The Promised Messiah Speaks

TRUTH UNDERLYING THE PRINCIPLES OF ISLAM

by HADRAT MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD
Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Mahdi, Promised Messiah and Mujaddid, 14th Century, Hijrah

It should be borne in mind that the truth which underlies all the principles of Islam is that indicated by the word Islam itself, and the aim of all its commandments is that a man should attain to the stage of perfection signified by Islam. Hence, the Holy Qur'an emphatically teaches that Almighty God should be made the sole object of one's desires and love. It shows now His beauty and goodness and calls attention then to His countless gifts and favours, for beauty and favours are the two incentives to love. According to the Holy Qur'an, Almighty God is one and without any partner in His excellences, and He is eternally free from every defect. In Him are found all the perfect attributes and by him are displayed all the mighty powers. From Him the whole creation comes into existence and to Him all the affairs return. He is the fountain-source of all blessings and the Judge of retribution. Being remote, He is very near, and being near, He is still far off. He is above all but still it cannot be said that beneath Him there is anything else, and he is the most hidden of all things, but it cannot be said that anything is more manifest than He. He is Himself living and everything has its life from Him. He is His own support and everything finds support from Him. He bears everything and there is nothing that bears Him. Nothing has come into existence independently of Him and nothing can exist without Him. He comprehends all, but the manner in which He does so, cannot be described. He is the light of everything that is in earth and heavens, and every light has shone forth from His hand and is a shadow of His person. He is the Lord of all the worlds and there is no soul which has not been brought forth by Him and has come into existence by itself. Nor is there any faculty of a soul which has not been brought into existence by Him. His manifold blessings are of two kinds. Firstly, such as are not given as a reward for any previous deed of a doer and which exist from the beginning, as earth, heavens, sun, moon and stars, fire, water, air and all other things which have been created for our comfort. Everything that was necessary to sustain us, was created for us by Almighty God long before we came into existence or any deed was done by us. Who can say that the sun was created because of any meritorious deed done by him, or that the earth was brought into existence because he had done a highly virtuous deed? In short, these blessings of God were created by His mercy displayed long before the existence of man, and they are not the result of any deed done by him. The other kind of Divine blessings is the outcome of His mercy displayed on the good deeds of men, and this does not stand in need of explanation.

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Eid Milad un Nabi

Whole Muslim world celebrates Eid Milad un Nabi on 12th Rabial Awal as the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Advent of Muhammad in fact was the advent of the greatest revolution of the history of mankind which ushered in the era of the dignity of mankind. New horizons were made accessible to man through this multidimensional revolution which took care both of his body as well as soul. This enabled man to strike a proper balance between the demands of his physical and spiritual beings. Further, it taught him the order of his relationship with the Creator as well the fellow human beings. The concept of Haqooq Allah (Rights of Allah) and Haqooq al Abbad was introduced with abundantly clear teachings that discharge of the rights of human beings is, in fact, an essential part of the discharge of rights of Allah. "Man is the viceroy of Allah in this earth" and every thing in the universe has been made subservient to him not only informed man of the dignified position he holds in the scheme of the creation but also made him rediscover the order of his relationship with the rest of Allah's creation in the universe. After having discovered that he was created to rule over the creation of Allah as the Creator's Viceroy, it will naturally be blasphemous on the part of man to worship any thing from amongst the Creation of Allah. He is to worship only his Creator. Hence, the Message "There is no God but Allah" made him submit to the Only and the one God, the Creator of the Universe. This in turn rid man of all carved and/or incarnated Gods.

Submit to one and rule the rest. Every thing which contradicted this dignified position of the man was washed away by this revolution worked by the Arabian Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Exploitation of man by his fellow men, be it in any form and field, was prohibited and the concept of social and economic welfare was introduced for the first time. Fundamental human rights of freedom of expression and freedom of belief were introduced and practiced. Intolerance and prejudice were cast away and thus ground for unity of mankind was prepared. In short, this revolution opened new vistas for mankind and human civilization took big strides. We celebrate Prophet's

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The Holy Qur’an further teaches us that the person of God is free from every fault and defect and that He wishes that human beings should also, by following His injunctions, become free from every defect and be purified of every impurity. Thus He says:

"Whoever remains blind in this world, and does not see God, shall remain blind after death and his darkness will not be dispelled." (xvii. 72)

For, the truth is that the eyes to see God are granted in this world, and any one who leaves this world without getting the eyes to see God, shall not see God in the next life. In this verse Almighty God has given us clearly to understand to what height of spiritual advancement He wants man to reach, and what stage of perfection a man can attain to by following His commandments. How Almighty God can be seen in this very world is then stated in the Holy Qur’an. Thus it says:

"Who wishes that he should see in this world the God Who is the true Lord and the Creator, should do the deeds of virtue which are free from every sort of corruption and in worshipping his Lord he should not be guilty of any shirk." (xviii. 110)

The first portion of this verse requires a man to do “deeds of virtue” which are free from impurity and every contamination, by which are meant deeds which are neither done that they may be seen of others nor do they generate vanity in the heart of a man that he is the doer of such great and excellent deeds, nor are they incomplete or defective, nor do they savour of aught but sincere personal love entertained towards God and are saturated with true faithfulness and perseverance. The second portion of the verse requires a man to abstain from shirk i.e. setting up with God such false deities as the sun, the moon, the stars of heaven, the physical forces of nature, the elements or anything else that is upon earth or the heavens, or setting too high a value upon the physical means and placing so much reliance on them as to consider them actually effective without any reservation like God himself or giving an importance to one’s own resources and efforts, for this, too, is a sort of shirk. On the other hand, when a man has done everything that lies in his power and exercised his abilities to his best, he should still be conscious of his utter weakness and ignorance, and ascribe everything to the mighty power and deep knowledge of God and not to his own power or learning. Our soul should constantly be in a state of perfect submission and prostration at the Divine threshold, and thus draw His favours and blessings. Unless we make our condition like the helpless cripple who, lying in a desert parched with thirst, suddenly sees a spring of sweet and clear water and, halting and limping, takes himself to it and applies his burning lips to cool water, not parting them until he is satiated - I say, unless we fully realize our own utter weakness and inability and the mighty power and beneficent grace of God which we constantly draw upon, we are not free from shirk and do not deserve to be called Unitarians.

