



THE REVIEW of RELIGIONS

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EUROPEAN
EDITION

EDITOR
B.A. RAFIQ

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The REVIEW of RELIGIONS

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The Philosophy of The Teachings of Islam

IT IS AN ENGLISH Translation of the paper written by

HAZRAT MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD
THE PROMISED MESSIAH

for the great Religious Conference held at Lahore, Pakistan in December, 1896. It contains about 200 pages of learned disquisitions on the following five subjects from a Muslim point of view, viz.,

1. The physical, moral and spiritual conditions of man.
2. The state of man in the life hereafter.
3. The real object of man's existence and the means of its attainment.
4. The effect of action in the present life and the life to come.
5. The sources of Divine knowledge.

The paper contains an exposition of Islam, such as is not met with by any other book hitherto published on Islam in any language. It is in fact a comprehensive commentary of the Holy Quran, throwing on its teachings and doctrines a light such as never before shed. The late Count Tolstoy expressed the following opinion on one of its parts:— "I approve very much two articles, 'How to get rid of the bondage of Sin' and 'The Life to come'. The idea is very profound and very true".

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COMMENTRY ON A VERSE OF THE HOLY QURAN

THE DEWELLERS OF THE CAVE

“Dost thou think that the Companions of the Cave and the Inscription were a wonder among Our Sings?” (18 : 10).

The verse declares the Dwellers of the Cave to be no novel or out of the ordinary thing but as only one of the so many Signs of God. There was nothing about them which might be considered a departure from the ordinary laws of nature. It is, however, very regrettable that while according to this verse the Dwellers of the Cave were no object of wonder but were only a Sign of God, many Commentators of the Quran have woven fantastic legends around them.

Who were those Dwellers of the Cave, where did they live and what were the conditions and circumstances under which they had to live, are some of the questions that have agitated the minds of Commentators for hundreds of years. A good clue to the solution of these baffling questions is to be found in some of the stories related by Muslim historians, Ibn Ishaq being most prominent among them. These stories are summarized below :-

Ibn Ishaq relates that when idolatry first found its way among Christians, those of them who were strict monotheists being sorely distressed over the condition of their co-religionists renounced their company. This happened in the time of the Roman Emperor Decius, who was a great persecutor of Christians. Some Christian young men who refused to worship idols were arrested and brought before him. He asked them to think over and revise their attitude and himself went on a journey. Instead of submitting to the Emperor's command they sought safety in flight and took refuge in a cave. On his return from the journey the Emperor ordered these young men to be brought before him. They feared that they would be found out and killed. So they prayed long and fervently in the cave and had hardly finished their prayer when they fell into a deep sleep. Their belongings lay beside them and their dog kept watch at the entrance of the cave. The search for them brought their pursuers to the mouth of the cave but no one could muster enough courage to enter it. The Emperor was counselled to raise a well before its mouth. He accepted the advice and the mouth of the cave was sealed up. (Ma'ani, vol. 5, p. 16).

There is another story to the effect that a disciple of Jesus arrived in a town of which the ruler had commanded that every new-comer, before entering the town, should prostrate himself before the idol at its entrance. The disciple refused to carry out the king's command. On the contrary, he began to preach against idol-worship which led to many inhabitants of

the town becoming Christians. One day, as the result of a scuffle between the king's son and the owner of a *hammam* (bath) the former was killed. The owner of the *hammam* fled. Some young men who had embraced Christianity, apprehending arrest, also fled and alongwith a landlord, who too had embraced Christianity, took refuge in a cave. The story then proceeds as narrated above by Ibn Ishaq (Ma'ani, vol. 5, p. 19).

Ibn 'Abbas is reported to have said that he was with Mu'awiya in an expedition against the Romans when they saw the cave in which اصحاب كهف (Dwellers of the Cave) were believed to have lived. Mu'awiya sent some of his men to enter the cave but a storm suddenly arose and prevented them from entering it. According to another narration Ibn 'Abbas is reported to have said that he had even seen the remains of اصحاب كهف which seemed to be 300 years old (Manthur, vol. 4. pp. 22, 214).

According to Abu Hayyan there is a cave in Spain which is supposed to contain the dead bodies of the Dwellers of the Cave and also of their dog. Ibn Abi. Attiyya also claims to have seen the cave where according to him the corpses of اصحاب كهف have remained for four or five hundred years. He writes that there are to be found near Granada the ruins of a town which is called the town of Decius. It contains very weird tombs built of stones (Muhit vol. 6, p. 102).

Identical accounts have been given by Ibn Kathir and by 'Abd al-Razzaq and Ibn Hatim in Durri Manthur (vol. 4, p. 224). Some Commentators of the Quran have gone so far as to give even the names of the Dwellers of the Cave. For instance, Ibn 'Abbas, has given the names of these people and their number.

The memorable story of the "Seven Sleepers", as told by Gibbon in his Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, provides an important clue to the solution of the mystery that surrounds the Dwellers of the Cave. "When the Emperor Decius", says Gibbon, "persecuted the Christians, seven noble youths of Ephesus concealed themselves in a spacious cavern in the side of an adjacent mountain, where they were doomed to perish by the tyrant, who gave orders that the entrance should be firmly secured with a pile of huge stones. They immediately fell into a deep slumber, which was miraculously prolonged, without injuring the powers of life, during a period of one hundred and eighty-seven years. At the end of that time, the slaves of Adolius, to whom the inheritance of the mountain had descended, removed the stones, to supply materials for some rustic edifice; the light of the sun darted into the cavern, and the seven sleepers were permitted to awake. After a slumber, as they thought, of a few hours, they were pressed by the calls of hunger and resolved that Jamblichus, one of their members, should secretly return to the city to purchase bread for the use of his companions.

The youth could no longer recognize the once familiar aspect of his native country; and his surprise was increased by the appearance of a large cross, triumphantly erected over the principal gate of Ephesus. His singular dress and obsolete language confounded the baker to whom he offered an ancient medal of Decius as the current coin of the empire; and Jamblichus, on the suspicion of a secret treasure, was dragged before the judge. Their mutual inquiries produced the amazing discovery that almost two centuries had elapsed since Jamblichus and his friends had escaped from the rage of a pagan tyrant. The bishop of Ephesus, the clergy, the magistrates, the people, and, it is said, the Emperor Theodosius himself, hastened to visit the cavern of the Seven Sleepers, who bestowed their benediction, related their story, and at the same instant peaceably expired" (chapter 33).

The story of the Dwellers of the Cave may also be taken to apply to Joseph of Arimathaea and his companions. According to William of Malmesbury, Joseph was sent to Britain by St. Philip and having been given a small island in Somersetshire there constructed with twisted twigs the first Christian church in Britain, afterwards to become the Abbey of Glastonbury. According to another account Joseph is said to have wandered into Britain in the year 63 AD. According to the legends which grew up under the care of the monks the first Church of Glastonbury was a little wattled building erected by Joseph of Arimathaea as the leader of the twelve apostles sent over to Britain from Gaul by St. Philip (Enc. Brit., 10th edition & 13th edition, under Joseph of Arimathaea & Glastonbury).

All these accounts may appear to be no more than picturesque legends or later interpolations or they may belong to the realm of poetry rather than genuine tradition but they do not seem to be completely devoid of all reality and are not without an undercurrent of truth. Anyhow, they possess a deep and far-reaching significance. Joseph of Arimathaea may or may not have gone to England or that country may or may not be "the cave" under discussion, but the story of the Dwellers of the Cave does symbolize the story of the early persecution and later rise and expansion of Christianity.

Our recent research, however, assigns the catacombs at Rome rather than Glastonbury as the site of "the cave" and a study of early Christianity lends great weight to this research. Accounts of the Dwellers of the Cave given above by Ibn Ishaq and other historians also seem to substantiate and reinforce this recent theory.

From these accounts the following facts unmistakably emerge:—

1. That early Christians were believers in the Unity of God and that they suffered great persecution for their beliefs.

2. That some of these Christians fearing persecution and death took refuge in a cave in the time of a king variously known as Dacyuse, Dacyanuse or, in Latin, Decius.
3. That the persecutors of these Christians were idol-worshippers who sought to compel them to worship their own idols and offer sacrifices to them.
4. That these young men came out of the cave in the time of a king named Nandusis or, as Gibbon says, Theodosius.

Now it is a well-known historical fact that early Christians had to suffer untold persecutions at the hands of the idolatrous Roman Emperors for their belief in the Oneness of God. This persecution began as early as in the time of the notorious Emperor Nero who is said to have set fire to Rome and fiddled while that great seat of learning and civilization was burning. It continued intermittently till the reign of the Emperor Constantine who became converted to Christianity and made it the religion of the State. According to Tacitus Nero inflicted most inhuman tortures upon Christians in order to shift the blame for the burning of Rome on to them. He caused them to be hanged, burned alive and thrown to hungry dogs. Even St. Peter is said to have met his death at this cruel Emperor's hands. Tertullian states that Peter was crucified under Nero, and Origen adds that at his own request he was crucified head downwards. Early in the third century the grave of Peter and Paul was shown in the Vatican and their relics were moved to the catacombs in 258 A.D. Among the tombs to be lately discovered in the catacombs are some of those disciples whose names have been mentioned in the Gospels and with whom Peter is said to have stayed (Enc. Brit., Every Man's Encyclopaedia, & Gibbon's Roman Empire, under Peter, Catacombs & Nero, and story of Rome by Norword Young).

The persecution continued in the reign of Domitian. But it was not only tyrants like Nero and Domitian who persecuted Christians but great and virtuous princes like Tarjan and Marcus Aurelius also punished these unoffending people with death, exile and imprisonment. They had, however, a brief respite of about forty years after which their persecution again began with renewed fury under the Emperor Decius. This time the persecution was so severe that compared with it the former condition was a state of perfect freedom and security. Decius wanted to restore the religion and institutions of ancient Rome and with this object in view he began a systematic extermination of Christianity. The edicts of Diocletian in 303 A.D., however, surpassed all anti-Christian measures. By these edicts Christian churches in all the provinces of the empire were demolished, all their sacred books were publicly burnt and the property of the Church was confiscated and Christians were put out of the protection of the land

(Gibbon's Roman Empire).

To save themselves from this most cruel and inhuman persecution the helpless Christians had to seek refuge in concealment and from a study of the catacombs at Rome it appears that they proved havens of safety for them. These catacombs which have been referred to in the Quran as "the cave" were admirably suited to the needs of Christians who had to remain in concealment for long intervals. They had built schools and chapels and also buried the dead bodies of their saints and holy men in them. Though some of the statements as to the employment of the catacombs in times of persecution may have been somewhat exaggerated we have clear evidence that they were used as places of refuge from the fury of the heathen, in which the believers — especially the bishops and clergy, who would naturally be the first objects of attack — might secrete themselves until the storm had blown over. This was a purpose for which they were admirably adapted both by the intricacy of their labyrinthine passages, in which anyone not possessing the clue would inevitably be lost, and the numerous small chambers and hiding places at different levels which might be passed unperceived in the dark by pursuers. As a rule also the catacombs had more than one entrance, and frequently communicated with a sand quarry; so that while one entrance was carefully watched, the pursued might escape in a totally different direction by another. These catacombs have several stories which are connected with each other by a vast labyrinth of narrow galleries, interspersed with small chambers, excavated at successive levels. These dark narrow and lybyrinthic galleries have gone on for hundreds of miles. Padris Marchi has estimated the length of the galleries at from 800 to 900 miles and the number of interments at between 6,000,000 and 7,000,000. Martigny's estimate is 587 miles and Northcote's lower still, at not less than 350 miles (Enc. Brit., 9th edition, under Catacombs).

From the inscriptions on the tomb-stones in the catacombs it appears that the early Christians were strict monotheists. There is not a single word on the inscriptions which indicated that they believed in Jesus as God or the son of God. He has been represented only as a shepherd or a Prophet of God, which he really was. Nor has Mary, his mother, been mentioned as anything more than a pious woman. The story of the tribe of the Prophet Jonah and that of Noah's flood find repeated and prominent mention in the inscriptions and engravings. This clearly shows that early Christians regarded the Old Testament with greater respect than do present-day Christians. It also appears that Christians who took refuge in the catacombs kept dogs at their entrance which would announce the approach of strangers by their barking.

To be brief, the account of the Dwellers of the Cave constitutes a representation of the history of early Christians and shows how they con-

ducted a vigorous campaign against idolatry and polytheistic beliefs and suffered untold persecutions for their successors ended by disowning almost all the fundamental doctrines of their Faith. The position of “the cave”, however, is of secondary importance, though from the facts narrated above its description as given in v. 18 applies more fully and in greater detail and exactness to the catacombs at Rome than to any other place.

Similarly, very strange and widely divergent accounts of **الرسيم** (the Inscription) have been given by Commentators. According to some it was a tablet of lead or copper or a slab of stone on which the names of the Dwellers of the Cave, their ancestry, etc., were inscribed. Some say it was the name of the town or village from which they came or the name of the mountain or valley in which that “cave” was situated, yet according to others it was the name of their dog or the coin which they used. Leaving aside the mental wanderings of Commentators, these two words – “cave” and “inscription” – represent the two most prominent aspects of the Christian Faith, viz., that it began as a religion of entire engrossment in worldly affairs, a religion of business and trade in a world of writings and inscriptions.

Commentary of the Holy Quran Vol. II – part I, page 1486 - 90.

OUR GOD IS OUR PARADISE

Our God is our paradise. Our highest delight is in our God for we have seen Him and have found every beauty in Him. This wealth is worth procuring though one might have to lay down one's life to procure it. This ruby is worth purchasing though one may have to lose oneself to acquire it. Oh ye, who are bereft, run to this fountain and it will satisfy you. It is the fountain of life that will save you. What shall I do, and how shall I impress the hearts with this good news, and by beating what drum shall I make the announcement that this is your God, so that people might hear? What remedy shall I apply to the ears of the people so that they should listen (Kashti Nooh, p. 30).

The Promised Messiah.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

BY
B.A. RAFIQ

The existence of a powerful political Jewish lobby in both Europe and America and the sway it exercises on the economic infrastructure (with tax concessions available to promote a tottering Israeli economy) creates an ideal formula for expansion to continue and for shuttlecock diplomacy to fail. The marriage with Christian-backed Lebanese eventually led to the invasion of their own homes and the reluctance to withdraw from occupied territory has taught them a bitter lesson. No matter how wide a territory an aggressor occupies it will always be vulnerable to attack from the people who have forcibly driven from their homes. Soon, America will no longer be able to sustain a massive budget deficit at home and lend support to a war-like Israel. When that happens, Israel may turn to Russia which would not be bound by ties to some of the neighbouring states. In that see-saw lie the cause of fresh disputes to emerge.

The question now is not so much whether Israel can exist in the Middle East but whether the Middle East can survive with Israel. A disunited Arab force, heavily under-equipped and demoralised by past defeats, offers little hope for the Palestinian Arabs who lie at the core of the misery that Israel has unleached on them. How long can they survive bullets fired at them, the agony of watching their homes reduced to rubble by bulldozers, of Jews occupying the land they once owned, of witnessing the massacre of their women and children by swooping bomb-raids or by the Lebanese militia right under the Jewish nose, and of the treachery of the rest of the Muslim world in allowing this to happen? How long is the Muslim world going to sit idly by and watch the desecration of a land once held holy by past prophets and now tainted by the blood of innocent victims to the struggle or by the ashes of buildings dedicated to the worship of the One God? How long will the other nations of the world continue to be impotent in watching the constant ignoring of their resolutions when it is their own resolution which helped to set up the state of Israel?

The continuance of the state of Israel is a sad reflection of the pathetic and sorry state of the Muslim world. They are busy disbanding Muslims from their own fold while agony piles up one after another on their brethren barely surviving in Israel. The way to defeat that state is by a resolute approach. That can only be achieved by unity. Unity will only come about once Muslims become Muslims and understand the bond that their Master knit them together in. Any other way is like putting the cart before the horse. Abortive terrorist (one questions who is the terrorist) plots merely ensure that when there is no war in this land, there is no peace

either. As long as Israel can rely on expansion as a means of security, it will move no closer to a settlement that would halt the bloodshed. Its retribution has sought more than an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth so much so that the victim of this vendetta has been rendered blind and toothless. In short, it has transgressed seriously in maintaining the sanctity of this land and the time has come for someone else to replace this cruelty with compassion, kindness, love and reestablish the name of a compassionate and Merciful God.

