

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



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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, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2004**

Time: 3 pm

Speaker: **Dr M A Hami**

Please make every effort to attend and be on time.

## Regular Activities

**Dars-i Quran/Hadith:** 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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by Dr. Zahid Aziz

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ  
هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَ  
الْفُرْقَانِ ۗ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ  
فَلْيَصُمْهُ ۗ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ  
فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۗ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ  
الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُوا  
الْعِدَّةَ وَ يُكَلِّمُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ  
وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٢١٨٥﴾  
وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۚ أُجِيبُ  
دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ ۗ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي  
وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ﴿٢١٨٦﴾

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ  
هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَ  
الْفُرْقَانِ ۗ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ  
فَلْيَصُمْهُ ۗ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ  
فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۗ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ  
الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُوا  
الْعِدَّةَ وَ يُكَلِّمُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ  
وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٢١٨٥﴾

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَيَّامِ الَّتِي كَانَ فِيهَا مَرَافِقُ  
لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجَّةِ وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا  
الْبَيْتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مِمَّنْ أَعْطَى  
وَأَتُوا الْبَيْتَ مِنْ أَجْوَافِهَا وَأَقْبَلُوا اللَّهَ  
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢١٨٥﴾

2:185: The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion. So whoever of you is present in the month, he shall fast therein, and whoever is sick or on a journey, (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days. Allah desires ease for you, and He desires not hardship for you, and (He desires) that you should complete the number and that you should exalt the greatness of Allah for having guided you and that you may give thanks.

2:186: And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should hear My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way.

2:189: They ask thee of the new

## Eid-ul-Fitr Khutba

on Sunday 14 November  
2004

at Darus Salam, Wembley,  
London

1. Holy Quran's verdict on some approaches to determining the new moon

2. Fasting teaches holding the Holy Quran as supreme guidance

moons. Say: They are times appointed for men, and (for) the pilgrimage. And it is not righteousness that you enter the houses by their backs, but he is righteous who keeps his duty. And go into the houses by their doors; and keep your duty to Allah, that you may be successful.

### Entering houses by their doors, not by back

Immediately after the section in the Holy Quran dealing with fasting, this verse 2:189 occurs. Its opening seems appropriate because people ask about the new moon in connection with Ramadan, both at its beginning and its end. This verse says that the new moons are the means of indicating and fixing times. Then it says: "And it is not righteousness that you enter the houses by their backs ...". What has that to do with the new moon? It is said by commentators of the Quran that there was a custom among pre-Islamic Arabs that if one of them went out of his house for some important purpose and failed to achieve it, then when he returned back home he would not enter it through the door, but by going around the back. If these words

يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ عَنِ الْآهْلِ كُلِّ هِيَ مَوَاقِيْتُ  
لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَيْضَةُ وَلَيْسَ الْإِذْرُ بَأَنْ تَأْتُوا  
الْبَيْتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْإِذْرَ مِنْ أَعْيُنِ  
وَأَنْتُمْ الْبَيْتَ مِنْ أَيْوَابِهَا وَأَنْتُمْ اللَّهُ  
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٢٨٩﴾

are directed only against this superstitious custom, then they don't have any meaning for us today, as no Muslim is involved in this practice today. The classical commentators of the Quran also say that the words "go into the houses by their doors" mean in a more general sense that you should adopt the proper method for doing something, and not a perverse, ridiculous and laughable method. Taking this as the meaning, we can certainly connect it to the subject of the new moon because the way that is being generally used for determining that the new moon has

appeared is, indeed, like entering a house by ignoring its direct front door and jumping over its back wall, and moreover, believing that what you are doing constitutes righteousness. This verse instructs us to use the direct, obvious, straightforward method, not take a convoluted, tortuous route.

Let me explain briefly. A long time ago, the only way of determining that the moon was new, and thus that the new month had begun, was by someone sighting it with the human eye at sunset (which is when the new moon is about to set). But for many decades now, probably more than a century, published tables have been available showing the precise dates and times of the birth of the new moon, its setting times and position in the sky. There are even websites run by Muslim specialists in astronomy where these dates and times are published for the coming months and years.<sup>1</sup> Yet these specialists, and the Muslim organizations whom they advise, still wait to receive reports of the new moon being sighted by at least two Muslim eye-witnesses in order to announce the start of the new month. They claim that this is required by Islamic law; or in other words it is "righteousness" (to use the term in the above verse). They ask people to look out for the new moon and report whether they sight it or not. When the experts and their committees receive a report of a sighting, they compare it with the scientific figures about the position, shape and movement of the moon, and if the report conflicts with this data they reject the report as mistaken; they know it must be wrong.<sup>2</sup> They only accept a report of a sighting if the moon was seen in the position and the orientation which they *already* know from the scientific data it should have at the time of observation.

