The Promised Messiah Speaks:

HAS ANY BOOK
BEEN REVEALED BY GOD
If So, Which?

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The Mahdi and the Promised Messiah
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The question is of such a fundamental importance in religion that it inspires the adherents of every religion to come forward and state their views so far as they bear upon it, and accordingly from the standpoint of Islam, I shall try to give an answer to this question. Before stating the Islamic view of the question of revelation, I shall briefly state the different views that are held by different people.

Firstly, there are people who totally deny the existence of God, and hence Divine revelation which presupposes the existence of a Divine Being is an impossibility with them.

Secondly, there are those who do not totally deny the existence of a Creator but their belief in God is tantamount to a partial denial of the Divine Being. To this class belong the people who deny that matter and soul with all their powers and attributes are made by God. They believe in God but at the same time look upon matter and soul as self-existent and eternal like God. Such a belief also implies impossibilities of Divine revelation, for according to these principles there is no relation between the soul of man and the Divine Being. But when we speak of Divine revelation being granted to a person, we really mean that on account of the close relationship that exists between the Creator and His creation, Almighty God speaks from within that person. If, therefore, there is not this close relationship between God and man by an insurmountable barrier, and in such a case He cannot speak from within a person just as we cannot speak from within another person, God and man being as distinct and as much apart from each other as two human beings.

Thirdly, there are people who believe in revelation but they do not believe that Almighty God sends down His word upon man and consider that the awakening of any idea or impulse in man’s mind is a Divine revelation.

Fourthly, there are and have been sects which think that man does not stand in need of Divine revelation, but that the faculties which have been granted to man by God are a sufficient guide if they are properly used.

Fifthly, there are the believers in Divine revelation who admit that Almighty God revealed His will to mankind and sent down His word upon His chosen servants in the past, but they at the same time believe that the conditions are now changed and that God has changed the law according to which He spoke to His servants in the past. Revelation according to them belongs to the past and the future has no share in it. They believe in effect that Almighty God listened to the prayers of His servants and spoke to them in the past. Such a belief is also defective, for it renders the Divine attributes to be imperfect in this age.2

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An Open Letter to All Muslims!

My dear brothers in Islam,
Assalam O Alaikum wa Rahmat-ullah-e-wa-Barakato-hoo.
(Peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)

As I set my pen to this unconventional editorial in a letter form, we will be about to say good bye to the year 1983. This has been an eventful and tragic year as a whole for the human race generally and, for the Muslim world most particularly wherein internecine differences, conflicts, enmity and bloodshed increased many fold and left it quite helpless in the face of these adversities. The Muslim world of today is in complete shambles and ruins. The height of the tragedy is that not only we are drifting helplessly on the high tide of the ocean of the forces of destruction but the slightest signs of any effort on our part to arrest this debacle are not visible in any quarters. Such a state, if anything is indicative of the fact that today's Muslim world is in the grip of Allah's chastisement; and Allah's punishment visits only those who transgress after clear guidance has been manifested to them. It is high time for soul searching by all Muslims in their right minds to find out the causes which led to the visitation of Allah's wrath on the Muslim world. Let us probe our near past for discovering our faults.

Casting eyes to the events of a decade back one sees a united Muslim world emerging through the Islamic Summit Conference of Lahore, Pakistan, wherein not only all the Muslim states participated but also pledged themselves to a common and united future in economic, political and social terms. Great hopes were pooled in this emerging unity in the ranks of Muslims probably for the first time in many hundred years. It was hoped that the path for a new world order based on the Islamic concept of brotherhood and equality of mankind as 'one nation' is finally being treaded. Suddenly, the magic wind of the Dajjal touched the Muslim world and the first wedge in the unity of the Muslims was created in 1974 through that fateful decision of the Government of Pakistan which declared Ahmadis, a sect of devout Muslims who played the role of vanguard in the propagation of Islam during this century, as non-Muslims. This decision was adopted and endorsed by the Islamic conference and many other Muslim states. This was a transgression of the highest magnitude. It was the result of political expediency but was in clear and open violation of the covenant of Allah as declared by the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and I quote:

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"Whoever offers prayers as we do and turns his face to our Qiblah and eats the animal slaughtered by us, he is a Muslim for whom is the covenant of Allah and the covenant of the Messenger of Allah, so do not violate Allah's covenant." (Bukhari: 8:28)

This was just the beginning of a process cutting at the roots of unity. It amounted to opening the Pandora's box and other declarations e.g. Iran declaring Iraqi rulers infidels and Kafirs, Saudi's declaring Qaddafi an infidel etc. etc. followed soon. Since Ahmadis, Iraqi Rulers, Qaddafi and all other Muslims who were subjected to such declarations of Takfir, fulfilled all the conditions of a Muslim as laid down in the above quoted Hadith, therefore, by declaring them non-Muslims, kafir or infidel the covenant of Allah and the covenant of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, was clearly, openly and brazenfacedly violated by the advocates and authors of such fateful declarations. That these declarations are acts of transgression is borne out by the following sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him:

"A Muslim is he from whose tongue and hand Muslims are safe, and a Mahajir is he who forsakes what Allah has forbidden." (Bukhari: 2:3)

and

"To abuse a Muslim is transgression and to fight him is unbelief." (Bukhari: 2:35)

Entire Muslim world has been guilty of transgression in the matter of Ahmadis as whether political expediency or some other worldly cause stood in their way in raising voice against that unholy decision that violated the covenant of Allah. Thereafter, the events of the last decade one after the other were visiting as a warning but all failed to take heed or set right the wrong. Arrogance rather than repentence was shown and is still being shown or else how Muslims will be engaged in destroying other Muslims as we find today. The very weapon, i.e. the takfir-e-Muslimeen, which was used against Ahmadis is now cutting through the unity of the whole Muslim world, and this is how the Muslim world has subjected itself to Allah's wrath.

My dear brothers in faith, with the advent of Islam the concept of the chosen people of Allah was put to rest for ever and a new era wherein the destinies of the people are made or marred on the basis of their deeds was ushered in. This law of Allah is work at all times and there is neither any escape nor exception to it. As explained herein above none but we Muslims are responsible for inviting the wrath of Allah through our violating the covenant of Allah and putting behind our backs the commands of Allah and His Messenger, peace be upon him. Allah does not like arrogance and only those who repent and follow His commands can hope for His mercy. My brothers, we can build a new and shining future from the ashes of our present state of ruins provided we care to ask for Allah's mercy and mend our ways. My dear brothers in Islam, let us resolve to make 1984 a year of the Unity of Muslims, and as a first step not only throw in the waste baskets all declarations of takfir—by whomsoever issued, but also root out the root cause of disunity in our ranks viz. the evil of takfir-e-Muslimeen, completely and for good. Do we have the courage to rise above the political expediency and hold fast the covenant of Allah?

Dear brethren in Islam, it is heartening that inspite of prevalent conditions of complete helplessness and debacle of the Muslim world in the political field, Islam is yet on the march by claiming hundreds of thousands of new followers in various parts of the world. This fact alone proves the fallacy of the common belief advocated and preached by clerics belonging to politico-religious groups in various Muslim countries that establishing governments of the clerics and divines (Saleheen) is a pre-requisite for the progress of Islam. This also gives lie to the false allegations that Islam ever stood in need of force of sword or political power for gaining followers. Quite contrary, the beautious teachings of Islam—the religion in the very nature of mankind as Qur'an calls it—appeals the minds and hearts of the seekers after truth and transforms their lives. This also demands soul searching by all of us as to how far we have shaped our lives in accordance with the commands of Allah. mere lip service neither does any good to us nor it pleases Allah.

May Allah grant us the courage to make our soul searching.

Wassalam

yours in Islam

Masud Akhtar

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Sixthly, there is another class of believers in Divine revelation. They believe in the revelation of a book for guidance to mankind, but they think that the gift of Divine revelation is limited to one language, one people, one age and one country. They believe that Almighty God spoke to a few men in the beginning of creation but that He has not since spoken to any body else. In other words, there has been no inspired person in the world except two or three persons of a single nation in a very remote age in the past, nor will the world so long as it exists see any inspired person in the future.

These are the various conceptions as prevailing in the world with regard to revelation and we will now state our own views in this fundamental question.

The Attitude of Islam towards other Religions

The principle on which Almighty God has established us and which He has revealed to us through His Holy Book is that surely there is a God and surely Divine revelation is true. But as God is the God of the whole world and not of any one sect or one tribe, He has also blessed all parts of the world and all tribes of the human race with the greatest of His gifts, i.e., Divine revelation, which is the fountain-head of true guidance, and He has not been sparing in the granting of this gift to any people. And thus it ought to have been. For, we see that things on which the physical life of man depends as earth, water, fire, air, sun, moon, corn, etc., are found in all countries and among all people though they are only meant for man's short-lived course of life upon this earth. How can it, therefore, be supposed that those guidances and

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heavenly blessings, on which depends the spiritual life of man which is his life eternal, should be granted to one particular tribe in one particular country and all other tribes and people should be kept entirely ignorant of them and thus made to fall into the pit of destruction. Human reason if not blinded by prejudice cannot accept it for a moment, nor can it attribute such injustice to Almighty God who is the God of all people, that He should favour one people and remain aloof from all others as if He were a tribal deity. This principle has been taught to us by Book which is called the Qur'an in which it is said, "And there is not a people but a Warner has gone among them," (35:24). Elsewhere it says "Say, (O Allah, our Lord! We believe in God and in that which has been revealed to us and in that which has been revealed to Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob and the tribes, and that which was given to Moses and Jesus and in that which was given to the prophets from their Lord. We do not make any distinction between any of them (so as to accept the prophets of one tribe and reject those of another) and to Him we submit. If, then they believe as you believe in Him (and do not reject any prophet of God) they are indeed on the right course; and if they turn back, then they are only in great opposition, so God will suffice thee against them: and He is the Hearing, the Knowing (and He hears and knows what they say and do). Almighty God has taught you this way of baptism) (Receiving) the baptism of God, and who is better than God, in baptising? and Him do we serve. (ii: 136-138)

The end of the chapter quoted above has another verse to the same effect. It runs thus "The Apostle believes in what has been revealed to him from His Lord, and (so do) the believers; they all believe in God and His angels and His books and His apostles (so as to reject some and accept the others): We make no difference between any of His apostles; and they say; 'We hear and we obey our Lord! Thy forgiveness (do we crave) and to Thee is the eventual course." (ii: 285)

All these verses show that the Holy Qur'an makes it obligatory upon its followers to accept all the prophets who are accepted by large numbers of the human race. According to the Quran it is sufficient argument of the truth of those prophets that they are accepted as true by a great part of the world and that the assistance and support of God was granted them at every step. High is the dignity of God and He is above such things as that He should make millions of human beings the devoted followers of a person whom he knows to be an impostor and a deceiver and a liar, for if the same honour is given to the impostor as to a true prophet of God, then there remains nothing which should enable the seeker after truth to distinguish the one from the other and every matter relating to prophethood becomes obscure. It is, therefore, a very clear and true criterion of the truth of a prophet that he is granted an acceptance in the hearts of men and there is no step that He takes but the assistance and support of God are with Him. A prophet who satisfies this criterion can never be an impostor. But it is possible that the later generations of his followers tampered with the scriptures which he left to them and made alterations in them, and reversed the significance of his word by comments in which they followed their own desires. Ancient books are in fact liable to be altered by different people interpreting them in different manners, their interpretations by and by taking the place of the text and becoming parts of the book itself. It is due to such differences that different sects are formed in every religion, each sect interpreting certain words in a manner different from that in which another interprets them.

