The Promised Messiah Speaks

The Significance of Umoor-I-Ghaibiyya

By Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad
Promised Messiah, Mahdi and Mujaddid of the Fourteenth Century
Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement in Islam

Before entering upon a disussion on the truth and superiority of the Holy Qur'an, it seems necessary that a mention be made, by way of introduction, of certain principles which are of fundamental importance and will be found useful in appreciating properly the arguments that will be offered hereinafter.

Evidence, External and Internal

External Evidence is the testimony derived from sources which are independent of the thing discussed. In relation to a book, it signifies those phenomenal events which come to pass in such a way as to prove the supernatural source of the book, or serve to establish the paramount necessity of its having been divinely inspired. Internal Evidence stands for those intrinsic values of the book which lead us to the inevitable conclusion that it is the infallible word of the Most High God which is far above the power and possibility of mortal man.

Four Kinds of Arguments

The arguments constituting external evidence on the truth and sublimity of the Holy Qur'an, may be split up into four sections, as stated below in extenso:

(a) Arguments based on facts which require to be rectified and reformed, as are found in the previous practices of unbelief and heresy, depraved deeds and dishonest dealings which man has adopted instead of the right beliefs and righteous actions, and which, having spread all over the wide world, vitiating its atmosphere, deserve richly to be set right and amended by the grace of the Most Beneficent God.

(b) Arguments deduced from teachings found in the Revealed Books in imperfect form, the defectiveness and deficiency of which become all the more glaring when examined in the light of the Prophet's Teachings; and it is also for this reason that these scriptures are wholly at the mercy of a high-standard Revealed Book which may lift them up to the level of perfect excellence.

(c) Arguments derived from the Book of Nature which may be further subdivided into two kinds, External Evidence consisting of such facts as are brought into existence by the Most High God directly, without the intervention of human stratagem and skill, and as bestow upon every particle, however small and petty, that glory and grandeur which, in all reason, is considered to be a sheer impossibility and without a parallel on the surface of this earth.

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OUR BELIEFS

(1) That there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger.

(2) After the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), Allah has completely barred the appearance of a prophet, old or new.

(3) After the Holy Prophet, Gabriel can never descend and bring Prophetic Revelation (Wahy Nubuwwah) to any person.

(4) If Gabriel were to descend with one word of Prophetic Revelation (Wahy Nubuwwah) on any person, it would contradict the two complementary verses:

“This day have I perfected your Religion for you” (5:5); “He is the Messenger of Allah and the Last of the prophets.”

(5) The Holy Prophet also said: “I am Muhammad and I am Ahmad and I am al-Aqib (the one who comes last) after whom there can be no prophet.” (Al-Bukhari : Kitab al-Manaqib)

(6) In the light of the above Islamic fundamentals, the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement never claimed to be a Nabi, but the God-Ordained Mujaddid (“The Promised Messiah”) of the 14th Islamic Century, having been expressly raised to re-establish the predominance of Islam in the world.

(7) He named his followers ‘Ahmadi’ after the Holy Prophet’s Jamali (beatific) name ‘Ahmad’.

(8) He proclaimed that no verse of the Holy Qur’an has been abrogated nor shall ever be abrogated.

(9) All the Companions of the Holy Prophet and the Imams are venerable.

(10) It is spiritually conducive to our Faith to accept the revivalist Islamic missions of all Mujaddids (Renovators).

(11) Any one who declares his faith in the Kalimah (Muslim formula of faith- la ilaha ilallahu Muhammadur Rasulullah) is a Muslim.

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Crime, Punishment, Socio-Economic Order and Moral-Spiritual Values

An Editorial By Ch. Masud Akhtar

I am on the visiting list of some Muslim inmates of a prison in California. On every visit I come out of the correctional facility with a heavy heart. Seeing youthful human beings incarcerated for life or a sizeable part of their lives, I cannot help but think as to why they are there. Why did they take crime? Why could they not feel for the sufferings of their victims at the time of the commission of their crime? To think of the misery which has befallen these youths and also of the suffering of their victims fills my reflective mind with grief and sorrow, as both are victims of an order which in essence breeds crime.

The United States of America is no doubt the most advanced country in the field of science and technology and is also the greatest economic and military power ever known in the history of mankind. Inspite of all these achievements, this nation carries the stigma of being the nation having the highest crime rate in the world. The prisons are overcrowded now and the number of inmates continues to increase as the days pass. This high incidence of crime, which has rendered the streets and market places insecure and even the four walls of the homes of the peaceful citizens of the country, is sending a message loud and clear that there is definitely something wrong with our society or socio-economic order, in that they in themselves tend to be breeders of crime. True, the laws of this country prescribe severe punishment for crimes and the legislative bodies are constantly passing tougher laws. True also is the fact that the law enforcement authorities try their best to fight this crime and that the courts are handing down the maximum punishments under the law. And further, the chapels, psychologists, psychiatrists and counselors in these penal institutions remain busy in the correction, rehabilitation and reformation of the prisoners. Yet, the high rate of crime continues to flourish and grow. These are all post-crime measures which come into play after a crime has been committed. These measures are like a physician treating the effect of a disease without caring to know or treat the “cause” of the disease. It is high time to awake to the fact that it is as important a duty of the state to eradicate the causes of the crime as it is to punish the criminal for his crime.

Hadrat Umar, the second Caliph of Islam, was most probably the first ruler to recognize the relationship between the prevalent socio-economic conditions in a state and the incidence of crime of that state. During famine conditions, he ordered the suspension of laws pertaining to the punishment for stealing and theft in cases involving foodgrains and edibles. The purpose of justice is not fully served by simply punishing persons involved in a crime without taking into consideration the causes that may have led to the commission of the crime. But for these causes, thousands may have never thought of committing a crime and, consequently, thousands would have been saved from becoming the victims of their crimes.

The most important deterrent against crime is the moral spiritual values of a society. This, in fact, is the most effective weapon against crime. It is true that undue emphasis on secularism weakens the influence of these moral spiritual values but it would be equally wrong to say that a secular society is completely without moral spiritual values. Secularism is comparatively a recent development in human history, whereas moral-spiritual values date back to thousands of years and are deeply ingrained and rooted in a society, whether secular or otherwise.

Most crimes in the United States are traceable to one of the following three causes, namely (1) lust for monetary gain or power, (2) drugs and (3) sex crimes. A study of each one of these causes in its relationship with the associated crime, the socio-economic order and moral-spiritual values of our society can help us to deal with the crime problem in a more effective manner. In the field of economics, we are living in a society which has the world’s largest and the strongest money lending system. This system is based on interest return. That is the motive of personal gain of the money lender. This system has been so thoroughly perfected that each one of us has been rendered nothing more than slaves to it. Nothing has been produced in our society, right from the smallest nail to the heaviest piece of machinery, from the smallest seed to the agricultural produce placed on our table, wherein the money lender’s interest share has not been involved in its cost. In effect, this society is the money lenders heaven. Not one but many tiers of loans are involved in the finish product, whether industrial or agricultural, and these loans and the interest generated therefrom increase the cost of production, incidence of which is passed on to the consumer by the manufacturer or trader. Thus, the consumer bears the burden of this
multi-tiered interest built into the cost of goods. If one was to calculate the share of interest in this cost of goods at one purchase, then it would be discovered that each one of us is working many hours in a day simply to benefit the money lender. The money lenders hand is in the pocket of each one of us. It matters little whether the money lender is an individual or a group of persons operating under the shield of a banking corporation or whether such institutions are in public or private ownership. All or any of these, through their interest-ridden loans, add greatly to the cost of products and thereby work to the disadvantage of the consumer. It is nothing short of profiteering and it is not done with any motive of sympathy towards the debtor or consumer. Loaning money to a needy person in order to help him in his plight in itself would be a noble deed if it were not for the element of personal gain. On the other hand, deriving personal gain from another human being's needs is blackmail, pure and simple, and a disservice of the highest order. And it is this element of blackmail that renders our present interest-ridden economic system immoral. The Judeo-Christian traditions which formed the predominant moral-spiritual background of the people of Europe and America unfortunately encourages the deriving of personal gain and benefit from lending money to another needy human being. The Jewish community in the Middle East and Europe has been engaged in money lending, with interest, for many centuries. The teachings of the Christian churches did not offer, nor thought of offering any solution to the problem. Such an economic order is based on the motive of "Grab" and is devoid of any moral value. This order of "Grab" has been imposed on our society in a big way and in a thoroughly organized and institutional manner. Resultantly, "Grab" has become the order of the day, whereunder everyone is out to "Grab" through means foul or fair. It is not any particular individual but rather the whole system that is to blame for this state of affairs. The system teaches meanness in exacting personal gain from the needs of others. It works only to render people inhuman in their economic relationship to others. Quite contrary to these Judeo-Christian traditions, the Qur'an teaches lending money to the needy simply in a spirit of love and sympathy towards another human being and does not allow deriving any personal gain or benefit from such transactions. It prohibits charging of any form of interest on loans and declares that those who charge interest are amok. Central to the economic activity, according to the teachings of the Qur'an, is the greater good and welfare of the people based on the concept of sympathy and beneficence and the love of mankind. The interest-ridden economic system to which we have been rendered slaves is entirely based on the motives of personal benefit and gains at the cost of another person or society by-in-large. It renders the poor much poorer and the rich much richer and creates an imbalance of the highest magnitude in the society. This imbalance, coupled with the inherent immorality of the economic system, is responsible for driving people to crime related to economic causes. This situation needs to be arrested and the system replaced by one based on love, beneficence and sympathy towards our fellow human beings. The Qur'an offers a beautiful economic system, provided the economists of our era recognize the importance of making love, sympathy and beneficence the central element to the economic activity rather than mere profiteering, capital building and personal gain.

Drugs are not only hazardous to life and health but are also one of the major causes of crime. Drug-related crimes are many dimensional, ranging from murder on account of rivalry between various drug syndicates down to robberies and murder by individual addicts to meet the high-cost of their addiction. Intoxicants have been in use since time immemorial and, in certain cases, intoxicants have been adopted as a part of religious rituals and festivals, for example, in Hinduism and Christianity. This has granted a general approval to the use of intoxicants in these societies rather than treating their use with abhorrence. This permissibility and approval of the use of a particular form of intoxicant inherently works to weaken the defense of that society against the use of other intoxicants or drugs. Such societies cannot expect their members to hate or avoid some types of intoxicants while they approve the use of other intoxicants or drugs. The dividing line in fact has not to be between the types of the intoxicants or drugs but rather between the use of intoxicants and non-use of intoxicants. It is the very act of using intoxicants which needs to be looked upon with despise. The teachings of the Qur'an come to the rescue of mankind in this field as well. It declares that using intoxicants is one of the Deeds of Satan and it teaches mankind not to follow Satan. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be on whom, is on record as having said that intoxicants are the "Ummal Khabais,", that is, "the mother of all evil deeds"- meaning thereby that many other evils flow from the use of intoxicants. Instead of jeering at certain Muslim countries that have been declared "dry", we can solve our drug problem by following their example. That a reform of this type is possible in American society has been amply demonstrated by the Founder of the Black Muslim Movement in America. If Alijah Muhammad could make more than one hundred thousand Americans quit smoking, not to speak of wines and alcoholic drink, then the application of the same teachings can help rid this society of all drugs. It is high time to shed continued On Page 19
Message from
The Ameer-E-Jamaat and
International President of
Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-I-Islam
Hazrat Dr Saeed Ahmad Khan Sahib
To The Guyana Convention

(It is) in houses which Allah has permitted to be exalted and His name to be remembered therein. Therein do glorify Him, in the mornings and the evenings.

Men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and the paying of the poor-rate - they fear a day in which the hearts and the eyes will turn about (24:36,37)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Faith,

Assalam-o-akhirum wa rahmatullahe wa barakatuahu

You have today gathered to open one of such Houses of Allah as mentioned in the first verse; and it is my hope and prayer that amongst you are and will be the people for all times to come, who are mentioned in the second verse I have quoted.

Now that the Mosque is ready for use, it has given you an additional responsibility and task. You have to resolve on this great occasion that you would maintain this Mosque with regular prayers, and from it will spread the message of Faith and the message of Ahmadiyyat to the entire World. This was the desire of the reformer of the age, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib. The reformer was promised by God that his teachings would spread to the farthest corners of the World. It gives me great satisfaction when I bring to mind the devotion and hard work that you have put in the completion of this Mosque. Only a year back the “Masjid-e-Noor” in Suva, Fiji was completed and now “Alhamdo-Lillah” this Georgetown Mosque and two other sister mosques recently completed by the Guyana Jamaats are on the list of countless Mosques and Houses of Allah on earth.

