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In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

The Islamic View

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The Muslim call to prayer is not an act of “domination” over non-Muslims

Friday *Khutba* for Lahore Ahmadiyya UK, 27 March 2026,

by Dr Zahid Aziz

أَتْلُ مَا أُوْحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَلَا تَجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ۚ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ
وَقُولُوا آمَنَّا بِالَّذِي أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَأُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَالْهُنَاءُ وَالْهَيْكُمُ وَاجِدٌ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

“Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book and keep up prayer. Surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil; and certainly the remembrance of Allah is the greatest (force). And Allah knows what you do.

And do not argue with the People of the Book except by what is best, save such of them as act unjustly. But say: We believe in what has been revealed to us and revealed to you, and our God and your God is One, and to Him we submit.” — The Quran, 29:45–46

There seems to be no connection between these two verses which occur together in the Quran. Before coming to any such connection, I would like to point out that the first verse begins by addressing one person, using the singular form of the word “you”:

“Recite what has been revealed to you (thee) of the Book and keep up prayer.”

But while worded as if it is addressing the Holy Prophet Muhammad, commanding him to recite his revelation and to keep up prayer, it is clear that each and every Muslim is meant because prayer is the duty of every Muslim. Moreover, verse 45 then switches into the plural at the end when it says:

“And Allah knows what you do.”

The second verse, verse 46, is all in the plural. When it says:

“do not argue with the People of the Book except by what is best”,

and:

“say: We believe in what has been revealed to us”

this is all in the plural, referring to all Muslims.

The only statement in these two verses which could be considered as referring exclusively to the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the opening one:

“Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book.”

However, in many places the Quran tells us that it was revealed to Muslims, just as in other places it tells us that the Quran was revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad. For example, right at the beginning of the Quran it addresses the Holy Prophet when it says: “what has been revealed to you” — *unzila ilai-ka* (2:4). But in other places it addresses all Muslims and describes the Quran as having been revealed to *you [all]*, *unzila ilai-kum* (5:68, 7:3, 39:55). Even here, in verse 46 that I read above, it tells Muslims to say to others that “We believe in what has been revealed to us” — *unzila ilai-nā*.

With regard to the scriptures of the Jews and the Christians as well, while as having been revealed to their individual prophets, sometimes these are mentioned as having been revealed to their communities. For example, it says: “what was revealed to Abraham, and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob” (2:136, 3:84), but here it says to their followers: “what has been revealed to you”. This all shows that the opening words of verse 45, “Recite what has been revealed to you (thee) of the Book and keep up prayer”, are directed at every Muslim, not only at the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

In that whole verse, the recitation of the Quran, the keeping up of prayer and the remembrance of Allah are mentioned. The prescribed daily prayers necessarily include some recitation from the Quran, along with other words which constitute the remembrance of Allah. It is stated here that these prayers keep a person away from all kinds of bad and wrong actions and behaviour. Apparently there is no connection between this topic of prayer and the instruction in the next verse which tells Muslims to say to the People of the Book:

“We believe in what has been revealed to us and revealed to you, and our God and your God is One.”

However, an event occurred a few days ago in London, just before the end of Ramadan, which makes the second verse highly relevant in connection with prayer. You may have heard that an *iftār* event with *Maghrib* prayers was organised in Trafalgar Square. Following this, some politicians alleged that this public holding of Muslim prayers with *adhān* was an act to demonstrate “Muslim domination” over non-Muslims. On the other hand, many responsible and recognised Christian and Jewish spokespersons rejected this criticism. The Bishop of Willesden wrote:

“The public *iftār* in Trafalgar Square was not an act of cultural imposition, nor a signal of division. It was, rather, a moment of hospitality ... extended by one community to the wider public. It was open, generous and peaceful” ([see link](#)).

The *Jewish News* published an editorial in its issue dated 19 March 2026, entitled: “In

defence of praying during *Iftar* in Trafalgar Square.” It stated that this event:

“had been openly and legally booked for Trafalgar Square. Muslims present had every right to pray as a part of that.”

It explained that Jews also hold similar religious events in public in the UK, and added:

“We would be wise to defend that right for others, because what guarantee do we have that if it were taken from them, we would not be next?” ([See link](#)).

The first verse that I recited states clearly the purpose of the Muslim prayer. It is to give the person praying the strength to be able to stay away from “indecent and evil”. The only “domination” by Muslims through prayer is domination over their own bad desires.

