

The Grand Prophecy of the Eclipses

The advent of the promised Mahdi (guided one) and the lunar and solar eclipses

culled from the essay written by
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The coming of a great Divine Reformer in the Latter Days has been predicted in the holy scriptures of various religions. I propose to discuss a very remarkable prophecy made by our lord and master, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, which helps a seeker after truth in recognizing him. According to this prophecy:

lunar and solar eclipses on the specified dates of the month of Ramazan would serve as Signs of his advent.

Hazrat Ali bin Umar Albaghdadi Ad-Darqutni, an eminent authority on Hadees, who lived from 918 to 995 of Christian Era (306 to 385 Hijri), had recorded of the following Hadees narrated by Hazrat Imam Baqar Muhammad bin Ali, son of Hazrat Imam Zainul Abedeen (may Allah have mercy on them):

"For Our Mahdi there are two Signs which have never appeared before since the creation of the heavens and the earth, namely, the moon will be eclipsed on the first night in Ramazan (i.e. on the first of the nights on which a lunar eclipse can occur) and the sun will be eclipsed on the middle day (i.e.; on the middle one of the days on which a solar eclipse can occur), and these Signs have not appeared since God created the heavens and the earth."

(Sunan Darqutni, kitabul eidain, chapter: salat-ul-kasoof-ul khasoof wa haitahuma)

These Signs are mentioned in the collections of Hadees of both Sunni and Shia sects. Eminent Muslim scholars have been quoting these Signs in their books. This prophecy is recorded in several sacred books, some of them are mentioned below.

1. Fatawa Hadisiya by Allama Sheikh Ahmad Shahabuddin Ibn Hijrul Haismi.
2. Ikmal-ud-din
3. Beharul Anwar
4. Hejajul Kirama by Nawab Siddeeq Hassan Khan
5. Maktoobaat-e-Imam Rabbani Mujaddid Alf-e-Sani

6. Qiyamat Nama Farsi by Hazrat Shah Rafeeuddin Muhaddis of Delhi
7. Aqaedul Islam by Maulana Abdul Haq Muhaddis of Delhi
8. Iqtirabus Saa't by Nawab Sideeq Hassan Khan
9. Ahwalul Akhirat by Hafiz Muhammad of Lakhoke. etc.

The Hadees is strengthened by the fact that the Holy Quran mentions eclipses as important Signs of the approach of Resurrection. The Holy Quran says:

"And the moon is eclipsed. And the sun and the moon are brought together." (Al-Qiyamah [75:9-10](#))

The root of the prophecy thus lies in the Holy Quran and the Hadees elucidates the verses of the Holy Quran and gives valuable details.

In the *New Testament*, Jesus, peace be on him, narrating the Signs of his second coming said:

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light." (Matthew 24:29)

Mahatma Surdasji has mentioned the prophecy that when Kalki Autar would appear, the moon and the sun would be eclipsed. He wrote:

"Both the moon and the sun will be eclipsed and there will be much violence and death."

In the holy book of the Sikhs, **Sri Guru Garanth Sahib**, it is written:

"When Maharaj will come as Nahkalank, the sun and the moon will be his helpers."

In short, books of other religions also mention of the Signs of the sun and the moon. In the Hadees of Darqutni, quoted earlier, much detail is given, which we shall discuss subsequently.

Lunar and Solar eclipses in the light of the laws of nature

Lunar and solar eclipses are phenomena which occur according to the laws of nature. The Holy Quran has repeatedly drawn our attention to natural phenomena. A discussion of the astronomical background is therefore appropriate and relevant. It helps in understanding the Hadees. The earth, the sun and the moon form a system of three bodies. The Holy Quran has referred to this system in a very beautiful way as follows:

