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# EDITORIAL

Mansoor Saqi – UK

In the study of religion it is important to go back as close as possible to the original scriptures to understand the real meaning of the message. Among religious scriptures the Holy Qur'an is unique as the text has been preserved and is exactly the same as that revealed to the Holy Prophet of Islam(saw). The texts of other scriptures have changed over time (corruption and interpolation) and the original message may not be apparent from the versions of these texts that we currently have.

The fact that the text of the Holy Qur'an has been safeguarded in this manner is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an itself:

*Verily, We Ourselves have sent down this Exhortation, and most surely We will be its Guardian. (Ch.15:V.10)*

This is a testimony to the truth of the Message and the fact that

Islam is a living religion. In this issue of *The Review of Religions* an extract from the writings of the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> is presented which discusses this fact:

*'There was a time when their number did not exceed the number of the members of one family and today they are counted in hundreds of millions. God had said He would safeguard His word, and is it not true that the teaching which the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> conveyed as coming from God Almighty in His Word is still safeguarded in that Word ...'*

The purity of the Holy Qur'an is examined in detail in an article on page 54 which has been continued from the previous issue. Here it is explained how the text was preserved in written form during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet(saw).

History has shown that the spread of the message of the Prophets has always been through persuasion and reasoning and never through the use of force. This is the way that the spiritual reformation of people has come about in an article featured in this edition.

The importance of persuasion, reasoning and of tolerance are particularly pertinent in these times, if the true meaning of the message of Islam is to be correctly conveyed to mankind.

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*‘Even a cursory glance at history will reveal that for spiritual and moral revolutions God asks his servants to win over the people with truth and patience. Patience and prayer are the integral part of religious revolution and they should continue to be exhorted till God’s promise is fulfilled.’*

And later

*And, above all, the Seal of the Prophets, the leading reformer of all time, our Master Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup> was sent to bring about a universal spiritual revolution with nothing but persuasion and reasoning.’*

## *The Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> Alone is the Living Prophet – Part 6*

This series 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 Sahib, Allah have mercy on him and reward him graciously for his great labour of love. Amin. The English rendering is by the late Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, may Allah be pleased with him, and is quoted from *The Essence of Islam*, Volume 1. All references throughout, unless otherwise specifically mentioned, are from the Holy Qur'an.

The miracles that were performed by all the other Prophets came to an end with them; but the miracles of our Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> are fresh and alive in every age. Those miracles being alive and not having succumbed to death is proof that the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> is alone the living Prophet and that true life is that which has been bestowed on him and not upon any other. His teaching is a living teaching because its fruits and blessings are experienced today as they were experienced 1,300

years before. We have before us no other teaching by acting on which a person might claim that he has been bestowed its fruits, blessings, and graces and that he has become a Sign of God. By the grace of God Almighty, we find the fruits and blessings of the Holy Qur'an present among us, and we still find those graces and signs which are bestowed in consequence of true obedience to the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>.

Thus has God Almighty established this Movement so that it

should be a living witness to the truth of Islam, and should prove that those blessings and signs which had appeared 1,300 years ago have appeared in this age also through perfect obedience to the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>. Hundreds of signs have so far been displayed. We have invited the leaders of all peoples and all religions that they should exhibit the signs of their truth in opposition to us, but there is not one of them who can put forth a practical sample of the truth of his religion.

*(Malfuzat Vol. III, p38)*

The promises of success which God Almighty gave by the Glory of His Divinity in opposition to all opponents, all enemies, all deniers, all the wealthy, all powerful rulers, all philosophers, all followers of other religions, to that humble, weak, poor, unlearned, untrained one, and which were fulfilled at their time and continue to be fulfilled, could not be the work of any human being, nor can any honest seeker after truth have any doubt concerning them. That poor,

lonely and humble person announced the spread of his faith and the establishment of his religion at a time when he had no one with him except a few indigent companions, and the total number of Muslims could be contained in one small room and their names could be counted on the fingers of two hands, and they could be destroyed by a few men of the town. They were opposed by the rulers of the earth and they had to deal with the peoples who were determined to destroy them and whose numbers ran into millions. But now look at the ends of the earth how God Almighty spread those few weak people all over the earth, and how He bestowed upon them power, wealth and kingdom, and how for thousands of years thrones and crowns were bestowed upon them. There was a time when their number did not exceed the number of the members of one family and today they are counted in hundreds of millions. God had said He would safeguard His word, and is it not true that the teaching which the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> conveyed as

coming from God Almighty in His Word is still safeguarded in that Word and there have always been hundreds of thousands who have committed the Holy Qur'an to memory? God had said that no one would be able to match His Book in wisdom and understanding, in beauty of composition, in comprehending the knowledge of the Divine, and in setting forth religious arguments, and so it has proved.

If anyone questions this, let him come forth and produce its match, and let him produce from any other book the equal of the verities, fine points, and wonders which we have set forth in this book from the Holy Qur'an with the promise of a reward of ten thousand rupees. So long as he fails to do so, he is convicted in the estimation of God. God had promised that He would take Syria out of the possession of the Christians and would bestow it upon the Muslims. So it came about, and the Muslims became the heirs of that land. All these claims are accompanied by Divine Power and Might. They



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

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 and blessings of Allah be upon him) and by the scriptures of other faiths.

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

are not merely like the boasts of astrologers that there would be earthquakes, famines, epidemics, plagues and the assaults of nation against nation, etc.

By following the Word of God

and through its effect, those who obey the Holy Qur'an, and believe sincerely in the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> and love him, and consider him better and holier and more perfect and more exalted than the whole of creation and all Prophets and all Messengers and all holy ones and all that has happened or might happen, continue to partake of those bounties and drink thirstily and copiously of the draught that was given to Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> to drink. They are lit up with Israeli lights and enjoy the blessings of the Prophets who were descendants of Jacob. Holy is Allah, once again, Holy is Allah!! How high is the status of the Seal of the Prophets<sup>(saw)</sup> and how grand is the light the humblest of whose servants arrived at the ranks that we have mentioned. *O Allah, send down Thy blessings on Thy Prophet and Thy loved one, the Chief of the Prophets, the best of Messengers and the Seal of the Prophets, Muhammad, and his people and his companions and bestow Thy bounties and peace upon them.*

The Christian divines, Pundits, Brahmos, Aryas and other opponents of our time need not wonder where are the blessings and heavenly lights representing which the followers of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> are sharers with Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> and where is the heritage of those lights which are bestowed on Muslims and from which all other people and followers of other religions are debarred? To set their doubts at rest, we have stated it several times in this footnote, that we are responsible for setting forth the proof of these things before any seeker after truth who would be ready, on witnessing the particular superiority of Islam, to become a Muslim.

In the second footnote<sup>(1)</sup>, we have set out in brief, how God Almighty manifests His Divine powers and graces and blessings in the case of Muslims, and how He has promised and given good news of events that are beyond human power. So if any Christian divine, Pundit or Brahmo denies these things, on account of his inner darkness, or

any Arya, or a follower of other faiths, is truly and sincerely a seeker after God, it is incumbent upon him that like a true seeker, he should discard all pride, arrogance, and hypocrisy, and worship of the world and obstinacy and contention and, seeking only the truth and wishing only for it, should come straight to us like a poor and humble person and should then be patient and steadfast, obedient and sincere like the righteous so that by God's will he might arrive at his object. If even now anyone turns away he becomes witness to his own lack of faith.

(*Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Ruhani Khazain, Vol. 1 pp. 266-275, footnote 11*)

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1. The reference is to the second footnote in *Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya*, which starts on page 293 in *Ruhani Khaza'in*, Vol. 1.

In this journal, for the ease of non-Muslim readers, '(saw)' or 'saw' after the words, 'Holy Prophet', or the name 'Muhammad', are used. They stand for '*Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*' 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 '*Alaihis salatu wassalam*' which are words that a Muslim utters out of respect whenever he or she comes across that name.

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

# PROPHETS AND TROOPERS

## *A Study in Contrast – Part 4*

*This is the third extract from Murder in the Name of Allah by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, dealing with Maulana Maududi's misinterpretation of the Islamic concept of Jihad.*

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*Remind them for thou (O Prophet) art an admonisher. Thou art not at all a warder over them.*

(Ch.88:Vs.22-3)

‘It (Jamaati Islami) is not a missionary organisation or a body of preachers or evangelists, but an organisation of God’s troopers.’<sup>1</sup>

*Maulana Abu Ala Maududi*

The picture of Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam<sup>(saw)</sup> painted by nineteenth century orientalisks has been examined in the previous chapter. It was a picture of a fanatical warrior riding out of the Arabian deserts with a drawn sword in one hand and the Qur’an in the other, offering his helpless victims a choice between the two. The harshness of this picture, popularised by Edward Gibbon<sup>1</sup>

has now been toned down by modern orientalisks. Even the well-known Jewish scholar, Bernard Lewis, with his dry British humour, had to admit that the picture, ‘is not only false but also impossible – unless we are able to assume a race of left-handed swordsmen. In Muslim practice, the left hand is reserved for unclean purposes, and no self-respecting Muslim would use it to raise the Qur’an.’<sup>3</sup>

But there is one ‘self-respecting’ Muslim, Maulana Maududi, who clutched his drawn sword in his right hand, irrespective of its lack of relevance to the teachings of the Holy Qur’an and the practices of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>.

The Maulana claims to be a loyal follower of the Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>, and, as such, one would expect him to talk admiringly of his Master. Beauty

is in the eye of the beholder. But how can he see defects in his Lord which even Islam's modern enemies reject? There are three answers to this question.

1. That the Maulana's claim to be a loyal follower of Islam is false. In view of what the Maulana wrote in *Al-Jihad fil Islam* and his other works, the reader may reasonably be led to believe that the author is not even remotely concerned with the teachings of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> and that his claim to be a loyal follower is false. That would be a very serious charge. Since I belong to a sect which has been falsely accused of showing disrespect to the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>, I would be the last to doubt the Maulana's loyalty to our Lord and Master, Muhammad – may Allah bless him and grant him peace.
2. That the Maulana's sense of values has been confused, so he has as much difficulty in telling good from evil as a colour-blind person does in telling red from green.

