



The Light — U.K. edition

May 2008

The Lahore Ahmadiyya monthly magazine from U.K.

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*Published from London by: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at Islam Lahore (U.K.)
The first Islamic Mission in the U.K., established 1913 as the Woking Muslim Mission
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Assalamu alaikum: Our next meeting —

Date: **Sunday 4th May 2008**
Time: **3.00 p.m.**
Speaker: **Dr Zahid Aziz**
Topic: **Past hundred years of the
Ahmadiyya Movement**

Regular activities:

Darus-i Quran and Hadith:

Every Friday at 2.30 p.m.

Meetings of the Executive:

First Sunday of every month at 2.00 p.m.

Meeting of the Jama‘at:

First Sunday of every month at 3.00 p.m.

100 years later — his teachings still sorely needed

by Zahid Aziz

As we mark the passage of a complete century since the departure from this world of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, events and circumstances around us plainly demonstrate that the key points of his teachings — his view of what Islam is and its role in the world and what Muslims ought to do — are all confirmed as absolutely correct and vitally needed. Let us consider some of these points

Throughout his writings, Hazrat Mirza sahib sought to dissociate Islam from any connection whatsoever with the teaching of violence, bloodshed and coercion in the name of religion. The *Jihad* taught by Islam was, according to him, not at all the waging of a war of aggression and conquest as the common perception of Muslims and non-Muslims held it to be. It had never been so, even in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The permanent meaning of *jihad* was the struggle against one's own self to do right and refrain from wrong, and also the striving to take and present the message of Islam to others, leaving it up to them whether to accept or reject it. In the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, *jihad* included the

struggle waged by him and his followers to repel the armed attacks of their enemies so that Muslims could continue to practise and preach their religion in peace. Such a *jihad* was no longer required in these times. The army raised by Hazrat Mirza sahib was one of peace, as he wrote:

“Those who join my army, I order them to give up these ideas [of a *jihad* of war], and to purify their hearts, develop and nurture their feelings of mercy towards all human-kind and be helpers of those in distress and suffering. They should spread peace on the earth, as this is how their religion will spread.” (*Government Angrezi aur Jihad*, p. 15)

The evil fruits of acting upon the wrong concept of *jihad* are evident before the world now. Both non-Muslims and Muslims are suffering loss of innocent lives and injuries in the East and the West, and the world at large has developed a detestation and aversion towards the religion of Islam. Orthodox Muslim leaders are now starting to advocate exactly the same concept of *jihad* as that presented by Hazrat Mirza sahib. Moreover, Muslims in the West are pledging to be loyal citizens of the non-Muslim rule under which they live, just as he did. But he is denounced as *kafir* and traitor to Islam for his similar declarations. It is Divine recompense that anti-Ahmadiyya *ulama* in Britain are now declaring themselves and their followers to be loyal citizens of the British state.

Hazrat Mirza sahib foresaw the world coming together and becoming more akin to one country and community due to modern inventions which accelerate the speed of communications and travel to hitherto unimaginable levels. This point is made by him in his books from the early work *Barahin Ahmadiyya* to the last published in his lifetime, *Chashma-i Ma'rifat*. According to him, Islam shall have its greatest success in such an age of fast communications between distant countries. To continue the quotation given above:

“...For just as God has created the modern inventions of the present times for the physical needs of man, similarly He will meet the spiritual needs of mankind by causing the light and the message of truth to spread widely and far by means of these very same ways of communication and transport.”

Therefore he presented Islam in a way which shows that only this religion provides guidance for such a situation. This is why he emphasised that Islam requires its followers to acknowledge and

believe in the prophets and founding religious sages of each and every nation. This belief broadens a Muslim's sympathies, making him look upon human beings everywhere as equally the creation of God, and recipients of His guidance, mercy and favours. The strands of truth found in different nations and religions, he taught, meet at last in Islam as brought by the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

He also appealed to followers of other faiths, and in particular the Hindu religion, to return the Muslim acceptance of their religious scriptures and great figures by acknowledging that the Prophet Muhammad was at least a true person and to cease vituperations against him. The Muslims too, he offered in his *Message of Peace*, must avoid offending Hindu religious sentiments. To improve the relationship between Muslims and Hindus in India was critical to peace and harmony in the land. In his *Message of Peace* he appears to forewarn of the terrible communal catastrophe that befell in India some forty years later. He wrote that if either community, Muslim or Hindu, fails to follow the liberal teaching of God to show sympathy to its neighbours belonging to the other community, then the consequences will be that:

“...that nation shall soon be destroyed, and not only itself but will invite destruction upon its unborn generations as well.”

“Hindus and Muslims are two communities about whom it is impossible to imagine that either of them can, at any time, turn the other out of the country.”

