



THE LIGHT

MONTHLY

FEBRUARY, 1991.

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL'S REVEALING SPEECH ABOUT THE EFFIGIES OF GOG AND MAGOG AT THE GUILDHALL, LONDON IN 1951

“On the one side is Gog, and on the other Magog. But be careful, my Lord Mayor, when you put them back to keep them from colliding with each other, for if that happens, both Gog and Magog would be smashed to atoms and we would all have to begin all over again – and begin from the bottom of the pit.

“What is the world scene as presented to us to-day? Mighty forces, armed with fearful weapons, are baying at each other across a gulf which, I have the feeling to-night, neither wishes and both fear to cross, but into which they may tumble and drag each other to their common ruin.

“On the one side stand all the armies and air forces of Soviet Russia and all their Communist satellites, agents, and devotees in so many countries. On the other are what are called “the Western democracies” with their far superior resources, at present only partly organised, gather themselves together around the United States with its possession of the mastery of the atomic bomb.” — (See p. 7)

THE ANTICHRIST, GOG AND MAGOG

“It is a remarkable coincidence that whereas in the world today European powers are pressing forward with a determined programme of action against the world of Islam and are restlessly anxious to hold an absolute sway over it, we find on the other hand a large number of prophecies of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that speak of trials and tribulations that were to befall the Muslims in the latter days – prophecies that almost find literal fulfilment in the trend of events *vis-a-vis* the Muslim world before us. It is all the more astonishing that these prophecies were recorded at a time when temporally Islam was predominant, and the whole world was trembling before its onward advance. It is an open secret that there is a terrible warfare at the moment between Europe and Islam, or to put it more correctly between the material and spiritual forces. Christian Europe regards the power of Islam to be an awful menace to its material civilization, and on this false apprehension is bent on crushing it out of existence and thus saving the world from its political influence. Its religious section has declared it quite openly that whereas other religions are non-Christian, Islam is definitely anti-Christian. And although the Christian missionaries are found active in every quarter of the globe, preaching to all kinds of people, their special objective is the Muslim community.”

Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali, *Antichrist, Gog and Magog*. (See p. 1)

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Hazrat Ameer Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan Sahib

By the grace of Allah, Hazrat Ameer Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan Sahib is keeping fairly good health and is attending to the work of the Anjuman as usual.

Let us pray for the health and long life of Hazrat Ameer! May the Jama'at, with the blessings of Allah and under the guidance of Hazrat Ameer make further progress!

Brother Abdul Razak left for Bombay

Brother Abdul Razak and his wife left for Bombay by train on 10th February. He came to Lahore on 22nd December, 1990 to attend the Annual Prayer Gathering. He also attended the meeting of the International Consultative Committee held on 29th December, 1990. May Allah keep this devoted and energetic brother in health.

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THE ANTICHRIST, GOG AND MAGOG PROPHECIES IN THE HOLY QUR'AN AND HADITH

The subject dealt with in this chapter is generally considered as relating to eschatology or the end of things, but this impression seems to be the result of Christian influence on Muslim thought. Islamic prophecies of the appearance of the Antichrist and of the predominance of Gog and Magog represent an aspect of the conflict of the spiritual and material forces, of the struggle of truth against falsehood, in which the spiritual forces are represented as being subjugated only temporarily, but as a result of which there would be a general spiritual awakening in the world and truth will ultimately shine in its full resplendence and prevail in the whole world.

Misunderstanding as to the significance of the prophecies referred to above exists not only among non-Muslims but among Muslims as well. In fact, these prophecies are the most misunderstood part of the Islamic religious literature, and some of the best intellects of Islam, being unable to discover the underlying significance, have gone to the extent of declaring all hadith relating to these prophecies as unreliable or fabrications of a later age. As a matter of fact, not only have many of these hadith been accepted by the most reliable collectors of hadith, such as Bukhari and Muslim, but similar prophecies are met with in the Qur'an itself. The reliability of such hadith is, therefore, beyond all doubt. But what is more, fulfilment of these prophecies shines out so clearly in the light of the events that are taking place before our eyes that what was considered to be the darkest spot of Islam forms now its brightest feature.

The need for discussion about the Antichrist and Gog and Magog

It is a remarkable coincidence that whereas in the world today European powers are pressing forward with a determined programme of action against the world of Islam and are restlessly anxious to hold an absolute sway over it, we find on the other hand a large number of prophecies of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that speak of trials and tribulations that were to befall the Muslims in the latter days — prophecies that almost find literal fulfilment in the trend of events *vis-a-vis* the Muslim world before us. It is all the more astonishing that these prophecies were

recorded at a time when temporally Islam was predominant, and the whole world was trembling before its onward advance. It is an open secret that there is a terrible warfare at the moment between Europe and Islam, or to put it more correctly between the material and spiritual forces. Christian Europe regards the power of Islam to be an awful menace to its material civilization, and on this false apprehension is bent on crushing it out of existence and thus saving the world from its political influence. Its religious section has declared it quite openly that whereas other religions are non-Christian, Islam is definitely anti-Christian. And although the Christian missionaries are found active in every quarter of the globe, preaching to all kinds of people, their special objective is the Muslim community.