In short, the principle which the Holy Qur'an has taught us is a very sound and stable principle, for human nature itself bears witness that the prophets whose acceptance finds a place in the hearts of millions of men and whose love and esteem are rooted deep in hearts and upon whom Divine assistance was showered are not impostors at all; for the evil-minded impostor, who tells lies about God and says that revelation is granted to him or that God speaks to him while as a matter of fact no revelation comes to him nor does God speak to him, is not granted such honour. The person who thinks that such Divine assistance and heavenly signs may also be granted to an impostor does not really believe in the power and wisdom of God and denies His very existence. The criterion which we have stated here is satisfied pre-eminently by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and is one of the most convincing arguments of his truth, for the height of glory to which he attained was not attained by any other prophet, and the Divine assistance which was granted to him was not vouchsafed to any one else. He came at a time when the whole world had fallen into a state of spiritual lethargy and was filled with Shirk and idol-worship. The worship of the true God had almost disappeared from the face of the earth. Some people worshipped stones and others fire: some bowed down before the sun and others took water for their Lord; while not a few had deified a man. The whole world was sunk deep in sin and vice and evils of every kind. The Holy Qur'an thus significantly describes the moral and spiritual degradation of the world of that time "Evil reigns supreme in land as well as in water," in other words, that the people who had scriptures in their hand become as corrupt as those who had no heavenly book to guide them. It is such a true description of the state of the world at that time that the history of every country bears witness to its truth. Can the wise historians of this land of Aryas deny that the time of the appearance of the Holy Prophet was such as it has been described in the Holy Qur'an to be, when idol-temples were so highly revered throughout the whole country as if idol-worship were the true religion of the Vedas? And will not the Christians admit that not only had Jesus been given the Place of the one and true God at that time, but his ardent worshippers prostrated themselves even before his picture while his mother was also worshipped as a God in the Christian church at that time? Such was the state of the world at the time of the appearance of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, but what a change was wrought by him in a few days and what a glorious revolution was brought by him. That Arabian peninsula which knew nothing but the worship of idols and stones resounded from one corner to the other with exclamations of the continued on next page
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unity of God. But what is particularly important to bear in mind is that the signs and miracles which were granted to our Holy Prophet, were not limited to his life upon this earth, but have been, and shall continue to be, witnessed in all ages. Another distinction granted to our Holy Prophet is that he is the seal of all prophets, not only in the sense that all the excellences of prophethood were manifested in him, but also because there cannot be any new prophet after him who would abrogate the law laid down by him or any new apostle who should not be from among his followers. Every one who is spoken to by Almighty God is made the recipient of this heavenly favour through the Holy Prophet, and must be one of his followers. As regards his acceptance and the turning of the hearts of men in submission to him there are today more than two hundred millions of Mussalmans of every class and grade who stand in his presence as respectfully as servants before their master. The most powerful monarchs have deemed it a pride to be counted among his servants, and even now the Muslim potentates regard themselves but as his slaves and would show their reverence for his name by coming down from their thrones.

Now consider if such honour and such greatness, such success and such glory, with thousands of heavenly signs and a thousand more heavenly blessings, can be granted to an impostor! We are indeed proud that the Holy Prophet whose followers we are had the grace of God granted to him in such abundance. He is not God but through him we have no doubt seen God. The religion which he has given us is a looking-glass of the mighty powers of God. Had there not been Islam, It would have been impossible to realize in this age what prophethood is and whether miracles are possible and whether they are within the laws of nature. It is the unintercepted grace of that great Prophet that has solved this mystery, and it is an obligation we owe to him that we do not relate stories of wonders wrought in the past as other people do, but have even now that Divine light and Divine assistance with us which others can only boast of having possessed in the past. We have not the words with which to express our thanks for this great blessing that the God who is hidden from the eyes of other people and that unseen power from whom others are separated by a thousand screens - that glorious God has manifested Himself to us through our Holy Prophet.

With all these facts before us it is astonishing to find that our opponents bear the greatest hatred towards that perfect Prophet. No other prophet in the world has so much hostile and abusive literature written against him as our Holy Prophet. This shows that him, whom God loves most of all and grants the greatest share of His greatness and glory, this blind world hates most of all. Many are his obligations upon the nations of the world. It is he who taught us that we should not reject the prophets that have appeared among other people, and that the prophets and apostles who are recognized as such by the nations of the earth and who are honoured and respected in any part of the world were really prophets of God. Their scriptures may have on account of the lapse of time been altered or changed, or a wrong interpretation may have been put upon their words, but these scriptures were no doubt heavenly books revealed to those prophets in their time and must therefore be honoured and respected.

The Muslims are exhorted to be respectful to all those religious leaders who are accepted in the world as prophets of God. This is mentioned on more occasions than one in the Qur'an, in order to impress upon the Muslims that they should not speak lightly or contemptuously of any religious leader of humanity.

A Message of Peace

The Muslims may indeed feel proud for this lovable and attractive principle, for other people not having any such principle to guide them speak disrespectfully and very often abusively of the holy prophets of God who are accepted as guides by millions of people, when they find them differing from themselves or their cherished beliefs on the most insignificant point. The most vulgar and contumelious attacks are in particular directed against the Holy Prophet Mohammad. Our opponents cry for peace with their tongues, but the same tongue they employ like a drawn sword against that beloved Prophet of ours under whose feet lie our very souls. None is more persecuted than we are, for while we regard with honour and respect all the prophets who have been accepted as such by other great nations of the world and believe in them as true prophets of God in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, the Holy Prophet, our love for whom knows no bounds, is openly abused in lectures and writings by our very neighbors. We do admit, and a public declaration of this admission we consider to be our happy duty, that Moses and Jesus and the other prophets were all the holy, righteous and chosen prophets of God, and that the holy men through whom guidance was brought to the people in this land were all the chosen servants of God to whom He sent down His grace and upon whom He showered His blessings. But is there any body who would listen to our complaint that other people do not deal with us in the same liberal and humanitarian spirit? From whom should we seek justice in this matter?

Consider how beautiful this teaching of the Holy Qur'an is, for it lays down the basis of peace and union in the world. It requires all the different peoples to become one people, for it demands of all that they should revere the sacred religious leaders of the others. It must be admitted by all that the root of the strong hatred and enmity between various people is the contempt and hatred of the prophets and messengers of God who are accepted and revered by millions of the people of every country. The person who speaks abusively or contemptuously of the prophet of a people or befriends an abuser and then desires that the people should be in harmony with him is a fool and his folly and ignorance are unequalled. Can a son live in peace and friendship with the abuser of his father? That cannot be. Those who cry most for peace and union with their tongues should first conform their conduct to a peaceful attitude. My dear friends! Do not throw away these words of mine but give them your deepest reflection. Let us live in such peace and friendship that we may be as part of one body. But hear in continued on page 14
THE HOLY QUR'AN
HOW & WHEN IT WAS REVEALED
by Hadhrat Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A. L.I.B.

The original source from which all principles and ordinances of Islam are drawn is the Holy Book called al-Qur'an. The name Qur'an is frequently mentioned in the book itself which also states to whom, how, why, when, and in what language, it was delivered. It was revealed to Muhammad: “And (who) believe in that which has been revealed to Muhammad - and it is the Truth from their Lord.” (47:2). It was revealed in the month of Ramadzan on a certain night which thenceforward received the name of the Night of Majesty (Lailat al-Qadr): “The month of Ramadzan is that in which the Qur'an was revealed.” (2:185); “We revealed it on a blessed night,” (44:3); “Surely We revealed it on the Night of Majesty.” (97:1). It was revealed in the Arabic language: “So We have made it easy in thy tongue that they may be mindful,” (44:58); “Surely We have made it an Arabic Qur'an that you may understand.” (43:3). It was revealed in portions, every portion being written and committed to memory as soon as it was revealed, and the revelation was spread over twenty-three years of the Prophet's life, during which time he was occupied solely with the reformation of a benighted world: “And it is a Qur'an which We have made distinct, so that thou mayest read it to the people by slow degrees, and We have revealed it in portions.” (17:106). It was not the Prophet who spoke under the influence of the Holy Spirit; it was a Divine Message brought by the angel Gabriel and delivered in words to the Prophet who communicated it to mankind: “And surely this is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds. The Faithful Spirit has brought it on thy heart that thou mayest be a warner, in plain Arabic language,” (26:192-195); “Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel - for surely he revealed it to thy heart by Allah's command.” (2:97); “The Holy Spirit has revealed it from thy Lord with the truth.” (16:102).

It is the highest form of revelation

Though the Qur'an was revealed piecemeal through Gabriel, yet the entire revelation is one whole, delivered in one and the same manner. Revelation, we are told in the Qur'an, is granted to man in three forms: “And it is not vouchsafed to any mortal that Allah should speak to him, except by revelation (wahy) or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger and revealing by His permission what He pleases.” (42:51). The first of these three modes is called wahy, which is generally translated as meaning revelation. Since the different kinds of revelation are spoken of here, the word wahy is obviously used in its literal sense, its primary significance being a hasty suggestion (al-isharat al-sari'ah) (R). Hence the inspired word, which enters the hearts of the prophets and of the righteous, is called wahy because it is like a sudden suggestion made directly to the heart of the inspired one (ilqan-un fi'l-ruai). It is not a message in words but simply an idea which comes like a flash and clears up a doubt or difficulty, and it is not the result of meditation. The second mode is described as speaking from behind a veil - a scene, carrying a deeper significance, is shown as in a vision (kashf), or in a dream (ru'ya), or words are heard by the person spoken to, as if coming from behind a veil. The third mode is that in which the angel bearing the message is sent to the recipient of the Divine revelation, and the message is delivered in words, and this is the highest form of revelation. As already stated, the angel entrusted with the Divine message in words is Gabriel or the Holy Spirit, and this third mode of revelation is limited to the prophets of God only - to men entrusted with important Divine messages to humanity - while the first two lower forms of revelation are common to prophets as well as those who are not prophets. For the delivery of the higher message which relates to the welfare of mankind, a higher form of revelation is chosen, a form in which the message is not simply an idea but is clothed in actual words. The prophet's faculty of being spoken to by God is so highly developed that he receives the messages, not only as ideas instilled into the mind or in the form of words uttered or heard under the influence of the Holy Spirit, but actually as Divine messages in words delivered through the latter. In the terminology of Islam this is called 'revelation that is recited' (wahy mathlum) and the Qur'an was, from beginning to end, delivered in this form to the Prophet, as the quotations earlier given from the Book itself make it abundantly clear. It does not contain any other form of revelation. It is in its entirety wahy mathlum or revelation recited to the Prophet distinctly in words, and is thus wholly the highest form of Divine revelation.

Other forms of Divine revelation to men

As stated above, prophets also received the lower forms of Divine revelation. For example, we are told in reports that before the higher message came to the Prophet Muhammad - i.e., before he received the first Quranic revelation - he used to have clear and true visions. "The first of revelations that came to the Messenger of Allah were good visions so that he did not see a vision but it came out true as the dawn of the day." (Bu. 1:1). The Prophet's hearing of certain voices as mentioned in the traditions' belongs to the same category, while the details of law as expounded by him, and as met with in his practice, belong to the first form of revelation, an idea instilled into the mind. This is called 'inner revelation' (wahy khatifiy). In the lower forms, revelation is still granted to the righteous from among the followers of the Prophet and even to others, for, as will be shown later, in the lowest form revelation is the universal experience of humanity. There is also a difference as to the method in which the different kinds of revelation are received. While the two lower forms of revelation involve but little change in the normal condition of a man, whether awake or asleep, and he is only occasionally transported to a state of trance, the highest form, which is that peculiar to the prophets, brings with it a violent change; it does, in fact, require a real passing from one world to the other, while the recipient is in a state of perfect wakefulness, and the burden of revelation is not only felt by him but is also visible to those who see him.

The Prophet's experience of revelation

The Prophet first experienced the higher revelation while he was alone in the cave of Hira. Before this he had, from time to time, seen visions, but when the angel came with the higher message, he found himself quite...
The Holy Qur’an
cont.

exhausted: “He (Gabriel) seized me and squeezed me to such an extent that I was quite exhausted,” and this was repeated thrice (Bu. 1:1). And even after he reached home, the effect of exhaustion was still upon him and he had to lie down covered over before he could relate what had befallen. It was an equally hard experience when the second message came to him after an interval of some months. And even afterwards, the effect of the Spirit upon him was so great that on the coldest of days perspiration would run down his forehead: “I saw”, says ‘Aishah, his wife, “revelation coming down upon him in the severest cold, and when that condition was over, perspiration ran down his forehead.” (Bu. 1:1). A Companion also relates that he was sitting with his leg under that of the Prophet when revelation came down upon him, and he felt as if his leg would be crushed under the weight.” (Bu. 8:12).

