The Islamic Conception of Deity

By Dudley Sadler Wright

THE ISLAMIC BELIEF IN GOD is not a mere article of faith—a solitary item in a shadowy creed. It is deep-rooted and firm. It has been said frequently that Islam possesses the shortest creed of all the religions of the world, and though this may be the case, so firmly fixed is the Muslim’s belief in the Supreme Being that he regards with abhorrence and as blasphemy any attempt to divide in any way the Unity of God. How can the Divine Being be reduced to the level of any other? Or how can He share His attributes with another? He is the Most High and He alone is to be adored, and to assert that there are three, or even two, in possession of Omnipotence is, to the Muslim, a self-evident contradiction. To him the expression in the Creed of Saint Athanasius:

“For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one: the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal,”

is meaningless, contradictory, and blasphemous.

It is a favorite contention with Christian apologists that there is no place in Muslim theology for the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God; and it may be at once admitted that the Muslim regards the relationship which exists between God and man as being far above that which can be understood by the expressions “Father” and “Son.” The term “Father” implies the performance of parental duties which are obligatory, and there can be no obligations from God to man. He is King Eternal, His Will should predominate every human desire. The Will of God should be the principle and object of every man and woman. “Islam” has a double meaning—submission to the will of God, and entering into peace. The first is a means to the second, which is the end or aim. The God of Islam is not a tribal—not even a national God, and Islam is not a national religion, but the religion of humanity. Allah is Lord of All the Worlds. If there are other inhabited worlds, then Allah is Lord over them also, and the brotherhood of humanity—one of the precepts of Islam, which is a belief put into practice—extends also to the inhabitants of those spheres. The Christian teaching of the relationship between God and man has led to an assumed intimacy between the Creator and the created which is repulsive to the spiritual mind, a deplorable lack of reverence, and an absence of worship. Man prays and as an outcome he realizes that blessings are showered upon him and he realizes also the nearness of God. Is he jubilant? It would be more correct to say, that as he ponders over the grace with which he has been favored he is awed.

There is a majestic glory in the expressions Ar-Rahman and Ar-Rahim which cannot be found in any other words. No limits can circumscribe His beneficence. Is it a matter for wonderment that the Muslim, when he thinks of the all-embracing grace and beneficence, the majesty and glory of the Lord of all Existence, should prostrate himself with forehead to earth in adoration and worship? To that Lord of All the Worlds, the Muslim gives a name which is above every other name—the name of Allah, a name which has never been given to any except the only true God, a name which embraces all the excellent names which can be enumerated.

Islam is no mere creed: it is a life to be lived. In the Quran may be found directions for what are sometimes termed the minor details of daily life, but which are not minor when it is considered that life has to be lived for God. The Muslim lives for God alone. God is the center of all satisfaction, all hope, all life. The aim of the Muslim is to become God-bound, and to endeavor to advance the knowledge of God in all his undertakings. From the cradle to the grave the true

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Dear Readers,

Muharram Al Harram, the first month of the Islamic calendar, brings along the memory of the supreme sacrifices offered by Imam Hussain and his family members for upholding the principles of righteousness and complete and unqualified submission to the teachings of Islam. Our first editorial is a homage to this illustrious grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him.

In our second editorial we welcome the Annual Ahmadiyya Conference being held at Lahore, Pakistan, in the last week of December, 1980.

We are concluding “The Glory of the Quran,” a thought-provoking article by the Promised Messiah.

Mr. Masud Akhtar highlights the necessity of restoring the factors of morality, justice, and fair play to the foreign policies of the Western democracies. It is an effort, by one opposed to the tyrannical Russian political system, to point out the most significant failing of the policies followed by the Western democracies in the Middle East—a failing that most people fail to take into consideration when thinking about foreign policy.

We hope “The Message of Islam,” by Al-Hajj Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, will be read with interest.

A very informative article by Maulana Ghulam Nabi Muslim about the age of Hadhrat Ayesha Siddiqah at her marriage will definitely interest all research scholars.

“The Islamic Conception of Deity” by Dudley Sadiq Wright tells how Muslims think of their Allah.

Abul-Qasim replies to a question about the position of “gays” and homosexuality in Islamic teachings—“gayism” is a burning issue in American society.

An article from Hadith brings home the importance of “knowledge” in Islamic teachings.

We bring Lesson III of the Qur’an Primer to you in this issue. Any comments, questions, and proposals are most welcome.

If you think The Islamic Review is serving any useful purpose, then please help us in our efforts by passing a copy of it to your neighbors, friends, and dear ones.

Yours truly,
The Publishers
The Tragedy of Karbla

Muharram al Harram is the first month of the Islamic calendar. It is customary with most nations to celebrate the beginning of their new year with great jubilation and festivity. But not so with the Muslims. The Islamic calendar starts from the Hijrah—the flight of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) and his companions from Mecca to Medina. Thus every Muharram al Harram comes as a reminder to Muslims to be prepared and ready to offer the greatest of sacrifices in the path of Deen-Allah. It was in keeping with this spirit of holding the right path and righteousness above all worldly considerations that Imam Hussain (Allah be pleased with him), the great and immortal martyr known to human history, offered supreme sacrifices at Karbala.

In answering Prophet Abraham’s prayers for granting the spiritual leadership of the world to his descendants, Allah had made a covenant with him. This covenant was “to the righteous ones from amongst them.” This covenant was not won without labor—nay, Abraham had merited it by complete and total submission to the will and command of Allah by offering the sacrifice of his son Ishmail. Abraham’s descendants held fast to this covenant and never showed any signs of weakness in offering the greatest of sacrifices when called upon to do so. In keeping with the great traditions of his family, Imam Hussain, a descendant of Abraham and grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him), illuminated the pages of the history of mankind by offering the sacrifice of 72 members of his family, including the infants, the teenagers, the youthful and the old ones, to uphold the cause which had been dear to his great ancestors for generations. Allama Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, the poet of the East, described this tradition of offering sacrifices in the cause of righteousness by Abraham and his descendants in the following words:

Very fascinating, though unique and simple is the story of Haram;
It begins with Ishmail and reached climax in Hussain.

When the concurrence of Imam Hussain was sought by Amir Muawiyah in the proposed succession of his son Yazid as Caliph of the Muslim world, the Imam refused to accept a tyrant being inflicted on the Ummah in gross defiance of the dictates of the true Islamic polity. Succession within the family (as one sees in the hereditary kingships of today) according to him cut at the very roots of the principle of “the fittest and most righteous amongst you.” It amount to depriving the Ummah of the benefit of the services of the fittest person for the highest office in the Islamic state, and was in clear violation of the teachings and practice of Islam. Honestly believing that his silence would be misinterpreted as acquiescence in the installation of a diabolic despotism, the Imam resolved to demonstrate his disapproval by refusing to take a pledge of fidelity at the hands of Yazid. Yazid on the other hand tried all tricks to make the great scion of great ancestry accept him as caliph. The valian’ Imam spurned all deceptive overtures, because he could not brook a transgressor quietly usurping the sacred scepter of supreme authority and riding roughshod over the sanctities of the Islamic values. The natural result was confrontation—a confrontation of the forces of good and evil. The venerable Imam vindicated his great ancestry by wearing the crown of radiant martyrdom. His family members and companions all laid down their lives in upholding the noble principles they had been wedged to for generations. They emblazoned their names in the annals of history. Hussain and his fellow martyrs at Karbala have become a symbol of good, of righteousness, of complete and unreserved submission to the commands of Allah, and always continue to illuminate the path to the greatness of man for all coming generations. The butchery of the Omayyad war-wolves on the other hand will go down in history as a target of curses and imprecations, and Yazid has become a symbol of evil, tyranny, cruelty, and defiance of the commands of Allah. Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar magnified these two symbols when he said in one of his verses:

Qatl e Hussain Asl main marr e Yazid thi
Islam zinda hota hai her Karbala kay ba’ad.

(The martyrdom of Hussain in fact was Yazid’s death; Islam gets a new life after every Karbala.)

The Annual International Ahmadiyya Convention at Lahore

The Ahmadi Muslims from all over the world will be gathering at Lahore, Pakistan, to attend the Annual Ahmadiyya Convention. The annual conventions were started by the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, during his lifetime. The purpose behind these annual conventions was manifold. It was an occasion for taking stock of the efforts toward propagation of Islam during the past year, as well as consultations and planning for the future expansion of that noble task. No less significant was the experience of spiritual rejuvenation and addition to the religious knowledge of the participants. Joining with other brothers and sisters drawn from various nations of the world in prostrating before Allah Almighty and praying not for any personal gain but only for the predominance of Islam over all... continued on page 21
"(The Quran is) a Book that We have revealed to Muhammad abounding in good, that they may ponder over its verses, and that the men of understanding may mind" —38:29.

THE GLORY OF THE QURAN

By HADHRAT MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi

(Continued from our November issue)

Quranic diction

Some controverts argue that it may be acceptable in theory that the Word of God should be unequaled and unique, but such a word is yet to be found, the matchlessness of which has been proved by some strong argument. If this claim be urged on behalf of the Quran, it shall have to be established, they contend, by means of an indisputable argument, for, the incomparability of the Quranic diction and idiom may be an argument for a man whose mother-tongue is Arabic, but it cannot carry any conviction for others who cannot also derive any benefit from it.

It is true that some knowledge of Arabic is necessary for the proper appreciation of certain points regarding the matchlessness of the Quran. But it is a mistake to think that all the arguments on its grandeur rely for their support on a knowledge of the Arabic language, and that its marvels can be appreciated by the Arabs only. This is certainly not the case. It is well known to any learned person that many of these arguments are so simple and easy that no proficiency in Arabic is required to understand them; even an ordinary sense suffices for their understanding. It should be noted that the Quran is so short and succinct in volume that it can be scribbled with a medium pen in four or five parts only; it contains all the religious doctrines and principles ever taught. Another marvel of the Book is that howsoever many truths of religious learning a man may discover through deep delibration and hard work, or expound with his own intelligence or argument on any religious topic, or demand to be shown from it, the remedial treatment of any of the moral and spiritual maladies that human beings have been suffering from, he will find the replies in its chapters. Yet another easily comprehensible proof of its matchlessness consists in the fact that the dignity of its diction, and the perfect choice of its words is so great that no human effort can ever approach it. This claim as stated above, was put to test at the time of its revelation, and found true, and has since come down through the ages as an established reality.

