

The object of this publication, produced by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, is to educate, enlighten and inform its readers on religious, social, economic and political issues with particular emphasis on Islam.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Chairman: Rafiq Hayat

Basit Ahmad, Fazal Ahmad,
Mansoor Saqi, Bockarie Tommy
Kallon, Sarah Waseem, Fauzia
Bajwa, Navida Shahid, Fareed
Ahmad, Mahmood Hanif,
Tanveer Khokhar,
Mansoor Hyder-Muneeb,
Saleem Ahmad Malik.

Chairman of the Management Board: Naseer Qamar

Special Contributor: Amatul-Hadi Ahmad

Design and Typesetting Tanveer Khokhar Shaukia Mir

Publisher Al Shirkatul Islamiyyah

Distribution Muhammad Hanif, Amatul M. Chaudry, M.D. Shams

Views expressed in this publication are not necessarily the views of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

All correspondence should be forwarded directly to:

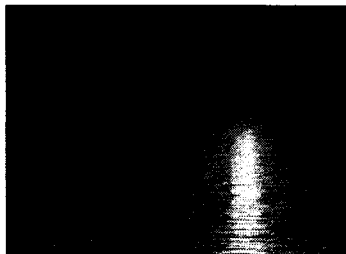
The Editor
Review of Religions
The London Mosque
16 Gressenhall Road
London, SW18 5QL
United Kingdom

© Islamic Publications, 2000

ISSN No. 0034-6721

CONTENTS — Feb/March 2001, Vol.96, No.2/3

Editorial	2
Comment	3
Fareed Ahmad – UK	
Prayer of the Righteous	7
Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad ^(as)	
The Significance of Darood	15
Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad	
Al-Qadr (The Majesty)	21
Dr. Basharat Ahmad	
Biblical Prophecy about the Holy Prophet^(sa)	28
Hadhrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Ahmad ^(ra)	
Al-Bayyinah – A Manifest Principle Al-Qayyimah - An Everlasting Teaching..	50
Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad	
A Life of Distinction – Hadhrat Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani^(ra)	57
Malik Salahudin Sahib	



(Photo from Cosmi Photo Library)

Editorial

Human life is today, as it has always been, full of concerns, problems and worries.

*O' World! O' Life! O' Time!
On whose last steps I climb
(Shelley)*

The social and personal concerns intertwine to create a world that sometimes satisfies but more often than not puzzles and troubles us all. In ancient times mythology provided the heroes that were seen as being in control. Recent 'mythology' has provided the heroes and superheroes who seem to be able to save mankind from all manner of calamities. Escaping from the real and painful facts of life, whether it is through the so called 'Entertainment' media or through alcohol and drugs is a scenario all too familiar to most of us.

No one can deny that life is a long series of problems, no sooner is one resolved that another one raises its head. However, the real problem sometimes is to know what the problem is? Modern methods of problem solving often involve approaches that analyse the problem itself from totally different perspectives. The religion of Islam claims to

provides a new perspective for all the worldly problems, be they personal or social.

True religion is one that guides human beings towards God. It is the only 'way' to achieve real solace and comfort in this life. The teachings of the religion of Islam provide not just a panacea for the problems of this life, they offer the elixir of life and this is achieved by seeking God's help through prayer.

The article, 'Prayers of the Righteous', compiled from the discourses and speeches of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi provides deep insight into the philosophy of prayer. In these extracts, the reader will find how it is that prayer is not just an occasional exercise for finding a way out of one's difficulties, but that it is the way of the righteous and it is the righteous who achieve true solace and true serenity in this life even when faced with extreme adversity and tribulation. As the saying goes, 'The sun shines on the Righteous'.

Notes and Comments

Poetic Justice?

February was witness to yet another chapter in the ongoing bombing of Iraq, which according to Iraq claimed two more lives, thus bringing the total killed (including civilians) to over 300. The international community roundly condemned the bombing. The only discernible feature of this bout of military action was its proximity to the capital Baghdad, as other bomb attacks in the no-fly zones have long become a part of life there. This triggered a momentary burst of activity in the media accompanied by the now-common mixture of support, condemnation, anger and confusion in the editorials and commentaries that followed.

The British and US leaders articulated that their action was based upon self-defence. At the same time they underlined the fact that this bombing should send a clear message to Saddam Hussein, that he must not go back on his word or act against any UN Resolutions. Profound words indeed.

If anything, this event did serve one useful purpose, that of reminding the world of the manner of US/UK rule over Iraq, which in substance is surely nothing but a sanctimonious façade that borders on disbelief.

The two no-fly zones in Iraq were set up in 1991 by the UK, US and France in the wake of the Gulf War. The declared objective was to protect the Kurds in the north and the Shias in the south, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 688 (adopted in April 1991). France ended its involvement in patrolling the no-fly zones in 1998 as it felt

that the scope of the patrols had moved beyond being just a surveillance operation. It has also been critical of the US/UK attacks on Iraq and its concern over the situation was reiterated recently by its Foreign Ministry that stated, '...we have on several occasions expressed our incomprehension and unease vis-à-vis the repeated air strikes carried out by the American and British Air Forces. In addition to the civilian victims they cause, these operations are today fuelling a tension detrimental to the implementation of a concerted solution to the Iraqi problem, in accordance with the Security Council's objectives.' (Communiqué issued on 16 Feb 2001).

So what does Resolution 688 actually say? Well, whilst it condemns the repression of the Iraqi civilian population and demands that Iraq end such repression immediately, it does not provide any mandate allowing the use of force to implement that resolution. Furthermore, there is certainly no specific authorisation giving anyone the right to take over Iraqi air space and to establish no-fly zones. This illegality of the no-fly zones was confirmed by Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the secretary-general of the UN when the no-fly zones were set up. He is quoted in John Pilger's article in the *New Statesman* (7 Aug 2000) as saying, 'The Security Council never approved or in any way ratified these [no-fly] zones.' When asked if that made them illegal his answer was an unequivocal 'Yes.' There would appear to be little room for debate in his response.

Thus to set up such no-fly zones, and enforce them with fighter jets and then claim self-

defence when the army of that country fires at you is absurd and stretches the boundaries of self-defence to the limits. Moreover, to criticise a country for not obeying UN rules whilst not following them yourself is clearly a case of the pot calling the kettle black.

Yet it seems that the US/UK take the issue of non-compliance with UN resolutions seriously – so seriously in fact that they have taken it upon themselves to try and enforce this for the last ten years. Ten years during which Iraq has been pummelled by thousands of tonnes of bombs with the cost of such action soaring into billions of dollars and hundreds of lives. If the US/UK take such non-compliance to heart then do other examples of such insolence cause them sleepless nights as well? Are they willing to take issue with all other disobedient countries also? One does not have to look far from Iraq to get the answer to this question.

Israel remains in breach of many UN resolutions but any talk of setting up no-fly zones there is unthinkable, even though the key issue there is its occupation of foreign soil. iResolution 242 has demanded Israel's immediate withdrawal from the occupied territories since 1967, yet it seems no one is prepared to act on such 'minor issues'. But such double standards should not come as a surprise as the US in particular has a record of having scant regard for obeying UN resolutions itself.

When Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975 a UN resolution called for its immediate withdrawal. Rather than seeking to enforce that resolution both the US and UK stepped up their military support to Indonesia and then stood by as the massacre of hundreds of thousands of people unfolded before them. A startling explanation of this

is found in the memoirs of the UN Ambassador Daniel Moynihan, who wrote, 'The United States wished things to turn out as they did, and worked to bring this about. The Department of State desired that the United Nations prove utterly ineffective in whatever measures it undertook. This task was given to me and I carried it forward with no inconsiderable success.' (*Rogue States*, by Noam Chomsky, p56). So much for the legal impulse to uphold the rule of law.

Other explanations advanced for US/UK action in Iraq are blessed by a moral impulse under the pretext of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It guarantees the rights of people against oppressive states. This was instrumental in the build up to the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 and it gave politicians a renewed confidence in their actions under the guise of 'humanitarian intervention'. This strikes as an attractive principle, until its reality is cross-examined. In 1999 the British Prime Minister Tony Blair said that NATO was fighting the war so that, '...the brutal repression of whole ethnic groups will no longer be tolerated.' Madeline Albright, US Secretary of State also proclaimed that, '...you cannot in 1999 have this kind of barbaric ethnic cleansing. It is ultimately better that democracies stand up against this kind of evil.' (*The New Military Humanism: Lessons from Kosovo*, by Noam Chomsky p.3). Noble words, but where was this moral impulse to act with force in South Africa during its brutal apartheid regime? And presumably such 'barbaric ethnic cleansing' was acceptable in 1994 when the genocide in Rwanda resulted in the primitive slaughter of over 800,000 people? Additionally, what action has been taken against China and Turkey for their human rights violations? It is evident that such action is only forthcoming when it (primarily) suits

US interests, for the laxity in responding to similar regimes right across the globe is bewildering. Clearly the moral impulse to act is subject to the same censors as the legal one before it.

Furthermore, the US's own track record in aiding and abetting such atrocities is far from innocent as can be further ascertained from the goings on in Colombia, Haiti and Venezuela amongst others. Even in Iraq the US supported the same Saddam Hussein when he gassed the Kurds at Halabja in March 1988 – but then he was a respected ally of the US, so no action was taken. It also seems that (legal issues aside) the right to humanitarian intervention is only the right of the US and the UK. The dismissal of Iran's offer to intervene and prevent the massacres in Bosnia, when the West remained idle, is a good case in point.

But how does all this contrast with the unceasing genocide in Iraq that is taking place as a result of the sanctions? How does that tally with the clarion call of humanitarian intervention in all this? If one considers that according to UNICEF the sanctions regime is a principal cause of the deaths of nearly 200 Iraqi children a day, i.e. nearly 500,000 so far, then it forces the question as to whose interests are being protected here?

It is also questionable at the very least as to where these sanctions sit with regard to human rights law. French Foreign minister, Hubert Vedrine, has labelled the sanctions as, 'cruel, because they exclusively punish the Iraqi people and the weakest among them, and ineffective, because they don't touch the regime' (*New Statesman* 22 Jan 2001). Dennis Halliday, UN Assistant Secretary-General and UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator for Iraq 1997-1998, went further and stated in his letter to

The Guardian on 8 Jan 2001 that, 'Have the sanctions imposed in 1990 retained their legality? The UN Charter, the International Covenants on Human Rights and a host of other treaties allow only one answer: they have not.'

Dennis Halliday resigned in 1998 (as did his successor in 2000) as sanctions were failing the purpose for which they were set up and he stressed that the consequent deaths of nearly 6,000 children per month was unacceptable. This is in stark contrast to Madeline Albright's response when asked if the death of half a million Iraqi children was a price worth paying for, she said 'We think the price is worth it.' (*New Statesman* 6-3-2001).

There is growing international frustration about the continued use of sanctions that are having limited success at best and destroying lives as a matter of course. One outcome of this has been the prospect of fine-tuning this policy and imposing so called 'smart sanctions' that would target weapons industries more specifically. The word 'smart' is perhaps inadvertently significant in that it reminds us of the so-called 'smart bombs' that were previously deployed in Iraq and Kosovo. It is now known that most of them missed their intended targets – is this an omen for smart sanctions too?

It is worth remembering that the sanctions were imposed to prevent Iraq developing weapons of mass destruction – be they chemical, biological or nuclear – as the US and UK consider it a very high risk of Saddam Hussein actually using them. Judging by his actions in the past there could well be grounds for holding that view – as he has been known to use them against Iran and the Kurds (albeit with the tacit support of the US) – but Iraq would be no more culpable for such actions

than the US and UK themselves. Not only have they been involved in supplying Iraq with materials useable for germ warfare in the past but the US/UK is also known to have used such weapons as well. Chemical weapons were employed by Britain against the Bolsheviks in 1919, and the US scorched South Vietnam with chemical weapons in 1961-62. It also is reported to have used biological weapons against Cuba in 1977. (*Rogue States*, by Noam Chomsky, p.26).

Without doubt such weapons are obnoxious and their use in any situation is rightly condemned but where in this asymmetric equation do depleted uranium [DU] weapons fit in? Being denser than lead DU is useful in punching through heavy armour. However, when it hits a solid object like a tank, the DU weapon erupts into a burning cloud of vapour that settles as dust that is both chemically poisonous and highly radioactive.

The UK and US extensively used DU weapons in Kosovo and Iraq and those countries have been left to tackle the consequences of such actions, consequences like the sevenfold increase in cancer in southern Iraq between 1989 and 1994. Meanwhile, in Kosovo where DU was used at over 100 sites there is also grave concern about the risk of DU remnants contaminating groundwater and future drinking water. The risk of DU was known to NATO as it cautioned its troops not to approach areas contaminated by DU without wearing protective gear. The local population however must take its chances. It is ironic that whilst there is much talk about sustainability and conservation in the West, this honourable concern disintegrates into radioactive dust when it enters the field of political warfare.

There is clearly a need for nations to keep each other in check to prevent oppression and injustice from taking root. However, the difficulty that arises here is that the flow of regulation of such activities is only in one direction, with the superpower retaining a tight grip on the rest of the world. A duplicitous superpower that is ruling with a nuclear fist. One that may support or punish other regimes as necessary to ensure that its own supremacy is never displaced.

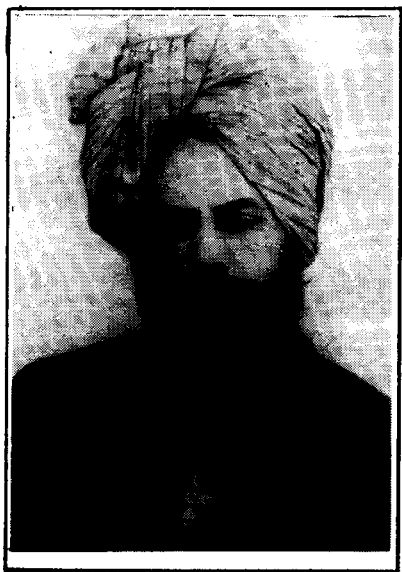
What avenues, therefore, are open for the world to change its course? Religionists would argue that only an about turn in morality, through a genuine belief in God, could halt this degenerative decline. Others may be less optimistic about such a change in human nature and feel that mankind will get what it deserves, before it is humbled into a more peaceful existence. Such a turn of events is perhaps captured in a verse by Omar Khayyam, who wrote,

*Ah Love! could thou and I with Fate conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would we not shatter it to bits – and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!*
(Edward Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*).

