AN IS A UNIVERSE IN MINIATURE. He occupies a unique position in the scheme of things. The powers of reason and observation single him out from the rest of creation.

Since his appearance on earth he has been the supreme master of the entire lower animal kingdom. Plant life and inanimate objects, too, have been under his control. He has used them as means to his ends. He started off with his conquest of land, sea and air, discovered the hidden qualities of botanical species to his own advantage and has gone on to master the forces of nature and the elements.

Though physically weak he has subjugated roaring lions and angry elephants and out-foxed the fox in cleverness and raised his art and technique to unprecedented heights. The marvelous technological inventions strike one speechless with wonder.

In fact, he has solved the most intricate and difficult problems of science and philosophy. Yet there is one problem which he has failed to solve. It is the problem of his own creation and its purpose. Man knows that he is not his own creator. The fact of his creation is either a chance accident or it has been willed by a Higher Being.

The hypothesis of chance and uncaused creation is no hypothesis, and evidence against it is so overwhelmingly strong that no reasonable person can accept it as the solution of the riddle of creation. The question actually boils down to this: if the Universe is a willed creation what is its ultimate end or purpose and how best can it be realized?

Students of comparative religion would know that revealed religion alone has consistently tried to prescribe and end to human life and invest it with meaning and purpose. Sciences and other studies cannot possibly confer an ideal on life since they are mostly busy with judgments of facts and not of value.

In this brief note I shall attempt to state the Islamic view about the purpose of creation.

God says in the Holy Quran that He created human beings, big or small, in order that they recognize Him and worship Him alone.

In the light of this verse the purpose of human existence is that we praise and worship Allah, try to attain communion with Him and acquire knowledge of His Greatness and dedicate and surrender ourselves to Him fully without reservations.

Needless to say that this exalted state cannot be attained unless God Himself lay down the ends and purposes of life. Man does not arrive at his earthly habitat out of choice nor does he leave it because he wants to. It is God who created him and blessed him with the finest of facilities. He it is Who has prescribed a scientific ideal and an end for him to achieve regardless of the fact whether man understands it or not.

In the Holy Quran, God says that “We offer a trust and responsibility to all creation—the trust of extreme love for God and the capacity to submit to His will under the direst circumstances. The offer was made to the angels, to the heavens, the earth, and all that lived in them and to the mountains which looked large and gigantic yet all declined to discharge the trust and shoulder the responsibility, except man.”

He alone had two characteristics: the capacity to drive his self and ego hard and cruel and he alone had the power to attain the highest form of love for God to the exclusion of all else.

Hence it is that all human attributes, internal as well as external, and all powers, are conferred on him with a view to realizing the one and only aim of knowing God, worshipping Him and adoring and loving Him as the one and only God. That is why he cannot find true rest and peace

... continued on page 6
In the Name of Allah, 
the Beneficent, the Merciful.

Dear Readers,

Our editorial points out the need for change in curricula in the institutions for religious studies, especially in the Islamic world.

The Promised Messiah reminds us of the “aims and objects of man’s life.”

In this issue Maulana Muhammad Ali’s article sheds light on the relationship of the Holy Quran to the earlier revealed books.

Mr. Arfaque Malik points out glaring contradictions in various parts of the Testaments.

While believers in other religions have faith in fate (predestination), which came under severe criticism of thinkers and philosophers in the early years of this century, “fatalism” became a despised term. Dr. Basharat Ahmad’s article discusses the Islamic concept of “Taqdīr” (pre-measurement).

The concept of Taqdir replaces the concept of fate taught by other faiths.

As promised, we are reverting to our set pattern by bringing articles on Hadith, “The Muslim World,” and “In Reply to Your Question.”

We would also like the readers to comment and send their questions to be answered in the subsequent issues. Any other suggestions will be much appreciated. Since this is the third month of the year, we would appreciate if it you could send your subscriptions for the year, or send gift subscriptions to your friends.

Yours truly,
The Publishers

Board of Editors:
Masud Akhtar
Zafar I. Abdullah
Noman Ilahi Malik, M.D.

Circulation Management:
Abdul Sattar

In This Issue

Editorial: Change These Breeders 4
The Muslim World 5
The Bible: A Garbled Mixture
Does It Present the True Teaching of Jesus Christ?
By Arfaque Malik 7
The Qur’an in Relation to Earlier Scriptures
By Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A., Ll.B.
In Reply to Your Question
By Abul-Qasim 9

Taqdīr, or Pre-Measurement in Islam
By the late Dr. Basharat Ahmad 11
Hadith: Debts and Mortgage
By Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A., Ll.B.
The Qur’an Primer: Lesson 5
21

A publication of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam, Lahore, Inc., 36911 Walnut Street, Newark, California 94560, U.S.A.
Subscriptions: $12.00 per year ($13.00 outside the U.S.A.): by air $25.00. Copyright © 1981.
The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) laid great emphasis on gaining knowledge. He advised his followers to travel to the farthest end of the then-known world (China is mentioned in one hadith, as America had not yet been discovered) in order to gain knowledge. In the olden days when there were no schools and colleges for producing technocrats and professionals, learned people and well-known men of letters used to lecture and impart knowledge at an individual level to their pupils, and at times through daily public lectures. And those who were in search of knowledge used to travel even to distant lands for gaining knowledge at such individual sources. History bears witness that people who traveled widely, from one source to the other, at times had a sort of insatiable thirst for gaining knowledge which kept them going to various sources for quenching their thirst. They became the great men of human history and left their mark on the pages of world history. Knowledge was their main objective in life and they did not raise any barriers between their objective and themselves. They rose above all prejudices and not only found truth themselves but illuminated the path for those who were to come after them. All illustrious scholars who gained heights of knowledge and spirit belonged to this class.

Then came the organized schools, colleges and universities to replace the old system. The new organized institutions in religious studies, commonly known as Madrassas, imparted education in a professional manner and produced professionals—it is a great tragedy of human history that such organized Madrassas raised barriers and curtains in the field of learning and thus became instrumental in curtailing the scope of gaining knowledge that could enable men to find the real truths—truths that, as a universal principle, are a prerequisite for creating a meaningful relationship between Allah and man—the real objective of religion. And the results evidently are not difficult to conceive for anyone possessed of average common sense. History bears witness that these institutions did not produce even one man who may have left his mark on the pages of history. What these institutions produced was a half-read, prejudice-ridden professional priest or mullah who is given more seriously to the cult of profession than to the cause of knowledge and truth. He sowed the seeds of dissension, prejudice and hatred whenever and wherever he got a chance to impart his professional knowledge. It was not his fault. The institution, the school, the Madrassa which produced him is to blame. The literature and knowledge of any religion, any sect other than the one to which the school belonged, was considered a poisonous tree for him. He was either kept away from it or else a distorted and false version was taught to him. Absolute knowledge and truth and nothing but truth can be arrived at only through open-minded, unbiased, thorough comparative study. Such comparative study is the only reliable method of sifting the truth from the untruth—and we pity all such people who have been educated in religious educational institutions belonging to and pertaining to a particular school of thought, religious or sectarian. They are the people from whom truth has been intentionally kept. And the greatest tragedy of the human society is that a large majority of such people have been let loose on us by various churches, established religious bodies and schools of faith. Almost all churches, mosques, temples and other places of worship, and institutions, universities and faculties, are manned by professional men who have been made to grow in barriers of prejudice, who only excel each other in vomiting ritualistic rhetoric and sermons in their lectures.

This whole system is outdated. The man of the future can not be kept from finding the truth. If religion is to play any part in the life of the man of the future, then the present established system of imparting religious knowledge to him must make way for a better system. And as a first step towards that goal, humanity has to learn to change the present breeders of prejudice—the institutions of religious education.
The Muslim World

The Islamic Summit Conference

It is heartening news that the Islamic summit conference held at Mecca in the last week of January attended to the problem of the Iraq-Iran war. This war between two member states of the Islamic Conference is a matter of concern to all those Muslims who have faith in the unity of the Muslim world and in the brotherhood of all Muslims. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) laid the foundations of the brotherhood of man by teaching the concept that "all human beings are one nation." This teaching of the Quran, if followed in letter and spirit, should necessarily make the true followers rise above all creeds of narrow nationalism evolved through the political philosophies of various European scholars. The concept of nationalism based on geographical, cultural and linguistic considerations is a product of man's own thought, and it directly conflicts with the philosophy of the unity of mankind taught by Allah to mankind through the Quranic message that "all men are one nation." Is it not time that the intelligentsia in the Muslim world pay attention to this contradiction between the political thought followed blindly by all Muslim states and the Quranic dicta? If nothing else, the Muslim would should demonstrate its adherence to and respect for the teachings of the Holy Quran by subjugating narrow nationalistic interests to the wider interests of Islamic solidarity. If the Muslim states start fighting against each other in the name of nationalism, be it Arab nationalism, Iranian nationalism, or any other nationalism, then how can they profess to deliver the message of Islam to the rest of the world? This will be an evident contradiction, which is called hypocrisy in modern terminology.

In his Farewell Pilgrimage message, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) had taught, "Do you know that God has made your blood (your lives) and your properties sacred till you meet God as he has made sacred this day?" Is not the killing of Muslims in the Iraq-Iran war a clear violation of the message of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him)? Afghanistan is a different case, as it seems to have become a Russian satellite, like any Eastern European country, but the absence of Egypt, Iran, Libya, etc. from the Islamic summit conference is indicative of disunity amongst the ranks of the Muslim world. It is most tragic in the present world situation. Unity of Muslims was probably never required more than now when the Muslim world has become a playfield for the superpowers' conflict for hegemony. The big question that looms in the Muslim world is, whether political leaders in the Muslim world are capable of rising to the occasion. Only the future will provide the answer.

The continuation of the Iraq-Iran war and the disunity within Muslim ranks raise the important question of looking into the affairs of the Islamic Conference. These indicate that the Islamic Conference, a body created for working for the solidarity and unity of the Muslim world, has proved ineffective first in maintaining peace and unity within the Muslim world and second in restoring peace between two member states. This indicates a loss of some member states' confidence in this important body. It is time to take stock of the situation and take necessary steps to make the body more effective by restoring the confidence of all Muslim states in it. On our part, we have always despised the role of some organs of the Islamic Conference in indulging in issuing fatwas. First Ahmadis were the targets of such fatwas, then gradually the scope and field of such fatwas were extended to various political adversaries in the Muslim world. The Islamic Conference—basically and essentially a forum for generating and maintaining unity amongst the ranks of Muslims in the world—if it allows any of its organs to sow the seeds of dissent, discord and disunity, will be defeating its own objectives. It would be tragic to allow this forum to become the mouthpiece of any select group or particular shade. It must work as a body responsible for watching over and advancing the interests of all Muslims. This will only be possible if it does not fall prey to the wishes and thinking of men bred in the ghettos of narrow-minded prejudices. No one should forget that essentially it is the confidence of member states that guarantees the existence of the Islamic Conference; without this confidence it will die its own death. A rethinking and reshaping of the Islamic Conference is most logically the call of the time.