Your Mosque like other Ahmadiyya Mosques is different only in the sense that it is not only beautiful architecturally or spacious enough but represents a place where people who have one thing in common gather. And what is this one thing that they have in common? It is the vision with which they have been fortunate to be blessed. The vision that recognized the great reformer, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi. An Ahmadi stands to protect the light that is surrounded by strong gusts of wind. We are a few who would rather burn protecting the flame of hope to mankind than let this light be extinguished by any unfavorable current.

The message of Ahmadiyyat in the present times is like a light which has been thrown aside, but is destined to be the lamp placed atop a minaret from which the light will reach every nook and corner of the World. As I put forward to you this simile, I cannot help thinking of the black
stone which had been thrown away by the builders but later became the corner stone of Ka’aba. This cast-aside light will soon be the source of enlightenment for the entire World.

The message of Ahmadiyyat has already spread to the far corners of the World, including Fiji and the Carribbeans. The power supply of the light is in the Central Anjuman in Lahore. I assure you that we will Insha-Allah spare no time, energy or resources to meet this need of the branches wherever they may be.

I pray for all those who have been blessed with the opportunity to attend and those who have been unable to be present on this occasion.

In the end, I remind you that building of a Mosque is not the ultimate goal, the ultimate achievement is the building of your achievement is the building of your soul through prayer so that within will abide the Almighty Allah. God bless you all and be with you. Ameen.

I write this message for you with mixed feelings. The feelings of great pleasure and immense joy that in spirit I share with you the happiness on the occasion of the inauguration of this great Mosque built by the Ahmadiyya Anjuman. The feeling of sorrow that I cannot be physically present amongst you and the sadness that I am not there to offer prayers with you on this historical day. There is however the satisfaction for me that I was with you at the ceremony held for the dedication of the land prepared for the building of the Mosque and we prayed together on the site on 2nd December 1979, and again when on 23rd July 1984 I saw the structure with its magnificent dome nearing completion. However, I assure you that all my prayers and good wishes are with you. I hope and pray that this Mosque may not only stand in the lovely capital of Guyana, Georgetown, as an architectural pride but as a House of God which will be in use for the keeping up of prayer, each day of its existence, day and night. The Arabic word for Mosque is “MASJID”, which is derived from the word “SAJDAH”, which means prostration, which is the extreme act of man’s devotion to his Creator. It is the act which man by physical gesture demonstrates that he completely submits to the Will of Almighty Creator. It is the act which

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, the Beneficent, the Merciful Master of the day of Requital. Thee do we serve and thee do we beseech for help. Guide us on the right path, the path of those upon whom thou hast bestowed favors, not those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor those who go astray.

There could be no appropriate and befitting chapter or verses of the Holy Qur’an to commence my address on this auspicious occasion of the inauguration of this Mosque than the opening chapter, “A Fatihah”. About this chapter, the Holy Prophet stated that, “no prayer is complete without Al Fatiha.” It is repeated at least 30 times in our daily prayers.

A muezzin calls for prayer with the words “Allahu Akbar”, God is the greatest; and Al Fatiha begins with “Al hamdu lillah”, Praise be to Allah. Both are terms of glorification. The main objective of building this magnificent mosque also is to establish a place in your city to glorify Allah, whose name we find practically on every page of the Holy Qur’an.

“Rabbil Alameen” completes the first verse of “Al Fatiha,” Lord of the worlds or nations. In light of the spirit of “Lord of all nations,” this masjid is open to all believers, no matter what school of thought they subscribe to.

“And who is more unjust than he who prevents (men) from the mosques of Allah, from His name being remembered therein, and strives to ruin them?”

It is a historical fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had allowed the Christian priests of Najran to use half of the prophets mosque for their Sunday service.

In order to establish religious freedom and tolerance, the Holy Qur’an instructs the Muslims to raise arms for the defense of the mosques as well as of the churches, synagogues and cloisters in these words:

“And if Allah did not repel some people by others, cloisters and churches, and synagogues, and mosques in which Allah’s name is much remembered would have been pulled down.”

Speech By M. Yasin Sahu Khan
At The Guyana Convention

“And when We said to the angels, Be submissive. they submitted, but Iblis (did not). He refused and was proud, and he was one of the disbelievers” (2:34).
Abu Bakr, The First Caliph Of Islam
By The Late Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A.L.L.B.

Early Life

‘Abd Allah was the name given to Abu Bakr by his parents. Abu Bakr was his kunyah(1) before Islam, while he received the title of Saddiq(lit., the most truthful) and ‘Atiq(lit., generous, excellent, or free) after his conversion to Islam. His father’s name was ‘Uthman, but he is generally known in history by his surname Abu Quhafah. Umm al-Khair Salma was the name of Abu Bakr’s mother. Both of Abu Bakr’s parents belonged to the Bani Taim clan of the tribe of Quraish. This clan occupied a position of eminence in Arabia, and questions relating to blood-money in murder cases were referred to it; Abu Quhafah, Abu Bakr’s father being entrusted with this important function.

Abu Bakr was born in the second or third year of the Elephant(2) and was thus two or three years younger than the Holy Prophet Muhammad. In his youth he was well-known for his high morals and commanded universal respect. Such noble virtues as helping the poor and the needy, doing good to kith and kin, rendering relief to the afflicted, hospitality and truthfulness, were all found in him in abundant measure.

(1) Among Arabs, a surname, generally indicating relationship to male offsprings (Ar. kunyah) was looked upon as a title of honor. The kunyah was especially taken from the name of the eldest son, to whose name the word ab (lit., father) was added, and it was thus generally father of so and so. But kunyah did not always express paternity; in some cases it was taken from some characteristic of the person, and the reason of this was that the word ‘ab’ has a wide significance. Thus Abu Hurairah (lit., father of kittens), the famous reporter of Hadith, was so called from his kindness to cats. Abu Bakr

literally means ‘father of the youthful camel’, and there is no indication in any report as to why he assumed, or was given, this particular kunyah. It may have been due simply to his kindness to, or love of, camels.

(2) Before the Muslim era knew as Hijrah, the Arabs used to reckon dates from the year of the “Elephant” which was the year in which Abraham, the Christian Governor of Yaman, led an attack on Makkah, with the intention of demolishing the Ka’bah. This army had one or more elephants in it and hence the name. The year of the Elephant was the year of the Holy Prophet’s birth. The Hijrah came 53 lunar years after this.

From his very childhood he had not so much as touched liquor. All these are precisely the virtues of which, as history tells us, the Holy Prophet was possessed before the Call. This shows that in a way Abu Bakr had a natural affinity to the Prophet. He had, however, received some education. He could read and write, and was a specialist in knowledge of the genealogy of the Quraish clans. People held him in very high esteem both for his knowledge and his ripe experience. By profession he was a cloth merchant and this business made him quite a rich man. At the time of his acceptance of Islam, he had 40,000 gold dirhams in hard cash. According to one of his own statements, he was the wealthiest of all the Quraish traders.

Conversion to Islam and services

When the Prophet received the Divine Call and invited people to join him, Abu Bakr was one of the first converts to embrace Islam. His zeal for Islam was so great that no sooner did he join its ranks than he applied all his energy and wealth to promote the sacred cause. Many were the souls that saw the light of Islam through him. Such great men as ‘Uthman, Zubair, ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn ‘Auf, Sa’id ibn Abi Waqqas, were converted by his preaching. His own brother, Umm al-Khair Salma, one of the early converts, also owed her conversion to him. His father, Abu Quhafah, however, heard the call much later, after the conquest of Makkah in the 8th year of Hijrah(1). many slaves of both sexes, who were persecuted and tortured by their masters for their acceptance of Islam, were purchased and set free by Abu Bakr. Of such, history has preserved the names of seven, including the famous Bilal. Of his wealth he spent liberally in the cause of Islam, so that at the time of the Hijrah only 5,000 dirhams remained of his fortune. The Prophet himself acknowledged his valuable services when he said: “No one’s wealth has benefited me so much as the wealth of Abu Bakr.” Within the courtyard of his house, he had built a small mosque. Here he would sit and recite the Qur’an in strains that captivated the hearts of listeners. The Quraish objected and demanded that he should cease reciting the Qur’an in a loud voice because it attracted their womenfolk and children, who might be led to renounce their ancestral faith. But Abu Bakr did not yield on this point and left no stone unturned to spread the light of Islam. During this period the ties of affection between him and the Prophet grew ever stronger. His monetary and missionary services endeared him all the more to the Prophet, so much so that the Master would in person call frequently at the house of his disciple. And when at length there came the time of Hijrah, it was Abu Bakr whom
the Prophet chose as a comrade in a critical hour.

(1) Hijrah, which is generally rendered as the Flight, means originally ‘cutting off’ from friendly intercourse or ‘forsaking’, and in the history of Islam it has come to signify the migration of the Holy Prophet and his Companions from Makkah to Madinah, to which he was compelled on account of the growing opposition of his enemies and sever persecution of Muslims by them. The Muslim era is named after it and dates from the first day of the first month (Muharram) of the year in which the Hijrah took place, that event itself taking place more than two months after the commencement of the year. The year of Hijrah probably coincides with 19th April 622 of the Christian era, while the Hijrah itself took place on 20th June.

He is persecuted

Abu Bakr was held in great respect not only for his noble birth but also for his personal worth, his high morals and his wealth. He could not, however, escape persecution in the cause of Islam. In connection with the conversion to Islam of his mother, Umm al-Khair, it is recorded that one day Abu Bakr began openly to preach the new faith. This was the time when the Prophet himself confined his activities to secret preaching in the house of Zaid ibn Arqam, where prayers were also said in secret. When the Quraish saw Abu Bakr openly preach Islam, they fell on him and beat him into insensibility. His own kinsmen took him up and carried him home. On recovering consciousness, the first question he asked was, “Where is the Prophet?” His mother ascertained the Prophet’s whereabouts, and immediately both went to the house of Zaid ibn Arqam, where the mother accepted Islam. When the people of Makkah put Muslims to severe persecution, the Prophet counselled them to emigrate to Abyssinia. Abu Bakr was one of those who chose to bid farewell to their native land. On the way he met a chief, Ibn al-Daghnah, who asked him wither he was going. “My own people’s persecutions have driven me out of hearth and home,” replied Abu Bakr. “A man like you,” said the chief, “certainly must not be exiled- you help the poor, you are kind to your kith and kin, you render succour to the distressed and show hospitality to the wayfarer.” And, bringing him back to Makkah, he had it proclaimed that Abu Bakr was under his protection. This protection, however, did not last long. As usual, Abu Bakr started his loud recitation of the Qur’an in the mosque which he had built in the yard of his house, which happened to be on a public thoroughfare. The Quraish were not prepared to tolerate this and so Ibn al-Daghnah had to withdraw the protection he had pledged. Abu Bakr was unmoved. Careless of the withdrawal of protection, he continued his usual recitations.

His daughter ‘A’ishah is married to the Prophet

In the tenth year of the Caliphate the Prophet lost his faithful wife Khadijah, who at the time of her death was sixty-five years of age. During the many hard trials through which the Prophet had passed, she had been his greatest comforter. This bereavement, therefore, was a great shock and told heavily on him. Seeing him greatly depressed, a Muslim lady suggested to him that he should marry, and proposed the name of Abu Bakr’s daughter, ‘A’ishah. The young girl had already been betrothed to Jubair, son of Mut’im, and when the lady in question mentioned her proposal to Abu Bakr, he was glad to strengthen his already strong ties of affection with the Prophet, but wanted first to settle the matter with Jubair. This being done, the “nikah” (marriage ceremonial) was performed, though consummation was delayed for five years on account of ‘A’ishah’s age, which was only nine at the time of “nikah” according to a report of Ibn Sa’d.(1)

(1) Tabaqat, Vol. VIII, p. 42.

Flight to Madinah

At last the Makkans’ persecutions reached their climax. Under the Prophet’s order, Muslims began to emigrate to Madinah. Abu Bakr also made ready for emigration, but the Prophet told him to wait till he (the Prophet) should receive divine permission to go. The Muslims removed themselves one by one. Abu Bakr and ‘Ali were the only two who remained behind with the Prophet. At length there arrived the hour when plans to assassinate the Prophet were matured in every detail. Then did the Prophet receive the Divine word to leave. He informed Abu Bakr, accordingly, to get ready and, leaving ‘Ali in his own bed departed from his house in the dark of night and passed unnoticed through the would-be assassins who had surrounded it. Three miles away from Makkah, there was a cave known as the cave of Thaur. There the two refugees took shelter. Abu Bakr was the first to go in. Dark as it was, he cleaned the cave with his own hands, and then asked the Prophet to enter. In the morning the Quraish began to search and followed the track right up to the mouth of the cave. From within the cave the refugees could even see the feet of their pursuers. This overwhelmed Abu Bakr with grief, but the Prophet consoled him saying, “Fear not, for God is with us.” The pursuers saw the cobweb of a spider over the mouth of the cave and turned back. Food arrangements had been made beforehand by Abu Bakr. He had instructed his servant to drive his herd of goats, while grazing them, to the mouth of the cave. The milk of these goats was all they had to live on. Thus they subsisted in hiding for three consecutive days and nights till, on the fourth, they mounted the camels which Abu Bakr had arranged for and left for Madinah.

