

*“In the name of ALLAH, the BENEFICENT, the MERCIFUL”*

# NOOR-I-ISLAM

(INTERNATIONAL)

AHMADIYAH ANJUMAN ISH'AT-I-ISLAM (LAHORE), CANADA

AUGUST - 2003

## KAABA

### WHO BUILT IT?

#### ANGELS, ADAM, SHEEH, ABRAHAM OR ISHMAEL

There are various reports which mention different periods of time for building the Kaaba. One report suggests that angels built it before the creation of Adam. This is mentioned by Al-Qurtubi, a leading scholar. However, this report is described as “strange”. Another report mentions Adam as the first builder of the Kaaba. It is further mentioned that he used for its building stones brought from five different mountains, including Mount Hira in the area of Makkah, Mount Sinai, Mount Zita in Palestine, the mountain of Lebanon and the mountain known as Al-Judi, on which Noah’s Ark landed after the floods has subsided. This report is also described as “strange”. A third report suggests that the first builder of the Kaaba was Prophet Sheeh, who was one of the early children of Prophet Adam.

According to Imam ibn Katheer, a leading commentator on the Qur’an, all these reports and similar ones are based on reports contained in the scriptures of early religions. Our attitude to such reports should be that we neither accept them as correct nor reject them as false. We simply cannot base any view on them, unless they are corroborated by an authentic Hadith. This is indeed the appropriate attitude. We cannot state anything concerning the building of the Kaaba before Prophet Abraham as a matter of certainty. It is possible that the Kaaba was built sometime before Prophet Abraham and that it was raised before he was assigned the task of building it again, but we cannot say that with any degree of certainty. All we know for certain is that Abraham and his son

Ishmael built the Kaaba, because Allah tells us so in the Qur’an.

Let us try to see what Qur’an tells us in this respect. The first one quotes Abraham’s prayer: *“My Lord, I have settled some of my offspring in a valley without cultivation near to Your Inviolable House.”* (14:37). An argument can be made here that the Kaaba might have existed at the time Prophet Abraham brought his son Ishmael and his mother Hagar to the area of Makkah. I do not think that such inference is acceptable. To start with, there is nothing to suggest that this supplication by Prophet Abraham was made at the time when he brought his son and his wife to settle them there. The supplication begins with Abraham saying: *“My Lord, make this city secure and let me and my offspring steer away from the worship of false gods.”* The supplication suggests that it was made after Makkah had been built. We know that when Abraham took his son and wife there, there was nothing and no one in that valley. Only after the water of Zamzam had gushed forth and birds started to frequent the area that a passing caravan came to look for water. When they saw Zamzam, they settled there and built Makkah. Therefore, the whole supplication is said most probably later, after the Kaaba was built by Abraham and Ishmael.

The second verse to which we can refer, may be rendered in translation as follows: *“The first temple set for mankind was indeed the one at Bakkah: rich in blessing and source of guidance to all the worlds, full of clear*

*messages. It is the place where Abraham once stood,”* (3;96-97). Argument can be made that this indicates that the Kaaba must have been there at the time when the first man, Adam, landed on earth. I fail to see that indication. The Qur’anic verse states that this is the first temple, but it does not say anything about the time when it was built. It is perfectly possible that human beings continued to live on earth for centuries before a temple was set up for them to worship. This does not mean that they did not worship Allah to start with. On the contrary, Adam was prophet who taught his children how to worship Allah in a way which was acceptable to Him. This does not mean that they have mosques or temples for worship.

The third verse we can refer speaks of the time: *“When Abraham and Ishmael were raising the foundations of the House,”* (2;127). Do the usage of the phrase “raising the foundations of the House” indicates that the House has existed before, I am afraid it

does not. In Arabic we could say about the building: its foundations were laid down, or its foundations were raised. The first expression means putting the foundations in place after digging the ground for building the structure. The other expression refers to the pillars which are raised in order to carry the building. There is no reference to any foundation that existed beforehand.

Having said that, it is of no consequence to us in the fulfillment of the task assigned to us by Allah, namely, building human life on earth, that we know whether the Kaaba existed before Prophet Abraham and his task was only to renovate it or that he built it for the first time. We accept what Allah has taught us that **Abraham built the Kaaba with the help of his son, Ishmael. It is the first temple dedicated for the worship of Allah.**

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## “AQIQA” the right timing

A little confusion arises because in some African countries people consider the term “week” to signify eight days, i.e., from Saturday to Saturday, or Tuesday to Tuesday, with both included. In most countries, a week signifies seven days.

