

# THE REVIEW of RELIGIONS

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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 whose advent had been foretold by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). The Movement is an embodiment of true and real Islām. 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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## EDITORIAL

Protestantism started in Germany in the 16th century when Martin Luther opposed certain practices and beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church and finally completely broke away from it. This was the Great Schism. Since that time Protestants have split among themselves and it has been estimated that today there are more than five hundred sects. On the other hand the Roman Catholic Church has remained more or less united under the spiritual leadership of the Popes. The Church has recently been shaken by the opposition and rebellious activities of French-born Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre who has been defying the directives of the Pope. The situation reached a climax when in defiance of the Pope's instructions he consecrated four new bishops in Switzerland. He and the four bishops were immediately excommunicated from the Church. His loyal supporters include many priests.

Schisms have occurred in all religions. Islam is no exception. It is unfortunate. They have destroyed unity which is the goal of Islam - the universal brotherhood of mankind. Religious unity can only be established and maintained through the recognition of the Oneness of God and undivided obedience to Him, His Messengers and appointees which in the case of Islam refer to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, the Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi who has appeared in the person of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad -the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, and the holy Khalifas who have succeeded him. God says in the Holy Quran:

“O you who believe, obey Allah, and obey His Messenger and those who are in authority among you.”

(4:60)

The Holy Prophet has said:

“He who obeys me obeys Allah, and he who disobeys me disobeys Allah, and he who obeys my appointee obeys me and he who disobeys my appointee disobeys me.”

(Bukhari)

Religious unity depends upon spiritual discipline.

## GUIDE POSTS

### THE BLESSED LIFE

(Bashir Ahmad-Qrhard)

A blessed life is one bestowed with divine favours. Every one enjoys blessings to a lesser or greater extent for which they should be grateful but too many people take them for granted and express no gratitude for them. Health, wealth, relatives and friends are but a few of them. When we compare our lot with those less fortunate than ourselves we begin to realize and appreciate the blessings we possess. We are reminded in the Quran:

“And surely thy Lord is gracious to mankind, but most of them are not grateful.”

On the other hand the Quran directs:

“Be grateful to Allah for whoso is grateful, is grateful for the good of his own soul.”

(Quran 31:13)

The Quran also warns:

“The ungrateful never prosper.” (28:83)

“Thus do We requite every ungrateful person.”(35:37)

Material blessings, however, are not enough to create a truly blessed life. The truly blessed are those who find blessings within. They dwell in the presence of God and He within them. They are suffused with heavenly light and they shed it wherever they go. Their conduct is sublime and their hearts glow with the warmth of divine love. Their happiness is not dependent on material possessions but rather on their relationship with God and their experience of His presence which animates every cell of the body with spiritual joy. The spirit of holiness pervades their lives. The following lines describe to some extent the charisma of the truly blessed:

**WHO ARE THE BLESSED?**

Those who have kept their sympathies awake,  
 And scattered joy for more than custom's sake;  
 Steadfast and tender in the hour of need,  
 Gentle in thought, benevolent in deed;  
 Whose looks have power to make dissensions cease;  
 Whose smile is pleasant and whose words are peace;  
 They who have lived as harmless as the dove,  
 Teachers of truth and ministers of love;  
 Love for all moral power : all mental grace,  
 Love for the humblest of the human race;  
 Love for the tranquil joy that virtue brings;  
 Love for the Giver of all lovely things  
 Who wait in peace their hour of final rest;  
 These are those who are truly blessed.

Islam teaches that all Prophets of God are sinless. They are perfect exemplars of the teachings they preach. God addresses the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) in the Quran:

“O perfect man.” (20:2)

“Thou dost possess perfect moral excellences.” (68:5)

Again:

“Verily you have in the Prophet of Allah an excellent model.”  
 (33:22)

The following is a moving prayer of the Holy Prophet.

“O Allah, diffuse light into my heart and ears;  
 Diffuse light on my eyes and on my tongue;  
 Diffuse light on my right and on my left;  
 Diffuse light above me and under me;  
 Engulf me in Thy light.

Hazrat Ayesha — wife of the Holy Prophet — said about him:

“He was an embodiment of the Holy Quran.”

The character of the Holy Prophet and his magnetic influence in transforming lives may be gained from the words of Jafar-al-Tayyar when he introduced Islam to the King of Abyssinia:

“We were an ignorant and misled people; we worshipped images, ate dead bodies, were lewd; ill-treated our neighbours, and the strong despoiled the weak of their property. We had long been in this condition when God sent a Prophet to us from amongst our own people, whose noble birth, truthfulness, honesty and righteousness were well known to us. He called us to God, to worship Him, only, and to leave off adoring the idols and stones before which our fathers and forefathers had knelt. He ordered us to obey God alone, and not to make anyone His equal. He made it incumbent upon us to offer prayer, to give alms, to fast when not sick or travelling. he commanded us to speak the truth, to give back safe and whole what is entrusted to us by others, to be affectionate to our relatives and kind to our neighbours, to shun wicked acts, licentiousness and bloody quarrels. He told us not to bear false witness, not to deprive orphans of their property, not to impute bad motives, nor to be suspicious of women. We have taken his advice and admonitions to heart; have believed in his truthfulness; have followed all the orders which God had made known to us; and have believed in the Unity of God. We abstain from what is forbidden and confine ourselves to what is permitted. Our people are infuriated at this change in our belief, thoughts and actions. They have persecuted us, and done their best to force us back to the idols, images and wicked acts which we have left. When it became impossible to live among them, and when persecution and torture became unbearable, we left our country, and , believing you to be a tolerant king, have taken refuge in your dominions.”

The following description of the Holy Prophet by Syed Ameer Ali in his book ‘The Spirit of Islam’ is most inspiring:

“We have seen this wonderful man as an orphan child who had never known a father’s love, bereft in infancy of a mother’s care, his early life so full of pathos, growing up

from a thoughtful childhood to a still more thoughtful youth. His youth as pure and true as his boyhood; his manhood as austere and devout as his youth. His ear ever open to the sorrows and sufferings of the weak and the poor; his heart ever full of sympathy and tenderness towards all God's creatures. He walks so humbly and so purely, that men turn round and point; 'There goes al-Amin, the true, the upright, the trusty.' A faithful friend, a devoted husband; a thinker intent on the mysteries of life and death, on the responsibilities of human actions, the end and aim of human existence he sets himself to the task of reclaiming and reforming a nation, nay, a world, with only one loving heart to comfort and solace him. Baffled, he never falters; beaten, he never despairs. He struggles on with indomitable spirit to achieve the work assigned to him. His purity and nobleness of character, his intense and earnest belief in God's mercy, bring round him ultimately many a devoted heart; and when the moment of the severest trial comes, like the faithful mariner, he remains steadfast at his post until all his followers are safe, and then betakes himself to the hospitable shore: such we have seen him. We shall see him now the king of men, the ruler of human hearts, chief, lawyer, and supreme magistrate, and yet without any self-exaltation, lowly and humble. His history henceforth is merged in the history of the commonwealth of which he was the centre. Henceforth the Preacher who with his own hands, mended his clothes, and often went without bread, was mightier than the mightiest sovereigns of the earth."

Let a non-Muslim now give his testimony. Sir William Muir was a nineteenth century orientalist and a dedicated Christian missionary. After describing the spiritual torpor in which Arabia was steeped in at the time of the advent of the Holy Prophet, he writes in his book 'Life of Mohomet':

"Their religion was a gross idolatry, and their faith rather the dark superstitious dread of unseen beings, whose good will they sought to propitiate and whose displeasure to avert, than the belief in an overruling Providence. The life to come and retribution for good and evil were, as motives of actions, practically unknown. Thirteen years before the



Hijra (July 2, A.D. 622), Mecca lay lifeless in this debased state. What a change had those thirteen years now produced! A band of several hundred persons had rejected idolatry, adopted the worship of One God and surrendered themselves implicitly to the guidance of what they believed to be a revelation from Him, praying to the Almighty with frequency and fervour, looking for pardon to His mercy and striving to follow after good.

They now lived under a constant sense of the Omnipotent power of God and of His Providential care over the minutest of their concerns. In all the gifts of nature, in every relation of life, at each turn of their affairs, individual or public, they saw His hand. And above all, the new existence in which they exulted was regarded as the mark of special grace, while the unbelief of their blinded fellow-citizens was the hardening stamp of reprobation. Muhammad was the minister of life to them, the source under God of their newborn hopes, and to him they yielded an implicit submission."

The life of the Holy Prophet was the most blessed life of the highest order. Constantly he was in converse with his Creator and constantly minute by minute he manifested the attributes of God in his blessed personality. He brought life to the dead, made saints out of sinners and brought about a spiritual revolution not only in the acceptance of beliefs by an erstwhile godless and degenerated nation, but also by a spiritual transformation in their personal conduct. How sweet was the perfume of his heavenly fragrance and how beautifully has he been extolled in a poem by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad - The Promised Messiah and Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam:

"What a noble man! What a comely man;  
His breath smells like the breath of flowers.  
God is visible in his face,  
Such are his virtues, such is his case.  
That is why he is loved. Indeed his virtues demand  
That he should be loved to the exclusion of all.  
Easy of access, noble, bounteous, friend of the God-fearing.

And he excels all in excellence and nobility,  
In glory and the beauty of the soul.  
Muhammad is the best of creatures,  
The soul of the nobles, the elect of the elect.  
All noble virtues have found their limit in him.  
The blessings of all times have found their place in him.  
By God! Muhammad is next to God,  
And through him alone can we reach God.  
He is the pride of the pious, the holies.  
He is the pride of the men of virtue.  
He excels all those who were honoured before him.  
Indeed excellence is a matter of virtue and not of time.

The blessed life is the noblest and most rewarding of all vocations. It is the fruit of righteous living which may be sampled by all who search and strive for it through prayer, good works and behaviour.

### POWER OF OPTIMISM

Do not permit a single adverse feeling to continue for a second. Change the mind at once by turning your attention upon something that will make you feel better. Resolve to feel the way you want to feel under all circumstances, and you will gradually develop the power to do so. Persist in feeling cheerful, hopeful, optimistic and strong. Place yourself on the bright side and the strong side of everything that transpires in your life, and you will constantly gain power — that will invariably be in your favour.