The feats of Dajjal and the astonishing adventures of Gog and Magog are no mere fanciful stories but are a portrayal of a faithful picture of the irresistible inroads of materialistic Europe and the Christianity of our own days, which the Hadith literature has drawn in prophetic language. That great seer, the greatest seer this world has produced, the Prophet Muhammad, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), has so vividly described events that were to happen 1300 years after him that one would think he was seeing them happening before his very eyes. In view of these clear prophetic warnings of the Holy Prophet, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), it becomes the imperative duty of every Muslim to give thought to those hadith which speak of the latter-day struggle of Christianity and Islam, and forget their own differences on small and secondary points, because the very existence and success of Islam in the world depends on the sequel to the contest of the two religions that are before us and of which these hadith speak, and not on those small matters, variations in which do not constitute any very great benefit or loss to the Muslims.

The significance of the Dajjal and Gog and Magog

The mention of Dajjal occurs repeatedly in hadith, whereas Gog and Magog are mentioned not only in Hadith but also in the Qur'an and the appearance of both is connected with the advent of the Messiah. The word *Dajjal* is derived from *dajala*,

which means *he covered* (a thing). The *Lisan al-'Arab* gives several views why Dajjal is so called. One view is that he is so called on account of his being a liar and covering or concealing the truth with falsehood; another that he will cover the earth with the largeness of his numbers; a third that he will cover the people with unbelief; a fourth that he will spread over and cover the whole earth. Still another view is that Dajjal is a community that will carry about its merchandise all over the world, *i.e.*, it will cover the earth with its articles of trade. Finally there is the view that Dajjal has been given this name because he will say things which are contrary to what is in his mind, *i.e.* he will cover his real intentions with false words.

Ya'juj (Gog) and *Ma'juj* (Magog) are derived from *ajj* or *ajij* in the forms of *yaf'ul* and *maf'ul* and *ajij* means *the flaming of fire*. But *ajja* also means *asra'a* *i.e.* *he walked fast*. This is the meaning given in the *Lisan al-'Arab*. Imam Raghīb says that *Ya'juj* and *Ma'juj* have been compared to the flaming fire and surging water because of their intense agitation.

The Dajjal and Gog and Magog in the light of the Qur'an

The word Dajjal does not occur in the Qur'an, but it is mentioned in authentic hadith that the first and the last ten verses of the chapter entitled *The Cave* afford protection from the trials of Dajjal, and the Qur'an, read in the light of these hadith, thus gives the clue to what Dajjal is. The following reports occurring in the most reliable works on Hadith bear on this point: *Whoever commits to memory the first ten verses of the chapter entitled The Cave will be immune from (the trials of) Dajjal.*¹ *Whoever recites the last ten verses of the chapter entitled The Cave will be safe from the trials of Dajjal.*²

Maybe in mentioning the first and last ten verses, the object is to refer to the whole chapter which describes the trials of Christianity in its two aspects — one religious and the other temporal. Read the first and the last ten verses, and it is clear as day-light that it is the Christian nations that are spoken of in both places. In the very beginning, the religious aspect is mentioned when the Holy Prophet, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is first spoken of as giving a general warning to all mankind,³ and then as warning the Christian nations in particular,⁴ people who have taken a son of God. Thus: *Praise be to Allah! Who revealed the Book to His servant. . . . to give warning of severe punishment from Him. . . . And warn those who say Allah has taken a son.*⁵

This is a clear reference to the Christian nations, the basic doctrine of whose religion is that God has a

Son. In the concluding ten verses, there is as clear a reference to the temporal achievements of these very nations: *Do those who disbelieve think that they can take My servants to be friends besides Me? . . . Say: Shall We inform you of the greatest losers in respect of deeds? Those whose effort goes astray in this world's life and they are making good manufactures.*⁶

This is a prophetic portrait of the Western nations in the clearest words. Manufacture is the one speciality and pride of the Christian nations, and it is to this distinguishing characteristic that the above verses refer. They are so engrossed in the race of manufacturing goods that the higher values of life are entirely screened away from their eyes. Manufacture and more manufacture — this is the be-all and end-all of life with them. Thus both the first ten verses and the last ten verses of this chapter clearly speak of the tribulations of the Christian doctrine of sonship and the materialistic activities of the Christian nations, and this is what is meant by the trials of Dajjal.

Gog and Magog (*Ya'juj* and *Ma'juj*) are mentioned twice in the Qur'an. Once they are mentioned in the eighteenth chapter in association with the description of Dajjal. Towards the end of this chapter, a great potentate, Dhu-l-Qarnain, is spoken of as undertaking journeys in different directions to fortify the frontiers of his empire. This potentate is historically proved to be Darius I, the emperor of Persia. His first journey is spoken of as terminating on the Black Sea: *Until when he reached the setting place of the sun (or the western-most point), he found it going down into a black sea.*⁷

Then there is a reference to his eastern journey: *Until when he reached the (land of) the rising sun, he found it rising on a people to whom We had given no shelter from it.*⁸

Still further there is a reference to his northern journey: *Until when he reached (a place) between the two mountains.*⁹

The reference here is to the mountains of Armenia and Azarbaijan. . . .