**** *

One of the main objections against Ahmadis is that they do not believe in the physical ascension of Isa bin Maryam to the heavens. It is also alleged that Ahmadis do not believe in Jihad as a means of spreading Islam to non-believers and converting them by force.

The above questions have been raised by one S. Ahmad of London and same have been answered by Editor-in-chief Fathi Osman in the October, 1983 issue of the "Arabia" published from London. Hereunder is reproduced the question and the answer:

Question: In the light of the Quran and Hadith is it essential to hold the following beliefs in order to remain within the fold of Islam: that Isa bin Maryam physically ascended to heaven; that Isa ibn Maryam (peace be on him) was conceived without the agency of a human father; and that in Darul Harb, "Jihad" primarily means a war of aggression for the purpose of seizing power, and converting non-Muslims to Islam?

Answer: 1. The Quran says: "God said: O'Jesus, Verily I shall cause thee to die and shall exalt thee unto Me (III/55); and: "God exalted him unto Himself" (IV/158).

These Quranic verses do not mean necessarily raising or elevating the body of the Prophet Isa, but his soul, as of any human being. However, Muhammad Asad in The Message of the Quran prefers to understand elevating in the Quranic text as honouring or exalting. He refers to the Quranic verse about another Prophet, Idris "Behold he was a man of truth, Prophet whom We exalted unto a lofty station" (IXX/57), as well as he referred to Tafsir-al-Manar by Muhammad Abdu and Rashid Rida.

2). The Quran Says, "(Mariam Mary) said: 'O my Sustainer! How can I have a son when no man has ever touched me,' (The angel) answered: 'Thus it is, God creates what He wills, when He wills a thing to be, He but says unto it: Be, and it is,' (III/47; see also IXX/20-21).

As Muhammad Asad puts it clearly in The Message of the Quran: "since neither the Quran nor any authentic tradition tells us anything about

the chain of causes and effects (asbab) which God's decree 'Be' was to bring into being, all speculation as to the 'how' of this event must remain beyond the scope of a Quranic commentary.'

3) *Jihad does not mean in any case a war of aggression of aim to seize power; it is to defend Muslims against aggression and oppression and to secure the freedom of belief:*

"And fight in God's cause against those who wage war against you, but do not commit aggression, for verily God does not love aggressors. But if they desist-behold, God is much forgiving, the dispenser of Grace. Hence fight against them until there is no more oppression, and belief is decided freely towards God, but if they desist then all hostility shall cease save against those who (wilfully) do wrong" (11/190-192).

Islam cares that the freedom of belief is secured, and that anyone can embrace the religion which he is convinced of, whether he chooses to be Muslim or not.

We welcome the views expressed by the Editor-in-chief of the most influential Magazine "ARABIA" which are identical with those held and preached by the Ahmadiyya Jamaat. It is indeed a bold step taken by the Editor to have spoken the truth on such a controversial issue.

* * * * *

Mr. Mansoor A. Shah of London attended the 91st Annual gathering of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, at Rabwah held on 26th, 27th and 28th December, 1983. We produce hereunder a report of the Gathering prepared by him for the magazine:

Each Annual Gathering of the world-wide Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam begins and ends with success and the story of the Ninety-first Jalsa Salanah, which attracted more than three hundred thousand participants from all over the world, is no different.

Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV inaugurated the Annual Gathering with his keynote address. He stated:

When we look around this world, we observe that the East hates the West and the North despises the South. Nations and peoples of the world hate each other; this hatred which is ablaze in people's hearts may become the cause of a world war and destruction of human beings. What is even more surprising is that so deep runs this hatred that those who invite others to God Almighty solely for His sake have become a victim of this hatred. No matter how much this fire of hatred is fanned, it would have no

influence on our patience and love. If our bodies are rend into pieces and our bones ground to ash and that dust hurled into rivers, even then each atom of that ash would continue in prayers for our enemies before disintegrating. Those who call others unto Allah and His Messenger have neither been afraid of others before nor would they now be afraid because the God of the Heavens procures peace and safety for such people. Never has hatred triumphed over love. I give my community the glad tidings that you remain within His protection. We are the servants of Muhammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and his servants have never been afraid of hatred or threats.

Huzur added: Today, from east to west, Muslims are at arms or logg-heads with each other: what is most painful is that all this is being done in the name of God. Thus, today, we should pray earnestly for Lebanon and Palestine; for Egypt and Yemen; for Saudi Arabia and Iran; for Iraq and Afghanistan and for Pakistan in particular because they deserve our prayers. I spend my nights in anguish at their pitiful state and the cruelties inflicted on the Palestinians – pray most prevently for them. May God Almighty grant all our brethren the sight to perceive their Creator.

This was a most inspiring address, and was, naturally, punctuated with slogan exhorting the Glory and Greatness of Allah.

SECOND DAY:

Huzur's second address was to the Ladies section and was relayed simultaneously to the men's section. Based extensively on the traditions of the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, it was about the fragility of a women's nature and the rights bestowed on her by Islam. Such rights continue throughout life both when a women is in the prime of her youth and in old age. A better exposition of women's rights I have yet to hear and no doubt readers will be treated to a full text of this address.

In his third address, he presented an annual review of the remarkable progress made by the community both in Pakistan and in the foreign countries in spheres ranging from finance, education, publications, medical care, architecture, preaching and propagation.

In this review, one must not forget the rest of the speakers. These included the following:

1. Sahibzada Mirza Anas Ahmad
2. Hafiz Muza'ffar Ahmad
3. Masaud Ahmad Jhelmi

4. Sultan Mahmud Anwar
5. Maulvi Abdus Salam Tahir
6. Maulana Dost Muhammad Shahid
7. Mirza Abdul Haq Advocate
8. Maulana Muhammad Shafi Ashraf
9. Mujibur Rahman Advocate
10. _Ghulam Bari Saif

Each one of these speakers gave an excellent expression of their knowledge. The manner in which the subject was presented to the audience would linger long in their memory. The ladies too had their own independent programme. The English and Indonesian interpreters translated simultaneously the speeches for those who could not understand the speeches. Two VCR cameras preserved this historical Jalsa. An excellent public address system ensured that not a word get lost to any ear. In the evening the foreign guests were treated to an array of speeches in fifty different languages. The bazaars were agog with the hustle bustle of the people and the endless shops of cassette-players replaying Huzur's speeches within a few minutes of his last words. I guess that if I told you that I witnessed a traffic jam stretching a mile in Rabwah, that is saying something. But, remember, this came about in spite of the fact that, most people walked on foot.

Beneath all this success lay the experienced machinery of Ahmadi volunteers who worked around the clock throughout the duration of the convention: providing food and accommodation to the several hundreds of thousands of guests, directing the endless streams of people in orderly lines around the dusty streets of Rabwah and generally ensuring a smooth flow of events.

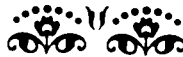
FINAL ADDRESS

Huzur's final address condensed the second part of the theme he had picked in the Annual Jalsa last year. For more than three and a half hours he kept the audience rivetted to every word of his exegesis on the Holy Quran till, out of consideration for the patience of the participants and the fading light of the evening, he brought the subject to a close with silent prayers. The theme thus concentrated on the following verses of the Holy Quran:

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

Huzur extended the all-embracing concept of justice to ones belief, worship—prayers, the pilgrimage, etc, commencing first with the unparalleled freedom of conscience granted by the Islamic charter and ending with the administration of justice right down to the admissibility of evidence. He quoted numerous verses and traditions of the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and anecdotes replete in the history of Ahmadiyyat which show how those who sacrificed everything for the sake of Allah's pleasure attained nearness to God Almighty. Huzur invited the audience to be ever-ready to sacrifice their blood, property and honour because there was no one else who could champion the all pervading concept of justice that God demands of man. He charged the community to ensure that in their relationship with the rest of God's creation, they will never let any material object influence their decision and that they will always render true justice in accordance with God Almighty's covenants and the high standard set by the Holy Prophet, peace and blessing be on him.

That then is but a poor summary of the Annual Gathering whose waves lashed on my heart as if I was immersed in a torrid ocean. I was by no means alone in sharing this awe-inspiring experience. A great multitude of people, a grand spectacle of humanity joined on one platform under God's emblem of Unity, a far outcry to the first Annual Gathering ninety years ago when only a handful attended, made us believe that it must be truth that has united us together. The footnote to the conference therefore belongs to Huzur who summed up the feeling of the Centre thus depart now but return a thousand times!



THE PROMISED MESSIAH SAYS ABOUT THE HOLY PROPHET, PEACE BE ON HIM

The life of the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, was a life of grand success. In his high moral qualities, his spiritual power, his high resolve, the excellence and perfection of his teaching, his perfect example and the acceptance of his prayers, in short, in every aspect of his life, he exhibited such bright signs that even a person of low intelligence, provided he is not inspired by unreasonable rancour and enmity, is forced to confess that he was a perfect example of manifestation of Divine qualities and was a perfect man (Al-Hakam, 10 April 1902, p. 5).

THE BACKGROUNDS AND STREAMS OF INFLUENCES FORMING CHRISTIANITY

BY
SYED BARKAT AHMAD

The questions discussed in this essay have been debated actuely, for centuries past, by theologians and philosophers. In taking them up, the present writer is therefore likely to fall into errors that will seem elementary to his readers. He will certainly be treading on ground that is familiar and well-worn to them. He ventures, nevertheless, on this inquiry in the hope that it may be of some interest to theologians to see how these old theological questions are approached by a historian. In any case, theologians may perhaps find amusement in watching an unwary historian floundering in well-known and minutely charted theological morasses.

Arnold J. Toynbee,
Civilization on Trial

The great philosophical poet of Rome, Lucretius, declares that nothing can spring from nothing. It is inconceivable for a historian of religion that Christianity or Islam, like another Minerva, can spring full-armed from the head of Jove - or in other words they can be entirely of divine and not of human authorship. In fact a revealed religion is not a product of human imagination. If religion is belief binding the spiritual nature of man to a supernatural being then human intellect alone cannot lead man to his Creator. What the founders of religions have taught has always been contrary to all contemporary trends.

If the teachings of Jesus had been in line with the tendencies of his times, it could be said that he only gave expression to those tendencies. Instead, what he taught was very different from anything he found current. How out of place the sermon on the Mount and Jesus' message of forgiveness must have appeared to the Jews suffering under the tyranny of Roman soldiers?

To be precise, therefore, we shall deal in this paper with the backgrounds and streams of influence forming the interpretation of Christianity.

THE BEGINNINGS

The capital of Sumerien Empire, the ancient city of Ur was attacked and destroyed by the Elamite hordes in 1960 B.C. Among those who escaped the cataclysm was the Aramean nomadic family of Terah. Most

probably on his way to southern Canaan Terah died in Haran. His son Abram, who succeeded him, broke with the religion of his father, which in all probability included the moon-god, Sin, the chief deity at both Ur and Haran. Abram turned to the service of one God, who was essentially an ethical God to whom the doing of justice and righteousness was of supreme concern. The Old Testament does not tell us how Abram first arrived at this conception of 'ethical monotheism'. Judaism arose out of the religion of Abram. It developed through law givers, priests and prophets amid disasters, deportations and persecutions. It was under the tolerance of the Persian monarchs that the Palestinian Jews built a new temple at Jerusalem which became the centre not only of the Jewish population of Palestine but also for the thousands of Jews scattered in Western Asia and Mediterranean Basin.

THE HELLENISTIC CIVILISATION

Persian rule came to an end in 333 B.C. when the all conquering Macedonian, Alexander the Great, took possession of Palestine. Alexander was no ordinary conqueror. He had a higher aim; it was to bestow the gifts of Greek culture — its arts and philosophies, its delicacies and graces upon the conquered people.

A disciple of Aristotle, who aimed at the hellenisation of Asia, Alexander was partial to the Babylonian civilization, and his desire to resuscitate Babylon and make it the centre of a mightier and more complete civilization, led him to discourage all creeds and faiths which militated with this aim. Under the Seleucidae, whose religion was a mixture of Chaldaeo — Hellenism, the process of denationalisation was enforced with full vigour. Antiochus Epiphanes cruelly persecuted the Jews and Zoroastrians, both were placed under the ban and ostracised.

The East provided its conqueror with several cults. The two world-influences came from Babylon and Egypt, Syria and Anatolia exercised only local influence.

In Egypt Ptolemy Soter, probably the most far-sighted of Alexander's generals, tried to fuse the Egyptians and Greeks into a homogeneous nation by the unifying bonds of a common religion and worship. The Greeks worshipped Zeus, Demeter and Apollo or Dionysus; the Egyptians, Osiris, Isis and Horus.

With these oriental cults there was also a simultaneous influx of mystery-religions. As Tarn puts it the universal basis of these religions was that one sought *soteria*, 'salvation', "by personal union with a saviour god who had himself died and risen again; to employ the well-known Orphic

phrase, one ceased to be a worshipper, a rod-bearer, and became a Bacchus... you were as the god himself."¹

To quote Tarn again "these religions brought to the aspirant a new sense of sin, a new conception of holiness, and the rite of initiation, culminating in the knowledge that you were saved, was undoubtedly an intense emotional experience."²

The Greek faith revolved round the Passion and Resurrection of Dionysus; the Egyptian in the Passion and Resurrection of Horus, the Son. Since the main idea was maintained a change in mere names was not important. Thus was born the great cult of Serapeum. Serapis took the place of Zeus among the Greeks, of Osiris among the Egyptians.

Of all the mystery religions which invaded the Hellenistic world the most important was the triad of Isis, Sarapis and Anubis. Among these three Isis was the greatest. Her cult seems to have produced a living and spiritual type of piety. To the ordinary decent woman the main facts of life were that she was wife and mother. Isis was both; she had been wife and the Mother goddess.

The worship of Isis seized at once the fancy of the Roman people. The passionate grief at the suffering and death of Osiris-Horus, the joy at his resurrection appealed vividly both to the populace and the cultivated classes of Rome.

But the Roman soldiers, in spite of Isis' power on their emotions, held in special favour the more virile cult of Mythra, with all its mystical rites, its doctrine of atonement and its insistence on the direct touch of its God with humanity.

Stoa was the philosophy of the Hellenistic world. It took under its shield both popular and astral religions together with a revived Platonism which was the distinguishing philosophy of the earlier Roman empire. With the decline of the City State, the Greek view of life had undergone a modification; a man was no longer merely a part of his city, he was an individual and as such needed new guidance. The founder of the Stoa, Zeno of Citium, "dreamt of a world which should no longer be separate states, but one great City under one divine law, where all were citizens and members one of another, bound together, not by human laws, but by their own willing

1. W.W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilisation*, (New York: The World Publishing Co., 1964) p. 354.

2. *Ibid.*

consent”.¹ This Great City of Universe was ruled by one Supreme Power whom the Stoics envisaged under many aspects and names — Destiny, Zeus, providence, the Universal Law, Nature. But the Stoic Destiny differed from the terrible Babylonian Fate, for it was all-wise, and that which it decreed for men was best for them. It was indeed God, who made the laws which ruled it and He too obeyed the law He had created. He was a God of moral attributes and in the hands of religious Cleanthes. He is even a merciful God. But everything was determined; and here the Stoics encountered the usual difficulty. Then there was another difficulty. As all men were citizens of one City, all ought to be equal, but in fact they differed in character, ability and circumstances.

The Stoics could not admit either free-will or inequality and yet they had to accept both. So they went back to the root principle of reason, the Logos, which imparts form to matter. The Logos is conceived as breath which passes through all things, giving unity to the whole. It is ‘air in motion’, ‘fiery reason’ or Form—imparting fire’ permeating the universe and giving it articulation. It is the spark of the divine Fire, but the body is clay, therefore the body matters nothing. “Zeno said that all that had to do with the body — Strength and weakness, sickness and health, wealth and poverty — was matter of indifference; and this, in theory, remained their attitude throughout. The Stoic sage, the Wise Man, would neglect such things, and turn only to the things of the soul. But these were, or could be, the same for all men; the slave in the silver mines, brutalised in body, might still in his soul follow after Wisdom and be the peer of the philosopher or the saint. Men then *were* equal after all, for all, if they wished, could be equal in their souls; in that realm the beggar might be king.”²

Through Wisdom the Stoics also solved Determinism. Man had free-will, but it was his *duty* so to employ it as to approximate to the Divine Will. In proportion to his attainment of wisdom, he would recognise that the way marked out for him was the right way. The problem of happiness was also solved alongwith. Unhappiness arose from wanting something one had not got or could not get. The way to be happy, therefore, was to want what one got, that is, to go in accord with the Divine will.

