



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

The Light

December
2018

International Organ of the Centre for the Worldwide Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam

The *only* Islamic organisation which is upholding the finality of prophethood.

Webcasting on the world's first real-time Islamic service at

www.virtualmosque.co.uk

Editors

- Germany - Amir Aziz
Guyana - Abd ul Muqtadir Gordon
India - Gowsia Saleem & - Prof. Shahab Shabbir
Sweden - Kaleem Ahmed
Suriname - Robbert Bipat M.D, PhD
South Africa- Ebrahim Mohamed
UK - Shahid Aziz & - Mustaq Ali
The USA - Zainab Ahmad

Contents

THE CALL OF THE MESSIAH	2
Islam and Genesis by Dr K Mohammed	3
My Journey to the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement. By Abdulhameed Bushe	10

Broadcasts (UK time)

1. **Urdu Skype:** Sunday 09:00
2. **English** www.virtualmosque.co.uk
 - **Friday Sermon** 13:00
 - **First Sunday** of month lecture 15:00.
3. **French** Sunday 11:00 Radio Virtual Mosque on Mixlr.com

Our Websites

1. [International HQ](#)
2. [Research and History](#)
3. [The Woking Mosque and Mission](#)
4. [The Berlin Mosque and Mission](#)
5. [Quran search](#)
6. [Blog](#)

Broadcasts from and about us

- www.virtualmosque.co.uk
- mixlr.com [Radio Virtual Mosque](#)

Interesting external links

- [Jews are a race.](#)
- [Non-Ahmadi Muslims takes steps against extremists..](#)
- [Muslims embrace Christianity to stay in Finland.](#)
- [Beyond Liberal Islam](#)
- [The Need for Muslim Reformation.](#)
- [What made mammoths extinct?](#)
- [American Muslims - Where do they stand?](#)
- [British Parliament turns to Islamic Family Law.](#)
- [America's Islamic heritage.](#)

External Links

The Light is not responsible for the content of external sites. The inclusion of a link to an external website should not be understood to be an endorsement of that website, the views it expresses or the site's owners (or their products/services).

Some links may have research, which disagrees with our beliefs. It is for us to consider such material and provide a rebuttal. Ignoring it will not make it go away.

We welcome all scholarly contributions to The Light.

I Shall Love All Mankind.

The Call of the Messiah

by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad



The Promised Messiah and Mahdi

(Editor's note: Any quotations from the Quran are translated from the author's explanations and are not literal translations of the verse quoted. This extract is from the English translation of a lecture he delivered in 1904 in Lahore, now in Pakistan, taken from the Lahore Ahmadiyya publication 'Essence of Islam', p. 66 – 71)

Signs of the Latter Age

Some men think that the prophecy relating to the appearance of the Promise is contained only in the traditions (Hadith) and not in the Holy Quran, and accordingly they demand a proof of it from the Word of God.

A reflection upon the words of the Holy Book is sufficient to convince any reasonable man that this prophecy is contained in the plainest words in the Holy Quran. In the chapter entitled the *Tahrim*, it is indicated that some individuals from among the Muslims would be called *ibn-i-Maryam* (the Son of Mary). In that chapter at first the faithful are compared to Mary and afterwards the breathing of a soul into her (i.e., the faithful like her) is mentioned. This indicates that the faithful who observe complete obedience to Divine commandments, and make themselves like Mary, will be rewarded by God by being made Christ like. It is in reference to the attainment of this stage that Almighty God says of me in a revelation published in the *Barahin Ahmadiyya*: يا مريم امكن انت و زوجك الجنة "O Mary! Enter paradise, you with your friends". And again: يا مريم نفخت فيك من روح بالصدق "O Mary! I have breathed into you the soul of truth," (thus symbolically Mary was impregnated with the truth); and last of all: اذ قال الله يعيسى ائني متوفيك اذ قال الله يعيسى ائني متوفيك "O Jesus! I will cause you to die a natural death and would then raise you to Myself," where I am addressed as Jesus Christ as if raised from the dignity of Mary to the dignity of Christ. Thus, the promise contained in the chapter *Tahrim* has been fulfilled in me, and I am named by God as the son of Mary.

Again, in the chapter. entitled the *Nur* (Light), Almighty God says that successors to the Holy Prophet would be raised from among the Muslims resembling all the successors that were raised to Moses as in the verse السُّخَّرُوا لِي فِي

الأرض كما استخلفت الذين من قبلهم From the Holy Quran it also appears that the religion of Islam would witness two terrible disasters which would endanger its very life. One of these came upon Islam with the death of the Holy Prophet and was averted at the hands of Abu Bakr, the first caliph according to the Divine promise. The second disaster according to the Holy Quran would be the evil that would be wrought by the Anti-Christ, to repel which the Promised Messiah would appear. It is to this great evil that the concluding words of the *Fatiha*, which every Muslim must repeat in his prayers, allude. It is to this time of tribulation that the prophecy contained in the words: وَلَيَمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا refer which occur in *Nur* immediately after the words in which successors to the Holy Prophet are promised (The Holy Quran 24:55).

