

THE FIRST ISLAMIC MISSION IN THE U.K. ESTABLISHED 1913 C.E. AS THE WOKING MUSLIM MISSION

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore (U.K.)

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Next Meeting

Assalamu alaikum

Venue: *Dar-us-Salaam*

Date: Sunday, 2nd May 2004

Time: 3 pm

Milad un Nabi

Please make every effort to attend and be on time.

Regular Activities

Dars-i Quran: Every Friday at 2:30 pm.

Meeting of the Executive: First Sunday of every month at 2 pm.

Meeting of the Jamaat: First Sunday of every month at 3 pm.

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News

The Centre

Hazrat Ameer Visits Jama'ats In The Frontier Province (Pakistan)

Hazrat Ameer - Dr. Abdul Karim Saeed, accompanied by Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Saqib, Mr. Anwaar Ahmad and Mr. Abdul Mubarak Ahmad visited Sarai Naurang on 29th February 2004 to offer his condolences on the death of our very devoted brother Sahibzada Muhammad Shaffi. The team went straight to the cemetery to offer prayers for the noble departed members of the Jama'at. Hazrat



From left: Mrs B Rahaman, Mrs Nasira Tufail (holding the concordance), Mr Jaleel ul Rahaman, Mrs Akela Haroun.

Ameer later addressed a gathering of members after *Maghrib* prayers. He advised members to sink all differences and forge unity amongst themselves to fight the challenges that the Jama'at was facing. He emphasised the importance of marriages within the Jama'at, and

motivated members to increase their monthly subscriptions. He expressed the hope that more members would be attending the Annual Training Course at the Centre this summer and that youngsters would also offer themselves for missionary work. There was a very positive response

Mr Jaleel ul Rahaman, president of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam (Lahore) Trinidad and Tobago, relating the history of the production of the English Concordance of the Holy Quran.



from the members. Hazrat Ameer particularly stressed the importance of women taking an active part in the affairs of the Jama'at. Sahibzada Muhammad Ibrahim very graciously offered to donate a room in his house for ladies' activities. *Jazaa kallah.*

On 1st March 2004 the delegation drove to Peshawar where the members had gathered at Sahibzada Said Lateef's house as the routes to the Jamiah were blocked because of the Moharram processions. A large number of staunch and enthusiastic Ahmadi had gathered there to meet Hazrat Ameer. He heard their problems and rendered appropriate advice.

Assar prayers were offered at the Sheikh Muhammadi mosque. Hazrat Ameer delivered a brief address again stressing the need for unity and the spirit of sacrifice for the cause of he Jama'at.

At Sufaid Dhairee the Jama'at, including a large number of very enthusiastic youngsters had assembled at the mosque. This Jama'at is constructing a new mosque with a capacity of over four hundred people from its own resources. Hazrat Ameer lauded the high spirit of the Jama'at and prayed for their success.

In a short span of two days Hazrat Ameer visited four important Jama'at centres and had meetings with over a hundred members. He was welcomed with overwhelming hospitality everywhere and his

presence infused fresh enthusiasm and spirit in the members.

United Kingdom

English Concordance of the Holy Quran

The late Maulana Muhammad Tufail, a past imam of the Woking mosque and the jamaat, had completed a draft of the English concordance of the Holy Quran. This was handed over to Maulana Mustafa Kamal Hydal, our missionary in Trinidad & Tobago, for revision and completion. Since that time Maulana has been working on this project, in addition to his other duties. It was completed and printed only recently and it is being formally launched on 25th April 2004. However, as the UK jamaat was fortunate enough to have Mr & Mrs Jaleel ul Rahaman, the president of the Trinidad jamaat, it was agreed to hold a presentation ceremony at which the very first copy of the concordance was presented to Mrs Nasira Tufail. The special volume printed with an appropriate inscription was presented to Mrs Tufail. Using a telephonic link, the Trinidad jamaat joined the UK jamaat in the presentation.

After the presentation those present said special prayers for Maulana Tufail that Allah may accept this labour of love from him and reward the Maulana for this great piece of work.

