Faisal Mosque Islamabad is claimed to be the largest mosque in the world.

A publication of the Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Ishaat Islam, Lahore, Inc., 36911 Walnut Street, Newark, California 94560 U.S.A. Subscription: $12.00 per year ($18.00 outside the U.S.A.); by air $27.00 to $33.00

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HEAVEN AND HELL

What is the object of religion? It is that having the certainty of faith in the existence and perfect attributes of God Almighty, man should attain release from the passions of self and should develop personal love for God. That is the paradise which will be manifested in diverse ways in the hereafter. To remain unaware of the True God and to keep away from Him and not to have true love for Him is the hell which will be manifested in diverse ways in the hereafter. Chashma Masihi, pp. 25-26).

The reality of heaven and hell that has been set forth by the Holy Quran has not been set forth by any other book. It has indicated plainly that this system starts in this very life. It is said: For him who fears to stand before his Lord, there are two Gardens (55:46). One Garden is obtained in this very world. The fear of God restrains a person from vice. To run after vice generates a restlessness and distress in the heart which is a fearful hell. He who fears God avoids vice and escapes the torment which is generated by the slavery of passion and he makes progress towards faithfulness and leaning towards God whereby he is bestowed a delight and joy and thus his heavenly life begins in this very world (Malfoozat, Vol. III, pp. 155-156).

Of the people there are those who dedicate themselves to seeking the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is Most Compassionate towards such devoted servants (2:208). In this verse God Almighty says that it is the one who sells his soul in order to win the pleasure of God who finds deliverance from all suffering. Such a one gives proof by his devotion that he belongs to God and conceives himself to have been created for the obedience of the Creator and the service of His creatures. He performs all good actions that are related to every faculty with such eagerness and sincerity of heart as if he beholds the True Beloved in the mirror of his obedience, his will conforms to the will of God Almighty and all his delights is in obedience to Him and righteous action proceeds from him not by way of labor, but on account of its delight and attraction. The paradise that a spiritual person finds immediately and that which will be bestowed upon him in future are a reflection of this life which will be personified physically in the other world by the power of God.

TWO GARDENS FOR THE RIGHTEOUS

This is indicated in the verses: For him who fears to stand before his Lord are two Gardens (55:47). Their Lord will give them to drink of a pure beverage (76:22). The virtuous shall drink of a cup tempered with camphor, from a spring wherefrom the servants of Allah drink. They cause it to gush forth from the earth through their efforts (76:6-7). They will be given to drink of a cup that is tempered with ginger, from a spring which is called Salsabil (76:18-19). We have prepared for the disbelievers chains and collars and a blazing fire (76:5). He who is blind in this world shall also be blind in the
OUR BELIEFS AND AIDS
The Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore is an international Muslim association (founded 1914) dedicated to the presentation of Islam by literary and missionary means. It believes that the world today, both non-Muslim and Muslim, badly needs to receive the true, original message of Islam. This is the message contained in the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad - a message which is today hidden under misconceptions and wrong popular notions.
We strongly believe that the mission of Islam is to attract the hearts and minds of mankind towards the truth, through rational arguments and the natural appeal of Islamic teachings. Islam does not seek political control over countries, nor does it use force to compel people to become Muslims or obey its teachings. In this age, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d.1908), uncovered and stressed certain vital aspects of Islamic teachings which had been forgotten over the centuries. He reminded the world that Islam is:

International - God raised prophets in every nation, and Muslims believe in them all. Good people and truth may be found in any nation. No people are God's favourite, not even Muslims, except those who do the most good.

Tolerant - Gives full freedom to everyone to hold and practice any belief or religion. Preaching to be by argument and example, not force. Muslims must also respect internal differences of opinion.

Rational - Religion to be studied in the light of reason and the ever-growing knowledge of mankind. Blind following disallowed and independence of thought granted.

Non-sectarian - Every person professing the words "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah" must be regarded as a Muslim. No religious board empowered to hold inquisitions into a Muslim's beliefs, or to expel self-professing Muslims from Islam.

Peaceful - Condemns all use of force except in unavoidable self defense. Teaches Muslims to live peacefully under any rule which accords them freedom of religion.

Living - Worship is not a ritual, but provides living contact with a living God. God listens to man, answers his prayers, and speaks to His righteous servants even today as in the past.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a servant of Islam, with a mission to bring about the spiritual and intellectual triumph of the teachings of Islam over all forms of belief. He never claimed to be a prophet, but a God-sent mujaddid (renovator) within the long line of saints that arose in the history of Islam. He believed, and we believe, that after the Holy Prophet Muhammad - may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him - no prophet can arise, whether a new one or one from the past.
Dear sir, I am attaching hereto a copy of my letter which I addressed to the editor Santa Clara Magazine, Santa Clara and which he declined to publish in full asking me for a shorter abridged letter. I hope you will publish this letter in full in your esteemed magazine.

In reply to "Salman Rushdie's Curse", which appeared in the Santa Clara Magazine (issue XXXI #3), I would like to make the following remarks:

(1) It is absolutely erroneous and inappropriate for Mr. Edward Kleischmidt to write in his article such a statement as "Muslims are plotting to kill the writer". It is extremely important at this point for the public in general not to interpret the Ayatollah's expression as that coming from the whole Muslim world. There is no papacy in Islam; in other words, when the Pope speaks, he speaks for Christendom but when the Ayatollah speaks, he speaks for Iran ONLY and not on behalf of all Muslims or Islam per se.

(2) Rushdie's incident is commonly fought on the wrong battle field and it has been given a religious flavor. However, the real issue is not a religious one but rather one of ethics. Do writers have a certain moral obligation to their readers? Does freedom of expression completely exempt writers from any kind of professional ethics whatsoever? Are not readers part of the big body known as consumers and as such they too have certain rights as regards the kind of product they are getting on the market? These are some of the key questions governing the whole Rushdie affair.

Nobody is questioning the ability of Rushdie as a great and powerful writer. What is being questioned is the content of his novel. The same Rushdie should be condemned if, for example, he comes next year with another novel praising the treatment of the Jews by the Nazis in World War II. Another classic example will be if some writer comes up with a book supporting the days of slavery in the south. Such works should never be allowed to be published because they stand as an insult to the dignity of a section of humanity and the whole mankind should get together to define the frontiers of freedom of expression.

The bottom line is that every nation or community has some raw areas from which writers should stay away because as long as they hit in those areas their works are going to insult and shatter the self respect of thousands of people. This is exactly what happened to "Satanic Verses". By character assassinating Prophet Muhammad in his novel, Rushdie hit a large section of humanity in their soft corner. He showed no respect to thousands of intellectual minds and he went over the horizon to invade the sanctity of such a historical personality as Holy Prophet Muhammad.

(3) Another facet of the whole Rushdie affair is to really appreciate those Muslims for being straightforward and very outspoken as to oppose the publication of "Satanic Verses". You will agree with me, Sir, that "Satanic Verses" is not the only illfated book in the realm of literature. Many other books have been published paying due respect to the freedom of expression but then the powerful lobbyists stabbed the freedom of expression right in the back by reducing to zero the distribution, marketing and sale of the so-called published books. Fitting examples of such illfated books are:

(1) Holy Blood Holy Grail by Baigent
(2) Dare To Speak Out by P. Findely

These books never made it to the shelves of bookstores. They were made to be hidden, in boxes, storerooms and kept away from the eyes of the public. Is this not cowardice, hypocrisy and treachery towards the freedom of speech? It is far much more honest to have a book not published officially rather than to have it published and then to pull powerful strings to block its distribution and sale.

Last but not the least, I would like to ask Mr. Kleischmidt the same question he wrote; should not President Bush "command the Librarian Congress to order 250 million copies of "Holy Blood Holy Grail" and "DareTo Speak Out" and to send one of each to every citizen of the U.S. as part of a literacy campaign, or let him propose a law making it illegal not to own a copy?" You will not dare stand behind your own words because "Holy Blood Holy Grail" will destroy the doctrine of Trinity and "Dare To Speak Out" will give a deadly blow to the blind support of the U.S. to Israel. Where do you stand then my respected writers? Why don't you come out of your closet and protect the freedom of writing, distributing, marketing and selling of books? No you would not dare to cross these strong lobbies. You would bow in front of them and wait for a Rushdie's incident to voice your noisy opinion.

Mr. Editor, the conclusive proof of your genuine love for freedom of expression lies in publishing this rebuttal in your magazine and I would be delighted to receive a copy of it. Please forward a copy of this letter to Mr. E. Kleischmidt.

May God Bless you,

Sincerely yours,

M. Rajabally, D.D.S
Fremont, California.

Dear Blithe Colgate,
Assalamu alaikum wa rahmatullah e wa barakatohu (i.e., peace be unto you and Mercy and Blessings of Allah be on you). Thanks for your letter of June 25, 1986 which came to my hands a few days back. Reply to your questions is as under:

**Question:** I have heard very little about Ahmadiyyah Group. From what I have heard, I am very interested. I have a few questions. Please write me back or call me for I am sincerely asking these questions.

**Answer:** The Ahmadiyyah Movement in Islam is not a new or separate religion. It is a movement within Islam for calling people back to the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him. It was initiated by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian the Mujaddad of the Fourteenth Century Hijra, the Promised Messiah and the promised Mahdi, for the predominance of Islam through taking the Message of the Quran to the four corners of the world. Not words but the Deeds and Records speak for the achievements of our Movement. We bow in all humbleness to Allah that He favored us with His choicest Blessings in that no other Muslim Group or sect has done so much for spreading the Word of Allah, the Quran, as the Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement in Islam and this small Jamaat of ours has done; e.g.,

1. First ever English Translation of the Quran by a Muslim came from the pen of continued on page 15

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Chapter 4

The Founders of Islam and Christianity

Nothing brings out the contrast between Islam and Christianity so much as a comparison between the Islamic attitudes towards Jesus and the Christian attitude towards Muhammad. For, while Muslims believe in Jesus as a great prophet of God and revere and love him as they revere and love the Prophet Muhammad, the Christians not only reject Muhammad, but are never tired of speaking about him in the most disparaging manner possible.

An impartial study of their lives will, however, show that the founders of Islam and Christianity were both godly men, completely dedicated to the task of preaching God’s religion, of delivering men from error, superstition and sin, and making the will of God prevail in the world.

The Life and Mission of Jesus Christ

Jesus was born a few years before the beginning of the Christian era (c. 7-5 B.C.) in an humble home in Palestine. Two of the four canonical Gospels state that he was born of a virgin mother without the agency of a male parent. However, the Gospels of Mark and John advance no such claim on behalf of Jesus. And even ‘Matthew’ and Luke, who begin their Gospels by stating that Jesus’ mother Mary, was still a virgin when he was born, go on to name Joseph the carpenter as his father.1

Very little is known of the early years of the life of Jesus. Luke gives a brief but beautiful summary: “Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:52). When Jesus was between thirty-three and thirty-five years of age, a prophet appeared in the wilderness of Judea preaching “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” The name of the prophet was John, and among the many people who went to John the Baptist and repented and were baptised by him was Jesus. After receiving baptism, while he was praying, the Holy Spirit came down upon him and revealed to him that he had been chosen by God as the expected Messiah of the Jews to revive the true religion and establish the Kingdom of God in the hearts of men.

