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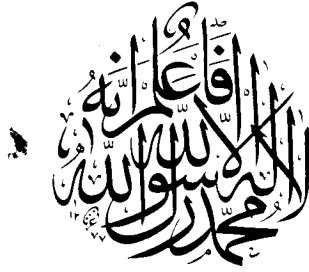
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EDITOR
B.A. RAFIQ



THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT

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



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COMMENTARY ON A VERSE OF THE HOLY QURAN

SPIRITUAL ASCENSION OF THE HOLY PROPHET

Glory be to Him Who carried His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Distant Mosque, the environs of which We have blessed, that We might show him some of Our signs. Surely, He alone is the Hearing, the Seeing. (17 : 2)

The verse is supposed by almost all Commentators of the Quran to refer to the **مِراج** (Spiritual Ascension of the Holy Prophet). The subject of *Miraj* has become much complicated and confused on account of the many divergent traditions that deal with it. Contrary to popular view we are, however, inclined towards the opinion that the present verse deals with the **اسراء** (Night Journey) of the Holy Prophet while his *Miraj* (Spiritual Ascension) has been dealt with in *Sura Al-Najm*. That *Sura* removes all the obscurities and ambiguities that have confused the popular mind in regard to this important subject. In *Sura Al-Najm* we have:-

It is nothing but a revelation that is revealed. The One of mighty powers has taught him (this knowledge): the One Possessor of strength. So He manifested His ascendance (over everything) and He revealed His word when he was on the uppermost horizon. Then he drew nearer (to God), then he came down to (His creatures), so that he became, as it were, the one chord of two bows or closer still. And He revealed to His servant that which He revealed. The heart (of the Prophet) was not untrue to that which he saw. Will you then dispute with him concerning that which he saw? And certainly he saw Him a second time, near the Lote-tree beyond which none may pass, near which is the Garden of Abode. This was when a wonderful and glorious Divine manifestation covered the Lote-tree. The eye deviated not nor did it wander. Surely, he saw the greatest of the Signs of his Lord. (53 : 5-19).

These verses give a graphic description of the *Miraj*, for the facts mentioned in them all relate to it, e.g., the Holy Prophet went up to the Lote-tree; (2) the Lote-tree was covered with "something"; (3) the Prophet saw the Paradise (the Garden of Abode) near the Lote-Tree; (4) he became, as it were, the one chord of two bows; (5) he saw God (and the heart of the Prophet was not untrue to that which he saw); and (6) the word of God descended on the Lote-tree.

All these details have also been mentioned in the traditions

which deal with the *Miraj*. As for the Lote-tree, Abu Huraira (as reported by Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abu Hatim, Ibn Merdawaih, Abu Yala and Baihaqi) says, "In the night of *Miraj*, after having seen other Prophets of God in heaven, the Holy Prophet proceeded further till he reached the Lote-tree." The same fact has been mentioned in the tradition quoted on the authority of Abu Said al-Khudri by Ibn Jarir, Ibn Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim Ibn Merdawaih, Baihaqi, and Ibn Asakir, and in the tradition quoted on the authority of Malik Ibn Sasa by Ahmad bin Hanbal, Bukhari, Muslim and Ibn Jarir and in the tradition quoted on the authority of Anas by Bukhari (Bukhari, *Chapter on Miraj Al-Khasais al-Kubra*, vol. 1 pp. 153, 167 & 174).

The second important detail mentioned in Sura Al-Najm is that when the Prophet reached the Lote-tree, he saw it covered with some extraordinary thing (53 : 17). This has also been mentioned in the traditions that deal with *Miraj*. In the tradition reported by

Abu Huraira to which reference has been made above we read *فغشيها نور الخلاق عز وجل* i.e., when the Holy Prophet reached the Lote-tree, the light of the Powerful and Glorious Creator covered it (Al-Khasais al-Kubra, vol. 1 p. 174). Similarly, in the tradition reported by Anas we have: "Then the Lote-tree became covered with a special divine grace so much so that in its newly changed condition its beauty defied all description" (Muslim, *Kitab al-Iman*).

The third incident referred to in Chapter 53 (Al-Najm) is that the Holy Prophet saw Paradise near the Lote-tree. This has also found mention in traditions which deal with *Miraj*. In the tradition quoted on the authority of Abu Said al-Khudri by Ibn Jarir and mentioned in some other books of Hadith we read: *ثم اني رفعت الى الجنة* i.e. after I had seen the Prophets in the heavens I was taken up to Paradise. This is followed by the words *ثم اني رفعت الى سدرة المنتهى* i.e. after the Paradise I was led up to the Lote-tree (Ibn Jarir, vol. 15 p. 11).

The fourth important detail mentioned in Chapter 53 is that when the Holy Prophet had a vision of those celestial scenes he was transported into a highly spiritual state which has been described in the words, *So that he became, as it were, the one chord of two bows or closer still.*

This fact has also been mentioned in the traditions about *Miraj*. In the tradition reported by Abu Said al-Khudri and referred to above we find the words: *فكان قاب قوسين او ادنى* i.e. between God and the Prophet there was the one chord of two bows or closer still.

The fifth important and relevant incident mentioned in Chapter 53 is that during the *Miraj* the Prophet had a vision of God Himself (53 : 12). This fact has also been mentioned in the traditions quoted by Ibn Merdawaih on the authority of Asma, daughter of Abu Bakr (Al-Khasais al-Kubra, vol. 1, p. 177), and by Muslim on the authority of Ibn Abbas (Muslim, *Kitab al-Iman*). In the latter tradition we read رآه بفؤاده مرتين i.e. twice the Prophet saw God with the eyes of his heart.

The sixth notable detail mentioned in Chapter 53 is that God spoke to the Holy Prophet near the Lote-tree (53 : 111). This fact has also found a mention in the traditions. For instance, in the tradition reported by Abu Huraira we have فكلّمه الله تعالى عنده ذلك i.e. so God spoke to him near it—the Lote-tree (Al-Khasais al-Kubra, vol. 1 p. 174). Similarly Ibn Abi Hatim has reported on the authority of Anas bin Malik that when the Prophet arrived near the Lote-tree God addressed him by name saying يا محمد i.e. O Muhammad and then Anas continues to finish the hadith. These very striking similarities and resemblances between the subject-matter of *Sura Al Najm* and the traditions about *Miraj* leave no doubt that it is the *Miraj* of the Holy Prophet which has been described in that *Sura*.

After having established the fact that *Sura Al-Najm* contains a description of the *Miraj* it is important to point out that this *Sura* has been admitted by the consensus of scholarly opinion to have been revealed in the fifth year of the Call or even earlier. The following very well-known historical event proves it. A party of early Muslims had sought refuge in Abyssinia. They left Mecca in the seventh month of the fifth year of the Call (Muir, *Life of Muhammad*, 1923, p. 69). Now the traditions agree that three months had hardly elapsed since this little band of the Faithful had left, for Abyssinia when they returned to Mecca (muir, *Life of Muhammad* 1923 p. 80). The reason which, according to traditions, led to their early return was this. The Holy Prophet was one day reciting Chapter 53. When he came to the words, *Rather prostrate yourselves before Allah, and worship Him* (53 : 63) the Prophet and the Muslims with him fell prostrate on the ground. The disbelievers present on the occasion, being overwhelmed with the grand theme of the *Sura* and the solemnity of the occasion, also joined the Prophet in prostration. This gave rise to the rumour that the Quraish had become converted to Islam. When this rumour reached Abyssinia, Muslim refugees hastened back to Mecca. This shows that the recitation of the *Sura* which led to this incident having taken place, must have been revealed in the fifth year of the Call or some time prior to it.

After a brief description of the *Miraj* or the Spiritual Ascen-

sion of the Holy Prophet and of the time when it took place, it may be noted here that the *Isra* or the Night Journey of the Holy Prophet from Mecca to Jerusalem, with which the present verse deals, took place in the eleventh year of the Call (Zurqani, vol I, p. 306). Christian writers, however, put it in the twelfth year of the Call (Muir, *Life of Muhammad*, 1923 o, 121). Traditions relating to this incident also corroborate the date referred to above. According to the traditions quoted by Ibn Merdawaih and Ib'n Sa'd the *Isra* took place on the seventeenth of Rabi al-Awwal, a year before the Hijra (Al-Kasais al-Kubra, vol. I, p. 162). Similarly, a tradition quoted by Baihaqi on the authority of Ibn Shihab, relates that the *Isra* took place a year before the Hijra. Another tradition also quoted by Baihaqi places the Night Journey to Jerusalem six months before the Hijra (Al-Kasais al-Kubra, vol I. p. 162).

All these traditions go to prove that the *Isra* took place six months or a year prior to the Hijra and it has been shown above that the *Miraj* took place about the fifth year of the Call. Thus the two incidents are separated from each other by an interval of six or seven years and therefore cannot be identical; the *Miraj* must be regarded as quite distinct and separate from the *Isra*.

Irrefutable evidence which shows that the *Miraj* and the *Isra* were two separate incidents is the fact that it was during the fifth year of the Call that the five daily prayers, were enjoined upon Muslims. If the *Miraj* be considered as identical with the *Isra*, then it will also have to be admitted that the five daily Prayers were enjoined upon Muslims in the eleventh or twelfth year of the Call which is evidently wrong because all traditionists agree that the five Prayers were prescribed in the very early years of the Call.

It may incidentally be stated here that the *Miraj* itself seems to have occurred twice. As it appears from the Hadith, the first *Miraj* occurred in the beginning of the Holy Prophet's ministry when the foundation of the Shariat may be said to have been laid and Prayers were made obligatory. Which seems to have taken place in the first year of the Call (Bukhari, *Chapter on Tauhid*; Jarir, vol 15. p. 4). The second or the better known *Miraj* took place about the fifth year of the Call when the five prescribed Prayers were made obligatory and Chapter 53, containing a description of it, was revealed (or it may have taken place even earlier and may have been subsequently referred to in Ch. 53). The *Isra* however, is quite a separate event which undoubtedly occurred in the eleventh or twelfth year of the Call when the Prophet was living in the house of his cousin Umme Hani, after the death of his wife, Khadija, which

took place in the tenth year of the Call after the Prophet had come out of the Valley (شعب) of Abu Talib.

In addition to this strong historical evidence, other relevant circumstances also lend support to the view that the two incidents are quite distinct and separate from each other:

(1) The first evidence in this connection is furnished by the Quran itself. It gives an account of the Prophet's *Miraj* (Spiritual Ascension) in Chapter 53 but makes no reference to his *Isra* (Night Journey to Jerusalem). While in the present *Sura* it speaks of his *Isra* but omits all allusion to his *Miraj*. This shows that the two incidents took place separately and, therefore, could not be mentioned together. It is inconceivable that the Quran should have mentioned the concluding portion of this incident in one *Sura* and the first portion of the self-same incident in another *Sura* five years later.

(2) The Second evidence which supports this inference is the fact that there was only one person, namely Ummi Hani, who was present with the Prophet during the night when the *Isra* (Spiritual Night Journey to Jerusalem) took place and she speaks only of his visit to Jerusalem and makes no mention of his journey to the heavens. She was the first person whom the Prophet informed of his Night Journey to Jerusalem and at least seven collectors of traditions have given her account of the incident on the authority of four different reporters who have reported the incident from her. All these four reporters concur in saying that the Prophet went to Jerusalem and returned to Mecca the same night. If the Prophet had spoken of his Ascension to the heavens also, Ummi Hani could not have failed to refer to it in one or other of her reports. But she does not do so in any of her reports, which conclusively shows that during the night in question the Holy Prophet made the *Isra* or the Spiritual Night Journey to Jerusalem only and that the *Miraj* did not take place on that occasion. So the *Isra* or the Prophet's Spiritual Night Journey to Jerusalem should not be confused with the *Miraj* or his Spiritual Ascension to heaven.

(3) All the different reporters of this incident may be placed in three categories: (a) those who speak of the Prophet's Ascension direct to heaven and make no mention of his Journey to Jerusalem; (b) those who speak first of his Journey to Jerusalem and then of his Ascension to heaven; and (c) those who only speak of his Journey to Jerusalem and make no mention at all of his Ascension to heaven. Of the reporters of this last group, there is a goodly number who say expressly that the Prophet returned to Mecca after his Journey to

Jerusalem.

It is evident that the reports of the first group point to the Miraj as being distinct from the *Isra* inasmuch as, according to them, the Holy Prophet was taken from his house direct to heaven, so Jerusalem could not lie in his way. The reporters of this group are Anas, Malik bin Sasa and Abu Dharr, who was one of the earliest converts to Islam.

Similarly, the reports of those who speak only of the Prophet's Journey to Jerusalem and make no mention of his Ascension to heaven also show that when he made his Night Journey to Jerusalem he did not ascend to heaven, for if he had ascended to heaven after his visit to Jerusalem, it is inconceivable that the reporters, after mentioning the less important part of the Vision, should have omitted to mention its more important part which related to his Ascension to heaven, and to his having seen God and having had communion with Him. The reporters of this group of traditions are Anas and Abdullah bin Masud, the latter being one of the earliest and best-loved of the Prophet's Companions.

Reports of the third group clearly state that the Prophet returned to Mecca after his visit to Jerusalem and did not ascend to heaven. These also demonstrate the two events to be distinct and separate from each other. The reporters of this group are Abdullah bin Masud, Abdullah bin Abbas, Aisha and Ummi Salma and Ummi Hani. All of them with the exception of Abdullah bin Masud, who, as stated above, was among the earliest converts to Islam, were the Prophet's very near relatives and enjoyed his intimate and constant company. It is impossible to impugn their evidence.

Another argument in favour of *Isra* being distinct from *Miraj* are the traditions which speak of the Prophet's transportation to the heavens after his visit to Jerusalem and then of his return from the heavens to Jerusalem and from Jerusalem back to Mecca (Al-Kasais al-Kubra, vol. I p. 154). Now, going to Jerusalem before ascending to heaven may be considered as reasonable, for it served for the Prophet the purpose of offering Prayers at the place where a large party of heavenly Messengers had delivered their divine Message, but it is difficult to understand why the same route should have been followed during the return journey, when on his return from heaven the Prophet is not reported to have performed any specific act at Jerusalem. The only reasonable assumption is that the account of the *Isra* became mixed up with that of the *Miraj*. Anas seems to have related the account of both the *Isra* and the *Miraj* to some reporters who mixed up the two accounts and mistakenly thought that they formed the two parts of the same event and thus these

reporters were led to believe that while coming back from his *Miraj* the Prophet went to Jerusalem from where he returned to Mecca. In fact, the confusion seems to have arisen from the same word *إسراء* (which means a night Journey) having been used for both the Holy Prophet's *إسراء* (Spiritual Night Journey to Jerusalem) and his *معراج* (Spiritual Ascension to heaven); and the resemblance that existed in some of the details in the description of the *إسراء* (*Isra*) and the *معراج* (*Miraj*) heightened and confirmed it.