Services in Madinah

Islam’s needs, limited in Makkah, grew with its advent in Madinah. When money was wanted to build a mosque, Abu Bakr paid for the site from his
own pocket. But the greatest need of the community was the conduct of a hard struggle against numerous enemies who were bent on annihilating it by the sword, and Muslims had therefore to put up a fight in self-defense. The carrying on of incessant war against an ever-increasing foe necessitated the utmost sacrifices from the adherents of the cause, and here, too, Abu Bakr was foremost as he was at Makkah.

On one occasion, Umar offered one half of his savings for the cause. This time at least, he hoped he would out-do Abu Bakr. Presently there came Abu Bakr bringing with him all that he had. “What have you left behind at home?” enquired the Prophet. “God and His Prophet,” came the reply. On his poor relations, too, Abu Bakr spent most liberally of his wealth.

Part in warfare

In Madinah Abut Bakr was the Prophet’s right-hand man in the affairs of state. He also took an active part in fighting and was never absent from any battle in which the Prophet himself took part. The first battle was fought at Badr in the second year of the Hijrah. The enemy’s numerical strength was thrice that of the Muslims but their fighting strength was greater still, for they were well-equipped and experienced warriors. The Prophet retired to a hut and prostrated himself in supplication before God. “O God,” said he, “if this day this handful of Thy servants perish, there will be none to worship Thee on this earth.” Abu Bakr kept guard at the entrance and heard his Master’s fervent prayers. At last he spoke out. “O Prophet,” he said, “God will undoubtedly come to thy help as He has promised.” They sallied forth into the field of battle and Abu Bakr displayed great valor. The Muslims won. Seventy prisoners of war fell into their hands. Abu Bakr counselled the Prophet to release them on payment of ransom money. This was done, as it was quite in accordance with the Qur’anic teachings.

At the battle of Uhud in the third year of Hijrah when the Muslims were trapped and suffered a heavy loss, Abu Bakr firmly stood to his ground. The Quraish shouted: “Is Muhammad there in the midst of the people? Is Abu Bakr there in the midst of the people? Is ‘Umar there in the midst of the people?” They are alive and here to bring you down,” shouted back ‘Umar at last, on which the enemy left the field. The very next day they were pursued, Abu Bakr taking part in the chase.

Then came the battle known as the Battle of the Ditch in the fifth year of the Hijrah. Here again Abu Bakr was seen working as a common laborer, digging the ditch to protect Madinah from the on-rush of the enemy. Madinah remained in a state of seige for thirty days, after which the enemy retreated. He was also present at Hudaybiyah, when a truce was concluded. The Muslims were much upset about it as they thought that the terms were humiliating to themselves. (1) ‘Umar was particularly agitated and came to Abu Bakr, saying, “Why must we submit to terms so humiliating, if our cause is a righteous one?” Abu Bakr replied that the Prophet must have acted in obedience to the will of God. “Did not the Prophet say,” argued ‘Umar, “that we would perform the pilgrimage?” “Indeed, he did,” rejoined Abu Bakr, “but he never said we should do this very year.” This was the same reply that ‘Umar got from the Prophet when he put a similar question to him. In the first stages of the battle of Hunain the Muslims were forced to retreat under pressure from the enemy’s archers. Here again Abu Bakr kept firmly to his ground and the battle was ultimately won. When money was needed for the Tabuk expedition, Abu Bakr placed the whole of his wealth at the disposal of the nation. In the ninth year of the Hijrah, he was put at the head of the pilgrim party to Makkah.

(1) Two of these terms were particularly distasteful: (a) Muslims shall not take with them any Muslim already living in Makkah, nor shall they stand in the way of any one from among themselves should he wish to stay at Makkah. (b) Should any of the Muslims at Makkah go over to Madinah, the Muslims shall hand him over to the Makkans, but if any of the Madinite Muslims should rejoin the Makkans, the latter shall not restore him to the Muslims.

**Abu Bakr as Imam during the Prophet’s Last Illness**

About the end of the tenth year of Hijrah, the Prophet went to perform a pilgrimage. This is known as the ‘Hajjat al-Wada’ or the Farewell Pilgrimage. It was revealed to him on this occasion that the religion of Islam had attained perfection, and that his time was drawing nigh. On his return to Madinah, some two months and a half afterwards, the Prophet was taken ill. Notwithstanding his illness, he attended the mosque and conducted prayers personally so long as he could. But he was too weak to talk much. One day in a sermon he said, “God has given to a servant of His choice between this worldly life and the life with Him. The servant has chosen that with the Lord.” This brought tears to Abu Bakr’s eyes. The hint was clear enough. The Prophet’s life was coming to an end. Then the Prophet ordered that all doors opening on to the mosque should be closed with the exception of Abu Bakr’s door. Gradually he became too weak to come out to the mosque. One day, word was thrice sent to him to come to prayer but he could not muster enough strength. So he directed that Abu Bakr should lead the prayers. ‘A’ishah submitted that her father was too tender-hearted and while reciting the Qur’an would burst into tears. This would make his recitation inaudible. The Prophet did not accept this excuse and insisted that Abu Bakr should lead the prayers. Consequently, for the last three days of the Prophet’s life Abu Bakr acted as the ‘Imam’. This was, in a way, an indication that the Prophet considered Abu Bakr to be the fittest person to succeed him.
The Prophet's demise, Rabi I, II A.H. (June 632 A.D.)

It was Monday, the 12th of Rabi I in the year 11 A.H., when Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, breathed his last. He had been bed-ridden for twelve days and had passed through some very critical moments, but only that very morning he had felt much better and had spoken with several persons. It was believed that the crisis was over and Abu Bakr who had so far kept by his bedside, had taken permission to go home to Sunh, where he lived. Few therefore, were prepared to believe the news when it came. 'Umar regarded it as a piece of mischief by some hypocrite and, sword in hand, he stood in the mosque to stop this disquieting news from getting abroad. Abu Bakr heard the news and forthwith hastened back and went straight into ‘A’ishah’s chamber. It was there that the Prophet had been nursed. He found that he was really dead. He kissed his forehead and gave voice to his sorrowing love in these touching words: "Sweet wert thou in life and sweet art thou in death." Then he came out into the mosque and communicated the news to the congregation in the following words:

"Listen ye all! Whoever worshipped Muhammad, then certainly Muhammad has passed away, and whoever worshipped God, let him know that God is Ever-lasting and He never dieth."

Then he quoted the following verse of the Qur'an: "And Muhammad is no more than a Messenger; all messengers before him have passed away" (3:143). This convinced the people that the news of the Prophet's death was true.

Abu Bakr's Election as Caliph

Abu Bakr and 'Umar were still in the mosque when someone from among the Ansar(1) (Helpers) came with the news that the Ansar had assembled in the Thaqifah Bani Sa'idah, a place used as a council hall by the people of Madinah, and were discussing the election of a successor to the Prophet. It was a critical moment. Had the Ansar succeeded in setting up a man of their choice and the rest of the people disapproved of that choice, the solidarity of Islam would have been shattered. No time was to be lost, Abu Bakr and 'Umar hastened to the council hall. On arrival there, they found that Sa'd ibn 'Ubada had just finished his speech and that the Ansar had agreed to elect him as a successor to the Holy Prophet. On the arrival of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, one of the Ansar stood up, and in further confirmation of the choice, dwelt on the claims of the Ansar and their virtues. Abu Bakr in reply said that so far as service to the cause of the Faith was concerned, there could be no two opinions about the Ansar. But the people of Arabia, he reminded them, would not submit to any king other than a Quraishite.

This was perfectly true. Never before in her history had Arabia known allegiance to a king. Every clan, every tribe, had been independent, and none had ever been under the sway of a rival clan or tribe. In the first place, the Arabs were temperamentally averse to owing allegiance to one king or overlord. Love of unfettered freedom had by birth and breeding become part and parcel of their nature, and every tribe prized its undisputed sovereignty above all else. And again, even if they could be reconciled to the idea of a central authority, they could never agree that that authority should be vested in any tribe other than the Quraish, whom they had learnt by long-established tradition to venerate by virtue of the fact that to this bribe belonge the sacred privilege of the custody of the spiritual centre of Arabia, viz., the Ka'bah, and to whom belonged the additional distinction that from it came the Prophet himself. Abu Bakr's statesmanlike foresight at once grasped the situation and he put it before the assembly of Ansar. It was thereupon suggested by the Ansar as a solution of the difficulty that instead of one there might be elected two successors, one form among themselves and another from among the Quraish. But this meant the disruption of Islam. After much discussion, the Ansar came around to Abu Bakr's point of view. One of them stood up and said:

"For the pleasure of God and in obedience to His will alone have we been sacrificing life and property, and now that the best interests of Islam so require, we submit to the election of a successor from among the Quraish. Just as we stood by the Prophet, even so do we pledge ourselves to stand by his successor."

And so saying, he took hold of Abu Bakr's hand and swore allegiance to him. According to some reports, the first to do so were 'Umar and Abu 'Ubaida, and thereafter the Ansar, group by group, came forward to make the pledge at the hand of Abu Bakr. Sa'd ibn 'Ubada was the solitary exception.

Abu Bakr's statesmanship

It was thus due to the prudence of Abu Bakr and 'Umar that a calamity was successfully averted. Had it not been for their speedy action in reaching the council hall Islam would have found itself in the grip of a most formidable dissension within its own house which would have ended in the total destruction of its power at that early stage. On the one hand, there was the funeral of the man for love of whom they had for a quarter of a century sacrificed their lives, their property and their all, the man whose separation they could not for one moment bear; it was their duty to see the body of their Master to its last resting place. On the other hand, there was the duty
to save Islam from disruption at this critical moment when one false step at the council hall, which had almost been taken, would have sealed the doom of Islam itself. And this call of national duty was too urgent, too imperative, to permit of delay. The temptation to remain close to the Prophet’s body, irresistible as it must have been, had to be sacrificed; and the sacrifice was made without a moment’s hesitation. For thus saving Islam, at a critical point, posterity must ever remain indebted to these two great men. Abu Bakr’s words on his own death-bed show that it was only to save Islam that he left the dead body of the Prophet. Calling ‘Umar to his death-bed, he gave him directions regarding reinforcements for Muthanna in the following words: “Command a levy for al-Muthanna. Tarry not. If I die, as I may this day, wait not till the evening; if I linger on tonight, wait not till the morning. Let not sorrow for me divert thee from this service of the Lord. Ye saw what I myself did when the Prophet died, and there could be no greater sorrow for mankind than that; truly, if grief had stayed me then from girding my loins in the cause of the Lord and of His Prophet, the Faith had fared badly; the flame of rebellion had been surely kindled in the city.”

(1) The Caliphate, by Sir W. Muir.

Abu Bakr’s address to the people

The spark of dissension which may have blazed into a conflagration and consumed the entire fabric of Islam having been thus extinguished, the Prophet’s body was with due solemnity interred the following day. The question of where the grave should be dug gave rise to a difference of opinion. This, too, was settled by Abu Bakr who decreed that a prophet must be buried on the very spot where he dies. So ‘A’ishah’s chamber became the Prophet’s tomb. Then came the ceremony of general pledge-giving at the hand of Abu Bakr as Caliph. After all had sworn allegiance, Abu Bakr delivered an address in the course of which he observed that nowhere in the depth of his heart was there any desire to be elected Caliph, and that he had accepted the responsible office only in obedience to the will of the community. He also expounded principles of caliphate or rulership which, if acted upon by the world of Islam, would have saved its world-wide empire from decomposition and decay which later overtook it. “Help me,” said the Caliph, “if I am in the right. Set me right if I am in the wrong!” In other words, he laid it down as the very cornerstone of government that all power ultimately vested in the people themselves. If a ruler administered this power in the best interests of the people, it was the duty of the people to render him every help. If, however, he worked against the good of the people, he forfeited his claim to the latter’s loyalty and support. In the same address, he gave in most pithy words the main function of all governments, viz., the preservation of peace and order and safeguarding the rights of citizens: “The weak among you shall be strong in my eye till I have vindicated his just rights, and the strong among you shall be weak in my eye till I have made him fulfil the obligations due from him.” He also told his people in what lay the secret of their life and prosperity: “No nation abandoned Jihad (struggle) in the path of God but God abased it.” And he concluded with the beautiful words: “Obey me as long as I obey God and His Prophet. In case I disobey God and His Prophet, I have no right to obedience from you.” Each word of this splendid address contains volumes of wisdom and may well serve as a beacon to the Muslim world in these dark and dreary days of universal decay. A Head there must be in any scheme of national organization, call him king, Caliph, president or Imam; one outward symbol of national unity and solidarity there must be. But the will of this Head of the nation ceases to be binding on the people the moment he transgresses the limits laid down by God and His Prophet.

