The Promised Messiah Speaks:

Salvation Lies in Complete Surrender to Allah

by HADHRAT MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD
The Promised Messiah, Mehdi and the Mujaddid of the Fourteenth Century Hijrah

The Holy Prophet was directed in the Holy Qur’an to supplicate: Lord bestow upon me an increase of knowledge (20:115). This means that the Holy Prophet was directed to supplicate for perfect knowledge of God’s greatness and understanding and attributes. At another place it is said: “thus have I been commanded and I am the foremost of those who submit.” (6:146) Reading these two verses together we find that the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, became the foremost of the Muslims because he was the most learned in the knowledge of Divine understanding. For this reason his Islam is the highest of all and he is the foremost of the Muslims. Another verse also indicates the vastness of his knowledge as is said: “He has taught thee that which thou knewest not, and great is Allah’s grace on thee.” (4:114) This means that god almighty taught the Holy Prophet that which he could not have learnt by himself and that by Divine grace he was blessed more than anyone else. That is to say, the Holy Prophet exceeded everyone in his knowledge and understanding of the Divine and God Almighty perfumed him with the fragrance of Divine understanding more than anyone else. Thus God has appointed knowledge and understanding as the principal means of obtaining a true concept of Islam. Though there are other means for obtaining such knowledge, like fasting and Prayer and supplication and carrying out of all the Divine commandments, the number of which exceeds six hundred, yet the knowledge of the Greatness of God and of His Unity and of His attributes of Glory and Beauty is basic for everything. He who has a heedless heart and has no understanding of the Divine, cannot obtain the strength to observe the fast or perform prayer or make supplication or occupy himself with doing good. All righteous action is indicated by understanding of the Divine and all the other means proceed from it and are its issue. The beginning of this understanding is the reflection of God’s Rahmaniyyat and is not the result of any action or any prayer, but is a gift o pure grace. He guides whom He wills and He lets go astray whom He wills. then this understanding is fostered by righteous action and good faith, till it assumes the form of revelation and descending in the word of God, illumines the whole expanse of the bosom with the light which is called Islam. At the stage of perfect understanding, Islam does not remain a mere phrase, but all its reality that we have described is achieved and the human soul prostrates itself humble before Divine Unity. Thereupon, from both sides it is announced: Whatever is mine is thine. That is to say, the human soul cries out and confesses: Lord whatever is mine is Thine: and God also speaks and conveys the good news: O My servant, the heaven and earth etc. that are with Me are with thee also. This stage is indicated in the verse: O my servants who have committed excesses against your own selves despair not of the mercy of Allah, surely Allah forgives all sin. (39:54) In this verse instead of: Say, O servants of

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EDITORIAL

FAITH AND SCIENCE

One of the main factors for the denial of Faith today is that it is considered to be contradictory to Science. This is far from being true. Both Faith and Science aim at ameliorating human life, and are based on the discovery of the laws governing our life and an implicit obedience to them. Both trace their origin to the one and the same source - Divine Nature. But they have different domains of activity; the one concerns with the improvement of man’s inner and higher life, the other with the betterment of his outer and physical environment. The other difference is that the laws of faith are sent down by Divine revelation, whereas natural laws are discovered through the development of man’s intellect and reasoning. Often the question is asked: Why cannot man discover spiritual and moral laws through his own intellectual endeavour? The answer is obvious. The subject dealt with by Faith is beyond the realm of matter. It belongs to the sphere of man’s soul. Let us consider a few questions such as the following: What is the origin and aim of this Universe in general and of man in particular? How should one develop one’s higher inner qualities? What is the aim of man’s life in this world? How can man curb his baser emotions in order to cultivate his moral attributes and to attain moral perfection thereby? It is evident that to tackle these questions is beyond the power of human intellect and reasoning. Any attempt made in this regard being the result of subjective reasoning, will not be based on sure knowledge and would also lack unanimity. In the case of physical laws, the findings can easily be verified by the observations and experiments made by others, but in the case of spiritual and moral laws, we lack such a verification. As in this case we are to deal with our own selves, our inner natures, which vary so greatly and thus it is impossible to arrive at a certain and unanimous conclusion. In short, scientific discoveries are objective realities, whereas spiritual findings if based on mere reasoning would be subjective in nature. It is at this point that Faith comes to the rescue of man and guides him in the vital life-problems. We all accept the objective method to be the most correct one in science but when the same is applied to the realm of faith we do not accept it and become skeptic of it. This objective method in the realm of faith is called Divine

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Revelation or the Word of God. It is vouchsafed to certain persons endowed with higher perceptive spiritual senses. The knowledge and guidance received through the Divine Revelation and demonstrated by the chosen ones of God is the most certain and convincing, and appeals to the inner self of man. It transforms the very lives of its adherents, who in return, give a new turn to the course of history and raise a fallen humanity to the heights of spiritual and moral glory.

We intend to throw light on the various aspects of Divine Revelation in the course of subsequent issues, but for the present we would only deal with another grave misunderstanding about the faith so commonly prevalent.

Faith is at present considered to be merely a matter of fiction and a collection of fairy tales. Generally concepts of faith are presented in a dogmatic and authoritarian manner. The votaries and custodians of religion require their followers to ‘believe’ and be ‘saved’. No attempt is, however, made to prove religious realities in a rational and scientific manner. The present are being one of science and rationalism, therefore, refuses to listen to the truths of religion. Moreover the evangelists fail to demonstrate any relationship between faith and the real problems of life confronting man. Certain formulae are repeated and some meaningless actions are performed, in order to seek the pleasure of an ‘angry deity’ and to attain ‘salvation’ thereby in the Hereafter. Such a presentation of religion is repugnant to the modern scientific spirit. The main reason why an average person today is indifferent to the faith and everything concerning it, is that faith and science have been made contradictory and conflicting. So the main defect lies in the manner of presentation of the faith as well as in the outlook and actions of those representing it. But in fact, both true faith and science are complimentary and even confirmatory. The true solution of the questions mentioned earlier, is provided in the guidance given by the perfect Divine Word. Recipients of Divine Knowledge - the Prophets - have not only provided guidance in the form of Ideal human code of life but have also demonstrated the highest standard of human conduct and character ever needed for the progress and prosperity of an Ideal society. That is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him, has been mentioned in the Last Divine Code - the Holy Qur'an - as 'An Excellent Exemplar'. (33:21)

The Qur'an is the only Scripture which has adopted a scientific approach to all human problems of spiritual and moral elevation. It has not only given certain answers to the questions mentioned above, but also argument substantiating their truth. For instance, fourteen hundred years ago, it upheld freedom of religion and conscience of man - one of the fundamental human rights. The Qur'an says: "There is no compulsion in religion, because true guidance has been made manifest from error." (2:256) While stressing the importance of the freedom of conscience, the Qur'an also puts forward an argument to substantiate it. As guidance has been made distinct from error, therefore there arises no need of coercion. The reasonable presentation of truth would be acceptable to the man of common understanding. Hence no necessity for compulsion. While on the contrary compulsion nullifies the very principal of granting freedom. Similarly while stressing the need of adhering to the Divine guidance, the Qur'an has so beautifully pointed out that as Allah has created man, He alone knows better how best to guide him. The Qur'an says: "Does He not know Who created? And He is the Knower of Subleties, the Aware." (67:14)

The present age thus requires that we should adopt a rational and scientific approach in presenting the teachings of Islam. The Qur'anic method of rational and scientific approach is *par excellence*. Religious experience is something beyond the reach of human reasoning but it can undoubtedly be explained and understood through reason. So it only needs a proper approach and understanding on our part and it will certainly appeal to the open and scientific mind of the modern age. The Qur'an itself points out this subtle fact in these words: "These are the clear messages in the very hearts of those who have been granted knowledge." (29:49) And it is thus that we can prove the veracity of religious truths as embodied in the Holy Qur'an and meet the challenge of the present scientific age.

Dr. Allah Bakhsh

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Allah; the Holy Prophet was commanded to say: O my servants. This verse was revealed in this form so that God Almighty might convey the good news of limitless mercies and might comfort those who are broken hearted in consequence of their sins. Thus Allah the Glorious desired to exhibit a sample of His mercies and to make it manifest to what extent He honours His faithful servant with special favours. By adopting the form: O my servants; God in effect said: Look at My beloved Messenger and see at what high rank he has arrived through his perfect obedience to Me that now all that is Mine is his. He who desires salvation should become his servant. That is to say, he should obey his so perfectly as if he was his slave. Then whatever sins he might have committed will be forgiven him. The word *abd* in Arabic idiom also means slave as it is said: A believing slave is better than an idol worshipper (2:222). In the verse to which we have drawn attention, it is indicated that he who desires salvation should establish the relationship of a slave with this Prophet. This is to say, he should not step outside his commandment and should consider himself bound to his obedience as a slave is bound and he would then obtain salvation. One pities dark-souled ones who bear such rancour towards the Holy Prophet that they consider that names like Ghulam Nabi, Ghulam Rasul, Ghulam Mustafa, Ghulam Ahmad, Ghulam Muhammad, saviour of associating the Holy Prophet with god, whereas, the verse indicates

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TWO KINDS OF TESTIMONY TO THE TRUTH OF THE PROPHET'S CLAIM
from MUHAMMAD IN WORLD SCRIPTURES
by MAULANA ABDUL HAQUE VIDYARTH

"And they who disbelieve say: Thou art no messenger (of Allah)
Say: Allah, and whosoever hath true
knowledge of the Scripture, is sufficient
witness between me and you."1

As long as the social development of
a nation does not reach a stage which
necessitates an organized government
to settle mutual disputes, no systematic
form is given to law and statutes.

Similarly, the signs of the truth of
prophetic claim have been corresponding to the mental
development of the people.

In olden days the people used to
indicate their veracity by different ways,
for instance, by taking a vow, lifting fire
in their hands, or forging into it, safely
crossing a whirlpool, throwing themselves from a mountain without
being hurt,2 soothsaying, magical
enchantment, walking on the water,
casting evil spirits into the swines, and
by showing dexterous tricks. The position of the testifier or the seeker-
after-truth was, thus, hardly better than
a divining machine. No deep thinking
was required to essay the genuineness of
a claim. In Hinduism, Judaism, Zoroastrians, even in Christianity and
ancient cults the veracity of holy
personages was judged by such like
criteria.

The Qur'an, however, has put forth
no such thaumaturgy in support of the
Holy Prophet Muhammad's claim (may
peace and the blessings of Allah be on
him). If the perfection of its law is the
criterion of an elevated society, then the
Qur'anic standard laid down for the
truth of the Holy Prophet's claim
deserves a careful consideration. In
the verse quoted at the top, two kinds of
testimony have been advanced in
support of the Prophet's claim, and
these witnesses have been deemed
sufficient to establish his truth -
the testimony of God Himself and the
testimony of the one who knows the
Book. 'The Book', of course, signifies
the previous revelations from God.