Virtue was the central point of Stoic ethics. The Supreme Power is not only all-wise but all virtuous; what it does is best. Virtue is essential if one wants to reach harmony with the Supreme Power. Virtue is happiness and its own award.

1. W.W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilisation*, p. 79.

2. W.W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilisation*, pp. 332, 333.

At first Zeno said that all that was not absolute virtue was vice, but since this rule was unworkable he modified it by granting a middle course, dividing things to be preferred and things to be rejected, the Stoic being bound to choose the former. But on one point Zeno was uncompromising; the intention to do evil was equivalent to doing it.

Stoicism's first postulate was that it was itself a moral system. It was in fact as much a religion as a philosophy, and a virile one. Man could get into harmony with wisdom and virtue, and in both these matters progress was possible; "the Stoic was thus led to examine the progress he was making, and the idea arose of conscious moral growth. Moreover the Supreme Power had had forethought for men and they had an aid on the path; there now appeared in philosophy the conception, heretofore a popular one, of conscience. Conscience and Duty were the cornerstones of Stoic ethics. Strength was needed to despise the things of the body, and on strong natures it acted as a tonic; the true Stoic, whatever else he was, was captain of his soul, or, in their phrase, *autarkes*, sufficient to himself. And he was master of his fate; fate could not hurt him, for what it brought him was what he would have chosen. But to all, strong and weak, it had a message, its insistence on the things of soul. Whatever the world did to you, in one sphere the world had no power; you could withdraw into your own soul and there find peace; for none could harm you *there* but yourself."¹

Bultmann puts it in another way. "The Stoic believes that it is possible to escape from his involvement in time. By detaching himself from the world he detaches himself from time. The essential part of man is the Logos, and the Logos is timeless. So the Stoic concentrates exclusively upon his Logos being, thus rising surperior to all obligations and denying himself any future. But in thus repudiating the future, he deprives the present and the past of their temporal character as well. His present is unreal, for the essence of the present is that it is the moment of decision for the future. The only decision he has to make has been anticipated already. Of course, that decision must be maintained, which means that it must be constantly renewed."²

Two vital things, however, were missing from the Hellenistic religions; immortality and love. Though Stoics gave the souls of the virtuous a limited survival, to Hellenism generally immortality was only for certain benefactors of their kind or the initiates in some mystery-religion; it was not for the mass of men. None of the Hellenistic creeds was based on love and humanity; none had any passage for the poor, the wretched and the sinner.

1. W.W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilisation*, pp. 334, 335.

2. Rudolf Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting*, (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1956), p. 144. —

HELLENISM AND JUDAISM

But the Jews, by and large, remained unaffected by the Hellenistic influence. They were strong enough to resist the impact of the victorious cultures. The opening declaration of the Book of the Covenant in stressing the redemptive acts of the Exodus¹ expresses the fundamental religious truth of God's activity in history. The prohibition of worshipping Nature, and its correlative, the making of 'graven images' established the distinctive character of Israel's monotheism, which marks it off with sharp definition from all other forms of god-belief – whether polytheistic or monotheistic. The gods of all other nations were identified with Nature, and like finite Nature could be given form; the God of Israel transcends every phenomenon, and any plastic or pictorial representation of Him is but a lie and an offence. Few Greeks in this Hellenistic period ever managed to learn very much about the Jews but they "did seize on two salient facts: the Jew made no images of the gods, and by command of his law giver Moses did not practice infanticide."²

Judaism rests on two basic doctrines, which are inextricably bound together, the belief in the One and Only God; (2) the election of Israel to be the bearers of this belief."³ "There is no assertion here of the Unity of God in the metaphysical sense. The idea of God as pure, simple being, belongs to the realm of philosophy rather than of religion. The negations are as emphatic and insistent as the affirmations. They negate all embodiments and motions of the Deity which, however refined and sublimated, veil the one and only God of Israel more than they reveal Him."⁴ All dualistic and polytheistic creeds are excluded, however much they may be explained away so as to make them compatible with the *one* God in the metaphysical sense. Such creeds are a direct denial of the *only* God who, from the beginning, had chosen Israel in His service."⁵

Holiness, according to Epstein, is the keynote of the Torah.⁶ Its Hebrew equivalent *Kadosh*, expresses a quality consisting negatively in 'separation *from*' and positively in 'dedication to'. It means that in its negative sense Israel should abstain from all that is opposed to the will of God, and in its positive sense dedicate itself to His Service. Fundamental

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1. *Exodus* 20. 22-26. All *Old Testament* references are to the Revised standard version.
 2. W.W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilization* p. 211.
 3. This age-long primal confession of faith is beautifully given in the Deuteronomic utterance, (6.4) known as the *Shema* ('Hear!') from the first word with which it begins.
 4. Isidore Epstein, *Judaism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 134.
 5. *Ibid*, 134.
 6. *Ibid*, Chapter 3, pp. 23, 31, deals with this subject.

Judea with his espoused wife, Mary, where she gave birth to her first born son Jesus.

We do not know how long Christ's public ministry lasted. Most probably, as the Fourth Gospel tells us, Christ preached for three years. The record of his brief ministry, which is now available to us, "originated in the seventies of the first century."¹ The earliest of the three Synoptic gospels was probably written by Mark, the disciple of Paul² shortly after A.D. 70. Although both Matthew and Luke have employed another source, Matthew "appears to have been subjected to more definite changes in the course of its history than the text of Mark, and there is the difficult question whether the sayings-passages, which are preserved either only in Matthew himself wrote."³ So right or wrong the earliest and the most reliable account of Christ's life and teaching that we have is written by a desciple of Paul.

Does the Markan Gospel together with the "Special Matthaean" and "special Lukan" material give us the essential and basic creed of Christianity, the Holy Trinity. This is not to deny that the Christian message, the Kerygma, is not pure description of a situation or events, but it is in continuity with the revelation of God's acting. This process of progressive revelation, however, can only uncover and interpret the person of Jesus but cannot go beyond the self-understanding of Jesus.

CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTENT OF THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

We shall, therefore, examine the Christological content of the synoptic tradition and then see in what background and under what streams of influences that Christological material has developed into the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity."⁴

In Mark, there is one passage where Jesus asserts that he is the Christ (Messiah) (14 : 62), two passages where he uses the term "the son" (as son of God) (12 : 6; 13 : 32) with ostensible reference to himself. Matthew has one such reference (11 : 25-27). There are some 33 sayings in which he uses "Son of man" as a self-designation. "This", according to Fuller, "suggests that if Jesus did impart any teaching about his own person in christological terms, such teaching was at best peripheral to his public ministry."⁵ But

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1. Hans Lietzmann, *A History of the Early Church*, trans. By Bertram Lee Woolf (New York: The World Publishing Co.) Vol. i, p. 47.
 2. *Ibid*, p. 46.
 3. *Ibid*, p. 46.
 4. Trinity is the fundamental dogma of Christianity, Other doctrines such as atonement, original sin, Baptism and eucharist are only subordinate, and therefore reasons of space i intend to deal only with the doctrine of Trinity.
 5. Reginald H, Fuller, *The Foundations of New Testament Christology*, (London: Lutterworth Press, 1965), p. 103.

this is all that we have and though significantly small, yet even if these sayings provide us with the essentials of the Trinity, the progressive revelation, will unveil the mystery.

Jesus was born of a Jewish mother, spoke Aramaic, the ecclesiastical language of the Jews of the eastern Diaspora, quoted from Old Testament and preached to the Jews. He “was not a Christian, but a Jew, and his preaching is couched in the thought forms and imagery of Judaism, even where it is critical of traditional Jewish piety”.¹ So it is only reasonable to seek the meanings of Jesus words in pre-Christian Judaism. This is what we shall do.

SON OF GOD

The king was adopted as the son of God in the Assyrian ideology. This form was taken up into the Yahwistic theology of Isreal.² In the Isreali tradition Isreal itself is spoken of as the son of Yahweh (Exod. 4 : 22 b - 23 a; *Hos.* 11 : i). The term son of God was later taken up into the Messianology of pre-Christian Judaism.³ “It meant”, as Fuller has pointed out, “not a metaphysical relationship, but adoption as God’s vice-gerent in his Kingdom.”⁴

Jesus did not alter the situation and did not reinterpret the term as a self-designation. In the parable of the vineyard (Mark 12 : 6) “son” stands for God’s final, eschatological mission. Or perhaps the Parable is an allegory of the church on the history of salvation.

Mark 13 : 32 also does not throw any new light. The word “son” is used here in Jesus’ disclaimer of knowledge of the date of the End.

The reference to “son” in Matthew 11 : 25-27 is, perhaps the most important. But all that it admits is a “Unique” Sonship to which Jesus was privileged to admit others through his ministry.

There is an interesting discussion on the subject by Hugh Anderson. He says, “criticism has found itself in the shaky position of having to buttress its arguments for the authenticity of the one (*Matthew* 11 : 27) by appeal to the other (*Mark* 13 : 32). There is indeed a certain pathos in the extreme desire of some critics to defend the authenticity of such a saying as *Matthew* 11 : 27, as though Christian faith could only continue to

1. Rudolf Bultman, *Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting*, pp. 71-72.
 2. See 2 *Sam.* 7 : 14 and the *Royal Psalm* 2 : 7.
 3. *The Dead Sea Scrolls* have provided evidence to support this view.
 4. Reginald H. Fuller, *The Foundations of New Testament Christology*, p. 32.

live out of the fact, the historically verified fact, of Jesus' own consciousness of Sonship to God."¹

SON OF MAN

The literature on the subject is voluminous. It may be safe to say that the evidence "indicates that the figure of the Son of man as the pre-existent divine agent of judgement and salvation was embedded in the pre-Christian Jewish apocalyptic tradition."² Taking the evidence as conclusive the question arises whether Jesus used the term in its biblical sense at all, or does it simply reflect current conversational usage in Aramaic in which it meant "man" or "one" such as the German "*man sagt*". In that case "The son of man has nowhere to lay his head" (*Matthew* 8 : 20) would either mean "I have nowhere to lay my head" or "one has nowhere to lay ones head." While Bultmann³ holds the view that Jesus used it in this sense Fuller⁴ has refuted it and insists that he used it in its pre-Christian Jewish apocalyptic tradition. If so, did Jesus use it as a self-designation? The answer is uncertain. Bultmann⁵ points out that there is an inner inconsistency within these sayings and since Jesus could have not been inconsistent as sometimes to distinguish between himself and the Son of man and sometime to equate himself with that figure, only the passages in which the distinction is drawn, or the identification not asserted, are authentic.⁶

The examination of the two most important titles, 'Son of God' and 'Son of man' has failed to recover Jesus' self-understanding and establish the Holy Trinity. There are five more titles, (i) Christ, (ii) Son of David, (iii) Servant, (iv) Kyrios and (v) Prophet. Jesus never used the term 'Servant' as self-designation, the examination of the rest would, though be interesting, not lead us to any positive results about his position in the Trinity or the Holy Trinity itself.

It may perhaps, be reasonable to infer that there is no mention of the Holy Trinity in the synoptic Gospels. This explains "Bultmann's apathy towards the historical Jesus and his repeated insistence that there is no good theological reason for trying to penetrate behind the kerygma. (and) for faith to fasten onto Jesus' conception of himself as Messiah or Son of Man as a historical fact is to lose faith's character of personal commitment."⁷

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1. *Jesus and Christian Origins. A commentary on Modern Viewpoints*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 158.
 2. Reginald H. Fuller, *The Foundations of New Testament Christology*, p. 42.
 3. *Rudolf Bultmann, Theology and the New Testament*, trans. By Kendrick Grobel (London: S.C.H. Press Ltd., 1959) V.I., p. 30.
 4. Reginald H. Fuller, *The Foundation of New Testament Christology*, p. 43.
 5. Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology V.I. p. 30.*
 6. Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology, V.I*, pp. 29 f.
 7. Hugh Anderson, *Jesus and Christian Origins*, p. 149 and 161.

POST EASTER DEVELOPMENT

The resurrection of Jesus, as Lietzmann has pointed out "does not come within the province of historical enquiry",¹ "It is a confession of faith and a proclamation, not a historical report."² But we are certain of one thing; that the disciples underwent an experience which gave them the conviction that God has raised their master from the dead. This much is essential to reconstruct the history. What is a historical fact is the speech, probably one of the earliest, attributed to Peter in *Acts* 3 : 12-26. "In language and conception", say Wright and Reginald, "it possesses a rugged antiquity which makes it difficult to believe that it is a free composition of the author of Luke-Acts."³ It presents Jesus as God's Servant, The last sentences of Peter's speech are significant. He said :

You are the heir of the prophets, you are within the covenant which God made with your fathers, when he said to Abraham, "And in your offspring all the families on earth shall find blessing." When God raised up his Servant, he sent him to you first, to bring you blessing by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.⁴

Peter's sermon is within the frame work of our examination of Jesus' self-understanding. In *Acts* 2 : 36 Peter proclaimed: "God has made this Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

Peter's christology was not at variance with the Jewish tradition. And so "the eschatological community did not split off from Judaism as though it were conscious of itself as a religious new society. In the eyes of their contemporaries they must have looked like a Jewish sect, and for the historian they appear in that light too."⁵

Our sources regarding the initial impact of Christianity on the Jewish people are rather meager. The early church probably drew its membership from most of the diverse elements⁶ within the first century. But Jews as a whole did not accept Jesus as Christ. Historians seem to make heavy weather of the controversy regarding the conversion of Gentiles. This, most probably, is the influence of New Testament writings e.g. Act XV. Side tracked by that controversy we tend to forget that the Jews rejected Jesus both before and after crucifixion. The Jewish "nation as a whole could

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1. Hans Lietzmann, *A History of the Early Church*, Vol. I, p. 62.
 2. G. Ernest Wright and Reginald H. Fuller, *The Book of the Acts of God*, (New York: Double Day & Co. Inc. 1960), p. 287.
 3. *Ibid.* p. 292.
 4. *Acts*, 3: 25-26. All New Testament references are from the *New English Bible*.
 5. Rudolf Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting*. p. 175.
 6. *Judgement regarding* the Qumran Community should wait till more positive historical evidence is available.

only see in such public ideals as those of Jesus, an abnormal and even dangerous phantasy; the majority, who followed the Pharisees and Scribes (Tannaim), the leader of the popular party in the nation, could on no account accept Jesus' teaching."¹

The Jewish rejection of Jesus was complete. What did Jesus do for the Jews asks a great Jewish scholar and then answer the question.

Had he come and said: Instead of religion alone, I give you here science and art as national possessions independent of religion; instead of scripture commentaries — learning and poetry, likewise independent of religion; instead of ceremonial laws — grown so oppressive as to crush the warmer religious feelings — a practical and theoretical secular culture, national and humanistic. He Jesus come with such a Gospel his name would have endured as a blessing among his nation.

But he did not come and enlarge his nations knowledge, and art, and culture, but to abolish even such culture as it possessed, bound up with religion, a culture which the Scribes and Pharisees (unlike the Prophets who though they ignored it in their wider political purview, did not annul it) seized upon and held tightly, as though it were the single anchor of safety left to the nation — a nation not minded to be only a religious community but a real nation, possessed of land, a state and authority in every sense.

Civil power! that is naught: "Give unto Caesar that which is Caesar's, and unto God that which is God's;" it is not worth while to fight against the political oppression of Rome, for the political freedom of the nation. What does it matter if you *do* pay tribute to Caesar, if only you are at peace with the Lord your God!²

These reasons for rejecting Jesus are given by a great nineteenth century Jewish scholar and are an eloquent commentary on the Jewish attitude towards life and religion. Jews in Jesus' time were no different and to all these reasons which Dr. Klausner has given now in our age Jesus had already replied: "It is written, that man shall not live by bread alone."³

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1. Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth, His Life, Times and Teaching*, (New York: MacMillan, 1925), p. 376. Chapter III of the Eighth Book deals in detail the reasons for this rejection.
 2. Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 373.
 3. *Luke 4:4*, Authorised version.