In these words, Almighty God tells us that in the last ages when the faith of Islam would be severely shaken, so much so that there would be fear of its extinction and of its being swept off wholly, He would re-establish it with firmness upon the earth, and grant the Muslims a security after that great fear. To the same effect the Holy Quran says elsewhere: هُوَ الَّذِي ارْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ "God is He Who sent His messenger with the guidance and the true faith so that He may ultimately (i.e., in the time of the Promised Messiah) make it victorious over all other religions" (9:33). Again, the verse اِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَاِنَّا لَهٗ لَحٰفِظُوْنَ "Verily We sent down the Holy Qur'an, and verily We will be its guardians," (15: 9) also refers to the time of the Promised Messiah. As it speaks of the sending down of revelation which was affected through the Holy Prophet, it also speaks of guarding the revealed word from its enemies when it would be in danger of being brought to extinction, which is the function of the Promised Messiah. Here, I have briefly pointed out the verses in which the advent of the Promised Messiah is indicated, either in plain words or by alluding to it. A detailed proof would not have suited the limits of a lecture. This is sufficient proof for anyone seeking evidence of my claim in the Holy Quran in the same manner in which he seeks an evidence of the claim of the Holy Prophet or Jesus Christ in the previous books. So, if these prophecies are not regarded as sufficient, it must also be admitted that there is no prophecy in the Torah concerning the appearance of Jesus or our Holy Prophet, for if the words of the former prophecies are not

very definite, neither are they so in the case of the latter prophecies. It is exactly here that the Jews stumbled in the recognition of the two prophets, Jesus and Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon them. For instance, if it had been stated in plain and clear words in the prophecies foretelling the appearance of our Holy Prophet that he would be born at Mecca, that his name would be Muhammad, that his father and grand-father would be known respectively as Abdullah and Abdul Mutalib, that he would be of the Ishmaelite race, that being persecuted at Mecca he would fly to Medina, and that he would be born so many years after Moses, not a single Jew could have denied him.

The difficulties in the case of the prophecies relating to the appearance of Jesus Christ are still greater, and it is on this ground that the Jews to this day consider themselves excusable in rejecting Jesus. In these prophecies, it is clearly stated that Elijah would re-appear before the advent of the true Messiah and prophecies containing this condition are contained in the revealed books. But since Elijah did not re-appear, therefore the claim of Jesus to Messiahship could not be regarded as true by the Jews. When confronted with this difficulty, Jesus replied that by appearance of Elijah was meant the appearance of one like him, and not his own appearance. But this explanation was rejected by the Jews as directly opposed to the Word of God which spoke not of the advent of the like of Elijah, but of the advent of Elijah himself. These considerations show clearly that the prophecies relating to the appearance of the prophets of God are always deep so that they may serve to distinguish the righteous from the wicked. ([Return to contents](#))

Islam and Genesis

A Study in Scriptural Intertextuality

by **Khaleel Mohammed**

Department of Religious
Studies,

San Diego State University



Abstract: Abraham Geiger's 1833 essay launched a genre of research that posits foreign etymology for many terms in the Quran. Whereas some work has been erudite, others

have posited far-fetched concepts to the point where at least one author opines that Aramaic was the original language of the Quran. Muslim exegetes have compounded the problem by seeking to interpret the Quran on its own, without reference to other Abrahamic scriptures. I argue that Muhammad's (s) audience understood him clearly since he was using terms that had become part of the Arabic language long before his time. I examine three terms: *islam*, *iman*, and *din*, showing that the meaning of these words in the Quran can be deciphered by reliance on context of usage and intertextuality. To this end, I refer to several verses of the Quran as well as of the Hebrew Bible and Talmudic literature. A proper understanding of these words allows us to see Q3:19 and Q5:3 as pluralistic instead of the particularistic interpretation that most exegetes proffer.

Abraham Geiger's 1833 essay *Was hat Muhammad aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen* postulated that the Quran was largely unoriginal: Muhammad (s) had compiled it using at least 14 terms from the Hebrew Bible and rabbinic literature, in addition to several other Jewish concepts (Geiger 1970, p. 44). Later analysis revealed that his work was "naïve and judgmental" (Lassner 1999), and that he sometimes fell victim to parallel-mania, positing Quranic borrowings from Pirke De-Rabbi Eliezer without realizing that the latter document was composed after the advent of Islam (Stillman 1974). Yet, Geiger must be hailed as the pioneer of the quest for foreign provenance of Quranic terms. His work set off a torrent of publications by Jewish scholars who sought to further detail Judaic influences on Islam. Hartwig Hirschfeld (Hirschfeld 1878), for example, wrote *Judische Elemente im Qoran* (1878), Charles Torrey penned *The Jewish Foundations of Islam* (1933), and Abraham Katsh authored *Judaism and the Koran* (Katsh 1954). By the 1870s, scholars began to oppose some aspects of Geiger's claims. Adolph Harnack (d. 1930) surmised influence from a gnostic Jewish-Christian community (see Pfanmuller 1923, p. 108). Julius Wellhausen (d. 1918), after careful analysis, suggested that Jewish concepts may have entered Islam through Christian refraction (Wellhausen 1961, p. 205).

This search for foreign provenance continues to this day, and while engendering some truly erudite scholarship, has also spawned some of the most ridiculous claims. One professor, for example, would have us assume that his

Arabic skills are such that he can correct the text to “the form the word or phrase had when it was first uttered by the prophet Muhammad” (Bellamy 1993). Christoph Luxenberg claims that Muhammad (s) did not even speak Arabic, but rather an Arabic-Aramaic hybrid, and that the Quran is derived from Syriac Christian liturgy (Luxenberg 2000). Another writer tells us that contrary to what Muslims and historians have claimed, the Quran was written in Aramaic (Sawma 2006).

Professor Walid Saleh’s words aptly describe the situation:

“The rule is presented differently by different scholars, but in a nutshell, it states that for every word in the Quran for which the native philological tradition fails to give a solitary explanation and instead offers multiple meanings, modern scholars have to presume that they are dealing with a foreign word. Having determined that a word in the Quran is foreign, scholars have gone ahead and presumed that its meaning in a cognate language or in its purported language of origin was the determining factor, and not its usage in its Quranic context.” (Saleh 2010, pp. 649–98)

Working off Professor Saleh’s findings, I intend to show that three important terms: Islam, *iman*, and *din* were part of the Arabic vocabulary long before Muhammad’s (s) time, and that his audience had no problems comprehending their meaning. I will also show that Islam actually owes its name to a particular Arabic rendering of Genesis 17:1. If I can sustain that line of reasoning for Arabic usage, rather than a foreign provenance, I demonstrate that two verses of the Quran (Q3:19 and 5:3) allow for a pluralistic outlook rather than the particularistic interpretation that the majority of exegetes have offered. Each word is of such importance that it merits a full-length journal article or monograph. Fortunately, several scholars have written on the subject, and I use their findings to make my presentation more concise. I omit the use of diacritical marks except in cases where I assume—somewhat arbitrarily—there is an absolute need for pronounciational accuracy. In certain cases, I will abbreviate Quran to Q followed by the chapter and verse number. For example, Q2:15 indicates the second sūra, verse 15.

