Eid-ul-Adha—Festival of Sacrifices
“Communism Is Conquerable”
“Militant” Islam—A Misnomer
Holy Qur’an—The Incomparable, Unequaled Word of God

The Superhuman Character of Words and Works of God

By HADHRAT MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD, Founder of Ahmadiyyah Movement in Islam

It is firmly established that all things created by God are unequaled in their excellence, and, conversely, things which have no parallel are essentially of supernatural source; thus the puerile proposition, which asserts that it is not necessary that the Word of God should be unique or that its being unequaled does not necessarily prove that it is from the Almighty, becomes baseless.

However, it is alleged that there exists in the universe many a word of man, the like of which has not so far been produced, and yet these have not been accepted as divine word. This erroneous conception has arisen from want of thought and deliberation; otherwise, of human word, however precious it may be, it can never be claimed justly that it is beyond the power and possibility of human mind, and that the author of it has done a deed which may well be called God-like. A man can do what another man has done. When a word is called the word of man, the conclusion that it is, therefore, not beyond the power of another person, is indisputable and the possibility of its being unparalleled is also precluded.

There has never been a man who ever claimed that his words and deeds can be compared with those of the Divine Being. And, if there had been such an impudent person with such an arrogant claim, many would have challenged him. It should be known that it is exclusively the privilege and glory of God to have challenged all the nations of the world to produce, if they could, word like unto His Word, and to have roused them to summon all their resources for this contest. And when hundreds of reputed poets have laid down their lives without being able to produce even one small chapter like that of the Qur’an, it will indeed be the limit of ignorance to call their writings unsurpassable, and to associate them with the Almighty in this attribute of His. The Qur’an says that “if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it and call on your helpers besides Allah if you are truthful. But if you do (it) not—and you can never do (it)—then be on your guard against the fire whose fuel is men and stones; it is prepared for the disbelievers.” And again the challenge is thrown that “if men and jinn should combine together to bring the like of it, though some of them were aiders of others. And certainly We have made clear for men in this Qur’an every kind of description, but most men consent to naught save denying.”

It is thus clear that the distinctive quality of being unparalleled and unapproachable in excellence belongs exclusively to the Divine Word and Deed. It is this very argument which helps to induce belief in the existence of the Creator, and without which the way to reach Him through the gateway of reason would have been closed. The fact of the existence of God, it cannot be gainsaid, is so closely connected with this great principle that it will be nothing short of cutting at the very root of Reason and Faith if we should dare admit mortal men into its purview, and ascribe to them the divine attribute.

If a person should refuse to accept this general principle, established after a careful observation of the laws of nature, he should not, thereafter, refer to Reason nor speak of the Laws that govern the universe, and should discard all books on logic and philosophy. How will he feel when he asserts that a bee, so perfect in its make, has undoubtedly been created by God, but His Word, with all the grandeur of its phrase and greatness of its teaching, cannot be so perfect as to evince its supernatural source? Is it not a matter of regret that, whereas in the case of a bee, he professes that

... continued on page 9
In the Name of Allah, the Beneficient, the Merciful

Dear Readers,

With this issue, The Islamic Review completes one year of its publication from the USA. By the Grace of Allah the readership, although slowly, is increasing. The process of changing the minds and hearts of people itself is the slowest of all, but once the wave overtakes them most are swept away by this. Our task is to call the people to Good and to Truth; the results are to follow by themselves. We are simply sowing the seeds which in due course will grow into a mighty tree that will bring fruits to the future generations of mankind. Thus we are thankful to Almighty Allah for the success we have achieved till now and pray to Him for future success as well.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Mujaddid of the Fourteenth Century Hijrah, was so deeply lost in the love of God, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and the Holy Qur'an that he is acclaimed as Fana-Fillah, Fana-Fir-Rasul, and Fana-Fil-Qur'an in the terminology of the Tassawaf. His article “Qur'an, the Incomparable Word of God” will bring you the depth of his understanding of the Qur'an.

Our Editorial sets right the record about the term “militant Islam” being commonly used in the media and by authors in Europe and the USA.

The article on Eid-ul-Adha, which falls during this month, explains the significance of this great festival of the Islamic world.

Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A., L.L.B., passed away during this month in 1951. We print an article quoting the opinion held by the Promised Messiah about this great and worthy disciple of his.

The Eid sermon delivered by Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan, senior vice president of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam, Lahore at Newark Community Center, Newark, California, brings home the fact that righteous men who follow the command of Allah find the taste of Paradise in this life.

In “Communism Is Conquerable,” we are printing the magnificent speech delivered by Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan at the Newark Community Center on the occasion of his farewell dinner on August 18, 1981, wherein he not only traced the history of the achievements of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement but also revealed the plans it is executing for the ultimate defeat of the Communist ideology. Perhaps no one can deny his claim that the final showdown with the communist world has to be on ideological grounds, and his analysis of the superiority of the Islamic ideology is supported by the facts of history. This may interest all those who are really convinced that in order to secure the future of mankind a world of believers has to be rebuilt and communism as an ideology must be defeated.

We also bring to you the Qur'anic concept of Adam as derived from the story of Adam in the Holy Qur'an. You will be able to mark the difference between this and the story of Adam as narrated in the Testaments.

Wishing a happy Eid-ul-Adha to all our readers,

Yours truly,
The Publishers
SOME AUTHORS, commentators, and newscasters are using the term “militant Islam” in their writings and talks. Since the increasing use of this term is likely to create misunderstandings in the minds of readers and listeners about Islam, there is a need to set the record right. There is no denying the fact that in the rank and file of every social, political, and religious denomination in any part of the world some zealots and militants have always been there, but this hardly warrants labeling the whole society or organization as militant. Islam is a religion of peace. The word “Muslim” literally means “peace,” or one who has completely submitted to the will of God. Thus “Islam” means “Peace through complete submission to the will of Allah.” Again, the Holy Qur’an lays down in unambiguous terms that “there is no compulsion in religion.” Further, it is incumbent on a Muslim to have faith and belief in all the prophets and messengers of Allah who preceded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, or else a Muslim’s faith is not complete. And the Holy Qur’an tells us that Allah has sent prophets to all the people in all the parts of the world for the guidance of their respective people. No other religious denomination or its holy books contains such a rational basis for a universal brotherhood of man through affinity of reverence—nay, having faith in the truthfulness of the founders of all great religions of the world and their missions. Buddhists do not believe in any prophet who appeared after Buddha. Jews do not believe in Jesus Christ or Muhammad—nay, they do not consider them as righteous men. Christians do not believe in the truth of the mission of Muhammad. It is the distinction of a Muslim alone that he has faith in the truth of Buddha, Moses, Jesus Christ and all the other prophets of God who appeared from time to time in various parts of the world for the guidance of the human race. This rational teaching of the Holy Qur’an provides the basis for “one human race under one God”—which alone can assure the lasting peace that humanity is longing for.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, established the highest traditions of ridding humanity of prejudices based on religious creed, race, wealth, and sex. He allowed the Christians to hold their Sunday church in the Muslim mosque of Medina. He placed Bilal, a believer who was a slave of African origin before embracing Islam, over the Quresh chiefs. He made wealthy Arabs admit poor people as their leaders. He placed womenfolk in the most elevated position by proclaiming that “Paradise is to be found under the feet of a mother” and also by doing away with the false concept preached by the Christians that held Eve responsible for making Adam commit the sin. He established a great example of forgiving his persecutors by a general clemency to all people at the fall of Mecca. The present-day so-called civilized nations, by extracting reprisals, war damages, and ransoms from the defeated nations after World War I and World War II, have proved by their conduct that in spite of their high-sounding claims to civilization, they are still lagging much behind the Islamic teachings in this regard among others.

And nothing will be further from the truth than to label such as religion as “militant” just for the deviant behavior of a few of its followers. The above facts are a matter of common knowledge today and we think most probably the “militancy” of the authors and commentators is peeping from behind their words.
EID-UL-ADHA: The Islamic Festival of Sacrifices

Pilgrimage to Mecca—a symbol of world brotherhood

"And proclaim the Pilgrimage to ALL MEN" is the Quranic command of Allah unto the Holy Prophet Muhammad. It is a perpetual call unto all believers in God who accept the Patriarch Abraham as the father of organized religion.

Muhammad was that Prophet and descendant of Abraham, sent by God to invite all men into Abraham’s monotheistic Faith of Islam, that in truly organized form they may develop his religion; and in establishing a great world brotherhood would bring about the peace and happiness of Heaven on earth that was promised to those true followers of Abraham.

The Pilgrimage is thus a wonderful exercise of human unity. Pilgrims of every race and nation, and from every walk of life gather upon the plains of Arabia and at the Holy Centers of Abraham in a grand show of mass unity of thought and purpose.

Spiritual power

Dressed only in two pieces of unsewn cotton garment and chanting together, “Here we are in Thy presence, O God,” the pilgrims must lose all feelings of personal importance to the urge for collective spiritual power and purpose: together they must prostrate themselves upon the earth that gave them birth and succor, that they may reflect upon their humble origins and their utter dependence upon Allah for life. In this collective frame of mind the pilgrims think only of God as the Sovereign over all and of themselves as equal co-sharers of the innumerable bounties of God. Here is born the spiritual power of Islam, of Abraham’s Religion that demands purposeful submission only to Allah, and sacrificing of the self for the benefit and welfare of others.

Abraham was the first man to organize religion for the benefit of society, and the shrine he built at Mecca in Arabia is a living testimony to his desire for all men to rally around this symbol of monotheistic faith that would inspire them into a single world-religious brotherhood. “God is one and mankind is a single community” is the Quranic dictum first voiced by the Great Patriarch.

Abraham’s prayer

The Shrine at Mecca is the first one upon the face of the earth to have had the distinction of having men and women drawn from all races and nations gather in pilgrimage around its holy precincts, and thus stands in fulfillment of the famous prayer of Abraham which the Patriarch had addressed to his Lord when dedicating the building to Divine worship:

“O Lord, I have settled a part of my offspring in this valley unproductive of fruit near Thy Sacred House that they may keep up prayer (to Thee). So make the hearts of people yearn towards them and provide them with ample fruit, and make this city secure and save me and my sons from worshipping idols, make them a nation submissive to Thee.

... and raise from among them a Messenger who shall recite to them of Thy Messages and who will teach them and purify them. Surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.”—Holy Qur’an.

Living symbol

It was in response to this prayer that through Ishmael the mighty Arab nation came into being and the Arabian wilderness began prospering with tremendous wealth—that through the Arabs, peoples of all races who “yearned towards them” began accepting Abraham’s Religion of Islam and above all the great world-Messenger Muhammad came with the true Messages of the Lord to teach and purify the world in the name of Allah.

The Pilgrimage to Abraham’s shrine in Mecca stands until today the symbol of Abraham’s monotheistic faith, a symbol of his desire for complete human unity, a symbol of the truth of Muhammad’s Divine appointment as the world Messenger (prayed for by Abraham) who has been the cornerstone in the building and the establishment of Islam as God’s True Religion on Earth.

Seeking Divine guidance

Eid-ul-Adha is the grand Islamic Festival of Sacrifices. It commemorates the historic sacrifice the Holy Patriarch Abraham had made of his son Ishmael on the barren wastes of Arabia.

Many of us seem not to wonder about this kind of God-man relationship which Abraham had experienced through the phenomenon of Divine Revelation. Mankind today does not seem to believe that such Divine Revelation has been reality in the past and still is unto today—that God still speaks to those deserving of this special Divine Favor.

We wonder why it is that God has been close to man in centuries past, that He spoke to His creatures and showed many signs of Divine Grace, Glory and Grandeur to peoples of the past, and now He fails in His Grace to Mankind.

