

DIE BERLINER MOSCHEE

90 years old Muslim Monument
Founded by Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam
1924-1927

ISLAM STANDS FOR: I SHALL LOVE ALL MANKIND

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Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad



**The Great Muslim Reformer of the Present Times
Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam**

**Prescribed following conditions to become a member of
the Movement**

**Practise Islam of the Qur'an and the Sunnah: Hold religion above
the worldly affairs**

Firstly, that until he is laid in his grave, he will shun all forms and shades of *shirk* (*polytheism*).

Secondly, that he will guard against falsehood, fornication, evil sight and every form of sin, evil, cruelty, dishonesty, disorder and rebellion: and in moments of passion, he will on no account give in, however boisterous that passion may be.

Thirdly, that without fail, he will say his prayers five times a day as enjoined by God and His Messenger and that, to the best of his power, he will say his midnight prayer, will invoke Divine blessings on the Holy Prophet, will ask forgiveness for his sins and will, with a truly loving heart, recall God's favours and glorify Him.

Fourthly, that he will do nothing in any way to injure his fellow human beings in general and the Muslims in particular – neither with tongue, nor with hand, nor in any other way.

Fifthly, that he will show fidelity to God under all circumstances – alike in prosperity and adversity, in pleasure and pain, in time of bliss and affliction; that he will resign himself to God under all conditions and will cheerfully bear all hardships and humiliations in His way; that in the hour of calamity he will not turn his back but will step yet onward.

Sixthly, that he will eschew observance of evil customs or following the promptings of his lower nature; that he will thoroughly submit to the yoke of the Holy Qur'an; that in every walk of life he will hold the word of God and of His Messenger as his guiding principle.

Seventhly, that he will totally abstain from haughtiness and will live in humility, meekness and mildness.

Eighthly, that he will hold the honour of religion and sympathy for Islam dearer than everything else – dearer than his life, his wealth, his honour, his children, his kith and kin.

Ninthly, that he will make it a rule of his life to show sympathy towards all human beings out of love for God and that, to the best of his power, he will use all his God-given faculties and blessings for the benefit of humanity.

Tenthly, that binding himself with me (i.e., Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam), in a fraternal bond in the way of Allah, he will obey me in everything good, and will live up to his pledge till death; that in this fraternal bond he will show such sincerity as is not met with in cases of blood relations or other worldly connections.

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Names of Imams, Caretakers and “Friends of the Mosque”



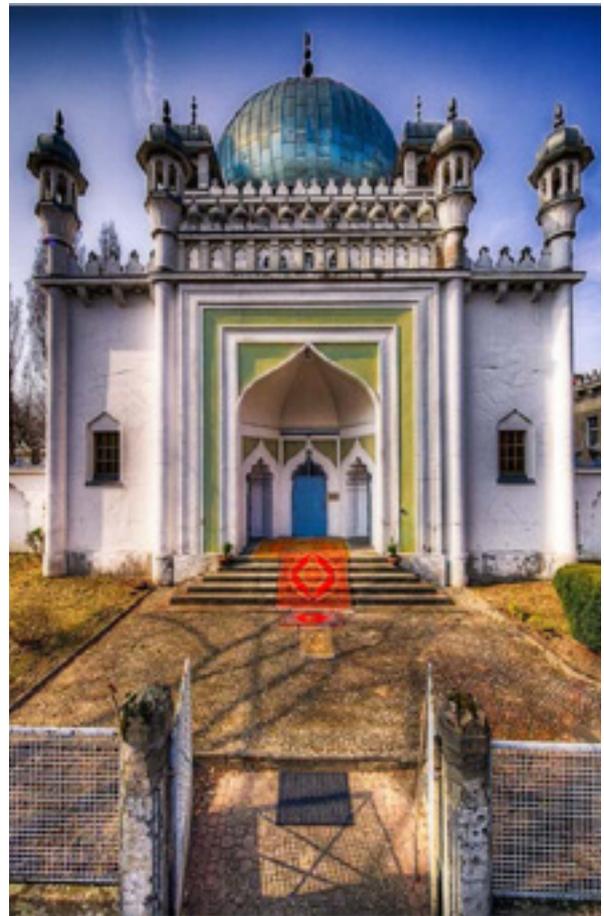
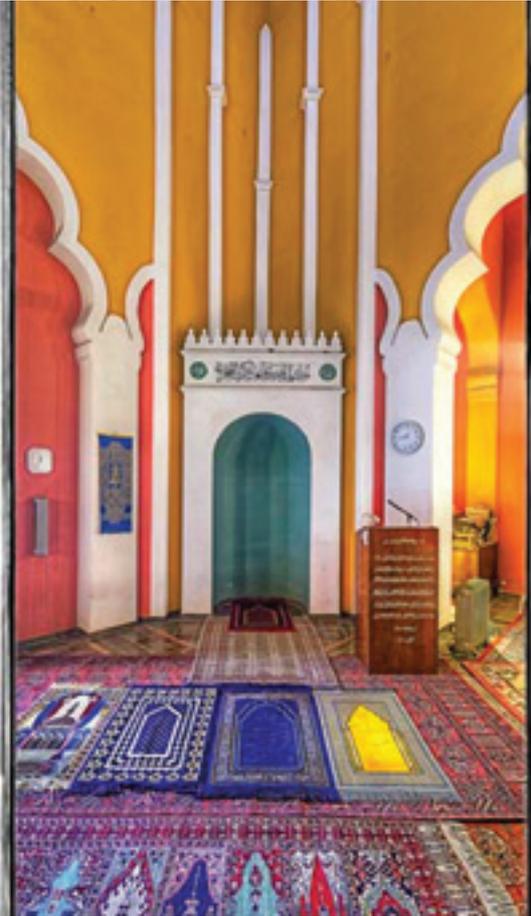
Hazrat Maulana Sadr-ud-Din, founder of the Berlin Muslim Mission and builder of the beautiful Mosque in Berlin 1924

IMAMS AND CARETAKERS

1. Hazrat Maulana Sadr-ud-Din, Founder and Imam (1922)
2. Maulana Abdul Majid, Asstt. Imam (1921)
3. Maulana Fazal Karim Durrani, Imam (1925)
4. Dr. S. Muhammad Abdullah, Imam (1928-1939)
5. Dr. Mirza Aziz-ur-Rahman, Asstt. Imam (1933-1937)
6. Dr. Nazir-ul-Islam, Asstt. Imam (1934-1938)
7. Mrs. Amina Mosler, Caretaker (1937-1963)
8. Bro. Muhammad Aman Hobohm, Imam (1949-1954)
9. Mr. Abdul Aziz Khan, Acting Imam (February 1959)
10. Maulana Muhammad Yahya Butt, Imam (Nov.1959-89)
11. Ch. Saeed Ahmad, Imam (1989-2004)
12. Mr. Riaz Ahmad, Imam (2004-2005)
13. Mr. Muhammad Ali (2005-2011)
14. Yasir Aziz, Caretaker (2011)
15. Mr. S. M. Khalid Iqbal , acting Imam for short intervals (2011, 2013)
16. Mr. Ahmed Saadat, Acting Imam (2011-2015)

FRIENDS

With the title “Friends of the Mosque”, we honour a number of professionals who supported us beyond the limits of their assignment: The late Dr. Juergen Lampeitl (architect at Monument Care, Berlin), Dr. Gerdien Jonker (Historian of Religion at the University of Erlangen), and Mr. Christian Fessel (Professional Photographer).



A brief history of the Berlin Muslim Mission and the Mosque in Germany

NEED FOR THE PROPAGATION OF ISLAM IN GERMANY

It was in May 1922 that a well-known English daily of India, the *Mohammadan*, published an article captioned “The Need for the Propagation of Islam in Germany”. The writer was Pro. Abdus Sattar Kheri, a zealous Indian Muslim living in Berlin. This gentleman and his brother, Pro. Abdul Jabbar Kheri, known as the Kheri Brothers. Prof. A. S. Kheri initially floated the idea of setting up an Islamic centre in Berlin:

“Among all the countries of Europe, there does not appear to be as much scope for the propagation of Islam as there is in Germany. She suffered defeat in the War (the First World War), and now she is seriously thinking of re-building her future course in order to usher in a new era of peace and prosperity. Everyone here is convinced that rebirth is not possible without following true religion. Christianity has met with complete failure. Germany is in a much better position to reach to the core of the veritable reality underlying false and baseless propaganda.... Germany is the centre of Europe and to achieve success here will have very healthy influence on the neighbouring countries....

It will serve as a great impetus to remove the heinous accusations of bloodshed and destruction levelled against Islam ... I am writing my observations after studying current events in Germany. And thus I feel that I would be disloyal to Islam if I did not inform the Indian Muslims of this great opportunity for propagating Islam in this country.”

