



THE REVIEW of RELIGIONS

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THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT

The Ahmadiyya Movement was founded in 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the expected world reformer and the Promised Messiah whose advent had been foretold by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). 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.



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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.

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EDITORIAL

OBLIGATIONS OF A MUSLIM

The teachings of Islam cover all aspects of life providing guidance and obligations in society. Islam is, indeed, a way of life involving oneself and obligations towards God and humanity. Islam does not permit a Muslim to live a withdrawn life avoiding society. It is strictly against monasticism and living the life of a hermit.

First it should be understood that Muslims believe the Holy Quran to be literal revelation from God which emphasises that a true Muslim is one who in addition to believing in the truth of his faith also practises it which involves good actions and righteous behaviour. In other words belief has little or no value unless the teachings are translated into action.

The name given to man in the Holy Quran is 'Insan' which means one who loves his fellow-beings. Brotherhood is a cardinal virtue of Islam. The essence of this teaching is summed up in the following verse:

“Verily, Allah enjoins justice, and the doing of good to others; and giving like kindred; and forbids indecency and manifest evil and transgression. He admonishes you that you may take heed.”
(16:91)

Here virtues and vices are divided into three classes respectively. The first stage involves fair dealings with others. A person should think and act towards others as he would like them to think and act towards him. He should not return evil for good nor should he expect to receive good in return for evil. The next stage is one of beneficence when a person should try to repay good shown to him with greater good and he should forgive those who harm him as far as circumstances allow. The third stage requires a person to do good to others neither in return nor with the expectation of receiving some favour in return. In this stage his pleasure lies only in doing good to someone else. Basing his way of life on these principles a Muslim is taught to render loving service to his fellow-beings free of all selfish motives.

While Islam recognises man's right to choose his own course of action be it right or wrong it does not permit him to wrong others. Man's duty is to obey the laws of God and live his life in accordance with those guide lines. No doubt man is free to follow the wrong way but if he does so he must expect to suffer the consequences.

As the teachings of Islam cover all aspects of life it also provides instructions on government. Muslims are taught that they should only select persons to office who are suitable for the post. It does not allow those lacking integrity and qualification to be chosen. It teaches that consultation is an important requirement in government. Whatever government is in power, however, a Muslim is enjoined to co-operate with it fully providing he is not called upon to act contrary to the commands of his religion.

Islam recognizes that everyone, irrespective of belief, is free to accept and believe in any religion or ideology of their choice. The Holy Quran explicitly states 'There is no compulsion in religion'. It is expected of a Muslim that he should convey the message of Islam to others but not by coercion of any kind. Furthermore Islam does not claim to have a monopoly on all truth. It teaches belief and acceptance of all Prophets of God and that there has not been a nation to which a Prophet has not been raised at one time or the other with Divine guidance.

Islam does not contend that a person is revered in the sight of God merely by acknowledging certain beliefs. On the other hand the Quran says 'Verily the most honourable person among you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous among you.' (49:14). Islam does not make any distinction between the obligations of a Muslim towards another Muslim or a non-Muslim. There is one exception. He should be more intent on correcting a fellow-Muslim from doing wrong. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, taught that a Muslim should help his brother not only if he is oppressed but even if he is the oppressor. The companions of the Holy Prophet said they could understand how they could help an oppressed brother but not if he were the oppressor. The Holy Prophet replied that they should check him from doing wrong. That was the way they could help him. Islam also teaches that a Muslim should observe equity and warns that enmity should not cause him to act unjustly towards a person.

The Holy Quran exhorts Muslims to co-operate in good works with others. It states that the best people are those who help one another in

purity and righteousness and oppose sin. It calls on unity among mankind to the extent that if one nation is guilty of aggression against another then all the others should go to the assistance of the one which has been wronged.

Islam teaches, therefore, that a Muslim should live amicably and beneficently with everybody.

KEY TO DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

There is a great distinction between the acquisition of worldly knowledge and knowledge of the Holy Quran. Righteousness is not needed for the study of grammar, physics, philosophy, astronomy, medicine, etc. It is not necessary that a student of these subjects should observe Salat and the fast and should be mindful of Divine commandments and prohibitions and should subordinate his every action and word to Divine directions. Indeed it often happens that the seekers of such knowledge become atheistic and are involved in every kind of vice. Today the world presents a remarkable spectacle. Though the people of Europe and America acquire high proficiency in worldly arts and sciences and daily make new inventions, their moral and spiritual condition is deplorable. We cannot even mention some of the scenes that are witnessed in the parks of London and the hotels of Paris and are published in the daily press. On the other hand righteousness is an essential condition for heavenly learning and for acquiring knowledge of the mysteries of the Holy Quran. For this purpose sincere repentance is needed. For the door of Quranic knowledge is not opened until a seeker of it carries the burden of Divine commands with perfect humility and meekness and turns to Him humbly, trembling before His glory and His might. Without these he cannot obtain from the Holy Quran the means of fostering those qualities and faculties which generate delight and comfort for the soul. The Holy Quran is the Book of God and its knowledge is in the hand of God; thus righteousness is the ladder for the acquisition of such knowledge.

(Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad)

GUIDE POSTS

VALUE OF SOLITUDE

(Bashir Ahmad Orchard)

It has been declared that great deeds are born in solitude. There is no doubt that great characters have been formed in solitude including great spiritual personalities. Not that they have spent all their time in solitude for they have to render their services for the benefit of mankind. Let us turn to the life of Jesus as recorded in the Bible. While he was active in preaching he appreciated the value of solitude from time to time. We read:

“And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.”

(Mark 1:35)

“ And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.”

(Matth. 14:23)

“These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.”

(John 12:36)

The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, also spent much time in prayerful solitude:

“Revolting against the mischiefs, misdeeds and the many vices of the people of Mecca, he chose a place two or three miles away for his meditations. This was on top of a hill, a sort of cave shaped out of stone. His wife Khadija would prepare food for several days, and with this he would repair to the cave Hira. In the cave he would worship God day and night.”

(Introduction to the Study of the Holy Quran)

Then in his home he would arise in the stillness of the night and spend hours offering special prayers (Tahajjud) between midnight and dawn.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad - the Promised Messiah and Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam was also prone to

solitude. It was not until the nature of his Divine mission required him to live and move in the limelight that he did so. Circumstances brought him out of seclusion. In his younger days he expressed his feelings to his father in the following words:

“ I wish I could spend the rest of my days in some solitary corner, drawing myself away from the company of men and busying myself with the remembrance of God. Perchance I may succeed in making up for lost time, and may be able to make amends for all my past.”

(Life of Ahmad by A. R. Dard)

In his house he constructed a special closet for prayer known as Bait-ud-Dua where he would retire in privacy to offer long and heartfelt prayers.

On one occasion he went into retreat for forty days during which time he issued instructions that nobody should visit him, the front door should be bolted and nobody should disturb him. Food was brought to him and utensils taken away afterwards. In this way he spent his time in one room praying, meditating and reading. The only time he ventured outside was to attend Friday prayers which he led in a small mosque. During those forty days he enjoyed communion with God and wonderful religious experiences.

Let us see what others have said on the value of solitude:

“Silence promotes the presence of God, humbles the mind, and detaches it from the world.”

(Archbishop Fenelon)

“In solitude and silence the holy soul advances with speedy steps and learns the hidden truths of the oracles of God.”

(Thomas a Kempis)

Sleep is a period of solitude when one becomes detached from the affairs of the world and returns to it revived and refreshed. It is necessary for the health and welfare of man. Similarly in the spiritual field we find that hungry and thirsty souls are spiritually refreshed and invigorated by periods of isolation devoted to spiritual development in one way or another such as through prayer, meditation and reading. There are times in this world when one likes to be alone with a friend when two is company and three makes a crowd. Similarly there are times when a devout soul likes to be alone with God and these are the times when he enjoys the value of solitude with Him.

REPLY TO THE REVEREND BARAKATULLAH

(The following appeared in the 1988 May issue of the Ansarullah Magazine and is a translation from the original Urdu).

The Rev. Barakatullah, M.A., wrote a book titled 'Torah of Moses and Muhammad-e-Arabi'. It is a debatable book in which very insolent language has been used against the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam and its Holy founder — Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. He categorically denies that the prophecy in Deuteronomy 18:18 which speaks of a prophet to come like unto Moses refers to some specific prophet. He says that the word prophet used in the Torah (Book of Moses) is a common noun and that God will continue to raise prophets from among the Israelites like unto Moses. Hence, he says, the prophecy does not refer to any particular prophet so there is no need to look out for any one in particular. According to him it is incorrect to translate the word nabi as 'a prophet'. It should be just 'prophet'. Similarly it is incorrect to translate the word yakim as 'will raise'. It should be 'will continue to raise'.

This is the evasive way adopted by Dr. Moffat in his translation of the Bible. In Deuteronomy 18:15 he has translated nabi as meaning 'prophet after prophet' and in 18:18 has translated nabi as meaning 'a prophet'. Again yakim as 'raised'. However the Rev. Barakatullah has surpassed him in twisting the text by insisting that the word means 'will continue to raise'. This is a wrong translation. In no translation of the Bible has anybody written 'will continue to raise'. None of the translations rendered into Greek two thousand three hundred years ago, nor the Latin and Syrian translations made in the early centuries, nor do any of the modern translations endorse the translation put forth by the Rev. Barakatullah.

In 1978 more than a hundred scholars of the world prepared a new translation of the Bible keeping in view the Hebrew, Syrian and Greek translations. They named it 'The New International Version'. It is an accurate translation of the Old Testament. In it:

1. Nabi is translated as 'a prophet'.
2. Yakim is translated as 'will raise'.

In view of the foregoing translation by more than a hundred scholars, what value can be given to the claims of the Rev. Barakatullah?

After this brief introduction, we would like to answer other points of criticism raised by the Rev. Barakatullah.

OBJECTION

Deuteronomy 18:18 does not refer to the Ishmaelites because nowhere have they been mentioned as being the brethren of the Israelites.

ANSWER

The Torah confirms in two places that the Ishmaelites have been called the brethren of the Israelites but this fact remained hidden due to the Hebrew text being difficult to understand. It is written:

“Having settled to the east of his brothers.” (Genesis 25:18)

It means that the Ishmaelites settled to the east of their brethren. The Arabian desert is to the east of Israel. That is why in the Torah the Arabs have been called Banu Qidm meaning the people of the east. Hence they are the brethren of the Israelites. Similarly in the New English Bible a marginal note beside Genesis 16:12 states that Ishmael will dwell to the east of his brethren (Israelites) and this is also confirmed in the marginal notes of the New International Version of the Bible. These versions clear all doubts and confirm that the Ishmaelites are the brethren of the Israelites.