Where is God, is the question now. Why is He not around to help us in our modern-day crises? Why is He not speaking to us and giving us hope as He did to our forefathers in ages past? Many of us answer these questions by saying—There is no God and there never was. Revelation is just man’s imagination and is unreal.

But there are others who believe there is a God and they have kept faith in His existence because of stories such as Abraham’s that have kept intriguing their minds with their ring of truth and their beautiful human appeal. But although they believe in God and that in the past He spoke to righteous men and Prophets such as Abraham, Jesus, Muhammad, etc., they do not believe He still contacts mankind in this blessed way.

The truth is, however, that God still speaks to men, and it is of utmost importance that we have faith in this greatest of Divine Favors. It is through hearing the spoken word of God, personally, that we can really believe in the true existence of God and come to obey His commandments that alone can save us from the destruction facing mankind today.

But how do we receive speech from God? We have to listen keenly and faithfully with our spiritual ears for His Voice that ever keeps up His speech within our innermost selves. We can only succeed in hearing from the Lord when we purify our bodies of unclean thought and deeds and enter into prolonged and sincere meditation and prayer the way Abraham and other righteous human beings had done.

Divine Revelation is not a joke or a thing of the past. In our own age the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam
Ahmad, had this most favorable experience. He proved it by showing certain signs and by way of prophecy. In these modern days of atheism, agnosticism and materialism, he proved the truth of Divine Revelation and we cannot ignore this wonderful phenomenon. It has meaning and relevance to our day-to-day existence.

We need Revelation now to assist us in our present miserable existence and we must quest like the Prophets after such Divine Favors and Grace. Let us then emulate the life-pattern of Abraham and seek the Lord’s Guidance for the better and happier Life Divine.

Ishmael—the legitimate heir of Abraham

His birth was by Divine Promise

The Holy Bible has proven beyond a doubt that Ishmael was the first born and beloved son of Abraham and not an illegitimate child of an unworthy handmaid as some erroneously imply.

Ishmael was born out of Divine Promise according to the Holy Bible: “And behold the word of the Lord came unto him (Abraham) saying... he that shall come forth of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.” (Gen. 15:4)

“And the angel of the Lord said unto her (Hagar). Behold thou art with child and shalt bear a son and shalt call him name Ishmael, because the Lord hath heard thy affliction.” (Gen. 16:11)

Ishmael not Isaac

From the above Biblical quotations none can doubt that Ishmael was born by Divine design, being promised to Abraham and Hagar and blessed by God. Ishmael was Abraham’s first born and heir, the elder of his two sons who was offered to God for the historic Sacrifice.

Many claim it was Isaac who was offered for sacrifice, but there is no truth in this. It is always the first born that is offered in God’s way for sacrifice of all sorts.

The Bible confirms this law of God: “And the Lord spoke unto Moses saying, sanctify unto Me all the first born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast is mine.” (Exodus 13:1)

The Bible also stresses that the first born must be the foremost inheritor of the father, and Ishmael was:

“If a man has two wives, one beloved and one hated, and they have borne him children, and if the first born son be hers that is hated; then it shall be when he is making his sons to inherit that what he hath, that he shall not make the son of the beloved before the son of the hated which is indeed the firstborn, but he shall acknowledge the son of the hated as the firstborn, for he is the beginning of his strength: the right of the firstborn is his.” (Deut. 21:15-17)

St. Paul’s theory

These verses of the Bible give ample testimony to the fact that Abraham’s firstborn Ishmael has been so honored by the great Patriarch and he was that son who was most assuredly involved in the famous Sacrifice and not Isaac. The theory of St. Paul that Ishmael was born after the flesh, thus falls to the ground and can be regarded as a violation of God’s Holy Words and as slander upon the sacred and pure characters of Abraham and Hagar (may Allah’s blessings be ever upon them).

Ishmael was not born of the flesh. His birth was designed by God and made legal through His words in the Bible. “And Sarah said unto Abraham: Behold now the Lord hath restrained me from (child) bearing. I pray thee go in unto my maid; it may be I may obtain children by her. And Abraham hearkened to the voice of Sarah. And Sarah, Abraham’s wife, took Hagar and gave her to her husband Abraham to be his wife.” (Gen. 16:2-3)

“Acromial-Hirrah”—Respect the Cat

A Poem by Mustafa H. M. Leon

Hast heard the story, how one summer’s day
Within a mosque, a cat once hap’d to stray.
Just at the time God’s Prophet had gone there,
To make, as was his wont, the Zuhr prayer?
With measured tread, it step’d with noiseless feet,
And, ‘fore God’s Prophet, calmly took its seat,
And purring gently, sat there calm and still,
Afraid of nought, suspicious of no ill,
When lo! by Allah’s will, e’er wise and good,
The cat was seized with pangs of motherhood,
And ’twixt its pangs, common to all o’ earth,
There in the mosque, to kittens three gave birth.
“Remove the brute,” then loudly one did cry,
“To thus pollute the mosque, sure it should die.”
“Say not such words,” God’s Prophet then did say,
“Remove it not, in peace let it here stay,
Do not a thing its feelings now to jar,
Respect the cat, Acromial al-hirrah,
This cat hath only done that which it should,
And hath performed its work of motherhood,
What Allah hath decreed for all the race,
As Nature’s law, sure can be no disgrace,
And Muslims learn from this the lesson, that
Allah doth teach to all, Respect the Cat,
Thy father honor, and thy brother love,
Protect thy sister, but of all above,
Respect thy mother, she it was who bare
Thee in her womb, and lavished on thee care
Known but to Allah; Muslims think of that,
This cat a mother is, Respect the Cat!”
In memory of Maulana Muhammad Ali M.A., Ll.B., the most accomplished scholar and author of the Islamic world during the present century and the translator of the Holy Qur’an in English with commentary. Born 1876; died October 13, 1951.

“No living man has done longer or more valuable service to the cause of revival of Islam than M. Muhammad Ali of Lahore.”
—Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, scholar and a translator of the Holy Qur’an

MUHAMMAD ALI IN THE EYES OF THE FOUNDER OF THE AHMADIYYAH MOVEMENT

“From among my people the Mawlawi Muhammad Ali, M.A., is one of the best and sincerest of friends. Besides his other capabilities he has just passed his examination in Law. At the cost of great personal loss he is staying with me at Qadian for the last few months for the translation of some of my works in English. . . . During this period, that is from the time he is staying with me, I have been watching him very closely with regard to his character and other behavior. So thanks be to God that I have found him a wonderful person in every respect. He is humble, modest, noble and pious and a person to be envied for many of his qualities. . . . This is obvious, that such brilliant young men, intelligent and honorable in every respect, the embodiment of all the good qualities, cannot just be found even if you search for them.” Majmu’ah Ithiharat (9th August 1899), vol. 8, p. 47.

“I am very happy at this, that another righteous youth has joined our movement by the grace of God, that is my dearest friend the Mawlawi Muhammad Ali, M.A. Pledger. In his person I see wonderful signs. He is staying at Qadian for a considerable time now, for the service of Islam, at the great loss of his worldly affairs. And he is listening to the discourses of the Qur’an by the Mawlawi Hakim Nur al-Din. And I am sure that my prudence will not go wrong in this, that this young man will make progress in the path of God, and I am sure that with the grace of God he will set such example by his steadfastness in righteousness and love of Islam which will be worthy of following by his friends. O God let it be so! Let it be so!” Majmu’ah Ithiharat (4th October 1899), vol. 8, p. 68.

“I have great confidence in you. That is why I love you so much. If in the sight of God your nature was not righteous I could never, never have confidence in you. I love you from the core of my heart and very often pray for you in my fwtimes prayers. I hope these prayers will have their effect one day.” Mujahid-i-Kabir, p. 50. (Life of Muhammad Ali, published by the Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Isha’at Islam, Lahore, Pakistan.) See also the Preface of The Religion of Islam, p. v.

“I wish to write a book on the teachings (of Islam) and get it translated by the Mawlawi Muhammad Ali. This book will be divided into three parts. One part should deal with our duties towards God, the second part with our duties towards ourselves and the third as to what the rights of our fellow beings are on us.” Manzur Ilahi (published by the Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Isha’at Islam, Lahore), p. 188.

Although the Founder did not write such a book, his wish was fulfilled by Muhammad Ali by the publication of his famous book The Religion of Islam.

A vision about the Commentary of the Qur’an

“After this a book was given to me about which it was told that that was the commentary of the Qur’an which was written by Ali and now Ali was giving that commentary to you. Thus praise be to God over this.” Bara’ih Ahmadiyyah, p. 503; Tadhkirah, pp. 21–22.

“So my proposal is this, that instead of these preachers some literature of excellent value should be sent to these countries. And if my community supports me fully in this I also wish to prepare a commentary (of the Qur’an) and get it translated in English and send it there. I cannot help myself from expressing this view that this is my work. Nobody would be able to accomplish it in the manner it would be done by me or by him who is of my branch and is just included in me.” Izalat Iqtiham, p. 773.

Miscellaneous

“Saw the Mawlawi Muhammad Ali in a vision. You were righteous and had pious intentions. Come and sit by us.” Badr, Qadian, vol. 3, no. 29.

The Founder once called for the editors of Al-Hakim and Al-Badr and told them that “they should always take care in writing down his speeches and articles, so that nothing could be reported wrongly by mistake, therefore, it seems proper that such articles should be shown to the Mawlawi Muhammad Ali before publication.” Diary, 2nd November 1902; Malfuzat Ahmadiyyah, vol. 6, p. 445.

“I wish there were more people like the Mawlawi Muhammad Ali. Nobody can be sure of his life. He is alone and there is no one to help him or take his place.” Ibid., Al-Hakim, Qadian, 30th November 1905.

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Eid-ul-Fitr Sermon

Delivered by DR. SAEED AHMAD KHAN
Senior Vice President, Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha’at Islam, Lahore
at Newark Community Center, California, USA, on August 1st, 1981

Surely those who keep their duty are in gardens and fountains.
Enter them in peace, secure.
And We shall root out whatever of rancor is in their breasts—as brethren, on raised couches, face to face.
Toil afflicts them not therein, nor will they be ejected therefrom.
Inform My servants that I am the Forgiving, the Merciful.
And that My chastisement—that is the painful chastisement.

Today is the Muslim festival of Eid, which term means an ever-recurring happiness or source of enjoyment. There are two Eids in Islam, of which the present one comes at the end of the month of fasting. The object lesson of thus placing the Eid is that real happiness of mind comes from self-purification, which is the aim of the month-long fasting which precedes the Eid. Unhappiness of mind comes from the inner conflict between the animal in man and his conscience, which represents his moral and spiritual sense. Fasting (i.e., denial of food and drink) tames the animal within man in the same way as the denial of food and drink tames the animals outside, such as in a circus. Once the correct balance is established between the animal within man and his moral and spiritual self, the inner conflicts cease and man is at peace with himself. Islam is the religion which teaches how that subtle balancing can be achieved.

The beauty of the Holy Qur’an is that it does not prescribe anything for its followers without giving the reasons or mentioning the purpose for which that act of devotion is prescribed. The month-long fasting has been prescribed to enable man to acquire Taqwa, which word in Arabic means the avoidance and shunning of that which is harmful to man’s morals and his soul; in other words, the shunning of evil. The Qur’an says:

“And for him who fears standing before his Lord, there are two paradieses,” which has been interpreted as a paradise in this life and the real paradise in the hereafter. The Qur’an says:

“Fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you so that you may acquire Taqwa (i.e., guard against evil).”

Nobody wants to do anything which is bad or harmful for him, and yet why do people incline toward evil? Because man shares with animals certain basic desires and passions, which provide the man with motive power for his actions, but which like all motive power, such as in a motor car, railway engine or aircraft, has to be controlled and steered or else it lands man in disaster. The animal within man, like all animals, can be tamed by starving it of food and drink. Even otherwise, the basic animal urges within man are based on food, drink, and sex. These urges, unless controlled, lead to crimes, excesses, and evils.