They now have the key to the door allowing them easy entry into the house. But they refuse to enter through that door, although they do open it and look inside! They prefer to enter by the old, inconvenient and uncertain way, claiming that it is righteousness to do it in this way, to

go over a hurdle unnecessarily. They have the accurate information, they believe in its correctness, and yet they want it confirmed by a less reliable method of human observation. This is just as a few years ago we could only get news from someone in a distant country by letter, taking several days to arrive. Now we can speak to that person on the phone or communicate by e-mail. So when we receive news from him by these new means, do we demand that we still need to receive a letter from him sent through the postal service conveying the same news? If we study the injunctions of the Holy Quran, they lead us to the conclusion that all inventions and developments which make things easier for mankind are blessings from God which we must use and accept, not reject and turn away from.

The result is that there is complete confusion just before Ramadan and just before Eid as to when it will be. It is not decided till the evening before. It causes inconvenience to people and brings Islam into ridicule. There is disagreement about the day among different groups, they hold it on different days, each group believing that it is following the way prescribed by the religion, and it is adhering to righteousness. But the Quran tells us in this verse that it is not righteousness to do something in an inverted, upside down way, departing from a straight and proper way.

1: See [www.moonsighting.com](http://www.moonsighting.com) and [www.hilal-sighting.com](http://www.hilal-sighting.com).

2: For an example of such a rejection at this *Eid* see [www.hilal-sighting.com](http://www.hilal-sighting.com), whose learned specialist Dr. Mohib Durrani rejected a reported sighting by a Muslim husband and wife in Illinois, U.S.A. on Friday 12 November on the following two grounds. The report stated that the ends of the observed crescent were pointing downwards towards the sun, which is the opposite of the way they should be. Also the moonset time that evening in that place was *before* the sunset time, so it was "impossible" (as Dr Durrani calls it) to have seen it.

It also tells us here what is righteousness: “he is righteous who keeps his duty”. The purpose of fasting, given in the very first verse about fasting, is to enable us to learn to keep our duty to God and our duty to fellow human beings. Those who learn this lesson from fasting are the righteous. It is not a condition of righteousness that you started and ended Ramadan on exactly the right date. As you may know, our Jamaat here in the U.K. uses a simple system based on the published data about the moon to fix these dates many years in advance. We don’t claim that this makes our fasting any more effective, any more accepted by God, than those who, in the traditional manner, don’t fix the date in advance. But we do say that we have made things more convenient for people, for making their arrangements, and we have shown how in Islam we can take advantage of scientific knowledge in organizing our religious activities. We are able to have this outlook because of the spiritual and intellectual heritage we have received from the great stalwarts of this Ahmadiyya Movement. They have shown how common-sense, reason and logic can be applied in the sphere of religion, while still treating religious teachings as supreme.

### Brief note on what happened at this *Eid*<sup>3</sup>

It was announced on the Muslim moon sighting websites more than a month before this *Eid* that while the birth of the new moon is on Friday, 12th November at 14.27 GMT, the lunar crescent will not be visible on Friday evening at sunset anywhere in the world. It is declared on the www.hilal-sighting.com website in bold text, using the underlining and capital letters as shown below:

“It is IMPOSSIBLE for the Hilal to be visible anywhere in the world on the evening of Fri 12 Nov 2004 CE. Hence, it is IMPOSSIBLE for EID-ul-FITR to be on Sat 13 Nov 2004 CE anywhere in the world.”

3: I have added this section after *Eid* while finalising the published version of the oral *khutba*.

The statement on www.moonsighting.com is as follows:

“On November 12, the moon could not be seen anywhere on earth, with a possible exception of limited Polynesian Islands where telescope will be required to see.”

However, on Friday evening in the U.K. the website of the Central London Mosque issued the following announcement:

*E I D S P E C I A L  
E I D O N S A T U R D A Y :  
Moon sighting signals end of  
Ramadhan*

The Central London Mosque follows Saudi Arabia, where Eid was held on Saturday. The following news item appeared in the Pakistani newspaper *The News International* and its Urdu sister paper *The Jang* on Saturday 13th November on their website:

### Eid in S Arabia, Gulf states today

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia and some Gulf Arab states will celebrate the Eid-ul-Fitr on Saturday, state media said on Friday.