(1) The Muslims living at Madinah were either the Muhajirin, i.e., those who had fled from Makkah and settled at madinah or the Ansar (lit. helpers) i.e., the residents of Madinah who had invited the Prophet to live among them. The Muhajirin belonged generally to the tribe of Quraysh, whose supremacy was admitted throughout Arabia on account of their guardianship of the Ka’bah. The Ansar belonged to two tribes, the Aus and the Khazraj.

Abu Bakr’s illness and death, Jumada II, 13 A.H. (Aug. 634 A.D.)

It was on the 7th Jumada II, 13 A.H., that Abu Bakr fell ill. When the disease took a serious turn, he sent for prominent Muslims and consulted them as to a suitable successor. All eyes turned to ‘Umar, just as at the Prophet’s death all had turned to Abu Bakr. Everyone considered him to be the right man for the exalted office. Throughout his reign, Abu Bakr had been conducting state affairs in consultation with ‘Umar. He consulted first ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn ‘Auf’, then ‘Uthman. Both favored ‘Umar. Thereafter he asked the opinions of Sa’id ibn Zaid, Usaid ibn Hudair and other Muhajirin (Emigrants) and Ansar (Helpers). The choice of all fell on ‘Umar. There were some who feared that by temperament ‘Umar was somewhat harsh. Responsibility of office, reassured the dying Caliph, would soften him. Thus with the consultation of Muslims, Abu Bakr nominated ‘Umar as his successor, and passed away on Tuesday 22nd Jumada II, 13 A.H. (23rd August, 634 A.D.) after a fortnight’s illness, and was buried beside the Holy Prophet. Reposing side by side with his beloved Master the devoted companionship which he so pre-eminently bore the Prophet in lifetime was now continued after death. The period of his
Caliphate was a little over two years, but immense work had been done during this short time.

**Simplicity of his life**

Abu Bakr was an embodiment of simplicity. Raised to kingship, he retained the same simplicity of life, the same simple dress, the same simple house, the same simple food. To him no work, however humble, was beneath his dignity. He did his own work when Caliph just as before holding that high position. Nay, he even did all sorts of little offices to others. Like his great Master, the Prophet, earthily kingship had wrought not the slightest change in him. If the Prophet set the high example of combining the life of a hermit with the position of a king, even so did he, the greatest of his disciples and the dearest of his companions, faithfully walk in his footsteps. When elected Caliph, the very next day he was seen wending his way to the market with his merchandise. ‘Umar chanced to meet him on the way and reminded him that on his shoulders lay the onerous burden of kingship, and as such it was not possible for him to carry on business pursuits together with state affairs. To maintain his family, replied the Caliph, he must work. The companions held a consultation and calculating his usual domestic expenses settled an annual allowance of 2,500 drachms on him, which was subsequently raised to about 500 drachms a month. At the time of death, he had in his possession an old sheet of cloth and a camel, the property of the public treasury. These he returned to his successor, ‘Umar. As regards the winding sheet to cover his corpse, he advised that an old piece of cloth, duly washed, would do. The living, he said, stood in greater need of a new piece than the dead. As regards his sincerity of conviction and faith in the Prophet, a historian like Sir William Muir advances this as an argument in support of the Prophet’s sincerity: “Had Muhammad begun his career as a conscious impostor, he never could have won the faith and friendship of a man who was not only sagacious and wise, but throughout his life simple, consistent and sincere.” (1) This testimony of a historian who makes no secret of his bias against Islam with regard to the sincerity and devotion of Abu Bakr should suffice to seal the lips of all detractors. The hand of God manifested itself in the Caliph’s support just as it had been manifested in the case of the Holy Prophet, and through his instrumentality Islam, after it seemed to have become submerged under the terrible upheaval on the Prophet’s death, was brought back to full life and vigor. As Muir says: “After Muhammad himself, there is no one to whom the faith is more beholden.” (2) Abu Bakr’s love of God and his Prophet was the deepest ever cherished by a disciple towards his Master. Consumed as his whole being was in Divine love, worldly power and pelf had not the least charm or attraction for him. His piety and devotion, his simplicity of life, sublimity of morals, his iron determination, his unflagging perseverance and, above all, his unshakable faith were the many qualities that have won him a place in Islam second only to that of the Holy Prophet.

(1) The Caliphate p. 81  
(2) Ibid.

**The collection of the Qur’an**

During the two years and a quarter of Abu Bakr’s reign, Islam was once more restored to life. The fire of insurrection all over Arabia was extinguished and the power of Islam firmly re-established. Nay, a new vigor was instilled into it; so that when the time came, it was able to overthrow at one blow of the mightiest empires of the day. But this is only one side of the picture, one phase of the great achievements of the Caliph. He did immense service to the great cause in several other directions. It was in the short reign that the collection of the Holy Qur’an was brought about. This expression—the collection of the Qur’an—is often misunderstood. It signifies no more than that all those manuscripts which during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet had been dictated to amanuenses from time to time, as the verses were revealed, were brought together into one volume in the order in which the Holy Prophet had personally directed them to be inserted. The practice with the Prophet was that whenever a verse or a chapter was revealed, a double process was employed to preserve it. There were amanuenses always at hand who committed it to writing; there were also those who committed it to memory. Now it must be noted that the revelation of certain chapters extended over many years, as they were revealed piecemeal. Thus, whenever a fresh revelation came which was to form part of a previously revealed chapter, the Prophet, while directing its commitment to writing and memory, would there and then also point out in what chapter and in what context of that chapter it was to be inserted. Thus the whole of the Qur’an was arranged and recited in the very order in which we find it in our hands. In this very order the Prophet recited the various chapters in his daily prayers. In this very order were they preserved in human memory. The order and arrangement were done under the Prophet’s own directions. The only thing left undone was that the various manuscripts were not put into one volume. Nor could they be so put during the lifetime of the Prophet, when at any time a fresh piece might be revealed and a rearrangement of the written pieces accordingly become necessary. These pieces were taken down on palm leaves, on paper, or on leather. The work of collection could only be done after the Prophet’s death when the Qur’an had been revealed in its
entirety. Consequently, when in the battle of Yamamah, many of those Muslims who had the Qur'an by heart met martyrdom. ‘Umar reminded Abu Bakr that the time for such collection had come, so that if even all those who had committed the Qur'an to memory should fall in battle, the Qur'an might still remain intact and in the same order. This important work was at once taken in hand and entrusted to Zaid ibn Thabit, the scribe who had taken down most of the Madinah chapters, and he collected all the material bearing these manuscripts and made them into one volume. This is all the term “collection of the Qur'an” implies, and this is what was done in the reign of Abu Bakr. Later, during the time of ‘Uthman, when the empire of Islam spread far and wide, several authentic copies of this volume were made and sent out to the various centers of the empire, so that each might in that part serve as a standard version and as a reference for all subsequent copies that might be made, thus avoiding all chances of discrepancies in text or in writing creeping in. This was undoubtedly one of the greatest services to the cause of Islam, and will ever be the basis of unity one book, without the least variation, for the whole Muslim world.

The collection of Zakat

The other most important achievement of Abu Bakr was the system of collecting zakat in the central national treasury. During the stormy days when pretenders had arisen in several parts of Arabia, some of the newly converted tribes took it into their heads to take advantage of the general disorder and refused payment of zakat. They demanded, as the price of their keeping quiet, that they should be exempted from this compulsory tax. Even a strict and stern man like ‘Umar counselled Abu Bakr to show leniency in view of the crisis. Refusal meant the estrangement of these tribes and throwing them into the arms of the rebels. The Caliph, however, resolutely rejected the proposal. It was a system of vital importance to both the solidarity and stability of the power of Islam, and a compromise therefore was out of the question. The slightest relaxation of this public duty would have meant, at that early stage, disintegration of the power of Islam. Shorn of this central national fund, the Caliphate would have been reduced to a mere skeleton without either vitality or vigor, and a few more days would have seen the end of it. Abu Bakr saved the situation. Should so much as a single seed of grain be left unpaid, he replied, he would wage war against the defaulter and carry it on till it had been paid. How many Muslims today ever reflect that much of their present national disintegration is due to lack of this central zakat fund? With a strong national fund kept continuously replenished by zakat from the pocket of every Muslim man and woman of means, wonders could be achieved in a short time in the way of nation building, such as the opening of schools, establishment of orphanages, poor houses, missions for the propagation of the faith, and so forth.

Government by counsel

The third most conspicuous service of Abu Bakr was the introduction, in all affairs of state, of the democratic system of taking counsel and arriving at decisions by the majority of votes. The procedure followed was that, first of all, reference was made to the Qur'an for light and guidance for the matter in hand. If no explicit ruling on the question was found there, reference was next made to what the Prophet had said or done. Failing to find light through that source as well, recourse was finally made to counsel to which all the prominent Companions were invited. The matter was thoroughly discussed and the line of action favored by the majority of those present was ultimately adopted. This exactly was the principle according to which the Government of the country was conducted during the reign of ‘Umar. Nevertheless, where a clear instruction could be had either on the authority of the Qur'an or the Sunnah, the matter was considered above dispute and settled accordingly even against popular opinion. The despatch of the expedition to Syria under the command of ‘Usamah is a case in point. Though most of the important Companions, in view of the threatening conditions at home, opposed this bold step, Abu Bakr overruled the opposition on the authority of the Prophet. An army, he argued, directed by the Prophet himself to proceed to Syria could on no account be kept back. On the same principle, he refused to put a more experienced man in command; for ‘Usamah had been appointed by the Prophet himself. In the absence of any clear light, however, all affairs were decided by the majority of votes, and when once a decision was thus arrived at, the minority cheerfully submitted to it.

Position of the ruler

Another equally momentous reform that gives to Abu Bakr an eminent position in history was the subordination of the status of kingship to the will of the people. The king was to be considered a member of society just as a commoner. There were no privileges attached to that exalted position. For instance, the king was not the master but only the custodian of the public treasury. A civil list was fixed for him beyond which he could not draw a single penny for his personal use. The king was thus the servant of the people. This was a reform introduced centuries ago when the standard of world civilization was very low, a reform of which the most civilized nation of this twentieth century could justly be proud. Then again, Abu Bakr did not convert kingship into a personal property...
to descend in his own line. At the time of his death, he had sons in every way capable of occupying his position, but he selected 'Umar as the worthiest of all to fill that office and did not consider his choice as final until he had consulted the Companions and obtained their confirmation. Yet again, the king was just as much under the law of the land as the man in the street. "The king can do no wrong" was not to be the Islamic law. The king was as much accountable for his deeds at the bar of the law of the land as a drawer of water or a hewer of wood. When on a visit to Makkah, the Caliph took a seat near the town hall and asked the people if any of them had any grievance against him or if he owed anyone anything. Furthermore, legislation was not placed in the hands of the king. First of all the Qur'an, then the Prophet's precept or practice, then the will of the people, such was the machinery that framed the law; and the law, not the king, was the supreme authority. In subordinating kingship to the law of the land and the law of the land to the will of the people, Abu Bakr laid the foundations of a truly democratic government as also of liberty and equality in the truest sense of these words. To the misfortune of the community of Islam, however, this golden rule of government was abandoned after the reign of 'Ali, the fourth Caliph. Kingship again became private property, as also did the public treasury. Democracy gave way to despotism, and thus began the disintegration and decay of the power of Islam.

**Treatment of enemies**

The list of Abu Bakr's multifarious reforms would be incomplete without mentioning those most humane rules which he laid down for the guidance of his army in its behavior towards the enemy. Here are some specially emphasized:

1. No old man, no child, no woman shall be slain.
2. No hermit shall be molested, nor his place of worship damaged.
3. Corpses of the fallen shall not be mutilated or disfigured.
4. No fruit-bearing tree shall be cut down, no crops burned, no habitation devastated.
5. Treaty obligations with other faiths shall under all circumstances be honored and fulfilled.
6. Those who surrender shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges of a Muslim subject.

