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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

The Reliability of Tradition: UNIQUE EVIDENCE.



The frontispiece affords to the student of Islamic history a unique testimony of the trustworthiness of the *hadees*, or traditions of the Holy Prophet contained in reliable works on the subject. It is a facsimile of a letter written by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, to a Christian monarch, Maqauqis, king of Egypt, and it is one of a series of similar letters written to the potentates. It is well-known that after the truce of Hudaibiyya which took place in the closing months of the sixth year of Hejira, the Holy Prophet sent his messengers to the neighbouring monarchs with letters inviting them to accept Islam, and the fact is mentioned in all trustworthy works on tradition. In the more important lives of the Holy Prophet, we find traditions in which the names of all the kings to whom letters were written are given and the name of Maqauqis is included in these. The *Mawdhib-i-Ludunniyya* and its well-known commentator Zurqani give full particulars about the letter to the Maqauqis as well as the wording of that letter. The same account is given by Ibn-i-Taimia of the despatch of the letter. He tells us that a letter was sent to Maqauqis, the Christian monarch of Egypt, who was then at Alexandria. The bearer of this letter was Hâtib Ibn-i-Abi Balta'ah. Hâtib explained to the king the mission of the Holy Prophet, telling him that as it was necessary for the Jews to accept the prophet

Jesus when he made his appearance though they had already revealed scriptures with them, so it was necessary for both the Jews and the Christians to accept the messenger of God who had made his appearance among them. He further spoke to him of the glad tidings which Jesus had given concerning the appearance of another prophet after him which prophecy he said had been fulfilled by the appearance of Muhammad. After this he handed over the letter to Maqauqis which was received honorably. When Maqauqis had read it he said to the messenger that he did not find him (the Holy Prophet) enjoining aught which he should abstain from or prohibiting aught that was desirable, that he did not consider him a magician or as one in error, nor did he find him a soothsayer or a liar, but that he found in him the signs of prophethood. After this he caused the letter to be placed in a casket of ivory and sealed it and made it over to his treasurer. We are also told that he wrote a reply to the Holy Prophet which he sent to him with some presents.

It is a remarkable circumstance that we find the letter to Maqauqis expressly mentioned in all traditions as having been safely preserved. Of the other letters, that written to Chosroes was torn by that monarch in the presence of the messenger of the Holy Prophet, on learning which the Holy Prophet prayed to God that the empire of Chosroes might be shattered; a prayer whose effect was witnessed soon afterwards. The letter to Heraclius was read by that monarch in a general assembly of the chiefs and the bishops of the empire and he at first proposed to them that the faith of the prophet should be accepted, but on finding them totally opposed to such a proposal he retracted it, saying that he only wanted to test their firmness in their old faith. Of the letter itself, however, we are not told whether it was preserved or not. Other letters were written to the king of Abyssinia and the kings of some Arabian provinces, most of which were received honorably. But the letter to Maqauqis is expressly mentioned in authentic traditions as having been preserved. It is this letter that was discovered some fifty years ago, in the year 1858, by some French travellers at a convent in Upper Egypt. It is now preserved at Constantinople. It has been declared to be genuine by Dr. P. Badger. Below is given in the right hand column the text of the document as deciphered by Dr. Badger and in the left hand column the text of the letter to the Maqauqis as preserved in a tradition in the

Mawdhib-i-Ludunniyya so that by comparing the two, the reader might be able to judge for himself the wonderful accuracy and trustworthiness of tradition:—

<p>بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم من محمد عبد الله ورسوله الى المقوقس عظيم القبط سلام على من اتبع الهدى اما بعد فاني ادعوك بدعاية الاسلام تسلم يوتك الله اجر مرتين فان توليت فعليك اثم القبط يا اهل الكتاب تعالوا الى كلمة سواء بيننا وبينكم الا نعبد الا الله ولا نشرك به شيئا ولا يتخذ بعضنا بعضا اربابا من دون الله فان تولوا فقولوا اشهدوا وا بانا مسلمون*</p>	<p>بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم من محمد عبد الله ورسوله الى المقوقس عظيم القبط سلام على من اتبع الهدى اما بعد فاني ادعوك بدعاية الاسلام تسلم يوتك الله اجر مرتين فان توليت فعليك اثم القبط يا اهل الكتاب تعالوا الى كلمة سواء بيننا وبينكم الا نعبد الا الله ولا نشرك به شيئا ولا يتخذ بعضنا بعضا اربابا من دون الله فان تولوا فقولوا اشهدوا وا بانا مسلمون</p>
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* The sealing of the letter with the seal in the opposite column is also expressly mentioned in the tradition.



It will be seen that the only difference in the text of the document and the words of the tradition is in the use of the word *دعاية* in the one case and *دعاية* in the other, and as both words express the same meaning, this difference is altogether insignificant. Most probably the error lies in deciphering the document in this case. The translation of the two being absolutely identical is not shown in two different columns. It is as follows:—

“In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. From Muhammad, the servant of God and His Apostle, to Maqauqis, the chief of the Copts. Peace be upon him who follows true guidance. After this, I invite thee to accept Islam: become a Muslim and thou

wilt be saved ; God will grant thee a double reward. But if thou turn back, then on thee will be the sin of the Copts. O people of the Book ! come to a word laid down plainly between us and you, that we will not worship aught but God, and that we will join no other god with Him, nor take each other for lords rather than God. But if they turn back, then say, Bear witness that we are Muslims.”

Seal :

<p>*God. Apostle of Muhammad</p>
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The discovery of this document establishes several points. It establishes the truth of all those traditions which tell us that the Holy Prophet wrote letters to the potentates. It also shows that even the details given in such traditions of the treatment which the messengers of the Holy Prophet received at the hands of those monarchs are quite correctly reported in the traditions. For tradition tells us that the letter to Maqauqis was safely preserved by that potentate in a casket, and its discovery shows that the messenger truly described the treatment he received and the reporters with the utmost faithfulness handed down his words to posterity. And if the truth of the details is placed beyond all doubt in one case, there is no reason to doubt the truth of the details in the other cases where similar letters were written. But more wonderful than all is the exactitude with which the original words of the letters written have been preserved in the traditions. I have already quoted the original words of the letter as reported in a tradition, but to make the point more certain, I give below the wording of another letter met with in traditions of the highest authority. This letter was written to Heraclius who being also a Christian monarch like Maqauqis, there could be no difference in the wording of the two letters except that of the name. The letter and the attending circumstances are reported in the Sahih Bukharee. The original reporter of these words is Abu Sufian who at that time was an opponent of the Holy Prophet, and in whose presence the letter which Dihya bore to Heraclius was read aloud. Abu Sufian tells us that the letter ran thus :—

*To be read from below upwards.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم من محمد عبد الله ورسوله الى هرقل
عظيم الروم سلام على من اتبع الهدى اما بعد فانى ادعوك
بدعائة الاسلام تسلم يوتك الله اجرک مرتين فان توليت فان
عليك اثم اليريسين ويا اهل الكتاب تعالوا الى كلمة سواء بيننا و
بينكم ان لا نعبد الا الله ولا نشرك به شيئا ولا يتخذ بعضنا بعضا اربابا
من دون الله فان تولوا فقلوا شهدوا بانا مسلمون

“In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. From Muhammad, the servant of God and His Apostle, to *Hiraql*, the chief of *Rûm*. Peace be upon him who follows true guidance. After this I invite thee to accept Islam : become a Muslim and thou wilt be saved ; God will grant thee a double reward. But if thou turn back, then on thee will be the sin of the *Yarisis*, (*i.e.*, thy subjects). O people of the Book ! come to a word laid down plainly between us and you, that we will not worship aught but God, and that we will join no other god with Him, nor take each other for lords rather than God. But if they turn back, then say, Bear witness that we are Muslims.”

The only difference between this letter and that in facsimile is that whereas in the former the letter is “to Heraclius, the chief of the Roman Empire,” in the latter it is “to Maqauqis, the king of Egypt,” and in the latter portion of the letter while the king of Egypt is warned that in the case of his rejection of the message, he shall be responsible for the sin of the “Copts” Heraclius is warned of the sin of the “*Yarisis*,” *i.e.*, his subjects. These two differences arose from the necessity of addressing the letters to the monarchs of two different countries. But as they both professed the Christian religion, no other change in the words was necessary and none is witnessed. This wonderful preservation of the exact words of the letter shows clearly that generally the reporters of the traditions reported, not the subject matter in their own words, but the very words which they heard. It also shows that they possessed wonderfully retentive memories, for Abu Sufian reported the exact words of the letter only on hearing them once read out in the court of Heraclius, and the narrators who reported these words from him as faithfully delivered them to posterity. In fact, such was the course they adopted in the narration of all traditions. They did not report them in a careless

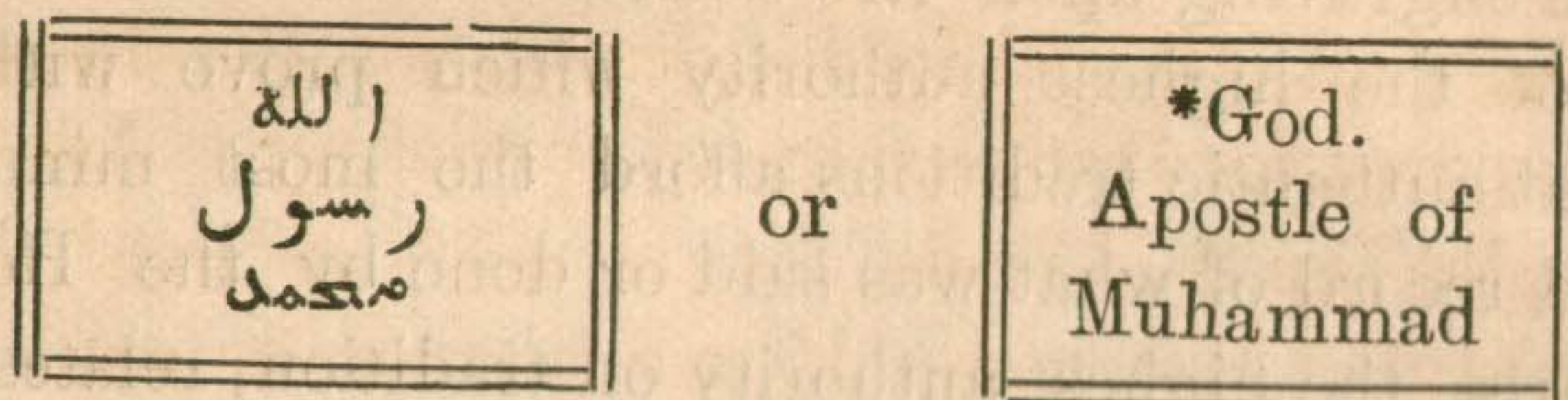
manner exaggerating some incidents and totally neglecting others, as some Christian critics would have us believe, but they were most scrupulous, and did their best to report the very words which they heard, and to describe the very incidents which they saw. And in the discovery of the original letter of the Holy Prophet written to Maqauqis, we have a unique and conclusive evidence that authentic traditions of the Holy Prophet may be as safely relied upon as if we had them contemporaneously written and the original writings safely preserved and handed down to us. Arab memory has proved an excellent substitute for writing. For, if a sufficiently long letter could have been faithfully preserved with all the incidents connected with its delivery, there is no reason why the words which came from the lips of the Holy Prophet should not have been faithfully preserved in memory and transmitted through the chains of trustworthy reporters.

