



THE REVIEW of RELIGIONS

VOL LXXXI

NO. 9

SEPT/OCT 1986

IN THIS ISSUE

- GUIDE POSTS
- SIR MUHAMMAD ZAFRULLA KHAN — AN APPRECIATION
- THE SUCCESSFUL PREACHER
- OUR GOD
- SURVIVAL OF THE SOUL — SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION
- LIFE AFTER DEATH
- THE PUNISHMENT FOR APOSTASY IN ISLAM

European Edition

EDITOR: B. A. ORCHARD



THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT

The Ahmadiyya Movement was founded in 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the expected world reformer and the Promised Messiah. The Movement is an embodiment of true and real Islam. It seeks to unite mankind with its Creator and to establish peace throughout the world. The present head of the Movement is Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad. The Ahmadiyya Movement has its headquarters at Rabwah, Pakistan, and is actively engaged in missionary work.



EDITOR

Bashir Ahmad Orchard

EDITORIAL BOARD

Dr. Qazi M. Barkatullah

Dr. M. Hussain Sajid

Mr. Abid Haneef

MANAGER EUROPEAN EDITION

Amatul Majeed Chaudhary

The REVIEW of RELIGIONS

A monthly magazine devoted to the dissemination of the teachings of Islam, the discussion of Islamic affairs and religion in general.

The Review of Religions is an organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement which represents the pure and true Islam. It is open to all for discussing problems connected with the religious and spiritual growth of man, but it does not accept responsibility for views expressed by contributors.

All correspondence should be forwarded directly to:

*The Editor,
The London Mosque,
16 Gressenhall Road,
London, SW18 5QL, U.K.*

*Annual subscriptions:
U.K. & Europe £10
U.S.A. & Canada \$15*



CONTENTS

Page

1. Guide Posts
(Bashir Ahmad Orchard) 2
2. Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan — An
Appreciation
(Aftab Ahmad Khan) 4
3. The Successful Preacher
(Abdul Wahab Adam) 10
4. Our God
(Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad) 18
5. Survival of the Soul — Scientific
Investigation
(Neville Randal) 20
6. Life after Death
(Muhammad Zafrulla Khan) 24
7. The Punishment for Apostasy in
Islam
(A. R. Mughal) 35

Guide Posts

HOSPITALITY

(Bashir Ahmad Orchard)

Hospitality is a cardinal injunction of Islam and a virtue lauded by all religions. Islam has placed emphasis upon it. We read in the Quran:

“So give to the kinsman his due and to the needy and the wayfarer. That is best for those who seek the favour of Allah, and it is they who will prosper.”

(30:39).

“And they (the virtuous) feed for the love of Him, the poor, the orphan and the prisoner; assuring them: ‘We feed you to win Allah’s pleasure only. We desire no reward or thanks from you.’”

(76:9,10).

Never was there a more hospitable and charitable person than the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). He used to give away almost everything he received. He never refused requests and was particularly liberal to the poor. He extended hospitality to Muslims and non-Muslims alike. A Christian delegation once visited him and he permitted them to conduct their service in the mosque. On another occasion he entertained a non-Muslim guest who wanted milk. He was not satisfied with the milk from one goat. A second goat was milked and still he wanted more. Eventually seven goats were milked for him. The Prophet taught:

“There is no good in one who does not entertain hospitality.”

“When someone visits you do honour to him.”

“Let not any of you neglect the least chance of doing good; if you can do no more at least meet your brother with a smile on your face. When you buy meat and put the cooking pot on the fire, add more water and send a portion of the broth to your neighbour.”

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad — the Promised Messiah and Holy Founder

of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam established a guest house in Qadian, India, the headquarters of the Movement. He instructed that no effort should be spared in attending to the comfort of guests. During his lifetime he personally supervised the guest house and thence forward the Community has regarded it as a spiritual trust requiring a high standard of management at all times. Since the spread of the Movement all over the world guest houses have been established elsewhere where the same standard of hospitality is maintained.

He was very considerate and attentive to all visitors and guests. On one occasion one of his followers came from far to see him. He arrived in the evening and retired early. He was awakened round about midnight by a knock on the door and, on opening it, found the Promised Messiah standing with a glass of milk for him. He felt completely overwhelmed by the gracious and courteous consideration of the Promised Messiah.

On another occasion two non-Ahmadis travelled from a far corner of India to see the Promised Messiah. The journey involved several days travelling. After arriving at the guest house in Qadian the attendants told them to unload their luggage from their horse-drawn vehicle. They took offence at the attitude of the attendants and immediately departed from Qadian. On being informed, the Promised Messiah was very displeased and straight away pursued them at a fast pace. He eventually caught up with them and expressed his deep regret over the unfortunate incident. He persuaded them to return. When they arrived back at the guest house he personally assisted in unloading their luggage and saw to all their needs. At the end of their visit he walked two miles with them before bidding them farewell.

No greater tribute could be paid to the hospitality of the Promised Messiah than the words of a Government official who once visited Qadian. He wrote:

“I have to thank him for the very kind treatment and thoughtful hospitality extended to me. I noticed, however, that this hospitality was not confined and limited only to particular people; it was general, all alike, extending the same brotherly treatment. . . . The great hospitality of the Mirza Sahab may be judged from the fact that at the end of my stay when I begged leave to terminate my visit, he smilingly agreed, but on condition that I would come again, and stay with him at least for two weeks. I returned from this visit with feeling still alive in me which had induced me to go.”

There are limits to hospitality which a guest or visitor should keep in mind. Islam teaches that a guest who has been invited for a meal should take his leave reasonably soon afterwards unless he is pressed to stay or there is an understanding between him and the host. Again, a guest staying for a longer period is entitled to be entertained for three days after which he should depart so as not to cause inconvenience to his host, unless he has been invited to stay longer.

Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan — An Appreciation

(Aftab Ahmad Khan)

It is impossible to present in a short space even a snapshot account of the life and achievements of Sir Mohammad Zafrulla Khan — a distinguished star of the firmament of Ahmadiyyat. His life was not an ordinary one and his achievements are enormous. Which aspect of his life should I highlight. Should I portray him as a successful and eminent legal practitioner who scaled the heights of the profession as a minister of law in the Government of un-divided India, a judge of the Supreme Court of India, a judge and then as President of the International Court of Justice? Or, should I portray him as an outstanding administrator who successfully held the charge of important departments of Railways Commerce and Supplies, as a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council in India from 1935 to 1940. Again, he deserves to be remembered as a notable legislator — a member of the Legislative Council of the Punjab in 1930, of the Indian Assembly and later as a member of the Constituent Assembly and the National Assembly of Pakistan? And as a political leader, he was outspoken in fighting for the independence of India. Another important aspect of his life which is a befitting subject for writing a book is the crucial role that he played in the establishment and consolidation of Pakistan and, in particular, his singular contribution towards determining the essential parameters of Pakistan's foreign policy as its first and most distinguished Foreign Minister from 1947 to 1954. A statesman respected throughout the world, he left a permanent mark on the contemporary history because of his deep commitment to uphold and defend the rights of down-trodden and deprived people of Jammun and Kashmir, the Arabs of Palestine and the inhabitants of North Africa. These are the topics which readily came to my mind as a student of history and an observer of international affairs. However, none of these distinctions and honours would have been possible to achieve, had Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan not possessed that extra quality which distinguishes the great from the ordinary. What was that extra dimension to his character and personality that made him a legend of our times? This question led me to recall my last meeting with him and the dilemma of what to say about him in my talk this morning was quickly resolved.

I first met Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan at his house in Karachi on 25th January, 1949 when he, as Foreign Minister of Pakistan, invited a small member of junior officers of foreign service. My last meeting with him took place thirty-six years later, on 3rd January, 1985 at the house of his daughter and son-in-law in Lahore. It was a cold, crisp and clear morning and he sat, almost motionless, in a chair wrapped in blanket; a saintly, fragile figure, at peace within himself and with the rest of the world. Mentally, he was alert and agile. He acknowledged my greetings and the first remark he made was to enquire about the welfare of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV whom I had seen in London a few days earlier. Then, he asked me about Jalsa Salana in Qadian which I had attended before coming to Lahore. He listened to my account with interest and apparent satisfaction. Probably, he was recalling in his mind the glorious days of his own journeys to Qadian. When I took leave, some half an hour later, he clasped my hands, looked up into my eyes and spoke, in a clear and convincing voice. "You will witness a dramatic progress of Ahmadiyyat in your life time." I knew that he was speaking from his heart and there was divine sanction behind this prediction.

Before driving away from his house, I wrote down his words in my diary. This remark offers the key to the source of his strength and inspiration. The theme of his life was the unfaltering devotion to Islam and the commitment to Ahmadiyyat was the motive force which propelled him to the highest pinnacles of success. The priorities in his life were set clearly and firmly; to conform to the principles and practice of Islam was his ideal and the service of Islam was a sacred duty. For this reason, I shall endeavour to give a brief account of his services to the World of Islam which was nearest and dearest to his heart. He always acknowledged and proclaimed that all the high honours that have come his way were due entirely to his obedience to God. This is what made him so different from all other leaders whose visions or aspirations are influenced by personal or political factors.

The most significant event of his life was when at the age of eleven he had a vision of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Mehdi and Messiah, peace be upon him. At that tender age, his mother had already enriched his mind with spiritual nourishment. Three years later, in 1907, he made the Covenant at the hands of the Promised Messiah and his life was completely transformed. That also marked the beginning of his meteoric rise to success and fame.

His progress from a district lawyer to an international hero was due entirely to God's favour and grace which appeared in the form of guidance and training given to him initially by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih I, whose wisdom and sagacity was unparalleled and, later, by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II whose intellectual power and acumen were exceptional. Subsequently he was granted special consideration and affection by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III and Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV.

It was Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II who inculcated in him the passion for the service of Islam and inspired in him the belief that the service of Muslims is an essential duty of every Ahmadi. This was the principle of his life and his efforts were rewarded with election in 1931 as President of the New Delhi Session of the All India Muslim League. He represented Indian Muslims at all the three Round Table Conferences in London in the early thirties where he along with the Aga Khan and Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah fought for the constitutional rights of Indian Muslims. As a minister in the Government of India before independence he persisted in impressing upon the British Government the need for safeguarding the religious, political and economic rights of Muslims after India's independence. The British as well as Indian leaders treated him with utmost respect as an honest and sincere spokesman of Indian Muslims during the constitutional negotiations leading to the independence of India in 1947.

Here, I may be excused for a slight digression to illustrate my point. In 1935, Sir Zafrulla Khan became a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. The most powerful figure in the Council was the Finance Member, Sir James Grigg who had been Private Secretary of Sir Winston Churchill, and later became the Secretary of State for War in the British Government. He was known for his arrogance and aloofness. One day, he unexpectedly dropped in at Sir Zafrulla Khan's house and without any apparent sign of informality said "Thank heaven for an Indian who knows his mind; exercises his judgement; and is prepared to take responsibility", and added, "We shall often differ, may even quarrel; but there need be no misunderstanding between us. I wish you good afternoon". And, then he departed.

In 1937, Sir Zafrulla Khan single-handedly and successfully piloted in the Indian Legislative Assembly Mr. Kazmi's bill for divorce of Muslim women — a legislative feat which earned him the admiration of even the most orthodox Muslim members. Under the leadership of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II, the Ahmadiyya Community was in the fore-front of the struggle for the establishment of Pakistan as a homeland for Muslims in India. Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan was one of the most experienced leaders whose advice and assistance was constantly sought by Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League leaders. At a critical stage, he was instrumental in securing the resignation of Sir Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana and the dissolution of the Unionist Party Ministry in the Punjab which paved the way for the Muslim League to take over political power in the province.

His appointment in 1947 by Mr. Jinnah to represent the Muslims of the Punjab before the Radcliffe Boundary Commission was not only a recognition of his legal and constitutional skills but also an affirmation that he alone could effectively represent the Muslims of that province and defend their rights. Later, when sectarian intolerance promoted political exploiters to cast doubt on his role in the proceedings of the Boundary Commission, it

was the Muslim Members of the Commission, Justice Mohammad Munir who condemned his detractors by publicly acknowledging that it was his duty to record his gratitude to Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan for the valiant fight he put up for the defence of the Muslim case and said, "For the selfless services rendered by him to the Muslim Community, it is shameless ingratitude for anyone to refer to Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan in the manner in which he has been referred to by certain parties" (page 197, the Munir Enquiry Commission Report).

Sir Mohammad Zafrulla Khan's tenure as Foreign Minister is a landmark in the formative years of Pakistan. To do justice to this subject will need a good deal of time and space. Therefore, I shall mention only two most essential elements which illustrate his devotion to the cause of Muslims. The first was the defence of the political and humanitarian rights of Kashmiri Muslims. Initially, India had gone to the U.N. with a complaint charging Pakistan of invading the State of Jammun and Kashmir. Instead, Sir Zafrulla Khan convinced the U.N. that it was India which had deprived the Kashmiri Muslims of their fundamental rights. His diplomatic success in the U.N., described as "masterly" by Chaudhri Mohammad Ali, a former Prime Minister of Pakistan, enhanced Pakistan's prestige in the international community in the early days when Pakistan had just emerged as a new state. Mr. Josef Korbel of Czechoslovakia who was a member of the U.N. Commission on India and Pakistan has written in his book "Danger in Kashmir" (page 109), "The Indian Government felt that its representatives had not done too well in putting the case before the United Nations and that the Pakistani Foreign Minister, an experienced and popular practitioner in United Nations dialectic, who was as suave and smooth as the Indian delegates were awkward and angular, had scored considerable success". No other Pakistani leader has fought the cause of Kashmiri Muslims so consistently, forcefully and courageously as the first Foreign Minister of that country.

