



The REVIEW of RELIGIONS

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لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

There is no deity but Allah, Muhammad is His Messenger

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 Supreme Head of the Movement is Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad. The International Center for the Ahmadiyya Movement is at Rabwah, Pakistan. The Ahmadiyya Movement is actively engaged in the propagation of Islam.



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful

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WHAT IS ISLAM?

Islam means *peace, surrender*. The significance of the name Islam is the attainment of a life of perfect peace and eternal happiness through complete surrender to the Will of God.

Absolute and uncompromising belief in One God is the central doctrine of Islam. *There is none worthy of worship but the One and Only God (Allah) Who possesses all excellences and Muhammad is His Messenger.* This is the most important doctrine of Islam.

Islam helps us to establish a permanent relationship with God to realize Him during our earthly life as our Helper and Guide in all our affairs.

Islam requires belief in all the prophets and spiritual guides including Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Krishna, Buddha, Confucius and Zoroaster. Islam represents the completion of the mission of *all* the prophets from the dawn of history. It teaches that *all the prophets of God came with one and the same mission*. Thus Islam establishes peace and unity between all religions. The Holy Quran—the Muslim Scripture—was revealed to the Master Prophet Muhammad 1400 years ago and has been preserved intact without the slightest change. A large number of Muslims know the whole Book by heart. It is an inexhaustible treasure of spiritual truths capable of satisfying the needs of all people in all countries and all stations of life.

The establishment of true democracy and universal brotherhood without any discrimination of caste, creed, color or country is the unique and unrivalled distinction of Islam. Islam has fulfilled and realized the splendid principles of democracy in the actual life and action of human society.

According to Islam life after death is a continuation of life on earth. Heaven and Hell begin right in this life. Heaven is eternal and everlasting, while hell is temporary. Hell is a hospital for the treatment of the human soul. As a soul is cured, it goes to Heaven. Heaven is the attainment of a life of everlasting progress and complete joy and happiness through union with God and by the development of the fine spiritual qualities and the unlimited capacities which have been implanted in human beings.

A few of the distinctive features of Islam are:

1. Liberation of women by establishing the equality of both sexes, safeguarding their rights and liberties and raising their status.
2. Absolute veto on all intoxicants.
3. Equitable solution of all economic problems.
4. Furnishing mankind with the noblest practical ethics.
5. Promotion of science and education.

Some of the obligatory duties laid down by Islam are:

1. Five daily Prayers.
2. Fasting in the month of Ramadhan.
3. Paying *Zakat* for the relief of poverty.
4. Pilgrimage to Mecca, once in one's lifetime, if circumstances allow.



*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful
We praise Him and invoke His blessings on His Noble Prophet*

COMMENTARY ON VERSES OF THE HOLY QUR'AN

وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا الْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ
وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَكِنْ شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اَلْتَمَعُوا فِيهِ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِنْهُ

(Wa Qaulehim Inna Qatalnal Masiha Eisabna Maryama
Rasoolallahe, Wa Maa Qatalooho Wa Maa Salabooho Wa
Laakin Shubbeha Lahum, Wa Innallazeenakhtalafoo Feehe
Lafee Shakkin Minho.)

‘And their saying, ‘We did kill the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah’; whereas they slew him not, nor crucified him, but he was made to appear to them like one crucified; and those who differ therein are certainly in a state of doubt about it: (4-158).

This and the preceding verse mention two main objections of the Jews against Jesus: (1) his alleged illegitimate birth, and (2) his supposed death on the Cross which, according to Jewish Law, was an accursed death (Deut. 21:23). The words, *We did kill the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah*, are spoken ironically and tauntingly, meaning, “we have killed Jesus who posed as the Messiah and a Messenger of God.”

The argument of the Jews was that because Jesus died on the Cross, he could not be a true Prophet according to Jewish Law. The inference was based on their sacred Scriptures; for, according to the Bible, he who is hanged is accursed of God, and a false Prophet shall

meet with destruction. Says the Bible:

“His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God) that thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance’ (Deut. 21:23).

Again:

“My hand shall be upon false prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies” (Ezek. 13:9).

Again:

“Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that prophesy in My name, and I sent them not, yet they say, “Sword and famine shall not be in this land, by sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed” (Jer. 14:15).

On the strength of such verses of the Bible, the Jews claimed that, as Jesus had been crucified and met with destruction, he could not be a true Prophet of God, but was a false claimant and an accursed one.

Regarding the charge about the alleged death of Jesus by crucifixion, the Qur’an says that the act of crucifixion having not been completed, and Jesus having been taken down alive from the Cross, the charge carries no weight. It should, however, be noted that the Qur’an does not deny the mere hanging of Jesus on the Cross; it only denies his death on it.

Two different views prevail among the Jews regarding Jesus’s alleged death by crucifixion. Some of them hold that Jesus was first killed and then his dead body was hung on the Cross, while others are of the view that he was put to death by being fixed to the Cross. The former view is reflected in Acts 5:30 where we read “which ye slew and hanged on a tree.” The Qur’an refutes both these views by saying, *they slew him not, nor crucified him*. The words may also signify that the Qur’an first rejects the slaying of Jesus in any form, and then proceeds to deny the particular way of killing by hanging on the Cross.

The verb **شبه** (in the passive voice) means, he was made to appear like, or was made to resemble. Now the question arises, who is the person who was made to appear “like one crucified.” Clearly it was Jesus whom the Jews tried to crucify or slay. Nobody else can be meant here, for there is absolutely no reference to any other person in the context. Hence, the theory invented by certain Commentators that Judas or somebody else was made to appear like Jesus and was

then crucified in his place is simply absurd. The context cannot be so twisted as to make room for somebody else of whom no mention at all is made in the verse.

To what then was Jesus made like? The context provides a clear answer to that question. The Jews did not kill him by crucifixion, but he was made to appear to them like "one crucified", and thus it was that they wrongly took him for dead. It was thus Jesus who was made to resemble "one crucified." This interpretation is not only in perfect harmony with the context but is also clearly borne out by all relevant facts of history.

The second meaning of the expression **شبه لهم** is that "the matter became confused to them." This interpretation is also clearly borne out by history; for although the Jews asserted that they had put Jesus to death by suspending him on the Cross, they were not sure of it and the circumstances being obscure, the matter had certainly become confused to them. The fact that the Jews themselves were not sure whether Jesus had actually died on the Cross is supported by the Bible and by all authentic historical facts.

The statements made in this verse are clearly substantiated by the following facts narrated in the Gospels:

1. Jesus had himself predicted his escape from death on the Cross, saying, "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:40). Now it is an accepted fact that Jonah had entered the whale's belly alive and had come out alive; so, according to his own prophecy, Jesus was to enter the heart of the earth (*i.e.*, his tomb) alive and was to come out of it alive.

2. The trying magistrate (Pilate) believed Jesus to be innocent and, being sympathetic, was anxious to save his life (Matt. 27:17, 18; Mark 15:9, 10, 14; Luke 23:4, 14, 15, 20, 22; John 18:38, 39); and he must have secretly tried to save him or at least connived at the attempt of others to do so.

3. Pilate's wife had seen a vision concerning the innocence of Jesus: "When he (Pilate) was set down on the judgement seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, 'Have thou nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him'" (Matt. 27:19). This message must certainly have influenced Pilate, and his wife must have also done her best to save Jesus.

4. Pilate held the killing of Jesus in such horror that he actually washed his hands with water, saying that he was innocent of the blood of that just man (Matt. 27:24).

5. Pilate did all he could to help Jesus; and the soldiers in charge also treated Jesus with kindness, apparently under Pilate's directions. The following are some of the special favors shown to Jesus: (a) Every malefactor carried his own cross but another man was made to carry that of Jesus (Matt. 27:32; Mark 15:21); (b) Jesus was given wine or vinegar mingled with myrrh. This was intended to render him less sensible to pain. The two thieves who were crucified with him were not given this drink. When after some time the effects of the drink were wearing off and Jesus cried with pain, the drink was administered again to render him unconscious of pain (Matt. 27:34, 48; Mark 15:23, John 19:29, 30).

6. The unconsciousness which followed the administration of vinegar was mistaken for death (John 19:30).

7. Jesus remained on the Cross for only about three hours (John 19:14. cf. Matt. 27:46) and according to Mark only for six hours (Mark 15:25, 33), and either of these periods was by no means sufficient to kill a young man like Jesus on the Cross.

8. When Joseph of Arimataea came and craved the body of Jesus, Pilate "marvelled if he were already dead," and calling to him the centurion asked him whether he had been any while dead (Mark, 15:44).



FROM THE WRITINGS OF HAZRAT AHMAD

What the Christians attribute to God Almighty by way of His Glory is a matter which can be determined by a single question. God Almighty, Who is Perfect and Eternal and Self-Sufficient and non-dependent, had carried on all His great works through eternity by His Ownself. He alone created the universe without the aid of a father or son and bestowed upon souls and bodies all the powers that they needed. He is Himself the Guardian and Support and Controller of the universe, and He brought into being through His attribute of *Rahmaniyyat* all that the souls and the bodies were to need without waiting for any action on their part. He created the sun and

moon and numberless stars and the earth and thousands of bounties contained therein out of His pure grace, without the assistance of any son.

The same Perfect God in the latter days, discarding all His glory and power, became dependent upon a son to make provision for the salvation and forgiveness of mankind, and a son so inferior as to possess no kind of similarity to the Father. He did not create like the Father any portion of heaven or earth which should bear testimony to his godhead. The Gospel of St. Mark in verse 12 of chapter 8 describes his helplessness in the words that he sighed and said: Why do the people of this generation seek after a sign? I tell you truly that no sign will be given to this generation. When he was put upon the cross the Jews said that if he would come back to life they would believe in him. But he did not show them this sign, nor did he prove his godhead and perfect power in any other way. Such miracles as he worked had been worked in large numbers by previous Prophets and even the water of a pond possessed properties that manifested similar miracles. (See chapter 5 of the Gospel of St. John.) As he himself confessed he was not able to show any sign in support of his godhead. Being born of a frail woman, he, according to the Christians, underwent such disgrace, humiliation and helplessness throughout his life as is the portion of the unfortunate and the deprived ones. He was a prisoner for a period in the darkness of the womb and was born through the urinary passage and passed through every condition to which the birth of human beings is subject, and did not escape a single one of them. Then he confessed in his own book, his ignorance and lack of knowledge and powerlessness and that he was not good. That humble servant, who was without any reason described as the son of God, was inferior to some of the major Prophets in his intellectual attainments and in his actions, and his teaching was also imperfect, being only a branch of the law of Moses. Then how is it permissible to attribute to the All Powerful God, Who is Eternal and Everlasting, this calumny that having been Perfect in his Being and Self-Sufficient and All Powerful, He in the end became dependent upon such a defective son and suddenly lost all His glory and His greatness?