3. That the Maulana is obsessed – obsessed with a desire for political power and authority. Obsession has been defined as 'A persistent or recurrent idea, usually strongly tinged with emotion, frequently involving an urge towards some form of action; the whole mental situation being pathological.'<sup>4</sup>

Pierre Janet found that an obsessive person was scrupulous, ever-conscientious and stricken by a sense of worthlessness.<sup>5</sup> Elton Mayo has summarised Janet's and his own characterisation of obsessives in these terms: 'They are the experts in arduous rethinking of the obvious – they substitute an exaggerated precision in minor activities for that activity in major affairs of which they are or feel themselves to be incapable.'<sup>6</sup>

The Maulana's childhood memories and adolescent experiences in Hyderabad, as we have seen earlier, led him towards one source of behavioural control – political power. Kurt Lewin has observed that if an individual's behaviour is to be understood, it must be in

terms of his life-space – one has to relate the individual to his environment over the course of time and *at the particular moment*. Lewin’s field of interest is thus: ‘the life-space, containing the person and his psychological environment.’<sup>7</sup> Woodsworth and Sheehan elaborate Lewin’s theory and say: The psycho-logical (or behavioural) environment is, of course, the environment as perceived and understood by the person, but more than that, it is the environment as related to his present needs and quasi-needs. Many objects which are perceived are of no present concern to him and so exist only in the background of his psychological environment. Other objects have positive or negative ‘valence’ – positive if they promise to meet his present needs, negative if they threaten injury. Objects of positive valence attract him, while objects of negative valence repel him.<sup>8</sup>

Psychology is not an absolute science and it is still evolving, but Maulana Maududi’s ‘obsession’ seems to fit the theory we have discussed. That is not to say, of course, that there might not be

another explanation of his obsessive behaviour. Whatever the explanation, the Maulana’s vision has undoubtedly been blurred by obsession. He trips and at times, stumbles into paths which have been traversed before him by the enemies of God. It is this obsession which causes him to support capital punishment for those who switch religions.<sup>9</sup> This punishment has always been demanded for prophets and their followers who change from their traditional religion. It is the same obsession which impels him to put a sword into the Holy Prophet’s<sup>(saw)</sup> hand and in doing so, to support those enemies of Islam who paint a gory picture of Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup>. Since persuasion and force are mutually exclusive, the Maulana adopts the sword as a means of reform and rejects reasoning as a method of conversion. Persuasion and reasoning are difficult tasks of which he is or feels himself to be incapable. They entail sacrifice and long suffering in the face of opposition, as the Prophet’s<sup>(saw)</sup> Makkan life showed. So the Maulana rejects them as objects of negative valence. Force through political power seems to meet his

present needs, so he adopts it and relates it to the Holy Prophet's<sup>(saw)</sup> life with a process of arduous thinking.

When I refer to the Maulana's obsession, I do not mean to show him any disrespect, although, by putting a sword into the hands of my Lord and Master Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup> he has shown disrespect to the Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> and all he stood for. Reviewing Israel Shenker's book, *Coat of Many Colors*, a collection of essays on Judaism, Hugh Nissenden says: 'Mr Shenker dramatises his obsession in a way that makes the history of his people accessible and illuminating to everyone.'<sup>10</sup> I only wish the Maulana could put his obsession to good use. Instead, he justifies force, not only as legitimate, but also as an essential method of reform. He says: 'It is not possible that they [the enemies of Islam] would sacrifice their interests in the face of persuasion and reasoning. All that one can do is to acquire political power<sup>11</sup> and force them to stop their mischief.'<sup>12</sup>

This method of reform seems to be

effective and also easier than persuasion, which requires patience and persistence in the face of ridicule, rebuffs and snubs. It is so easy to convert people by force. There is no comparison between the two methods. One is easy and quick; the other difficult and time-consuming, requiring the patience of Job<sup>(as)</sup>. All reformers have had to endure ridicule and rejection. This is how the Qur'an describes their lot:

*Those who were guilty used to laugh at those who believed; and when they passed by them, they winked at each other. And when they came back to their families, they exulted over them; and when they saw them they exclaimed: 'These indeed are the lost ones.' But they were not appointed keepers over them.*

(Ch.83:Vs.30-34)

The verses quoted above explain why the Maulana would not follow the path of the reformers sent by God. People laugh at reformers and say: 'Look at these people whose only weapon is persuasion! They are so weak we

can crush them whenever we wish; and yet they claim to win people over by their reasoning and advice.’ So the Maulana rejected peaceful argument and said instead:

Anyone who wants to uproot mischief and disorder from this world and wants to reform mankind should realise that he cannot do so by mere sermonising and counselling. It is useless. He should rise against the government of false principles, he should seize power, remove the wrongdoers from authority and set up a government based on sound principles and just administration.<sup>13</sup>

But the Maududian method of reform, which is modelled on Marxism, is not the divine way of saving mankind. In God’s plan, persuasion is so important that, even in an age of general moral decline, only pious believers ‘*who exhort one another with truth and steadfastness*’ (Ch.103:V.4) will succeed. Even a cursory glance at history will reveal that for spiritual and moral revolutions God asks his servants to win over the people

with truth and patience. Patience and prayer are the integral part of religious revolution and they should continue to be exhorted till God’s promise is fulfilled. It is foretold that ‘*the [pleasing] end is for the righteous*’. (Ch.7:129)

All God’s messengers have followed this method of religious reform, one which is totally opposed to the Marxist use of force. The Qur’an preserves the account of many prophets and evangelists. According to this divine account, Noah’s<sup>(as)</sup> instrument of revolution was persuasion and Abraham’s<sup>(as)</sup> was also. It was the instrument of Shuaib<sup>(as)</sup> and Saleh<sup>(as)</sup>. Lot<sup>(as)</sup> was also sent as a counsellor and so was Moses<sup>(as)</sup>. Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> caused a revolution with his sermons. And, above all, the Seal of the Prophets, the leading reformer of all time, our Master Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup> was sent to bring about a universal spiritual revolution with nothing but persuasion and reasoning. But the Maulana not only ignores this tradition of God’s holy messengers; he also contradicts it in the following words: ‘Anyone who wants to uproot mischief and disorder from this world and wants

to reform mankind should realise that he cannot do so by mere sermonising and counselling. It is useless.’

Let us compare this Maududian dictum with the unbroken tradition of God’s messengers. When Noah’s” people accused him of spreading ‘manifest error’, he replied:

... *O my people, there is no error in me, but I am a Messenger from the Lord of the world. I deliver to you the message of my Lord and give you sincere advice, and I know from Allah what you do not know.* (Ch.7:Vs.62-63)

This is God’s account of Noah’s<sup>(as)</sup> ministry. According to the Maududian dictum, Noah<sup>(as)</sup> *should* have said: ‘I am the Messenger of God and I shall impose upon you, whether you like it or not, a body of righteous men who will take away your power.’

When the people of Ad told Hud<sup>(as)</sup> he was lost in foolishness, he did not say: ‘Do not be deceived and

consider me a fool because of the harmlessness of the advice; you are not seeing the real me. In fact, I am an oppressor and one day I will seize power from the hands of those who have rebelled against God and give it to my own, righteous, people.’ Indeed, he did not. Instead, he followed the tradition of the prophets and said:

... *O my people, there is no foolishness in me, but I am a Messenger from the Lord of the worlds. I deliver to you the messages of my Lord and I am to you a sincere and faithful counsellor.*  
(Ch.7.Vs.68-69)

The people of Thamud, like those of Ad, rejected Saleh<sup>(as)</sup> and accused him of all sorts of things. But, following Noah<sup>(as)</sup> and Hud<sup>(as)</sup>, he told them:

‘*O my people, I did deliver the message of my Lord unto you and offered you sincere counsel, but you love not sincere counsellors.*’  
(Ch.7.V.80)

And then God sent Lot<sup>(as)</sup>, whose

followers also made no attempt to seize power from the misguided, and continued to reason with them till they were punished. Before the appointed punishment came, Lot<sup>(as)</sup> and his followers left their homes with God's permission. And then came that morning about which tyrants have always been admonished: *'But when it descends into their courtyards, it shall be an evil morning to those who have been warned.'* (Ch.37:V.178)

The seventh chapter of the Qur'an continues with the story of the misguided people and the messengers<sup>(as)</sup> of God who tried to reform them. After telling the story of Lot<sup>(as)</sup>, the Qur'an tells us how Shuaib<sup>(as)</sup> reasoned with his arrogant people and pleaded with his cruel tormentors. When all his advice was rejected, he turned away and said: '

*...O my people indeed, I delivered to you the messages of my Lord and gave you sincere counsel. How, then, should I sorrow for a disbelieving people?'*  
(Ch.7:V.94)

The Qur'an, which for Maulana Maududi and all Muslims is the Word of God, tells us that all God's messengers give sermons and advice and when these are rejected, they cry and pray before their Lord. They have an unshakeable belief in their message and, instead of seizing power from their enemies, they continue to offer love and kindness. They reason gently, impart advice with humility and leave the result to God. He alone is the Lord and He bestows the earth on whoever He pleases. The wishes of all His messengers are epitomised in Moses's<sup>(as)</sup> words: *... 'O Lord, send down on us steadfastness and make us die as men who have surrendered to Thee.'* (Ch.7:V.127) Moses<sup>(as)</sup> advised his people, *'to seek help from Allah and be steadfast'* (Ch.7:V.129) and told them that *'the Verily, the Earth belongs to Allah; He gives it as a heritage to whoever He pleases'...* (Ch.7:V.129) It is not for righteous men to seize power by force. All that we know is that *'the end is best for the God-fearing'*. (Ch.7:V.129)

After Moses<sup>(as)</sup>, Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>, too, spent his life exhorting and counselling and never considered seizing power. Finally, the Chief of all prophets, Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup>, was sent as an exhorter and counsellor to invite the people to be virtuous, not as a kind of a policeman or a soldier. God named him ‘admonisher’ and said: *‘Admonish them, for thou art but an admonisher. Thou hast no authority to compel them.’* (Ch.88:Vs.22-23)

But the Maulana insists that he and his followers ‘are not a body of religious preachers and evangelists, but an organisation of God’s troopers so that they “*may be a witness against mankind*”’. (Ch.4:V.42) The task of these ‘troopers’ is to use force to wipe out ‘injustice, mischief, disorder, disobedience and exploitation from the world’.<sup>14</sup>

God tells the greatest of his prophets: *‘... And We have not appointed thee a keeper over them, nor art thou over them a guardian’*. (Ch.6:V.108) But Maulana Maududi reserves for himself and his followers not only

the authority of a policeman, but also the powers of a magistrate. It is surprising that God did not give the Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>, His greatest reformer, temporal authority over the hearts of unbelievers, but gave it instead to Maulana Maududi and his followers. The Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> – the embodiment of mercy and compassion – prayed hard that he should become instrumental in showing the path of righteousness to all mankind. But God answered: *‘Wilt thou, then, take it upon thyself to force people to become believers?’* (Ch.10:V.100) As far as believers are concerned, God told the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>: *‘And if Allah had enforced His will, they would not have set up gods with Him. And We have not made thee a keeper over them, nor art thou over them a guardian.’* (Ch.6:V.108)

In contrast to the established conduct of all the messengers of God mentioned in the Holy Qur’an by name or in general, Maulana Maududi gave himself the authority to oppress and compel God’s servants so that the Jamaati Islami could eradicate injustice, mischief, disorders,

disobedience and exploitation from the world'.<sup>15</sup>

The Maulana's ambition of seizing power knew no bounds: he would go to any lengths to achieve it. He was totally obsessed with political authority and considered that the worship of God had been prescribed to train Muslims to usurp power and rule the world. For him, worship had no spiritual purpose. It was not a religious experience, a meeting ground between man and his Creator, but a ritual of self-discipline. God says: '*And I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship Me.*' (Ch.51:V.57) The world was created for the worship of God. Worship was not created for any other purpose. But the Maulana insists:

The prayers (*salat*), fasting, charity (*zakat*) and pilgrimage have been prescribed to prepare and train us for this purpose (*jihād*). All the governments in the world give their armies special and specific training, their police and civil service too. In the same way, Islam also trains those who join its service - then requires them to go

to *jihād* and establish the government of God.<sup>16</sup>

No religion in the world preaches such a materialistic concept of worship. But even the worship of God can become nothing more than an army drill for a person who is obsessed.