In the law of evidence, two factors
are particularly notable - the
importance of the witness and the
relevancy and positivity of the
testimony. In the case of the Holy
Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon
him) the mightiness of the evidence is
obvious from the fact that the Lord
Himself stands as a witness for him.

The Testimony of the Lord

By God's testimony is generally
meant the evidence of the Book of
Nature, the extraordinary celestial
power and those heavenly signs which
have always characterised the truth of
divinely inspired people. We find in this
universe everything governed by a
particular law. From the minutest atom
to the most gigantic orb, nothing
seems in the creation to be working
without some principle. 'Our Lord is He
Who gave to everything its creation,
then guided it (to its goal).’3 This
all-comprehensiveness of Divine Law is a
strong testimony to the truth of the holy
prophet's claim; for he was the first of
all prophets who advanced this
argument to prove the universality of
Divine revelation, viz., that every leaf in
the book of nature and every particle of
the creation necessarily stands in need of
the laws which God Almighty has
vested into it. When the All-Wise God,
the Cherisher of the worlds, has
vouchsafed a law even unto the tiniest
atom, then man, the best handiwork of
His Omnipotent power, with a vast field
of progress before him, must needs have
guidance and heavenly light for his
maintenance and progressive
development. Says the almighty in the
Holy Qur'an: “Glorify the name of thy
Lord, the Most High, Who creates, then
makes complete, and who makes (things)
according to a measure, then guides
(them to their goal).”4

To set a human limit to Divine
revelation and to confine it to a
particular period or people, not only
negates the attributes of Love, Mercy
and Beneficence of the Lord, but
disparages the very need and essence of
Religion. It ceases to be the
indispensable essential which must of
necessity be imparted to every nation,
or if corrupted by the ravages of time,
must be revived through a new prophet
to make it again the motive power of
human life. If all the nations of the
world, save a particularly favoured
tribe, could manage to live on without
religion, and could produce, without
revelation and divine inspirations such
supreme models of virtue and piety as
appeared sometimes in the persons of
Zoroaster, Buddha or Abraham, and
sometimes in the persons of Moses,
Krishna or Jesus Christ, surely there
seems to be no justification for
specifying a particular people or place
for the guidance and instruction of the
rest of mankind. And if it is God
Himself, Who with His law of requital,
unnecessarily creates a schism among
the people, showing His Light only to
the chosen few, depriving the rest and
condemning them to perdition as if they
were not His creatures, then such a
god is not worthy of adoration. He will be
no better than the bafulous blind king of
a sunless realm Whose denial is better
than acceptance.

This is an immensely extensive and
vast subject. The more one ponders over
it, the more palpably will it transpire
that the need for religion arises only
under the circumstances that Islam has
presented. Islam maintains that
prophets have been raised from time to
time in every nation of the world, and
the Beneficence of the Most
Compassionate Lord has never
deprieved any of His creatures of the
light and lead of True Religion. Again it
holds that religion must be found in
every age and clime as an established
reality; the followers of which must
look upon its propagation as the prime
purpose of their life. No power on earth,
however great, should deter them from
their missionary endeavours. Otherwise
any secrecy in the propagation of
religion and whispering of the chants in
the ears, lest the others may know of it,
is to negate the very purpose of religion.

Belief in the Holy Prophet
alone ensures Universal Peace

“And verily We have raised in every
nation an apostle saying: Serve Allah
and shun false gods.”5

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, of
all the prophets of the world, has been
endowed with unique attributes. One
characteristic mark of his mission is that
he vouched the truth of all the prophets
who had gone before him, and made it
obligatory on his followers to put faith
in all of them, just as in his own divine
mission. This principle of Islam is so
magnificent and grand, that it not only
forms the very basis of True Religion

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and universal peace, but the slightest deviation from it would pull the whole structure of religion to the ground. For, according to Islam, religion is a universal reality which is found in every nation of the world. In the present age, men of this view have sprung up in almost every religion, which is a clear sign of the soundness of this creed. But Muhammad was the first inspired teacher to teach this sublime principle to the world. No prophet before revealed this truth, nor any other religion has made the belief in all the prophets, an essential article of faith.

“The Lord of the Worlds”

-a Qur'anic conception only

Praise be to Allah Lord of the worlds. He is the Lord of the East as well as the Lord of the West. Leaving aside the recognition of the appearance of prophets in every nation, most of the religions are not tolerant and generous enough even to concede that their god is the God and Diety of other nations as well. Brahmanism and the Vedic religions looked upon the Aryans as the only children of God. The cow-mother of the Vedas yielded milk only to the Brahmins, the Kashatriyas and Vaishas, and fed and fostered them alone. Jehovah, the God of the Israelites, was to the utter exclusion of other people, their God alone. Mr. John S. Hayland writes: “The God whom the Jews worshipped had at first been conceived of as the tribal Diety of a nomadic people... for many centuries the Jews continued to conceive this god of righteousness as their God only... But this idea that their own national God was also the God of all other men was never welcomed and adopted by the mass of the Jewish population.”

Divine testimony in the form of Celestial Triumph

“Say: Allah sufficeth for a witness between me and you; for He is Aware of His servants, Seeing.”

The testimony of God, in this verse, denotes the triumph of Truth and the discomfiture of falsehood. Truth, notwithstanding its increasing opposition, thrives and prospers; whereas falsehood in spite of its power and privileges, is vanquished, for the Lord with His Almighty power is Aware and Seeing. This second testimony of the Lord is met with in every phase of the prophet’s life in the form of astounding success. The heavenly signs that appeared in support of Noah, Abraham, Buddha, Krishna, Moses, Zoroaster and all the prophets of the world, appeared in the most manifest manner in support of the Prophet Muhammad. His great success and preponderance, in spite of bitter opposition, paucity of firedens and legions of foes, is a clear proof of Divine support. Even the opponents of Islam have admitted this unique success of the Prophet and, that, as a matter of fact, is his real greatness which also acknowledged by opponents. The Encyclopaedia Britannica in the article “Qur’an” describes the Holy Prophet as “the most successful of all the prophets and religious personalities.”

The Promised Prophet

“And when Allah made this covenant with the prophets: Certainly what I have given you of book and wisdom - then an apostle comes to you verifying that which is with you, you must believe in him, and you must aid him. He said: do you affirm and accept My compact in this (matter)? They said: We do affirm. He said: Then bear ye witness, and I will be a witness with you.”

Besides the two above-mentioned testimonies, there is yet another magnificent testimony of God referred to in this verse. A covenant was taken from all the nations of the world through their respective prophets, that when the prophet who would confirm their truth and corroborate their Scriptures, should appear they would accept him with open arms, and render him all possible assistance. This covenant of the prophets is recorded in their Books in the form of prophecies. The Prophet Muhammad (blessed be his soul) brought this supreme truth into the world, which proved the indispensibility of religion and then established it on a firm footing. The condition in which the sacred scriptures of the world are found today, is really a harrid one. These are, no doubt, the relics of those great Books that were given to the prophets of yore. No scripture of any religion was to be found in its original form and pristine purity at the time of the Holy Prophet’s advent, nor is one found today. Such books, therefore, cannot prove the truth of religion, nay, their own prophets stand in need of vindication. A number of suspicions and misgivings have sprung up about the prophets, Zoroaster, Abraham, Krishna and Christ, so much so that they are being looked upon as mere fictitious persons. So many differences are found regarding the name, place, and period of the pre-historic prophets, that their very existence is being doubted. The Holy Prophet has, thus, put all the prophets under deep obligation by testifying to their truth. Indeed he had done for them what their own present-day Books or followers could not do. In this way, by the collective evidence of them all, he has also established and evinced the truth of religion. And in this age of irreligion and materialism, a better argument on the truth of religion could hardly be found - an argument on which the wise and fair-minded people of all the nations could agree.

We invite the attention of the just-minded people of all persuasions to another very important testimony of this kind. Just as the Holy Prophet has vouched for the truth of all the prophets of the world, and made it obligatory for a Muslim to believe in all of them, in like manner, all the prophets of the world testify to the truth of the Holy Prophet and exhort their followers to put faith in him. Not a prophet has passed who did not give the glad tidings of the advent of this Great Prophet who was to appear last of all. The fact that Muhammad certified the truth of the preceding prophets, forms a strong basis for international peace and human brotherhood. But to say that all the prophets of the world confirmed the truth of Muhammad’s mission, is a mightier argument still, proving the truth and unity of all religions. the point that some accredited prophet of every clan or clime predicted the advent of the Holy Prophet, deserves serious consideration by every seeker after truth. Muhammad was the confirmer of all the prophets, and this tenet, as we have said, is the basis of world-wide

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peace and amity. The prophets of the world were the confirmers of Muhammad. This, accordingly, forms the holy sanctum of the world of Religion. He who stays without these sacred precincts will soon fall a prey to Godlessness and irreligion.

The Testimony of the People of the Book

"Say: Allah is sufficient as a witness between me and you and whoever has knowledge of the Scripture."13

The sacred scriptures in keeping of other religions have come down from thousands of years, but the Muslims, during the past thirteen centuries and a half, have never endeavoured to learn their languages and give the book a thorough study; although next to the Divine testimony in favour of the Prophet Muhammad comes the evidence of the one who has been given knowledge of the Great Book that was revealed to the prophets in different languages of the world. The present age, there is no gainsaying the fact, is the time when Islam will prevail and predominate over all other religions, and innumerable arguments proving the truth of Islam shall be adduced. This is the age of the fulfilment of the Divine promise: "He might cause it to prevail over all religions."14 This is also the age when the collective evidence of the prophets of different religions, in favour of the Prophet Muhammad, was to be unfolded. With what care and caution the followers of various religions in the past kept their books in concealment and secrecy, is a long, long tale. The instance of an eminent scholar Sir William Jones will illustrate our point. Sir William was the man whose assiduous efforts carried Sanskrit to the Western countries, so that Europe today is publishing, for the Eastern people, rare and obscure editions of the Vedas. Sir William came to the Fort William, Calcutta, as a Judge of the Supreme Court in A.D. 1783. He was the man who founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and thus laid this country under an immense debt of gratitude, which can never be forgotten. It was through the untiring effort of this Society that the ancient editions of the Vedas and other Sanskrit literature saw the light of the day. When Sir William made up his mind to learn the Sanskrit language, no pandit, inspite of a handsome remuneration, could be found throughout the length and breadth of the country who would undertake to teach him. Old records, however, show that two or three pandits secretly went to Sir William to settle the remuneration, etc., but the pandit fraternity got a smell of the affair and they were ex-communicated, all manner of social dealings such as interdining, intermarriage, etc., being cut off with them. Such a strict attitude of the Society naturally threw cold water over the aspirations of the pandits and the difficulty remained unsolved.

