

*“Call to the path of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation,
and argue with people in the best manner.” (Holy Quran, 16:125)*

The Light **AND** **ISLAMIC REVIEW**

**Exponent of Islam and the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement
for over eighty years**

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In the spirit of the above-cited verse, this periodical attempts to dispel misunderstandings about the religion of Islam and endeavors to facilitate inter-faith dialogue based on reason and rationality.

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احمدیہ انجمن اشاعت اسلام لاہور

◆ Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at Islam Lahore Inc., U.S.A. ◆

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The Light was founded in 1921 as the organ of the AHMADIYYA ANJUMAN ISHA'AT ISLAM (Ahmadiyya Association for the Propagation of Islam) of Lahore, Pakistan. *The Islamic Review* was published in England from 1913 for over 50 years, and in the U.S.A. from 1980 to 1991. The present periodical represents the beliefs of the worldwide branches of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam, Lahore.

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The main objective of the A.A.I.I.L. is to present the true, original message of Islam to the whole world — Islam as it is found in the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, obscured today by grave misconceptions and wrong popular notions.

Islam seeks to attract the *hearts and minds* of people towards the truth, by means of reasoning and the natural beauty of its principles.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908), our Founder, arose to remind the world that Islam is:

International: It recognizes prophets being raised among all nations and requires Muslims to believe in them all. Truth and goodness can be found in all religions. God treats all human beings equally, regardless of race, nationality or religion.

Peaceful: Allows use of force only in unavoidable self-defence. Teaches Muslims to live peacefully under any rule which accords them freedom of religion.

Tolerant: Gives full freedom to everyone to hold and practise any creed or religion. Requires us to tolerate differences of belief and opinion.

Rational: In all matters, it urges use of human reason and knowledge. Blind following is condemned and independence of thought is granted.

Inspiring: Worship is not a ritual, but provides living contact with a Living God, Who answers prayers and speaks to His righteous servants even today as in the past.

Non-sectarian: Every person professing Islam by the words *La ilaha ill-Allah, Muhammad-ur rasul-ullah* (There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah) is a Muslim. A Muslim cannot be expelled from Islam by anyone.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad taught that *no* prophet, old or new, is to arise after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. However, *Mujaddids* will be raised by God to revive and rekindle the light of Islam.

About ourselves

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore has branches in many countries including:

U.S.A.	Australia
U.K.	Canada
Holland	Fiji
Indonesia	Germany
Suriname	India
Trinidad	South Africa
Guyana	Philippines

Achievements:

The Anjuman has produced extensive literature on Islam, originally in English and Urdu, including translations of the Holy Quran with commentaries. These books are being translated into other languages, including French, German, Spanish, Dutch, Russian, Chinese, and Arabic. The Anjuman has run several Muslim missions around the world, including the first ever in Western Europe.

History:

1889: Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad founds the Ahmadiyya Movement.

1901: Movement given name *Ahmadiyya* after Holy Prophet Muhammad's other famous name *Ahmad*.

1905: Hazrat Mirza appoints central body (Anjuman) to manage the Movement.

1908: Death of Hazrat Mirza. Succeeded by Maulana Nur-ud-Din as Head.

1914: Death of Maulana Nur-ud-Din. Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam founded at Lahore as continuation of the original Anjuman. Maulana Muhammad Ali elected as Head.

1951: Death of Maulana Muhammad Ali after fifty years of glorious service to the cause of Islam. Maulana Sadr-ud-Din (d. 1981) becomes Head.

1981–1996: Dr Saeed Ahmad Khan, an eminent medical doctor and religious scholar, led the Movement, at a time of intense persecution.

1996–2002: Prof. Dr Asghar Hameed, a distinguished retired University Professor of Mathematics, and learned Islamic scholar, served as Head.

2002: Prof. Dr Abdul Karim Saeed Pasha elected Head.

Sirr-ul-Khilafah

**Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's Vindication
of the Prophet's Companions
and His Plea for Islamic Unity**

By: Prof. Henry Francis B. Espiritu

[This article addresses a long standing issue having deep religious and political implications. The issue of Sunni-Shia partisanship has plagued the Muslim world with not only religious tension but also actual violence and bloodshed. The author, Prof. Henry Francis B. Espiritu, Assistant Professor VII in Philosophy at the University of the Philippines-Cebu College, relays the lessons provided by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, concerning this subject. Focusing on historical facts and the spiritual instructions contained in the Holy Quran and the established traditions all Muslims accept, Hazrat Mirza Sahib seeks to clarify the concern relating to the character of all four successors to the Holy Prophet Muhammad and thereby promote an opportunity for understanding, reconciliation and unity. Prof. Espiritu's survey of Hazrat Mirza Sahib's writings on this topic is methodical and the manner in which he imparts the spirit of these lessons is exceptional.]

And hold fast by the covenant of Allah all together and be not disunited. And remember Allah's favor to you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts so by His favor you became brethren. And you were in the brink of the pit of fire, then He saved you from it. Thus Allah makes clear to you His messages that you may be guided.—Holy *Qur'an*ⁱⁱ

No one is a true Muslim until he desires for his brothers and sisters what he desires for himself.—*Hadith Sharif*ⁱⁱⁱ

One must not forget that all the Companions and the Holy Prophet—the Pride of Humanity, worked in complete harmony like the limbs of a living body. Some of them were like the eyes, some like ears, some like hands and still some others like feet. Thus the Companions of Allah's Apostle did all they could in the service of Islam in conformity with their capabilities. In all that they did, they sought the pleasure of Allah... He who says that the Three Great Companions were *kafirs*, hypocrites and usurpers, thus tars all others also with the same brush because each one of them swore allegiance to Hazrat Abu Bakr, then to

Hazrat Umar, and then to Hazrat Uthman.—
Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib^{iv}

* * * * *

**Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad: A Staunch
Upholder of the Classical Ahlus Sunnah View
Concerning the Rightly Guided Caliphs and the
Companions of the Holy Prophet**

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib of Qadian (circa, A.D. 1836-1908)—the eminent Punjabi Islamic mystic-theologian, considered by the worldwide Ahmadiyya movement as the Regenerator (*mujaddid*) of Islam for this century—devoted a concise yet spiritually profound treatise defending the classical Sunni view on the legitimate spiritual authority of the *Rashidun* Caliphs^v and the uprightness of the Companions of the Holy Prophet. This booklet written in elegant *Hijazi* (classical) Arabic and titled, *Sirr-ul-Khilafah* (The Secret of Caliphate), called on Muslims of the world to unite under the banner of the first four Righteous Caliphs (*Khulafah Rashida*) of Islam by emulating their deep spirituality which authentically mirrors and reflects (*zilli wa buruzi*) the spiritual effulgence of the Holy Prophet of Islam who was their spiritual preceptor and guide.

The said booklet likewise endeavored to show that the sequence of the accession of the *Rashidun* Caliphate—beginning with Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq to Hazrat Umar Farooq down to Hazrat Uthman Ghani until Hazrat Ali Ibn Abu Talib—was willed by Almighty Allah for the preservation of Islam during the precarious stage of its existence. The treatise proceeded to enumerate the virtues of the first four Caliphs of Islam, particularly Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq whom Hazrat Mirza Sahib considered as “Islam's Second Adam” for defending the integrity of Islam and for strengthening its spiritual, political, administrative, and economic fortifications during the period of apostasy besetting the Arabian Peninsula following the Holy Prophet's demise.^{vi} Hazrat Mirza Sahib contended that following the exemplary deeds of the Holy Prophet as manifested in the manner of life of the Companions is the most important step in achieving Islamic Renaissance so that Muslims will rise up once again to become leaders of righteous society and just civilization throughout the world. While vindicating the integrity and the honor of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and the Holy Prophet's blessed Companions, more importantly, *Sirr-ul-Khilafah* echoes Hazrat Mirza Sahib's passionate call for all Muslims to be united in their Islamic faith and identity by following closely the Tradition (*Sunnah*) of the Holy Prophet as handed down in posterity by the blessed Companions themselves.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's Declaration of Adherence to the Essential Creeds Subscribed by the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah and His Strong Advocacy for Islamic Unity

This short treatise, *Sirr-ul-Khilafah*, proved in no uncertain terms that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib upheld the classical orthodox understanding of the fundamental creed (*aqeedah*) agreed upon by the *ulama* (scholars) of Sunni Islam as Hazrat Mirza Sahib himself testified time and again that he upholds the essential teachings of the *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah* as constituting the normative belief of the Islamic *Ummah* (community); he even directed the whole *Ahmadiyya Jamaat* to subscribe to the essential creed reached by authoritative scholarly consensus (*ijma*) of the mainstream Sunni faith. In the words of Hazrat Mirza Sahib:

In short, it is obligatory [for Ahmadiyya Muslims] to believe in all matters, whether of faith or practice, on which there has been consensus between the past righteous leaders of Islam, and which are considered by consensus among the *Ahle Sunnat wal Jamaat* to constitute Islam. And we call upon the heavens and the earth to bear witness that this is our religion.^{vii}

On 2nd October 1892, Hazrat Mirza Sahib personally made a solemn pronouncement before the worshippers in the Jamia Masjid in Delhi to the effect that he himself unequivocally proclaimed his wholehearted adherence to *Ahlus Sunnah* Islam. Quoting from Hazrat Mirza Sahib;

I confess belief in all those matters which constitute the Islamic principles of faith. And in accordance with the belief of the *Ahle Sunnat wal Jamaat*, I believe in those things which are established from the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith*.^{viii}