"Holy is HE Who created all things in pairs, of what the earth grows and of themselves, and of what they know not. And a Sign for them is the night from which WE strip off the

day, and lo ! they are left in darkness. And the sun is moving on to its determined goal. That is the decree of the Almighty, the All-Knowing God. And for the moon WE have appointed stages, till it becomes again like an old dry twig of a palm-tree. It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day. All of them float smoothly in an orbit" (Ya Sin 36: 37-41)

Five verses of the Holy Quran have been quoted here. In the first verse a fundamental fact has been mentioned that Almighty God has created all things in pairs. The second verse refers to the night and the day, which arise from the motion of the earth. The third verse refers to the motion of the sun and the fourth refers to the motion of the moon. In the fifth verse, the sun, the moon, the night and the day, are all mentioned together, and attention is drawn to the fact that the movements of the sun and the moon have their limits.

We learn from science that the earth and the moon move around each other and complete a revolution in one month, they form a pair. The earth and the moon jointly move around the sun and complete a revolution in one year. Thus the sun and earth-moon system form another pair. In the solar system there are numerous pairs within pairs. The sun with all its planets and their satellites moves around the center of the Galaxy completing a revolution in about two hundred million years. Like our sun, there are billions of stars in our Galaxy which move around the center of the Galaxy with different periods. Holy is He Who created all things in pairs.

When the moon in the course of its motion around the earth, comes between the sun and earth in such a way that it prevents the light of the sun from reaching the earth, we have a solar eclipse; and when the earth comes between the sun and the moon in such a way that its shadow falls on the moon, we have a lunar eclipse. In astronomical terminology, we say that a solar eclipse occurs at new moon and a lunar eclipse occurs at full moon. At the time of the new moon, the longitudes of the sun and the moon are the same and the moon is said to be in conjunction. An eclipse does not occur at every new moon and full moon because for the occurrence of an eclipse it is necessary that the sun, the earth and the moon should be aligned. If the earth's orbit around the sun and the moon's orbit around the earth, were in the same plane, there would have been alignment twice every month, and hence there would have been one lunar eclipse and one solar eclipse every month. Actually the two orbital planes are inclined to each other by an angle of about five degrees, on account of which the maximum number of eclipses in a solar year does not exceed seven (four or five being solar and three or two being lunar). The minimum number of eclipses which can occur in a year is two, both being solar. For further details, see books on Spherical Astronomy.

The motion of the moon is quite complicated. To a first approximation, the moon moves around the earth in an elliptic orbit, on account of which its distance from the earth and its speed vary within certain limits. When the moon is closest to the earth it is said to be at perigee. The speed of the moon with respect to the earth is greatest when it is at perigee. On account of the gravitational attraction of the sun, the position of the perigee changes in space. Thus sometimes the moon moves faster in the early part of the month

and sometimes it moves faster in latter part. Likewise the distance and velocity of the earth-moon pair with respect to the sun also changes within certain limits in accordance with the law of gravitation. As the Holy Quran says:

"The sun and the moon run their courses according to a fixed reckoning" (Al-Rahman 55:6)

The changes in the distances and velocities of the bodies have their effects on the dates on which the eclipses can occur.

Astronomers take the time of conjunction as the beginning of the lunar month. At that time the moon cannot be seen at all. The month of the Islamic Calendar (Hijri) begins with the first sighting of the lunar crescent, i.e.: when the phase of the moon becomes big enough to be visible. An excellent book dealing with the problem of the first visibility of the lunar crescent, has been written by Dr. Muhammad Ilyas. (*A modern Guide to astronomical Calculations of Islamic Calendar, Times & Qibla. Published by Berita Publishing Kuala Lumpur 1984*)

If the Hijri Calendar is used, the dates on which a lunar eclipse can occur are 13, 14 and 15; and the dates on which a solar eclipse can occur are 27, 28 and 29. According to the prophecy, the lunar eclipse would occur on the first night and the solar eclipse would occur on the middle day in the month of Ramazan. This fixes the 13th of Ramazan for the lunar eclipse and the 28th of Ramazan for the solar eclipse.