The second aspect of Sir Zafrulla Khan's service to Islam was his unmatched advocacy of the cause of Muslim and Arabs which has ever since become a fundamental element of Pakistan's foreign policy. It has earned Pakistan substantial dividends on the form of economic and political gains of great magnitude. He identified Pakistan with the interests of Muslim countries and fought ceaselessly for the rights of Muslims all over the world. One of the first decisions that he made as Foreign Minister was to stop the KLM flights landing at Karachi airport because the Dutch Government was flying troops for military action in Indonesia. This measure proved significant for the success of Indonesian freedom fighters. His defence of the rights of Palestinian Arabs constitutes a glorious chapter in the history of the struggle of Muslims against colonialism and foreign domination. At a time when the Arabs were not united and lacked co-ordination and were not even convinced

of their own case, Sir Mohammad Zafrulla Khan presented the most comprehensive, chronologically co-ordinated and convincing case against the western powers which were determined to establish a zionist state in the heart of the Arab world. In his book "The Emergence of Pakistan" Choudhri Muhammad Ali, says, "Pakistan treated the Arab cause in the United Nations as its own and there was no more eloquent exponent of this cause in the United Nations than Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Zafrullah Khan."

Sir Zafrulla's heroic fight in the United Nations for the freedom of Libya, Tunis and Morocco is another epic story of selfless devotion to the cause of Muslims. In the Arab world his name has been inextricably linked with the independence of these territories. Many children born in the early fifties were named after him. Mr. Fadhil Jamali, a former Foreign Minister of Iraq, in a tribute on his death last year, wrote in the Tunisian daily, "Al-Sabah" of 10th October, 1985. "In fact, it was not possible for any Arab, however capable and competent he may be, to serve the cause of Palestine in a manner in which this distinguished and great man dedicated himself. What was the result of the debate in the United Nations is another matter. But, it must be acknowledged that Mohammad Zafrulla Khan occupies a pre-eminent position in defending the Palestinians in this dispute. We except from all Arabs and followers of Islam that they will never forget this great Muslim fighter. After Palestine, the services of this man for the independence of Libya also deserves admiration. In the United Nations, his struggle for the rights of Arabs formed the basis of firm and lasting friendship between us."

Pakistan has continued to derive maximum political, economic and security advantages from the goodwill of Arabs and the Muslim countries. Today, many claimants have appeared as authors of that friendship. The foundation of this policy was laid down by Sir Mohammad Zafrulla Khan who pursued it as an article of faith rather than as a political expediency to win popularity or secure personal gain. He visited Palestine in 1945 and was deeply distressed by Zionist designs backed by both Capitalists and Communists in pursuance of their respective interests. In 1948, he was invited to Damascus to meet the Foreign Ministers of six front-line Arab countries to co-ordinate the strategy of struggle of Arabs against Zionism. In 1951, he toured Turkey, Lebanon and Syria. The next year he went to Egypt and Iraq and a year later he was invited to visit Iran, Jordan and Syria. During these visits, he established personal contacts with the leaders of these countries, particularly with President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt; the King of Morocco, the President and the Prime Minister of Syria and the Hashemite Rulers of Jordan. One of the most valued contacts that he made with the Arab leaders at the U.N. was with Crown Prince Faisal of Saudi Arabia who later became the King. At his invitation, he visited Saudi Arabia in March 1958 and had the privilege of performing the Umra. He was received by King Saud who personally thanked him for the services rendered to the Arabs. During his last illness in 1985 all

the Arab Governments conveyed good wishes and prayers for his recovery. King Hussein of Jordan offered to send his own aircraft and medical team to arrange for his treatment. No other Pakistani or Muslim leader in contemporary history has received such high respect and universal acclaim from the rest of the world including those against whom he fought for the sake of principle.

The "Dawn" of Karachi acknowledged in an editorial on September 3, 1985. "He earned the abiding respect and admiration of the Arab and other Muslim nations as a defender of their interests." In a personal tribute, His Majesty King Hussein bin Tallal of Jordan said, "He was indeed a champion of the Arab cause and his ceaseless efforts whether among the Muslim and non-aligned countries or at the International Court of Justice will remain for ever a shining example of a great man truly dedicated to our faith and civilization."

No account of Sir Mohammad Zafrulla Khan's service to Islam without a reference, albeit a brief one, to his writings and publications on Islam and Ahmadiyyat. He translated the Holy Quran into English and also the writings of the Promised Messiah. His biography of the Holy Prophet Mohammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is a testimony to his intense love and obedience to the Prophet of Islam. These publications serve as a most valuable introduction to Islam and its philosophy, particularly for readers in the West. He spent the last year of his life serving Islam through his writings as well as by personal example as a true believer and servant of God.

One can talk for hours about his exceptional qualities his unimpeachable intellectual integrity and honesty, remarkable simplicity and accessibility, and unlimited capacity to bestow favours of friendship and consideration on others. These are the qualities of a Muslim as enjoined by the Holy Quran. He was a true Muslim also in his attitude towards his adversaries and personal critics. This was the aspect of his life which reflected the greatness of his character and the beauty of his personality. I can find no better way of ending than to quote a letter from an Indian gentleman Dr. B. R. Sen. He was a senior official of the Indian Government who served as Director General of the Food and Agricultural Organization. Acknowledging the receipt of Sir Zafrulla's autobiography, "Servant of God", he wrote on 8th April, 1984. "Zafrulla has always been one of my heroes in public life. I have always admired his intellectual abilities and also his integrity which is a rare thing in public life these days. Another quality of his that I have admired is his capacity of friendship. I remember one of his statements to me when I went to call on him in New York, where he was attending a Security Council debate, that he always tried to keep his brain on ice. His long and outstanding distinguished public life reads like a fairy story."

We pray that Allah may grant mercy and grace to His devoted servant and rest the departed soul in peace. Amen.

The Successful Preacher

(Abdul Wahab Adam)

Preaching is of paramount importance in the life of every prophet. The first responsibility of a prophet is to communicate to his people the message he received from God. Addressing the Holy Prophet Allah says in the Holy Quran:

“O Messenger! convey to the people what has been revealed to thee from thy Lord.”

(5:86).

All the responsibilities of the prophets can be summarised in the main responsibility of the plain delivery of their message. The Holy Quran says:

“Are the Messengers responsible for anything except the plain delivery of the Message?”

(16:36).

The success of each prophet in his mission depends on the abilities bestowed upon him by God to convey his message. In this regard, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) has far excelled all. God the Exalted bestowed upon him the most charming and excellent qualities. First, he had the love of God in his heart, nay!, the light of God engulfed all his heart till it turned into light as the Holy Quran describes it:

“Light upon Light”

(24:36).

Secondly, the Holy Prophet’s love for God was translated into love for His creation, in particular for the love of mankind. The Holy Prophet reflected in himself the attribute of God “The Most Loving”. It was only him who has been described as “A mercy for the whole of mankind”. These two aspects of love: The love of God and the love of mankind, were the two wings by which the Holy Prophet soared high and reached the highest pinnacles of success in preaching and conveying his message.

Since the very early moments of his ministry these two aspects of love were clearly visible in his relationship with others. Those who were intimately

acquainted with his private life were able to see the glow of love which overwhelmed his heart and exhibited itself in his relationship with God and in his relationship with his fellow-beings. After receiving the early revelations, the Holy Prophet was burdened with fears and worries as to how he could carry out the responsibilities which God intended to put on his shoulders. His loving wife Khadija consoled him affirming:

“God is witness, He has not sent you this Word that you should fail and prove unworthy, that He should then give you up. How can God do such a thing, while you are kind and considerate to your relations, help the poor and forlorn and bear their burdens? You are restoring the virtues which had disappeared from our country. You treat your guests with honour and help those who are in distress.”

What a code of ethics the Holy Prophet had followed even before he received any revelation. It was a code of ethics which reflects a genuine love for God and for man.

In modern techniques of debate or negotiations, the professionals say that you can win the debate or you can impose your terms in a negotiation if you can get your adversary to agree with you on a certain principal; then if you use that principal as a premise upon which you build an argument which you present as a direct consequence of that principal, then in such a case the opponent has no alternative but to agree with your terms.

The Holy Prophet has used exactly the same technique more than fourteen hundred years ago. When he received a revelation instructing him to declare openly his message, he ascended to a height and called every one of the tribes of Quraish by its name. When they had collected together, he addressed them saying: “O Quraish! were I to tell you that a large host has collected together on the other side of this height and is preparing to attack you, would you believe me?” They responded: “Surely, we would believe you as we have always found you truthful.”

Here the Holy Prophet, like an expert negotiator using the techniques of the present day professionals, has got his people to agree on a principal, that he was always found to be truthful. He used this principal as a premise upon which he build his argument which was in direct consequence of the principal they had agreed on. He said to his people: “I am the Messenger of God to you. I warn you that God’s chastisement is approaching. Believe in God so that you may be saved.” Bent on arrogance and wickedness rather than on wisdom and intelligence, they could not meet the strong impressive technique used by the Holy Prophet. When they could not refute his argument logically they took the route taken by the losers. They resorted to mocking and derision. One of them, Abu Lahab, replied: “Ruin seize you. Did you call us only for this?” Having said that, they all went their way mocking and joking.

It is sometimes said that the shortest way to a man's heart is the one which passes through his stomach. The wife who cooks delicious dishes for her husband usually enjoys his love. This technique is also valid in preaching. Many of those who are actively engaged in preaching would invite their friends for a cup of tea or to the dinner table in order to communicate the message of the True Islam. The Holy Prophet used the same technique. In the early days after proclaiming publicly his mission, he directed Ali to have a meal prepared and invited the descendents of Abdul Muttalib to partake of it so that the occasion might be utilised for conveying the divine message to them. About forty persons responded to the invitation. The Holy Prophet wanted to say something after the meal but again Abu Lahab made some observation which caused the guests to disperse.

A little later, the Holy Prophet directed Ali to prepare another meal to which he invited his relatives. On this occasion, he addressed them as follows: "Descendants of Abdul Muttalib, I have brought you something, better than which no one has brought for his people. I call you to God. If you respond to my call, you will become the recipients of the best bounties of this life and the next. Which of you will be my helper in this enterprise?" There was a dead silence, when suddenly Ali stood up and said: "Though I am the weakest and the youngest of all these who are present here, I shall support you." Thereupon, the Holy Prophet, addressing his guests said: "If you will hear and follow what this young one has said, you would do well." On this there was general laughter and Abu Lahab said to his elder brother, Abu Talib: "Now Muhammad directs you to follow your son." The guests departed deriding and laughing at the Holy Prophet.

Patience and forbearance are qualities no successful preacher can do without. The Holy Prophet had to go through many situations which demanded the exercise of extreme patience and forbearance. In many situations he was subjected to severe persecution and in others he was subjected to temptation; but in every situation he demonstrated the highest degree of steadfastness.

Once the arch enemies of Islam and the chiefs of Mecca gathered together after sunset to discuss what they should do to persuade Muhammad (peace be on him) away from his new religion which posed a serious threat to their own personal prestige. They decided to send for him and persuade him to change his ways. A messenger was immediately dispatched to inform the Holy Prophet that the chiefs of his people were anxious to speak to him. He hurried to the Kaaba anticipating that the Meccan chiefs may have at last come to their senses and were ready to listen to him. When he took his seat among them they said: "Muhammad, we have not known any man among the Arabs who has created such troubles and problems for his people as you have done by your claims. If your purpose is to gather wealth we are willing to bestow upon you so much that you may be the wealthiest of us all. If you are seeking

honour and status we are willing to make you our chief. If you hanker after ruling power, we are even prepared to acknowledge you as our king. If you can be made happy by marriage with a young woman, we can provide you with the best maiden among the Arabs. If your agitation is due to some disease or disorder, we are prepared to provide for your proper treatment at our expense. All that we ask you in return is to desist from denouncing our idols.”

It is said by those who believe in the divinity of Jesus that no human-being could have resisted the temptation which Jesus was subjected to by Satan. A study of both incidents of temptation reveals that the Holy Prophet was subjected to a temptation different to that of Jesus. The Holy Prophet was tempted by his people whom he knew to have the power to make good their promise. Jesus was tempted by Satan whom Jesus knew could not fulfil his promise. The Holy Prophet knew that when a noble Arab chief makes a public promise he stands by his word at any cost. Jesus knew, even as a small child knows, that Satan does not stand by his word. The price which the Holy Prophet was asked to pay was only to desist from denouncing the idols of Mecca while the price Jesus was demanded to pay was to prostrate and worship Satan. Finally, when both incidents of temptation took place, the Holy Prophet and his small band of helpless followers were suffering from severe persecution which usually makes one succumb and yield to temptation while Jesus had suffered no persecution whatsoever before this incident which took place right after he was baptised by John in the River Jordan (Matt. 4).

Any false claimant in the Holy Prophet's place would have been inclined to compromise with such an offer: Kingdom and honour instead of persecution and humiliation, wealth and riches instead of poverty and need, the most beautiful girl among the Arabs instead of his old wife who was in her sixties. But not Muhammad. His love for God transcended all such temptations. He replied to the chiefs of Quraish and said: “I suffer from no disease or disorder and I desire none of these things you want to offer me. I am a messenger of God and have brought you His message. My heart is full of sympathy for you. If you listen to me and follow what I say, it will be entirely for your benefit, both here and in the hereafter. If you reject my message, I shall wait the judgement of God with patience and forbearance.”

