

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, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2005

**Time:** 3 pm

**Speaker:** Miss Zahida Aziz B.A.

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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### Prophecies of The Promised Mesih

By Jalal Ud Dean (Fiji)

This discussion is divided into three sections. The first deals with the position of Islam before Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. The second deals with the uplift of Islam during and after the life of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. The last section deals with proof of some predictions that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was the promised Reformer of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century.

In most countries there are many Embassies and High Commissions. The Ambassador is always the representative of the Government of his or her country. Whatever questions or queries that people ask the Ambassa-

dor, that Ambassador will always answer and clarify issues on behalf of his or her Government.

Similarly, Reformers (or *Mujjadids*) served their term on this earth as Ambassadors from Allah. The purpose of a Reformer is to clarify and explain the teachings from the Holy Qur'an and with references from the *Hadith*, so that there is no confusion and all the people understand the same message about Islam and Allah. A Reformer (or *Mujjadid*) is not allowed and cannot introduce anything new, which is not in the Holy Qur'an.

We have many old buildings around us. Some were built a very long time ago. Every so many years it is necessary for building maintenance. The building may need some cleaning up and may be repairs and painting. A Reformer (or *Mujjadid*) is really an Islamic religious maintenance person who comes once in a century to correct beliefs and practices in Islam. This distortion in beliefs and practices is expected over many years and generations. The Reformer (or *Mujjadid*) must limit himself to the Holy Qur'an only.

It is necessary to clarify an important point about the name of this society, the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-i-Islam (Lahore) Fiji Islands. This clarification must remove all misunderstandings and misconceptions about the difference of Lahore Ahmadiyya from the other group, also known as the Qadiannis. The two Ahmadiyya groups are not the same.

People in the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-i-Islam (Lahore) are called Ahmadiyya not because of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad although his last name was Ahmad. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad did not choose his own name for his followers but he chose the original name of Rasul Allah (PBUH). When Prophet Muhammad was born, his father had already died. His mother Amina had a dream about the greatness of her son and she was informed in her dream that her baby should be named **Ahmad**. Amina gave her baby the name of **Ahmad**.

However, five years later after Amina also died, the child Ahmad was taken to his paternal grandfather Abu Muttalib. Abu Muttalib then

changed his grandson's name - from Ahmad to Muhammad.

The Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-i-Islam (Lahore) is called Ahmadiyya because of Rasul Allah's (PBUH) first name of Ahmad. Please note this clarification.

The prophecy about Rasul Allah (PBUH) is also in the Holy Bible when Jesus Christ (AS) made the announcement and given at John 16: vv.12 -14 (King James Version), which reads:

*"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come he will guide you all into truth: for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me."*

This refers to Rasul Allah (PBUH) and not Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. It is common knowledge that Rasul Allah (PBUH) was the only Prophet who received direct revelations (*Wahy-e-Nabuwwa*) from Angel Gabriel, hearing them and he immediately spoke and relayed them to his followers so that the revelations were recorded. These revelations formed the foundations of the Holy Qur'an. There is also a quotation in the Holy Qur'an at 61: v.6, which also refers to Rasul Allah (PBUH) and not to Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad:

*"6. And when Jesus, son of Mary, said: O children of Israel, surely I am the messenger of Allah to you, verifying that which is before me of the Torah and giving the good news of a Messenger who will come after me, his name being Ahmad."*

These two quotations are being taken incorrectly by the Qadiannis to gainfully mean Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. The Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-i-Islam (Lahore) most forcefully states that the two quotations do not refer to Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad but both quotations refer to Rasul Allah (PBUH).

History tells us, that throughout the world, Prophets and Reformers came

especially at those times, when the fundamental belief of one God, was under the heaviest attack. This attack was always by those people, who believed in many gods or, worshipped statues, idols and other man-made objects. The same pattern happened even before the time of Rasul Allah (PBUH). India was no exception to this.

In 1835 Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was born, as son of Mirza Ghulam Murtaza from the very noble family of Mirza Ata Muhammad. Mirza Ata Muhammad was a Mughal Barlas from Samarqand. This is an important point as it links Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to his Persian ancestors. Like Jesus Christ descended from King David, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had also descended from very noble families in Persia. The expression Mirza is not just a name but also a very noble title.

During this time, the majority non-Muslim religious groups in India were very powerful and very much against Islam.