In the same breath that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib unreservedly declare himself as adherent to the *ijma* of the *Ahlus Sunnah* faith; his treatise, *Sirr-ul-Khilafah*, likewise strongly stressed the need for Muslims everywhere to manifest Islamic unity in all their dealings with one another. He exhorted Muslims to pray for, and work towards Islamic fraternity and harmony. He explained that the proper approach to disagreements among Muslims is for believers to endeavor to bring reconciliation among brethren, to understand the point of view of others, and to always exercise the spirit of humility and magnanimity to forgive each other's failing. In this short treatise, it is very interesting to note the fine balance that Hazrat Mirza Sahib maintained in his adherence to the command for Islamic unity while at the same time firmly adhering to the

Sunni *aqeedah*. This fine balance that Hazrat Mirza Sahib maintained between his staunch commitment to Sunni Islam and his impassioned call for Islamic amity can be clearly seen in his eloquent defense of the *Rashidun* Caliphs, particularly Hazrat Abu Bakr against the undeserved allegations of some Shi'as—yet he always refers to Shi'as as his “brothers”, “fellow Muslims”, “fellow believers”, etc. He therefore considers Shi'as as believers or Muslims for they too declare the fundamental basis of Islam, which is Allah's Unity (*tawhid*), and they likewise adhere to the belief in the *risalah* (messengership) of the Blessed Prophet Muhammad.^{ix} For Hazrat Mirza Sahib, the proper approach to any dispute among believers should be tolerance, kind understanding, and reconciliation. As per Hazrat Mirza Sahib;

The Holy *Quran* has not branded the disputants and those engaged in mutual altercations as *Kafirs*. Each party is designated Muslim. It ordains that if two factions of True Believers fall out and quarrel with each other, they should be reconciled...^x

The Necessity for Islamic Harmony and Concord: Hazrat Mirza Sahib's Pluralistic and Inclusivist Reply to the Question, “Who is a Muslim?”

Hazrat Mirza Sahib's ardent appeal for Islamic concord is all the more needed in our current times especially when Muslims nowadays seem to forget the very *Qur'anic* maxim of unity; “And hold fast by the covenant of Allah all together and be not disunited...”^{xi} Let us look at the pathetic contemporary situation of the Muslim *Ummah*. Islam is now divided into numerous bickering sects that constantly fight each other even in trivial matters. It is indeed sad how efforts and resources are being wasted in Muslims' fighting each other instead of preaching the magnificence of Islam to the world. What is more heart-rending is when Muslims of different sectarian persuasions physically commit violence against each other just to further their own points of view! May the All-Compassionate Allah have mercy on us, and save us from this deplorable situation besetting the entire *Ummah*. May Almighty Allah teach us to love one another since our Holy Prophet clearly declares that no person can be a true Muslim until he desires for his brothers and sisters what he desires for himself.^{xii}

One very crucial point that Hazrat Mirza Sahib emphasized in *Sirr-ul-Khilafah* is his inclusive and broad view of Islam. For him, every person who publicly professed that he is an adherent of Islam by subscribing to the Islamic creed (*Kalima*), “There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah”, is a Muslim. Only Allah knows the condition of each and everyone's faith (*iman*) and therefore no one has the

right to expel a Muslim outside the fold of Islam if the person publicly professes to believe in the abovementioned creed. Nobody has the right to call a professing Muslim *kafir* because the state of our *iman* will only be eventually known in the Day of Reckoning. Commenting on the unfortunate conduct of some Shi'as to call some Companions as *kafirs* just because these Companions disagreed with Hazrat Ali on some matters, Hazrat Mirza Sahib had this to say:

...When true believer is cursed and is recklessly denounced as *Kafir* for no fault of his own and is subjected to abuse, he takes on the likeness of the prophets and joins the ranks of the elects of God. He is rewarded as the Prophet is rewarded. He receives compensation as the prophets do.^{xiii}

Subsequently, Hazrat Mirza Sahib warns Muslims not to be suspicious of fellow Muslims, nor spy on them, nor slander them, nor backbite them, as these constitute acts of bad faith towards fellow believers.^{xiv} By exhorting all Muslims not to malign nor accuse fellow believers in an unjust manner, Hazrat Mirza Sahib strongly echoed the *hadith sharif* of the Holy Prophet: "A true Muslim is he in whom other Muslims are safe from his tongue and from his hands."^{xv} Hazrat Mirza Sahib's entreaty for Islamic unity is therefore amply supported by both the words of Allah and by the admonitions of the Holy Prophet. In his exegesis of the Quranic *ayah* (Holy *Qur-an* 4:24): "And do not say to the one who greets you with the Muslim salutation (*Assalamu alaykum*); You are not a believer"; Hazrat Mirza Sahib wrote:

The Holy Prophet even warns Muslims: Beware! Do not judge with contempt those who recite our *Kalima*. Do not call them unbelievers. Beware! For he who calls a Muslim *kafir* is himself nearer to *kufr* than the one accused". Thus Muslims must heed this solemn warning from Almighty Allah and from the Holy Prophet.^{xvi}

Hazrat Mirza Sahib sternly warned Muslims to desist from calling their fellow Muslims *kafir* on the basis of petty trifles since this is considered to be one of the gravest sins that a Muslim can commit.^{xvii} The Holy Prophet clearly described the broad basis of Islamic unity and cautioned the Muslims against creating divisiveness. He said: "He who prays as we do, and faces the same *Qiblah*, and eats animals as slaughtered by us, then he is a Muslim, who has the protection of Allah and his Messenger; so do not betray Allah in His protection."^{xviii}

Hazrat Mirza Sahib utilized the tolerant stance of the *Qur-an* towards disagreements among believers to substantiate his position that Muslims may sometimes err

by disputing with each other regarding non-essential aspects of faith, yet these disputes do not make the disputants less of a Muslim. He reasoned:

Someone proclaims a verdict of *kufr* against True Believers, whereas God has called them True Believers even when they were warring with one another and He has regarded them as brethren among themselves. Even when one group is at war against each other, neither of them is *Kafir* in the eyes of God... the Holy Quran calls even the warring believers as "party from among the True Believers (*firqatun-min-ul-mummineen*)"... This guiding hint is enough for you if you are of the God-fearing people.^{xix}

Thereafter, Hazrat Mirza Sahib requested both Shi'a and Sunni Muslims to leave aside the unproductive activity of *kafir* branding and spiteful name-calling against each other; and instead to assiduously labor for harmony, amity, and unity among all Muslims of the world regardless of their sectarian affiliations.^{xx}

Hazrat Mirza Sahib's Exhortation for Shi'a and Sunnis to Maintain Islamic Amity Towards Fellow Muslims

In the next three sub-sections, I will focus my interest on Hazrat Mirza Sahib's impassioned call for Shi'a and Sunni Muslims to love each other in unity and in peace. Hazrat Mirza Sahib singled out Shi'a and Sunni Muslims for his holy advice on unity since they both comprise the majority of the *Ummah* of the Prophet. It is deeply regrettable that throughout the past centuries, as attested by numerous instances in Islamic history, the rift between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims has done incalculable damage to the Islamic *Ummah*; such sectarian divisions lead to much animosities and unnecessary violence committed against each other. It behooves both Shi'a and Sunnis to heed the call of Hazrat Mirza Sahib to live in the spirit of Islamic fraternity and amity. Let us now examine what Hazrat Mirza Sahib has to say as to how both Shi'a and Sunni Muslims can manifest this ideal of Islamic unity in their dealings with each other.

Hazrat Mirza Sahib is aware that the issues dividing Shi'as and Sunnis are minor and trivial, and in his estimation, these matters should not be elevated to the point of causing division between them. Furthermore, he says that the quarrels between them are caused by misunderstandings and extreme partisanship among their respective adherents; rather than legitimate disagreements on the fundamental doctrines of *tawhid* (divine monotheism) and *risalah* (prophethood). Shi'as should understand that bonafide Sunnis love the *Ahlul-Bayt* (the Holy Family of the Prophet) and always prayed for their welfare. Sunnis, especially belonging to the school of

tasawwuf (Islamic mysticism) always acknowledged Hazrat Ali as one of the fountainheads of *marifat* (gnosis).^{xxi} All genuine Sunni Muslims accord great respect to Hazrat Ali and his family by mentioning them in their *khutbah* (sermons), and by supplicating for the welfare of the *Ahlul-Bayt* in all their formal prayers. In addition, Sunnis seek to understand and endeavor to sympathize with the Shi'as', at times to appear, excessive love for the *Ahlul-Bayt* since Shi'as feel that by doing so, they are complying with Rasulullah's request for all true believers to love his immediate family.^{xxii} Hazrat Mirza Sahib—although considering himself a strict adherent of the *Ahlus Sunnah* school of thought—unequivocally declares that he profoundly respects the sterling virtues and spiritual qualities of Hazrat Ali. He encouraged Muslims, specifically the Shi'as, that their love for Hazrat Ali should not becloud their hearts from refusing to appreciate the merits of the other blessed Companions who, like Hazrat Ali, were also stalwart and self-effacing servants to the cause of Islam.^{xxiii}

Hazrat Mirza Sahib likewise exhorted Muslims in general to continue giving due respect to the Holy Family of the Prophet. However, he warned Muslims to be very careful that they should not engage in exaggerations characterizing extreme partisanship to the *Ahlul-Bayt*. He asked the Muslims to be people of moderation and prudence, since these virtues promote unity and discourage division. Hazrat Mirza Sahib reminded Shi'a sectarians that extreme heroic-admiration of Hazrat Ali should not lead to disrespect to the other venerable Companions of the Prophet for to accuse the Companions of insincerity is shameful presumption and gross sin since the Holy Quran and the *Hadith* have already attested to the righteousness of the Companions; thus any disrespect of the first three Righteous Successors to the Holy Prophet can be taken to mean as not believing what the *Qur-an* and the *Hadith* tell us about the Companions' nobility and unmatched qualities. Furthermore, according to Hazrat Mirza Sahib, any disrespect to the first three Righteous Caliphs due to excessive love for Hazrat Ali is self-destructing and self-contradictory since their accusations likewise tarnish the very character of Hazrat Ali who gave his loyal, one-pointed, and sincere obedience to his predecessor Caliphs. Surely Hazrat Ali was not a hypocrite; he wholeheartedly gave himself with no hesitation at all in the service of the first three Caliphs. To say that Hazrat Ali feigned obedience but harbored grudges to the first three Caliphs is to accuse Hazrat Ali of hypocrisy, double-dealings, and inauthenticity—God forbid! In the words of Hazrat Mirza Sahib:

Thus the Companions of Allah's Apostle did all they could in the service of Islam in conformity with their capabilities. In all that they did, they sought the pleasure of Allah...