The enemies of Islam realised that no temptation would turn the Holy Prophet from his mission and no persecution would make him change his mind. The only solution was to get rid of him once and for all. How could they get rid of him while he was under the protection of one of their chiefs, Abu Talib? They decided to send a deputation to address Abu Talib and demand that he should give up Muhammad (peace be on him).

This incident provided an occasion to reveal some of the many qualities which the Holy Prophet possessed, namely his perseverance and determination to propagate his message. Without perseverance and

unyielding determination, no preacher can be successful in conveying his message.

The deputation came to Abu Talib and said: "You are one of our chiefs and for your sake we have so far spared your nephew, Muhammad. The time has come, however, when we should put an end to this conflict in our midst. We ask and demand that he should desist from saying anything against our idols. If he agrees to this, our conflict and controversy with him will be over. We urge you to persuade him. But if you are unable to do so, then one of two things must happen. Either you have to give up your nephew, or we, your people, will give you up."

Abu Talib was very much upset. He sent for the Holy Prophet and explained to him the demand made by the elders of Mecca. "If you do not agree," he said with tears in his eyes, "then either I have to give you up or my people will give me up." The Holy Prophet was in evident sympathy with his uncle. Tears came to his eyes and he said: "I ask you not to give up your people, I ask you not to stand by me. Instead, you may give me up and stand by your people. But the One and Only God is my witness when I say that even if they were to place the sun on my right and the moon on my left, I would not desist from preaching the truth of the One God. I shall persist in it till God enables me to discharge it fully or till I perish in the attempt."

Khidmatul-Khalq or the rendering a service to those who need a helping hand, is one of the most effective tools in preaching. The Holy Prophet utilised this tool to the full. A woman once came to Mecca to settle down when she heard the propaganda widely spread by the Holy Prophet's enemies accusing him of influencing people by his magic and leading them astray. She was very much perturbed and decided to leave Mecca and go back to where she used to live a few miles outside Mecca. She collected her luggage and started her journey back. The Holy Prophet met her on her way. Seeing an old woman loaded with luggage he offered a helping hand. The woman welcomed his offer thinking she would pay him when she arrived at her home. The Holy Prophet carried the woman's luggage over his head and followed her. On the way he asked her why she was leaving Mecca. She told him what she heard about someone called Muhammad who influenced people by his magic and led them astray. She explained that she was leaving Mecca to save herself from his evil magic. The Holy Prophet did not say anything but kept chatting with her while carrying all her load until they reached her home. She wanted to pay him but he declined. She was very much impressed by his attitude and by his conversation. She asked him about his name and he replied "Muhammad". Realising that the charming, kind and helping person was the same one whom she had been led by the Meccans to fear, she smiled and said, "Now I understand what kind of magic you use upon people. It is the only kind of magic which God bestows upon the truthful ones".

A successful preacher may possess so many good qualities but when intimidated or provoked, he loses his temper and vents his anger. This was not the case with the Holy Prophet. He was subjected to all kinds of intimidations but always maintained self-control of himself. Once a Jew wanted to test the Holy Prophet's quality of self-control. Knowing that a true prophet would exercise extreme self-control, he planned to intimidate him and observe his reaction. He lent him some money and on the day when the payment was due, he came to the Holy Prophet while he was sitting among his companions and demanded the payment of the loan in a very provoking and intimidating manner. Hazrat Omar who was present could not restrain himself, he drew out his sword, took hold of the man and addressing the Holy Prophet said: "Messenger of Allah, permit me to cut off the head of this enemy of God". The Holy Prophet objected saying that he should not have resorted to violence. Instead he should have advised the man to demand his loan in a proper manner. The Holy Prophet then directed that the man should be paid the full amount of the loan and also be paid an extra amount as a compensation for Omar's attitude towards him which had frightened him. The man admitted that he had planned the scene in order to test the Holy Prophet's quality of self-control. As he was completely satisfied with the noble qualities of the Holy Prophet, he had no choice but to declare his acceptance of Islam.

I cannot close without mentioning a couple of incidents in which most of his noble qualities were manifested with such excellence that they can never be matched. His qualities of forbearance, of determination, of patience, of steadfastness, of love for mankind, even for those who were not yet born, and above all his love for God, his complete trust in Him and his utter reliance upon Him; all these qualities were manifested like a glowing sun.

The tribe of Quraish had compelled the Holy Prophet and his helpless followers to be confined in a quarter belonging to Abu Talib situated in a narrow valley. They were denied all necessities of life. The Quraish would sell them nothing nor would they allow any provision to reach them. They were exposed to extreme misery and distress. The wailing of the famished children within the valley used to be audible outside. When the period of confinement which had lasted for about three years came to an end, the Holy Prophet suffered two grievous bereavements by the deaths of his wife Khadija and his uncle Abu Talib. The death of his faithful and devoted wife deprived him of his counsellor and support. The death of his uncle left him exposed to the violence and attacks of his foes without a strong hand to protect him. The Quraish were adamant in opposing him. He met with disappointment and frustration in every direction. None of the people of Mecca or its visitors was willing to listen to him. Yet, he did not give up. His enthusiasm to propagate his message did not change. He decided to go to Al-Taif, a town about forty miles from Mecca. He called on the leading men of the city but all of them

rejected him and abused him. He called on the most prominent chief of the city but he put him off and incited the rabble of the city to chase him out of town. They pelted him and his servant Zaid with stones and went on reviling them for a distance of three miles. Though the blood was flowing from both legs of the Holy Prophet and was streaming down from Zaid's head who was trying to shield the Holy Prophet, yet the mob did not desist until they chased them across the sandy plains. Taking refuge in a vineyard, completely exhausted and utterly helpless, the Holy Prophet was asked by an angel whether he would like his persecutors to be destroyed. "No", said the Holy Prophet, "I hope that from one of them would be born one who would worship the One True God". Then, in complete humility and in utter reliance on God he supplicated:

"Lord, I submit my complaint to Thee. I am weak and without means. My people look down upon me. Thou art Lord of the poor and the weak and Thou art my Lord. To whom wilt Thou abandon me — to strangers who push me about or to the enemy who oppresses me in my own town? If Thou art not angered with me, I care not for my enemy".

May Allah shower His countless mercies and blessings upon the Holy Prophet, who has sustained all sorts of unimaginable hardships so that those who come after him may see the light which he saw and worship the Living God whom he has worshipped. But alas for his followers! They have reverted to the same old ways of tyranny and corruption. They have gone astray and have become divided among themselves. They fight each other and take pride in shedding each other's blood. They have occupied themselves in exploiting and oppressing their own people. While rendering a lip-service to Islam they have presented to the world the most ugly and detestable image of Islam. And now, when God has sent The Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, to carry high the banner of the Holy Prophet and to lead the world to the way of the Holy Prophet and to propagate the true religion of Islam throughout the whole world, they have denounced him and his followers as kafirs (disbelievers) outside the pale of Islam. He and his followers have and are being persecuted in the same way as the Holy Prophet and his followers were persecuted in their time. However, we have seen the excellent example of the Holy Prophet and his determination in preaching and propagating the True Religion. We shall follow that excellent example. Let the enemies of Islam devise what evil plans they please. Their evil will fall upon themselves. Let them enflame the fire of hatred and division but that fire will consume only themselves. Let them cowardly assassinate our helpless old men in the dark, let them slaughter our defenceless young men and shoot down our weak women; let them confine our people to prison for no crime other than reciting the kalima (declaration of faith), let them confiscate and destroy our mosques, let them blacken their books and newspapers with their lies and forgeries against us; let them spread their wicked fabrications through

their conferences and crooked propaganda; they will never be able to prevent us from raising high the banner of Islam.

Weak as we may be, oppressed by our own people, forced to leave our homes and our countries, alone as we are with no earthly power or material might; we have no complaint. We supplicate to Allah alone as did the Holy Prophet:

“Our Lord, To Thee we submit our complaint. We are weak and without means. Our people look down upon us. Thou art Lord of the weak and the oppressed and Thou art our Lord. To whom wilt Thou abandon us — to strangers who push us about or to the enemy who oppresses us in our own countries? If Thou art not angered with us, we care not for our enemy. Thy mercy be with us. We seek refuge in the light of Thy face. It is Thou who canst drive away the darkness from the world and give peace to all, here and hereafter. Let not Thy anger and Thy wrath descend on us. And there is no power and no refuge except with Thee.

Teachings of Confucius

The true scholar and the man of virtue will never seek to save themselves at the cost of their moral integrity. In its defence they will be ready to sacrifice life itself.

Among the truly educated there is no distinction of classes.

Even when contact is made with uncivilised peoples, kindly sympathy must not be withheld.

Tzu-king asked if the Master could give him one word to serve as a rule of life. The Master said: “Would not ‘reciprocity’ be such a word? What you do not wish others to do to you do not unto them.”

(Analects of Confucius.)

Our God

(Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad)

God Himself is constant. He is Eternal, Never Changing, Most Perfect in Himself. Changes are produced in human beings. When one changes for the better, God reveals Himself to him with a new manifestation. When one makes progress, God reveals Himself with a higher manifestation. God exhibits miraculous manifestations of His Power and Glory when man undergoes a miraculous change. This is the root of marvels and miracles.

Our God is a very loyal God and He shows wonderful works for those loyal to Him. The world wishes to swallow them and enemies gnash their teeth against them, but He Who is their friend saves them from every danger and makes them triumph in every field. Blessed is he who firmly holds on to this God.

We believe in Him. We recognise Him. He alone is the God of the world. He has sent down His revelation to me. He has shown powerful Signs for me. He has sent me as the Promised Messiah for this age. There is no other God except Him, neither in the heavens nor on the earth. Whosoever does not put his faith in Him remains deprived of His blessings and lives in confusion. We have received the revelation from our God which is as bright as the sun. We have seen Him. He alone is the God of the world. There is none other except Him. How Powerful and Ever-Living is the God we found; full of wonderful Powers is the God we witnessed. The truth is that there is nothing impossible for Him, except a thing which runs counter to His own Promise and His own Book.

When you stand up for prayer, it is incumbent upon you to hold that your God is All-Powerful. Then your prayers will be accepted and you will witness the marvels of His Power, just as we have witnessed. Our witness is based on personal experience, not on hearsay.

God has mastery over everything. But the Book of God has laid down this rule regarding prayer: He treats a righteous person like a friend out of His infinite mercy. Sometimes he does as the person asks, as He has said: "*Call me and I will answer you.*" Sometimes He wishes His will to prevail, as He has

said: "*We will try you with a bit of fear and a bit of hunger . . .*" This is so He might treat a person according to his prayers to increase his certainty in Him and sometimes He might do His will and increase his rank and out of love for him advance him along the paths of light.

Our God has countless wonders, but only those witness them who become His with truth and fortitude. He does not reveal His wonders on others who do not believe in His Powers and are not faithful and true to Him. Unfortunate, indeed, is the person who still does not know that he has the Only God who is Master over everything. Our God is our paradise. Our highest enjoyments are in Him. We witnessed Him and found every beauty in Him. This treasure is worth possessing even if one has to sacrifice his life for it. This jewel is worth buying even if one loses everything else for it.

Ye unlucky ones, run to this fountain and it will quench your thirst. This is the fountain of life, it will save you. What shall I do? How can I convey these glad tidings to the hearts? What kind of a drum should I beat through the streets, announcing to everyone that this is your God, so people will hear me? What medicine should I use so people have their ears opened to listen?

If you become His, then be certain that God is yours. He will keep awake for you and guard you while you are asleep. You may let down your guard, but God will keep an eye on your enemy and will frustrate his plans. As yet you do not know the Powers inherent in your God. If you knew Him, never a day would come when you would worry about worldly things. A person who owns a treasure will not cry on the loss of a single penny as if he is going to perish for this loss. If you knew about this gold mine that God will suffice for all your needs, you would never lose your cool for this world.

God is a precious treasure, learn His value. He is your helper at every step. You or your material plans are nothing without Him. Do not follow other nations who depend only on material means. . . . They put all their faith in material means and did not seek strength from God. They are dead and the heavenly spirit has left them as a dove flies away from its nest. They have a craze for worldly things which has cut away all their internal organs. Beware of this madness.

I do not prohibit you from using material means within proper limits. I do forbid you to become slaves of material means, like other nations, and ignore God Who provided these means to you. If you had eyes you will see that God is everything, anything else is worthless. You cannot stretch your hand nor retract it without His consent.

(Extracts from *Kashti-i-Nooh*)

Survival of the Soul — Scientific Investigation

(Neville Randal — *Daily Sketch* correspondent)

At some time in their life everyone is asked the question: Do you believe you will go on living after you die?

Well, do you believe it?

Consider the facts. Time after time people have reported that a dying person's face is suddenly filled with happiness at the actual moment of death.

Is it possible to know why?

Yes. Through the people who have experienced "death" — and come back to tell the story.

This enquiry begins with the documented evidence of a scientist. He has made the most careful study yet of what happens when people die.

He is Dr. Robert Crookhall who lives in Dursley, Gloucestershire. He has probed and sifted through all the cases he could track down. Here are some of them:

Case of the man who lost a bond acknowledging a debt of money. Without the bond he could not legally demand repayment. His debtor repudiated the claim.

Then he almost drowned. Scene by scene his life passed before him — including the moment when he had hidden the bond in a secret place. When he recovered he went to his bookcase, took out a book . . . and extracted the bond.

Case of Flight-Lieut. J. P. Wynton. He described to Dr. Crookhall how he experienced a timeless review of his life as he crashed in a plane and was almost burnt to death.