Naturally, one wonders how the “impossible to sight” lunar crescent became visible in these countries. There exist only the following three possibilities:

1. The lunar crescent was actually sighted and therefore the calculations are wrong. If this is the case, then why aren’t the Muslim astronomy experts challenging the results of their scientific discipline and declaring that these have been proved to be in error by human observation?
2. The sighting was an error by the observer; something else was mistaken for the lunar crescent. In this case, it just shows the unreliability of the method of sighting by eye, and is a strong argument for using the method of calculation.
3. It was not an honest error but a deliberately false claim that the moon had been sighted. If this was the case, then it is highly deplorable that there are Muslims who, in collusion with their governments, are pre-

pared to swear false oaths in a religious matter.

I leave this question for Muslim leaders in the fields of religion, science and national and community politics to answer, as to which of these three possibilities is true.<sup>5</sup>

Fasting teaches that the Quran should be the supreme source of guidance

I now refer to the beginning of the first verse that I quoted, which says: “The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion”. Ramadan was selected in Islam as the fasting month because it was the month in which the revelation of the Quran began upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu alai-hi wa sallam*. The Holy Prophet, before being appointed to his mission, felt deep concern at the morally fallen state of humanity and used to pray to God to seek answers to the fundamental questions about life and solutions to the problems besetting the world. He also undertook very hard fasting in solitude for this purpose. God then granted him guidance in the form of revelation, later collected in book form as the Quran. Both Moses and Jesus had also undertaken hard fasting in solitude immediately prior to receiving their mission from God. Our fasting, much less severe than theirs, is also for a similar purpose on a more limited scale — that of becoming purified so as to be able to receive the understanding of the Word of God in our hearts. Then, while increasing our own understanding of the Word of God, and strengthening our connection with it, it is also our duty to teach its guidance to the world. As it is stated here, the Quran is a guidance to all human beings. The purpose of fasting is not achieved unless it leads us to make the Quran into a guidance for ourselves and then for the whole

5: This account is given in Pickthall’s biography entitled *Loyal Enemy* by Anne Fremantle, published in London, 1938, from pages 408 to 420.

world.

It is in this respect that the Ahmadiyya Movement has rendered a unique service. When the Ahmadiyya Movement appeared, there was *no* concept among Muslims in general of:

- Learning anything from the Quran and acquiring knowledge from it,
- Applying the Quran to current problems and issues,
- Translating the Quran,
- Holding the Quran as the uppermost guide in life.

People did learn to recite the Arabic text of the Quran, and their religious scholars did know its language. But their understanding of its teachings was confined to the commentaries of the Quran written several centuries ago. They made little or no effort to understand or learn anything directly from the Quran and apply it to the situation of the current times. The commentaries of centuries ago, that they studied, related to the conditions of those times, and many things in them seemed rather strange, absurd and inapplicable now.

As to translating the Quran, a large number of Muslim ulama considered it disallowed by Islam to translate the Quran at all into any other language. Our Jamaat's English translation by Maulana Muhammad Ali appeared first in 1917. Twelve years later, when a famous British Muslim, Marmaduke Pickthall, also did an English translation, he took it to Egypt before publication to check it under the guidance of the Ulama there. But he found to his surprise that many of them declared it as unlawful in Islam to translate the Quran. Instead, they advised him to translate one of the traditional commentaries. Pickthall has himself written an account of how he had to refute their objections, try to overcome their opposition and

prove the urgent necessity of a translation.<sup>4</sup>

The Ahmadiyya Movement taught a hundred years ago that it was absolutely essential for scholars to translate the Quran into other languages and to write commentaries and explanations based on the Quran itself, instead of the classical commentaries, and apply the Quranic teachings to the questions and issues of the present age. The ordinary people too must study the Quran directly, with the help of these translations and explanations. But they must do this with an enquiring mind, and not blindly or regarding the explanations of the interpreters as being infallible like the word of God. It is their duty to apply their sense and reason to satisfy themselves that the meanings given by the scholars are confirmed by the Quran itself, and even to try to improve their interpretations further.

These days you see in the Muslim press and electronic media all over the world the meanings of the Quran being taught, *dars* and talks on the Quran and explanations of its passages being given, etc. Teaching the Quran in this way is a practice which was almost *unknown* among Muslims until long after the Ahmadiyya Movement instituted the teaching of the meanings of the Quran through books, lectures, *khutbas*, talks etc.