OBJECTION

Ishmael was the step uncle of Isaac and not his brother.

ANSWER

Ishmael and Isaac were the progeny of Abraham and were, therefore, brothers. They were brothers from different mothers. Their offspring are brothers. A real uncle cannot be regarded as a step uncle when the Ishmaelites have been called the brethren of the Israelites in the Torah.

In the Catholic Bible (1958) the commentary on Matthew 12:46 states that according to Hebrew and most oriental languages not only the children from the same parents but also those of paternal and maternal uncles are regarded as brothers. Hence Ishmael and Isaac were brothers. Moreover the offspring of Jesse the elder son of Jacob

have been called brothers of Isaac in the Old Testament. Also in Jeremiah 49:11 there is mention of Jesse's brothers where the Ishmaelites are alluded to as brothers and not the Israelites because Ishmael's daughter was given in marriage to Jesse who, as a result, became the son in law of Ishmael. Since the house of Ishmael and the house of Jesse were relatives, they were regarded as brothers.

OBJECTION

Muhammad was not from the progeny of Ishmael. There exists no continuous chain of genealogy. Also the Prophet said: 'Those who describe my genealogy beyond Adnan are liars.'

ANSWER

According to reliable Arab traditions Adnan was from the offspring of Ishmael. The availability of continuous genealogy is not essential. Waqidi writes that he never came across any difference of opinion about the fact that Ma'ad, the father of Adnan, was not the progeny of Qaidar bin Ishmael (Khutbat Ahmadiyya p.624). In the same book Sir Sayyed writes on page 628 that all historians, the Jews and nations dwelling nearby to Arabia, Arabs and Muslims of other countries confirm that Muhammad (peace be on him) was from the progeny of the family of Hashim which originated from Ishmael, son of Abraham. When addressing the Arabian tribe of Quresh, Muhammad (peace be on him) told them 'Your father was Abraham'. This fact was accepted by all and sundry. Who, therefore, can dare deny it? He also quotes the testimony of the reputed historian, Gibbon, who has written that it is the foolishness of the Christians to say that the Prophet was from a low and mean progeny because it is a nationally accepted and proved fact that he was from the progeny of Ishmael.

We invite the Rev. Barakatullah to take a look at his own scriptures and pay particular attention to the following points:

- (1) Are there not genealogies in the New Testament which are at variance with one another?
- (2) Was Jesus the son of Joseph? In the New Testament his genealogy states that he was the son of Mary and not the son of Joseph.
- (3) Where is the genealogy of Jesus on his mother's side?

OBJECTION

If the verse under discussion (Deuteronomy 18:18) foretold the advent of Muhammad, then the Quran would have said so.

ANSWER

The Holy Quran says:

“Say, ‘Tell me, if this Quran is from Allah, and you disbelieve therein, and a witness from among the Children of Israel bears witness to the advent of one like him, and he believed, but you are too proud to believe, how should you fare?’ Verily, Allah guides not the wrongdoing people.” (46:11)

This verse sheds sufficient light to remove whatever objection there may be. The Holy Quran says:

“Verily, We sent to you a Messenger, who is a witness over you, even as we sent a Messenger to Pharaoh.” (73:16)

Here mention has been made that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) was like unto Moses who was also a law—bearing Prophet.

OBJECTION

It appears from the Torah that prophethood is restricted to the house of Israel. This point was also proclaimed by Jesus and his disciples.

ANSWER

Jesus understood the Old Testament. In his view the brethren referred to in Deuteronomy 18:18 were not the Israelites but another nation:

“Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” (Matthew 21:43)

The Rev. Barakatullah interprets this saying of Jesus to mean that other nations will accept Christianity which contradicts what Jesus meant who elsewhere said:

“These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans, enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” (Matthew 10:5,6)

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

According to Jesus ‘other nations’ does not refer to or mean

Christians of other nations.

The Jews believed in the advent of two Messiahs (John 1:27). One would bring together the tribes of Israel and the other will be the son of David. They called the awaited and promised one Messiah. It is written in the Talmud, the name of the fundamental code of the Jewish and canonical law, that all the prophets had given news about the appearance of a Messiah and the world had come into existence only for him. (Sanm 98—99)

Jesus put forward an argument from Psalm 110 saying that the Messiah is not the son of David because David called him 'Lord' and not son (Matthew 23:45). In the Psalm the Messiah has been likened to Melchizedek — the high priest — who was a non—Hebrew Semitic King. According to the Psalm the expected one for the world will be of permanent status similar in ways to King Melchizedek. According to Jesus, therefore the promised Prophet was not to appear from among the Israelites but from another nation.

OBJECTION

The prophecy in Deuteronomy 18:18 foretelling the advent of a prophet like unto Moses simply means that as God sent Moses so will He continue to send prophets in the future. It does not refer to a specific prophet.

ANSWER

It has already been stated that the word used in the text of the Hebrew Torah is *yakim* which means 'will raise'. Nobody has ever translated it to mean 'will continue to raise'. This is a novel concoction on the part of the Rev. Barakatullah. God clearly says that a prophet like unto Moses will be raised from the brethren of the Israelites and I will put my words into his mouth as contained in the prophecy.

It is clear that the main resemblance is that of a law-bearing prophet like Moses who was given a law and a book. A prophet was to be raised who would bring a law and a book like Moses. Wherever in the Holy Quran a prophecy of the coming of a prophet like Moses is mentioned, mention is made of the Torah and Quran. This is the major point of resemblance. We read in the Holy Quran:

“Say, ‘Tell me, if this Quran is from Allah and you disbelieve therein, and a witness from among the Children of Israel bears witness to the advent of one like him and he believed, but you are too proud to believe, how could you fare?’ Verily Allah guides

not the wrongdoing people.” (46:11)

“And before it there was the book of Moses, a guide and a mercy; and this (Quran) is a book in Arabic language, fulfilling previous prophecies that it may warn those who do wrong, and give glad tidings to those who do good.” (46:13)

Waraqah bin Naufal said “This is the same bearer of revelation that God sent to Moses.” which again proves that the revelation of a law is the greatest point of resemblance.

OBJECTION

It is absolutely wrong on the part of Muslim scholars to conclude from the words of Peter that a prophet like Moses would come after the Messiah (Acts 3:21,22). Whatever Peter said applied to Jesus.

ANSWER

The New Jerusalem Bible, 1985 edition, has given a different translation. The words ‘Moses for example’ need attention and the ‘universal restoration’ is linked with the prophecies of the prophets as Moses said a prophet like himself would be raised from amongst the brethren of the Israelites. It is written in the passage from Acts:

“It is necessary that he (Jesus) should remain in Heaven until the reformation and correction of the world..”

All these things must happen, therefore before the second advent of Jesus. Peter also said ‘For the same reason He sent Jesus to you beforehand’. These words are quite clear. The Messiah would first come to be followed later by the promised prophet (Deuteronomy 18:18) and after him would take place the second coming of the Messiah — Jesus. Thus the covenant made with Abraham would be fulfilled. It is evident that the mission of the expected prophet would be for all mankind and a universal spiritual revolution is linked with him. All nations will benefit from his blessings and he will not come only for the Israelites.

OBJECTION

Peter was only giving a reminder about Abraham’s covenant recorded in the Old Testament: “And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I shall establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.” (Genesis 17:19). God excluded Ishmael from His covenant.

ANSWER

This is the height of prejudice to say that all the homes of the Israelites shared God's blessings while the descendants of Ishmael were deprived of them. It is written in the Torah:

“And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.” (Genesis 17:20)

The Rev. Barakatullah responds by saying that Ishmael was promised only material blessings and not the blessings of prophethood. Why? Because the textual changes in the Torah do not allow for it. For instance Ishmael was the first born of Abraham and God told Abraham to sacrifice his only son. As Isaac was never the only son, an alteration was made by inserting ‘only son’ before Isaac: ‘Take now thy son, thy only son Isaac’ (Genesis 22:2). How could he be called the only son in the presence of his brother? This contradiction proves that the Bible has suffered textual interpolation. The Jews prepared an alternative Torah from some sub-scrolls and called it Jubilee. In it is written that Abraham should sacrifice his first born son Isaac. How can Isaac be called his first born? Also the words ‘I will make My covenant with Isaac’ have been changed. A universal covenant is mentioned including the whole of Abraham’s progeny. This was revealed to Abraham even before the birth of Isaac (Genesis ch 17).

On the one hand Ishmael is included in the covenant before the birth of Isaac and on the other hand the covenant is made with Isaac at the exclusion of the other. This open contradiction shows there has been an alteration in the text. The following words are attributed to God in the Torah ‘But My covenant will I establish with Isaac’ (Genesis 17:21). It is an admitted fact that the Torah was collected through different means. Some chapters have been extracted from the Torah of the Deacons. In one place the Deacons inserted the word ‘but’ instead of ‘also’, i.e. ‘I will make My covenant with Isaac also’ has had its meaning changed by inserting ‘but’ instead of ‘also’. The Gospel of Barnabas is a mutilated document in its present form but original material of the Bible is found in some places. It is written that since Ishmael was Abraham’s first born, he was offered for sacrifice. The scribes made an alteration and inserted the name of Isaac in the text while Ishmael was the confirmed son of the covenant.

OBJECTION

According to the covenant of Abraham the blessing of prophethood was restricted to the twelve tribes of Israel. All the prophets appeared among them. Ishmael was deprived of this greatest blessing and had no share in it.

ANSWER

This is the second limit of prejudice. Jacob was definitely not an Israelite but an Arab prophet. (Bible and Arabia p.172 by James Montgomery)

Renowned scholars are of the opinion that the original language of Jacob's scrolls was Arabic and was later translated into its present form. Phillip Hitti writes:

“Jacob was not a Jew. he was an Arab as is apparent from his name and the place of his scrolls was Northern Arabia.”

He writes further:

“There is mention made of Qidm and Bani Qidm in the Torah which alludes to the people of Arabia. One of the chiefs of this Bani Qidm was Jacob.”(Ayyub 1/3)

“His scribe was regarded as a masterpiece in wisdom and poetry.”

“Moses married the daughter of a chief of Midian who was an Arab.”

