The Other Side of the Coin
A Rejoinder to Sir Muhammad Zaheeruddin Khan
Physical Ascension of Religious Personages Merely a Pagan Myth
Why One May Fast

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Islam made its rise and marvellous progress in the teeth of adverse circumstances; such was its superhuman power that it imparted a new life to, and worked a complete transformation in its adherents. It is to this exalted condition that the revivalist associations intend to raise it from the deplorable state into which it has fallen. But I request them to consider for God's sake if they are, in doing so, following in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet, and if the agencies which had been at work in the beginning are now being employed by them to give a new turn to the life of the people who have forsaken the higher principles of a true religion. It needs no demonstration to prove that the degeneration of the Mussalmans has passed all bounds and that they are now standing on the verge of the pit of fire from which a blessed and mighty hand had drawn them back at first. The same disensions and disputes, the same division in the camp, which marked the pre-Islamic Arabs, are witnessed among those who claim to be following the banner of Islam. Success has already departed, and faith, religion and union, the moving spirit and the life of the nation, are gone. Luxurious habits, transgressions, drunkenness, gambling and laziness, evils from which the Mighty Magnetiser had granted them a deliverance, have again got the upper hand. Reverence for striving after the model of the Holy Prophet, the honour and respect due to the Holy Quran, awe and devotion for the grandeur and majesty of God, have been blotted out from all hearts. The evils which have wrought the destruction of the race find utterance, in sincerity or otherwise, from the lips of all speakers. The Mussalmans have fallen on evil days and such must be the fate of every people who in spite of the shining arguments of God's existence depart from His ways.

The Mussalmans could fall into no greater error than to take as the standard of perfection and as a model for emulation, a people who are bent low upon the mean cares of this world, without ever raising their hand to heaven, and whose sole object in life is not to go beyond indulgence in the animal passions and carnal desires, and passing their lives in luxury and surfeiting. The Mussalmans are a people who were taught to take care of things relating to religion in preference to their worldly affairs, while the materialistic tendencies of Europe are well expressed in the verse: "There is no other than our life in this world, neither shall we be raised again." How can a nation labouring day and night for the fleeting comforts and pleasures of the world, having its whole soul in the material inventions and manufactures, scheming and plotting day and night for subduing territories, in short, utterly abandoned to all sorts of low desires and earthly cares and utterly estranged from truth and light, serve as a model for a people whose goal is not earth but heaven. If there are persons among them who aspire to a higher aim and have pretensions of leading a heavenly life, their case is still worse, for they rest satisfied with a dead man as their God. We hear on all sides a cry for "High Education" but admitting its need, are we not justified in saying that the side of spirituality is utterly neglected and that intentionally or otherwise, no regard is paid to it. The first principle of all associations formed for the amelioration of the condition of the Mussalmans is, not to interfere with the irreligious course of life which a man may adopt. Sacred words are forbidden to be uttered within the precincts of their meeting-halls. In the volley of numberless resolutions, not a single word is ever said or allowed to be said, upon the observance of religious injunctions, constancy at prayers and fasting, refraining from ways of wickedness and transgression or making piety and righteousness as the guiding rules of life. There is a grand and solemn assemblage of robes and forms with every diversity of the inclinations and passions of the soul. A daring libertine may stand up as the champion of Islam and propose a resolution with the avowed object of restoring it to its original purity, and an equally dissolute gentleman flushed with wine may second it with tottering feet and reeling head! A man quite ignorant of Islam and contemptuously rejecting its holy injunctions, a Materialist or an Atheist, is some time chosen as a chief of an association so long as he bears the name of a Mussalman, though he is completely enslaved to the world.

—Translated by Maulana Muhammad Ali
Dear Readers,

We are presenting this issue for the months of June and July, 1981. You must have noticed that a few previous issues were received late, at times at the end of the month. In order to publish the magazine well in time in the future, a joint issue for June–July has been necessary. We hope this will enable us to catch up with the time.

Since the month of Ramadhan falls in July, we have deemed it fit to reproduce Maulana Muhammad Ali’s article on “Fasting” and also relevant quotations from the Hadith.

The Promised Messiah’s article about the revivalist movements in Islam, though written about a century back, still holds valid philosophically.

The event of the “Ascension of the Holy Prophet Muhammad,” commonly known as Meraj-Un-Nabi, was celebrated throughout the Islamic world on the 31st of May, 1981. We hope Maulana Hafiz Sher Mohammad’s thought-provoking article on Meraj-Un-Nabi will be read with interest.

“The Other Side of the Coin,” by Ch. Masud Akhtar, highlights the basic differences of beliefs between the two sections of the Ahmadiyya Movement. The facts presented by the author speak for themselves. We hope this will enlighten many readers as to the Ahmadiyya Movement and its Founder.

And finally, our editorial, “The Golden Rules for Success,” may help someone see the light.

Yours truly,
The Publishers
Editorial

The Golden Rules for Success
Taqwa—Unity and Inviting to Good

"O you who believe, keep your duties to Allah, as it ought to be kept, and die not unless you are Muslims.

"And hold fast by the Covenant of Allah all together and be not disunited. And remember Allah's favor to you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts so by His favor you became brethren. And you were on the brink of a pit of fire, then He saved you from it. Thus Allah makes clear to you His messages that you may be guided.

"And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. And these are they who are successful." (Chapter 4, part 4, vv. 101-103)

The above quoted verses of the Holy Qur'an embody golden principles for the success of any people—"Taqwa—unity and inviting to good—enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong" is the plan for success given by Allah and whosoever will practice these principles must see success welcoming him at every step.

Taqwa is keeping one's duty that he owes to God, or to safeguard those rights and liabilities which Allah has enjoined upon man through Shariah (laws) or to which human intellect and nature guide. Thus the first rule for success makes us individually conscious of our duty which we owe to Allah. The first rule thus concerns individuals. And what are a people or a nation but a collection of individuals? Most logically any plan for the betterment of a people has to make a start at a grass-roots level—the individual—and the Qur'an makes it at that very level. It is a matter for each and every Muslim to ponder and look as to whether we are keeping our duty that we owe to Allah. The words "as it ought to be kept" appearing in this verse speak for themselves as to the standards of keeping one's duty to Allah. Let all of us take account of ourselves as individuals as to whether our deeds match with our professings or we are simply paying a lip service to Allah and Deen Allah. For surely Allah does not stand in need of our lip service nor does Allah stand in need of our deeds. If we practice this rule honestly and without deviation, it is we who are to benefit. Let us honestly acknowledge that our position in this regard, in spite of calling ourselves Muslims—and Muslim literally means one who has submitted completely—is not enviable. Let all of us, wherever we are and whoever we are, step up our endeavors in shaping our lives in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah, for this alone will make us successful individuals.

The next step in the plan for success of a people is to create unity amongst those individuals who have benefited individually from adherence to rules of life given by their Creator. In a most scientific and logical manner the Qur'an exhorts the believers to remain united, and the basis for this unity has been made known in very clear terms in the words "hold fast by the Covenant of Allah." Thus according to the Qur'an the basis for the unity of Muslims—those who completely submit to the command of Allah—is holding fast to the "Covenant of Allah," or in other words their common bond of faith in Allah. The position of the Muslim world even in this regard is not commendable. Disunity rather than unity is the order of the day in the Islamic world judged at international or even national levels. The politicians and the religious leaders alike have not yet comprehended the great truth that a religion that claims to have been ordained by Allah for the guidance of the whole human race cannot by any stretch of imagination afford to suffer under petty prejudices. Creation of a global order presupposes a global rather than a national or linguistic or sectarian outlook: It is time our political as well as religious leaders outgrow their shells and pave the way for complete unity amongst the ranks of Muslims as a first step towards unity of the whole human race. Adherence to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an alone provides the basis for such a unity. Even in material terms today's Islamic world is lagging behind the developed nations in many spheres—one nation is marred by lack of resources and another by lack of know-how and yet another by lack of manpower. By pooling up and united efforts many material objectives may be achieved in much less time than an individual nation can.

The third rule is "inviting to good and enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong." Inviting to good means calling people to the teachings of Islam, because these teachings in fact carry the good of mankind—they en-
"MERAJ-UN-NABI"

By MAULANA HAFIZ SHER MOHAMMAD

English Rendering by Ch. Masud Akhtar, B.A., L.L.B.

The literal meaning of the Arabic word *meraj* is the “ladder,” but in Islamic terminology it stands for a particular occurrence on the 27th night of the Islamic month of Rajab which is narrated in Hadith.

This word *meraj* is not mentioned in the Holy Qur'an but is found in many narrations of Hadith. In the Holy Qur'an, instead of *meraj* the word *Asra* is used in the first verse of Surah Bani Israil (chapter 17) and commentators of the Holy Qur'an, in all ages, have interpreted this verse to be referring to that event which is commonly reported in the Hadith as “Meraj-Un-Nabi.”

Meraj-Un-Nabi has been mentioned in many reports of the Hadith, some of these being *sahih* (authentic), others *hasan* and yet others *zaheef* (weak). Nevertheless all Muslim sects agree as to the occurrence of the event of Meraj. Difference, however, is found, since the early Caliphas, about the mode of Meraj as to whether it was a bodily ascension of the Holy Prophet to the heavens or just a spiritual experience or manifest-vision. Before going into the details of these differences and their validity or otherwise, it seems useful to find an answer to some relevant questions for rendering possible the complete and unambiguous comprehension of the Meraj.

These questions are:

1. Do we comprehend Allah in a material-physical form or spiritual form?
2. Can we see Allah with our physical eyes?
3. Allah’s being close to us is in physical sense or spiritual sense?
4. Where is Allah? Is he seated in the skies only or is He omnipresent?
5. In the Holy Qur’an the word *Sama’a* is used for skies. Does it always mean the physical space only or can it mean a spiritual elevation too?
6. How can a man get closer to Allah, through rockets and space planes or through good deeds?
7. Are human eyes the only means of one’s vision or are some other means for vision possible?

Four variant opinions about the mode of Meraj are prevalent among Muslims since the early days of Islam:

1. That the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was carried bodily from the Masjid al-Haram to Masjid al-Aqsa and therefrom to the heavens up to the skies.
2. That he was carried bodily from the Masjid al-Haram to Masjid al-Aqsa and therefrom only his spirit was allowed to rise to the heavens; i.e., they believe in partial physical, partial spiritual Meraj.
3. That the whole event of carrying from Masjid al-Haram to Masjid al-Aqsa and onward to the heavens was simply a manifest vision, a spiritual experience in a state of being awake without involving the moving of the physical body from where it was.
4. That the whole event was shown in the form of a dream in a state of sleep.

