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# Editorial

This month's issue focuses on Christianity. Easter - despite its modern trimmings with Easter bunnies and chocolate eggs - is supposed to be a time for Christians to reflect upon the biblical account of what they believe to be Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>' last days on earth before he was crucified and then brought back to life prior to his ascension to heaven. Despite the historical evidence of early Christians holding different beliefs, for modern Christianity at least the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> is the bedrock of their whole faith as the bible declares 'And if Christ be not risen then is our preaching vain.' (Corinthians 15:14).

In Islam, whilst Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> is not considered to be the literal Son of God but rather a noble and respected prophet of God, the events surrounding Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> being put on the Cross remain a sobering episode of his life. Setting aside the timing of Easter itself (over which there is some debate) what is common to Christians and Muslims is that this was a time during which a

beloved of God suffered immense torture simply on account of his belief in God and for his delivering God's message to the Israelites.

The scene in the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> throws himself in prayer before the Almighty in total submission and humility is one of raw, heart-rending emotion. The tears that flow from him as he prayed for the 'cup of death' to be taken from him are not a sign of his weakness but a sign of his utter conviction, and total faith in God. Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> remained steadfast during this testing time and even his closest disciples could not match his endurance and they seemed to have fallen, tired and exhausted, not being able to muster enough strength to keep watch and pray alongside Jesus.

The 'lost sheep of the house of Israel' - the very people whose souls he had come to save - were after his life. Their faith had been obliterated by personal and political gain and they were not going to let a simple man from Nazareth deprive them of the power that *their* god gave them.

However, Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>, like all prophets had preached and insisted all along that God lived

and that He answered the prayers of His servants. We read in the Bible that 'every one that asketh receiveth' (Luke 11:10), the question, therefore, that hangs perilously over the events surrounding crucifixion, is how was it possible for God to ignore the cries of His prophet at his hour of need? For if the cup of death did not elude him despite all his prayers then surely, despite all his noble words and deeds, he would have failed in his divine mission and it would have been *his* preaching that would have been in vain?

If however he had survived and not died on the cross then this would have been sure sign of God and of Jesus' (as) truth as His prophet. It is for this purpose that the articles selected for this issue are those that provide an insight into just some of the mountain of evidence that exists supporting the survival of Jesus(as) from the cross. However, this is not a new concept, but one that has its modern roots in the 19th century.

The first treatise that presented this whole theory as well as its impact on world religion, rationally and meticulously, was written over 100 years ago in

1899 - curiously enough by a person claiming to be the second advent of Jesus(as) as prophesied in various religious scriptures. That person Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) lived in Qadian, a tiny unknown hamlet in India yet his research is remarkable - and truly astounding if one considers the difficulties he faced when conducting and compiling his research. The validity of this research is testified by the fact that his book *Jesus in India* even today remains unchallenged in its evidence and has served as a springboard for much research in this area throughout the 20th century and beyond.

**Fareed Ahmad**

# The Pure Heart

Presented below is a compilation, in translation, of excerpts taken from *Malfoozat* relating to the topic of the purity of heart. *Malfoozat* is the title of the ten volumes that contain the collection of discourses, speeches and addresses of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).



**The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.**

In 1891, he claimed, on the basis of Divine revelation, that he was the Promised Messiah and Mahdi whose advent had been foretold by the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) and by the scriptures of other faiths.

His claim constitutes the basis of the beliefs of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

[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<sup>(ra)</sup>. Where the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> has himself stated a certain interpretation of the Arabic verse, this is incorporated in the main body of the text].

**Compiled and translated by Amatul Hadi Ahmad**

God has placed within a human being three types of controlling factors: the mind, the heart and the tongue. The mind uses reasoning and intelligence and its job is to be occupied at all times in formulating ideas and forming ever new thoughts, explanations and arguments. The mind has been assigned the duty of assessing the results and conclusions of various formulations. The heart, on the other hand, is the 'king' of the whole being. It does not use argument and proof because it has a link with the King of Kings [i.e. God Almighty] and that is why it is sometimes informed with a clear

and evident revelation and sometimes with a secret or hidden revelation. Another way of stating this is to say that the mind is a 'Vizir', a 'Minister'. Ministers are statesmen and in this capacity the mind is occupied with formulating ideas and schemes as well as the means and consequences. The heart has no business with all that.

Within the heart God has placed the power of instinct just as an ant manages to reach exactly the place where there is something sweet. The ant does not have any proof of the fact that there is something sweet at a certain place. It reaches there because God has provided it with the instinct that guides it. In this sense the heart shares a similarity with the ant because it too has an instinctive sense within it that guides it and that does not depend upon proofs, arguments, conclusions and results. However, it is quite another matter that the mind is able to and does provide such proofs for the 'heart'.

One meaning of the heart is apparent and physical. The

other meaning of the heart is spiritual. The literal meaning of the term *Qalb* [Arabic for heart] is that which moves around or returns. As the heart is the source of circulation of blood in the body, it is referred to as *Qalb*. In the spiritual sense its meaning is that the progress that a human being wishes to achieve is also based around the 'heart'. Just as the circulation of blood, crucial for sustaining human life, originates from the heart, so the spiritual progress is dependent upon the spiritual heart.

Some ignorant people including some philosophers of today who place the mind at the centre of all the best activity, do not know that the mind is only the seat of cognitive powers of reasoning and argument. The power of thought and memory is in the mind but there is an aspect of the heart that makes it the ultimate sovereign. The activity of the mind has a contrived element about it that is not present in the case of the 'heart'. That is why the heart bears a resemblance to *Rabb-ul-Arsh*, that is, the Lord of the Heavenly Throne. The 'heart' is

able to recognise [spiritual truths] without proofs and arguments, purely through its instinctive powers. That is why it is stated in a Hadith of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>: *Istafil qalba*, that is, ask your heart for a verdict - it does not state 'ask your mind for a verdict'.

It is to the 'heart' that the 'cord' of God is linked and no one should consider this a far fetched idea. It is, indeed, difficult and abstruse but those who purify themselves know that the heart does possess such noble qualities. If the heart did not possess such qualities, then the very existence of the human being would have been considered useless. The Sufis and those who carry out spiritual exercises know this well that the heart has been seen giving out light in the form of pillars of light that reach towards the skies in a straight line. This experience is certain and well witnessed. I cannot here state specific examples but those who have to undertake such exercises or those who have decided to journey through the different stages of *Salook*, that is mystic

initiation, they have found this to be true according to their experiences. It is as if there is a fine thread connecting *Arsh* and *Qalb*, linking the Divine Throne and the spiritual heart. [At this stage] the *Qalb* finds pleasure in the commands it receives (from its Lord God) - it is not dependent upon external proofs and evidence. It becomes *Mulhim*, that is, one who is a recipient of Divine Revelation, and internally converses with God and forms verdicts. However, it is true that as long as the heart remains only a heart, it becomes a proof of the condition illustrated in the following verse of the Holy Qura'n:

لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ

*If we had but listened or possessed sense*  
(Ch.67: v.11)

that is, there is a time when a human being does not possess the powers of heart and mind. Then there comes a time when the mind develops its powers and faculties and then a time comes when the *Qalb* becomes engulfed by light - a light bursts

forth and it is illuminated. When the time comes for the 'heart' to come to the fore, the human being attains spiritual maturity and the heart rules over the mind. At that stage, the powers of the mind do not have supremacy over the heart. It should be noted that the different states of the mind are not specific to the believers alone. Hindus and others all use the mind alike. Those who are involved in worldly affairs and in trade and business all use the powers of the mind and their mental faculties develop to the full. Every day new ideas and inventions are made to further their affairs. In Europe and the new world you can see how well people have used their mental capacities and how frequently and how many new inventions they make.

However, when the work of the *Qalb* is carried out, it is then that a person becomes God's. It is at that time that all inner powers of rule and control become under the power and rule of the 'heart' which attains a firm control, power and strength. It is at such a stage that a human being becomes a

complete human being. This is the time when he becomes a living proof of the [following verse of the Holy Qura'n where God states]:

نَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي

*I have breathed into him of My Spirit. (Ch.15: v.30)*

It is a time when even the angels prostrate before him. At that time he becomes a new human being. His soul is filled with pleasure and joy. It should be remembered that this pleasure does not resemble the carnal pleasure of an adulterer, nor does it resemble the enjoyment that is gained by listening to beautiful singing. No, it does not resemble any such thing and one should not be deceived by this. The pleasure of the soul is attained when a person's being begins to melt and flow like water at the thought of and fear of God. It is at such a stage that he becomes the '*Kalima*', that is, 'the word' and the essence of this [the following] verse begins to work within him:

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا  
أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

Verily His command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it 'Be' and it is.  
(Ch.36: v.83)

People have been greatly mistaken about the use of the term *Kalima-tullah*, meaning the 'Word of God' in relation to Jesus and have tended to consider it to be due to some special quality possessed by Jesus whereas this is not so. This term, in fact, applies to any human being when he emerges purified from the darkness that surrounds his soul and from all the impurities and imperfections that engulf him. When such a high state of purity is achieved, a person becomes *Kalima-tullah*, that is, the 'Word of God'.

You should remember that a human being is the 'Word of God' because there is within him a soul that is referred to in the Holy Qur'an as *Amr-e-Rabbi*, that is, that which comes into

being at the Command of God [and is under the Command of God]. However, due to their foolishness and ignorance, people do not generally appreciate the significance of the soul and as a result they imprison their soul and shackle it with all kinds of 'chains' [that are 'created' by their worldly pursuits]. This has the consequence of turning the light and clarity of the soul into a dangerous darkness, taking away its ability to 'see' and thus turning the soul into something that is so opaque that it becomes undetectable.

However, when a person repents and turns to God, thus removing the cloak of a dark impure life, the light within the heart begins to shine and he begins to move towards the real 'fountainhead' until the highest point of righteousness is reached. At this stage all the impurities are removed and what remains is only *Kalima-tullah*. This is a very fine and subtle point of deep spiritual insight and one that may not be easily understood by everyone.  
[*Malfoozat*, Vol.1, pp.404-408].



You will know that during Bai'at, the Oath of Initiation [into Ahmadiyyat] I include this promise from the initiate: 'I shall give precedence to faith over worldly matters'. This is so that I may see what steps are taken by those who have taken the Oath of Initiation in fulfillment of this promise. It is the case that if a person acquires even a small piece of new land, he leaves behind his home and goes and establishes himself on the newly acquired land and it is necessary that he should go and live there in order to inhabit that piece of land. (Even the likes of Muhammad Hussain [who was an outspoken opponent] had to go and stay at the Bar). Hence, when I give you a new 'land' and a land that can give eternal fruits if it is kept clean and cultivated with effort and hard work, why do people not come and make their homes here? If a person takes this 'land' with such carelessness that after 'Bai'at' even a few days visit [to Qadian to be with the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup>] is so difficult and burdensome to him, then what hope can there be of a 'ripened crop' from this 'land'.

God has referred to the heart, *Qalb*, also as land, or earth, [as for example, in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an, it is stated]:

إِعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُحْيِي  
الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا

*Know that Allah is now quickening the earth after its death.*

(Ch.57: v.18)

How much effort has to be made and care taken of land [before it can give crops and fruit]. A person buys a bullock to till the land. He then carefully sows seed in it after which he has to ensure that it is kept well watered. In short, a great deal of effort goes into the cultivation of the land and unless he makes his own personal effort and supervision, nothing comes of it. It is related that a person saw written on a stone that farming is nothing but hard work so when he started farming, he left everything to his servants. However, when he came to check his gains, he found that

not only there was no gain, he had to pay out to clear his debt. At this stage he began to suspect that something was wrong. A wise person advised him that what was written on the stone was true but it was his own foolishness that brought such a bad result. He further advised the farmer that he should himself take charge of the land, only then would he reap any benefit from it. The nature of the heart is exactly like this [in terms of reaping rewards].

He who looks down disrespectfully upon the land [newly placed in his care through his initiation into Ahmaiyyat] does not receive any blessing or favour from God. Remember that I have been appointed for the reform of humanity and as such whosoever comes to me, becomes the beneficiary of such favours. However, I state this clearly that he who comes and takes the Oath of Initiation in a callous manner, repeating only the words, and then disappears so that we do not even know who he is and where he has gone, for such a one there is nothing - he came empty handed and he left empty

handed. [*Malfoozat*, Volume 2, pp.70-71].

Some people consider that merely by visiting some holy person and without any effort or inner purification, they will be able to join the fold of the Truthful. This is just wishful thinking. You should study the Holy Qur'an to see that you cannot win the pleasure of God unless you too endure hardship and tribulation as did the Prophets of God. Some of their ordeals and suffering was so extreme that, [in the words of the Holy Qur'an]:

وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ  
الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا  
مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصْرُ اللَّهِ  
أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ

*Until the Messenger and the believers who were with him, cried out: When will the help of Allah arrive? Surely Allah's help is nigh.*  
(Ch.2: v.215)

It has always been the case that the servants of God were put

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WHEN THE HUMAN SOUL IS FACED WITH PAINFUL ORDEALS AND TRIBULATIONS, THE EXPERIENCE AND THE CONSEQUENT HUMILITY MAKES IT RADIANT. JUST AS IRON OR GLASS WHILE POSSESSING THE CAPACITY TO SHINE, SHINE ONLY AFTER THEY HAVE UNDERGONE A LENGTHY PROCESS OF BURNISHING AND THEN THEY SHINE SO BRIGHTLY THAT IN THEM IS REFLECTED THE FACE OF THE PERSON LOOKING IN. STRIVING IN THE PATH OF GOD ALSO WORKS AS A PROCESS OF BURNISHING.

