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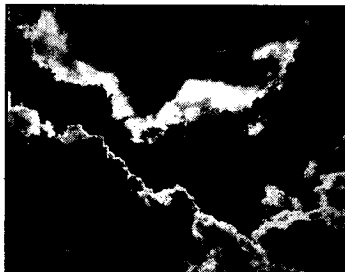
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Editorial

The world marked the start of the year 2000 with dazzling celebrations, and yet the new millennium is actually now, at the end of the year 2000! And with the new millennium comes a new significance for the religious world.

Throughout the globe, people of different faiths are looking upon this era as the one in which they expect to see epic change, with the advent of a messiah (or in the case of Christianity, the re-advent of Jesus^(as)) who will destroy the arrogant and irreligious, unite the world under their true banner and create the final victory for God.

The January 2001 issue of the *Review of Religions* has therefore decided to make a feature out of this subject. The feature article itself is taken from the book *Rationality, Revelation, Knowledge and Truth* by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad and explores this subject with a focus on the expectation of the Christian world. Later in the issue, there is a focus on the messianic expectation of other world religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Judaism, all awaiting Signs from God to signify the dawn of the latter days.

If we were to view these beliefs at face value, we might expect a traffic jam of religious resurgence with different countries being overwhelmed by several prophets at once. The only conclusion out of such a scenario could be a grand finale in which there would be a presidential style fight between the candidates until the

last true belief would win out. In the meantime, if all of the prophecies were also to be taken literally, each of these candidates will unleash a reign of terror in the direction of the people of their adversaries.

However, religion never has nor ever will follow such a pattern. Throughout the annals of history, God's Messengers have always shown fortitude against dangerous enemies, and have always used valour and dignity to fight the irreligious mobs. They have endured hardship, pain, suffering, torture and exile, but never returned with vengeance, rather they show love and forgiveness to win over the hearts and minds of the people. If there is to be a new order and a new religious age, the Prophets and Messengers of God will follow the same pattern of behaviour that they have always shown.

Moreover, it would have been nonsensical for God to send several competing messages to different parts of the world simultaneously. This magazine has always endeavoured to demonstrate that the message has always been the same although clothed differently to be understood by the target audience. It is always with the passage of time that the original messages get distorted. In this final age, we should pray for the one reformer who can unite the world with one unique Divine Message. May God enable us to follow His Servants when they appear. Ameen.

Notes and Comments

Power of God

As we move into the new Millennium, we can reflect upon the achievements of the previous thousand years; in fact a review of the last hundred years would suffice to illustrate the amount of progress that we have made.

Great powers came and went. Britain and France were great Colonial powers but saw their empires crumble from beneath them. Russia became a superpower and then lost its unity and although still strong, appears to have less command over its neighbours. Germany twice tried to impose its supremacy and failed.

As a result of two world wars and numerous other clashes, the USA is now the major superpower in the world. Man was able to learn to fly to the extent that millions of people fly every hour of every day. The automobile was developed to such an extent that now every, expects to travel by car much faster. Man even managed to travel to the Moon.

Communication became a key factor in the last hundred years. First we learned to communicate through telegrams and crude telephones. Now we carry small mobile gadgets that enable us to talk to

anyone, anywhere around the world, at any time and in an instant.

The developed nations of the world have developed huge cities with vast towers and skyscrapers. The cities are thriving and have expensive infrastructures and defences such that they would seem impenetrable.

Nations have developed vast defence systems such that where we started the century with the ability to defend using guns, bows and arrows, and cannons, we now have long range missiles able to travel thousands of miles and devastate hundreds of thousands of people and large tracts of land for many years from a single explosion as Japan learned to her horror.

So with instant communication, speedy travel, incredible medicine and advanced cities, man has made huge leaps in just a hundred years. It is hard to imagine where we will be in 2101 let alone in 3001!

Yet there is still another phenomenon which has not changed despite all of these changes. Cities have often been planned to the minutest detail, and yet have been susceptible to flooding, earthquake damage, tornados, hurri-

canes, tsunami and the devastating effects of climate change. Even the most advanced nations such as the USA, Britain, Japan, China and Russia have fallen victim to such natural disasters and have tried to plan against future disasters, but to no avail.

Can we learn a lesson from this for the new Millennium that we are just entering?

If we reflect on our achievements, we can see that no matter how tall we build our pillars or towers, no matter how advanced we build our cities, and no matter how hard we push technology, there is a fundamental difference between the powers at man's disposal, and the Powers at God's disposal. If we start to forget about God, we will ultimately be brought back down to earth. If we have truly advanced in the last hundred years, we should learn that no matter where we have made progress, we have not been able to change the laws of nature, merely to obey God's Laws to our advantage.

We can advance even further if we recognise the Greatness of God and His Creation, and use our knowledge to help us worship God and to use this understanding to treat our neighbours better and become a more tolerant world. If viewed from this perspective, then the last hundred years has seen an increase in the divide between rich and

poor. Some continents have advanced, others have been subjugated. In this respect, we may have gone backwards.

The Holy Qur'an provides a history of past nations who achieved greatness but abused their powers and didn't worship God. These people were always destroyed and a new God-fearing people raised in their place. The Qur'an tells us the story of the great race of Ad whose messenger Hud warned them in the following words..

Do you build monuments on every high place, seeking vain glory? And do you erect palaces as if you will live forever? And when you lay hands upon any one, you lay hands as tyrants. So fear Allah, and obey me; and fear Him Who has helped you with all that you know; He has helped you with cattle and sons, and gardens and springs; Indeed I fear for you the punishment of an awful day.

(Ch.26, Vs:129-136)

Ad were destroyed and their huge pillars could not help them. We should ensure that our fate is not that of the tribe of Ad.

Tanveer Khokhar – UK

Jesus^(as) versus Finality

This is an extract taken from the book Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth, written by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad.

The belief that the last prophet, Muhammad^(sa), has already come and gone and the assertion that Jesus^(as) would descend to earth as a prophet after him are so inconsistent that they cannot be owned simultaneously. In fact this cocktail of two unrelated issues was made by some Ulema of the late medieval times. At the time of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an any connection between the two was unthinkable.

For the sake of the unfamiliar non-Muslim reader we need to explain the historical background of this issue lest they should fail to understand what the row is all about. The verse *Khatamun-Nabiyyeen* is one of the most fundamental verses of the Qur'an which is profoundly rich in meaning and contains many possible connotations. But none of its connotations can even remotely be related to the so-called ascent of Jesus Christ^(as). Hence the Mullah's plea that Jesus^(as) was lifted to the fourth heaven because this verse of finality was to be revealed by God is absolutely ridiculous and melodramatic. This so-called bodily ascent of Jesus^(as) has nothing to do with this verse nor with any verse in the Qur'an. The idea of raising Jesus Christ^(as), to heaven had never occurred to God. The entire Qur'an and the traditions of the Holy Prophet^(sa) absolve God of this absurdity by a total absence of any such reference to the ascent of Jesus^(as). For the Mullahs to maintain that God had lifted him to forestall the problem created by this verse is a blatant lie and an unfounded allegation against the Qur'an. Thus it is the Mullah who is creating the problem himself and resolving it in the name of God. To bind this unfounded conjecture to one of the most fundamental verses of the Qur'an is an act of abomination. The reasons which motivate the medievalist clergy to do this and the deceptive manner in which they attempt to fuse these absolutely unrelated issues is the main subject of discussion here. Having familiarised the reader with the

background, now we proceed to tell the tale of the Mullah's desperation. With this in mind we hope that the reader will fully understand that which follows.

Despite the fact that the imagined ascent or descent of Jesus^(as) has nothing to do with the independent declaration of the Holy Prophet's finality, the clergy still assert that there is a definite link between the two. Prophet Jesus^(as), son of Mary, they insist, will be personally brought back from the heavens because no new prophet can be raised after Prophet Muhammad^(sa). This ingenious device of bringing an old prophet back to earth instead of raising one from the Ummah to meet the new need may seem highly laudable to the Muslim orthodoxy but their enthusiasm cannot be shared by ordinary humans. No one with an iota of common sense can attribute this cheap act of trickstering to God the Almighty, the All Wise. Only the Mullahs can, and this is exactly what they attempt to do. By connecting the return of Jesus^(as) with the finality of the Holy Prophet^(sa), they think that they have rescued God from the consequences of a premature declaration of finality. Thus, the clergy believes that they have saved God from a grave dilemma of contradiction. This has to be the brainchild of a half-wit Mullah to whom it rightly belongs. The promise of finality to any prophet by God, despite His knowledge that it could not be kept, is inconceivable of Him. To make a show of keeping the promise by bringing an old prophet after the demise of the last one is sheer mockery. Thus, judging God by his own standards, the Mullah first attributes a shameful act of contradiction to Him, then comes forward to help Him save His face from it. This blatant attempt is not made without a purpose. To the Mullah it is a great idea having multiple advantages.

It saves the life of Jesus^(as) from an ignoble death upon the cross and frustrates his enemies' attempts to prove him false. Imagine their exasperation at finding Jesus^(as) escape their clutches by vanishing into thin air (if there is any air at all in the fourth heaven where he is assumed to have ascended). But this measure must also have created another small problem for God. When and why he should be brought back to earth must have been the question. After all he could not be left abandoned in his heavenly confine till Doomsday. As far as God is concerned the problem does not exist. As far as the Mullah is concerned the problem is created by him to hide his own

THE BELIEF THAT THE LAST PROPHET, MUHAMMAD^(SA), HAS ALREADY COME AND GONE AND THE ASSERTION THAT JESUS^(AS) WOULD DESCEND TO EARTH AS A PROPHET AFTER HIM ARE SO INCONSISTENT THAT THEY CANNOT BE OWNED SIMULTANEOUSLY.

contradiction of believing in the finality of the Holy Prophet^(sa) , as well as believing in the re-advent of Jesus^(as) as a prophet after him. That is the only reason why he connects the verse of *Khatamun-Nabiyyeen* with the imaginary ascent of Jesus^(as). He does it with a cunning deceitfulness which cannot be detected by the ordinary Muslim masses. The following is the case he builds:

- 1 . Jesus^(as) was lifted to heaven with a purpose and will be brought back finally to earth.
2. The coming of an old prophet after the last one had appeared would not break the seal of his finality.
3. The need for a new prophet in the latter days will be fulfilled without creating any dilemma of contradiction in God's Decree.

There are some who kill two birds with one stone but the orthodoxy seems to know how to kill three with one! In reality however, by shifting the twist of their own mind to that of God, they commit an unpardonable act of blasphemy.

We believe that by concocting this mindless exercise and spinning such a bizarre tale the most prominent advantage the Mullah gains, among others, is to escape the possibility of any Divine authority to be ever imposed upon him. Good riddance once and for all from the institution of prophethood and the danger of ever losing his absolute command over the ignorant Muslim masses. The belief that a two thousand year old prophet would come again has the inherent guarantee that no prophet would ever come again. Thus the Mullah's grip on Islam will be perpetuated and he will forever retain his despotic authority over the unsuspecting Muslim masses.

The dead never return from their other worldly abode. Once departed, none has ever paid a second visit to begin mixing with the living. Never has God brought back any dwellers of the past. Those who literally await the return of Jesus^(as) may continue to do so till eternity. He will never come, nor will the Mullah ever quit his demagogic command over the Muslim world. Left forever at the mercy of the Mullah, who knows no mercy, the masses are duped to wait in vain for the return of Jesus^(as) bearing a cup of elixir in his hand. Islam will continue to suffer year after year, century after century under the despotic rule of the Muslim clergy.

Looking yet again at the same question of Jesus^(as) versus finality, the solution proposed by the Mullah is untenable anyway. To borrow an old prophet from the bygone Ummah of Moses^(as) for the completely different requirements of the Muslim Ummah of the latter days can in no way resolve their problems. A borrowed prophet, they fail to understand, will be the one who will violate the sanctity of the Holy Prophet's finality and not the one who is born and raised within his Ummah as his spiritual son.