“In the Book of Proverbs the wise sayings of two kings of an Ishmaelite tribe Masa are also recorded.” (Tarikh—e—Millat Arabi Urdu p.69,70)

The Bible has not restricted prophethood to the twelve tribes of Israel. This is the wrong idea of Rev. Barakatullah who has limited the covenant of Abraham only with the Israelites. It is his narrow-minded deduction.

OBJECTION

According to the Torah Ishmael lived in the desert of Paran. The link between Mecca and Paran is just like that between Srinagar and Benares. Throughout his life Ishmael never visited the vicinity of Mecca. He spent the whole of his life in the desert of Paran where he died. His progeny occupied the region between Havilah and Shur, and this territory is many hundred

kilometres away from Arabia.

ANSWER

The Rev. Barakatullah is deceived by the Biblical geography prepared by the clergy. He is absolutely unaware of recent research. According to the Dictionary of the Bible by John D. Davis, the original Havilah is in Yemen and Shur refers to the southern boundaries of Canaan which means that the Ishmaelites dwelt in the land of Yemen to the south of Palestine. Havilah is not many hundred miles from Arabia. It is the name of the southern part of Arabia. This may be verified in the forementioned dictionary. The research of scholars about Paran is that it is the name of the desert in which the Israelites stayed during the period of their migration. They wandered for thirty eight years (Aid to the Bible Understanding 'Paran' 1270). Phillip Hitti says that the Israelites spent their days of migration in the central Arabian desert and Sinai (Tarikh—e—Millat Arabi p.65). It is evident that the old name of the greater part of the Arabian desert is Paran known as Faran.

What is the meaning of Faran? It is an Arabic name. In Hebrew it means 'uncertain'. The principle is that if there is confusion in the Hebrew then turn to the Arabic for the meaning. This principle has been accepted by all contemporary scholars. Faran has two meanings in Arabic (1) meaning to boil, to spring with force, i.e. boiling of water or springing of a fountain. (2) The second meaning is from the root i.e. to run. The two runners. The beautiful coincidence is that the two meanings are applicable here. In the uninhabited desert for the two exiled (Hagar and the infant son, Ishmael) a spring of water burst forth in abundance. This spring caused the country to become populated and also became the sole source of drinking water for pilgrims proceeding to the Ka'ba during pilgrimage. The Torah names it the wood of Bair-e-Shabi. According to Arab tradition, however, it is the uninhabited valley of Mecca in which the same spring of water called Zam Zam is situated and continuously provides water for the people. Leaving aside this difference in point of view, Faran, according to philology, is the point from where the spring flowed and where, for the sake of God, the two exiles stayed. This incident took place in the uninhabited valley according to ancient Arab traditions. Due to this startling and miraculous coincidence, the whole of the desert of Arabia began to be called Faran. It is written in the Torah:

“He shined forth from Mount Paran” (*Deuteronomy 33:2*)

The Prophet Habakkuk foretold the coming of:

“The Holy One from Mount Paran.” (Habakkuk 3:3)

Let us examine what is meant by Mount Paran. James A. Montgomery, a renowned contemporary scholar, has written an authentic book on this topic. He writes:

“The chain of volcanic mountains spread from Mecca to Damascus. They are called Harrat in Arabic. In Hebrew the word used for them is Harr. Habakkuk the prophet mentioned the places of God’s appearances such as Teman, Paran, Kushaw and Medina. They are all the Harrat of the North West.” (Arabic and the Bible p.83, 84)

This research shows that the mounts of Paran are situated in Hijaz because Faran is the ancient name of Arabia.

The basic mistakes of Papal geography is that the territories of Yemen and Hijaz are shown in the Syrian desert or to the south of Canaan. Due to the influx of population the Arab tribes migrated from Yemen and Hijaz and started to inhabit northern Arabia and the Syrian desert. The immigrants gave the same name to the new cities and countries from where they had come. Very little has been made of the permanent residing place of the Ishmaelites. People took the northern territories as real places. They put the Ishmaelites in northern Arabia and the Syrian desert instead of Hijaz. Gradually this confusion is being cleared and the truth is being revealed. Havilah is the Yemen but due to the exodus of the population this name also appeared in northern Arabia. John Davis detected the probable reason of the double name and confirmed that original Havilah was in Yemen. Similarly Faran is the name of the uninhabited valley of Mecca. The mountains of this place were called Jibal-e-Faran. There are resembling places in the north that become the basis of misunderstanding. Due to double names some of the territories of Yemen and Hijaz have been shown in the north. This has been unfair treatment with Arabian geography. It is essential at the end to have a view of the prophecies of the Old Testament which have been applied to the Messiah by the writers of the Bible. The Rev. Barakatullah has served our purpose by publicly proclaiming that there are no particular prophecies about the Promised Messiah in the Old Testament. On the other hand those that had come true in the near

future have been applied to Jesus. This is a startling confession stated by him:

“Therefore the statements of the past prophets mentioned in the Bible were not the particular prophecies about the advent of a Messiah after many centuries but they only related to the period of the prophets of that time or to some historical event of the near future. For example Isaiah stated: “Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.” And he said, “Hear then, O house of David: Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold a young woman shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel. He shall eat butter and honey that he may know how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.” (Isaiah 7:10-16)

It is clear that this prophethood is linked with the near future but the words of verse 14 have a very significant meaning for the writers of the Bible and they viewed it exactly like the manner of the birth of Jesus as written in the first chapter of the Gospel of Matthew: “All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ‘Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Immanuel.’” (Isaiah 7-14)

In an earlier statement the Rev. Barakatullah writes clearly that when the past prophets prophesied these things they never meant that they were referring to a particular prophet or Messiah.

One should remove the beam from one’s own eye before looking for the mote in another’s eye.

PRAYER

(Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad)

(A brief review of booklets of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan K. C. S. I., called Prayer and its Acceptance and The Principle of Interpretation. This is followed by a discourse on Pleasure in Prayer by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad)

Syed Sahib sets forth his belief that the acceptance of prayer does not mean that the supplicant should be bestowed what he asks for. If this should be the meaning of the acceptance of prayer two difficulties would be encountered. The first difficulty is that thousands of supplications that are made most humbly and earnestly are not fulfilled which means that the prayer has not been accepted, while God has promised acceptance of prayer. The second difficulty is that which is to happen is determined and also that which is not to happen. Nothing can happen contrary to that determination. If acceptance of prayer means granting the request made, then the Divine promise: *"Call on Me, I shall respond to you"* (40:61), is not fulfilled concerning supplications the granting of which is not determined. According to this interpretation, the general promise of acceptance of prayer will be falsified inasmuch as only those requests are granted the fulfilment of which is determined, and yet the promise of acceptance of prayer is general and is not subject to any exception. Some verses indicate that those things which are not determined will not be granted and some verses indicate that no supplication is rejected and that all are accepted. The verse: *Call on Me, I shall respond to you*, shows that God has promised the acceptance of all prayers. Thus, the only way of reconciling this contradiction between the verses that the acceptance of prayer should be interpreted as meaning the acceptance of an act of worship, that is to say, that prayer should be interpreted as a type of worship concerning which there is a Divine promise of acceptance when it is offered in the sincerity and earnestness of the heart. The acceptance of prayer is, therefore, no more than that it earns merit by being regarded as a type of worship. If the bestowal of something has been determined and it is also prayed for, it is bestowed not because of the prayer, but because it had been determined upon. The great benefit of prayer is that when at the time of prayer the heart is fixed upon the greatness of God and His limitless power that idea overcomes all the apprehensions which were the cause of restlessness and the supplicant

experiences patience and steadfastness. This condition of the heart is produced by worship and this is the acceptance of prayer. Syed Sahib observes that those people who are unaware of the reality of prayer and of the wisdom that is inherent in it can say that if that which is not determined cannot happen, then prayer is of no use. That is to say, that which is determined will happen in any case whether one offers a prayer in respect of it or not and that a thousand prayers will not help where the matter has not been determined, thus prayer is in vain and useless. In answer to this Syed Sahib says that to supplicate for help in the time of distress is a characteristic of human nature and a person supplicates on account of his natural characteristic without thinking whether what is being supplicated for will happen or not. On account of this characteristic of his nature he has been told to supplicate to God for whatever he desires.

This summary of the view held by Syed Sahib indicates that his belief is that prayer cannot be the means of achieving one's goal, nor has it any effect on such achievement. If by prayer the only purpose of the supplicant is that through his supplication his request should be granted his purpose is vain, inasmuch as no prayer is needed for that which has been determined and for that which has not been determined, humility and earnestness are without avail. He believes that prayer is only a form of worship and it is in vain to adopt it as a means of achieving a specific purpose.

We shall show later that Syed Sahib has woefully misunderstood the verses of the Holy Quran. At this stage we would observe with regret that if Syed Sahib's intellect had fallen short of the meaning of the Holy Quran, had he at the time of writing these booklets overlooked the law of nature which he claims to follow and which he regards as the interpreter of Divine guidance and of the hidden mysteries of the Holy Quran? Is Syed Sahib not aware that though nothing good or ill in this world is free from determination, yet nature has appointed such means for the achieving of the good or the ill, the true and correct effect of which is not questioned by any wise person? For instance, though keeping in mind determination, to have recourse to a remedy in case of illness is the same as praying or not praying for an object, yet would Syed Sahib affirm that the science of medicine is altogether without any basis and that remedies have no effect whatever? If, despite his belief in determination, he is persuaded that remedies are not without effect, then why does he create a distinction between this law and a similar and parallel law? Does he believe that God had power to invest certain medicines with such powerful effects that their full dose should immediately move the stomach, or that certain

poisons should have such powerful effect that a full dose of them should despatch that consumer from this world within a matter of minutes, yet He should leave as dead and without effect the supplications of His elect which are full of resolve and attention and earnestness? Is it possible that there should be a contradiction in the Divine system and that the Divine design which works for the welfare of His servants through medicines should not operate in the case of prayer? That is not so. Syed Sahib himself is unaware of the true philosophy of prayer and has no personal experience of its high effectiveness. His case is like that of a person who over a period uses a stale medicine which has lost all its effectiveness and then concludes, as a general rule, that medicine is ineffective. Syed Sahib has reached an advanced age, but the natural system, that determination is closely related to means, has eluded him. That is why he has fallen into the error that anything can happen without the intervention of the means which nature has appointed spiritually and physically. As a general rule, nothing is free from determination. A person who derives advantage from fire, or water, or air, or clay, or corn, or vegetable, or animals, or minerals, does so under the rule of determination, but if a stupid one should imagine that without the help of the means which God Almighty has appointed, and without treading the paths that have been fixed by nature, something might be acquired without the mediation of physical or spiritual means, such a one seeks to falsify the wisdom of God Almighty. The meaning of all that Syed Sahib has put forth is that he does not regard prayer as one of the effective means, the existence of which he admits, and that he has in this matter gone beyond the limit. For instance, if someone mentions the effect of fire to him, he will not deny it and will not affirm that if anyone's being burnt has been determined he would be burnt without the intervention of fire, then I am surprised that despite being a Muslim he denies the effectiveness of prayer which sometimes lights up the darkness like fire and sometimes burns the hand of an impertinent intervenor. Does he remember determination at the time of prayer and forget it when fire or the like is mentioned? Does not the same determination govern both? When, despite determination, he adheres so strongly to effective means that he has acquired an ill reputation in his exaggeration, then what is the reason that the system of nature which he acknowledges is forgotten by him in the matter of prayer, so much so that while in his view a fly has some effect, yet prayer has none? The truth is that he is unaware of the effect of prayer and has no personal experience of it, nor has he had the advantage of keeping company with those who have such experience.