Shiv Chandra, the Maharaj of Krishna Nagar, was a friend of Sir William. He too tried his best, but could not procure a man to teach 'the unclean' Sir William. At last a familyless pandit Ram Lochana by name, girded up his loins for the risky job. The Pandit lived alone, a man, 'single chose to live and shunned to wed'. Friends, he had no doubt, but a pay of Rs. 100 a month and the majestic ride of palanquin from his place to Chaurangi, were attractions, which made the Pandit regardless of his friends. Very hard were the conditions which the Pandit imposed upon his student, but Sir William Jones endured all the severe restrictions and did not swerve a jot from his firm resolution. A room on the ground floor of the bungalow was set apart for the purpose. It was, by the Pandit's order, floored with white marble. Meat of any kind was not allowed to be brought even into the precincts of the house. Sir William was to receive instruction on an empty stomach; but occasionally, when he humbly implored the pandit, he was allowed to take a cup of tea. Half an hour before the appointed time, a trooper rode to the Pandit's house to inform him that it was time for the lesson. Then would the pandit condescend to come. An apartment adjacent to the study-room was set apart for the Pandit to remove his pure and sacred robe and put on the one with which he went into the 'Sahib's' presence. A Hindu was appointed to daily consecrate the study-room and its furniture by washing it with Ganges-water. The Pandit was of an irritable temper. He often used to scold Sir William saying that meat-eaters could not learn Sanskrit, for it was not the language of the unclean but of the gods. Sir William Jones brooked all this sarcasm with a smiling face, and at last he did learn Sanskrit. Had there been some one else in Sir William's position, his enthusiasm would certainly have damaged within a very few days.

In a word, we are much indebted to the efforts of the people who brought out the scriptures of the Hindus and the Zoroastrians from their den of obscurity and showed them the light of the day. Although these efforts were primarily of a commercial nature, still we owe gratitude to those scholars for their untiring endeavours and the zeal with which they learnt different languages and published old books. Here too, we find a sign of the Holy Prophet Muhammad's truth. Jesus Christ was, in fact, the 'Morning Star' who brought the happy tidings of the appearance, on this world's firmament, of the mid-day Sun of prophethood. Similarly the literary and scientific researches of his followers have always guided the world to the Prophets' mission and testified to his truth. The indifference of the present day Muslims towards knowledge, the decay of their civilization and culture, and the destructive forces of their mutual feuds and kafir-making, instead of the propagation work or some constructive programme, are really signs of the discomfiture of Islam. But the Prophet Muhammad is not blessed by Muslims alone, as god and His angels also bless his name.15 The Muslims of today are, unfortunately, through their misdeeds, a slur upon the holy name of the Prophet, but the blessings of Allah and His angels are, at the same time, removing all stigmas and clearing the Prophet's character of all false imputations. All the literary and philosophic researches and the volumes published to day in Europe on the study of ancient religions, are full of such arguments that support the truth of Islam. If before the advent of the Holy Prophet the Christian monks and priests were eagerly waiting for the

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appearance of Paraclete (Ahmad), and with their continuous prayers, their devout supplications and invocations of blessings, they were giving the world the glad news of the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, similarly they are, today, evincing his truth through their critical investigations and literary pursuits. It was no small a favour which the Holy Prophet did to Jesus Christ, his mother and their pedigree. And this, in fact, is a humble reciprocity of the same kindness, that the Christians today are spending millions and taking so much pains to (indirectly) serve Islam. It is no wonder, if as a result of their labour, they may see the true light of Islam.

No doubt, the inability of the Muslims to render this service to the cause of their religion, deprived them of heavenly rewards, but it was, at the same time, not without a pre-ordained purpose. Had the Muslims been responsible for bringing these ancient scriptures out of oblivion, the blame of corruption in these books must also have been laid on them. Thus, if on the one hand, the non-Muslim followers of these books tried their best to keep their contents in secrecy, on the other hand, the expositors of their teachings were also non-Muslims and often hostile opponents of Islam. So it was ordained that all the prophecies in those books should remain intact without a shadow of doubt of corruption in them. This is why during the palmy days of Islam, the Vedas, the Dasatir and other ancient scriptures remained in obscurity and the treasures in them were meant to be bestowed on the Muslims in this age of their decline and decay, so that it may prove the fact that Islam has never stood in need of a temporal power for the establishment and recognition of its truth, but that it also possesses such priceless gems, to shed lustre upon the world, which for centuries past were kept buried as a unique Divine gift in the stores of other religions.

A Strong Evidence on the Finality of Prophethood

"And thus We have made you an equitable nation that you may be the bearers of witness to the people and (that) the Apostle may be a bearer of witness to you."

The belief in the advent of a new prophet after the perfection of religion and completion of prophethood is to again rend asunder this solidarity of religions and to falsify the very wisdom of All-Wise God. Such a belief is simply preposterous and is open to various objections. We count three objections to this belief.

The first reflection is on the wisdom of God Himself. He gave such a training to humanity, through a long chain of prophets, that they united into a single whole at an appointed time. After the achievement of this great object, He Himself sent a new prophet to tear away this united body. After thirteen centuries of great sacrifices and strenuous efforts a community of sixty crores of people was prepared to lift the banner of international peace and amity and to enervate the truth of all the prophets of the world; and then suddenly it struck god to raise a new prophet and break this mighty force into pieces. Thus, the parable of the spinning dame narrated in the Qur'an will be more applicable to God Himself.

"And be not like her who unravels her yarn, disintegrating it into pieces after she has spun it strongly."

The second objection to this doctrine is that it negates the very aim of religion. The real aim of religion is to unite mankind into a single whole. And if a prophet can appear even after the achievement of this aim, religion not only loses its real purpose but also amounts to an absurdity. Prophets could certainly come, and have been coming, before the appearance of the Promised Prophet; but when that expected one has appeared about whom all the preceding prophets had prophesied and enjoined upon their followers to put faith in him and assist him, and when religion was made perfect and the world was given the message "This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion." Any new prophet or new religion will undo the whole thing and will cause a great disruption.

The third reason why a prophet cannot be tolerated after the finality of prophethood, is, that it falsifies the mission of the Promised Prophet. If prophethood was to continue as before, there was no sense in raising one prophet for the guidance of the entire mankind. Different prophets could have come to guide their respective people. And the appearance of a prophet among the very followers of Muhammad, whose denial turns a man out of the pale of Islam, is an insult to that great eminence of the Promised

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THE MESSAGE OF ISLAM FOR THE MODERN DAY
by SHAHID AZIZ, M.Sc.

The topic I have chosen for this lecture is 'The Message of Islam for the Modern Day'. However, the title of this lecture is not correct because it implies first that the present generations of humans is inherently different from earlier ones, and second, that Islam is in some way new.

A study of history shows that ever since creation man has faced the same problems. Essentially these problems revolve around human arrogance and human greed. Amongst other things we see these qualities manifested as nationalism, slave-labor wages by multi-national companies in the third World, and strikes by workers who are in a position to hold a nation to ransom for unrealistically high wages at the expense of others. These symptoms of the diseases of greed and arrogance are not new, they have been with us ever since man was put on this planet. One can point to nationalism of the city-states of ancient Italy, to the destructive wars of Athens and Sparta, to the use of labour for building the Pyramids and the Great Wall, and to the use of coercion employed by, for example, the Roman armies to secure high wages.

As for the second point, Islam does not claim to be a new philosophy of life. Islam was taught by all the prophets who preceded the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). It was the way of life preached by the Holy Prophets Abraham, Noah, Jacob, Ishmael, David, and many others, down to the Prophet Jesus. The Holy Qur'an clearly states that Moses was given the Book, and Messengers were sent after him one after another. It commands Muslims to believe in that which was revealed to Abraham, and Ishmael and Isaac, and Jacob and the tribes, and in that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and that which was given to all the other prophets from thier Lord.1

The Holy Qur'an could not have commanded the Muslims to believe in these prophets had their teachings been in any way contradictory to the Holy Qur'an. On the contrary, the Holy Qur'an specifically claims to contain the true teachings of all the prophets.2 Indeed it goes further than claiming simply to contain the teachings of all the previous scriptures. The Holy Qur'an, in its own words, verifies that which went before it, and is a guardian over it.3 So Islam is not only the living embodiment of all previous religions, it is their seal of authenticity. Although the Holy Qur'an does not mention all the religions, it does not mean that prophets not mentioned in the Holy Qur'an are false.

Messengers were sent to every nation and all people4 although only some of these messengers of God have been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an.5 And just as it is incumbent upon Muslims to believe in Moses, Jesus, and David, we believe there were many others of whom we have no knowledge.6 When one pauses to think about it, one realises that, logically, this is the only acceptable position for a religion to take. Islam means submission to Allah, and it signifies peace between fellow men. This being so, in broad terms, a prophet from Allah could not but preach Islam. As all the prophets preached Islam, it is only right and fair that this should be recognised and verified by that way of life which is generally known by the title Islam.

However, because at the time of earlier prophets (may peace be upon them all) the human race had not advanced to a point where one universal message would have been possible or sufficient, there were differences in the Divine guidance revealed to different people. By the time the Holy Prophet Muhammad appeared the stage had been set for the revelation of a universal and eternal message. And because it was to be the universal and ever-lasting message it contained the supreme teachings of all religions. Therefore, because the Divine guidance is now complete there is no further need for prophets or for new scriptures. So the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the Last of the Prophets, and the Holy Qur'an the final message. Islam has no message which is confined to the modern day. It is a compilation of the noblest teachings of all the previous scriptures. Its message is universal and everlasting, and within that message lies the solution to the problems of all humanity for all time to come. This does not, however, mean that Allah no longer communicates with his servants. There is continuing divine guidance in Islam.7 It is mediated to this very day through Divinely-raised reformers called mujaddid and saints known as auliya.8 However, their revelation is subservient to the Holy Qur'an and is directed towards reviving those spiritual qualities which become dormant through a lack of contact with the Divine-elect. One may think of them as an eternal flame which is used by men through the ages to light their spiritual candles.

Let us now turn to the problem humanity faces, and the solution proposed by Islam. The problem is essentially spiritual, although to us its outward forms only are visible. It is man's soul that is sick and needs to be healed. However, just as for a physical disease, both the symptoms and the causes of a serious disease must be treated, so it is for the spiritual sickness. In Islamic philosophy man's spiritual, moral, and physical states are closely linked. Sickness in any one of these is bound to affect the others. The soul, however, is the seed from which human qualities sprout forth. Bad seed gives a bad crop, and a good seed gives a good crop. As I have already said, this sickness manifests itself in arrogance and greed. From these two moral, or rather immoral, qualities spring theories of master races, hording of wealth, extortion, production and sale of pornography, and other evils all too familiar to us.