Over and above what has been discussed, it must be noted that in the context of the present discussion mere chronology cannot determine whether a prophet is old or new. If a prophet comes again with exactly the same attributes which he had during his first advent then of course his visit could be treated as a repeat visit. But, if before his second advent, he has been radically changed in his physical characteristics and aptitudes and his attitude to his enemies has fundamentally changed, he can in no way be described as an old prophet come again. In addition, the spiritual status he holds, the message he delivers, the miracles he works and the authority he exercises over the whole of mankind has no similarity with the Jesus^(as) of the New Testament. It is also worthy of note that the Jesus^(as) whose advent was promised by the Holy Prophet^(sa) has a completely different identity from that of the previous Jesus^(as). The promised Jesus^(as) would not be a prophet of Israel any more. He will no longer be subordinate to the Torah, or to the Gospels he himself taught. Nor will he be confined to the domain of the House of Israel. If, despite all this, the Mullah must insist that the Promised Jesus^(as) is the same Jesus^(as) of Israel then they must admit that before being

brought back to earth he would be completely reconditioned and re-commissioned in all the essential features of his prophethood. If that is not the advent of a new prophet, what else is? No Mullah would concede that such a Jesus^(as) as the one described could ever be assimilated into Islam without compromising the principle of the Holy Prophet's finality. What remains for them is only to believe that Jesus^(as), would return to earth without any change wrought in him. Once here, he would be budded onto the tree of Islam and re-grow as a reformer fit to be called a universal Muslim prophet. We should be permitted to draw the attention of the Mullah that even then, he will remain foreign to Islam, unable to shed his non-Muslim personality of an Israelite. His case would be like that of a bud from a tree of a different species grafted onto the stem of another. If a lotus can be grafted onto a cherry tree, or a blueberry to a pineapple bush, only then can one visualize a pre-Islamic prophet grafted onto Islam. But to what avail. The grafted stem can never lose its identity. What would grow out of Jesus^(as) as even when bonded to Islam, would still be a Jesus^(as) of Israelite identity.

Jesus^(as), therefore, even if physically transferred to the world of Islam, can never change his true identity. The Qur'an will continue to describe him merely as a prophet to the children of Israel. Any infuriated Muslim divine could stand up to defy his claim on the basis of this Qur'anic injunction alone, if he ever returns. He will be roundly denounced as an impostor. By what authority, he will be questioned, did he abrogate the proclamation of the Qur'an that he was merely a prophet to the House of Israel? As long as the Qur'an defines him as such, his identity will never be changed; he was and will always remain a prophet to the House of Israel.

رَسُولًا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ

a Prophet to the children of Israel ...
(Ch.3:v.50)

Ours is an age when the fundamentalists have overexcited the sensibility of the Muslim masses to the issue of blasphemy. Evidently, the life of Jesus^(as)

will not be safer in the hands of Muslim fanatics than it was in the hands of the Jewish people. Moreover, he will have to face other multifarious dangers which he did not encounter during his first advent. The world of Islam is split into schisms far more sharply and intolerantly than the world of Judaism was at the time of Jesus Christ^(as).

The threat to his life will be grave no matter where he lands in a Muslim state – if he ever lands! If his landing strip happens to be in Iran, evidently he will be subjected to a gruelling examination regarding his doctrinal position. Does he believe in the twelve Imams or does he reject them? Does he believe in the Khilafat of Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman or does he not? Does he believe in the unbroken continuity of succession of Hadhrat ‘Ali to the Holy Founder^(sa) of Islam? If he conforms to the Shi’ite beliefs in answer to these questions, the threat to his life will still not be averted because of the additional problem of the disappearance of the twelfth Imam. It will be demanded of him as to how he dared return to earth alone while their Holy twelfth Imam (Al-Mahdi) is still in hiding somewhere in space. Without the personal testimony of that Imam to the truth of Jesus, he will most certainly be stigmatized and penalized for being false.

If he is found guilty of endorsing the right to Khilafat of the first three Caliphs, Hadhrat Abu Bakr, Hadhrat ‘Umar and ‘Hadhrat Uthman (may Allah be pleased with them), he will be denounced even more vehemently as an impostor. After this, his being condemned to death would be but a routine procedure of Shi’ite jurisprudence.

However, if he descends in a Sunni territory while holding Shi’ite views, no sooner will he land than be despatched back to heaven. If on the other hand he holds Sunni views, his life will still not be out of danger because each of the Sunni sects dwelling in that country would require him to testify to the truth of their beliefs, or be rejected as a liar. It is hard to conceive Jesus Christ^(as), converting to the Barelvi faith or becoming a Wahhabi fundamentalist the moment he touches down in their respective countries. Whichever of the two will he claim as his own? Either way it will be tantamount to bargaining for a death warrant issued by the clergy of the other.

The reason for this condemnation would not just be his belonging to a different sect; the reason for his condemnation to death would be his imposture as a true prophet of God. No true prophet of God can hold wrong religious views they will argue. Each sect would judge Jesus^(as) by the testimony of their own beliefs; none will judge their beliefs by the testimony of Jesus^(as).

There will also arise the question as to which school of jurisprudence he belongs. Will he belong to the school of Hadhrat Imam Malik or that of Imam Abu Hanifa or Imam Shafe'i or Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal? Having had no experience of such juristic wrangles, he will find himself helplessly trapped in the middle of this rigmarole. How he would wish that he had never ever returned to earth! Even if he is accepted by the sect whose garb he finally decides to wear, he will be strongly rejected by the remaining seventy-one sects. Over and above this will he not continue to confront the danger of rejection by all on the basis of the Qur'anic verse mentioned above, which declares him to be merely a prophet to the House of Israel?

The shout of 'Go back to where you really belong' may be heard from the mouth of any fanatic in the assembled crowd. 'Take off and re-route your flight to the State of Israel,' may well be curtly demanded of him. 'If you are man enough to face a retrial at their hands, go to the Jewish people and prove your true identity.'

What shall God do at this new turn of events one wonders. Will He command the angels to hasten to Jesus's rescue once again, lifting him to the same remote celestial abode? Or will he be abandoned by God to shift for himself at the mercy of the Muslim or the Jewish clergy? Whether he will be re-crucified by Israelite soldiers in the state of Israel or whether he will be hung till death by a Muslim hangman, is a question which only the future will tell – if he ever visits this miserable world of ours again. Far more than his previous advent, he will find the new one to be a mission impossible.

On a more serious note, we beg to remind the reader that when religion is interpreted without rationality, when faith is divorced of reason, all that they

give birth to are myths without legitimacy and legends without substance. Mindless trustees of faith succeed only in making a mockery of Divine wisdom.

The great scholars of medieval ages who failed to understand the true import of such prophecies can genuinely be excused. Theirs was a different age. Their understanding of the world and the cosmos around it was as yet merely conjectural. But the contemporary medievalists who are born and raised in this age of enlightenment have no justification for their gross misreading of Divine prophecies. The soul of holy Jesus^(as), the true servant of God, has undoubtedly returned to Him to occupy the lofty station he is assigned. The Jesus they await is a mere fantasy of their own minds. What does one care therefore, if that phantom figure is crucified or stabbed to death or hung a thousand times! The whole episode of Jesus' bodily ascent and preservation somewhere in space, merely to fulfil the future need for a prophet, is so provocative to the human sense of propriety! Add to this the impunity of their attributing this nonsense to God and wonder what stuff their minds are made of!

Let the world of Islam get rid of this fantasy once and for all and let the clerics who nurture it get lost. The death of their age will usher in the age of the revival of Islam.

Last, but not least, there is yet another strong objection against the suggestion that a prophet of Israel could be somehow trimmed to fit into the robe of a Muslim prophet. How can the orthodox clergy forget that during his absence from earth the Holy Qur'an could not have been revealed to Jesus simultaneously with the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa). This angle of observation raises many difficult questions for the clergy to answer. The foremost among them is the issue of his conversion. When and from whom did he learn that the greatest of all the prophets had appeared down below on earth? Did he testify to his truth forthwith becoming a believer? If he did become one – the first ever in space – how did he learn to practice Islam without knowing anything of the Qur'an?

As such, whether the Qur'an was revealed to him directly by God through

the Archangel Gabriel, is the highly crucial question which must be addressed and answered.

If the Qur'an was revealed to him while he was still in space, he would certainly have become a partner prophet to Prophet Muhammad^(sa) like Aaron^(as) was to Moses^(as), both enjoying an almost similar status. If the Qur'an was not revealed directly to him through the archangel, what would be the nature of his faith before his return to earth? Had he remained a Judeo-Christian while Islam had been declared by God as the last universal religion of mankind? Was he treated as an exceptional case and allowed to remain a non-Muslim after the advent of the Holy Founder^(sa) of Islam? If not, then one cannot escape the logical conclusion that the Qur'an must have been revealed to him somehow.

Will the Mullahs suggest that instead of the archangel, the Holy Prophet^(sa) should himself have delivered the message to him? But the problem is that when the Holy Prophet^(sa) delivered the message of the Qur'an to his companions no intermediary agent was required. Whatever was revealed to him through the archangel, he directly passed it on to his companions. But Jesus, according to the medieval Mullahs, was sitting high above somewhere in the heavens with no possible direct link with the Holy Prophet^(sa). So there are only two options left. Either he should be considered as totally unaware of the revelation of the Qur'an till his eventual return to earth, or the Qur'an should only be revealed to Jesus as a message from the Holy Prophet^(sa). But how can this message be lifted to him while in space unless the archangel is again involved in this exercise? The scenario which develops is so insulting and so abhorrent that a true believer cannot entertain it even for a moment. Imagine the archangel delivering the Holy Qur'an to the Holy Prophet^(sa) and then begging him to recite it back to him so that he could deliver it to Jesus as a message from the Holy Prophet^(sa) and not from God.

Returning to the issue of Jesus' conversion to Islam, if the Qur'an was not revealed to Jesus at all, but he believed in the Holy Prophet^(sa) in a vague nondescript manner, then at best he could be described as a non-practising Muslim with no knowledge of Qur'anic teachings. The common herd of

Muslims anywhere on earth could claim a better status in Islam despite their ignorance. How would a Jesus such as this be welcomed back to earth by the great Muslim theologians and clerics of the time? To redress his ignorance will he be rushed to the presence of the Imam Al-Mahdi the instant he lands so that he could be initiated without further loss of time? No sooner than he accepts Islam, will he be offered the chair of judgement over all the conflicting Muslim sects? When and by whom will he be taught Islam fast enough to discharge such grave responsibilities with absolute precision and perfection?

If the clergy insist that he must have been re-commissioned as a Muslim prophet, while still in space before his descent to earth, then how could he be treated as an old prophet of the pre-Islamic era?

To conclude, the borrowing of a prophet from a pre-Islamic era requires that either he is re-commissioned in space as a new prophet in Islam after the advent of the last Prophet, or he is to be converted after his descent to earth and then re-commissioned as a Muslim prophet.

However much this bizarre idea of inherent contradictions may appear devoid of all common sense to the rest of the world, the orthodox clergy is not perturbed in the least. Reason and rationality have no role to play in their understanding of Divine prophecies. They take them literally without ever realizing what damage this may do to the cause of Islam. It is this madness which is largely responsible for all the chaos we observe today prevailing in their perceptions, hopes and aspirations.

All said and done, the borrowing of a non-Muslim prophet from a pre-Islamic age does not transpire to be as profitable as it appeared to the clergy. It is a tribute to their relentless obstinacy that they would much rather have a convert prophet from space than a prophet born here on earth, within Islam. They do so because there are many more advantages to be gained from this fairy tale visit of Jesus. He, as a visitor from space, would not be the same ordinary human prophet as he was but would have amassed prodigious superhuman powers unheard of in the history of prophethood before his return to earth.

This mythical image of Jesus is evidently created by their same tendency to over-literalize prophecies. Evidently they do not care what price they have to pay for the folly of rejecting reason and rationality. To Jesus Christ they assign the task of salvaging whatever remains of the dignity and honour of Islam in the latter days. It will be he, they believe, who will launch a single-handed powerful offensive against the anti-Christ on a global scale. Having roundly defeated and destroyed the anti-Christ – the one-eyed monster, Jesus will hand over the keys of his world dominion to the people of Islam, and will also distribute the immense treasure and riches which he will have amassed. Thus all the spoils of his war against the anti-Christ will he lay at the feet of the Muslim Ummah.

Having resolved their political and economic problems, he will turn his full attention to such prophecies as relate to religion. He will start by launching his campaign against Christianity. His strategy will be to break every cross in the world, whatever material it is made of. He will visit every cathedral, every monastery, every church, every temple, every Christian hermitage. He will walk every street of every township and stare at every passer-by in search of any cross. Ladies perhaps will become the prime object of his scrutiny because he will be aware of their despicable habit of having crosses engraved upon their jewellery and ornaments. He will take care of the fact that they also wear crosses hanging around their necks. Thus he will snatch away every bangle, every bracelet, every pendant and earring with the sign of the cross upon it. Woe to the ladies who dare to cross the path of that Jesus, but where can they escape and hide, the poor defenceless wretches? He will enter every house and search every cabinet and jewellery box. Every wall and every corner will be scanned. Crosses must be literally broken and wiped out from the face of earth. Until he has accomplished this task to the full he will not rest in peace. This is the vision of the Muslim orthodoxy of the mission of Jesus Christ^(as) if ever he returns to earth, but that is not all. Having completely disposed of the symbol of Trinity, he would then turn to another task which prophecies assign to him, if they are taken literally. He will lose no time in beginning to kill every non-Muslim inhabiting the world. Either they must convert to Islam or they must die – these will be their only options. He will go about this slaughtering business in a rather unusual way.