PLAN FOR AN ISLAMIC CENTRE AND A MOSQUE IN BERLIN APPROVED

It was in February 1920 that Pro. Abdul Jabbar Kheri met a German Muslim, Dr Khalid Banning, and seriously pondered on the prospects of setting up an Islamic centre in Berlin. Meanwhile, he got some letters written to the *Imam* of the Woking Muslim Mission, Surrey, England by a German lady, strongly suggesting the opening of a mission in Berlin on the pattern of the Woking Muslim Mission based at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, England. At that time, Maulana Mustafa Khan was the *Imam* of the Mosque at Woking. Pro. Sattar Kheri sent this plan to Woking and from there it reached Lahore. The Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at-i Islam, Lahore carefully considered the scope and feasibility of the plan and accepted it. Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali (1875-1951), the then

Head of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Anjuman, and well-known Muslim scholar and translator of the Holy Qur'an into English, made a special appeal for donations during the Annual Conference in December 1921 for the opening of Islamic centres in both America and Germany.

MAULANA SADR-UD-DIN AND MAULVI ABDUL MAJID IN BERLIN

In March 1922, the *Anjuman* decided to send Hazrat Maulana Sadr-ud-Din (1909-1984), and Maulvi Abdul Majid M.A. (of Hyderabad Deccan, a teacher in the Muslim High School, Lahore) to Germany. Maulvi Abdul Majid (1897-1977) left for Germany on 7 June 1922. For the initial eight or nine months, he worked single-handedly. During this period, Hazrat Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din (1870-1932) (Founder of the Working Muslim Mission, England, and of the monthly *Islamic Review*) visited Berlin in July/August 1922 in order to assess the situation for the setting up of an Islamic Centre. He sent a detailed report to the Central Anjuman in Lahore, which also contained a proposal for the construction of the mosque. The following is an extract from his report:

“As compared to England, there is far greater educational taste and liking over here.... Educational institutions of this country are well-known throughout the world for their high standard of knowledge and research. Keeping in view the advanced knowledge in the fields of economics, philosophy of ethics, philosophy of civilisation and culture, and various other fields, we have to establish that the teachings of Islam not only provide basic guidance about these fields of knowledge, but it is much more sublime.”

Meanwhile, Maulana Sadr-ud-Din and Maulvi Abdul Majid carried on their Islamic activities from Gotesbacht Street, 5/111 Garbortenberg, Berlin. They also met the Muslim ambassadors and delegates in Berlin to seek their support. The Ambassador of Turkey strongly encouraged the Maulana and assured him of all possible help for the construction of the Mosque and he continued to support him up to the stage of the completion of the Mosque. The missionary work continued from the temporary office in Garbortenberg.

In May 1923, *Tarawih* prayers were offered at this place during Ramadan. The *Eid al-Fitr* prayer was offered at the mosque in Winsterdorf, then a ninety-minutes journey from Berlin by rail. This mosque was built by the German Government for prisoners of war. It could accommodate as many as 3000 people. The *Imam* of this mosque, Hafiz Shukari Amandi, a Turk, strongly favoured the construction of the proposed mosque in Berlin. Most of the people who offered prayers were from Bokhara and Turkey.

PURCHASE OF LAND AND DESIGN OF THE MOSQUE

In July 1923, a two-acre parcel of land in a posh area belonging to the local Municipal Committee was purchased. Its importance can be judged from the fact that the construction of a church was first proposed on this land. However, the proposal could not materialise and the land was subsequently purchased for the construction of the Mosque. The site was surrounded on three sides by roads, with lush, green gardens on the fourth.

Hazrat Maulana Sadr-ud-Din started to think about the construction plan for the Mission House and the Mosque. Keeping in view the Mogul architecture of the “Taj Mahal” at Agra and the

“Badshahi Mosque” in Lahore, work on the plan made steady progress. It appears that the design of the arches on the inside and the Arabic inscription, “*La ghaaliba illallah*” (To Allah alone belongs empire and power), are borrowed from one of the audience halls at Alhambra, Spain. At this juncture, Maulana Sadr-ud-Din met a Russian scholar, Mr Lutfe Bey. The Mosque building plan was completed in September 1923 and was sent to Lahore so that Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali could bless it with his formal approval.

Earlier, in October of the same year, Maulana Sadr-ud-Din delivered a comprehensive and thought-provoking lecture on “The Philosophy of Islam” at a convention held at Darum Straat presided over by a renowned German philosopher, Count Newling.

In November 1924, preparations for the stone-laying ceremony of the Mosque were in progress. The Ambassador of Turkey was to be the chief guest. An unknown Egyptian student, on the instigation of the Kheri Brothers, created mischief through a handbill that Maulana Sadr-ud-Din was a spy of the British Government. As a result, the Turkish Ambassador refused to preside over the ceremony. The ceremony was therefore postponed, but construction work continued.

In order to counter the malicious insinuation, a meeting was held at the temporary Mission House. It was resolved to send a delegation to His Excellency, Sami Pasha, the Turkish Ambassador. Dr Abdul Hassan Mansur, a scholar of Turkish, Russian and English, was deputed to visit the Ambassador and apprise him of the facts underlying the false propaganda. This he did and was able to dispel the Ambassador’s reservations. Dr Nasibuk of the Turkish Club also played an important role in clearing the baseless doubts.

The efforts for the propagation of Islam through the Berlin Muslim Mission, coupled with the construction of a beautiful mosque in Berlin, went a long way in highlighting the services rendered to Islam by the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement. The *Muslim Outlook* of Lahore, in its issue of 4 February 1925, published a lengthy editorial note in appreciation of the services. Excerpts are reproduced below:

“... this *Anjuman*, which is working fervently on a higher scale, is the Ahmadiyya Anjuman *Isha’at-i Islam*, Lahore, which is associated with the Ahmadiyya Sect ... the marvellous English rendering of the Holy Qur’an done and published by the President of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman *Isha’at-i Islam* (Maulana Muhammad Ali) has gone so far as to open the doors of Islam to many of the non-Muslim critics and atheists. Muslims firmly believe that Islam was never spread by the sword nor will it ever be done so ... Islamic centres at Woking and Berlin established by this organisation and their workers are working in the West selflessly.... They do not promote sectarianism and present the very Islam which the Holy Qur’an has epitomised. This *Anjuman* is doing great service for the cause of Islam ... which many other associations and institutions would not have even thought of so far.”

The construction work of the Mosque was in progress. Maulana Sadr-ud-Din received invitations to deliver lectures on various aspects of Islam from different organisations. In February and March 1925, meetings were held in which, besides the Maulana, the new German Muslim, Dr Griffelt, and Dr Zakir Hussain of Jami’ah Milliyyah, Aligarh, took active part. Detailed reports of these lectures, with photographs of the Berlin Mosque, were published in the local newspapers.

GREAT MUSLIM LEADER PROF. BARKATULLAH AT THE MOSQUE

In April 1925, a reception was arranged in honour of a well-known Muslim scholar, political leader and preacher, Prof. Abdul Hafiz Mohammed Barkat Ullah (1913-1927) more known as Prof. Barkatullah so that the effects of the vicious propaganda launched by the Kheri Brothers and other opponents against the Mission and the Mosque could be dispelled. The Professor was well-versed in the Arabic, Persian, Turkish and German languages. He had toured China, Japan and America a number of times. Maulana Sadr-ud-Din had been introduced to him in Switzerland during the Lausanne Conference. This Conference was attended by many German Muslims, such as Dr Khalid Banning, Dr Hamid Marcus, Dr Griffelt, Dr Muhammad Brackish, and also by Dr Mumtaz Ali Khan Bhatti. The latter used to publish a magazine in Persian and German. Because of this Conference, the construction of the Mosque and the activities of the Mission were amply highlighted in the press.

The cost of the construction of the Mosque rose higher than the original estimate and it was becoming difficult to meet the excess through donations. Urgent payments were therefore made by disposing of a portion of the land.

Before the Mosque was completed, a high-level German scholar, Dr Hamid Marcus (1880-1966), had embraced Islam in 1924. He also had a good command of the English language. The well-known poet and philosopher of Indo-Pakistan fame, Dr Muhammad Iqbal, spoke highly of Dr Marcus.

INAUGURATION OF THE BERLIN MOSQUE

The opening ceremony of the Berlin Mosque was held on 26 April 1925. The event started with a Qur'anic recitation by Khwaja Abdul Hamid, a student at the Berlin University. Maulana Sadr-ud-Din delivered a brief speech in German. The Russian Muslim scholar, Luferbe Qasmi, threw light on the Ahmadiyya Movement in Turkish. Dr Idris Bokhari then stressed upon the importance of "Islamic Brotherhood" in Turkish. Another learned brother from Iran, Hassan Bey, speaking in Persian, condemned sectarianism as a curse and laid stress on the necessity of strengthening bonds of mutual tolerance and brotherhood. Professor Abdul Hakim of Hyderabad Deccan read out a beautiful poem. An Iranian prince explained Islamic teachings in German. At the end, Maulana paid tribute to the honesty and integrity of the German architects and contractors. The historic event came to an end with prayers. The Turkish Ambassador and his staff had taken keen interest and actively participated in organising the ceremony.

An outstanding personality of Turkey, the Honourable Amir Shakib Arsalan (1869-1946), a leading Lebanon intellectual and Muslim leader on returning home made a vigorous public speech introducing the Berlin Muslim Mission and lauded its efforts directed towards the propagation of Islam. On the front page of the daily *Tawhid-i Afkaar* of Istanbul, Turkey, details of the activities of the Mission along with photographs of the Mosque and an introduction of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-i Islam, Lahore were published.

