



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
In The Name Of God, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful



THE CALL

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ZAKAAT

Mr. Faizy Mohammed in his queries on *Zakaat* ("The Call "Vol 2. No. 2) asked whether it was paid together with income tax in the time of the Holy Prophet, and nowadays in muslim countries. The answers to both his questions are simply NO!

The followers of the Prophet Muhammad (U.W.B.P.) did not pay income tax at the time they paid *Zakaat*. Indeed income tax is only a recent introduction, as it was during the latter half of the nineteenth century that income tax was widely adopted in the western world. Income tax became permanently established in the U.S.A. only in 1913, with the passing of the 16th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. There was therefore no question of income tax as we know it today, in the time of the Holy Prophet of Allah.

The situation nowadays is such that *Zakaat* is not paid at all to the state, even in nations whose people are predominantly muslims. For several years now muslim scholars have been calling for the re-institution of *zakaat*, to replace income tax as adopted in muslim countries. All muslims agree that *zakaat*, as a pillar of Islam, is a tax to be collected by the muslim state in a muslim country, and by a muslim organization in non-muslim countries. It is to be collected (Qur'an: 9:60), and cannot be disbursed by an individual as he wishes.

However the problems of re-instituting *zakaat* are threefold. *Firstly*, calculation of the *nisaab* or lowest amount on which *zakaat* becomes payable. *Secondly*, whether *zakaat* is payable on *total income* or on *savings alone*. And, *Thirdly*, should *zakaat* be a tax in addition to income tax.

The first problem has arisen because in the time of the Holy Prophet, the *nisaab* of *zakaat* was fixed on herds, gold and silver. In present times however, herds are rarely kept, while the value of

gold and silver has changed. In addition, the greater transactions today are in the form of cash or related cash-amounts, and muslim scholars have not come up with a satisfactory decision concerning the *nisaab* on cash. In the Holy Prophet's time however, there was a silver coin in use, called the *dirham*. The Holy Prophet ordered to pay as *zakaat*, one *dirham* out of every forty *dirhams*; and there is no *zakaat* if there are 190 *dirhams*, but when it reaches 200, five *dirhams* are to be paid as *zakaat*. (i.e. one in every 40). There is no reason then, why this standard cannot be maintained with the word *dirham* being replaced by *dollar*, *pound*, etc. i.e. the currency in use in a particular country. It is to be noted, however, that this *nisaab* has to belong to a person for one year.

So far as the second problem is concerned, it is felt that since a person's savings may be small though his income is large, *zakaat* should be taxable on his total income from all sources. On the other hand, some feel this is unfair to the poor and *zakaat* should only be calculated on savings. A compromised view has been proffered to calculate *zakaat* on one's chargeable income as calculated on one's income tax return. However, none of these views find support in either the Qur'an or the Hadith. Indeed the last mentioned view is even more unrealistic, in that a person's chargeable income could be unrealistically augmented or decreased by either totalling his income from all sources or unjustly increasing his claims for deductions. Certain just claims may also be omitted: e.g. medical expenses. The Holy Prophet clearly forbade *zakaat* collectors to combine herds in order to increase *zakaat*, as he also forbade persons to separate herds to avoid paying *zakaat*.

The Holy Qur'an has given the perfect guideline for the individual to calculate his *zakaat*, knowing it to be a command

of Allah, who is ever keeping a true account of all affairs.

"They ask thee as to what they should spend. Say: What you can spare. Thus does Allah make clear to you the messages that you may ponder." (Qur'an: 2; 219).

The word *al'afwa* (what you can spare) is interpreted by Imam Raghīb as *what is easy to spend*, whereas Ibn'Umar and most commentators of the Holy Qur'an, give its meaning as *that wealth which is more than what is needed for one's family*. However, *al'afwa* really means to remove all traces of, as well as, to grow or increase. Thus in relation to *zakaat* the Qur'an requires us to ponder or reflect on our cost of living and spend as *zakaat* that wealth which once spent leaves no scar or mark or trace of regret or hardship, on our lives or budget. In other words, two and a half percent (2½%) of that wealth, which is in excess of our needs. Every muslim family, should therefore, keep correct records of their incomes and expenditures to facilitate them in calculating *zakaat*. It is true that inflation affects the cost of living, but in Trinidad at least, the increase or decrease in the cost of living on basic items is published regularly, so that it is not difficult to calculate one's family needs during the year.

The third problem is solved in muslim countries by replacing income tax systems with a comprehensive *zakaat* policy. Whereas in non-muslim countries instead of being an additional tax burden, *zakaat* can be made tax deductible by calculating an average annual *zakaat* and pay it by Deed of Covenant. In this case any excess payments for *zakaat* should be made separately. The Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-i-Islam, collects the *zakaat* of all muslims in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, and is ever willing to give individual guidance when necessary.

We believe in the finality of Prophethood in Muhammad.

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُوْلُ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمُ النَّبِيِّينَ

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M u h a m m a d

The Light of the East and the West

“Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. A likeness of His Light is as a pillar on which is a lamp – the lamp is in a glass, the glass is as it were a brightly shining star – lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither eastern nor western, the oil whereof gives light, though fire touch it not – light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom he pleases. And Allah sets forth parables for men, and Allah is Knower of all things.” (Qur’an :24: 35)

In the parable set forth in this *ayat* of the Holy Quran, the word *nur* (light) may be taken as referring to the Holy Prophet, upon whom be peace. From within the darkness of the Arabian Peninsula, from among a people steeped in the most abject state of moral degradation, Muhammad arose as a light dispelling the darkness from his people. Even before the age of forty he was recognised for his rectitude that earned for him the epithets of **“Al-Ameen”** and **“Haneef”**. When, then, the mantle of Prophethood was cast upon him it was, as the Quran rightly describes it, **“Light upon Light”**.