Ambition is impatient by definition, but of all ambitions, power mania brooks least delay. So the Maulana would not take the straight path – it was too narrow and too long for him. And Marxism, too, will not take the long and hard route of democracy to liberate the oppressed. Instead, it adopts violence to try to overthrow the elected government of the day. The Maulana's method of reform is no different from the Marxist ideology of violent struggle. The Maulana says: 'Stand up to reform people wherever you can. Try to replace wrong principles with correct ones. Snatch away executive and legislative powers from those who do not fear God.'<sup>17</sup>

It is surprising that a journalist of Maulana Maududi's long political

experience could not understand the principle that governments should not be overthrown by force, whatever the reason. To break this basic rule is to destroy law and order. The fires of civil war would consume the very fabric of society.

Firstly, no party can be its own judge and decide its intentions are good. Secondly, even if those intentions are good, the opposition parties cannot be condemned out of hand. It is inconceivable that every member of the opposition is cruel, unjust or evil, while every member of ‘God’s troopers’ is pious, God-fearing and free from greed and lust. The fact is that parties which start the work of reform with high-flying claims are the ones which soon become greedy for power, their good intentions burned up by the flames of greed. The Maulana himself explains how uncontrollable is the desire for power:

As everyone knows, power is such a dangerous demon that the very desire of it is accompanied by an all-consuming greed. Man eagerly looks forward to owning earthly treasures and controlling his fellow

creatures so that he may exercise absolute power over them.<sup>18</sup>

One problem in uttering such uncontrolled rhetoric is that even an experienced journalist like Maududi forgets the inherent contradictions within his writings. If the very thought of power can bring a dangerous change of heart, what guarantee is there that the ‘upright’ members of the Jamaati Islami would not be corrupted by absolute power? No doubt these ‘upright’ men have undergone the ‘civil service training’ prescribed by God, i.e. Islamic worship (prayers, fasting and *zakat*), but this ‘service training’ is not restricted to the Jamaati Islami.

Ahmadi worship is not accepted as Islamic worship, according to Maulana Maududi, but what about Barelvi and Deobandi worship? Is Shiite worship not Islamic worship? Would anyone say that the prayers offered by Ahli Qur’an are non-Islamic? If so, why should not these Muslim sects ‘rise against governments based on *false* principles, seize power, remove the *wrongdoers* and establish a government based on *sound* and

*just* administration?’ ‘False’, ‘wrongdoers’, ‘sound’ and ‘just’ are relative terms. What is false according to the Jamaati Islami may not be false according to the Deobandis. What is sound and just according to the Deobandis may not be sound and just for the Barelvis. Then, what about non-Muslims? They, too, have their own views about what is right and wrong. If their views were no different from those of Muslims, they would have queued to join Islam. Would they also have had a right to overthrow the government of the day?

Good intentions or reform projects cannot become an excuse to overthrow governments. There are such vast differences in the definition of ‘uprightness’ between different political parties that if all these differences were accepted, no party could be considered ‘upright’. For instance, according to the Maulana, the Ahmadiyyah Movement has no connection with Islam; the British government created it to divide the Muslim *umma* so that Muslims would be dissuaded from *jihad* and their strength sapped. It is alleged that

the movement was developed to act as a fifth column to destroy the Muslim *umma* from within.

But the Ahmadi self-image is very different from that of the Jamaati Islami. Ahmadis believe their movement was founded to establish supremacy and to bring about a Muslim rebirth. It was not the British, but God Himself, who planted its seed to fulfil a promise He made to the people of Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup>. He promised to send a Mahdi for the reform of the *umma* and raise a Messiah who, with his irrefutable reasoning, would destroy the Cross, the Cross which inflicted suffering on Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>. It is that Mahdi and that Messiah who founded this community, now busy in the selfless service of mankind. On one hand, the community humbly counsels and advises people to change themselves, while, on the other, it fights and defeats Christianity on every front. How can one believe that the Ahmadiyya Movement was set up by the British – themselves Christian? Does one expect the British to support, let alone found, a community which is devoted to

eradicating the Trinity and planting the holy tree of the Unity of God? Wherever Ahmadis have gone, the weed of the Trinity has withered and the ever-beautiful plant of the Unity has flourished with fragrant flowers and sweet fruits. If that is the fruit of a plant sown by the British, then one only wishes they had sown a few more, so that the revival of Islam and the dissolution of Christianity had been accelerated!

What Ahmadis believe about themselves is exactly the opposite of the Maulana's views about them. In the Ahmadiyya view, the founder of their movement was deeply immersed in the love of the Holy Prophet, Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup>. The following lines from one of his poems show the ecstasy of his love and the depth of his devotion for the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>:

My intoxication in the love of Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup> is second only to that of God.

If this can be dubbed as disbelief, then God be my witness that I am the greatest of disbelievers.

*(Durre Thameen)*

According to the Ahmadis, their belief is deeply rooted in the love of the Seal of the Prophet, Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup>. But Maulana Maududi asserts that their roots go deep into the British soil of imperialism. The two views are entirely opposed.

Let us examine the converse view. The Maulana asserts that the Jamaati Islami has been founded to create a body of 'upright' men through a long discipline of Islamic worship. These people should reach such a point of readiness that Islam can say to them: 'Yes, now you are the most upright servants of God on earth. Forward, Muslim soldiers, fight the rebels of God, dispossess them of authority and take the reins of government in your hands.' Thanks to the Maulana's efforts, that body of upright men is now ready and waiting to gain strength to overthrow the government of the day.

The Maulana really believes that this body of 'upright' men was created to reform mankind and raise Islam's flag in the world. It will abolish everything ungodly

and carve with the sword the name of Allah on every heart.

The Maulana's claim that the members of Jamaati Islami are the most upright servants of God is believed to be baseless by the Ahmadis. As a matter of principle, everyone has the right to consider himself and his followers to be in the right. To be right is one thing. To be upright is quite another. We cannot claim we are righteous and upright. Man is lost in a maze of self-deception, delusion and outright hypocrisy, so that he is unable to describe himself with any accuracy.

Who knows the secrets of the heart, the lust of the mind and the hidden desires, except God? Only He knows who is upright and who sins. There are exceptions, of course. Some people exhibit unmistakable and conclusive signs of their uprightness, so that the love of God is evident from their behaviour. God talks with them as He talked with the upright people of the past. His light shines over them as it did over the great mystics and saints of the *umma* and His succour and support

becomes manifest, both in words and deeds.

Therefore Ahmadis totally reject Maulana Maududi's claim that the Jamaati Islami was founded to raise the flag of Islam. That is, in fact, a degrading and defaming of the religion which he professes to follow. The followers of Maulana Maududi can claim whatever they want within the safety of a Muslim country like Pakistan or Saudi Arabia, but let them take their creed of 'Islam by force' elsewhere and just see what reception it gets. Can they convert Christians, with their belief in Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> living since his crucifixion in heaven, to Islam? Can they destroy the Cross? Can anyone raise the flag of Islam with these Maududian beliefs?

There is no doubt in an Ahmadi mind that the teaching of Maulana Maududi brings Islam into disrepute and makes it a target of ridicule. The Jamaati Islami is not only not a friend of Islam, but also it is a form of communism. Devoid of spiritual values, hungry for power, the Jamaati Islami is inspired by Moscow, not Makkah.

In short, Ahmadis censure the Jamaati Islami as greatly as the Maulana censures the Ahmadiyya for supposedly being abusive and vituperative. Multiply these two opposing views among other sects and groups of the *umma* and you will see each of them tearing apart the other's claim of uprightness. Who, then, should 'Stand up to reform people and snatch away the executive and legislative powers from people who have no fear of God?'

Power obsession is the focal point of Maulana Maududi's concept of reform. He sees the Prophet's(saw) life in political terms, explains Islamic worship in military jargon and interprets the Qur'an as pure power politics. The Maulana knows he is incapable of reforming by persuasion, patience and humility, so he puts forward a policy of violence and disorder. The most generous interpretation of his aims is that his intentions were good. But the road to hell is paved with good intentions. The Qur'anic verdict, however, is explicit '*And when it is said to them: 'Create not disorder in the land', they retort: We are only*

*seeking to promote peace. Beware! most certainly it is they who create disorder, but they realise it not.'*  
(Ch.2:Vs.12-13).

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  13. ibid., 11.
  14. ibid., 58.
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  17. ibid. The original Urdu sentence is involved and the Maulana has used the Urdu word *hukumat* twice in the sentence in two different meanings.
  18. ibid., 15.

# PROPHETS

## of God

Part 3

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*A brief introduction to some of the major prophets. Last month we looked briefly at the life of Prophet Noah<sup>(as)</sup>. In this issue, we look at Moses<sup>(as)</sup>.*

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**By Daud A Hanif – USA**

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### **Hadhrat Musa<sup>(as)</sup> (Moses)**

Israelites were living in bondage in Egypt. The King had subjected them to very hard and difficult conditions. To perpetuate their control over Israelites, one of the measures taken against them was that the male children of Israelites be slain. The King had ordered the midwives to carry out this evil task quietly at the very birth of the children of Israelites (Exodus 1:16). But the Will of God prevented the midwives from such an evil act. When the King came to know of

this, he gave order to his people, saying,

‘Every son that is born, ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.’ (Exodus 1:22)

We have in the Holy Qur’an:

... *Pharaoh behaved arrogantly in the earth, and divided the people thereof into parties; he sought to weaken a party of them, slaying their sons and sparing their women...*

(Ch.28:V.5)

Such was the scene in Egypt when Moses<sup>(as)</sup> was born there in the house of Imran during the despotic reign of, probably, Ramses II. God decided to help the weak Israelites and bring about a complete change in their position. They were to be delivered from the bondage of Pharaoh and were to become leaders and inheritors of favours and bounties of God.

