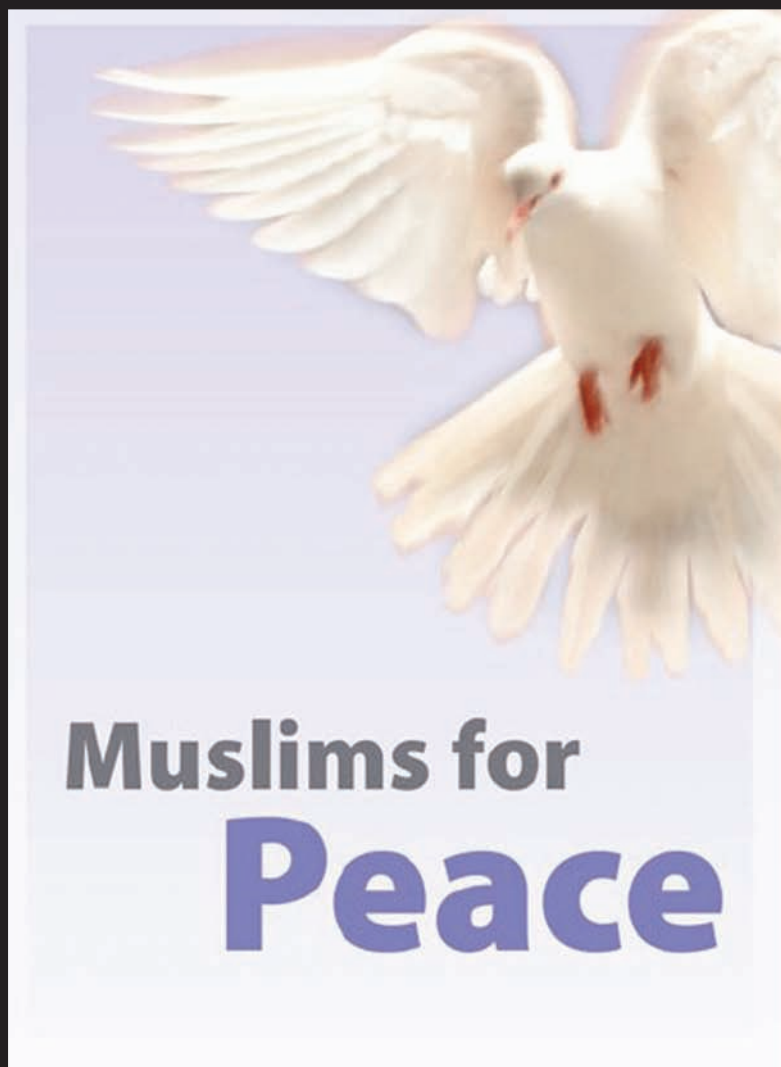


"In the latter days, the sun shall rise from the west" • Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be on him)



**TERRORISM  
HAS NO  
RELIGION**



**Muslims for  
Peace**



AHMADIYYA  
MUSLIM COMMUNITY  
United States of America

*Muslims who believe in the Messiah,  
Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani*

**11** Freedom From  
Terrorism

**14** The Root of  
Terrorism: An  
Unholy Thought

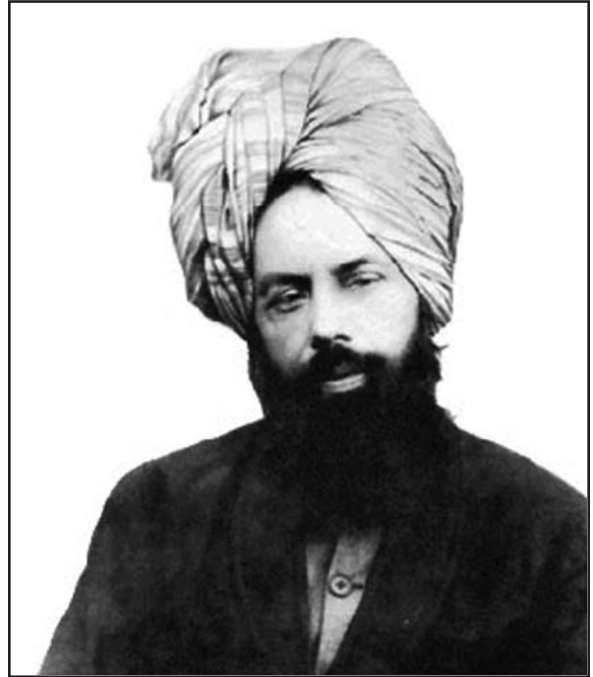
**17** There's  
Nothing Religious  
About Religious  
Terrorism

**21** Jihad: To  
Behead or Win the  
Pleasure of Allah

# The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

**T**he Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a religious organization, international in its scope, with branches in 189 countries in Africa, North America, South America, Asia, Australasia, and Europe. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established in 1889 by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> (1835-1908) in Qadian, a small and remote village in the Punjabi province of India. He claimed to be the expected reformer of the latter days, the Awaited One of the world community of religions (The Mahdi and Messiah). The Movement he started is an embodiment of the benevolent message of Islam – peace, universal brotherhood, and submission to the Will of God – in its pristine purity. Hadhrat Ahmad<sup>as</sup> proclaimed Islam as the religion of man: “The religion of the people of the right path” (98:6). The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was created under divine guidance with the objective to rejuvenate Islamic moral and spiritual values. It encourages interfaith dialogue, diligently defends Islam and tries to correct misunderstandings about Islam in the West. It advocates peace, tolerance, love and understanding among followers of different faiths. It firmly believes in and acts upon the Qur’anic teaching: “There is no compulsion in religion” (2:257). It strongly rejects violence and terrorism in any form and for any reason.

After the passing of its founder, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has been headed by his elected successors. The present Head of the Community, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, was elected in 2003. His official title is Khalifatul Masih V or Fifth Successor of the Promised Messiah..



Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908)

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Muslims follow the name of God's prophets with the prayer *alaehis salaam* or 'may peace be upon him,' and for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu alaeihi wasallam* or 'may peace and blessings of God be upon him.' Companions of prophets and righteous personalities who have passed away are saluted by *radhi-Allaho anhu/a* or 'may Allah be pleased with him/her.' While such salutations sometimes are not set out in the text for readability, we encourage readers to offer these prayers as if set out in full.

Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq (1872-1957) was the first Ahmadiyya Muslim missionary to arrive in America. In 1921, he founded the *Muslim Sunrise*, which stands today as the longest running Muslim publication in America. The magazine seeks to open discussions on Islam and topics relating to religion in general. It highlights the role of Islam in an ever changing global society. It provides a platform for public opinion on contemporary issues and presenting their solutions from an Islamic perspective.

[www.muslimsunrise.com](http://www.muslimsunrise.com)



AHMADIYYA  
MUSLIM COMMUNITY

United States of America

Muslims who believe in the Messiah, Hazrat  
Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Qadiani<sup>AS</sup>



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For More Information on  
Islam/Ahmadiyyat:  
[Alislam.org](http://Alislam.org) or  
[1.800.WHY.ISLAM](tel:1800WHYISLAM)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## From the Holy Qur'an

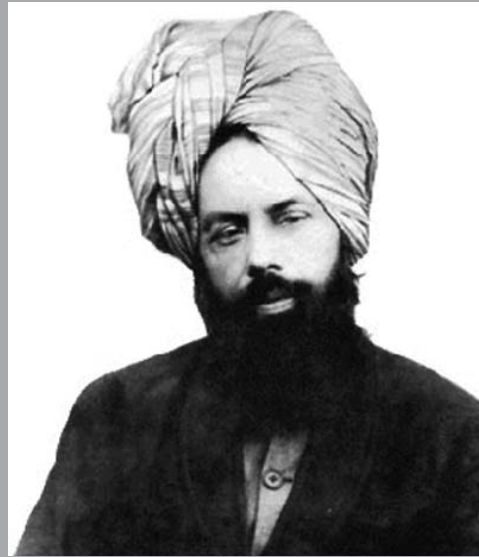
Chapter An-Nisa (verses 94-95)

وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِّدًا أَجْرًا وَّهُ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَغَضِبَ  
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٩٤﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا  
ضُرِبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ أَلْفَى إِلَيْكُمْ  
السَّلَامَ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا تَبْتَغُونَ عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ  
مَغَانِمٌ كَثِيرَةٌ كَذَلِكَ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَنَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ  
فَتَبَيَّنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿٩٥﴾

[4:94] And whoso kills a believer intentionally, his reward shall be Hell wherein he shall abide. And Allah will be wroth with him and will curse him and will prepare for him a great punishment.

[4:95] O ye who believe! when you go forth in the cause of Allah, make proper investigation and say not to anyone who greets you with the greeting of peace, 'Thou art not a believer.' You seek the goods of this life, but with Allah are good things in plenty. Such were you before this, but Allah conferred His *special* favor on you; so do make proper investigation. Surely, Allah is well aware of what you do.

## In the Words of the Promised Messiah



Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908)

*The Holy Prophet,  
peace be on him, never  
raised his sword except  
against those who first  
raised it themselves and  
most mercilessly killed  
innocent pious men,  
women and children.*

**T**he doctrine of *Jihad* as understood and propagated by the Muslim divines of this age who are called *maulvis* is utterly incorrect. It can lead to nothing except that by their forceful preaching they would

convert common people into wild beasts and would deprive them of all the good qualities of human beings; and so it has happened. I know for certain that the burden of the sins of those people who commit murders through ignorance on account of such preachings, and who are

unaware of the reason why Islam had to fight battles in its early stages, lies on the necks of these *maulvis* who go on propagating secretly these dangerous doctrines which result in such grievous loss of life. When these *maulvis* call on government officials they bow down before them at such an angle as if they are ready to go into prostration; but when they are among their own ilk they persist in declaring that this country is *Dar-ul-Harb* [lit. *House of War*] and that the employment of the sword for the purpose of the propagation of the faith is a prescribed obligation. There are few of them who do not adhere to this doctrine. The large majority of them are so committed to this false doctrine which is utterly contrary to the Holy Quran and the teaching of the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, that they condemn anyone who differs with them on this score as *Dajjal* and proclaim that he may be killed with impunity. I have been the subject of such condemnation since a long time.... They should remember that this doctrine of *Jihad* as conceived by them is not at all correct. Its first result is the sacrifice of human sympathy. Their notion that as *Jihad* was permitted in the early stages of Islam there

is no reason why it should not be lawful now is utterly misguided. We have two answers to it. The first is that the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> never raised his sword except against those who first raised it themselves and most mercilessly killed innocent pious men, women and children. They were killed in such cruel manner the recital of which even today brings tears to our eyes. Secondly, even assuming that in the beginning of Islam such *Jihad* was obligatory, as is mistakenly conceived by these *maulvis*, yet in this age it no longer holds good as much as it is written that when the Promised Messiah appears *Jihad* by the sword and all fighting for religion will come to an end as he will not take up the sword or any other earthly weapon and his only weapon will be his supplications, and his high resolve will be his sword. He will lay the foundation of peace and will gather the goat and the lion together. His age will be the age of peace and kindness and human sympathy. Why do these people not reflect upon the fact that thirteen hundred years ago the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, had said concerning the Promised Messiah: He will put an end to war.

O Ye Muslim divines and *maulvis*, listen to me. I tell you truly this is not the time of fighting for the faith. Do not disobey the Holy Prophet, peace be on him. The Promised Messiah, who was to come, has appeared and has directed:

Henceforth desist from religious wars with the sword which caused bloodshed. To persist in bloodshed and not to desist from such sermons is not the way of Islam. He who accepts me will not only desist from such sermons

but will hold this way as most vicious and likely to invite divine wrath.

Now that the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> has come, it is the duty of every Muslim that he should refrain from having recourse to fighting for the propagation of the faith. Had I not come there might have been some excuse for this misunderstanding. But now that I have arrived and you have witnessed the day of promise, those who take up the sword on behalf of the faith have no excuse left which they can put forth before God Almighty. He who possesses eyes and can read the Holy Qur'an and the *Ahadith* can realize that this kind of *Jihad* which the ignorant ones insist upon in this age is not authorized by Islam. It is an error which has spread among the Muslims in consequence of the upsurge of unlawful passions or the vain hope of winning paradise through such misguided action.

Ignorant *maulvis*, may God guide them, have grievously misled the common people and have told them that such action which is sheer wrong and cruelty and is opposed to all moral values is the key to paradise. Can it be a good action to shoot down an utter stranger who is walking through the street on some errand and who has done us no harm? If this kind of thing is virtuous, wild animals possess more virtue than such men. Glory be to God, how righteous were those and how truly were they inspired by the spirit of the prophets who, when they were commanded in Mecca not to resist evil though they might be cut to pieces, behaved like humble and weak suckling babies as if their hands and their arms possessed no power at all.

How grievous and shameful it is that

an utter stranger who has done us no harm and who is occupied with some lawful errand should be shot down without any cause and his wife made a widow and his children made orphans and his dwelling turned into a house of mourning? Which *Ahadith* and which verse of the Holy Quran authorizes such an outrage? Can any *maulvi* furnish an answer to this question? Ignorant people who have only heard the word *Jihad* make it an excuse for the fulfillment of their selfish desires (*British Government and Jihad*, pp . 5-12) .

I have brought you a commandment which is that *Jihad* with the sword has been ended but the *Jihad* of the purification of your spirits must continue to be waged. I say this not on my own but in order to proclaim the design of God. Reflect on the *Ahadith* of Bukhari wherein it is stated that the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> would put an end to fighting for the faith. Accordingly, I command those who have joined my ranks that they should discard all such notions. They should purify their hearts and foster their mercy and should have sympathy for the afflicted. They should spread peace on the earth, for this would cause their faith to spread. They should not wonder how this would come about. As God Almighty has utilized the elements and all earthly means for the purpose of bringing about new inventions to serve human needs like mechanical locomotion, etc., in the same way He will put His angels to work for the fulfillment of spiritual needs through heavenly signs, without the intervention of human agencies and there will appear many flashes of light whereby the eyes of multitudes will be opened (*British Government and Jihad*, pp. 14-15, For full contents of the book go to *Alislam.org*).

# Editorial

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**T**errorism is being discussed everywhere in the world. The U.S. news media spends a significant amount of time reporting terrorism, specifically focusing on *Islamic* terrorism. News consultants and pundits analyze how *Islamic* terrorism works and explain how we should react to it.

A fundamental flaw in these discussions is the terminology being used—*Islamic terrorism*. Terrorism has nothing to do with any religion. It's an abuse of religion. Christian terrorists in Ireland or Serbia and Hindu terrorists in India or Sri Lanka are just, plain and simply put, *terrorists*. A thief is a thief is a thief. A Muslim thief, Hindu thief or a Christian thief is a plain and simple thief. By associating a religion to the outlaws, we create an inseparable political sympathy among the followers of the religious group they are associated with, although it's a fictitious relationship. As soon as the media acknowledges that the terrorists claim to serve their faith in Islam, certain Muslim groups become sympathetic and, astonishingly, even defend the terrorists knowing full well that Islam opposes the barbaric acts.

Adding fuel to the fire, fundamentalist preachers and proponents of Christianity jump on the bandwagon to preach that the Holy Qur'an promotes terrorism. Recently, a preacher who could not even pronounce the word *Imam* was on national TV professing and describing what the Qur'an teaches. His solution was to burn copies of the Qur'an. The fundamental commandment of *turning the other cheek* was probably not taught in his church.

A religion should not be judged by the acts of a minority of outlaws regardless of their claimed religious affiliation. Christians should not be judged by the acts of their brothers in Serbia or Ireland. Christianity should be judged by the teachings and practice of Jesus<sup>as</sup> and his disciples<sup>ra</sup>. Similarly, Islam should not be judged by the terrorists in Pakistan, Afghanistan or the Middle East. It should be judged by the teachings and practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>saw</sup> and his companions<sup>ra</sup>. Did they kill every Jew and Christian that they met? Certainly not. Their example illustrates that we should even invite Christians to offer their prayers in our mosques, as they did in the Prophet's Mosque in Medina back in the seventh century.

In our discussions with one of the top consultants of a nationally well-known

think tank in Washington, DC, he expressed his concern about the term *Islamic terrorism*. He acknowledged that Islam did not have anything to do with terrorism but did not know how to term the Muslims who are involved in terrorism. He actually invited us to come up with a term so the media would replace it over the current terminology. The question is why terrorism needs to be associated with any religion or religious group. We need to deal with it just as we deal with other sins and law breaking activities such as murder, theft or character assassination. We don't need to distinguish a Muslim murderer from a Hindu or a Christian one.

Terrorism is spread all over the world and we need to deal with it. We must sensibly acknowledge it for what it is—a crime against humanity. The international community would be able to deal with it once a united front is created against terrorism as a crime and not as a branch of any faith or interpretation of any particular religion. It is only then that the world can form a united front to eradicate the catastrophic plague terrorism has wreaked across the globe.

# Striving in the way of God

Summary of Friday Sermon  
Delivered by Hadhrat Mirza  
Masroor Ahmad <sup>at</sup>, Head of the  
Ahmadiyya Muslim Community,  
September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010

Hudhur gave a discourse on striving in the way of God in his Friday Sermon today. He began by reciting the following Quranic verse: **‘And as for those who strive in Our path — We will surely guide them in Our ways. And verily Allah is with those who do good.’** (29:70) Hudhur said we are currently going through the last ten days of Ramadan



which are special days to attain the highest point in acceptance of prayer. Today, being Friday, is also a blessed day that comes every seven days and which also has a particular moment of acceptance of prayer. All these combined blessings draw our attention to God’s favours. Such thoughts should not be temporary, rather, as the aforementioned verse states there should be constant striving in God’s way.

Success is attained in this striving by consistently and resolutely trying, keeping in view God’s commandments. It is indeed His favour that He facilitates an environment during Ramadan when there is keenness in spiritual development. Fasting and worship in Ramadan are also a particular ‘striving’, if carried out thoughtfully.

Hudhur said each person has different ca-

pacities and inclinations, and the commandment is to seek God in accordance to whatever capacity one has. When effort is made in this regard, God shows the way that leads to Him. However, if selfish thoughts and excuses get in the way, slight effort is assumed as ‘striving’, man cannot attain God. Hudhur explained the ways and means to attain Divine nearness and to be included among those who in God’s sight **‘do good’** through various writings of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> that he had penned in elucidation of the particular aforementioned verse of Surah Al Ankabut.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> said one who is careless and indolent cannot attain the same degree of Divine grace as one who makes an effort with all one’s might and with sincerity to search for God.

Hudhur said there are different degrees of Divine nearness which can be attained by constant striving which attracts God’s attention. One must strive in God’s way according to the means that God has taught. Belief in the unseen and perfect belief in God’s attributes inclines one to this striving. If one tries to find God purely through intellect, God does not

show the way. God has not left man in dark for as regards this search. From the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>saw</sup> till the Day of Judgement we have the Holy Qur’an as the guidance. Earlier, there were other Prophets. God also manifests signs through His Prophets to prove His existence.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> said that God states He would show the way to whoever strives in His way, this is His promise. Conversely, He has taught us the prayer of **‘guide us in the right path’** (1:6). One should say this prayer during Salat with the supplication and aspiration to be counted among those who have been granted spiritual advancement and insight.

Hudhur said if this prayer, which is read in each *rakah* (unit) of Salat, is said with due care and compassion, wanting guidance, God

grants it. It is obvious that when a wise person derives benefit through someone’s advice, he/she is grateful to the one who had advised as well as tries to inculcate a connection with them. Indeed, should try and inculcate a connection. Hudhur said it is important to understand this point, it leads to success. When Prophets and those who are commissioned by God, guide to the ways of seeking God, it is essential to follow them and stay connected to them. The Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> retold about the coming of the Messiah in this age. How important it is then to pay attention to one who was to connect man with God. How important it is that rather than mindlessly reject him, by making a connection, they try to at least experiment finding the ways that lead to God. They have the prayer (1:6) to do this. Hadhrat Musleh Maud<sup>ta</sup> would even tell non-Muslims that although they would not say the Quranic prayer of **‘guide us in the right path’**, but if they simply prayed for the straight path with an open mind, God would guide them. Many told him that the truth of Islam was unfolded to them. How important it is then for Muslims to try this formula! It is also important for us Ahmadis, who have accepted the Imam of the age, to not simply sit back but try and constantly strive in the way of finding God, especially during these days.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> said that God is well aware of what is in hearts. If one is righteous He is Ghafur (the Most Forgiving) for those who turn to Him.