The Dajjal and Gog and Magog are identical

Immediately after speaking of Gog and Magog fighting with each other in verse 102, the account reverts to the subject of Dajjal: *Do those who disbelieve think that they can take My servants to be friends besides Me?*

This shows that the Qur'an identifies Dajjal with Gog and Magog. They are given two different names

because of their two different functions. As for the identity of Gog and Magog, the commentators differ. Ibn Kathir says that they are descendants of Adam, and this view is supported by the hadith in *Muslim* and *Bukhari*. According to *Ruh al-Ma'ani*, they are two tribes from among the descendants of Noah's sons Japheth, of whom the Turks form a part, being so called because they were left (*turiku*) on the other side of the wall. Moreover, the Qur'an's own description shows clearly that they are human beings, to ward off whose invasions the wall was constructed.

The second reference to Gog and Magog occurs in 21:96: *Even when Gog and Magog are let loose and they sally forth from every elevated place.*¹⁰

Sallying forth from every elevated place evidently means that they will establish their supremacy all over the world. The way the Qur'an speaks of them in both the places shows that a time will come when these people will overpower all the nations of the world. It also appears that they already existed at the time of the revelation of the Book, but that their movements were to remain checked until a certain time, after which they would wield uncontrolled authority in the whole world.

The reason why the Qur'an does not mention Dajjal

It may, however, be asked that if Dajjal and Gog and Magog are merely two different names for the same people, why is it that while the Qur'an mentions Gog and Magog by name, it does not mention Dajjal by name anywhere. The reason is that the word Dajjal, as shown above, means a "liar" or a "fraud"; and no one, howsoever great a liar and a cheat he may be, likes to be called by this epithet. Gog and Magog, on the other hand, being the names of the people concerned, no one can take exception to this name. In fact, the English people have installed statues of Gog and Magog in front of the Guildhall in London. That is why the Qur'an uses the names Gog and Magog and not the word Dajjal which means a liar. The Books of Hadith, on the other hand, use the word *Dajjal*, because the name Antichrist (*Dajjal*), as also the prophecies relating thereto are met with in the older Scriptures. It was felt necessary, accordingly, to explain in what manner these prophecies were to be fulfilled.

Besides, the word Dajjal indicates only one aspect of the question, *viz.*, the lies and deceptions of these people, whether it be in matters religious or in matters worldly. But apart from this dark side of their character, there are bright sides of it as well. From the worldly point of view, their material prosperity must be regarded as one of their good points.

It is in view of this that in hadith, one eye, the worldly eye, of Dajjal has been described as a shining star. The Qur'an also speaks of their skill in manufacture. Thus the epithet Dajjal is only a partial description. In the Holy Qur'an, the Christian nations are spoken of as *People of the Cave and Inscription*.¹¹ This description covers both the aspects of the history of Christianity. "The people of the Cave" is an appropriate description of the followers of Christianity in its early history, since monasticism was the predominating feature of Christianity at this stage. They had completely renounced the affairs of the world for their devotional practices. In other words, they had discarded the world for the sake of their religion. The last stage, however, is well described by the expression "People of the Inscription (*raqim*)."
Raqam in Arabic means a *thing written*. This word is particularly used in respect of prices written on articles of trade, like cloth etc. This description indicates their deep absorption in matters of the world, a fact referred to further in the Qur'an by the words, *those whose effort goes astray in this world's life*.¹² Thus, if in the first stage of their history the Christian peoples renounced the world for the sake of their religion, in the final stage they have totally discarded religion in the interests of the world, and hence they are spoken of as "of Our wonderful signs".¹³ The Qur'anic words quoted above are an appropriate description of their materialistic tendencies. And since they are far in advance of all other nations in matters worldly, the nations of the world, tempted by the worldly advantages secured by these people, have been following them blindly. Thus the Christian nations are misleading the people of the world not only by their false religious ideas of sonship and atonement but also by their blind pursuit of materialistic ideals to the total neglect of the higher values of life. They are therefore given the name of Dajjal, or arch-deceiver, in the Hadith.

Gog and Magog in the light of the Bible

In the Bible, Gog and Magog are mentioned in very clear terms, and no doubt is left as to their identity:

"And the word of the Lord came unto me saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief Prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him: And say, thus saith The Lord God, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thine jaws..."¹⁴

Here Gog is mentioned clearly and this Gog is the same as *Ya'juj* of the Qur'an. He is spoken of as being the chief of Russia, Moscow and Tubal. And as

for Magog (Ma'uj), only the land of Magog is spoken of.

The three names mentioned in the Bible are Rosh or Russia (Rus), Meshech or Moscow, and Tubal or Tobalsk. While Russia is the name of the country, Omask and Tubal are the names of two rivers to the north of mount Caucasus. On the former is situated Moscow, and on the latter Tobalsk, both these being the most famous cities of Russia. In view of the clearness of the description, no doubt whatsoever is left as to the identity of Gog.