Nature of the Prophet’s revelation

The next question is about the nature of the revelation itself. When Harith, son of Hisham, once enquired of the Prophet how revelation came to him, he replied: “It comes to me sometimes as the ringing of a bell and this is hardest on me, then he (the angel) leaves me and I remember from him what he says; and sometimes the angel comes in the shape of a man and he talks to me and I remember what he says.” (Bu. 1:1). These are the only two forms in which the Quranic revelation came to the Prophet. In both cases, the angel came to him and was seen by him; in both cases a certain message was delivered in words which he at once committed to memory. That is the essence of the whole question. The only difference between the two cases was that in one case the angel appeared in the shape of a human being and uttered the words in a soft tone as a man talks to another; in the other case, it is not stated in what form he came, but we are told that the words were uttered like the ringing of a bell, that is to say, in a harsh, hard tone, which made it a heavier task for the Prophet to receive them. But still it was the angel who brought the message, as is shown by the use of the personal pronoun ‘he’ in the first part of the report. In both cases the Prophet was transported, as it were, to another world, and this transportation caused him to go through a severe experience which made him perspire even on a cold day, but this experience was harder still when the deliverer of the message did not appear in human shape and there remained no affinity between the deliverer and the recipient.

But whether the angel appeared in human shape or not, whether the message was delivered in a hard or soft tone, the one thing certain is that it was a message delivered in words; and the Quranic revelation is thus entirely one message delivered in one form. It should be noted that the Prophet often received the message while sitting with his companions, but the latter never saw the angel nor ever heard the words of revelation. 10 It was, therefore, with other than the normal human senses that the Prophet saw the angel and heard his words, and it was really the grating of these other senses that is called transportation to another world.

1. Generally the sources are said to be four, the Qur’an, the Sunna or Hadith (Doings and Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad as preserved in collections of Traditions), Ijma or unanimous agreement of the Muslims community and Qiyas or reasoning. The former two are called al-adilat al-qatayya or absolutely sure arguments, and the latter two as al-adilat al-jihadiyya or absolutely sure arguments, and the latter two as al-adilat al-jihadiyya or arguments obtained by reversion. But as Ijma and Qiyas are admitted basis on the Qur’an and the Hadith (Tradition), the latter itself being only an explanation of the Qur’an, as will be shown later on, the Qur’an is actually the real foundation on which the whole superstructure of Islam rests, and being the only absolute and final authority in every matter which relates to the principles and laws of Islam, it is perfectly right to say that the Qur’an is the sole source from which all the teachings and practices of Islam are drawn.

2. The word Qur’an is an infinitive noun from the root qara’a which signifies primarily he collected together things (I.A.). It also signifies he read or recited, because in reading or reciting, letters and words are joined to each other in a certain order (R.). “According to some authorities, the name of this book al-Qur’an from among the world Divine books is due to its gathering together in itself the fruits of all the books, rather its being a collection of the fruits of all the sciences, a reference to which is contained in the words, “an explanation of all things”. (R). It also means a book that is or should be read, containing a prophetical reference to its being “the most widely read book” (En. Br.) in the whole world. The Qur’an speaks of itself under various other names. It is called al-Kitaab (2:2) meaning the Writing which is complete in itself; al-Furqan (25:1) or the Distinction between right and wrong and between truth and falsehood; al-Dhikra, al-Tadhkira (15:47) the reminder; al-Mulk, the one of eminence and glory and man; al-Tanzil (26:192) or the Revelation from on high; Ahsan al-Hukm (13:37) or the Judgment; al-Hikma (17:39) or the Wisdom; al-Shifa (10:57) or the Healing; al-Huda (72:13) or the Guidance; al-Rahma (17:82) or the Mercy; al-Khair (3:103) or the Goodness; al-Ruh (42:52) or the Spirit; al-Bayan (3:137) or the Explanation; al-Ni'ma (93:11) or the Blessing; al-Burhan (4:175) or the Argument; al-Qayyim (18:2) or the Maintainer; al-Muhamin (5:48) or the Guardian; al-Nur (7:157) or the Light; al-Haqq (11:78) or the Truth besides these it is mentioned by several other names; and there is also a large number of qualifying words applied to it. For instance, it is called Karim (56:77) or Honourable; Majid (85:21) or Flourishing; Hakim (36:2) or Wise; Mubarak (21:50) or Blessed; (lit. the things never be interpreted); Mubin (12:1) or the one making things manifest; ‘Aliyy (43:4) or Elevated; Fasl (86:13) or Decisive; ‘Azim (39:67) or of great importance; Mukarram or Honoured. Marfu or Exalted, Mutahab or Purified (80:13, 14); Muhabib (39:23) or conformable in its various parts.

3. 2:185; 10:37; 61; 17:106, etc.

4. The Lailat al-Qadr or the Night of Majesty is one of the three nights in the month of Ramadhan, 25th, 27th, or 29th, i.e., the night preceding any of these dates (Bu. 32:4). The Prophet was, at the time when revelation first came to him, forty years of age.

5. It should be noted that the Qur’an uses the words Holy Spirit and Gabriel interchangeably. In one of the reports speaking of the first revelation to the Prophet the angel who brought the revelation is called al-Namus al-Akbar, or the great Namus, and Namus means the angel who is entrusted with Divine secrets (N.), the Divine secrets, of course, being the Divine messages to humanity sent through the prophets of God. The same report adds that it was the same angel that brought revelation to Moses. Thus both the Qur’an and the reports make it clear that Divine revelation was brought to the Prophet, as well as to the prophets before him, by the angel Gabriel who is also called the Holy Spirit or the Faithful Spirit or the great Namus. This clears up all doubts as to what is meant by the Holy Spirit in Islam; and in the mouths of the Old Testament prophets, as well as Jesus Christ, it carried exactly the same significance. It is true that the prophets did not have the same clarity here as in Islam, but it is equally true that the orthodox Christian conception of the Holy Spirit was quite unknown to the Jewish mind, and in this respect Jesus Christ was a staunch Jew, his terminology being taken in its entirety from the Jews. In the Old Testament terminology, the form used is the Spirit or the Spirit of God. In Ps. 51:11 and Is. 63:10, 11, the form used is Holy Spirit which is also the form adopted in the Talmud and Midrash. The Holy Ghost is peculiar to the New Testament writers. The Jews looked upon it as one of the created things; it was among the ten things that were created on the first day (En.J.). The function of the Holy Spirit is described thus:

“The visible results of the activity of the Holy Spirit, according to the Jewish conception, are the books of the Bible, all of which have been composed under its inspiration. All the prophets spoke “in the Holy Spirit”; and the most characteristic sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit is the gift of prophecy, in the sense that the person impregnated by the Spirit beholds the past and the future. With the death of the last three...
THE OBJECT OF RELIGION
A Lecture Delivered in U.K. by
late Khawaja Kamal-ud-din, B.A. Ll.B.

I have been requested to say something on the object of Religion, a subject which has caused such a diversity of opinion and confusion of ideas. It has created quite different theologies and diverse codes of morality in different parts of the world. Some say that the object of Religion is fulfilled when we give up all worldly affairs in pursuit of a Godly life. With them Religion stands for renunciation. Others think that the function of Religion consists in bringing purity of life into the world of every day.

With some, Religion in the best form, came to redeem humanity from eternal perdition by showing us the way to appease an angered Deity, and to create a sort of reconciliation between the Creator and the creature; as if we had incurred Divine wrath even before our birth, without any action on our part. In short, the object of Religion has been formulated in different accents and stresses in various quarters. But the last Book of God, I mean the Qur'an, epitomizes it in one word. It makes ‘falah’ the object for which religion came to humanity from its Maker.

I have purposely given here the original word from the text, as I fail to find its proper equivalent in any other language. In its ordinary meaning the word ‘falah’ in Arabic signifies success, but literally it means the burrowing out of what is hidden in anything. You cannot succeed in doing a thing of which you are not capable; consequently where there is a want of capacity, there is a want of success.

Success, therefore, consists in the working out of your latent faculties to your best ability. I am not concerned with what others say on the subject, but I have given you what the Qur'an describes as the object of Divine Revelation to humanity. Whatever of noble and good is hidden in you must come out, whatever is in the form of potentiality in human minds must be converted into actuality.

Some think that to please God can be the only valid object of Religion. That is true, but one fails to understand in what consists the pleasure of God. If He created man for a certain purpose, do we not incur His wrath, if, through our actions, we bring that purpose to nothing? Divine glorification does not mean the singing of hymns; that is but a lip-gratitude which will not please even an average men. What about God? Divine glorification, from the Qur'an's point of view, consists in human edification, and in order to please God, we cannot do better than help Him in the accomplishment of that grand object for which man was created. Therefore, to please God is really to work out our own evolution, and to bring to realization what our Creator has placed in us. In this lies our whole success. The Qur'an says the same elsewhere: “He who purifies himself and through that purification reaches his full-fledgedness is successful, but he who has stunted his faculties meets failure.” Again the Book says, when it defines man's religion: “Turn your face strictly to the right Faith - Nature, Given by God, on which He has created man; there cannot be change in the Make of God; it is the Religion.”

In these words we have been given our Religion. My Religion is my own nature and to live religion is to work it out. Study your own Nature, try to find out what inestimable treasures lie in it. Discover means whereby you may bring your Nature to fruition, and you have found your religion. Revelation from God According to the Qur'an, therefore, came to enlighten us as to our own capacities, and to provide us with means to work them out to their perfection. To study your own Nature is, therefore, to study your own religion. “One who has known his own self,” so says the noble Prophet, “has known his own God”. See what wonderful capabilities you possess, bring them to their full fruition, and you have glorified your own Maker and lived the best religion you can possibly live: and this is Islam.

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ISLAM MY CHOICE

It is then that the question arises: But why choose Islam, why not the religion in which one happened to be born (if any)? The answer is contained in the question itself: Islam is being at peace with oneself and the world and - with God, that is, submission to the will of God. Though the beauty and majestic terseness of the Qur'an 89:27-30 is lost in the translation, I will quote God's word:

"O soul that art at rest! Return to thy Lord, well-pleased with Him, well-pleasing Him. So enter among My servants. And enter in My garden."

Islam, therefore, is the only pure religion, not a religion marred by a mythology, like Christianity and other religions.

Compare the Christion doctrine that an infant is responsible for the sins of its forbears, with God's consoling words:

"And no soul earns evil but against itself, and no bearer of a burden shall bear the burden of another" (The Qur'an, 6:165).

"We do not impose on any soul a duty except to the extent of its ability" (The Qur'an, 7:42).

II

by PERCY ROBINSON U.K.

My embrace of Islam I feel to be the logical issue from protracted inquiry and investigation of religion over several decades and, in its range, covering substantially all that is known and set forth by accredited writers upon that vast subject from Socrates to John Wesley, on the one hand, and from Celsius to Voltaire upon the other. . . .

In the Qur'an, the first and most powerful witness to its continued purity and authority for us today is the beautiful method employed by the Almighty author to ensure its inimitable continuance in that state.

The Qur'an, then, originally delivered by Divine means to a perfectly or completely illiterate man, ensures its claims to Divine authorship and preservation intact, as such, by the exquisitely simple means or method of recitative retention in the human mind from generation to generation ad infinitum.

Again, in the sequel to its original delivery by the Prophet Muhammad (peace by on his soul), we find the most ferocious, fearless, arrogant and bloodthirsty of races, the sons of Ishmael, bowing themselves before it, and with faces in the very dust itself! Tamed! Completely tamed, before the Holy Words of God - the Merciful, the Beneficient! . . .

Surely this is sufficient for any man or woman as witness or support to the perfect claim the Qur'an makes to being alone today the pure Book of God, while it again calls upon such men and women to exclaim, "There is but one God, Muhammad is His Messenger".