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;

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birthday, not only to recount the blessings of the Message brought by him, but to pay homage to him and above all to identify ourselves with this Message and the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). The best method of identifying ourselves with Muhammad (peace be upon him) will be to deliver his message to the four corners of the world and to express our dislike for all those forces which are busy sowing the seeds of disunity among the human race through generating prejudices in the name of religion, race, nation, gender, color, region or language. Show our disapproval of all the forces of diversity and disunity amongst the ranks of human beings for these contradict the very essence of the Holy Prophet’s message which was restoring the dignity of mankind through its unity under One God.

Masud Akhtar
When 'Review of Religions' started its publication from Qadian, India, in 1901, Maulana Muhammad Ali became its first editor. The depth of his knowledge in the teachings of Islam portrayed through his articles and editorials surprised not only the scholarly elite of the Ahmadiyya Community but also of the contemporary Muslim world. His articles on comparative religion are a treat to read (the Review of Religion file is available in the Library of Congress in U.S.A.). Merit of his learning was discovered and recognized by the Mujaddid of the 14th Century Hijrah and the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam in early days of his contact with him and accordingly he had ordered that all articles to be published in Urdu magazines of the Movement be first shown to and approved by Maulana Muhammad Ali. Not only this, the venerable Imam of the 14th Century Hijrah chose this young man from amongst a circle of the scholarly personages who had gathered around his as his disciples, each one of whom was an authority on the teachings of Islam in his own right, for that great work of translating the Holy Qur'an into English and for writing a book on the teachings of Islam for exposing the sublime teachings of the Qur'an and Islam to the Western nations. This was a great honor for a youth in his early thirties as Maulana Muhammad Ali was at that time.

Maulana Muhammad Ali started work on the English translation of the Holy Qur'an with Commentary in 1909 and it was completed in 1918 when its first edition was published. (He completed its revision in 1950 and the revised edition was published in 1951 a few days before his passing away.) For these nine years he worked very hard, and thus the first complete English translation of the Holy Qur'an from the pen of a Muslim became available to the world of religion. About the salient features of this translation he himself wrote in the preface to the first edition which is reproduced hereunder:

"As regards the translation I need not say much. That a need was felt for a translation of the Holy Book of Islam with full explanatory notes from the pen of a Muslim in spite of the existing translations is universally admitted. Whether this translation satisfies that need, only time will decide. I may, however, say that I have tried to be more faithful to the Arabic Text than all existing English translations. It will be noticed that additional words as explaining the sense of the original have been avoided, and where necessary - and these cases are very few - they are given within brackets. Wherever a departure has been made from the ordinary or primary significance of a word, reason for this departure has been given in a footnote and authorities have been amply quoted.

"There are some novel features in this translation. The Arabic Text has been inserted, the translation and the text occupying opposite columns. Each verse begins with a new line in both the Text and the translation, and verses are numbered to facilitate reference. Necessary explanations are given in footnotes in serial numbers, and generally either authorities are quoted or reasons given for the opinion expressed. This made the work very laborious, but I have undertaken this labour to make the work a real source of satisfaction to those who might otherwise be inclined to be sceptical regarding many statements which will appear new to the ordinary reader. I have tried to avoid repetition in the explanatory footnotes by giving a reference where repetition was necessary, but I must confess that these references are far from being exhaustive. When the significance of a word has been explained in one place it has been thought unnecessary, except in rare cases, to make a reference to it. For the reader's facility I have, however, added a list of the Arabic words explained, and the reader may refer to it when necessary.

"Besides the footnotes, ample introductory notes have been given at the commencement of each chapter. These introductory notes give the abstract of each chapter in sections, at the same time showing the connection of the sections and also explaining that of the different chapters with each other. This feature of the translation is altogether new, and will, I hope, in course of time, prove of immense service in eradicating the idea which is so prevalent now that there is no arrangement in the verses and chapters of the Holy Qur'an. It is quite true that the Qur'an does not classify the different subjects and treat them separately in each section or chapter. The reason for this is that the Holy Qur'an is not a book of laws, but essentially a book meant for the spiritual and moral advancement of man, and therefore the power, greatness, grandeur and glory of God is its chief theme, the principles of social laws enunciated therein being also meant to promote the moral and spiritual advancement of man. But that there exists an arrangement will be clear even to the most superficial reader of the introductory notes on these chapters. It will be further noted that the Makkand and Madinan revelations are beautifully welded together, and there are groups of chapters belonging to about one time and relating to one subject. The introductory notes also show whether a particular chapter was revealed at Makkah or Madinah, and also the probable period to which it belongs. Exact dates and specified order of the revelation of different chapters are often mere conjectures, and therefore I have avoided this useless task.

"The references to the authorities quoted in the notes are explained in the list of abbreviations given on p. lx. Among the commentators, I have made the greatest use of the voluminous commentaries of Ibn Jarir, Imam Fakhr al-Din Razi, Imam Athir al-Din Abu Hayyan and the shorter but by no means less valuable commentaries of Zamakhshari, Baidawi and Jami' al-Bayan of Ibn Kathir. Among the lexicons, Taj al-'Arus and the Lisan al-'Arab are voluminous standard works and have been freely consulted, but the smaller work of Imam Raghib Isfahani, known as Mafradat fi Gharib al-Qur'an, has afforded immense help, and it undoubtedly occupies the first place.