During the month of fasting, denial of these three basic animal urges from dawn to dusk for the sake of moral and spiritual ascendency over them, not only weakens their intensity, but enables man place moral and spiritual gains over and above these animal desires. That is Taqwa for which fasting was prescribed.

The verses which I recited mention some of the rewards of Taqwa not only in the hereafter but also in this very life. The Qur’an is quite clear that paradise begins from this life:
Holy Qur’an . . .

Continued from page 2

its physical structure is such that it lies beyond the power of man to produce a like thereof, but in regard to the Divine Word he avers that its like can be produced.

Such a person contemplates that a man cannot create honey, but he has all the power to produce word like unto the Word of God. Does he not feel that if there should be, in the Divine Word, not even as much excellence as in the make-up of an insect, the objection thereof would have to lay at the door of the Almighty, Who has exalted the inferior creation over and above the superior and higher in excellence, and has endowed the former with such arguments, pertaining to his own person, as have not been conferred on the superior one?

These truths are so evident and clear that even he who has not entered the fold of Islam can understand that it is necessary for the Word of God to be unequalled and unsurpassable in excellence. Every sensible man who reflects on the working of the laws of nature, realizes that every thing created by God, however trifling it may be, is so full of marvel and wisdom that it is far beyond the power and capacity of a human being to produce; nor will he ever be able to accept the possibility of association of a created being in the person, attributes and deeds of the Creator.

For a man of intelligence and understanding, there are, besides what has been stated in the foregoing pages, many more arguments which establish the fact of the incomparability of Divine Word in a very clear and lucid manner. Suppose, for instance, some men of letters enter into a contest for the production of a composition which should be pure and full of knowledge, wisdom and learning. It needs no saying that the palm, in this contest, will be borne only by that writer who will have a vast knowledge and profound practice in the art of writing. No other person, deficient in learning and intelligence, comprehensiveness and capability, will be able to reach the former’s elegance and grandeur in writing, and become his equal.

We may here take another example of a physician, who is not only an expert in the art of diagnosis and healing, but is also an adept in the art of speaking and writing. The perfect and precise manner in which he will dilate upon and discuss the causes, symptoms and treatment of a disease, will not be equaled by another man who is not endued with the gift of the bag. The speech of an illiterate cannot, therefore, be at par with that of a scholar.

Now that it has been established that the disparity, which exists in the literary and intellectual power of a human being, finds its expression correspondingly in his speech, it becomes necessary that the word, which is claimed to be that of God should, in regard to internal as well as external excellences be unapproachable by human word for the reason that the knowledge of no other being can be equal to that of the Divine Being.

When human beings, notwithstanding the fact that they belong to the same species, have different powers of expression on account of the disparity in their knowledge and wisdom, experience and practice, so that a man of small understanding and knowledge cannot attain to the higher level of a scholar’s speech-excellence, how could it be possible for a created being, whose knowledge is insignificant, to be an equal of the Creator? The fact that all the internal and external grandeur of a word is solely dependent on the literary capability and practical experience of a person now stands proved.

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

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

Eid Sermon . . .

Continued from page 8

causes even much more fear, anxiety, insatiable urge for more which burns him like fire. On the other hand, virtue gives him peace of mind and bliss, which is the paradise of the heart promised to those who guard against evil.

It must be remembered that it is what is in your heart which puts you in paradise or hell in this world. Externally he may have all that should give him happiness and bliss, but if his heart is in hell, he is in hell whatever comforts may be available to him. And if his heart is in peace and bliss, he is in paradise even though he may not be in a garden outside.

The verses I have recited say that those who guard against evil are in paradise and springs. It will be literally so in the hereafter. But what about the paradise of this life? I have just explained about the paradise within a virtuous person’s heart. The springs stand for the benefits to others, as all springs do. An evil man wants all for himself. A virtuous man is unselfish and his life is devoted to the service of and benefit to others. Thus, benefits flow from him to others.

The next verse,

"Enter it (i.e., the paradise) in security and peace." That of course will be very true of the real paradise in the hereafter. In fact, that paradise would . . . continued on page 21
“The Communist World Is Conquerable”

“Let no one be mistaken about the fact that the final showdown with communism will be on ideological grounds.”

—Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan

Speech of DR. SAEED AHMAD KHAN, senior vice president of Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at Islam, Lahore, delivered at Newark Community Center, California, USA, at a farewell dinner given in his honor on August 18, 1981

Ladies and gentlemen,

The verse I have just recited sums up the divine principle and purpose on which the Ahmadiyya Movement is based. I intend explaining its relevance and importance to the future shape of events in the world.

As we all know, the present world scene is dominated by the conflict between two power blocs—the Western democracies led by the USA and the communist bloc led by the USSR. This is a division in political terms. The same scene is viewed from a different angle by those who have faith in God and religion. They view the world along the lines of the “believers and non-believers.” Through the ever-increasing conflict of the two power blocs the hopes of peace and security continue becoming dimmer with every day that passes, and the danger of a nuclear holocaust rendering this beautiful abode of mankind into ashes is ever present. This state of affairs must change or else mankind will gradually pushed to its annihilation. We are of the view that the future of the human race will be secure only if the affairs of this world are managed and controlled by men who have a living faith in God and who entertain fear of God in their hearts.

Both the Western democracies and the communists are wedded to the concept of secularism, though they differ in the application of this concept under their respective systems. In the Western democracies, secularism stands for separation of state from religion based on two clearly defined principles, namely, non-entanglement of the state with religion and complete freedom of professing and practicing one’s religion. In spite of these clearly defined principles, at times in practice limitations are imposed on the practice of one’s genuine religious beliefs and laws are made and enforced which clearly run contradictory to the religious doctrines. In cases of clash between the statutes and the religious beliefs, the statutes prevail and the religious doctrine is thrown to the backyards. This recent extension of secularism beyond its originally defined principles has resulted in weakening the moral fiber of society in the Western democratic world. Barring this development, the freedom of professing, practicing, and preaching one’s religion is available to all the people in the free world. The state neither establishes nor destroys religion and rather likes to remain unconcerned. Apparently in such a state of affairs there is no clash between the state and the religion.

Quite contrary to this, communism openly preaches and practices destroying religion. Atheism is one of the pivotal concepts on which the edifice of communist ideology has been raised. Hence an apparent clash between the communists and the believers. Since Islam teaches Jihad, that is, struggle in all forms including waging war, against a government that stands to destroy religion, therefore coexistence between communism and Islam on an ideological basis is out of the question.

A study of the history of the growth and expansion of communism reveals some facts which might be of much use in combating further expansion and extension of communist influence. I will mention only a few of these:

1. In its first phase communism grew and flourished as an ideology in a predominantly Christian Europe, and Christianity found itself helpless in stalling its growth. On the other hand, the failings of the Christian church to provide any solution to the problems posed by the machine age made easier the growth and development of this new gospel. The massive support received by this new ideology from the working class in Europe, and its drawing the majority of its membership from ex-Christian communities, speaks by itself of this helplessness of the church against this new godless ideology.

2. After the establishment of a communist state in Russia, a vast majority of the Christian population submitted to the indoctrination process of the government, while a vast majority of Muslims within the borders of the USSR have not only kept their religious entity actively alive at all times but the government had to grant them a special status permitting them to continue professing and practicing their religion.

3. In its second phase, communist influence expanded towards the Far East to areas of predominantly Buddhist and Christian influence, yet two Muslim nations, namely Indonesia and Malaysia, have successfully fought against communist insurgence and have emerged successful in keeping communism at bay.

4. After World War II billions of dollars in economic aid were pumped into Europe and elsewhere in order to save the people from falling prey to communism. As against that, ill-fed and ill-dressed people of the Middle East, in spite of having been driven into the laps of Russia through constant denial of their legitimate rights and requirements by the Western democracies, have not accepted the communist ideology. They have demonstrated the superior force of the Islamic concept of life, inasmuch as in
more than two decades of its presence, mainly as a seller or supplier of armament, Russia has not been able to form or establish any communist organization in the Muslim Middle East. It is well known to all, who has compelled the Arabs to look for and buy arms from Russia. On one end Turkey stands as a stout sentinel of the free world on the borders of Russia, while on the other Afghans are writing history with their blood by fighting with their primitive rifles against about a hundred thousand Russian troops equipped with the most modern weaponry. In the Far East, standing on the borders of predominantly communist West Bengal of India, the Muslim nation of Bangladesh, in spite of its extremely poor living conditions, by remaining immune from the neighboring communist influence is demonstrating the strength of the Islamic spiritual force. In short, the Muslim world stands like a rock against atheistic communism by dint of strong spiritual and ideological bases provided by the teachings of the Holy Qur’an.

5. Communist ideological influence is presently being exerted on Africa and Latin America.

One undeniable fact that emerges from the study of this history in amply clearer terms is that Islam and Islam alone is that ideological force which is not only capable of stalling the growth of communism in its areas of influence but may ultimately defeat the communist ideology in a world conflict of the two. The choice for believers has thus been narrowed. They have no option but to choose between Islam and communism—one imbibing a living and closer relationship with God while the other stands for destroying the very concept of God. It is most unfortunate that the hatred and militancy generated against Islam for centuries in Europe and the USA is keeping this extremely important fact from the vast majority of people in these lands. But the sooner it dawns upon the minds of people in the free world, the better it will be, in their own interests as well as in the interest of world peace and security.

Let me deal with another important relevant factor involved in the global conflict of the two power blocs. That is, the repulsion of the communist onslaught through armed resistance and economic aid. Since Russia has amassed a gigantic war machine and is extensively using it for achieving its objectives, it will be a folly to call a halt to resisting the force by force. Islam does not teach turning your other cheek to a person who slaps you on one cheek. Islamic teachings are very explicit in this regard. Islam enjoins war in defense of one’s faith. It is Jihad—struggle in all forms including waging of war in defense of one’s faith—that has been made incumbent upon all Muslims as a sacred struggle. Aiding such a struggle is also enjoined upon Muslims as a sacred duty. This is the doctrinal position under the teachings of Islam. But let us not forget that arms and economic aid and all such devices, though quite necessary and valid to save the world from forcible subjugation by the communists, are not the end in themselves. Without defeating communism on ideological grounds, these just amount to fighting the symptoms of a disease rather than curing the cause. Since the signing of the Kennedy-Khrushchev coexistence and détente, a slumber seems to have overtaken the Western democracies on the ideological front. This probably resulted from their feeling assured of their economic interests through a clear demarcation of the sphere of influence of each nation and the accompanying assurance by each not to interfere in the other’s sphere. The other reason one might think of is that the Western democracies, having noticed the ineffectiveness of Christian societies in keeping communism at bay, have left the ground to more effective societies. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that efforts on an ideological basis have slackened to a great extent, if they have not completely been abandoned. Quite contrary to this, the communists still remain wedded to their ideology as before. They have not shown any signs of slackening their efforts in this regard. Subjugation of the world to their ideology still remains their goal. Induction of armament is just another means towards the achievement of their objective. Let no one be mistaken about the fact that the final showdown with the communists has to be on an ideological basis. This can be averted in only one way: that the communists give up their anti-God, anti-religion doctrines and allow the freedom of professing, practicing, and preaching religion in the communist world.