He who says that the Three Great Companions were *Kafirs*, hypocrites and usurpers, thus tars all others also with the same brush because each one of them swore allegiance to Hazrat Abu Bakr, then to Hazrat Umar, and then to Hazrat Uthman... If Hazrat Abu Bakr had been a usurper in the eyes of Hazrat Ali, he would not have agreed to owe allegiance to him. He would have followed the example of Hazrat Ibrahim (peace be upon him) and migrated. Hazrat Ali was the soul of sincerity and fidelity. He did not show any resentment.^{xxiv}

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's Request for Shi'as Not to Commit Unjust Accusations and Acts of Dissensions Against the Essential Beliefs Adhered to by the Ahlus Sunnah

Hazrat Mirza Sahib fervently advised those Shi'as who attack and slander the Rightly Guided Caliphs and the Holy Companions to cease such activity because cursing even ordinary believers is un-Islamic and unethical. All the more disgraceful would it be for one to curse the Righteous Caliphs and the Holy Companions who were sincere helpers, supporters, and friends of the Holy Prophet! Prophet Muhammad enjoined believers to be kind to one another, and to forgive one another. Indeed, it is against the beautiful etiquette (*adab*) of Islam to love Hazrat Ali while at the same time insulting and maligning the holy Companions of the Blessed Prophet.^{xxv}

According to Hazrat Mirza Sahib, a denial of the right of the Righteous Caliphs to rule the Islamic *Ummah* is also an outright denial of Allah's *taqdeer* (Divine Plan) since everything comes from the Will of Allah. Therefore, Almighty Allah permits the historical circumstances leading to the accession and succession of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq, Umar Farooq, Uthman Dhun-Nurain, and Ali ibn Abi Talib to the office of the Caliphate. This historical succession of the Righteous Caliphate (*Khulafur Rashidin*) was due to Allah's Will, since nothing in this world happens without Almighty Allah's expressed permission. Even the burial of the *Shaykhayn*^{xxvi} in proximity to the blessed grave of the Holy Prophet shows the *Shaykhayn* Abu Bakr Siddiq and Umar Farooq's preminent station. Their status as the two stalwart ministers of the Holy Prophet is even more confirmed even after their demise. Hazrat Mirza Sahib beautifully explained the Divine Wisdom hidden in this specific historical circumstance of burying the *Shaykhayn* side by the side the grave of the Holy Prophet. This shows the closeness of the *Shaykhayn* to the Holy Prophet; and Almighty Allah seals this proof of nearness by situating Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Umar side by side the Prophet's resting place. In short,

it is Almighty Allah's Divine Providence (*qadar*) and grace (*ni'mat*) that made the graves of Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Umar to be placed side by side the Holy Prophet's resting place in order to put to silence forever the accusations against them. As Hazrat Mirza Sahib beautifully explained:

It is rare good fortune that these two Great Companions were buried alongside the Holy Prophet's sacred grave. Even Moses and Jesus would have envied this great honor, if they have been alive. But such exaltations do not come by merely longing for them. No one can get them by force. Unless one is destined to get these honors, no one can get them by many endeavors. Only such people as are chosen by God, and are enveloped by His mercy gets these honors.^{xxvii}

Then Hazrat Mirza Sahib opined that to say that the *Shaykha'yn* were usurpers is likewise considered casting aspersion on the holiness of the Prophet Muhammad since, if that is the case (God forbid!) the blessed grave of the Holy Prophet is situated side by side rebels, traitors, and transgressors (again, God forbid!). To quote Hazrat Mirza Sahib:

Hazrat Abu Bakr was buried next to the grave of the sovereign of Prophets and the master of the holy persons. He lived very closely with the Beloved of God. After surviving him for sometime, he joined his company after death. It is a matter of great surprise that in the eyes of denigrators, God allowed the "usurpers and the traitors" to be close to the grave of the Holy Prophet and did not get rid of them even after death. How is it that those who are branded "usurpers" by the denigrators remained with the Prophet in life as well as after death? Our God is Holy and is above and beyond what the fabricators talk of his Prophet. God with his grace and blessing, kept the righteous Companions close to the master of the pious. It is a sign of great significance and is food for thought for those who shoot their tongues at the Great Companions... The sacred grave of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) is worthy of the greatest respect and honor. It is sacrilege to say that it lies between the "usurpers" and "defectors".^{xxviii}

In addition, not to acknowledge the Righteous Caliphate's sequence of succession is tantamount to non-acceptance of the Immutable Will of Allah which is always reflected in human history. Even Hazrat Ali himself submitted to the rule of his predecessor Caliphs and he even helped and advised them in whatever way he

can in order for their Islamic reign to be successful. Shi'as, who assign to themselves the name, "*Alawi*" (i.e., partisans of Hazrat Ali) should imitate this magnanimous act of Hazrat Ali towards his predecessor Caliphs. Hazrat Mirza Sahib shared the result of his judicious academic research which shows that even the *ulama* of the Shi'as were forced to give preeminence to Hazrat Abu Bakr's towering spirituality and his selfless service to Islam. According to Hazrat Mirza Sahib:

When we asked the divisionists which of the men of mature age first accepted Islam and parted company with the unbelievers, they have perforce to admit that it was Hazrat Abu Bakr. Again when we ask them to tell us who migrated with the Holy Prophet and turned his back on his nearest and dearest and went where the Holy Prophet led him, they involuntary exclaim it was Hazrat Abu Bakr. When they are faced with the question about the person who was the First Successor, they have to acknowledge that it was Hazrat Abu Bakr. They also hold that it was Hazrat Abu Bakr who collected the Qur'anic verses in the form of Book for the distribution to the cities. They also know that he was buried next to the Holy Prophet's grave. It is strange that excellences fell to the lot of those whom the denigrators regard as disbelievers. Moreover, the superiorities of Islam manifested themselves in their lives... Every category of nearness to the Holy Prophet was vouchsafed to Hazrat Abu Bakr in full. Still he is the target of vilification, while according to the confessions of these critics no one else received the glory which Hazrat Abu Bakr received.^{xxix}

Therefore, contributing to the amity and harmony of the Muslim *Ummah* by respecting the Righteous Caliphs will promote Islamic understanding and mutual goodwill.^{xxx} Thus, Hazrat Mirza Sahib advised both Shi'as and Sunnis alike to come to a just and mutual agreement with each other so that they will be of one accord in mind, heart, and spirit; in so doing, this can remove the trivial misunderstandings that fiercely divided each other for centuries.

Concord and Fraternal Amity among Muslims—Whether Sunni or Shia—As Imperatives for the Ascendancy of Islam in the Future

Hazrat Mirza Sahib reminds both Shi'as and Sunnis (and indeed all Muslims) that the purpose why they should always be in harmony with each other is for the realization of the success and victory (*fath*) of Islam in this present world. Fraternity among all Muslim groups (*jamaat*) is for the purpose of promoting unity of all the

followers of Prophet Muhammad who recite the *Kalima* which is the sure sign of faith. All Muslims are *Ahl-al-Qiblah* (people of one direction and perspective); thus, they should manifest this oneness of mind, heart, and spirit at all times.^{xxxii} Hazrat Mirza Sahib's treatise, *Sirr-ul-Khilafah*, plainly states that when the worldwide Islamic *Ummah* will comply with this call of unity, then signs of heavenly assistance (*nusrat*) from Almighty Allah will descend from on high, and will make the Muslim *Ummah* victorious once again. Hazrat Mirza Sahib says:

It is incumbent upon you not to behave in a manner which incurs divine wrath. You should not court ruin by indulging in over haste. You should avoid the company of the transgressors... How does it lie in your mouth to brand the Companions *kafir*? God the Almighty has said of the Companions of the Holy Prophet: "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah and those who are with him are hard against the disbelievers but tender among themselves (48:30)"... Thus, O ye Muslims! Save yourselves from misguidance. If you lean on sheer malice, it will not give you certainty. It will accentuate your suspicions.... He who turns his back on the Holy Quran and takes shelter in hearsay lands himself into the abyss of ruin and joins the ranks of ruined people... Refrain from entertaining doubts against the Companions and do not plunge into the abyss of destruction and disunity. Fear God if you are pious. Undoubtedly, the Companions of the Holy Prophet (*Ashab Kiram*) and his Scions (*Ahlul Bayt*) were spiritual people. They had surrendered themselves to God. They lived in pious retirement and isolation from the world. Thus do not give credence to the fiction that they disputed for mundane gains...^{xxxiii}