One prominent politician, a former leading government minister and former Foreign Secretary, said in a TV interview last Sunday, with reference to some of the words of the *adhan* which was sounded at the ceremony, that this:

“made it clear that there is no God other than the God of Islam and no prophet other than the Prophet Muhammad.”

This, he claimed, was “exclusionary”. ([BBC1 programme Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg: in the iPlayer recording see at 47mins](#)). To hear a recording of his words from the programme, please select [this link](#).

It so happens that the second verse I recited (29:46), after the one emphasising the importance of prayer, is a simple answer to such ignorance. In this verse, consisting of two sentences, the second sentence instructs Muslims to say to the People of the Book, which refers in particular to the Jews and the Christians:

“We believe in what has been revealed to us and revealed to you, and our God and your God is One, and to Him we submit.”

This is a plain rebuttal of the allegation of this politician, that Muslims are proclaiming to others that ours is the only God. Islam clearly recognises that the Supreme Being worshipped by other religions is the same God Whom we call Allah, the one Whom Christians refer to as “God the Father”. The error of others that Islam points out is that while they worship the One true God, they take other beings as His partners. It is also plainly stated here that Muslims believe that the same God Who sent the Quran to the Holy Prophet Muhammad also sent the scriptures of other religions, meaning in particular the scriptures of the Jews and the Christians, to their prophets.

There is no concept or teaching in Islam of a *God of Islam* or a *God of Muslims*. As everyone knows, the Quran begins by describing Allah as “Lord of all the worlds”. Then its first-occurring commandment is:

“O mankind, serve your Lord Who created you and those before you” (2:21),
and in its last chapter Allah is called:

“the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, and the God of mankind” (114:1–3).

As to Jews and Christians specifically, Allah says in the Quran:

“And when We made a covenant with the Children of Israel: You shall serve none but Allah” (2:83),

and:

“And with those who say, We are Christians, We made a covenant” (5:14).

The covenant or promise made by Allah, first with the Israelites through Moses, and then with the Christians through Jesus, was that if they fulfilled their side of the bargain of remaining true to the teachings given to them, Allah would fulfil His promise to them of bestowing his spiritual favours upon them. The same covenant was made with the Muslims, as the Quran says:

“And remember Allah’s favour on you and His covenant with which He bound you when you said: We have heard and we obey” (5:7).

These covenants are mentioned several times in the Quran, and significantly in chapter 5 the covenant with Muslims is mentioned in verse 7, with the Jews in verse 12, and with the Christians in verse 14. It was the same God making the same covenant through His prophets with their people.

The other allegation made by the politician mentioned above, that Muslims were declaring that there is “**no prophet other than the Prophet Muhammad**”, is based on such deplorable ignorance of commonly and widely known facts that it hardly needs any refutation. If a Muslim made such a declaration, it would be exactly as if he was leaving the religion of Islam. A person cannot possibly remain a Muslim without acknowledging all the prophets named in the Quran, including Abraham, Moses and Jesus, and several other prophets of the Bible.

I will now briefly turn to the first sentence of the second verse, 29:46, that I have been dealing with above. It begins by instructing Muslims:

“Do not argue with the People of the Book (i.e., principally Jews and Christians) except by what is best, save such of them as act unjustly.”

In another place the Quran has made explicit what that “best” is. It says:

“Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in the best manner” (16:125).

The “best” way of arguing is to put forward arguments and teachings which appeal to human reason and to the human minds and hearts. The aim of the argument should be to convince the other person of the truth for his own benefit. It should not be to defeat, humiliate or belittle the other person, score debating points, or achieve victory by tricks and unfair and unscrupulous tactics. “Best way” also means to conduct the argument sincerely in a good-mannered, polite and decent way. The verse adds here that some of those with whom you are arguing may act “unjustly”. That refers to those who merely attack you and use bad language, ridicule and mockery to gain cheap laughs, and knowingly hide or distort the truth to reject your argument. In such situations, the Quran advises Muslims not to engage with such people. Muslims must not descend to their level, but the Quran allows Muslims to respond, in a careful and restrained way, to the undesirable language used by their opponents. Thus the Quran requires Muslims to be respectful towards people of other religions even while engaging in a debate with them.