Why was it necessary that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad should be born in India, and not some other Middle East Arab country, or some Western country? The answer lies in briefly discussing the history of all-India before the partition of Pakistan from India.

India was invaded since 1500 BC by the Aryans who introduced the Sanskrit language - and later by other ethnic groups. From the 10<sup>th</sup> Century, Muslim invaders added to the conflicts and this continued till the 14<sup>th</sup> Century with formation of the Delhi Muslim Sultanate. In 1520, the Muslim empire of the Moguls was founded. From the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century several European delegations entered India for trade. After the formation of the British East India Company in 1857, the British Government took over the rule of much of India. This conduit allowed many Christian missionaries to enter India.

The ethnic cast system in India was greatly affecting the social struc-

tures. Those Indians who were generally regarded as lowest level were denied all privileges of human dignity. The Christian missionaries saw this as good opportunity and started to convert the lowest level Indians (commonly known as *Chhammar*) into Christians.

These new converts now had a mixed culture of Hinduism plus Christianity. Islam was under greatest threat from the majority mainstream Hindus and now the increasing numbers of Christians in India.

The 14<sup>th</sup> Century *Hijra* covers the period 1883 - 1979. We are now in the 15<sup>th</sup> Islamic Century. What was the prophecy and signs given of the arrival of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century Reformer? The prophecy was that the Second Coming of Jesus (PBUH) will be in the form of the *Mahdi* and certain events will happen as warnings. They were:

Eclipse of the moon together with eclipse of the sun within two weeks; both eclipses will be in the month of *Ramadan*; Lunar eclipse will be in the first night when fasting commences; Solar eclipse will follow within two weeks - but still in the month of *Ramadan*;

Today astrophysics science proves that lunar eclipse will always be on the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> days of its lunar cycle; Further, today astrophysics science proves that solar eclipse will always be on the 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> days of earth's cycle;

This became true in year 1894 as soon as Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad began to receive revelations about his Assignment as 14<sup>th</sup> Reformer and *mahdi*;

In the same year, both lunar and solar eclipses occurred not once but twice, once in southern hemisphere and later in northern hemisphere; The moon was eclipsed on the 13<sup>th</sup> night and the sun on the 28<sup>th</sup> day; The eclipses in both hemispheres literally informed the world;

There was further prophecy of a plague that will devastate the country where the *mahdi* will appear; In the same year (1894) a serious plague of

cholera swept through India and thousands upon thousands of people perished;

The *mahdi* will be born as one of a twin; Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was born as twins, the other being his twin-sister;

The *mahdi* will be encountering similar difficulties as Jesus (PBUH) and Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad went through similar difficulties and forsaken by his own *Qadian* Muslim community when he claimed of receiving revelations from the Most High upon his appointment as 14<sup>th</sup> Reformer.

It was in 1889 that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad founded the Ahmadiyya Movement as the Reformer (or *Mujjadid*) of the 14<sup>th</sup> Islamic Century.

Since Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was the 14<sup>th</sup> Reformer, and then who were the other thirteen Islamic Reformers (or *Mujaddids*) before Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad? They were as –

1. Umar ibn Abdul Aziz
2. Imam Shafi
3. Abu Sharh
4. Abu Ubaidullah
5. Al-Ghazali
6. Al-Sayyid Abdul Qadir Jilani
7. Imam ibn Taimiyah
8. Ibn Hajar Asqalani
9. Sayyid Ahmad Jaunpuri
10. Imam Suyuti
11. Al-Shaikh Ahmad Sirbind
12. Shah Wali Allah Muhaddath Dehlavi
13. Sayyid Ahmad Bareilvi

When the Islamic 13<sup>th</sup> Century came to a close after *Mujjadid* Sayyid Ahmad Bareilvi and the 14<sup>th</sup> Century was about to begin, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad received his first Commission of Command (*Wahy-e-Willaya*) from Allah when he was told: **“You are the Mujjadid of this Century!”**

Then there was a revelation (*Wahy-e-Willaya*) from Allah in Arabic language. The translation means:

“Allah taught you the Qur’an and made known its true meanings to

you, so that you may warn of bad consequences a people who fell in errors because of generations of neglect and lack of admonition, and so that manifest becomes the path of those culprits who do not want to accept the true path even after receiving the guidance. Tell them: Allah has commissioned me and I am the first of those who submit.”

