

© A Lahore Ahmadiyya Publication

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

The HOPE Bulletin

MOTTO ISLAM: I SHALL LOVE ALL MANKIND



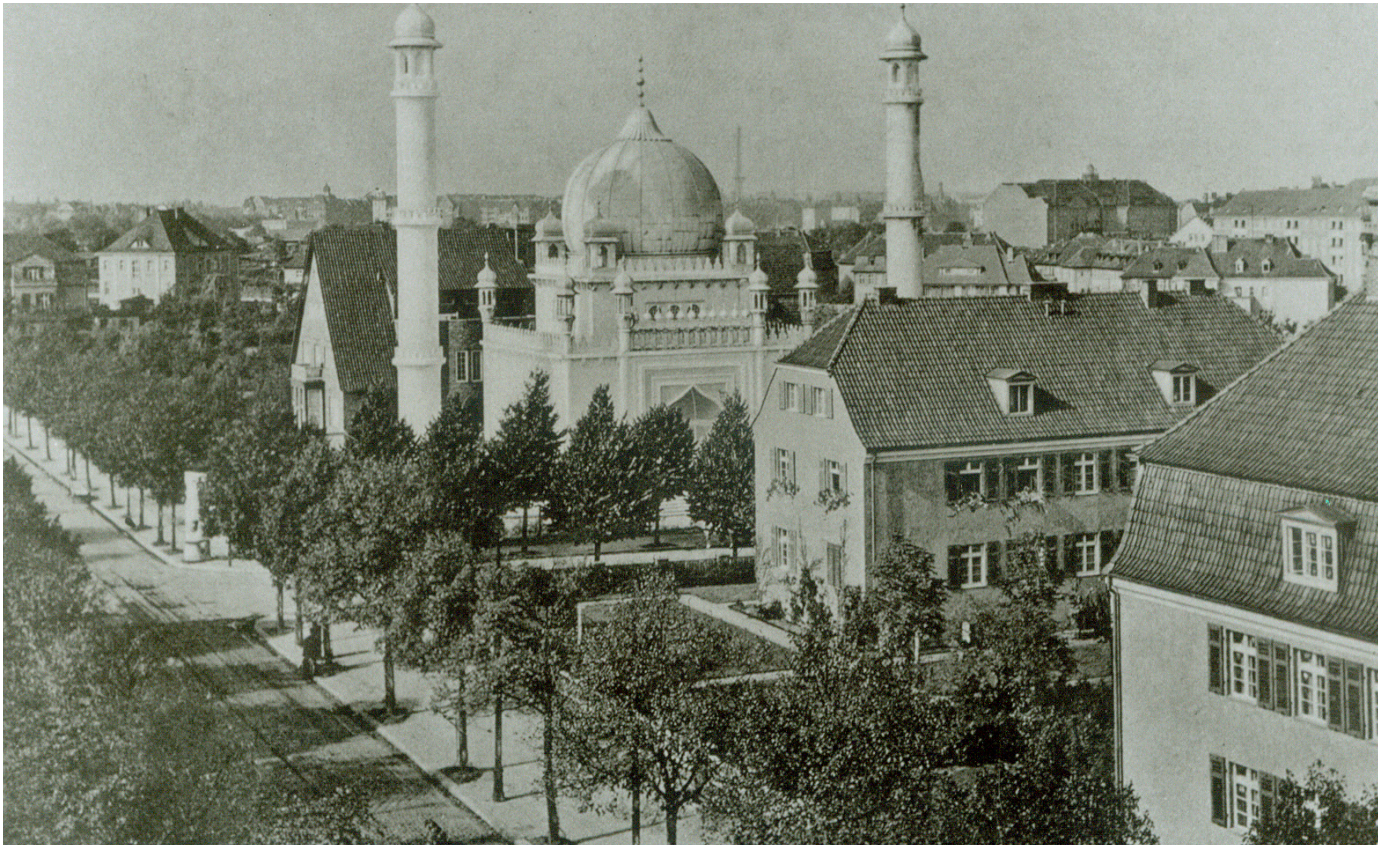
Worldwide Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement (AAHL)
A California Jama'at Project. Approved by Central Anjuman, Lahore.

JANUARY 2022

Editor: Nasir Ahmad B.A. LL.B.

Vol. No. 16, Issue Nos. 01

IN MEMORY OF JALAL-UD-DIN AKBAR IBN-I ABDULLAH, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA



An Aerial view of the Berlin Mosque before World War II

CONTENTS	Page
AERIAL VIEW OF BERLIN MOSQUE BEFORE WORLD WAR-II <i>Complete renovation will be done by the end of April 2022.</i>	1
FRIDAY KHUTBAH IN ENGLISH ON LINE <i>Dr. Zahid Aziz</i>	2
ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF “MUJADDID-I AZAM” VOL.2 PUBLISHED ON LINE <i>Akram Ahmad, USA</i>	3
WORLD RELIGION DAY <i>Riaz Ahmadali, Suriname</i>	9
CAUSES OF ISLAMOPHOBIA <i>Dr. Zahid Aziz</i>	15

Important Announcement

WATCH AND LISTEN ONLINE

Friday Khutba in English, and Prayers at 1.00 p.m. (UK time)

By DR ZAHID AZIZ
President, UK Lahore Ahmadiyya Community

The link to this YouTube broadcast is:
<https://youtu.be/9FQwBmlZeaU>

You can also use the following permanent YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWYoLGMhY7et1SIFJyv9jvw/live>