MIRACLES ARE WROUGHT BY PRAYER

The subject of the acceptance of prayer is a branch of the subject of prayer. A person who does not comprehend the principle encounters difficulty in comprehending a branch. This is at the bottom of the misunderstanding of Syed Sahib. The principle of prayer is that there is a mutually attractive relationship between a pious servant and his Lord. To begin with, the *Rahmaniyyat* of God Almighty draws a servant to itself. Then through his sincerity the servant approaches close to God Almighty and in prayer that relationship, when it arrives at a certain stage, manifests its wonderful qualities. When a servant being confronted with a great difficulty leans towards God Almighty with perfect certainty, perfect hope, perfect love, perfect fidelity and perfect resolve, and becoming extremely alert and tearing aside the veils of heedlessness advances far into the fields of the discarding of self, he beholds in front of him the court of the Divine and perceives that He has no associate. Then the soul prostrates itself at that threshold and the power of attraction that is invested in him draws the bounty of God Almighty towards itself. Then God, the Glorious, addresses Himself towards fulfilling the purpose of the supplication and casts the effect of prayer on all those preliminary means which give rise to the means that are necessary for the achievement of the purpose of the prayer. For instance, if the prayer is for rain then on its acceptance the natural means that are needed for rain are created by the effect of the prayer. If the prayer is for famine the All-Powerful One creates the contrary means. It has been proved to the satisfaction of those who have frequent experience of visions that in the prayer of a perfect person a power of fashioning is created. That is to say, by the command of God the prayer exercises control in the lower and higher world and turns the elements and heavenly bodies and the hearts of people to the direction that is desired.

THE EFFECT OF PRAYER IS GREATER THAN THE EFFECT OF FIRE

There are many instances of this in the holy Books of God Almighty. Some types of miracles are in reality the acceptance of prayer. The source of thousands of miracles that were manifested by the Prophets and the wonders that have been exhibited throughout by the saints was prayer, and it is through the effect of prayer that extraordinary events display the power of the All-Powerful. Are you aware what was the wonderful event that happened in the deserts of Arabia, that hundreds of thousands of the dead became alive within a few days, and those who had been corrupted through generations took on Divine colour, and the blind began to see, and the tongues of the

dumb began to flow with Divine insight, and such a revolution took place in the world which no eye had seen and no ear had heard before? It was the prayer during dark nights of one who had been wholly lost in God which created an uproar in the world and manifested such wonders as had appeared impossible in the case of that unlearned helpless one. O Allah send down blessings and peace on him and on his people according to the number of his griefs and sorrows for the Muslims and send down upon him the lights of Thy mercy for ever. I have experience that the effect of prayer is greater than the effect of fire and water. Indeed in the systems of natural means nothing has greater effect than prayer.

PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL MEANS ARE NOT OUTSIDE DETERMINATION

If a question is raised that some prayers are not heard and no effect becomes visible, I would say that the same is the case with medical remedies. Have medicines shut the door of death, or is it not possible for them to fail in their purpose? Yet, despite this, can anyone deny their effect? It is true that determination covers everything, but determination has not wasted or disgraced knowledge, nor has it rendered means unreliable. Careful consideration would show that physical and spiritual means are not outside determination. For instance, if the fate of a patient should be good, the means of a proper remedy become available and the body becomes ready to take advantage of them. In such a case the remedy becomes most effective. The same is the case with prayer. All means and conditions of the acceptance of prayer come together where the Divine design is of acceptance. God Almighty has tied together His physical and spiritual systems in the same chain of causes and effects. It is a great mistake on the part of Syed Sahib that he acknowledges the physical system but denies the spiritual system.

I deem it necessary to add that if Syed Sahib does not repent of his wrong assumption and should require proof of the acceptance of prayer, I would be ready to disabuse his mind. I promise that I shall inform Syed Sahib in advance of the acceptance of some of my prayers and will also publish the fact, provided Syed Sahib promises that on my claim being established he will repent of his wrong assumption.

MUST ALL PRAYERS BE ACCEPTED?

Syed Sahib says that in the Holy Quran God Almighty has

praised those who are steadfast and at a time of trial confine themselves to committing themselves to God. In this verse prayer has not only been commanded but the verse goes on to describe it as worship and in case of disobedience warns of the torment of hell. It is obvious that in the case of other prayers this warning is not added. Indeed in some cases Prophets were admonished in respect of their prayers. The verse: I advise thee not to act like the ignorant ones (11:47) is an instance. This shows that if every prayer had been worship Noah would not have been rebuked about his prayer. In some situations Prophets and saints have considered it disrespectful to supplicate and the righteous have followed the dictate of their hearts in respect of such prayers; that is to say, if at a time of distress the heart suggested prayer they turned to prayer and if the heart suggested steadfastness, they were steadfast and turned away from prayer. Besides, God has not promised acceptance of prayer in all cases, but has clearly said that He would accept if He so wills and would reject if He so wills. The verse: In such an event you will call on Him alone, then will He remove that which you call on Him to remove, if He pleases (6:42) clearly indicates this.

CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTANCE OF PRAYER

Even if we were to concede that the phrase 'Call on Me' means prayer, we would have to affirm that by prayer is meant such prayer as complies with all required conditions and that is not within the power of man unless he is helped by God. Humility alone is not enough for prayer, but righteousness, purity, truthfulness, perfect certainty, perfect love and perfect attention are all needed, and it is also necessary that the object prayed for should not be opposed to the Divine design for the welfare in this world and in the hereafter of the supplicant, or on the one on whose behalf supplication is made. Very often, despite all other conditions being fulfilled, the object for which supplication is made is opposed to the Divine design and there is no good in its fulfilment. For instance, if a child should cry that his mother should hand over to him a burning brand, or a serpent, or should feed him a poison, which appears agreeable, the mother would not comply with his wish. Were she to do so, and though the child might escape with his life some limb of his should become useless, then arriving at years of discretion the child would have a grievance against his foolish mother. There are many other conditions in the absence of which prayer does not deserve that name and so long as prayer is not inspired by full spirituality and there is not a close connection between him who supplicates and him on whose behalf supplication is made

there is little hope of the acceptance of prayer. Unless there is Divine willingness for the acceptance of prayer all these conditions are not fulfilled and full attention remains lacking. Syed Sahib acknowledges that the good fortune of the hereafter and its bounties and delights and comforts which constitute salvation, are the result of faith and sincere prayers. That being so, Syed Sahib would be compelled to acknowledge that a believer's prayers have effect and become the cause of the removal of calamities and the achievement of objectives. If that were not so, then how would they be of help on the Judgement Day?

If prayer is truly a vain thing and cannot be the cause of removal of any calamity in this life, then how will it become a cause for their removal on the Judgement Day? If our prayers truly possess the effect of safeguarding us against calamities that effect should be manifested in this world also, so that our faith and hope might be fostered and we should pray more earnestly for our salvation in the hereafter. But if prayer amounts to nothing and that which is written is bound to happen, then as, according to Syed Sahib, prayer is vain for the calamities of this world, it will be vain for the hereafter also and no hope could be placed in it. (Barakatud Dua pp. 5-14)

PLEASURE IN PRAYER

I am extremely sorry to find that man has, nowadays, no love of devotion. This lack of love is due to the poisonous effect of too much attention to forms or outward observance of prayer. It is on account of this formalism or devotion to outward forms that love of God is on the wane, and man, therefore, does not find in his prayers the pleasure he ought to find. There is no such thing in the world which has not been provided with some taste or special flavour. Those, who do not experience any pleasure in their prayer, are like the patient who cannot relish even the most delicious food. To them, even the most palatable dishes are either bitter or entirely tasteless. Such people should have much concern over their disease.

As I have already stated, nothing in this world is devoid of some taste. Now, as God has created man for His worship, how can it be possible that He has provided no taste and pleasure for him in such worship or prayer? Taste and pleasure certainly there are, but one must have the aptitude for it. God says:

‘And I have no other purpose in the creation of jin and man save and except that they should worship Me.’ (Ch. 51:57)

Now, as God has created man for worshipping Him, He must have made provision for pleasure and satisfaction in it. This truth is brought home to us by our daily experiences. Take, for example, the case of the articles of food and drink that have been provided for man. Does not man find relish and flavour in them? Has not man been provided with a tongue to taste them and enjoy their flavour? Does he not find pleasure at the sight of some beautiful thing—vegetable or mineral, animal or human? Does not his ear enjoy fascinating and melodious sounds? Is any more evidence required to prove that there should be some pleasure in worship?

From what I have already stated, you can fully realize that worship or prayer is not a burden nor a tax. In worship too there is a bliss and pleasure which is far superior to all the other pleasures and enjoyments of the world. Just as sexual pleasure cannot be enjoyed by an impotent person, or one who has not the required power for it, and just as a diseased person cannot relish the daintiest food, similarly, an unlucky man cannot find any pleasure in worship or prayer.