When atheistic thought and communism were growing in Christian Europe, a divine scheme for providing a panacea for all atheistic evils was contemporaneously at work in the Muslim world. The advent of the Promised Messiah, the Mehdi and the Mujaddid (Renovator) of the 14th century Hijrah, foretold by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in many of his prophecies recorded in the books of Hadith, was fulfilled in the appearance of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. According to these prophecies the revival of Islam and the ultimate predominance of Islam over all other faiths was destined at the hands of the Mehdi and the promised Messiah, who was to be an Imam from amongst the Muslims. According to all Muslim schools of thought this was to happen in the 14th century Hijrah. The revival of Islam pre-required pinpointing the problems, setting its own house right, and finally conveying the message of Islam to all the nations. As atheism was the growing force in Europe and was likely to engulf the whole world and to pose the greatest challenge to religion in its history, therefore the promised Messiah called the attention of his people to this fact and offered the solution. In Taryaq-ul-Qulub, one of his early books, he wrote:

"God has sent me to this world so that I may call the people back to God through affability, civility and tenderness and through the respendence of the light that has been bestowed upon me enable the people to tread on the right path. Mankind stands in need of strong logic that may conclusively establish that there is a God. A great number of the people of the world have gone astray only for the reason that they have no belief in the existence of God nor do they believe in the guidance revealed by Him. There can not be a simpler or clearer way of proving the existence of God than establishing that God speaks to His righteous men and informs them upon the events of the future and grants them knowledge of hidden things or mysteries which otherwise are beyond the reach of human knowledge. . . . My God has done me a great favor that he selected me from amongst the whole world so that through the clear manifestation of His signs He may bring the apostatized men back to the right path."

Let me emphasize that the Ahmadiyya Movement is not a new religion in any sense at all. It is, on the contrary, the revival of Islamic faith in its original and pristine purity. Not only is the movement not a new faith, but, if properly appraised, it does not even
represent a new sect in Islam. As a matter of fact this movement represents a Divine scheme to inaugurate the struggle for dissemination of the true teachings of Islam in the modern world. It is a campaign to establish the truth and superiority of the principles of Islam and to revive the conquering forces of the faith.

The founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement has explained the purpose of his being raised as a Mujaddid (Renovator) in almost all his books, speeches and discourses. I will presently read a few quotations from these to make clearer to you his mission and purpose:

"The spiritual triumph of the religion of Islam which would be brought about by conclusive arguments and clear proofs, whether it happens in his lifetime or after his death, is destined to be accomplished through this humble servant. Though the religion of Islam has been triumphant from the beginning on account of its strong appeal to the human mind and though from the earliest times its opponents have met with disgrace and discomfiture, its conquests over the different religions depended on the coming of a time which, by opening the ways of communication, should turn the whole world into a kind of united states of the world.

"Thus God intends, by raising me in this age and by granting me hundreds of heavenly signs and visions of extraordinary matters relating to the future and deep knowledge of truths, and by giving me knowledge of hundreds of sure arguments, to spread and propagate the knowledge of the true teachings of the Qur'an among all nations and in all countries."

His book Faith Islam, as its name indicates, deals with the triumph of Islam in the world. The object of his advent is described thus:

"Do not wonder that God the Most High in this time of need and in the days of this darkness has sent down a heavenly light and, having chosen a servant of His for the good of mankind in general, has sent him to make supreme the religion of Islam and to spread the light brought by the most excellent of His creatures, viz., the Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him), and to strengthen the cause of Muslims and to purify their spiritual condition."

And again he says in the same book: "The truth will win and the freshness and light of Islam which characterized it in its earlier days will be restored and that sun (of Islam) will rise again which rose in its full resplendence before. But it is necessary that Heaven should withhold its rising till our hearts bleed with labor and hard work and we sacrifice all comfort for its appearance and submit ourselves to all kinds of disgrace for the honor of Islam. The life of Islam demands a sacrifice from us, and what is that? That we lay down our lives in its way. And on this our death depends the life of Islam, the life of Muslims and the manifestation of the Living God. This in other words is called Islam. And the revival of this Islam is the will of God, the Most High."

He was a prolific writer, and throughout his books and all other writings, as well as in most of his Persian and Urdu poems, is reflected the great passion which he had for the propagation of Islam, and his writings are full of hope, prayers and the glad tidings that the days of triumph of Islam are drawing nigh. It is quite astonishing that, while living in a village absolutely cut off from all modern movements, neither having knowledge of the English language nor any contact with the Western world, he particularly set before himself the task of propagating Islam in the West. In one of his books published as early as 1891 he writes, "This humble servant has been shown in a vision that the rising of the sun from the West signifies that the Western world shall have the light of Islam." He then records a vision in which he saw himself speaking from a pulpit in London and explaining the truth of Islam in a well-reasoned address in the English language, and afterwards he saw himself catching a large number of white birds. Then he interprets this vision to mean that though he may not personally go there, his writings would spread among these people and they would embrace Islam. He had great faith and a firm conviction on this point. He says, "At this critical moment a man has been raised by God and He desires to manifest the beautiful face of Islam to the Western world and open its ways to the Western countries."

Contributions made to Islamic thought

The contributions made by the Founder of the Movement to Islamic thought are multifarious and numerous and it is not possible to deal with them all in a limited time. I will only mention some of the salient features. Before doing so, I would like to point out, firstly, that all matters in which the Founder gave a new direction to Muslim thought are closely connected with Islam's advancement in the world; they have nothing in common with the sectarian differences among Muslims; they are vital to the existence and advancement of Islam, as they are meant to wipe off certain blemishes which were ascribed to it. Secondly, it should be remembered that religion was made perfect in Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the last of prophets. Therefore, any revival of the faith can only be a revival of the great truths taught by Islam, i.e., an interpretation of the Holy Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet. It is as such that the Ahmadiyya Movement has given prominence to many important religious truths, some of which I would like to mention now.

1. Qur'an and Sunnah—
the pivotal center for revival

The two great and original sources of Islam are the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah. There can be no difference of opinion about these sources being the two main foundations on which is built the faith of Islam. Any belief, tenet and teaching traceable to the Qur'an and the Sunnah must be accepted to form part of the Islamic faith; while anything proved to be repugnant to these two sources must be rejected. These two sources form the basis of the brotherhood of all Muslims all over the world. In matters of detail and interpretation, Muslim schools of thought may differ from one another. However, as long as they accept and adhere to these two basic sources, they are Muslims, irrespective of their minor differences. Members of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement do unequivocally declare that the Qur'an and Sunnah form the basic pillars of Islamic faith, and that the neglect of this vital principle by Muslims is mainly responsible for disunity, divisions and sectarianism. The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement was the first person in this age to raise his voice, loud and clear, against the nefarious practice of takfeer, i.e., calling brother Muslims heretics and unbelievers. The Founder also emphasized reversion to the Divine Book, the main pivot around which revolves the progress and unity of Islam. The Holy Qur'an has itself stated, "Hold fast by the covenant of Allah altogether and be not disunited" (3:102). This "covenant of Allah" is nothing
else but the Qur'an, as indicated by a saying of the Holy Prophet.

The message of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement to the Muslims in general, therefore, is to return to the Word of God and learn to understand and imbibe the exact spirit of Qur'an and Sunnah and not to be satisfied with mere verbal repetition, formalism and ritual ceremonialism.

2. God's communication with man continues

For common people the question of Jesus Christ's death is perhaps the only distinguishing feature of the Ahmadiyya Movement. This, however, is not wholly correct. There is no doubt that the Founder has laid great stress on this point, as it was an obstacle in the way of the propagation of Islam, and the claim of the Founder as the Promised Messiah is also based on this. But the greatest distinguishing feature of Ahmadiyyat is that it has revived the almost dead concept of God's communication with man. The foremost task to which the Founder devoted his attention was to demonstrate this truth once more to the world, that God still spoke to his righteous servants and that this in no way interfered with the finality of Prophethood. The real claim of the Founder was that of being a Mujaddid, a renovator, and a mubaddith whom God appoints to uphold the cause of religion, and who is not a prophet though God communicates with him frequently. For the revival of faith in religion the first point is to prove the authenticity of Divine communication with man, as this is what has been vehemently denied in this age. The concept of a mechanical God, as the Ultimate Cause, is even admitted by a materialist, but the foundation of religion was, and is, on the fact of God's communication with man, the basis of almost all religions is the phenomenon of Divine revelation. But there is no religion except Islam that advocates that even now God communicates with man. Yet this concept became extinct even amongst Muslims. Wahabism was a strong movement in Islam before the advent of the Ahmadiyya Movement, but its followers, called Ahl Hadith, also believed that God's communication with man was meant for times gone by, although in authentic traditions it is clearly mentioned that there would be persons in this ummah who would not be prophets and yet God would speak to them. Under the influence of modern education, Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan of Aligarh (India) went so far in this respect as to entirely reject the concept of God's revelation to human beings. It was left to the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement to establish this point from the Qur'an and the Hadith, that Divine Communication had not come to an end. He presented his own self as a proof and claimed to be the recipient of such favors of God. In his books he has mentioned many of his prophecies which had come true, and has also made forceful assertions that it was only in Islam that Divine Communication was continued, and therefore Islam was the only living religion in the world.

3. No compulsion in religion

The Founder also removed the misconception that a Muslim who renounces Islam should be immediately put to death. Ahmadiyyat has made it clear from the Qur'an and Hadith that it is neither lawful to convert a person to Islam by force nor to keep him within the faith under threat of the sword, and has thus removed this stain from the beautiful faith of Islam, that it had no spiritual force to keep itself alive.

4. Relations with other religions—Jihad and its true significance

The fourth major area of contribution to Islamic thought, or revival of the great truths taught by Islam, was in respect of Islam's relationship with other religions. The Founder emphasized the original broad and liberal outlook of Islam towards other religions, which, in course of time, had entirely been lost sight of. Through misrepresentations and misunderstandings, Islam had come to be looked upon as a most intolerant religion while it is, as a matter of fact, extremely liberal. Never in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet was any person converted to Islam by force. Nor was any war waged by him against a nation for the purpose of spreading Islam amongst them. Yet European writers had drawn this very picture of Islam and its Founder to create hatred against Islam. The Western domination in the world helped to spread this distorted view far and wide. On the other hand, the concept of a warrior Mehdi among Muslims themselves gave support to this misunderstanding. The correction of this fundamental mistake is a distinctive feature of Ahmadiyya thought, and the Founder's claim of being the Mehdi was to root out this false notion from amongst Muslims themselves. This, in other words, means that Islam does not stand in need of force for its propagation. It was the task of the Founder of the movement to remove all erroneous views on the subject and to put things in their proper perspective. He laid great emphasis on jihad with Qur'an not only in theory but also in practice. By his personal example he demonstrated how jihad with the Qur'an should be carried out, and he instilled the same zeal in his followers. In this way he established the superiority of Islam in the world and showed the way how Muslims, in spite of being weak from the point of view of worldly power, could bring the stronger nations under the yoke of Islam, if they would just make the correct use of the weapon which had been given to them in the form of the Qur'an. Jihad with Qur'an and the preaching of Islam (Ishaat-i-Islam) are identical expressions. How far Ahmadiyyat has succeeded in the revival of these ideas can be gauged from the fact that until recently when someone talked about preaching of Islam, he was immediately identified as being an Ahmadi. Muslims were completely oblivious to the great power which lay with them in the form of the Qur'an, until Ahmadiyyat awakened them to this supreme reality. Jihad is indeed obligatory on all Muslims under all circumstances, but this is the same Jihad which the Holy Prophet and his Companions carried on under all circumstances and conditions, whether they lived at Makkah or Madinah. The bringing home of this great truth to the Muslims has been one of the foremost tasks of Ahmadiyyat.