Let us pray that Allah enables us to present these teachings of the Quran to those who are unaware of them and who are jumping to their own wrong conclusions. *Ameen*.

Note: The audio form of this *khutba* is available at the following link.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMQrPT2w84c

Addendum

To my *khutba* above, I may add the following point. As stated above, Jews and Christians also hold public religious events in the UK, even at the same world-famous venue as the one mentioned above. In the Jewish scriptures it is written that God said: “Israel is My son, My first-born son” (Exodus, 4:22). Again, this nation is addressed as follows:

“For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession” (Deuteronomy, 7:6).

And according to one of the Gospels, Jesus said:

“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John, 14:6).

This statement is often seen displayed on notice boards outside churches. We would ask the former UK government minister mentioned above: Would he declare these statements as “exclusionary” of other religions or not?

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# Sacrifice

Friday *Khutba* for Lahore Ahmadiyya UK, 10 April 2026,

by Dr Mujahid Saeed

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضْعِفَهُ لَهُ وَلَهُ أَجْرٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٥٧﴾  
يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى نُورُهُمْ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ بُشْرُكُمُ الْيَوْمَ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ  
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٥٨﴾

“Who is it that will offer to Allah a goodly gift, so He will double it for him, and he will have a generous reward. On that day you will see the believers, men and women, their light gleaming before them and on their right hand. Good news for you this day! — Gardens in which rivers flow, to abide in them! That is the mighty achievement.”

— The Holy Quran, 57:11-12

I have chosen today's topic as 'Sacrifice' to commemorate the martyrdom of the UK *Jama'at's* Imam, Mr. Muhammad Anwar Shaheed. Forty years have now elapsed since his supreme sacrifice, when he laid his life in the way of Allah on the 9th of April 1986, whilst in Guyana.

For those in a younger age group listening to this sermon, when you hear of the sacrifice of our dearly departed *Imam*, the image that would evoke in your minds would be of an older person. At least that is what I would visualise if I heard someone's name being prefixed with the honorific title of '*Imam*'. I would therefore emphasise that he was only 46 years of age at the time of his martyrdom. I will give you a moment to reflect on how much he achieved at such a young age for this *Jama'at*.

Now, we all know how much promise someone holds in their fourth decade of life in terms of prosperity that usually follows when people are in the prime of their careers. There is so much to look forward to for the family. The husband and father is their comforter, protector and breadwinner. The children are usually young and they long for the love and affection of their parent. The wife yearns to see the face of her beloved every morning upon rising and every evening upon return from work and feel the warmth of his presence. It is with this sentiment of poignant pain for the Anwar family and their friends and the UK *Jama'at* that I was compelled to drop the sermon I had originally prepared for today and instead quickly jot down some points on the aspect of sacrifices that people of faith have to make whilst engaged in the spread of the word of Allah.

Now, in the Holy Quran, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is addressed by Allah with the following words:

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ فَبِهِدَاهُمْ أَقْتَدِ ط

“These [i.e., the Prophets of Allah] are they whom Allah guided,  
so follow their guidance...” (6:90).

This verse highlights that we find the greatest guidance and examples of how to conduct our lives by looking at the life history and guidance of the earlier prophets.

Again, the Holy Quran has revealed in this famous verse known to you all:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ط

“Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much” (33:21).

So, when we look at the lives of the Prophets, we see numerous examples of sacrifice, for example, Prophet Noah (Nūḥ), having endured years of taunts and abuses from his people, Prophet Abraham (Ibrāhīm) having faced the fire of opposition, Prophet Moses (Mūsā) having faced hardship in taking the message to the powerful Pharaoh, Prophet Joseph (Yūsuf) having been separated from his family as a teenager — through the treachery of his very own brothers, Prophet Job (Ayyūb) having been patient in spite of his painful afflictions, Prophet Jesus (‘Īsā) (peace be upon them all) having been put on the cross by his people, and our beloved Prophet Muhammad (may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him) having borne all the trials and tribulations that came his way with profound fortitude. We see a wide array of personal losses, such as being born an orphan, having lost his father before his birth, losing his mother at the tender age of six years, and again the death of his guardian — his paternal grandfather — at the age of eight years, losing his sons and his wife Hazrat Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her) in his lifetime, being stoned and bloodied by the people of Taif, being boycotted and then exiled from Makkah, being injured in the Battle of Uhud and losing his teeth, etc. All sorts of griefs afflicted him, but he persevered and was ultimately successful.