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through many an ordeal and hardship before they were accepted by God.

The Sufis have written about two paths that lead to success in this struggle. One is the path of *Salook*. This is the path of people who, by using their own intelligence and wisdom, adopt the path of God and His Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. [God, addressing the Holy Prophet<sup>(as)</sup> states in the Holy Qur'an]:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ  
فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ

Say, 'if you love Allah, follow me: then will Allah love you'.  
(Ch.3: v.32)

That is, if you wish to become the loved ones of God then you should follow the path of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>. He is the

Perfect Guide and he is the Prophet who underwent such extreme hardship and suffering that the like of it has never been seen anywhere in the world. His quest was such that it did not let him rest even for a day. Now, the followers [of this Prophet] will only be those who truly and sincerely follow his every word and every deed. The true follower is he who follows in every way. A person who has scant regard [for Divine injunctions] and a harsh attitude [towards others] is not liked by God. Such a person will, instead, come under the wrath of God.

The injunction to follow the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup>, places an obligation on the seeker to first study the whole history of the Holy Prophet<sup>(sa)</sup> and then to follow in his footsteps. This is what is mean by *Salook*, [that is, Initiation]. There are in this

path numerous ordeals and hardships. It is only after showing steadfastness in the face of numerous hardships that a person becomes a *Salik*, that is a 'Devotee'.

The status of the people on the path of *Jazb* is greater than those on the path of *Salook*. [The term *Jazb* implies absorption of the love of God]. Those who strive on the path of *Jazb* are not left at the stage of *Salook*. God deliberately puts them through ordeals and tribulations in order to draw them closer to Himself through the eternal power of absorption, that is, *Jaazba-e-Azli*. All the Prophets of God were *Majzoob*, that is, they were drawn to God and were absorbed in God.

When the human soul is faced with painful ordeals and tribulations, the experience and the consequent humility makes it radiant. Just as iron or glass while possessing the capacity to shine, shine only after they have undergone a lengthy process of burnishing and then they shine so brightly that in them is reflected the face of

the person looking in. Striving in the path of God also works as a process of burnishing. The burnishing of the 'heart' should be to such a degree that the 'face' is reflected in the resulting 'mirror' [of the 'heart']. What is meant by 'reflection of the face? The meaning of this is to become the fulfillment of the saying, 'Create within you morals in accordance with the "character" of Allah'. The heart of the *Salik*, that is, the Initiate, is a 'mirror' that is burnished so much through undergoing experiences of great suffering and tribulation that the reflection of the moral qualities of the Holy Prophet(sa) are fixed upon it. This occurs at a time when, having undergone numerous spiritual exercises and inner purification, there remains no resentment or impurity within. It is only then that this status is attained. Every Muslim believer needs this kind of cleansing to some extent. No believer will find salvation whilst being without the 'mirror' of the heart. [*Malfoozat*, Vol. 1, pp.27-28].

# Jesus's Survival from the Cross

By Muzaffar Clarke, UK

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This article examines some of the evidence from a biblical perspective regarding the events surrounding Jesus being placed on the Cross. It takes into account the timing of the crucifixion as well as the key players involved - both in public and behind the scenes - in the unfolding of what could be considered as one of the greatest miracles of all time - Jesus's survival from the Cross.

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*O Jesus, I will cause thee to die a natural death and I will exalt thee to Myself.*  
(Ch.3: v.56)

*But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; And if Christ be not risen then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.*  
(Holy Bible: Corinthians 15: 13 -14)

On 27th October 1972 the *Guardian* newspaper carried the following report: 'An anaesthetist told the High Court in London that he believed Christ did not die on the Cross. Mr James Gerald Bourne, formerly Senior Anaesthetist to St Thomas' Hospital, London said that he believed that the Resurrection was Jesus' recovery from a faint. Mr Bourne was asked by Mr.

James Comyn, QC, "are you saying that is a widely held view?" Mr Bourne told Mr Justice Ackner he believed an increasing number of people were no longer accepting the "miraculous view" "Do you feel that all right-thinking people should take that view?" Mr. Comyn asked. "I think it would be an advance," Mr. Bourne said, "To quote a writer of the second century AD, 'If an offence comes out of the truth it is better that the offence comes out rather than the truth be concealed.'" Mr Bourne said he realised that his view would be offensive to a great number of people. Mr. Comyn asked: "Do you realise that it makes nonsense of a good deal of Christian teaching?" Mr Bourne replied: "Yes: but not of Christian ethics. He was not suggesting that the Crucifixion and the Resurrection were hoaxes. "I

have never believed, since a school-boy, in the miraculous or supernatural." Mr. Bourne who had been called as a witness in a libel action concerning an anaesthetic technique, said his belief about the Resurrection was "a conviction which seems to me, and it may be wrong, to be common sense." He said he believed that Jesus fainted sometime during the three hours on the cross. He was then taken down and entombed. "I think the faint simulated death - a faint which he conquered."

The Resurrection of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> is a very sensitive subject for Christians and we must always remember that we are talking about deeply held and treasured beliefs.

From a very early age, I was taught that it was sinful to question the teachings of the Catholic Church about anything. As a young boy, I genuinely wanted answers to certain questions so that I could understand them properly. The nuns and priests responsible for my Catholic education sternly discouraged me. Being young, this just made me more curious. I suppose I was unlike other kids

because I really did want to know. My mother tried her best to make sure that I was brought up as a good Catholic. I suppose I must have been because a school report describes me as 'A staunch Roman Catholic'. I think I was only seven or eight at the time. This refusal to give me more information led me to look at what other Christians believed. If my Parish Priest had found out he would have twisted my ear, told me off and may have reported me to the Bishop. The Church told you what to believe and it was up to the Church to make sure you did not get confused or 'fall into error' as the Church put it.

Well I still was not satisfied and one of the things that really troubled me was the death of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> on the cross. The more I studied the Bible the surer I became that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> came to lead people back to God by his own example of loving kindness and to reconcile people to God through repentance and spiritual re-birth. I could not make any sense at all of a supposedly merciful God, who could not forgive weak humans without requiring the torture and murder of His only 'begotten son'. It seemed an injustice that God's

sense of justice required retribution for sin through the death of whom Christians believe to be his most loved.

The Church teaches that Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) died on the cross to pay for your sins and mine. Revelation 1:v.5 says: 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' It also teaches that: 'He who knew no sin became sin.' (2 Corinthians 5:21) and: 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.' (Isaiah 53:5)

Well a sinner I may be, but I am not so sinful as to expect God to punish an innocent man for my misdeeds. I thank Allah for leading me out of darkness into light and for teaching me that I am responsible for my actions and that He is Most Gracious, Ever Merciful to those who repent and turn to Him for forgiveness. My personal Saviour is Allah and Allah alone.

The story of the Resurrection of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> as told in the New Testament has long been taken

for granted. It is part of the cultural background of Western man. Britain may not be a nation of Christians but we follow broadly Christian values and these are reflected in our laws and social values. The majority of people are not church-going Christians but they still revere Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> as someone who exemplifies the best in human behaviour. Many people aspire to follow his example in doing good deeds and acting in a decent manner. His supposed death on the cross is seen as the ultimate example of sacrificing one's life for others. Many people, while not describing themselves as especially religious, have followed his example and have performed outstanding feats of personal bravery and sacrifice. The person of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> forms part of the psyche of Western nations. A tragic and moving story, the Resurrection offers hope and promise. While I was researching this topic I was amazed to discover that so many leading Christians have raised doubts about the Resurrection. Many Christians seem to have given up the idea that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> survived death on the cross at all. George Cary, Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury was at the centre of a

media storm over the resurrection. An interview by a reporter from *The Mail* newspaper was published in August 1999:

Cary was quoted as saying: *'While we can be absolutely sure that Jesus lived and that he was certainly crucified on the cross, we cannot with the same certainty say that we know he was raised by God from the dead'* Opposition Member of Parliament Ann Widdecombe said that if the Archbishop *'in any way leaves the Resurrection open to doubt then that is the ultimate betrayal.'* Archbishop Cary commented later that he had been misquoted. He had actually said that there is enough historical evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> lived; however there is not the same amount of evidence that he was resurrected.

As an Ahmadi Muslim, I do not believe that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> actually rose from the dead after crucifixion, rather that he revived after being treated and cared for by Nicodemus. I accept that he was seen in the flesh by his disciples, that he was very keen to show them his physical injuries and to

eat in front of them. Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>(as)</sup> provided evidence from the Bible that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> survived crucifixion. He also provided independent documentary evidence of Jesus'<sup>(as)</sup> subsequent journey eastwards from Palestine to find and deliver his message to the other Jews. His book *Jesus in India* is of monumental importance because it removes all doubt. This book provided me with the key to understand what really took place 2,000 years ago before a bloodthirsty mob at a rubbish dump called Golgotha outside the walls of Jerusalem.

Palestine was one of the worst trouble spots in the whole of the Empire. The Jews were unlike any other religious group because their beliefs could not be incorporated into the Roman pantheon. The Romans ruthlessly crushed any opposition and this resulted in thousands of crucifixions. The Romans were experts in crucifixion. This argument appears to be a strong proof that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> **did** die on the cross. The Romans could make crucifixion last for days. Crucifixion was commonly used to execute insurgents and rebels and was a stark warning to those



who challenged the power of the Roman Empire. We may ask the question "If the Romans were so efficient, how could Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> have escaped?" The answer to the question lies in an extraordinary set of factors that came into play.

On the night of his arrest, Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> went with his followers to the garden of Gethsemane where he threw himself before God and prayed passionately that God should not allow him to die a shameless and humiliating death in front of his enemies. Jesus'<sup>(as)</sup> prayer that the cup of death be removed could not go unaccepted. Indeed Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> was not afraid of dying if God willed it but he was fearful that he would be seen to have died an accursed death. He knew he would suffer the most extreme, shameful form of punishment devised. Galatians 3:13 reads: 'Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.' If he had died on the cross he would have died a curse and as a criminal. He would have died in total shame and disgrace in the eyes of the world.

Jesus' apostles had followed him for three years. The apostle Peter had boasted only days earlier: 'Though I should die with thee,

yet will I not deny thee.' (Matthew 26:35) There he was that night standing in the mob. Defeated, confused and hurt. Jesus was dead! He was crucified as a blasphemer! One of the women saw Peter and said 'And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.' (Mark 14:67) The Bible says, 'he began to curse and to swear, saying I know not this man of whom ye speak' (Mark 14:71). Mark 14: 50 says that the apostles deserted Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>. 'And they forsook him and fled'. But something happened! Something happened to that small band of frightened and humiliated men. Less than two months later they were back in Jerusalem preaching that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> was alive!

During the 'trial' of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>, if it can be called a trial, Pilate the Roman governor did everything possible to avoid getting involved in what he saw as an internal Jewish matter.

Caiaphas, President of the Sanhedrin, the supreme religious tribunal wanted Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> executed for blasphemy but they could not kill Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> themselves because blasphemy was not punishable by Roman law. They had to convince Pilate to agree to

the death sentence on the basis that as Jesus said he was 'The Messiah' this would make him a popular hero and he would incite the Jewish population against Rome. Pilate could not ignore this political charge. He was not the sort of man to go along with Jewish demands without good reason, certainly not to be a rubber stamp on their independent decisions. He is described by a contemporary as 'naturally inflexible, a blend of self-will and relentlessness'. The accounts also show a provocative man who found it hard to climb down. The Jewish authorities would have been only too pleased to denounce him to Rome for not doing his job. So Pilate was obliged to handle the case.

Pilate was convinced that it was a trumped-up charge and that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> was no revolutionary but a religious fanatic, and not dangerous. Like one of his successors faced with a similar case, Pilate was inclined to pronounce him as a maniac and let him go. He hoped to achieve his freedom by invoking the established practice of releasing a Jewish prisoner before the Passover festival. So Pilate offered to release Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>. This

was not a very clever idea because the custom was to release a *popular* prisoner and Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> was anything but popular with the people to whom Pilate had made the offer. They had their own candidate, Barabbas and they had taken the precaution of gathering a big enough crowd to drown out any support for Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>. Beaten in his attempt to discharge Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> completely Pilate tried a compromise. He had Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> scourged. This was serious enough and was a regular punishment before crucifixion. The victim was tied to a post and his back flayed raw with leather throngs. The throngs had lead balls attached. He seems to have relied on the popular demand for Jesus'<sup>(as)</sup> blood being satisfied by this savage treatment. To add to the psychological effect he had his soldiers dress Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> in a royal robe and put on his head a 'crown' of thorny twigs. Often the scourging itself was fatal. But Pilate did not intend it to be fatal. It could have been another attempt to thwart Jewish demands by substituting a lesser sentence. But he had miscalculated.

The Jewish punishment for blasphemy was death and they would accept nothing less from the Romans. Political pressure was put on Pilate to sign the death warrant, which he reluctantly did. He was undoubtedly influenced by his wife who had experienced troubling dreams about Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> and had warned him not to harm Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>. He had received the message from his wife while he was actually conducting the trial. Pilate said he could find no fault with Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>. God uses the most unlikely looking people to aid His cause. It may be that Pilate's determination to free Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> was his most noble action. We know that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who moved in the same social circles as Pilate and his wife, were secret followers of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> and that they may have influenced her.