Emphasis by the Ahmadiyya Movement on the point that the sword has nothing to do with the propagation of Islam has led many people to falsely accuse its Founder of having abrogated the Islamic doctrine of Jihad. It is a great injustice to accuse the Founder of having abrogated the Islamic doctrine of Jihad. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Founder of the Movement and all Ahmads believe in every single word of the Holy Qur'an and the doctrine of Jihad is as valid for them as for any other.
Muslim. What the Founder rejected was not the doctrine but its orthodox interpretation, which had given rise in the West to grave misconceptions and the wrong impression that the word jihadi was synonymous with war undertaken to force the religion of Islam upon non-Muslims. The Muslims themselves labored under a similar delusion. The belief in the advent of a warrior Mehdi found currency amongst the Muslims because of the false impression that conversion at the point of the sword was also permissible. The result was that they absolutely forgot the importance of Jihad with Qur'an. It was the task of the Founder of the movement to remove all erroneous views on the subject and to put things in their proper perspective. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has thrown ample light on this subject and pointed out that there is a Jihad which one can always carry on for Islam (i.e., exerting oneself spiritually in the way of God and doing one's best to preach the message of Islam to others) and there is a Jihad with the sword which can be resorted to under specific conditions for the defense of Islam. He declared preaching of Islam to be the Jihad of this age. Other spiritual leaders prescribe for their disciples different adhkar and mushahadat, i.e., recitals and certain hard exercises for their spiritual advancement, which could not be traced to the ways of the Prophet and his Companions. On the other hand the Founder, while taking bai'at, would ask his followers to strive hard in the cause of propagation of Islam.

5. Qur'an to be given precedence over everything else

The fifth major distinctive feature of the Ahmadiyya Movement is that the Qur'an must be given precedence over everything else. While all Muslims agree that the Qur'an is the real source of guidance for Muslims, in practice they attached more importance to Fiqh (jurisprudence) over the Qur'an and Hadith, and the Divine Book was relegated to the background. Principles of religion or portions thereof were referred to one of the four Imams according to the Ahl Sunnah and to the traditions of the Prophet according to the Ahl Hadith. With the attaching of greater and greater importance to Fiqh the natural beauty and simplicity of Islam was lost in the labyrinth of arduous and nerve-wracking questions which ultimately sapped the energies of the Muslim nation. Books depicting the teachings of Islam by Christian writers were chiefly based on works of Fiqh and they tried to excite hatred against Islam among Europeans by presenting before them a confused and complicated picture of the simple doctrines and beliefs of Islam. To remove these misunderstandings and to clear the ground for preaching of Islam, it was essential that the original simplicity of Islam be restored. This was the work which the Founder of the movement accomplished by laying due stress on a firsthand study and knowledge of the Qur'an in a Muslim's life, and by explaining the right place of the Holy Qur'an as compared to the Hadith and Fiqh. The Founder used the Qur'an as his chief instrument for reformation of Muslims and for propagation of Islam among non-Muslims. Although the Ahmadis fully respect and Hadith and after that the jihadi of the Imams, and they refer to these (in that order) as two sources of information on religious matters after the Holy Qur'an, yet their main energy is spent in disseminating the knowledge of the Qur'an, which was the real source of life for the Muslims before, and which is still capable of giving them a new life.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in all his writings, whether in support of Islam or in repudiation of others' false doctrines, used to base all his arguments on the Divine Book. In important discussions and controversies and indeed before writing a book on any subject, his normal practice was to go through the Qur'an from beginning to end and derive all his inspirations and conclusions from it. While debating with non-Muslim missionaries and religious leaders he used to lay down the condition that whatever claims or arguments were advanced, should be based on their respective religious scriptures, a principle which he used to follow himself scrupulously even though his opponents could not. In this way too he established the glory and supremacy of the Qur'an.

Besides this Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad cleared away many other misconceptions about the Qur'an which the Muslims erroneously adopted. For instance, it was generally believed that there were certain verses in the Qur'an which had been abrogated by other verses. By accepting such a view it had to be admitted that there were discrepancies in the Holy Book. This erroneous doctrine was removed by the Founder of the movement, who made it clear that there was no verse in the Qur'an which had been abrogated by another verse.

For another example, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, by declaring that the door to Ijtihad (exercise of judgment) was open, encouraged the use of intellect and reasoning in interpretation of the Qur'an. He himself gave a lead to his followers by laying down a healthy relationship between intellectual and spiritual truths by interpreting the Qur'an in both a scientific and a literary manner: by disregarding the fanciful and imaginary stories which were then being treated as an essential part of interpretation of the Qur'an; by fighting against the ignorance and narrow-mindedness of the ulema; and by laying down the principles that while interpreting the Qur'an, the Qur'an itself should have priority over everything else and then should come Hadith (but reports dealing with stories should be accepted after great caution and scrutiny) and that care should be exercised in selecting that meaning of words which does not go against history, human intellect or experience.

Acting upon the course set by its founder, the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore played a history-making role during this century in introducing the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and Islam to Europe and America. Back in 1914 when no other Muslim sect or organization could dream of propagation of Islam in the West, this Anjuman established the first Muslim mission of this century in Woking, Surrey, United Kingdom. Again, its leader and president, the most accomplished scholar and author on Islam, namely Maulana Muhammad Ali, made history in 1917 by giving to the world the first English translation with running commentary of the Holy Qur'an from the pen of a Muslim; this, incidentally, was also the first translation by a Muslim in any European language. His book The Religion of Islam, published in 1936, was another landmark. Muhammad the Prophet and Living Thoughts of the Prophet Muhammad, two biographies of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and other literature produced by the Ahmadiyya Anjuman in the '20s, '30s and '40s, made their mark and the thinkers, philosophers, and learned men in Europe and the USA not only recognized but acknowledged the truth.

Muhammad now is considered the greatest man of human history. Islam...continued on page 23
The Story of Adam in the Holy Qur’an

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

It should be borne in mind in reading the histories of the prophets, as given in the Holy Qur’an, that the object is not to narrate history as such, but to bring out certain characteristics of the histories of different nations, to mention incidents which contain prophetic allusion to the Holy Prophet’s life, or to the future of Islam, and to comfort the Prophet with illustrations from previous sacred history that truth shall ultimately be established and that opposition shall entirely fail and be overthrown. The Qur’an does not concern itself with the details of those histories, not even with the details of what messages a prophet delivered to his people or how he was received. It contents itself with the broad facts that every prophet delivered the message of Unity, invited people to obey God and to do good to fellow-men, and aimed at the moral betterment of the people to whom he was sent. It shows, by mentioning prophets of Israelite and non-Israelite nationality, that the cardinal principles of the religion of all the prophets were one and the same. The references in the earlier chapters are very brief. Whatever details there are belong to a period when opposition to the Prophet was at its height and the object is, no doubt, to tell the opponents, when they were at the height of their power, that they could not escape their ultimate overthrow. Another point worth noting is that every prophet is spoken of as being sent to a single nation, with the exception of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, who is spoken of as being sent to all the nations of the world.

The Holy Qur’an does not state when Adam was born or how he was born; it does not even state that he was the first man. The great Muslim divine, Muhammad ibn ‘Ali al-Baqir, one of the twelve Shi’a Imams, is reported to have said that “millions of Adams passed away before our father Adam,” and Ibn ‘Arabi, the head of the Sufis, writes in his great work, the Futuhat, that forty thousand years before our Adam, there was another Adam. There is also a report accepted by the Imamiyya, according to which there were thirty Adams before our Adam, and this earth remained a waste after them for fifty thousand years; then it was inhabited for fifty thousand years; then was Adam created.

Again, the Holy Qur’an does not say how Adam was made. It does not accept the Bible theory of his formation. It does say, indeed, that he was made from dust, but then it speaks of every son of man as being created from dust as well:

“O people! if you are in doubt about the raising (to life after death), then (know that) We have created you from dust, then from a small life-germ, then from a clot, then from a lump of flesh...” (22:5).

“He it is Who created you from dust, then from a small life-germ, then from a clot, then He brings you forth as a child” (40:67).

“His companion said to him while disputing with him: Dost thou disbelieve in Him Who created thee from dust, then from a small life-germ, then He made thee a perfect man?” (18:37).

Dust is the first stage of man’s existence, and every man is made from it. How? The Holy Qur’an itself explains:

“And certainly We created man of an extract of clay, then We made him a small life-germ in a firm resting-place” (23:12, 13).

“And He began the creation of man from dust; then He made his progeny of an extract of water held in light estimation. Then He made him complete and breathed into him of His spirit and made for you the ears and the eyes and the hearts” (32:7–9).

Thus man’s creation from dust means his creation from an extract of dust, an extract which eventually appears as a life-germ, because from the earth comes the food which through several processes assumes the form of the life-germ. It is noteworthy that the Holy Qur’an here speaks of the spirit of God being breathed into every man, and the spirit in this case is not the animal soul, but the soul that enables a man to distinguish between right and wrong, the nafs nattiga, or the human soul or reason, and hence it is that the statement is immediately followed by the words, “and made for you ears and eyes and hearts.”

Nor does the Qur’an accept the Bible statement that Eve was made from a rib of Adam (Gen. 2:21, 22). It is no doubt stated in the Holy Book that God created people “from a single being and created its mate of the same” (4:1); but the meaning is evidently of the same kind or same essence, for elsewhere we are told that mates or wives are created for all men from themselves—Ar. anfus, meaning selves or kind:

“And God has made for you wives from yourselves” (16:72).

“And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may incline to them, and He put between you love and compassion” (30:21).

The devil’s opposition to Adam, which is the chief characteristic of Adam’s story, as given in the Holy Qur’an, is mentioned in seven different places, i.e., four times in early Makkah revelations (38:71–85); 17: 61–65; 18:50; 20:116–124), twice in the later Makkah revelations (15:26–44; 7:11–25), and once in early Madinah revelation (2:30–39). To realize the true significance of the story, it is necessary to compare the various statements on the same or similar
points. The first point is God’s declaration of His will to create Adam or man:

“When thy Lord said to the angels: I am going to create a mortal from dust” (38:71).

“And when thy Lord said to the angels: I am going to create a mortal of the essence of black mud fashioned in shape” (15–28).

“And when thy Lord said to the angels: I am going to place in the earth one who shall rule in it” (2:30).

Now on the first two occasions, it is simply a mortal whose creation is spoken of, while on the third occasion it is one who rules in the earth. The first two descriptions in their generality, and the third in particular, apply to all men and not to Adam alone, and hence the story of Adam is really the story of every man. Man’s being a ruler refers to the high place he was intended to occupy on earth, ruling not only the animal creation but the very forces of nature, as the Qur’an repeatedly states.

It is only on one occasion that attention is drawn to the darker side of the picture of humanity. “Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood?” (2:30); but the brighter side of that picture is presented in varying colors. In the earlier revelation we have: “When I have made him complete and breathed into him of My spirit” (34:72; 15:29), a description expressly applied to every human being in 32:9, but, later, man’s vast capability to rule is pointed out in the words, “And He gave Adam knowledge of all the things” (2:31), a knowledge which is not given even to the angels (2:32). In knowledge really lies the power of man, and hence it is that the command to the angels to make obeisance to Adam follows immediately after the mention of his completion on the first two occasions and the giving of knowledge to him on the third.

This, as I have already stated, is the chief characteristic of Adam’s story, the command to angels to make obeisance to Adam, showing that he is placed above even the angels, and that, below God, he occupies the highest place on earth. This is by virtue of his capacity for acquiring knowledge, and he acquires knowledge by slow degrees through his efforts, the light of the Divine spirit is within him, and by the use of that light he can rise to higher and higher eminences. Just as in the physical world, the acquisition of knowledge opens out before him new fields of advancement, so in the spiritual world the knowledge of things Divine opens out before him a higher life, a full manifestation of which begins with what is called the resurrection day. Hence we find that with the angels making obeisance to Adam on all seven occasions is mentioned the refusal of Iblis to submit. Now Iblis is the proper name of the devil, and in 18:50, he is plainly spoken of as being of the jinn or invisible beings of a lower order, in contrast with the angels or invisible beings of a higher order. These invisible beings are connected with the spiritual life of man, the angel urging him to good and the devil stirring up the baser passions in him and thus retarding his advancement to the higher life; see 50:21, where the impeller to evil or the devil is called a driver, and the caller to good or the angel is called a witness. Hence when it is stated that the devil refused to submit to Adam or man, it means that man’s baser passions which the devil excites are really a hindrance to his progress, and that to attain to a higher life it is necessary that the devil should be made to submit or that the baser passions in man must be subdued. That such is the real significance was explained by the Holy Prophet himself when, on being questioned if he too had a devil as every other human being had, he replied in the affirmative, and added: “But God has helped me against him so that he is submissive.” The devil and his progeny are, therefore, called man’s enemy (18:50), with whom a man is required to carry on a struggle until the enemy submits to him.