In short, the Quran, like a sure circle, encompasses within its fold all religious truths and wisdom. All those principles which had been taught wrongly by people, on account of their imperfect knowledge, will be found rectified, and brought to perfection in it. There will also be found in this revealed Scripture such truths, the exposition of which never fell to the lot of any human teacher. The niceties with regard to the divine knowledge which, though put in writing in volumes, but was yet in an incomplete form, have been fully explained in it. The Almighty proclaims that "with truth have We revealed it (the Quran), and with truth did it come."² ³ "We have not neglected anything in the Book."² ³

Again, addressing the Prophet, God says that "We have not revealed to thee the Book except that thou mayest make clear to them that wherein they differ, and (as) a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe."⁴

And the assurance is also given to God’s statement that "surely We have revealed the Reminder, and surely We are its Guardian."⁵

The Quran is admittedly a small volume. It was revealed to Prophet Muhammad piecemeal during a period of twenty-three years. It is divided into 114 chapters. Each consists of a number of verses. But all the diverse doctrines of religion, and all the great and subtle truths about the Divine Being, and the essence of all the thought-product of the ancient and modern teachers have been so miraculously condensed in it that not a single truth, or true principle, can be pointed out which has remained outside its sphere, thereby, proving indubitably that it is not the work of man.

Vehicle of expression

Some people are of the opinion that language has been created by man and it is, therefore, not impossible for him to acquire perfect excellence in the use of its phrase and idiom. It will be irrational to think, they argue, that man is unable to make progress in the matter of his own invention. And they conclude that, since it is not impossible to achieve perfection in the use of language, it will not also be impossible to produce a likeness of the Holy Quran equally excellent in phrase and dignified in diction.

It is unwarranted to suppose that
human power, in the matter of knowledge and wisdom, can be at par with the Divine Power. It is, therefore, necessary that the disparity which exists between these high and low, strong and weak powers, should find a corresponding repercussion in their words. The word proceeding from a higher power will evidently be superior to that which has its source in the inferior, much in the same way as a weak person cannot take his stand against a stronger one, although all men belong to the same human species.

It is not correct to say that every language and dialect has been invented by man. It has been proved conclusively that the Supreme Being Himself, having created man, endowed him with language also that he may be able to express himself. If language had been created by man, there would have been no need for educating a child who, when grown up, would have invented a language for himself. But a child will remain speechless and destitute of oral expression if he is not instructed in any language, no matter whether he is brought up in Asia, or is kept in a forest in Europe, or is taken to some spot below the equator.

An argument is sometimes adduced to the fact that hundreds of different changes have been taking place in languages, indicating human intervention and influence over them. This is another misconception. These changes are not caused by human will and power, nor has any law been discovered so far to determine the periods of time during which human nature acts for the introduction of these changes. A deeper reflection, however, will show that these changes in languages are also brought about by the Divine Being, much in the same way as all other changes, celestial and terrestrial, are made by His will. It can never be proved that human beings ever invented all those languages and dialects, which are spoken in the world.

It is urged that just as changes have been introduced in languages by God as a natural phenomenon, why should it not be possible that, in the beginning, too, languages came to be created likewise, and no special revelation had been vouchsafed from on High?

The reply to this objection is that it is a general law of nature that, in the first instance, the Almighty created everything exclusively by His power of origination. A little pondering over the creation of the heaven and the earth, the sun and the moon, and the human nature itself, will show that the time of the first creation was the time for display of the divine power of origination, which had nothing to do with the other laws of cause and effect.

When every form of creation, in the beginning, was brought into existence merely by His will and command, it would be unreasonable to suppose that the Almighty, who has the power to create man, besides other things, even without the agency of both father and mother, should be so weak and destitute of power in the creation of languages. Every sensible man will have to accept that the law of origination was in operation in the beginning of the world. It will, therefore, be unfair to throw the creation of the languages outside the sphere of this law.

The fact of phenomenal changes coming over the languages is different from that of bringing a language into actual existence from a state of nothingness. And, besides all these things, when God, even now, reveals His will to His people in different languages, some of which are entirely unknown to them, which they had rather learnt from their parents nor from their teachers, will it not be unreasonable to say that the same All-Knowing God had not the power to create language and teach it to human beings in the beginning of the world, which was just the time of man's want and destitution? Will such a belief leave behind any regard and reverence for the Divine Power? Can any fair-minded man ever harbor such a false notion that the Lord failed to display, in the beginning of the world, certain powers, the manifestation of which was necessary and essential for the good of man who knew it not? Is it thinkable at all that the Creator, who brought man into existence with a firm and set purpose and made him the best of creation, should have left him defective and unfinished in his make, which deficiency was, later on, made up by man himself through an accident? Will it be correct to suppose that the Almighty, Who had a perfect knowledge of all the languages from the very beginning, should have held back that knowledge deliberately from man, even though He had seen him wallowing and waltering in speechlessness?

It is sometimes objected that if language was taught to man by divine instruction, why should savage tribes be suffered to live in a state of speechlessness in the jungle, to express themselves by mere signs and signals of the hand? Why should not a language be conferred upon them by God and, why should not a new-born baby, if kept in the jungle, be blessed with such a divine revelation?

This objection comes from a wrong conception of the divine attributes. The Word of God is not cast upon anyone. The recipient of the divine communication should possess the requisite excellence and merit. The other condition for the bestowal of the divine revelation is that there should exist a true, genuine need for it. In the beginning of creation, when man was brought into existence, both these conditions, necessary for the teaching of language to man by divine instruction, existed. Man had already been endowed with capability for the reception of divine communion. The condition of a true, genuine need was also fulfilled. For, there was, at the time, no kind and compassionate friend, except the Almighty, Who could teach him how to speak and thereby raise him from the primitive state to the higher and nobler stage of civilization and culture.

Later on, when the children of Adam, the human race, spread over the world, and the knowledge imparted to Adam from on High was diffused thoroughly among his progeny, some people then became the teachers and preceptors of others. It was not so in the case of Adam. There was no other being, no teacher, preceptor or parent, except God Who could teach him language and educate him in human dignity and decency. In short, it was absolutely necessary that Adam should have been brought up and educated, by the Almighty Himself whereas, in the case of his children, this necessity does not arise for the simple reason that hundreds of millions of human beings now speak many different dialects and also teach the same to their children.

The personal capability and excellence of an individual form an essential condition for his becoming the recipient of divine communication. And should a person be found, even now, imbued with noble qualities, he can receive guidance from God. The eye of the Supreme Being penetrates into the depths of man's capability and the comprehensiveness of his mind. The Lord will never deprive him of the opportunity of displaying his mental powers. It can never happen that a person, who is imbued with the faculty
of imbibing divine inspiration and knowledge, should yield up his life and depart from this world without having been raised, in consequence of certain physical causes or, for instance, birth in a jungle, to that high office of dignity and distinction for which he had been ordained. On the contrary, only that man rolls in an abject state of speechlessness and savage disposition who is, by nature, defective and deficient. Moreover, by the conferment of so many different dialects upon hundreds of millions of people, the door for the general instruction of others has been widely opened. Under these conditions, no necessity whatsoever is left for the teaching of language by divine revelation, except in some special case in which a sign is intended to be shown.

**Literary expression**

Some people hold that the alphabet and separate individual words are common between the human language and the Word of God, so that, in this respect, man stands at the same footing as does the Almighty. But, the fact is that He Himself taught man the vehicle of expression. Therefore, the alphabet and the separate individual words also have come to man as a blessing from Him.

Man can only know how to express what is in his mind, in a given situation, by preparing a construction of words, placing one sentence in one way, and another in a different way. This placing of words and phrases in a particular order is called literary composition to give expression to a particular thought or emotion. In this literary art, we claim that no man can manage to equal God. Nor can it be held permissible that a human being should be able to rise to a position of equality with Him in this respect. In that case, the implication would be that the creation of God can rise to a position of equality with the Creator, which, of course, should be an impossibility for mortal beings. That man should be making use of the same sounds, the same alphabet, and the same words, which also occur in the Divine Word, does not place him in a position of equality with the Lord. Clay is a creation of God. But a potter treats it in a particular manner, and then shapes pottery from it, which has variety of forms and sizes. When the potter is seen at work, it is not concluded that he has acquired a position of equality with the Creator of the world. Equality with God would be taken to have come about only if a man could shape various forms of animate and inanimate objects.

It is, of course, true that a measure of invention and literary construction has also fallen to the share of man, which God operates in His wisdom within the lines and confines of the various laws of nature. But, how can the human invention and literary composition rise to the same heights of excellence and beauty as do the powers of the Almighty? In efforts to put himself in a position of equality with God, if a man were to confine himself to the task of re-assembling the various parts of an animal’s body that had come to be cut off and dismembered, and to re-infuse the breath of life in the parts he had brought together, he would never be successful. How can a weak and frail human being then dare set himself up as the equal of the Lord? He cannot, with any justice, equal an animal in many respects—in fact not even the small insects, since many of them are far better builders and creators than human beings: some create beautiful and delicate silk, others sweet and health-giving honey, etc.

It should consequently be remembered that, just as the various elements of the human body are from God, similarly, the component parts of the human speech are also from Him. Therefore, a genuine seeker-after-truth should not allow himself to be misled by the thought that the alphabet, words and expressions, which comprise a language, are common between human speech and Divine Word. He should not forget that these elements of human speech have been given to man by the All-Powerful, Who also uses them in His Word, as does man when he desires to express himself to another human being.

In literary expression, man cannot by any possible means rise to the position which belongs in this field, as in others, only to God. This is why the unbelievers of Mecca, many of them poets of the highest repute for the grandeur and the force of their literary compositions, could do nothing at all when they had to face the challenges of the Quran to produce a piece to match it.