There are certain recommended things to observe at the birth of a baby. These include giving the baby a name, shaving his/her head and giving away to charity the equivalent of the weight of his hair in gold or silver, and sacrificing a sheep to celebrate his birth with neighbors and relatives. The other recommended practice is the circumcision of boys.

The timing of giving a child a name is said to be on the seventh day. However, there are other reports recommending naming a child on the third day of his birth. Moreover, we have a Hadith which quotes the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as saying: *“I have had a child born to me tonight whom I have called Ibraheem.”* That means that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave his son a name on the very night that he was born. All this suggests that it is possible to give a child his/her name as early as the first day of birth or later.

The shaving of the child’s head and giving to charity the equivalent of the weight of the hair in gold or silver is done prior to the sacrifice (Aqiqah). Both are recommended on the seventh day. If the sacrifice cannot be managed on that day, then according to scholars, it may be done on the fourteenth or the twenty-first day of the child’s birth. It can be done even later than that. It is also recommended to invite neighbors and relatives to a meal using the meat of the sacrificed animal. This is more preferable to sending the meat as a gift to them. The point is that the birth of a child, whether a son or a daughter, is a joyous occasion and it is preferable that the local community and relatives should share in the happiness of the child’s family. The sacrifice and inviting relatives is a Sunnah, not obligatory. If a person cannot afford the sacrifice, he commits no offense if he does not offer one. Should his circumstances improve after the child has grown, the time of the Sunnah would have lapsed. But if he decides to offer a sacrifice, there is no blame attached to him for that.

# Labour in Balance

(Labour Day is celebrated all over the world. Days and Dates are different in North America, Europe and Asia.)

**Riaz Ahmadali**  
**Paramaribo, Suriname**

Islam aims at creating a society in which peace and prosperity prevail among the citizens. This includes material progress, and for this proposes Allah has provided mankind with the natural resources of the earth. (Qur'an 31:20, 2:30).

## Asceticism

An ideal society includes a flourishing economy and for this reason Islam encourages labour. However, it is possible that people get so involved in labour that they lose sight of the spiritual side of life. As a result, many unlawful and irresponsible means (corruption, gambling, etc.) might be used to earn as much money as possible, without hesitation.

To avoid this situation, some groups within various religions (including Islam) went to the extreme and established the institution of Asceticism. The thought behind this is that people who seclude themselves from the temptations of the world, such as wealth and sex, will automatically achieve a pure, spiritual life.

This, however, is not the view of Islam. The Qur'an states that Allah has established times for working and for rest. (Qur'an 78:10-11) Man can only develop his moral self when he is exposed to the attractive and tempting things of life. He can make spiritual progress by making efforts to restrain these temptations. Thus, Islam aims at finding a middle course and for this reason the Qur'an teaches the believers to pray for the good, both of this world and of the Hereafter. (Qur'an 2:201) Asceticism is not an Islamic institution; therefore, the Qur'an mentions it as being "an invention of man". (Qur'an 57:27)

## Spending Property

Labour and the collection of wealth are not only necessary for the progress of society, but they play an important role for the individual, too. The Qur'an mentions property as being "a means to support". (Qur'an 4:5) This support is not only for one's household, but, in fact, for every poor and needy fellow-man. Islam does not consider property to be the possession of an individual –

even if he has earned it with his own hands – but property is considered as the possession of Allah, which has been entrusted to the people. For this reason, the Qur'an describes the true believer as one who "spends of what Allah has given him". (Qur'an 2:3) By spending his property on his fellow-men, he tries to lessen their sorrow, he develops a feeling of compassion for them, and he learns that wealth is not everything in life. This last point is very important, for, as was mentioned earlier, the desire for more and more wealth can drive one to unlawful and irresponsible means to achieve it.

## Always a place for Allah

Labour and wealth are only means to achieve certain goals and not the ultimate goals of life. One can earn as much money as one likes, there is no restriction on this, except that extravagance should be avoided (Qur'an 5:87-88), for even if the roofs and stairs of his house are from silver and gold, as the Qur'an states, the Hereafter will be only for the dutiful believers (Qur'an 43:33-35). The Qur'an describes these believers as "men whom neither merchandise nor sale beguileth from remembrance of Allah and constancy in prayer and paying to the poor their due" (Qur'an 24:37).