But it was Jesus' concept of God which was most repugnant to the Jews. Jesus taught his disciples that they must love their enemies as well as their friends, since their heavenly Father "makes his sun rise on good and bad alike, and sends the rain on the honest and the dishonest."¹ For the Jews it meant that God is not *absolute righteousness*, but the *good*² before whom is no evil. "He is not the God of justice, in spite of his Day of Judgment: in other words, *he is not the God of History.*"³ In the Jewish conception of God the wicked are not worthy of God's sun. To quote Klausner again,

God is good; but he also requires justice. He is "merciful and compassionate, long suffering and of great kindness::: but none the less, "He will by no means acquit the guilty" Jesus' idea of God is the very reverse.... such an idea of God Judaism could by no means accept."⁴ The poignancy of Luke's words now becomes apparent:

And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger: because there was no room for them in the inn.⁵

IN THE MANGER

It is not insignificant that we know very little of the mother-church in Judea. Most of the twelve disciples, who saw and heard Jesus, who in fact were personally trained by him, disappear from history. The story of the Aramaic-speaking Christians is still to be discovered and told.⁶ The exact relation between Peter, the leading apostle whom Jesus had specially entrusted the Church's mission, and 'the Lord's brother', James the Just, is obscure.

1. *Matthew*, 5 : 45.

2. *Mark*, 10 : 18, *Luke* 18 : 19.

3. Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 379.

4. *Ibid*, p. 380.

5. *Luke*, 2 : 7. Authorised version.

6. I have deliberately avoided all discussion of *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, the Essenic belief and such related matters. To distinguish between sound scholarship and propaganda is a specialist's job hence this hesitance. Having read J.C.L. Gibson's "From Qumran to Edessa" (*The annual of leeds University Oriental Society* Vol. V) one gets the feeling that Gibson is trying to say less than what he knows. There is no doubt, however, that when the Qumran manuscripts are properly recognised and evaluated in relation to the books in the edited and evaluated in relation to the books in the edited and expurgated *New Testament* some fundamental changes might take place in the history of Christian dogma. Any reference to Ebionites and the Syrian 'Nazarenes' has also been left out for reasons of space.

But "the decisive step was taken", Bultmann tells us, "when the good news of Jesus, crucified and risen, the coming judge and agent of redemption, was carried beyond the confines of Palestinian Judaism, and Christian congregations sprang up in the Graeco-Roman world".¹

Paul² was the right missionary to the Gentiles. It was he who had forced the issue of circumcision and the law. It was his achievement to vindicate the equal status of Gentile Christians and to win from the Jerusalem leaders the recognition for these converts as full members of the Church. "He understood this also to imply recognition of his own standing as the apostle of the Gentiles."³

Paul, which is the Roman cognomen of Saul, was born before 10 B.C. of Jewish parents. It is claimed that he had received the rabbinical training. It is not proved by independent sources and certainly not from the Jewish sources. That he was a disciple of Gamaliel I, the mild Hillelite is based on Acts 22 : 3. Though Paul claimed to be, "a Hebrew born and bred,"⁴ he seemed to be a Hellenist in thought and sentiment. His quotations from the Old Testament taken from the Greek version do not indicate familiarity with the original Hebrew text. The basic sources of his eschatological and theological system seem to be the Book of Wisdom, other Apocrypha and Philo.

While on the road to Damascus, commissioned with the task of exterminating the Christian movement, Paul had a vision in which Jesus appeared to him, saying, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"⁵ In consequence of this vision he became "my (Christ's) chosen instrument to bring my (Christ's) name before the nations⁶ and their kings, and before the people of Israel. I (Christ) myself will show him all that he must go through for my (Christ's) name's sake."⁷ Paul connected his conversion with his call to be an apostle to the Gentiles. "But then in his good pleasure God, who had set me apart from birth and called me through his grace, chose to reveal his Son to me and through me, in order that I might pre-claim him among the Gentiles:"⁸ Paul saw Jesus in a vision, "was caught

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1. Rudolf Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity*, p. 175.
 2. I have purposely avoided Johannine literature and the Fourth gospel's affinities on the Hellenistic side, namely Gnosticism. This subject requires another paper.
 3. Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church*, (harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967), p. 20.
 4. Philippians. 3 : 5 The Authorised version translation "A Hebrew of the Hebrew", to which the Jews seem to take exception, is obviously not correct.
 5. Acts 9:5, This may be compared with I. Samuel 26 : 18.
 6. Authorised version has used "Gentiles" instead of 'nations'.
 7. Acts, 9 : 15 : 16.
 8. Gal, 1 : 615.

up as far as the third heaven was caught up into Paradise, and heard words so secret that human lips may not repeat them.”¹ Evidently this picture of Jesus must have occupied a prominent place in his mind, just as Mithra did in the minds of Jewish mystics. It is surprising that immediately after his conversion he kept aloof for three years and avoided a meeting with other apostles who had seen Jesus in the flesh. It is only after three years of solitude in the Arabian desert that he decided to go to Jerusalem “Two points are noteworthy” about this visit, observes, Bruce,” the careful specification of the date and duration (15 days) of the visit, and the not less careful exclusion of the other apostles from participation in it. St. Paul wishes it to be understood that it was a private friendly visit to Peter alone, in which the other apostles had no concern. To be strictly accurate, he admits that he did see James, the Lord’s brother, but he alludes to the fact in such a manner as to suggest that the meeting was accidental and of no significance.”² There is no doubt that he wanted to emphasize not only “that both his gospel and his call came to him direct from the hand of God³, but also – and this is very important – he did not want to be obligated to them for his authority, in the eye-witness account of Jesus’ ministry. The eleven apostles, their witness and their experience were of no consequence to him. In the absence of any historical evidence, one may legitimately infer that his spiritual experience deepened in the solitude in the desert, his profound understanding of the Gospel which he received “by revelation”⁴ and strengthened by his learning was definitely at variance with the interpretation of the Eleven.⁵ Documents, oral reports and rituals, Niebuhr observes, can be understood differently in different contexts. These forms are carriers of revelation only as long as they are interpreted in a community of selves who share the same internal history out of which they came.⁶ The eleven apostles and Paul did not share the same internal history. He wanted to make a clean break from and Palestinian Christians, and from the “Christianity” of these Eleven – especially the “national” flavour of the Palestinian Christianity. That he did, though he encountered initial difficulties. Thus, after the martyrdom of Stephen, a new version of Christianity grew up. Its centre was Antioch, its language was Greek and it was distinct from the original Palestinian version. Paul got his opportunity when Barnabas went down to Tarsus to seek him, and brought him to Antioch to take part in the movement that had begun there.⁷

1. 2 Cor 12 : 24.

2. Alexander Balmain Bruce, *St. Paul's Conception of Christianity*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1984), p. 42.

3. *ibid.*

4. Gal, 1 : 12.

5. See reference to Weizsacker, *The Apostolic Age*, opp. 95-98 vide Alexander Balmain Bruce, *St. Paul's conception of Christianity*, p. 45.

6. H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Meaning of Revelation* (New York : Mac Millan, 1941), p. 31.

7. *Acts*, 11 : 25.

The use of Greek language made Paul's task easy. It left the door to the Hellenization of Christianity wide open. Greek conceptions inevitably entered, along with the Greek vocabulary, into the sphere of thought and the philosophical connotations of innumerable terms led to the philosophizing development of Christology. It was the Gentile Churches which produced all the four gospels. The Church leaders after the Apostles, as far as one can discern them, are all like Luke, Titus and Timothy – Greeks by race and culture.

BAPTISM OF HELLENISM

The Jews called for miracles and the Greeks looked for wisdom¹. Paul decided to present Christ in the form of personified wisdom mediating between God and World.² Baptism, which was a symbolic rite suggestive of purification took a new significance under the Greek mystery religions. The person that enters the water and emerges again undergoes an actual transformation, dying with Christ to the world of flesh and sin, and rising with him to the world of spirit, the new life of the resurrection.³

Equalization of the Son with the Father marks an innovation in the Pauline teaching.⁴ In a subsequent passage of the first letter of Paul to Corinthians⁵ the Holy Spirit is added. We have already noticed the idea of the Trinity in the Hellenistic gods. Paul's conception of the crucifixion of Jesus also can be traced to a mystic Union with the Deity by means of sacramental rites. Although Paul accepts the Palestinian Church view of the atoning power of the death of Jesus as the suffering Messiah⁶, the crucifixion of Jesus as the son of God assumes for him at the very beginning the character of a mystery revealed to him, "a stumbling-block to Jews and folly to Greeks"⁷. It is to him a cosmic act by which God becomes reconciled to Himself. The man-God idea was not new to the Hellenistic world. Only Hellenistic pantheism could give Paul the idea of the "Pleroma", "the fullness" of the Godhead dwelling in Christ.⁸

1. *1 Cor*, 1 : 22.

2. *1 Cor*, 8 : 6 St. Paul presents the theology of salvation under five main images; redemption, justification, reconciliation, victory and sacrifice. But it is in Paul's conception of the redemptive history that we have the real key to his life and thought.

3. *Rom*, 6 : 1-10.

4. *1 Cor*, 8 : 6.

5. *1 Cor*, 12 : 3.

6. *Rom*, 3 : 25.

7. *1 Cor*, 1 : 23.

8. *Col*, 2 : 9.

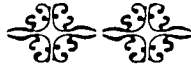
“The New Testament is overshadowed by the presence within it of no less than fourteen Pauline or near-Pauline writings. There is singularly little materials of a Hellenistic character earlier in the date than the Pauline writings and therefore indubitably free from Pauline influence.”¹ There is no doubt that Paul played a major role in Hellenising Christianity. But did he have an alternative? The Jews had rejected Christ and Paul could foresee that the small Jerusalem Church was about to collapse. It came in A.D. 66. The rebels in that insurrection massacred such Jewish Christians as they caught in Palestine. The massacres were repeated again during the rebellion of Bar-Cochoa. Outside Palestine, Jewish Christianity was to wither away during the next generation. The old Hellenistic Judaism, which had furnished great stalwarts to the Apostolic Church was to be reabsorbed in the new Pharisaic community to be closed to any outside influence. This explains the haste with which Paul rushes around the world. If the new Gospel was to survive, it must be rooted afresh in a new soil before its roots are cut by the destruction of the Jerusalem Church. “The astonishing ‘leap’ of Christianity from one world to the other between A.D. 50 and 60 was made only just in time.”²

By this transplantation Paul achieved two things he saved the “Gospel” and gave to the Hellenistic religions the two things which they lacked, immortality and Holy love. A great civilization unsuccessfully trying to work out its own salvation through its magnificent system of philosophy was given a soul, a revealed God, Christ was saved from a second crucifixion, but Christianity was crucified to save Greek civilization. Our great cumulative heritage of today, known as Western civilization is nothing but the evolution of the Greco-Roman civilization reborn “in Christ”.

The point philosophers like Radhakrishnan,³ theologians like Dom Gregory Dix,⁴ and historians of comparative religion like Farnell,⁵ miss is that the conflict is not between two cultures like Eastern and Western or Syriac and Greek but between the intuitive experiential religious insight, and faith in an authoritative revelation. The inward sentiment or psychic emotion of the different religions depend on the personal emotional relation of the individual towards the godhead. Has the God has discovered by a philosophical process in metaphysical terms or is it a personal experience as a result of revelation?

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1. C. Ernest Wright and Reginald H. Fuller, *The Book of the Acts of God*, p. 301.
 2. Dom Gregory Dix, *Jew and Greek, A study in the Primitive Church*, (Glasgow: Dacre Press, Adam and Charles Black, 1955), p. 55.
 3. S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1940).
 4. Dom Gregory Dix, *Jew and Greek*.
 5. Lewis R. Farnell, *Greece and babylone*, (Edinburgh T & T Clark, 1911).

God is not a product of human imagination. He reveals Himself. Once we lose contact with the living God, then and only then, different philosophical interpretations, cultural influences and mythologies begin to influence our understanding of Him. We are then left with ritual, theology and syllogistic hair-splitting. It is only incidental that while the Aryan mind – Greek or Hindu – reduces everything *into its* constituent elements and does not rest unless everything is analysed, the Syriac or Arab mind assumes and accepts on trust certain basic facts and is content with faith on things which transcend normal human experience.



Observations of the Promised Messiah, peace be on him

“Let the world exert itself and gather all its strength and its hosts. Let all Christian sovereigns and their governments combine, and let Europe and America join together, and let all wealthy and powerful nations combine and unit together to frustrate me in the achievement of this purpose, even then I state, in the name of God, that they would fail completely against me. In response to my prayers and plans God will frustrate all their projects and plans and machinations, and, through me and my disciples and followers, God will uphold the honour of Islam for the purpose of establishing the truth of this prophecy on account of the name of the Holy Prophet, peace be on him. He will not leave the world alone till Islam is established once more in the world in its full glory and till Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, peace be on him, is accepted as the living Prophet of the world.”

“If you will adhere to truth and faith, angels will instruct you, heavenly comfort will descend upon you, you will be helped by the Holy Spirit, God will be with you at every step and no one will be able to overcome you. Await the grace of God steadfastly. Listen to abuse and keep silent. Endure being beaten and be steadfast. As far as possible do not resist evil, so that you may be accounted acceptable in heaven.”

*THE PROMISED MESSIAH
(Tazkaratush Shahadatain)*

ISRAEL – PROPHETS AND PROPHECIES

True Muslims are the real heir to the Holy Land

BY
M.A. SHAH

Few subjects other than Israel arouse greater sentiment in the hearts of the Muslim world; yet it continues to be the only existence against which there is the greatest division of action amongst the Muslims. Indeed was it not for this disunity there would have been little to support its survival in the very heart of the Muslim world. Passionate articles written by Muslims about it are no more than water off a duck's back. As long as Muslims continue to adhere to the practice of mere lip profession of their faith the spirit and action will lag behind the words.

The purpose of this article is to review the history leading up to the creation of the Zionist state of Israel and some prophecies about it within the confines of brevity so that the reader may co-relate these to the present situation.

EARLY HISTORY

Strictly speaking, Jews are descendants or members of the Biblical tribe or people called Yehudah or Judah. The Hebrew adjective YEHUDI came to mean the followers of Judaism in general. The designation of 'Jews' as a race in the present context where they hail from Russia to USA is scientifically fallacious, and we have therefore resorted to the more accurate definition of the Holy Quran of the Beni-Israel or Israelites unless we refer to the intermingled Jewish people.

The Old Testament presents the Israelites as the descendants of Abram or Abraham (meaning 'the Father') who is said to have come from Mesopotamia into Palestine about 2000 B.C. and to have lived to the age of 175. Abraham, the Great Patriarch, was born at Ur of the Chaldees as the son of Terah. Abraham is the progenitor of the two great peoples, the Israelites and the Ishmaelites, who equally revere him.

When Abraham's wife, Sarah, heard the sad news of the impending destruction of Lot's people, she became fearful and the Almighty God hastened to give her the glad tidings, in the words of the Holy Quran:

And his wife was standing by and she too was frightened, whereupon We gave her glad tidings of the birth of Isaac, and, after Isaac, of Jacob.
(II : 72)

Jacob (or Yaqub) was born in canaan and acquired the name of Yisroel or Israel, and the Hebrews, traditionally his descendant, are called Beni-Israel, the Children of Israel. One of his sons was Joseph (Yusuf). Compelled by famine, Jacob (Israel) and his family descended to Egypt, where they were re-united with Joseph, who had been sold into slavery by his jealous brothers. Joseph subsequently achieved great success, least of all in the interpretation of dreams. In Egypt, the Beni-Israel soon were reduced to slavery.

With the advent of the law-giving prophet Moses and through him their escape from this condition, their exodus through the Sinai Desert north into Palestine with betrayal, etc. is well-known to the readers of this magazine and need not be repeated here. It is important, nonetheless, to remember that this Promised Land for the Jews was already inhabited and therefore their claim to it as a birth-right excludes the rightful descendants of those that were at least then settled in that land.

After Moses may be quoted Joshua, the Judges, and Saul who created their impact on the land. Saul was succeeded by David who invoked religious devotion and crushed the Philistine menace greatly extending the borders of the state in all directions. David's son Solomon, developed Jerusalem (first captured by David) as capital of the country and constructed the temple. Discontent and the devious tendencies, long apparent in the Israelites, finally manifested themselves and the ten northern tribes broke away under Jersboam to set up what came to be known as the Kingdom of Israel which never enjoyed political stability with intermittent wars and dynastic disension. The Southern Kingdom of Judah with its capital of Jerusalem had numerous prophets such as Isaiah, etc. By 586 B.C. the reborn empire of Babylania reduced the country to subjection, destroyed the Temple and deported a large population.