In the Hadees, the word Qamar is used for the moon and not Hilal. The crescent of the first, second and third nights, is called Hilal while Qamar denotes the moon from the fourth night onward. (Aqrabul Mawarid vol. 2) Hence the interpretation that the first night Ramazan implies the 13th of Ramazan and not the first of Ramazan, is also supported by the word Qamar used in the Hadees, thus leaving no ambiguity.

The advent of the Promised Mahdi, peace be on him, and fulfillment of the prophecy

I shall now discuss how the prophecy of the Hadees was fulfilled.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India, peace be on him, was born in the year 1835 of the Christian Era. He was a model of extraordinary righteousness. Profound love for the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was the salient feature of his personality. He was grieved to see the onslaughts against Islam by its critics and the poor spiritual condition of the Muslims. He dedicated himself to the service of Islam and prayed fervently for the spiritual regeneration of the world. His epoch-making work Braheen-e- Ahmadiyya published in four volumes from 1880 to 1884 is a masterpiece in which are discussed the truth of Islam and the excellence of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

Hazrat Ahmad, peace be on him, had the privilege of being recipient of Divine revelation from 1876 until 1908 when he passed away. In 1882 he received his first revelation regarding his appointment as Divine Reformer through the following words:

"Allah bless thee O Ahmad. It was not thou who didst throw but it was Allah Who did throw. The Most Gracious One has taught thee the Quran so that thou shouldst warn the people whose ancestors have not been warned and that the way of the guilty ones might become manifest. Proclaim; I have been commissioned and I am the first of the believers." (Braheen-e-Ahmadiyya, vol. 3)

He also received the following revelation:

"Tell them I have with me testimony from Allah, then will you believe? Tell them I have with me testimony from Allah, then will you submit?" (Braheen-e-Ahmadiyya, vol. 3)

In obedience to Divine command he declared that he is the Mujaddid (Reformer) of the 14th century of the Islamic era. Later on the 23rd of March 1889, under Divine command, he took the first oath of allegiance at Ludhiana and thus formed the Ahmadiyya Community. Hazrat Al-Haj Hafiz Maulvi Hakim Nooruddin, who later became his First Successor, had the honour to be the first person to take the oath of allegiance. On the same day, forty persons swore allegiance to the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, peace be on him, and solemnly promised that they would give priority to religion over worldly affairs.

Towards the end of 1890 C.E Almighty Allah revealed to him that Prophet Jesus, peace be on him, had died and the prophecy of his second advent was to be fulfilled by a person like Jesus, and that he was the Promised Messiah. Among the revelations, which he received to this effect, was the following:

"The Messiah, son of Mary, prophet of Allah, had died and in his attribute thou hast come in accordance with the promise. And the promise of Allah was bound to be fulfilled." [Tazkirah, revelations of the Promised Messiah, peace be on him]

After receiving this explanation from Almighty God, Hazrat Ahmad, peace be on him, claimed in 1891 to be the promised Messiah and Mahdi whose advent as prophesied by the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Hazrat Ahmad, peace be on him, also gave arguments in support of his claim and wrote books, *Fatah-Islam* (Victory of Islam), *Tauzih-Maram* (Explanation of Objectives) and *Izalai-Auham* (Removal of Suspensions). He asserted that Almighty God had sent him to give spiritual life to the people. The contemporary theologians rejected his claims and he met a storm of very violent opposition.