Thereafter Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad received many revelations (*Wahy-e-Willaya* and not *Wahy-e-Nabuwwa*) that gave clear indications of events yet to happen. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad never ever received *Wahy-e-Nabuwwa* as that aspect was only for Prophets. The ulama of the time acclaimed and received the claim of his being the *Mujjadid* of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century.

The Holy Qur’an states with authority at Ch 3: v.103

*“And from you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. And these are they who are successful.”*

Which is this party who enjoin the right and forbid the wrong? That party is the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha’at-i-Islam (Lahore) – the correct party.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is therefore a continuation of the line of Reformers (or *Mujaddids*). Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a Reformer (or *Mujjadid*) not a Prophet.

The other majority religious groups recognised that the revival of Islam was now beginning and they all tried very hard, to crush Islam into non-existence in India. They got together to misrepresent Islam as a backward religion. If that was not enough, they said Islam was a religion of violence and a cult.

It was at this time, that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad became the undisputed champion of Muslims, to defend Islam from all other communities – all by himself. He began to write and issue posters.

It is also necessary to fully understand and appreciate the difficulty the people of India had with media. Technology was backward. Most

resources were difficult to get by.

There was no radio, no television, no videotape and no Internet. The only way to propagate Islam was to print posters and paste them all over the main public places so that all the people would read them.

The posters circulated by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad were similar to those posters that we generally see during election times that have some party politics message on it and pasted on walls all over the towns and villages.

Books were meant only for those people who were wealthy and could afford to buy them but posters had best public attention. Hazrat Mirza wrote 89 books in Urdu and Persian. Many of those books were later translated into English.

He explained in most of his books and lectures that Islam was a religion of tolerance and reasoning. Further, he established the superiority of Islam over the other faiths and philosophies of life.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad established the following foundation points:

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is ***Khatam al-Nabiyyin*** (seal of all prophets) and no prophet either ***older or new*** will ever come again to the Day of Resurrection.

All prophets were human beings and all have died. Their bodies have remained buried here in the earth and their souls have departed to ***Barzak***.

No person shall claim to be a prophet after Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as this will destroy the entire fabric of Islam.

Prophets were mortal Messengers. They must die.

Prophets bring ***Shariya***.

Holy Qur’an is the final ***Shariya*** to the world.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was not a prophet like Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad never claimed to be a prophet.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad clarified that Angel Gabriel never descended upon him.

Belief in the Kalima "*La-illaha illa Illahu Muhammad-ur Rasul Ullah.*"

Any person who recites and believes the above Kalima is a Muslim.

No Muslim has rights to declare another Muslim a **Kafir**.

Starting in India, with the help of Maulana Muhammad Ali, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's books reached almost every country of the world. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad received special Divine guidance after facing up to some of the harshest criticisms from his own country folk.

He made many predictions. His predictions not only proved that he was the true Reformer of Islam, but went beyond his lifetime to prove the truth of the Ahmadiyya Movement.

Majority non-Muslim religious groups were not the only people who were attacking Islam. The Muslims of India, who did not accept Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as the Reformer, joined hands with other non-Muslims to attack Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Such treacherous Muslims who join hands with other non-Muslims to work against Islam are better known as "*Gaddar*."

This system of attack against the Ahmadiyya Movement continued, and it still continues – even to this day. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad made over 3,000 predictions and all proving to be true, as time progresses. Here are only some of them:

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad died in 1908 and therefore, was not around to prove that he was right as he made predictions during his lifetime and the events actually happened after his death.

His predictions were from visions he had, in a state of wakefulness, and not in dreams.

He was in Lahore, and there he saw a vision of his father's death, at sunset, the next day at Qadian. Lahore and Qadian are 70 miles apart. He told his followers about it and rushed

over by train to Qadian. He reached Qadian and all the events that happened there proved correct.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had a vision of Jesus Christ's (AS) grave at Khan Yar Street, at Srinagar in Kashmir, without ever visiting that place. That is proved correct.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad explained the meaning and prophecy of Dajjal to be the white race of European origins. He explained that Europeans would try to imitate Allah in science and technology and become blind to religious and spiritual beliefs. Today we hear so much about scientists and their test-tube babies, and cloning of animals.