The last point I mentioned above is: Holding the Quran as the uppermost guide. Unfortunately, Muslim scholars and interpreters had been giving greater authority to books such as collections of Sayings of the Holy Prophet, works of what is called Islamic law, and even some books of unreliable history, than to the Holy Quran in determining both the spiritual teachings of Islam and its ordinances for this world's life. This led to the growth of certain concepts and views among Muslims which are opposed to the Holy Quran's directives and the actual practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Many of these wrong conceptions, regarded as Islamic, in fact cause damage to the dignity of Islam and create obstacles for its progress in the world. In this category are the wrong views on ji-

had, freedom of religion, rights of women, and the story of Jesus's life. The Ahmadiyya Movement cleared up these misconceptions by placing the Quran in the position of the highest authority and treating all other sources as secondary to it. If you read Maulana Muhammad Ali's commentaries on the Quran or his book *The Religion of Islam* you will see exactly how these wrong interpretations have been corrected by treating the Quran as the highest source of guidance.

So the Ahmadiyya Movement has fulfilled this key purpose of fasting — that we learn to hold the Holy Quran as the supreme guidance for our lives and we strive to make this book reach all of humanity. If we are asked why *certain* of the Ahmadiyya views are different from the generally-held beliefs prevailing among Muslims, the reason is *only* that the Ahmadiyya Movement gives the highest place of all to the Holy Quran when deciding what our beliefs should be.

Prayer and attaining closeness to God

The second verse I read out is the one in which Allah says:

“And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should hear My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way”.

This shows that fasting should lead a person to realize that God is near him and, being near, answers his or her prayers. Therefore prayer is of the utmost importance in the month of fasting. No doubt all Muslims believe in the extra importance of prayer during the month of Ramadan. But two points should be noted here. Firstly, prayers had come to be regarded as a ritual to be performed by repeating set words and literally going through the motions. The involvement of the heart and mind was considered unnecessary. The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement stressed that prayer is only meaningful if it comes from the depths of one's heart and is not merely a ritual.

4: This account is given in Pickthall's biography entitled *Loyal Enemy* by Anne Fremantle, published in London, 1938, from pages 408 to 420.

Secondly, the Ahmadiyya Movement has stressed the importance of *tahajjud* prayers during Ramadan. Generally Muslims hold *taraweeh* prayers after *isha* prayers. But the Ahmadiyya Movement urged that, if possible, one should instead pray the solitary *tahajjud* prayers in the early hours. That is the prayer recommended by the Quran and spoken of very highly in it. It provides a unique opportunity for seeking closeness to God. Unless our fasting makes us realize practically that God is near, He listens to and answers our prayers, and that therefore we too should answer His call, it doesn't become the true fasting as required by Islam.

Righteous and true Muslims in all ages have demonstrated proof to the world, through their lives, that God was near them and that He answered their prayers. In recent times, it is the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement and then those who accepted him in his lifetime who showed to a very sceptical world that God is near and He hears and answers prayers. Their pure moral conduct and character was testimony that they felt that they were in God's presence all the time. Their prayers were so effective that the seemingly impossible became possible through them. The power and efficacy of their prayers was widely recognised by other Muslims. It is impossible that we would be gathered here today, in this centre, doing the work of the propagation of Islam, if it were not for their prayers.

We must carry forward the mission they started, even though we cannot by any means reach their calibre of scholarship, level of devotion, readiness to make sacrifices, and high standard of righteousness. The Holy Quran teaches that those who inherit faith from their spiritual forefathers can nonetheless preserve, safeguard and develop their heritage, even though they may not be anything like equal to them: "And those who believe and whose offspring follow them in faith — We unite with them their offspring and We shall deprive them of naught of their

work" (52:21). There are people who inherit great monetary wealth from their forefathers, but themselves do not have the capability or knack of creating wealth from nothing as their forefathers did. They can **either** fail to value their inheritance, and let it deteriorate and go to waste, **or** they can make efforts to preserve it, maintain it and make it develop and grow by investment. The same applies to us in having received this inheritance of *gold mines of faith and knowledge* from the founding stalwarts of this Movement. Every generation can always progress, even if it lives in the shadow of the greatness of a previous one.