The link to the radio broadcast is:

<https://mixlr.com/lahore-ahmadiyya-uk>

You can find the links to this *khutba* and to previous *khutbas* at our website: www.ilam.uk

* * *

The Long-awaited Translation of the Second Volume of

THE LONG AWAITED TRANSLATION OF SECOND VOLUME OF

“THE GREAT REFORMER OF THE PRESENT TIMES”

“MUJADDID- I AZAM” BY DR. BASHARAT AHMAD

IS OUT ON LINE AT [HTTPS://THE-GREAT-REFORMER.COM/](https://the-great-reformer.com/)

By Akram Ahmad, MS. (USA)

“Let me just add that I feel like the curator who stands intently at the threshold of a museum, eager to usher in the visitors who seek to explore the treasures that await them inside; the difference being that whereas those visitors can merely peer at the embalmed museum pieces through glass cases, you may garner for yourself the enduring spiritual treasures — particularly those in the form of excerpts from *Hazrat Mirza Sahib’s* written works — that are presented in the pages of this biography. I hope that you will derive as much pleasure and inspiration from reading this volume as I did in translating it.”

It is my singular honour to present to you the English translation of the second volume of a biographical work by Dr. Basharat Ahmad Sahib. This is a biography of **Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib**, an eminently pious and religious leader who was born in the town of Qadian in the Indian Subcontinent.

His life spans the years 1835-1908. God appointed *Hazrat Mirza Sahib* as the **Mujaddid** (Reformer) of the fourteenth century *Hijrah* (according to the Islamic calendar) to bring about a reformation of Islam, and as the **Promised Messiah** and **Mahdi** (rightly-guided one) who was to spread Islam in the world by argument and reasoning, and not by the sword.

Well, instead of offering a few obligatory, non-descript remarks, I thought I’d try to make it interesting and briefly provide some structured background into this remarkable biography. I will also try to convey an overview of some of its essential features and qualities, as well as share some personal perspectives on the process of translating the second volume that you now hold in your hands. This biography — titled *The Great Reformer* — is the work of the late Dr. Basharat Ahmad.

Brief introduction of Dr. Basharat Ahmad

The biographer was a contemporaneous disciple of *Hazrat Mirza Sahib*; he took the religious pledge at the hands of *Hazrat Mirza Sahib*, and subsequently became and

remained a devoted disciple. He had tremendous love for the Holy Quran, and he used to inspire other people with this love by teaching the Holy Quran. He had learned to love and understand the Holy Quran from *Hazrat Mirza Sahib*.

It greatly pained Dr. Basharat Ahmad to see that *Hazrat Mirza Sahib* and his views were grossly misrepresented by opponents and detractors. So he resolved to do his best to set right this state of affairs by composing a truly accurate and comprehensive biography of his spiritual and religious mentor, *Hazrat Mirza Sahib*. However, Dr. Basharat Ahmad had grown old and physically infirm. Yet, despite the odds unmistakably stacked against him, he put forth a prodigious effort — he composed this sizeable and landmark biography that contains a total of one thousand, seven hundred and fifty-one pages in the Urdu language.

Once he had completed the third and final volume, Allah summoned Dr. Basharat Ahmad to Himself, to give this devoted servant of Islam a great reward; he passed away during that same year. For a more detailed description of the preceding observations, I refer you to the preface provided by *Maulana Muhammad Ali Sahib* in this biography's third volume. The title of this biography, ***The Great Reformer***, is the literal translation of the corresponding title in the Urdu language, ***Mujaddid-i Azam***.

Contents of *The Great Reformer*

As you may have inferred from the preceding remark, *The Great Reformer* was written in the Urdu language. It is comprised of three volumes. For your interest, I have compiled the following facts by consulting the original biographical work in the Urdu language:

- The **first volume** contains 736 pages, and covers *Hazrat Mirza Sahib's* life from his birth to the year 1900. Each chapter of this volume generally corresponds to a major event in his life, and the chapters are arranged in chronological order.
- The **second volume** contains 655 pages, and covers *Hazrat Mirza Sahib's* life from the year 1900 to the end of his life. Like the first volume, each chapter of this volume roughly corresponds to a major event in his life. In addition, out of the approximately eighty chapters in this volume, ten are devoted to providing you with some glimpses and insight into the moral qualities of *Hazrat Mirza Sahib*.
- The **third volume** contains 360 pages. This volume presents a detailed summary and review of the achievements and religious services rendered by *Hazrat Mirza Sahib* over the span of his life.