**Appearance and character**

Abu Bakr was a man of fair complexion, lean in body and with emaciated cheeks, deep-set eyes and up-drawn forehead. He had a slight stoop. He dyed his hair red and wore a ring on his finger with the inscription "ni'm al-Qadiru Allahu," i.e., "How good is God, the Almighty." Amongst his numerous virtues, generosity was conspicuous. It was an instinct with him to help the poor and the needy. As king he did not let money accumulate in the treasury. Whatever came in was distributed amongst the deserving. Man and woman, slave and free, young and old, all got equal shares in the distribution. At his death, the State treasury contained not more than a single dirham. He was humble in disposition and very hospitable. He was so tender-hearted that when he recited the Qur'an, tears overwhelmed him. Nevertheless he combined with this a high order of bravery. At the most critical junctures he stood by the side of the Prophet, such as on the occasion of the flight, and at the battles of Badr, Uhud, and Hunain. His piety was equally great. For a great part of the night he kept awake praying to God while in the daytime he would fast. For all this, in time of war he was never behind others. When Madinah had no garrison left and was attacked by rebels, he took all the available men and himself marched out in pursuit of them. Whenever he sent out an expedition, he would in person give it a send-off. Notwithstanding his old age, he accompanied Usamah on his Syrian expedition a long way on foot, advising him on various matters. Even in the days of his Caliphate he came to Madinah and went back to his country-house on foot, though he was above sixty years of age. He had three sons. 'Abd Allah, 'Abd al-Rahman, and Muhammad; and three daughters, Asma', 'A'ishah and Umm Kulthum.
The Exilement Of Ishmael To The Wilderness Of Arabia Was The Real Sacrifice Of Abraham

By Zahid Khan

The sacrificial act of the Patriarch Abraham has always been the question asked by many throughout the ages. The Bible gives contradictory statements as to whom Prophet Abraham offered for sacrifice to Almighty God in a test of faith in God. The Holy Qur’an makes it clear that it was Ishmael, his ‘first-born son,’ who was offered but the circumstances and the purpose of it all were quite different from the Biblical account.

Christians believe that it was Isaac. But the Bible has sufficient evidence to prove it was Ishmael, although the texts were tampered with to fit in with Isaac.

The Holy Qur’an states that Prophet Abraham was commanded by God through a dream to sacrifice his ‘ONLY SON’ (See also Gen. 22:2,16): ‘O my son! I have seen in a dream that I should sacrifice you...’

Thus it was that Prophet Abraham proceeded by knife to sacrifice his ‘only son’ (See Gen. 16:1-3, 15-16) on the basis of a dream. Dreams, as we know are subjected to interpretations, therefore, when the Almighty stayed Prophet Abraham’s hand from slaughter we realize that the Patriarch’s interpretation of the dream was wrong.

God has never intended to try Prophet Abraham’s faith through such morbid means. It was Prophet Abraham who misinterpreted his dream. But surely, God Almighty did command the sacrifice of his son. The commandment nevertheless stood there for fulfilment.

Was it ever fulfilled? In the case of Isaac we find no such fulfilment in any incident of his life. In that of Ishmael, however, an incident actually took place which called forth a similar spirit of sacrifice on the part of Prophet Abraham. He had to exile his ‘Only Son’ (at the time), for life, not only for saving him from Sarah’s anger, but for the fulfilment of a Great Divine Purpose which at that time was beyond comprehension of the human mind.

The Holy Qur’an hints at this when it says:

“And He(God) ransomed him with a great sacrifice.”

Now surely a ram could never be considered ‘a great sacrifice’, as the Bible makes out. Evidently it was the ‘Exile’ of his ‘beloved son’ whom he had gotten in his old age after years of supplications, that the Holy Qur’an also hints at.

It is clear that God had never intended to try Prophet Abraham’s faith by sacrificing any one with a knife. What Prophet Abraham attempted was through an error of his...but never intended by God to be a test of faith.

It is beneath the dignity of God to hold mock trials for His faithful servants. We know that trials and tests are not objects in themselves, but only precursors of some coming achievement. If He ordered Prophet Abraham to sacrifice his son, He must have had some purpose for it.

The fact that God prevented the slaughter shows that He wanted the sacrifice in some other way, a way that would prove some real good to the world. This is the reason why God in the first place sent His chosen ‘Messengers’ to make sacrifice for the benefit of mankind. Definitely, the ‘Exilement of Ishmael’ was the desired ‘Sacrifice’.

What then was the purpose of God commanding Prophet Abraham to ‘exile’ his only beloved son Ishmael in the barren land of Arabia? What good did it bring to mankind?

The answer lies in the famous prayer of Prophet Abraham.

Almighty God has revealed unto Prophet Abraham that a ‘sacred Prophet’ built for His worship a long time ago in the ‘wilderness of Arabia’ was now desolate and in need of restoration.

He ordered Prophet Abraham to do so and Prophet Abraham journeyed there with ‘HIS WIFE HAGAR’ (Gen. 16:3) and his young son ‘Ishmael’. Prophet Abraham was still living in Arabia with his ‘wife’ and ‘son’ and came only to pay his last respects to Sarah when she died. (Gen. 23:1-3,19).

After rebuilding the ‘Sacred House’, which the Bible calls an ‘alter’ Prophet Abraham prayed his now famous prayer:

“O my Lord! Cause a great city and a mighty nation to grow out of this ‘wilderness’, making them secure and prosperous, keeping up Thy Commandments. And raise from among them a ‘Messenger’, calling ‘all men’ unto Thy worship, living forever in Thy service and praising Thee much.”

Then did God spoke unto Prophet Abraham assuring him of the fulfilment of his prayer, for surely Prophet Abraham was blessed, and a Friend of God. (See James 2:23)

But Prophet Abraham was asked to sacrifice the one thing most dear to him. He loved Ishmael very much, when Sarah insulted Hagar and Ishmael, Prophet Abraham was hurt:

“And the thing was VERY GRIEVOUS in Abraham’s sight because of ‘HIS SON’.(Gen.21:10-11)

He was asked to leave Ishmael at the Sacred House.

Thus it was that God intended to build a great nation and country (Matt. 21:43-44) around His Sacred House through

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REVELATION IN ISLAM

By the Late Maulana Muhammad Ali

Continued From

Previous Issue

The fourth distinction: the possessor of prophetic revelation is a master (mūtā')

The summary of the distinctions aforementioned is that the possessor of prophetic revelation acts particularly by virtue of and on account of his own revelation. He acknowledges the other revelation, not as such, but only because his own revelation has verified or made it necessary to accept the previous one. Therefore, he upholds his own revelation as compared with all others, whereas the disciple only submits to the revelation of his leader prophet and accepts his revelation, only if it corresponds and is confirmed by the authoritative revelation of his prophet. That is why a prophet does not stand in need of getting his revelation judged by a previous revelation, but a disciple does not enjoy this prestige.

Another distinction between the revelation of a prophet and a non-prophet is this, that, when a prophet is raised to the rank of prophethood and is endowed with prophetic revelation, it becomes the duty of all those to whom he has been sent to follow him and only accept his revelation in preference to all other revelations. In other words, every prophet is a leader. The following Qur'ānic verse is clear evidence to this fact:

"And We sent no messenger but that he should be obeyed by God's command." (The Qur'ān, 4 al-Nisā:64)

The significance of mūtā', as has been explained above, is that the people to whom the prophet is sent must by all means obey him and must acknowledge his revelation in preference to all other revelations. Every prophet is just like a new sun. It may have a lesser or greater light, but, whenever and wherever a sun rises, all light should be obtained from it. Such is the appearance of a prophet. When he comes, he is a leader, the guide, the precept, the most excellent exemplar. Whatever he says and to whichever direction he leads must necessarily be followed. It will be he whose spiritual power will work, it will be he who will help in self-purification and not the one who has passed before.

This is not difficult to understand about those prophets who were raised among different nations. The difficulty arises in the case of the prophets before whom a great Law Giver prophet had preceded and left a nation behind him, and other prophets were raised in his footsteps. Although their prophethood was not the result of their discipleship to him but because they had to complete the work which he had started and had to reform the condition of that nation and had to guide it according to the needs of the new time, therefore, they were called the successors (Khulāsā) of the former prophet. I want to explain by way of an illustration how, even in such cases, always the last prophet was the mūtā' (leader). For instance, David was a prophet of his time from among the Israelites. When he was raised to the status of prophethood, the obedience of all the Israelite prophets became submerged in the obedience of David, because he was the prophet of his age. Whatever his revelation contained had to be accepted, whether or not it was in agreement with a part of the previous revelation. The Torah, the book of Moses, was after all limited to a particular age and a particular nation and, accordingly to the changed conditions of the time and the nation, it required corresponding changes and alterations. There was no promise for its protection and it was not preserved in its pristine purity. Under these conditions, whatever the prophet of the time would say must be accepted.

If we do not accept this fact, then the coming of prophets (among Israelites) becomes a meaningless affair.

For every prophet must command allegiance from his people, and the people should have unconditional faith in his revelation. Whatever he commands must be accepted, whether or not it is against the Torah or the teaching of any other previous prophet. If we think that faith in every prophet depended on its being in conformity with the Torah, then we have to believe that unless Jesus Christ had come no alteration had taken place in the Torah and it was word for word the same book which was reveal to Moses; and this is against facts and history. Moreover, it follows in this case that the Torah has not undergone any change until now. If for fifteen hundred years, that is from Moses to Jesus, not a jot or title of the Torah was altered, in spite of the lack of arrangements for safeguarding the scripture, in spite of the Jews suffering the worst of calamities, then were there any specific circumstances during the life of Jesus Christ or after him which caused alterations in it? Even a hostile critic of Islam, like Sir William Muir, admits that there has been no book like the Qur'ān, which has remained protected for a full thirteen hundred years. If we do not agree with this we have to admit that in this respect the Torah fared better than the Qur'ān as far as its authenticity is concerned. This is untrue on the very face of it. Thus, in case the Torah kept on suffering at human hands this does not seem befitting that in the presence of a prophet who received new revelation, the altered and interpolated book should be held above it. In short, such a view is not acceptable at all that the revelation of the Israelite prophets should be made subordinate to a book that has been seriously tampered with.

The truth is, however, this, that, leaving aside the prophets who appeared from time to time among various nations and countries, even every prophet who appeared among the Israelites was actually the mūtā'-the leader of his time. It was, therefore, necessary for the children of Israel to believe in all the prophets who appeared among them at different times, that is to say they were the prophets raised for the reformation of the people in that age. It was in this manner that every new prophet who appeared among them was considered to be their real leader, and they received all the divine favors possessed.
by the new prophet by following in his footsteps, and by annihilating themselves in him and his spiritual power. Thus every new prophet among them was their leader. The chain of ziyara (sainthood) started with the new prophet and not with the old one. But a disciple, as I have explained before, is himself a muti’ (obedient), and his leader is his master prophet. Therefore, he cannot declare himself a leader. He would call other people to the same fountainhead from where he has quenched his own thirst because his prophet would be the guide, the leader, the exemplar, and the preceptor.

Aaron was also the possessor of command

It is sometimes objected that Aaron was commanded to obey Moses, with whom he was contemporary prophet, and the following verse is advanced as an argument where Moses says to him:

Hast thou, then, disobeyed my order? (The Qur’-an, 20 Ta Ha: 93)

These words were uttered by Moses when, in his absence the Israelites started worshipping a molten calf and Aaron was not severe in preventing them from it. Now the question worth consideration is, that if Aaron was absolutely obedient to Moses, why did Moses request God:

“Give me an aider from my family: Aaron, my brother.” (The Qur’-an, 20 Ta Ha: 29-30) Could not he take his brother with him by himself? Did not the aides and helpers of the Prophet and Jesus Christ come out of their respective communities? And Moses was raised to a nation, which, although they showed many weaknesses in their practical life, did not hesitate at all to accept him as a prophet. All of them paid allegiance to this messenger of God and followed him wherever he led them. When Moses appointed scores of other men to do various jobs, could he not entrust Aaron with a job? Would Aaron have disobeyed him? In fact, such a doubt only arises out of lack of understanding of the Qur’-an. If there are, on one side, the words: Hast thou, then, disobeyed my order?, on the other, in the prayer of Moses to God, the following words also occur: Add to my strength by him, and make him share my task. (Ibid., 20 Ta Ha: 31-2) And anyone who shares the task must necessarily be to an extent possessor of the command (sahl-ib-i-amr) as well. On the one hand, Moses blames Aaron for disobedience, on the other, he believes him to be a sharer in his task. In fact, the point is simple to understand. There is no contradiction in it. Moses and Aaron were both possessors of command, as is clear from the above verse. By reading the Torah, in whatever condition at the moment it is, we know that some work was entrusted to Aaron and some to Moses. For this reason, the office of priesthood (kahanat) has been continued among the descendants of Aaron as their exclusive prerogative. So much so, that Mary, the truthful, who belonged to the priestly class (19: 28: “Mary belonged to the priestly class,” as Wherry also admits, “because she was of the Levitical race, as by her being related to Elizabeth it would seem she was,” and, therefore, she is rightly called ukht Harun, or sister of Aaron, the word ukht being by no means limited to the close blood relationship like its equivalent in English. The Holy Qur’-an, Arabic text, translation and commentary by Muhammad ‘Ali (1951 ed.), p. 599-Ed) has been called in the Qur’-an the sister of Aaron. When, under the Divine command, Moses went to the Mountain for forty days, then Aaron was entrusted with all the work. A part of his work was that in which he was himself sahib-i-amr, and the other part of the work was that where he exercised the power delegated to him by Moses; and it was this work of deputation where Aaron exercised leniency so that Moses might not blame him for causing dissensions among the Israelites; and this has been made clear by the Qur’-an in the following way:

“And Aaron indeed had said to them before: O my people, you are only tried by it, and surely your Lord is the Beneficient God, so follow me and obey my order. They said: We shall not cease to keep to its worship until Moses return to us. (Moses) said: O Harun, what prevented thee, when thou sawest them going astray, that thou didst not follow me?” (The Qur’-an, 20 Ta Ha: 90-3)

And the excuse which Aaron made was also clear:

“Surely I was afraid lest thou shouldst say: Thou hast caused division among the children of Israel and not waited for my word.” (Ibid., 20 Ta Ha: 94)

To keep the nation united was the job of Moses. But, on the other hand, Aaron’s saying to his people ut’tu amri (obey my order) showed that he himself was also the possessor of command (sahl-ib-i-amr), as is evident by Moses’ prayer make him share my task (Ibid., 20 Ta Ha: 32). The fact is, then, this, that Moses had found himself unable to bear the whole burden. Therefore, he prayed to God that he should be helped by another prophet who should be responsible for a part of the work. For the same reason, the Qur’-an says about the Torah: And We gave them both the clear Book. (Ibid., 37 Al-Saffat: 117) That is to say, the Book was given both to Moses and to Aaron. Thus, there is no doubt about it that Aaron was a sharer in the prophethood (sharik fi al-muhasebah) of Moses and both were the possessors of command, although in the absence of Moses it was Aaron only who possessed the command. It was because of this that Moses used the words af’asatu amri(Hast thou disobeyed my command?). Otherwise, in their respective jobs they were both the leaders of the Israelites.

The fifth distinction: a prophet is a follower of revelation but a non-prophet makes use of ijtihad (judgement)

The foregoing arguments from the Qur’-an and the Hadith also point out another distinction between a prophet and a follower, which is that, in solving the difficulties concerning matters of faith, a prophet waits for the revelation to come but a follower makes use of his judgement (ijtihad). The reason is obvious. When a non-prophet attains to all the excellences by following his prophet, then at times of solving a religious problem it is, however, necessary that he should make his own efforts and run towards the same source from which he had originally received light and guidance. But the source of the light of a prophet is God. Therefore, he turns towards

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prejudices aside and, where
Judeo-Christian traditions and
teachings have failed to deliver
the goods, we should be looking
toward other moral-spiritual
sources which can benefit us.

The third main cause of crime is
the deviant behavior in the field
of sex. During the early period
of the development of the church
dogmas, sexual relationships
even with one’s own wife was
considered as a barrier between
man-God relationship. Insistence
on celibacy in the case of people
intending to be religious guides,
I.e., monks and nuns, supports
this deduction. This was an
extreme and unnatural dogma.
The other extreme was reached in
the dogma that, once a couple
entered into marriage there was
no way out of that marriage, come
what may, the divorce was not
allowed. Thirdly, more than one
marriage was not allowed,
whatever the problems faced by
an individual or a nation. These
rigid extremes, all unnatural,
could not stand the test of time.
Since no provision for exception
was made, hence the only option
available was breaking these
laws. Unnatural as these laws
were, people found by-passes and
excuses for by-passing these laws.
The stresses of the industrial age,
the calamities of two World Wars,
coupled with the economic
stresses of the system, have
jointly worked to completely
demolish these laws. The people
have lost the sense of any sanctity
to these dogmas and have thrown
these teachings overboard. The
tragedy is that, once society came
to reject these notions as
guidelines for their sexual
behavior in their lifestyles and in
their family life, they were left
without any moral-spiritual
values to fall back upon in the
field of sex. They started evolving
their own codes of behavior rather
than drawing on any spiritual
source. The result is a complete
state of anarchy in the field of sex
and family life. Living together
without marriage, having babies
without wedlock, swapping
partners, keeping sexual
relationships with men and
women other than spouses,
homosexuality, bisexuality, etc.,
etc. are the means by which this
society is trying to formulate its
own ethics of sexual behavior. All
the modesty, the nicety and the
decency in one’s sexual behavior
and family outlook has
disappeared from society in this
process. Deviation is the order of
the day. People not only talk but
also preach deviation. The
church, as a reaction to whose
unnatural dogmas and teachings
this bestial process started, is
helpless to offer any solution.
For the most part, the church
functionaries are simply silent
spectators and, in many cases,
bestow silent approval. This has
ripped apart the family structure.
Divorces are rampant, which in
turn are hardening the little
children who are subjected to
trauma because of these divorces.
If Christian traditions and
 teachings have not availed
 society in shaping sexual,
 marital, and family problems,
than that society will be well-
advised to turn towards alternate
moral-spiritual sources rather
than leaving the field in the
hands of the gays, bi-sexuals and
such other deviationists groups
and philosophies. The society
needs to be pulled out of the
present state of anarchy and this
is only possible through some
moral or spiritual teachings. Like
in other fields, Islam also can help
solve this problem. Its teachings
emphasize status of equality of
women to men, as partners in life
and not the subject of man’s
lustfulness or sexual gratifications,
as the present society has
come to treat her. She is not a play
thing or a toy or a model, the parts
or limbs of whose body may be
used by men for display for
commercial gain. Islam teaches
proper respect for women by
declaring her roles as a mother, as
a wife, as a daughter and as a
sister, and emphasizes modesty
for both men and women alike.
Our modern society can benefit
from the spiritual teachings of
Islam by adopting these
guidelines for sexual behavior
and family life and can restore
peace to homelife.

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Him for guidance. Thus, a disciple
exercises his judgement in matters
concerning religion and a prophet
gives judgement by the revelation he
receives from God. A disciple cannot
give this status to his revelation that it
should be considered the basis for
solving religious problems. But, as he
also gets a little light besides his
also gets a little light besides his
scholarly judgement (ijtihad),
therefore, his revelations and
inspirations can guide him at times of
need, but he cannot advance them as
arguments by themselves in solving
these problems. His is not entitled
to say that, because he has received a
certain inspiration, therefore a certain
point should be considered right in
accordance with his revelation. His
inspiration, however, serves only as an
aid to him in his exercise of judgement
(ijtihad). His mind is turned towards
the truth by a revelation which is
clearest and surest in its form and them
by his own ijtihad he throws light on the
various aspects of that problem.
Thus, in this manner, the disciple’s
revelation gives his ijtihad a high status
and saves him from stumbling and
from errors. If he has made a mistake in
his previous ijtihad, this revelation
removes that mistake. In short, the
disciple gets all sorts of help in his
ijtihad by his revelation. But, as he is
himself nobody as compared with his
prophet, so is his revelation of no
independent value. It is only a means
of help to him. A prophet also
sometimes stands in need of exercise of
judgement, but where ijtihad would
not work he should be guided
according to his need by Divine
Revelation.

In short, this also is a clear
distinction between a prophet and a
non-prophet. I may repeat it that in the
intricacies of faith a prophet is
supported by Divine revelation and a
non-prophet by ijtihad. The prophet
gets his light direct from God.

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EDITOR’S MAIL

My dear Masud,
Thank you for the consideration shown to my suggestion about countering the misrepresentation of Islam by the ignorant.

Anything out of the common or cruel done by a Muslim ruler is asserted as an Islamic Law. It may have been a state necessity at that time or the ruler was that kind of a ruler but the non-believers attribute it to the religion of Islam. This kind of publicity and propaganda has to be combated also through the local papers because they are what the people would usually read.

I read your very learned and lucid exposition of the eternal guidance of the Qur’an. This will help remove the cobwebs in the minds of so-called “thinking believers” and “wavering”.

I agree with you that it is the elevation of Mulla to the status of a law-giver which has helped the spread of obscurantism in Islam and shackled the reason of believers to the Mulla’s pronouncements rather than learning it free to look to the perfected guidance given by the Qur’an.

Mr. Hafeezur Rahman Khan
Bar-At-Law
Formerly the Ambassador of Pakistan to Burma, 1974-78
Brisbane, Australia

Sometime back, a brother had enquired on the question as to what day and date of the American calendar on which Ramzan had fallen in 1960 and Eidul fitr had fallen in 1960. The reply is as follows:
The ist of Ramzan in 1960 was on Sunday, February 29th. Eid-ul Fitr in 1960 was celebrated on Tuesday, March 29th.

REVELATION IN ISLAM Continued

therefore, for receiving further light he turns towards Him. The latter gets his light from his prophet, therefore he always turns towards this source from which he originally received the light.

To Be Continued In Next Issue

Berry White,
125 Alwise Brook Parkway, 36/c
Somerville, MA 02144

Dear Brother Berry White,

Assalamo alaikum wa ratamullah e wa barakatohu. Here are the answers to your four questions which were received by us through Dr. Noman Ilahi Malik of Columbus, Ohio.

Question 1. Did Mirza Ghulam Ahmad forbid the members of his Jama’ from praying behind a non-Ahmadi Muslim even at funerals?

Answers: Your question covers two fields that are, “Praying behind a non-Ahmadi Muslim” and Funeral prayers of a non-Ahmadi Muslim”. We will cover both these fields in our answer.

(a) Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad did not forbid his followers from offering prayers behind a non-Ahmadi Muslim who do not call other Muslims a kafir nor did he forbid offering funeral prayers of such Muslims. On the contrary, when an agreement was signed between the Ahmadi and non-Ahmadi Muslims of Village Bhadyar District Amritsar, Punjab in 1908, wherein it was clearly stated on behalf of the Ahmadi “we will offer funeral prayers for a non-Ahmadi relative who was a common peaceful muslim”, Hadhrat Mirza Sahib approved it when this was presented to him and he wrote a note on its margin in his own hand writing; “Whatever has been written is good and blessed.” (for reference, see Badr of May 13, 1909)

(b) In reply to a query a Fatwa was issued by Mufti Muhammad Sadiq on behalf of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib in 1907 as was the arrangement of dealing with the Queries at that time. This Fatwa reads as under:

“Mukarrami Salammahu, Assalamo alaikum. Your letter is received. Funeral, bath and Takfeen (Shrouding) of a non-Ahmadi muslim is right and permissible and so also in eating anything slaughtered by him. Hadhrat Sahib (i.e. Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad) remembers you in prayers. Wassalam. Muhammad Sadiq Affa Allah o anho.” from Qadian, April 19, 1907. A facsimile of this letter appeared in Paigham e Sulah on January 30, 1921.

(c) Mirza Basheeruddin Mahmood Ahmad, who was the innovator and architect of the belief forbidding members of the Jama’ from offering prayers behind a non-Ahmadi Muslim and also forbade offering funeral prayers, had written in 1915:

Then there is the question of offering the funeral prayers of non-Ahmadi muslims. In this matter one difficulty which is presented is that the Promised Messiah has permitted offering funeral prayers of non-Ahmadi muslim in certain events. There is no doubt that such references are available in his writings from which this fact is evident and a letter has also been found on the subject which is presently under our consideration.” (Anwar e Khalafat page 91, published 1915)

It is strange that when Maulana Muhammad Ali Sahib repeatedly demanded that the said letter of the founder be published then Mirza Basheeruddin Mahmood Ahmad declared that the same has again been lost. In his statement before the Anti-Qadiani Riots Enquiry Court in 1953, Mirza Basheeruddin Mahmood Ahmad once again stated in his sworn statement:

“We have now found a fatwa of the founder of the Movement (Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad), according to which it is possible that our previous decision forbidding offering funeral prayers of non-Ahmadis may be altered.” (Statement of the Imam of the Ahmadiyyah Jamaat before the Enquiry Court. Published by Seega Nashro Isha’t, Rabwah, Jhang. page 22.)
More than forty years have passed on this court statement of Mirza Basheeruddin Mahmood Ahmad but neither the said letter or Fatwa has been published by the Rabwah Jama’at nor their process of considering it has been completed thus far.

There is no doubt that the founder had prohibited offering prayers behind an Imam who is Mukaffar of other Muslims, i.e. one who calls other Muslims Kafir, as according to an authentic Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him, the Kufr reverts to the Mukaffar of a Muslim. Based on this, a true follower of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad will most probably not like to offer prayers behind an Imam of the Rabwah group of Ahmadis as they too call other Muslims Kafir.

Since Takfeer e Muslimeen, i.e. calling other Muslims a Kafir is a very commonly prevalent evil amongst professional muslim Clerics of various sects, therefore, it will be interesting to read some of these fatwas as a specimen of this abhorrent practice.