We then see the sacrifices made by the Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may Allah be pleased with them all). Just imagine the grit and courage demonstrated by them when they were a group of poorly-equipped, 313 in number, young and old, against a strong, well-armed army of 1,000 non-Muslim warriors of the Quraish, determined to annihilate the Muslims in the Battle of Badr. Consider the martyrdom in Karbala that was dearer to Hazrat Imam Hussain (may Allah be pleased with him) and his companions than to bow down before a tyrant.

In the history of our own *Jama‘at*, the example of Sahibzada Abdul Latif Shaheed in 1903,

during the life of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, having accepted martyrdom in the face of the painful death through being stoned. The sacrifice of Hazrat Ameer Maulana Muhammad Ali and his companions having left Qadian in 1914 to preserve the teachings of the Promised Messiah. The sacrifice of being away from one's homeland and family that we see in the lives of our missionaries, such as Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, Hazrat Ameer Maulana Sadr-ud-Din, Imam Muzaffar Baig Sateh, Dr. Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah, Shaikh Muhammad Tufail, and Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi, amongst many others. Many of our families have suffered through loss of life and property in the anti-Ahmadiyya events of 1974 and the decades that have since followed.

We see people sacrificing their time, money, pleasure for worldly gain. The key to any success lies in sacrifice. Success can never be met with idle hands. It is therefore of utmost importance that we as a *Jama'at* ensure that we do not neglect this important duty of spreading Islam, so we can achieve success.

I conclude by stating the dictionary meaning of 'sacrifice'. It is 'to give up something of value for the sake of other considerations'. In my humble estimation, there is nothing more valued to us than our own life. See how much we endeavour to preserve it. I propose that we lay our lives by not merely losing it but by devoting our *lifetime* to the cause of Islam and this *Jama'at*. With the soul-searching sentiments I have expressed today, I hope this will stir you from deep within to consider contributing through your time, money and efforts to further this noble cause.

May Allah give *sabr* (patience) to my Bano aunt (wife of our martyr), my sister, Habiba (our *Shaheed's* daughter), and my Arjumand uncle (our *Imam's* dear friend and brother-in-law). May Allah give *sabr* to the entire family, friends and the UK *Jama'at*. *Aameen*.

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Letter by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to a follower explaining his claim

"We have no Book but the Holy Quran, no *rasul* but Muhammad *Mustafa*, and no religion but Islam."

In August 1899, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad wrote a letter to a follower of his to settle a disagreement between some of his followers regarding the use of the words *nabi* and *rasul* about him. This letter was also published at that time in the Ahmadiyya newspaper *Al-Hakam* by Maulvi Abdul Karim, a prominent Ahmadi religious scholar. The letter is dated 7 August 1899 and was published in *Al-Hakam* in its issue of 17 August 1899 (p. 6). Preceding the letter is an introduction by Maulvi Abdul Karim, in a part of which he

explains the reason for publishing it. In this introduction, Maulvi Abdul Karim warns followers of the Promised Messiah not to exaggerate his status. We translate his warning below. He writes:

“There is another very important matter to which I draw the attention of my friends. It is that they must always check the words they utter about the True *Imam*, the holy *Hazrat* [Mirza Ghulam Ahmad], and the beliefs they hold about him. This is a matter of having respect, and it is through showing respect that man attains success. The rank and status which God bestows upon someone is in reality a Divine gift. No other person has the right to exaggerate it or to find fault with it. What did the Christians gain by exaggeratedly praising Jesus, which someone following this path can expect to achieve?

I remember once one of our friends, who is deeply engrossed in the love of the *Imam*, said to him:

‘Why should we not consider you to be superior to the *Shaikhain* [i.e., Hazrat Abu Bakr and Umar], and nearer to the Holy Prophet?’

Hearing this, the holy *Hazrat’s* face changed colour, and he appeared to be entirely overcome by severe agitation and restlessness. ... He spoke for six full hours. ... All the time he dwelt on the praises and virtues granted to the Holy Prophet, and on his own dedication and servitude to the Holy Prophet, and on the qualities of the *Shaikhain*. He said:

‘It is a sufficient matter of pride for me that I am an admirer and servant of those people. The particular excellence which God granted them, no one will ever attain. Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him, cannot come back into the world to give anyone the same opportunity to serve him as the *Shaikhain* had.’