The religion of God was not unknown to the Jews, but at the time when Jesus began his ministry, the spirit of the true religion had been stifled by the worldliness of the Sadducees and the formalism and trivial legalism of the Pharisees. They declared, in the words of the Talmud, “He who lightly esteemeth handwashing will perish from the earth.” And Jews rebuked them, saying: “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God, in order to keep your tradition!” They had absurd rules about the Sabbath. For instance, a man might walk two thousand cubits on the Sabbath, but no more. In case death threatened, a physician could be summoned, but a fracture may not be attended to on the Sabbath. Vinegar, if swallowed, could be used to relieve a sore throat, but it could not be gargled. Jesus impatiently brushed aside all such artificial and unedifying regulations. He said that the Sabbath was for man and not man for the Sabbath, and he warned them: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith; these you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!” (Matthew 23:23-24).

Jesus had not come with a new religion. His religion was the same as that of every other prophet. “Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets,” he said, “I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them.” (Matthew 5:17). He emphasized three things: God’s love for man, man’s faith in and love for God, and man’s love for and service to fellowmen. He referred to God as “Our Father in Heaven” in order to lay stress on God’s loving-kindness and care for human beings. Jesus was not the first to call God “Father”; that had been done before, and not only by the prophets of his own race; religious teachers of other races had done the same. He tried to impress these teachings on the hearts of his followers by means of his inspired sermons and beautiful parables.

But the most impressive thing about the teachings of Jesus was not that he taught them but that he lived them. His entire life was one of complete humility, self-giving, and love which sought not its own. “The supreme evidence of his humility,” writes E. C. Colwell, “is that it is impossible to discover precisely what Jesus thought of himself. He was not concerned that men should know what he was. His concern was for people to know God and His will for their lives. By induction this tells us something about what Jesus thought of himself too, but it is obvious; he thought infinitely less of himself than he did of God.”2

The Sadducees, Pharisees, scribes and others, instead of listening to his inspired teachings and accepting him as the Messiah, about whose coming the earlier Israelite prophets had given clear prophecies, turned his mortal enemies and had him arrested and forced the Roman procurator to sentence him to crucifixion.3

Jesus Christ was undoubtedly one of the noblest and most inspired characters of history. He was a man of surpassing charm and winsomeness. He liked people, and they liked him in turn. He loved children. He led a pure, virtuous and godly life. He showed a rare combination of mildness and courage in carrying out the will of God and in dealing with his misguided companions. He was all gentleness, selflessness and humility, serving his friends and praying for his enemies. He worked many wonders yet never took credit for them, ascribing them always to the “finger of God” and even admitting others’ ability to do the same. He had totally resigned and surrendered

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himself to the will and purpose of God. He declared: "I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just; because I seek not my own will, but the will of Him who sent me? (John 5:30). His compassion for the sinners and sufferers was truly touching and admirable. About him it may well be said that he had made his will one with the will of God and completely conquered the devil.

The Prophecies of Jesus about Muhammad

The crimes of the Jews against Jesus deprived them of God’s favours and blessings. Jesus announced to them that after him God will not raise any other prophet from among them, and added: “The Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it.” (Matthew 21:43). He reminded them of what was written in the Scriptures: “The very stone which the builders rejected had become the head of the corner.” The stone that was rejected symbolized the children of Ishmael (i.e., the Arabs). The children of Israel had disowned and rejected the children of Ishmael (as is evident from the Genesis and other Old Testament books); but Jesus declared that God would reject the children of Israel, because of their wickedness and crimes against His Messengers, in particular against Jesus the Messiah. He would choose instead the children of Ishmael and make them the “head of the corner” in the grand Temple of Faith. He would raise the World-Prophet, who would complete and perfect the revealed religion, from among the children of Ishmael (the Arabs). Jesus gave the good news of his coming in no uncertain terms: “I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.” (John 16:12-13)4

When we turn from the canonical Gospels to the Gospel of Barnabas, we find in the latter several prophecies of Jesus in which we foretold the advent of the Prophet Muhammad by name. Of these just one is reproduced below: “Jesus went into the wilderness beyond Jordan with his disciples, and when the mid-day prayer was done he sat down near a palm tree, and under the shadow of the palm tree his disciples sat down. Then said Jesus: ‘So secret is predestination. O brethren, that I say unto you, verily, only to one man shall it be clearly known. He it is whom the nations look for, to whom the secrets of God are so clear that, when he cometh into the world, blessed shall they be that shall listen to his words, because God shall overshadow them with His mercy even as this palm tree overshadoweth us. Yea, even as this tree protecteth us from the burning heat of the sun, even so the mercy of God will protect from Satan them that believe in the man. The disciples answered: “O Master, who shall that man be of whom thou speakest, who shall come into the world?” Jesus answered with joy of heart: “He is Muhammad, messenger of God, and when he cometh into the world, even as the rain maketh the earth to bear fruit when for a long time it hath not rained, even so shall he be occasion of good works among men, through the abundant mercy which he shall bring. For he is a white cloud full of the mercy of God, which mercy God shall sprinkle upon the faithful like rain.”

The Prophet Muhammad

The Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, the Messenger of God, about whose advent Jesus had given the glad tidings, was born in Arabia in the year 571 C.E. At the time of his birth, people all over the world had either totally forgotten the true religion or if they at all remembered it, it was in very much altered and distorted forms. There was complete death all around him—intellectual, moral and spiritual death. The people among whom he was born, the Ishmaelites, Arabs, were polytheists and idolaters. They were sunk in vice and superstition of every kind.

Among these people, who had drifted far from God’s way, Muhammad grew up to be the Man of God. What distinguished him from others was his pure and spotless character, his sincerity and love of truth, his compassion for the weak, the poor and the downtrodden. They called him Al-Amin, the faithful, the trustworthy one.

The superstitions and the evil and cruel ways of the people grieved his heart very much. He had great love for mankind, and even before he received the call to prophethood he had joined the League called Hif-ul-Fuzul to help the widows and orphans and to protect the helpless victims of injustice and cruelty. He spent hours in a cave outside Mecca in communion with his Creator and in meditation on the aim of man’s life and the purpose of creation. He longed to bring people to the Straight Path, to “render God unto man and man unto God.” When he was forty years of age the Divine Light shone in its full resplendence in his heart and mind and he was chosen by God as His Messenger to all mankind.

He preached to them of the one and only God, the Loving Creator, Sustainer and Ruler of all the worlds. He ardently desired that the people should know the true god and that they should enter into right relation with Him and through Him, establish right relation with one another. He longed to lift man’s thoughts to an immutable and eternal good. He earnestly exhorted them to have faith in God, to give up falsehood, evil and injustice, and to love and serve one another. He told them that religion in its true sense was the removal of the want, misery and suffering of others and the selfless service to fellowmen, that the religious faith and worship were of no use at all if they did not inspire and train man to become God-fearing and work lovingly and selflessly for the good of others:

“Has thou observed him who believeth religion? That is he who repelleth the orphan and urgeth not the feeding of the needy. Ah, woe unto worshippers who are heedless of their prayer; who would be seen at worship yet refuse small kindnesses!” (The Quran, 107)

The Prophet struck at the false sense of superiority based on color, caste, family, wealth, sex, race or nationality, declaring that all human beings were equal and brothers.

The treatment meted out to the Prophet Muhammad by his people was not different from that meted out to the other prophets. He was rejected by people with vested interests and subjected to bitter persecution. Many of those who believed
in his Divine mission were brutally tortured and killed. A combined attempt was made by all the tribes of Mecca to put an end to his life. The courage, patience and forebearance with which he faced the insane fury of his opponents have won the admiration of all those who had studied his life. The Prophet desired nothing but the good of all human beings, even of his most ruthless enemies.

After enduring the tortures inflicted on him and his followers for thirteen long years, the Prophet at last migrated to Madina, where a large number of people had already embraced Islam. Now a new phase began in his life; the people of Madina not only believed in him and his message but also made him the head of their State. Here, in addition to his moving appeals for individual change of heart and transformation of character, the Prophet also got the opportunity to develop and put into practice the wider social implications of the message. The many revolutionary changes that he introduced included the raising of women to a status of equality with men, improving the lot of the slaves and taking steps for the total abolition of slavery, complete prohibition of all kinds of exploitation of man by man, doing away with priesthood and granting religious freedom to all individuals and communities, bringing into force the most enlightened code of laws known to man and the establishment of a welfare state and a form of administration which was an ideal blend of justice and mercy. He made education and acquisition of knowledge compulsory for every Muslim, male and female, and brought into existence a universal brotherhood embracing people of many races and nationalities. The distinguishing feature of those who joined this fold was zeal for the service to the one God and to humanity.

His rise to power as the head of the State did not bring about in the Prophet any change in his personal and domestic life and in his dealings with other men. He remained simple, modest, humble and sincere all his life, never placing himself on a higher footing than the humblest of human beings. He strictly disallowed any special show of respect to himself and would mix and move about freely among the people. He continued to wear patched clothes, to mend his own shoes, to milk the goats and sweep the floor with his own hands. At the height of his power he used to work as a common laborer along with others. His food was of the simplest kind and very often he went to bed on an empty stomach. He loved children and would frequently stop to laugh and play with them in the streets.

After accomplishing his mission, the Prophet Muhammad, "the most successful of all the prophets and religious personalities" as the Encyclopedia Britannica described him, departed from the world in 632 C.E. He has left behind the Quran, which was revealed to him by God, and his own sayings and the example of his life to guide mankind.

The Ideal Character

The Prophet of Islam led a life which was in the truest and highest sense exemplary and godly. He was model par excellence for all men, as the Quran says: "Certainly you have in the Messenger of God an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in God and the latter day and remembers God much." (33:21)

"O Prophet! We have sent thee as a witness, and as a bearer of good news and as a warner, and as one inviting to God by his permission, and as a light-giving sun." (33:45-46)

He lived up to the highest ideals of the Holy Quran and exemplified in his life the virtues mentioned in the Book of God. When his wife, Ayesha, was questioned about his morals, her reply was: "His morals are the Quran." Conversely, when she was asked to explain certain ethical precepts of the Quran, she did so by illustrating them with examples taken from the Prophet's life.

