

# In Australia, Young Ahmadis Spread Misinformation On “Discover Islam” Road Trip

by Hugh Fitzgerald



**The story is here:** “Young Muslims travelling across rural Australia to challenge misconceptions about Islam,” by Antoinette Radford, [SBS News](#), August 22, 2019:

*A group of young Australian Muslims are embarking on a rural expedition across the country to challenge misconceptions about their faith.*

*More than 60 young men from the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association (AYMA) will travel from six cities this weekend on a seven-day ‘Discover Islam road trip’, culminating in a gathering at Uluru [a place sacred to aborigines].*

*The group, made up of several high school and university*

*students, will cover more than 30,000km and stop at more than 50 towns along the way in an effort to promote social cohesion.*

Whatever fleeting “social cohesion” may be achieved during these encounters will not be based on the stability of truth, but will merely be the result of these pleasant young Ahmadis misleading the non-Muslims they meet about the teachings of mainstream Islam. For the Ahmadis are a most unorthodox sect, one that rejects the use of violence in spreading Islam – they are also regarded by most Muslims as not real Muslims themselves – and the version of Islam they spread is the one most comforting to non-Muslims.

*“We really, really hope to have honest conversation and open dialogue,” 27-year-old participant Ata Ul Hadi told SBS News.*

*Mr Hadi, who is an outreach coordinator working with young Muslims, and a medical student at Griffith University, said for him the trip is an opportunity to interact with people from all walks of life and break down social barriers.*

*“We believe we can improve social harmony within our society and bring Australians closer together because when we know better about each other, we are more tempted to be better human beings and be better Australians,” he said.*

It’s not the warm, friendly behavior of these Ahmadi defenders of the faith (the very faith whose true believers mostly reject them) that will teach non-Muslims anything useful about Islam. What they need is not beguiling smiles, but to learn about the texts and teachings of Islam, as found in the Qur’an and Hadith. They need to understand that the Qur’an commands Muslims in more than 100 verses to conduct violent Jihad, to “fight” and to “kill” and to “smite at the necks of” and to “strike fear in the hearts of” the Infidels. How likely is it that the Ahmadis will discuss a single one of those verses?

How likely is it that those Ahmadis will mention Muhammad's claims, in the Hadith, that "war is deceit" and that "I have been made victorious through terror"?

*Ata Ul Hadi [the leader of the group] believes the best way to counteract negative misconceptions is through dialogue, which he hopes will occur on the trip.*

What kind of "dialogue" is possible when one side is determined to misrepresent Islam as "a peaceful religion," by ignoring all the disturbing Qur'anic verses and Hadith stories, while the other side knows nothing about what Islam inculcates, so is unable even to know what questions to ask, much less to detect that misrepresentation?

*Research published in the Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs suggests about 70 per cent of Australians know "little to nothing" about Muslims or what they stand for.*

*The road trip aims to [sic] educating people in regional areas about the peaceful nature of Islam, and to remove misconceptions about the faith.*

The "peaceful nature of Islam" will be demonstrated not by texts, but by the "peaceful nature" of these young Ahmadis, all smiles and eager to please. And while 99.9% of the Qur'an will not be discussed, it's likely that the Ahmadis will bring up the two Qur'anic verses that are the favorites of the apologists. The first is that which claims "there is no compulsion in religion" (2:256). Sounds good, unless you know that Muslims who apostasize can be punished with death; that surely constitutes "compulsion in religion." And non-Muslims may be allowed to live and practice their religion as long as they submit, as tolerated "dhimmis," to a whole host of onerous conditions, including payment of the Jizyah; over time, many dhimmis converted to Islam in order to escape from those burdensome conditions. That, too, constitutes

“compulsion in religion.”

The second verse they are likely to supply, to “remove misconceptions about the faith,” is the abridged version of 5:32, which reads “If any one slew a person... it would be as if he slew a whole people; and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of a whole people...” The full verse means something quite different, for it is addressed specifically to the Children of Israel, not to everyone, and instead of denouncing killing, it details when killing is allowed: “On that account: We ordained for the Children of Israel that if any one slew a person – unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land – it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people.” And the following verse, 5:33, details just how those guilty of “murder” or “spreading mischief in the land” should be killed.

The “misconceptions about the faith” the Ahmadis wish to remove start with the very word “Islam,” which they claim means “peace”; in fact, as is endlessly pointed out, it comes from a root that means “submission.” The Ahmadis will describe Jihad as primarily a “spiritual struggle,” and are likely to quote a fabricated hadith about Muhammad who, returning home from battle, exclaimed that he had left “the Lesser Jihad”(of war) for the “Greater Jihad” (of self-control in domestic life).