**Experimental experience**

The peculiar quality of the incomparability of the Quran, based on the excellence of its phraseology and the majesty of its diction, can be appreciated only through experimental experience, much in the same way as the distinctive characteristics of other things are put to test and examined. For this purpose, the Divine Providence has prescribed but one course: in case of a doubt, the experiment should be repeated over and over again until it is completely removed, and the mind is fully satisfied in regard to that particular quality.

To illustrate this, let us suppose a man, after a long series of experiments, has arrived at the irresistible conclusion that arsenic is a violent poison. If he should, thereafter, deny this deadly quality of arsenic for the reason that it is not known to him why it should be so destructive, then such a man will be considered unsound and deranged. But, the biggest of follies is to deny the exclusive and unique qualities of the Almighty—of His being nonpareil and without any sort of association of partnership in His attributes and deeds, and of His being fully perfect and complete in His power and glory. This fact has been established not only by practical experience, but metaphysical reasoning and argument also prove it to be important in the highest degree, and connect the fact of His divineness with these super-human attributes.

The arguments which God has adduced on the inevitable need and super-natural source of the Quran may briefly be summarized as follows: the Book came at the most critical time when the adepts of all faiths had forsaken the true principles and fallen away from godliness, piety and chaste action. Human minds had been obsessed with the love of this world to such an extent that all their efforts and actions were inspired by one single motive: the attainment of worldly pleasure, honor and happiness.

So, in pursuance of His eternal law—that He turns mercifully towards His creatures whenever they are stricken down with affliction, just as He sends down life-giving rain when the death-dealing drought smites them—God liked not that His created beings should continue in that state of spiritual darkness and distress, which would ultimately land them in eternal damnation and destruction. So, He revealed the Quran to call them back to rectitude from moral wandering and transgression. Without the advent of a prophet who brought with him such a mighty Book—which is pure and free from every kind of fault, flaw or failing that impairs excellence—it would not have been possible to bring back to the right path those who had renounced
the true faith. The proof of this argument rests upon the fact that it is the immutable and eternal law of God that He confers His help at the time of physical and spiritual needs—in the form of rain from heaven when physical distress afflicts the world, and in the shape of His Word of wisdom and healing when the spiritual calamity torments.

This proposition is so clear and self-evident that it produces conviction on its bare presentation. No man will ever deny the fact that both the physical and the spiritual systems have been coming down the ages, uninjured and unimpaired, for the one reason that the Lord has been protecting them against all the forces of desolation and destruction. For instance, if He had not vouchsafed His protection to the physical world, by sending down rain from the heaven when deadly drought and frightful famine prevailed, the inescapable result would have been that people, having consumed the yield of their first crops would have, thereafter, starved to death and mankind would have ultimately been annihilated. Or, if He had not ordained the sun and the moon, the day and the night, the wind and the cloud to function with perfect precision, the whole system of this universe would have broken down and disintegrated. And we know that “God it is Who sends down the rain after people have despaired, and He unfolds His mercy. And He is the Friend, the Praised One.”

General law of nature

If we cast a glance on the creation of God, and ponder over the peculiar qualities which the Creator has imposed in them, we come upon and discern clearly the principle that all these qualities may be divided into two kinds: Firstly, those that can be easily appreciated. For instance, everybody knows that man has two eyes, two ears, etc. These are facts which can be appreciated and recognized by a mere glance. Secondly, those that are hard and subtle. For example, the strange construction of the eye, by means of which both the eyes function unitedly as one, beholding alike all things great and small; or the making of the ears which enables them to hear various sounds, etc. These simple facts are such as cannot be appreciated by a simple observation which necessitates many years of research of great scholars and specialists in sciences. There are yet hundreds of hidden marvels in the construction of the human body which no one may have so far been able to reach.

It cannot be doubted that the higher purpose behind these wonders of the human body is that man should realize and appreciate the perfection of the Divine Power and Wisdom, which has accomplished these marvelous deeds in his creation. But the following objection may, however, be urged for want of knowledge and discernment: Why should God have made this matter, which was intended to induce divine knowledge, so subtle and abstruse that a whole age of thinking and deliberation is required to understand and appreciate it, and yet with the uncertainty as to whether all the hidden realities will be unravelled and disclosed; and that, on account of this, man has not so far been able to get even one single drop out of the vast ocean of that knowledge; and that these marvels should have been so manifest and clear as to fulfill that great purpose easily?

The reply would be that the Creator, in regard to all His creations, is He Who is not contented with the display of some manifest marvels only, but has also concealed in everything profound and abstract wonders. To call and condemn this noble work of the Supreme Being as worthless and useless will be the height of ignorance. It should be understood that He has not created man, like other inferior animals, with such a narrow nature that his knowledge might have remained confined to a few tangible and readily perceptible facts. On the other hand, man has been invested with the power to make unlimited progress in the vast field of knowledge and learning through keen observation and deep thought.

If all these divine marvels had been made manifest and clear, so that there would have been left no need for the exercise of observation and thought on the part of man, what things would have been there whereto he would have devoted and directed his intellectual powers, the cultivation of which is imperatively necessary for the perfect development of man? And if he had not been vouchsafed the opportunity to comprehend and infer, how could it have been possible for him to raise himself to the intended stage of perfection? Since humankind is so closely connected with the use of man’s mental powers, the Creator has concealed many wonders in His creation in such a way that unless man puts into action with full force the powers and faculties bestowed upon him, these marvels cannot possibly be comprehended.

In short, all the works of the Almighty finish not merely on rough and crude constructions, but the deeper one digs into them, the finer the marvels one will find. The general law, which has been proved beyond doubt in regard to all things coming from God, states that they are all full of deep secrets and abstruse subtleties. Every sensible man, therefore, will have to admit, in accordance with this law of nature, that Divine Word also should not be devoid of profound delicacies.

People argue that since the sacred Scriptures have been revealed for the good and guidance of the ignorant and Bedouins of the desert, the teachings contained therein should, therefore, be within the kin of their meager minds.

This is another misconception which has arisen out of ignorance. If we were to study the Quran seriously, and reflect over its excellences, our false notion would be dissipated like the dispersion of darkness when the sun rises.

It has clearly been stated by God that the Quran has been revealed for the reformation of the whole world and for the reclamation of all kinds of human temperaments. In it, the followers of all the faiths—the Jews and the Christians, the Polytheists and the Magians, the Atheists and the Agnostics—have been addressed much in the same way as the ignorants of the desert have been accosted: “Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good, they have their reward with their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.”
It need not be said that mere conjecture or surmise is unable to hold its stand against a fact. When some peculiarity of a thing has been discovered after a long experience, it would be unwise to denounce it on the basis of some proofless presumption. It sounds as if a man were to deny the peculiar qualities of plants for the reason that if the Creator had reposed these qualities into them for the good and benefit of man, why should He have concealed them from the eye of human beings who, merely for want of a knowledge of them, continued to die without treatment for a long time? Should a man cast a glance around him, he will find that Divine Law is not confined to one or two things only, nor is it hidden to such an extent which makes it difficult to understand.

**Profound principles**

It is to be understood that God has made no secret of, nor concealed any of the essentials of religion. The profound principles comprise those facts only which are beside and above these elementary fundamentals of faith, and are meant for such persons who have been endowed with the capability of acquiring higher excellences. By means of these subtle and finer truths those people rest not contented with those principles only, but make progress in divine knowledge and wisdom and get to the lofty tower of firm faith and certainty which is, indeed, a sublime point for human power and progress to reach.

If all the secrets and subtleties of divine knowledge had also been made manifest and easy to understand, there would have been no difference between a wise and an ignorant person. All knowledge, in that case, would have been destroyed and lost for the measurement of human capability, which increases man’s observational power and makes him perfect would have vanished away. Man, without this important means, would have been rendered incapable of exercising his observation and thought, with the result that he would have stopped and stagnated at a certain point and lost all power for making unlimited progress and achieving that blessing.

God has endowed man with the power to observe and think, and soar upwards. How can it, then, be possible to allege against Him that He has sent down His Book to hinder man from rising to perfection? Is it not true that He has revealed His Word for the purpose of getting man out of darkness into light? Will not then the divine claim that His Book can only accomplish this object be reduced into a mere empty boast, if it were contended that the books of Aristotle and Plato alone could pull man out of the depths of darkness? Providence Divine has not involved man into a handicap or thrown him into a difficulty. He has bestowed upon him, in the first instance, the power to observe and reflect; and then He has provided materials for the exercise of this power. These are indeed the divine blessings which have enhanced the grandeur and glory of man over other animals.

**Way to knowledge**

The Almighty has Himself directed and pointed out the way to knowledge and wisdom: “We have sent among you a Messenger from among you, who recites to you Our messages and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the Wisdom and teaches you that which you did not know.”

Again, we are told in the Quran that “the Supreme Being grants wisdom to whom He pleases. And whoever is granted wisdom, he indeed is given a great good.”

In short, God has expounded in His Book the principles of salvation and success so explicitly that no difficulty or doubt can arise in understanding them. The educated and the uneducated are both on the same footing in this respect, yet it has been His will that in the matter of divine knowledge and sublime principles, man should struggle and strive after them, so that this effort and exertion may prove to be the cause of his perfection. All human powers and faculties depend, for their existence, on exercise and use. If a man should keep his eyes closed for ever, and use them not for the purpose of seeing, he will soon, as proved by medical experiments, become blind. Likewise, his hands and feet will become defunct, if he should not make use of them. His memory, too, as well as his power of thinking, will waste away and become atrophied, if he should cease to work them.

It is thus His kindness and grace that He has guided man into the way whose development of his power of observation and thinking. And if He had emancipated man altogether from the shackles of struggle and strife, it would not have been proper and just to send His Last Book, meant for the guidance of all the nations of the world, speaking different dialects, in one single language which they knew not. It would not have been possible for them to make out and decipher a strange language without exertion, however small and meager it might have been.