To say that he was sinless would be only a negative description of the Man of God who had completely conquered all temptations, passions and selfish urges and lived only for the sake of God and in total harmony with the will of God:

"Say (O Muhammad): "My prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for God, the Lord of the worlds. No associate has He; and this am I commanded, and I am the first of those who submit." (6:163-164)

He was, as the Quran describes him, "a mercy to all the nations." His compassion extended to friends and foes alike. "Do you love your Creator?" he asked: "Love your fellow-creatures first." He felt extremely concerned at the depraved and corrupt state of the people around him. It grieved his heart very much when, as the head of the State, he had to pass an order of chastisement on anyone for the sake of justice or for the security of the young republic. But for his own sake he never even lifted his finger against anyone. When at a critical moment some asked him to invoke God's curse on his enemies and persecutors, he replied: "I have not been sent to curse, but as a mercy to mankind. O Lord, guide the people for they know not." At the conquest of Mecca (to give just one instance out of many) he freely forgave his enemies, who had spared no effort to annihilate him, his religion and his followers and were guilty of persecution and shedding innocent blood. With a look of compassion he told them: "No reproach or blame shall be upon you this day. May God forgive you. He is the most Merciful of all those who show mercy." Here is a practical example of the laudable precept: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." He had come to reform and reclaim the fallen humanity and he won the hearts of the anti-social elements and the outcasts of his age by love and kindness. The Quran says: "The good deed and the evil deed are not alike. Repel the evil deed with that which is best, and lo, he between whom and thee enmity would be as if he were a warm friend." (41:34). His charity and readiness to help the people in all possible ways were proverbial. He was the greatest friend of the poor, the sufferers and the downtrodden.

He strove all his life to lead mankind to the one true God, to make them godly, to rescue them from error, superstition and sin, but in inviting them to the truth he faithfully observed the Quranic injunction: "There is no compulsion in religion;" (2:256). His life demonstrates that the greatest things that one can do can be done only in obedience to transcendent imperatives and inspired by the conviction that the eternally true and right
are realities which must take precedence of everything else in one’s allegiance. He had imbued himself with divine qualities and inspired his fellowmen to take the greatest step towards the divine. He was and remains an inexhaustible principle of moral regeneration for humanity. Yet he was always humble and modest, conscious always of his nothingness before God, and from the highest peak of moral and spiritual perfection to which he had attained he cried out to the people: “I am only a mortal like you” (41:6).

Non-Muslims’ Tributes to the Prophet

With the passing of the Oriental and Islamic studies from the hands of Christian missionaries and divines into those of more independent scholars, the appreciation of the Prophet Muhammad and his message is increasing in the West.

Here are two extracts about the Prophet Muhammad from a recent book by a learned American professor: “Pure-hearted and beloved in his circle, he was, it is said, of sweet and gentle disposition. His bereavements having made him sensitive to human suffering in every form, he was always ready to help others, especially the poor and the weak. His sense of honor, duty and fidelity owe him as he grew older the high and enviable titles of "The True","The Upright","The Trustworthy One." Yet despite his concern for others he remained midst an effete and chaotic society. As he grew from childhood to youth and from youth to manhood the lawless strife of his contemporaries, the repeated outbursts of pointless quarrels among the tribes frequenting the Meccan fairs, and the general immorality and cynicism of the day combined to produce in the prophet-to-be a sustained reaction of horror and disgust. Silently brooding, his thoughts turned inward.”

“In an age charged with supernaturalism, when miracles were accepted as the stock-in-trade of the most ordinary saint, Muhammad refused to traffic with human weakness and credulity. To miracle-hungry idolaters seeking signs and portents he cut the issue clean: “God has not sent me to work wonders; He has sent me to preach to you. My Lord be praised! Am I more than a man sent as an apostle?” From first to last he resisted every impulse to glorify his own person. ‘I never said that Allah’s treasures are in my hand, that I knew the hidden things, or that I was an angel....I am only a preacher of God’s words, the bringer of God’s message to mankind.’ If signs he sought, let them be not of Muhammad’s greatness, but of God’s and for these one need only open one’s eyes. The heavenly bodies holding their swift silent course in the vault of heaven, the incredible order of the universe, the rain that falls to relieve the parched earth, palms bending with golden fruit, ships that guide across the seas laden with goodness for man—can these be the handiwork of gods of stone? What fools to cry for signs when creation harbours nothing else! In an age of credulity, Muhammad taught respect for the world’s incontrovertible order which was to awaken Muslim science before Christians.”

And this is how the distinguished historian Stanley Lane-Poole, sums up the character of the Prophet Muhammad: “There is something so tender and womanly, and yet so heroic, about the man, that one is in peril of finding the judgment unconsciously blinded by the feeling of reverence, and well-nigh love, that such a nature inspires. He who, standing alone, braved for years the hatred of his people, is the same who was never the first to withdraw his hand from another’s clasp; the beloved of children, who never passed a group of little ones without a smile from his wonderful eyes and a kind word for them, sounding all the kinder in that sweet-toned voice. The frank friendship, the noble generosity, the dauntless courage and hope “He was an enthusiast in that noblest sense when enthusiasm becomes the salt of the earth, the one thing that keeps men from rotting whilst they live. Enthusiasm is often used despitably, because it is joined to an unworthy cause, or falls upon barren ground and bears no fruit. So was it not with Muhammad. He was an enthusiast when enthusiasm was the one thing needed to set the world aflame, and his enthusiasm was noble for a noble cause. He was one of those happy few who have attained the supreme joy of making one great truth their very life-spring. He was the messenger of the one God, and never to his life’s end did he forget who he was or the message which was the marrow of his being. He brought his tidings to his people with a grand dignity sprung from the consciousness of his high office, together with a most sweet humility, whose roots lay in the knowledge of his own weakness.”

Major A. G. Leonard refers to the sincerity of the Prophet and the truth of his message in these words in his book Islam: Her Moral and Spiritual value: “If ever man on this earth found God, if ever man devoted his life to God’s service, with a good and a great motive, it is certain that the Prophet of Arabia was that man.”

“To thoroughly comprehended the spirit of Muhammad or the soul of Islam, the student himself must be thoroughly in earnest and sincere. He must in addition possess that moral, mental and intellectual sympathy which gives the ego an insight into human subtleties as well as simplicities. He must take Mohammed and Islam as he finds them— in the same intensely sincere spirit that constituted the one and inculcated the other. He must at the outset recognize that Mohammd was no mere spiritual peddler, no vulgar time-serving vagrant, but one of the most profoundly sincere and earnest spiritual men of any age or epoch. A man not only great, but one of the greatest,—i.e., truest—men that Humanity has ever produced. Great, i.e., not simply as a prophet, but as a patriot and statesman: a material as well as a spiritual builder who constructed a great nation, or greater empire, and more even than all these, a still greater Faith. True, moreover, because he was true to himself, to his people, and above all to his God. Recognizing this, he will thus acknowledge that Islam as a profound and true cult, which strives to uplift its votaries from the depths of human darkness upwards into the higher realm of Light and Truth.”

Finally, this was what Lamartine, one of the greatest poets of France, writes about the greatness of Muhammad: “Never has a man set for himself, voluntarily or involuntarily, a more sublime aim, since this aim was superhuman: to subvert superstitions which had been interposed between man and his Creator,
of being a victim of his fellow-countrymen: all those and, finally, his flight, his ambition which was entirely devoted to one idea and in no manner striving for an empire, his endless prayers, his mystic conversations with God, his death and his triumph after death: all these attest, not to an imposture but to a firm conviction. It was his conviction which gave him the power to restore a dogma. This dogma was twofold, the unity of god was the immateriality of God; the former telling what God is, the latter telling what God is not....

"Philosopher, orator, apostle, 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?"12

Historicity

The Christian missionaries are never tired of making invidious comparisons between the characters of Jesus and Muhammad, but a moment's thought will show that the Jesus of the Gospels and Muhammad offer no comparison at all. For, while Muhammad is a thoroughly historical character, every detail of whose life, from birth to death, is preserved in critically tested books of Hadith and history, the life and personality of Jesus are shrouded in mystery. There are several eminent scholars who totally reject the historicity of Jesus and regard him as a character not of history but of mythology.13 This is undoubtedly an extreme viewpoint which is unacceptable to the Muslims as it is to the Christians; yet the fact remains that the historical facts about Jesus' life are inextricably mixed up with myths and legends. Our information about him is so fragmented and uncertain that no clear picture of his life and personality emerges in our minds. There are doubts about the date, place, manner, and identity of his birth; there is nothing known about the first thirty years of his life; there are differences on the questions of his death. The Gospels tell us of barely two or three years of his life, and that too in a manner that can hardly pass the test of historical criticism. In an earlier chapter, Dr. C. J. Cadoux, who was Mackennal Professor of Church History at Oxford, was quoted as having written that many scholars and critics regard as hopeless any attempt to separate the historically-true from the legendary or mythical matter which the Gospels contain and to reconstruct the story of Jesus out of the more historical residue. As we find him in the Gospels, Jesus appears a shadowy, glorified and hypothesized figure.

Perfect Model

Although on the basis of the Quran, I regard the characters of Jesus and Muhammad to be equally godly, pure, noble and inspiring, yet Jesus did not get the opportunity to become a perfect model for men in all situations and walks of life as the Prophet Muhammad did. We have no doubt that if Jesus had got the chance he would have behaved exactly as the Prophet Muhammad did; for both were prophets of the same God.

Jesus never married and so could not become an ideal husband and father. He did not triumph over his enemies and so had no opportunity of showing how a victor should behave towards his vanquished foes who had spared no pains to annihilate him and his followers. He did not have his persecutors at his mercy and so had no occasion to display forbearance, mercy and forgiveness. Jesus did not rise to power to become a perfect ruler and judge, a model for the rulers and judges of the world.

We must turn to the Prophet Muhammad, and not Jesus, if we wish to see the picture of an ideally happy and virtuous married life and of a wise, just and benevolent ruler whom nothing could corrupt or divert from working for the material, mental and moral reform and amelioration of his people. The Prophet Muhammad witnessed in his life both failure and success, defeat and triumph, adversity and prosperity, helpfulness as well as power and authority, persecution at the hands of his opponents as well as finding his persecutors at his mercy. He showed rare patience, fortitude, courage and loving kindness for his enemies as a
EVIL AND ITS GENESIS

By the Late Alhaj Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din

The origin of evil has always been a difficult problem both for religion and philosophy. Its solution has constantly baffled them both. Crude notions and inaccurate ideas have given rise to erroneous doctrines in religion, and a wrong philosophy or conception of the principles of life. With the old Zoroastrians in Persia, evil and good came from two gods: the god of evil and the god of good. Mankind became a plaything in the hands of these two deities; they remained always at war with each other, and whichever of the two happened to have the upper hand for the time being, made man an instrument to work out his dictates. Good and evil thus ruled in the world alternately from time to time.

The Church in the West, with its half apostle and half logician-philosopher St. Paul at its head, made sin a legacy. Man received it by inheritance, and could not rid himself of it. At the very outset, man's nature was contaminated and sin became innate in it, "as if the machine", to quote Lord Headley, "became amiss at the beginning."

