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European Edition

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THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT

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



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The REVIEW of RELIGIONS

A monthly magazine devoted to the dissemination of the teachings of Islam, the discussion of Islamic affairs and religion in general.

The Review of Religions is an organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement which represents the pure and true Islam. It is open to all for discussing problems connected with the religious and spiritual growth of man, but it does not accept responsibility for views expressed by contributors.

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Guide Posts

THE EXALTED LIFE

(Bashir Ahmad Orchard)

We have been created for one main purpose and it behoves every enlightened person to set his sights upon this objective and make it his primary target as long as he dwells on this planet. Since time immemorial the goal of life has never changed and the road which ascends to this celestial citadel provides the wayfarer with spiritual fruits of joyous living. Real happiness is experienced in exalted living and this has been the message proclaimed by every Prophet of God. The Law of Moses teaches:

“Ye shall observe to do therefore as
the Lord thy God hath commanded you.”

(Exodus 5:32).

“. . . love the Lord thy God with all thine
heart, and with all thy soul, and with
all thy might.”

(Exodus 6:5).

Jesus taught:

“But seek ye first the Kingdom of God
and His righteousness.”

(Matthew 6:33).

God affirms in the Holy Quran:

“I have not created the Jinn and the men
but that they may worship Me.”

(51:57).

The worship of God is not restricted only to the offering of prayers and praising His name. Worship and love of God is a practical demonstration of our relationship with Him. We are required at all times to endeavour earnestly to express our love for God by manifesting in ourselves the attributes of God. That is to say we should be ever watchful of our thoughts,

words and deeds so that they may reflect the spirit of love and holiness. God says in the Holy Quran:

“He truly prospers who purifies himself.”

(87:15).

However much we may strive and progress along the path of virtue we can never attain perfection although we can reach such heights that a less developed person may consider us a saint; but we ourselves know only too well that we are sinners full of shortcomings and weaknesses. Yet as we grow in virtue we are conscious of our progress and delight in the feeling of spiritual well-being. Our primary ambition should be to change more and more for the better as we pass through life and never to be satisfied with our present condition.

The Holy Quran refers to four spiritual ranks which may be attained in this world:

“And whoso obeys Allah and this Messenger of His shall be among those on whom Allah has bestowed his blessings, namely the Prophets, the Truthful, the Martyrs and the Righteous. And excellent companions are these.”

(4:70).

The status of Prophethood is the highest spiritual rank conferred on man by God. It is not attained by spiritual endeavour but is bestowed by God on whomsoever He chooses. The other three ranks may be attained through resolve, endeavour and the help of God.

THE TRUTHFUL

“The men who are truthful and the women who are truthful.”

(Quran 33:36).

A truthful person is thoroughly sincere in all his words and actions. He is honoured and respected. He exhibits humility and courage for it requires a good measure of these virtues in order to adhere to the following injunction:

“Speak the truth even though it be against thyself.”

(Holy Prophet).

The Holy Prophet of Islam was a perfect exemplar of truthfulness throughout his life. The inhabitants of Mecca named him Amin — the truthful one. Shortly after he proclaimed his Divine mission he called the Meccans to gather around him and then asked them whether they would believe in him

were he to tell them that enemy forces were approaching from behind the hills. They replied in the affirmative well knowing his implicit truthfulness. Thereupon he announced the truth of his Divine mission. He was so meticulously truthful that he forbade stating an untruth even in jest.

Absolute truthfulness is the insignia of an upright man:

“Lie not at all neither in a little things or a great.”

(Jeremony Taylor).

“It is this quality (truthfulness) more than any other that commands the esteem and respect, and secures the confidence of others. Truthfulness is at the foundation of all personal excellence. It exhibits itself in conduct. It is rectitude — truth in action, and shines through every word and deed.”

(Samuel Smiles).

THE MARTYR

Who is a martyr? The meaning and description of a martyr has been consummately explained by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad — the Promised Messiah and Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam:

“Bear in mind that a true martyr (Shaheed) is not only the man who is killed in a religious cause but also the man who in all trials and difficulties remains firm and faithful to God, and who is ready to suffer any hardship in the path of God. Shaheed literally means a witness and, therefore, everyone who has such a living and certain faith in the existence of God that he may be said to have witnessed Him and the glorious manifestation of His power is a shaheed or a martyr. He believes in the existence of God of God and in His mighty power and control over all with such certainty as if he had witnessed them. When the spiritual wayfarer has reached this stage, he finds no difficulty in laying down his life in the path of God. Rather he finds supreme pleasure and bliss in it. By laying down his life in the path of God is not meant that a person should seek an occasion to be actually murdered. What is meant is that he should prefer the pleasure of God to his own desires and interests, that is to say, whenever his own interests and desires clash with his duty to God, he should willingly forsake the former. Everyone should reflect whether it is this life that he loves most or the next; whether if he meets with any difficulty or is subjected to any hardship in the path of God, (i.e. for the sake of righteousness) he would bear it with heart’s joy, and whether if he is required to lay down his life, he is prepared for it. This is a spiritual stage to which it is my object to lead my disciples.”

(Vol IV Review of Religions. 1905).

Everyone who strives with great effort in avoiding sin and in cultivating virtue to the extent that he sacrifices personal inclinations and interests for the sake of his spiritual aspirations may be called a martyr in as much as he is sacrificing temptation for the sake of God against the onslaughts of the devil. He may stumble from time to time but is quick to arise resolved not to slip again. He lives to polish every kind of virtue within himself so that they shine forth from him like brilliant gems of different hues. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) has said:

“All the love and hate and dislike of a true believer is subject to his desire to win the love of God and to avoid everything which Allah does not approve of.”

(Abu Daud and Musnad Ahmad).

We are reminded by God in the Holy Quran:

“Verily he truly prospers who purifies himself, and remembers the name of the Lord, and offers prayers. But you prefer the life of this world, whereas the Hereafter is better and more lasting.”

(87:15–18).

We should live to become martyrs in the spiritual sense of the word which will make earth for us a place of joyous exaltation!

THE RIGHTEOUS

“The best provision is righteousness.”

(Quran 2:198).

Righteousness is the key to real and permanent happiness; and there should be no second thoughts on this truth. Spiritual happiness excels all other kinds of happiness. The goal of the spiritual wayfarer should be the constant attainment of higher and higher levels of righteousness. God says in the Holy Quran:

“O ye men worship your Lord Who created you and those who were before you that you may become righteous.”

(3:52).

Righteousness should pervade every aspect of our life. It should colour our thoughts words and actions. It is not sufficient to practise good conduct to some extent in certain matters and not to do so in other matters. Our objective should be to manifest the attributes of God in all matters at all times. Although we will always fall short of perfection however ever much we may grow in spiritual stature, we should always be climbing the path of virtue

keeping in mind that there is always spacious room within us for spiritual improvement. We are, in fact, the product of our thoughts in accordance with the aphorism:

“As a man thinketh in his heart so
is he.”

This indisputable truth has been confirmed in the following lines translated from a Persian poem written by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad — the Promised Messiah and Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam:

“Everything
Thou hast in thy mind,
Every thought thou nourisheth,
Other than that of God
And of winning His approbation
Is an idol which thou worshipeth.
O thou weak of faith!
Beware of these hidden idols;
Guard well thy heart,
And keep it always
Out of their reach.

The cultivation of righteousness is the most blessed and rewarding of all ambitions:

“Verily the most honourable among you
in the sight of Allah is the one who
is most righteous among you.”

(49:41).

The noblest of possessions is an exalted character. Let us strive and pray to God to lead us step by step to higher standards of piety. God helps those who help themselves; and in particular those who strive to live in accordance with His pleasure.

Canonical Books

(Nasir Ward)

In the first century the choice of reading material for the Christian depended on language. Those who were Jews, the vast majority, had available the Old Testament writings and the books of the Essenes in Hebrew. The Jews who could not read Hebrew had recourse to the Septuagint and the few books which had been translated into Greek or Aramaic. Probably the learning of Hebrew was a necessity for earnest converts. Many of the books of the Essenes were not translated directly, and so the 2nd century church was deprived of much of its foundation of knowledge. Interpreters such as Mark and Luke made simplistic notes of the apostles' teaching according to tradition and these were compiled, gradually into enough material to make a book in Greek. The New Testament in its present form simply did not exist. Moreover, each church had its own list of writings which were either read by or to congregation: there was no unanimity of material. With the passage of time new writings came to light, were added to those already available and were used according to preference. As there could only be one original of each document, the most each community could hope for was an accurate copy. To make this was a slow and very laborious process and the omission of a single vowel could sometimes completely alter the meaning of the author.

Probably the oldest Greek document we have in existence is the Didache or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. This has been dated by Pere J. P. Audet as originating about 60 A.D. Certainly it is a simple teaching, modified for converts, of a strictly Jewish form of worship. The early date therefore may not be out of place. At this time there had obviously been no break with the Jewish roots of the Christian community and the later developments of the eucharistic doctrine by the church had not yet taken place. The agape or love feast, or eucharist as it may be, is simply a communal meal for the congregation following their worship. It could easily have taken place in any synagogue without causing undue offence, and probably did in some. How then did the dogma of transubstantiation arise? — that the Christians are actually eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Jesus — because at a later date, the leaders of the church decided this was what was really taking place in the eucharist. Previously it had not occurred, so we may ask, why should it

begin to happen at a much later period of time? No amount of double talk will arrive at this theory from the basic teachings of the Didache, so if the 1st century Christians had no intention of eating the body and drinking the blood of Jesus were they in error? It is quite impossible for a later generation to know more about the religious teachings of their founder than the first. Those who knew Jesus and his disciples, must by human nature, have possessed a greater knowledge of his teachings than those who had never seen or heard him, much more than those who lived one or two centuries later. To discover the true teachings of a religion we must go back to the source and analyse what was being taught then. In the case of Christianity this was purely Jewish teaching. After all, isn't this what is meant by apostolic succession? If the later beliefs do not conform to the original ones, then naturally, someone has imposed a meaning on them which was never there. It is difficult to see how Jesus could have meant his disciples to be literally eating his body when he himself was physically present with them at the last supper. This would appear to be an anomaly.

Similarly, as Jesus lived all his life strictly in conformity to the Mosaic Law, although differing in interpretation of it from the religious authorities of his day, it is quite obtuse to believe that he advocated its removal to his followers. James the Righteous was no philosopher; it was only simplified for new converts until they could accept.

The Jewishness of Christianity is again exemplified in the letters of Clement, third bishop of Rome. He is aware of some of the letters of Paul and his first epistle is full of Jewish Old Testament references; Rahab the harlot is justified by her faith and hospitality. Although he may have been an associate of Paul, there is no trace of any of the latter's more peculiar doctrines in his letter. As Marcion had not grappled with them yet, this is hardly surprising. Christianity to Clement is the New Israel', nothing more than that; a purification of the old Mosaic Law by the explanations of Jesus, the Messiah. The Second Epistle is of debatable authenticity. Some scholars place it as a 3rd century compilation as it contains many references to celibacy and monasticism, but this may be a continuation of the Essene tradition.

By the 4th century, when the church had become the official state religion, the bishops could afford to sit down in council and sift through the collection of books and letters which every church possessed. The aim was to impose a unity of texts upon the churches and so bring about a unity within the Empire which would justify Constantine in his preference of Christianity. When the bishops conferred together they were using the criterion of 4th century dogmas and politics, which they assumed, or wished to believe had always been the teachings of the church. Consequently, they judged each book in the light of their own knowledge and beliefs. Many sects had fallen foul of the church authorities in the preceding three centuries and their books were automatically disposed of. These sects, of course, were not represented in the

councils. The Jewish tradition and the churches which still held to it were regarded as misguided, their founders as having low intelligence because of their low opinion of Christ — that is they didn't regard him as a god. These churches, nevertheless continued in existence for some time after the Constantine declaration, before the church, acting as the executive of the Roman emperor, began to take steps to actively suppress them. There was no need for the emperor to persecute the Christians, when by a twist of policy he could get the church itself to do the job for him. So the endless age of persecution of the Christians began as the bishops sought to play the part of the emperors and in the end, to supplant them.