Poetic justice this may be, but who would wish to live through its ultimate recitation?

Fareed Ahmad

Prayer of the Righteous



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

Presented below is a compilation of extracts, relating to the subject of Salat, i.e. formal Islamic Prayers, from the speeches of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, as recorded in 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).

Prayer for the believer is like a sweet spring that is situated close to him and with which he can satisfy himself whenever he so desires. Just as a fish cannot exist without water, so the 'water' of a believer is prayer without which he cannot exist.

The most apt occasion for prayer is during the performance of Salat (formal Islamic worship) through which a believer enjoys such satisfaction and pleasure that in comparison even the greatest worldly pleasures of the most immoral person appear very insignificant. The greatest achievement that can be attained through prayer is nearness to God. It is through prayer that a human being becomes

close to God Almighty and attracts Him towards himself. When the prayer of a believer is filled with complete sincerity and displays a total spiritual separation (from the selfish and worldly elements) then it is that God takes pity on such a believer and God becomes his protector and provider. (*Malfoozat* Vol.7, p.59)

It is upon prayer that we depend and depend upon it totally. Prayer is the one weapon with which a believer can attain victory in all matters. God Almighty has stressed the importance of prayer for a believer and what is more, He eagerly awaits the prayer of (the believer). I see that through His special grace, God accepts my prayers. A person can escape every kind of calamity and illness through prayer. I once read in a newspaper that a police officer hurt his finger when a piece of lead from a pencil became lodged in his nail. It is a fact that the lead inside a pencil contains some toxic matter and it so happened that after a short while his hand began to swell and the swelling soon extended up to his elbow. The doctor advised amputation of the arm and warned that failure to do so could prove fatal. The police officer, however,

did not wish his arm to be amputated and a short time after this he died. Now, it so happened that a small piece of lead from a pencil became lodged in my nail. During my walk I noticed that my hand was swelling up and then I remembered the incident (mentioned in the newspaper) and I began to pray from that moment on and continued praying. By the time I reached home, I noticed that the swelling had disappeared so completely that no sign of it remained. I showed it to people and recounted the whole incident to them.

Similarly, once my tooth began to ache very severely. I mentioned it to some people and they advised that it would be better to have the tooth out. I did not like to have my tooth extracted and turned to prayer when I received the revelation, which is also contained in the Holy Qur'an,

وَإِذَا مَرَضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ

And when I am ill, it is He who restores me to health.
(Ch.26:, v.81)

and with this the illness was eased completely and it is now 15 years since that incident. It is clear from

this that a person will turn away from reliance upon material means in accordance with the strength of his faith. The more his faith develops and progresses and becomes complete, the more a person dislikes reliance upon material means. (*Malfoozat*, Vol.7 pp.51–52).

The efficacy that is in prayer is not to be found in anything else. Deep emotion and motivation for prayer, however, does not arise for ordinary, small matters. In fact, prayer for some very minor things seems even disrespectful and one is inclined more towards patience. At times of great difficulties there develops a deep feeling and emotion in the heart for prayer and it is at such times that some extraordinary sign appears.

It is said that there lived a holy man in Delhi with whom the King for some reason had become angry. The King at that time was embarking on a foreign journey but he gave orders that upon his return the holy man was to be hanged and he swore that this order would be carried out. When it was time for the King's return, the holy person's followers became very saddened and reminded him that the time for the

King's return was very close. The holy person responded to their concern with the statement that, 'Delhi is yet far'. When the King reached the gates of the city and was about to enter the city, the followers again reminded him that the King was now about to enter the city upon which the holy person again replied that, 'Delhi is yet far'. In the meantime news arrived that as the King was about to enter the gates of the city, the door of the gate fell upon his head and he died. It seems that the holy man was probably informed by God regarding the events that were about to take place.

A similar account is found regarding Sheikh Nizam-ud-din. Once the King was angry with him and gave orders for him to be severely punished within the week. When the day of punishment arrived, Sheikh Nizam-ud-din was asleep, close to one of his followers. When the disciple remembered that it was the day of punishment for his master, tears flowed from his eyes and fell upon the Sheikh, awakening him. The Sheikh enquired from his disciple the reason for his tears and when he was reminded that the day of punishment was upon him, the Sheikh told his disciple not to be sad

as he would not be punished. He added that he had just seen a dream that a violent cow was about to kill him when he took it by its horns and threw it down on the ground. It so happened that the King fell ill that very day and later died during the same illness. (*Malfoozat*, Vol.8, pp.36–37).

All the objectives that we wish to achieve will be achieved only through the means of prayer – there is great power in prayer.

It is recounted that once a King left with his armies to launch an attack on another country. On the way a holy man, a Faqir, took hold of the reins of his horse and told the King not to go any further otherwise he would fight the King. The King was much surprised at this and asked the Faqir how he planned to fight when he had no means? The Faqir replied that he would go to war with the King with the ‘weapon’ of early morning prayers. At this the King turned back saying that he could not take on such a challenge.

In short, God has placed great powers in prayer. God has repeatedly informed me, through revelation, that whatever achievement

there is, it will be through prayer. My ‘weapon’ is prayer and apart from this I possess no other weapon. Whatever I seek in secret, God makes it manifest. In previous times, the opponents of some Prophets were on occasion punished through the Prophets. However, God knows that we are in a weak position and that is why He has taken all our work in His own hands. For Islam there is now only this path but the Mullah (the Cleric) and the philosopher are unable to understand this point. (*Malfoozat*, Vol. 9, pp.27-28).

Prayer is a strange and wonderful thing but it is regrettable that many who make requests for prayers are not familiar with the ‘rules’ that underline such requests. Moreover, in this age many among those who offer prayers are not acquainted with the ways that lead to acceptance of prayer.

The truth is that people have become estranged from the reality of prayer. There are some who deny the effectiveness of prayer altogether and there are others who do not deny it completely but accepting it half-heartedly. However, it often happens that the condition of the latter group

becomes more serious than of those who totally deny the effectiveness of prayer. This is due to the fact that those who possess a half-hearted belief in prayer become frustrated and disillusioned when their prayer is not met with acceptance. It is the lack of knowledge regarding the ways of acceptance of prayer that leads such people to despair when, in fact, their prayers are not prayers in the true sense of the word. Moreover, the low state of their moral condition has pushed many to the verge of atheism.

The first condition for prayer is that a supplicant should not become weary and should not despair. Sometimes it is seen that a prayer is continued till it is about to be accepted and then the supplicant gets weary and the result is failure and frustration. Frustration results in the denial of God. At such times, people often say about God that if a God exists who accepts prayer of the supplicant, then why have their prayers not been accepted? If those who think in this way and stumble were to reflect upon their lack of perseverance, they would come to know that all their frustration is the result of their own haste and impatience that generated an ill

concept of the powers of God and resulted in despair – one should never tire.

Praying is like sowing of the seed by a farmer. During the process of sowing, he places the seed within the soil. Who can expect at that time that every grain of seed will develop into a healthy plant and will bring forth a harvest? Outsiders and even the cultivator himself cannot see that the grain is assuming the form of a plant inside the earth. However, the reality is that within a few days, the grain undergoes a change and begins to assume the shape of a plant till its shoot emerges from the ground and becomes visible to everyone. From the moment when the grain was placed in the soil, it had started its preparation to become a plant, but an eye that can only perceive the visible does not become aware of it until its shoot emerges from the ground and becomes visible. At that stage, an ignorant child cannot understand that it will one day bear fruit. He desires to see it bearing fruit immediately, but an intelligent cultivator will know the time when it is due to bear fruit. He looks after it steadfastly and nurtures it till the time comes when it bears fruit and that fruit ripens.

The same is the case with prayer which is nurtured in the same way and brings forth fruit. Those who are in haste get weary quickly and give up and those who are steadfast, persevere and arrive at their objective. It is true that there are many stages in prayer, ignorance of which deprives the supplicant of the fruits of his prayer. Such people are in a hurry and cannot wait, whereas there is a gradual progression in the works of the Almighty. It never happens that a man should marry today and a child might be born to him tomorrow. Though God is All Powerful and can do whatever He wills, yet compliance with the law and the system that He has appointed is necessary. In the first stages of child bearing, like the development of plants, nothing is apparent. For four months there is no certainty then a movement begins to be felt and after the full period of pregnancy, the child is born after much pain and trouble. The birth of the child is also the 'birth' of the mother. It is difficult for a man to form a concept of the trouble, exertion and pain that a woman has to endure during her pregnancy, but it is true that the coming of a child is a new life for the mother. She has to accept death so as to have the joy of

bearing a child. In the same way, it is necessary for a supplicant that he should discard haste and endure all troubles and should never imagine that prayer is not accepted. At last the time arrives for the result of the prayer to be manifested – 'the child', that is the objective of prayer, is finally born. A prayer should be carried on to the limit until it produces a result. You will have observed that when a piece of cloth is placed under a piece of glass, the rays of the sun concentrate upon it. The heat from the rays reach the cloth at a temperature that rapidly burns the cloth. In the same way, it is necessary that prayer should be carried on to a stage where it should develop the power of 'burning' up failures and frustrations and of the fulfilment of desired objectives.

It is only after one is occupied with prayer for a long time that God Almighty manifests the results. It is my experience, which is borne out by the experience of the righteous in the past, that if there is silence for a long time, there is hope of success, but if there is a quick reply the purpose is not likely to be achieved. When a beggar goes to someone and begs with humility and earnestness and does not move from his place,

even after he is rebuked and continues his supplication, then in the end that person is moved and bestows something on the beggar despite his own miserliness. Should not a supplicant have at least as much steadfastness as an ordinary beggar? It is the case that when God Almighty, who is Most Noble and Benevolent, sees that His humble servant has fallen down in prostration at His threshold and has remained so for a long time, He does not lead him to suffer a bad end. If a pregnant woman should become impatient after four or five months and should take some abortive medicine, the child would not be born, but she herself would be involved in despair. In the same way he who is in a hurry with his prayer before the due time only suffers loss and puts his faith in danger – some people in such situations become atheists. There was a carpenter in our village whose wife fell ill and then died. He said that if there had been a God, his numerous prayers would have been accepted and his wife would not have died and in this way he became an atheist. If a good person adopts the characteristics of loyalty and sincerity, (prayer) increases his faith and he also achieves his objectives. What value

have the riches of this world in the sight of God Almighty? Everything is possible for Him. Have you not seen that He bestowed sovereignty upon (the Muslim nation), a people who at one time were entirely unknown, and made kings from slaves and great kindgoms obedient to them?

The person who is righteous and turns totally to God, would lead an excellent life but the condition is that he should be sincere and possess resolve. His heart should never move from its main objective and there should be no element of display in it nor any aspect of shirk i.e. reliance on beings other than God. What was it about Abraham^(as) that made him the father of his people and the father of those who are devoted to God. Moreover, God Almighty bestowed countless great blessings upon him? It was his righteousness and his sincerity. Abraham^(as) had offered a prayer that a Prophet should appear in Arabia from among his Progeny. Was this prayer accepted at once? No. For a very long time after Abraham^(as), no one paid any attention to that prayer, yet it was fulfilled in the form of the great advent of the Holy Prophet^(sa) of Islam and how grand was its

fulfilment! (*Malfoozat*, Vol.4, pp.415–420).

Beseeching God Almighty through prayer is not an easy task and people are not familiar with its true nature. There are many who write to me that they have prayed for such and such but their prayer did not have any effect. Such people tend to incline towards a negative view of God and through their own sense of hopelessness they face ruin. They do not understand that prayer cannot be of any benefit unless it is accompanied with its requirements.

It is among the necessary requirements of prayer that the heart melts and the soul flows like water, falling at the feet of the most noble Lord, with feelings of pain and anguish within. In addition, a person should not be impatient, seeking quick results. He should persevere in prayer with patience and steadfastness. It is only then that one can hope and expect that the prayer may be answered. (*Malfoozat*, Vol. 9 p.109).

The person who utters words of prayer but does not make any effort towards the fulfilment of the prayer, only tries God. Before beseeching God, therefore, it is necessary that

every effort is made, (including the performance of good deeds), and that is the true meaning of prayer. First, a supplicant should check his beliefs and his deeds for it is the way of God Almighty that inner reform comes through some means. God brings about the means that lead to reform.

It is a point to ponder upon for those who raise the objection that when there is prayer, what need is there for means? Such foolish people should consider that prayer in itself is a hidden means that creates other means. (*Malfoozat*, Vol. 1, p.124)



The Significance of 'Darood'

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 are answers given by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad to questions raised in sessions held in London on 6 May 1984 and 7 June 1998.

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

Transcribed by Amatul Hadi Ahmad

Questioner:

I would like to ask about Darood Sharif [that is, invocation of God's blessings upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa)]. Every day we ask God to send Darood to the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa) as He sent Darood upon Prophet Ibrahim^(as). I would like to know, first of all, what exactly is this Darood and, secondly, what was so great about the effect of such Darood upon Prophet Ibrahim^(as) and the progeny of Ibrahim that we are asked to compare it with that?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:

The question being asked is about the great stress that is laid upon the importance of invoking blessings of God in a set form upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa) and at the same time we are reminded that Allah showered His blessings upon Prophet Ibrahim^(as) and his followers. In this

invocation, one mentions before God that as He was extremely beneficent towards Abraham and his followers, so please shower your blessings and extend your mercy, in the same manner, upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa) and his descendants and his followers. Why is this so – that is the question? This is one part of the question and the other is about the meaning of Darood. Let me start with the latter.