So, as the conclusion to my forty years’ quest, I myself, like unto our fierce Arabian forbears, bow my face to the very dust before its claims upon me and joyfully declare, Allaha Akbar!

The Holy Qur'an cont.

greatness and his insight into things. A king saw seven lean kine eat up seven fat ones, and the meaning was that seven years of famine and hardship would follow seven years of plenty and eat away the hoarded corn of the country. Hence God's speaking from behind a veil means His revealing certain truths in dreams or visions. In a saying of the Prophet these are called mubahshirat: "Nothing has remained of nubuwwa, i.e., receiving news from God, except mubahshirat." Being asked "what was meant by mubahshirat," the Prophet replied, "good visions" (Bu. 91:4). In this category are also included words which some righteous servants of God are made to utter or which they hear under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

8. Practice - Sunnah, Doings of the Prophet.
9. Some misdirected critics have represented this extraordinary experience of the coming of the revelation as an epileptic fit. The question is whether an epileptic could, when the fit came on, utter those grand religious truths which are met with in the Qur'an, or indeed make any coherent statement at all; whether he could have the strong will which made the whole of Arabia at last bow down to the Prophet, or possess the unparalleled energy which we witness in every phase of his life, or the high morals which were his, or be the master of that magnetic virtue under whose influence a whole country could be purified of the grossest idolatry and superstition; whether hundreds of thousands of men possessing the Arabs' independence of character would have taken him for a leader whose orders were obeyed in the minutest details of life; or whether he could produce men of the will and character of Abu Bakr and "Umar and thousands of others, before whom mighty empires crumbled?" The story of
MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZDAD

by Hadhrat Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A. L.I.B.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was once drawn by a correspondent of the daily Zamindar (The daily Zamindar, Lahore, 16 June, 1936) of Lahore into the controversy as to the nature of the claims of the Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement and the rights of the Ahmadiyya communities to claim a position within Islam. Both these matters were set at rest by the Maulana in the very first letter to the said correspondent thus:

"You enquire which one of the two Ahmadi groups follows the true path, the Qadian group or the Lahore one. In my opinion neither is on the true and right path, but the Qadian section has gone too far in its gholaww, so far that the very fundamentals of Islam have been shaken; for instance, its belief that for faith and salvation the known and admitted doctrines of Islam are not now sufficient and it is essential to believe in the Mirza Sahib of Qadian. But the Lahore group denies this gholaww; it neither confesses a faith in the prophethood of the Mirza Sahib nor does it add any new condition to the conditions of faith; where it has stumbled is in the misplaced belief which it has created for the Mirza Sahib."

In this passage Maulana Abul Kalam has made clear the three points: 1. The position which the Mirza Sahib claimed for himself, 2. Whether the Qadian group is outside or within the pale of Islam, and 3. The position of the Lahore group.

Let us consider first the position of the Mirza Sahib in the light of what the Maulana has said. In ascribing gholaww to the Qadianis, the Maulana has in fact made it clear that the Mirza Sahib never claimed prophethood for himself, for a ghali is one who ascribes a position to its leader higher than that which he claims for himself. For example, the Christians are guilty of gholaww when they ascribe to Jesus Christ a claim to Godhead because he never claimed Godhead for himself. Hence the Qadianis can be said to be guilty of gholaww only if they ascribe to Mirza Sahib a claim which he never made for himself.

The above conclusion drawn from Maulana Abul Kalam’s letter is further corroborated by two of his earlier writings on the subject. The first of these is a passage which occurs in the Maulana’s well-known book the Tadkhirah published in 1919. Writing about Sayyid Muhammad of Jaunpur who claimed to be the Mahdi, the Maulana says:

"The affair of the Sayyid of whom we are speaking is full of wonder, and various sorts of claims and absurd sayings have been attributed to him. What the followers of a person say need not be paid attention to, for whomever a people take for their religious leader they would raise him to no less a dignity than that of Godhead, and if they are very careful they would not keep him below the position of a prophet. But some recent writers have written things which at first sight cause perturbation. Shah Abdul Haq, the Muhaddath of Delhi, writes: ‘According to Sayyid Muhammad of Jaunpur, every perfection possessed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad was also possessed by Sayyid Muhammad, the only difference being that there it was in asalat (possessed originally) and here it was by tab‘iyyat (attained by following), and by following the Holy Prophet he attained to such a place that he became like a prophet.’"

"Reading these words of Shah Sahib, it occurred to me that in our own days a big section of the followers of the Mirza Sahib of Qadian entertains an exactly similar belief about the Mirza Sahib and lays the foundation of all its gholaww (exceeding the bounds) and ighraaq (exaggeration) on this difference of asalat (possessing originally) and tab‘iyyat (attaining by following)."

(Tadkhirah, pp. 30, 31).

Here the Maulana states that the followers of Sayyid Muhammad and a great section of the followers of the Mirza Sahib have fallen into the same error and have been guilty of exaggerating the claims of their respective leaders. Evidently he is referring here to the Qadianis and considers them to be guilty of gholaww, i.e., exaggerating the claims of the Mirza Sahib and attributing to him what he never claimed. Thus attributing the claim of prophethood to Mirza Sahib is gholaww on the part of the Qadianis; in other words, the Mirza Sahib did not claim to prophethood.

As regards the second writing of the Maulana which exonerates the Mirza Sahib of laying claim to prophethood, it is really a fatwa given by him when extracts dealing with the alleged claim to prophethood taken from his different writings were placed before the Maulana. These extracts were sent to him by me personally, and he returned those papers with the following words: "He is a mu‘awwil (one who explains a word as conveying a significance quite different from its ordinary significance) and a mu‘awwil is by unanimous decision not a kafir." (I am writing this from memory and the original is in my papers at Lahore. But there is not the least doubt in my mind as to the words quoted being in their essence those of the Maulana).

This shows that after reading all the writings of the Mirza Sahib on the question of his alleged claim to prophethood, Maulana Abul Kalam came to the conclusion that he never laid claim to prophethood and explained his use of the word prophet as conveying a different significance from the usually received one.

Thus Maulana’s letters to the correspondent of the Zamindar settle at least one question, viz. that the Mirza Sahib was not a claimant to prophethood and that he was a Muslim and not a kafir.

We will now take the second question whether the Maulana looks upon the Qadianis as Muslims or kafirs. The Maulana considers them to be guilty of gholaww (exaggeration and exceeding the proper limits), but at the same time he considers them to be Muslims - Muslims who have strayed away from the right path. That is all that one Muslim can say about another. Their error is very great, and it shakes the very foundations of Islam, says the Maulana, but he has not been carried away by the senseless agitation to expel this or that group from the pale of Islam. It is the Holy Prophet’s verdict that they are Muslims - yes erring Muslims - but Muslims all the same. For, does not the Holy Prophet say: "Whoever says prayers as we do, and faces our Qibla and eats our dhabiha, - that one is surely a Muslim and for him is the covenant of Allah and the covenant of the Apostle of Allah, so do not violate the covenant of Allah"

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Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
cont.
(Bukhari, 8:28). And on a certain occasion when a man abused the Holy Prophet in his face, and the Holy Prophet would not suffer any harm be done to him because, he said, "perhaps he said prayers," Khalid remarked: "How many people there are who say prayers, yet there is on their lips what is not in their hearts." But the Holy Prophet rebuked him, saying: "I am not commanded to pierce the hearts of the people or to break open their secret thoughts" (Bukhari, 65:63).

The Maulana is thus a noble exception to the 'Ulama of the present day who care neither for the Holy Qur'an which says: "And say not to any one who offers you the (Islamic) salutation: Thou are not a believer" (4:94); nor yet for the Holy Prophet who clearly commanded that the covenant of God shall not be broken by calling a man Kafir who said prayers as the Muslims do. The Qadianis are undoubtedly shaking the very foundations of Islam by attributing prophethood to the Mujaddid of this century and by denouncing four hundred million of Muslims as kafirs because they do not believe in the prophethood of the Mirza Sahib, but with all those grievous errors they are Muslims, just as the Shias are Muslims though they abuse the companions of the Holy Prophet and denounce them as usurpers and just as so many other extremist sects are Muslims though they raise their leaders to the dignity of Godhead or the dignity of prophethood.

I now come to the third question: The Lahore section of the followers of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, or the Ahmadis as they are now generally called as distinguished from the Qadianis, Maulana Abul Kalam has, here too, set at rest one question, viz., that the Ahmadis do not believe in the prophethood of the Mirza Sahib, nor do they add any condition to the accepted conditions of the faith of Islam. This clearing of the position of the Ahmadis in Islam is also an important contribution to sane criticism in the Muslim camp, for sanity is a gift which is so rare among the Ulama, even among the general Muslim public, when they have to deal with the Ahmadis. Once, Mufti Kifayatullah, the head of the Jamiat-ul-Ulama of Delhi, committed the mad act of denouncing the Lahore Ahmadis as Kafirs because, he said, "They believed in the prophethood of Mirza Sahib," and this in spite of the fact that we have been carrying on an incessant war against the Qadianis regarding their belief in the prophethood of the Mirza Sahib and their denunciation of the forty crores of Muslims as kafirs.

While I am sincerely thankful to Maulana Abul Kalam for definitely and clearly upholding the truth in these three matters, that the Mirza Sahib never claimed to be a prophet, that the Qadianis in spite of their grievous errors are Muslims, and that the Ahmadis deny the prophethood of the Mirza Sahib and accept him only as a Mujaddid, adding nothing to the accepted doctrines of the faith of Islam, I must say that the Maulana has not done justice to us. He has every right to say that we are not on the true path, for to differ with others is the Muslim's birthright; the Maulana has a right to differ with us and we have a right to differ with the Maulana. But when he says that we have "stumbled" in a "misplaced belief which we have created for the Mirza Sahib," he is unjust to us. We have created no belief for the Mirza Sahib except only what the Qur'an and the Hadith say. For what is our belief regarding Mirza Sahib? We accept him as a Mujaddid and we accept him as fulfilling the prophecies relating to the advent of the Messiah among the Muslims. And the coming of Mujaddids and the advent of a Messiah are both based on Hadith.

As regards the first point, the Maulana was undoubtedly misunder-stood as denying the coming of Mujaddids when his two letters to the correspondent of the Zamindar appeared in the press. But the writer of Tadhkirah who describes the Mujaddid as the centre of all hope in the triumph of Islam could not deny the coming of Mujaddids. His words were surely strong, but he has tried to explain them away in a latter statement, and whether we accept or reject his explanation, we have no right to ascribe to him denial of the coming of Mujaddids now that he has reaffirmed his faith in their advent in very clear words. His real views on this point are met with in his famous writing, the Tadhkirah:

"These perfect ones are given the name of muhaddath in the hadith of Bukhari, and in them, too, is fulfilled the hadith relating to the appearance of Mujaddid, which has been narrated through various channels, and about its genuineness, therefore no doubt can be entertained." (p. 94)

"And these are the clear and manifest characteristics of the place of tajjid (the position of the Mujaddid), the vicegerency of prophethood, about which I have again and again said that the highest of heads must bow there." (p. 140)

Now when it is accepted that the Mujaddids must come, and the Hadith says that the commencement of every century of Hijra shall see the appearance of a Mujaddid, I fail to see how our belief about the Mirza Sahib being a Mujaddid of the fourteenth century is 'misplaced' when there is no one to claim that office, nor has any one else been unanimously accepted as the Mujaddid. In accepting Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as the Mujaddid of the fourteenth century we have bowed only before the Hadith of the Holy Prophet. One of the two positions must be accepted; either the hadith relating to the appearance of the Mujaddid is not genuine, which view is however strongly rejected by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, or Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is the Mujaddid of the 14th century, for there is neither another claimant nor has the Muslim world unanimously declared another man to be the Mujaddid of this century.