Some of the salient features

Having provided you with an overview of this biographical work, *The Great Reformer*, I'll now turn to a brief discussion of **some of its salient features**:

- One remark that I have heard from several people who have read *The Great Reformer* is that it transports one to the era of *Hazrat Mirza Sahib*. In part, this trend is no doubt tied to the fact that the biographer (Dr. Basharat Ahmad) was a close disciple of *Hazrat Mirza Sahib*. So this biography is **a first-hand account of the life and times of Hazrat Mirza Sahib**.
- Another quality of the biography is that it is **highly readable and accessible**. Far from being a dry recitation of facts, *The Great Reformer* was written in a very engaging and conversational style. Like my colleague translators of the first and third volumes, I've tried hard to capture this readable style in the translation process. You will be the best judge to determine if we, the translators, have succeeded in achieving this goal. For those with an interest in the field of translation, let me briefly mention that, in translating from Urdu (my native language) to English (my secondary language), I've found the English language sufficiently rich in expression so that I can scarcely recall any instance where I felt the need for inventing neologisms.
- Going hand in hand with the quality of readability is the feature of *The Great Reformer* that it is **a very powerful and compelling narrative**. And a sentiment that is shared by many readers of *The Great Reformer* is that learning about the life and the religious services rendered by *Hazrat Mirza Sahib*, from the pages of this biography, led them to embrace the ideals of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam.
- Another feature of *The Great Reformer* is that, in addition to being **packed with anecdotes** from the life of *Hazrat Mirza Sahib*, it **contains an abundance of relevant excerpts from scores of his religious works**. This will give you an excellent flavour of *Hazrat Mirza Sahib's* various religious works in a consolidated form.
- Yet another quality of *The Great Reformer* is that **exaggerations are absent from this biographical work**. In other words, the entire narrative is founded in historical facts, and thus there is no revisionism that is sometimes unfortunately attendant on works of history and biography. The very great religious saint and reformer that *Hazrat Mirza Sahib* undoubtedly was, there isn't any needless glorification in this biography. Instead, one of the goals of *The Great Reformer* is to provide you with glimpses into his life, set amid the backdrop of historical events.

Acknowledgement

Finally, I'd like to share **some personal perspectives** on the experience of translating this work into English:

- In 1993, my brother-in-law, Dr. Hamid Rahman, drew my attention to the fact that the second volume of *The Great Reformer* needed to be translated into English. As such, I am extremely grateful to him. No doubt cognizant of the fact that this would be **a fairly sizeable undertaking**, he reminded me of the adage which affirms that "the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." So I began the work of

translating the second volume of *The Great Reformer* back in the year 1993. (I am also deeply grateful to both Dr. Hamid Rahman and Mrs. Naseera Ahmed for subsequently meticulously reviewing and updating the second volume in its entirety to ensure accuracy and to make it as error-free as is humanly possible.)

- Since the time when I embarked upon this task, I received encouragement from many people. As time permitted, I continued to chip away at this task during my free hours. Allah granted me the strength throughout this endeavour, enabling me to complete this translation in December of the year 2000. Since December of 2000, I have reviewed, proofread, and tried to refine the presentation. I can candidly tell you that this work is easily **the most creative endeavour that I have ever undertaken in my life**. As much an exercise in creativity, this work turned out to be — particularly during the concluding fifteen months or so of this project when I was revising the translation manuscript — an exercise in managing the logistics of propagating a modicum (I hope!) of coherence and consistency throughout the breadth of the several hundred pages in this volume.
- I wish to add here the observation that the Ahmadi Muslim children who are growing up in the Western hemisphere will most likely be able to read only those books that are written in the English language. As such, these English translations of the volumes that comprise *The Great Reformer* will, *In-sha-Allah* (God-willing), serve as valuable reading material for the children of our denominational community. The next generation of Ahmadis will thereby be able to find **accurate information regarding Hazrat Mirza Sahib**, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, as well as learn about **the philosophy and true objectives of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam**.
- To state a truism, English is the most widely used language in the entire world. As such, it is my earnest wish that many in the world will hopefully get the chance to read the English translation of *Hazrat Mirza Sahib's* biography, and perhaps thereby be **attracted to the message that Hazrat Mirza Sahib continued to propagate Islam and nothing but Islam till the last breath of his life**. His message, of course, being the true teachings of Islam as practiced by his master, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).
- You might be aware of the fact that, over the years, the teachings and life events of *Hazrat Mirza Sahib* have been egregiously misconstrued and then foisted on the unaware public by the detractors and opponents of *Hazrat Mirza Sahib*. Since this biography presents the life of *Hazrat Mirza Sahib* as well as his religious works in a nutshell, it can be reasonably hoped that this biography will, *In-sha-Allah*, **contribute towards clearing up the false charges and allegations that have been levelled against him**.

Having shared with you some insights and personal perspectives on the translation experience, I will furnish a few comments below that will help you in comprehending this biography:

- In the interest of brevity, I have variously used the words **Ahmadiyya Organization**, or simply **Organization**, in the translation. Wherever you see either of these aforementioned phrases, you should understand that the ***Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam*** (the Ahmadiyya Organization for the Propagation of Islam) is signified. I'll add that the ***Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam Lahore*** (the Ahmadiyya Organization for the Propagation of Islam, based in the city of Lahore) is the extant organization founded by one of *Hazrat* Mirza Sahib's closest disciples, *Maulana* Muhammad Ali Sahib. This missionary organization was established in the year 1914, subsequent to the demise of *Maulana* Nur-ud-Din Sahib, who had served as the next president of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam in Qadian (located in the Indian Subcontinent) after *Hazrat* Mirza Sahib. I refer you to *Maulana* Muhammad Ali's book titled *The Split in the Ahmadiyya Movement* for further details regarding the events that led to the formation of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam Lahore.
- Also in the spirit of conciseness, I have generally omitted the use of the word ***Sahib*** (this Arabic word signifies a polite form of address). Lest there be any doubt regarding its usage in this biography, I hasten to point out that wherever the name of any person is mentioned in the Urdu language version of this biography, the biographer has generally appended to that name the title of *Sahib*.
- To the fullest extent possible, and for your benefit, I've tried to add **citations with a uniform notation (chapter number, verse number)** in locations where the biographer has referred to a verse(s) from the Holy Quran. As an example, (56:79) refers to the seventy-ninth verse in the fifty-sixth Quranic chapter. My motivation in adding these Quranic references is to enable you to further explore the themes that are mentioned in the biography.
- Finally, throughout this volume, I have tried to italicize all **words and phrases that might be unknown** to readers who are familiar with English alone. And, through **parenthetical notes**, I have provided brief descriptions and the import of such words and phrases as they are variously encountered in this volume. Examples of these are: *ijtihad*, *ummah*, *kalimah*, *zill*, *burooz*, *Fajr*, *Zuhr*, *istikhara*, etc.