The original teachings of Christianity had been largely lost over the centuries as one idea encroached upon the other. Jesus had become hellenised, in fact it was only when this process had been complete that Constantine and the emperors felt they could accept him; he had become one of them, no longer a threat to the social order, but a supporter of it. The Jewish elements had been filtered out and the hellenised remnants had passed through to be assimilated by the population, who though they may not have liked the ideas put forward, could fully comprehend their meaning.

With the gradual destruction of the original principles of Christianity went the understanding of what some of the early Christians had been doing. The Ebionites had been founded by Ebion and were "poor" because of their poor opinion of Jesus. Fourth century ideas determined the worth of any teachings, the authenticity of any book, and these ideas were rigorously imposed, amid much confusion. Eusebius, writing in Constantine's time is quite unable to see the foundation of early communities as Christian ones, He takes the view that all these heretical sects have added to their original teachings throughout the years, but the church which he represents has maintained the teachings exactly as they were in the beginning — an assumption which completely disregards the tendencies of human nature and the principle of teachings being purest at their source. The books of the church had to reflect the teaching of the apostles as the bishops of the 4th century possessed it. Those that did not were discarded as heretical; those which had been widely used by many churches but did not support the contemporary doctrine were placed in the apocrypha; those writings which generally supported the doctrine but had several passages to the contrary were quietly amended, which was in accord with the literary practice of the day in placing speeches in the mouth of the author, which the editor felt he should have made. Where a book was felt to be lacking, it was fabricated and the name of a famous writer of the past attached to it, again following the contemporary practice. Those who felt no scruples at forging books to support the true faith, would have felt no compunction at inserting or removing "difficult" passages from earlier works. This is why Marcion makes Paul say:

. . . "And if I give the lie to the greater glory of God, why am I to be judged a sinner?"

For the present the books could simply be edited and their circulation, after approval, controlled, but when this proved an inadequate weapon, and the books of the "heretics" did not disappear or lose favour, a policy of bibliographical persecution was adopted. Fortunately, the owners of the Nag Hamadi collection and some others, managed to bury theirs in time for them to survive into the 20th century. As has been said before, those who burn books very soon begin to burn people.

To return to Eusebius, once more he refers to the 1st century sect of Nicolaitians, founded by Nicolaus, no doubt; a Jewish Christian, who had been appointed with Stephen to supervise the relieving of the "poor." Eusebius considers them to be merely "poor" people because of his lack of understanding of the term, but in all probability, he was given an administrative position in relation to the funds of the "poor"—the Ebionites. Clement of Alexandria¹ (c. 190) gives an account of Nicolaus, who was accused by the apostles (c. 35 A.D.) of jealousy, whereupon he brought his wife before them and told any one of them to take her if he wished; following the injunction, "the flesh must be treated with contempt." By Clement's time, the Nicolaitians had taken this quite literally to the extreme and had become utterly promiscuous. This would seem to support the Roman charges made in the 2nd century about the Christians, or at least some of them. However, Clement states quite categorically that Nicolaus and his family never indulged in any such practices in their lifetime, adding that Matthias taught the same principle of renouncing the flesh. Presumably some of the later Christians took his teaching rather too literally, causing quite a scandal.

The Nicolaitians are referred to in Revelations 2:15, causing some doubt as to the authenticity of this book which was for along time not accepted by the eastern churches. The book of Revelations was supposedly compiled by John, or one of his pupils at Ephesus or Patmos some time before 95 A.D. It comprises two parts, the first of which is quite different in style to the second and it is in this part that the reference to the Nicolaitians and other "heretical" sects is made. The second part contains the actual revelation and it is this which corresponds to the Essene Book of Revelations² in style and content. The reference to the "heretical" sects would appear to be a later composition to discredit those which are mentioned. This would make the whole of the first part of the Book of Revelations a forgery of the 2nd or 3rd century and helps to explain why it was unacceptable to the eastern churches for so long. Needless to say, this part of the Revelation is not found in the original Essene work.

1. Clement of Alexandria — Book II, quoted by Eusebius *op. cit.* 29:4.

2. Szeceky *op. cit.*

Another “heretical” sect, founded by Cerinthus (c. 70–110) is mentioned by Eusebius. His main complaints seem to have been over the language Cerinthus used. Cerinthus reputedly foretold an earthy kingdom for Christ, though Jerusalem would remain corrupted. In this kingdom, the followers of Christ would receive all the rewards due to them, expressed in terms of luxury and sensuousness; a thousand years would be given over to celebrating what he terms a wedding feast. Cerinthus is said to have received this teaching from the apostle John.

Again Eusebius is judging by his own standards of 4th century doctrine. Had he any knowledge of early Christian writings he would have realised that Cerinthus was merely expressing the kingdom of Christ in terms of allegory and the Messianic Banquet, described at Qumran. Not comprehending this and not having any original documents to consider, Cerinthus is condemned. If he had grasped the meaning of the Epistle of Peter³ he would have realised that Cerinthus was merely expressing the views of the church to which he himself subscribed,

“ . . . with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day.”

Papias, a disciple of John according to Irenaeus, also believed in the physical kingdom of Jesus as Cerinthus taught. According to Eusebius, most of the Early Christian Fathers, including Irenaeus, held this same belief, yet Eusebius discounts it as being incorrect (as it hadn’t occurred by his time), due to a misunderstanding and the “very small intelligence,” of Papias. This accounts for the principle apostolic teachings which conformed to the views of the 4th century bishops such as Eusebius; other apostolic teachings were obviously due to misunderstandings, presumably by the apostles themselves.

To pull the rug out further from poor Cerinthus, Eusebius quotes a concocted story about the apostle John, “on the authority of Polycarp” but actually put out by Irenaeus, to whit; John was going to the public baths, when he discovered Cerinthus was inside. He left immediately, whereupon the roof of the place fell in. This account seem to completely disregard the strictly Jewish practices of John and the Essenes, it is not likely that someone who lived in seclusion, visiting the gentile churches when asked, would suddenly decide to adopt the Roman custom of bathing at the public baths. However, Apollonius of Tyana, it will be remembered, also had an episode in the public baths, this time in Rome. It would appear the Christians were against public bathing as an immoral practice. It is hardly to be expected then, that a disciple of Jesus should have indulged in the practice and who, according to Polycrates in his letter to Victor of Rome (c. 190), describes him as a sacrificing priest in the manner of James the Righteous, Jesus’ brother.

3. 2 Peter 8. c/f the same idea at Qumran and also in the Holy Quran.

In the same passage about Cerinthus quoted by Irenaeus, Marcion is also reviled, this time by Polycarp, who describes him as the "first born of satan". These appear to be nothing more than later interpolations to denigrate the founders of these supposedly heretical sects, inserted no doubt by a zealous writer in order to further the cause of the true faith and make the heretics well known to the ignorant populace. The Acts of Paul and Thecla provide a similar example, where the fictitious account of the martyrdom of Thecla was composed by a Presbyter of Asia (again the areas where John resided), who "confessed that he did it out of respect of Paul" in the words of Tertullian (c. 200). This did not prevent many churches from accepting it as a genuine work, including Eusebius' at Caesarea and numerous works eulogising the virtues of the imaginary martyr Thecla. The emperor Zeno himself (c. 590) received a vision of the noble Thecla in which she promised him the restoration of his empire. A church was dedicated in her honour at Seleucia in Isauria, and the account of Paul and Thecla was considered to have been written in the apostolic age, on the basis that it agreed with what were then considered to have been teachings of the apostles. In fact there was no criterion other than this, however much Eusebius elaborates it, for deciding whether a book was genuine or not.

Papias also gives us some information regarding the compilation of the gospels as they later became. "Mark wrote down the discussions of Peter in a haphazard manner, while Matthew compiled the sayings in the Aramaic language, and everyone translated them as well as he could."

This seems to indicate, if genuine, that the gospel writers compiled only a list of sayings of Jesus, quite unsystematically, which were later produced in the form of the present books. Whether or not they were the same as the original "Sayings" is a moot point. It would not be too unfair to believe that anything which appeared not to correspond to the accepted doctrine was edited out as untrustworthy. This appears to have been the case if the Gospel of Thomas and the other Gnostic gospels are considered, though in fairness, each compiler of sayings would have reproduced only what he himself knew. It is quite possible, therefore, that some of the Gnostic gospels are equally, or more genuine than the present synoptic ones, which represent only a biographical account of the teaching of Jesus. The Gnostic Gospels, on the other hand, sought to convey the teachings of Jesus in completely different language and style, one which the church of the 3rd and 4th century no longer understood. It is not too exaggerated, I would suggest, to regard the synoptic Gospels as being prepared for the novices, those who required an elementary introduction to the life of Jesus, and the Gnostic gospels as material for those who sought an esoteric or inner meaning to that teaching. This would appear to have been the method adopted by the Essenes, who had two levels of believers — the mass of the members and the elect, who dedicated themselves to the inner teachings of the Mosaic Law. The Book of Revelations also has a

place reserved for the elect, who remain celibate, as does Paul, or Marcion, in the Epistles. The Gospel of Thomas describes a small elect in the body of the church. It is quite likely, therefore, that the Roman church, being composed largely of converts who did not fully accept the whole teachings of Moses, were deprived of this esoteric tradition and sought to reduce the story of Jesus to a simplistic level as in the present canonical Gospels. The Gospels of other churches which drew out a hidden meaning were rendered by definition heretical as the Roman church did not possess their traditions and knowledge. It must be remembered that the manuscripts we have of the Gospels themselves date from the 4th century at the earliest. What editing went on before that time we can only surmise, as in the example of the women caught in adultery.

Eusebius relates:

“Papias also makes use of evidence drawn from 1 John and 1 Peter, and reproduces a story about a woman falsely accused before the Lord of many sins. This is to be found in the Gospel of the Hebrews.”⁴

By implication this would appear to be the story of the woman taken in adultery, which now occurs in the Gospel of John, but presumably did not in Eusebius' time or he would have mentioned it. This Gospel is available to us in fragments only, but was extant in the 4th century Epiphanius refers to it in his list of heretical books:

“They have (the Norzoraean) the Gospel according to Matthew quite complete, in Hebrew; for this Gospel is certainly still preserved among them as it was first written, in Hebrew letters. I do not know if they have even removed the genealogy from Abraham to Christ.”⁵

The Stichometry of Nicephorus of uncertain date, lists, the Gospel of the Hebrews as having 2,200 lines, whereas the Gospel of Matthew has 2,500. As it is admitted by Eusebius that Matthew wrote the Gospel in Hebrew originally, (confirmed by Papias and Epiphanius) it seems 300 extra lines have been added to it, if the Gospel of the Hebrews is the original, or copy of the original Gospel. Possibly the genealogical listings may account for some of these, and the transference of such incidents as the woman caught in adultery to other Gospels make answer for the rest. Whatever the facts, it is quite clear that the original “Sayings” of Matthew have been changed in some form. There is one reference to what appears to be the present shroud of Turin, or its counterpart, quoted by St. Jerome from the Gospel following the “resurrection” of Jesus:

“Now the Lord, when he had given the linen cloth unto the servant of the priest, went unto James and appeared to him. . . .”⁶

4. Eusebius op. cit. 39,17.

5. Epiphanius Heresy 19:9,4.

6. Jerome Of Illustrious Men, 2.

Origen 3rd century also quotes from the Gospel:⁷

“And if any accept the Gospel according to the Hebrews, where the Saviour himself saith, ‘Even now did my mother the Holy Spirit take me by one of mine hairs, and carried me away to the great mountain Thabor,’ he will be perplexed. . . .”

Naturally they would be perplexed unless they had the Gospel of the Essenes also in their possession, where the angelic term “earthly mother” is fully explained. It will not be lost to the reader, I am sure that this is also the explanation given of the Holy Spirit. The perplexed ones had erroneously assumed it to be a part of the divinity. This is the trouble with most translations. We shall come across the gospel again, later.