He could not set it right for thousands of years, till at last he chanced upon a new method for its proper working, some two thousand years ago. But unfortunately the new scheme also failed. Christianity, it is true, did evince some hopeful signs, when it was confined to slaves and serfs; but from the days of the Royal Conversion down to the present time, it has walked knee-deep in blood—to say nothing of the other forms of evil that have, through all that period, borne rule openly in Christendom.

Jesus himself is a noble pattern of humanity, and his teachings surely lead to righteousness; they may not be comprehensive enough to meet all the manifold phases of human life, but no one can deny their beauty and sublimity. Yet drink, gambling and prostitution constitute the Nemesis which attend Christianity wherever it goes, and this would seem to indicate that the Divine Scheme which had for its pivot the tragic scene of Calvary, had also failed in its object. This kind of theology, which bears the name of Christ, is not creditable to its authors, nor does it add any dignity to the Object of their adoration. Our nature is not of our own making. It was given to us with all its capabilities, for good or evil, by the Creator. Sin, if innate in it, becomes a gift from God to His creatures; and the use of a divine gift should not entail punishment on us. If a dog cannot be held responsible for keeping its tail erect or his head downwards—and his justification is that he acts at the promptings of nature—we can hardly be called upon to account for our evil deeds; and, under all principles of justice and equity, we should not merit any punishment for failing to walk on the road of righteousness if our nature has not been made to do so; while to act according to one's nature, within proper limits, is entirely consistent with propriety and decorum. It simply comes to this: that we are doing right whenever we do wrong, provided it be within the limits sanctioned by society. This may sound paradoxical, and a contradiction in terms, but the premises put forward by the Christian Church force us to this the logical conclusion.

To Buddha, on the other hand, the very existence of man is a loathsome thought, if we accept what we read of him in Buddhistic records. Trouble and misery, the fruit of evil, dominate human destiny; and man's only liberation, according to Buddha, lies in annihilation. Why man, the supreme product of elemental combination, was created at all, if misery only is to be his lot, while the rest of nature is simply beauty and sublimity, is an enigma to be solved by the upholders of such theories. Nature in itself must be sheer wickedness, if its best handiwork, man, has become the personification of evil and consequently the target of all trouble and tribulation. Hindu philosophers have no better solution of the problem to offer. Nothing that they have said succeeds in rebutting the presumption that Parabrahm (Great God) is the author of evil; and the theory of Karma or the transmigration of souls would appear, rather than not, to justify the Divine Intelligence in dispensing evil to mankind.

The whole world would have remained in darkness on this subject, had not the last Book of God, I mean the Qur-an, come with the true solution, and given the final and decisive word on it. All-merciful and All-beneficent God, acknowledged by all men as the fountain of good, acannot be the source of evil, directly or indirectly. Everything which comes from God is good, and for the benefit of mankind. All that is created by Him is to serve human ends, if properly used; in other words, everything in heaven and earth, including every human faculty, has its appointed utility. All things possess particular properties which work to our advantage, if used properly, and within given limits.

The one essential aim and object of all knowledge and science is to discover these limits, the transgression whereof creates the harmful influence which we, in popular parlance, term evil. We do good when we use the gifts that God has given us within the limits ordained by Him. When we exceed those limits we do evil. Let me take medicine as an illustration. Medicines may be opposite in their effects, because it is intended that they shall be prescribed for widely-differing ailments. But because two medicines are contrary in their effects, you cannot for that reason call one good and the other bad. Both are, in themselves good, but only when used as it is intended that they should be used, and when not so used, both are bad. Thus opium—a blessing of God when used to alleviate pain—has, when taken for other purposes, become the curse of humanity in China and throughout the civilized world. An elixir is a poison when unnecessarily administered.

So it is with all our faculties. Human actions have always the same results, which the exigencies of scene and occasion make good or evil.

The companionship of man and woman sanctioned by society as lawful wedlock, is good; but the same companionship under any other conditions is a wickedness which ranks, in the teaching of the Qur-an, second only to murder.

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Whatever is from God is for our good, to supply our needs, to turn our faculties and powers to good; and if, by our misuse of them, we turn them to evil, that is our doing and our sin.

We come to this world with immaculate natures, capable of doing good and of soaring to the highest of the high; everything around us is designed to aid us in attaining the object for which we have been created. There is no doubt that we do stand sorely in need of knowledge—knowledge of our own selves and the powers that are latent in us, and knowledge of the Nature round about us, and if anything can be said to have wrought evil in the world, it is our ignorance. Nature is inexorable and cannot forgive those who do not respect her. Meddling with her laws brings havoc and disaster, but it is the meddling born of ignorance; for science has been enabled to read and understand the secrets of Nature, and to make of the inexorable tyrant, a submissive handmaid. All the fury of the elements is tamed to our command, and all that seemed evil and sinister therein has been shown to be but a manifestation of the Divine Beneficence. Different forms and forces of Nature may in relation to each other, be described as good and bad, because of the difference in their effects and tendencies; but, in the abstract, all are good, and are intended to do good. Cold and heat may, relatively, be good or bad, as the case may be; but, separately, each is good in the performance of the functions prescribed for it. The laws of gravitation and repulsion may, similarly, be classed as good or bad according to circumstances, and yet it is these two forces which are mainly responsible for the harmonious working of Nature as a whole. (Are not white corpuses the foes of bodily health, and yet, at the same time, do we not own our vitality to the constant struggle ceaselessly being waged within us by the white and the red germs?) There are literally countless illustrations, drawn from everyday Nature, which force us to the conclusion that there is nothing coming from God which, when used in the proper way and at the proper time, is evil. It is the non-observance of ordained limits which creates evil and engenders sin.

This is the exposition of good and evil which we read in the Qur-an, and it shows clearly enough that evil is of our own acquisition, and not a heritage. "Whatever comes to you it is from God, whatever evil befalls you it is from yourself" (Qur-an, Ch. V. v. 79). Evil is not a God-made thing, but the fruit of human actions or of omissions due to man’s ignorance. Revelation is from God, to enlighten us as to the limits beyond which we must not go. God has made us capable of distinguishing between the right and the wrong use of everything created by Him. He has given us the knowledge, and if we choose to act in a manner contrary to that knowledge, we alone are responsible and we must suffer accordingly; for everything in Nature, including Man and the capacities of Man, is under the law. To obey brings good, to disobey, disaster. The logic is simple, but St. Paul failed to understand it, and the Church, through succeeding ages, has clung to his fallacy. To him, law appeared as a curse which brought sin into the world, redemption from which he found only in the blood of Jesus. Law does not create sin; it is the breach which gives birth to evil. Law is the way to achieve good, sin is its violation.

The Quranic language is too cogent to leave any doubt on the subject. All the Arabic words used in the text to correspond with, or to convey the significance of the English word “sin”, mean transgression, or going beyond certain bounds. "Junah" literally means to be aside from the proper place; "Asa" to go beyond; "Jurm" to be cast aside; "Zamb" to be above the proper lines; “Ada” to transcend. All the words quoted here have been used by the Qur-an, for sin, and their literal meanings serve to show the nature of sin under Quranic teaching, which is to go beyond certain limits. The word “Tauba,” which in the Qur-an stands for repentance, throws a still further light on the subject. It literally means to return. All human actions are virtues when man is within bounds. If he exceeds them, he is a sinner; but if he retracts his steps, he is showing repentance, in the Islamic sense of the word.

There is another aspect of the question which needs a few comments; and that is—our capacity to do wrong.

RELIGION AND FETISHISM

If we worship a thing, imaginary or real, in the belief that it will be productive of the greatest possible good to us in this life and in the hereafter, and that without any exertion on our part, we are doing precisely the same thing as the fetish worshippers of Central Africa, and it is not for us to laugh at them if they select an eggshell or a tin can as the object of their adoration.

No time or country has been without its fetish. People have worshipped elements and combinations of elements, with the same belief. Luminaries, rivers, trees, stones and animals have received from man the homage due only to the Most High in Heavens. Is not all this fetishism? If some people in India approach this thing or that with the same feeling of reverence or adoration as the African savage approaches an eggshell, reason fails to see any difference between African and Indian psychology. Science, however, has reduced these deities of the past, and made them slaves to us. They have been brought down from the throne of godhood to minister to our needs. Once they were our lords, but now they sit at our feet. But for all that, I fear, fetishism is ubiquitous still. It appears in different forms and shapes in different times and climates. When once the clothing with which it was divinely vested by one generation, becomes sufficiently threadbare to disclose its nakedness, it appears in new garments, to demand respect from mankind. Just like an old Brahmin, who every day goes with fresh flowers to replace the faded wreaths with which he garlanded his idol yesterday, so man has worshipped his fetish, from an egg to God-in-man, with different sentiments and ideas.

If our faith in the sanctity or superhumanity of a certain man, or in a certain event in his life, is believed to effect a miraculous transformation in our morals, and make us the recipients of the choicest blessings of God—all this being only the imagination, with no reality in it—in what way are we better off than our fellow-beings in Central Africa? And if these premises are valid, am I not justified in concluding that all such religions of the world, including Christianity, as base

continued on page 17
CHARITY

What is meant by charity in Islam?

Charity, for which the expression used in the Holy Quran is “spending out of what God has given you”, means using one’s energy, talent, ability, money, or whatever else, to help and do good to those in need. In Islam, charity is very often mentioned alongside prayer because just as the latter is man’s relation with God, or man’s duty towards God, the former (charity) represents his relation with his fellow-beings, and indeed with all the creation of God. Prayer expresses love for God, submission to Him, and a desire to bring out the Divine qualities that lie dormant in every person. Charity is an expression of sympathy and benevolence towards God’s creation, and putting the lesson of prayer into actual practice by displaying the Divine qualities that one remembers during the Salaat.

Please give some examples of what is charity in Islam.

Innumerable examples can be given because doing any kind of good to anyone, even to yourself, to make you more capable of benefiting others, by using what God has given you, is an act of charity. Feeding the hungry, helping the poor, taking care of the destitute such as orphans, lending a hand to the disabled, helping an unemployed person find a job, etc., are the more obvious examples of charity taught by Islam. But it also teaches that there are other, smaller acts of charity which one has the opportunity to do every day. Helping someone in any way, showing the way to a stranger, speaking a kind word to cheer someone up, giving useful advice or imparting knowledge to someone, removing from the road something that could cause an accident, even refraining from hurting anyone, are all acts of charity in Islam.

How important is charity?

Being charitable is very strongly urged upon the Muslims, so much so that the Holy Prophet Muhammad has said that on every limb of the body, doing a charitable deed is due every day, whether it is with the hands, feet, or tongue. There is no person at all who cannot do a deed of charity to others. According to the Holy Prophet, if someone has nothing to give, he should work and earn, and give out of that; if he still does not have anything to give, he should help someone in distress; and if he is unable, for some reason, to do even that, he should try to do any good he can and refrain from doing any harm to anyone.

Apart from general charity, Islam has made compulsory a sort of tax on one’s possessions, known as Zakaat, to be spent on the welfare of the disadvantaged. This is explained further in no. 81.