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among the standard works in Arabic Lexicology so far as the Qur'an is concerned. The valuable dictionaries of Hadith, the Nahayah, of Ibn Athir and the Majma' al-Bihar have also proved very serviceable in explaining many a moot point. It will, however, be noted that I have more often referred to Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon, a work in value of which for the English student of Arabic can hardly be overestimated; this has been done purposely so that the reader of this volume may have the facility to refer to an easily accessible work. It is a pity that the great author was not spared to complete his work, but up to the letter fa, Lane has placed the world under the greatest obligation. Besides commentaries and Lexicons, historical and other works have also been consulted. Among the collections of Hadith, Bukhari, Kitab al-Tafsir, or chapter on the commentary of the Holy Qur'an, has been before me throughout, but the whole of Bukhari and other reliable Hadith collections have also been consulted. And lastly, the greatest religious leader of the present time, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, has inspired me with all that is best in this work. I have drunk deep at the fountain of knowledge which this great Reformer - Mujaddid of the present century and founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement - has made to flow. There is one more person whose name I must mention in this connection, the late Maulvi Hakim Nur al-Din, who in his last long illness patiently went through much the greater part of the explanatory notes and made many valuable suggestions. To him, indeed, the Muslim world owes a deep debt of gratitude as the leader of the new turn given to the exposition of the Holy Qur'an. he has done his work and passed away silently, but it is a fact that he spent the whole of his life studying the Holy Qur'an, and must be ranked with the greatest expositors of the Holy Book.

"The principle of the greatest importance to which I have adhered in interpreting the Holy Qur'an is that no word of the Holy Book should be interpreted in such a manner as to contradict the plainer teachings of the Holy Qur'an, a principle to which the Holy Word has itself called the attention of its reader in 3:6; see 387. This rule forms the basis of my interpretation of the Qur'an, and this is a very sound basis, if we remember that the Holy Qur'an contains metaphors, parables, and allegories side by side with plain teachings. The Practice (Sunnat) and Sayings of the Holy Prophet, when contained in reliable reports, are the best commentary of the Holy Word, and I have therefore attached the greatest importance to them. Earlier authorities have also been respected, but reports and comments contradicting the Qur'an itself cannot but be rejected. I have also kept before me the rule that the meaning to be adopted in any case should be that which suits the context best, and the only other limitation to which I have subjected myself is that the use of that word in that sense is allowed by the Lexicons or by Arabic literature. Existing translations have rendered me great help, but I have adopted an interpretation only after fully satisfying myself and having recourse to original authorities. Many of the stories generally accepted by the commentators find no place in my commentary, except in cases where there is either sufficient historical evidence or the corroborative testimony of some reliable Saying of the Holy Prophet. Many of these stories were, I believe, incorporated into Islamic literature by the flow of converts from Judaism and Christianity into Islam. I must add that the present tendency of Muslim theologians to regard the commentaries of the Middle Ages as the final word on the interpretation of the Holy Qur'an is very injurious and practically shuts out the great treasures of knowledge, which an exposition of the Holy Book in the new light reveals. A study of the old commentators, to ignore whose great labour would indeed be a sin, also shows how freely they commented upon the Holy Book. The great service which they have done to the cause of Truth would indeed have been lost to the world, if they had looked upon their predecessors as uttering the final word on the exposition of the Holy Qur'an, as most theologians do to-day."

kThe Urdu paper 'Wakil' which was published from Amritsar, India, and of which both the editor and the proprietor were orthodox Muslims, published a review of this translation in the following words:

"We have seen the translation critically and have no hesitation in remarking that the simplicity of its language and the correctness of the version are all enviable. The writer has kept his annotations altogether free from sectarian influence with wonderful impartiality, and has gathered together the wealth of authentic Muslim theology. He has also displayed great skill and wisdom in using the new weapons of defence in refuting the objections of the opponents of Islam."

Revd. Zeweme's quarterly, The Muslim World of July, 1931, offered this comment:

"One cannot read far in the translation of Maulvi Muhammad Ali or in his notes without being convinced that before he began his work on the Koran he was already widely read in the Arabic Authorities listed on page ix, to which frequent reference is made in his notes; also his quotations from Lane's Lexicon indicate that he was not altogether oblivious to the results of European scholarship." (p. 303)

The author of Islam in its True Light called this translation "a leading star for subsequent similar Muslim works" p. 69. Many of the special features of Maulana Muhammad Ali's translation were adopted by later Muslim translators of the Holy Qur'an. The introductory notes to chapters, giving the abstract of each chapter and showing its connection with what has gone before, were specially appreciated. Even in the matter of interpretation, most of the views adopted by Maulana Muhammad Ali have found acceptance with them, as we shall see in the following lines.

English translations of the Holy Qur'an by Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall and Mr. Ghulam Sarwar appeared a few years after Maulana's translation. About the influence on Mr. Pickthall and Mr. Sarwar, we have to quote once again from 'The Muslim World, July, 1931, Revd. Zweener's quarterly: continued on next page
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"A careful comparison of Mr. Pickthall's translation with that of the Ahmadiya translator, Maulvi Muhammad Ali, shows conclusively, that Mr. Pickthall's work is not very much more than a revision of the Ahmadiya version." (p. 289)

"We have made a thorough examination of about forty verses in the second chapter, sixty verses in the third, forty verses in the nineteenth, and all of the last fifteen chapters, comparing his renderings with those of Sale, Rodwell, Palmer and Muhammad Ali; as well as with the Arabic. From this careful investigation we have come to the conclusion that Mr. Pickthall's translation, in all that part of his work which we have examined, resembles very closely the version of Muhammad Ali, the difference between the two versions in many passages being merely verbal." (p. 290)

"Now if we compare the above passage (3:57-63) with the versions of S, R and P, we shall see that Mr. Pickthall is very much nearer to MA than he is to any of the three previous translators, so that one gets the impression that, although he may have taken a word here and there from R and P, yet he has not followed them so closely as he obviously followed MA." (p. 292)

"The dependence of Mr. Pickthall upon the work of MA is also indicated in an occasional footnote, and those who will compare these footnotes with the notes in the 1920 edition of MA, which contains his commentary, will find that throughout chapter 2 almost every footnote is based on the Ahmadiya Commentary." (p. 293)

"We think it will now be evident to the reader how much Mr. Pickthall is indebted to the version of Maulvi Muhammad Ali, not only for his footnotes but also for the translation itself." (p. 293)

The author of 'Islam in its True Light' also mentions both Mr. Pickthall and Mr. Sarwar as following closely the translation of Maulana Muhammad Ali. Rev. Zwemer also wrote:

"By comparing these two passages with Mr. Sarwar's rendering given on page 133 of the last issue of this journal, it will be seen that both Mr. Sarwar and Mr. Pickthall have followed MA very closely." (p. 294)

Allama Abdullah You saf Ali is another translator of the Qur'an into English. He has rendered a translation from Arabic verse to English verse. For such a translation in poetry it is really hard to remain true to Arabic. The true meanings have to be sacrificed for the sake of poetical rhythm and meter. Abdullah Yusuf Ali was conscious of this problem and we have it at the authority of late Mirza Masud Beg, a retired Divisional Inspector of Schools, government of the Punjab, who became the Secretary General of the Ahmadiya Anjuman Ishaat Islam Lahore and had been working in various positions for the Anjuman for the most part of his life, that Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali, when he was a lecturer in Anjuman Himayatul-Islam Lahore's Islama College had he had an arrangement with Maulana Muhammad Ali where under he used to send each verse of the Qur'an that he rendered into English poetry to Maulana for approval who will return it to Abdullah Yusuf Ali with necessary suggestions as to keeping nearer to true meanings.