The next point mentioned is that Adam and his wife are at first placed in a garden (20:117; 7:19; 2:35), a description of which is thus given in one place: “Thou shalt not be hungry therein nor bare of clothing”; “Thou shalt not be thirsty therein nor shalt thou feel the heat of the sun” (20:118, 119). Then we are told that Adam and his wife were told “to eat from it a plenteous food wherever you wish,” but a warning was added: “Do not go near this tree for then you will be of the unjust” (2:35; 7:19). In order to tempt Adam, “the devil made an evil suggestion to them” (7:20; 20:120). It is noteworthy that in all the details of this story the Holy Qur’an does not accept the Bible statements. It is not the serpent, “more subtle than any beast of the field,” which comes and speaks to Eve and leads her astray, she in her turn leading man astray. It is the devil who makes an evil suggestion to Adam, or to both Adam and Eve, as he makes only evil suggestions to every son and daughter of Adam. By the devil’s evil suggestion, man is made to think that the forbidden tree “is the tree of immortality and a kingdom which decays not” (20:120); and the suggestion is that God had “not forbidden you this tree except that you may not both become angels or that you may not become of the immortals” (7:20). Thus “he caused them to fall by deceit” (7:22), and they both ate of the tree. And what were the consequences? “They both ate of it, so their evil inclinations (or nakedness) became manifest to them, and they both began to cover themselves with leaves of the garden” (20:121, 7:22).

All this clearly shows that the garden is not an earthly garden, but stands for a state of contentment and rest in which there is no struggle. The tree which is not to be approached is always called “this tree” as if it had been just mentioned or as if it were a tree too well-known to need any description. This in itself gives an indication that it is the well-known tree of evil, for both good and evil are compared to two trees in 14:24, 25 and elsewhere. This is further corroborated by the devil’s description of it as “the tree of immortality” (20:120), by which he deceived man (7:22), showing that it is really the tree which brings death, i.e., the tree of evil. Another clue to the nature of this tree is afforded by 7:22 and 20:121, where the result of the eating of this tree is pointed out—their evil inclinations became manifest to them. It is clearly the consciousness that man has done something wrong, something unworthy of himself. The attempt “to cover themselves with the leaves of the garden” (7:22; 20:121) is the desire to make up by human effort for the evil consequences of the fault committed. In fact, all this is placed beyond all doubt when the Qur’an goes on to speak immediately afterwards of two kinds of clothing, the external clothing “to cover your nakedness and for beauty,” and the spiritual clothing, “clothing that guards against evil, that is the best” (7:26); and in the same strain it goes on to generalize: “O children of Adam! let not the devil cause you to fall into affliction as he expelled your parents from the garden, pulling off from them their clothing that he might show them their evil inclinations ...

. . . continued on page 22
The Religion of Christ and Muhammad

By MUMTAZ AHMAD FARUQUI

I should like to survey briefly the teachings of the sacred Scriptures of Christianity and Islam, and the missions of Jesus Christ and Muhammad, the founders of two of the greatest religions of the world. Both the Israelite and the Arabian Prophets were divinely inspired, and the logical deduction would be that the Scriptures of both religions are the revealed words of God. But in this respect Islam occupies a unique position: of all the Scriptures, the Holy Qur'an has come down to us in an absolutely uncorrupted form—a fact that is admitted even by noted non-Muslim historians. The inspired words of Jesus were not preserved in all their purity but were altered and adulterated by the interpolations and interpretations of later writers. No written record of the sayings and deeds of Jesus was made during his lifetime. The four Gospels were written many years apart, the earliest appearing many years after Jesus' death.


"...Was written after Peter's martyrdom (A.D. 65) and at a time when Mark, who had not himself been a disciple of Jesus, apparently had none of the personal disciples of Jesus within reach, by whose knowledge he could check his narrative. These circumstances of its composition account for the existence in it, side by side, of numerous signs of accuracy, a certain number of signs of ignorance and inaccuracy."1

The Gospel According to St. Matthew. This was not written by Matthew the disciple, but was composed in Greek in Antioch in about C.E. 90. If Matthew, the evangelist, had also been Matthew the apostle, he could not have recorded many of the events which he does, for he was not then present. Such instances are the stories of the Magi, the Temptation, the Transfiguration, the denials of Peter, the conversation between Judas and the priests and that between Pilate and the priests and, finally, words spoken at the trial and at Calvary.


This passed through several stages before it reached its present form. It was composed by Luke, the traveling companion of Paul (neither of whom had seen Jesus), towards the end of the first century C.E.

The Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke are called the "Synoptic Gospels" because they have much in common.

The Gospel According to St. John. The fourth Gospel is very different from the preceding three. It was written at or near Ephesus in about C.E. 110 by an unknown man. In C.E. 180 it was wrongly ascribed to John, the son of Zebedee, one of the twelve disciples. The orthodox verdict is that it is more "an inspired meditation" on the life of Jesus than a true history:

"The speeches in the fourth Gospel (even apart from the early messianic claim) are so different from those in the synoptics, and so like the comments of the Fourth Evangelist himself, that both cannot be equally reliable as records of what Jesus said. Literary veracity in ancient times did not forbid, as it does now, the assignment of fictitious speeches to historical characters. The best ancient historians made a practice of composing and assigning such speeches in this way."2

The Holy Qur'an. The sacred book of Islam, on the other hand, was undoubtedly compiled during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. It was not only committed to writing, but was learnt by heart (and recited in daily prayers) by hundreds of people during the Prophet's lifetime.

Jesus and Muhammad. Muslims revere the person of Jesus as a true Prophet of God, as they do to all the Prophets; however, the followers of Christianity, especially Christian missionaries, spare no effort or occasion to condemn and belittle the founder-prophets of other religions—especially the Prophet of Islam.

Although the characters of Jesus

On Jesus Christ

The Holy Qur'an:

—"He (Jesus) was naught but a servant on whom We bestowed favor and We made him an example for the Children of Israel." (43:59)
—"The Messiah, son of Mary, was only a messenger; messengers before him had indeed passed away." (5:75)
—"...nor did they cause his (Jesus') death on the cross, but he was made to appear to them as such." (4:157)
—"And We made the son of Mary and his mother a sign, and We gave them a refuge on a lofty ground having meadows and springs." (23:50)

The Holy Bible:

—"I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High." (Psalm 82:6)
—Jesus said: "...Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God." (Mark 10:18)
—Jesus said: "...for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." (Matt. 4:10)
—"But he (Jesus) answered and said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matt. 15:24)
and Muhammad are equally true, noble and inspiring. Jesus lacked the scope to become a perfect model for men in all walks of life as Muhammad did. Jesus had no family life—hence no model for a husband and a father; he did not triumph over his enemies in battle—hence no model for a victor's behavior to the vanquished; he did not become a ruler, a business man or a judge—hence no model for giving and enacting beneficial laws for the subject, and no example for those in authority to follow. On the other hand, Muhammad combined in himself all of these, and his life was a perfect model for men in all walks of life.

Before we evaluate what the Holy Bible and the Holy Qur'an say about the personalities and missions of these two prophets, let us see what, in a nutshell, are the principal doctrines of Islam and Christianity. In her booklet Islam and Christianity, Mrs. Uliat Aziz-us-Samad writes:

"Christianity, as understood and believed by Christians of both Roman Catholic and Protestant persuasions, means the Three Creeds, namely, the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian. The characteristic doctrines of Christianity are (1) the Trinity, (2) the Godhead of Jesus Christ, (3) the Divine Sonship of Jesus, (4) the Inherent Sin, and (5) the Atonement.

The religion of Islam has no place in it for any of these dogmas. It believes in the oneness of God as against the Triune God of Christianity. It considers the Christian description of Jesus to be a reversion to paganism. Jesus, according to the Holy Qur'an, was not an incarnation of God but a Prophet of God; like all other Prophets (including the Prophet Muhammad), he was every bit a human being. Islam rejects the Divine Sonship of Jesus; he may be called a son of God in the sense that all righteous and merciful human beings are the children of God, but not in any literal or special sense. And, likewise, it disbelieves in the Christian dogmas of Inherent Sin, Crucified Deity, and Atonement.

The cardinal principles of Islam are (1) the unity of God, (2) the belief in the prophets raised by God among all the nations of the world, (3) the belief in the revelations sent by God to the Prophets to guide human beings to truth and righteousness, (4) the inherent sinlessness of human nature and man's capacity for unlimited moral and spiritual growth (through belief in God and faithful adherence to the inspired teachings of the Prophets), (5) life after death, and (6) the equality and fraternity of all men and women."

The doctrine of Trinity is that there are three distinct Divine persons in the Godhead: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. According to the Athanasian Creed, these are not three Gods, but one God. No wonder that Rev. J. F. De Groote says:

"The most Holy Trinity is a mystery in the strictest sense of the word. For reason alone cannot prove the existence of a Triune God; revelation teaches it. And even after the existence of the mystery has been revealed to us, it remains impossible for the human intellect to grasp how the Three Persons have but one Divine Nature." 4

Strangely enough, Jesus Christ himself is not recorded as having ever mentioned Trinity. Like all the Prophets, he believed in one Divine Person, one God, as is evident from the following saying: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10).

The doctrine of Trinity was coined by the Christian Church more than a century after the departure of Christ. The four Canonical Gospels were written between the years 65 and 110 C.E. Even Paul, who imported many pagan ideas into Christianity, knew nothing of the Triune God. To attribute divinity to three persons is to deny the essential nature of the Self-Sufficient, Eternal, and Infinite Being, of the one and only God Who created the universe and continues to rule over and guide it. This latter is the concept of God in Islam.

The second Christian dogma is that of the Divine incarnation. The Athanasian Creed states: "Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly in the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ."

But we find Jesus disclaiming divinity in the following words: "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God" (Mark 10:13).

Jesus spoke of God as "my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17), so that he stood in the same relation to God as any other man. Then again, he says: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

This is reiterated by the Qur'an: "And they surely disbelieve who say: Lo! God is the Messiah, son of Mary. The Messiah himself said: O Children of Israel, worship God, my Lord and your Lord" (5:72). Elsewhere in the Qur'an we read: "He (Jesus) said: I am indeed a servant of God. He has given me the scripture and has appointed me a prophet" (19:30).

The third Christian dogma is that Jesus Christ was the son of God in a special and exclusive sense. Yet he himself says: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you...; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven" (Matthew 5:44-45). And again: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9).

Obviously Jesus referred to himself as a "son of God" in the same sense in which Adam, Israel, David, and Solomon had been called sons of God before him. John (10:34-36) reports Jesus referring to this very point when he obviously had in mind the Psalms (82:6-7) where Prophets of old were called "gods" only in a metaphorical sense.