Muhammad as the light of the East and the West can be discussed from two points of view (1) Muhammad during his life and (2) Muhammad after his death. But which ever aspect we choose we find that the life and teachings of the Holy Prophet had a far reaching effect on men of all ages, all classes and all races; from the boy Ali to the wealthy Abu Bakr, from the slave Zaid to the emperor Negus, from Salman the Persian to Bilal the Negro. And the primary reason for his followers’ devotion to him was his constant contact with the people. During his life he was always accessible to the poorest and meekest and even now fourteen hundred years after his death, through Hadith and Biographies, he still fills the heart of men with profound respect.

It was in the sacred city of the Pagan Arabs that Muhammad was born. This unlettered Apostle as a handsome child, was destined as an heir to the noble stock of the Quraish. But nobility of lineage was not the only gift he possessed; rather he possessed far more nobility in his wisdom and in his ability to understand men and to love them. This child, gifted with great understanding of nature, was selected to receive and to disseminate, to preach, most eloquently and convincingly, the spiritual truth and message of the Almighty God.

The like of Muhammad was unknown in the previous annals of history. Though unlearned, he possessed more knowledge and wisdom than the scholars of his time. He was no poet but his challenge to poets

to produce even one verse like that of the Holy Quran, remains unanswered even unto this day. His early life was simple; spent among shepherds with whom he lived and worked and by whom he was adored. Though he travelled devious paths through valleys, caves and desert, yet he never lost his way to truth and righteousness. He lived among dishonest people but yet he was untainted by their dishonesty. So much so that he deserved from them the ungrudging name of **“Al-Ameen” the Trustworthy**.

It was at the age of forty that the Prophet was commissioned to go forth and propagate that God is Most Bounteous and that his greatest gift to man was knowledge through both the spoken and the written words. In preparing himself for this tremendous task the Prophet of Islam was even in search for truth. He pondered upon the alternation of the Sun and Moon, the night and day, in the laws and ways of Nature, in the heart and minds of mankind, in men’s joys and sorrows, their virtues and vices, and he wondered, indeed he was perturbed as to why men ignored all moral laws and more over the supreme commands of God to whom all must submit to achieve the most sublime joy.

Though disturbed by such thoughts, Muhammad himself, increased in virtue and piety. Though he had no formal education he learnt from men and learnt how to teach them. He always indulged in honest labour and in his dealings with others he displayed the utmost in integrity. By intermingling with the people of the cities he was able to discern and distinguish between their good and evil ways. Because he was known to be just and righteous, people would consult him in their disputes. He would mix equally with the old and the young but he gained more spiritual knowledge by resorting to solitude for Prayer. He did not spurn wealth but distributed it to others and more often than not he was contented with poverty.

After his first revelation, Muhammad continued to receive the contents of the Holy Qur’an. Its words were embedded in his heart and its wisdom proclaimed to all. This Qur’an he brought as a warning to those who ignore it, a guide to those who go astray, an assurance to those in doubt, a solace to the suffering, and a hope to those in despair. Thus was completed in him the chain of Revelation to the divinely inspired Apostles.

It may be said of this reformer of mankind that he was the first, indeed the only person in the history of the world who was able to realise within his own life time, the ideal state which he had

envisaged. Philosophers before and after him there were, but none was able to be ruler of a state according to the laws he himself had promulgated. This privilege of the Prophet is an added example of his being the paragon of human achievement; for it was with the advent of the Prophet that Philosophy was perfected, religion was consummated, and the perfect way of life became practical. Indeed the teachings of the Prophet whenever put into practice have always blossomed forth a society which history is proud of. In such a society, peace dwelled, happiness prospered, learning increased, and science flourished.

This then is how the Prophet Muhammad was the light of the East and the West; for with him religion has attained a new meaning. No longer is it a set of rules, regulations and rituals but it is a science based on the universal experience of humanity. Religion is not confined to the next world, it is first concerned with man’s life on this earth; and the message of Muhammad has dealt adequately with the vast variety of problems relating to the world around us and pertaining to our own social and political life.

Wherever this message of Muhammad has gone, it has shed light on a troubled humanity and in fact the progress of the western world today is admitted on all hands to be due largely to the influence of Islam. For Islam right from its first words of revelation had encouraged its followers to respect learning and it made the search for knowledge the sacred duty of every muslim. Let us not forget that the muslim scientists were also scholars in religion. Indeed it was the teachings of Muhammad which urged the muslim scientists to enter new fields of research. When they read the saying of the Prophet **“God sends down no disease without sending a cure for it as well”** they realised that by searching for unknown cures they would contribute to a fulfilment of God’s will. So medical research became as important as religious duty. Muslim scientists read the Quranic verse 21:30 **“we have created every living thing out of water”**. And so they began to study living organisms and established the science of biology. The Holy Qur’an pointed to the movement of the stars and so astronomy and mathematics were taken up by the muslim scholars.