(Christian D. Lawson)

# SOURCES OF SIRAT

(4)

(Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad)

## BOOKS ON HADITH

The literature on traditions is divisible into three great classes:

- (1) Al-Hadith, or what may be termed as theological traditions.
- (2) Al-Tafsir, or Exegesis.
- (3) Al-Sirat and al-Tarikh, or Biography and History.

Hadith is a general name for those collections of traditions, the main significance of which is theological, but which may also contain some historical and exegetic traditions. On the whole, such traditions reach back to the Holy Prophet. The last narrator attributes a word or deed to the Prophet himself, or the Prophet acquiesces in somebody else's word or deed, which word or deed the Prophet heard or saw. But sometimes the traditions stop with the Companions of the Prophet. They are then called Athar. Works of Hadith were mainly composed in the second, third or fourth century of the Hijra. They do not, however, all have the same status or authority; for, not all traditionists have observed the same rigorous standards of criticism and caution. The following are the better known works on Hadith with brief comments on their relative value:-

1. Sahih al-Bukhari by Imam Muhammad b. Isma'il al-Bukhari (b. 194. d. 256 A.H.)

Commonly regarded as the most reliable of all works on Hadith. Bukhari examined altogether 600,000 traditions, and out of these he selected only 4,000 for his collection. He was a very pious and righteous person and observed the utmost caution and care in his work. His standard of criticism is undoubtedly the highest and the book is rightly known as occupying a position second only to the Quran. Imam Bukhari was born at Bukhara in Central Asia and travelled far and wide before he returned to his native town for compiling his great collection of Hadith.

2. Sahih Muslim, by Imam Muslim b. al-Hajjaj (b. 204, d. 261 A.H.), comes next to Bukhari but is considered superior to all the other works on Hadith. A tradition agreed to by Muslim and Bukhari is regarded as the most reliable, being technically known as *Muttafaq Alaih* i.e., the one agreed upon). Muslim was born at Nishapur in Khurasan, a province in North-East Persia.

3. Jami' al-Tirmidhi, by Abu 'Isa Muhammad b. 'Isa al-Tirmidhi (b. 209, d. 279 A.H.). Abu 'Isa who was a pupil of Bukhari, was born at Tirmidh, a town on the eastern bank of the Oxus in Central Asia.

4. Sunan Abu Daud, by Abu Daud Sulaiman b. al-Asha'th (b. 22, d. 275 A.H.). Abu Daud belonged to the Province of Sijistan in Central Asia, but his place of birth is not quite known. Some authorities assert that he was born near Basra in a small village called Sijistan, but the people of Basra deny the existence of such a village. He died at Basra.

5. Sunan al-Nasai, by Ahmad b. Sh'aib al-Nasai (b. 215, d. 306 A.H.). The author was born at Nasa in Khurasan and died at Mecca.

6. Sunan Ibn Majah, by Muhammad b. Yazid Ibn Majah (b. 209, d. 273 A.H.). Ibn Maja was born at Qazwin in Persia and, like his contemporaries, travelled far and wide in search of traditions.

The last four books, along with the first two, constitute the Sihah Sitta i.e., the Six Sound Ones. All of them are regarded as reliable, their order of reliability being indicated by their order in the above list.

7. Muwatta Imam Malik, by Imam Malik b. Anas (b. 95, d. 179 A.H.).

This work is of a high order, some regarding it even as reliable as Bukhari. But the style of the greater part of this work has turned it into more of a book on Fiqh (or Muslim Jurisprudence) than on Hadith. It has not, therefore, been classed with the other Sihah, although, in respect of its intrinsic merit, it is second to none among the various Hadith collections.

Imam Malik is one of the four Imams, i.e. pillars or leaders of the Science of Fiqh. He was born in Medina, the city of the Prophet, and

came in closest touch with the early leaders of Muslim thought.

8. Musnad Imam Abu Hanifa, by Imam N'uman b. Thabit Abu Hanifa (b80, d. 150 A.H.). Abu Hanifa was born at Kufa in Iraq and died imprisoned at Baghdad, where he had been confined by the order of the Khalifa al-Mansur for refusing to become a Qadi. Abu Hanifa occupies the highest position and has the largest number of followers among the four Imams of Fiqh, being generally known as the Great Imam. He is not known as a collector of traditions, nor did he turn to this line of study, except as a preparation for his main work on Jurisprudence. His two pupils, Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad, also occupy a very high position.

9. Musnad Imam al-Shafi'i, by Imam Muhammad b. Idris al-Shafi'i (b. 105, d. 204 A.H.)

The author who was born at Ghazza in Syria and was taken to Mecca as an infant, is yet another of the four Imams of Fiqh and his work on Hadith is a prolegomena to his work on Fiqh.

10. Musnad Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, by Imam Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Hanbal (b. 164, d. 242 A.H.).

The author, the latest of the four Imams of Fiqh, is also distinguished for his remarkable collection of Hadith, the largest perhaps of all collections, the general standard of which, however, is not as high as that of the Sihah. He was born at Baghdad, the centre of Muslim culture in those days.

11. Sunan al-Darimi, by 'Abdullah b. 'Abdur Rahman al-Darimi (b. 181, d. 255 A.H.).

He belonged to Samarqand and has a fairly high position, but only after the Sihah.

12. Mu'jam al-Kabir wal-Ausat wal-Saghir, by Sulaiman b. Ahmad al-Tabarani (b. 260, d. 360 A.H.). He was born at Tabariya in Syria, but later settled in Isfahan, where he died at the good old age of one hundred years. He is a well-known traditionist.

13. Sunan al-Darqutni, by 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Darqutni (b. 306, d. 385 A.H.).

The author was born in a quarter of Baghdad known as Dar ul-Qutn, i.e. the house of cotton. He is a traditionist of good repute who also has a book on Asma-ur-Rijal to his credit.

14. Mustadrak al-Hakim, by Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad b. 'Abdulla al-Hakim (b. 321. d. 405 A.H.).

The author, who belonged to Nishapur, was very learned man, who observed a fairly high standard of criticism in his compilation.

15. Shu'ab ul-Imam and Dalail-un-Nabuwwa, etc. comprising miscellaneous works on Tradition, theological as well as historical, by Ahmad b. Husain al-Baihiqi (b. 384, d. 458 A.H.).

This author also is a well-known traditionist, who wielded a versatile pen. He was a pupil of al-Hakim and was born at Baihiq, a small village near Nishapur.

Besides the above there have been other collectors of traditions, who, notwithstanding the distance which separates some of them from early Islam, have collected traditions, the chain of which goes back to the Holy Prophet or to his Companions, but I have enumerated above the names of the better known traditionists and their works. Of this list, the collections last mentioned include traditions characteristic of the later traditionists — comparatively weak and not as trustworthy as the Sihah but still containing fairly-spread grains of truth. I have, however, mentioned the more important works on Hadith which an historian can safely use for reconstructing the Life of the Holy Prophet and the early History of Islam. And, as I have said before, the collections of Hadith are far more reliable than those collections of traditions, the primary significance of which is biographical or historical, viz., books on Sirat or biography. Compared with the authentic works on Hadith such as Bukhari, Muslim and Muwatta, the historical works have very little value indeed, and an impartial historian will not hesitate — unless there are very strong reasons for doing so — to reject all historical traditions that clash with the traditions contained in books like the collections of Bukhari, Muslim, Muwatta, Tirmidhi and Abu Daud, and he will also generally prefer other traditions of Hadith to historical traditions. This very important point has unfortunately been lost sight of by most European biographers — they have based their work mainly on the works of Sirat, ignoring almost all relevant matter occurring incidentally in the books of Hadith, or for that matter in the Holy Quran itself. The mistake was perhaps unavoidable: for, whereas the books on Sirat and biography contain well-arranged narratives composed and systematized in the form of history, one has to search for the scattered grains of history in the Holy Quran and the Hadith, in which historical facts have been mentioned not as part of biography or history but as material bearing on morals, theology and jurisprudence. This deplorable oversight is responsible for many errors

in the works of European writers.

### SUNNA AND HADITH

Something about Sunna would be in place here. The common tendency to regard Sunna and Hadith as synonymous term is quite mistaken, for the two are quite different. Hadith is the name given to those verbal (oral or written) reports of the sayings and doings of the Holy Prophet, which the Companions and Successors' successors to later times, and which doctors of Hadith, after the criticism, reduced to a systematic form. Sunna, on the other hand, is the name given to the Prophet's practice, which has been transmitted from generation to generation, not through any verbal reports, but through the collective and continuous practice of the believers. For instance, the Holy Quran teaches about Namaz, the institution of Muslim worship. Now whether or not the Holy Prophet gave any determinate instructions to the companions on this subject, there can be no doubt that the details of Namaz were imparted to them effectively by the Prophet's own living example. This example was spread over the lifetime of the Prophet, and this the Companions constantly observed. Its value was enhanced by the Prophet's own vigilance. So the Companions learned the details of Namaz from the Prophet's own daily example. The Companions imparted it to the Successors, the Successors to their successors and so on.

Throughout this process, practice was transmitted as practice and, for all we know, was transmitted without much or any verbal instruction. Other institutional practices of Islam have been transmitted to subsequent generations in the same way. The primary source of Islam, therefore, turn out to be the Holy Quran and the Sunna; and these have been co-ordinated from the very beginning. Hadith, as distinct from Sunna, turns out to be only a secondary source of Islam, the main function of it being to provide philosophical explanation or incidental evidence for the Sunna; it is not a primary source. It is a mistake, therefore, to regard Hadith and Sunna as the same thing. I should not have pointed this out but for a tendency to ignore the genesis and the distinctive importance of the Sunna and to think, in consequence, that the institutions of Islam are founded on sources that came into existence about 200 years after its rise.

### BOOKS ON TAFSIR

The second division of works on tradition is devoted to Tafsir or Exegesis of the Holy Quran. As this division is concerned with the interpretation of the Holy Quran, it often tends to be philosophical

and speculative. The standard of criticism which it observes is, like that of historical traditions, somewhat lower than that of theological traditions. But it is, nevertheless, a useful collection which can be turned to good account by writers on biography and history. The more important works on the exegesis of the Holy Quran containing the sayings of the Prophet and the Companions are the following:

1. Tafsir Ibn Jarir, in 30 vols., by Imam Abu Ja'far Muhammad Ibn Jarir al-Tabari (b. 224, d. 310 A.H.).

Of all the exegetical works on tradition this is the earliest and the most comprehensive. But a number of weak traditions have found their way into it.