Late Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi, Editor Such Lucknow has also translated the Holy Qur'an. He was a recognized leader of orthodox Muslim Opinion. He admits the influence of Maulana Muhammad Ali's translation in the following words from his paper of 25th June, 1943:

"To deny the excellence of Maulvi Muhammad Ali's translation, the influence it has exercised and its proselytizing utility, would be to deny the light of the sun. The translation certainly helped in bringing thousands of non-Muslims to the Muslim fold and hundreds of thousands of unbelievers much nearer Islam. Speaking of my own self, I gladly admit that this translation was one of the few books which brought me towards Islam fifteen or sixteen years ago when I was groping in darkness, atheism and scepticism. Even Maulana Muhammad Ali of the Comrade was greatly enthralled by this translation and had nothing but praise for it."

Whether his translation be counted amongst the orthodox or the Modernists, Maulana answers this question in these words:

"There is not a single doctrine of the religion of Islam in which this translation differs from orthodox views. I hope to be excused for clearing up this point by a quotation from Mr. Pickthall's review of my "Religion of Islam" in the Islamic Culture for October, 1936:

"Probably no man living has done longer or more valuable service for the cause of Islamic revival than Maulvi Muhammad Ali of Lahore. . . . In our opinion the present volume is his finest work. It is a description of Al-Islam by one well-versed in Sunnah who has on his mind the shame of the Muslim dependence of the past five centuries and in his heart the hope of the revival, of which signs can now be seen on every side. Without moving a hair's breadth from the traditional position with regard to worship and religious duties, the author shows a wide field in which changes are lawful and may be desirable because here the rules and practices are not based on an ordinance of the Qur'an or on an edict of the Prophet (peace be on him!)."

Mr. Pickthall was an orthodox Muslim, and what he has said of The Religion of Islam is true of this Translation. There is not a hair's breadth departure from the essentials of Islam, and this Translation does not contain anything contrary to the views of the great Imams and learned Ahl Sunnat that have gone before. That there have been differences in the interpretation of the Holy Qur'an among the greatest commentators, among even the Companions of the Holy Prophet and the great Imams, cannot be denied. But these differences do not relate to the essentials of the faith of Islam on which all Muslims are agreed; they relate to minor or secondary points. All Muslims believe in the Unity of God and the prophethood of Muhammad. They believe in all the prophets of God and in His Books. They believe that Divine revelation came to perfection with the Prophet Muhammad who is thus the last of the prophets - Khatam al-Nabiyin - after whom no prophet will come, and the Holy Qur'an is the last Divine message to the whole of

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How Maulana Muhammad Ali came to exercise so much influence on his contemporary and later Muslim scholars? He was not seeking worldly laurels or prizes. He was consciously working for transforming the world around him; and this was possible only through revival of Islam - the mission of the Mujaddid whose disciple he was. Thus his was the labor of love, devotion and dedication. The labor which Maulana had put in this is recounted by him in these words:

"My work was a work of labour. For every rendering or explanation I had to search Hadith collections, Lexicologies, Commentaries and other important works, and every opinion expressed was substantiated by quoting authorities. Differences there have been in the past, and in future too there will be differences, but whatever I have differed I have given my authority for the difference. Moreover the principle I have kept in view in this Translation and Commentary, i.e., seeking the explanation of a problematic point first of all from the Holy Qur'an itself, has kept me nearest to the truth, and those who study the Qur'an closely will find very few occasions to differ with me."

"I may here add that it is not only in having recourse to Lane's Lexicon that I have taken advantage of European scholarship. For full nine years before taking up this translation I was engaged in studying every aspect of the European criticism of Islam as well as of Christianity and religion in general, as I had specially to deal with these subjects in The Review of Religion, of which I was the first editor. I had thus an occasion to go through both the higher criticism of religion by advanced thinkers and what I may call the narrower criticism of Islam by the Christian missionaries who had no eye for the broader principles of Islam and its cosmopolitan teachings, and the unparalleled transformation wrought by Islam."

No wonder then that his translation is a leading star for later translations of the Qur'an. After the English translation, Maulana Muhammad Ali wrote a voluminous Urdu commentary of the Qur'an under the title of 'Bayan-ul-Qur'an' in three volumes which extends over 2500 pages and is much more explanatory than the notes in English Translation. This translation and commentary became the most popular exposition of the teachings of the Qur'an in Urdu language in the nineteen thirties and forties; so much so that many Maulanas who were otherwise opposed to the Ahmadiyya Movement made extensive use of this commentary in their Khutbat (sermons) and Darse-Qur'an. The only precaution they took was to tear off the title page where the name of the author and publishers was printed. But there were other honest and strong characters who did not deem fit to do away with the name of the author and publishers. Late Sheikhal Islam, Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani, the then Principal of the well known Darul-ulum at Devband (India) was one of them. Late Maulana Aftabuddin Ahmad, a student of the Sheikhal Islam at Dev Band who later became Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque Woking Surrey, U.K. and translator of Sahih Bukhari into English in his account of joining the Ahmadiyya Movement reported that Sherkhal Islam used to deliver very inspiring and enlightening Darse Qur'an and while on a visit to his home Maulana Aftabuddin found that Maulana Usmani made use of the Bayanul Qur'an of Maulana Muhammad Ali for his Darse Qur'an. Having noted the name of the author and the publishers, Maulana Aftabuddin came to Lahore during summer vacations and joined 'Ahmadiyya Movement. (this account was published during the life of Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani and during a period of about twenty years between publishing and his death Maulana Usmani did not contradict or disown it). On the emergence of Pakistan Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani, came to Pakistan and became Sheikhal Islam of Pakistan.

