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*All correspondence should be forwarded directly to the editor at:*

**The Review of Religions  
The London Mosque  
16 Gressenhall Road  
London, SW18 5QL  
United Kingdom**

© Islamic Publications, 2004  
ISSN No: 0034-6721

# Editorial

The question ‘Does God exist?’ has been debated by philosophers and theologians for centuries. Large sections of society have always believed in God. There are those who do not subscribe to any particular faith but affirm that they do believe in some kind of deity. Religious belief gives a framework by which to live one’s life. All faiths address the individual and the community at large and this includes how to understand one’s responsibilities to one’s fellow beings. As such, religion is very relevant to the world today.

Recent developments in science, especially in molecular biology and biomedical engineering have moved the capabilities of mankind into as yet unknown areas and has highlighted the need for an ethical dimension by which to consider how these new technologies can be of benefit rather than detriment to society. It is religion that provides these guidelines.

But how does one approach the question of the existence of God? In this issue of *The Review of*

*Religions* there is an article entitled ‘In search of the Existence of God’. This is based on a presentation given at the World Religions Conference held in Canada last year. Several arguments based on the Holy Qur’an, are put forward as proof of the existence of God. The article argues that God has revealed Himself through the prophets and messengers of God. It demonstrates the importance of considering historical evidence and also of personal experience. The author also states the importance of considering the testimonies of those who lived at the time of the prophets, ‘All those prophets ... were indeed credible people and their lives were pure and no one could ever challenge their integrity.’

Belief in the existence of God is not a mystical requirement of faith. It can be approached using reason and logic. In addition, a genuine desire to find God on the part of the seeker also has a significant role to play.

**Mansoor Saqi – UK**

# Notes and Comment

## **Religious Freedom:**

The freedom of thought, conscience and religion is today almost universally held to be a fundamental human liberty, an inalienable right of every man and woman. This right is based not upon science, nor upon social theory, but on the inviolable dignity of the human spirit. While particular beliefs may be right or wrong, better or worse, the right to reach, hold, debate, exercise and even change those beliefs is basic and non-negotiable. These rights have been proclaimed in diverse texts, both scriptural and political. The Holy Qur'an, revealed, as Muslims believe, approximately 1400 years ago, states most categorically: *'There is no compulsion in religion'*. (Ch.2V.257) and *'And say: It is the truth from your Lord, wherefore let him who will believe and him who will disbelieve.'* (Ch.18: V.30)

Many centuries later, and after much strife and persecution caused by intolerance over religious belief, the first amendment to the constitution of the United States of

America declared: 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof'. In the last century, these principles have been reaffirmed in the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states in Article 18: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.'

Yet the unhappy fact remains that even today in various countries and societies throughout the world people are prevented from freely and openly practising their religious beliefs. The denial of this fundamental human right takes many forms, some blatant and openly oppressive, some subtle and hidden. Despite the emphatic proclamations of the Holy Qur'an regarding the inviolability of freedom of conscience, some of the most oppressive persecution takes

place in Muslim countries – the denial of the most basic religious freedoms to Ahmadi Muslims written into law in Pakistan being the most obvious and outrageous example, but sadly not the only one. Muslim society in general seems to have been infected with a virulently intolerant ideology that holds its own narrow interpretation of Islam to be absolute, and that brooks no argument or debate. Sadly, this infection seems to have spread to Bangladesh that has recently moved to ban the production, sale and even possession of literature produced by the Ahmadiyya Muslim community.

Religious freedoms in today's world are threatened not just by the forces of religious extremism, which deny the legitimacy of any religious belief or practice other than their own, but also by the forces of illiberal secularism, which seek to deny the legitimacy of any form of religious expression in public life. To them, religion is something that can be tolerated if practised in private among consenting adults, but that must be stamped upon if it seeks to raise its voice in the civic sphere. In many countries in the West, and in particular Europe, we face the

strange situation that public policy may claim to be inspired by Socrates or Kant, Adam Smith or Karl Marx, Darwin or Einstein but never by any form of religious belief or tenet. There has been much controversy recently over the attempts to pass a law in France banning signs and clothing which conspicuously display a pupil's religious affiliation. Even beards grown out of religious conviction may be banned, although a beard that is merely a fashion statement would be acceptable! Without getting into the details of the debate on this proposed law, one wonders how different in spirit it is from Pakistan's laws which have seen Ahmadi Muslims arrested for the use of basic Islamic terms and phrases which are perfectly legal when used by other Muslims and even non-Muslims.

Religious extremism and illiberal secularism are perhaps two sides of the same coin – linked by the firm conviction that their world-view is the only reasonable one. We need to move back to, or in some cases remain committed to, values that promote pluralism and tolerance of all faiths and creeds; a liberal secularism that sees itself as the

protector of all forms of religious belief as well as no belief at all. In addition we need to recognise that religious beliefs have a part to play in public and civic life and should not be devalued or dismissed out of hand. The words of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, founder of the State of Pakistan, in his address to the Constituent Assembly in Karachi, on the eve of Pakistan's birth, may perhaps serve as inspiration for us in this regard:

‘You are free, you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this state of Pakistan... You may belong to any religion or caste or creed – that has nothing to do with the business of the state... We are starting in the days when there is no discrimination, no distinction between one community and another... We are all citizens and equal citizens of one state... all members of the Nation... and you will find then in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslim would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political

sense as citizens of the state... My guiding principle will be justice and complete impartiality...’

*By Mahmood Hanif – UK*

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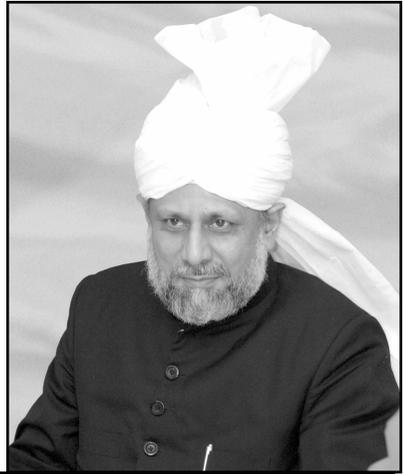
In this journal, for the ease of non-Muslim readers, ‘(sa)’ or ‘sa’ after the words, ‘Holy Prophet’, or the name ‘Muhammad’, are used. They stand for ‘*Salallahu alaihi wassalam*’ meaning ‘Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him’. Likewise, the letters ‘(as)’ or ‘as’ after the name of all other prophets is an abbreviation meaning ‘Peace be upon him’ derived from ‘*Alaih salato wassalam*’ for the respect a Muslim reader utters.

The abbreviation ‘ra’ or (ra) stands for ‘*Radhiallahtala*’ and is used for Companions of a Prophet, meaning Allah be pleased with him or her (when followed by the relevant Arabic pronoun). Also ru or (ru) for *Rahemallahu Ta’ala* means the Mercy of Allah the Exalted be upon him.

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## **Message by Hahdrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad – Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya community ..**

**..to delegates attending the ‘Seekers  
in Search of Truth’ at the 23rd World  
Religious Conference held in Ontario,  
Canada on the 18th of September  
2003.**



*Assalamu alaikum warahma-  
tullah - Peace and blessings of  
God be upon you all*

I am pleased that the World Religious Conference has once again put God at the centre of its search. The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Hahdrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, peace be on him, states:

A large part of the world declares that it believes in God, yet at the same time it is engulfed by the impurities of the world and steeped in the evils of sin. How then is it that there is so much opposition to God and such

courage is shown in disobedience to His laws? When this professed belief is tested and examined, it has to be acknowledged that it is a mere claim that is not supported by any actions or deeds. It is in the nature of man that he wishes to avoid the harm and gain from the benefit in whatever he believes. For example, arsenic is a poison and a person does not even taste it because he knows that even a small amount can kill him. Why, then, having acquired a belief in a God will he not derive the conclusion incidental to that belief? If belief

in God equates to the confidence one has in arsenic, then a person's emotions and desires would turn cold and a death would come over them... The first duty of a human being, therefore, is that he should correct the belief he has in God, that is to say, he should prove through his deeds and actions that they are not against the glory of God or the commandments of God... The nature of true belief is such that it kills the selfish desires of a human being and it suppresses the inclinations towards sin. I can never accept that belief and sin can exist together. Belief is a light before which the darkness of sin cannot stand. Can it ever be that there is daylight as well as the darkness of night? In order to safeguard against sin, there should develop a true belief in God.

(*Malfoozat*. Vol.4 pp.312-314)

I pray that God enables all of you to understand Him.

A prerequisite to this understanding is that we must not withdraw any attribute that God had in the past. One such attribute is that He lives now as He did in the past. If God lives now, we must also believe that He speaks now as He spoke to the Prophets of the past. I hope, therefore, that this Conference would enable all who participate in it to acquire a true belief in a Truly Perfect God, a God Who is Most Gracious and repeatedly Merciful.

***Mirza Masroor Ahmad***  
***Supreme Head of the Worldwide***  
***AHMADIYYA MUSLIM***  
***COMMUNITY***

# In Search of the Existence of God

*By Naseem Mahdi – Amir and Missionary-in-Charge of Canada*

[The following is based on a presentation delivered by Mr Naseem Mahdi, Amir and Missionary Incharge Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Canada at the XXIIIrd World Religions Conference held October 4, 2003, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. Representatives from eight faiths i.e. Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Native Religions and Atheism deliberated at the conference with their understanding on the theme ‘In Search of the Existence of God’. Over 700 delegates from diverse religious background attended the event, including national and provincial leaders, local dignitaries, university officials and students. Representatives of different faiths were guided to draw their presentation entirely from their respective Holy Scriptures and faith traditions, and comparisons with other faiths were only allowed to promote better understanding and respect.

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First, I will present a central theme, and then I will give seven arguments based on the Holy Qur’an, the holy scripture of the Islamic religion in proof of the existence of God.

I quote from the Holy Qur’an:

*Eyes cannot reach Him but He reaches the eyes. And He is the Incomprehensible, the All-Aware.*

(Ch6:V.104)

Most scholars and philosophers, who have written about the history of humankind on the basis of anthropology or archeology, believe

that the idea of God has evolved during the last 10 to 12 thousand years. Contrary to this belief, the Holy Qur’an says that as God is the Creator of this universe and the Creator of life on our planet, so it is He Who initially revealed about Himself. He did not create humankind and leave them alone wondering whether there was a creator or not. He created them and then guided them to Himself.

Many scholars suggest that idea of God has evolved over time from different gods to one God. Muslims believe that God has revealed Himself through the prophets and messengers of God. God has shown

His countenance and put His love in the hearts of people. So God did not need to be discovered but revealed Himself.

Now, I will present some verses from the Holy Qur'an to prove the existence of God:

*And that is Our argument which We gave to Abraham against his people. We exalt in degrees of rank whomso We please. Thy Lord is indeed Wise, All-Knowing.*  
(Ch.6: V.84)

*And We gave him Isaac and Jacob; each did We guide aright, and Noah did We guide aright aforetime, and of his progeny, David and Solomon and Job and Joseph and Moses and Aaron. Thus do We reward those who do good.*  
(Ch.6: V.85)

*And We guided Zachariah and John and Jesus and Elias; each one of them was of the virtuous.*  
(Ch.6: V.86)

*And We also guided Ishmael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot; and each one did We exalt*

*above the people.*(Ch.6: V.87)

On the basis of the fore mentioned verses, Muslims believe in all the previous prophets. Some 28 are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. But really, there were some 124,000 prophets sent to humankind in the past, according to a saying of the Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (on whom be peace and blessings of Allah). The Holy Qur'an says that God sent prophets to every nation and land. There were prophets not only in the Middle East, but everywhere else – amongst the natives of North and South America, the aboriginals of Australia, in China and so on.