Similarly muslims studied physiology, chemistry, zoology and the other sciences with the same fervour as they studied theology. For the Prophet had most succinctly informed us that the scientist walks in the paths of God.

SURATUL BAQARAH

(FINAL)

By Maulana Abdul Haque Vidyarthi

(Translated from the Urdu by Maulana M.K. Hydal)

Unity of God and Equality of man

The Holy Qur'an provides the quitesence for the rapproachment of peace and security among men and for the spiritual reformation reached its zenith in the person and teaching of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). These teachings centre around complete faith in the unity of God. This is the only source of spiritual development and a sure panacea for world peace.

Allah is unique in His person and His attributes. No existence in the heaven or the earth has a likeness to anyone of His attributes. The belief in the Unity in His person is authenticated by almost all the religions of the world. But where they differ is in Unity with regard to His worship. It is only within Islam that one can evaluate the significance of this Unity i.e. that the entire devotion of one's heart must be to Him alone. This significance is emphasised in the following prayer of the Prophet Muhammad, which he uttered after the five times daily devotional services:

"O Allah, Our Lord and the Lord of everything. I am witness that Thou art the only Lord. No associate hast Thou. O Allah, Our Lord and the Lord of everything! I am witness that Muhammad is Thy servant and Thy Prophet. O Allah, Our Lord and the Lord of everything, I am witness that all your servants are brothers to each other." (*Musnad Ahmad & Abu Dawud*).

Three kinds of witness is found in this prayer. The first is that Allah is One, no associate has He, and none is like Him. The second is that Muhammad is a servant and Messenger of Allah. In spite of this grand personality he has no share in any of the Divine Attributes. The third is that all human beings are equal and brother to each other. Thus side by side with the Unity of Allah there exists a testimony to the unity of humanity.

At the time of the appearance of Islam, humanity at large was very much in need of two things viz., the Oneness of God and the equality of the human race. Although the world today has basically accepted the Unity of the Godhead yet they turn a deaf ear to Unity in His attributes and unity in obedience to

Him. The prime cause of this is that man is prone to worship man, religious leaders or political leaders. Nay there are religions in which the worship of animals, trees and even stones, is still extant.

Means and Ends

It is universally acknowledged that there are some means to acquire certain ends. As man progresses intellectually, means may vary but the ends always remain the same. Cow's milk and the ox-plough were means through which human food was required. But scientific developments have now replaced these arduous and ineffecient means by easier and more effective methods. Whereas previously the cow and ox were used for agriculture, now diesel and electricity have supplanted these. It is essential to note that though there may be various means by which the same end and likewise truth may be attained, that end or truth remains firmly established. Culture's primary purport is the cultivation and growth of the human mind.

Arabs' Benevolence to Hindus

The three letters **alif, laam and meem**, denote a long period in the history of mankind. God had created the cow, and for man's benefit, had placed in it the ability to draw loads, plough and irrigate the land. He had also created man and instilled in his brain the skill to extract work from the cow. So that the human mind thought up ways of bringing the cow under yoke by joining wood and iron to form a plough. The milking of the cow was also a difficult process. Today we easily extract milk from the cow. But wild cows were not easily domesticated, nor did they milk as easily and in such large quantity as they do now.

It is interesting to note that the original home of the cow was Arabia. But due to disagreeable climate it migrated from there. (*The Book of Knowledge*). The Arabs underwent enormous difficulties to subdue the cow. Eventually they taught the world how to drive the cow and milk it.

In Arabic language there are separate words for the wild and domesticated cow. As regards the age, colour, size and sex, in all languages the cow and calf bear the most names. The Sanskrit Dictionary

Nighanatu cannot enumerate them all. The calf of a wild cow alone has eight names respective to its ages, while that of a tame cow has nine.

Anyway, as in a former times the Arabs gave to the world the art of taming the wild cow, so in a latter period the Arabian Prophet gave to cow-worshippers a message i.e. **"In the cattle quadrupeds there is a strong argument for you. We give you to drink what is in the bellies — between blood and dung — pure milk which is pleasant for the drinkers."** (16:66). In Arabic language **'ibrah** is a strong argument which does not let the human mind and intellect remain stagnant, but takes it across from shore to shore. It is derived from **'ubur** which means to cross water. Man crossed many stages in working the quadrupeds from which he derived precious benefits. But these benefits of cattle (Arabic — **ni'amat — blessings, benefits** — from which **an'am — cattle**, is derived) are given by God, for it's He Who, by means of their latent machinery, makes delicious milk to flow out of blood, dung and worthless straw.

In the above mentioned there is more food for thought for Hindus. Just as Almighty Allah has provided in cattle, milk for nourishment of your physical body, likewise He has provided spiritual milk i.e. the Holy Qur'an for the nourishment of your spirit. This Quranic verse is a precious nectar for the sustenance of the human mind and spirit. In it the greatness of man is established above all the blessings of the world. According to it no blessing is the sole monopoly of any nation, race, colour or caste, nor does the *Brahmin* possess sole rights over knowledge, the *Kshatriya* over Government, nor the *Vaish* over Commerce. In its view, *Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaish, Shudras* — all are equal. The example of the cow should be taken. Does it deny its milk to the untouchables? Or does it give sweet milk to the Brahmins and sour milk to the untouchables? Thus the first and basic principle of Islam, is the oneness of God, next to it is the equality of human race i.e. **all men are brothers to each other, generated from one pair, and all blessings of God are for all without discrimination or exception.**

H I N D U (

ARE THEY REVELATION FROM
GOD?)