So which of the proofs of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad that he was the appointed 14<sup>th</sup> Century Reformer of Islam are you going to deny?

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad also predicted the death of a very offensive Hindu critic of Islam on 6 May 1891. He was Lek Ram of Peshawar, India. Hazrat Sahib predicted that in six years a non-human hand would kill Lek Ram, with a knife, on Eid-ul-Fitr on 6 May 1897. On a precise given date of Eid-ul-Fitr 6 May of 1897, Lek Ram was surrounded by several of his stalwart body guards in a sealed room two stories high. The building was the tallest in Peshawar and in midst of Lek Ram's followers.

Lek Ram and his followers were prepared to prove Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad wrong and continue their blistering attack on Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and attack Islam. On one side of the building, tents were set up with many people intermingling and the whole area covered a wedding function. Suddenly a most ferocious looking man with blood dripping all over him appeared from nowhere into this sealed room and ripped open Lek Ram's abdomen with a knife. Nobody was able to apprehend the murderer. The bloodied murderer vanished as quickly as he appeared.

Lek Ram died soon after realising that the revelation received by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was proved correct and that the Muslims'

Allah was True and Living God. Every aspect of the revelation proved correct. It should be noted that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was nowhere near that place when Lek Ram was killed.

Hazrat Sahib warned Doi of USA, not to call himself as God. He predicted that Doi's own bodyguard would kill Doi. It happened exactly that way.

An Englishman called Piggot was claiming to be a prophet. Hazrat Sahib warned him not to say so, or an unknown disease will kill him. Piggot became very sick, and died from unknown diseases in England. Till this day it is not known which disease killed Piggot.

In 1901, after the people of Afghanistan murdered Moulvi Abdur Rahman and Sahibzada Abdul Latif, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad warned them, that there would be a bad disease, which will kill many Afghani people. Over 85,000 Afghans died from Cholera in a short time.

So which of the proofs of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad that he was the appointed 14<sup>th</sup> Century Reformer of Islam are you going to deny?

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad also warned the King of Afghanistan, that his country would fall 70 years later and would suffer from many political problems. In 1970, the USSR invaded Afghanistan, and till today, there is so much trouble in Afghanistan. The combined militaries of Britain, United States of America and Australia reduced Afghanistan to rubble and ruins.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was very poorly received and ridiculed, by the British and Americans. He warned them that they will face serious calamity, and millions of people will die. In 1950-53 the Korean War broke out, and over 5 million people were killed.

The Europeans were very worried about Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad that he was trying to revive Islam, and they worked against him. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad warned the Europeans, including the British and

Americans about World War I and World War II. He predicted the dates as 1914-1918 and 1939-1942. Both dates were proved correct.

Hazrat Sahib described how very big explosions would come from the land, the sky and the sea. In those days (before 1908 when Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad died) there was no bomb, rocket, aeroplane or submarine. Yet all the events came to be true in World War II.

So which of the proofs of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad that he was the appointed 14<sup>th</sup> Century Reformer of Islam are you going to deny?

He also predicted that Japan would become a powerful country, and try to conquer the world economy. This happened after World War II.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad warned the Arabs, not to take side with the British Government, and not to fight with other Arabs and Muslims. They did not listen to him and the Arabs confided with British Intelligence Officer T E Lawrence (the famous Lawrence of Arabia) to fight other Muslims – the Turks. As a result, till today, the Arabs are divided; they are fighting each other and the Jews.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad predicted that a famous Muslim leader and adversary of Ahmadiyya people will be imprisoned and hanged on his 52<sup>nd</sup> year of life. A Former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was imprisoned. One month before his 52<sup>nd</sup> birthday, media informed the world about Bhutto celebrating his birthday in prison - and then he was hanged exactly on his 52<sup>nd</sup> year of life in 1979.

So which of the proofs of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad that he was the appointed 14<sup>th</sup> Century Reformer of Islam are you going to deny?

Hazrat Sahib also predicted that there will be another Muslim leader, who will become another great adversary of Ahmadiyya people, and that this Muslim leader will get killed in a fiery explosion in the sky. General Zia ul Haq – President of Pakistan was killed in an aircraft explosion in the sky in 1986. It should

be noted that at the moment of prediction, there was no aeroplane during the lifetime of Hazrat Sahib.