I do not believe that any wise person would permit such humiliation to be imagined concerning the Perfect Being Who comprehends all perfect qualities.

(Braheen Ahmadiyya, pp. 413-419, footnote 11).

Editorial

Endless Changes in Biblical Versions

The Christian world seems to have undergone a dramatic change since the end of the Second World War. Old moral values have lost their traditional meaning. Lines drawn by the old Biblical teachings between right and wrong, good and bad, virtue or vice have become increasingly blurred.

Several modern theologians have observed that while, on the one hand, there has been a discernible interest in spirituality in the last decade, there has also been, on the other hand, a distinct feeling that the Bible, as available at present, does not adequately convey the original concepts of Christianity. Consequently several reputable and prestigious groups of outstanding Christian scholars have been simultaneously engaged in preparing new versions of the Bible. As Rev. Eugene A. Nida of Greenwich, Conn. noted:

“Never before has such a variety of new translations, revisions and paraphrasing of Scripture been turned out as in recent times.” Furthermore, “It is building up steadily.” (*Newsday*, January 8, 1983)

Notwithstanding the facts that the original texts of the present Scriptures are not available anyway, as well as the episode of highly arbitrary selection of the gospels contained in it, there have been several major revisions of the text over the centuries. However, what was rather an occasional appearance of a new version in the past has turned into “A Bible translation explosion” in the last several decades, according to Rev. Nida. Mr. George W. Cornell of the Associated Press estimates that there are about 600 Bible translation projects now going on around the world. Already “there have been 78 new Bible translations or revisions in English alone, compared with only a handful in all the years before” as Mr. Cornell observes.

One of the many reasons for this unparalleled proliferation of new English Bibles, according to Rev. Bruce Metzger of Princeton, N.J., a well-known Bible scholar who heads a permanent commercial committee working on the Revised Version of 1952, is the accumulation of older, better manuscripts. Of course there is no way to be sure if these older manuscripts are true copies of the originals.

The discrepancies in various previously available versions of the

Bible are truly bewildering. It is surprising to observe that it was not until 1973 that a committee of Protestants and Catholics approved a "common Bible." Of course, not all Protestant denominations have accepted the so called "common Bible."

Correspondent Cornell reports that this agreement of the two major Christian denominations was achieved through a compromise. Some Old Testament books, which were considered needed by Catholicism but not regarded as necessary by the Protestants, have now been added in the 1973 compromise. It is said that these books were a part of King James Version of 1611 but they were eliminated by commercial printers in the 19th century "to cut costs." (*Newsday*, January 8, 1983).

This array of new revisions is being accomplished from a variety of new angles. While the New King James Bible publishers are updating the 1611 version with the help of 130 scholars, the Reader's Digest Bible has condensed the previously used text by 40 percent. While the World Biblical Commentary publishers are busy in providing their own version, the Anchor Bible Company is engaged in the preparation of another, a 60-volume series of a new translation to be produced by Doubleday & Company. In addition, the American Bible Society has been distributing its own new translation. The New International Version has been provided by Zondervan Publishers to cater to conservative denominations.

Of course, to make the gospels comprehensible to people of different times, it stands to reason that there should be new translations from time to time to accomodate new vocabulary and changed meanings of the words. What is baffling is the change in the substance of the Bible. How can a non-Christian student of the Bible fully appreciate why there are no real origianl texts? Why have some of the gospels arbitrarily been discarded and others included? Why does the text of the gospels increase or decrease at different times?

In this profusion of new biblical versions, perhaps one of the most radical is a new translation which has turned the gender of God. The Lutheran Church in America has already announced its rejection of the new translations because "they are inadequate and stylistically inadequate." (*The New York Times*, October 15, 1983) The question arises if, after this radical change in the metaphors used for God, it can still be portrayed as the revealed word. The head of the Greek Orthodox Church also noted that it does not reflect sufficient reverence and tradition. He felt that this new lectionary will bring

disunity to the Church. Bishop James R. Crumely Jr. of New York has expressed his concern that the new venture might make God appear "bisexual rather than asexual." Dr. Art Gay, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, observed that the new lectionary "might be overkill and they might do violence to the authority of the text." (The *New York Times*, October 15, 1983)

The Roman Catholic Bishops of the United States have also recently announced withholding of their approval of this controversial new version as issued by the National Council of Churches. And thus—the confusion, the controversy and failure of producing a universally accepted version of the Bible goes on interminably. (The *New York Times*, November 23, 1984)

For the believers in Islam, it is a source of deep gratification that their Scripture, The Holy Qur'an, enjoys the unique distinction of a divinely guarded and totally protected text. Of course, the need for new translations to convey its continuously unfolding meaning to mankind living in different ages and speaking different languages will go on. What has not changed—and will never change till eternity—is the originally revealed word of God to the Holy Prophet Muhammad more than fourteen hundred years ago.

Khalil Ahmad Nasir



SO SAID THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD

A Muslim owes to a Muslim six duties to be bestowed liberally—he should say: *Assalamo Alaikum* (peace be on you) when he meets him; He should accept his invitation when he invites him; he should pray for him when he sneezes; he should visit him when he is sick; he should go to his funeral when he dies; and he should love for him what he loves for himself.



Surely truth leads to virtue and virtue leads to paradise. A person continues to speak the truth until he becomes thoroughly truthful. Surely falsehood leads to vice and vice leads to fire. A person continues to tell lies until he is written down a great liar with Allah.



From Our Archives:

THE NEED OF THE HOLY QURAN

By

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

The Promised Messiah

(Reprinted from the Review of Religions, Vol. II, 1903)

The great object of Islam being to teach the doctrine of the Unity of God, the question has often been asked what was the need of the Holy Quran when the doctrine of Unity had already been revealed to the world in the Torah (the book of Moses). In answer to this question it should be borne in mind that Judaism no doubt originally taught the doctrine of Unity, but Judaism at the time of the revelation of the Quran was itself corrupt both in practice and doctrine. The pure religion of the Unity of God had been departed from by the Jews, and the doctrine of Unity contained in their books had no practical effect upon their lives. The grand aim for which man is created and the Word of God revealed had been utterly lost sight of. The recognition of the Divine Unity consists in a firm belief in the existence of God and His Oneness attended with an implicit obedience to Him, complete submission to His will and losing one's self in His love. The Jewish books taught Unity indeed but the inner life of the Jews was not governed by the noble principles which underly the doctrine of the Unity of God, and their hearts were totally devoid of the deep expression of the grandeur and glory of God. Outwardly and formally they recognized Unity but their hearts were turned away from purity and under the control of Satan. Their lives were characterised by every form of iniquity such as worldliness impure thoughts and affections, deceit and falsehood. The honor and greatness due to God was given to priests and hermits and disgraceful deeds were done. Hypocrisy and deceit were predominant in the hearts of those who pretended to be the teachers and reformers of the people.

Moreover a mere formal recognition of the Unity of God is of no avail if the heart bows down in submission before a thousand different idols. The person who assigns the glory and greatness which is due solely to God, to the means, plans and stratagems which he employs for the realization of an object, or gives a share of the

majesty and power of God to his own self or to any other creature, is also an idol worshipper though he may outwardly confess the Unity of God. Idols are not only images made of stone, brass, gold, silver or any other substance, but every object of reverence and passionate devotion, which should be due to God, is an idol in the sight of God. The Jewish sacred books however did not teach this noble significance of the doctrine of Unity and the Quran was, therefore, needed for its exposition to the world. The doctrine of the absolute Unity of God precluding faith or trust in everything else besides God was not known to the world until the Holy Quran revealed it. The adoration and reverence of senseless images is an act to which none but the most ignorant and superstitious would resort, but the most dangerous form of idolatry is that which cannot be easily discovered and which affects and vitiates the whole system like an imperceptible but obstinate disease. This lamentable disease prevailed among the Jews and the Bible did not prove an effective remedy for it; for the Bible did not teach the great truth underlying the Unity of God. The general prevalence of this disease, moreover, required a perfect living exemplar whose life, being governed by the practical principle of the absolute Unity of God, should have been a guidance and a direction to mankind and a powerful remedy for destroying the disease.

What is the true doctrine of the Unity of God which the Holy Quran requires us to believe and which is the only way to salvation? It is to believe in God as One and Alone in His person, and above every rival or partner whether it is an idol, a human being, a heavenly body, one's ownself or one's resources, plans or means. It is to regard none as powerful against Him, nor to consider anyone as the sustainer, the exalter, the abaser, the helper or the supporter as against the will of God. It is to love Him alone, to worship Him alone, to submit to Him alone, to fear Him alone and to centre all one's hopes in Him alone.

There are three requirements for a complete adherence to the doctrine of Unity. Firstly, a man must believe in Unity in the person of God, *i.e.*, he must regard everything as vain and naught before God. Secondly he must believe in Unity in the attributes of God and consider Divinity and Lordship as the attributes of none besides God, looking upon all those who seem to have an authority as having it from Him. Thirdly, there must be unity in the love, sincerity and devotion which he bears to God. In other words, nothing else must have a share of his love and devotion towards God and of the other

aspects of his adoration, and he must be completely lost in Him.

These three aspects of the Divine Unity had not been taught by any book before the Quran. What had been taught by Moses and the Israelite prophets was not acted upon by the Jews and the Christians. The iniquity and gross immorality in which these people indulged at that time is a clear testimony to the truth of the statement that they admitted the existence of God with their lips, but their hearts were utter strangers to this exalting and noble faith. It is for this reason that the Quran condemns both the Jews and the Christians and says that if these people had acted upon the teachings of Moses and Jesus, they would have been granted sustenance both from heaven and from earth. The heavenly sustenance indicates the spiritual blessings which are granted to the righteous and faithful in heart such as heavenly signs, acceptance of prayer, visions and inspiration. Here they are also declared as having been deprived of earthly sustenance, because they did not obtain it by just and righteous means but by bending low upon earth and making use of vile means.

Israelite Law, no doubt, taught the Unity of God, but the doctrine of Unity taught by it, fell far short of the sublime Unity revealed by the Holy Quran. This defect of teaching in itself called for a new revelation, while the necessity was further enhanced by the spiritual death of those who professed to inculcate this doctrine. The Jewish doctrine of Unity, imperfect as it was, was in their books and not in their hearts. They, therefore, needed a heavenly teacher who should have breathed the soul of Unity into their hearts, and a warm devotion in place of dull and vapid utterance of formal words. The Jews were dead and life had departed from them on account of the hardness of their hearts and their numerous transgressions. No spark of love for God and not the slightest trace of inclination to spirituality was left in them. Their books on account of their defective teachings and the numerous alterations in their letter and spirit, could not inspire a new life into, and furnish a perfect guidance to, their votaries or to the world at large. Therefore, Almighty God sent down His living Word like fresh and timely rain and to this Word which gave life did He invite them, that they might find life and salvation, being purified through it of their former errors and iniquities. The Holy Quran was, therefore, needed in the first place to teach a living Unity to the lifeless Jews; secondly, to inform them of their errors; and thirdly, to throw full light upon all matters relating to eschatology which had been but barely alluded to in the Israelite law.