This is just what happened at the partition of India in 1947. The Promised Messiah must have been informed by God of those inter-communal atrocities and the slaughter to come, and wrote this booklet to avert them. Even though the Hindus and a large part of the Muslims separated into two different countries, the mutual hatred, suspicion and prejudice then led to wars between these countries, as well as the ever-present threat of war. The principles laid down by Hazrat Mirza sahib in his *Message of Peace* can still be employed to lessen that hatred and replace war by peace.

Hazrat Mirza sahib proclaimed, on the basis of the real teachings of Islam, that everyone should be free to adopt whichever religion they wish. They should apply the test of reason and evidence to decide which creed is true. It is no good declaring your faith unless you believe it in your heart to be true. It is of no avail performing the formal duties of a religion unless these bring a change for the better in your character and behaviour that other people can recognise. More and

more thinking people now agree with this, and those religious leaders who display a false piety and a show of religiousness no longer impress people.

Hazrat Mirza sahib informed the modern world that science and human discoveries in the physical world cannot lead man to the discovery of God nor to his moral reform. That has been confirmed in the past 100 years, as modern man has been unable to contain his base desires and has used the enormous power of technology for the greatest destruction ever seen. He informed the Muslim world that the solution of its underlying problems lay neither in secular politics, nor in setting up a so-called Islamic state, nor in the observance of empty religious rituals. It lay in bringing about a true change within the heart of man by a living contact with God, which should make man give up his lower desires and regard himself accountable before God. The history of Muslim countries over the past 100 years bears testimony that all systems tried in Muslim countries, whether capitalism, socialism, communism, or so-called Islamic, have failed because the people operating them were corrupt and self-seeking. In fact, establishing an “Islamic” system has been used merely as a cover to gain political power and to manipulate the Muslim masses most cynically.

Vituperation and abusive writings against the Holy Prophet of Islam were at their notorious height and quite commonplace in the time of Hazrat Mirza sahib. He undertook to refute all the allegations, but he was opposed to Muslim calls for banning such publications. His view was as follows. Firstly, as such writings have already been circulated on a great scale it is impossible to suppress their contents. Secondly, if a book is banned we lose the right of replying to it. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the objections against Islam that are expressed scurrilously in these books still remain within people’s hearts and they cause doubts even in the hearts of Muslims. He also proposed ways in which religious discussions and controversies could be conducted, and objections raised against any religion, in a civil and polite way without recourse to abusive or offensive language. In the light of recent events that occur with regularity, we need hardly say that his approach to this issue is more than ever relevant and required today.

Hazrat Mirza sahib greatly deplored that a person should show prejudice and bigotry against another on the basis of religion. He required his own followers to extend their sympathy to all human beings, regardless of their religion, and,

when fulfilling their worldly contractual obligations, to regard everyone equally without distinction of belief or religion. In his time there was terrible religious bigotry all over the world, but in our time every decent person in the world rejects such narrow mindedness. When Dr Mirza Yaqub Baig qualified as a medical doctor, Hazrat Mirza sahib gave him this advice: “You are a physician of the body, not of the soul, so you must treat everyone equally, whether Muslim, Hindu or Christian. To you, the man who prays five times a day and the man who doesn’t believe in God should both be equal in your dealings”.

Lastly, there is the greatest gift of Hazrat Mirza sahib to the Muslim world, which is that he emphasised that the Holy Quran must be given precedence over all other authorities in Islam, such as Hadith reports and rulings of *fiqh*. This principle clears up several misinterpretations of Islamic teachings, particularly relating to subjects on which there is much criticism of Islam, such as *jihad*, freedom of religion, tolerance, punishments for apostasy and blasphemy, and the rights of women. Muslim scholars are increasingly accepting this principle. Applying it, we find that *jihad* is not at all the same as a battle with weapons, Islam allows war only in self-defence, it grants complete freedom of religion, and it prescribes no punishment whatsoever for apostasy or for committing so-called blasphemy.

One hundred years ago, understanding the Quran was generally considered by Muslims as unnecessary since its blessings were obtained, they believed, by reciting it in Arabic or by honouring its printed pages and copies as sacred. For understanding it, they believed it was sufficient simply to look up its ancient commentaries, which were the final authority on the Quran. No pondering or reflection on the Quran itself was required. Many *ulama* had declared it an unlawful act in Islam to translate the Quran into other languages. The followers of Hazrat Mirza sahib undertook this task a hundred years ago, and after the publication of Maulana Muhammad Ali’s English translation for the first time in 1917, the door seemed to have opened to further translations by others.