The above events are recorded in Pakistan history.

Jesus Christ (AS) came 1400 years after Prophet Moses (AS).

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad came 1400 years after Rasul Allah (PBUH).

After studying all these events it cannot be denied that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib was the true Reformer and *Mujjadid* of the 14<sup>th</sup> Islamic Century.

## UNITY

### A LESSON FROM THE HISTORY OF ISLAM - THE CRUSADES

By

*Desmond A. Ali, Ph.D. (Trinidad)*

There is a well-known saying “Those who do not know the failures of history are doomed to repeat them.” For my talk today, I wish to change that saying slightly by stating “Those who do not learn from the successes of history are doomed to repeat its failures.”

I take my lesson from the seven Crusade wars visited on the Islamic Empire by Christian Europe from the years 1098-1248 C.E. The idea of the Crusades, the so-called holy wars of Christendom against the infidels of Islam, began almost from the birth of Islam and continue to this very day though under a different guise, a different name and a different pretext.

The encounter of Islam and Christendom illuminates the eternal struggle between East & West. Whether in war or peace, this encounter was always decisive and had the most far-reaching effects and repercussions on the destiny of the world. The world of Christianity looked on in awe as a group of nomadic Arabs driven by this new passion of Islam overcame the prestige and power of the two greatest powers and in less than fifty years were able to found on the ruins of these two former great empires one of the most progressive, learned and civil societies the world has ever seen.

From the very outset, almost immediately after the death of our Holy Prophet (*saws*), Christianity saw in Islam a threat to its survival. One must wonder from whence this perceived threat arose? One can only speculate but one can discern a number of contributing factors. Here were two religions with a common source in the Holy Prophet Ibrahim and both sharing many other commonalities. Christianity saw in Islam an effervescence, a vitality, a purity of message, a simplicity, a universality and an egalitarianism that were lacking in itself. By the time that Islam appeared in 622 CE, Christianity had re-invented itself. The First Nicene Conference of 325 CE had legitimised the Pauline principle of the Trinity of God and the centre of Christianity had moved from the Middle East to Rome. In fact, the Roman Emperor, Constantine, who, on his conversion to Christianity, had called the Nicene Conference manipulated the conference to enable the marriage of Roman imperialism and Christianity which he saw as the perfect vehicle for his expansionist policies and Roman imperialism.

Could it be that the Europeans, who believed that they had inherited the mantle of Christianity, had never forgiven God for bringing Jesus into this world as a Middle Eastern Jew rather than as a European? Certainly all the religious imagery, whether paintings, icons, or sculptures and more recently films from Europe showed Jesus and his family with typically European features rather than swarthy Middle Eastern features. Now here was this new religion, Islam, with an Arab Prophet and Arab followers, proud of all that was Middle Eastern.

Could the pure, undiluted, uncorrupted message of this Holy Quran which was the Word of God speaking to His servant supplant the Biblical message which by this time had gone through manifold changes with many books omitted? Even within the four main books of the New Testament, there was much disagreement. The basic simple message of the Galilean carpenter had become a complex one of Trinity, a hierarchial Church, pageantry, ritual and liturgy.

Perhaps the most important Christian

fear was that Islam had removed the phenomenon of intercession. Man's relationship with God was direct and personal without the intercession of a clergy. It was this phenomenon of intercession that made the Roman Church mighty since the ordinary folk were led to believe that the only path to God lay through the Church.

To fully comprehend this vital point, I should like you to cast your minds back, if you can, to what the world might have been like in 622 CE. It would have been a simple and oftentimes brutal existence. Social organisation consisted of the nobility, the Church, the army and the peasants. In Europe, the Roman Christian Church with its complex organisation, its layers of clergy, its interminable rituals, its growing wealth and power was the only organised industry. The Church was power, and powerful was the Church. Very early in its existence, Emperor Constantine and the Roman Christian Church understood the unlimited power which intercession provided.

The Roman Christian Church therefore brooked no rivals as evidenced by the ferocity, the terror and the bloodshed which it unleashed on all its rival Christian groups, including the peaceful, ascetic Gnostics who claimed the simplicity and nobility of Christ. The Gnostics were massacred and hounded out of existence, their bibles destroyed wherever they were found. One fortunate Gnostic follower hid his bible in a jar at Nag Hammadi in Egypt to be discovered 1600 years later in 1945 by two Egyptian peasant boys. These texts now provide insight into Gnostic beliefs and practice.