As such Muslims believe in all those prophets. Muslims believe in all the religions which are based on the revelation of God.

The argument as a proof of the existence of God in these verses is that all those people, whether they are living in North America or Australia or in the Middle East or in Africa, or any other part of the world have a concept of God. All those prophets, who presented to them the concept of God were indeed credible people and their

lives were pure and no one could ever challenge their integrity. If all those people said that there is one God Who has spoken to them, is it possible that all of them were lying? Or had a greed for something? And that their proclamations were a total fabrication and based on falsehood? Certainly not. So when we witness this idea of God among different nations, and we realise that all those prophets who were signifying humankind that God has revealed to them, God has spoken to them, and they even presented His spoken words, one cannot say that the testimony of all these prophets is a fabricated falsehood.

In our daily lives we make decisions on the basis of testimonies. A judge makes a decision and sometimes it could be capital punishment, or life imprisonment etc. He says that the testimony before him is credible. So if before us is the testimony of so many people in the last 6000 years, starting from Adam<sup>(as)</sup>, Abraham<sup>(as)</sup>, and Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> and so on, and all of them have spoken that there is one God, Who has spoken to them, it is not fair for us to simply reject the testimonies of so many credible people of so many different nations and lands of the

world.

The next verses are:

*Blessed is He in Whose hand is the kingdom, and He has power over all things;*  
(Ch.67: V.2)

*Who has created death and life that He might try you -which of you is best in deeds; and He is the Mighty, the Most Forgiving,*  
(Ch.67: V.3)

*Who has created seven heavens in harmony. No incongruity canst thou see in the creation of the Gracious God. Then look again: Seest thou any flaw?*  
(Ch.67: V.4)

*Aye, look again, and yet again, thy sight will only return unto thee confused and fatigued.*  
(Ch.67: V.5)

In these verses another powerful argument for the existence of God is presented. We see a universe that is so flawlessly constructed. It is impossible that it has just come into being by way of chance. View a movie on deep sea life, visit a conservatory of butterflies, look at an aquarium of different type of fish

or look at the environment around you. Look at any specie on earth: all are so beautiful and are spectacular creations. Can they all be a consequence of mere chance or spontaneous creation? Therefore, in this verse God asks us, look at my creation, and you will not find any flaw. Moreover, if we just look at our own lives and our own bodies, we notice that there is indeed a whole universe within our bodies. For instance, how our eyes function how our liver functions, how our kidneys and hearts function and so on and so forth. Hence, God says, think about those creations of God, you need not to look far away to those Galaxies and the Milky Ways, but look within yourself and around you, how is it all possible without a Creator?

In the 1940's and 1950's, the word 'God' was a taboo for scientists, and most of them were atheists, but in the last 20-30 years, when the scientists' knowledge has increased, they are coming very strongly to this conclusion that there must be someone, whether we call him 'Allah' or 'God' or 'Primatama' or whatever, but there is some 'superpower' who is controlling this universe.

Next, I present to you the following verse:

*And those who take Allah and His Messenger and the believers for friends should rest assured that it is the party of Allah that must triumph.*  
(Ch.5: V.57)

If we study the lives of all these prophets, one thing is common, that they were persecuted and prosecuted. Just imagine how Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) was mocked and how he was dragged through the streets. Think about Moses (peace be upon him), how he was rejected by the Pharaoh of the time. Think about Muhammad (peace be upon him) who rejected by his people and heavily persecuted by the Makkans. Invariably, all of them emerged successful in the final analysis. The first 300 years after Jesus, on whom be peace, for the Christians were the time of persecution. But later, we all know, and up till today we know that how God has blessed them and how they have become the masters of this world. Similar is the story of Jews or the Muslims etc. How is it possible that this is all just by chance and it was only a

coincidence that all the prophets (without exception) were, in the final analysis, victorious? And all their enemies were defeated? Indeed it is a convincing argument in favor of the existence of God Almighty. God was certainly behind them all the way. It was really the force of God, Almighty working for the final victories of His chosen prophets.

The Pharaoh is reported in the Holy Qur'an as:

*Saying, 'I am your Lord, the most high.' So Allah seized him for the punishment of the Hereafter and the present world.'*

(Ch.79: VS.25-26)

Further God says in the Holy Qur'an:

*And when My servants ask thee about Me, say: I am near I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he prays to Me. So they should hearken to Me and believe in Me, that they may follow the right way.*

(Ch.2:V.187)

The argument here is the acceptance of prayer. There are so many people in this very hall today that can give this testimony that they have prayed to God and that their prayers were accepted. Whether they are Christians or Jews or Sikhs or Hindus or Muslims or belong to any other religion. I can give you my own testimony and the testimony of my community, the Ahmadiyya Muslim community. We are strong believers in the power of prayers. On a daily basis we pray. We often pray for the most difficult things in our lives and we have seen, how God has resolved those difficult problems. If there were no God, Who was listening to those prayers and Who was solving those difficult problems?

And then Allah says:

*Allah strengthens the believers with the word that is firmly established, both in the present life and in the Hereafter; and Allah lets the wrongdoers go astray. And Allah does what He wills.*

(Ch.14:V28)

God communicates not only with the humankind but also with other

creations. All that He has created, He can communicate with them. That communication is on a daily basis. God has communicated to earlier prophets and He communicates with humankind even today. In that communication, at many times, He gives us the knowledge of the unseen. He tells us what happened in the past that was not known to us. He told Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace) that the dead body of the Pharaoh was preserved. This fact was not known to the people of the time of Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace). It was only discovered during the last century that the dead body of the Pharaoh of the time of Moses (peace be upon him) was found preserved. God spoke to him and he made so many prophecies and the Holy Qur'an is full of prophecies of Latter Days. We find the prophecy of Jesus Christ in the New Testament, we find many prophecies from the Old and New Testament and the Holy Qur'an about the future. If we see these prophecies being fulfilled today, how were those people able to make those prophecies if God did not communicate to them and did not exist?

So this is indeed a strong argument that God exists and He tells His chosen ones and prophets what will happen in the future.

My last point is:

*And as for those who strive in Our path We will surely guide them in Our ways. And verily Allah is with those who do good.*  
(Ch. 29:V.70)

God says that if you come to Him and if you strive and if you want to know Him, pray to Him and He will guide you.

Even if an atheist, addresses God and says to God: 'O God if you ever existed, I want to come to you!' I am sure He will guide the atheist, to Himself.

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## The Essence of Islam – Vol.1, part II

This is the second of a series to be printed over the next few months in *The Review of Religions*. It sets out, in the words of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, a summary of his exposition of four outstanding topics: ISLAM; ALLAH, THE EXALTED; THE HOLY PROPHET<sup>(sa)</sup>, and THE HOLY QUR'AN. The original compilation, in Urdu, from which these extracts have been translated into English, was collated with great care and diligence by Syed Daud Ahmad, may Allah have mercy on him and may He reward him graciously for his great labour of love. Amin. The English rendering is by the late Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, Allah be pleased with him and quoted from *The Essence of Islam*.

All references throughout, unless otherwise specifically mentioned, are from the Holy Qur'an.

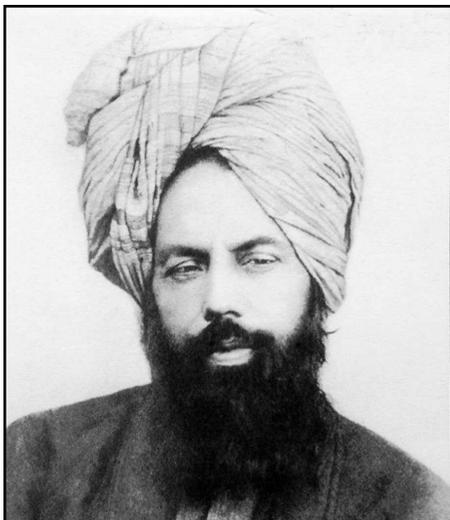
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When I reflect upon the whole word of God, I find that in its teachings it seeks to reform the natural conditions of man and to raise him step by step to higher spiritual levels. In the first place God desires to teach man the elementary rules of behaviour and culture and thus to change him from the wild condition of animals, and then to bestow upon him elementary moral conditions which can be described as culture or civilisation. Then He trains him and raises him from the elementary moral conditions to a high moral stage. All this is in truth one stage, which is the reform of natural conditions, and

the only difference is one of degree. The All-Wise One has presented the moral system in such a way whereby man should be able to move from a lower moral level to a higher moral level. The third stage is that man should be devoted to winning the true love and pleasure of his Creator and the whole of his being should be devoted to God. It is at this stage that the faith of Muslims has been named Islam which means to be wholly devoted to God and to keep nothing back [*Islami Usul ki Philosophy*, now printed in *Ruhani Khazain* (London, 1984), Vol. 10, p. 10].

It is foolish to imagine that religion means a few things that are mentioned in the Gospel. All matters that are essential for the perfection of man are comprehended within the scope of religion. Religion comprises all those matters which lead man from his wild condition to the condition of true humanity and then lead him from the condition of humanity to a life of wisdom and thereafter lead him from a life of wisdom to a life that is devoted to God [*Kitabul Bariyyah*, (Qadian, Ziaul Islam Press 1898); Now printed in *Ruhani Khazain* (London, 1984), Vol. 13, p. 71].

There is no doubt that the Gospel does not provide for the full nurture of the tree of humanity. We are sent into the world with many faculties and every faculty demands that it should be used on its proper occasion. The Gospel emphasises only the faculty of meekness and gentleness. Meekness and forgiveness are good qualities when exercised on the proper occasion but their use on every occasion would be greatly harmful. Our cultural life which comprises the interplay of



**The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup>.**

In 1891, he claimed, on the basis of Divine revelation, that he was the Promised Messiah and Mahdi whose advent had been foretold by Muhammad, the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) and by the scriptures of other faiths.

His claim constitutes the basis of the beliefs of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

different kinds of tempers demands that we should exercise all our faculties with discretion on the proper occasion. It is true that on some occasions forgiveness and forbearance would benefit materially and spiritually a person who has done us harm. On other

occasions, the exercise of those faculties would encourage the offender to commit greater mischief and do more harm.

Our spiritual life resembles our physical life to a large degree. It is our experience that the use of only one type of food and medicines would upset our health. If we were to confine ourselves over a period to the use of cooling articles of diet and refrain altogether from the use of warming articles, we would become a prey to some disease like paralysis, Parkinson's disease or epilepsy. On the contrary, if we confine ourselves to warming articles of diet, so much so that even the water that we drink must be warm, then equally we would be liable to some other kind of disease. Consequently, in order to maintain our physical health we must keep a balance between hot and cold and hard and soft and movement and rest. We should follow the same rule in respect of our spiritual health. God has bestowed no evil faculty upon us. Indeed no faculty is evil in itself. It is the misuse of a faculty that is evil. For instance, envy is evil but if we use it for a good purpose, that is to say, as a

competition in goodness, it becomes a high moral quality. The same is the case with all moral qualities. Their misuse renders them harmful and their use on the proper occasion in a moderate manner makes them beneficial.

It is, therefore, a mistake to cut off all other branches of the tree of humanity and to put the entire emphasis on forgiveness and forbearance. That is why this teaching has failed of its purpose and Christian sovereigns had to enact codes of law for the punishment of offenders. The current Gospel cannot bring about the perfection of the human self. As the stars are dimmed when the sun rises and then disappear from sight altogether, the same is the case of the Gospel in comparison with the Holy Qur'an [*Kitabul Bariyyah*, (Qadian, Ziaul Islam Press 1898); Now printed in *Ruhani Khazain* (London, 1984), Vol. 13, pp. 48-49].