Internal evidence of the traditions also point to the fact that the *Isra* and the *Miraj* were two distinct and separate events. The traditions which first give an account of the Prophet's visit to Jerusalem and then of his transportation from Jerusalem to heaven also state that at Jerusalem he met the former Prophets, including Adam, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, and that in the heavens he met the same Prophets again but could not recognize them. Now how did these Prophets whom he had met at Jerusalem reach the heavens before him and why could he not recognize them while he had seen them only a short while ago in the course of the same journey? If the two meetings had taken place separately and after long intervals it was possible that he could not have recognized some of them at the time of the second meeting in a changed atmosphere. But it is inconceivable that he should have failed to recognize them when he had met them only a short while ago in the course of the same journey.

It having been established that the *Isra* and the *Miraj* were two separate and distinct events, it is necessary to give a somewhat detailed account of *Isra* as given in the traditions as it forms the subject-matter of the verse under comment. The most reliable account of it is to be found in the tradition quoted by Ibn Jarir on the authority of Anas bin Malik. It is briefly as follows:

“When the Archangel Gabriel brought the *Buraq* to the Holy Prophet, he mounted it, and had gone only a short distance, when he saw an old woman. The Prophet asked Gabriel who she was, but Gabriel gave no answer to his question; on the contrary he told him not to ask questions, just as Moses in his *معراج* (Spiritual Ascension) was told not to put unnecessary questions (18 : 71). After the Prophet had gone a little further he saw a man calling him by name from across the road in order to invite his attention to himself. But Gabriel asked him again not to heed his call. When the Prophet had proceeded a little further he met a party of men who greeted him with the greeting of peace. Gabriel told him to return their greeting. After this the Prophet reached the Holy House in Jerusalem. There Gabriel presented him with three cups containing water, milk and

wine. The Prophet took the cup containing milk and drank it and refused to accept the other two. Upon this Gabriel said to him, "Thou hast, indeed, chosen the right course which is in perfect harmony with a pure, unsullied nature. If thou hadst accepted water or wine, thou and thine followers would have been lost." Then Adam and the other Prophets were presented to him, and the Holy Prophet led them in Prayers. After this Gabriel explained to him that the old woman he saw on the way was an embodied representation of the life of this world and only as much was left of the life of the world as was left of the life of that old woman. As for the person who called him from across the road, he was Iblis, the enemy of God. The party of men who greeted him were the Prophets Abraham, Moses and Jesus (Ibn Jarir).

This tradition serves as a key to resolve this whole allegory. It gives the most reliable and correct account of the *Isra*. It shows that the Journey to Jerusalem was no physical act but only a vision. This is clear from the following facts:

(a) It is stated in this tradition that during the Night Journey to Jerusalem, the Prophet saw an old woman, a person standing on one side of the road, and three cups full of water, wine and milk (of which the Prophet chose the last), and Gabriel told him what all these things signified. The explanation and interpretation by Gabriel of the things the Prophet saw shows that the Journey was only a vision, for it is only things seen in visions that need interpretation and explanation.

(b) The Night Journey has been spoken of as a vision in the present *Sura* (v. 61). Accordingly, we find that several Companions of the Prophet and some of the later scholars of Islam have, on the basis of this verse, declared the *Isra* to be a vision. For instance, Ibn Ishaque and Ibn Jarir report that when Muawiya was asked concerning the *Isra*, he said that it was a vision which came out to be true (Manthur, vol 4 p. 197). Aisha is also reported to have held the same view. (Hisham and Maad, vol. 1)

(c) We learn from the *Hadith* that when the Holy Prophet spoke of his Night Journey to Jerusalem he was asked to give a description of the Temple at Jerusalem. The Prophet is reported to have said that at that time God presented before his eyes an embodied representation of the Temple and he was thus able to describe it as demanded of him (Ibn Kathir, vol. 6, p. 18).

The Vision of the Prophet referred to in the present verse implied a great prophecy. His journey to the Distant Mosque (المسجد الأقصى) meant his Emigration to Medina where he was to build a Mosque

which was destined to become later the Centre of all Faiths and Dispensations and the Holy Prophet's seeing himself in the Vision leading other Prophets of God in Prayers signified that the New Faith — Islam was not to remain confined to the place of its birth but was to spread all over the world and the followers of all religions were to join its fold. His going to Jerusalem in the Vision may also be understood to mean that he was to be given dominion over the territory in which Jerusalem was situated. This prophecy was fulfilled in the Caliphate of Umar.

The words of the verse also lend support to the view that the Vision constituted a prophecy about the great future of Islam. The Distant Mosque (المسجد الاقصى) that the Prophet saw in the Vision represented his own Mosque at Medina, Jerusalem stood for Medina and his going to Jerusalem signified his Emigration to Medina. The Vision begins with the words سبحان الذي (Glory be to Him) which indicated that the Emigration of the Prophet would rebound to the Glory of God. The word سبحان itself shows that the Vision embodied a prophecy; for a physical journey to the Temple at Jerusalem could not be regarded as evidence of the Glory of God. But as establishment of the Islamic State at Medina was to fulfil a prophecy, that event did serve as evidence of divine Glory. Thus the words, *Glory be to Him Who carried His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Distant Mosque*, signified that God would take the Holy Prophet to a Mosque resembling المسجد الاقصى (the Distant Mosque) at Jerusalem so that His word might be fulfilled.

The words, 'We might show him some of Our Signs', pointed to the great possibilities of the Prophet's Journey to Medina. The Prophet's Emigration to Medina served as a prelude to the glorious future of Islam which was then hidden from the eyes of the world and thus God's great Signs were manifested. The reason why the Holy Prophet's Mosque was called المسجد الاقصى (the Distant Mosque), and why Medina was shown to him in the Vision in the form of Jerusalem was that the blessings which God had conferred on the Mosque at Jerusalem were also in store in a greater measure for the Prophet's Mosque at Medina.

The Prophecy implied in the words, 'Who carried His servant by night', was fulfilled when the Prophet left Mecca at dead of night. He did not undertake this journey of his own accord but in pursuance of God's express command. And as in his Night Journey to Jerusalem in the Vision he was accompanied by the Archangel Gabriel, so in his Flight to Medina he was accompanied by his most faithful companion, Abu Bakr. The word "Gabriel", means "man of God", fitly applies to Abu Bakr and portrays his spiritual eminence.

This Vision may also be taken as referring to a spiritual journey of the Holy Prophet to a distant land in some future time. It meant that when spiritual darkness enveloped the entire world, the Prophet would appear in spirit a second time in the person of one of his followers, in a land far away from the scene of his first advent—in the Punjab. A pointed reference to this second advent of the Holy Prophet is to be found in 62, 3:5.

(The Holy Quran with English
translation and Commentary
volume II (part 1) p. 1404
to 1411).

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THE PROMISED MESSIAH SAYS

When God Almighty, observing the condition of the world and finding the earth filled with every type of disobedience, sin and misguidance, appointed me for the propagation of the truth and the reform of the people, then I, in obedience to this Divine command, sent forth the call through written and oral announcements that I was the person who was to arrive at the beginning of the century for revival of the faith. My purpose was to re-establish the faith which had disappeared from the earth and to pull mankind towards reform and righteousness and truthfulness through the power and strength that God had bestowed upon me, and through the magnetic power of His hand. It was also my purpose to correct their doctrinal errors and to reform their conduct. A few years thereafter, it was made quite clear to me through Divine revelation that the Messiah, whose advent among the Muslims had been promised from the beginning, and the Mahdi whose advent had been Divinely decreed at the time of the decline of Islam and the spread of error, and who was to be guided directly by God, and who was to invite people to partake of the heavenly banquet, and whose coming had been foretold by the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, thirteen hundred years in advance, was myself. Divine revelation to this effect was vouchsafed to me so clearly and so continuously that it left no room for doubt. It was replete with grand prophecies that were fulfilled clearly as bright day. Its frequency and number and miraculous power compelled me to affirm that it comprehended the word of the One God, without an associate, Whose Word is the Holy Quran.

(Tazkaratush Shahadatain, pp. 1-2).

NOTES AND COMMENTS

By
B. A. Rafiq

In its July/September 1983 issue, the Muslim Digest of South Africa has produced an article written by Al-Haj Hassan Rawat, M.A.; accusing therein the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian of corrupting and interpolating some of the verses of the Holy Quran. The article under comment says, "Even the enemies of Islam have had to accept this fact that the Quranic text is pure, free from corruption and interpolation since the days of Prophet Muhammad, may peace of Allah be on him". The article also quotes some verses of the Holy Quran in support of the claim that no corruption or interpolation was possible in the text of the Holy Quran. To say in one breath that Allah has taken it upon Himself to preserve and safeguard the text of the Holy Quran and also to accuse Hazrat Ahmad, the Promised Messiah, of successfully corrupting the text of the Holy Quran, in the next, is a contradiction that can best be explained by the author himself.

Before we proceed further we would like to produce some extracts from the writings of the Promised Messiah regarding the Holy Quran:

"The Holy Quran is a rare pearl. Its outside is light and its inside is light and its above is light and its below is light and there is light in every word of it. It is a spiritual garden whose clustered fruits are within easy reach and through which streams flow. Every fruit of good fortune is found in it and every torch is lit from it. Its light has penetrated my heart and I could not have acquired it by any other means. If there had been no Quran I would have found no delight in life. Its beauty exceeds that of countless Josephs. I incline towards it with great inclination and drink it into my heart. It has nurtured me as an embryo is nurtured and it has a wonderful effect on my heart. Its beauty draws me away from my soul. It has been disclosed to me in a vision that the Garden of holiness is irrigated by the waters of the Quran, which is a surging ocean of the water of life. He who drinks from it, comes to life and brings others to life." (Ayena Kamalat-e-Islam Page 545).

"I was young and am now aging. But people can bear witness that I never burdened myself with worldly affairs and was always interested in matters of the Faith. I have found the words which comprise the Quran, of the utmost holiness and full of spiritual wisdom.

It does not deify any man and it does not bring God into contempt by excluding souls and bodies from His creation.”

(Sanatan Dharm pp 6-7)

“I also enjoin upon you not to forsake the Quran for in it rests the essence of your life. Those who honour the Quran, shall be honoured in heavens, and those who accord preference to the Quran over everything else shall also be given preference in the heavens. There is no other book on the face of the earth for the guidance of mankind but the Quran. And there is none who can intercede on behalf of the progeny of Adam but the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him)”.

(Kishti-Nuh p 20)

Could a man with such devotional attachment to the Holy Quran be accused of even thinking of corrupting the text of the Holy Quran? This is not a new criticism raised by the author. The Promised Messiah (peace be on him) has emphatically denied this charge in the following words.

“It should be borne in mind that we are not permitted to make changes in the text or sequence of verses in the Word of God, except only when the Holy Prophet himself should have done so. It is on record that he did not do anything of this nature in his life time. In view of this we cannot disturb the sequence of the Quran, nor can we add anything to it. If we do so, we would be guilty of an offence and would be accountable for it”.

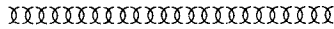
(Itmamul Hujja, p. 19)

At the time of the advent of the Promised Messiah (peace be on him), a large number of Muslim ulama and divines believed that as many as six hundred verses of the Holy Quran had been abrogated by other verses of the Quran. The Promised Messiah emphatically rejected this notion and challenged the advocates of the abrogation theory to produce a single verse of the Holy Quran which they thought had been abrogated by another verse. On the other hand he would prove conclusively from the Holy Quran itself that the verse under reference had not been abrogated at all but had a deep philosophy and hidden meanings which the ulama had failed to comprehend. He firmly established the fact that every vowel point of the Holy Quran was from God and was not subject to change or alteration by anyone. No commandment of Allah stood in need of correction or abrogation.

The Promised Messiah never changed, altered or abrogated even a vowel point of the Holy Quran. We challenge anyone to produce a single instance of such alterations in the Holy Quran from the books of the Promised Messiah. The Arabic quotations produced by the Muslim Digest from various books of the Promised Messiah

are not at all verses of the Holy Quran but are his own revelations.

The author of the article has deliberately distorted the writings of the Promised Messiah and has mischievously attributed the revelations of the Promised Messiah to be the verses of the Holy Quran. This was done to deceive and misguide his readers. This, then is the truth about the charge that the Promised Messiah had been guilty of interpolation in the verses of the Holy Quran.



Bahau'lla proclaimed himself to be the manifestation of God on earth and wrote a book called 'Al-Aqdas' i.e. "The Most Holy Book". In his will he said about this book. "Reflect upon that which is revealed in my book the Al-Aqdas." His son Abdul Baha said in his Will, "unto the Aqdas everyone must turn." Yet, strangely enough, this so called holy book has never seen the light of the day since it was written by Bahau'lla. Only a few of its fragments were translated into English some time ago. The reasons for its non-publication are best known to Bahais themselves.

Recently the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britian published an English translation of Al-Aqdas by Earl E. Elder, Ph. D., D.D., and published by Luzac & Co., London. On a study of the book a few of the characteristics of the Bahai Law emerge into public view.

On Adultery: "God has commanded that every adulterer and adulteress pay a fine to the House of Justice. The sum is nine mithqals of gold. For the second offence double the punishment."

It should be noted here that a mithqal is approximately five grammes or one seventh of an ounce. It would mean that the total fine for the first offence in England would be about £2. In case of second offence, double of the amount i.e. £4 is to be paid to the House of Justice. There is no mention of subsequent offences. It might mean that one is obliged to pay the fine until his second offence. Thereafter there is no penalty to be paid. Again as the House of Justice has not yet been established anywhere, so for the time being there is no penalty to be paid according to Bahai Law.

On Dowries: "The amount estimated for towns is nineteen mithqals of pure gold, and for villages the same amount in silver".

The Bhai Law does not mention any concession to a person who does not possess the nineteen mithqals of pure gold. Shall he not marry at all?

On Unlawful Marriages: "The wives of your fathers are unlawful to you."