In his book *Noorul Haq* (Light of Truth) Part I, written in Arabic and published in early 1894, Hazrat Ahmad, the Promised Mahdi, peace be on him, made the following humble supplications:

Translation:

"Judge between us and our people with justice for Thou are the Best of those who judge. O God! Please send thy succour for me from the heaven and help Thy servant in the time of adversity" [Roohani Khazain vol. 8, p. 6]

Among the objection raised against him was also the one that the prophecy pertaining to the eclipses of the sun and moon has not been fulfilled. Then Almighty God manifested this heavenly Sign in the year 1311 Hijri (1894 C.E) when the lunar and solar eclipses occurred over Qadian on the specified dates of Ramazan in fulfillment of the grand prophecy of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. The lunar eclipse occurred after sunset on the 13th of Ramazan (March 21, 1894) and the solar eclipse occurred on Friday, the 28th of Ramazan (April 6, 1894). Apart from the almanacs, there was mention of the eclipses in the Indian newspapers of the time Azad and Civil and Military Gazette. Even now, the dates (of the Christian era) for these eclipses can be confirmed from Oppolzer's Canon of Eclipses by Prof. T. R Von Oppolzer, Dover Publications New York, 1962. And Nautical Almanac, London of 1894. The calculations based on the position of the moon show that the lunar dates of the eclipses correspond to the 13th and the 28th of Ramazan.

Characteristics of the eclipses of Ramazan 1311 Hijri (March - April 1894)

Soon after the celestial Signs were witnessed, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, peace be on him, wrote the book Noorul Haq (Light of Truth) Part II, which is devoted to an extremely enlightening discussion of the accurate fulfillment of the splendid prophecy of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. In this book, he explained in the light of Divine revelation that the true interpretation of the Hadees is that in the time of the Mahdi, the Moon will be eclipsed in the first of the three nights on which a lunar eclipse can occur i.e.; on the 13th of Ramazan, and the sun will be eclipsed on the middle day out of the days on which a solar eclipse can occur, i.e. on the 28th of Ramazan.

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi, peace be on him, drew attention to several properties of the eclipses which make the Signs very impressive. He pointed out that the word first and middle used in the Hadees were fulfilled in two ways, with regard to date as well as with regard to time. Not only did the lunar eclipse occur on the first of the three nights but also it occurred in the beginning of the night in Qadian. The solar eclipse not only occurred on the middle day but also occurred in the forenoon in Qadian. It did not occur early in the morning and it was over before noon. The word 'nisf' used in the Hadees also means half. According to Calcutta Standard Time, the lunar eclipse was visible in India in the evening between 7 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. and solar eclipse was visible in India in the forenoon between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Aided by divine revelation, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, peace be on him elucidated the deeper meaning of the Hadees as follows:

"So the right interpretation and the true meaning of the expression 'lunar eclipse will occur in the first night of Ramazan' are that it will occur in the first of the three full-moon nights and you know the expression white nights. In addition to this there is also a hint that when the lunar eclipse occurs in the first full-moon night, it will occur in the beginning of the night and not after a lapse of time as will be clear to an enlightened person. And the lunar eclipse did occur accordingly and many had seen it in this country" [Noorul Haq, Part II]

With regard to the solar eclipse, he stated:

"The saying that the sun will be eclipsed in the middle, implies that the solar eclipse will manifest itself in such a way that it will divide the days of the eclipse into two halves. It will occur in the second day of the eclipse and its time will not exceed the first half of the day because that is the limit of the half. So just as Almighty God ordained that the lunar eclipse should occur in the first night, so also He ordained that the solar eclipse should occur in the eclipse days in the time specified by half. So it happened as predicted. And Almighty God does not reveal His secrets to anyone except to those whom He chooses for the reformation of the world. Hence there is no doubt that this Hadees is from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, who is the best of all messengers." [Nooral Haq Part II]

It may also be noted that both the lunar and solar eclipses were visible from India. A lunar eclipse can be seen from more than half the earth's sphere but a solar eclipse is visible from a much smaller area. It often happens that a solar eclipse is only seen from a sparsely populated area or over an ocean. The solar eclipse of April 6, 1894, was visible from a vast area of Asia including India. Professor T. R. Von Oppolzer has given details of the present and future lunar and solar eclipses from 1208 B.C to 2161 C.E in his book Canon of Eclipses. He has shown by means of maps the paths of only the prominent solar eclipses; i.e.; those of annular, annular-total and total categories. The path of the solar eclipse of 6th April 1894 is included in Oppolzer's map (Chart 148). The Nautical Almanac of 1894 has also shown the path of this eclipse by a map. It can be seen from both these sources that the path of this eclipses passes through India.