A study of the religions of the world reveals that every religion, except Islam, contains some mistake or the other. This is not because they were all false in their

origin, but because after the advent of Islam, God gave up the support of other religions and they became like neglected gardens which had no gardener to look after them, and for the irrigation and upkeep of which no arrangement had been made, so that gradually they began to decay. Their fruit-bearing trees became dry and barren, and thorns and weeds spread all over. Those religions lost all spirituality which is at the root of all religion and nothing was left but bare words. God did not suffer this to happen in the case of Islam as He desired that this garden should flourish throughout. He made provision in each century for its irrigation and thus rescued it from decay. Although at the beginning of each century when a man of God was appointed for its reform the ignorant people opposed him and were averse to the reform of anything which had become part of their habits and customs, yet God Almighty adhered throughout to His way. In these latter days also, which is the time of the last battle between guidance and error, finding the Muslims heedless and neglectful in the beginning of the

fourteenth century, God recalled His promise and made provision for the revival of Islam. But other faiths were never revived after the advent of the Holy Prophet, peace be on him; and they all died. There was no spiritual life in them and errors took root in them, as dirt accumulates in a garment which is much in use but which is never washed. People who had no concern with spirituality and who were not free from the stains of earthly existence corrupted these faiths to a degree that they no longer resemble the originals. Consider the case of Christianity, how pure was its origin. The teaching set forth by Jesus was not perfect as compared with the teachings of the Qur'an, because the time had not yet come for the revelation of the perfect teaching and people were not yet strong enough to bear it, yet that teaching was an excellent one and was appropriate for its own time. It guided to the same God to Whom the Torah guided but after Jesus, the god of the Christians became another god who found no mention in the Torah and was not at all known to the children of Israel. Belief in this new god upset

the whole system of the Torah and all the guidance contained in the Torah, for deliverance from sin and attaining true salvation and a pure life, was frustrated. Salvation and deliverance from sin now depended upon the confession that Jesus had accepted crucifixion for the sake of the salvation of mankind, and that he was the very God Himself. Many permanent laws of the Torah were abrogated and the Christian faith was so changed about that if Jesus were to come back to the earth he would not be able to recognise it. It is a matter of surprise that the people who were admonished to adhere to the Torah set aside its commandments at one stroke. For instance, it is nowhere stated in the Gospel that though the Torah forbids the eating of the flesh of swine yet it is now permitted, nor does the Gospel say that though circumcision is prescribed in the Torah yet that commandment is now abrogated. But all this was done and that which had never been said by Jesus became part of religion. However, as it was God's design to establish a universal religion namely Islam, the decay of Christianity was an indication

of the appearance of Islam. It is also well established that Hinduism had been corrupted before the advent of Islam and that throughout India idol worship had become common. Part of this corruption resulted in the doctrine that God Who is not dependent upon matter for the exercise of His attributes is, in the view of the Aryas, so dependent for the creation of the universe. This led to another false doctrine that all particles of matter and all souls are eternal and uncreated. Had they considered deeply the attributes of God, they would never have said so; for if in the exercise of His eternal attribute of creation, God is dependent like a human being on matter, then how is it that in the exercise of the attribute of hearing and seeing He is not so dependent as is man. Man cannot hear without the agency of air and he cannot see without the aid of light. Then is God also dependent upon light and air for seeing and hearing? If He is not so dependent, be sure that He is not dependent upon matter for the exercise of His attribute of creation. It is entirely false that He is dependent upon matter for the exercise of any of

His attributes. It is a great mistake to attribute human weaknesses to God; for instance, that He cannot create something from nothing. Man's being is limited and God's Being is unlimited. By the power of His Being, He can create another being. This is of the essence of Godhead. He is not dependent upon matter for the exercise of any of His attributes, for had that been so, He would not be God. Nothing can obstruct Him. If He were to desire to create a heaven and earth instantly, He would be able to do so. Of the Hindus those who, in addition to knowledge, partook of spirituality also and were not committed to bare logic, never believed that concerning God which the Aryas set forth today. This is the result of the lack of spirituality altogether.

All this corruption, some of which is unmentionable and is opposed to human purity, was an indication of the need of Islam. Every reasonable person is bound to confess that a short while before Islam, all other faiths had become corrupt and had lost all spirituality. The Holy Prophet, peace be on him, was a great reformer in the

cause of truth who restored the lost verities to the world. No prophet shares with him the pride that he found the whole world in darkness and by his advent that darkness gave place to light [*Lecture Sialkot* entitled 'Islam', (Sialkot, Mufid Aam Press, 1904); Now published in *Ruhani Khazain* (London, 1984), Vol. 20, pp. 1-5].

First of all it is necessary to set out what is the reality of Islam, what are the means of arriving at that reality and what are the fruits of following that reality; for this knowledge is essential for the purpose of understanding many mysteries. It would be of great benefit for our opponents that they should study these matters with attention, for many of the doubts which assail their minds are the result of their failure to reflect upon the complete and perfect reality of Islam, its sources and its fruits. . . . The opponents of religion also would benefit greatly by this study. They would understand what religion is and what are the signs of its truth.

In the idiom of Arabic, Islam means money paid as earnest to

conclude a bargain, or to commit some affair to someone, or to seek peace, or to surrender a claim or point.

The technical meaning of Islam is set out in the verse: *The truth is that whoever submits himself completely to the will of Allah and acts righteously shall have his reward with his Lord. No fear shall come upon such, nor shall they grieve* (Ch.2:V.113). This means that a Muslim is one who commits himself wholly to the cause of God Almighty; that is to say, one who devotes himself to God Almighty, to following His designs and to winning His pleasure, and then becomes steadfast in doing good for the sake of God Almighty and devotes all his faculties to that cause. In other words, he belongs entirely to God Almighty both doctrinally and in practice.

Doctrinal belonging means that one should esteem one's being as something which has been created for the recognition of God Almighty and His obedience and the seeking of His love and pleasure.

Practical belonging means to do all the good that is related to every one of one's faculties with such eagerness and attention as if one beholds the countenance of the True Beloved in the mirror of one's obedience [*Ayena-e-Kamalat-e-Islam*, (Qadian, Riyadh Hind Press 1893); Now printed in *Ruhani Khazain* (London, 1984), Vol.5, pp 57-58].

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## Service to Humanity – A Religious Duty in Islam

By Bockarie Tommy Kallon, London, UK.

Service to humanity is part and parcel of the Muslim faith. The ultimate goal of Islam, as with all religions founded on Divine revelation, is to bring man into communion with His Creator. In order to attain nearness to God and to win His favour, it is essential for man to serve His creatures with all faculties and bounties he has, as a manifestation of His grace and providence, bestowed upon man. The Holy Qur'an itself is replete with verses that enjoin upon believers service to humanity and at the same time forbid any behaviour that might be detrimental to society. Most prominent among those verses is one that is recited as part of every Friday Sermon:

*Verily, Allah requires you to abide by justice, and to treat with grace, and give like the giving of kin to kin; and forbids indecency, and*

*manifest evil, and transgression...*  
(Ch.16: V.91)

This verse not only demands justice on the part of a Muslim, it also requires him to do good to others regardless of what sort of treatment he receives from them, even if maltreated by them. In other words, his conduct should not be actuated by considerations of reciprocity or recompense. The qualities of forgiveness, charity, giving of alms and social service all fall under this category. The promotion and patronage of knowledge and the systemisation of its different branches are also included here because they have for their object the material and spiritual well-being of man. Furthermore, a Muslim is expected to do good to others prompted as if by natural impulse, as favours are conferred upon near blood relations or as a mother loves her children. A

mother's love for her children is the result of a natural impulse. Her sacrifices and the hardships she willingly suffers for her children are prompted by no hope of return or appreciation. They spring from the natural fountain of love which God has implanted in her nature.

In addition to the three commandments, the verse also contains three prohibitions of vices and evils to which man can fall victim. These relate not only to that which causes harm and injury to the self but also that which would constitute an infringement of the rights of others in society and which can also do them positive harm.

This subject matter is presented beautifully by another verse of the Holy Qur'an which assigns a great status to Muslims:

*You are the best people raised for the good of mankind; you enjoin good and forbid evil and believe in Allah...*  
(Ch.3: V.111)

Muslims are reminded that the real purpose in life is to do good to humanity. They are expected to be torchbearers and contribute to the betterment of their respective communities and other peoples. If they do this, they will remain the best of mankind for therein lies their greatness; greatness proportionate to the magnitude of their service to humanity.

The moral values inculcated by these, and similar, verses of the Holy Qur'an were illustrated in their perfection by the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> so that mankind could benefit alike from his precept and from his example. He had been raised as a manifestation of God's mercy to mankind:

*And We have sent thee not but as a mercy for all peoples.*  
(Ch.21: V.108)

God had called him a mercy for mankind and so indeed did he prove himself in every respect. His mercy and humanity were all-embracing, without limit and

without discrimination, and from which even the lower creations were not excluded. It was grievously painful for him that his people should be distressed, and he was ardently desirous of promoting their welfare. He was tender and compassionate at all times, cheerfully sharing in their sorrows and anxieties, and anxious to apply balm to their wounded spirits. Even towards the disbelievers who subjected him to all manner of persecution and privations, his heart was full of the milk of human kindness that no amount of persecution could make him bitter against them or make him wish them ill. He was so kind and sympathetic towards the disbelievers that it caused him much grief to see them turn away from the path of righteousness and thus invite the wrath of God unto themselves. This is encapsulated in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

*Surely, a Messenger has come unto you from among yourselves; grievous to him is that you should fall into*

*trouble; he is ardently desirous of your welfare; and to the believers he is compassionate, merciful.*

(Ch.9: V.128)

The Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> was ever watchful of the poorer sections of society and always sought to ameliorate their plight and raise their status in society. He used to say that no festivity would be blessed unless some poor people were also invited to it. During his time in Madinah, a poor woman used to clean up the mosque. Not having seen her for a few days, the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> made some enquiries about her upon which he was told that she had passed away. He expressed his displeasure that he was not informed of this stating that he would have wished to join her funeral prayers and added, 'perchance you did not consider her worthy of consideration as she was poor.' He then asked to be directed to her grave to which he proceeded and prayed for her.

Not only was he himself watchful of the welfare of the

poor but he constantly exhorted others to be the same. If a needy person approached the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> and made a request, he would ask those around him to also support the request so that they would acquire merit by becoming sharers in promoting a good deed. His object was to create on the one hand in the minds of his Companions a feeling of eagerness to help the poor and on the other in the minds of the needy a realisation of the affection and sympathy felt for them by their relatively well-to-do brethren.

As the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> pined for the welfare of mankind so did he pay special deference to those who devoted their time and substance to the service of mankind. An Arab tribe once initiated hostilities against the Muslims and in the ensuing battle their forces were defeated and some were taken prisoner. Among these was the daughter of one of them whose generosity had become a proverb among the Arabs. When she informed the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> of her parentage,

he treated her with much consideration and as a result of her intercession, he remitted all the penalties imposed on her people on account of their aggression.

In his anxiety to safeguard the interest of the poor and needy, the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> went so far as to instruct that no charity was ever to be bestowed upon any of his family. He did this out of fear that through excessive devotion to him, his companions would make his descendants the sole objects of their charity thus depriving the needy. As Islam spread through Arabia, the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> would frequently receive large quantities of goods and money. He would immediately distribute these among the poor and needy.

The Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> was setting a very high precedent. In Islam, it is incumbent upon those in authority to show sensitivity to the cause of the people to an extent that there is no need to form pressure groups and unions. His benign example was followed

by his Successors. Once, Hadhrat Umar<sup>(ra)</sup>, during his tenure of office as Khalifa, discovered by chance that outside Madinah a woman and her children had been without provisions for two days, because she lacked the means therefor. He returned immediately to Madinah where he collected flour, butter, meat and dates in a large bag and summoned a servant for assistance in lifting the bag onto his back. The servant protested and offered to carry the bundle himself. Hadhrat Umar<sup>(ra)</sup> declined his offering, observing, ‘No doubt you can carry this bundle for me now, but who will carry my burden on the Day of Judgement?’ He meant that on the Day of Judgement, the slave would not be in a position to answer on his behalf how he discharged his responsibility as head of state. He had to do it himself. It was also a sort of self-inflicted penance because he felt responsible for the pain and anguish of the woman. And thus Hadhrat Umar<sup>(ra)</sup> carried the provisions to the woman, who blessed him for his kindness, and, not knowing the identity of her

benefactor, exclaimed, ‘You are far more fit to be Khalifa than Umar. He knows not how the people fare.’ ‘Well, mother, perhaps Umar is not so bad’, said the Khalifa, gently, smiling.

The philosophy of *Zakat* is the bedrock of Islamic social values. *Zakat* is one of the pillars of Islam. Put simply, it is a levy on both capital and income set aside for the benefit of community. The Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> himself described *Zakat* as ‘a levy imposed upon the well-to-do which is returned to the poorer sections of society.’

The Holy Qur’an commands that the proceeds of *Zakat* must be devoted towards relieving poverty and distress, winning over the cheerful co-operation of those who have not yet embraced Islam, helping those burdened with debt, providing comfort and convenience for travellers, supplying capital where talent is available but funds are lacking, providing stipends for scholars and research workers, and meeting the expenses involved in collecting and administering the

*Zakat* itself. Generally, *Zakat* can be employed towards all things beneficial for the community as a whole, such as public health, public works, medical services and educational institutions. Says the Holy Qur'an:

*The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and for those employed in connection therewith, and for those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and for the freeing of slaves, and for those in debt, and for the cause of Allah, and for the wayfarer - an ordinance from Allah. And Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.*  
(Ch.9: V.60)

Through the institution of *Zakat*, the concept of alms giving acquires a new outlook. No longer does it compliment the donor and embarrass the recipient. The recipient is only receiving his rightful share:

*And in their wealth is a share belonging to the beggar and the destitute.*  
(Ch.51: V.20)

Human dignity is emphasised in the strongest terms in this verse. The recipient is reminded that there is no need for him to be embarrassed or to suffer from any complexes because, in fact, God has granted him the fundamental right to survive decently and honourably. The message delivered to the one who gives is that what he gives to the poor, in reality, did not belong to him. Something has to be wrong with an economy where some people are left destitute or compelled to beg for their living.

Apart from the manner in which you give, what you give is also important. If you give something of which you would be ashamed of receiving yourself, this does not fall under the definition of alms, according to the Holy Qur'an:

*O ye who believe! Spend of the good things that you have earned, and of what We produce for you from the earth; and seek not what is bad to spend out of it when*

*you will not take it yourselves except with eyes downcast with shame. And know that Allah is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy.*  
(Ch.2: V.268)

In any case, the Holy Qur'an tells us that spending in the cause of Allah wins His favours and those who do so shall have their reward with Him:

*Those who spend their wealth by night and by day, secretly and openly, have their reward with their Lord; on them shall come no fear, nor shall they grieve.*  
(Ch.2: V.275)

The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> and Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community followed the example of his illustrious master, the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> in his concern for the welfare of humanity in particular and God's creatures generally. One of the conditions he laid down for initiation into the community was 'that he [the initiate] shall keep himself occupied in the

service of God's creatures, for His sake only; and shall endeavour to benefit mankind to the best of his God-given abilities and powers.'

Elsewhere he writes:

*'Be kind and merciful to humanity, for all are His (God's) creatures: do not oppress them with your tongue, or hands, or in any other way. Always work for the good of mankind. Never unduly assert yourself with pride over others, even those who are placed under you. Never use abusive language for anyone even though he abuse you. Be humble in spirit, kind and gentle, and forgiving, sympathetic towards all and wishing them well, so that you should be accepted. There are many who pretend to be kind, gentle and forgiving but inside they are wolves; there are many on the outside who look pure, but in their hearts they are serpents. You cannot be accepted in the presence of the Lord unless you are pure,*

*both on the outside and inside. If you are big have mercy on those who are small – not contempt; if you are wise and well versed in learning serve the ignorant with words of wisdom: never desire to bring disgrace on their ignorance by trying to show off your learning. If you are rich, instead of treating them with self-centred disdainful pride, you should serve the poor.’*

(*Kashti Nuh* – Quoted from *Our Teachings*, pp.2-3)

The community he founded is actively engaged in social welfare and in meeting the educational needs of not just its own members but also in the communities in which they reside, particularly in Africa where scores of schools and hospitals have been established. These humanitarian services also extend to aid relief and medical supplies to the victims of natural disasters or human conflict.

In recent history, the world witnessed the horrors of war in

the former Yugoslavia. The Ahmadiyya Muslim community, under the instruction and direction of its then Supreme Head, Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV<sup>(ru)</sup>, was able to deliver over 100 tonnes of food aid valued at over £1 million to the victims of war. In these humble efforts, which may be deemed small by some, the community sought sincerity of purpose and ensured that the aid reached Serb, Croat and Bosnian alike. Muslims are duty bound to assist all those in need without any discrimination. This was in consonance with the gracious spirit of universal compassion and non-discriminatory benevolence inculcated by the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>:

*‘A religion which does not inculcate universal compassion is no religion at all. Similarly, a human being without the faculty of compassion is no human at all. Our God has never discriminated between one people and another. This is*

*illustrated by the fact that all the potentials which were granted to the Aryans were also granted to the races inhabiting Arabia, Persia, Syria, China, Japan, Europe and America. The earth, created by God provides a common floor for all people alike and His sun and moon and many stars are a source of radiance to all alike; they also have many other benefits. Likewise, all peoples benefit from the elements created by Him such as water, fire, earth and other similar products such as grain, fruit and healing agents. These attributes of God teach us the lesson that we too should behave magnanimously and kindly towards our fellow human beings and should not be petty of heart and illiberal.’ (A Message of Peace, pp. 7-8)*

Returning to the humanitarian endeavours in the former Yugoslavia, those humble efforts inspired and prepared the grounds for the Community’s affiliated

independent charity organisation, Humanity First, which after the cessation of hostilities continued to assist the displaced refugees in the reconstruction of their country and their lives. Humanity First has since been able to render assistance to the victims of war in Sierra Leone and Kosovo, to the victims of earthquakes in Turkey, India and recently Bam in Iran, and in general, is involved in various projects, ranging from feeding the poor to orphan care, designed to promote the preservation of human life and dignity.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim community has also been able to organise charity events such as marathon walks and cycle marathons to raise funds for, and support the noble objectives, of several other charities. But such activities are not limited to one-off events. Whether it is visiting the sick and elderly in hospitals and old-peoples’ homes, or providing a welcome meal to the homeless on the streets, the Ahmadiyya Muslim community seeks to help in any way it can.

In discharging its duties to humanity, the community always admonishes its adherents to do so purely for the sake of God. The verses oft quoted in this regard are from the Holy Qur'an:

*And they feed, for the love of Him, the poor, the orphan and the prisoner, saying: 'We feed you for Allah's pleasure only. We desire no reward nor thanks from you.*  
(Ch.76: Vs.9-10)

This is because Islam seeks to inculcate the attitude whereby it is considered against dignity and modesty to accept gratitude. The Holy Qur'an instructs the donor to serve mankind for a higher and nobler cause rather than merely to satisfy a natural urge or earn a good reputation by benevolent acts. The Holy Qur'an repeatedly reminds men to do acts of goodness for the sake of God and only to win His pleasure and earn His favours.

All services to humanity are to be provided without any ulterior

motives. Once a favour is shown to anyone, Islam would require him to forget about it. To exult over one's act of goodness and to rub in one's favour are declared suicidal and self-annihilatory to the very act of goodness. This is declared comprehensively in the following verses:

*They who spend their wealth in the way of Allah, then follow not up what they have spent with taunt or injury, for them is their reward with their Lord, and they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve. A kind word and forgiveness are better than charity followed by injury. And Allah is Self-Sufficient, Forbearing.*  
(Ch.2: Vs.263-264)

Quite apart from its socio-economic values, Islamic teachings also ensure that people in a community behave with dignity, and that particular attention is paid to the maintenance of order in public places. Islam teaches that persons using public places must

take care that no undue inconvenience is occasioned to others using the same, nor should any person be exposed to risk or injury. In elaborating this point the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> mentioned all such articles on pathways and roads which could in anyway be injurious to passers by. Thus he warns that if you profess to be among the faithful, you must take heed and begin the journey into higher achievements from there. If someone sees a nail, banana skin, a thorn or anything which could cause injury to an unwary person or cause accidents of a larger dimension, and yet does not take the trouble of removing it from the path, he would be deficient by that much in his faith.

The Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> explained that faith is divided into seventy tiers. At the highest point faith can be summed up as a total dedication to the Oneness of God and the lowest of them is to clear the path of undesirable things. That the removal of such articles from pathways as may cause injury is a constituent of faith is

worth pondering over if we are to understand the underlying wisdom. True faith in God requires that security and protection which one receives from God by virtue of faith, should also be extended to one's fellow human beings. God's mercy and benevolence extend equally to all His creatures. Hence, if someone is remiss in discharging his responsibility of extending security and protection to others, by that much he would be considered as having faltered in his faith.

It is evident from this that Islam's sphere of instruction comprises everything that may be required even at the lowest levels. But, perhaps, the most comprehensive direction within the domain of service to humanity is the promotion of righteousness and virtue:

*And help one another in righteousness and piety; but help not one another in sin and transgression...*

(Ch.5: V.3)

When the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> said on one occasion, ‘Go to the help of your brother whether oppressor or oppressed’, he was asked, ‘We understand what is meant by going to the help of a brother who is oppressed, but how shall we help a brother who is an oppressor?’ The Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> replied, ‘By restraining him from oppressing others.’ He once defined a Muslim as ‘one from whose hands and tongue his fellows apprehend no harm.’

It is patently obvious, from the foregoing, that Islam has placed great emphasis on the day-to-day pattern of one’s conduct in relation to his fellow human beings which in the case of the true believer distinguishes him from the non-believers in decency and refinement. For Muslims, service to humanity is a moral prerogative, a spiritual privilege and, above all, a religious duty.

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# Al-Hayy – The Living God

by Naeem Ahmad of New York USA based on a speech delivered on 27 June 2003 at the Ahmadiyya Muslim Annual Convention of USA

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*Alif Lam Mim. (I am Allah, the All-Knowing) Allah is He beside Whom there is no God, the Living, the Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining.*

(Ch.3: Vs.2-3)

In these opening verses of Sura Al-Imran Chapter 3, in the *Ayatul-Kursi* (Chapter 2: V.256) and at three other places in the Holy Qur'an, Allah refers to Himself by this most glorious name of Al Hayy: The Living, the Self-Subsisting.