Obituary: Mr. Muhammad Ahmad

Mr. Muhammad Ahmad, son of Maulana Muhammad Ali, passed away in London, United Kingdom, in the last week of January 1981 of pneumonia. For the last six months Mr. Ahmad had been receiving treatment for a cancerous upper jaw in a UK hospital, and had come to London to continue the therapy just three days before his death.

Mr. Muhammad Ahmad joined the Indian Railway Service after obtaining his M.A. English degree from the Punjab University, and rose to the rank of chief commercial manager of the Pakistan Railway. Mr. Ahmad, who was on leave before retirement, was considered one of the most honest and capable officials of Pakistan Railways, and was responsible for planning and administering the dry port scheme of the Government of Pakistan whereby Pakistan Railways and Pakistan customs jointly rendered facilities of clearance of goods in upcountry areas rather than at Karachi port.

Mr. Ahmad was author of Muhammad Ali, the Great Missionary of Islam, a biography of Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A., L.L.B., and was responsible for the revision of the English as well as the Urdu commentary on the Holy Quran of Maulana Muhammad Ali. He was busy preparing an abridged edition of the English . . . continued on page 8
Man's Aim in Life

(Continued from page 2)

except in God however he might pre-
occupy himself in a hundred and one
pastimes.

The small still voice of conscience
continues to accuse him if he fails to
realize this end. He may be rich or he
might win political power, maybe he is
a big business magnate or he might
even wear a crown or yet become
famous as a thinker and philosopher;
but in the heart of his hearts he never
feels satisfied at his worldly triumphs
and preoccupations, and his con-
science never raises its finger of ap-
proval at his tricks and stratagems.

The highest perfection of a task, at-
tainable by an individual—animate or
inanimate—could legitimately be con-
sidered the cause and object of its
creation. Take the ox. The best of
which it is capable is to carry loads,
pull carts and plow the land and work
the wells. It could do nothing better.
Consequently this alone constitutes
the ultimate purpose of its existence.

But when we direct our scrutiny
to man, we find that it is altogether
a different story. He is capable of reach-
ing dizzy heights in the performance of
so many tasks. But one thing stands
out clear and supreme out of all pro-
portion to the rest of his capacities. It
is the ceaseless and universal human
urge to search for and discover Allah,
the Creator of us all. Once he tastes
the joys of this search, he wants to sur-
render his all to Him and attain a com-
plete identity with Him and His
wishes.

Lower animals share a number of
common instincts with him. Some of
them even excel him in certain tasks.
The bee for instance can extract nectar
from flowers which man has not been
able to do so far. As a matter of fact,
human greatness lies elsewhere. It lies
in the attainment of communion with
God. This alone is the purpose of its
existence.

The question arises: How to realize
this purpose and what are the means to
its fulfillment? Here the Holy Quran is
the best and surest guide.

First of all we must realize and ap-
prehend and know God and have the
right kind of belief in Him. This is the
basis and foundation of all else. We
must, for instance, believe in a God
Who is Perfect, Good, Supreme. All-
Powerful and must not be an imper-
fect and helpless being like an ordinary
man, or an animal or even a blind
natural element. The Holy Quran
gives us detailed knowledge about
God and His divine attributes to which
we shall presently refer.

Secondly we should not only know
that there is God. We should also ex-
perience and be aware of His beauty
for beauty attracts and its contempla-
tion breeds love. Says the Holy Quran
in connection with Divine Beauty, His
Oneness, His Greatness. His inherent
Goodness and others of His attributes:
God is one in His being, attributes
and perfect. He has no co-sharer or
partner, all need Him and He needs
none. All derive life and sustenance
from Him. He is the source of all
bounty and all good. He is no one’s
father nor any one’s son.—Quran.

It is, in fact, the God for which our
hearts yearn and our souls crave. No
dead or weak, or callousatty or ele-
nement of nature could replace Him or
compare with Him.

Thirdly, in order to realize a close
proximity with Him we must have a
true understanding of His attribute
of Ihsan (because love has two mot-
vies, “Husn” and “Ihsan”), beauty and
“the attribute or graciousness.”

In the opening chapter of the Holy
Quran. Almighty God sums up the
Divine attributes which are classified
under Ihsan or Graciousness. Perfect
Ihsan is none other than the fact that
God creates out of nothing and sus-
tains His creatures under all circum-
stances. He alone becomes the source
of all help and succour and manifests
His grace and mercy which encompass
all and which are limitless and infinite.
God reminds us of this kind of Ihsan
again and again. Says He: “If you try
to count the favors to Allah, you will
not be able to number them.”

Fourthly, Prayers—continuous and
with fervor, He says: “You must sup-
plicate and pray before Me and I will
accept them.”

Time and again man is exhorted in
the Holy Quran to offer Prayer so that
he should receive help from God.

Fifthly, Jihad or Mujahida or cease-
less effort, is another means to the
realization of man’s aim. It signifies a
relentless persistence, in the path of
God, to expend money, time, life and
indeed everything we have including
any specialization and excellence we
might have acquired and to spare
nothing in our search to find Him.

For instance, God says: “Exert in
the way of God with all your poses-
sions, property and life and your per-
son with all its capacities and with
everything given to you by God. God
assures such as are capable of putting
in such an effort, that He shall guide
them along the right path.”

Sixthly, Istigamat or steadfastness is
also one of the means to the realiza-
tion of the human goal. Steadfastness
signifies the refusal to accept defeat or
feel tired, despondent and beaten or
to fight shy of the consequent trials for
odds which one has to face. It is in this
context that God says:

“As for those who say Our Lord is
Allah and then remain steadfast, the
angels descend on them, saying: Fear
ye not, nor grieve, and receive glad
 tidings of the Garden which you were
promised. We are your friends in this
life and in the hereafter.”

It is quite clear that steadfastness re-
results in divine pleasure. The fact of
the matter is that steadfastness is more
than a miracle. The highest point or
zenith of steadfastness is that when we
find ourselves hemmed in on all sides
by calamities, when stark danger
stares us in the face and our life and
honor and prestige all are exposed to
serious threat, when there is no silver
lining to the dark clouds which
envelop us, when God, too, tempo-
arily seems to have forsaken us and left
our frail boat to the tender mercies of
the high seas, and even withdraws, as
a matter of trial. His favors (visions and
revelations which are a great source of
solace and peace) when, in fact, we
are left alone against the wide world,
we in spite of all these, refuse to desert
the path of righteousness and retreat
not nor go back on our pledge like a
coward, and keep our loyalties intact

... continued on page 22
The Bible: A Garbled Mixture
Does It Present the True Teachings of Jesus Christ?

By ARFAQUE MALIK

Is the Bible the word of God or is it the word of man? If it is the word of God, how would one explain conflicting and contradicting reports? Could all these contradictions spring from the same source? Is it not time to re-examine the contents of the Bible objectively?

Is it not true that various churches before the days of printing had their own copies of various books of the Old and New Testaments? At first the material was handed down by oral tradition and only later was it written. Could all the copies produced in this manner be exact? The scribes who made them changed the material to suit their own ideas. The text, with the passage of time, was considerably interpolated by embroidery of fantasies and fiction. We shall, in this brief study, examine some of the conflicting reports and leave it to the readers to judge if the Bible is the word of God.

In the fifth chapter of Matthew we find Jesus preaching:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:3–6).

Here Jesus appeals to the poor and poverty-stricken and gives an impression that the successful and the powerful will not inherit the kingdom of God and that heaven is a birthright of the poor. Is not this a deception of a political demagogue who endeavors to get a large following by promising something to the poor? Is not this deception unbecoming to a "son of God" or "God"?

He consoles his followers by saying:

"Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:17–18).

Contrast this with his statement:

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I come not to send peace but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law" (Matt. 10:34–35).

"Could these be statements of the same man?"

Jesus goes on to preach:

"And if thy right eye offend thee pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish and not that thy whole body be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body be cast into hell" (Matt. 5:29–30).

"If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire" (Matt. 18:8–9).

Do the followers of Jesus cast away their eyes and cut off their hands? Perhaps they are only offended by their "left" eyes and "left" hands. Perhaps the eyes and hands used in the hospitals for transplantation are those that have been cast out.

Jesus' teaching on divorce is most unreasonable. Is it a fault of two people that they are unable to live happily together? He says:

"Whoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" (Matt. 5:32).

Why should they be condemned to eternal hell-fire because they divorce each other? Not only are they threatened with hell-fire but the people they marry also commit adultery and are subject to eternal damnation.

"An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" (Matt. 5:38) is a famous Biblical maxim, but so is "Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. 5:39). Obviously both cannot be right. How does this contrast with the philosophy later expressed of setting people against each other (Matt. 10:34–35)? Do the followers of Jesus pay any attention to turning the other cheek? History has preserved examples of intolerant church leaders who have burned at the stake, tortured, imprisoned or massacred those who did not believe exactly as the ill-informed religious leaders believed.

Jesus is said to have taught:

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:14–16).

Here he expressly commands people to show their good works, but later he says:

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 6:1).

Again he expressly commands his followers not to permit their philanthropies to be known. He says:

"Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6:8–9).

How would one explain the conflicting teachings in the above verses?

Another of Christ's philosophies is against thrift and saving. He teaches:

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself" (Matt. 6:34).

If this suggestion is carried out we would have a nation of paupers expecting to be fed from heaven. Sup.

... continued on page 8
The Bible: A Garbled Mixture . . .

continued from page 7

pose everyone followed Christ’s saying:

“Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?” (Matt. 6:25–26).

What will happen? Those unemployed will remain unemployed and the employed will be tempted to get themselves “unemployed.”

At one place Jesus says:

“Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?” (Matt. 6:7).

But in another place he claims:

“If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place: and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Matt. 17:20).