But from the pilot and others Dr. Crookhall made a new and strange discovery. Time after time people snatched from violent death told him that as death approached they felt no pain. His theory was confirmed, for example by one:

Case of Leslie Grant Scott.

"Dying is not such a terrifying thing," said Mr. Scott. "I died and came back. I found death one of the easiest things in life." Or again consider:

Case of a man who fell from a tremendous height. He said: "When my body finally bounded against the rocks . . . I became unconscious without feeling any pain whatever. The moment I stood at the brink of the (new) life were the happiest I have ever experienced."

Dr. Crookhall also listened to the case of a doctor who fell a hundred feet, heard the noise when his head struck various corners of rocks, but stated:

"In all this I felt no pain." This only came later when he re-entered his body.

Crookhall is a scientist. He has been demonstrator in botany at Aberdeen University and Principle Geologist to Her Majesty's Geological Survey. He likes to go about things in a scientific way.

He decided that we were looking for proof of survival in the wrong place. That if we wanted evidence about the next world we should look for it there, not in verifiable memories of this world.

He began by collecting communications from the "dead" by whatever means they came — through professional mediums or natural "sensitives." He examined thousands of accounts of what these allegedly dead people said they experienced at, and soon after death. From these he was able to build up the first consistent and coherent account of how those who have been through death say they pass from this world to the next. This is the amazing picture which emerged:

1. In addition to his Physical Body, man also has a Psychical or Soul Body which we cannot see or touch but which has the same shape as the physical body. And there is another Spiritual Body, too, on a higher level still.
2. As a man approaches a natural death, at old age, his thoughts fly instinctively to friends who have died already. He summons them to help him over to the next stage.
3. Near the moment of death man experiences a detailed review of his past earthly life.
4. About an hour before visible death, when the heart stops beating and he ceases to breathe, a dying man has often already left his physical body and stands near by, conscious and happy. This is what we call pre-death coma.
5. Natural death involves no physical pain or fear.
6. Many of the newly dead do not, for a time, realise that they have shed their physical bodies.

7. The psychical double that leaves the physical body at death usually floats for a while horizontally above the dead physical body, resembles it, and looks younger and brighter.
8. Many of the newly dead see immediately friends who have died already, especially those whom they have unconsciously called.
9. When he has severed the final links with the physical body, the average man who dies naturally has a recuperative sleep lasting for three or four days of our time. But the man who is killed in the prime of life tends to be awake at once.
10. The next world in which he finds himself is not, as is taught in some Churches, of a purely spiritual nature, or the Paradise of the Bible. That comes later. The next world for the average man is semi-physical in nature: intermediate between our earth and the "Heaven" of the Scriptures. It is earthlike and familiar.
11. During the period which follows, the newly dead man experiences a second review of his past earthly life. This time emotional, selective and responsible. It is the Biblical "Judgement".
12. On the basis of this each person goes eventually to his own place in the spiritual or super-physical heavens. These cannot be described in normal language, but they are more real than the physical world.

But what happens to people who die a sudden or violent death?

They suffer from shock, says Dr. Crookhall. For them it is difficult to realise what happened. But with help, after a period of rest in special conditions after death, they are able to join the normal sequence.

The first question Dr. Crookhall asked — as a scientist — was: "Does it make sense?" He found that it does. More than that, he found that the communications he tested were consistent with one another.

Then he discovered something even more conclusive.

It was possible to test the sensations said to be experienced by newly dead people by comparing them with the sensations known to have been experienced by people who have returned from near death to physical life.

The communications from the dead said that they actually left their physical bodies about an hour before the heart stopped beating.

During this period people who did return, and are alive today, have experienced some of the first stages of the transition from this life to the next. That's where these cases we showed you at the start come in. For these experiences are similar, usually identical to those described by the dead.

Many people who have "died" and come back have described how they left their physical body and looked down on it. And this has been corroborated by people who have never been near death themselves but have seen it happen while watching others die. Let us examine another case:

Case of an American doctor, R. B. Hout, of Indiana. At the death-bed of his aunt he saw "this astral body hung suspended horizontally a few feet above the physical counterpart. It was quite serene and in repose. But the physical body was active in reflex movements and subconscious writhings of pain. I saw the features plainly. They were very similar to the physical face except that a glow of peace and vigour was expressed instead of age and pain. . . . My uncle, the deceased husband of my aunt, stood there beside her bed. Also her son, passed away many years previously.

This phase — the arrival of friends or relatives already dead — has been corroborated by almost everyone who has seen death often. Time after time the dying person's face is suddenly filled with happiness at the actual moment of death. Sometimes they actually speak the name of a friend or relation who has died before.

Crookhall found that "there seems to be no single case on record in which a dying person claimed to see a living friend whom he erroneously thought to be dead. On the other hand there are many recorded cases of dying people who saw friends whom they supposed to be living and who were in fact dead."

Doctors are so used to this phenomenon that some have come to expect death soon after their patients appear to see friends who have died.

And a nurse with twenty years experience has testified:

"I noticed that often just before the end, the dying would seem to recognise someone who was not of those at the bedside and who was unseen by the latter. I have seen a woman who had been in a coma for hours suddenly open her eyes with a look of glad surprise, stretch forth her hands as though to grasp invisible hands outstretched towards her, and then, with a sigh of relief, expire. That at such moments the dying really see some spirit form — someone who has come from the other world to welcome them — I have never doubted."

Perhaps you are one of those who are in doubt.

Everyone who believes in Christianity should, as an act of faith, believe that they will survive their own death. Yet recent surveys have revealed that more than half the people of Britain have no conviction at all. Faith and the evidence of the Bible are no longer enough. They want proof.

Others like the nurse and Dr. Hout, of Indiana, who have come face to face with the evidence have no more doubts. And Dr. Crookhall in the face of the body of evidence he has amassed, is unable to doubt either.

"The whole of the evidence," he concludes, "is explicable only on the hypothesis of the survival of the human soul in a Soul Body. There is no longer a deadlock or stalemate on the question of survival. On the contrary survival is as well established as the theory of evolution."

Life after Death

(Muhammad Zafrulla Khan)

Life after death is a subject on which sure knowledge can be gained only through revelation. The Prophet has said: "The conditions of the life after death are such that the eye has not seen them, nor has the ear heard of them, nor can the mind of man conceive of their true reality." Even through revelation man can acquire knowledge of the life after death only in the language of symbol and metaphor. All illustration of the conditions of that life can be by way of similitude only.

Man's life on earth is not in itself a perfect whole: it is incomplete: it lacks fulfilment. Too often it seems to come to an end like a snapped ribbon, leaving loose ends flapping idly. If there is nothing to follow, the co-ordination of values in this life would have little meaning and, indeed, would become almost impossible. There would be no accountability and consequently no responsibility. More than that, there would be no consummation of the deepest yearnings of the human soul. Such realisation as is possible in this life is only a twilight experience.

Islam insists on belief in the life after death. There are several matters of belief which Islam regards as essential, but belief in the life after death is concomitant with belief in the Existence of God (5:70). Failing belief in the life after death there is no faith at all. The absence of such belief is almost a negation of, and inconsistent with, belief in a Wise Creator.

Too often has man been apt to say: "There is no life other than our present life. We were without life and now we live; but we shall not be raised again" (23:38). "Man says: 'What! When I am dead shall I be brought forth alive?' Does not man remember that We created him before, when he was naught?" (19:67-68). Man, and indeed the whole universe, has been brought into being from a state of nothingness. It is idle to contend that inasmuch as our observation merely confirms that man dies and his *body* disintegrates, therefore his personality and his existence come to a final end with death. Man's very coming into existence is proof that there is the possibility of continuation. When the fact of man's having been brought into existence through a long process is viewed against the existence of a Wise and

All-Powerful Creator, the conclusion is inevitable that man was created for a purpose, and the fulfilment of that purpose demands a continuation of life.

“They say: ‘When we shall have become bones and broken particles shall we be really raised up as a new creation?’ Say: ‘Be ye stones or iron or some created thing which appears hardest in your minds, even then shall you be raised up.’ Then will they ask: ‘Who shall restore us to life?’ Say: ‘He Who created you the first time. They will then shake their heads at thee and say: ‘When will it be?’ Say: ‘Maybe it is nigh. It will be at the time when He will call you.’ And then you will respond praising Him, and you will think that you have tarried but a little while” (17:50–53).

It is a misconception that a continuation of life beyond this life must involve the assembly of a dead body’s bones and particles after everything has disintegrated and decomposed, so as to reconstitute the body. The body, which is developed for terrestrial existence, is fashioned for the conditions of this life. Life after death cannot and does not mean that the dead will be reassembled and reconstituted upon the earth. Even if that were possible, the earth could not hold a billionth fraction of them. Consequently, the decomposition and disintegration of the human body is completely irrelevant to the possibility of life after death.

The Quran draws attention to the phenomena of sleep and dreams to illustrate that man is capable of undergoing experiences and receiving impressions without physical participation in space and time. These experiences being part of this life, the connection between the soul and the body is no doubt maintained while the experiences last; though their physical co-relations are transformed. There is, as it were, complete realisation that the total organism, body and soul, is participating in them. The Quran states: “Allah takes souls unto Himself at death, and during their sleep the souls of those who do not die. Then He retains those on which He has passed a decree of death, and sends the others back for a named period. Therein are Signs for those who reflect” (39:43). The admonition to reflect over the Signs which this phenomenon draws attention to is a clear indication that man can derive an understanding of the nature and reactions of the soul and its condition after death by pondering over his experiences during sleep.

During sleep the body reposes comfortably in bed, in a reduced state of vitality, while the soul undergoes experiences and receives impressions which leave a slight or deep impress upon it, according to the intensity of the experience. Some of these experiences are vivid enough to leave a permanent impress upon the personality. These experiences are not confined to dreams, when the functions of the body have been reduced to a minimum, and the person undergoing the experience is utterly unconscious of anything outside the dimensions of the experience itself. In many cases, people undergo similar experiences in a state of complete wakefulness, though for the moment there

is, as it were, a withdrawal from other activity, mental or physical. These are generally described as visions. Dreams and visions, however, must not be confused with the effect produced upon a person's consciousness when he is under hypnotic or mesmeric control or influence. That is an altogether different kind of experience, and it is now well established that such influences and control can be acquired, developed, and exercised through concentration and practice, like any other power or skill.

The Quran invites attention to physical birth into this life for the purpose of illustrating the process of rebirth through which the soul passes after death:

"Does not man see that We have created him from a mere drop of seed? Yet behold, he is given to constant arguing. He coins similitudes for Us and forgets the process of his own creation. He says: 'Who can quicken the bones when they are decayed?' Say: 'He Who created them the first time will quicken them; and He knows every kind of creation full well, He who produces for you fire out of the green tree, and behold, you kindle from it. Has not He Who created the heavens and the earth power to create the like of them?' Yea, and He is indeed the Supreme Creator, All-Knowing" (36:78-82). Attention is here drawn to the process of man's own creation for the purpose of this life. The flesh, the bones, the muscles, the blood, the brain, and indeed all the faculties and the whole complicated and yet wonderfully co-ordinated machinery of the human body constituting a complete microcosm is all potentially contained in less than a millionth part of a drop of fluid. The Wise Creator knows what He is doing. In accord with the manifold provisions that He has already made, the drop of fluid in due course experiences a new creation at birth and matures into an intelligent human being, capable of the highest attainments in every field of life. The centre of the whole process is the soul. The body is an essential part for the purpose of life in the conditions of this world. Up to a point, the soul and the body together constitute a unit and are indissoluble; then dissolution comes and that is the end of life upon earth, but that is not the end of life itself. At death the functions of the body come to an end, and except for considerations of decency and respect for the dead, it is immaterial how the body be disposed of. The soul then enters upon a process of rebirth, during the course of which it acquires a new frame, and the result is another organism for the purposes of the new life. Thus "the bones are quickened," but they are quickened out of the soul itself. "He knows every kind of creation full well" indicates that this "quickenings of the bones" will be a new kind of creation. The Wise and All-Powerful Creator Who created man from an insignificant drop of fluid and created the whole universe for the fulfilment of the purpose of human life has power to endow the human soul with the capacity to develop into a new organism; and He has power to transport the soul into another universe in which it may find its complete fulfilment.

"Verily, We created man from an extract of clay; then We placed him as a

drop of seed in a safe depository, then We fashioned the clot into a shapeless lump; then We fashioned bones out of this shapeless lump; then We clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed it into another creation. So blessed by Allah, the Wisest of Creators. Then after that you must surely die. Then on the day of resurrection will you be raised up" (23:13-17). "Then We developed it into another creation" refers to the stage when the body is quickened by the soul. After death, the soul undergoes the same process to be "developed into another creation". At death, with reference to the fuller life awaiting it, the soul is, so to speak, in the condition of the sperm drop. It passes through a state which may be compared metaphorically to the womb, where it develops the faculties that may be needed in, and would be appropriate to, the conditions of the Hereafter. Its birth into a new life after passing through the process of developing its faculties to a certain degree, is the resurrection. Even before that stage is reached, the soul is alive in the conditions of its new existence and is endowed with incipient responses, like those of an embryo in the womb.

"Does man think that he is to be left to himself, without purpose and uncontrolled? Was he not a drop of fluid emitted forth, then he became a clot, then God shaped and proportioned him, then He made of him a pair, male and female. Has not such a One the power to raise the dead to life?" (75:37-71). There can be only one answer to that question: "Yea, for He is the All-Knowing Creator."