It was into this world that Islam found itself. Within one hundred years of the death of the Holy Prophet (*saws*), this new religion had spread its wings from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. Everywhere that Islam went, it was embraced. The absence of intercession in man's relationship with God proved to be a potent drawing card.

The Umayyad Muslims went into Spain and there created a society that remains to this day unmatched for its liberty, learning, enlightenment and progress. The Christians to the north

looked on in envy, fear and greed as the Umayyads made Spain fertile, cultivated learning and the arts, established schools, universities and great libraries, allowed freedoms to the Jews and Christians, built fine cities, towns and villages and brought the Goths from backwardness to civility. Andalusia had become not only the centre of Islam but the centre of progress in Europe.

These infidels from Arabia and North Africa were posing a serious threat to Christendom for the Christians saw that when Islam acquired the greater part of the patrimony of the Roman Empire, the object of Muslim conquest was not limited to conquering lands and extending sovereignty; it was not to commit genocide and eliminate entire races of people as was to become the hallmark of European imperialism less than nine hundred years later; Muslims had a greater and nobler end which was the realisation of spiritual and social sovereignty in addition to political domination.

It was against this threat that European Christendom marshalled itself. The Crusades were the manifestation of this wave of religious fanaticism. The Christian Church went about transforming and unifying Europe in a way that was shameful to say the least. They appealed in the name of religion to succour the cross and hasten to their share of these rich Muslim spoils. The movement took its patronage under the Papacy. Despite all the talk about Christendom, the struggle was for worldly ambition and material gain, just as it is today. The appeal of the Church and Papacy was to kings and nobles, it was to knights and common people, it was to master and serf. All would benefit in one way or another from the magnificent Islamic heritage, new feudal possessions for the nobles, ransoms for the kings and princes of Islam, beautiful valleys, blooming fields and new cities with prosperity for the commoners and peasants to escape the barrenness and poverty of Northern Europe. It was an opportunity to pillage and loot, to conquer and occupy new lands.

Christendom had its limited successes in the Crusade battlefields but the seven Crusades were in overall

terms unkind to the Europeans. The forces of the princes and kings of Europe were routed and they retired in awe and admiration of people like Salah-ud-Din. In the Seventh Crusade in Egypt, the king of France, Louis IX, suffered an ignominious defeat, was captured and later ransomed.

The great lesson and success to Europe of the Crusades was a social one. The people of Europe had suffered under the heavy hand of feudalism led by the Church and the nobility. The Crusades opened up a wider horizon allowing human thought to traverse beyond the narrow circle within which it was confined. The commoner and the peasant of European lands who had hastened to the Crusades found this wider horizon on seeing the liberties of Islam and were inspired with great hope. The Crusades were in fact the first general European event, an event that crossed barriers within nations and which united nations in a common goal. In every country of Europe, all classes of people were moved by the same sentiment; kings, nobles, priests, merchants and peasants acted as one. This was in fact the beginning of European unity. The seeds of European unity and strength that we witness today were laid under the cross in the struggle against the crescent.

Much was to happen after the Crusades between the nations of Europe, but that seed of unity was sown. Religion brought these people together to fight a common cause. The Crusades were the cradle of European nationalism and despite the later split in the Roman Church, despite the acts of kings and princes, despite the protestations of politicians, the common man had partaken of something which had created a storm in men's minds and which would not be lost.

I close by bringing us back to today's world. On a wider scale, the struggle between Islam and Christendom continues. The West is still organising its own crusades against Islam under the banner of political and economic imperialism using new methods concealed under the mask of civilisation, democracy, peace, weapons of mass destruction and whatever else. We Muslims, divided

as we are into Sunnis, Ahmadis, Qadianis, Shias, Sufis, and more need to take a lesson from Christendom in Europe as they took on the might of Islam from 750 CE onwards. The threat to the survival of Islam is **from without and not from within**. We who are Muslims regardless of our creed neglect that fact to our detriment.