WHY PEOPLE FIND NO PLEASURE IN PRAYER

The reason why people are negligent and slack in prayer is that they are not aware of the pleasure and bliss to be found in prayer; and this is the main reason of this neglect and slackness which is to be found in a greater degree in towns and villages, where even fifty percent of the people do not prostrate before their True Lord with true and perfect sincerity. Now, the question again arises: Why is it so? The reason, as already stated, is that they are not conscious of the pleasure of prayer, and they have never tasted or experienced it. In religions, other than Islam, there is no provision or injunction for such prayer or worship. It, sometimes, happens that when the *Muazzin*, (one who calls to prayer), chants the *Azan* (call to prayer), some people remain engrossed in their work, and they do not even care to hear the *Azan*; they are, as it were, aggrieved to hear it. The condition of such people is extremely pitiable. Even here, (referring to Qadian), there are some persons whose shops are situated adjacent to the mosque, but still they do not care to join the prayer.

I, therefore, enjoin my followers to pray to God with great pathos and fervour that He may enable them to experience, for once, the bliss and pleasure of prayer and devotion, even as He has blessed them with

the relish of various fruits and other things. The thing once enjoyed is remembered. If a person has the pleasure of seeing a beautiful thing, he remembers it well. Again, if he sees an ugly and loathsome object, it also appears before his mind's eye in all its features. Without any connection or experience nothing is remembered.

Hence, to a person who does not offer prayer, prayer is a burden to him, for he has, for nothing for which to get up early in the morning, perform ablution in the cold, abandon his sweet sleep and forego many other comforts. The reason is that he harbours an aversion to prayer because he cannot realize its worth or utility. He is not aware of the pleasure and bliss that underlies prayer.

Now, the question is: What means can a person adopt to achieve pleasure in prayer? We find that when a drunkard does not get satisfaction in drinking, he goes on drinking glass after glass of wine, till he gets intoxicated. A wise man or a saintly person may derive a lesson from it. That is, he should continue his prayer, and go on praying, till at last, he experiences a bliss or satisfaction in it. Secondly, he too, like one given to drinking, whose main purpose is to derive pleasure from it, should keep in view and have all his efforts riveted to the acquisition of pleasure. Thirdly, he should pray to God for that pleasure fervently and sincerely, at least with the ardour and fervour of a drunkard. If one does so, I am sure, he will certainly find that pleasure. Fourthly, while offering prayers he should have in view the benefits that result from prayer. God says:

“Good actions drive away evils.” (Ch. 11:115)

So pray to God with a view to having all these good things or blessings (*Hasanaat*), so that you may be favoured with ability to pray like those true lovers and true worshippers of God who, while praying, feel that they are seeing God or are being seen by Him. God says in one place: “*Hasanaat*, or good actions, or prayers, keep one away from vice and sin”, and at another place He says: “Surely, prayer saves one from manifest evil and sin,” (29:46), and yet we find that some persons, in spite of offering prayers, commit vice or sin, it is due to the fact that their prayers are devoid of essence, fervour or sincerity, and are mere ceremonial performances or habitual movements of the body without life in them.

Such prayers cannot be called *Hasanaat*. The reason why the word *Hasanaat* and not *Salat* has been used here, although both have the same meaning, is to draw attention to the beauty, utility and blessings of prayer, and to emphasize the fact that only such prayers remove evil

or vice and sins, as have the spirit of truth or sincerity in them, and are productive of good. Such prayers do, certainly, wipe out evil. Prayer does not mean mere sitting and standing. The essence or soul of *Namaz* is the prayer which is attended with pleasure and bliss or satisfaction. (*Malfuzat*, pp. 152–157)

HEARTFELT PRAYER

Beloved Lord, come to our help. Make firm our convictions and our faith so that we should incline wholly towards Thee with all our hearts and all our desires and our full understanding, and with all our limbs and our lands and our cultivations and our commerce and our industry and our professions. Make us turn away from everything that is besides Thee. Let nothing beside Thee have any existence in our estimation. We should obey and follow Thee alone. O Creator of all and Master of all, why should we take any pride in wealth or in the owner of wealth, and why should we be deceived by them? We present ourselves in Thy court of honour in the guise of the humble and the meek. We reject the world and part from it. We love the hereafter and desire that alone. O Lord of perfect powers, our full trust is placed in Thy Beneficent Being. O Gracious One, every particle of ours is devoted to Thee. Illumine us with Thy light. Amen.

(Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad)

80 YEARS AGO

(The following is an extract from the October issue of the Review of Religions, 1908)

CHANGING GOD INTO MAN

In the Contemporary Review for August a writer states the circumstances which led to a change in his belief in the Christian Catholic doctrines. A perusal of Renan's and Strauss' lives of Jesus, he tells us, awakened subversive thoughts and feelings in him, and to find an antidote for these doubts he went to a learned Catholic Divine, "the only source of spiritual solace" he knew, "and a man of genuine piety and vigorous intellect." Before him he laid open his inner thoughts in the hope of finding some spiritual illumination to dispel the darkness of doubt. And here is the gist of what the learned professor said:

"Lost faith in the divinity of Christ? Him! Yes, It does make a difference to a young man; creates a void; deadens energy. But only for a time if the psychic nature is sound. Only for a time. Most of us have passed through the ordeal, and we are—what we are. You must not take it too much to heart. After all, belief is not of the essence of our religion. As there were Christians before the Gospels were written, so too there were Christians before the dogma of the divinity was defined or believed ... That tenet grew like other doctrines. Even in the new Testament there are two currents: the one tending to show that Jesus did not claim to be the Messiah; the other proving that he did. Any how, the Jews did not accept him as their Messiah, because among other reasons he died an ignominious death, and no nation would let its hero be crucified like a slave. To this the Christians made the answer: Yes, it is true that he died, but he will come again in power and majesty, and all the world shall see. This announcement had been made by Jesus himself who stated that he would come before that generation should pass away. Well ... ages ... have passed since then and ... and that hope is still cherished.

"Read the Gospels carefully and you will yourself see that Jesus never claimed to be God. Indeed he would have sharply repudiated any such notion. The Lord's prayer is itself a refutation of the idea.

Analyse it and you will discover that it is the supplication of a pious man eager to draw nearer, and to draw his companions nearer to the Divine father. Jesus disciples, who were apt enough to magnify and exaggerate, never fancied that he had harboured such a thought. They remembered that he had forbidden them to call him or any man good, that being an attribute of the deity. And long after Jesus death, Paul, who set him above the angels, regarded him as lower than God. The dogmas have grown up around fact and legend, knowledge and hope

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“The miracles of the New Testament on which we unwisely base the divine origin of our religion would find no credence to-day. Instead of proving anything they themselves stand in need of demonstration. To my thinking one of the most far resonant yet unobserved of all those miracles was the apotheosis by which Jesus of Nazareth became the second person of the Most Holy Trinity, God from all Eternity.”

“All this, my young friend, may be impalatable to you, but it is the best of myself, the most intimate of my thoughts that I am now giving you. You will perceive, if not to day, then in a month, a year or a decade, that for an honest seeker after religious truths in the nineteenth century, these are conclusions of which it is impossible to get rid... The deity becomes humanity, but with no such incarnations as ancient theologians dreamt of. As the earlier church transformed man into God, so we of the nineteenth century would fain change God into man. Next century will see the feat accomplished.”

This unexpected homily from such a high spiritual source was a death-sentence for the old beliefs of the enquirer who, while branding him “as a sheep-thief in shepherd’s garb, as a traitor wearing the livery and enjoying the confidence of the state which he was basely betraying to the enemy,” was yet “unable to parry any of his powerful well-aimed blows.” And who knows how many there are in the holy orders who believe as this great Catholic divine believed, though their position does not allow them to confess this openly. To the Christians it may seem strange, but this is exactly what the Holy Quran taught regarding Jesus thirteen hundred years before this. Truth must prevail in the end, and sooner or later the Christian missionaries who are leading astray the ignorant and superstitious population of India, so far as religion is concerned, will learn that the Divinity of Christ is an error, and thus will the God of four hundred millions of people be changed into man.

FULFILMENT OF PROPHECIES ABOUT THE MAHDI

(Mustafa Sabet)

Much has been written and said about the advent of the Mahdi in the latter days. There are so many traditions mentioned by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, describing every aspect of the life, mission and the time in which the Mahdi is to come. Due to these numerous traditions and the emphasis they lay upon accepting and supporting the Mahdi in his mission, and due to his high status affirmed by some traditions which put him above all the prophets before the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, a great part of the Muslim nation has considered the advent of the Mahdi to be a corner stone in reforming the faith. On the other hand, we find that many false claimants have claimed to be the promised Mahdi. Accordingly some Muslims tend to reject all the traditions about the Mahdi. In the time assigned to me, I will not try to prove the authenticity of these traditions. To me, as well as to many who are sitting in this auditorium, these prophecies have been already fulfilled in the person of the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, may the peace and the blessings of God be upon him as well as on his master the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. I will take only 10 prophecies about the Mahdi and analyse the chances of their fulfilment in one person. I will be making use of the well-known principle of probability. If the chance of one thing happening is one in X and the chance of another independent or related thing is one in Y, then the chance that they both happen is X times Y. To illustrate further, if we throw a dice on a table, the chance to get a specific number is one in six but if we throw 2 dices, then the chances of getting the same specific number from both the dices is one in 36. The proof of this theory could be found in any college Algebra text. I must point out that in our daily life, we accept the validity of scientific facts without any objection. They are the foundation on which the rates are fixed for all kinds of insurance whether it is life, property or car insurance, and in practice the truth of this theory has been proved in every application.

In evaluating these prophecies we shall have to answer this question

regarding each prophecy: One man in how many men has fulfilled this particular prophecy? I realize that some may object to this question, saying that these prophecies were made with respect to the Mahdi, and no other man can fulfil them. This of course is true when we consider the mass of prophecies regarding the Mahdi but is not true of all individual prophecies. Let us, for example, take 10 prophecies regarding some aspects of the Promised Mahdi, such as:

1. His name. 1 in 10; 2. His origin. 1 in 100; 3. His place. 1 in 10; 4. His features and complexion. 1 in 100; 5. His health. 1 in 10, 6. His revelation. 1 in 100,000,000; 7. His life. 1 in 100,000,000; 8. His sign. 1 in 100,000,000; 9. His mission. 1 in 100,000,000; 10. His accomplishments. 1 in 10.