What exactly is the meaning of Darood? If one sets before oneself an ideal or a model of a paragon of virtue, and one is constantly reminded to praise that model or to begin to love that model then one is more likely to follow that model than if one neglects such an ideal. Moreover, constant praise compels a person to become more and more like that which one is praising. If one is honest

in one's praise, the effect of the praise would be to urge one to become close to the object of praise. On the other hand, if one is dishonest in one's praise, then it would just be lip service and no more.

One aspect of the philosophy of invoking God's blessings upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa) is this that it should constantly remind his followers that he is the paragon of virtue whose example is to be followed. Moreover, if one were to praise him honestly, his conscience would lead him to the understanding that honest praise requires a reformation and movement towards the practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa). If that is not the case then it would be understood that one is false in one's Darood .

This is the fundamental philosophy of Darood . In addition there is, of course, the fact that if someone is one's benefactor, one would wish to return the favours. However, it is not possible for us to return the innumerable favours and acts of goodness and beneficence towards mankind of the Holy Prophet^(sa). The only way in which one can show one's gratitude to the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa) is by invoking God's blessings upon him. However, this is just one aspect of the philosophy of

Darood and there are many others.

I have yet to address the other part of the question as to why Prophet Ibrahim^(as) is mentioned in Darood ? The reason why this is that Prophet Ibrahim^(as) is known as the father of Prophets who left a long line of very pious people behind him. He was not only the father of the Shari'a that was revealed to him, he was also the father of the Shari'a of Moses that was to follow and, consequently, he has a much wider impact. Moreover, he comes closer to the concept of Rahmatul-lil-Alameen after the Holy Prophet^(sa) than any other Prophet because his name is associated with the reconstruction of the Ka'ba in relation to which no mention is made of any particular religion. The Holy Quran simply mentions the fact that the Ka'ba was created for mankind:

إِن أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ
لِلنَّاسِ لِلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ
مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِلْعَالَمِينَ

Surely, the first House founded for mankind is that at Becca [the valley of Mecca] abounding in blessings and a guidance for all people. (Ch.3: v.97)

Note that here the Holy Qur'an does not state that this house was for the believers or for a particular religious denomination, but that it was built as a blessing for all mankind.

In short, the Ka'ba is the only place of worship that has been mentioned by the Holy Quran as a place of worship for all mankind and Prophet Abraham^(as) is mentioned in the Holy Quran in relation to the second construction of the Ka'ba. We do not know who erected the first building of the Ka'ba and how long ago – perhaps it was Prophet Adam^(as) himself. But a new era was to begin in which Prophet Abraham^(as) was to play a fundamental role of bringing mankind together and in so doing he, in fact, laid the first brick of Islam because it was the Holy Prophet^(as) who was ultimately to be the Messenger for all Mankind. This is the reason for including Prophet Abraham^(as) in the Darood instead of any other Prophet. Prophet Abraham^(as) is mentioned because he has a direct relationship with the Holy Prophet^(sa).

Secondly, the Holy Quran tells us that it was the prayer of Prophet Abraham^(as) that was accepted in full by Allah. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa) came the Holy Quran reminds us that it was Prophet Abraham^(as) who prayed for such a

being to come.

رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا
فِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ
آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ
وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ ط

And, our Lord, raise up among them a Messenger from among themselves, who may recite to them Thy Signs and teach them the Book and Wisdom and may purify them. (Ch.2: v.130)

This is the prayer of Prophet Abraham^(as). The answer to this prayer is given in the chapter of the Holy Quran entitled Surah Juma'a where Allah tells us that:

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأَقْبَانِ
رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ
آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي
ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ٥

He it is Who has raised among the Unlettered people a Messenger

from among themselves who recites unto them His Signs, purifies them, and teaches them the Book and wisdom, although they had been, before, in manifest misguidance;
(Ch.62: v.3)

This is simply, word for word, the same prayer, with the one difference that the order has been changed and hence the effect of the prayer has been enhanced. Allah accepted the prayer of Prophet Abraham^(as), word for word, but gave him much more than he requested. The change of order of just one word has added a completely new beauty to the effect of the prayer and its acceptance. While Prophet Abraham^(as) asked that a Prophet may be raised from among them who would recite to them God's verses and who would teach them the Book and the philosophy of that Book and who would then purify them.

The thinking of Prophet Abraham^(as) must have been this that after the revelation, that is, the Book, the knowledge of the Book has to be taught and after the knowledge, the philosophy of that knowledge has to be given. Once this process is complete, it is then that people are purified – not before that. However, God's response was that He would send a Prophet of such an excellent

stature that he would not wait for people to learn the book or understand the philosophy before they are purified. He would have a direct purifying force such that close proximity to him would have a purifying effect. This is how the efficacy of the prayer was enhanced with such beauty. Secondly, it is being stated that the knowledge that would be revealed to this great Prophet would be of such a high quality that without purification a person would be unable to gain its understudying. Purification, therefore, has to come first and it is exactly this that has been mentioned in the opening verses of the Holy Quran where it states:

ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ شَيْخٍ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١﴾

This is the perfect Book; there is no doubt in it; it is a guidance for the righteous.
(Ch.2: v.3)

That is, this Book is of such a high quality that ordinary people would not be able to benefit from it – one would have to become a Muttaqi, that is one who is purified, before one could begin to benefit from this Book. It is as if instead of a primary school, a

postgraduate college has come into being where one has to have some primary knowledge before one can draw benefit from higher education.

In short, so many facets have been added to the effect of Prophet Abraham's prayer by changing the order of just one word, taking it from the end and giving it the second place. In conclusion, this is the answer to the question as to why Prophet Abraham^(as) has a very deep association and unbreakable association with the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa) of Islam that the name is chosen as an example of Darood otherwise different Prophets could also have been mentioned. Other Prophets have, in fact, been mentioned [in the Darood] but in the sense of his followers, as his aal [which is a term that covers both his progeny as well as the line of his true followers and the Prophets that came to guide them].

Questioner:

What is Islam's relationship with Abraham?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:

Prophet Abraham^(as) is held in the highest esteem by Islam, above all the previous Prophets. Abraham^(as) is taken to have created a revolution in the world of religion whereby his

dedication to God and his sincerity was meant to guide the future of the entire world.

He has two lines of progeny, one beginning from Isaac^(as) and the other beginning from Ishmael^(as). About both these, the Bible gives a positive verdict that the progeny of both will be specially blessed.

In the first phase, up to the time of the Holy Prophet^(sa) of Islam, the first part of the prophecy was fulfilled completely. Ishmael^(as) did not play any role in the destiny of mankind until that time except for being the forefather of the Holy Prophet^(sa) of Islam. So, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa) appeared, the second phase of these biblical prophecies began to be unfolded and this is what we see today – the entire world lies in its destiny at the feet of the Jews the Christians and the Muslims. If these three religious forces unite, the rest of mankind will not mean anything in comparison to their influence over the world. So, this is the esteem we give to Prophet Abraham^(as) in our beliefs, as the father of the future of mankind. We believe that the inter-relationship between these three major religious forces will determine the future of mankind.

Questioner:

In the Bible, in the Book of Genesis, it is stated, 'Abraham believed God and God accounted it to him for righteousness' – what do you understand by this?

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad:

It is very clear and simple – you don't need any explanation of this. You see, God only cares for righteousness in man – not for blood relationship or other worldly gains in any area of human value. If a man is righteous then even if he is very poor and very simple, God would look only at the righteousness of the man and would care for him only as such. Other things become immaterial because ultimately God is righteous. Ultimately, God is truth and so what he cares for is righteousness and truth and this is illustrated in the form of a Biblical story about Prophet Moses^(as).

lice ever bothers you again – I will pick out each lice and kill it. I will clean and wash your clothes and make you very clean and beautiful'. When Prophet Moses^(as) heard this he scolded the shepherd angrily for insulting God with such lowly language. At that time God spoke to Prophet Moses^(as) asking what right he had to interfere between God and his servant. God said that He was enjoying this talk because it came from the inner truth of that person, whatever that was – he was so true, so honest, so loving and that is what God cares for. So, in that instance, God rejected the greatness of Prophet Moses^(as) as compared to the simplicity and honesty of the humble shepherd. This is what God always cares for in a person – righteousness and sincerity. If you cultivate these values, then you will know how to get close to God. There is no other way!



It is stated that once Prophet Moses^(as) was passing by a shepherd who was cleaning himself. He was busy washing his clothes, taking thorns out of his feet and removing lice and at the same time he was busy talking to God. His conversation with God attracted the attention of Prophet Moses^(as) who stopped to listen. The shepherd was saying, 'O God! If I have you, I would take thorns out of your feet and I will see to it that no

Al-Qadr (The Majesty) – Ch.97

Commentary by Dr. Basharat Ahmad, translated by Imam Kalamazad Mohammad

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Surely We revealed it on the Night of Majesty – And what will make thee comprehend what the Night of Majesty is? The Night of Majesty is better than a thousand months. The angels and the Spirit descend in it by the permission of their Lord – for every affair – Peace! it is till the rising of the morning.

In this chapter, *Al Qadr*, it is stated that the period when the Holy Qur'an was being revealed was a time of great blessings and the reward for worship, righteous actions and other efforts for the sake of religion that could have been attained at that time cannot be paralleled in any other age.

The pronoun *hu* (it) in *anzalnahu* (We revealed it) refers to the revelation of the Holy Qur'an on the Night of Majesty. Elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an it is mentioned:

The month of Ramadhan is that in which the Qur'an was revealed.
(Ch.2:v.186)

This tells us that the Night of Majesty is in the month of Ramadhan. According to the Holy Prophet(sa), it is one of the odd nights of the last ten days of Ramadhan, that is, it is either the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th or 29th night. Another report puts it as one of these nights – either the 25th, 27th or 29th night.

It has been called the Night of Majesty because it is a night of great grandeur and honour and which man should value with total respect and reverence. There is no doubt that the night in which the Holy Qur'an was revealed – an extra-ordinary gift and an incomparable book of guidance to mankind – should be regarded with the highest honour and respect. This night receives its eminence from the fact that the Holy Qur'an was revealed in it and the anniversary of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an on this night has been laid down for all times as a night of great blessings and honour, so that every year when that night comes, Allah opens the doors of His mercy and blessings for His servants. This is not just a mere anniversary, for just as the rivers of Allah's Mercy gushed forth on that

sublime night when the first revelation of the Holy Qur'an came, so too, the same thing obtains every year on that particular night when Allah showers His Mercy and blessings on the hearts of all those who endeavour to seek His Grace.

Sometimes an objection is made that the whole Qur'an was not revealed on that night. The answer to that is that the word Qur'an has been used in reference to the entire Qur'an or to a part of it or even to a single verse as we read: *nen the Qur'an is being recited, listen to it (Ch.7:v.204)*. Here the whole Qur'an cannot be meant, but we are commanded to listen attentively when a part or a verse of the Qur'an is being recited. Thus when it is said that the Qur'an was revealed on that Night of Majesty, it does not necessarily mean that the whole of the Qur'an should have been revealed. Even if one verse was revealed, the statement would still have been true – that the Qur'an was revealed on the Night of Majesty. The fact remains that the revelation of the Holy Qur'an extended over a period of twenty-three years and its verses were revealed in various places on different occasions. But that night when the first verses of the Holy Qur'an were revealed will always be considered as the night on

which the Qur'an was sent. The reason for this is that before that night there was no Qur'an on earth.

Wa ma adraka ma lailatul Qadr, Lailautl Qadri khairum-min alfi shahr (And what will make thee comprehend what the Night of Majesty is? The Night of Majesty is better than a thousand months).

In other words, to perform worship and do acts of righteousness on that night will bring to the believer more reward than he would get in a thousand months. Here the word *thousand* is used to signify a very large number and what is meant is that countless blessings will accrue to the devotee if he fulfils the conditions. It is recorded that in the month of Ramadhan, the Holy Prophet^(sa) was extremely generous and at night he engaged in extra devotional prayers, especially in the last ten nights when his worship reached the topmost peak of perfection. In the latter part of the night he used to read ten *rakahs* (cycles) of prayer in twos and then add one *rakah* (cycle) called '*witr*' thus making the whole prayer an odd number, that is, eleven *rakahs* (cycles) in all. People normally read three *rakahs* (cycles) of prayer (*witr*) in the latter part of the night.

The Holy Prophet(sa) used to read eleven rakahs (cycles) of prayer called the *Tahajjud* prayer. This name was given to it because *Tahajjud* means getting up from sleep. So the prayer that people read after rising up from sleep is called *Tahajjud*. But if a person should stay awake all night and keep on performing prayer throughout, that prayer according to the definition of the *Shariah* (Law) cannot be called *Tahajjud*.

So the eleven rakahs (cycles) of prayers that the Holy Prophet(sa) used to read in the latter half of the night was called *Tahajjud* because he used to read them after waking up from sleep and he used to add the *witr'* prayer so as to make the number an odd one.

This is the prayer that is called *Tarawih* in the month of Ramadhan because after every two rakahs (cycles) of the prayer a short rest is permitted and it is because of this short rest that this prayer is named *Tarawih*. Thus the *Tarawih* prayer in the month of Ramadhan is really the *Tahajjud* prayer and not an additional or separate one, and for ease and convenience it is read in an earlier part of the night rather than in the later part. To read twenty rakahs (cycles) of *Tarawih* prayer with three

witr' added making a total of twenty-three rakahs (cycles) is not in accordance with the Sunnah of our Holy Prophet Muhammad(sa). This came about because in the time of the Caliph Umar(as), people were sitting one night in the masjid and engaging in idle talk. The Caliph passed by them and asked them what they were doing. On receiving the reply that they were just enjoying some small talk, he asked a hafiz (person who knows the Qur'an by heart) to gather the people into a congregation and lead them in twenty rakahs (cycles) of supererogatory prayer. The idea was that the whole Qur'an should be read in the *Tarawih* prayer during the month of Ramadhan. This then became the accepted practice, but this was not the custom of the companions of the Holy Prophet(sa).