After this Maulana Muhammad Ali wrote his well known book on teaching of Islam under the title of 'The Religion of Islam'. Allama Iqbal wrote about it:

The University of the Punjab (now in Pakistan) in appreciation of this work granted Maulana Muhammad Ali a special reward, and included this book

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Another unique contribution made by the prophet to human civilization was the idea of human dignity. This, too, was a natural sequel to the idea of the oneness of God, on which he laid so much stress. Man was the noblest of God's creation, according to the Prophet, and it was degrading for him to worship things or to bow before things which he really excelled: What! Shall I seek for you an object of worship other than Allah, while He has made you excel all created things? (7:140)

That was to be the essential principle in man's relations with the rest of creation; he had been made to excel all things. He excelled even the angels, as the angels are required to make obeisance to man:

And when We said to the angels, Make obeisance to Adam, they did make obeisance. (2:34)

Man, therefore, degraded himself to the utmost if he carved out idols with his own hands and then worshipped them as if they were Divine, or as if they controlled good or evil for him:

What! Do you serve what you hew out? And Allah has created you and what you make. (3:95:96)

Why dost thou worship that which neither hears, nor sees, nor does it avail thee in the least? (19:42)

The Prophet would not brook idolatry in any form. The association of anything with God made a man fall from the high position which nature had given him:

Therefore avoid the uncleanness of idols and avoide false utterance - Being upright for Allah, not associating aught with Him; and whoever associates others with Allah, it is as though he had fallen from on high, then the birds snatch him away or the wind carries him off to a far distant place. (22:30,31)

He did not even allow great men to be taken as lords:

They have taken their doctors of law and their monks for lords besides Allah, and also the Messiah, son of Mary, and they were commanded that they should serve one God only; there is no God but He. (9:31)

It was also a degradation of human nature that man should worship the sun or the moon or the stars or the elements of nature, because all these things were created for the service of man, and he was required to yoke them into service and control them:

Allah is He Who made subservient to you the sea that the ships may run therein by His command and that you may seek of His grace. (45:12)

And the changing of the winds and the clouds made subservient between the heaven and the earth. (2:164)

He has made subservient to you the sun and the moon; each pursues its course till an appointed time. (31:29)

And he has made subservient to you the night and the day and the sun and the moon, and the stars are made subservient by His command. (16:12)

And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all, from Himself. (45:13)

According to the Prophet, man's position in nature was that of a conqueror; he had been created to control all the forces of nature and to rule in the earth, not to bow before them:

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

He had been given vast capabilities for attaining the knowledge of things:

And He gave Adam knowledge of all things. (2:31)

The Arabs were an illiterate people; reading and writing was so rare among them that it may be said not to have existed at all:

And say to those who have been given the Book and the illiterate people: do you submit yourselves (to God)? (3:19)

He it is who raised among the illiterates a Messenger from among themselves. (62:2)

The followers of the Book, the Jews and the Christians, also gave the same name to the Arabs:

This is because they say: There is not upon us any reproach in the matter of the illiterate people. (3:74)

The Prophet himself did not know reading and writing and is called an Unlearned Prophet:

And thou didst not recite before it any book, nor didst thou transcribe one with thy right hand. (29:48)

Those who follow the Messenger-Prophet, the unlearned one, whom they find written with them in the Torah and the Gospel, who enjoins them good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful to them the good things and makes unlawful to them impure things, and removes from them their burden and the shackles which were upon them. (7:157)

Believe in Allah and His Messenger, the unlearned Prophet, who believes in Allah and His words, and follow him so that you may walk in the right way. (7:158)

Yet what was the very first message of this Unlearned Prophet who appeared among an illiterate people:

Read in the name of thy Lord Who created. (96:1)

Read and thy Lord is most Bounteous, Who taught with the pen. He taught man what he knew not. (96:3-5)

Read and write, was thus his first message, and to these two means for gaining knowledge of things was added the quality of observation with which man was endowed:

And how many a sign in the heavens and the earth which they pass by, yet they turn aside from it. (12:105)

In the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, there are sure signs for men of understanding: Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain. (3:189,190)

The knowledge of things thus gained was perfectly reliable because one law prevailed throughout the vast universe whose extent could not be imagined by man:

Thou seest no incongruity in the creation of the Beneficent God; then look again, canst thou see any disorder? Then turn back the eye again and again, thy look shall come back to thee confused while it is fatigue. (67:3-4)

Everything created by God, we are further told, was made according to a measure so that it could not go beyond a certain limit, and the progress made by every thing was along a certain line by continued on next page.
DIGNITY OF MANHOOD

cont.

following which it attained the perfection destined for it:

Glorify the name of thy Lord, the Most High, Who creates things, then makes them complete; And Who makes things according to a measure, then guides them to their goal. (87:1-3)

From the slave of nature's forces which man generally was at that stage of human civilization, the Prophet thus raised him to the dignity of the master and the ruler, and it was due to this realization of man's position in the universe that the Muslims in their very early history took vigorous strides towards the expansion of knowledge and the advancement of the sciences. Reading and writing was within a few years spread throughout the whole of Arabia and other countries which came under the influence of Islam, and the Muslim State so encouraged the pursuit of study and scientific research that centers of learning and universities sprang up throughout the empire of Islam.