The letters of Ignatius have received the same treatment as those of Paul. Most scholars consider them to have numerous interpolations of the 4th century, seven possibly being genuine and six definitely forgeries. Their content is very unreliable, concerned with warnings against heretics, as ever, a refutation of the Jewish law, (from one who had been a pupil of the apostles), and what appears to be an exhortation to believe in the Nicene Creed, which had to wait some two centuries yet before it came into existence.⁸ Most of the doctrine propounded by Ignatius is quite obviously 4th century in origin and undoubtedly represents an effort on someone’s part to influence in favour of the particular view of the church they represented — that the apostles and Early Fathers had all taught and believed the same things. Although we may consider many of these works as forgeries now, it should be remembered that the early Christians were greatly influenced by these writings and used them to frame their own doctrines and dogmas. This in part may exonerate the majority from open complicity. Of course, the church has continuously referred to them to the present day in support of their dogmas, citing them as proof that they were taught in the age of the apostles. The letters of Polycarp have of recent years similarly been regarded as unreliable. A Latin version is extant but the Greek text has been changed. Mention is made in them of some 2nd century heresies, once more, but there are some doubts as to whether these sects were prominent at the time of Polycarp.

On the other hand the Epistle of Barnabas has been frequently quoted by the Early Fathers such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Eusebius, and was considered quite genuine by them. Notwithstanding this, it is now excluded.⁹

If this is a complaint against Christians, it is also a complaint of them. Justin martyr is of the opinion that the Jews had deliberately cut out the prophecies,

7. Origen on John, 2, 12.

8. Epistle to the Trallians 2.10.

9. Early Christian Fathers F. Ross (Duckworth).

used by the Christians, from their scriptures. In particular he cites the verse, "the Lord shall reign from the tree" as an example. More likely is the explanation that some of the Christian churches had inserted this verse to support their own benefits, although it must be said, Josephus informs us the Jewish books were continually being chopped and changed in his time (c. 80 A.D.). Insertion can be deduced again in the letters of Paul. Clement of Alexandria,¹⁰ concerning himself with the question of marriage for Christians, which was a great controversy in the 2nd century, points out for support a passage from Paul's Epistle".¹¹

Clement, writing in support of marriage, shows that both Peter and Philip had families and also that Paul was married. In actual fact, the copies of Paul's epistles we possess do not show that he was married at all, perhaps due to the influence yet again of Marcion who firmly disapproved of Christians' marrying. But the striking aspect of this particular verse in Corinthians is not the verse itself, but the one which immediately follows it. This states that all the apostles, Jesus' brothers and even Cephas were married, yet Clement does not quote it in support of his belief, contenting himself with the much lesser statement that only two of the apostles were married. This must surely lead us to one of two conclusions:

(a) The verse was not extant in Clement's copy, or (b) at his time someone removed the reference to it.

In view of the marital controversy it seems more likely that the verse was inserted in Corinthians, especially as in the rest of his epistles, like Marcion, Paul does not advocate the institution of marriage. This would mean that Marcion's was not the only hand which tampered with this work.

Dionysius, bishop of Corinth in the second half of the 2nd century, has a similar grievance against the interpolators.

"When my fellow-Christians invited me to write letters to them I did so. These the devils' apostles have filled with tares, taking away some things and adding others. For them the woe is reserved. Small wonder then if some have dared to tamper even with the word of the Lord Himself, when they have conspired to mutilate my own humble efforts."¹²

The vast number of interpolations, lack of original texts, and desire to support particular doctrinal points make it virtually impossible to say which, if any, can be classed as completely authentic books and which not. Added to this may be the custom of the Essenes and the Christians to attribute their writings to historical persons for reasons of style and in the latter's case, to lend authenticity. The 2nd century bishops, not being able to read Hebrew

10. Clemens Alexandrinus-Miscellanies-quoted by Eusebius op. cit 30:1.

11. I Corinthians 9.5.

12. Quoted by Eusebius op. cit. 23.8.

and not being aware of the historical beginnings of Christianity to any great extent, had no means of knowing what was genuine and what was not. They could only judge in the light of their own beliefs at the time. This is why so many books were regarded as scripture at one time and were considered heretical at another. Doctrines and beliefs had changed and so too must the books change to support those beliefs.

Melito, bishop of Sardis in Asia, had received letters from Onesirnus, a colleague, asking for information about the recognised Old Testament books. Melito did not have the information, but on making a trip to Palestine, took pains to discover the facts. (c 170–80).

“So when I visited the east and arrived at the place where it all happened and the truth was proclaimed, I obtained precise information about the Old Testament books, and made out a list which I am now sending to you.”¹³

Evidently Melito and his churches were using what we would regard as New Testament books only. This would have made it somewhat difficult to maintain the Jewish traditions. Presumably no one nearby in another bishopric possessed the information either, therefore the knowledge of the congregations would have been similarly limited on the subject. Perhaps it would be worth while to quote his list of genuine books. These were:

Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, Deuteronomy.
 Joshua, Judges, Ruth
 Kings (4 books), Chronicles (2 books),
 Psalms of David
 Solomons Proverbs,
 Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs,
 Job,
 Isaiah, Jeremiah (inc. Lamentations), the Twelve in a single book,
 Daniel,
 Ezekiel,
 Ezra

With the exception of Esther, this would appear to present a full list of our present Old Testament books.

In the 1st century the catacombs in Rome and the works of Christian writers abound with Old Testament references; with the changeover from Hebrew into Greek and Latin, the Old Testament references gradually disappear, the New Testament books gradually spreading to replace them. Knowledge of the Old Testament seems to have been lost with this changeover also; when Eusebius relates the account of the persecution in Gaul by Marcus Aurelius

13. Melito — Extracts quoted by Eusebius *op. cit.* 27.4.

(177 A.D.) nearly all the quotations in the passage are from the New Testament, but curiously, a great number of them are misquoted. Either the writer suffered from a lapse of memory, or the wording in the Gallic copies of the New Testament books was different then than now.

The measures taken by the emperors following the second Jewish rebellion to actively prohibit circumcision in new converts meant that converts to "Christianity" could never be fully accepted as full members of Judaism (ger tzedek), should they have wished to do so. The most they could hope for was to be regarded as half-members of the Jewish community (ger tashav). Only a few writers were advocating the Jewish law for Christians; Justin thought it permissible, though most considered it undesirable especially as the Jews had recently been completely humiliated yet gain by the Roman armies. This was their punishment for failing to accept Jesus, therefore to follow their law was tantamount to joining the disbelievers.

Around the middle of the century Marcion produced the first list of Canonical books; prior to this there was none agreed by all the churches. Fearful of Marcion's growing influence, this superior form of organisation encouraged the Roman church to publish its own list of approved books; this we can see in the Muratorian fragment, a mutilated copy of what is regarded as a canonical list in Rome c. 180 A.D. This document may be a copy of a genuine list, but its authenticity cannot be proved satisfactorily. The four synoptic gospels are included in it at the beginning, followed by:

"Moreover the Acts of all Apostles are included in one book, Luke addressed them to the most excellent Theophilus because the several events took place when he was present and he makes this plain by the omission of the passion of Peter and of the journey of Paul when he left Rome for Spain."

If correct, the above two descriptions have been omitted on rather spurious grounds. The journey to Spain fits in well with Apollonius of Tyana's journey there in the account given by Philostratus, but evidently these two omissions must have existed in some form in order for the copyist to have mentioned them. A passion of Peter is now classed as apocryphal.

The epistles of Paul are described as:

1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Galatians, Thessalonians and Romans. Those to Alexandrians and Laodicians are considered forgeries by Marcion. Letters to Philemon, Titus and two to Timothy are allowed as authentic, as well as the two epistles to John, Jude, and the Wisdom of Solomon. The Apocalypse of John and (probably) that of Peter is also included, together with the "Shepherd" by Hermas.

This, of course, refers only to the Roman church; other churches had their own preferences. Of the New Testament canon in the present day, the following were omitted by the Roman church:

2 Corinthians, 2 Thessalonians, Hebrew, James, I and II Peter, 3 John and Revelations, and of the Muratorian list, the Apocalypses of John and Peter, the Shepherd and Wisdom of Solomon have now been omitted.

By any standards this is a great discrepancy in judgement. Was the error in the bishops of Rome and their congregations in including some and excluding others, or was the fault with those who changed the Muratorian list? Which were "imposed" as the present term denotes it, and which were not? What is genuine in one age cannot become false in another and vice-versa, unless we judge, not according to religion, but the need of the times.

Let us compare the list with that presented by Eusebius (c. 330) to see what has changed in a century and a half. Eusebius accepts the four gospels and Acts, Pauls' epistles (all?). I John, 1 Peter and is undecided about Revelations. Those which are disputed include the epistles of James, Jude, 2 Peter and 2 and 3 John. "Spurious books" are designated as Acts of Paul, the Shepherd, Revelation of Peter, Epistle of Barnabas, Teachings of the Apostles, Revelation of John (if not accepted in the first category), and Gospel of Hebrews. The rest are heretical.

Quite why the Gospel of the Hebrews, written for Jews in Hebrew to outline the truth of Jesus' mission, should have been forged must remain a mystery. If the book was in Hebrew, Eusebius would not have been able to read it; if it was aimed at the Jews it must not have contained any ideas opposed to the Mosaic Law, and perhaps this explains why it was disputed, although the original was the translation for Matthew. It is quite possible that none of these books mentioned by Eusebius is exactly identical with the ones we have at present. We do not know the text of the works for the first three centuries and it may be that some changes have been made to them, as was common practice.*

We must also account for the Theodotonic readings in New Testament books. Theodotion of Ephesus, referred to by Irenaeus in the 2nd century was a convert to Judaism, or an Ebionite according to St. Jerome. He revised the Septuagint from the Hebrew text, used by Origin (c. 245) in his "Hexopla". Theodotion is credited with the present translation of Ezra — Nehemiah and Daniel and possibly some others unknown to us because the text is lost. In the New Testament, the text of his translation occurs particularly in quotation from Daniel (Hebrews) and Revelation (Hebrews 11: 33 also 9, 20; 10; 6: 12; 7: 13, 7: 19, 6: 20, 4: 20, 11).

* Fragments and the texts of some books do exist from the 3rd century.

Barnabas, Clement and Hermas also have Theodotianic references. As these books are supposed to have been composed before the lifetime of Theodotus this presents us with something of a problem. Either Theodotus used an alternative version to the Septuagint, unknown to us, but perhaps used locally, or the books referred to were composed, using Theodotus' translation, much later than is thought. If the latter is the case it would fit in quite nicely with the policy of editing manuscripts which appears to have been commonly practiced by the Christian churches. It would certainly appear to be another example of tampering with the texts, or alternatively forgeries. Hermas alone would be excusable as having Theodotus' translation available.

The Diatessaron of Tatian (c. 170–80 A.D.) present us with what is probably our oldest glimpse of the four New Testament gospels. After studying under Justin Martyr in Rome, Tatian returned to his native Syria where he compiled a harmony of the four gospels, though in what language exactly is not known. This harmony in all probability represented a selection of sayings from the four canonical gospels compiled into one book form. It is unlikely that the four gospels existed as separate entities at this time and the Diatessaron remained the main form of Gospel narrative in Syria until the 6th century, when bishop Theodoret replaced it by the Peshitta version. The Diatessaron itself has since been lost to us.

In close relationship with Tatians' work are the Syriac manuscripts — the Sinai and Curetonian. These are generally placed in the 4th and 5th centuries respectively, though again there can be no certainty of dating. They both contain numerous readings which differ from the present gospels, both being extant in fragmentary form only, but for detailed comparison a closer study than can be provided here is recommended. One or two examples may suffice to whet the appetite; the wording of the Lords Prayer is different to the present official version; the verses describing the Last Supper are in an alternative order, while the wording above the cross is omitted by both manuscripts. The Sinaitic version has the quite remarkable addition,

“Why are they taking away the stone?”

delivered outside the tomb of Jesus in the garden, and which may present a much more prosaic explanation of the resurrection than has previously been considered.