The jamaat will order some copies

after the book is formally launched. Members are requested to support the project by purchasing the first edition. Also it will greatly help all members, whether they know the Arabic alphabet or not, in understanding the Holy Quran.

An exchange

“Dear Sirs,

I have been trying to find out about Islam for some time, and you were kind enough to send me a copy of The Holy Quran translated by Maulana Muhammad Ali. I have been reading and studying for several years now, and I would like to explore becoming a Muslim. But so far I have not plucked up the courage to go further. It seems to me that it is foolish to put things off, and that I should not be influenced by the anti-Muslim feeling that is around at the present time.

I am therefore writing to you to ask if it is possible to have instruction from you in Islam, and how would I go about getting this instruction. I would prefer it if this was possible in Birmingham or the Midlands area, but if that is not possible I would be prepared to come down to London for instruction. Please let me know if there is any possibility of receiving teaching from your organisation. I look forward to hearing from you.”

Our reply

“Dear Ted

Assalamu alaikum (meaning peace be upon you)

You have taken a very brave step given the Islamophobia in the West. Although you have not formally recited the Shahada (become a witness to Unity of Godhead and Messengership of the Holy Prophet Muhammad) I think in your heart you are already a Muslim and therefore I have addressed you with the greeting reserved for Muslims. The first step of course is to publicly declare the Shahada. In the mean time I will send you a little booklet about prayers and you can start to learn your prayers from that. We always have a meeting on the FIRST SUNDAY of each month. The next

meeting will be on May 2nd. If you like you can come down on Friday and meet a few people for the Friday prayers. I will also introduce you to Dr Hami who will be pleased to instruct you further.

I look forward to your reply and to seeing you of course.

Wasalaam Your brother in Islam

Shahid Aziz”

Ted's response

Dear Shahid,

Assalamu alaikum.

Thank you very much for your e-mail which I received earlier today. I am so relieved that I have finally taken the plunge, and got in contact. I feel that a great weight has been lifted from my mind. I am trying not to be swayed too much by the Islamophobia in society, and trying to do what I think to be the right thing to do.

I would like to come to Friday prayers. Would this be at the Wembley address? At the moment I have to work on Friday mornings, and the earliest that I could get away is about 10.30 am. If I left Solihull at that time, and drove down the M40, I could get to Stanley Avenue in time for Friday Prayers, inshallah. I look forward to meeting Dr. Hami. Whether I can get to Friday Prayers or not, I will try to come to the meeting on the first Sunday of the month on May 2nd. Travelling should be easier on a Sunday. I would be grateful if you could let me know some directions. I have never driven down to London before, and any help that you could give me would be very appreciated.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Wasalam

Ted”

The Islamic view on.... What It Means To Be A Muslim

Selected by Sarah Ahmed

Holy Quran

“Nay, whoever submits himself

entirely to Allah and he is the doer of good (to others), he has his reward from his Lord, and there is no fear for such nor shall they grieve.” (*Al Baqara 2:112*)

Hadith

Narrated Abu Musa:

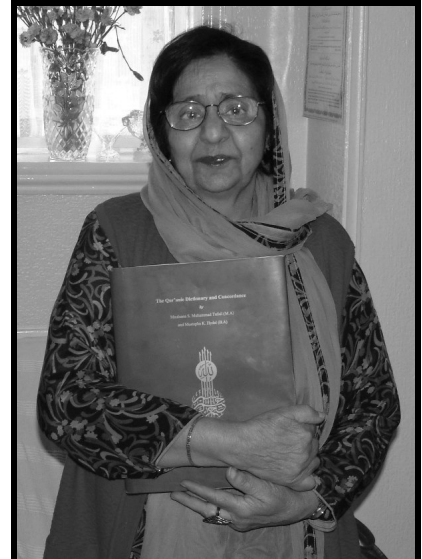
Some people asked Allah's Apostle, "Whose Islam is the best? i.e. (Who is a very good Muslim)?" He replied, "One who avoids harming the Muslims with his tongue and hands." (*Sahih Bukhari: Book 2 Chapter 5*)

Narrated Anas:

The Prophet said, "Whoever possesses the following three qualities will have the sweetness (delight) of faith: (1) The one to whom Allah and His Apostle becomes dearer than anything else. (2) Who loves a person and he loves him only for Allah's sake (3) Who hates to revert to Atheism (disbelief) as he hates to be thrown into the fire." (*Sahih Bukhari: Book 2 Chapter 9*)

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib Qadriani

“What are the ways of attaining the real essence and spirit of Islam? ... Every wise person can see that the real essence of Islam can only be established in someone if all his being, with all its inner and outer faculties, is devoted solely to God and His way, and all that he has received from God as a trust is returned to the Real Giver. It should not only be in terms of belief, but in terms of deeds as well, that he must display the full image of Islam and its perfect essence. That is, the person claiming to be a follower of Islam must prove that his hands, feet, heart and mind, his sense, reason, anger, mercy, gentleness and knowledge, all his spiritual and physical powers, his honour and property, his rest and comfort, and all that he has, from the hair of his head to the nails of his toes, both outwardly and inwardly, so much so that his intentions, the fears in his



Mrs Nasira Tufail holding the English concordance, after its presentation.

heart, and the feelings in his soul -- all these have become as obedient to God as a person's limbs that are in his own control. In brief, it must be established that his devotion has reached the stage where whatever is his, is not his, but has become God's; and all his limbs and faculties are so engaged in the service of God as if they were the limbs of God ... To devote one's life in the way of God, which is the essence of Islam, has two sides to it. First, God must be believed to be the One Who is to be worshipped, sought and loved. The other aspect of devoting one's life to God is that it must be dedicated to the service, sympathy and help of His creatures, the bearing of their burdens and the true sharing of their grief. One must bear hardship to provide relief to others, and for their comfort tolerate difficulty for oneself.

... Therefore, a person can only be called a Muslim in the real sense when a mighty revolution has come in his life of indifference, obliterating forever the stamp of his lower self and all its passions, and after this death a new life of "doing good for the sake of Allah" has been born within him, a life so impeccable that it consists of nothing but obedience to the Creator and sympathy for His creation.” (*Extract taken from: A'ina-i Kamalat-i-Islam*)

SUPPLICATION FOR AN ABSENT FRIEND OR COMMUNITY

Sadiq Noor – Regina – Canada
(Editor Noor-I-Islam)

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has taught us to pray to Allah for all our needs, whether they relate to this world or the hereafter. From his practice and guidance we have learned that supplication could be made at any time and in all situations. While it is often the case that we pray Allah to forgive us our slips and sins, bestow His mercy on us and admit us into heaven in the hereafter, we are also reassured when we pray to Him to help us accomplish our purposes in this life. We know that His help is the key to success in every situation. It is also natural to devote most of our supplication to our own needs and our own forgiveness. But what about supplication on behalf of others?

It is normal practice that when two Muslims are about to go separate ways after they have been together for sometime, or someone is not feeling well (medically or financially) one of them requests the other to pray for him or one of his family members or the whole family. This is also the case if the parting will be for sometime, as when one of them is about to travel somewhere. If that travel takes him to Umrah or Pilgrimage, he is requested by everyone he meets before his departure to remember him when he makes a supplication in the Grand Mosque in Makkah or when he attends at Arafat. **Even the Prophet (pbuh) said to Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) when he was about to leave for Umrah: "Do not forget us when you make your supplication, brother."** Umar was so elated to have this request put to him by the Prophet. For one thing, the Prophet's request suggests that Umar's prayer is something to be sought, because it stands a good chance of being answered. For another, being called 'brother' by the Prophet was an honor that Umar was to cherish for the rest of his life. To us, however, this suggests that supplication by one Muslim for another is something particularly valuable. This is confirmed by Hadiths and reported statements by

the companions of the Prophet. **Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), the closest to the Prophet of all his companions, used to say: "A prayer by a brother in Islam, is sure to be answered."** (related by al-Bukhari, Al-Adab Al-Mufrad). A more definitive statement is the Hadith in which **Abdullah ibn Amr states that he heard the Prophet saying: "The fastest supplication to be answered is that made by one person on behalf of another when they are away from each other."** (related al-Bukhari, al-Tirmithi and abu Dawood).