Can the followers of Jesus move even a grain of mustard seed? Do they not have faith? Or is Matt. 17:20 a fanciful assertion? Can this be a teaching inspired by God? Could this have been revealed by God?

Jesus exhorts his followers to seek the kingdom of God (Matt. 5:3, 16:8; Luke 12:34) and for centuries priests and preachers have exhorted their followers to seek the kingdom of God. But what is the kingdom of God? Most of the priests and preachers have different ideas as to what the kingdom of God is. But then what else can we expect? The garbled accounts, exhortations and preachings attributed to Jesus give no idea as to what men are to do to seek the kingdom of God, because many of the statements are conflicting.

It is true that Christian ministers have sought to pick out and magnify certain parts of Biblical philosophy to attract followers, but if they choose to minimize some of Christ’s sayings, that is only an indication that they do not believe in them fully, and again the argument is presented that if one part of the book is fallible or false or erroneous, the whole Bible becomes doubtful.

Certainly it is not a very reverent act for Jesus to tell one of his followers to let his father lie:

“Let the dead bury their dead” (Luke 9:60).

Do the churches follow this commandment? Why is huge revenue spent in conducting funerals?

The followers of Jesus make a capital of Christian love for humanity, but what has the Bible to say? In Matthew 10:21 we read:

“And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death” (Matt. 10:21).

It is impossible to harmonize the two principles.

At one place Jesus is reported to have said:

“But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another” (Matt. 10:23).

But at another place he says:

“Preach ye upon the house tops. And fear not them which kill the body” (Matt. 10:27–28).

What would a disciple do? Of course, this, like all the Biblical injunctions, provides the followers with many “outs” and excuses their doing whatever they want to do.

In the twelfth chapter of Matthew Jesus excuses his disciples for plucking corn on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:1–4) in direct contravention of the teaching laid down in Exodus 31:12–14 which he claimed to have come to “fulfill” and not to “destroy” (Matt. 5:17).

Is it a sign of courteousness or friendliness when his brother and mother come to see him and he refused to recognize them? He said:

“Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?” (Matt. 12:48).

Is it a philosophy of returning good for evil when Jesus says of the people who did not follow him, that the angels would come forth and “shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 13:42).

Jesus being hungry (Matt. 21:18) saw a “fig tree in the way” but as he saw no figs on it, he cursed the tree: “Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth forever” (Matt. 21:19) and commanded the tree to “wither away” (Matt. 21:19). Is it not childish to curse inanimate objects? Is the height of madness to expect figs as it was not the season for bearing figs. What advantage would it be to anyone to spitefully cause the tree to be withered because it was barren?

This is a sample of the garbled mixture that the Bible is composed of. Could this all be true? Could these be the words of God? The fact that the Christians accept all these as God’s inspired words leaves us speechless.

The Muslim World . . .

continued from page 5

translation of the Holy Quran which was to contain brief explanatory notes and was planned to be made available to readers at a reasonably low price. In addition, Mr. Ahmad had collected khatbat (Friday prayer sermons) of Maulana Muhammad Ali. This was a voluminous work because khatbat of about 34 years had to be collected, edited, and arranged by subject. Mr. Ahmad had spent many years on this and was looking forward to giving final shape to and publishing the abridged translation (edition) of the Holy Quran and the khatbat after retirement from the railway service. His untimely death leaves both these projects unaccomplished.

Mr. Muhammad Ahmad was an elected member of the General Council of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam, Lahore, Pakistan, and was continuously elected to it every three years since 1951. He was a member of the Executive Committee and the Foreign Missions Committee of the said Anjuman. His deep interest in and insight into the work of propagation of Islam at the international—nay, world—level endeared him to many people in various lands to whom his death must have come as a great shock. The Islamic Review expresses its sympathies with the family of Mr. Muhammad Ahmad and members of the Ahmadiyya movement in Islam all over the world at the loss of this worthy son of Islam. May Allah grant them the courage to bear the loss of Mr. Ahmad’s death and may Allah rest the soul of Mr. Muhammad Ahmad in peace. Amen.
The Qur’an
In Relation to Earlier Scriptures
By MAULANA MUHAMMAD ALI, M.A., LL.B.

Previous scriptures recognized.

The Holy Qur’an requires a belief not only in its own truth but also in the truth of previous scriptures delivered to the prophets of different nations of the world. At its commencement, it lays down clearly: “And those who believe in that which has been revealed to thee and that which was revealed before thee” (2:4).

The universality of what was revealed before is clearly accepted: “And there is not a people but a warner has gone among them” (35:24). “And every nation had a messenger” (10:47).

Lest anyone should be misled by the names of a few prophets mentioned in the Holy Qur’an, it is stated: “And certainly We sent messengers before thee; there are some of them that We have mentioned to thee and there are others whom We have not mentioned to thee” (40:78; 4:164).

Thus the Holy Qur’an accepts the truth of the sacred books of the world, and hence it is again and again spoken of as a Book verifying that which is before it. The basis of the relation in which the Holy Qur’an stands to other scriptures is, therefore, that they are all members of one family; they all have a Divine origin.

Guardian of previous scriptures.

The Verifier of the sacred books of the world, however, occupies a unique position among them. The relation in which the Holy Qur’an stands to earlier scriptures is thus lucidly set forth by the Holy Book itself: “And We have revealed to thee the Book with the truth, verifying that which is before it of the Book and a guardian over it” (5:48).

The Qur’an is thus not only a verifier of the sacred books of all nations as stated above; it is also a guardian over them. In other words, it guards the original teachings of the prophets of God, for, as elsewhere stated, those teachings had undergone alterations, and only a revelation from God could separate the pure Divine teachings from the mass of error which had grown around it. This was the work done by the Holy Qur’an, and hence it is called a guardian over the earlier scriptures. Of all the scriptures, it has particularly chosen the Gospels to show in what ways erroneous doctrines had almost entirely suppressed the truth preached by a prophet of God. They seem, moreover, to have been chosen as an example, for how could earlier scriptures escape alterations, if the teachings of so recent a prophet as Jesus Christ could not be handed over intact to posterity?

The Qur’an as a judge in existing differences.

The Holy Qur’an further claims that it came as a judge to decide the differences between the various religions: “Certainly We sent messengers to nations before thee. And We have not revealed to thee the Book except that thou mayest make clear to them that about which they differ” (16:63, 64).

As already stated, the Qur’an proclaimed that prophets had been raised in every nation, and, therefore, that every nation had received guidance from God, yet nation differed from nation even in the essentials of faith. The position of the Holy Qur’an was, therefore, essentially that of a judge deciding between these various claimants.

It explains all obscurities.

The most important point to be borne in mind in connection with the relation of the Holy Qur’an to the earlier scriptures is that it makes clear what is obscure in them and explains fully what is there stated briefly. Revelation, according to the Holy Qur’an, is not only universal but also progressive, and it attains perfection in the Final Revelation. A revelation was granted to each nation according to its requirements, and in each age in accordance with the capacity of the people of that age. As the human brain became more and more developed, more and more light was cast by revelation on matters relating to the unseen, on the existence and attributes of the Divine Being, on the nature of revelation from Him, on the requital of good and evil, on life after death, and on paradise and hell. It is for this reason that the Holy Qur’an is again and again called a Book “that makes manifest.” It shed complete light on the essentials of the faith and made manifest what had hitherto of necessity remained obscure.

Perfect Revelation of Divine Will

Further, as a result of what has been said above, the Holy Qur’an claims that it came as a perfect revelation of Divine will: “This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favor to you and chosen for you Islam as a religion” (5:3).

The finality of the Quranic revelation is, therefore, based on its perfection. New scriptures were revealed as long as they were needed, but when perfect light was cast on all essentials of religion in the Holy Qur’an, no prophet was needed after Muhammad. Six hundred years before him, Jesus Christ, who was the last among these national prophets—the Holy Prophet Muhammad being the prophet not of one nation but of the whole world—had declared in plain words that he could not guide the world to Perfect Truth, because the world at that stage was not in a fit condition to receive

...continued on page 10
Q. Don’t you think that by facing towards Ka’ba during prayers, Muslims in fact worship Ka’ba? —Mr. Jack Bridger, Grass Valley, California.

A. It is quite wrong. The assumption in this allegation seems to be that according to the Muslims the Ka’ba is the house of Allah in the sense in which each one of us has a house. This is incorrect. The Holy Quran says: “He pervades the heavens and the earth” and “Whithersoever you turn, there shall you find the face of Allah.” So, according to the Muslims, God is not localized to a particular place or house. When Muslims call Ka’ba a House of God they simply mean the house for the worship of Allah; it was the first house built for the worship of One God (Allah) by the Prophet Adam and thereafter was rebuilt by Prophet Abraham. Hence if facing towards Ka’ba carries any significance for Muslims, it is emphasis on the Unity of God for which Ka’ba stands as a monument. The Holy Quran lays down clearly: “Let them worship the God of this house.” So not the Ka’ba but the one true God for Whose worship it stands is to be worshipped. To all the Muslims all over the world, Ka’ba is a place of worship and not an object of worship. Another significance underlying the rigid uniformity all over the Muslim world regarding facing toward Ka’ba is that by facing in one direction (or one way), a sense of oneness is evidently inculcated in the minds of believers, and its nation-building value is thus obvious. A common center should, moreover, create a feeling of community and brotherhood among the Muslims.

—Abul-Qasim

MUHAMMAD IN WORLD SCRIPTURES
By Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi

A scholarly work in three volumes describing how the scriptures of all the great religions of the world contained predictions for the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. A work the like of which has not been written in the Islamic world so far.

MUHAMMAD THE PROPHET
By Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A., LL.B.

ANECDOTES FROM THE LIFE OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD
By Mumtaz Ahmad Faruqui

Biographies of the greatest man known to the history of mankind.
TAQDIR
or Pre-Measurement in Islam

By the late DR. BASHARAT AHMAD

"He who created everything, then ordained for it a measure (Taqdir)" — The Holy Quran, 25:2

The Islamic doctrine known as Taqdir has unfortunately come to be rendered as “fatalism” in English. The word “Kismat” regarded as a synonym of Taqdir creates a queer feeling in the mind of Western people. Nothing can be farther from reality. The popular conception of fatalism has been the cause of many a misconception about Islamic taqdir. It is no exaggeration to say that the two stand at antipodes, so far as their effect on practical life is concerned.