## 70 or 72 followers of Jesus in Gospels?

### *A miracle of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad*

By Hazrat Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi (d. 1977)

(About the author: Hazrat Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi, best known for his voluminous work *Muhammad in World Scriptures*, was one of the greatest missionaries of Islam and scholars of comparative religion of this age. He entered into the *bai'at* of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in 1907 at the age of 19 and worked for the Central Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore since its foundation in 1914. His successful debates in India with Hindu and Christian polemicists, his world-wide travels as a Muslim missionary, and his literary services to Islam, have been acclaimed by many prominent Muslims outside this Movement.

When he completed the compilation of the 3-volumed, second edition of his famous work *Muhammad in World Scriptures*, he wrote an article about this book which begins as follows:

"The Promised Messiah had announced in his first book *Barahin Ahmadiyya* that he would put forward three hundred arguments as evidence of the truth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. He published

this book in four parts in which, addressing the religious divines of all the religions of the world, he showed the Holy Quran to be a unique book, a great miracle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and a clear proof of the truth of his claim. This book is an unparalleled work as regards its nature and subject, and is a shining evidence of the Divinely-bestowed knowledge of Hazrat Mirza sahib and of his being the *Mujaddid* of the century.

"This is the real work which must be the centre and the pivot of all the efforts of the Ahmadiyya Movement. Whatever will be done in this line will be dedicated to the name of the Promised Messiah and be considered to be his work and derived from him. *Barahin Ahmadiyya* was the book which gained tributes from the *Ulama* of the time, and this was the book, by reading which my late father became an admirer of Hazrat Mirza sahib and desirous of entering into his *bai'at*. From the earliest that I can remember, it was from this fountain of knowledge that I drank, and I was successful in public debates against the most prominent religious leaders of the Arya Samaj and the Christians." (*Paigham Sulh*, 27 December 1967, p. 7.)

We give below extracts from an instalment in a series of articles Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi wrote in our Lahore Urdu periodical *Paigham Sulh*, replying to various allegations made against one of our books by a highly experienced and prominent Christian missionary of the Indian subcontinent, whose name was also Abdul Haq.

The Christian critic objected that a statement by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in a book referring to '72 emissaries of Jesus' was incorrect since the number given in the Gospels is 70. He claimed that no Ahmadi could show the figure 72 anywhere. Extracts from the Maulana's reply, in *Paigham Sulh* of 26 August and 2 September 1964, now follow:

"In reply, we admit that in Luke 10:1 seventy followers are indeed men-

tioned. But learned people know that in Divine scriptures the numbers *seventy* and *seventy-two* stand for a large number. In English this is known as ‘round figures’, and these merely mean a large number. This was not such a serious matter that you should have accused a respectable Imam of a community of exaggeration and fabrication. However, God intended that you should be utterly vanquished in your combat with His champion (i.e. Hazrat Mirza), and therefore He caused you to issue the challenge that the number of these followers was 70 and not 72

“The mention of 72 instead of 70 from the pen of the Promised Messiah is a miracle. Hazrat Mirza did not know Greek, nor was he well-versed in English. In the Urdu and English translations of the Gospels, designated as authentic, the number of these preachers is given as 70. And in the Greek text published by the Church of England, their number is also *Ebdom* or seventy, *but in the margin it is noted that in some Greek manuscripts the number is Ebdom duo, or seventy-two.*

“It was God, the Knower of the unseen, Who caused the Imam of the time to write these words, because he was taught by the Holy Spirit. The Christian missionary Abdul Haq did not know it despite studying and teaching the Gospels all his life, and this humble writer (Maulana) Abdul Haq would never have known it if he had not consulted that Greek text to reply to the missionary’s objection about the number 72. My faith in the Promised Messiah has increased. Certainly it was God Who caused Hazrat Mirza to write these words, and today we can even show this self-styled Christian ‘conqueror of Qadian’ the word *seventy-two*, not in the margin, but in the main text itself.

“The top-most Christian clergyman of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent accuses Hazrat Mirza of fabrication. Normally one would expect that a Christian missionary who has been studying and teaching the Gospels for over half a century, taking part in religious debates, and is the head of

their theological college, is bound to be knowledgeable, indeed extremely learned, in the Gospels. On the other hand there is Hazrat Mirza, who had definitely studied the Gospels, but he did not have the opportunity or the resources available to the Christian missionary for this study. It is certainly not an ordinary thing that such a prominent Christian theologian challenges the Imam of the age about a reference in the Gospels.