The Sinaitic manuscript is the shortest New Testament text we have available and perhaps contains the bare bones of the Gospel narrative in its simplest form before later additions were made. The extant codices and manuscripts generally fall into the distinct types — the western and the eastern, probably representing the two traditions in the Greek and Latin. The western text, compiled by the Roman and western churches contains many interpolations, if we assume the eastern text is the earlier or more authentic.

This is only to be expected from extensive translation. The Sinaitic Syriac omits all the major western interpolations, though in itself does not represent the original text of the gospels. With reference to the disputed ending of Mark's Gospel, the Sinaitic omits it altogether, as do the majority of Armenian manuscripts, together with the Georgian Adysh and Opiza.

The text of the Latin Bible existed in one form or another from the end of the 2nd century. Victor, bishop of Rome is reputed to have been the first ecclesiastical writer to compose in Latin. Tertullian, Cyprian and others all quote from what appears to be the Old Latin text, but there was such a multiplicity of versions, each with its variations, that Pope Damasus felt compelled to ask St. Jerome to revise the Latin Bible in 382. This he did, though probably he did not go beyond a revision of the four gospels. Jerome attempted to bring the Latin versions into line with Greek manuscripts to remedy the complete disorder into which the Latin Bible had fallen. The choice of Greek manuscripts was left to Jerome himself, but like all ecclesiastical authorities of that date he could only judge their worth according to their correlation with the contemporary doctrines. Jerome's finished version is the Vulgate, which did not gain universal favour until some considerable time after his death. However, it eventually became the official western Bible for over a thousand years.

With the supremacy of the Roman church, all translations were made from it until the 16th century and the growth of Protestantism. Today it remains the official Bible of the Roman church in its revised form. It is not difficult, therefore, to visualise how it has shaped our view of Christianity to the present time.

Hazrat Abu Bakr

(M. Siddique Shahid)

Hazrat Abu Bakr was the most trusted and devoted companion of the Holy Prophet and the first Caliph. He was born in Mecca in 572 A.D. He was two or three years younger than the Holy Prophet. His father's name was Uthman Quhafaah and his mother's name was Salma surname Umul Khair.

In pre-Islamic days, he was known by the name of Abdul Kabah and on his conversion to Islam was given the name of Abdullah and the title of As-Siddiq (the most truthful) by the Holy Prophet, (peace be on him).

He was one of the most respected leaders even before his acceptance of Islam. He was well known as a man of high principles, honesty, and truthfulness. He was a trader and undertook several commercial trips to Syria and Yemen.

Abu Bakr was a close friend of the Holy Prophet even before he embarked on his prophetic mission. Once on his return to Mecca from a business tour he learned from his female servant that his friend Muhammad (peace be on him) had claimed to be a Prophet. On hearing this he hurried to him and asked what had happened. The Prophet fearing lest Abu Bakr should misunderstand began a long explanation. Abu Bakr stopped the Prophet and asked for a clear answer to the question. The Holy Prophet said "Yes" and Abu Bakr at once declared his faith and embraced Islam. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "Whenever I invited any person to accept Islam he showed some hesitation before embracing it except Abu Bakr who accepted without the slightest hesitation and was steadfast." (Tarikhul Khilafathy Suyuti).

Among the adults he was the first to accept Islam. After accepting Islam he placed his entire wealth in the service of Islam and he freed many slaves including Hazrat Bilal whom he purchased from his master and freed him. The Holy Prophet said. "No one's wealth has stood me in such good stead as that of Abu Bakr."

Once the Holy Prophet asked his companions to contribute towards the cost of a defensive campaign against the opponents. Hazrat Umar being a

wealthy man thought to take advantage of that golden opportunity and thus surpassed Hazrat Abu Bakr in the service of Islam. He hurried to his house and brought a considerable portion of his wealth. The Holy Prophet was pleased and asked him "Have you left anything at home for your children?" "Half of my wealth I have left at home for my children" replied Umar. Then Hazrat Abu Bakr came with his own share and the same question was asked by the Holy Prophet. He replied, "the names of Allah and His Prophet are sufficient for home." Umar was deeply touched and said "It would never be possible for me to surpass Abu Bakr."

Ali Ibn Abi Talib used to say: "I swear in the name of Him who has my life in His hands that never did we hasten to do a good thing but that we were beaten hollow by Abu Bakr."

Hazrat Abu Bakr underwent all kinds of hardship, suffering, and persecution willingly in the service of Islam. Once, he was so severely beaten by the opponents of Islam in the Ka'aba that he became unconscious.

After some years of persecution the Holy Prophet was instructed by God to leave Mecca on account of the plot of the enemies to murder him. He selected Abu Bakr as his companion in that dangerous hour. They both took refuge in the cave of Thaur, three miles distant from Mecca. This incident has been mentioned in the Holy Quran in these words: "When the disbelievers drove him forth while he was one of the two when they were both in the cave, when he said to his companion, 'Grieve not, for Allah is with us.' Then Allah sent down His peace on him" (9:40) The verse sheds important light on the high spiritual status of Abu Bakr who accompanied the Holy Prophet in his flight from Mecca and was then one of "the two" referred to in the verse. The Holy Prophet's words "Grieve not for Allah is with us" speak volumes for Abu Bakr's spiritual greatness for also the the pronoun "us" signifies that God was not only with the Holy Prophet but also with Abu Bakr.

Hazrat Abu Bakr fought shoulder to shoulder with the Holy Prophet in all the battles which were fought in the lifetime of the Prophet. He displayed a shining example of sacrifice.

Hazrat Abu Bakr was the trusted companion of the Holy Prophet of Islam and he was much loved by him for his virtues and noble deeds. Once the Holy Prophet said: "I have paid back the obligations of all except those of Abu Bakr who will have his reward on the Day of Judgement." He also said "If I were able to choose a companion in the next world I would prefer Abu Bakr above all men for he surpasses all men in kindness and comradeship. Helpless as I am to take anyone with me, one brethren in faith and fraternity will have to wait till God unites us on the Day of Judgement."

It was on account of this virtue that the Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "Abu Bakr is the best man after me unless a Prophet should appear."

(Kanzul Ammal). When the Holy Prophet fell seriously ill, he appointed Abu Bakr to lead the congregational prayers. It was a unique distinction indeed. Hazrat Abu Bakr possessed the qualities of humility, piety, kindness and simplicity. He never lacked wisdom, intelligence and far-sightedness. He had the wisdom to understand the underlying significance of the words of God and the words of The Holy Prophet about which the other companions were unaware.

When the life of the Holy Prophet was nearing its end he said to his companions that God said to a man: "If it pleases you, you may return to me, or you may work a little longer reforming the world." The man said that he preferred to return to His Lord. Abu Bakr was among the audience. He at once understood the parable that the Holy Prophet was talking about himself and that he was to leave them for ever to meet his God. He at once burst into tears, the other Companions including Umar who took a surface view of what they had been listening to, were amazed to see Abu Bakr thus shedding tears. What could be the matter with Abu Bakr? They said: The Prophet was relating to coming victories of Islam and then the story of somebody else. Yet he was weeping. Only the Holy Prophet understood what was happening and only Abu Bakr he thought had understood him. Then the Holy Prophet went on to say "Abu Bakr is very dear to me. If I were to have an intimate friend I would have Abu Bakr my friend. O my people all the doors which open to the mosque should be closed from today except the door of Abu Bakr." (Muslim). There is no doubt that this last instruction was a prophecy indicating that after the Holy Prophet, Abu Bakr would be the first Khalifa or successor to lead the Faithful in Prayers. He would have to come to the mosque five times a day and to do this he would have to keep open the door of his house leading into the mosque.

When the Holy Prophet passed away, Abu Bakr was not in Madinah. All the companions were greatly shocked and stupefied by the news of the death of the Holy Prophet and were not ready to believe it. Hazrat Umar even drew his sword and threatened to kill those who would say the Prophet had died. In the meantime some companions went in search of Abu Bakr, found him and told him what had happened. Abu Bakr came back and entering his master's apartment, uncovered the face of the Prophet, bent down and kissed the forehead. Choking with grief and with tears in his eyes he said "Sacred were you in life and sacred are you in death, God is our Witness. Death will not come upon you twice over."

Having said this great sentence over the dead body of the Prophet, Abu Bakr came out and made silently to the pulpit in the mosque and said: "Those amongst you who worshipped God, let them know that God is still alive and will ever remain alive. But those amongst you who worshipped Mohammad let them know it from me that Muhammad is dead." He then recited the verse of the Holy Quran: "And Muhammad is only a Messenger. Verily, all

Messengers have passed away before him. If then he die or be slain, will you turn on your heels?" (3:145)

These words from the Holy Quran brought home that it was only Allah who was everlasting and unchangeable. The Holy Prophet had been a Messenger of Allah and had died like other messengers of Allah who had been before him. By that Abu Bakr taught the people that every Prophet earlier had died. According to one tradition, Umar was so overcome that his legs began to tremble and give way. He fell down exhausted.

Khilafat

On the death of the Holy Prophet, there arose the matter of electing his successor. Abu Bakr asked the Muslims to choose either Omar or Abu Obaida bin al-Jarrah, but both these worthies said "No, none deserves it better than you. You are the chief among Muhajirins (refugees). You were the Prophet's comrade in the cave and you led the Prayers in his absence."

Thus Abu Bakr was elected the first Caliph of Islam. After his election, he delivered the following memorable speech.

"Brothers, now I have been elected as your Amir. I am not the best among you. I need all your advice and all your help. If I do well support me, If I make a mistake counsel me. To tell truth to a person commissioned to rule is faithful allegiance, to cancel it is treason. In my eyes, the powerful and the weak are alike; and to both I wish to render justice. As long as I obey God and His Holy Prophet, obey me, if I neglect the laws of God and the Holy Prophet, I have no right to your obedience."

After Hazrat Abu Bakr was elected Khalifa he found that a very difficult task was rested upon him. As soon as the Holy Prophet closed his eyes from this world a number of tribes rebelled against the order of the Khalifa, and some others refused to pay the Zakat. Hazrat Abu Bakr who was basically kind-hearted and humble in his nature stood like a rock against such a disintegrating trend and dealt with the rebellious firmly till they submitted to his authority.

It is said that the situation was so gloomy that even a person of such calibre and strength of character as Hazrat Umar was said to have advocated exemption of Zakat for those people. But Hazrat Abu Bakr said "I swear by Allah that even if a piece of cord to tie a camel is withheld from the Zakat tax, I will fight for it with all the resources at my command."

Another serious affair, along with the revolt of the tribes, was that a number of false prophets also raised their heads in various parts of Arabia. Among them, the name of Musailemah the liar. Hazrat Abu Bakr sent eleven expeditions against Musailemah and the task of reducing him was entrusted to

Khalid bin-al Wahid who eventually killed him. Thus a great danger to the solidarity of Islam was uprooted in the time of Hazrat Abu Bakr and an Islamic government was established on a sound footing.

The Holy Prophet had intended to send an army under command of Usamah bin Zaid to Syria to meet an expected attack by the Byzantine forces. With the death of the Holy Prophet the door of apostacy was flung open and rebellion and anarchy spread throughout the length and breadth of the Arabian Peninsular. Some of the companions advised him to abandon the despatch of the expedition. Abu Bakr who was a man of quick understanding and quick decision refused to accept the advice. He replied.

“Who am I to withhold the army that the Holy Prophet had ordered to proceed? Come what may, let Madinah stand or fall, the caliphate live or perish, the Holy Prophet’s commands must be carried out even if beasts should tear me to pieces or the enemy insult our womenfolk in the streets of Medina.”

The soldiers were ordered to proceed forthwith and they accomplished their task within 40 days. This action of Abu Bakr had an indirect affect on many of the tribes who felt that if a considerable detachment as well equipped as Usamah’s could be spared for distant operations then the Caliph’s government at Madina must be firmly sound and stable.