Along with this contribution to human thought in the physical sphere, a change was brought about in the spiritual outlook of man. The first change effected in this direction was that in the natural state man was pure; and every child whether born of Muslim or non-Muslim parents was sinless:

Surely we have created man in the best make. (95:4)

So set thy face upright for religion in the right state - the nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah's creation; that is the right religion but most people do not know. (30:30)

Explaining this verse of the Holy Qur'an, the Prophet is reported to have said:

Every child that is born conforms to the true religion (lit., human nature); it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian. (Bukhari, 32:79)

Every child was thus recognized by birth to be a Muslim; the purity of human nature was not affected by his being born of non-Muslim parents. Hence it was further recognized that all children who died before attaining the age of discretion, whether they were children of Muslims or polytheists, went to heaven. On a certain occasion, the Prophet related a vision in which he had seen Abraham in paradise with children all around him, and he added that these children were all the children that had died in the state of nature, i.e. before they attained the age of discretion. Some of his companions, the Handith goes on to say, thereupon asked him:

The children of those who set up gods with God (mushrikin) as well, O messenger of Allah?

And he replied:

Yes, the children of those who set up gods with God (mushrikin) as well. (Ibid., 91:48)

The doctrine of the sinlessness of man by birth was an aid to leading a sinless life. If a man did good and avoided evil he was true to his nature, while if he went against good and did evil he was false to his nature. It further strengthened him to overcome sin, because he knew that nature had fitted him for this task. But there was yet a further step to raise him spiritually to a very high level.

According to the Prophet, not only no impurity attached to man in the natural state, i.e. by birth, but he, in a certain sense, also partook of the Divine nature, for it was the Divine Spirit that was breathed into man, into every human child:

Who made good everything that He created, and He began the creation of man from dust; then He made his progeny of an extract of water held in light estimation; then He made him complete and breathed into him of His spirit. (32:7-9)

When thy Lord said to the angels, I am going to create a mortal from dust; so when I have made him complete and breathed into him My spirit, fall down making obeisance to him. (38:71,72)

Evidently, the Divine Spirit spoken of here is something distinct from the animal soul which animates the whole animal kingdom, including man. It shows a sycophantic relation of the spirit of man with the Divine Spirit, and refers to the higher life of man. This was also the reason that God revealed Himself to the perfect Man in His full resplendence, and Divine revelation thus granted to man awakened him to a higher life and made him overcome his animal passions and low desires. The destiny of man, according to the Prophet, was therefore higher than mere conquest of nature; it was to seek union with the Divine Spirit:

O soul that art at rest! Return to thy Lord, well-pleased with Him, well-pleasing, so enter among My servants, and enter into My Garden. (89:72-30)

The Goal of life was liqa-Allah, or the meeting of God, in the language of the Holy Qur'an:

O man! Thou must strive to attain to thy Lord a hard striving until thou meet Him. (84:6)

They are losers indeed who reject the meeting of Allah. (6:31)

They will perish indeed who call the meeting of Allah to be a lie. (10:45)

He regulates the affair, making clear the signs that you may be certain of meeting your Lord. (13:2)

And surely most of the people are deniers of the meeting of their Lord. (30:8)

The sublime thought that this worldly life was not the end and aim, nor conquest of nature the great goal of life, but that there were higher values of life, and that the present life was but a means to realize those values, the goal being a re-union with the Divine Spirit, this formed the basis of a life after death. The two lives, life on this earth and life beyond, are really one:

Whoever is blind in this life, shall also be blind in the Hereafter. (17:72)

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

It is God's pleasure that a man is told to seek in this life, and God's pleasure is the greatest of the blessings of the next life:

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

And as the believers to here below, they shall there glorify and praise God:

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

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QUR'ANIC VIEW OF HUMAN FREEDOM
by late Dr. Basharat Ahmad

The Modern Champions of Freedom

One is simply amazed at the man who, in the modern age when the world has fully realised the blessings of freedom offered by Islam, stands up to preach anew the gospel of freedom and calls it a heavenly boon as if the world had not received already. This is the age in which everybody is clamouring for freedom and independence, and even though one may shout as loudly as one can, one cannot call it a heavenly voice, but an echo of these very earthly voices; for Divine messages come only when the world needs them. Such guidance is given when the world is sunk deep in vice and misery, when "corruption appears in the land and the sea." (xxx. 41) and when there is darkness enveloping the world. Thus the voice for freedom ought to have been raised at a time when there was no freedom in this world which presented a scene of human bondage. But now man has grown wise and is fully aware of his requirements. So a teacher now playing upon the same tunes as the world at large is playing cannot be called to have said or brought anything extraordinary or unknown to the world. But the Holy Prophet Muhammad raised his voice at a time when slavery was considered to be no sin and was regarded as an emblem of might and splendour. That indeed, was the appropriate time to teach the lesson of freedom.

Every form of Bondage Abolished

The Holy Qur'an stands for complete independence of humanity as a whole and preaches equality between man and man. Let us discuss a few cases of freedom.

(a) Man, the Lord of creation. The Holy Qur'an first frees man from the yoke of all false deities, and makes him the supreme head of all creatures and the vicegerent of Allah on this earth.

(ii. 30)

Human beings who in the past used to worship the sun, the moon, fire, water, trees and creatures, now began to rule and govern these objects. The Holy Qur'an raised the dignity of man so high that not only these false deities were dethroned but even the angels, which are the spirits underlying all powers in Nature, had to make obeisance to him, and all that was in the heavens and the earth was to be made subservient to him.

(b) Equality among mankind. The next step taken by the Holy Qur'an is that it establishes equality among mankind, by declaring that all men are created by One God and are the offsprings of one pair. Thus, it has removed all the barriers of national and tribal distinctions, and of caste, colour and creed, and of the so-called superiority of birth, and has destroyed slavery root and branch. All men, says the Holy Qur'an, whether rich or poor, high or low, white or black, of the East or the West, are the sons of the same parents and creatures of the same Creator. As such they possess equal rights and owe equal obligations to one another.

"O people! be careful of (your duty to) your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same (kind) and spread from these two many men and women; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, by Whom you demand one of another (your rights), and (to) the ties of relationship; surely Allah ever watches over you." (iv. 1)

In this way the Holy Qur'an establishes freedom, equality and enjoins protection of individual rights. When one realises that all men are the creatures of the same Being, one will help one's fellowmen at a pinch, considering it to be a duty towards the Lord. Thus, God has favoured mankind by including the service of fellowmen as an act of worship and adoration.