Now there remains only one point. Have we created any new belief in accepting the Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement as the Messiah that was to come among the Muslims? Happily Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, whose letters in the Zamindar raised apprehensions in some minds that he was denying the hadith referring to the advent of Messiah, has cleared his position in a later statement, and we are glad that he accepts the hadith. I am further certain that, like us, the Maulana also believes in the death of Jesus Christ. Now the position is this: The Messiah must come as the Hadith says, but Jesus Christ cannot be that Messiah because he died long ago. There is then no escaping the conclusion that the Messiah that is to come among

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MAN, SCIENCE & THE QUR'AN

By Khalifa Naseer-ud Din Siddiqi

It has become a truism to say that man's control over nature has far outstripped man's control over himself. Scientists, philosophers, psychologists repeat ad nauseum in their respective fields of inquiry and in their own exclusive jargon, this conundrum of modern civilization. Man's intelligence unaided by God has been his undoing. He has gained power and does not know what to do with it. In fact the most perfect version of creation up-to-date seems to be bogged in a nightmare of his own making; he is fast subsiding and crying 'help' in the direst straits.

But this phenomenon of man's abjection in basic conflicts and contradictions is the warp and woof of history. It has always spilled a fresh spurt in his spiritual and psychophysical evolution and, in the outcome, his accusing conscience, the Nafs-al-Law wama has got the better of the immoral tendencies, the Nafs-al-Allama and saved the situation. Let the biologists discover causes and reasons in errant humanity with preconceived Darwinist notions of the origin and nature of man; let them hug to their hearts the materialistic concept of the universe and insist on the entirely physiological character of the mind and ignore the soul and, inevitably in despair, shed tears over the imminent liquidation of the human species.

They cannot deny that schizophrenia, frustration, hippism, drug addiction and ever-increasing neurosis and mental derangement, etc., can only be traced to the temporary depression and deterioration in man's moral values and the passing phase of a decline in his spiritual consciousness. Why is it that the man of genuine religious conviction, irrespective of his denomination, is the only balanced individual in modern society. Scoffers and detractors of religion, on the other hand, are the main recruits to drug addiction, alcoholism, loose living, cynicism and despair about the future.

These pitiful specimen of humanity, these wails and orphans, the offal and refuse of a decadent civilisation, have posed a challenge to man's basic morality, his fundamental decency, his eternal values, or in one word, his soul. Having committed an outrage against their own nature by denying God and the world of the spirit, they have deprived themselves of the raison d'être of life on this planet, and strayed away from the very core and nucleus of universal reality, the all-pervading unity, homogeneity and identity in creation and the concept of human brotherhood which is its inevitable and inexcusable corollary. The diagnosis of this intellectual dishonesty and spiritual aberration is to be found, apart from the revolt against conventional religion and more particularly Christian dogma and Christian beliefs and Christian behaviour in the crass materialism of Darwinism and latterly Socialism; the complexes that they have engendered constitute the backdrop of the dark night of despair which has descended upon our age.

Both theories set out to analyze and explain biological and social phenomenon entirely with reference to the world of matter to the exclusion of the world of the spirit. To Darwin, who was otherwise a devout Christian, the mutations, permutations and combinations in ever-evolving living matter represented the survival of the fittest. The blind forces of nature observed the law of the jungle in which only physio-biological superiority has any chance to survive. Inferior organisms were eliminated or became extinct before more powerful and efficient organisms, irrespective of the right or wrong of it.

In actual fact, the right or wrong of the process of evolution never came into the picture. No single theory had done more damage to man's values, than Darwinism. It has contaminated the thinking of a whole century. The notion that man is a helpless victim of the forces of nature and that the law of might has prevailed ever since life was born, was appropriated by thinkers like Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx and a host of others not less eminent in world thought: a view of life in which material strength and political and military power were the only objectives worth living and dying for. All the evils of modern society, aggravated by industrialism, were heaped on the head of religion and its so called companions in crime, monarchy, feudalism, and capitalism.

Therefore, the Utopia the Marx sought to present to the world, and the society and State that Spencer and his like envisaged, ignored God altogether. The god of the state entered by one door and the God of mankind passed out of the other.

The view of the mind as an epiphenomenon is another of the foundlings from the litter which Darwinism scattered pellicell on poor civilisation. The survival of the biologically fittest having been accepted as the universal law, it was argued that mind (the soul being a fragment of the imagination and a legacy of discredited religion) was nothing but matter turned conscious. The Behaviourist school in psychology explained away human activity entirely with reference to physiology, ignoring consciousness altogether. The conditioned reflex became a fetish with all researchers according to whom the complexities of mental life were owing to its innumerable permutations and combinations. The body-mind controversy, psycho-physical parallelism and similar standpoints which held the field for a century were effectively nipped in the bud by the elimination of a dispensable and sparable entity, viz., the human mind.

The reaction, however, was bound to come sooner or later. The mind was restored but not entirely rehabilitated with the advent of Freud, Bergson, Jung and Adler. The motivating forces of human behaviour were glimpsed in coloured glasses and explained away in terms which further complicated the basic issues, so unceremoniously dismissed by the materialists. Notwithstanding all these new departures, the nature of the mind remained obscure to the psychologists, who, partly succumbing to the plague of Darwinism and partly swamped by other godless ideologies which were coming into vogue, attempted to seek the genesis of the human mind and personality in the conflicts and complexes, the inhibitions and patterns, the life forces, etc., etc. The modern version of psycho-physical parallelism is an elaborate attempt to discover the mental counter-parts of the human brain in the lower, middle and high areas representing its evolutionary manifestations. The disparity between man's moral qualms and his self-destroying propensities was traced to continued on next page
some mysterious and inexplicable defect developed in the course of evolution. It was nevertheless conceded that in spite of the abjectness and helplessness of man before inexorable evolution, he is capable of rising above himself on account of his morality, his intelligence and his freedom of action. It is, therefore, self-evident that the dilemma facing science today is either to enthrone an entirely materialistic view of the universe or pay homage to a spiritual interpretation as envisaged by the Revealed Word, the last and the latest being the Holy Qur'an. Science has not yet irrevocably made up its mind about either alternative. Its approach to this issue is either indifference or hostility to the realm of the spirit, which is not amenable to control and manipulation like ordinary matter.

The Holy Qur'an has drawn the line of demarcation between nature and man, between the material and the immaterial, between the physical and the supra-physical, between science and the knowledge of God. The supra-physical world directs and controls the physical world and is not just a coexisting entity. The Qur'anic view of man and the universe which human beings harness for their ends and purposes:

“Hast not thou considered that God has subjected (to His laws) for your good whatever is in the earth.” (22:65)

not only pre-supposes the pre-eminence of the human personality of free will and of intelligence but also the exercise of them within the framework of the moral law laid down by it:

“Alif, Lam, Mim. This grand Book! There is no doubt that it is a guidance for the use of the reverent: Who believe in the (Great) Unseen, And keep up the prayer, And out of what We have provided them with Do they spend; And who believe in what has been sent to thee (O Muhammad) And what was sent before thee; And full faith have they in the Future.” (2:1-4)

His status of the vicegerent of Allah on earth with power over matter and nature which he wields freely intelligently but within bounds of the moral law, is a trust that he must discharge till the account is rendered on the Day of Judgement. The two fundamentals of the moral law, unity of God and brotherhood of man are in fact identical and inseparable. The belief in and surrender (Islam) to the only diety, Allah and Rabb, is the inescapable obligation of the human species, irrespective of caste, creed, or colour. Before the one God the Almighty, all men are equal. The Rabb, the Creator, the Nourisher and the Sustainer makes no distinction between them.

Man was not only born free but equal and akin, so that no human being can claim superiority over his fellow on any score whatsoever. The nemesis of science is that man's ingenuity has acquired power in politics and technology in the West without the spiritual strength and courage to use it for the good of fellow beings in the East. The Western man is powerful but race-minded and hence immoral. He is not inclined to share his good luck with the East because the Eastern man is not his equal being beyond the pale of a superior European civilisation. While he conceives verbally the equality of the human race, he is determined not to squander his money and land to lesser breeds. The Qur'an emphatically announces the fate of the arrogant, the tyrant and the unjust:

“And be not cheeky towards men and walk not in the earth struttingly. Surely God loves no conceited booster.” (31:18)

The aim of the Qur'an was to inculcate humility and humanism, the antithesis of pride and arrogance, which are the most obvious characteristics of the dominant white race of today. Through humility and self-surrender the Muslim is made poignantly conscious of kinship with his fellow men. Therefore, he is spiritually and psychologically attuned and adjusted and keyed up to fulfil obligations laid down for him. Not for charity and pity, not for exercising the qualities of patronage and condescension, but as the discharge of a trust, a duty to be fulfilled, a right to be acknowledged and implemented. This view of man and his environment is the crux of the teaching of the Qur'an.

The recipient enjoys an inalienable right which no earthly power can take away. The intense consciousness of obedience to the law comes from the revolutionary and equalitarian nature of Islam, which, in fact, set the model for the much later humanistic movements of the post-Renaissance era. The dignity and status of man, as a member of a non-racial and fraternal society, in which the freedom of the individual was guaranteed, provided he adhered to the universal law: Oneness of God and Brotherhood of Man. The drum-beaters of the West have attributed every conceivable credit to the Renaissance and totally ignored the humanism of the spirit that Islam ushered in long before. The phoney character of this so-called revolution in men’s ideas is well-exposed by Thorkild: “No one has ever proved its existence, no one has really tried to. It is too suggesting of a sensational, miraculous, extra-ordinary, magical, human and intellectual development, like unto the phoenix rising from its ashes after 500 years, etc., etc.”

The Qur'an and its votaries which had shaped the thinking of the middle ages, is unquestionably the background and the main motivating force of all humanistic and spiritual movements in the West, Protestantism, freedom of thought and the concepts of unity of nature and God and rational faith, which most of the post-Renaissance philosophers like Roger Bacon, Kant and Bergson enunciated on the same lines as the Qur'an and the Muslim thinkers.

The society of Islam from its inception has been a raceless society, the institutions of prayer and the mosque lent solidarity, unity and permanence to it, besides imparting and inculcating moral, intellectual and disciplinary attitudes in the business of life. For all social welfare activities, for religious instructions and the acquisition of knowledge, for communal purposes, for military organisation and for a host of other beneficent and collective ends the mosque was the pivot and the centre. In a society taking its cues in all spheres of human activity from the equality, brotherhood and mutual sympathy and co-operation, immoral and violent behaviour is unthinkable. The Imams were true leaders and guides of their flock. By precept and example, they husbanded the moral and material

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resources of society and kept mischief and unsocial behaviour in check.

Compare our society with that of our predecessors and the ills and maladies rampant among us can be correctly diagnosed. We are devoid of communal unity, oblivious of the problems of the poor, the jobless and the needy, ignorant of the ingredients of our faith, indifferent to the education of our children on Islamic lines, and unfeeling about the fate of our disintegrating social order, because we have lost touch with the basic Quranic institution of prayer in assembly and the mosque.

Unless these are revived, we shall keep floundering and blundering in formulating our educational policy.

The Quran gives priority to education, and discipline over everything else:

"And We cause to be sent down the Quran. What is a healing and a mercy to the faithful. And it increases nothing to the unjust but loss.

And when We send blessings upon man he turns aside and withdraws himself. And when evil touches him, he becomes despairing.