2. Tafsir Ibn Kathir, in 4 vol., by Hafiz Imaduddin Isma'il b. Omar Ibn Kathir (b. 700, d. 774 A.H.).

This work is commonly regarded as very reliable and authentic. According to Zurqani, himself a critic of no mean repute, there is not another work like it.

3. Al-Durr ul-Manthur fil Tafsir bil Mathur, in 6 vol., by Shaikh Jalaluddin Abdur Rahman b. Abi Bakr al-Suyuti (b. 849, d. 911 A.H.).

This is a later work which, though comprehensive, contains material of very unequal value.

### EARLIER WORKS ON BIOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

The third division of works on tradition is devoted to biography, history and early wars of Islam. The aim of these works is to bring together traditions about the Life of the Holy Prophet, the wars and the earlier History of Islam. But, as I have pointed out already, the standard of these works is inferior to that of works on theology. The purpose which inspired their original collection was to make historical material safe and secure before it was destroyed by the ravage of time. Their standard of criticism was not so strict, because their authors assumed that with material made safe and secure, its criticism could be left to later generations. Indeed, with the Holy Quran and the Hadith in our possession, such a task is not difficult. The earlier works of this division, which also includes works on the Geography and History of Arabia, are the following:-

1. Kitab ul-Maghazi, by Muhammad b. Muslim b. Shihab al-Zuhri (b. 51, d. 124 A.H.). This is probably the earliest work on the Life of



the Holy Prophet and the earlier wars. Imam Zuhri, himself a Tabi'i (i.e. a Successor), had met many Companions, and had heard from their lips accounts of the earlier History of Islam. He had a most balanced mind, and was very learned and well-informed. Unfortunately his work has perished. References to it, however, are to be found in many other works. Traditions reported orally by him are also recorded in many works and are usually regarded as very reliable. Zuhri was a native of Medina.

2. Al-Maghazi, by Musa b. 'Uqba (d. 141 A.H.), one of the most distinguished of Imam Zuhri's pupils. He had met some Companions, was a most careful writer and never accepted anything until he had fully weighed and considered it. Imam Malik took lessons in Hadith from him. Musa was a freed slave and lived at Medina.
3. Sirat Ibn Ishaq, by Muhammad b. Ishaq (d. 151 A.H.), another pupil of Imam Zuhri and a recognised authority on Biography. Ibn Ishaq was a native of Medina. His work has been commonly regarded as the source-book on the Life of the Prophet and on the early Muslim wars. Later historians mostly draw on this work. Some people have doubts about his reliability, but these do not seem justified. Only, he is an historian by temperament. His standard of criticism is not as high as that of Hadith. That is why Imam Bukhari has not drawn on his Hadith at all, but has drawn freely on his History. His work is not available, but Ibn Hisham has reproduced most of it in his own work.
4. Sirat Ibn Hisham, by Abu Muhammad 'Abdul Malik b. Hisham (d. 213 A.H.). Ibn Hisham originally belonged to Basra but migrated later to Egypt, where he died in the year 213 or 218 A.H. He was a great historian whose reliability is commonly acknowledged. His work, based mostly on Ibn Ishaq's, is both comprehensive and complete. Of all the works on the Life of the Prophet, his is the best known and the most popular.
5. Kitab ul-Maghazi, by Muhammad b. 'Omar al-Waqidi (b. 130, d. 207 A.H.). Wadiqi was a resident of Medina but later settled down in Baghdad, where he served as Qadi for a number of years. A very widely informed historian, but being indifferent to truth and falsehood, he is condemned by all authorities as quite unreliable and unauthentic. I am appending a separate note about him.

volumes, contains a mass of detailed information. The first two and a half volumes are devoted to the Holy Prophet, the rest to the Companions. Stripped of Wadiqi's influence which, unfortunately, is not small, this work should possess great value and validity. Ibn S'ad also was a Medinite.

7. *Tarikh ul-Umam wal-Muluk*, by Abu Ja'far Ibn Jarir al-Tabari (b. 224, d. 133 A.H.). This is a work not on biography but on history, but it includes a detailed account of the Prophet's life. Tabari was born at a place called Amul in Tabaristan and died in Baghdad. He is one of the best known and perhaps the most reliable of Muslim historians. His work, in twelve volumes, is a most comprehensive work on History. Besides collecting traditions from Ibn Ishaq, Wadiqi, and Ibn S'ad, he has added many traditions of his own. He has left on the whole a very worthy collection of material on history and biography.

8. *Shamail ul-Tirmidhi*, by Abu 'Isa Muhammad bin 'Isa al-Tirmidhi (b. 209, d. 279 A.H.).

His work on Hadith has already been mentioned. This work contains personal details about the Prophet, and describes in a brief but beautiful manner his personal appearance, habits, and character. Tirmidhi, who was a pupil of Bukhari, is one of the great collectors of Hadith.

9. *Kitab ul-Ma'arif*, by 'Abdullah b. Muslim b. Qutaiba (b. 213, d. 276 A.H.).

This is a general work on history; accounts of the Holy Prophet and of the more distinguished Companions are included.

10. *Futuh al-Buldan*, by Abu J'afar Ahmad b. Yahya b. Jabir al-Baladhuri (d. 279 A.H.).

This popular work contains an account of the victories of the Holy Prophet and his Successors. Baladhuri is a well-known historian.

11. *Kitab ul-Kharaj*, by Qadi Abu Yusuf Ya'qub b. Ibrahim (d. 182 A.H.). Abu Yusuf was a well-known legist, and one of the most distinguished pupils of Imam Abu Hanifa, founder of the Hanifi School of Muslim jurisprudence. His work gives an authoritative account of the various taxes which the Holy Prophet and his Khalifas levied upon populations under their rule.

12. *Muruj uz-Dhahab*, by Abul Hassan 'Ali b. Husain al-Mas'udi (d. 346 A.H.).

This book begins with a history of the people of the world and passes on to a history of Arabia right up to the Abbaside period. Mas'udi is a writer of great repute.

13. *Tajarib al-Umam*, by Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Miskawaih (d. 421 A.H.).

This is a book on general history, beginning with the period just following the time of the great deluge of Noah and containing a brief sketch of the Holy Prophet's life, finally ending with the Abbaside period. Ibn Miskawaih was an intelligent writer and, although his work is mainly based on the collections of earlier historians, he has been able to bring to light some new phases of Muslim History.

14. *Tarikh Makka*, by Abul Walid Muhammad b. Abdul Karim al-Azraqi (d.233 A.H.)

Contains an historical account of Mecca, the Ka'ba and the Quraish.

15. *Sifatu Jazirat il-Arab*, by Abu Muhammad Hasan b. Ahmad b. Ya'qub al-Hamadani, popularly known as Ibn ul-Haik (d. 334 A.H.)

One of the earliest and most reliable Geographies of Arabia.

These works constitute the historical sources of the Life of the Holy Prophet and of the earlier History of Islam. All later works derive material from them. Not all of them, however, are works on biography and history. But their subject-matter is closely connected with the Life of the Prophet and the early History of Islam. Of proper works on biography that still exist, there are only four, viz., *Sirat Ibn Hisham*; *Kitab-ul-Maghazi* by Waqidi; *Tabaqat Ibn S'ad*; and *Tarikh ut-Tabari*. Of these four, Waqidi is universally condemned. We are, therefore, left with only three, viz., *Ibn Hisham*, *Ibn S'ad* and *Tabari*. There is no doubt that next to the Holy Quran and the Books of Hadith, biographical material is to be derived mainly from these three sources.

#### WAQIDI

I might have spared this separate note on Waqidi, but for the

amazing importance which some European biographers of the Prophet have attached to this historian. Waqidi lived from 130 to 207 A.H. and there is no doubt that, judging from the times during which he lived, his position is no less fortunate than that of any other biographer of the Prophet. But this fact cannot alter his personal qualities and character, and it is but a sad truth that, in spite of his learning, Waqidi is an utterly untrustworthy writer, all authorities unanimously declaring him to be a liar and a fabricator. This is not to say that all his traditions are fabrications. The most hardened liar does not always lie, and many things he might say would yet be true. But as Waqidi was given to lying, he cannot command our confidence. He was no doubt very learned; few historians have been as well-informed as he. But it seems as though learning itself had corrupted him, so that instead of confessing ignorance about matters of which he knew nothing, he would proceed to construct them out of his own imagination. Truly has one authority said of him:-

“Waqidi is always remarkable, whether he tells a truth or a lie.”

Unfortunately, the powers of elaboration and graphic description which should condemn him as a scientific biographer, seem to have endeared him to some European writers. It does not seem to concern them whether Waqidi has regard for truth or not, whether he is at all as careful and cautious as a true historian should be, or whether he is not a clever and voluble writer who constructs much and reports little. They are infatuated by his concreteness and realism, and remain unimpressed by the strongest testimony against him. All traditions according to them have equal claims, and they are their best judges. The portentous care and industry with which Muslim savants have collected the life-histories of narrators, and provided the world with an almost unerring instrument of criticism, does not seem to impress them at all. Nobody of course can stop them from pleasing themselves as they like, but to give the reader some idea of the kind of authority Waqidi is, I append here the opinions which well-known authorities of acknowledged integrity and judgement have expressed about Waqidi:

(a) Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal (b. 161, d. 241 A.H.), says:

“Waqidi is a great liar who used to distort traditions.”

(b) Abu Ahmad 'Abdullah b. Muhammad, known as Ibn 'Adi (b. 277, d. 365 A.H.) says:-

“Waqidi's traditions are not reliable and the fault springs from his own character.”

(c) Abu Hatim Muhammad b. Idris (b. 195, d.277 A.H.) says:-

“Waqidi fabricates traditions himself.”

(d) ‘Ali b. ‘Abdullah b. Ja’far, known as Ibn ul-Madini (b.161, d.234 A.H.) says:-

“Wadiqi used to cook false traditions. I do not consider him reliable from any point of view.”

(e) Imam ‘Ali b. Muhammad al-Darqutni (b.306, d.385 A.H.) says:-

“Waqidi’s traditions are weak.”

(f) Ishaq b. Ibrahim, known as Ibn Rahwaih (b. 161, d. 238 A.H.), says:-

“Waqidi is one of the fabricators of Hadith”.