Events moved extremely quickly because Jesus'<sup>(as)</sup> enemies wanted him dead before the start of the Passover at dusk on Friday. The Romans gave him more rough treatment before forcing him to carry his cross to Golgotha. There he was crucified along with two others. The gospels tell us that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> remained on the cross

between three and six hours. Some commentators say that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> was in the prime of his youth and in excellent health and therefore it is surprising that he could have died in such a short time. However, it would be unjust to overlook the fact that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> had been physically punished before the crucifixion.

He was blindfolded, vilified, spat at, punched, beaten with reeds and whipped. Soldiers had rammed a crown of thorns on to his head. He had been dragged before six different hearings in one night. After his 'trial' he was made to carry the wooden crosspiece through the streets to the place of execution. There he was stripped and large carpenters' nails were hammered between his wrist bones to secure his arms to the crosspiece. His feet were nailed onto a wooden block. There was also a wooden support between his legs. This helped to relieve the pain in his wrists and feet and reduced some of the pressure on his lungs when his legs could not support him. The pain returned when the victim had to push himself up in order to breathe properly. This process was repeated over and over again. The Romans made

crucifixion as long and painful as possible.

Between three and six hours later it was beginning to get dark. Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> appeared to be dead. The other condemned men were still alive. The Roman execution party had been ordered by Pilate to speed up the crucifixions before the start of the Passover. They broke the legs of the two others with blows from a hammer. This caused them to collapse and die more quickly. When they came to Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> they thought he was already dead. A Roman soldier jabbed him in the side with a spear and blood and water, probably serum, flowed from a wound. He was taken down from the cross and put in a rock tomb provided by Joseph of Arimathea. Meanwhile Joseph had quickly gone to Pilate and reported that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> was dead. He asked for the body of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> so that he could bury him. Pilate was surprised that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> had died so quickly. He gave Joseph permission to take the body.

Nicodemus went with Joseph to Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> taking with them a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body

of Jesus and wound it in linen cloths with the spices, 'as the manner of the Jews is to bury'. This is clearly stated in John 19:40.

If we pause for a moment it is obvious that Nicodemus and Joseph were bandaging Jesus'<sup>(as)</sup> injuries. Myrrh and aloes is a powerful ointment for healing wounds. This is attested to by the Promised Messiah<sup>(as)</sup> in *Jesus in India*. There are hundreds of references in ancient books to 'The Ointment of Jesus'. The writer of the Gospel of John also states that wrapping the body in bandages and spices is a Jewish burial rite. Mr Fishel Todd of the 'Shema Israel Torah Network International Burial Society' was asked if the Biblical account actually fell in line with Jewish burial traditions. Mr Fishel Todd said that Jewish burial customs had not changed in 3,500 years and that the body was not to be touched except to give it a ritual bath called a Tahara (meaning purity). The body is then put in the ground in the quickest simplest fashion available with only traditional burial shrouds. Mr Todd said that if the biblical account was accurate then Nicodemus carried the spices to

the scene with the intention applying them to Jesus' (as) wounds so he would be healed. When the women came to the tomb they found that the stone had been rolled away and Jesus(as) had gone. They encountered two individuals who asked them 'Why seek ye the living among the dead?' (Luke: 24;5)

In order to convince the Disciples that he had survived the crucifixion, Jesus(as) asked them to realise that spirits or ghosts or apparitions do not have human flesh and bones. To make his point firmly he asked for something to eat. They gave him fish and a honeycomb and he ate it in front of them while they watched. What was the need for a supernatural divinity or God Himself to eat food? Apart from his attempts to assure them that they were not seeing an apparition, it is most likely that Jesus(as) was extremely hungry: having gone through pure hell in being beaten and nailed to a cross.

Christians are bound by the doctrine that defines Jesus (peace be upon him) as both man and God. They view his post-

crucifixion appearances as the appearance of this dual being. Non-Christians are not bound by religious faith to believe that Jesus (peace be upon him) was a special supernatural being. When we consider the evidence impartially, then the events surrounding the crucifixion become clear and simple. They demonstrate one reality: Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) survived the crucifixion.

The night of his arrest Jesus (peace be upon him) prayed so hard that his sweat was like drops of blood. God answered his prayer:

'In his life on earth Jesus made his prayers and requests to God, Who could save him from death. Because he was humble and devoted, God heard him.' (Hebrews 5:7)



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# Is the Shroud of Turin a Medieval Photograph? A Critical Examination of the Theory

By Barrie M. Schwartz, USA

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The Turin Shroud has been a focus of world-wide attention ever since it was discovered to be a negative image. Its first photographer was Secondo Pia and since then it has been photographed millions of times and even been subjected to a comprehensive examination by an international team of experts in 1978, who were eager to discover more about the cloth and whether it could have been the shroud of Jesus as many claimed. Twenty-four years on this debate still rages on and many theories have been put forward to try and explain how the image was formed.

The author of this article was fortunate to have been the official photographer of the 1978 Shroud of Turin Research Project. An established professional photographer in his own right, Barrie Schwartz reviews the theory of Prof. Nicholas Allen that the Shroud is nothing more than a photograph that was taken around the 14th century using materials that were readily available to people at that time. This is a fascinating proposition, as photography did not emerge until nearly 500 years later in the late 19th century.

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## Abstract

Since the late 1970's, dozens of researchers, scholars, skeptics and 'professional debunkers' have presented their theories on how the image on the Shroud of Turin was formed. Some are based on serious science while others show a complete lack of

understanding of the Shroud image or its properties.

In this paper, I will review the "proto-photography" theory proposed by Prof. Nicholas Allen of South Africa. This theory concludes that the raw materials to produce photography not only existed in

medieval times, but that a brilliant medieval 'photographer' actually used them to invent photography 500 years before the *documented* creation of the first photographic negative by Joseph Niepce in 1818.

To his credit, Allen has actually achieved what he set out to accomplish. He has, without question, used medieval raw materials to create a faint but good quality photographic image on linen cloth. As I will show however, his own results provide the best evidence against the validity of his theory. In the end, any attempt at duplicating the image on the Shroud of Turin must match all of its physical and chemical properties, not just a select few. It must also withstand the scrutiny of careful, side-by-side comparison to the original.

In this paper I will provide just such side-by-side comparisons of key areas of the Shroud image vs. Allen's results and

present my arguments against the validity of his theory based on my 30 years of professional photography experience.

## I. Introduction

In the last 30 years, the Shroud of Turin underwent the most intense and exhaustive study in its history. In 1969, 1973 and particularly 1978, literally thousands of photographs were made of the cloth and its image. With the advent of personal computers and more recently, the explosive growth of the Internet, the Shroud has become far more available for study than it ever was before. In fact, photographs of the Shroud are now readily available to anyone with a modem and the willingness to spend a few minutes downloading them.

This has not been without impact in the world of Sindonology.

Since the late 1970's, dozens of researchers, scholars, skeptics and 'professional debunkers' have presented their theories

on how the image on the Shroud was formed or described other artifacts they believe they have discovered hidden in the image. Some are based on serious science and are very credible, while others show a complete lack of understanding of the image and its properties and reveal the absence of any real research on the part of their proponents. To make matters worse, many of these theories have received wide public attention and in some cases, have actually been adopted as part of the 'mythology' of the Shroud.

In this paper, I will review the 'proto-photography' theory proposed by Prof. Nicholas Allen and present my arguments against its validity.

## II. The Proto-Photography Theory

This theory concludes that the raw materials to produce photography not only existed in medieval times, but that a medieval photographer created a light sensitive emulsion, coated it onto linen cloth and

'exposed' this medieval 'film' using a room sized camera obscura and a dead body hanging in front of its crystal lens as the subject matter.<sup>1</sup>

He goes on to claim that one half of the Shroud image was exposed at a time, first the ventral and then the dorsal half. He further concludes that it would take about four days to properly expose each half of the cloth, needing at least eight days to complete the entire task. Recently, he modified his theory to include a third exposure for the face, made with a different lens<sup>2</sup>. To prevent the decay of the body during more than a week of exposure to the bright sunlight necessary for adequate exposure of the 'film,' Allen suggests that the camera obscura was located in a cold climate.

## III. Comments

Allen has not been able to provide even one example of this medieval proto-photography process anywhere in art or photographic history,



although he has carefully and extensively documented early historical references to lenses and cameras obscura<sup>3</sup>. However, he has not demonstrated that anyone in medieval times ever combined this knowledge with the various sophisticated chemical and physical requirements of photographic science and brought them all together to make the process work. And if someone had, why didn't they create more examples of this unique art form that would have certainly made them famous? Were this truly the case, many other examples of this type of image would certainly exist and photography would be acknowledged as a medieval science rather than one developed in the earliest stages of the industrial revolution.

Allen also expressed to me his more recent belief that the Shroud is actually a composite of *three* different exposures, now concluding that the facial image was made as a distinctly different and third exposure

onto the cloth. He writes:

'My own work is confirming... that the details of the head are much more exacting than those of the body and especially the dorsal image (which is by far the worst image). I am surmising that the head was made with a separate lens. The frontal figure (sans head) was made with a lens closer to the one I used originally... and finally this lens was used for the dorsal image which needs no details such as are found on the face, fingers, etc.'<sup>4</sup>

He supports this claim by stating that he has recently detected 'spherical aberrations' in the facial image on the Shroud which leads him to this conclusion<sup>5</sup>. Obviously, this would make the process of creating the image even more complex for a medieval photographer and even harder to accomplish. Today, even with the advanced state of modern digital imaging tech-

niques, such a perfect composite image could only be accurately accomplished by a highly trained photographic expert. To conclude it was produced by a medieval photographer truly stretches the imagination.

Both the ventral *and* dorsal Shroud images do in fact include many intricate details, although Allen refers to the dorsal image as 'by far the worst...' I submit that the dorsal view lacks the equivalent detail only because facial features and fingers are not seen from behind. However, one must not ignore the scores of scourge marks across the shoulders, back, buttocks and legs on the dorsal image, since they in fact are excellent details that have been verified by no fewer than three expert forensic pathologists and anatomists.<sup>6</sup>

During our discussions he also stated:

'...(the Shroud) shows stigmata that reflects the

religious mores of the thirteenth and early fourteenth century.'<sup>7</sup>

I believe this conclusion is directly challenged by the multitude of expert forensic pathologists who have seriously studied the Shroud and have unanimously concluded that the accuracy of the pathology illustrated on the cloth is precise and completely realistic.

Also, Allen makes no attempt to explain the forensic accuracy of the bloodstains on the Shroud. Since research done by the Shroud of Turin Research Project (STURP) and others has shown that there is no image underneath these bloodstains, we have been able to conclude that they were on the cloth before the image was formed. In fact, it appears that they actually acted to inhibit the image formation mechanism<sup>8</sup>. Prof. Allen's mechanism leaves the critical issue of the bloodstains totally unresolved.

Allen's rationale for his theory is obviously based on his personal acceptance of the carbon dating of the Shroud as medieval and his rejection of the image as a painting. Thus he apparently concludes that, since the Shroud image is known to exhibit certain photographic properties and it does not appear to be a painting, it *must* be a photograph.

In fact, he stated:

'It shows an image that could *only* have been produced photographically...'<sup>9</sup> (emphasis mine).

Although he has created a photographic image on linen cloth, I disagree that the Shroud image could only have been produced in this manner. In fact, his own results provide the best evidence against the validity of this theory. Any attempt at recreating an image like that on the Shroud of Turin must match all of the physical and chemical

properties of the original, not just a few.

#### IV. Comparison

##### *Direction of Light*

To artists, accurate duplication of the light falling on their subjects is the primary basis for realism in their results. The history of art clearly documents the attempts made by artists at achieving this through the centuries. It is this relationship of highlights and shadows on a subject that provides the modeling that allows depth, shape and form to exist in a two dimensional plane. Artists must first discipline themselves to 'see' the effects of light on their subject, then perfect the techniques for incorporating these effects into their artwork. Without doubt, this task is much simpler for photographers since it is the light itself that creates the result that is captured on the film.

Allen's photographs contain a strong directionality of light.



FIGURE 1 (© 1995 Nicholas Allen)

This is obvious from the deep shadows cast on his subject by the strong overhead sunlight he used to create his images (Figure 1). These are clearly seen in the eye sockets, under

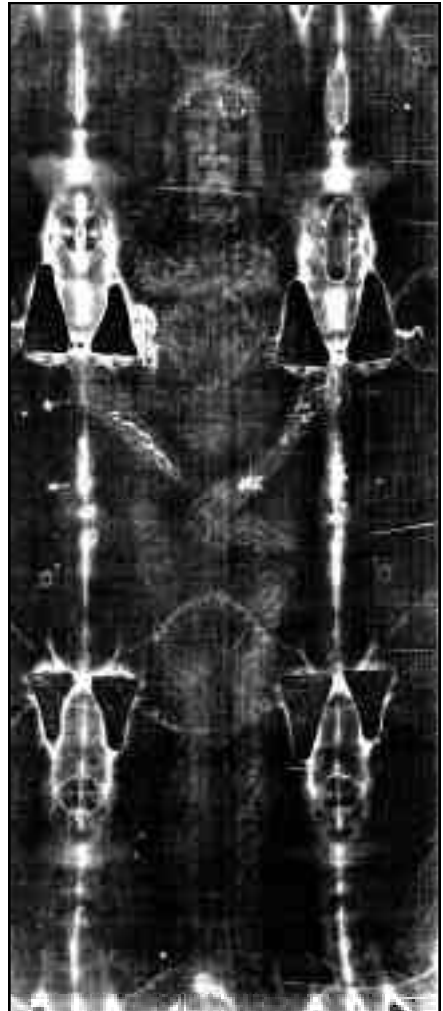


FIGURE 2 (© 1978 Barrie M. Schwartz)

the nose and chin and below the hands and is unlike the image on the Shroud (Figure 2), which demonstrates no such directionality of light at all. It is further confirmed by

the 'washing out' of detail in certain parts of the image, most notably the tops of the feet, which received far more light and cumulative exposure than the rest of the body (Figure 3).