The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, and his companions, saw this eclipse from Qadian. The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, stated that people should ponder over this fact that the sign was manifested in his country. He thus wrote as follow: "O servants of God, ponder and think. Do you consider it permissible that the Mahdi should be born in the countries of Arabia and Syria and his Sign should be manifested in our country; and you know that the wisdom of God does not separate the Sign from the person for whom the Sign is meant. Then how could it be possible that the Mahdi should be in the East but his sign should be in the West. And this should be sufficient for you if you are really seekers after truth." [Noorul Haq Part II]

In short the prophecy of our beloved master, the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was fulfilled with great accuracy in a most elegant manner.

"...So blessed is Allah, the Best of creators." [Al-Mu'minun 23:15]

Sir Isaac Newton had discovered the law of gravitation in the 17th century of the Christian era. Detailed astronomical calculations of the eclipses were not possible before this discovery. But our lord and master, the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, made such an amazing prophecy on the basis of the knowledge he acquired directly from the omniscient God. I cannot conceive a better heavenly sign than this for indicating the advent of the Promised Messiah, peace be on him.

Congratulations from the Promised Messiah and Mahdi on the fulfillment of the prophecy

The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, was thrilled by the fulfillment of the grand prophecy of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Replete with gratitude to Almighty God for His magnificent favour, he wrote a poem in Arabic.

The meaning in English of some of the verses are as follows:

*Glad tidings to you O community brothers.
Congratulations to you O community friends.*

*The brilliance of God's bounty has become manifest.
And the way is opened for the person who can see.*

*And a prophecy of glad tidings of the Chief Prophet of Allah.
Have been fulfilled in such a pure way that there is no blemish in it.*

*Today every enlightened person is weeping.
In remembrance of the bounties of Almighty Allah.*

*And in acknowledgment of the fulfillment of the prophecy of our prophet.
And are reflecting upon the Greatness of Allah, the real Benefactor.*

*Today every person who has pledged allegiance
Has increased so much in faith as though he has acquired a new faith.*

This is a long poem which ends with the verse;

O my Lord, bless this for the sake of the countenance of Muhammad.
Who is the best of all the noble and purest of all the pure.

The second pair of eclipses of Ramazan 1312 Hijri (March 1895)

According to another Hadees:

"The sun will be eclipsed twice in Ramazan before the advent of Mahdi." [Mukhtasir Tazkira Al-Qurtabi p.148 by Alqutbur Rabbani Skeikh Abdul Wahab Sherani]

In the following year 1895 C.E lunar and solar eclipses again occurred in the month of Ramazan on the 11th of March and the 26th of March respectively. These eclipses occurred in the West. They were not visible from Qadian, but when the eclipses occurred, the dates in Qadian were the 13th and the 28th of Ramazan respectively. The date of an eclipse can differ with the place.

The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, made mention of these eclipses also in his book Haqiqatul Wahi. He wrote as follows:

"As stated in another Hadees, this eclipse occurred twice in Ramazan first in this country and then in America, and on both occasion it occurred on the same date. Since at the time of the eclipse there was no claimant on earth of Mahdi Ma'hood (Reformer of the Time) and since nobody else declared this eclipse as his sign and published hundreds of pamphlets and books in Urdu, Persian and Arabic, this heavenly sign is for me. Another proof of this is the fact twelve years before this sign occurred, Almighty God had informed me that such a sign would occur and this news which is stated in Braheen-e-Ahmadiyya was announced to hundreds of thousands of people before the sign was manifested." [Haqiqatul Wahi p. 195]

Answer to the objection that lunar and solar eclipses have occurred many times in Ramazan

Objections have been raised that lunar and solar eclipses have occurred in the month of Ramazan several times and hence these could not be a reasonable criterion for the recognition of a Divine Messenger. It is true that, both eclipses have occurred in the same month of Ramazan many times but it is important to note that the Hadees makes mention of specific dates and the presence of the claimant is a vital part of the prophecy. The words '----Arabic----' [which has never appeared before since the creation of the heavens and the earth] used in the Hadees clearly show that the prophecy is highly significant.