The main point about this latter type of prayer is the fact that the two persons are not together or at the same place. While it is commendable that one person prays on behalf of another when they are together, as when one says to his Muslim brother, "May Allah reward you, or give you honor, or may He enhance your position in the hereafter, etc.", it cannot be absolutely certain that this supplication is totally free from a personal element. One may pray for another to assure one's that he cares for him and harbors no ill-intention against him. Or he may try to assert his friendship by showing how keen he is that the other receives Allah's grace. When the two are not together, such a prayer requires special significance. No one prays for another when the latter is absent unless he is sincere and he cares for his well-being.

It is because of this sincerity that Allah answers such a supplication and rewards the supplicant as well. Abu Ad-Dardaa' was one of the scholars among the companions of the Prophet and he was well known for his thoughtfulness, asceticism and indifference to worldly matters. His wife was similarly devoted to the service of Allah. We have a report that Safwan ibn Abdulmalik, Abu Ad-Dardaa's son-in-law, went to visit him at his home in Syria. Arriving at his home, he found only his mother-in-law Umm Ad-Dardaa' there. She asked him whether he was on his way to pilgrimage. When he answered in the affirmative she answered: "Then include us in your supplication; for the Prophet has said: 'A prayer by a Muslim for his brother in his absence is always answered. An angel stands close to

him who is assigned a special task. Every time he says a good prayer for his brother, the angel says: Amen, and may Allah grant you the same'." Safwan says that he went to the market where he met his father-in-law, who confirmed this report since he heard it being said by the Prophet." (al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood and others)

This Hadith encourages us to pray for our relatives, friends, jama'at members and other Muslims. We are certain that our supplication on their behalf will be answered and a similar prayer is granted by Allah to us. Hence, if we act on this Hadith, we are bound to cement brotherly relations within our community and society. We know that Allah can answer every prayer and give everyone of his creation everything he requests of Him.

This point may not be very clear to some people. They may imagine Allah in the same light of a king or an emperor. They seek to have the maximum they can get from Him before anybody else can have a share, as if they fear that what Allah has to give away to His servants may be exhausted. They do not realize that it is inexhaustible. A well-known incident took place at the time of the Prophet. A Bedouin came to the mosque and prayed when the Prophet was sitting nearby. When the man finished his prayers, he said in his supplication: "My Lord, bestow your mercy on me and Mohammed and do not bestow your mercy on anyone beside us." The Prophet turned to him and said: "You have narrowed a great expanse." In another version of this Hadith, related by al-Bukhari, the man is reported to have said in his prayer: "My Lord, forgive me and Mohammed only." The Prophet said to him: "You have deprived many people of that."

This is certainly a very narrow view. Allah's mercy is sufficient to wipe off every sin committed by mankind. He may bestow it on whomever He wills. To fear that it may be exhausted is contrary to Islamic teachings and the teachings of Hazrat Maseeh Maood, because we are required to always think well of Allah. With regard to this particular point of Allah's mercy, we have to remember the Hadith which tells us

that when Allah created mercy, He divided it into one hundred portions. He kept ninety-nine portions for Himself and distributed the last portion among His creation. All the mercy and compassion we see in this world and all the mercy that is exercised by every species of creatures anywhere in the universe is part of that last share. The Prophet says that “Even when an animal lifts its leg to allow its youngsters to pass” it does so as a result of having a share of that last portion of mercy which Allah has distributed among all His creatures. Someone may ask: What does Allah do with those ninety-nine portions. The answer is that He may bestow His mercy on His creatures in this world, but He certainly withholds much of it for the day of judgment where He forgives His servants and bestows His mercy on them.