Let it be very clear that believing in the truth of any one of these four opinions and dispensing with the remaining three will not in anyway detract anything from one’s *iman* (belief) as a Muslim, as the exponents of all these four opinions have drawn deductions from the Holy Qur’an, the Hadith and the reports of the companions of the Holy Prophet, and each one of them is possessed of sound arguments in favor of his opinion. Nor does the difference of opinion as to the mode of Meraj reduce the significance of the event of Meraj. By saying that the Holy Prophet ascended to the heavens or that the heavens descended to the presence of the Holy Prophet, nothing is subtracted from this great event of human history. The idea of physical ascension in Meraj no doubt offers a very beautiful journey which the human mind can visualize. Stories of physical ascension to the heavens by the founders and righteous men and prophets are commonly found in the mythology of Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity and even Sikhism—in certain cases it goes to the extent of raising to the heavens of a religious personage or a leader of a nation along with his horses and chariots. We know, from our advanced state of knowledge and reasonings today, that all these stories of physical ascensions are myths, simple myths. Thus any effort on anyone’s part to insist on the belief of the bodily ascension of the Holy Prophet does not in any manner help to prove the superiority of the Holy Prophet over other religious personages and rather amounts to pulling him down to the level of all other mythical heroes of human history. This will be a disservice to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

Myth in all ages has nourished on ignorance, and it is more true about matters spiritual. When spiritual experiences reported in metaphor fall for interpretation to the hands of people devoid of any spiritual experience themselves, they always tend to interpret it in physical terms, as their own comprehension is limited to things apparent to our physical senses. Deeper metaphoric sense is beyond their capacity. If a person sees the sun, the moon, the stars and the skies, then he does not think that the sight of these things carries any message of hope for him or has any special significance for him or that there is a prophecy in it for him—but if the same person sees the sun, the moon, the stars or the skies in a dream or a vision then he tries to find the significance of the sight of these things in dream or vision and tries to dig the underlying meanings. Similar is the case of the Meraj-Un-Nabi if we try to read and understand it in its true historical background.

The background and the meanings of the first verse of Surah Bani Israil

Meraj is an event of the early days of the Mission of the Holy Prophet. We know that the first verse of Surah Bani Israil is one of the early revelations. Now this was a period full of afflictions, difficulties, adversities and miseries for the Holy Prophet and his
companions. Those who have read the history of this period know fully well that the magnitude of the sufferings of the Holy Prophet and his companions was so great that it was not humanly possible to stand it without a rocklike conviction of faith found only in men appointed by Allah. Reading through the verses appearing at the end of Surah Bani Israil, one finds that the opponents of the Holy Prophet were asking all sorts of questions and were raising all types of objections. We find them telling him:

“We will by no means believe in thee, till thou cause a spring to gush forth from the earth for us.”

“Or thou have a garden of palms and grapes in the midst of which thou cause rivers to flow forth abundantly.”

“Or thou cause the heaven to come down upon us in pieces, as thou thinkest, or bring Allah and the angels face to face (with us).”

“Or thou have a house of gold, or thou ascend unto heaven. And we will not believe in thy ascending till thou bring down to us a book we can read.”

Now apart from verse 64 of this Suran calling Meraj a “Roja,” a manifest vision; in reply to the above demands the Holy Prophet tells them, “Am I taught but a mortal messenger? Had the Meraj been a physical ascension, his reply would have been very different to this.

Most naturally in such adverse circumstances what was required was something which could provide a ray of hope to the Holy Prophet and his companions on the one hand and a proof—a manifest proof of the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet on the other hand. A physical ascension of the Holy Prophet on his journeys between the Masjid al-Haram and Masjid al-Aqsa, not witnessed by his opponents, if at all offered anything, then it was to the Holy Prophet himself and to none else. This will not suffice to establish the truthfulness of his mission. What was required was something greater than this, a clear proof of the truth of Islam visible to all and sundry and that is what is contained in the first verse of the Surah Bani Israil. This contained a message of success of the mission of the Holy Prophet as well as prophecies of innumerable achievements by the Holy Prophet and his Ummah.

The verse starts with the word “Subhana” (praise be to) which indicates that this verse is in reply to the objections of the opponents of Islam because all lexicons agree that the use of the word “Subhana” before Allah indicates that Allah is free from the matters or things attributed to him by the opponents.

The next word is “Asra” which means walking during the night, and if we consider it is derived from the root “Asriya” and “Sara,” then it means vastness of a piece of land.

Next comes the words “Be Abde hi” meaning “His servant.”

Next is the word “Lila” — “lai” means the night and it is also written for the days of affliction and distress or for darkness. Night is also considered the most suitable time for spiritual strides.

Masjid al-Haram is Kaabah in Mecca. Masjid al-Aqsa is the Mosque in Jerusalem; this is applied to Masjid-e-Nabwi in Madina by some commentators.

In the next words “Barakua Holahu” (We blessed his precepts) is an indication of gathering the material and spiritual good in the person of the Holy Prophet, as Palestine for its plenty of water resources and growth is considered an economically rich land while on the other hand it is spiritually rich, being the abode of many prophets of the past.

The purpose of the Meraj has been explained in the words “Le No Rayahu Min Ayatena” (that we might show him of our signs). Thus the Meraj was for showing some signs and prophecies to the Holy Prophet and through him to other human beings. In fact the verse relating to Meraj prophecies about the great success to be achieved by the Holy Prophet and about the heights spiritual as well as material to be attained by him and his Ummah have been revealed. If by Masjid al-Aqsa we mean Masjid-e-Nabwi then this verse predicts about an honorable migration to Madina wherefrom the blessings of Islam will reach the whole world.

Verses predicting and promising the establishment of the Rule of the Prophet on Mecca, Madina and even Palestine, during that period of affliction and miseries, and the news of the great spiritual and material heights to be touched by the Muslims, in those difficult days would have given a message of hope to the Muslims and fulfillment of these prophecies would have served as the greatest evidence of the truthfulness of the mission of the prophet. Can there be a greater miracle than this?

Gist of Hadith reports on Meraj

The event of Meraj in detail has been reported in a number of Hadith. One finds mention of miracles and signs in all the great religions of the world. All prophets of Allah have brought such miracles which appear supernatural to us and it is this part of religion which has been the cause of a vast majority being led into what is called religious. By today’s thinkers-philosophers: Meraj is one of these events.

The philosophy underlying Meraj is simply this, that after the proclamation of Prophethood by the Holy Prophet he was subjected to great afflictions and in such a distressed condition glimpses of the success awaiting the Holy Prophet and his Ummah and the resultant elevation of the human race were manifested to the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, narrating the experience of Meraj states, “I was asleep in Hateem when the roof of the house opened and Gabriel descended in the company of a few other angels. First of all they led me to Zam Zam (a fountain in Mecca) and opened my chest there, took out my heart and washed it with the water of Zam Zam. Thereafter a tray full of eman (belief) and wisdom was brought and Gabriel took eman and
wisdom from the tray and placed it in my chest and closed it. After that an animal called “Burraq” was brought. It ran with great speed so that each of its steps was touching the horizon. Riding on this “Burraq” we first came to Masjid al-Aqsa and offered two “Rakkat” prayers and thereafter we set out on our journey through the skies to heaven in the company of Gabriel. We met Adam on the first sky. There I was shown two rivers and on my asking, Gabriel told me that these were Euphrates and Nile. We met Prophet Joseph on the second, Idrees on the third, John and Jesus on the fourth, Haroon on the fifth, Moses on the sixth and Abraham on the seventh sky. Then we passed through the garden were I saw a river on which palaces having domes of pearls and ground of musk were built; then we reached a place where the sound of the pen of the Creator could be heard and therefrom we proceeded to “Sadratul Mantaha” (the farthest lot-tree) and then Allah drew nearer to me so that the distance was reduced to the extent of two ends of a bow, even lesser. Then I was given three gifts, (1) the last verses of the Surah “Baqarah” (the cow-chapter, two) (2) good news of Allah’s Mercy that Allah will forgive all except those who set equals with him, and (3) saying of prayers fifty times a day was enjoined.

“I met Moses on my way back...” Then is the narration of the talk between Moses and the Holy Prophet and the ultimate reduction of the prayer times to five. On his way back he returned to Masjid al-Aqsa where all the prophets of the past had assembled and all of them offered their prayers led by the Holy Prophet and one Hadith tells us (Fasaiqaza wa howa fil Masjidilharam) that thereafter he awoke and he was in Masjid al-Haram. This in brief is the gist of the story reported in the Books of Hadith. A beautiful fairy tale indeed, if one considers it a bodily journey and does not bother to dig the underlying meanings. It will not serve any useful purpose for a person and his companions who are suffering severe afflections at the hands of their opponents but if we believe in it as a manifestation and spiritual experience then it contains prophecies and promises for the success of those who were passing through that period of hardships and misery. It paints a picture of the bright future for them. Let us try to dig out the hidden beauties of this vision—the spiritual Meraj in this story:

1. Gabriel’s opening the prophet’s chest and placing “eman” and “wisdom” in it is an indication of the fact that the Holy Prophet’s heart has been cleansed of all base sentiments and that the Holy Prophet and his Ummah have been bestowed with “Eman and wisdom,” all prejudices replaced with open-mindedness, a natural element of wisdom.

2. The Prophet’s traveling on “Burraq” is an indication that the religion of the Holy Prophet will spread with great speed, and history bears witness that Islam spread much faster than any other religion. Secondly, the Holy Prophet’s riding on the “Burraq,” which appeared in animal form rather than something having wings to fly, is an indication that animal passions have been subjugated by the Holy Prophet, that with the advent of Islam animal passions will give way to the progress of humane rationalism.

3. Rising to the skies and meeting the prophets of the past is an indication of the great heights to be touched by Muslims and along with them the whole human race, and that all the prophets are the parts of one scheme and all were raised to lead humanity to one goal—rising to the destined heights. All other prophets welcoming the Holy Prophet is a clear prophecy of the fact that the followers of all other religions will embrace Islam and that the welfare of the human race lies in the unity of all believing people.

4. The Holy Prophet’s leading the prayers of the other prophets is a very significant indication of the finality of the Prophethood. This tells us that whatever good for the human race was possible had been done and they are offering their prayers led by a prophet who finalized the process; now none else will be raised as a prophet. In Masjid al-Aqsa all the prophets handed over the spiritual as well as worldly Khilafat to the Holy Prophet by accepting him as their Imam and as a result of this the Bani Isra’il and the Christians lost the succession to the prophets in favor of the Ummah of the Holy Prophet.

5. By showing Nile and Euphrates to the Holy Prophet it was prophesied that in the near future not only Bait-ul-Muqaddas would fall to the Muslims but Egypt, Iraq, and Syria would also come under Muslim domain.

6. When Moses was shown to the Holy Prophet in a weeping condition and complaining about the hardness of heart of his followers in it was drawn a complete picture of the state of hard-heartedness, thanklessness, crookedness, materialism and altering of the teachings of Torah to the Jews, Moses’ shedding the tears indicates his grief over the low moral and spiritual state of his Ummah and what Moses tells the Holy Prophet about the prayers has an element of warning for the Muslim nation in neglecting to discharge the duty of saying prayers regularly, which is evident to all today.