There is no mention as to the marriage between brother and sister or between uncle and niece. The incomprehensive nature of the Bahai doctrines is so evident.

On changing furnishings of the house: "It was ordained for you to renew your house-furnishings after the expiration of nineteen years. Thus was the matter decided by an Omniscient Knower."

A faith built on such ludicrous items of trivial nature as the guidance for the changing of furnishings and the omission of very important doctrinal points which are essential for living a peaceful life, could not last long. If it does not, indeed, fulfil the real object of life it will not easily be acceptable as doctrine by any thinking person.

In due course it is proposed to deal with several such queer points which are presented by this holy book of the Bahai faith.

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The Times (London) while commenting on the pertinent question of immigration in the Western Countries captioned its Editorial "Indigestible Islam" in its issue of 5th September 1983. The title, if not disingenuous, is emotive. It purports, ostensibly, that Islam in respect of its religious practices and customary tenets is indigestible in a western or so called civilised society. The paper wrote "In both countries (France and Germany) it is the presence of a massive community of Islamic culture which is proving particularly indigestible. Frankly racist attitudes are becoming almost the norm towards Turks east of the Rhine, and towards Arabs (essentially North Africans) west of it."

However it is now acknowledged in all quarters including European Orientalists, that Islam was the main force for the upsurge of its believers in its early days and the Muslims in their heyday presented an unrivalled higher quality of culture and others, including Europeans, were only keen to emulate their way of life, and no scruples about indigestible Islam were raised.

Secondly! The Times acknowledged that the immigrants were invited at the outset of the economic recovery in Europe after the Second World War. In some cases they were tempted and lured by high wages and good prospects. The paper wrote:

"Western European countries owe their postwar prosperity in part to immigrant labour, and none of them is actually prepared to do without foreigners in many jobs even in these times of recession".

In other words the immigrants substantially contributed to the booming economy of the west. They were welcome in time of abundance but in times of present recession they are reckoned as alien and socially unagreeable. Some unscrupulous political leaders are creating the ill feelings for vested interests.

It may be appropriate to point out that the western countries are signatories of the U.N. Charter of Human Rights which explicitly enshrined the freedom of religious beliefs and practices. The U.N. recently made an important Declaration on this subject particularly its Resolution No. 36/55 dated 25 November 1981. The Article 1 proclaims "The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion" and further that "This right shall include freedom to have a religion or whatever belief of his choice and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching". Article 7 requires, "The rights and freedom set forth in the Present Declaration shall be accorded in national legislations in such a manner that every one shall be able to avail himself of such rights and freedom in practice." In view of the commitment of the western countries to this Declaration it is all the more regretful that The Times referred in the said editorial Ramadan as "nightly revel". The Colonial Powers should know from their occupation of the Muslim lands that whereas Islam proved a dominant force in its early days, in the days of its adversity and subjugation of its believers, it proved equally sustaining as an assertive force and the colonial powers showed tolerance of its "indigestible" aspects. It must be pointed out here that there is no sanction or injunction whatsoever in Islam for female circumcision which unfortunately is practised in some African countries; a relic of their savage past.



THE PROMISED MESSIAH, PEACE BE ON HIM, SAYS

God Almighty has, through the blessings of my obedience to and love for the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, and through my following His Holy Word, honoured this humble one with His revelation and with inner knowledge. He has enlightened me with the disclosure of many mysteries, and has filled my bosom with many verities and realities. He has informed me many times that all these gifts, bounties, exaltations, favours, kindnesses, attention, awards, supports and revelations have been bestowed upon me by virtue of the blessings of obedience to and love for the Seal of the Prophets, peace be on him. (Braheen Ahmadiyya, p. 623, footnote 1).

THE AL—AQSA MOSQUE

By
A.R. Mughal

The Al-Aqsa Mosque is a symbol of the Muslim renaissance in modern times. The Jews no doubt are at present the “Sacred Cows” of the United States of America. We often hear talk of the strong Jewish lobby in the U.S. Lobby is perhaps an insignificant word and in fact an understatement. It is the entire media which is at the back of the Jewish people. A sizeable portion of the American resources are annually earmarked for sustaining the ‘eye for an eye’ doctrine of the Jewish State. The discretion rests entirely with Israel whether on certain occasions it is a ‘million eyes for an eye’ or even worse than that.

Western diplomacy perhaps believes in making things worse before they could be made better. To contain or preferably to dislodge the evil Jewish influence on matters pertaining to human rights of the Arab occupied areas, it is essential that a common stand on the highest level should be established by the world Muslim Community. Hazrat Khalifat-ul-Masih IV in a recent Friday Sermon highlighted the need for such a step without wasting valuable time in holding conferences from time to time in various Arab Capitals. Mere conferences will do nothing for the participants and less than nothing for the poor Palestinians now being crushed under the iron heels of their Jewish oppressors.

The Jews as a community are fear-mongers and fright-pedlars. They only understand the language of force. Repeated appeals to the United Nations or some half-hearted resolutions in the Security Council will never bear fruit. The Jewish State has been wrong about more things more times than any other modern state. There are many things that the Jews do not like. But what is more important is that they indulge in unilateral actions where patience and diplomacy could be more effective.

The major question is! who is going to draw the line — thus far and no further? Both the super Powers are not interested in drawing this line. There are only the following alternatives:—

- a) The Muslims should keep cool and let events take their own course.
- b) The world Muslim Community should forge a United front and wage a relentless war of attrition against the Jews to the bitter end.

As mentioned already Hazrat Khalifa-tul-Masih IV has indicated the direction towards which the Divine Finger is pointing. Let the Muslims take heed, shed their internecine differences, and forge a United front against the Jewish aggression. In the meantime, the Ahmadiis should keep themselves in readiness to make sacrifices for the just cause of our Arab brothers. Said Hazrat Khalifatul-ul-Masih IV: "The Battle of Badr, was won in the prayer tent of the Holy Prophet (Peace and blessings of God be on him). Let us start our jihad with prayers. When the time comes the world will find the Ahmadiyya Youth in the front ranks of the fighters."

The Al-Aqsa Mosque belongs to the Muslims. It is a part of our sacred heritage. Let the Jews entertain no doubts about it. The Temple of Solomon was annihilated by the Romans. Let no one prescribe the wrong cure for the wrong illness.

What was destroyed by the Romans could not now be built on the site of a Mosque which has catered for the spiritual needs of billions of Muslims during the last 1400 years. Nobody can rewrite past history. It would be a sacrilege.

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I have, by the sheer grace of God, and not on account of any merit of my own, been accorded a full measure of the bounty that was bestowed before me on the Prophets and Messengers and the chosen ones of God. It would not have been possible for me to be granted this bounty had I not followed the ways of my lord and master, the pride of the Prophets, the best of mankind, Muhammad, the chosen one, peace be on him. Whatever I have been given I have been given by following him and I know through true and perfect knowledge that no man can reach God except by following the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, nor can anyone arrive at a full understanding of God except through him.

(Haqeeqatul Wahi,, p. 68)

THE PROMISED MESSIAH

SOME DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF ISLAM

*Text of a speech delivered by
Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV
at Canberra, Australia.*

No Monopoly of Truth

While speaking on the subject of the distinctive features of Islam, the first and most attractive feature that strikes one, is its most endearing disclaimer that Islam has a monopoly of truth, and that there have been no other true religions. Nor does it claim that Arabs alone have been the recipients of God's love. Islam is the only religion that totally rejects the notion that truth is the monopoly of any single faith, race or people; instead, it professes that Divine guidance is a general bounty that has sustained humanity in all ages. The Quran tells us that there is neither a race nor a people, who have not been blessed with the bounty of Divine guidance, and there is neither a region of the earth nor a body of people who have not received Prophets and Messengers of God.¹ Contrary to this worldwide Islamic view of the manifestation of Allah's Favour upon all peoples of the earth we are struck by the fact that no Book of any other religion verifies or even mentions the possibility of other peoples and nations having received light and guidance from Allah at any stage in history. In fact, the truth and validity of a local or regional religion is often emphasized so greatly, and the truth of other faiths ignored so totally, as if God were the preserve of just one faith, one people and one race alone, to the total exclusion of all other inhabitants of the earth as if the sun of truth had only risen and set upon the limited horizon of a certain people to the exclusion of the rest of the world left, so to say, abandoned and condemned to eternal darkness. For instance, the Bible presents only the God of Israel, and it repeatedly says: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel."² It does not, even in passing, verify the truth of religious revelations bestowed on other lands and upon other peoples. Thus, the belief of the Jews that all Israelite Prophets were sent only to the tribes of Israel is in full conformity with the intent and message of the Bible. Jesus had also declared that his advent was intended for the guidance of the Hebrew tribes alone, and had said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel",³ and he

1. 35 : 35

2. Chronicles 16 : 36

3. Isamuel; 25 : 32

admonished his disciples in the words: "Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before swine."⁴

Similarly, the Hindu religion also addresses its Books only to those of high birth. It is said, "If one of base birth should per chance hear a text of the Vedas, the King should seal his ears with molten wax and lead. And should he recite a portion of the Scripture, his tongue should be severed; and should he succeed in reading the Veda, his body should be hacked to pieces."⁵

Even if we disregard such drastic injunctions, or offer some less severe explanation of them, the fact remains that the Holy books of various faiths do not, even by implication, allude to the truth of the religions of other lands and peoples. The basic question that arises here is, that if all these faiths were in fact true, then what was the wisdom in presenting the concept of God in such limited and restricted terms? The Quran readily furnishes a solution of this predicament. It says that even before the revelation of the Quran and the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, Divine Messengers had indeed been sent to every nation and every part of the globe, but their sphere was regional and their assignments temporary. This is because human civilisation had not yet reached a stage of development which merited the commissioning of a universal Messenger, bearing a universal Message.

A Universal Religion

The very first leaf of the Holy Quran praises the Lord Who is the Sustainer of all the worlds, and its last passage urges us to pray to the Lord of mankind. Thus, both the first and the last words of the Holy Quran present the concept of the entire universe, and not merely that of a God of the Arabs or the Muslims. Verily, no one before the Holy Prophet of Islam had beckoned the whole of humanity, and no Book before the Holy Quran had addressed the entire world. The first such claim was made in favour of the Holy Prophet of Islam in these words: "And we have not sent thee but as a bearer of glad tidings and a Warner of all mankind, but most men know not."⁶ And then "Say 'O mankind, truly I am a Messenger to you all'."⁷

And when the Quran calls itself "a message for all the world,"⁸ it upholds itself as the guidance with which is linked the true deve-

4. Matthew 15 : 21-25

5. Gotama Smriti: 12

6. 34 : 29

7. 7 : 159

8. 81 : 28

lopment and advancement of mankind.

The Quran has repeatedly been called the 'Verifier' of other Books and Muslims are admonished to believe in all other Prophets in exactly the same manner as they believe in their own Prophet. In our faith, it is forbidden to make a distinction among any of them, much less to believe in some and to reject others. The Quran says: "All (of us) believe in Allah, and in His angels, and in His Books, and in His Messengers saying, 'We make no distinction between any of His Messengers.'"⁹

It may not be without merit to examine if universality in itself is a desirable feature, and why Islam has laid such great stress upon it. Ever since Islam has brought the message of the unity of mankind, the pace of the march towards such unity has continued to accelerate in every sphere. An example of this march in our times is the establishment of different international bodies and federations. Indeed, these are but milestones along the long and devious journey towards unity among all mankind. So, the need that is keenly felt by the advanced and civilised man of today, had already been fulfilled by planting the seed of its solution in the message of Islam 1400 years ago. Today, of course, the rapid development of travel and communications has lent a new impetus to the march towards unity among peoples and nations.

Differences and Contradictions Among Faiths — Their Reality

A question that arises is; if all religions were in fact founded by Messengers from God, then why is there any difference in their teachings? Can the same God send down different teachings? This question is answered by Islam alone, and this, too, is a distinctive feature of this religion. Islam holds that there are two basic causes of differences between various religions. First, that varying conditions had needed varying dictates and rules, and the All-Knowing and All-Wise God had provided guidance for different ages, regions and peoples in accordance with their respective needs. Secondly, the contents of various faiths faded and wilted under the vicissitudes of time, hence they were not preserved in their original form. In some cases, the followers themselves introduced innovations and variations to suit changing needs, and the originally revealed Books continued to be interpolated for this purpose. Obviously, such adulteration of Divine Message ultimately mandated fresh guidance from the Original Source. As God has said in the Quran: "They pervert the words from their proper places and have forgotten a

good part of that with which they were exhorted.”¹⁰

If we examine the history of differences between various faiths in the light of the principles enunciated by the Quran, we find that the differences tend to diminish as we reach nearer the source itself. For instance, if we limit the comparison of Christianity and Islam only to the life of Jesus and the four books of the Bible, then there will appear only very minor differences between the basic teachings of the Bible and the Quran. But, as we travel further down the road of time, the chasm of these differences becomes wider and wider, till it becomes totally unbridgeable — and all because of human endeavours to revise that which was originally revealed. The history of other faiths also reveals the same basic reality, and we find strong corroboration of the Quranic view, that the direction of human changes and revisions of the Divine Message, has always been from the worship of one God to that of several, and from reality to fiction, from humanity to deification of human beings.