During the Khilafat of Hazrat Abu Bakr, Islam spread beyond the Arabian Peninsula. He launched a campaign in Syria against the Byzantine forces and in Iraq against the Persian Army.

A meagre portion of Iraq was captured during the Khilafat of Hazrat Abu Bakr while the decisive and final battle was fought during the reign of Hazrat Umar. The battle in Syria also started during the Khilafat of Abu Bakr and ended in the reign of Hazrat Umar.

Beside all this another distinctive work which Hazrat Abu Bakr did was the compilation of the Holy Quran.

Hazrat Abu Bakr’s Khilafat lasted for two years, three months and seven days. He died in the year 634 A.C.

He was buried in a grave by the side of the Prophet’s tomb.

Points of View

(Bashir Ahmad Orchard)

Christian: While it may be true that Muhammad was a good man he is dead while Jesus is alive and a living saviour.

Muslim: You are correct in stating that Muhammad (peace be on him) is dead. He died in 632 A.D. and his tomb is in Medina, Arabia. However you are incorrect in stating that Jesus is alive for he died a natural death as is the way of all human beings.

Christian: Jesus was different for he was God Himself manifested in the flesh. He ascended into heaven where he sits on the right hand of God.

Muslim: The doctrine of divinity was invented by early Christians. Jesus never claimed to be God. He was a human being who ate, drank and slept like any other person. He constantly prayed to God. These facts are incompatible with your assertion that he was the Almighty Himself.

Christian: Jesus had two natures being both human and Divine. He was God incarnate. God took upon Himself the form of man.

Muslim: This is another invention of the early Christians. Nowhere in the Gospels does Jesus claim to have two natures. Was it the man Jesus or the God Jesus who you believe died on the cross?

Christian: It was the human Jesus who died.

Muslim: The Church teaches that God came down into the world for the express purpose of suffering crucifixion as an atonement for the sins of mankind. This doctrine is proved false if it was only the human Jesus who died on the cross.

Christian: Jesus was the son of God. It was he who died for the sins of mankind.

Muslim: According to you Jesus was God but now you say he was the son of God. Which do you mean?

Christian: There is the doctrine of Trinity—God the Father, God the Son,

God the Holy Ghost. Three in one and one in three. I admit it is difficult to understand. Furthermore Jesus said "I and my Father are one." (John 10:30).

Muslim: If you believe that the son Jesus and the Father are one and the same person then it means that the son is God and therefore God Himself died on the cross although you have already stated God did not die. Is it not a right old mix up? I would like to point out to you that Jesus also said "the Father is greater than I." (John 14:38). Clearly Jesus never claimed to be God otherwise we are to understand that there are two gods one being greater than the other.

Christian: That was the human Jesus speaking.

Muslim: Of course it was the human Jesus speaking because that is just what he was—a human being. It was the human Jesus who prayed for deliverance in the garden of Gethsemane and it was the human Jesus who cried out on the cross "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me." Human beings are always human beings irrespective of their close connection with God.

Christian: If Jesus was only a human being then how do you account for his miracles and his resurrection?

Muslim: The Bible is not infallible. It is not absolutely authentic. No doubt some portions may be more or less trustworthy but much of it is unreliable. It is a mixture of fact and fiction. It is for you to establish the authenticity of your references. Regarding miracles the Old Testament furnishes accounts of prophets performing miracles as great or even greater than those performed by Jesus. Elisha brought life back to a dead person (2 Kings 4:34) and Moses worked many wonders even turning a rod into a serpent. As to the resurrection it should first be noted that it is refuted in the Holy Quran. Jesus was mistaken for dead and it was his unconscious body showing the appearance of death which was laid in the tomb. He revived and left the tomb after which he travelled east in search of the Lost Tribes of Israel whom he found scattered mainly in Persia, Afghanistan and Kashmir. He died among them and his tomb may be seen today in Srinagar the capital of Kashmir.

Christian: This is completely contrary to the teachings of the Bible—the Word of God.

Muslim: I have already explained that the Bible is not a reliable guide. It has suffered many interpolations of various kinds. Whereas it may be a book about God it is no way the Word of God which is free from all defects.

Christian: There are no errors and mistakes in the Bible. What you consider to be interpolations are only seeming errors which can be explained.

Muslim: The compilers of the Revised Version of the Bible prove you to be mistaken. They have removed more than fifty verses from the New Testament

despite the fact that—they have appeared for centuries in all previous issues of the Bible. The last twelve verses of the sixteenth chapter of Mark have been deleted. Also the fourth and fifth verses of the fifth chapter of John. Many other verses have also been removed. This one illustration proves interference with the text of the Bible.

Christian: I do not consider this to be a serious issue because the authors were only trying to produce a better translation nearer to the original Greek manuscripts.

Muslim: It is not a matter of translation but one of deliberate deletion of Biblical passages. Furthermore Greek is not the original language of the New Testament. Jesus spoke Hebrew and Aramaic. The Greek manuscripts are not the originals but only translations from Aramaic.

Christian: Even if your criticism is correct the four Gospel writers all bear witness to the empty tomb.

Muslim: The contradictions which exist in the Gospel accounts of the "resurrection" establish the unreliability of these records.

Christian: It is natural that there may be some differences in the four Gospel narratives. Newspaper reporters do not describe an event exactly the same; but they all agree that the event occurred despite differences in details.

Muslim: You are now comparing the Gospel writers with newspaper reporters who frequently err and contradict one another in their reports. This is true to a great extent. On the other hand you assert that the Gospel writers wrote under Divine inspiration in which case there can arise no question of errors. God does not err or contradict Himself.

Christian: I am not aware of any contradictions.

Muslim: Matthew states that after visiting the empty tomb Mary Magdalene met Jesus for the first time while on her way with other women to convey the news to the disciples. John, however, states that it was not until the disciples had visited and left the tomb that she met Jesus for the first time. She remained behind weeping because she did not know what had become of him whereas Matthew states she had met him earlier. The two stories contradict one another.

Christian: Why do you think the disciples and early Christians preached the resurrection under severe persecution if Jesus had not arisen from the dead?

Muslim: Being under the impression that Jesus had expired on the cross they may well have chosen to believe he had risen from the dead. They were under the impression that Jairus's daughter was raised from the dead although Jesus had declared "The maid is not dead but sleepeth." (Matthew 9:23) However they laughed him to scorn!. In those days people came to

incredulous conclusions. When King Herod came to hear about Jesus he exclaimed "It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead." (Mark 6:16).

It is possible to hold a firm conviction in a wrong belief. Sincerity in faith does not necessarily testify to the truth of that belief.

Best Weapon

Prayer is the best weapon that opens the way of deliverance from hardship.
(Promised Messiah)

Outstrip One Another in Virtue

Man desires to outstrip his contemporaries in the race for progress. This instinct is not confined to man, but is also to be found among other animals. A horse going at a leisurely pace begins to gallop as soon as it hears the sounds of hoofs behind it; and seeing this the one behind also begins to gallop in an effort to outrun the one in front. The proper use of this natural instinct produces many moral benefits, and a deficiency or excess of it results in many moral defects. A man can derive great moral advantage from it by using it as an aid in moral and spiritual development. For instance the Holy Quran says, "O believers, outstrip one another in virtue and good deeds." (Quran 2:148). It is by virtue of this instinct that a student makes rapid progress in his studies. When used under proper restrictions and limitations, it develops into an excellent moral quality.

(Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad)

Character of Muhammad

(Sir William Muir)

The following description of his person and character is taken from Sir William Muir (*Life of Muhammad*, pp. 510–13):

His form, though little above mean height, was stately and commanding. The depth of feeling in his dark black eyes, and the winning expression of a face otherwise attractive, gained the confidence and love of strangers, even at first sight. His features often unbended into a smile full of grace and condescension. He was, says an admiring follower, the handsomest and bravest, the brightest-faced and most generous of men. It was as though the sunlight beamed in his countenance. His gait has been likened to that of one descending a hill rapidly. When he made haste, it was with difficulty that one kept pace with him. He never turned, even if his mantle caught in a thorny bush; so that his attendants talked and laughed freely behind him secure of being unobserved.

Thorough and complete in all his actions, he took in hand no work without bringing it to a close. The same habit pervaded his manner in social intercourse. If he turned in a conversation towards a friend, he turned not partially, but with his full face and his whole body. In shaking hands, he was not the first to withdraw his own; nor was he the first to break off in converse with a stranger, nor to turn away his ear. A patriarchal simplicity pervaded his life. His custom was to do everything for himself. If he gave an alms he would place it with his own hands in that of the petitioner. He aided his wives in their household duties, mended his clothes, tied up the goats, and even cobbled his sandals. His ordinary dress was of plain white cotton stuff, made like his neighbours'. He never reclined at meals.

Muhammad, with his wives, lived, as we have seen, in a row of low and homely cottages built of unbaked bricks, the apartments separated by walls of palm-branches rudely daubed with mud, while curtains of leather, or of black haircloth, supplied the place of doors and windows. He was to all of easy access — even as the river's bank to him that draweth water from it. Embassies and deputations were received with the utmost

courtesy and consideration. In the issue of rescripts bearing on their representations, or in other matters of state, Muhammad displayed all the qualifications of an able and experienced ruler. What renders this the more strange is that he was never known himself to write.

A remarkable feature was the urbanity and consideration with which Muhammad treated even the most insignificant of his followers. Modesty and kindness, patience, self-denial, and generosity, pervaded his conduct, and riveted the affections of all around him. He disliked to say No. If unable to answer a petitioner in the affirmative, he preferred silence. He was not known ever to refuse an invitation to the house even of the meanest, nor to decline a proffered present however small. He possessed the rare faculty of making each individual in a company think that he was the favoured guest. If he met anyone rejoicing at success he would seize him eagerly and cordially by the hand. With the bereaved and afflicted he sympathised tenderly. Gentle and unbending towards little children, he would not disdain to accost a group of them at play with the salutation of peace. He shared his food, even in times of scarcity, with others, and was sedulously solicitous for the personal comfort of everyone about him. A kindly and benevolent disposition pervaded all those illustrations of his character.

Muhammad was a faithful friend. He loved Abu Bakr with the close affection of a brother; Ali, with the fond partiality of a father. Zaid, the freedman, was so strongly attached by the kindness of the Prophet, that he preferred to remain at Mecca rather than return home with his own father. "I will not leave thee," he said, clinging to his patron, "for thou hast been a father and mother to me." The friendship of Muhammad survived the death of Zaid, and his son Usama was treated by him with distinguished favour for the father's sake. Uthman and Umar were also the objects of a special attachment; and the enthusiasm with which, at Hudaibiyya, the Prophet entered into the Pledge of the Tree and swore that he would defend his beleaguered son-in-law even to the death, was a signal proof of faithful friendship. Numerous other instances of Muhammad's ardent and unwavering regard might be adduced. His affections were in no instance misplaced; they were ever reciprocated by a warm and self-sacrificing love.

In the exercise of a power absolutely dictatorial, Muhammad was just and temperate. Nor was he wanting in moderation towards his enemies, when once they had cheerfully submitted to his claims. The long and obstinate struggle against his pretensions maintained by the inhabitants of Mecca might have induced its conqueror to mark his indignation in indelible traces of fire and blood. But Muhammad, excepting a few criminals, granted a universal pardon; and, nobly casting into oblivion the memory of the past, with all its mockery, its affronts and persecution,

he treated even the foremost of his opponents with a gracious and even friendly consideration. Not less marked was the forbearance shown to Abdullah and the disaffected citizens of Medina, who for so many years persistently thwarted his designs and resisted his authority, nor the clemency with which he received submissive advances of tribes that before had been the most hostile, even in the hour of victory.