7. The Holy Prophet’s reaching the farthest lot-tree and the shedding of Allah’s light on it and the opening of the windows of the garden of heaven towards this tree is a prophecy of the establishment of a new world order, what is known as Islam, and bestowing the spiritual and worldly kingdom on the Holy Prophet. The tree stands for this new order—Islam. The wisdom behind giving it the form of a tree instead of a man or any other animal form is that the teachings of Islam on various aspects of life are intertwined with each other in a very orderly manner just as the various parts of the tree are related to each other. Though orderliness is found even in the human body or in animal form but due to freedom of will at times this order changes into disorderliness, therefore, the parable of the tree was offered. Secondly it was a custom in Arabia that when they had to select their ruler or king they assembled under a large lot-tree and selected their king. Thus this tree indicates establishing the kingdom of the Holy Prophet in the world and was a message of hope during that period of distress that notwithstanding all the present afflictions his kingdom would be established. Would not this have served as a miraculous symbol of the truthfulness of the mission of the Holy Prophet for those opponents who were demanding signs from him?

8. Shedding of the light and bringing the garden of the heavens nearer to the Holy Prophet is an indication of Allah’s mercy on the Prophet and a promise that the period of hardships was to come to an end soon.

9. The three gifts received by the Holy Prophet also have great significance:

a. Salat or the prayer, which has been called the Meraj of a believer, is the greatest mode of spiritual elevation and in it all the believers were made to share the Meraj with the Holy Prophet.

b. The promise of mercy and forgiveness to all except those who set... continued on page 22
Recently I went through Chaudry Sir Muhammad Zafarullah Khan's *Ahmadiyyat, The Renaissance of Islam* (Tabshir Publications, Great Britain). Chapters nine and ten deal with the split of the Ahmadiyya Movement into the Ahmadi and Qadiani groups. From a man of his stature, who claims to have benefited from the great spiritual and religious revolution wrought by the Promised Messiah, one expects all the relevant facts. On the contrary, we find some facts arranged in a party lawyer-like manner to bear out only one thesis—that of Sir Zafarullah. Any attempt to suppress the evidence at this stage is futile. We will comment only on the material in the relevant chapters and offer other relevant material to set the record straight and prove conclusively how most of the relevant evidence has been suppressed by him.

Sir Zafarullah quotes the Testament (Al-Wassiyah) of the Promised Messiah in chapter nine (pages 169 to 174). However, he takes care not to quote those portions of the testament which shatter the shaky case he tries to build up in chapter ten. The following statements from Al-Wassiyah have either been left out or altered. Therefore, we reproduce the literal translation of each relevant clause:

"9. The Anjuman which will hold such funds and shall not be entitled to spend them except for purposes of the Ahmadiyya Movement and in this respect top priority should be given to propagation of Islam. It should also be permissible for the Anjuman, with the unanimity of opinion, to augment the funds by means of commercial enterprises.

"10. All members of the Anjuman shall be those who are members of the Ahmadiyya Movement, righteous and honest and, in future, if it is felt about anyone that he is not righteous or honest, or that he is cunning and has a taint of the love of this world, it would be the duty of the Anjuman to throw him out forthwith, and appoint someone else in his place.

"13. Since the Anjuman is the successor of the Divinely appointed Khalifah it should, therefore, remain absolutely free of all worldly taint and all its affairs should be clean and based on justice.

"14. To strengthen and support this Anjuman it would be permissible to have branches of this Anjuman in far-off lands working under it.

"15. Where a person possesses no movable or immovable property, but it can be shown that he is a righteous person, God-fearing and sincere believer, without taint of hypocrisy, love of the world, or fault in his observance (of the Sharia’ah), with my permission, or with unanimity of opinion in the Anjuman, after me, he can be given burial in this cemetery.

"I do not wish to obtain any goods from you and become their possessor. On the other hand you will give your money to the Anjuman for the propagation of Islam" (wide Supplication to Al-Wassiyah).

Having adjusted the facts to suit his thesis, Sir Zafarullah then tries to prove that the split was caused because Hadhrats Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din and Maulana Muhammad Ali stressed the importance and primacy of the Central Anjuman at the cost of the authority of the Head of the Movement (Khalifatul Masih). On pages 194 and 195 (chapter ten) he writes:

"Almost immediately after his election as first successor of the Promised Messiah some of those very gentleman who had insistently urged upon Maulvi Nurud Din Sahib that he should take over the heavy responsibilities of the Khalifat and become Head of the Movement founded by the Promised Messiah, and who had announced that in such an event his orders would be as binding upon the members of the Movement as had been the orders of the Promised Messiah himself, began to have second thoughts about the wisdom of the step they had taken. The most prominent of those who felt uneasy in the situation that they had helped to create, were Khawaja Kamaluddin Sahib and Maulvi Muhammad Ali Sahib.

"When the Promised Messiah had instituted the Central Ahmadiyya Association in January 1906 he had appointed Maulvi Nurud Din Sahib President of the Association. He continued as president even after his election as khalifa. Those who began to think that the authority of the khalifa should be clearly defined and strictly limited took advantage of this situation and began to refer in their speeches to the Khalifatul Masih as the Chief President; thus subtly giving currency to the notion that the Head of the Movement exercised his authority by virtue of his office of President of the Central Association and not in his capacity of Khalifatul Masih. During the Annual Conference of 1908 some of them in their speeches had recourse to this device. They urged the community to remain united and to render full obedience to the Chief President.

"In the record of the proceedings of the Association also, any reference to the Khalifatul Masih was carefully avoided and he was referred to only as the President of the Association.

"Propaganda was carried on, especially in Lahore, stressing the importance and primacy of the Central Association, and ignoring the capacity and authority of the head of the Movement as Khalifatul Masih."

This established beyond any doubt that according to Sir Zafarullah the dispute that led to the split of the Ahmadiyya Movement into the Qadiani (the group to which he belongs) and Ahmadi (our organization) centered only round the relation of the Khalifah with the Association, and that Hadhrats Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din and Maulana Muhammad Ali, along with members at Lahore, were busy undermining the authority of the Khalifa. However, facts flatly contradict any such manufactured assertion. As we shall prove conclusively, the question of the division of powers was not the only, or even the major dispute
which caused the split nor can the blame be laid at the doors of Hadraths Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din and Maulana Muhammad Ali or members from Lahore for asserting the supremacy of the Anjuman as the successor to the Promised Messiah.

Al-Wasiyyah, quoted above, proves that it was the Promised Messiah himself who appointed the Central Association (Anjuman) as his successor and bestowed all powers on it. Looking into events which took place during the life of the Promised Messiah one finds that his family members wanted to set up a hereditary priesthood (an object they ultimately achieved through the amendment of Al-Wasiyyah in 1915) and were against the Anjuman from its very inception. Mir Nasir Nawab, maternal grandfather of Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, was the one who first started finding fault with the Anjuman. Consequently, the Promised Messiah wrote a note in his own hand on October 27, 1907, setting out the Anjuman’s powers. Its facsimile, with an English translation, appears on this page.

However, this was only a temporary setback. The fact that the Promised Messiah’s family continued its efforts is borne out by the following extracts from a letter from Mirza Mahmud Ahmad to Hadrat Maulana Nur-ud-Din:

“As to your saying that you will publish a poster in which it should be written that in future you will not interfere at all in their (Anjuman’s) temporal affairs; about this I may say: Sir, that at this stage whatever service is being rendered by us is apparently in the form of (managing) the school, propagation and meetings. If these were handed over to them, it would mean in other words—though not in words but in practice, that the Khilafat has been handed over to them. And in this way they would become more independent…

“My object in writing these lines is that this trouble is not of recent origin but it started from the time of the Founder. He used to keep the finances of the Guest House in his hand. You have handed over all this to them as well. Now it has occurred to them—let us grab the rest also.”

To these efforts by Mirza Mahmud Ahmad to poison Hadrat Maulana Nur-ud-Din’s mind were added others by his family such as the setting up of a group called the Ansarullah, though Sir Zafarullah presents this in a totally different light, to spread false propa-

“Ganda against Hadraths Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din and Maulana Muhammad Ali as well as issuing a malicious circular by Syed M. Ishaq, Mahmud Ahmad’s brother-in-law, about the authority of the Khilafat and the juxtaposition between the Khilafat, and the Central Association.

In rule 15 of the Al-Wasiyyah, quoted above, the words “with my permission, or unanimity of opinion in the Anjuman, after me” were particularly repugnant to the Promised Messiah’s family for they authorized the Anjuman to deal with all matters. However, despite their efforts the situ-

A facsimile reproduction of the writing of the Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement in which he entrusts the Anjuman with the fullest powers in all affairs relating to the Movement. The translation is as follows:

“My opinion is that any matter about which the Anjuman comes to a decision that it should be thus, such decision having been taken by a majority of votes, the same should be considered to be the right decision, and the same should be the final decision. Nevertheless, I would add this much, that in certain religious matters which are related to the object of my advent, I should be informed. I am fully confident that this Anjuman will not do anything against my wishes. This is written only by way of precaution, for it may be that the matter is one which is ordained by God in a special manner. This rule is to be observed only during my life-time; after that, the decision of this Anjuman in all matters shall be final.”
ation remained the same during the life of Hadhrat Maulana Nur-ud-Din. But when Mirza Mahmud Ahmad came to power he had the rule altered and the following words were added:

"In every affair of the General Council and the committees under it, if any, and of the Sadar Anjuman Ahmadiyya and all its branches the order of Hadhrat Mirza Bashir al-Din Mahmud Ahmad, the Khalifa al-Mashh II, will be absolute and decisive." (Inside cover, Mansab-i-Khilarat, 1915 C.E., published from Qadian.)

This amendment, the realization of the Promised Messiah's family, amounted to the violation of the testament of the Promised Messiah and establishes in the clearest possible terms the party not satisfied with the arrangements for conducting the affairs of the Movement as laid down by its founder. As against this amendment the Promised Messiah said "the decisions of this Anjuman in all matters shall be final." This lays to rest any doubts about the powers he willed the Anjuman to wield. However, it does beg another question: who is it that Qadianis follow, for it is certainly not Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad! The only crime committed by Hadhrats Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din and Maulana Muhammad Ali as well as the members at Lahore was that they were faithful to the Promised Messiah's testament and teachings. We proudly declare that we shall continue to commit this crime till the Day of Judgment.

In passing, it is relevant to point out that whereas Mirza Mahmud Ahmad wrote to Hadhrat Maulana Nur-ud-Din "this trouble is not of recent origin but started from the time of the Founder." Sir Zafarullah contends "... but after the death of the Promised Messiah it (the Central Ahmadiyya Association) began to arrogate to itself a position and status which were inconsistent with the overall authority of the Head of the Movement." Whom should we believe, the Khalifa or the disciple? I opt for "His Holiness," as Sir Zafarullah terms his chief.