The overwhelming emotion that I feel at this juncture is that of heartfelt gratitude to Allah for granting me the strength to render this work. I'll unequivocally state that this work could simply never have been accomplished without His assistance. Also, while physical relationship by itself naturally doesn't confer any merit on me, I wish to state for the historical record that the biographer, Dr. Basharat Ahmad, was my great-grandfather. In conclusion, and on a personal note, I profess that this translation represents the labour of my love — while I certainly recognize that this is a wholly

modest contribution to religious literature, it nonetheless represents the labour of my love. As such, **I wish to dedicate it to the following individuals:**

- To the beloved memory of Dr. Saeed Ahmad Sahib, the late President of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam Lahore. He was quite simply the most extraordinary, humble, and pious servant of Islam that I have ever known in my life. Thinking of him, it never ceases to amaze me that a single person can touch the lives of so many people in such an uplifting and enriching manner.
- To the fond memory of Mr. Naseer Ahmad Faruqui Sahib, the late Vice President of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam Lahore. Another dedicated servant of Islam who earnestly loved the Holy Quran, he is the author of *Ahmadiyyat in the Service of Islam*, a splendid book that is one of my favourites.
- To the memory of my late father, Mr. Mansur Ahmad Sahib. More than any other individual, my dear father continued to motivate me at every step of the process of rendering this biography into English.
- To my mother, Mrs. Khadija Begum. Along with my father, my dear mother instilled in me the love of books and learning.
- To my wife, Mrs. Zainib Ahmad, my dear friend and fellow translator.

I also wish to acknowledge the valuable help that I received from Qazi Abdul Ahad Sahib; he furnished translations of Persian phrases and verses of poetry, Quranic and *hadith* references, as well as the translations of the same when only the Arabic text was to be found in the biography. My father, Mr. Mansur Ahmad, provided invaluable assistance in that he diligently reviewed the entire translation manuscript and supplied first-class feedback! I also wish to thank Aunty Safia Saeed for providing me with the English translations of numerous Persian verses of poetry that appear in this work. I hasten to underscore the fact, though, that all errors of commission and omission are solely my responsibility.

A parting thought

Here is a parting thought: *Hazrat* Mirza Sahib is the person who received the following lofty commendations from Holy Prophet Muhammad:

- “If any of you meets him, he should say *Assalamo alaikum* from me to him” (*Kanz-al-Ummāl*, vol. 7, p. 203, *hadith* no. 2143).
- “So when you see him, take his pledge, even if you have to go on your knees in snow” (*Kanz-al-Ummāl*, vol. 7, p. 186, *hadith* no. 1934).

Even though *Hazrat* Mirza Sahib fulfils all the prophecies of the Holy Quran and Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) regarding his person, this luminary of the spiritual firmament wasn't widely accepted by Muslims. With this

state of affairs in mind, *Hazrat Mirza Sahib* himself echoed these **poignant thoughts in the following couplet:**

Today, my people have not recognized my status;
A day shall come when they will remember, in tears, the joyful time (for Islam) that came with me.

And I wholeheartedly look forward to the arrival of the day when the Muslims of the world and the general public will embrace *Hazrat Mirza Sahib's* truthfulness and his irreproachable message to revitalize Islam.

Let me just add that I feel like the curator who stands intently at the threshold of a museum, eager to usher in the visitors who seek to explore the treasures that await them inside; the difference being that whereas those visitors can merely peer at the embalmed museum pieces through glass cases, you may garner for yourself the enduring spiritual treasures — particularly those in the form of excerpts from *Hazrat Mirza Sahib's* written works — that are presented in the pages of this biography. I hope that you will derive as much pleasure and inspiration from reading this volume as I did in translating it.

July 4, 2013

* * *

WORLD RELIGION DAY

Riaz Ahmadali, Suriname.

(TEXT OF FRIDAY *KHUTBAH* DELIVERED AT THE CENTRAL AHMADIYYA MOSQUE, SURINAME ON FEBRUARY 14, 2022)

“An initiative of interfaith dialogue was taken much earlier than those above, in the early twentieth century, by *Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad*, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, an organisation of which the Surinaamse Islamitische Vereniging (SIV) is a member as well.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad believed that Muslims could establish peaceful relations with the followers of other religions, such as the adherents of the Hindu religion in India where he resided, by accepting the divine origin of that religion, and he suggested that

the followers of the other religions would in turn respond by showing respect for the Holy Prophet Muhammad. He strongly urged the holding of interfaith conferences where, in his words, 'the representative of each faith would demonstrate the virtues and merits of his own religion, rather than find fault with others.' The first such conference of its kind was organized in Lahore under the patronage of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, and his contribution was later published in the form of a book, *Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*."