As regards the Night of Majesty, Lady Ayesha once asked the Holy Prophet(sa) what *dua* (supplication) she should make if she ever experienced that extraordinary Night of Grandeur, and this is the prayer he gave to her:

'O Allah! Thou art the Forgiving and thou lovest forgiveness, so please forgive me.'

Tanazzalul mala 'ikatu war-ruhu

filta bi 'idhni Rabbihim min kulli amr. Salamun hiya hatta matla 'il fajr (The angels and the Spirit descend on it by the permission of their Lord for every affair. Peace! It is till the rising of the morning).

Here many people infer from the expression *min kulli amr* (for every affair) that on this night all decisions for the following year regarding the administration and other affairs of the world are determined. This deduction is not correct. *Kul* (every) is a relative word and its application depends on the context or the situation and covers only such matters that are under discussion. For example, if on the occasion of a feast it is said that all the people have arrived, it cannot mean that all the people in the world are present there. What it means, in fact, is that all the invited guests are present. Similarly, when Prophet Noah^(as) was given the following command in the chapter *Hud*: *We (Allah) said.. 'Carry in it two of all things, a pair'*, it did not mean that he had to take a pair of all the animals on earth, but the order extended only to those animals that he would need later on. So here the expression *min kull amr* (for every affair) does not refer to all the affairs of the world but only to such spiritual blessings and favours which are pertinent to that

glorious and honourable night on which the Holy Qur'an was revealed.

Ar-Ruh (The Spirit) refers to those angels who descend with the word of Allah on the hearts of the righteous infusing them with spiritual life. That is why they are called *The Spirit*.

The word *salam* means peace and freedom from every kind of fear or anxiety. In other words, everything that descends on that night is aimed towards the giving of physical and spiritual blessings to man. Thus if we study the Holy Qur'an which was revealed on that Night of Majesty we shall discover that it contains a message of complete peace, the chief objective of which is to save man from sin and evil, trials and tribulations and make him attain a life of peace and tranquillity.

Therefore, if a person derives the benefit of this night and through worship and strenuous efforts towards goodness, he makes his heart worthy of spiritual blessings, then it is inevitable that the angels will bring Divine communication and spiritual blessings to his heart with such force that his soul shall be freed from the straight-jacket of sins and shall enter the sanctuary of peace.

The question arises as to why the angels descend only on the heart of man. The fact is that it is always the heart of man which receives Divine communication and spiritual blessings through angels as has been mentioned concerning the Holy Qur'an itself:

Say: Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel – for surely he revealed it to thy heart by Allah's command.
(Ch.2:v.98)

This verse proves that it is the hearts of righteous people that receive spiritual blessings and Divine communications through the agency of angels through whom Allah inspires righteousness. However, those people whose hearts are closed to spiritual blessings and who are under the sway of satanic forces will find it impossible to receive angelic inspiration.

The literal meaning of *hatta matla'il fajr* (until the morning) is that the spiritual blessings of that grand night extend till dawn. However, it also conveys a deeper meaning and that is, that the peace and blessings that descend on the heart of man on that night continue till the darkness of evil dissipates and heavenly light suffuses the heart.

Lailatul-qadr is generally known as one of the odd nights of the last ten nights of Ramadhan on which the Holy Qur'an was revealed. But it has a deeper significance for it refers to the period of the prophethood of Prophet Muliammad^(sa) when the Qur'an was revealed. This period is called night because at that time the whole world was shrouded in darkness, misguidance and unbelief. It is also called *Al Qadr* (The Majesty) because the Holy Qur'an, that extraordinary heavenly book of Divine guidance, was sent down to man, and the Prophet Muhammad^(sa), that incomparable guide, was appointed on that night. There can be no doubt, therefore, that our Prophet's^(sa) time was greater than a thousand months and superior to all other ages. The blessings that came to a believer for worship and religious service in that age cannot be had in any succeeding age. In this regard, the Holy Prophet^(sa) himself said that the recompense for giving a handful of barley in that period far exceeded the reward one would get in a later age for giving a heap of gold as large as Mount Uhud. This is because at a time of great need a little assistance merits greater reward than great help later on when the need is not demanding.

In our Holy Prophet's^(sa) time, Islam was faced with such monumental difficulties and calamities that the extent of the need for sacrifices by way of wealth and lives is beyond description. So the reward for the selfless service of those who sacrificed their lives and property for Islam in that precarious time and never swerved an inch from the path of Allah, cannot be attained by those who came after when Islam had triumphed in the world and Muslims had at their command great wealth and power.

Our Prophet's^(sa) lifetime was the time when the angels and the spirit were descending on earth – on the one hand the Holy Qur'an was being revealed and on the other hand the hearts of the believers were being suffused with spiritual life. For every act of sacrifice and selflessness there flowed a constant stream of assistance and support – angels descended, faith was revived and strengthened, hearts were invested with spiritual power and even in the midst of all these dangers the message of peace was silently working its way into the hearts of people to such an extent that eventually the dark cloud of unbelief was lifted and the divine light of guidance spread its glorious rays all over the world

The expression *a thousand months* embodies a subtle meaning – one thousand months amount to almost eight-three years. Now, our Holy Prophet^(sa) has said that at the turn of every century, a *mujaddid* (reformer) would appear for the revival of the religion of Islam. As every *mujaddid* is a *khalifah* (successor) of our Holy Prophet^(sa), therefore, his age is like a facsimile or reflection of the Prophet's age and bears a strong connection with it. And the seventeen years that make up the complete century bear a superiority over the remaining eighty-three years just as the Prophet's^(sa) age enjoyed supremacy over all other eras. In other words, a *mujaddid's* dispensation extends on the average over a period of seventeen years and the remaining eighty-three years, are deprived, as it were, of a *mujaddid*. What a wonderful coincidence it is, therefore, that the *Mujaddid* and Promised Messiah of our century, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as), claimed to have received revelation for thirty years but his claim to being the Promised Messiah amounted to exactly seventeen years!

As the time of the appearance of a *mujaddid* is a trying time for religion and there is a crying demand for religious service, therefore the

reward for worship and good actions in this period is correspondingly greater than in any other age, more so because sacrifice of wealth and lives is called for.

This is the time of the *mujadid* of the fourteenth century when Islam is beset by all kinds of dangers and attacks. There is a preponderance of false creeds and the darkness of irreligion and misguidance has overspread the earth. Therefore, for this reason, the descent of Allah's angels and His communications are respectively much more numerous and more powerful now than in the time of any other mujaddid and so, too, the deeper knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and the inspired truths that have been revealed.

Furthermore, the magnitude of blessings for divine service and sacrifice for religion in this age will never be equalled in later times when the darkness of misguidance will have been dissipated thus allowing the sun of Islam to rise from the West and shed its rays over the whole world. Our Holy Prophet *Muliammad*^(sa) himself has said in relation to this present age that a sincere *sajdah* (prostration) to Allah now will be worth more than years of worship in another era.

Thus, in this period of godlessness, to put religion above the world and to sacrifice wealth and lives for Islam in these vulnerable times and to devote oneself to the worship of Allah in this atheistic age will bring to the sincere devotee more blessings than that people will receive in later times when the need for sacrifices for Islam will not exist and when the Oneness of Allah and true knowledge of Him will be prevalent throughout the world.



Biblical Prophecy about the Holy Prophet^(sa)

Extract from the Introduction to the Study of the Holy Qur'an by Hadhrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad – the second Khalifa of the Promised Messiah^(as).

God's Promise to Abraham^(as)

A fourth question, the answer to which should throw light on the question relating to the need of the Qur'an, is: Did earlier religions regard themselves as final? Or did they believe in a kind of spiritual progression which was due to culminate in a universal teaching for the guidance of mankind?

In answer to this, we must admit that a continuous narrative, in which the story – of one Prophet is linked with that of another, is to be found only in the Bible. In reconstructing the stories of the Prophets, the help we derive from the Bible is invaluable. No other book revealed before the Qur'an can give us this help. To answer the question whether earlier teachings and earlier Prophets did or did not foretell the coming of a perfect Teaching and a perfect Prophet after them, we have to turn to the Bible.

When we do so, we find that God made many promises to the Patriarch Abraham^(as). He was born in Ur of the

Chaldees. From there he migrated with his father to Canaan, His father stopped on the way at Haran and died there. On his father's death, Abraham^(as) was commanded by God to leave Haran and go to Canaan and had the following revelation:

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

(Genesis 12: 2–3).

And again (Genesis 13: 15):

For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

And again (Genesis 16: 10–12):

And the angel of the Lord said unto her (i.e. to Hagar), I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that

it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael, because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

And again (Genesis 17: 9-11)

And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

And (Genesis 17: 14):

And the uncircumcised man-child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

Further on (Genesis 17: 16), we are told that Abraham's^(as) wife Sarah also

was promised a son.

And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her; yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.

Of the progeny of Sarah (through Isaac) we are told (Genesis 17: 19)

And I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

Of Ishmael (Genesis 17: 20–22) we read:

And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee (refers to Abraham's prayer in Genesis 17:18- "O that Ishmael might live before thee"): Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

Again (Genesis 21:13)

And also of the son of the

*bondwoman will I make a nation,
because he is thy seed.*

Again of Ishmael, God said to Hagar
(Genesis 21:17–18)

*For God hath heard the voice of
the lad where he is. Arise, lift up
the lad, and hold him in thine
hand; for I will make him a great
nation.*

Again (Genesis 21: 20-21)

*And God was with the lad; and he
grew, and dwelt in the wilderness,
and became an archer. And he
dwelt in the wilderness of Paran:
and his mother took him a wife out
of the land of Egypt.*

From these quotations it is obvious that Abraham^(as) had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, Ishmael being the elder and Isaac the younger. God promised Abraham^(as) that He would multiply and bless his progeny. The promise applies to both Isaac and Ishmael. From the quotations it also appears that Ishmael lived in the wilderness of Paran, that the land of Canaan was given over to the sons of Abraham^(as), and that the external sign of the covenant which God made with Abraham^(as) was circumcision of all males. All these promises were fulfilled. The progeny of Isaac

multiplied exceedingly. From among them arose the Prophets, Moses^(as), David^(as), Ezekiel^(as), Daniel^(as) and Jesus^(as). For two thousand years they ruled over Canaan. Their hold on it was never really abolished, though for a short time it became weak. After the seventh century AD, however, the sons of Isaac, and those who observed the letter of the Law of Moses had to withdraw from Canaan. The sons of Ishmael, instead, became its political as well as its spiritual leaders. The fact that the sons of Israel had to surrender the land of Canaan shows that they had become unworthy of the promise which God had made to them through Abraham^(as). This promise was that Israel would remain in possession of this land until the Last Day, and the promise was true. The Last Day in the divine promise, therefore, cannot mean the day which is to mark the end of the world, but the day on which the Law of Moses was to be superseded by the promulgation of a new Law for the guidance of the world. In the language of Divine Revelation, the advent of a new Law is often described as the birth of a new heaven and a new earth. Just as a new heaven and a new earth cannot be created without a large-scale upheaval usually associated with the Last Day – so the establishment of a new Law must entail a large-scale upheaval of the

people who receive that Law. Therefore, when the prophecy said that the sons of Israel would retain their hold over Canaan until the Last Day, it meant that their hold would continue until the advent of a new Law-giving Prophet. In the utterances of David^(as) we have a hint of this meaning of the prophecy. The promise contained in Genesis that Israel would retain possession of Canaan until the Last Day is expressed differently. Thus in Psalms (37:29) we read:

The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.

The promise of eternal possession is not for Israel as such but for the righteous. This utterance of David, in fact, was a clear warning that the days of Israel's dominance were numbered. The Prophet seemed to point out that the divine promise, after a time, was to be understood not in a racial but in a spiritual sense; that the sons of Ishmael were going to inherit the promises made to Abraham^(as) by inheriting the truth and a new covenant was going to be initiated through them. If our interpretation of the prophecy is not correct, then the question is, Why did God make the sons of Ishmael—and believers in the Message of the Qur'an—dominant in Palestine? The prophecy was quite clear. The sons of

Isaac were to hold Palestine until the Last Day. The question is, Why did they not? Why did God allow a transfer of political power from the sons of Isaac to the sons of Ishmael? If the transfer had lasted for a short time, it would have made no difference to the prophecy. The rise and fall in the fortunes of nations are a common phenomenon. But the transfer of which we speak proved a permanent one. More than one thousand three hundred years have passed, and Palestine is still in the possession of Muslims, the sons of Ishmael. European powers and the U.S.A. are trying hard to alter this, but so far, at any rate, they have not succeeded. If at all they succeed in their designs, the success is bound to be short-lived. Either the new Israelite settlers will become converted to Islam and regain possession of Palestine through a new covenant; or they will have to quit Palestine once again. Palestine is for those who keep the covenant which Abraham^(as) made with God. Christians, no doubt, claim to fulfil the covenant. But they forget that the covenant lays down an important external sign. That sign is circumcision of the male population. Only Ishmaelites have kept the sign both before and since the revelation of the Qur'an.

In short, the prophecy of Abraham^(as) promised blessings to both Isaac and

Ishmael. According to this promise, the sons of Isaac were established over Canaan and the sons of Ishmael over Arabia. But when the Last Day arrived for the sons of Isaac, then, in terms of the prophecy of David^(as), the promise was transferred from Israel to Ishmael. The claim of Israel was now only a racial claim. The claim of Ishmael was spiritual. On the basis of their racial claim the sons of Ishmael held Mecca and the territory around (2: 125–29). On the basis of their spiritual claim they added Canaan to their possessions after the religious deterioration of Israel.

The Prophecy in Deuteronomy

When Moses^(as) went to Mount Horeb under the command of God, he addressed the Israelites saying:

The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.

(Deuteronomy 18:15)

God spoke to Moses^(as) saying:

I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will I put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not

hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.