(g) Imam Bukhari (b.194, d.256 A.H.), says:-

“Waqidi is not one of whom we may accept any traditions.”

(h) Imam Yahya b. Mu’in (b.185, d.233 A.H.), says:-

“Waqidi deserves no respect. He used to mutilate and distort traditions.”

(i) Imam Shafi’i (b.150, d.204 A.H.), says:-

“Waqidi’s books are without exception a mass of falsehood. He used to forge authorities for his traditions.”

(j) Imam Abu Daud Sijistani (b.202, d.275 A.H.), says:-

“I shall not accept Waqidi’s traditions at all; he used to fabricate.”

(k) Imam Nasai (b.215, d. 303 A.H.), says:-

“Waqidi was one of those liars whose lies are patent and known to everybody.”

(l) Muhammad b. Bashshar Bundar (b. 167, d.252 A.H.), says:-

“I have not known a bigger liar than Waqidi.”

(m) Imam Nawawi (d.674 A.H.), says:-

“All authorities are agreed that Waqidi is a reporter of weak traditions.”

(n) ‘Allama Dhahabi (d. 748 A.H.), says:

“All authorities are agreed in regarding Waqidi as feeble.”

(o) Qadi Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Ibrahim, known as Ibn Khallikan (d. 681, A.H.), says:-

“Waqidi has been judged feeble and has been much criticised.”

(p) ‘Allama Zurqani (d. 1122 A.H.), says:-

“When Waqidi is alone in reporting a tradition, he is not believed; what would you then think of a tradition which he reports in contradiction to others ”

This is the considered opinion which Muslim savants of acknowledged repute and unimpeached integrity many of them being Waqidi’s contemporaries — have expressed of him. What our Western friends would still think of their favourite authority, I leave to them to judge. I do not at all mean to suggest that everything which Waqidi reports is false. Probably many of his reports are true. But an authority whose integrity has been so gravely impugned, cannot have much respect from us; he will have to be dismissed in cases in which he is alone in reporting anything, more so in cases in which he is in conflict with other reporters.

Two motives have been assigned for Waqidi’s fabrications. Firstly, it is thought that he was too imaginative and prided himself on giving the very minute details of incidents. This coupled with his lack of scruples often made him trespass the bounds of truth. Secondly, it is said that he was a favourite in the Court of Baghdad and, being untruthful and addicted to lying, he did not hesitate to fabricate traditions to provide his masters with religious sanctions for some of their un-Islamic activities. Be that as it may, there is no denying the fact that Waqidi is universally condemned as an inventor of false traditions and as such he cannot be accepted as an authority of any kind.

Among original authorities on biography, the only works, therefore, are those of Ibn Hisham, Ibn S'ad, and Tabari. I do not at all suggest that everything recorded by them is unquestionably true, but only that they are on the whole reliable, though even they may have occasionally reported wrongly owing to want of proper criticism or some defect in the chain of narrators. But, leaving aside the Quran and the books of Hadith, these are undoubtedly the main sources of the Life of the Prophet, whatever use we may still make of other works.

## LATER AUTHORITIES

Other works on biography and history, however comprehensive and useful, cannot be treated as original sources of our subject. For, they themselves have been mainly derived from the three works which I have mentioned above. We can, therefore, only quote them for purposes of collaboration or convenience. As for myself, I have made only such use of them in my *Life of the Prophet*. I have often found it convenient to quote one later authority instead of many earlier ones, but in all such cases I have satisfied myself that the traditions quoted from the later works are to be found in the earlier ones. Still, the later works are of great value. They embody a tremendous amount of industry. In them have been brought together traditions from the original works on Hadith and History. In many cases they record traditions from works which have since perished, so that — within certain limits of course — they can take the place of earlier but extinct works.

The following, out of these later works, may be mentioned:-

1. *Al-Raud al-Unuf*, by 'Abdur Rahman b. 'Abdulla al-Suhaili (b. 508, d. 581 A.H.).

A work in two volumes designed as a commentary on Ibn Hisham. A very reliable and authentic work.

2. *Tarikh-ul-Kamil* by Hafiz Ibn Athir al-Jazari (b. 555, d. 630 A.H.). A work in twelve volumes mostly derived from Tabari, and well edited. The biographical part relating to the life of the Holy Prophet is contained in two volumes.

3. *Tarikh-ul-Khamis fi Ahwal Anfas al-Nafis*, by Husain b. Muhammad bin Hasan al-Diyarbakri (d. 966 A.H.), in two volumes. Contains well arranged matter and is fairly comprehensive.

4. *Insan al-'Uyun fi Sirat al-Amin al-Mamun*, by 'Ali

b. Burhanuddin al-Halabi (b. 975, d. 1044 A.H.). A work in three volumes — popularly known as *Sirt Halabiya* — very comprehensive, but rather ill-arranged.

5. *Sharh Mawahib al-Ludunniya*, by Muhammad b. 'Abdul Baqi b. Yusuf al-Zurqani (d. 1122 A.H.). A work in eight big volumes, all devoted to the Life of the Prophet. Comprehensive, reliable and scholarly. Makes use of theological as well as historical traditions. I should have no hesitation in acclaiming it as the most comprehensive and, on the whole, the most reliable Life of the Holy Prophet in Arabic.

6. *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, by Abu 'Abdullah Yaqut b. 'Abdullah al-Hamvi (d. 623 A.H.), in eight volumes. This book is full of detailed and useful information on geography.

Besides these, we have the following works on the Life of the Prophet:-

- (1) *Sharaf ul-Mustafa Naisapuri* (406 A.H.)
- (2) *Sirat Ibn 'Abdulbarr* (463 A.H.)
- (3) *Sharaf ul-Mustafa Ibn Jauzi* (597 A.H.)
- (4) *Sirat Ibn Abi Tayi* (630 A.H.)
- (5) *Iktifa* (634 A.H.)
- (6) *Sirat Kazruni* (694 A.H.)
- (7) *Sirat Dimyati* (705 A.H.)
- (8) *Sirat Khilati* (708 A.H.)
- (9) *Tarikh Abdulfida* (732 A.H.)
- (10) *'Uyun al-Athar* (734 A.H.)
- (11) *Sirat Mughlatai* (762 A.H.)
- (12) *Nur al-Nibras Sharh 'Uyun al-Athar* (841 A.H.)
- (13) *Kash ul-Litham* (855 A.H.)
- (14) *Mawahib al-Ludunniya* (923 A.H.)

Some of these have perished and such as have survived, have little value compared with the works I have already mentioned.

## SUMMARY

To summarize, the sources of the Life of the Holy Prophet and of the early History of Islam are the following:-

- (1) The Holy Quran.
- (2) The Hadith.
- (3) Works on Tafsir or exegesis which record the Prophet's own interpretations of the Quran, as well as those of the Companions.



(4) Works on the Life of the Prophet and on early Muslim wars.

The relative value of these sources is indicated by the order in which they have been put in the above list. By far the most reliable is the Holy Quran, about the authority of which there can be no question at all. Its revelation was spread over the twenty-three years of the Prophet's ministry, and was recorded as it was received. It is the solution of all difficulties connected with the Life of the Prophet and the early History of Islam. Next to the Quran is Hadith, in the collection of which the greatest possible care has been taken but which, nevertheless, cannot have the authority of the Quran; particularly as feeble traditions have also found their way into it. Next to Hadith are those traditions whose primary significance is exegetical. They provide the setting and the environment in which portions of the Quran were revealed, also reports of what the Holy Prophet himself said to enlighten the Companions on the meaning of those portions. But here also a good many feeble traditions have crept in. Last of all come works on the Prophet's life and Muslim history, which are indeed the mainstay of the Prophet's biographer. Unfortunately, however, this is the source most infected with feeble traditions. The primary concern of the Prophet's biographer is, therefore, to hold fast to the Quran and the Hadith and never lose sight of them; else he will not succeed in getting to the true spirit and the right significance of the Prophet's Life. We may build up a bony skeleton out of material provided by work on biography and history, but the flesh and blood and, above all, the inner soul can come only from the Quran and the Hadith. And these only would tell us how to put the right bone at the right place.

### THE MAGNANIMOUS MAN

"He is reticent, and somewhat slow of speech, but speaks his mind openly and boldly when occasion calls for it. He overlooks injuries. He is not given to talk about himself or about others; for he does not care that he himself should be praised, or that other people should be blamed. He does not cry about trifles, and craves help from no one."

(Aristotle)

## TRUE HAPPINESS

(Louis of Granada)

*(Louis of Granada was Spain's most popular spiritual writer in the 16th century and was constantly in demand everywhere as a preacher. His books have been translated into twenty-five languages. We produce some extracts from his writings on his viewpoint about True Happiness. -Editor)*

Having seen how wretched and deceitful is the happiness of this world, it remains for us to consider that true happiness can be found only in God. If worldly men understood this well, they would not pursue mundane pleasures as they do.

No creature can enjoy perfect happiness until it attains its ultimate end, that is the last perfection that is due to it according to its nature. Until it arrives at this state, it is necessarily restless and discontented, as is anyone who feels a need for that which he yet lacks. Now what is the ultimate end of man, the possession of which constitutes his complete happiness. Undoubtedly it is God, who is man's first beginning and last end. Moreover, if God alone is man's last end and true happiness, it is impossible for man to find true happiness outside of God. As the glove is made for the hand and the scabbard for the sword, and they serve for no other purpose than for which they were made, so the human heart, created as it is for God, cannot find rest in anything outside of God. In Him alone is it content; without Him it is poor and needy.

In order that you may understand this truth more clearly, consider the needle of a compass. The needle has been touched with a magnet and as a result it always points to the north. Observe how restless this needle is and how it fluctuates until it points to the north. Once this is done, the needle stops and remains fixed. So also, God created man with a natural inclination to Himself, and as long as man is separated from God, he remains restless, even though he possesses all the treasures of the world. But once he has turned to God, he finds repose, as does the needle when it turns north, for in God man finds all his rest. Hence he alone is happy who possesses God, and he will be the closer to true beatitude who is closer to God, they are the more happy, although the world does not understand their happiness.