Previous Scriptures Interpolated

Although the Holy Qur'an requires Muslims to believe in all the books of all the Prophets of God, it does not state that the Books at present in the possession of the followers of the different religions are in their original form. On the contrary, it admonishes the people of the Book for corrupting their scriptures with their own hands. Thus in Chapter 2 verse 59, the Qur'an states:

"But those who were unjust changed the word which had been spoken to them, for another saying," and in verse 75

"And a party from among them indeed used to hear the word of Allah, then altered it after they had understood it." Again in verse 79, "Woe! then to those who write the Book with their hands then say, this is from Allah; so that they may take for it a small price. So woe! to them for what their hands write and woe to them for what they earn."

Again in chapter 3 verse 77: "And there is certainly a party of them who lie about the Book that you may consider it to be (a part) of the Book while it is not (a part) of the Book; and they say, It is from Allah; and they forge a lie against Allah whilst they know." These verses make it clear that the followers of other religions have interpolated their Books. Belief in a prophet, and a Book given to every people, is an essential part of a Muslim's faith, even though the name of that prophet is unknown or the original Book he brought has been lost or corrupted.

AUTHORS OF THE VEDAS

There is much dispute as to who are the authors of the four Vedas, and hence about their birth, place of residence and death. According to the *Arya Samajists*, the four Vedas were revealed in Tibet to four 'rishis' (*Sages or prophets*), whose names were Agni, Vayu, Aditya and Angira (*Satyarth Prakash* Pg. 229). The members of the *Sanatan Dharma* claim that they were revealed to *Brahma*. *Bal Gangadhar Tilak* is of the view that they were revealed to people living around the North Pole. *Swami Vivekananda* upholds the view that they were revealed to four hundred and four rishis including women. This latter view seems to be correct as at the head of the chapters (*Sukt*) of the Vedas, the names of the authors are usually given. About these, very little is known. Indeed the

Aryas Samajists argue that these four hundred and four rishis are the interpreters of the verses and not the authors. But this is an obvious fallacy as sometimes their names and the names of their fathers occur within the verses themselves. The interpreter of a book cannot have his own name inserted in the text itself.

The nature of Revelation

So far as revelation is concerned, Hindu theologians have not been able to explain its nature. However, they do distinguish between 'Shruti' i.e. something personally heard, and 'Smriti' i.e. something handed down by tradition. The Vedas are classed as Shruti; but as to the actual mode of revelation opinions differ widely. Thus *Manu Smriti* (1:23) states;

"He (*Brahma*) for the perfection of sacrifice, from the fire (*Agni*) wind (*Vayu*) and the sun (*Surya*) milked (out) the eternal threefold Veda, which consists of the Rig, Vajur and Sama (Vedas)." But according to the *Sankhya School of thought*, the Vedas are eternal and issue from *Brahma's* mouth at each successive *Kalpa-creation*. Modern-day theorists accept the Vedas as some sort of revealed literature which was revealed to a few gifted persons who will not reappear in the world. Some completely reject the Vedas, and *Dr. C. K. Raja* believes that the Rig Veda is essential good poetry by a number of different poets, and that, is its real importance. As for the *Yajur Veda* there are two recensions. It is narrated in the *Mahabharata* 12:319 and the *Vishnu Purana* 3:5 that *Vaishampayana* was the first teacher of the *Yajur-Veda*. Once his chief disciple *Yajnavalka* offended him and *Vaishampayana* ordered him to give back the Veda taught to him. Then *Yajnavalka* vomited the Veda stained with blood while the other disciples transformed themselves into Patridges and picked up the leavings. Thus this veda is also called *Taittiriya* (Patridges). But then *Yajnavalka* did intense penance and propitiated the Sun-god, by whose grace he got the same Veda in a different form known by the appellation *Vajaseneyi*.

The Vedas themselves give no evidence of being revealed books and proof of their being a revelation is attempted from other writings such as that of sages or commentators. But as these themselves do not explain revelation or the nature of revelation, it is more convenient to consider the Vedas as having been pro-

duced rather than revealed. Thus *Shatpath Brahmana* in XI 5, 8, 1 says: "From these (*Agni, Vayu and Rayi* i.e. Fire, wind and the Sun) being heated, the three vedas were produced." *Vishnu Purana* says: "From his eastern mouth *Brahma* formed the Rig and Sama, and the Yajur from his Southern mouth." While *Bhagvat Purana* Says: "Once the Vedas sprang from the four-faced creator as he meditated."

The Vedas have developed along three stages. Vedic literature came to an end by about 600 B.C. But as to its beginnings, there is much conjecture. European scholars regard 1400 B.C. as the beginning of Vedic literature. *Swami Dayananda* holds that the vedas were revealed one thousand, three hundred and ten million years ago. *B.G. Tilak* at first assigned the vedas to 500 B.C., but later he concluded that this date may be pushed back to about 10,000 B.C. The final date has not been fixed yet.

So far as the compilation of the Vedas is concerned it is to be noted that the *Rig Veda* is regarded as the oldest. It consists of poems or songs (*Sukt*) 1,017 in number (1,028 in some versions) consisting of 10,472 verses or *mantras* (actual number varies from 10,000 to 10,589), grouped into 10 Books (*mandala*). They are all by a number of different poets who belonged to certain Families. Seven of these then Books (i.e. II to VIII) are assigned to seven such families. In the first Book the poets belonged to families other than those contained in Books II to VIII.