(Deuteronomy 18: 18–20)

From these passages it is evident that Moses^(as) prophesied about a Law-giving Prophet who was to appear after him, and who was to be from among the brethren of Israel.

That he was to be a Law-giver, and not an ordinary Prophet is obvious from the words 'like unto Moses'. As Moses^(as) was a Law-giver, the Prophet, who was to be like Moses^(as), was also to be a Law-giver. The Promised Prophet is described as one who 'shall speak unto them all that I shall command him'. From this also it appears that the Promised Prophet was to be a Law-giving Prophet. The promulgation of a new Law means the initiation of a new movement, a new nation. A Prophet who promulgates a new Law, therefore, is no ordinary Teacher or Reformer. He has to present a comprehensive teaching, incorporating fundamental principles as well as detailed rules. Without it a new nation cannot be raised. But a

Prophet who does not bring a new Law has only to explain and to annotate an already existing Law. It is not necessary for him to present all that he receives from God to his people. It is possible that some of his revelations may be meant only for his personal edification, which he is under no obligation to pass on to his people. The prophecy also lays down that the Promised Prophet will 'speak in my name', and those who will not listen to him, God will 'require it' of them; that is, those who turn a deaf ear will incur punishment. We are also told that any one who pretends to fulfil the prophecy will be put to death.

If we keep in view all the terms of the prophecy, we are bound to conclude that until at least the time of Jesus^(as) no Prophet had appeared in the world who could be said to have answered to the description of the Promised Prophet. All the Prophets who appeared between Moses^(as) and Jesus^(as), therefore, may be ignored, when we set out in search of the Prophet who could be said to have fulfilled this prophecy. They have left no following and no people who could espouse their claims. Only Jesus^(as) remains who has a large following, and who is regarded by his followers as the last Teacher sent by God into this world. But when we apply, one by one, the terms of the prophecy to

Jesus, we find that not one of them applies to him:

First, the Promised Prophet was to be a Law-giving Prophet. Was Jesus^(as) a Law-giver? Did he bring a new Law into the world to replace an old one? Jesus^(as) said clearly:

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

(Matthew 5: 17–18)

The followers of Jesus^(as) went so far as to declare:

And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, . . .

(Galatians, 3:12–13)

Jesus^(as) laid no claim to giving a new Law, and his disciples regard the Law as a curse. How then can Jesus^(as) and his followers be said to fulfil the prophecy in Deuteronomy?

Secondly, the Promised Prophet was to be raised not from among Israel but from among their brethren and Jesus^(as) was an Israelite.

Christian exponents, confronted with this fact, are wont to say that Jesus^(as) had no earthly father, so he can be said to be one of the brethren of Israel. But such a construction would be untenable. The prophecy speaks of brethren, which means they were to constitute a race or a people from among whom the Promised Prophet was to rise. Jesus^(as) stands alone, as son of God. If there were other sons of God, he might have answered to the description of the prophecy. But, apart from this, it is clearly laid down in the Bible that Christ was to be of the seed of David^(as) (Psalms, 132: 11; Jeremiah, 23: 5). Jesus^(as) may shed his Israelite origin because he had no earthly father: but he will not then remain a son of David^(as) so that the prophecy of the Psalms relating to Christ will not apply to him.

Thirdly, the prophecy says: 'I will put my words in his mouth.' But the Gospels do not consist of words which God put in Jesus' mouth. They only tell us the story of Jesus^(as) and what he said in some of his public addresses and what his disciples said or did on different occasions.

Fourthly, the Promised One was to be a Prophet, while the Christian view is that Jesus^(as) was not a Prophet, but the son of God. How then, can Jesus^(as) answer to the

description of the prophecy?

Fifthly, we have in the prophecy: 'Words which he shall speak in my name.' Strange as it may seem, there is in the Gospels not a single example of words which Jesus^(as) may be said to have received from God with the command to pass them on to the people whom he taught.

Sixthly, we have in the prophecy: 'He shall speak unto them all that I shall command.' The Promised Prophet, according to this, was to give to the world a complete and comprehensive teaching. But Jesus^(as) claimed no such mission for himself. He regarded himself as the forerunner of a greater Teacher yet to come. Thus we have (John, 16: 12-13):

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. How be it when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

From these verses it appears that the prophecy in Deuteronomy was not fulfilled in Jesus^(as). We cannot but conclude, therefore, that both the Old and the New Testaments foretold the

coming of a Prophet after Jesus^(as) who was to guide the world, 'unto all truth', and who was to establish the name of God on earth for all time. Our claim is that the revelation of the Qur'an and the advent of the Holy Prophet mark the fulfilment of the prophecy in Deuteronomy. The following facts bear this out:

(i) The Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa) was a descendant of Ishmael. The descendants of Ishmael were the brethren of the descendants of Isaac, the Israelites.

(ii) The Holy Prophet^(sas) is the only one claiming to be a Prophet like Moses^(as). We have in the Qur'an (Ch.73:v.16):

Verily We have sent to you a Messenger, who is a witness over you, even as We sent a Messenger to Pharaoh.

The Qur'an definitely likens the Holy Prophet^(sa) to Moses^(as).

(iii) The prophecy described the Promised One as a Prophet. The Holy Prophet^(sas) claimed to be a Prophet only. Jesus^(as), we are told, on the other hand, did not claim to be a Prophet. We read in Mark (8:27-30):

He asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? and they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets. And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him. Thou art the Christ. And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

That is to say, Jesus^(as) denies being either John the Baptist, or Elias, or one of the Prophets. But the prophecy in Deuteronomy speaks of the Promised One as a Prophet like Moses^(as). The prophecy, therefore, applies to the Prophet of Islam^(sa) and not to Jesus^(as).

(iv) The prophecy speaks of 'words I will put in his mouth.' The Gospels do not contain any such words. On the contrary, the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa) brought to the world the Qur'an which is from beginning to end only the word of God, which God put into his mouth. The Qur'an describes itself as the word of God (2: 76).

(v) The prophecy said that the Promised One would speak all that he was commanded. We have quoted the Gospels to prove that Jesus^(as) did not pass on everything he received from God, and that there was to be another after him, who was to do so. The Holy

Prophet of Islam^(sa) fully answers to this description. We have in the Qur'an (Ch.5:v.68): 'O Messenger! convey to the people what has been revealed to thee from thy Lord.' The verse seems to say, 'O Prophet, there is an ancient prophecy about you which said that when you come into the world you would give to it all the truths you received from your God. Therefore preach to the world whatever is revealed to you, whether it likes it or not.' Similarly, the verse revealed on the completion of the revelation of the Qur'an says:

This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as religion.
(Ch.5: v.4)

That is to say, 'Through the revelation of the Qur'an, faith has been made perfect and the gift of guidance made complete for you, and peace and tranquillity have been appointed for you as your religion.' It was the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa), therefore, who taught everything and kept back nothing. In the time of Jesus^(as), people were not ready to receive and to believe in everything that was worth while. But in the time of the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa) man had traversed all the stages of spiritual evolution and the time had come for all the

truths to be revealed to the world.

(vi) The prophecy speaks of 'words which he shall speak in my name'. This part of the prophecy also was fulfilled in the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa). He is the only one who spoke in the name of God, because every Chapter of the revealed Book brought by him begins with the words: 'In the name of Allah the Gracious, the Merciful.' This great sign, duly incorporated in the Qur'an, also proves that the last stride in the spiritual advance of humanity, foretold by Moses, was registered with the advent of the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa).

(vii) The prophecy laid down the important criterion:

But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.
(Deuteronomy 18:20).

In this verse the world was taught how to distinguish the Promised One of the prophecy from those who should only pretend to fulfil the prophecy. It was necessary that a clear criterion should be laid down. The Promised One had to be charged with

the important mission of initiating the last stage in the spiritual advance of man. If pretenders to this office should arise, the world would run great risks. To ward off these risks, God laid down the criterion that a pretender would incur divine punishment and meet with death and defeat. The Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa) laid claim to this office very early in his career, and in the clearest terms. When he announced his claim, he was friendless and weak. The enemy was large in numbers and was strong, and he left no stone unturned to bring to nought his message and his mission and spared no pains to put an end to his life. Mighty rulers also set themselves against him but it was they, not the Prophet who suffered discomfiture and disgrace. The Holy Prophet^(sa) died full of success. When he died, the whole of Arabia had declared faith in him; and after his death his first Successors in a few years spread Islam throughout the whole of the then known world.

Moses^(as) was a true Prophet. The prophecy in Deuteronomy was a revelation from God. But was the Holy Prophet^(sa) bound to succeed in the way he did? And were his enemies, who thirsted for his blood, bound to fail in the way they did? No, neither the Holy Prophet's^(sa) success nor the failure of his enemies was an

accident. On the other hand, it seems that the Qur'an had in view the terms of the prophecy in Deuteronomy when it declared before all Arabia and early in the career of the Holy Prophet^(sa):

And Allah will protect thee from men.

(Ch.5: v.68).

Similarly, addressing the enemies of the Prophet, the Qur'an declared:

He is the Knower of the unseen; and He reveals not His secrets to any one, except him whom He chooses, namely a Messenger of His. And then He causes an escort of guarding angels to go before him and behind him.

(Ch.72: vs.27-28).

That is to say, the Prophet, having been charged with an important mission, would not be left unprotected. Enemies would never be able to kill him.

These verses proved that the success which the Holy Prophet^(sa) attained was not an accident of good fortune. He declared early, through revelations received by him from God and recorded to this day in the Qur'an, that God would protect him from the murderous attacks of his enemies. He

warned the world that because he was not a pretender but the Prophet promised in the prophecy in Deuteronomy, he would not be killed.

In short, one thousand nine hundred years before the advent of the Prophet of Islam^(sa), Moses^(as) declared that his own Law was, in the divine scheme, not the last Law; that the world was to have a fuller Law later on; and that, for this, God would send in the Latter Days another Messenger of His. This Messenger was to teach all truths; it was he who was to mark the last stage in the spiritual advance of man. The world had to wait for another book and another Prophet. If, therefore, the Qur'an and the Holy Prophet^(sa) have come after the Bible and after the Prophets Moses^(as) and Jesus^(as), and if they claim to have come from God as guidance to man, their claim must be treated as just and true. It must be taken as the fulfilment of ancient prophecies. The revelation of the Qur'an was not a gratuitous revelation, a redundancy in the presence of those revelations. Indeed, if the Qur'an had not been revealed, promises made by God through His Messengers would have gone unfulfilled, and the world would have become afflicted with doubt and disbelief.

Faran-Part of Arabia

In Deuteronomy (33: 2) we have:

And he said, the Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.

In this verse Moses^(as) is promised three manifestations of the glory of God. The first of these appeared from Sinai, to which a reference is made in Exodus (19: 20)

And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.

This manifestation of Divine Glory appeared in the time of Moses^(as). The world witnessed the blessings which came with it. Time passed. The second manifestation promised in the prophecy was to take place from Seir. Seir is that part of the world round about which the miracles of Jesus took place. 'Rising up from Seir', therefore, points to the advent of Jesus^(as). Christian exponents of the Gospels identify Seir with Sinai but this is a mistake. Seir is part of Palestine. The name has many corrupt forms. One of these serves as the

name of a people who are descendants of the Prophet Jacob^(as) and are known as Bani Asher. Another serves as a name for the north western part of Palestine. Seir, therefore, stands for the second manifestation of divine glory, to wit, the one especially associated with Palestine. To identify Seir with Sinai and to attribute both manifestations to Moses^(as), is wrong also because Moses^(as) never crossed into Canaan. He died at a spot from where he could only see its borders. After Moses^(as) and before Jesus^(as) no manifestation of divine glory took place which could rank with that of Sinai. 'Rising up from Seir', therefore, means the advent of Jesus which took place right in Canaan, and through which, as it were, God showed His face for a second time. The third manifestation of divine glory was to take its rise from Paran, and Paran (Arabic Faran) is the name of the hills which lie between Mecca and Medina. Arab geographers always called this territory Faran. A halting place on the way from Mecca to Medina is called the Valley of Fatima. When caravans pass through it, children from the neighbourhood meet them and sell them flowers. Asked where the flowers come from, the children answer: 'Bariyyat Faran', (Fasl al-Khitab) that is, the wilderness of Faran. Faran, therefore, is part of Arabia, the Hijaz to be exact.

According to the Old Testament, Ishmael lived in this part. Thus in Genesis (21:20–21) we have:

And God was with the lad (Ishmael); and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

The Quraish are Ishmael's Descendants

The Biblical description of Paran is somewhat different from that of Arab geographers. According to the Bible, Paran is a territory adjacent to Canaan. But a territory made up of woods and hills must be a large one, sometimes extending over hundreds and thousands of miles. It cannot be just a strip of land situated within another territory or on its edge. The Biblical description can only mean that the woods and hills of Paran rise from somewhere near Canaan. It cannot mean that Paran is the southern periphery of Canaan. The Bible, however, admits that Abraham had a son called Ishmael and that he lived in Paran. The testimony of the sons of Ishmael who inhabited it, must be regarded as paramount. The Israelites should have little to say on the point. Their knowledge of history and geography was not good. They

could not give an adequate account of the route they followed in their own journey from Egypt to Canaan. How could they pronounce on the geographical facts of other territories? Only one people today trace their descent from Ishmael and they are the Quraish. They live in Arabia, and Mecca is their centre. If the Quraish claim is a pretence, it is difficult to find a motive for it. The claim could not advance their racial status, for the Israelites still looked down upon them. Nothing could make a desert people trace their descent to Ishmael unless the descent was a fact.

Also, if the Arab claim is false, where did the descendants of Ishmael disappear? According to the Bible, Ishmael had twelve sons, and these twelve again, according to the Bible, were to multiply exceedingly.

Thus in Genesis (21: 13) we have:

And also of the son of the bondwoman (i.e., Ishmael) will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.

Again in Genesis (21: 18) we have:

Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation.