God declares in the Holy Book that, before Muhammad, He sent apostles among the different nations of the world. But, those people were taken in and led into error by the deceitful devil, and their evil deeds seemed fair and pleasing to them. So, he sent down the Quran so that their differences may be expunged and the teaching, which existed in an incomplete form in the earlier Scriptures, may be perfected for the guidance of the believers: “We certainly sent (messengers) to nations before thee (Muhammad), but the devil made their deeds fair-seeming to them. So he is their patron today, and for them is a painful chastisement. And We have not revealed to thee the Book except that thou mayest make clear to them that wherein they differ and (as) a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe. And Allah sends down water from above, and therewith gives life to the earth after its death. Surely there is a sign in this for a people who listen.”

It has been the law of nature, from time immemorial, that the Almighty causes the winds to blow before His mercy sends down rain. These winds, which carry rain-bearing clouds on their wings, are driven to a dead land which has been sapped of life by a dreadful and devouring drought. He then sends down water and causes many a kind of luscious fruits to grow. In the same way, He pulls the spiritually dead from their depths: “He is Who sends forth the winds bearing good news before His mercy; till, when they bear a laden cloud, We drive it to a dead land, then We send down water on it, then bring forth thereby fruits of all kinds. Thus do We bring forth the dead that you may be mindful. And the good land—its vegetation comes forth (abundantly) by the permission of its Lord. And that which is inferior—(its herbage) comes forth but scantly. Thus do We repeat the messages for a people who give thanks.”

The Prophet of Arabia appeared at a time when corruption prevailed over sea and land, and the world was tainted with depravity and debauchery...
The Muslim World: Can Russia Be

By MASUD AKHTAR, B.A., LL.B.

The Middle East, the cradle of great civilizations and the birthplace of three great religions of today's world, is flanked by Pakistan in the east and by Turkey in the west. The people of this region are deeply wedded to the Islamic spiritual and moral values and heritage. This in fact is the greatest asset of the people of the Middle East.

It was this great moral and spiritual heritage which kept Communism at bay in the days of the ideological onslaught mounted by Soviet Russia in the early years of the cold war. The Communist ideology and propaganda could not cut any ice with the ill-fed and ill-clad people of the Middle East in the early years after World War II. When billions of dollars had to be pumped into the western European countries under the Marshall Plan to save the nations of Europe from falling prey to Communist ideology. The scenario in the Middle East is somewhat like this today:

—More than 80,000 Russian troops are in Afghanistan and it appears they will stay there for quite some time if not permanently;

—Russia and Iraq have a joint defense pact under which Russia supplies arms to Iraq;

—A similar defense pact ensures supplies of Russian weapons to Yemen and port facilities to Russian naval units at the port of Aden right at the entrance of the Red Sea;

—The Syrian army receives its arms from Russia and Syria has some sort of defense arrangements with Russia;

—Egypt in past years had been receiving Russian arms; it was with the use of these arms that the Egyptian army routed the Israeli army in the Suez War;

—After being thrown out of Egypt, the Russians have made arrangements to supply arms to Libya;

—Russia has made offers to supply arms to Iran, and in fact some weapons may be flowing to Iran from Syria and Korea;

—The PLO receives some weapons from Russia;

—King Hussein of Jordan has developed enough relations to entitle him to look towards Russia for armament needs in case supplies are not available from the West.

Thus, barring Israel and Saudi Arabia and the Sheikdoms, the Russians have made inroads into all the countries of the Middle East. The fact remains that these inroads are not ideological inroads, as Communism and the Communist way of life are still despised by the people of the region.

The Russian presence in the Middle East, which is greater and stronger than the Western presence in the region, speaks volumes about the success of the framers of Middle East policy in the Kremlin. In fact, if the common man in the U.S.A. and Western European democracies were ever able to draw a balance sheet of the Russians' gains and the Western democracies' losses during the last thirty-five years in the region, he would discover that ever since the confrontation with Russia after World War II, the Western democracies have ended up with a constant yearly loss statement. Many philosophical analyses are offered to the people by the statesmen, experts, professors, and media men, but all these fail miserably in presenting the true picture of the failings of the West.

The common man in the West has been made accustomed to viewing the international political scene with preconceived ideas and emotionalism, rather than grasping the realities of the fast-changing world around him.

The Gain and Loss Account.

At the time of the cessation of World War II, the whole world, except the Eastern European countries conquered by Russia during the war, was the sphere of influence of the Western Democracies. Thus the starting balance in favor of Russia was "nil" and overwhelmingly in favor of the West. The Russian presence today in various regions of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and especially the Middle East, and the way the Russians have been turning this balance in their favor, demand an objective study of the foreign policies being pursued by the two camps. One matter is absolutely clear—every Russian gain in the Middle East in fact points to the failings of the West's policy in that most important region. These failings are alarmingly great, and the West seems to be helplessly bogged down in this continuous process. If the accounts of the rise and fall of nations preserved in the pages of history carry some lesson for the nations of Western Europe and the U.S.A., then this process needs to be halted—nay it needs to be reversed or else the whole world is on the brink of falling prey to the most tyrannical political system known to the human race—Communism. The object of this study is to pinpoint the failings in the Middle East policy pursued over the years which have contributed to the Russian presence in that region. The reversal of these policies is the most logical, indeed the only, way open to the West for containing Russia in the Middle East. The Western democracies have a vital interest in the region.

In fact Middle East oil is the lifeline of industries in Europe and Japan and in most developing nations. The Russians have gained their present position in the region without being directly involved in war or risking direct involvement. And if such a peaceful conquest of the Middle East by Russia continues for a few years more, then Japan, the developing nations, and most industrially developed nations in Europe will find themselves yielding to the dictates of Russia or else going without their industrial production. A world war will be the only option open at that time if the Western statesmen fail to make use of the options open now. Only time will tell whether the West is capable of producing a statesman possessing the requisite vision and courage.

It goes without saying that the first and predominant role in containing the Russian expansion of influence has to be played by the people of the Middle East themselves. It is most unfortunate that the Western democracies have acquired an image of the least magnitude as far as practicing morality and moral ethics goes. So poor has been the West's record in this regard in the Middle East that the common man in the Middle East has come round to believing that Russia is the lesser of the two evils. With its constant record of violating the principles of morality, justice, and fair play in the Middle East, the West's simultaneous claim to adhere to these high
principles appears simply as Western hypocrisy to the man in the street in the Middle East. A brief survey of the Western democracies' contradictions in the Middle East will show that the conclusions drawn by the people of the Middle East are supported by sound evidence.

The West caught on the wrong side

The recognition of the principle of self-determination and its incorporation in the United Nations Charter sent a wave of upsurge for freedom through Asia and Africa. The United States of America, being traditionally and historically wedded to the idea of self-determination, played a significant role in getting this principle recognized and incorporated in the UN Charter. The Western democracies, and more particularly Great Britain, France, and Holland, were the main colonial powers before World War II. In spite of their recognition of the self-determination principle, and in spite of being signatories to the UN Charter, these Western nations exhibited reluctance to give up their colonies and resorted to any dilatory tactics that could somehow prolong their rule in the colonies. In most cases this pushed the ruled to resort to armed struggle for achieving independence. This was a tragic exhibition of the contradictions between the West's professions and its behavior. Still more tragic has been the lukewarm treatment of the freedom movements of Asian and African countries by the U.S.A., a declared stalwart supporter of the principle of self-determination. Probably the U.S.A. was accommodating its allies. Russia took full advantage of this weakness of the Western camp and put its full weight on the side of the freedom movements. It not only supplied the requisite weapons to the freedom fighters, but also adopted a policy of open and full support for their cause in the United Nations. This behavior of Russia washed away all the effects of propaganda mounted against Russia by the West in its effort to paint Russia as an unscrupulous power. Russia reaped high dividends by following the policy of taking advantage of these contradictions of the West.

How Great Britain tricked the Arab nationalists in World War I, inducing them to fight against the Ottoman Sultanate by the promise of complete and full independence to be granted to them at the end of the war but instead converting them into colonies under what is commonly known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement, is a matter of recorded history now. To the people of the Western democracies, where double standards are the standard of life, such trickeries in the name of diplomacy pass without much notice. But to the people of the Middle East, who are deeply wedded to the moral values of life, if trickery is diplomacy then all big cheats and swindlers merit being called statesmen of the highest caliber. It was a result of this treachery that the Western colonial nations took decisions and steps that have thrown the Middle East into a constant condition of war since the cessation of World War II. The imposition of Jewish settlers of European nationalities was started by the colonial rulers with complete disregard for the desires of the local population, in clear violation of their political rights, and also in clear violation of the promises given them. Instead of rectifying the wrong, the process of adding further wrongs has continued since then:

1. A wholesale migration of the Jews of the European nationalities and the uprooting of the local population in complete neglect of all principles of human rights, self-determination, and the sanctity of national borders was planned and implemented by the Western democracies in Palestine. This great contradiction between profession and action later paved the way for the Palestinian Holocaust, the re-playing of the European Holocaust by its victims.

2. Calling the whole world to rally around the Allied nations in order to defeat the racist Nazi regime in Germany, while laying the foundations of a racist state in the Middle East, is a glaring contradiction.

3. Signing the United Nations Charter and incorporating the right of self-determination of peoples on the one hand, and on the other using the forum of the same United Nations to create the state of Israel against the desire of the majority of the residents of Palestine, are acts contradictory and self-defeating. How smaller nations were coerced into voting for the Resolution is a matter of recorded history. In an interview after the vote, Sir Muhammad Zafar Ullah Khan, the foreign minister of Pakistan, expressed the feelings of many of his fellow UN delegates: "We entertain no sense of grievance against those of our friends and fellow representatives who have been compelled under heavy pressure to change sides and to cast their votes in support of a proposal the justice and fairness of which do not commend themselves to them. Our feeling for them is one of sympathy that they should have been placed in a position of such embarrassment between their judgment and conscience, on the one side, and the pressure to which they and their governments were being subjected, on the other." The warnings of the State Department and the secretaries of state that "this will amount to throwing the Arab world in the lap of Russia" were correct and have proved historically true, but the decisions of foreign policy were being made on the advice of people other than the State Department. Probably this too was a contradiction, to have a State Department to assist and advise in the formulation of foreign policy, and then bypass its expert opinion and implement the advice of those who were neither charged with this responsibility nor answerable to the Executive head or to Congress.