Towards the end of May 1925, the Maulana left Berlin for his homeland. On his way, he met Hakim Muhammad Ajmal Khan (1863-1927), an outstanding physician specialising in the field of traditional Unani medicine, Muslim nationalist politician and political leader, in Paris, and apprised

him of the activities of the Mission and the Mosque and sought his help in raising funds for them. Maulana Sadr-ud-Din received a rousing welcome on his arrival at the Lahore railway station.

The excitement of the German Muslim converts on the construction of the Mosque was inspiring. An old German Muslim lady, Gardowas, saw in a dream that the Mosque had been completed and light was being diffused from it in all directions. She particularly appealed to the womenfolk to fervently take part in this sacred task.

The daily *Shafaq-i Surkh* of Tehran also carried an editorial note on the efforts made by the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement in Lahore for the preaching of Islam:

“The centre of the ‘Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at-i Islam’ is in Lahore (India) and for the propagation of Islam its branches are spread over India, Burma and other Eastern countries... All those who are associated with the *Anjuman* and its supporters are mostly religious people of the Ahmadiyya ideology. It is the result of their high spirit and enthusiasm that a mosque at Woking (near London) has become a vibrant centre for the preaching of Islam.... Now, under the auspices of the same *Anjuman*, a mosque has been built in the city of Berlin, which is considered the best worship place in Berlin. Five million liras has been spent on its construction so far.”

STRUCTURAL DETAILS ABOUT THE MOSQUE

| | | |
|--|--|-----------|
| Length | | 46.5 feet |
| Breadth | | 46.5 feet |
| Height of main gate | | 30 feet |
| Dome | | 75 feet |
| Two minarets | | 90 feet |
| Two minarets flanked on both sides of the Mosque | | 25 feet |
| 4 ft. wide gallery all around the main floor of the Mosque | | |

The main structure was nearing completion, but still some work remained to be done on the minarets, the dome, and other ornamental works to enhance the beauty of the Mosque. At this stage, Maulana Sadr-ud-Din sent the following telegram to the Community in Lahore on 27 December 1924 on the occasion of the Annual Gathering of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Community:

“Our Community should be proud of this remarkable achievement. I congratulate you all – the old and the young, the rich and the poor – for it is due to your concerted efforts, sacrifices and fervent prayers that such a milestone has been accomplished about which some had doubts, and at times insurmountable difficulties created dismay and hopelessness. But, by the grace of Almighty Allah, the major task of the plan has been accomplished today. All of us should be grateful to Allah for blessing our humble efforts in His cause.”

The initial estimate of the construction of the Mosque was fifty to sixty thousand rupees, but afterwards, due to unforeseen circumstances, the cost rose to one hundred thousand rupees.

So, in early 1924, when the minarets of the Mosque had not yet been completed, a message from the Central Anjuman in Lahore was sent to Maulana Sadr-ud-Din to postpone the work on the minarets for the time being. Meanwhile, vigorous efforts were made to raise funds for the Mosque. Special appeals by Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali were sent to the members of the *Jama'at* throughout India.

In his speech on the first day of the Conference in December 1924, which was for ladies, Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali expressed great concern that the work on the minarets had to be suspended due to shortage of funds. In his passionate speech he addressed the ladies in these words:

“Many of our sisters in the *Jama'at* may think that the fact that their husbands or elders take part in religious service also suffices for them. But this is not correct. Just as the good deeds of the husband will not be of any use to the wife, similarly, his voluntary contributions will not be of any good to the wife. In the Holy Qur'an, where there is a mention of the alms-giving men, the women who give alms are also mentioned.... Allah has imposed the duty of religious service on women as well as on men. The women of our *Jama'at* should bear in mind that no matter how much their husbands serve the religion, if they do not take any part in it themselves they are as unfortunate as any other woman who does not help.”

As a result of this appeal, all the women present took off their jewellery and presented them for the propagation of Islam, and their menfolk contributed the rest of the required sum of money. The completion of the remaining work on the Berlin Mosque was thus possible.

The names of the ladies and gentlemen who made generous contributions towards the construction of the Berlin Mosque on this occasion are mentioned below as a matter of record for future generations to know how zealous their elders were in serving the cause of Islam.

This was not the first time when special appeal was made to generate funds urgently needed to complete the minarets and other construction work; and members of the Community, men and women, contributed with amazing generosity. Right from the start of the construction work of the Mosque and Mission House, publication of the Qur'an in German and other projects for the cause of Islam, appeals were regularly made and members had been contributing generously. Different methods were adopted as a means of incentive to make children and women at homes to contribute for the noble cause. For example, children were asked to contribute daily by saving some money from their pocket money and put it into a money box. Women would put some handful of flour into a tin daily and every Friday a person would come and collect the flour and money obtained by selling it was contributed to the Mosque Fund. This was besides the monthly subscription (*chanda*) and other kinds of charities.

Contribution by Ladies: Major contribution in the form of ornaments and cash came from the following ladies of Lahore and they also made special efforts in collecting funds for this noble cause:

Mrs. Maulana Muhammad Ali, Mother and wife of Dr. Mirza Yakub Beg, Mrs. Dr. Syed Muhammad Hussain Shah, Mrs. Dr. Ghulam Muhammad, Mrs. Dr. Syed Tufail Hussain Shah, Mrs. K. S. Babu Manzoor Ilahi, Mrs. Ch. Zahoor Ahmad and Mrs. Khwaja Jalal-ud-Din. The total value of the collection made on this occasion was Rs. 7300.00, of which Rs. 2500 was received in cash while Rs. 4800 was in the form of jewellery

In this regard the following ladies from other parts of the country also made significant contributions: Mrs. Ch. Muhammad Ismail (Revenue Officer), his daughter and sister-in-law (Montgomery), Mrs. Dr. Jalal-ud-Din (Gojra), Mrs. Sh. Maula Bakhsh (Sialkot), Master Muhammad Ismail (Sialkot), Mrs. Qazi Samiullah (Sargodha), Mrs. Sh. Abdul Wahid (Police Officer) (Abuhr), Daughter of Munshi Muhammad Bakhsh (Chak No. 355, Sargodha), Mrs. Sh. Maqbul Ilahi (Sheikhupura), Mrs. Syed Ahmad Hussain Shah (Hoshiarpur), Mrs. Babu Dilawar Khan (Peshawar) and Mrs. Mistri Yakub Ali (Jammu).

The ladies of the following Jama'ats contributed collectively towards the fund: Lyallpur, Chak No. 81 (Sargodha), Qasur, Lahore Cantt., Gujrat, Chak 2 and 4 L (Okara), Mardan, Kunjah, Wazirabad and Charsaddah. A non-Ahmadi lady sister of Muhammad Umar Barumi from Atman Zai contributed Rs. 400.00.

Contribution by Men: Collections made through the sale of one-rupee coupons and other means was Rs. 8600.00. In this connection the services of the following members deserve appreciation: Mian Muhammad Zaman (Charsaddah), Ch. Muhammad Ismail, (Revenue Officer, Associate member, Montgomery), Mian Muhammad Siddiq, Police Officer (Indore), Dr. Ismat Ullah (Darband), Maulvi Aziz Bakhsh and Sh. Fazal Ilahi (Jhang), Ch. Allah Ditta (Srinagar), Mr. Fazal Haq (Peshawar Cantt.), Master Inamullah Khan (Fort Sandeman), Sh. Maula Bakhsh, shoe-merchant (Sialkot), Maulvi Alam Din, Advocate (Sheikhupura), Dr. Jalal-ud-Din (Gojra), Ch. Muhammad Hussain Numberdar (Chak 81 Sargodha), Sheikh Mian Maula Bakhsh, mill-owner (Lyallpur), Dr. Hassan Ali (Kunjah), Sh. Niaz Ahmad (Wazirabad) and Headmaster Muslim High School, Lahore.

Collections made by delegates sent to various parts of the country: Qazi Sami Ullah (Rs.5501), Mehr Khan Muhammad Khan, Inspector police (Rs. 100), Sh. Abdul Wahid, Sub-Inspector police (Rs.2400), Malik Ghulam Muhammad, Central Flour Mills, Qasur (Rs.500).

Contributions made by non-Ahmadi supporters: Nawab Ahmad Yar, *Rais* Luddon (Rs.1000), Ch. Shahab-ud-Din, *Rais* Lahore (Rs. 1000), Sardar Mir Dost Muhammad Mazari, Jahaniyan, Distt. Dera Ghazi Khan (Rs.800), Hon'ble Sir Muzammil Khan, *Rais*, Distt. Aligarh (Rs.500).

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE IN GERMAN, *MOSLEMISCHE REVUE*

In January 1924, Maulana Sadr-ud-Din started publishing a quarterly magazine in German called *Moslemische Revue* in the style of *The Islamic Review*, the monthly magazine of the Working Muslim Mission, England. Most of the articles were contributed by newly converted German Muslim scholars such as Dr Hamid Marcus, Dr Khalid Banning and Dr Arif Griffelt. The magazine also featured translations of articles written by Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali and Maulvi Abdul Majid. The periodical soon became popular not only in Germany but also in Yugoslavia, Hungary, Albania and other neighbouring countries. Its articles, translated into Croatian and other local languages, carried the message of Islam to a wide section of people in the region. More than half of the German Muslim converts had entered the fold of Islam after reading its articles. Due to certain financial difficulties, however, publication was suspended for two years, but through the efforts of Dr S. Muhammad Abdullah it was re-started in 1929 and was published until 1939, when the Second World War began and its further publication had to be stopped.