Islam, on the spiritual level, teaches man to subdue his carnal desires, or in the words of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), to convert the devil within one to Islam. If we do not so, we will be the losers. In Islamic philosophy only those survive spiritually who exhort each other to patience and truth.9 A man's lineage, class, position, or his wealth shall avail him nothing. Man's ego tells him that he is superior because of his culture, language, or living standard. This was the attitude of the founding fathers of America. Settlers in Australia, colonisers of Africa, and the imperial rulers of India had the same idea. It was the Divinely ordained duty, they said, of the European nations to preach the Gospel, and teach the heathen the right way to live.

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This is not Islamic teaching. According to Islam, people have superiority over each other in goodness only. It gives one a little hope for the future of humanity when one finds a statesman of the stature of Edward heath reiterate Islamic teaching, although in a political context. He said: "In so many cases the extent of our influence depends crucially upon the belief of others that we respect their values...not merely in the realm of politics but also of culture and religion." The Holy Qur'an goes further. It declares the whole of humanity to be one single nation. By this one single statement it removes the seeds of nationalism, and superiority based on colour or culture. The very first verse of the Holy Qur'an declares Allah to be Al-Rahman and Al-Rahim. That is to say, that His love and mercy are for the whole humanity, without any distinction between the believer and the unbeliever. That the One God is the God of every nation and each religion should not be a surprise to anyone, for we were created to reflect Divine attributes. Humanity could become a single nation only if there was One God for all the people. It also follows from this that there can only be one final way of life which leads to communion with God, and that way of life, we believe, is Islam. Another reason for nations and communities not being condemned wholesale is that each individual is responsible for his actions. Further, he will be punished or rewarded for each action separately. One slip, one wrong step, or one weakness does not mean that all the good one may have done would be wasted. The only superiority Islam recognises is that based on virtue.

Islam has also abolished superiority based on gender. You will note that I have not said that Islam has made man and woman equal, but rather that Islam does not recognise any superiority based on gender. The reason is that Islam considers man and woman to be two essential parts of the family unit. They are different, and each has its own duties and obligations. In spiritual, religious, economic and social matters, Islam does not draw any distinction between them. In every place where the Holy Qur'an mentions 'man', it mentions also 'woman'. Many verses of the Holy Qur'an begin with: "Say to the believing men, and the believing women...".

As for polygamy, it is only permitted, not made incumbent upon Muslims. It was allowed to counter social consequences of wars which were repeatedly thrust upon the Muslims. We do not have to think back to the two world wars to find the social effects of war. In our own life-time we have seen the effect of 'fighting for peace' in such places as Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. It was to provide for the widows and orphans of such catastrophes that polygamy was allowed.

It is not only in theory that Islam declares an end to superiority based on man-made ideals. It puts this theory into practice in the ritual of its prayer and Pilgrimage, and fasting. Five times a day a man is required to bow to a supreme Being, and to humble himself by prostration. A mosque does not have a special pew for the squire, and there are no reserved places. One stands where there is room, the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the prince and the pauper, stand shoulder to shoulder. In the same way, at the time of the Pilgrimage there is no distinction of any kind. At that time all Muslims are even clothed in the same clothes. This gathering of millions, all of them clothed in two white sheets, each performing the same ritual, not only levels all distinctions but also presents the most magnificent spectacle of universal brotherhood. In addition, for a whole month every year all healthy Muslims are commanded to give up food and drink during the whole day.

8 "Muhammad...is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the prophets." (ibid., 33:40)
9 "This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour to you and chosen for you Islam as a religion." (ibid., 5:3)
10 "Those who say, Our Lord is Allah, then continue in the right way, the angels descend upon them, saying: Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of the Garden which you were promised." (ibid., 41:30)
11 "There will be in my community (i.e., among the Muslims) men who will be spoken to by (God), though they will not be prophets." (Bukhari, 62:6)
12 "Surely Allah will raise up for this people (i.e., the Muslims) in the beginning of every century one who will revive for it its religion." (Kitab al-Sunah, Abu Dawud)
13 Speech at Foulton, Missouri, reported in 'The Times', March 3, 1982.
14 "Mankind is a single nation" (the Holy Qur'an, 2:213)
15 "In the name of Allah, the Rahman, the Rahim." (the Holy Qur'an)

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16 "And whoever commits a sin, commits it only against himself." (ibid., 4:111)
17 "And We have made every man's actions to cling to his neck...thine own soul is sufficient as a reckoner against thee." (ibid., 17:13,14)
18 "And thou wilt see every nation kneeling down. Every nation will be called to its record." (ibid., 45:28)
19 "So he who does an atom's weight of good will see it, and he who does an atom's weight of evil will see it." (ibid., 99:7,8)
20 "And We revealed to Moses' mother..." (ibid., 28:7)
21 "When We revealed to thy mother that which was revealed..." (ibid., 20,38)
22 "And when the angels said: O Mary, surely Allah has chosen thee and purified thee..." (ibid., 3:41)
23 "For men is the benefit of what they earn. And for women is the benefit of what they earn." (ibid., 4:32)
24 "And give women their dowries as a free gift. But if they themselves be pleased to give you a portion thereof, consume it with enjoyment and pleasure." (ibid., 4:4)
THE PROPHET'S MANNERS AND MORALS
from THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD
by MUHAMMAD ALI, M.A., LL.B.

Brief as this treatment of the Prophet's life is, it would be incomplete without a few words as to his manners and morals. When his wife, 'A'ishah, the most privy to his secrets, was questioned about his morals, her reply was, "His morals are the Qur'an." In other words, the highest morals that were depicted in the Holy Qur'an were possessed by him.

Simplicity and sincerity are the keynotes of the Prophet's character. He would do all sorts of things with his own hands. He would milk his own goats, patch his own clothes and mend his own shoes. In person would he dust the house, and he would tie his camel and look after it personally. No work was too low for him. He worked like a labourer in the construction of the mosque, and again in digging a ditch round Medina. In person would he do shopping, not only for his own household, but also for his neighbours or for helpless women. He never despised any work, however humble, notwithstanding the dignity of his position as Prophet and King. He thus demonstrated through personal example that man's calling does not really determine his nobleness or his meanness.

His actions and movements were characterized by homely simplicity. He did not like his companions to stand up on his arrival. Once he forbade them, saying, "Do not stand up for me as do the non-Arabs;" and added that he was a humble creature of God, eating as others eat and sitting as others sit. When a certain man wanted to kiss his hand, he withdrew it remarking that that was the behaviour of the non-Arabs to wards their kings. Even if a slave sent him an invitation he accepted it. He would take his meals in the company of all classes of people, even of slaves. When seated among people, there was nothing about him to make him conspicuous.

The Prophet had a deep love for his friends. While shaking hands with them, he would never be the first to withdraw his hand. He met everybody with a smiling face. A report from Jarir ibn 'Abdullah says that he never saw the Prophet but with a smile on his face.

He would talk freely, never putting on artificial reserve to give himself an air of superiority. He would take up children in arms and nurse them. He disliked backbiting and forbade his visitors to talk ill of any of his friends. He would never take the lead in greeting his friends and shaking hands with them.

In the administration of justice, the Prophet was scrupulously even-handed. Muslims and non-Muslims, friend and foe, were all alike in his eyes. Even before the Call, his impartiality, his honesty and integrity were of household fame, and people would bring their disputes to him to settle. At Medina, the Jews and the idolaters both accepted him as the arbitrator in all their disputes. Notwithstanding the deep-rooted malice of the Jews against Islam, when a case between a Jew and Muslim once came up before him, he decreed in favour of the Jew, regardless of the fact that the Muslim, nay, even perhaps the whole of his tribe, might thereby be alienated. In his dealings with his worst enemies he was always true to the Qur'anic injunction which says: "Let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably; act equitably, that is nearer to piety." (5:8) On his death-bed, immediately before he breathed his last, he had it publicly announced: "If I owe anything to anybody, it may be claimed; if I have offended anybody, he may have his revenge."

In his dealings with others he never placed himself on a higher pedestal. Once while he held the position of a king at Medina, a Jew whom he owed some money came up to him and began to abuse him. 'Umar was enraged, but the Prophet rebuked him, saying: "It would have been meet for thee to have advised both of us - me the debtor to repay the debt with gratitude, and him, the creditor, to demand it in a more becoming manner." And he paid the Jew more than his due. On another occasion when he was out in the wood with his friends, the time for preparation of food came. Everybody was allotted a piece of work, he himself going out to pick up fuel. Spiritual and temporal overlord though he was, he would yet do his share of work like an ordinary man. In his treatment of his servants, he observed the same principle of equality. A report from Anas says that during the ten years that he was in the Prophet's service at Medina, where he ultimately became the master of the whole of Arabia, he was not once scolded by him. He never kept anybody in slavery. As soon as he got a slave, he set him free.

The Prophet's generosity even towards his enemies stands unique in the annals of the world. Abdullah ibn Ubayy, the head of the hypocrites, was a sworn enemy of Islam, and his days and nights were spent in plotting mischief against the Muslims. Yet at his death, the Prophet prayed to the Lord to forgive his and even granted his own spirit to ensnroud his body. The Meccans, who had all along subjected him and his friends to the most barbarous tortures, were not only awarded a general amnesty but were let off even without a reproach. Twenty long years of persecutions and warfare were absolutely forgiven and forgotten. "The magnanimity with which Muhammad treated a people who had so long hated and rejected him is worthy of all admiration," says Muir. The fact is that no other example is met with in history of such magnanimous forgiveness of invertebrate enemies, who had shed innocent blood, who had shown no pity for helpless men, women and children, who had exerted themselves to their utmost to kill the Prophet and to annihilate the Muslims. The prisoners of war were almost always set free even without demanding a ransom. It was only in the case of the prisoners of Badr that ransom was demanded; after that, hundreds of prisoners and in one case, in the battle with Hawazin, as many as six thousand, were released without taking a price as ransom. At the battle of Uhud, when he was wounded and fell down, a comrade asked him to curse his persecutors. His reply was: "I have not been sent to curse but as an inviter to good and mercy. O Lord! guide my people, for they know not." Once a Bedouin pulled him and threw his wrap round his neck. When asked why he should not be repaid in the same coin, he pleaded that he (the Prophet) never returned evil for evil.

In charity the Prophet was simply unapproached. He never gave a flat
refusal to a beggar, he would feed the hungry, himself going without food. He never kept any money in his possession. While on his death-bed, he sent for whatever there was in his house and distributed it among the poor. Even for the dumb creatures of God his heart overflowed with mercy. He spoke of one who drew water from a well to quench the thirst of a dog as having earned paradise with this act of kindness. He spoke of a deceased woman that she was undergoing punishment because she would tie up her cat and keep it hungry. From his earliest days he had a deep sympathy for widows and orphans, the poor and the helpless. He would ever stand by the oppressed. He vindicated the rights of women over men, of slaves over their masters, of the ruled over the rulers, and of the subjects over the king. Negro slaves were accorded the same position of honour as the Quraish leaders. He was the champion of the oppressed and the ill-treated ones. He was very fond of children, and while walking along he would pat and stroke those whom he met on the way. Without fail he would visit the sick to enquire after their health and console them. He would also accompany a funeral.