There is another circumstance connected with the document discovered to which I wish to call the reader's attention. At the end of the letter is a seal which being deciphered reads مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ or Muhammad the Apostle of God. Now we see that the traditions also speak of a signet-ring made to seal the letters written to potentates. Bukharee reports on the authority of Anas the following tradition: "When the Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, intended to write to the emperor of Rome, he was told that they (*i.e.*, monarchs) do not read a letter unless it bears a seal. Thereupon the Holy Prophet caused a signet-ring to be made of silver, as if I even now see its whiteness in his hand, and he caused the words مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ, (Muhammad the Apostle of God), to be engraved upon it." This tradition is of the highest authority, for it is reported not only by Bukharee through six or seven different channels, but by all reliable collectors of traditions through different chains of reporters. It shows clearly that a ring was made, and the letters written to potentates all bore an impression of the words engraved upon it which words were Muhammad-ur-Rasûl-Ullah. The discovery of the document places the reliability of this tradition beyond all question, for we now actually see the impression of the seal, and read the same blessed words in it which tradition tells us were engraved on the ring for the very purpose for which we find it

used. What clearer proof is needed of the trustworthiness of traditions?

This is not all that we learn from tradition concerning the signet-ring and the engraving upon it. Further details are met with in traditions of the highest authority which prove with wonderful clearness that authentic traditions afford the most minute and the most faithful record of what was said or done by the Holy Prophet. Thus Bukharee, the highest authority on tradition, relates the following from Anas: "When Abu Bakr became a caliph, he (Anas) wrote for him (the rules relating to the realization of alms), and the engraving on the signet-ring was in three lines, *Muhammad* forming one line, and *Rasul* one line, and *Allah* one line." To this another reporter who also narrates from Anas, adds: "The ring of the Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, was in his hand (in his lifetime) and after him in the hand of Abu Bakr, and after Abu Bakr in the hand of Omar. When it came to Othman, he sat on the well known as *Arees*, and holding the ring in his hand, he began to amuse himself with it when it suddenly fell. Then we continued with Othman for three days to search the well, but we did not find it." Now this tradition clearly shows that the signet-ring in the hand of Abu Bakr was the same that the Holy Prophet had caused to be made on the occasion of writing letters to the potentates, and moreover that the engraving was in three different lines, each of the words *Muhammad*, *Rasul* and *Allah* forming a separate line. Now let the reader compare this description of the signet-ring with the facsimile of the impression of the seal at the end of the letter to Maqauqis, and he would find a wonderful agreement. He would find exactly the same three lines as are given in the tradition. Under this tradition, the chief commentator of Bukharee, the author of the *Fath-ul-Bari*, refers to the saying of certain doctors of religion who held, undoubtedly on the authority of some tradition which has not been preserved to us, that the engraving on the signet-ring, *Muhammad-ur-Rasul Ullah*, was from below upwards, the glorious name of *Allah* being in the uppermost, and *Muhammad* in the lowest, line. This saying the author of the *Fath-ul-Bari* considers weak, probably because the tradition upon which it is based was not given, but the discovery of the document has now shown that this saying also was

based on a reliable tradition. Thus if the document were never discovered, and we were required to form the engraving on the ring from its description as contained in authoritative traditions, we would have it exactly as in the facsimile, *i.e.*,



Consider this remarkable evidence as to the trustworthiness of tradition which has thus accidentally been brought to light. It is a case in which the trustworthiness of tradition was severely put to the test, and in which tradition has quite safely passed through the ordeal and conclusively established its claim to reliability. The discovery of the original letter of the Holy Prophet to Maqauqis has established beyond the shadow of a doubt not only the authenticity of the many traditions which mention the writing of letters to the neighbouring kings and the making of the signet-ring with all the details thereof, but it also affords a unique testimony of the reliability of tradition in general, for it shows that the companions of the Holy Prophet were most careful and scrupulous in reporting the words which they listened and in describing the deeds which they saw done. Strangely enough, the very traditions whose truth has been thus conclusively and clearly proved have been denounced as "examples of capricious fabrication" by a well-known Christian critic of Islam who has arrogantly assumed the authority of being a judge of the great traditional lore of the Muslims without knowing even the primary rules of sifting true from false traditions. This biased critic is the late Sir William Muir whose *Life of Muhammad* is regarded as the standard work and the most reliable authority on Islam by all Christians. His reasons for rejecting the traditions speaking of the signet-ring, I may give in his own words. Under the marginal side note "examples of capricious fabrication" he writes :

"The aberrations from fact hitherto noticed are presumed to have proceeded from some species of bias, the nature of which I have been endeavouring to trace. But the testimony of the companions, as delivered to us, is so unaccountably fickle and capricious that,

even where no motive whatever can be guessed at, and where there were the fullest opportunities of observation, traditions often flatly contradict one another. Again with respect to his signet-ring—a matter involving no faction, family interest or dogma—tradition is most discordant. One party relate that, feeling the want of a seal for his despatches, the Prophet had a signet-ring prepared for that purpose of pure silver. Another party assert that Khalid Ibn Said made for himself an iron ring plated with silver; and that Mahomet, taking a fancy to it, appropriated it to his own use. A third tradition states that the ring was brought by Ibn Said from Abyssinia; and a fourth that Muadh had it engraved for himself in Yemen. One set of traditions hold that Mahomet wore this ring on his right hand, another on his left; one that he wore the seal inside, others that he wore it outside; one that the inscription upon it was *The truth of God*, while the rest declare that it was *Muhammad, Prophet of God*. These traditions all refer to one and the same ring; because it is repeatedly added that, after Mahomet's death, it was worn by Abu Bakr, by Omar, and by Othman, and was lost by the latter in the well Aris. There is yet another tradition that neither the Prophet, nor any of his immediate successors ever wore a ring at all. Now these varying narratives are not given doubtfully, as conjectures which might either be right or wrong; but they are told with the full assurance of certainty, and with such minute circumstantiality as to leave the impression on the simple reader's mind that each of the narrators had the most intimate acquaintance with the subject. To what tendency, then, or habit of mind, but sheer love of story-telling, are we to attribute such gratuitous and wholesale inventions?"

It is easy to show the falsehood of all these base charges of fabrication against the companions of the Holy Prophet by simply referring the reader to the facsimile of the Prophet's letter to Maqauqis where the impression of the seal may be seen by any one, and the testimony afforded by that letter is conclusive. But I would like to refute the charges brought forward by other considerations which would hold true even if the letter were not discovered. The minute description of circumstances which Muir considers an evidence of fabrication I have already shown to be accurate beyond all question.

The difficulty which Muir puts forward as confronting him in accepting the traditions speaking of the signet-ring is entirely of his own making; and the alleged contradictions do not exist in reality, but are shown as existing for throwing a discredit on the reliability of tradition. In fact, there is not the least difficulty in reconciling the various traditions so long as the proper line is drawn between authentic and unauthentic traditions, for it is only here that ignorant critics stumble or carpers find material for finding faults with the trustworthiness of tradition. This work has already been done for us by the *Mohaddisin* who with immense labour and pains sifted true from false traditions, and as they carried on their work at an early date, in the second and the third centuries of Hējira, they had far greater chances of ascertaining the truth than any one who undertakes a similar work now. The renowned Bukharee for instance selected about seven thousand different reports from a mass of six hundred thousand after travelling from place to place and spending the whole of his life in this one pursuit. Ignoring the almost superhuman exertions of these labourers in the field of tradition, our Christian critics want us to take it for a rule for determining the authenticity of traditions that all the traditions unfavourable to Islam are authentic, while those favorable to it are fabricated. Following this principle Muir has adorned his *Life of the Holy Prophet* with many traditions which have been rejected by the highest Muslim authorities while he has unhesitatingly rejected many which are undoubtedly authentic. Perhaps it is in obedience to the same principle that while he misrepresents the significance of many traditions concerning the signet-ring, he mixes up all kinds of traditions, those accepted by the *Muhaddisin* and those rejected by them, to show that there are contradictions in the traditions.

In the first place, it should be borne in mind that the whole force of Muir's false charge lies in the supposition that there was only one ring in the whole of Arabia in the time of the Holy Prophet or at least that only one ring is spoken of in traditions. On this assertion alone are based all the alleged contradictions. In support of this he tells us that it is "repeatedly added" that the ring was worn by Abu Bakr, Omar, etc., after the Holy Prophet. Indeed, he would have proved that there was only one ring if he had shown that each

of the traditions which he shows to be contradictory to one another was followed by the statement that the ring was worn by Abu Bakr, etc., after the Prophet. As a matter of fact it is only the ring prepared for despatches of which we are told that after the Holy Prophet it remained with Abu Bakr, and the ambiguous statement of Muir that it is "repeatedly added" is only made to lend a colour to his false assertion by hiding the truth from the reader, for traditions speak of numerous rings. To none of the traditions which he mentions as contradicting the generally admitted tradition that the ring was made for the purpose of sealing despatches, is it added that that ring came into the possession of the Holy Prophet's successors after his death. Again, Muir confuses authentic traditions with unauthentic ones with the object of making out a case of contradiction. For instance, he says that the inscription upon the signet-ring according to one tradition was *The truth of God*, while according to all others it was *Muhammad, Prophet of God*. Now the one tradition which he purposely introduces to make out a case of contradiction ought to have been given in original with the authorities for it so that one might have been able to judge the value of the statement. As a matter of fact, none of the authoritative works on tradition, Bukharee, Muslim, Abou Daood, etc., mentions any inscription except *Muhammad, the Apostle of God*, and this inscription is so frequently mentioned in traditions received through different channels that a solitary tradition contradicting them could not have the least weight with an unprejudiced critic. But Muir's object is not to ascertain the truth, but to obscure it. Again, he tells us that there is a tradition which says that "neither the Prophet nor any of his successors ever wore a ring at all," which I fail to find in the form in which Muir quotes it in any work on tradition. As regards the minor points, whether the Prophet wore the ring on his right hand or left, whether he wore the seal inside or outside, there is no contradiction and Muir could have seen it if he had not looked at the circumstances through the coloured glasses of prejudice. One man saw the Prophet with the ring on his right hand, another on the left, one saw the seal inside, another outside, and each reported what he saw. The minuteness in the description of circumstances far from being an evidence of fabrication shows conclusively the existence of the signet-ring, for with all the differences in details

which naturally arose from different circumstances the existence of the signet-ring with the inscription is affirmed.