To conclude, when we are overcome by the emotions of love, we must always keep our tongues and hearts under the control and regulation of the true *Shariah*. ...

I copy below a letter by the holy Hazrat [Mirza Ghulam Ahmad] which he wrote to settle a dispute. Before he sent it, I obtained it from him for the benefit of our brothers, and I purposely omit the name and address of the person who is addressed in the letter, since it is the content that matters.”

We quote below this letter by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in English translation. We have placed some words in bold to draw particular attention to them.

“My dearly beloved brother,... *assalamu alaikum wa rahmatullah wa barakatu-hu*.

The situation is that, although for twenty years I have been constantly receiving Divine revelation in which the word *rasul* or *nabi* often occurred — as there is the revelation: ‘He it is Who sent His messenger (*rasul*) with guidance and the true religion’, and the revelation: ‘the champion of God in the mantle of the prophets’, and the revelation: ‘A prophet came into the world but the world accepted him not’, *

(* *Author’s note*: Another reading of this revelation is: ‘A warner (*nazir*) came into the world’, and this is the reading which was given in *Barahin Ahmadiyya*. To avoid creating dissension (*fitna*), the other reading was not given.)

and there are many such revelations in which the word *nabi* or *rasul* has occurred regarding myself — however, that person is mistaken who thinks that by this prophethood and messengership is meant real prophethood and messengership, by which the man concerned is called a ‘law giver’. In fact, by the word *rasul* is only meant ‘one sent by God’, and by the word *nabi* is only meant ‘one who makes prophecies’, having received intimation from God, or one who discloses hidden matters.

As these words, which are only in a metaphorical sense, create dissension (*fitna*) in Islam, leading to very bad consequences, these terms should not be used in our community’s common talk and everyday language.

It should be believed from the bottom of the heart that prophethood has terminated with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, as God Almighty says: ‘He is the Messenger of God and the *Khatam an-Nabiyyin*.’

To deny this verse, or to belittle it, is in fact to separate oneself from Islam. Just as the person who exceeds the limit in rejection is in a dangerous condition, likewise he too is in a dangerous condition who, like the Shiahs, exceeds the limit in acceptance.

It should be known that **God has ended all His prophethoods and messengerships with the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet**. I have come into the world, and have been sent into it, merely as a servant of the religion of Islam, and not to discard Islam and create some other religion. One must always protect oneself from being waylaid by the devils, and have true love for Islam, and must never forget the greatness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

However, in the terminology of Islam, *nabi* and *rasul* mean those who bring an entirely new Law (*Shariah*), or those who abrogate some aspects of the previous law, or those who are not called followers of a previous prophet, having a direct connection with God without benefit from a prophet. Therefore, one should be vigilant to see that the same meaning is not taken here, because **we have no Book but the Holy Quran, no *rasul* but**

Muhammad *Mustafa*, and no religion but Islam. We believe that our Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, is the last of the Prophets (*Khatam-ul-Anbiya*), and the Holy Quran is the last of the Books (*Khatam-ul-Kutub*). Religion should not be made into a children's game, and it should be remembered that I make no claim other than, and contrary to, that of being a servant of Islam. The person who ascribes to me the contrary is making a fabrication against me. We receive grace and blessings through our Holy Prophet, and receive the benefit of knowledge from the Quran.

It is, therefore, pertinent that no person should entertain anything in his heart contrary to this direction, or else he shall be answerable for it before God. If we are not servants of Islam, then all our work is in vain and rejected, and shall be called to account."

The Urdu text of this letter was published over the years in some of our Lahore Ahmadiyya literature; for example, *Mujaddid-i Azam* (vol. 1, pp. 647–649), and *An-Nubuwwat fil-Islam* (pp. 195–197 in the first edition). However, comparing these with the original publication in *Al-Hakam*, 17 August 1899, I found that we had made a small but significant omission. In the statement:

"... we have no Book but the Holy Quran, no *rasul* but Muhammad *Mustafa*, and no religion but Islam",

the middle words, "no *rasul* but Muhammad *Mustafa*", had been omitted in our Lahore Ahmadiyya literature. In Urdu text the full wording is:

ہماری کتاب بجز قرآن کریم کے نہیں ہے اور ہمارا کوئی رسول بجز محمد مصطفیٰ ﷺ کے نہیں ہے اور ہمارا کوئی دین بجز اسلام کے نہیں ہے

Our standpoint becomes even stronger, much stronger in fact, by these accidentally omitted words. The other parts of this statement, that is, "we have no Book but the Holy Quran, and no religion but Islam", can even be made by those who believe Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to be a prophet (namely, the Qadiani *Jama'at*, led today by Mirza Masroor Ahmad). But the part that we have "no *rasul* but Muhammad *Mustafa*" is a clear contradiction of their belief.