The *Sama Veda* has only seventy-eight new verses, the rest being taken from the *Rig Veda*. The *Yajur Veda* borrows about fifty percent of its text from the *Rig Veda*. The *Atharva Veda* is of a much later date. At lot of discrepancy exists in the various accounts about the places where these books were revealed and the rishis (seers) to whom they were given.

The Lost Veda

Whether or not the Vedas were committed to writing as they were composed, it is clear that little effort was made to preserve them. There were 1131 Vedas out of which only about a dozen are now available. Originally there was one Veda but this is now lost (*Nashta* i.e. lost Veda). The entire Vedic literature was taken up at a later stage as a unit for employment at the rituals. Poets used to compose new adorations addressed to the gods on the occasion of the rituals and

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the old texts were ignored and pushed out of currency; many of them were lost and some of them were imitated by later poets (*Quintessence of the Rig Veda* Pg. 4) Evidence of the numerous interpolations, redundancies and inconsistencies in the Vedas has been excellently compiled in the "Ved Sarwasaw" (Hindi).

There is no evidence that the vedas are the oldest revealed books. The Puranas, comprising the history of the creation of the universe, the history of the early Aryan tribes and the life stories of the divines and deities of the Hindus, are considered next in authority to the Vedas. The majority of Hindus believes that the Vedas too, attest the truth of the Puranas. This shows that the Puranas are more authentic and ancient. Thus in the *Atharva Veda* XI: 7, 24, it is written: "verses and Songs and magic hymns, Purana, sacrificial text - All the celestial gods whose home is heaven, sprang from the residue." And in the *Rig Veda* X:130,6 "So by this knowledge of Purana Yajna our fathers are raised up to Rishi." These references show that the Puranas are also revealed books like the Vedas and as regards their age of revelation, they were either revealed simultaneously with the Vedas or some time before. Reference in the Vedas and Puranas to the *Gathas* (the earlier part of Zoroaster's teachings) show that these are older than the Vedas and Puranas. (Vide *Atharva Veda* 18: 6.12)

Sanskrit Language

It is generally assumed that the Vedas are the oldest revealed books as they exist in the Sanskrit language which is considered to be the mother of languages. This latter claim has now been rejected. The very word *Sanskrit* means *refinement or improvement of speech* i.e. Sanskrit was an improvement of some original language. This language was *Praakrit* meaning original. *Praakrit* itself was derived from the Arabic language. Evidence of this is that these languages are written from left to right as in English, while Arabic is written from right to left. Thus by reversing the order of the letters words were formed e.g. Arabic *Ras* became *Sar* both meaning head, *Lajj* became *jal* i.e. water, etc.

Some scholars have tried to determine the date of composition of the vedas with the help of astronomical references in the *Rig Veda*. *Hermana Jacob* of Germany and *B.G. Tilak* of India, found that there is evidence of the vernal Equinox falling at the time when the Sun was in

Orion. Thus they assigned the Vedas to 5000 B.C. Later, however, *Tilak* himself venturing upon a new theory that the Arctic region was the home of the Vedic people, tried to show that the vernal Equinox actual fell when the Sun was in the eight constellation and that was in 10,000 B.C. This is not generally accepted by the scholars. They do not believe that the calculations of the positions of the Sun could have been accurate enough in those primitive times to form a basis for fixing dates. (*Quintessence of Rig Veda* pg. 2) Indeed *Professor Max Muller* had expressly observed that "the question whether this date should be fixed as 1000, 1500, 2000 or 3000 years before Christ can never be solved" (*Longman's History of India* Pg. 22). Consequently if the very date of the vedas cannot be determined, how can the claim that they are the oldest revealed books, be tenable?

Historically it is accepted that the Vedic peoples could not have come to India before 2000 B.C. when the *Indus Valley (Mohenjodaro) Civilization* (now accepted as pre-Vedic) came to an end. Moreover, remains of a *Hittite civilization* were discovered in Asia Minor, where at *Boghaz-koi* was found an inscription believed to date 1400 B.C. This inscription records the treaties between the *Hittites* and *Kings of Mitani*, and the gods whom these people worshipped are invoked as witnesses and protectors of the contracts. These gods are the *Vedic gods Indra, Mitra and Varuna*. Indeed names of cities and kings common to Sumerian history and the *Rig Veda* had led *Dr. Prannath* to proclaim that "the *Rig Veda* is not an Indian document."

Further in a series of articles he had sought to prove that the *Rig Veda* is a Sumerian document and that one fifth of the *Rig Veda* is connected with Egypt. However the geographical allusions in the *Rig Veda* show that the authors were familiar with the country extending from Afghanistan to the Gangetic valley. There are frequent allusions to the rivers *Kabul, Swat, Kuram* and *Gomal*. The river *Indus* and its tributaries appear to have been well known to the Vedic authors. Frequent mention is also made of the *Himalayas* and some of its peaks. Thus if as is generally accepted by scholars, the date of the Vedas is 1400 B.C., it would mean that the Vedic authors were writing in India at the time they were supposed to be living in Asia Minor!