He will breathe fire like a mythical dragon, while no myth has ever presented such a dragon before, even in the wildest tales of fantasy. His blazing breath will scorch to death innumerable infidels even when they are miles away from him. Those within the reach of his sword, will have their heads stricken off and made to roll. He will identify them unmistakably because on the forehead of each non-believer would appear the imprint in bold: Al-Kafir, the non-believer. Thus he will leave none alive except the Muslims, and the de-Christianized Christians of course, who will be left without a single cross to worship. Hence the curtain will fall upon this unique carnage by the imaginary Jesus, filling the entire earth with fetid odour, an obnoxious stench of rotting bodies, some slaughtered, some scorched to death. Hatred will generate more hatred, bloodshed will lead to more bloodshed.

The last gory act of Jesus upon the earth will be to annihilate the species of swine. No quarter will be granted to pigs. All boars and all sows and all their brood will be put to the sword – each one of them. Hand on sword, fire in breath, Jesus will visit every township, every village, every street. The imaginary Jesus as painted by house, every shack and every sty in search of the hiding rascals. He will visit every wilderness, will thrash all the bushes of Africa, and will hunt for them in the rain-forests of South America. China will not be spared for that matter, nor will Japan. The islands of the South Pacific will also be combed where the flesh of pig is considered a highly prized delicacy.

Evidently no prophet of God in the entire history of mankind has ever performed such bloody, filthy feats as are attributed to the Jesus Christ envisioned by the Muslim orthodoxy. This is what the clergy in Islam have done to the profound wisdom of the Holy Prophet^(sa). They have failed to penetrate across the bodies of letters to reach the soul and the spirit of the prophecy they contained.

The real task assigned to the Promised Christ in this prophecy was to purify the human society from inhuman behaviour and some evil habits which the swine symbolizes. There are many animals and birds which steal the fruits of the farmer's labour for the sake of their survival but do not destroy the

crops and trees just for the fun of it. The swine stands out among all the animals in this destructive tendency. The swine is also notorious for eating the corpses of its young ones. No other non-marine animals are known to devour their young ones when they die. A bloodthirsty lion, or even a ferocious wolf, will rather die of hunger, woefully sitting beside the dead bodies of their brood, than to even dream of eating their flesh. Dogs do not eat the corpses of their dead puppies either. Pigs and boars, it should be remembered, are vegetarians, yet by some devilish instinct they relish eating the corpses of their young ones. Evidently therefore, the message implied in this prophecy has to be to wage a Holy War against the perverted habit of humans to be inclined to genocide and to feel free to usurp the rights of the weak. The pig's habit of eating its own piglets could be likened to the child abuse of the modern age. Child abuse may be directed against one's own children or against the children of others, either way it is swinish in character. Recently it has become a subject of common talk in modern society, so needs no further elaboration. No other animal can match humans in this ugliness.

War against evil has always been the occupation of prophets. As such, Jesus Christ in his second advent would be no oddity among them if his second advent is understood to be metaphorical. But a Jesus such as the one who is idolized by the Muslim clergy – a literal murderer of the swine - is what they need and await to welcome. The moment this apple of their eyes arrives and discharges his task of eliminating the pig species from the animal kingdom, he must needs be applauded. So will he be applauded and befitting homage would be paid to his last glorious days spent on the planet earth.

Glory be to Lord Jesus will be chanted over sea, over land, over hill, over dale. The church bells will not toll for the carnage he will make but the minarets will resound with the shouts of the Muezzin heard far and wide, *Allah-O-Akbar, Allah-O-Akbar, God is the Greatest, God is the Greatest – and glory be to our saviour the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Lastly, before Jesus' departure from earth, there is yet another highly important business for him to conduct, but in this he must be assisted by the

Mullah. Throughout it has been only Jesus Christ serving the cause of the Mullah. Let the Mullah serve his cause now, for once at least! All that Jesus would demand of the Mullahs after his global exploits would be to help him in the task of getting married. After the ruinous trail of rampage and bloodshed that he would have left behind, marriage would not be an unwelcome change for him.

If the Mullah has any serious regard for the literal fulfilment of prophecies he must find him a highly gifted young Muslim damsel who should not fail to bear him children. Christ is about to be married! Some great Mullah must be found to read his wedding sermon and enquire from the would-be father-in-law of Christ if he consents to give the hand of his daughter to that of Jesus. After his consent would come the turn of Jesus, at last, to confirm the proposed marriage. What happy moments, what ecstasy! After a celibacy of two thousand years or more he would stand up and nod his head in affirmation '*Yes I do, O loving Mullah, yes I do*'. In what better manner could the exploits of Jesus Christ be celebrated than that! From North to South, from East to West, hymns will be sung in his praise and marriage songs will fill the air with their sweet melody. All that is left for him is to hopefully wait for the delivery of his blessed first-born with a holy string of other sons and daughters to follow. Thus by producing children at the ripe old age of two thousand years plus, he will create the greatest of all the miracles he had ever worked. His spirit has always been strong but the flesh too would not lag behind in strength it seems. What a miracle indeed that the passage of time makes him grow even stronger, while old age is left buried far behind in the land of his youthful first advent. Finally, the hour of death will arrive, but what a glorious enviable death it will be! Blessed be the day he was born and blessed be the way he will die.

This is the enchanting tale of Jesus which, if ever realised, the Mullahs will always tell their pupils in every Madrasah of Islamic instruction, year after year, generation after generation.

A more gruesome example is hard to find in the entire history of religion of how Divine prophecies are mutilated out of shape, by a mindless materialist

clergy. But this is not a prerogative of the Muslim clergy alone. Whenever and wherever the priesthood takes over the command of religious orders they are likely to turn facts into fiction and realities into myths. This is the price man always pays for entrusting his faith to a hierarchy divested of common sense and reason, unable to distinguish between fair and foul. Whatever their business, rationality is not a commodity in which they trade.

The most tragic of all the religious leaders of the world is the case of the Muslim priesthood. The vain hopes they build for the ultimate victory of Islam are based utterly on misconstrued prophecies turned into mirages and illusions. They are no longer fit to lead any religious order, let alone Islam! They are no longer fit to follow any prophet of God, be he old or new.

Their vision of the final victory of Islam, attained entirely by the might of Jesus, absolves them of any role to play in the final struggle for the victory of Islam. In truth, what they need is not a prophet but an enslaved giant. They fail to realize that the type of Jesus for whom they aspire has never appeared in the entire comity of prophets before. No prophet is mentioned in the Qur'an or in any other scripture who would fight single-handedly for the supremacy of his people while they sit idly by. This is what the Jews demanded of Moses^(as) and were denied. If the final victory of any religion can thus be achieved without blood, sweat or toil, where is there room for a prophet of God who invariably calls to the path of sacrifices? Their vision of a prodigal Jesus corresponds to a genie rather than that of a Divine Reformer. The real issue with them has never been a choice between an old prophet or a new one, it has always been between a genie and a prophet. Their attitude is reminiscent of a tale from the classic work of *A Thousand and One Nights*.

Once upon a time, so it is narrated, a magician in the guise of a vendor roamed the streets of Baghdad shouting at the top of his voice, 'Old lamps for new! Old lamps for new!' Many a housewife rushed to the door to have her old lamp swapped for the new ones he offered. A happy bargain indeed, they thought, and so it was. Yet there was one exception. Little did one of the housewives know that when she exchanged her old lamp for a new one offered by the swindler, the old lamp she was giving away had imprisoned

in it a genie with almost unlimited powers. She had no idea that the owner of that lamp could also become the master of the genie. Hence, the interest of the swindler was in the prisoner of the lamp, not in the lamp itself. If that genie could be possessed by swapping a million new lamps for one that is old, no greater bargain could be conceived.

In reality the Mullahs are neither interested in a new lamp lit by the light of Muhammad^(sa) nor are they interested in the old lamp of the Ummah of Moses^(as). All they are interested in is the prodigal Jesus of their fancy deemed to be trapped therein. No Divine torch of prophethood means anything to them. A prophet is not what they care for and a prophet is not what they require. All that they need is a giant slave who would lead them to all the worldly riches at their bidding.

Political and economic domination of the world is their only ambition for which they are most ill-equipped. All that they are trained for is the letting of Muslim blood at the hands of other Muslims butchered by the knives of other Muslims.

Any bloody revolution brought about by Mullahcracy in any Muslim country should not mislead others. In no way can it upset the balance of power in the world. To dream of world domination without scientific and technological advancement, to hope for tilting the existing balance of power without boosting their own economy and revolutionizing their industry; to challenge the might of great world powers without the capability of manufacturing highly advanced and sophisticated military hardware is ultimate madness. What little, one may ask, do they have to achieve their goal?

The Mullahs must realize that their blatant distortion of the great prophecies of the Holy Founder^(sa) of Islam will not go unpunished. It will bring them and those whom they lead to nothing but utter ruin. This is the price they must pay for the crime of perverting the wisdom of God. Let them stand on a corner and watch the days and nights slip by. Let them watch the heavenly tracks and strain their ears to listen to the descending footsteps of their mythical saviour from the voids of space. Let them live on and on in hope,

and perish again and again in despair, generation after generation after generation. None will ever come to rescue them from the entangled web of their own twisted vision and contradictions between their ideals and practice. Every moment that passes, every second that ticks by, the fear of God is fast vanishing from their daily life. Honesty, justice, selfless sacrifice, mutual brotherly love and respect for other's property have become values of the bygone days – still dearly remembered, but widely shunned. With what yearning they are talked about, with what love and tenderness they are treasured, but only in the storehouses of memories!

Theft, robbery, murder, child abuse, abduction, fornication, adultery, prostitution, fraud, and deceit are only registered by those whom they strike. Others live with them in an unholy alliance. Gang rapes committed in broad daylight by the very custodians of peace; bribery, corruption and brazen-faced violations of law by their lordships, who are supposed to be the defenders of justice – a society where the wardens of peace lynch and murder peace, a society where disorder is the only order of the day. Yet strangely enough, it is not altogether bereft of its sense of right and wrong. It hates the evil it generates itself, it abhors the horrors it commits. It is sick to death of the pollution it exhales. Everywhere, everyday the evils are decried by the very people who exude them. They are castigated, condemned and censured at such tempo as its resonance can be heard from one end to the other, from the lofty legislative chambers to the lowly shacks of the destitute. Yet how dearly they are embraced at the same time, how firmly clasped, how faithfully adhered to in everyday life at all tiers of society! Their deeds display what their mouths condemn. This is the lie they live or the death they daily die but call it life. Where are the custodians of Muslim values and where are the torch-bearers of decent conduct? Are there any who would lose a single moment of their sweet sleep over these bitter realities? Why should it matter anyway, and what do the Mullahs care! What difference could it make to a society which has been induced to believe that the hour of Divine Decree will finally strike and Jesus^(as), son of Mary, will descend from his heavenly abode to raise Muslims such as these to the lofty chambers of command. It would be they who would carve and shape the destiny of the world. Thus the Mullahs lullaby the Muslim masses to sleep 'until such time

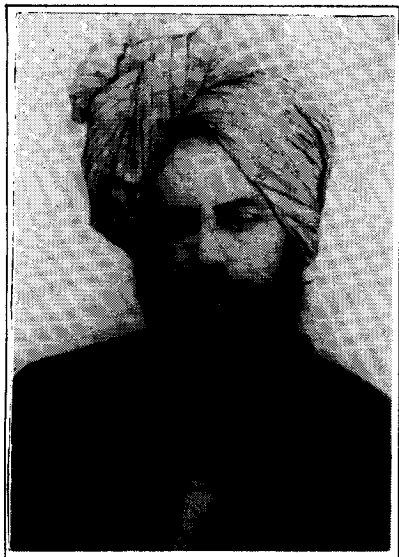
as the Lord of the Christian West will desert their cause and rise in full glory as the Lord of the Muslim East'. Why then, should the Mullah ever bother about the moral destitution of the herds he leads? Why work for their reformation and strive hard needlessly to redeem them from their hopeless state of morbidity? Patience, patience, is the only panacea – just wait for the hour to strike!

Woe to such an hour of destiny if it ever strikes! Damnation is the name for it. For the creatures of Allah to be subjected to the rule of the Mullah is sheer abomination. Jesus Christ! Could he ever permit himself to stoop so low! Could he ever be a party to such a blatant crime! No – not he! Jesus or no Jesus, no prophet of God would ever debase himself to champion the cause of a depraved people. It is a task fit only for a power-hungry demagogue who would not be reluctant even to become a king of beasts let alone of a beastly people. With or without the help of a Jesus he would not hesitate to step upon the shoulders of prophets to achieve his ambition.

The Mullahs' dreams are madder than those of a mad hatter's but how can they ever be realized? Mad dreams never turn darkness into light, nor do they ever break the dawn of a new day. It is always the dawn of a new day which breaks and shatters such dreams. Let the Mullah sleep forever. Let the empty chambers of his brain be filled with as many illusions as would feed upon his limitless craving for power. Let the people of Islam wake up and wish him to sink into a deep sleep till Doomsday. Let the sleeping Mullah lie and sink into a deeper sleep. And let him leave the Ummah of the Holy Prophet^(sa) alone to begin to see the light of the day.