Say: Each one acts according to his method (behaviour-pattern). But your Lord knows best as to him who is better guided in the path." (17:82-84)

This is the rule of conduct of the Quran which Muslims have failed to appreciate as a guide to their total life—material and spiritual. Therefore, it says:

"Do they not use deliberation with regard to the Quran? Or are there locks on their hearts?" (47:24)

The Quran registers a warning against the trials and tribulations facing man:

And We will discipline you with something. Of fear. And hunger. And loss of property. And of lives. And of fruits; And give glad tidings to the preserving ones— Who, when a happening happens to them. Say. 'Surely to God we belong and surely to Him we return.' These are the people upon whom be greetings from their Lord. And mercy: And these be the people who are guided." (2:155-157)

The Quran reminds us:

"And as for man whom his Lord disciplines him so that He honours him and blesses him; then he says: 'My Lord has honoured me.' But when He disciplines him so that He measures out his provision. Then he says: 'My Lord has degraded me.' Nay, but you do not honour the orphan. Nor do you urge the feeding of the poor. And you squander the property left by the deceased persons and great squandering. And you love wealth with a whole-hearted love." (89:15-20)

If one were to ponder deeply on the social and economic malaise in human society, one would sense the truth and feel the impact of the four causes thereof mentioned in this verse, viz. (i) rejection of the orphan; (ii) neglect in feeding the poor; (iii) devouring of other people's provisions and (iv) lust for accumulation of wealth. This is the analysis of man's conduct which in its depth of feeling and meaning and its universal import has no peer in philosophy or religion. The paramount duty of man is to worry about his brothers in distress and desist from exploiting them. Food, clothing and shelter is the first pre-requisite of civilisation, the provision of which is a must for man and society and of course the government of the day. The cardinal sin is accumulation of wealth, the prevention of which is again the bounden duty of man, society and government.

As you ponder over the Quran you cannot fail to observe and feel that it aims primarily at the education and moral discipline of the individual and the society to which he belongs. It speaks of the discipline of the soul and the freedom of the will at the same time, but the discipline is not irksome and freedom is not license:

"God burdens not any soul But according to its capacity.

For it (be) what it earns And against it (also) what it does." (2:286)

Again in:

"But he did not believe nor did he pray And he declared it a lie and turned-back. Then he went back to his family strutting." (75:31-33)

The code of life according to the Quran is:

"And those in whose wealth there is a fixed portion For the beggar and the wretched." (70:24-25)

All surplus wealth must go the amelioration of poverty and the eradication of economic disparity. Again:

"And God distinguishes some of you above the others in the means of livelihood Then those who are distinguished do not give back their means of livelihood to those whom their right hands possess so that they may be equal therein. Is it then that they deny the blessings of God?" (16:71)

Instead of helping the needy, the serfs and slaves of the capitalist and the feudal lord, you succumbed to the evil, and the inevitable consequence of such an immoral attitude was:

"Who gathers wealth and guards it." (104:2)

"We will make him reach the unhappy end by gradual stages." (92:10)

The physical and spiritual states of man spring from three sources, according to the Quran: the first is the Nafs-e-Ammara, which signifies the spirit or the part of the soul prone to evil. Thus it says:

"Surely the soul is indeed prone to evil, Excepting such as my Lord may be merciful to." (12:53)

It is the nature of the Nafs-i-Ammara that it inclines man to evil, tends to lead him into iniquities and immoral paths and stands in the way of his attainment of perfection and moral excellence. Man's natural proneness is to evil at a certain state in his development, when he does not walk in the light of true wisdom and knowledge but acts at the behest of his animality, the heritage from the past that he must outgrow. It is when he acquires self-control and the capacity to know good from evil that his Nafs-i-Lawwama or the self-accusing soul comes into play:

"And again Nay! I call to witness the self-blaming soul." (75:2)

Now it is that he has outgrown his animality and curbed it by rationality so that the rational animal has emerged. But the awakening conscience is not yet master of the situation and is likely to deviate from the path of duty. The flesh sometimes has the upper hand but the soul revolts against the violation of the law. This constitutes the stepping stone to the third stage—the Nafs-i-Mutma'ina the contented soul—which is the source of all spiritual qualities:

"O soul made tranquil! Come back to thy Lord satisfying and satisfied. Therefore enter thou amongst My servants, And enter thou in My garden." (89:27-30)

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Man, Science & the Qur'an cont.

At this stage the soul is freed from all weaknesses and frailties and is braced with spiritual strength. It is perfectly united with God and cannot live without Him. It is in this life that the soul is capable of access to paradise. The same idea is expressed elsewhere in the Qur'an. He who has purified the soul is saved and shall not be destroyed but he who gave vent to unbridled earthly passions should surely despair of life:

"By the soul and Him who perfected it. Then He taught it the way of its ruin and the way of its safety. Surely he succeeds who purifies it: And surely ruined is he who corrupts it." (91:7-10)

The main objectives of the Qur'an being educative and disciplinary, let us see what guidance it can give us to curb the evil in us. According to the teaching of the Qur'an, the physical nature of man is complementary to his spiritual self, so that his physiological reactions when governed and directed by the law acquire a moral character. The golden means:

"And eat and drink, But waste not;" (7:31)

turns the appetites and the passions into constructive moral conduct. The bodily needs are not to be shunned like ascetics and hermits, but their indissoluble links with the soul must be acknowledged:

"And most surely We have made man from an extract of clay. Then we placed him as a sperm in a firm resting place. And then We made the clot into a lump of flesh. Then We made the lump of flesh into bones, And We dressed the bones with muscles. Thereafter We evolved him into another make. Therefore blessed by God, the Best to make." (23:12-14)

This miracle of the emergence of the soul is further described in:

"So that when I have formed him into a complete shape And I have breathed into him of my spirit, Then start bowing down to him." (15:29)

The Holy Qur'an has applied itself abundantly to the reformation of the physical state of man's life. It gives us the most valuable and minute directions on all matters of importance in man's earthly existence.

The reformation of man was destined to be brought about at a period of the grossest immorality and ungodliness in human history. In Arabia proper and the rest of the then habitable world, Persia and Byzantine, man had descended to the lowest depths of misery and sin. The Qur'an alludes to this in:

"Evil has appeared on land and sea." (30:41)

"Know ye that God quickens the earth after its death." (57:17)

In this year of grace, the fag end of 1983, the world possesses many features which remind us of the scene before Islam's advent. The same disregard of spiritual values, of morality, the same licentiousness, the same laxity in relations between the sexes, alcoholism, gambling, etc., etc., side by side with the exploitation of the masses who live in grinding poverty and destitution. Both on land and sea, corruption and chaos and mass murder through wars and genocide have raised their heads. Man is in the direst straits in his history. He is groping for his lost soul in the dark night of despair and frustration. The day of the tyrant is past; the common man has seen through the treachery and perfidy of the wielders of power, the politicians and the technologists, the capitalists and the Marxists, one and all bent upon destroying his soul.

The Quranic view of the soul as the determining factor in man's conduct is an entity which has the final say in all human activity. It is not synonymous with mind which is only a recording machine of the sensations, perceptions and feelings of the individual. The raw material of experience is the gist of the mill of the soul. It manifests itself as the Nafs-i-Ammara when it is deprived of the inspiration and guidance of the next higher self.

The Nafs-i-Lawwama of the individual, a moral dynamism, is the driving force and mainspring of human behaviour. Body and mind are parts of a whole and not coextensive or parallel; they are aspects of a continuous and never-ceasing process of appreciating and experiencing the self and the physical environment so as to accumulate the stuff for the working of the soul, the overseeing and controlling authority, the final arbiter of the decisions of man through the exercise of free will in the framework of the moral and spiritual values of Divine Law: Unity of God and Brotherhood of Man.

The Promised Messiah Speaks cont.

mind that hypocritical love would not avail in the least. Nay such peace is a poisonous seed which will give a fatal fruit in the end. Peace is no doubt an excellent thing, the one thing that can be desired, but remember that peace and abuse cannot live in the same heart. Are you then prepared, my friends! to take this step to lay the basis of the long desired union by accepting this principle of peace, viz., that as we regard those rishis and prophets of yours, who are accepted and highly revered by millions of your people, as truthful and righteous servants of God, you also may in like manner believe with a sincere heart in the prophethood of our Holy Prophet Mohammad and unite with us in reciting the holy words which are so dear to every Muslim's heart (La ilaha illallaho Mohammadur-Rasool Ullah) i.e., "There is no deity but Allah and Mohammad is the Apostle of God."

My friends! I entreat you to join with us in advancing towards that goal of peace and union for which we have already started, and thus deal a death-blow to the hatred and ill-feeling which is eating away our world. We do not require you to do anything which we have not ourselves done first and our requisition relates only to a condition which we have already satisfied. To uproot all enmities and to establish a true and sincere union, it is sufficient that as we look upon your prophets and avatars as true prophets of God, you should also express a belief in the truth of our Holy Prophet and make this declaration public. We cannot, of course, act in accordance with all your current beliefs, for Almighty God has informed us that the scriptures which are in your hands have had alterations and changes made in them by human hands. Moreover, your own religious differences are so great that the beliefs of one sect contradict those of another, and it is useless to enter into these discussions, for the final commandment of God as contained in the Holy Qur'an has freed us from all other obligations. Therefore all we desire of you is that you should believe in the truth of our scriptures and prophets in the same manner as we believe in the truth of your scriptures and prophets.

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THE CHRISTMAS TREE GOING TO BLOSSOM
by Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi

Unchristian Christmas

Indeed, the world lives on phrases which it goes on repeating till some thinker makes breach in the solid wall of conformity. We see in the Christian calendar from 1642 to 1652, Puritan authorities trying hard to eliminate this unchristian humbug, when all exhibitions of gaiety and happiness were held sinful and a law was made forbidding anyone to celebrate Christmas on pain of arrest and punishment. However, Christmas history is replete with instances of degeneration of its principles being split up in High Church, Broad Church, Low Church and no-Church extremities.

What the Scholars say

It is a bare fact that Jesus was not born on the 25th of December. It is now admitted even by Christian scholars of the twentieth century. The Qur'an, however, proclaimed it fourteen hundred years before.

"Christmas and Epiphany festivals are of much later date than Easter and Pentecost, and were probably unknown till A.D. 300."2

"The Christian usage was to celebrate the death of remarkable persons rather than birth... In fifth century the Western Church ordered the feast to be celebrated on the day of the Mithraic rites of the birth of the sun and the close of the Saturnalia as no certain knowledge of the day of the Christ's birth existed. Among the German and Celtic tribes the winter solstice was considered an important point of the year and to commemorate the return of sun. They held their chief festival of Yule, which like other celebrations, was adopted by the Christians. Most of the customs now associated are pre-Christian and non-Christian customs taken up by the Christian Church. Saturnalia, a Roman feast celebrated in mid December, provided for many of the merry-making customs of Christmas."3

"There is no authoritative tradition as to the day and month of Christ's birth and same uncertainty exists as to the actual year. St. Clement of Alexandria refers to calculations which places it in April or May. Some such date would better accord with the Gospel statement that shepherds were watching their flocks by night than 25th December, which falls in the cold and rainy season in the hill country of Judae. The choice of 25th December in the West was chiefly due to the two following considerations: In the first place, Hippolitus, Tartullian and Philocean calendar named 25th March date of the Crucifixion (assigned for the spring equinox in the calendar of Julius Caesar), it may have been settled arbitrarily, so as to make the date of the creation of the world. The crucifixion could not, in fact, have occurred on 25th March but the tradition referred to by such authorities evidently reflects the official Roman ecclesiastical reckoning."4

The choice of this (Christmas) may be due to general recognition that the winter solstice was the turning point of the year; all things seem to prepare then for a fresh period of life and activity after the winter sleep of death. The Rome festival of the winter solstice was celebrated on 25th December. The Celtic and Germanic tribes held this season in veneration from the earliest times and the Norsemen believed that the deities were present and active on earth from 25th December to 6th January. Many other ancient beliefs and customs about this period have been handed down to our times and have crept into Christian usage. The lighting of Yule log was derived from Lithuanic folk-lore. Decorating houses is pagan in its origin, and the Mistletoe was the sacred plant of the Druids (ancient Egyptian Priests). Presenting gifts at this festival has been taken from the Romans. Christmas tree was introduced in England in the reign of Queen Victoria through her German husband.5

"It is impossible to determine the exact date of the birth of the Christ either from the evidence of the Gospels or from any sound tradition. During the first three centuries of the Christian era there was considerable opposition in the church to the pagan custom of celebrating birthdays. Although there was some indication that a purely religious commemoration of the birth of Christ was included in the feast of the Epiphany in England, the Puritans condemned the celebration from 1642

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to 1654, issued a series of ordinances forbidding all church services and festivities."