Gog is thus clearly Russia, the habitat of the Slavonic people. And as for Magog, it is of the same land. So, while on the one hand, Gog is spoken of as the chief or master of Russia, on the other he is described as living in the land of Magog. Now the population of the land in which Russia is situated, *i.e.*, Europe, consists of two main races, Slavs and Teutons. The latter includes the British and the Germans. This clearly shows not only that Gog is the name of the Eastern nations of Europe, but also that Magog is the name of the Western nations of that continent, *i.e.* the nations known as Teutons. It is also clear that in the beginning both these races lived in the same land. Maybe, Gog and Magog were the names or titles of the first ancestors of these two races. Evidence of this is found in the fact that from very ancient times the statues of Gog and Magog are found installed in front of the famous Guildhall of London. If these names had nothing to do with the ancestors of these people, why should their statues be installed in the manner before the chief assembly house of the nation?

The reference to these as given in the Bible, together with the historical evidence as furnished by these statues in London, establishes it with utmost certainty that Gog and Magog are no fictitious names but are the names of two races which inhabit the Continent of Europe and which together cover the whole of its land surface. In view of these clear indications as to the identity of these people, only one meaning can be attached to the Quranic description of them, that they would sally forth from every place of advantage; and this means that Europe will wield supreme authority over the whole surface of the globe. Nay, the expression *kulli hadab-in*,¹⁵ *i.e. every place of advantage*, shows that their supremacy will not only be in the physical but also in the intellectual sphere, and the other people of the world will be their slaves not only in body but also mentally. The Qur'an thus gives us a true picture of the political and cultural dominance of Europe over the nations of the world, and the very fact which has brought

about the downfall of Muslims in these latter days, is strangely enough also a clear proof of the truth of Islam.

The menace of the Dajjal according to the Qur'an and Hadith

As stated above, there is no mention of Dajjal in the Qur'an by this particular name. But in authentic Hadith we are told that the recital of the chapter *the Cave* in the Qur'an is a remedy for the menace of Dajjal, and this particular chapter deals specially with Christianity and its false doctrines. The first and the last ten verses of this chapter in particular deal with the beliefs and activities of the Christian nations. This clearly shows that according to the Qur'an, Dajjal menace is only another name for the predominance of the false doctrines of Christianity and the dominance of the materialistic outlook on life of the Western nations. In other words, what the Hadith describes as the tribulation of Dajjal is nothing else but the predominance of the concept of life of the Christian West. The Books of Hadith proclaim with one voice that the tribulation of Dajjal is the greatest of all tribulations, so much so that a Muslim is taught to pray to God in his five daily prayers to be saved from being afflicted with the tribulation of the Dajjal: "O Allah! I seek refuge in Thee from the trial of al-Masih al-Dajjal." We are also told that every prophet warned his nation against this tribulation. Further, it is clearly stated that: *There is no tribulation greater than that of the Dajjal from the creation of Adam to the day of Resurrection.*

All the books of Hadith are agreed on this point and this warning has been repeated in various forms. The question, therefore, arises: Is the Qur'an silent on an event which is described by the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, so emphatically as the greatest of all tribulations?

Before giving an answer to this question, we should look a little deeper into the nature of the two tribulations of which Muslims are warned as coming to pass in the latter days. The tribulation of Gog and Magog is spoken of in the clearest words in both the Qur'an and the Hadith, but instead of Dajjal, the Holy Qur'an speaks of another great tribulation in the form of the Christian doctrine relating to Divinity of Christ. It denounces this doctrine in the strongest terms as the greatest of all tribulations for humanity: *The heavens may almost be rent thereat, and the earth cleave asunder, and the mountains fall down in pieces, that they ascribe a son to the Beneficent!*¹⁶

It further states that such a doctrine was never taught by Jesus Christ. In fact, it speaks of it as just

the opposite of what Christ taught: *And when Allah will say: O Jesus, son of Mary! Didst thou say to men, Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah? He will say: Glory be to Thee! it was not for me to say what I had no right to (say) . . . I said to them naught save as Thou didst command me: serve Allah, my Lord and your Lord.*¹⁷

Thus the doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus, according to the Qur'an, cannot be ascribed to Christ but to Antichrist; and though the Qur'an does not mention the name of Dajjal or Antichrist, it speaks of the Antichrist as being the manifestation of the erroneous Christian doctrine of the sonship of God.

If we consider the hadith concerned, these also testify to the truth of what has been said above. The first thing that strikes us in this connection is that almost all hadith speaking of the coming of Jesus allot to him only one task, viz., that "he will break the Cross" (Ar. *yaksiru al-saliba*). It is only rarely that he is spoken of as killing the Dajjal. This is rather strange, seeing that the menace of the Dajjal is, according to Hadith, the greatest of all afflictions that can befall the world. This menace was destined to be removed at the hands of the Promised Messiah. But when the advent of the Messiah is spoken of, his great achievement is mentioned as breaking of the Cross, which shows clearly that the breaking of the Cross and the killing of Dajjal carry one and the same significance. It is really very significant that when Hadith describes the trials and tribulations of the latter days, it gives the greatest prominence to Dajjal, but when it comes to describe the remedy of this affliction it mentions the breaking of the Cross. The fact that the Promised Messiah's first and foremost task would be the breaking of the Cross, shows decisively that the menace of Dajjal and the predominance of the religion of the Cross are but two different expressions for one and the same idea.