4. Blessing Israel in retaining the fruits of aggression in the Middle East, and more particularly the fruits of the 1967 aggression, under the pretext of "secured borders" when the secured-borders theory has become outdated and a simple hoax in a world possessed of long-range bombers, long-range rockets and continental and intercontinental missiles, and professing adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter, are self-contradictory.

5. Israel's constant violation of the United Nations resolutions and the Western democracies' refusal to be a party to considering any measures for compelling Israel to honor the United

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The Message of Islam

By AL-HAJJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

The world has not been without her reformers and prophets before and after Islam. But history fails to lay its finger upon a single personality, other than Muhammad, who could perform the real function of a Messenger from the Lord in doing good to the whole world. Nay, I would go further; I would say, no other prophet's claim could be considered as such if Muhammad could not be accepted as a Prophet from the Above. Ours are days of utility and not of sentimentality. We hardly need a Prophet to read us homilies or sermons on visionary ideals—or give us lessons on ceremonials. We need no "slain deity" to wash off our sin through the magic of his blood. A Messenger from the Lord should come like the spring which resuscitates the dead nature; he should raise again the lifeless mass and arouse humanity from her torpor. His teaching should illumine benighted hearts and put forth before them ideals that help human progress on material, mental and spiritual planes. He should raise the human mind above ignorance, and expose the falsity of wrong beliefs. In a word, he should stir the stagnant pool of humanity, and bring forth out of it a living stream. All this Muhammad accomplished. Look at the condition of the whole world before and after him. Culture and progress followed him immediately in Muslim lands—movements which influenced the whole world afterwards and continue to do the same till today. Things unknown in the realm of knowledge came to light through his teaching and led to modern civilization. Even in the field of religion, Muhammad caused a wonderful revolution in its every corner. Study Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity and other faiths of the world as they stood at the advent of Islam; compare their respective modern beliefs with what they believed at first. Everywhere reformation followed Islam. Every religion is now molded, or is on its way to become so, in Islamic cast. Polytheistic tendencies are on the wane, and mankind embraces the Muslim Monotheism. Superstitions are disappearing. Observe the present movements in the Christian Church. What disgust with the old order that is here! Nay, the whole Modernist movement is based on Islamic laws.

Islam literally means, implicit submission to Divine Laws, or the complete subjugation of our human will to the Will of the Lord. This obedience to God does not mean the bondage of man, in any sense, or the rule of an Arbitrary Will over him, but it means Divine Guidance in this working out of the real object of religion.

The religious passion in us, like our other instincts, must be satisfied in a way that may help the growth of our nature. Religion, therefore, must have the same object. The Quran defines religion thus: "Then set your face upright, for religion is the right state, the nature made by Allah in which He has made man; there is no altering of Allah's creation; that is the right religion, but most people do not know." (30:30)

The sacred words give both the objective and subjective aspects of religion. They point out the goal as well as the means to reach it—the aim and the procedure. The aim is to work out our nature to its best advantage, and the procedure lies in "setting our face upright in the right state."

This leads me to say something of human nature and of its capabilities. Christian theology sees no good in it. Human nature, it says, is sinful and tainted from birth, and the blot on it could not be removed except through our belief in The Blood, Islam, however, takes quite a contrary view of the case. It tells us that we enter into the world with a nature pure and untainted and capable of soaring to Divine precincts. Sin, we are told, is not among the furniture of our nature; it is a subsequent acquisition that results when we abuse our capabilities.

The whole question turns on our nature and its capacities. We, no doubt, are capable of sin, but we are also capable of resisting it. The error in Christian theology lies in mistaking capacity for nature. Nature is not tainted. It possesses no inclination towards wrong. It is abuse of our inclination that germinates evil. But this is true of everything in Nature. A simple thing like water, which is a blessing, will play havoc, if uncontrolled. The fire that does so much good to humanity is capable of reducing whole towns to ashes. Everything that comes from God is for our good. It possesses certain properties which may be misapplied. Opium, which drugs our senses and numbs our faculties, has invaluable medicinal properties. Everything has its use and an occasion for it. It becomes a blessing—and that was the purpose for which it was created—if only we try and find out its use, its occasion and the right measure in which it is to be used. The Quran revealed this truth, when it said, "And He made the measure that you may not be inordinate in respect of the measure" (45: 7–8).

In fact, God is the measurer of good and evil. Every measure of everything is for good. But what is good for A is evil for B. The food of a thorny shrub is the destroyer of a fruitful tree. It is in finding out the property of measure that brings forth all prosperity. It was to emphasize the importance of the knowledge of measure that the principle of good and evil measure was included in the Muslim articles of faith: Wa'l-Qadri Khareeb wa sharrihi min 'L-lahi 'alâ—I believe in measurement of good and evil from God—in short, it is the mishandling or misapplication of things that is responsible for the world of evil. We need knowledge of these things. Science has come to check various diseases and disasters: the same is true of human nature; man is Nature's masterpiece; he is capable of sinking to the lowest of the low. His soaring or sinking are the two same phases of the power of moving. Fire
has been given a capability of exuding heat: it may cook a dish or burn a whole house. We have to find out how to control these elements, and thus we can convert a seeming curse into a blessing. Similarly, we need knowledge of the nature of our passions. The world before Islam lacked the revelation of these truths, and the message came from the Lord in the following words: “Certainly We created man in the best make, then We render him the lowest of the low, except those who believe and do good, so they shall have a reward, never to be cut off. Then who can give you the lie after (this) about the judgment?” (Quran 95: 4-7).

Other messengers before Islam told us that man was after the image of the Lord, but the Message went further and gave us the greatest of all tidings. It declared that we were the vicegerents of God on the earth and were capable of assuming His colors. It showed us the way to achieve this grandest object.

Islam thus came with quite a new conception of religion. It did not speak either of “an angered Deity” whose wrath could be propitiated only through offerings of flesh and blood, or whose pleasure could be secured through ceremonialism or the singing of hymns and repetition of words in His praise. The Book of Islam—the Quran—says:

“There does not reach Allah (God) their flesh nor their blood, but to Him is acceptable righteousness” (22:37).

“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces toward the East and the West, but righteousness in this, that one should believe in Allah and the Last Day and the Angels and the Book and the Prophets and give away wealth out of love for Him, to the near of kin, and the orphan and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) the captives, and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate; and the performers of their promise when they make a promise and the patient in distress and affliction in time of conflict—these are they who are true (to themselves), and these are they who are righteous” (2: 177).

“Be grateful to Allah (God). And whoever is grateful, he is only grateful for his own soul; and whoever is ungrateful, then surely Allah is self-sufficient, praised” (31:2).

These verses dispense with the religion of the “Grace of Blood” as well as with ceremonialism. The Quran attaches no value to ritualism and sacraments. It speaks of the religion of Beliefs and Action with a view to attaining some purpose. The last verse, it is true, speaks of Divine glorification and the duty of thanksgiving. But it is for the benefit of our own souls, seeing that God is “Self-sufficient and Praised.” Even amongst us one who seeks praise and “fishes for compliments” fails to command our respect; we call him conceited. What, then, would be our estimation of a God whose pleasure consisted in hearing praises and thanksgivings from His own creatures, and that, too, for the maintenance and continuance of His own scheme of creation? Islam, no doubt, enjoins prayers and thanksgiving. But it gives them quite a new meaning. The Quran calls prayer a reminder. The Muslim Prayer has been couched in words that eloquently show the relations existing between man and God, and the course pursued by Divine economy, in showering His blessings on His creatures. Again, the words of the prayer prompt us to seek to mold our actions in the Divine cast. We are also taught clearly that lip-gratitude carries no weight with the Lord. Thanksgiving in Islam consists in making proper use of Divine blessings, to our own edification. Prayer and thanksgiving in Islam are, in fact, disciplinary measures for working out our spiritual development.

Everything around us appears to possess inherent qualities. The atomic world and its various combinations are repositories of numberless capacities. They only await favorable circumstances to bring their latent faculties to full fruition. A seed is a potential tree and a sand-shell a royal palace; the light of a glowworm evolves into an electric arc, and the noise of a cricket into a grand oratorio. Everything, in short, is on its way to advancement. Should we not expect the same of human nature? Our frame is the best product of Nature. It comprises particles of everything in the universe. All the faculties of the animal kingdom have become collocated in human consciousness. It is imaginable that this world of wonderful probabilities and possibilities is meant to remain dormant? Islam says “No.” It says that the main object of religion is to make these probabilities and possibilities a reality, and therein lies the true satisfaction of our religious instinct.
Syyedah Aishah Siddiqah’s Age at Her Marriage

By GHULAM NABI MUSLIM
Translated by Masud Akhtar

Most narrations carry misstatements about the age of Syyedah Aishah Siddiqah at the time of her marriage to the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be on him. They place this marriage in the tenth year of the Call and state that Aishah was only 6 years old at that time. On proper sifting of the material facts these statements turn out to be incorrect and it becomes evident that she in fact was about 19 or 20 years of age when she arrived in the house of the Holy Prophet as his wife in 2 A.H.

It will be in the fitness of things to quote from the writings of two well-known Muslim scholars of the present century who are the main exponents of the view that Syyedah Aishah Siddiqah was 6 years old at her Nikah and 9 years old at the time of the consummation of her marriage. Both Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadi and Maulana Syed Abul Ala Maududi are well-known Muslim authors of Seerat (biography).

Nadi’s view

Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadi writes at page 21 of his book Seerat e Aishah:

“Books of history and biography are generally silent about the birth date of Syyedah Aishah. The historian Ibn Sa’ad, whom many later biographers have followed, has written that Syyedah Aishah was born in the fourth year of the Call, and was married at the age of 6 years in the tenth year of the Call. Apparently this cannot be correct, because if her birth in the fourth year of the Call be admitted as correct then her age at the time of her marriage in the tenth year of the call works out to 7 and not 6 years. The fact remains that some matters about the age of Syyedah Aishah are admitted to be correct by most historians and biographers, and these are: she was married three years before Hijrah at the age of six years; the marriage was consummated in the month of Shawal in the year 1 A.H. when she was 9 years old; and she became a widow in Rabi at Awal 11 A.H. at the age of 18 years. According to this account the correct date of her birth works out to the end of the fifth year of the Call or 614 A.D. of the Christian calendar. For a proper comprehension of the events of history one should bear in mind that out of a total period of 23 years of the Call, the first 13 years were passed in Mecca and the last 10 years in Medina. Thus the fourth year of the Call had already been out before her birth and the fifth year was running.”