Those who reject the life after death do so because they refuse to let reality influence their judgement. They are too arrogant to admit the possibility of even the Creator having power over them to continue their existence in the Hereafter and to call them to account for what they did in this life. "Your God is One God. As to those who do not believe in the Hereafter, their hearts are strangers to truth, and they are full of arrogance. Undoubtedly, Allah knows what they conceal and what they disclose. Surely, He loves not the arrogant. When it is said to them: 'What think ye of that which your Lord has revealed?' they say: 'Mere fables of the men of old'" (16:23-25).

He who is still hard to convince is admonished: "Man is self-destroyed: How ungrateful! From what does He create him? From a drop of seed! He creates him and proportions him; then He makes the way easy for him; then He causes him to die and assigns a grave to him; then when He pleases, He will raise him up again" (80:18-23). The grave here does not mean the tomb in which the body is interred. Not all bodies are buried in tombs; many are cremated, some are devoured by wild beasts, some perish in a conflagration, some drown in water. The grave refers to the phase through which the soul passes after death, and in which it continues till resurrection, which corresponds to the phase through which the embryo passes in the womb while it develops the organs and faculties appropriate to its life upon earth.

That the soul is not without feeling and perception even during that stage appears from the following: "Those whom the angels cause to die while they are wronging their souls will offer submission, saying: 'We used not to do any evil.' Nay, surely Allah knows well what you used to do. Then enter the gates of hell to dwell therein. Evil indeed is the abode of the arrogant" (16:29-30). Similarly, with regard to the righteous it is said: "For those who do good there is good in this world, and the home of the Hereafter is even better. Excellent indeed is the abode of the righteous. . . . To those whom the angels cause to die while they are pure they will say: "Peace be unto you! Enter heaven because of what you used to do" (16:31-33).

It is obvious that the conditions of the life after death, though capable of being expressed to some degree in terms of human speech, have not the same character as the conditions of this life. Compared with the conditions of this life, they are purely spiritual, and yet they are so manifested that they felt and experienced and realised with far greater intensity than are the conditions of this life in the course of existence here. It is not possible with our present faculties to realise the true nature of the conditions of the life after death. All that is possible is to attempt some approximate, intuitive understanding of them. As the Prophet has said, it is not possible for the mind of man to conceive of the true reality of these conditions. The Quran states: "No soul knows what bliss is kept hidden for it as a reward for its good works" (32:18).

A study of the Quran reveals that each human being through his or her conduct during this life develops certain qualities or defects in the soul which render it capable of the appreciation and enjoyment of the conditions of the life after death or which cause it to react painfully to those conditions. We see, for instance, that a healthy organism reacts agreeably to the conditions of this life and finds joy and happiness in them. A defective or diseased organism reacts painfully to those conditions of this life which affect it. For instance, the light of the sun, refreshing to healthy eyes and a great source of delight on account of the facilities it provides for human intercourse and the performance of daily tasks and occupations, and the beauties that it reveals, becomes a source of intense pain and discomfort to one with sore eyes, so much so that if they are not quickly shielded from the bright rays of the sun they may suffer permanent injury and even loss of sight. The same applies in respect of the other senses: hearing, smell, taste, touch, sense of heat and cold, and the muscular sense.

Similar is the case with the spiritual senses. The reactions of the soul in the life Hereafter will be governed by the condition in which it enters upon that life. A diseased soul will react painfully, very painfully, to the conditions of the life after death. It may suffer indescribable tortures, according to the degree to which its faculties have become diseased during its life on earth. A healthy soul will react joyfully to all the conditions of the life to come. "We call to witness the soul and its perfect proportioning. He revealed to it what is

wrong for it and what is right for it. The one indeed will surely prosper who purifies the soul, and the one who corrupts it will be ruined" (91:8-11).

The same concept is expressed in a different manner. "Verily, he who comes to his Lord a sinner, for him is hell; he shall neither die therein nor live" (20:75). This means that he who enters upon the life after death with a diseased soul will have to face prolonged suffering, from which he will not be able to obtain release through complete extinction, for the soul is immortal, and does not suffer extinction; nor will he be, during this period of suffering, in the full enjoyment of life, for his existence will be only a series of miseries and torments. "But he who comes to Him as a believer, having acted righteously, for such are the highest ranks: Gardens of Eternity, beneath which streams flow; they will abide therein forever. That is the recompense of those who keep themselves pure" (20:76-77). Those who keep their souls pure, that is, those who develop their spiritual faculties in this life into a state of purity which is the state of perfect health for the soul, will experience spiritual reactions that are blissful, the intensity of the reactions depending upon the degree of attunement achieved by the soul in this life.

The whole concept is well illustrated in the Quran, where the consequences of certain types of conduct in this life are described as defects and shortcomings that will affect the soul in the life after death. For instance, the Quran says that he who is blind in this life will be blind in the life after death, and will find himself even more astray (17:73). This obviously does not mean that a person who is physically blind in this life will be spiritually blind in the next. Blindness here means spiritual blindness. He who has failed to develop spiritual insight in this life will be blind in the life to come. For instance: "How many a city have We destroyed which was given to wrongdoing, so that it is fallen down on its roofs, and how many a well is deserted and how many a lofty castle is in ruins! Have they not travelled in the land, so that they may have hearts wherewith to understand, and ears wherewith to hear? For indeed it is not the eyes that are blind, but it is the hearts which are in the bosoms that are blind" (22:46-47). This shows clearly that the failure to observe, to ponder, and to take heed gradually deprives a person of spiritual insight. He becomes spiritually blind. Such persons, when brought face to face with the consequences of their neglect or indifference, will exclaim: "Had we but listened and exercised our judgement we should not have been among the inmates of the blazing fire" (67:11). He who develops the faculty of observation and reflects over what he observes and draws the right conclusions therefrom, has his spiritual insight sharpened and he will enter upon the life to come in a state capable of experiencing the utmost delight in reaction to the conditions of that life.

Again, it is stated that those who are placed in authority and misuse that authority, thus creating disorder in the land instead of strengthening and cementing human relationships, will be afflicted with spiritual deafness and

blindness (47:23-24). Persistence in such a course deprives a person of the faculty of appreciating good advice given to him or of drawing a lesson from his own observations and reflections. He becomes haughty and arrogant, and cannot tolerate any questioning of his own judgement or any criticism of the manner in which he exercises authority.

In the same way, whoever turns away from Divine guidance and closes his eyes to it is bound to lose his spiritual sight. He may pride himself on his sharp perceptions and clear insight and may even consider himself above the need of any guidance, but by turning away from Divine guidance he is in effect destroying his spiritual insight. "Whoso will turn away from My Reminder, his will be a strait life, and on the Day of Resurrection We shall raise him up blind. He will say: 'My Lord, why hast Thou raised me up blind, while I possessed sight before?' God will say: 'Thus it must be. Our Signs came to thee and thou dost disregard them. In like manner will thou be disregarded this day'" (20:125-127).

The Quran explains that all human action leaves an impress upon the soul and that the soul when it enters upon the life to come carries the sum total of this impress with it, and reacts in that life accordingly. The record of a person's acts and their consequences will be presented to him, as in an open book, and he will be told to read his book and to follow the course that it lays down for him. His reactions will be determined by his record. He will himself render an account of the manner in which he spent his life on earth and that very account will constitute his reward or his punishment. "Every man's works have We fastened to his neck; and on the day of resurrection We shall place before him a book which he will find wide open. It will be said to him: 'Read thy book; sufficient is thine own soul this day as a reckoner against thee.' He who follows the right way follows it only for the good of his own soul; and he who goes astray, goes astray only to his own loss. No bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another" (17:14-16).

The state of the organs with which the soul will enter upon its new life will correspond to the spiritual condition of its faculties at the time of death, and their reactions to the conditions of the new life will be manifested accordingly. These reactions will be patent and irrefutable proof of the person's conduct and actions in this life. A spiritually defective and diseased ear or eye or tongue or skin shall, through its reactions to the conditions of the new life, bear witness to the evil use to which it was put in this life. "When they face the torment their ears, and their eyes, and their skins will bear witness against them as to what they used to do. They will say to their skins: 'Why bear ye witness against us?' These will reply: 'Allah has made us to speak as He has made everything else to speak.' He it is who created you the first time, and unto Him have you been brought back. You did not apprehend that your ears and your eyes and your skins would bear witness against you; nay, you thought that even Allah did not know much of what you did. That notion of

yours, which you entertained concerning your Lord, has ruined you. So now you have become of those who are the losers" (41:21-24).

It is emphasised that the consciousness of living every moment of one's life in the sight of God is the most effective deterrent against wrongdoing and the most potent incentive toward righteous action. Those who live their lives in the full consciousness of being in the sight of God every moment shall enter upon the new life in perfect spiritual health and all their reactions will be joyful. "Those who fear their Lord will be conducted to the Garden in groups, until, when they approach it, and its gates are opened, its keepers will say to them: 'Peace be upon you; you have attained to the state of bliss, so enter it, abiding therein.' They will say: 'All praise belongs to Allah; who has fulfilled His promise to us, and has bestowed upon us this vast region for an inheritance, permitting us to make our abode in the Garden wherever we please.' How excellent, then, is the reward of the righteous workers" (39:74-75).

Heaven and hell are not separate, defined and divided regions, but exist, as it were, coextensively. The Quran says that the extent of heaven is equal to the whole extent of the heavens and the earth (57:22). Someone once asked the Prophet: "If heaven occupies the whole extent of the heavens and the earth, then where is hell?" He replied with another question "When there is day, where is night?" Night, of course, means the absence of light. Hell means a state of the soul whose faculties are defective or diseased and whose reactions, consequently, are painful in contrast with the pleasant and agreeable reactions of a healthy soul. It is true that the phraseology employed constantly creates in the mind physical images, but in the conditions of human existence in this life that is inescapable. The only language that man can understand is the language to which he is accustomed. It is only by means of paraphrase and explanation that an effort can be made to bring the human mind closer to some understanding of these conditions, the reality of which is indeed beyond the ken of man.

The Quran explains that the conditions of the life after death will constitute symbolical representation of man's thoughts, designs, and actions in this life, and will be the consequences, or fruits thereof. "Give glad tidings to those who believe and act righteously, that for them are Gardens beneath which streams flow. Whenever they are given a portion of the fruits therefrom they will say: 'This is what was given as aforetime'; and upon them will be bestowed gifts in resemblance" (2:26). This shows that when the righteous are presented with the fruits of the Garden in the life to come, they will recognise them as something of which they have had enjoyment in this life also. They will be reminded of the spiritual joys experienced in this life, and they will recognise the resemblance between them and the fruits presented to them in Paradise. In the same way it is stated that in the life after death the righteous will be able to choose the kind of fruit they prefer and the kind of meat they

desire. The meat referred to is "the flesh of birds" (56:21-22). Now, "bird" in the phraseology of the Quran also means "conduct" or "action" (17:14). Here again the reference to fruits and the flesh of birds clearly signifies the consequences or the fruits of righteous action.

"The similitude of the Garden promised to the righteous is: Therein are streams of water which corrupt not; and streams of milk of which the taste changes not; and streams of wine, a delight to those who drink, and streams of pure honey. In it will they have all kinds of fruit, and forgiveness from their Lord" (47:16). The versé begins by saying that this is a similitude of the Garden promised to the righteous. The streams and their contents signify certain spiritual qualities or conditions. For instance, water signifies prosperity of every kind; milk signifies knowledge of Divine attributes; wine signifies man's love for God (which is why we often hear of a person being drunk or intoxicated with joy or with love of a person or of God); and honey signifies the Grace and Mercy of God. In connection with the mention of wine in this context, it should be remembered that this wine is not liquor. The Quran describes it as "sparkling, white, delicious to the drinkers, wherein there is no intoxication nor will they be exhausted thereby" (37:47-48). Again: "Out of a flowing spring, no headache will they get therefrom, nor will they be intoxicated" (56:19-20).

Conversely, the torments of the wicked are described as "Allah's kindled fire, which rises over the hearts," which again clearly means that these are the consequences of evil conduct which, through the operation of Divine law, assume the quality of kindled fire rising over the heart, constituting a torment for the heart (104:7-8).

The Quran states, for instance, that hell has seven gates (15:45). Hell not being a defined, physical region, "gates" in this context can only mean ways of approach or means of entrance. The words "seven" and "seventy" are often used in Arabic as meaning several or many. But even if seven be taken as having a precise significance in this context it may be said that the torments associated with the concept of hell will be experienced through seven senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, the feeling of heat and cold, and what may be called the muscular sense, or feeling of fatigue. The Quran refers to the various torments which might be experienced by a diseased soul. When the transgressors see the torment they will realise that all power belongs to God and that God is severe in punishment (2:166). They will hear its raging and roaring from afar (25:13). They will drink boiling water; they will sip it and will not be able to swallow it easily (14:17-18). They will taste neither sleep nor pleasant drink save boiling water and a fluid that stinks (78:25-26). Their food will be dry, bitter, thorny herbage; it will neither nourish nor satisfy hunger (88:7-8). Hell will be for them a bed as well as a covering, so that the torment will affect them through the sense of touch (7:42). When they are thrown into a confined place chained together, they will wish for death, but

death will not come to them (25:14). Their drink will be either boiling or intensely cold, both difficult to swallow, and various kinds of other torments of a similar nature they shall endure (38:58–59). There will be chains and iron collars imposing the torment of close confinement (76:5). Some faces on that day will be downcast, lined, weary (88:3–4). But the greatest torment will be that God will not speak to them, nor look at them, nor purify them (2:175; 3:78). This will be the most terrifying and the most tormenting of their experiences. Then they will realise as never before how completely they have placed themselves at the pole opposite to the purpose of their creation, which is to become an image or a manifestation of the attributes of God (51:57).