Whatsoever one may do, right or wrong, whatsoever may befall one, the minutest movement of man and the meanest event of his life has been irrevocably ordained beforehand. His fate is indelibly writ on his forehead and with mathematical exactness too. No amount of effort to the contrary can alter the course of events predetermined by an absolute necessity. This, in a nutshell, constitutes the sum total of the prevalent notion of fatalism. Obviously enough, this unfortunate piece of metaphysics strikes a death-blow at the very root of all morality. Denying the freedom of will in man, it eliminates the factor of individual responsibility from human conduct, and with that vanishes the sense of individual accountability which is the mainspring of moral life. Furthermore, it tends to damp all enthusiasm for progress. If what is to be, must be with the infallible turn of the wheel of fortune, then why at all trouble about it? Thus, the doctrine puts an end to all struggle of life which, in fact, is responsible for every form of advancement. This is the outcome of the doctrine of fatalism. Depriving him of the freedom of will, it reduces man, the lord of creation, to the status of an automaton, dancing on this stage of earthly life to a wire-puller behind the scene. It destroys morality and retards progress.

Islamic taqdir, on the other hand, is an indispensable principle of every form of existence, mineral, vegetable, or animal, as I will attempt to show in the following pages, on the authority of the Holy Quran. According to taqdir man is not born with a destiny. He has to work it out on his own account. Taqdir in Islam is the fly-wheel, so to say, for this vast universe, but for which the gigantic machinery would crash.

The Islamic doctrine wrongly labeled as fatalism goes by the name of taqdir in the theology of that religion. The term fatalism or predestination may more appropriately be substituted by pre-measurement; for this, in fact, is the sense the Arabic word taqdir conveys. We will draw upon the Holy Quran itself to make out what exactly the term taqdir connotes.

In the above verse (25:2), the Holy Quran draws attention to a twofold testimony, pointing to the existence of God—creation and measurement. Just as creation is a clear testimony to the existence of a Creator or First Cause, in like manner the specific measure of capabilities embedded in the nature of things and the specific set of laws they have to obey, furnish an unmistakable clue to the existence of a purposive designing Mind, at work behind the scene. This latter phenomenon betokens the existence of a Being Who has created everything with a set purpose. In order that this purpose may be fulfilled, certain laws have been laid down for each thing to obey. In other words, all creation is purposive, each thing to realize its particular purpose through obedience to particular laws. This is taqdir or pre-measurement, pre-prescribed function for each thing with pre-prescribed laws to discharge it. So far, but no further, is the province of pre-determination in Islam.

Islam claims to be the universal religion of the entire realm of Nature, from the microscopic atoms to the gigantic planets, from the insignificant worm to to sublime man, the lord of creation. The religion of Islam is only another name for the laws of Nature. There is no truth taught by Islam, but finds confirmation in the phenomena of Nature. The law of taqdir or pre-measurement as expounded by Islam is corroborated by every form of existence in Nature. It is, in fact, the basic principle of all existence. The law that everything shall have an express function of its own, thereby promoting the well-being of one another and contributing to the ultimate realization of the single purpose of the whole creation, is writ large on the face of every atom in the universe. Call it by whatever name you will, division of labor, or economy of Nature, it is unmistakably there.

Unity presupposes diversity. That there runs a common purpose throughout the universe, goes without saying. This unity of purpose is not attainable but through diversity of function so far as the component parts are concerned. Needless to labor a point which is a matter of common observation. That an ordinary watch may serve the purpose of showing correct time, each one of its component parts and particles, whether great or small, must have a different function to discharge: the spring, the pivot, the key, must each have an assigned part of its own to play. Sight, hearing, speech, smell, motion, locomotion, intellect and a hundred and one others are the diverse functions that go to make up man as he is. It is in their diversity that lies the utility of things. Sameness can be prolific of no good. A combination of a million eyes, or as many ears or another limb by itself would be a nonsensical juxtaposition, serving no purpose except, perhaps, as a testimony to the tomfoolery of its creator.
In like manner, though on a more extensive scale and in a far more intricate way, each thing in this vast universe has been ordained to fulfill some definite purpose, by innumerable ties connected to other things, served by others and in its turn serving others. This, exactly this, neither more nor less, is the conception of taqdir in Islam—a specified function for each thing and for the matter of that, a specified set of laws suited to the fulfillment of that function. It is to this law of Nature that the Holy Quran draws attention in the following verses:

"And the sun runs on to a term appointed for it; that is the ordinance of the Mighty, the Knowing.

"And the moon. We have ordained for it stages till it becomes again as an old dry palm branch.

"Neither is it allowable to the sun that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day; and all float on in a sphere" (36:38–40).

These verses clearly point out that even the sun has got a revolution of its own round some center, not yet discovered, just as the earth revolves round the sun. This alternation of day and night is also the outcome of a preordained law, the law of rotation. With the advance of scientific investigation in the domain of physical geography, it is now a matter of common knowledge how much we owe to these fixed motions of the earth. In fact, our very life depends upon the regular, uninterrupted working of the system. But what is all this blessing due to? Obviously enough to the fact that neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the earth can go out of its way by a single inch. Chained by the law of taqdir or premeasurement, they keep to their fixed orbits, but for which they would bring about their own destruction by clashing against one another. This is Islamic taqdir or predestination, the vital indispensable principle of existence. Let those in the habit of twisting Islamic doctrines, in season and out of season, ponder.

Quranic verses may be multiplied to show how much this all-important principle of life has been emphasized, in order to drive the truth home. Time and again, man has been reminded that, like the rest of the universe of which he is a part and parcel, he too is intended to fulfill a special object. Now the question might arise as to the express purpose, the end in view, in the creation of man and how to achieve it.

The object in the creation of a thing, it is plain enough, must needs be no other than that for which it possesses the requisite adaptability. The innate capabilities, engraved in the nature of a thing, must therefore be referred to, in order to ascertain the special purpose for which it has been designed. Besides such a reference to the potential properties of a thing, a knowledge of the various ways and means to be adopted, the rules and regulations to be obeyed, is also indispensable for the realization of its set object. It is to allay this anxiety that the Holy Quran thus assures us:

"Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High, Who creates, then makes complete, and Who makes (things) according to a measure, then guides (them to their goal)" (87:1–3).

In these verses man's attention is directed to certain Divine favors which entitle Him to glorification by man. He did not only create things in a haphazard manner, but equipped them with the requisite adaptability to the set of circumstances in which they were placed. Again, He did not only ordain a special function for each thing, leaving it in the dark to grope its way towards the destined end, but also furnished it with the necessary guidance, following which it may attain to its goal. With this Divine assurance let us investigate the particular function Islam has assigned to man to discharge and the particular laws it has laid down for the fulfillment of that object. The above verses show that the object of the creation of man cannot be ascertained but in reference to the set of circumstances in which he has to lead his life and to his latent capabilities. These are the two considerations that must not be lost sight of in determining the proper function of man. In other words, we must find out man's position with regard to the rest of the universe as well as his innate capabilities, upon which alone we can base, according to the verses quoted above, our conclusion as to the object designed for man to realize. For light on these points let us turn to the pages of the Holy Quran again.

As regards the first, viz., man's position in this system of Universe, the Holy Quran has conceived of him in three distinct relations:

1. Man's relation to the rest of the universe.
2. Man's relation to his Creator.
3. Man's relation to his fellow-beings.

Quranic: verdict in respect of man's relation to the universe elevates him to the status of the lord of creation:

"Whatever is contained in the heavens or on the earth has been made subservient to you (man)."

And again: "Verily I am creating a Caliph (God's representative) on earth."

The verses are too eloquent to need comment. Everything in this infinite universe, the sun, the moon, the starry creation, the earth with its teeming life, has been created for the service of man. Further on, he has been spoken of as God's representative on earth. In other words, God has vested man with some of His own powers, in order to enable him to control the forces of Nature and put them to his own use. But this is not all. Even the angels are enjoined to bow to the authority of this human khilafat on earth, if developed in obedience to the Divine dictates revealed from time to time for man's guidance.

Man's position in relation to his fellow-beings has been defined in the verse:

"I am no more than just a man like you."

The words are put in the mouth of the Holy Prophet of Arabia. Human equality constitutes the cardinal doctrine of Islam. Islam knows no distinctions of caste, color or clime. Under the universal Providence of One God, Islam recognizes only one universal brotherhood of humanity. So far as human rights and obligations are concerned, no line is drawn between the high and the low. Even the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace be on him!) is made to confess, with all his sublimity of personality, that there was nothing superhuman in him.

Then comes man's relation to his Creator:

"I created man nor jinn but for the sole purpose of worshipping me" (13:35).

Divine worship, it must be pointed out, has suffered grave misconceptions, like so many other Islamic notions. Let there be no misunderstanding as to the true purpose of worship. Divine worship does not aim but at the elevation and edification of man himself. Its performance by man cannot add a jot, any more than its neglect can detract from God, Who is self-sufficient and perfect in every respect. To this effect says the Holy Quran:

"O man! Worship your Lord Who created you and those before you so that you may attain purity of life."
Purity of character, when attained through Divine worship, leads to that state of mind known as celestial life, as the Holy Quran says:

"The likeness of the paradise that has been promised to the pure of life..." (13:35).

What clouds of misconception overhang the notion of paradise requires a separate discussion. It may suffice to point out in this connection that according to a report from the Holy Prophet it consists of blessings the eyes have never seen, nor the ears have heard, nor the tongue has tasted, nor the mind has fancied. It is therefore unfair to compare its enjoyment to our worldly enjoyments. As a matter of fact Muslim paradise is a state of mental bliss, experienced by the virtuous in this very life, which will assume a more palpable form in the life hereafter when the human soul, freed from the prison of this corporeal frame, will no longer have to perceive things through physical sense-organs. This handicap will cease to limit the sphere of human experience, and things now conceived as abstract experiences will put on a more tangible form. (See *Hell and Heaven* by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din). This, however, is a digression. To revert to the point under discussion, Divine worship is a means of human purification consisting in cheerful submission to Divine Will on the part of man, under all circumstances and resulting in qualifying men for a life of eternal bliss.

The Holy Quran has thus enlightened us as to the various relations in which man stands to the rest of the universe, to his fellow-beings and to his Creator. Each of these relations, we have seen, devolves upon him a corresponding obligation. To subjugate and rule over the entire universe, to meet his fellow-men on terms of scrupulous equality and to tender cheerful resignation to the Will of God, is the only object of man's life in Islam. Or to speak in technicalities, this is his *taqdir*, the definite measure of function ordained for him to discharge.