“Say: My prayers and my sacrifice and my life and my death are surely for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds” (6:163)

“Nay, whoever submits himself entirely to Allah and he is the doer of good (to others), he has his reward from his Lord, and there is no fear for such nor shall they grieve” (2:112)

God’s name in the Hindu scriptures

By Hazrat Maulana Abdul Haque Vidyarthi

Among Hindus in India the name of God differs from province to province. In Bengal they call Him Hari. He is known as Paramatma, Parameshwar, Ishwar, etc. among the common people. In their religious scriptures the names Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are frequently used, which indicate His three attributes, namely creation, sustenance and destruction. In the Rig Veda, which is considered most authentic, the name of a hymn is *Ka*. This is an interrogative word which means ‘who?’ or ‘what?’. There are ten mantras in this hymn which are addressed to the god ‘Who?’:

1. He is the Creator of all creation
2. He is the Maker of the heaven and the earth
3. He is the Master of life

4. He is the giver of power and bringer of death

5. He is the only Ruler over the animate and the inanimate, over animals and humans

6. He is the God of all the gods who has no associate

7. Who is He whom we should serve and present our offerings to?

8. Who is He?

[NOTE These eight numbered lines are all summaries of points, not quotations from the hymn.]

The yearning and restlessness of the supplicant can easily be discerned from this hymn. When we hear someone being highly praised we are keen to know who he is. Similarly, we are anxious to know who this benefactor of mankind is who is being praised so much in this hymn. The word *Ka* has been repeated nine times with the result that this *Ka* (‘What?’) has become God’s name. When the Israelites received food from heaven they held it in their hands and asked each other “*Man, man?*”, i.e., “What is this?” In Hebrew *man* is used for inanimate objects as well, thus *man* became the name of food from heaven. Similarly *Ka* (‘Who?’ or ‘What?’) became God’s name among Hindus. Thus it is mentioned:

“The word *Ka* is the Sanskrit interrogative pronoun ‘What’. In later times this interrogative was treated as a proper name, the question became assertion. In later Vedic literature *Ka* is a synonym for Prajapati, Brahma, Vishnu and other gods. In the Puranas, *Ka* appears as a recognised god, as supreme god. The Mahabharata mentions *Ka* with Daksha. Bhagavat Purana applies the term to Kashyapa.”

Again:

“*Ka, kaḥ, quis*) meaning Who? that is, the Unknown God, has been applied as a name to Prajapati, and to other Gods, from a forced interpretation of the interrogative pronoun which occurs in the refrain of each verse of the hymn.”

Not only in the Rig Veda, but also in the Yajur Veda God has been called *Ka* (see Yajur Veda, 14.20; 20.22). Although the name of the

object indicated by *Ka* has been stated differently, or is not stated at all, still the search for this unknowable and unnamed being has been continued in every age. Sometimes He has been called Prajapati, Brahma or Vishnu, at others Shiva, Daksha or Kashyapa. And when on none of these names was agreement reached, He was just known by a question mark. It has been stated in the Rig Veda:

“All the mantras of the Rig Veda are in the high heaven, where all the gods reside. They are condensed and concealed in a single syllable. What good can the Veda do to him who has no knowledge of that syllable, and those who know it are happy and prosperous in this world.” (Rig Veda, 1.164.39)

When we analyse this mantra we come to the following conclusions:

(a) this mantra is a statement of the Rig Veda itself or its author who is considered to be God;

(b) all the ten thousand mantras in the Rig Veda revolve around the syllable mentioned in this mantra;

(c) that syllable is still in the High Heaven and not revealed yet;

(d) that syllable is still concealed;

(e) he who does not know that syllable cannot be benefited by the Rig Veda;

(f) he who knows it is happy and prosperous in the world.

The commentators of the Vedas explained this mantra in three ways:

1. The mantra under discussion points to the sun and its rays. He who does not know the sun cannot be benefited by its rays.

2. It may refer to the soul that is concealed in the body. A person who does not know the soul cannot derive any benefit from the body.

3. All the mantras are concealed in the word *OM*. What use is the Veda to a person who does not know *OM*? (Nirukt, 3.10)

These three interpretations have been given in the most authentic commentary on the Vedas. Such difference of interpretation about a mantra is itself a proof of the ambiguity of the matter under discussion. Nevertheless the third

interpretation is more acceptable because in the Upanishads (considered second to the Vedas in authenticity) the greatness and the superiority of the word *OM* has been mentioned. One is, however, struck by the fact that the word *OM* does not occur in the four Vedas, but still its mention has been made in the Upanishads in such laudable terms. Prof. Griffith's remark on this point is worth quoting:

"The syllable is the *pranava*. The mystic syllable *OM* is set in the Upanishads as the object of profound religious meditation. The highest spiritual efficacy is attributed to it."