Hudhur explained that God fulfils His promise when one turn to Him. Just as He promises to show the way to one who endeavours in His way, illuminating their way, it is stated about those who turn away that they fall in darkness. **‘...So when they deviated from the right course, Allah caused their hearts to deviate, for Allah guides not the rebellious people.’** (61:6)

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> said that just as in our worldly life each action has an effect, similar is the law of religion. As God states in the two instances: **‘And as for those who strive in Our path — We will surely guide them in Our ways.’** and **‘So when they deviated from the right course, Allah caused their hearts to deviate’.** Hudhur remarked that it is man’s misfortune that he distances himself from God. Hudhur said a friend from outside the commu-



nity came to visit Hudhur from Pakistan and asked what was the reason for what is happening in the country [Pakistan] and when and how will it get better. Hudhur told him there were only two things to keep in view. God states come to Me, make an effort, endeavour. Hudhur said he gave the reference of this Quranic verse. God states make your utmost effort and I will show the way. Hudhur asked the person, was the state of affairs so? He replied it was quite the contrary. Hudhur responded to him that when the situation is thus, God's second action comes into play. Hudhur said collectively the Pakistani nation has to change its train of thought. The Pakistani media is raising a hue and cry, by making certain statements it has gone to extremes and Hudhur would not like to repeat. Yet no one is trying to make concerted effort to stop the instances of barbarity. May God have mercy.

Explaining how God treats good-natured people, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> said that ultimately God removes the shortcomings of good-natured people and gives them strength for piety. All that is unpleasant in God's sight becomes unpleasant for them. God blesses all efforts made by them. The ways that are dear to God become dear to them. They are granted strength which does not weaken, fervour which does not wear out and *taqwa* (righteousness) which is not followed by sin and God's pleasure is thus attained, but this grace takes time in being granted. Man stumbles a lot in the beginning due to his weaknesses but as his constant striving continues and God sees the resoluteness, God draws man to Him as stated: **'And as for those who strive in Our path — We will surely guide them in Our ways.'** It is a long and constant endeavour which gives permanence to *taqwa* and belief and one finds the ways of Divine love and knowledge.

Elucidating the verse **'And as for those who strive in Our path — We will surely guide them in Our ways.'** in another place, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> says that the entire matter rests on striving, without which nothing can be attained. Some people erroneously cite that Syed Abdul Qadir Gilani (may Allah have mercy on him) turned a thief into a chief in one look. It is all misconception; people assume that one can achieve spirituality by certain people blowing on them. Those who rush in matters with God are destroyed. Like any progress in the world, spiritual development is also gradual and nothing can be attained without striving and this striving also has to be in accordance to God's commandments,

***'And as for those who strive in Our path — We will surely guide them in Our ways.' In another place, the Promised Messiah (on whom be peace) says that the entire matter rests on striving, without which nothing can be attained.***

rather than any self-made spiritual exercises. This is what God commissioned the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> for. Striving is required for the door of spiritual knowledge to open, striving that is carried out in the ways taught by God and in following the blessed model of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). Many people leave this and visit *Pirs* and *Faqirs* (ascetics) to seek their 'blowing'. This is a sin. Guidance comes from God alone. He opens the ways of spiritual knowledge to those who search for Him with sincerity of heart, those who search for Him merely for the sake of sincerity and earnestness. However, anyone trying on an experimental level for derision is left deprived.

Hudhur explained that Muslims visit shrines, wear amulets, they reckon these solve their problems or efface their sins, regardless if they offer Salat or not. Some ascetics also presume they can give guidance and tell people that they have become pious by simply giving them an amulet. Likewise some people hold gatherings, the odd Ahmadi also gets involved, in which they try alternative ways of *dikr* assuming they can forgo Salat.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> said that God wishes to imbue everyone in the colour of His knowledge. **'Say, 'We will adopt the religion of Allah; and who is better than Allah in teaching religion, and Him alone do we worship.'** (2:139) Hudhur said each believer should try and imbue in the colour of God, adopt the colour of Divine attributes. This signifies that man has the capacity to espouse Divine attributes. The Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> said that God created Adam in His form. Hudhur explained that God is Sattar (Coverer of faults), partaking of this attribute we should also practice covering the weaknesses of others. God is Shakur (Most Appreciating), although when applied to God the term 'Shakur' has different significance, man should be thankful. Then there is the expansive Divine attribute of Rabbul Alameen (Lord of all the worlds). Keeping this in view, man can be a *rabb* in his/her limited sphere, like parents in relation to their children. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> said that one finds God when one looks for Him by being in Him. This signifies adopting His attributes. God is Rahman (Most Gracious) and Raheem (Ever Merciful). His mercy is His overriding attribute.

How can those who commit barbarity in His name find His way? Hudhur said today again we have received sad news. Terrorists attacked our mosque during Friday Prayers in Mardan [Pakistan]. However, due to timely action of the Khuddam on duty they were not successful in coming inside the mosque. They threw grenades, one suicide attacker was injured and then blew himself up. Because of this the gate of the mosque and some walls fell. A few Khuddam on duty were injured and one Khadim was martyred, *Inna lillahe wa inna illaihe rajioon*. May God elevate the status of the martyr and heal the injured. The other assailants fled. What sort of people are these who perpetrate these acts in the name of God? They can never be called godly, for they attack those who worship God in the name of God. Two days ago they attacked a Shia rally taking many innocent lives. The hearts of the perpetrators are so deviant that it appears there is no turning back for them. Those who help them or those who have power but do nothing about it are also culpable. May God soon rid the country of these oppressors and also rid the world, for they have now spread in the world.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> said that those who endeavour ultimately find guid-

ance. Just as a seed grows with water supply and even destroys itself in order to grow into a plant, unless one supplicates God daily for help, His grace will not come and change cannot come without Divine help.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> said the Companions of the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> did not reach their elevated stations through ordinary worship. Most people wish to reach the heavens by a simply blowing of the mouth. None can have the lofty station of the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup>, when he did not avail of ‘blowing of the mouth’ then who else is there to do it? He spent extended, arduous hours in the Hira cave in worship of God after which he received Divine grace. Unless one annihilates oneself in God’s way, there is no reciprocation. However, when God sees that man has tried his very best and has assumed a kind of death on himself to seek God, this is when God reveals Himself to the person.

One who endeavours and strives in God’s way is never unsuccessful, as indeed God states: **‘And as for those who strive in Our path — We will surely guide them in Our ways.’** If we can feel

sympathy and compassion for someone staying up late preparing from exams, could God let the hard work of one wishing to seek Him go to waste? Most certainly, never.

When the Holy Spirit helps a believer it is simply a blessing of God. It is given without exerting any effort to those who truly believe in the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> and the Holy Qur’an and is thus borne out of belief. The condition for its conferment is that one is truthful and steadfast. However, the Divine guidance as stated in: **‘And as for those who strive in Our path — We will surely guide them in Our ways.’** is not granted without striving. One who is inclined to God, God also inclines to him. If one is not indolent and makes endeavour, when his endeavour reaches its highest point he witnesses God’s light. The condition for success is not to lose courage.

Islam grants true spiritual knowledge, which brings about a death to life of sin, which in turn gives a new lease of life. The reason every person cannot attain this is because it is not attained without striving, repentance and completely submitting to God, as stated in: **‘And as for those who strive in Our path**

**— We will surely guide them in Our ways.’**

It is because of their striving in the way of God that the Companions of the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> were likened with stars by God. God stated that such was their brilliance that anyone who followed them would find guidance.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> said that the real objective of his *bai’at* is to attain love of God and a loathing for sin. If one did not strive in the way of God and did not pray after *bai’at*, one in fact dishonours the *bai’at*.

Hudhur prayed that may each one of us understands the essence of this and may our efforts ever be to move onwards and to fulfil our pledge with the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> and to attain God’s pleasure. May we never be embarrassed in front of God by showing weakness in our promise and deficiency in our effort. May He continue to enable us to fulfil our promise and to seek His nearness and may we spend the remaining days [of Ramadan] in prayer more than before. May God Himself become our Shield and may He bring about the chastisement of our enemies.

## Muslims Condemn Burning of Holy Qur’an

*Ahmadiyya Muslim Community counsels patience, prayer and promotion of knowledge of the Holy Quran and its true teachings*

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA strongly condemns a Florida church’s effort to desecrate the Holy Quran on “International Burn a Quran Day” on Sept. 11. In response, it is launching a nationwide campaign to educate fellow Americans about the Holy Quran.

The campaign, which coincides with the holy month of Ramadan, commences immediately and includes the distribution of literature on the Holy Quran, exhibitions across the United States ex-

*“It’s regrettable that some fringe elements of the Christian faith plan to burn the Holy Quran,” said Dr. Nasim Rehmatullah, Vice President of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA.*

plaining the holy book and its teachings, and interfaith symposia promoting the respect and

honor of sacred scriptures of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism. Copies of the Holy Quran in both English and Spanish will be distributed widely.

“It’s regrettable that some fringe elements of the Christian faith plan to burn the Holy Quran,” said Dr. Nasim Rehmatullah, Vice President of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA. “Such groups do not understand the true teachings of this beautiful book, which champions truth, justice and freedom of religion for all—values that Americans hold dear.”

Many other churches and Christian organizations have condemned this inflammatory event that will create disorder and hatred at a time when peace and brotherhood is needed. The very act of burning religious scripture is contrary to the teachings of the world’s major religions, including Christianity, which enjoins its followers to turn the other cheek.

As Muslims who believe in the Messiah Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian and his Master Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community invites intellectual debate on the Holy Quran, which gives high status to Jesus Christ and his mother Mary (peace be on them both).



# Freedom from Terrorism

By Ayesha N. Rashid

Terrorism is a complex term. Violence that appears as terrorism to some is actually freedom fighting to others - recent history serving as an adequate witness. When Afghan militants fought against the Soviet Union, they were respectfully called *Mujahideen* or freedom fighters. However, when the same army later fought the United States, they were dubbed *terrorists*. It would seem, accordingly, that there is no fine line between freedom fighting and terrorism. Blanketing them all under the term terrorism and trying to root it out will only result in instigating more hatred and more violence. Such a solution is no solution at all.

In the post 9/11 era, two political leaders appeared as the main players in the war on terror – former United States President George W. Bush and former Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf. President Bush hailed democracy as the solution to rising terrorism and sent forces to Afghanistan and Iraq for such a cause. People who already had negative feelings for American foreign policy increased their disdain for the democratic system to which they were now subject.

Pakistan served as a breeding place for terrorists in the post Afghan-Soviet war era. Madrassa culture promoted fundamentalism and intolerance in the society. President Musharraf considered “enlightened moderation” as the saving grace to eradicate terrorism. To achieve this he tried to promote education in Pakistan. Unfortunately, he too was wrong in his perception. Studies have shown that there is only an indirect, complicated and weak link between education and terrorism. The evidence demonstrates that public opinion for violent attacks does not decrease with higher education and higher standards of living. Both Muslim and Jewish militants were highly educated, with some were working in high paying jobs.<sup>1</sup> Highly educated terrorists of Pakistani origin further prove President Musharraf’s inability to get to the root cause of the problem.

Another common mistake is to associate terrorism with Islam. Some governments, media outlets and members of the public label Islam as the root cause of terrorism. However, in his book *Dying to Win*, Robert Pape establishes that in recent years, Tamil Tigers, a Hindu group, have committed more suicide attacks than all Muslim militants combined. He further establishes that Muslim militant groups have political agendas or nationalistic views - i.e., they have less to do with the religion and more with nationalism. However, we cannot completely dismiss the idea of religion being forcibly involved in the business of terrorism. The terrorists declare themselves to be Muslims and claim to be following and serving Islam through their violent activities. Even if their hidden agendas are something other than religion, still they give rise to terrorism by propagating false teachings in the name of Islam. Muslim militancy is on the rise and two factors are fostering its growth. First, brain washing techniques of Muslim warlords pollute young minds with false understandings and applications of *jihad*. Second, the false propaganda of much of the western media depicts Islam as a religion — not terrorists alone — as a threat to the western world. Instilling more hatred amongst Muslim youth, this trend generates a backlash and increases the likelihood that such individuals will seek out revenge. Ultimately, this makes them an easy target for terrorist organizations.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> provides an effective solution to the terrorism wrongly associated with Islam. He proved through the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and through the examples from the life of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> that Islam does not support violence in any capacity. However, the general form of terrorism too can be eradicated with the golden Islamic principle of "justice." History bears witness to the fact that constant suppression of any particular nation or group gives birth to violent elements within the society. This calls for a just body to apply absolute justice for both the oppressed as well as the oppressors.

### Effective United Nations

The Holy Qur'an [49:10] says: "And if two parties of believers fight *against each other*, make peace between them; then if *after that* one of them transgresses against the other, fight the party that transgresses until it returns to the command of Allah. Then if it returns, make peace between them with equity, and act justly. Verily, Allah loves the just."

The Holy Qur'an sets a simple rule to fight terrorism — to join hands against it. This verse is certainly not ethnocentric in scope, but can be applied to any such situation regardless of the faiths or governments involved. Commenting on this verse, Mirza Mahmood Ahmad<sup>ra</sup>, the 2nd Khalifa of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community says:

"The verse lays down the following principles for the maintenance of international peace. As soon as there are indications of disagreement between two nations, the other nations, instead of taking sides with one or other, should at once serve a notice upon them, calling upon them to submit their differences for settlement to a 'League of Nations' or 'United Nations Organisation' as the case may be. If they agree the dispute will be amicably settled. But if one of them refuses to submit to the 'League' or having submitted refuses to accept the award of the 'League' and prepares to make war, the other nations should all fight against it. It is evident that one nation,



**Thus, the key is in uniting against a group that opts for violence. No matter the organization and might of a group, it cannot have the strength to fight with the cluster of other groups, organizations or countries.**

however strong, cannot withstand the united might of all other nations and is bound to make a speedy submission. In that event terms of peace should be settled between the two original parties to the dispute. The other nations should act merely as mediators and not as parties to the dispute and should not put forward new claims arising out of the conflict with the refractory nation, for that would lay foundation of fresh disputes and quarrels. The terms of peace should be just and equitable with reference to the merits of disputes; they should be confined to the original dispute between the parties and should not be allowed to travel beyond it. It is such a 'League' or 'Organization' which can safely be entrusted with the maintenance of international peace, not a league or organization whose very existence is dependent upon the goodwill of others."<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the key is in uniting against a group that opts for violence. No matter the organization and might of a group, it cannot have the strength to fight with the cluster of other groups, organizations or countries. The Holy

Qur'an does not suggest to immediately impose war on such a group. Instead it commands to first pursue peace through negotiation and arbitration. Then, if the aggressive group still prefers to fight, then the peace-seeking group must now resort to war as a last resort. Such an opposition would discourage the violent group so much so that he will be bound to comply.

In this regard the example of medieval Muslims is worth noting. Following Barbarian invasions in the 5th century, the Visigoths ruled Spain until the 8th century. They later collaborated with Catholics and openly persecuted Jews for some time. Jews were deprived of holding public office and restricted from marrying Christian women, both of which were permitted before. Moreover, Jews were given the option to either convert to Catholicism or face expulsion from Spain. Some 90,000 Jews converted and thousands escaped<sup>3</sup>. This persecution finally ceased with the efforts of the Umayyad Khalifa Walid of Islam in 711. An army of Berbers and Moors joined hands under the command of Tariq bin Ziyad and freed the Jews of Spain from

Catholic Visigothic atrocities.<sup>4</sup> Many Jews joined the Muslim army in opposition to the Visigoths. The Jews of Toledo were so grateful to the Muslims that they opened the “gates of the City” for Tariq bin Ziyad as an expression of gratitude. It is recorded that the Muslim rulers were benevolent after their victory and the natives were not forced to change their customs, language or religion. The Spanish “retained their Romance tongue, and enjoyed complete civil independence with their own churches, laws, courts, judges, bishops and counts.”<sup>5</sup> This historical event not only refutes the idea that Islam forces conversion, but also establishes the concept that there is “no compulsion in religion.”<sup>6</sup> Once peace was established, Christians, Jews and Muslims continued to live in mutual harmony under Muslim rule. It is a known fact that medieval Spain produced some of history’s most prolific scientists, architects, linguists, mathematicians and physicians. These combined efforts led to a 700 years long Golden Age in Spain. Thus, the Holy Qur’an offers a solution that not only promotes peace but also ensures societal prosperity.

The foundation of the League of Nations in 1919 was a step in the right direction for world peace. Though established by non-Muslim governments, many objectives of the League were in complete harmony with Qur’anic instructions mentioned in verse (49:10). The League aspired to prevent wars through collective security disarmament and to settle international disputes through negotiation and arbitration.

While it served as the prototype to the United Nations, both the League of Nations and the United Nations have failed. The sole purpose of United Nation’s existence was to resolve territorial disputes. Studies provide insight that the current day terrorism sprouts from the territorial disputes and political conflicts. For instance, Robert Pape writes that 301 out of 315 suicide attacks committed from 1980-2003 were to gain “political concession” from a target government rather than religious fundamentalism.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, at the very least the United Nations should have the strength to resolve the issues associated with its very existence. However, the inability to

do so has only served to create more hatred between the weaker and stronger nations.

This inability is largely due to the veto power delegated to the permanent five members (P5) of the United Nations. This veto power undermines justice and assists the P5 to avoid decisions that are contrary to their own interests. Thus, each P5 member single handedly stifles the United Nations intended authority. For instance, the United Nations has instructed Israel to vacate occupied Palestinian territory. Yet, due to the United States veto power, such a resolution has never been implemented. From Kashmir to Rwanda, from Bosnia to Palestine, the United Nations has been unable to function in its intended capacity.

Thus, the goal is to transform the United Nations into an autonomous body that makes and implements just decisions, regardless of the might or weakness of the nation in question. Only then can true progress towards international mediation and conflict resolution become possible.

## Controlling Media

Media plays an increasingly important role in combating terrorism. Though varied, modern day media around the world is homogeneously biased. While the media in Muslim countries blame Mossad, RAW and Black Water for every act of violence in their countries, the western media hurries to blame Islam. The hype the media creates about terrorist activities further enhances the causes of terrorists i.e., getting into the media to instigate more hatred. According to a January 2010 Gallup poll, almost half of Americans hold an unfavorable view of Islam. The hatred is mutual: According to the Gallup poll of 2002, more than 60% of the populations of large Muslim countries hold unfavorable views of America.

Both types of media have created an “us vs. them” mentality - a suicidal approach in itself. It is a win-win situation for the terrorist, and lose-lose for innocent parties. Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, the fourth Khalifa of the International Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, warned about this growing polarization as a re-

sult of pitching Muslims against non-Muslims. He said:

“The policy of setting the Muslims against the non-Muslims is a suicidal policy born out of ignorance because nothing shall be achieved as a result; instead, they will lose even the little they currently have.”<sup>8</sup>

In this regard a slight tilt of media towards the correct direction can save many lives. If the Muslim media gives due credit to the Western nations for giving equal opportunities, social security and religious freedom to Muslim immigrants, things would certainly improve. For instance, President Obama’s visit to Israel was shown on Muslim countries’ media over and over again to instigate hatred. Yet, his efforts to building bridges with the Muslim world are reported significantly less. Likewise, if a news report about American Muslim soldiers fighting for national security changes the views of even one American about Islam and saves even one Muslim falling prey to the terrorists, it is a giant step towards international peace.

Terrorism may always remain a complex term with a difficult definition. However, it needn’t remain as such. If we champion a United Nations on the pillars of absolute justice while maintaining objectivity in the media, we will foster a worldwide unification against terrorism. In such a scenario, terrorists might still exist, but faced with a united world of freedom fighters, they won’t exist for long.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Krueger, Alan B.; Malečková, Jitka, Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is there a causal connection? The Journal of Economic Perspective.

<sup>2</sup> Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih II, The Holy Quran with English Translation and Commentary; Vol.5, pp.25-26. Five Volume Commentary.

<sup>3</sup> Gerber, J. S: The Jews of Spain: a history of the Sephardic experience, P. 12

<sup>4</sup> Marks, S. A. The Jews in Islamic Spain: Al Andalus

<sup>5</sup> Sertima, I. V. African Presence in early Europe. Page 155

<sup>6</sup> Holy Qur’an. (2:257)

<sup>7</sup> Pape, R. A Dying to Win, Pg. 15

<sup>8</sup> Tahir, A. M; Gulf Crisis and The New World Order, p. 327



There is an often quoted saying, “Watch your thoughts; they become **words**. Watch your words; they become **actions**. Watch your actions; they become **habits**. Watch your habits; they become **character**. Watch your character; it becomes your **destiny**.”

## Root of Terrorism: An Unholy Thought

Zia H Shah MD

**I**n this article I want to describe the thought that leads to terrorism. It is a thought that any human can have and is not specific to Muslims. It is the thought of not holding the life of other humans as sacred. Are human lives sacred or not? Are they priceless or can we put a price tag on them? Are they dispensable for our political gains? Should we label some of them as collateral damage? Can some fundamentalists kill a few and go and meet their share of virgins in paradise? These are some of the questions that can identify the unholy thought that leads to terrorism.