Much more is required to make a thing perfect than to make it imperfect, for perfection requires that a thing be completely perfect but imperfection requires only one defect. Moreover, perfect happiness requires that man has all that he desires, and if only one thing is missing, this may contribute more to his unhappiness than all the other things to his happiness. I have seen people in high places and with great possessions who inspite of these things were most unhappy because they were made more wretched by the lack of something they yet desired and could not obtain than they were made happy by all that they had. However much a man may have, it will not give him satisfaction as long as he is tormented by a desire for something. It is not the possession of many things that makes a man happy, but the satisfaction and fulfillment of all his desires.

St. Augustine explained this beautifully when he wrote: "To my way of thinking, no man can be called truly happy who has not attained what he truly loves, whatever be the thing that he loves. Neither is he happy who does not love what he possesses, although the thing itself possessed be very good. For he who yet desires something he cannot obtain, remains wretched and tormented; he who desires that which is not worth desiring, deceives himself; and he who does not desire what deserves to be desired, is sick. from this it follows that our happiness consists in the possession and love of the supreme good and apart from this no man can be happy."

If you look upon the grandeur of their state and the splendour of their homes, you will think they are the happiest of men, but if you approach more closely, you will find they are quite different from what they appear to be.

If we cannot find true happiness in this world but only in God, why do we not seek it in Him "Encircle the earth and the sea where you will," says St. Augustine, "Wherever you go, you will be miserable if you do not go to God."

## THE QURAN AND MODERN SCIENCE CONSISTENT OR INCONSISTENT ?

(Ijaz Ahmad Qamar, Ph.D.)

Throughout the history people in various cultures have reflected on nature, attempted to discover its laws and have sought to subjugate and subdue it. Our Holy Scripture, the Quran, enjoins the twin pursuit of reflection (i.e. Science) and mastery over nature (i.e. technology). It says:

“Allah is He Who made it possible for you to acquire mastery over the ocean, thus your craft can go to and from between places with Allah’s command, Allah is He, Who gives you subjection over all that is in heaven and on earth: Herein are Allah’s signs for people who reflect”.

It is worth noting at the outset that in contrast to 250 verses in the Quran which are of legislative character, there are some 750 verses (almost one-eighth of the Book) which exhort people to study nature, to reflect, and to make the best use of reason in search for the ultimate. The Holy Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him, emphasized that the quest for knowledge and sciences is obligatory upon every man and woman. He enjoined to seek knowledge even if they had to travel to China in its search. Here clearly he had scientific rather than religious knowledge in mind.

Maurice Bucaille, a French surgeon and a writer in his perceptive book, *The Bible The Quran And Science*, states various premises. At one place he says that there is not a single verse in the Quran where natural phenomena are described and which contradict what we know for certain from our discoveries in sciences of today.

To this premise may be added another premise. In the whole of Islamic history there has never been an incident like that of Copernicus, Galileo or Bruno. There has been persecution, denunciation, even ex-communication over doctrinal differences, but never for scientific beliefs. As against this, for example, scientific development was opposed in the Christian world for many centuries by the authorities of the time. It is on record that measures were taken

against those who sought to enlarge science. These measures made scientists to go into exile, to avoid being hurt at the stake, unless they recanted, changed their attitude or begged for pardon.

There was a time in the pre-Islamic history when most men and their institutions refused to accept Copernicus's suggestion that earth travelled around the motionless sun and the moon, instead of the other way around. As a result Copernicus's book remained on the prohibited list for 200 years. A century later the Pope of the time had Galileo's books burned and he was sentenced to jail for his scientific assertions. He was threatened to be burnt if he did not recant his theory that the earth revolved around the sun.

In the case of Islam, on the other hand, science and scientists were treated differently. How seriously did early Muslims take up the injunctions of the Quran and of the Holy Prophet, one may ask. Barely 100 years after the death of the Holy Prophet in 632 A.D. the Muslims made it their task not only to master the then known sciences, they also acquired an exclusive ascendancy in the creation of new vistas of sciences which lasted over the next 350 years.

A measure of scientific achievements under Islam is evident in a monumental work entitled *History of Science* by George Sarton. He divides the story of scientific achievement into ages or periods, each period lasting about half a century. With each half century he associates one central figure. Thus 500-400 B. C. is the age of Plato, followed by the half centuries each of Aristotle, of Euclid, of Archimedes and so on. From 600 to 700 A.D. is the Chinese century, and then from about 750 to 1100 A. D. (i.e. 350 years) is the unbroken succession of the ages of men belonging to the culture and the commonwealth of Islam, i.e. Jabir, Khwarizmi, Razi, Masudi, Abul Wafa, Al Biruni, Avicenna, Ibn Ul Haitham and Omar Khayyam. In these 350 years Arabs, Turks, Afghans, Persians, who were chemists, algebraists, clinicians, geographers, mathematicians, physicists and astronomers, held the world stage of Islam. Only after 1100 A.D. the first Western names like Gerard and Roger Bacon begin to appear. However, for another 250 years they share the honours with men of the Islamic commonwealth like Ibn Rushd, Musa bin Maimoun, Nasiruddin Tusi, Ibn Nafis - the man who anticipated Harvey's theory of blood circulation.

In addition to the emphasis on scientific observations and experimentation in the Islamic scriptures and the sayings of the Holy

Prophet, an aspect of reverence for the sciences and scientific enterprise in Islam was the official patronage enjoyed in Islamic countries for these activities. Islamic commonwealth of science cut across nations, and colours and other barriers. Early Muslim society was tolerant of people from its outside. Where Muslim society decayed, science lost its vitality and force. So long as the authorities patronized sciences the torch of science was kept burning. We find the 8th to 12th century of the Christian era was the period of height of Islam. During that period a large number of studies and discoveries were made at Islamic universities. The entire corpus of the then known knowledge was translated in the religious language of Arabic. The remarkable cultural resources (i.e. libraries) were well stocked. The Caliph's library at Cordoba of the then Muslim Spain contained 400,000 volumes of books — a remarkable collection at the time. That is why scholars from all over Europe went to study at Cordoba during that time.

It is surprising to find that there are so many statements in the Quranic text, revealed 14 centuries ago, which refer to diverse subjects and all of them totally in keeping with the modern scientific knowledge. One is wonderstruck when one finds the sheer abundance of the subjects discussed, e.g. the creation, astronomy, the explanation of certain matters concerning earth, the animal and plant kingdoms and human reproduction to name a few. If I had to stop and ask myself: if a man was the author of the Quran, how could he have had written facts in the 7th century A.D. that today are shown to be in keeping with the modern scientific knowledge. Says Maurice Bucaille to whom I referred above. "In my opinion, 'he says, "there is no explanation, there is no special reason why an inhabitant of the Arabian Peninsula should have had scientific knowledge on subjects that were centuries ahead of our own".

Now I come to the specific examples from the Quran which highlight scientific phenomena and are found in concordance with the contemporary knowledge discovered after centuries of research. I will touch upon three areas of scientific endeavours.

#### **CREATION OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH.**

The Quran says, "Say, do you really disbelieve in Him who created the earth in two days? And do you set up equals to Him? That is the Lord of the worlds. He placed therein firm mountains rising above its

surface, and blessed it with abundance, and provided therein its foods in proper measure in four days — alike for all seekers. Then He turned to the heaven, while it was something like smoke, and said to it and to the earth, come ye, both of you in obedience willingly or unwillingly. They said we come willingly. So He completed them in the form of seven heavens in two days, and He revealed to each heaven its function. And we adorned the lowest heaven with lamps for light and provided it with the means for protection. That is the decree of the Mighty, and the All-Knowing". (41: 10-13)

The six periods (two plus four) referred to here cover the formation of the celestial bodies, the earth and the development of the earth until it became inhabitable by human beings. In the case of the earth the events described in the above Quranic verses happened over four periods. One could see in them the four geological periods described by modern science. If we take the sun and its subproduct the earth as an example, science informs us that their formation occurred by a process of condensation of the primary nebula and their separation. This is exactly what the Quran expresses when it refers to the process that produced a fusion and subsequent separation starting from a celestial smoke. So we see the correspondence between the Quran and the facts of science.

The plurality of the heavens expressed in the Quran by number is confirmed by modern science due to the observations astrophysicists have made on the galactic system and their very large numbers. (number seven is used 24 times throughout the Quran for various numerical quantities. It often carries the meaning of many. The Greeks and Romans also used the number seven to mean an undefined idea of plurality.)

Although not all the questions raised by the Quranic verses have been completely confirmed by the scientific data as yet due to lack of research, there is in any case absolutely no opposition between the information in the Quran on the creation and modern knowledge on the formation of the universe.

#### **THE SCIENCE OF ASTRONOMY IN THE QURAN.**

Apart from the verse I quoted there are about 40 verses in the Quran which provide information on astronomy including the nature of the

heavenly bodies (i.e. sun, moon, stars, planets), celestial organizations (i.e. the existence of moon, the sun, orbits) the sequence of day and night, evolution of the heavens and the conquest of space. For the sake of brevity I will just take up the conquest of space which is happening in our day and age of science.

The Quran says:

“O company of Jinn and men! if you have power to break through the confines of the heavens and the earth, then break through them. But you cannot break through except with authority”.(55:34)

This verse has been variously interpreted. My inclination is that this points to the making of rockets, sputniks and spaceships etc. The verse definitely indicates the possibility that men will one day achieve what we today call the conquest of space. The text of the verse predicts not only the penetration through the region of the heavens but also the earth i.e. the exploration of its depths. The other two remarkable verses on this subject read as:

“And even if we opened to them a gate in heaven, and they kept ascending through it, they would surely say, ‘Only our eyes are dazed; rather we are a bewitched people’”.  
(15:15,16)

These verses express the astonishment at the spectacular appearance of the planets and the stars from above entirely different from any thing we could imagine and experience from the earth below. This is exactly how astronauts have experienced the remarkable adventure during space flights around and above the earth.

Here again it is difficult not to be impressed, when comparing the text of the Quran with the data of modern science, by statements that simply cannot be ascribed to the thought of a man (i.e. the Prophet Muhammad) who lived 14 centuries ago. It must be the revelation of the superior Being we call Allah.

## **THE FIELD OF BIOLOGY.**

There are numerous Quranic verses on the origin of life and other details in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, on human reproduction etc.