“The challenge of the reverend, made after Hazrat Mirza’s death, is to every Ahmadi, not only those of the present time but the millions to come till the end of the world, that they shall not be able to meet his demand. As against this bold challenge, there is the promise of Allah to the Imam of the time as follows: *La nabqa la-ka min al-mukhziyat dhikra*, meaning, ‘We shall not leave behind thee anything which can humiliate thee’, so that anyone trying to disgrace him will face disgrace himself.

“It is perfectly true that in the Gospels published till the time of the Imam of the age, in Urdu, Persian, Arabic and English, which were called the Authorised Versions, the number of disciples is given as 70 and not 72. However, when this Christian missionary issued what he firmly believed was an unassailable challenge, and accused Hazrat Mirza of fabrication, then God, the Defender of the honour of His own Imam, manifested a miracle. A humble servant of the Imam set out to look through the Greek texts of the Gospels, and discovered the reference to 72 in the marginal notes of the Greek edition of this same authorised version, saying that in some manuscripts the number is given as 72. But after this, I received a Greek edition of the Gospels published in the U.S.A., in which not in the margin *but in the main text* the number of these followers is stated to be 72.

“This is a miracle of the Imam of the age. I received this edition only two weeks ago, exactly at the time of need when I had to reply to this allegation. Although the Imam of the

age did not know languages such as Greek and Sanskrit, but the Imam of the age is after all the Imam of the age. He is the Imam appointed by God, and it is not possible for the theologians of the world, be they eastern or western, to find faults with him.”

## Hazrat Aishah Siddiqah’s Age at Her Marriage:

by Ghulam Nabi Muslim, M.A.  
Translated by: Masud Akhtar, LL.B.  
The Light (Sep 24, 1981, pp. 13-17).

[Note: Many anti-Islamic sites accuse our Beloved Holy Prophet, Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, of, God Forbid, marrying a minor. This has been repeated by a Dutch MP recently, who heaven forbid, called our beloved prophet a perverted paedophile. We present here an article that will clear our Beloved Holy Prophet (pbuh) of this blasphemous charge. **We are proud to say that we were the first Muslim organisation to carry out research on this topic in order to be able to refute this baseless charge. We urge our brothers and sisters to take up the pen to clear the holy name of Islam and its prophet and not the gun. Use of violence means that we does not have convincing arguments to refute such baseless charges and we are trying to silence our detractors by force. This is not what Islam or hits prophet need!** May Allah guide the opponents of Islam aright, Aameen]

Most narrations carry misstatements about the age of Hazrat ‘Aishah Siddiqah at the time of her marriage to the Holy Prophet, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). They place this marriage in the tenth year of the Call and state that Hazrat ‘Aishah was only 6 years old at that time. On proper sifting of the material facts, these statements turn out to be incorrect and it becomes evident that she, in fact, was about 19 or 20

years of age when she arrived in the house of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as his wife in 2 A.H.

It will be in the fitness of things to quote from the writings of two well-known Muslim scholars of the present century who are the main exponents of the view that Hazrat 'Aishah Siddiqah was 6 years old at her *Nikah* and 9 years old at the time of the consummation of her marriage. Both Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadvi and Maulana Syed Abul Ala Maududi are well-known Muslim authors of *Seerat* (biography).

### Nadvi's View

Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadvi writes on page 21 of his book '*Seerat-i-Aishah*':

"Books of history and biography are generally silent about the birth date of Hazrat 'Aishah. The historian Ibn Sa'd, whom many later biographers have followed, has written that Hazrat 'Aishah was born in the fourth year of the Call, and was married at the age of 6 years in the tenth year of the Call. Apparently this cannot be correct, because if her birth in the fourth year of the Call be admitted as correct, then, her age at the time of her marriage in the tenth year of the Call works out to 7 and not 6 years. The fact remains that some matters about the age of Hazrat 'Aishah are admitted to be correct by most historians and biographers, and these are: She was married three years before Hijrah at the age of six years; the marriage was consummated in the month of Shawal in the year 1 A.H. when she was 9 years old, and she became a widow in Rabi-al-Awwal 11 A.H., at the age of 18 years. According to this account, the correct date of her birth works out to the end of the fifth year of the Call or 614 A.D. of the Christian calendar. For a proper comprehension of the events of history, one should bear in mind that out of a total period of 23 years of the Call, the first 13 years were passed in Mecca and the last 10 years in Madina. Thus, the fourth year of the Call had already been out before her birth and the fifth year was running."