It is true that the seed of truth was sown with the revelation of Moses while that of Jesus gave the glad tidings of a future when that revelation was to be made perfect. As the seed that grows in a healthy condition gives the glad tidings of good fruits, the Gospel of Jesus gave the glad tidings of the revelation of a perfect law and an unerring guide. This was fulfilled in the Holy Quran. The seed which Moses had sown, therefore, ripened with the Quran. The Holy book brought with it the perfect blessings which made a clear distinction between truth and falsehood and perfected the religious truths and spiritual verities. This was the purport of the words of Moses in Deut. 32:2:

“The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from mount Paran.”

In fact the different phases of law were made perfect only by the Quran. Its two great divisions, the one treating of the relation of man to God and the other of that of man to man, found complete and full development only in the Quran. The object of the Quran was to make the savage into a man, to teach the man the highest moral qualities and to make him Godly. This function the Holy Book performed with such success that every other law is a total failure in comparison with it.

The Holy Quran was also needed to settle the differences between the Jews and the Christians relating to Jesus. This it has done in various places. A very important point of difference is that in relation to which the following verse occurs in the Holy Quran:

“O Jesus, I will cause you to die a natural death and will exalt thee to Myself, and will clear thee from the charges of those who disbelieve.” (3:56)

The Jews asserted as against the Christians that their prophet, i.e., Jesus, had been crucified and, therefore, according to the law of Moses he was accursed and his soul did not rise to heaven. This argument they advanced as conclusive proof that Jesus was a false prophet. The Christians admitted the curse but said that he had been cursed for their sake, and that subsequently the curse being removed, he rose to heaven where God seated him on His right hand. The verse quoted above condemns both views as serious errors. It states that Jesus did not suffer either a permanent or a temporary curse but that his soul rose to heaven, the happy abode to which the souls of the righteous rise, immediately after his death which did not take

place on the cross. The Mosaic Law makes curse the consequence of a death upon the cross and not of a mere suspension on it which does not result in death. The Quran plainly negates the death of Jesus upon the cross and consequently his subjection to curse and asserts in clear words that his soul, like the souls of the righteous, rose to heaven after death. Therefore, the Holy Quran refutes both the Jewish and Christian doctrines and asserts that he was not accursed as his enemies and erring friends would have him, but died a pure death and was raised to heaven after his death like all other prophets. Thus did the Holy Quran settle the much vexed question of the death of Jesus, but the Christians do not still admit the need of the Quran.

The Quran brought the pure doctrine of the absolute Unity of God. It produced harmony between reason and religion. It carried the doctrine of Unity to its perfection. It furnished clear and conclusive arguments for the Unity and attributes of the Divine Being. It gave reasons based on intellect, history and revelation, for the existence of God. It dressed religion, which had up to that time no more value than can be given to a story, in scientific clothing. It clothed every doctrine with true wisdom. It brought to perfection the chain of religious truths which was hitherto imperfect. It took away the curse from Jesus, and it gave evidence of his being a true prophet and of his soul having risen to heaven to live with the righteous. In the face of these facts, no sensible person would assert that the Quran was not needed.

It should be borne in mind that the Quran has itself clearly proved its need. Thus it says:

"Know it that the earth had been dead, and God is now going to restore it to life again."

History bears evidence to the fact that immediately before the revelation of the Quran, every nation had depraved itself and all the people were sunk deep in vice. Pfender, notwithstanding his determined enmity to, and blind prejudice against Islam, also bears testimony to the fact that the Jews and the Christians at the advent of our Holy Prophet were corrupt to the core and led grossly immoral lives, though he adds to explain away the appearance of the Holy Prophet that the coming of a false prophet at the time of a general corruption was a warning to the Christians and Jews who had gone astray to reform themselves. Anyone having an ordinary

share of intelligence will clearly see that this explanation is simply an absurdity and an impertinence. Put in plain words, it means that finding the people of the earth in gross errors and turpitude, God intentionally led them into greater errors and brought about circumstances which led millions of human beings farther away from the right path instead of doing something to bring them back to the truth. Is it true that when God sees the people gone astray, He intentionally leads them to greater destruction, and sends them imposters and false prophets when they need true guides and reformers? Do the Divine laws, as revealed in external nature, lend support to this conclusion, and is it thus that God visits the people when sufferings and adversities are unbearable? This is the most blasphemous charge against Divine justice and mercy. To what extreme does the love of this world lead! A weak human being is first called God and then an accursed person! The righteous prophet of God who delivered the world when it was plunged in evil and restored it to life when it was dead, is denied!

What stronger evidence of the need of the Quran is needed? It came at a time when error raged in the world. It found the world blind and gave it light. It found it in error and gave it guidance. It found it dead and gave it life. The fact that the doctrine of the Unity of God had already been revealed does not in any way affect the need of the Quran, for as already shown, the doctrine of Unity as taught in previous books, was imperfect and did not aim at the high standard revealed by the Holy Quran. Moreover, even in that imperfect condition, it was only upon the lips and not in the hearts of its adherents, and the Holy Quran was, therefore, needed to impress it upon the hearts, and to make it a living principle for action instead of a formula for repetition. The doctrine of Unity had in fact been lost and the Quran brought it afresh to the memory of mankind. The reason why the Holy Quran has been termed *Zikr* (remembrance) is that it brought back to the memory that which had been forgotten.

The argument against the need of the Quran applies, if there is the least weight in it, with equal force to the Mosaic Law itself, because the doctrine of Unity was not unknown before the revelation of the Law of Moses. Do not even the Jews and the Christians admit that this doctrine had been first revealed and taught to Adam, then to Seth, Noah, Abraham and the other prophets that went before Moses? The revelation of Moses is, therefore, open to the same

objection, viz., that it was not needed when the doctrine of Unity was already revealed and known before it. The same eternal and unchangeable God who revealed Himself to Adam, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, revealed Himself to Moses, and Moses taught the same Unity which the earlier prophets had taught.

The truth is that the doctrine of the Unity and existence of God was not first taught by the law of Moses but is of ancient origin. We must therefore, seek the principle which governs its repeated revelation in the world. A cursory glance at the world's history will show that there had been periods in it when the teaching of Unity had been forgotten and men had abandoned it. This principle was then held in contempt and disregard. Almighty God had, on such occasions, raised the prophets and vouchsafed fresh revelations to the world in order to deliver people from the evil of *shirk* into which they had fallen and to bring them back to righteousness and the Unity of God which had been lost.

Thousands of times has this doctrine grown rusty and as many times has it been polished and restored to its original purity. With its rustiness, its true worth is hidden from the human eye and accordingly for a time it appears to be quite forgotten. A prophet of God, therefore, again appears to manifest its beauty and light and to dispel the darkness from its face. Thus have light and darkness been gaining the supremacy alternately in the world. The most unfailing test that can be applied to judge the claims of a prophet is to see the time when he appears and the transformation which he brings about. This is the safest method which a seeker after truth should adopt. He should consider with an unprejudiced mind the conditions, both as to principles and actions, of the people among whom a prophet appears, before his appearance and after he has done his work. If he comes in time of need and leaves them when that need is satisfied, this is an irrefutable proof of his truth. A prophet is needed to deliver those who are involved in sin in the same manner as a physician is needed to cure the sick.

If anyone were to apply this sound test to the claims of our Holy Prophet and compare the pre-Islamic Arabs with the companions of the Holy Prophet, he would be convinced that the Holy Prophet far excelled all other prophets in his sanctifying power, in the wholesomeness of his influence, and in the abundance of his blessings and that the need of the Quran and the Holy Prophet was far more clear and easy of demonstration than the need of any other

prophet or book.

What great need did Jesus, for instance, satisfy and what is the proof that he actually did satisfy any need? Did he work any great transformation in the faith, morals and customs of the Jews? Or was he successful in purifying the lives of his chosen apostles? Both questions, we are sorry to note, must be answered in the negative. All that can be proved is that Jesus had gathered about him a number of avaricious men who were guilty of treachery and faithlessness to their master. Was this the effect of teachings which are boasted as unequalled in their sublimity?

It should also be borne in mind that the Gospel teachings have no superiority over the teachings of the earlier prophets. The teachings contained in the Gospels have, on the other hand, been all taken from earlier sources including the Talmud. The Jews have always forcibly asserted that there is no originality in the Gospel-teachings but that they are only plagiarisms from Jewish sacred books. One Jewish author has traced whole passages of the teachings of Jesus in the words of earlier sages.

The Christians, while admitting this charge of plagiarism, say that the object of the mission of Jesus was not to teach morality but to offer his blood as an atonement for the immoralities of the world and to be subjected to curse. This is however a serious error into which they have fallen. They think that the original Law was consummated in the Mosaic Law and that therefore, the Law revealed in the Quran was not needed.

The truth is that since men are apt to forget and be remiss in acting upon the moral injunctions which are revealed to them through a prophet, a new prophet is required after some time to re-establish the same principles and make men act upon them. Every new age stands in need of a new reformer. But the Quran was not needed only to satisfy these two needs; it was also needed to bring the teachings of the earlier books to completion and perfection.

To take one instance only; the Mosaic Law laid stress upon vengeance only in all cases, while Jesus taught of unconditional forbearance and non-resistance. Both these teachings were required by the special circumstances of the time when they were taught, but being onesided, they could not furnish rules for all ages. As the teaching of the extreme vengeance of Mosaic Law was abrogated by the Gospel, the Gospel-teaching of extreme forbearance itself

required to be modified. Hence the need of the Holy Quran which teaches the middle path in which the punishment of the offender or forbearance ought to be resorted to as the occasion requires. Thus both the Mosaic Law and the Gospels take the extreme course while the Quran teaches the golden mean in all cases.

The essence of the teaching in all three books is the same, but the first two laid stress only upon one side of the question owing to the peculiar requirements of the time and the circumstances when and under which they were revealed and the third, meant as it was for the whole of humanity for all times, had the flexibility in it. The Mosaic Law takes one extreme and the Gospel the opposite, the one requiring vengeance in all cases and the other unconditional forbearance, but the Holy Quran reveals the wise path of acting according to the occasion. The teachings of the Mosaic Law and the Gospel are thus enclosed with true wisdom in the Holy Quran. If the Holy Quran had not come, the law revealed in the Mosaic Law and the Gospel would have been like the arrow shot by a blind man which, if it hits the mark once by chance, goes wide a thousand times. In short, the Pentateuch contained law in the form of stories and the Gospel taught it in the form of parables while the Holy Quran presented it to seekers after truth, clothed in true wisdom.