So, even if you are busy earning money, Allah desires that you always have a place for Him in your heart and that you spend part of your property on your poorer brethren. Only in this way can a flourishing, peaceful society exist, which consists of righteous and pious people who earn and spend their property in a sound way.

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**I am very much thankful to Riaz Ahmedali for his wonderful contribution to our newsletter and I hope that he will keep writing.**

**Please send your articles and comments to the editor at [jsmkw@hotmail.com](mailto:jsmkw@hotmail.com) or [msnoor53@yahoo.com](mailto:msnoor53@yahoo.com)**

**May Allah guide us all on right path.**

(Sadiq Noor, Regina – Canada)

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# Did You Know?

(a Question and Answer page for our Children)

**Q:** Can we offer our prayers in a church?  
(*Jawwad Ali, Canada*)

**A:** If you mean to pray in a Christian church, doing Islamic prayers, then that is permissible provided that you do not disturb people in the church. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) says that the whole earth has been made a place of worship for him and his followers.

When the Patriarch of Jerusalem invited Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) to pray in the church, Umar declined because he did not wish subsequent generations of Muslims to try to build a mosque in place of that church. He did not say to the Patriarch that prayer in a church was forbidden. He went outside and prayed. It certainly happened that Muslims in future generations did build a mosque in that particular place and called it Umar's mosque. So Umar's refusal to pray in the church was made out of respect and his keen desire that Christians are not put under any pressure to relinquish their church.

**Q:** I want to give my son the name of "WAQQAS", but I was advised against it, because it does not have any good meaning. I know that one of the companions (Sahaba) of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was Saad ibn Abu Waqqas and I feel that it is a good choice to give my son the name of a companion of the Prophet.  
(*name withheld, Australia*)

**A:** The Prophet's companion's name is Saad, not Waqqas. Saad's father, whose name was Malik, was given the nickname "Abu Waqqas" for a particular reason. The term "Waqqas" is derived from the source Waqas which means "a very short neck". Saad's father might have had a very short neck and he was given the nickname as a result. On the other hand, the verb derived from this source means to break up small pieces of wood to light fire. It might have been an assignment given to Saad's father when he was a boy to do this particular job in order to ensure that the family's fire was always on.

Whatever the reason, Saad's father did not become a Muslim and he was not a companion of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Therefore, to choose his nickname for the name of your son is not a particularly good idea. You should consider the very good alternative of calling your son Saad, after this particular companion of the Prophet who was one of the 10 given the very happy news of certain admittance to heaven. The Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) declared very late in his blessed life that he was pleased with 10 of his companions, and Saad was one of those 10. Saad (may Allah be pleased with him) lived a very long time after the Prophet has passed away, and he was the commander of the Muslim armies which fought the great battle of Al Qadissia in Iraq, which heralded the final collapse of the Persian Empire.

# Guidance from the Prophet

(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

## HOW TO TREAT YOUR NEIGHBORS

**Ibn Saleh  
Canada**

The companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) who were addressed directly by the message of Islam used to ask the Prophet about every detail. They realized that he was among them to provide guidance. The more they learned from him, the better they were able to understand the message of Islam and to act on it. They realized that if they did not ask the Prophet about something which they needed to know, there was no other authority to explain to them what they needed. Their attitude was of great benefit to all future generations of the Muslim nation. Without such an attitude on the part of the companions of the Prophet, we would have been left with no guidance on many details of different aspects of our religion. We should be grateful to them for this attitude which has ensured that we have the information we need in order to approach everything we want to do in such a way which earns us reward from Allah.

Some people may suggest that seeking guidance on every detail may restrict us to a certain pattern of behavior and deprive life of what they term as rich variety. This is a totally mistaken idea. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) provides us with certain principles and opens for us certain doors. It is we who can act on these principles and decide how to approach those doors and what to do after we have entered. His guidance tells us how not to slip. Moreover, much of what he teaches us is voluntary. It provides a certain approach to the implementation of a principle He has laid down. His recommendations provide the perfect approach. If we act on them, we achieve a very high standard. If we seek to implement that principle in a different way, we will soon find out that it lacks something or another in its details. It is for this reason that we should try always to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet. By doing so, we are not only certain of our footsteps, but we also earn reward from Allah.

