



RECLAIMING **WOKING MOSQUE** (HISTORY OF WOKING MOSQUE)

WRITTEN BY:

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

After Christianity, Islam is the second largest religion in Britain. According to a cautious estimate, there are at present around three million Muslims among the British population. The majority thereof comes from Pakistan, followed by Muslims from the Middle East, North Africa, Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Turkey, Somalia, Afghanistan, Kurdistan, etc. It is hence not amazing that Britain boasts of around 1000 mosques, representing different juristic interpretations and schools of thought.

Britain's first mosque was located in Cardiff, Wales. That mosque was built around 1860, but unfortunately, nothing of this mosque remains. In 1887, another mosque was built in Mount Warner Street, Liverpool. This mosque was later on relocated by the registry office to Brougham Terrace, where it was utilized as mosque till 1908.

The oldest purpose-built mosque (which was built in 1889), however, is located in Woking, a small city in the Greater London Urban Area. This mosque is known as Shah Jahan Mosque or Woking Mosque. It is a strange twist of fate that I had the chance to visit the Shah Jahan Mosque in Thatta, Pakistan, but in spite of living in Britain for 18 years, I had only once the chance to go to Woking, and that too, late at night. How much I long to visit this historical mosque! One point that adds to the historical value of Woking Mosque is its being the subject of one great success that the Khatme Nubuwwat Movement had to register.

My original intention was to visit the mosque before endeavouring to write about it. However, a short while ago, one of my dearest friends and member of the Majlis Tahaffuz Khatme Nubuwwat London, Maulana Mufti Mahmoodul Hasan Sahib called me during his own visit to this mosque, and almost pressed me to write something about the place, so that Muslims all over the world may know its true history. I agreed, even more so since one meeting I had with the great scholar Allamah Khalid Mahmood Sahib (rahmatullahi alaihi) was and is still fresh in my mind. I thus consider it as my duty to deliver this trust to my estimated readers.

Woking Mosque is located about 30 miles (50 kilometres) south of London. History tells us that in the days before Partition, the Maharani of Bhopal had got this mosque built so as to acquaint the people of England with Islam. The Maharani had thus done a tremendous favour to the British Muslims. Building this mosque was a great demonstration of her attachment to the House of Allah, her belief and sincerity. Once the building was complete, the Maharani desired to hand the keys over to the Muslims. However, scheming as they are, the Qadiyanis thwarted this plan and through deceit, they managed to obtain the keys for themselves. After that, the Woking mosque functioned for 55 years as a centre for Qadiyani propaganda. Days in, nights out, this mosque was used by Mr. Kamaluddeen and other members of the Lahori Qadiyani party to preach the false concept

of Mirza Qadiyani's Zilli and Buroozi prophethood. It did not take long until Woking mosque became a stronghold of Qadiyanism. At the same time, the Muslims who considered Woking Mosque as a great boon, made sure to attend all prayers and functions held there. You can easily imagine what a large-scale deception the Qadiyanis had orchestrated there!

Without wasting any more time, some Muslims, who had understood those sinister doings, arranged a rally with the Woking Mosque, to which they had invited Hazrat Allamah Khalid Mahmood rahmatullahi alaihi as speaker. Hazrat was addressing the people, when someone stepped up to him and whispered in his ears: 'Sir! The Qadiyani Imam of Woking Mosque is in the audience.' Hazrat then continued his scholarly discourse for quite some time. As the rally drew to a close, Hazrat was informed that the Qadiyani Imam would like to come and shake hands with him. Hazrat was about to tell him: 'If you disagree with my view-point, then feel free to discuss with me', but before he could do so, the Qadiyani Imam whispered into his ears: 'I fully agree with everything you said. If you could hold a lecture in our mosque as well.' Hazrat was surprised to hear this. Turning towards his companions, he ordered that the next rally be held in Woking Mosque, if Allah wills. Before departing, the Imam said to Hazrat: 'I am Muslim. I am not Qadiyani. I am son of Abdur-Rahman Masri Qadiyani, about whom you must have read in the Qadiyani literature. We were in Qadiyan when there arose differences. We then left Qadiyan for Lahore, where we founded a new group, the Lahori group, which was more aligned with our views. The leadership of the Lahori group then sent me as a missionary to Kenya. I did go there as I was told, but since deep inside I was a true Muslim, I engaged in trade instead of preaching Qadiyanism. Then the Lahori group decided to transfer me from Kenya to London, Woking.' He then made another disclosure: 'The High Court case against Mirza Basheeruddeen Mahmood was filed by me. My father did believe in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiyani, but he did not believe in Mirza Basheeruddeen Mahmood. We left Qadiyan in protest against him. I wanted to tell my father that I not even believe in Mirza Qadiyani, but due to my respect for his advanced age, I did not dare to speak like this.' The Imam

then continued: 'This mosque belongs to the Muslims. They shall take care of it. Let them remove me.' He then mentioned a scheme through which the mosque could be made over to the Muslims...

As promised, Woking mosque was selected for the next rally, which was scheduled for Sunday, 11th February 1968, 3 p.m. Hazrat Lal Husain Akhtar rahmatullahi alaihi was especially invited as speaker. Apart from him, a huge number of Muslims from Southall, London and Hounslow attended the rally. The Mosque was brimming full with believers. The Imam, Basheer Ahmad Masri, son of Abdur-Rahman Masri Qadiyani, had given the guest speakers Hazrat Lal Husain Akhtar and Allamah Khalid Mahmood rahmatullahi alaihi the warmest of welcomes, just as he had promised. Mr. Ahmad, secretary of the Pakistan Muslim Association, Woking, presided over the rally. After the recital of the Holy Qur'an, the great debater of Islam, Hazrat Lal Husain Akhtar rahmatullahi alaihi delivered a thought-provoking, moving speech about the issue of Khatme Nubuwwat and the need to refute Qadiyani claims. The details of this historic speech can be found in a number of books. After his speech, Basheer Ahmad Masri affirmed Hazrat's words, and then said: 'I am not a Mirzai or Ahmadi. I am a Muslim, and I consider anyone who claims prophethood after the Last of all Prophets, the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as a liar and out of the pale of Islam. I believe that the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the Last and Final Messenger till the Day of Judgement.'

Hazrat Lal Husain Akhtar rahmatullahi alaihi then asked Basheer Ahmad Masri: 'What is your creed regarding the claims made by Mirza Qadiyani?' Basheer Ahmad Masri replied: 'I deem him to be a liar in each and every of his claims.' This renewal of faith, made the hall reverberate with shouts of 'Allahu Akbar' and the felicitations of the people who congratulated each other on having reclaimed Woking Mosque.

What scene of overwhelming joy this must have been could have been described only by Allamah Sahib rahmatullahi alaihi... It was only

Allah's infinite bounty and grace, and the struggles of our elders for the sake of Khatme Nubuwwat that led to the Word of Truth to be raised in this mosque, and that resulted in an international rebuttal for Mirza Qadiyani and his followers.

Hazrat Lal Husain Akhtar led the Asr and Maghrib prayers, after which Basheer Ahmad Masri announced that for as long as he was in this mosque, the mosque shall belong to the Muslims, and not the Mirzais. Congratulatory messages from Majlis Tahaffuz Khatme Nubuwwat from all over Britain began to pour in. At the conclusion of the rally, Hazrat Lal Husain Akhtar recited the Ayat: **قُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ**, after which he fervently supplicated for a long time.

Thus the rally came to a successful conclusion, and Alhamdulillah! To this date, Woking Mosque is looked after by the Muslims.

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