They will describe Muslims as allowing Christians and Jews – fellow monotheists and believers in abrahamic religions – to practice their religion, but will say nothing of the many conditions those Christians and Jews must meet, as “dhimmis,” including payment of the burdensome Jizyah tax to the Islamic state by Christians and Jews, so that they remain free of attack from Muslims themselves; in other words, the Jizyah was protection money. Don’t expect these Ahmadis to mention the “jizyah” or “dhimmi”; such concepts would merely confuse non-Muslims. Why unduly upset them?

The Ahmadis will take care not to mention the Qur'anic command to Muslims "not to take Christians and Jews as friends, for they are friends only with each other" (5:51). And they will certainly say nothing about the verses that proclaim Muslims to be "the best of peoples" (3:110) and non-Muslims "the most vile of created beings." (98:6).

*Waqas Ahmad, national president of the AYMA, told SBS News many misconceptions Muslims encounter in their everyday life surround the misconception that Islam is a violent religion.*

*"Islam is seen to be a violent religion and the Qu'ran teachings are seen to be teachings which promote violence, which is totally incorrect," he said.*

*"If we take out just a few hand-picked teachings from the hadith book, let alone the Qu'ran, it doesn't really paint the whole teaching. Islam is not a violent religion. Islam literally means 'peace'. And the words that Muslims use with each other means [sic]'peace be upon you'." Islam is not a violent religion. Islam literally means 'peace'.*

No, it must be insisted one more time: "Islam" means not "peace," but "submission." And it's not a "few hand-picked teachings from the hadith book" (a strange way to refer to the different collections of hadith, of distinctly varying authority for Muslims), "let alone the Qur'an," that show Islam to be a violent religion. That violence is all over the Qur'an, and everywhere, too, in the hadith collections of the most reliable *muhaddithin*, Bukhari and Muslim. It would be most useful if some of those Infidels in the Outback could actually look into the Qur'an *before* meeting with the traveling circus of Ahmadis, and thus could be prepared to knowledgeably challenge those who, like Waqas Ahmad, claim that it is "totally incorrect" to see Islam as a "violent religion" and also "totally incorrect" to claim that the Qur'an promotes violence.

Those well-prepared Infidels might appear, armed with note cards, to confront the Ahmadis spreading their dreamy misinformation about Islam. Each note card could contain a Qur'anic verse that commands Muslims to fight, to kill, to smite at the necks of, to strike terror in the hearts of, and to despise, Infidels. Here are a dozen of the most disturbing: 2:191-193, 3:151, 4:89, 5:51, 8:12, 8:60, 9:5,9:29,47:4, and 98:6. How will the Ahmadis explain away those dozen, or many dozens more?

*The Ahmadiyya Muslim sect, considered unorthodox by many mainstream Muslims, makes up only a small percentage of Australia's overall Muslim community. It is estimated there are only a few thousand Ahmadiyyas practising in Australia.*

*The impact of misconceptions about Islam affect the lives of everyday Australian Muslims, one of the road trip participants told SBS News.*

*Waqar Ahmad Nasir, who works within the AYMA as the head of moral, ethical and spiritual training **recounts various times people have discriminated against him either at a social gathering, in the workplace and in public.***

*Most recently, he said he was approached by someone on a bus who told him Muslims were creating problems in Australia.*

*"Somebody openly said to me ... 'What are you doing here? **You should leave this country. You should leave here, because of you a lot of problems are being created.**'"*

*"I politely said to him ... 'Look, you know, that is your view, you are right. **There are people [causing problems] but they are a very, very small amount.**'"*

Nasir has had to endure "various times people have discriminated against him." Most recently, Waqar Ahmad Nasir claims that somebody told him "You should leave this country."

It could have happened. Or it might have been exaggerated, or even made up, to fit the victimhood narrative that Muslims are everywhere disseminating. In any case, even if that story is true, that is apparently the worst he has had to endure. That remark made to him was ugly, but it did not constitute discrimination. Discrimination is when you are not hired for a job, or not given a promotion you deserve, or not been able to rent an apartment, because of your identity (religion, race, ethnicity, sex). It's an act, not an opinion. If Waqar Ahmad Nasir had ever suffered anything worse than this episode, you can be sure he would have let us know.