Virtue and Vice



**Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)
(The Promised Messiah and Mahdi)**

Presented below is a compilation of excerpts relating to the subject of attaining virtue and abstaining from vice that have been taken from the speeches and discourses of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, as recorded in Vol. 10 of the collection entitled *Malfoozat*.

*Compiled and translated by Amatul
Hadi Ahmad*

(Translator's note: All references to the verses of the Holy Qur'an are given in Arabic as they occur in the text. The English translation, presented in italics, is taken from the translation of the Holy Qur'an by Hadhrat Maulvi Sher Ali Sahib^(ra). Where the Promised Messiah^(as) has himself stated a certain interpretation of the Arabic verse, this is incorporated in the main body of the text).

[In answer to a question requesting the definition of sin, the Promised Messiah^(as) stated]: It is God's being that is the source of eternal bliss and happiness in the life of a human being. Whosoever distances himself from God or abandons Him in any aspect of his life, is said to have 'sinned'. Moreover, keeping in view the nature of man, God has further defined as 'sin' those acts which through their finer implications, prove to be harmful for man himself, even though a person sometimes may not be able to appreciate such harm. For example, theft and harming others by taking away their rights, impairs the purity of one's own life. The act of adultery and taking what may

belong to someone else, destroys a person's own piety and engulfs him in various physical and spiritual difficulties. Similarly, such acts that are against the nature of man's purity and piety are also referred to as 'sin', as are all the other acts that are related to these, be it closely or distantly.

God Almighty Who is the Greatest and Who possesses greatest knowledge, is the true Creator of human beings as well as of every particle that exists. It is He who has created the nature of [the different types of] creation and He understands best that nature. God is All-Wise and All-Knowing and, hence, with His complete wisdom and complete knowledge, if He states that something is harmful for you, that indulging in a certain act would be of no benefit to you at all, then it is not for a good person to go against this. We observe that when a doctor advises a patient to abstain from something, the patient acts on that advice without any argument. Why does he act in this way? He does this because he considers the doctor to be in possession of much greater knowledge than himself. Similarly, there are some things that are harmful for the body or for the

spirit whether a person himself understands that or not. There are some things that would be harmful even if God had not given a ruling about them. In medicine also there are some things which are considered to be 'sins' [i.e. they are harmful] and lack of medical knowledge is no excuse for the person who goes against medical principles.

The point to remember is simply this that the root of all sin is those actions which lead man away from true purity and righteousness. It is the true love of God and union with Him that alone is real pleasure and true bliss. Thus, distancing from God and separation from Him, is also referred to as sin as it is the cause of suffering, distress and grief.

In brief, 'sin' is all that which is disliked by God in view of His own sanctity and Holiness. There are some aspects of this matter on which people may not agree but the greater part of the world is in common agreement in considering, for example, lying, stealing, adultery and cruelty to be sinful acts. However, one should remember that the root of all sin is precisely that which distances man from God and

that which is against His sanctity and against His wishes and is harmful for man's nature.

Every person can sense the element of 'sin' in his own actions. If, for instance, a person slaps someone who is innocent and knows that he had no right to do so, he will at some later time, when he looks back at his action with a cool head, feel ashamed and will sense that he has done a bad deed. Conversely, if someone feeds a hungry person and clothes someone who lacks garments, such a person will have an inner sense of having been good and having done a blessed deed. A person's heart and conscience and the light of belief remind him whether his various actions were a good deed or a sinful act.

With regard to 'Satan', it should be remembered that in the creation of man and his nature, have been included two forces. They are both opposed to each other and it is so in order for a person to be tried and tested. It is the successful outcome of such a test, [through effort and striving], that a person becomes deserving of nearness to God. Of the two forces, one pulls man towards goodness and the other invites man

towards evil. The force that pulls towards goodness is referred to as 'Malk' or 'Angel' and the force that incites towards evil is referred to as 'Satan'. In other words, there are two forces that are at work within a person, one is *dai khair*, that is one who invites towards good and the other is *dai sharr*, that is, one who invites to evil. Someone may find the use of the terms 'Angel' and 'Satan' disagreeable but the existence of two types of forces within a human being is something that cannot be denied. God has not intended any evil – whatever God has done is nothing but good.

Consider this that if sin did not exist in the world, there would be no goodness. Goodness develops from sin. It is the existence of sin that brings into being the existence of goodness. For instance, if someone has the opportunity to commit adultery and he possesses the capacity to do so but he abstains from this sin, this action is called goodness. If someone has the opportunity to steal or to be cruel and he is capable of these acts but he does not do so and positively abstains from them, then he is doing a good deed. Not indulging in an act of sin while having the opportunity

IT IS THE EXISTENCE OF THE TWO EXTREMES, EXCESS AND LIMITATION, THAT CREATES GOODNESS. IF A PERSON'S STATE REMAINED UNCHANGEABLE AND HE WAS NOT GRANTED ANY CAPABILITY TO CHANGE HIS SITUATION WITH THE CONSEQUENCE THAT HE WAS ALWAYS 'FORCED' TO DO GOOD NEVER HAVING THE ABILITY TO DO EVIL, THEN WHAT WOULD THERE BE THAT WE COULD CALL 'OBEDIENCE' OR GOODNESS?

and possessing the capability to do so, that is, a good deed deserving of reward.

[Here the questioner added the point that there exist in the world two forces, the positive and the negative, and the Promised Messiah^(av) continued his response]. If, for example, a person is not capable of shouting, his use of soft tones in speech will not be considered a behaviour of high esteem. Goodness cannot remain as goodness if a person remains always in the same state, being incapable of any change. It is the existence of the two extremes, excess and limitation, that creates goodness. If a person's state remained unchangeable and he was not granted any capability to change his situation with the consequence that he was always 'forced' to do

good never having the ability to do evil, then what would there be that we could call 'obedience' or goodness? God has, to an extent, given human beings control over their lives. They can change their state. They have the power to do good and have the ability to do evil. Whatever a person chooses to do, he will face the consequence of his actions.

Furthermore, we need to ask as to what kind of morals would be referred to as 'virtues' if there did not exist any 'vice'. It is only when there exists evil behaviour that good morals and virtue can exist. It is only through the exercise of having in mind the impression of a bad characteristic that a person can censure it. By the same token, something specially good is referred

to in a person's mind as a 'good characteristic' and as such he approvingly praises it. If there was no notion of 'bad' in the mind then goodness would also be non-existent.

It is the case that goodness is always distinguished by its contrast with evil. If there had existed only one aspect [of behaviour], then there would certainly not have been any reward nor any approval. Sorrow and joy, comfort and discomfort, darkness and light, bitter and sweet, poison and antidote, bad and good and vice and virtue, all come into being through the existence of its opposite. If opposites had not been created, life itself would have been very dull indeed. Had only one state been created for man, that would have become his nature, in which case what need would there be for reward and recompense? How could such a state become a source of gaining God's pleasure when all the deeds were acts of compulsion, a person having no power to do otherwise?

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا ۝
وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا ۝

It must be remembered that man has been given control – he has the power to do good or bad, to be kind or cruel, to be benevolent or miserly. It is always through an assessment of the two aspects of possible behaviour that one can form an opinion about a person being good or bad. Indeed, the essential defining characteristic of actions is that a person has the capability of doing the reverse of what he has actually done. It is the person who has the capacity to take revenge but does not, in fact, do so, who can be said to have performed an act of goodness. Conversely, the person who does not return physical aggression simply because he is unable to do so due to a physical disability, cannot be said to have performed a good deed by not retaliating. [The Holy Qur'an states in the following verse]:

*He indeed truly prospers who purifies it [the soul]
And he who corrupts it is ruined.
(Ch.91: vs.10-11)*

It is clear from this verse of the Holy Qur'an that the existence of goodness and good qualities has its basis in the existence of the capacity for both aspects [of choosing to do good or bad]. If a person were given

just one capability [to either do good or do bad], he would be like an impression that cannot be erased.

He who denies the existence of 'Angels' and 'Satan', is in fact denying self-evident and well observed truths. We witness everyday that people do good deeds and also that in the world around us many bad acts are committed and that the two forces are equally at work. This cannot be denied by any person. Who is there who does not find within himself some sense and influence of both? On this point no philosophy or logic can rule otherwise since the two forces are present and each is working in its own sphere. [*Malfoozat, Vol.10, pp.357-362*].

The more a person gains knowledge of God's power and control over all things and the more he becomes certain that disobedience of God will lead to a grave punishment, the more he will abstain from disobeying God and from transgressing against his laws. You should note that some people undergo a kind of 'death' before they actually meet their death. What kind of people are those who are

referred to as 'the virtuous', 'the devotees' and the '*Aqtaab*' i.e. those who shine like a pole-star acting as a spiritual pivot for others to follow? What is it that these people come to acquire that is so extraordinary? It is the certainty [of their knowledge about God]. Certain and definite knowledge necessarily and by its nature forces a human being towards a certain direction. In relation to God, vague suspicion cannot be enough. Doubt cannot be of benefit. Efficacy is only found in certainty. The certain knowledge of God's attributes has the effect greater than that of a terrifying strike of lightning. It is such an effect that makes the virtuous and holy people bow their heads before God and throw themselves down before Him. Remember, therefore, that the greater the certainty, the greater will be the abstention from sins.

At first glance, it may appear that there are many who make such claims but their example is like that of a pimple which shines because it is full of puss and the area surrounding it also seems to glisten as a result. It is, however, full only of matter that is nothing but puss and filth. Alongside claims of piety, there should be signs of abstention

from sins. Light, sunshine and heat are signs that the sun is out but a person who says that the sun is out in the middle of the night when there are no signs of the sun, would not be making a claim worthy of acceptance. Similar is the situation of those who say that they believe [in God and His teaching] when the signs of true belief are not with them – signs such as total dislike of sins and signs of God's favour and blessings are absent from them. What is required is that a person should abstain completely from all that is against the pleasure of God and should consider the disobedience of God and sins generally to be worse than swallowing fire.

Moreover, one should not be influenced by the material splendour or might of anyone in opposition to God. Even more than that, one should not be in the least concerned about the ability of others to bring benefit or harm besides the will of God. In this regard, all others should be treated as worthy of no more attention than a dead insect. In short, one should lose oneself completely in God, bringing every move under the will and pleasure of God.

The achievement of all these matters

is beyond the strength of man. It is not within the power of a person to attain all these blessings and to safeguard against all the impurities. For this purpose it has, therefore, been the way of God that he commissions and sends a human being (as a Messenger) to the world and manifests His extraordinary powers at the hands of the Messenger. [Malfoozat, Vol.10, pp.320-321].

There are two types of people in this world. One type is that to whom, unfortunately, it is taught that there are some holy people in the world who, merely through their attention, can make one reach a high spiritual station such that one acquires knowledge of heavenly matters. The other type of people are those who ponder over the Holy Qur'an and struggle and strive in the path of God in order to reach Him and it is

أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا
أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ
لَا يُفْتَنُونَ ﴿٣﴾

these people whose sincere efforts

and hard work does not go to waste. It is for the people who beg patiently at God's door, who knock at that door with true sincerity that this door is eventually opened. As a result of their true sincerity and deeply felt pain and anguish (for attaining the pleasure of God), such people are made masters and heirs of the treasures of God's bounty.

You should know that God is indifferent. What could it possibly matter to Him personally whether a person enters hell or enters paradise – He is indifferent to all that. If a person goes to hell, this does not affect God in any way whatsoever and if someone enters paradise, it does not benefit Him in any way. There is no personal gain or loss for God. God states [in the Holy Qur'an]:

Do men think that they will be left alone because they say, 'We believe', and that they will not be tested?

(Ch.29: v.3)

That is, [do they imagine that] God is pleased merely by people stating that they have believed when the situation is that their verbal statement has not yet been tested as

to whether they are, in reality, believers or not and the truth or falsehood of their utterance has not been made manifest. Hence, the definite and true way is that a person should first adopt a sincere and truthful attitude [in his search for God] and in so doing he should bring upon himself a thousand deaths. It is only then that he will attract God's Mercy and it is only then, that God will glance towards him. Those who are of the opinion that with some magic spell they can somehow become holy people and that at a mere touch they can become masters of heavenly treasures, they are the ones who are always disappointed and remain deprived. [Malfoozat, Vol.10, pp.206-207]



The Concept of The Awaited Messiah in World Faiths

by Fazal Ahmad - UK

A year ago, the world mistakenly celebrated the advent of the new millennium of the Christian Era because the coming year now began with a '2' rather than a '1'; the true Millennium is actually starting in January 2001. However, the significance to Christianity of this new epoch is clearly evident. It is interesting to note that many other world faiths also attach a significance to this epoch (not based on the Christian Era) in terms of the advent of a final messiah to unite world faith. This article examines the concept of messiah as held by other world faiths.