The Quran tells us that the surest way to distinguish a true religion, despite its subsequent mutilation, is to examine its origin. If the origin reveals the teaching of the unity of God, worship of none save the One God, and a true and genuine sympathy for all humanity, then such a religion, despite subsequent changes, must be accepted as true. The founders of religions that satisfy this criteria, were indeed righteous and pious beings, and true Messengers deputed by God, between whom we should make no distinction and in whose truth we must believe fully. They have certain fundamental features common to all regardless of difference in time and place. Thus expounds the Holy Quran:

وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ
 حُنَفَاءَ وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ
 وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقِيَمَةِ

Translation: And they were not commanded but to serve Allah, being sincere to Him in obedience, and being upright, and to observe Prayer, and pay the Zakat. And that is the religion of the people of the right path.¹¹

An Eternal Religion

Another distinctive feature of Islam is, that it not only pro-

10. 5 : 14

11. 98 : 6

claims its universal character, but also lays claim to being eternal, and it then proceeds to fulfil the preconditions of such a claim. For instance, a Message can be eternal only if it is complete and perfect in every aspect, and also guaranteed with regard to the verity of its contents. In other words, its revealed Books should bear Divine guarantee against human revision and tampering. In so far as the teachings of the Quran are concerned, The Almighty Himself claims in the Quran:

“I have this day perfected your faith for you in every way and, having completed My bounty upon you, have chosen for you Islam as religion.”^{1 2}

Safeguarding of the Quran

As I have already said, for a teaching to be eternal, it is not sufficient merely that it should be complete and perfect, but that there should also exist a guarantee for its perpetual preservation in its original form. The Quran amply satisfies this fundamental requirement, and the One Who sent down the Quran has proclaimed it in the clearest terms that:

“We have sent down this Book and verily We shall safeguard it.”^{1 3}

In other words, God Himself will safeguard it and will never allow it to be tampered with. One method of the preservation of the text has been, that in accordance with Divine Will, there have always been hundreds of thousands of people in every age who have committed the text of the Quran to memory, and this practice continues to this day. And the principle measure of safeguarding the real import and essence of the Message has been the Divine practice of appointing Guides and Reformers in each century, and to prophesy the advent of a Grand Reformer and Reviver in the latter age. He was to be commissioned as the spiritual head by the Almighty Himself and under Divine guidance, was to settle differences and controversies among the followers of Islam, thus safeguarding the true spirit of the Holy Quran.

Of course, there is the question as to whether the Quranic claim of its preservation is also supported by reliable corroborative evidence. A clue to the answer to this question lies in the fact that there are a very large number of non-Muslim researchers who, despite themselves, have totally failed to show that the text of the Quran has been tampered with, in the slightest manner after the passing

12. 5 : 4

13. 15 : 10

away of the Holy Prophet of Islam. In fact, there are many non-Muslim researchers who have felt compelled, after their extensive searches in this field, to affirm openly that the Quran has indeed been preserved and safeguarded in its original form. For instance, Sir William Muir in his work, *The life of Muhammad*, says: "We may, upon the strongest presumption, affirm that every verse is the genuine and unaltered composition of Muhammad himself."¹⁴ Also, "There is otherwise every security, internal and external, that we possess the text which Muhammad himself gave forth and used."¹⁵ Says Noldeke: "Slight clerical errors there may have been, but the Quran of Uthman contains none but genuine elements, though some times in very strange order. The efforts of European scholars to prove the existence of later interpolations in the Quran have failed."¹⁶

A complete Religion

As regards Islam's distinctive and unique claim that the teachings of the Quran are complete and perfect and fully capable of guiding humanity in all ages, this, too, is fully supported by reason. It is not possible in a brief space of time to deal with this subject in detail, and I must confine myself to a brief reference to some guiding principles and illustrative examples. First, we must consider how Islam succeeds in meeting the demands of changing times, thus forestalling the need for any revision in its teachings. It is indeed fascinating to study Islam's practical guidance in this regard, of which I shall now place a mere sample before you:

1. Islam only enunciates fundamental principles and refrains from stipulating such detail as would need to vary to cope with changing times and situations.
2. Islam is fully mindful of man's intellectual, social and political evolution, and its teachings cater for all possible situations. It not only recognises the fact that there occur continuous change and development among nations, but also the reality that not all peoples are at par in their state of development at a given point in time. For example, it is possible that the earth may still in part be inhabited by the people of the Stone Age, and some groups and tribes may still be a thousand years behind our age, even though we share the same time. Their intellectual, social and political state may really belong to an age left far

14. P. XXVIII

15. P. XXVII

16. Enc. Brit. 9th Edition under the word: Quran.

behind. I am sure we would all agree that it would be the height of folly to force modern political ideologies upon the original inhabitants of Australia, or the pygmies of the Congo.

3. Islam is a religion that conforms to human nature and fulfils all human needs. No change in its teachings is necessary, unless there also occurs a fundamental change in human nature, a prospect we can dismiss outright.

These were a few facets of the principles of Islamic teachings; I shall now discuss them a little further so that my submission may be understood more fully.

Zakat Vs Interest

Islam condemns the institution of interest in all its forms and strongly urges its total elimination. The motive force it presents in place of interest, to move the economic wheel, is called Zakat. Obviously, I cannot treat this subject in detail in the time available, and will, therefore, just say a few words on the methodology adopted by the Quran to present the essence of its teachings in this important sphere. Zakat is a system of taxing capital, realised from the well-to-do. Apart from meeting the demands of the State, this tax is intended to meet the needs of the poor. In other words, this system not only meets the requirements of the government machinery, but also guarantees to fulfil the demands of social welfare. All that has been done is to lay down the basic principle, leaving it to those with insight and understanding to settle the details in accordance with the conditions prevailing in a particular environment at a given time. The Quran says that in the wealth of those who possess over and beyond their basic needs, is also the share of those who are unable to meet their basic needs and are considered deprived in their environment. This clearly establishes that it is the right of every person to have certain basic necessities of life provided to him in every land and society, and those made responsible for meeting this obligation are the ones who possess more than their basic needs, leaving it to the State to decide upon the *modus operandi*, which is to ensure that the system is fair, just and equitable and adequately fulfils its basic purpose.

Directions in Political Matters

The other major international question confronting us today is that of the determination of the form of government for a given region or country. Here, too, the guiding principles of Islam are

so pertinent, weighty and elastic that their truth and practicability become self evident. No one can deny that a particular form of government is considered suitable or unsuitable only when applied to a specific set of conditions obtaining, and it is idle to imagine that a particular political system can fulfil the needs of every people for all times. This is why Islam does not specify a particular form of government. It neither presents a democratic or socialist form, nor recommends kingship or dictatorship. Instead of dilating upon the methods of establishing governments, Islam enunciates the principle of conducting political and governmental affairs in a specific manner, and imposes the condition that, no matter what the form, the responsibilities of a government will always be discharged justly and fairly, with sympathy; always fulfilling and upholding basic human rights. Thus, instead of emphasising the first segment of the commonly accepted definition of democracy, i.e., "government, by the people; Islam emphasises that, whatever the form of the government, it must in all events be: for the people." So when democracy is mentioned among other forms of government the real stress is laid on its quality. It is emphasized that it should not be a hollow democracy, but that those electing their rulers should be competent people, motivated in all honesty to elect only those who are really fit and equal to the task. This has been made a pre-requisite of any election to office by the Quran. It says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا
وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ

"Verily, Allah commands you to give over the trusts to those entitled to them, and that, "when you judge between men, you judge with justice."¹⁷ And then, whatever government may as a result be established, it is obliged to govern with justice, without any discrimination of race, colour, or creed.

Now I shall briefly summarise the rules that flow from the basic fundamentals given in the Quran about any system of government:

1. A government is duty-bound to protect the honour, life and property of its people.¹⁸
2. A ruler must always act with justice, between individuals and between peoples.¹⁹
3. National matters should be settled by consultation.²⁰

17. 4 : 59

18. Verily, Allah commands you to make over the trust to those entitled to them. Holy Quran 4 : 59

19. And that, when you judge between men, you judge with justice. Holy Quran 4 : 59.

20. And whose affairs are decided by mutual consultation. Holy Quran 42 : 39.

4. Government must arrange to fulfil the basic needs of man: that is to say, provide him food, clothing and shelter.^{2 1}
5. People should be provided a peaceful and secure environment, and their lives, property and honour protected.^{2 2}
6. The economic system should be equitable and orderly.^{2 2}
7. Health care should be organised.^{2 2}
8. There would prevail total religious freedom.^{2 3}
9. A vanquished people must be dealt with justly.^{2 4}
10. Prisoners of war should be treated with compassion.^{2 5}
11. Treaties and agreements must always be honoured.^{2 6}
12. Inequitous agreements must not be forced upon the weak.^{2 6}
13. Muslim subjects are enjoined to obey the government in authority. The only exception to this rule is a case where the government blatantly opposes and prevents the carrying out of religious duties and obligations.^{2 7}
14. If differences should arise with the ruler, then these be settled in the light of the principles enunciated in the Quran and by the Holy Prophet. In no event should one be swayed by selfish motives.^{2 8}
15. People are enjoined to assist the authorities by supporting schemes that aim to promote general well-being and welfare. It is forbidden to launch so-called non-cooperation movements.^{2 9} Similarly, governments are obliged to assist in beneficent undertakings, whether individual or collective, and not to obstruct such endeavours.

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21. It is provided for thee that thou wilt not hunger therein, nor wilt thou be naked. And that thou wilt not thirst therein, nor wilt thou be exposed to the sun. Holy Quran 119 : 120
 22. And when he is in authority, he runs about in the land to create disorder in it and destroy the crops and the progeny of man: and Allah loves not disorder. Holy Quran 2 : 206
 23. There should be no compulsion in religion. Holy Quran 2 : 257.
 24. "And let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just, that is nearer to righteousness." Holy Quran 5 : 9.
 25. "It does not behove a Prophet that he should have captives until he engages in regular fighting in the land." Holy Quran 8 : 68.
 26. "Then afterwards either release them as a favour or by taking ransom — until the war lays down its burdens. That is the ordinance." Holy Quran 47 : 5
 27. "Obey Allah, and obey His Messenger and those who are in authority among you." Holy Quran 4 : 60.
 28. "And if you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger. Holy Quran 4 : 60
 29. And help one another in righteousness but help not one another in sin and transgression. Holy Quran 5 : 3

16. A powerful country is forbidden from all forms of aggression against another country: recourse to arms is permitted in selfdefence only.³⁰

Islamic concept of Justice

I shall now cite a few important examples of Islamic principles which perhaps need particular emphasis in the world today. The first concerns Islamic teaching in respect of equity and justice. Other religions do not present a comprehensive direction about the administration of justice and fairplay, and even if they mention this at all, it is in terms that can scarcely be applicable to us today. In fact, some parts of these directions appear to conflict directly with the intellect and sensibilities of our age, and one cannot but conclude that these teachings have either become corrupted or were intended only for local and temporary application. As Judaism presents God as only the God of Israel to the exclusion of all other mankind — no wonder then, that it does not even in passing deal with the fundamental question of Human Rights as such.

As for Hinduism it seems outright hostile not only to the non-Hindu but also to the Hindu of a low caste, hence narrowing further the field of God's mercy to a much smaller section of the human race. Hinduism decrees: "If a Brahmin is unable to return a loan to one of low caste, the other has no right to demand its return. But if one of low caste is unable to return a loan taken from a Brahmin, he is to be made to work as a labourer for Brahmins till such time as he is able to pay back the loan in full."³¹

Again, in Judaism we fail to detect a concept of justice toward one's enemy. It is said: "And when your Lord your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them; then you must utterly destroy them; you shall make no covenant with them."³²

I shall now, by way of comparison, cite a few examples of Islamic teachings in the same areas. The Quran enjoins, — and I quote:

1. "And when you judge between people, do so fairly and justly."³³
2. "Be strict in observing justice, and be witness for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or against your

30. And strain not thy eyes after what we have bestowed on some classes of them to enjoy for a short time." Holy Quran 20 : 132

31. Manu Smriti 10 : 35

32. Deuteronomy 7 : 2

33. Quran 4 : 59

parents or kindred."³⁴

3. "And let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just, that is nearer to righteousness."³⁵
4. "And fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you but do not transgress. Allah loves not the transgressors."³⁶
5. "And if they incline towards peace, incline thou also towards it."³⁷

The other example I wish to cite of the eternal teachings of Islam is the one concerning revenge and forgiveness. When we compare Islam's teachings in this sphere with that of other faiths, we are at once struck by this injunction of the Old Testament:

"Your eye shall not pity; it shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot."³⁸

Doubtless, such emphasis on vengeance causes not mere wonder, but also saddens our heart. However, I am not citing this example to castigate another teaching, but to show that, when viewed in the light of Quranic principles, even such drastic measures may also sometimes be justified. The Quran, thus helps us in following the conflicting teachings of other faiths in a spirit of sympathy and understanding, which, too, is an exclusive feature of Islam. According to the Quran, the extraction of full vengeance was decreed only to meet the specific needs of a particular period. This was necessary to give heart to the Israelites to make them stand up for their rights after they had remained victimized and enslaved for a prolonged period, and had as a result, become cowardly and developed a deep-seated complex of being an inferior people. Obviously, in such a situation, it would not have been proper to emphasize forgiveness, as it would only have made the Israelites sink deeper into their morass and not given them the confidence and courage to break the shackles of abject bondage. This teaching, therefore, was right and proper in the situation which then obtained, and was indeed given by the All-Wise God. On the other hand, when we consider the New Testament, we find that in contradiction of the previous Scripture, it emphasizes forgiveness to such an extent that it totally deprives the Israelites of the right to extract any vengeance

34. Quran 4 : 136

35. Quran 5 : 9

36. Quran 2 : 91

37. Quran 8 : 62

38. Exodus 21 : 24

whatsoever. The real reason for this was that practising the previous teaching over a long period of time, the Israelites had become hard-hearted and ferocious, and this could only be remedied by suspending for a certain period their right to extract vengeance. This is why Jesus admonished them:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, but I say to you do not resist one who is evil. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also, and if anyone would use you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well.’”³⁹

Islam holds these two opposing teachings to be complementary, each suited to the conditions and situation prevailing at the time, and neither, therefore, able to lay claim to being universal or eternal. And this perfectly stands to reason, for man was still progressing through earlier stages of development and had not yet become one comity to which could be vouchsafed a law that would be final and universal. We believe that Islam is that final law and presents a teaching not influenced by place or time which fact is amply illustrated by its teaching in the matter being considered. The Quran says:

وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ
فَاجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ

“Remember that the recompense of an injury is an injury the like thereof; but whoso forgives and thereby brings about a reformation, his reward is with Allah. Surely, Allah loves not wrong-doers.”⁴⁰

Islam thus combines the best features of both the earlier teachings, with the vital addition that forgiveness is commended provided it is likely to result in an improvement and the correction of the defaulter, that being the real objective. If not, then punishment is held to be necessary, but not exceeding the degree to which one is wronged. Surely, this guidance is in full conformity with human nature and is as practicable today as when it was revealed fourteen centuries ago.