God's ways are mysterious and human beings cannot perceive them. The case of the freedom of Israelites is a marvellous one. It establishes beyond doubt that Allah's decision always comes to pass and that no power can be a hindrance in the way of its fulfillment.

Let us see how the events had unfolded for the liberation of the Israelites.

The Holy Qur'an says about the birth of Moses<sup>(as)</sup>, that God revealed to his mother saying:

*... Suckle him; and when thou fearest for him, then cast him into the river and fear not, nor grieve; for We shall restore him to thee, and shall make him one of the Messengers.*  
(Ch.28:V.8)

The Old Testament, although it has undergone many changes, contains the following statement:

'And when she could no longer hide him, she took for

him an ark of bulrushes and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river-side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child; and behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him; and said, this is one of the Hebrews' children. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the women took the child, and nursed it. And the child grew,

and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses; and she said, because I drew him out of the water.'

*(Exodus 2:3)*

This statement from the Bible in essence is very close to what we have in the Holy Qur'an as an accurate account of what happened to Moses<sup>(as)</sup>.

The mother of Moses<sup>(as)</sup> was a very sincere believer and had a living relationship with God. After the birth of Moses<sup>(as)</sup> she suckled him as God had directed her and when she felt otherwise, then without any hesitation she placed the infant Moses in the ark (Ch.28:V.8, Ch.20:V.40) and floated it in the river and directed her daughter to follow it. The daughter kept watch over the ark in such a way that no one could perceive it. The ark was picked up by a member of the family of Pharaoh who happened to be bathing in the river. The ark was brought to the palace of the Pharaoh, where his wife saw the

beautiful Israelite baby. She was attracted towards the infant and pleaded with the husband saying:

*... He will be a joy of the eye for me and for thee. Kill him not. Haply he will be useful to us or we may adopt him as a son.*

*(Ch.28:V.10)*

Then she sent for wet nurses for the baby. The baby did not accept any one of those who came. Meanwhile Moses's<sup>(as)</sup> sister man-aged to reach there and offered a solution to the problem saying:

*... Shall I lead you to a household who will bring him up for you and will be his sincere well-wishers?*

*(Ch.28:V.13)*

They agreed and Pharaoh approached the mother of Moses<sup>(as)</sup> for the nursing and upbringing of the child. She readily agreed to their proposal and the baby was given to her for upbringing and training at the expense of Pharaoh. The mother

of Moses<sup>(as)</sup> was so delighted at the return of her child according to Allah's promise that she could hardly control her emotions. Her faith in Allah became even more solid. She was fully convinced that this child would be a prophet of Allah in due course as Allah had informed her earlier. So she spared no efforts in bringing him up in the best manner. Moses<sup>(as)</sup> had such a holy mother for benevolent care and guidance and a mighty monarch as guardian until his manhood. He had the healthy and wholesome effect of his mother, overriding the evil ways and manner of his guardian monarch. He developed manly qualities of might and power and valour from the palace on the one hand, and learned good manners and self-control over them from the pious mother on the other.

As Moses<sup>(as)</sup> advanced toward maturity his observation of daily life of the people of Egypt became intense. He was able to see very clearly the cruel treatment meted out to the Israelites. The whole atmosphere

of Egypt had developed totally against the Israelites and even ordinary Egyptians carried out atrocities against them. Moses<sup>(as)</sup> had a great aversion to oppression and was very helpful to the weak. An incident for illustration may be of interest. The Holy Qur'an says:

*And he entered the town while people were still asleep and he found therein two men fighting—one of his own people and the other of his enemies. And he who was of his people sought his help against him who was of his enemies. So Moses punched him with his fist; and thereby caused his death. He said, 'This is of Satan's doing, he is indeed an enemy, a manifest deceiver.'*

(Ch.28:V.16)

Moses<sup>(as)</sup> had no intention of killing the Egyptian but his single punch had caused the death of the Egyptian. At this Moses<sup>(as)</sup> became very upset and implored God for forgiveness and made a solemn promise to

Him saying, 'I will never be a helper of the guilty.' The next morning he left his home being watchful of the situation. Suddenly he heard the call of help from the same Israelite, who was again engaged in some dispute with another Egyptian. Moses<sup>(as)</sup> said to him, 'You are definitely a misguided person.' And when Moses<sup>(as)</sup> made up his mind to take hold of the man, who was an enemy of both, the Israelite thought that Moses<sup>(as)</sup> was about to hold him, and cried out loudly, '*O Moses<sup>(as)</sup> dost thou intend to kill me as thou didst kill a man yesterday?*' (Ch.28:V.20) This cry disclosed the incident, which had taken place a day earlier. The Egyptians were already in search of the killer of the Egyptian. So the condition of Moses<sup>(as)</sup> became very vulnerable. He, therefore, confined himself to his home. A well-wisher of Moses<sup>(as)</sup> who happened to know the evil design of the authorities came to him with the news that the chiefs were counselling together to kill him and advised him to depart from the area immediately.

### **Moses<sup>(as)</sup> Departs for Midian**

Moses<sup>(as)</sup> secretly left home praying and moving watchfully. After travelling for a while, he decided to go to Midian. After a few days' journey Moses<sup>(as)</sup> arrived in the vicinity of Midian. On the outskirts of Midian he found shepherds watering their animals. Among them were two young ladies who were holding back their flocks. Moses<sup>(as)</sup> asked them what their problem was? They replied:

*We cannot water our flocks until the shepherds take away their flocks, and our father is a very old man.*

(Ch.28:V.24)

Moses<sup>(as)</sup> watered their flocks and returned to the shade of the tree while praying to God for help and guidance. When the two ladies came back and narrated the story to their father, he sent one of them back to Moses<sup>(as)</sup>. She came and bashfully approaching Moses<sup>(as)</sup> said: '*My father calls thee that he may reward thee for thy having watered our flocks for us.*' On his

arrival at their home Moses<sup>(as)</sup> narrated the incident, which had happened in Egypt. The old man replied, *'Fear not; thou hast escaped from the unjust people'* (Ch.28:V.26).

It seems that the household was already in search of some good servant. So his daughters suggested employing Moses<sup>(as)</sup> as he had proved himself to be a strong and honest man. The father was fully convinced of the nobility of Moses<sup>(as)</sup>; he, therefore, offered him one of his daughters in marriage. In due course a marriage contract was made. The old man, Shuaib, was a holy man and perhaps knew through revelation that his son-in-law would be a prophet of God. So he wanted him to remain with him for a long time and benefit from his company. He made eight to ten years of service an essential condition for marriage. Moses<sup>(as)</sup> accepted the condition of service and remained with Hadhrat Shuaib for this time.

### **Moses<sup>(as)</sup> Commissioned to Prophethood**

After completing the term of service, Moses<sup>(as)</sup> set forth from Midian with his family. On the way, he saw a manifestation of God. He told his family to wait for him while he went up the mountain, where he had seen the light and was expecting great communication from God. On arrival at the spot, he was called by a voice from the right side of the valley, in the blessed spot, out of the tree:

*...O Moses, surely I, none but I, am Allah, the Lord of the worlds;..... Throw down thy rod. And when he saw it move as though it were a serpent, he turned back retreating and did not wait.' 'O Moses, come forward and fear not; surely thou art of those who are safe. Insert thy hand into thy bosom; it will come forth white without evil effect, and draw back thy arm toward thyself to be free from fear. So these shall be two proofs from thy Lord to Pharaoh and his chiefs. Surely, they are a*

*rebellious people.*  
(Ch.28:Vs.31-33)

With these words Moses<sup>(as)</sup> was commissioned to return to Pharaoh and his people for their guidance and reformation. Moses<sup>(as)</sup> had lived among them and was aware of their arrogance, cruelty and inhumane behaviour. The responsibility of guiding them seemed to him very heavy and the task extremely difficult. No doubt the responsibilities of prophethood are indeed very heavy, and Moses<sup>(as)</sup>, it appears, felt that he was not equal to the great task with which he was being entrusted. That is why he said:

*And my breast is straitened  
and my tongue is not fluent;  
therefore send word to Aaron*  
(Ch.26:V.14)

He also recalled the incident in which an Egyptian had died at his fist and the blame of killing him was placed on him. Allah, the Wise, granting the request of Moses<sup>(as)</sup>, said:

*We will strengthen thy arm  
with thy brother, and We will  
give power to you both so that  
they shall not be able to reach  
you. Go with Our signs. You  
two and those who follow you  
will be the winners.*  
(Ch.28:V.36)

Allah said again:

*So go to Pharaoh and say,  
'We are the Messengers of the  
Lord of the worlds, to tell thee  
to send the children of Israel  
with us.*  
(Ch.26:Vs.17-18)

The Bible also mentions this in Exodus, chapter 5 but in a different way.

The name of Pharaoh to whom Moses<sup>(as)</sup> gave the message of God, has not been mentioned in the Holy Bible or the Holy Qur'an. Some historians say it was Ramses II while more recent ones say it was Merneptah, the son of Ramses II. However, it does not make much difference, as both were despotic and most cruel to the Israelites.

## **Moses<sup>(as)</sup> in the Court of Pharaoh**

Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and Aaron<sup>(as)</sup>, with a mighty message and full assurance of victory from God, reached the capital of Egypt. On arrival they first contacted the Israelites and gave them the glad tidings of achieving freedom from the bondage of Pharaoh and persuaded them to prepare for the impending departure. Then they went to Pharaoh. Moses<sup>(as)</sup> conveyed to him the message of God in a very plain and polite manner saying:

*O Pharaoh truly, I am a Messenger from the Lord of worlds. It is not meet that I should say anything of Allah except the truth. I have come to you with a clear sign from your Lord; therefore, let the children of Israel go with me.*  
(Ch.7:Vs.105-106)

*... and afflict them not. We have indeed, brought thee a Sign from thy Lord; and peace shall be on him who follows the guidance. It has, indeed, been revealed to us that*

*punishment shall come on him who rejects and turns away.*  
(Ch.20:Vs.48-49)

On hearing this message, the following dialogue took place between Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and Pharaoh.

*Pharaoh said, 'Who then is the Lord of you two, O Moses?'*

*He said 'Our Lord is He who gave unto everything its proper form and then guided it to its proper function'.*

*Pharaoh said, 'What then will be the fate of the former generations?'*

*He said, 'The knowledge thereof is with my Lord recorded in a Book. My Lord neither errs nor forgets.'*

*It is He Who has made the earth for you a cradle and has caused pathways for you to run through it; and Who sends down rain from the sky and thereby We bring forth various kinds of vegetation.*

*Eat ye and pasture your cattle. Verily, in this are Signs for those who are endued with reason.*

*From it have We created you, and into it shall We cause you to return, and from it shall we bring you forth once more.*

*And We did show him (Pharaoh) Our signs, all of them; but he rejected them and refused to believe.*

(Ch.20:Vs.50-57)

### **Miracles of Moses<sup>(as)</sup>**

Pharaoh then demanded some miracle saying, ... *'If thou hast indeed come with a Sign, then produce it, if thou art of the truthful.'* So he flung down his rod and behold! It was a serpent plainly visible. And he drew forth his hand, and lo! it was white to beholders.'