Now let us have a glance at the other "contradictions," which Muir has pointed out. Authentic traditions tell us, as I have already pointed out, that the special signet-ring with the inscription on it was prepared for the purpose of sealing the despatches to various monarchs. Muir tells us that other traditions contradict it. For instance, he says that "one tradition states that the ring was brought by Ibn Said from Abyssinia." But the only mention we find of the ring that came from Abyssinia is in the following tradition : narrated by Abu Daood, one of the six reliable works on tradition. "Ayesha says that certain ornaments came to the Holy Prophet from Najjashi (Negus king of Abyssinia) which he had sent to him as presents, and among these was a golden ring with an Abyssinian gem on it. The Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, took the ring and then caused Umama, daughter of Abul As and daughter of his own daughter Zainab to be brought to him, and said to her, wear this my daughter." Ibn-i-Abi Shaiba also narrates the same tradition from Ayesha. It is, therefore, quite clear that the ring that came from Abyssinia was not the silver ring which bore the impression *Muhammad, Apostle of God*, but it was a golden ring received as a present at an earlier time and the Prophet gave it away to his grand daughter. I am not in a position to say whether Muir has confused the rings spoken of in the two traditions purposely or whether he was actually ignorant that the other ring which was a present from the king of Abyssinia had no connection at all with the signet-ring with the impression which was made only to seal letters written to foreign potentates.

Another "contradiction" pointed out by Muir is in connection with a tradition which according to him says that "Khalid Ibn-i-Said made for himself an iron ring plated with silver; and that Mahomet, taking a fancy to it, appropriated it to his own use." There is a good deal of misrepresentation here. The tradition to which Muir apparently refers has been narrated by Ibn-i-Sa'd on the authority of Sa'id ibn-i-As "that Khalid ibn-i-Said, that is son of As, came and in his hand was a ring. The Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, said to him, 'what is

this ? throw it away.' Thereupon he threw it away and it was a ring of iron plated with silver. Being asked what was the impression upon it, he said, *Muhammad, the Apostle of God*. He then said that he took it and wore it." It would appear from this that the Holy Prophet's taking a fancy to the ring of Khalid-ibn-i Said, or this ring being identical with the one which was prepared for sealing letters is an invention of the ingenious author, and tradition lends no support to either of these statements. The fact is as we learn from numerous other traditions that when the Holy Prophet had his signet-ring with the impression prepared, the companions imitated him and many of them had similar rings with the same impression, Muhammad, the Apostle of God, prepared for their own use. Now as the signet-ring which the Holy Prophet had caused to be made was meant for state use in sealing letters, etc., of a public nature, he forbade his companions to wear similar rings, *i.e.*, rings with the same impression, as traditions narrated in the *Sahih Bukharee* expressly state, and thereupon they left to wear such rings. Khalid ibn-i-Said seems to have remained ignorant of the prohibition and accordingly when he was found with a ring with the impression, *Muhammad, the Apostle of God*, upon it, he was ordered to throw it away which he immediately did. These circumstances show, clearly that the actual reason of the order to Khalid to throw away the ring was the existence of a ring with the Prophet of which the one thrown away was an imitation, and accordingly to argue from this tradition the identity of the two rings is utterly absurd. As regards the Prophet's taking it and wearing it himself, even this circumstance lends no support to Muir's assertion. The Holy Prophet took it up out of respect for the name of God and perhaps also because if he had not taken it up, any one else would have taken it up and worn it. No tradition, however, says that it was this ring with which the despatches were sealed and which passed to the successors of the Holy Prophet.

Muir mentions another tradition to the effect that the particular ring which was used to seal despatches belonged originally to Muadh and that he "had it engraved for himself in Yemen." "I have not been able to find such a tradition anywhere in the reliable works on tradition, and I think that Muir has really tampered with

some tradition in this case as he has done in the two cases already pointed out. There seems to have been no need of going to Yemen for getting a ring engraved, for there were many engravers at Medina. It appears from traditions narrated in the *Sahih Bukharae* and other authoritative works that after the Holy Prophet had his ring engraved, many of the companions had the same words, *Muhammad, the Apostle of God*, engraved on rings prepared for themselves, and the use of these rings was forbidden afterwards by the Holy Prophet. It is hardly conceivable that they had to go to Yemen to get their rings engraved. Moreover, as I have shown above, the tradition which speaks of the ring having been prepared on need being felt for the same to seal despatches is reported through so many different chains of highly trustworthy narrators and has been so unhesitatingly accepted by all the highest authorities on tradition as an authentic report that any solitary tradition contradicting it which no reliable work has accepted as authentic cannot but be rejected as being based on an erroneous report. It is a fallacious argument that any historical statement, however authentic, becomes a fabrication if contradicted by any report, however weak and unacceptable the latter might be. Yet this is what Muir says in effect when he writes in great exultation that the traditions speaking of the signet-ring are "examples of capricious fabrication" because from the mass of traditions rejected by the *Muhaddisin*, the highest authorities on tradition, he can pick out one which speaks of the signet-ring having been prepared otherwise than is mentioned in reliable and authentic traditions. The folly of this judgment is inconceivable. And now the discovery of the letter to Maqauqis with the impression of the seal at the end has only too clearly made manifest the absurdity of this false charge. I do not think any Christian critic would ever dare to apply a similar test to the Gospel statements concerning Jesus Christ where inspired writings contradict each other, to say nothing of the contradictions met with in the writings which the church does not include in the canon. If the rule laid down by Sir William Muir to determine the fabrication of the traditions of the Muslims is applied to the Christian writings concerning Jesus Christ, it would be impossible to prove even the existence of Jesus, not to mention the incidents of his life on which the whole Christian religion is based.

To revert to the subject in hand there is a unique testimony afforded to us of the reliability of tradition in the discovery of the original letter of the Holy Prophet to Maqauqis. There is besides this another evidence, equally to which I wish to refer here because it has never before this come before the European critic. This evidence not only establishes the reliability of tradition, but affords also a clear and conclusive testimony of the truth of the Holy Prophet. It is the wonderful prophetic element contained in tradition. If the history of Islam is divided into three periods, the early ages, the middle ages, and the last or the present age, we find prophecies relating to, and being fulfilled in, each of these ages. To the conquest of Arabia and the vanquishment of the unbelievers by the Muslims there are ample references in the Holy Quran in the chapters revealed at Mecca where the Muslims were severely persecuted and oppressed, but it is not my object to refer to them here. There are, however, traditions plainly speaking of the conquest by the Muslims of the dominions of both Heraclius and Chosroes. This the Holy Prophet foretold when a ditch was being dug in the battle of the confederates. Traditions containing this prophecy are narrated in the collections of Ahmad, Nisai, Baihaqi and others. In these traditions he is reported as having said aloud: "God is great, I am given the keys of *Shdm* and I see even now its red palaces;" and a second time: "God is great, I am given the keys of Persia, and I see from this my place its white palaces;" and a third time: "God is great, I am given the keys of Yemen, and I see from here the gates of *Suna*," and added that the angel of God informed him that his companions would conquer these places, at which the companions rejoiced greatly. We have also his saying in the traditions: "When the Ceaser perishes, there would be no Ceaser after him and when the Kisra (Chosroes) perishes, there would be no Kisra after him." Thus while the vision foretold the conquest of these great empires by the companions of the Holy Prophet, the other prophecy foretold that the kingdoms of these two monarchs shall ever remain in the hands of the Muslims. The vision was published and fulfilled in the time of the Holy Prophet, but the fulfilment of the latter prophecy has been witnessed in all ages and is witnessed even to-day and thus it lends additional weight to the truth of the vision. No sensible person would contend that the foretelling of these deep secrets of the future

was only some mighty achievement of human knowledge. The fulfilment of these wonderful prophecies while clearly proving the truth of the Holy Prophet also argues for the reliability of tradition.

From trustworthy traditions narrated by Bukharee, Abu Daood and other reliable collectors of traditions we learn that most of the important events which were to befall the Muslims were foretold by the Holy Prophet. The faction and slaughter taking place in the closing days of the caliphate of Othman and in the caliphate of Ali, the civil wars and the great tribulation of the times, the peace with Muavia and many other important events well-known in the history of Islam were clearly foretold and the prophecies are still preserved to us in traditions. Christian critics like Muir who are too ready to condemn as a fabrication every tradition which is favorable to Islam have passed the same remark upon traditions of the nature referred to above and regard them as having been fabricated by partisans of this or that dominant party. But it is an assertion devoid of all proof. The *Mohaddisin* never accepted any tradition as true unless they had the clearest proof of it, and they even rejected many traditions attributing certain miracles to the Holy Prophet as pure and simple fabrications. Any one who reads the record of forged traditions will be able to verify these facts for himself.

There are, however, other circumstances placing the reliability of such traditions beyond all doubt. The traditions were widely known even in the first century of Hejira, while in the second and third centuries they had been collected, arranged, classified and recorded in books, copies of which were circulated in the whole Muslim world. The six reliable works of tradition called the *Sihah Sitta*, for instance, were completed and widely circulated before the end of the 3rd century of Hejira, yet in these works we find not only traditions containing prophecies which had already been fulfilled, but traditions containing prophecies which were fulfilled long afterwards. These prophecies are so clear that not the least doubt can be entertained as to their fulfilment, and it is these that I give here as the second unique evidence of the reliability of tradition and of the truth of the Holy Prophet. The fulfilment of these prophecies belongs to the middle ages of Islam.