Furthermore, the presence of the claimant is a necessary condition for the fulfillment of the prophecy. The words of the Hadees 'our Mahdi' make it clear that this Sign is for the benefit of the Mahdi. Mere occurrence of the eclipses without the claimant are of no significance.

The words '----Arabic----' [which has never appeared before since the creation of the heavens and the earth] in the Hadees, imply that such a sign never occurred before. They do not imply that such eclipses never occurred before. The Promised Messiah, said:

"We are not concerned with how often solar and lunar eclipses have occurred in the month of Ramazan from the beginning of the world till today. Our aim is only to mention that from the time man has appeared in this world, solar and lunar eclipses have occurred as Signs only in my age for me. Prior to me, no one had this circumstances that on one hand he claimed to be Mahdi Mauood (Promised Reformer) and on the other, in the month of Ramazan, on the appointed dates, lunar and solar eclipses occurred and he declared the eclipses as signs in his favour. The Hadees of Darqutni does not say at all that solar and lunar eclipses did not occur ever before, but it does clearly say that such eclipses never occurred earlier as Signs, because the word 'lum takuna' is used which denotes feminine gender; this implies that such a Sign was never manifested before. If it was meant that such eclipses never occurred before 'lum yakuna' which denotes masculine gender was needed and not 'lum takuna' which denoted feminine gender. It is clear from this that the reference is to the two signs because signs are of feminine gender. Hence if anybody thinks that many times lunar and solar eclipse have occurred, it is his responsibility to show the claimant to Mahdi who declared the solar and lunar eclipses as his sign and this proof should be certain and conclusive and this can only happen if a book of the claimant is produced who claimed to be Mahdi Ma'hood and had written that the lunar and solar eclipses which occurred in Ramazan on the dates specified in Darqutni are the Signs of my truth. In short we are not concerned with the mere occurrence of solar and lunar eclipses even if they had been thousands of times. As a Sign this has happened at the time of a claimant only once and the Hadees has proved its authenticity and truth through its fulfillment at the time of the claimant to Mahdi."
 [Chashma-e-Marifat, p. 315]

The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, further said:

"As a matter of fact, since Adam to the present time, nobody ever made a prophecy like this. The prophecy has four aspects: (1) the occurrence of the lunar eclipse on the first of the eclipse nights. (2) the occurrence of the solar eclipse on the middle of the eclipse days, (3) the occurrence in the month of Ramazan and (4) the presence of the claimant who has been rejected. Hence if the greatness of this prophecy is denied, then show a parallel to it in the world, and until a parallel cannot be found, this prophecy ranks foremost among all those prophecies to which the verse 'fla yuzhar ala ghaibehi ahada' can be applied, because it is stated here that from the time of Adam to the end, it has no parallel." [Tohfa-e-Golarviya, p. 29]

The challenge of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (peace be upon him)

The Promised Messiah, peace be upon him, also gave a challenge with a reward of one thousand rupees to any one who could show that such a Sign had occurred earlier. He stated as follows:

"Are you not afraid to deny the Hadees of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, even though its truth has become as manifest as the bright sun? Can

you present a Sign like this in any age in the past. Do you read in any book that some person claimed to be from Almighty God and then in his time in Ramazan, the lunar and solar eclipses occurred as you have now seen? If you are aware then relate it and you will get one thousand rupees as a reward if you can show. So prove it and take this reward and I make Almighty God a witness. And if you cannot prove, and you will never be able to prove, then guard against the Fire which is prepared for those who create disorder." [Nooral Haq Part II]