To whom can a Muslim give in charity?

Just as acts of charity have the broadest possible significance in Islam, similarly the circle of those towards whom charity is to be exercised is the broadest that can be conceived. Starting with the people around us - our relations, friends, and neighbors - it extends to all Muslims, and to those of other religions. In fact, a Muslim’s charity covers even animals. The Holy Quran emphasizes that one should keep a special look-out for those who may be in need but who do not ask for help.

What kind of things should be given in charity?

In case of those acts of charity when we give something away, the Holy Quran teaches that we should only give good and useful things, not useless and worthless ones, and they should be the kind of things we like to have ourselves. Moreover, things given in charity must have been earned or acquired lawfully by the person giving them away.

Please explain what is Zakaat?

Just as Islam has prescribed a form for prayer, to remind us of its importance. That outward form of charity is known as Zakaat, and consists of giving a specified fraction of one’s wealth every year into a fund. This fund is administered by the government, or by the Muslim community if there is no Muslim government, and is used to help the poor, the disabled, the unemployed, and others in need.

Is Zakaat just like a tax?

In the sense of being collected and spent by the government (if there is a Muslim government doing this), Zakaat is like a tax. However, the great difference is that paying Zakaat is a religious duty to be done out of obedience to God and sympathy for people. So giving Zakaat is morally beneficial to the payer because it develops the spirit of self-sacrifice in him and curbs feelings of greed. Notice that the word ‘tax’ means a burden, but ‘zakaat’ means something which purifies you.

Why is general charity and Zakaat a basic duty in Islam?
Because it brings out the best and highest qualities in a person, which is really the object of existence according to Islam. God has given to each person various abilities and capacities, such as knowledge, money, strength, some talent or skill, etc. Every individual must use whatever he or she has been given to benefit other people as well as the rest of God's creation, and not for selfish ends. If this principle is not followed, not only is there much distress and suffering for the needy, but man becomes his fellow-man's deadly enemy, and both society and mankind become divided into factions and groups aiming at each other's destruction.

THE HOLY QURAN

96. Please tell us a little more about the Holy Quran which you have mentioned throughout this booklet while explaining the teachings of Islam.

The Holy Quran is the scripture of the Muslims. It is the word of God as communicated to the Holy Prophet Muhammad on a number of different occasions from the time God made him a prophet, at the age of 40, till his death. The passages revealed at various times over this period of 23 years, which were arranged in a set order by the Holy Prophet, constitute the Holy Quran.

87. How did God communicate His messages and words to the Holy Prophet?

God's messages are not physical sound which can be heard by the physical ear, but can only be received by the inner, 'spiritual' senses possessed by every human being. In Prophets of God these senses are extremely sharp and very highly developed, and therefore they can receive clear communications from God. As in the physical world, messages are transmitted through various media, such as air (for sound) or radio waves, similarly the word of God is brought to the Prophet through the spiritual beings called angels. The revelation of the Holy Quran was communicated to the Holy Prophet Muhammad by the angel Gabriel in the form of clear words of the Arabic language. According to Muslim belief, God spoke to all the other Prophets, such as Moses and Jesus, in the same manner in their languages.

88. How did the Holy Quran come down to us?

It was by the following stages:

i) During the Holy Prophet's life, whenever a revelation came to him, he would announce it, many of his followers would learn it by heart, and it would also be put into writing at the same time. As the Holy Quran was recited aloud in public prayers, and at other times, every Muslim was quite familiar with its contents, and many knew it completely by heart.

ii) After the Holy Prophet's death in 632 C.E., about six months later, a complete copy of the Quran was collected together, consisting of all the writings taken down in his presence.

iii) Some 15 years later, further copies were transcribed from this master copy and sent to the big cities of the then Muslim dominion to be kept as standard copies. Muslims also continued the practice of memorizing at least some, and in many cases the whole, of the Holy Book.

In this way, the Holy Quran was passed down the ages, in both a written and oral form, remaining intact in its original form.

89. Do all Muslims have the same Quran?

Yes. Because of the reasons given above, the text of the Muslim Scripture has been preserved in its original purity. In fact, God had given a promise in the Quran itself that He would Himself guard this Holy Book. All Muslims, whatever their sect, country or language, have always had exactly the same Arabic Quran, just as it was in the Holy Prophet Muhammad's time. No two copies of the Holy Quran anywhere in the world differ in any way.

90. Please mention some features of the Holy Quran which give it a unique place among the scriptures of the world.

i) As mentioned above, the Holy Quran has not undergone any loss or alteration since it first came into the world so many centuries ago, and all the followers of Islam have the same Quran.

ii) The Holy Quran is still available to us today in the original language in which it was revealed.

iii) Arabic, the language of the Holy Quran, is still a living language spoken and written by over 100 million people, and has changed very little over the centuries. Therefore, any person today can easily learn this language, and read and understand the Holy Quran directly.

iv) The history of the revelation and the collection of the Holy Quran is known fully and clearly, not being shrouded in mystery or uncertainty. We should add briefly, without being disrespectful, that other scriptures have suffered much loss and alteration in the course of history, their original languages have died out so that only their translations are available today, their history and origin are largely unknown, and their authors or persons to whom they were revealed are not known in history.

91. Is there any other notable distinction of the Holy Quran?

One that may be mentioned is that the Holy Quran tells us all about itself. From various places in it we learn that it is a Book called the Quran, a revelation from God, communicated to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, coming through the angel Gabriel, in the Arabic language. The Quran also tells us that it is revealed in portions, not all at once, and that the first revelation came to the Holy Prophet in the month of Ramadaan.

The unique features mentioned here and in the answer to the last question concern the text of the Holy Book. There are many distinctive points about the Holy Quran as regards its teachings, and these will be found throughout this booklet.

92. How is the Holy Quran divided?

So far as the subject matter is concerned, it is divided into 114 chapters. Each chapter, called a Sura in Arabic, consists of a number of verses, each verse being called an Ayat. Some chapters were wholly or largely revealed to the Holy Prophet during the first 13 years of his mission.
when he lived in Makka, and the rest after his emigration to the city of Madina. Chapters revealed at Makka are called Makki, and those revealed at Madina are called Madani. While the capters are of varying lengths, the Holy Quran is also divided into 30 almost equal parts, each part being known as a juz (or separa in Urdu and Persian). This division is simply to enable a reader to complete a reading of the Holy Book in one month.

93. Is the Holy Quran arranged in the order of the time in which its passages were revealed to the Holy Prophet?

No. In fact, the very first revelation which came to the Holy Prophet is actually to be found in chapter 96, not far from the end of the Holy Quran. The order in which various passages or chapters were revealed is not of any importance, especially to people after the Holy Prophet's time, because the Quran is a complete, consistent book. A verse is just as important and significant no matter when it was revealed.

94. It is said that the Holy Quran is not arranged in an orderly form, but deals with various subjects in an unrelated manner. Please comment on this.

This is not correct. It is true that the Quran does not cover topic after topic in a set sequence, but this does not mean that it has no arrangement. The Holy Quran is not really a book of laws or commandments on various subjects, but a book meant to guide a man and convince him of the truth. Its basic theme is the greatness of God, that man's aim in life should be to acquire nearness to Him, and that his actions, good or bad, will always bear fruit according to what they are. All the topics the Quran deals with are built around this basic message which is the real point being stressed all the time.

95. Is there an arrangement of topics in the Quran?

Yes, there is, and for full details the English translation of the Holy Quran with commentary by the late Maulana Muhammad Ali should be consulted. Here we may briefly point out that the Holy Book begins with the famous short chapter, 'The Fatihah', which is a sort of preface summarizing the entire Quran and its teachings in seven verses. This is followed by a long chapter which begins by stating the fundamental teachings of Islam, and goes on to show why a new religion was necessary at this time, and how the followers of previous religions had gone astray. This and the next few chapters then deal in detail with Islamic teachings. Very often in the Quran, chapters revealed at Makka, containing prophecies about the success of Islam, are followed by chapters revealed at Madina showing how those prophecies were being fulfilled. There is, thus, a clear arrangement of the subject-matter in the Holy Quran.

96. What sort of subjects does the Holy Quran deal with?

An enormous range of topics. It tells us about God, His attributes, man's position in the universe, his aim in life and how to attain that aim. It gives details of what one should believe and how it should be put into practice. The next life is described in it full. Histories of previous nations and their prophets, as well as many events from the life of the Holy Prophet himself, are also given in the Quran.

It gives arguments to disprove false beliefs of all kinds, and answers all sorts of questions and objections raised about its teachings and about the Holy Prophet. Guidance, laws and regulations on everyday subjects such as family life, business dealings, the law, war and peace, women's rights, hygiene, government and democracy, etc., is also to be found in the Holy Book.

97. Does the Holy Quran give any evidence to back up its claim that it is the word of God, and not the thoughts of a man?

Yes indeed. The Quran does not want a person to accept anything without reason and proof. The evidence it provides on this point is:

i) The Holy Quran contains such grand principles and deep points of knowledge as could not have been known to any person in the seventh century, when it was revealed. They certainly could not have been known to, or discovered by, a man like Muhammad (peace be upon him) who could not read or write, and lived in a country which was very backward and cut off from the civilization of the time.

ii) The Holy Quran's moral teaching brought about a complete and astonishing change for the good in the people of a whole country, a reform which appeared impossible to do through human teachings.

iii) Prophecies in the Holy Quran that the Holy Prophet Muhammad shall be triumphant over his opponents, made at a time when he hardly had any followers or friends, all came true in a short period of time. And many prophecies in the Quran about the distant future have come true in modern times.

iv) The language and literary style of the Holy Quran was so excellent that the Holy Prophet's opponents, who included great poets and masters of the Arabic language, could not match it even though they had been challenged to do it. For all these reasons, the Holy Quran has thrown a challenge, standing open for all time, to those who think that it is not the word of God, to produce a writing like it even one chapter long.

98. What position does the Holy Quran hold for Muslims?

The Holy Quran is the final and highest authority for Muslims on all matters. It is the fundamental source of the teachings of Islam. When determining whether a certain belief or practice is a part of Islam or not, the verdict of the Quran has the highest priority and must be accepted even if it goes against common practice or one's own wishes. If a person differs with us regarding the meaning of a verse of the Quran, we must still respect him and his views if he gives arguments from the Holy Book in his support.
THE FRENCH REVOLUTION - 1789 A.D.
VERSUS
THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION - 609 A.D. - 632 A.D.
BY K.S. RAHIM BAKSH M.A.

It is by sheer coincidence that the date of the French Revolution this year has fallen on the same date i.e., 14th August, as that of the Islamic Revolution fourteen hundred years ago on the occasion of the Last Hajj Pilgrimage performed by the Holy Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon him). Both these occasions mark the inception of an era of Fundamental Rights of Man with the solemn declaration of Liberty, Equality, Justice and Fraternity.