Maududi’s view

In an article, “The Nikah Date of Syyedah Aishah,” published in the Tarjaman al Quran of September 1976, Maulana Abul Ala Maududi wrote:

“It is apparent from the detailed reports of Imam Ahmad Tibrani, Ibn Jareer and Bahiqi that the Nikah of Syyedah Aishah was solemnized before the Nikah of Syyedah Saudah. It is also evident that her Nikah with the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, was solemnized in the month of Shawal of the tenth year of the Call, three years before Hijrah when she was 6 years old. Here a question arises that if Syyedah Aishah was 6 years of age in the Shawal of the tenth year of the Call, then she should have been 9 years of age at the time of Hijrah and should have been of 11 years in 2 A.H. at the time of consummation. But all narrators agree that her Nikah was solemnized when she was 6 years old and the marriage was consummated when she was 9 years old. Some Ulema have tried to meet this discrepancy by saying that the marriage was consummated seven months after Hijrah. Hafiz Ibm Hajar has preferred this view. On the other hand Imam Naudi in his Taheeb al Asma’a al Lughat, Hafiz Ibn Katheer in his Al Badaya and Allama Fasaltani in his Mawahib al Deeniah report consummation in 2 A.H. Hafiz Badarud din Aini has written in his Undat al Qari that the marriage of Aishah Siddiqah was consummated in Shawal 2 A.H. after the return of the Holy Prophet from the battle of Badr. Both Imam Naudi and Allama Aini consider the above quoted reports of consummation of marriage seven months after Hijrah as irresponsible and untrustworthy. Thus we are faced with a question that if the marriage was consummated at the age of 9 years in Shawal 2 A.H., then what should be the date of Nikah which should tally with her age of 6 years? An answer to this question is found in Bukhari wherein it is reported from Urwah Bin Zubair, “Syyedah Khadija died three years before Hijrah; the Holy Prophet solemnized Nikah with Syyedah Aisha two years after that. Then it was consummated at the age of 9 years.” This works out to be correct that Nikah was solemnized one year before Hijrah when she was 6 years old and consummation took place in 2 A.H. when she was 9 years.”

The above quotations amply bear out that both Syyed Nadi and Syyed Maududi agree to the correctness of reports stating the age of Syyedah Aisha at 6 years at Nikah and 9 years at the consummation. Their only worry seems to be the calculation of the correct year of the Call and the Hijrah for fixing these ages in those calendar years. Both of them start with a preconception that the age of 6 years for Nikah and 9 years for consummation are correct and true, and set out in search of the correct year of the Call and Hijrah in which these preconceived ages will fit in. This hardly can be called a scientific method of finding her correct age. This rather may be called an effort to find a correct date for a given age.

The other view

As far as my information goes the first voice against the common misconception about the age of Syyedah Aishah at her marriage was raised by Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A., L.I.B., in 1924 in his Muhammad the Prophet, wherein he wrote:

“The popular misconception as to
Aishah’s age may be removed here. That she had not attained majority is clear enough, but that she was not so young as six years of age is also true. In the first place, it is clear that she had reached an age when betrothal could take place in the ordinary course and must therefore have been approaching the age of majority. Again, the Isabah, speaking of the Prophet’s daughter Fatimah, says that she was about five years older than Aishah. It is a well-established fact that Fatimah was born when the Ka’bah was being rebuilt, i.e., five years before the Call or a little before it, and so Aishah was certainly not below ten years at the time of her marriage with the Holy Prophet in the tenth year of the Call. This conclusion is borne out by the testimony of Aishah herself who is reported to have related that when the chapter entitled ‘The Moon’ (the 54th chapter) was revealed she was a girl playing about and that she remembered certain verses then revealed. Now the fifty-fourth chapter could not have been revealed later than the fifth year of the Call, and therefore the report which states her to have been six years old in the tenth year of the Call when her marriage ceremony was gone through cannot be correct, because this would show her to have been born about the time of the revelation of the 54th chapter. All these considerations show her to have been not less than ten years old at the time of her marriage. And as the period between her marriage and its consummation was not less than five years, because the consummation took place in the second year of the Flight, it follows that she could not have been less than fifteen at that time. The popular account that she was six years at marriage and nine years at the time of consummation is decidedly not correct, because it supposes the period between the marriage and its consummation to be only three years, while this is historically wrong.

Sulaiman Nadvi took Maulana Muhammad Ali to task (for his above-quoted view) in note 2 on page 26 of the third edition of his Seerat e Aishah in the following words:

“Some irresponsible persons who think that the marriage with a girl of tender age was not befitting for the Holy Prophet have tried to prove that the age of Hadhrat Aisha Siddigah at her marriage was 16 years instead of 6 years. All such efforts are useless and all such claims are illogical. Not a single word in the Hadith and history can be found in their support.”

Nadvi contradicts himself

In spite of this severe criticism of Muhammad Ali’s view, Nadvi not only contradicts himself about the age of Syedeh Aishah but provides supporting evidence to Muhammad Ali’s views when, writing about the last days of the life of Syedeh Aishah, he writes at page 111 of the same Seerat e Aishah: “Hadhrat Aisha was a widow and she passed forty years of her life as a widow.” Further, at page 153 he writes: “The last days of Khilafat (Caliphate) of Amir Muawiyah were the last days of the life of Hadhrat Aishah and her age at that time was 67 years.” Now if we deduct 40 years of her widowed life from 67 years then we find that she was 27 years of age at the time of the passing away of the Holy Prophet in 11 A.H. and not 18 years as reported by Nadvi in the earlier pages of the same book. Since the total period of the Call is 23 years, therefore, according to this account she was born about four years before the Call and not in the fourth year of the Call as Nadvi tried to make us believe in his earlier pages quoted hereinafore. Consequently her age at the time of her Nikah in the tenth year of the Call works out to 14–15 years and not 6 years as Nadvi himself so assertively reported. According to this account Syedeh Aishah’s age at the time of the consummation of her marriage in 2 A.H. works out to 19–20 years and not 9 years as stated in earlier pages of Seerat e Aishah. A further enquiry is most naturally necessitated to find out which of the two reports of Nadvi should be given credence.

Other sources

There are other important events recorded in history which provide definite evidence about the age of Hadhrat Aishah.

1. The well-known historian Ibn Jareer Tibri writes at page 50 of volume 4 of his Book of History: “Abu Bakr married two ladies in the days of ignorance (pre-Call era). Fateelah daughter of Abd al Aza was the first, from whom Abdullah and Asma were born. Umm e Rooman was the second, from whom Abd Al Rahman ad Aishah were born. All the four children of Abu Bakr were born in the days of ignorance (Jahiyah, i.e., pre-Islamic days) from the above-named two ladies.”

2. It is a well-known fact of history that Abu Bakr’s son Abd al Rahman fought against the Muslims in the battle of Badr. His age at that time was 21–22 years, and although he was older than Aishah, there is no evidence to show that the differences between their ages was more than three or four years. This fact lends support to the view that Hadhrat Aishah was born four or five years before the Call.

3. The well-known historian and scholar Allama Ammad ud deen Ibn Katheer writes in his Al Badayah about Syedeh Asma’ daughter of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (Allah be pleased with him) (and we hope Maulana Syed Abdul Ala Maududi must have seen it as he referred to Al Badaya in his article): “Asma’ died in 73 A.H. at the age of 100 years. She was ten years older than her sister Aishah.” Now according to this report Asma’ would have been 27–28 years old at the time of Hijrah and since she was ten years older than Syedeh Aishah, therefore the age of Syedeh Aishah would have been 17 or 18 years at the time of Hijrah. Accordingly her birth falls about four or five years before the Call, and her age at the time of the consummation of marriage in 2 A.H. will work out to 19–20 years.

4. The author of the well known collection of Hadith Mishkat al Masbeeh, Sheikh Waheed ud Deen, writes in his well known book Akmal fi Asma’ al Rajal:

“At the time of the consummation of her marriage Syedeh Aisha’s age was not less than 18–19 years.”

All the above quotations give ample refutation to the common misconception that Syedeh Aishah’s age at the time of her Nikah was 6 years and at the time of consummation of marriage it was only 9 years. If Muslim scholars of the present era deem fit to make an objective research instead of beating the old track, they will find ample material in the pages of history to arrive at a correct age for Syedeh Aishah. This indeed would be a great service to the cause of Islam.

Every person is sinless at his birth.

The Holy Quran

The Islamic Review • December 1980
Q. Several gay friends have expressed an interest in becoming Muslims but wanted me to explain whether homosexuals are accepted by Islam or not. I can't find any evidence for or against homosexuality in the Koran, though it does appear that it is illegal to dress as a woman. What can I tell them? —John D. Moss, Houston, Texas.

A. Dear brother John D. Moss: A change in religious beliefs is the most difficult change in one's life. Anyone who embraces a religion other than his previous faith, does so only after he concludes that the teachings of his previous faith fail short of bestowing a meaningful spiritual guidance and life while these requirements are met in the faith he chooses to embrace. Religion or faith is not the name of a few rituals. It is rather a mode of life which one adopts for his spiritual uplifting. Thus, most logically, a change of religion, faith, cult, whatever one may call it, must mean a change in one's mode of life, based on a change in one's thinking and approach to life. It, in fact, has to be a desire to turn a new leaf in one's life. The history of religions tells us that the majority of converts to religions were previously lost in a life full of sins of all kinds. If such a change has been experienced by a Gay brother then he will be most welcome to become a Muslim. A mere change of labels, without any change in one's mode of life, neither does any good to the convert nor to the religious denomination he chooses to join.