Muhammad’s (s) audience understood him clearly since he was using terms that had become part of the Arabic language long before his time.

The underlying message behind the borrowing idea seems to indicate that the Quran has misleadingly depicted its ideas as original, and that such a claim has been debunked by the revelations of its alleged sources. However, the Quran makes no secret that its material is not new; indeed, Muhammad’s (s) detractors repeatedly described his narratives as “ta-

les of the ancients” (Q6:25, 8:31, 16:24, 23:83, 25:5, 27:68, 46:17, 68:15, and 83:13), and he himself said that he had not come with any innovation (Q 46:9). The Quran also describes itself as a preserver of the antecedent Abrahamic scriptures, even advising people to ask the Jewish *mazkirim* about matters relating to the prophets (Q 16:43; 21:7; Mohammed 2015, pp. 33–46). Even if there are perceived differences in narratives, to assume that we can trace the “true” story to some urtext is problematic, given the presence of the two Torot (written and oral). There was a wide variety of exegetical traditions that, over a long period of time, “supplemented, supported, amended, and even perhaps at times, subverted that legacy” (Pregill 2007, pp. 643–59). If we cannot trace the source for a reference, it may simply be that, as Marilyn Waldman noted, the Quran is using the outlines of a story as a didactic vehicle. (Waldman 1985, pp. 1–13).

Insofar as language is concerned, some Western scholars seem reluctant to believe that, before the Quran, Arabs could effectively communicate via a language of their own. As Afnan Fatani notes:

“Arabic is not looked upon not as a sister or equal language of Hebrew, Aramaic, and other Semitic languages, i.e., when it is treated as an offspring that presented the original language in a degenerated form. It is this view that compels some Western scholars to constantly look for the etymology of Quranic terms in other Semitic languages, convinced that Arabic must by necessity, have borrowed its lexicon from these older and more sophisticated languages”. (Fatani 2006, pp. 356–71)

Muslim exegetes added to the problem in several aspects. One was by relying upon creedal constructs to provide explanations of the terms, often engaging in semantic acrobatics to support their interpretations. The earliest exegetes whose works are available were writing in a milieu that was far removed from the

one to which the Quran was initially addressed, operating under constructs that often worked to their epistemological detriment. Early Muslim approaches to philology and etymology were clearly in the service of religion, and this came with several drawbacks (Kopf 1956, pp. 33–59). While earlier exegetes recognized the existence of loan words in the Quran, later ones sought to literally interpret the Quranic verses that referred to the document being in clear Arabic (e.g., Q 12:2, 16:103, 26:195, 41:44, and 42:7). The derived reasoning was that since God cannot lie, then every word had literally to be from an Arabic source.

Another problematic concept was the widespread Muslim contention that the previous scriptures were corrupted and therefore not reliable. This is underlined by the idea that reliance upon rejecting Judaic traditions—known as *israiliyat*—would lead to false interpretations (Mohammed 2015, p. 15). Rejecting biblical influence negatively affected exegesis, given that, as Reuven Firestone aptly noted, “the Quran could not possibly exist without its scriptural predecessors as subtexts” (Firestone 2004, pp. 1–22). The dynamic influence that the Quran has had upon the Arabic language has also exacerbated the problem. This is because almost every classical dictionary of Arabic relies heavily on the Quran for elucidation, often without regard to differences between terminological and quotidian usage.

I rely on some late discoveries within the field of Islamic studies to form certain relevant premises. The recent discovery of what some term as the Birmingham manuscript basically vouchsafes what the Muslim tradition has always held: that the Quran goes back to the time of Muhammad (s), unlike the late dating that researchers have claimed, such as Patricia Crone, Michael Cook, and John Wansbrough, for example. The presence of Christian and Jewish tribes in the Arab peninsula long before Muhammad’s (s) birth meant that, cognate consideration aside, certain religious concepts, even if they had stemmed from foreign terminology, had become completely Arabized by Muhammad’s (s) time (Griffith 2013; Gilliot and Larcher 2001). There is also a midrash dated to the second or third century Sifre to Deuteronomy 32:2 that states, “When God revealed Himself to give the Torah to Israel, He did so not in one language, but in four: in Hebrew, in Greek, in Arabic, and in Aramaic” (Goitein 1958, pp. 149–63). As Goitein astutely pointed out, whereas such

Insofar as language is concerned, some Western scholars seem reluctant to believe that, before the Quran, Arabs could effectively communicate via a language of their own.

translation was probably never committed to writing, it certainly must have been present via an oral method. The Arabs were therefore not as unfamiliar with Biblical material as the proponents of the foreign etymology camp might suppose.

Let us examine the first of the three terms: Islam. It is derived from the fourth form (أسلم) of the verb سلم (*salima*), which occurs in the Quran in its various forms some 157 times. The verb forms of أسلم occur 22 times, and the noun, Islam, from that verb, is found in eight verses. The meanings of various verb forms of a common root in Arabic can seem unrelated to each other. The second form of *salima*, for example, *sallama*, used transitively, means to hand over or to give over something. Used with a preposition, it means to greet, as in *Sallama alaihi*. One must avoid arbitrarily selecting a meaning from any particular root simply because it fulfils a cherished objective; an offered explanation should be accompanied by incontrovertible proof(s).