(Ch.7:Vs.107-109)

These miracles were so impressive and imposing that Pharaoh was dumbfounded but his courtiers, the chiefs of his people, came to his aid saying that Moses<sup>(as)</sup> was most surely a skillful sorcerer and desired to turn the people out of their land. The other chiefs joined in and advised Pharaoh to put off Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and his brother for a

while and call all the skillful sorcerers from all over the country for combating Moses<sup>(as)</sup>. Then they asked Moses<sup>(as)</sup> for the appointment of a date for the final contest. Moses<sup>(as)</sup> said:

*Your appointment shall be for the day of the Festival and let the people be assembled when the sun is risen high.*

(Ch.20:V.60)

The discussion ended there and the people dispersed. Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and his brother returned to the Israelites and continually conveyed the message of God to them and kept assuring them of the impending victory.

Moses<sup>(as)</sup> returned to the appointed place on the fixed date and time. Pharaoh and the chiefs had already gathered all the people and their skillful sorcerers. The record of the contest that ensued between them according to the Holy Qur'an is given below:

*They said, O Moses, either do thou throw first, or we shall*

*be the first to throw’.*

*He said, ‘Nay, throw ye. Then lo! their cords and their staves appeared to him, by their magic, as though they ran about.*

*And Moses conceived a fear in his mind.*

*We said, ‘Fear not, for thou wilt have the upper hand;*

*And throw that which is in thy right hand; it will swallow that which they have wrought, for that which they have wrought is only a magician’s trick. And a magician shall not thrive, come where he may’.*

*(Ch.20:Vs.66-70)*

This contest did establish the truth of Moses<sup>(as)</sup> but Pharaoh and his people did not pay heed to it, rather, advancing in their transgression said:

*‘Wilt thou leave Moses and his people to create disorder in the land and forsake thee and thy gods?’ He answered, ‘We will ruthlessly slay their sons and let their women live. And surely we are dominant*

*over them.*

*(Ch.7:V.128)*

Thereafter Pharaoh and his chiefs intensified their brutal treatment of Israelites while Moses<sup>(as)</sup> intensified his exhortation to the Israelites for becoming more steadfast in their faith and seeking help from God. The Israelites complained about the evil treatment, while Moses<sup>(as)</sup> encouraged them to bear it with patience:

*They replied, ‘We were persecuted before thou camest to us and even after thou camest to us.’*

*He said, ‘Your Lord is about to destroy your enemy and make you rulers in the land, that He may then see how you act.’*

*(Ch.7:V.130)*

### **Other Signs Shown to Pharaoh and His People**

God Almighty afflicted the people of Pharaoh with drought, scarcity of fruits and by sending upon them storms, locusts, lice, frogs and blood as clear Signs.

But they behaved proudly and were a sinful people. When a punishment fell upon them, they said:

*O Moses, pray for us to thy Lord according to that which He has promised to thee. If thou remove from us the punishment, we will surely send with thee the children of Israel. (Ch.7:V.135)*

Nine miracles were shown to Pharaoh and his people through Moses<sup>(as)</sup> but they did not benefit from them. Due to the fear of persecution by Pharaoh and the chiefs, only a few youths from among them believed in Moses<sup>(as)</sup> (Ch.10:V.84). After the defeat of his sorcerers Pharaoh became more furious. At this critical hour God revealed to Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and his brother:

*Build houses for your people in the city and make your houses facing in the same direction and observe Prayer. And give glad tidings to the believers. (Ch.10:V.88)*

Under this direction of God, Moses<sup>(as)</sup> convinced the Israelites to dwell very close together so as to be able to help one another in time of need. This is only achievable when people build their houses near or facing each other. It also indicated that they should have a common goal or ideal and remain focused on it. Thus Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and Aaron<sup>(as)</sup> concentrated on having the Israelites united and prepared fully for migration on the one hand and implored God against Pharaoh on the other hand in the following way:

*Our Lord, You have bestowed upon Pharaoh and his chiefs ornaments and wealth in this life. Our Lord, it results only in their leading people astray from Your path. Our Lord, obliterate their riches and be severe on their hearts because it seems they would not believe until they see the grievous punishment. (Ch.10:V.89)*

God heard their prayers and gave them final orders for departure

from Egypt saying:

*Take away My servants by night, and strike for them a dry path through the sea. Thou wilt not be afraid of being overtaken, nor wilt thou have any other fear.*

(Ch.20:V.78)

In order to fully understand the nature and significance of this incident which indeed constituted a great divine sign, it is necessary to read this verse along with other relevant verses such as Ch.2:V.51, Ch.26:Vs.62-64 and Ch.44:V.25.

The Bible mentions the crossing of the sea in the following words:

‘And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand

and on their left. And the Egyptians pursued and went in after them to the midst of the sea. And the Lord said unto Moses, ‘Stretch out thine hand over the sea.’ And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea and the sea returned to its strength. And the waters returned and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.’

(Exodus 14:21-28)

The Holy Qur’an says:

*And remember the time when We divided the sea for you and saved you and drowned Pharaoh’s people while you looked on.*

(Ch.2:V.51)

*And when the two hosts came in sight of each other the companions of Moses said, ‘We are surely overtaken’ .... Then We revealed to Moses saying, ‘Strike the sea with thy rod.’ Thereupon it parted*

*and every part looked like a huge mountain.*

(Ch.26:Vs.62 and 64)

Along with it read also:

*And leave thou the sea at a time when it is motionless.*

*Surely, they are a host that are doomed to be drowned.*

(Ch.44:V.25)

When Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and the Israelites arrived at the northern extremity of the Red Sea, the ebb of the tide had begun. As the water receded, it left behind dunes, the tops of which were gradually uncovered, leaving the intervening depressions full of water. The Israelites crossed over at that moment. On arrival at the spot, the Egyptian forces saw a bare stretch of the shore and pursued the fugitives. Their chariot wheels stuck fast in the wet soil and the water returned upon them when the wind shifted. They were thus destroyed by God.

Historians differ as to the exact place from where Moses<sup>(as)</sup> crossed the Red Sea. Keeping all

views in sight, “What is most probable is the fact that from Tal Abi Sulaiman which was the capital of the Pharaohs in the time of Moses<sup>(as)</sup>, the Israelites at first went to north east to the gulf of Timsah but finding that a net of gulfs barred their way, they turned south and crossed the Red Sea near the town of Suez where it is hardly more than 2/3 mile wide and started for Qadas.” (Enc. Bible Col 1437)

In short, Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and Aaron<sup>(as)</sup> ‘led the Israelites out of Egypt into Canaan. The Israelites left secretly by night, and when Pharaoh learnt of their flight, he pursued them with his hosts and was drowned in the Red Sea.’

As Pharaoh was drowning, he proclaimed belief in the God of the children of Israelites. Acknowledging his belief God said:

*What! Now! while you have been disobedient before and were of those who do mischief.*

*So this day We will save thee in thy body alone that thou mayest be a Sign to those who come after thee. And surely many of mankind are heedless of Our Signs.*  
(Ch.10:Vs.92-93)

According to one research:

It is remarkable that the Qur'an alone, of all religious scriptures and books of history, mentions this fact. The Bible makes no mention of it, nor does any book of history. But in what wonderful manner the word of God has proved true! After the lapse of more than 3,000 years the body of Pharaoh has been discovered and it now lies in a preserved state in the museum at Cairo. The body shows Pharaoh to have been a lean, short-bodied man, with a countenance expressive of anger and stupidity. Moses<sup>(as)</sup> was born in the time of Rameses II and was brought up by him (Exodus 2:2-10), but it was in the reign of his son, Merneptah (Meneptah)

that he was entrusted with the mission of a Prophet (*Jew Enc.*, vol 9, p.500 & *Enc. Bib.*, under "Pharaoh" and under "Egypt")." (Large Commentary, Vol 1, Page 448).

### **Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and the Israelites in Sinai**

After having crossed the sea safely, Israelites saw the destruction of the powerful enemy with their own eyes and thanked God. God called Moses<sup>(as)</sup> for thirty nights on Mount Sinai and then this period was extended for another ten nights. Before leaving for the meeting with God, Moses<sup>(as)</sup> said to his brother Aaron<sup>(as)</sup>, '*Act for me among my people in my absence and manage them well, and follow not the way those who came disorder*' (Ch.7 V.143).

Moses<sup>(as)</sup> was blessed with special communication from God. It made him bold, and he requested God to show him that perfect manifestation which He promised the prophet prophesied in Deuteronomy 18:18. Upon

this God manifested himself on the mountain, and it broke into pieces and Moses<sup>(as)</sup> fell unconscious. On recovery he thanked God and said, 'Holy art Thou, I turn towards Thee and I am the first to believe' (Ch.7:V.144).

He was then given the Ten Commandments for Israelites. The words of those commandments were not preserved. However, they are found in the current Bible in the following words.

### **The Ten Commandments**

And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

*Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt

not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me. And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain. *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.* Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

*Honor thy father and thy mother:*

that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

*Thou shalt not kill.*

*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

*Thou shalt not steal.*

*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*

*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*

(Exodus 20:1-17)

Besides these commandments, the law of retaliation, which was vigorously followed by the Israelites, is mentioned in the following words:

‘And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life.

Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

And if man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish, he shall

let him go free for his eye's sake.

And if he smite out his manservant's tooth or his maidservant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake.’

(Exodus 21:23-27)

The Holy Qur'an describe this law as follow:

*And therein We prescribed for them: a life for a life, and an eye for an eye, and a nose for a nose, and an ear for an ear, and a tooth for a tooth, and for other injuries equitable retaliation. And whoso waives the right thereto, it shall be an expiation for his sins; and whoso judges not by what Allah has sent down, these it is who are wrongdoers.*

(Ch.5:V.46)

During the absence of Moses<sup>(as)</sup> the Israelites due to their weak faith, returned to the worship of the calf, which Samiri prepared with their ornaments. They did not heed the polite admonition of

Aaron<sup>(as)</sup>. On his return from Mount Sinai, Moses<sup>(as)</sup> rebuked them and was hard on his brother. He excommunicated Samiri and frightened the followers a great deal, then picked up seventy leading men and went back to the mountain for repentance. An earthquake took place, which struck terror among the Israelites. They joined in repentance with Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and were forgiven by God.