"Gospel according to Mark begins not with birth and childhood of Jesus, but with his baptism. The great church adopted Christmas much later than Epiphany. . . There were many speculations in the second century about the date of Christ's birth. Clement of Alexandria, towards the close, mentions and condemns them as superstitions. Some chronologists, he says, alleged the birth to have occurred in twenty-eighth year of Augustus on 25th of pachone, the Egyptian month that is 20th of May. Others set it on 24th or 25th of Phurmuthi i.e. 25th April. Clement himself sets it on the 17th of November 3 B.C. Some people say it was Wednesday; others hold it to be Friday, and still others say it was Sunday and 28th of March. Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the church, and before the 5th century there was no general consensus of opinion as to when it should come in the calendar, whether on January 6 or March 25 or December 25. The exact day and year of Christ's birth have never been satisfactorily settled, but when the fathers of Church in 349 decided upon a date to celebrate the event, they wisely chose the day of the winter solstice, which was firmly fixed in the minds of the people and which was their most important festival . . . The second birth (baptism) was more renown than his first, for now the God of Majesty is inscribed as his father, but then at his first birth Joseph, was assumed to be his father. He hath more honour who cries aloud from the heaven (God the father) than who labours upon earth."

"Concerning the date of Christ's birth the Gospels give no help; indeed upon their dates contradictory arguments are based, the census would have been impossible in winter, the whole population could not then be put on motion, again in winter it must have been; then only field labour was suspended. But Lamps has shown (1785) page 219: that there is no month in the year to which respectable authorities have not assigned Christ's birth."

"Not only in Mark but even in John the latest of the Gospels, only Matthew and Luke deal with the birth and childhood of Jesus and the two accounts are irreconcilably at variance. . . In fact its (Matthew's) vague and unclear statements which perplex the interpreter. . . The chronological difficulties with which the learned subtility has struggled in vain for centuries can only be indicated here. When Matthew places the nativity within the reign of Herod and the return from Egypt in that of Archilus his successor, the birth of Christ is thereby determined to have been some years earlier. The census carried out in Palestine by order of Augustus under P. Sulpicius Quirinius, the Governor of Syria. This cannot be conceived as having been carried out before the deposition of Archelaus in 6 A.D., and in point of fact it is attested for this date by Josephus. This essential fact for the narrative of Luke-the census by Quirinius in Palestine cannot be assigned to a date earlier than 6 A.D. Luke, however, is in contradiction not only with Matthew but also with himself; for at the outset of his narrative (1:5) he places the event in the days of Herod, the King of the Jews. The two data are separated by an interval of more than ten years. No trustworthy date at all can be obtained from the accounts of the nativity that have reached us. The Gospels say nothing as to the day of nativity. The church fixed it by mythological analogy."

Bishop Barnes writes: There is, moreover, no authority for the belief that December 25th as the actual birthday of Jesus. If we can give any credence to the birth-story of Luke, 'with the shepherds keeping watch by nights in the field near Bethlehem', the birth of Jesus did not take place in winter, when the night temperature is so low in the hill country of Judaea that snow is not uncommon. After much argument our Christmas day seems to have been accepted about A.D. 300. Bishop Barnes than goes on to relate that the 25th of December was taken from the Persian cult; Mithra being the god of the invincible sun, and his festival day was suitably that on which, after the winter solstice the sun again began clearly to show its strength."

It is very perplexing to many to find that he (Jesus) was actually born four years before the time from which we count his birth. The simple reason is that no one calculated the dates from the birth of Christ till centuries after he was born, and then Dionysius Eusignus, the monk who published the calculations in A.D. 526, made a mistake of four years. He placed the birth of Christ in the year of Rome (A.U.C.) 754. But Herod the Great, who slew the innocents of Bethlehem, died in April of the year 750; so that Christ must have been born several months before or not later than the end of 749."

The Summary

1. The festivity of Christmas was unknown to the early Christians as the Qur'an says: They have no knowledge of it, nor had their forefathers... they speak nothing but a lie.

2. As no certain knowledge of the birthday of Jesus existed, the Mithraic birthday of the sun was adopted. The Qur'an plainly asserts, "Say: O People of the Book, exaggerate not in the matter of your religion unjustly, and follow not the low desires of people who went astray before and led many astray, and went astray from the right path."

3. It is impossible to determine the exact date of the birth of Jesus from the Gospels, the Qur'an states plainly: And with those who say we are Christians, we made a covenant but they neglected a portion of that wereof they were reminded.

4. The rites and customs were borrowed from the pre-Christian Pagans. "They imitate the saying of those who disbeliefed before."

5. Among the early Christians there was opposition to the commemoration of these Pagan practices (from 1642 to 1652 it was punishable). The Qur'an's verdict on this is: These our People (Christians) have taken gods (doctors of law) beside Him (The God). Why do they not bring clear authority for them? Who is then more unjust than he who forges a lie against God."

6. There are many speculations about the date of Christ's birth. As the Qur'an plainly states: "But they became divided into sects, each party rejoicing in that which was with them."

"Of these who split up their religion and became parties; every sect rejoicing in that which is with it."

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7. The common belief that the birth of Jesus took place of 25th December is absolutely wrong. According to the verdict of learned scholars it is the day of the sun’s worship.

8. Another view is that he was born on the 6th January. (A great lie rolls like a snow ball.)

9. Some chronologists say, it was on 20th May, but this also is only an illusion.

10. Others guess it to be 28th of April.

11. Clement of Alexandria asserts it was 20th November.

12. Some say it was Wednesday.

13. Others declare it to be Sunday.

14. There are still others who aver it was Friday.

15. Some novices say it was 28th of March.

16th. The exact date, month, and year have never been satisfactorily settled.

17. Christ’s birth from his father Joseph, the carpenter, has remained unnoticed and discredited.

18. His second birth (baptism by John) is considered honourable (but practically unnoticed).

19. The question is, why the Christian world commemorates the birth of Jesus from Joseph, the carpenter, if he was really born the day of baptism.

20. If there were two births, one from Joseph, the carpenter, and the second from God at the time of his baptism, then why do the Christians believe that Mary was found with child of the Holy Ghost, before they (Joseph and Mary) came together. (Matthew, 1:18)

21. Luke, however, is in contradiction not only with Matthew but also with him; for at the outset of his narrative (L:5) he places the event in the days of Herod, the king of the Jews (who died four years before the birth of Jesus).

22. There are so many guesses about the day, date, month and year of birth of Jesus that Scholars seem to be suffering from a plethora of surmises, conjectures and hypotheses.

Miracle of the Qur’an and its Verdict on the Birth of Jesus

Now listen to the true revelation of the Qur’an. According to it, “no knowledge have they (the Christians) thereof, nor had their fore-fathers... They speak not but a lie.” The Qur’an 1400 years ago proclaimed this phenomenon which Christians have now admitted in the twentieth century, namely, that it was absolutely wrong to say that Jesus was born on 25th December or even in I.A.D. He was born 6 years earlier than that. There are two chapters in the Qur’an in which Christianity has been discussed. The history of Christianity, according to it, can be divided into two periods. In the first period they were hiding in catacombs, on account of severe persecution while there oppressors enjoyed wordly pomp and splendour. But in this oppressed state of life, they were worshipping the only one true God. The Qur’an relates that early savants said to the pseudo-Christians: “These our people have taken (the doctors of law) as gods beside Him, why do they not bring clear authority for them? Who is then more unjust than he who forges a lie against God?”

These righteous men remained in their caves for three hundred years, that is, Christianity itself remained in hiding during this period, till the conversion of Constantine the Great, who was the emperor of Rome. It is a fact of history that in the year 325 A.D. he embraced Christianity with the result that the time of hiding in catacombs came to an end. In 325, twenty-five years are that of the life of Jesus, but we know he was 31 years old at the time of his prosecution, so there is a miscalculation of six years in the Christian calendar as already stated above. It is reported in the Qur’an, “And they remained in their cave three hundred years and add nine.” The history of Christianity, which runs like an undercurrent in the story of the Companions of the Cave, finds a clear expression now. There is no tradition that the companions of the cave remained in the cave for full three hundred years. It is a fact that Christianity rose to power with the conversion of Constantine, and at the same time it lost its purity with the formulation of the doctrine of Trinity, which was promulgated in 325 A.D. It is now almost agreed that Jesus Christ was born six years before the reputed date of his birth. (As admitted in Bishop Barnes’ reference quoted above.)

Therefore, according to the edict of the Qur’an, we are passing now-a-days in 1970 not in 1964, hence Jesus was born 1970 years ago, not 1964 years. In other words 1964 years before he was not a babygod in swaddling clothes lying in the manger but at that time he was a well-grown boy of six playing in the carpenter’s shop. The author has many proofs of it. 1. As the census mentioned by Luke was held in I.A.D.

2. Herod had died in 4 B.C. Hence it is a fact that Christian calendar is wrong and therein is a mistake of not only one, two or three years but of six years. What a marvellous miracle of the Qur’an to have pointed out this error which even its enemies have admitted. But they are reluctant to correct their calendar for fear of public ridicule. There is another eye-opening wonder of the Holy Qur’an. An important and most pertinent question is: In which part of the year was Jesus born? The Qur’an indicates that when the pangs of child-birth drove Mary, the mother of Jesus, to take refuge under the shadow of a palm tree and the period of pains and pangs got prolonged and she was crying due to her throes, God said to her: ‘And shake towards thee the trunk of the palm tree, it will drop on the ripe dates of tree’. This verse of the Holy Qur’an throws a flood of light on the question: in which month Jesus was born. It was the month in which dates ripen, that is, August. In her pains of child-birth, coming under the shadow of Palm Tree, there is a symbol, very deep in meaning, for it is a sotry narrated about three great religious personalities of the world—Zoroaster, Buddha and Jesus, the son of Mary. Mary symbolises Christianity as Sara and Hagar are allegorical figures of Jews and Muslims; in the book of Galatians, her pains of child-birth are the problems confronting Christendom, while the Palm Tree and dates symbolize Islam or its cure. Mary (Christianity) suffers from pains and pangs i.e. fallacious creeds and the intellectual absurdities arising therefrom that baffle the Christian scholars from time to time; their panacea and cure is dates which symbolize Islam. In the scriptures date palm is a symbol of elegance and grace. The evergreen foliage and abundance of

continued on next page
The Way of Life
(after a poem of Muhammad Iqbal)

The mass-minded mud of the river bank said,
In all of my existence I have sought for self-knowledge,
to know what I am—but the purpose of my presence only eludes me.

Hearing this, the swift-moving wave of the water replied,
the secret of life and life's essence is motion:
I am so long as I continue to flow;
should I cease to go onward,
I would cease to be known.

The love that paints,
in enchanting colors,
the leaves of the tulip,
plants in my heart
the spider of tumult.
In the earth whose veins
are pale and dusty,
the life-blood of love
more rudely flows.

Man,
man is the instrument
for the songs of love.
God made the world
and man models on it.
Is he not then
conjoined with creating?

If the heart had been only
the lackey of reason,
no spark could have kindled
this cold clay of life.
In the tavern of existence
no word had been uttered,
had love not stirred up
its passionate cry.

It is the fire of pathos
that ignites this heart;
and tears of blood in the eyes
engender keenness of sight
for the forms they survey.
So that he who calls
love madness, remains estranged
from the secret of life.

For in the gardens,
the breezes of springtime
are the gifts of love;

and in the fields,
love brings blossoms
like the stars of the sky.
the rays of love's light
spindle down through the oceans
and give to dark fishes
this unfailing guide.

David Sparenberg

The Christmas Tree
cont.
delicious fruit make it a type of
righteousness. Solomon the Great sings the beauty of his beloved Mahamadim
(Muhammad) in these terms: "This thy stature is like a palm tree... I said
I will go up to the palm tree I will take
hold of the boughs thereof."

For all the thorns, pangs and
difficulties of Christianity, the cure is to
come under the Palm Tree or shadow of
Islam and seek sustenance from the ripe
dates of Islam.