In the *Sunnan* of Abu Daood and some other works of the *Sihah*

Sitta are found many traditions plainly speaking of the conquest of Constantinople by the Muslims. (See *Kitab-ul-Maláhim*). Now at the time when these traditions were collected in books, Constantinople was outside the pale of Muslim conquest. The collectors had simply satisfied themselves that the traditions foretelling the conquest of Constantinople were authentic and reported the words of the Holy Prophet himself through trustworthy chains of reporters, and without knowing how or when the fulfilment of the prophecy would be brought about they put it on record. More than five hundred years elapsed after the traditions were put to writing when the prophecy relating to the conquest of Constantinople saw fulfilment. It was only in 1453 of the Christian era that the Muslims conquered it, and thus the prophecy uttered more than eight hundred years before, and reduced to writing more than five hundred years before, was brought to fulfilment. It is a clear proof not only of the reliability of tradition, but also of the truth of the Holy Prophet. In the same work as well as in the *Sahih Bukharee* and other reliable works there is another tradition foretelling the ensuing of a great fight between the Turks and the Muslims and a great slaughter of the latter by the former. This took place hundreds of years afterwards when Baghdad was destroyed and the Muslims put to a general slaughter by the Turkish hordes in the seventh century of Hejira. The commentators of *Aboo Daood* and the *Sahih Bukharee* have mentioned all these circumstances under these traditions and claimed the fulfilment of these prophecies to be mighty miracles of the Holy Prophet who foretold all these things in the most definite and clear words more than six hundred years before. Similarly the temporary triumph of the Christians in taking Palestine from the Muslims and their defeat later at the hands of a great Muslim (Salah-ud-Din) is also foretold in traditions reduced to writing long before these occurrences.

One more instance I will mention. In the *Sahih Bukharee* which was completed and widely circulated before the death of Bukharee in 256 A. H. there is a tradition under the heading *Kurooj-un-Nár*, or the appearance of fire, which says that "the hour shall not come until there appears a fire from the land of Hedjaz (of such immense magnitude) that it will light the mounds or hills at Busra." The same tradition has also been reported

in the *Sahih Muslim*, which is only second to the *Sahih Bukharee* in authority on tradition. Now the appearance of this fire, prophecies about which were recorded in the middle of the third century of Hejira, has been noted by all the historians. It appeared on the 3rd of Jamadil-Akhar in the year 654 A. H., and the following description of this extraordinary fire is taken from the *Fathul Bari*, a commentary of the *Sahih Bukharee* :—

“In the *Tazkara*, Qartabi says that a fire appeared in the Hedjaz near Medina, and before it there was a great shock of earthquake on Wednesday night after darkness had set in, which was the third of Jamadil-Akhar, A. H. 654, and it did not vanish till about 10 o'clock on Friday. And the fire appeared at Quraiza on the side of Harra, and it was like a great city with walls around it and merlons and towers on them all of fire, and there seemed people guiding its course. Every rock that it passed over was melted under it, and from it flowed a blue and red stream which had a rumbling sound like that of thunder, sweeping stones before it, and it extended to the place where riders from Iraq alight, causing a barrier as big as a mountain. The fire reached the neighbourhood of Medina where it stopped, yet Medina had only a cool breeze. Storms were witnessed in this fire which resembled the storms in ocean. I have also heard it stated that the fire was seen from Mecca and from the mountains of Busra. Navawi has said that the appearance of this fire is universally testified by the people of *Sham*. Abu Shama has said that the appearance of the fire testified the truth of what was written in the two *Sahihs*, i.e., *Bukharee* and *Muslim*, and then he mentions this tradition.”

The fulfilment of these prophecies did not remain unnoticed in the Muslim world. The commentators of the collections of authentic traditions who wrote their commentaries noticed the facts which constituted the fulfilment of the prophecies and mentioned them when explaining those traditions. Thus the appearance of the fire in Hedjaz, the destruction of Muslim power in Baghdad by the Turks, the conquest of Constantinople are all dwelt upon in these commentaries, showing that the Muslims awaited their fulfilment. No stronger proof is needed of the reliability of traditions than this. In them we have the clearest prophecies affecting the whole Muslim nation or foretelling great incidents which no human knowledge

could discover five, six or seven hundred years before their occurrence. The prophecies are of a wonderfully definite nature. Where the slaughter of the Muslims by the Turks and the devastation of their power by that people is mentioned, the name Turk is expressly given and their features are also described, though the Holy Prophet never saw them. The companions were warned that they should not take the initiative in war with the Turks. "ترکوں کو اتر کر ما تر کو کم" "Leave the Turks alone so long as they leave you alone" said a tradition, warning the Muslims of the disaster which was to befall them from their hands, and the companions never forgot this injunction. When one of the governors of Mu'avia wrote to him that he had defeated a party of the Turks, that monarch was very angry and wrote to his governor not to fight with the Turks for he had "heard the Holy Prophet say, 'the Turks will drive the Arabs until they make them reach the place where *shih* (a species of wormwood) grows.'" By this the Prophet meant to express their destruction, thus aptly describing the scene of the slaughter of the Muslims by the Turks at Baghdad, the seat of Muslim power, a scene of bloodshed which has not been surpassed in the history of human bloodshed. But this destruction did not overtake the Muslims, until they disobeyed the Holy Prophet's commandment enjoining them to "leave the Turks alone," for Baghdad was ruined and hundreds of thousands of Muslims slaughtered only after Khwarazm Shah had put to death the ambassadors of Chingiz Khan, the Turk ruler. There is also a tradition that "the Bani Qantura, i.e., the Turks, shall be the first to wrest the kingdom from the hands of the Muslims." In fact, the Muslims from their very early days were certain on the basis of the prophecies uttered by the Holy Prophet that a great disaster was in store for them which they were destined to meet from the Turks. No prophecy as grand and as definite and at the same time relating to such a distant future is met with in the history of any other prophet. We have a most convincing and conclusive proof here of the truth of the Holy Prophet. Similarly the other prophecies referred to above are of a most definite nature. The conquest of Constantinople is expressly mentioned, which the Holy Prophet could not have done unless he had possessed a certain knowledge of it which he could not derive from any but a Divine source. The prophecy relating to the appearance of fire expressly mentions the land of Hedjaz as the place of its appear-

ance and describes its magnitude to be of such a nature that the hills of Busra, a sufficiently distant place, are mentioned, as receiving light from it. Such fires do not commonly appear in the world and to foretell its appearance in a particular locality, one where volcanic matter has never been witnessed, could not be within the sphere of human knowledge. And yet the prophecy was fulfilled in a wonderful manner in all its details.

There are, however, numerous prophecies in traditions which are being fulfilled in our own time. I cannot refer to them all here, but will mention by way of example two of them only. One tradition says : *ليتر كن (لقلاص فلا يسعى عليها)* i.e., "A time will come when the camels will be neglected and they will not be used for riding upon." This prophecy has already seen a fulfilment in many countries such as India, where camels being once almost the sole means of conveyance, their use has already gone out of vogue. In Arabia itself, the home of the camel, the Hedjaz Railway must in two or three years displace the camels as a means of conveyance. Thus it is easy to see how clearly the prophecy has been fulfilled. There is another tradition which says that two heavenly signs will appear for the Promised Mahdi, viz., *يذكسف القمر لاول ليلة من رمضان وتذكسف الشمس في النصف منه* i.e., "The moon will be eclipsed on the first of her (eclipse) nights in the month of Ramazan and the sun will be eclipsed in the middle of his (eclipse) days." This prophecy came to a fulfilment in the year 1894 when in the Ramazan of the year 1311 A. H. the moon was eclipsed on the 13th of the sacred month, being the first of her eclipse nights, and the sun was eclipsed on the 28th, being the middle of his eclipse days. No prophecy could be more definite and none could be more clearly fulfilled. The Promised Messiah and Mahdi had announced his claim some four years previously, and thus all the circumstances which could contribute to the fulfilment of the prophecy were brought about in this age. As against the fulfilment of this prophecy it is asserted that the words *اول ليلة* in the tradition which I have translated as meaning "the first of eclipse nights" do not convey that significance, but that they mean "the first night of the new month." The absurdity of this view is too clear to need any refutation. The new moon, or the moon as seen on the first night, is not called *قمر* (Qamar) in the Arabic

language, but it is called *hilal*, i.e., crescent. Now the word used in the tradition is not *hilal*, but *qamar*, showing clearly that by *ليلة اول* is meant the first of the moon's eclipse nights. Moreover an eclipse of the new moon is an absurdity in itself besides being an impossibility. In short, the prophecy relating to the eclipse of the moon and the sun in the month of Ramazan has been clearly fulfilled in our own time.

The reliability of the traditions of the Holy Prophet has, therefore, a unique evidence in the presence of the prophetical element in them, and the fulfilment of the prophetical in them has been witnessed in all ages by all Muhammadans, from the time of the companions of the Holy Prophet to our own time. Such a unique evidence is not met with in the case of ordinary history. In a separate article I will show that the historical evidence in favor of the reliability of the traditions of the Holy Prophet is also of the strongest nature.

Salvation and the Way to its Attainment.*

Every religion that is preached in the world asserts that it points out the way to the attainment of salvation, but the fact is that most people are utterly ignorant of the true significance of salvation. With the Christians salvation indicates nothing more than not being called upon to account for one's sins, but this is not salvation at all. A man may not commit adultery, theft, murder, perjury or any other sin of which he has a knowledge, and he may at the same time be as far from the attainment of salvation as possible. The attainment of salvation signifies in fact the attainment of that eternal bliss for which the human soul naturally thirsts and hungers, and which can only be attained when the love of God implanted in man's heart becomes perfect, taking such a deep root that Divine love responds to it, and when a perfect knowledge of, and a perfect union with,

* Taken almost entirely from the *Chashma-i-Masih*, a recent Urdu writing of the Promised Messiah, written in refutation of the "Sources of Islam."

the Divine Being has been achieved. This eternal bliss men so often seek in erroneous paths which ultimately lead to grief and pain. Some there are who desire to satisfy this craving of the soul for eternal pleasure by indulging in the luxuries and transient pleasures of this world, but they soon find out to their heart's great grief that instead of pleasure they have sought pain, and the ways in which they walked, led to their destruction. There are others who seek that pleasure in ranks and titles, but they too remain perfectly ignorant of the great purpose of their lives and end their days in grief and sorrow. Still others there are who for the sake of pleasure amass riches, but whose treasures are only a source of grief to them when they have to part with them. The prime question for the seeker after truth is, therefore, how to attain that eternal pleasure and that supreme bliss, and the only criterion of a true religion is that it should lead its follower to that bliss. The guidance afforded to us by the Holy Quran in this respect is that eternal bliss lies only in the true and perfect knowledge of God, in the pure, perfect and personal love of the Divine Being and in a perfect faith in Him, so that the heart should find no rest but in Him. Brief as these words are, they require volumes for their explanation.