Some other distinctions

The subject of Islam's distinctive features is a very vast one, and I have been able to deal with just a few aspects that I had chosen

39. Matthew 5 : 35-45

40. 42 - 41

for this presentation. Time will permit no more than a passing reference for certain other aspects that I would not wish to omit;

1. Islam holds God to be the Creator of the universe and presents His Unity in stark simple terms, comprehensible and appealing both to a rustic and an intellectual. Islam calls God a Perfect Being, the fountainhead of all excellences and free of all blemishes. He is a living God Who manifests Himself everywhere and Who loves His creation and listens to their supplications. None of His attributes have been suspended; He, therefore, communicates with mankind as before, and has not barred the avenues to reach Him directly.
2. Islam holds that there is no contradiction between God's word and His deed. It, thus, frees us from the traditional rivalry between science and religion, and does not require man to believe in anything beyond the laws of nature determined by Him. He urges us to ponder over nature and to put it to beneficent use, for everything has been created for the benefit of mankind.
3. Islam does not make idle claims or compel us to believe what we do not understand. It supports its teachings with reason and explanation, satisfying our intellect and also the depths of our soul.
4. Islam is not based on myths or folklore. It invites everyone to experiment for himself and holds that truth is always verifiable, in one form or another.
5. The revealed Book of Islam is unique, distinguishing it from all other faiths. Despite their collective efforts over centuries, its opponents have not been able to equal even a small portion of this wondrous Book. Its merit lies not only in its unique literary excellence, but also in the simplicity and comprehensiveness of its teachings. The Quran proclaims that it is the best teaching—a claim made by no other revealed Book.
6. The Quran claims that it combines the best features of earlier Scriptures, and all enduring and comprehensive teaching has been placed within its fold. The Quran says:
"Herein are lasting commandments" and "This indeed is what is taught in former Scriptures—The Scriptures of Abraham and Moses."
7. A distinctive feature of Islam is that its revealed Book is

in a living language. Is it not curious that the languages of all other revealed Books are either dead or no longer in general use? A living Book, it seems, had to be in a living and ever-enduring language.

8. Another distinction of Islam is that its Prophet passed through every imaginable stage of human experience, starting from an impoverished and orphaned childhood and ending as the undisputed ruler of his people. His life has been documented in minute detail and reflects unparalleled faith in God and constant sacrifice in His way. He lived a full and eventful life packed with action, and has left behind an example of perfect conduct in every sphere of human endeavour. This is only fitting and proper, as he was a living interpretation of the Quran, and by personal example lighted the way of mankind for all time to come—a role not fulfilled adequately by any other Prophet.
9. Another distinction of Islam is its many prophecies that have been fulfilled over the ages and have reinforced the faith of its followers in the existence of the All-knowing and Living God. This process continues to this day, as witnessed by the recent discovery of the preserved body of the Pharaoh who had driven Moses and his people out of Egypt. Another fresh example of the Quranic Prophecy is about the development of new means of destruction, where fire would be locked in minute particles which would stretch and agitate before exploding with a ferocity that would cause mountains to evaporate.
10. Another feature of Islam is, that when it talks of the hereafter and life after death, it also prophesies future events of this world, the fulfilment of which reinforces the faith of its followers in the life after death.
11. Islam is distinct from other faiths in providing a comprehensive code of conduct in individual, collective and international dealings. These directions encompass every imaginable situation and include the relationship between the young and the old, the employer and the employee, among family members, between friends and partners, and even between adversaries. The rules and principles enunciated are truly universal and have already stood the test of time.
12. Islam proclaims complete equality among mankind,

irrespective of differences of caste, creed and colour. The only criterion of honour it accepts is that of righteousness, not of birth, riches, race or colour. The Quran says:

إِنِّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اتَّقَا كُؤ

“Verily, the most honourable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you.”⁴¹
And again:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

“Whoso does good, whether male or female, and is a believer — these will enter the Garden; they will be provided therein without measure.”⁴²

13. Islam presents a definition of good and evil that distinguishes it from all other faiths. It does not hold natural human desires to be evil; it only calls their inordinate and improper satisfaction to be evil. Islam teaches that our natural inclinations should be regulated and channelized so as to make them constructive and beneficent for the society.
14. Islam has not only made women heirs to property, but has given them equal rights with men, but not in a manner that would disregard the distinctive features of their anatomy and their exclusive responsibilities in the bearing and nursing of children.

A Religion of Peace

In the end, I would give all seekers of peace the glad tidings that Islam alone is the faith that guarantees peace in all spheres and at all levels: individual, social, economic, national and supranational. Islam alone bears a name, the literal meaning of which is ‘peace’, and one who becomes a Muslim, not only enters a safe haven himself but also guarantees it for others, and shuns all actions that might lead to inequity and disruption. The Holy Prophet said that a Muslim is he whose word and deed do no harm to others.⁴³ The momentous address of the Holy Prophet delivered shortly before his death, and

41. 49 : 14

42. 40 : 41

43. Bukhari — Kitabul Iman

after the performance of what has come to be called the Farewell Pilgrimage, is an eternal charter of peace for all mankind. Islam enjoins peace not only between men, but also between man and his Maker, so that not only other men remain unharmed from the word and deed of a Muslim, but he himself remains safe from God's wrath and censure, the recompense which is merited as a result of committing transgression. So, a Muslim's peace obtains in this world and also extends to the hereafter.

Islam's teachings, if followed by the nations of the world, are fully capable of saving them from strife and destruction. Islam is a living faith and claims to be able to place the relationship of man with God on the same plane as it was in the days long past. Islam does not consider revelation and communion with God to be a thing of the past. It believes that the avenues of spiritual bliss trodden upon by Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and, above all, the Prophet of Islam, are still open and beckoning to those desirous of close communion with God.

The Ahmadiyya Movement

The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam believes that these claims have been fulfilled in our age in the person of its founder Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who was born in 1835 in the remote village of Qadian in India. He was enabled by Divine mercy to tread the path of piety and righteousness, and, strictly following the teachings of Islam, was blessed with intimate communion with the Almighty. He received Divine revelation, which also formed the basis of his many prophecies, whose unfailing fulfilment has continued beyond his life.

In accordance with Divine direction, he founded the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam in the year 1889, and, leaving behind a dedicated and vibrant community of disciples numbering several hundred thousands, he departed from this earthly abode in 1908. His mission continues, and the Community has all along been headed by elected successors.

While describing his mission, The founder of our Movement had said:

"I have been sent that I should prove that Islam alone is a living religion. And I have been blessed with spiritual powers that render helpless those of other faiths, and also those from among us who are spiritually blinded. I can demonstrate to every opponent that the Quran is a miracle in its teachings, its enlightened knowledge, its deep and delicate insight, and in

its perfect eloquence. It excels the miracles of Moses, and those of Jesus a hundred fold."⁴⁴

He goes on to say:

"I am the light in the darkness of this age. He who follows me, will be saved from the pits and ditches dug by the Devil to ensnare those straying in the dark. He has sent me so that I should lead the world, gently and in peace, to the One True God, and re-establish moral excellences of Islam. And I have been given heavenly signs to satisfy those who seek the truth."⁴⁵

I now end my address with another quotation from the writings of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, which is a call to the whole of mankind:

"The mirror which enables you to behold That Lofty Being, is His communion with man Let one whose heart yearns for the truth, stand up and search. I tell you in all truth, that if souls search honestly and hearts really thirst for the truth, then men should look for the right method and the right path. But how will this path open, and how will this veil be lifted? I assure all seekers that Islam alone gives the glad tidings of this path, for others have long since placed a seal on God's revelation. But, be assured that God has not placed this seal: this is a mere excuse conjured up by man in his deprivation. Verily, as it is not possible to see without our eyes, or hear without our ears, in exactly the same way, it is impossible to behold the countenance of That Beloved, without the help of the Quran. I was a young man, and now I am grown old, but I have never found anyone who has drunk of the ultimate spiritual elixir, except from this holy spring."⁴⁶

Doubtless, this call is a life-giving message for every soul that seeks the real truth.

44. Anjam-i-Atham (Rohani Khazain) vol 11. pp. 345, 346

45. Jesus In India

46. The Philosophy of the teachings of Islam. p. 131, 132.



THE ROLE OF THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PAKISTAN

By
Aftab Ahmad Khan

According to a prophecy of the Holy Prophet of Islam, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, the principal function of the Promised Messiah was to revive the faith of Islam. The fulfilment of this prophecy is being witnessed every day. Inspired and instructed by the teachings and writings of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, peace be on him, the Ahmadiyya Movement has devoted itself to the revival and rejuvenation of Islam. To begin with, the advent of the Promised Messiah transformed the fate and future of Muslims in India. After more than five centuries of political and social ascendancy in the Indian subcontinent, the Muslims had degenerated into a defeated and demoralised nation by the second half of the last century. Of course, the seeds of degeneration were sown by their own hands; they had given up the values and principles of Islam and had adopted the practices and customs of pantheism which characterized the native cultures and beliefs of India. Eventually, they were divided by Western colonizers who overpowered them through military superiority. At the same time, the Muslims had fallen an easy prey to economic exploitation by the Hindus. Thus at the turn of the century, they had fallen into an abyss of spiritual decadence and political disarray from which there seemed no hope of escape. In fact, Muslims all over the world were in such a state of confusion and humiliation that, as prophesied by the Holy Prophet of Islam, peace and blessings be on him, the time had arrived for divine intervention in the form of the Second Advent of the Messiah.

In 1884, the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, completed the first four volumes of his monumental work — *براهین احمدیہ* (Proofs of Ahmad)—which presented the most logical and irrefutable arguments in support of the truth of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be on him. It provided a breath of new life and a ray of fresh hope for the despondent and demoralised Indian Muslims. They were engaged in a desperate struggle for survival against the determined onslaught, on the one hand, of powerful Christian missionaries supported and encouraged by the British rulers and, on the other, of wealthy and militant Hindu revivalist groups like Arya Samaj and Brahmo Samaj whose aim was to reduce the Muslim populations of Northern and Eastern India into a sub-servient class of Hindu society and, thus, isolate Indian Muslims and cut off

their links with the rest of the Islamic world. Though some distinguished Muslim scholars and social workers had emerged in mid-nineteenth century to warn the Muslims against the dangers facing them, it was not until the appearance of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian that the Muslims found the most fearless and formidable champion of their cause. Even those who were opposed to him on matters of doctrine acknowledged his extraordinary contribution towards the spiritual enlightenment and moral uplifting of Muslims in India. One of his bitterest enemies, Maulvi Muhammad Hussain of Batala, a great scholar in his own right, wrote:

“In my opinion, this book (Braheen-e-Ahmadiyya), at this time and in view of the present conditions, is unique. No such book has so far been written in the annals of Islam.” (Ishaat us Sunnah Vol. VII, p. 6-11).

A Homeland for Indian Muslims

Until his death in 1908, the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, continued successfully to defend and uphold Islam and its principles against all attacks and allegations. He was constantly engaged, under Divine guidance, in writing articles and books on Islam, in participating in public addresses and debates and in challenging the enemies of Islam. He provided the Muslims of India with spiritual inspiration and moral support to lift themselves out of the dust and to stand up with dignity and self-confidence against Christians, Hindus and all other detractors of Islam. Without this spiritual awakening and the newly aroused sense of pride in Islam, the Indian Muslims could never have achieved the seemingly impossible task of waging a successful fight for securing their political and economic rights from the hands of powerful adversaries. Without detracting from the valuable contributions made by contemporary Muslim reformers and thinkers like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Mohsin-ul-Mulk, Viqar-ul-Mulk, Maulana Shibli and Maulana Altaf Hussain Hali, I submit that the seed of the concept of a homeland for Indian Muslims was sown by the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, peace be on him, because it was his declared mission to establish the supremacy of Islam and the superiority of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be on him, all over the world. In India, it meant the establishment of a state over which the banner of Islam would fly forever.

A divine revelation

That the Promised Messiah had been foretold by Allah about an Islamic state in India is borne out by historical record. In its

issue of 17-24 December, 1903, the first Ahmadiyya newspaper, "Al Hakam", published a divine revelation received by the Promised Messiah in these words: *رسول اللہ پناہ گزین ہوئے قلعہ ہند میں* i.e. Allah's Prophet took shelter in the citadel of India.

A year and a half later, on 20th December 1905, the second Ahmadiyya newspaper, "Al Badr", published the following account of a divine manifestation witnessed by the Promised Messiah:

"I am very loudly reciting 'Allah o Akbar', 'Allah o Akbar' and the whole of Azan. A man is perched on the top of a tall tree and reciting the same words. Afterwards, I started reciting Durood Sharif in a loud voice and that gentleman came down the tree and said, "Syed Muhammad Ali Shah has arrived." Thereafter, what I witness is a severe earthquake and the earth is shaking like a ball of corded cotton. Then, the following was revealed to me: 'It is the Gracious Lord ahead of you'."

I wish to refer to three aspects of this significant vision. The first is a mention of the name, Syed Muhammad Ali Shah, which is a clear reference to Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who became the founder—the Shah—of Pakistan, nearly half a century later. Then there is a reference to an earthquake and the Indian Subcontinent did undergo a shock at the time of Partition in 1947. Finally, there is a confirmation that Allah will always guide and accompany the Promised Messiah and his progeny.

The year 1905 is also significant in India's political history. Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah started his political career as a young secretary of a distinguished Parsi leader of the All India Congress Party, Sir Dadabhoy Naroji. This was the year when the Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, announced the partition of the province of Bengal which had grown into an unmanageable administrative unit. The division of Bengal was violently opposed by the Hindu community because it endangered their political and economic vested interests as the Muslim peasantry of eastern districts of Bengal had for long contributed to the prosperity of Hindu businessmen and money lenders of Calcutta. Though the division of Bengal was annulled in 1911 by the British government under pressure from the All India Congress Party, it was the first clear sign that the political and economic interests of Hindus and Muslims were diametrically opposed and that the majority Hindu community was not prepared to concede even the most legitimate rights of the minority Muslim community. The Muslims who had, by and large, cooperated with the Hindus for a common cause of independence of a united India, were rudely shaken and disillusioned. The Two Nation theory,

thus, became a political reality in India and the division of Bengal in 1905 served as the introductory chapter of the Partition of the subcontinent in 1947.

From 1906 to 1947, India passed through various stages of constitutional development leading the country ultimately to full independence. The Hindus had demanded a united India in which they would enjoy a 4 to 1 majority over the Muslims and thus hold power under a western oriented political system. For the British, a united India was a geopolitical concept dear to their heart. For administrative convenience and security of the Raj, they had devised a strong central government with a single army and unified superior services. The Muslims, on the other hand, had neither a common objective nor a united platform. The first attempt to organise them was in 1906 when the All India Muslim League was formed in Dacca. The same year, a delegation of Muslim leaders, led by His Highness the Aga Khan, called on the Viceroy of India, Lord Minto, and put forward the demand for separate voting rights for the Muslims. In the beginning, the attempts by the Muslim League to unite and organise Indian Muslims met with limited success only. It was not until the late nineteen thirties that the Muslims, under the leadership of Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, started organising themselves as an effective political force in anticipation of the independence of India which had become inevitable as a consequence of the Second World War.