Historical background of present World Religion Day

World Religion Day is celebrated every January on the third Sunday of the month. In 2022, that will be on January 16. Its purpose is to promote understanding and peace among all religions and to encourage people to learn about other religions and their followers.

World Religion Day was instituted in 1950 by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States as a way to encourage good understanding between the various religions so that we can overcome differences. For centuries, different religions have fought each other and ignored their common values, and unfortunately, they still do. I only have to say Middle East or Kashmir, or Babri Masjid in India, and you will know what I mean. The aim of World Religion Day is therefore to work towards a peaceful understanding between religions.

In Suriname there have also been initiatives to bring various religions together. For example, Suriname has an Interreligious Council (IRIS), founded in 1989, in which Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Baha'i organizations work together. The IRIS, which the S.I.V. is also part of, encourages religious tolerance in society, and there is mutual agreement that persons of one religion do not express negative things about another religion through the media.

Around 1998, the Interreligious Health Commission was established in Suriname with the aim of promoting the relationship between religion and health; giving health advice from religion. This committee is no longer active, however.

And around 1986, the World Religion Day Foundation was established in Suriname with the aim of commemorating this day annually. The first World Day of Religion in Suriname was commemorated in 1987.

Interfaith initiatives in other countries include building an Abrahamic Family House in Abu Dhabi. This will hold three buildings in one location: a synagogue, a church, and a mosque. The name was chosen because all three of these religions descend from Abraham. This building complex is expected to be opened this year (2022).

Another initiative is in Berlin, the capital of Germany, of a building consisting of three prayer rooms — one each for Jews, Christians and Muslims — and next to it a central hall. The foundation stone was laid in June 2021 and the building will bear the name House of One. It is expected to become the world's first multi-faith place of worship (the Abu Dhabi example cited above involves three different places of worship in a central location).

So we see that if there is any will to bring about religious co-operation, it is certainly possible and it can result in a much more beautiful and peaceful world.

Initiative of interfaith dialogue taken by the Holy Founder

An initiative of interfaith dialogue was taken much earlier than those above, in the early twentieth century, by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, an organisation which the Surinaamse Islamitische Vereniging (SIV) is a member as well.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad believed that Muslims could establish peaceful relations with the followers of other religions, such as the adherents of the Hindu religion in India where he resided, by accepting the divine origin of that religion, and he suggested that the followers of the other religions would in turn respond by showing respect for the Holy Prophet Muhammad. He strongly urged the holding of interfaith conferences where, in his words, the representative of each faith would demonstrate the virtues and merits of his own religion, rather than find fault with others.

The Quran and other religions

Let's see what the Holy Quran — the foundation of Islam — teaches us about dealing with other religions.

We read in 2:62 that the Quran grants the right to Paradise to followers of other religions also:

“Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good, they have their reward with their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.”

Furthermore, the Muslims are commanded to believe in all the Prophets of Allah (2:136):

“Say: We believe in Allah and (in) what has been revealed to us, and (in) what was revealed to Abraham, and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and (in) what was given to Moses and Jesus, and (in) what was given

to the prophets from their Lord; we make no distinction between any of them and to Him we submit.”

Also, the Quran states that all nations have had acts of worship from Allah (22:34):

“And for every nation We appointed acts of devotion.”

The Quran goes so far as to allow dissenters to act according to their own (pure, original) revelations:

“Say: O People of the Book, you follow no good till you observe the Torah and the Gospel and what is revealed to you from your Lord” (5:68; see also 5:47).

Furthermore, the Quran exhorts Muslims to protect not only their own places of worship, but also places of worship of other religions (22:40):

“And if Allah did not repel some people by others, surely cloisters and churches and synagogues, and mosques in which Allah’s name is much remembered, would have been pulled down.”

Thus, the Quran recognizes all these places of worship as places in which God’s name is honoured.

The Quran speaks mainly of Jews and Christians as being ‘Followers of the Book,’ but this includes all other peoples who had a revealed scripture. It states that every nation has had a messenger (35:24):

“And there is not a people but a warner has gone among them.”

And, as Maulana Muhammad Ali writes in his book, *The Religion of Islam*, Christians, Jews, Parsis, Buddhists and Hindus can all be counted as Followers of the Book, according to this verse.

The Quran states in 5:48 that Allah could have made all people one nation, but that He wants to test us with the differences He has given us. The purpose of this condition is apparent from Quran 49:13:

“O mankind, surely We have created you from a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other.”

Suppose we all looked exactly the same ... as identical twins, for example. How could we distinguish between each other? See, then, the benefit of differences.

Unfortunately, we often put too much emphasis on these differences. The Quran warns us about this in 2:113:

“And the Jews say, The Christians follow nothing (good), and the Christians say, The Jews follow nothing (good), while they recite the (same) Book. Even thus say those who have no knowledge.”

Similarly, all Muslims have the same Quran, and yet you have certain groups that declare others *kafir* (infidels). We read the Quran, but we do not learn from it.

The Quran goes so far as to provoke death to followers of such ideas:

“Say: If the abode of the Hereafter with Allah is specially for you to the exclusion of the (other) people, then invoke death if you are truthful” (2:94; see also 62:6).