Sir Zafarullah quotes extensively from the speeches of Hadhrat Maulana Nur-ud-Din where, without naming anyone, he admonishes those opposed to him. These references can be used by any party against their adversaries. As against this we reproduce those speeches and writings only where he names the troublemakers. In 1912, when Hadhrat Maulana paid a visit to Lahore, in one of his speeches delivered at Ahmadiyya Buildings, he said:

"The third thing is that some persons who call themselves my friends tell me that it is the Lahore Ahmadis who are an impediment in the affairs of my Khilafat... Even now I have a piece of paper in my hand on which it is written that the Lahore Section... places obstacles in the way of our spiritual organization... The Lahore Ahmadis are sincere and true; try to follow their good example. These friends love our Promised Messiah, so do not think ill of them." (Badr, July 4 and 11, 1912)

Hadhrat Maulana got so tired of this insidious propaganda that, in a letter to Hadhrat Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din dated May 13, 1913, he wrote "Na-wab, Mir Nasir and Mahmud (family members of the Promised Messiah including Mirza Mahmud Ahmad) are worthless people whose zeal is misplaced. I am plagued by them. May Allah rid me of them. Amen!" To Mirza Mahmud Ahmad he wrote the following about Hadhrat Khawaja:

"You are indulging in mistrust. Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din works for the Most High God and does not act hypocritically. This is what I believe about him. He is not innocent (of errors of judgment) I admit. I am happy with his works and his works are blessed. Those who spread misunderstandings about him are hypocrites." (Friday sermon printed in Al-Fadlı, October 22, 1912, as quoted in Haqiqat-i-Khita-laf, p. 21)

He also wrote:

"After them is Maulvi Muhammad Ali who serves (the Cause) in ways that I cannot even imagine" (Al-Hakam, June 6, 1908)

"Maulvi Muhammad Ali... is a friend of mine and my arm on whose sincerity I marvel and also envy." (Badr, June 14, 1909)

"... You make up opinions about great people; you are liars and absolute liars. Muhammad Ali is a great man, he penned the English translation, none of you did that! As for the difference, they existed even at the time of the Holy Prophet; this is only the matter of Mirza." (Related November 25, 1913; published Paigham Sulah, May 18, 1914).

"To see you daily is also food for my soul; Maulvi Sahib, you are very dear to me. One suitable weapon has been given: (he is) nothing but knowledge..." (Related February 18, 1914, published Paigham Sulah November 3, 1935).

Against these clear statements Sir Zafarullah would have us believe, by quoting some general remarks which may be taken to apply to his group, that Hadhrats Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din and Maulana Muhammad Ali and members at Lahore were rebels and dissidents. A pertinent question which we challenge the Qadianis to answer is: Who is more reliable, Sir Zafarullah or Hadhrat Maulana Nur-ud-Din?

The main cause of the split

Sir Zafarullah tries and fails to establish that Khilafat was the sole cause of the split of the Movement into Ahmadi and his Qadiani group. We now give the real cause of the split. Hadhrat Maulana Muhammad Ali states:

"Apparently there were no signs of a split in the Movement. However, on two matters opinion became gradually divergent but did not gain much strength because of the powerful personality of the late Maulana Nur-ud-Din Sahib. One centered round the relation of the Khalifa with the Anjuman and the other the denunciation of all (non-Ahmadi) Muslims as disbelievers (takfir).

"... the first point... did not assume much importance, neither at the time nor afterwards, though it was one of the controversial points at the time of the split. Nevertheless the second point, which was not only connected with the teachings of the Movement but also with the fundamental principles of Islam, was the final cause of the split after the death of Maulana Nur-ud-Din... The question of the prophethood of the Founder which is at present considered to be the main controversial point between the two sections, has, in fact, arisen out of the question of takfir... The split, was, however, caused in the Movement chiefly on this ground (of takfir) in March 1914 A.D." (The Ahmadiyyah Movement, pp. 26–26)

This is corroborated by Mirza Mahmoud Ahmad:

"... on the eve of the meeting at which God was pleased to decide the question of a successor to the Khalifa, Maulvi Muhammad Ali came to pay me a call... Maulvi Muhammad Ali at that time laid stress upon this very question (of takfir). He pointed out that it was difficult to proceed with the election of a Khalifa, because there was such serious disparity of beliefs prevailing in the community. One party (Qadiani—the group to which Sir Zafarullah belongs) regarded the Promised Messiah as a Nabi (prophet)
and his deniers as kafirs while the other party (Ahmadis) refused to subscribe to any such doctrine.” (The Truth about the Split, p. 178)

Yet Sir Zafarullah is not only “dumb” on this point—he would have us believe that though the main issue between the contending parties was that of Khilafat, Hadhrat Maulana Muhammad Ali was raising objections to a totally irrelevant point immediately prior to the election. The fact is that it was Mirza Mahmud Ahmad who had written:

... so not only that person who does not call the Promised Messiah a “kafir” (heretic) but does not accept his claim to be ‘Promised Messiah:’ has been declared a ‘kafir,’ but even that person also, who secretly considers the Promised Messiah as true in his claims, and even does not openly deny it but is reluctant to give a pledge has been shown as a kafir.” (Tashheezul Adhan, p. 141, April 1911)

This caused great consternation amongst the Indian Muslims. Hadhrat Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din, who was on a missionary tour of India at the time, was confronted repeatedly with questions about this article. In order to set the matter at rest he issued a proclamation with the permission and under the signature of Hadhrat Maulana Nur-ud-Din:

...Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad...has used the word kafir...for those who do not believe in the Promised Messiah. I have read this magazine and I do not find any ground for such a hue and cry as in Arabic ‘kafir’ means to deny and ‘kafir’ is one who denies, it appears to me that the son of the Founder has used the word ‘kafir’ in this sense of a denier, or else it is the word ‘kafir’ be taken as meaning ‘out of the pale of Islam’ like Hindus and Christians then neither mine nor Mian Mahmud Ahmad Sahib’s opinion in this matter has any worth when the late Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib never called those who did not believe in him to be kafir or out of the pale of Islam.

“I approve it, you may publish it. Sgd. Nuruddin, August 18, 1911

(Publishers: Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din B.A., Pleeader, Ahmadiyya Building)"

In reply to this Mirza Mahmud Ahmad wrote:

“What right has he (Hadhrat Khawaja) to explain meanings of my articles during my lifetime. If he has any doubts he could have made enquiries from me because it is my belief that all Muslims who do not believe in the Promised Messiah are kafirs and are out of the pale of Islam.”

This was the first wedge in the ranks of the Movement. These differences had not yet been resolved when Hadhrat Maulana Nur-ud-Din passed away in 1914 and Mian Mahmud Ahmad contrived to have himself proclaimed the khilifa. He continued to publicly proclaim these beliefs.

“All those so-called Muslims who had not entered into his Bai’at (pledge) formally wherever they might be living, were kafirs and outside the pale of Islam, even though they may not have heard the name of the Promised Messiah.” (The Truth about the Split, p. 55, 1924; see also pp. 138, 140, 185)

This difference in beliefs did not escape the notice of non-partisan independent commentators. Maulana Abu-al-Kalam Azad, the late president of India (editor of Al-Hilal at the time) wrote:

“For some time now this organization has been split in two because of differences on the issue of takfir. One believes that non-Ahmdis Muslims too are Muslims even though they do not believe in the claims of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib, while the other openly proclaims that those who do not believe in Hadhrat Mirza Sahib are kafirs. ... Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad is the leader of the latter and they have now declared him as their khilifa but the former group does not recognize him. The articles published by Maulana Muhammad Ali in this respect and the unparalleled courage and boldness with which he had expressed his views while residing in Qadian is in fact an event which will go down in history as the greatest event of this year.” (Al Hilal March 25, 1914)

Rev. Kraemer (The Moslem World, p. 178, Hartford Seminary Foundation, vol. xxxi, April 1931 A.D.) wrote:

“...The Lahore group who have seceded from the original community on the ground that they venerate their founder as a Mujaddid (renewer of religion) and not as a prophet, are therefore more acceptable to public opinion in Islam. They have the same spirit of opposition against Christianity as the Qadianis, but their activity is more exclusively concentrated on the proclamation of Islam as the only religion that is in consonance with reason and nature. The crisis of Christian Europe gives them much material to expose this religion and extol Islam.”

Prof. Levenshulme of New York University notes in The Ahmadiyya Movement these facts.

On page 227 Sir Zafarullah says:

“...By the date of this writing their (the Ahmadi’s) ratio to the main Ahmadiyya community has dwindled still more, so that they have been reduced to a position of insignificance.”

It is astonishing that Sir Zafarullah relates the significance of a group and the correctness of its beliefs to the number of its adherents. The Qadianis are themselves “insignificant,” compared with the general body of the Muslims. By this logic their religious beliefs are wrong too. Is Sir Zafarullah prepared to make a statement to this effect on the basis of his own logic? Let us see what independent observers had to say about our significance.

Rev. Kraemer: “...in their bitter aggressiveness they mete out the same treatment to Christianity that has often been meted out by Christianity to Islam... Their influence is far wider than the number of their adherents would suggest. Their vindication and defense of Islam is accepted by many educated Moslems as the form in which they can remain intellectually loyal to Islam.”

Mr. Muhammad Pickthall: “...probably man living has done longer or more valuable service for the cause of Islamic revival than Maulana Muhammad Ali of Lahore.”

W. J. Milburn: “Perhaps no Muslim, living or dead, has done more than Maulana Muhammad Ali to lead people to see the good side of Islam. With these books no student of world religions would find any excuse for failing to learn about Islam.”

Faber-Kaiser (Jesus Died in Kashmir, p. 144): “They (International Lahore-Ahmadiyya Movement) keep to the original doctrines of the movement and continue to work for the spiritual awakening of the world, proclaiming Muhammad and the Qur’an, and translating the Qur’an into foreign languages.”

The details of our activities have already been published in this journal (vol. 1, no. 2). If we assume that by being “reduced to a position of insignificance,” Sir Zafarullah means that our membership is five percent of the total membership of the Ahmadi and Qadiani groups, then one has a right to ask him to show nineteen times the ... continued on page 22
**SAUM or FASTING**

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

**Saum**

The primary signification of saum is abstaining, in an absolute sense. In the technical language of the Islamic law, saum and siyam signify fasting or abstaining from food and drink and sexual intercourse from dawn till sunset.

**Institution of fasting in Islam**

The institution of fasting in Islam came after the institution of prayer. It was in Madinah in the second year of Hijrah that fasting was made obligatory, and the month of Ramadhan was set apart for this purpose. Before that the Prophet used to fast, as an optional devotion, on the tenth day of Muharram, and he also ordered his followers to fast on that day, it being a fasting day for the Qurash as well, according to ‘A‘ishah (Bu. 30:1). The origin of fasting in Islam may thus be traced to the time when the Prophet was still at Makkah; but, according to Ibn ‘Abbas, it was after his flight to Madinah that he saw the Jews fasting on the tenth day of Muharram; and being told that Moses had kept a fast on that day in commemoration of the deliver of the Israelites from Pharaoh, he remarked that they (the Muslims) were nearer to Moses than the Jews and ordered that day to be observed as a day of fasting (Bu. 30:69).