On the other hand, the conditions in which the righteous will find themselves, and their reactions to those conditions, will be pleasant and agreeable in respect of every one of their faculties and senses. Their faces will reflect joy; they will be well pleased with their labour (88:9–10). They will hear no idle talk, nor any falsehood (78:36), nor anything vain, but only “Peace” (19:63). They will be welcomed with greetings of peace (25:76). “They will not hear therein any vain or sinful talk, except only the word of salutation, ‘Peace, peace’” (56:26–27). The angels will greet them with: “Peace be on you. You have arrived at a joyful state, so enter it, and dwell therein forever” (39:74). They will not feel the unpleasant effects of heat or cold (76:14). God will provide for them a pure drink (76:22). They will dwell among gardens and springs (15:46). Fatigue and lassitude will not touch them (15:49). They will enjoy perfect comfort and the fragrance of happiness (56:90). They will ever be in rapture (76:12). Their faces will exhibit the freshness of bliss, and they will be given to drink of a pure beverage, sealed with musk (83:25–27). They will be in the midst of a vast kingdom of bliss; and they will say: “All worthiness of praise belongs to Allah, Who has fulfilled His promise to us, and has bestowed upon us this domain for an inheritance, making our abode in the Garden wherever we please” (39:75).

The supreme triumph, however, will be the realisation of having won the pleasure of Allah (3:16; 57:21). “Their Lord gives them glad tidings of Mercy from Him and of His pleasure” (9:21). “Allah has promised to those who believe, men and women, Gardens beneath which streams flow, wherein they will abide, and delightful dwelling places in Gardens of Eternity, and the pleasure of Allah (3:16; 57:21). “Their Lord gives them glad tidings of Mercy (9:72). “Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him” (9:100).

One important question in connection with the conditions of the life after death is whether they will be permanent and everlasting or will come to an end. The Quran teaches that while the rewards and joys experienced in the life after death will be everlasting and ever intensifying, the pains and torments will come to an end; all mankind will ultimately find admission to the Grace and Mercy of God. We have been told that mankind has been created

for the purpose of becoming the manifestations of God's attributes (51:57). That being the Divine purpose, it follows that it must be fulfilled in respect of everyone. God says: "I will inflict My punishment on whom I will; but My Mercy encompasses all things" (7:157). Indeed, mankind has been created for the fulfilment of God's Mercy (11:120). When pain, punishment, and torment will have achieved their purpose, which is curative, and is in itself a manifestation of God's Mercy, Divine Mercy will then enable each human being to react joyfully to the conditions of the life after death.

The Prophet has said that a time will come when hell will be empty, and the cool breezes of God's Mercy will blow through it. Duration in the Hereafter is within God's knowledge alone and He alone knows how long any particular condition will last. It is common experience that periods of joy and happiness seem to race by, while moments of pain and anxiety appear unending. Pain and torment will appear long, for the torment suffered under the operation of Divine law will be severely felt, and no alleviation of it may be in sight. But eternity is infinite, and in each case a stage will be reached when torment will cease, pain will disappear, and all will be joy. As the experience of pain and punishment will be corrective and reformatory, each succeeding stage will bring an amelioration, but so long as the process is incomplete, the over-all reaction will continue to be painful. The Quran states that the punishment of evildoers will appear to be unending, but it will in fact be terminated when God wills (11:108). The joys of the life after death are also subject to God's Will, but with respect to those, God's Will has been announced; they are a "gift that shall not be cut off" (11:109). For the righteous there is an "unending reward" (95:7).

Thus there will be continuous progress for all in the life after death. Those under sentence will work out their sentence, not as a penance, but as a curative process designed to cure the soul of the defects and disorders accumulated in its life upon earth and to bring it into a state of purity and health in which it can react with joy and pleasure to the conditions of the life after death. The righteous will be continuously praying for, and seeking the perfection of, their light (66:9). They will be greeted by their Lord with: "O, soul at peace, return to thy Lord; thou well pleased with Him, and He well pleased with thee. So enter thou among My chosen servants, and enter thou My Garden" (89:28-31). In these words the righteous are told that because of their unending quest for knowledge of the attributes of God — that they may become perfect manifestations of those attributes — heaven is a state of being in which there is continuous progress and continuous action. Because the attributes of God are without limit, man's seeking to become the perfect manifestation of God's attributes will be endless.

The Punishment for Apostasy in Islam

(A. R. Mughal)

The basic charter for human rights was acclaimed by the United Nations in 1948. It was the Holy Prophet of Islam (Peace be on him) who really set the pace 1400 years ago by proclaiming, "There is no compulsion in Deen." (Al-Bakarah-256). The word 'Deen' has been purposely used here by us instead of the usual translated version "religion". For 'Deen' in arabic connotes religious tenets, social systems, political behaviour and a selective way of life chosen by a people under specific conditions. The position that emerges after a survey of various verses of the Holy Quran, may be summed up by saying that not only is there complete freedom of conscience to profess, to practise or to change religious views in Islam but that no punitive measures of any sort are laid down against peaceful dissidents. This rational approach runs like a golden thread throughout the entire fabric of the Quranic teachings.

Islam is a religion of preaching and guidance. It must put its own house in order before its message to the outside world could assume an aspect of credibility. The muslims were enjoined to fight against the oppressors till religious persecution had ceased and men were free to practise the religion of their choice (Al-Bakarah-194). Only abrasive deviation from the pristine text of the Holy Quran, could contrive to make distinctions between the 'ingress' and the 'egress'—two strait-jackets invented by Maulana Maudoodi—for the application of the two above-quoted verses in general terms. For in the opinion of this muslim divine, the doors of ingress to Islam were always open. No compulsion was permissible to push someone inside the fold of Islam. But henceforth, Islam was like a rat-trap. Once you were inside, the doors of egress were firmly and finally closed. Should you decide to get out of this trap, you will be immediately cut down by the sword of Damocles suspended over your head by a single hair—in this case, capital punishment for apostasy. The hostility of the orthodox theologians towards the reasonable tenets of Islam is so inveterate and implacable that they now symbolise, as it were, as evil models of a primitive faith for the outsiders.

Periodic witch-hunts for apostates in Islam have been a distinctive feature

of our past history and even now fanaticism is on the rampage in a certain section of our society. In a part of the world where poverty sums up our ultimate destiny, where life wastes away unnoticed, where most things are governed by religious bias and sectarian hatreds, our only ray of hope is the Book of God in our midst. There is little that one could not do if we made up our minds to adopt the Holy Quran as our guiding principle. The doctrine of in-errance for the Muftees, the Qadhees, the jurists and least of all, the Maulvis does not exist in Islam. More than anything else, it is the Holy Quran which is the final arbiter among the Muslims owing allegiance to various sectional denominations of our faith.

This is not to say that the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (Peace be on him) the traditions, the verdicts of the Khulafai-Rashedin and the honest opinions of Muslim jurists could be under-rated in the category of partial consolations. Far from it. It is only where a fanatic's knowledge becomes a conviction and his common philosophy acquires the negative characteristics of that which it purports to disclaim and replace, that it becomes necessary to draw a line between the religious heresies and the infallible injunctions of the Holy Quran. The questions which are qualitative and which do not lend themselves easily to scientific analysis, cannot be legitimised, much less answered, with blind faith alone.

The cult of force in matters of religion, is not a phenomenon of recent origin. In the dark ages, millions of Christians — men, women and children — were hunted out of their homes, chased like wild beasts and dragged to the fiery stakes. Their sole crime was that they had been declared apostates by their co-religionists only because they read the Bible in their mother tongue. Catholic priests in France issued a 'Fatwah' (religious decree) that all Protestants, irrespective of age or sex, were heretics and as such were to be massacred on Bartholomeo Day — 24 August, 1662. This horrible 'Fatwah' was carried out to the hilt, and thousands of innocent people were put to the sword to appease the religious frenzy of some blood-thirsty Christian priests. The Clergy justified this blood-bath in the name of God and His apostles.

One has to admit reluctantly that there is a curious resemblance between the conduct of the old Christian priests and the 'Fatwas' now being issued by some of the muslim divines for the decimation of apostates in Islam. The end result may perhaps be the same in both cases. There is nothing new in human nature. The only thing that changes, are the names we assign to objects. 324 years previously, people had the same troubles as we have now. Religious fanaticism then was the same as it appears to us today. Only the people have changed. The only thing new in the world, is the history we do not know. If Bartholomeo Day could be celebrated again in the present times — with perhaps a different name — the result could be identical or even worse.

Our country is full of peaceful and law-abiding citizens. The man in the

street is more or less gentle and usually pays scant attention to the rantings of the Maulvis. Eventually, perhaps even sooner, the saner elements in our society, are bound to react to the fanatics' outcry for death to the apostates and put an end to this theological madness. For in default, the Maulvis could engineer an outrage which could only be measured by the size of its aftermath.

Islam, basically, is a religion of peace. "There is no compulsion whatsoever in religion", says the Holy Quran. Again it says "whosoever obeys the Messenger, obeys Allah, and whosoever turns away (then) we have not sent thee as a warder over them". Again it says: "Proofs have come unto you from your Lord, so whosoever sees it, is for his own good and whosoever is blind, is blind to his own hurt; and I am not a keeper over you". These Quranic injunctions prove, if nothing else, that Islam disavows compulsion in religion in any form or manner. The people who are immune to any penitential feelings may not like the intent of the above-quoted verses and persist in pursuing the ghost of apostasy to its bitter end. For persons such as these, we can only pray to Allah for guiding them to the right path. Nothing but a bold orientation of Islam, to separate the vital from the lifeless and to convert the muslims into citizens of the present world from the archaic incongruity that they are today, is what is needed most at the moment. The Maulvis' hold on the masses is undoubtedly massive and apparently one does not yet see any light at the end of the tunnel. But let there be no misgivings about one thing! Whosoever believes in the Unity of God and the Prophethood of Muhammad; declares himself a muslim and is a peaceful and law-abiding citizen; renegade or no renegade, he is under the protection of Allah and His Prophet.

The Punishment for Apostasy in Islam

There are three main and specific sources of guidance in Islam:

- (a) The Holy Quran.
- (b) The Sunnah.
- (c) The Traditions.

The foremost and before anything else, is the Holy Quran, which emphasises, beside other things, the Unity of God, and the exalted status of the most glorious and Merciful Being. The Quran contains injunctions regarding each and every facet of our religion and nothing of importance, pertaining to the well-being and social problems of the believers and the humanity at large, is left undecided in the Book of God. It is completely unambiguous about the basic principles which should govern an Islamic polity. All that is against the verdict of the Quran is to be rejected outright without fear or favour. For there is nothing that can supersede the word of God in any way or manner whatsoever. Islam is not like a high-school seminar where everyone has an opinion of his own and insists to be heard, the stupidity

of his views notwithstanding. The Quran is the supreme arbiter in all disputes and its decisions are final and binding in all cases at all times.

The second source of guidance, is the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (Peace be on him). In matters of disputes and friction among the Muslims, the Sunnah is the first sign-post which leads us to the solution of our problems according to the Quran. The Sunnah and the traditions are two entirely distinct and separate entities. For the traditions were compiled 150–200 years after the demise of the Holy Prophet (Peace be on him). The Sunnah on the other hand, followed step by step the revelation of the Holy Quran and existed simultaneously as the verses of the Quran were being sent down, spread over a span of 23 years. The Sunnah does not refer to any past events of doubtful authenticity. For, as already pointed out, it closely followed behind the descent of the Quran. There is no concept of uncertainty in the fact that the Muslims were following the injunctions of the Holy Quran in respect of vital matters like war against the disbelievers, treatment of prisoners of war, spoils of war, the administration of the occupied territories, the punishment for rebellion against the Islamic State and innumerable other matters both physical and otherwise. All this was being done when there was no trace of the traditions yet; because the Holy Prophet (Peace be on him) was still alive and available for guidance at all times and occasions.

The third source of guidance in Islam, is the 'Hadees'. This source does not function independently but comes into force only in support of its fore-runners, the Quran and the Sunnah. The traditions were pressed into service primarily for the benefit of those not fully comprehending the Word of God with all its implications. There are some muslim sects, who give preference to Hadees over the Holy Quran. They forget that, at best, the only sure thing about the Hadees is the uncertainty about its sources. Again, there are others who say that they could not be a party in believing something which was compiled centuries after the demise of the Holy Prophet and as such there was no way that they could have a firm position about the Hadees one way or the other. It is not the intention to discuss here the problem of the authenticity of the Hadees. Enough to say that Hadees is a source of guidance for the muslims in many ways and should be ignored only in cases where it conflicts with the dictates of the Quran.

This preamble was necessary before taking up the issue whether simple apostasy without any political strings attached is at all punishable in Islam. In the Holy Quran, there are many verses which mention apostasy sometimes expressly and sometimes by import. One point on which there is no argument from any side that there is not a single verse in the Quran, from its beginning to the end which stipulates the death penalty for apostasy, expressly or by inference. One may be mentally ill, over-cautious or — the ultimate putdown — suffering from acute theological bigotry; yet one thing is certain. The Word of God has the final say in all matters. It can neither misguide nor misjudge

(Al-Tariq — 14-15). The cardinal rule in the Quran is: "There is no compulsion in religion". (Al Bakarah — 256). This basic concept of Islamic teaching finds endorsement in many other verses of the Holy Quran. A man is free to choose between truth and falsehood at all times.