Jane Smith, in her 1975 doctoral dissertation, noted that, “[W]ithin the Muslim community itself, there has been a change in the understanding and interpretation of *Islam*, i.e., that the word connotes to Muslims of the current century something different (or additional to) what it meant to those of the early centuries of Islam” (Smith 1975, pp. 2–3). After 9/11, some Muslim apologists, trying to distance their faith from the stereotype of violence, tried to focus on one derivative of *Salima* (as opposed to its fourth form, *aslama*) to insist that Islam comes from the word ‘*salam*’ and means peace (see for example, Balogun 2014). Our task then is specific: it is not to simply look for the root, but to examine the word’s usage and if possible, refer to a narrative or concept already known to the Arabs.

Several lexicons provide a gamut of meanings, including “safety” as well as “freedom from blemish,” but end up referring to the Quran to proffer Islam as submission (*khudu*) or accepting what the Prophet has brought (Al-Jawhari 1957; Al-Isfahani 1961, pp. 240–1; Ibn Manẓūr

n.d., pp. 342–50). Ismail al-Jawhari (d.c. 400), in his *Taj al-Lughah*, deduced that the *Aslama* and *istaslama* forms are contextually equivalent and therefore underlined the meaning as “submission” (1957). The general trend in the tafsirs is not different, as noted in Jane Smith’s study of 14 major exegetes, to represent the explanation over a 14-century period (Smith 1975, pp. 218–26). Interestingly, she cites al-Razi who, among other definitions, offered that the term means “entering into wholeness or peacefulness”—this of course being achieved by subjecting oneself to the obligations required by God (Al-Razi, vol. 7, p. 702).

Some Western-based analyses have offered truly far-fetched interpretations. Margoliouth asserted that the derived word “Muslim” has little to do with the Arabic root to which it is usually traced, but that it was instead derived from the name Musailima, the false prophet of a monotheistic sect (Margoliouth 1903, pp. 467–83). Mark Lidzbarski debunked Margoliouth’s allegation, and then, following the borrowing concept, alleged that the word has no meaning on its own, but can be traced to be like the Greek σωτηρια (soteria), indicating salvation (Lidzbarski 1922, pp. 85–96). Meir Bravman decided that none of these explanations was convincing and related the term to “*gihād*”, rendering it as “defiance of death, self-sacrifice (for the sake of God and his prophet), or “readiness for the defiance of death” (Bravmann 2009, pp. 1–38). Both David Kuntzlinger and Helmer Ringgren examined Hebrew and Aramaic cognates of the word, with the former pointing out that some usages in the Quran match the Hebrew מלש (Kuntzlinger 1935, pp. 128–37). Ringgren refers to various parts of Quran and verses of ancient poetry to show that, while he opted for a general meaning of submission and surrender, there are other usages (Ringgren 1949, pp. 1–27). Q2:66, for example, “*mussalamatun la shīyata fihā*”, indicates a heifer that is perfect and free from blemish. In Q37:82 and 26:89, he also points out that it means “sound” as in *Qalb Salīm* (1949). He drew upon Isaiah 38:3 to show an almost identical expression (מלש) that in context means “whole and undivided” (Ringgren 1949). Incidentally,

the Quran 2:135 revisits the argument that Jews and Christians have engaged in over the identity of Abraham with, “They say, ‘Be Jews or Christians, and you will be guided.’ Say ‘Rather the path of Abraham, a *hanif*; he was not one of the polytheists.”

in Arabic parsing, the term “*sālim*” is used to denote a noun (or its plural form), which is “sound”, i.e., adhering to all the qualities of a noun, as in the word “*Qā’ilūn*”, wherein the form of the plural suffix indicates that it is a sound masculine plural: “*jam’ mudhakkār sālim*” (Ibn Hishām 2003).

The background that Ringgren and Kuntzlinger provided is certainly useful, but when examining both the Hebrew and Arabic cognates, they seemed to overlook certain simple facts. The first is that the Quran occasionally reports Biblical stories with its own—obviously Arabic—rendition of the actual dialogue. The second is that, in the Arabian environment, as noted earlier in Sifre midrash to Deuteronomy 32:2, there is evidence that there were at least partial translations of the Torah in Arabic. Most likely, such translations would have originated too from the Aramaic Targum rather than the Hebrew text. The third is that, in the Quran, Abraham is the prototype of the perfect worshipper. Indeed, the Quran 2:135 revisits the argument that Jews and Christians have engaged in over the identity of Abraham with, “They say, ‘Be Jews or Christians, and you will be guided.’ Say ‘Rather the path of Abraham, a *hanif*; he was not one of the polytheists.” The Quran 2:128 also has Abraham and Ishmael laying the foundations of the Kaaba in Mecca and asking God that they be Muslim.

Charles Torrey pointed out that Muhammad (s) did not consider Islam as a new religion (Torrey 1967, p. 64), referring to the identification of Abraham in the Quran, not only as Muslim, but exhorting his offspring to be such (Q 2:132). Rather strangely, Torrey makes no mention of verse Q2:131. He then states that there

was no real equivalent in Aramaic or Syriac (Torrey 1967, p. 101), and as such, he attributed the word to a genuine Arabic usage. While disputing the interpretation of “submission”, he offers the meaning of “yielding to the will of God.” This is

where Q2:131 becomes so important to us: *Idh qāla lahū Rabbuhū “Aslim.” Qāla, “Aslamto li rabbil alamīn.”* The Quran is obviously referring to Genesis 17.1, wherein the partly-translated text reads, “When Abram was ninety-nine years old, The Lord appeared before him and said I am

God Almighty. Walk before me and be תָּמִים (*tamīm*).” The various translators have rendered תָּמִים differently: some as “blameless”, others as “whole-hearted.” While there is agreement that in order to obey God’s edicts, one must submit, the word in context has no direct connotation of submission; rather, it indicates the attempt to be perfect, to be without blemish, to be sincere and loyal. The Arabic contextual rendition, working off the Hebrew cognate, would be either كُن تَمَامًا (*Kun tamāman*) or أتمم (*atmim*). Since the Arabs were more familiar with the Aramaic Targum, the more significant word, as in Onkelos, would have been שָׁלִים (*shalīm*). It is rather noteworthy that תָּם (*tam*) of the Hebrew Bible is generally rendered as שָׁלֵם, except in a few cases, such as in Job 1:1, where it becomes ללא מום (without blemish).