The above discussion shows that although God's real name is not mentioned in the Vedas, the urge to know it and obtain blessings therefrom is found among the Hindu sages. In the Vedic hymns different gods have been glorified. Agni, Indra, Suraj etc. have been separately praised. Either they should all be considered separate gods or there is One Being who is above them all and is the true object of all praises. That unknown and unnamed Being is Allah. "Who or What is He?", asks the Veda. The reply is given by the Holy Quran:

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful." (The Quran, 1 : 1)

Allah is the real and personal name of God, and the names of all other gods are, in fact, His attributive names. It is only in this way that one can truly understand the concept of the Unity of Godhead and accept the whole of mankind, including Brahmins, Kshatriya, Vaishyas and Shudras, as one family and equal in rank in the sight of God. This is the great fact which has been foretold in the Atharva Veda, Allo Upanishad and Bhavishiya Purana as a great prophecy. (*Editor's note: Actual references to quotations have been deleted due to lack of space but are available in "Muhammad in World Scriptures."*)

The Pledge

Why is it necessary to take the pledge to join the Ahmadiyya Movement?

It is often asked: why is it necessary to take the pledge to join the

Ahmadiyya Movement when we do not have to take a pledge to join any other Islamic organisation? This question arises out of ignorance of the history of Islam and a lack of understanding of what is the pledge and why this pledge is taken.

At the simplest level the answer to this question is very easy. One can point to many organisations which require new members to take a pledge to uphold their rules and regulations and to support their objectives. The Scouts are just one example of such an organisation. Their are also positions of authority, such as the presidency of the United States and judgeship of a court, to give only two examples, which require the person aspiring to hold these positions to take a pledge to uphold the sanctity of these positions. Indeed, those who acquire British nationality are required to take a pledge to support and obey the British monarchy.

The pledge in the Ahmadiyya Movement has a deeper and a spiritual meaning. It symbolically links to the pledge that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) took from his Companions (R). The first occasion on which the Holy Prophet (s) took a pledge from his Companions (R) was when he saw that his life in Makkah was going to be in danger in the not too distant future and that he would need a refuge. Some people from *Yathrab* (the original name for Madina) had come to perform the pilgrimage. They had heard about the new teaching and wanted to embrace it. **The Holy Prophet (s) met them in secret and when they invited him to *Yathrab*, he asked them to take a pledge that they will defend the Holy Prophet (s) as if he was a part of their own tribe. The defence of his life was in fact the defence of the Unity of Godhead because no other religion at the time preached monotheism.** The Holy Prophet's demise would have meant an end to monotheism. This is borne out by the fact that before the Battle of Badr which took place after the Holy Prophet (s) had migrated to *Yathrab*, when he fell down to pray to Allah for victory he said: "if this small band is exterminated today, there will be no one left to laud your name." **These early Muslims took**

the pledge to defend him with their lives. Within two years of this first pledge all the tribes of Makkah together entered into an agreement to murder the Holy Prophet (s). The Holy Prophet (s) was informed of their machinations, by Allah, and slipped out of Makkah to join his Companions (r) in *Yathrab*. The Holy Prophet's wisdom in taking this pledge was shown by the turn of events after his migration. The Quraish of Makkah gathered together twelve hundred well-armed men and attacked *Yathrab* in order to destroy the small Islamic community taking shape there. The Muslims had to fight for their survival. There were in *Yathrab* (which by now was called *Madina tul nabi* - the City of The Prophet) hypocrites who, although they professed to be Muslims, did not let pass any chance to damage or to destroy the Muslim community. On the outskirts of Madina were Jewish tribes who resented the Holy Prophet's claim to be The Prophet promised in the Old Testament. They too did their level best to destroy the Muslim community, including having the Holy Prophet (s) poisoned. **Had the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) not had the foresight to get those who invited him to Madina to take the pledge, to defend him with their lives, who knows what their reaction might have been when facing such odds against their survival.**