If Sunnis and Shi'as fail to live up to Hazrat Mirza Sahib's spiritual advice to maintain harmony and unity among their ranks, they will self-destruct and will annihilate each other in their divisive quarrellings; and the enemies of Islam—who themselves are the very ones who fanned these sectarian squabbles within the Islamic World—will stand benefited from all these irrelevant wrangling. God forbid that these anti-Islamic and atheistic forces will use one group of Muslims to destroy the other. The Islamic belief in Divine Unity (*tawhid*) should be carried by all Muslims to its practical and actual manifestations of unity, goodwill, and fraternity (*akhuwwat*), in order for the Muslims to thwart and confound the divisive machinations of the external enemies of Islam. It is only by applying the practical dimensions

of the unity of Islam (*tawhid*) in our various dealings with our fellow Muslim brethren that Almighty Allah's help will once again descend on the Muslim *Ummah*. Therefore it is extremely crucial for both Sunnis and Shi'as to promptly put an end to the pointless, disloyal, unjust, and detrimental disputes against each other. Since all Muslims who profess the Unity of Allah and the final prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad are true believers, it is essential to leave aside trivial distinctions, which necessitate division and to focus instead on the myriad of essential doctrinal similarities, which positively results in harmony, fraternity, and unity among brethren in faith.

Epilogue: Faithful Adherence to the Quran and to the Traditions (Sunnah) of the Holy Prophet and of His Companions as Key Towards Achieving Goodwill and Harmony

For Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib, it is a sure divine sign concerning the truth of Islam that all Muslims, despite their adherence to varying schools-of-thought (in *fiqh* or jurisprudential rulings) unite in upholding this essence of the Muslim faith when it comes to the fundamental principles that make the person Muslim (i.e., the *Kalima*, the foundational creed of Almighty Allah's Unity and the final messengership of the Holy Prophet Muhammad). Similarly, according to Hazrat Mirza Sahib, the whole *Ummah's* universal adherence to the belief that the Holy *Qur-an* is Almighty Allah's self-disclosure to humankind is a living proof of how Muslims from different backgrounds, nationalities, and sectarian or jurisprudential persuasions are truly in unanimous agreement and are absolutely united in the certainty of their conviction regarding the veracity of the *Kalima* and the integrity of the *Qur'anic* texts.^{xxxiii} Therefore, since all Muslims are truly of one accord in upholding all the fundamental truths of the Islamic faith and in the integrity of the contents of the *Holy-Qur-an*, it is indeed useless and counterproductive for the propagation of Islam if Muslims continuously fight, bicker, and quarrel over superficial and trivial issues.

To end this essay, allow me to offer my sincere *naseehat* (advice) pursuant to Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib's call for all Muslim brethren to dwell together in peace and harmony with each other. We, Muslims, need to be reminded time and again that Almighty Allah's help (*nasr/nusrat*) can only come if we begin to love our fellow brethren as ourselves. With Allah's *nusrat* also comes His *fath* (victory).^{xxxiv} The first step therefore to achieve Islamic re-awakening, reformation, and renewal is for Muslims to live together in peace and unity. *Inshallah*, if both Shi'as and *Ahlul-Sunnah* Muslims (and indeed all differing Muslim *jamaats*) will heed to this spiritual advice of Hazrat

Mirza Sahib, Islam will become a great spiritual force in the world and there will occur genuine Islamic Renaissance on the face of the earth. Let us fervently pray and passionately labor to achieve Hazrat Mirza Sahib's dream and vision of universal Muslim concord by faithfully practicing the virtuous ways of the Holy Prophet Muhammad as passed on to us by his blessed Companions. May the All-Compassionate Allah have mercy on the *Ummah* of the Holy Prophet, and may all believers in Allah's Oneness manifest unity, amity, and fraternity with each other so that Allah's religion will be victorious in this whole wide world. *Ameen, thumma Ameen!* ■

ENDNOTES

- i Prof. Henry Francis B. Espiritu is an Assistant Professor VII in Philosophy at the University of the Philippines-Cebu Campus. He is a candidate in PhD-Philosophy at the Ateneo de Manila University. He is a convert to Islam, and a fervent student of the mystical writings of the Punjabi *mujaddid* (renewer of the faith) saint, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib. His Islamic name is Abdil Ghaffar.
- ii *Holy Qur-an* 3:103; *The Holy Qur-an: Translation and Commentary by Maulana Muhammad Ali*. Columbus, Ohio: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore, 1998.
- iii *Hadith Sharif, al-Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Akhuwwat*. Cairo, Egypt: Darul Kitab, 1973; p. 17ff.
- iv Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib. *Sirr-ul-Khilafah: Secret of Caliphate* (First English Edition). Lahore: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore, 1971; p. 31.
- v *Rashidun* means "Rightly Guided" in the classical Arabic of the Holy *Qur-an*. This refers to the first four righteous/ Rightly Guided Caliphs (*Khulafah Rashidah*) who closely followed the Holy Quran and the *Sunnah* (Holy Traditions) of the Holy Prophet in ruling the Islamic *Ummah* (Community) immediately after the Holy Prophet's demise. The *Rashidun* Caliphs according to the order of their reigns and according to the order of their virtuous preeminence were: Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique Akbar, Hazrat Umar al Khattab al Farooq, Hazrat Uthman Ghani Dhun Nurayn, and Hazrat Ali Ibn Abi Talib. The term *Khulafah Rashida* comes from the Prophetic Hadith, "Hold firmly to my Traditions (*Sunnah*) and to the Traditions of my Rightly Guided Caliphs" (See Dawood, *Kitab-ul-Taraweeh*, #8).
- vi *Sirr-ul-Khilafah: Secret of Caliphate, op. cit.*, p. 19. According to Hazrat Mirza Sahib, Hazrat Abu Bakr's epithet "Second Adam of Islam" can best be understood in the light of the latter's superb leadership and spiritual genius in preserving the unity and the integrity of Islam when the Islamic *Ummah* was attacked by internal dissensions and apostasy after the Holy Prophet's demise. Hazrat Abu Bakr was victorious against all the attacks that the enemies of Islam raised against the infant Muslim community during that crucial period of Islamic history right after the Holy Prophet's passing away. Throughout the pages of *Sirr-ul-Khilafah*, one can also observe the deeply reasoned arguments made by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib showing that the *maqamat* (spiritual rank) of Hazrat Abu Bakr is second to the spir-
itual station of the Holy Prophet; and therefore, the excellence of Hazrat Abu Bakr's *Khilafat* reflected the glories of the just polity and benevolent governance of the Prophet Muhammad (*hukumat Muhammadiyyah*). See, *Ibid.*, pp. 19-21.
- vii From Hazrat Mirza Sahib's book, *Ayyam-us-Sulh*, published in 1899, p. 87 and quoted in N. A. Faruqui, *Ahmadiyyat in the Service of Islam*. Newark, California: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore, 1983; pp. vii.
- viii N. A. Faruqui, *Ibid.*, p. viii.
- ix *Sirr-ul-Khilafah, op. cit.*, pp. 7-11.
- x *Ibid.*, p. 7.
- xi *Holy Qur-an* 3: 103.
- xii *Hadith Sharif, al-Muslim, Kitab-ul-Ummah*, Cairo, Egypt: Darul Kitab, 1974; p. 36ff. See also *Hadith Sharif, al-Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Akhuwwat*. Cairo, Egypt: Darul Kitab, 1973; p. 17ff.
- xiii *Sirr-ul-Khilafah, op. cit.*, p. 4.
- xiv *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.
- xv *Bukhari Sharif, Kitab-ul-Iman*, Cairo: Egypt: Darul Kitab, 1973; p. 4ff.
- xvi *Sirr-ul-Khilafah, op. cit.*, p. 14.
- xvii *Kanz-ul-Ummal*, Volume 2, p. 129; quoted in N. A. Faruqui, *Ahmadiyyat in the Service of Islam, op. cit.*, p. 80.
- xviii Bukhari, *Kitab-us-Salaah* 6; quoted in *Ahmadiyyat in the Service of Islam, op. cit.*, p. 81.
- xix *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- xx *Ibid.*, pp. 7-9.
- xxi Another personage considered as fountainhead of mystical gnosis according to the Sufis is Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq whom the Naqshbandi order of Sufis regards as their paramount spiritual teacher (*murshid-e-mutlaq*) next to the Holy Prophet. Naqshbandi Sufism traces the beginnings of its spiritual lineage (*silsilah*) to Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq.
- xxii See *Holy Qur-an* 42:23.
- xxiii *Sirr-ul-Khilafah, op. cit.*, pp. 43-45.
- xxiv *Sirr-ul-Khilafah, op. cit.*, pp. 31, 43.
- xxv *Ibid.*, pp. 39-43.
- xxvi *Ash-Shaykhayn* means "the Two Respectable Elders" in the classical Arabic of the Holy *Qur-an*. This refers to the Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique Akbar and Hazrat Umar Farooq whose rulings are considered by the *Ahlus-Sunnah* to be part and parcel of the Prophetic Traditions (*Sunnah*) since they were in close proximity to the Holy Prophet and they advised the Holy Prophet in matters of governing the affairs of the Islamic community in Medina. For the Sufis particularly Hazrat Imam Rabbani Ahmad Farooqi Sirhindi, the title *Shaykhayn* refers to the preeminence and lofty spiritual station of Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Umar in the Prophet's circle of Companionship. The term *Shaykhayn* refers to the highly elevated station of the first two Rightly Guided Caliphs next to the Blessed Prophet (See *Maktubat-e-Mujaddid Alf-Thani*. Istanbul: Hakikat Kitabevi Gazetcelik, 1984; Letters 36, 37, 48). Hazrat