The excellent teachings revealed in the Holy Quran are, thus, far above those contained in the Bible, Nay the whole of the Bible cannot stand against a single short chapter of the Holy Quran entitled the *Fatiha* which contains only seven verses and which discloses such vast treasures of spiritual wisdom, excellent religious truths and the highest and most precious verities arranged in natural order and methodical succession of parts as are not to be met within the books of Moses and Jesus, even though one should waste his whole life in turning over their pages. The word of God shows its Divine origin by the Divine power which lies hidden in it just as His handiwork shows His wonderful skill. It should be further remembered that the Holy Quran contains all the directions which are necessary for the perfection of man.

The Bible is like an inn which once afforded lodging and rest to wayfarers but after a time, heavy storms and violent earthquakes levelled it to the ground. The great building which had once separate apartments for different functions, lay in such waste and total disorganization that the whole was nothing but a heap of bricks. The Lord of the inn took pity on the travellers and prepared a new inn,

more spacious than the first and providing every sort of accommodation and all necessities for the comfort of the travellers. In its preparation the Lord of the house while making use of some of the bricks of the old building that lay in ruins, added a great deal of fresh material, in order to provide for every requirement of the travellers. This second inn is the Holy Quran: let every one who has eyes, behold.

In connection with the perfection of the teachings revealed in the Holy Quran and the imperfection of those revealed to Moses and Jesus, it is necessary to remove an objection. The incompleteness of the earlier teachings is due not to any defect in capability and capacity of those for whom these teachings were meant. The Israelites to whom the mission of Moses was directed had passed about four hundred years in the slavery of the Pharaohs of Egypt, and under this long subjugation under the tyranny of their masters, they had become, as it were, utter strangers to principles of justice and equity.

As a general rule, the principles to which the masters of a country adhere, find their way into the subject people also. People who are subjected to tyranny, must after a time grow tyrants themselves; while those who are under a just ruler, must grow just in private. The king is as it were a teacher of his people. The Israelites had for many generations been in the bondage of foreign tyrants and their constant subjection to the tyranny and cruelty of their masters fostered in them a spirit which was quite inconsistent with principles of justice and equality. It was, therefore, the first and primary duty of Moses to indoctrinate them in the principles of justice and hence his teachings laid great stress upon this point.

The pentateuch of Moses is not wholly devoid of the teachings of forbearance and mercy but the vein of justice runs through its pages, and its object is also to put a restraint upon undue cruelty and vindictiveness. Such is not the object of the Gospels. They lay stress upon forgiveness and forbearance. The reason of this is not far to seek. The Jews had carried to excess the doctrine of retaliation taught by the Mosaic Law, and instead of kindness and fellow-feeling, rancor and spite had grown up in their hearts.

The teaching of Jesus in the Gospels is evidently addressed to a people whom the speaker knows to be men of a rancorous and vindictive nature and whom he wishes to instruct in the high moral qualities of kindness, patience, forbearance and forgiveness to which they are utter strangers.

Hence the propriety of the teachings of Moses and Jesus is unquestionable though it cannot be denied that both doctrines were like special or local laws and from their very nature unsuitable for permanent and universal adoption.

The true and universal law is revealed in the Holy Quran which abrogated all previous laws. Any one who enters into the spirit of the Holy book and goes to the depth of its true significance, will clearly see that the Quran has neither laid stress upon strict vengeance as the Mosaic Law did in its doctrine of retaliation and its battle, nor has it gone to the opposite extreme by emphasizing absolute and unqualified forgiveness of all injuries, but adopts the middle path by enjoining that which is right and forbidding that which is wrong. It required us to do that which is right, both according to reason and law, and to refrain from doing what reason and law do not permit. The laws and injunctions of the Quran do not, therefore, relate to particular actions but lay down general rules for a right course of conduct. It does not, for instance, tell us to take an eye for an eye in every case or to forgive injury however evil its consequences may be, but tells us to apply our reason and judgment to the circumstances of every case and act in a manner which is likely to produce the greatest good.

By enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong, the Holy Quran has given us general laws for our guidance and thus introduced scientific principles in religious injunctions. Before proceeding to take any step, we are required to consider what will actually be the right way? Whether it is right to forgive or punish or to give in charity or not to give, is a question of circumstances in each case. According to the Quranic teachings, therefore, our primary consideration in every case should be the propriety of the occasion.

We have so far discussed every side of the question relating to the need of the Quran. One point only remains to be considered. Did Islam wage war with the Jews and the Christians to compel them to accept its doctrines? This asserted compulsion has no basis at all. Islam never took the initiative in the battles which it had to fight. It was compelled to take up the sword against those who had either aggressed or assisted the aggressors. The wrath of God was, therefore, moved to punish the offenders. But His mercy still saved from the deserved punishment such as accepted Islam or paid the *jizya*. This favor was also in accordance with the Divine laws, for whenever there is a divine visitation such as a famine or a plague, the hearts of

men are naturally turned to humbleness, repentance, prayers and charitable deeds to avert the Divine punishment. This shows clearly that God Himself inspires into the hearts of men a remedy averting the evil. The ardent prayers of Moses averted many a time the punishment of the Israelites. In short, the Islamic fights were a punishment from God to the aggressors, in which the way was still open for repentance and obtaining mercy of God.

There is no doubt that the early Islamic wars were not undertaken to compel the Jews and Christians to accept the doctrine of Unity preached by Islam. Wars were resorted to at the express command of the Almighty as a punishment for the offenders who either took up arms against the holy faith for its extirpation or assisted the aggressors or laid obstructions in the way of Islam intending to hinder its progress. These three causes necessitated a severe chastisement of the offenders and Almighty God willed that it should be effected by means of the sword.

Another unjust and unwarranted charge against Islam is that it preached peace during the first thirteen years under the most cruel tortures and persecutions of its enemies because it lacked force at that time, but that as soon as it had sufficient force to make its appearance in the field of battle it declared war. Such a charge would have had some foundation if the opponents of the Holy Prophet had not committed the heinous deeds of cruelty and bloodshed or plotted to take away his life as they did at Mecca, and the Prophet had left Mecca of his own accord and not on account of their evil designs. The slightest acquaintance with the circumstances of the Prophet's life at Mecca would convince every sensible person of the unreasonableness of such a supposition. Even the enemies of Islam cannot deny—nay they have borne testimony to the fact—that the Holy Prophet met the objections and persecutions of his enemies with great fortitude and strictly enjoined forbearance and non-resistance of evil upon his companions.

There was no end to the severe persecutions by his enemies. They shed the blood of many an innocent person and inflicted wounds and injuries upon whomsoever they could lay their hands on. An attack on the Prophet himself was at last plotted to bring the whole movement to an end. At this critical moment Almighty God led His messenger out of all danger to Medina and gave him the glad tidings that those who had taken up the sword against Islam would perish by

(continued on page 34)

JESUS AND THE HOLY QURAN

By

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Man is the crown of the creation. He has been granted authority and power over all other creatures of the world. There is a purpose for every creation and man, above all, has a very special and particular purpose. He is not to pass this life like other lower animals and creatures, *i.e.*, to eat, drink and die. His supreme aim in life as explained by the Holy Quran is:

"I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship me." (51:57)

During his sojourn on this earth, man is to realize and worship God Almighty and attain spiritual heights. But who will lead man to this elevation? Who will show him those paths of spiritual light and glory? God did not leave mankind to grope in the darkness but arranged specially to lead him to those blessed avenues. For this purpose, God Almighty sent his messengers from time to time in all regions of the world. They were the special people chosen by God to lead mankind to the true paths and to pull humanity from darkness into radiant light.

It is recorded in the scriptures of practically all the major religions of the world that whenever humanity goes astray, God arranges to send His chosen ones to lead them to the right course. It is not strange, and history bears out this fact very clearly, that a prophet was always raised amongst a people whenever they drifted away from heavenly paths. It is also a historical fact that they all faced bitter opposition from the same people amongst whom they appeared and whose welfare, uplift and progress they cherished. What was the cause? It was because these men of God swam against the current. They opposed the existing order and prevailing system and gave a new set of rules. They preached honesty and truth, love and affection for their fellow beings, respect for parents and elders, care for the poor and needy, and so on. But the highest aim of these heavenly people was to establish the Unity of God Almighty, the fountainhead of all the virtues, which the people of that time had abandoned.

But the society, the masses, who were knee-deep in immorality, were not prepared to abandon their luxurious and wordly life. This was the principal cause of the opposition against these prophets. But God had established a law in this regard and the Holy Quran has explained it in the following words:

"Allah has decreed: 'most surely I and my messengers will succeed'". (58:22)

The history of every prophet is a witness to this universal truth. All the prophets of God succeeded sooner or later and the system and order which they had brought from God prevailed and their opponents either joined the fold or vanished and were decimated.

Jesus Christ commands a special place amongst these prophets and dear ones of God. The Holy Quran has mentioned about him in detail at various places. A large portion of humanity today believes in him, not as a human being or a prophet but as God or son of God. Let me quote here a passage from a booklet "Is Jesus God" issued by 'Worldwide Church of God'. It says: 'Since God the Father created all things by Jesus Christ and since all things including man were made by Jesus Christ; He (Jesus) is our maker and therefore, God and His life which He gave was of greater value than sum total of all human beings'.

Why this misconception crept amongst the people about this great prophet and beloved of God? One reason was the mode of his birth. The Gospels say that he was born of virgin Mary without the assistance of male agency. The Quran also mentions the same thing. But, if someone is born of a virgin or without the help of a male, this is no criterion of becoming God or son of God. The Quran compares the birth of Jesus to the birth of Adam:

"Surely the case of Jesus with Allah is like the case of Adam." (3:60)

If God has the power to create Adam without any agency, male or female, why can he not create Jesus from a female alone and without the help of a male. Therefore, if Jesus can be God or son of God then Adam will be a bigger and mightier God or son of God. So according to the Holy Quran, Jesus is not God or son of God. He is a human being like all other people **but** he is surely a prophet of God.

Another very significant incident presented about his divinity is his death and resurrection. As mentioned earlier, all prophets of God

faced bitter opposition at the hands of their people in propagating their mission. Jesus also faced such situation at the hand of contemporary Jews. Throughout his ministry of about three years, he was confronted and heckled by the divines and scholars of the Jewish nation. But as he was inspired by God, he was always triumphant and his opponents were always vanquished.