The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> declared:

‘He is Self-Existing in His Being and everything is alive through Him. He is Self-Existing and everything exists through Him. He is All-Sustaining and nothing supports Him. There is nothing that has come into being on its own or can live without Him on its own. (*Lecture Lahore*)

Commentators of the Holy Qur'an and lexicographers have explained Al Hayy as One Who never dies, and He Who lasts forever, (*Qartabi*), One Whose existence is from ever to ever, (*Jalalain*). Ibne Kathir says that Al Hayy is He Who would never die- He Who is the First and the Last – He Who has the knowledge about everything, Who is Everlasting, Ever Remaining, Ever Existing, and Eternal and Who is Ever-Living. *Mufridat* and Lane describe Al Hayy as an attribute of God, signifying that God is the only Being Who is deathless, and lives by Himself, needing no support. He is Eternal and Ever-Lasting.

From all these the general sense emerges of a Being Who is perfectly Alive, Aware, Cognisant, and Active.

The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> has written that:

‘In order to bestow perfect understanding upon His humble creatures, God Almighty has set out His noble attributes in two aspects. First He has described His attributes metaphorically, as resembling some human qualities, as for instance, He is Noble, Merciful, Beneficent and becomes angry and has love.... To repel the notion that man resembles God in respect of these attributes and God resembles man, as a contrast, God has mentioned in the Holy Qur’an His attributes of transcendence also; that is to say such attributes of which man does not take partake at all in His Being or His qualities.’

*(Chashma Marifat)*

Al Hayy is one of those beautiful names of God that pertain to His Divine Person or His Being. Other beautiful names in this category include *Al Wahid* the One, *Al Haqq* the True, *As Samad*, the Besought of All, *Al Qayyum* the All Sustaining, *Al Awwal* the First, *Al Aakhir* the Last, *Al*

*Quddus* the Holy, and *Al Ghani* the Self-Sufficient.

Al Hayy is the Being Whose Power is limitless, Whose knowledge knows no bounds, Who is Ever-Vigilant, Ever-Watchful, He does not depend upon other beings and is not limited to time and space. Al Hayy is the prime attribute that makes God worshipable. If He was not alive what could He do for others? If He is not the bestower of life, what right has He to require obedience and worship from others? Al Hayy requires worship because He gave life and did not leave it without providing sustenance. Allah is not like a builder who may raise a building but is not concerned about its daily maintenance or the needs of its occupants. Such a builder’s existence and attendance is not necessary for the good of the building; nor will his death cause any problem to it; whereas the universe and all that it contains, including us human beings are always in need of and cannot function without Allah’s constant support, timely assis-

tance and maintained sustenance. Our God has not only provided for all our needs, but He remains Ever-Watchful for all corrections that the course of our life may require.

Al Hayy is called the *Isme Adham*, the Great Name. If it was to be stricken out from the attributes of Allah then the rest of the attributes would be of no avail. If He is not Al Hayy then a non-entity cannot be Al Qayyum, the All-Sustaining, or Ar-Rahman, the Gracious, or Ar-Raheem, the Merciful, or the Sustainer of all the Worlds or the Master of the Day of Judgment. Al Hayy is, therefore, the first and foremost of the attributes and qualities with which Allah can be recognised and identified. Without realisation of this attribute the creation and sustenance of the Universe cannot be conceived.

The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> has conveyed to us the significance of this most noble attribute of the Almighty in several of his writings:

‘This means that true being and true existence and all true qualities belong only to God and no one is an associate with Him in respect of them. He alone is alive in His Being and everything else exists through His support. He is not subject to death so also He is not subject to even temporary cessation of His senses like sleep or slumber.’ (*Chashma Marifat*)

The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> also said:

‘He is the Ever-Living and All-Sustaining, if He were not so, there would be fear lest He die before us.’  
(*The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam*)

The proposition about the so-called death of God, is not as preposterous as it may sound. *Time Magazine* ran a cover story entitled ‘Is God Dead?’ in their April 8, 1966 issue. The magazine cited public attitudes viz ‘I am too darned busy to worry about God’, ‘Religion is good for the kids,

though I am not religious myself’, and ‘God is a kind of an older man, who is just and fair, but can get angry at times and He does not do much about most things anyway.’ The magazine quoted several leading theologians and intellectuals of that time. They wondered that God’s work had been long done after He initiated the Creation. The consensus seemed to be that while the existence of God is not in question, the concept of God needed revision. There was a dire need to reinvent or redefine a God who was not only all love but also satisfied their need for an awe inspiring Being to Whom they could feel and hear and reach out. On a secular level the feeling was that since we have the marvels of modern technology there is no need for God to work miracles. We have social and moral scientists who have developed a theory of ethics based on enlightened self-interest and need no living God to hang on to. There was a sequel, an article in the May 2, 1969 issue, where most of the experts approached for the earlier article, reiterated the view that a

transcendent God of the Bible had died and He was irrelevant today; however, the dominant current concept is waiting for God.

Alas, this waiting has come to naught. As recently as June 14 2003, there was an article on the Op-Ed page of the *New York Times*, bemoaning and lamenting the fact that there is no mention of God or a hint of religion in the new European Union constitution now being written. The preamble extols Europe’s ‘underlying humanism, equality of persons, freedom, respect for reason’. The use of the word ‘humanist’, according to the columnist, was a signal that Europe had done away with the concept of God, living or otherwise.

The fact is that our God requires much more than blind faith or lip service. Works of righteousness must accompany belief. That is why there has to be an Al Hayy, the Living, to guide our continued effort towards leading a good life here and to make provisions for the next. Allah says in Sura Al Hadeed:

*He is with you, wheresoever  
you maybe.  
(Ch.57:V.5)*

This promise of Him being with us is, to borrow from computer-speak, in Real Time. He is Al Hayy and always alive for our needs.

The question then arises, how do we know that God is alive, active and cognisant? The answer is the same as for the existence of God:

*There is none worthy of  
worship other than Allah,  
Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> is the  
Messenger of Allah.*

As the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> has explained in a letter to Pandit Agni Hotri that:

*There is none worthy of  
worship other than Allah*

is the claim and

*Muhammad is the Messenger  
of Allah*

is the proof.

He also said:

‘We call thousands of blessings and peace and mercy on the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>, the chosen one, who gives us proof of His existence through His Word. He demonstrates to us through extraordinary signs His shining countenance, which possesses eternal and perfect power. We found the Messenger who manifested God to us and we found the God Who created everything through His perfect Power.’  
(Naseem-e-Dawat)

It is the excellent exemplar, the complete guide, the effective moral teacher, the blessed life and successful completion of the mission of that perfect human being, the Apostle of Allah, Seal of the Prophets, Lord of the children of Adam, our Master Muhammad Mustapha<sup>(sa)</sup> that compels us to believe in Al Hayy, the Living God.

*And trust thou in the Living  
One, Who dies not, and glorify*

*Him with His praise. And sufficient is He as the Knower of the sins of His servants.*

(Ch 25: Vs. 59)

The Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> was thus commanded, comforted and guided by Allah. With complete assurance of the active support of the Ever Living God, he was to devote all his faculties and utilise his entire energies in pursuing his mission of conveying the message and commandments of Allah, and to be a mercy for all the worlds. He was to lead such a life that it would be an excellent example not only for his companions but also for all the generations of all the peoples in all parts of the world till the end of times. The life of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> is essentially a continuous story of his trust in the Ever Living God. He won the hearts and minds of his people with Allah's help. He fought many defensive battles and was successful against overwhelming odds. He accomplished all of these only by supplicating to the Ever Living God. There are several authentic traditions that tell us that whenever there was a

momentous decision to be made, or looming calamity to be avoided, or problem to be solved, the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> invariably stood up for a special prayer and beseeched the help of Allah. This help was always there in an extraordinary way.

The following incident from the life of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> will show the function of Al Hayy who is Alive, Active, Ever Living. During a journey, an enemy of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> found him taking a nap, unguarded, under a tree. He stood over the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>, drew his sword and before striking him fatally unaware, asked in a loud voice: 'Who can save you from this predicament?' The Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> woke up and without a moment's hesitation, the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> replied: 'Allah!' He uttered this one word with such perfect assurance that even the heart of his disbelieving enemy was forced to acknowledge the loftiness of his faith and trust in the Ever Living God. The sword fell from his hand and the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> took it in his hands and

asked his assassin the same question. Alas! The enemy could only mutter his regrets and threw himself at the mercy of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. Of course, he was forgiven and his life was spared.

The Imam of our age, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani<sup>(as)</sup>, the Promised Messiah and Reformer of the Age, based the entire proof of his advent upon the cognisance, active help, assistance and sustenance of the Ever Living God. He writes:

‘Be sure, therefore that the belief in the unity of God can be achieved only through a Prophet, as our Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> convinced the atheists and pagans of Arabia of the existence of God Almighty by showing them thousands of heavenly signs. Up till today the true and perfect followers of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> present these signs to the atheists.’  
*(Haqiqatul Wahy)*

In several of his books he has enumerated more than 300

instances of Divine intervention following his supplications. Following the tradition of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> he challenged all his opponents to a *Mubahila* (a prayer duel) and was always successful.

‘It is by the exercise of His Power and Will that the True God confirms His Person. This is how the Unknowable manifests Himself’.

From hundreds of instances of Allah’s Grace and Mercy is the story of the illness of Abdul Rahim Khan<sup>(ra)</sup>, a son of Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan<sup>(ra)</sup>. His health suddenly took a turn for the worse, and upon the urgent and impassioned pleas of Nawab Sahib, the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> prayed for him and was also moved to intercede for him. The Wahy (revelation) came down immediately:

*Who dares to intercede with Him without his permission?’*

The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> became silent as he was almost overcome

with the awe of God. But the Most Merciful God then revealed ***Innaka antal Majaz*** *Indeed thou art permitted (to intercede)*. The Al Hayy accepted the intercession of his honoured servant and through the manifestation of His attribute of His being alive and Ever Living granted the gift of life to the young Abdul Rahim Khan<sup>(ra)</sup> who became healthy again.

There is also the well-known episode of Abdul Karim<sup>(ra)</sup>, who was bitten by a mad dog and sent to the special hospital for the hydrophobic patients and for whom the telegram ‘Nothing Can Be Done’ was sent by the British surgeon. With the prayers of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> the Al Hayy revived him.

Allah has always been Alive to the needs of all His Messengers. He guided them every step of the way in pursuing their missions and provided them His ever alive and vigilant care. Hadhrat Nuh<sup>(as)</sup> prayed:

*He therefore prayed to his*

*Lord saying, ‘I am overcome, so come Thou to my help.*  
(Ch.54:V.11)

Allah responded by opening the floodgates of the heavens and the earth and caused Hadhrat Nuh<sup>(as)</sup> and the believers to be rescued on the Ark *that floated under Our eyes.* (Ch.54:V.15)

Allah was with Hadhrat Ibrahim (Abraham)<sup>(as)</sup> when his people put him in a fire:

*We said , ‘Turn cold, O Fire, and be a source of peace for Abraham’.*  
(Ch.21:V.70)

Hayat-e-Noor records a narrative by Hadhrat Musleh Maud, who was present when the manuscript of ‘Noor-ud-Deen’, was being read out to the Promised Messiah<sup>(sa)</sup> for his review. This book was being written by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I in response to a book *Renunciation of Islam* by a Muslim who had converted to Hinduism and taken the name of Dharampal. One of his objections was that the Qur’an is full of stories of miracles

of earlier prophets, whereas nothing was contemporary. ‘Why is the fire not being ‘cooled’ for a pious one these days?’ Hadhrat Maulwi Sahib had written in response that the ‘fire’ was a metaphor for the hatred based on ignorance, for bigoted enmity and for the agony of persecution, etc. The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> forcefully intervened and said: ‘There is no need to go into long interpretations and metaphorical meanings. God has named me Abraham<sup>(as)</sup> also. Let them put me in a fire and let them then see how God makes that fire a means of coolness and safety for me.’