Imam Rabbani Sirhindi's explanation of the term *Shaykhayn* is fully corroborated by the *hadith sharifs* concerning Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Umar, viz., "The period of prophethood ends with me, if supposing prophethood will continue after I am gone, then Umar would be that Prophet." (*Kanz-ul-Ummal*, Volume 3; p. 283) and in another *hadith* "What was revealed in my heart by *ilham* (inspiration); God revealed it thereafter to Abu Bakr's heart. Abu Bakr confirms what was being first revealed in my heart." (*An-Nasai*, *Fazail-e-Abu Bakr Siddiq*, Volume 2; p. 75). In *Sirr-ul-Khilafah*, Hazrat Mirza Sahib further corroborated Imam Rabbani Mujaddid Alf-Thani Sirhindi's explanation by providing a mystical explanation of the paramount excellence of the *Shaykhayn* among the Companions. Hazrat Mirza Sahib said that Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Umar, by their constant association (*suhbat*) and service (*khidmat*) to the Holy Prophet, became perfect mirrors and reflectors (*zilli wal buruzi*) of the Holy Prophet's virtues and attributes; thus they became completely lost (*fanaa'i-Rasul*) in the Holy Prophet's blessed personality. According to Hazrat Mirza Sahib, these are the reasons why the *Shaykhayn* were the "respectable elders" of the whole Muslim *Ummah* (See *Sirr-ul-Khilafah*, *op.cit.*, pp. 3-4, 13, 16-21, 23-31, 34-40).

xxvii *Ibid.*, pp. 38.

xxviii *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

xxix *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

xxx *Ibid.*, pp. 41-43.

xxxi Cf. N. A. Faruqi, *Ahmadiyyat in the Service of Islam*, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-82.

xxxii *Sirr-ul-Khilafah*, *op. cit.*, pp. 8, 9, 14.

xxxiii See, Dr. Basharat Ahmad, *The Great Muslim Reformer of the Present Age—Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad*. Hayward, California: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore, 2001; pp. 31-32.

xxxiv See, *Holy Qur-an*, *Surah Nasr: ayah*, 1-3.

Ramadan and Eid Messages from the West

An often overlooked gesture of good-will

Compiled by the Editor

Just as some Westerners perceive *all* Muslims with suspicion, there are Muslims that similarly perceive the West, *in general*, as inherently anti-Islam. This prevalent mistrust between the people of the West and Muslims in the East in recent times has led to much misunderstanding causing great turmoil. The Lahore Ahmadiyya Islamic Society devotes much time and effort in clarifying the misapprehensions that people in the West have about the religion of Islam and the Muslim people. In the same vein, the Society attempts to add some perspective to the anti-Western rhetoric

often heard from certain Muslims circles. Despite being far from perfect, the North American and European countries provide a level of freedom and protection of civil liberties that is unknown in most "Muslim" countries today. Not only are Muslims in the West free to practice their faith and share their religious views with others, their faith is respected and regarded as a great contribution to modern civilization. Certainly, there are fringe political movements that arise from time to time that exhibit intolerant and narrow-minded notions – including racist and prejudiced positions concerning immigrants, in general, or Muslims, in particular – but these are certainly not the norm. As an illustration of the level of public recognition and support that Islam as a religion and Muslims as followers of the faith receive in the West, we reproduce below various messages on the occasion of Ramadan and in celebration of Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha by prominent and influential leaders of the West. We hope these messages of good-will will be received with appreciation and provide an opportunity for understanding and, possibly, a prospect for peace-building.

Message from President Barack Obama on the Occasion of Ramadan 2010

On behalf of the American people, Michelle and I want to extend our best wishes to Muslims in America and around the world. Ramadan Kareem.

Ramadan is a time when Muslims around the world reflect upon the wisdom and guidance that comes with faith, and the responsibility that human beings have to one another, and to God. This is a time when families gather, friends host iftars, and meals are shared. But Ramadan is also a time of intense devotion and reflection – a time when Muslims fast during the day and pray during the night; when Muslims provide support to others to advance opportunity and prosperity for people everywhere. For all of us must remember that the world we want to build – and the changes that we want to make – must begin in our own hearts, and our own communities.

These rituals remind us of the principles that we hold in common, and Islam's role in advancing justice, progress, tolerance, and the dignity of all human beings. Ramadan is a celebration of a faith known for great diversity and racial equality. And here in the United States, Ramadan is a reminder that Islam has always been part of America and that American Muslims have made extraordinary contributions to our country. And today, I want to extend my best wishes to the 1.5 billion Muslims around the world – and your families and friends – as you welcome the beginning of Ramadan.

I look forward to hosting an Iftar dinner celebrating

Ramadan here at the White House later this week, and wish you a blessed month.

May God's peace be upon you.

Message from Secretary of Defense, Hillary Clinton, on the Occasion of Ramadan 2010

On behalf of the United States Department of State, I wish all Muslims around the world a happy and blessed Ramadan.

Ramadan is a time for self-reflection and sharing. American Muslims make valuable contributions to our country every day and millions will honor this month with acts of service and giving back to their communities.

Along with dozens of our Embassies, I will host an Iftar in Washington, DC, for Muslims and non-Muslims to join together and reflect on our common values, faith and the gifts of the past year. At our Iftar, we will also celebrate dozens of young American Muslims who are helping shape the future of our country with their energy and spirit. These young business and social entrepreneurs, academics, spiritual leaders, and other young Muslims around the world are leading the way to a new era of mutual respect and cooperation among all the citizens of our world.

During this month of peace and renewal, I wish the 1.5 billion Muslims around the world *Ramadan Kareem*.

Statement by U.S. Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, on the occasion of Ramadan 2010

The holy month of Ramadan is a period of spirituality, reflection and rejoicing for Muslims here and around the world. It is a time to honor the traditions of the Muslim faith, and an opportunity for all Americans to celebrate the tradition of pluralism, tolerance, diversity, and religious freedom embedded in the very fabric of our Constitution and our history.

In the weeks to come, let us each reaffirm our commitment to the core values of all faiths: advancing justice and pursuing peace; giving to charity and working toward the common good; and treating others with dignity and respect.

To all who observe Ramadan, may this month bring joy, wisdom, and countless blessings to you and your families. Ramadan Mubarak.

Message from Prime Minister David Cameron on the occasion of Ramadan 2010

I want to send my very best wishes to all the Muslim communities in Britain and around the world as you start this hugely significant month of Ramadan.

I know one of the messages of Ramadan is the importance of charity and the act of giving to those less fortunate than ourselves. That tradition is not just a great Muslim tradition. It's also a great British tradition, something we cherish right across our society, amongst people of every faith and none.

I'm very proud that Britain has been at the forefront of the international response to the terrible floods in Pakistan. And our thoughts are with all those who have suffered in this disaster and their families and friends, especially those here in Britain.

At this time of prayer and reflection, I hope that your prayers will be answered, your families and communities strengthened and that this Ramadan may bring you peace, happiness and every blessing.

Message by British Foreign Secretary, Mr. William Hague, on the occasion of Ramadan 2010

As-Salaam Alaikum.

As the Islamic holy month of Ramadan begins I want to send as British Foreign Secretary good wishes to Muslims across the globe.

This is a very important time in the calendar. It's a time of fasting, of prayer, of introspection, of the gathering of families and I'm very conscious as a British politician of the huge contribution that so many Muslims in Britain make across the whole breadth of our society and that is something of course that we want to see even more of in the future.

So it's a very, very important time of year celebrating what Ramadan is about, important values of selflessness, of charity, of compassion, of looking after people less fortunate than ourselves. And these are values of course that unite Muslims and non Muslims alike.

So at this special time of year I say to you, your friends and your relatives, Ramadan Mubarak."

Message from British Secretary of Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles, on the occasion of Ramadan 2010

The message of compassion, giving and justice is strong in the Islamic faith. And this period of Ramadan and Eid, in particular, inspires Muslims to focus more on others than themselves and think about those who are less fortunate.

I wish to join you in celebrating the Eid al Fitr festival after a long, hard month of fasting during Ramadan.

The principles and actions demonstrated during this time - of empathy, generosity and concern for the welfare of others - can be an inspiration to everyone,

irrespective of faith.

I, and my fellow ministers in Government, recognise and commend the huge contributions Muslims have made and continue to make to enrich British society.

From now, everyone - Muslims and non-Muslims alike - will have a part to play in creating the Big Society, in which people come together, think about what they can offer others and start to mould their own communities and neighbourhoods.

Eid is a time for family and friends; and for prayer, contemplation and reflection. As British Muslim communities across the United Kingdom enjoy their Eid celebrations, may I take this opportunity to wish you a peaceful and blessed Eid.

Eid Mubarak!