Humble and meek in the highest degree, he had yet the courage of the bravest of men. Never for a moment did he harbour fear of his enemies. Even when plots to take his life were being hatched in Mecca, he moved about fearlessly day and night. He told all his friends to emigrate from Mecca, himself remaining almost alone among infuriated enemies. With his pursuers at the mouth of the cave in which he had hidden himself, he could yet console his companion, saying, "Allah is with us." On the field of Uhud when the whole of his army fell into a trap, he shouted aloud, regardless of all danger to his own person, to rally the confused soldiers. In the battle of Hunain when the Muslim rank and file took to flight, he advanced alone towards the enemy, calling aloud, "I am the Prophet." When one night a raid was suspected, he was the first to reconnoiter the outskirts of Medina, riding his horse without saddling it. On a certain journey, while resting under a tree all alone, an enemy came upon him, and unsheathing his sword shouted out: "Who can save thee now from my hands?" Calmly the Prophet replied,

Prophet replied, "Allah." And the next moment the same sword was in the Prophet's hand who put to his enemy the same question, on which he assumed a tone of abject humility, and the Prophet let him go.

The Prophet's integrity and sincerity were of universal fame throughout Arabia. His worst enemies had often to confess that he had never told a lie. When he once pledged his word, he kept it under the most trying conditions and even at a heavy cost. He faithfully observed the truce made at Hudaybiya, though he had to refuse shelter to Muslims escaping from the persecutions of the Meccans. His biographers are all at one in their admiration of his unflinching fortitude and unswerving steadfastness. Despair and despondency were unknown to him. Hemmed in as he was on all sides by a gloomy prospect and severe opposition, his faith in the ultimate triumph of the truth was never for one moment shaken.

THE PROMISED MESSIAH SPEAKS: Cont.

that these names are means of salvation. As abd implies that a person so named should refrain every kind of freedom and self direction and should be completely obedient to his master, therefore the seekers after truth have been urged that if they wish to attain salvation they should adapt themselves to this condition. This verse has the same connotation as the verse: Announce: If you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will then love you and forgive you your sins. (3:32) Perfect following demands that devotion and full obedience which is conveyed in the expression abd. The verse: Say: O my servants; means in effect: Say: O my followers, who are involved in sins, despair not of the mercy of Allah, for Allah, through the blessing of your following me, will forgive all your sins. If the word servants in this verse is construed as meaning the servants of Allah, the purport of the verse is perverted for it cannot be true that God Almighty would forgive all idol worshippers and disbelievers without their believing in and following the Holy Prophet. Such construction would be contrary to the express directions of the Holy Qur'an.

It should be remembered that the purport of the verse is that those who become the sincere servants of the Holy Prophet will be bestowed the light and the faith and the love and the passion which will deliver them from all that is beside Allah, and they will be freed from sins and will be bestowed a pure life in this world and they will be delivered from the narrow and dark graves of human passions. This is indicated by the Hadith: I am the resurrector on whose footsteps people will be raised up. The Holy Qur'an is full of the idiom that the world had died and that God Almighty revived it through sending the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, as is said: Know that Allah revives the earth after its death (57:18). In the same way, it is said with reference to the companions of the Holy Prophet: God helped them with the holy spirit (58:23). The help of the holy spirit is that it revives the hearts and delivers from spiritual death and bestows pure faculties and pure senses and pure knowledge and carries a person to the station of nearness to God through certain knowledge and conclusive arguments. This knowledge on which salvation depends cannot be obtained without that life which is bestowed through the holy spirit. The Holy Qur'an affirms it emphatically that that spiritual life is obtained only through following the Holy Prophet and that all those who repudiate obedience to him are dead and do not possess that life. Spiritual life means the intellectual and active faculties which are brought to life by the holy spirit. The Holy Qur'an shows that the commandments of God to which He desires man to conform are hundred. In consonance with this the wings of Gabriel bearing these six hundred commandments, it cannot hatch the baby completely lost in Allah. The reality of man has the capacity of six hundred eggs. A person whose six hundred eggs are covered by the six hundred wings of the capacity of Gabriel is the perfect man whose spiritual birth is perfect and whose life is perfect. If one looks with care one finds that the spiritual issue of the egg of humanness which by the blessing of the following of the Holy Prophet were born to the Holy spirit, are more perfect and complete than the spiritual children of all the other Prophets. This is indicated by the verse: You are the best of people who have been raised up for the reform of mankind. (3:111) (Ayeena-i-Komalat-i-Islam, pp. 186-197).
ISLAMIC WAY OF LIFE
ITS SOCIAL BASIS
from AS I SEE IT
by Abul Hashim

Life, when it means a way of living, is an attitude of the mind which determines individual and collective behaviour of man. In its ultimate analysis, this attitude of the mind is a faith born out of traditions or intuitive appreciation of being and becoming of man. Islamic way of life must therefore, be necessarily moulded according to the spirit of the fundamental articles of faith in Islam. These are faith in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers and in the Last Day. According to these fundamentals, mental disposition determining the Islamic way of life must be one of absolute submission to the will of Allah, conscious of its duties and obligations to its own self and to others. An Islamic mind is actively opposed to zulm or transgression, for according to Islam, an act of zulm either against one's own self or against others is a sin. Islamic life is, thus, a life dedicated to jihad or striving in the way of Allah against all manner of zulm or transgression for the achievement of peace, prosperity and progress for each and all here and in the hereafter. We have it in Al-Qur'an, "Strive in the way of Allah with your wealth and yourself, that is best for you if you knew."

Concept of religion in Islam is fundamentally different from the general concept of religion now prevalent in the world. Religion is now defined merely as a theology or a science treating of the existence of God and His relation with man. Man's relation with man and other creatures of Allah is omitted from the scope and jurisdiction of religion. It is obvious that according to this concept, religion is a matter of one's private and personal faith and contemplation having little or no bearing upon one's conduct as an active member of a society. Islam is not a system of dogmatic faith and worship, but a comprehensive code of life embracing and governing all aspects of human existence. According to Islam, life in the hereafter shall be handsome if life here in this world of matter, form, time and space be handsome. Life in this world is the root and the life of the other world is the fruit. Al-Qur'an interprets fundamentals of human nature and on these fundamentals prescribes a super-structure of a social-order congenial to harmonious growth and development of human values. As a practical step towards this end, the Book of Islam gives a system of law for adjusting human relations for peaceful co-existence. The social laws of Al-Qur'an do not ignore the needs of man's material existence, but promote material welfare seasoned with moral and spiritual values. Islamic view of the material world is so realistic that it can be aptly called theistic materialism as distinct from and opposed to atheistic materialism of the West which like the one-eyed Demon of Scriptures contemptuously ignores spiritual values.

Spiritual value of Islamic social order is contained in the Qur'anic verse, "And then your Rab, the Creator, Sustainer and Evolver of the Universe, to His Angels said, Verily I am sending a vicegerent on earth." The Angels wondered why Allah should contemplate creation of man, a creature who would shed blood on earth. Allah created man and sent him on earth as vicegerent of his Rabubiat or attributes of creation, sustenance and evolution, charged with the responsibility of sustaining all creatures of the earth according to His principles of sustenance. Faithful performance of this sublime duty is, according to Islam, the true worship of Allah. The Holy Prophet of Islam said, "Adorn yourselves with Divine attributes." In order that man may perform his duties with justice Al-Qur'an prescribes a mode of formal worship or practice of submission to the will of Allah, to equip himself with spiritual values necessary for the service of his fellow-creatures. Fulfilment of this purpose of man's creation is the end and the mode of formal worship is a means to that end. For this purpose, Islamic order of existence divides man's rights and duties into two specific categories. These are Huqquq Allah or rights of Allah, and Huqquq-Ibad or rights of slaves or creatures of Allah.

Huqquq-Ibad is the sine-qua-non of Islamic social order. He who neglects his duties to his fellow creatures and pretends to perform his duties to Allah is condemned in Al-Qur'an as a prayer-performer. Al-Qur'an tells us that accrued are those prayer-performers who are inimical to orphans, do not provide food for the needy and are indifferent to their neighbours. In Islam there is no such thing as charity which is the luxury of the rich. Service to Allah's creatures according to Islam is not an act of charity but is a duty divinely imposed upon man, non-performance of which leads to grievous consequences both here and in the hereafter. History bears testimony to the fact that wanton disregard of and negligence to duties to fellow-creatures by those in authority has been through ages the cause of fall of mighty nations of the world. Islamic social order - its economic, political and legal system zealously guards Huqquq-Ibad. Hazrat Abu Bakr, the Truthful, in his inaugural address unequivocally declared, "the weakest shall be the strongest in my regime so long as his just rights are not vindicated, and the strongest shall be the weakest so long as he does not discharges his obligations."

Social democracy in Islam means just and equitable distribution of rights and privileges of a society and state. Any social super-structure in a given society suitable for implementing this spirit of democracy is Islamic. The spirit is eternal, but the form of social machinery necessary for implementing the spirit of democracy changes with varying material conditions of existence. To hold fast to the outer form in colossal ignorance of the spirit is un-Islamic. Fundamentals of Islamic social order were as perfectly implemented by the faithful Caliphs of Islam as they could be in the context of the then prevailing conditions of life.