Why is the Dajjal called Masih?

As a matter of fact, a little thought will find this truth indicated in the fact of Dajjal being given the name of Masih al-Dajjal. Why should, after all, Dajjal be called *Masih* or Messiah? The reason is that Dajjal shall be setting about his task under the name of "Messiah", which is a sacred title given by God to Prophet Jesus by revelation. The giving of this title of a righteous servant of God to Dajjal shows that the latter will be doing his work in the name of this holy man; and it is this which in reality constitutes its *dajl* or fraud, because while he assumes the name of Messiah, who was a prophet and a righteous servant of God, he does things which are directly opposed to his teachings. The Messiah Jesus taught that

God is one and that none else but He should be served and worshipped, but Dajjal raised the Messiah himself to the position of God. Again, whereas Jesus the Messiah taught that all the prophets of God were His righteous servants, Dajjal condemned all these holy personages as sinners. The reason is not far to seek. Unless all those people whom God chose from time to time for the guidance of humanity are condemned as sinful, there arises no necessity for a supposed sinless son of God to be an atonement for the sins of humanity. Further, whereas the true Messiah taught that every man receives reward or punishment for his own actions, Dajjal in the guise of the Messiah teaches that the son of God is a sufficient atonement for the sins of all Christendom. The real Messiah preached that a rich man can not enter the kingdom of heaven; but Dajjal, pretending to be the Messiah, teaches people but one thing, the accumulation of wealth.

Is the Dajjal a single person or a nation?

It is true that most of the hadith seem to indicate that Dajjal will be a single person, who will have only one eye and on whose forehead will be found written the Arabic letters *kaf, fa* and *ra* (or *kufr* meaning *unbelief*), and who will carry with him an ass and a river and a fire. But if we care to read these reports in the light of the relevant statements in the Qur'an, it becomes quite clear that Dajjal is not the name of a person but of a nation or rather of a group of nations. The Qur'an has definitely identified Dajjal with the Christian nations, and has moreover indicated that Dajjal and Gog and Magog are not separate entities, because the trials arising out of both are spoken of together. We have also the evidence of the Bible, which has already been quoted, that Gog and Magog are the nations of Europe. It thus becomes clear that Dajjal also stands for certain nations. It has further been shown that the trials connected with Dajjal are to have their source in the predominance of Christianity. This evidence is further corroborated by a hadith in *Muslim* which shows that just as Rome and Persia are spoken of as a nation, Dajjal also indicates a people. It reads as follows: *The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: You will fight with them (i.e. the Arabs) and Allah will give you victory over them; then you will fight with Persia and Allah will give you victory over them; then you will fight with Rome and Allah will give you victory over them; then you will fight with the Dajjal and Allah will give you victory over them.*¹⁸

Here the war with Dajjal is mentioned in the same manner as the war with the Arabs, the Persians and the Romans. This shows that the last mentioned are a nation just as the others are nations. The reference

in these wars may be to the crusades, or it may have a reference to the events of the world in our own day. One thing, however, is clear from this hadith that like Persians and Romans, Dajjal stands for a nation or a group of nations.

The fact, however, still remains to be explained that in the Hadith, Dajjal is spoken of as if he were a single person. As I have already shown, these prophecies are all based on visions seen by the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and a nation could be represented in a vision only as a single person. In fact, it is certain characteristics that mark out a nation, and in a vision these characteristics could only be shown as being met with in an individual. Even in ordinary language a nation is spoken of as if it were a single person. Thus the Qur'an speaks of the Israelites, addressing them as if it were a single person. Read for example words such as the following: *O Children of Israel! call to mind My favour which I bestowed on you and that I made*

*you excel the nations.*¹⁹

Here the people actually addressed are those who were living at the time of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, but events are referred to which took place at the time of Prophet Moses or during long centuries after him. The favours spoken of were bestowed upon generations long past but the words here are addressed to their distant descendants who were now a debased and humiliated people. But all these numerous generations are spoken of as if they were a single person. Even thus a whole nation of Dajjal was shown to the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, symbolically in the form of a single person, while its description as given in the Qur'an shows that Dajjal stood for certain nations which were to be known by certain distinguishing features.

The Antichrist and Gog and Magog
by Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali, pp.1-17).

(To be continued)

FOOTNOTES

1. *Al-Muslim* 6 : 42; *Abu Dawud*; *Tirmidhi*; *Musnad Ahmad*.
2. *Al-Muslim*; *Tirmidhi*; *Abu Dawud* 36 : 12.
3. The Qur'an 18 : 2.
4. *Ibid.*, 18 : 4.
5. *Ibid.*, 18 : 1-4.
6. *Ibid.*, 18 : 102-104.
7. *Ibid.*, 18 : 86.
8. *Ibid.*, 18 : 90.
9. *Ibid.*, 18 : 93.
10. *Ibid.*, 21 : 96.
11. The Qur'an 18 : 19.
12. *Ibid.*, 18 : 104.
13. *Ibid.*, 18 : 9.
14. Ezek. 38 : 1-4.
15. The Qur'an 21 : 96.
16. *Ibid.*, 19 : 90-91.
17. *Ibid.*, 5 : 116-117.
18. *Mishkat ch. al-Malahim*.
19. The Qur'an 2 : 47.