As a last resort, the Jews planned to ensnare him in legal technicalities and eliminate him by killing him. It is a long story of treacheries, false witnesses and incrimination by his enemies in an effort to succeed in proving a crime against him which was to be penalized by capital punishment on the cross. The main purpose of this condemnation was to prove that he was a false Messiah as it was written that "he that is hanged is accursed of God." (Deut. 21:23)

Jesus knew well that if they were successful in killing him by crucifying him, their claim about his falsehood will be justified and no one will be able to convince them about his Messianic mission. They had brought him before the Great Sanhedrin, listening to his case before 71 members of the council and condemning him to death on the cross. As they could not carry out this punishment themselves, they brought this case before the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate. He listened to the whole case but did not find him guilty and wanted to set him free but the Jews forced his hand. Therefore, the Roman Governor had no other choice except to give in to their demands. As a result Jesus was nailed to the cross. The joy of his enemies was unbounded on their victory that they had succeeded in hanging the false Messiah on the cross and thus making him accursed in the eyes of their fellow beings, according to the Law of Scriptures. How strange it is that Christians too accepted that their Lord died on the cross and became accursed.

Let me explain what the word 'curse' means. This nauseating word is related directly to the heart alone. He whose heart is black, vicious, sinful, foul and rotten by running away from God, he who is deprived of God's blessing, he who is deprived of the love of God and is blind like a devil, he who has lost the true and heavenly path and he who has severed every link and loyalty to his Creator and there is hostility and spite and enmity between him and God, God loathes him and he loathes God, he is the one who is accursed. How can one use such a nauseating word for Jesus who was a beloved of God. There was never a time on Jesus when he detested and loathed God. He never even thought that he was removed from God or was

an enemy of his Creator. His heart was always filled with the love and the light of his Lord.

This is what we will have to think and believe about Jesus if we consider him to be accursed or to have died an accursed death. But what is the verdict of the Holy Quran about his death? It clears him of all the incriminations brought against him by his enemies, the Jews. It says:

"And for their saying, 'We did slay the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah' whereas they slew him not, nor did they bring about his death on the Cross, but he was made to appear to them like one crucified and those who differ therein are certainly in a state of doubt about it; they have no certain knowledge thereof but only pursue a conjecture. On the contrary, Allah exalted him to Himself." (4:158-159)

Again we read:

"(Remember the time) when Allah said, O Jesus, I will cause thee to die (a natural death) and will clear thee (of the charges) of those who disbelieve and exalt those who follow thee above those who disbelieve until the Day of Resurrection." (3:56)

See, how the Quran states clearly that Jesus did not die an accursed death. The Jews failed to kill him on the cross. He died just like any other human being and like all other prophets and was exalted in the eyes of God like other heavenly messengers. It states another prophecy as well and that is those who will believe in him will always be exalted above those who disbelieve in him. History of the last two thousand years bears out this fact without the least doubt and needs no explanation.

Then again the Quran clears this great prophet from being accursed, When Jesus speaks about his birth and his death. He says:

"That I was blessed on the day I was born and I will be blessed on the day I die and I will again be blessed when I shall be given life again.", (19:34)

See, how Quran exonerates and announces about the blessings the day he was born and the day he died and the day he will be raised again. How lovely is this description and the word accursed is kept far away from this beloved one of God.

The Quran mentions about Jesus in very admirable and loving words and says that he was a messenger of God:

"And He (i.e., God) will teach him the book and the wisdom

and the Torah and the Gospel. And (will send him) as a messenger to the children of Israel.” (3:49-50)

Again while giving glad tidings about his birth to Mary, his mother, God says in the Holy Quran:

“When the angel said, ‘O Mary, ‘Allah gives thee glad tidings of (a son) through a word from Him; his name shall be the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, honored in this world and in the next and of those who are granted nearness (to God).’ (19:46)

See how the Quran says that he is honored in this world and in the next and he is one of those who are granted nearness. The Quran has never mentioned that he was ever removed from God or was ever accursed or his heart was ever far away from God.

Let me end with a prayer of Jesus Christ for the people who believed in him as mentioned in the Holy Quran:

“Said Jesus, son of Mary, ‘O Allah, our Lord send down to us a table from heaven, spread with food that it may be to us a festival, to the first of us and to the last of us and a sign from Thee; and provide sustenance for us, for Thou art the best of Sustainers. Allah said, ‘surely I will send it down to you; but whosoever of you disbelieves afterwards—I will surely punish them with a punishment wherewith I will not punish any other of the peoples’”. (5:115-116)

What a majestic prophecy of the Holy Quran about the Christian nations. God accepted Jesus's prayer and, in the beginning, Christians were granted empires and kingdoms and now in the end for the last two hundred years Christian nations were again granted large kingdoms. But what about the warning at the end of this verse. If they disbelieve, the punishment will also be unique, special and unusual. Imagine only the horrors of the two world wars. Nearly twenty million people lost their lives. Others who suffered untold sufferings physical, social and economical, are innumerable. And God knows what dire punishment is yet in store in the form of a future nuclear war. This dreaded calamity and hell upon earth is looming large over the heads of today's humanity and what a catastrophe it will be, cannot even be imagined. So let the followers of Christ take heed and follow the way God has explained, for their own safety and the security of the whole human race.



AHMADIYYAT TODAY (II)

By

Ataul Mujeeb Rashed, Imam of the London Mosque

THE PRESENT LEADER

The present leader of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at is Hazrat Sahibzada Mirza Tahir Ahmad, who was elected to the exalted office of Khilafat at the age of 54 on 10th June, 1982. He was born on 18th December, 1928, at Qadian. After graduation from Government College, Lahore, he enrolled at the Jamiatul Mubashireen for theological and oriental studies at the level of Shahid. After serving the Movement in Pakistan for some time, he arrived in London where he studied at the School of Oriental Studies at the University of London. Keenly interested in sports, this resilient athlete harbored a spirit for adventure and outdoor life. During his stay in London, he toured the Continent with a rucksack on his back, staying at various youth hostels. He returned to Pakistan where he held numerous offices in the Ahmadiyya Movement.

He is very pragmatic and foresighted; a practicing scholar, an eloquent orator and a lover of the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him. Besides possessing a deep knowledge of the philosophy and teachings of Islam, he is an acknowledged historian who has kept up to date with the latest secular research and discoveries of man. He has visited Europe and America several times for the purposes of research studies and the propagation of Islam.

MAIN TEACHINGS

Ahmadiyyat is nothing but true Islam. It could, therefore, be said without exaggeration that the main teachings of Ahmadiyyat are those which have been taught and set forth by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him. The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement himself makes this point clear in his writings. He says:

"I believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers. And in the life after death. I do believe in the Great Book of Allah, *i.e.*, the Holy Quran, and I follow the greatest of the Messengers of Allah, *The Khatamul-Anbia*, Muhammad Mustafa (peace and

the blessings of Allah be upon him) and surely I am a Muslim. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the One, there is none to associate with Him, and that Muhammad is His Servant and His Messenger. O my Lord, Grant that I live a Muslim and die a Muslim and raise me up with the Muslims on the Day of Resurrection. Thou knowest what is in my heart and none knoweth it but Thee and Thou art the best witness. Let everyone bear witness to this written statement of mine. And the All-Knowing, All-Hearing God is surely my witness, first and foremost, that I do believe in everything that converts even a non-Muslim into a Muslim. And I do believe in all which is given in the Holy Qur'an and the authentic Hadith." (*Tabligh-i-Risalat*, Vol. 21, pub. 1891).

"Nobody enters my Jama'at except one who enters the fold of Islam and follows the book of Allah and the Sunnah of our Master, the Best of Creation, and has firm faith in Allah and His Messenger, the Noble, the Merciful, and the Day of Resurrection and in Paradise and in hell; and solemnly promises and declares that he would never choose a religion except Islam and that he would die with firm faith in the truth of this, holding fast to the Book of Allah, the All-Knowing, and that he would translate into action whatever is to be found in the 'Sunnah' of the Holy Prophet and the Holy Qur'an and the consensus of the Companions of the Holy Prophet; and whoever abandons these three, throws himself in hell." (*Mawaheb-ur-Rahman*; p. 96, pub. 1903)

Despite the fact that Ahmadiyyat is nothing but true Islam, there are some points on the interpretation of which there exists a difference of opinion between Ahmadies and the generality of the Muslims. Hereunder I mention some of the main issues where we are divided:

1. It is generally believed that Jesus Christ is alive in the heavens with earthly body and shall descend from there in the latter days. We believe Jesus to have died a natural death. There are several verses of the Holy Quran which support our view and the first Ijma of the Ummah leads us to the same conclusion. At the demise of our beloved Prophet, peace be upon him, Hazrat Abu Bakar, recited from the Holy Qur'an.

"The Holy Prophet is but a prophet. There have been prophets before him and they had all died. If he also should die or be put to death, would they turn back upon him?" (3:145)

To say that the same Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, was to descend from heaven to regenerate Islam is tantamount to limiting the powers of the Almighty. We believe that God is All-Powerful. He

has no need to resuscitate Jesus of Nazareth. He can raise a teacher from among the followers of the Holy Prophet, install him as the Promised Messiah and charge him with the duty of reforming the world. How can anyone, who deliberates over this subject in a proper manner, insist that the Power of God requires God to bring the first Messiah back to life. God is not poor. He is Powerful. If He finds that His servants need someone to guide them, He does not have to put life into a dead prophet. He is able to raise one from amongst His living servants to reform and lead the people.

2. We believe that as the Holy Prophet Muhammad is *Khatamun Nabiyyin* (Seal of the prophets) no prophet can now come who could supersede him, or who should give the world a new Kalima or a new Qibla or a new religious law or alter any part of the law of the Holy Quran. It is said in the Holy Qur'an:

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your males, but he is a Messenger of God and Khatam al-Nabiyyin." (33:41)

Some people argue that according to the above, there can be no prophets now, even from among the followers of the Holy Prophet. But they seem to forget that in the divine text the word used is *khatam* and not *Khatim*. The word *Khatim* would mean 'the last person' or the 'the last one'. The great doctor of Hadith, Imam Bukhari, has interpreted the divine title, *Khatam al-Nabiyyin*, as 'Seal of the Prophets'. A seal has the function of attestation, not termination.