Form-worship or rigid adherence to age-worn forms thoroughly kills the spirit and it has been the plague of all the ages. This form-worship by the Pharisees of Judaism crucified at Calvary Jesus Christ, the Spirit of purity. This form-worship by the Pharisees of Islam destroyed the spirit of Medina and eventually created sultanates of Damascus, Baghdad, Granada and Delhi. Reconstruction of super-structure of Islamic social order in the context of modern material environments of man through the

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process of ‘ijtiham’ for unqualified implementation of the spirit of Islam is the panacea of all the ills of the muddled world of today. It does not require much intuition to see that equality and brotherhood of man is the corner-stone of Islamic social order. Brotherhood of man in Islam is not a fashionable or convenient theory but is a reality. An unbrotherly behaviour with one's fellow-creatures is, according to Islam, a crime and a sin. It is a gross misrepresentation of the spirit of Islamic brotherhood of man to think that regular payment of Zakat is the only obligation and that one is entitled to appropriate the residue of one's assets in any manner one likes after payment of Zakat. In Islam one possesses his material resources as a trust for his own sustenance and for the sustenance of one's fellow brothers who may be needy and this trust is not absolute mandatory. While defining virtue Al-Qur'an tells us that virtue lies not in turning one's face towards the East or towards the West but in giving away one's wealth in love of Allah to kins, orphans, the needy, the wayfarers, to those who ask and for liberation of slaves and in regular payment of Zakat. In Islam one is accountable to God and man as to how one earns and spends one's assets. Any anti-social way either of earning or of spending is severely condemned. In order that a society or a state may, with some justification style itself as Islamic it must see that its civic life is saturated with the spirit of real brotherhood of man. Equality of man does not, however, mean equal abilities but it means equal opportunities for self-determination. 'Full many a flower is born to blush unseen and waste its sweetness in the desert air' only in a social order which usurps all the rights and opportunities for a privileged class and treats the rest as inferiors destined to take eternal rest in 'dark unfathomed caves of oceans' unseen and unheard. One born with high talents for music, if offered proper opportunities, may have the eminence of a Tansen or a Beethoven. He who has the possibilities of achieving greatness as a musician, if obliged due to want of opportunity to spend his life as a clerk in some commercial office, will ultimately find his place in the dustbin of time. Freedom according to Islam, is the right and opportunity to rise up to the highest level of ones own genius. Any society and state which may with some justification style itself as Islamic must see that every man and woman under its charge has rights of and opportunities for the fulfilment of his or her highest nature. Al-Qur'an says that Allah created man in the best of moulds and blessed him with boundless possibilities. Everybody believes that these holy personages never made a false statement for some worldly end or voracity. They were above all men, so much so, that many of them were worshipped as gods or incarnations or sons of God. They infused life into millions of dead people and their followers do not name them before purifying themselves. These great souls have prophesied the advent of a glorious prophet. Belief in this prophet is thus obedience and submission to the will of their own prophets and rishis. It is really a strange coincidence and must be well considered by followers of all the religions and even by those who don't believe in a religion - how all the prophets living in remote corners of the world and far away from Arabia, thousands of years before, gave the glad news of the advent of a glorious prophet. And it was not, like the prophecies of Christ, just a piece of news, but it had arguments and clear evidence to support it. The Divine Hand was also seen moving in its favour and extraordinary celestial triumphs, which are beyond human power, accompanied it. Let all the wise men and sages of the world ponder over this. A man ignorant of letters and worldly sciences, knowing nothing of other religions, makes a declaration which none ever before him made, and today the expounders of religion evince his truth and verify what he said centuries before. Today it is proved that prophets have been appearing one after another like the links of a chain. Again it is seen that various prophets appearing in different countries, addressing different nations and speaking in different dialects made a prophecy, thousands of years before, of the coming of a prophet who will be the promised one of all nation. The world knows that the said prophet with all his accompanying signs did appear. And later it must also be considered that he brought a message which is unique in establishing peace and fellow feelings among all sections of humanity and is the only solution of the present world problems.

Some Characteristics of the Prophecies about the Holy Prophet

MIRACLES AND PROPHECIES LIKE THE MISSIONS OF THE PROPHETS, HAVE LASTED

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WAS JESUS BORN ON DECEMBER 25th
by ARFAQUE MALIK

The twenty fifth day of December, being the Christmas Day, is celebrated by millions all over the world as the birthday of Jesus Christ. Was he born on the twenty-fifth of December? “No one knows exactly when Jesus was born.”1 “It is impossible to determine the exact date for the birth of Christ, either from the evidence of the Gospels or from any sound tradition.”2

Did the disciples, who knew Jesus personally, celebrate his birthday (i.e. Christmas)3 on the 25th of December? “Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the church...” The first evidence of the feast is from Egypt.”4 “The early Church had no fixed date for Christmas; by some it was observed in May, by some in January, and by others combined with Epiphany.”5 We learn from the Oxford Dictionary of Christian Church that “through speculation as to time of year of Christ’s birth dates from the early 3rd century... the celebration of the anniversary does not appear to have been general till the 4th century.”6 The Encyclopaedia Americana says: “Christmas... was, according to many authorities, not celebrated in the first centuries of the Christian Church, as the Christian usage in general was to celebrate the death of remarkable persons rather than their birth... A feast was established in the memory of this event in fourth century. In the fifth century the Western Church ordered it to be celebrated forever on the Old Roman feast of the birth of Sol, as no certain knowledge of the day of Christ’s birth existed.”7 Thus there is “no authoritative tradition as to the day or month of Christ’s birth.”8 The above historical authorities led us, as they have led Christian scholars, to conclude that the “Christmas was not observed by Christians for the first two or three hundred years... It got into the Western, or Roman, Church by the fourth century A.D. It was not until the fifth century that Roman Church ordered it to be celebrated as an official Christian festival.”9

“Most of the Christmas customs now prevailing... are not genuine Christian customs, but heathen customs which have been absorbed or tolerated by the Church... The Saturnalia in Rome provided the model for the most of the merry customs of the Christmas time.”10 The pagan customs were so deeply entrenched in the daily life that the Christian influence could not get rid of them. In fact “the pagan festival with its riots and merry making was so popular that Christians were glad of an excuse to combine its celebration with little change in spirit and manner. Christian preachers of the West and the Near East protested against the unseemly frivolity with which Christ’s birthday was celebrated, while Christians of Mesopotamia accused their Western brethren of idolatry and Sun worship for adopting this pagan festival.”11 As to the origin of the date the World Book Encyclopaedia says: “In A.D. 354 Bishop Liberius of Rome ordered the people to celebrate on December 25th. He probably chose the date because the people of Rome already observed it as the Feast of Saturn, celebrating the birthday of the Sun.”12 However, the choice of the 25th of December in the West was chiefly due to the following consideration: “The winter solstice was regarded as the birthday of the Sun and at Rome a pagan festival of Sol invictus was introduced by the emperor Aurelian on the 25th of December, 274. The church unable to stamp out this popular festival spiritualized it as the feast of the Nativity of the Sun of Righteousness.”13 According to the Colliers Encyclopaedia “The choice of December 25th was probably influenced by the fact that on this day the Romans celebrated the Mithraic Feast of the Sun God (natalis solis invicti) and that the Saturnalia also came at this time.”14

We have seen from the above evidence that Christmas has its roots in paganism and certainly did not originate in Christianity. The next question was Jesus born on the 25th of December? “There is no historical evidence as to the day or month of Christ’s birth and some uncertainty exists as to the actual year. St. Clements of Alexsandria refers to calculations which placed it in April or May. Some such dates would better accord with the Gospel statement that shepherds were watching their flocks by night than 25 December which falls in the cold and rainy season in the hill country of Judaea.”15

The 25th of December could not have been the birth of Jesus. The Bible shows that at the time “shepherds were still in the fields at night.” As the Encyclopaedia Britannica (1907, vol. V, p. 611) acknowledges, they would not have been there in the cold, rainy season of winter (Luke 2:8-12).”16 Accordingly,

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1 The World Book Encyclopaedia (1979) vol. 3
3 Christmas in Old English was called ‘Christes Maesse’ which means ‘the mass of Christ’, later shortened to ‘Christ-Mass’ and eventually became Christmas.
4 The Catholic Encyclopaedia 1908 vol. III p. 724
5 Everyman’s Encyclopaedia, 1978 vol. 3 p. 299
8 Chambers Encyclopaedia 1967 vol. 3 p. 538
13 Chambers Encyclopaedia (1967) vol. 3 p. 528
15 Chambers Encyclopaedia (1955) vol. 3 London p. 540
17 Luke 2:8
18 Herbert W. Armstrong, Supra; p. 9.
19 Adam Clarke’s Commentary, Vol. 5, N.Y. p. 370
20 Adam Clarke’s Commentary (vol. 5, N.Y.) p. 370; quoted by Herbert W. Armstrong in “The Plain Truth About Christmas,” Worldwide Church of God, California, p. 11

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WAS JESUS BORN ON DEC 25th

Jesus was not born in the Winter season. We have seen that when he was born “there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.”

Could this have occurred in Judaea in the month of December? “The shepherds always brought their flocks from the mountainsides and fields and corralled them not later than October 15th, to protect them from the cold, rainy season that followed that date. Notice that the Bible itself proves, in Songs of Solomon 2:11 and Ezra 10:9,13 that Winter was a rainy season not permitting shepherds to abide in open fields at night.”

We read in Adam Clarke’s commentary that it was ancient custom among Jews to send their sheep to fields and deserts about the passover in early Spring and then home at commencement of the first rain. The same authority states: “During the time they were out, the shepherds watched them night and day. As the first rain began early in the month of Marchesvan, which answers to part of our October and November (begins sometime in October), we find that the sheep were kept in the open country during the whole summer. And, as these shepherds had not yet brought home their flocks, it is a presumptive argument that October had not yet commenced, and that, consequently, our Lord was not born on the 25th of December, when no flocks were out in the fields; nor could He have been born later than September, as the flocks were still in the fields by night. On this very ground, the nativity in December should be given up.”

The facts produced in these pages may shock those who have faithfully believed that Jesus was born on the 25th of December, but they are plain facts of history.

To conclude we shall summarize below the conclusions we have reached:

1) Jesus was not born on the 25th of December.
2) The early Christians were neither aware of the ‘25th December’ nor celebrated the Christmas.
3) The festival was borrowed from pagans and spiritualized as Christmas in the fourth and fifth centuries.

4) As Jesus was born at a time when shepherds were abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night, Jesus could not have been born later than September.

TWO KINDS OF TESTIMONY

only for a time, and have been confined only to the respective scriptures of a people. Thus the prophecies about Jesus Christ and Elijah are found only in the books of the Israelite prophets and in no other religious scripture. If per chance any reference about them is to be met with in the scriptures of other religions, they have no value, for, according to the Christian belief divine revelation was granted only to the Israelite prophets. This is why we find, in the Gospels, prophecies about Christ made by the Israelite prophets only and by none else. Of all the prophets, it was the Prophet Muhammad alone, about whom prophecies were made in all Divine books by all prophets.

Another characteristic of the prophecies made about the Holy Prophet is that we find in them frequent mention of the Divine power, celestial triumphs and testimonies of science and learning; whereas in the case of other prophets mention is made only of petty facts relating to everyday life. In the case of Muhammad, however, it is recorded that even impossibilities will be made possible for him and on many occasions his advent is spoken of as the appearance of God Himself. Things that are impossible for man are more than possible for God, and as the Holy Prophet was given Divine help at every step and God’s Hand was working in his favour, his appearance is metaphorically called the appearance of the Lord.