**A universal institution**

In the Qur'an, the subject of fasting is dealt with only in one place, that is, in the 23rd section of the second chapter: though there is mention of fasting by way of expiation (fidyajah) in certain cases. This section opens with the remark that the institution of fasting is a universal one. “O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was for those before you, so that you may guard against evil” (2:183). The truth of the statement made here—that fasting “was prescribed for those before you”—is borne out by a reference to religious history. The practice of fasting has been recognized well-nigh universally in all the higher, revealed religions, though the same stress is not laid on it in all, and the forms and motives vary. “Its modes and motives vary considerably according to climate, race, civilization and other circumstances; but it would be difficult to name any religious system of any description in which it is wholly unrecognized” (Encyclopaedia Britannica, art. “Fasting”). Confucianism, according to the writer in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, is the only exception. Zoroastrianism, which is sometimes mentioned as another exception, is stated as enjoining, “upon the priesthood at least, no fewer than five yearly fasts.” Present-day Christianity may not attach much value to religious devotions of this sort, but not only did the Founder of Christianity himself keep a fast for forty days and observe fasting on the Day of Atonement like a true Jew, but also commended fasting to his disciples: “Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face” (Mt. 6:16, 17). It appears that his disciples did fast, but not as often as did those of the Baptist, and when questioned on that point, his reply was that they would fast more frequently when he was taken away (Lk. 5: 33–35). The early Christians are also spoken of as fasting (Acts 13:2, 3; 14:23). Even St. Paul fasted (I Cor. 6:5; 11:27).

**New meaning introduced by Islam**

Cruden’s remark in his Bible Concordance that fasting in all nations was resorted to “in times of mourning, sorrow and afflictions” is borne out by the facts. Among the Jews, generally, fasting was observed as a sign of grief or mourning. Thus, David is mentioned as fasting for seven days during the illness of his infant son (II Sam. 12:16, 18); and, as a sign of mourning, fasting is mentioned in I Sam. 31:13 and elsewhere. Besides the Day of Atonement, which was prescribed by the Mosaic law as a day of fasting (Lev. 16:29)—the people being required to “afflict” their souls while the priest made an atonement for them to cleanse them of their sins—various other fast-days came into vogue after the Exile “in sorrowful commemoration of the various sad events which had issued in the downfall of the kingdom of Judah” (En. Br.). Four of these became regular fasting-days, “commemorating the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem, the capture of the city, the destruction of the temple and the assassination of Gedaliah” (ibid.). Thus it was generally some trouble or sad event of which the memory was kept up by a fast. Moses’ fasting for forty days—which example was later followed by Jesus Christ—seems to be the only exception, and the fast, in this case, was kept preparatory to receiving a revelation. Christianity did not introduce any new meaning into the fast; Christ’s words that his disciples would fast oftener when he was taken away from their midst, only lend support to the Jewish conception of the fast, as connected with national grief or mourning.

The idea underlying this voluntary suffering in the form of a fast in times of sorrow and affliction seems to have been to propitiate an angry Deity and excite compassion in Him. The idea that fasting was an act of penitence seems gradually to have developed from this as an affliction or calamity was considered to be due to sin, and fasting thus became an outward expression of the change of heart brought about by repentance. It was in Islam that the practice received a highly developed significance. It rejected in toto the idea of appeasing Divine wrath, or exciting Divine compassion through voluntary suffering and introduced in its place regular and continuous fasting, irrespective of the condition of the individual or the nation, as a means, like prayer, to the development of the inner faculties of man. Though the Qur'an speaks of expiatory or compensatory fasts in certain cases of violation of the Divine law, yet these are quite distinct from
the obligatory fasting in the month of Ramadan, and are mentioned only as an alternative to an act of charity, such as the feeding of the poor or the freeing of a slave. Fasting, as an institution, is here made a spiritual, moral and physical discipline of the highest order, and this is made clear by changing both the form and the motive. By making the institution permanent, all ideas of distress, affliction and sin are dissociated from it, while its true object is made plain, which is “that you may guard (tattaqun).” The word tattaqa, from which tattaqun is derived, means the guarding of a thing from what harms or injures it, or the guarding of self against that of which the evil consequences may be feared (R). But besides this, the word has been freely used in the Qur’an in the sense of fulfillment of duties, as in 4:1 where arhan (ties of relationship) occurs as an object of ittaqa, or, as generally in ittaq-ulah where Allah is the object of ittaqa, and therefore the significance of ittaq in all these cases is a fulfillment of obligations. In fact, in the language of the Qur’an, to be a muttaqi is to attain to the highest stage of spiritual development: “Allah is the friend of the muttaqin” (45:19); “Allah loves the muttaqin” (3:75; 9:4, 7); “Allah is with the muttaqin” (2:194; 9:36, 123); “The good end is for the muttaqin” (7:128; 11:49; 28:83); “For the muttaqin is an excellent resort” (38:49)—these and numerous similar passages show clearly that the muttaqi, according to the Qur’an, is the man who has attained the highest stage of spiritual development. And as the object of fasting is to be a muttaqi, the conclusion is evident that the Qur’an enjoins fasting with the object of making man ascend the spiritual heights.

A spiritual discipline

Fasting, according to Islam, is primarily a spiritual discipline. On two occasions in the Qur’an (9:112; 66:5), those who fast are called sa‘ih (from saha meaning he traveled) or spiritual wayfarers; and according to one authority, when a person refrains, not only from food and drink but from all kinds of evil, he is called a sa‘ih (R). While speaking of Ramadan, the month in which fasting is ordained, the Qur’an specially refers to nearness to God, as if its attainment were an aim in fasting, and then adds: “So they should hear My call (by fasting) and believe in Me, that they may walk in the right way” (2:186). In Tradition, too, special stress is laid on the fact that the seeking of Divine pleasure should be the ultimate object in fasting: “Whoever fasts during Ramadan, having faith in Me and seeking My pleasure” (Bu. 2:28). The Prophet said, “Fasting is a shield, so the faster should not indulge in foul speech... and surely the breath of a fasting man is pleasant to Allah than the odor of musk; he refrains from food and drink and other desires to seek My pleasure: fasting is for Me only” (Bu. 30:2). No temptation is greater than the temptation of satisfying one’s thirst and hunger when food and drink are in one’s possession, yet this temptation is overcome not once or twice, as if it were by chance, but day after day regularly for a whole month, with a set purpose of drawing closer and closer to the Divine Being. A man can avail himself of the best diet, yet he prefers to remain hungry; he has the cool drink in his possession, yet he is parching with thirst; he touches neither food nor drink, simply because he thinks that it is the commandment of God that he should not do so. In the inner recesses, there is none to see him if he pours down his dry and burning throat a glass of delicious drink, yet there has developed in him the sense of the nearness of God.
to such an extent that he would not put a drop of it on his tongue. Whenever a new temptation comes before him, he overcomes it, because, just at the critical moment, there is an inner voice, "God is with me." "God sees me." Not the deepest devotion can of itself develop that sense of the nearness to God and of His presence everywhere, which fasting day after day for a whole month does. The Divine presence, which may be a matter of faith to others, becomes a reality for him, and this is made possible by the spiritual discipline underlying fasting. A new consciousness of a higher life, a life above that which is maintained by eating and drinking, has been awakened in him, and this is the life spiritual.

**A moral discipline**

There is also a moral discipline underlying fasting, for it is the training ground where man is taught the greatest moral lesson of his life—the lesson that he should be prepared to suffer the greatest privation and undergo the hardest trial rather than indulge in that which is not permitted to him. That lesson is repeated from day to day for a whole month, and just as physical exercise strengthens man physically, moral exercise through fasting, the exercise of abstaining from everything that is not allowed, strengthens the moral side of his life. That idea that everything unlawful must be eschewed and that evil must be hated is thus developed through fasting. Another aspect of the moral development of man by this means is that he is thus taught to conquer his physical desires. He takes his food at regular intervals and that is no doubt a desirable rule of life, but fasting for one month in the year teaches him the higher lesson that, instead of being the slave of his appetites and desires, he should be their master, being able to change the course of his life if he so wills it. The man who is able to rule his desires, to make them work as he likes, in whom will-power is so developed that he can command himself, is the man who has attained to true moral greatness.

**Social value of fasting**

In addition to its spiritual and moral values, fasting as prescribed in the Qur'an has also a social value, more effective than that which is realized through prayer. Rich and poor, great and small, residents of the same vicinity are brought together five times daily in the mosque on terms of perfect equality, and thus healthy social relations are established through prayer. But the commencement of the month of Ramadan is a signal for a mass movement towards equality which is not limited to one vicinity or even one country but affects the whole Muslim world. The rich and the poor may stand shoulder to shoulder in one row in the mosque, but in their homes they live in different environments. The rich sit down at tables laden with dainties and with these they load their stomachs four, even six, times daily; while the poor cannot find sufficient food with which to satisfy their hunger even twice a day. The latter often feel the pangs of hunger to which the former are utterly strangers; how can the one feel for the other and sympathize with him? A great social barrier thus exists between the two classes in their homes, and this barrier is removed only when the rich are made to feel the pangs of hunger like their poorer brethren and go without food throughout the day, and this experience has to be gone through, not for a day or two, but for a whole month. The rich and the poor are thus, throughout the Muslim world, brought on the same level in that they are both allowed only two meals a day, and though these meals may not be exactly the same, the rich have perforce to shorten their menu and to adopt a simpler fare and thus come closer to their poorer brethren. This course undoubtedly awakens sympathy for the poor in the hearts of the rich, and it is for this reason that the helping of the poor is specially enjoined in the month of Ramadan.

**Physical value of fasting**

Refraining from food during stated intervals does no physical harm to a healthy person. On the contrary, it does some good. But fasting has yet another, and a more important, physical value. The man who cannot face the hardships of life, who is not able to live, at times, without his usual comforts, cannot be said to be even physically fit for life on this earth. The moment such a man is involved in difficulty or distress, as he must be every now and again, his strength is liable to give way. Fasting accustoms him to face the hardships of life, being in itself a practical lesson to that end, and increases his powers of resistance.

**The month of Ramadan**

With some exceptions, which will be mentioned later on, Muslims are required to fast for 29 or 30 days of the month of Ramadhan. The exact number depends on the appearance of the moon which may be after 29 or 30 days. Fasting commences with the new moon of Ramadhan and ends on the appearance of the new moon of Shawwal. The Prophet is reported to have said: "We are a people who neither write nor do we keep account; the month is thus and thus, showing (by his fingers) once twenty-nine and again thirty." (Bu. 30: 13). Another tradition says, "The Prophet mentioned Ramadhan and said, Do not fast until you see the new moon and do not break fasting until you see it (again), and if it is cloudy, calculate its appearance." (Bu. 30:11; M. 13:2). Another says that if it is cloudy, thirty days should be completed (Bu. 30:11). To begin and end by the actual appearance of the new moon was the easier method for a "people who did not know writing, and did not keep account," and it is still the easier method for the vast masses living in villages and distant places, but the tradition quoted above also allows that the appearance of the moon may be judged by computation. There is however an express prohibition against fasting when the appearance of the moon is doubtful (yaam al-shakkh) (AD 14:10).