Etiquette For Guests

With regard to invitations to meals, at homes, etc., Islam teaches that persons who are invited to such functions should accept the invitation; for, participation in such functions promotes mutual goodwill and affection, and a refusal without any valid excuse may adversely affect the maintenance and promotion of friendly relations. But nobody must go to any such function uninvited. If a person who is invited should happen to be accompanied by one who is not invited, the former must obtain the permission of the host before asking his companion in. Guests should not arrive before time. In cases of invitations to meals particular regard must be paid to cleanliness, and everybody should wash their hands before sitting down to eat. Before commencing to eat the grace and blessings of God should be asked. Food must not be devoured in a greedy manner, and everybody must eat of that which is placed nearest to him. The quality of the food must not be criticized, nor must it be praised in a manner which savours of flattery or adulation. All must wash their hands and clean their mouths and pray after the conclusion of the meal, asking the blessings and grace of God for the host and his people, who have been put to trouble and expense in providing the meal. Unless the host requests them to stay on, the guests must not tarry long after the meal but should leave soon after it.

(Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad)

Possibility of Virgin Births

(a) "Medical men have not ruled out altogether the possibility of natural parthenogenesis, or the production of a child by a female without any reference to a male. Such a statement offhand appears ridiculous, yet its possibility, from a purely biological standpoint, under certain conditions, cannot be disregarded. Dr. Timme calls attention to this possibility as the result of a certain type of tumors, known as arrhenoblastoma (from the Greek word for "female" and "sperm") which are occasionally found in the female pelvis or lower body. These tumors are capable of generating male sperm-cells. Naturally, if these male sperm-cells are alive and active and come in contact with the female's own egg-cell or ovum, conception might occur. There is nothing illogical in this line of reasoning. Dr. Timme states that there are twenty authentic cases, reported in Europe in which an arrhenoblastoma has been found to develop male sperm-cells. . . . The arrhenoblastoma is a tumor that contains blastodermic cells. These cells are creative structures and are capable of development at any time and the fact, therefore, that arrhenoblastoma containing these "embryonic cells" might create testicular tissue, capable of producing male sperm-cells seems scientifically not impossible. . . . If living male sperm-cells are produced in a female body by arrhenoblastoma, the possibility of the self-fertilisation of a woman, even though a virgin, cannot be denied. That is to say, her own body would produce the same result as though sperm-cells from a man's body had been transferred to hers in the more usual way, or by a physician's aid." (American Medical Journal)

(b) "There are cases on record of children having been born without fathers. A young girl of great moral purity became pregnant without the slightest knowledge of the source. There is a case of pregnancy in an unmarried woman, who successfully resisted an attempt at criminal connection and yet became impregnated and gave birth to a perfectly formed female child." (Anomalies and Curiosities of Medicine, George M. Gold and Walter L. Payle)

(c) "Nature's whims are unpredictable. In the realm of live experience, we will have to be particularly careful not to dismiss the incredible as the impossible.

"In November, 1955, Miss A. a simple woman who definitely knew nothing about the discoveries of modern biology, told a fantastic story. No doctor, no judge, no husband would have hesitated to regard her tale as a senseless web of lies, or as the hallucinations of a lunatic. Yet a team of leading British scientists was willing to investigate the matter by modern scientific methods. Their surprising verdict was; "The assertions of this woman should be taken seriously. In addition, we must admit that we could not refute them."

"The woman insisted that she had given birth to a fatherless daughter. She claimed for her the miracle of the virginal conception.

"Unbelievable? Of course, because we are used to regarding the birth of organisms in terms of two sex partners. That a male and a female co-operate seems to us an immutable law of nature. It is not." (Eric Weiser: Conception and Misconception)

(d) "In the past few years 26 cases of tumor of the character of arrhenoblastoma have been collected and reported from Europe by Professor Robert Meyer of Berlin. These had similar characteristics in that they actually produced in the patients a general masculinisation. Only one case has ever been reported from America. . . . This was the case of a young girl of eighteen years." The writer, Dr. Walter Timme, then tells us how the girl's menstruation suddenly stopped and how she began to develop certain male features, such as hair on the upper lip etc. She also developed a tumor mass in her abdomen, which gave her so much pain that it had to be removed surgically. "Sections of the tumor were carefully examined. It was found to consist, besides the coagulation necrosis and degenerative masses, of an atypical arrangement of small round and spindle cells showing an occasional whorl and a suggestion of groups bound together by fasciculi. At other places the structure was undoubtedly epithelial in character, presumably from the hilum of the ovary and represented the primary growth. These cells were arranged in irregular medullary cords and also as rudimentary tubules. *The tubules were lined with atypical columnar to cuboidal forms of epithelium.* Besides the detritus and coagulated material within the lumen of the tubules, *there appeared also a few definite pear-shaped forms of spermatozoa.* In fact specimens of these sections were sent to Berlin for Professor Meyer's interpretation, which he unhesitatingly pronounced to be semini ferous tubules within which were spermatozoa. It was concluded therefore that this was a true arrhenoblastoma originating in the hilum of the ovary and developing from anlagen consisting of residual undifferentiated cells which have developed along male lines as evidenced by the presence of tubules similar to seminiferous tubules and of typical testicular tissue with interstitial cells. In other words, we have male testicular tissue producing spermatozoa in juxtaposition to an ovary which potentially could function within the pelvis of a woman. The possibility of a so-called "Immaculate Conception" is

therefore not without the bounds of reason.” (The Transactions of the American Neurological Association, Vol 60 (1934) pp. 85, 86)

(e) “The possibility that a woman might become pregnant without at least one spermatozoon having entered the uterus is not one which the reasonable man would lightly entertain. Scientific opinion for several centuries has sided with the reasonable man; but today biologists and cytogeneticists in particular, would be less dogmatic in dismissing such a possibility. To them the rarity of spontaneous parthenogenesis in vertebrates is ground for remark. . . .

“Parthenogenesis, in which an ovum begins to divide ‘of itself’ producing a haploid embryo or recouping the missing paternal chromosome some form of doubling, is much rarer in warm-blooded complement by vertebrates, but it is common in invertebrates. Parthenogenetic cleavage has been reported in cat and ferret ova, and lately in unfertilised turkey eggs. None of the embryos have been shown to be viable. But parthenogenetic development going to full term and producing a viable and healthy offspring, can be induced in mammals by cooling the fallopian tubes, and many fatherless rabbits have already been reared by this technique, though the failure-rate is high. In view of this, we may have to re-examine the justification for our belief that spontaneous parthenogenesis is rare in vertebrates and absent in mammals. If it were rare in mammals but occasionally present, would it in fact be noticed?

“The offspring of parthenogenesis would be a female or less probably an abnormal male, and its immunological make-up would be such that it could be recognised with absolute certainty — ‘no specialised knowledge would permit faking.’ Most claimants could be sifted on the repertoire of blood-grouping tests alone. The culminating proof would be the ability of the mother to take a skin-graft derived from the child without breakdown and with indefinite persistence of the graft. . . .

“Possibly some of the unmarried mothers whose obstinacy is condemned in old books on forensic medicine, or cited as a curiosity by their contemporaries, may have been telling the truth.” (The Lancet, November 5th, 1955)

The Buddha and St. Jehosaphat

(Nasir Ward)

Religious syncretism was rife within and without the Roman Empire of the first two centuries of our era. Indeed, it is perhaps the only way in which a settled culture can absorb new ideas which are fundamental to it without losing its identity completely. In an age where education was confined to the few and where travel was restricted to those who had the means to pay for it, knowledge of distant lands, ancient traditions and languages was bound to be limited. As we have seen, it was the custom of the Hellenists to reduce everything to terms with which their own culture could cope; place names, linguistic terminology and the names of individuals. The Romans, as successors to the Greeks, inherited this legacy, which of course reduced ideas and concepts in the same manner. The Romans were supremely tolerant of other religions, adapting them to be absorbed within their own pantheon; most Greek and Near Eastern deities were converted by Roman names to popular worship within the temples.

With the decline of the Empire in the west, the eastern half, ruled from Constantinople remained to continue the culture of the Ancient World. This Byzantine Empire, which was to last into the 15th century comprised the Greek speaking provinces of the Romans and the Hellenistic culture with which it had been endowed for several centuries. Its language was Greek; its cities were still ruled by aristocratic oligarchies along the lines of the old Greek "polis," and education and thought had to be expressed through the traditional means of expression. There was, however, one slight difference. The Byzantine Greeks had become Christian. By the 7th century the local aristocracy which ruled the cities of the Empire had become bishops. This was the natural outcome in a world which saw itself as a Christian unity, surrounded by non-Christian foes, which included the "heretical" Arian co-religionists of the former barbarian tribes, now settled in the western provinces. To the east were large numbers of Persian Christians, mainly Nestorians, some of whom formed the courtly class of the Sassanians. Local loyalty still remained attached to the town, and with it the bishop who was the

“patron” of this flock.¹ He interceded with the Emperor’s agents, just as Senators had accepted their obligations to their “clientela.”

The works of the Greek philosophers were still read, but only in the libraries of the magnates and bishops themselves. The proletariat had little time for such pre-Christian personalities and their writings, and with the closure of the academies, there was nowhere for them to learn of the ideas which had, and still did form the basis of their own civilisation. Then, in the 7th century came the event which was to shatter this rather cosy, dependant arrangement; the Arabs burst through the Byzantine defences in the south and occupied in quick succession the wealthy provinces of Egypt, Palestine and Syria, along with the great cities of the region which they were quite incapable of administering independently. Although the Arabs brought their new religion, Islam, with them, many of their tribes still retained their traditional bedouin and cultural outlook. The rulers of the new empire were staunch Muslims, but as in the case of Christianity, a surfeit of new converts within a short space of time made it very difficult to train the adherents in the conduct and belief which was essential to the religion.

Islam was not a new religion; it was the continuation of one religion which had always existed for mankind. It was the latest revelation of this religion through a prophet of the Arabs themselves—Muhammad, just as his predecessors had been Moses, Jesus, Zoroaster or the Buddha. To the Muslims Jesus was one in the line of prophets who appear when religion is in a state of decay in order to revive it. He was a man, the Messiah for the Jewish religion. Islam was the successor to that religion, extending it and refining its teachings. Consequently, as all human beings were members of this universal religion, they were all brothers and sisters of the Muslims themselves. As each person was allowed to follow his own conscience, they were left unmolested to practice their own beliefs, their descendants remaining as separate communities even today.

As the Arabs were unable to administer the territories themselves they had to rely on the continuation in office of the Byzantine officials. One of these was John of Damascus who held a post in the finance department under one of the Umayyad Caliphs in the second half of the eighth century. John was a thorough going Greek, even under the Muslims, but he was also a staunch Christian. Just what he made of the Arabs we do not know, but he has left us with an excellent example of the way in which the Hellenistic mind adapted names and ideas which were strange to themselves. He was an example of the Greek filter at work; it was John who translated for us what became a best selling classic of the Medieval World.

1. *c/f* the scene of Christ surrounded by his apostles, who intercede as patrons for their clients on a 4th century Roman terracotta plaque (Fig. 77. *The World of Late Antiquity*—P. Brown, Thames and Hudson). This developed into the later concept of the “patron saint,” associated with a particular town or occupation, a carry over from paganism.

This was the story of Barlaam and Jehosaphat, two gentlemen of the True Faith, who lived in India. John heard the story presumably while at the Caliph's court at Damascus. The Umayyads traded mainly with the east and it is quite likely it passed along the trade route until John heard of it and thought it worthwhile recording for his fellow Christians. Subsequently it proved so popular as to be translated into more than sixty different languages, varying from Spanish and Hebrew, to Icelandic and Russian.

It is the story of a king who lived in India but who, much to his sorrow, had no son. He had also developed the unpleasant habit of persecuting his subjects for their religious beliefs. These latter were all believers in the "true faith." John does not specify as to what it was in India, but quite naturally to him it was Christianity. In so doing he unwittingly completed the circle of events which began with Jesus' departure from Palestine, but this will be dealt with later.

One night the wife of the king dreamed she was visited by a white elephant. This made such an impression on her that she felt compelled to tell her husband about it the next morning. The king, being unable to understand the meaning of it, sent for his astrologers and wise men, who explained that the elephant represented a son, soon to be born to the queen. Joy was tempered with anger however, when it was discovered that one of the court nobles had become converted to the "true faith." As punishment, the offender was sent into exile.