When the Baylonian Empire was overthrown by the Persian Cyrus the Great, some Israelite returned to reconstruct the Temple. Persian suzerainty was replaced by Hellenistic the Ptolemies, the Seleucids till the Hasmonean revolt and it finally surrendered to the Roman domination. It was then that the last prophet in the form of Jesus arrived to arrest the evils that enveloped the Israelite but little did they heed to his message. The proliferation of sects and periodic revolts led to a short-lived independence before the Romans returned to destroy Jerusalem and the Temple (AD70). The centre of Jewish life transferred to Galilee in the north. The rivalry of expanding christianity resulted in the decline of the Jewish population in Palestine and other centres of Jewish life outside the country (the Diaspora) began to grow in Egypt, Rome, the Balkans, Asia Minor, Gaul, Spain, Rhineland, etc. some of which had become established much earlier (one may quote Jesus's journey across Afghanistan and Kashmir in

search of the lost tribes of Israel).

THE ISHMAELITES

With the conquest of the land by the Muslims and the erection of the Aqsa Mosque on the site of the Temple, the Jews enjoyed much more freedom in Palestine than they had had ever before. A number of Jews became Muslims. During the times of the Holy Prophet in Medina, they had derided and conspired against him, and, the Holy Quran, on numerous occasions, reminds them of the favours bestowed on them by God Almighty and how, as a calous disregard for those favours, they had been afflicted with misfortune forever.

The Promised Land continued to be occupied by the righteous servants of God, the Muslims, apart from a brief period during the crusades, which achieved greater fame in the West than its impact in Palestine itself. Indeed, out in Europe, not only when crusades took place, or were in preparation, but on all occasions of religious and even political and social excitement the Jews were mercilessly attacked, preposterously accused and massacred. The Fourth Lateran Council of the Church of 1215 forbade Jews to have Christians in their service; compelled them to wear a distinguishing badge, in 1240 in Paris, the Talmud was condemned as blasphemous and vast numbers of manuscripts were publicly burned. Money-lending became their monopoly and economic jealousy began to add fuel to their sorry status leading to their expulsion from several countries and they were even accused of causing the plague. A stream of emigration led to new communities in Western Europe. With many of the Jews having formally or informally abandoned Judaism, new persecution based ostensibly on racial grounds culminating in the Dreyfus case involving a Jewish officer wrongly condemned for espionage led to the launching of the Zionist movement at the hands of a Viennese journalist, Theodor Herzl in 1895. This political wing was committed to the attainment of a permanent Jewish state in Palestine. It bore sharp contrast to their religious belief because it was supposed to be the Messiah who was to lead them back to Jerusalem.

With the growth of Nazism and the decline of Arab power in the Middle East, a wave of unabated immigration of unprecedented scale, somewhat equivalent to a colony of wasps trying to invade a bee-hive, and the holocaust, the Zionists became successful in riding on the sympathies following the holocaust, probably the most appalling disaster that had ever inflicted any people in history. In Iraq, Zionists emissaries threw bombs into Jewish homes to create a fear so that David Ben Gurion's dream of a partnership with Arab Jews may emerge and so that they may resettle in Israel.

THE STATE OF ISRAEL

Palestine had been the newly evolving hope that had kept alive the morale of the Jewish people. Arab opposition to the mischief of the Balfour Declaration was intense but a war-weary Great Britain with behind the doors American collaboration turned the solution of the problem over to the United Nations where, with Russian backing it adopted a report recommending the partition of mandatory Palestine on the West Bank of the Jordan into two independent states, one Arab and the other Jewish. The Jewish state came to be known as Israel under the first president Chaim Weizmann and Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, on 14 May 1948, some two thousand years since the Jews had last existed in the country in some force. Numerous battles since then has led to a greatly expanded State of Israel as it is known today. Just as the old borders of the Holy Land were imprecise, so is the urge to expand to more 'source' borders indefinite e.g. calling the West Bank by the Herut party 'Judea and Samaria'. After this brief history, we refer to some heavenly prophecies about Israel.

BIBLICAL PROPHECIES

In the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the swords, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel which have always been waste.

(Ezekiel 38 : 8)

And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that My fury shall come up in My face. Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel.

(Ezekiel: 38 : 18)

For evildoers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. The Lord knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be forever. For such as be blessed of Him shall inherit the earth: and they that be cursed of Him shall be cut; the righteous shall inherit the land and dwell therein forever.

(Psalms 37 : 9, 11, 18, 22, 29)

(The land is Canaan, the pledge of God's covenant – *Commentary on the Old Testament* published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge)

For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swore unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto

other gods, and serve them, and provoke Me, and break My covenant. And the Lord said unto him, this is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying I will give it unto thy seed.
(Deuteronomy 28 : II; 34 : 4)

And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee-thou shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey His voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers, possessed, and thou shalt possess it, and He will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.

(Deuteronomy 30 : 1-5)

The above refers to the conquest of Samaria by the Assyrians in 733 B.C. then, under Pharaoh Necho, the Egyptians ravaged Judah in 608 B.c. then Nebuchadnezzar laid waste Judah and killed, in cold blood, the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Through Cyrus and his successors, the Jews were restored to Jerusalem after wandering in the wilderness for about a century.

It may be noted that the Christians who do not fulfil Abraham's covenant are not included in this pledge of God. Only the meek and righteous servants of God are. Chapter 39 of Ezekiel describes the destruction of Gog upon the mountains of Israel: (Gog – Russia) – though the prophecy about Gog and Magog is particularly relevant to the present discussion, we shall avoid it for the moment and shall assume that everyone is aware of the two opposing camps that exist and how without American support for Israel it could barely last a few days.

QURANIC PROPHECIES

And after him We said to the children of Israel, 'Dwell ye in the land; and when the time of the promise of the latter days comes, We shall bring you together out of various peoples.
(17 : 105)

The promised land was that of Canaan. (Unlike Moses who never got the land in which he lived, the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, not only regained Mecca but his followers spread all over the world) the above verse clearly shows that in consequence of their misdeeds, the Jews would be visited with divine punishment, be banished from their homes, would live in exile till the time when the second of the two punishments would overtake the Muslims who would succeed the Jews and then the Jews will be gathered from the ends of the earth and brought back to their Holy

Land. The Jewish punishment first at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon who carried them away into captivity, and, the second time at the hands of Titus of Rome, is referred to in the Holy Quran in Ch. 17; 6-8 the 'promise of the latter days appears to refer to the Muslims who were to be punished twice: First during the Crusades when they temporarily lost the Holy Land and later when Baghdad fell to the armies of the tartars under Halaku Khan. That the Jews were to be brought back from out of various peoples is exactly what happened and God's promise, despite the protests was fulfilled. The clarity of this prophecy and its fulfilment to the letter is beyond dispute.

"We have recorded in the Book of David, after the exhortation that My righteous servants shall inherit the Land. Herein, surely, is a message for those who are devoted to worship." (21 : 106-7) Commenting upon this verse, the Promised Messiah stated :

This verse shows clearly that the 'Al-Ard' (the Land) here means *the countries of the Middle East including Palestine. It is the inheritance of the righteous and is in the possession of Muslims today.* God has used the word YARETHOHA (will inherit) and not YAMLEKOHA (will possess). This has clear indication to the effect that the Muslims are and will continue to remain its real heir and even if this land goes into the hands of someone else sometime, then this possession will be in the same way as the owner lends his property to the lessee. This is where the excellence of the divine prophecy lies. Since the Land of the Middle East is that of the Prophets, Allah does not want to desecrate it by allowing it to be inherited by non-Muslims. (Malfuzat Vol. IV p. 125)

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II has commented on this and the subsequent verses as follows:

1. The Muslims should learn a lesson from it. If they want Palestine back, then they should become righteous as the Holy Land (Palestine) is ultimately promised to the righteous.
2. It is a prophecy of the Quran that the Jews will be made to come back to the Holy Land from the ends of the earth in the latter days. There is however no cause for disappointment for the Muslims, their Prophet came as a Mercy for them and their relationship will never frustrate them.
3. Allah has already made Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, pray for the Muslims that He should cause Palestine to be returned to them and thus testify his truth. We are fully convinced that the Prophet's prayer will

never go unheard. The world shall see with its own eyes how it is fulfilled. Neither Russia nor America will be of any avail to Israel. (Tafseeri Sagheer p. 421)

The above verse more specifically refers to the prophesied conquest by Hazrat Umar and the peaceful establishment of the site of the Temple in Jerusalem to the worship of the One God and in its present context to the prophecy that the Jewish control over this land, the desecration of the Mosque built on the Temple site on several occasions, the resultant blood-shed of innocent by-standers, and the forced eviction of the Palestinian Arabs from their homeland by a people who had utter disregard to the Prophets of God is but a temporary phase, though God Almighty does not set a time limit on this occupation.

PROPHECIES OF THE HOLY PROPHET, PEACE BE UPON HIM

Numerous prophecies tell of the condition of the Muslims of the latter days; that they would display the qualities of the Jews. Its fulfilment is obvious when we observe around us how Muslim dominance in the economic sphere has led to money-lending, usury, and in the religious sense, the disregard to the teachings of God and the rejection of prophethood, in particular that of the Promised Messiah, where a large majority is awaiting the advent of a prophet from the skies, just as the Jews did at the time of Jesus. Abu Hurairah reports that he heard the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, state that before the Last Day comes a severe clash will occur between the Muslims and the Jews, as a result of which the Muslims will start killing the Jews. The Jews will hide themselves behind a stone or a tree, then that stone or tree will cry out: 'O Muslim, O Servant of Allah, here is a Jew hiding behind me, come and kill him', except that the gharqad tree shall not speak. (Sahih Muslim-Kitab at Fitn)

PROPHECY BY THE PROMISED MESSIAH

Continuing the prophecy about the third world catastrophe, the Promised Messiah states:

There will be a world catastrophe, the middle point of which will be the Middle East. (Tadhkira Vol. II, p. 15)

In yet another prophecy he states that the third conflict will arise all of a sudden and that it shall start from Sham (Syria) and that death shall reign from the skies. The importance of Middle Eastern oil, the nurturing of Israel with military and financial aid to coax it to sign peace treaties with the neighbours whose territories have been occupied and Syrian rejection of the Palestinians has made this part of the world a political hot-bed and

a mere spark could explode into an irretrievable war given the belligerent attitude of the two world powers.

COMMENTS BY THE SUCCESSORS
HAZRAT KHALIFATUL MASIH II

In the final conflict the Jews will again lose the power that they will recently have acquired and will again be reduced to the same sad state from which they had risen. (Communism and Democracy pp 30 - 31)

Palestine is very close to the last resort of our Master and Benefactor during whose lifetime the Jews, inspite of every sort of kind treatment, never left any stone unturned to oppose him with utter shamelessness and immodesty. Most of the battles broke out on their instigation. So it is not the question of Palestine alone. It is the question of Islam as a whole, and it is not the question of Jerusalem alone, it is the question of Mecca, the Holy city. It is the question of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) himself. We must try therefore, through our righteous deeds, sacrifices, unity and humble prayers, to shorten the period of this (first) prophecy to the minimum. (Al-Fazl 31.5.1948)

The land of Palestine shall remain permanently in the hands of righteous servants of God. So these righteous Servant i.e. the people of Muhammadan dispensation shall definitely enter this land. . . . this whole structure which is being installed there with the help of the U.N.O. and America will tumble to the ground at the hands of the Muslims, who empowered by divine help, will be able to rehabilitate the Muslims once again there. . . . Neither atom bombs and hydrogen bombs of America, nor Russia's help would be of any avail. It is the decree of God which must come to pass, however the world may resist. (Tafseer-i-Kabir Vol. IV, p. 576)

There is a third element which also at the present moment constitutes a grave threat to the very heart of Islam and that is the state of Israel. The prophecies indicate, however, that the state of Israel will gravitate towards Communism and that which the West may have mistakenly supposed and relied upon as a support will soon be shown to have grown into a menace. (Communism and Democracy p. 33)

In 1948, Hazrat Khalifatulmasih II delivered an address captioned **ALKUFRO MILLATUN WAHIDA** which received excellent reviews in the Arab press, e.g;

We have received a tract containing an address of Mirza Mahmud Ahmad delivered in Lahore in which he has called upon all Muslims to unite and to adopt concrete and effective measures to rescue Palestine

from the clutches of the Zionist criminals. He has also exhorted the people of Pakistan to render immediate assistance to the Palestinian Arabs. He has appealed to all Muslims reminding them of the directions of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) and arguing on the basis of the verses of the Holy Quran that they should organise themselves to resist the Zionist aggression which is being supported by the USA and by the USSR in pursuit of their own interest and purpose.

He has also drawn the attention of the Muslims to the necessity of discarding all thought of weakness and despair and of keeping before their eyes the responsibilities that lie upon their shoulders in the matter of striving of the strength and progress of Islam and the Muslims.

This is an excellent address and it is timely propoganda on the problems of Palestine and the situation which the Muslims are faced with. We pray to God Almighty that He may bring to fruition our pious desires and our good resolutions concerning our holy faith which are surging through our hearts.
(The Annahza 12 July 1948)

During these times, the services rendered by Muhammad Zafrulla Khan as the then Foreign Minister of Pakistan are beyond any parallel in history and the Arab world remains indebted to him since then.

HAZRAT KHALIFATUL MASIH III

He delivered his 'A Message of Peace and a Word of Warning' in London in 1967 during which he repeated the warnings of the Promised Messiah and showed the ways how a catastrophe could be avoided. He repeated this warning at the 1978 International Conference on the Deliverance of Jesus from the Cross held in London. In 1980, at a press conference at the Cafe Royal in Piccadilly in answer to a question whether he recognised the state of Israel he stated that he could not refuse to accept a fact of history that Israel exists. The only way to deal with Israel was for the Muslim world to unite. The unwarranted invasion by Israel into Lebanon and the endless bombardment of innocent citizens affected him deeply.

HAZRAT KHALIFATUL MASIH IV

Even prior to the election as a Khalifa, he had written a terse reply to an Urdu circulation, compiled under the direction of Maulana Sayed Muhammad Yusuf Bannauri, entitled 'From Rabwah to Tel Aviv' in which he ably answered the preposterous allegations connecting Zionism and Ahmadiyyat. His rejoinder proves that there is no such connection and he commends the service rendered by the Ahmadiyya Community to oppose the establishment of the Zionist state.

The stand of the Ahmadiyya Community which has always been given expression to very clearly by the Head of the Movement has throughout been that the Holy Land belongs to the Muslims of Palestine and that no one else is entitled to a single inch of it. The Ahmadiyya Community has throughout strongly opposed Zionist designs and the setting up of the state of Israel and has throughout clearly and openly supported the cause of the Arabs in respect of Palestine and the same is its attitude today namely that the Zionist state has no claims to legitimacy and should be brought to an end.

(From Rabwah to Tel Aviv pp. 20 - 21)

Being a Palestinian is no fun. Hounded out of one refuge to another; disowned by your neighbours; denied citizenship for an elusive identity; taking up arms when your brethren have let you down; unrecognised even as human beings by agencies fighting for human rights for others all over the world; stateless, homeless, pitiable, yet resolute – that is the plight of these people. In a constantly changing map of their land, how jitting therefore that they have at last found a spiritual leader, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV, whose heart throbs with their struggle who shares their sorrow, and most importantly, who not only prays fervently for their interest but urges an ever-growing community to do the same. Could these prayers be the antidote to the Israeli poison that has displayed so horrifically the weakest link of Muslim relationship – its disunity?

CONCLUSION

The betrayal of the Palestinian Arab leaving them alone to fight a guerilla warfare in the face of a well-equipped vendetta type army can only prolong the misery of the refugees kicked out of their home and hounded from neighbouring territories either by the ruling powers or the invaders. Till Muslims become Muslims first and stand united against Zionism the macabre drama is only going to assume worse trends and twists. Where the neighbours keep fighting each other, they can have little strength to face Israel. But God's promise will be fulfilled – when, only time can tell.

Golden deeds of Muslims

by RASHID AHMAD CHAUDHRI

The stories make compelling reading matter for both young and old. They give an insight to the simple lives led by the early Muslims and show how such people sacrificed their lives, property and honour for the sake of their faith and thus became popularly known as martyrs or heroes. The reader has been saved the trouble of sifting facts from myths in order to present the truth in its barest form: these are true stories.