Unfortunate incident occurred in Suriname

An event occurred around the 1960s or so, when there was a great discussion between scholars of two Muslim groups in Suriname. They had rented a theatre for this, and it was packed. In the fierce heated discussions, of course, they couldn't figure out who was right. Then, according to the verse I just read, they invoked death on the one who was wrong. And, indeed, very shortly afterwards someone did die — a lady who was the wife of one who had taken part in the discussion and she was also the sister of the chairman of the other group. What message could Allah have wanted to send with this? Could it be: Both of you are now affected, so neither of you was right? There is absolutely no point in having such religious discussions and highlighting the differences.

So, Allah's order is not that we just hang out with our own people and ignore the rest of the world's population. The test is precisely that we try to get to know one another and learn from one another, and above all continue to respect each other. Just as we appreciate music and food from different cultures, why can't we do that with the religions?

That is also one of the goals of World Religion Day — to get to know one another's religion better. And we see that the Quran states, as already discussed, that we must respect all religions and that there is some element of truth in all of them.

Finally, some prayers from world religions.

Islam: The *Fatihah*

Source: Opening Chapter of the Quran

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds,
The Beneficent, the Merciful.
Master of the day of Recompense.
You do we serve and You do we beseech for help.
Guide us on the right path,
The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favours,
Not those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor those who go astray.

Christianity: The Lord's Prayer

Source: Matthew, Chapter 6

Our Father which art in heaven!
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

About the forgiveness mentioned here, we read in the Quran:

“And pardon and overlook. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you?” (24:22)

Hinduism: The *Gayatri Mantra*

Source: The Vedas

*Aum Bhur bhuvah Swaha Tatsavitur varenyam, Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi,
Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayaat.*

Translation:

O God (Bhagwan), He Who resides within each one in the form of the breath of life, Destroyer of pain, ignorance and bliss. The Luminous, worthy of worship and pure. Oh God (Bhagwan),

may we meditate on You. Oh God (Bhagwan), we ask You to enlighten our intellect.

So much for this *khutbah* about World Religion Day. May this day be an inspiration to all of us to act with respect for one another, and in particular one another's religious beliefs.

* * *

CAUSES OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

(Speech delivered at the Annual Gathering of Ahmadiyya Anjuman Lahore, on Line on 24 December 2021)

by Dr Zahid Aziz

"They desire to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light, though the disbelievers may be averse. He it is Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the Religion of Truth that He may make it prevail over all religions, though those who set up partners (with Allah) are averse" (The Holy Quran, 61:8-9).

Unfortunate act of terrorism in the UK

After I was requested to deliver a talk on the subject of the causes of Islamophobia for the annual Lahore Ahmadiyya gathering of December 2021, two days later, on 15 October, I was giving a Friday *khutba* in the UK in the month of *Rabi-ul-Awwal* on the topic that the Holy Prophet Muhammad was "a mercy to the nations." I did not know then that, only a few minutes earlier, a Muslim in England had stabbed a member of the UK Parliament, Mr David Amess, several times with a knife. The Member of Parliament died two hours later. The killer remained on the scene and it was soon proved that this was an act of terrorism by a Muslim. This atrocity, and similar incidents, are among the causes of Islamophobia (fear of Islam or hatred of Islam) in the West. But Islamophobia did not begin because of such events. These events just continue and re-inforce Islamophobia and keep it going.

Background of term “Islamophobia”

The term ‘Islamophobia’ was only coined in the last twenty years, but this phenomenon has existed for many centuries. At the very beginning of Islam, Muslims conquered countries populated largely by Christians, such as Syria, Palestine, the present-day Israel, Egypt, etc. The rulers of those countries were Christian but they cruelly oppressed and maltreated their own Christian populations because Christians were divided into many sects which were one another’s bitter enemies. When Muslims conquered those countries, they established justice there, in accordance with the teachings of Islam. They treated the Christians so well that those Christians started to prefer living under Muslim rule than the rule by their own co-religionists.¹

However, the Christians in Europe, in countries such as England, France, Italy, etc., which were ruled and largely populated by Christians, were most unhappy to see that in the Middle East, where their sacred places were located, Christians had been defeated and were living under Muslim rule. This was the beginning of Islamophobia in the West. They knew little about Islam, and they constructed an image of Islam based on their hatred, ignorance and prejudice towards Islam. In our time, around the year 1960, an English historian, Norman Daniel, published a book entitled *Islam and the West, The Making of an Image*. In it, he has shown after much research and analysis that the false picture of Islam which was presented in Western writings of 700 or 800 years ago still has some reflection in modern Western literature on Islam.² Another Western scholar of Islam of our times, Francis Robinson, compiled a book entitled *Atlas of the Islamic World since 1500*, published around the year 1980. He expresses surprise that although Christianity has lost its hold in the West, and Western countries have become non-religious or secular, but still the same objections against Islam, which used to be spread by bigoted Christian writers of the past, have been adopted by the non-religious, secular Western writers and are today put forward in new ways.³

1 In *The Preaching of Islam*, Sir T.W. Arnold writes: “When the Muslim army reached the valley of the Jordan and Abu Ubaidah pitched his camp at Fihl, the Christian inhabitants wrote to the Arabs saying: ‘O Muslims, we prefer you to the Byzantines, though they are of our own faith, because you keep better faith with us and are more merciful to us and refrain from doing us injustice and your rule over us is better than theirs, for they have robbed us of our goods and our homes’ ” (p. 55, 1913 edition).