If we are to accept the Midrash in Sifre, as earlier mentioned, the Arabic version would seem to be more obviously related to the Aramaic cognate rather than the Hebrew תָּמִים. The effective translation then of Q 2:131 is: “His Lord said to him; ‘Be whole (without blemish)’. He responded, ‘I will (seek to) be whole/without blemish for the Lord of the Worlds.’” Since the Quran summarizes the entire episode, it subsumes the rest of the Genesis narrative in Q2:132: Abraham bequeathed unto his offspring, as did Jacob, “O our children. God has purified for you the *din*; do not die unless you are in a state of being without blemish.” Being whole or without blemish, in context, would be only achievable by following God’s edicts. This is underlined by the references already made, for example to Abraham approaching his lord “*bi Qalbin Salīm*”—a perfect heart (Q37:82). What the Quran has effectively done then, is to simply use a word that would have been known to the Arabs with the presence of Jewish and Christian tribes. I have no reason as to why Western-based researchers have overlooked Q2:131. It is obvious, however, that in so doing, they missed the element of understanding the term Islam.

Jane Smith focused on how Muslim exegetes interpreted the term. Since their discussion, as noted earlier, focused upon the term solely from an Arabic linguistic perspective and creedal foundations, they largely opted for a meaning of submission. Relying upon the general use of the word from the root *salima*, Ringgren noted that it would appear that the general meaning is one of “wholeness, entirety, or totality . . . something that is whole, unbroken, and undivided and

This lessening of standards was not accepted by everyone, and thus a more appropriate nomenclature was sought for those who did not merit the designation of *mumin*; “*muslim*” seems to have been the appropriate choice

therefore sound and healthy, or peaceful and harmonious” (Ringgren 1949, pp. 1–35). Surprisingly, he still opted for a meaning of submission. Given the milieu to which Muhammad (s) arrived, it would seem unlikely that Muhammad (s) would have chosen a term that has the concept of submission as its primary meaning, since the polytheist gods also demanded submission (Baneth 2001, pp. 85–92). Abraham, as portrayed in Genesis, while subjecting himself to God’s commands, is not an example of abject submission: he questions and reasons with God. Were the primary meaning to be submission, the word would most likely have been *istislam*, and that would not have been sourced to Genesis 17:1. A derived noun from *istislam*, *mustaslimūn*, occurs as a hapax legomenon in 37:26, where the connotation is clearly one of abject submission, describing the condition of the contumacious folk who, having mocked the concept of a day of reckoning, would now be gathered for sentencing.

The long discourse on the meaning of Islam does not contain much reference to Muslim exegetes who—at least the ones whose works I have examined—did not try to find the Hebrew Bible reference of Q2:131 to buttress their explanations. Since it is clear then that the Quran was working off a Biblical reference for its coinage, this segues into the discussion about *iman*, that I, as do most other researchers on the subject, translate as “faith” or “belief”.

Q49:14 makes a clear distinction between Islam and *iman*: the bedu Arabs say, “We have believed!” Say, “You have not believed; say rather, ‘we have professed Islam,’ for faith has not entered your hearts.” Abdul Khaliq Kazi (1966) and Jane Smith (1975) excellently investigated the terms to the point where a summary of their findings will suffice for our purposes. The Muslim savants of the second and third hijri centuries debated over what removed a person from being considered a “*mumin*” (believer). The

Khawarij, Mutazilites, and Shias set the most rigid standards, insisting that *iman* was basically belief professed by the tongue and felt in the heart, and manifested in abstinence from sin—although they differed regarding the extent of the sin that would expel someone from being a *mumin* (Kazi 1966, pp. 227–37). With the spread of Asharite theology, *iman* was deemed as restricted to belief, and not necessarily manifested in conduct (Kazi 1966, pp. 227–37). This lessening of standards was not accepted by everyone, and thus a more appropriate nomenclature was sought for those who did not merit the designation of *mumin*; “*muslim*” seems to have been the appropriate choice. By the end of the Umayyad period (circa 750), the scholars had identified Islam as the religion of the Arabs, and “Muslim” as the designation for the followers of this religion (McAuliffe and Clare 2001, pp. 398–417).

Abu Hanifa, in differentiating between Islam and *iman*, considered the former term as indicating submission and subjection and the latter denoting confirmation and belief; yet, he noted that one was not possible without the other (Kazi 1966, pp. 227–37). By the sixth century hijri, Al-Shahristani (d. 548/1158) had come up with what is now accepted as the majoritarian view: Islam denotes outward submission, and both a *mumin* and a hypocrite (Al-Shahristani 1910, pp. 53–54) can practice it. A *mu'min*, from this outlook, denotes one who sincerely believes, and who acts according to the dictates of the faith.

Jane Smith examined the two terms in the 14 hadiths and concluded that there is a clear line of demarcation drawn between Islam and *iman*. Islam consists of performing five specific rituals (*shahādah*, *ṣalāt*, *zakāt*, *ṣawm*, and *ḥajj*), whereas *iman* is faith in various elements that are mentioned in the Quran and traditional literature, such as God, the messengers, Muhammad (s), angels, Heaven, Hell, Reckoning, and divine decree (Smith 1975). Like Kazi, she found a clear distinction was not always made and that the terms were deemed to have an interlocking relationship (Smith 1975).