Moses<sup>(as)</sup> introduced the Divine Commandments on the tablets and advised them that their progress and prosperity lay in obedience to them. Israelites were to be trained in Sinai for the victory of Canaan.

Having lived for a long time in bondage and in a state of dependence, the Israelites had become cowardly and indolent. So God intended them to stay in the desert for some time and to live on game and wild herbs in order that they might shed their cowardice and laziness by living an independent life in the desert.

Thus revitalised, they were to be led to the Promised Land and made rulers of it. The Israelites, however, failed to understand the real purpose of God or, having understood it, failed to appreciate it and foolishly insisted upon living in a town. God wanted to prepare them to rule over the Promised Land but those unfortunate people hungered after husbandry. So they were told to go down to a town where they would get the desired things.

### **Promised Land and the Israelites**

Reference to the Promised Land has been made in the Holy Qur'an in the following verse:

*And already have We written in the Psalms of David, after the exhortation, that My righteous servants shall inherit the land.*

(Ch.21:V.106)

Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and Aaron<sup>(as)</sup> encouraged Israelites to march forward from Sinai to conquer Canaan, the Promised Land, and assured

them of victory, provided that they strove to enter the gates thereof. But they replied saying,

*O Moses , there is, in that land a haughty and powerful people, and we shall not enter it until they go forth from it. ... Go thou and thy Lord and fight, and here we sit.*  
(Ch.5:Vs.23, 25)

When the Israelites behaved in a cowardly manner, God decreed that they should continue to wander in the wilderness for forty years in order that the life of the desert should invigorate them and infuse in them new life and should strengthen their morals.

Moses<sup>(as)</sup> had succeeded in bringing the Israelites out of Pharaoh's bondage and brought them freedom, but could not convince them to conquer Canaan. He died in Sinai.

### **Future Disclosed to Moses<sup>(as)</sup>**

Allah alone possesses the knowledge of the future. He imparts it through His chosen ones. We mention a few

prophecies of Moses<sup>(as)</sup>.

‘And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death.

And he said, The Lord came from Sinai and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.’

*(Deuteronomy 33:2)*

In this passage three prophecies have been mentioned:

Manifestation of God on Moses<sup>(as)</sup> in Sinai.

God's manifestation on Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> in Seir, the area in which many miracles of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> took place.

God's manifestation on Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup> which was to take place at Mount Paran. The Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup> conquered Makkah at the head of ten thousand companions. Paran in Arabic is called Faran, the name of the hill that lies between Makkah and Madinah. The fiery

law mentioned is the Holy Qur'an – a permanent law for mankind.

God spoke to Moses<sup>(as)</sup> and said:

‘I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which he shall speak in My name, I will require it of him.’

*(Deuteronomy 20:18-19)*

In this prophecy Moses<sup>(as)</sup> was told that God would raise a Prophet from among their brethren, that is, the Ishmaelites, who would be a law-bearing Prophet like Moses<sup>(as)</sup>. This was fulfilled in the person of Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup>. The word of the prophecy ‘and will put My words in his mouth’ are very significant as the Holy Qur'an introduced by Muhammad<sup>(saw)</sup> claims to be the very Word of God. There is no other religious book, which claims to be the exact Word of God.

Moses<sup>(as)</sup> was a law-bearing Prophet and all those appeared after him including David, Solomon and Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> followed his law. His dispensation came to an end with the death of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> in Kashmir, India.

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# The Impact of Religion on Ghanaian Society

*By Maulvi A. Wahab Adam, Amir (Head) & Missionary-In-Charge of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Ghana on 76th National Annual Convention of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Ghana, held at the Mission's conference centre, Bustan-e-Ahmad, (Garden of Ahmad), Ashongman, Accra, on 8th-December, 2005.*

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*Assalaamu Alaikum  
Warahmatullahi Wabarakaatuh!*

May the peace, mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you all.

Our special welcome goes to His Excellency Alhaji Aliu Mahama, Vice President of the Republic of Ghana who despite his pre-occupation with enormous State duties, has honoured our invitation to be with us this morning.

The theme for this year's Convention is '*The Impact of Religion on Ghanaian society*'.

A human being is like any other lesser creature. He feels hungry and therefore eats to satisfy his hunger. So does he feel thirsty and drinks to quench his thirst. He feels sleepy and, therefore, sleeps.

Man shares all these instincts with all other lesser creatures. What, then, what is the difference between man and the other creatures? Man has been given the intellect to distinguish between good and evil.

This is also called *conscience*. It enables him to distinguish what is good from what is bad; what is proper from what is not proper, what is appropriate from what is not appropriate.

Then on top of it all, he has been given the capacity to choose what is right from what is wrong. It is the capacity to choose that raises man above the angels.

The Holy Qur'an says:

*So when I have fashioned him*

*in perfection and have  
breathed into him of My Spirit,  
fall ye down in submission to  
him.*

(Ch.15:V.30)

With these qualities, he becomes a moral being. He may feel hungry and thirsty but unlike the lesser creatures, he will not consume what does not belong to him. Besides, he will not consume what is not wholesome. So will he not have intimacy with his mother or sister as do lesser creatures. By the same token, he is expected not to have intimacy with one who is not his legitimate married partner.

When man is said to have been created in God's image, that is what it means. It does not mean that God has a nose like that of man or a mouth like man's mouth! What it means is, man has been endowed with the capacity to imbibe the attributes of God.

To help us attain to these heights, God has been sending guidance to all nations. This guidance from God is what constitutes religion. Religion teaches purity of thought and of action. The basic teachings

of all religions are the same.

It must be stressed that Allah is not a partial God. Ever since the creation of the world, God has been providing guidance for all nations. He cares for all His creation. He cares not only for the people of Israel but also for the people of India, Arabia, Europe, Australia and Africa. According to the Holy Prophet or Islam<sup>(saw)</sup> there have appeared 124,000 prophets in the world.

The Holy Qur'an says:

*Verily, We have sent thee with  
the truth, as bearer of glad  
tidings and as a Warner; and  
there is no people to whom a  
Warner has not been sent.*

(Ch.35:V.25)

The Holy Qur'an also says:

*Say ye: 'We believe in Allah  
and what has been revealed to  
us and what was revealed to  
Abraham and Ishmael, and  
Isaac, and Jacob and his  
children, and what was given  
to Moses and Jesus, and what  
was given to all other Prophets*

*from their Lord. We make no difference between any of them; and to Him we submit ourselves.'*

(Ch.2:V.137)

So we hear of Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. All these great religions have made a tremendous impact on society.

It is generally believed that religions have been the cause of wars and conflicts in the world. This may be true of followers but not of the teachings.

In Ghana, two of these great religions are predominant, i.e. Islam and Christianity .

The theme of this year's Convention is to enable us to make a frank, honest and unbiased assessment of the impact of the two great religions on the Ghanaian society.

I am a personal witness to the collaboration of leaders of Religious Bodies in ensuring relative peace and stability in the

country. I am aware of the Joint Pastoral Letters that leaders of Religious Bodies in this country have been signing to bring hope and solace to the people of Ghana in times of great fear and despair. I also know the efforts of leaders of Religious Bodies in organising programmes of Compassion for those living with HIV/AIDS.

There is also no gainsaying the fact that religion has made invaluable contribution to the provision of quality education, health care facilities and has also developed agriculture in the country.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, for instance, is well-known for its schools and hospitals: It is the first religious body to have set up homeopathic clinics in the country. It the first in the country to have made successful experiment of wheat cultivation.

As from this year, a special Department has been opened at the Ahmadiyya Muslim Missionary Training College at Ekrawfo – a Department whose first intake is 41. The students will commit the

entire text of the Holy Qur'an to memory.

Apart from other advantages, the forty-one Ghanaians committing the entire text of the Holy Qur'an to memory will provide an irrefutable proof to Ghanaians, as it has to many countries across the world, that the Holy Qur'an is the one Scripture that is indestructible because it can be reproduced, word for word, by at least 41 individuals, here in Ghana, should the need arise.

Already, students from 12 countries of the sub-continent are pursuing courses in theology at the College.

Contributions of various religious bodies, therefore, are no doubt, highly commendable when viewed against the background of religious leaders in other countries who for political and other considerations create disunity, conflict and pain to the detriment of their respective countries.

What needs to be noted, however, is the fact that there abound in the world today, many institutions

whose avowed aim is to provide material prosperity to their clients. These institutions are not only concerned with the provision of material wealth but are also experts in the field.

What such institutions lack, and to which they do not make any claim, is the ability to equip their clients with morality and communion with the Creator.

It is religion that makes these claims. In this age of specialisation, it is easy to understand that the principal responsibility of religion is to lift man from an animalistic state to a moral being.

That is why it would be tragic if the high-sounding claim of religion to develop man morally and link him to his Maker remains a dead letter as is the case with mundane institutions and organisations.

It is in this light that one needs to evaluate the impact of religion on the Ghanaian society.

Here is a country where superstition is so deep-rooted that religion or no religion, we still

believe in a concept which is well captured by a University Professor that ‘if you do not perform funeral rites properly, the passage of the ancestors becomes a little difficult.’

The result is, we spend hours, days, weeks and even months so as to ‘ease’ the passage of our dead. Time aside, we also spend scarce resources that are better reserved for orphans and widows on the purchase of expensive coffins, choicest drinks and in recent times, sumptuous ‘take away’ meals! In our part of the world, more money is spent on the dead than on the living!

The story of the man who connived with his doctor to inform his relatives that he is dead in order to get them to pay his hospital bills is still fresh in our minds.

None of the relatives paid him a visit when he was lying in pain at Korle Bu. The moment the doctor informed the family that he was dead, they did not only find the money to purchase an expensive coffin, but also enough to settle the hospital bill. It was after settling

the hospital bill that the man was presented to the members of the family as a living being! They were terribly disappointed to see him alive!

Excessive drinking is the bane of our society. Most of the accidents on our roads are caused by drivers who either do not heed the oft repeated warning: ‘Don’t drink and drive’ or through vehicles that are not road-worthy or both.

Yet superstition is so deep-seated in our society that we ascribe these tragic accidents to the devil!

Widows are tortured and humiliated in our society. They are turned out of the homes they helped their husbands to build. Pepper is literally put into their eyes because it is taken for granted that it was the wife who ‘killed’ the husband. So she must be punished! All these boil down to superstition and it is a pity that adherents of religion indulge in these practices in the name of culture.

Culture is dynamic, not static. So every cultural practice that is

inimical to society should be discarded. And it is religion that should help us do that.

Imagine that in the 21st Century we spend a lifetime ‘catching’ witches. Yes, always witches, not wizards, and generally, old and vulnerable women.