What is terrorism? ‘The systematic use of violence to create a general climate of fear in a population.’ The Encyclopedia Britannica defines terrorism as, ‘thereby to bring about a particular political objective.’ It further adds, ‘Terrorism has been practiced by political organizations with both rightist and leftist objectives, by nationalistic and religious groups, by revolutionaries, and even by state institutions such as armies, intelligence services, and police.’ I would like to add an important aspect to this definition of terrorism, namely, of victimizing innocent bystanders for achieving ones political goals.

A recent terror attack in India demon-

strated to the world once again that Muslims do not have a monopoly on terrorism. Scores of passengers of a Maharashtra-bound express train were killed on May 28, 2010 and 200 injured in a left wing Maoist attack which led to derailment of 13 coaches that were hit by a goods train coming from the opposite direction. A Maoist party left two posters near the rail tracks clearly owning responsibility for the derailment of the train but later in a public announcement denied any involvement. One observation was, however, about the latest terror attack in India that the Muslims had nothing to do with it!

It seems like terrorist acts are motivated by a belief in effectiveness of terrorism in delivering results for the cause whose righteousness terrorists believe in to the exclusion of nearly all else. The problem lies in not holding human life sacred or worth more than the political cause that the terrorists are trying to achieve. Amy Zelman, a writer and consultant on political violence, explains:

“If you look at any group that is widely understood as a terrorist group, you will find these two elements are basic to their story.

“Zionists who bombed British targets in 1930s mandate Palestine felt they must do so in order to create a Jewish state.

“The IRA (Irish Republican Army) bombed English targets in the 1980s to make the point that they felt their land was colonized by British imperialists.

“In the 1960s and 1970s, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine felt that armed attacks in Israel were a justifiable response to the usurpation of their land.

“Osama bin Laden’s declaration of war on American interests in the 1990s stemmed from his belief that U.S. troops stationed in Saudi Arabia represented an abomination to the kind of Islamic state he believed should exist in the Arabian peninsula.

“Uighur separatists in China today feel that Chinese religious repression (the Uighur Chinese are Muslims) justifies their terrorist tactics.”

The Holy Qur’an describes that the prohibition of murder is as old as Prophet Adam<sup>as</sup>. It defines the worth of each human life as priceless! It states that the Divine teaching to the Israelites was that the worth of each human life is as high as the

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# The root cause of terrorism lies in not respecting human life. It lies in not assigning an absolute worth to every human life and regarding its value as less important than one's political goal.

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whole of humanity. It prescribes the same teaching for all Muslims also in the words, "We prescribed for the children of Israel that whosoever killed a person — unless it be for killing a person or for creating disorder in the land — it shall be as if he had killed all mankind." The Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>saw</sup> linked the sanctity of human life to the human appreciation of sacredness; as he addressed a large, sobbing and spellbound crowd of pilgrims, at the time of his last pilgrim to the house of one God in Makkah. He said, "Even as this month is sacred, this land inviolate, and this day holy, so has God made the lives, property and honor of every man sacred. To take any man's life or his property, or attack his honor, is as unjust and wrong as to violate the sacredness of this day, this month, and this territory." It is only through Divine law that we come to know the absolute value of human life. Dr. Andrew Conway Ivy was appointed by the American Medical Association as its representative at the 1946 Nuremberg Medical Trial for Nazi doctors. He wrote, "Only in a moral world, a world of responsibility, can man be free and live as a human being should. Men are truly equal and free only as creatures of God, because only as the children of God and only in the sight of God and ultimate moral law are men truly equal." In the Nuremberg trial he struggled with the question that if man-made law is the sole source of basic human rights, why condemn the Nazi assault on Jews, Gypsies, Poles, and political enemies; and having been shaken by this perplexing trial he concluded:

"If God and the ultimate moral law are

denied, there can be no absolute argument against slavery, against 'might makes right' and man's greedy exploitation of man. If human beings have no absolute intrinsic value, no absolute intrinsic freedom of decision, no absolute liberty, no absolute duties, they possess only extrinsic value and may be used as chattels, slaves or serfs by those who have the intelligence and power."

Extending Ivy's thesis further, if human life does not have an absolute worth then the possibility of terrorism opens up, depending on how much a group values her political cause. That is the reason why humans have used terrorism for their political goals over the millennia. They have considered human life to be dispensable. The history of terrorism is as old as history itself. The Encyclopedia Britannica states:

"Terror has been practiced by state and nonstate actors throughout history and throughout the world. The ancient Greek historian Xenophon (c. 431–c. 350 bc) wrote of the effectiveness of psychological warfare against enemy populations. Roman emperors such as Tiberius (reigned ad 14–37) and Caligula (reigned ad 37–41) used banishment, expropriation of property, and execution as means to discourage opposition to their rule.

"The most commonly cited example of early terror, however, is the activity of the Jewish Zealots, often known as the Sicarii (Hebrew: "Daggers"), who engaged in frequent violent attacks on fellow Hebrews suspected of collusion with the Roman authorities. Likewise, the use of terror was openly advocated by Robespierre during

the French Revolution, and the Spanish Inquisition used arbitrary arrest, torture, and execution to punish what it viewed as religious heresy. After the American Civil War (1861–65), defiant Southerners formed the Ku Klux Klan to intimidate supporters of Reconstruction (1865–77) and the newly freed former slaves."

The root cause of terrorism lies in not respecting human life. It lies in not assigning an absolute worth to every human life and regarding its value as less important than one's political goal. Any unexamined belief that condones violence can become a catalyst for terrorism. Case in point, the belief of both the Sunni Muslims and the Christians in a violent second coming of Jesus<sup>as</sup>. A similar view is shared by the Sunni and Shiite Muslims regarding a bloody Mahdi. Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad,<sup>as</sup> the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community analyzes the situation in the case of Sunni Muslims:

"A very detrimental belief that is profoundly hurting the spirituality in Islam is that the *mullahs* are awaiting a bloody *Mahdi* who will soon after his appearance submerge the world into violence and bloodshed. These are the signs that they subscribe for their imaginary messiah also, that as soon as he descends from the heaven he will start killing the non-believers, and only those will be saved who will become Muslim. Men with such beliefs can never be sincere with others; even traveling alone with such believers is risky business, lest they should kill you thinking that you are a non-believer, while they are in total denial of their own disbelief! Always remember that to call these absurd

# If any religion teaches hatred against any group or minority then we need to trade that religion for something better.

ideas as root of Islam and attribute them to the Holy Quran is preposterous.”

Almost every religion of the world recommends the Golden rule! What is the Golden rule? It can be expressed in different words but with the same message from different traditions:

## THE GOLDEN RULE

### Hinduism

One should not behave towards others in a way which is disagreeable to oneself. This is the essence of morality. All other activities are due to selfish desire.

### Egyptian Book of Dead

He sought for others the good he desired for himself.

### Law of Moses

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

### Grecian instruction

Do not do to your neighbor that you would take ill from him.

### Zoroaster, Persia

Do as you would be done by.

### Confucius, China

What you would not wish done to yourself do not unto others.

### Buddhist instruction

One should seek for others the happiness one desires for oneself.

### Roman Law

The law imprinted on the hearts of all men is to love the members of society as themselves.

### Jesus Christ

All things therefore whatsoever you would that men should do unto you, even so you do unto them; for this is the law of the prophets.

### Prophet Muhammad

By God Who holds my life in His Hand, none of you can be a truly faithful Muslim, unless he liked for his brother what he liked for himself.

None of us want to be innocent bystanders of a terrorist attack or collateral damage. If we wish the same for others there cannot be any terrorism.

If any religion teaches hatred against any group or minority then we need to trade that religion for something better. The Messiah of this era, the lead follower of the Prophet Muhammad,<sup>saw</sup> Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> wrote in his last book, *The Message of Peace*:

“A religion which does not inculcate universal compassion is no religion at all. Similarly, a human being without the faculty of compassion is no human at all. Our God has never discriminated between one people and another. This is illustrated by the fact that all the potentials and capabilities which have been granted to the Aryans have also been granted to the races inhabiting Arabia, Persia, Syria, China, Japan, Europe and America. The earth created by God provides a com-

mon floor for all people alike, and His sun and moon and many stars are a source of radiance and provide many other benefits to all alike. Likewise, all peoples benefit from the elements created by Him, such as air, water, fire and earth, and similarly from other products created by Him like grain, fruit, and healing agents, etc. These attributes of God teach us the lesson that we, too, should behave magnanimously and kindly towards our fellow human beings and should not be petty of heart and illiberal.”

## EPILOGUE

When a Muslim does not check his thoughts against the touchstone of the Qur’anic verse, ‘We have sent thee (Muhammad) not but as a mercy for all peoples,’ he is vulnerable to fall victim to the unholy thought that may lead to terrorism. Likewise, when a Jew does not check his thought or plan against the teaching, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,’ when a Christian does not evaluate his thought with the litmus test, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’ when an agnostic or atheist does not evaluate his thoughts and plans against the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, he or she may be slipping on the slippery slope that can lead to pillage, war, terrorism and mayhem. Do as you would be done by!

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# TERRORISM HAS NO NATION HAS NO RELIGION



## There is nothing **religious** about “religious terrorism”

By Amtul Mussawir Mansoor

When referring to the idea of ‘religious terrorism,’ one may assume that it is the religion itself that promotes terrorism, but this is far from the truth. Not one of the beautiful religions of the world promotes killing of innocent people. In the Holy Qur’an, God says: “...whosoever killed a person...it shall be as if he had killed all mankind” (5:33). Accordingly, the Bible says: “Thou shalt not kill” (Exodus 20:13).

So what does one mean by ‘religious terrorism?’ Religious terrorism is a type of political violence motivated by an absolute belief that an otherworldly power has sanctioned and commanded terrorist violence for the greater glory of the faith. Acts committed in the name of faith will be forgiven by the otherworldly power and perhaps rewarded in an afterlife.<sup>1</sup> Basically, the terrorists believe

that their religious faith legitimizes violence as long as such violence is an expression of the will of God.

Since time immemorial, terrorism in the name of faith has been advocated in order to promote a belief system or as a defense mechanism. In these recent years, there has been an increase in religious terrorism but what has inspired these so-called ‘religious’ terrorists to commit such heinous crimes? Many are inspired by the attainment of martyrdom. This is not new. During the Crusades, whose purpose was to capture the Holy Land from the disunited Muslims, Christian knights and infantry answered Pope Urban II’s call because he promised that fighting and dying for the Cross would ensure martyrdom, guaranteeing a place in Heaven. Thus, “knights who with pious intent took the Cross would earn a remission from temporal penal-

ties for all his sins; if he died in battle he would earn remission of his sins.”<sup>2</sup>

Nowadays, those participating in the ‘Islamic’ Jihad believe, that if they commit suicide bombings, they will attain paradise. But as far as Islam is concerned, it categorically rejects and condemns every form of terrorism. It does not provide any cover or justification for any acts of violence, be it committed by an individual, a group or a government.<sup>3</sup> One of the most notorious organizations participating in this so-called ‘Islamic’ Jihad is Al-Qaeda, also known as ‘International Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders.’ Its leader, Osama bin Laden, issued a *fatwa* or religious ruling in February 1998, calling for a worldwide ‘Islamic jihad’ (holy war) to kill Christians and Jews. His main targets were U.S. citizens and U.S. property because he was infuriated by the pres-

ence of U.S. military and its influence of Western culture on Islamic nations.

Al Qaeda is responsible for the destruction of Khobar Towers residence in Saudi Arabia in 1996, the U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, the bombing of the *USS Cole* in Yemen in 2000, and its most famous crime, their attack on the World Trade Center in New York City, and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. on September 11, 2001.<sup>4</sup>

Sadly, Al-Qaeda and other Muslim terrorist organizations are following a wrong interpretation of Jihad. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> explains: “The current practice found among the Muslims to attack people of other religions, which they call by the name of *Jihad* is not *Jihad* according to the *Shariah* (Islamic law), rather, it is clearly violation of the instructions of God and the Messenger<sup>sa</sup> and a grievous sin.”<sup>5</sup>

He further elaborates: “Could it be considered a good act, for example, there is a person walking in a bazaar engulfed in his own thoughts, and is a complete stranger to us, and we do not even know his name, and neither does he know us, but we fire a gun at him with the intention of killing him? Is this a religious act? If this is a good act, then the beasts are far better than human beings in carrying out good deeds... Did God instruct us to cut a person into pieces without any proof of crime, or kill him with a gun while we do not even know him, and neither does he know us? Can such a religion be from God that teaches to start killing sinless and innocent people of God without any excuse and reservation, and without even delivering them the message, and that it would lead us to heaven? It is pitiful and shameful that a person, with whom we have no previous enmity, and is a complete stranger to us, and while he is buying something for his children from a store, or is busy in some other lawful act, and we, without any reason, fire a gun at him, and make his wife a widow and his children orphans, and turn his house into a place of mourning. Which *Hadith* mentions this practice? Which verse of the Holy Qur’an mentions this? Is there any *Maulvi* who could answer this? The unwise people have heard the name of *Jihad*, and using it as an excuse are fulfilling their vain selfish desires, or are carrying out gory acts because of their insanity... When no one kills Muslims for the sake of religion, I wonder, under what authority they kill innocent people?”<sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately, Christianity and Islam are not the only religions misrepresented by religious terrorism for there are also other major religions of the world involved. In India, during the 13<sup>th</sup> through the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, a cult “Thugee” was

**No true religion, be it Islam or Christianity, promotes violence and killing of innocent human beings in the name of God.**

created. They worshipped the Hindu goddess Kali, the destroyer. They would strangle sacrificial victims in the name of Kali and bury them. Offerings would then be made to Kali. The British eventually destroyed the movement during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. “This secretive cult is believed to have murdered 20,000 victims a year... perhaps dispatching as many as several million victims altogether before it was broken up by British officials.”<sup>7</sup>

Recently, there has been a rise in state-sponsored religious terrorism, which basically means that the state or the government sponsors the terrorist organization around the world. Iran being one of them. After the overthrow of the monarchy of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi in 1979, and the creation of the theocratic Islamic Republic of Iran, Iran has sponsored a number of groups known to have engaged in religious terrorism. One of the main terrorist organizations Iran sponsors and facilitates is the Hamas organization based in Palestine. Hamas aims to establish an Islamic state in the West Bank and the Gaza strip. This goal combines Islamist objectives with Palestinian nationalism. Hamas has called for the destruction of the state of Israel, and refused to recognize it. Hamas urges Muslims to wage ‘jihad’ against foreign usurpers of Muslim lands, mainly Jews and Western-

ers. They have since claimed responsibility for hundreds of attacks against both military and civilian Israeli targets, in shootings, knifings, and short-range rocket attacks, as well as suicide attacks.<sup>8</sup>

The future looks bleak as there are many active religious terrorist organizations around the world trying to establish their superiority over the other. But they should each follow and understand the religious teachings of one’s true faith. The many Muslim terrorist organizations who have defamed the name of Islam and the character of our beloved Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>, should understand the true meaning of the term “Jihad.” Their doctrines should be reformed and their books should start teaching the true Islamic concept of Jihad. On the other hand, Christian extremists who are continuing to promote a war on terrorism, which in actuality is a war on Islam, should try to understand the true teachings of Islam. No true religion, be it Islam or Christianity, promotes violence and killing of innocent human beings in the name of God. As Hadhrat Khalifat-ul-Masih IV<sup>th</sup> beautifully put it, “God is love, God is peace! Love can never beget hatred, and peace can never lead to war.”<sup>9</sup>

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#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Martin, Gus. *Essentials of Terrorism*. 1st ed. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Inc, 2008. 114.

<sup>2</sup> Martin, Gus. *Essentials of Terrorism*. 1st ed. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Inc, 2008. 115.

<sup>3</sup>Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV. *Murder in the name of Allah*. [http://www.alislam.org/library/books/mna/chapter\\_9.html](http://www.alislam.org/library/books/mna/chapter_9.html)

<sup>4</sup><http://law.jrank.org/pages/11973/Terrorism-Religious-Terrorism.html>

<sup>5</sup>Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. *British Government and Jihad*, Roohani Khaza’in, Volume 17, p.17

<sup>6</sup> Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. *British Government and Jihad*, Roohani Khaza’in, Volume 17, p.11-13

<sup>7</sup> Martin, Gus. *Essentials of Terrorism*. 1st ed. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Inc, 2008. 116.

<sup>8</sup> <http://terrorism.about.com/od/groupsleader1/p/Hamas.htm>

<sup>9</sup> Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV. *Murder in the name of Allah*. [http://www.alislam.org/library/books/mna/chapter\\_9.html](http://www.alislam.org/library/books/mna/chapter_9.html)



**Sometimes terrorism is clearly a state-sponsored act of offense, and at other times it is merely an act of a small cell of disgruntled persons. It is relatively difficult to keep an eye on individuals who tend to change into brutes.**

# Terrorism Defined

Mubasher Ahmad, M.A., LL.B.

**S**ixty years after the terrifying wreckage of Pearl Harbor, the next devastation on American soil occurred on September 11, 2001. The al-Qaeda functionaries carried out a terrorist attack on the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon. The motivation was multifold: Symbolically, attacking the World Trade Center and the Pentagon buildings was to down the American towering stature as the world superpower.

Like Osama bin Laden, all the terrorists were from Saudi Arabia. Initially Osama bin Laden did not take any credit for the horrifying attacks that killed almost 3000 civilians. Even the U.S. intelligence could not provide any concrete proof to the guilt of Osama bin Laden when the Taliban regime of Afghanistan asked for evidence that he was the culprit.

However, after three years, Osama bin Laden himself released a taped message in which he took full responsibility for the attacks and explained that the motive of the attack was "to regain the freedom" of the Muslim nation (Fox News, October 30, 2004). Richard A. Clark, a counterterrorism expert, outlines the U.S. foreign policy decisions that contributed to al-Qaeda leadership motives to hurt America. Among others, Mr. Clark explains that confronting the U.S.S.R. in Afghanistan, putting the U.S. Military in the Persian Gulf, and helping Israel economically and militarily were the factors that contributed to bin Laden's motives (Clark, 2004). Peter Bergen, a news correspondent, further explains that bin Laden's motive was to unify the Muslims of the world behind him against the U.S. Bin Laden attacked the U.S. to instigate the American Government to increase the number of its forces in the Middle East. The increased U.S. military presence in

the Muslim countries, in turn, would force the Muslims to unify politically and accept a united Islamic government in the region. (Bergen, 2006, p.229).

Sometimes terrorism is clearly a state-sponsored act of offense, and at other times it is merely an act of a small cell of disgruntled persons. It is relatively difficult to keep an eye on individuals who tend to change into brutes. For example, a student, otherwise well behaved and belonging to a nice family, turns out to be a killer of dozens of his fellow students and teachers, terrorizing the entire community. A disgruntled employee ends up murdering in cold blood his fellow workers or the employer. In a case hearing in a court of law, one party suddenly starts shooting at the judge or his opponents. No one can see or predict who would perpetuate similar unexpected acts of violence by individuals. There are individuals committing crime like Unabomber with solo campaign of terror. However, to discover and identify terrorist organizations, working within a locality or on international level has become a task incumbent upon all societies and states. There is no dearth of well-knit terrorist groups, fully armed with explosives, guns and deadly ammunition. They plan and work in meticulous secrecy. They recruit willing and emotionally charged individuals, and train them well

## **A terrorist blowing up, for example, an abortion clinic is certainly under the influence of a religious or moral belief system that deems abortion as an act of killing a human life. Thus the very definition of terrorism remains flexible and subjective.**

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to carry out acts of terrorism, including suicide bombings. Their leadership tries to remain hidden and obscure from the public eye. Their tactics change from day to day. They try to use the element of surprise to the best of their ability (Morris, 2009).

Terrorism has many faces, and it is not easy to define it. The concept remains vague. Still it would be helpful to read some of the definitions. In 1974, the British Government characterized it as "...the use of violence for political ends, and includes any use of violence for the purpose of putting the public, or any section of the public, in fear." In 1980, the FBI identified it as: "Terrorism is the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives" After three years, in 1983, the United States Department of Defense called terrorism as "the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological". In 1992, the United Nations defined terrorism as "An anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby - in contrast to assassination - the direct targets of violence are not the main targets."

Terrorists are dreaded and hated by their targets and are thought to be bloody cowards and criminals. However, the same terrorists are considered as courageous patriots or even holy personages by their supporters. Usually their followers and supporters are a minority group who are emotionally charged, having strong opinions concerning those who treat them with injustice. They work in secrecy be-

cause they know the harsh consequences if their plans are exposed ahead of time. The very nature of terrorism contains the element of surprise, and this makes terrorists to work in many a creative form. Use of commercial airplanes loaded with passengers as explosive blistering missiles, tying of bombs around one's own body, and blowing oneself up are not the normal ways of conducting an armed conflict. These and similar tactics compel the targeted people to remain on alert at the highest level all the time. "Expect the unexpected" is the norm, and the tremendous cost for personal and national security increases day by day.