FIGURE 3 (© 1995 Nicholas Allen)

When Allen and I discussed this particular property of his image, he suggested that he would

'...have to wait for the right time of year to do this, when the sun is very low in the sky. The result will be a more frontally illuminated image (like the Shroud of Turin).'<sup>10</sup>

In effect, this adds an additional layer of complexity

to his theory and taxes the imagination to accept that a medieval photographer would

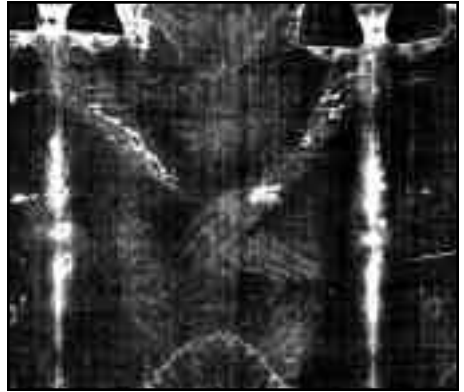


FIGURE 4 (© 1978 Barrie M. Schwartz)

have had the understanding of all of these principles, let alone the knowledge and skills to incorporate them into his work.

In addition, his suggestion that the image on the Shroud is 'frontally illuminated' makes it obvious that he has failed to grasp certain image properties evidenced on the cloth. I am specifically referring to the darker areas (on the negative image) surrounding the crossed hands (Figures 2 and 4). If the Shroud were frontally illuminated, this distinctive darkening could not

exist, since front lighting would not cast any shadows at all, let alone above *and* below the hands. It is obvious that the darkening around the hands is not a shadow or the effect caused by directionality of light. Yet other research completed over the last three decades provides a very logical explanation for their existence.

### *Dimensional Encoding*

The experiments completed by the STURP team and other researchers have provided clear evidence that there is certain dimensional information encoded into the Shroud's image.<sup>11,12</sup> This is often referred to as 'three dimensional' data. Of course, that is not technically correct since 'three dimensional' implies 360 degrees of information. What we actually see in the Shroud image is an accurate dimensional relief, similar to that created by the bas relief art technique. The result on the Shroud is a natural *relief* of a human form.



FIGURE 5 (© 1997 Barrie M. Schwartz)

This dimensional data was first visualized by the STURP team in 1976 with an instrument known as the VP-8 Image Analyzer, a device used by NASA for mapping image density to vertical relief (Figure 5). It was further supported by the density /relief mapping techniques used by several Italian researchers around the same period of time<sup>13,14</sup> and verified in recent years by the work of an Italian professional photographer and Shroud imaging expert using refined photographic edge enhancement techniques<sup>15,16</sup>. Of course, today it can also be done using some of the latest digital imaging software programs (Figure 6).<sup>17</sup> The fact that all of these techniques yield the exact same result



FIGURE 6 (© 1999 Mark Bruzon)

clearly confirms the existence of the dimensional data first visually revealed by the VP-8.

The STURP team concluded that there was a correlation between the density (or darkness) of the image on the Shroud and the distance the cloth was from the body at the time the image was formed. The researchers calculated that the image on the Shroud was formed at a cloth-to-body distance of up to approx-

imately 4 centimeters, but beyond that, imaging did not occur. The closer the cloth was to the body, the darker the resulting image in that area, with the darkest parts of the image being formed where there was direct contact between the two. The image became proportionately lighter as the distance increased until it reached the maximum imaging distance.<sup>18 19</sup>

It is this very fact that explains

the phenomenon of the 'shadows' surrounding the hands and helps to exclude frontal illumination as a viable possibility for the Shroud image. Since the crossed hands of the man of the Shroud caused the cloth to be raised away from the body, the distance between the cloth and body in the areas immediately surrounding the hands was increased, thus decreasing the image density (Figures 2 and 4). This clearly accounts for the less dense areas that surround the crossed hands in the image and that are identified by Allen as 'shadows.' This image property cannot be achieved using light or photography.

Since the densities on a photographic negative are not dependent on the distance between subject and film, there is no way that this density information can be incorporated into an image photographically. Consequently, when subjected to VP-8 image analysis, Allen's results do not yield a proper dimensional

relief of a human form like that on the Shroud (Figure 7).<sup>20</sup> This is reason enough to disqualify photography as a possible explanation for the image on the Shroud and is supported by research from a number of independent sources. Allen's conclusions seem to indicate



FIGURE 7 (© 2000 Kevin Moran)

that he does not fully understand these rather complex dimensional properties of the Shroud image.

### *Sharp edges*

There is one additional facet of Allen's image that is considerably different from the image on the Shroud. The Shroud image has no distinct or sharp edges, yet Allen's body image has a very distinct and sharp edge, much as one would expect from a properly



focused photograph. This property of the Shroud reinforces the distance-to-density correlation mentioned earlier. In essence, the distance between the peripheral of the body and the cloth increased gradually until it reached the maximum imaging distance and caused very soft, gradated edges that simply fade into the background. Once again, Allen's image provides the necessary evidence to disqualify photography as the Shroud's image formation process.

#### IV. Conclusions

The proto-photography theory proposed by Prof. Nicholas Allen was able to create an image on linen cloth, but not one that duplicated the image properties of the Shroud of Turin. When attempting to provide a viable image formation mechanism for the Shroud, one has to account for all of the image properties, not just a few of them. Allen failed to understand certain important facets of the image on the Shroud of Turin. Much

as it truly takes a professional artist to properly evaluate a painting, so too must photography be evaluated by the professional photographer. In the case of the proto-photography theory, other professional evaluations of Allen's theory have reached similar conclusions.<sup>21</sup>

Admittedly, Allen was able to create a viable photographic image using medieval raw materials, but he did so from the perspective of 21st century science. Surely raw materials must exist on our planet today that may eventually lead to the development of interstellar travel, but their mere existence is not enough to actually provide us with the technology<sup>22</sup>. That will have to wait until our technological development advances to a much higher level than exists today.

If we accept the argument that the mere existence of certain raw materials is reason enough to believe someone actually used them to invent a

technology that was still 500 years in the future, we should start searching archaeological sites around the world for the remains of medieval cellular phones, microwave ovens and nuclear weapons! Just because the raw materials for these highly advanced technologies existed, does not mean someone actually created them, particularly before human knowledge advanced enough technologically to truly make this possible.

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# The Israelite Origin of People of Afghanistan and Kashmir

By Aziz A. Chaudhary, USA

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Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> himself had said that his mission extended to the lost sheep of the House of Israel, meaning that he had come to preach his message to the tribes of Israelites who had deviated from the teachings of Judaism. Yet of the 12 tribes of Israelites only two were present in Palestine, so where were the rest? This article provides a useful insight into those tribes that had scattered across Persia and India and comments on their prevailing Jewish customs and traditions. If these were the people for whom Jesus was sent then did he reach them?

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People of both Afghanistan and Kashmir in northern India trace their origins to the Israelites and claim to be descendants of the lost tribes of Israel.

First we will discuss the people of Afghanistan, called Afghans. According to their traditions, the Afghans claim to be Beni Israel or the children of Israel. This claim is supported by their old historical works some of them being manuscripts still in their possession.

## The Afghans

The oldest manuscript available to us is *Rauza-tul-Albabfi Ta-arikh-i-Akabar-wal Ansab - (The Garden of the Learned in the History of Great Men and Genealogies)* - by Abu Suleman Daud Bin Abul Fatal

Muhammad Albenaketi written in 717 AH. The author says in the introduction that ever since the times of Moses, the ancestors of Afghans had to face great hardships. They were expelled from place to place and exterminated. Jerusalem was sacked more than once and their ancestors, the Israelites, were carried into captivity. In Chapter I, a *detailed* history of Jacob is given and in Chapter II, the genealogies of the Afghans tribes are traced to King Saul.

Mestoufi, the author of *Maima-ul-Ansab* traces Kais - the tribal head of Afghans, in a series of thirty-one degrees to King Saul and forty-five generations to Abraham.

Bukhtawar Khan, in his valuable universal history, *Mirat-ul-Alam - (The Mirror of the World)*, gives a vivid account of the journeys of Afghans from Palestine to Ghore, Ghazni, Kabul, and other places in Afghanistan. Similarly Hafiz Remat Bin Shah Alam in his *Khulasa-tul-Ansab* and Fareed-ud-Din Ahmad in his *Rasalah Ansab-i-Afghansiyah* gives the history of Afghans and deals with genealogies. They both prove that Afghans are descendants of Israel through King Saul. Fareed-ud-Din writes in his book that after the invasion of Palestine by Nebuchadrezzar, and the deportation, some of their ancestors left Nebuchadrezzar's territory under a chief and went away to Ghaur hills in Afghanistan. Their descendants multiplied and the people began to call them Beni Israel, Beni Asaf, and Beni Afghans.

Khawaja Nimatullah of Herat in his book *Makhazan-i-Afghansi* written in 1018 A.H. in the time of King Jahangir (translated by Prof Bernard Doran, London 1836) comes to the conclusion that Afghans are Beni Israel - the children of Israel - and traces their descent from King Saul. As noted elsewhere after the events of Nebuchadrezzar, the ancestors of Afghans had settled in Ghaur territory of Afghanistan. At the time of Holy Prophet Muhammad(sa),

Khalid Bin Walid invited them to Islam. The Afghans chiefs under the leadership of Qais, who was descendant of King Saul in the 37th degree, came to visit Prophet Muhammad(sa) who conferred upon the chiefs the title of Pathan which means 'a ship's rudder'. This signified that these chiefs would guide their nation into the currents of Islam.

Among recent authors Sayed Jalal-ud-Din Afghansi in his *History of Afghans* and Syed Abdul Jabbar Shah, ex-ruler of Swat (in his *Mun Ameen-i-Bani Israel*, MS) discuss genealogies of different Afghans tribes and ultimately trace them to King Saul. They discuss the question with exhaustive detail and come to irresistible conclusion that the Afghans represent the lost ten tribes of Israel.

Most of the Western writers and historians who have written on this subject, have come to the same conclusion. One of the earliest among them is Henry Vanistart<sup>1</sup> who commented on Israeli descent of Afghans and stated that the claim of the Afghans to be Beni Israel was more than justified.

Sir Alexander Prunes in his *Travels into Bokhara* (published in 1835) discusses the claim of Afghans to be of Israelite descent and then

stated that he saw no good reason to discredit them. He further wrote: 'The Afghans look like Jews and the younger brother marries the widow of the elder. The Afghans entertain prejudices against the Jewish nation, which would at least show that they have no desire to claim, without just cause, a descent from them'.<sup>2</sup>

In 1837, Sir Alexander Prunes was sent as the first British envoy to the court at Kabul. For some time he was the guest of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan - the King of Afghanistan. He questioned the king about the descent of the Afghans from the Israelites. The king replied, 'His people had no doubt of that though they repudiated the idea of being Jews, whom they treat with hereditary contempt. They found their claim not merely on tradition but on an ancient record in their possession named Mujmooa-e-Ansab.'

G.T.Vigne<sup>3</sup> in his book, *A Personal Narrative of a Visit to Chuzin, Cabul in Afghanistan* (1840) writes that one Mullah Khuda Dad, a person learned in history of his countrymen, read out from a book, the genealogy of his people. According to it a person named Afghans was a descendant of Jacob in the ninth degree. Afghans was a contemporary of Nebuchadnezzar,

called himself Beni Israel and had forty sons. Sulum, the eldest son of Afghans, migrated from his home in Syria and settled in Gura Mishkon near Herat. His descendants spread over the country now called Afghanistan. 34th descendant of Afghans was Qais who lived in the time of Prophet Muhammad<sup>(sa)</sup>.

Dr. Joseph Wolf<sup>4</sup> writes: 'I was wonderfully struck with the resemblance which Yusuf Zayes and the Khaibarites, two of their (Afghans) tribes to the Jews.'

James Bryce<sup>5</sup> in his *Cyclopaedia of Geography*, (1800) writes about Afghans that they trace their origin to King Saul calling themselves Beni Israel. Quoting Sr. A. Brunes he further writes that their tradition is that they were transplanted by the King of Babylon from Holy Land to Ghore, lying to the Northwest of Kabul and they lived as Jews till 682 A.D. when they were converted to Islam by an Arab chief.

J.P.Ferrier wrote his *History of the Afghans* in 1858. It was translated by Capt. W. M. Jesse. He also believed that Afghans represented the Ten Tribes of Israel. In support of his views he recorded<sup>6</sup> a significant fact that during his invasion of India, Nadir Shah was presented at Peshawar, by chiefs of

Yusuf-Zayee tribe with a bible written in Hebrew and with several other articles preserved by their families for the performance of religious ceremonies of their old faith. As there were also Jews in Nadir Shah's camp, they readily recognised these articles.