The root *āmana* (أمن) and its derivatives are far more frequent in the Quran (859) than *sal-ima* and its derivatives (157). This frequency, Kazi convincingly contends, as well as the Kharijite and Mu'tazile refusal to consider sinners as *muminin*, indicate that the earliest followers of the Prophet were called *muminūn* (Kazi 1966, pp. 227–37). It is significant too that the caliphs

from the time of Umar were called *amīr al-mu'minīn*, not “*amir al-muslimīn*”. In Q 2:62, the Quran juxtaposes “those who believe” (*al-ladhīna āmanū*) against Jews and Christians, instead of using the term “those who profess Islam” (*al-ladhīna aslamū*), thus underlining Kazi's contention.

Kazi however asserts that the expression *āmanu* was new, since there was “no background to its usage in the pre-Islamic Arabic language” (Kazi 1966, pp. 227–37). Kazi's assessment is highly questionable, as we simply do not have access to written material to make such an authoritative pronouncement. Even the foreign etymology proponent, Arthur Jeffery (Jeffery 2007), agrees that by Muhammad's (s) time, the word was in normal usage, albeit with several shades of meaning (Pregill 2007). We do know that long before Muhammad (s), the Jews and Christians said “Amen”, derived from the Hebrew אָמֵן (*emunah*) at the end of prayers, from whence comes the Islamic *Amin*, and we can assume that those who lived in the Hijaz used the Arabic equivalent.

Psalm 15 states:

Lord, who may dwell in your sacred tent?
Who may live on your holy mountain?
The one who walks uprightly (blamelessly),
Who does what is righteous,
Who speaks the truth from their heart;
Whose tongue utters no slander,
Who does no wrong to a neighbour,
and casts no slur on others;
Who despises a vile person
but honors those who fear the Lord;
Who keeps an oath even when it hurts,
and does not change their mind;
Who lends money to the poor without interest;
Who does not accept a bribe against the innocent.
Whoever does these things will never be shaken.

Rabbi Simlai, in Makkot 24a, a Talmudic tractate that predates Muhammad (s), offers the following explanation. The Gemara analyzes these verses: “He that walketh uprightly”: this is referring to one who conducts himself like our forefather Abraham, as it is written concerning him: “Walk before Me and be thou wholehearted” (Genesis 17). The commentary continues, based upon Habakkuk 2:4, that “But the righteous shall live (בְּאֵמוּנָתוֹ, be *emunatu*) by his

faith" (Epstein 1935). Another tractate, Shabbath 97a, has God referring to the Jewish people as "*maminim bnei mamimin*"—מאמינים בני מאמינים—believers, the children of believers (Epstein 1935). Faith is elemental to the Christian faith as well, and reference to it occurs more than 230 times in the Testament. It is unthinkable that any of the Arabic-speaking Christian or Jewish tribe would have not known the Arabic word in a terminological context.

Q 2:260 states: Abraham said, "Lord, show me how you give life to the dead". God asked, "Do you not believe? (أولم تؤمن)". Abraham answered, "Certainly, but just to set my heart at ease". After which, God gave him some directions that he obeyed. Genesis 15 seems to be the reference for this Quranic narrative with the most important part being verse 6 which tells us: And he (Abraham) believed in the Lord (יהוה). It seems evident then that the Arabic *iman* involves conviction in the heart, and not simply an outward declaration of belief in God. This certainly supports the findings of Professors Fred Donner and Robert Shedinger that Muhammad (s) and his early followers saw themselves as a community of believers, including Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and other monotheists, rather than as a "new or separate religious confession" (Donner 2010, p. 69; Shedinger 2012, p. 81). Muhammad (s) declared that he was no innovator among the apostles, meaning that he was not bringing anything new or different from what they had delivered (Q46:9). Professor Donner sums it up as follows:

Believers then, whatever religious confession they may have belonged to - whether (non-trinitarian) Christians, Jews, or what we might call "Quranic monotheists" recent converts from paganism - were expected to live strictly by the law that God has revealed to their communities. Jews should obey the laws of the Torah; Christians those of the Gospels; and those who were not members of one of the pre-existing monotheist communities should object the injunctions of the Quran. The general term for these new Quranic monotheists was Muslim. (Donner 2010, p.71)

Donner's statement is supported by Q 5:48: "For each among you, we have made a *shari'a* and a program". The Quran also takes time to chastise those who do not observe

the sabbath with full devotion (2:65). The idea of conquest by the sword - at least in early Islam - and of opposition to what we deem Islamic principles, seem problematic given the absence of any significant polemic against Muhammad's (s) movement for at least a century after his death (Donner 2010). The later Muslim descriptions of bloody conquests are based largely on hadith literature, a genre that often tells us more about how their writers wanted the past to be than what it was. Certainly, there were battles, but the spread of Muhammad's (s) movement seemed, at least in the early stages, before the rise of a distinct reconstruction of the term "Islam", not so much to convert as to impose a political hegemony (Donner 2010, p. 109).