The Holy Quran has mentioned the nation of the prophet Lot, who were homosexuals. It has also stated the punishment that was inflicted upon that nation. Prophet Lot was a nephew and a contemporary of the prophet Abraham. Prophet Lot is mentioned in the following chapters and verses of the Holy Quran: 6:87; 11:77-83; 15:61-74; 21:74-75; 26:160-173; 27:25-58; 29:32-35; 37:133-136; 51:32-37; 53:53-54; 54:38-39; 66:10.

A few of the above verses are quoted here to bring home the nature of the crime and the punishment for it:

1. "And Lot, when he said to his people: Do you commit an abomination which no one in the world did before you. Surely you come to males with lust instead of females. Nay, you are a people exceeding bounds. And the answer of his people was no other than that they said: Turn them out of your town; surely they are a people who aspire to purity."

2. "So We delivered him and his followers, except his wife—She was of those who remained behind. And We rained upon them a rain. See then, what was the end of the guilty." (7:80-84)

3. "And to Lot We gave wisdom and knowledge, and We delivered him from the town which wrought abomination. Surely they were an evil people, transgressors." (21:74)

4. "Do you come to the males from among the creations. And leave your wives whom your Lord has created for you? Nay, you are a people exceeding limits.

They said: If thou desist not, O Lot, thou wilt surely be banished. He said: Surely I abhor what you do. My Lord, deliver me and my followers from what you do.

So We delivered him and his followers all, except an old woman, among those who remained behind. Then We rained on them a rain, and evil was the rain on those warned.

Surely there is a sign in this; yet most of them believe not.

And surely thy Lord is the Mighty and the Merciful." (26:165-175)

5. "And Lot, when he said to his people: Do you commit foul deeds, while you see? Will you come to men lustfully rather than women? Nay, you are a people who act ignorantly. But the answer of his people was naught except that they said: Drive out Lot's followers from your town; Surely they are a people who would keep pure.

But We delivered him and his followers except his wife; We ordained her to be of those who remained behind.

And we rained upon them a rain; So evil was the rain on those who had been warned." (27:54-58)

And when Our messengers came to Lot, he was grieved on account of them, and he lacked strength to protect them. And they said: Fear not, nor grieve; Surely we will deliver thee and thy followers, except thy wife —she is of those who remain behind.

"Surely we are going to bring down upon the people of this town a punishment from heaven, because they transgressed.

"And certainly We have left a clear sign of it for a people who understand." (29:33-35)

6. "The people of Lot treated the warning as a lie. Surely We sent upon them a stone storm, except Lot's followers, We saved them a little before daybreak. A favor from Us. Thus do We reward him who gives thanks.

"And surely he warned them of Our violent seizure but they disputed the warning.

"And certainly they endeavored to turn him from his guests, but We blinded their eyes; So taste My chastisement and My warning."

"And certainly a lasting chastisement overtook them in the morning. So taste My chastisement and My warning.

"And certainly We have made the Quran easy to remember, but is there any one who will mind?" (54:33-40)

It is evident from the above quotations from the Quran that the people of Lot were homosexuals; that they were warned by Allah through His messenger to give up this abomination, as this act was considered evil and a transgression; and that the punishment meted out to them was a rain, a storm of stones. And further, that the punishment inflicted upon them has left a clear sign for those who understand. The ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah in the neighborhood of the Dead Sea on the road from Saudi Arabia bear witness to these verses to this day.

The Holy Quran permits sex only within the bounds of a legal marriage. There are no "boyfriends" or "girlfriends" allowed in the Islamic way of life. Sex crimes have been described in the Holy Quran in three categories.
KNOWLEDGE

By MAULANA MUHAMMAD ALI, M.A., L.I.B.

1. “Read in the name of thy Lord Who created; He created man from a clot. Read and thy Lord is most Honourable, Who taught with the pen, taught man what he knew not” (96:1–5).

2. “Allah will exalt those of you who believe and those who are given knowledge to high degrees” (58:11).

3. “And say, O my Lord! Increase me in knowledge” (20:114).

4. “And whoever is given knowledge is given indeed abundant wealth” (2:269).

While faith brings about the spiritual and moral development of man, knowledge brings about his intellectual development, and therefore stands next in importance to faith. In Bukhari’s arrangement therefore “knowledge follows faith.” The first revelation that came to the Holy Prophet is admittedly the first quotation given above. These verses not only lay stress on both reading and writing but also speak of the Lord of Honour in this connection, showing that man can attain to honour only through knowledge. This is expressly stated in v. 2. The Holy Qur’an even directs the Holy Prophet to seek more and more knowledge (v. 3). It is in fact full of praise for knowledge: the words ya’laman (they ponder), yatafakkaran (they reflect), yataadhakkaran (they meditate) and other similar expressions occur on almost every page of the Holy Quran. V. 4 speaks of knowledge as great wealth. Such is also the import of the very first hadith quoted in this chapter, which speaks of both wealth and knowledge as things which man desires naturally to seek and in which all men should try to emulate each other (h. 1). The Holy Prophet made it incumbent on those who came to him to seek knowledge to impart the same to others (hh. 2, 3), and desired even those who were considered to be in the lowest strata of society to be uplifted to the highest level through education (h. 4). Islam, in fact, lays the basis of mass education, education of men as well as women, of children as well as adults. The Holy Prophet himself made arrangements for the eduction of women (h. 5). Writing was en-

2 Malik ibn al-Huwairith said, The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said to us: “Go back to your people and teach them.” (B. 3:25.)

3 Ibn ‘Abbas reported on the authority of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him: “Let him who is present impart knowledge to him who is absent.” (B. 3:37.)

4 ‘Abu Musa said, The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said: “There are three persons for whom there is a double reward: . . . the person who has a slave-girl, and he brings her up and trains her in the best manner and he educates her and gives her the best education, then sets her free and marries her, ne nas a double reward.” (B. 3:31.)
Abu Hurairah reported.
A man from among the Ansar said...
O Messenger of Allah! I hear from thee a hadith which pleases me very much but I cannot retain it in memory. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said: "Seek the help of thy right hand." And he made a sign with his hand for writing. (Tr. 39:12.)

Abu Sa`id Koudri said.
The women said to the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, The men have got an advantage over us in approaching thee therefore appoint for us a day from thyself; so he promised them a day in which he met them and he exhorted them and gave them commandments. (B. 3:35.)

Abu Hurairah said.
There was no one said from among the companions of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, who reported more hadith from him than myself, but 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr used to write while I did not write. (B. 3:39.)

Abu Hurairah said.
The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said: "People are mines like mines of gold and silver; the more excellent of them in the days of Ignorance are the more excellent of them in Islam when they attain knowledge." (M-Msh. 2:1.)

Zaid ibn Thabit reported that.
The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, commanded him to learn the writing of the Jews (in Syriac) so that I wrote for the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, his letters and read out to him their letters when they wrote to him. (B. 93:40.)

Abu Hurairah reported that.
The Khuzza`ah murdered a man of Banu Laith in the year of the conquest of Makkah, as a retaliation for the murder of one of them whom they had murdered. The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, was informed of this, so he mounted his riding camel and delivered an address. And there came a man from among the people of Yaman and said, Write it down for me, O Messenger of Allah! So he said: "Write down for such and such a one." (B. 3:39.)
education, female education and emancipation of slaves were thus forestalled by the Holy Prophet thirteen hundred years before modern civilization.

6. Bukhari mentions this hadith under the heading, “Should a separate day be fixed for the education of women?” It shows that from the Islamic point of view it is desirable that there should be separate arrangements for the education of men and women.

7. Although the Holy Prophet himself did not know reading or writing, he encouraged both. There is a misunderstanding as to the prohibition of writing down hadith. As this hadith shows, the Holy Prophet himself ordered the writing down of hadith when it was needed. Generally, however, writing of hadith was not considered desirable as it was feared that persons who were not cautious enough might confuse the verses of the Holy Qur’an with hadith. As the next hadith, however, shows there were some people who regularly resorted to writing hadith.

8. The words “in Syria” are not in Bukhari but they are added here on the authority of A.D. and Tr. This hadith shows that the Holy Prophet ordered the learning of other languages as well.

9. He was told to learn the art of writing and then write down hadith.

10. The superiority of race over race and family over family is recognized—people are rated on their merits like mines of gold and silver ghubar (emulation) have one thing in common, viz., a desire regarding advantages or excellence which another man possesses; but in hadad the desire is that he shall be deprived of them, while in ghubar it is that the desirer may be favored with similar advantages. By using the word ghubar in the heading of this chapter, Bukhari shows that while hadad is prohibited here, ghubar is recommended in two cases.

2. The word in the original is hikmah which may be rendered wisdom or knowledge. According to R., it means “the knowledge of things and the doing of good.”

3. The desire to have knowledge is here made akin to the desire to possess wealth which is a natural desire in every human heart, and thus it is made clear that the acquisition of knowledge is as essential as the pursuit of wealth, and every human being should acquire both. The desire to possess either, however, is made subject to a further condition: the possessor of wealth spends it in the cause of Truth, and the possessor of knowledge teaches it to others, so that the benefit of humanity is the real end in view. In the Holy Qur’an, knowledge is spoken of as the greatest wealth: “And whoever is given knowledge (hikmah), he indeed is given abundant wealth” (2:269).

4. It was the case of a deputation of the Rabii’ah tribe that came to the Holy Prophet from Bahrain (on the Persian Gulf). They were told to remember all that they had learned in their residence at Madinah and to teach it to their people. The duty to teach others is laid on all Muslims in b. 3.

5. Here we are told that, so far as education was concerned, even slave-girls were not to be neglected. They had to be trained well and educated in the best manner. This was what Islam aimed at, and this was to be the Muslims’ highest ideal: to train and educate even slave-girls, who were considered by the Arabs to have a very low status—not so low, however, as the unfortunate untouchables in India—were to be brought up to the level of the free citizen by proper education and training, and not only boys but girls as well. The questions of mass
Can Russia Be Contained in the Middle East?

Nations resolutions and instead maintaining a constant supply of arms to Israel, negates the West’s claims of adherence to the United Nations Charter.

6. The constant refusal to recognize even those rights of the Palestinians granted to them in the United Nations Resolution of 1947 pertaining to the partition of Palestine is another contradiction.