George Moore, published his famous work *The Lost Tribes* in 1861. He gave numerous reasons to prove that these lost ten tribes of Israel can be traced to Afghans and people of Kashmir in India.

He writes<sup>7</sup> 'and we find that the very natural character of Israel reappears in all its life and reality in countries where people call themselves Bani Israel and universally claim to be the descendants of the Lost Tribes. The nomenclature of their tribes and districts, both in ancient geography, and at the present day, confirms this universal natural tradition. Lastly, we have the route of the Israelites from Media to Afghanistan and India marked by a series of intermediate stations bearing the names of several of the tribes and clearly indicating the stages of their long and arduous journey.' Moore goes on to say: 'Sir William Jones, Sir John Malcolm and the Missionary Chamberlain, after full investigation, were of the opinion that the Ten Tribes

migrated to India, Tibet, and Cashemire through Afghanistan.'

H.W.Bellews<sup>8</sup> writes in his book *The Races of Afghanistan* (1884) that Afghans came from Syria and Nebuchadnezzar took them captives and settled them as colonists in Persia and Media from whence at some time later they marched to the East and settled in Ghaur hills where they were known as Beni Israel.

Among the recent writers, Dr. Alfred Edersheim<sup>9</sup> and Sir Thomas Holditch<sup>10</sup> are of similar view that majority of Afghans and people of Kashmir are descendants of Israelites.

### **The Kashmiris**

Now we turn to people of Kashmir called Kashmiris. Here again we find that their traditions and history, both ancient and modern, establishes their descent from the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel. The Kashmiris claim to be Bani Israel (children of Israelites) and call themselves 'Kashar' which is a Hebrew word meaning 'right'.

Unfortunately no history of Kashmir from ancient Hindu sources is available except Kalhana's *Raiatarangini* which deals with kings and dynasties rather than people. The first real

historian of Kashmir was Mulla Nadiri who started writing his *Tarikh-i-Kashmir (History of Kashmir)* in the reign of Sultan Sikandar (1378-1426 AD) and completed in the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin. The next historian was Mulla Ahmad who wrote his *Waqaya-i-Kashmir (Events of Kashmir)* during the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin. Both these historians state categorically that the inhabitants of Kashmir are descendants of Israel. The book of history, *Hashmat-i-Kashmir*<sup>11</sup> written by Abdul Qadir Bin Qazi-ul-Quzat Wasil Ali Khan was written in 1820 and states that the inhabitants of Kashmir are the children of Israel and states further that they had come from Holy Land.

Nazir Ahmad, author of *Jesus in Heaven on Earth*, estimates<sup>12</sup> that the ancestors of present inhabitants of Kashmir settled here probably in 3rd century BC in the reign of King Vasukula. His view is based upon the book of history by Mulla Muhammad Khalil of Murjunpur and the *History of Kashmir* by H.H. Wilson.

Pundit Narain Kaul, a Kashmiri Pundit wrote his *Guldasta-i-Kashmir* in 1884. He described Kashmiri Muslims and Pundits as being of Jewish countenance and

descent. (Part I, p.73). Pundit Ram Chand Kak who was at one time a prime minister of Kashmir writes in his *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir* published in 1933:

*Moses is a very common name here and some ancient monuments still to be seen disclose them to be of a people who came out of Israel. For instance, the remains of an edifice built in a high mountain is called to this day the Throne of Solomon.*  
(p.75)

*Asul-i-Kafi is a book of Shia traditions written over a thousand years ago. This book mentions that in ancient times there was a king in Kashmir whose forty courtiers were well versed in the knowledge of Torah.*  
(p.334)

To examine Western travellers, writers and historians, we will begin with Francis Rernier<sup>13</sup>. He was a courtier of Emperor Aurangzeb for many years and had visited Kashmir. He wrote that there were many marks of Judaism to be found in Kashmir and on entering this country after crossing the Peer-Punchal Mountains, the inhabitants in the frontier villages struck him to resemble Jews



markedly. Bernier then concluded:

*'You will see then, my dear Sir, I am not disposed to deny that Jews may have taken up residence in Kashmir - The purity of their law, after a lapse of ages, may have been corrupted until having long degenerated into idolatry, they were induced, like many other Pagans, to adopt the creed of Mahomed'.*

Catrou, a Jesuit father wrote in his *General History of the Moghal Empire* (1708) that *'the Kashmiris are descendants of the Jews'*, (p.195).

S-Manouchi was a physician in the service of Emperor Aurangzeb. He had access to official records and like Bernier he accompanied the Emperor to Kashmir.

He wrote<sup>15</sup>: *'There is an old tradition that these Jews who were led captives by Shalemanesser settled in Kashmir and that the people of that country are the descendants of the Jews. It is certain, though we find no remains in Kashmir of the Jewish religion, the people there being all either Guntus (Hindus) or Muhammadans, that there are several vestiges of a race descendant from the Israelites. The air of the face and*

*the looks of the present inhabitants have something of what is peculiar to Jews, which distinguishes them from all other people'.*

Rev. Claudius Buchanan toured Southern India extensively and in his *Christian Researches in Asia*, he mentioned his discovery of an ancient manuscript of the book of Moses in Hebrew. It was written on a roll of leather 48 feet in length. He was told that it was brought from Kashmir (p.229).

H.H.Wilson, author of *Travel in Himalyan Provinces* (1841) states: *'The physical and the ethnic character, which so sharply marks off the Kashmiris from all surrounding races, has always struck observant visitors to the valley and they have universally connected them with the Jews.'*

G.T.Vigne in his *Travels in Kashmir, Ladakh and Iskardoo* which he published in 1842 mentions certain Jewish tombs near 'I'akht-i-Sulaiman in Sirinagar. (p.395)

We have already quoted the views of George Moore, the author of *The Lost Tribes*.

Dr. Keith Johnston in his *Dictionary of Geography* (1867) writes: *'The natives of Kashmir are of a tall,*

robust frame of body, with manly features, the woman full formed and handsome, with aquiline noses and features resembling the Jews' (p.250).

In a book named *Kashmir and its Shaws* (1857) the following passage occurs: 'There is a tradition of long standing, recently revived, that some portion of the so-called lost tribes of Israel found their way to Kashmir on their dispersion. If based on any correct foundation, the fact of weaving in its higher departments having existed for hundreds of years in the valley might be accounted for by the expatriated Jews carrying with them the arts they learned from their Babylonish conquerors.' (p.17)

Numerous writers have commented on the Jewish appearance of people of Kashmir. This list is very long. Sir Francis Young husband was a representative of the British crown (the Resident) to the Court of the Maharaja of Kashmir for many years. He writes in his book *Kashmir*: 'The visitor...will often see strikingly handsome women, with clear cut features, long dark eyes, well-marked eyebrows and a general Jewish appearance. Here may be seen fine old patriarchal types, just as we picture to ourselves the Israelitish heroes of

old. Some, indeed, say...that these Kashmiris are the lost tribes of Israel and certainly as I have already said, there are real Biblical types to be seen everywhere in Kashmir and especially among the upland villages. Here the Israelitish Shepherd tending his necks and herds may any day be seen.(p.107,112)

John Noel wrote an article, 'The Heavenly High Snow Peaks of Kashmir' in *Asia Magazine*, New York, Oct. 1930. In this article he wrote: 'Immensely strong are those picturesque, broad-shouldered Kashmiri peasants and yet docile and meek in temperament. One thing about them strikes you with enormous force. They seem more perfectly Jewish than the purest Jews you have ever seen, not because they wear a flowing cloak-like dress that conforms to your idea of Biblical garments, but because their faces have the Jewish cast of features. The curious coincidence - or is it a coincidence? - is that there is a strong tradition in Kashmir of its connection with the Jews.'

### **Customs and Traditions of Afghans and Kashmiris**

A study of customs and traditions of Afghans and people of Kashmir shows resemblance with the Israelite or Biblical traditions, in

spite of the centuries that have rolled by since the Israelite ancestors settled in these lands. Nazir Ahmad did such a research and came to the conclusion that many customs and traditions of Afghans and Kashmiris relating to birth, marriage, mourning, burial, food, and general habits and customs bear strong resemblance to counterpart Biblical or old Jewish customs and traditions. He has given a comprehensive report<sup>16</sup> of his extensive research in this regard in his book. Like Jews, Afghans and Kashmiris reckon their week as beginning with Saturday. Kashmiris used to and Afghans even now observe and celebrate 'Eid-Fassakh' which corresponds with the Jewish Passover. Like Jews, Afghans and Kashmiris name their subtribes after various animals. Many of the traditions of Afghans and Kashmiris are founded on Biblical records. They speak of their great past, of the glories of Solomon, of the deluge and of their captivity. Their folklore and fables resound with Jewish stories. The preponderance of Jewish names among Afghans and Kashmiris cannot be explained simply by their conversion to Islam.

Certain archaeological discoveries point out that Afghans and Kashmiris are descendants of Israel of old. The domestic pottery which

archaeologists have discovered in ancient cities of Kashmir and Afghanistan is of one variety called 'Celadon'. Chips and fragments of Celadon are to be found from Babylon to Seistan, from Seistan to India, in Afghanistan, and in Kashmir and not beyond."

The Jews were once famous for their type of pottery and it is significant that Sirinagar Museum in Kashmir abounds with this pottery which has been excavated from different places in the Kashmir Valley.

### **Ancient Kashmir Temples**

The ancient temples of Kashmir are the most remarkable monuments of India. They establish undoubted traces of Israelite influence. Some think that they exhibit Greek influence but Sir V.A. Smith, the famous historian of India, in his *Early History of India* discusses this thoroughly and proves that there is no evidence that Greek architecture was ever introduced in India.'" Both Sir Aurel Stein<sup>19</sup> and Vigne<sup>20</sup> rely on famous report of Professor Bruel and agree with him that none of Kashmir ruins were of Buddhist or Brahmanical origin. Many experts have expressed the view that the stereotyped style of temples of Kashmir points to a different origin than Hindu temples. Two Kashmir

temples need mentioning in particular. The most celebrated Kashmir temple both in extant and splendour is of Martand near Mattan, about eight miles from Islamabad (Kashmir) Dr. James Ferguson who for many years was in charge of the Archaeological Department of Government of India, testified that this temple is a Jewish temple. He wrote that it is one of the points of interest in the Kashmir temples that they reproduce, in plan at least, the Jewish temple, more nearly than any other known building<sup>21</sup>.

The second significant Kashmir temple is known as Takht-i-Sulaiman - (The Throne of Solomon) in Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir. This temple is built on a high hill approached by a long flight of steps enclosed by two side walls which originally bore four Persian inscriptions and to which we will refer later. The date assigned to this temple is prior to 250 BC. This temple is a replica of the tomb of Absillam, the third son of David, near Jerusalem.

### Kashmiri Language

When the monuments of Kashmir first attracted the attention of archaeologists not a single syllable of the ancient inscriptions could be read. The knowledge of the ancient alphabet had become

extinct. Some experts were trying to decipher it as if the inscriptions were in a language belonging to Sanskrit group. The researchers of Sir George Gregson, however, proved that the Kashmiri language was non-Indian and did not belong to the Sanskrit group. Prof. E. J. Rapson says that in fact there were two languages of Semitic origin, which were known as the 'Brahmi' and 'Khoroshti'. After stating that two languages were 'brought into India through Mesopotamia by merchants he goes on to say that 'Khoroshti' which is particularly the alphabet of Northwestern India, is a variety of the Aramaic script which prevailed generally throughout Western Asia in the fifth century BC. As the Persian language evolved, Syrian influence brought about the Sulus script. The New Persian with Arabic admixture resulted in 'Kashar' the language of people of Kashmir. Richard Temple<sup>22</sup> rightly points out that the Kashmiri language contains 30% of Persian words, 25% of Arabic, and 45% of other languages including Hebrew. The Kashmiri language is distinct from that spoken in any part of India. Mufti Mubammad Sadiq asserts that its nucleus to some extent is drawn from Hebrew language. In his book, *Qabr-i-Masih (The Tomb of Jesus)* he has given a very lengthy and comprehensive list of Kashmiri

words which, in pronunciation and meaning are identical with Hebrew words.<sup>23</sup>

### **Biblical Names Of Tribes and Places in Kashmir and Afghanistan**

It is well known in history that emigrants carry with them their habits, customs, and traditions. They also have the tradition of naming new places in their new country with names of places in their old country. At times they name new places with the names of their well-known ancestors. Again sometimes tribes are named after places of their origin or their ancestors. In this way the immigrants to a new country try to preserve the memory of their ancestral home. A good example is America where European immigrants named so many settlements in the New World with names of towns in Europe. If we proceed in tracing back the names of tribes and places of a country to another which is far away, we would be justified in asserting that the inhabitants of one of them migrated from the other. But such an inference would be justified if known facts could not be explained with some other hypothesis. In this regard, other factors like mutual trade, the settlements of a ruling nation or the conquering armies must be taken into account.

It is a most significant fact that in Kashmir and Afghanistan, innumerable names of places and tribes can be traced to Biblical names of Israelites of old. History does not furnish us with evidence of extensive trade with Palestine or of Israelites coming to these countries as conquering settlers. The preponderance of Biblical names of old can, therefore, be explained on the basis of migration.