Again in Genesis (17: 20) God says to Abraham^(as):

And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

That is to say, the descendants of Ishmael, were to multiply exceedingly and were to become a great nation. If the claim of the Arabs to be the descendants of Ishmael is false, equally must these Biblical prophecies be false. For there is not another nation in the world which claims descent from Ishmael. It is only when the claim of the Arabs is accepted, that the Biblical prophecies relating to Ishmael can be proved true for they all apply to the Arabs.

The strongest historical evidence consists of stable national traditions. For hundreds of years a people have regarded themselves as descendants of Ishmael and no other people in the world so regard themselves. Better evidence than this there cannot be.

According to the Bible, the Ishmaelites lived in Paran, and Paran, according to Arab geographers, is the territory extending from Mecca to the northern border of Arabia. Paran,

therefore, is part of Arabia as certainly as the Quraish are the descendants of Ishmael. The divine glory which was to rise from Paran was, therefore, to rise from Arabia.

That the Ishmaelites had settled in Arabia is proved by further evidence from the Bible. In Genesis (25: 13-16) we have the names of the twelve sons of Ishmael as follows:

1. Nebaoth.
2. Kedar.
3. Adbeel.
4. Mibsam.
5. Mishma.
6. Dumah.
7. Massa.
8. Hadar.
9. Tema.
10. Jetur.
11. Naphish.
12. Kedemah.

In accordance with ancient custom, we should expect their descendants to be named after their respective ancestors. The descendants of Jacob^(as), for instance, would be named after their ancestor. Countries also have been named after their people. In the light of these customs a survey of the population of Arabia reveals that the names of the twelve sons of Ishmael are found spread in different parts of Arabia. The

descendants of Ishmael fill the entire length and breadth of the country.

The first son of Ishmael was Nebajoth. The territory peopled by his descendants, according to geographers is between thirty and thirty-eight degrees North, and thirty-six to thirty-eight degrees East. The Rev. Katripikari (Khutubat Ahmadiyya) admits this and says the descendants of Nebajoth occupied the territory between Palestine and Yanbu, the port for Medina.

Kedar was the second son. His descendants also constitute part of the Arab population. The literal meaning of Kedar is 'of camels', which points to their Arabian habitation. They are to be found in the territory between the Hijaz and Medina. Ptolemy and Pliny, in the course of their description of the people of the Hijsz, speak of the tribes Kedars and Gedors (the latter seems to be a corrupt form of Kedar). There are Arabs today who claim descent from Kedar.

The third son was Adbeel. According to Josephus, the Adbeels also lived in this part of Arabia. The fourth was Mibsam. We cannot find any traces of this tribe in ordinary geography books. But it is possible that their name has become corrupted into some unrecognisable form. The fifth son

was Mishma, and the Mishmas are to be found to this day in Arabia. The sixth was Dumah. A well-known spot in Arabia is still called Dumah, and Arab geographers have always traced this name to that of the sixth son of Ishmael. The seventh son was Massa, whose name is to be found intact in a Yemenite tribe. Their archaeological remains can also be identified. Katripikari mentions this. The eighth son was Hadar after whom we have the famous town Hudaïda in Yemen.

The ninth son was Terna. From Najd to the Hijaz the territory is called Terna and it is all peopled by the descendants of Tema. In fact they seem to have spread right up to the Persian Gulf.

The tenth son was Jetur (Arabic Yatar). The Jeturs can also be traced – in Arabia and are known as Jedurs. The sounds ‘j’ and ‘y’ often interchange, as do ‘t’ and ‘d’.

The eleventh son was Naphish, and Forster thinks that the authority of Josephus and the Old Testament supports the view that the descendants of Naphish lived in the wilds of Arabia.

The twelfth son was Kedemah. The habitation of the descendants of Kedemah is known to lie, according

to the famous geographer, Masdi, in Yemen. The tribe known as Ashab al-Rass and mentioned also in the Qur’an are descendants of Ishmael, and they were two tribes, one called Kedamah and the other Yamin. According to some authorities the second one was called Ra’wil, not Yamin.

Historical and geographical evidence, therefore, shows that the descendants of Abraham^(as) have lived in Arabia. All of them held Mecca and the Ka’ba in great reverence, and from this it appears that Ishmael first settled in Mecca, and this is the part which, according to both Arab and Old Testament records, is called Paran (or Arabic Faran). The testimony of the revelation of Isaiah (21: 13-17) supports the same view:

The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim. The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty, they prevented with their bread him that fled. For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war. For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Within a year, according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail: And

FROM THE PROPHECIES OF MOSES^(AS) AND HABAKKUK IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE ADVENT OF JESUS^(AS) WAS NOT TO MARK THE LAST STAGE IN THE SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OF MAN. IT WAS TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE ADVENT OF ANOTHER PROPHET TO MARK THE THIRD MANIFESTATION OF DIVINE GLORY. THIS PROPHET WAS TO MANIFEST BOTH THE BEAUTY AND THE MAJESTY OF GOD AND BRING A FIERY LAW INTO THE WORLD, NOT MERELY A MESSAGE OF FORGIVENESS.

the residue of the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be diminished: for the Lord God of Israel hath spoken it.

This prophetic passage is a picture of the Battle of Badr which took place about a year after the Holy Prophet's^(sa) migration from Mecca to Medina. In this battle the sons of Kedar, the people of Mecca and the territories around, suffered a grievous defeat at the hands of Muslims. Unable to withstand the fierceness of Muslim swordsmen and archers, the Meccans sustained a disgraceful defeat. Mark the words with which the passage begins: 'The burden upon Arabia'. Herein Tema and Kedar are respectively spoken of as an Arabian territory and an Arabian tribe. According to this text, revealed seven hundred and fourteen years before Jesus^(as) to the Prophet Isaiah^(as), the

descendants of Ishmael lived in the Hijaz.

In short, from whatever side we may approach this question, there is abundant evidence that the Quraish were the descendants of Ishmael and that Paran of the Bible (Arabic Faran) is the land in which they lived. The manifestation of divine glory that was due to take place from Paran was the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa), prophesied by Moses^(as).

The Holy Prophet^(sa) mentioned in Habakkuk

This advent was also prophesied by Habakkuk (3: 3-7) six hundred and twenty-six years before Jesus^(as). Thus we have:

God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the

heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hands: and there was the hiding of his power. Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting. I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.

Here we have a mention of Tema and of a Holy One from Paran. From the prophecies of Moses^(as) and Habakkuk it is evident that the advent of Jesus was not to mark the last stage in the spiritual development of man. It was to be followed by the advent of another Prophet to mark the third manifestation of Divine Glory. This prophet was to manifest both the Beauty and the Majesty of God and bring a fiery Law into the world, not merely a Message of forgiveness.

The Holy One to appear from the land of Tema and Mount Paran is the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa), and his fiery Law is the Qur'an which has the virtue of consuming to ashes the stuff of which sins and satanic

machinations are made. Moses^(as) truly said that the Promised One, rising from Paran, would be accompanied by ten thousand saints. As all the world knows, it was the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa) who rose from Paran and marched into Mecca with ten thousand followers. Could Jesus^(as) be said to have fulfilled this great prophecy or David^(as) or Moses^(as)? Did any of them rise from Paran? Did any of them march to victory with ten thousand saintly followers? Jesus^(as) had only twelve disciples, one of whom sold him for a little money. Another cursed him for fear of being maltreated. Ten remained faithful but, according to the Gospel account, even they dispersed when Jesus^(as) was put on the Cross. Had they stood by their Master's side, even then a following of ten could not have equalled a following of ten thousand. And then the Biblical prophecy says clearly that the ten thousand would be with the Promised Prophet. But the Gospels tell us that the ten disciples of Jesus^(as) who remained abandoned him when he was put on the Cross. According to Habakkuk, one sign of the Promised One was to be the amount of praise showered upon him. Thus Habakkuk (3:3) says, 'and the earth was full of his praise.'

It does not seem to us a mere accident that the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa) was named Muhammad (literally, the Praised One). When his enemies denounced him, they were worried by the contradiction entailed in denouncing the Praised One. So they changed his name from Muhammad to Mudhammad, from the Praised One to the denounced one. When the Prophet's Companions got exasperated at the denunciations and abuse hurled at him he would say, 'Hold your peace; they abuse not me but someone else called Mudhammad.' Only a man with a name as beautiful as his personality and character could answer to the description which Habakkuk had given of the Promised One. No less significant is the tradition of devotional verse which has grown in Islam, and which has resulted in an important branch of the poetry written by Muslims of all countries. Habakkuk also says:

*Before him went the pestilence,
and burning coals went forth at
his feet.*
(Ch.3: v.5)

This sign of the Promised One was also fulfilled in the Prophet of Islam^(sa). True, the prophecy speaks of pestilence, that is, a disease in epidemic form. But it is large scale

destruction and death which a pestilence brings which is here meant. Because the enemies of the Holy Prophet^(sa) suffered large scale destruction and death in their encounters with him, he may be said to have fulfilled even this part of the prophecy.

Again it says:

*He stood and measured the earth:
he beheld, and drove asunder the
nations.*
(Ch.3: v.6)

This part of the prophecy, like the others, can apply neither to Moses^(as) nor to Jesus^(as). Moses^(as) died while he was still fighting his enemies, while Jesus^(as) was put on the Cross. The Prophet who beheld and drove asunder the nations was the Prophet of Islam^(sas). Truly did he say of himself, 'My presence is awe-inspiring, and I have been helped not a little by it. People fear me from a distance of one month's journey' (Bukhari).

Again:

*The everlasting mountains were
scattered, the perpetual hills did
bow.*
(Ch.3: v.6).

This part of the prophecy also applies to the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa). For his enemies were completely routed. Mountains and hills only mean powerful enemies.

Again we have in Habakkuk (3: 7):

I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.

This part of the prophecy clearly shows that the Promised Prophet was to belong to somewhere outside Syria. For it is the hordes in Cushan and Midian which are to be afflicted and frightened on the appearance of the armies of the Promised One. The description cannot apply to Moses^(as) or Jesus^(as). It applies only to the Prophet of Islam^(sa). When a small army of his, in the time of his First Successor, Abu Bakr, advanced towards Palestine, notwithstanding the fact that Canaan was then under the Roman Kaiser, master of half the known world at the time, the superior forces of the Kaiser were crushed by the inferior Muslim forces. 'The tents of Cushan were in affliction and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.' The people of these lands found their salvation in laying down their arms before the servants of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^(sa).

The Prophet's Advent Foretold by Solomon

(a) In the Song of Solomon (5: 10-16) we have:

My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven. His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh. His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires. His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon socks of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

This prophecy promises a Prophet who would be superior to others, and would possess a rank higher than others. We say this because the rapturous description in the Song of Solomon comes in reply to the question:

*What is thy beloved more than
another beloved?*

(5:9)

We are told that this beloved would stand out like a flag among ten thousand men. As a flag symbolises an army, the description, therefore, applies to some great occasion on which this beloved would command a following of ten thousand.

We are also told:

*His lips like lilies, dropping sweet
smelling myrrh.*

(5:13)

*Now myrrh is a kind of gum, of
bitter taste but sweet-smelling and
very useful, a germ-killer and a
cicatrizer, used in disinfectant
preparations, in treating wounds
and making scents and perfumes.*

We are also told that 'he is altogether lovely' (mark the Hebrew Mahamaddim). It means his person and character would be such as to compel love and admiration.

This prophecy clearly applies to the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa). It was he who headed ten thousand saints and marched victorious from the heights of Paran into the valley of Mecca, exactly as had been foretold by

Moses^(as). It was he whose teaching proved like myrrh for the world, bitter in taste but beautiful in its effects. It contained principles and rules all of which were calculated to promote the well-being of man, and which yet tasted bitter to some nations. And it is he who is called (and is true to the description) Muhammad.

Christian writers are wont to say that the beloved promised in this prophecy has been called Mahamaddim not Muhammad. But this objection does not go very far. The Old Testament name for God is Elohim. In Hebrew it is common to show consideration and reverence by using a plural for a single person. We do the same in Urdu. Lecturing in Urdu, a lecturer might easily conclude his tribute to the Prophet by saying, 'Yeh hain hamare Muhammad', meaning, These are our Muhammad!

(b) In the Song of Solomon, we have another prophecy about the Holy Prophet of Islam. This is in 4: 9–12. In these verses Solomon addresses his beloved as both sister and spouse (4: 9; 4: 10; 4: 12). The simultaneous use of the two forms of address—sister and spouse—is not without significance. 'Sister' indicates that the Promised Prophet would be an Ishmaelite, one of the brethren of the Israelites; and 'spouse' indicates that the Message of

the Promised Prophet will not be confined to his own people, as were the Messages of all the Israelite Prophets. It would be open to other nations and peoples as well. We should not be misled by the feminine form of address used here. The passage is couched in poetical language, full of metaphors. The last line of the chapter uses the masculine form, which is contradictory, but significant. Thus we have:

Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. (4: 16).

The prophecy (4: 9–12), therefore, applies only to the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa). Jesus^(as) was not one of the brethren of Israel, nor was his teaching addressed to any people other than Israel.

(c) We also have in the Song of Solomon (1: 5–6):

I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not upon me, because I am black.

From this description it appears that Solomon foretold the advent of a Prophet who would come from the south, and he (or his people) would be black of skin as compared with the

descendants of Isaac. It is well known that the people of Syria and Palestine have a fairer complexion than the people of Arabia. The Prophet of Islam was an Arab.

(d) In the same place another sign of the Promised One is given as follows:

My mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept (1:6).

This is a description of the people to which the Promised One was to belong. The Arabs, at the advent of the Prophet of Islam^(sa), were an unambitious people. They accepted employment under Romans and Iranians, but of their own country they thought but little. The Holy Prophet^(sa) came and Arabia rose from her slumber. The result was an Arab-led world movement embracing every conceivable side of human progress—spiritual, intellectual, political. The Arabs became the keepers not only of their own vineyard, but of the vineyards of the whole world.