Terror is extreme fear, and terrorism is defined (Compact Oxford English Dictionary, 2005) as the unofficial or unauthorized use of violence and intimidation in the attempt to achieve political aims. But the problem lies in the fact that a terrorist may have sought his permission from someone who claims to have a different type of authority to allow a specific act of terror to be committed. A religious fanatic would become a terrorist on behalf of a religious authority against an established political power. Some terrorists seek "moral" authority when using violence against an institution they conceive to be immoral. A terrorist blowing up, for example, an abortion clinic is certainly under the influence of a religious or moral belief system that deems abortion as an act of killing a human life. Thus the very definition of terrorism remains flexible and subjective. New concepts and creative ways are commonly utilized to justify and advance destructive and terrorizing acts of brutality. Extreme violent behavior is under taken for varied reasons, may they be political, economical, social, moral or religious. In recent times, terrorism has become as expression of resentment and anger of individuals as well as of well-organized groups. Not being able to

change a political or economical status, expression of violence is a way of showing utter desperation and hopelessness.

The terrorists want to draw attention of public and governments by performing such horrible acts that are sure to become sensational news and a source of free publicity. Killing of Israeli participants in 1972 Munich Olympic, for example, was reported globally. Bringing down Twin Towers in New York in 2001 was instantly picked up by the news-media all over the world. Greater the damage, bigger the target, wider the implications, the news-media picks it up at all the levels. In August 2006, the news of a plot to simultaneously blow up 10 British jumbo jets with liquid explosives hidden in carry-on luggage that could have caused mass murder on unimaginable scale sent waves of horror all over the world.

Ideology always plays a vitally important role to keep the leadership and members of terrorist groups motivated. As indicated earlier, it could be based either on political, religious, or economical thoughts different from the accepted norms. It could also be a mix of more than one of many propelling ideas. Many times, an apparently politically motivated group uses religious beliefs (true or perverted) to gain its popularity and to increase its membership, promising spiritual as well as monetary rewards. When one country is under attack by a foreign nation, it is not difficult to utilize patriotism, and to turn many people into active terrorists working against the attackers. Presently, in some Muslim countries, Islam has become a tool in the hands of terrorist groups who are opposed to Western political systems. Thus it is an extremely complex situation, hard to discover the real impulses and incentives that might be working behind the scenes. Just to claim, as President Bush has done several times during his two term presidency that the terrorist groups do not like our freedom and democracy is in fact oversimplification of a multifaceted and difficult reality (President Bush's speech at the Ronald Reagan Library, in Simi Valley, California, October 21, 2005).

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By Dr. Khaula Rehman

The word ‘Jihad’ is derived from the Arabic root ‘Juhd’ which means ‘to strive.’ Jihad is to carry on a spiritual struggle to attain nearness to God, to struggle for self purification and self improvement. The word Jihad has been used in the Holy Qur’an many times:

*“And strive in the cause of Allah (Jihad) as it behooves you to strive for it. He has chosen you, and has laid no hardship upon you in religion; so follow the faith of your father Abraham; He named you Muslims both before and in this Book, so that the Messenger may be a witness over you, and that you may be witnesses over mankind. Therefore observe Prayer and pay the Zakat, and hold fast to Allah. He is your Master, an excellent Master and an excellent Helper!”*

-- Holy Quran 22:79

In this verse the word Jihad clearly signifies striving hard to win the pleasure and nearness of Allah. Jihad against one’s baser self i.e., against one’s evil desires and propensities or Jihad against Satan is the real meaning

# JIHAD

## to behead, or win the pleasure of Allah?

*The Ahmadiyya Solution: the Promised Messiah’s teaching against the use of violence in religion*

of Jihad. A Muslim has to engage in this Jihad every moment of his life. This Jihad has been called *Jihad-e-Akbar* (the greater Jihad) by the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. Once returning from battle of Tabuk he said to his companions that you have returned from the lesser Jihad (fighting against the enemies of Islam) to a greater Jihad (waging war against ones baser self).

Allah has given the name of Muslims to the followers of the Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>. The word Muslim is from a root word that means peace. So, a true Muslim is one who is at peace with God and man and with himself. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has defined a Muslim aptly in the following well known Hadith: ‘A Muslim is one from whose hands and tongue other Muslims are safe.’<sup>1</sup>

It is indeed strange, that a religion whose very name means peace and whose followers are enjoined to preach and practice peace, has been stigmatized by hostile and ignorant Muslim clerics and non Muslim critics. The Islamophobic critics allege that the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and his companions used the sword for the propagation of Islam. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

*Jihad-e-Asghar* (the lesser Jihad) where Muslims can raise the sword is only permissible when they are prevented by their enemy from declaring their faith in God, they are oppressed, driven out of their homes and/or have been wronged. This is clearly stated in the following verses of the Holy Qur’an:

“Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made because they have been wronged, and Allah indeed has power to help them. Those who have been driven out of their homes unjustly only because they

said, ‘Our Lord is Allah’—And if Allah did not repel some men by means of others, there would surely have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques wherein the name of Allah is oft commemorated. And Allah will surely help one who helps Him. Allah is indeed Powerful, Mighty.” (Al Qur’an 22:40-41)

Time and again the Qur’an mentions the significance and essence of Jihad (striving in cause of Allah). It says:

“And as for those who strive in Our path, We will surely guide them in Our ways. And Indeed, Allah is with those who do good.” (Al Qur’an 29:70)

“O ye who believe! shall I point out to you a bargain that will save you from a painful punishment? That you believe in Allah and His Messenger, and strive in the cause of Allah (Jihad) with your wealth and your persons. That is better for you, if you but know.” (Al Qur’an 61:11-12)

“Those who believe and emigrate from their homes for the sake of God and strive in the cause of Allah with their property and their persons have the highest rank in the sight of Allah. And it is they who shall triumph.” (Al Qur’an 9:20)

It is a well established fact among the Muslim circles, especially the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> was the Qur’an incarnate. To know him is to know the Qur’an and to know the Qur’an is to know him. From the Qur’an and the Sunnah (practices of the Prophet), Islamic Jihad does not imply that Muslims should pick up the sword and behead those who reject Islam. It simply means to strive hard

to win pleasure of Allah.

The Holy Qur'an teaches sanctity of human life and states:

"Whosoever unjustly kills a single person, it shall be as if he slaughtered all mankind; and whosoever saves the life of one, it shall be as if he had protected the life of all mankind." (Al Qur'an 5:33)

"You kill not the life which God has made sacred." (Al Qur'an 6:152)

Killing of the innocent and committing suicide are grievous sins in Islam. The Holy Qur'an forbids suicide, and it is an unforgivable sin in Islam.<sup>2</sup>

The Qur'an gives comprehensive instructions against all evil thoughts and plans, all kinds of abusive behavior and every form of cruelty and inequity. The Qur'an gives injunctions to protect the person, property, honor or good name of another person. The Qur'an declares in clear and unambiguous words that God does not love those who create disorder on earth (5:65) (28:77); He does not love who are unjust (3:57); and does not love those who exceed the limits (2:191) (5:88).

In our era, the Messiah of the time and the lead follower of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>, is Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup>. He founded the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. The community believes that the doctrine of Jihad has been entirely perverted by the "fundamentalists" and it needs to be rescued. '**Love for All, Hatred for None**' the motto of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is the recipe for global peace.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> warned more than 100 years ago that according to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> use of force is totally forbidden in matters of faith. As stated in the Holy Qur'an:

**'There is no compulsion in religion'**. (Al Qur'an 2:257)

I want to make my case by quoting several excerpts from the writings of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup>, the Promised Messiah. He states:

"No true Muslim has ever believed that Islam should be spread by the sword. Islam has always been propagated through its inherent qualities. Those who, calling themselves Muslims, seek to spread Islam by means of the sword are not aware of its inherent qualities and their conduct resembles the conduct of wild beasts".<sup>3</sup>

He further states:

"I have come to you with an order: Jihad with the sword has ended from this time for-

ward, **but the Jihad of purifying your souls must continue**. I do not say this of my own accord. This is indeed the will of God. Recall the Hadith from Sahih al-Bukhari which honors the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> by saying *yada-ul-harb*. That is to say, when the Messiah comes he will put an end to religious wars. Accordingly, I command those who have joined my ranks to refrain from all such thoughts, to **purify their hearts, to foster sympathy, and to be compassionate towards the suffering. They should spread peace on earth**, because that will cause their faith to spread in return."<sup>4 5</sup>

"It should be remembered that today's Islamic scholars (who are called *maulavis*) completely misunderstand Jihad and misrepresent it to the general public. The public's violent instincts are inflamed as a result and they are stripped of all noble human virtues. This is in fact what has happened."<sup>6</sup>

"Their belief, that Jihad should be lawful today because it was permitted in early Islam, is totally incorrect and we offer two rejoinders. The first is that their reasoning is baseless. Under no circumstance did our Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> raise the sword against anyone unless they had first raised the sword, mercilessly killing innocent, pious men, women and children with such brutality that reading about these events even today brings tears to our eyes. Second, even if we assume that Jihad as conceived of by these *maulavis* (misguided clerics) was obligatory in early Islam, the commandment is no longer applicable because it is written that violent Jihad and religious fighting will come to an end with the appearance of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, who will not raise the sword or any other earthly weapon. Prayer shall be his only instrument, and firm determination his only weapon. He will establish peace and gather together the goat and the lion. His age will be one of peace, gentleness and human sympathy. Alas! Why do these people not reflect that thirteen hundred years have passed since the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said, "*yada-'ul-harb*" in honor of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>. These words mean that the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> will end warfare when he comes."<sup>7</sup>

He again writes:

"At this time, I specifically instruct my *jama'at* (Community), which accepts me as the Promised Messiah, that they should always stay away from these foul habits. God

has sent me as the Promised Messiah and has clothed me with the garment of the Messiah, son of Mary. I therefore admonish you: Refrain from evil and be truly compassionate towards mankind. Cleanse your hearts of malice and spite, for you will become like angels through this habit. It is a filthy and unholy religion that is devoid of sympathy for humanity, and polluted is the path riddled with the thorns of a rancor based on selfish desires. O those who are with me, do not become like such people. Think about what it is we seek to attain through religion. Is it to constantly oppress others? No, religion exists so that we may obtain the life that lies in God. Such a life has not been, and will never be, attained unless Divine attributes come to abide in you. Be compassionate towards all for the sake of God so that you may be shown mercy in the heavens. Come, and I will teach you a way that will cause your light to prevail over all other lights. Abandon all lowly spite and jealousy, be compassionate for mankind, and lose yourselves in God. Being with God, achieve the highest levels of purification. This is the path on which miracles are bestowed, prayers are accepted, and angels descend to one's aid. But it is not a single day's work. Advance and continue advancing."<sup>8</sup>

In the end, let me summarize the teachings of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> in two lines:

**"In our age the pen has been raised against us. It is with the pen that we have been caused pain and suffering. In response to this, the pen is our weapon."**

*Dr. Khaula Rehman is a Sleep Medicine Specialist working in upstate New York.*

#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> From the book of Hadith by Bukhari

<sup>2</sup> Al Quran 4:30

<sup>3</sup> Tiryaq-ul-Qulub, Ruhani Khaza in, vol.15. Page 167, footnote, 1902.

<sup>4</sup> Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. British Government and Jihad. Page 17.

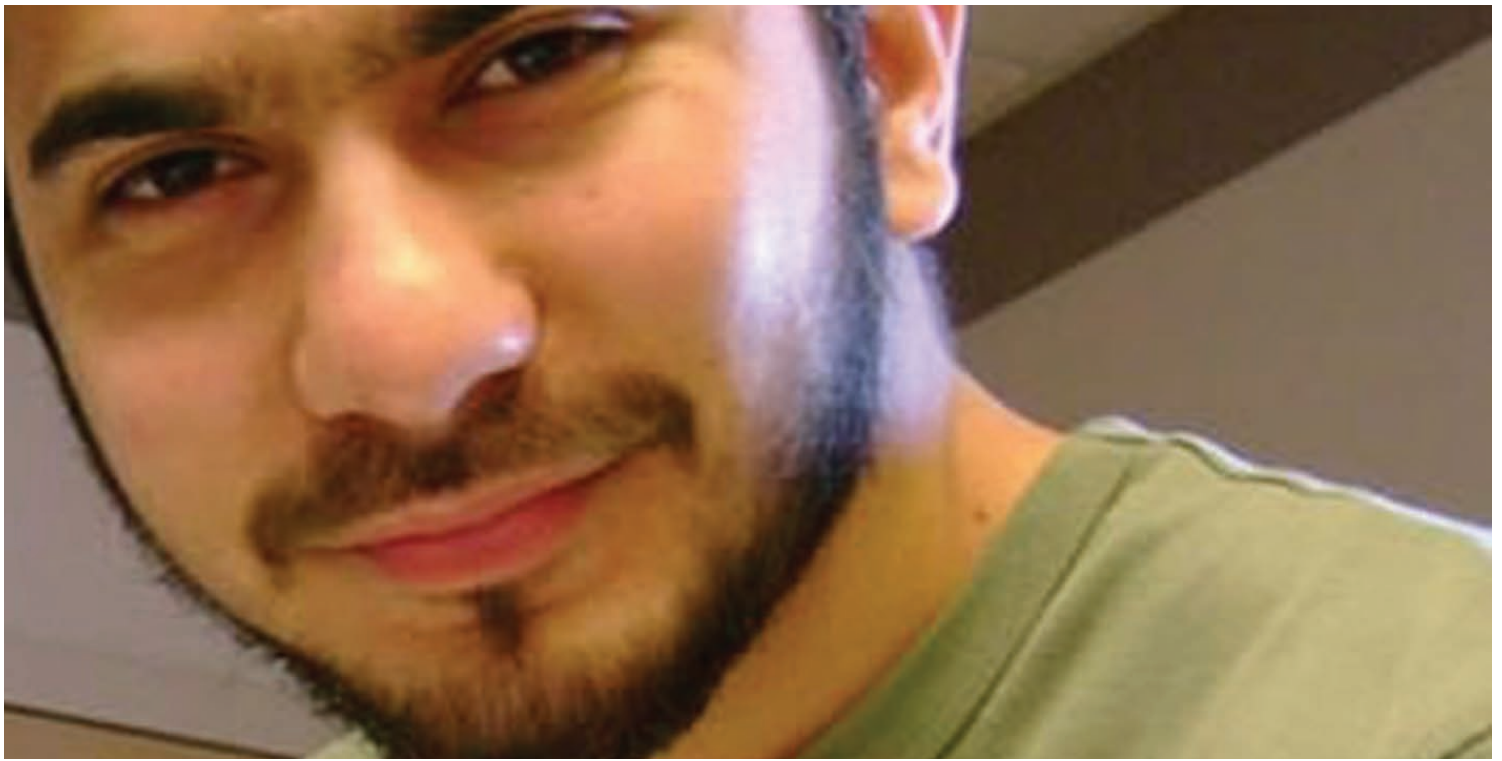
<sup>5</sup> <http://www.alislam.org/library/books/BritishGovt-and-Jihad.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. British Government and Jihad, Page 8

<sup>7</sup> Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, British Government and Jihad, Page 8-9

<sup>8</sup> Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. British Government and Jihad. Page 16.

<sup>9</sup> Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Malfuzat, Part I, p. 44.



# What's Up With Faisal Shahzad?

*Faisal Shahzad, a young man from a privileged Pakistani family, with an MBA degree from the University of Bridgeport, had all that he needed to lead a fulfilling life. But, instead of pursuing fulfillment through normal means, he decided to become a terrorist.*

By Atif Munawar Mir

**D**aniel Pipes, a conservative commentator, offered a very simplistic explanation for Shahzad's choice. He blamed Shahzad's "jihadi intent" and his ideological passions, ruling out the possibility that Shahzad's actions were motivated by insanity or by his perception of the injustices of American foreign policy.<sup>1</sup> Robert Wright provides a more balanced explanation, disagreeing with Pipes, whose one-dimensional assessment obscures deeper realities. Wright attributes Shahzad's terrorist mindset to his possible anger caused by the American drone strikes that regularly kill Pakistani women and children, as well as the alienation due to negative immigration experiences.<sup>2</sup>

## Breaking the Cycle of Hate and Anger

Wright argues that U.S. policymakers must acknowledge that their counter terrorism strategies have upsides as well as downsides, one of the downsides being that these strategies are prone to cause an upsurge in terrorist recruitment at home and abroad. Such an acknowledgement would demand of U.S. policymakers an honest and transparent effort towards fighting terrorism with minimal collateral damage. Furthermore, the U.S. should avoid making unilateral decisions when it deems war necessary and instead seek the consensus of the international community to avoid repeats of the Iraq war, which has brought nothing but death and destruction. In addition to this, America should try to resolve the Palestine-Israel issue with justice. Such efforts will go a long way in winning the hearts and minds of Muslims around the world.

Muslim governments must also ac-

cept responsibility for Shahzad's actions. For example, in Pakistan, the young malleable minds are often taught that all ills that plague Pakistani society are the result of U.S.A.'s foreign policy. The private TV channels in Pakistan invite conspiracy theorists, who spew hatred against the U.S.A., to discuss politics, economics and religion. Professor Pervez Hoodbhoy testifies to this state of affairs. He explains how extremist rhetoric is common in Pakistani society and how in some Pakistani educational institutions, a hate-based educational curriculum is taught. Hoodbhoy says that all these conditions that perpetuate hate are amplified by Pakistan's irresponsible media, which sowed the seeds of hatred in Shahzad's mind and persuaded him that the problems of the world could only be solved by destroying the U.S.A.<sup>3</sup>

To summarize, U.S. counter terrorism strategies, such as the drone strikes, become instrumental in angering and alienating Muslim youth. This anger is then turned into hatred via media propaganda and toxic schooling. The cycle of anger



Faisal Shahzad pleads guilty to carrying out the failed May 1 car bombing in New York's Times Square

and hatred perpetuates terrorism and widens the already existing gulf between Muslims and Americans. It is imperative that the political leaders on both sides find a way to break this cycle otherwise terrorism will turn the theory of the clash of civilizations into a concrete reality and both moderate Muslims and the U.S.A will have to pay a very heavy price.

### Alienation of Muslim Youth and the Creation of a Terrorist

Muslim spiritual leaders and intellectuals also have a crucial role to play. They must support the integration of Muslim youth into western societies by helping them reconcile their multiple identities and conflicting loyalties. Failure to integrate produces in the youth a sense of alienation, that is, a feeling of isolation and powerlessness. This is a serious matter. In 2003, the Dutch Prime Minister sug-

gested that alienation is a major cause of terrorism.<sup>4</sup> This is because an alienated mind looks for anchors to cling to and becomes vulnerable to the influence of terrorist ideology.

Apparently, Shahzad was also victim to feelings of alienation and found anchorage in a terrorist organization based in Afghanistan. Perhaps, the Islamic institutions in the U.S.A were not religious enough or pure enough for his taste. His choice of affiliation was, in fact, completely contrary to Islamic teachings. The Holy Quran teaches sanctity of human life and declares that whosoever unjustly kills a single person, it shall be as if he slaughtered all mankind; and whosoever saves the life of one, it shall be as if he had protected the life of all man-

kind (5:33). The Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> taught that during war the elderly and women and children are not to be killed, and the possibility of peace should always

***Perhaps, the Islamic institutions in the U.S.A. were not religious enough or pure enough for his taste. His choice of affiliation was, in fact, completely contrary to Islamic teachings.***

be kept in view<sup>5</sup> and when Muslims enter enemy territory, they should not strike terror into the general population, and should not permit ill-treatment of common folk<sup>6</sup>. Shahzad's intentions, which were to create murder and mayhem in Times Square, were clearly antithetical to the fundamental teachings of Islam.



Why did he choose to serve Islam in a completely un-Islamic fashion? It is possible that his sheer ignorance of Islam made him susceptible to the message of self proclaimed scholars of Islam such as Bin Laden and the Taliban. Extremists benefit from the lack of a central authority in Islam. Legal experts (Muf-tis) can render legal opinions (fatwas) in matters both personal and public. While these legal opinions can be countered by moderate religious leaders, they may still retain validity for the Mufti's followers.<sup>7</sup>

It may be that Shahzad resented the fact that Muslims, once the pioneers of glorious civilizations have been reduced to objects of ridicule and instead of blaming Muslims for their failures, he instead held the U.S.A responsible for their failures. Dominique Moisi would support this idea as he argues in one of his books that it is a sense of humiliation felt by Muslims that enables extremists to attract a young educated Muslim, living in the west, to violent ideology.<sup>8</sup>

A report by the New York Police Department concludes that the search for identity and the failure of social and economic integration is playing a greater role than oppression, despair or spirit of revenge as incubators of radicalization.<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, however, Mohammed Siddique and Hasib Hussain, who planned the London Subway attacks in 2007 were well integrated into British society. These individuals neither studied in madrassas nor were they from poor families. What attracted them to terrorism? Reza Aslan argues that although far more integrated into Europe than their parents, first-and-second generation Muslim youth tend to feel even more excluded from European society, precisely because their expectations and their sense of entitlement are greater. These expectations and entitlements are not met due to restrictive citizenship laws and a lack of laws against religious discrimination<sup>10</sup>.