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A PAGE FROM THE HISTORY OF AHMADIYYAT

The Rt Rev George Alfred Lefroy was Bishop of Lahore in the early years of this century. His attitude towards Islam might be gathered from the following incident recorded in the *Life and Letters of George Alfred Lefroy* by H.H. Montgomery (London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1920), where it is said:

“Archbishop Bensen made a speech at the annual meeting of the society for the Propagation of the Gospel in St. James’s Hall on 16 June 1892 in the course of which he said: ‘We know what the sins of Muhammedenism are, but do we not know what the sins of Europe and London are? No one can go into a Muhammeden place of worship without being struck with the evidence of sincerity, gravity, absorbedness and solemnity in the worshippers. ‘Commenting on this Lefroy said; ‘It must be with the extreme deference that I venture to dissent from the view of his Grace.’”

Bishop Lefroy knew Hebrew, Arabic and Persian and could speak with great facility in Urdu. He was fond of public speaking and often addressed meetings in the spirit of an evangelist. He was appointed Bishop of Lahore in 1899. During the spring and early summer of 1900 the Bishop delivered public addresses at different places in Lahore on the thesis that Jesus alone, out of all the prophets, was sinless and compared him with the other prophets, especially with the Holy Prophet of Islam, to the disadvantage of all the other prophets.

When Ahmad heard of these lectures, he wrote and published two leaflets on 25 May 1900 for distribution at the Bishop’s lecture which was due to be delivered the same afternoon. This was done and at the end of his address the Bishop was asked to comment on the subject matter of the leaflets. The Bishop excused himself on the plea that the points raised in the leaflets were new to him and that he had come to know of them for the first time. The leaflets dealt with the subjects on which the Bishop had spoken on earlier occasions. At the end of the second leaflet, Ahmad wrote that if the Bishop of Lahore was in earnest and was really interested in the truth, he should come forward and announce that he was prepared to hold a public discussion with Muslims on the topic whether Jesus or Muhammad was the greater Prophet in respect of knowledge, personal example and spiritual influence.

A large number of Muslims also addressed a letter to Bishop Lefroy inviting him to agree to a public discussion on five questions affecting the truth of Christianity and Islam with Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, over a period of five days. They set out the regulations for the

conduct of the meeting and appealed to the Rt Rev gentleman, in the name of Jesus, not to fail to provide an opportunity for the seekers after truth to come to a decision on the proposed questions after listening to the discussion.

The well-known English daily, the Pioneer, published from Allahabad, said in the course of its observations on the letter; 'The letter has a great many signatures, of which the first few names will be sufficient to indicate the widespread interest and expectation with which the Muhammadan community are looking forward to the encounter.'

"On 12 June 1900, the Bishop sent a reply to the letter from Simla in which he put forward a number of reasons or excuses why he could not comply with the request submitted to him in the letter. One of these was:

The Mirza Sahib, in venturing to call himself the Messiah, assumes, with no shadow of authority, that name by which we Christians are called and which we regard with profoundest reverence, and offers in my opinion a most grievous insult and dishonour to Him Whom I worship as my Lord and Master. How then can I possibly consent to meet him in a friendly way?"

A reasoned and courteous rejoinder was sent, on behalf of the signatories to the original letter, to the Bishop on 10 July 1900. In the course of it the writer pointed out:

Your Lordship has declined to meet Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in any friendly relationship for his having assumed a name which the Christians honour and worship as their Lord and Master. Had it been even as your Lordship thinks, it could not have been a good ground for hatred and the cessation of friendly relations, for the Holy Bible inculcates love towards enemies. Treatment of this nature towards an adversary cannot be expected from the followers of any religion, not to say anything of a Christian and especially of a Church dignitary, whose duty it is not only himself to act upon Matt. 5:44, but also to teach that doctrine to the laity and to preach it to the non-Christians. But I may assure you that Mirza Sahib does not assert that he is Jesus Christ in person, but one coming in that Prophet's spirit and character and preaching after his manner, as John came in the spirit and power of Elias. Moreover, the Muslims honour Jesus as a true and eminent prophet and the Mirza Sahib, being the foremost Muslim of his day, does so pre-eminently, whereas millions of people who do not profess the Christian or Muslim faith do not look upon him even as a prophet and thus offer the greatest affront to his dignity, and your lordship must often, I suppose, have come into contact with such persons. Yet, I do not think that your Lordship has ever expressed the same feeling of hatred towards

them as you have expressed towards Mirza Sahib in your letter.

In conclusion it was stated: When this matter was referred to the Mirza Sahib and he was asked whether, as your Lordship had declined to meet him in a friendly way, he too was disposed to entertain similar feelings towards your Lordship, he gave the following reply:

I do not look upon anyone in the world as my enemy. I hate not individuals but the false beliefs they entertain. As regards individuals, my feelings towards them are of the utmost sympathy and goodwill. How can I then regard anyone as my enemy who enjoys respectability among his co-religionists and is honoured for his position and learning? I love him though I do not like his doctrines, but my hatred towards these doctrines extends only so far as the attributes of God are ascribed to human beings, and human faults and weaknesses are ascribed to the Lord of the universe. I am not averse to meeting his Lordship in a friendly way, for it is possible that either party may reap some advantage from the other, as the seed of sincerity must bear fruit. It is the first requisite in the performance of a person's duties as a reformer or a preacher that he should receive those who hold views differing from his own in the most cordial and cheerful manner. In truth, I would not only be departing from my functions as a reformer, but dealing at the same time a death-blow to all moral laws, if I were to regard as my enemies persons who deserve compassion for having unfortunately fallen into error. Such a step on my part would only deprive a large majority of those noble and holy truths which it is my duty to preach to all.

"The Holy Quran says: "We have sent unto you a Prophet whose heart is full of sympathy for you, so much so that all your cares and anxieties grieve him in the same manner as if they were his own, and he is always anxious for your comfort and happiness" (9 : 128) Again it says: "Shalt thou, O Prophet, put an end to thy life out of grief that these people do not accept the truth?" (26 : 4). The last verse makes a reference to the true sacrifice of life which the prophets of God make for the reformation of the people. These are the verses upon which I act, and one can easily understand from this the nature of my feelings towards those who regard themselves as my enemies."

But nothing could induce his Lordship to change his mind. He wrote in reply on 12 July 1900: "I have received your letter of the 10th instant, but I have nothing to alter in, or add to, the reasons assigned in my former letter for declining to enter into a controversy with Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to which you invited me."

The comments of two impartial papers would give a fair idea of the

validity of the reasons put forward by Bishop Lefroy for declining the invitation addressed to him. The Indian Daily Telegraph of 19 June 1900 wrote as follows:

We reproduce on another page a most interesting religious challenge, from the school of Islam in this country which follows Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, to the Bishop of Lahore. It is interesting because it seems to be put forward in an earnest and sincere spirit. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is the Chief of Qadian, and according to the wording of the challenge, not only lays claim to the Promised Messiahship, but has made good that claim by strong and conclusive arguments, and has proved himself to be the Promised One whose appearance has been foretold in the Holy Quran and the Bible. It seems that the following of this somewhat remarkable personage numbers about thirty thousand in different parts of the world, and his friends and disciples are anxious that he should hold an elaborate and learned argument on the respective truth of Christianity and Islam with the Bishop of Lahore, whose lectures at that place have convinced the Muhammadans that he is unrivalled in religious learning in this country. His vast and practical knowledge, his acquaintance with Arabic, Persian and Urdu and his amicable and polished manners are also enumerated as further reasons why he should be asked to enter into a controversy with this Champion of Islam. The challenge throughout is worded in conciliatory terms and exhibits an evidently keen desire for a formal and set controversy on fair terms to both parties on the comparative merits and excellences of Christianity and Islam. The challengers, who are large in numbers and hail from all parts of India, hope by adjuring the Bishop in the name of Jesus Christ to gain his consent to a controversy.

We are of the opinion that the Bishop would do well to accept the challenge. To assume a superiority that cannot stoop to controversy would be a mistake, as the challengers, would be entitled from their point of view to conclude that the case being undefended went by default and to claim the victory. Also, the fact that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian is not the promised one whose appearance has been foretold in the Holy Quran and the Bible ought not to influence the learned Bishop towards a refusal to enter into an argument with him. This question is not to be discussed in the proposed controversy, but the Bishop may possibly convince his opponent of error if the challenge is accepted. The fact that the Muslims desire to put their Messiah against the Bishop is the highest compliment they could desire to pay to his learning. They wish to intimate that they recognize him as the first authority in India. Again, we do not see how the Bishop can plead that such an elaborate controversy would take up too much of his time. He should on no account lose an opportunity of refuting, silencing and convincing such opponents, especially where he is desired to prove which of the two religions, Christianity or Islam, can be called the

living faith; and of the teaching inculcated in the Holy Quran and the Bible, which is the more excellent and natural? We should like to see the challenge accepted because we think it would prove highly interesting.

On the Bishop's refusal the Indian Spectator commented as follows:

The Bishop of Lahore seems to have retired with more haste than dignity from a challenge which he had himself provoked. His Lordship, some time back, set before himself the task of proving to Muhammedan audiences that Christ was a true Messiah and the challenge was taken up by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian to whose claim of Messiahship we referred some time ago in these columns. Now Mirza Ahmad may, for aught we know, be a rank impostor, or he may really believe himself to be what he claims to be. In either case, we do not see why the Bishop should decline to argue with him. His Lordship speaks of Mirza Sahib as offering a grievous insult and dishonour to Christ by venturing to call himself the Messiah. The Jews of two thousand years ago crucified Christ for the self-same reason. They felt insulted by his venturing to call himself the Messiah. What is even more strange is the Bishop pointing to the fact of Mirza Ahmad's claims being treated with ridicule and contempt by an overwhelming majority of Punjab Muhammedans as conclusive proof of the falsity of those claims. When Pilate asked the assembled Jews whom would they like to be liberated on the day of the Passover, Christ or Barabbas, they unanimously voted for the impenitent thief. Did that prove that Christ's claim to Messiahship was unfounded? We are not among the followers of Mirza Ahmad and have no intention of upholding his claims in preference to those of Christ, but we object to the logic of the hustings being introduced in a discussion on religion. If the whole Muslim world would have acclaimed the Mirza, would the Rt Rev Prelate of Lahore have altered his opinion of his mission? Religious beliefs in his country are in a state of dissolution just now. It behoves those who are anxious to see them crystallized round the truth not to employ arguments which are not of the purest temper.

(Taken from "Ahmadiyyat, the Renaissance of Islam" by Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan.)

*The main part of wisdom after religion is love for men—
doing good to every one, pious or sinner. The Holy Prophet*

JESUS DID NOT DIE ON THE CROSS

BY

DR. AZIZ A. CHAUDHRI

It is one of basic beliefs of Christianity that Jesus had died on the cross, and on the third day was resurrected from dead. Is there any historical basis for this? No doubt all the four gospels state that Jesus had died on the cross. But they state it as more of belief rather than a fact based upon their observation as an eyewitness account. All the disciples left Jesus and fled at the time of his arrest. They were probably afraid for their own lives. None were present at the place of crucifixion or in the tomb at the time of supposed resurrection. It is a significant fact that none of the authors of gospels give an eyewitness account of death of Jesus on cross or his subsequent resurrection.

All the gospels were written at a time when the original teachings and religion of Jesus had undergone major changes. A new christology had been evolved born out of despair of apparent failure of mission of Jesus; and chief architect of which was St. Paul. Pauline theology with its emphasis on death of Jesus had held sway and had gradually submerged all opposition to its views by early Christian community. Contrary to teachings of Jesus, St. Paul began to preach to Gentiles and declared law a curse as Gentile world was not ready to submit the death on the third day; was adopted as it was attractive to Greek and Roman world for its obvious resemblance to their mythology. Thus the founder of Christian dogmas was St. Paul and not Jesus Christ.

Jesus did not want to die on the cross as his mission had not been completed. This is obvious from his fervent prayers. Jews had rejected him and did not accept him as a prophet and a Messiah. They considered him a pretender and wanted to prove him a false prophet and "an accursed of God" by killing him on the cross as it was their belief that the death on the cross was an accursed one (Deut 21 : 23). To Jews nothing was more abhorrent than a crucified Messiah.

Almighty God who had bestowed prophethood on Jesus, in His mercy and grace saved Jesus from such a disgraceful end. He brought about such circumstances that Jesus did not die on the cross. He was probably mistaken as dead while he was unconscious. He was handed over to his secret disciples who placed him in the large airy sepulchre where Jesus recovered from fainting and shock. His wounds were treated and he regained sufficient strength to leave that tomb on the third day. Credulous imagination build up the theory and legend of resurrection and his physical ascension to heaven. Physical resurrection and ascension involves three things. First, that

actually dead persons come back to life. Second, that physical body was lifted up in the sky and thirdly, that if you are lifted up in the sky or space you reach a heaven where physical bodies are kept. All this is impossible physically. Whole legend or theory is irrational.

In spite of belief that Jesus had died on the cross, there is enough material in the gospels which supports the fact that Jesus did not die on the cross. Let us now consider this material in the gospels.

A SIGN AND A PROPHECY

In referring to the wicked generation opposed to him and to their demand for a sign, Jesus said "But no sign shall be given to it except the sign of prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of whale, so will the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of Earth. (Math. 12:30-40). Prophet Jonah was thrown into the sea from a ship and was swallowed by a whale. He survived in the belly of whale for a few days probably due to large air mass in her stomach till he was vomited out. Jesus made a prophesy that like Jonah prophet he will survive the ordeal facing him. And like Jonah, he will spend time in the sepulchre but will remain alive like him and eventually will come out alive. If Jesus had died on the cross and entered sepulchre as dead what could be the resemblance between a dead man and one who was alive? Moreover, the people on the ship thought that they had killed him by throwing him into the sea; similarly, enemies of Jesus thought that they had killed Jesus on the cross. However the matter remained dubious to them.

PRAYER IN GETHESMANE

Jesus knew by God given knowledge through revelation that his arrest was imminent and that he will be put on the cross. When this time drew nearer, Jesus went to Gethesmane with his disciples and offered fervent prayers to be saved from death on the cross. We read: And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, "My Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." (Math. 26 : 39) We read in Luke: An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. In great anguish he prayed even more fervently; his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. (Luke 22 : 23-44) If Jesus had known that his mission in life was to redeem mankind of its sins by dying on the cross and that this was his destiny, why would he offer prayer to be saved from such an end? Fact is that Jesus had no knowledge of such a destiny. He did not want to die on the cross as this would have proven to Jews that he was a false prophet and an accursed one. His mission was not yet complete. So, he fell on the ground and in great anguish offered fervent prayers that if it be possible he be saved from the death on the cross.

Jesus was a beloved one of God. Will not God accept his prayers? In the Sermon on the Mount, he had said: "Would any of you who are fathers give your son a stone when he asks for bread? Or would you give him a snake when he asks for a fish? (Math. 7 : 9-10). It is inconceivable that God would not hear his prayers and let him die a premature and disgraceful death at the hands of his enemies. God in his grace and mercy always delivers his dear ones from their enemies and thus shows his signs and power.

On the cross in pain and anguish and momentary despair, Jesus cried out: And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli lema, Sabachthani" that is, "My God, my God why have Thou forsaken me?" This was a heart rendering cry for help of God. God did not abandon him. Divine help came. God brought about such circumstances that Jesus was saved from death on the cross. His prayers were heard.

ATTITUDE OF PONTIUS PILATE

We learn from all the accounts in the gospels that Pontius Pilate was extremely sympathetic to Jesus. After he had questioned Jesus he did not find him guilty. He was convinced of his innocence. We read in Luke, Pilate said: "Now I have examined him here in your presence and I have not found him guilty of any crimes you accuse him of. Nor did Herod find him guilty, for he sent him back to us. There is nothing this man has done to deserve death. So I will have him whipped and let him go."

(Luke 23 : 14-16)

Pilate wanted to free him but he gave in to pressure from Jews who claimed that Jesus considered himself a King of the Jews and was a rebel. They reminded Pilate that if he freed Jesus, he would prove himself to be no friend of Caesar. Pilate agreed to sentence of crucifixion against his wishes. He was afraid that a riot may break out if he freed Jesus. He washed his hands in a symbolic fashion saying that he was not responsible for the death of Jesus.

(Math 27 : 29)

While Pilate was sitting in judgement hall, his wife sent him a message: "Have nothing to do with that innocent man because in a dream last night I suffered much on account of him." (Math. 27 : 19). The purpose of this dream and message to Pilate was not to kill Jesus. When Joseph was shown in a dream that he should take baby Jesus to Egypt the purpose was to save Jesus from being killed by Herod. Similarly, the purpose of this true dream of Pilate's wife was to save Jesus from death on cross. In spite of agreeing to crucifixion of Jesus, Pilate must have made efforts in secret designed to save Jesus from death. Following points should be noted.