In so doing, we ascribe to these poor women things that they cannot even dream of doing – eating up young grandchildren, placing ‘barrels’ in the wombs of their daughters so that they become barren, afflicting prosperous relations with deadly diseases, and hanging poverty perpetually around their necks!

These are ‘secrets’ which are ‘uncovered’ only by men of God, with devastating consequences. Seeds of suspicion and hatred are sown in the hearts of close relations. Houses of suspected witches are set on fire. Some are beaten to death. The result is the witches’ village at *Larbanga*. It is a blot on the face of an otherwise beautiful body called religion.

If out of many hours of worship,

only a fraction is devoted to instilling true moral values, or if, in some cases, sermons are delivered in a language that the congregation does not understand, how are worshippers expected to know the fundamentals of religion?

Who is a prophet? What moral attributes does he possess? Can one see the footprints of angels on sand in a wakeful state? What is prayer? Do we have to shout at the top of our voices before Allah or God hears us? Do we please Allah or God by offering ill-gotten money to Him? If not, is there a system of retribution in this world and in the world to come?

If we knew such simple fundamentals of religion, we would not be persuaded to believe that prayers are best answered if a man of God places his hands on his subject when she is stark naked. So would one not be persuaded to believe that the way to fertility is to abandon one’s husband to have intimacy with a man of God.

It is unbelievable that a worshipper can be persuaded to

pretend to be 'blind' or 'lame' in order that he or she could be declared as 'seeing' or 'whole', in public, through the 'miracle' of a man of God!

How surprising that a worshipper can be made to believe that a man of God can predict his or her future merely by looking into a bowl of sand!

What a pity that the celebration of an important religious observance cannot be complete without amorous dance and public nuisance!

Let us admit that, so far, we, as Religious bodies, have not found any satisfactory answer to the oft-repeated question that if the majority of the people of the country are worshippers of Allah or God, how come there is so much of indiscipline, immorality, and embezzlement in our society?

While we have every right to celebrate the achievements and successes of religion, we should also be honest and humble enough to admit the failures. Such an admission is battle half-won

because we would, from then on, not behave like the ostrich that buries its head in the sand but tackle the problem head-on with a view to solving it.

According to the Holy Qur'an, the problem lies in disbelief in life after death: that there is life beyond this material world, that every deed of man is recorded and that the All-Knowing Allah or God will sooner or later call each one to account for his or her stewardship while in this transient world. Then each will be, without doubt, rewarded or punished in strict accord with his or her deeds.

The Holy Qur'an says:

*As to those who believe not in the Hereafter, We have made their deeds appear beautiful to them, so they are wandering blindly.*  
(Ch.27:V.5)

It also says:

*And We will certainly question those to whom the Messengers were sent and We will certainly question the Messengers.*

*Then will We certainly relate to them their deeds with knowledge, for We were never absent.*

*And the weighing on that day will be true. Then as for those whose scales are heavy, it is they who shall prosper.*

*And as for those whose scales are light, it is they who shall have ruined their souls because of their being unjust to*  
*Our Signs.*

(Ch.7: Vs.7-10)

It is only with such a realisation that materialism will give way to spirituality, immorality to morality and indiscipline to discipline.

Religious bodies must view with justifiable concern the recent calls for legalisation of prostitution as a check against the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Whatever reasons lie behind these calls can only be found in philosophies that fail to take into account the teachings of God.

The Holy Qur'an is explicit on this:

*And come not near unto adultery; surely, it is a foul thing and an evil way.*

(Ch.17:V.33)

In other words, all avenues through which adultery can be committed should be carefully watched and avoided. These include free intermixing of the sexes, indecent dressing and lewd or profane songs.

When any of these is projected through the radio or television, it has the same effect.

Indeed the Holy Prophet of Islam<sup>(saw)</sup>, has said:

‘It never happens that permissiveness overwhelms a people to the extent that they display their acts of sex shamelessly and they are not uniquely punished through the spread of such diseases the like of which have never been witnessed by their forefathers.’

*(Sunan Ibn-e-Majah. Kitabal-Fitan, Baabul Uqoobah)*

That should be the rationale of accepting abstinence as the

number one line of action as a check against the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Not only that the call to legalise prostitution will not be the correct antidote against the spread of the dreadful disease but also it will encourage immorality and the break-up of families.

It is equally important that Religious Bodies should be seriously worried about the growing acceptance of same-sex relationship as a fact of life. When the matter was raised at the Lambeth Conference some years back and the Bishops from Africa and Asia dismissed it as unsupported by Scripture, they were branded as backward and superstitious.

However, a few days ago, the South Africa Constitutional Court ruled in favour of same-sex marriages. The Court went further to define marriage not as ‘a union between man and woman’ but as a union between two persons. So the trend which seemed distant is getting closer and closer.

How true are the words of Dr. Giles Frazer: ‘God created two persons male and female. Now the world of homosexuals has created a third – a homosexual, neither male nor female – strange two-in-one human.’

These trends present a serious challenge to Religious Bodies and all men and women who are concerned about morality in the Ghanaian society.

The idea of same-sex marriages defeats the purpose of marriage which is holy matrimony and ordained by the Almighty for procreation and the continuity of the human race.

Ghana is a great country, the first in Africa South of the Sahara to have gained Independence. It is destined to play a pivotal role in the affairs of Africa and the world at large. To do that the citizens of Ghana, each and all, need to play his or her part, not in talking but in doing what it takes to bring to Ghana peace, stability, honour and above all, a deep consciousness of morality and accountability that will make Ghana truly great. Here,

religion has an important role to play.

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV (Allah's mercy be on him) has lamented in these words:

‘As far as human moral conduct is concerned, it seems to be universal in its sinfulness. Those who claim to be religious are unfortunately no less immoral than the irreligious. The so-called believers in God are no longer clearly distinguishable from those who do not believe.....’

The Holy Qur'an pronounces its judgement on the people of the latter days:

*We call that age to witness, That man is most certainly at loss. Save for those who believe and do good deeds and admonish righteousness by righteous means, and admonish patience with patience.'*

(Ch.103:Vs.2-4)

*(Revelation Rationality Knowledge and Truth, Page 651-2)*

Let all the Religious Bodies in this, vigour, steadfastness and in all sincerity, pursue that objective, and the country will witness a positive impact of religion on the citizenry.

The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup>, had prayed for all those who participate in these Conventions whose only aim is to develop ourselves morally and spiritually.

It is our humble prayer that Allah may, out of His grace, make each one of us a recipient of the blessings of those humble supplications.

Once again, it is my honour and privilege to welcome you all to this Convention.

Thank you.

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# *The Purity of the Text of the* **HOLY QUR'AN** – Part 2

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From the Review of Religions, 1907

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## **2. Arguments showing that the Holy Qur'an was written in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> by his own direction.**

I will now consider the circumstances which assisted in the preservation of the text of the Holy Qur'an. The first and the most important of these is that every verse of the Holy Qur'an was written in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> before his eyes. Writing was generally known at Makkah and Madinah before the advent of Islam, and though the Arabs generally trusted their wonderfully retentive memories for the preservation of thousands of verses and long lists of geneologies, yet they reduced to writing their more important compositions and hung them in some public place where their compatriots could see and admire them. Hence the seven famous

odes known as '*the seven suspended ones*'. These odes were so named from the circumstance that they were suspended upon the Ka'aba by their authors, as odes of unequalled poetic beauty, at the pilgrimage season, and there they remained placarded for some time. There were seven different odes by seven different famous poets of the pre-Islamic days and were suspended in succession.

Various anecdotes preserved to us in the traditions show that the whole of the Holy Qur'an existed in a written form in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>, while the Holy Book itself contains many references showing that it was written at the time. But before referring to these two sources of evidence, I would give a quotation from Sir William Muir, showing that there is such an overwhelming evidence of the Qur'an having

been reduced to writing before the eyes of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> that one of the most hostile critics of Islam has found it impossible to deny its truth. He writes:

‘But there is good reason for believing that many fragmentary copies, embracing amongst them the whole Coran, or nearly the whole, were during his lifetime made by the Prophet’s followers. Writing was without doubt generally known at Makkah long before Mahomet assumed the prophetic office. And at Madinah many of his followers were employed by the prophet in writing his letters or despatches. . . . . The poorer captives taken at Bedr were offered their release on condition that they taught a certain number of Madinah citizens to write. And although the people of Madinah were not so generally educated as those of Makkah, yet many are noticed as having been able to write before Islam’.

*(Introduction to Muir’s Life of Mahomet, p.28)*

The Holy Qur’an itself furnishes ample evidence that it existed in a written form. It is again and again called the *kitab* which means a book or a thing written. The Qur’an is also designated as the ‘*suhuf*’ which means written papers. Thus in xcvi: 2, we have the Arabic which means ‘*a messenger from God reading to them pure pages in which are unchanging books.*’

The pure pages are the pages of the Holy Qur’an and the unchanging books are its chapters, for not only is the entire Qur’an called *Alkitab* or the Book, but its different chapters are also called books, Again in Ch.29: Vs.11-15, Rodwell renders the Arabic as follows: ‘*Verily it (the Qur’an) is, a warning (and whoso is willing beareth it in mind) written on honoured pages, exalted, purified by the hands of scribes, honored, righteous.*’ The word *sahifa* (pl. *suhuf*) which is used here is the very word applied to the collections made by Zaid in the caliphate of Abu Bekr and later in that of Othman. Thus we see that the Holy Qur’an describes itself in clear words both as a *kitab* and as

*sahifa*, words used in the Arabic language to denote a written book, a fact to which every dictionary of the Arabic language testifies. From the same root *sahaf* is derived the word *mushaf*, a name to this day applied to the Holy Qur'an, which means a book or a volume consisting of a collection of *sahifas* or written pages (see Lane's Lexicon under the root:

س ه ف

The word *Qur'an* is derived from the root *Qara* which means reading or reciting, and the Holy Book is called the Qur'an showing that it was meant for reading or reciting. Every portion of it was both written and recited and hence it is the Qur'an as well as the *kitab*.

There are many other references in the Holy Qur'an showing that its chapters existed in a written form at an early date. The fifty-sixth chapter of the Holy Book which is entitled *alwaqiah* or the 'Inevitable' is among the earliest chapters revealed at Makkah, and in it occur the following verses: 'Verily it is the honorable Qur'an

written in the preserved Book: let none touch it but the purified' (76-78). These verses establish two points; firstly, that the Qur'an asserted to be a preserved Book, i.e., a book which none could alter, and secondly, that it claimed to be written at that early date, because the impure are forbidden to *touch* it. If it was not found in a written form, it could not be described as a thing which could be touched. Rodwell gives the following footnote under this passage:

'This passage implies the existence of copies of portions at least of the Koran in common use. It was quoted by the sister of Omar when, at his conversion, he desired to take her copy of Sura 20 into his hands. Verses 77, 78, were directed by the Calif Muhammad Abulcasim bin Abdulla to be inscribed on all copies of the Koran' (*Rodwell's Koran*, p.54).