Freedom of conscience is thus the life-blood of all Islamic teachings. This principle is always to be kept in view when studying incidents and effects of Ahadees, the practice during the Caliphates or the opinions of the Fuqha. Everyone, without exception, must be judged by the letter and spirit of the Book of God. No deviations, variations or interpretations are to be accepted — no matter from what source — which run counter to the Quranic verses.

An effort is being made at present in our country to transform spiritual concepts into political ones. A group of Ulema, who originally opposed the creation of Pakistan, are at the helm of the controversy regarding apostasy in Islam. It is not that these Ulema see the truth differently from us. A situation is being created out of nothing to get maximim political benefit for themselves and their henchmen. The question of apostasy in Islam has been discussed thread-bare in the Sub-Continent during the last 50 years or more. There is nothing new in this and it could have been treated with the contempt it deserved; were it not for the fact that some responsible quarters might be misled by the persistent uproar of the Ahrar Maulvis. It is for this reason alone that we are constrained to air our views for perhaps the hundredth time all over again.

Islam is basically a liberation theology. It is steadily attracting more and more scholars from the West and other parts of the world. The die-hards think it a fundamental danger for the faith. But the Holy Quran is on the side of the liberals. Says the Holy Quran: "There is no compulsion in religion. Surely the right way has become distinct from error" (2-256). The meanings of this verse are self-evident as has already been explained by us. Again it says: "And obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and be on your guard. But if you turn away (from Islam) then know that Our Messenger is responsible only for conveying Our Message." (Al-Maida 92). This verse indicates a clear reference to apostasy but prescribes no worldly punishment for anyone. In fact it says in unmistakable terms that the responsibility of the Messenger is limited to Conveying to the people, the message of God. Again the Quran says; "He who follows the right way, follows it only for the good of his own soul; and he who goes astray, goes astray only to his own loss. And no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another." (Bani-Israel — 15). It is crystal clear from the above verse that everyone carries his own cross in matters of faith. No body will lift the burden except his own. Perhaps the Ulema know too much or may be too little. It is their dark side of genius which prompts them to assume the role of the Divine warders where none were required. Even the Holy Prophet's role has been confined to that of a preacher only (5-92).

Nowhere in the above-quoted verses, the Holy Prophet (Peace be on him) or his followers have been permitted to put to the sword the old or the new opponents (apostates), or if possible, to stone them to death. The killing of dissidents — barring those engaged in actual hostilities — is a primitive habit and such folly as this could squander the moral standing of the Muslims for all times.

We would now revert to specifics and like to quote some verses of the Holy Quran which deal exclusively with the issue of apostasy in Islam. Says the Holy Quran: "And they will not cease fighting you until they turn you back from your Faith, if they can. And whosoever from among you becomes an apostate and dies in the condition, it is they whose works shall be vain in this world and the next. These are the inmates of the Fire and therein shall they abide." Nothing could be clearer and more explicit than the above verse in so much as the one question that counts most, has been decisively answered in it. The verse deals primarily with those who turn back from their Faith. There is no mention whatsoever of killing or stoning to death of such persons. This interpretation is not confined to us only. A renowned Muslim scholar interprets the above verse as under; "It contains a warning against apostasy but at the same time urges the apostates to repent during their lifetime to avoid Hell-fire." (Tafseer Ruhul-Bayan vol. 1, p. 227). Again the Holy Quran says: "Whosoever forsakes Islam for another faith, it shall not be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter, he shall be among the losers." (Al-Imran — 85). This verse also provides a standout example for freedom of choice in matters of religion. This, in essence, is the message of the verse under reference. It applies equally to apostates and other disbelievers and falls short of making any distinction between the two categories. Punishment for both is reserved in the Hereafter. It is a pity that the Ulema did not have a say in this matter. Otherwise a considerable number of innocent people would have lost their lives at the altar of ignorance. In fact it would have been a rout either way for the real disbelievers as well as the victims of the Fatwah-mongers. Again, the Holy Quran says: "How shall Allah guide a people who have disbelieved after believing and who had borne witness that the Messenger was true and to whom clear proofs had come and Allah guides not the wrong doers. As for such people, their reward is the curse of Allah on them, and of angels and of men all together . . . except those who repent thereafter and amend. Surely Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful." (Al-Imran — 86-89). If our Ulema are honest in their professions of faith, they should immediately fold their campaign of hatred against the so-called apostates. The above verse emphatically demolishes the sand-hill of their arguments. If the apostates were to be put to the sword after renunciation of Islam, there would not be any time-lag available to them for the purposes of Tauba, etc. There is no deadline fixed for repenting. This aspect clearly repudiates the concept of violence or terror against those guilty of apostasy. Once again, says the Book of God: "Those who believe, then disbelieve, then again believe,

then disbelieve and thereafter go on increasingly in disbelief; Allah will never forgive them nor will He guide them to any way of deliverance.” (Al-Nisa — 138). If a person had to be killed for his very first defection; he could not possibly have a history of conversions. This verse provides the decisive showdown between us and our adversaries. The Ulema can never have it their way unless they include this verse also in the list of the other more than 500 verses of the Holy Quran which, according to them, have been abrogated and, therefore, no longer operative.

There are numerous other verses in the Holy Quran which establish beyond a shadow of doubt that no compulsion is permissible in matters of faith. It is because faith is a matter of conscience and by its very nature conscience cannot be compelled. Human nature revolts against the doctrine of compulsion and there is no evidence in its favour either in the Quran or in the practice of the Holy Prophet or of his succeeding Caliphs. The Word of God clearly envisages the natural death of an apostate and any punishment in this sphere is reserved for him in the Hereafter. The Quran itself places hypocrites at par with the apostates; but in their case, history bears out a most humane and liberal policy of tolerance by the Holy Prophet. So much so that the Holy Prophet said the Jinaza (funeral) prayer for Abdullah Bin Ubayi Bin Saloul, the chief of the hypocrites of Madina. Let no one say that the Quran had a soft corner for the hypocrites. Far from it. The Holy Quran specifies the lowest depth of the Fire for the hypocrites (Al-Nisa — 146). It is inconceivable that the Quran could formulate two different patterns of punishment for the hypocrites and the apostates because both the groups had first believed and then disbelieved. Thus there is nothing whatsoever in the Holy Quran from which any inference could be drawn that apostasy is punishable with death or indeed with any worldly penalty. This meets just about every criterion for freedom of conscience and fundamental human rights.

As pointed out the second source of guidance for the Ummah is the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet. There is not a single instance in the life-time of the Holy Prophet (Peace be on him) when any man or woman was smitten on account of apostasy only. The following incidents occurred after the Holy Prophet's Hijra to Madina which have definite bearing on the punishment of apostasy:

- (a) A beduin came to Madina and embraced Islam at the hands of the Holy Prophet. He was afflicted with fever after sometime and considering this an ill-omen, asked the Holy Prophet to abrogate his covenant of Baiat. He saw the Holy Prophet on more than one occasion for this purpose, but his request was turned down. Eventually the beduin left Medina for his desert home (Sahih Bukhari). This incident provides ample proof that there was no such thing as death for apostasy in the days of the Holy Prophet. Otherwise this beduin would have been put to death, the first time he declared his disbelief in Islam.

- (b) An article in the treaty of Hudaibiyyah stipulated that if any of the Meccans embraced Islam and sought refuge at Madina, they would be returned to the Meccans. On the other hand if a Muslim repudiated Islam and wanted to identify himself with the Meccans, he would be allowed to do so. (Sahih Bukhari) (Egyptian edition — vol. II p. 76). The above details clearly establish the fact that apostasy was not an offence! at least not in the life-time of the Holy Prophet.
- (c) Abdullah bin Abi Sarha was one of the scribes of the Holy Prophet. He became an apostate and joined the Meccans in their war against the Muslims. When Mecca fell to the Muslim Army, Abu Sarha was one of those who were refused amnesty by the Holy Prophet. He, being the foster-brother of Hazrat Usman, took shelter with him for some days. When order was restored in Mecca, Hazrat Usman requested the Holy Prophet spare Sarha's life. The Holy Prophet, after some hesitation, forgave Abu Sarha (Tafseer by Imam Razi — vol. IV p. 484). On this point, it could be proved conclusively from both ends of the pencil that there was no penalty for apostasy in Islam. There is ample evidence available in Ahadees that the Holy Prophet never accepted intercession in the matter of the 'Hudood'.
- (d) Some people from Uraina came to Madina and accepted Islam. The local climate did not appear to suit them, so the Holy Prophet gave them permission to live in the suburb of Madina along with the keepers of the State herds. These miscreants not only tortured and killed the keepers of the herds but also drove away with all the camels and goats ect. An armed party of muslims was sent after them who took them prisoners and brought them back to Madina. These people were executed under the orders of the Holy Prophet for committing murder and robbery. There is nothing in this Hadees which lends support to the view that apostasy is punishable with death. The apostates from Araina were not killed for apostasy but for the triple crime of torture, murder and robbery.
- (e) "A woman became an apostate on the day of Uhad. She was executed by orders of the Holy Prophet because she refused to repent." This Hadees is palpably false on the face of it as the Holy Prophet never directed the killing of women for apostasy. One of the narrators of this Hadees was Muhammad B. Abdul Malik who revelled in fake Ahadees and as such had been rejected as a true source by eminent Muslim theologians.

The third source of guidance for the Ummah are the Traditions. Some reported sayings of the Holy Prophet whose circumstantial antecedents cannot be fully determined, must receive specific interpretation so as to bring them into conformity with the Quran and Sunnah. It must be borne in mind

that all these sayings were recorded 150–200 years after the demise of the Holy Prophet. The following are some of the traditions which pertain to the subject in issue:

- (a) Anyone who changes his allegiance or loyalty, should be executed. (saying attributed to the Holy Prophet by various sources). To see reason at its worst, if one could examine this Hadees at some length, it would mean that conversion from any other religion into Islam or vice-versa, would render the converttee liable to capital punishment. There is obvious thinness in this argument and even our opponents would not readily agree to this interpretation. Maulana Maudoodi has translated this Hadees as under:

Anyone (that is to say, Muslim) who changes his religion, should be executed. (Murtad ki Saza Islami Qanoon Ma'ne — p. 12). The words within brackets (that is to say, Muslim) are only an interpretation and merely an innovation of the Maulana Sahib. This innovation or fabrication could not withstand an even-handed discussion of the word 'Deen'. The Arabic connotation of this word means religious tenets, allegiance to a political system or the way of living of a Community. The Hadees only implies that changing of allegiance or loyalties when a state of war exists between two parties or communities, would amount to high treason and, therefore, punishable with death. This is a common code of war recognised by all the nations of the world. To apply it specifically to apostasy would be a far cry from the truth. If our Ulema had searched deeply, they could have discovered the glimmer of a correct interpretation of his Hadees.

- (b) Said the Holy Prophet: "The killing of a Muslim is permissible only for three reasons:
- (i) An adulterer.
 - (ii) One who becomes an apostate and wages war against God and His Prophet.
 - (iii) A murderer." (Abu Dawood-Kiṭābul-Hudood).

There are two or three similar Ahadees and the killing of apostates is invariably linked with their waging war against God and his Prophet. It does not require any deep thinking to realise that even if a Muslim waged war against a Muslim state he would be treated as a traitor and dealt with accordingly. It is no use saying things which the Ulema know to be untrue. A Muslim State makes no distinction between a Muslim rebel and an apostate rebel. It is not known why such traditions are quoted in support of death for simple apostasy.

- (c) Abu Mūsa Asha'rī was appointed Governor for Yemen by the Holy Prophet. After some time Muā'z Bin Jabal was also despatched to Yemen to assist Abu Mūsa Asha'rī. When Muā'z reached the

Government House, he saw a Jew sitting there. This Jew had previously embraced Islam but reverted to his faith afterward. Muā'z recognised him and ordered his immediate execution. Muā'z repeated his demand three times until the Jew was executed on the spot. (Murtad Ki Saza by Maulana Maudoodi — p. 14).

The inference drawn by Maulana Maudoodi is that this Jew was an apostate and therefore was put to the sword by the Muslim rulers. The conclusion arrived at by Maulana Maudoodi is incorrect for the following reasons:

- (i) No saying of the Holy Prophet has been quoted in this case. Someone has narrated a doubtful incident in which a Sahabi used his own initiative in the killing of a Jew. Ijtehad of even august Sahabis cannot be accepted as a binding precedent if it flagrantly contravenes the verses of the Holy Quran and the practice of the Holy Prophet.
- (ii) This Jew had previously embraced Islam. Afterwards he joined the forces of Musailma Kuzzab and had tortured and killed some Muslims from Banu Haneefa. This was the reason why he was executed by the order of Muā'z Bin Jabal.

Much is being made of the war waged by Hazrat Abu Bakr against the rebel tribes around Madina and other places in Hejaz. There were, in all, eleven tribes of Murtaddin who had defected from Islam, three of them having done so in the Holy Prophet's own time and the remaining eight in that of Hazrat Abu Bakr.

Tabarī has given a full account of all the rebel tribes who had refused to pay taxes to the Central Government at Madina. Actually it was not a simple case of defiance against the Divine Commandment of Zakat. This was not an issue with the common people. The core of the problem was that rebel tribes resented the supremacy of the Quraish over the rest of the Arab tribes. Some of the tribes even had the effrontry to attack Madina but were beaten back by forces led by Hazrat Abu Bakr himself.