Nazir Ahmad, author of the book, *Jesus in Heaven on Earth* has done valuable research and has given over four hundred names of places and tribes in Kashmir and Afghanistan and adjacent regions which have been traced to Biblical names of Israelites<sup>24</sup>. George Moore, the author of *The Lost Tribes* has also acknowledged this fact. This is the most convincing proof that Afghans and people of Kashmir are descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel.

This was the reason that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> undertook the long and arduous journey to Afghanistan and later to India and Kashmir, where he settled, in search of those lost tribes whom he referred to as 'lost sheep' and 'other sheep'. He did this migration in his post crucifixion period of his life when he had despaired of the Jews in Palestine.

One clarification is needed. When we claim that people of Afghanistan are descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israelites, we do not mean that all inhabitants of Afghanistan today are such. We only mean the main group known as Afghans. So-called true Afghans are the Pushtun tribes to whom the term Afghans was first applied. These Afghans are also known as Pakhtuns and they constitute about 60-70% of population. They speak Pushto. Historically they have held main power and prestige in the country. It is this predominant group called Afghans that are descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel. It is conceivable that other small ethnic elements may have been absorbed into the main body of Afghans over the long period of many centuries.

There are many other distinct ethnic groups which are part of population of Afghanistan today. There are Tajiks which are of Iranian origin and speak Persian. Another group, Hazara, are believed to be descendants of Mongols. They speak a dialect of Persian containing many Turkish words. There are Turk and Turko Mongol elements like Uzbeks, mainly found along the northern part of country. There are other ethnic groups like Baluch in the south and Kafirs in the Northwest.

Similarly when we say that people of Kashmir are descendants of Israelites, we mean the main and predominant stock of Kashmiris and not other ethnic groups which may be part of the population of Kashmir today.

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# Evidence of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> in India

By Abubakr Ben Ishmael Salahuddin - USA

The tomb known as 'Rozabal' in the capital of Kashmir is no ordinary tomb. The life history of the person who lies buried there bears a strong resemblance to Prophet Jesus. His trials and tribulations, his style of preaching and his origin from the Holy Land all lend powerful support to the argument that it is indeed Jesus who lies buried in Rozabal. Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's<sup>(as)</sup> book *Jesus in India* was written over 100 years ago in 1899, and his works have since found resonance throughout the last century with researchers the world over. This article is based on an extract from 'Saving the Savior - Did Christ Survive the Crucifixion?' - one of the most recent books on this subject, and it re-examines some of the historical evidence surrounding this theory about the person who lies in Rozabal.

## The Followers of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>

'The followers of Issa, son of Mariam [Jesus, son of Mary], generally call themselves Muslims, and inhabit a number of villages scattered throughout the western area of Afghanistan whose centre is Herat. I have heard of them several times, but considered that they were probably the people who had been converted by the European missionaries from eastern Persia, or that they were a relic of the time when Herat had been a flourishing bishopric of the Nestorians, before the Arabs conquered Persia in the seventh and eighth centuries. But, from their own accounts, and from what I could observe, they seem

to have come from a much older source. There must be about a thousand of these Christians. Their chief is Abba Yahiyya (Father John), who can recite the succession of teachers, through nearly sixty generations, *to Issa, son of Mariam of Nasara [Nazareth], the Kashmiri.*'<sup>1</sup>

The quote clearly states that Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup> taught in Afghanistan and attracted a following of people, the descendants of whom refer to themselves as The Followers of Issa. But does this place him in Afghanistan after the event of the crucifixion? Professor Omar Burke continues:



'Jesus, according to the community, was a carpenter and also a shepherd...The "Traditions of the Masih" (anointed one) is the holy book of the community. They do not believe in the New Testament; or, rather, they say that these Traditions are the New Testament, and that the Gospels which we have are partly true but generally written by people who did not understand the teachings of the Master [Jesus].

'Abba Yahiyya, a towering figure with the face of a saint, was certainly an erudite man, and he knew his own scriptures, plus a great deal of the Jewish writings, very well indeed. He had heard of the teachings of the "heretics" as he called what we would call the various sects of Christians known to us, and he wanted no part of them.

"My son," he said, in his softly accented Persian, 'these people are reading and repeating a part of the story. They have completely misunderstood the message. We have the story told to us by the Master [Jesus], and through him we will be saved and made whole. Some of the events in that document which you call the Bible are true, but a great

deal is made up or imagined or put in for less than worthy reasons. *Isa lived for over thirty years after the materials you have were completed, and he told us what was true.*

'Briefly, the doctrine is that Jesus was the son of God because he had attained that rank through his goodness and sacrifices. Thus he was equal to a divine person. He came after John the Baptist, who himself had reached the highest degree of development possible at that time. John baptized him with water, Jesus with spirit and fire. These were the three stages of understanding, which were taught by our Christians.'

'There was a great deal of confusion at first, because I was talking about sacraments and being saved, while it took me some time to realize that Abba John's people saw baptism, the Holy Ghost and the Kingdom of God to be three stages in a system of human illumination. This is what they claim is the function of the Church: the preservation of an administration of these three "developments" for the worshipers'.

'There is a ritual meal, like the Last Supper, but this is carried out once a week. Bread and wine are eaten, but as symbolic of the grosser and finer nutritions that are the experiences of attainment of nearness to God. "While it is possible to consider these people as mere heretics, or else as followers of someone else who impersonated Jesus, yet I was singularly impressed by their piety, their feeling of certainty, their simplicity and lack of the unpleasant forms of fervour which one often finds in minority cults. *They were convinced, too, that the day would come when the world would discover the truth about Jesus.*'<sup>2</sup>

The reader will note that the followers of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> claim that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> taught a message quite similar to the Gnostic one we studied earlier, as well as the message contained in the documents discovered by Nicholas Notovitch amongst the Buddhists. Baptism, the Holy Ghost, and the Kingdom of God were three stages of illumination. This idea is contrary to the current Christian doctrine that places Jesus as the intermediary between human beings and perfect knowledge of God. Is it

simply 'coincidental' that three different groups of people, living in different parts of the world—the Gnostics Christians, the followers of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> in Afghanistan, and the Buddhists of Tibet—shared an understanding of the teachings of Jesus Christ that was *exactly* the same, and yet totally at variance with what is now called 'Christianity'?

### The Bhavishya Mahapurana

There are eighteen books of the Hindus called the Puranas. The ninth book, the *Bhavishya Mahapurana*, records an encounter of King Shalivahana with Jesus Christ near Srinagar long after the crucifixion. In contrast to the Gospels, the exact date of this book is *clearly* known. It was compiled by Sutta in the year 3191 of the Kaukikia Era. That corresponds to the year 115 AD. (Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup> is believed to have died at age 120, so this account was compiled five years before his death). Alongside the oral tradition of The Followers of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> in Afghanistan, this written account is perhaps the most important of any of the documents recording the presence of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> long after the crucifixion, because it was written while Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>,



Sanskrit verses 16-33 [shaded in grey] of the third khanda of the Pratisarga parvan of the Bhavishya Mahapurana

according to the theory, would still have been alive.

Christian scholars state that the only extant Gospels *possibly* dating to the first century are Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Thomas. But they theorize that there may also have existed a Q document that pre-dated these Gospels, and served as the source material for at least Matthew and Luke. This Q document is not available anywhere today. Though scholars *assume* its existence, we cannot know for certain whether it actually existed prior to the compilation of the Gospels. So the Bhavishya Mahapurana is an extant book

that reveals information about Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup> *during his lifetime*. So it can be suggested that the Bhavishya Mahapurana stands as a more reliable document than any of the Gospels, as it was not derived from a 'Q' document, but is an original text. This is a very striking account:

*Sanskrit verses 16-33 [shaded in gray] of the third khanda of the Pratisarga parvan of the Bhavishya Mahapurana*

'Shalivahana, who was a grandson of Bikrama Jit, took over the government. He vanquished the attacking hordes of Chinese,

Parthians, Scythians and Bactrians. He drew a border between the Arians and the Mlecha (non-Hindus), and ordered the latter to withdraw to the other side of India. One day, Shalivahana, the chief of the Sakyas, went into the Himalayas. There, in the Land of the Hun (Ladak, a part of the Kushan empire), the powerful king saw a man sitting on a mountain, who seemed to promise auspiciousness. His skin was fair and he wore white garments.

'The king asked the holy man who he was. The other replied: "I am called a son of God, born of a virgin, minister of the non-believers, relentless in search of the truth". The king then asked him: "What is your religion?" The other replied, 'O great king, I come from a foreign country, where there is no longer truth and where evil knows no bounds. In the land of the non-believers, *I appeared as the Messiah*. But the demon Ihamasi of the barbarians (dasyu) manifested herself in a terrible form; I was delivered unto her in the manner of the nonbelievers and ended in Ihamasi's realm.

"O king, lend your ear to the

religion that I brought unto the non-believers: after the purification of the essence and the impure body and after seeking refuge in the prayers of the Naigama, man will pray to the Eternal. Through justice, truth, meditation and unity of spirit, man will find his way to Isa in the center of light. God, as firm as the sun, will finally unite the spirit of all wandering beings in Himself. Thus, O king, Ihamasi will be destroyed; and the blissful image of Isa, the giver of happiness, will remain forever in the heart; and I was called *Isa-Masih*.' After the king heard these words, he took the teacher of the non-believers and sent him to their pitiless land."<sup>3</sup>

Here again we see a teaching similar to the Gnostic, Buddhist and Afghani versions that we studied earlier, with Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> here stating that personal acts involving prayer, self-purification, the practice of truth and justice and the practice of meditation would bring human beings to God. In none of those four versions has Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> spoken about himself as the object of worship or as a mediator through which one must go in order to reach God. And again, this idea is

contrary to today's Christian teachings.

The reader will notice above that the 'holy man' used the indefinite article, 'a' in describing himself as, 'a son of God.' You may recall the previous section on The Followers of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> where the head of that community, Abba Yahya, also said that Jesus bore the appellation, son of God, 'because he had attained that rank through his goodness and sacrifices.'

Kersten states that the name 'Isa,' or 'Issa', derives from the Syrian, *Yeshu* (Jesus), 'being altered to conform to Musa (Moses).' What is striking about the above account is that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> is mentioned by the name that he is known by in the scripture of Islam, the Qur'an. But the above document was compiled hundreds of years before the Qur'an was written. Also, the above document was written in Sanskrit-the language of the Hindus, a totally different religion. Since the name Isa appears in an ancient Hindu document as well as in the scripture of Islam, apparently it was a name by which Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> was known in the East.

Although Kersten states that 'Isa' is derived from the Syrian, *Yeshu*, the above verses seem to use the name Isa as an attributive name, and not as the actual personal name of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>. The reader will note that he stated: '...man will find his way to Isa in the center of light.' Then later he refers to *himself* as Isa-Masih-the Isa Messiah. So, could the word Isa actually have meant some kind of attribute of the Divine? Had this holy man been sent as the 'Isa Messiah' to re-establish this special Divine attribute in those to whom he ministered? He defines Isa as, 'the giver of happiness,' and does not seem to refer to *himself* by the name Isa. In short, he is the Messiah *of* Isa, or he is the Messiah *for* Isa. It seems that his mission was to teach spiritual practices that would *lead* to Isa, the giver of happiness, with the words 'giver of happiness' being an attribute of God. As he states, 'Through justice, truth, meditation and unity of spirit, man will find his way to Isa in the center of light.' It appears that Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup> was teaching a spiritual prescription for finding happiness 'in the center of light,' and the words 'center of light' must certainly have been metaphorical for the

Divine-for God. The word 'light' refers not only to physical light. In religious literature of various religions, the word light refers to guidance. So the 'center of light' or the center of all guidance would be God.

### The Rauzat-us-Safa

Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> was mentioned in a Persian historical work known as the *Rauzat-us-Safa*, written by Mir Muhammad Bin Khawand in 1417 AD. The complete title of that book is, *Rauza-tus-Safa fi Sirat-ul-Ambia wal Muluk wal Khulafa (Gardens of Purity concerning the biography of the Prophets and Kings and Caliphs)*. It was published later, in the year 1852 AD, in Bombay. In this book, he mentions a tradition regarding a visit by Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> and Mary to Nasibain.