Declaration on oath by the Promised Messiah and Mahdi

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi, peace be on him, also declared on oath that he is the Promised Divine Messenger and that the lunar and solar eclipses are Divine Signs for him. He stated as follows:

"In my age only in the month of Ramazan, eclipses of the sun and the moon occurred; in my age in accordance with the authentic sayings of the Holy Prophet and the Holy Quran and earlier Books, there was plague all over the country, and in my age only new mode of transport, namely railways came into existence and in my age only, as per my prophecies, terrible earthquakes came. Does not then righteousness demand that one should not be bold in denying my. Look! I swear by Almighty God and say that thousands of signs for establishing my truth have been manifested, are being manifested and will be manifested. If this were a man's plan, never he would have enjoyed such a support and help." [Haqiqatul Wahi p. 45]

He further said:

"And I also swear by Almighty God that I am the Promised Messiah and I am the same person who was promised by the prophets. There is news about me and my age in the Torah and the Gospel and the Holy Quran, it is stated that there will be eclipses in the sky and severe plague on the earth." [Dafiul Balaa p. 18]

He also said:

"I swear by God in Whose Hand is my life that He has manifested this Sign in the sky to testify my truthfulness, and He manifested it at a time when the Maulvis (theologians) named me Dajjal (Anti-Christ), biggest liar, infidel and even biggest infidel. This is the same Sign regarding which twenty years ago I was promised in 'Braheen- e-Ahmadiyya', namely. 'Tell them I have with me testimony from Allah, will you believe it or not? Tell them I have with me testimony from Allah, will you accept it or not?' It should be remembered that although there are many proofs from Almighty God for vindicating my truthfulness and more than a hundred prophecies that have been fulfilled to which hundreds of thousands of people are witnesses, but in this revelation, this prophecy has been mentioned specifically. I have been given such a sign which was not given to anybody else from the time of Adam to the present time. In short I can stand in the sacred

precincts of the Ka'aba and swear that this sign is for testifying my truth." [Tohfa-e-Golarbiyya p. 53]

In his verses, the Promised Mahdi, peace be on him, appealed as follow:

*To imagine that a Mahdi will come who will cause bloodshed
And make religion prosper by killing the disbelievers.*

*O ignorant people, these ideas are completely wrong.
They are calumnious and baseless, and they will not flourish,*

*O my dears, the man who was to come, has already come.
Even the sun the moon have disclosed this secret to you.*

The Truth About Eclipses

Comments on the article entitled "Flaws in the Ahmadiyya Eclipse Theory" by Dr David McNaughton

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Hazrat Imam Baqar Muhammad bin Ali^{ra} has narrated the following Hadees (saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}):

For our Mahdi (Divine Reformer) there are two signs which have never appeared before since the creation of the heavens and the earth, namely the moon will be eclipsed on the first night in Ramazan (i.e. on the first of the nights on which a lunar eclipse can occur) and the sun will be eclipsed in its middle (i.e. on the middle day of the days on which a solar eclipse can occur), and these signs have not appeared since God created the heavens and the earth.
(Dare Qutani Vol 1, page 188)

In the literature of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, the dates of the lunar and solar eclipses have been taken as 13, 14, 15 and 27, 28, 29 respectively of the Islamic calendar. Dr David Mc Naughton has pointed out that lunar eclipses can occur on 13th, 14th and 15th and solar eclipses on 28th and 29th. Only under special circumstances, a solar eclipse can occur on the 27th of the Islamic month. Also, under

special circumstances, a lunar eclipse can occur on the 12th. Hence the dates of the eclipses should be taken as 13, 14, 15 and 28, 29 or as 12, 13, 14, 15 and 27, 28, 29.