Introduction

The year 2000 or 2001 has developed a catalogue of mythology around the world related to the advent of a final messiah who would come to destroy evil and unite mankind. It is unerring how often this concept reccurs and how the various traditions can link this tradition and the timing of the advent of their messiah to the current age.

So many religious people are waiting for the Messiah to come in this age, that in the coming years, there will be growing disillusionment among them, unless, of course, people are unaware that their expectation has already been met, but that they have failed to

realise it. Could it be that through an over-zealous 'literal' interpretation of their texts and folklore, they have made conditions impossible for anyone to ever fulfil the criteria for the Messiah, and in so doing, have made it impossible for themselves to recongise the awaited Messiah?

Let us take a closer look at the concept of the messiah in different religious traditions to determine whether the different faiths anticipate several individuals, or one awaited messiah for the globe.

Return of Lord Krishna^(as)

Hindus expect the reappearance of their Lord Krishna^(as) at the time of the Kali Yuga, or the Age of Iron and Chaos. They believe that when

the world is in darkness, Krishna^(as) will return in judgement in the form of a new avatar. According to their description of the Kali Yuga, they believe that we are currently at the age for his return, when the world is in an age of spiritual decadence (Ref.3 p.182). This is to be followed by a regenerated era. Krishna^(as) himself declares the progressive line of prophethood in the following text:

Whenever the Law declines and the purpose of life is forgotten, I manifest myself on earth. I am born in every age to protect the good, to destroy evil, and to re-establish the Law.

(Bhagavad Gita, 4:7-8)

There is also a tradition of *Kalki*, the final Hindu avatar who would appear from the West mounted on a white horse. Kalki is also known as the conqueror of dualities and of darkness. The texts describe the advent of Kalki:

When the practices taught by the Vedas and the institutes of law shall nearly have ceased, and the close of the kali age shall be nigh, a portion of that

divine being who exists of his own spiritual nature in the character of Brahma, and who is the beginning and the end, and who comprehends all things, shall descend upon the earth He will then re-establish righteousness upon earth; and the minds of those who live at the end of the Kali age shall be awakened, and shall be as pellucid as crystal. The men who are thus changed by virtue of that peculiar time shall be as the seeds of human beings, and shall give birth to a race who shall follow the laws of the Krita age, the Age of Purity.

(Vishnu Purana, 4.24)

Again here, the verses first give an indication of the state of the world when the Kalki avatar would appear in terms of lawlessness and a lack of spirituality. It then talks of Kalki re-awakening the spiritual minds of people and signalling the dawn of a new spiritual (Krita) age.

The question is whether Kalki will come just for India and the Hindus and this age of righteousness will be limited in scope only to the Indian sub-continent, or whether Kalki

COULD IT BE THAT THROUGH AN OVER-ZEALOUS ‘LITERAL’ INTERPRETATION OF THEIR TEXTS AND FOLKLORE, THEY HAVE MADE CONDITIONS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANYONE TO EVER FULFIL THE CRITERIA FOR THE MESSIAH, AND IN SO DOING, HAVE MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEMSELVES TO RECONGISE THE AWAITED MESSIAH?

would have a more global message and scope. There are other local traditions of a similar nature such as among the Iranians.

Saoshyant - Zoroastrian Messiah

The Zoroastrians believe that Zoroaster^(as) would return in the form of Saoshyant, the new Persian messiah at the onset of their twelfth millennium (around 2000 CE). The nature of Saoshyant is preserved in the following text:

He shall be the victorious Benefactor (Saoshyant) by name and World-renovator (Astavat-ereta) by name. He is Benefactor because he will benefit the entire physical world; he is World-renovator because he will establish the physical living existence indestructible. He will oppose the evil of the progeny of the biped and withstand the enmity

produced by the faithful.

(*Avesta, Farvardin Yasht*, 13.129)

This text describes the characteristics of Saoshyant as being World-renovator, a characteristic shared by Maitreya Buddha as we shall see later. Zoroaster^(as) had a local mission for the people of Persia (modern Iran), whereas Saoshyant seems to have a wider scope to his future mission as he is decribed as ‘*World-renovator*’ and we are told that he will ‘*benefit the entire physical world*’. He will stand up against evil.

Another text describes the state of the world after Saoshyant arrives:

The victorious World-renovator and his helpers ... shall make the existence renovated - ageless, deathless, unputrifying, uncorruptible, ever-

living, ever benefitting, ruling at will. The dead shall rise up, life shall prevail indestructible, and existence shall be renovated at the will of God!
(*Avesta, Zamyad Yasht*, 19.11)

In this text, an interesting point is the use of similar terminology as seen in the Bible. Where this text says that '*the dead shall rise up*', it means the spiritually dead shall be reawakened, rather than a literal meaning of the world being filled with the walking dead.

Immanuel – Jewish Messiah

The Jewish faith has a concept of the prophet or messiah called Immanuel. In the Old Testament or Torah, there is a record of the visions of Daniel:

I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man. He came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away. And

his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.
(*Daniel*, 7:13-14)

Elsewhere in the Torah, we read:

I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.
(*Deuteronomy*, 18:18)

The Jewish race have been anticipating the advent of a warrior king messiah for many millenia to free them from slavery from the Roman powers. Immanuel will be from the bloodline of King David^(as) and will restore the Jewish race to their lofty status of the Chosen People.

The danger for the Jews is that if they have missed the actual advent of their expected Messiah, the conditions of his fulfilment will now be totally out of context two thousand years later as they are not in bondage in the world, rather they themselves hold power over the media and politics; so who is the Messiah supposed to free them from?

Moreover, the Jewish race has always guarded its privileged position as a chosen race, superior to the rest of humanity. However, the vision of Daniel describes a man whom '*all peoples, nations and languages*' would serve. Does this imply that God would now hold all men on an equal footing, and that the Jewish race would no longer have an exclusive path of communication with God?

Reappeared Christ

Christians believe that Christ was resurrected after his death, and is sat in heaven, waiting to return bodily to earth. Matthew tells about the time of the readvent of Christ:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days [latter days], the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken; then will appear the son of man in heaven, and then all tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will

gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

(*Matthew, 24:29-31*)

This verse describes the signs of the latter days in a way that tends to suggest that both the sun and the moon would be eclipsed as signs of the second coming of the son of man (Jesus^(as)). The same theme occurs elsewhere in the Bible in Mark 13:24 and Luke 21:25. We shall come across a similar prediction for the Mahdi of Islam later.

It is interesting to note that in his mission, Jesus^(as) always limited his scope to the Jews, whereas in reference to the second advent of Jesus^(as), Matthew describes how '*all tribes of the earth will mourn*', implying a more global message as we have seen with traditions of other religions already.

Christianity has been in turmoil over the last hundred years with scholarship challenging long-held concepts such as Trinity, Resurrection and Ascension. There have been discoveries such as the Dead Sea Scrolls which have challenged the context and nature of the message of Jesus^(as) as portrayed

by Christians. There are now many cults around the world who, having taken the passages of the Book of Revelations in the Bible literally, are predicting doom for the world, raising their own claimants to the throne of messiah, and leading people to suicide in anticipation of the picture of carnage which they have conjured up. Such a messiah would not be in keeping with our experience of previous messengers of God. All previous Messengers have delivered a message of peace; why would Jesus' second coming be any different?

Amida or Maitreya Buddha

The Buddhists around the world attach great significance to the next advent of Buddha^(as) as *Maitreya* (World Unifier). The name *Maitreya* is derived from *Mitra*, the word for friend, and is similar to the Zoroastrian Saoshyant who we encountered earlier. Buddha^(as) is claimed to have said regarding Maitreya:

I am not the first Buddha [awakened one] who has come upon the Earth, nor will I be the last. In due time, another Buddha will rise in the world, a Holy One, a supreme

enlightened one, endowed with auspicious wisdom embracing the Universe, an incomparable leader of men, a ruler of gods and mortals. He will reveal to you the same eternal truths which I have taught you. He will establish his Law [religion], glorious in its origins, glorious at the climax and glorious at the goal in the spirit and the letter. He will proclaim a righteous life wholly perfect and pure, such as I now proclaim. His disciples will number many thousands, while mine number many hundreds. He will be known as Maitreya.

(Digha Nikaya, iii.76)

The term Buddha is referring to a prophet of God or awakened one, and in this quote, Gautama Buddha^(as) is clearly showing that he is one in a line of prophets or Buddhas. The final Buddha's message would be global in scope and would attract a large following as is suggested in the expression '*his disciples will number many thousands while mine number many hundreds*'. Clearly there are more than a few hundred Buddhists in the world, so this expression is

THEY HAVE A TRADITION OF AN OLIVE-SKINNED MESSIAH WITH A LONG WHITE BEARD WHO WILL COME FROM THE EAST. IN 1912, MANY OF THEIR SHAMANS CLAIMED TO HAVE HAD A DREAM OF A STRANGE AND WONDROUS WHITE FIGURE ‘TOWERING OVER ALL HUMANITY, WITH SPECIAL SERVANTS UNDER HIM, GUIDING THE MASSES OF THE PEOPLE TO GOD.

metaphorical showing a difference in scales and scope for the message of Maitreya.

Gautama Buddha^(as) also tells of the time when Maitreya would arrive as being in the latter days:

Three leaders have there been: Kakusandha, Konagamana, and the leader Kassapa too. I am now the perfect Buddha; and there will be Maitreya too before this same auspicious eon runs to the end of its years.

(Anagatavamsa)

Another recorded text expands on the achievements of the Maitreya to come:

Listen attentively with one heart. A man whose spirit shines brightly, a man whose mind is completely unified, a

man whose virtue excels everyone - such a man will truly appear in this world. When he preaches precious laws, all the people will be totally satisfied as if the thirsty drink sweet drops of rain from heaven. And each and every one will attain the path of liberation from struggles.

(Sutra of the Great Accomplishment of the Maitreya).

The Mahayana Buddhists expect their messiah to be Christlike and to return in South Asia (due to his similarity to Bodhidharma) 25 centuries after Lord Buddha^(as) under the name of Amida Buddha. This again brings the timing to around 2000 CE. In Japan, Honen (1133 - 1212) in the 12th century taught that those people of pure hearts and child-like simplicity, would find

peace in the Western Paradise of Amida Buddha. A Japanese monk on Mount Hiei called Kuya (903 - 972 CE) wrote a simple poem about Amida:

*He never fails
To reach the Lotus Land of Bliss
Who calls,
If only once,
The name of Amida.*

*A far, far distant land
Is Paradise,
I've heard them say;
But those who want to go
Can reach there in a day.*

Kuya used to sing this hymn (Ref.7, p.503-507) in open market places, and people would join him in this invocation to *Namu Amida Butsu*. Amida Butsu is derived from the Sanskrit figure Amitabha who voluntarily postponed his own salvation until all human beings have been saved.

We shall see later that the name Amida is remarkably close to the Islamic name Ahmad, and this may also have some significance.

Confucius^(as) on the Messiah
Prophet Confucius^(as) spoke of the

characteristics and power of a divine moral man who will come:

As soon as such a man shall make his appearance in the world, all people will reverence him. Whatever he says, all people will believe it. Whatever he does, all people will be pleased with it. Thus his fame and name will spread and fill all the civilised world, extending even to savage countries, wherever ships and carriages reach, wherever the labour and enterprise of man penetrate, wherever the heavens overshadow and the earth sustain, wherever the sun and moon shine, wherever frost and dew fall. All who have life and breathe will honour and love him.

(Doctrine of the Mean, 31 - 32)

While he didn't name the Messiah or when he would appear, or even where, the characteristics of the age and of the person have similarities with other such messianic expectations.

Sikhism of the Final Days

The Sikh faith talks of a time when the world would be united:

Now is the gracious Lord's ordinance promulgated, no one shall cause another pain or injury; all mankind shall live in peace together, under a shield of administrative benevolence.

(*Sri Raga M.5*, p.74)

While the Sikh faith appears not to have a concept of a final messiah, there is a similar concept of world unity and harmony.

Mahdi

In 1889, the Mahdi for the Muslim world and the rest of the religious world came in India in the form of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as). The Muslim world awaits the return of the Messiah and Mahdi in the latter days at the start of the 14th century of Islam. There is a tradition of the Holy Prophet^(sa) in which he said:

He [the Messiah], in the beginning, will be like a poor stranger unknown and uncared for, and Islam then will be in the hopeless and helpless plight of an exhausted camel who has laid down its head and is wagging its tail. With such a start he will establish an empire of God in this world. He will be

the final demonstration and proof of God's merciful Wish to acquaint man with the right ways of life.

(Nahjul Balagha Sermon, 187)

According to this tradition then, the Messiah would appear to have a small and powerless community, but will bring the world together under the banner of truth and justice, i.e. Islam.

There is also a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa) recorded by Hadhrat Imam Muhammad bin Ali^(ra) regarding heavenly signs of the advent of the Mahdi:

There are two testimonies for our Mahdi which have never occurred since the creation of this Universe and that is a lunar eclipse would occur on the 1st night in a month of Ramadhan, and the sun would be eclipsed in the middle of the same month (of Ramadhan).