FORTHCOMING BOOKS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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Sir Winston Churchill's revealing speech about the effigies of Gog and Magog at Lord Mayor's banquet at the Guildhall, London in 1951

"I cannot help feeling the import of these thoughts in this war-scarred hall. Its battered monuments remind us of other struggles against the continental tyrants of the past, in generations before the supreme ordeal of 1940 we all endured and won together.

I am so glad my Lord Mayor, that you have decided to replace the effigies of Gog and Magog. It was to me a painful blow when they were burnt to ashes by Hitler's bombs. They will look fine in the gallery up there. *Indeed, I think they are not only ancient but up to date.*

It seems to me that they represent none too badly the present state of world politics. *World politics, like the history of Gog and Magog, are very confused and much disputed.* Still, I think, there is room for both Gog and Magog.

On the one side is Gog, and on the other Magog. But be careful, my Lord Mayor, when you put them back to keep them from colliding with each other, for if that happens, both Gog and Magog would be smashed to atoms and we would all have to begin all over again — and begin from the bottom of the pit.

Whatever are the differences between Gog and Magog, at any rate, they are made out of the same materials. Let me tell you what the materials are: Cast masses of warm-hearted human beings wanting to do their best for their country and their neighbour and longing to build their homes and bring up their children in peace, freedom, and the hope of better times for the young when they grow up.

That is all they ask of their rulers and governors and guides. That is the dear wish in the hearts of all the peoples of mankind. How easy it ought to be, grant them this humble, modest desire.

But then there came along all these tribes of nationalists, ideologists, revolutionaries, class warfare experts, and the imperialists, with nasty regimentation of academic doctrinaires, striving night and day to work them all up against one another so that homes, instead of being built, are bombed; and the

bread-winner is killed, and the broken housewife left to pick the surviving children, maimed and scorched, out of the ashes.

There is the structure; that is the composition which Gog and Magog have in common, and there is the fate which both will suffer if you, my Lord Mayor, and others concerned in our City affairs and some who deal with world affairs, do not act with ordinary common-sense and keep Gog and Magog from falling upon one another.

Somehow or other these ideas about Gog and Magog seem to have some suggestive relationship to the discussions which are taking place in Paris at the present time. But we must not let our thought be complicated by our imagery. So here I leave Gog and Magog, hoping I may have the chance to see them both in their places as you promise.

What is the world scene as presented to us to-day? Mighty forces, armed with fearful weapons, are baying at each other across a gulf which, I have the feeling to-night, neither wishes and both fear to cross, but into which they may tumble and drag each other to their common ruin.

On the one side stand all the armies and air forces of Soviet Russia and all their Communist satellites, agents, and devotees in so many countries. On the other are what are called "the Western democracies" with their far superior resources, at present only partly organised, gather themselves together around the United States with its possession of the mastery of the atomic bomb.

Now, there is no doubt on which side we stand, Britain and the Commonwealth and Empire, still centring upon our island, are woven by evergrowing ties of strength and comprehension of common need and self-preservation to the great republic across the Atlantic Ocean. The sacrifices and exertions which the United States is making to deter, and if possible prevent Communist aggression from making further inroads upon the free world are the main foundation of peace."

(The Times, November 10, 1951).

NEWS AND VIEWS

THE CHALLENGE OF COMMUNISM FOR MUSLIMS IN RUSSIA

“Religion is anathema to communism, but no religion has resisted the imposition of communism on its followers as doggedly as Islam. The struggle which the Soviet Muslims have put up against communist rule and the fight that their Chinese brethren waged on the eve of Mao’s take-over speak eloquently of this. To begin with, the communists gave the Muslims in both countries all sorts of assurances, but as they consolidated power Islam, like other religions, was stamped out. At times, some compromises with religious practices were made but this was for either tactical reasons or to curry favour with the Muslim world. The policy of the communists was to indoctrinate the younger generation against theism and no communist regime has deviated from this dogma. The ruling communists have allowed some groups to retain their cultural heritage, which in most cases is rooted largely in religion. This has given a disinterested observer the impression that the communists have softened their attitude to religion but this is a wrong view.

Central Asia, encompassing five republics of the Soviet Union – Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kirghizia and Turkmenistan – and the Caucasus, is the most important Muslim region of the communist world. Although Sunnis predominate, there is a sizeable number of Shi’as, including Islam’ilis, among them. Under the Czars, efforts were made to convert the Muslims to orthodox Christianity; but the Muslims resisted stubbornly. The Bolsheviks were on firmer ground, since they wanted to abolish all religions. They started by secularizing society and taking over religious establishments. This was followed by a rigorous programme of indoctrination using Marxist ideology, including atheism. It was done cautiously at first, by assuring the Muslims that they would be much better looked after by the new rulers. Lenin was aware of Muslim hostility to the Czarist regime and was eager to enlist their support for the revolution. He and his comrade-in-arms, Stalin, issued an appeal in December 1917 wherein the Muslims were reminded that their ‘mosques and prayer houses had been destroyed’ and their ‘beliefs and customs trampled upon by the Czars and oppressors of Russia’. They told them that ‘henceforth your beliefs and usages, your national and cultural institutions are

for ever free and inviolate,’ and urged them to ‘organize their national life in complete freedom’.