The Role of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II

In their struggle for recognition as a separate entity and the fight to secure their legitimate rights, the Indian Muslims and the Muslim League had the unqualified support of the Ahmadiyya Community. In 1914 Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad became the Second Successor of the Promised Messiah. Apart from being blessed with great spiritual qualities, he possessed extraordinary political acumen and a separate discourse will be required to outline his services towards the political and social emancipation of Indian Muslims. He did not join any political party but his wise counsel was sought by Muslim leaders on critical occasions. He either wrote himself or caused to be written many books and articles on the important issues confronting the country and providing necessary guidance to Indian Muslims. In 1922-23, he successfully and singlehandedly fought against a campaign by the Arya Samaj to convert the Muslim Rajputs—called Malkanas—in the United Provinces of India. The members of the Ahmadiyya Community responded to his appeal and served as volunteers to prevent the mass

apostacy of poor and frustrated Malkana Muslims. In 1924, he was invited to visit London for participating in the Commonwealth Conference of Living Religions. Apart from introducing true Islam to the people of the West, he made them conscious of the separate entity of Muslims in India. In 1928, he wrote "Muslim Rights and the Nehru Report", exposing the serious danger to the Muslims from the constitutional plan devised by a committee of the All India Congress Party under the leadership of Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, father of Jawahar Lal Nehru. A little earlier, one of the most distinguished Indian Muslim leaders, Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar, had paid tribute to the Head of the Ahmadiyya Community in these words "It will be ungrateful if we do not mention Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad and his well disciplined community who have devoted all their efforts, irrespective of doctrinal differences, towards the welfare of the Muslims. These gentlemen are, on the one hand, taking active interest in the politics of Muslims and, on the other, energetically engaged in promoting the unity, organisation, trade and preaching among Muslims. Time is not far away when the attitude of this organised sect of Islam will provided guidance for the Muslim nation in general and for those persons in particular who are idly sitting under the domes of Bismillah and making boastful and empty claims of service to Islam." (Hamdard, 26 September, 1927).

The Round Table Conference

Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih II, wrote another important book entitled "A solution of the present political problem of India" on the eve of the First Round Table Conference held in London in November 1930. Our respected leader, Sir Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, represented Indian Muslims in this conference as well as in the following conferences in 1931 and 1932, alongwith other important leaders such as Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, His Highness the Aga Khan and Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal. In his recently published book "Servant of God" Sir Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrulla Khan has repeatedly acknowledged the debt that he owed to Khalifatul Masih II for the inspiration and guidance which enabled him to play an important part not only in the three Round Table Conferences but in the subsequent negotiations leading to India's independence. In 1931, Chaudhry Sahib was elected as President of the All India Muslim League and presided over its annual session in New Delhi.

Formation of all India Kashmir Committee

Even a brief account of the invaluable contribution of Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad in helping Indian Muslims to identify their problems and to plan strategies for achieving their objectives, will not be complete without mentioning two important services rendered by him. In 1931, at his initiative, the All India Kashmir Committee was established to help the Muslims of that State secure fundamental human and political rights from an autocratic Maharaja. He was elected as the first President of this Committee which included among others Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal. The time, effort and resources provided by Khalifatul Masih II until the end of his life, for the Muslims of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, have been recorded and duly acknowledged by the Kashmiri leaders including the late Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah returns to Pakistan

The second important development which had a lasting impact on the political scene in India was the personal intervention of Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad in persuading Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to return to India and resume leadership of the Indian Muslims at a critical time when their future was in jeopardy. Disgusted and dismayed at the intransigence of the Hindu leaders and the lack of unity amongst the Muslims, Mr. Jinnah decided to settle down in London after the Third Round Table Conference in 1932. How he was persuaded to return to India is described in the book "Ahmadi Muslims—A Historical Outline" by Mr. Nuruddin Munir published by Lajna Imaillah Rabwah.

"Hazrat Khalifatul Masih was distressed at the turn of events. He knew that it was Mr. Jinnah who could guide and lead the Muslims of India. There was no other leader with the political sagacity and iron nerves required to secure for Indian Muslims a decent political future. He felt that if Mr. Jinnah would not come back the Muslim cause would be lost. So he deputed Mr. Dard, Ahmadiyya Missionary in London, to see Mr. Jinnah and persuade him to come back to India for taking up the case of the Indian Muslims. Mr. Dard had many interviews with Mr. Jinnah. Eventually Mr. Jinnah changed his mind and agreed to return to India and resume the political struggle for Indian Muslims. The start was made in London. Mr. Dard arranged a meeting on the lawns of the London Mosque. Some 200 politicians and intellectuals attended. Those included Mr. Pethick Lawrence, Sir Edward McLagen, Professor H.A.R. Gibb, Sir Denison Ross. Sir Nairne Stewart Sandeman presided. Mr. Jinnah spoke on 'India of the Future'. He started his talk with the announcement

that Mr. Dard's persuasion had compelled him to come again into the political field, from which he had withdrawn. 'The eloquent persuasion of the Imam left me no escape.'

"The speech was extensively reported in the press. The Sunday Times, London, in its issue of April 9, 1933, wrote:

There was also a large gathering in the grounds of the Mosque in the Melrose Road, Wimbledon, where Mr. Jinnah, the famous Indian Muslim, spoke on India's future. Mr. Jinnah made unfavourable comments on the Indian White Paper from a national point of view. The Chairman, Sir N. Steward Sandeman, M.P., took up the Churchill attitude on the subject and this led to heckling by some of the Muslim students, who were, however, eventually calmed by the Imam of the mosque."

In case any one objected that this account came from an Ahmadi source, let me refer to a non-Ahmadi writer whose credibility is beyond any doubt. Writing in a special supplement of the Pakistan Times on 11 September, 1981, the well known journalist, Mian Muhammad Shafi, recorded the following:

"So disgusted was Mr. Jinnah with washing of the dirty linen of Indian politics in public by the leaders of Indian public opinion that he decided to retire from Indian politics and in token thereof took his abode in London—almost permanently. It was Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan and Maulana Abdur Rahim Dard, an Imam of London Mosque, who persuaded Mr. M.A. Jinnah to change his mind and return home to play his role in the national politics. Consequently, Mr. Jinnah returned to India in 1934 and was elected to the Central Assembly, un-opposed."

Support for the All India Muslim League

So, Mr. Jinnah returned to India and resumed the political struggle on behalf of Indian Muslims. At its historic session in Lahore in 1940, the All India Muslim League demanded a separate homeland for one hundred million Muslims in India where they could order their lives in accord with Islam. This was the famous Pakistan resolution. Despite strong opposition from the Congress as well as the British government, this demand was eventually met and Pakistan came into existence as an independent and sovereign state on 14th August, 1947. Once again, the Ahmadiyya Community under the guidance of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II played an active role in the process leading to the establishment of Pakistan. In the elections of 1946, he advised not only the members of the Ahmadiyya Community but also all other Muslims to rally round the leadership of the

All India Muslim League and to support the demand for Pakistan on which those elections were fought. It is significant to note that even among Muslim political and religious groups and leaders, there were some who violently opposed the creation of Pakistan and criticised Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and the same factions and people have been the enemies of Ahmadiyyat and its Founder. It is a paradox that some of these are now claiming to be the champions of Islam and the guardians of Pakistan.

The Boundry Commission & Partition of India

A tragic consequence of the Partition of India was the partition of the province of the Punjab. For this purpose, a Boundary Commission was set up under a British judge, Sir Cyril Radcliffe. Sir Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrulla Khan was nominated by the Quaid-e-Azam to represent the Muslims of the Punjab before that Commission. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II worked day and night assisting Chaudhry Sahib's effort to put up an irrefutable case on behalf of the Muslims. At his expense, he secured important documents and also the services of an expert from London—Professor Speight of London School of Economics—who gave useful advice on geopolitical aspects of the boundary line. However, the Radcliffe Award was based not on the merits of the case but on political expediency of the Viceroy and Governor-General, Lord Louis Mountbatten who was instrumental in yielding the Muslim majority district of Gurdaspur to India which provided India an access to the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Apart from creating the Kashmir dispute as a continuing source of friction between India and Pakistan, the unjust Award left Qadian on the Indian side of the border and compelled the Imam of the Ahmadiyya community to migrate to Pakistan and establish a new centre at Rabwah. This eventuality was foreseen by the Promised Messiah who had predicted in 1902, in his publication in these terms: "The Christian people will commit a fraud to torment us . . . those will be the days of trial . . . And you should say 'O God give me a place in پاک زمین (pure land) which will be a sort of spiritual migration'."

Later, some avowed opponents of Ahmadiyyat criticised the role of Sir Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan as advocate of Muslims before the Punjab Boundary Commission. An unequivocal rebuttal came from Justice Mr. Muhammad Munir who was a member of that Boundary Commission and who later presided over the Commission of Inquiry into anti-Ahmadi disturbances in 1953 and wrote thus in his famous report:

"Vile and unfounded charges have been levelled against the

Ahmadis that the district of Gurdaspur was assigned to India by the Award of the Boundary Commission because of the attitude adopted by the Ahmadis and the arguments addressed by Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan who had been selected by the Quaid-i-Azam to present the case of the Muslim League before that Commission. But the President of the Court, who was a Member of that Commission considers it his duty to record his gratitude to Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan for the valiant fight he put up for Gurdaspur. This is apparent from the record of the Boundary Commission which anyone who is interested may see. For the selfless services rendered by him to the Muslim community, it is shameless ingratitude for anyone to refer to Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan in the manner in which he has been referred to by certain parties before the Court of Inquiry.”

(Page 197)

Sir Zafrulla Khan appointed the first Foreign Minister

The Quaid-e-Azam was so pleased with the performance and services of Sir Chaudhry Muhammad Zafrulla Khan that he immediately nominated him to lead Pakistan's first delegation to the United Nations in 1947 and soon afterwards appointed him as the first Foreign Minister of Pakistan.

The Partition of the country was accompanied by an unparalleled holocaust of death and destruction in many parts of India. Members of the Ahmadiyya community shared the suffering and grief with their Muslim brethren in East Punjab. Qadian provided a temporary refuge and a haven of security for hundreds and thousands of Muslims who were fleeing from India for refuge in Pakistan.

Lectures by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II

On migration from Qadian, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II stayed in Lahore for sometime. Here, again, he devoted a good deal of his time in educating the people about their new responsibilities as citizens of a state pledged to follow the principles of Islam. In many articles and speeches, he discussed problems of Pakistan's development, defence and security. In an article published in the Ahmadiyya daily "Al-Fazal" on 14th October, 1947, he urged the Government to establish relations with all the Muslim countries, particularly Indonesia and Saudi Arabia. A day later, he emphasised the need for expanding the armed forces and appointing Pakistani commanders. He also wrote on Islamic democratic principles and the practical steps of establishing an Islamic system of society. He delivered six historical lectures in Lahore during December 1947

and January 1948 on the current problems of Pakistan and their solution. The intelligentsia of the country was deeply impressed with his views. He served the cause of Pakistan because he believed it to be a part of the divine mission for which the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement was deputed.

Pakistan – A Divine Gift

It is most unfortunate that enemies of the Ahmadiyya Movement have been engaged in attempting to minimise, misrepresent or completely ignore the contributions made by the Founder of the Ahmadiyya community, his distinguished Successors and devoted followers towards the rejuvenation of Islam in India. They have gone to the extent of even rewriting the history books to remove any trace of the role of members of the Ahmadiyya community in the establishment and consolidation of Pakistan. Such blatantly prejudiced and false propaganda is still being carried out against the community that the new generation in Pakistan would never be able to know the facts. Apart from other long term dangers to the national psyche, such a mutilation of history would provide a weapon in the hands of enemies of Islam who have always doubted the credibility and questioned the basis of the struggle of Muslims for a separate homeland in Pakistan. The political and constitutional discrimination against the members of the Ahmadiyya community also constitutes a complete negation of the views of the Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on the fundamental features of the state of Pakistan which were elaborated in his historical address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan in Karachi on 12th August, 1947. Despite all this, the commitment of the Ahmadiyya community to Pakistan will never waver or weaken. How deeply and devoutly its members believe in the Divine gift of Pakistan can be judged by the pronouncements of their Imam, Hazrat Mirza Bashir-uddin Mahmud Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih II. On the occasion of the Annual Jalsa of the Jamaat held in 1947, he declared "The achievement of Pakistan is significant insofar as it enables the Muslims, with Allah's grace, to breathe with relief. They can now freely take part in the race for progress. They have unlimited opportunities for improvement and if these are seized, no other nation on earth can compete with them. The establishment of Pakistan is, however, the first step. We have to march forward and make it as a stepping stone for Islamisation based on justice and equity. The real achievement will be to assemble all Muslim countries on one platform. It is our duty to raise the banner of Islam over all the countries and to carry the name and message of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings

be on him, to the four corners of the world . . . My heart is burning with a fire and a passion which makes me restless at all hours of the day and night. I want to raise Muslims from the depths of degradation to the heights of grandeur. I want to carry the name of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be on him, to the whole world. I do not know whether this will happen within my lifetime or not. However, I do know that I wish to take part, to the extent God Almighty would enable me, in building the magnificent structure of Islam . . . Allah has granted us a country which — whether it acts as Islamic or not—is indeed of Islam and belongs to Allah's Prophet, Muhammad, peace and blessings be on him It is a matter of great joy that God has given us this country, even though it is small, it is ours. That this state has been established in the name of the Holy Prophet of Islam, peace and blessings be on him is a source of utmost pleasure for me and makes me forget all the grief that I have suffered at the loss of a house in India because my Lord and Master, Muhammad, peace and blessings be on him, has acquired a home. It is true that four and a half million Muslims have been deprived of thier homes. They have also lost other assets. However, they have gained a homeland about which the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be on him, considers as his home and which is far more precious than all the lost houses and properties.”