MAULANA FAZLUL KARIM DURRANI AS IMAM

In May 1925, on Hazrat Maulana Sadr-ud-Din's return to Lahore, Maulana Fazlul Karim Durrani took charge of the Berlin Muslim Mission. Regular meetings of the German Muslim Society were held at which Dr Hamid Marcus and other new German Muslims gave learned discourses on various aspects of Islam and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*sas*). Some of the topics were "Materialism and Spirituality", "The Importance of the Excellent Example of the Holy Prophet in the Present Age".

The Mission House was yet incomplete when a notice was issued by the City Corporation to complete the construction work. Further funds were thus immediately required. Maulana Muhammad Ali again made a fervent appeal in the Urdu organ of the Movement, in November 1925:

"The problems of the Berlin Mosque are yet not over. A further sum of around twenty thousand German Marks is needed, partly because the work has been extended and partly because costs have increased. It was felt that the snowfall and heavy rains of the winter would damage the Mosque so the work has already been started. Maulana Sadr-ud-Din returned from Germany in a very weak state. .. I was most concerned when I saw his condition but there was no option other than to send him on another tour... I hope and believe that on reading these few lines of my fervent appeal our members will extend a helping hand to Maulana Sadr-ud-Din"

As a result of the activities of the Berlin Muslim Mission, the message of Islam was effectively conveyed to the intellectual circles in Germany, and, one by one, people entered the fold of Islam. The Heidelberg University of Germany is almost as famous as the University of Cambridge in England. One of its learned directors, Hans Loba, accepted Islam.

Maulana Fazlul Karim Durrani kept receiving invitations from different quarters to deliver lectures about the Ahmadiyya Movement, which were followed by question-answer discussions. Afterwards, he wrote a series of articles on the Ahmadiyya Movement in the *Moslemische Revue*. In December 1926, these were published in English in the form of a book entitled *The Ahmadiyya Movement*.

The services of the Berlin Muslim Mission and the Lahore Ahmadiyya Isha'at-i Islam Association for the cause of Islam were being appreciated in Muslim countries. In an editorial note, the daily *Iqdam* of Tehran, Iran paid the following tribute to the Berlin Muslim Mission in December 1928:

"The Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-i Islam, Lahore has constructed a magnificent mosque in the city of Berlin, Germany, which holds an eminent position among the buildings of the city. It was constructed two or three years ago and the work of preaching and propagating the teachings of Islam is done here. More than a hundred people from different walks of life have entered the fold of Islam, of which the most famous is Dr Hamid Marcus. An Islamic periodical, *Moslemische Revue*, is also published in German."

One million ardent Slav Muslims were living in Yugoslavia. As a result of the endeavours of the Mission, they started getting Croatian translations of the articles and excerpts from the English translation of the Holy Qur'an by Maulana Muhammad Ali.

In June 1927, Maulana Fazlul Karim Durrani expressed his thought-provoking views in an article entitled “Islam in Europe” on the method to be adopted in propagating Islam in Europe and the need of understanding intellectual inclinations of the European people. He wrote:

“We must bear in mind that of all the nations of Europe, this nation has the firmest belief in Christianity. Although they believe that the Gospels are not authentic nor are they the Word of God, and that the beliefs of the Church are irrational, yet in order to make others accept Christianity, they have presented it in a completely different garb – a garb of fine example and high ideals. The German nation is the leader of these ideals in this age. Their research work and advancement in knowledge in various fields soon will become the property of the whole world. Thus, in order to meet this challenge it is necessary to be familiar with the new thoughts and outlook of the German nation.”

During the same period, Maulana Durrani wrote strong and pithy articles in the *Moslemische Revue* in reply to the objections raised against Islam by a well-known German scholar and Minister of Education, Prof. Pecker.

TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY QUR’AN INTO GERMAN

In 1926, the Central Ahmadiyya Association in Lahore agreed to undertake the translation of the Holy Qur’an into German. Keeping in view the importance of the project and the huge expenses to be incurred, Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali published the following appeal in the Urdu weekly, *Paigham-i Sulh*:

“I am fully conscious of the fact that there are already a great many burdens on this small Community. But I also believe that Divine assistance is only granted when some difficult task is undertaken. So I am happy that through the fervent encouragement of a respected Bro. Malik Ghulam Muhammad of Qasur (Punjab), a concerted move to get the Holy Qur’an translated into German has begun. The establishment of a mission in Germany, the publication of a quarterly magazine, and the construction of a mosque at the cost of around a hundred thousand rupees – all these have been possible due to His special grace and blessings. When our Community started this work, Allah, Most High, opened the doors of His help in many ways. Obviously, all that has been done so far is incomplete until we provide those people with the Holy Qur’an in their own language.”

Dr Abul Hassan Mansoor, Ph.D., of Berlin University, was selected to render the translation and commentary in English done by Maulana Sadr-ud-Din into German. He was the editor of a magazine, *Deutsch Moslemische Girschaft*, published from Berlin. He arrived in Lahore in March 1928, and the translation of the Holy Qur’an into German was completed in February 1934 under the supervision of Maulana Sadr-ud-Din. While translation work was being done, Syed Mustafa Ahmad, an ardent member of the *Jama’at*, donated four hundred rupees every month for a period of two years for the translation work. In total, he donated the sum of ten thousand rupees. Some financial difficulties were encountered during the last stages of the work. However, Maulana

Sadr-ud-Din's appeal and the generous contributions of certain members of the *Jama'at* enabled the Maulana to get the translation published in Berlin.

Members of the *Jama'at* contributed generously towards the German translation of the Holy Qur'an. Several people outside the *Jama'at* also gave financial support towards this important religious publication. A donation of Rs.500 by the Princess of the State of Manavar, India is worthy of mention.

In the absence of Dr. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, Dr. Aziz-ur-Rahman carried on the activities of the Mission. In 1933 reports sent by him in Urdu appeared regularly in the weekly organ of the Central Anjuman, *Paigham-i Sulh*. He was a highly qualified talented young man of our *Jama'at*. He was the son of Hazrat Mirza Hakim Khuda Bakhsh, a learned disciple of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam.

Dr. Mirza Aziz-ur-Rahman completed his Ph. D. at the Berlin University. Just about that time, the President of the German Sufi Society, Allama Kazim Zada, visited the Berlin Mosque and appreciated the activities of the Mission. The same year, in July, a meeting was organised to celebrate the Birthday of the Holy Prophet Muhammad under the auspices of the German Muslim Society. For the first time, the Mosque and the Mission House were illuminated with candles in the traditional fashion.

In July 1932, the German Muslim Society held a reception in honour of Dr. Mirza Aziz-ur-Rahman (1901-1938) who obtained doctorate from the Berlin University. On this occasion, Dr. Hamid Marcus delivered a very illuminating lecture on "The Message of the Arabian Prophet Muhammad (SAW) for the People of Europe", in both German and English. In 1936 he led Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha congregational prayers. On the eve of Eid al-Adha princes of Hyderabad Deccan were guests of honour.

In connection with the printing of the German translation, Maulana Sadr-ud-Din went to Berlin in April 1937, where he completed arrangements and returned home in December 1937. The supervision of proofreading and printing was very diligently done by Dr Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah. At the end of 1937, for about six months, during the absence of Dr Abdullah, Dr Nazeer-ul-Islam (1909-1983) served as *Imam* of the Mosque and also looked after the proofreading and printing of the translation. Finally, the translation came out of the press in August 1939.

This translation of the Holy Qur'an was appreciated in German circles. One German scholar expressed his opinion in the following words:

"This translation has not only fulfilled a long-felt educational and religious need but it has also ensured that its dissemination will greatly spread and popularise the knowledge of the Quran and the teachings of Islam."

GERMAN TRANSLATION OF THE QUR'AN DESTROYED

Unfortunately, only a month after the publication of this translation, on 3 September 1939, the Second World War broke out and the bombing of Berlin by the Allied Forces' planes not only damaged the dome and the minarets of the Mosque but also destroyed the press and the entire stock of the German translation of the Holy Qur'an, except for a few copies. After almost twenty-five years,

in 1965, two thousand copies of the off-set edition were published in Pakistan. A sum of 20,000 rupees was donated for this by Mrs Sheikh Ataullah of Multan. The stock was soon exhausted.

In 1982, a well-known German publishing firm, Sea Benztryn, decided to reprint the Translation. They sought the opinion of several German and Al-Azhar scholars about the authenticity and standard of the translation and commentary and received favourable comments. They then contacted the Central Ahmadiyya Association in Lahore for permission through the *Imam* of the Berlin Mosque, Maulana Butt. Unfortunately, an agreement could not be reached. Subsequently, old edition's two reprints were published from India, and copies are still available.

The German translation of Maulana Muhammad Ali's English translation with commentary has also recently been published and is available.