The French Revolution has caught the imagination of the world, especially the Western World, and France has accordingly commemorated the Bicentennial of the Revolution on this date, and about forty countries have participated in the celebration.

The episode of the French Revolution occurred with the storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789 A.D. when its gates were burst open by the furious mob of the French nation, heralding a period of liberty with slogans of equality, fraternity and justice which went up in jubilation of the freedom acquired by the nation from the thraldom of the monarchist regime, and the feudal order of government.

"It was the best of time and it was the worst of time" observed Charles Dickens about this revolution. For withal the enjoyment in exuberance of the freedom of liberty so attained, the fury of the mob was roused and knew no bounds, and a reign of terror ensued. The leaders of the revolution like Roussou, Robespierre, Danton, Voltaire, etc. took the reigns of government in their hands, and played havoc with the lives of the king and queen, and all other functionaries of the monarchist regime, who were taken captive and beheaded mercilessly. The voracious guillotine was set up in the Parisian Square and began to chop the heads of the ruling junta indiscriminately and mercilessly. The gory revolution then reigned supreme, and no quarter was given to any one associated or suspected of alliance with the monarchist regime. Even some of the revolutionary leaders fell victim to the insatiable guillotine. It is estimated that throughout France, some 35000 people died on the scaffold. However, the crusade of equality, fraternity and justice did not last long, and was succeeded by the Napoleonic regime of absolute despotism. And only the revolutionary concept of democracy remained to be emulated by the generations which followed.

The Islamic Revolution:

Fourteen hundred years ago, however, a far greater and more lasting Revolution had taken place for the uplift and emancipation of mankind from bondage of sin and all social evils that hampered man to attain his goal of freedom and salvation for good till the end of time. It was the Advent of Islam 609 A.D. to 632 A.D. that ushered in an era of Equality, Fraternity and Justice in the annals of humanity.

The Islamic Revolution started with the first Revelation from On High conveyed by the archangel Gabriel to the Holy Prophet, Mohammad, Peace be upon him, in the cave Hira on the night of 609 A.D. in the month of Ramazan. The Angel spoke to the Holy Prophet thus: "Read in the name of thy Lord, who creates man from a clot. Read, and thy Lord is most generous, who taught man to write with the pen. Taught man what he knew not" (96: 1-5). In spite of the Holy Prophet's plea of his inability to read, the Angel made him to read the above revelation by hugging him. The Holy Prophet then realized for the first time that the heavy responsibility of Prophethood was placed on his shoulders and that he had been entrusted with the stupendous charge of human reformation. And thus the era of Islamic Revolution was inducted on 609 A.D.

The term revolution is generally associated with a violent and radical disturbance in the social fabric of a country or nation. But this was not so in the case of the Islamic revolution, which took place by peaceful means in the course of twenty-three years. The change was brought about in the outlook of man, and the task of regeneration and reformation was accomplished through persuasion, indoctrination and conviction in the Truth of Faith, that is, the Religion of Islam. The conversion of the people from the prevalent idolatry to Islam was slow and acrimonious in the process, but the converts were so firm in their faith that they were prepared to undergo the severest afflictions perpetrated by the unbelievers, who had by now stood up in opposition to the new religion as they termed Islam. It is related that the believers were subjected to most terrible persecutions, the account of which is so shocking to relate as to raise the hair on end, and send spasms of horror, but it speaks volumes for the conviction of the believers, who suffered these persecutions without flinching or retraction from the faith they had embraced. Oh - for the horrors of persecution, which however, failed absolutely to shake the faith of the believer converts. But despite all this persecution, Islam made progress and a number of believers gathered round the Holy Prophet in support of the religion Islam. But this did not suit the inimical intentions of their persecutors so that the believers had to resort to migration in the first instance to their neighbouring Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia for asylum. Even this was not enough, till the Muslims left with the Holy Prophet were left with no option but to migrate to Madina and the historic event of The Flight took place when the Holy Prophet himself accompanied by his faithful companion, Abu Bakar took flight to Madina by traversing a distance of about three hundred miles on camel back.

The Flight of the Holy Prophet from Makkah to Madina stands as a landmark and holds a paramount importance in the history of Islam. In fact, this event continued on page 18.

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of the Late Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A.LL.B, our first Ameer. By the Grace of Allah it is still considered, the best and the most authentic translation of the Quran, even by our adversaries. Had you ever had a chance to read this translation and commentary, you would have found answers to all your questions to your satisfaction.

2. Translations of the Quran in Dutch, Spanish, German, Urdu, Indonesian, Hindi, Tamil, Gurmukhi, etc. were Published by us.

3. Translations of the Quran in French, Russian, Japanese, Chinese and German languages from the English Translation of Maulana Muhammad Ali are being presently done and Allah willing all of these will be published in 1990-91. Insha Allah.

4. Valuable literature on Islam in English has been Published by us since the beginning of this century when no other Muslim group or sect even thought of delivering the Message of Islam to the people of Europe and America. This literature played the role of educating the intelligentsia of these regions about the true picture of Islam. This literature is still as useful today as it was in the beginning of the Century.

For complete information on the Ahmadiyyah Movement, I will recommend you to read, “The Ahmadiyyah Movement”, by the Late Maulana Muhammad Ali, which deals with the beliefs and objects of the Movement in details and the point of differences with the orthodox Muslims. It is available from us for U. S. $5.00 plus postage.

Question: Does your group consider the present day Quran to be Divinely inspired or do you consider it as being distorted in its translation by men through the years?

Answer: Your one question in fact has two queries. Firstly, about the present day Quran and, secondly about the translations of the Quran. I will deal with these two separately. The Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement believed, and so does our group believe, that the present day Quran in Arabic in the hands of any Muslim, irrespective of the fact to which sect or school of thought he belongs, is the same which was revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him, through the Archangel Gabriel. This has come down to the present day without the change of even a dot. It was a verbal revelation to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him, which was not only written down as dictated by him to the scribes but was also preserved through memorizing by the Huffaz, and there were hundreds of them in the Prophets' time. Thousands of Muslims have been committing whole of the the Quran to memory in every era. Thus, a double and foolproof system of preserving the originally revealed Quran without any alteration, addition or deletion has been at work down the ages to preserve the word of Allah as originally revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him. Is it not miraculous that the whole Muslim world has the same Quran in Arabic in their hands for more than fourteen centuries without the difference of even a dot?

The second part of your question, i.e., about the translations of the Quran, in fact, deals with the status of the translations of the Quran, and not the Quran itself. Let me make it very clear at the very outset that though we consider the Quran in Arabic as the revealed word of Allah, we do not consider the translations and explanatory notes of the Quran by any author, even though these be in Arabic, as word of God. A translation, however conscientious, can never be the equal of the original. Secondly, how much a translation is a faithful representative of the original is relative to the proficiency of the translator in the original language from which he is translating and even the language which he translates. This is more difficult in matters of translation from Arabic which is the most eloquent language of all the languages. Thirdly, the preconceptions and intent of the translator may control his fashion of presentation. Fourthly, the context in which a word occurs controls the meanings of a particular word. It is really an impossibility to translate one word of Arabic in one word of any other language. The translators have tried to choose the closest word in the other language but that does not convey the full sense of the original Arabic word. A full sentence or even more may be required to convey that full sense. Hence, the translators have resorted to the process of Explanatory notes or commentaries as these are called in common parlance. In view of these difficulties, no scholar person in Muslim Ummah has ever considered these translations and commentaries (Tafsir) as word of God. Whether any translator has distorted the Quran in its meanings is again a matter of relativity as stated above. Since the Original in Arabic is available to all, therefore, where a translator differs in meaning from the other translator and whether those differences have any support from the Arabic Lexicons and/or context of the Quran is not hard to judge. Once such a support from the Lexicons or the context is available the differences in interpretation of the Quran are tolerated. Ilmi-Tafsir, i.e., the science of the Interpretation of the Quran has been developed through the centuries and has its set principles and rules. Any interpretation within these rules is acceptable but it does not have the Status of the Word of God. Even many non-Arabs have learned Arabic and have excelled Arabs in Translation and Interpretation of the Quran.

Question: Do you have a new Divinely inspired Book, a new revelation, and if so, what is the Book's name? I would like to read it.

Answer: Many questions in one; answer to all of these is “NO”. The Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement in Islam believed, and so do we, that the Holy Quran is the last revealed Scripture and the FINAL one. The Inspired Book or the Scripture is revealed to a Prophet and since the Founder believed, and so do we, that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and Blessings of Allah be on him, was the last prophet of Allah after whom no prophet, whether old or new, can or is to come, therefore, the question of having any new Divinely inspired book does not arise.

Question: In the Quran, Surah 21:104, it says "...Even as We produced the first creation, so shall We produce a new one...". How do you interpret this verse? Does the word "We" mean that God and the Angels produced the first Creation?

Answer: You have half quoted the verse of the Quran. The verse as translated in full reads as under:

“The day when We roll up heaven like the
rolling up of the scroll of writings. As We began the first Creation, We shall reproduce it. A promise (binding) on Us. We shall bring it about.”

Before giving the interpretation of the above verse as we understand it in its proper context, I deem it fit to answer your second query as to the meanings of the word ‘We’ occurring in this verse, as to whether God and Angels are meant by ‘We’? No person with a little knowledge of Arabic language and teachings of Islam has ever interpreted the use of word ‘We’ in this context as meaning “God and Angels”, for he fully well knows that in Arabic and other Middle Eastern and Eastern languages it is a common style of diction that the word ‘We’ (plural tense of form) is employed for a single person holding a position of majesty, power, honor and respect. Muslim Kings, while referring to themselves, always used the plural form of the word, i.e., ‘we or us’ in their common talk to their subjects and citizens of the State. By the same style of diction words ‘We’ or ‘Us’ occur in the Quran referring to God alone who is the highest authority in the Universe a human being can ever perceive. The use of upper case (capital) letters ‘W’ and ‘U’ in ‘We or Us’ are reserved by the English translators to indicate God alone. According to the teachings of the Quran and Islam Allah (God) alone is the Author of all creation and has neither any partner nor any associate and Angels are themselves one of His creations, therefore, the question of partnership of Angels in the first creation or the second creation does not arise at all. Only those who are completely ignorant of the above stated Arabic style of diction and the fundamental teachings of the Quran and Islam will consider the use of ‘We’ in this context referring to plurality. Under the Rules of interpretation of the Verses of the Quran, amongst other things, a verse of the Quran is interpreted in context with the verses preceding it and following it and in the context of the subject matter under discussion in those verses. Divorced from their proper context many verses will not make any sense. Further, the allegorical verses are interpreted subject to the verses which form the basis of the Book, i.e., those verses which teach the fundamentals or principles. Finally, interpretation of verses is relative to the personal understanding of the commentator and is not binding on other commentators or Muslims. Human society is ever in a state of evolution as such the state of knowledge and information of mankind is much advanced today compared to mankind of a few hundreds of years back. This has been so all through the various eras of the history of mankind; and this has necessitated a new and fresher interpretation for the Quran suitable for that particular age and in accordance with the needs of that era. Thus, an interpretation of the Quran through the support of inspiration from Allah is given to the Muslim Ummah in every century. This freedom of expressing the meanings of Quran without being bound by the meanings understood by other previous commentators is a guarantee for the Islamic Society not suffering from stagnation and is the most valuable asset of the believers which ensures application of the Islamic Fundamental teachings to all ages till the day of Judgment. After this introductory note, now I come to the interpretation of verse 104 of Surah 21.