It must be remembered that "by Whom you demand one of another" - does not carry the sense of begging, even though it be in the name of God. But what is implied is that men are interdependent and stand in need of mutual help. If a king needs subjects, the subjects need a king; the rich stand in need of the poor and vice versa; women depend upon men and men seek the company of women, and a child needs a father and a father yearns for a

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child. These mutual needs and reciprocal help result in the formation of civilisation and culture. The more systematic a nation is in helping each other, the higher its standard of civilisation. Generally, we find that some nations are bound with one another by tribal ties or blood relations as a result of which they deal with nations not related to them with partiality and contempt and would at any time usurp their rights. But the teachings of Islam, that aim at creating love, union, independence and equality, have made these tribal ties or blood relations only secondary. What they primarily emphasise is the great basic relation that all men are the creatures of one God. They further make us understand that the needs for which a man requires the help of another are from God. Thus, fulfilling these requirements means obedience to the will of God, Who has created us such. Therefore, those who do not mind their duties and obligations and who, instead of helping their fellow-beings, toy with their rights, must know that they are disobeying their Lord. Thus, when doing injustice to the rights of others is considered disobedience of God and incurs His displeasure, human rights will be as safe as anything. It will also widen the area of human sympathy and brotherhood.

Common Origin

Next to the relationship as creatures of the same Creator, the Holy Qur'an also draws upon blood-relationship. But it has so widened the scope of this relationship as to include the whole humanity. It does not recognise any petty divisions of tribes and families, which men have fabricated, but regards all mankind as belonging to one and the same family, as the descendants of Adam and Eve. There remains, therefore, no scope for the rich to abhor the poor, nor for men to look down upon women. The Holy Qur'an establishes so close a relationship between mankind that they are all united into a single whole, and all distinctions are wiped out. Says the Qur'an:

"O you men! surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honourable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty); surely Allah is Knowing, Aware." (xlii. 13)

The only mark of distinction, according to this verse, is that of one's piety and goodness. The more one acts in accordance with the commandments of Allah and does good to mankind, the more one is elevated and raised to a position of respect and distinction, no matter what one's social status, caste, colour or creed may be. Hence, according to Islam, all men are equal and free, being children of one. None can claim any racial, tribal, religious or national superiority. The only way of surpassing others and nearing Allah is the way of piety and righteousness.

(c) Freedom from political bondage. Before the advent of Islam the world was passing through a strange time. The kings and monarchs were regarded by the people as super-human beings. They enjoyed rights and privileges which no other soul was allowed. The king had not to abide by any law, but was law unto himself. His only duty was to govern, and whatever he uttered was an inviolable law for the people. In short, a king was a personification of tyranny and oppression, and the subjects presented a most depressing picture of slavery. Islam came to free mankind from the curse of this bondage as well. It taught that the chief of a people had to serve the people. What the people have to obey is law, and not the sweet will of a chief or a monarch. All heads must equally bow before the law of God. So says the Holy Qur'an:

"O you who believe! obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those in authority among you; then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the Apostle." (iv. 59)

Here, what is meant by Allah and His Apostle, is the divine law; for the laws of Islam are derived from these two sources. Thus, there is no exception in Islam as far as obedience to law is concerned; all must abide by it, both the rule and the ruled.

Now arises another question. What should be the principles on which the government must be conducted? The Holy Qur'an lays down two golden rules. First:

"Their rule must be based on mutual counsel and agreement." (xlii. 33)

The form of government is thus suggested to be democratic. And it was the Holy Qur'an that, for the first time, preached democracy. Now, as to who should be entrusted with the affairs of people, the Holy Qur'an says:

"The affairs of the people are a trust and must be entrusted only to those who can faithfully discharge that trust." (iv. 58)

In other words, only those must represent the people who are fit to do so.

(d) Freedom from blind following and intellectual bondage. In the pre-Islamic times, the religious leaders, learned men and other public dignitaries used to rule the heart and minds of their followers. Whatever they uttered had to be followed without demur or delay. Reasoning was disallowed, and difference of opinion was more than a sin. To raise an objection, however valid, was an unpardonable offence and was considered to imply disrespect to the high-priests. The result of all this was that none could distinguish the lawful from the unlawful and sift virtue from vice. Whatever the learned said was law, morality and religion. Thus the people were slaves to the priests whom they blindly followed. But Islam has done away with this form of slavery, also. It calls this sort of blind following a form of polytheism:

"They have taken their doctors of law and their monks for lords besides Allah." (ix. 31)

Thus, by freeing mankind from priest-worship, the Holy Qur'an has made them the lovers of truth, virtue and independence.

(e) Freedom from social bondage. The world before the advent of Islam had forged for itself chains of various usages continued on next page
and customs. Blindly following in the footsteps of their forefathers and pursuing the customs prevalent in society had so shackled the people that they could hardly move along the path of moral or intellectual progress. As the Holy Qur'an puts it:

"They have placed chains on their necks, and these reach up to their chins, so they have their heads raised aloft." (xxxvi. 8)

These chains were a barrier in the way of their progress and did not allow them to make any advancement. As regards blindly following in the footsteps of forefathers, The Holy Qur'an says:

"What! even though their fathers knew nothing and did not follow the right way?" (v. 104)

Whatever the elders do is not necessarily right. They might have mistaken a thing and moved in a wrong direction. Thus, the Holy Qur'an frees man from the self-imposed chains of blind following and clears the way for man's progress in the moral and intellectual spheres.

(f) Freedom from sex inferiority. The position of woman in pre-Islamic society was no better than that of a slave. She had no rights against men, nor could she claim a share in heritage. Her consent was not sought in her marriage. She was always at the mercy of her husband or guardian, who would exercise the same rights on her as a master on his slave. But the Qur'an liberated her from this slavish treatment. It announced:

"It is not lawful for you that you should take women as heritage against (their) will." (iv. 19)

Their agreement at the time of marriage is, therefore, essential without which no marriage can be called lawful. Again, she was given the right of securing divorce if she did not like to live with her husband. If a man can divorce a woman, a woman can also get divorce when she likes. Then the Holy Qur'an establishes her rights against man. Woman has as much rights as man has:

"And they have rights similar to those against them in a just manner." (ii. 228)

Woman was also given a share in heritage and her individual rights and independence were recognised. A detailed examination of the teachings of the Holy Qur'an will show how Islam has liberated the fair sex from slavery and has bestowed numerous favours on her.