The story of Hadhrat Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and his mission is replete with instances of an Ever-Living God protecting and accompanying the prophets on their missions.

*And when the two hosts came in sight of each other the companions of Moses said, ‘We are surely overtaken. ‘Nay, speak not thus!’ said he, My Lord is with me; He will direct me aright.*

(Ch.26: Vs.62-63)

And Allah was most assuredly with the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> when after endless persecution he was migrating from his home in Makkah to the nascent community of Madinah. After a days journey, with the Makkans in hot pursuit the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> and his companion Hadhrat Abu Bakr Siddiq<sup>(ra)</sup> took refuge in the cave At-Thaur. The professional trackers hired by the Makkans were hovering at the mouth of the cave. To quote from Sura Tauba:

*If you help him not, then know that Allah helped him even when the disbelievers drove him forth while he was one of the two when they were both in the cave, when he said to his companion. ‘Grieve not, for Allah is with us.’ Then Allah sent down His peace on him, and strengthened him with hosts which you did not see, and humbled the word of those who disbelieved, and it is the word of Allah alone which is supreme. And Allah is Mighty, Wise.*

(Ch.9:V.40)

This comforting advice of: ‘*Grieve not: verily, God is with us*’ was to have far reaching consequences. When by the decree of Allah the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> passed away from this world, his companions went into a state of shock! His advent was so momentous; the change in their lives had been so profound that they could not face the trauma of his death. No less a personage than Hadhrat Umar Farooq<sup>(ra)</sup>, thought that the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> had just fainted. He stood outside the Prophet’s<sup>(sa)</sup> Mosque with a drawn sword threatening to punish those who persisted in believing otherwise. Hadhrat Abu Bakr<sup>(ra)</sup> hastened to the Mosque, comforted Hadhrat Umar<sup>(ra)</sup> and said: ‘*And Muhammad is only a Messenger. Verily, all Messengers have passed away before him. If then he die or be slain, will you turn back on your heels? And he who turns back on his heels shall not harm Allah at all. And Allah will certainly reward the grateful*’ (Ch.3:V.145). He added, ‘Let him, who worshipped Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>, know that Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> is dead.

And let him, who worships Allah; know that *Inna Allahu Hayyun la yamoot*. That Allah is ever living and shall never die. This had an electrifying effect upon all present. Hadhrat Umar<sup>(ra)</sup> started sobbing with grief and relief!

The Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> wrote:

‘Our God is One, Who is living today as He was living before. And He speaks today as He spoke before and He hears today as heard before. He both hears and speaks. All His attributes are eternal and everlasting. None of His attributes has fallen into disuse or will fall into disuse.... He manifests Himself through His powers and His signs and we can find Him only through Him. He manifests Himself always to the righteous and shows them His powers. That is how He is recognised and that is how the path is recognised which has His approval’.  
(*Al-Wasiyyat*)

This is the nub of the difference between the Ahmadi Muslims and other Muslims. We believe that Allah is Al Hayy and is as alive to the needs of His chosen faith and His sincere servants today as He ever was. He guides them by responding to their prayers, by inspiring them with true dreams and heavenly signs and He sends down His revelation, on whomsoever He pleases at His Own chosen time. He may name a recipient of this revelation, who is from amongst the followers of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> and follows his example perfectly, as a prophet. The other Muslims, do not deny that God hears, but are reluctant to say that He speaks. The door of formal Wahy, according to them is shut forever.

Other than responding to the supplications of prophets we believe, indeed, have witnessed the Ever Living's out-of-the-ordinary help and succour to the Khulafa, companions and other respected personages of the Jama'at.

*And all faces shall humble*

*themselves before the Living, Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining God. And he shall indeed perish who bears the burden of iniquity.*  
(Ch.20:V.112)

I need not go into the details of the great leaders and dictators who oppressed and persecuted those who believed in God, throughout the ages, and also in the not too distant past; whom the Ever Living God abased and brought down with His swift reckoning. He was and Insha Allah (God willing) will always be with the righteous.

Al Hayy: of which the verb form is Hayy-ya i.e. he lived, had life, etc. Another form from the same root is Yuhyee: he gives life, brings to life, or causes to live. There is mention of *Ahya-e-Mota* or the bringing the dead back to life. This is a vast subject. In Sura Al Baqra Verse 259 to 261 Allah has revealed some aspects of it. In verse 259, the king is disputing the claim of Hadhrat Abraham<sup>(as)</sup> that *My Lord is He, Who gives life and causes death.* The king said

*I also give life and cause death.* Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih I has explained that the king claimed to have caused townships to grow and decline by moving of location of state functions. Hadhrat Abraham<sup>(as)</sup> retorted that *Allah brings the sun from the East, bring it thou from the West.* As the king was a sun worshipper, he could not claim any control over the sun and consequently realised that he had no control over life or death, in any form, either. *Thereupon the infidel was dumbfounded.* In the next verse Allah relates the story of a prophet of Banu Israel, possibly Ezekiel who witnessed the ruins of the freshly devastated town, he was overcome with pathos and wondered when would Allah bring that town back to life. Then God showed him a vision of a hundred years hence when the town has been reborn, and thus demonstrated a manifestation of His attribute of Al Hayy, in respects of cities and population centers. The next verse relates to the revival of nations and peoples.

*And when Abraham said, 'My Lord show me how you bring*

*the dead back to life?' God said, 'Dost thou not believe?' Abraham said, 'Yes, but I ask this that my heart be at ease.' God answered, 'Take four birds and make them attached to thee. Then put each of them on a hill then call them: they will come to thee in haste. And know that Allah is Mighty, Wise.'*

(Ch.2:V.261)

Allah has bestowed this attribute of revivification of lost souls upon His chosen servants throughout the ages. Hadhrat Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> was given this power

*And I will quicken the dead by the command of Allah.*

(Ch.3:V.50)

This, of course pertains to the marvelous moral transformation that a prophet of God brings about in the lives of his followers. Consider the present day evangelical movements that claim to make their adherents as 'born again' Christians.

For the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>, Allah has made the special dispensation in

Sura Al Infal (Chapter 8) Verse 25

*O ye who believe! Respond to Allah and the Messenger when he calls you, that he may give you life.*

Here is food for thought for us who claim to have heard and responded the Divine summons in this age. The way to an everlasting spiritual life is clear. We have to follow commands of God and adopt the practice of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> and hold fast to the continued lifeline that Allah has been Gracious and Merciful enough to extend to us in the form of Khilafat Ahmadiyya. It is only then that we can come alive and start on the path of His approval. Allah says in Sura Yasin: *It is but a Reminder and a Qur'an that makes things plain, so that it may warn all who live, and that the decree against the disbelievers may come to pass.* (Ch.36:V.70-71)

It will be noted that Al Hayy, as an attribute of God, appears five times in the Holy Qur'an. At three places it is paired with Al Qayyum, the reference in each of

these three instances is to describe transcendental attributes of Unity, Self Subsistence, the All Sustaining Power, and Dominion over all. Al Hayy occurs only twice in the singular. In both cases Allah is invoking this beautiful attribute to encourage a positive and sure step forward in pursuit of our goals for this life and preparing for the next while making us assured of the help and backing of the Ever Living God.

The reference in *Sura Al Furqan* was quoted before. Verse 66 from Sura Al Momin (Chapter 40) clearly and succinctly conveys the message of this presentation:

*'He is the Living God. There is no God but He. So pray unto Him, being sincere to Him in religion. All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.'*  
(Ch 40 Vs 66)

# Death on the Cross

**This article is based upon a pamphlet entitled: ‘Death on the Cross? Ten arguments from the Bible’ by the Late Maulana Abul Atta Jalandhri, H.A. and published by the London Mosque.**

For the sake of the convenience of the reader, the name Jesus and other prophets has not been suffixed by (as) (peace be upon him) in all places but we urge Muslims to consider it implicit in the text.

## **Jesus’s Birth**

Strangely enough, the three great nations of the world – Jews, Christians and Muslims are at variance with regard, both, to the birth as well as the death of Jesus Christ who was born among the Jews. The Jews declare his birth to be illegitimate: they are guilty of uttering a grievous calumny against Mary, mother of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>. The Christians on the other hand believe that Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup> was born without the agency of an earthly father and that he was the son of God Himself. This shows that both the Jews and the Christians have gone to the opposite extremes as regards Jesus’<sup>(as)</sup> birth. The Muslims on their part, believe that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>, no doubt, was born without the agency of an earthly father, but he was not the son of God. A fatherless birth may be a strange incident but it is not unnatural. There have been cases in medical history where innocent virgins have

given birth to babies. Adam is believed by the three great religions of the world to be born without the agency of either ‘father’ or ‘mother.’ The Muslims believe that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> was a true prophet of God. His birth, without the agency of man, has nothing to do with his sonship or his divinity. He was human, pure and simple. Jesus invariably calls himself the ‘Son of man’ in the New Testament.

## **Jesus’s Death**

His death is equally a controversial affair with the Jews, the Christians and the Muslims. The Jews believe that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> died on the cross because he was a false prophet. In this connection they quote the Bible. ‘And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree’ is ‘the accursed of God’. (Deut. 21:22-23), According to them, Jesus was a false prophet, therefore he died on

the cross as the accursed of God.

The Christians also believe that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> was hanged on the Cross and died an accursed death. Says Paul:

*'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree'.*

(Galatians 3: 13).

But the Holy Qur'an declares that Christ did not die on the Cross. God saved him from death by crucifixion in the same way as He saved His dear ones from tribulations. Did not Jonah the Prophet come out alive from the belly of the whale? The fact of the matter is that Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup> only fell into a swoon on the Cross, but when he was taken down from it, he recovered and then died a natural death at the good old age of 120.

On the strength of their belief that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> was a false prophet, the Jews, particularly the Pharisees of his time, brought serious political charges against him alleging that he was disloyal to the Roman Emperor, and that he claimed

himself to be the King of the Jews. The governor, Pilate was not convinced of his guilt but being influenced by the tumult of the multitude he delivered Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> to be crucified. They put him on the Cross where he remained, at the utmost, for three or four hours only and then was taken down in a swoon and placed in a sepulchre in a garden nearby.

Now in those days it took several days for criminals to die on the Cross. They suffered the pangs of hunger and thirst and in most cases their legs were broken. They died a lingering death extending over several days. But it was not so in the case of Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup>. Incidentally, he was put on the Cross on a Friday afternoon. The following being the Sabbath day -a day of religious observance by the Jews – no criminal could remain on the Cross on that Holy day, so he was taken down from it after about three or four hours. The loss of blood from the wounds caused him to fall into a swoon. He was taken for a dead man. His body was placed in a spacious sepulchre in a garden by Joseph of Arimathaea, his own disciple. Jesus being still alive in the sepulchre, left it on the

third day in disguise, met his disciples at Galilee and ate with them. His wounds were healed by the application of an ointment especially prepared by his disciples for the purpose.

This is the natural story of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> Crucifixion but the Christians gave a strange version of his death which is not only unnatural but also against historical evidence as well as logic. They believe that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> actually died on the Cross but on the third day he rose up to the heavens. What a paradox! Modern Christianity rests on the belief that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> died on the Cross. But if it is proved that he did not die on the Cross nor did he rise from the dead, then the whole edifice of Christianity tumbles to the ground. Paul, who is the real founder of modern Christianity, himself says:

*'And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith also vain'.*

(I. Corinthians 15: 14).