The fourth Christian dogma is that of Atonement. Christianity declares that man is born in sin inherited from Adam. Further, it declares that a penalty must be paid for all sins, inherited or otherwise, and that no man can be saved from eternal retribution unless he believes that the son of God appeared in human form to die on the cross and atone for the sins of men through the shedding of his blood; for the wages of sin is death. "That Jesus died for us, and that we are saved by him, is indeed the living truth of the Church in all ages... Jesus alone of the great founders of religions suffered an early and violent death, even the death of a criminal... He died the death of a criminal not for his sins but for ours." 5

Like all other Christian dogmas, the belief in original sin finds no clear support in the Bible, except in the Epistles of St. Paul—and he became a Christian long after the departure of Christ. The Old Testament—Jeremiah (31:29, 30) and Ezekiel (18:1-9 and 20, 21)—rejects the dogma of inherent sin. Jesus himself said about children: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein" (Mark 10:14, 15).

... continued on page 23
The Qur'an's Concept of Paradise and Hell

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

The life after death takes two forms: a life in paradise for those in whom the good preponderates over the evil, and a life in hell for those in whom the evil preponderates over the good. The word paradise (Ar. jardān) occurs only twice in the Holy Qur'an—in 18: 107 and 23:11. It is the word janna (garden) or its plural jannat that is generally used to indicate the abiding-place of the righteous, who are generally described as those who believe and do good deeds, while their abiding-place is generally said to be gardens in which rivers flow, the rivers corresponding to faith, and the trees of the garden corresponding to the good which a man does. The word janna is derived from jann, which means to conceal a thing so that it is not perceived by the senses, and janna means a garden because its ground is covered by trees. The description of paradise as a garden with rivers flowing in it is, however, only a parable: “A parable of the garden which the righteous are promised: therein are rivers of water” (47:15). The blessings of paradise cannot be conceived in this life, and are not, therefore, things of this world: “No soul knows what is hidden for it of that which will refresh the eyes: a reward for what they did” (32:17). An explanation of these words by the Holy Prophet is given in the Bukhari as follows: “God says, I have prepared for My righteous servants what no eye has seen and no ear has heard, and what the mind of man has not conceived.” Therefore, paradise and what it contains cannot even be conceived by the mind of man. Ibn ‘Abbas is reported to have said that “nothing that is in paradise resembles anything that is in this world except in name.” For instance, the word zill (shade) occurs very often in the Holy Qur'an in connection with the blessings of paradise, but a shade is not what is really meant, for there is no sun: “They shall see therein neither sun nor intense cold” (76:13). The word is there, but the significance underlying it is different. According to Raghib, it stands for plenty or protection. Such is also rizq (sustenance) in paradise; it cannot be what sustains the body here; in fact, prayer itself is called a sustenance in 20:131. Nor are the fruits of paradise like the fruits of this life, because these are the fruits of the deeds done. 2:25 makes it clear: “Whenever they shall be given a portion of the fruits thereof, they shall say, This is what was given to us before.” Evidently the fruits of the deeds are meant here, and not the fruits that the earth grows, because the latter are not given to all the faithful here, while the former are. Similar is the case with the water, the milk, the honey, the cushions, the thrones, the clothes and the adornments of the next life; they are not things of this life; these descriptions are of the nature of parables, as the Qur'an expressly calls them a mathal or parable.

In fact, a little consideration would show that even our ideas of place and time are not applicable to the next life. It is said in the Qur'an that paradise extends over the whole of the heavens and the earth: “And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden the extentiveness of which is as the heavens and the earth” (3:132; 57:21); and when the Prophet was asked where hell was, if paradise extended over the whole of the heavens and the earth, he replied, “Where is the night when the day comes?” This shows clearly that paradise and hell are more like two conditions than two places. Again, notwithstanding that the two are poles asunder, the one being the highest of the high and the other the lowest of the low, they are separated only by a wall: “Then a separation would be brought between them by a wall having a door in it; on the inside of it there shall be mercy and before the outside of it there shall be chastisement” (57:13). Elsewhere, speaking of the inmates of paradise and the inmates of hell, it says: “And between the two there shall be a veil” (7:46). Again, a "vehement raging and roaring" of hell-fire is mentioned repeatedly (25:12, 67:7), but those in paradise shall "not hear its faintest sound" (21:102), while we are told that those in hell shall talk with those in heaven and the two shall hear each other; see 7:44–50. I quote only the concluding verse: “and the inmates of the fire shall call out to the dwellers of the garden, saying: Pour on us some water or of that which God has given you. They shall say: God has prohibited them both to unbelievers.” Thus, those in paradise shall hear the talk of those in hell, but they shall not hear the roaring of the fire of hell. This shows that hell is a condition which shall be perceived only by those in it, and similar is the case with paradise.

As I have already pointed out, the Holy Qur'an says that paradise and hell begin in this very life. Read the following verses along with those already quoted:

“And convey good news to those who believe and do good deeds that they shall have gardens in which rivers flow; whenever they shall be given a portion of the fruits thereof, they shall say, This is what was given to us before; and they shall be given the like of it” (2:25).

“For them is a known sustenance” (37:41).

“And He shall cause them to enter the garden which He has made known to them” (47:6).

The first of these verses shows that the fruits which the righteous shall find in paradise shall be the same as were given to them in this life; the second and the third show that the sustenance which shall be given to them in paradise is made known to them in this very life. It is clear that the sustenance and the fruits spoken of here are not
those which the righteous have in common with the evil-doers, the fruits and the sustenance that the earth grows, what is needed for the support of the body of both. The things meant are those which are granted specially to the righteous, to which the evil-doers have no access; in fact, they remain quite blind to them in this life and are, therefore, deprived of them in the hereafter: “And whoever is blind in this, shall also be blind in the hereafter” (17:72). These are the fruits of good deeds and the sustenance which the righteous find in the remembrance of God. It is the sustenance spoken of in the following verses and elsewhere:

“Bear then patiently what they say and glorify thy Lord by the praise of Him before the rising of the sun and before its setting, and during hours of the day do also glorify and during parts of the day that thou mayest be well-pleased. And do not stretch thy eyes after that with which We have provided different classes of them, of the splendor of this world’s life, that We may thereby try them, and the sustenance of thy Lord is better and more abiding” (20:130, 131).

It is in accordance with this that the soul that has found rest in God is admitted to paradise in this life: “O soul that art at rest! return to thy Lord, well-pleased with Him, well-pleasing Him; so enter among My servants and enter into My garden” (89:27–30).

It is quite in accordance with this conclusion that we find that the highest bliss of paradise is plainly stated to be the pleasure of God, the greatest spiritual blessing which the righteous strive for in this life, and by attaining which they enter into paradise in this very life, as has just been shown:

“God has promised to the believing men and the believing women gardens in which rivers flow, to abide in them, and goodly dwellings in gardens of perpetual abode; and greatest of all is God’s goodly pleasure—that is the grand achievement” (9:72).

Those in paradise shall be occupied with and find delight in the praise of God and in His glorification; in what is declared to be a spiritual sustenance for the righteous in this life (20:131):

“Their cry in it shall be, Glory to Thee, O God! and their greeting in it shall be, Peace; and the last of their cry shall be, Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds” (10:10).

There is no grief, fatigue or toil therein, and the heart is purified of all rancor and jealousy, peace and security reigning on all sides:

“The righteous shall be in the midst of gardens and fountains. Enter them in peace, secure. And We will root out whatever of rancor is in their breasts—they shall be as brethren on raised couches, face to face. Toil shall not afflict them in it, nor shall they be ever ejected from it” (15:45–48).

“They shall not hear therein vain or sinful discourse, except the word peace, peace” (56:25, 26).

“And they shall say: All praise is due to God Who has made grief to depart from us; surely our Lord is Forgiving, Multiplier of reward. Who has made us alight in a house abiding forever out of His grace; toil shall not touch us therein, nor shall fatigue afflict us” (Z 35:34, 35).

Notwithstanding all this, paradise, according to the Holy Qur’an, is not a place for simple enjoyment or rest; it is essentially a place for advancement to higher and higher stages: “But those who are careful of their duty to their Lord, shall have high places, above them higher places, built (for them)” (39:20). This shows that not only does paradise admit the righteous to high places, but it is in fact the starting-point for a new advancement, there being higher and higher places still, and it is in accordance with this that they are spoken of as having an unceasing desire for attaining to higher and higher excellences, their prayer in paradise being: “O our Lord! make perfect for us our light” (66:8). This idea of a ceaseless advancement in paradise is one which is peculiar to the Holy Qur’an, and not the least trace of it is to be met with in any other scripture.

Quite in accordance with the idea of paradise as a place of unending progress to higher stages of life is the idea of hell where punishment is not meant for torture but for purification, in order to make a man fit for spiritual advancement. The idea underlying hell is that those who wasted their opportunity in this life shall, under the inevitable law which makes every man taste of what he has done, be subjected to a course of treatment for the spiritual diseases which they have brought about with their own hands. It is for this reason that the Holy Qur’an makes a difference between the abiding in paradise and the abiding in hell, allowing a termination in the latter case but not in the former.

As I have already noted, punishment for evil deeds sometimes takes effect in this very life, and the Holy Qur’an lays down the principle in clear words that every such punishment is a remedial measure:

“And We did not send a prophet in a town but We overtook its people with distress and affliction in order that they might humble themselves” (7:94).

“And certainly We sent apostles to nations before thee, then We seized them with distress and affliction in order that they might humble themselves” (6:42).

It is clear from this that God brings down His punishment upon a sinning people in order that they may turn to Him; in other words, that they may be awakened to the higher life. The same must, therefore, be the object of the punishment in hell. That this is really so is made clear, in the first place, by giving the utmost prominence to the quality of mercy in God, as already pointed out, and then by stating clearly that all men have been created for mercy: “Except those on whom thy Lord has mercy and for this did He create them” (11:119). The purpose of God must be ultimately fulfilled and, though man may bring down punishment on himself by his deeds, yet as God has created him for mercy, mercy is the ultimate end in the Divine scheme. Elsewhere we are told: “And I have not created the jinn and the men except that they should serve Me” (51:56). They must, therefore, ultimately be made fit for the service of God, and that is the higher life. With all its fearfulness, hell is called a maula (friend) of the sinners, in one place (57:15), and their umm (mother), in another (101:9). Both these descriptions of hell are a clear indication that hell is meant only to purify a man of the dross which he has accumulated with his own hands, just as fire purifies gold of dross. In fact, it is to point to this truth that the Holy Qur’an uses the word fina (which originally means the assaying of gold, or casting it into fire to purify it of dross) both of the persecutions which the faithful are made to suffer (2:191; 29:2, 10) and of the punishment which the evil-doers shall suffer in hell (37:63), where the food which those in hell shall be given is called fina, because the object in both cases is the same, the faithful being purified through persecutions and the evil-doers by hell-fire. Therefore hell is called a friend of the sinners, because, through suffering, it will make them fit for spiritual progress; and it is called a mother of the sinners to show that its connection with them is that of a
mother with her child, the sinners being brought up as it were in the bosom of hell. The fire is a source of torment, but it is also a purifier. The keenness of the torments of the other life is due to the keener perception of the soul, which is the necessary result of its separation from the earthly vessel. Bliss and torment, therefore, grow equally keener in that life.

It is in consequence with its remedial nature that we find it stated that the sinners shall ultimately be taken out of hell. It is true that the word abad is thence in the Holy Qur'an in connection with the abiding in hell (4:149; 33:65; 72:23), but abad indicates eternity as well as long time, and that the latter significance must be taken in this case is made clear by the use, in the same connection, of the word ahqab (78:23), meaning years or long years. Besides this, a limitation is placed on the abiding in hell by the addition of the words except as thy Lord please, the exception clearly indicating the ultimate deliverance of those in hell. The following two verses may be noted in this connection:

"He shall say, The fire is your abode, to abide in it, except as God please; for thy Lord is Knowing, Wise" (6:129).

"So as to those who are unhappy, they shall be in the fire; for them shall be sighing and groaning in it: Abiding therein as long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as thy Lord please; for thy Lord is the Mighty Doer of what He intends" (11:106, 107).