According to the latest books of Hazrat Mirza sahib, God has given the world **one Prophet (Muhammad) and one Book (the Quran) and one religion (Islam)** and they are acknowledged by accepting **one kalima:**

“God used to send a separate prophet and messenger for each country, and did not regard just one book as sufficient. ... Then the time came to remove national divisive-

ness and to bring everyone under one book. Then God sent only one Prophet [Muhammad] for the whole world that He may unite all nations on one faith...”¹

“If all the books of God the Most High are looked into closely, it will be found that all prophets have been teaching: believe God the Most High to be One without partner and along with it also believe in our *risalat* (messengership). It was for this reason that the summary of the teachings of Islam was taught to the entire *Umma* in these two sentences: *La ilaha ill-Allah, Muhammad-ur Rasul-ullah* (There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah).”²

News

This issue of *The Light* consists of only 4 pages since a 20-page special commemorative issue on the centenary of the death of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has been produced separately. The first article in this issue is taken from that special issue.

Mrs Atiyya Keeskamp

Mrs Atiyya Keeskamp from Holland will be visiting the U.K. from 1st May to 5th May. Members will remember her from the late 1970s and early 1980s when she lived in the U.K. Before accepting Islam at the hand of our imam Dr Nazir-ul-Islam her name was Donna Lockyer, and she took the name Atiyya on accepting Islam. Upon marriage to the late Yahya Keeskamp she moved to Holland. Yahya Keeskamp, that most remarkable Dutch convert to Islam and staunch member of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement, died less than a year ago in June 2007. We will be able to meet her at the monthly meeting on 4th May.

Death of Mian Farooq A. Shaikh

We have received the following brief obituary compiled by the venerable **Fakhr-ud-Din Ahmad sahib** in Rawalpindi, Pakistan:

Mian Farooq A. Shaikh, founder-proprietor of Colony Textile and Jute Mills of Pakistan, Allied bank Ltd. and Mustahkam Cements industry of Pakistan, breathed his last in Rawalpindi on the eve of 21st March 2008, *Eid Milad-un-nabi*. “We belong to Allah and to Him do we return”. He was the illustrious son of Al-hajj Mian Muhammad

Ismail of Chinote (Punjab), a devoted follower of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. He joined the movement along with his brothers Al-hajj Mian Maula Bakhsh and Al-hajj Mian Muhammad — primer mill owners of Punjab.

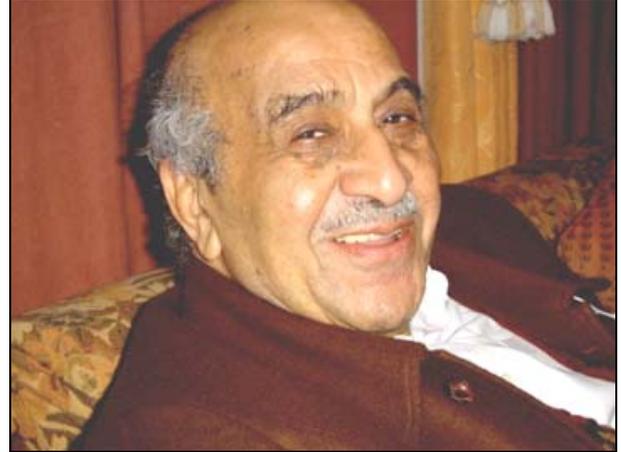


Photo of Mian Farooq A. Shaikh

Mian Farooq shifted his business from Multan to Rawalpindi half a century ago. He motivated the local Anjuman to have a mosque of their own in Rawalpindi. He contributed liberally and devoted his attention to the completion of the project. The mosque was opened by the Hazrat Maulana Sadr-ud-Din, President and Amir of the Anjuman.

The late Mian sahib was very particular about the offering of Friday prayers. He also arranged for offering *Tarawih* prayers during the fasting month. He always kept the Holy Quran and other religious literature with him for study while traveling in and out of Pakistan. His behaviour reminds us of the verse in Holy Quran: “O you who believe, let not your wealth nor your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah” (63:9).

He served the Central Anjuman as General Secretary and an active and zealous member of the council of trustees. He had the privilege of accompanying Hazrat Amir Maulana Sadr-ud-Din during the performance of Hajj and visits to the Jamaats in the western Hemisphere. This tour lasted for a couple of months.

The late Mian sahib contributed for the welfare and uplift of poor families, spread of education and providing jobs to the unemployed youth. May Allah bless Mian Farooq and shower his blessings and favors on the departed soul, *Amen*.

Condolences may be sent to the daughter of the deceased, Mrs Sharmeen Azam Jamil, by e-mail to the address sharmeenj@hotmail.com or by phone to 0092 51 210-7125 (Pakistan).

1. *Chashma-i Ma'rifat*, published May 1908, p. 136.

2. *Haqiqat-ul-Wahy*, published May 1907, p. 111.