The late Dr. Zwemer, the well-known American missionary says:

*'If our belief in the death of Christ on the Cross is wrong*

*then the whole of Christianity is a farce'.*

### **I-Jonah's Sign**

Now we proceed with our arguments from the Bible itself to show that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> did not die on the Cross. We read in the New Testament:

*'And when the people were gathered thick together, he (Jesus) began to say, this is an evil generation: they seek a sign: and there shall no sign be given it but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man to this generation.'* (Luke 11:29, 30).

Again:

*'But he answered and said unto them; an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign: and there shall be no sign given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth'.* (Matthew 12:39, 40).

Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup> is said here to give a sign to the people of his own time as Jonas, the prophet, had given to the Ninevites? Now what was the sign given by Jonas to the Ninevites? The Bible says:

*'Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly. And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest, my voice'.*  
(Jonah 1: 17 and 2: 1, 2).

According to this verse in the Bible, Jonah was swallowed up by a big fish where he remained three days and three nights and then came out alive from the belly of the fish. It was a sign given to the Ninevites. Jonah prayed to God for deliverance while in the belly of the fish. The Lord heard his prayer and Jonah came out alive. Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> says that no sign shall be given to the evil and adulterous generation of his time except that of Jonas. Now what is the resemblance between the two signs of Jonas and Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>. It is nothing but going alive into the

belly of the fish and the heart of the earth and coming out alive. Both Jonah and Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> cried by reason of their respective afflictions and prayed to their Lord for deliverance. The prayers of both were heard. If Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> did not enter the heart of the earth (sepulchre) alive, and come out alive, where is the resemblance of the two signs? Jesus promised to show only one sign to the generation of his time, but even if that sign be not proved to be true, is there anything also to prove the truth of his claim to be a prophet? Jesus<sup>'(as)</sup> reference to the sign of Jonah simply means that he would not die on the Cross. Therefore, there is every reason to believe that the swoon theory is not based on a wrong hypothesis.

## **II - Pilate's wife sees a dream**

*'When he was set down on the Judgement seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have you nothing to do with that just man (Jesus): for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him'.*  
(Matthew 27: 19)

The lady's dream was really true and quite opportune. It purports to mean that Christ be saved from the accursed death on the Cross. God

saves his dear ones by means of dreams of others as was the case with Joseph who was released from jail having interpreted the two dreams of Pharaoh. God wanted to protect Jesus against his enemies, hence the dream of the Roman governor's wife which influenced his judgement.

### **III - The Roman Governor's sympathetic attitude**

The Jews presented the case of Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup> to Pilate, the Roman Governor of Palestine. He held a judicial inquiry into the case and declared that he was not guilty of the charges brought against him. He said unto them:

*'Ye have brought this man unto me as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things where of ye accuse him.'*  
(Luke 23: 14).

*He went out again unto the Jews and said unto them, I find in him no fault at all. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye, therefore, that I release*

*unto you the King of the Jews? Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber'.*  
(John 18: 38, 40).

*And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar'.*  
(John 19: 12).

From the references given above, it is evident that the Governor regards Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> innocent of all the charges brought against him by the Jews, he tries his utmost to release him but when the Jews threatened to report him to the Caesar in Rome he yielded to them and handed Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> over to them. But secretly he took measures to see that Jesus should be saved. He had his wife's dream before him and he knew full well that the chief priests had delivered him in envy.

**IV-Pilate's scheme to save Christ**  
Pilate, the Governor, was thoroughly convinced of the innocence of Jesus Christ. He

therefore, had a pre-planned scheme to save Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> life. As a responsible official of the Roman Empire he could not openly come to the forefront, but he was the mastermind before the whole scheme and the chief actor in the drama. Other characters of the show were Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable councillor and disciple of Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup>. He had already had a sepulchre hewn out in a rock garden nearby. We read in St. John:

*'And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes about a hundred pounds weight'.*

(John 19: 39).

It was very clever of Pilate to choose Friday afternoon as the time for Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> crucifixion so that he could not remain on the Cross after sunset, the following day being Sabbath, so holy to the Jews. All necessary measures were adopted to bring Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> to consciousness. Otherwise what did Nicodemus mean by bringing the mixture of myrrh and aloes. Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> was shown to have died in official records to pacify the Jews and the

imperial government at Rome. Joseph of Arimathaea boldly asked the Governor to hand over the 'body' of Jesus which request he readily granted. If the plan was not pre-conceived, how could the Governor hand over the 'body' of Jesus to a stranger from outside. There is reason to believe that Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup> himself must have been informed of the plan so that his prophecy might come true that as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

### **V-Duration of Crucifixion**

The duration of crucifixion or the period of time for which Jesus remained on the Cross was not long enough to warrant his death on the Cross. Criminals generally took several days to die a lingering death on the cross on account of the loss of blood from the wounds on hands and feet, the physical pain and the pangs of hunger and thirst. The minimum time of death on the cross ranged between 24 and 28 hours but in some cases it took several days to die on the cross. In such cases it became necessary to break the legs of the criminals so that death may be hastened and consummated.

Let us now probe into the matter of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> crucifixion. The New Testament tells us that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> remained on the cross for a few hours only. The actual duration of time Jesus remained on the Cross was not more than three or four hours. Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup> who was in the prime of his youth (33 years) and enjoyed excellent health, could not be expected to have died within so short a time in particular when his legs were not broken as was done in the case of the two robbers crucified with him the same day.

It may not be out of place here to note that, according to the Roman calendar the day began with the setting of the sun and ended with its setting the next day. The same custom is in vogue even to this day in Arab countries. According to John (19: 14) it was about the sixth hour of the day (Friday) that Pilate spoke last to the Jews vis-a-vis Jesus crucifixion and handed him over to them.

*‘And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour: And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, LAMA*

*SABACHTHANI, My God, My God why hast thou forsaken me?’”*

(Mark 15:33, 34).

This shows that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> retained his consciousness up to the ninth hour of the day and then he fell into a swoon, that the New Testament writers call ‘giving up the ghost’. None of the writers were present on the spot to stand as eye-witness. The ‘swoon’ was taken to be ‘death’ and ‘death on the Cross’ means an accursed death. Do we not read in the Bible, ‘for he that is hanged is accursed of God’? (Deut. 21:23).

## **VI-Coming out of blood and water**

*‘Then came the soldiers and broke the legs of the first and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they break not his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water’.*

(John 19:32-34)

The soldiers did not break the legs of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> for they took him for a

dead man while actually he was in a state of swoon, or just to silence the angry Jews he was declared to be a 'dead' man. But one of the soldiers incidentally 'pierced his side and forthwith there came out blood and water', which is a surer sign of life for blood and water do not gush out of a dead man's body. There is much food for thought for those who care to ponder over it.

### **VII-No eye-witness of crucifixion**

Three writers of the Gospels state that there was darkness over all the land from the sixth to the ninth hour and that there was an earthquake and the rocks were rent and the veil of the temple was rent in twain. It is a matter of common experience at the time of a severe dust-storm accompanied by an earthquake, people generally hasten to go home and they do not enjoy the luxury of a bloody sight-seeing. Now imagine for a moment, who could stand an eye-witness to tell the story that Jesus actually died on the cross. The Jews, if at all, there were any on the spot, must have run away at the sight of the rising storm and the shaking of the earth must have frightened them to turn on their heels and hasten to their homes. As to the disciples, they had already

fled from the scene of the crucifixion.

*'But he began to curse and to swear saying, I know not this man (Jesus) of whom you speak'.*

(Mark 14:71)

*'And they forsook him (Jesus) and fled'.*

(Mark 14: 50)

To be brief, there was no one present on the scene who could definitely and certainly say that he saw Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> 'giving up the ghost'. This is all mere conjecture and imagination.

### **VIII-Jesus' mission to the lost sheep of Israel**

1. *'For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost'.*

(Luke 19: 10).

2. *'And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd'.*

(John 10:16).

3. *'And he said unto them, I*

*must preach the Kingdom of God to other cities also; For therefore I am sent.*  
(Luke 4:43).

4. *'But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'*  
(Matthew 15:24).

From the quotations given above, it is clear that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> mission was to preach to all the twelve tribes of Israel that were scattered in the eastern countries extending from Palestine to India at the time of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> appearance. Of the twelve tribes of Israel there were at that time, only two tribes in Palestine while the other ten were found scattered in the lands stretching from Palestine to the confines of India. Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> cannot be said to have been successful in his mission if he did not address and preach to the ten lost sheep of Israel. Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> supposed death on the Cross at the early age of 33 gives a shattering blow to the mission for which he was sent. The truth of the matter is that Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup> after his escape from the Cross, did migrate to the East in search of the lost sheep for which there is ample historical evidence and is recently supported

by the modern 'finds' of archaeology. Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> found his lost sheep in Persia, Afghanistan and Kashmir, preached to them and comparatively he was much more successful here than in Palestine.

He died a natural death and was, we believe, buried in Srinagar, Kashmir.

### **IX-Jesus' victory over his enemies**

Addressing his disciples Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> says:

*'Before, the hour cometh yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.'*  
(John 16:32, 33)

Now what does Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> victory consist of? Was it in his death on the Cross or in his escape from the Cross? If he died on the cross then the Jews were successful because the very aim of theirs was to prove

that he was false in calling himself the Messiah. They had in their support, the Biblical statement that *'he that is hanged is an accursed of God'*. (Duet. 21: 23). But if we believe that he was taken down from the cross alive, (in a state of swoon of course) and he entered the heart of the earth alive and came out of it alive, then he can rightly be said to have overcome his enemies and frustrated all their evil designs. Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> says:

*'For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation'*.  
(Luke 11:30)

In other words Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> said to the Jews that God Almighty would save him from the clutches of death in the same way as He had saved Jonah from the belly of the whale. The similarity between the two incidents can be real and genuine only when Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> enters the heart of the earth (grave) alive and comes out alive.

### **X-His Prayer was heard**

From the study of the Bible we learn that God listens to the prayers of his apostles and saves them from

tribulations and trials. Says the New Testament:

*'The effectual fervent prayer of a religious man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again and the heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit'*.  
(James 5: 16-18).

Again we read:

*And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said father I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me. And I knew that Thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it that they may believe that Thou hast sent me'*.  
(John 11: 41, 42).

*And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will but what Thou wilt'*.  
(Mark 14:36)

From the quotations given above it

is clear that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> was terribly afraid of being put to the Cross, so he fervently prayed that the bitter cup be taken away from him. Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> passionately and fervently prayed to God that he might be saved the accursed death on the Cross, how could he then, say that he had overcome the world; in case he died on the Cross, the mission of his whole life would come to naught and wrongdoers could challenge his claim to prophethood. The thought of death on the Cross was simply grating upon his soul. Being a righteous prophet he was not afraid of mere death; he was certainly afraid of dying on the Cross as such a death could be interpreted to mean an accursed death which was the very negation of his prophetic mission.

*'In the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death and was heard in that he feared'.  
(Hebrews 5:7).*

Hence we must presume that his earnest prayer was, no doubt heard and he miraculously escaped death by crucifixion and lived long

enough to preach his mission to the lost sheep of the Israelites in the East.

These arguments prove that the idea of the crucifixion of Christ cannot be justified even from the Biblical point of view. Therefore, it is evident that the present Christian faith based on that erroneous idea, can not hold ground.

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## ERRATA

In *The Review of Religions* of April 2003 (p.15) and August 2003 (p.4). Hadhrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih III was described as the 'cousin' brother of Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalidatul Masih IV instead of 'maternal step' brother. We trust that the above has abundantly cleared any confusion in the minds of some readers.