NAME

It was prophecied, for example, that the Mahdi (literally means The Guided One) would have a name which resembles the name of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him. We know that the Holy Prophet was given the name Muhammad at his birth and it is the name with which he was addressed and mentioned also in the Holy Quran. But he said that he was given different names among which were Ahmad and Mahmood, which literally resemble the name Muhammad. Now the question is: How many men fulfill this prophecy? In other words, how many persons have the name Ahmad or Mahmood? If we assume that the average number of people living is 3000 million, out of which 600 millions are Muslims, a percentage of 2 out of 10, then let us assume that 50% of all Muslims have a name that in one way or another is similar to the Holy Prophet's name. In other words there will be 300 million persons who can fulfill this prophecy, and accordingly the chance of fulfilment of this prophecy will be 1 in 10 with respect to the total population. It is well known that the name of the Founder of this Movement was Ahmad.

HIS ORIGIN

It was also prophesied that the Promised Reformer will be a man from Persia and in the mean time he will belong to the family of the Holy Prophet. Many false claimants who happened to belong to the Holy Prophet's family neglected the other condition, namely to be of a Persian origin. The Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement was a Persian through his father and belonged to the family of the Holy Prophet through his mother. But was he the only one who fulfilled this prophecy? Of course not. If we assume that 30 million people are

Persians and at the same time belong to the Holy Prophet's family, then the chance of fulfilment of this prophecy would be 1 in 100.

HIS PLACE

It was mentioned that the Promised One will come in the East and specifically in the area east of Damascus. If we take the area bounded by the latitude no. 30 and that no. 35 and go further to the east until we reach the Pacific ocean, then every one living in this area can claim to have fulfilled this prophecy. Incidentally, Qadian which is the small village of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement lies exactly to the east of Damascus in the area by latitudes 30 & 35. But again he was not the only person who lived in this area. There may be about 300 million persons living in that strip Damascus to the Pacific, and accordingly, the chance of fulfillment of this prophecy is 1 in 10.

HIS FEATURES AND COMPLEXION

It was mentioned that the Promised Mahdi will have a dark complexion. He is not white but he is not black either. He will have sharp eyes, soft hair and a big beard that will hit his shoulders whenever he turns his face to the right or to the left. This prophecy excludes all the white and the black races. It also excludes all those who have curly hair from the remaining population. If we estimate a number of 30 million people could fulfill this prophecy, it means that the chance of fulfilment is 1 in 100. Incidentally some false claimants also disregarded this prophecy. For example, the Mahdi of Sudan had a black not dark complexion, had a curly not soft and straight hair and had a very short beard. I believe that out of all the claimants to the office of Mahdi, the only one who fulfilled this prophecy in all its details was Hazrat Ahmad of Qadian.

HIS HEALTH

It was prophesied that the Promised One would suffer from two diseases. Of course everyone of us has sometimes become a victim of some kind of disease. But how many of us have lived their whole life carrying with them two kinds of diseases. If we estimate the number to be 300 million persons, then the chance of fulfilment of this prophecy is 1 in 10. Hazrat Ahmad of Qadian suffered from two kinds of disease and he has pointed out that this was a sign from Allah to distinguish the right claimant from the false one.

HIS REVELATION

It was prophesied that the Promised One would receive revelation from God. I should emphasize here that Islam as explained by The Holy Quran is the last religion for all mankind, brought by the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, and will remain valid and intact until the Day of Judgement, No other book is to abrogate the message of

the Holy Quran and no other religion is to be sent from God. The only kind of revelation that may exist after the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, is that which bears glad tidings to the believers and reveal the secrets of the unseen. In no way it should contradict, add or cancel any word contained in the Holy Quran. Rather, it will resemble the kind of revelation the Prophet Aaron received in the time of Moses on whom be peace. The same was received by the prophets raised in the Jewish nation, it did not add or abrogate any teachings of the Torah, but its purpose was to explain the teachings of the Torah. In the same way, the Promised Mahdi was to receive revelation from God, but his revelation will not contradict any teachings of the Holy Quran. It will be only for the purpose of proving that Allah is the only True Living God, and to establish the truth and the triumph of Islam as the only true and living religion.

Now, let us ask our question... how many men would fulfill this prophecy? We know that from time to time, someone emerges who would claim to have received revelation from God. The Holy Prophet said that in the time between himself and the advent of the Mahdi there will be 30 false claimants. In our estimation, we will assume that in every time, there will exist 30 persons all claiming to receive revelation. Accordingly the chance this prophecy is to be fulfilled would be 1 in 100,000,000.

HIS LIFE

The Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, has said that the duration of the mission of the Promised Mahdi will be 40 years. Again in the Holy Quran, the criteria by which we can differentiate between a true and a false prophet is that the false one would be killed unless he repents. If we study the life of those we have known to have claimed to be the promised one for the latter days we will find that they were subjected to the operation of this heavenly law. In Sudan, the one who claimed to be the Mahdi was killed by the British authorities. In Iran, the Bab was also killed after six years of his claim. In the west, the Founder of the Mormon Church was killed at the age of 34. It was only the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community who received his first revelation in about the year 1868 and for 40 years until the year 1908, he spent his life in the service of Islam, and in spite of all kinds of opposition and attempts made upon his life, God saved him from being killed at the hands of his enemies providing irrefutable evidence of his truthful claim to be the Promised Mahdi.

Now, let us ask our question, one man in how many would claim

of his life in the service of Islam and that he has been appointed by God for that office and still he lived his 40 years and was not humiliated and killed by his opponents. To me there is none except Hazrat Ahmad of Qadian, but just for the sake of argument and in order not to be accused of exaggerating our estimations, let us assume that there were 29 unknown and unheard of persons who in addition to Hazrat Ahmad have fulfilled this prophecy. Then we can calculate the chance of fulfillment to be 1 in 100,000,000.

HIS MISSION

It was prophesised that the Promised Mahdi will have a dual mission. As a spiritual Son of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, he will be a reformer to the Muslims, a reformer who will purify the religion of Islam of all the misconcepts that crept into it. Also he will be a reformer to the Christians who will prove to them their error in holding a human being a God, and ultimately will bring the followers of the three great religions: Islam, Christianity and Judaism into unity by proving that Jesus was a true prophet who was delivered from the shameful death upon the Cross. This dual mission of the Promised Mahdi was the reason that he was considered also to be the Promised Messiah. Now let us consider, how many persons claimed to be the Promised Mahdi? Many did so. How many claimed to be the Promised Messiah? Many did so. But how many claimed to be the Promised Mahdi and the Promised Messiah at the same time fulfilling the prophecy of the Holy Prophet that the the Mahdi and the Messiah are one and the same person? None, no one except Hazrat Ahmad of Qadian. This will put our estimation of fulfilment of this prophecy to be 1 in 300,000,000. But let us assume again that there were another 29 unknown and unheard of persons who made such a claim. Our estimation then will be 1 in 100,000,000.

HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

It was prophesised that the institution of Khilafat will be re-established after about 1300 years from the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. It is true that some kings used to call themselves Khalifas but the type of Khilafat mentioned in the prophecies is that which is after the manner of Khilafat established by the Holy Prophet himself. For the sake of argument, we will consider all types of Khilafats that were established between the time of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, until now and would exaggerate our estimation and assume that 1 person out of 10 has somehow established a system of Khilafat.

chance of fulfilment of these 10 prophecies. To do that we have to multiply all our estimates together. That is:

$10 \times 100 \times 10 \times 100 \times 10 \times 100000000 \times 100000000 \times 100000000 \times 100000000$ and this is equal to 1 chance in 1 with 40 zeros at its right side written in the form of 1 in 10^{40} .

If we would like to know the chance that any man might have lived from the day these prophecies were made to the present time who may have fulfilled these 10 prophecies, we should divide our 10^{40} by the total number of people who have lived since the time of these prophecies. We can estimate this number to be 100,000,000,000 (one hundred billion) or 10^{11} assuming that an average of 3 billion people existed every 40 years. By dividing the 2 numbers $10^{40}/10^{11}$ we get 10^{29} . In order to satisfy some people who may have felt that we have over-estimated our figures, I will reduce this figure by dividing it further by 1,000,000,000 leaving the final figure to be 10^{20} which means that the chance of fulfilment of those 10 prophecies in any one person is 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000,000 (one hundred billion billion).

Let us try to visualize these chances.

If you mark one of ten dimes and place all the dimes in a hat, and thoroughly stir them, and then ask a blindfolded man to draw one, his chance of getting the right dime is one in ten.

Suppose we take 10^{20} dimes and put them one over the other in a shape of a column the height of that column will be reached, if we travel in a train at a speed of 100 miles per hour every day and night, in 90 million years.

Since this is a very long period of time, let us put our blindfolded man in the Enterprise of the Star Trek of the T. V. series that travels at the speed of light which is 186000 miles every second. This imaginary spaceship will cover the distance between the earth and the sun in 8 minutes. To reach the end of our column of dimes, it will need 13 years and 6 months.

Again, if we take our 10^{20} dimes and mark only one of them and stir the whole mass thoroughly and lay them on the face of the Province of Ontario, (the size of Ontario is four and half times the size of United Kingdom. The size of Ohio state is 4000 square miles larger than Pakistan and Bangladesh). Blindfold a man, and tell him to travel as far as he wishes but he must pick up one dime only and say

that this is the right one.

What chance would he have of getting the right one?

Just the same chance that the people who wrote these prophecies would have had in fabricating them and still having them all come true in one man, from their day to the present time.

Now, these 10 prophecies were either revealed by God to the Holy Prophet or the narrators and the writers fabricated them and attributed them to the Holy Prophet. But could they have also organized their fulfilment in one person having only one chance in 10²⁰. But as we have seen, all the ten prophecies came true in the person of Hazrat Ahmad of Qadian the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam.

The fulfilment of these 10 prophecies only proves beyond any doubt that Allah the All-Knowing revealed them to the Holy Prophet and He as the Powerful and Mighty God had the power to bring about their fulfilment. The advent of the Promised Mahdi is accordingly considered as a great sign and an irrefutable evidence and proof of the truth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and of the truth of the religion of Islam.

Can anyone be unreasonable as to reject the Promised Mahdi, Hazrat Ahmad of Qadian, and pin his hope on such a slim chance as finding the right dime among this great mass, covering the whole province of Ontario two hundred and fifty one feet deep?

It does not seem possible, yet everyone who rejects that Hazrat Ahmad of Qadian was the Promised Mahdi is just that.

Any man who rejects Hazrat Ahmad is rejecting a fact proved as absolutely as any other fact in the world.

The rejection of the Mahdi is in fact a rejection of the one who prophesied about his advent, and in a way a rejection of God Who fulfilled these prophecies in the person of Hazrat Ahmad of Qadian.

May Allah shower His blessings upon him and his master the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, and help and guide us to be His humble and obedient servants. Amen.