This idea is not an innovation; the
Qur'an itself claims:
"Does one of you like to have a
garden of palm and vines with streams
flowing in it—he has therein all kinds of
fruits and old age has overtaken him
and he has weak offspring, when (lo) a
whirlwind with fire in it smites it so it
becomes blasted. Thus Allah makes the
messages clear to you that you may
reflect."'

Fifteen centuries old sickness of
Christianity can be cured only by
the panacea of Islam. As proved earlier,
Gospels are at variance not only with
each other but every Gospel is
contradictory with itself.

Ponder over these words of the
Qur'an, "And make the trunk of the
palm tree towards thee, thou will cause
ripe dates to fall upon thee." The
equivalent of 'ripe dates' in the Qur'an
is rutaban janiyya which has only eight
letters in Arabic script. The numerical
strength of these letters (as confirmed
even by the Hebrew scholars) is 325, the
exact year of the conversion of
Constantine and end of the purity of the
teachings of Jesus. At that very time
Christians gave up the creed of the unity
of God and became Trinitarians. The
Qur'an very reasonably diagnoses the
chronic disease of Christianity. It is

1635 years old. A further proof of the
birth of Jesus in the 8th month of the
year i.e. August is, that there are eight
letters in rutaban janiyya according to
the script of the Qur'an, i.e., it was 8th
month or August in which dates became
ripe in Judea. Therefore, my dear
friends, I invite you to come under the
Shadow of Palm Tree which is a symbol
of Islam, the true religion of Jesus and
of all the prophets of the world. May
Allah guide you to it.

NOTES FOR
The Christmas Tree Blossom

1. "She brought forth her first-born son, and
wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in
a manger, because there was no room for them in
the inn." (Luke, 2:7)
2. James Hastings, Dictionary of Christ and
Gospels, Art. 'Christmas'.
3. Encyclopaedia of America Art. 'Christmas'.
'Christmas'.
6. Collier's Encyclopaedia. Art. 'Christmas'.
7. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Art. 'Christmas'.
9. Cheyne, Encyclopaedia Biblica, Art. 'Nativity'.
42.
12. The Qur'an, xviii. 5.
13. Ibid., v. 77.
15. Ibid., xi. 30.
16. Ibid., xviii. 15.
17. Ibid., xxiii. 53; 23. 53.
18. Ibid., xxx. 82.
19. Ibid., xviii. 15.
20. Ibid., xviii. 25 "Add nine" i.e. according to the
lunar Calendar.
22. The Qur'an, xix. 25.
24. Psalm, 92, 12, Jer., 12, 3; Rev., 7. 9.
25. Solomon's Song. 7. 7.
26. The Qur'an, ii. 266.
27. Ibid., xix. 25.
OUT of the many religions in the world, to-day only Islam and Christianity could be called world-wide missionary religions. While Islam enjoins its followers to honour and respect the founders of other known religions of the world, it is a pity that quite a number of non-Muslim writers have not done justice to Islam and its founder, although it can be proved that all the known founders of the Faith had predicted the advent of the Prophet Muhammad, the final and universal Messenger of God.

Still there have been some great non-Muslim writers, mostly Christian, who have been just and fair enough when commenting on Islam and its founder Muhammad (may God’s blessings be on him). For the first time in Western literature it was Goethe the famous German poet and philosopher who represented Muhammad without reserve as a prophet - a true prophet of God. A few of such other opinions and quotations are given below:

1. "The most successful of all the Prophets and religious personalities" (Encyclo. Brit., 11th Edn.).

2. "The driving force of his life was his belief in the unity of Allah and his desire to bring his people to this belief. He showed deep sincerity and must have been a man of unusual personality and charm, for he not only bound to himself men of different types, but also kept their devotion..."

3. "In his private character he showed amiability, loyalty, tenderness towards his family and a forgiving spirit. He lived at the height of his power in extreme simplicity..." (Chamber’s Encyclopaedia under the headline “Muhammad”).

4. "Other men have been monotheistic in the midst of idolaters but no other man has founded a strong and monotheistic religion. The distinction in his case was his resolution that other men should believe...certainly he had two of the most important characteristics of the Prophetic order. He saw the truth about God which his fellow-men did not see and he had an irresistible inward impulse to publish this truth..." (Dr. Marcus Dodds, about Muhammad in his book Muhammad, Buddha and Christ).

5. "We shall see, moreover, that the Koran is an exceedingly human document, reflecting every phase of Muhammad’s personality and standing in close relationship to the outward events in his life; so that here we have materials of unique and incontestable authority for tracing origin and early development of Islam as do not exist in the case of Buddhism or Christianity or any other ancient religion" (Professor R.A. Nicholson in his Literary History of the Arabs, London, 1914).

6. "By a fortune absolutely unique in history, Muhammad is a threefold founder, of a nation, of an empire and of a religion...Muhammad to the end of his life claimed that title only with which the highest philosophy and the truest Christianity will one day, I venture to believe, agree in yielding him, that of a Prophet, a very Prophet of God..." (R. Bosworth Smith in his Muhammad in Muhammadanism, London, 1874).

7. "Bernard Shaw, the famous writer and critic, opined that if a man like Muhammad were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it much needed peace and happiness."

8. "In his private dealings he was just. He treated friends and strangers, the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak, with equity, and was beloved by the common people for the affability with which he received them, and listened to their complaints" (Washington Irving, Mohomet and His Successors. London, 1909, p. 193).

9. "...His (Muhammad’s) memory was capacious and retentive, his wit easy and social, his imagination sublime, his judgment clear, rapid and decisive. He possessed the courage of both thought and action; and although his design might gradually expand with his success the first idea which he entertained of his divine mission bears the stamp of an original and superior genius" (Edward Gibbon, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, London, 1838-39. Vol. V, p. 335).

Mahatma Gandhi, the great Hindu leader, on reading a book on the life of the Prophet, wrote in his newspaper, Young India, an extract from which is given below:

"...I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for pledges, his friends and followers, their intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle...It is enough for me to know that he was a man among millions who tried to walk in the fear of God, died a poor man, wanted no grand mausoleum for his mortal remains and did not forget even on his death-bed the last of his creditors."

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad cont.

the Muslims must be a Mijaddid of this ummah. We accept Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to be that Mijaddid. We have created no new belief. Here again we bow our head before the Hadith of the Holy Prophet. What are our arguments for accepting him as such is a different question which cannot be discussed here. The Maulana has a right to say that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is not the Mijaddid and the Messiah, and that we have made a mistake in fixing our choice, just as we have the right to say that the Maulana is making a mistake in rejecting him, but two conclusions are inevitable: There must be a Mijaddid of this century, and only a Mijaddid can be the Promised Messiah.

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The Promised Messiah Speaks
cont.

In short, we have come to you with this principle of peace in our hands, so that you may bear witness that we accept your great and revered leaders as prophets of God, and we hope that if you love peace and desire to promote union between various people, you will have no hesitation to accept our Holy Prophet, as a true Prophet and righteous Messenger of God. The argument to which we have drawn your attention is a very clear and cogent argument. But if peace and union are not brought about by this method, bear in mind that they will not be effected in any other way, and mutual hatred and enmity will daily be on the increase.

The Muslims are a people who lay down their lives for the honour of their noble Prophet, and they would sooner die than suffer such disgrace that they should be sincere and loving friends of a people whose business is to abuse day and night their noble Prophet and who speak of him in the most contemptuous and vulgarly abusive terms in their books, periodicals and notices. Bear in mind that those who are taking the leading part in abusing thus the sacred leaders of humanity are not real well-wishers even of their own people, for they are sowing seeds of thorny shrubs in their way. I say to you truly that it is possible for us to live in peace with the serpents of the jungle and the wild beasts of the forest, but it is absolutely impossible to live in peace and harmony with a people who would on no account give up abusing the holy prophets of God. They think that they can win a religious controversy by resorting to abuse and contumely but they are mistaken, for success and victory come from heaven. Those who are pure-hearted are triumphant in the end and they win the hearts of their hearers by the pure words to which they give utterance. But men of impure heart know nothing beyond this that they cause hatred and disunion to prevail in the world and thus cause its peace to be disturbed. Would that people had followed such peaceful principles as are laid down in the Holy Qur'an and then the world would have been filled with blessings! There is one book and only one under the heaven which lays stress upon the principle that those prophets and messengers whom the great nations of the world have followed as their leaders and who are accepted and honoured as truthful in vast countries were really true prophets of God. It is in fact a strong argument of their truth and of their being from God that Almighty God inspired millions of men to accept them as true and granted them His assistance in an extraordinary manner. It shows that they loved God and were loved by Him and that their contempt is really the contempt of their Divine Master Who raised them for the regeneration of the world.

(to be continued next issue)

The Holy Qur'an
cont.
from appearing from his mouth at the time of revelation is pure invention. Klein, writing in The Religion of Islam (p. 8), makes the following statement on the authority of Bukhari: “Another tradition says that froth appeared before his mouth and he roared like a young camel.” Bukhari makes no such statement, in the place referred to (Bu. I. 2). Elsewhere he says: “The face of the Messenger of Allah was red and he was snoring.” (Bu. 25:17). Statements met with in traditions are similar to those quoted from Bukhari. For instance, we have in Muslim: “When revelation came to the Holy Prophet, he appeared to be as it were in distress and turned pale in the face.” And according to one report, when revelation came to the Prophet, he would hang his head and his Companions would do the same; and when that condition was over, he would raise up his head. All these and other similar statements contained in other collections of traditions, only show that the coming of the revelation brought a real change in the Prophet which others also witnessed.

Another misconception may also be removed here. When the Prophet related his first experience to his wife Khadijah, he added the words: “Surely I have fear regarding myself, laaqad khashihi ‘ala nafs!” (Bu. I. 1). Some critics have misunderstood these words as meaning that the Prophet feared he was possessed by an evil spirit; and a rather foolish story from Ibn Hisham as to Khadijah's taking off the veil and the angel disappearing (which is without the least foundation and against all historical facts of the Prophet's life) is narrated in support of it. The story seems foolish inasmuch as the angel appeared to the Prophet in the solitude of Hira, and not in the presence of Khadijah. A cursory glance at the words quoted above would show that they could not possibly bear any such interpretation. The Prophet knew for certain that he had a message from on High for the reformation of the fallen humanity; all that he feared was lest he should fail in bringing about the desired reformation. That was how Khadijah understood it, as she immediately comforted him: “Nay, by Allah, Allah will never bring thee to grief; surely thou dost good to thy relatives, and bearest the burden of the weak, and earnest for others that which they have not got, and art hospitable to guests and givest help when there is real distress” (Bu. I. 1). The faithful wife who had known him intimately for fifteen years enumerated these great virtues in him, as a testimony that a man of such a high character could not fail in accomplishing the task which was entrusted to him - the task of uplifting a fallen humanity.

BOOK REVIEW

Ahmadiyya in the service of Islam
by N.A. Faruqui
Publishers: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam, Lahore, Inc., 36911 Walnut Street, Newark, California 94560 U.S.A.
Telephone (415) 791-6449

Mr. N. A. Faruqui is one of a few scholars in the Muslim world who have deep insight in the teachings of the Qur'an and Islam with special reference to their application to the present day world. His discourses in the Qur'an and his articles are a treat to read for any enlightened person. The present book by him is a very authentic study of the objections of the orthodox Muslims against the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. All arguments have been based and/or supported by facts or quotations. Since Mr Faruqui as a member of the Indian civil service worked as District Magistrate for about ten years and after independence of the sub-continent retired as Chief Election Commissioner of Pakistan, the highest post a civil servant could reach in his career, he brings with him the experience and art of not only sift the facts but also judicious analysis of the material for correct and faithful deductions. The present work more or less appears like a beautiful judgement based on facts and teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The author has artistically taken care of the charges levelled by non-Muslims and orientalists against Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, while refuting the charges levelled against the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement. Thus the book will be found very useful by those interested in learning about Islam and the life of Muhammad, peace be upon him.

In a beautiful two color paper back, it is a pleasant study recommended for students interested in factual study of the Ahmadiyya Movement and its role in Islam.

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—Alphonse de Lamartine in *Histoire de la Turquie*

“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*

“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