1. Fatwas of Devbandis about the funeral prayers of Shiites and Bohra Muslims;
“Offering funeral prayers and praying for their forgiveness is not permissible.” (Fatawa e Darul uloom e Devband Volume 5, page 465)

2. Fatwa about Wahabis;
“If a Wahabi, Devbandi dies then do not participate in his funeral burial nor permit them to be buried in a muslim cemetery.” (Unanimous Fatwa of three hundred Ulema, Published by Muhammad Ibrahim Bhagalpuri).

3. Fatwa against Ghulam Ahmad Pervaz;
“Neither any Muslim lady can remain his legal wife nor any Muslim lady can be given in Nikah to him. Neither his funeral prayers shall be offered nor shall it be permissible to bury him in a muslim cemetery.” (Fatwa Wali Hassan Tonki and Sheikul Hadith Muhammad Umar Banauri of Madressa Arabia Islamia of Karachi Town.)

The above should suffice to show that Mirza Basheeruddin Mahmood Ahmad also joined the common rut of professional muslim Clerics in pronouncing other Muslims Kafir and forbidding his followers from offering prayers behind non-Ahmadis immams and offering their funeral prayers.

During the life of the Founder and during the period of Maulana Nuruddin Sahib, Ahmadis used to offer prayers behind non-Mukaffar muslim Immams and used to offer funeral prayers of non-Ahmadis muslims and many examples of this are traceable in the Ahmadiyyah literature of those days. After the bifurcation of the Movement into Qadiani (Rabwah) group and Lahori group, Maulana Muhammad Ali and his associates continued to follow the example and the position of the Founder and Maulana Nuruddin Sahib but Mirza Basheeruddin Mahmood Ahmad, in the voyage of his followers from the Ahmadiyyat to Mahoomodyat, chalked a way for them which followed the traditions of professional muslim Clerics.

Question 2. Did Mirza Ghulam Ahmad order his female followers never to marry a non-Ahmadis Muslim?
Answers: (a) Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib did not forbid his male or female followers from marriages with non-Ahmadis Muslims who did not believe in his claims.
(b) Several rather innumerous Fatwas were issued by non-Ahmadi Ulema against Ahmadis exhorting muslims on ostracizing Ahmadis and forbidding muslims from entering into any marital relationship with Ahmadis, as a result of which Ahmadis ladies who were married to non-Ahmadis muslims were in some cases persecuted by their husbands and in-laws. In view of this situation, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad advised his followers not to marry their ladies to such muslims who considered Ahmadis as Kafirs and encouraged them to arrange marriages within the group as far as possible.

When Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib claimed to be the Mujaddid of the 14th Century, he did not tell his followers not to have marital relationships with other muslims. Then in 1888, he formed the Jama’at by taking Biat, but he did not forbid marital relationships with non-Ahmadis. Again in 1891, he claimed to be the Promised Messiah but he did not tell his followers not to marry non-Ahmadis muslims. Thus his beliefs or Claims were not the basis of his above advice to his followers to not marry Ahmadis ladies to those muslims who considered Ahmadis Kafirs. It was ONLY AFTER persecution of Ahmadis ladies as a result of the Fatwas of non-Ahmadis muslim Ulema that, in 1898, he issued a statement which reads as under:

“It has become impossible for the members of our Jama’at to enter into marital relationships with such people who, under the influence of opponent Maulvis, have exceeded all limits of enmity towards us because of deep-rooted prejudice and rancour. There is no need that our Jama’at may enter into marital relationships with such people who consider us Kafir and Dajjal or with those who are under the influence of such people.” (Fatwa e Ahmadiyyah, p. 143)

He did not tell his Jama’at to sever all their relations with non-Ahmadi relatives as is clear from the following statement:

“To join with your relatives in their occasions of pleasure and to sympathise with them in matters of grief is very important, except with such relatives who are extremely opposed to this righteous Jama’at and indulge in abusive language. It is not advisable to keep relations with such people.” (Akbar Badr July 26, 1906)

Question 3: Did Mirza Ghulam Ahmad CLAIM infallibility regarding his teachings?
Answer: No. Definitely not. Tenth
condition of the conditions of Biat which he laid down for joining his Jama"t runs as under:

"And seeking pleasure of Allah, enters into a bond of brotherhood with this humble single promise to follow only in Ma’roofi.e., that is which is in accordance with the Qur’-an and Sunnah and will hold fast to this bond until death."

It is evident from the above that he asked people to join with him in a bond of brotherhood and be bound only to follow him in what is Ma’roof.

Not only that, he wrote about the Ilhamat, which he was receiving from Allah;

1) For this reason the Saintly Ilham or Ilham which is vouchedsafed to a believer (Momin) is not an arbitrary argument (Hujjat) except to the extent that it is in accord with the teachings of the Qur’-an.” (AZALAH AUHAM, Page 628)

2) “I have not said a word until I have presented these Ilhamat on the Qur’-an and the authentic Hadith.” (Hamamatul bushra pp. 47-48)

Thus the teachings of Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad are subject and subordinate to the teachings of the Qur’-an and the Sunnah. Infallability can only be claimed for the Qur’-an, therefore, anything which accords with it is correct and anything which is opposed to it or contradicts it is wrong. This was the belief of the founder and this the what he has written.

Question 4: Whether there is another Mujaddad expected or not?

Answers: Yes. A Mujaddad is definitely expected. The appearance of a Mujaddad at the head of a century has been predicted in an authentic Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and Mujaddads have appeared in 13 centuries in accordance with this Hadith. Then appeared Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in 14th Century Hijrah in its fulfillment. Mujaddadeen shall continue to appear at the head of each century till the day of Qayyamah. That is what Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib has written in the interpretation of that Hadith:

(2) “Question. Will there be a Mujaddad after you?”

Answer- What is the harm if a Mujaddad appears after me. The age of Moses’ prophethood came to an end, therefore, the series of his Khulfa came to an end with Jesus Christ. But the age of the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him, extends until the last Day (Qayyamah), therefore, Mujaddadeen will be appearing until Qayyamah.” (Fatawa e Hadrat Maseeh e Maud aliha as Salam p. 228 and p. 331)

I hope the above replies to your questions make the position amply clear. Please do not hesitate to ask information about any matter relating to Islam and the Ahmadiyyah Movement in Islam. With best regards, Wasslam.

Yours in Islam,
Masud Akhtar

The Authority of the Prophet

"And obey God and obey the Messenger and be cautious...” (5:92)

"Whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allah...” (4:80)

"But no, by the Lord! they believe not until they make you (O Muhammad) a judge of what is in dispute between them...” (4:65)

There is but one God: Muhammad is the Messenger of God.

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If Rabb means the nourisher into perfection of all the worlds or nations, this mosque will serve as a religious, cultural, social and educational center where all will be benefitted.

The next verse of “Al Fatiha” is Al-Rahman, Ar Raheem “The Beneficent, the Merciful,” provides man with everything necessary for his development; physical as well as moral and spiritual. You have built this masjid to provide a place for the community where these objectives could be achieved.

“Maliki Yaumiddin,” Master of the day of judgement. There is no deed, good or bad, that is without a consequence. If these consequences are not identified by people in this life, there is still a day of Requital even after death.

The muezzin of the mosque calls for prayer five times a day with the announcement: “Hayya alal salat”- come to prayers; “Hayya alal Falah”- come to success; “La ila ha illAllah”- there is no God but Allah; “Muhammadun Rasool Allah”- Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; “Allah-u-Akbar”- God is the greatest.

Coming to prayer is the attainment of success in life because it is through the realization of Divine in man that complete self-development (Falah) is attained. The adhan is not only an announcement of the time of prayer but also of the great principles of the faith of Al-Islam and of the significance underlying them.

“Thee do we serve and thee do we beseech for help.” The idea contained in these words is to create in man the spirit of obedience to the Divine Commandment and be prepared.

By attending regular prayers in this house of God, your complete faith in the Divine is certainly going to be developed and that would lead you to success. Your sacrifices to build this mosque will enable the Muslims to witness the practical comment-ary of the opening chapter of the Holy Qur’an every day.

Kindly recall when Hazrat Ibrahim and Ismail raised the foundation of the House, they prayed: “Our Lord accept from us, surely thou art the hearing, the knowing. Our Lord, and make in both submissive to thee and show us our way of devotion, and turn to us mercifully, truly thou art the oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful. (2:127-128)

In building this mosque, all who have worked and contributed in any capacity, may they be designers, laborers carpenters, painters, decorators, organizers or contributors of money or material have really followed the footsteps of Hazrat Ibrahim and Ismail, who rebuilt the first House of worship to God in the wilderness of Arabia.

On this auspicious occasion of the inauguration, I avail of the opportunity to congratulate the Ahmadiyya Anjuman of Guyana and leave one final thought- that may this magnificent mosque serve as a means of the unity of Purpose that forms the basis on which rests the Universal Brotherhood of Islam. I wish to conclude by reminding us all about the Holy Prophet’s saying: “Don’t call those who follow your Qiblah (ahl Qiblah) disbelievers (kafirs).

From Page 16
The Exilement Of Ishmael

Ishmael and his descendants and to raise a ‘Great World Prophet’ (Deut. 18:18) from among them through this sacrifice of Prophet Abraham.

Most surely this came to pass around the ‘Sacred House’ called the ‘Kaaba’ was raised the mighty Arab nation from the land of Arabia, who unto this day carries on the traditions of Prophet Abraham and keeps up his ‘Covenant’ (Gen.12:3; 17:9-14), and maintains his monotheistic faith and the pilgrimage initiated by Prophet Abraham.

And the greatest good? The appearance upon the world scene, the Arabian son of Prophet Abraham and Ishmael, the World Prophet Muhammad, who has come as ‘Savior’ to the world of monothestic faith and a ‘Mercy to all Nations’.

For it was Prophet Muhammad prophesied by all the Prophets who came into the world and brought the ‘Law’ of God to ‘Perfection’ (See 1 Cor. 13:9) for the benefit of the entire human race to live in peace and happiness.

Some points to ponder.

A promise was made to Prophet Abraham that he would be the father of many nations and the world would be blessed through him. After a long time, Sarah realized that she was not the ‘Promised Mother’. She complained:

‘The Lord hath RESTRAINED ME FROM BEARING’. WHY?

There were many beautiful women of high birth, wealth and honor in the land. Why was Sarah not chosen from among them? Why Hagar, the Egyptian? There must be a reason! She must have had some sign from God, because no woman would like to share ‘another woman’ with her husband.

Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham to be ‘HIS WIFE!’ and not a ‘CONCUBINE’? Hagar was no more a ‘bondwoman’ or ‘handmaid’. She now has the status of a ‘LEGAL WIFE’. Now look at the miracle of God. As soon as Abraham ‘went into Hagar’, SHE CONCEIVED.

Do we need a stronger proof than this? Therefore, the Child Ishmael was the ‘Legal Son’ of Prophet Abraham. Ishmael was born when Prophet Abraham was 86 years old (Gen. 16:15-16).

Isaac was born when Abraham was 100 years old (Gen. 21:5). Ishmael was therefore 14 years older than Isaac.

In view of this clear proof, Christians still propagate in direct contradiction to their Bible that Isaac was the only ‘son’ of Prophet Abraham.

God told Abraham that He will Continued O - Page 25
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Internal Evidence implying those inner excellences of the book, the grandeur of its phrase and the greatness of its teaching, which no amount of human power can contend with and compete, and which, in point of fact being nonpareil and unique, become a sign of and point to the Supreme Being Who is also all-powerful and peerless.

(d) Arguments relating to the unknown secrets or umoori-ghabiyya, that is, facts falling from the lips of a man of whom it cannot be accepted by any stretch of the imagination that he was capable of and competent to make those statements. In other words, it should be categorically clear, from a consideration of the secrets disclosed and the conditions of the man, that it could not be possible for him to have a previous knowledge of those facts, neither through sensible experience nor by means of contemplative thought, nor will it stand to reason to suppose that he became aware of them through the agency of a confidant, although the very same facts may not be without ambit of another man. It is, thus, obviously clear that the term umoori-ghabiyya has relative meaning. The same facts which, in relation to a certain set of persons, may rightly be regarded as secrets of the unseen, i.e. umoori-ghabiyya, may lose this significance altogether when spoken in reference to others.

A Few Examples

(1) Suppose Zaid was born in the present age; and Bakr, another man, came into the world fifty years after the death of Zaid. Now it goes without saying that Zaid did not live contemporaneously with Bakr, nor had any possible physical means of knowing the life-history of Bakr who was still in the womb of the unborn future. The events, which happened to Bakr and were experienced by him during his lifetime, could not, in reference to him, be called umoori-ghabiyya. But if Zaid were to give us a complete knowledge of all those events correct to the minutest detail long before Bakr came into existence, it will very aptly be said of him that he unfolded to us secrets of the unseen, for he had neither perceived those occurrences himself, nor had the benefit of acquiring that knowledge by any other possible physical means.