**Choice of Ramadhan**

The injunction laid down in the Qur'an, relating to fasting in the month of Ramadhan, runs as follows: "The month of Ramadhan is that in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of guidance and the Criterion. Whoever of you is present in the month, he shall fast therein" (2:185). It will be seen from the words of the injunction that the choice of this particular month for fasting is not without a reason. It has been chosen because it is the month in which the Qur'an was revealed. It is well known that the Qur'an was revealed piecemeal during a period of twenty-three years; therefore by its revelation in the month of Ramadhan is meant that its revelation first began in that month. And this is historically true. The first revelation came to the Prophet on the 24th night of the month of Ramadhan when he was in the cave of Hira (IJC-C. 2:185). It was therefore in Ramadhan that the first ray of Divine light fell on the Prophet's mind, and the angel Gabriel made his appearance with the great Divine message. The month which witnessed the greatest spiritual experience of the Prophet was thus consid-
ered to be the most suitable month for the spiritual discipline of the Muslim community, which was to be effected through fasting.

There are evident reasons for choosing a lunar month. The advantages and disadvantages of the particular season in which it falls are shared by the whole world. A solar month would have given the advantages of shorter days and cooler weather to one part of the world, and burdened the other with the disadvantages of longer days and hotter weather. The lunar month is more in consonance with the universal nature of teachings of Islam, and all people have the advantages and disadvantages equally distributed.

On the other hand, if a particular time had not been specified the discipline would have lost all its value. It is due to the choice of a particular month, that with its advent the whole Muslim world is, as it were, moved by one current from one end to the other. The movement effected by the advent of Ramadhan in the Muslim world is the greatest mass movement on the face of the earth. The rich and the poor, the high and the low, the master and the servant, the ruler and the ruled, the black and the white, the Eastern and the Western, from one end of the earth to the other, suddenly change the course of their lives when they witness the tiny crescent of Ramadhan making its appearance on the western horizon.

There is no other example of a mass movement on this scale on the face of the earth, and this is due to the specification of a particular month.

Persons who may not fast

The injunction to fast is laid down only for those who witness the coming of the month, *man shahida min-kum al-shahra*. The verb *shahida* is from the infinitive *shahada*, which means *the bearing of witness*; so the injunction to fast is laid upon those only who witness the coming of the month. Evidently all people who live in places where the division into twelve months does not exist, are excluded from the purview of the injunction. Fasting is not compulsory in their case.

People who are exempted are specially mentioned either in the Qur’an or in the Tradition. The Qur’an mentions the sick and those on journey in the following words: “But whoever among you is sick or on a journey, (he shall fast) a like number of other days. And those who find it extremely hard may effect redemption by feeding a poor man” (2:184). This is not an absolute exemption for the sick man and the traveler; they are required to fast afterwards, when the sickness has gone or when the journey ends, but there may be cases of protracted illness or constant journeying, and such people are allowed to effect a redemption by feeding a poor man for every fast missed. Tradition makes a further extension and gives relaxation to certain classes of people, who, on account of some physical disability, are not able to fast. It is related of Anas that he used to feed a poor man when he grew too old to fast (Bu. 65, surah 2, ch. 22), and Ibn ‘Abbas is reported to have held that the words “those who find it hard to do so may effect a redemption” relate to the old man and old woman and the pregnant woman, and the woman that suckles a child, and that all of them are allowed to break the fast—the latter two, only if they fear for the child—and feed a poor man instead (AD. 14:3). This view was also held by Hasan and Ibrahim (Bu. 65, surah 2, ch. 22). It will be seen that the underlying idea is that a burden should not be placed on any one, which he is unable to bear. The case of old people who have become enfeebled by age is very clear while in the case of pregnant and nursing women, the permission to effect a redemption is due to the fact that fasting may cause harm to the unborn baby, or the baby that is being nursed, as well as to the woman herself; and as she is likely to remain in this condition for a sufficiently long time, she is given the benefit of the relaxation. Sickly people and those who are too weak to bear the burden would be dealt with as sick. Ibn Taimiyah further extends the principle that the fast may be deferred in cases of hardship, and holds that those engaged in war may not fast, though they may not be journeying, for, he adds, the hardships of war are greater than the hardships of travel (ZM. I, pp. 165, 166). From this it may be argued that, in unavoidable cases of very hard labor, the choice of postponing the fast may be given to those who are engaged in such labor.

To define the limits of sickness or travel is rather difficult. ‘Ata was of opinion that whatever the ailment, great or small, it entitled a person to the benefit of the exception (Bu. 65, sura 2, ch. 25). But generally it has been held that only such sickness as is likely to cause harm comes under the exception. As regards travel, there is nothing on record from the Prophet as to its limit (AM. I, p. 166). A certain Companion, Dihya, is reported to have traveled to a village which was about three miles distant from his own place and to have broken the fast, and some people followed his example but others did not (AD. 14:38). But it has been held that the proposed journey must be one that extends over more than a day, i.e., twenty-four hours; according to others, it must extend over two days; and others still think it necessary that it should extend over three days at least. But when the journey is actually started, the fast may be broken, whatever the distance traveled over may be. Thus of Abu Basra Ghifari, a Companion of the Prophet, it is related that he took a boat from Fustat to Alexandria, and broke the fast while yet the buildings of Fustat had not disappeared (AD. 14:45). I would interpret the exception relating to sickness and travel as meaning a sickness or journey which causes inconvenience to the subject of it, as the exception is followed by the words, “Allah desires ease for you, and He desires not hardship for you” (2:185).

The permission to break the fast for sickness or journey is meant for the convenience of the person who is under an obligation to keep the fast, as the words quoted above show. There is, however, a strong opinion that the permission granted by God must be made use of, just as in the case of prayer the traveler must shorten his prayer. The case of prayer and fasting do not, however, stand on a par, because, if the fasts are broken, the number of days must be completed afterwards, while in the case of prayer, there remains no obligation upon the traveler when the journey is over. The sick person and the traveler have therefore the option of keeping the fast if they do not find it hard, or of availing themselves of the permission and breaking the fast. The permissive nature of the words of the Qur’an is reflected in many of the most reliable traditions. There are reports showing that the Prophet himself kept a fast while on a journey (Bu. 30:33). In one tradition it is stated that on a certain journey on a very hot day, only the Prophet and Ibn Rawahah kept the fast (Bu. 30:35). There are other traditions showing that when a certain person questioned the Prophet whether he should or should not break the fast, when on a journey, his own inclination being for fasting, the Prophet replied: “Keep the fast if thou likest, and break it if thou likest” (Bu. 30:33). Anas relates that they
used to travel with the Prophet, and those who kept the fast did not find fault with those who broke it, nor did those who broke the fast find fault with those who kept it (Bu. 30:37). There is no doubt a saying of the Prophet to the effect that “it is not a virtue to fast when journeying,” but these words were spoken to a person who was in severe distress on account of the fast, and around whom people had gathered to provide shade for him (Bu. 30:36). Bukhari’s heading of this chapter is significant: “The Prophet’s saying to him who was protected with a shade and the heat was severe. It is not a virtue to fast when journeying,” the meaning evidently being that one should not fast when one finds it hard. There is a very large number of traditions on this subject, and some of these seem to contradict others, but the weight of evidence lies on the side that one is given the option of keeping the fast or breaking it.

**Who is bound to fast?**

The commandments of the Qur'an are meant for those who are full-grown, and so is the injunction relating to fasts. According to Imam Malik, minors should not fast, but the Caliph ‘Umar is quoted as saying: “Even our children are fasting” (Bu. 30:47). Probably this may have been done when the weather was not too hot, and the object may have been to habituate the children to fasting. From what has been stated above, it would further appear that only such people are bound to fast as are physically fit. The jurists lay down three conditions, viz., that of being *balig* (one who has reached the age of majority), *qadir* (physically fit) and ‘*aqil* (sane). Women are bound to fast if they are free from menstruation (Bu. 30:41). But while the women who has the menstruation on is freed from the obligation of prayer completely, she is bound to make good the fasts that she has not kept and complete the number of days after Ramadhan, being treated in this respect like a sick person. The bleeding of childbirth is considered as menstruation with this difference, that if the mother is nursing the baby, she can effect a redemption by feeding a poor man. In all cases in which fasts have to be recovered, whether it is the case of a sick person or a traveler or a menstruating woman, a person is at liberty to do it when he or she likes, before the coming of the next Ramadhan (Bu. 30:39).

**Limits of the fast**

The limits of a fast are clearly laid down in the Qur'an: “And eat and drink until the whiteness of the day becomes distinct from the blackness of the night at dawn (al-fajr), then complete the fast till night (al-lail)” (2:187). *Lail* (night) begins when the sun sets, and hence the fast in the terminology of Islam is kept from the first appearance of dawn, which is generally about an hour and a half before sunrise, till sunset. *Wisal* (Lit. joining together) in fasting, or continuing the fast throughout the night and then the next day so that there is no break, is definitely prohibited (Bu. 30:48, 49). But one tradition permits continuity of fast till daybreak (Bu. 30:50). This would mean that a man may not, if he chooses, break the fast at sunset but must take the morning meal for fasting for the next day; in other words, he must take a meal once in twenty-four hours at least. *Wisal* was prohibited lest people should, in trying continuous fast, impair their health or make themselves unfit for worldly work, for it appears that the Prophet himself sometimes kept a continuous fast (Bu. 30:48, 49; 94:9; 96:6); but for how many days, is not definitely known. Only on one occasion, when some of the Companions joined with the Prophet in keeping a continuous fast, it was continued for three successive days, and being the close of the month, the moon appeared on the evening of the third day, the Prophet adding that if the moon had not appeared he would have continued the fast. When some one asked him, why he forbade *wisal* to others, when he himself kept continuous fasts, he replied: “I pass the night while my Lord gives me food and makes me drink” (Bu. 30:49). He referred of course to the spiritual food which sometimes makes a man bear hunger and thirst in an extraordinary way, thus, in a sense, taking the place of food and drink. But all men had not the same spiritual sustenance, and, moreover, continuity of fast, if allowed generally, would have given rise to ascetic practices which Islam does not encourage. It should be noted in this connection that fasting, according to the Qur’an, meant abstaining from food as well as from drink, and three days’ continual suffering of hunger and thirst, in a hot country like Arabia, shows the extraordinary power of endurance which the Companions of the Prophet had developed, while his own power of endurance was much greater.