USA does not have restrictive citizenship laws and does have laws against religious discrimination. Why did Shazad feel alienated? Did the American society force him to choose between his religious identity and loyalty to the state? Perhaps he decided not to become fully integrated into

American society because of his perceived injustices perpetrated by American foreign policy. If he felt that the U.S.A. was the enemy, he should have moved to Afghanistan or Iraq and joined insurgents. Why stay in the U.S.A. and choose to kill innocent Americans? These questions are hard to answer.

It is also possible that Shahzad did not believe in religion at all. He was a nihilist. He was neither disenchanted nor alienated, but was simply a deeply disturbed and angry individual who wanted to vent his unknown frustration. His anger and resentment translated into violence and the stamp of religion on his actions lent his evil deeds some dignity and a possible shot at heaven as well. Another viable explanation is that Shahzad found terrorism to be the shortest and easiest route to glory or fame. Possibly, he was just a rebel in a modern world who found the terrorist ideology more attractive because it appealed to his animal and self-destructive instincts. It is also possible that Shahzad was simply mentally unstable and suffered from severe anxiety disorder not unlike Seung-Hui Cho, who killed 32 people in Virginia Tech before committing suicide. In such a case, Shahzad needs psychological treatment not a lecture on the peaceful spirit of Islam.

## Compassion is a Key Ingredient of Islamic Identity

At any rate, nothing gives Shahzad or anyone else the right to kill innocent civilians, especially not so in the name of religion as God Himself has given non-Muslims the gift of life. He lacked compassion, which is a key ingredient of a true Muslim identity. Shahzad could have become a great scientist, businessman, doctor or charity worker to restore the pride of his Muslim identity.

The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in light of the Holy Quran and *Ahadith* taught us more than 100 years ago that a religion must inculcate universal compassion and that we must learn from the attributes of God, who created Earth, air, water and fire for all humanity regardless of their faith, and should not be

petty of heart and illiberal. He also taught Muslims not to take up arms against a non-Muslim government when it treats them with justice and equity.<sup>11</sup>

## Conclusion

The poet Yeats said that the best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity. Never before has it been so important for the best in the U.S.A. and the Muslim world to forcefully articulate their compassionate convictions and reverse the tide of intolerance and prejudice that lends itself to extremism and terrorism. Muslim leaders should help Muslim youth find anchors that inspire them to serve humanity not harm it. They should be taught the Islam of the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> as opposed to the Islam of extremists. Western countries should also prevent or ameliorate the alienation of Muslim youth by making a genuine effort to integrate individuals like Shahzad without discouraging them from exploring their Muslim identity.

***The writer holds a BA in Political Science and Economics and a Master's Degree in Taxation. He works in a major CPA firm as an International Tax Advisor.***

Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup>Pipes, Daniel, the Corner, May 5, 2010 <http://corner.nationalreview.com/post/>

<sup>2</sup>Wright, Robert, "The Making of a Terrorist," New York Times, May 11, 2010 (<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/05/11/the-making-of-a-terrorist>)

<sup>3</sup> Hoodbhoy, Pervez, "Faisal Shahzad's Anti-Americanism" (<http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/editorial/faisal-shahzads-antiamericanism-850>)

<sup>4</sup>[http://www.government.nl/News/Press\\_releases\\_and\\_news\\_items/2003/September/Alienation\\_at\\_the\\_root\\_of\\_terrorism](http://www.government.nl/News/Press_releases_and_news_items/2003/September/Alienation_at_the_root_of_terrorism)

<sup>5</sup>Abu Dawud

<sup>6</sup>Muslim

<sup>7</sup> Esposito, John, "God in Politics" in The Future of Islam, Oxford University Press, USA, 2010. P. 73

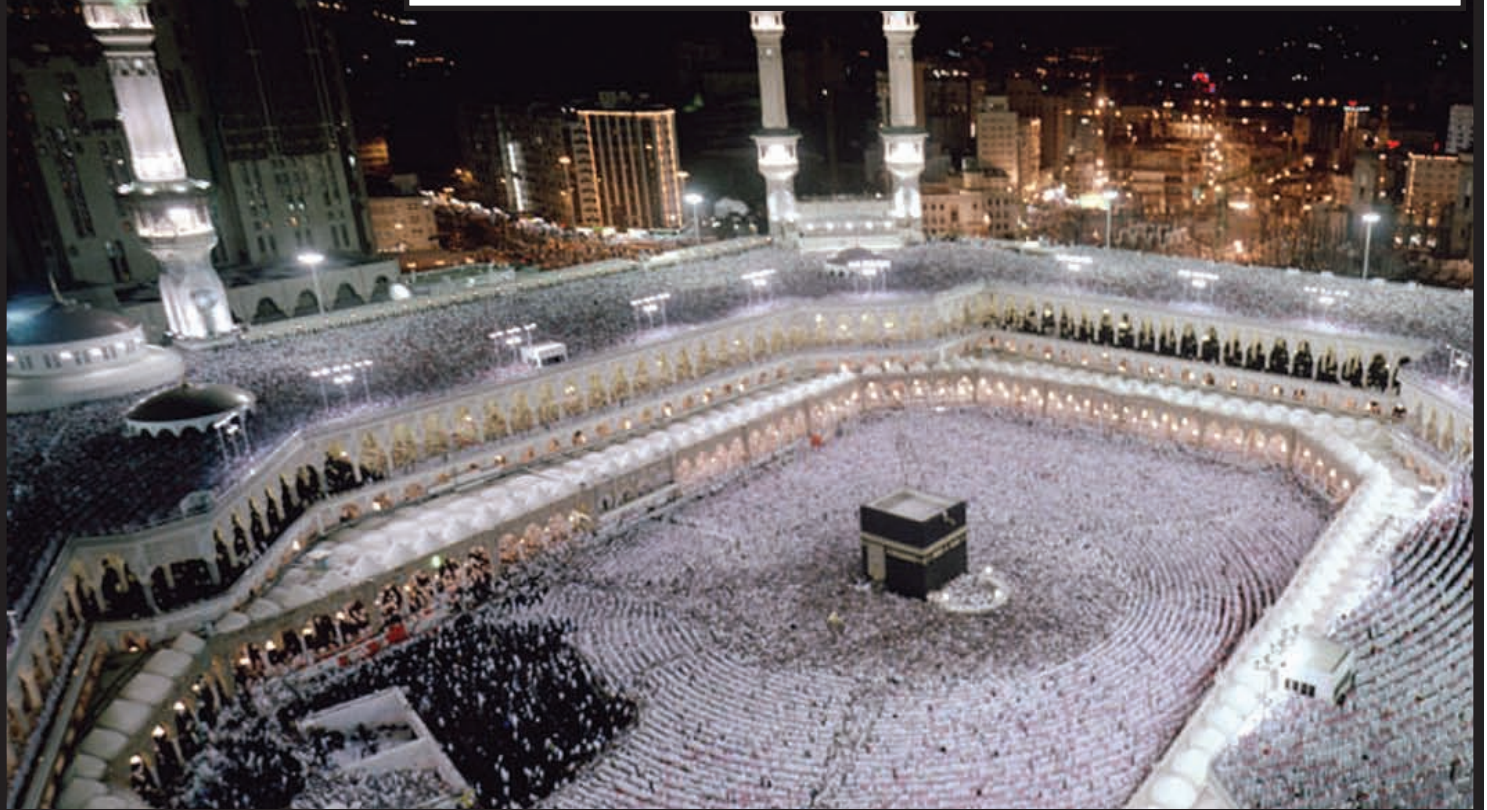
<sup>8</sup> Moisi, Dominique, "The Culture of Humiliation" in The Geopolitics of Emotion, Anchor Books, New York, 2010, p. 76

<sup>9</sup> ibid, p. 77

<sup>10</sup> Aslan, Reza, "The End of War as we Know it" in Beyond Fundamentalism, Random House Trade Paperback, 2010, p. 150

<sup>11</sup> Ahmad, Mirza Ghulam, "Jihad with the Sword" in Essence of Islam, Volume II, Islam International Publications, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, p. 324.

## The right steps for the pilgrimage to Mecca



# HAJJ

The annual pilgrimage to Mecca is to be performed between Nov. 14-18, 2010

### Ihram

**I**hram is the intention of the person willing to perform all rites of Hajj when he arrives at the Miqat.

Each direction coming into Makkah has its own Miqat. It is recommended that the one who intends to perform Hajj takes a shower with the intention to purify one's self and to be ready for Hajj, perfumes his body and puts on a two-piece garment with no headgear. The garments should be of seamless cloth. One piece is to cover the upper part of the body, and the second to cover the lower part. For a woman the Ihram is the same except that she can wear any kind of wide garments, and

should not use perfumes at all and her dress should cover the whole body decently, leaving the hands and the face uncovered.

Men are recommended to utter the talbeyah aloud while women are to say it quietly. This Talbeya is the following:

“ LABBAYKA ALLAHUMMA LABBAYK. LABBAYKA LA SHAREEKA LAKA LABBAYK. INNALHAMDA WAN-N'IMATALAKA WALMULK. LASHAREEK LAK”.

“Here I am at your service. O my Lord, Here I am. No partner you have. Here I am. Truly, the praise and the provisions are yours, and so is the dominion. No partner do you have”

### Tawaf

When a Muslim arrives in Makkah, he should make Tawaf around the Ka'bah, as a gesture of greeting Al-Masjid Al Haraam. This is done by circling the Ka'bah seven times in the counterclockwise direction, starting from the black stone with Takbeer and ending each circle at the black stone with Takbeer, keeping the Ka'bah to one's left.

Then the pilgrim goes to Maqam Ibrahim (Ibrahim's station), and performs two rak'ah behind it, (close to it if possible), but away from the path of the people making Tawaf. In all cases one should be facing the Ka'bah when praying behind Maqam Ibrahim.

## Sa'i

The next rite is to make sa'i between Safa and Marwah. The pilgrim starts Sa'i by ascending the Safa. While facing the direction of the Ka'ba he praises Allah, raises his hands and says Takbeer "Allah-u-Akbar" three times, then makes supplication to Allah. Then the pilgrim descends from the Safa and heads towards the Marwah.

One should increase the pace between the clearly marked green posts, but should walk at a normal pace before and after them. When the pilgrim reaches the Marwah, he should ascend it, praise Allah and do as he did at the Safa. This is considered one round and so is the other way from the Marwah to the Safa. A total of seven rounds are required to perform the sa'i.

## Shaving the Head or Trimming the Hair:

After Sa'i, the Muslim ends his Umra rites by shaving his head or trimming his hair (women should cut a finger tip's length from their hair). At this stage, the prohibitions pertaining to the state of Ihram are lifted and one can resume his normal life.

There are no required supplications for Tawaf or for Sa'i. It is up to the worshipper to praise Allah or to supplicate Him with any acceptable supplication or to recite verses of the Qur'an. There are no many specific supplications that the Prophet<sup>saw</sup> used to recite during the rites.

A Pilgrim performing Hajj should intend Ihram, from the place where he is staying, on the eighth of Dhul-Hijjah, which is the Tarwiah Day, and it is better to leave for Mina in the morning. In Mina, the pilgrims pray Dhuhr, Asr, Maghrib and Isha of the 8<sup>th</sup> day of Dhul-Hijjah and Fajr of the 9<sup>th</sup> day of Dhul-Hijja (Arafah Day). Dhuhr, Asr and Isha are each shortened to two Rak'ah only, but are not combined.

The pilgrims remain in Mina until sunrise of the 9<sup>th</sup> day of Dhul-Hijjah and then leave for Arafat.

## Departure to Arafat:

On the 9<sup>th</sup> day of Dhul-Hijjah, the Day of Arafah, the pilgrims stay in Arafat until sunset. It is preferable to pray Dhuhr and Asr at Arafat, shortened and combined during the time of Dhuhr to save the rest of the day for glorifying



Allah and for supplication asking forgiveness. A pilgrim should make sure that he is within the boundaries of Arafat, not necessarily standing on the mountain of Arafah, he should also be sure that he has spent any part of the night – even a few minutes-within Arafat.

Soon after sunset on the day of Arafah, the pilgrims leave for Muzdalifah quietly and reverently.

In Muzdalifah, the pilgrim performs Maghrib and Isha prayers combined, shortening the Isha prayer to two Rak'ah. Pilgrims stay overnight in Muzdalifah to perform the Fajr prayer and wait until the brightness of the morning is widespread before they leave for Mina passing through the sacred Mash'ar Al Haram valley.

## Back to Mina Stoning Jamrat Al-Aqabah

When the pilgrims arrive in Mina, they go to Jamrat Al-Aqabah where they stone it with seven pebbles glorifying Allah "Allah-u-Akbar" at each throw and calling on him to accept their Hajj. The time of stoning Jamrat Al-Aqabah is after sunrise. The size of the pebbles should not be more than that of a pea. The pebbles can be picked up either in Muzdalifah or in Mina.

## Slaughter of Sacrifice

After stoning Jamrat Al-Aqabah, the pilgrim goes to slaughter his sacrifice either personally or through the appointment of somebody else to do it on his behalf. A pilgrim should slaughter either a sheep, or share a cow or a camel with six others

## Shaving the Head or Trimming the Hair:

The final rite on the tenth day after offering one's sacrifice is to shave his head or to cut some of the hair. For women, the length of hair to be cut is that of a fingertip. The stoning of Jamrat Al-Aqabah and the shaving of head or the trimming of hair symbolizes the end of the first phase of the state of Ihram and the lifting of its restrictions except for sexual intercourse with one's spouse.

## Tawaf Al-Ifada

Tawaf Al-Ifadha is a fundamental rite of Hajj. The pilgrim makes Tawaf Al-Ifadha by visiting Al-Masjid Al-Haram and circling the Ka'bah seven times and praying two Rak'ah behind Maqam Ibrahim if possible and without causing any harm to Muslims. Then the pilgrim should make Sa'i between the Safa and the Marwa. After Tawaf Al-Ifadha the state of Ihram is completely ended and all restrictions are lifted including sexual intercourse with one's spouse. Tawaf Al-Ifadha can be delayed until the days spent in Mina are over.

The pilgrim should return to Mina and spend there the 11<sup>th</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> days of Dhul-Hijjah.

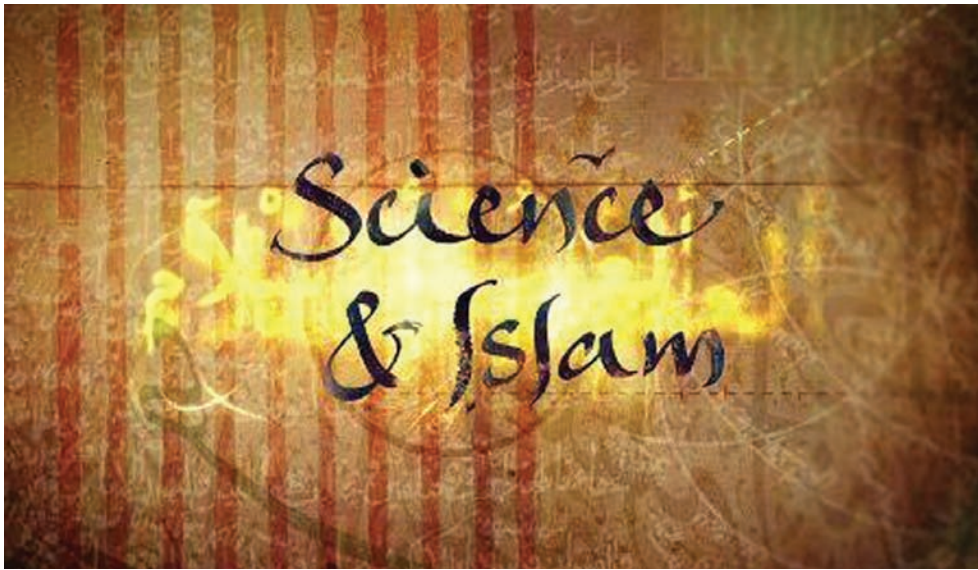
During each day, and after Dhuhr prayer until the midnight, the pilgrim stones the three stone pillars called "Jamrat": The smaller, the medium and Jamrat Al-Aqabah, glorifying Allah "Allah-u-Akbar" with each throw of the seven pebbles stoned at each pillar.

These pebbles are picked up in Mina. A pilgrim may leave Mina to Makkah on the 13<sup>th</sup> of Dhul-Hijjah or on the 12<sup>th</sup> if he wishes, there is no blame on him if he chooses the latter, but he has to leave before sunset if not he must stay in Mina till he throws the pebbles the next day (13<sup>th</sup>).

## Farewell Tawaf:

Farewell Tawaf is the final rite of Hajj. It is to make another Tawaf around the Ka'bah.

## Religious & Science Section



By Naseer A Tahir, M.D.

**I**n May 22, 2010 Nicolaus Copernicus was finally laid to rest in Poland, this time with due honor and recognition. When Nicolaus Copernicus died on May 24, 1543, he was originally buried as an unknown scholar rejected by Catholic Church. His history-changing book was published claiming a heliocentric view with the sun being in the center and not the earth. The commonly held biblical view was that the sun revolves around the earth. His claim, while starting the scientific revolution and forming the basis of modern astronomy, initiated the cleavage between science and Christianity. The medieval Church continued its opposition of science, fighting fiercely when the scientific discoveries did not reconcile with the Bible. The dogmatic biblical view point could not keep pace with demands of reason and rationality posed by science, and dealt with this reality by resorting to persecution and oppression of scientists such as Galileo, Bruno and Newton. It took centuries for this to change. At a special ceremony in the Vatican on May 9, 1983, His Holiness the Pope John Paul II declared:

“The Church’s experience, during the Galileo affair and after it, has led to a more mature attitude ... the Church is convinced that there can be no real contradiction between science and faith...”

Bernard Haisch, a well known astrophysicist, describes science in his book *The God Theory*: “Science today is based on the premises of materialism, reductionism, and randomness.” Materialism for him is that all reality consists of matter and energy, all measurable and observable. Reductionism means that complex things can be explained by explaining their constituents. Randomness refers to the convention that natural processes follow laws of chance.

In his book, *The God Delusion* Richard Dawkins writes:

“Fundamentalists know that they are right because they have read the truth in a holy book and they know, in advance, that nothing will budge them from their belief. ... The book is true, and if the evidence seems to contradict it, it is the evidence that must be thrown out, not the book. By contrast what I, as a scientist, believe (for example, evolution) I believe not because of reading a holy book, but because I have studied the evidence.”

What he claimed in his statement is: The Holy Book (Dawkins was talking about a holy book not just Quran so the author might want to elaborate here that by The Holy Book the author means Quran) is not true because it is not based on evidence; science is true because it is all from evidence. In this article, I will submit that both of these presumptions are wrong.

Sir Martin Rees in his famous book

*Just Six Numbers* has introduced us to six finely tuned constants that rule the universe. Life on this planet is a rare phenomenon and possible only with those constants and any slight variation of which is not compatible with presence of life. The scientific idea of randomness as an explanation for creation of the universe poses a problem, and the only way out for scientists is the proposal of theory of Multiple Universes. Here is how Bernard Haisch describes it in his book *The Purpose Guided Universe*:

“Our Universe has numerous characteristics that together make for a highly unlikely fine-tuning of properties. This is considered by scientist to be serious and significant enough to warrant an ‘explanation.’ Apart from the ‘it is just a lucky accident explanation’ we are left with only two possibilities. Either the properties of our Universe are special because they are indeed the product of intelligence or they are just the outcome of statistics. But the latter view requires the existence of a vast, perhaps infinite number of other unseen universes with properties different from ours.”

The number of universes needed for this randomness of chance, as described in his book *The Cosmic Landscape* by Stanford physicist and father of string theory Leonard Susskind, is theorized to be  $10^{500}$  that is one followed by 500 zeroes. By comparison to that the total number of atoms in the entire universe is only  $10^{80}$ . Which of the two is a more logical explanation? The unique properties of the universe are the product of an intelligence or randomness that requires the existence of  $10^{500}$  multi-universes?

The scientific evidence for multi-universe is precisely zero, but the scientists (acting like dogmatic priests) have opted for the unlikely multi-universe theory. This is just one example of the kind of ‘evidence’ that Richard Dawkins is boasting about.