'Jesus (on whom be peace) was named the 'Messiah' because he was a great traveler. He wore a woolen scarf on his head and a woolen cloak on his body. He had a stick in his hand; he used to wander from country to country and from city to city. At nightfall he would stay where he was. He ate jungle vegetables, drank jungle water, and went on his travels on foot. His companions,

in one of his travels, once bought a horse for him; he rode the horse one day, but as he could not make any provision for the feeding of the horse, he returned it. Journeying from his country, he arrived at Nasibain. With him were a few of his disciples whom he sent into the city to preach. In the city, however, there were current wrong and unfounded rumors about Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> and his mother. The governor of the city, therefore, arrested the disciples and then summoned Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>. Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> miraculously healed some persons and exhibited other miracles. The king of the territory of Nasibain, therefore, with all his armies and his people, became a follower of his. The legend of the 'coming down of food' contained in the Holy Qur'an belongs to the days of his travels.'<sup>4</sup>

### Ikmal-ud-Din

The author of *Ikmal-ud-Din* (the original title is, *Kamalud Din wa Tmam-un Nimat fi Asbat-ul-Ghaibat wa Kashful- Hairet*), is Al-Shaikh Al-Said-us-Sadiq Abi Jaffar Muhammad Ibn-i-Ali Ibn-i-Hussain Ibn-i-Musa Ibn-i-Baibuyah al-Qummi, who died in Khorasan in 962 AD. He was a scholar who had travelled to

many countries in order to research material for his book. He mentions the travels of Jesus Christ (Yuz Asaf) to Kashmir:

'Then Yuz Asaf, after roaming about in many cities, reached that country which is called Kashmir. He travelled in it far and wide and stayed there and spent his (remaining) life there, until death overtook him, and he left the earthly body and was elevated towards the Light. But before his death, he sent for a disciple of his, Ba'bad, by name, who used to serve him and was well versed in all matters. He expressed his last will to him and said: 'My time for departing from this world has come. Carry on your duties properly and turn not back from truth, and say your prayers regularly.' He then directed Ba'bad to prepare a tomb over him (at the very place he died). He then stretched his legs towards the West and head towards the East and died. May God bless him.'<sup>5</sup>

Yuz Asaf taught in parables in the same manner as the Bible records that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> taught. Here is a sample of a parable of Yuz Asaf's which parallels the famous sower-of-seeds parable men-

tioned by the Gospels:

'When a sower goes to sow and sows, some seeds fall by the wayside, and the birds pick up the seed. Some fall upon stray land, and when they reach the stony foundation they wither away. Some fall among thorns and grow not: but the seed that falls on the good land, grows and brings forth fruit. By the sower is meant the wise, by the seed is meant his words of wisdom. The seeds picked up by birds mean those people who understand not. The seeds on the stony ground are like the words of wisdom that go in one ear and out of the other. The seeds that fell among the thorns are like unto those who hear and understand but act not accordingly. Other seeds which fall on good grounds are like those who hear the words of wisdom and obey.'<sup>6</sup>

The Bible records Jesus'<sup>(as)</sup> sower parable in the following manner:

'And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places,

where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But others fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.<sup>17</sup>

In my view, the sower parable from *Ikmal-ud-Din* is very important. First, from the earlier quote we see that Shaikh Sadiq recorded the travels of Yuz Asaf and his eventual arrival in Kashmir. Second, he also recorded one of the important parables of Yuz Asaf. Since orthodox Muslims have always believed that Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup> ascended to heaven, then Shaikh Sadiq would have no reason to even suspect that Yuz Asaf and Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup> were the same person, simply because of the fact that he was a Muslim who believed in Jesus'<sup>(as)</sup> ascension. Even if such a notion had come to his mind, he would have immediately dismissed it, because to entertain such an idea

would have been a violation of his religious beliefs.

Also, it is far from likely that Shaikh Sadiq would have inserted this story, deceitfully citing it as a Kashmiri tradition. It is very unlikely because of the fact that the scripture of Shaikh Sadiq was the Qur'an, not the Bible. The parable of the sower of the seeds does not exist in the Qur'an, so why would Shaikh Sadiq have taken a Biblical parable that has no connection whatsoever to his own religious tradition and inserted it into his account of Kashmiri tradition? Again, he certainly was not trying to destroy Christian belief by suggesting that Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> was in Kashmir long after the Crucifixion, because to do so, as I stated above, would have meant the destruction of his own religious beliefs as well, since both orthodox Muslims and orthodox Christians believe in the Ascension of Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup>.

### **The Book of Balauhar and Budasaf (Yuz Asaf)**

It is believed that the name Budasaf [Bud-Asaf] and Yuz Asaf refer to the same person. An entire Buddhist Book of Budasaf exists which mentions Budasaf



(Yuz Asaf) in Kashmir. (For an original-language Urdu translation of portions of the *Book of Balauhar and Budasaf*, see: [www.tombofjesus.com/qisabig.htm](http://www.tombofjesus.com/qisabig.htm))

It says of Budasaf:

'And he reached Kashmir, which was the farthest region at which he ministered, and there his life ended. He left the world and bequeathed his inheritance to a certain disciple called Ababid who had served him. Everything that he did was perfect. And he admonished him and said to him, "I have found a worthy shrine and decorated it and brought in lamps for the dying. I have collected the flock with the true face, which had been dispersed and to whom I was sent. And now I shall draw breath through my ascent from the world, by the separation of my soul from my body. Obey the commandments that were given to you, and do not deviate from the path of truth but keep firmly to it in gratitude. And may Ababid be the leader." He then commanded Ababid to level off the place for him; he stretched his legs out and lay down. Then, turning his head northwards and his face eastwards, he passed away.'<sup>8</sup>

The reader will note a discrepancy between the above Buddhist account of the death of Jesus Christ and that written in *Ikmal-ud-Din*. Whatever might be the explanation for why these accounts differ with regard to which direction Jesus faced his head *just prior to the moment of his death*, this is not to be confused, obviously, with the direction in which he was finally buried in the Roza Bal. The real sarcophagus containing the remains of Yuz Asaf in the Roza Bal lies underground and could at one time be seen through a small aperture. It is interesting that that sarcophagus faces the direction that is in accordance with Jewish custom—east to west. Even considering that the account in *Ikmal-ud-Din* was referring to the direction he lay at the time of his death, that account is in accordance with the direction of the sarcophagus of Yuz Asaf in the Roza Bal, and must be considered a correct one. Some orthodox Muslims claim that Yuz Asaf is an Islamic saint. This idea cannot be correct because the tradition of Yuz Asaf in Kashmir goes back long before the Islamic period.

### The Tarikh-i-Kashmir

In his book, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, the historian, Mullah Nadri, made mention of Yuz Asaf, Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup> in Kashmir:

'After him his son Raja Akh (whose name was Ach), came to the throne. He ruled for sixty years. It is said that he founded the village (of) Achabaal in Kothar district. After him his son, Gopananda, took (the reigns of) Government and ruled the country under the name of Gopadatta. [During his reign] many temples were [built] and on top of Mount Solomon the dome [of the temple] became cracked. He deputed one of his ministers named Sulaiman, who had come from Persia to repair it. Hindus objected that he [the Minister] was an infidel [and belonged to] another religion.

'During this time Hadhrat Yuz Asaf having come from Bait-ul Muqaddas [the Holy Land] to this holy valley proclaimed his prophethood. He devoted himself, day and night, in [prayers to] God, and having attained the heights of piety and virtue, he declared himself to be a Messenger [of God] for the people of Kashmir. He invited people [to his religion].

Because the people of the valley had faith in this Prophet, Raja Gopadatta referred the objection of Hindus to him [for decision]. It was because of this Prophet's orders that Sulaiman, whom Hindus called Sandeman, completed [the repairs of] the dome. [The year was] Fifty and four. Further, on one of the stones of the stairs he [Sulaiman] inscribed: "In these times Yuz Asaf proclaimed his prophethood," and on the other stone of the stairs he also inscribed that he [Yuz Asaf] was Yusu, Prophet of the Children of Israel.

"I have seen in a book of Hindus that this prophet was really Hadhrat Isa [Jesus], the Spirit of God, on whom be peace [and salutations] and had also assumed the name of Yuz Asaf. The real knowledge is with God. He spent his life in this [valley]. After his departure [his death] he was laid to rest in Mohalla Anzmarah. It is also said that lights of prophethood used to emanate from the tomb of this Prophet. Raja Gopadatta having ruled for sixty years and two months, [then] died...'<sup>9</sup>

This is another very interesting recording. It shows that Mullah

Nadri clearly gave an account of Yuz Asaf in Kashmir. He stated that Yuz Asaf came from the Holy Land, and that he proclaimed to be a prophet of the Children of Israel, or the Jews. Yet, up to that point, he had not equated this prophet with Jesus Christ. Then, as an objective historian, he recorded a Hindu tradition telling that Isa and Yuz Asaf were the same individual. And he recorded this Hindu tradition even though it was at variance with his own Islamic tradition.

It seems as though Mullah Nadri must have been influenced by this Hindu tradition in some manner. Rather than state that, 'Of course my religion, Islam, says that Jesus ascended to heaven,' or just outright deny this Hindu tradition, or even worse, simply leave it out, he states, 'The real knowledge is with God.' I think it is very significant that Mullah Nadri would not forcefully deny the tradition or even qualify it by airing his own religious views. Obviously, the Hindu tradition Mullah Nadri mentioned is the same one that records the meeting of King Shalivahana with Jesus Christ - the *Bhavishya Mahapurana*.

Also, you will notice that Mullah Nadri refers to Isa as the 'Spirit of God.' This description of Isa as the 'Spirit of God' seems to support my own view, expressed in the section on the *Bhavishya Mahapurana*, that the name Isa may not be a personal name but is instead attributive in nature.



The 'Tarikh-i-Kahsmir'  
(Courtesy, Dr Hassnain)

**The Tarikh-i-Kashmir (author unknown)**

The author of this *Tarikh-i-Kashmir* is unknown. Note that the document states that 'six days after his crucifixion, Jesus visited several places.'

'In early writings, it is mentioned that seventy years after the demise of Alexander the Great, Jesus Christ was born. When he reached the age of thirty years, God raised him to the status of an apostle. At the age of thirty-

three years, he proceeded from Palestine towards the Holy Valley [Kashmir]. It is mentioned in historical works that Jesus Christ reached Syria in company of his disciples and followers. It is written in authentic works that *six days after his crucifixion, Jesus visited several places and met Zacharis and Mary and Disciples and then left for [an] unknown destination.*<sup>10</sup>

The reference to the 'Holy Valley' is speaking of Kashmir, which has been called the Valley of Eternal Peace, and other such names.

### The History of Religion and Doctrines-The Glass Mirror

In his book, *A Search for the Historical Jesus*, Dr. Fida Hassnain, former Director of Kashmir State Archives and of Archeological Research and Museums, mentions a Tibetan manuscript he discovered called *Grugtha Thams-chand kyi Khuna dan Dod-Thsul Ston-pe Legs Shad Shel-gyi Melong*. (Recall Nicholas Notovitch's discovery that Buddhists in Tibet had within their possession ancient documents which recorded the comings and goings of 'San Issa,' or 'Yesu,' i.e.,

Jesus) containing information about Jesus<sup>(as)</sup>.



The 'Grugtha Thams-chand' Tibetan translation of ancient Chinese document, The Glass Mirror (Courtesy, Dr Hassnain)

This Tibetan document, written by Le-zan Chhes-kyi Nima, was translated from an ancient Chinese document called, *The History of Religion and Doctrines-The Glass Mirror*: The relevant portions are reproduced below:

'Yesu, the teacher and founder of the religion, who was born miraculously, proclaimed himself the Saviour of the world. He commanded his disciples to observe the ten vows [Ten Commandments], among which includes prohibition of manslaughter and attainment of eternal joy through good deeds. He preached that evil actions

plunge one into hell, where there is eternal torment and misery. A sin committed in a state of consciousness cannot be condoned or pardoned. This is one of the virtuous results emerging out of the teachings of the Buddha. His doctrines did not spread extensively, but survived in Asia, for a long period. The above information is derived from the Chinese treatises on religions and doctrines.'<sup>11</sup>

I find it interesting that the above document states that, except in Asia, the teachings of Yesu (Jesus) did not spread. When one considers the differences in the teachings of Yuz Asaf/Yesu when he was in Asia, and those of Christianity as it evolved in the West, one begins to understand the above quote. For, the primary focus of Western Christianity is the death of Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup> for the sins of the world, but in the East that idea does not exist.

#### The *Tarikh-i-Kabir* Kashmir

The *Tarikh-i-Kabir Kashmir* was published at Suraj Prakash Press in Amritsar, Punjab in 1902. On page 34 of Volume I of that work, Haji Mohiyuddin says the:

'Syed Nasir-uddin Khanyari is

much revered for spending his life in piety and prayers. He was buried in the famous shrine known as the Rozabal Tomb. *His grave is located towards the south of the holy grave of a prophet.* As such, the shrine is known as the Site of the Prophet. Khawaja Azam Didmari writes that in the past a Prince, who absorbed himself in prayers and piety attained the station of a Messenger [of God] and was sent to this land for guidance of the people. *His name was Yuzu-Asaph.* After his death, he was buried here in Mohala Anzmar near Khanyar.

'Mulla Ahmad in his *Asar-ul-Ikhyar* has quoted that Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin deputed Syed Abdullah Bahaiqi as an Ambassador to Egypt and the Pharaoh of Egypt deputed Yuzu-Asaph who was a progeny of Moses as his ambassador. The Shias believe that Yuzu-Asaph descended from Hazrat Imam Jafar-i-Sadiq. However in an Arabic manuscript, it is related the Prince came from Sholapit to Kashmir as a traveler and is buried in Anzmar, Khanyar, Srinagar. But more older information is available that [a] sweet smell used to come from one of the holes of [the] sarcophagus. A

lady, who desecrated the tomb became mad. *Others believe that it is [the] tomb of a great Prophet who is no other than Hazrat Isa--the Spirit of God.*'<sup>12</sup>

You will note from the above that the document presents various opinions regarding the identity of the prince who occupied the Roza Bal, the last one being that he was Hadhrat Isa-Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup>.

### The Wajees-ut-Tawarikh

According to the Tarikh-i-Hassan, the *Wajees-ut-Tawarikh* was compiled in 1857 by Abdul Nabi Khanyari (Tarikh-i-Hassan, Vol. 1, p.377). Abdul Nabi Khanyari was known by various names: Abdul Nabi, Naba Shah and Ghulam Nabi. It is to be noted that Raja Gopananda is mentioned in this excerpt, as you will see below, and he ruled over Kashmir during 49 to 109 AD.