I will bring out just one verse which is very revealing in dealing with the sources of the constituents of animal milk. It reads as:

“And surely in the cattle too there is a lesson for you. We provide for you drink out of that which is in their bellies from between the faeces and the blood — milk pure and pleasant for those who drink it.” (16:67)

This verse alludes to some subtle processes taking place inside the bellies of animals. A study of these processes of the conversion of grass and other feed which the animals eat into milk in their bellies could not have possibly been done in Prophet Muhammad's time. The present understanding of this concept is the result of the discoveries made in the chemistry and physiology of the digestive system. Once again current research has proven the scientific accuracy of the Quranic revelation.

I will also take the example from the field of human reproduction which eloquently proves the concordance of the Quran and the scientific facts.

Reproduction has always been surrounded by myths and superstitions. How could it be otherwise considering the fact that to understand its complex mechanism one had to possess knowledge of anatomy, embryology, obstetrics, basic sciences had to be founded to nurture physiology and the discovery of the microscope had to be made. All these were not present at the time of the Quranic revelation. Despite this, human reproduction is referred to in dozens of verses of the Quran in various contexts. Its precise mechanism in clearly defined stages is explained in the Quran in an understandable language in strict accordance with what was to be discovered much later.

The Quran says:

“He creates you in the wombs of your mothers formation after formation in three veils of darkness”.(39:6)

Not long ago I came across a news item in the Toronto Globe and Mail with a headline: Embryo Development Described in Koran, University of Toronto Scientist says, according to this story, Dr. Keith Moore, a leading embryologist of the University of Toronto found an accurate description of the human embryo's stage by stage

development in the Quran, which was proposed by western experts in 1940 and later proved in the next 15 years.

Dr. Moore is amazed at the accuracy of the Quranic statements made in the 7th century. He also says that he subsequently examined both the Old and New Testaments but could find no parallel to the Quranic verses. He asserts that the verses along with some sayings of the prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him, help to close the gap between science and religion which had existed for many many years.

Dr. Moore's research was done jointly with Dr. T V N Persaud of the University of Manitoba and Dr. Marshal Johnson of the Jefferson Medical Centre in Philadelphia, U. S. A. These scientists see in the verse quoted above three anatomical layers that protect an infant during the gestation period, the abdominal wall, the uterus itself and the surroundings of the foetus (i.e. placenta, embryonic membranes and amniotic fluid). So in a nutshell the Quranic statements express in simple terms the truth of primordial importance which human beings have taken centuries to discover.

Lastly I must emphasize that in Islam, religion and science have always been considered twin sisters, and why it should be otherwise when to us, the Ahmadi Muslims, the Quranic religion is the word of God and science is the work of God. How could the word and the work of one true God be inconsistent?

If we perceive any inconsistency between the two, it is our faith which guides us what to chose. Here I would like to quote from one of the lectures by Professor Dr. Mohammad Abdus Salam, the only Muslim Noble Laureate in the field of science. He says, "Personally for me, my faith was predicted by the timeless spiritual message of Islam, on matters on which physics is silent. It was given to me by the very first verse of the Holy Quran after the opening chapter:

"This is the Book, wherein there is no doubt, a guidance to God-fearing, who believe in the unseen."

The unseen is beyond the reach of the human ken and this is the limitation of science, which can only be surmounted by unfolding His Supreme knowledge through scientific research by human beings. I conclude with a quote from the Holy Quran which speaks volumes of the eternal wonders in science.

“To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth, verily, Allah is self sufficient, praise worthy, and if all the trees on earth were pens, and the sea was ink, seven seas after it to replenish, yet would the words of thy Lord never be exhausted. Surely thy Lord is Mighty and All Wise.”

### LAWS OF SUCCESS

God says in the Holy Quran:

Verily he truly prospers who purifies himself. (87:15)

O ye who believe! if you do your duty to Allah, He will grant you a distinction. (8:30)

O ye who believe! be steadfast and try to excel in steadfastness and be on your guard and fear Allah that you may prosper. (3:201)

O ye who believe, seek help through perseverance and prayer; surely, Allah is with those who patiently persevere. (2:154)

Everyone has a goal to which he turns his whole attention. Then vie with one another in good works. (2:149)

Verily the most honourable person in the sight of Allah is he who is most righteous. (49:14)

So fear Allah, O men of understanding, that you may prosper. (5:101)

Do good that you may prosper. (22:78)

Guide us on the right path. The path on which those have walked who have received Thy blessings and favours. (1:5-7)

Seek help with patience and prayer. (2:46)

## FROM THE PRESS DESK

### MURDEROUS ATTACKS ON AHMADI MUSLIMS.

An Ahmadi Muslim Mr. Hanif Khan and his son Islam Khan, both of village *Jalalah*, Distt. Sialkot had been charged under sections 298 C (punishable with three years imprisonment) and 295 C (punishable with death). As they were returning from the court in Narowal, shots were fired at them. The injured were taken to Narowal Hospital, but were refused admission. They were then transported to the Civil Hospital Sialkot, some fifty miles away. Initially the authorities there too refused to admit them for treatment.

In *Gambit*, Sind, two persons lured an Ahmadi doctor Zafar Ali into a trap on the pretext that a patient needed attention at some distance away. On the way they fired at him. Fifty five years old doctor was hit in the arm. He ran towards the nearby canal, jumped into it and swam towards the opposite bank, where he lay bleeding for about one and a half hour before a passerby came to his rescue and rushed him to the local hospital.

### SIX MONTHS FOR WRITING:

*"In the Name of Allah, Most Beneficent, ever Merciful".*

An Ahmadi Muslim, Malik Mubarak Ahmad of *Attok* had printed invitation cards for his daughter's wedding on top of which were written "In the name of God. Most Beneficent, Ever Merciful" as is customary to do so on these cards. A case was brought against him in the court of magistrate Malik Tariq Javed. He was sentenced to six months imprisonment.

### AHMADI MUSLIMS DISMISSED FROM THEIR JOBS

1. The Manager of the Quetta Mills, Kotri, Sind Province summoned an Ahmadi Muslim employee, Mr. Naseer Ahmad, in his office recently and told him that they had tolerated the presence of an Ahmadi in their company for too long and it was time for him to leave. He was consequently dismissed. This came after mullahs of the area held a meeting in the city inciting the public against the Ahmadis.

2. Hameedullah Jaskani Baluch, an Ahmadi Muslim from Karachi, had been serving in the Pakistan Air Force as a senior technician for almost thirteen years. His letter of dismissal, NO. AIR HQ 22879/26/ADP (Mng), dated 22nd February, 1988 stated:

“Since you have renounced Islam, you are, therefore, dismissed from service under section 20(1) of P. A.F. Act 1953, on the government directive.”

3. “The President of Pakistan General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq has Sent the case of the dismissal of 328 Qadiani non Muslim, army officers to the Secretary Establishment Division for necessary action. These officers, he maintained, do not believe in *Jihad*, the religious wars. The Director of the President Secretariat, President house Islamabad, Hafiz Khalid Mahmood has sent a memorandum to this effect to the Secretary Information International Majlis Khatme Nabuwat, Maulvi Faqir Muhammad. Earlier the case was sent to the P. S. Department Branch of the General Headquarters, but General Ghulam Mohyuddin returned the case to the President House with the note that the dismissal of Qadiani military officers be sent to the Ministry concerned.” (Daily, Jang, London dated 30th April- 1st May 1988).

#### **FINED FOR WRITING KALIMA ON THE WALL OF HIS HOUSE:**

Mr. Rafiq Ahmad, resident of Rabwah, District Jhang, was sentenced till the rising of the court and fined rupees 200 for writing Kalima i.e. There is none worthy of worship except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, on the walls of his house.

#### **A CASE AGAINST AN AHMADI ADVOCATE:**

Mirza Abdul Haq, an eminent Ahmadi Advocate and Provincial Ameer of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Punjab was charged under section 298C a few days ago as the Kalima ( Declaration of Ahmadi Muslim faith) was found written in his house. Another Ahmadi Muslim, Mr. Rashid Ahmad Khan, was arrested in Sangarh, Sind Province, under section 298 C because the Arabic words“ God is sufficient for his servant” were written on the front of his house.

#### **FIVE AHMADI MUSLIMS CHARGED FOR TAKING PART IN PRAYER.**

Five Ahmadi Muslims, resident of Chak 152, Distt. Sargodha were

charged with the 'crimes' of calling the Azan (call to prayer) and taking part in congregational prayer.

#### **AHMADIYYA MOSQUES BEING ATTACKED IN PAKISTAN:**

According to the latest reports reaching here from Pakistan a police party broke into the Ahmadiyya mosque Khushab, Pakistan, late one evening and removed the Kalima inscription i.e. 'There is none worthy of worship except God, Muhammad is the Messenger of God', from the mosque for the eighth time.

In Gogej, Sind, 200 local mullahs took out a procession and made extremely provocative speeches against the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. Later the local magistrate along with 30-35 mullahs raided the local Ahmadiyya mosque, took away 28 copies of the Quran, and sealed the mosque.

In another village Khando, Sind, the Ahmadiyya mosque was attacked, and the attackers broke the furniture, smashed the door and the windows. They also took away the copies of the Holy Quran and other religious literature from the building.

A spokesman of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association U. K. Mr. Rashid Ahmad Chaudhary, stated: "It seems that the magistrates and the police of Pakistan have no other duty except to go round and desecrate the Ahmadiyya mosques." He said: "The Government of Pakistan has unashamedly usurped the fundamental rights of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community four years ago, and has since applied the ridiculous clauses of the Ordinance 20 to curb the religious freedom of four million of its people".

*(For further information please contact Mr. Chaudhary Rashid Ahmad, Press Secretary, Ahmadiyya Muslim Association, 16 / 18 Gressenhall Road, London SW18 5QL, Tel: 01-870 8517 ext. 147)*

## ISLAM AND RUSSIA (10)

(Dr. Qazi Muhammad Barakatullah)

ZUL QARNAIN:

“And they ask thee concerning Zul Qarnain. Say, I will recite to you something of this account.” Quran (18:84)

Before proceeding to know and establish the identity of Zul Qarnain, it is necessary to state the reasons why at all his story has been related in the Holy Quran and why it has found such prominent mention in the present Surah. A pointed reference has already been made in this Surah to the two periods of the great material progress of Western Christian nations. Its opening verses give a somewhat detailed account of the Dwellers of the Cave. After an account of the early persecution of the Dwellers of the Cave and the later material progress and prosperity of their successors, the Western Christian nations, an account of the Isra or Spiritual Journey of Moses which represents the advent of the Holy Prophet of Islam has been given in some detail in order to show that with the Holy Prophet's appearance the first period of the material prosperity and progress of the Christian peoples would come to an end, and though it would still be possible for them to make some progress they would reach the zenith of their material glory and greatness for a second time, long after his advent. The second period of material pomp and show and grandeur of the Christian people is represented in Divine Scriptures by the phenomenal rise to power of Gog and Magog which forms one of the central themes of the present Surah . Because politically Gog and Magog and Zul Qarnain are inseparably linked with each other, Zul Qarnain's account also has been given in some length in this Surah.