The second occasion on which the Holy Prophet (s) took the pledge from his Companions (R) to defend Islam to death was just before the peace at Hudaibiyah. Muslims had marched out of Madina to perform a minor pilgrimage at Makkah. Thus they were not fully armed for a battle. On approaching Makkah an emissary, Hazard Usman, was sent to Makkah to make arrangements enabling Muslims to perform the pilgrimage. The rumour soon spread that, against all norms of behaviour, Hazrat Usman had been killed by the Quraish. This left Muslims with no choice but to give battle. **At that time, hundreds of miles from Madina, completely exposed, ill prepared to fight, the Holy Prophet (s) sat under a tree and asked those present to take a pledge that they will stand and fight and die but not flee.** This

again was a time when the whole of the Muslim community stood in danger of complete annihilation. It was again a time when those who upheld monotheism might have been exterminated leaving no one to extol the One True God. The whole community agreed to stand and fight to death rather than flee, such was their faith. **Upon this, the Holy Prophet (s) received a revelation from Allah: "Those who swear allegiance to thee do but swear allegiance to Allah. The hand of Allah is above their hands. So whoever breaks (his faith), he breaks it only to his soul's injury. And whoever fulfils his covenant with Allah, He will grant him a mighty reward."** (Al Quran 48:10) **This then came to be known as Baiati Rizwan. This shows that taking of the pledge is sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) and that Allah expressed His pleasure with those who took the pledge and kept their promise.** The reason was, as I have already said, that this was a pledge to fight to death to establish the Unity of Godhead on this earth. **Taking a pledge became an established practice amongst the sufis. They would ask a person who wanted to join their order to take a pledge.**

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad made his claim to being the Mujaddid (reformer) of the 14th century in his book *Brahin-i Ahmadiyya*. However, it was not until 1885 CE that he published twenty thousand copies of an announcement, in English and in Urdu, claiming that he was the Mujaddid of the 14th Century of Hijra. At this time, people were gathering round Hazrat Mirza sahib in large numbers and many were pressing him to accept their pledge. However, Hazrat sahib kept refusing because Allah had not yet permitted him to do so. On 1st December 1888 CE, Hazrat sahib announced that Allah had commanded him to organise a jamaat and to take pledges from the people who want to join this jamaat. Allah had addressed him using these verses of the Holy Quran: "Trust in Allah" followed by "And make the ark under Our eyes and Our revelation." He interpreted the "ark" to mean a jamaat. In addition, verse 48:10, quoted above was communicated to him, together

with: "Allah indeed was well pleased with the believers, when they swore allegiance to thee under the tree, (Al Quran 48:18). Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad interpreted this to mean that he had been granted permission by Allah to take the pledge from the people who want to join this organisation.

Towards the end of the last century of the Christian era Muslims had become bankrupt politically, financially, militarily, morally and spiritually. In India they were falling in to the lap of Arya Samaj - a Hindu missionary organisation aimed specifically at Muslims; and also Christian missionaries. At the time of the original pledges taken by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s), Islam was in danger because the person of the Prophet or the whole community stood in danger of extermination. Islam was in danger again because Muslims had come to associate the correctness of religious belief with military strength or financial prosperity. They were thus concluding that Islam was not the True religion and converting to other religions, particularly Christianity. **It was both to stem the moral and spiritual degeneration of Muslims and to prepare an army of missionaries to defend and propagate Islam that Hazrat Mirza sahib was Commanded by Allah to create this jamaat and ask people to take the pledge.** Of course the Holy Prophet was not there, so this time the pledge was to be taken at the hand of his deputy, the mujaddid of that era. This is the only difference between the pledge taken by the Holy Prophet and the pledge taken by Hazrat sahib. The conditions of the pledge are summarised into **"And I shall give preference to my religion over my temporal affairs."** Thus just as the Holy Prophet asked Muslims to lay down their lives for the cause of Islam, this pledge too asks you to lay down your life in exactly the same way. At the time of the Holy Prophet, a Muslim was to die fighting for Islam with the sword, now we are required to die fighting for Islam with the pen. When Maulana Nur-ud-Din took the pledge, he asked Hazrat Mirza whether he had a litany or a ritual which he wanted him to perform.