Moreover, the companions of the Prophet were able to understand his guidance fully. When they heard a particular statement by the Prophet, they

knew to which area it applied. Let us consider the Hadith which quotes the Prophet as saying: **“Gabriel has continued to recommend me to be good to my neighbor until I thought that he would include him among my heirs.”** This sets a general principle. It is important to know which of our neighbors are entitled to our kindness. The practice of the Prophet’s companions provides very important guidance in this regard. We have, for example, a report that Abdullah ibn Amr (may Allah be pleased with him), a companion of the Prophet who was well-versed in Hadith had a sheep slaughtered. He repeatedly asked his servant: **“Have you sent some meat as a present to our Jewish neighbor?”** When he said that several times, he added: **“I have heard Allah’s messenger (peace be on him) saying; ‘Gabriel has repeatedly recommended me to be good to my neighbor until I have thought that he would include him among my heirs.’”**

Another version of this story quotes a person called Mujahid as saying that he and others used to visit Abdullah ibn Amr frequently. He had flocks of sheep and they used to drink warm fresh milk when they visited him. One day he gave them cold milk to drink, and he explained that he had to change the area where his sheep grazed. Mujahid mentions that Abdullah’s servant was skinning a sheep he had just slaughtered. Abdullah said to him: “When you have finished, take a portion to our Jewish neighbor.” He repeated that three times. One of his guests said to him: “May Allah guide you, you do mention this Jew frequently.” Abdullah then mentioned the Hadith he heard from the Prophet.

From this report we learn that the companions of the Prophet were certain that every neighbor, regardless of his religion, is entitled to our kindness. Everyone knows that the Jews have always been hostile to Muslims, throughout the history of Islam, although they enjoyed good and kindly treatment by Muslims, the like of which they rarely experienced elsewhere. We note in this report that Abdullah ibn Amr

considers his Jewish neighbor as entitled to his kind treatment as any other neighbor he may have had. When he is questioned about mentioning him too often, he does not reply that the Jew is a good neighbor or that he has been very hospitable to him, but his only reason for his kindness to that Jewish neighbor is that Hadith he heard from the Prophet. That tells us that the application of this Hadith in general, and that every neighbor is entitled to be treated well by his Muslim neighbor, regardless of his religion.

One may have many neighbors and if he is expected to give a present to each neighbor, he may find that very difficult. It is, therefore, important to know who is a neighbor and who of our neighbors should be given priority. In answer to the first question we have a Hadith which is classified as "mursal", reported on the authority of Al-Hassan Al-Basri. A mursal Hadith is one which its chain of reporting does not go as far back as the Prophet, but ends with someone like Al-Hassan, who belonged to the generation following that of the companions of the Prophet. He was asked: "**Who is a neighbor?**" he answered: "**Your neighbors are forty houses ahead of you and forty houses to your back, and forty houses to your right and forty houses to your left.**" When we consider that all these people are our neighbors, and we note how strongly the Prophet recommends us to be kind to our neighbors, we can realize what sort of community Islam creates in every locality. This, however, is bound to raise the second question of whether there is any degree of priority which makes certain neighbors more entitled to our kindness than others.

Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), the Prophet's wife, asked him: "**Messenger of Allah, I have two neighbors. To whom shall I direct my present?**" He answered: "**To the one whose door is closer to yours.**" (related by Al-Bukhari and

Abu Dawood). Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him), a companion of the Prophet, is quoted as saying: "**Do not begin with your distant neighbor before the one who is closer to you. Rather, give priority to your nearer neighbor ahead of your more distant one.**" (related by Al-Bukhari).

These two Hadiths are self explanatory. They hardly need any comment from me. But we note, however, that kindness to neighbors is taken for granted. There must be something which tells us what is the minimum degree of kindness to neighbors. This is explained in the following Hadith in which Abdullah ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) the Prophet's cousin, states that he heard him saying: "**A believer is not the one who eats his fill when his neighbor is hungry.**" This is a very significant statement by the Prophet. It speaks of mutual care by neighbors. They must know how their neighbor live, and if they are poor, then they must send them food. Indeed, this has been a tradition of Muslim societies which has survived for centuries. The Prophet even gives us a hint of how we can share our food with our neighbors without increasing our expenses a great deal. He tells his companion, Abu Tharr: "**If you cook something with gravy, increase the gravy and send some of it to your neighbors.**" (related by Muslim, Ahmad and Bukhari). The Prophet is telling us here not to think too little of anything which we can give to our neighbors. Even a person who is not rich can give his neighbors some food which may not be the best they can have, but would be more than useful in a neighborhood where poverty is common.

**May Almighty Allah guide us to the right path and grant us wisdom to understand and follow the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet Mohammed** (peace and blessings of Allah be on him).  
Ameen.

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