Zul Qarnain seems to be the king who founded the Medo-Persian Empire which represented the two horns of the rams of Daniel's famous dream: “I saw the ram pushing westward and northward and southward, so that no beast might stand before him, neither was there

any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will and became great." (Dan. 8:4,20,21). Quite in harmony with this part of Daniel's dream, the Quran mentions three journeys of Zul Qarnain (18:87,91,94). This fact leads powerful support to the inference that Zul Qarnain was the descriptive name of a king of Media and Persia. And of all kings of Media and Persia, the description given in the Quran most fitly applies to Cyrus.

The Quran has mentioned four distinctive marks of Zul Qarnain:

(a) He was a powerful monarch and a kind and just ruler, (18:85,89).

(b) He was a righteous servant of God and was blessed with divine revelation (18:92,99).

(c) He marched to the West and made great conquests till he came to a place where he found the sun setting, as it were, in a pool of murky water and then he turned to the East and conquered and subdued vast territories (18:87,88).

(d) He went to a midway region where a savage people lived and where Gog and Magog made great inroads; and he built a wall there to stop these inroads. (18:94-98). Of the great rulers and famous military captains of ancient times Cyrus possesses, in the greatest measure, the four above mentioned qualities, he, therefore, rightly deserves to be considered the Zul Qarnain of the Quran.

The words, the setting place of the sun, signify the western most parts of Cyrus's Empire or the north-western boundry of Asia Minor and refer to the Blacksea, because it formed the western-north boundry of his empire. The verse 18:87 refers to the expedition which Cyrus undertook against his enemies in the West.

Cyrus believed in Life after Death. (18:88). He was a follower of Zoroaster. And of all religions, second only to Islam, Zoroastrianism has laid the greatest stress on life after death. There can be no doubt that Cyrus and his Persian followers were faithful believers in the pure doctrine of Zoroaster, and disdainfully regarded foreign cults.

The verse 18:91 refers to Cyrus's expedition to the East of Afghanistan and Baluchistan which were treeless barren tracts on



which the sun beat down fiercely. It may also apply to the people who lived in the plains which extended for hundreds of miles to the east of Seistan and Herat and to the north of Duzdab up to Meshed.

The verse 18:93 refers to Cyrus's third expedition to the north of Persia to the territory between the Caspian Sea and the Caucasian mountains.

The two mountains signify two barriers. The pass of Derbent in which the Wall was built was bounded on one side by the Caspian Sea and on the other by the Caucasian mountains. These two served as two barriers for it.

The Verse 18:94 refers to the people of regions who spoke a language different from that of Cyrus, but living in the immediate neighbourhood of Persia and, having coastal contact with the Persians and the Medians, they had learnt to understand to speak their language, though very imperfectly and with great difficulty. The region in which the wall was built was adjacent to Persia and later formed a part of it. Now, however, it is included in the Russian territories." (F.N. 1719-1727; English Commentary)

#### **Explanation:**

The fall of Communism has connection with Zul Qarnain as described in the Holy Quran. The question is who is Zul Qarnain? The answer is now cited:

1. It means horn. Zul Qarnain then means: Lord of the two horns (East and West). Thus Zul Qarnain represents the two horns of the ram of Prophet Daniel's dream. (Dan. 8:4,20-21)
2. It means a century. By Zul Qarnain is then meant one whose life span covers two centuries. It applies on the Promised Messiah of the latter days that is Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India, in whom prophecies of the Promised Messiah have been fulfilled. He established the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam in one century and carried over his message to another century. He is, as such, Zul Qarnain of our time-period.
3. It refers to the prophecy that the Mahdi and Isa are one and the same person.

It thus applies to the Promised Messiah who accordingly holds spiritual offices of both Mahdi and Isa blended into his person.

Some say, Alexander the Great was Zul Qarnain. Some Muslim commentators contend that Zul Qarnain was one of the Iranian Kings. Hazrat Maulana Nurud Din, Khalifatul Masih I, said that most likely he was King Qaiqbad. But Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II holds that as of research, the epithet applies to the Iranian King Khorus known as Cyrus. (Tafseer-i-Kabir, pg. 491-508).

The Promised Messiah proclaimed to be the Zul Qarnain of this age. And the narration in the Holy Quran regarding Zul Qarnain is not just an episode but refers to him for crushing the devilish powers and establishing the Kingdom of God on Earth. (Roohani Khazain, Vol. 21, p. 314)

Referring to the Chapter Al-Kahf, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, The Promised Messiah said:

“The biggest of calamities which are destined to appear in the time of the Promised Messiah is the calamity of Gog and Magog and Dajjal (i.e. Anti-Christ). They would constitute a divine trial for the Muslims as a result of their ignoring and disobeying God — It must be known that Gog and Magog are the attributive names of the people who would make use of fire in their productions and hence will be known as Gog and Magog. Ajij (the root of Yajuj Majuj, the Arabic expression for Gog and Magog) being an attribute of fire. Likewise their wars will be with fiery weapons — and there will be a great shaking on the earth because of these two nations, mountains shall begin to move and darkness will prevail everywhere. The Muslims will be severely afflicted by this calamity which will consume all their wealth, dignity, and prosperity. At that critical juncture, the Promised Messiah will stand before his exalted Lord and will pray with a pain-stricken voice. And as ice melt before fire, so with a melted heart the Promised Messiah will pray for Muslims over this calamity that has befallen them, and will continue praying with extreme agony and pain of heart until his prayer shall be heard because he occupies a worthy position before his Lord. Then will descend protecting and helping angels from

heaven and Allah will do whatever He likes at that time. He will save the people from all sufferings.. The Promised Messiah will be recognized on earth in the same way as he has been recognized in heaven, and then will his acceptance grow deep among common people as well as rich people, so much so, that even kings shall seek blessings from his garments. All this shall happen from the Exalted Allah though it is strange in the eyes of people.” (Khutba Ilhamiah: pg. 317-8).

### GOOD COMPANIONSHIP

O ye who believe! Fear Allah and be with the truthful.

(Quran: 9:119)

And keep thyself attached to those who call on their Lord morning and evening seeking His pleasure.

(18:29)

O ye who believe! Take not others than your own people as intimate friends; they will spare no pains to ruin you.

(3:119)

O ye who believe! Take not for your friends those who make a jest and sport of your religion from among those who were given the Book before you and the disbelievers. And fear Allah if you are believers.

(5:58)

Let not believers take disbelievers for friends in preference to believers - and whoever does that has no connection with Allah - except that you guard yourselves fully against them.

(3:29)

## BOOK REVIEW

### CRITICISM OF HADITH AMONG MUSLIMS WITH REFERENCE TO SUNAN IBN MAJA

Author: Suhaib Hasan Abdul Ghaffar

Publisher: Ta Ha Publishers & Al Quran Society, London.

Pages: 254

Paperback

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The origin and development of Hadith, and traditions attributed to the Holy Prophet of Islam has been a subject of keen interest since its content has a very deep and marked effect upon the development of Islamic thought and philosophy and also every other aspect of Islamic life.

Criticism of Hadith among Muslims with reference to Sunan Ibn Maja by Suhaib Hasan Abdul Ghaffar is yet another addition to an already large collection of comprehensive and critical study of the Hadith Literature by Muslim as well as non Muslim scholars.

This particular study of the Hadith literature is divided into two sections. The first part deals with the origin of Hadith and the sources of fabrication. The author also summarizes the reasons for this fabrication in Hadith literature and proceeds to identify political differences and personal motivation, difference of opinion and personal prejudice, influence of converts who joined Islam without thorough conviction and that of ascetics and fascination for story telling as the main reasons for the fabrication of Hadith literature.

The first section of the book also deals with the criticism of Hadith and its reporters and the methods of verifications adopted by the traditionalists to ascertain the authenticity of any particular Hadith. These topics are discussed in several stages, beginning with the period of the Holy Prophet of Islam and followed by a period of his successors and companions and then the succeeding generations up to the middle of the second century.

The second part of the book is mainly devoted to a detailed study of 10 allegedly spurious Traditions from the works of Muhammad bin Yazid Abu Abd Allah Ibn Maja Qazwini, the author of the reputed work of Hadith more popularly known as the Sunan of Ibn Majah.

Whatever the merits of the author's opinions in relation to all the questions discussed by him, one needs to admit that the book on the whole gives a deep insight to the origin of the Hadith literature, its reporting by successive generations; methods of verification adopted by scholars through generations and the element of fabrication of the Holy Prophet's Tradition.

Published jointly by the Al Quran Society and Ta Ha Publishers of London, the book can be a valuable addition to one's personal reference library.

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*(Publishers and authors who wish to have a review of their publications included in the Review of Religions are invited to send two copies of publications to: Mr. Naeem Osman Memon, Editor Book Review, The Review of Religions, The London Mosque, 16 Gressenhall Road, London. SW 18 5QL. U. K.)*

### INFORMATION NEEDED

Information is requested about the late Chief Petty Officer Mahboob Ali (ONO 2940) of the Royal Pakistan Navy who was killed in or near Batala, East Punjab, India, on Friday, 3rd October 1947, while escorting a convoy of refugees from Qadian to Lahore during partition evacuations. Mr. Bashir Ali (ACIS), the younger brother of the hero is proposing to write his biography and wishes to obtain an eye witness's account of his tragic but immortal death while on duty. The attention of Lt. A. Hamid RPNVR Commander, Lt. S. S. Hassan, RPNVR is particularly drawn to this matter if they happen to see this announcement. Anyone who is able to provide any information on this matter may please write to: Bashir Ali (ACIS), 22 Hurley Road, Greenford, Middlesex. UB6 9EZ. U.K.