There are many Muslims, not a "very, very small amount," who have caused problems in Australia. There have been terrorist attacks by Muslims, in just the last few years, in Endeavour Hills, Parramatta, Minto, Queanbeyan, Brighton, Mill Park, Melbourne. Notable terrorist plots that were uncovered in time included those of Faheem Khaled Lodhi, Neil Prakash, the Sydney Five, the Benbrika Group in Melbourne, the Holsworthy Barracks terror plot, Tamin Khaja, the 2014 plot of "Abu Bakr," the Federation Square attack plot. Terrorism is not the only sort of "problem" caused by Muslims. Lakemba, the largely Muslim suburb of Sydney, has become a high-crime area and a center of the drug trade, widely regarded as a No-Go area for non-Muslims.

*Mr Hadi said the AYMA is prepared for some negative reaction to the excursion and social media can be a place where many young Muslims experience discrimination and offensive comments.*

*He believes social media comments are a short-term problem though, whereas engaging in dialogue and conversation provides a long-term change in values.*

"Dialogue" and "conversation" with those Ahmadi Muslims who are determined to be just as friendly as they can possibly be

are poor substitutes for knowledge of the Qur'an and hadith. Non-Muslims need to know not how friendly Muslims can be, but what the texts and teachings of Islam tell us. That's not something these Ahmadis have any intention of sharing.

*"On social media I feel like this is more prevalent where people are more tempted to say things that they might not be comfortable saying in an otherwise social environment," [Mr. Hadi] said.*

*"We're trying to counter negative ideas by providing genuine information, and by having a genuine discussion about what we believe in and what we stand for." The change in mindsets for this trip is not limited to educating others about Islam. The men participating in the journey are also looking forward to learning more about the rural Australian way of life, and challenges facing regional towns.*

What is that "genuine information" that the Ahmadis are eager to supply? Simple assurances that Islam "means peace"? Explaining that "there is no compulsion in religion" and continuing to ignore the 109 verses that command violent Jihad in the Qur'an? Will they discuss the Qur'anic command not to take Christians and Jews as friends? Or the verse telling Muslims to regard all Infidels as "the most vile of created beings"? Or will this Ahmadi caravan merely disseminate its comforting misinformation, a worn passport allowing non-Muslims to travel from one area of ignorance to another?

*"To go out even further ... out to the country, and to see how people live out there and the challenges they have ... that will be a great learning curve for all of the young members of our community including myself," he said.*

*One of the five pillars of the Muslim faith includes engaging in acts of charity. The pillar, Zakat, generally includes giving a set proportion of one's wealth to charity.*



*The group hope to extend their charitable actions by also helping cleaning up rubbish in the towns they visit.*

What Mr. Hadi is careful not to make clear is that in Islam, Zakat is obligatory charity, but the object of that charity should only be fellow Muslims. If these Ahmadis are engaging in acts of charity for everyone, including non-Muslims – e.g., by planting trees, or cleaning up rubbish – this does not qualify as Zakat. What it is, instead, is part of a very visible public relations campaign to make Islam look good.

*“People believe that our loyalties maybe lie to [sic] some middle-eastern country or that they’re not faithful to Australia,” Mr Hadi said.*

*“This is so far removed from the truth and there’s nothing of that within Islam. Islam actually teaches that the love of the country you live in is part of your faith.”*

This is flatly false. Islam teaches Muslims that they *may* obey the laws of the country they live in, but only as long as those laws do not contradict Islamic teachings and tenets. Islam – with its teachings to be found in the Qur’an, Hadith, Sira – does not command mainstream Muslims to “love...the country you live in.” A Muslim’s supreme loyalty is not to any country, but to the faith itself, and to fellow Muslims, members of the worldwide Umma, wherever they may be. The Ahmadis are outliers, whose views are quite different from those of mainstream Muslims. They are followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835–1908), who claimed to have been divinely appointed as both the promised Mahdi (Guided One) and Messiah expected by Muslims to appear towards the end times and bring about, by peaceful means, the final triumph of Islam. They believe in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as a lesser prophet who appeared after Muhammad. As a consequence, the world’s Ahmadis are regarded by most other Muslims as not even real Muslims; in Pakistan, they are forbidden to identify themselves as

Muslims. The Ahmadis make up a little more than 1% of the world's Muslim population; their views, including their rejection of violent Jihad, are not those of mainstream Islam.

When the current leader of the Ahmadis, Mirza Masroor Ahmad, claimed that Muslims should love the country they live in, his claim had no validity for the 99% of the world's Muslims who are not Ahmadis. The Ahmadis, who are energetic proselytizers, present their own unorthodox views as those of mainstream Islam, misleading and lulling non-Muslims by stressing the Ahmadi desire to spread Islam only through peaceful means. How many non-Muslims in the Australian outback will understand the difference between the Ahmadis, so pacific and eager to please, and mainstream Muslims, whose views are much more disquieting?

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