While mocking at a ‘holy book,’ (he was mocking at all holy books) Richard Dawkins has ironically described the true belief of all the Muslims about the Holy Quran (might want to elaborate this point). I invite him to read the following with an unbiased (worthy of a scientist) mind:

“There is not a single verse in the Quran where natural phenomena are described and which contradicts what we

**For the Muslims, the Holy Quran is the word of God and Science is God in action with complete manifestation of all His rules. Since there is no intermingling of a human hand in the Holy Quran, each word, each sentence and each chapter of the Holy Quran is from the Divine and therefore the ultimate truth.**

know for certain from our discoveries in Science.” (Maurice Bucaille in *the Bible, the Quran and Science*)

The truth of the Holy Quran is accepted by many other scientists, following is an example of that:

“The intensive studies of the Qur’an and Hadith in the last four years have revealed a system of classifying human embryos that is amazing since it was recorded in the seventh century A.D. ... the descriptions in the Qur’an cannot be based on scientific knowledge in the seventh century.” (Keith L. Moore Professor Emeritus, Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology, University of Toronto)

As scientific knowledge developed it became clear that the biblical knowledge was inadequate in many spheres. *Creationism* and *Intelligent Design* movement are still fighting the scientifically proven concepts of *Evolution*. Scientific development in Islamic world, taking place centuries before renaissance, generally, faced no such handicap, until the more recent times.

For the Muslims, the Holy Quran is the word of God and Science is God in action with complete manifestation of all His rules. Since there is no intermingling of a human hand in the Holy Quran, each word, each sentence and each chapter of the Holy Quran is from the Divine and therefore the ultimate truth. When the Muslims find any contradiction between science and genuine understanding of the Quran, they firmly believe that the correct interpretation of the Quran

will always prevail and scientific idea will be proven wrong, as knowledge of science is tentative.

The acquisition of knowledge is the duty for all Muslim men and women. The Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>saw</sup> advised all Muslims to acquire knowledge from the cradle to the grave even if one had to go to China (a distant and hard to reach country at that time). Muslims have acted upon this advice throughout the ages. Abu Raihan Al Biruni was a great scholar in Islamic history. The story of his death is told by someone who was his contemporary. He heard Al Biruni was dying and he hurried to his house. Al Biruni opened his eyes and said, “are you so and so?” He said yes to that. Al Biruni said, “I am told you know the resolution of a knotty problem in the laws of inheritance of Islam.” He said, “Abu Raihan at this time?” Al Biruni replied, “Don’t you think it is better that I should die knowing, rather than ignorant?”

Dalafi and Hassan mention in *Renaissance of sciences in Islamic countries*:

“According to Dr. Mohammad Aijazul Khatib of Damascus University, nothing can emphasize the importance of science more than the remark that ‘in contrast to 250 verses which are legislative, some 750 verse of the Holy Quran — almost one eighth of it — exhort the believers to study Na-

ture; to reflect, to make the best use of reason and to make the scientific enterprise an integral part of the knowledge.”

The Holy Quran has repeatedly encouraged and challenged the believers to ponder over nature, “Who has created seven heavens in harmony. No incongruity canst thou see in the creation of the Gracious God. Then look again: Seest thou any flaw? Aye, look again, and yet again, thy sight will *only* return unto thee confused and fatigued.” (Al Quran, 67:4-5)

Intertwining of Divine knowledge and scientific development also produced other unique aspects only found in Islamic empires: tolerance of other faiths and equal opportunity for all. Michael Morgan in his book *Lost History* writes:

“A Muslim history that was about invention, creativity, tolerance, and coexistence. It is a Muslim history that had been more intellectually accomplished than the Christian Europe of the day, and a Muslim past where Christian, Jews, Hindus, and Buddhists had flourished and worked together. It is culture that had seeded the European Renaissance, and helped enable many aspects of the modern West and global civilization.

It is a history that by the beginning of the 21st century had been forgotten, ignored, misunderstood, suppressed, or even rewritten.”

During Medieval times while Islamic

empires flourished in the Middle East and Spain, religion and science coexisted harmoniously. Many connect the renaissance to the flow of knowledge from Spain to southern Europe. Several examples of religious differences leading to persecutions and prosecutions are found, but no record of maltreatment of any scholar or scientist such as Galileo exists. If the Religion was thought of God, then science is the study of action of God.

George Sarton, in his monumental five-volume History of Science, has divided the story of scientific achievements into ages each lasting half a century and connected to a central figure. 450-400 B.C., Sarton calls the age of Plato, followed by half centuries of Aristotle, of Euclid, of Archimedes, and so on. From 750 A.D to 1100 A.D. is the unbroken succession of Islamic scholars and scientists: Jabir, Khwarizmi, Bazi, Masudi, Wafa, Biruni, Avicenna, Ibn Al Haitham and Omar Khayam. The first European name of Gerard of Cremona appears in 1100 A.D. but honors are still shared with names of Ibn-Rushd, Musa Bin Maimoun, Tusi, and Ibn-Nafs. After 1350 A.D., only an occasional mention of Islamic names is to be found, as if the beacon of light of knowledge had moved to Europe entirely.

What happened to the Muslims in fourteenth century?

The seeds were sown that led to Islam of today that finds itself in a state of backwardness and darkness. The same people who were the providers and beacon of light for all now stand in need to beg it from others. The thought slowly entered Muslim minds that science must lead to rationality and eventually lack of faith. According to Dr. Abdus Salam, the Nobel Laureate in Physics from Pakistan, the causes for the downfall were both external as well as internal. While invasion by the Mongols that destroyed the empire was one of the external causes, the internal factors include the downfall of ideology, which can be seen compar-

ing the thoughts of two Islamic scholars, Al-Kindi with that of Ibn-Khaldun (This idea is not clear). (Renaissance of Sciences in Islamic countries by Dalafi and Hassan)

More than 1100 years ago Al-Kindi wrote:



“It is fitting then for us not to be ashamed to acknowledge truth and to assimilate it from whatever source it comes to us. For him who scales the truth, there is nothing of higher value than truth itself; it never cheapens nor abases him who seeks.”

The apathy towards scientific research that latter developed is evident from following, from Ibn-Khaldun, *Muqddima*:

“We have heard, of late, that in the lands of Franks, and on the northern shores of Mediterranean, there is a great cultivation of philosophical sciences. ... But it is clear that the problems of physics are of no importance for us in our religious affairs. Therefore, we must leave them alone.”

Muslims had changed in their thinking and actions. Al Biruni was accused of heresy for using a Byzantine solar cal-

endar to calculate prayers timings. Al Biruni retorted, “The Byzantine also partake of bread. Will you now promulgate a religious sanction against bread?”

Unfortunately this backward attitude continues. In his speech delivered in Bahrain on May11, 1983, Dr Abdus Salam talked about his unification theory and its effects in future technology and economy. He said:

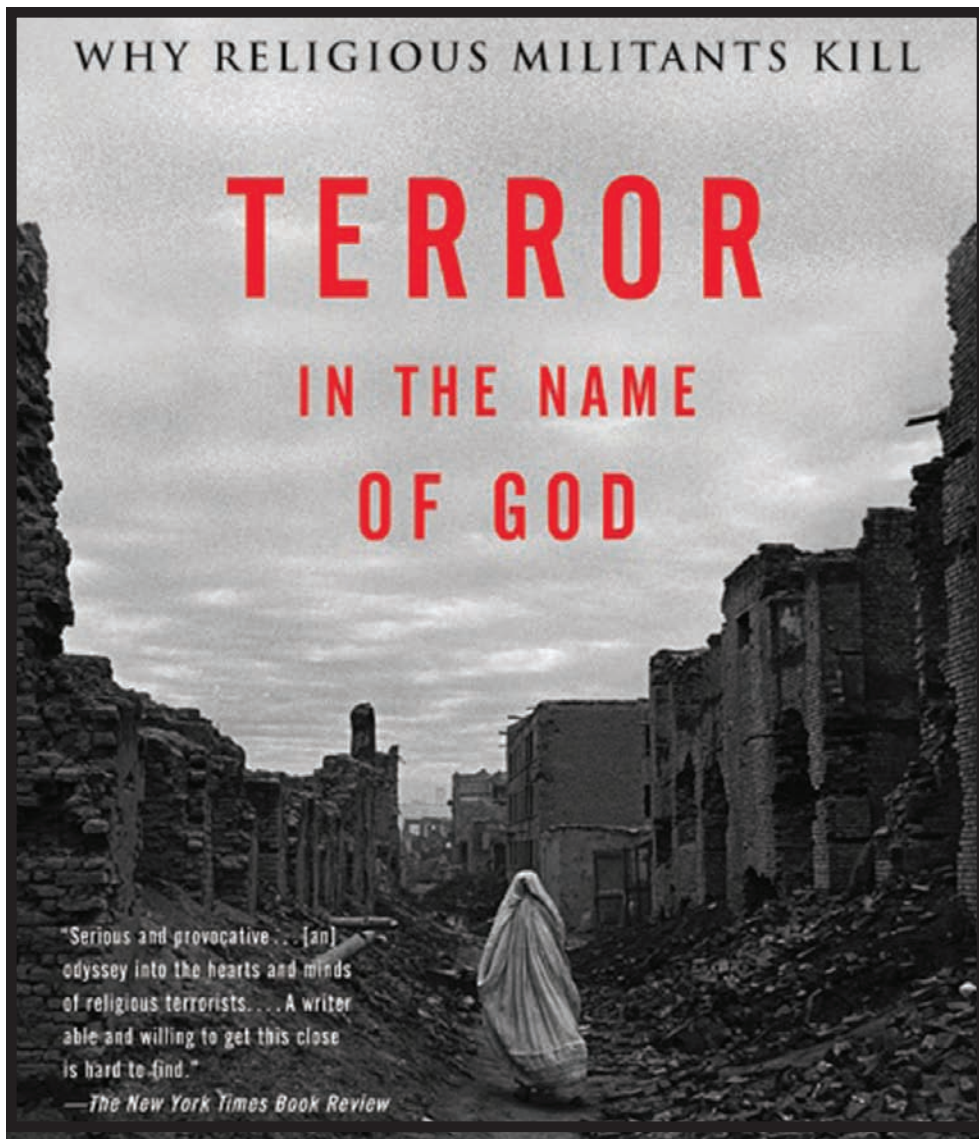
“So far, the only comment on these discoveries made by an Arab-Islamic journal was last month; this journal, published in London, accused me of following in my research on the unification of these fundamental forces, ‘the heretical Sufi doctrine of Wahdat-ul-Wujud.’” Dr. Abdus Salam’s reaction to this ill placed comment was, ‘*Inalillahe wa inna illahe rajeeon.*’ This brief verse is generally recited on death of a person and also used as an expression of shocking amazement. The same journal promoted the idea that we as Muslims should not concern ourselves with advances in science. We should concentrate on imitative technology.

Muslims can achieve their scientific glory once again. All they need to do is turn back to their original Faith, as they had done in past. We need to revert to the Quranic injunction, “In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day there are indeed Signs for men of understanding. (The Holy Quran 3:191)

***The writer is an Anesthesiologist and Pain Management Specialist in Rochester, NY. He is President of the local chapter of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and has been since 1983.***

Endnotes:

- 1 Dawkins Richard. The God Delusion. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006.
- 2 Dalfi, H.R. Hassan, M.H.A. Renaissance of Sciences in Islamic countries. World Scientific, 1994.
- 3 Rees, M. Just six Numbers. Basic Books, 2000.
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ances? And then how does a leader effectively run the organization? How is the leader able to successfully generate the train of thought to hate, harm and kill innocent people?

Jessica Stern put on her own empathic garb to elicit this information from them, believing that it is necessary to grasp the roots of the beliefs of terrorists without any prejudice towards them. To develop such a relationship is a must if we are to combat the evil of terrorism: we need to comprehend their own reasoning behind their motives. Stern says, "...I wanted to understand how they view the world and how they feel, in order better to understand how to stop them" (introduction, page xxix).

Several grievances are highlighted "that lead operatives to become terrorists" and engage in religious conflicts. However their goals are multi-dimensional, not necessarily always remaining religious or spiritual in principle but quite often political as well as profit-oriented, thereby "switching from grievance to greed" (page 7). But to terrorize people is their first line of defense, or attack, whichever way we view it.

Humiliation and alienation are emphasized as core sources for frustrated citizens as well as nations set back from their goals, to turn to terrorism. Such defeated people easily succumb to the motivations of terrorists. Stern has pointed out that it is a matter of identifying these sources as well as the motivational factors that follow.

She herself has described quite a few paths that people's lives and even nations, take before they get sucked into a group that they can relate with.

Touching upon today's martyrdom operations, she has elucidated how leaders manipulate innocent men and their families, using religion and giving them rewards, both material and spiritual, to join a cause but also to join the sect as was being done during the Roman Empire by the Christians.

Her interviews with the men in her book have revealed how "hopelessness, deprivation, envy and humiliation make death and paradise, seem more appealing" (pg 38), and hence the birth of a suicide-bomber. Furthermore, Stern has brought to light not only why and how Muslims become suicide-bombers but has

## Terror in the name of God:

Book Review by Maham Khan

Author Jessica Stern has sought to discover the underlying reasons why normal people with normal sensitivities suddenly transform into beings with no empathy towards those who hold opposing beliefs. In her book, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill*, she has presented her interviews with terrorists as well as cult members with the intention of trying to understand what goes through their minds in order to kill...in the name of God, while they continue to worship Him, do good deeds and extend charity towards society. Where and how do the "malice and fore-



Author Jessica Stern

thought," the components of terrorism, come in? What attracts people to join these groups and what are their griev-



*Her book is a straightforward piece of work showing no bias towards any religion or nation. Today terrorism is a global war with many of the participants sadly being Muslim, yet she has not excluded the role of the United States in the mess that Muslims have found themselves in.*

drawn a similarity in how early Christians glorified martyrs.

Stern's honest work has shown that terrorism is not peculiar to just one religion or one nation. Apocalyptic cults have their own share of zealous followers who claimed that "...if purging had to precede peace, then let the purging begin" (introduction, pg xv).

Existing today are even Jewish groups that have aggressive agendas of their own regarding Jerusalem and even the building of the Third Temple...by blasting off the Dome of the Rock first as revealed by an interesting interview, with an MIT graduate, Yoel Lerner, who was imprisoned for terrorist plots in Jerusalem.

Stern has also discussed in great extent, how the mingling of church and state has promoted the goals of religious groups or terrorist organizations and has cost nations thousands of lives. In some cases, e.g., Maluku (Indonesia) and Pakistan, the government and even the military has played a vital role in shaping jihadi groups that eventually corrupt to become violent. Some-

times these groups are formed to protect the people because the government had failed to do so. And so they prey on the disenchanted and recruit them to become future terrorists. Ultimately, it becomes difficult for the sitting or even succeeding government to reign in the "genie it unleashed" (pg 78).

Leaders of terrorist organizations and religious cults, as examined by the author, have to be adept at instinctively reaching out to another's inner desires and to recognize what is missing and what could satisfy the recruit. The strict militant ethics provided in these organizations are part of the attraction for those who want answers and solace for themselves and the society. They find their solutions in men who have refined the art of preaching their beliefs with confidence and wear a religious facade to impress their sincerity upon others.

In 1998, she interviewed Kerry Noble, an elder of the Christian cult called *The Covenant, the Sword, and the Arm of the Lord* (CSA) whose main purpose was to bring about the return of Jesus Christ<sup>as</sup>. She quotes him say-

ing "the original timetable was up to God but God could use us in creating Armageddon. That if we stepped out, things might be hurried along. You get tired of waiting for what you think God is planning" (pg 11). It is people like him who carry such frustrations with the world at large who are capitalized upon. He also described how his superior made the members feel secure among themselves. He emphasized his desire for them to be purified and convinced them that they were strong. Thus, the psychological process stays intact by constantly reminding the members of such convictions and desires.

Jessica Stern took a whirlwind journey from Cambridge, Massachusetts, spanning over a couple of years to travel to places like Jerusalem, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Indonesia, to come up with *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill*. Her book reveals to us what lies behind the manifestos of religious groups such as *Laskar Jihad*, CSA, the Army of God better known as Doctor Killers, or the Temple Mount Faithful. Her candid interviews with noted organizational leaders such as Indonesian cleric Ja'far Umar Thalib, Fazlur Rahman Khalil (*Harkat-ul-Mujahideen*) inform us of how men are sucked into these religious groups and how they are taught to nurture their "killer self" in cults and *madrassahs*.

Her book is a straight-forward piece of work showing no bias towards any religion or nation. Today terrorism is a global war with many of the participants sadly being Muslim, yet she has not excluded the role of the United States in the mess that Muslims have found themselves in. Acknowledging that it is a long road, she believes terrorism can only be fought with stringent controls on all aspects that terrorist organizations are heavily dependent on, e.g., weapons, outside funding and political support etc. However, when religion is being used to mobilize the people, it is the religious aspect that needs to be fully grasped and in many cases corrected. The belief that their terror tactics are morally justified can only be countered by the fact that "God, as is His wont, is silent."



## I'm a writer, not a fighter

By Amjad Mahmood Khan

Daylight breaks; the headlines scream—  
Mosques attacked; a deadly scheme.  
Oceans apart; my sinking heart—  
Bodies strewn; the innocent depart.  
Who am I to a country gone cold?  
To extremists bereft of mind and soul?  
I'm an Ahmadi; I'm not a stranger—  
I'm a writer; I'm not a fighter.

Lahore awakens; the 28th of May—  
A mother weeps while her children lay.  
A hundred martyrs from the bullets' rounds—  
Their blood still cries from the hallowed  
grounds.

Who am I to the injured and the worn?  
To the father and the brother; to the families  
torn?  
I'm an Ahmadi; I'm not a stranger—  
I'm a writer; I'm not a fighter.

Stirred hearts and awakened minds—  
Millions watch; their emotions grind.  
The attackers' wish? More blood on the  
floor—  
Of bullets and grenades; of bombs and wars.  
Who am I to the extreme and the barbaric?  
Whose anger their ailment; whose murder  
their tonic?  
I'm an Ahmadi; I'm not a stranger—  
I'm a writer; I'm not a fighter.

Confusion reigns; as the blood  
stains on the victims' remains—  
Witness reports; terrorists' retorts;  
the police explains.

Calm prevails; as the Ahmadis hail  
the Khalifa's statement—  
Of patience and prayer; of  
courage and containment.  
Who am I to my beloved Imam—  
Whose shield I fight behind from?  
I'm an Ahmadi; I'm not a  
stranger—  
I'm a writer; I'm not a fighter.

The law's awry; hands are tied; the  
lies no one buys—  
A cryptic defense; leaders grow  
tense; little surprise.  
But justice is blind; the truth they  
will find; it's Allah's design—  
We strive for what's right; our  
pens our might; the enemies  
decline.

Who am I to my one true  
Jama'at—  
Whose unity I derive my life from?  
I'm an Ahmadi; I'm not a  
stranger—  
I'm a writer; I'm not a fighter.

**Ibn Abbas relates:**

I was riding behind the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> one day when he said: Boy, I would instruct thee in some matters. Be watchful of Allah, He will be watchful of thee. Safeguard His commandments; He will be ever with thee. When thou must ask, as of Allah alone; and when thou must seek help, implore Allah alone for help. Remember that if all the people were to combine to bestow some benefit upon thee, they would not be able to bestow anything upon thee except that which Allah has appointed for thee, and that if all of them were to combine to harm thee, they would not be able to afflict thee with anything except that which Allah has decreed against thee. The pens have been lifted and the ink of the books has become dry.

Safeguard the commandments of Allah, you will find Him before you; remember Him in prosperity, He will remember you in adversity. Be sure that that which has led you into error will not lead you aright, and that which has guided you to good will not lead you astray. Remember that help comes with steadfastness, there is prosperity after adversity and that hardship is followed by ease.

**Shaddad Ibn Aus relates:**

The Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> said: A wise person is one who watches over himself and restrains himself from that which is harmful and strives for that which will confront him after death; and a foolish one is he who gives rein to his cravings and seeks Allah for the fulfillment of his vain desires.



Sunday, July 04, 2010

## Standing Behind America and Islam

Rizwan Alladin

With the United States fighting two arduous wars in so-called Muslim countries, it would seem difficult for American Muslims to be proud of their country and to sing the praise of the Constitution, especially on July Fourth. However, if a Muslim truly reflects on America's history and heritage, one should conclude that loving this country is the easiest thing to do.

During the days when the United States population was primarily Caucasian and Christian, we fought other similar-looking countries during World War I and World War II. Earlier than that, we even fought ourselves in the Civil War. But as those were conflicts of ideology, it became imperative for America to fight, which is sadly the same situation now. The new troublesome ideologies of influence by terror, persecution of women and minorities, and restriction of freedom of thought, are neither American nor Muslim.

I implore all my fellow American Muslims to wholeheartedly celebrate Independence Day, and continue to show our support for our troops and pray for the success of their mission and safe return.