Following the assurance, the Muslims of the various regions collaborated with the Bolsheviks. But as soon as Lenin was firmly in the saddle he declared war on all religions. Addressing the Second Congress of the Third International in 1920, he spoke inter alia about ‘. . . the necessity to struggle against the clergy and other reactionary and medieval elements, which have influence in backward countries. . . the necessity to combat pan-Islamism and similar currents’, which strengthen ‘the position of the khans, large landowners, mullas etc’.

This was translated into action first by withdrawing State support to religious organizations, and then by instructing communist cadres to free the Muslims from the clutches of the mullas. The orthodox Muslims resisted this intrusion into their religious affairs and organized Basmachestov, the ‘armed revolt’ of the Muslims, which took the Soviet rulers by surprise because their experience with the Christians had been different; the latter had meekly submitted. Lenin, therefore, cautioned his colleagues in the Seventh Congress of the Central Committee of the Communist party to be careful in dealing with the Muslims, ‘who till this day are under the influence of their mullas’. Impatient to usher in the new order, the Soviets, nonetheless went ahead with the confiscation of waqf properties, the closure of *adalat* and shari’ah courts, the reorganizing of *madradas* and schools, and the discontinuation of religious instruction. These measures provoked violent outbursts. Lenin once again cautioned party workers ‘to proceed tactfully and not to offend the religious sentiments of the Muslims’. But as soon as resistance subsided, the same policy was renewed. After Lenin’s death, Stalin, in 1927, declared the shari’ah invalid, abolished the Islamic judicial, educational and religious institutions and came down heavily on the mullas, many of whom were imprisoned and denied civil rights. The Muslim rites of marriage were abolished; so were their divorce laws. Stalin even created a new class of clergy known as *novomechetniki* (the ‘new mosque’) to fight reactionary mullas. They campaigned against the payment of the zakat and the wearing of veils

by women. No one was allowed to go on hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca; many mosques were turned into museums. According to a leading Soviet historian, N. Suviznov, 'Counter-revolutionary elements were utilizing the Qur'an and were attempting to manipulate the religious sentiments of the believers. . . [in order]. . . to hinder socialist construction. . . [and] . . . to inflame national and religious hostility with a view to splitting the single front of the toilers of the Soviet Union'. Every Soviet citizen, irrespective of his religion, was subjected to the same secular laws; no exceptions were permitted.

By 1939, the Soviet authorities had convinced themselves that Muslim religious organizations and mosques had become centres of anti-Soviet activities. A party pamphlet noted that 'the enemies of the people carry on their treacherous work under the flag of the defence of religion. . . . The activity of the counter-revolutionary Muslim clergy in the USSR is directed by the Japanese secret service'. The onset of World War II (1939 – 45) and the destruction it brought to Russia compelled the government to appease the mullas, who, in turn, mobilized the Muslims in defence of the fatherland. A more cordial relationship was established between the Muslim 'clergy' and the State, and was formalized in 1943 at a conference of the mullas at Tashkent where a 'Spiritual Administration for the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan' was formed with Mufti Isban Babakhan as chairman. For the Shi'ites, a special administration was set up at Batu, and for the European Muslims at Ufa. All three centres were directed and controlled by the Council for Religious Affairs, presided over by a member of the Politbureau; its task was to make use of religion to communize society and to cover up communist indoctrination in State-run schools and colleges. This was followed by the collectivization of agriculture and rapid industrialization, where the peasants and the workers were taught communist ideology. Again, through the 'social engineering' pursued since World War II, the Muslim bourgeoisie was shorn of their privileges and, in some cases, eliminated. The ulama, who did not cooperate with the authorities, were ostracized and deprived of their means of livelihood by being forbidden to teach religion.

The situation has not changed very much since then except that recently, in order to placate Muslim sentiment elsewhere, Islamic cultural achievements in the Central Asian Republics and the Caucasus are being displayed through Muslim Spiritual Boards. These Boards appoint muftis to manage 'working mosques' and guide believers, but the priests are more mouthpieces of Soviet propaganda than of

Islam. Their activities are severely restricted and they can neither complain against the anti-Islamic tirades of the communists nor ask for the right to propagate their faith. Despite the many international Islamic conferences convened in Tashkent and the delegations of Soviet Muslims sent to the Arab and other Muslim countries, the official approach remains basically atheistic. This is obvious from the fact that fifty million Soviet Muslims have less than 150 'working mosques' in the whole of Central Asia. There are two madrasas – one in Bukhara and the other in Tashkent – maintained as showpiece; there are a few religious periodicals, such as *Muslims of the Soviet East*, which are mostly circulated abroad. Beautiful editions of the Qur'an are printed solely to be presented to visiting Muslim dignitaries. Likewise, copies of the hadith of Imam Bukhari, who was a resident of Bukhara and in whose name one of the two madrasas was established, are published for distribution outside the Soviet Union. *The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* (1953 edition) had explained the communist viewpoint candidly.