In its apparent meaning, this verse refers to the day of Final Judgment or Resurrection on which day the Universe, as we know it, will be folded up by Allah like a Scroll of parchments. And there is a promise of Second Creation of the universe and as an argument in support of this promise, it is stated that Allah Who created it first is capable of creating it afresh or of reproducing it. These are the apparent meanings which most commentators have understood. In addition to its reference to the ultimate day of Judgment, two great commentators of this era, namely, Mualana Muhammad Ali, M.A.,LLB, and Allama Dr Khadim Nuri have interpreted this verse in the context of the subject matter of the Gog and Magog discussed in this Surah and in the context of the Promise that the land shall ultimately be inherited by the Righteous. According to them, the rolling up of universe like a scroll means that the older order will be swept away altogether—as happened in Arabia at the appearance of the Holy Prophet, Muhammad, peace be on him, and a new civilization had appeared, so shall Allah reproduce that civilization after a temporary setback at the hands of materialistic outlook of the world brought about by the influence of Gog and Magog, i.e., the two materialistic fashions of life, namely, the Capitalistic nations and the Communist nations. This is a promise of bringing about the ultimate triumph of truth in the whole world. Since both the commentators believed that the Law of reward of deeds of mankind is at work at all times and since they believed that in a conflict of good and evil Good shall ultimately prevail, therefore, in addition to a belief in the second creation of the universe after the Day of Judgment, they believed in an applicability of this verse to this world also. Factual conditions of the present day support their viewpoint inasmuch as mankind on account of advanced knowledge of its pivotal position in the scheme of universe is saying goodbye to all such creeds which feed them on Myths while on the other hand, it is awakening to the reality of its being one nation and is expressing its disgust about the wastage of resources in preparation of war against other fellow human beings. The day is not far when simple minded human beings all over the world will throw away the idols of Nationalism, Capitalism and Communism, the false gods carved by crafty politicians and statesmen and economists for setting man against man. Man will probably soon realize that the simple minded workers all over the world are paying a very high price in sweating for hours every day throughout their lives simply to feed the greed of these false deities. We have been made to follow a process in search of peace which has completely robbed us of our internal peace and has heaped enormous pressures and hardships on each one of us, no matter in what part of the globe we reside. Mankind is presently marching, though slowly, towards setting its priorities right. The day all of us will realize that we are human beings first and everything else is of secondary consideration, we will start living with our God the only and one God and all false gods and deities carved by
human beings shall stand discarded. The good sign is that mankind has started its march towards that end. That is what the Quran teaches and that is what Islam stands for.

Your's Sincerely,
Masud Akhtar, Editor

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persecuted preacher of religion and in the hour of deepest gloom, and unparalleled self-control, forbearance, mercy and forgiveness when his bitterest foes and opponents were helpless before him. Jesus did not get the chance to put into practice many of his precepts and teachings. For instance, he announced: "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword." (Matthew 10:34). He advised his followers: "Let him who has no sword sell his mantle and buy one" (Luke 22:36). But he could not enlighten them, and show by his own example, the proper occasion and right use of the sword. The result has been that the sword has always been in the hands of his followers. It was repeatedly used by the Crusaders to attack and slaughter innocent inhabitants of non-Christian lands, and sometimes even by Christian sects to kill each other in the name of Christianity. It was used by the imperial powers, with the blessings of the Church, to conquer, kill and exploit the peoples of Asia and Africa and to wipe out the Maoris of New Zealand, the aborigines of Australia, the Red Indians, Aztecs and other natives of North and South America. The use of the sword to subjugate and exploit people or to grab the land of other or to impose one's religion on others has indeed been one of the worst evils of human history. But, on the other hand, there are occasions when the use of the sword to resist aggression, to protect the lives and liberties of men and to restore religious freedom for all becomes a moral necessity. It was the Prophet Muhammad, and not Jesus, who showed how a true soldier of God -- the protector of the victims of tyrants, genocidal maniacs and religious fanatics -- should behave on the battlefield and in moments of defeat and triumph.

Religion cannot confine itself to the private life of individuals and shirk its responsibility of providing guidance to people in their public life and of reorganizing it on the basis of justice and righteousness and for the maximum benefit and welfare of all sections of humanity. Religion must make the will of God prevail in the hearts of men and in their private life as well as in their social, political, economic and international affairs. An Apostle of God in need to guide and be a model for man in their private as well as in their public activities, and it is obvious that Muhammad, and not Jesus, is that apostle par excellence.

The life of Jesus runs parallel to the early life of the Prophet Muhammad, but Jesus did not live long enough to give a practical shape to his teachings and to develop and put into practice the social implications of his message. He did not have the chance to enlarge his teachings to cover all the situations of life and to bring about the great social reforms that the Prophet Muhammad did. The modern man, who has to lead life as a son, a husband, a father, a poor workers, a neighbor, a citizen, a victim of religious and political intolerance, a man in adversity and also a man in prosperity, a successful leader of men, a man with power and authority, a businessman, a soldier, a judge, a ruler, will find the Prophet Muhammad a perfect model in all situations and walks of life.

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human salvation in this life or hereafter upon dogmas unattended with actions, are only refined forms of fetishism? One may go further than that. Even the performance of the religious ceremonies known as divine worship, in the belief that our doing so is in itself sufficient for our uplifting, is only fetishism in its ultimate form.

The Quran says:

"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is this, that one should believe in Allah and the last day and the Books and the prophets, and give away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) the captives, and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate; and the performance of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in time of conflict--these are they who are true (to themselves) and these are they who guard (against evil)." (2:177) The Holy Quran

To partake of the Lord's Supper for the purpose of commemorating the Last Passover observed by Jesus, is intelligible enough; but to call it the Sacrifice of the Mass, and to maintain that our partaking of it brings into our body the very flesh and blood of Jesus, represents a belief which can scarcely command an intelligent reverence. It is not by any means new. In every other Hindu temple in India we find a ceremony analogous to the Mass. The offerings made to Hindu idols, if partaken of by the worshipper, are believed to bring him nearer to the celestial bodies which those idols symbolize. As long as man will manage to keep his religion and his reason in two different water-tight compartments of his mind, so long will fetishism appear in one form or another. Put all these dogmatized doctrines to the test of that God-given gift--which alone sets the man above the animal--I mean reason, and all your gods and deities will crumble down to dust, mere fetishes, stripped of all the graceful garments given to them by ignorance and credulity.

Things from God are complementary to each other. They may differ in some of their properties, but they work harmoniously. If religion is a gift from God, and our reason also, then any religion or faith which cannot be made consistent with that reason, is not religion from Above, but only fetishism.

God does not stand in need of adoration from us. If our worship of Him is His pleasure, then is He a God of like passions with ourselves; hence will arise anthropomorphom/iconceptions, and these are not a promising mould for morality.

If man, as they say, is the best handiwork of God, he must have been created to accomplish some grand object. Eating, drinking and the procreation of his species cannot be said to constitute a
grand object. All the lower members of the animal kingdom are in this respect on a level with the lord of the universe. But there is something more than this in man—isconscince, the ethical and the moral sense, spirituality and the soaring of the soul up to the holy precincts of the Most High. If these potentialities in man do not become realities by pursuing this or that faith, such faiths are only diverse forms of fetishism, and not religion.

Islam comes to give a new object in religion—to make it the theory of life. It supplies man with rules which, when acted upon, converts his potentialities into actualities. Worship in Islam means complete submission to Divine Laws, and what Muslims do in their mosques is an index to their minds. Their bowing and prostrating only show their willingness to lower and prostrate themselves to His Will, in order to work out that grand object for which humanity was created, to prepare and qualify themselves for further uplifting in the regions on the other side of the grave.

The first thing the Holy Prophet did on his arrival at Madina was the formation of a community of Muslim brotherhood by knitting the migrant Muslims with the resident Madina Muslims in a bond of brotherhood so closely as beyond any blood kinship so that the emigrant Muslims equally shared the property and monetary possessions of the Madinite Muslims. It was a unique brotherhood which the world has ever witnessed. Next he addressed himself to the entire population of Madina, which consisted of a number of clans and tribes of Arabs, who were mostly Jews, a number of whom had turned Muslims on the arrival of the Holy Prophet. These tribes were always at war with each other, and the Holy Prophet knit them in bond friendship under a Treaty, known as the Treaty of Madina. Under the terms of the Treaty, they were welded together to keep peace, to freely observe their religious obligations and to help each other in case of any attack from outside through inimical excursions. The steps taken by the Holy Prophet were undoubtedly conducive to peace in Madina, but this was not to the liking of the evil designs of the Makkah opposition and their allies, who wanted to extinguish Muslims altogether. So they began to send expeditions from time to time to create trouble for the Muslims, and finally rose up in arms, and marched with a big army on Madina to engage the small number of Muslims in Madina in battle and destroy them completely. This led to the first battle at Badar in the outskirts of Madina, which in spite of the unequipped small band of Muslims resulted in defeat and complete rout of the Makkah opposition army. However, the Makkah opposition did not rest content, and subsequent to their defeat at Badar, they engaged the Madina Muslims in a series of battles at Uhad and in the battle of Azbab or the battle of the Ditch, in which the Muslims entrenched themselves in Madina by digging a ditch around the town. The siege lasted about a month, and the besieged Muslims underwent considerable hardships. The Makkah army finally launched an attack but could not succeed due to the intervening ditch. And finally, they suffered defeat, first in duel battles, with Muslims and lastly as if Divine Aid had come to the help of the Muslims, the forces of nature caused havoc in the enemy camp in the form of a deadly severe storm which lashed upon their camp with a devastating fury which they could hardly withstand and had to flee in complete disarray.

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and even more astray (17:73). This means that he who fears God Almighty and stands in awe of His Greatness and Glory will have two Gardens, one in this world and the other in the hereafter. Those who are devoted to God are given to drink of a beverage which purifies their hearts and thoughts and designs. The virtuous shall drink of a beverage which is tempered with camphor out of a spring which they dig out themselves. The root of the word camphor that has been used in this context means suppressing and covering up. This is an indication that they have drunk of the cup of cutting asunder from the world and turning to God with such sincerity that their love of the world has been cooled down. All emotions are generated by the ideas of the heart and when the heart withdraws far away from improper thoughts and has no concern with them, the emotions are subdued till they disappear altogether. In this verse God Almighty desires to convey that those who turn wholly to Him cast aside their passions and their hearts become cool to worldly activities and their emotions are covered up and suppressed as poisonous matter is suppressed by camphor.