There has been a more detailed treatment of this subject many times in the *Review of Religions*, however, suffice it to say that Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) of Qadian in India made his claim to be the

Messiah and Mahdi in 1889, and during Ramadhan in March / April 1894, eclipses of the Sun and Moon occurred on the prescribed days and were visible from Qadian.

He also made his claim to be that final messiah awaited by all of the true faiths of the world; a world unifier who came with a message of love and peace and truth rather than a destructive message.

There are many millions of Muslims who have not yet accepted him as the Mahdi, but even this should not be unexpected as this tradition of the Holy Prophet^(sa) illustrates:

Abdullah bin Amarra relates that the Holy Prophet^(sa) said: 'Surely things will happen to my people as happened earlier to Israelites, they will resemble each other like one shoe in a pair resembles the other to the extent that if anyone among the Israelites has openly committed adultery to his mother, there will be some who will do this in my Ummah as well. Verily the Israelites were divided into 72 Jama'ats but my people will be divided into 73

Jama'ats, all of them will be in the fire except one.

(Tirmidhi)

There are other traditions which allude to a messiah even though they fall outside the fold of the major world religions.

Eskimo Messiah

The Eskimo people live in the Arctic regions of North America. They have a tradition of an olive-skinned messiah with a long white beard who will come from the East. In 1912, many of their shamans claimed to have had a dream of a strange and wondrous white figure 'towering over all humanity, with special servants under him, guiding the masses of the people to God.' (Ref.1, p.28). The timing of the dreams of the Shaman are consistent with the advent of Hadhrat Ahmad^(as) in India.

Maori Messiah

The Maoris of New Zealand during the late 19th century CE began to abandon their pagan traditions and tried to gather their people as forerunners of the forthcoming Judaeo-Christian messiah (Ref.1, p.24). This great messianic expectation took hold from 1820 to

the start of the 20th century CE, again at the time of the ministry of Hadhrat Ahmad^(as).

Quetzalcoatl in Mexico

In Mexico, there is a long tradition of the feathered serpent king known as *Quetzalcoatl*. Although literally translated as feathered serpent, it can also mean twin brother.

Regarding the readvent of Quetzalcoatl, the tradition states:

A great teacher with olive skin and bearded will come from the direction of the rising sun, flying in a huge canoe with massive wings a few centuries after the coming of the white brother.

The white brother was the arrival of the Spanish in Mexico, and their destruction of the Mayan and Aztec culture. They systematically subjugated the Mexican peoples and took away their treasures. After a few centuries, the Mexicans anticipate that their saviour will return from the East, to restore the dignity of the native Indians after the white brother has almost annihilated the world of the red brother.

North American Indians

Just as the Mexicans look forward to a redeemer to return their dignity and status after their suffering at the hands of foreign invaders, similarly the North American Indians have many traditions in the form of Ghost Dances in which they foresee justice for the Europeans who took their land, and a return to the old ways. One such tradition is the Ghost Dance of the Sioux Indians which states in a visionary form:

All the Indian nations formed one tribe and could understand each other ... The earth will roll up like a blanket with all that bad white man's stuff ... and underneath will be our old-young Indian earth with all our relatives come to life again.

The Hopi Indians have traditions of the latter days. They believe that in the latter days, we would see cobwebs in the sky and the white man would build a permanent teepee (dwelling) in the sky. Some interpreters see the cobweb in the sky as the vapour trails left by aircraft, and the sky teepee as the International Space Station. Therefore there is renewed hope among such native peoples of a

Messiah	Scope of Message	Nature of Message
Krishna ^(as) in the form of Kalki	Re-establish righteousness upon the Earth	During an age of lawlessness and irreligion, Kalki would re-establish spirituality in a new age of purity.
Saoshyant for the Zoroastrians	World-renovator	He would oppose falsehood and re-awaken spirituality.
Immanuel for the Jews	A man whom 'all peoples, nations and languages' would serve	He would have an ever-lasting dominion over all peoples, and would speak as a messenger of God.
Jesus Christ ^(as) for the Christians	Appears to have a universal message, although modern Christians expect an exclusive message for Christians.	The son of man would re-appear after eclipses of the Sun and Moon to gather the religious people from around the world. Some Christians expect him to destroy all non-Christians.
Maitreya Buddha	World-Unifier	He would be a leader of men who would establish his Law, and lead a perfect and pure life.
Amida Buddha	Messiah for Mahayana Buddhists	A Christ-like figure (perhaps from India) who would bring salvation to all mankind.
Mahdi for Muslims	A messiah for all mankind	A humble man whose advent would be signalled by eclipses of the Sun and Moon, and would rejuvenate spirituality, and unite all of the world's religious people.

return to justice and harmony.

Conclusions

We have seen how very similar concepts are presented by the religions across the globe. In the case of the messiah, he is expected

to come in the latter days (around 2000 CE) when the world has fallen into lawlessness and chaos, and irreligion is rife. The messiah would come to fight evil and bring the victory of good to unite all of mankind. There are variations

around this central theme.

In the Buddhist tradition, Maitreya may refer to the law brought by Prophet Muhammad^(sa) in the form of the Qur'an, while the later Buddha Amida has a striking resemblance in name to Ahmad^(as). In the verse from Matthew in the Bible, the signs of the Messiah are the eclipses of the Sun and Moon, likewise the signs of the Messiah as foretold by Prophet Muhammad^(sa) although in this case, he gave more precise details. At the advent of Ahmad^(as), there were eclipses of the Sun and Moon just after he made his claim, and the eclipses were witnessed in fulfillment of these prophecies.

There cannot have been several competing creators making the universe and the world, therefore it is highly likely that when we all refer to God, we are referring to the same ONE Creator. If this is the case, it is not surprising that all of these groups have a similar concept related to the advent of their messiah in the latter days. However, it would be naive or nonsensical to assume that the same ONE God could send different messiahs to different races with diverging messages. Each race

would then expect the messiah to protect them alone while destroying mankind.

Can we really envisage a scenario in which several messiahs will descend upon the earth at the same time, and fight to the last until one is victorious; in the process destroying vast numbers of humanity?

This cannot be the case. There is only ONE God, and He has sent just ONE messiah for all of mankind with a single message to unite all spiritual people under the worship of the ONE true God. We believe that Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) was that messiah and that careful study would reveal that his characteristics match those anticipated by religious people the world over.

In answer to criticism from other religious groups in India at the time of his advent, the Promised Messiah^(as) wrote:

I proclaim to all Muslims, Christians, Hindus and Aryas that I have no enemy in the world. I love mankind with the love that a compassionate mother has for her children;

even more so. I am only the enemy of false doctrines which kill truth.

(*Roohani Khazain*, Vol.17, Arbaeen Pt.1, p.344)

He also addressed the anticipation of the Messiah in other world religions in the following words:

Remember very well that no one shall ever come down from heaven. All our opponents who live today shall die and none from them shall ever see Jesus^(as) son of Mary coming down from heaven; then their children that are left after them shall also die and none from among them shall ever see Jesus^(as) son of Mary coming down from heaven and then their third generation shall also die and they too shall not see the son of Mary coming down. Then God shall cause great consternation in their minds and they shall then say that the period of the dominance of the cross has also passed away and the way of life has changed completely, yet the son of Mary has not come down. Then in dismay the wise among them shall forsake this belief and

three centuries from now shall not have passed when those who await the coming of Jesus^(as) son of Mary, whether they be Muslims or Christians, shall relinquish altogether this conception. Then shall prevail only one religion over the whole world and there shall be only one religious Leader. I came only to sow the seed which has been planted by my hand. It shall now grow and flourish and there is none who can hinder it.

(*Roohani Khazain*, Vol. 20: Tazkiratush Shahadatain p.67)

The failure to recognise the world's messiah is due to an erroneous literal translation of the texts by people around the world related to their own anticipated messiah. In time, people will abandon their local anticipation and turn to the real Messiah appointed by God for all mankind, but the benefit will also be for all of mankind.

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Who are the ‘Jinn’?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, the Fourth Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, from time to time offers to people of all nationalities, faiths and beliefs the opportunity of raising questions and issues that may be of interest to them. Presented below is the answer given to a question raised in a session held in November 1995 in London for Arabic speaking people.

[Note: *All reference to the verses of the Holy Qur'an are given in Arabic, wherever possible. The English translation, presented in Italics, is taken from translation of the Holy Qur'an by Hadhrat Maulvi Sher Ali Sahib^(ra).*]

Transcribed by Amatul Hadi Ahmad

Question:

If we understand the existence of the Jinn to be some creatures who may exist somewhere in the world, in some different dimensions, there is then no problem [about this issue]?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:

There is no problem and the ‘Jinn’ do not create any problems. The problem is only in the minds of those people who like to make others believe that there are some creatures called ‘Jinn’ over whom they have command. Such people then use these matters to extract money from others for services rendered to them by way of pretence at dispelling the ‘Jinn’ and so on. The problem only lies in this area otherwise the ‘Jinn’ (whatever they may be) are beings that do not

interfere with the lives of human beings.

The most important issue that people do not raise but that needs to be raised is in relation to Sharia – how far are the ‘Jinn’ obliged or commanded by God to accept a Prophet? If the ‘Jinn’ are considered to be some kind of a separate entity in themselves, if they have a distinct existence, what is their situation with regard to Sharia or the religious law? If the ‘Jinn’ are considered to exist in some ethereal form, similar in nature to, for instance, the angels then the issue becomes quite clear. We do not, of course, know what angels are like but we know that they can take on a form and become visible as an apparition. An angel, for instance, is sometimes seen in

the form of a dove as was seen by Jesus Christ^(as). The Holy Prophet^(sa) saw the angel Gabriell at one time in the form of a being that filled the entire horizon and at another time in the form of a human being. This implies that angels do not possess a physical shape or form as we do. However, in order to be seen they have to acquire some form. The Holy Qur'an referring to such an event states:

فَتَشَلَّ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا

And he appeared to her in the form of a perfect man.

(Ch.19, v.18)

That is, the angel that appeared before Mary was not in his own form – it was a well formed, handsome man that Mary saw but it was not a human being – it was an angel of God. Hence, angels have to take different forms when they appear before people. Even Prophet Abraham^(as) misunderstood the messengers of God who visited him to be ordinary human beings. They were so much like human beings that Abraham^(as) ordered a goat kid to be prepared for the guests. The point is that Abraham^(as) was not

able to recognise the true identity of his 'guests'.

I am not here proposing that the 'Jinn' possess a form similar to that of the angels. However, in as far as the Jinn may exist in some ethereal form, there may be some similarity of nature between the two. As the Jinn do not possess a material shape, they may appear in the form of an apparition, in a similar way to the angels and as such they may appear differently to different people.

The question now is are such 'Jinn' *Mukallaf bisharia* or not? That is, do they come under the rule of religious law? Do they have to accept a Sharia, a religious law? Who becomes *Dai-illallah*, the one who calls them to God, and how is the message conveyed to them? Is it 'scattered' all around in the air so that the 'Jinn' may hear? If the Jinn were to be taken as being held responsible under the religious law of Sharia then further questions arise as to how the 'Jinn' perform salat and the Pilgrimage? How do they give zakat? How do they get married and distribute their legacy? These are all matters that are governed by the Sharia.

It is only when such issues are confronted, that it becomes apparent that if the 'Jinn' are considered to be some ethereal beings, then it cannot be the case that they would be obliged by God to accept any human Prophet. This is so because a Prophet has to be from among his own kind. In the case of angels, the Holy Qur'an rejects the idea that an angel should descend as a Prophet when it is human beings that are being addressed. How then can it be that a human Prophet should be sent to the ethereal beings, if we take the 'Jinn' to be that? If that is not the case then are there 'Jinn' Prophets? How is the word of God revealed to them? We do not read anywhere in the Holy Qur'an that God has sent *wahi* to a 'Jinn'. We read that God sent *wahi* even to the honey bee but we do not read this about the Jinn in the Holy Qur'an or in the Hadith .

This line of argument also decides one issue very clearly and that is that the 'Jinn' mentioned in the Holy Qur'an who accepted the Holy Prophet^(sa) were not the 'Jinn' of the ethereal type who cannot in any way be expected by God to follow a Prophet or a Sharia because they are a different type of creation. They do not possess a physical form that

would enable them to follow the Sharia that is revealed to a human being for the purpose and requirements of human beings. If the 'Jinn' are a different type of creation, their Sharia should be different otherwise, all the rules stipulated in the Holy Qu'an would be applicable to the ethereal 'Jinn' and these would include rules relating to the right to privacy, extending verbal greetings of *Assalamo-alaikum*, marriage, divorce and inheritance, to name but a few. Hence, the question needs to be asked as to whether this Sharia is applicable to the 'Jinn'? People who hold traditional views about this matter do not try to extend the application of their beliefs to different situations (when they would realise the obvious contradictions).