The last term of our analysis is *din*. In Hebrew, Aramaic and Arabic, the word seems to deal with justice. From Hebrew and Aramaic, we have the term *beth din* to refer to a place where judgment is issued, and several verses in the Tanakh refer to this type of usage as in Genesis 6:3, 15:14, 49:16, and Deuteronomy 32:36. The Quran speaks of the *yawm al-din*, and describes the happenings on that day in terms that are akin to a courthouse scenario. People appear with a record of their deeds (Q84): their body parts testify against them (Q36:64); the good are separated from the evil and each group gets its just reward (Q82). The scenario is also known as *Yawm al-Hisab* (Day of reckoning), in which the rendering of judgments implies "*din*" as the general body of commandments that the Divine requires of worshippers. "*Din*", as religion, is a modern rendition that misrepresents the Arabic term, probably used only to convey a sense of consistency in translation (Brodeur 2001), given that even in the broader sphere of religion studies, there is no agreed-upon definition of the word. As Brodeur further pointed out, the term seems to more represent "God's right path for human beings on earth at all times" and a "prescribed set of behaviours" (McAuliffe and Clare 2001). A far closer word to the idea of "religion", per Quranic usage, would be *milla*, as in "*millat Ibrahim*", the response that the Quran 2:135 directs Muhammad (s) to provide when asked to become a Jew or a Christian.

This brings us then to two verses, Q 3:19 and 5:3, that are generally translated as,

"Din", as religion, is a modern rendition that misrepresents the Arabic term, probably used only to convey a sense of consistency in translation

I Shall Love All Mankind.

Q3:19: Indeed, the *din* with God is Islam. Those who were given the Book before you did not differ until after knowledge had come to them, out of mutual envy. And whoever rejects the signs of God, then God is swift in calling to account.

Q 5:3: This day I have perfected your *din* for you, and made complete my bounty unto you, and have chosen for you Islam as a *din*.

The first verse is preceded by an outline of whom the pious are: those who are patient, observe the commandments of God, and are steadfast in prayer, and followed by the idea that God is just. This sets up the conclusion that the right form of comportment is to seek to follow the edicts of the various *Sharias* that God has imposed upon the different communities, all of which seek to adhere to the desire to be without blemish, to be whole. The verse is not a proclamation of a specific, distinct religion from that followed by Jews and Christians. If it were, Q2:62 would be meaningless: Those who believe, and the Jews and the Christians and the Sabians, whoever believes in God and the last day, and does good deeds, for them is their reward with their Lord: on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve". As Kazi notes, "... Muslim is applicable to the followers of the previous prophets also, whether before or after the revelation of the Quran" (Kazi 1966). This verse has no juxtaposition, as pointed out earlier, between Muslims and the other communities. It seems to indicate, therefore, that God will judge every community according to their various *sharias* that the Divine had enjoined upon them to achieve wholeness and blamelessness. This includes Muhammad's (s) followers, the *mu'minūn*; the verse then is not a particularistic one.

The other verse, Q 5:3, is in line with Q3:19, establishing textual consistency. The right "*din*" with God would include all those who follow their different *sharias*, since to every different nation, the Divine had sent a prophet, and with this came different laws and programs, concordant with their tribal and cultural differences. Islam is the term covering all of those people, as all the prophets, according to the Quran, followed that path based on Genesis 17:1, the reference for Q2: 131.

Were the Hebrew version of Genesis 17:1 directly translated to Arabic rather than via an Aramaic intermediary, as I have earlier surmised, then the religion we now know as Islam would most likely have been instead called

Itmam. The foregoing research not only fulfilled the goals of my inquiry but also demonstrated two other points. Firstly, when one reads the Quran as an intertext with the Hebrew writings, the former document is quite understandable, without need for any great reliance on the tafsir or hadith literature. Secondly, Abraham Geiger was not entirely incorrect when he declared that the Quran was unoriginal. The paradox is that the Quran's originality is structured on that lack of originality - in that, Muhammad's (s) purpose was acknowledged a path that covered all monotheists, without claiming singular salvation for one group. That most of his later followers diverged from that path of pluralism is something that makes modern research into the intertextual relationships of the Abrahamic religions so vital. [\(Return to contents\)](#)

My Journey to the Lahore

Ahmadiyya

Anjuman

By

AbdulHamid Bushe



I have been guided by spirits for as long as I can remember. I have also been haunted by devilish voices for almost as long. This has given me a rich spiritual life and also seen me placed in psychiatric settings at times. My struggle has been to distinguish between the voices I hear and the dreams I have to interpret the meaning behind them. For me my experiences are not pathology but rather a form of mysticism.

Therefore, I am religious by nature because I believe that angels, devils, and spirits operate in the universe. The world of the unseen has a purpose and I have opened myself to the possibility that God exists and that He works in amazing ways.

I was baptised a Roman Catholic while belonging to an agnostic family because that is the tradition in Ireland that people always baptise their children. I always felt a close relationship to God despite the agnosticism that surrounded me. My grandmother used to take me to mass on Sundays as she was a believing woman unlike my immediate family. However, I have a curiosity for all ways of life and this came to the fore when as a teenager I encountered the writings of Karl Marx. When I was refused admission into a Catholic seminary at the age of 18, I took to reading the atheist writings of Marx and

I Shall Love All Mankind.

Engels and became convinced by them. My dreams and visions stopped, and I became atheist for several years. Following an unsuccessful relationship with an American Marxist woman in Atlanta, Georgia, I found myself questioning life again as the surety of Marxist materialism was at that time called in for review.

In a moment of loss, I appealed to the universe to guide me to the truth. Then surely within my library of books I came across a small publication called, "A Brief Illustrated Guide to Understanding Islam" by I.A. Ibrahim. In it I discovered the brilliance of the Holy Quran as a scientifically sound message to an unlettered man called Muhammad (s) and how he heard the voice of an angel called Gabriel. It was then that I remembered my older fideism and accepted that the Holy Quran was a book of revelation. Thus Muhammad (s) was a prophet because he had been given knowledge via divine inspiration.

My Irish friends and family were shocked to discover that I had come to find agreement with the religion of Muhammad (s) and the Quran. However, I quickly encountered practicing Muslims at my university and they welcomed me as a revert. I felt a powerful compulsion to devote myself to Allah and His Messenger while the spirits that had been dormant during my period of atheism returned. This time I had the teachings of Islam to interpret them with.