## Thank you, Founding Fathers

Tahir Ahmad

It took awhile for me, an Indonesian Muslim who works and lives in America, to appreciate the significance of July Fourth. Then, I came across a quote of President John F. Kennedy that helped me understand: "Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty."

Since I have lived here, this nation has

given me an education, freedom, security and the liberty to become a part of its society. I understand and realize that this country has paid a huge price and sacrificed many of its citizens for me, and so many others like me, to enjoy these freedoms. For this I am very grateful and this July Fourth, I simply want to say to the Founding Fathers, "Thank you."



July 4th

By: Sohail Hussain

On this Fourth of July, I salute the flag and our founding fathers for allowing all Americans to practice their faith freely. In fact, it was in a letter to Baptists in Connecticut that in 1802 then President Thomas Jefferson coined the phrase 'separation of church and state.' He assured them of the first amendment to the Constitution, which states that, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Now almost nine years since 9/11, I appreciate more than before the country to which I belong. This is because despite the finding that the terror was perpetrated by renegade Muslims, our government protects my right as a Muslim to openly preach the true and peaceful message of Islam that I and millions of American Muslims uphold. As we wave our stars and stripes, let us all honor our Constitution and its authors. Let us also pray that our nation continues to flourish on these principles of religious freedom and that the rest of the world follows suit.



## Ground Zero Mosque: A Muslim's Perspective

By: Harris Zafar

Should a Muslim group be allowed to build an Islamic prayer center two blocks away from Ground Zero? This simple question has evolved into a passionate debate, as zealous support and opposition is seen almost daily in the news. Organizers of the Muslim mosque near Ground Zero are pushing the project forward despite a growing

number of vocal opponents wishing to halt this project in its tracks.

At the center of this controversy is the "Cordoba House" (also being called "Park 51"); a \$100 million construction project of a 13-story Islamic Center two blocks from where the twin towers once stood. The mosque is a project of the American Society for Muslim Advancement and the Cordoba Institute, which promotes cross-cultural understanding between Islam and the West. Led by Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, the group hopes the new structure will stand as a symbol of tolerance and unity. Detractors call it an insult for an Islamic structure to be erected at the site of the tragic 9/11 attacks where nearly 3,000 Americans lost their lives.

At a hearing last week at the Landmarks Preservation Commission, nearly 100 angry people gathered, advocating to obstruct this Islamic Center from being built. What may have begun as a civil show of disagreement often reverted to boorish shouts from the crowd whenever someone would speak in favor of the project.

With the passage of time, we see more mosque construction plans face opposition. Currently, the Islamic Center of Murfreesboro is facing fierce opposition to its plans of constructing an Islamic Center to serve the needs of the Muslim community in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Back in 2007, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community canceled its plans to purchase a large plot of land in Walkersville, Maryland, for use as a prayer space and for national events after the township pressed government officials to halt the sale of the land.

As a Muslim, I know a mosque is meant to be a symbol of peace and must not be used as the source of hostility. The only way to maintain civility and peace is for the Muslim group sponsoring each mosque construction project to reach out to its neighbors and understand their concerns so that any erroneous fears can be addressed with peace and respect.

The bitter fact is that the actions of extremists have made it difficult for many Americans to trust even moderate Muslims because of the inability of such people to separate the extreme faction from the rest of the Muslim world. Consequently, Muslims in America need to be sensitive to the fears and the mistrust that have infiltrated the minds of many

of their fellow citizens. Patience and perseverance are needed in order to help our fellow Americans understand that a Muslim and a Mosque are nothing to be afraid of.

It appears that the Cordoba House's organizers sought to avoid early publicity around the proposed construction project and apparently waited months before seeking public comment. The ensuing firestorm from the local neighborhoods and communities does not, therefore, appear to be all too surprising. A better and potentially more palatable approach would have been to conduct broad community outreach and enlist broad community support before pushing the Center's plan through local government channels. Given the sensitivities surrounding the Ground Zero site and the general ignorance of Islam, this approach may have averted the nasty debate we have now. Ultimately, I am in the favor of the construction of a mosque, but I am not happy with the way the organizers have appeared to have pursued it.

Any Muslim community planning to build a mosque must reach out to the surrounding neighborhood and personally share their intentions behind the construction project. If fear and mistrust is born of ignorance, then open dialogue and education is the only way to help people overcome this misplaced fear.

If Muslims want to stand for peace, they must stand patiently. We must respond to fear, intolerance and even hatred with peace, education and patience. That is our true Jihad.

washingtonpost.com

July 23, 2010

## Secularism Is An Islamic doctrine

By: Ismat Mangla and Sardar Anees Ahmad

Some two million Muslims, according to the Pew Research Center, have the privilege of living in the United States today. Many are citizens who vote, participate in all parts of civic life and hold steady jobs. But there are still some Americans who distrust Muslim-Americans, as evidenced by the current opposition to mosque projects in both Manhattan and Tennessee. Americans may wonder: Do Muslims living in Western society have any sense of loyalty to their non-Muslim governments? If a country enacts Shariah law, does that mean that women and non-Muslims

*“If Muslims are living in the United States, they are part of this society,” Mr. Mahdi added. According to their own religious obligations, they must be loyal to and follow the rule of law of the society in which they reside. In fact, Muslims have a special responsibility in countries like this one, which affords them so many freedoms.*

will lose all their rights? Are non-Muslim countries with large Muslim populations in danger?

This past weekend, more than 6,000 Ahmadi Muslims gathered in Virginia for the 62nd annual convention of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA, where this important issue was discussed. Mr. Naseem Mahdi, the missionary-in-charge and a vice president of the community, delivered a keynote speech on the question “Are Muslims required to obey non-Muslim governments?” The answer, according to Mr. Mahdi and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, is a resounding yes.

From the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community's perspective, there is no doubt: Secularism, is, in fact, an Islamic doctrine. “Islam,” Mr. Mahdi said, “does not promote a system that divides the citizens of a country into classes, where Muslims are first-class citizens, and everyone else is not.”

The Holy Qur'an states: “Verily, Allah commands you to give over the trusts to those entitled to them, and that, when you judge between men, you judge with justice.” (4:59). This verse mandates that the Muslims accept the most capable person as their ruler, irrespective of faith. And once that ruler is appointed, Muslims must obey him: “Obey...those who are in authority among you” (4:60). Prophet Muhammad himself said, “You should listen to and obey your ruler, even if you [despise him]” (Bukhari). This is sufficient evidence of Islam's mandate for the separation of mosque and state.

In fact, Prophet Muhammad took the issue of obedience to your government even further. He said, “Love of your homeland, your place of residence, is part of your faith.” The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, reiterated

this message, stating, “It should be the duty of every Muslim to render true and sincere obedience to this government and offer heartfelt gratitude to such an authority and pray for its welfare.”

“If Muslims are living in the United States, they are part of this society,” Mr. Mahdi added. According to their own religious obligations, they must be loyal to and follow the rule of law of the society in which they reside. In fact, Muslims have a special responsibility in countries like this one, which affords them so many freedoms. The Holy Qur'an says that God is unfavorable of those who are not grateful for what's given to them: “If you are grateful, I will, surely bestow more favors on you; but if you are ungrateful, then know that My punishment is severe indeed” (14:8). To take advantage of American freedoms without being grateful for them is hypocritical and against the teachings of Islam.

So does Islam's mandate of loyalty dictate that Muslims blindly agree with any governmental policy, regardless of its merit? Mr. Mahdi added, “Sometimes people misunderstand ‘obedience.’ It does not mean you cannot disagree. The first step in democracy is dissent. That's part of the freedom of living in this society.”

Disagreeing through legal channels, therefore, is permissible in Islam. What's not acceptable: creating any sort of disorder while voicing or demonstrating your disagreement. In 2:206, the Holy Qur'an states, “And when he is in authority, he runs about in the land to create disorder in it and destroys the crops and the progeny of man; and Allah loves not disorder.” Thus, spreading any type of discord is absolutely anti-Islamic. “If you have been wronged,” said Mr. Mahdi, “You have the option of legal recourse, or you can migrate from that country. That is what the Holy Qur'an allows.” He cited 4:98, which states, “...They will reply, ‘We were treaded as weak in the land.’ They will say, ‘Was not Allah's earth vast enough for you to emigrate therein?’”

Prophet Muhammad himself was the best example of this practice. After spending most of his life in Mecca, the persecution Muslims faced there became too much to bear. So the Prophet asked his followers to leave their homes and migrate to Medina. American Muslims are fortunate to not face such a burden; instead, we're blessed to live in a land that ensures our religious freedoms and respects our right to worship. The least we can do, then, is to remain loyal to it.



In a documentary on HBO called “**My Trip with Al Qaeda.**” A journalist spends time in Egypt, interviews sources, etc. He then writes a Broadway play detailing his experiences, along with the history of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bin Laden, etc.

In his narrative, he talks about Taif, 55 miles from Mecca, in which Bin Laden’s dad was in charge of building a road for those two cities. He parallels Taif with 9/11 by saying that Prophet Muhammad<sup>saw</sup> was the first to use a catapult to break down a large wall in Taif to lay siege to that city in 630 AD, even while knowing women and children would be hurt. The catapult is the simile to the planes that struck the towers. Is this Taif story true, something tells me he is wrong.



## Answer

The Taif story is true. The Prophet<sup>saw</sup>, after the battle of Hunain, did lay siege to the town for 21 days. The main tribe living there were the Thaqif. There were negotiations to let the women and children leave, but the women, (amongst them a daughter of Abu Sufyan who was married to Urwa bin Masu'd) refused. The siege engine, testudo, was used to break down the gate and the outer fortifications of the city. The Muslims attacked under its cover but were repulsed, leaving about 13 dead. There were no known casualties amongst the Thaqif. The Muslims eventually lifted the siege, but as was customary, the Prophet did not lay waste their orchards outside the city and that bode well with the Thaqif. Urwa accepted Islam and came to Medina. He was killed on his return by the Thaqif. The real chief of Thaqif,

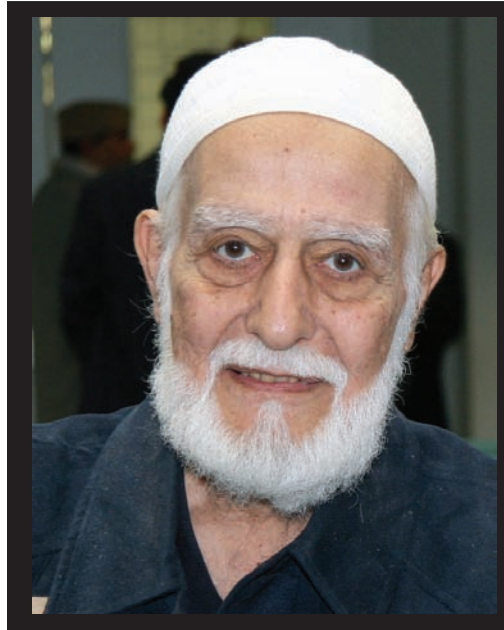
Abdu Yalail (who had denied help to the Prophet during his first visit to Taif) became convinced that they could not survive in opposition sent a delegation to Medina to seek terms of surrender. They negotiated for many days - the sticking point was the destruction of their goddess, Al Lat, which was a large rock statue. The Prophet did not budge from his demand of its immediate destruction. Neither would he countenance a reduction in the obligatory prayers. Finally, it was agreed that they would not have to do it themselves and idol would be destroyed by others, Abu Sufyan led the team that destroyed it and Urwa's son was made their chief.

These are the facts as reported by the historians, Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Hisham and Tabari. The narrative is self explanatory.

# The Law of Probability in the Fulfillment of Prophecies about the Mahdi

By Mustafa Sabet

*(Mr Sabet, an Egyptian Ahmadi, Engineer by trade, who lived in Canada and served our community in many ways including hosting the Arabic programs on MTA passed away recently. In his memory, we reproduce an article written by him and published in the Muslim Herald February 1982 issue.)*



Much has been written and said about the advent of the Mahdi in the latter days. There are many traditions mentioned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>saw</sup> describing every aspect of the life, mission and the time in which the Mahdi was to come. Due to these numerous traditions and the emphasis they lay upon accepting and supporting the Mahdi in his mission, and his high status affirmed by some traditions which put him above all prophets before the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> a great part of the Muslim nation has considered the advent of the Mahdi to be cornerstone in the reformation of the faith. On the other hand, we find that many false claimants have claimed to be the promised Mahdi. Accordingly, some Muslims are inclined to reject all the traditions about the Mahdi.

I will not try to prove or disprove the authenticity of these traditions. To me, and to many others, these prophecies have already been fulfilled in the person of the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, May peace and blessings of God be upon him as well as on his master, the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>saw</sup>. I will take only ten prophecies about the Mahdi and analyze the chances of their fulfillment in one person.

I will be making use of the well known principle of probability. If the chance of one thing happening is one in X and the chance of another independent or related thing is one in Y, then the chance that they both happen at the same time is X times Y, i.e. if we throw a dice on the table, the chance of getting a specific number is one in six, but if we throw two dice, then the chances of getting the same specific number from both the dices is one in

36. The proof of this theory could be found in any college Algebra text. I must point out that in our daily life; we accept the validity of these scientific facts without any objection. They are the foundation on which rates are fixed for all kinds of insurable risks, whether it is life, property or car insurance, and in practice the truth of this theory has been proved in every application.

In evaluating these prophecies we shall have to answer this question regarding each prophecy: One man in how many men could fulfill this particular prophecy? I realize that some may object to this question, saying that these prophecies were made with respect to Mahdi, and no other man can fulfill them. This, of course, is true when we consider the mass of prophecies regarding the Mahdi but is not true of all individual prophecies. Let us, for example, take ten prophecies regarding some aspects of the Promised Mahdi, such as:

## 1. His Name

It was prophesized, for example, that the Mahdi (literally meaning the Guided One) would have a name which resembled the name of the Holy Prophet. We know that the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> was given the name Muhammad at his birth

and it is the name by which he was addressed and mentioned in the Holy Quran. But he had said that had been given different names among which were Ahmad and Mahmod, which literally resemble the name Muhammad. Now the question is how many persons have the name Ahmad or Muhammad? If we assume that the average number of people living is 3000 million, out of which 600 million are Muslims, a ratio of 2 out of 10; and assume that 50% of all Muslims have a name that one way or another is similar to the Holy Prophet's name, there will be 300 million persons who could fulfill this prophecy. The chances of fulfillment of this prophecy would therefore be 1 in 10 with respect to the total population. It is well known that the name of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya was Ahmad.

## 2. His Origin

It was also prophesized that the Promised Reformer would be a man from Persia and would belong to the family of the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup>. Many false claimants who belonged to the Holy Prophet's family neglected the condition of being of Persian origin. The Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement was a Persian through his father and belonged to the family of the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> through his mother. But was he the only one who fulfilled this prophecy? Of course not. If we assume that there are 30 million Persians and all of them belong to the Holy Prophet's family, then the chances of fulfillment of this prophecy would be 1 in 100.

## 3. His Place

It was mentioned that the Promised One would come specifically in the area east of Damascus. If we take the area bounded by the latitude 30°N and 35°N and keep proceeding further to the east until we reach the Pacific Ocean, then everyone living in this area could have claimed to have fulfilled this prophecy. Incidentally, Qadian, the little village of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, lies exactly east of Damascus in the area bounded by latitudes 30°N and 35°N. But again he was not the only person who lived

in this area, but there may be about 300 million persons living in that strip from Damascus to the Pacific, and hence the chances of fulfillment of this prophecy would be 1 in 10.

#### 4. His Features and Complexion

It was mentioned that the Promised Mahdi would have a fair complexion, neither white nor black, and would have sharp eyes, soft hair and a flowing beard that would touch his shoulders whenever he turned his face to the right or the left. This prophecy excludes all the white and black races. It also excludes all those who have curly hair from the remaining population. If we estimate a possible number of 30 million people could fulfill this prophecy, it means that the chance of fulfillment would be 1 in 100. Incidentally, the Mahdi of Sudan had a black not dark complexion, had curly not soft and straight hair and had a very short beard. I believe that out of all the claimants to the office of Mahdi, the only one who fulfilled this prophecy in all the details was Hadhrat Ahmad<sup>as</sup> of Qadian.

#### 5. His Health

It was prophesized that the Promised One would suffer from two ailments. Of course every one of us has sometimes become a victim of some kind of disease. But how many of us have lived their whole lives carrying with them two kinds of diseases? If we estimate the number to be 300 million persons, then the chances of fulfillment of this prophecy would be 1 in 10. Hadhrat Ahmad<sup>as</sup> of Qadian suffered from two kinds of diseases and he had pointed out that this was a sign from Allah to distinguish the true claimant from the false one.

#### 6. His Revelation

It was prophesized that the Promised One would receive revelation from God. I should emphasize here that Islam as explained by the Holy Quran is the last religion, brought by the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup>, for all mankind and will remain valid and intact until the Day of Judgment. No other book is to abrogate the message of the Holy Quran and no other religion to be sent by God. The only kind of revelation that may exist after the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> is that which bears glad tidings to the believers and reveals the secrets of the unseen. In no way should it contradict, add or cancel any word contained in the Holy Quran. Rather, it should resemble the kind of revelation the Prophet Aaron<sup>as</sup> received in the time of Moses<sup>as</sup>. The same was received by the prophets raised in the Jewish nations, it did not add or abrogate any teachings of the Torah, but its purpose was to explain the teaching of the Torah. In the same way, the Promised Mahdi was to receive revelation from God, but his revelation would not contradict any teachings of the Holy Quran. It would only be for the purpose of proving that Allah is the only True Living God, and to establish the truth and the triumph of Islam as the only true and living religion.

How many men could fulfill this prophecy? We know that from time to time, someone emerges who claims to have received revelation from God. The Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> said that in the time between himself and the advent of the Mahdi there would be thirty false claimants. For our estimation, we still assume that in every time there existed thirty persons all claiming to receive revelation. Accordingly, the chances that this prophecy was to be fulfilled would be 1 in 100,000,000.

#### 7. His Life

The Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> had said that the duration of the mission of the Promised Mahdi would be forty years. Again in the Holy Quran, the criteria by which we can differentiate between a true and a false prophet is that the false one would be killed unless he repents. If we study the life of those who

have claimed to be the promised one for the latter days we find that they were subjected to the operation of this heavenly law. In Sudan, the one who claimed to be Mahdi was killed by the British authorities. In Iran, the Bab was also killed after six years of his claim. In the West, the founder of the Mormon Church was killed at the age of 34. It was only the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement who received his first revelation in about the year 1868 and, for forty years until the year 1908, he spent his life in the service of Islam. In spite of all kinds of opposition and attempts upon his life, God saved him from being killed at the hands of his enemies providing the irrefutable evidence of his truthful claim to be the Promised Mahdi.

How many men could claim that they had fulfilled this prophecy, that is to say that they had spent forty years of their life in the service of Islam and that they had been appointed by God for that office, lived for forty years and were not humiliated or killed by their opponents? To me there is none except Hadhrat Ahmad<sup>as</sup> of Qadian, but just for the sake of argument and in order not to be accused of exaggerating our estimations, let us assume that there were twenty nine unknown and unheard of person who in addition to Hadhrat Ahmad<sup>as</sup> had fulfilled this prophecy. Then we can calculate the chances of fulfillment to be 1 in 100,000,000.

#### 8. His Signs

According to the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> the True Mahdi would have a heavenly sign that had never occurred before. The moon would be eclipsed on the thirteenth of the lunar month and the sun would be eclipsed on the twenty-eighth, and both eclipses would occur successively in the fasting month of Ramadhan. It is worth mentioning that this heavenly sign occurred on the same days during the month the Ramadhan of the year 1331 after Hijra (AD 1894). The question we ask is how many persons could claim that they had fulfilled this prophecy? One may say that the estimated number of 3,000,000,000 persons living during the year 1894 could have claimed that they fulfilled this particular prophecy. But we must not forget that the two eclipses were not just a natural phenomenon, but they were to occur as a heavenly sign in support of the true Mahdi. In other words, the true Mahdi should have made his claim before this sign had occurred, and point out to the world that this heavenly sign had been manifested in his support. Let us now consider those people who had claimed the office of the Mahdi at that time. The Sudanese Mahdi was killed at the hands of his enemies in the year AD1885, nine years before the sign occurred. The Iranian Bab was killed at the hands of his opponents in the year AD1850, forty years before this sign occurred. It was Hadhrat Ahmad<sup>as</sup> of Qadian, the only living claimant at that time who claimed to be the true Mahdi and proved that this heavenly sign, which was beyond the power of any human being, was manifested to affirm his truth and support his claim.

However, let us again assume that there were another twenty nine unknown and unheard persons who made such a claim. Then the chances of fulfillment of this prophecy would be 1 in 100,000,000.