The first requirement for the attainment of salvation is, therefore, a true and perfect knowledge of God, for love itself depends upon knowledge. We cannot love a thing of which we have no knowledge, or if we love a thing with an erroneous knowledge of it, our love is misdirected. Our love of God increases with our knowledge of Him. The two incentives to love are beauty and goodness, and, therefore, so long as a man has not perfect knowledge of Divine beauty and Divine goodness, his love towards God can never be perfect. But the person, who has a certain knowledge of the majestic beauty of the Divine Being and who knows also with certainty how unbounded is the goodness of God towards His creatures, has a new life and energy granted to his love for the Divine Being which is implanted by nature within his heart. It is when a man is fed from the source of Divine beauty and goodness that he loves Him with an unparalleled love and considers no one to be His equal. It is not with his tongue only that he admits the Unity of God then, but in practice too he considers him as one and without any associate. The seed of Divine love is, no doubt, sown from the beginning, but to grow it needs

the nourishment of Divine knowledge, for unless a man has knowledge of the beauties of an object he cannot be drawn towards it as a lover. The love of God can, therefore, never arise in a heart which has no knowledge of Divine beauty and goodness. But when a man's knowledge of God becomes perfect, and he realizes the Divine beauty and goodness in all their splendour and perfection, a flame of the fire of Divine love then descends upon his heart. Then the human soul falls down upon the threshold of Divine glory with a lover's true submission, and undergoes a mighty transformation being entirely purged of all kinds of dross and impurities. But this stage is reached only when a man not only knows but also realizes that the God Whom he worships is the possessor of every excellence, beauty and glory which the mind of a man can conceive and Whose goodness is perfect and unbounded, and hence the first step in the attainment of salvation is the acquiring of a true knowledge of God, and a man's advancement in this path, that is to say, his spiritual advancement, depends upon his progress and perfection in the knowledge of God.

The question which naturally arises here is, what is meant by a true knowledge of God? Our answer to this question is that we should recognise God as absolutely defectless in His unity, power, knowledge, and every other beauty and attribute. A defect in Divine unity is implied not only by associating anything else with God, as is done by the worshippers of idols, phenomena of nature, fire, water, the sun, the moon, Jesus, Krishna, etc., but also by looking upon one's resources as having an efficacy independently of God. The Holy Quran speaks of men "who take their desires for their *ilāh*, i.e., god." It is Islam only that teaches a perfect Unity of God. Christianity also claims to have a Unity in Trinity, but the truth is that it believes only in Trinity and its claim to a belief in Unity is simply preposterous so long as it holds the Son and the Holy Ghost to be two persons of godhead along with God the father as the third. The puzzle of Unity in Trinity was simply introduced to escape the charge of *shirk* or setting up gods with God which all the prophets denounced as the most horrible sin, but the Christians can never clear themselves of this grave charge so long as they look upon one born of a woman as their God in whom they place all their reliance. Thus Christianity fails at the very outset to impart a true knowledge of God to man because it leads him farther off from the recognition

of Divine Unity by inculcating the godhead of two other persons besides God. But as without true and perfect knowledge of God, true love of God can never be entertained, it follows that salvation in the sense of having a communion with God cannot be attained by following the principles and doctrines of Christianity.

The second requirement of a man's true knowledge of God is that the power and knowledge of God should be considered perfect and defectless. Judging the various religions on this principle, we see that no religion except Islam can give a man a true and perfect knowledge of the Divine Being. The Holy Quran recognises the Omnipotence and Omniscience of God repeatedly while the doctrines inculcated by most other religions attribute defectiveness to both the power and knowledge of the Divine Being and place limitations upon them. There is the Arya Samaj, for instance, a newly arisen sect of Hinduism, which teaches that God is not the Creator. This doctrine it teaches on the authority of the Vedas, which according to it, teach that God, soul and matter are three self-existent beings, and that God had nothing to do with the creation of soul and matter. This doctrine implies that the power, knowledge and unity of God are all defective. For, if matter and soul with all their properties are not the creation of the hand of God, there is no reason to believe that God has knowledge of all their hidden properties. On the other hand, with such a doctrine as the basis of one's belief in God, there is reason to believe that God has no knowledge of the hidden properties of soul and matter because these were never made by Him. The doctrine, therefore, strikes at the root of Divine Omniscience and with such a belief the true knowledge of God can never be attained. But if we recognise God as the Creator of the Universe, of matter as well as of soul, we also recognise His Omniscience for what was made by His own hand could not remain unknown to Him. And if God is unaware of the hidden properties of soul and matter, He cannot be supposed to know even the laws governing the universe for these laws rest on these properties. We may choose one of the two courses, *viz.*, either consider God as the Creator of matter and soul and all their properties and the logical consequence of this belief is that we look upon God as an Omnipotent and Omniscient Being, or we may believe that matter and soul with all their properties were never made by God, but that they are co-

existent and co-eternal with God, and in that case we must further admit that not being the author of these things, he cannot have a perfect knowledge of these things or their hidden properties. If God did not create matter and soul and these two are uncreated, eternal, and self-existent like God, they do not depend for their existence upon God, and even if God be supposed to be non-existent, still matter and soul would not suffer in any way thereby.

The Holy Quran, on the other hand, tells us that Almighty God is *حي hayy* and *قيوم qayyûm*. The first of these names signifies that He is the living one and the giver of life to all, or the self-existent and the bringer of all things into existence. The second name indicates that He is the self-subsistent one by whom all things subsist. These two names have in fact a connection which cannot be broken. For, only those things can be said to subsist by God which owe their existence to Him; and a thing which was not brought into existence by Him cannot be said to subsist by Him. A thing which came into existence of itself must subsist by itself, but a thing which owes its existence to God needs His subsistence too. For subsistence or support implies that without it the things would cease to exist, whereas when we say that a thing came into existence without any agency, it is implied that it can exist without any external support or subsistence. Hence those who believe that matter and soul came into existence of themselves and do not owe their existence to God, must also believe that matter and soul are not in any way dependent upon God in the continuity of their existence. This dissevers all connections of the soul with God and leaves it quite independent of Him, for it can live without Him. A God who cannot have knowledge of the hidden and minute properties of soul and matter and without whom soul and matter would be as well as ever does not deserve to be called a God.

Again, as was said in the beginning, salvation lies in the pure and perfect love which the soul entertains towards God, the seed of this love being implanted in the soul by the hand of God from the very beginning. For if the love of God were not a natural attribute of the soul, in it could not lie the highest bliss and supreme pleasure of the soul. But if Almighty God is not the Creator of soul, the love of God cannot be one of its natural attributes, for its existence is in that

case quite independent of Him. Salvation itself is impossible in that case, for salvation implies the growth of the seed of Divine love, which is sown from the beginning in the human soul, into a perfect state, but when the existence of the seed is denied, which is a necessary consequence of the doctrine of the self-existence of soul, there can be no growth and consequently no salvation. The love of God in such a case is an accident and not a natural quality of the soul, and it cannot, therefore, be its highest goal. The Holy Quran refers to it in vii: 171, in the following words: *الست بربكم قالوا بلى* "Almighty God said to the souls, 'am I not your Lord?' They replied: 'yes, Thou art.'" The reply of the souls acknowledging the Lordship of God is in fact their natural response showing that obedience to God and love of Him are implanted in the soul from the beginning by God Himself who is its maker. The testimony of the soul that God is its Creator is a testimony which its very nature affords, and consequently the love of that Creator is also sown in it from the very beginning. In another verse, the Holy Quran calls the faculty of seeking God and finding one's true pleasure in Him as a natural property of the soul with which God has created mankind* (xxx: 29). And since our own souls testify to the truth of what the Holy Quran tells us, viz., that though we seek pleasure in a thousand things, our true and supreme pleasure lies only in God, and it is in union with Him only that we find that bliss and rest which men are seeking day and night elsewhere, hence we are certain that God is the Creator of our souls and that He Himself has implanted the seed of His own love within our souls. In short, the love which the soul naturally has for God is a clear testimony that God created our souls, and the natural love of our souls for Him is inexplicable on any other ground. But if it be supposed that our souls are not connected with God by the tie of creation, their supreme pleasure cannot in that case be in the love of God and hence the impossibility of salvation according to this belief.

The true fountain of salvation is the soul's natural love for God which makes it attain the union of God, for the true lover cannot remain separate from his beloved one. And as God Himself is light, His love gives birth to the light of salvation. On the one hand, the love

* فطرت الله التي فطر الناس عليها

which is implanted in the nature of man draws the love of God towards it, and, on the other, the love of God for man gives a new impulse to man's love for God, and when these two loves meet together, *fana* or a spiritual annihilation is brought about, and this is followed by *baqá billah* or a life in God, in which every veil which hides the face of God and every hinderance which separates man from God is removed and Divine love pervades the soul. It is this annihilation of self, followed by a truly spiritual life, that is mistaken by the Buddhists for an annihilation of both body and soul after which there is no existence. It is the first stage of perfection in spiritual growth and unless the spiritual wayfarer passes through it he cannot attain the goal. But here his own efforts end, for it is the last stage in the path of human efforts to attain the goal. After annihilation a new life is granted to the spiritual wayfarer by the grace of God. It is to this Divine blessing which is granted only by grace that the Holy Quran refers in the prayer which it teaches the Muslims, as it says in the verse : هـ د ن ا ل ص ر ا ط :

“O Lord ! show us the right path, *المستقيم صراطا لذي ين ا نعمت عليهم*”

~~the path of those whom Thou hast blessed by Thy grace” It shows~~

that the stage of a new life is reached only through the grace of God and not through one's efforts. It is the fruit of Divine love which grants an everlasting life to man and frees him from death. Everlasting life does not belong by right to any one except God, for He alone lives for ever and ever. From among men, therefore, only to him is granted eternal life who frees himself entirely from the love of others and being engrossed in Divine love and thus completely annihilated gets a new life through the grace of God. It is improper to call such a one a dead person for he leads a life in God. They are dead who being estranged from God are spiritually dead. It is to this that the Holy Quran refers when it says : ا نه من يا ت ر به مجر ما :

“Verily he who comes to God and he is cut off from Him, for him is hell in which he will neither die nor live”

These two statements which seem to be apparently contradictory are based on one of the highest spiritual truths. The man who is cut off from God, who has done nothing to make the seed of Divine love which was implanted in his heart by God Himself grow in him, will be in a state which is neither death nor life. He does not

die because he is created for worshipping God eternally and, therefore, it is necessary that he should live, but he cannot be said to be living because true life is attained through union with God of which he has deprived himself by estranging himself from God. It is this eternal life that salvation signifies and it can only be attained through love of, and union with, God. Had other people possessed true knowledge of a spiritual life they would never have promulgated such blasphemous doctrines as that God is not the Creator of soul and matter and that these things have eternal and spiritual life like God Himself. The truth is that this knowledge is only gained through inspiration from God, for it relates to heavenly things and only he who is fed from the heavenly source can have access to it.