In 2007, I journeyed for Haj and never was my devotion to God or the activity of the spirits or jinn as I now understood them higher. I completed the Haj and returned a convinced revert. It was topical at the time and still is today to question Islam across all spectrums of knowledge. This includes theology, science, philosophy, gender studies, human rights, politics, etc. I engaged with others in lively debate and all the while I referred to the Quran as the final point of reference. In the course of the universal debates which I involved myself in as a seeker of truth I came across the prophecies of the Muhammad (s) concerning the return of Jesus to guide humanity. To explain briefly, Jesus son of Mary was prophesied to descend from a white minaret east of Damascus towards the end times to guide humanity. There were dozens of signs of the last day and many of them had seemingly occurred. For example, that, men would behave as women and women would behave as men. Indeed, it seemed as though that was currently true. Having considered the prophecies as related by the scholar Ibn Kathir

I discovered the brilliance of the Holy Quran as a scientifically sound message to an unlettered man called Muhammad (s) and how he heard the voice of an angel called Gabriel.

it seemed as though Jesus would return any time soon. Upon graduating from university, I resolved to take up an offer by a Muslim religious teacher in Damascus to study Islam there. I intended to go and wait for Jesus son of Mary to return there. I applied for a Syrian visa. However, before the visa could be delivered, I was contacted by an Irish revert to Islam who propagated faith with an organisation called the Worldwide Ahmadiyya Movement in Galway, Ireland.

Was it destiny or chance that I agreed to meet up with these particular Muslims who are generally called Qadianis? Upon my encounter with them I came to believe with them that their claim that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian was the fulfilment of the prophecies was true. Jesus it seemed had already returned and we in the West were only now hearing about this. The night of my deliberation on whether to join the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association of Ireland I had a dream where a hand beckoned me to follow it even though I was not up to the task it invited to. I accepted the pledge which made me a follower of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian and I moved to Galway to study with the Ahmadi organisation there.

However, my dreams and visions became even stronger as I settled into life there. It was hard to process the journey and the challenging ideas since everything was contested by people I met along the way. There were high stakes for religious and non-religious when it came to the veracity of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's claim to be the Promised Messiah. If the claim was true then it obligated seekers of truth to accept, surely!

However, few people were prepared to do that. My dreams and visions became a source of relief to me in the wake of so much dispute at university, at the mosques, on the street stalls where I promoted the Ahmadiyya Movement.

Time passed, and my friends moved on and got married, had kids and settled down. I thought I should do likewise. So, I sought the hand of a Sunni Muslim woman from London.

I Shall Love All Mankind.

Unfortunately, she could not believe that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a prophet after Muhammad (s) because it was foundational to Islam that Muhammad (s) was the Final Messenger. Through my discussions with her I resolved the more likely truth to be that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a saintly man who received revelation from Allah. Since I heard voices and received visions why could not other people?

Ultimately, I left the Worldwide Ahmadiyya Movement because the regime of control exercised by the organisation does not permit members to marry non-Ahmadis. I got married to Tehmina Kazi in a *nikah* that took place under the authority of the Imam of the Association of British Muslims on July 14th 2012. I was never happier. However, the joy was short lived as on

the second night of the marriage my voices and visions came back to me with a vengeance. I saw a dream that Satan was coming to assault me. In the period between November 2012 and

2015 I had constant assault from jinnis which possessed me and attempted to ruin me. But it did not stop me from having clear visions enter my mind also. The word "*Mujaddid*" was written into my heart by a spirit or angel. It occurred at around the same time in 2012 when I encountered the Lahore Ahmadiyya Anjuman at Wembley, London. Since I left the Qadiani Movement I was troubled by my conscience to uphold my pledge to Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian. The Lahori Ahmadis showed me written evidence that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib left his Movement in the care of a Council called the Anjuman. The Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement is the inheritor of that council. Furthermore, my deduction that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a saint who received revelation was given confirmation by the fact that Promised Messiah only claimed to be a *Mujaddid* and

not a full prophet in the sense that Muhammad (s) was a full prophet. It is well accepted throughout Islam that no messenger can come after Muhammad (s). I think that makes more sense than to say that the Promised Messiah is a Prophet after Muhammad (s). Rather he was a saintly warrior of the pen who came to prove the truth of Islam to the world. He was guided by dreams and visions as I am.

My personal experiences of dreams and visions was given conclusion by the fact of the vision of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in 1891 C.E. that he would give rise to a flock of white converts to Islam which he metaphorically called "White Doves". I myself am a white Irish convert now of the Lahori Ahmadiyya branch of his movement.

my deduction that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a saint who received revelation was given confirmation by the fact that Promised Messiah only claimed to be a *Mujaddid* and not a full prophet in the sense that Muhammad (s) was a full prophet.

Today I am confirming that I believe that Allah is the One God and that Muhammad (s) is His Messenger. I also confirm that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, and the *Mujaddid* who was sent to defend and promote Islam. Finally, I confirm that I am a white dove meaning that I am a white convert who is a member of the Lahori Branch of the Ahmadiyya Movement. The spirits have guided me to my appropriate destination in religion. Praise be to Allah.

(Return to contents)

L.A.M believes in the absolute finality of prophethood. Thus, no prophet, old or new, can now come. Reformers shall continue to appear to guide Muslims under Divine Command.

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore (UK)

Founders of the first Islamic Mission in the UK - established 1913 as the Woking Muslim Mission.

Dar-us-Salaam, 15 Stanley Avenue, Wembley, UK, HA0 4JQ

Centre: 020 8903 2689 · President: 01793 740670 · Secretary: 07737 240777 · Treasurer: 01932 348283

E-mail: info@aaiil.uk

Websites: www.aaiil.org/uk | www.ahmadiyya.org | www.virtualmosque.co.uk

Donations: <https://www.cafonline.org/charityprofile/aaiiluk>