Hazrat Mirza sahib told him to carry out The Jihad. Maulana was taken aback and asked whether he should take up the sword and attack the British. **He replied that when you have religious freedom there is no need to take up arms. The need now is to destroy them by argument,** so Maulana should write a book showing why Islam, and not Christianity, is the true religion.

At the time of Holy Prophet (s) a Muslim gave up pleasures and comforts of this world for the sake of Islam; this pledge requires us to do exactly the same. Give up our time to study Islam and other religions, to spread the good news that The Truth has arrived, to make sure we say your five daily prayers, to say our Jummah prayers; give some money so that literature may be printed and distributed; so that Muslims in need may be helped and so that mosques may be built and maintained.

Ask yourself: "Why am I a Muslim?" and then "What does it mean to be a Muslim?" Is it for any reason other than you were born to Muslim parents? The pledge, as laid by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, draws your attention to the reasons why you should be a Muslim and what your duties are. **It takes out the accident of birth as being the main reason for your following Islam. It asks you to acknowledge not only that you are a Muslim, but also what your duties are. You swear an oath to ALLAH that you will abide by all His Commands, that you will do what He requires you to do and that you will forsake what He requires you to forsake.** Thus, on the day of judgement you will not have the excuse that you did not know. **To take the pledge is to accept knowingly the yoke of the obedience of the Holy Quran upon your shoulders. After you have taken the pledge, you are now a Muslim, not because your parents were Muslims, but because you now know and understand what it is to be a Muslim.** By taking the pledge to join us, you have taken the oath to join the soldiers of Allah to fight in His Way. You have sworn an oath to struggle to establish the supremacy of Islam whoever you are, where ever you are and what ever you do.

Conditions of the pledge taken when joining the Ahmadiyya Jamaat.

Firstly, that until he¹ is laid in his grave, he will shun all forms and shades of *shirk* (worship of others than Allah)

Secondly, that he will guard against falsehood, dishonesty, disorder and rebellion; and that he shall not surrender to temptation, no matter how strong the urge may be.

Thirdly, that without fail he will say his prayers five times a day as enjoined by Allah and His Messenger, and that, to the best of his power, he will say his *tahajjud* prayers, invoke Divine blessings on the Holy Prophet, and ask forgiveness his own sins; and will make it a habit to recall Allah's favours, with a truly loving heart, and praise and glorify Him.

Fourthly, that he will do nothing in any way to injure his fellow human beings in general and Muslims in particular, neither with the tongue, nor with the hand, nor in any other way.

Fifthly, that he will remain faithful to Allah under all circumstances, alike in prosperity and adversity, in pleasure and pain, in time of bliss and affliction; that he will resign himself to Allah under all conditions and will cheerfully bear all hardships and humiliations in His way; and that in the hour of trial he will not turn his back but will step yet onward.

Sixthly, that he will abstain from the observance of un-Islamic customs or following his lower desires; that he will thoroughly submit to the teachings of the Holy Quran; and that in every walk of life he will hold the word of Allah and that of His Messenger as his guiding principle.

Seventhly, that he will entirely abstain from arrogance and pride, and will live a life of humility, meekness, politeness and mildness.

Eighthly, that he will regard the Religion and its honour and sympathy for Islam as dearer to him than his own life, wealth, honour, children, and kith and kin.

Ninthly, that he will remain engaged in the service of humanity in general, out of love for Allah, and that, to the best of his ability, he will use all his God-given powers and blessings for the benefit of mankind.

Tenthly, that binding himself with me (Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad) in a bond of brotherhood in the way of Allah, which requires obedience in everything good, he will remain steadfast upon it till his death, and will fulfill this compact to the highest degree, which is unequalled in his physical and worldly relationships and connections.

The Promised Messiah said:

“Think not that merely taking the Baiat (Pledge) in words is sufficient. You must live up to it in reality, and bring about a change in yourself as described in the conditions of the Baiat (Pledge).”

1: The original pronoun in Urdu stands for both male and female.