Message from President Barack Obama on the Occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr

As Ramadan comes to an end, Michelle and I extend our best wishes to Muslims in the United States and around the world on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. For Muslims all over the world, Eid ul-Fitr marks the end of a holy month of fasting and prayer. It is a time of self-reflection focusing on the values that Muslims and people of all faiths share - charity, community, cooperation and compassion. This year's Eid is also an occasion to reflect on the importance of religious tolerance and to recognize the positive role that religious communities of all faiths, including Muslims, have played in American life.

On this Eid, those devastated by the recent floods in Pakistan will be on the minds of many around the world. To help in the tremendous relief, recovery, and reconstruction effort for the floods, all Americans can participate by donating to the Pakistan Relief Fund at www.state.gov.

On behalf of the American people, we congratulate Muslims in the United States and around the world on this blessed day. Eid Mubarak.

Message from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha 2010

As Muslims around the world complete the Hajj and acknowledge Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, I extend my best wishes to the people of Maldives.

The spirit of this holiday serves as an important reminder of the values we all share—the importance of faith and family—and millions of American Muslims will join Muslims around the world in prayer, contemplation and respect. Whether around a dining table in Baghdad, Arizona, or Baghdad, Iraq, families will share meals together and celebrate Eid al-Adha.

As I look to the year ahead, I hope we will all share the blessings of happiness with our loved ones, peace and prosperity with our fellow citizens.

President Barack Obama's Speech on the occasion of 2010 Iftar Dinner at the White House

Good evening. Welcome to the White House.

To you, to Muslim Americans across our country, and to more than one billion Muslims around the world, I extend my best wishes on this holy month. Ramadan Kareem. I want to welcome members of the diplomatic corps; members of my administration; and Members of Congress, including Rush Holt, John Conyers, and Andre Carson, who is one of two Muslim American Members of Congress, along with Keith Ellison.

Here at the White House, we have a tradition of hosting iftars that goes back several years, just as we host Christmas parties, seders, and Diwali celebrations. These events celebrate the role of faith in the lives of the American people. They remind us of the basic truth that we are all children of God, and we all draw strength and a sense of purpose from our beliefs.

These events are also an affirmation of who we are as Americans. Our Founders understood that the best way to honor the place of faith in the lives of our people was to protect their freedom to practice religion. In the Virginia Act for Establishing Religion Freedom, Thomas Jefferson wrote that "all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion." The First Amendment of our Constitution established the freedom of religion as the law of the land. And that right has been upheld ever since.

Indeed, over the course of our history, religion has flourished within our borders precisely because Americans have had the right to worship as they choose - including the right to believe in no religion at all. And it is a testament to the wisdom of our Founders that America remains deeply religious - a nation where the ability of peoples of different faiths to coexist peacefully and with mutual respect for one another stands in contrast to the religious conflict that persists around the globe.

...

Tonight, we are reminded that Ramadan is a celebration of a faith known for great diversity. And Ramadan is a reminder that Islam has always been part of America. The first Muslim ambassador to the United States, from Tunisia, was hosted by President Jefferson, who arranged a sunset dinner for his guest because it was Ramadan—making it the first known iftar at the White House, more than 200 years ago.

Like so many other immigrants, generations of Muslims came here to forge their future. They became farmers and merchants, worked in mills and factories, and helped lay the railroads. They helped build America. They founded the first Islamic center in New York City in the 1890s. They built America's first mosque on the prairie of North Dakota. And perhaps the oldest surviving mosque in America—still in use today—is in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Today, our nation is strengthened by millions of Muslim Americans. They excel in every walk of life. Muslim American communities—including mosques in all fifty states—also serve their neighbors. Muslim Americans protect our communities as police, firefighters and first responders. Muslim American clerics have spoken out against terror and extremism, reaffirming that Islam teaches that one must save human life, not take it. And Muslim Americans serve with honor in our military. At next week's iftar at the Pentagon, tribute will be paid to three soldiers who gave their lives in Iraq and now rest among the heroes of Arlington National Cemetery.

These Muslim Americans died for the security that we depend upon, and the freedoms that we cherish. They are part of an unbroken line of Americans that stretches back to our Founding; Americans of all faiths who have served and sacrificed to extend the promise of America to new generations, and to ensure that what is exceptional about America is protected - our commitment to stay true to our core values, and our ability to perfect our union.

For in the end, we remain “one nation, under God, indivisible.” And we can only achieve “liberty and justice for all” if we live by that one rule at the heart of every religion, including Islam—that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

Thank you all for being here, and I wish you a blessed Ramadan. And with that, let's eat. ■

Maulana Muhammad Ali

His Influence on Contemporary and Later Muslim Scholars

by Ch. Masud Akhtar, B.A., LL.B.

[This article provides an excellent summary of the widespread influence Maulana Muhammad Ali's literary works had on his contemporaries and later scholars. In particular, Maulana Muhammad Ali's English translation and commentary of the Holy Quran was the initial work in the arena of Muslims rendering the Quran into the English language and served as a prototype for most

(if not all) later translations. As very ably demonstrated in this article, Maulana Muhammad Ali's works were regarded as premiere Islamic literature for English readers and a source of scholarly information for academics in the West. The superior quality of Maulana Muhammad Ali's literary treasures and their utility in the promotion of authentic Islamic education is once again being recognized and valued today, ironically in the East. Most of Maulana Muhammad Ali's works are being translated from English into Arabic (and a host of other languages) and are being received with much admiration, recognition and appreciation by individuals and academic institutions alike.]

When *The Review of Religions* started its publication from Qadian, India in 1901, Maulana Muhammad Ali became its first editor. The depth of his knowledge in the teachings of Islam portrayed through his articles and editorials surprised not only the scholarly elite of the Ahmadiyya Community but also of the contemporary Muslim world. His articles on comparative religions are a treat to read. (*The Review of Religions* file is available in the Library of Congress in the U.S.A.) Merit of his learning was discovered and recognized by the *Mujaddid* of the 14th century *Hijrah* and the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam in the early days of his contact with him and accordingly he had ordered that all articles to be published in Urdu magazines of the Movement be first shown to and approved by Maulana Muhammad Ali. Not only this, the venerable *Imam* of the 14th century *Hijrah* chose this young man from amongst a circle of the scholarly personages who had gathered around him as his disciples, each one of whom was an authority on the teachings of Islam in his own right, for that great work of translating the Holy Quran into English and for writing a book on the teachings of Islam for exposing the sublime teachings of the Quran and Islam to the Western nations. This was a great honour for a youth in his early thirties, as Maulana Muhammad Ali was at that time.

Maulana Muhammad Ali started work on the English translation of the Holy Quran with Commentary in 1909 and it was completed in 1917 when its first edition was published. (He completed its revision in 1950 and the revised edition was published in 1951, a few days before his passing away.) For these nine years he worked very hard, and thus the first complete English translation of the Holy Quran from the pen of a Muslim became available to the world of religion. About the salient features of this translation he himself wrote in the preface to the first edition which is reproduced hereunder:

As regards the translation I need not say much. That a need was felt for a translation of the Holy Book of Islam with full explanatory notes from the pen of a Muslim in spite of the existing translations is universally admitted. Whether this trans-

lation satisfies that need, only time will decide. I may, however, say that I have tried to be more faithful to the Arabic text than all existing English translations. It will be noticed that additional words as explaining the sense of the original have been avoided, and where necessary—and these cases are very few—they are given within brackets. Wherever a departure has been made from the ordinary or primary significance of a word, reason for this departure has been given in a footnote and authorities have been amply quoted.

There are some novel features in this translation. The Arabic text has been inserted, the translation and the text occupying opposite columns. Each verse begins with a new line in both the text and the translation, and verses are numbered to facilitate reference. Necessary explanations are given in footnotes in serial numbers, and generally either authorities are quoted or reasons given for the opinion expressed. This made the work very laborious, but I have undertaken this labour to make the work a real source of satisfaction to those who might otherwise be inclined to be sceptical regarding many statements which will appear new to the ordinary reader. I have tried to avoid repetition in the explanatory footnotes by giving a reference where repetition was necessary, but I must confess that these references are far from being exhaustive. When the significance of a word has been explained in one place it has been thought unnecessary, except in rare cases, to make a reference to it. For the reader's facility I have, however, added a list of the Arabic words explained, and the reader may refer to it when necessary.

Besides the footnotes, ample introductory notes have been given at the commencement of each chapter. These introductory notes give the abstract of each chapter in sections, at the same time showing the connection of the sections and also explaining that of the different chapters with each other. This feature of the translation is altogether new, and will, I hope, in course of time prove of immense service in eradicating the idea which is so prevalent now that there is no arrangement in the verses and chapters of the Holy Quran. It is quite true that the Quran does not classify the different subjects and treat them separately in each section or chapter. The reason for this is that the Holy Quran is not a book of laws, but essentially a book meant for the spiritual and moral advancement of man, and therefore the power, greatness, grandeur and glory of God is its chief theme, the principles of social laws enunciated therein being also meant to promote the moral and spiritual

advancement of man. But that there exists an arrangement will be clear even to the most superficial reader of the introductory notes on these chapters. It will be further noted that the Makkan and Madinan revelations are beautifully welded together, and there are groups of chapters belonging to about one time and relating to one subject. The introductory notes also show whether a particular chapter was revealed at Makkah or Madinah, and also the probable period to which it belongs. Exact dates and specified order of the revelation of different chapters are often mere conjectures, and therefore I have avoided this useless task.