To say that the passage affords evidence of copies only of some portions of the Holy Qur'an is not true. The verse does not contain any word which can lead us to the

conclusion that some portions of the Holy Book were not written. It speaks of the whole of the Qur'an and not of some portions of it to the exclusion of others. The testimony afforded by the verse is that the Holy Qur'an was written and to show that any portion of it was not written there must be opposing evidence. But in the Holy Qur'an and the traditions there is not to be met with the least trace of any such evidence.

On the other hand, it is an admitted fact that every portion of the Holy Qur'an was looked upon with the same reverence by the Muslims and every word of it was believed to be the Word of God. It is, therefore, quite unreasonable to suppose that some portions of the Holy Qur'an were written while others were not. There is not a single circumstance in the whole history of Islam which should entitle us to make any such distinction between the different portions of the Holy Qur'an and to suppose that while some chapters were written, the others were not thought fit to be written, or that the same care was not taken of all the parts or that the

same desire to preserve every word of the Holy Qur'an was not shown by the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> or his followers.

The Holy Qur'an was a 'book,' 'written in honored pages' which 'none but the pure should touch' and these descriptions apply to each and every word of the Holy Book.

Again, it is in a chapter revealed and proclaimed at Makkah that we meet with the following challenge to the unbelievers who looked upon the Holy Qur'an as a fabrication of the Prophet. 'If they shall say, "The Qur'an is his own device", say, "Then bring ten Suras like it of your devising, and call whom you can to your aid beside God, if you are men of truth"' (Ch.11:V.14). A similar challenge is contained in a chapter of a still earlier date:

*'Say, Assuredly if mankind and the Jinn should conspire to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce its like, though the one should help the other'*  
(Ch.17: V.89).

And in a chapter revealed at Madinah, we have:

*'And if you be in doubt as to that which we have sent down to Our servant, then produce a Sura of like sort, and summon your witnesses besides God if you are truthful: But if you do it not, and by no means shall you do it, then fear the fire prepared for the unbelievers'*  
(Ch.2: Vs.24-25)

Now all these challenges to the opponents to produce one sura or ten suras like the Qur'an imply that the suras of the Holy Qur'an existed in a written form at the time of the challenge, because otherwise the challenge would have been meaningless. The unbelievers could not be expected to commit to memory the whole or several chapters of the Qur'an, and therefore, they could not be challenged to produce its like unless they could have access to the written chapters.

In traditions of the highest authority there are numerous anecdotes showing that when the Holy Prophet(saw) received a

revelation it was at once reduced to writing. The first revelation which the Holy Prophet(saw) received was brought to him written on a paper<sup>1</sup>, which the angel asked him to read, and probably it was a hint to the prophet that every revelation which was brought to him should be written down.

However, that may be, it is a fact that every verse or chapter of the Holy Qur'an when it was revealed was put to writing in the presence of the Holy Prophet(saw). Thus in a tradition related by Abu Daood, Tirmadhi and Ahmad, the Caliph Othman thus explained the practice as to the writing of the revelations of the Holy Qur'an:

*'It was customary with the Messenger of God(saw), when portions of different chapters were revealed to him, that when any verse was revealed, he called one of "those persons who used to write the Holy Qur'an and said to him; 'Write these verses in the chapter where such and such verses occur'."*

This tradition mentions, not what the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> did on one occasion, but what he always used to do, when any verse of the Holy Qur'an was revealed to him. The person who describes this practice of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> is Othman, one of the earliest converts to Islam and a son-in-law of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>. Thus we have the clearest testimony that every verse of the Divine revelation was put to writing by the order and in the presence of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>, while additional care was taken by him to point out the place and chapter of a verse when there were two or more unfinished chapters, so that the Scribes might not confuse verses of one chapter with those of another. This evidence is conclusive because there is not the slightest evidence that any portion of the Holy Qur'an was left without writing.

Other traditions of the highest authority support the evidence of Othman. Thus *Bukhari* reports under the heading 'The Amanuensis of the Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>' the following tradition from Bara: 'When the verse:

لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَعْدُونَ  
مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرَ أُولِي  
الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْمُجْهَدُونَ فِي  
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

was revealed, the Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> said, 'Bring Zaid to me and he should come with the tablet and the inkstand.' Then he said to him (Zaid), Write

يَسْتَوِي الْخ

(the verse revealed).'

In another tradition reported by Bukari under the same heading, Abu Bakr<sup>(as)</sup> addresses Zaid, the same man who was ordered to write the verse in the above tradition, in these words: 'Verily thou didst use to write the revelation for the Messenger of God, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him.'

Besides Zaid, who being the official scribe did by far the

greater part of writing the revelations of the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> at Madinah, many other persons are mentioned who did this work at Makkah, and in the absence of Zaid, at Madinah. Among these are mentioned the names of Abu Bakr<sup>(as)</sup>, Omar<sup>(as)</sup>, Othman<sup>(as)</sup>, Ali<sup>(as)</sup>, Abdulla bin Sa'd bin Abi Sarh (who became an apostate but embraced Islam again after the conquest of Makkah), Zubeir, son of Awam, Khalid and Aban, sons of Said, Ubayy son of Ka'b, Hanzala son of Rabi, Muaiqab son of Abu Fatima, Abdulla son of Arqam, Sharhubail son of Hasana and Abdulla son of Rawaha<sup>2</sup>.

But it is not to be supposed that these were the only persons among the companions who could write or actually transcribed copies of the Holy Qur'an. These were the men who did the work of amanuenses for the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> and whose names have been preserved to us in traditions. Nor is the list given above a complete list of all the amanuenses.

Besides these traditions which directly establish the fact that

every verse of the Holy Qur'an was written at the time of its revelation there are many other anecdotes supporting the same conclusion. For instance, Muslim reports a tradition according to which the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> said to his com-panions: 'Do not write from me anything except the Qur'an'. This direction which was meant as a precautionary step against the confusion of the Holy Qur'an with what the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> spoke on other occasions, also shows clearly that arrangements had been made for the writing of the Holy Qur'an by the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>. The direction takes it for granted that the Holy Qur'an was written.

If it had not been the practice to write every verse and chapter of the Holy Qur'an, no objection would have been taken to the writing of other words uttered by the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>. This conclusion is further corroborated by the circumstance that where there was no danger of confusion on the part of the writers, the writing of certain traditions was also allowed<sup>(3)</sup>.

There is another tradition mentioned by Ibn-i-Hisham in the story of the conversion of Omar which shows that written copies of the chapters of the Holy Qur'an were in common use among the early Muslim converts at Makkah. Omar with a drawn sword in his hand made for the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> one day to murder him. On the way he learnt that his own sister and brother-in-law were hidden converts to Islam. So he turned his steps to his sister's house.

'At that time there was in the house a third man, Khabbab son of Art, who had with him a volume in which was written Ta Ha (the twentieth Chapter of the Holy Qur'an) which he was teaching to Omar's sister and her husband. When they perceived Omar coming, Kabbab hid himself in a corner of the house, and Fatima, Omar's sister, took the volume and hid it under herself. But Omar had already so far approached them that he had heard the voice of Khabbab's recital of the Holy Qur'an.

So the first question he asked,

when he entered the house, was as to what they were reading. They replied, 'Thou hast not heard anything.' He said, 'Yes I have heard and I have been informed that you have followed Muhammad in his religion.' Then he caught hold of his brother-in-law, Sai'd, son of Zaid. His sister advanced towards him to protect her husband and was severely hurt in the struggle. Then Omar's sister and her husband told him that they were really converts to Islam and that he might do what he liked.

When Omar saw his sister bleeding, he was sorry for what he had done and asked his sister to let him have the book which they were reading, so that he might see what it was that Muhammad had brought to them. Omar himself could write. On hearing his demand, his sister expressed the fear that he might destroy the document. Omar gave her his word and swore by his idols that he would return to her the document after perusing it.

Then she told him that being a Musharik (one who set up false gods with God) he was impure and

could not touch the Qur'an because it said that none should touch it except the pure. Then Omar washed himself and his sister handed over to him the book which had Ta Ha written in it. Omar read a portion of it and began to admire it and showed a reverence for the book. Thereupon Khabbab seeing that he was well disposed towards Islam, asked him to accept Islam."

This long quotation which is a part of the lengthy tradition of the conversion of Omar shows conclusively that at that early period copies of the Qur'an were commonly used by the believers. It is sometimes argued that such anecdotes only show that some chapters were written and that therefore there is no evidence that every verse of the Holy Qur'an was reduced to writing. But there is a fallacy in this argument. The statement that the twentieth chapter of the Holy Qur'an existed in a written form before the conversion of Omar is not made to give any importance to that chapter, so that one may think that the reporter mentioned it because of its peculiarity. On the other

hand, this statement is made incidentally in a narrative reported with quite a different object, and hence it is only illustrative of the practice of the Holy Prophet(saw) and the Muslims at that early date.

Even if there were no other evidence of the writing of the Holy Qur'an except this anecdote, still we would be justified in drawing from it the conclusion that the portions of the Holy Qur'an revealed up to that time existed in a written form and that it was the practice to write the revelation. The twentieth chapter did not possess any peculiarity which should have entitled it to be written while the other chapters were only orally recited. On the other hand, it is not one of the chapters which are mentioned as being commonly recited in public prayers, while numerous other chapters, some of them much longer than it, are mentioned as being thus recited, and it can be easily seen that written copies of chapters which were commonly recited in prayers must have been in use to a far greater extent.

Hence the existence of the

twentieth chapter in a written form, the use of the manuscript made in Omar's sister's family which shows that similar use was made of this and other chapters among the believers, and that lady's consciousness that the Holy Qur'an forbade the touching of its manuscripts by impure hands afford to us the clearest evidence that written copies of every chapter of the Holy Qur'an existed even at Makkah at a time when the converts to Islam were very few in numbers.

the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> to read and his reply that he was unable to read show conclusively that the revelation was shown to him written, on a paper, and further that, the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup> could not himself read or write.

2. See *Fath-ul-Bari*, Vol IX, page 19, under the heading 'The Amanuenses of the Holy Prophet.'
3. See *Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Ilm*.

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## REFERENCE

1. The tradition from which I draw this inference is given in the beginning of the Sahih Bukhari, and runs thus: 'The angel came to him (the Holy Prophet<sup>(saw)</sup>) when he was in the cave of Hira and said to him "Read." He replied: "I cannot read".' The tradition states that this was repeated three times, and after this the angel dictated to him the opening verses of the ninety-sixth chapter which is entitled the 'Alaq'. The angel's asking

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