There is another defect in the Arya Samaj or Hindu doctrine of salvation which may be mentioned in this connection. It is held by the upholders of the doctrine of self-existence and eternity of soul and matter that salvation is granted to the souls only temporarily. Permanent salvation according to them is impossible, for if it were granted, it would be possible for all the existing souls at some time to obtain salvation and leave God without any material to work upon on account of His inability to bring new souls into existence. It is to avoid this difficulty that the doctrine of temporary salvation is resorted to. In other words, it is held that even the saints after having attained to a state of salvation shall be deprived of that bliss and again made to wander in an endless course of transmigration. This means that Almighty God is pleased to inflict pain upon His servants and does not like them to remain in eternal bliss. The Christian doctrine of salvation has a similar defect, for though it promises eternal bliss to the worshippers of Jesus, it threatens the deniers of the divinity of Jesus with a never-ending punishment. It is the Holy Quran which teaches the only reasonable doctrine on this point, for it gives hope even to the unbelievers that the salvation which they have themselves rejected in this life shall ultimately be granted to them by the mercy of God. Both the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet state this in clear words. A tradition in the Sahih Muslim says: *يا ترى على جهنم زمان ليس فيها* i.e. "A time will come over hell when there shall be none in it and the cold breeze (of Divine mercy) will shake its gates." The Holy Quran refers to this subject in xi: 109,

110, where it speaks of the blessings of paradise as "an uninterrupted boon," but in speaking of those in hell it adds: "But if thy Lord wills it otherwise (*i.e.*, to take them out of hell), (He shall do it) for thy Lord is the mighty worker of His will." This is the only teaching which is in accordance with perfect Divine attributes. There are Divine attributes of glory and Divine attributes of beauty, and as God inflicts the punishment, He also applies the ointment. It is not true that those in hell shall eternally be subject to a manifestation of the Divine attribute of wrath, and that the Divine attribute of mercy shall never take them under its protection. Of course it is not meant that those thus delivered from hell shall be on a par with the elect in the bliss which they shall enjoy, for those who have chosen the side of God in this very life and completely annihilated their own selves in the love of God shall attain to the high stages of salvation which the others shall never be able to attain to. Moreover it should be borne in mind that the chief attribute of God is mercy, and His wrath is really only a manifestation of this attribute which takes place for the purpose of setting something right, and when that is done, mercy again appears in its own form. It is with this attribute of mercy that the Holy Quran opens, as the names *Rahmán*, the most merciful, and *Rahím*, the most compassionate, testify. Almighty God is not pleased by inflicting punishment upon His own creatures and He does not wrong any body, but men injure their own souls for in His love is true salvation and in estrangement from Him real pain.

If we take Christianity, we find it also deficient in giving a true and perfect knowledge of God which we have seen to be the first step in the attainment of salvation. The Christians look upon Jesus as their God, but Jesus was neither Omniscient nor Omnipotent, and hence according to the Christian teaching, Omnipotence and Omniscience are wanting in God. Jesus used to fly from his enemies and to hide himself from them, he was arrested and cast into prison, scourged and nailed to the cross. Omnipotence is not consistent with such disgrace. Jesus did not know the future for he admitted that even the Son knew not the time of the hour of judgment. Such ignorance strikes at the root of Omniscience. Moreover, an Omnipotent Being could not be led to the extremity of committing a suicide for the salvation of mankind or a portion of it. And again, the theory that God remained dead for three days is at least as preposterous as the doctrine of

Trinity itself. And wonder of wonders that though God remained dead for three days, yet his creatures did not suffer in the least by his death and lived as well without him as during his life.

The greatest error that Christianity has made is its introduction of the doctrine of Trinity into the pure monotheistic teaching of the Jewish religion. It is a doctrine which strikes at the root of Divine Unity, and makes the attainment of a true and perfect knowledge of God impossible. The three gods of Christianity are the father, the son and the holy ghost. In order to make this doctrine look unlike the polytheism of heathen nations, it is further asserted that the three gods named above are only one God, but this assertion is too absurd to need any refutation. So long as men are men and have heads on their shoulders, they cannot be convinced that $1+1+1=1$. Even mission colleges and schools do not teach an arithmetic which contains such a rule of addition. Three perfect and eternal Gods, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, are three Gods and they cannot be one, and if God is one, then there cannot be three. The doctrine of Trinity is rejected alike by the Holy Quran and the Old Testament. The law that was revealed to Moses does not contain any trace of the doctrine of Trinity, and the Unity of God was preached by all the prophets that appeared among the Israelites. The truth is that even the Gospels do not teach the doctrine of Trinity, and none of the sayings of Jesus reported in the Gospels contains the slightest trace of this erroneous doctrine. As a matter of fact, Paul and not Jesus is responsible for introducing the doctrine of Trinity into the Christian system. Paul borrowed it from the Greeks and in fact made a sort of compromise with the heathen in order to swell the number of Christians. In India too we find a trinity of very ancient origin which is called *Tri-murti*, and like the three Divine persons of Christianity, we have the three gods in the Hindu triad, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. Like their brethren in India, the Greeks had also a trinity of gods. The number *three* had for this reason acquired a sanctity among them, and played a part in most of their religious ceremonies. The one object of Paul was to gain adherents to the system which he preached, and for this purpose he did not hesitate to sacrifice the fundamental principle of the religion which Christ taught and which was in fact the same which Moses had taught.

The Greeks had in their turn borrowed the doctrine of Trinity from the Egyptians among whom we find the very three names of gods as are given by the Christians to the three persons of their Trinity. Thus the oracle of Serapis is said to have given the following answer to Thulius, a great monarch, who asked if any one was greater than he: "First God, afterward the Word, and with them the Holy Spirit, all these are of the same nature, and make but *one* whole, of which the power is eternal." Here we see clearly the original of the "Word" in John, the second person of Trinity. Plato also taught that the *Logos* was the second God, which is also called *the first-born son of God*. There is no doubt, therefore, that Paul introduced the doctrine of Trinity in imitation of the Greeks in order to make Christianity more acceptable to the polytheists and idol-worshippers. The teaching of Jesus concerning the person of God was very simple like the teachings of all the prophets, and he taught the simple doctrine of the unity of God, and modern Christianity is not the religion of Christ, but the religion of Paul. Jesus never taught Trinity so long as he lived, and after him his brother James remained true to his doctrine. But Paul opposed him and introduced many innovations into the Christian religion. He not only dispensed with the Mosaic law, but most arrogantly called it a curse and taught that the blood of Jesus wiped off all the sins and that a belief in the atonement was sufficient for salvation. Jesus was that meek and lowly man who did not like to be called "good" even, but Paul went to the extremity of calling him God. The words which Jesus spoke when he was nailed to the cross, saying "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me," are a very clear evidence of his pure monotheistic belief. A man who finding himself thus in utter distress calls upon his only refuge, the Lord God whom he considers his only deliverer, cannot, consistently with this utterance be supposed to have ever asserted that he himself was the all-powerful God who ruled earth and heavens. As regards certain words used of him in the Gospels, it should be borne in mind that Almighty God often addresses such of His chosen servants as have the purest connections of love with Him in words which the ignorant take literally and fall into errors, whereas such words are used only metaphorically.*

*In some of his revelations, the Promised Messiah in thus addressed: "Thou art from Me and I am from thee. Thou art to me as children. Thou hast with me a dignity

In short, Paul was the man who gave to Christianity a new turn of life and novel doctrines, while James, the brother of Jesus, the recognised chief of the Apostles at Jerusalem, remained faithful to the Mosaic law. Paul legalised all the prohibitions contained in the law and made Christianity approach the Greek idolatry as near as he could. He was a deadly enemy of Jesus during his life, but after his death he became a convert to Christianity, the basis of his change of faith being alleged to be some personal grudge against the Jews. On his way to Damascus he had a vision according to the Christians, after which he found himself a convert to Christianity. Thus it was at Damascus that the erroneous doctrines of Trinity and the divinity and atonement of Jesus took root. It is to this seed of evil sown at Damascus that one of the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad refers which tells us that the second Messiah will appear to the east of Damascus. The function of the Promised Messiah is stated to be the breaking of the cross which is the symbol of Trinity, and accordingly tradition indicates by speaking of the appearance of the Promised Messiah to the east of Damascus* that he will strike at the root of the evil of Trinity and that his advent would be a sign for the prevalence of the doctrine of Unity. The appearance of the Messiah in the East is a sign of the triumph of truth over error, for light appears from the East and when it appears, it dispels all darkness. So far as the claim of Paul to be one of the apostles of Jesus is concerned, there is not the least evidence in support of this assertion. Jesus never said that one of his apostles would come after his death, nor did he ever say of Paul that notwithstanding his determined enmity to him in his life time, Paul would rise to the dignity of an apostle after his crucifixion. Paul had an ingenious brain and seeing the vacancy caused in the apostles by the apostacy of Judas Iscariot, he advanced his claim to be the twelfth apostle or the apostle of the Gentiles on the basis of an alleged vision which he saw on his way to Damascus. As a matter of fact, this apostle of Jesus Christ proved even worse than the one whose place

which the world knows not." The first of these revelations may be misunderstood without an explanation. The phrase "thou art from Me" indicates that the Promised Messiah is a Messenger of God and is from God in that sense. The second phrase, "I am from thee" signifies that the world had utterly forsaken God and it is the Promised Messiah who has again established His glory upon earth and revived faith in Him.

*Qadian, the birth place of the Promised Messiah, is situated to the east of Damascus and thus the prophecy contained in the traditions is also literally fulfilled.

he filled, for Judas Iscariot only betrayed his Master, but Paul struck at the very root of the principles which Jesus had taught and thus gave a much severer blow to Christianity than Judas.