Some important Conventions about Prophecies

Students of every science and art have to bear in mind certain conventions and things agreed upon relating to the art which they want to study or acquire. An artist is at liberty to paint a miles long journey just on a scrap of paper, to describe on a smooth surface not only its length or breadth but also its height and depth. A sculptor can make a statue without colour or movement. We are generally familiar with such conventions and so we do not object to them, otherwise our case would have been just like those Americans who objected why a photograph had only one side of the face. There are also some accidental conventions just as a sculptor in order to raise his statue, gives it a support. Similarly, there are certain conventions regarding prophecies. We count a few of them:

1) Prophecy the term is used in theology in its strict sense it means the foreknowledge and fore-telling of future event though it may sometimes applied to past and present hidden things which can not be known by the natural light of reason. Its knowledge must be supernatural and infused by God. It is a Divine light by which God reveals things beyond the natural power of created intelligence. Prophecy is given primarily for the good of others. No doubt text is not always clear and explicit. the prophecies that are to be met with in the Bible, whether they be for Christ or for any other personality, are without any details. Some are full of ambiguity and require interpretation and comment. The result is that their meanings remain hidden from the people of ordinary intelligence, and the learned one’s also cannot understand them except with some special context or after the actual appearance and the personal interpretation of the promised prophet for whom they are meant. And according to the Christian view, sometimes even the man for whom the prophecies are made, cannot understand their meaning. Thus John denied being Elijah, while Christ clearly stated that none but John was the promised Elijah.

Both Ramchandra and Parsurama were incarnates of God as believed by Hindus yet not recognising each other they quarrelled.

2) The Name used in prophecies are generally not proper names but attributive names. This is because, in the eyes of god the value of a man is according to his qualities, personal merits and attributes and not on continued on next page
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cont.

account of his personal name. God multiplies the means of transmitting these revelations, at one time he makes use of words at another of figures, images, similitudes, and again of both words and symbols together. We find the proper name of Christ was Jesus, but there is not a single prophecy in the preceding scriptures in which mention of Jesus is made. No doubt there are prophecies making a mention of Messiah and this is because Messiah was the qualifying name of Jesus, the Christian prophet.

3) In the language of prophecies a day sometimes means a year and sometimes one thousand years of our human calculation. “And Surely a day with thy Lord is as a thousand years of what you reckon.” Among the Hindus, as well, the year of Brahma and Pitrais are different in duration than that of the common people.

4) A prophecy is interpreted just as a dream. In Vedic term it is raahasya or a secret. Words have their usual literal meanings, but they can also be used figuratively. As head had its literal meaning as a part of the body, but is applied to head of a school, of an army, the force of stream of water, stalk of grain, hammer, club etc. A person may be said a keystone of an arch or a dome figuratively.

5) Not only the names of individuals but the names of countries and places that are mentioned in prophecies are also attributive. For instance Jerusalem’ stands for Makkah and even for Islam itself.

Similarly Ayodhya (the unconquerable) in the Veda stands for Makkah, where war is forbidden and not for the Indian Ayodhya which had always been under the sway of some domination. The almon branch shown to Jeremiah is not shown for itself, it is intended solely to represent by its name ‘Shaqed’ (vigilant) the Divine watchfulness, which will not allow the word of God to be unfulfilled.

It is wrong to say that Isaiah believed that at the end of time the hill Zion would physically surpass all the mountains on the earth.

6) If in some revealed books we come across a double-faced prophecy about the same individual we shall have to take only one of the two aspects. As these books have been in the hands of non-Muslims, it is quite possible that they might have tampered with them in order to make the prophecy ambiguous. Moreover it is against the truth of the book itself that it may give two contrary facts about one and the same individual.

7) Any part of a prophecy which is contrary to reason and real knowledge will not be worth considering.

6 Ibid., 1. 1.
7 Aryas are the sons of God, Nirukta, VI:26
8 Atharva Veda, XIX:71, I. Mother Veda is the nourisher of Brahmans. Kashatryan and Vaishya.
9 Mr. John S. Hayland’s ‘A Brief History of Civilization’ p 72
10 The Qur’an XVII, 96
11 Encyclopaedia Britannica 11th ed. p. 898
12 The Qur’an III: 80
13 Ibid., See No 1
14 Ibid., IX:33
15 “God and His angles bless the Prophet; O You who believe! call for (Divine) blessings on him and salute him with a (becoming) salutation.” The Qur’an, XXXII:56.
16 In the birth role of Jesus Matthew (1:1-7) gives names of women like Thamor, Rahab, Ruth, and Bath Sheba. They were prostitutes and harlots. See Gen. 38:24, IChr. 2:4, but 2:4, 16, 17, 3:1, 10, 14, 4:12 2 Sami 11:1-12. The Qur’an on the others hand speaks of Mary as “O sister of Aaron! thy father was not a bad man, nor was thy mother an unchaste woman.” XIX:28 According to the Holy Qur’an, Mary descended from the family of Aaron, which was very well-known for its piety and devoutness.

8) Parts of prophecies which are full of myths will be accepted only so far as they are corroborated by real facts.
9) The prophecy of the second advent of a prophet would mean the appearance of some one else in the spirit and power of that Prophet. This is how Christ explains the second advent of Elias. Similarly Krishna says, “We make ourselves appear through someone else as need be.”
10) In prophecies, the name, place and the years of the advent of the man about whom a prophecy is made is not clearly stated, because, belief in the prophets is more or less of the nature of the ‘belief in the unseen’. Had the prophethood of every prophet been quite clear and manafest, there would have been no reward for accepting them, as there is no reward for believing in the Sun which every eye can clearly see. Secondy, deep thinking in religion and investigation of hidden secrets, sharpens a man’s intellect, and this is exactly what god wants the rational beings to do. Thirdly, there have always been different metaphors, similes and figurative speeches in different languages, and they have been adding to the ambiguity of prophecies. Moreover, there being no record of geographical and historical conditions of various countries, it is difficult, in spite of research work, to find out the man about whom a prophecy was made.

Lastly, there is another point also which is greatly responsible for the ambiguity in prophecies - i.e., the

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hostility which the followers of a book bear towards other religions and tribes. A people who consider themselves the chosen ones and children of God will never tolerate, in spite of a clear prophecy in their book, to evince the truth of another prophet. Thus the Israelites refused to believe in the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) because he was a non-Israelite. Rather they tried their best to tamper with the prophecies about the advent of the Holy Prophet and made them obscure.

thus, just as Nature has kept most of its beauties hidden lest they may lose their charm and lustre, in like manner, these gems of prophecies are also kept hidden in the shells of pearl-oysters to keep them secure from the ravages of time just as shells are secure in the tumultuous waves of the sea.

THE MESSAGE OF ISLAM FOR THE MODERN DAY cont.

Such abstinence not only helps man to subdue the animal within him but causes the well-to-do to feel the pangs of hunger which, in the normal course of events, are a poor man's lot only.

The other sickness in the human soul is that of greed. Arrogance leads to war, and greed leads to exploitation. Islam counters not only arrogance and greed, but also their consequences. It is a practical religion which recognise that in many instances human beings fail to live up to the ideals they are taught. That is why Islam went so far as to lay down rules for conduct of way and treatment of prisoners of war. Today these rules are generally known as the Geneva Convention. Islam counters greed in a similar manner.

However, this is not confined to greed at an individual level. National greed is no less damaging than individual greed to mankind. A deliberate policy by a country, or group of countries, to buy raw material at knocked-down prices, and then sell manufactured products made from the same raw material back to the producer at exorbitant prices does no credit to these countries. Neither do attempts to deprive the, so called, Third World of advanced technology on the pretext that such technology will lead to a spread of advanced destructive weapons. Those countries which have themselves stockpiled enough destructive weapons to destroy the earth many times over, are the ones which are inhibiting spread of advanced technology to those who most need it. Indeed, these are the countries who, at the cost of their programmes to help the old, the sick, and the poor, have announced massive increases in their defence budgets. Not content with conventional weapons, atomic bombs, hydrogen bombs, Tridents, Cruisers, and many other instruments of horror and destruction, these powers have now undertaken the most terrifying programme of expansion of their ability to wage Chemical warfare. All this is being carried out in the name of freedom. When we look at the supporters of Afghanistan, So. Africa and El Salvador, we realise that behind the smoke-screen of fighting for freedom lies the real reason, which is extension of political power, and influence of one power on another.

Behind this pursuit of national interest by a government lies the collective will of a nation. The national, or the collective, greed is a summation of the greed of the people of a country. This is why Islam lays so much emphasis on eliminating individual greed. Once this is eliminated, so too is unscrupulous pursuit of the so-called national interest at the cost of the rest of mankind. The only way to overcome human greed is to instil in man a desire for selfless service of humanity.

As with all other problems, Islam deals with greed at both the spiritual and physical levels. It gives service of humanity the status of an article of faith. It is given the same status as belief in the Unseen (God), revelation to the Holy Prophet Muhammad and all preceding prophets, and the Hereafter. Indeed, it gives service of humanity the same status as prayer. It goes so far as to say that praying shall avail a man nothing unless it is accompanied by service of humanity. The reason for laying so much emphasis on service of humanity is that Islam imposes only two obligations upon man. The first is to recognise the uniqueness of his Maker and to serve Him. The second is to serve humanity. Further, service to humanity should be selfless and without show. So strict is the Holy Qur'an on this point that it equates service of humanity for show with disbelief in Allah. Islam also commands that, when doing good, no distinction is to be made between Muslims and non-Muslims. The object of the Qur'anic teaching is to knit together mankind into a bond of love and brotherhood, and selfless service of humanity without distinction of race, colour, creed, or religion, is the first step towards this eventual goal.

Islam has a very broad definition of service to humanity. A kind word, advice to someone with a problem, calling man to the service of his Maker and fellow man, and refraining from sin, are all within the definition of service to humanity. Islam calls the service of humanity struggling in

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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
Taught to Man by God
Dr. Zahid Aziz, England

HOW THINGS ARE INVENTED

Firstly, it has to be made clear as to what science is, how scientific knowledge is arrived at, and how things are invented. The basic principle behind scientific progress is observation of various natural phenomena, followed by the use of reason to draw conclusions and do experiments. The Holy Qur'an says:

"And He has given you hearing and sight and minds - little thanks do you give." (32:9)

The basis of all inventions, therefore, is observation and exploitation of the already existing laws of nature, which are not made by man. In the invention of the aeroplane, for example, man first observed the flight of birds and tried to copy it exactly, i.e. he attempted to follow a law of nature that he thought applied to him as well. That approach having failed (because man's muscle-to-weight ratio is much smaller than birds), man investigated and exploited the laws of aerodynamics to design aircraft wings enabling a powered machine to fly. Now, the design and shape of such wings, which is still under research, depends on the laws of aerodynamics which, of course, were not devised by man.

Such is the case with all other inventions, that man does not invent something in an arbitrary manner, in just any way he likes or chooses, but he is utterly and totally bound by laws of nature. To record sound or pictures, man must use tapes or films made of certain materials that have been discovered as having the appropriate chemical properties. To distribute electrical power, so far as present knowledge goes, wires made of copper are to be used, not by man's choice, but because nature (or God, in our terms) endowed this metal with the appropriate property.

