

The Creation of Pakistan and role of the Lahore Ahmadiyya

Friday Khutba by Dr Zahid Aziz, for Lahore Ahmadiyya UK, 13 August 2021

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يُقَوْمِ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ أَنْبِيَاءَ وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُلُوكًا وَآتَاكُمْ مَا لَمْ يُؤْتِ أَحَدًا مِّنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾

“And when Moses said to his people: My people, remember the favour of Allah to you when He raised prophets among you and made you kings and gave you what He did not give to any other of the nations.” — ch. 5, v. 20

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ

“Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will surely make them rulers in the earth as He made those before them rulers ...” — ch. 24, v. 55

When God revealed to Moses the great law and the moral and social teachings for the Israelites, Moses was also given the promise by God that after him prophets and kings will be raised in his nation. The Quran refers to this promise in the first verse above. Then the Quran gives the same promise to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, that, as had happened with the Israelites before the Muslims, Muslims too would acquire rulership or *khilafat* in the world. And this rulership would be both spiritual and worldly. The first verse mentions both these aspects when Moses says to his community that God will raise prophets among you and also make you kings. In case of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, prophets cannot come after him. Among Muslims, instead of prophets, it is *auliya* who come and provide spiritual leadership. And just as God also granted kingship and worldly rule to the Israelites, the *khilafat* promised to Muslims in the second verse includes rule over countries as well.

Let us, however, remember that when the followers of Moses complained to him

that they were constantly under persecution and powerless he said to them: “It may be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you successors [or rulers] in the land, then He will **see how you act.**” — ch. 7, v. 129. There is a similar verse which is said to apply to followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad: “Then We made you successors in the land after them [i.e., after the earlier religious communities], so that We might **see how you act.**” —ch. 10, v. 14. The ending words of both verses are the same. They mean that the granting of rule is a test and a trial, and God will give His judgment on the test depending on how the people act when they are given the rule and power. When God gives you power and rule and conquest as **His favour**, whether you are Israelites or Muslims, it is not a licence and freedom to behave in any way you like. God will hold you accountable for your exercise of power and can take it away from you.

About ninety years ago, when the Indian subcontinent was under British rule the British government started discussing handing over its rule to Indian political parties. Muslims had in mind that God had promised to them rule in the land and that, before British rule, they had themselves ruled over large parts of the Indian subcontinent. The party representing Muslims, the Muslim League, proposed that those provinces in India which had a Muslim majority should be formed into a state with its own government, and this could be a self-governing part within an independent India. Later this proposal was changed into a demand for an independent Muslim state called Pakistan. The Muslim League was supported in this demand by most Muslim groups, but some Muslims opposed it and were against the creation of a state like Pakistan.

Our Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement wholeheartedly and passionately supported the campaign for the creation of Pakistan. However, our Movement, unlike many Muslim movements and sects, **does not believe** that the goal and aim of Islam is that Muslims should gain political power and create an Islamic state, and that Muslims can only practise Islam properly if they live under an Islamic state which enforces the laws of Islam on them. The reason why our Movement supported the creation of Pakistan was **not** that it believed that Muslims would necessarily be better Muslims just by living in an Islamic state. What it believed was that, by creating such a country, Muslims would

have the opportunity to present a model of the true teachings of Islam relating to society, economics and state organisation. Also it believed that this state would use its resources for the propagation of Islam to the world on a large scale, the work which the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement could only do on a small scale.

The reason why the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement believed that Pakistan could be a model of true Islamic teachings was that the leaders of the Pakistan Movement were influenced to a great extent by the interpretation of Islam presented by the Lahore Ahmadiyya. A common principle of agreement between them was that the picture of Islam preached by the general Ulama, on many important issues, was based on the misinterpretations and outdated explanations contained in the centuries-old books of Islamic law or *Fiqh*. These wrong interpretations, which the Ulama treated as the actual teachings of Islam, were contrary to the principles laid down in the Quran. These issues related mainly to whether Islam grants freedom of religion to people, its teachings on how to treat non-Muslims, what is *jihad*, the rights of women, and *whether* Islam consists of rules imposed by the state which people obey outwardly *or if* Islam consists of teachings which people follow out of their inner belief and strong desire, because those teachings appeal to their hearts and minds.