# The Prophet Promised Through Moses<sup>(as)</sup>; Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> or Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>? – part II

An examination of the prophecy of prophet Moses<sup>(as)</sup> regarding the advent of a great future prophet. The first part of this article was featured in last month's edition of *The Review of Religions*.

by Dr. A.R. Bhutta, published in *The Truth*, Nigeria, August 1986

## Contents of the Prophecy

Now that we have examined the context of that prophecy of Moses<sup>(as)</sup>, we can study its contents and try to find out, once again, who out of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> and Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> really answers the description of that prophet mentioned in the prophecy.

(i) First of all, we are told in the prophecy that the prophet to be raised will be a prophet 'like Moses'.

It is clear that for any prophet to be called 'like Moses' he must of necessity possess something particular as a prophet in common with Moses<sup>(as)</sup>. We know that Moses<sup>(as)</sup> was not an ordinary prophet. He was a prophet with a difference; and the only thing special about Moses<sup>(as)</sup> was that he was sent with a new Law while all the other prophets who followed

him were sent to obey and re-establish his Law.

So, when it was said that another prophet 'like Moses' would be raised by God, it could only mean that a prophet with a new Law would be raised as Moses<sup>(as)</sup> had been.

As far as Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> is concerned he did not come with any new Law as he had been sent only to preach and propagate the same old Law of Moses<sup>(as)</sup> which all the other prophets of Israel had been preaching before him, (Matt. 5:17). Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>, therefore, had nothing particular in him as a prophet that could make him a prophet 'like Moses'.

On the other hand, Muhammad, the Holy Prophet of Islam<sup>(sa)</sup>, was a prophet who had been sent with a new Law, replacing the old Law of Moses<sup>(as)</sup>. He, therefore, is the only

prophet who can be called a prophet 'like Moses' and who has actually been called so in the Holy Qur'an (*Ch.73: v.16*).

Another very outstanding feature common between Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>, that further makes them resemble each other as prophets, is that God manifested His mighty signs and powerful glory through both of them when God made them victorious over their very strong enemies, defeating and destroying the enemy completely in the process. No such power and might of God was manifested through Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>. On the contrary, it was the enemies of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>, according to the New Testament, who over-powered him and put him on the Cross.

How can Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>, therefore, be called a prophet 'like Moses' when every thing about him was unlike Moses<sup>(as)</sup>?

(ii) The second feature of that prophet, mentioned in the prophecy, is that he shall be raised from the 'brethren of Israel'. (*Deut. 18: 18*)

Now it has already been discussed and concluded from the background

of the prophecy that 'that prophet' could in no case be raised from the Israelites and that he could only come out of Gentiles. Here in this verse, our conclusion about the Gentiles has been confirmed and narrowed down to one particular nation. We are told that out of Gentile nations, that prophet will be raised from that particular nation which can be called the 'brethren of Israel'.

Israel is not an ordinary nation. They are regarded as the chosen people of God; for any nation to be regarded as their 'brethren' that nation must of necessity share and inherit something particular in common with Israel. 'Brethren' is a very specific and significant word and God would not have used it for any people if He did not really mean it.

We know that the people of Israel are the descendants of Isaac<sup>(as)</sup> and that they had been promised great blessings of God through their forefather Abraham<sup>(as)</sup>. It is a historical fact that the only people who can be regarded as the physical as well as the spiritual counterparts of Israelites, are the descendants of Ishmael or Ismail<sup>(as)</sup>, the elder

brother of Isaac<sup>(as)</sup>. There is no nation on the face of this earth, other than the descendants of Ismail<sup>(as)</sup>, that can claim to be the ‘brethren’ of Israel and that at the same time can boast of having flourished under the divine promise made to Abraham<sup>(as)</sup>. Even the Bible confirms that Ismail<sup>(as)</sup> and Isaac<sup>(as)</sup> were not only brothers in flesh but also brothers in promise. (*Genesis 16:16; 17:20*)

Since Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>, the Holy Prophet of Islam, was a descendant of Ismael<sup>(as)</sup>, he was actually and literally raised from these ‘brethren of Israel’, and the prophecy of Moses<sup>(as)</sup> was fulfilled in his person and not in the person of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> who was raised from the Israelites and for the Israelites.

It may be argued that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> had no earthly father; he, therefore, should not be regarded as a prophet from Israel.

This argument has no weight at all because Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> at least had a mother who belonged to Israel. So, if he had no father, then he would wholly and solely belong to his mother’s family. Moreover, not having a father from Israel, does not

fulfil the condition mentioned in the prophecy; it must also be proved that he came from the ‘brethren of Israel.’ So, for Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> to be ‘that prophet’, his father must be found and found from the ‘brethren of Israel’. Otherwise he will hold his mother’s nationality.

It may be said that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> was a ‘son of God’ and he, therefore, can be considered to have come from, the ‘brethren of Israel’. This argument looks ridiculous on the very face of it, unless we are also ready to consider that God had not a son, but many sons and daughters who multiplied somewhere in the heavens and developed into a community called the ‘brethren of Israel’.

(iii) The third characteristic of that prophet, mentioned in the prophecy is that God will ‘put His words in his mouth and he shall speak all that God shall command him’.

This is a very special feature of that prophet. It not only proves that ‘that prophet’ will be a Lawgiver but also explains that the Law given through that prophet will be in the form of pure and precise words of God, and that he shall speak out these words

of God only under the control and command of God, without any contribution on his part.

This is exactly how the Holy Qur'an was revealed to the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> of Islam. The 'words of God' were actually put in his mouth when, under the divine control, verses of the Holy Qur'an issued forth from his holy mouth without his personal effort or desire. (Ch.53: Vs.4,5)

As far as Jesus is concerned, he was neither given any Law nor is there any record of verbal revelation that was 'put in his mouth'. He, therefore, cannot answer this description of that prophet.

Another interesting and important point mentioned in this connection, is that 'that prophet will speak the word of God in the name of God'. It is indeed very inspiring to note that every chapter of the Holy Qur'an, except one, starts with the verse, 'In the name of Allah, the Gracious and Merciful'; and all Muslims are required to recite this verse before reciting any portion of the Holy Qur'an.

There is no such example reported in the Gospels where Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> conveyed any exact words of God in the name of God. On the contrary he clearly declared that someone else will come after him who will hear from God and convey us all the truth (John 16:13). So we see that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> could not be the 'prophet' mentioned in the prophecy of Moses<sup>(as)</sup>.

(iv) Finally, God is reported to have said in that prophecy '*whoever will not pay heed to my word, which that prophet will speak in my name, I will myself require it of him*'; and then God went on to say: '*but the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, that same prophet shall die*'. (Deut. 18:20)

Now here in these verses, God has not only sounded a very serious note of warning for both, the prophet and the people, but also has provided a criterion for judging the truth of that prophet. We are told that God will punish the enemies of that prophet. On the other hand, any false claimant pretending to be that prophet, shall also be punished, and punished with death.

Let us now compare Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> and Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> and see how they fared in this test set by God.

Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> has been declared to be a prophet who came according to the prophecies of the Holy Bible and in particular, he has been called a prophet like Moses<sup>(as)</sup>.

After his claim to the prophethood, he was rejected, opposed and persecuted by his people. Repeated attempts were planned and made on his life and he had to participate personally in many bloody wars. On many such occasions, he received serious injuries and at times even had close brushes with death; nevertheless, he not only survived all these dangerous situations but also succeeded in completing his divine mission against all odds. On the other hand, his enemies, despite their strength and superiority in men and materials, were defeated disgracefully and destroyed eventually, making Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> the most successful prophet that ever came into this world.

However, Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> too, claimed to be a prophet; he too, was rejected and persecuted by his people; and his enemies too, planned to kill him.

But, unfortunately for the Christians, (and in accordance with Christian belief) they are of the view that his enemies succeeded in their very first attempt on his life and most of his followers ran away for their lives and went underground. Evidently, the enemies of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> not only succeeded in defeating him and his budding community, but also they seem to have escaped any punishment from his God.

If that warning and criterion, mentioned by God in that prophecy of Moses<sup>(as)</sup> has anything to go by, then nobody with a fair sense of judgement, can say that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>, and not Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>, could be the prophet mentioned in that prophecy. The achievements of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> and Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> are diagonally opposed to each other in that particular field. If Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> were really that prophet promised by Moses<sup>(as)</sup>, his enemies could not have defeated him, they could not (as Christians believe) have prosecuted and executed him; nor could they have escaped their own defeat and destruction. Conversely, if Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> had falsely claimed to be that prophet, he could not have succeeded in his mission, the way

he did; and his enemies could not have been punished and destroyed, the way they were. Consequently, there is no escape from the obvious conclusion that the prophecy of Moses<sup>(as)</sup> was fulfilled, not in the person of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>, the Christ, but with the advent of Muhammad, the Holy Prophet of Islam <sup>(sa)</sup>.

### **An Important Clarification**

It seems necessary to clarify in the above-mentioned context that we do not mean to say that every prophet that fails to defeat his enemies and is killed by them, must necessarily be a false prophet.

Firstly, if a person claiming to be a prophet of God, is captured and killed by his enemies, no doubt he could still be a true prophet of God but what he can never be is that particular prophet mentioned in that prophecy of Moses, because the penalty of death has been fixed as a sign for the false claimant to that particular post. This makes it necessary that a true claimant to that particular prophethood should never suffer that penalty and his life should be saved and protected.

Now, Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>, as believed by the Christians, was captured and killed

by his enemies. As such, he could still be a true prophet, no doubt; but he could be the Christ, Elijah or any other prophet, new or old, but he could never be that particular prophet who was destined to be saved and successful and whose enemies were doomed to be defeated and destroyed.

Secondly, it has been said in the prophecy that anybody pretending to be that particular prophet and preaching a false word of God shall be punished with death. That automatically means that any prophet who preaches the words in the name of God all his life and is still not caught and killed by God, that prophet must necessarily be true in his claim to be that particular prophet.

This makes the case of Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> very simple and straightforward. He claimed to be that particular prophet and preached the words in the name of God all his life; and in spite of all this, he received no such punishment fixed for a false prophet but proved himself to be most successful of all the prophets. Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>, therefore, must be accepted as absolutely true in what he claimed

to be, otherwise we would have to believe that something must be wrong with that prophecy. If he were false, he could not have made himself above the Law of God and escaped His punishment.

So, let it be known to all lovers of the truth that the greatest promise to Abraham<sup>(as)</sup> was that the nations of the earth shall be blessed through his descendants; the greatest promise given to Moses<sup>(as)</sup> was that a great prophet like him shall be raised from the descendants of Abraham<sup>(as)</sup>, other than the Israel; the greatest prayer and desire of all the Biblical prophets was to see the fulfilment of that promise made to Abraham<sup>(as)</sup> and Moses<sup>(as)</sup>; the greatest mission of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> and his disciples was to preach and proclaim the forthcoming fulfilment of that promise. The greatest thing that ever happened on this earth was the fulfilment of that promise with the advent of Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>, the Holy Prophet of Islam.

*no part of the inheritance, an argument sometimes also incorrectly advanced against Ismail (as) as being the rejected one of Abraham. But it is very obvious from the words of this prophecy that the prophet who was to come had to come from some brethren other than from the tribes of Israel. Secondly, with reference to Jesus, John refers to the Comforter as the Holy Ghost and the Spirit of the Truth, and the Law introduced by Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> was nothing but the Truth and he himself was known as the Siddiq i.e. the Truthful one. (Ed)]*

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*[Editor's Note:*

*It is sometimes argued that the prophecy in Ch.18 of Deuteronomy refers to the tribe of Levi who had*

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