2 Daniel, in his Foreword, mentions the “prejudices which still, after so many centuries, affect European attitudes; and which do so, despite the great contemporary improvement in understanding...” (p. v). He begins his Introduction as follows: “... the European West has long had its own characteristic view [of Islam], which was formed in the two centuries or so after 1100, and which has been modified only slowly since. ... and even when, in relatively modern times, some authors have self-consciously tried to emancipate themselves from Christian attitudes, they have not generally been as successful as they thought themselves” (p. 1).

At the close of his book he gives the following advice to Christians about Islam: “what the mediaevals studied we may study again, making use of what they did; but we may do it for its own sake, and without thought of propaganda, and without hatred” (p. 307, 1966 edition).

3 Robinson writes that “traditional sources of hostility to Islam derived from the medieval Christian polemic still flourish in secular form”, an example of which is that “the old objection which focused on the enjoyment of sex and sensuality has become a new objection to the position of women.” He adds: “Indeed, a disapproval of Islam, which sometimes amounts to outright hostility, seems ingrained in the secular culture of the West” (Francis Robinson, *Atlas of the Islamic World since 1500*, 1982, Introduction, p. 20, col. 2).

Turning back to the historical development, some 800 to 1000 years ago Christian European countries were aroused by the passion that they must go to conquer the lands in the Middle East where their sacred places were located and where their fellow Christians were living under Muslim rule. For this purpose they launched the Crusades. They raised armies in England, France, Italy and other European countries and went to present-day Syria, Palestine, and Israel and repeatedly tried to conquer them. In order to incite their own people to join these military expeditions they presented before them a most hideous and distorted picture of Islam, the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the Muslims.

How to win the hearts of staunch enemies

Despite believing in this ugly picture of Islam, when the crusaders returned to their countries after failing in their crusades, they came back very impressed with Salah-ud-Din Ayyubi, his character, wisdom, justice and kindness.⁴ This shows that if Muslims present a good example of moral behaviour, they can win the hearts of their most staunch enemies. It should also be remembered that this was a time when Muslim civilization was at its height and Western nations were much behind Muslims in worldly development and knowledge. Therefore, although the Christians of Europe were deeply biased against Islam, they still used to take advantage of the knowledge developed by Muslims and were impressed and overawed by them.

However, after about the year 1500 this situation started to change and to become the other way round. In Western countries, progress started being made in scientific knowledge and this led to all kinds of technological inventions being made. Along with that, European nations began to explore the world and establish trading centres in Asia and Africa, as in our own Indo-Pak subcontinent. At exactly the same time, the decline of Muslims started. The development of knowledge in their countries came to a stop and they lost the qualities and skills of statecraft and government. By the nineteenth century (the 1800s) Muslim countries were either directly under the rule of one European power or another, or they were so weak that they could not maintain their own independent rule and relied on the support of some European power or other.

When Christians saw their dominance in every field of life, they considered it to be a proof of the truth of their religion and the validity of their values and civilisation. They declared Islam to be the cause of the failure and the decline of the Muslims. Their opinion about Islam now was that this religion may have been of some good

4 Robinson describes Salah-ud-Din Ayyubi, or “Saladin”, as: “the great hero of medieval chivalry” (p. 16, col. 2).

many centuries ago, but in the new age of knowledge and enlightenment Islam was an obstacle in the path of human progress and human civilization.⁵

Along with the spread of European rule in the world, Christian missionaries also went all over the world and attempted to convert Muslims to Christianity. Now the West was addressing the Muslims themselves. At the time of the Crusades the purpose of spreading hate against Islam was only in order to incite their fellow Christians to take part in the wars against Muslim rule in the Middle East. So the Christian public could be told anything against Islam, no matter how baseless; for example, that Muslims worship Muhammad, or Muslims worship the sun, or Islam teaches that women do not have souls.⁶ But now the Muslims were the audience. Therefore, what was required was a criticism of Islam which at least had some basis, so that it might have an effect upon the Muslims, and not be rejected as complete nonsense.

Start of distorted picture of Islam in the West

So in this period, Christians published literature such as English translations of the Quran and biographies of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, in which they tried to prove their own distorted views about Islam. Islam was presented by them as a religion of ignorance, savagery and violence, whose founder was following his own worldly and material desires. Regrettably, these critics found much material in the books of the Muslims themselves, and in certain wrong notions held by Muslims, which they could use against Islam.

However, in the same age, due to the progress of scientific knowledge in the West itself, the educated sections in the West began to raise doubts about and objections against religion itself, the existence of God and the spiritual matters that are the basis of all religions. Although these objections applied also to the Christian religion, yet they were directed at Islam as well. And as I said earlier, modern non-Christian Western writers inherited from their Christian forefathers a distorted picture of Islam, and in addition their modern branches of knowledge created new forms of objections against Islam as a religion.

5 Francis Robinson refers to the opinion of Ernest Renan (d. 1892), the French orientalist and language scholar, that he considered Islam was "opposed to the scientific spirit, and a barrier to progress." He adds: "Indeed, confidence in the superiority of Western civilization, and of Western ways of looking at things over the Islamic, has been instinct in much Western scholarship" (p. 20, cols. 1-2).