To whom was this latter addressed?

In his introductory note to this letter, Maulvi Abdul Karim wrote, as quoted above:

"I purposely omit the name and address of the person who is addressed in the letter, since it is the content that matters."

This letter is included in the collection of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's letters published

by the Qadiani *Jama'at* under the title *Matkubat-i Ahmad*. (See *Matkubat-i Ahmad*, new edition, published 2008, volume 2, letter no. 46, pages 248–249.) From there, we see that the letter was addressed to Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan of Malerkotla (d. 1945), a prominent follower of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. After the Split in the Ahmadiyya Movement in 1914, he was in the Qadiani *Jama'at* with those who believed Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to be a prophet. He was also a son-in-law of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

This letter shows that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad explained most clearly, to people and general and his followers in particular, the very guarded and cautious use he made of the words 'prophet' (*nabî*) and 'messenger' (*rasul*) as these apply to him. He explicitly prohibited his followers from using these words about him in a carefree and casual manner in their "common talk and everyday language" because that would cause "*fitna* in Islam, leading to very bad consequences". His fear and warning of creating a *fitna* in Islam has been entirely fulfilled by the loose and unrestrained use of these words about him by members of the Qadiani *Jama'at*.

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## **Mercy, not malice, towards all others on earth**

### **No blood-shedding, violent Mahdi is to come**

#### **by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad**

(Note: We quote a section below from the book *Kashf-ul-Ghita* by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, published in December 1898. His rejection of the concept of the coming of a war-waging Mahdi, and his exhortations to Muslims to show mercy and compassion to all those on earth, provide the right solution to the very serious problems Muslims face all over the world today.)

It is worth remembering that the ancient sects of the Muslims are awaiting a Mahdi who would be a descendant of Fatimah, the mother of Husain. They also await a Messiah who will join this Mahdi to fight battles against the opponents of Islam. However, I have emphasised that all such ideas are fanciful, false and untrue. Those who entertain such ideas are greatly in error. The existence of such a Mahdi, which is firmly fixed in the hearts of the Muslims due to foolishness and misunderstanding, is imaginary. The truth is that no Mahdi will come from among the progeny of Fatimah, and all such reports in the *Hadith* to this effect are weak, unfounded and fabricated, probably concocted during the Abbasid period of rule. The true and correct position is only this: that there is mention of a person to come bearing the name *ʿĪsā* (Jesus), peace be upon him, who will neither fight battles nor shed blood, but he will turn the hearts of the people towards the truth with humbleness, lowliness, gentleness, and convincing arguments.

Accordingly, God has informed me through clear words and signs that I am that man. He has shown signs from heaven in my confirmation. He has made known to me secrets of the unseen and matters of the future, and has bestowed upon me deep knowledge which the world did not know.

My belief that a blood-shedding Mahdi will not appear in the world is different from the belief of all other Muslims, and I have declared this belief to all my followers and to hundreds of thousands of people in general. This contradicts the expectations of the Muslims. Their beliefs were undoubtedly of the kind which stir up savage feelings in man and throw him away from civilised and decent behaviour. Anyone who ponders can realise that a person holding such beliefs is a dangerous person. Therefore, God, Who is Merciful and Compassionate, laid the basis of peace and harmony through my advent. He has washed the hearts of my followers from these preposterous beliefs just as clothes are washed with soap. This is the reason why these people bear hostility towards me. What has happened here is what happened in the case of the Jews when, contrary to their expectations, Jesus did not come as a ruler, nor did he fight battles against other nations. The Jews started persecuting him and declared that he was not the one they were awaiting.