### Maududi's View:

In the article, "The *Nikah* Date of Sayedah 'Aishah," published in the '*Tarjuman al-Quran*' of September 1976, Maulana Abul Ala Maududi wrote:

"It is apparent from the detailed reports of Imam Ahmad Tibrani, Ibn Jareer and Baihaqi that the *Nikah* of Sayedah 'Aishah was solemnised before the *Nikah* of Sayedah Saudah. It is also evident that her *Nikah* with the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was solemnised in the month of Shawal of the tenth year of the Call, three years before Hijrah, when she was 6 years old. Here a question arises, that if Sayedah 'Aishah was 6 years of age in the Shawal of the tenth year of the Call, then she should have been 9 years of age at the time of Hijrah and should have been of 11 years in 2 A.H. at the time of consummation. But all narrators agree that her *Nikah* was solemnised when she was 6 years old and the marriage was consummated when she was 9 years old. Some Ulema have tried to meet this discrepancy by saying that the marriage was consummated seven months after Hijrah. Hafiz Ibn Hajar has preferred this view. On the other hand, Imam Nauvi in his '*Tahzeeb al-Asma'a al-Lughat*', Hafiz Ibn Katheer in his '*Al-Badaya*' and Allama Qustalani in his '*Mawahib al-Deeniah*' report consummation in 2 A.H. Hafiz Badr-ud-Din Aini has written in his *Umdat al-Qari* that the marriage of 'Aishah Siddiqah was consummated in Shawal 2 A.H. after the return of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) from the battle of Badr. Both Imam Nauvi and Allama Aini consider the above-quoted reports of consummation of marriage seven months after Hijrah as irresponsible and untrustworthy. Thus we are faced with a question that if the marriage was consummated at the age of 9 years in Shawal 2 A.H., then what should be the date of *Nikah* which should tally with her age of 6 years? An answer to this question is found in *Bukhari* wherein it is reported from Urwah ibn Zubair, "Sayedah Khadijah died three years before Hijrah; the Holy

Prophet solemnised *Nikah* with Sayedah 'Aishah two years after that. Then it was consummated at the age of 9 years." This works out to be correct that *Nikah* was solemnised one year before Hijrah when she was 6 years old and consummation took place in 2 A.H. when she was 9 years."

The above quotations amply bear out that both Syed Nadvi and Syed Maududi agree to the correctness of reports stating the age of Sayedah 'Aishah at 6 years at *Nikah* and 9 years at the consummation. Their only worry seems to be the calculation of the correct year of the Call and the Hijrah for fixing these ages in those calendar years. Both of them start with a preconception that the age of 6 years for *Nikah* and 9 years for consummation are correct and true, and set out in search of the correct year of the Call and Hijrah in which these preconceived ages will fit in. This hardly can be called a scientific method of finding her correct age. This rather may be called an effort to find a correct date for a given age.

### The Correct View:

As far as my information goes the first voice against the common misconception about the age of Sayedah 'Aishah at her marriage was raised by Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A., LL.B., in 1924 in his '*Muhammad the Prophet*', wherein he wrote:

"The popular misconception as to Aishah's age may be removed here. That she had not attained majority is clear enough, but that she was not so young as six years of age is also true. In the first place, it is clear that she had reached an age when betrothal could take place in the ordinary course and must therefore have been approaching the age of majority. Again, the Isabah, speaking of the Prophet's daughter Fatimah, says that she was about five years older than 'Aishah. It is a well-established fact that Fatimah was born when the Ka'bah was being rebuilt, i.e., five years before the Call or a little before it, and so 'Aishah was certainly not below ten years at the time of her

marriage with the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in the tenth year of the Call. This conclusion is borne out by the testimony of 'Aishah herself who is reported to have related that when the chapter entitled 'The Moon' (the 54<sup>th</sup> chapter) was revealed she was a girl playing about and that she remembered certain verses then revealed. Now the fifty-fourth chapter could not have been revealed later than the fifth year of the Call, and therefore the report which states her to have been six years old in the tenth year of the Call when her marriage ceremony was gone through cannot be correct, because this would show her to have born about the time of the revelation of the 54<sup>th</sup> chapter. All these considerations show her to have been not less than ten years old at the time of her marriage. And as the period between her marriage and its consummation was not less than five years, because the consummation took place in the second year of the Fight, it follows that she could not have been less than fifteen at that time. The popular account that she was six years at marriage and nine years at the time of consummation is decidedly not correct, because it supposes the period between the marriage and its consummation to be only three years, while this is historically wrong."