This endurance was no doubt due to extraordinary spiritual powers.

In this connection it may be further noted that, though the taking of a morning meal is not made obligatory, yet special stress is laid on it, and it is said to be a source of blessing, because it enables a man the better to cope with the hardship of the fast. The Prophet is reported to have said: “Take the morning meal, for there is blessing in the morning meal (*subur*)” (Bu. 30:20). This meal was taken very near the break of dawn. One Companion relates that, after taking the morning meal, he hastened to the mosque so that he might be able to join the morning prayer. Another says that the interval between the finishing of the morning meal and the beginning of prayer in the congregation was such that hardly fifty verses could be recited in it (Bu. 9:27). It is even recommended that the morning meal should be taken as near the break of dawn as possible (Ah. V. p. 147). In one tradition it is stated that the adhan of Bilal should not lead you to give up the morning meal, for, it is added, he utters the adhan while yet it is night, so that the man who is saying his tahajjud prayers may finish his prayers and the one who is sleeping may get up from his sleep (Bu. 10:13). And according to another, the morning meal was to be continued till Ibtis Umm Maktum gave the call to prayer, for he was a blind man and he did not give the call till (dawn became so clear and well-established that) “people called out to him. The dawn has broken, the dawn has broken” (Bu. 10:11). And even if the adhan is called out when the dawn has fully appeared, and a man has a cup in his hand ready to drink, he need not put it away and may drink it up (AD. 14:18).

As it is recommended in the case of the morning meal that it should be as late as possible, it is recommended that the breaking of the fast should be as early as possible. The Prophet is reported to have said that when the sun is set, the fast should be broken (Bu. 30:45). And according to another tradition: “People will have the good so long as they haste in breaking the fast” (Bu. 30:45). Some wait to break the fast till they see the stars, thinking that the night does not set in till darkness is spread, but there is no authority for this.

**The niyyah**

A good deal of misunderstanding
prevails on the questin of niyyah in the observance of fasts. The niyyah really means intention, aim or purpose in the doing of a thing; but it is wrongly supposed that the niyyah consists in the repetition of certain words stating that one intends to do so and so. Bukhari shows the true significance of niyyah when he gives as the heading to one of his chapters: “He who fasts during Ramadan having faith (in God) (iman-an) and seeking His pleasure (ihtisab-an) and having an aim or purpose (niyyat-an)” (Bu. 30:6). And he adds a portion of a tradition reported by ‘A’ishah in which it is stated that “people will be raised up (on the Judgment Day) according to their aims (‘ala niyyati-him).” The very first tradition with which Bukhari opens his book is an example of what niyyah means: (Good) actions shall be judged only by their aims—‘inama-l-a’malu bi-l-niyyah.” Hence if a good action is done with a bad aim, it shall not benefit the doer. Exactly the same object is in view in the statement that there must be a niyyah in fasting, as Bukhari says: that is, the man who fasts must have an aim or purpose before him. The aim or purpose of fasting has already been stated, being, according to the Qur’an, the attainment of taqwa, to make the fast a spiritual discipline, to attain nearness to God and to seek His pleasure in all one’s actions, and to make it a moral discipline, to shun all evil. It is in this sense alone that the niyyah is of the essence of fasting, as it is in fact of the essence of all good actions.

“What breaks the fast”

The word for breaking the fast is iftar, from fa’ar meaning to close or split a thing lengthwise (R.), and the things which break a fast are called mufrihat, pl. of mufrat. The three things which one should abstain from in fasting being eating, drinking and having sexual intercourse, these three, if resorted to of free will and intentionally, between daybreak and sunset, would break the fast, but if done through forgetfulness or inadvertently, the fast remains and must be completed (Bu. 30:26). Ringsing the mouth with water or with a toothbrush, gargling or sniffing the water into the nostrils, even if a little water passes into the throat unintentionally, does not break the fast (Bu. 30:25, 26, 27, 28). Nor does taking a bath or keeping a wet cloth on the head or pouring water on the head break the fast, even though done intentionally to relieve the severity of thirst (Bu. 30:25, MM. 7:4-ii). Cupping and vomiting also do not break the fast, for as Ibn ‘Abbas and ‘Ikrama say, a fast is broken by that which goes into the body, not by that which comes out (Bu. 30:23). There is a difference of opinion regarding the punishment for breaking a fast intentionally before its time, as shown under the heading “Expiatory fasts.” The Qur’an is silent on this point, while Tradition only shows that is it sufficient that the violator should be sincerely repentant. If fast is broken on a cloudy day, under the impression that the sun has set, and the sun then appears, then the fast should be completed (Bu. 30:46). If a man is fasting and then undertakes a journey, the fast may be broken (Bu. 30:34). The same rule may be followed in the case of sickness. In the case of voluntary fast, a man is at liberty to break the fast on account of a guest or the persistence of a friend (Bu. 30:51).

“Ethical side of fasting”

What has been said hitherto relates only to the external side of the fast but, as stated in the beginning, the essence of the fast is its moral and spiritual value, and the Qur’an and Tradition have laid special stress on this. “Whoever does not give up,” says one tradition, “lying and acting falsely, Allah does not stand in need of his giving up food and drink” (Bu. 30:8). This is true of all the Islamic injunctions. A man who says his prayers and does not keep in view their inner meaning, the object of prayer, is condemned in clear words: “Woe to the praying ones, who are unmindful of (the object of) their prayers” (107:4, 5). In another tradition, the ethical side of the fast is shown in the following words: “Fasting is a shield, so let the man who fasts not indulge in any foul speech or do any evil deed (la yajhal), and if any one fights or quarrels with him or abuses him, he should say, I am fasting. By Him Who holds my soul in His hand, the breath of the faster is pleasanter with Allah than the scent of musk” (Bu. 30:2). It is not re-fraining from food that makes the breath of the faster so sweet; it is re-fraining from foul speech and abuse and evil words and deeds of all kinds, so much so that he does not even utter an offensive word by way of retaliation. Thus a fasting person undergoes not only a physical discipline by curtailing his carnal desires, the craving for food and drink, and the sex appetite, but he is actually required to undergo a direct moral discipline by avoiding all kinds of evil words and evil deeds. It is not only a training on the physical side, which has a moral value; it is a direct training on the spiritual side as well. In the sight of God, as plainly stated in these traditions, the fast loses its value not only by taking food or drink but also by telling a lie, using foul language, acting unfaithfully, or doing an evil deed.

The moral value of the fasting discipline is further enhanced by laying stress on the doing of good to humanity in the month of Ramadan. The example of the Prophet is quoted in this connection in a tradition: “The Prophet, may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him, was the most bountiful of all people, and he exceeded his own bounty in the month of Ramadan” (Bu. 30:7). Another tradition describes the month of Ramadan as “a month in which the sufferings of the poor and the hungry must be attended to” (MM. 7:1-iii).

“Exempting a slave from fasting”

These injunctions make clear the significance of the tradition which says that when the month of Ramadan commences, “the doors of Heaven are opened and the doors of Hell are closed and the devils are put into chains” (Bu. 30:5). This is true of the man who keeps the fast, both physically and morally. The devils are chained in his case because he curbs and conquers the lower passions, by exciting which the devil makes a man fall into evil. The doors of Hell are closed on him because he shuns all evil
which is man’s hell. The doors of Heaven are opened for him because he rises above physical desires and devotes himself to the service of humanity. In one tradition, fasting is described as bringing about a forgiveness of sins “for him who fasts having faith (in God) and to seek His pleasure and having an aim or purpose” (Bu. 2:28; 30:6). There is not the least doubt that fasting as qualified here, that is, when it is kept having true faith in God and when the person fasting resorts to it as a discipline for seeking the pleasure of God, is practical repentance of the highest value; and when a man sincerely repents of sins, his previous sins are forgiven, because the course of his life has been changed.

“The is, however, yet another sense in which the doors of Heaven are opened to a fasting person in the month of Ramadhan. It is specially suited for spiritual advancement, for attaining nearness to God. Speaking of Ramadhan, the Qur’an says: “And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, surely I am nigh: I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me” (2:186). The ways of attaining nearness to God are here spoken of as being specially opened in Ramadhan, and this nearness is to be sought through prayer. It is for this reason that the Prophet used to have special regard for Tahajjud prayers in the month of Ramadhan. And he also recommended that his followers should, during this month, awake at night for prayers (Bu. 2:27).

I'tikaf

I’tikaf means literally to *stay in a place*; technically it is staying in a mosque for a certain number of days, especially the last ten days of the month of Ramadhan. Bukhari has devoted a whole book to I’tikaf (book 33), showing the practice of the Prophet in this connection. During these days, the man who enters the state of I’tikaf (mi’takif) dissociates himself from all worldly affairs, and he does not leave the mosque unless there is necessity (haajah), such as evacuation, or having a bath, etc. (Bu. 33:34). Usually a tent was pitched for the Prophet in the yard of the mosque (Bu. 33:7). Women are also allowed to enter a state of I’tikaf (Bu. 33:6). The mu’takif may be visited by other people or by his wife (Bu. 33:11). According to one tradition, he may visit a sick person (AD. 14:78). An I’tikaf may be performed in other days (AD. 15:75), but the last ten days of Ramadhan are specially mentioned in traditions and I’tikaf is spoken of in the Qur’an in connection with Ramadhan.

Lailat al-Qadr

One of the last ten nights of the month of Ramadhan is called Lailat al-Qadr, the night of grandeur or majesty. In the Qur’an, it is spoken of in two places. In ch. 97, it is mentioned thrice as lailat al-Qadr: “Surely We revealed it on lailat al-Qadr. And what will make thee comprehend lailat al-Qadr is? Lailat al-Qadr is better than a thousand months. The angels and the Spirit descend in it by the permission of their Lord—for every affair—Peace! it is till the break of the morning.” Here this night is spoken of as the night in which the Qur’an was revealed, and it is further stated that it is the night on which the angels and the spirit descend. It is also mentioned in ch. 44 where it is called a blessed night (laila mubarakah): “By the Book that makes manifest (the truth)! We revealed it on a blessed night—truly We are ever-warn.ing. Therein is made clear every affair—full of wisdom—a command from Us” (44:2–5). It will be seen that, in both places, the Qur’an is spoken of as having been revealed on this night, and elsewhere it is stated that the Qur’an was revealed in the month of Ramadhan, which shows that this night occurs in the month of Ramadhan. The revelation of the Qur’an on this night means that its revelation began on that night; in other words, the first revelation came to the Prophet on this night. It is called a blessed night or the grand night because in it was laid the basis of a new revelation to the world which contains every commandment (amr) full of wisdom and knowledge (hakim). The lailat al-Qadr is, therefore, as it were, the anniversary of the revelation of the Qur’an.