GERMAN MUSLIM SOCIETY IN BERLIN FORMED

Dr S. Muhammad Abdullah was appointed *Imam* of the Mosque and left Lahore for Berlin in March 1928. He completed his doctorate at Berlin University in 1932. In 1935, his thesis was printed in the periodicals of the Chemical Societies of Berlin and Calcutta.

On 22 March 1930, the German Muslim Society was formed. Its officers were:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <i>President:</i> | Dr Hamid Marcus |
| <i>General Secretary:</i> | Professor Dr Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah (M.Sc., Ph.D.) |
| <i>Assistant Secretary:</i> | Mr Umar Shoebert |
| <i>Muslim Members:</i> | Mr Muhammad Tufail Ahmad (Engineer) Dr Abul Hassan Mansur Ph.D. |
| <i>Non-</i> | Mrs Rodgez |
| <i>Muslim Members:</i> | Mr George Gotsegh |

After arriving in Berlin, Dr Muhammad Abdullah organised the Islamic activities of the Mission and reactivated the German Muslim Society, which played an effective role in informing Berlin's educated circles of the Mosque's activities. At the meetings on the Society, Dr Hamid Marcus and other new German Muslims delivered scholarly discourses on various topics. From time to time, Prof. Mirza Hassan, a lecturer of Persian at the Berlin University, Dr Mumtaz Ali Khan Bhatti, and Dr Abul Hassan Mansur also delivered talks and took part in the discussions. Some of the subjects dealt with were, Islam and war, Treatment of Prisoners and Slaves, The killing of Apostates, The Relationship between Husband and Wife, Fighting in the way of Allah (*Jihad fi sabil al-Allah*), and The Teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the Bible.

In January 1931, a well-known Egyptian periodical, *Al-Lataif al-Musawwarah*, published pictures of Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali, the Mosque in Berlin, and of Babu Manzoor Ilahi, who was in charge of the Foreign Correspondence Department at the Central office in Lahore, with the following remarks of the well-known Muslim scholar of Egypt, Allama Amir Shakib Arsalan:

“This is a mission of the Jama'at-i Ahmadiyya Lahore, which has established a centre for preaching Islam in Europe. The Lahore *Jama'at* is distinct from the Qadian *Jama'at*.”

Shakib Arslan (1869 - 1946) was a Druze prince (*amir*) from Lebanon who was known as *Amir al-Bayn* (“Prince of Eloquence”) because in addition to being a politician, he was also an influential writer, poet and historian.

DR S. M. ABDULLAH ON “WOMAN IN ISLAM”

On 15 September, Dr Abdullah delivered a remarkable lecture on the subject “Woman in Islam”. Entry to the event was by ticket. Besides a large audience, the lecture was also attended by representatives of the local press. The following report appeared in the local press:

“The Western woman has always wanted to know more about the Eastern woman. In order to fulfil this need, Dr Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, the *Imam* of the Berlin Mosque, delivered an enlightened lecture, well-supported by logical arguments, in compliance with the wishes of the Ladies’ Organisation of Berlin... The learned doctor explained that Islam gives married life precedence over celibacy and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*saw*) has declared the marriage to be a *Sunnah* (practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad). Then he emphasised that polygamy is conditional and is allowed only for specific reasons. He also cleared various misconceptions which prevail about *pardah* (or seclusion of woman), divorce, etc. A large audience was present and the lecture was greatly appreciated.”

BARON EHRENFELS IN THE FOLD OF ISLAM

At the end of the year, members of an aristocratic house of Austria – Baron Umar Ehrenfels and his wife – entered the fold of Islam. The Baron’s father was a professor at Berlin University. He, himself, was a journalist and lived in Hungary. By this time, a hundred people had already accepted Islam.

On the occasion of the Annual Conference of the Central Ahmadiyya Anjuman in Lahore in 1932, Baron Umar Ehrenfels went to Lahore, where he was accorded a splendid welcome at the Lahore Railway Station on 24 December.

Baron Umar was invited by all the important organisations and elites of Lahore. After Lahore, he toured Delhi, Aligarh, Hyderabad, and other big cities of India in the company of Dr Abdullah. In May 1933, he returned to Austria and established the Vienna Muslim Mission in Vienna, which he headed for some time.

In July 1934, the *Imam* of the Berlin Mosque appealed for funds for repairs to the Mosque. A very generous response came from Sheikh Aziz Ahmad, the son of Al-Hajj Sheikh Niaz Ahmad, a wealthy leather merchant of Wazirabad, Punjab, and a devoted companion of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement. Sheikh Aziz Ahmad had gone to Germany for advanced training in leather tanning. He was the owner of the well-known Punjab Tannery of Wazirabad.

In October 1937, at a meeting of the German Muslim Society, Baron Foltanec delivered a very interesting and informative lecture about the archaeological relics of Islam.

On 17 October 1937, Sir Aga Khan III (Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah, 1877-1957) visited the Berlin Mosque and expressed great pleasure when he was told about the German translation of the Holy Qur’an.

On 22 October, the German Muslim Society called a special meeting to praise the great religious services of Maulana Sadr-ud-Din for the cause of Islam in Germany.

In February 1938, the *Eid al-Adha* sermon was delivered by Dr Nazeer-ul-Islam. A meeting of the German Muslim Society, under the presidency of Mr Khalid Zuyler, was held in the same month, in which Mr R. H. Goltmaz, a secretary in the German Government, delivered a remarkable lecture on “The Influence of the Religions of the World on the Nations of the World”.

The publication of the German translation of the Holy Qur’an was completed on 22 June 1939. On this occasion, at a special meeting, new German Muslims and others paid glowing tributes to the religious services rendered by Hazrat Maulana Sadr-ud-Din and Dr Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah in Germany.

Separate meetings for women were also held at under the auspices of the Mission, at which new German Muslim women took an active part. Most of the credit for organising these meetings went to Mrs Mahmudah Abdullah.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Unfortunately, the World War II broke out in September 1937 and Dr Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, being a British citizen, had to leave Berlin. He went first to Copenhagen, Denmark, before returning to his homeland.

During the World War II, the responsibility of the Mosque and Mission House was entrusted to an energetic and dedicated German Muslim lady, Mrs Amina Mosler (1895-1957). In the past, she, too, had participated in the activities of the Society. She had already founded the Women’s League through which she had done commendable welfare work in various fields. This pious lady faithfully and courageously looked after the Mission during the War and kept the Mosque alive in the most difficult conditions.

In 1941, the former *Mufi* of Palestine, Amin al-Hussaini, and the Prime Minister of Iraq fled to Berlin along with their Arab supporters. They attended the *Eid* congregations at the Mosque.

DAMAGES DURING WORLD WAR II

The contact between Berlin and the Central Anjuman at Lahore was severed until the end of the War. The vicious air attacks launched by the Allied and American forces on Berlin resulted in most of the city being destroyed. The Mission House, the dome and the minarets of the Mosque were badly damaged. Mrs Amina Mosler’s residence was completely destroyed but she and her son stayed in Berlin and obtained help from different quarters in clearing the rubble from the area of the Mosque after the fighting ceased. For a few months Berlin was completely under the control of Russian troops.

On Mrs Amina Mosler’s call for help in cleaning and doing the necessary repairs to the Mission House and the Mosque, the Russian representative sent twenty men for the job. Soon, however, this part of Berlin came under the control of the British army. The determination, courage and sincerity with which Mrs Mosler selflessly worked for the Mosque throughout this period are reflected in this report by *Reuters*, which was published on 12 August 1945 in the daily *Dawn* of Karachi:

“Berlin, August 12. *Reuters’* correspondent writes from Berlin: The Berlin Mosque, which was built by Indian Muslim missionaries in 1927, has survived the war but it has suffered substantial damage and the dome has also received several blows.

The Mosque is situated in the part of Berlin which is under the occupation of the British Government. The minaret from which the *muezzin* calls the faithful to prayer is absolutely safe.

Six sincere and dedicated women have managed to repair the Mosque after five weeks of effort and hard work so that the Mosque is now fit for the offering of prayers. Amina Mosler, a middle-aged German Muslim lady who has been looking after the Mosque during this time, said: 'The Mosque suffered little damage from the bombing and until the end of April, when fighting in the marketplaces and streets of Berlin started, it was in a quite satisfactory condition. Then the men of the S.S dug a trench in the garden of the Mosque and the Russian soldiers kept launching attacks from the graveyard of Wilmersdorfen. Many of the bombs hit the Mosque. When the fighting ceased, the corpses of fourteen men of the S.S lay in the Mosque.'

Mrs Amina Mosler described how she was engaged in the repair of the Mosque for five weeks: 'The greatest constraint we faced was the lack of capital because the Russian officials froze our bank account and we have not succeeded in drawing any money from the bank so far. During the War, there were six thousand members in our *Jama'at*. Most of them went away and only a few hundred remain now. We gather in the Mosque on Saturday evenings and on Sundays because Friday is a working day, and also, due to transport problems, the people cannot get together on Fridays. Until the Mosque was repaired we made arrangements for prayers in a room of our house. When the fighting around the Mosque stopped we put a huge red flag on the Mosque and wrote in bold letters that the Mosque was the property of British India so we did not have to face any trouble. The printing press, where we used to publish religious literature, was completely destroyed by the bombing.'