Sulaiman Nadvi took Maulana Muhammad Ali to task (for his above-quoted view) in note 2 on page 26 of the third edition of his '*Seerat-i-Aishah*' in the following words:

"Some irresponsible persons who think that the marriage with a girl of tender age was not befitting for the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) have tried to prove that the age of Hazrat 'Aishah Siddiqah at her marriage was 16 years instead of 6 years. **All such efforts are useless and all such claims are illogical. Not a single word is the Hadith and history can be found in their support.**"

**Nadvi Contradicts Himself:** In spite of this severe criticism of Muhammad Ali's view, Nadvi not only contradicts himself about the age of Hazrat 'Aishah, but provides

supporting evidence to Muhammad Ali's views when, writing about the last days of the life of Hazrat 'Aishah, he writes at page 111 of the same '*Seerat-i-Aishah*': "Hazrat 'Aishah was a widow and she passed 40 years of her life as a widow." Further, at page 153 he writes: "The last days of *Khilafat* (Caliphate) of Amir Muawiyya were the last days of the life of Hazrat 'Aishah and her age at that time was 67 years." Now if we deduct 40 years of her widowed life from 67 years then we find she was 27 years of age at the time of the passing away of the Holy Prophet in 11 A.H. and not 18 years as reported by Nadvi in the earlier pages of the same book. Since the total period of the Call is 23 years, therefore, according to this account she was born about four years before the Call and not in the fourth year of the Call as Nadvi tried to make us believe in his earlier pages quoted herein above. **Consequently, her age at the time of the *Nikah* in the tenth year of the Call works out to 14-15 years and not 6 years, as Nadvi himself so assertively reported. According to this account, Hazrat 'Aishah's age at the time of consummation of her marriage in 2 A.H. works out to 19-20 years and not 9 years as stated in earlier pages of *Seerat-i-Aishah*.** A further enquiry is most naturally necessitated to find out which of the reports of Nadvi should be given credence.

#### Other Sources

There are other important events recorded in history which provide definite evidence about the age of Hazrat 'Aishah.

1. The well-known historian Ibn Ja-reer al-Tabari writes at page 50 of volume 4 of his '*Book of History*': "Abu Bakr married two ladies in the days of ignorance (pre-Call era). Fateelah daughter of Abd al-Aza was the first, from whom Abdullah and Asma were born. Umm-i-Rooman was the second, from whom Abd al-Rahman and 'Aishah were born. All the four children of Abu Bakr were born in the days of ignorance (Jahiliyyah, i.e., pre-Islamic days) from the above-named two ladies.

2. It is a well-known fact of history, that Abu Bakr's son Abd al-Rahman fought against the Muslims in the battle of Badr. His age at that time was 21-22 years, and although he was older than 'Aishah, there is no evidence to show that the difference between their ages was more than three or four years. This fact lends support to the view that Hazrat 'Aishah was born four or five years before the Call.

3. The well-known historian and scholar 'Allama 'Imad-ud-Deen Ibn Katheer writes in his '*Al-Badayah*' about Sayedah Asma' daughter of Hazrat Abu Bakr' (Allah be pleased with him) (and we hope Maulana Syed Abul Ala Maududi must have seen it as he referred to 'Al-Badaya' in his article): Asma' died in 73 A.H. at the age of 100 years. She was ten years older than her sister 'Aishah. Now according to this report 'Asma' would have been 27-28 years old at the time of Hijrah and since she was ten years older than Sayedah 'Aishah, **therefore the age of Sayedah 'Aishah would have been 17 or 18 years at the time of Hijrah. Accordingly, her birth falls about four or five years before the Call, and her age at the time of the consummation of marriage in 2 A. H. will work out to 19-20 years.**

4. The author of the well-known collection of Hadith '*Mishkat al-Masabeeh*', Sheikh Waheed-ud-Deen, writes in his well-known book '*Ahmal fi Asma' al-Rijjal*':

"At the time of the consummation of her marriage Sayedah 'Aishah's age was not less than 18-19 years."

**All the above quotations give ample refutation** to the common misconception that Sayedah 'Aishah's age at the time of her *Nikah* was 6 years and at the time of consummation of marriage it was only 9 years. If Muslim scholars of the present era deem fit to make an objective research instead of beating the old track, they will find ample material in the pages of history to arrive at a correct age for Sayedah 'Aishah. This indeed would be a great service to the cause of Islam.