It should be evident that the assertion in the second part of the verse is in extenuation of what is conceded in the first. The first part concedes an apparent defect, namely, that the Holy Prophet had no physical male issue. On the face of it, there is a contradiction with what is asserted in another well-known verse of the Holy Qur'an: *'Verily, not you, but your enemy is without issue.'* (108:4)

To resolve this contradiction, God makes an important claim on behalf of the Holy Prophet in verse 33:41. the claim is to repel the doubt or difficulty which the admission of this contradiction may easily raise. The claim is this: True, the Holy Prophet has no physical son. But this is no disgrace. It does not mean that he really is without offspring or progeny. Why? Because he is a Prophet of God. As a Prophet of God, he would have his followers as his spiritual progeny, which would more than compensate for any lack of physical progeny. But he is more than a prophet. He is also the

Seal of the Prophets. The expression 'Seal of the Prophets' asserts something further. It asserts that not only will the Prophet have followers and believers of the usual order; but also as 'Seal of the Prophets', he will have the further power of raising others to the spiritual rank of prophethood. He will be the progenitor not only of ordinary believers but even of prophets.

3. We believe in the obligation of *Jihad*. Without *Jihad*, according to us, belief cannot be made perfect in Islam. The weakness of Islam and of Muslims, the decay or the disappearance of belief, that we observe today on all sides, are due to casualness in the matter of *Jihad*. What we deny and resist vehemently is the view which makes it right to shed blood, to spread disorder and disloyalty, and to disrupt peace in the name of Islam. We are not against *Jihad*. The cry of (so called) *Jihad* is heard again and again and from many different quarters. But what was the *Jihad* to which God and His Prophet invited Muslims? And what is the *Jihad* to which we are invited today? The *Jihad* to which God invites us in the Holy Quran is described in the verse:

"So obey not the disbelievers and strive by means of it (i.e., the Qur'an) a great striving." (25:53)

The greatest *Jihad*, therefore, is *Jihad* with the help of the Quran. Is it such a *Jihad* to which Muslims are invited today? How many are there who turn out to strive against disbelievers with only the Qur'an in their hands? Are Islam and the Qur'an so utterly devoid of inherent merit and attractiveness? If Islam and the Qur'an cannot attract people today by their intrinsic beauty, what evidence have we for the truth of Islam? Human speech can change hearts. Can the speech of God change no hearts? Can it bring about no change in the world except with the help of the sword? Long human experience shows that the sword cannot effect a change of heart and, according to Islam, it is a sin to try and convert a people through fear or favor.

This passage from the Holy Qur'an leaves no doubt whatever that a religious war is not permitted by Islam unless it is against a people who force another people to abjure their religion, unless, for instance, Muslims are forced to abjure Islam. A religious war may be justified when there is interference in religion. But even when permitted, a religious war is not intended to force a people to give up their faith, nor is its purpose to desecrate or destroy places of worship, or to kill. The purpose of religious wars is to protect

religion, and to save from disgrace and destruction all places of worship, irrespective of the denomination to which they belong. Only such a religious war is permitted by Islam. Islam stands as a witness for other religions and protects them. Islam is no party to violence or cruelty or repression.

The Jihad sanctioned by Islam is to make war against a people who prevent others by force from accepting Islam, or who wish to force people to deny Islam. It may be made against a people who kill others because of Islam. Only against such a people is the making of war permissible in Islam. Against any other people war is wrong and contrary to Islam. War, not sanctioned by these conditions, may be a political war, a war between two countries or two peoples. It may even be a war between two Muslim peoples, but it will not be a religious war.

THE CHIEF AUTHORITIES FOR THESE TEACHINGS

The supreme authority in all matters of religious requirements is the Holy Qur'an. This is the final law of God which forms the basis of the Islamic *Sharia* (Law). The second source of authority is the *Sunnah* (practice of the Holy Prophet) and *Hadith* (Sayings of the Holy Prophet). These are paramount sources which form the basic authority. But in all matters Qur'an takes precedence over Sunnah and Hadith. If any Hadith is found contrary to the verdict of the Holy Qur'an this is rejected. The law of *Sharia* is quite extensive and the *Fuqa'ha* have made great advancements in understanding the letter and spirit of *Sharia*. In such matters we follow *Fiqha Hanafiyya*. Our Qazis are asked to follow Hanafi jurisprudence when deciding cases that are brought before them for decisions. But the firm principle that the Holy Qur'an always takes precedence over all other sources is never neglected.

The Holy Founder of the Movement, from time to time, has stated his own decisions on certain issues where there are differences amongst various schools of thought. In such situations the verdict of the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam is accepted.



THE MIRACLE OF THE PEN

By

Syed Hasanat Ahmad

In the long history of mankind, no one has ever wielded his pen so forcefully, so powerfully and so relentlessly in the defence of his faith as Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad—the great spiritual son of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing of God be on him).

Ahmad, peace be on him, unlocked fathomless treasures of knowledge so freely, so generously and so abundantly. He fulfilled a famous saying of the Holy Prophet that the Mahdi would distribute wealth freely.

Millions of words flowed from his pen, his writings occupy thousands of pages bound in over eighty bulky volumes. This does not include hundreds of posters, leaflets and handbills issued by Ahmad to nail the lie or to challenge the enemies of Islam.

His medium of expression was Urdu, Arabic and Persian, although by virtue of his meagre education, he could claim perfection in none. Urdu was the proud language of Delhi and Lucknow and Ahmad hailed from a village lying far away from the ramparts of civilization and culture of that day. Yet Ahmad produced a style of his own that immensely enriched the Urdu literature so abundantly that it amazed the proud scholars of its rich culture.

Ahmad's pen produced a magic, cast a spell, exercised a fascination and hypnotized the reader in a way that no writer could ever claim. His cold logic, his power of reasoning, his marshalling of arguments, his method of induction and deduction, his dynamism in style and expression left his friends and foes dumbfounded and speechless.

Ahmad's love for God, his devotion to the Holy Prophet and his complete immersion in the Holy Quran were simply matchless and unparalleled. His love for Islam prompted the unceasing flow of powerful writings that set leaders of diverse faiths on the defensive.

God had blessed him with two special gifts, the gift of knowledge and the gift of the power to communicate that knowledge. The miracle of the pen, whether in Urdu or Arabic, with which he was Divinely blessed, remains unchallenged for all times. Little wonder

that Ahmad was able to demonstrate the mastery on both these languages in a manner no one could ever excel.

Ahmad was endowed with the special gift of the understanding of the Holy Quran. He asserted, and established this assertion with the force of a giant, that the Holy Quran is an infinite source of knowledge—infinite in its meanings and infinite in its nature and properties. Ahmad brought a new glory and a new lustre to the Holy Quran discovering numerous excellences and graces that had laid hidden for centuries.

Ahmad demonstrated with arguments that the Holy Quran is replete with prophecies about our time, some fulfilled and some yet to be fulfilled. The Quran never makes an assertion unless it provides a convincing argument for that assertion. Any doubt or any difficulty arising in one's mind can easily be settled by the Holy Quran itself. Ahmad demonstrated the multi-sidedness of the Quran by explaining how the text is to be interpreted. It has many layers of meaning. He claimed that the Holy Quran imparts knowledge about the natural phenomena so necessary to the spiritual advancement of mankind. He gave us the principles of interpretation of the Holy Quran whereby one can guard against the errors. Ahmad discovered that the Holy Quran contains a systematic account of the spiritual advancement, and enumerated the stages to which the human beings are capable of attaining them. He proved that the Holy Quran has a perfect sequence. The verses of each chapter are related to each other in a rational link.

Ahmad was the first authority to indicate that Sura Fatiha is a synopsis of the Holy Quran and in a way prologue to the Holy Book, the rest of the Book being an explanation. He explained how the meanings of various parts and the verses of Quran have relevance to the present day needs.

When Ahmad announced his mission for reforming the society, he was attacked for his alleged lack of knowledge and learning. He was described as a Munshi (clerk) and a half-educated scholar. It was stated that he had no knowledge of Arabic and therefore did not have the necessary qualifications to pronounce judgment on matters of higher learning. A wall of prejudice was raised against him. When this hue and cry spread far and wide, God granted him a special knowledge of the Arabic language and endowed him with the knowledge of forty thousand roots of Arabic in a single night. Ahmad was granted this miraculous competence in Arabic and was commanded

to write books in Arabic. His first attempt in Arabic prose was a chapter that he appended to his outstanding book, *Aeena-kamalat-Islam*. This chapter contained an open challenge to anyone who could find faults in his God-given gift of Arabic.

The number of books that he wrote in Arabic continued to pile up till it crossed the figure of 20. Ahmad asked his critics to produce something better and nobody had the courage to accept the challenge. He then offered rewards from Rs 1,000 which went on rising to Rs 10,000, but despite the temptation offered none could produce something as good in beauty and eloquence and power or even inferior as the writings of Ahmad. All of his Arabic books remain a challenge until now; even the Arabs were invited to join the challenge but none came forward.

Then it was alleged that Ahmad had secretly employed an Arab who did his writings in Arabic. To silence this allegation, Ahmad was commanded by God to deliver a sermon in Arabic on the forthcoming Eidul Azha which was to occur in a couple of days (April 11, 1900). In obedience to the Divine command, Ahmad delivered a lengthy sermon in Arabic, which was recorded instantly by a team including Hazrat Maulvi Noorud Din, who later was elected the first Caliph. The sermon (later published under the title of *Khutaba Ilhamia* (revealed Sermon) is couched in Arabic of highest order and bewildered the Arabs and non-Arabs alike.

The writing of these books was not the only occupation of Ahmad. He issued thousands of leaflets, handbills and tracts and wrote letters and made speeches and granted interviews to hundreds of thousands of seekers of the truth. According to one estimate, in seven years after the acceptance of the first Bai't, he received ninety thousand letters to which he had to reply himself. The writing of forty or fifty letters a day is not an easy job for a man who is required to make speeches, hold debates and write books. And then he had to play host to all those who visited him, for Islam, inculcating cordial hospitality towards all guests.

A word about the first Bai't that Ahmad took on March 23, 1889 at Ludhiana. It excites one's imagination why Ludhiana and not Qadian had the honor of being the venue of the first Bai't. Every act of the Promised Messiah was at the behest of the Divine command and there may be some wisdom and some significance.

And indeed there was one. Exactly fifty-four years before the first

Bai't, Ludhiana became the first city in the land of five rivers where the first Christian Mission and the first Church were set up with the avowed object of not only converting the entire Punjab but the whole of Central Asia into Christianity. Rev. Lowrie, an American Christian missionary when returning home after setting up the Mission at Luhiana said: "The mission established at Ludhiana would be the Morning Star preceding the full day of Gospel Light."

And so the hand of God moved and exactly fifty-four years after the event, the advent of the Promised Messiah took place in the same town and the historic mission of "the breaking of the Cross" began.



THE NEED OF THE HOLY QURAN

(continued from page 20)

the sword. Do these circumstances lend the least support to the cruel charge that the Prophet was from the very commencement bent upon war and that this cherished idea took a practical shape when he found himself at the head of an army at Medina?