THE BERLIN MOSQUE SURVIVED AMONG THE RAVAGES OF THE WORLD WAR II

In August 1945, when the news that the Berlin Mosque was safe was heard for the first time through *Reuters*, the President of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement, Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali, made a passionate appeal for funds for the repair of the Mosque in the Urdu weekly organ of the Movement, *Paigham-i Sulh*, under the title "Congratulations to the Community". Excerpts from the English translation of the text are given below:

"Berlin has been destroyed – so utterly destroyed that the destruction of London and Warsaw and Stalingrad seem insignificant in comparison. Fire raged from its skies day and night. Hundreds of thousands of tons of bombs were dropped on it in succession for two or three years. At the end of this period... the Allied Forces assailed Berlin and razed its buildings to the ground so that the onlookers said that London was not ruined; it was Berlin that was destroyed. But today, *Reuters'* correspondent reports that in this ravaged city the Berlin Mosque stands alive.

An impoverished Community erected a House of God in the city of Berlin. This Community desired no publicity because nobody bothered to see what it had constructed. It kept on contributing its wealth for the construction of the House of God and kept praying with

humility: 'O our Lord, accept this humble effort on our behalf.' I still remember the spectacle. A handful of women were present at the Annual Conference. An appeal came from our missionary in Berlin that there were no funds left for the minarets. When I appealed to that handful of women, Allah opened their hearts and several thousand Rupees were collected from the few women of a small Community. So I congratulate my Community today that Allah, the Most High, has shown a clear sign that their sacrifice has been accepted and today *Reuters'* correspondent has announced to the whole world, something which was beyond our power, that in this devastated city, Allah has saved His House.

And the amazing thing is that the report also tells that although the dome and a minaret have suffered some damage, the minaret which the *muezzin* climbed to call the *Azaan* (the call for prayer) is unscathed. God's Name was raised from there. God has indeed shown a great sign... Allah has shown a tremendous sign in saving His House and has given remarkable evidence of His Power and His Existence as He showed the world in the past the sight of Divine protection for Prophet Abraham. The Holy Qur'an says: 'O fire, be (means of) coolness and peace for Abraham' (21:69). He has once again displayed to the world that whom He wants to save, is safeguarded even in a raging fire...

All praise be to Allah. Where are those Muslims, or those who had instigated the Muslims to destroy the Berlin Mosque because it was built by the members of the Ahmadiyya Movement? O Muslims! Look at your intentions and look at the will of God. You wanted to destroy it because it was constructed by a Community which was imbued with the spirit of serving Islam; God showed, by protecting it in the midst of blazing fire, that His Hand is with this Community, and with the holy Founder who entrusted the Community with this holy mission. Come, my friends, and prostrate yourselves before God with humility, for having made manifested such a great sign of His Power and His Omnipotence for such sinful and useless people as us. It is His mercy; we did nothing to deserve it, but there are no bounds to His appreciation. He has awarded so much recognition to such a trifling endeavour. Come, let us, too, thank Him for His mercy in displaying a miraculous sign, by taking a practical step forward... God has granted so much appreciation to your first effort; now increase the pace of your steps in the way of God ... Bring forth whatever you can so that we can all raise the Name of God in the world...

O affluent people! If you do not bring forth your wealth at my call, remember that you will regret it one day. Give your riches in the way of God for elevating the Name of God in the world; for conveying the last message of God as a sustenance for the world dying of spiritual hunger... And pray for the triumph of the religion of God with so much pain and anguish that your cries may reach the heavens."

For a few years after the end of the World War II, the *Anjuman* could not send an *Imam* from Pakistan. Mrs Amina Mosler, however, continued to look after the Mosque and the Mission House. During the War, the duties of the *Imam* were temporarily performed by Abdul Ghani Usman, a Tartar. The residence of the *Imam* was rented out to a Christian German couple Mr. & Mrs Herbert Gaedecke by Dr. Abdullah before he left Berlin in 1939 and the income from it was used to meet

the Mosque's expenses. Mr. Gaedecke was appointed by the Ministry to act as go between the Mosque community and the Nazi Regime. He was earmarked as the future ambassador in India but he did not make it. He died in 1945. The couple looked after the house very well.

Meetings of Yugoslavian Muslim volunteers and other gatherings were held at Mrs Mosler's house. During this period, around eight thousand Turks, Yugoslavians and Tartars were associated with the Berlin Mosque, of which six thousand were Yugoslavs. Friday congregational prayers and weekly gatherings on Sundays also took place regularly.

MR MUHAMMAD AMAN HOBOHM AS IMAM

In May 1949, Muhammad Aman Hobohm, a learned and zealous German Muslim belonging to the northern German city of Leubec, was appointed as the *Imam*. He stayed at Woking for about six months and received instructions from Dr S. M. Abdullah, then *Imam* of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, UK. On 14 May 1949, a special reception was held in Berlin presided over by Dr Abdullah. At this meeting, his appointment was officially announced and he was introduced to the local German Muslims and other notables of the city. The reception was attended by more than two hundred Muslims. Details of the reception were broadcast through *Reuters*. A report, together with a photograph and a brief history of the Mosque, was also published in the local press and Pakistani newspapers.

Mr Aman Hobohm was proficient in German and English, and he also knew Arabic, French and Latin. He started a magazine called *The Orient Post (Bareed-i Sharq)* from 1950-54 in three languages – Arabic, English and German – but due to financial constraints could not continue it. He served as *Imam* of the Berlin Mosque for almost four years, during which eighty-two Germans entered the fold of Islam.

In the beginning of 1959, Mr Abdul Aziz Khan of Zaida, Mardan was designated *Imam* of the Mosque. He had worked as General Secretary of the Central Ahmadiyya Anjuman, Lahore for a few years. Being an elderly person he could not cope up with the strain of the work and returned to Pakistan.

MAULANA MUHAMMAD YAHYA BUTT AS IMAM

Maulana Muhammad Yahya Butt (1924-2003), who was working as Assistant *Imam* of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, UK, since 1956 was appointed the *Imam* of the Berlin Mosque. A graduate in Arabic from Punjab University, Maulana Butt carried out the Mosque's activities in an organised manner. He soon obtained proficiency in the German language. Following is a brief resume of his work:

1. Talks were given at the Berlin Mosque after Friday prayer.
2. Lectures were held every Saturday.
3. Discussions were arranged with Christian students of Berlin University.
4. Lectures were given at the meetings of The All Churches Religious Organisation.
5. Talks were delivered at the Elphen Gelshey Academy of Berlin.
6. Lectures at various Muslim organisations.
7. A series of talks was broadcast on Radio *Reis*, Berlin. It included talks delivered on important occasions such as the Night of Majesty (*Lailatul Qadr*, the day the revelation of the Holy Qur'an started), Ascension of the Holy Prophet (*Mi'raaj*, *Eid al-Fitr* (end of the month of Fasting), and *Eid al-Adha*

(commemoration of the sacrifice of Ishmael by Prophet Abraham), etc. Later some of these talks were published in the form of booklets.

The topics dealt with in these booklets were: “Concept of Life and Death”, “The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, his Life and Mission”, “Basic Principles of Islam”, “Birthday of the Holy Prophet Muhammad”, “A Call to the Truth”, “The Status of Prophet Jesus in the light of the Bible and the Qur’an”, “The Path of Peace”, “The Message of Islam”, and “The Concept of the advent of Reformers in Islam”.

Maulana Butt served as *Imam* of the Berlin Mosque for more than twenty-seven years during which one hundred and seventy-five people entered the fold of Islam, among them a judge of the Berlin court and several German scholars.

GERMAN INFORMATION BULLETIN

In 1962, the *German Information Bulletin* published a brief history of the Mosque and some details about its activities under the title “The Beautiful Mosque of Berlin”. Some extracts are given below:

“Muslim tourists are awed by the spectacle of the beautiful Mosque in Berlin, the metropolis of ancient Germany. It is a pleasure of every citizen to take every newcomer to the city in his first leisure time and to visit this ... most magnificent Mosque. Muslims coming from Muslim countries experience a spiritual joy at this place as, standing shoulder to shoulder, they prostrate themselves before the Almighty. Its foundation stone was laid thirty years ago by a pious person, Maulana Sadr-ud-Din, who succeeded in completing it by his tireless efforts. This Mosque contributes to the repute and prestige of the city. It affords a practical example of the majesty and tolerance of Islam. When Germans visit the Mosque and talk about Christianity and ask the *Imam's* opinion about their views and ideas about Islam, the astonishing result has been that most of those who come to the Mosque with confused and prejudiced ideas about Islam (get a very rational and different view of Islam) and in some cases bid farewell to Christianity after they have had a talk with the *Imam* and return to their homes having entered the fold of Islam.”

GERMAN MUSLIM SOCIETY REVIVED

In the same year, the German Muslim Society was revived after a long time. Princess Mahpara Kadjarentaki of the Iranian Royal family was elected as its first president, but later on Maulana Butt took over as its head. Members of the Society were: Mr. Sencer Imer, Mr. Albrecht Boda, Mr. Mohammed Sabri, Mr. Sadig Beg Mirza and Mr. Ahmed Abu Arisheh. From 1982 to 1987 Maulana Butt's daughter, Miss Mansura Butt, was the secretary, and Syed Tanfus of Tunis the treasurer. [Mansura Butt did her M. Sc. in Economics at Berlin University. The topic of her thesis was “Interest-Free Banking in Pakistan”.]