## 80 YEARS AGO

*(The following is an extract from the Message of Peace taken from the last book written by the Promised Messiah and which appeared in the Review of Religions dated July, 1908)*

The primary object of the Holy Prophet was to reform the Arabs. The Arabs were then in such a degraded state that they could hardly be called men. There was no evil but was to be found in them and there was no form of *Shirk* but prevailed among them. Thieving and dacoity formed their business and the murder of a human being was with them like the trampling under foot of an ant. They killed orphans to appropriate their property and buried their daughters alive under the ground. They took pride in adultery and openly spoke of indecent things in their poems, which were immoral to the highest degree. Drinking prevailed to such an extent that no house was free from it, and in gambling they beat every other people. In short, they were a disgrace even to the beasts and the snakes of the desert.

But when the Holy Prophet rose to regenerate these people and when he devoted his whole attention to the purifying of their hearts and cast his holy influence on them, he worked such a transformation among them in a few days that from their savage state they rose to be men and from the stage of men they advanced to the stage of civilization and thus progressing step by step they became godly men and finally they were so annihilated in the love of God that they bore every pain with the utmost resignation. They were subjected to various kinds of tortures, whips were lashed at them with great cruelty, they were made to lie on burning sand, they were put in fetters, deprived of food and drink for days until they were almost at the door of death, but they only stepped forward at every affliction. Many had their children slaughtered before their eyes, many were hanged by the neck in the presence of their children, but a contemplation of the steadfastness with which they laid down their lives draws tears from the eyes. What was it which drew them so powerfully towards Islam and worked such a change in them that they threw themselves on the threshold of a man who once walked about in the streets of Mecca, a poor, solitary and helpless man? It was the hand of God that was controlling their hearts; it was the spiritual attraction of the Holy Prophet which raised them from the depths of degradation to the sublime heights above.

The wonder is that before they embraced Islam, most of them were the mortal enemies of the Holy Prophet and were thirsty of his blood. I can not see there could be a greater miracle than that a poor, helpless and solitary man should have thus purged their hearts from malice and should have so drawn them towards himself that they cast away their costly robes and having donned sackcloth presented themselves before him like humble servants.

### **DIVINE SUPPORT**

It is not a matter for wonder that a poor, powerless, helpless, unlearned orphan who was alone at a time when every people possessed a plentitude of financial, military and intellectual means, brought such a bright teaching that he silenced everyone with his conclusive arguments and clear proofs? He pointed out the mistakes of those who were claimed as great philosophers. He exhibited such power that he pulled down rulers from their thrones and put poor people on them in their place. If this was not Divine support, then what was it? Can anyone overcome the whole world in reason and knowledge and strength and force without Divine support?

(Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad)

## GOD CAN BE EXPERIENCED – A PERSONAL OPINION

(Saba T. Malik)

Is the existence of God something which we can claim to know? Or is it a belief for which a more or a less strong case can be made? Or is it a fantasy for which there is no reasonable case at all? Before we can claim to have had “experienced” God we must have faith in His existence and some type of relationship and knowledge of God. Firstly, then let us understand what we mean by the word “knowledge”. It would be a mistake to suppose that there is one clearly identifiable something called “knowledge” which one either has or has not got. “Knowledge” is always a progressive word denoting or signifying some kind of achievement or attainment. I am not here concerned with knowing, in the sense of knowing how but of knowing that or knowing what, i.e. knowing that such and such is the case or knowing what so and so is like. If as the theists so maintain our knowledge of God is obtained in a kind of personal intercourse with Him, such as we have with one another then it is after all empirical knowledge. The really important difference is that while we can see other people’s bodies and check our understanding of them by following their words and expressions from moment to moment. God has no body for us to see our interpretations of His thoughts and purposes from the course of observed events is schematic and highly debatable. The other important factor is that different people will have varying degrees of intercourse with God. The more intense the relationship, the deeper the experience.

Another factor to point out as Peter Vardy notes, is that there are different types of God. For example the God of religious language, the timeless spaceless God, the superspaceman God and so on. Obviously the God of language cannot be experienced, for He is only a God of words. The timeless spaceless God cannot be experienced either because He is neither within time nor space so He would not be able to have any kind of relationship with human beings. The super spaceman God is obviously the only type of these Gods that can be experienced but let us reject these in favour of God in the standard sense.



One difficulty springs to mind at once; God in the standard sense of the term is not a possible object of experience. Not just by the accident of our circumstances but essentially by His very nature. He is incapable of coming under direct human observation. If we are to learn anything about such an object from experience we must learn it indirectly from other objects which are observable. Because God cannot be described with a remotely comparable degree of precision, an intelligent being such as He is supposed to be is most readily traced by His actions. Such an inference is often made by historical students and in detective work. One finds among one's data a set of facts which seems to invite interpretation in terms of an agent previously unknown to us. In the case of God the case lies overwhelmingly in the seeming traces of purpose in nature, most strikingly in the long record of the evolution of life and mind. For a God belief founded on an argument such as this it is sometimes claimed that an experimental verification is possible. From one's conception of God one deduces certain types of directives for conduct and lives life according to these directives. In course of time one finds one's idea of God and the universe becoming clearer, and sees more and more of the signs of God's guiding action in events as one becomes better able to detect them. The individual will find if she is of the responsive kind, that she enters into a kind of intimacy of fellowship with God and, by reflex of this, with others around her circle. In this type of relationship one could be said to be "experiencing" God everyday; experiencing God in thoughts, feelings and prayers. In the same way one would "see" God in the world though not as part of the world. One would see Him in the processes of nature somewhat as one "sees" human agents in the things which they make and the processes which they initiate and control. The analogy is far from perfect. We should not suppose for a moment that God is related to the universe as humans are related to their bodies and that which they create. Nor do we normally profess to read God's thoughts and purposes in detail as we often do those of other human beings. All we do is to "see" God's agency in the world around us. It is an intuitive perception possessed only by those who have a strong and true belief in God.

For a profound believer of the intimately personal God experiencing God is an everyday occurrence. We walk with Him we talk with Him and we believe that the world has derived its very being and existence from God. It follows that this type of God cannot be met personally and in isolation, but always in relation to the world, a relation such that He is not there because the world is there, but the world is there only because of Him. It is a relation of unilateral dependence. Since God is not seen as depending on anything else because the world depends on Him, we conceive Him as an absolute

being with absolute existence, an infinite being, Who although is not timeless or spaceless is still nevertheless not confined within the limits of time and space.

Religious experience is of various kinds, but in none of them is God perceived as an object; though there is always that which is taken to be His presence and activity. The basic form of it is to be found in the God vision, as Anthony Kenny puts it. In this type of experience with God, the believer perceives or seems to perceive the activity of God at the heart of all that is and all that happens. She will often say "I see" God in these things, so she does in one sense of the word "see" but God is not present to her as an object of direct perception. All that is present are physical things and events. Into these she reads with

God. Religious experience in the form of the vision of God, as in seeing God's hand in all things is the foundation on which the whole structure of God is ultimately built. But the theological doctrine, once established, reacts upon our experience, and the more developed forms of religious experience are the result of our reactions to the doctrine of God and the universe and our attempts to work it out in life. We find ourselves drawn into a kind of personal intercourse with God which becomes more and more intimate as we progress in our spiritual life. This constitutes part of the realm called spiritual or religious experience. Not every God believer has experience of it. Indeed many think they have none at all; their religion is their ethic backed up by a belief in its supernatural warrant. But others seem deeply initiated in experience with God and what they say and do affects the spiritual and intellectual atmosphere for themselves.

The most primitive reaction to God is the emotional response of awe. It is an emotion to which some people are more susceptible than others. Like other emotions it is subject to a degree of control; one can resist feeling it or one can throw oneself open to it. But essentially it is a passive experience, a response to something perceived or imagined. "Experience", however does not mean only seeing or feeling; it also means learning about things by seeking and finding and interacting with them by enquiry and experiment. Religious experience has this exploratory and experimental dimension too; there is a religious way of living and an expertise to it. There is a kind of "Knowledge" of God which is gained through a sustained active contact with Him in the events and actions of one's life. And there is for the finely attuned spiritual person a peculiar contemplative kind of awareness of God sometimes associated with a perpetual awareness; not of God in himself but of His action in the soul. It is a difficult phenomena to describe with precision but it is a constant awareness of God working

not only in the mind but also in the soul and spiritually cleansing it. This would seem to be the most intense type of experience of God. But how does one experience this type of functioning of God in human thought and life? Again it is by experiment and enquiry a type of trial and error of procedure. Let us start with what is believed about the nature of God and the nature of the human beings. Since we as intelligent beings are in some degree akin to God, we may venture to suppose that there can exist some kind of relationship between Him and us. However, this depends on, most importantly on our cultivating that in us which is most akin to God, and making ourselves responsive to any communications that may come from Him. The characteristically religious life pattern is one endeavouring to do this; though the details of the way, and the nature of the goal, are differently presented in different doctrines. An individual's relation to God in her own life is implicit in the vision of God as "All-Doing". For if all that is and that happens is His doing, then in seeing anything, I am not merely seeing a thing, but something in which God is manifesting something which he is showing to me. In my recognition of this, my appreciation of His work, there is already a relationship, a kind of shared experience between Him and me. One can get into the habit of sharing experiences with Him in this way. But the relation becomes richer and more significant when I am confronted with a situation requiring that I should act or deliberately take up an attitude. God is "All-Doing" all the facts which together constitute my situation are His work. He made them, He brought about the situation and He brought me into the situation. If it requires of me action or decision, then it is He who through the situation demands these things of me. But further, I myself am His with my needs, desires, ideals and principles. These are not what they would be if I were morally and spiritually more mature, but such as they are, they are the guide lines which He gives me in this situation, here and now.

If I interpret the guidelines wisely and follow them earnestly, my judgement will be dearer and firmer next time. If I fail to achieve my purpose, if disconcerting results follow, then either my choice of means was unwise, or I may have got the wrong directive; or I may have thought too readily that if I do the right thing, I am entitled to expect success. This may be God's way of governing events, or of disciplining me. So through reflections like these I may grow in wisdom, insight, and experience. The moral life is an education, it is a life in which we gain fuller understanding as we act on the understanding which we have. All this is in a relationship with God, a relationship which matures in experience as we ourselves mature, through this relationship with God in thought and experience.

## **The REVIEW of RELIGIONS**

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