The fact is that when the Meccans advanced towards Medina and were met by the Moslems at the famous field of Badr, the ranks of the Muslims contained no more than 313 men of whom very few had any experience of war and the majority were young men who had never fought a battle before? Nay, among these three hundred and thirteen were also boys who had not yet grown to manhood. Could this small number of raw young men be relied upon as sufficient force to meet the sturdy warriors and Bedouin hordes of the whole idolatrous Arabia and the thousands of Jews and Christians who were bent upon extirpating the new faith? Could a General ever make his appearance in the field with such scanty material to deal destruction to innumerable foes? Does it not clearly prove that the Prophet was obliged to take the sword in obedience to the commandment of God and not to fulfil any plan which he had concerted? Had it been his plan, he would have first collected a force of thirty or forty thousand strong and then made his appearance into the field of battle.

THE RETURN OF THE MESSIAH

BY

Dr. Qazi Muhammad Barkatullah

Almost one hundred years ago, the prophecies relating to the return of Jesus Christ were being fulfilled, and the second advent of the Messiah very anxiously looked forward to. We have a precedent that Elias had to come down from heaven before the first advent of Jesus Christ. But, the same Elias did not come back, and John the Baptist was said to have come with the Spirit of Elias (Matthew; 11:14). Similarly, the second coming of the Messiah was duly fulfilled with the advent of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam.

It was the latter part of the nineteenth century, A.D., and the close of the thirteenth century Hijri, that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India, proclaimed that he was the Promised Messiah and the Mahdi. The Promised Messiah declared that the door to salvation was none other than professing:

*Besides Allah, there is none worthy of worship
and Muhammad is His Messenger.*

PREDICTIONS FULFILLED

The signs of time pointing to the second advent of the Messiah being fulfilled are briefly cited here:

1. Various scholars relied heavily on Daniel's Prophecy (Daniel, Chapter 12) about the coming of Jesus Christ. It refers to the year 1290 of the Muslim calendar which occurred in the latter part of the nineteenth century, A.D. (around 1874). Hazrat Ahmad's Advent occurred exactly on time, according to Daniel's Prophecy (*Haqiqatul Wahy*, p. 208).

2. In 1889, The American Mission published a book, *Millenium Dawn*, mentioning that from the time of the creation of Adam, up to the year 1872, a period of six thousand years had been completed, entering into the seventh thousand and the time for the second coming of Christ.

3. Reverend Comming in his book, *The End* (Ohio, 1879), concluded that all the signs of those days were preparing the way for the fulfillment of the prophecy for the second coming of Jesus Christ. The fulfillment of the predictions like earthquakes in different places, plagues and pestilences, wars and rumors of wars, all were preparing the way for the second coming of Jesus Christ. The Christian Scholar, therefore, wrote in 1879: 'Christ is at our door.'

4. Not only Christians but Muslims were also awaiting the advent of the Messiah and Mahdi (rightly guided). For, Prophet Muhammad said: "The Mahdi is none else but Jesus." There was a heavenly sign to be fulfilled, a sign which had never been witnessed by the world ever since its creation. The fulfillment of that great heavenly sign leaves not a bit of doubt in this connection. Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be on him, says:

"Of our Mahdi there are two signs which have never taken place ever since the earth and the heaven came into existence. One is that in the month of Ramazan the moon shall be eclipsed on the first of its nights and the Sun in the middle of its days of eclipse and such a sign had never occurred ever since the creation of the earth and the heaven." (*Dar Qutni*, Vol. VIII, p. 188)

It is, therefore, evident that the advent of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi shall be heralded by a profound and singular sign of the Heaven. This sign was duly fulfilled in the year 1311 A.H., corresponding to the year 1894 A.D. In the month of Ramazan both the moon and the sun were eclipsed at specified times in accordance with the prophecy.

5. The Muslims were also awaiting the Reformer who was to be raised at the beginning of the 14th Century of Muslim era. For, a Reformer had to be raised at the beginning of each Century according to Prophet Muhammad. (*Abu Dawood*)

Jesus Christ appeared 1300 years after Prophet Moses, that is at the beginning of the 14th Century. Similarly, the Second Coming of Jesus, the Messiah, the Mahdi, was also to be fulfilled 1300 years after Prophet Muhammad, that is at the beginning of the 14th Century of the Muslim calendar. This period corresponds to the last quarter of the nineteenth century of Christian calendar.

6. Wali Naimatullah, a great Muslim saint, predicted through his famous verses as follows:

I behold the might and power of God,

When 1200 years will have expired
The law of Muhammad shall he refresh and revive
I recite the name Ahmad,
He is the Mahdi of the time and the Messiah of the age;
Both these offices I see blended in him.

7. The Hindus were looking for Krishna and the Sikhs for Autar. Guru Baba Nanak had pointed out: "The reign of the Mughals shall last from 1578 to 1897 of the Bikram era. Then a Reformer shall rise". (*Janam Sakhi of Bhi Bala*, p. 272)

8. Most of the Chapters in the last part of the Holy Quran contain signs of the advent of the Promised Messiah. Some of the Signs are summarized below:

- A. The eclipse of both sun and moon on specified dates in the month of Ramazan was witnessed in the year 1894.
- B. The falling of the stars was witnessed in 1866, 1872, and 1875.

This prophecy has also been the topic of discussion by the Christian scholars. For example, Ellen G. White refers to this in his book, *The Great Controversy*, as follows: "In 1833, two years after Miller began to present in public the evidence of Christ's coming soon, the last of the signs appeared which were promised by the Savior as tokens of his Second advent. That is the stars shall fall from heaven".

- C. "The Mountains will be blown away," has also been witnessed as many tunnels and roads have been made through mountains by blowing them up.
- D. New modes of transportation have been witnessed in terms of railroads, airplanes, etc.
- E. The period when "the beasts are gathered together," has been witnessed by the establishments of Zoological gardens.
- F. "The waters of rivers drained away" for irrigation purposes, the rivers lined up together, large oceans joined by canals, have since been witnessed.
- G. "The bringing of people together" has been witnessed by the mass media of communication.
- H. The advancement in the science of astronomy and the ushering in of the space era has also been witnessed.

- I. The calamities of diverse nature in our times have also been witnessed.
- J. Having witnessed all the signs being fulfilled,, there are glad tidings for the people that the appearance of the Promised Messiah will make it easier for people to accept him and please God Almighty. That is to say, the Paradise is to to be brought nearer to the people. Because even the slightest sacrifice in the way of God Almighty will carry great weight. As such the people who accept the Promised Messiah will be near and dear to God Almighty.

This was the period when God Almighty raised Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who proclaimed that in him all the prophecies about the Advent of a Great Reformer, the Mahdi and the Promised Messiah had been fulfilled. During the year 1880, while writing his first book, *Brahin-i-Ahmadiyya*, it was revealed to him that he was the Reformer of the Fourteenth Century Hijri, but he did not form any organization immediately.

It was the year 1307 A.H., corresponding to 1889, that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad proclaimed himself to be the Promised Messiah. In his Persian verses, (rendered into English), Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad proclaims:

This was the time, the time for the Messiah to come,
Had I not come, someone else would have come.

It has been revealed to me that I am the same Person who
is the Reformer of the faith and the Guide unto the people.

With the loud beat of drum I proclaim that I am the
Messiah and Successor to the King in Heaven, that is, Pro-
phet Muhammad.



The Promised Messiah said: "As I am the Promised Messiah and God has manifested heavenly signs in my support, everyone who in the estimation of God has been sufficiently warned of my advent as the Promised Messiah and has become aware of my claim, will be accountable to God, for no one can turn away with impunity from those who have been sent by God.

THE ROLE AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN ISLAM

By
Mostafa Sabet

*(Being the text of an address delivered in the Annual Convention
of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of Western Canada, held in
May 1984 at Calgary, Alberta, Canada.)*

The subject of the status of women in Islam can be discussed from several angles. One approach is to show the miserable status of women before the advent of Islam and then to explain the high status to which women were raised through Islam. This approach, in my opinion, is not the best, as it does not necessarily prove the superiority of the status of women in Islam but rather proves the inferiority of women in pre-Islamic era. If we were to prove the solidity and strength of an element by comparing it with the strength of glass, the comparison will not help much in appreciating the strength of that element. It could rather be misleading. But if we prove that an element is stronger than steel, then the listener can clearly appreciate the strength of the element in question.

Thus in my exposition, I intend to compare the status of women in Islam with the status of women in a country or a culture where women have presumably enjoyed all human rights and achieved the highest status they can think of. It is generally believed that it is very difficult to find that women have achieved this kind of status except in the Western civilization. It is often boastfully claimed that women in the West under the Judeo-Christian tradition or culture have 'almost' enjoyed equality with man. So, in order to appreciate the high status of women in Islam, let us compare it with the status of women in North America under the Judeo-Christian culture and tradition.

In the second chapter of *Genesis*, we read as follows in the Bible about the story of Creation:

"And the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him'" (Gen. 2:18).

Then after the curse which befell man, according to the Bible God told the woman:

"I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception, ..., thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over you." (Gen. 3:16).

This in a nut-shell summarizes the status of women in the Judeo-Christian culture: The woman was created to be a helper for man. She ought to live in sorrow because of God's curse on her. Accordingly, her desire shall be to her husband and he shall rule over her. This verdict was believed to be in operation for thousands of years until this contemporary century of ours. Women have been treated like animals as they were considered to be created only for man's service and pleasure.

Woman is thus believed to be without a soul and she cannot know love and affection but only have a desire to her husband as if woman is not endowed with feelings of love, sympathy, mercy and affection. Woman's place in society was always subordinate to man because "he shall rule over her", according to the Bible.

Compare this with the purpose of creation of women as presented by the Holy Quran:

"And one of His Signs is this, that He has created wives for you from among yourselves that you may find peace of mind in them, and He has put love and tenderness between you. In that surely are Signs for a people who reflect" (30:22).

How vast is the difference between the desire instinct which drives a woman to her husband according to the Bible, and the bond of love and tenderness which joins a man and his wife in order to achieve peace of mind according to the Holy Quran!

Again, according to the Bible, the role of man was that of a ruler over woman, but the Holy Quran explains the role of man in the following verse:

"Men are guardians with respect to women" (4:35).

The Arabic word translated as guardians in the verse is *Qawwa-moona*, which refers to a person who is taking care of someone or looking after him or after his affairs or protecting or guarding someone. Thus the relationship between man and woman in Islam is that in which a woman feels safe and secure. Man has to look after her, care for her, protect her and stand on guard after her safety and security. This superior relationship between man and woman in Islam applies through all the stages of woman's life—as a daughter, as a wife and as a mother.

Referring to daughters, the Holy Prophet has said:

“He who is blessed with three daughters, educates them, looks after them properly and brings them up to be righteous women, God will reward him by admitting him into Paradise.”