But this is not enough to conclude our quest after the human *summum bonum*. We must know for certain that man has been endowed with the necessary capabilities to acquire himself in his various positions. As we have already pointed out, a thing must possess the indispensable adaptability to the purpose of its creation. Is man equipped with the qualities necessary for the due discharge of the various functions the Holy Quran has fixed for him? Let us address the question to the Holy Book itself, which claims to be a perfect guidance. As to the latent powers of man, it gives us emphatic assurance in the words:

"Verily We created man in the best of mold" (95:4).

And again:

"Verily We offered the trust to heavens and earth and mountains; but all refused to undertake the responsibility and dreaded it; man, however, accepted it, for he possessed the power to put himself to task (for God's sake) and of losing himself in Divine love" (33:72).

These verses furnish conclusive testimony to the vast capabilities ingrained in the nature of man, enabling him to undertake responsibilities which the most stupendous of creation dare not accept. The *trust* referred to here consists in the hundred and one faculties of man, both physical and spiritual, his passions, his will, his strength of body and of mind. These Divine blessings have been aptly spoken of as *trust*, for all of these capabilities have to be solely dedicated to the ways of Allah. Dissipation of them would mean a betrayal of Divine trust. It is to this effect that the Holy Quran says:

"Verily God enjoins upon you to make over the trust to whom it legitimately belongs" (4:58).

Man is not the sole master of his physical and spiritual faculties, to make or mar them at his own sweet will. He is no more than a mere trustee of every form of Divine blessing on him. His position as such requires that he should consecrate these blessings one and all to the exclusive service of God. He must lose himself in the Will of God, and the verse says he possesses the power to do so. In obedience to Allah's Will, he has got the capacity to curb his passions and entirely forget himself. A glance at Islamic history reveals the fact that instances of a practical illustration of this virtue of losing self in God are neither few nor far between.

Now we come to the consideration as to whether the Holy Quran has furnished any guidance to man for the realization of the object of his creation, as promised in the verse. In other words, we have to ascertain the various laws, obeying which man may succeed in discharging his specified function. How should he regulate his faculties, so as to fulfill the Divine trust reposed in him? Human faculties may be divided into two classes, controllable and uncontrollable, i.e., those he can exercise at his will and those which must work in spite of him. The faculty of speech, for instance, falls under the first category. He may make it use of it for good or for evil, just as he would. But the faculty of taste is beyond such a control. He cannot make it report sour as sweet or vice versa. The operation of the whole of the internal system, of heart, of stomach, of liver, belong to the automatic class of faculties.

As regards guidance for such faculties, it is not far to seek. They work automatically in implicit submission to the laws of nature, discharging their respective functions on their own account. The science of dealing with this branch of human organism is known as physiology. Neither man nor God holds one accountable for these functions, which are not within the province of his volitional control:

"God does not saddle any one with responsibility beyond his capacity" (2:286).

But there is a vast sphere of human activities where man's will enjoys freedom of control and direction. There it is that man is held responsible and accountable for the right or wrong exercise of his faculties. It is therefore a matter of the deepest concern to man to ascertain the rules and regulations which should guide his conduct in that sphere. To supply this need, God has endowed man with two weapons wherewith to chalk out the right course for himself—intellect and revelation.

Out of the three functions designed for man to discharge, as already enumerated, the first, viz., subjugation of the universe, can adequately be achieved by discovering the laws of nature through the weapon of intellect. The science dealing with an explanation of these laws goes by the name of natural philosophy. The wonderful achievements of modern science are but a slight manifestation of the intellectual might of man. This also constitutes partial acquisition of *khilafat* on earth. This *khilafat* is obtainable through purely intellectual exertions and is commensurate to the mastery one may obtain over the forces of nature. The Holy Quran does in no way belittle the importance of human domination over nature, as unfortunately not a few of the Muslims of the day are inclined to think. On the other hand strong impetus is intended to be given to exploitation of the realm of nature in the verses.
“Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for men of understanding. 

“Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain! glory be to Thee! save us then from the chastisement of the fire!” (3:189–190).

Attention has been directed in these verses to the truth that the more we ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth, the alternation of night and day, the greater conviction takes hold of our mind that this vast universe contains nothing that we cannot turn to some account or other.

The conviction, Thou hast not created this in vain, forms the foundation of all scientific progress. If we fail to derive some benefit from a thing, it is due to our own lack of knowledge. The thing in itself is not devoid of some good or other to mankind. Man is thus encouraged to carry on research in the realm of nature, acquire knowledge of its laws, and he shall find that there is naught that cannot be of some avail or other to him. The phenomenal success modern scientific civilization has achieved in the exploitation of nature is solely due to the faith in the utility of all creation, as inculcated in this part of the verse. But the Holy Quran could not content itself with stirring man to materialistic progress to the disregard of certain undesirable consequences that inevitably follow in its wake. Dazzled with the glimmer and glitter of material achievements, one is apt to regard them as all-in-all, forgetting God, the real source of all these blessings. Thus taking a materialistic turn, the human heart tends to degenerate into bestiality, evils such as greed and licentiousness stealing therein. The Western unGodly civilization of the day, with its mania for self-aggrandizement ensuing in pillage, bloodshed, arson and a hundred and one other miseries is a concrete illustration of such one-sided progress. The Holy Quran which emanates from an All-Wise source has rightly forewarned man in the concluding portion of the verse—“then save us from the chastisement of fire”—lest he should, in the hour of his triumph and felicity, lose sight of his Creator and thereby convert his own handiwork into a veritable hell.

Man does not live by bread alone. It forms only part of his function, as already discussed, to obtain supermacy over nature. He has a higher purpose to fulfill. He has to work out his moral and spiritual evolution through his dealings with his fellow-men and his Creator. He owes it to one to mete out equitable treatment and to the other to submit with cheerful resignation. This is a sphere where human intellect by itself is not adequate to ensure propriety of conduct. Man’s obligations towards man and God involve complications too delicate for unaided human reason. Besides an intellectual error in this sphere would ensue in the violation of human or Divine rights. Hence the absolute necessity of direct guidance from God to make up for the frailties of reason. Just as a telescope or a microscope helps the naked eye in perceiving what was otherwise too distant or too minute, similarly Divine revelation comes to the assistance of human reason to enlighten man as to the laws that ought to regulate his relation to man and God. The laws thus revealed go by the name of a Divine Book or a Religious Code. In obedience to these laws, man can discharge his functions and attain the summum bonum of his life. Virtue and sin are only other names for the observance or violation of these laws. The Holy Quran has laid great emphasis on obedience to these laws, which is conducive to human happiness and peace of mind. Contravention of these engenders mental anguish. Laws pertaining to interhuman relations have been summed up in the following verse:

“Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion; He admonishes you that you may be mindful” (16:90).

’Adl consists in giving each one his just due. Ihsân requires doing good even in the case which does not deserve it. Itâ’i zil-qurba enjoins kindness to others, as spontaneously and affectionately as in the case of blood relations. Just as a mother loves and looks after her child out of pure maternal love, even so does Allah want us to show our sympathy to our fellow-beings, regardless of reward or gratitude. These are the positive virtues laid down to be practiced. Then come the sins to be shunned. Fa’isha or manifest evil: this comprises all the evils one commits simply to gratify his low carnal desires, which are limited in their effect to the doer himself. Munkar is the evil whose effect extends to others and involves an encroachment upon others’ rights. Baghy is the evil that tends to have a prejudicial effect upon the government of the country.

In a single verse the Holy Quran has condensed volumes of ethical code. What a man ought and what he ought not to do, in relation to his fellow-men, has been beautifully and pitily set down. The various forms of evil, beginning with the one limited in its effect to the individual doer himself, and gradually leading up to violation of other’s rights, and consummating in disturbing the peace of the country, exhaust the entire range of human wrongs. Abstention from evil, however, falls at best under the head of Negative Virtues. Edification of man, which is the sole purpose of Islam, could not be achieved by such half-measures. In the same breath, therefore, a code of Positive Virtues has been laid down. Respecting the rights of others is the minimum; we must be charitable to others, regardless of recompense in any shape. But not even so far. We must rise to the plane where charity and kindness to others may attain the characteristic of a spontaneous outpouring of the heart. Let it not escape critical notice that the whole process of man’s elevation from a self-seeking bestial stage is so accurately marked by what may be called the various stages of moral evolution. Graduation between the lowest point, abstinence from the harmful to one’s self, to the highest rung, spontaneous charity, is so true to nature. Step by step the moral infant is led from state to stage, falling here, stumbling there; yet rising each time, day by day, gaining strength to climb higher and higher till he attains the pinnacle of moral glory. Egoism is supplanted by altruism of the highest order.

But Islam has an unending, an infinite progress in store for man. It is but a humble flight of the human soul to break open the prison of the self to roam about in the sphere of humanity at large. Losing the self in humanity is only a stepping-stone to a yet higher plane. From the ashes of the love of humanity has to rise the love of Divinity, the self to merge into God. This is the millennium presented by Islam—at-one-ment with the Creator. Thus says the Holy Quran:

“Say: my prayer, my sacrifice, my life, my death, is for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. None there is His equal. With this am I enjoined and I am the first to submit.”

Divine love must now be the main-
spring of human conduct. All other motives, however noble in themselves, must sink into insignificance before this all-absorbing passion of Divine love. Man shall at this stage owe allegiance to none but to the Creator of the infinite universe. Him alone shall he worship. Whatever sacrifice he might make, must be for the sole object of winning favor with Him. In the entire course of his life, with all its ups and downs, Divine Love must be the one and only guiding principle. In the thick and thin of life, whether fortune should smile or frown on him, in fair weather as in foul, Divine Love must be the keynote of his life. A king or a subject, a peasant or a prince, in whatever station of life, high or low, Divine Love must be the burden of each and every item of his conduct.

The Universal Cherisher of all, the Creator of the Universe, should be the only object of his life. No vicissitude of life, neither sunshine nor storm, should deter him from the pursuit of this one object. This is the ultimate purpose for which man, according to Islam, has been destined. In other words, this is the taqdir or pre-measurement of man.

The Blessings of Misfortunes

“And We will most certainly try you with some trials of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits, and give good news to the patient, who, when a misfortune befalls them, say: Surely we are Allah’s, and to Him we shall surely return. Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the followers of the right course” (2:155–157).