FROM THE PRESS DESK

(*Rashid A. Chaudhary*)

Ever since the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has issued the challenge of *MUBAHALA* (Prayer Duel) to its adversaries, a fresh wave of persecution against this Community has started in Pakistan. Besides the onslaught by mullahs, government agencies have also been active against Ahmadis up and down the country. More than 150 cases have been registered against members of the Community on different charges.

Mubahala, in Islamic terminology, is the spiritual battle between the two opposing factions, in which the claimant from God invites his opponents to take their dispute directly to the Court of God by invoking the curse of God on the party which, in the sight of God, wilfully distorts the truth and indulges in falsification and lies. According to the Holy Quran this is the ultimate measure to resolve the otherwise unending dispute of truth or falsehood of one's claim.

Reports received from Pakistan recently reveal that:

In Sargodha district, a case has been registered against nine Ahmadi Muslims. They were booked for showing a video cassette of a Question Answer Session conducted in London by the Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad and for distributing the *MUBAHALA* pamphlet. It is reported that these Ahmadis gathered in the house of Sheikh Gulzar Ahmad where the video was shown. When local mullahs came to know of such a function they rushed to the police station and asked them to take prompt action against the Ahmadis. As a result a police party raided the house late at night and searched the whole house but found no objectionable material. The police refused to register any case. The mullahs however remained adamant and threatened to create disorder in the area if their demands were not accepted. The police eventually registered the case. They have also raided Ahmadi houses in Sargodha city and arrested Dr. Abdul Ghafoor and his son for distributing the *MUBAHALA* pamphlet.

In yet another case the dispenser of an Ahmadi doctor Hafiz Masood Ahmad, was lured outside from the dispensary and assaulted

by five or six hooligans. He received multiple injuries on his body, and his leg was fractured.

As a consequence of the distribution of the *MUBAHALA* pamphlet in Faisalabad a crowd of 100 to 150 strong attacked and completely vandalised the clinic of an Ahmadi doctor, Mr. Bashir Ahmad. Earlier his four nephews Amir Rashid, Haroon Adeel, Rizwan Adeel and Suhail Ahmad were clubbed by several people on the instigation of a mullah, and then taken to the police station where a case was registered against them for distributing the above mentioned pamphlet.

In Jhang a case under section 16 MPO and 298/C was registered on 4th of August 1988 against the local leader of the Ahmadiyya Community Sheikh Mahmood Ahmad and six other Ahmadi for distributing the *MUBAHALA* pamphlet. It has also been reported from Sahiwal, Attock, Bahawalpur and Toba Tek Singh that the local Ahmadi leaders were arrested for the same reason.

In Karachi, despite protests from local Ahmadi Muslims the Sub divisional magistrate Karachi has ordered the sealing of the Ahmadiyya mosque, Orangi Town, Karachi stones were also hurled at three Ahmadi houses in Steel Township of Karachi, and a house belonging to an Ahmadi situated in Shershah sector was set on fire.

At least three Ahmadi Mr. Ata-ur-Rahman, Mr. Majid Sheikh and Mirza Jehangir Beg (an elderly person) were arrested for distributing the pamphlet.

At least three cases have been registered against the Supreme Head of the Ahmadiyya Community, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad. The action has been prompted by the mullahs against the Head of the Community for issuing the said challenge to his opponents.

I, myself, have been charged in one of the cases for sending the above mentioned pamphlet.

On the report of mullahs two Ahmadi namely Afzal Qureshi and Qaiser have been arrested for keeping a pamphlet containing religious poems composed by the Head of the Ahmadiyya Community at their shop in Rabwah.

An eleven year old school boy and an eighty eight year old and weak Ahmadi poet were arrested in Premkot, Gujranwala and Rabwah respectively on meagre charges. The bail application was refused in both cases.

THE DELIVERANCE OF JESUS FROM THE CROSS

QURANIC AND ISLAMIC EVIDENCE

(Abdus Salam Madsen)

PRELIMINARY REMARKS:

The Christian Churches teach that Jesus was crucified and suffered an accursed death on the cross for the atonement of the sins of mankind - that he was resurrected on the third day and ascended bodily to heaven, where from he will descend to judge the living and the dead.

Many so-called orthodox Muslims teach that Jesus was not put on the cross, but someone else resembling him was crucified in his place, whereas Jesus was raised to heaven in his mortal body, and that he remains there alive to descend in the latter days with the same physical body to judge according to Islamic law - as understood by these so-called orthodox Muslims.

It is my purpose to show that these two versions of the life, mission and death of Jesus do not find any support in Quranic evidence.

The word evidence may mean two things: witness (shahada) and proof (burhan). So some people might be satisfied to answer the question raised by the title of my address with a summing up of the Quranic witness as to the natural death of Jesus and his deliverance from death on the cross, while others might insist on some additional proof to substantiate the scriptural evidence given.

Now if we turn to a study of the Quran we shall see that this division between the two meanings of the term "evidence" is not relevant, because it is a striking characteristic of the Quranic revelation that it gives not only witness, but always and at the same time also furnishes proof. The Quran never makes an assertion and merely leaves it at that. The Quran invariably gives proof in support of every assertion. A close study of any given passage will reveal that there is full evidence, i.e. both witness and proof together.

You may have noticed that I treat Quranic evidence and Islamic evidence as synonymous. Muslim scholars state that there are several sources of knowledge of what Islam is. First the Quran, then the

practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and then the collected body of the Sayings of the Prophet. Many add to these such sources as consensus and rational insight. Whatever the learned scholars of different schools have been inclined to say about the classification of these sources, I for my part, and those who think like me, underline the simple historical fact that the Quranic revelation that came to Muhammad, peace be upon him, over a period of 23 years from 610 to 632 A.D. and was committed to memory and writing simultaneously, is in all respects a perfect and sufficient document from which we gain all necessary evidence about our faith. Whatever is reported from the Holy Prophet is by way of interpretation of this evidence. That is to say, what the Holy Prophet said has no independent status; it is all secondary, though it serves to elucidate many a point. Yet it can never add any essential knowledge to that which we possess in the Holy Quran. Reason can with all its inherent weaknesses help us to understand the Message, but just as interpretation is already incorporated in the Message, likewise are rational arguments-as I have already pointed out. There remains one single perfect source of Islamic evidence: the Holy Quran.

The outline of the material gathered by me from the Quran will be presented in three sections: 1. The mortality of man. 2. The mortality and death of all prophets. 3. The mortality and death of Jesus. In the last section I shall treat in some detail the two texts that are especially relevant for the understanding of the deliverance of Jesus from death on the cross.

As I have said, I shall restrict myself primarily to the Quranic evidence, applying the principle that the Quran is the best interpreter of the Quran, i.e. to discover the correct connotation of a phrase we must have recourse to other texts in which the phrase has been used. We may also have recourse to classical dictionaries, but only as a possibly helpful medium, without placing too great confidence in all the mass of material which is often confusingly offered us there. Finally we might incidentally consult commentaries, mainly for the sake of curiosity, as we know only too well that commentators were only too prone to accept any fantastic story they gathered from Jewish or Christian sources. The modern trend in Islamic exegesis reveals a growing realization of the credulity of earlier commentators in accepting what is known as Jewish tales. Strangely enough this criticism has not yet in any great measure been directed against the heretic Christian interpretation of the event of the crucifixion which is so obviously the source on which many commentators rely when they

touch upon the simple account of this event found in the Quran.

**ALL MEN ARE CREATED MORTAL AND ARE BOUND TO DIE
AFTER A CERTAIN TERM**

On this we shall let the Quran speak for itself in the following references God said:

“Go forth (Adam and Eve) some of you being enemies of others. And for you there is an abode on earth and a provision for a time. God said: Therein you shall live, and therein you shall die, and therefrom you shall be brought forth”. (7:25-26).

“Have We (God) not made the earth vast enough to gather the living and the dead?” (77:26-27).

“Say: The angel of death that has been put in charge over you will cause you to die: Then to your Lord you will be brought back.” (32:12).

“And We cause that which We will to stay in the wombs for an appointed time, then We bring you forth as babes, then We rear you that you may attain to your age of full strength. And there are some of you that are caused to die early, and there are others among you who reach extreme old age with the result that they know nothing after having had knowledge.” (22:6, vide also 16:71).

“Every soul shall taste of death.”(21:36)

“Have they not seen how many generations have We destroyed before them, and that they never return to them.” (36:32)

“And behind the dead is a barrier until the day when they shall be raised again.” (23:101)

A brief commentary on the foregoing verses may be helpful.

The first two Quranic texts affirm that both life and death are bound to be confined to this earth, the third text states that God has created angels that are especially commanded to execute His decree of death which must come for every human being. The two succeeding references give a more detailed description of the creation of life, its development through different - higher and higher stages - and its natural end in decrepitude and death. The three last quotations affirm that death is inevitable, also in the sense that there is absolutely no return to life on this earth, and that the coming life will be a new creation of God - not belonging to our present system.

ALL PROPHETS HAVE DIED

“We did not bestow on the Messengers bodies that ate no food, nor were they to live for ever.”(21:9)

“We granted not everlasting life to any human being before thee. If then thou shouldst die, shall they live on for ever?” (21:35)

“Muhammad is only a Messenger. Verily, all Messengers have passed away before him.” (3:145)

“The Messiah, son of Mary, was only a Messenger. All Messengers have indeed passed away before him. His mother was a righteous woman. They both used to eat food. See, how We explain the signs for their benefit, and see, how they are turned away.” (5:76)

With this last verse we are already partly tackling the next question which particularly deals with the death of Jesus. He is included — of course — in the category of both humans and Prophets, and so the question could be regarded as answered, but as some people tend to make him something special and outside the normal categories, we have to deal with:

THE NATURAL DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

From the relevant references we shall here exclude the two that deal with the crucifixion event, and shall deal with them later. (They are 3:55-56 and 4:158-159).

There are also other Quranic verses that prove to the satisfaction of any reasonable unbiased person that Jesus lived a full life and died an honourable death at a good old age after having completed his mission as the Jewish Messiah.

“Keep in mind when God will say to Jesus, son of Mary: Didst thou say to people: Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah? And he will answer: holy art Thou, I could never say that to which I had no right. If I had said it, Thou wouldst have surely known it. Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I know not what is in Thy mind. It is only Thou who art the Knower of hidden things. I said nothing to them except that which Thou didst command me: Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. I was a witness over them as long as I remained among them, but since Thou didst cause me to die, Thou hast been the Watcher

over them, and Thou art Witness over all things.” (5:117-118).