I do not deny the fact that, among other things, there may exist some ethereal creation that has its own function and its own purpose. However, the 'Jinn' who came to the Holy Prophet^(sa) and became Muslims, they were people of a mountainous tribe who did not wish to be seen by the people around. They did not wish to be seen by the people around and that is why they chose the night time to visit the Holy

Prophet^(sa). They came and camped outside Medina and while they camped, they built fires and cooked food. This is an established fact because when the Companions visited the place the following morning they saw these signs of a normal, human encampment. This points to the fact that they were ordinary human beings. They have also been recorded as saying, 'Look at us, how foolish we were! We used to think that God would not send another Prophet but here we are – we have just met a Prophet!' In short, they were a group of people who did not wish to be seen publicly in that area. Hence, they came at night and left early morning before people were out and about. They were, of course, *Mukallaf bisharia*, that is, they were answerable for acceptance or otherwise of the Message that the Holy Prophet^(sa) had brought. It was necessary and essential for them to accept a Prophet when he is sent. Hence, they had to be human beings.

The word 'Jinn' is also applicable to great people, people who hide, people who belong to rough and rebellious tribes, people of the mountains – all these types of people can be referred to as 'Jinn'.

In short, my view is this that it is possible for a special type of existence, that is neither angelic nor human, to exist separately and they may be referred to as 'Jinn'. However, there is no evidence whatsoever from any Holy Book that either Prophets are sent to them from among them or that human Prophets are also made to deliver their message to the 'Jinn'. Consequently, the Sharia is not applicable to them.

The Holy Qur'an states:

يَعۡشَرَ الْجِۖنِّ وَالۡاِنۡسِ
 اَلَمْ يَاتِكُمۡ رُسُلٌ مِّنۡكُمۡ
 يَقۡصُۜوۡنَ عَلَيۡكُمۡ اٰیٰتِیْ
 وَیُنۡذِرُوۡنَکُمۡ لِقَآءِ یَوۡمِکُمۡ
 هٰذَا قَالُوۡا شَهِدۡنَا عَلٰٓی
 اَنۡفُسِنَا وَغَرَّتۡهُمُ الْحَیۡوَةُ
 الدُّنۡیَا وَشَهِدُوۡا عَلٰٓی
 اَنۡفُسِهِمۡ اَنَّهُمۡ کَاۡنُوۡا کٰفِرِیۡنَ

O company of Jinn and men! did not Messengers come to you from among yourselves who related to you My Signs and who warned you of the meeting on this your day?' They will say, 'We bear witness against ourselves.' And the worldly life deceived them. And they will bear witness against themselves that they were disbelievers.
(Ch.6, v.131)

Although this verse speaks of 'Jinn' as well as men, but there is positive evidence that the interpretation suggested by Sayyed Hilmi Al-Shafa'ee Sahib [the Egyptian co-host of the Session] is the only acceptable interpretation. He has suggested that this verse is, in fact, proof that the 'Jinn' being addressed here are human beings – they are not anything other than human beings. This is because there is no record in the Holy Qur'an that Prophets are sent separately for the 'Jinn' and 'Bashar' (i.e. human beings). There is no evidence from the Holy Qur'an that on the Day of Judgement the 'Jinn' and Bashar will be brought separately for questioning. This means that the address, *Ya Ma'asharal Jinn* (O' company of Jinn) applies to a type or section of

people – but people who are human beings, nevertheless.

This reminds me of some other verses of the Holy Qur'an that are very similar in nature and indicate that the people being addressed are not some ethereal beings but are, in fact, human beings. I quote another verse from the Holy Qur'an which is from Surah Ar-Rahman and begins similarly:

يَعُشْرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ
إِنْ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ
تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ فَانْفُذُوا
لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَانٍ
فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ

O company of Jinn and men! if you have the power to go beyond the confines of the heavens and the earth, then do go. But you cannot go save with authority. Which then of the favours of your Lord will you twain deny?
(Ch.55, vs.34-35)

What is meant here by '*Ya masharal Jinn-e-wal Ins*', (that is, O' company of Jinn and men!)? The meaning of this statement is the same in both of the verses quoted above. According to the Quranic usage, the word 'Jinn' can be proved to mean the 'bourgeoisie', the 'capitalists', the people of authority and influence, the great nations and, as against this, the word 'Ins' can be interpreted as the 'proletariat', the ordinary people, the masses, the 'socialist' nations, and both of these groups have leaders. During this century, when the world came to be divided into two factions, the 'capitalists' and the mass movements, both groups had their leaders who ruled and commanded them. The address here is, in fact, to the leaders of the people of power and influence as well as to the leaders of the common people – to the leaders of the rich nations as well as to the leaders of the poor nations. Through this verse of the Holy Qur'an, (Ch.6: v.131), the two groups are being reminded that Prophets have been sent to all of you, whichever group you may belong to. This is an interpretation which I believe to be not only applicable, but it is the only interpretation that is valid here in this context.

I now refer to the other verse quoted above, (Ch.55, v.34). Here also it is quite clear that '*Ya masharal Jinn*' and '*Ya masharal Ins*' indicate the two divisions of mankind because here it is very clear that it speaks of a time when it would be possible for mankind to think of crossing and going beyond the limits of 'heaven' and earth. As long as this step remained an impossibility for mankind, the Qur'anic challenge was without meaning. It was, therefore, a challenge for the future. It could be said about the 'Jinn' (if they are taken to be some supernatural creation) that they could perhaps jump up and cross certain boundaries, but it was not possible for mankind, until very recently, to reach out to any significant height.

What did the earlier generations of mankind possess that they could utilise for this purpose? They had nothing for this purpose. Even aeroplanes did not exist at that time. From this it becomes evident that the Qur'anic challenge proposes that if mankind attempts to go out of and beyond the periphery of the whole universe, *aqtaris-samawat-e-wal-arth*, it can try to do so, but it would most certainly fail in this attempt. It would be so because, as the Holy

Qur'an states:

يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمَا شَوْاْهُ
مِّنْ نَّارٍ وَنُحَاسٍ
فَلَا تَنْتَصِرَانِ

*There shall be sent against you a
flame of fire, and smoke; and you
shall not be able to help
yourselves.*

(Ch.55: v.36)

That is, if you did attempt to go beyond the limits of the universe, fire would be bolted upon you, and you will not be able to cross the barriers.

This scenario points towards a future age, towards an age when mankind would be divided into two main groups, the people of power and influence and the masses - the 'proletariat' and the 'bourgeoisie' or 'Socialists' and 'Capitalists'. Both types of groups would try to go to the moon, to mars and beyond. They would try to cross the limits of the universe – this is the prophecy. The Holy Qur'an does not use the words 'aqtarul-arth', meaning the limits of

the earth, because this and the skies around the earth is a very limited and small area. The challenge of the Holy Qur'an, on the other hand, relates to the whole universe. The Holy Qur'an is stating that it would be impossible for mankind to cross the ultimate periphery, the outer boundaries of the universe. At the time when the Holy Qur'an was first revealed, neither the 'Jinn' nor the 'Ins' [i.e. the ordinary people] understood the true meaning of this verse. In the present age, however, we can understand and fully appreciate the true significance of this verse because now we know that it would require between eighteen and twenty billion years for a man, travelling at the speed of light, to reach the end of the universe – (the speed of light being 186 miles per second). The problem is even more compounded when we consider that the universe is an ever expanding universe. Pointing to this, God states in the Holy Qur'an, that the universe is being expanded constantly and this is exactly what the scientists tell us, that it is an expanding Universe. This is the meaning of this verse, (Ch.55: v.34). In fact it is a prophecy, a great prophecy, about the times to come, inventions to be made and ambitions

born in man. At such a time, mankind would make plans to conquer the Universe and God has stated that they will not succeed in this aim. It would be impossible for them to do so.

In short, it is not the 'Jinn' of folklore that have been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. (It is, as stated above, a reference to people of great influence and authority). We know this from the facts so why should we interpret the Holy Qur'an against the facts that have already appeared before our eyes. It is a fact that both groups, the 'proletariat' and the 'bourgeoisie', the Communist block and the Capitalist nations have made attempts to reach out into space.

An interpretation of the term 'Jinn' that encompasses a broader understanding and one that does not deny the scientific findings of man, enables us to pay a much greater homage and tribute to the Holy Qur'an.

I have discussed this question at some length in order to render advice to those people who overemphasise the belief in 'Jinn' as some supernatural creation. Such a belief is quite irrelevant. The important

thing is to interpret the Holy Qur'an correctly and in a manner that does not contradict the scientific discoveries of man. In fact, such discoveries support the correct interpretation of the Holy Qur'an. I have presented my interpretation from which it is clear that this single verse can be quoted as proof of the existence of God as well as of the truth of the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa).

Those who insist that the term 'Jinn' only applies to some creation that 'occupy' women, or capture someone else's chickens, or that it is something whose services are utilised through charms for gaining another person's love, such people should tell us if and where these things are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an? Moreover, if such 'Jinn' have made an attempt (at going across the periphery of the universe) how do we know? Men of an earlier age could not have made an attempt anyway but if such 'Jinn' have made an attempt, we do not know about it. Where does that leave the evidence for the truth of the Holy Qur'an? My interpretation, on the other hand, offers a clear argument for the truth of the Holy Qur'an.



Yus Asaph and Jesus^(as)

By Maulana J.D. Shams

This is an extract taken from the book ‘Where did Jesus die?’ written by the author in 1945 while serving as a Missionary in the United Kingdom. His book covered the evidence for the life, survival on the cross and travels of Jesus^(as) in search of the Lost Tribes of the Israelites. In this section, he described the evidence to suggest that Jesus^(as) travelled to Kashmir where he preached and eventually passed away.

I have already discussed in the previous pages the statement that Jesus^(as) did not die on the Cross, but came out of the sepulchre with his body of clay, met his disciples in secret during his stay in Palestine, then, to preach to the lost ten tribes of Israel, went to Nasibin, then to Persia, then to Afghanistan then through the Punjab, reached Kashmir.

The Promised Messiah^(as) to whom God revealed that ‘*The Messiah, Son of Mary, is dead*’ heard from the inhabitants of Kashmir that in Srinagar, in the Khan Yar Street, is a tomb renowned as the tomb of Nabi Sahib (i.e. a prophet). The word Nabi, which is only used in two languages, Hebrew and Arabic, excited his curiosity and led him to the conclusion that he was a Semitic

prophet and preferably a Hebrew prophet, as no prophet appeared from Muslims after the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa), whose tomb is situated in Medina. Further enquiry confirmed his view, for he was told that the prophet, who was also known by the name of Yus Asaph was a stranger and came to Kashmir some 1900 years ago. These and other factors led him to believe that the buried prophet in Srinagar could be none but Jesus^(as) of Nazareth who went to India in search of the tribes of Israel living in these northern regions of India.

Here I relate a few points which support this view:

1. There is oral and written evidence of distinguished people in Srinagar that the occupant of the

tomb under discussion was a prophet Yus Asaph who came to Kashmir some 1900 years ago and was also called Prince. A long list of witnesses to this effect is found in the last chapter of *Alhuda*, an Arabic work by the Promised Messiah^(as), published in 1902 at Qadian.

2. The annals of the country also testify that the tomb is known as that of Prophet Yus Asaph. The author of the *Tarikh-i-Azami* of Kashmir, (historical work written some 200 years ago), referring to this tomb, says, on page 82:

‘The tomb next to that of Sayyid Nasr-ud-Din is generally known as that of a prophet who was sent to the inhabitants of Kashmir and the place is known as the shrine of a prophet. He was a prince who came to Kashmir from a foreign land. He was perfect in piety, righteousness and devotion; he was made a prophet by God and was engaged in preaching to the Kashmiris. His name was Yus Asap’.

3. Rev. Weitbrecht, a Christian missionary, an opponent of the Promised Messiah^(as), who worked for years in the Punjab, after his visit to the tomb in 1903 wrote a letter in a Christian newspaper, *Epiphany*, in which he said:

‘Within this are two tombstones. He (a venerable old man in charge of the shrine) said that the larger one at the north end was that of Yus Asaf, and that the smaller tombstone was that of Sayyid Nasr-ud-Din’.

(Note a)

4. The Editor of the *Review of Religions*, in the issue for October, 1909, writes:

‘The most remarkable thing about the tomb is that it is known not only as the tomb of a Nabi Sahib, but also as that of Isa Sahib (Jesus). Hadhrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, son of the Promised Messiah^(as), paid a visit to the tomb in July last; and when he asked an old woman (the last survivor of a long line of the hereditary

(a) As the Rev. Weitbrecht had misrepresented some facts in his letter, a controversy took place between him and Maulvi Sher Ali, a devout companion of the Promised Messiah, for which refer to *The Review of Religions*, Vol. 2, Nos. 11 and 12, 1903; Vol. 3, No. 5, May, 1904.

attendants of the tomb) whose tomb it was, she replied: "It is the tomb of Isa Sahib". Being asked why she called it the tomb of Isa Sahib, while the Maulvies believed Isa (Jesus^(as)) to be in the heavens, she said, "Let them believe what they will. The name (Isa) is the one which we have been hearing from our forefathers".'