BURIAL GROUND FOR MUSLIMS IN BERLIN

During the monarchy, William Caesar had given a parcel of land to the Turkish Government for a graveyard. It was under the control of the Turkish Consul General in Berlin. On several occasions, Muslims who were not Turkish faced difficulties in getting permission to bury their dead . Due to

the efforts of Maulana Butt and the Mayor of Berlin, the Federal Government allocated a separate piece of land for the burial of other Muslim inhabitants.

THE BIRTHDAY OF JESUS CHRIST

With the object of promoting an atmosphere of religious tolerance and mutual understanding between Muslims and Christians, the birthday of Jesus Christ was celebrated for the first time at the Berlin Mosque on 26 December 1964. It was presided over by the Mayor of Berlin, Mr William D. Jamseroy. After a recitation from the Holy Qur'an, Mr Kurt Aberhart, Secretary of the All Churches Religious Organisation, said:

“I have been invited by the *Imam* of the Mosque to read a passage from the Bible on the occasion of the birth of Christ. I am thankful to him for this and see it as a gesture of tolerance towards Christianity. This attitude is made even admirable by the fact that Islam has a different belief about Jesus Christ than that of Christianity. Muslims believe that Jesus was only a prophet, equal in status to the other prophets, such as Moses and Elias, mentioned in the Bible, and do not believe that he possessed any Divine attributes. In spite of this that Jesus and Mary have been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an more than once is noteworthy. But this still does not provide sufficient reason to celebrate the birthday of Jesus in a mosque. In this context, some other things are also thought-provoking. For instance, Islam counts Christianity among the religions of the world. I think that the *Imam* of the Mosque has set for us a good example by organising this gathering and it is my wish that Christianity should reciprocate by showing a much greater degree of tolerance for Islam than has been displayed up to this time. A good beginning was made by the Protestants and Catholics in the near past. The healthy start should be built upon. In Berlin, though different churches and the organisations of various Christian factions, we have provided an opportunity to the followers of different religions to get together to try to understand one another's views. I have mentioned these few facts in order to explain in detail the background of this inter-religious gathering which is being held in a mosque in connection with the birth of Jesus Christ.”

In 1970, Hazrat Maulana Sadr-ud-Din, the founder of Berlin Muslim Mission and the Berlin Mosque, who by this time was the Head of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement, visited the Berlin Mosque on his way back from a month-long tour of Trinidad, Guyana and Suriname. The Maulana was visiting this amazing landmark of his life after 33 years, as he had last visited it 1937 when he came to make final arrangements for the publication of the German translation of the Holy Qur'an.

In June 1977, Maulana Butt visited Muslim prisoners in the Berlin prison at the request of the Minister of the Judiciary. He spoke with them on different issues and presented some copies of the German translation of the Qur'an by Maulana Sadr-ud-Din.

POPE JOHN PAUL'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF RECONCILIATION TOWARDS MUSLIMS IN 1965

In September 1978, Maulana Butt met the Cardinal Secretary of Pope John Paul in a religious conference in Rome. One of the objects of this conference was to highlight the Pope's important

announcement of 1965 in which he had directed priests to modify their past attitude towards Muslims and to cultivate closer and exchange views with them on religious issues. First, the Cardinal Secretary expressed his views on the subject of religious tolerance, then Maulana Butt was invited to present the Islamic position. Some extracts from the Maulana's views are:

“We welcome this announcement of Pope John Paul about religious tolerance and would like to take this opportunity to state with pleasure that Islam has been practising religious tolerance for the past fourteen hundred years. Islam does not restrict itself to preaching tolerance only in words; it presents a practical example of tolerance which no religion has taught to this day. Tolerance is not just a policy in Islam; it is declared to be part of faith to believe that all religions and their founders are from God. It even goes a step further than this to state that not only is it essential to believe in all the messengers of God; if even a single messenger is denied, a Muslim becomes an infidel. This concept of Islamic tolerance not only links the followers of all religions in a spiritual relationship; it also provides a firm basis for bringing them closer and promoting better understanding among them.

There is so much respect and veneration among the Muslims for Jesus Christ and Mary that even in a remote village of the Muslim world, whose people are not even educated, when the names of these two religious personalities are mentioned, people bow down their heads in respect.”

In 1980, the *Imam* of the Berlin Mosque was invited to Tehran by the Revolutionary Council of Iran to participate in the celebrations of the anniversary of the Revolution.

On 7 May of the same year, a documentary entitled “Muslims in Germany” was shown on television, in which the Berlin Mosque and the endeavours of the Mission were briefly introduced and interviews of some German Muslims were shown. Some of those interviewed said that they had obtained information about Islam from the *Imam* of the Berlin Mosque.

During the same year, a renowned German publishing firm, Zie Benztryn, compiled articles written by Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrian, Baha'i, and Sufi religious leaders and scholars on the subject “What will happen after Death”. Twenty-four articles were written, of which eighteen were by Christians. The Islamic point of view was presented by the *Imam* of the Berlin Mosque, Maulana Muhammad Yahya Butt. It was later published in the form of a book.

SAEED AHMAD CHOUDHARY AS IMAM

In October 1987, Mr Saeed Ahmad Choudhary, a retired aircraft engineer with a passion to serve the cause of Islam, took charge of the Berlin Muslim Mission. The new *Imam* assessed the financial and organisational aspects of the Mission, especially the repairs that the Mosque and the Mission House required. His first priority was to generate funds for these urgent repairs. In this connection, he undertook an extensive tour of Lahore Ahmadiyya community in Holland and made vigorous efforts to collect funds. The response was very encouraging. Even some volunteers from the community came with material to do the urgent repair work manually.

During his tenure of 16 years (1987-2003) at the Mosque, his main thrust had been to encourage people of all faiths to visit the beautiful historic building. According to the records maintained

by the *Imam* during his time, about ten thousand visitors came to the Mosque. They included teachers, students from schools and universities, tourists, police officers, nursing staff and groups from various churches. Fifty-three persons from various nationalities entered the fold of Islam.

At one point, he was able to elicit the cooperation of four German Muslims to start a quarterly magazine, *Islam Heute* (Islam Today). Mr Ibrahim Schadow and Dr Franzen from Celle were mainly responsible for editing, printing and distributing this magazine.

In 1997, an international Lahore Ahmadiyya Convention was held at the Mosque and was attended by representatives from Pakistan, Holland, England, Suriname, the USA and Canada. The main object was to highlight the activities of the Mission and to launch a worldwide appeal for funds for the repairs of the Mosque and the Mission House. It was decided to declare the year 1996 as the “Year of the Berlin Mosque” in order to boost the campaign for collecting funds.

Due to health reasons, Saeed Ahmad Choudhary relinquished the work of the Mission towards the end of January 2004.

MR. RIAZ AHMAD CHOUDHARY AS IMAM

In February 2004, Mr Riaz Ahmad Choudhary, a law graduate, took charge. Unfortunately, he had a rough time. A young man first tried to attack him in the Mission House by entering the drawing room through the back door. Again, he tried to assault Mr Choudhary while he was on the street. The police provided a regular watch of the area and the matter was eventually settled. Mr Choudhary led the Friday prayers and attended to visitors. He also made some improvements at the Mission House. The extreme cold of winter, however, was unbearable for him and he left for Pakistan by July 2005.

MR. MUHAMMAD ALI AS IMAM

Mr Muhammad Ali, an IT programmer from Rawalpindi, got a job in a German firm in Berlin. Luckily he got a flat on the Berliner Strasse, which was within walking distance from the Mosque. While working, he also attended classes and attained proficiency in German language. During the time of Ch. Saeed Ahmad and later of Ch. Riaz Ahmad, Mr Ali used to help the work at the Mosque, deliver brief talks in German on Open Days, and also spent most of his weekends at the Mosque.

In July 2005, this devoted young man took over the charge. After almost 20 years, there was now a young man who was fluent in German heading the Mission. He worked voluntarily for almost five years, during which he took great interest in all aspects of the Mission House and the Mosque. He tried his best to give a new look to the Mission House.

During his period, Mr Khalid Iqbal and Mr Nasir Ahmad from the UK provided support. The basement was thoroughly cleared, and old and unwanted items were cleared. Copies of *Moslemische Revue*, *Orient Post* and other books, booklets and files were arranged. More importantly, copies of *Moslemische Revue* and *Orient Post* were scanned and placed on the Ahmadiyya Anjuman’s website, lahore.ahmadiyya.org. Later on, through the kind help of Dr Gerdien Jonker, a well-known writer and research scholar of Berlin, the missing issues of the *Moslemische Revue* were

scanned from the Central Library, Berlin and added to the special section “Berlin Mission” on the website:lahore.ahmadiyya.org.

Mr Ali, from his own sources, tried to tidy and provide facilities in the kitchen and the office: the boiler for heating the premises of the Mission House was replaced; the wallpaper in the drawing room and the kitchen was changed; the drawing room, the kitchen and all the windows were painted; new linoleum was laid in the kitchen and front entrance corridor; and a new printer and an internet connection installed in the office.