“Jesus said: I am a servant of Allah. He has given me the Book and made me a prophet. And He has made me blessed wheresoever I may be and has enjoined on me prayer and almsgiving so long as I live. He has made me dutiful toward my mother, and he has not made me haughty and unblessed. Peace was on me the day I was born, and peace there shall be on me the day I shall die, and the day I shall be raised up to life again.” (19:31-34).

Of these verses the first proves: (1) The corruption of Christian doctrine took place after the death of Jesus. (2) If Jesus were still alive, Christianity would still exist in its pure form. (3) Jesus will not appear a second time in this world, as he would then become aware of the mentioned corruption and could not, therefore, plead ignorance in front of God’s judgement seat.

The second verse equally proves that Jesus must have died and could not exist in heaven with his physical body, (1) If he was still alive, he would have to give alms in heaven, but who would need alms there? (2) If he would descend again to the earth alive, he would have to follow the Jewish prescriptions on both prayer and almsgiving - and could not be a follower of the Islamic Law. (3) Did his mother accompany him in his ascension? How could he otherwise behave like a dutiful son towards her?

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE EVENT OF THE CRUCIFIXION?

We will deal now in some detail with the verses that refer to the event that took place at the crucifixion and see what actually happened according to the simple and clear statement of the Quran. In doing this we deem it advisable to put the two texts parallel to each other as one explains the other:

“The Jews planned, and Allah also planned, and Allah is the Best of planners. When Allah said: O Jesus, I will cause thee to die a natural death and will exalt thee to Myself and will clear thee from the charges of those who disbelieve and will place those who follow thee above those who disbelieve until the Day of Resurrection.” (3:55-56)

“And their saying: We did kill the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, whereas they slew him not nor killed him on the cross, but he was made to appear to them as dead. Those who differ therein are certainly in doubt about it. They have no knowledge thereof, but

only follow conjecture, and they certainly did not kill him. On the contrary, Allah exalted him to Himself, and Allah is Mighty and Wise.” (4:158-159)

By reading the two versions together it becomes clear that the plan Makr of the Jews was to kill Jesus and thereby disprove his claim to Messiahship (because he who was hanged on a tree was cursed by God (Deut 21:23). But God also had a plan or a counter-plan Makr and that was to save Jesus from an accursed death and exalt him in rank and position.

It is clear that God’s plan could not be a supernatural event like casting the likeness of Jesus on someone else and raising him bodily to heaven; nor to let him die and then resurrect him and raise him bodily to heaven. Makr (plan) means to change something to the opposite of that which is designed by the opponent by a stratagem or device or means. Thus makr operates through means adopted in this world for achieving a purpose, and no miracle can be called a makr. The second reference also ends with a reference to God’s Wisdom. What Wisdom - Divine or otherwise - could there be in cheating the Jews, the Romans and the disciples alike by substituting another person for Jesus?

The expression used for natural death is *tawaffa*. Without any exception it means: to take possession of the soul; to cause somebody to die after completing his or her term. The Quran contains as many as 22 (twenty-two) clear references where *tawaffa* has been used in that connotation. We have excluded therefrom the references where Jesus is mentioned as the object of *tawaffa*, because they are under discussion. There are two separate verses (6:61 and 39:42) about the taking possession of the soul during sleep. But that does not detract from the connotation that we have mentioned, as a simple quote from the last mentioned verse will prove:

“Allah takes away *yatawaffa* the souls of human beings at the time of their death; and during their sleep of those that are not yet dead. Then He retains those against whom He has decreed death and sends back the others till an appointed term.”

Tawaffa is never used for taking possession of the body. It is the soul that is taken-either permanently (at death) or ad interim (in sleep). So *Mutawwafika* means as ibn ‘Abbas reported; *Mumituka* (I will cause thee to die) Bukhari.

The phrase *Rafi’uka* means I will exalt thee. *Raf’a* is used twice about Jesus. Once it is used about Idris (Enoch) in 19:58: And We

exalted him to a lofty station. This is a normal usage of the Quran. Muhammad Asad says in his Commentary (p.177) that when God is the subject, *raf'a* means invariably: to exalt in rank. Also Mufradat says that (about Jesus) his Raf'a is to be understood *min haithi-tashrif*: by way of bestowing honour on him.

Ibn Khatib says in his "Modern" Egyptian Commentary (The Clearest of Commentaries) what we have translated here. And those who assert that Jesus is dead point to the word of the Exalted God: Every soul shall taste of death, and Jesus-peace be upon him-belonged to the human species for which death is ordained. Some people presume that he is dead and lies buried in a locality which they mention by name, and maybe it is India, and God-may He be exalted-knows best what He has said and done.

Those who allege that Jesus was not put on the cross should look up in a Quranic Concordance, where they will find that the word *salaba* is used at five (5) places about this special death punishment (namely 12:42, 7:126, 20:50 and 5:33) At two places it is used (sulb, aslab) about spine, back-bone, namely 86:8 and 4:24. So in accordance with this *Mufradat* confirms that *salaba* means: to break the spine or back-bone or to bring out the marrow of the bone (by breaking it). So what the verse states: *ma qataluhu wama salabuhu* means that they did not kill him (either by strangling or stoning) or by a completion of the well-known death-punishment (in so far as they did not break his bones).

But he appeared to them like one killed, says the verse. Now *shubbiha* and derivatives are found in the Quran at 12 places, invariably meaning "to be like or similar" to something or someone. But as it is here used in the passive, it can only refer, according to Arabic grammer, to a well-known (implied) subject, i.e. in the context it can only refer to Jesus and not to some one else who is neither mentioned here nor elsewhere in the Quran.

To sum up: the Jews plotted to disprove the Messiahship of Jesus by killing him on the cross, but God counter-acted their plot on their own plan by saving him from the shameful death on the cross, so that he only appeared to them as dead. But in fact he survived and lived to a ripe old age as promised in the word *Mutawaffika* which has a double meaning: not only to cause to die (a natural death), but also-as interprets ibn Khatib: *Mutawafaka ajalaka*: I intend to complete your life-term.

I have so far kept strictly within the boundaries of the evidence

furnished by the Quran. But the attentive listener will have noticed that I made a passing reference to Sahih al Bukhari who quoted Ibn Abbas for the interpretation of Mutawwafika as meaning Mumituka (I shall cause you to die). But his is not a saying of the Holy Prophet; it is only an interpretation of an expression used in the Quran.

In order not to leave Hadith (sayings of the Holy Prophet) totally untouched I would like to quote the three which are brought forward to show that Tradition also regards Jesus as dead. But first I would like to explain why there are only three traditions affirming the death of Jesus. The answer is simple: because the Quran is so clear and un-ambiguous, that there was no need of great elaboration of this self-evident point. These three are:

“If Moses and Jesus had been alive, they would have had no choice but to follow me.” (*Kithir Vol. II, pg 245 & al-Yawaqit wal-Jawahir 2nd Pt, pg 24*)

“Verily, Jesus son of Mary, lived for 120 years, and I (Muhammad) see myself as only entering upon the beginning of the sixties.” (*Kanz al-Aamal, Pt. 6, pg 120*)

“During his spiritual ascent to heaven (Mi'raj) the Prophet saw Jesus together with John in the second heaven. (*Bukhar, Pt. 2, Chapter on al-Isra: the Night Journey*)

The first two are very clear in their evidence, while the third may need some explanation. The point to be deduced from that is that Jesus and John were together in the same state, so either both are dead or both are living. It is admitted by all that John is dead, so Jesus must also have died.

After the death of Muhammad some of his disciples, among them 'Umar ibn al-Khattab doubted that he was really dead. However, Abu Bakar, after having paid his last respects to his beloved master, ascended the pulpit in the mosque and recited the verse of the Quran:

“Muhammad is only a Messenger. All Messengers before him have passed away. If he dies or is killed, will you then turn your heels?” (3:145)

Abu Bakar said:

“If any of you worshipped Muhammad, let him know that

Muhammad is dead, but if you worship God, you should know that God is Ever Living and does not die.” (Pt. 3, Chapter on the letters of the Prophet to Kisra (Chosroes) and Qaiser (Caesar).

This was the first instance of Ijma’ or consensus of the Community, because the response of the disciples is well-known and reported in the same hadith: “By God, it was as if this verse was not revealed by Allah before Abu Bakar recited it, and every one received it from him, and I did not hear any one who did not recite it.” No one objected that Jesus or any other prophet had not died. Every one recieved it and accepted it and confirmed it! How then can any person deny that which has been confirmed by that august assembly?

It is not within the scope of this presentation to set out an account of the post crucifixion life of Jesus. That will be done by others. But to end in a fitting manner I shall quote a well-known verse from Sura al Muminun:

“And We made the Son of Mary and his mother a sign and gave them shelter on a pleasant plateau with springs of running water.” (23:51)

Thus after having been delivered from his enemies and their persecutions - just as Noah, Moses and Aaron and the earlier prophets had been delivered from their enemies - Jesus like them was given the opportunity to complete his mission in another country, of which this verse gives a striking description.

Our last word is that all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and peace be upon all His Messengers.

CONDEMNATION OF BLASPHEMOUS BOOK

The Members of Ahmadiyya Muslim Association in the United Kingdom express shock and disgust at the publication of Salman Rashdi's book *Satanic Verses* in which the character of the Holy Prophet of Islam, peace and blessings be upon him, has been described in most blasphemous terms.

Though claiming to be a work of fiction, the book uses the names of real persons who are deeply respected and revered by all Muslims. The Holy Prophet and his Companions are depicted in scandalous manner which would offend the taste and sensitivity of every decent person, whether Muslim or not. It seems, the author is inspired and motivated by some satanic forces.

The Members of the Association demand the withdrawal of this book from circulation. They also request the British Government to take appropriate action against the author and the publishers for denigrating and slandering the Founder of Islam and for deliberately offending Muslims who form a substantial section of the multi-racial society in Britain. It is hoped that people of all Faiths would support this demand for the sake of religious harmony.

Members appreciate the action taken by the Government of India in banning the book and by similar action which may have been taken by other governments.



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, Confucius 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 Religion is the oldest magazine of its kind published in 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-six years the message of Islam has been conveyed through this magazine to millions of readers and many fortunate persons have recognized the truth of Islam and accepted it through its study.

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 refutation 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.



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