Although the Holy Qur'an has men-

tioned that every nation was given a prophet to whom a Book was revealed, it does not state that all these Books had names. Reference is made, however, to the *Torah* of *Moses*, the *Sabur* of *David*, the *Injeel* of *Jesus* and of course the *Qur'an* itself is revealed to the *Prophet Muhammad* (upon whom be peace), and is the last revealed Book. However Muslims following *Hazrat Umar*, have come to acknowledge the *Zend Avesta* and *Dasatir* as also revealed. Indeed on the basis of *Umar's* judgement any Book may be accepted as revealed if its followers accept it as such, although it may exist in a most corrupted form. However this cannot be applied to any scripture claimed to be revealed after the Quran.

Literature? or Scripture?

The reason why the Vedas have not been made available to the public at large is excellently discussed by *C.K. Raja* in his book "The Quintessence of the Rig Veda." Briefly, he has pointed out that the Vedas are literature and not scripture. Most of their poems were composed for recitation on the occasion of the rituals and not as any integral part of the ritual. They were composed as poetry and not as sacred formulae. The entire Vedic literature was taken up at a later stage as a unit for employment at the rituals. As factors in the rituals, the Vedas have no meaning, they are only a series of sounds, like Musical sounds. The rituals were performed only by a few persons and so the study of the Vedas was confined also to a few persons. There is no religion behind the *Rig Veda*. There are no Religious orders and there is no Church and there are no priests. The Vedas are not texts on Philosophy. Of the *Rig Veda* he continues: "It is essentially good poetry and that is its real importance" again, "It is not the 'Scripture' of any religion. There are no dogmas involved in it. It calls for no beliefs." Indeed according to the *Charvaks system of philosophy* "The Veda, and the Vedic rites are only the fancies of men, particularly of the Brahmins who made all the rules for sacrifices, etc. to serve their own interests." (*Longman's History of India* Pg 32).

But if these views are considered to be heterodox then another reason why the vedas are not made public is the *gayatri mantra* which is the mother of the Vedas. This *mantra* is found in *Rig Veda Mandil 3 Sukt 62 mantra 10*, and also in the *Yajur* and *Sam Vedas*. The impor-

tance of this mantra is well recognized among Hindus. Thus **Manu** says: "*Better a well-behaved Brahman who knows only the gayatri than one ill-behaved though he knows the three vedas.* (II:118) *There is nothing higher than the Savitri (another name for gayatri)*" (II:83) "*A Brahman if he utters the gayatri is endowed with the merit of the vedas*" (II:78) Repeating this verse 1,000 times frees one from even a great sin. Also the penance for not reciting the gayatri is the same as for those who have committed a sin or have given up the Veda. Now the Gayatri as has been shown by **A. H. Vidyarthi** in his "*Muhammad in World Scriptures*" Pg. 118ff, is actually a prayer for the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad with guidance. Why then should the vedas be propagated when one's sins can easily be expiated for, and the blessings of reading all the vedas can easily be obtained by merely reciting this prayer for the

Holy Prophet Muhammad and his guidance i.e. the Holy Quran? Although the Vedas have been translated by Hindus into Hindi and Urdu, it is the Europeans who have translated them into English, German and French.

As for the name **Veda**, it is derived from the root '**vid**' (*to know, to think, to be*). It is used frequently (more than 55 times) as a verb in the Rig Veda. As a noun it means *riches or wealth of the enemy* **Rig Veda 3:53, 14 etc**). *Nowhere in the entire vedas has it been used as the proper name of a book.* On the other hand there are so many books on arts which are called Vedas eg. **Ayur Veda, Sarp Veda, Pisbach Veda** etc i.e. *the book of Medicine, snakes, evil spirits, etc.*

The Vedas do not mention the question of the transmigration of souls. This idea is taught for the first time in the *Upanishads*. These are a class of works

dealing with speculative subjects such as the mysteries of nature, the universal soul, the life here and the life hereafter. They are considered to be revealed literature also. The Puranas are also revealed as references in the Vedas and Upanishads show. Recently however some Pundits have begun to reject them as they contain numerous prophecies concerning the Prophet Muhammad. The *Bhagwad Gita* and the *Ramayana* are epic poems by **Vyasa** and **Valmiki** respectively. But the original poems have been considerably added to, by later authors. The *Arya-Samajists* consider the *Puranas* and the *Ramayana* of **Tulsidas** as imaginary and false books (**Satyarth Prakash** Pg. 128).

M.K.Hyda, B.A.
(Theology)

THE MESSAGE OF I S L A M TO THE MODERN MAN

*In the name of Allah, the Beneficent,
the Merciful*

It is said that modern man is like a modern shop where they hang everything in its show-window. When one goes inside nothing is to be found. Or sometimes he is compared with an onion. You peel off layer after layer and you find in the end there is nothing in it. There is, however, another way of defining a modern man. It is said that he is like an egg; too full of himself to hold anything else.

It is this kind of person with which we have to deal. He is either too empty or too full. Life to him has no meaning and purpose beyond the existence on the level of an animal. He has **FORGOTTEN** that human life consists of a spiritual as well as a physical self. To him the physical self is the only reality for which one should live and die. And that self is his goal, his destination, his idol or his god. He bows down before this **SELF** and worships it.