The glorious future

How can any member of the Ahmadiyya community ever feel despondent about his life in Pakistan when his beloved Imam expressed such a tribute to a country which is to represent all the values and traditions inherited from the Founder of Islam and revived by his devoted servant, the Promised Messiah? Let the whole world hear once again the statement of the Second Successor to the Promised Messiah, published in the *Al-Fazal* of 30th September 1947—only a few weeks after the establishment of Pakistan when the rest of the world was wondering whether this new state would be able to survive or not. He predicted:

“Almighty God will never allow the tree that He has planted to be destroyed by the hands of the enemy. He will never permit the banner to be pulled down which has been raised in this country by Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be on him. Allah will not tolerate that the Holy Quran be ever insulted in this country. He will surely grant them honour and bless them with good fortune and success. God Almighty has ordained victory for Islam and for Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be on him, and for the banner of Islam to fly high above all other banners.”

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

By

Dr. Aziz Ahmad Chaudhri

The Essene Sect

At the time of Jesus there were three main sects of Judaism; Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Essenes. This is testified by a 1st Century Jewish historian, Josephus who writes that these three were the main sects during his lifetime. For some reason the Essenes are not mentioned in the gospels. But they were an important group. In this section we will confine our discussion to Essenes as in recent years there has been a resurgence of interest shown in this sect due to discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Moreover, the main reason for our interest in Essenes is the theory that Jesus had belonged to the Essenes during his early years.

Josephus has written about Essenes in his work, *De Bello Judaico* (Ch 8) and especially in his *Historia Antiqua Judaica* (Book 3, ch 5). His description is authentic as in his early years he was personally associated with Essenes. On reading Josephus, we get the following description:

The doctrine of Essenes tended to make men confident to trust their fate in the hands of God as they believed that nothing happened without His Will. They believed that the soul is immortal and aspired to lead a righteous and honest life. They were very industrious, enterprising, and showed great skill in agriculture.

They exercised justice and equality in their dealings with all people and having all their property in common, rich and poor shared with each other. They never married as they thought that it would create discord among the brethren. They did not think it right that one should be slave or servant of the other as all men are brethren and God is their Father. Therefore, they lived entirely separate from women and served and assisted each other.

They chose most virtuous and honest men to work as accountants for the profits of their agricultural labour and other handicraft. They also performed the service of priests and provided for all their wants including food and clothing. Compared to other Jews, they showed more amity and love for each other and lived a more moral life.

They shunned and despised sensuality as a great sin but considered

a moral and temperate life a great virtue. They had the custom of adopting children of other people, especially when they were very young as this is the most impressionable age. They showed great kindness and love to these children and taught them all kinds of knowledge, sciences, morals, and religion. They did not reject wedlock altogether as it is necessary for the propagation of mankind but for themselves they prohibited marriage as they feared unchastity of women and considered it a source of discord.

They despised riches and worldly gains and the equality of property among them was admirable. The laws of their order regulated that anyone who entered their brotherhood gave up all his property and wealth, donating it to the common property of the sect; as a result neither haughtiness nor slavish subjection was seen among them. They all lived together as brethren, sharing both good and evil.

They did not live in any particular town but in every town their order had its respective house where members lived, received travellers and kept their supplies. Essenes wore their clothes until they were worn out. They neither bought or sold among themselves but every member willingly shared with each other.

The Essenes worship of God was grand, sacred, and majestic. Before the sunrise they did not speak on worldly matters but read sacred prayers. The prayer being over, they worked in their various professions till noon time when they gathered again, bathed themselves with cold water, and donned a white linen garb. Then they proceeded to special halls of the order where meals were served in silence. They offered prayer before the meal and again after it. They sang a hymn of praise to give thanks to God, the Giver of all good, both before and after the meal. They then took off their white aprons which they considered as sacred and returned to their work until evening. They observed the same ceremonies for their evening meal. They took their meals in most solemn silence, no noise or dispute disturbing the peace of the house. They observed great temperance in their way of living, eating, and drinking.

One of their principles was "to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, comfort the sick, visit, assist, and comfort the prisoner, and comfort, aid and protect the widows and fatherless." They never let themselves be overcome by anger, hatred, and vengeance, or ill will. Indeed they were the champions of faith, truth, and honesty and servants and arbitrators of peace. Except the oath they took at their initiation into the order, they did not bind themselves through an oath. They had profound knowledge of the art of healing, and were well acquainted with medicinal herbs and plants and minerals.

Anybody who wished to belong to the brotherhood was not admitted at once but had to pass a whole year of trial and follow certain rules and regulations. If he proved himself worthy by living a strict moral and virtuous life, he was provided with a spade, an apron, and a white garb and again had to undergo further trials. Later he was sprinkled with water or baptized as a sign of his spiritual purity and liberation from material things.

At last having proved strength of character and other qualities he was admitted as an actual member of the brotherhood and at that time had to take the following sacred vow:

"Above all things to fear God, of a true and pure heart, exercise justice and honesty to all men; neither by impulse nor influenced by others, harm or hurt any man; during all his life to shun injustice, and ever undaunted, further truth and justice."

"Further, he vows sacredly ever to obey his worldly ruler, as nobody has the rule without the will of God, and if he becomes a ruler, he does vow not to misuse power, and to set an example for his subjects by a virtuous life, frugality, and plain clothing. He shall always love truth and shun falsehood, preserve his mind from any impure thought or impulse, and never stain his hands with unjust gain.

For the third, he vows never to interpret or explain anything of the laws of the order in any other spirit than he himself has received it from holy fathers and faithfully hide and take care of the books and archives of the order and according to special regulations to keep secret the name of angels with whom the fathers formerly stood in communion." This was the vow that every member had to take and they considered it so sacred that they would suffer death than to break it.

They kept sabbath more punctually and conscientiously than any other Jews. All members of Essene sect were grouped in four separate classes or ranks. Older groups were considered superior to younger ones. Essenes possessed courage and uncommon tranquility of mind. They could bear pain and suffering with the greatest fortitude and strength of mind and in defense of anything good and just, they gladly preferred death to life. In the Roman war (66-73 A.D.) they suffered great persecutions.

Essenes believed the soul to be immortal which after death lives eternally. It was their saying that during worldly life the spirit is chained to the body like a prisoner in his cell but when these chains burst at death, the spirit is freed from the bodily prison and already tasting the heavenly bliss, it soars up to the bright kingdom of joy and peace.

The greetings of Essenes to each other was "Peace be with you." They had the custom of presenting their doctrines to younger members and brethren in parables or allegorical form, thereby to form and exercise the mind and sharpen the intellect.

Above is a summary of description by the learned Josephus of this interesting Essene brotherhood.

Another learned author about Essenes is the Jewish philosopher, Philo, who was a contemporary of Jesus but lived in Alexandria, Egypt. In several of his writings he has described doctrines and customs of Essenes. Generally, his descriptions of Essenes correspond and compliment that of Josephus. According to Philo, "The Therapeuts" were those Essenes who of their own free will had retired into solitude and who for love of Godliness and heavenly things passed their time in studying religion and nature. They lived in several places in Palestine and Egypt and in the later country their greatest congregation was in the vicinity of the city of Alexandria.

Thus we have two authentic authors who have described the Jewish sect of Essenes in their writings.

A reflection upon the doctrines and customs of the Essenes reveals a similarity with the precepts and traditions of Christianity. Their emphasis on righteous life, forgiveness, brotherhood, and peaceful living is similar to the teachings of Jesus in the gospels. The Essenes' vow to obey their worldly rulers remind us of the words of Jesus, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesars, and unto God things that are God's." Like gospel teachings, the Essenes emphasized to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless and comfort the sick. Like the Essene custom, Jesus taught religious truths in allegorical forms of parables. During his post crucifixion appearances to disciples, Jesus persistently used the Essene greeting, "Peace be with you". According to some scholars, the Christian communion and baptism has its roots in the Essene rites of the sacred meal and sprinkling of water and baptizing to clean the body spiritually. The elements of atonement were added to it later on, when that became the church doctrine. Christian monasticism and ecclesiastical hierarchy remind us of the celibacy and rigid hierarchy of Essenes. One wonders if the reason for Jesus not marrying during his Palestinian life was due to the influence of Essenes.

Many Biblical scholars are agreed about the influence of the Essene sect on Christianity and the early church, especially in view of the discovery of Dead Sea scrolls which have thrown fresh light upon this Jewish sect. There has long been a theory that Jesus was an Essene which

would explain the similarities between his teachings and that of Essenes and it would appear probable that Jesus lived with Essenes during long periods of his life before his ministry about which the gospels are absolutely silent. It is also postulated that John the Baptist also belonged to the Essene sect.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

In early spring of 1947, a Bedouin boy was herding his goats near a cliff on the western shore of the Dead Sea. He noticed a cave he had not seen before and he just threw a stone into it. There was an unfamiliar sound of breakage. He was frightened and ran away. But later he returned with another boy and together they explored the cave. Inside they found several tall clay jars. They took off lids of jars and inside they found ancient manuscripts written in Hebrew but they did not know the language. They sold the manuscripts which eventually reached the hands of scholars. Thus began the story of the most spectacular manuscript discovery of modern times, known as the Dead Sea scrolls. Except for a few scraps in the past, these are the first ancient Hebrew manuscripts known.

The area of the cave on the western shore of the Dead Sea where scrolls were found is known as Qumran. Later all the caves in Qumran neighbourhood, more than two hundred, were searched by archaeologists and other experts. In addition to manuscripts they collected tens of thousands of fragments of manuscripts. It became apparent that a whole library had been hidden in the caves which seemed to have included almost all the books of the Bible, a number of apocryphal works and literature of the Essene sect. These manuscripts and their fragments were kept in the Palestine Archaeological Museum in Old Jerusalem for further study and research. Some of the manuscripts were acquired by the Government of Israel and a special museum was built to house them. These Manuscripts have been photographed, translated, and published. Numerous books by Hebrew and Biblical scholars have been written about the Dead Sea scrolls.

There was an old ruin near the original cave on the western shore of The Dead Sea with only a bit of stone wall protruding out of the ground. It has been known in Arabic as “Khirbet Qumran” (Ruin of Qumran). Discovery of scrolls in the caves nearby heightened the interest of archaeologists in this ruin. It was almost completely excavated by Roland De Vaux of the Ecole Biblique and Mr. Harding of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan. The result was astonishing. Excavation has resulted in a very ancient stone building containing twenty to thirty rooms and thirteen cisterns for water and with much of its equipment intact. Nearby there is a cemetery with more than a

thousand graves. The building looks like a monastery and all evidence seems to establish that it was one of the habitations, if not actually the headquarters of the Essene sect. Most scholars are agreed that this Dead Sea community who deposited its library in the caves, were Essenes. However there is some dissent.

Pliny in his writings has located the Essene community exactly where this Qumran building and the library in the caves nearby were found. It has been concluded by archaeologists like De Vaux that members of the Essene community lived in nearby caves and also in tents and huts and the monastery was their centre. From coins found in caves and the monastery and also evidence of pottery, the period of occupancy by the Essenes has been estimated from about the end of the second century B.C. to the year 68 A.D., the second year of 1st Jewish revolt when the building was destroyed and the community killed or dispersed by Romans. It was for fear of Romans that the Essenes hid their library in the caves nearby. The dating of the manuscripts is in accordance to this estimated period of Essene occupancy. Some of the manuscripts are known as the Manual of Discipline, the Habakkuk Commentary, and Hymns of Thanksgiving. A "Manual of Discipline" describes the practices and doctrines of the community which in general are similar to those described by Josephus about the Essenes. Mr. Edmund Wilson, author of "Dead Sea Scrolls", (1947-1969) calls this community, located on the Dead Sea shore with a monastery as their centre, "a cradle of Christianity perhaps more than Bethlehem or Nazareth."

Teacher of righteousness

One of the central figures of Dead Sea scroll literature is the person who is called "Teacher of Righteousness" who was persecuted by one called the "wicked priest". This is based upon passages in Habakkuk Commentary. These persons are not named but evidently they were of great importance in the history of this Dead Sea community. The "Teacher of Righteousness" is presented as a priest and leader of a community whose members are poor and call themselves "the New Covenant". The teacher was blessed with divine revelations and was referred as "Elect of God." He insisted on strict observance of law but was in conflict with the priests of Jerusalem. He was persecuted by a "wicked priest" who is sometimes referred to as "Man of Untruth" or "Prophet of Untruth" who "swallowed him up in the heat of his anger" and who "has dared to strip him of his clothing" and has struck him "in the execution of inequitous judgements" and "odious profaners have committed horrors on him and vengeance on the body of flesh."

On the three scrolls from the original cave there is a collection of thirty-five Psalms known as "Thanksgiving Hymns", the complete text of which has been published by Hebrew University in Jerusalem. These Psalms are thought to have been composed by Teacher of Righteousness or by one of his disciples who acted as his mouthpiece. The author of these Psalms speaks eloquently of his persecution and persecution of his people and gives thanks to the Lord for his deliverance from the enemies.

Dupont-Sommer, a well known French scholar, writes in his book, *The Dead Sea Scrolls, a Preliminary Survey*: "Everything in the Jewish New Covenant heralds and prepares the way for the Christian New Covenant. The Galilean Master, as He is presented to us in the writings of the New Testament, appears in many respects as an astonishing reincarnation of the Teacher of Righteousness. Like the latter, he preached penitence, poverty, humility, love of one's neighbour, and chastity. Like him, He prescribed the observance of the Law of Moses, the whole Law, but the Law finished and perfected, thanks to His own revelations. Like him, He was the Elect and the Messiah of God, the Messiah redeemer of the world. Like him, He was the object of the hostility of the priests, the party of the Sadducees. Like him, He was condemned and put to death. Like him, He pronounced judgement on Jerusalem, which was taken and destroyed by the Romans for having put Him to death. Like him, at the end of time, He will be the supreme judge. Like him, He founded a Church whose adherents fervently awaited His glorious return. In the Christian Church, just as in the Essene Church, the essential rite is the sacred meal, which is presided over by the priests. Here and there, at the head of each community, there is the overseer, the 'bishop'. And the ideal of both Churches is essentially that of unity, communion in love—even going so far as the sharing of common property.

"All these similarities—and here I only touch upon the subject—taken together, constitute a very impressive whole. The question at once arises, to which of the two sects, the Jewish or the Christian, does the priority belong? Which of the two was able to influence the other? The reply leaves no room for doubt. The Teacher of Righteousness died about 65-53 B.C., Jesus the Nazarene died about 30 A.D. In every case in which the resemblance compels or invites us to think of borrowing, this was on the part of Christianity. But on the other hand, the appearance of the faith in Jesus—the foundation of the New Church—can scarcely be explained without the real historic activity of a new Prophet, a new Messiah, who has rekindled the flame and concentrated on himself the adoration of men." (p 99-100)

It is apparent from this discussion by Dupont-Sommer that

there is a striking resemblance between Teacher of Righteousness and Jesus. Dupont-Sommer states that Teacher of Righteousness was condemned and put to death by his enemies. As Edmund Wilson discusses in his book 'Dead Sea Scrolls' (1947-1969) there is no definite evidence in scroll literature that Teacher of Righteousness was killed.