Of course, there are other differences of belief as well. One is that these people believe that as Muslims they must bear malice towards non-Muslims as much as possible, and if the opportunity should arise, they must cause them harm as well. But I say that it is impossible for a person to be a Muslim unless he exercises the same sympathy towards others as he does towards himself. My teaching is that you must purify your hearts and show compassion to the whole of humanity, and wish no harm for anyone, for this is the height of civilised behaviour. It is a matter of regret that these people are so highly desirous of seeking vengeance upon other nations. But I say that you should show forgiveness and forbearance, and be not those who bear malice or show hypocrisy. Show mercy to those on earth so that mercy may be shown to you from heaven.

These are not mere words of mine, but I have demonstrated it in practice. I have never wished to do harm to one who intends to do harm to me. For instance, Dr Clarke accused me of instigating his murder, but this could not be proved in a court of law; on the contrary, the evidence was found to be against it. Then the Magistrate of District Gurdaspur, Captain Douglas, asked me if I wanted to take legal action against Dr Clarke, but I, without any reservation, said: No. In fact, I even declined to take legal action against those Christians who were determined by the investigation of the court to be guilty of wrongdoing against me. If forgiveness and forbearance had not been my principle, then after undergoing so much pain at their hands I would most certainly have taken legal action against them.

Similarly, when Muslims of this locality, acting through the Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam Lahore, sought to have the author of the booklet *Ummahat-ul-Mu'minin* punished,<sup>1</sup> and they sent numerous petitions to the Governor of this province to this effect, expressing their deep outrage, even at that time, I sent a memorial against them. I clearly wrote that we seek no retribution whatsoever from the author of *Ummahat-ul-Mu'minin*; however, it is our duty to write a sensible refutation.

Thus, there has always been a difference between me and these people and their religious leaders in these matters. They are greatly shocked by this, but I bear them no enmity. In any case, I believe them to be deservant of pity, and who is more deservant of pity than the one who abandons the path of truth and right? (*Ruhani Khaza'in*, v. 14, p. 193–195)

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Can a woman recite the Holy Quran during menstruation?

Whereas Muslims in general consider it prohibited for a woman to recite, or even to hold, the Quran while having menstruation, the right answer to this question has been provided by Maulana Muhammad Ali in his Urdu commentary of *Sahih Bukhari*. In Bukhari's Book of Menstruation (Book 6), chapter 7 has the following heading:

“A menstruating woman should complete all the rites of the *Hajj* except making circuits of the Kabah.”

Under this heading there is a lengthy note in which some views of Muslims of the earliest generations are quoted by Bukhari. At three points, Maulana Muhammad Ali has added his own comment as a footnote as follows.

1. Bukhari's note begins as follows:

“Ibrahim said: There is no harm that she should read verses of the Quran, and Ibn Abbas did not see any harm in a person under obligation of a bath reciting the Quran. The Prophet, may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him, used to remember Allah during all his time. Umm Atiyyah said: We were instructed that we should take out the menstruating women and they should call out *Allahu Akbar* along with the men calling out the same; and that they should call upon Allah.”

¹ *Ummahat-ul-Mu'minin* was a bitterly abusive book written by a local Christian in British India in 1897, using the most vile language against the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his wives. The author of this book then sent one thousand copies of it free to the leading Muslim figures of India to injure their religious sentiments.

Maulana Muhammad Ali writes under this:

“This means that, except those particular rites that are clearly mentioned in the *Hadith*, a menstruating woman, or a man or woman under obligation of a bath, can attend all other affairs of religion. Thus, a person can recite the Quran even without being in the state of purity required for saying the prescribed prayers, and from the opinion of Ibn Abbas it has been concluded here that this also applies to a woman in menstruation. Such women are particularly to be present in the *Eid* congregation and call out *Allahu Akbar*.”

2. Bukhari’s note continues:

“Ibn Abbas said: Abu Sufyan informed me that Heraclius sent for the letter of the Prophet, may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him, and read it, and in it was: ‘In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful,’ and: ‘O People of the Book, come to an equitable word between us and you, that we shall not serve none but Allah and that we shall not set up any partner with Him’ till the end of the verse (the Quran, 3:64).”

Maulana Muhammad Ali writes under this:

“As for reading from the Quran, the Holy Prophet did not consider even the unbelievers, who are not in the state of purity for the observance of any rite of Islam, to be unworthy of reading it. In his letters to the various rulers of unbelieving people of the time, he quoted verses of the Quran which were obviously intended to be read by the recipients of the letters. Hence it cannot be impermissible for a Muslim woman in menstruation or a Muslim under obligation of bath to read the Quran.”