When nature had taken its course, a son was duly born to the queen, and he was given the name of Yudasaf. Unfortunately, to his father's consternation, the astrologers worked out the child's horoscope and forecast that in time Yudasaf would also become a follower of the true faith. This was anathema to the king and to prevent such an occurrence, he had built a special palace in a remote area, where the child was kept in seclusion. Here he was unlikely to come into contact with pervasive religious beliefs. Meanwhile the king took every precaution to see that his son met only persons approved by himself and that he remained within the palace.

If this story seems somewhat like a fairy tale, it must be remembered that many such tales do contain an element of reality in them. At all events the story was believed as a completely true account, and still is by the church up to the present day.

Yudasaf had an inquiring mind, and as he grew up he discovered the reason why he had been kept in seclusion. This prompted him to demand access to a nearby town for the first time so that he could gain experience of the world. On going out, he passed on the way, a blind man, a leper, an old man and a corpse. These acquainted him for the first time with the suffering and miserable lot of his fellow human beings. He returned to the palace to consider this discovery. Shortly afterwards a certain Barlaam learned of the

young prince's whereabouts, and disguising himself as a beggar, visited the prince in private. This afforded him ample opportunity to promote the real reason for his coming; to teach Yudasaf the true religion. Barlaam taught in parables and he began with three of them:

- (a) The Trumpet of Death.
- (b) The Four Caskets.
- (c) The Sower.

When Yudasaf had absorbed the meaning of these, he taught him eight more, making eleven in all.²

Yudasaf was convinced of the true religion by Barlaam and became converted. While this discussion was taking place, Zardan, the prince's guardian concealed himself in order to overhear it. Zardan then threatened to report the matter to the king, but after much entreaty, was persuaded to keep quiet. Yudasaf was so filled with zeal for the true faith that he decided to leave the palace and go with Barlaam in order to continue his studies. However, Barlaam related to him the parable of the Tame Gazelle and the prince was then persuaded to stay.

After Barlaam's departure Zardan changed his mind and informed the king of what had occurred. This placed him in a difficult position as the prophesy had now been fulfilled. The astrologers advised him as to his next course of action which might win back Yudasaf from the true faith. They suggested the king should get hold of Barlaam and have him put to death. Failing this, as Barlaam was unavailable the king decided to organise a debating contest at which his own views would be victorious. To produce the desired result, a certain Nachor was hired to impersonate Barlaam and given orders to lose the contest. Yudasaf, remaining firm in his faith, learned of the scheme and threatened Nachor with punishment if he should lose. Nachor decided it was safer to antagonise the king than Yudasaf. He won the contest, but fortunately escaped before the king could lay hands on him.

Having been thwarted in his plans the king was at a loss as to what to do next. Theudas, the magician, advised him to procure a woman for the prince. This, he suggested, would keep his mind occupied and away from thoughts of the true religion. To support his scheme he related the parable of the "Youth who had never seen a woman." The prince proved impervious to such temptations and narrated a parable of his own entitled, "The Peacock and the Raven," which convinced Theudas of the true faith. Yudasaf was then able to escape into the wilderness to rejoin Barlaam. Mounting his horse, he rode from the city at night. The hooves of his mount were lifted magically above the ground so that the noise would not wake the population from sleep. At last he

2. These included: The man in the well; the three friends; the king of the year; the heathen king and the believing adviser; the swimmer and his comrades; the rich man and the beggar's daughter; education by love; the man and the bird.

was re-united with Barlaam, practising the true faith in peace and harmony, and after a suitable interval they both die. The tale is much more involved than the summary which I have given here. Those who wish to study it more closely can buy a copy from any reasonable bookshop. It was extremely popular in the Middle Ages; Caxton published the English version under the title, "The Golden Legend," and it became one of the first books to be printed in the English language. The story received such wide acclaim that both Barlaam and Josaphat were made saints of the Catholic Church; November 27th is their feast day in the Roman calendar, while August 26th is St. Josaphats' in the Greek.

To commemorate the devotion of Josaphat, which is merely a Greek version of Yusasaph, a church was dedicated to him in Palermo, the "Divo Josaphat," which still stands, complete with a statue of its favourite saint. To the great joy of their devotees a Portuguese expedition to India actually discovered the remains of these two saints and brought them to Europe. On August 7th 1672 a grand procession carrying their bones made its way through the city of Antwerp to the cloister of St. Salvator, and there they remain to this day.

The key to the identity of this saintly person lies in the changes which naturally occur when a name of a story is translated from one language to another. In this case, it is not only language which has affected a transition, it is the cultural adaptations which are involved also.

John of Damascus, who is commonly assumed to have translated this story in the west, was writing from the standpoint of a Christian in a muslim country. To him the "true faith" was definitely Christianity as he knew it. Josaphat, therefore, behaved as would any Christian gentleman, albeit in a foreign land. John filtered the elements of the story which were unacceptable to him as a Greek Christian and reduced it to what was recognisable and expected. The personality of Jesus was affected in the same way, together with his teachings, so that it became familiar and acceptable to the Greek speaking converts of the eastern Mediterranean.

The name "Josaphat" gives us the main clue as to what has happened here. This is a Greek form from Yosaphat or Joasaph, which in Arabic and Hebrew would be something like Yozasaf. In Pehlevi the form of the name would be Bodasaph, which lengthened becomes Bodhisattva, the man destined to become Buddha.

As the tale was brought westwards from India it underwent various changes to make it comprehensible to the different ethnic groups which received it, until eventually it emerged in its present form. If we trace it back to its original source the mystery becomes unravelled. Far from being the story of two pious Christians in India, it becomes clear it is little more than a reworking of the life of Buddha, expressed of course in Graeco-Christian terms. This fact was

obviously quite unknown to John of Damascus. If it is a simple matter to transform the Buddha into a Christian saint in the Greek mould, how easy it must have been to apply the same process to Jesus himself, converting him into the ideal of a Greek teacher and philosopher in the style of Plato or Plotinus. By the same token the Jewish aspects which were unacceptable to the Greek mind were shed along the way.

If we return to the story of St. Josephat we can see this process taking place. The defence speech delivered by Nachor at the religious debate with the king turns out to be a Greek model. It is in all essentials a text book example entitled the "Defence of Aristides," which was supposedly delivered by the Christian philosopher of that name before the emperor Hadrian in c. 124 A.D. In the "Acts of the Apostles" we have seen the speech of St. Paul at Athens is a concoction from the works of previous Greek philosophers. This was what made it intelligible to its Greek readers—that Paul was one of their own. A strict Jew would have been anathema to them.

The events recorded in the life of Josephat are virtually the same as those described in any general life of the Buddha—his birth, seclusion, meeting of the four examples of human misfortunes, his fleeing on the horse whose hooves did not touch the ground and so on.

In the Ethiopic version Yewasef, or so he is called in that language, has a vision of heaven:

"And they brought him into a vast country wherein were many rivers, and the landscape thereof was very beautiful, and the perfumes of its flowers were exceedingly sweet. And he saw there trees of diverse kinds growing all together, and they bore strange and marvellous fruits which were pleasant to look upon and most delicious to taste. And the leaves of those trees sang sweet songs, and when they were set in motion there went forth from them delicious breezes of the sweetness of which the people could never have enough."³

Taken as a whole, this is Sukhavati, "The hand of Bliss," as depicted in the Mahayana Buddhist work, the Sukhavati-vyuha (Sacred Books of the East vol. XLIX).

It is also very similar in concept to the Essene Paradise, where holy persons are compared to great trees. This is hardly surprising as the Mahayana Buddhists drew their inspiration from the Essene concepts and imagery, as we shall see later.

3. Reproduced from, "How the Buddha became a Christian Saint," W. Hayes, 1931, British Museum Library.

"In the days of old, when the Creation was young,
 The earth was filled with giant trees,
 Whose branches soared above the clouds,
 And in them dwelled our Ancient Fathers,
 They who walked with the Angels,
 And who lived by the Holy Law.
 In the shadow of their branches all men lived in peace,
 And wisdom and knowledge was theirs,
 And the revelation of the Endless Light.
 Through their forests flowed the Eternal River,
 And in the centre stood the Tree of Life.
 . . . The whole earth shall be a garden,
 And the tall trees shall cover the land.
 In that day shall sing the Children of Light a new song:

My brother tree!

Let me not hide myself from thee,
 But let us share the breath of life,
 Which our Earthly Mother has given to us.
 More beautiful than the finest jewel,
 Of the rugmaker's art,
 Is the carpet of green leaves under my bare feet;
 More majestic than the silken canopy,
 Of the rich merchant,
 Is the tent of branches above my head,
 Through which the bright stars give light.
 The wind among the leaves of the cypress,
 Makes a sound like a chorus of angels.

. . . Thus shall sing the Children of Light,
 When the earth shall be a garden again;
 Holy Tree, divine gift of the Law!
 Who have strayed from their true home,
 Which is the Garden of the Brotherhood."⁴

"I thank Thee, Heavenly Father,
 because Thou hast put me,
 at a source of running streams,
 at a living spring in a land of drought,
 watering an eternal garden of wonders,
 the Tree of Life, mystery of mysteries,
 growing everlasting branches for eternal planting.
 to sink their roots into the stream of life
 from an eternal source.

4. "Trees"—Gospel of the Essenes—Szeckeloy.—C. W. Daniel Co.

And Thou, Heavenly Father,
 protect their fruits,
 with the angels of the day,
 and of the night,
 and with flames of eternal light burning
 every way."⁵

In the same way, the parables mentioned in the story of Joasaph or Josaphat, are nearly all ascribed to Buddha or form part of Buddhism. The "Four Caskets" is a parable of Buddha, which was adapted by Shakespeare to form part of the "Merchant of Venice." Another parable, "The Man in the Well," is to be found in the Hindu Mahabarata, as well as in Buddhist works. "The Trumpet of Death" is also Buddhist, while the "Robber's Nemesis," occurs in the Buddhist Jatoka Tales as well as in the Arabian Nights and Chaucer's Pardoner's Tale. "The Young Man who had never seen a woman," is also from the Jatoka Tales.

So, it becomes clear that Buddha has been reduced to Christian terms for the last 1100 years or so, and has been worshipped as a Christian Saint by the congregation of "Divo Josephat" in Palermo as well as others. An interesting theological speculation must arise from this: if the prayers of the worshippers have been answered, was it through the agency of Buddha, as St. Josaphat did not exist? They have created their saint in their own image, but the analogy does not end there. As we have begun to see, the words of St. Josaphat were largely the words of Buddha; but the ideas of Buddha were those of the Essenes. To move one step further, "Yudasaf," translated as "Joasaph" or "Josasaphat," is the name given to the man who represents Buddha in the story, the name itself assuming the meaning of "the man destined to be Buddha." "Barlaam" means "Blessed One; Master."

Unknown to John of Damascus, a previous amalgamation of terms had taken place before the story actually reached him "Yudasaf" is the name given to the teacher who travelled through Iran approximately 1900 years ago, and journeyed east through Afghanistan to Northern India. At present he lies buried in the Khanyar district of Sirinagar in Kashmir, remembered as a prophet, a teacher of parables. The name Yus Asaf is displayed on his tomb, which has been venerated for centuries by the inhabitants. He became the second Buddha, the founder of the Mahayana Buddhism, recognised as the spiritual return of the Buddha in northern India. He is also called "Maitreya" or "Messaiah" in Buddhist works. His life became fused with that of the first Buddha, Guatama who had lived some six centuries previously. But as well as being the return of Buddha, he was also the teacher of the "true faith." This was why John of Damascus assumed he was a Christian, and of course, why so

5. From the Thanksgiving Psalms—Dead Sea Scrolls—Szekely op. cit.

many teachings of Mahayana Buddhism appear to be merely oriental versions of Christianity. Yusasaf was the name assumed by Jesus, the Messiah as he spread his Essene revitalisation of Judaism among the Jewish tribes of the Orient, many of whom had become attached to Buddhism. The name of the valley outside Jerusalem, where he often walked to the Mount of Olives and where his relatives were buried, is called by two names. One is the Kidron Valley, but the other is the valley of Josaphat, or Yusasaf. The wheel has turned full circle; Jesus, who left the west, has been re-admitted to his own church under the guise of Buddha or Yus Asaf, and is in the unique position of being both the founder and a saint at the same time. By another quirk of fate his whereabouts can be traced to three places; the heavenly realm, according to the interpretation of the gospels; the cloister of Antwerp, according to the Catholic church, and the tomb at Sirinagar, according to the rest of mankind. For those who may be in two, or three minds about it, we shall look at the evidence in the next few chapters.