أَفَرَأَيْتُ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ

"Seest thou him who takes his desires for his god" says the Qur'an (45. 23). Or he is like those who say:

مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا
وَمَا نُهْلِكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّاهِرُ

"There is nothing but our life of the world; we die and we live and nothing destroys us but time." (45.24)

That is the materialistic view of life. We are born, grow old, decay and disintegrate because of the passing of the time. An Indian poet reflects the same mood when he says:

زندگی کیا ہے عناصر میں ظہور ترتیب
موت کیا ہے انہیں اجزا کا پریشان ہونا

What is this life? A manifestation of the combination of the elements. What is death? Splitting up of these elements again.

THE ISLAMIC VIEW of life is, however, different. It is here that the Qur'an comes to the rescue of the man. It says:

وَخَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ

"And God created the heavens and the earth with truth" (45. 22)

This is the oft-recurring theme of the Qur'an. We are also told that God "**created not the heaven and earth and what is in between them in vain. That is the opinion of those who disbelieve**" (38. 27).

Thus faith in the materialistic view of life is not the only reality. Man is not a product of instincts and mechanical be-

haviour alone. Physicists have not been able to solve the problems of matter, which in the beginning they thought was inert or lifeless. In their higher researches, today, they have realized that matter is another form of thought or consciousness with the result that the whole field of research has to be moved from physics to a new kind of metaphysics. Life is no more a blind interplay of physical and chemical forces. Everything follows an order or submits to a pattern, although this pattern may be complicated or at times inexplicable to ordinary human intelligence. Pointing towards this reality the Qur'an says:

Seest thou not that to God makes submission whoever is in the heaven and whoever is in the earth, and the sun and the moon and the stars, and the mountains and the trees, and the animals and many of the people?" (22. 18)

It will be noticed that in the above passage it is mentioned that the mountains, and the trees, and animals all submit to God and when it comes to human beings the words used are **kaseerum minanaas** (*many of the people*), not all of them. Because in some ways man has been left to make his own choice in submitting to the Divine pattern. Although it is in his own interest that he should follow this pattern but as a free agent he could reject this guidance if he likes. However by rejecting this guidance he is confronted with another phenome-

non in life, which is life without hope, life without faith, life without purpose. These are the tragedies of the modern world and this is where Islam can help man to stand on his feet again.

To set our house in order we have to learn that there is a creative and directive force in this universe. According to the Qur'an:

رَبَّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَىٰ

“Our Lord is He Who gives everything its creation then guides it.” (20:50).

The word *hada* (*he guides*) signifies that God leads it along to its goal of perfection. At another place we are told:

سَمِعَ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَىٰ هَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّىٰ
وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَىٰ

“Glorify the name of thy Lord, the Most High. Who creates, then makes complete, and Who measures and then guides” (87. 1 – 3).

These verses speak of four Divine acts viz., creating, completing, measuring, and guiding. By remaining close to this reality we can understand the purpose of our existence in this world. If we forget to take heed of these simple and basic facts of life we may see and hear things without realizing their true significance.

When the gramophone disc is being played before us we see the movement of the disc and needle. Do these movements cause the music? A man who cannot see further will perhaps reply in the affirmative. But the truth is that neither the disc, nor the needle, nor the gramophone box is causing this music. The needle is being pushed up and down in the almost invisible grooves of the disc. In these grooves has been recorded the sound of music. These vibrating notes existed elsewhere before they could touch our ears and heart. We see the disc, needle and the box, but we have to lift ourselves from this level of seeing, hearing and thinking before we could understand the source of the music.

In our every day life, we depend too much on outward sight, forgetting that it is the inner vision of our self, the inner drive of our soul, that can enlighten the dark and dreary paths of our lives. That is only possible when we remain in touch with that invisible factor who is behind the music of our existence. When we forget this Supreme Reality, in fact we forget our souls:

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنْسَاهُمْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ

“And be not like those who forget

God, so He makes them forget their own souls” says the Qur'an. (59:19)

This forgetting causes disruption in human relations. This forgetting brings conflict and tragedy in human life. When we forget God we forget our own souls. When we forget God, we turn our backs on our own happiness. When we forget God, we throw out the rest and peace which abides with us. When we break friendship with God, we bring grief and fear in our lives.

FEAR is a dominant factor in the mind of man today. It also haunted the primitive man. But the modern man is afraid of himself. Man must learn to save himself from himself if he wants to survive.

The only possible way is to go back and start again from where he lost his way. He must restore the broken link by surrendering himself to that Ultimate Reality to Whom all the mountains and the trees surrender. He must submit himself entirely to the All-Loving and Compassionate God and reflect this submission in his actions, which will finally make him free from fear and grief.

مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرٌ
عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

“Whoever submits himself entirely to God” says the Qur'an, “and is the doer of good (to others) he has reward from his Lord. And there is no fear for such nor shall they grieve”. (2:112)

SUBMISSION to God has been coupled with righteousness. Submission without deeds of piety is like a bird with wings which can merely hop but cannot fly. Thus faith and works should go together. Life without faith and life without moral discipline is worse than death. We must discover the spiritual meaning of our existence if we want to make ourselves free from fear and grief. God did not leave man alone to grope in darkness to find the solution of his problems. He did provide him with means of his spiritual nourishment as he did for his physical sustenance. This however brings us to another aspect of the problem under discussion.