6 Robinson includes the following in the misrepresentations of Islam by European Christians: "the Quran had been borne to the people on the horns of a white bull; the Prophet was a sorcerer ... who, according to Christian legend, lied and wallowed in debauch..." (p. 16, col. 1). Norman Daniel's book deals in detail with these nonsensical misrepresentations; for example, "stories that told of a dove whom Muhammad, or a wicked teacher of Muhammad, trained to eat a grain of corn from the Prophet's ear, to simulate the Holy Ghost" (p. 32), "Muhammad was also often supposed quite wrongly to be ignobly born ... and an idolator among idolators" (p. 83), and the opposite allegation that he had been a Christian cleric "frustrated in his ambition, who perverted his own converts to spite the Roman church" (p. 83).

Movement to refute objections against Islam

Now the time came when Allah appointed Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as *Mujaddid* and his mission was to refute all these objections against Islam. In one of his early writings, *Izala Auham*, he wrote: “It is undoubtedly true that Europe and America have a large collection of objections against Islam, inculcated through those engaged in Christian Mission work, and that their philosophy and natural sciences give rise to another sort of criticism” (p. 772). He not only wrote books in response to these objections but he also made the prophecy that “the Western world which has been involved of old in the darkness of unbelief and error shall be made to shine with the sun of Truth, and those people shall have their share of Islam” (p. 515).

In my speech there is no scope to go into details of the work which Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and his followers did in this respect, but I draw your attention to one incident. When Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din went to England in 1912, in continuation of Hazrat Mirza sahib’s mission of the propagation of Islam, it was there that he realized the full extent of Islamophobia in Europe. In the following year, 1913, he sent a written message to the meeting of the All-India Muslim League taking place in Lucknow, India, on 22-23 March 1913. In it he described in detail what is today called ‘Islamophobia’. He writes that after coming to England he discovered how badly Islam and Muslims are looked upon. First it was only the political rulers and the Christian religious leaders of the West who considered the existence of Muslims to be undesirable, because “we have been an obstacle and hindrance,” standing in the way of their objectives, but now it is also “on humanitarian grounds that the peoples of the West desire to see us finished as soon as possible.”

What is the reason? He explains: “If the concept of Islam and the Muslim, prevalent in Europe, were correct and based upon valid data, I should see no reason why every fair-minded person having the least interest in humanity should not come forward to help Europe in her task of effacing Islam from the face of the earth.” He adds: “Our sole remedy lies in dispelling the cloud of ignorance which enshrouds Europe and prevents her from appreciating Islam at its true value.” He also says as regards the false and ugly picture of Islam that is widespread in the West: “In the beginning, no doubt, it was the work of some evil schemers against Islam, but now it is the honest belief of millions in Europe.” He notes that the decline of the Turkish Ottoman Empire and its defects and weaknesses are said to be because of Islam. It should be remembered that when Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din was writing this message the Ottoman sultanate had reached close to its end.

He appeals to the Muslims to: “Do your best to correct the false picture of Islam in Europe, and millions of people here will support your noble cause.”

Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din published this message in 1913.⁷ After that, during the twentieth century, accurate and sound knowledge about Islam began to spread in the West. In this work the Lahore Ahmadiyya *Jama'at* played a prominent role. Its first Head, Maulana Muhammad Ali, addressing the Western world in English, and keeping in his mind the atmosphere and society in the West, wrote numerous fundamental books on Islam and urged that this literature should be distributed in the West. Non-Muslim Western authors also wrote books on Islam in which, instead of adopting a biased attitude, they showed more impartiality and inclination to the truth and facts.

A time now also came when Muslims no longer remained a distant people from the West. Through the development of modern means of travel and communications, news and information about Muslim countries became common knowledge in the West. The other change was that, for the first time in history, Muslims migrated to Western countries in large numbers and settled there. The people of the West could see Muslims close at hand and establish relations with them.

The positive result of these new conditions has been that it became difficult to fabricate false and baseless allegations against Islam. But there has also been an adverse result. Due to certain views, customs and practices of the Muslims, which are either contrary to Islam or are not supported by Islam, a bad image of Islam has been projected in some ways and this provides fuel to Islamophobia. In this context, among the misconceptions which spread about Islam, the worst is that Islam had spread by force, it can only continue in existence by using coercion, and that it preaches violence and extremism. In the last thirty years, various events have taken place, reported internationally, by which Muslims themselves can be seen providing support for the allegations against Islam made by its Western detractors. One such event was the recent murder in England of an innocent member of the British Parliament, Mr David Amess, by a Muslim, as I mentioned at the beginning.

Under these circumstances, it is vitally important that the picture of Islam presented for the whole world by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, which was then explained in full detail by Maulana Muhammad Ali in his English and Urdu books, should be widely disseminated in new forms and new ways.

*

⁷ See *Muslim India & Islamic Review*, March 1913, pp. 65-70. It was also published in *The Review of Religions*, Qadian, May 1913 issue, pp. 210-219, with an introduction by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The HOPE Bulletin

E-mail address: thehopebulletin@hotmail.com



ISLAM stands for: **I SHALL LOVE ALL MANKIND**

Design & Formatting : *Erwan Hamdani*, Jakarta, Indonesia

<http://www.aaiil.org>

<http://www.Lahore.ahmadiyya.org>

<http://ahmadiyah.org>

For Books on Islam and the Ahmadiyya Movement: Translations of the Holy Quran in Urdu, English, German, French, Russian, Arabic, Javanese, Indonesian, Dutch, Spanish and Turkish. Visit our websites.