#### 9. His Mission

It was prophesized that the Promised Mahdi would have a dual mission. As a spiritual son of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>saw</sup>, he would be a reformer to the Muslims, who would purge the religion of Islam of all the misconceptions that had crept into it. He would also be a reformer to the Christians and prove to them their error in holding a human being as God and ultimately would bring the followers of the three great religions, viz. Islam, Christianity and Judaism, into unity by proving that Jesus was a true prophet who was

delivered from the shameful death upon the Cross. This dual mission of the Promised Mahdi was the reason that he was considered also to be the Promised Messiah. Now let us consider how many persons claimed to be the Promised Mahdi. Many did so. How many claimed to be Promised Messiah? Many did so. But how many claimed to be the Promised Mahdi and the Promised Messiah at the same time fulfilling the prophecy of the Holy Prophet <sup>saw</sup> that the Mahdi and the Messiah would be one person? NONE. No one except Hadhrat Ahmad<sup>as</sup> of Qadian. This will put our estimation of fulfillment of this prophecy to be 1 in 3,000,000,000. But let us assume again that there were another 29 unknown and unheard of persons who had made such a claim. Our estimation then would be 1 in 100,000,000.

## 10. His Accomplishments

It was prophesized that the institution of Khilafat would be re-established after about 1300 years from the time of the Holy prophet Muhammad<sup>saw</sup>. It is true that some kings used to call themselves Khalifas but the type of Khilafat mentioned in the prophecies was that Khilafat which was established by the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> himself. For the sake of argument, we will consider all types of Khilafats that were established between the time of the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> until now and would exaggerate our estimation and assume that 1 person out of ten had somehow established a system of Khilafat.

1. His name	1 in 10
2. His origin	1 in 100
3. His place	1 in 10
4. His features and complexion	1 in 100
5. His health	1 in 10
6. His revelation	1 in 100,000,000
7. His life	1 in 100,000,000
8. His sign	1 in 100,000,000
9. His mission	1 in 100,000,000
10. His accomplishments	1 in 10

Now, let us go back to our laws of probability and calculate the chances of fulfillment of these ten prophecies. To do that we have to multiply all our estimates together. That is:

$$10 \times 100 \times 10 \times 100 \times 10 \times 100,000,000 \times 100,000,000 \times 100,000,000 \times 100,000,000 \times 100,000,000 \times 10$$

And this is equal to 1 chance in 1 with 40 zeros at its right hand side, expressed more conveniently in the form of 1 in  $10^{40}$ .

If we would like to know the chance that any man might have lived from the day these prophecies were made to the present time who may have fulfilled all these ten prophecies, we should divide our  $10^{40}$

by the total number of people who have lived since the time of these prophecies. We can estimate this number to be 100,000,000,000 (one hundred billion) or  $10^{11}$ , assuming that an astronomical average of 3 billion people existed every 40 years. By dividing the two numbers ( $10^{40}$  by  $10^{11}$ ) we get  $10^{29}$ . In order to satisfy some people who may have felt that we have over-estimated our figures, I will reduce this margin by dividing it further by 1,000,000,000, leaving the final figure to be 1020 which means that the chance of fulfillment of those ten prophecies in any one person is 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 (one hundred billion billion).

Let us try to visualize these chances.

If you mark one of ten coins and place all the coins in a hat, and thoroughly stir them, and then ask a blindfolded man to draw one, his chance of getting the right one is one in ten.

Again, if we take out  $10^{20}$  coins, mark only one of them, stir the whole mass thoroughly and lay them on the face of the Province of Ontario (412,582 square miles; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is 94,214 square miles), blindfold a man, and tell him he can travel as far as he wishes but he must pick up one coin only and say that this is the right one.

What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the people who wrote these prophecies would have had in fabricating them and still have them *all* some true in one man, from their day to the present time.

Now, these ten prophecies were either revealed by God to the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> or the narrators and the writers fabricated them and attributed them to the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup>. But could they have also organized their fulfillment in one person having only 1 chance in  $10^{20}$ ? But as we have seen, all the ten prophecies came true in the person of Hadhrat Ahmad of Qadian, the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam.

The fulfillment of these ten prophecies only proves beyond any doubt that Allah the All-Knowing had revealed then to the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> and a the Powerful and Almighty God, He had the power to bring about their fulfillment. The advent of the Promised Mahdi is accordingly considered as a great sign and an irrefutable evidence and proof of the truth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>saw</sup> and of the truth of the religion of Islam.

Can anyone be so unreasonable as to reject the Promised Mahdi, Hadhrat Ahmad of Qadian, and pin his hopes on such a slim chance as finding the right coin among this great mass, covering the whole Province of Ontario *two hundred and fifty one feet deep*?

It does not seem possible, yet everyone who rejects that Hadhrat Ahmad of Qadian was the Promised Mahdi is doing *just that*.

The rejection of the Mahdi is in fact a rejection of the one who prophesized about his advent and in a way a rejection of the Almighty God Who fulfilled these prophecies in the person of Hadhrat Ahmad<sup>as</sup> of Qadian. ♦



# “Ignominious outcome” A Survivor’s Perspective at the Scene of a Massacre

S.R.A. Nasir

**T**here was an ideology, given the status of a religious dogma, behind every scrupulous effort made and every sacrifice offered when the independence movement for Pakistan was at its pinnacle. Undoubtedly, it was the fact that soon there is going to be established a state based on the high morality of Islamic teachings. Here not only Muslims but all people professing other religions would also feel secure and safe in preaching and propagating their doctrines. But nobody could ever have dreamt of the ramifications such as the contemporary situation in the country.

Talking about the brutal massacre that took place on 28th of May, the sacred day of Friday, one can easily appreciate the fact that the original ideology behind the creation of Pakistan was shattered to pieces. In these days, there had been a number of debates and discussions on this topic, both futile and productive. Some incoherently termed it as an attempt to destabilise the country; some went as far as declaring it as an attempt to sabo-



**Talking about the brutal massacre that took place on 28th of May, the sacred day of Friday, one can easily appreciate the fact that the original ideology behind the creation of Pakistan was shattered to pieces.**

tage Yaum-e-Takbir; some terming it to be one of those chain of events which aim at rooting out the Ahmadiyya Community from the country. We shall, however, circumscribe ourselves to that segment played in this episode by some personnel and authorities who under normal circumstances, claim to have been playing a heroic role in the stability and sanctity of the nation by unearthing true facts and figures in front of the public.

The Law Enforcement authorities are, in most of the cases, meant for maintaining law and order situation in the society and to safeguard the lives and proper-

ties of the citizens. They are and should be, like a solid armour and a protective covering withstanding any element threatening to the society. They are really an edifice of the state’s sanctity. They are utterly candid, unprejudiced and guileless.

But what happened in the case of the Ahmadiyya Community, in Baitul-Nur, Model Town, when our own security guard on the sight of the terrorists shouted out to the unarmed duty personnel to take cover, the policemen deputed there fully armed with rifles ran for their lives, across the ground and out of sight.

Had they retaliated and tried to encounter the terrorists, the situation would have been entirely different. Perhaps there would not have been such a large number of casualties. But they opted to save their own skins leaving 1500 unarmed people to the mercy of two lunatic gunmen who had come with the ultimate pledge to blow themselves up.

To add misery to it, when the civil and elite forces came about half an hour after the carnage had started, they remained outside for some ulterior motive, perhaps expecting the two to come outside and give themselves up. The television cameras captured the scenes of our youth arguing with the DSP in charge and imploring him to give them the weapons as they wanted to get inside and tackle the terrorists with their inexpert yet estimable skills. But he indolently chose to remain outside with his subordinates along with interdicting our members saying repeatedly that he didn't have orders. Scores of innocent people are dying inside and he insists that he doesn't have orders to act. A television anchor later in his talk show veraciously pointed out that even if there had been a higher level official standing there, he too would have been inept and good for nothing because it was, in that case, the Ahmadiyya Community.

The two terrorists held in Model Town were caught by our brave and intrepid members, one by a 17-year-old and the other by a 60-year-old retired Armed Forces Colonel. But the law enforcement authorities and their high-ups perfidiously termed their capture 'as a great achievement of our stalwarts'.

I myself was hiding inside the mosque and came out after it seemed evident that the maniacs had either absconded or been apprehended and started helping lifting the dead and the wounded. When every single injured and the martyred had been sent in the ambulances, it was then that the 'valiant cops' entered the building. The elite force took the terrorists into their custody and defused the suicide jacket he was wearing underneath.

A similiar frightening situation was happening at the same time at another Ahmadi mosque, Dar-u-Zikr, Garhi Shahu. The security constables deputed there, hid themselves on the first onrush of the terrorists. When they realized that the terrorists had gone inside, they too took to their heels and started running towards the

other side of the road. They didn't even care about the people lying badly injured and some even dead on the ground.

Our youth standing at the gate who were left unscathed during the first burst, without caring for their lives, just with sheer force of faith and willpower, started barring the traffic from coming any more near to the mosque. That was the time when one terrorist had already gone up the minaret and started firing indiscriminately at the road. One of our boys told me that when the 4 stationed policemen were fleeing, he caught hold of one of them and cried out 'For God's sake, be brave and carry on with the fight otherwise hand me over the weapon and I shall join in.' But he gave him a strong jerk and as soon as the grip loosened, he followed suit with his other colleagues.

The Police force which came after approximately 10 minutes were not much useful either. In spite of the efforts of our youngsters as well as media personnel calling them down, they refused to do anything to get inside and started firing aimlessly at the two indomitable terrorists. Not a single shot hit them and after massacring a lot of people, they blew themselves up. According to the eyewitnesses, at least three of them fled from the building despite police forces cordoning off the surroundings. Nevertheless, one and a half hour later, the elite force squad came and after another half an hour, the APC's came. Before that, all the worshippers inside were left at the tender mercy of the religious zealots.

Credit should indeed be given where it is due. Here the credit goes to the elite force who on reaching the spot, broke into the mosque, down to the ground and out of sight. The danger zone was already cleared so more police force and rescue workers as well as media personnel were able to get inside.

The most tragic and unprecedented segment of this whole melodrama started after the entry of the forces inside. The two delinquents had already blown themselves up and at least three of them decamped. On arriving at the scene, the police men had the coast cleared. Abandoning pretence, they made a revel soot by taking away the mobile phones, cash, vallets and other valuables a person might possibly carry from the pockets of the martyred and injured. This is not just mere accusation but there are numerous eyewitnesses to it.

Such an inhumane, truculent and recreant attitude by those who claim to have been safeguarding the lives and properties of people and chasing down those involved in such malevolent and contemptuous acts, rather than patronizing and befriending them. While all this was happening inside, some police men were jubilantly busy firing aerially as a symbol of their triumph.

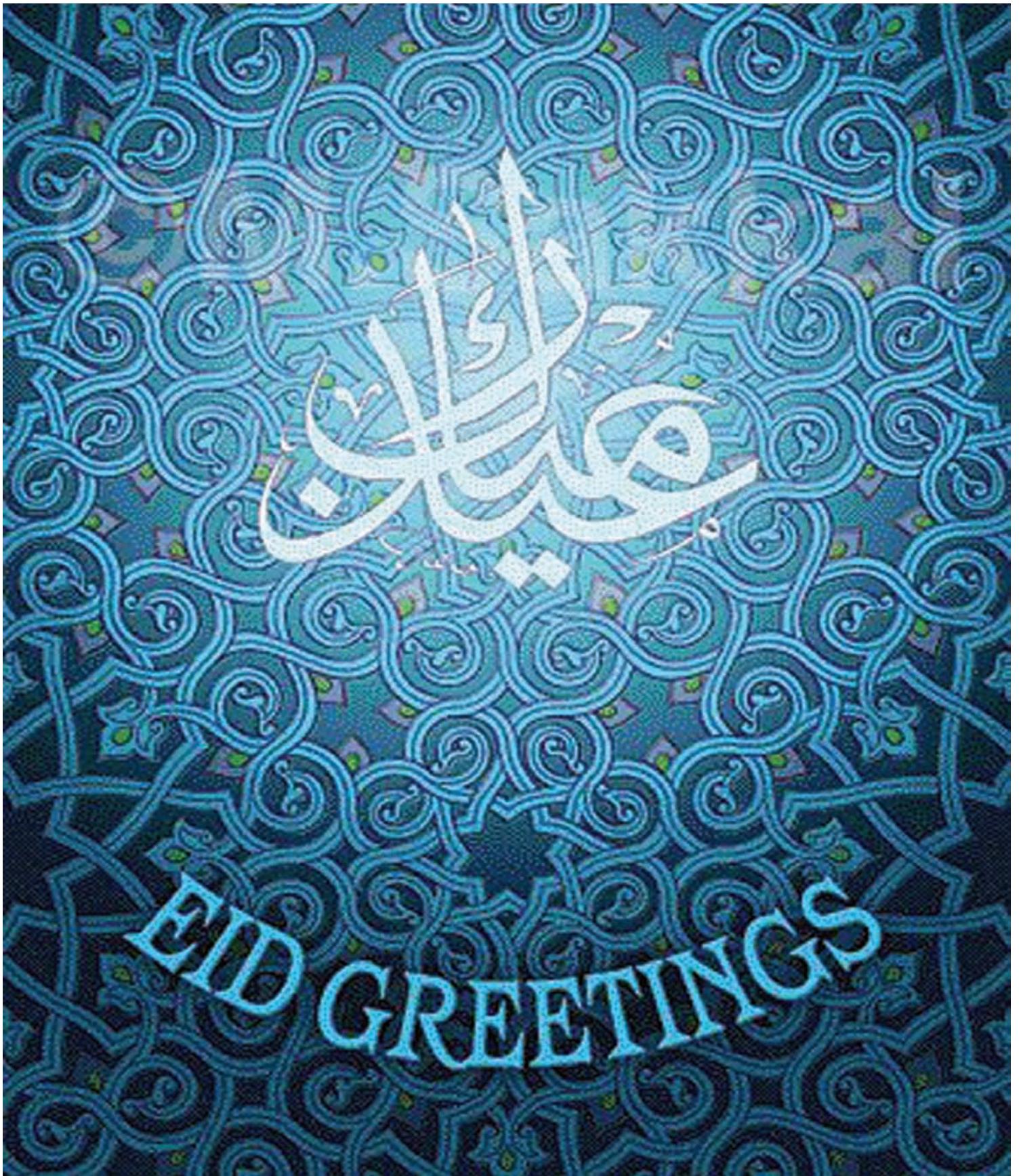
I am utterly confounded and nonplussed by the Inspector General Police hailing this incident as an 'operational triumph' of the police force; as well as by the Chief Minister of the Punjab, caressing and cosseting them as if they are some sort of heroes completely unwitting of the despicable attitude exhibited by 'some of them'. In spite of that, I salute the Rescue 1122 workers who as far they could, returned the valuables to their rightful owners.

We, the public, still consider this force as our saviour showering them with accolades and believe in their motto 'Police is our friend' embosomed on their emblems. In case of any emergency, we look up to them for our sanctity and protection. But now when the fat is really in the fire, what can one expect from them after this debacle, except to run a marathon in case of dire need. There has now arisen an inexplicable question mark on their infallibility.

For our community, this scenario is not new. It is reminiscent of the role of the police as an active partisan in anti-Ahmadiyya riots and wiping out the *Kalma-e-Shahadat* from our mosques. We can never forget their visage as a caricaturist hanging high profane and sacrilegious posters. We also recall their non-impartial and uncouth attitude in the registering of complaints in the wake of atrocities committed against Ahmadis.

These are not some outdated facts. Every now and then, it is happening around us reaching its apex after 1974 and especially 1984's infamous ordinance number 20. Over the years, it has indeed become an established fact that law enforcement authorities and the law, in letter and spirit, are only vaguely and distinctly related to each other. So much so that one can go as far as saying that they are hardly related at all. ♦

*The writer is a student at Forman Christian College University Lahore.*



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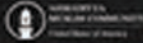
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# Perspective

## My Weekend Dilemma



*“Have you ever been inside a soup kitchen?”*

I cleaned up my desk on Friday afternoon. I shoved all the loose papers on my desk in the empty drawer in my desk reserved for this purpose. On Monday morning, I would dump the stack back on the top of the desk and spread it all over to make it look busy. Majority of the papers would age in this process. Over a short time, they would become irrelevant and would be shredded or given to my secretary so she could file them in the burial grounds of permanent files. I picked up my briefcase and left the office to go home for the weekend.

I walked pass a cubical where Jamal worked. He was also getting ready to clean up for the weekend. I did not know much about him. I knew that he com-

muter from the inner city and is involved in some community work. I had a few conversations with him in the company cafeteria from time to time, but mostly about the quality of food. I said the customary slogan “Have a nice weekend”. He responded by the usual “you too”. However, there was an expression on his face that he wanted to say something more. I hesitated in anticipation and he started the conversation.

“I bet you have altogether a different outlook about the weekend than I do. You are thinking like others living in the suburbs that you would have to mow your lawn, drive your family for the weekly grocery shopping and have a dinner out with the family on Saturday night.”

“Well, what do you look forward to?”

“I am thinking that I probably would be called to get in the middle of the

standoff between some teenager holding a gun and the police. My job would be to try to persuade him to give up his gun. Either he would get killed or go to jail; either outcome would not be pleasant. Or I would be helping some family grieve over their son or daughter who got shot in a drive by shooting. The rest of the time, I would be spending in helping serve food in the soup kitchen.”

“I knew that you were involved in community work and I can see what you mean by a different outlook about the weekend.”

“If you don’t mind my asking how much do you contribute to the soup kitchens?”

“I have not given any direct contribution to any soup kitchen but I give donations to organizations that I am sure pass some of the money to those places.”

“Have you ever asked those organizations how much they give to the soup kitchens for the hungry?”

“I am a small fish in a huge pond. My donations are not large enough that I can demand those explanations.”

“Have you ever been inside a soup kitchen?”

“No I haven’t. Once I was driving on South Michigan Ave and I saw a long line alongside a building. I was curious. So When I got closer I noticed that it was outside the door of a soup kitchen. We don’t have any soup kitchens where I live.”

“You don’t get to feel the plight of the hungry unless you look in the eyes of a man or woman or a child in the soup kitchen. Their eyes tell you the desperation and not knowing which soup kitchen they would go to for their next meal. I see that all the time and it gives me a different perspective on the problems of the hungry. Well, now you know what I look forward to every Friday afternoon. You have a nice weekend though.”

I did not know how far this con-



**The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community (AMC)** encourages and supports soup kitchens throughout American communities. In the photo above, AMC members feed the poor and homeless at a soup kitchen held monthly in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

versation would go so I took the short cut by saying, “Well, see you on Monday.” Before he could say anything else, I was on my way to the parking lot.

During the weekend, while I was mowing the lawn and driving my wife to the grocery store, his conversation kept on hounding me. What could I do to help the poor and the needy? Am I supposed to be helping in the soup kitchens? As far as I knew the closest one would be an hour away. That could take just about half a day including the commute. That is not convenient at all.

How would I even start this process? Where would I park my car in the neighborhood where the soup kitchen is located? I am sure the charitable organizations give funds to the soup kitchens. I don’t know any friends in my suburban neighborhood who do this kind of ser-

vice. I am sure those facilities have enough volunteers in the city to run their affairs. I don’t even know how many hungry people are out there served by the soup kitchens. Why doesn’t the government do something about it? There is no way that I could find time to get involved in community service. I even take work home on the weekends. Sometimes I have to show up at work on Saturdays just to impress the boss. At the least I should not complain about the company cafeteria food, especially at the subsidized prices.

Mowing the lawn and pushing the shopping cart seemed picnic time as compared to what Jamal would do in a weekend. Isn’t that why people live in the suburbs so they don’t have to face those issues? I have not lived in the city for years so I only read what is in the

newspapers. That is like reading news about another country. My feelings about the problems in the inner city are hampered by the way of living in the suburbs. Out of sight, out of mind.

While I was having dinner with my family at the local restaurant, my head was still being pounded. I wondered if the other families having dinner at the restaurant had such thoughts as I did. Does my family know how good they have it? How many children are standing in those lines outside the soup kitchens so they can have a roll and a cup of soup? I have heard they give them a cookie too. Do their faces light up when they receive it or the fear of not knowing about the next meal keeps them from smiling? I don’t know because I have never faced a hungry child other than in commercials. Those commercials never bothered me because I knew there was a camera man and a director nearby and it was all staged. Maybe it wasn’t.

On Monday morning, on my way to my office, I took a different way so I wouldn’t run into Jamal. I am not ready to face the issues of inner city. It is a good thing there are people like Jamal in the world. It would take a while for me to recover from the thoughts he provoked in me. He probably would give me details of how his weekend went. All I would have to say is “How was your weekend?”. I wasn’t in the mood or ready to talk about inner city issues. I get sick just by reading that stuff in the newspapers.

He already ruined my weekend by playing with my mind. I just didn’t want him to ruin my whole week.

• *Falahud Din Shams*

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