3. Bukhari’s note continues as follows to its end:

“Ata reported from Jabir that Aishah started menstruating and she performed all the rites of *Hajj* except making circuits of the Kabah, and she did not observe the prayer. Al-Hakam said: I used to slaughter (animals) while I would be under obligation of a bath, while Allah the Mighty and Glorious has said: ‘And do not eat of that on which Allah’s name has not been mentioned’ (6:121).”

Maulana Muhammad Ali writes under this:

“As it is allowed for a man under obligation of bath to slaughter an animal for meat, for which act one has to mention the name of God, it is concluded that the reciting of the Quran in this state is permissible.”

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## Does only Allah, *and no human*, know the interpretation of certain verses of the Quran?

There is a verse in the Holy Quran, the beginning of which is translated along the following lines:

“He it is Who has revealed the Book to you (O Prophet); some of its verses are decisive (*muḥkamāt*), they are the basis of the Book, and others are allegorical (*mutashābihāt*). Then those in whose hearts there is perversity follow the part of it which is allegorical, seeking to mislead, and seeking to give it interpretation (*ta’wīl*)” (3:7).

The word *muḥkamāt* may also be rendered as “clear”, “definitive”, or “having an established meaning”, while the word *mutashābihāt* may also be rendered as “metaphorical”, or “symbolical”. The next words of this verse are generally translated as follows:

“but none knows its interpretation (*ta’wīl*) except Allah. And those firmly rooted in knowledge say: We believe in it, it is all from our Lord.”

The meaning of this statement is generally taken to be that no human knows, or can know, the interpretation of the allegorical verses; only Allah and no one else knows it. Those who possess firm knowledge merely express their belief that these verses are from Allah.

However, this part is translated by Maulana Muhammad Ali as follows:

“And none knows its interpretation save Allah, and those firmly rooted in knowledge. They say: We believe in it, it is all from our Lord.”

As can be seen, the translators in general place a pause after “but Allah”, and begin a new sentence starting “And those who are firmly rooted in knowledge say:”. However, Maulana Muhammad Ali has joined the two, so that the meaning becomes: no one knows the interpretation except Allah *and* those firmly rooted in knowledge.

Some traditionally-minded Muslim scholars, for example Abul Hasan Ali Nadawi, have criticised Maulana Muhammad Ali for giving “rationalistic” and novel explanations of certain verses of the Quran, in order to make them conform to modern Western thought, which are contrary to the meanings that have always been accepted by Muslims since the beginning of Islam. According to these critics, the Quran states that only Allah knows the interpretation of the *mutashābihāt* verses, and no human can ever know them, but Maulana Muhammad Ali has contradicted this in order to “modernise” the Quran.

However, we find that Maulana Muhammad Ali's view, that humans can know the interpretation of the *mutashābihāt* verses, is supported by authoritative classical sources of Islam. In *Sahih Bukhari*, there is a comment in connection with this verse which states about the *mutashābihāt* verses that:

“and those firmly rooted in knowledge know its interpretation” (Book: *Tafsīr*, ch. 2 on *Sūrah Āl-i ‘Imrān*, heading above *hadith* 4547).

In the *Hadith* collection *Ibn Majah*, there is a report from Ibn Abbas as follows:

“The Messenger of Allah embraced me and said: O Allah, teach him wisdom and the interpretation (*ta’wīl*) of the Book” (*Ibn Mājah*, Book 1, ch. 11, *hadith* 166).

In the famous classical commentary of the Quran by Ibn Kathir, under this verse Ibn Abbas is quoted as follows:

“I am among ‘those firmly rooted in knowledge’ who know its interpretation.”

Ibn Kathir also tells us that some people consider that there is a pause after the words “except Allah”, the meaning being that none but Allah knows the interpretation, while others do not pause here but place the pause after “those firmly rooted in knowledge”. Ibn Kathir adds that “most commentators of the Qur’ān and those who adhere to principles” follow the second opinion, and their argument is that “to address people with what they cannot understand is not befitting”. In other words, while Allah has perfect knowledge which no human can attain in full, *it is not worthy of Allah* to have revealed certain verses whose meaning can only be known to Allah, and is impossible to be known to humans whose duty is merely to acknowledge belief in those verses.

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