We note further that this complete and absolute dependence of man (and not control by him) upon nature, and upon those particular laws of nature he just happens to have discovered, shapes the course of history. An important instance, so far as Muslims are concerned, is that since the middle of the 19th century C.E. the West happened to make and exploit such discoveries as led to a technology heavily dependent on crude oil. It also so happened that this raw material was later found in abundance in some Muslim countries. This has led to a complete turn-around in the Muslims' economic and political fortunes, and marks a turning point in history. It could quite conceivably have happened that Western technology could have evolved on different lines, not being so dependent on oil.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"And We have created for them the like of the ships, in which they will ride." (36:42)

The making of the ships of the future (the 'like' of the ships that then existed) is here ascribed to God because of man's dependence on His laws of nature for inventing them things.

SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES

Having elucidated that, for making all his wondrous inventions, man is bound by the laws of nature that he happens to discover, we turn to a very crucial and interesting aspect of how scientific discoveries are actually made. There are numerous key discoveries in science that were made purely by accident. Many of the important discoveries in electrical science during the 19th century, which are quite fundamental, were accidental. As a voluminous work on the history of science says of this field in that period:

"It is interesting to reflect on the sequence of apparently accidental discoveries that led to this stage of knowledge." (Science in History, by J. D. Bernal, London 1965, pp. 437)

These 'accidental' discoveries were of the kind where, while a scientist was doing some particular experiment, an unplanned combination of circumstances caused something unexpected to happen, to which his attention happened to turn. For instance, the crucial discovery of a relation between electricity and magnetism was made accidently by Oersted, who just happened to have a compass placed near an electric current, and noticed that the compass needle got deflected by the current.

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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
cont.

Many examples are there in science of ‘accidental’ discoveries, and it confirms the Qur’anic verse:
“He (God) taught Adam (man) all the names (i.e. knowledge).” (2:31)
These incidents show that scientific advances are not made in a manner planned and pre-determined by man, and are not under man’s control. Hence the truth of the verse quoted above.

ATOMIC PHYSICS
ANOTHER SERIES OF ACCIDENTS

In the early 1890’s, just around the time Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had laid claim to be the Divinely-ordained Reformer in Islam, what is known now as ‘classical’ physics reigned supreme. It was believed that the existing physical sciences could explain more or less all the natural phenomena. Under this Western influence, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (d. 1898), the famous Muslim figure of India, suggested that prayer or supplication to God about any matter could not be fulfilled in an objective manner because such fulfilment would interfere with the fixed laws of nature and cause chaos in the physical world. On the same basis, Sir Sayyid also rejected the occurrence of ‘miracles’ at the hands of God’s elect. In reply to these views, Hazrat Mirza wrote a book in 1893 entitled Barakat-ud-Dua (Blessings of Prayer), in which he explained that the fulfilment of prayers or occurrence of miracles, which may breach man’s known laws of nature, was actually in accordance with Divine Wisdom, and other laws of nature known only to God at that time.

When Hazrat Mirza wrote this reply, the scientific world held the same view as Sir Sayyid, yet only two years later a ‘revolution in physics broke out abruptly . . . with moments of unexpected discovery like that of X-rays and radio-activity in 1895-96 . . .’ (Science in History, pp. 518).

This ‘revolution’ disclosed new realms, such as the sub-atomic world, where classical physics, based on Newton’s laws, broke down and did not apply. Thus it was seen that the physical sciences which were thought to have reached perfection and universal applicability, and whose laws and principles could not be infringed through prayer or Divine miracle, were inaccurate, insufficient, and even totally erroneous in certain new situations. The hand of God can clearly be discerned in this development following so closely the Barakat-ud-Dua by Hazrat Mirza.

As the above quotation from Science in History shows, the major discoveries leading to the ‘revolution’ in physics were accidental. Of one of these fundamental discoveries, namely, that of radio-activity or atomic radiation itself, which surely must rank as a great historic discovery, it is recorded that the discoverer, Baquerel, ‘might just as easily’ have chosen a different substance to test in his investigation and ‘the discovery of the phenomenon of radioactivity and all it meant for atomic physics might have been delayed for another fifty years’ (pp. 523). This further shows that the downfall of the supposed laws of nature based on classical physics, at that particular juncture, only two years after Hazrat Mirza’s book, was an extraordinary and unusual event - Divine intervention, in fact.

HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE REVEALED TO MAN

The writer of Science in History, referring to the accidental nature of the discovery of radioactivity adds:
“Who knows how many equally simple phenomena capable of revolutionizing our science now lie hidden around us?” (pp. 523)
In other words, fundamental scientific discoveries are essentially simple things, but the problem is in finding them out because they are ‘hidden’. The Holy Qur’an says in this connection:
“And with Him (God) are treasures of the Unseen; none knows them but He.” (6:59)
So the history of scientific discoveries bears out this statement of the Holy Qur’an.

Another relevant verse of the Qur’an runs:
“And there is not a thing but with Us (God) are the treasures of it. We send it down not but in a known measure.” (15:21)

This verse really sums up the history of scientific inventions in one sentence: in everything around us there are treasures, of knowledge, of wealth, of wisdom, but they are disclosed to man only in accordance with a strict Divine ‘measure’, not haphazardly or all at once. So we find that, in every age, many discoveries are made accidentally, without human pre-planning or much effort. Yet, on the other hand, there are also phenomena man tries very hard to investigate or exploit, but he goes on trying for years without success (an example is ‘controlled nuclear fusion’, which has given promise of abundant energy for over thirty years).

Commenting on the above verse in his book Izalat Aasmah (1891), Hazrat Mirza has applied it to the disclosure of fresh Qur’anic truths in every age. He writes that, just as in every age there are new ideas, philosophies, and sciences, so are new and previously unknown truths disclosed from Qur’an according to the needs of the particular age. This principle expounded by Hazrat Mirza shows the Holy Qur’an to be a living Book for all times.

Just as nature discloses its secrets with time, though they have been there from the beginning; so does the Qur’an gradually give out its hidden treasures though its words are the same as they were 1400 years ago.

INVENTIONS AND SPIRITUAL REALITIES

The last point we note about modern inventions is that they bear a relationship to the spiritual truths and principles taught by the Holy Qur’an. It says:
“And He has made subservient to you all that is in the heavens and the earth. In this surely are signs for a people who think.” (45:13)
Man’s control and exploitation of the world around him, therefore, contains ‘signs’, by which in the Qur’an is meant proofs of the spiritual truths conveyed by the Holy Book.

What are these ‘signs’? It must first be recalled that according to the Qur’an man is God’s vicegerent, has been given knowledge by God, is submitted to by

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angels (who implement Divine commands in the world), and has the capacity of acquiring a semblance of the Divine attributes of his human scale. Thus the knowledge of, and power over nature acquired by man is a reflection of God's knowledge and power. If a person had been told a hundred years ago that man would be able to fly, go into space, transmit pictures and sound across thousands of miles, record and replay sound and motion, etc., he would not have believed it possible. This is just as many today do not believe that the All-Knowing, All-Powerful Being exists. So the scientific knowledge and inventions of man, which could not have been even imagined in the past, serve as a clear argument on the perfect knowledge and power of God, and this argument gains more and more strength with the progress of science and technology.

SPECIFIC CASES

Let us now look at some specific examples of inventions and their relation to spiritual truths.

Instruments such as microscopes, telescopes, and radio-telescopes have disclosed the existence of entire worlds hidden from the human senses. This serves as an argument on the existence of what the Qur'an calls al-ghaib, the spiritual realm imperceptible by physical senses by revealing to man more and more hidden and subtle realms which he knew nothing about previously.

Cameras, sound recorders, video recorders, etc. enable actions and words to be recorded and played back. This is an argument to support the Qur'anic statements that a person's words and deeds are recorded in a spiritual sense, and will eventually be played back to him after death. Before the invention of sound and image recording, someone could have rejected this Qur'anic teaching on the grounds that it is impossible to record what a person does or says. However, God has granted man to make such inventions that serve as 'signs' that deeds and words can be preserved. We note also that these devices are being used to record the actions of thieves and robbers, without their knowledge, and bring them to justice in this world.

The Holy Qur'an also tells us that a person's hands and feet and body bear witness as to his deeds. What is meant is that the effect of one's actions, done by the physical limbs or body, are preserved upon the corresponding, 'inner' or 'spiritual' limbs, and therefore when after death only the spiritual body, made from one's deeds, remains it bears clear witness to man's deeds done during his life. As a physical proof of this spiritual truth, God has granted man knowledge, such as that of forensic science by the use of which a person's fingerprints and even invisible marks and cloth fibers on his body bear witness as to his actions.

It ought to be noted with all these examples that the spiritual recording of deeds is perfect and comprehensive, while the physical one invented by man is imperfect and limited.

CONCLUSION

The great scientific and technological progress made by man in the last century or so has led to the notion that it is man who is all powerful and able to do and invent anything, and therefore his former belief in God stemmed from ignorance and weakness. We have shown that, in fact, man relies and depends totally on the laws of nature, which are beyond his choice and control. What is more, the history of science shows that even man's discovery of the laws he has found out is not in his control, for so many crucial discoveries were made by sheer accident, not through pre-planning or deliberation. The beginnings of atomic physics came quite abruptly at a significant time, just at the time when the Promised Messiah had announced that what man thought were laws of nature could be breached by higher laws known to God. Science is therefore, taught by God, and serves to prove the spiritual truths adduced in the Holy Qur'an.
called Zakaat, upon all Muslims. Zakaat can only be used for administration of the tax itself, and for the needy.

By enjoining upon man the obligation to use all his faculties and resources for the benefit of humanity, Islam teaches man to overcome his greed. Once he has achieved this, he puts others' needs before his own.

Let me not leave you with the impression that Islam is against acquisition of wealth. On the contrary, Islam encourages investment and trade undertaken for the purpose of generating wealth. It is unscrupulous pursuit of amassing wealth to the exclusion of all other considerations that Islam prohibits. It regards as lawful only those ventures which may result in a loss as well as a profit. Any means of generating wealth which does not require the investor to take a risk, such as interest on loans, is prohibited by Islam. The other action on the part of the investor which makes acquiring wealth unlawful is a refusal to share it with others, first by refusing to give a part of it away voluntarily, second by not paying Zakaat, and third by not allowing it to be shared amongst as many people as possible after death.

The message of Islam for the modern day, in fact for each and every day, is that the solution to the world’s problems lies in curing man’s spiritual disease, and that cure can only come about by adopting an Islamic way of life in its totality. As a first step towards complete cure, man should subdue and overpower his arrogance and greed. Then by treating all men as equals, and through selfless service to humanity, will man begin to find communion with God, and start to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

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*All Flowers*

In the Name of God,
the Compassionate,
the Merciful
All tongues
that have hymned God
are beautiful.
All places sanctified
to the worship of Him
are beautiful.
All races
all deeds done
all faces
that have shone with love
shine
and are beautiful.
O world
turn not away
into the hour
of perversity
but flower
into eternity.
All flowers... all flowering
is beautiful.

David Sparenberg
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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