Like all religions, Islam has always played a reactionary role being an instrument of spiritual oppression of the toilers in the hands of the exploiting classes and was used by foreign colonizers for the enslavement of the peoples of the East. . . . After the victory of the Great October Revolution in Russia, during the armed foreign intervention and the civil war, Islam was utilized by the internal counter-revolution and foreign imperialists for the struggle against the Soviet state. . . . During the period of socialist construction in the USSR, the remnants of the exploiting classes strived to utilize Islam for the struggle against socialism. The Muslim clergy as agents of these classes conducted a struggle against Soviet laws on family and marriage, against the emancipation of women, for the retention of chudder and the pardah. . . for the struggle against industrialization and committed terroristic acts. Especially actively were the Qur'an and the shari'ah employed. . . for the struggle against industrialization and collectivization. . . In the USSR Islam exists [now] only as a survival of one of the forms of ideology of the exploitative society. . . The American-English imperialists utilize Islam for the purpose of struggle against the revolutionary and national liberation movements in the Muslim countries. . . .

There has been little change in this attitude, except under Brezhnev when, from 1964 to 1982, he reversed the repressive measures against the Muslim 'clergy' reintroduced by his predecessor, Krushchev, who, between 1959 to 1964, had closed down thou-

sands of mosques and banned religious teaching. Brezhnev welcomed the resurgence of Islam in the world at the Twenty-Sixth Congress of the Soviet Communist party and hailed it as a progressive force. He said, 'The banner of Islam may lead to the battle for liberation'. But since the advent of Gorbachev there has, once again, been a revival of the old hostile attitude towards Islam though its manifestation is more subtle.

However, despite official denigration and sustained atheistic indoctrination, Islam has not disappeared from the Soviet Union. Soviet Muslims may not practise the five fundamentals of their faith, but they have not given up Islamic rites and customs. Officials have learnt from experience that it is wiser to allow religious ceremonies during marriage or death and let the Muslims celebrate festivals such as Behram or Id al-Adha than prohibit them, since they are more social than religious events.

There are two other sources of Islamic influence which the authorities have not been able to eliminate. One is the tribal court, dominated by erstwhile tribal leaders, which is still rooted in the Islamic tradition. Many of these leaders continue to speak and read Arabic and possess a rudimentary knowledge of theology. The other wellspring of Islam in the USSR is the clandestinely organized network of sufi brotherhoods which has been popular in Central Asia since medieval times. These continue to exercise considerable influence on the Muslims. Of these, the Naqshbandiya is the most popular, followed by the Qadiriyya (mostly in the Caucasus) the Khalwatiya (in Turkmenistan or Turkmen SSR), and the Yasawiya (in Uzbekistan, Kirghizia and Kazakhstan). The Soviet authorities are aware of the potential of these institutions for religious revival but have so far left them alone, since suppressing them in the past had only inflamed fundamentalism. Nevertheless, Communist party workers have been actively decrying what they call 'parallel or unofficial Islam', as opposed to official or State-controlled Islam. They also point to the benefits the State has given the Muslims, contrasting this with their appalling living

conditions before the Bolshevik revolution. It is undeniable that the Soviet Muslims, cut off as they are from the rest of the Muslim world, are vulnerable, but memories of their 'splendid past', of the splendour of Samarqand and Bukhara, remain a powerful force that bind them to their faith. Even as late as 1967 it was admitted by the Soviet authorities that religious 'prejudices' among them were still alive; the Soviet press repeated that 'the instructions of the shari'ah are frequently adhered to in all the Central Asian republics. Religious traditions and customs are observed not only in rural areas but also in towns and even by non-religious people, including members of the national intelligentsia, who are members of the Communist party'.

The Soviet continue to regard Muslims as a potentially destabilizing force and so allow only a few to go on the hajj pilgrimage; also Friday congregational prayers are largely restricted to 'the working mosques', which are not easily accessible to the majority among the Soviet Muslims. After the Khomeini revolution in neighbouring Iran and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the party leadership has become even more apprehensive about unrest erupting among the Central Asian Muslims. The general secretary, Mikhail Gorbachev, warned that the communists must be more vigilant and active in countering the possible impact of foreign religious influence, which he described as 'reactionary', and the work of 'foreign spies and agents' in league with anti-Soviet elements. On his visit to Tashkent in November 1986, the Soviet leader made a frontal attack on Islam as 'an instrument for the spiritual oppression of the workers and for the subjection of the people of the East', and issued an order barring party members from visiting mosques. The long-standing programme of Russification has also seen no let up. In fact, communist intellectuals are now coming round to the view that 'religious groups' should not be equated with nationalities as what had so far been done can be legitimately encouraged under Leninist dogma."

(The Struggle within Islam by Rafiq Zakaria, pp. 264-269).