(e) The Song of Solomon also contains a warning for Israel: they are told not to meddle with the Promised Prophet. Thus in 2: 7 we have:

I charge you, O ye daughters of

*Jerusalem, by the roes, and by
the hinds of the field, that ye stir
not up, nor awake my love, till
he please.*

The theme is continued in the Song in 3: 5 and in 8: 4. These passages only mean that when the Promised Prophet appeared, Jews-and Christians, two branches of Israel, would oppose and oppress him; but as the Prophet would be a God appointed Prophet, they would not succeed, but would instead suffer an ignominious defeat. Solomon, accordingly, warned his people saying:

*I charge you, that ye stir not up,
nor awake my love, till he
please.*

The Israelites, both Jews and Christians, were advised to do nothing to the Promised Prophet. When his influence spread to their land, they should accept him. It would not do to oppose him and to try to stem the tide of his influence. Opposition would spell the opponents' own destruction. For a people who meddle with a Prophet's mission become liable to divine punishment. The warning proved true. Jews and Christians became meddlesome and brought divine punishment upon themselves. If a people remain passive and show no

hostility to a Prophet, he adopts no violent steps against them but confines himself to teaching and preaching. Occasionally, a Prophet draws the sword, but only against those who first draw the sword against him. He makes war only upon those who first make war upon him and seek to put down by force and oppression the Message sent by God. The Holy Prophet's^(sa) example illustrates this point. It was the risk entailed by thoughtless hostility to a true Message against which Solomon warned.

These prophecies cannot possibly apply to Jesus^(as). Jesus^(as) did not appear from the south of Palestine. Nor was he one of the brethren of Israel. Nor did he have the means to resist and to destroy the opposition of Israel. The prophecies apply only to the Prophet of Islam^(sa). He is the beloved of the Song of Solomon. The Song is, in fact, a rapturous description of the Prophet^(sa).



To be continued

Al-Bayyinah – A Manifest Principle

Al-Qayyimah – An Everlasting Teaching

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

Al-Bayyinah, a Qur'anic term, applies to such manifest truth as is outstanding in its quality of dazzling brilliance, as though the star had risen and the night dispelled. It appears with the appearance of all Divine messengers who usher in a new era of light. It does not relate to the beginning of Islam alone; it relates to the beginning of all Divine manifestations. When a messenger comes to revolutionize a society, he personifies *Al-Bayyinah* of which he himself is the harbinger.

فِيهَا كُتِبَ قِيَمَةٌ

Therein are everlasting teachings.¹
(Ch.98: v.4)

Al-Qayyimah is another term which signifies that part of a prophet's teachings which makes the central core of every religion. It has a quality of permanence about it which defies change. All prophets according to the pronouncement of Surah *Al-Bayyinah* (Chapter 98), essentially bring the same message in fundamentals. This means that Adam^(as), the first messenger of God, was no different in this respect from any other prophet who followed him. *Al-Qayyimah* provides the binding link between all Divinely revealed religions. According to this declaration the religion of Adam^(as), the first prophet, and that of Hadhrat Muhammad^(sa) the last of all the law-bearing prophets, have to be the same in bare essentials. Despite this similarity, there may be vast differences in the teachings of the earlier religions and those of the more evolved ones of subsequent ages. To produce dissimilarity in detail despite similarity in the fundamentals is in fact an intrinsic character of evolution. The term 'mammal' for instance is a term applied to all warm-blooded animals who possess vertebral columns and limbs but they are not exactly alike. Sheep differ so much

from humans, and cats from monkeys, despite the fact that they belong to the same order of mammals. Hence, as religions continue to evolve, they appear with new titles and names without becoming different in fundamentals. *Al-Qayyimah* remains their permanent binding link.

The *Bayyinah* as explained above, is not only the quality of the truth a prophet brings but it is also the quality of his personal character. His truth is so manifest that prior to his claim of Divine representation, the entire society in which he is born and raised testifies to it with unanimous accord. But *Al-Bayyinah* is not that alone! The truth of a prophet, when further supported by heavenly signs, becomes so evident that there is no genuine excuse whatsoever for the society to deny it. It is this same irrefutable manifestation of his Divine origin which ironically becomes responsible for the extreme hostility and antagonism displayed against him, particularly by the old order religious clergy of the time. They reject him only because they recognize in him the dawn of a new day of truth. This rise of a new dawn, if permitted, would break their hegemony over the ignorant masses and destroy the old order of their religious hierarchy. It is this potent threat to their survival as a class which compels them to forget their mutual differences and put up a joint front of resistance with no holds barred. When all their baboonish noises and threats fail to intimidate the prophet, the only option they are left with is a desperate recourse to violence. But it is far beyond their united might to defeat *Al-Bayyinah*. Its winning potential lies not merely in the quality of its truth but more than that it lies in the support that God lends it. *Al-Bayyinah* thus aided by destiny transcends time and space, and always emerges as the dominant principle. To be on the right side of *Al-Bayyinah* is to survive, to be on the left is to perish.

Al-Bayyinah does not belong to that category of absolute truth which makes the subject of philosophical discussions. Nor is it similar to the emergence of absolute ideas which gradually develop after successfully meeting the challenges of successive eras. The quality of brilliance it displays is lent to it by Divine Revelation from its very inception.

The term *Al-Bayyinah* also comprises other connotations. It works as a motive phenomenon which advances faith and spiritual evolution. It is not inert, but is more like the domineering principle of evolution. All prophetic movements emanate from *Al-Bayyinah*. The word is derived from an infinitive which has

the root meaning of differentiation and discrimination, a meaning it shares with another Qur'anic term, 'Al-Bayan'. *Al-Bayan* is the faculty of speech which has the power to differentiate between two meanings and to define human thought into clear expressions. It should be noted that like the '*Bayyinah*', *Al-Bayan* also is described by the Qur'an to have a Divine origin as mentioned in the following verse:

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ * عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ

He created man;

And taught him how to express himself and differentiate.²

(Ch.55:vs.4-5)

Hence, the faculty of speech is clearly claimed to have been bestowed by God upon man, which leads to the inevitable conclusion that the first language taught to him was taught by God Himself. In the light of this, the enigma of the human faculty of speech does not remain as incomprehensible as it would otherwise be. The faculty of speech separates man from the rest of the animal kingdom by such a wide margin as cannot be explained by the doctrine of evolution alone, however much it may be extended. Hence, *Al-Bayan*, the faculty of speech has to be a gift of Divine revelation.

Thus both the *Bayan* and the *Bayyinah* have the same common origin and both possess the same quality of differentiation. Despite this similarity however, there is a characteristic difference between the two. While *Al-Bayan* is intrinsically bonded to verbal expressions, *Al-Bayyinah* is not confined to this alone. It may at times carry verbal pronouncements, but at others it may manifest itself without the medium of speech. This silent display of *Al-Bayyinah* is like the radiance of a midday sun in which all ever-lasting Divine teachings bask. While on the one hand it draws its strength from God, on the other it lends support to those who lean on it.

'*Al-Qayyimah*', the other term, applies to all such fundamental teachings as have a quality of permanence about them. It is there that the two terms seem to merge together into one. The philosophical terms of absoluteness or universality of values can also fully apply to the values which are expressed by the religious

term *Al-Qayyimah*. But whether there can be any ideas or values which can in reality be described as absolute or universal is the question which we must examine now purely from the secular angle. Almost all the prominent thinkers belonging to the school of scientific socialism reject the absoluteness of ideas or values categorically. They only do so because of the incompatibility of absoluteness with the Marxist vision of dialectical materialism. But their encounter with the day-to-day realities of the surrounding material world leaves them no justification for their total rejection of the idea of absoluteness.

Night follows day and day follows night. Fire burns and water extinguishes. Our sense of heat and cold, of sorrow and pleasure, our awareness of appetite and satiation, our concept of thirst and its slaking and a myriad of other similar perceptions do not require a scientist to prove their validity. They simply exist without change, without question, requiring no advocate to prove their validity. All the same their absoluteness is inseparably linked with the quality of human perception. The concept of night and day requires the faculty of sight. But what of those whose vision is impaired? Their perception of things will be relatively different from that of those who are gifted with a better quality of sight. This raises the doubt that even what we categorize as elementary perceptions may only be relative in nature. There is a wide spectrum between the extreme edge of doubt and that of absolute certainty. Both may shift in any direction along the spectrum depending on the clarity of the observer's sight and that of the available light. But such doubts are raised only with reference to exceptional cases and situations. Compared to the universal human experience at large, they make only a very small and insignificant minority, which cannot alter the consensus of the universal human experience. Again it is not just in relation to these elementary concepts that man has reached a stage of certainty; there are other far more complex and intricate issues which can yet be safely described as absolute. Most of our advanced knowledge of chemistry and physics today belongs to this category. It continues to grow, no doubt, but most often without contradicting the previously held views based on universal human observation. The alterations and amendments take place only in the peripheral areas. The uncertainty factor does not cast shadow of doubt over the main body of proven facts; it does so only in relation to a few limited and confined areas of advanced research. Hence, one can safely conclude that at least in the secular field of human experience, the concept of absoluteness is not merely valid, it is certainly an ongoing progressive reality. But in the matter of faith and belief the same

cannot be claimed with any justification. It is extremely difficult for believers, if not impossible, to draw a clear line between the facts and fantasies of their beliefs. Most often they are raised as children in the cradle of faith and, before they ever become capable of judging the truth or falsehood of their beliefs, they already become an integral part of their system. The few who awaken from their mental state of lethargy and oblivion do so at the cost of their religion but seldom admit this fact publicly. They keep wearing the same garb under the same title so that despite the loss of faith their religion continues to survive merely as a symbol of identity. This, unfortunately, is the fate of all religions which deny rationality any instrumental role in judging the validity of their beliefs.

Returning to the discussion of the progressive transformation of uncertainties into certainties and certainties into absolute truth, we must admit that the same universal trend of change leads some philosophers to regret the very concept of absoluteness altogether. No perception can ever be absolutely free from the influence of ever changing time and the variant faculties of the beholder. If their logic is accepted, one is left with no choice but to reject everything as possibly untrue and believe in nothing. But in everyday life a philosophy such as this would lead to utter disaster. With what measure of dependability can one decide whether the precipice one sees at the edge of a lofty rock is really a precipice? By what criterion can one become absolutely sure that the deadly viper blocking one's path is actually what it appears to be? In all such encounters with threats to life, even the most sceptical would accept the verdict of the common human experience. It is this common human experience which is most steadily moving in the direction of absoluteness of knowledge. At every cross-section of time this verdict must be accepted. Call it probability if not absoluteness but remember that it is this probability which commands the human destiny with absolute firmness. One cannot deny a seeming reality lest it should prove to be false in future.

All said and done, in the evolution of human knowledge most concepts do mature to a fullness which cannot be further touched by the hand of change or doubt. Similarly, the behaviour of many physical and chemical laws once understood continues to remain the same. Our ignorance of some of their operations does not invalidate the knowledge that we have already gained in most areas of their operation. Despite the fact that the dynamics of the heavenly

bodies and the laws of gravitation are now perceived with a minute variation of perception, the Newtonian understanding of them is still valid within its context. Thus the laws of motion of the heavenly bodies are as absolute as they ever were within their respective field of operation. The laws of motion of the subatomic particles are also absolute within the domain of their miniature universe. Hence there is no discrepancy or contradiction between the laws which govern the cosmos and the laws which govern the subatomic world. Their field is different and the context in which they operate is not the same either. What man has discovered is only the fact that Newton's laws of dynamics are applicable only to the cosmos. Both categories of the laws are absolute and exist independently of man's ability or inability to understand them. Thus, absolute truth is not just a product of the human mind. it must exist independently.

Returning to the Qur'anic pronouncements, on the subject of rationality and its bearing on religious truths, the reader's attention is drawn to the following verses of the Holy Qur'an which rule out the possibility of any contradiction in the universe created by God:

مَا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفَوُّتٍ ۖ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِن
فُتُورٍ * ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ
حَسِيرٌ *

... No incongruity can you see in the creation of the Gracious God. Then look again: Do you see any flaw? Aye, look again, and yet again, your sight will only return to you tired and fatigued.³

(Ch.67: vs.4-5)

The Qur'an further stipulates that likewise there can be no contradiction within the scriptural universe which is the Word of God (4:83, 21:23). Both the Word of God which is revealed truth and the Work of God which is material universe, must be in perfect unison with each other. Thus Divine revelation can never be at odds with the laws of nature, both sharing the same Fountainhead of Eternal Wisdom. This categorical denial of contradiction is yet another way of endorsing the inviolable principle of rationality.

Thus, whenever and in whatever area the scientists' understanding of the material world is correct, it is impossible for the Word of God to contradict it. The converse is also true. As such whenever we witness a perfect accord between the two, the quality of their absolute truth becomes par-absolute.

In the light of what has passed, we are ready now to undertake the issue of Qur'anic revelation and examine its validity on the touchstone of rationality and reason, category by category.

References

1. Translation of Ch.98:v.4 by the author.
2. Translation of Ch.55:vs.4-5 by the author.
3. Translation of Ch.67:vs.4-5 by the author.



Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth

by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad



'The most distinguishing feature of this book is the profound and deep understanding of the Qur'an that you use in all your arguments whether to refute or to support. This sort of knowledge of the scriptures cannot be simply acquired by just simple studies. This is a gift from God that is granted to few and it is a gift to be called revelation.'

Hon. Tom Cox, MP (Tooting – SW London)

A Life of Distinction –

Hadhrat Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani^(ra)

The following article has been prepared from the account of the life of Hadhrat Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani^(ra) presented by Malik Salahudin Sahib (M.A.) of Qadian in his book entitled *Ashab-e-Ahmad*, Vol. 9. which is in Urdu.