The references to the authorities quoted in the notes are explained in the list of abbreviations given on p. lx. Among the commentators, I have made the greatest use of the voluminous commentaries of Ibn Jarir, Imam Fakhr al-Din Razi, Imam Athir al-Din Abu Hayyan and the shorter but by no means less valuable commentaries of *Zamakhshari*, *Baidawi* and *Jami' al-Bayan* of Ibn Kathir. Among the lexicons, *Taj al-'Arus* and the *Lisan al-'Arab* are voluminous standard works and have been freely consulted, but the smaller work of Imam Raghīb Isfahani, known as *Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran*, has afforded immense help, and it undoubtedly occupies the first place among the standard works in Arabic lexicology so far as the Quran is concerned. The valuable dictionaries of *Hadith*, the *Nahayah* of Ibn Athir and the *Majma' ul-Bihar* have also proved very serviceable in explaining many a moot point. It will, however, be noted that I have more often referred to Lane's *Arabic-English Lexicon*, a work value of which for the English student of Arabic can hardly be overestimated; this has been done purposely so that the reader of this volume may have the facility to refer to an easily accessible work. It is a pity that the great author was not spared to complete his work, but up to the letter *fa*, Lane has placed the world under the greatest obligation. Besides commentaries and lexicons, historical and other works have also been consulted. Among the collections of *Hadith*, *Bukhari*, *Kitab al-Tafsir*, or chapter on the commentary of the Holy Quran, has been before me through-out, but the whole of *Bukhari* and other reliable *Hadith* collections have also been consulted. And lastly, the greatest religious leader of the present time, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, has inspired me with all that is best in this work. I have drunk deep at the fountain of knowledge which this great Reformer—*Mujaddid* of the present century and founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement—has made to flow. There is one more

person whose name I must mention in this connection, the late Maulawi Hakim Nur al-Din, who in his last long illness patiently went through much the greater part of the explanatory notes and made many valuable suggestions. To him, indeed, the Muslim world owes a deep debt of gratitude as the leader of the new turn given to the exposition of the Holy Quran, he has done his work and passed away silently, but it is a fact that he spent the whole of his life studying the Holy Quran, and must be ranked with the greatest expositors of the Holy Book.

The principle of the greatest importance to which I have adhered in interpreting the Holy Quran is that no word of the Holy Book should be interpreted in such a manner as to contradict the plain teachings of the Holy Quran, a principle to which the Holy Word has itself called the attention of its reader in 3:60; see 387. This rule forms the basis of my interpretation of the Quran, and this is a very sound basis, if we remember that the Holy Quran contains metaphors, parables, and allegories side by side with plain teachings. The Practice (*Sunnah*) and Sayings of the Holy Prophet, when contained in reliable reports, are the best commentary of the Holy Word, and I have therefore attached the greatest importance to them. Earlier authorities have also been respected, but reports and comments contradicting the Quran itself cannot but be rejected. I have also kept before me the rule that the meaning to be adopted in any case should be that which suits the context best, and the only other limitation to which I have subjected myself is that the use of that word in that sense is allowed by the lexicons or by Arabic literature. Existing translations have rendered me great help, but I have adopted an interpretation only after fully satisfying myself and having recourse to original authorities. Many of the stories generally accepted by the commentators find no place in my commentary, except in cases where there is either sufficient historical evidence or the corroborative testimony of some reliable Saying of the Holy Prophet. Many of these stories were, I believe, incorporated into Islamic literature by the flow of converts from Judaism and Christianity into Islam. I must add that the present tendency of Muslim theologians to regard the commentaries of the Middle Ages as the final word on the interpretation of the Holy Quran is very injurious and practically shuts out the great treasures of knowledge, which an exposition of the Holy Book in the new light reveals. A study of the old commentators, to ignore whose great labour would indeed be a sin, also shows how freely they commented upon the Holy Book. The great service which they

have done to the cause of Truth would indeed have been lost to the world, if they had looked upon their predecessors as uttering the final word on the exposition of the Holy Quran as most theologians do today.

The Urdu paper *Wakil*, which was published from Amritsar, India, and of which both the editor and the proprietor were orthodox Muslims, published a review of this translation in the following words:

We have seen the translation critically and have no hesitation in remarking that the simplicity of its language and the correctness of the version are all enviable. The writer has kept his annotations altogether free from sectarian influence with wonderful impartiality, and has gathered together the wealth of authentic Muslim theology. He has also displayed great skill and wisdom in using the new weapons of defence in refuting the objections of the opponents of Islam.

Rev. Zwemer's quarterly, *The Muslim World* of July, 1931, offered this comment:

One cannot read far in the translation of Maulvi Muhammad Ali or in his notes without being convinced that before he began his work on the Koran he was already widely read in the Arabic authorities listed on page lx, to which frequent reference is made in his notes; also his quotations from Lane's *Lexicon* indicate that he was not altogether oblivious to the results of European scholarship (p. 303).

The author of *Islam in its True Light* called this translation "a leading star for subsequent similar Muslim works" (p. 69).

Many of the special features of Maulana Muhammad Ali's translation were adopted by later Muslim translators of the Holy Quran. The introductory notes to chapters, giving the abstract of each chapter and showing its connection with what went before, were specially appreciated. Even in the matter of interpretation, most of the views adopted by Maulana Muhammad Ali have found acceptance with them, as we shall see in the following lines.

English translations of the Holy Quran by Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall and Mr. Ghulam Sarwar appeared a few years after Maulana's translation. About the influence on Mr. Pickthall and Mr. Sarwar, we have to quote once again from *The Muslim World*, July, 1931, Rev. Zwemer's quarterly:

A careful comparison of Mr. Pickthall's translation with that of the Ahmadiyya translator, Maulvi Muhammad Ali, shows conclusively that Mr. Pickthall's work is not very much more than a

revision of the Ahmadiyya version” (p. 289).

We have made a thorough examination of about forty verses in the second chapter, sixty verses in the third, forty verses in the nineteenth, and all of the last fifteen chapters, comparing his renderings with those of Sale, Rodwell, Palmer and Muhammad Ali; as well as with the Arabic. From this careful investigation we have come to the conclusion that Mr. Pickthall’s translation, in all that part of his work which we have examined, resembles very closely the version of Muhammad Ali, the difference between the two versions in many passages being merely verbal (p. 290).

Now if we compare the above passage (3:57-63) with the versions of S, R and P, we shall see that Mr. Pickthall is very much nearer to MA than he is to any of the three previous translators, so that one gets the impression that, although he may have taken a word here and there from R and P, yet he has not followed them so closely as he obviously followed MA (p. 292).

The dependence of Mr. Pickthall upon the work of MA is also indicated in an occasional footnote, and those who will compare these footnotes with the notes in the 1920 edition of MA, which contains his commentary, will find that throughout chapter 2 almost every footnote is based on the Ahmadiyya Commentary (p. 293).

We think it will now be evident to the reader how much Mr. Pickthall is indebted to the version of Maulvi Muhammad Ali, not only for his footnotes but also for the translation itself (p. 293).

The author of *Islam in its True Light* also mentions both Mr. Pickthall and Mr. Sarwar as following closely the translation of Maulana Muhammad Ali. Rev. Zwemer also wrote:

By comparing these two passages with Mr. Sarwar’s rendering given on page 133 of the last issue of this journal, it will be seen that both Mr. Sarwar and Mr. Pickthall have followed MA very closely (p. 294).

Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali is another translator of the Quran into English. He has rendered a translation from Arabic verse to English verse. For such a translation in poetry it is really hard to remain true to Arabic. The true meanings have to be sacrificed for the sake of poetical rhythm and meter. Abdullah Yusuf Ali was conscious of this problem and we have it at the authority of late Mirza Masud Beg, a retired Divisional Inspector of Schools, Government of the Punjab, who became the Secretary General of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam Lahore and had been working in various positions

for the Anjuman for the most part of his life, that Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali, when he was a lecturer in Anjuman Himayatul-Islam Lahore’s Islamia College he had an arrangement with Maulana Muhammad Ali whereby he used to send each verse of the Quran that he rendered into English poetry to Maulana for approval, who will return it to Abdullah Yusuf Ali with necessary suggestions as to keeping nearer to true meanings.

The late Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi, Editor, *Such*, Lucknow, has also translated the Holy Quran. He was a recognized leader of orthodox Muslim opinion. He admits the influence of Maulana Muhammad Ali’s translation in the following words in his paper of 25th June, 1943:

To deny the excellence of Maulvi Muhammad Ali’s translation, the influence it has exercised and its proselytizing utility, would be to deny the light of the sun. The translation certainly helped in bringing thousands of non-Muslims to the Muslim fold and hundreds of thousands of unbelievers much nearer Islam. Speaking of my own self, I gladly admit that this translation was one of the few books which brought me towards Islam fifteen or sixteen years ago when I was groping in darkness, atheism and scepticism. Even Maulana Muhammad Ali of the *Comrade* was greatly enthralled by this translation and had nothing but praise for it.

Whether his translation be counted amongst the orthodox or the modernists, Maulana answers this question in these words:

There is not a single doctrine of the religion of Islam in which this Translation differs from orthodox views. I hope to be excused for clearing up this point by a quotation from Mr. Pickthall’s review of my *Religion of Islam* in the *Islamic Culture* for October, 1936:

‘Probably no man living has done longer or more valuable service for the cause of Islamic revival than Maulvi Muhammad Ali of Lahore. ... In our opinion the present volume is his finest work. It is a description of *Al-Islam* by one well-versed in *Sunnah* who has on his mind the shame of the Muslim decadence of the past five centuries and in his heart the hope of the revival, of which signs can now be seen on every side. Without moving a hair’s breadth from the traditional position with regard to worship and religious duties, the author shows a wide field in which changes are lawful and may be desirable because here the rules and practices are not based on an ordinance of the Quran or on an edict of the Prophet (peace

be on him!).’