7. Constantly supplying aggressive arms to Israel, whose economic non-feasibility makes keeping tension and constant conditions of war in the area a necessity for receiving foreign aid now touching the figure of about two billion dollars per year (Mr. Goldman’s recent statement, published in the newspapers in November, 1980, on the occasion of his birthday, should be an eye-opener to those who do not believe that Israel is not economically feasible. The migration of Israeli youth to the U.S.A. in large numbers also proves that Israel has not proved the heaven of the dreams of its creators.), and refusing delivery of such arms to Saudi Arabia, a friend of the U.S.A. from whose economy the American economy derives benefits of billions of dollars each year and whose defense arrangements are practically in the hands of the U.S.A., is not only contradictory to the principles of friendship but also brings home the fact that the United States’ policies in the Middle East completely lack bilateralism. The U.S.A. appears to be nobody’s but Israel’s friend in the Middle East.

With such a constant record of contradicting all principles of morality, of human rights, of self-determination, and of the United Nations Charter and the principles incorporated in that charter, the West’s calls to the rest of the world to rally around all these high principles appear to the people of the Middle East as the traditional hypocrisy of the West. The West’s loss on this moral-ethical side in international affairs has been more significant, and in the ultimate analysis weakens it more, than anything else. It appears that the statesmen in the Western camp have been found miserably wanting in keeping pace with the fast-changing world. The United Nations votes in recent years are the indicators of the mood of world opinion. The smaller nations of the third world are now less receptive to pressures from either camp. They have exhibited a tendency to cast their votes in light of the merits of the matter and of calls for justice and fair play, rather than voting for this bloc or that bloc. This is a healthy sign, and has revived hopes for restoring the application and practice of morality, justice, and fair play in international affairs rather than high-handedness. Machiavellian diplomacy is fast becoming outdated in today’s world. The West faces this challenge of restoring morality, justice, and fair play in its Middle East policy before it can hope to claim any meaningful support from the people of the Middle East, a necessary party in any effort at containing Russia in that region. Whether the West is left with enough good in its fibre to be able to rise to this challenge of history, only time can tell.

In Answer to Your

viz., indecent sexual behavior short of fornication; fornication between a male and a female (both unmarried) or between two males; and adultery. Different punishments for each one of these crimes have been prescribed by the Holy Quran. In addition to the above, false accusation of adultery is also a punishable crime.

The punishment for “indecent behavior” by a woman has been laid down in chapter 4, verse 15, which reads:

“And as for those of your women who are guilty of an indecency, call to witness against them four from amongst you; So if they bear witness, confine them to the houses until death takes them away or Allah opens a way for them.”

Most commentators have written that sexual indecency short of fornication is the subject of this verse, and the punishment prescribed is “confine- ment to the house.” The words “or Allah opens a way for them” have been interpreted to refer to their marriage.

Verse 16 of chapter 4 deals with the crime of homosexuality and fornication. It reads:

“And when two male fornicators from amongst you are brought to you; give them both a slight punishment; then if they repent and amend turn aside from them. Surely Allah is ever oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful.”

Now this verse clearly speaks of two male fornicators, which is the case of homosexuality. The view of some commentators is that the word “Al Zaan,” though used in the masculine form, is not necessarily limited to males and will cover the case where one of the parties is female. According to this view any two parties to a sexual act of fornication are punishable.

The punishment for adultery is stated in chapter 24, verse 2, which reads:

“The Adulteress and the Adulterer, flog each of them a hundred stripes, and let not pity for them detain you from obedience to Allah, if you believe in Allah and the last Day, and let a party of believers witness their chastisement.”

The punishment for adultery as stated here is to be flogging, and not stoning to death, which was the punishment under the Jewish law. The cases of stoning to death for adultery by the order of the Prophet (peace be on him) relate actually to a Jew and Jewess in one case as reported by Bukhari (23:61), and others apparently occurred before the revelation of this chapter. Stoning to death was never contemplated by Islam as a punishment for adultery, as is made clear by verse 25 of chapter 4 of the Holy Quran, where it is stated expressely that the punishment for adultery in the case of slave girls, when they are married, is half the punishment which is inflicted on the free married woman; and death or stoning to death cannot be halved by any stretch of imagination. According to Maulana Muhammad Ali. Flogging is aimed more at disgracing the culprits than at torturing them. In the time of the Prophet, and even for some time after him, there was no whip and flogging was carried out by beating with a stick, or with shoes. The culprit was not stripped naked, but was required to take off thick clothes. (For more details, see The Religion of Islam by M. Muhammad Ali.) Shooting to death or beheading, as we witnessed in The Princess, is not an Islamic punishment.
The Islamic Conception of Deity
(Continued from page 2)

Muslim lives for God and God alone. The announcement of the glory of God—Allahu Akbar—is made to the newborn infant the moment he enters upon separate existence, for Muslims hold that this should be the first sound to fall upon the ears of the newborn babe, in order that the foundation-stone of a godly life should be well and truly laid. As the child grows it is the name of Allah which is sounded in his ear by the parent or guardian when either grief or passion break in and disturb its normal existence. The foundation of learning is made by the teaching of the name of God—Bismillah Ar-Rahman Ar-Rahim. Five times a day he hears the cry Allahu Akbar in the call to prayer. The same jubilant words form his battle-cry should he rally forth to war. “There is no God but Allah” becomes the motto of his home life. That, too, is the final message whispered into the ears of the departing soul, and the same words are chanted as the body is placed into the tomb.

The Muslim believes that man can obtain nearness to God by the practice of self-sacrifice, self-denial, and obedience to His commands. Islam does not inculcate communion with God, say Christian objectors. What saith the Prophet? “God saith, ‘The person I hold as a beloved, I am him hearing by which he heareth, and I am his sight by which he seeth, and I am his hands by which he holdest, and I am his feet by which he walketh.’” One cannot get much nearer to God than that. Can we wonder that the Rev. C. F. Andrews, a Christian missionary, says in his work, North India, “The dignity and courtesy of the best type of Mohammedian gentleman, the orderliness of day and week, month and year, in each of which God is remembered, are great and real treasures which we need to regain within our Church.”

The Muslim raises his heart in gratitude to Allah for the example set by all the long line of prophets, beginning with Adam and ending with Jesus and Muhammad. He knows from the Quran that some were more highly endowed than others, but that they were all human: none was Divine in the sense of being equal with Allah. He rejoices in that knowledge, for he realizes that the lives of all the holy men of the past should be a stimulus for him to seek for a closer communion with God, to aim at living the life and possessing the character which they lived and possessed.

Want to change your life? . . .
Read the Holy Qur’an and follow its teachings.

An English Translation and Commentary
by Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A., LL.B.

“To deny the excellence of Maulvi Muhammad Ali’s translation, the influence it has exercised, and its proselytizing utility would be to deny the light of the sun. The translation certainly has helped in bringing thousands of non-Muslims to the Muslim fold and hundreds of thousands of unbelievers much nearer Islam. Speaking of my own self, I gladly admit that this translation was one of the few books which brought me towards Islam fifteen or sixteen years ago when I was grooping in darkness, atheism and skepticism. Even Maulana Muhammad Ali of the Comrade was greatly enthralled by this translation and had nothing but praise for it.”

—Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi, author of an English and Urdu translation of the Holy Qur’an, and editor, Such, Lucknow, India.

Notes
1. The Quran, 10:57. The Quran is a healing and a guidance for all people. See also 29:51.
2. Ibid., 17:105.
3. Ibid., 16:60.
4. Ibid., 6:38.
5. Ibid., 15:9. See also 8:7–8; 10:1–2; 41:41–42.
7. Ibid., 2:62.
8. Ibid., 2:151.
9. Ibid., 2:269. See also 1: 5–6; 35:28.
11. Ibid., 7:57–58. See also 30:4–50.
12. Ibid., 30:41–42.

Editorial
(Continued from page 4)

religions of the world is a unique Ahmadiyya tradition. These experiences are in fact the greatest assets of this small but dedicated group of the faithful. The Islamic Review and all the Ahmadis in the U.S.A. express the feelings of solidarity with the Central Anjuman at Lahore and through it with all the brothers and sisters gathered at Lahore from the four corners of the world. We pray to Almighty Allah for the success of this annual convention and hope this convention being held at the end of the first year of the 15th century Hijrah will prove a landmark in the history of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. Amen.
Jazm - sakoon or "resting" indicates that the consonant over which it is placed should be pronounced without any vowel sound, as in "al ham.

When this sign is given on the letters (waw) and (ya) and these are preceded by the vowel (Fatha), they form the diphthongs au and ai, as in (yaumi) and (Raiba).

Key:
ab, ib, ub: at it ut; an in un; das, dis (this) dus;
wal, wil, wul: a': ah; min (twice); min hum
min hum; unzila (twice); alhamdu (twice); azlama (twice)
nabudu (twice); alam (twice); nasrah (twice); laka (twice)
sadraka (twice); alam nasrah laka sadraka;
alhamdu; nabudu; antum; azlama
a, au, bau, ai, bai, sau, sai, jau, jai, rau, rai, fau, fai, yau.
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“If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad? . . . Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask: Is there any man greater than he?”

—Alphonse de Lamartine in Histoire de la Turquie

QUR'AN, THE GREATEST SPIRITUAL FORCE

“It is the one miracle claimed by Muhammad—his standing miracle, he called it—and a miracle it is.”

—Bosworth Smith

“Never has a people been led more rapidly to civilization, such as it was, than were the Arabs through Islam . . . And to it was also indirectly due the marvelous development of all branches of science in the Moslem world.”

—New Researches by H. Hirschfeld

“Here, therefore, its merits as a literary production should, perhaps, not be measured by some preconceived maxims of subjective and aesthetic taste, but by the effects which it produced in Muhammad’s contemporaries and fellow-countrymen. If it spoke so powerfully and convincing to the hearts of his hearers as to weld hitherto centrifugal and antagonistic elements into one compact and well organized body, animated by ideas far beyond those which had until now ruled the Arabian mind, then its eloquence was perfect, simply because it created a civilized nation out of savage tribes, and shot a fresh woof into the old warp of history.”

—Dr. Steingass, Hughes’ Dictionary of Islam