A MESSAGE, however cannot be delivered without a messenger. The Divine method of supplying spiritual nourishment to humanity was through Divine Messengers. These messengers, according to the Qur'an, were sent to every nation of the world. (10:47; 35:24; 4:164). Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him) was one of them, and the last of them (33: 40). He was a guide and mercy to the nations (21:107). He was neither God nor an angel. If angels were walking around

the earth, God would have certainly sent angels as messengers, says the Qur'an (17:95), but as earth was inhabited by human beings, mortals were sent, who ate food and went about the market as other mortals did (25:7). These mortal messengers were warners and bearers of good news (2:213) and brought mankind from darkness into light (5:16) by the help of God. The object of their advent was to recite God's messages and thus purify their followers. By purification is meant not only purification from sin, but also setting the believers on the path of moral, spiritual and physical advancement.

These messengers who came to purify the world from sin, and lead men to righteousness were themselves sinless. They were the honoured servants of God, and acted on God's commandments (21:25 - 27); they could not act unfaithfully (3:160). The chief object of their appearance in the world was to remind men of their duties to their Creator and their fellow-beings.

The Qur'an itself has been called a REMINDER FOR THE NATIONS (*zikrul lilalameen*) (12:104; 38:87; 68:52; 81:27). This is where the Qur'an makes an impact on the human mind. It makes us remember of what we have forgotten, it makes us recollect of what has gone out of our memory – or in other words out of the upper surface of our mind, yet latent deep down in our souls. This forgotten truth has to be retold. Being in consonance with human nature, the Qur'an is a reminder of what is already imprinted therein. This indicates the essential worthwhileness of human self which was made in the best make by our Creator (95:4). According to the Qur'an, paradise is man's birthright; he is born on the banks of virtue. By his own following he falls in the mire of sin.

The Qur'an again reminds us that mankind is a single nation (2:213). We are told:

“O mankind, keep your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same (kind) and spread from these two many men and women”. (4:1)

“O mankind We have created you from a single male and female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other. Surely the noblest of you with God is the most dutiful of you (49:13).

“And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colours. Surely there are signs in this for the learned”. (30: 32).

The diversity of tongues and colours is a sign of God for human beings, but we have made it a bane and a curse to ourselves.

We accept Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulām Ahmad of Qādiān, the founder of the Ahmaddiyyah Movement, as the *Mujaddid* of the 14th century and we affirm that he never claimed to be a prophet.

Ṭṣ. 2.

The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said:

"O mankind surely your God is one and surely your father is one. There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, nor of a coloured man over a white man or of a white man over a coloured man. The noblest in the sight of God is the most dutiful of you.." (*Bukhari*).

The modern world today is torn on the question of race, colour and rank. The Qur'an has not only condemned this approach towards life in theory (mere sermons were not enough) but also eradicated these prejudices from the minds of Muslims, by establishing institutions such as prayer and pilgrimage where all people meet on equal footing irrespective of their position, colour or race.

The good and righteous people among the followers of other religions.

The Qur'an reminds us that there is also light and guidance in the Torah and the Gospels (5:44; 54). There are good and righteous people found among Jews and Christians.

"They are not all alike", says the Qur'an, **"of the people of the Book there is an upright party who recite God's messages in the night time and they adore (Him). They believe in God and the Last Day, and they enjoy good and forbid evil and vie one with the other in good deeds. And those are among the righteous. And God knows those who keep their duty"** (3:112 - 114).

Conquest of natural forces.

The Qur'an reminds us that man is not made a slave of the natural forces, but a ruler over them. His rank in the scale of creation is so high that everything in the universe has been made subservient to him.

"God is He Who made subservient to you the sea that ships may glide therein by His command, and that you may seek of His grace, and that you may give thanks. And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth all from Himself. Surely there are signs in this for a people who understand" (16:12).

Life and its problems

The Qur'an reminds us that man has been created to face distress and difficulties (90:4). He has to face problems as long as he lives. Problems run like a stream in our lives; constantly passing away yet constantly coming. When we face problems and overcome them we become better human beings. Thus pain and suffering have a great value in our lives. However the business of man is to go forward under all conditions. That is only possible when the modern man

corrects his attitude towards life and learns to be grateful, faithful, hopeful and trustful of the mercy and compassion of god in his life.

As I have said before the modern man is fearful of his own destructive powers. He can destroy himself and all that he has achieved in centuries, within a matter of a few hours. But in spite of this, fear should not prevail in our minds. Until death, it is

S. Muhammad Tufail.

all life, and we in the meantime should not forget our duty to God and to our fellow beings.

As long as we live we must keep on learning how to live. And when the time of our departure comes, the Qur'an reminds us that we do not fade away into nothingness. We keep on living in another world. Men are sleeping, says the Qur'an. when they die they wake up.

READERS

WRITE

90 Trumpington Road,
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January 23, 1977

The Editor,
"The Call".

Aslamu alaikum

I am not an *Ahmadi*, but wish to study interpretations of Islamic concepts as believed by both Ahmadi sects. I wonder if you can oblige me by sending me a regular copy of your publication *"The Call"*, and any other tracts of general interest.

Many thanks.

Your brother in Islam,
M. R. MALIK.

Palmyra Village,
East Canje,
Berbice.
December 21, 1976.

The Editor,
"The Call".

Assalamu alaikum wa rahamt ullah

My name is Wazir Mohammed and I am living at Palmyra village. I am fourteen years of age, and I am attending a Secondary School. I am very interested in Religion. I had seen a copy of *"The Call"* and found it very interesting. I would like to have some copies of *"The Call"* from the time of publication. Please convey my best regards to members of the Anjuman.

Yours truly,
Wazir Mohammed.