In our own society here in T&T, as we celebrate our 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an independent republic today, we need to take back our country from bandits and wicked leaders who would destroy us for narrow selfish interests. We need to be united in the face of this common enemy. We need to unite, Indo-Trinis, Afro-Trinis, Chinese-Trinis, White-Trinis, Mix-up-Trinis, whatever kind of Trinis we are, to end this scourge that faces us so that we and our children may live without burglar bars, so that we can walk our streets without fear and we can live our lives in peace and harmony. We may lose a battle here and a battle there, but in the end we shall win this war that threatens all of us with a future that bodes ill for us all.

I close with the lesson from the Crusades in Europe: **In unity there is eternal strength, for ultimately the voice of the people is the voice of God.**

## ISLAM & HUMAN RIGHTS

*By Ms Habiba Anwar*

Recently, I came across a publication with the fascinating title; The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. When I looked for the name of the author and its publisher, it had just three letters; U, N and O and that intrigued me so much that I forgot the job in hand and started reading.

The inside title page had, by way of introduction, the following list: "On December 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the full text of which appears in the following pages." After the text of the act, the assembly had called upon all member countries to publicize the declaration and, I quote, "cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and

expounded principally in schools and other educational institutes, without distinction based on the political status of countries and territories." The act consisted of seven introductory clauses under the heading preamble, and then thirty clauses of the main provision listed as article No. 1, 2, 3 and so on. The first clause of the preamble explained the nature of the entire document. To give you a taste of this masterly exposition, I quote: "Whereas, the recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." And why such a charter was needed is highlighted in the third clause where it states: "Whereas, it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse as a last resort to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law." Then I read the articles of this act, or this charter one by one and that kept me absorbed in it for the rest of the afternoon.

Suddenly, it occurred to me that my religion Islam claims to be a "*Deen*" or a way of life for man prescribed by the Creator of mankind Himself. If it was so, certainly Islam must have provided us with a similar charter, or in fact a better one if it was a divine revealed system. My thoughts immediately turned to Qur'anic teachings and the practice of the Holy founder of Islam as the Qur'an claimed to be a carrier of "*Huda*" the guidance, and "*Noor*" the light. The Holy Prophet of Islam had been mentioned as the teacher of the Qur'an, the purifier of the faithful and the source of wisdom himself being the best exemplar who practiced what he preached. When I questioned some elders, I was led to Qur'anic teachings and the Prophet's sayings on the subject, and I proceeded to study each article on the UN Human Rights Declaration in the light of Islamic teachings. Since it is not possible to study and compare the contents of all the 30 articles with what had been laid down by Islam 1400 years ago in the space available to me, I will, therefore, first give a brief account of all the provisions of the 30 articles, and then present the Islamic stance on some of

them.

It has been recognized and declared that all human beings are born free, and are equal in dignity and rights. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedom set forth in this declaration without any distinction such as race, sex, color, language, religion, political or other opinion, nation or social origin, property, birth or any other status. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude. No one shall be subjected to torture, cruelty, inhumane or degrading treatment. Everyone has the right to recognition. All are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection by the law. Everyone has the right to an effective remedy for acts violating the fundamental human rights. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile. Everyone has the right to a fair and public hearing by an impartial tribunal in the determination of his rights. Anybody charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty after a fair trial. All will have the right to their privacy, the privacy of their family, home or correspondence, protecting his/her honor or reputation. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement within a country or across borders, and to seek asylum in a foreign country from persecution in his own. Every man and woman has a right to a nationality and they are free to marry and find a family with their free and full consent. Everyone has the right to own property, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, opinion and expression thereof. All men and women have a right to freedom of peaceful assembly and forming clubs and associations. They have a right to vote, to form a government that will rule their country directly or through representation. As a member of society, each member has a claim to social security, the right to work, free choice of employment and favorable conditions of work. The basic rule being equal pay and equal work. Every citizen has a right to rest, leisure and periodic holiday with pay, enabling him or herself to enjoy a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and of his family. Mothers and children

are entitled to special care and consideration. All children whether born in or out of wedlock shall enjoy the same social protection. Everyone has the right to education that which will be directed to full development of human personality and potential, and parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education for their children. Everyone has the right to participate in the cultural life of the community and everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration can be fully realized.

Now, let us examine some of these articles against the guidance given to us by the Qur'an and the Holy Prophet of Islam.