In seriousness, it is a good example of the way in which names and accounts change according to cultural bias and expectations. Buddha could not be admitted into the church until he became his Greek counterpart Josaphat. Similarly Jesus could not be accepted to the Greeks until he threw off his Jewish trappings and became a Hellenistic teacher or philosopher. We have made an image of both he and his teachings in our own form, and this is the Jesus who is still worshipped today. He has no connection with the real Jesus than St. Josaphat had with Buddah—his parables and details of his life only. The statues of Jesus in the churches no more correspond to him than the statues of Josaphat. For those who may be puzzled as to how this process of cultural selection occurs, they have only to ask themselves, would they be happy praying to a statue of the Buddha in their churches? The answer is obviously no; no more than could the early Greek Christians accept the Jewish Jesus into their churches, and in his place they fashioned their own Hellenistic Josaphat. That image has remained with us for the last 1800 years. In place of the Holy Law, the Tree of Life, has been pruned to fit the shape of our own gardens; what was a living religion became a code of Graeco-Roman ethics, and we, as successors to the Greeks and Romans, have kept the same form ever since.

MUHAMMAD

(Summarised from Mr. Gorham's sketch in his *Ethics of the Great Religions*)

“And the life of Muhammad is not
the life of a God, but of a man;
From first to last it is
intensely human.”

(Lane-Poole).

From more than one point of view, the system established by the great Arabian reformer Muhammad is worthy of serious study. That one of the leading Christian Powers should also be the greatest Muslim Power of modern times is a striking fact, testifying to a degree of toleration which would have been impossible to the Christianity of the Middle Ages, and also showing that even for prudential considerations it is well for Englishmen to understand a religion with which they are brought into close relationship. Moreover, the religion of Muhammad is the only serious rival to Christianity; and, being from the simplicity of its main conception and the suitability of its ordinances well adapted to the needs of the races of the East, advanced with rapidity which Christian missionaries are unable either to check or emulate.

A brief sketch of Muhammad's life will form a suitable introduction to an account of his religious system. Most faiths centre in a great personality, and this is specially true of Islam. There are no “historic doubts” as to the actual existence of Muhammad; throughout his active career almost every detail of his life is known. That career is of extraordinary interest; that character was one of the most powerful influences in human history.

Arabia, about the time of Muhammad's birth, at Mecca, in A.D. 570, was in a state of religious unrest and political chaos. Its wandering inhabitants, who are believed to have been descendants of Abraham through Ishmael, and therefore closely akin to the Jewish people, were mainly idolaters, worshipping stars, stones, and fetishes. There were many Jewish colonies which had been established after the destruction of Jerusalem 500 years earlier, while a number of Christian sects made the influence of their faith in more or less debased forms perceptible among the native tribes. The chief of

these sects were the Nestorians, the Arians, the Sabellians, the Eutyrians, the Marianites, and the Collyridians; but many other forms of religious eccentricity flourished in the freedom of the desert. There were also men known as Hanifs, who did not attach themselves to any religious community, but were anchorites of an individualist and ascetic character, who taught a monotheistic faith in which elements of Essenism and Christianity were mingled. This comparative purity of life and doctrine doubtless helped to prevent the utter decay of religion in the Arabian peninsula; but the urgent need of moral reform was perceived by many before the advent of Muhammad. Indeed, a widespread expectation was in the air that the time was approaching when an Arabian Messiah should appear and found a new religion. The ground was prepared for a great social revolution. The time was ripe, and the man appeared.

The father of Muhammad died before his son's birth, and the boy having at six years of age lost his mother also, was brought up by his uncle, Abu Talib, who, though not a believer in his mission, remained through life the Prophet's best friend. Until manhood, Muhammad was in poor circumstances, tending flocks of sheep and assisting his uncle in his business as a merchant. At the age of twenty-five, Muhammad, through the offices of Abu Talib, obtained employment as a camel driver with a rich widow named Khadijah, and took charge of a caravan conveying merchandise to Syria. Pleased with his successful management, and attracted by his personal beauty, Khadijah, though by fifteen years his senior, sent her sister to offer the young man her hand in marriage. Matters were promptly arranged, and Muhammad became a man of wealth and position. No great success, however, attended his own business enterprises. Religion and commerce sometimes require a good deal of reconciling, and Muhammad was not then an adept in the art of making the best of both worlds. Naturally reserved, and with a mind disposed to a poetic and dreamy mysticism, his mundane affairs were somewhat neglected. His religion assumed an increasingly earnest tone; he spent a large part of his time in lonely meditation in the desert and among the hills, and many an unseen conflict left its trace upon his soul.

Not until he was forty years old did Muhammad receive his first "divine revelation", in the solitude of the mountains near Mecca. Translated into modern language this means that he then first became convinced that he had a mission to fulfil, viz., to arouse men from their sins, their indifference, their superstition, to thunder into their ears a message from on high, and awaken them to living faith in one indivisible, all-powerful, and all-merciful God. Prolonged fasting, days of ecstatic contemplation, and vigils of the night in the silent valleys and gloomy mountain caves had made him a visionary, with a firm faith that God had inspired him to be His messenger to mankind. This revelation, generally believed to be referred to in the short 96th surah of the Kur'an, he communicated to none but his immediate relatives and a faithful

friend, Abu Bakr. Painful doubts as to the reality of the vision oppressed him, but were dispelled by the sympathy of his friends. Many of his friends called him a fool, a liar, a mad poet; and the city of Mecca for several years illustrated the proverb that a prophet hath no honour in his own country by a decisive rejection of his claims. When conviction, however, had once taken possession of his mind, it was unshakeable. When his uncle begged him to cease his attempts to convert the Meccans, and so put an end to constant trouble. Muhammad said "Though they gave me the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left to bring me back from my undertaking, yet will I not pause till the Lord carry His cause to victory, or till I die for it." Turning away he burst into tears, and Abu Talib replied: "Go in peace, son of my brother, and say what thou wilt, for by God I will on no condition abandon thee."

The little body of believers grew slowly. In four years Muhammad had about forty proselytes, mostly of the lower ranks, and he then felt himself justified in coming forward as a public preacher, and denouncing the superstitions of the Meccans. To establish a new religion was no part of his intention. He desired simply to recall them to the purer and truer faith of their ancestor, Abraham. Zealous for the worship of the Kabah, and dreading lest the profitable pilgrimages to their city should fall into decay, the people of Mecca showed the bitterest hostility to Muhammad, opposing and ridiculing him at every turn. So violent was their hatred that Abu Talib thought it prudent to shelter him for a time in a place of security in the country. About this time his wife died, then his uncle, and changes of fortune reduced him again to poverty. He went to another part of the country, but found himself in danger, and barely escaped with his life. But a turning-point in his career was at hand. In a party of pilgrims from the rival city of Yathrib, afterwards called Medinah, Muhammad made several converts. On their visit the following year, their numbers were so greatly increased that Muhammad entered into an alliance with them, and on a certain night, when a plot had been made to assassinate him he left the city of his birth and took refuge in the friendly city. The Muslim era of Hegira (Hijrah) dates from this event.

Muhammad was now among friends; his converts increased rapidly in number and the once despised Teacher was recognised as the ruler of a city and of two powerful tribes. Missionaries were sent to all parts of Arabia, and even to neighbouring countries, including Egypt and Persia. The final conquest of Mecca was followed by the submission of the tribes and the acknowledgement of Muhammad's spiritual and temporal supremacy over the Arabian peninsular. The vanquished marvelled at the magnanimity of the victor. Only three or four persons, and those criminals, were put to death, and a general amnesty was then proclaimed.

When he became aware that his end was approaching he addressed his followers in the mosque as often as he was able, exhorting them to righteousness and piety and peace among themselves. Each man, he

declared, must work out his own salvation. He read passages from the Kuran, asked forgiveness of any whom he had wronged, and prepared his weeping followers for his death. His head pillowed on the lap of his wife, his lips murmuring of pardon and paradise, the dying agonies of a great soul came to an end, and the Preacher of Islam breathed his last.

His people were moved to keen distress. Omar, half-frantic, drew his scimitar, rushed among the crowd, and declared he would strike off the head of anyone who dared to say the Prophet Of God was no more. Abu Bakr calmed him, and preached resignation to the will of God.

Muhammad was a man of imposing presence, of medium height, broad-shouldered, and strongly built, with fine features, coal-black hair and eyes, and a long beard. His mental powers were of a high order, his manners reserved yet affable and courteous; his speech laconic and often humorous, a man of strong passions but noble impulses, capable of great love, great generosity, altogether a character of surprising force, capacity, shrewdness, and determination. Temperate and prudent in youth, he gained in manhood the name of "Al-Amin", or "the faithful", from his fair and upright dealing. Just and affectionate in private life, he lived in the humblest style in a poor hut, eating the plainest food, lighting his own fire, and mending his own clothes and shoes, having given his slaves their freedom. For months together he would seldom eat a hearty meal, always sharing it with those whose need was greater: a number of the poor lived entirely on his generosity.

What is Islam?

Islam literally means *Peace, surrender of one's Will*; and to be in amity and concord. The significance of the name Islam is the attainment of a life of perfect peace and eternal happiness through complete surrender to the Will of God. The Quran — the Holy Book of the Muslims — interprets it to be the religion whose teachings are in consonance with human nature. Islam, as the Quran has stated (5:4), is the completion of the religion inaugurated by God in the beginning of the world, on His sending the Quran through the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him). As a child is taught his alphabet, so God taught the religion to the world gradually and little by little, by sending His prophets at different times and to different peoples.

When the world reached that stage of understanding when it was ready for the final lesson, He sent the last and complete Book through the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him). This Book not only corrects the errors which had found their way into various religions, but preaches the truths which have not been preached before, on account of special circumstances of the society or the early stage of its development. At the same time it gathers together in itself the truths which were contained in any Divine revelation granted to any people for the guidance of men (The Quran 98:4). Lastly, it meets all the spiritual and moral requirements of an ever advancing humanity.

This is Islam which is wrongly called Muhammadanism.

According to Islam, the object of man's life is its complete unfoldment. Islam does not support the idea that man is born in sin. It teaches that everyone has within him the seed of perfect development and it rests solely with a person himself to make or mar his fortune. *We created man in the best make* says the Holy Quran (95:5).

The cardinal doctrine of Islam is the Unity of Godhead. *There is none worthy of worship but the one and only God, and Muhammad is His Prophet.* He is free from all defects, Holy and Transcendent. He is All Good, All Mercy and All Power. He has no partner. He neither begets nor is He begotten, because these are the traits of frail and weak humanity. Furthermore, Islam helps us to establish a permanent relationship with God and to realise Him during our earthly life as our Helper in all our affairs and undertakings. This Unity of God is the first and foremost pillar of Islam and every other belief hangs upon it.

Islam requires belief in all the prophets, including Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Krishna, Buddha, Confucious and Zoroaster. We regard them all (and many more not mentioned here) as heavenly teachers born to reform and regenerate man and lead him to God. Adherents of some other religions may consider it an act of piety to use disrespectful words and heap abuse on the prophets of other religions, but if a Muslim were to show the slightest disrespect towards the founder of any other faith, he does so at the cost of his own faith. He has to utter the respectful benediction *Alaihis-Salam* (peace be on him) after mentioning the name of every prophet. Thus Islam establishes peace between all religions.

The REVIEW of RELIGIONS

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

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

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