1. Pilate appointed Friday as the day of trial knowing full well that crucified persons could not be left on cross after sunset as it was the start of Jewish sabbath. And he knew that a few hours on the cross during the day will not kill Jesus.
2. The centurian or the army officer which Pilate appointed was sympathetic to Jesus. He believed that Jesus was true in his claims as he said at the time of earthquake, "He really was son of God". (Math. 27 : 59)
3. Jesus's legs were not broken as that of bandits were to kill them. A few hours on cross were not sufficient to kill the crucified. Bandits were still alive. It is stated in the gospels that they did not break Jesus's legs as they thought he was already dead. Either they were mistaken in this conclusion or the other possibility is that this was an excuse to spare Jesus's life on instructions from Pilate.
4. Pilate readily agreed to hand his body to his secret disciple Joseph of Arimathea. He handed over Jesus to his friends and well wishers and not to his enemies. Probably he was told secretly that Jesus was still alive and could be revived if placed in the tomb and treated.

DEATH BY CRUCIFIXION A SLOW PROCESS

Death by crucifixion was always a slow process. The purpose of crucifixion was not to kill directly but to kill by slow torture. Victims died slowly due to pain, exhaustion, and dehydration and it took several days, generally three or four, to accomplish this. Jesus remained on the cross from three to six hours which was not long enough to kill a young man with robust health. Two bandits who were on the corss for the same time did not die and to kill them their legs were broken. But that of Jesus spared. Pilate was amazed when he heard that Jesus had died. He must have known by experience that only a few hours on the corss was not sufficient to kill a man.

Several biographers of Jesus of relatively recent times have expressed grave doubts about death of Jesus on the corss.

William Hanna writes: "Crucifixion was a much more lingering kind of death, and, in its earlier stages much less excruciating than we are apt to imagine or than otherwise it would have been. As there was but little loss of blood, the nails that pierced the extremities touching no large blood vessels and closing the wounds they made. The death which followed resulted from the processes of bodily exhaustion and irritation; and these were so slow that in no case, where the person crucified was in ordinary health and vigour, did they terminate within twelve hours. Almost invari-

ably he survived the first twenty-four hours, lived generally over the second, occasionally even into the fifth or sixth day. The ancient testimonies to this fact are quite explicit, nor are the modern ones wanting, although there are but few parts of the world now where crucifixion is practiced. I was told, says Captain Clapperton, speaking of capital punishments inflicted in Soudan, a district of Africa, that wretches on the cross generally linger three days before death puts an end to their suffering.¹

William Stroud writes, "A fact of importance to be known, but which has not been sufficiently regarded, is that crucifixion was a very lingering punishment, and proved fatal not so much by loss of blood, since the wounds in the hands and feet did not lacerate any large vessel, and were nearly closed by the nails which produced them, as by the slow process of nervous irritation and exhaustion. This would of course be liable to variety, depending on differences of age, sex, constitution, and other circumstances; but for persons to live two or more days on the cross was common occurrence, and there are even instances of some who, having been taken down in time and carefully treated, recovered and survived. In many cases death was partly induced by hunger and thirst, the vicissitudes of heat and cold, or the attacks of ravenous birds and beasts; and in others was designedly accelerated by burning, stoning, suffocation, breaking the bones, or piercing the vital organs."²

"But the sudden death of a young and robust man, after a crucifixion of only six hours, was extraordinary, and to them unaccountable."³

"The scourging, mockery, and labour of carrying the cross were not in themselves more distressing to Jesus than to the malefactors who accompanied him; his fasting and watching had not, at farthest, continued longer than from the preceding evening; his removal from place to place was not likely to be attended with much fatigue, since all the places lay within a narrow compass; and heat of climate could not have been very oppressive in Jerusalem at the vernal equinox to a native of the country; more especially, when it is considered that, during the last three hours of his life, from the sixth to the ninth hour, the sun was obscured, and that in the much hotter climate of Central Africa crucified persons usually live three days on the cross."⁴

Ernest Renan writes: "It is evident, in fact, that doubts arose as to the reality of the death of Jesus. A few hours of suspension on the cross appeared to those accustomed to see crucifixions entirely insufficient to bring about such a result. They cited many instances of persons crucified, who had been removed in time and brought back to life again by energetic treatment. Origen, later on, thought it needful to invoke a miracle in order to explain so sudden an end. The same surprise is discovered in the

narrative of Mark. Pilate was astonished that Jesus was so soon dead.”⁵

While on the cross, Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani”. Soon after he again cried with a loud voice before his supposed death. This is most unusual. Before death on the cross Jesus would be in critical condition. As is observed from patients in critical condition before their death, they do not have strength to cry aloud. What is more likely is that Jesus cried aloud and then fainted.

We read in the gospel of John: “But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came blood and water.” (John 19 : 34) Piercing the side of Jesus by a soldier and consequent flowing out of blood is a clear cut sign that heart activity and circulation was intact, and Jesus was still alive. After death, if the body is pierced the blood does not flow.

After Jesus was taken down from cross, his body was handed over to Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, both secret disciples of Jesus. They kept Jesus in a large sepulchre in a garden, hewn out of rock. It was a large air chamber like a room as it could hold many persons as is apparent from various descriptions. Jesus was treated. They wrapped his body in linen cloth impregnated with spices. With effects of lying in recumbent position in cool airy chamber, which restores fallen blood pressure of a person who has fainted in verticle position, and stimulation of aromatic spices, Jesus recovered consciousness. His wounds were treated so that he was able to leave the sepulchre with the help of his secret disciples who were members of brotherhood of Esseens. His recovery was the explanation of so called resurrection and he was said to have “arisen”. There is no eyewitness account stating that he was dead when placed in the tomb and there is no eyewitness account of resurrection.

CONTRADICTIONARY REPORTS

Who first gave the news about the resurrection? Who was in the tomb at the time Mary Magdelene and the other women visited the tomb on Sunday morning? Where did they first see Jesus? Where did Jesus first meet his disciples after leaving the tomb and how many appearances did he make and to whom? The reports about these events in New Testament are all contradictory. On such circumstances of contradictory reports, the mere assertion that Jesus had died on the cross is not reliable when none of the disciples or writers of gospels were present at the scene of the crucifixion.

FURTHER EVIDENCE FROM GOSPELS

Before Jesus was brought down from the cross there were very confusing circumstances. The curtain hanging in the temple was torn in two.

There was an earthquake. It had become very dark since noon. In these unusual circumstances, it was not extraordinary that Jesus was mistaken dead. Even in these days of modern medicine, there have been rare instances when a physician has made a mistake about clinical death of a patient and pronounced dead someone who was actually found alive later.

After women had visited the tomb on Sunday morning and had been told that Jesus had "arisen" and would meet his disciples in Galilee, they were terrified. We read: "So they went out and ran from the tomb, distressed and terrified. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid. (Mark 10 : 8). It is worth pondering as to why were they so terrified that they did not say anything to anyone. The reality was that when they learned that Jesus was still alive, they were afraid for his life that he may not be rearrested.

After coming out of the tomb, Jesus's behaviour was significant that he only appeared to his disciples. He had probably disguised as Mary Magdalene thought he was a gardner and did not recognized Jesus at first. He walked on foot anonymously as an obscure traveller on the road to Emmaus, a village near Jerusalem. All the appearances of Jesus were confined to his disciples and these were made in private and in secret and were quite sparce considering that he is reported to be in the area for forty days before his parting. At times he went to see his disciples when the doors were kept closed for secrecy and fear of Jews. He made no appearances to his opponents. Why was he affraid if he had become alive after death on the cross? If he could conquer death, what else he could be afraid of? The simple fact is that he had escaped death on the cross and was now in hiding. He was afraid that he may be rearrested and face another ordeal.

We read in Luke: "They were terrified thinking that they were seeing a ghost. But he said to them "Why are you alarmed? Why are these doubts coming up in your mind? Look at my hands and see that it is I myself. Feel me and you will know, for a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you can see I have." He said this and showed them his hands and feet. They still could not believe, they were so full of joy and wonder, so he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of cooked fish which he took and ate in their presence." (Luke 24 : 37-43)

In all probability, disciples had given him up as dead mistakenly and were so surprised to see him still alive. If Jesus had actually become alive after being dead as resurrection implies, it is reasonable to assume that he had some sort of spiritual body as it is generally believed that soul after death takes on a spiritual body. But Jesus had same mortal body as proven by his feeling hungry, eating and drinking and travelling on foot to Galilee and persistent fear of rearrest. He still had healing wounds and their scars

on his hands and on his side which he showed to doubting Thomas. He had same body of flesh and bones. What could be greater proof that he had escaped death on the cross? Jesus, by showing his body and wounds to his disciples was emphasizing that he was no spirit who had arisen from dead but he was the same person still alive.

Thus is obvious that Jesus was still alive with the same mortal body. He had not died on the cross. He had fainted and was in serious condition due to trauma of crucifixion. He was probably mistaken as dead. But with the grace of God and help from his secret disciples he recovered and was able to leave the tomb like tomb on the third day. He had "arisen" not from death but from a state resembling death. It was certainly miraculous as his enemies had planned to kill him.

St. Paul who abolished the Mosaic law said about Jesus: "But to redeem us from the curse of law, being made a curse for us, for it is written "cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." (Gal. 3 : 31). In above words St. Paul declares the law as a curse and that Jesus redeemed them from this curse of law having died an accursed death on the cross. One shudders at the implication of curse associated with Jesus as St. Paul declares. Curse of God implies that Jesus was made devoid of God's love and that his heart darkened with unfaithfulness. Jesus was beloved of God and his faithful prophet. It is a great injustice and cruel to associate such thoughts of a curse with Jesus. Merciful God saved Jesus from such a disgraceful death and thus exalted him and proved him to be a true prophet and a true "Son of God", meaning a beloved of God.

OINTMENT OF JESUS

Another unusual proof that Jesus did not die on the cross is the mention of MARHAM-I-ISA or the "ointment of Jesus" in the ancient and medieval books on medicine. List of such medical books runs into hundreds. Along with giving the formula of this ointment, it is stated that this ointment was prepared by the disciples for Jesus's wounds. Some of these medical books were compiled by Christian physicians, some by Jewish physicians, and others by Muslim physicians. Most books are very old. At first an old pharmaceutical work in Latin was compiled soon after event of cross which mentioned this ointment alongwith statement that this preparation was prepared for the wounds of Jesus. Later this work was translated into several languages including into Arabic at the time of Caliph Mamum-al-Rashid. These old books on medicine state that this ointment is very useful in cases of injury due to blows or falls, arresting promptly the flow of blood, and as it also contained Myrrh, the wound remains aseptic.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of Ahmadiyya movement

in Islam, has given a long list of those medical books in his book, **JESUS IN INDIA**. Out of this long list we quote the following two :

1. QANUN, By SHAIKH-UL-RAIS BU ALI SINA,
Volume III, Page 133

(Canon of Avicenna)

2. QARABADIN-I-RUMI (Roman Pharmacopes),

compiled about the time of Jesus and translated into Arabic in the reign of Mamun-al-Rashid.

The first book mentioned is by world famous medieval physician and philosopher, Bu-Ali-Sina, known in the West as Avicenna. His book of medicine Qanun (Canon) remained medical text in Europe for centuries. Following is the formula of ointment of Jesus as given by Avicenna.

1. Gum Ammonicum
2. Aristalochia Longa
3. Plumbi Oxidum
4. Olibanum
5. Resin
6. Resin of Pinuslongifolia
7. Galibanum
8. Sub Acetate of Copper
9. Gum Gugal
10. Myrrh
11. Wax
12. Olive Oil

Jesus healed others. This ointment healed Jesus!

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah, writes in his book, **JESUS IN INDIA**: "These books have been mentioned here by way of illustration. Learned people, especially physicians, know that most of these books, in times gone by, were taught at important places of learning under Muslim rule; even scholars from Europe studied them. It is a fact, and there is not the slightest exaggeration about it, that in every century there have been millions of people who have been acquainted with these books; hundreds of thousands of them have been studying them from end to end. I can assert that not a single person from among the learned people of Europe and Asia has been ignorant of the names of at least some of the books in the above list. When Spain and Qastmonia and Shantrin had universities, Bu-Ali-Sina's great Qanun, a great medical work in which there

is set out the prescription for Marham-i-Isa and other books such as Shifa and Isharat and Basharat pertaining to science, astronomy and philosophy, were eagerly studied and learnt by the Europeans. Likewise, works of Abu Nasr Farabi, Abu Raihan, Israil, Thabit bin Qurrah, Hunain bin Ishaq, and Ishaq, etc — all luminaries of learning — and translations made by them from Greek were also taught. Translations of their works would certainly be found to exist in Europe even today. As Muslim rulers were keen patrons of medicine, they prepared translations of good Greek works. The supreme authority of Khilafat vested for a long time in kings who desired expansion of knowledge rather than the extension of their dominions. That was why they not only had Greek books translated into Arabic but also invited learned Pandits from India, and got them to translate medical and other books, paying them high remuneration. One of the greatest debts that seekers of true knowledge owe to them, therefore, is that they prepared translations of Latin and Greek medical books which contained a mention of the “Ointment Jesus”, and which, almost as an inscription, recorded the fact that the ointment had been prepared for the wounds of Jesus.”⁶

ASCENTION

The legend of Ascension is the result of gradual glorification of Jesus and confusing heaven with sky. John and Mathew say nothing at all about ascension. If such an unusual event had occurred would they have omitted it? According to Mathew, Jesus last met his disciples at the hill in Galilee. What happened to Jesus after that? Matthew is silent. According to John, Jesus last met his disciples at Lake Tiberias.

According to Mark after Jesus appeared to eleven disciples in Jerusalem presumably the same day as resurrection, Jesus was taken up to heaven. Says Mark: “After the Lord Jesus had talked with them, he was taken up to heaven and sat at the right side of God” (Mark 16 : 19). This is a mere statement of belief rather than a historical event which was observed. They could not be witness to Jesus sitting on the right side of God. Moreover, it is universally recognized that the last ten verses of Mark are a later addition, that leaves Luke only who says: “as he was blessing them, he departed from them and was taken up into heaven.” (Luke 24 : 51) This happened at Bathany near city. Only credible thing about this statement is that Jesus said farewell to his disciples and departed from them from some unknown place. Many Biblical scholars think that the words “taken up into heaven” is an interpolation. Luke contradicts himself in Acts and says that Jesus remained in the land for forty days. At the Mount of Olives he said farewell to his disciples. “After saying this, he was taken up to heaven as they watched him and a cloud hid him from sight.”

(Acts 1 : 9)

From this it appears that when Jesus bade farewell and departed from his disciples on the Mount of Olives, there was a low cloud or mist which hid Jesus.

Apart from contradictions, can anyone believe that Jesus with a physical body like all human beings was lifted into sky. Even if he could be lifted up with some miracle would he have reached heaven? Is heaven a habitat in the space for humans? In today's space age we can watch astronauts disappear into the sky. Can we assume that if they went high enough they will reach Heaven? According to all religions heaven or hell is for souls in life after death. Jesus was alive and with the physical body. Thus, without passing through the gate of death he could not enter or leave for heaven. Ascension, like resurrection, is a pure legend and a myth.

WHERE DID JESUS GO

But question does arise as to where did Jesus go after he bade farewell to his disciples. This is the unknown life of Jesus to which he had alluded in his remarks.

“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice and there shall be one fold and one shepherd”.

(John 10 : 16)

“I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel.”

(Math. 15 : 24)

It is a historical fact that at the time of Jesus only two tribes of Israelites were settled in Judea. The other ten tribes had been dispersed to the Eastern countries after Babylonian captivity. They had settled in Afghanistan and Kashmir in northern India and the adjacent regions.

After the event of crucifixion, Jesus despaired of the Jews in Judea and under divine guidance left Palestine and went in search of the “lost sheep” or lost tribes of Israelites in the East. He travelled east as far as India and eventually settled in Kashmir, (in northern India) where there were numerous Jewish tribes already settled in diaspora. He preached his message to them and was accepted. As history tells us he lived to ripe old age and after his death was buried in Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, where his very tomb which bears his name has been discovered. This subject will be taken up in later chapters.