It would appear from the above that the true knowledge of God which is necessary for salvation cannot be attained otherwise than by following the Islamic teaching. Next to knowledge the love of God is essential for salvation, for no one likes to punish him who loves him. Love is always reciprocal, and the love of one person for another attracts the love of the latter for the former, though he may not have even given expression to his love. This is the secret of the attraction witnessed in the prophets of God. People are drawn to them with a mighty magnetism and they love them to such an extent that they do not hesitate even to sacrifice their lives for them. The reason of this attraction is that the prophets have love and sympathy for mankind greater than the love and sympathy which a mother has for her children. They suffer every hardship only for the sake of others. The magnetic power of their love shows at last its effect, and capable hearts are inexplicably drawn towards them. If then even man responds to man's love for him, why not God who knows the secrets of the heart. Love shows wonders. Its fire burns the chaff of sin and eats away the flame of transgression. There can be no punishment where there is true, pure and perfect love. One of the signs of true love is that the lover has it impressed in his very nature that separation from the beloved one is fatal for him. He is certain that if he departs in the least from the right path, perdition will overtake him, and any opposition to his beloved one he considers a poison for himself. He is ever restless to attain union with the object of his love. Adultery, theft, murder, perjury, &c., which are considered to be transgressions of Divine commandments by ordinary men, are not the only sins for him, but the least indifference to God and the slightest regard for others he considers to be a heinous sin. It is for this reason that he resorts to *istighfar* continually, i.e., prays to God day and night for His protection and support. As he cannot bear separation from God even for an instant, he is always anxious to seek His pleasure. There is a thirst in his soul that God should be pleased with him and hence he is never tired of praying for Divine protection. The spring of love within him constanly gushes forth afresh and hence he is more and more anxious

to advance in the attainment of Divine pleasure. Hence the more a man loves God, the more he resorts to *istighfar* and seeks the protection of God. This is the reason that the righteous servants of God who have a perfect love for Him constantly resort to *istighfar*, and this is in fact a criterion by which the sinlessness of a man can be determined. The true and primary meaning of *istighfar* is only this that a man prays to God to save him from stumbling on account of the natural human weakness. Its meaning is then extended to cover the cases in which a man prays to God to save him in this life and the next from the evil consequences and poisonous effect of the evil deeds which he has already done. The true fountain of salvation is, therefore, love for God, and this love on account of a man's continual prayers and supplications draws God's love towards it. When a man's love for God is perfect and the fire of his love burns all his low desires, the flame of Divine love then descends upon his heart of a sudden and draws him out of all the impurities of a worldly life, and Divine purity overshadows all the phases of his life.

This high stage in spiritual growth may be reached and the Divine blessings consequent thereupon received even now as they were in the past, for the Divine attributes of love and mercy never lie idle and Divine blessings are never withheld. To the man who makes an effort in His path and walks in righteousness, God grants these gifts now as He granted them before. Such a promise is contained in the Holy Quran even in the prayer which the Muslims are ~~taught to repeat in their daily prayers and which says:~~ "O God, show us the right path, the path of those upon whom have been Thy grace and blessings." It tells us to pray for all the blessings and gifts which were granted to the prophets of God and His righteous servants, thus showing that the Muslims are not deprived of these Divine blessings. It gives the Muslims mighty hopes which were not given to the former people. The blessings of God were granted variously to the various prophets appearing in different ages and countries, but the Muslims are taught to pray for, and may thus hope to receive, all these blessings combined. It is for this reason that the Holy Quran calls the Muslims "the best of people" raised for the guidance of mankind, for greater excellences and blessings were in store for them. The reason of this special Divine favour upon the Muslims is that the Holy Prophet Muhammad whom they follow

possessed the combined excellences of all the prophets that passed before him, as the Holy Quran says in one place: *فَبِهِدْهُ* (i.e., "Follow thou all the guidances of the earlier prophets.") This is the reason that our Holy Prophet is the most excellent and the greatest of all prophets for he possesses all those excellences which were possessed variously by the other prophets. Hence it is necessary that a true follower of such a prophet should also be an heir to all these blessings. It is a pity that there are some Muslims who being themselves deprived of these blessings on account of their departure from the right path assert that the Muslims as a whole have been deprived of these blessings. Hence it is that when a Muslim claimed that he received Divine revelation in the same manner as Jesus Christ did, they called him an heretic, for they think that the greatest of all Divine blessings, viz., Divine revelation, cannot be granted to a follower of the Holy Prophet. These people go direct against the plainest words of the Holy Quran. It is surprising that though they still believe that Almighty God listens to the prayers of His servants as He listened to them before, yet they deny that He speaks now to His righteous servants as He spoke before. These are all errors. None who is only content with stories of the past can attain to true salvation. But Islam is a living religion and the Holy Quran teaches us that the Muslims are the heirs to all the blessings that were ever granted to any people. Here is the fountain of true salvation, let any one who desires drink of it.

In short, the way to salvation which Islam shows us is philosophic and not arbitrary. It tells us that in the nature of man are placed from the beginning two opposite tendencies. There is in it a poison which inclines a man to sin, but there is also an antidote to this poison which is the love of God. These two tendencies are a part of human nature. The poisonous tendency is creative of pain while the antidotal force of the love of God consumes sin and is the source of the highest pleasures. It is not consonant to the justice of God to say that while tendency to evil was placed in the nature of man from the beginning, the antidotal remedy, the means of deliverance from sin, was given to him only a little while ago, that is to say, from the time when Jesus Christ was crucified. No one who has any sense or reason in his head can accept this absurd assertion as a truth. The poison and the antidote have both been given to

man from the beginning, and the remedy to counteract the effect of the poison is within him and was not introduced into the world by some special act which the nature of man knows not. To say that the world knew not this remedy till two thousand years ago a certain man was crucified is not only a denial of the justice of God but also an insult to human reason. Almighty God created the antidote along with the poison, and this antidote is the love of God, which can become perfect only through a true and perfect knowledge of God.

Earthquake and Prophecy.

(By M. Sher Ali, B.A.)

Akbar Masih is a typical Christian controversialist. He always lays before his readers such facts as he can manage to distort and wilfully ignores everything which defies his attempts at misrepresentation. His letter published in the *Ephiphany* of June 23rd, 1906, in which he criticises the Promised Messiah's prophecy relating to the memorable earthquake of April 4th, represents him in his true colours.

The Promised Messiah published two revelations, one predicting "A shock of earthquake" and the other saying 'Buildings shall be levelled with the ground.' The prophecies were published in December 1902 and May 1904 respectively. ~~These revelations not only predicted~~ an earthquake in this country, but also foretold the degree of its severity. It was to be so severe that it was to level buildings with the ground. No sensible man can deny that the prophecy was fulfilled in the earthquake of April 4th, which actually levelled buildings with the ground. But Akbar Masih is audacious enough even to deny this plain prophecy. In discussing the prophecy, the first trick to which this crafty controversialist resorts is to ignore one portion of the prophecy. He intentionally overlooks the revelation which foretold 'a shock of earthquake' and then objects that the prophecy did not mention an earthquake. Both the revelations were mentioned side by side in Mr. Faquir Ullah's letter published in *Epiphany* of 9th June, but Akbar Masih takes up one and totally neglects the other. If he had no fault to find with the other, why

did he not candidly admit that the revelation which spoke of a shock of earthquake was fulfilled? But he has not acted justly even in his examination of the revelation which he has taken up for criticism. Even if we neglect the other revelation and confine ourselves to the one which spoke of the total destruction of buildings, this single revelation is sufficient to convince an honest man of its truth. It at least spoke of the destruction of buildings even if it did not mention the cause which was to bring about the destruction. Now we have to see whether the disaster foretold in the revelation, *viz.*, the total destruction of buildings, came about or not. If it did come about, we must admit that the prophecy in the revelation turned out to be true. Did it lie in the power of the Promised Messiah as a mortal to foresee the disaster? Or was it in his power to bring about an event which should have resulted in such a general demolition of buildings. But Akbar Masih would not admit any truth. He charges the Promised Messiah with plagiarism, but I fail to understand what he means by this. Does he mean to say that he could not himself make an elegant Arabic sentence and stole a line from the Saba Muallaqa, thinking that this act of his would pass undetected? But such an assumption is evidently foolish. As to his ability to write elegant Arabic, it is sufficient to say that he has written about 20 works, both in poetry and prose, in elegant Arabic, and has offered them to the world as a miracle, challenging the learned, not only of India but also of Turkey, Egypt and Arabia to produce their like if it lay in human power to produce such writings. Is it not foolish then to think that such a man was compelled to resort to plagiarism in the present instance? Similarly it is foolish to think that the Promised Messiah wanted to impose upon the public and thought that no body would be able to identify this line. It is a well-known line of a well-known poem, which is in the hands of every student of Arabic, and the Promised Messiah could never have thought even for a moment that no body would be able to identify this line. The very circle of friends to whom he announced the revelation in the first instance contained in it men who could not be for an instant supposed to be ignorant of the line for they had not only read the poem themselves but had taught it to hundreds of their pupils. Can anything be more absurd, then, than the assertion of Akbar Masih that the Mirza Sahib plagiarised a line from the

Saba Muallaqa thinking that his plagiarism would not be detected by any body. Is it possible for Akbar Masih to steal a line from Shakespear and make the public believe that it was his own composition? The quotation of a well-known line from a well-known author does not fall within the definition of plagiarism, even if it is not accompanied by an acknowledgement. When engaged in a controversy, Akbar Masih does not try to profit by his common sense, not because he has none, but because he tries to impose upon those who do not possess it in a sufficient degree. It must be remembered that it was not for the elegance of its style that Ahmad offered the line to the public. Ahmad offered it as a line which foretold a future event. It was not as his own word, but as the Word of God, that Ahmad published the verse. That he had received it from on high and had not borrowed it from the Saba Muallaqa has been proved by the result. The event foretold in the verse, *viz.*, a general destruction of buildings, came to pass and furnished a clear proof of the fact that the line was a genuine Word of God and not a plagiarism. Will Mr. Akbar Masih kindly explain why the event foretold in the verse came to pass if it was a plagiarism? The line in the mouth of the Muslim poet of Arabia was only the word of a mortal, and contained no more than the description of a desolation that had already occurred, but in the mouth of Ahmad that line became a miracle in as much as it told of a future event which came to pass exactly as foretold. If the prophecy had not been fulfilled, then Akbar Masih could have brought every charge against the Promised Messiah, but now when the fulfilment of the prophecy announced in the line has proved it to be the Word of God, it is the zenith of impudence to charge Ahmad with plagiarism. Can Akbar Masih select a line from Shakespear or Milton and announce it as a prophecy? If it is possible to do so, let him publish such a prophecy and if that prophecy turns out to be true, we will gladly admit it as his miracle. But if it is not possible for him to do so, he must admit that what Ahmad published was the Word of God which he had received from on high and which gave the proof of its Divine origin by its fulfilment. Can a plagiarist be a prophet! To object to this prophecy of Ahmad is, to my mind, as foolish as to deny the miracle of Moses which was wrought by the rod. Is it reasonable to assert that as the rod which turned a serpent was an ordinary stick which Moses used to carry in

his hand, therefore the miracle wrought by Moses with the stick cannot be a true miracle? If God could show a miracle through the instrumentality of an ordinary stick, why can he not turn an ordinary line into a miracle now? All we have to see is whether the prophecy announced in that line has turned out true. If the event predicted in the line has come to pass, that line is a miracle; otherwise it is plagiarism or fabrication.