(2) Let Bakr be a profound philosopher who has studied books on philosophy very intensively for a long period of time and acquired efficiency and skill in solving complex and complicated problems. As a result of his sound knowledge of mental sciences, his study of the works of ancient authors, and his deep delving into the treasures of later researches, his continued concentration of thoughts, and profound practice in the application of the accepted principle of logic and learning, a good many truths of high knowledge and arguments that are sure and unfailing, have become thoroughly known to him. Zaid is another man of whom it has been proved conclusively that he never heard a single word from any book on philosophy, nor ever sat in the company of a scholar, but is wholly an unschooled and unlettered man, a perfect ummi who has lived all his life in the company of illiterate people. It is now easy to understand that all the vast knowledge which Bakr has acquired through a long and assiduous effort cannot be called umoori-ghabiyya in reference to him. On the other hand, if Zaid, who is completely illiterate and destitute of all kinds of knowledge and learning, should expound hard metaphysical problems in such a clear and explicit way as not to deviate from the true knowledge even by the breadth of a hair; if he should explain the subtleties of sublime knowledge in such a fine and firm manner that not even the feeblest flaw or foible could be found therein; if he should set forth and teach the delicate intricacies of knowledge and wisdom in such a perfect and precise way that no teacher, no philosopher before him, had ever been able to do likewise; then every complete statement of Zaid, fulfilling the above-mentioned conditions, will come within the category of umoori-ghabiyya, for he has disclosed those facts beyond his power, his capacity and his comprehension, and for the exposition of which he had not been equipped with any of the necessary means.

(3) Let us now suppose that Bakr is a minister of the church, a pandit or a scholar of some other religious belief, who has arrived at the hard and acute principles of his religion after years of strenuous study and deep deliberation. Zaid is another man, of whom it is known indisputably that he is completely illiterate and cannot read any book. If Bakr should state some facts or principles contained in his religious books, it will not amount to a disclosure of the secrets of the unseen, for through hard study and ripe knowledge of those books, Bakr has got a good grasp over their contents. On the contrary, if Zaid, who is a mere ummi, should explain and expatiate on those hard and impenetrable facts with distinct clearness, and point out their faults and failings so thoroughly that the like of which may not be found in the history of the world, it will, then, be highly just and fair to affirm that Zaid has unravelled mysteries of the unseen and disclosed to us the unknown umoori-ghabiyya.

An Objection

Arguing adversely, an objection may perhaps be urged in this connection that it is quite possible to restate the simple and easy-to-understand facts incorporated in the scriptures by taking to the method of hearsay. For this purpose, a man need not be well-read; he can easily reproduce a fact which he has heard from a learned man. The facts of their religion, too, are not so hard and abstruse as not to be understood without the help of high learning and erudition.

The poser of such an objection may be asked in retort to state whether the scriptures of his religion have any hard nuts which cannot be cracked except by scholars of high degree who have, for many years, ruminated over those books. And if it were said in reply that knowledge of such an exalted nature is not to be found in their books, and that they contain simple and commonplace teachings, which even a man in the street can easily comprehend, and a boy of small understanding can easily fathom; and
that a knowledge of those scriptures which are no better than books on fable and fiction, compiled for the use of children and common folk, constitutes no high and distinctive mark of learning.

If it were so, the plight of these scriptures is only to be regretted; for, a book commands but scant respect in the eyes of the learned and wise if it should fail to rise above the crude intelligence of the common folk and fall far below the level of sublime truths. If one should cherish such a claim about his scripture that its teaching is utterly commonplace and devoid of all the exalted truths, such a man, it cannot be gainsaid, is guilty of a contempt of his own scripture. Nor will his feeling of pride and superiority be able to hold its own, for the simple reason that the attainment of a thing, in which all the riff-raff are equal partners with him, will confer no literary distinction, and he will be counted among the common folk, his knowledge and wisdom being in no way superior to theirs. The upshot of all this is that a knowledge of such low-class books cannot fall within the domain of "umnoor-i-ghabiyya," provided, of course, their teaching should be so widespread and well-known that there may be good reasons to believe that every unschooled and illiterate man can be aware of it, if he should devote even his small attention to the matter. On the other hand, if the contents of those books are not generally known nor universally prevalent; in that case, however low and crude those facts may be, a disclosure of them will be regarded as the disclosure of "umnoor-i-ghabiyya" in reference to the man who is absolutely ignorant of the language in which those facts have been written. But if a nation should openly declare that their scriptures contain such subtle and sublime truths as cannot be appreciated, except by eminent scholars who have spent their lives in deliberating over them, then our case stands verified and proved, for if an ignorant and illiterate ummi should expound and explain those high facts, it will, without the least shadow of doubt, amount to the unfolding of "umboor-i-ghabiyya," the unravelling of the secrets of the unseen.

(2) By “Observation and Judgement” of all those things which have been created exclusively by the power and command of the Most High God, from the smallest blade of grass to the most gigantic orb of the heaven. It is an established fact that even from among the merest trifles, for instance, a fly, a gnat or a spider, not one thing is to be found which lies within the power of man to create. On the other hand, the construction and composition of their tiny bodies is so wonderful and marvellous that it constitutes a strong and unshakable argument for the existence of the Great Creator of this universe. Moreover, it is well-known to every sane and sensible man that if it were possible to have another being who could also create those things which have been brought into existence by the power and command of the Most High God, the argument of proving the existence of God from His creation would have lost all force, and the great fact of God’s existence would have become doubtful and dubious; for it is a very simple logic that if another creator is possible in some cases, he could also be possible in all cases.

To sum up

The knowledge of "ghaib," i.e. of the unknown and unseen, it has been accepted on all hands, falls beyond the ken of mortal man; and whatever is beyond the power and possibility of man is evidently caused by the Most High God. So "umboor-i-ghabiyya" are caused into existence directly by the Divine Being, without the intervention of human element.

A thing which is brought into existence exclusively by the perfect power of the Most High God, be it a living being or a sacred scripture, should essentially be endowed with this distinctive quality that it shall be entirely beyond the power and possibility of a human being to produce a like or an exact resemblance of it. This principle, which is of a general nature, may be proved and established in two ways:

(1) By correct “Constructive Imagination” according to which it is absolutely necessary that God should be one and without an associate in His person, attributes and deeds; for, if the association of a created being were possible in any of His creations, words and deeds, it could also be possible in all His works and attributes, in which case the possibility of the creation of another God will also become permissible. And if a thing were to possess some of the Divine attributes, it shall have to be regarded as an associate with the Supreme Being which is obviously inconsistent with the plain dictates of commonsense and reason. It is, therefore, indispensably necessary that God should be purely one and single and without an associate in all His attributes, words and deeds, and far above and free from all those ignoble and mean matters which tend to create the possibility of a partnership with Him.

The Exilement Of Ishmael Continued From Page 23

make a great nation of Ishmael, because he is 'THY SEED'(Gen. 21:13). This same was also promised to Hagar (Gen. 21:17-18).

The right of the 'First-Born' is doubled (Deut. 21:15-17).

And God was with Ishmael, he grew and dwelt in the wilderness of 'PARAN'. (Gen 21:20-21)

Ishmael was the 'Promised Son' as proven from the Bible from whose progeny the 'Great World Prophet 'MUHAMMAD' was raised to guide 'INTO ALL TRUTH'.
THE SACRIFICE OF ABRAHAM

By Dr. M.I. Rajabally

An offering of a sacrifice is an old form of worship as history itself. Every civilization had its own way of making sacrifices, as is pointed out in the Holy Qur'an:

“And for every nation we appointed acts of sacrifice that they might mention the name of Allah on what He has given them of the cattle.” (Chapter 22, V. 34)

The first sacrifice recorded in the annals of human history was the one offered by the two sons of the Prophet Adam, Abel and Cain. A description of this event is given in the Qur'an, Chapter 5, V. 27. Since then, many variations and deteriorations invaded the concept and act of sacrifice; so much so that human lives would be taken in the hope of appeasing the wrath of an offended God.

Gradually, Islam establishes the true concept and spirit with which sacrifice should be performed. It is important to bear in mind that in Islam, whenever we sacrifice an animal, we are not in any way offering the blood or the flesh of the animal to Allah. This is made very clear in the 37th verse of Chapter 22. The real philosophy of sacrificing an animal is an outward manifestation of thanksgiving, obedience and the readiness of the will to sacrifice our wealth, even life, in the cause of Allah whenever the need arises. The animal itself is purely symbolical.

Now, when Abraham's son Ishmael became of age to work with him, he had a vision that he should sacrifice his son Ishmael. He discussed the vision with his son and Ishmael did nothing else but agree that his father should go ahead and sacrifice him, if that was the will and command of Allah. On hearing that, Abraham (peace be upon him) had his son laid down on his forehead and at this very moment he was informed by Allah that his vision had been fulfilled and instead a ram was sacrificed. Up to this day, this whole act is being repeated again and again by thousands and thousands of pilgrims performing the Hajj.

This is the zenith of obedience to Allah, complete submission to the Creator. We can imagine how hard it was for the father to sacrifice his only son, knowing that he was of old age and a second son would not be practical. The same goes for the son, how had it was for him to encourage his father to fulfill the vision. They were able to do it because their whole life was based upon obeying God and seeking His pleasure.

Where is that obedience in our life. How many of us celebrate the Eid ul Adha with the firm determination of increasing our willingness to obey and follow the commands of Allah? Unfortunately, Eid is more viewed as a social gathering, an occasion to wear out our latest outfit. This should not be the case because this festival is to remind us that everything we possess is not really ours but has come to us as a mercy from Allah and we should be prepared to spend it in the way of Allah if we are called upon. That was exactly what the Prophet Abraham did. Ishmael was his son, from a mercy of Allah, and when All asked for Ishmael's life, he was ready to sacrifice the life of his son.

Another interesting aspect of this festival is the biblical version of it. According to the books of the Old Testament and the Bible, it was not Ishmael that was to be sacrificed but Isaac. This is one of the contradictions and inaccuracies of the Bible, as we are going to see. According to the Book of Genesis, Isaac was born when Abraham was 100 years old (Gen. 21:5) and Ishmael was born when Abraham was 86 years old (Gen. 16:16). Ishmael was therefore 14 years older than Isaac and, in other words, at no time could Isaac have been the only son of Abraham. Yet we read in the same Book of Genesis (27:2):

"Take now thy son, thy "only son" Isaac..."

How do we reconcile these two statements. If Isaac was the younger son as shown in the same book, he could never have been the only son. The same verse continues with the mention of "the land of Moriah", which is very close to Marwah, where the Prophet Ishmael was and not Jerusalem.

Finally the reward of Prophet Abraham for his obedience to Allah was great. The immediate reward was the announcement of a second son, inspite of his age. This is how Allah rewards those who obey Him. He, Abraham, was willing to sacrifice his only son, and Allah rewarded him with another son. Long term rewards were two-fold. First, his prayer that prophets be raised among his progeny was granted. Thus Abraham, through the progeny of Isaac and Ishmael, became the father of 3 great religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Second, his prayer to make the kaaba a place where people will celebrate the praise of Allah was answered when Islam established itself in Makkah. The kaaba was cleaned of 360 idols and only Allah is worshipped and praised. This is the lesson for us, if we obey Allah and follow His rules, we are bound to be rewarded.
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MUHAMMAD THE GREATEST MAN OF HISTORY

"If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad? . . . Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask: Is there any man greater than he?"

—Alphonse de Lamartine in Histoire de la Turquie

QUR’AN, THE GREATEST SPIRITUAL FORCE

"It is the one miracle claimed by Muhammad—his standing miracle, he called it—and a miracle it is."

—Bosworth Smith

"Never has a people been led more rapidly to civilization, such as it was, than were the Arabs through Islam. . . . And to it was also indirectly due the marvelous development of all branches of science in the Moslem world."

—New Researches by H. Hirschfeld

"Here, therefore, its merits as a literary production should, perhaps, not be measured by some preconceived maxims of subjective and aesthetic taste, but by the effects which it produced in Muhammad’s contemporaries and fellow-countrymen. If it spoke so powerfully and convincingly to the hearts of his hearers as to weld hitherto centrifugal and antagonistic elements into one compact and well organized body, animated by ideas far beyond those which had until now ruled the Arabian mind, then its eloquence was perfect, simply because it created a civilized nation out of savage tribes, and shot a fresh woof into the old warp of history."

—Dr. Steingass, Hughes’ Dictionary of Islam

THE BEAUTIFUL CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAM

"I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phases of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him—the wonderful man—and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Saviour of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the Dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness. I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today."

—George Bernard Shaw