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- — — — —

An essential teaching for you is that you should not discard the Holy Quran, for therein is your life. Those who honour the Quran will be honoured in heaven. Those who prefer the Quran to every hadees and every other saying, will receive preference in heaven. For mankind there is no book in the world except the Quran, and for all children of Adam, there is no Messenger and intercessor but Muhammad, the chosen one, peace be on him. Then endeavour to cultivate true love for the dignified and majestic Prophet and do not give any kind of preference over him to anyone else so that in heaven you may be counted as those who have attained salvation. Remember that salvation will not be manifested only after death, but true salvation is that which exhibits its light in this very world. Who attain salvation? He who believes that God is true, that Muhammad, on whom be peace, is the intercessor between God and all His creatures, and that there is no Messenger equal to him in rank under heaven, nor is there any book equal in rank to the Holy Quran.

*THE PROMISED MESSIAH
(KISHTI NUH PP. 15 - 20)*

BOOK REVIEW

GURMUKHI TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY QURAN

BY
GIANI IBADULLAHPUBLISHED BY
NAZIR DAWATO TABLEEGH QADIAN – INDIA

One morning a couple of bearded Maulvis in turbans presented me with a Punjabi rendering of the Holy Quran by Giani Ibadullah, a Sikh convert to Islam. They were Ahmadiyya missionaries who had devoted their lives to *tableegh* – spreading the gospel. It occurred to me that I had never read the Quran from cover to cover – only some selected portions. For that matter I had not read the Talmud the Bible or even the Granth Sahib (many passages of which I have translated into English) from the beginning to the end. The only scriptures I had gone through completely were some of the smaller Upanishads and the Bhagvat Gita which takes less than an hour to read. Why I have never filled these enormous gaps in my reading is because I find religious classics somewhat repetitive and boring. When I meet people who spend many hours of their day reading their scriptures and see how profoundly they are moved hearing them recited I feel I miss something very precious. Perhaps it is the music of the words in which they are couched: this is certainly true of the Arabic of the Quran the Sanakrit of the Geeta and much of the Santbhasha used by Guru Arjun. The less you understand their meaning, the stronger the spell cast by the words.

I know I am not likely to read the Gurmukhi translation of the Quran – incidentally the third in the language. However, the gift impelled me to pick up English translations I have on my shelves. I was happy to note that as a matter of fact forty years ago I had almost read the entire book with a Maulvi Sahib reading the text in Arabic and I following it in Pickthalls translation. I had underlined many passages either for their moral message or their literary excellence. Somehow the Throne Verse (Ayat-ul-Kursi) which is perhaps most commonly reproduced in Muslim mausoleums and worn in amulets and necklaces (I have a beautiful re-production in silver on a bidri plate) was not one of those which had then attracted my attention. I would like to know why this *ayat* (verse) is regarded as a warder off of evils.

“O ye who believe! Spend of that wherewith We have provided you before the day come when there will be no trafficking nor friendship, nor intercession. The disbelievers, they are the wrongdoers.

“Allah! There is no God save Him, the Alive, the Eternal. Neither slumber nor sleep overtaketh Him, Unto Him belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Who is he that intercedes with Him save by His leave? He knoweth that which is in front of them and that which is behind them, while they encompass nothing of His knowledge save what He will. His Throne includeth the heavens and the earth, and He is never weary of preserving them. He is the Sublime, the Tremendous.

There is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is henceforth distinct from error. And he who rejecteth false deities and believeth in Allah hath grasped a firm handhold which will never break, Allah is Hearer, Knower.”

For non-Muslims who wish to read the Quran but are daunted by its size, I recommended starting with the shorter Suras which come at the end but are amongst earlier revelations. They are powerful poetry.

It also occurs to me that no group has done more for spreading Islam in Europe and Africa in the last fifty years than the Ahmadiyyas. It is ironic that it is the Ahmadiyyas that the Pakistan Supreme Court has declared to be non-Muslims. Has anyone the right to pronounce on another's faith?

Ahmadis have not been declare d non-Muslims by the Supreme Court of Pakistan but by the National Assembly of Pakistan.

(Editor)

KHUSHWANT SINGH
(Courtesy Hidusten Times)
5.9.1983.

TADHKIRA

*(English translation of the dreams, visions and verbal revelations vouchsafed to the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad)
By Muhammad Zafrulla Khan*

Publishers: The London Mosque

£ 3.00

The Holy Quran has laid down a criteria for the truthfulness of a claimant of the receipt of divine revelation in the following words:

And if he had forged and attributed any sayings to Us, We would, surely, have seized him by the right hand, and then, surely, We would

have cut his life-vein, and not one of you could have held Our punishment off from him (69 : 45 – 48).

Commentators agree that if a claimant of receiving divine revelation survives for a period of 23 years he must be true. This is because God will not permit a false claimant to survive a period equal to that of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, on whom be peace.

Tadhkira, which is a compilation of dreams, visions and verbal revelation of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, provides a sure proof of the truthfulness of his claim as he (Hazrat Ahmad) continued receiving revelation from God for a period of over thirty years. The collection of these revelations is replete with prophecies many of which have been fulfilled, some of them repeatedly and some await fulfilment.

It was the study of this book that brought Mr. Faiz Rusul, a former Shavian Socialist or a disciple of Bernard Shaw—a near Communist, to the fold of Ahmadiyyat. In the Birmingham Central Library he accidentally found “Tadhkira” on one of the shelves. Having gone through its pages he decided “If this is true, and we do not believe in this, or if this is not true, and we believe in it, we will be sitting on a volcano”. He further remarked that the trouble of the Muslim world was deeper than they knew, which independence from foreign dominance alone could not cure but return to Islam could. It is through a divinely inspired and divinely revealed guidance that the problems of the Muslim world could be solved.

The book under review provides ample proof that God speaks to His chosen ones today as He spoke to them in the past. The acceptance of prayer and the Quranic declaration “And when My servants ask thee about Me say, I am near, I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he prays to Me” is fully illustrated in the pages of Tadhkira. There are countless instances of the acceptance of prayer and God’s communication with the author. The grant of revelation is a pure bounty of God. It is not the choice of the recipient however righteous and exalted he might be. There is a widespread notion in the West that revelation is an upsurge of the mind of a righteous human being. The Quran rejects that notion. It states that Allah causes His Word to descend on whomsoever of His servants He pleases. In a wider sense the revelation may comprise dreams, visions or verbal revelation. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was vouchsafed with all forms of communication from the Almighty, and the book “Tadhkira” is not a mere compilation of revelations and visions it is indeed a narration of the special bounty of God that had been granted to him. The fulfilment of the prophecies and the acceptance of prayer about friends and enemies alike are

positive proof that God of Islam is a living God. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad says:

“One grand miracle of the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, is that the revelation vouchsafed to all other prophets has been cut off, and their miracles have been left behind, and their followers are empty-handed and are left only with old storeis, but the revelation vouchsafed to the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, has not been cut off, nor have his miracles been cut off, but are always displayed through his perfect followers who are honoured with obeying him. On this account the religion of Islam is a living religion and its God is a living God. In this age also this servant of the Lord of Honour is present. Thousands of signs in support of the Messenger of Allah and the Book of Allah have been shown by me, and I am almost daily honoured with the converse of God Almighty.”

(Chashma Masihi p. 18)

“Tadhkira” fully supports the above statement.

M.A. Saqi

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

A friend of mine, an Ahmadi Muslim, has, over a considerable time now, kept me under 'Tabligh'. He is very enthusiastic about his 'preaching duty', and he performs it very sincerely and very efficiently. I sometime wonder how can he spare so much time for his purely 'un-rewarding' activities. But I do listen to him, eagerly and as enthusiastically. I can't help it; he is so nice a person, and so very helpful. I also harbour a secret ambition that I might turn him to my ways, i.e., Catholicism. He would make such a wonderful and valuable addition to Christianity!

Last week he showed me an ancient-looking magazine, the 'Review of Religions'. I am sure its outward appearance can be improved. It contained very timely and relevant topics. But more importantly, I learned that the 'Review' is going to be published from London, replacing the 'Muslim Herald', and that it is going to be edited by you, Sir, B.A. Rafiq. I hope it will have an international flavour.

There is a great religious awakening all over the world. Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Buddhist missions are springing every where. Such intense activities are almost unheard of in the past. It has also resulted in controversies. For the first time it is possible for a layman like me to see and compare all aspects of any religion. I believe that any religion or any religious denomination which cannot support itself with cogent arguments from its holy scriptures, is unlikely to survive this present age of enlightenment.

But it is not the arguments alone which will win the hearts and minds of the people. It is the example set by any given religious community which will finally be the determining factor.

It is futile for me to pretend that Christian world is perfect; it is under threat every where. We have also the age-old rift between Catholics and non-Catholic world. But the most hopeful thing is that the differences are being recognised, and for the first time in many hundreds of years, Christians of all denominations are united under an umbrella organisation to try to limit and even wipe out these differences with a view to eventual unity. This is their eventual aim. What interests me most is the fact that this new unity movement is born out of an intense desire to retard the march of Islam as represented by your Ahmadiyya Movement. This apparently and relatively little known Movement appears to be posing a mortal threat and the Church is determined to overcome this situation.

On the other hand, I understand, that your Government of Pakistan declared you, by means of a constitutional amendment, 'Not Muslim'. It is a great puzzle to me. Even during the worst trials in the Christian world in the middle ages, no one Christian denomination usurped the right to declare its opponents as 'Not Christian'. There is another puzzling factor: the ordinary Muslims seem to have more in common with Christians than the Ahmadi Muslims. They would'nt like to enter into any dialogue with Ahmadis.

In fact, I have more affinity with them also. We both believe, for instance, that Jesus is alive in heaven; that Jesus, the same Jesus of 2000 years ago, will come down from heaven very shortly. Now my point is that if we are going to accept Jesus Christ any way, then what is the point in accepting Islam or any other religion meanwhile? Why not to continue working for Christ all the way! My Muslim friends can give me no answer. And Ahmadi Muslims, because they do not believe in the above doctrine, are difficult to confront. If Jesus died a natural death, then he is not coming a second time. And logically, the Promised Messiah has to be someone else, but like Jesus. But then, you do not appear to represent true Islam!

I wish you also get together with other Muslim sects and try to sort out your doctrinal differences, as Christians are doing. At least it will cut down the number of differences and lessen the confusion in the realm of religion. As the matters stand now, it is so complicated. Perhaps, and I very much hope, you will address yourself to these matters also.

May I wish you all the best.

Yours faithfully,

London

(Adam H. Goodwin)

Dear Sir,

When 'The Review of Religions' was first produced in 1902, it was the Promised Mesih's wish, that this magazine should be a vehicle for conveying the message of Islam to English speaking people. Furthermore he desired that its circulation should reach at least 10,000. Although 'The Review of Religions' has been in production for many years now with great benefit to readers all over the World., it gives me tremendous pleasure to learn that the 10,000 target has now been reached. This is due to the programme for expansion initiated by Hazrat Khalifatul Mesih IV and is only one of the many schemes which have been generated under his

dynamic leadership. I am sure that the improved quality and layout of this magazine will give even greater pleasure to its readers, and I would like to congratulate you and your staff, as well as to wish you all the best for the future.

I hope and pray that your experience as founder editor of 'The Muslim Herald' will enable you to approach your new assignment with even greater expertise. May Allah make this new venture a continuous source of blessing and enlightenment for those who are in search of truth and knowledge.

Yours sincerely,

London

(M.A. Saqi)

The Sayings of Prophet Muhammad on whom be peace and Blessings of Allah

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet (peace be on him) said, "There are three types of people whom Allah will neither talk to, nor look at, on the Day of Resurrection. (They are):

1. A man who takes an oath falsely that he has been offered for his goods so much more than what he is given,
2. A man who takes a false oath after the Asr prayer in order to grab a Muslim's property, and
3. A man who withholds his superfluous water. Allah will say to him, "Today I will withhold My grace from you as you withheld the superfluity of what you had not created."

Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Apostle (peace be on him) said, "No doubt, you had better gather a bundle of wood and carry it on your back (and earn your living thereby) rather than ask somebody who may give you or not."

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to this law of Holiness are two principles, which form the basis of "man's creative co-operation with God-Justice and Righteousness, Justice being the negative aspect of Holiness; Righteousness, its positive aspect. In the common life, Justice meant the recognition of six fundamental rights. Righteousness was to manifest itself in the acceptance of duties."¹ The two primary principles of God's dealings with his people are Justice and Mercy. These two attributes are represented respectively by His two names, Elohim ('God') and YHWH (the Lord). They are by no means divided into two separate powers, where the good and the evil are in a conflict with each other. God of Justice is the God of Mercy (Love), one and inseparable, both Justice and Mercy being complimentary aspects of His character. His Justice carries with it the affirmation of His being the Judge and His mercy is the expression of his character as Redeemer. The concept of original sin finds no place in Judaism.

The distinctive feature of Judaism is, however, "its insistence that the consummation in the Beyond is conditioned by the fulfilment in the historical and social contest of daily life. Unlike other creeds, Judaism refuses to admit the dualism that opposes the earthly to the heavenly, the temporal to the eternal, and consequently considers suffering and misery inseparable from the present world and the lot of human life. On the contrary, the earthly and the heavenly are in the view of Judaism in harmonious relationship to one another, the latter being regarded as inevitable result and development of the former. Judaism rejects the dualistic idea of a pure spirit imprisoned in a body which is impure and hostile to the immaterial and spritual. For Judaism body and spirit have been united to one another in order to give rise together to a higher form of earthly life – the righteous man – and thereby contribute to the rearing of rightrousness on earth in fulfilment of divine purpose."²

Had the people of Isreal remained isolated from the rest of the world, they might have retained the purity of their faith and culture. But the little hill state of Judea contained only part of the race when Ptolemy I acquired it in 301 B.C. Samaria was inhabited by a mixed race, in Galiles and Peraea Greek settlements had been made. Egypt and the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, however, had the full impact of the Hellenic civilisation. Jewish Hellenism reached its greatest development in Alexandria. Here Hellenistic Judaism became more Hellenistic than Jewish. The great monument of the Hellenistic Jews in Alexandria is the Septuagint or 'Book

1. Isidore Epstein, *Judaism*, pp. 25, 27.

2. Isidore Epstein, *Judaims*, pp. 140, 141.

of the Seventy', the translation of the *Old Testament* into Greek. It was highly esteemed by the Hellenistic Jews, who permitted girls to read it and declared it to be the only language into which the Torah might be translated.

It is difficult to ascertain how early traces of Hellenism are to be found in Jewish literature. It is claimed that the universalist passages in *Isaiah* were inspired in this period, and the Book of *Ecclesiastes* has been suspected of containing Stoic and Epicurean doctrines. But it is open to doubt. Greek influence came later and can be seen in the Apocrypha.

Greek ethics cast in the mould of the Jewish Wisdom literature is presented in the Wisdom of Solomon. In his conception of Wisdom the author follows Proverbs 8 and 9, but Wisdom becomes in his hands an independent being, existing apart from the Deity, and, in a way, acting as the mediator between the divine activity and the world. The terms in which the author describes this mediation show the influence of Greek philosophy, specially of Stoicism recalling the doctrine of divine reason immanent in the world.

The pressure of Hellenistic culture was gradually felt in Judea as well, and the higher order of priests were constantly adjusting themselves to this pressure. Though they frowned upon new and foreign ideas in religion, they were willing to adopt the outward forms of the dominant civilization. The members of this wealthy, aristocratic and worldly group gave birth to the important party of Sadducees. From these "pious ones" or "puritans" who had no interest in politics and much less in Greek culture, spring the powerful party of the Pharisees, to which most of the scribes and rabbis belonged.

In A.D. 6 Judea became a Roman province and about the same time two new parties sprang up. The Zealots, the passionate upholders of a policy of rebellion against Rome and the Essenes, who disassociated themselves from politics. The Messianic expectation increased its hold on thousands of suffering Jews. If God cared at all for his chosen people, he would act soon and so in preparation for the Messiah's coming they withdrew from the "corruption" of civilized society into monastic seclusion, where they fasted and prayed, ate together and practiced non-violence. They called themselves followers of "the way" and "sons of light".

JESUS OF NAZARETH

It was in this Hellenistic world that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed.¹ So Joseph went to

1. It is immaterial whether such an order was issued at this time or not. This is one of the most poignant passages in the *New Testament* (St. Luke 11, 2-7) and what St. Luke is trying to convey is that at this time it was the writ of the Roman Emperor which ran in the world.

THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT

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

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The REVIEW of RELIGIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