Mr. Pickthall was an orthodox Muslim, and what he has said of *The Religion of Islam* is true of this Translation. There is not a hair’s breadth departure from the essentials of Islam, and this Translation does not contain anything contrary to the views of the great *Imams* and learned *Ahl Sunnat* that have gone before. That there have been differences in the interpretation of the Holy Quran among the greatest commentators, among even the Companions of the Holy Prophet and the great *Imams*, cannot be denied. But these differences do not relate to the essentials of the faith of Islam on which all Muslims are agreed; they relate to minor or secondary points. All Muslims believe in the Unity of God and the prophethood of Muhammad. They believe in all the prophets of God and in His Books. They believe that Divine revelation came to perfection with the Prophet Muhammad who is thus the last of the prophets—*Khatam al-Nabiyyin*—after whom no prophet will come, and the Holy Quran is the last Divine message to the whole of humanity. All these doctrines find clear expression in my translation and the explanatory footnotes.

The only important matter wherein I may be said to have differed with the majority relates to the death of Jesus Christ. But in the first place the belief that Jesus is alive somewhere in the heavens has never been included among the essentials of Islam. It has never been included among the religious doctrines of the faith of Islam. There are Muslims who still believe that four prophets are alive—Khidr, Idris, Elias and Jesus Christ—but that is not an article of faith with any Muslim. Many learned Muslims have held such belief regarding the first three to be based on Israelite stories and as having nothing to support it in the Holy Quran and authentic *Hadith*. They are not looked upon as unorthodox for that reason. Why should this Translation be looked upon as unorthodox for saying the same thing about a belief in Jesus Christ being alive? I may call the reader’s attention to another fact as well. Most learned Muslims all over the world, if not all, are today convinced that Jesus Christ died like other prophets and many of them have given expression to such views, among them being the famous Mufti Muhammad ‘Abdu-hu and Sayyid Rashid Rada of Egypt.

Now this opinion that Jesus Christ did not bodily ascend to Heaven and is not alive there and that he died a natural death like other prophets was not only followed by Mr. Pickthall and Mr. Sarwar but found place in the first edition of Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali’s trans-

lation. For reasons best known to them the publishers deleted it from the later editions. Recently, Allama Muhammad Asad’s translation has been published and it, too, has carried the same opinion and interpretation about the death of Jesus Christ as expressed by Maulana Muhammad Ali in his translation.

Ahmad Deedat of South Africa is another Muslim scholar of the present days who believes in the death of Jesus Christ and is in agreement with the opinion of Maulana Muhammad Ali on almost all important matters of the teachings of Islam.

How did Maulana Muhammad Ali come to exercise so much influence on his contemporary and later Muslim scholars? He was not seeking worldly laurels or prizes. He was consciously working for transforming the world around him; and this was possible only through revival of Islam—the mission of the *Mujaddid* whose disciple he was. Thus his was the labour of love, devotion and dedication. The labour which Maulana had put in this is recounted by him in these words:

My work was a work of labour. For every rendering or explanation I had to search *Hadith* collections, lexicologies, commentaries and other important works, and every opinion expressed was substantiated by quoting authorities. Differences there have been in the past, and in future too there will be differences, but whatever I have differed I have given my authority for the difference. Moreover, the principle I have kept in view in this Translation and Commentary, that is, seeking the explanation of a problematic point first of all from the Holy Quran itself, has kept me nearest to the truth, and those who study the Quran closely will find very few occasions to differ with me.

I may here add that it is not only in having recourse to Lane’s *Lexicon* that I have taken advantage of European scholarship. For full nine years before taking up this translation I was engaged in studying every aspect of the European criticism of Islam as well as of Christianity and religion in general, as I had specially to deal with these subjects in *The Review of Religions*, of which I was the first editor. I had thus an occasion to go through both the higher criticism of religion by advanced thinkers and what I may call the narrower criticism of Islam by the Christian missionaries who had no eye for the broader principles of Islam and its cosmopolitan teachings, and the unparalleled transformation wrought by Islam.

No wonder then that his translation is a leading star for later translations of the Quran. After the English translation, Maulana Muhammad Ali wrote a voluminous Urdu commentary of the Quran under the title *Bayan-ul-Quran* in three volumes which extends over

2500 pages and is much more explanatory than the notes in the English Translation. This translation and commentary became the most popular exposition of the teachings of the Quran in the Urdu language in the nineteen thirties and forties; so much so that many *maulanas* who were otherwise opposed to the Ahmadiyya Movement made extensive use of this commentary in their *khutubat* (sermons) and *dars-i-Quran*. The only precaution they took was to tear off the title page where the name of the author and publisher was printed. But there were other honest and strong characters who did not deem fit to do away with the name of the author and publisher. The late *Sheikhul Islam*, Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani, the then Principal of the well known Darul Ulum at Deoband (India) was one of them. The late Maulana Aftab al-Din Ahmad, a student of the *Sheikhul Islam* at Deband who later became *Imam* of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey, U.K. and translator of *Sahih Bukhari* into English in his account of joining the Ahmadiyya Movement reported that the *Sheikhul Islam* used to deliver very inspiring and enlightening *dars-i-Quran* and while on a visit to his home Maulana Aftab al-Din found that Maulana Usmani made use of the *Bayan al-Quran* of Maulana Muhammad Ali for his *dars-i-Quran*. Having noted the name of the author and the publishers, Maulana Aftab al-Din came to Lahore during summer vacations and joined the Ahmadiyya Movement. (This account was published during the life of Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani and during a period of about twenty years between publishing and his death Maulana Usmani did not contradict or disown it.) On the emergence of Pakistan Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani came to Pakistan and became *Sheikhul Islam* of Pakistan.

After this Maulana Muhammad Ali wrote his well known book on the teachings of Islam under the title of *The Religion of Islam*. Allama Iqbal wrote about it:

. . . An extremely useful book almost indispensable to the students of Islam.

The University of the Punjab (now in Pakistan), in appreciation of this work, granted Maulana Muhammad Ali a special reward, and included this book as one of the reference books on Islamic jurisprudence.

Marmaduke Pickthall wrote about this book:

Probably no man living has done longer and more valuable service for the cause of Islamic revival than Maulvi Muhammad Ali of Lahore . . . In our opinion the present volume is his finest work. It is a description of *Al-Islam* by one well-versed in *Sunnah* who has on his mind the shame of the Muslim decadence of the past five centuries and in his heart the hope of the revival, of which signs can now be seen on every side. Without moving a hair's breadth from the traditional position with

regard to worship and religious duties, the author shows a wide field in which changes are lawful and may be desirable because here the rules and practices are not based on an ordinance of the Quran or on an edict of the Prophet (peace be on him!).

This was translated into Arabic in Egypt and Miss Qutorman, a Turkish journalist who visited Pakistan in 1950, informed that this had been translated into Turkish and the influence it wielded in Turkey was acknowledged by the message of the great Mufti of Turkey delivered by her to the Maulana . . . It has since been rendered into many languages, Dutch, Indonesian, Urdu and Spanish being some of these. In 1945, the *Maulana* published *The New World Order* whereby he tried to draw the attention of the world intelligentsia to the fact that the concept of nationalism as worshipped by various nations in recent times has proved to be the worst enemy of mankind. National jealousies and rivalries are the root cause of conflict and war between various nations. The only hope for world peace is to be found in replacing the present glorification of nationalism with glorification of the concept of mankind as one nation' as preached by Islam. This great work of the *Maulana* will be a source of enormous wealth for intellectuals of the world till mankind attains the capacity to discover its destiny.

Editor's Note: Since the initial publication of this article years ago, another popular translation of the Holy Quran, by M.H. Shakir, came to being. It turned out that the Shakir translation was a mere plagiarized version of the 1917 edition of Maulana Muhammad Ali's translation. A linguistic report on this matter, showing that 90% of it is copied verbatim for Maulana Muhammad Ali's works, may be viewed at: <http://www.muslim.org/intro/ShakirPlagiarismReport.htm>.

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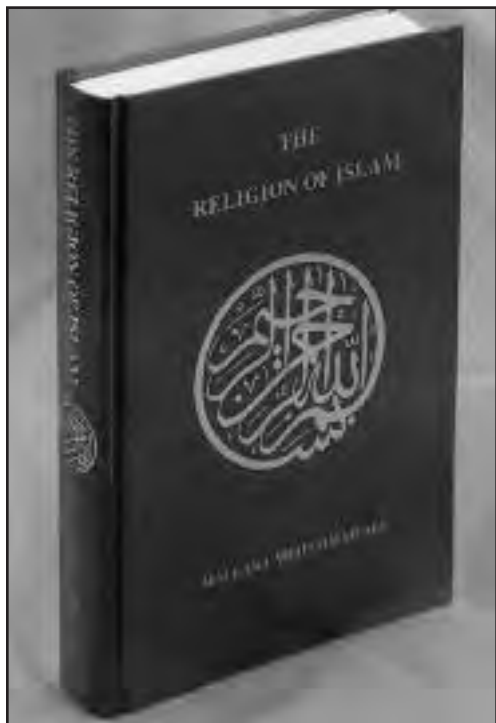
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