A superficial critic of the doctrine of taqdir may raise the point, to support the theory of fatalism, why these heart-rending scenes of human suffering, if not due to some preordained absolute necessity? Death, disease, famine, fire, starvation, wailing widows and orphans, groaning naked destitute beggars, and quite a host of this or that canker eating into the body or mind of man. There is not an individual, male or female, high or low, that has not a sad tale of his own. There is not a pleasure but has a dark fringe of sorrow and grief about it. And look at the anomaly! A helpless widow is robbed of the little she has to eke out her existence on, and the knave escapes scot-free. It is this state of things that has driven the fatalist to attribute every occurrence to an absolute necessity. And consequently his frame of mind looks at the course of events with cynical indifference. The inevitable must happen in spite of human efforts to the contrary, even setting at naught the settled course of cause and effect. From the data of sufferings which to him are unaccountable, he arrives at the conclusion, far more general than the original premises would warrant, that every event of human life has been unalterably sealed beforehand, and hence the futility of exertion to achieve pleasure or avoid pain. That Islam pooh-poohs this idle view, we have said enough to show while discussing the true conception of taqdir in Islam; when we come to deal with the Freedom of Human Will, we would attempt to throw further light on the point. What we want to point out here is the difference in the concrete effect on a fatalist and a Muslim. From the same phenomenon, the experience of sufferings, they arrive at conclusions diametrically opposed. To a fatalist they betoken a capricious, angry and inexorable deity. To a Muslim they serve as a message of yet brighter future. In the one they engender a pessimistic mood of mind, in the other they foster an optimistic vein. They degenerate the one and sublimate the other.

Islam has hallowed misfortunes with a grace of their own. Nay, it regards them as the indispensable groundwork for all moral superstructure. They form the very material necessary to bring the latent powers of human mind into play, but for which no mental development is possible. A seedling may contain a gigantic oak in potential form; but the actual oak will not grow up, unless the seedling should pass through many a process. Some external conditions must be there or the potential will never become the actual. Suitable soil, suitable climatic conditions, proper watering and manuring, and quite a number of other necessaries must be forthcoming, that the oak in embryo may rise to be what it is. Exactly so is the case with the various virtues lying dormant in the nature of man, awaiting suitable conditions to find manifestation. An anchorite, for instance, away from the trials and temptations of social life, can hardly boast of virtues such as chastity, sympathy, generosity and so forth. One who has never been in the heat of the battle or braved the brunt of it, is in no way entitled to the proud epithet of “daring.” And, as a matter of fact, man’s greatness of character is just in proportion to the situations met, the hardship undergone, the obstacles surmounted, the temptations resisted and the passions curbed. It is this lesson that the above Quranic verses teach. The Arabic word ibtâlah, rendered as “trial” in English, signifies manifestation of what is hidden.

The various inflictions enumerated above are intended to bring out various traits of man’s character. Virtues such as patience, forbearance, resignation, faithfulness, can have only one nursery, the nursery of sufferings, hardships, and tribulations. It is thus in the best interests of man himself that he is put under such-like trials. If manfully borne, one emerges purer, loftier and stronger, from the furnace of troubles.

A Muslim is enjoined in these verses to display cheerful resignation to the will of God, under hardships however trying. “For God we are, to God we return,” a Muslim must say under such circumstances. These are the words a Muslim never fails to utter as soon as he hears about the death of another. What a consolation under conditions when the bravest may lose heart! It may not be without interest to compare, in passing, the saying—Dust thou art, to dust returnest—which sums up the Christian outlook on life. The Quran, however, has a more sublime destiny for man: “For God we are, to God we return.” Those possessing such a submissive frame of mind under adverse circumstances, “On them,” says the Holy Quran, “are the blessings and the mercy of God.” Islam has thus transmuted misfortunes into blessings. It has imparted to miseries a deeper meaning. With Islam, a calamity is a mercy in disguise. Alive to the Divine purpose in inflicting hardships on him, a Muslim’s breast pulsates with yet greater hope, while a fatalist may get deeper into the slough of despondency and content himself with cursing his stars. “For God we are, to God we return” are the words on every Muslim’s lips in time of loss, pain or calamity of any kind. His resignation is cheerful; nay, he is enjoined to offer even gratitude for whatever may befall him. At the funeral of his father, the very first words a bereaved son utters are “All praise to God who is the Nourisher, the Sustainer and the Evolver of all”; for he looks upon the incident as a means of his own upliftment.

Misfortunes in Islam are in no way incompatible with the doctrine of taqdir, as the fatalist may take it to be. If taqdir has fixed a certain object for
man, misfortunes pave the way to the realization of the object.

It may not be out of place to deal with just the opposite phase of human life, with a view to show its bearing on the doctrine of taqdir. Just as misfortunes and calamities are so many opportunities to bring out the dormant virtues of the human soul in like manner, felicity, ease and plenty that fall to the lot of some in this life are also means to the same end:

"O believers! Let not your wealth and your children make you forget God" (63:9).

Prosperity and plenty are perhaps more potent in turning away man from God than misfortunes. They lull him to security and foster a sense of self-sufficiency. Why should he turn to God? Or, what is the same, he may make these very blessings of God instrumental in encroaching upon the rights of others and thus change them into a curse for himself.

And again:

"Your possessions and your children are only a trial, and Allah it is with Whom is a great reward" (74:15).

The Arabic word fitna, rendered as "trial" here, signifies the process of purifying gold of whatever dross it may contain by putting it into fire. Man's property and his offspring are here spoken of as a furnace to purify him of his shortcomings. Love of either may stand in the way of his responding to the call of his higher nature. In the sacrifice of these at the altar of Divine Will lies the secret of his self-elevation. But what a pang the wrench of either involves, is not an uncommon experience. In respect of fury, it is a veritable furnace to put aside either the love of children or of wealth. But this in fact is the very gateway through which man must pass in order to realize his higher self. Thus it is that his character is purified of the alloy of low sordid attachments.

It is thus obvious that prosperity and plenty are as much a means of self-culture as misfortunes. They are no more than mere opportunities for the manifestation of various qualities of the human soul, which would otherwise remain dormant. It makes therefore no material difference, so far as the human taqdir or his summum bonum is concerned, whether a man is elevated with one kind of lever or another, for both are meant for the sole purpose of human edification. Each man is undergoing the process of a test in this life. It is of vital moment to him, no doubt, that he should acquit himself creditably. But it counts little what kind of material he is tested with. If, for instance, a child were to be trained in the skill of counting, it would make no difference whether he is given pebbles or pounds to practice the process. Let him be correct at counting, even though with pebbles, and up will he go, while his class-fellow, with sovereigns to handle but bad at counting, must keep back.

Islam thus looks upon felicity and adversity as means to a common end—self-sublimation. Whether they will ultimately turn out to be for the real good of man or his evil, depends solely upon the way in which he may acquit himself under these circumstances. Man is the undisputed master of his own destiny, the passing vicissitudes of life providing only the material with which to work out his destiny. In themselves adversity and prosperity constitute neither good nor evil. By an irony of fate, however, as one would put it in common parlance, the means have been mistaken for the end. Avoidance of the one and achievement of the other have come to be regarded as the ultimate goal of human life.

Freedom of Will

Whether man is absolutely free to choose between right and wrong is the main point upon which hangs the whole issue. The psychologist may have his own discussion whether or not man's will is influenced by external and internal circumstances such as heredity, environments, education, physical health and so forth. We are not concerned in our present discussion with the correctness or otherwise of his conclusions. What we want to ascertain is the verdict of Islam on the point. The Holy Quran has not left this all-important problem untouched. It has positively declared man's undisputed right to make a choice between good and evil. Again and again the point has been emphasized to drive the idea home to man, lest he should forget his own responsibility for his conduct. In fact the whole trend of Quranic ethics points in this direction:

"Say, the Truth is from your Lord, whosoever may wish he may believe and whosoever may wish he may disbelieve" (18:29).

God has simply pointed out the right course. Whether that may or may not be followed, is left to man himself to choose. He refrains from any interference with the free choice of man. Again:

"Verily We have shown him (man) the (right) path; he may be grateful or ungrateful" (76–3).

There is no compulsion, on the part of God, brought to bear upon man to adopt this course or that. Yet again:

"Verily this is a reminder to the peoples; for those of you who wish to take the right course" (73:19).

Here too man has been let alone in the matter of selection. Further on:

"It is for God only to furnish strong proof, and if He allowed His wish to influence man, He would have guided all" (16:9).

Denial of interference cannot be made in clearer terms. If He were so pleased as to thrust His own wish upon man, He would not have let a single one go astray. To the same effect the Holy Quran says:

"If God determined things of His own wish, He would have made all men as one religious nation" (42:8).

That is, He would have brought together the whole of humanity to the same path—the path of righteousness. But He has so ordained that He shall in no way bring any pressure to bear upon man to incline him this way or that. Man is the sole master of himself. He must steer his ship on his own account, whether to a haven of safety or against a rock of destruction.

It would not be out of place to refer in this connection to a few misunderstandings having a direct bearing on the problem in hand, arising merely out of ignorance of the real significance of certain expressions in the Holy Quran. For instance, the verse:

"He (God) leads astray therewith (with the Holy Quran) many and guides therewith many" (2:26).

It is argued on the strength of such-like statements that God deliberately guided some and misled others. God, in other words, is held responsible for the doings of man. The authors of this calumny against Islam must bear in mind that the Holy Quran, which claims to be a guidance for the whole world, could not in the same breath give utterance to a statement quite contradictory. How can it serve as a guidance for the whole of the human race if, as it is taken to mean, it aims at misleading many? It cannot at once guide and misguide people. There are no contradictions in the word of God. The fault lies with the shallow knowledge of the interpreter. The verse simply regrets that the Holy Quran, which was meant for the guidance of people, was made by some an occasion to go astray. Let it be noted that the Quran does not play the part of an effi-
cient cause to mislead some people, but they themselves make it an occasion for themselves to go wrong. Such constructions are not infrequently used in the Holy Quran itself. The words put in the mouth of the Prophet Noah: "My preaching did not increase them but in running off" (71:6) amply illustrate the point. Obviously enough, Noah's preaching, which was intended for their good, could not be the cause of their apathy; it only became an occasion for their turning away. Noah preached to them with a view to draw them to his own ways. They, however, turned a deaf ear to his exhortations out of obstinacy and prejudice. Thus, instead of coming round to the path of truth, they grew in aversion. The preaching of Noah is in no way responsible for their attitude. In the same way the Holy Quran cannot be said, to the disregard of clear testimony to the contrary, to have misled people. Another verse usually picked out for hostile criticism runs thus: "Surely those who disbelieve, it being alike to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, will not believe. Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and there is a covering over their eyes, and there is a great chastisement for them" (2:6, 7).