As shown above, the last ten days of Ramadhan are specially observed as days of devotion, so much so that, though Islam discourages asceticism, yet in these ten days, a Muslim is allowed to lead an ascetic life, by keeping himself to the mosque and giving up all worldly affairs. There are various traditions showing that the Muslims should look for this night as one of the odd nights in the last ten nights of Ramadhan (Bu. 32:3) or in the last seven nights (Bu. 32:2). According to some traditions it is the twenty-fifth or twenty-seventh or twenty-ninth night of Ramadhan. One tradition says that some of the Companions of the Prophet were shown lailat al-Qadr in their dreams in the last seven nights (MM. 7:9–11). It should be borne in mind that lailat al-Qadr is a spiritual experience, as it was the spiritual, not the physical, experience of the Prophet, and as the last-quoted tradition shows, it was the spiritual experience of the Companions, and therefore it is an error to think that it can be beheld as a physical experience, or that any physical change is witnessed on that night. It is the spiritual experience of the man who exerts himself in Ramadhan to seek nearness to the Divine Being.

Notes

1. Al-insaku ‘anti-f’il, which includes abstaining from eating or speaking or moving about. Thus a horse that abstains from moving about, or from fodder, is said to be sa’im, and wind is said to be saum when it abates, and the day when it reaches the midpoint (R.). In the sense of abstaining from speech, the word is used in the Qur’an in an early Makkah revelation: “Say, I have vowed a fast to the Beneficient God, so I shall not speak to any man today” (19:26).

2. The actual appearance of the moon may be established by the evidence of a single man if he be trustworthy. It is related that on a certain occasion the people of Madinah were doubtful about the appearance of the new moon of Ramadhan and they had decided not to fast, when a man came from the desert and gave evidence that he had seen the new moon. And the Prophet accepted his evidence and directed the people to fast (AD. 14:14).

3. The Arabic word is yutayyqa-hu, which is generally interpreted as meaning *those who are able to do it*. If this interpretation be adopted, the significance would be that invalids and travelers may either fast afterwards when they are not under such disability, or they may effect a redemption by feeding a poor man for every day of fasting. But I prefer the other interpretation which some commentators have accepted, viz., that yutayyqa-hu means those who find it hard to keep the fast even afterwards: only such persons are allowed to effect a redemption by feeding a poor man. This interpretation is supported by a different reading yutawwaqa-hu which means those who on a hard task is imposed. Ibn ’Abbas, reading yutawwaqa-hu (Bu. 65:2, ch. 22) carries a similar significance, and he interprets these words as relating to very old people who are unable to fast.

4. I have translated the word a’mal as meaning... continued on page 22
Hadith: Fasting

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

1. “O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard (against evil):... and those who find it hard to do so may effect a redemption by feeding a poor man.” (2:183, 184).

2. “The month of Ramadhan is that in which the Qur’an was revealed:... Therefore, whoever of you witnesses the month, he shall fast during it, and whoever is sick or on a journey (he shall fast), a (like) number of other days.” (2:185).

3. “It is made lawful to you to approach your wives on the night of the fast: they are an apparel for you and you are an apparel for them:... and eat and drink until the whiteness of the day becomes distinct to you from the blackness of the night at dawn, then complete the fast till night.” (2:187).

The directions relating to fasts are all contained in vv. 2:183–187. Fasts are to be kept during the 29 or 30 days of Ramadhan (v. 2). The Fast consists in abstaining daily, from dawn till sunset, from food and drink and sexual intercourse (v. 3). Fasting is recognized in hadith as one of the pillars of Islam (Bukhari 2:1:36), but too much voluntary fasting is prohibited (B. 30:55). While fasting, one must cultivate the habit of abstaining from evil, from foul talk and falsehood (hh. 1, 2), and of charity to fellow-men (h. 3). Fasting starts with the first day of Ramadhan and ends with the last day of it. Ramadhan being a lunar month, its beginning and end depend on the appearance of the new moon (B. 30:11). Fast must not be kept on a doubtful day (h. 4). The fast begins when dawn appears (h. 5), and ends when the sun sets (h. 6). When fasting, it is recommended that one should have a meal in the morning (h. 7), a little before dawn (h. 8).

Breaking the fast when one is journeying is permitted, but fasting is allowed in such a case unless it entails hardship (hh. 9, 10). One who is ill, the pregnant woman, the woman who gives suck, and a very old person may feed a needy person instead of fasting.

(h. 11). A woman should not fast when she is menstruating, but she should fast for the same number of days afterwards (h. 12). When for some reason, the number of fasts is to be completed after Ramadhan, it may be done at any time before the next Ramadhan (h. 13). Fasting on 1d days is strictly prohibited (h. 14). When a person eats or drinks forgetting that he is fasting, the fast is not broken (h. 15). Cooling oneself, taking a bath, gargling or rinsing the mouth and tasting of the food in the cooking pot do not break the fast (h. 16), nor does vomiting (h. 17). *Fikr* or keeping to the mosque during the last ten days of Ramadhan, and not going out of it except for a need, may be resorted to by those who fast, and it is in these nights that the Laila al-Qadr must be sought (hh. 18, 19).

1 Abu Hurairah reported.
The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said:
“Fasting is an armor with which one protects oneself; so let not him (who fasts) utter immodest (or foul) speech, nor let him act in an ignorant manner; and if a man quarrels with him or abuses him, he should say twice, I am fasting. And by Him in Whose hand is my soul, the odor of the mouth of one fasting is sweeter in the estimation of Allah than the odor of musk—he gives up his food and his drink and his (sexual) desire for My sake: fasting is for Me and I will grant its reward; and a virtue brings reward ten times like it.” (B. 30:2)

2 Abu Hurairah said.
The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said:
“He who does not give up uttering falsehood and acting according to it, Allah has no need of his giving up his food and his drink.” (B. 30:8)

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3 Ibn 'Abbas said.

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, was the most generous of all people, and he was most generous in Ramadhan, when Gabriel met him, and he met him in every night of Ramadhan and read with him the Qur'an; so the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, was more generous in the doing of good than the wind which is sent forth (on everybody). (B. 1:1)

4 Siyah said, reporting on the authority of 'Ammar.

Whoever keeps fast on a doubtful day, disobeys Abu-l-Qasim,* peace and blessings of Allah be on him. (B. 30:11)

*Abu-l-Qasim is the ka'bah of the Holy Prophet.

5 'Adiy ibn Hatim said.

When it was revealed, “Until the khait al abyadh becomes distinct to you from the khait al-aswad,” I betook myself to a black cord and a white cord* and put them under my pillow, and I looked at them (now and then) during the night but I could not distinguish between them; then I came to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, in the morning and I mentioned this to him. He said, “By this is meant only the blackness of the night and the whiteness of the day.” (B. 30)

*Khait literally means a cord.

6 Umar said.

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said: “When the night comes on from there and the day departs on this side and the sun goes down, the one who is fasting should break the fast.” (B. 30:43)

7 Anas said.

The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said:
10 Jabir said,  
The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, was on a journey, and he saw a crowd and a man who was placed under a shade. He said, “What is this?” They said,  
“He is one fasting. He said:  
“There is no great virtue in fasting when on journey.” (B. 30:36)

12 Abu-l-Zinad said,  
The menstruating woman has to fast afterwards, and she has not to perform any prayer (for the prayers omitted). (B. 30:41)

13 Abu Salamah said,  
I heard 'A'ishah say, I used to be under obligation to fast on account of (the fasts omitted in) Ramadhan, and I was not able to perform this obligation except in Sha'ban.* (B. 30:40)

*Sha'ban is the month preceding Ramadhan.

14 Abu 'Ubaid said,  
I was present at 'Id with 'Umar and he said, The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, forbade fasting on these two days, the ('Id) day of your breaking the fast and the other ('Id) day on which you eat of your sacrifices. (B. 30:66)

15 Abu Hurairah reported,  
The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said:  
“When one forgets and eats and drinks, he should complete his fast, for Allah made him eat and drink.” (B. 30:26)

16 Ibn 'Umar moistened a cloth and cast it over him while he was fasting; and Sha'bi entered a bath while he was fasting. Ibn 'Abbas said, There is no harm that one should taste of the food in the cooking-pot and anything else. And Hasan said, There is no harm in rinsing the mouth with water, and getting cooled, by one who fasts. (B. 30:25)

17 Abu Hurairah said,  
When a person vomits, he should not break the fast. (B. 30:32)
able them to lead lives full of peace and happiness. Thus the propagation of Islam is another principle for the success of Muslims. There cannot be a nobler goal than endeavors for creating an order that bestows peace and happiness on the human race. But even in the achievement of such a noblest goal no wrong is allowed to be done. No wrong is to be preached. Right and only right essentially has to be the basis of an order that can guarantee happiness with a man and happiness all around.

The Mujaddid of the 14th century Hijrah, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, laid foundations for the propagation of Islam at a time when Islam and the Muslim world appeared to be a spent force. Allah bestowed great success on the mission of this great Mujaddid. In less than a century the tables have been turned and one sees mosques and Islamic centers emerging in almost all big cities of the United States and Europe. Islam is an ongoing religion today, yet greater efforts and a more organized manner are required in this direction. Most Muslims are not yet alive to this cry of the time. As against the Muslim propagation mission, Christian churches and Judaeo rabbis are possessed of enormous monetary, material and intellectual resources in addition to mighty political influence in many countries. Allah has bestowed on many Muslim nations wealth from natural resources. They may be considered thankless by future historians if they fail to direct a substantial portion of this God-given wealth in the way of Allah for the benefit of mankind. Only time will give a verdict whether we were able to benefit from these golden rules laid down by Allah for enabling us to lead successful lives.

O Allah You help us adhere to what You commanded. Amen.

Fasting

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good actions. A reference to what follows in the report makes it clear, for the example of actions given there is hijra, the flight of a man for the sake of his principles which is an action of the highest value, but as the report tells us, if the hijra is undertaken with a bad aim in view, to attain worldly wealth or for the love of a woman, it loses all its value. That there can be no question of a good aim in evil actions is self-evident, and hence by a’mal in this report are meant good actions.
5. Therefore anything done under compulsion or involuntarily does not break the fast.
6. There is a difference of opinion on some of these minor points, but what has been said here is based on weightier authority.
7. ‘I’tikaf is derived from ‘akafa ‘adali-hi, meaning he kept, or clave, to it constantly or perseveringly (L.L.).
8. There are other traditions showing that he should not visit the sick, nor assist at a burial, but evidently such deeds fail within the meaning of hajah.

The Other Side

continued from page 11

amount of work we are doing. For example, have the Qadianis initiated translations or publication of the translation of Holy Quran in 152 different languages; set up 133 new jamaats overseas; or published about 247 journals? If they can not match their significance in numbers with work then either they are not as significant as they claim to be (they are certainly not relevant to the 15th century of Hijra) or their numbers are not as great as they claim. However, matters of principles and faith are more important than these polemics. In this respect we request Sir Zafarullah to publish an open letter stating whether he believes non-Ahmadi Muslims to be, in the words of Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, kafirs and outside the pale of Islam.

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—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.”

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“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-countrysmen. 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