It is true that though most of the revelations of Ahmad are original, yet on a few occasions God has been pleased to adopt the words of mortals when he found them to be fit descriptions of the events which He meant to disclose. One instance of this kind is the

Revelation in Arabic, *وَالْبُيُوتُ الْمَسْكُونَةُ*, 'Buildings both temporary and permanent, shall be levelled with the ground.'

Another instance of this kind is to be found in a still later revelation which runs as follows *تَزَلُّزٌ رَايُوا كِسْرَى* *i.e.*, "A quaking occurred in the palace of *Kisra*." But these are as good prophecies as any other. The fact that the revelations which contain a prophecy

~~are not original by no way detracts from the merits of the prophecy.~~

If the use here and there of fit quotations on the part of a mortal is not considered to be a blemish, but a beauty of style, why is it considered to be a fault in the case of God. Will Mr. Akbar Masih kindly explain what harm there is if the Words of God should correspond with the words of mortals? Does not God speak in the same language in which we mortals speak? Mark how beautifully the disastrous effects of the earthquake of April 4th are described in the line *عَفَّتْ أَلْدِيَارُ مَحَلَّهَا وَمَقَامُهَا* 'Buildings both temporary and permanent shall be levelled with the ground.' Does not this line give a very fit description of the earthquake? Did it lie in the power of Ahmad to select a line from the writings of early poets which gave so true and apt a description of the coming disaster. God ~~not only disclosed a coming disaster but portrayed its ruinous effects~~ in such fitting terms that it is impossible to find better words than these to describe the ruin caused by the earthquake.

Another objection which Akbar Masih raises against the prophecy is that previous to its fulfilment, Ahmad understood the prophecy to refer to the destruction of plague. This objection of his is based on his ignorance of the nature of the prophecies that are

uttered by the prophets of God. Their prophecies are not like those of astrologers. The prophecies of the latter, whatever their value, are supposed to be based on their own knowledge, and being the expression of their own thoughts they ought to be fulfilled in accordance with what their utterers thought to be their sense at the time of their publication. The astrologers are themselves the authors of their prophecies and the words of their predictions should be fulfilled according to the sense in which their authors used them. But the prophecies uttered by the messengers of God are quite different from those published by the astrologers. The prophets are not themselves the author of their prophecies. It is God who is the author of the predictions published by them. The only difference between the prophets and other mortals is that the former receive the message directly from God, while the latter receive it indirectly through the prophets. In other respects they are all equal. The prophets can not add anything to the message which they receive from God. They only deliver it to the people exactly as they receive it. If the prophet should express any opinion as to the manner in which the prophecy is to be fulfilled, we should treat his opinion only as the opinion of a mortal. He is as ignorant of the future as we ourselves are. He does not pretend to be a knower of the secrets. The revelation which he publishes is not an expression of his own thoughts. He is not the author of the prophecy and, therefore, if the manner of the fulfilment of the prophecy should not correspond with the manner in which the prophet *thought* the prophecy would be fulfilled, the circumstance by no way detracts from the value of the prophecy. We should keep in view the original words of the prophecy, the very words that came from God and wait for the result. If anything should come to pass to which the words of the prophecy are *clearly* applicable, we must admit that the prophecy is fulfilled. What we have to see is whether the result exactly corresponds with the original words of the prophecy. If it does, the prophecy must be owned as true. It is not necessary that the opinion of the prophet as to the manner in which he *thinks* the prophecy will be fulfilled should be right in all cases. Numerous instances may be cited both from Jewish and Islamic history in which the prophecies were fulfilled in quite an unexpected manner. Was it not in an unexpected manner that the advent of Jesus took place? Should we, then, deny Jesus because he came in

an unexpected way? Akbar Masih says he is assured by a Muhammadan writer that the revelation *عفت ا ل د ي ا ر م ح ل ه ا و م ق ا م ه ا* was not fulfilled in the manner in which the Promised Messiah expected it would be fulfilled. Will Akbar Masih ask his Muhammadan friend, if he is other than Charágh Din of Jammu who died of plague before he could well enter upon his career as an apostle, whether the vision of the Holy Prophet with regard to his flight was fulfilled according to his expectations? Did he not think that the land of palms to which he had to fly was Yamama or Hajar? But it turned out to be Medina. Will the Muhammadan friend of Akbar Masih say that the Holy Prophet's vision with regard to his flight did not turn out to be true because it was not fulfilled in the manner in which the Holy Prophet thought it would be fulfilled?

In the beginning of May, 1904, the word of God came to the Promised Messiah saying "Buildings both temporary and permanent shall be levelled with the ground." This was the message which the Promised Messiah received. As plague prevailed in the country he *thought* the revelation referred to the destruction of the country through plague. But the result showed that the revelation did not refer to a destruction to be brought about by plague, but to the actual demolition of buildings. Plague only destroys the inmates of the house, but the revelation referred to the destruction both of the inmates and the houses and thus it was fulfilled in its true and natural sense. Compare the result with the *original* words of the prophecy and see how exactly the result corresponds with the prophecy. The prophecy said that a disaster would level buildings with the ground and so it came to pass. Akbar Masih should remember that it was God who was the author of the prophecy and not Mirza Sahib. If the Word of God has been clearly fulfilled, he must accept the prophecy as true. It was God who uttered the prophecy and it is His Word that we have to consider. If previous to the fulfilment of the prophecy, the Mirza Sahib thought that it referred to plague, we cannot blame him for doing so, for he is only a mortal and has never claimed to possess the power of peering into the hidden secrets of the future or claimed to be himself the author of the prophecy. This difference between his own opinion and the real intent of the prophecy is a proof that the prophecy was not his own fabrication. He thought one thing, God meant another.

Another objection which he raises against the prophecy is that the place and time of the occurrence of the earthquake were not defined. If Mr. Akbar Masih had even a smattering of Arabic, he would have never objected that the prophecy did not define the place of the earthquake. The ج of the word ج ل د ي ا ر in the prophecy told every student of Arabic that it was this land, *i.e.*, the Panjab, the land of the Promised Messiah, that was to be the scene of the earthquake. It was pointed out at that very time that, as the words of the revelation indicated, the prophecy related to the Panjab and to a very near future. It should also be remembered that God caused the earthquake in order to punish the people and hence it ought to have overtaken them all of a sudden. It is for this reason also that the exact hour of the terrible earthquake which is yet to come has not been disclosed by God. It will overtake the world all of a sudden. It is the height of folly to deny the truth of the prophecy which saw its fulfilment on April 4th, merely because it did not give the exact hour of its fulfilment. The Word of God revealed to Ahmad foretold of an earthquake in the land of the five rivers in a near future which was to be so severe that it was to level buildings with the ground. This land had not witnessed any such earthquake for centuries and hence his prophecy could not be a conjecture. Within a year after the publication of his second revelation regarding the earthquake came the memorable shock of April 4th, which in the twinkling of an eye turned the fair valley of the Kangra District into a wilderness of ruins. But Akbar Masih says that the prophecy cannot be said to have been fulfilled because the exact hour of its fulfilment was not disclosed. If some one should prophecy that A shall be bitten by a rabid dog and die of hydrophobia in a near future, and it should come to pass as he said, should we deny the fulfilment of the prophecy merely because the exact hour of his death was not disclosed. If Akbar Masih should stick to this rule, he shall have to reject most of the prophecies of the Bible. It is foolish to urge that such and such a thing was not disclosed. What we have to see is whether what was disclosed lay in the power of the prophet to disclose and whether it has come to pass. If a prophecy satisfies these two conditions, it is a true prophecy.

Christian controversialists neglect their own Jesus while speaking of the Promised Messiah. Akbar Masih impudently compares

Zadkeil, the Jew, with the Promised Messiah, but does not seem to know that by doing so, he brings disgrace on his own Master, whom he adores as his god. If he had compared Zadkeil, the Jew, with Jesus, he would have found that the incarnation of the second person of the godhead certainly lagged behind the Jew. Jesus predicted earthquakes which were to serve as signs of his second advent, which, he said, would take place before that generation passed away. Akbar Masih is well aware that not only that generation but many other generations have passed away without witnessing the fulfilment of that prophecy. Now, Zadkeil, the Jew, also predicted an earthquake in the present century, which Mr. Akbar Masih says has turned out true. Can not then this Jew claim a superiority over Jesus? If Akbar Masih refers to other prophecies of Zadkeil which have failed, this Jewish gentleman can in his turn point to many prophecies of Jesus which turned out to be false.

While comparing the prophecy of Zadkeil with that of the holy Messiah, the following facts should be borne in mind :—

(a). The Promised Messiah published his prophecy 10 months before Zadkeil.

(b). Zadkeil's prediction did not state the degree of the sharpness of the earthquake. He predicted a 'sharp' earthquake, but there might be a sharp earthquake while no serious harm might be done to the buildings. The shock of April 4th has been followed by many earthquakes which have been designated as 'sharp,' but which have not done any serious damage to the buildings. But in Ahmad's prediction the degree of sharpness was stated with an exactness which can hardly be surpassed. The prophecy stated that the earthquake would level buildings with the ground. Thus Ahmad's prophecy was far clearer than that of Zadkeil.

(c). Ahmad's prophecy was not based on any astrological or seismological considerations. If Zadkeil's prophecy shows the influence of planets, the mighty prophecy of Ahmad shows that it was Almighty and all-knowing God that disclosed this secret to him and that he is a true prophet. وَاِخْرَدُ عَرَبْنَانِ اِلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

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