5. We read in a book, *Ikmal-ud-Din* (an Arabic work of about 1000 years ago), on page 359, the following:

'He (Yus Asaph) wandered about in several lands and cities until he reached a land called Kashmir. So he moved about in the land and lived and stayed therein until death overtook him, and he left his body of clay and ascended to the light, and before he breathed his last, he summoned a disciple of his, named Yabid, who used to serve him and wait on his person and was perfect in all matters, and addressed him thus: "My departure from this world hath drawn nigh; so you must perform your duties and must not swerve from the truth and

should observe all rites. Then he bade the disciple build him a tomb, and stretching out his legs, turned his head to the west and his face to the east, and yielded up the ghost".

Further we read in this book that Yus Asaph gave the name *Bushra* (Arabic and Hebrew for Gospel) to his message:

'Then he began to compare the tree to Bushra (Gospel) which he preached to the people, and he likened a spring of water to the wisdom and knowledge which he possessed, and the birds he compared to the people that swarmed around him and accepted his religion.'

6. Sir Francis Younghusband, British Government resident in Kashmir (1909-11), writes:

'There resided in Kashmir some 1900 years ago a saint of the name of Yus Asaf, who preached in parables and used many of the same parables as Christ used, as for instance, the parable of the sower. His tomb is in Srinagar, and the theory of the founder of the Qadiani Sect is that Yus Asaf

and Jesus are one and the same person'.¹

7. One of the points which Dr. Francois Bernier has mentioned in his Travels to show that the Jews lived in Kashmir, is '*the belief that Moses died in the city of Kashmir, and that his tomb is within a league of it*'. It is obvious that the inhabitants, who, Bernier says, were Muslims, could not say that Moses^(as) died in Kashmir and was buried there, because the Holy Prophet^(sa) of Islam pointed to his tomb in Palestine. It seems that Bernier somehow misunderstood and took Isa^(as) for Musa^(as). This point, however, proves beyond doubt that the inhabitants of Kashmir, in the seventeenth century, believed that the occupant of the tomb was a Hebrew Prophet, as great as Moses^(as).²

8. Ahmad Islam, after his visit to Kashmir in 1939, wrote in a letter to the editor of *The Sunrise* the following:

'I did soon venture out of my room. I mentioned Khanyar to a Tongawala. Spirited was the response. "You want to see the Rauza of Nabi Sahib, sir?" "Yes"

was my reply, and we were soon on the way ... We soon reached the Rauza ... I was told that all kinds of visitors, from India and abroad, come to see the tomb. "Even the Viceroy has been here". I was interested to hear this. "Which Viceroy do you mean?" "Don't know, sir, but I mean the one who did not have an arm". Evidently it must have been Lord Halifax, the British Foreign Secretary, who was then Lord Irwin. The visit of Lord Halifax was never reported in the papers. At least I do not remember having read anything about it. Still one can understand why Lord Halifax satisfied his curiosity so quietly. Yet a visit by a Viceroy and as quite unannounced as that—does make it look serious.

"How old, do you think, would be the tomb?"

"Very old, sir".

"Still, how old?"

"The tongawallas, there were three of them, looked at one another, until one of them said "Nineteen hundred years,"

adding he was a prophet who came from somewhere outside. The tomb has been revered for hundreds of years, and this is what we have been hearing from our fathers".³

These references to the tomb under discussion show that the entombed person was:

- a prince;
- a nabi, i.e., a prophet of God sent to the inhabitants of Kashmir;
- who used to speak in parables;
- was a stranger who came from the west some 1900 years ago;
- and his name was Yus Asaph and was called Issa as well.

Having ascertained these facts, it is not difficult to identify the occupant of the tomb. There has been no prince in the past to whom this distinction might apply other than Prince Jesus^(as) the son of David.

- Jesus^(as) was a prince, being called the son of David^(as)⁴ whom God exalted to be a prince,⁵ and the Prince of the Kings of the earth.⁶
- Jesus^(as) was a nabi, i.e. a prophet

of God to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. He journeyed from Palestine to preach the word of God to Israelites in Afghanistan and Kashmir.

- Jesus^(as) spoke in parables. He called his preaching Bushra (gospel) and compared his disciples to birds. The parable of the sower is mentioned in Matthew (13:3) and 'without a parable spake he not unto them'.⁷
- He travelled from Palestine to Kashmir some 1900 years ago. So the time of the two are the same.
- In the Holy Qur'an, Jesus'' name is *Issa*, a shortened form of the Hebrew word *Ishu*.

He was called *Yus Asaf* which also is a Hebrew name. The word Yus is another form of *Yuyu*, Jesus in the old Persian language, or *Yasu*, Jesus in Persian as well as in the Arabic New Testament translated from the Greek. The word Yus, therefore, stands for Jesus^(as) and Asaph is a Biblical name meaning Collector or Gatherer (Note a). we read in 1 Chronicles (16:4-7) that Asaf was a devout Levite, and was appointed chief of the keepers of the Psalms of

(a) See Appendix to the Facsimile series of Bagster's polyglot Bible p. 33 under Index of Proper Names with Meaning.

David^(as).

Jesus' mission was to collect and gather all the scattered tribes of Israel into one fold, as he says:

'And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd'.⁸

For this reason Jesus^(as) was called Asaf. When he came to preach to the lost ten tribes in Persia, Afghanistan and Kashmir, he was rightly called Yus Asaf, i.e. Jesus Asaf.

European writers, not knowing the discovery by the Promised Messiah^(as), and basing their opinions on the story of Barlaam and Josaphat or Joasaph, and Christian missionaries especially, to save Jesus^(as) from being buried like other prophets, have said that the tomb under discussion is Buddha's. Rev. Weitbrecht, for instance in his above-mentioned letter has argued that as the events related about Yus Asaf in the romance of Barlaam and Josaphat are similar to events of Buddha's life the name of Yus Asaf becomes susceptible of explanation and must be another form of Bodistava. Likewise Dr. McDonald

writes:

'The discovery that the Joasaph or Josaphat of our story was none other than Buddha was made at the same time and independently of one another, by French, German and English scholars. The writer himself admits that the story came from India. Anyone can recognise it as none other than that of Buddha'.⁹

Further it is said, 'As a matter of fact, Barlaam is himself a variant of the Buddha, and thus a doublet of Josaphat'.¹⁰

It should be remembered that the Promised Messiah's source of information concerning the tomb was not the story of Barlaam and Josaphat. However, if the European writers are justified in taking Josaphat for Buddha^(as), it will be equally justifiable for us to take him for Jesus^(as). It should not be forgotten also that the Yus Asaph of Srinagar was a prophet of God, not a mere saint (every prophet is a saint, but not vice versa) or disciple of a prophet. The issue, therefore, lies between the two: the Yus Asaph of Srinagar was either Buddha^(as) or Jesus Christ^(as). He cannot be Buddha^(as). Firstly, because

Buddha^(as) did not die in Srinagar, and his body was not buried, but was cremated. Modern research has discovered the place where Buddha^(as) died.

‘He died and was cremated at Kusinagara (in Oude) at the age of 80, in the year 543 BCE, his relics distributed among a number of contending claimants, and monumental tombs erected to preserve them’.¹¹

Dr. T. W. David writes:

‘Pre-eminent among these is the discovery by Mr. William Peppe on the Birdpur estate adjoining the boundary between English and Nepalese territory, of the stupa of cairn erected by the Sakia Clan over their share of the ashes from the cremation pyre of the Buddha’.¹²

Dr. Herman Oldenberg, writes:

‘Buddha died in Kusinara. Towards the sunrise the nobles of Kusinara burned Buddha’s body before the city gates with all the honours that are shown to the relics of universal monarchs’.¹³

It is evident, therefore, that Buddha^(as), who died at Kusinagara or Kusinara, and was cremated cannot be the occupant of the tomb under discussion. Secondly, had the entombed person been Buddha^(as), or any other Hindu Raja, Prince, or, Saint, the shrine would have been possessed and visited by Buddhists or Hindus not by Muslims.

Thirdly: The very name Yus Asaph, as I have discussed above, is a Hebrew name, and it seems ridiculous to take it for another form of Bodistava. Is it not more credible that it is another form of Yus Asaph than to take it for a form of Budistava? When it is established that Yus Asaph of Kashmir was not Gautama Buddha^(as) then we are justified in saying with full confidence that he was no other than the Prophet Prince Jesus^(as) of Nazareth.

The genuineness of this discovery by the Promised Messiah^(as), that the entombed Yus Asaph in Srinagar is none other than Jesus^(as), is proved by all possible means by which such events of the distant past are proved, and it is so evident and clear that even Sheikh Rashid Ridha (of Cairo,

Egypt), who opposed the Promised Messiah^(as) all his life could not help but comment, after reproducing the arguments regarding this tomb, from *Alhuda* (the Promised Messiah's work in Arabic) in the book *Tafsir-ul-Manar*, vol. 6, under the caption "Jesus' flight to India and his death in Kashmir", in these words:

‘The flight of Jesus, therefore, to India and his death in Srinagar is not foreign to rational or historical truth’.

Judge Docker writes:

‘I must here notice the old legend which I have before referred to. A modern version of it was given in the periodical *The East and West*, some years ago. Briefly, it is to the effect that Jesus did not die on the Cross, but recovered under treatment with a miraculous ointment being applied to his wounds, which healed in the space of forty days; that he journeyed to India to preach to the lost tribes of Israel, and eventually died at Srinagar, where a tomb is pointed out to this day as his.’

‘Though I do not know of any evidence tending to establish the substantial truth of this account, I desire to point out that there is nothing unreasonable or improbable about it. We are told from other sources that there are to the present day in Afghanistan and Bactria tribes of unmistakable Hebrew type. It is surprising to find the number of passages in the New Testament writings which if they do not corroborate the story, at least are consonant with it. Is it unreasonable then to suppose that Jesus, finding it unsafe to remain in Judea or Galilee longer than the forty days during which he is said to have instructed his disciples in the things concerning the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:3) should feel called to carry the message of the Kingdom to the lost tribes of House of Israel’.

Again (page 77) he says:

‘I must repeat that we do not know. It may be that after preaching to the lost ten tribes of the House of Israel, in those remote regions Jesus died at Srinagar, and was buried at the

tomb that now bears his name'.¹⁴ John Noel, in an article, *The Heavenly High Snow Peaks of Kashmir*, published in a monthly magazine, *Asia*, October, 1930, U.S.A., writes:

'Immensely strong are the picturesque, broad-shouldered Kashmiri peasants, and yet docile and meek in temperament. One thing about them strikes you with enormous force. They seem more perfectly Jewish you have ever seen-not because they wear a flowing, cloak-like dress that conforms to your ideas of Biblical garments but because their faces have the Jewish cast of features.'

'This curious coincidence, or is it a coincidence, that there is a strong tradition in Kashmir of connection with the Jews. For a good many years there have been afloat in this land rumours that Christ did not really die upon the Cross but was let down and disappeared to seek the lost tribes, that he came to Kashmir, Ladakh, and little Tibet, and died and was buried in Srinagar. Kashmir legend, I have been told, contains reference to a

prophet who lived here and taught as Jesus did, by parables-little stories that are repeated in Kashmir to the present day'.

Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, Premier of India, writes in his book *Glimpses of World History*:

'All over central Asia, in Kashmir and Ladakh and Tibet and even further North, there is still a strong belief that Jesus or Isa travelled about there'.
(Page 84).

I am confident, therefore, that when those who are endowed with the gift of reason and wisdom will think sincerely, keeping in mind that Jesus^(as) came out from the sepulchre alive with his wounded mortal body and did not ascend to heaven but lived on earth, they will come to the conclusion that the entombed person in Khan Yar Street (Srinagar, Kashmir) is Jesus^(as) the Son of Mary.

This is our answer to all those who may ask us. If Jesus^(as) did not die upon the Cross, where did he go and where did he die?

In this lies the solution of the

complicated question about the unknown life of Jesus^(as). If anyone can produce any other solution more credible and reasonable than this, let him come forward and produce it and the world will judge for itself.

Finally I would like to say that were the archaeologists to open the tomb and explore it, they might find some epitaphs upon the stones or other signs in support of the aforesaid discovery, and thus they might redeem hundreds of millions of their fellow-beings from worshipping a man who was sent to call the people to the worship of the one and only God.



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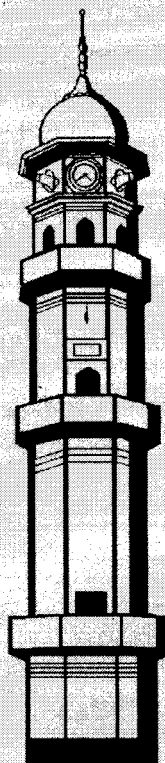
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