You have to remember that when the campaign for the creation of Pakistan was going on, and in fact in the early years after its creation, the Lahore Ahmadiyya leaders were regarded by many Muslims as being a part of the leadership of the whole Muslim community. This was because of the Lahore Ahmadiyya work of the propagation of Islam. Maulana Muhammad Ali's English translation of the Quran was considered as the *Muslim* English translation of the Quran. The Working Muslim Mission and the Berlin Mission were the Muslim missions in the West, which represented Muslims as a whole. The Lahore Ahmadiyya leaders, notably Maulana Muhammad Ali, Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, Dr Mirza Yaqub Baig and others, were friends of the prominent national Muslim leaders such as Jinnah, Iqbal and Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar, and were respected by them.

The Pakistan Movement held a very different view of Islam from the traditional

established Muslim religious leadership or what later became known as ‘fundamentalists’. The Pakistan Movement rejected their sectarianism and their narrow-minded concepts of an intolerant Islamic state with Islamic laws based on centuries-old interpretations. Many Pakistan Movement leaders wanted new interpretations of Islamic laws to be drawn up, based on the principles of the Quran and the example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and taking into account modern world conditions and problems. That was the work of reform that the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement was doing. In particular, Maulana Muhammad Ali in his book *The Religion of Islam* had given a picture of many enlightened interpretations of the kind I have mentioned, interpretations which remove the problems created by the ideas taught by the Ulama to the Muslim public.

Let me give you an example. In 1928, the British government of India proposed a law to set a minimum age of marriage for boys and girls, prohibiting marriage of someone before they had reached that minimum age. This was to abolish child marriages which was a custom among Hindus but many Muslims followed it as well. The Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement was fully in support of such a law and in fact it wanted even higher age limits than those proposed by the government. Maulana Muhammad Ali wrote an article in which he showed that the Quran clearly requires that, at the time of marriage, the people getting married should have attained “maturity of intellect” (see *The Light*, 5 July 1928). But the general Ulama rose up in opposition against the proposed law, claiming that according to Islam the marriage of a minor is allowed.

The Pakistan Movement, led by the Muslim League, claimed that Muslims constitute a nation with an identity so that they can form a state based on their values. Therefore they had to make clear: (1) Who is a Muslim, and (2) What are the religious values according to which they will organise their state institutions and society? On the first point, they could hardly claim that Muslims constitute a nation if they cannot identify and define a member of that nation! The Pakistan Movement held to the widest definition of a Muslim. This definition was that a Muslim is one who belongs to the Muslim community culturally and in his life-style, and identifies himself as a

member of the Muslim community. Such a person does not need to pass a test set by the *Ulama* about his beliefs to check whether these are correct and conform to Islam. Regarding the second point, the Pakistan Movement looked to their proposed new country as one which would be inspired by the spirit of Islam — by its principles of equality, brotherhood, democracy, accountability of rulers, and social justice. It believed in a liberal, progressive and tolerant picture of Islam, which was broadly the same as the picture presented by the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement.

The orthodox Muslim religious leadership, including the followers of Maulana Maudoodi's *Jamaat-I Islami*, were bitterly opposed to the Pakistan Movement before the creation of Pakistan. They called the leaders of the Pakistan Movement as *kafir*. They poked fun at their definition of a Muslim and said that what the Pakistan Movement are defining as Muslims are merely *nasli* Muslims, or 'born Muslims', and not *asli* Muslims or 'real Muslims'. It is a great irony of history that, from the 1970s onwards, these very groups who were opponents of the creation of Pakistan became highly influential in the running of Pakistan, so much so that some governments of the country had to bow to their demands while other governments were directly under their control. Those who opposed the creation of Pakistan became its caretakers, claiming that Pakistan was founded in order to have an Islamic state of the kind they want to see — where there is no religious tolerance, apostasy and blasphemy are punished by death, Muslim minorities and non-Muslims face ethnic cleansing at the hands of mobs, and women are deprived of their social and legal rights.

We pray that may Allah restore that Pakistan which was envisaged by its founders — *Ameen*.

بَارِكْ اللَّهُ لَنَا وَنَاوَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ، وَنَفَعْنَا وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِالْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ، إِنَّهُ تَعَالَى جَوَادٌ كَرِيمٌ
مَلِكٌ بَرٌّ رَوْفٌ رَحِيمٌ-