The sense of these verses is misconstrued to amount to this: Because God has set a seal on their hearts and upon their hearing, it is therefore in vain for you to warn them. It is then argued that God Himself has deprived them of their faculties. Why? To hold them responsible if they do not listen to the call of Truth. This is again a case of misinterpretation. The true significance of the verses points to the admitted law of nature that whichever faculty should suspend discharging its own function, the time shall by and by come when it will get totally atrophied. If the hand, for instance, is not put to use, and not a few Hindu ascetics subject themselves to this form of rigor, the limb is sure to lose all vitality, and no amount of care will then do it any good. Exactly the same is the case with every other faculty—physical, mental or moral. If the heart, the eye or the ear is not regularly exercised, it will gradually grow unfit for the discharge of its true function. This is what the verses say. If the opponents are such as have made up their minds not to listen to you at all, they will get, according to the law of nature, deprived of their faculties of head and heart. It is their own neglect that has brought about the loss of their mental faculties. Why should the blame be laid at the door of the Divine Being? It is unfair to single out a verse here and a verse there, put thereon a wrong interpretation, and then jump to the conclusion that the God of Islam thrusts His own will upon man.

Another common objection against the freedom of human will is put thus: God knows beforehand all the events of the world, as also who will do good and who evil, what will befall one and what another. God's knowledge being perfect, everything must inevitably happen accordingly. Where, then, is the room for a free choice of man between right and wrong? Such an objection is the outcome of ignorance of Divine attributes. It is a truism that an event gives birth to the knowledge of the event, and not vice versa. In other words, knowledge is the outcome and hence not the cause of an event. To illustrate the point, it is only when John has murdered Jack, that a third person, Jill, gets knowledge of the murder. It is inconceivable that Jill should have knowledge of the murder unless it has actually taken place. It is ludicrous to imagine that such a knowledge on the part of Jill has constrained John to commit murder. In this case it is Jill, whose knowledge has compelled John, and not the latter that ought to be sent to the gallows. It is plain that knowledge cannot be the cause of an event, but its outcome. Now, the knowledge of God, unlike that of man, is not limited by time. It comprises the future as much as the present and the past. He is beyond the human limitations of time and space. What is past or future in human sphere is present to Him. Just as man gets knowledge of a past event, He can have cognizance of a future event as well. But the fact remains that knowledge is the outcome of the event, in the case of God as in that of man. But we have shown that knowledge can in no wise be said to have been the cause of the event. It would be a funny perversion of the natural order of things. The knowledge of God, therefore, cannot be said to have compelled the coming about of the event; for knowledge springs from the occurrence. The event, though yet to happen in the future from the human point of view, is to Him as present. The Holy Quran aptly speaks of the Divine knowledge in the metaphor of a book. A book holds all the knowledge contained therein at one and the same time. It is the reader in relation to whom the notions of past, present and future arise. The portion of the book he has gone through has become to him as past, that he is reading is the present, and that he has as yet to study, the future. But it must be marked that the book itself is above such considerations. To it all knowledge it comprises is present knowledge. In like manner the knowledge of God is all-comprehensive, whether past, present or future. He holds it all at one and the same time. Like the reader of the book, the limitations of past, present or future are conceivable only in relation to man. To God is attributed Omnicience. All the events are as if just now before His eyes. Thus His knowledge is as much the product of the events as that of man. It is therefore absurd to argue that His knowledge is in any way responsible for the various events of life. His knowledge, like human knowledge, exerts no compulsion to bring about the event, which is already there, to Him. Man himself is responsible for his deeds; Divine knowledge does not interfere with his privilege to exercise his will as he would.

The Conclusion

To recapitulate, the conception of taqdir in Islam amounts to this. God has created everything on a particular measure which is determined by the function the object is intended to discharge. Consequently it has been endowed with appropriate faculties, as also with the capacity to observe certain laws by obedience to which it may achieve its end. The whole system of the universe having a single object to fulfill, it is indispensable that the component parts, in order to be useful to one another, should vary in respect of their respective functions. Man, who is a part and parcel of the universe, must therefore have his own position in the system, his own faculties, his own capabilities, his own end to serve, and his own obligations to discharge. To seek light on the various points concerning him we turn to the pages of the Holy Quran, and we find that in relation to the rest of the universe, man occupies the position of the overlord. He has to subjugate and put it to his own service. As regards interpersonal relations, the Holy Book assigns a common platform for all, the high and the low. Universal brotherhood of man, irrespective of caste, color or clime, under the common Providence of Allah, the Creator, the Nourisher . . . continued on page 22
Debts and Mortgage

By MAULANA MUHAMMAD ALI, M.A., LL.B.

1. "When you deal with each other in contracting a debt for a fixed time, write it down... and let him who owes the debt dictate" (2:282).

2. "And if you are upon a journey and you do not find a scribe, then a security may be taken into possession" (2:283).

3. "Allah has allowed trading and forbidden usury" (2:275).

4. "And if the debtor is in straithness, then let there be a postponement until he is in ease; and if you remit it as alms it is better for you, if you knew" (2:280).

Lending and borrowing are a necessary condition in human transactions, and the rules relating to them are laid down in the Holy Qur'an. Every such transaction should be written down, and the writing should be dictated by the person who owes the debt (v. 1). This latter direction guards against injustice being done to the debtor. Mortgaging of property is also allowed (v. 2), but the apparent condition of being on a journey or being no scribe is simply a statement of the difficulties under which it becomes a necessity. The carrying on of a trade and drawing profit therefrom is placed on a different footing from lending money on interest, the first being the fruit of labor while the latter leads to ease and inordinate love of wealth (v. 3). A debtor in straitened circumstances must be dealt with leniently, and if he is unable to pay, the debt should be remitted (v. 4).

Contracting debts was discouraged, and in his prayers the Holy Prophet sought refuge from being in debt as well as sin (h. 1). When a bier was brought to him and he was told that the dead one had died in debt and had left nothing for payment thereof, he refused to conduct the service personally until someone undertook the payment of his debt (h. 2). Contracting a debt when a man did not intend to pay it is denounced (h. 3), and the Holy Prophet's anxiety to pay his debts is shown in h. 4. Granting respite to a debtor and the remission of debt when the debtor is in straitened circumstances is recommended (B. 34:17).

Payment in excess of the actual sum which a person owes is not interest; on the other hand, it is considered goodness (h. 5). Deferring payment by one who has the means is condemned as unjust (h. 6), and may even be punished (h. 7). The Muslim state is required to pay the debts of those who contract debts due to need; it must even maintain uncared-for families (h. 8). Mortgaging of property as security for payment of debt is allowed, and the mortgagee is allowed to derive benefit from it (h. 9, 10). The case of insolvent is dealt with in h. 11, 12. Usury, even interest, is forbidden, but it is prophesied that a time would come when people generally would be involved in it (h. 13-15).

"When a man is in debt he speaks and tells lies, and he promises and breaks the promise." (B. 43:10).

2

Salamah reported,
A bier was brought to the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, that he may say funeral prayers over it. He said: "Was he in debt?" They said, No. So he said prayers over it. Another bier was brought to him and he said: "Was he in debt?" They said, Yes. He said: "Say prayers over your companion." Abu Qatadah said, I will pay his debt, O Messenger of Allah! So he said funeral prayers over it.* (B. 39:3)

*The Holy Prophet did not forbid the saying of funeral prayers over the bier of a person who was in debt. By refusing to say prayers himself, he wanted only to discourage the habit of contracting debts when one had not the means to pay. According to another version of the same hadith (B. 31:3), the Holy Prophet said funeral prayers over a person who was in debt but who had left property from which the debt could be paid. As shown further on (h. 8), the Holy Prophet himself undertook the payment of the debts of those who died in debt later on, when the state treasury had the means to pay them.

1 'A'ishah said,
The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, used to pray, while saying prayers, and to say: "O Allah! I seek refuge in Thee from sin and from being in debt."

Someone asked him, How often dost thou, O Messenger of Allah! seek refuge from being in debt. He said:
deprives them of the noblest human sentiments. Hence they are said to be the poorer.

The narrator, while saying thus and thus, moved his hands right and left, to show that wealth must be given away liberally if one has the good fortune to possess it.

“Hudhaifah said, The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said: ‘The angels met the soul of a man from among those who were before you, (and) they said, Hast thou done any good? He said, I used to give respite to the one in easy circumstances and forgive one who was in straitened circumstances. So they forgave him.’” —Ed.

4 Abu Hurairah reported.

The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said:

“Whoever contracts a debt intending to repay it, Allah will pay it on his behalf,” and whoever contracts a debt intending to waste it, Allah will bring him to ruin.” (B. 43:2)

*The significance is that Allah grants him the means to pay it.

5 Jabir said.

I came to the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, while he was in the mosque; so he said:

“Say two rak’ahs of prayer.” And he owed me a debt; so he paid it to me and gave me more (than was due).* (B. 43:7)

*Thus, if the debtor of his own free will gives more than what is due, it is not usury or interest.

6 Abu Hurairah said,

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said:

“Delaying the payment of debt by a well-to-do person is injustice.” (B. 43:12)

7 The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, is reported to have said:

“Deferring payment by one who has the means to pay legalizes his punishment and his honor.”* (B. 43:13)

*The legalization of ‚irdz (honor) is the using of harsh words, and that of ‚uqabah (punishment) is imprisonment (B. 43:13). Thus it is only the rich man who can be sent to prison for refusing to pay his debt; regarding the man in straitened circumstances, the law of Islam is that recommended in B. 34:17—the debt should be remitted. [This latter hadith reads:

4 Abu Dharr said,

I was with the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him. When he saw (the mount) Uhd, he said:

“I do not like that this (mountain) should be turned into gold for me, then there should remain with me one dinar out of it beyond three days, except a dinar which I should keep for payment of a debt.”

Then he said:

“The wealthier are the poorer except he who gives away wealth thus and thus, and they are very few.”** (B. 43:3)

*To get more and more wealth becomes a passion with wealthy people, and this passion

8 Abu Hurairah reported,

The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said:

“Whoever leaves property, it is for his heirs; and whoever leaves a burden, it shall be our charge.”* (B. 43:11)

*Kall (burden) includes both a family to maintain and debts to be paid. It is thus the Muslim state that is required to undertake both the maintenance of uncared-for families and the payment of unpaid debts.