According to Tabarī, the revolt of the tribes against Madina was not a case of Irtidad (apostasy). Even if it was, then it was more a political than a religious defection. There are clear indications that the first Caliph had never acted on the principle that a change of faith, even though peaceful, would have to be suppressed by force. Abu Bakr's wars, without exception, were waged against the rebels.

Tabarī also mentions in his History, that Khalid bin Walid refused to pardon the rebels unless they first surrendered those of their comrades who had burnt to death Muslims or mutilated their bodies. Professors Wellhausen and Laetani (Encyclopedia of Islam) have also expressed the view that the

rebellions in the days of Khulafai-Rashedeen had pure political hues and had less than nothing to do with Islam and apostasy. The plea of our Ulema that Hazrat Abu Bakr waged wars against the apostates only, is borne out neither by history nor by the flimsy data produced by the zealots in support of their claims.

It is a pity that our Ulema continue to believe that the Murtaddin were poor harmless people who under some evil influence had defected from Islam. Muslim divines like Maulana Maudoodi still imagined that the Murtaddin had committed no wrong beyond with-holding a few dinars of Zakat and that they never fought against the Muslims nor hurt anyone. Our Maulvis also believe that the Murtuddin had no quarrel with the Islamic state. All this goes to show the depth of ignorance of some of our Muslim scholars. Morbidity had replaced intelligence and good sense so much that a number of our theologians felt oddly restless until they could endanger the lives of some innocent people with their Fatwahs.

Ibne Khalladun has recorded that 'Abs and Zubiān were the first among the rebel tribes who spearheaded the attack on Madina. If it was a gentle case of with-holding of Zakat by some ignorant people, then the fault lay with Hazrat Abu Bakr who took the initiative in the fighting. But all the great Muslim historians maintain that it was the rebellious tribes who set the tone in the severe fighting that ensued immediately after the demise of the Holy Prophet. It would be a sheer travesty of facts to accuse Hazrat Abu Bakr of initiating a civil war merely because some people were not offering their regular prayers and were with-holding some goats from the Zakat levy.

The apostates had not only made secret plans to occupy Madina, but had also murdered the sincere Muslims among them who persistently opposed rebellion against the Centre. According to Ṭabarī, as soon as the intimation of the death of the Holy Prophet was received, Banu Zubiān and 'Abs attacked and killed all the devoted muslims around them. Their example was followed by other tribes and scores of true believers were tortured, killed and burnt in the most atrocious manner. These are facts of history which only the stark blind could deny.

A fringe element among our Ulema (including Maulana Maudoodi and Shibbir Ahmad Usmani) has flirted with the notion that even genuine repentance by an apostate cannot save his neck from the guillotine. It is, therefore, no wonder that such extremists as these would perhaps never be dissuaded from foreclosing the redemption of misguided people. But in a situation like this, such fanatics would be at odds with their own version of the wars waged by Kulafai-Rashedeen against the Murtuddin. For there is irrefutable evidence available that Hazrat Abu Bakr, much to the discomfiture of our Maulana, never indulged in mass slaughter of the apostates. Even in the Battle of Yamamah against Musailmah Kuzzal —

which was the fiercest — the lives of thousands of people were spared by Khalid bin Walid.

The situation in a nutshell, was that the Murtuddin had rebelled openly against the authority of the Islamic State. They killed hundreds of devoted Muslims and were determined to wipe out and destroy the Islamic State and Islam itself. Allama Āini who wrote a commentary on Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhari says: "Hazrat Abu Bakr waged war against the tribes not because they withheld Zakat but because they had rebelled against the State in the first instance and had killed a large number of Muslims." (Āini — vol. II p. 236).

There is not the slightest doubt that had Hazrat Abu Bakr not used maximum force against the apostate tribes, there would have survived no Muslim and no Islam. The consensus of opinion among the Muslim and non-muslim historians is that the Murtuddin were clearly the aggressors. They not only refused to pay the Government taxes but took up the sword against the Muslims and thus commenced hostilities. The thesis that the apostasy of the tribes was confined to a difference of doctrine, is altogether false as has been proved abundantly in the preceding paragraphs. When Bani Asad, Ghatafan, Hawzan, Bani Sulaim and Bani Tsi were finally crushed and defeated, Khalid bin Walid granted amnesty to the remainder only when the persons who had burned the muslims alive, and mutilated their dead bodies, were produced before him for punishment.

The Murtuddin were really infidels who in the heyday of Muslim power, had accepted Islam only as a political expediency. The opportunity to take revenge of their defeats at Mecca and Hunain was furnished to them when the Holy Prophet died so unexpectedly and the muslims felt like orphans in the midst of hostile multitudes. Had it not been for the valour and wonderful courage and strategy of Hazrat Abu Bakr, there would have been left no Muslims and no Islam itself. The people who think that Hazrat Abu Bakr staked the very existence of the Islamic State and Islam merely because a few people did not believe in paying the Zakat, are either ignorant of the early history of Islam or they deliberately seek to mislead the unwary.

There are some Ulema who take delight in believing that spiritual evolution in Islam has come to an end and that God has now finally decided to withdraw all His Blessings and Bounties from the human beings till eternity. We are not indulging in any arguments regarding the finality of prophethood in this paper. This is hardly our subject in the present instance. But when the Maulvis gleefully cite the example of Musailma Kuzzal and other imposters in the days of the Holy Prophet, we are just not sure what the Maulvis want to prove. Do they want to prove that Hazrat Abu Bakr fought and vanquished the false Prophets because this was left undone by the Holy Prophet himself? According to the Maulvis, the first Caliph fought Musailma and others because they had become apostates after laying claims to Prophethood. What

the Maulvis forget very conveniently is that Musailma and other false prophets had claimed prophethood in the life-time of the Holy Prophet. In fact Musailma came to Madina in person with a delegation of Banu Haneefah and proposed to the Holy Prophet that he would withdraw his claim to prophethood if he was nominated his (The Holy Prophet's) successor. The Holy Prophet turned down his offer but never ordered his arrest nor issued any instructions for executing him as an apostate and an imposter. Could some bright Maulvi enlighten us with the solution of this mystery? Most probably not. The only plausible reason was that Musailma at that stage had not revolted against the authority of the Islamic State. It is only on this account that he was not molested in Madina, his claim for prophethood notwithstanding. There is a similar case of Ibne Sayyād. This man lived in Madina and had claimed prophethood in the life-time of the Holy Prophet. There is a record of dialogue between Ibne Sayyad — the pseudo-prophet and the Holy Prophet. Hazrat Umar wanted to kill him but the Holy Prophet forbade him to do so. Where are the protagonists of killing peaceful citizen-prophets or no prophets? Can any Maulvi explain this contrast of behaviour between the Holy Prophet and the first Caliph? Well, here is the explanation. Masailma, when he came to Madina, was unarmed and a peaceful citizen of the Islamic State. The Holy Prophet had, therefore, no occasion to molest him or order his execution for laying false claim to prophethood. But when he confronted Khalid bin Walid — the representative of Hazrat Abu Bakr — at Yamamah, he was at the head of an extremely powerful army consisting of more than 40,000 soldiers and was heading towards Madina in order to destroy the Islamic State and Islam itself. The writer of this paper is confident that any person with fear of God in his heart, would at once realise the difference between the two situations. He would also realise that Musailma was completely left alone in Madina in spite of his apostasy and claim to prophethood because he had arrived there as a peaceful citizen. Later when he took up arms against the Islamic State, he was dealt with according to law for the traitors and the rebels.

It is hoped that the arguments of supporters of death penalty for apostasy, have been finally clinched. There appears to be no need to go into further details of the doings of Khulafa succeeding Hazrat Abu Bakr.

Before closing this paper, we will deal briefly with a verse of the Holy Quran advanced by Maulana Maudoodi in support of his executionary role against the apostates. He quotes from the Holy Quran: "But if they repent and observe prayer and pay the Zakat, then they are your brethren in Faith. And we explain the signs for a people who have knowledge. But if they break their oaths after their covenant and attack you on account of your religion, then fight these leaders of disbelief — surely they have no regard for their oaths — that they may desist." (Al-Taubah—11–12). There is nothing in the above verses which could incite someone to kill peaceful and law-abiding

apostates. In fact there is no mention of apostacy in these verses and only persons with *extraordinary intelligence and fancy* could have innovated the image of the murtuddin between the lines. The Maulana, instead of a comprehensive commentary on this verse — the only one he could find on the subject of apostasy in the Holy Quran, has abruptly tried to sidestep the issue which was beginning to irritate the minds of a large number of people besides his own. After an excessively brief explanation of the verse, he has quickly shifted his posture towards some Ahadees — most of which are weak and therefore not dependable. According to Maudoodi Sahib, the word 'Ahd' in the verses, means a covenant to accept Islam. This interpretation has already been rejected by the following well-known muslim scholars! Maulana Shah Abdul Qadir, Maulana Ashraf Ali Thawnvi, Maulana Mohammad Hussan Deobandi, Maulana Shibbir Ahmad Usmani, Maulana Ahmad Raza Khan Brailwi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Mr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan of Bhopal.

Such renowned scholars as above, have shattered the ant-hill of Maulana Maudoodi in no uncertain manner. The matter does not end here. There is none in the long list of recognisable names of the Muslim divines, who ever offered the verses (11–12) in Surah Tauba in support of the thesis that Murtuddin should be executed. However, we have discussed this subject in detail in this paper and leave the judgement now to our readers. There are some Ulema in our country who would let the fate of the nation go hang as long as they get their full share of the spoils of lawlessness and disorder. There is an apparent contradiction between our social philosophy and system of religious faith. More than anywhere else in the world, there are hate-pedlars in our midst whose sole job is to pour more and more oil on the already inflamed atmosphere of religious intolerance. Pakistan is a sacred heritage for all of us — innocent men, women and children — who would wish to live in peace with their neighbours.

Islam itself is a religion of peace and provides protection to all those who are peaceful citizens of this God-given country. It must never be overlooked that Pakistan was not achieved by conquest but as the result of a negotiated agreement between communities inhabiting the sub-continent. The minorities in both Pakistan and India were entitled to have equal rights and protection under the law. Nobody has got extra-proprietary or territorial rights in this land, least of all, the Maulvis who opposed the creation of Pakistan. All religious groups and factions in this country should learn to practise moderation in their behaviour towards each other. Amen!

What is Islam?

Islam literally means *Peace, surrender of one's Will*; and to be in amity and concord. The significance of the name Islam is the attainment of a life of perfect peace and eternal happiness through complete surrender to the Will of God. The Quran — the Holy Book of the Muslims — interprets it to be the religion whose teachings are in consonance with human nature. Islam, as the Quran has stated (5:4), is the completion of the religion inaugurated by God in the beginning of the world, on His sending the Quran through the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him). As a child is taught his alphabet, so God taught the religion to the world gradually and little by little, by sending His prophets at different times and to different peoples.

When the world reached that stage of understanding when it was ready for the final lesson, He sent the last and complete Book through the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him). This Book not only corrects the errors which had found their way into various religions, but preaches the truths which have not been preached before, on account of special circumstances of the society or the early stage of its development. At the same time it gathers together in itself the truths which were contained in any Divine revelation granted to any people for the guidance of men (The Quran 98:4). Lastly, it meets all the spiritual and moral requirements of an ever advancing humanity.

This is Islam which is wrongly called Muhammadanism.

According to Islam, the object of man's life is its complete unfoldment. Islam does not support the idea that man is born in sin. It teaches that everyone has within him the seed of perfect development and it rests solely with a person himself to make or mar his fortune. *We created man in the best make* says the Holy Quran (95:5).

The cardinal doctrine of Islam is the Unity of Godhead. *There is none worthy of worship but the one and only God, and Muhammad is His Prophet.* He is free from all defects, Holy and Transcendent. He is All Good, All Mercy and All Power. He has no partner. He neither begets nor is He begotten, because these are the traits of frail and weak humanity. Furthermore, Islam helps us to establish a permanent relationship with God and to realise Him during our earthly life as our Helper in all our affairs and undertakings. This Unity of God is the first and foremost pillar of Islam and every other belief hangs upon it.

Islam requires belief in all the prophets, including Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Krishna, Buddha, Confucious and Zoroaster. We regard them all (and many more not mentioned here) as heavenly teachers born to reform and regenerate man and lead him to God. Adherents of some other religions may consider it an act of piety to use disrespectful words and heap abuse on the prophets of other religions, but if a Muslim were to show the slightest disrespect towards the founder of any other faith, he does so at the cost of his own faith. He has to utter the respectful benediction *Alaihis-Salam* (peace be on him) after mentioning the name of every prophet. Thus Islam establishes peace between all religions.

The REVIEW of RELIGIONS

The Review of Religions is the oldest magazine of its kind published in the English language in the Indo-Pakistan Sub-Continent. Its first issue was published in 1902 and it has been continuously published since.

It bears the distinction that it was initiated under the direction of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah himself.

During more than eighty-one years the message of Islam has been conveyed through this magazine to hundreds of readers and many fortunate persons have recognised the truth of Islam and accepted it through studying it.

The articles published in it deal not only with the doctrines and teachings of Islam but also set forth a comparative appreciation of the teachings of other faiths.

One of its outstanding features is the refutations of the criticism of Islamic teachings by orientalists and non-muslim scholars.

It also presents solutions in the light of Islamic teachings of the problems with which the Islamic world is from time to time confronted.

A study of this magazine is indispensable for the appreciation of the doctrines of the Ahmadiyya Movement and the teachings of its holy Founder.



Printed by The Eastern Press Ltd, London and Reading
Published by The Review of Religions, The London Mosque, 16 Gressenhall Road, London,
SW18 5QL