After this the virtuous drink of a cup which is tempered with ginger. The word for ginger in Arabic is composed of two roots which mean ascending a mountain. It should be known that after a person recovers from a poisonous disease, his health

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is looked upon as the new birth of Islam, when Islam received a new phase of life which ultimately brought about the triumph of Islam. Thus, the Muslim calendar dates not from the first call in the cave of Hira, but from the time of Prophet's Flight, which took place in the fourteenth year of the call. After leaving Makka secretly at night, and undergoing severe hardships of refuge in the cave of Saur, the Holy Prophet accomplished the journey to Madina in eight days accompanied by Abu Bakar, and arrived there on the 12th of Rabia I corresponding to June 28, A.D. 622; which thus marks the beginning of the Islamic Calendar. On arrival, the Holy Prophet first stopped at Quba in the
passes through two stages. The first is a condition when the poisonous matter is subdued and dangerous tendencies are corrected and poisonous conditions are left behind and the fatal storm that had arisen is banked down. But the limbs are still weak and the patient cannot carry out anything that requires strength and moves about like a person who is half dead. The second stage is when health returns and the body gains strength and by the restoration of strength the patient is encouraged to think that he can ascend a mountain and can run about with delight on the heights. With reference to this condition, God Almighty indicates that virtuous people drink of a cup which is tempered with ginger, that is to say, their spiritual condition arrives at full strength so that they can scale the heights and carry out difficult tasks and exhibit wonderful devotion in the cause of God Almighty.

This property of ginger, that it strengthens bodily heat and improves the digestion, and its Arabic name that has been used in the verse is adopted as an indication that it so strengthens a weak person and generates such heat in him as enables him to scale the heights. The purpose of these two verses which refer to camphor and ginger is to indicate that when a person moves away from passion towards virtue, his poisonous tendencies are suppressed and begin to decline as camphor suppresses poisonous matters. That is why it is found useful in cases of cholera and typhoid fever. When poisonous matters are suppressed and a weak health is gained, the next stage is that the patient is strengthened with a drink tempered with ginger. This drink is a manifestation of the beauty of God Almighty which constitutes a nourishment for the soul. When a person is strengthened by this manifestation he is able to ascend great heights and to perform such surprisingly hard tasks in the cause of God Almighty as cannot be performed unless the heart is inspired by the heat of love. To illustrate these two conditions God Almighty has here employed two Arabic words, one camphor which connotes suppression and the other ginger which connotes ascending the heights. These are two conditions that are encountered by the seekers in their progress.

Then the verses proceed, that for those who are disinclined to accept the truth God has prepared chains and collars and a blazing fire. The meaning of the verse is that those who do not seek God Almighty with a true heart suffer a reaction. They are so occupied with the world as if their feet are chained, and they are so much bent down in secular pursuits as if there are collars around their necks which do not permit them to raise their heads, and their hearts burn with worldly desires that they might acquire so much wealth or property or dominion over a region or victory over an enemy. Finding them unworthy and occupied with evil deeds God Almighty subjects them to these three handicaps. There is an indication here that when a person acts there is a corresponding action by God Almighty. For instance, when a person shuts all the windows of his room the corresponding action of God Almighty is that He makes the room dark. That which has been appointed as a necessary consequence under the Divine law of nature is the action of God Almighty, inasmuch as He is the Cause of causes. In the same way, when a person swallows a fatal dose of poison the reaction of God Almighty would be that he would die. In the same way, if a person acts carelessly so as to attract an infectious disease, the reaction of God Almighty would be that he would suffer from that disease. Thus, as in our physical life there is a necessary consequence of every action and that consequence is an action of God Almighty, the same is the case in spiritual matters. For instance, it is said: We guide along Our paths those who strive after Us (29:70); and as a contrast it is said: So when they deviated from the right course, Allah made their hearts perverse (61:6). This means that those who seek God with full effort, their action is followed from by the Divine action that they are shown the path of God; and those who deviate from the right course, their action is followed by Divine action that their hearts are perverted. This is further illustrated in the verse: He who is blind in this world shall be blind in the hereafter and even more astray (17:73). This is an indication that the righteous behold God in this very world and thus the foundation of heavenly life is laid in this world and the blindness of the hereafter is generated by the foul and blind life of this world. Again it is said: Give glad tidings to those who believe and act righteously that for them there are gardens beneath which rivers flow (2:26). In this verse God Almighty has described faith as a garden beneath which rivers flow. It is here pointed out that the relationship which streams of water have with gardens is the relationship which subsists between faith and actions. As no garden can flourish without water, no faith can be a living faith without righteous action. If there is faith and there are no actions, that faith is vain, and if there are actions but there is no faith, those actions are mere show. The reality of the Islamic paradise is that it is a reflection of the faith and actions in this life. It is not a new thing which will be bestowed upon a person from outside. A person's paradise is generated from within himself and everyone's paradise is his faith and his righteous action, the delight of which begins in this life. The gardens of faith and action and the streams that flow through them are seen in a hidden manner in this life, but in the hereafter they will be perceived overtly. The holy teaching of God Almighty tells us that the true and pure and firm and perfect faith in God and His attributes and His designs is a pleasant garden of fruit trees and righteous actions are the streams that irrigate that garden. This is indicated in the verse: Allah sets forth the case of a good word, which is like a good tree whose root is firm and everyone of whose branches reaches into heaven. It brings forth fresh fruit at all times by the command of its Lord (14:25). This means that the word of faith which is free from all excess and defect and falsehood and vanity, and is perfect in every way, is like a tree that is free from every defect, its root is firm in the earth and it brings forth fruit at all times. At no time are its branches without fruit. In this verse God Almighty has likened a word of faith to a tree that bears fruit at all times and has specified three signs of it. The first is that its root, that is to say, its true meaning should be firm in the soil of man's heart. Nature and human conscience should have accepted its truth and reality. The second sign is that its branches should spread into heaven, that is to say, it should be reasonable and should be in
accord with the heavenly law of nature which is the action of God. The arguments in support of its correctness and truth should be deducible from the law of nature and should be so perfect as if they are in heaven and cannot be reached by any criticism. The third sign is that its fruit should be eternal and unending. That is to say, its blessings and effects should be perceptible in every age and should not cease after any particular period.

It is then said: The case of an evil word is like that of an evil tree, which is uprooted from the earth and has no stability (14:27). This means that human nature does not accept it and it has no firmness. It is not supported by reasonable arguments or by the law of nature or by human conscience and is like a mere tale or story. As the Holy Quran has referred to the good trees of faith as resembling grapes and pomegranates and other nice fruits, and has said that they will be personified like those fruits and resemble them, in the same way, it has called the evil tree of faithlessness in the hereafter by the name of Zaqqum, as it is said: Is this better entertainment or the tree zaqqum? We have made it a trial for the wrong-doers. It is a tree that springs forth in the bottom of hell; its fruit is as though it was the heads of Satans (37:63-66). The tree of zaqqum is the food of the sinful; like dregs of oil, it will boil in their bellies like the boiling of scalding water (44:44-47). Now suffer this, thou who didst hold thyself mighty and noble (44:50). The wicked will be asked whether the gardens of paradise are better or the tree zaqqum which is a trial for wrong-doers. If it is a tree that springs forth from the bottom of hell, that is to say, it is born of arrogance and self-esteem. Its fruit is like the heads of Satan, which means that its eating would be fatal. It is the food of those dwellers of hell who deliberately choose sin. Its eating is like swallowing molten copper which boils up in the belly like scalding water. The one condemned to hell is asked to eat it and is reminded that if he had not been arrogant and had not turned away from the truth out of self-esteem, he would not have had to endure these torments.

Thus as God Almighty has likened the words of faith of this world to the trees of paradise, He has likened the words of faithlessness of this world to the tree of hell and has indicated that the root of heaven or hell begins from this world. At another place hell is referred to as the blazing fire of Allah which mounts upon the hearts (104:8), that is to say, hell is a fire the source of which is the wrath of God. It blazes forth from sin and first overcomes the heart. This is an indication that at the root of this fire are the sorrows and desires and torments that seize the heart, innasmuch as spiritual torment begins with the heart and then comprises the whole body. At another place it is said: Its fuel are men and stones (2:25; 66:7); that is to say, the fuel of the fire of hell which keeps it blazing are first those men who turn aside from God and worship other things, as it is said: You and that which you worship beside Allah are the fuel of hell (21:99). Secondly, the fuel of hell are the idols. The meaning is that if these things had not existed there would have been no hell. Thus in the holy word of God, heaven and hell are not like this physical world. The source of both of them are spiritual matters. It is true that in the other world they will appear as physical, but they will not belong to this physical world (Islami Usul ki Philosophy, pp. 71-79).

THE TORMENT AND COMFORT OF THE GRAVE ARE PERCEIVED THROUGH THE BODY

To enter heaven it is necessary to have a body, but that body will not be compounded of physical elements innasmuch as the fruits of heaven will not be physical, but will be a new creation. Therefore, the body in heaven will also be a new creation which will be different from the original body. It is necessary that after death the believers should have a body. On the night of his ascension, the Holy Prophet did not see only the souls of the Prophets, but saw the bodies of all of them, and Jesus had not a body different from the others (Zameema Braheen Ahmadiyyah, Part V, p. 213, footnote).

We have also exposed the error of the Christians in that they think that heaven will only be a spiritual experience. We have proved that the nature of man is such that his spiritual faculties need a body for their perfect and complete functioning. For instance, it is our observation that an injury inflicted upon a certain part of the brain destroys memory, and that an injury inflicted upon another part destroys the faculty of thinking, and that a disturbance occasioned to the nervous system affects several spiritual faculties. Such being the case that a minor disturbance of the body occasions a disturbance in the functioning of the soul, how can we expect that after a total separation from the body the soul would be able to maintain its integrity? Therefore, Islam teaches that every one is bestowed a body in the grave which is needed for the perception of delight and torment. We cannot say from what material that body is prepared except that this mortal body becomes naught and no one observes that it is revived in the grave. Very often it is cremated or is preserved in a museum or is kept outside a grave for long periods. If it were a fact that it is revived, that would have been witnessed, yet it is proved from the Holy Quran that a dead person is revived and we have, therefore, to accept that he is revived with another body which we are not able to see. Very probably that body is made out of the fine qualities of this body and along with it human faculties are revived. As that body is much finer than this body, the door of visions is opened widely to it and the realities of the hereafter are seen as they are. The wrong-doers then suffer a torment of despair in addition to the physical torment. It is thus an agreed principle in Islam that the torment of the grave is perceived through a body. Reason also demands this as experience has established that the spiritual faculties of man do not manifest themselves without a body (Kitabul Bariyiyah, pp. 70-71).
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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