'The grave of Mir Sayyid Naseeruddin is in Khanyar. The place is also known as Rozabal. It is said that at that place exists the grave of Paighambar Yuzu Asaf. He was a prince who had come to this place. Due to his utmost piety and prayers, he was raised to the status of the Messenger (by God) for the people of Kashmir. He

preached among the people. It is said that Raja Gopananda ruled over the country during that period. The aroma of musk used to emanate from a hole in the western wall.'<sup>13</sup>

The appellation, 'Paighambar' means, 'Messenger of God.' So he is mentioned in this document as, 'Messenger of God, Yuzu Asaph.'



The 'Wajees-ut-Tawarikh'  
(Courtesy, Dr Hassnain)

### Official Decree of the Grand Mufti

The following decree was issued by the High Court in Kashmir, presided over by the Grand Mufti, a high ranking religious leader, and other judges. The decree clearly affirms that Yuzu-Asaph was sent as a prophet to the people of Kashmir, according to the traditions of the Kashmiri people.

This decree was issued in the year 1774 AD, although Dr. Fida

Hassnain's book, *The Fifth Gospel*,<sup>14</sup> has the date as 1766 AD:

THE SEAL OF THE JUSTICE OF ISLAM MULLA FAZIL 1194 A.H.

In this High Court of Justice, in the Department of Learning and Piety of the Kingdom.

**Present** Rehman Khan, son of Amir Khan, submits that: the kings, the nobles, the ministers and the multitude come from all directions of the kingdom to pay their homage and offerings in cash and kind at the lofty and the holy shrine of Yuz-Asaph, the Prophet, may God bless him.

**Claims That:** he is the only and absolute claimant, entitled to receive the offerings and utilise these, and none else has any right whatsoever on these offerings.

**Prays that:** A writ of injunction be granted to all those who interfere and others be restrained from interfering with his rights.

**Verdict:** Now, this court, after obtaining evidence, concludes as under: It has been established that during the reign of Raja

Gopadatta, who got built many temples and got repaired, especially, the Throne of Solomon on the hill of Solomon, Yuz-Asaph came to the valley. Prince by descent, he was pious and saintly and had given up earthly pursuits. He spent all his time in prayers and meditation. The people of Kashmir, having become idolaters after the great flood of Noah, the God Almighty sent Yuz-Asaph as a Prophet to the people of Kashmir. He proclaimed oneness of God till he passed away. Yuz-Asaph was buried at Khanyar on the banks of the lake, and the shrine is known as Rozabal. In the year 871 AH Syed Nasir-ud-Din, a descendant of Imam Musa-Raza, was also buried besides the grave of Yuz-Asaph.

**Orders:** Since the shrine is visited by the devotees, both high and common, and since the applicant Rahman Khan is the hereditary custodian of the shrine, it is ordered that he be entitled to receive the offerings, made at the shrine as before, and no one else shall have any right to such offerings. Given under our hand, 11th Jamadi-ud-Sani, 1184 AH.



## Signpost outside of the Roza Bal



Signpost outside of the Tomb

The following is the English translation of the information displayed on the signpost that stands outside the Tomb of Jesus Christ. The information contains the views of Khawaja Azam Daddmari, who compiled his *Tarikh-i-Azam* in about 1729 AD.

‘Nearby is situated the stone of the grave which, according to the people, is the prophet’s who arrived from a far off place during ancient times. Anointed for Kashmir: This spot is famous as the resting place of a messenger: I have read in an ancient book that a prince from a foreign land arrived here and engaged himself in piety and prayers [and] became a mes-

senger of God for the Kashmiri people. In that ancient book his name is mentioned as Yuz Asaf.’

## The Acta Thomae

In Chapter 7 we saw that the Apostle Thomas had been assigned to go to India to preach the message of Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup>. The *Acta Thomae*, though, also records an account showing that Jesus Christ was in Taxila at a marriage ceremony, along with Thomas, in the year 49 CE, a good number of years after the crucifixion. This account verifies St. Irenaeus’s observations (see Chapter 2), recorded in his *Against Heresies*, that Jesus was seen alive in Asia long after the event of the cross. The *Acta Thomae* is a Christian work, though it was declared heretical in the year 495 CE by a decree of Gelasius.

In the following account, the bridegroom saw whom he thought was Thomas talking to his new bride, but it was not Thomas. Both Thomas and Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> attended this wedding, and one of them was often mistaken for the other:

‘Thomas after the ceremonies left the palace. The bridegroom



(Abdagases) lifted the curtain which separated him from his bride. He saw Thomas, as he supposed, conversing with her. Then he asked in surprise: "How Canst thou be found here? Did I not see thee go out before all?" And the *Lord* answered: "I am not Thomas, but his brother."''<sup>15</sup>

Here is another translation of this account:

'And the king desired the groomsmen to depart out of the bride-chamber; and when all were gone out and the doors were shut, the bridegroom lifted up the curtain of the bridechamber to fetch the bride unto him. And he saw the *Lord Jesus* bearing the likeness of Judas Thomas and speaking with the bride; even of him that but now had blessed them and gone out from them, the apostle; and he saith unto him: "Wentest thou not out in the sight of all? How then art thou found here?" But the Lord said to him: 'I am not Judas which is also called Thomas but I am his brother.'"''<sup>16</sup>

It is not difficult to understand why the *Acta Thomae* would have been declared heretical: Any mention of the appearance of

Jesus Christ after the crucifixion certainly ran counter to the already-formulated Christian.

But it is fair to point out that the words of advice later given by Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> to the young newlywed couple regarding marriage and conjugal relations are so absurd and outrageous that it would seem to call into question the above account (assuming that what is recorded is what he actually said).

Also, all throughout the *Acta Thomae*, Thomas refers to Jesus as the 'Lord, God.' Certainly if Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> was travelling with Thomas as a human being, he would not refer to him as God. But I include this account from the *Acta Thomae* because despite the standard Christology which flows throughout the *Acta Thomae*, and the absurd advice supposedly given by Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> to the newlyweds, it is extremely difficult to ignore the fact that the *Acta Thomae* records an appearance of Jesus<sup>(as)</sup> in India.

Was the appearance mystical? It does not at all read as if this was the case. Is the *Acta Thomae* a total and complete fraud? I cannot answer that question. But

for one reason or another, the Acta Thomae made a point to mention that a living and walking and talking Jesus was in India with Thomas at a wedding ceremony.

### The Ain-ul-Hayat

The author of the *Ain-ul-Hayat* was Ibn-i-Muhammad Hada Muhammad Ismail. In Volume 2, Chapter 2, pages 177 to 178, he states the following regarding Yuz Asaf:

'He went to many cities and preached to those cities. At last he reached the city of Kashmir. He invited its inhabitants to righteousness and resided there till death approached him, and his holy spirit departed from his earthly body and went to rest with God. But before his death he called his companion Ba'bad and made a will...and directed him to construct a tomb for him. He laid himself with his head towards the East and stretched his legs towards the West, and went to the place of Eternity.'<sup>17</sup>

**The Takhat Sulaiman (Throne of Solomon) monument in Srinagar**  
The Takhat Sulaiman (Throne of Solomon) is a large temple situated on the top of a hillock

near the Dal Lake in Srinagar, Kashmir. It was renamed Sankarachariya by the Hindu Maharaja in 1848. There are four inscriptions on this monument, two of which are still legible. The inscriptions are recorded in Khwaja Hassan Malik's book, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*.<sup>18</sup>

They read:

1. The mason of this pillar is Bahishti Zargar, Year fifty and four.
2. Khawaja Rukun son of Murjan erected this pillar.
3. At this time Yuz Asaf proclaimed his prophethood. Year fifty and four.
4. He is Jesus, Prophet of the Children of Israel.

Concerning the year 54, Hassnain notes the following:

'Note that since Islam did not exist during the reign of Gopadatta (79-109 AD), connecting the year 54 with the Muslim Hijra Era is absurd. During that period, the Laukika Era was exclusively used in Kashmir. As this era started in 3076 BC, the

54th year mentioned in the inscription would come to either 22 BC or 78 AD (since Laukika Year 1 is 3076 BC, 3054 would be 22 BC, and 3154 would be 78 AD) As it was not possible for Jesus Christ<sup>(as)</sup> to have travelled to Kashmir in 22 BC, I take the year 78 AD to be the correct date of his arrival.<sup>19</sup>

### References

1. O.M. Burke, *Among the Dervishes* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1973) p.12
2. Ibid, pp. 107-109
3. Nag Sharan Singh, *Bhavisya Mahapuranam* (Jawahar Nagar, Deli: Nag Publishers, 1984, originally compiled in 115 A.D.), verses 16-23 of the third khanda of the Pptratisarga parvan
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# Letter to the Editor

## Power and Responsibility

In the US, ever since former US President Richard Nixon's 'Watergate,' lay people have been questioning the leaders of government and various institutions of trust. This has spread to medicine, where doctors had been looked at as almost 'godlike' to financial institutions, and now the Roman Catholic Church.

However, whilst it has become all too common to come across reports of political leaders misusing their positions and power and committing immoral acts, when religious clerics do so it undermines the spiritual foundations of society and may ultimately repel people away from religion. As their life is supposed to be devoted to bringing people closer to God, their self-example must remain spotless not only for the sake of the people who follow them but also for their own sake as well, for they will be held accountable by God. One shudders to think of

how they will answer for preaching in the name of God whilst committing the very acts they publicly denounce.

Without doubt this has sent shockwaves throughout the religious world. Some have pointed fingers at the practice of celibacy whilst others have denounced this as a downright abuse of the privileged positions such priests hold in society. The scale and significance of this whole sorry chapter has been highlighted by the fact that the Pope has himself intervened to provide guidance on this matter when he called a meeting with senior American bishops. As can be expected, the laity too is now questioning the accountability of the Church in these matters.

Throughout America, sex abuse scandals in the Church have become much more personal. From small to large congregations, announcements have been made about allegations of sexual abuse from more than 30 years ago. It has reached nightmarish proportions, as

priests, who had moved around the country to various parishes, faced allegations.

These bombshells have created all kinds of conflicting emotions within American Catholicism. Primarily, it evoked compassion for the wonderful, good, and effective priests that congregations had known and appreciated for years. But there were others, who were priests preying on young children, abusers they called 'true paedophiles'. It must be noted that the bulk of the cases involved priests preying on adolescents.

One response has been that throughout America, Catholic congregations organized an evening of prayer for accused priests and at prayer meetings there was much sharing of compassion and forgiveness if the allegations were to be found true. There also was prayer for the alleged victims of priest abuse. It has been a difficult period for Catholics. Many have admitted carrying a heavy burden of sadness for all involved in allegations of sexual abuse. The Catholics point out that this is also a time of sorrow for our own

sins and how they impact others and pray for forgiveness.

With around 46,000 priests in the US, and nearly 62 million parishioners, or lay people, some Catholic observers of the current controversy say it is a good thing that the Pope met with the American cardinals to address the accountability aspect of this scandal.

Many Catholics believe that a policy of pulling an accused priest from his work and notifying civil authorities is impending and is imperative. The Catholic Church teaches compassion and forgiveness of sin. Thus, in conjunction with this, offending priests, most American Catholics believe, should be offered therapeutic intervention and an opportunity for repentance and rehabilitation. But most believe they should not be placed back into a ministry where they would have any contact with young people.

A favoured proposal of most American Catholics was the creation of a panel of esteemed lay people to monitor the Church's performance in the handling of the sex abuse cases.

An outside panel to review internal affairs, many believe, is healthy. Although the proposal was discussed in Rome, it was not included in the American Cardinals' final communiqué. There was no mention of the review boards or of the lay people. When questioned about the omission in a late-night news conference at the Vatican, the Cardinals admitted that somehow, they had inadvertently left the lay people out.

The end result of this current turmoil in the Roman Catholic Church may be the demand by lay people in the pews for more accountability in church finances, Catholic schools and certainly a new era of accountability from the bishops regarding the sexual abuse scandals.

Whilst this is a very serious time for Catholics the world over it would be foolish to believe that abuse of power has not occurred in other religions as well. The Catholic Church will no doubt take this opportunity to take a firm line against such irreligious practices in an effort to uphold the principle of absolute justice. A

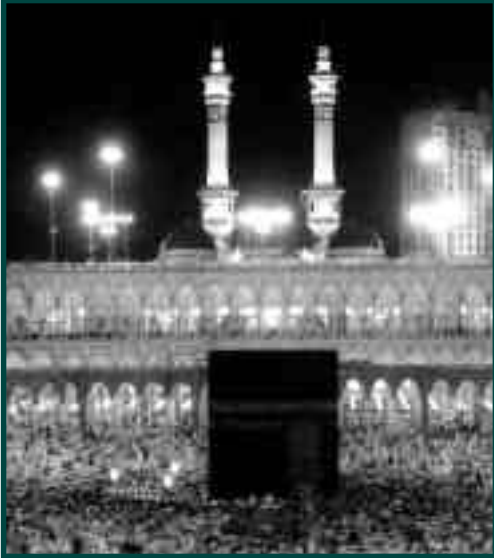
starting point could be to remove those found guilty, otherwise regaining the trust of the people would be an impossible task, and the implications of this would only distance people from true religion and all the much needed guidance that it has to offer.

It is evident that Catholics bound by faith will recover from these scandals but congregations will prevail upon bishops of the United States to make every effort to implement the challenge that lies ahead, so that the present crisis leads to a holier priesthood, a holier episcopate and a holier Church.

Hasan Hakeem,  
Zion, USA

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