Basically Islam, as the word implies, is a religion of peace and submission. As such we expect of its teachings to be conforming to what we have studied as the best of the charter. The most important declaration behind the human rights charter is the one emphasizing equality of all human beings. Islam has been very clear about this, declaring that all human beings, being the creation of the one Creator, are equal and in fact, the word used by the Qur'an is "*IKHWAH*" meaning brotherhood, and derives the equality of mankind from the unity of its common Creator. The Qur'an states: "Oh mankind, be mindful of your duty to your Lord who created you from a single soul, caused to be spread large numbers of men and women, and be mindful of your duty to Allah in whose names you appeal to one another, and be mindful of the ties of kinship." (4:2)

The dignity of man, as highlighted in the charter, was recognized and proclaimed by the Qur'an 1400 years before this charter. Consider the following verses: "..... Man has been made as His vicegerent on earth" (35:40) and "surely we have created man in the best mould" (95:5). Before this, the bible had also proclaimed that God created man in his own image, and the Qur'an has testified the Bible again and again. What other higher status could have been given to man than regarding him as a representative and successor to God Himself on this earth (*Khalifatullah*).

As to the provisions of freedom of choice of religion and beliefs, the Qur'an is very specific when it proclaims that there is no compulsion in religion because right has been clearly defined against wrong.

As the right to life, liberty and security, Islam is very emphatic on this issue, forbidding suicides (4:30) infanticide (17:32) and any attacks on anybody's lives. There is a famous verse of the Holy Qur'an that states anybody who kills one person has in fact slaughtered all of mankind because he started disorder by this one murder (5:33).

The property of individuals has been protected by the Qur'an in verses 152 and 153 of chapter 6, which reads: "Approach not the property of an orphan till he attains his maturity. Give full measure and weight with equity. When you speak, be just. That is what Allah enjoins upon you that you may be mindful." The Holy Prophet (pbuh) in his address at the farewell pilgrimage had stressed the teachings in this respect in the following Quranic words: "your persons, properties and honor, are declared sacred, like the sanctity of this day, this month and this place. Let them not be violated." As you will agree with me, the charter could not find better words than these.

The article about the abolishment of slavery and all forms of servitude is in fact a repetition of what Islam had enforced many centuries before. The article preventing torture, cruelty, inhumane or degrading treatment/punishment, is in fact an extension of Islamic teachings, especially those expounded by the Holy Prophet who had constantly admonished people to behave with calmness and dignity in all situations, and emphasized the need for courtesy towards all. He told the leader of a deputation from the tribe of Abul Qais, and I quote: "you have two qualities which are very acceptable to Allah ... forbearance and deliberation." He prohibited all cruelty and torture commanding: "No one should be subjected to punishment by fire", and also admonished against hitting any person on the face.

Article 6, 7 and 8 of the Human Rights charter are designed to secure for all persons recognition and qual-

ity before the law and protection of the law for everyone without discrimination. Islam introduces and upholds this value with a much stronger emphasis. The famous verses are read in every sermon by the Imam includes the verse: "Allah requires of you to exercise justice and favor". The world justice means informing the accused of the details of the charge against him, and giving him complete opportunity to defend himself against the charge. According to the Islamic Law the plaintiff or complainant is required to produce the evidence and in the absence of convincing evidence, the case against the accused is regarded as null and void if he denies the charge. At another place, the Qur'an states: "when you judge between people, judge with justice" (4:59) "and the course of justice is not to be corrupted through bribery" (2:159) "or the recourse to false evidence" (25:73) Islam's sensitivity to justice is so sharp that it requires Muslims to deal justly with even their enemies: "let not a people's enmity towards you incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just. That is closest to righteousness. Surely Allah is aware of what you do".

Islam has enumerated in junctions like prohibiting people not to enter houses other than your own until you ask leave and have saluted the inmates: "If ever you are told to go back, then go back" (24:28-30).

The right of neighbours, travellers, relatives, parents, orphans and the needy have been dually recognized by naming them (Qur'an 4:37-38)

In his farewell address, our Holy Prophet (pbuh) declared as: "Your lives, your properties and your honor are declared sacred as the sanctity of this day that is the day of pilgrimage; and this month of Zil Hajj, and this place that is the expense of Arafat."

It is thus clear that the objectives of this article are fully supported and subscribed to by Islam. Similarly, there are specific and sometimes even more detailed instructions for safeguarding the basic human rights named in the rest of the articles. I will leave further details for some other time.