Transcribed by Amatul Hadi Ahmad

The following account is not intended to be a comprehensive account of the distinguished life of Hadhrat Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani^(ra), a most devout Companion of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi. It is his early life and events leading to his conversion to Islam and his entry into the fold of the Community of the Promised Messiah^(as) that will form the main focus of this article. The distinction of Hadhrat Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani^(ra) lies not only in his early entry into the fold of Islam from a Hindu background, but also in the fact that he became one of that select and distinct group of Companions who manifested their love for the Promised Messiah^(as) through their eagerness to be with him at all times and to serve him with all that they possessed.

Hadhrat Mirza Mahmud Ahmad^(ra), the second Khalifa of the Ahmadiyya

Community, has expressed beautifully the special status of the Companions. He states, ‘The Companions (of the Holy Prophet^(sa)) understood (this principle) well that the sun appears more majestic surrounded by planets revolving around it. The glory of the moon manifests itself through the many stars that appear around it. No matter how much we continue to praise the Promised Messiah^(as), others may consider it an exaggeration. However, if we recount the events of the lives of his Companions who served him with devotion and describe the relation of deep love and obedience that they had with the Promised Messiah^(as), then the conclusion has to be that it cannot be a fabrication – there has to be something there.’

With the beauty of his truth, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) of Qadian captured the hearts and minds of many, rendering them helpless in their

love for him. Indeed, it is the testimony of his devoted companions that reinforces his claim to be a Messenger of God. The beauty of the Promised Messiah's truth attracted people not only from among the Muslims, it also attracted them from other faiths and beliefs. Hadhrat Bhai Abdur Rahmanra Qadiani, for instance, joined the fold of devoted followers of the Promised Messiah^(as) in 1895 as a young boy from a Hindu background when he was about 16 years of age.

The life of Hadhrat Bhai Abdur Rahman^(ra) Qadiani began in 1879 when he was born into a well placed, land owning, Hindu family. He was the first born and was given the name of 'Haresh Chandar'. He was brought up to observe strict adherence to Hindu customs and practices which governed many aspects of daily life. He relates an incident of his early childhood when he was about 5 or 6 years of age, when in his school, a Muslim boy inadvertently brushed against him in passing. He happened at that time to be carrying his school lunch but having been touched by a Muslim, this made his lunch 'impure' for a Hindu and he preferred to throw away that food and go hungry all day rather than eat such food. He did this even though his friends tried to persuade him not to throw away the

food, reassuring him that they would not tell his family.

However, by the time he reached middle school years his thoughts began to change. He states that he came across a book entitled 'Customs of India' in which the Hindu author had displayed extraordinary impartiality in describing Muslim as well as other customs. A study of this book and of the account of Islamic customs presented in this book endeared him to Islam and it sowed the first seed of Islam in his heart. By 1891, the love of Islam had taken deep roots within him and increasingly he befriended Muslim students as opposed to Hindus. In debates in school he would speak in support of Islam and an Islamic view point was also manifest in the essays and articles he wrote.

On occasions such as Friday and Eid prayers the boy Haresh Chandar would watch over the walls of the mosque to observe the scene of a multitude of people standing in rows, line upon line, bowing and prostrating. He states in his accounts of this period of his life that he was more interested in observing Islamic worship being performed than in visiting places where idols were being worshipped. He did not understand the words of Azan (Islamic call to prayer) but he would stop at its start

and stay motionless until it finished. By this time, he was beginning to have various dreams which worked to strengthen his resolve towards the direction his heart and mind was taking.

Hadhrat Bhai Ji, as he was later endearingly referred to, states that during the period 1893–1894 he was still in a place called Choonian. This was quite a small place and kept itself quite isolated from the world outside and even though the name of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) of Qadian as the Promised Messiah was much talked about everywhere else, it had not yet reached Choonian. However, a boy returning from Lahore told him that, 'a Muslim Maulvi who is very learned, prophesied the death of an Englishman and that prophecy has been fulfilled'. In answer to my questioning, he told me that the person 'lives far away, somewhere on the border with Russia'. He added that he did hear the name of his village but he had now forgotten.

Hadhrat Bhai Ji states that in 1894, when during the month of Ramadhan the sign of the Mahdi of the latter days became fulfilled in the form of the eclipse of the sun and the moon, he remembers vividly the sound of the words and the accompanying scene when the headmaster of their school, a

Maulvi Jamaludin Sahib, announced in the school that, 'One should now search for the Mahdi of the latter days. He has definitely been born because the sign of his advent has appeared. He must be living in some cave or other.' Hadhrat Bhai Ji states that at that time he was studying at middle level in school and he became very curious and inquisitive and wished to find out more about this 'Mahdi'. He further adds that there were five aspects of this matter that took hold over his mind and he thought about these very deeply which further strengthened his resolve to unravel the mystery. The five aspects that intrigued the young Haresh Chandar were as follows:

- 1) Thirteen hundred years ago an event is foretold that has become common knowledge among friend and foe and then for that prophecy to become fulfilled exactly as it was foretold.

- 2) The fulfilment of the prophecy (regarding the eclipse of the sun and moon) is not the outcome of any human effort but took place in the heavens above where man can neither reach nor does man have the ability to interfere there.

- 3) The personality of the Mahdi of the latter days ([as was held to be the case

in common Muslim beliefs of the time) – the wiping out of Kufr (turning away from God’s commandments), spreading Islam, preparing an army of Islam and defeating the non-believers with the sword and the victories for the Muslims.

4) Prayer and its true nature. God’s characteristic that He accepts the prayers of His servants because (the Muslims strongly held the belief that) the previous holy people of Islam had prayed for the advent of the Mahdi of the latter days – and now those prayers seemed to have been answered.

5) All the above aspects appeared to present [to Haresh Chandar] the evident and clear proof not only of the truth of the religion of Islam but also of the fact that it is Islam alone that presents the means of reaching God and attaining His love.

Hadhrat Bhai Ji states that these five points became deeply ingrained on his heart and mind and led to his spiritual progress and development to such an extent that he became keen and anxious to find the Mahdi of the latter days.

Shortly after this, it so happened that the family of a doctor by the name of Sayyed Mir Haidar Sahib moved to

Choonian. This family was related to Hadhrat Mir Hamid Shah Sahib^(ra) of Sialkot. One of the sons of this family, Sayyed Bashir Haidar became a close school friend and companion of Hadhrat Bhai Ji who was still known as Haresh Chandar but soon came to be referred to as ‘Bhai Ji’ by his Muslim friends from whom he began to learn about the practice of Islam and even kept some fasts. Hadhrat Bhai Ji states that his leanings towards Islam was kept a secret from his family but an incident at school led to his younger brother being informed of this. The brother informed the mother who, according to Hadhrat Bhai Ji, was a very intelligent and clever lady. On the surface she gave no importance to the incident but secretly she informed her husband who was at that time in another town. Soon after that, arrangements were made to transfer young Haresh Chandar to another town on the pretext that the school there was of a better standard.

The period of separation from his close Muslim friends was a very sad one for Hadhrat Bhai Ji. In his lucid account of his emotional and spiritual state during this period, he describes the various events that finally culminated in his reunion with his friend, Sayyed Bashir Haidar who was now in Sialkot. He stayed for a

short time with this friend in whose house he found some books of the Promised Messiah^(as) and he studied *Nishan-e-Asmani* and *Anwar-ul-Islam*. Hadhrat Bhai Ji states that although the love of Islam was already in his heart, the study of these books filled his heart with a new light of truth. Up to this time he did not know Salat but now he set about learning the words of Salat and began to offer this form of worship on a regular basis.

Hadhrat Bhai Ji states that shortly after these events, he told Sayyed Bashir Sahib that he could no longer hide his views and feelings and wished to make manifest his acceptance of Islam. His friend referred him to Hadhrat Sayyed Hamid Shah Sahib^(ra) who discussed matters with him at great length and gave him some valuable advice. In view of the fact that Hadhrat Bhai Ji's Hindu relatives held high positions in various departments in Sialkot, Hadhrat Hamid Shah Sahib^(ra) felt that they could place obstacles in his path in Sialkot and advised him that it would be better if he went to Qadian and himself wrote a letter of introduction for him to take to Qadian.

Hadhrat Bhai Abdur Rahman^(ra) Qadiani, describes the ordeal of reaching Qadian, in terms of his own

experience when he first wished to visit Qadian, around 1895. 'The first difficulty one faced was due to the relative anonymity of the small village (of Qadian) and, having located its whereabouts, the second great difficulty was the matter of actually getting there. The absence of any proper channel of transport was such that even finding a mode of transport was a difficult feat. However, having achieved the first goal of actually finding a carriage, the second difficulty was the disappearance of the driver who would take off in search of other passengers before he was ready to take one to Qadian.

Having reached Qadian, Hadhrat Bhai Ji initially found it difficult to find anyone who was willing to direct him to 'Mirza Sahib', that is, to the residential area of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi. This difficulty was related to the fact that Hadhrat Bhai Ji still had a Hindu appearance and most of the shopkeepers he asked directions from were Hindus who did not wish him to reach Hadhrat Mirza Sahib^(as). They wished to prevent him from reaching his desired destination and for this they tried all kinds of tactics. They spoke to him in caring and loving tones, advising him sympathetically and

treating him to their generous hospitality. However, his persistence finally led him to the place where he wished to be.

Hadhrat Bhai Ji recounts that it was probably late September or early October 1895 when he first set foot in the blessed area of the Mosque called Masjid Mubarak. There he saw two gentlemen and he gave the letter of introduction to one of them. It so happened that the letter was addressed to Hadhrat Maulana Abdul Karim^(ra) and the gentleman who received the letter was that very person.

Shortly after this, the Azan was heard and Maulvi Abdul Karim^(ra) Sahib showed him the place where he could perform ablution after which he came to Masjid Mubarak. There he saw a group of eight or ten men one of whom was the Promised Messiah^(as). Hadhrat Maulvi Abdul Karim Sahib^(ra) beckoned him to come forward and pointed towards the Promised Messiah^(as) whereupon he most respectfully offered Salaam. It appeared that by the time he had returned from his ablution, Maulvi Abdul Karim Sahib^(ra) had informed the Promised Messiah^(as) about him. The Promised Messiah^(as) cast a glance towards the newcomer and stated, addressing Hadhrat Maulvi Abdul Karim Sahib^(ra), 'Maulvi Sahib,

he appears to be a child at the moment and seems under-age. The Hindus are always in search for an excuse to create trouble.' At this Hadhrat Maulvi Abdul Karim Sahib^(ra) beckoned me to say something and himself added that the boy is very clever and has given this matter serious consideration. Hadhrat Maulana Maulvi Nurudin Sahib^(ra) also made some supportive comments and then he himself stood up and spoke, 'Huzur, I have been a Muslim in my heart for a long time. I know Namaz and I offer it. I have carefully studied and understood Huzur's books, *Nur-ul-Islam* and *Nishan-e-Asmani*. I like Islam and I am an adult – I am not under-age.' After this, the Promised Messiah^(as) agreed to initiate him into Islam and Ahmadiyyat. Hadhrat Bhai Ji states that his Ba'it was in the form of verbal recitation of the words of the Kalima, and he repeated them after the Promised Messiah^(as).

Shortly after this the Promised Messiah^(as) gave a new name to this new convert to Islam and that name was 'Abdur Rahman'. He later came to be known as 'Abdur Rahman Qadiani' and as a title of endearment the word 'Bhai' was added before his name. Thus it was that a new phase began in the life of Hadhrat Bhai Abdur Rahman^(ra) Qadiani. It was to

lead him to become one of the most distinguished Companions of the Promised Messiah^(as). His allegiance to the Promised Messiah^(as) was total and his trust in God was strong and firm. After the death of his father, a share in the family lands and estates was rightfully his. In a television interview, shown on MTA, one of his sons described how their father took them to see the lands and said to them that he left his family and all that they stood for. Therefore, he will not be claiming any of his inheritance. He added, however, that he cannot stop them, (his sons), from taking what was theirs, if they so wished, but they did not wish to do so either.

to be erased again. It so happened that I came to prefer his door to kingdoms of the world and that was the reason why any thought of separation from him (the Promised Messiah^(as)) appeared to me as a horrifying death.'

Throughout his life, Hadhrat Bhai Abdur Rahman Qadiani^(ra) displayed through his acts and deeds complete steadfastness, loyalty and deep devotion to the Promised Messiah^(as) and manifested true obedience to God, the God of Islam that he chose to serve. The story of his life is a story most inspiring.



Hadhrat Bhai Ji writes, 'I am saddened by and regret very much the fact that I am unable to show to the world that something which made me leave behind a mother's love, a father's kindness and the love of my brothers. It made me forget the loving care of my sister and my beautiful wife and friend. It made me forget the noble family with its proud traditions into which I was born. It made me forget my beloved land and the religion of my birth.' He further writes, 'The spiritual power and attraction of my master and guide, (the Promised Messiah^(as)) and his noble character etched on my heart such a deep impression that was never

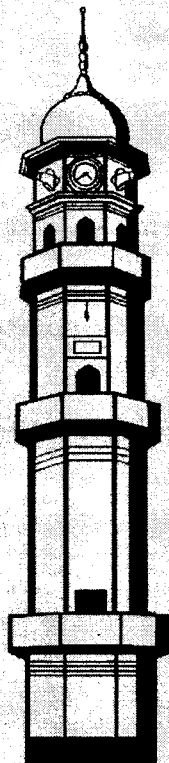
SUBSCRIPTION

We hope you have enjoyed reading this edition of the magazine. *The Review of Religions* will continue to provide discussion on a wide range of subjects and welcomes any comments or suggestions from its readers.

To ensure that you regularly receive this monthly publication, please fill in your details below and we will put you on our mailing list.

The cost of one year's subscription is £15 Sterling or \$30 US for overseas readers (Please do not send cash). Payments should be made payable to the London Mosque and sent to:

**Review of Religions
The London Mosque
16 Gressenhall Road
London SW18 5QL
United Kingdom**



Please put me on the mailing list for the Review of Religions for 1 year. I enclose subscription payment of £15.00 or \$30.00 US.

Name: _____

Address: _____