The date of his death is not given in the scrolls. Dupont-Sommer has tried to identify the Teacher of Righteousness and the wicked priest. He identifies the wicked priest as Aristobulus II, a Hasmonaean prince and states that Teacher of Righteousness died about 65-53 B.C. He gives date of Habakkuk Commentary about 41 B.C. This identification and assigning the dates is based upon analysis of historical allusions in some passages of 'Habakkuk Commentary'. Other scholars like G.R. Driver of Oxford, disagree and find this analysis far-fetched and he assigns the general date to the scrolls as middle or late 1st century A.D. or early 2nd century A.D. and to the Habakkuk Commentary he assigns the date 70-73 A.D. after the destruction of Jerusalem.

An intriguing question

There is an intriguing question. Could the Teacher of Righteousness and Jesus be one and the same person? It may be that Jesus after escaping death on the cross and hiding from his enemies in Jerusalem exiled himself and took refuge with the Essene community on the western shore of the Dead Sea. He may have lived with this community for a varying period of time before he left Palestine in search of lost tribes of Israel in the East and travelled as far as India. Since he probably belonged to the Essene sect in his youth, he may be well known to them as a teacher and a leader who fulfilled their Messianic expectations.

Thus Jesus may have been referred to as 'Teacher of Righteousness' in the scroll literature and the reason, among any others, for not calling him by his name would probably be the desire for secrecy for reasons of the security of Jesus after the event of the cross. In this view, 'Thanksgiving Hymns' by the Teacher of Righteousness would in fact be Psalms by Jesus, in post crucifixion period, in which he offered thanks to God for having delivered him from his enemies, like Caiaphas — the "wicked priest" — who tried to kill him on the cross and who had "dared to strip him of his clothing" and the 'odious profaners who had committed horrors on him and vengeance on the body of flesh.'

It is contended that there is not enough resemblance between scrolls literature of the sect and Jesus' teachings as in gospels. There are many resemblances but there are also differences. In this regard

it should be borne in mind that gospels have limitations as regards their claim to convey to us the authentic words of Jesus. Secondly, even though Jesus may have belonged to the Essene sect in his earlier years he was raised to the status of prophethood by God, and he was not bound by all their precepts and practices. As a prophet, though following Mosaic Law, he, in the light of his divine revelations, was a teacher and a reformer not only for Pharisees and Saducees, but equally for Essenes. Thus he may have repudiated some of the doctrines and practices of Essenes, acting in the role of a prophet and a Messiah. This may explain the divergences between gospel teachings and those of the Dead Sea community, or for that matter, between Teacher of Righteousness and Jesus, as depicted by gospels.

Among the Dead Sea scroll scholars, most like Dupont-Sommer, are not of the view that Teacher of Righteousness was Jesus. However, there are rare examples of this view. Dr. J.L. Teicher of Cambridge believes that Dead Sea sect were Ebionites 'the poor ones'—that is, Jews who had been converted to Jesus but who continued Jewish practices; and that Teacher of Righteousness was Jesus and that the person referred in scrolls as 'wicked priest' and 'Man of Untruth' was the apostle Paul. He assigns 1st century A.D. as date of the scrolls.

It must be admitted that among the scrolls scholars there are disagreements and controversies about the various historical aspects of the Dead Sea scrolls.

Nag Hammadi documents

In the years 1945-47, apart from discovery of Dead Sea scrolls, Coptic documents belonging to early Christians were found in an ancient graveyard at Nag Hammadi, a village in Egypt. These are known as Nag Hammadi documents. These documents contain many apocryphal works including the gospel by Thomas. The gospel of Thomas is among the earliest documents of Edessan Christianity.

We read in the book, 'The Crucible of Christianity', edited by Arnold Toynbee, published in London 1969:

"The earliest documents we have on Edessan Christianity — namely the gospel of Thomas, the song of Pearl contained in the acts of Thomas and the odes of Solomon — go back, in part, to the end of the 1st century and display the characteristic features of Judeo Christianity — beyond Edessa Christianity penetrated into Adiabne, where there was an important Jewish community, and no doubt reached India very soon, since Pantaenus, writing in the mid 2nd century, asserts that he found in India a gospel in the Hebrew script.

(P. 277 b)

The odes of Solomon referred above are not by King Solomon but consist of 42 songs composed in Syriac. These are hymns celebrated among the early Christians of Edessa and sung by them in congregations. They belong to 1st century. In 1908 James Rendel Harris, a famous Syriac scholar, located this forgotten treasure in a 16th century manuscript. Some odes included in this manuscript are put in the mouth of Jesus Christ who states:

“They who saw me marvelled at me, because I was persecuted, and they supposed that I was swallowed up; for I seemed to them as one lost.

And I did not perish, for I was not their brother nor my birth like theirs. And they sought for my death and did not find it”.

(Ode 28, verse 8, 14, 15)

“And I rose up and am with them; I will speak by their mouths.

I did not perish, though they desired it against me. And I made a congregation of living men amongst his dead men, and I spoke with them by living lips.”

(Ode 42, verse 6, 14, 18)

(The Lost Books of the Bible—The World Publishing Company, New York, 1944. Second part, “Forgotten books of Eden.” The odes of Solomon P. 120-140)

The above words of Jesus as quoted in odes of Solomon show that his enemies tried to kill him but did not succeed even though he seemed to them as one lost. This supports our view that Jesus did not die on the cross.

Shaikh Abdul Qadir, a Pakistani scholar of biblical and Christian literature, gives his analysis of the Nag Hammadi documents and reaches the conclusion that according to these documents the death of Jesus on the cross is a myth.

He writes in an article in the book, ‘Truth About the Crucifixion’:

“The Nag Hammadi documents were contained in a sealed jar. The writings, 52 in number (consisting of 1,191 surviving pages) deal with the beliefs of early Christians. They are all written in the Coptic language. It is the literature of Gnostics the Hebrew Christians—the more pious part of the Christian Community. When the Roman Church set about destroying this literature, early Christians collected it and buried it underground in a graveyard. This literature contains the Gospel of St. Thomas. This Gospel contains the earliest version of 114 sayings of Jesus Christ, many of which the present day reader does not find in the synoptic Gospels. The most interesting point is that this literature contains dialogues which Jesus Christ

held after the event of the cross. This treasure includes besides the Gospel of St. Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, The Gospel of Truth and the Epistle of James. This discovery points to the changes which took place in early Christian beliefs. It also points to what happened to Jesus after the crucifixion. It also contains the parables and teachings of Jesus. These Gospels make clear that the death of Jesus on the cross is a myth. Jesus lived in Palestine for 550 days after the crucifixion, and he lived in the company of some of his followers and kept himself busy in teaching and training them. This proves that Jesus was alive after the incident of the crucifixion.”

I give some excerpts from Nag Hammadi Gospels. The Gospel of Philip says:

“Those who say that the Lord died first and then rose up are in error, for he rose up first and then died.”

Quoting a passage from the unpublished document Bertil Gartner writes:

“In one of the many documents from the Nag-Hammadi Library, the as yet unpublished Apocryphal of James, we read that the risen Lord walked with his disciples for 550 days after his resurrection, and that it is Peter and James who are there entrusted with the secret knowledge.” (Bertil Gartner, *The Theology of the Gospel of Thomas*, pp. 102-103).

The same author quotes another passage from the Apocryphal of James.

“Jesus said: Leave James and Peter to me, that I may fill them with fullness. And when we had called them both, he drew them aside at the same time commanding the others to attend to their tasks.”

(p. 120-121)

In the Gospel of Thomas (published in 1959) we read:

“The disciples said to Jesus: We know that you are going to leave us, who shall (then) be chief over us? Jesus said to them: Wherever you have come, you shall go to James, the righteous one.” (Bertil Gartner; *The Theology of the Gospel of Thomas*; p. 56-57).

“But the days shall come when you shall seek me and you shall not find me.”

It is clear from the above quoted passages that Jesus Christ escaped death on the cross. He lived with his disciples for nearly a year and a half, he ‘filled’ Peter and James with ‘fullness’ because they had to look after his sheep in his absence. At last he left his disciples for good, nominating James as their Head.”

(Truth About The Crucifixion – p. 134-136)

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THE PROMISED MESSIAH

When the 13th century of the Hegira drew to a close and the beginning of the 14th century approached, I was informed by God Almighty, through revelation, that I was the Reformer for the 14th century. I received the revelation (Arabic). 'The Gracious One has taught thee the Quran and has expounded its true meaning to thee, so that thou mayest warn people of their evil end those who through generations of neglect and through not having been warned have fallen into error. So that the way of those offenders may be made manifest who do not desire to follow the guidance after it has been openly declared. Tell Them: I have been commissioned by God and am the foremost of believers.'

(Kitabul Bariyya, p. 201).

BOOK REVIEW
"MUHAMMAD"

By
Michael Cook

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Price: £ 1.95 (paper back) p. 94

This forms the latest publication in "Past Masters" series produced by Oxford University Press. The other titles already printed include Jesus, Buddha, Confucius, Darwin, Aristotle and some other famous historians, philosophers, scientists, physicists, humanists, political revolutionaries etc. These books attempt to give an objective and readable account of the lives, teachings and works of the great men of the past.

The author of "Muhammad" is Michael Cook, a lecturer at the School of Oriental and African Studies, in the University of London who is also the author or editor of several books on the history of the Middle East. In this book the writer has presented a critical, though sometimes sceptical view of Islam most especially when he compares the teachings of Quran with those of the Bible. References from the Holy Quran are quoted liberally yet often taken out of context and in many instances failing to differentiate between metaphorical and literal expressions so frequently used in the holy scripture of Islam.

For example, in trying to establish an analogy between the Christian concept of a human God, who according to the Bible needed rest after the labour of creation, the author declares that "Muhammad's God in some respects illustrates this trend." He adds: "Admittedly the Koran still speaks freely of God's 'hand' and refers to Him sitting on His throne". No doubt, it is a pity that Cook has failed to realise that these are metaphoric expressions which denote the power and the domain of God and not that He is a physical Being Who has a specially designed seat from where He administers the affairs of the universe.

Shirk, associating someone else with God, is a major sin in Islam: Surely, Allah will not forgive that any partner be associated with Him. (Quran 4.99) And to assume that "certainly on the one occasion when Muhammad temporarily yielded to the temptation to allow the pagan gods a place in his religion, the move was in human terms a dramatic success" is only the invention of the fertile

imagination of the mind of the author. No such compromise was ever envisaged by the monotheist Prophet. Nothing can be more absurd than to assert that in Quranic elements the Jewish influence is prominent and that they are definitely Christian in origin. The Quran affirms the truth of previous revelations. But it points out that previous revelations have suffered from interpolations and perversions. This must also be taken into consideration before making such a sweeping statement.

Unfortunately the factual basis of the book leaves much to be desired.

M.A. Saqi

AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH (PEACE BE ON HIM)

Harken, all ye people. This is a prophecy of Him Who has created heaven and earth. He will spread this Community of His in all countries and will make it supreme over all, through reason and arguments. The days are coming, indeed they are near, when this will be the only religion which will be held in honour. God will bestow extraordinary blessings on this religion and Movement. He will frustrate everyone who seeks to destroy it. This supremacy will last till the Judgement Day.

Remember, that no one will descend from heaven. All our opponents who are alive today will die and no one will see Jesus son of Mary descending from heaven. Then their next generation will pass away and no one of them will see this spectacle. Then the generation next after that will pass away without seeing the son of Mary descending from heaven. Then God will make them anxious that though the time of the supremacy of the cross had passed away and the world had undergone great changes yet the son of Mary had not descended from heaven. Then the wise people will suddenly discard this belief. The third century after today will not yet have come to a close when those who hold this belief, whether Muslims or Christians, will lose all hope and will give up this belief in disgust. There will then be only one religion that will prevail in the world and only one leader. I have come only to sow the seed, which has been sown by my hand. Now it will sprout and grow and flourish and no one can arrest its growth.

(Tazkaratush Shadatain, pp. 64-5).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

Please accept my heartiest felicitations on the publication of Review of Religions under the new style. May God crown your devoted efforts with many more successes.

You will be pleased to know that I have donated my eyes to restore the eye-sight of any blind person after my death. The donation of eyes is still a controversial issue amongst various schools of thought saying that Islam does not permit the donation of eyes or for that matter, any part of the body required to save a human life.

I am confident that Islam, being a true religion for all times, beside being flexible in its nature, is extremely generous in many respects. If my eyes or any useful part of the eye is medically removed immediately after my death and grafted in the eye of a blind person, he or she by the Grace of Allah, the Most Benevolent and Most Beneficient, would be gifted with a second sight and would be able to thank Allah for His bounty.

I wish some worthy readers of your esteemed magazine would throw light on the subject so that those who are not clear on it have their doubts removed and that they also join many others in this humanitarian service to their fellow beings in the name of their Creator.

Yours sincerely

Rabwah.

(MUSHTAQ A. SHAIQUE)
Squadron Leader (Retd.)

Dear Sir,

I was much privileged last year to be invited to the annual Jalsa (meeting) of the U.K. Ahmadi Movement. Amongst many excellent addresses given there, none was more impressive than the objective, historical analysis on the creation of Pakistan by the distinguished ex-Ambassador Mr. Aftab Ahmad Khan. He traced the evolution of events leading to the establishment of the new Islamic state including hitherto not generally known details of the various roles played by such leaders as Mr. M. Ali Jinnah and Sir M. Zafrullah Khan, in what seems

to me a masterly and valuable perspective of interest and revelation to all students and scholars of Islamic affairs, especially to all those interested in the interplay of forces during the last days of the British Raj.

I was told that this address would be reprinted in the Review of Religions but have so far not seen it. Apart from its political importance Mr. Aftab Khan spoke in beautiful and lyrical English which was a pleasure to hear.

Yours sincerely

John Pitcairn.

The article by Mr. Aftab Khan appears in this issue — Editor.



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THE PROMISED MESSIAH

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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.