9 ‘A’ishah said.

The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, bought food from a Jew for payment to be made at an appointed time, and he mortgaged for it a coat-of-mail made of iron. (B. 43:1)
Abu Hurairah said,
The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said:

"The mortgaged animal may be used for riding, when it is mortgaged, on account of what is spent on it, and the milk of a milked animal may be drunk when it is mortgaged, and the expenditure shall be borne by him who rides (the animal) and drinks (the milk)."* (B. 48:4)

*Hh. 9 and 10 show that the law relating to mortgage as laid down in the Holy Quran (v. 2) is not limited to cases when one is journeying or when there is no scribe. The law is a general one, the only limitation being that the property mortgaged shall be in the possession of the mortgagee. This hadith shows that when a person has to spend money on the thing mortgaged, he is entitled to derive benefit from it. Hence a house or land can be mortgaged subject to the condition that the possession shall be made over to the mortgagee who is entitled to live in the house or let it on hire, if he carries out the repairs, and to till the land and have the produce of it if he spends on it.

13 A'ishah said,

When the verses of the chapter al-Baqarah, relating to usury, were revealed, the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, went forth to the mosque and recited them to the people, then he forbade trading in intoxicating liquors.* (B. 8:73)

*Parts of the verses referred to here are quoted above (vv. 3, 4). In v. 3, it is stated that Allah has allowed trade and forbidden usury, but as intoxicants were prohibited to Muslims, the Holy Prophet made it clear, when reciting this verse, that trade in intoxicants was also prohibited.

15 Abu Hurairah reported,
The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said:

"A time will come over people when not a single person will remain who does not swallow down usury, and if one does not swallow it, its vapor will overtake him."* (AD-Msh. 12:4)

*This is a prophecy relating to the present time. Material civilization has at its culmina-
tion brought about a state of things when no transaction can be carried on without payment of interest.

THE QUR'ANIC ART OF CALLIGRAPHY AND ILLUMINATION

Jabir reported,
The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, cursed the usurer and the man who pays usury and the writer of the transaction and the two witnesses thereof and he said:

"They are alike."* (M-Msh. 12:4)

*The Arabic word which is here translated as usury is riba (an excess or addition), and means an addition over and above the principal sum that is lent (Lane's Lexicon), and thus includes both usury and interest. The Holy Qur'an compares the devourers of usury to those whom the Devil has proscribed by his touch (2:275), indi-
THE QUR'AN PRIMER

LESSON 5: LONG VOWELS, ALIF OR ١, ٠ OR ١, ٠ OR ١.

Like the three short vowels (refer to Lesson 2), there are three long vowels in Arabic. A long vowel only lengthens the sound of a short vowel.

I. Long vowel (alif or ١) of Fatha: Silent alif (١) after Fatha (١) makes the long vowel َاء, as in ٠٠لَ ("not"). Likewise, alif (١) placed over a letter lengthens the vowel, as ٠٠بَاء. The sound of the short vowel Fatha (١) is thus lengthened by placing a silent ١ after it or over a letter.

PRACTICE (read right to left)

بيب، تب، ثب، جب، ذب، سب، عب، كب، لب، لب، لل، يب.

FURTHER PRACTICE

قُلْ، فَذَلِكَ مَلَكُ مَلِكٍ أَدْمَ، أَمَّنَ
كِتَابٍ يَكْتُبُهُ، سُبْحَانَهُ، سُمُوعُهُ، كِلَمَتُهُ، أَذَّانُهُ،
مَارِبٍ، زِرْعُهُ، خُطْيَتُهُ، ذَلِكُ، يَبْحَتُ
يَخْيَطُهُ، صِلْوَةٌ، مَسْتَنِي، يَبْلُدُ

Key: Practice: bā, tā, thā (sā), jā, dā, sā, ʿā, kā, lā, yā. Further practice: qāla, máliki, ādama, ʿāmana, kitābu, suḥbānaka, samāwātin, kalimatin, ʿazānihim, maʿāribu, raṣaqaḥum, khatwāyākum, zālika, yābani, yahvā, salātun, mātā, bilhūdā (NB: since ٠ in salatun and ٠ in māta and bilhūda have no sign over or under them, they are silent and not pronounced).

II. Long vowel of Kasra (٠ or ٠): A silent٠ after Kasra (٠) makes the long vowel ىء or ىء (for “me”). Likewise alif ١ under a consonant (which is called Kasra Ishbāl) sounds like ee or i, as in ٠٠لَيٰ. Thus the long vowel of Kasra is either by a silent ٠ occurring after Kasra ٠, or by alif ١ occurring under a letter.

PRACTICE

بيب، تب، ثب، جب، ذب، سب، عب، كب، لب، لب، لل، يب.

FURTHER PRACTICE

بيب، تب، ثب، جب، ذب، سب، عب، كب، لب، لب، لل، يب.

The Islamic Review  March 1981  21
Man’s Aim in Life and How to Attain It . . .

Continued from page 6

and whole, and our attachment and steadfastness inviolate and undisturbed.

Further, it requires that we feel happy in adversity and be ready to meet death.

Steadfastness demanded that weak and frail though we are, we stand erect and true and lay down our lives regardless of consequences and do not find fault with His verdict and will, and do not grumble and exhibit restlessness.

We should continue this flight with ourselves and with all else until we emerge from the exacting fires of trials and tribulations successful and triumphant. This is what we call Istiqamat or Steadfastness. It is Steadfastness of this kind which earns us divine pleasure and commendation and by which the scented dust of prophets, saints and martyrs still smells sweet and fragrant.

The seventh way to attain the ideal of human life is the company of the righteous and the emulation of their noble example. Inherently, one needs example. A perfect example stimulates interest. It encourages and sustains. Those who are without an example or model to follow are likely to flag and wander. God refers to this when He says:

"Be with the truthful. The path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Blessings."

In this God had appointed Muhammad as our Supreme Exemplar. The eighth means to the attainment of the purpose of human life is pure dreams, visions and revelations from God. This path to divine communion is a difficult path. It is full of all kinds of dangers and hazards. The unwary traveler is likely to stay or lose heart and stop short of going ahead. Hence it was that divine mercy and grace should descend on the lonely traveler and give solace and encourage him and whet his appetite and enhance his interest.

God always favors and blesses those who set out on the journey to meet Him. Such are His ways. He consoles the travelers to His way with His word and revelation. He appears and shows them that He stands with them. This gives them strength and courage and enables them to tread along the path to His pleasure and Mercy with a surer foot and a lighter heart. It is about this when God says:

"For them are glad tidings in the present life and also in the Hereafter, and much peace and happiness therein."

Taqdir, or Pre-Measurement in Islam . . .

Continued from page 17

and the Evolver of all, is the rule to regulate the relations of man to man. God alone should be the object of man’s endeavors, under all circumstances. As to his capabilities, he has been endowed with the best conceivable. He is capable of making infinite progress and of attaining union with his Creator. He has been furnished with the requisite equipment to fulfill his obligations. The universe which is meant to be subservient to his welfare, he can control and exploit with the help of his intellect. But to enable him to acquaint himself creditably in more delicate situations, viz. in his relations to his fellow-men and to his Creator, his intellect, which is not infallible, has been supplemented by Divine Light. Revelation enlightens him as to the laws, obeying which he may achieve the summum bonum of his life, viz., at-one-ment with his Creator. The diverse vicissitudes of life, its pleasures and pains, its prosperity and adversity, are mere opportunities to bring his dormant virtues into play and thereby effect their evolution. Assigned a set purpose to fulfill, endowed with particular faculties and capabilities suited to the realization of his fixed end, and provided with the necessary guidance, he is left alone to work out his own edification. Thereafter there is no Divine interference with him in the matter of choice between right and wrong. Thus the Holy Quran, allowing him freedom of will, saddles man with responsibility, which serves as a spur to self-exertion.

Islamic taqdir, recognizing freedom of human will, infuses into man a sense of responsibility and accountability, and thus gives an impetus to the advancement of culture of the right sort. Islamic taqdir makes man the lord of the universe, controlling the forces of nature, putting them to the service of man and thereby promote general welfare. Islamic taqdir brings paradise to the door of man by creating goodwill and fraternal affection between man and man.

Above all, Islamic taqdir uplifts man from a self-centered brute to spiritual heights, where he loses himself in the service of humanity and of the Lord, his Creator. He is borne to celestial regions where there is neither snow nor storm, where the virtuous drink deep at the cool fountain of Divine love, basking in the sunshine of Divine bliss.
SOME AUTHENTIC WORKS
ON ISLAM

By Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A., LL.B.—
The Holy Qur'an. English translation with Arabic text, exhaustive footnotes, and detailed index. • The Religion of Islam. “Extremely useful work, almost indispensable to the students of Islam.” —Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal • A Manual of Hadith. A selection from Hadith. • Muhammad the Prophet. A biography. • The Early Caliphate • The Living Thoughts of the Prophet Muhammad. A wonderful book on the life and teachings of the Holy Prophet. • The New World Order • The Ahmadiyya Movement • Muhammad and Christ • Muslim Prayer Book • History of Prophets • Introduction to Study of Quran

By Mirza Ghulam Ahmad—
Najmul Huda (The Star that Guides) • Teachings of Islam • Triumph of Islam

By Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi—
Muhammad in World Scriptures

By Khawaja Nazir Ahmad, Barrister-at-Law—
Jesus in Heaven on Earth

By Mumtaz Ahmad Faruqui—
Anecdotes from the Life of the Prophet Muhammad • Anecdotes from the Life of the Promised Messiah • The Crumbling of the Cross • Prayers of the Quran and the Holy Prophet • Truth Triumphs

By Mirza Masum Beg—
Christ Is Come

By Mrs. Ulfat Aziz Us-Samad—
Great Religions of the World

By Ghulam Nabi Muslim—
Manual of Quran

By Maulana Aftabuddin Ahmad—
Sahih Bukhari, parts 1, 2, 3

Ask for these books at your bookstore, or write for complete details and prices to:
Zafar Abdullah, 36911 Walnut St., Newark, Calif. 94560
MUHAMMAD THE GREATEST MAN OF HISTORY

“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 convincingly 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*

THE BEAUTIFUL CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAM

“I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phases of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him—the wonderful man—and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Saviour of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the Dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness. I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today.”

—George Bernard Shaw