Perhaps the author is the first person to point out that it is possible to observe a lunar eclipse on the 12th. On the other hand, it seems to be well known from observational records that a solar eclipse can occur on the 27th. I present two examples taken from important books wherein 27th is considered as one of the dates for the solar eclipse.

Nawab Siddeeq Hasan Khan writes in his book Hujajal Kirama (in Persian, published in 1271 Hijri) on page 344 that according to astronomers a lunar eclipse does not take place on any date other than 13, 14 and 15; and in the same way a solar eclipse does not take place on any date other than 27, 28 and 29.

Professor F. Richard Stephenson, who has devoted considerable effort in the study of ancient records of eclipses, writes in his book, "Historical Eclipses and Earth's Rotation" (Cambridge University Press 1997) on page 436 as follows:

"In the Islamic calendar, lunar eclipses consistently take place on or about the 14th day of the month and solar eclipses around the 28th day"

Hence considering the dates as 13, 14 and 15 for the lunar eclipse and 27, 28 and 29 for the solar eclipse for interpreting the prophecy in 1894, at the time of the claimant, is quite reasonable. The purpose of the prophecy is to help people to recognize the Promised Divine Reformer and the prophecy has served the purpose very well.

It may also be noted that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} claimed on the basis of Divine revelation, which he received, that the prophecy has been fulfilled in his person. He also declared on oath that he is the Promised Messiah and Mahdi.

In order to understand the Hadees on the basis of our present knowledge we should note that the time between the astronomical new moon and full moon varies between 13.9 days and 15.6 days as mentioned by Dr Mc Naughton. Hence if a lunar eclipse occurs on the 12th of a month, the solar eclipse cannot occur on the 28th of the month because in that case the interval between the new moon and the full moon would

exceed 15.6 days. If the Hadees had not laid any restriction on the date of the solar eclipse, the first date of the lunar eclipse may have been considered as 12th. But since the Hadees has specified the date of the solar eclipse, the first night in the Hadees has to be interpreted as the first of the well known three nights, i.e. 13th.

The Promised Messiah^{as} also gave another explanation for the Hadees which is simple but very illuminating. He wrote in his book [Noorul Haq Part 2, Roohani Khazaen Vol 8 page 196](#):

"Dare qutani has recorded that Imam Muhammad bin Ali has narrated that there are two signs for our Mahdi which never appeared before, that is, never occurred for any other person since the creation of the earth and the heavens and these are that the moon will begin to be eclipsed in the beginning of the night in Ramazan and the sun will be eclipsed in the remaining half of the month."

Professor G.M.Ballabh and I had prepared a list of the years in which both lunar and solar eclipses occurred in the month of Ramazan from the time of the Holy Prophet^{sa} until the year 2000 A.D. We found that 109 times both lunar and solar eclipses occurred in the month of Ramazan over some part of the earth or the other. Out of these only seven pairs of eclipses were visible from Qadian. Only in the year 1894 the moon began to be eclipsed in the beginning of the night in Ramazan. The sun set in Qadian at 18 hrs 41 min and the eclipse of the moon began at 18 hrs 56 min. (Review of Religions Vol 89 No 9 September 1994 page 47)

For a detailed discussion of the fulfillment of the prophecy, please see my article entitled "*The Advent of the Promised Messiah as vindicated by the Signs of the Lunar and Solar Eclipses*" in the Review of Religions, Vol. 84, No 11, November 1989, pages 3 to 24. Answers to some of the objections have been given in my article "*The Truth about Eclipses*" published in The Review of Religions, Vol. 94, No's 5 and 6, May & June 1999.

Almighty God says in the Holy Quran:

He (Allah) is the Knower of the unseen, and He reveals not His secrets to anyone, except to him whom He chooses, namely a Messenger of His. (Chapter 72 Verses 27, 28.)

The remarkable prophecy of the Signs of the eclipses and its fulfillment in our age bears eloquent testimony to the greatness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}

May Almighty God guide mankind to the right path.