Both these verses show clearly that the punishment of hell is not everlasting. To make this conclusion clearer still, the latter of these occasions may be compared with the next verse which describes the abiding in paradise:

"And as to those who are made happy, they shall be in the garden, abiding in it as long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as thy Lord please: a gift never to be cut off" (11:108). The two expressions are similar: those in hell and those in paradise abide in it as long as the heavens and the earth endure, with an exception added in each case showing that they may be taken out of it. The concluding statements are, however, different. In the case of paradise, the idea that those in it may be taken out of it, if God pleases, is immediately followed by the statement that it is a gift which shall never be cut off, showing that they shall not be taken out of paradise; while, in the case of hell, the idea of those in it being taken out of it is confirmed by the concluding statement—"for thy Lord is the mighty Doer of what He intends."

The conclusion drawn above is corroborated by the sayings of the Holy Prophet. Thus a saying reported in the Muslim concludes: "Then will God say, The angels and the prophets and the faithful have all in their turn interceded for the sinners, and now there remains none to intercede for them except..."
cept the most Merciful of all merciful ones. So He will take out a handful from fire and bring out a people who never worked any good.” Further, Bukhari records a saying to the effect that, when the sinners are taken out from hell, they shall be thrown into “the river of life,” which clearly indicates that they shall be made fit for a higher life. The Kanz al-Ummal records the following: “Surely a day will come over hell when it will be like a field of corn that has dried up, after flourishing for a while”; “Surely a day will come over hell when there shall not be a single human being in it.” A saying of ‘Umar is recorded as follows: “Even if the dwellers in hell may be numberless as the sands of the desert, a day will come when they will be taken out of it.”

Hell is described by seven different names in the Holy Qur’an, and these are supposed by some to be the seven divisions of hell. The most frequently occurring name is jahannam, which is like a proper name for hell. It is an Arabic word and the root-word means great depth. Next in frequency of occurrence is sa’ir, from a root meaning the intensity of fire. Then comes sa’ar, from a root meaning the kindling of fire. Next to it is sa’ar, signifying scorching heat, which occurs only in two of the earliest chapters (54:48; 74:26, 27, 42). Hu- tama, which is derived from a root meaning to crush, occurs only twice in one early chapter (104:4, 5). Laza (70:15), meaning a flaming fire, and hawiyah (101:9), meaning abyss, or a deep place of which the bottom cannot be reached, occur once each.

Most frequently, however, the punishment of the evil-doers is spoken of as nar, meaning fire. It should be borne in mind that hell or the fire of hell is, according to the Holy Qur’an, a manifestation of hidden realities (86:9). In other words, the spiritual torments and mental pangs that are often felt by an evil-doer in this very life assume a palpable shape in the life after death. “The fire kindled by God which rises above the hearts” (104:6, 7) becomes the flaming or intense or scorching fire of the next life. The ahwa (low desires) of this life that are so often a hindrance in his awakening to a higher life and nobler deeds become the hawiyah or jahannam (abyssal depth) to which the evil-doer makes himself to fall. Hence it is that intense regret for the evil done is sometimes described as the fire: “Thus will God shew them their deeds to be intense regret to them, and they shall not come forth from the fire” (2:167); and the day of resurrection is accordingly called “the day of intense regret” (19:39). Sometimes it is being debarrued from the Divine presence that is spoken of as a hell: “Surely on that day they shall be debarrued from their Lord; then surely they shall enter the burning fire” (83:15, 16). Sometimes disgrace is described as the punishment in the next life: “Then on the resurrection day he will bring them to disgrace” (16:27). It should also be noted that, as in paradise there is neither sun, nor intense cold (76:13), so in hell there is both “boiling and intensely cold water” (78:25); a “requisite corresponding” to sin, it is added, to show the real nature of the punishment.

Story of Adam . . .

Continued from page 16

(or nakedness), for he sees you, he as well as his hosts, whence you cannot see them: indeed, We have made the devils to be the friends of those who do not believe” (7:27).

The next verse then speaks of the indecencies committed by the unbelievers, and thus it becomes too clear to need further comment that it is of the tree of evil that the Holy Qur’an speaks in this tree. When this is established, the conclusion is evident that the garden spoken of is a spiritual garden, the garden of contentment, as already pointed out. Its description as a garden where man feels no hunger (20:118), and at the same time eats from it a plenteous food (3:35), leads to the same conclusion. That the Qur’an is here speaking allegorically of spiritual truths is also clear from 20:124: “And whoever turns away from My reminder, his shall surely be a straitened life, and on the day of resurrection We will raise him blind.” The straitened life here clearly indicates the life spiritual. As a result of prompting man to evil, the devil, the inciter of the lower passions in man, is expelled from the garden forever:

“Get out of it, for thou art driven away, and My curse is on thee to the day of judgment” (38:77, 78; 15:34, 35). Adam, who disobeys the Divine commandment, through forgetfulness and not intentionally (20:115), is also expelled from the garden, but only for a while, to carry on a struggle with the devil that is his enemy: “Get forth, one of you the enemy of the others, and there is for you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time” (2:36); “Get forth you two therefrom—all—one of you enemy to another” (20:123). The state of struggle with the devil was destined to set man on the way to regain the garden. Man who is gifted with the power even to rule the angels and who could, therefore, make the devil to submit to himself, is expelled from the garden to make the necessary struggle and, through that struggle, helped by the Divine light of revelation, to regain the garden permanently, never more to be expelled from it. He turns to God and, finding help from that source of strength, conquers the devil:

“They said: Our Lord! we have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not and have not mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers” (7:23).

“Then Adam received some words from his Lord, so He turned to him mercifully” (2:37).

“Then his Lord chose him, so He turned to him mercifully and guided him” (20:122).

If this is true of Adam in particular, it is also true of man generally. Communion with the Divine being obtained through His revelation brings man to a state in which the devil is forever subdued, the state in which he has no more fear of the devil, nor does he commit evil to grieve over it.

“Surely there will come to you a guidance from Me, so whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve” (2:38).

“There will surely come to you guidance from Me, so whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray, nor be unhappy” (20:123).

Anyone who considers carefully the details of this story, its manifestally allegorical nature, and the great purpose underlying it—that every man must carry on a struggle with his passions until he acquires the mastery over them—cannot for an instant entertain the idea that the Holy Qur’an is in any way indebted to the Bible for the story of Adam.
Communism Is Conquerable . . .

Continued from page 14

is recognized as one of the greatest religions and spiritual forces of the world. This change in world attitude, which undoubtedly has been the fruit of the more than half century’s devoted efforts of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman, is shaping the future of the world. The tide now is in Islam’s favor, instead of hatred, now there is an ever-increasing desire in the minds of the common men in Europe and the USA to know more about Islam.

The complete message of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement is, however, not only “Back to Qur’an” but also “Onward with Qur’an.” In the completely changed conditions of the present times, the true teachings of Islam must be widely disseminated and broadcast to an ignorant world. Under the urgent and compelling need and the criterion of sifting truth has undergone a total revolution. Blind following and bowing to unreasonable authority have been replaced by an urge for cogent reasoning, convincing proof, conformity to natural laws and satisfaction of the needs of mankind. The accepted criterion now is that the faith that can satisfactorily solve the modern problems of society and the future faith of mankind. Ahmadiyyat maintains that Islam and the Qur’an and these alone, can solve the problems of today’s world. The Founder of the movement held the Holy Qur’an above everything else and directed the attention of the Muslims to the great work of Jihad with the Qur’an (Jihad bi’l Qur’an).

In its annual conference at Lahore in December 1980, the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha’at Islam Lahore, proceeding on the course set by the Founder, took yet another great decision which will have far-reaching effects on the future shape of the world. We resolved to present the translation with running commentary of the Holy Qur’an in various languages such as French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, etc. A fund has been constituted to which members of the Anjuman from all over the world are making donations. I am pleased to know that the Anjuman’s USA wing, the California-based Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha’at Islam, Lahore, Inc., in a recent meeting of its board of directors, decided that it will finance the translations and commentary in three languages, namely, Russian, Chinese and Japanese.

Let us not forget that about half the population of the globe is at present in the communist bloc and a large number of them are not communists. The constant atheistic teachings in schools and universities, though successful in creating a generation of non-believers, have not yet been able to completely uproot the faith of the people in God. We in the free world owe a duty to these people; the duty to keep burning the candle of faith and belief in God and religion. No doubt, the Western democracies are possessed of much greater economic resources over the communist bloc and also enjoy superiority of industrial production, science and technology, and military hardware, but let us keep in mind that this gap is ever decreasing and the day is not far when this material superiority will be lost. It is our duty to prepare the people for that day. As I have already stated, communism is an ideology and an ideology cannot be defeated by the superiority of material sources. It necessitates possessing a superior ideology. Fortunately, this ideology is available in the form of the teachings of the Holy Qur’an. It only needs to be disseminated to all the people, whether living inside or outside the Iron Curtain. We have decided to proceed with our project on an emergency basis. As a first step we have already started work on a Spanish translation of the Holy Qur’an and hope the translation will be completed and published by the end of 1982. This translation has been given priority in order to carry the message of hope to Latin America, which is almost like a virgin land as far as the propagation of Islam is concerned. Secondly, in view of the communist intention of extension in this region, it is necessary to provide the umbrella of formidable belief in God that the teachings of the Qur’an create.

Groundwork on translations into the Russian and Chinese languages is in hand. It is going to be the most effective weapon in the hands of the free world for defeating the communist ideology. I have to assure you all that the communist world is conquerable ideologically, provided we are capable of carrying the ideological material to the communist world itself. Once the communist world sees the light of belief in God, the future of mankind is sure to be bright and secure. We seek assistance of all the believers in this noble cause, which incidentally is the common cause of all of us.

Chris A. Muhammad

Continued from page 18

Islam condemns the dogma of inherent sin and regards children as pure at birth. Sin, it says, is not inherited but is something we acquire for ourselves. Man is born with free will; he has the capacity to do evil or good. The divine spark of conscience is present in every human being, while the messengers of God or sent-ones point to man the path of salvation. But God is not a mere judge or king in the earthly sense; He is “Master of the Day of Judgment.” He is not only a just God; He is Merciful and Forgiving. If a man sincerely repents of a sinful life and his life thereafter is seen to be a good one, God in His infinite mercy may forgive his past sins and impose no penalty for them.

The Christian dogma of Atonement that salvation cannot be achieved without a belief in the saving power of Jesus Christ’s blood, is not only a denial of the mercy but also of the justice of God; for to punish a man for the sins of others is an act neither of mercy nor of justice. Further, Jesus did not willingly suffer death on the Cross. According to Mark (14:36), he was not only sorrowful but wanted the cup of suffering to be taken from him. We find him crying to God from the cross: “My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34).

The Holy Qur’an denies that the forgiveness of sins can be obtained by the suffering and sacrifice of any other person: “Whoever goes aright, it is only for the good of his soul that he goes aright, and whoever goes astray, goes astray only to his own detriment. No bearer of a burden can bear the burden of another. Nor do We chastise until We raise a messenger” (17:15).

NOTES

2. Ibid., p. 16.
5. Encyclopaedia Britannica (1957 ed.), vol. 5, article “Christianity.”
MUHAMMAD THE GREATEST MAN OF HISTORY

“If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad? . . . Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask: Is there any man greater than he?”

—Alphonse de Lamartine in Histoire de la Turquie

QUR’AN, THE GREATEST SPIRITUAL FORCE

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

—Bosworth Smith

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

—New Researches by H. Hirschfeld

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

—Dr. Steingass, Hughes’ Dictionary of Islam

THE BEAUTIFUL CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAM

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

—George Bernard Shaw