There is an entrance to the left side of the Mission House that was without doors, maybe since World War II. It was through this entrance that the assailant had entered the back garden, and, breaking the door of the drawing room, had tried to attack Ch. Riaz Ahmad. A new wooden door was put in and a peephole added in the front door. A sensor light was also fixed on the right wall of the Mission House, and a green tube light installed above the main entrance of the Mosque, which not only sheds light at the entrance but also makes the front of the Mosque visible from a distance.

Unfortunately, due to his mother’s ill health, Mr Muhammad Ali had to leave for Pakistan in April 2010 to look after her.

GERMAN FOUNDATION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ANCIENT MONUMENTS

One major breakthrough was obtaining the cooperation of a well-known voluntary German organisation which helps fund the maintenance of old historic buildings. This prestigious private organisation, Deutsche Stiftung Denkmalschutz or DSD (German Foundation for the Conservation of Ancient Monuments), held a very successful joint gathering at the Mosque on the two Open Days in Nov. 2008 and April 2009. Its young and energetic president, Mr Gunter Paetz, and his colleague, Ms Anika Probst worked very hard. They sent special invitations to more than 200 members of the organisation. More than 800 people turned up.

The Mission had hoped that with the help of this organisation and the Monument Department sufficient funds would be available for the repairs of the Mosque.

MR. YASIR AZIZ FROM SWEDEN

From May 2010 to October 2011, Mr Yasir Aziz came from Sweden at various intervals to look after the Mosque and the Mission House. In all, he stayed for one year.

MR. SHEIKH MUHAMMAD KHALID IQBAL

On two occasions, between 2010-2011, Mr S M Khalid Iqbal from Woking officiated as Imam voluntarily at the Mosque.

One night in January 2011, some miscreant attempted to burn down the Mission House. Fortunately, the fire was extinguished and only the front door suffered damage. Almost all the local newspapers such as *Die Spiegel* covered the incident. The police investigated the matter. Within a week the culprit was arrested. It was discovered that he was responsible also for attacking a Turkish mosque in the area on the same night. The door of the Mission House was repainted and a new peephole installed in it by Mr Khalid Iqbal.

Mr Khalid Iqbal also stayed at the Mission House in November 2013 for one month when Mr Ahmed Saadat went to Pakistan on leave. He led the *Eid al-Adha* congregation and was there when the Monument Department carried out an assessment of the repair work in the Mosque.

SOME IMPORTANT PUBLICATIONS IN GERMAN

During this period, Mr Manfred Backhausen, a sincere and scholarly friend of the Mosque, also volunteered his services. Even though he lived in Pulheim, Cologne, he contributed a great deal to the management of the Mosque and the Mission House, as well as producing two publications: *Brief history of the Berlin Mosque and Mission*, and *The Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement in Europe*. He worked very hard to collect material, including rare photographs, and added valuable footnotes and references. The latter publication is a voluminous research work and is now more commonly known as *The Blue Book*, as its title is blue. He assisted Mr Ali on important events and arranged history of the Mosque and Mission in a very descriptive and impressive way to the groups and audience. He also translated two booklets, *The Will* by the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement and *Janazah Salaah* by Mr. Nasir Ahmad into German.

MR. AHMED SAADAT AS ACTING IMAM

Mr Ahmed Saadat took over the management of the Mosque and Mission House in January 2011, and except for the period between July 2011 and February 2012, has been serving in that position. He has been managing visitors, the Friday service, the two annual *Eids*, and other special days such as the Long Night of Religions, European Heritage Day, and Open Day. Attendance on Friday congregational prayers, five daily prayers and other events have been very encouraging. The activities at the Mosque are published in the local dailies. During the last two years, three TV teams covered the activities at the Mosque. One company, which is attached to *Al-Jazeera*, showed the video during Ramadan 2013. This was in Arabic. The other video was in German and was shown on the local TV channel. The third TV coverage was by a Russian based channel. They were covering views of responsible people of Muslim centres about public preaching near pubs, churches and market places., which was causing public annoyance and tension. The Mosque has become the focus of attention for visitors from Europe, and countries as far as Poland, Ukraine, Bosnia, Egypt, Palestine, Israel, the Middle East and the West Indies.

This is the first and oldest and most beautiful mosque in Berlin, and because of its architectural beauty and Mughal design is called the “Mini Taj Mahal”. This year, 2014, makes it 90 years old, and its anniversary will be celebrated on 25 and 26 October 2014.

DR GERDIEN JONKER AND MR CHRISTIAN FESSEL: TWO VALUABLE “FRIENDS OF THE MOSQUE”

In recent years we are fortunate to have two very able and professional friends of the Mosque. They are Dr. Gerdien Jonker and Mr. Christian Fessel. The former has worked day and night to dig up primary sources pertaining to the history of the Mosque in interwar Germany, among them remains of the mosque archive lying in the basement since 1930's, as well as correspondences in various national and private archives.

She went to Switzerland to see the private archive of late Dr. Hamid Marcus in the Zuercher Zentralbibliothek, Zurich and brought copies of correspondence such as exchanged between Maulana Sadr-ud-Din, Maulana Aftab-ud-Din Ahmad, Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking (UK) and Mirza Masud Beg, General Secretary of the Central Ahmadiyya Anjuman, Lahore.

Some of these letters were written from the Mosque to various German Muslims who entered the fold of Islam, contributed articles to the *Moslemische Revue* and helped Maulana Sadr-ud-Din, the Founder of the Berlin Mosque and Mission and Dr. S. M. Abdullah who was Imam and editor of the *Moslemische Revue* from 1928 -1939. The finds shed new light on our Mission as it was given shape in the interwar period. They also allow for a re-appraisal of Dr. Hamid Marcus, a well-known German scholar and writer, who, because of his Jewish origin, was forced to leave Berlin for Switzerland in 1939. Dr. Marcus was main contributor to the *Moslemische Revue* and also helped in the revision of the German translation of the Holy Qur'an by Maulana Sadr-ud-Din.

Dr. Jonker has also worked hard on the pile of old books in various languages lying at the Mosque and Mission House since the time of Dr. S. M. Abdullah. She discovered how Dr. Abdullah numbered and categorised books under different subjects. She has not only re-arranged them but turned the find in a comprehensible story about the way in which this missionary collected books and, through them, made sense of the world around him.

Dr. Jonker is a scholar in the History and Ethnography of Religion. Her research publications in German, French and English include books and articles on (1) Institutionalising Islam in Europe, (2) Death and Mourning, (3) Sufism, and (4) the History of the Ahmadiyya Mission in Europe. In recent years she has also delivered several talks about the impact of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam at Woking (England) and Ohio (USA) and in different academic forums in continental Europe.

Mr Christian Fessel, is a professional cinematographer and a photographer with a natural aptitude for professionalism. He uses his skill with an unusual aesthetic sense and instils captivating beauty into his photography. He works with an enviable passion.

A casual visit to the Mosque about three years ago had a lasting effect on his mind and he is now a great "Friend of the Mosque". So far, he has made more than 60 stills of the Mosque, the Mission House, related buildings, and the surroundings connected with the history of the Mosque. He has at times taken risk of climbing the narrow and steep iron stairs of the minaret and even went onto the roof the Mosque to capture panoramic view of the Mosque and its surroundings. His still photos of the inside of the Mosque are captivating and highlight exquisite combination of different colours and artistic design of the arches. He covers all important events at the Mosque, such as the Open Days, Long Nights and European Heritage Days. He has started work recently on a documentary about the Mosque, which, it is hoped, will present reconstruction of the history of the Mosque and will also bring out the hidden "Mini Taj Mahal" into a living reality.

SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION BY THE MONUMENT DEPARTMENT OF BERLIN

During the World War II, the Berlin Mosque, its two minarets and Mission House were badly damaged. Initially some very urgent repairs were done by the Central Anjuman in Lahore. During mid 1970's Monument Department contributed Euro 325,000.00 towards its repairs. Most probably it was for urgent repairs inside the Mosque and making old heating system working.

But major work for replacing the dome, re-constructing the two minarets to its original height, plastering of the outer walls of the Mosque and the Mission house and renovation of kitchen and the two bathrooms – one upstairs and the other downstairs – in the Mission house, required huge amount. For this purpose late head of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement, Dr. K. B. Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan entrusted the work of negotiating the deal with the Monument Department to Mrs. Samina Malik and Dr. Nouman Malik of the USA Branch. Contracts for phases I and II were entered into in 1995 and phase III in 1996. Overall percentage of contribution of the total cost borne by the Lahore Central Ahmadiyya Anjuman was 10%. This amount comes to approximately \$248,000.00 of which major portion was paid by the USA branch. The amount paid or arranged by the Monument Department was \$752,000.00. Our special thanks go to late Mr Juegren Lampaitl (Architect) and Mr. Wendtland (Contractor) of the Monument Department for accomplishing renovation and repairs. The former put in lot of effort and showed keen interest in completing various phases and obtaining funds and contributions. We also express our gratitude to Mrs. Samina Malik and Dr. Nouman Malik for arranging payments in time and also for supervising the work. For this purpose both made frequent visits to Berlin, arranged interpreters to negotiate with the Monument Department and the contractors.

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ISLAM stands for: I SHALL LOVE ALL MANKIND