Referring to wives, the Holy Prophet says:

“The best among you is he who is best to his wife.”

Referring to mothers, again, the Holy Prophet has said:

“Paradise is found under the feet of mothers”

meaning that one can be admitted to Paradise by virtue of being a good guardian with respect of his mother.

I have not come across similar teachings in my study of the Bible. It is true that the fifth commandment says: “Honor thy father and thy mother”, but it does not explain the manner or the form of honoring mothers. The matter is left open to individuals according to the fashion or the traditions of their day. No wonder we see that ‘Homes For The Elderly’ are jammed with helpless elderly people living their last days in solitude, away from their loved ones who consider it to be doing them honor by isolating them in such homes in exchange for financial compensation. How fortunate indeed is the Muslim elderly mother who lives in an Islamic society where the true teachings of Islam are practiced. She lives all her life looked after and cared for by her children who seek to enter Paradise through doing their utmost for her comfort. And how miserable the condition of an elderly mother who lives in the so-called free world under the Judeo-Christian tradition. She may spend her last days confined to a home for the elderly, lingering helplessly until the moment of death finally comes.

If this is the miserable end awaiting most of the elderly mothers, then what did the women’s liberation movement achieve? In this regard, let me quote a few lines from a recent article:

“The women’s liberation movement has come a long way. Women have probably agitated for social change since the beginning of history.”

The writer, of course, seems to be completely ignorant of the high status enjoyed by women in Islam. He continues:

“But the traceable, formal beginning of the American Women’s Liberation Movement occurred at the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848”. (That is to say after more than 1260 years since Muslim

women have enjoyed their rights.) "It was the first women's rights meeting in America and it drew about 250 women and 40 men. It was at this convention that the first phase of the women's liberation movement took shape in the daring step to ask for suffrage.

That was all that the women were striving to achieve at that time—the right to vote—as if they had already achieved their basic human rights other than the right to vote. Let us now continue with the article to see what miserable status women of Europe and North America were living in, even until the twentieth century, that is, 1300 years after the advent of Islam:

"Considering the American historical background, asking for the right to vote was a big step. For women, marriage was "civil death" in that her person and property were then owned by her husband, a concept rooted in English Common Law and carried to this country by the colonists. The same concept was brought by other European immigrants."

Here we see that the concept of a husband owning the person and property of his wife was rooted in English Common Law. In fact this tradition did not originate in the British society but became an integral part of the English Common Law since it was deeply entrenched in the Judeo-Christian tradition. After all, this tradition originated in the Bible. Paul confirmed this tradition when he said that man is the head of woman as Christ is the head of the Church. This meant firstly that woman does not have a head of her own but man is her head. Secondly that the relationship between man and woman is like that between Christ who is believed to be "God the Son" and the Church; and as God is the Owner of the person and property of His servants, so does man own the person and property of his wife. Compare this cruel attitude towards women with the superior teachings of the Holy Quran revealed about 1300 before women's liberation movement started. The Holy Quran says:

"They are a garment for you, and you are a garment for them"
(2:188).

This is what the relationship should be between a husband and a wife, as garments cover up the faults and defects, provide warmth, security against the elements, provide beauty and comfort; similarly each spouse should be like a garment to his or her partner. It is not a ruler-servant relationship nor owner-slave affiliation as depicted in the Judeo-Christian tradition, which to a certain degree still exist in North America to this day.

Let us now continue with that interesting article about the history

of women's liberation movement. It says:

"In 1868 the 14th Amendment extended the right to vote to only male citizens. Two years later, (1870) black males achieved suffrage through the 15th Amendment. It took another half a century before women won the right to vote. That occurred in 1920 with the 19th Amendment. The first phase of the movement was over."

That was all what the western woman has achieved after thousands of years of enslavement to man and 72 years of striving since the initiation of women's liberation movement: the right to vote. Otherwise, her inferior status remained virtually the same. Compare this to the rights Muslim women enjoyed more than 1300 years before women in the West won their right to vote. The Muslim woman had the right to challenge the highest authority, the head of state, if she felt that she was right and he was wrong. This was exactly what happened in the time of Hazrat Umar, the third Khalifa, when he was challenged by a woman from among his audience who objected to what he was saying. There and then, the great Khalifa admitted his error and uttered the well-known sentence:

"The woman is right and Umar is wrong".

Once again we go to this article and read:

"A new vitality and era of optimism ushered in the second phase of the women's movement, beginning in the early sixties and continuing to this day."

To this day women are still striving to win their rights. But the rights women have won only in the past 20 years, have been granted to Muslim women for more than 13 centuries. The article says:

"In this current phase, women have achieved many goals in the area of education and employment. Under pressure, Congress enacted a series of laws beneficial to women. Among those laws were the Equal Pay Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, passage of Equal Rights Amendment which was subsequently submitted to the States for ratification and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 banning sex discrimination in education".

Today, after 3500 years since the revelation of the Law of Moses, after almost 2000 years since the advent of Christ, after a long struggle and phase after phase of women's liberation movement, the western woman in North America, under Judeo-Christian tradition, has achieved what was granted to Muslim women about 1400 years ago. The principle of the Equal Pay Act which the Congress in the

U.S.A. has enacted under pressure in 1964, is found in the Holy Quran where God says:

"I will allow not the work of any worker from among you, whether male or female, to be lost" (3:196).

The principle of banning sex discrimination in education which was enforced through Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 was already guaranteed to Muslim females by the Holy Prophet Muhammad as he said:

"Seeking knowledge is a right and obligation for every Muslim male and female."

I already mentioned that a man can be admitted to Paradise by virtue of the education and good upbringing of three daughters.

In spite of all these rights which the western women have achieved, still they have not achieved the rights granted to Muslim women 1400 years ago. Let me briefly give some examples of areas where Muslim women have enjoyed the rights which the western women, under Judeo-Christian tradition, are still deprived of:

1. In marriage:

A Muslim woman can demand her marriage to be dissolved, she has the right to keep all her personal property but she has to give back to the husband his dowery. Usually there is a waiting period of 3 months after divorce.

Women in Canada upto 1984 were not able to obtain a divorce except for three specific reasons: Cruelty, adultery and irreconcilable differences. There was a waiting period of 3 years before granting a divorce. The new amendments of the family laws which were presented by the Federal Government as one of the election goodies have reduced the waiting period to one year but have obliged the woman to give half of her property to the husband.

In Islam, Muslim woman is protected against premarital exploitations. Man does not have the right to be intimate with his fiancée before marriage is consummated. Under Judeo-Christian tradition, western woman is not protected from such exploitation.

In Islam there is no minimum age for a girl to marry as long as she is ready by nature. Thus chastity of women can be guarded through early marriage if the need arises. A western girl cannot legally get married before the age of 18. For several years after attaining puberty, to guard their chastity western girls generally fight a losing battle.

Usually they fall in the way with a result of thousands and thousands of illegitimate children and scores of organizations using tax-payer money to care for these children, to look after single mothers and to launch campaigns to educate the girls on how to indulge in sex without getting pregnant.

2. The Right of Inheritance.

The right of inheritance is guaranteed to a Muslim woman. She can inherit her father, brother, son and husband. In Judeo-Christian tradition, the first born male inherits everything. Up till this day there is no law to guarantee the share of a woman in inheritance. It is up to the man to include or exclude his wife, daughter, sister or mother from his will.

3. In Business:

Muslim woman enjoys the privilege of being cared for by her husband. Islam puts the responsibility of providing for the family on the shoulders of man. The woman is not obliged to spend out of her wealth. The husband has no right to his wife's income or inheritance without her permission. No such privileges are enjoyed by western women by religious injunction. Woman in Islam has the right to manage her own wealth. A woman in some western countries cannot get a loan from a bank without her husband's consent. Until the seventies, woman in Canada was not able to have credit without approval of her husband or father.

Before I conclude, I would like to point out some of the dreadful maladies which plague women in western societies, all of which are based on the exploitation of women in every form and manner. The tragedy is that woman in the West is victimized by man who exploits her and treats her as merely a sex object. To top it all, man was able to convince the woman that these ills and maladies are but rights and privileges for her to enjoy. For example, in western society a woman has the "right" to dress or undress the way she likes, she can cover herself or walk about half-naked. She can enjoy basking in the sun wearing a bikini or wearing only her own make-up. But this is not a privilege. This is a degradation of the status of women. The women in savage and uncivilized tribes used to do exactly the same. They used to go about also half-naked. When man was in the animal stage he used to roam about naked but when he became civilized he put on decent clothes. It is but a mere deception a woman is subjected to by being told that to be free she can cut short her clothes and bare more

than what she covers. If this is freedom, then animals and insects are the most free creatures as they do not wear clothes at all.

Another so-called privilege the western women were made to believe is a free mixing with the other sex. In fact Muslim women are often accused of being backward because they do not mix freely with men. But what is the result of free mixing between men and women in the western society? Broken homes, destroyed marriages, rapes, adultery, crime, and the list goes on and on. Is this civilization? If so then animals are very civilized because they also mix freely but without causing homes to break or marriages to be destroyed.

The third so-called privilege which is rampant in western society is the freedom the girls experience in their relations with males. This practice is known as 'dating'. But what is the result of such a practice? Venereal diseases, illegitimate children, prostitution, humiliation of girls in tender ages. Girls are used and abused in the name of freedom to satisfy the carnal desires of man, and if a girl refrained from such degrading and animalistic practices she is usually accused of having a sick mentality or living in the past or not liberated. That is why one may see in western societies the so-called liberated men and women practicing shamelessly all kinds of indecencies in the street, in a park, in a subway or in a bus. If this is liberation then what is the difference between the liberated men and women in the western societies who indulge in such practice publicly and the bulls and cows in the field or the roaming dogs and bitches which do the same act publicly in the street?

Islam condemns all such practices which degrade and humiliate women. Women in Islam enjoy a very high status. Women in Islam are to be treated tenderly with kindness and affection. Women in Islam are to be looked after and cared for. Women in Islam are to be protected and have the right to enjoy comfort and security. Women in Islam have their share in inheritance. Women in Islam have the right to education and acquiring knowledge. Women in Islam are very fortunate because they are truly the free and liberated women. As to the unfortunate women living in the western societies under the shackles of Judeo-Christian tradition, I say: 'Do not despair! The Promised Messiah has come to spread Islam in the whole world, to grant you life and bestow upon you true freedom. One day you will also be liberated, not by struggling through women's liberation movements but through the wonderful teachings of Islam'.

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 at the following centers:

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The REVIEW of RELIGIONS

The Review of Religions is the oldest magazine of its kind which began its publication in the English language in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent. Its first issue was published in 1902 from Qadian, India, and it has been continuously published since. It is currently being published in the U.S.A.

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

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



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