(g) Deliverance from economic bondage. The capitalist has always tried to crush the labourer. The poor labourers, before Islam, were worse than slaves. The chains of usury and compound interest had made them awfully helpless. The Holy Qur'an declared usury to be unlawful and thus liberated the poor from the clutches of the voracious capitalists:

"O you who believe! do not devour usury, making additions again." (iii. 129)

And haram al-riba ("God has made usury unlawful." (ii. 275)

(h) Freedom from obedience to the Devil and sensual desires. Bondage to passion and sensual desires is such a mighty and alluring form of slavery that even the wisest brains and powerful kings cannot help falling a prey to it. Man, in spite of his knowledge, reason, high civilization and culture could not free himself from these chains. But the Holy Qur'an waged a regular and unceasing war against this slavery and, freeing a nation from its fetters, made it the very model of independence, freedom and chastity. The selflessness and piety of the Companions of the Holy Prophet need no comment. It was due to the Holy Qur'an that they freed themselves from the bondage of personal desires and sensuality. The Holy Book plainly states:

"Have you seen him who takes his low desires for his God?" (xxv. 43)

Thus, those who are captives of their low desires are the worst of slaves and are no better than polytheists, for they worship their passions. Again says the Qur'an:

"Did I not charge you, O children of Adam, that you should not serve the devil? Surely he is your open enemy, and that you should serve Me; this is the right way." (xxxvi. 60-61)

The Devil is thus declared to be an open enemy of man and mankind is charged not to follow him, for this is the way to real freedom.

(i) Freedom from ignorance. In pre-Islamic times, people used to believe in strange superstitions, and included every nonsense into their religious practices. Belief in the stars ruling their destinies, taking omens from the movements of birds and other creatures, faith in magic, witchcraft and other mysterious agencies had enslaved human understanding and intellect. At every step they required the help and advice of a magician, a soothsayer or an astrologer, and possessed no sense of their own. Islam broke the chains of these misdirected and irrational beliefs, and, dragging man out of the darkness of ignorance, led him to the path of knowledge and wisdom. It laid great stress on the acquisition of knowledge and acquainted man with the fact that his superiority over all creation and even over the angels was simply due to the knowledge and learning that he possessed. The words:

"He gave Adam knowledge of all the things." (ii. 31)

clearly indicate that the vicegerentship of Adam in this earth is based upon his knowledge of the things, which no other creature possesses. The Holy Qur'an has thus made the world the lover of knowledge, and the universal thirst for knowledge that we find in people today had its beginning in the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. Thus Islam frees mankind from the bondage of ignorance by emphasising the true value and worth of knowledge.

(j) Deliverance of the weak from the bondange of the mighty. It was the rule, before Islam came to this world, that the mighty would make the weak their slaves. They could not get rid of this slavery, even till the time of their death, and often these chains of bondage were inherited among them from one generation to another. The result of this was that these poor slaves lost possession of all the gifts given by God, such as wisdom, courage, morality, etc., and they led a life in no way better than that of animals.
QUR'ANIC VIEW OF HUMAN FREEDOM
cont.

The powerful nations used to attack the weaker ones. If they could stand their attack and managed to escape, they were safe; otherwise they were killed or taken slaves. The mighty ones would thus not only resort to fighting to capture their weak opponents, but would also, every now and then, snatch away men, women, and children from their guardians and make them their slaves for ever. Such was the unjust and unfair treatment which the strong meted out to the powerless. How did Islam liberate mankind from this slavery is a question which must be discussed at length.

As I have already stated, the powerful people used to enslave the weak ones in two ways. First by making war after which men and women of the weak opponent were made slaves. And secondly, even when there was no war, the weak were carried away by the mighty, were kept as slaves and were bought and sold, and thus deprived of freedom for ever.

These two processes of enslaving people were so common that they were practised in almost every part of the world. The mighty ones considered these to be the signs of their might and grandeur. The Holy Qur'an has laid down three injunctions for liberating mankind from this curse, and these principles have been so beautifully laid down that they leave absolutely no room for slavery.

(1) The Holy Qur'an has clearly stated that in no case shall a person lose his freedom unless he is taken prisoner in war. Thus, the second way of enslaving people, i.e., catching hold of them without any justification and buying and selling them, is strictly forbidden. The Holy Qur'an says:

"It is not fit for a prophet that he should take captives unless he has fought and triumphed in the land; you desire frail goods of this world, while Allah desires (for you) the hereafter, and Allah is Mighty, Wise. Were it not for an ordinance from Allah that had already gone forth, surely there would have befallen you a great chastisement for what you had taken to." (viii. 67-68)

After the Flight, when the Meccans were busy hatching plots against the Holy Prophet and making preparations for war, the Holy Prophet sent a small party to watch their movements and to gather necessary information. This party of the Muslims came across three unbelievers whom they attacked without the Holy Prophet's permission. One of the three Meccans was killed and the other two were taken prisoners. When the Holy Prophet came to know of this, he showed great displeasure. He was sorry for the man killed, paid his blood-money, and set the two prisoners free. Similarly, in the Battle of Badr, some Muslims thought of attacking the Meccan caravan instead of fighting the unbelievers, and it was then that the above quoted verses were revealed. The Muslims were clearly warned in these verses that the foul ways of attacking and capturing people were prevalent only in the times of ignorance when the outlook of people was limited to worldly benefits only, and that Islam could not allow such evil practices, for it aspired not for worldly gifts but for the heavenly boons and blessings in the hereafter. Prisoners could only be taken in the time of war and any other attempt at doing so incurred God's displeasure, which brings severe chastisement. And this injunction of His was based on sheer wisdom and sagacity and did great good to the people. So, one who violates and breaks this rule, they were told, must know that Allah is powerful and will not allow the transgressors to escape from punishment. This time, they were told, they had escaped punishment, for it was not the way of God to punish unless a previous warning had been given. Otherwise, what they had done merited dire punishment.

The words "You desire the frail good of this world." refer to those people who had attacked a party of the unbelievers before the battle had taken place, or who were scheming to attack the caravan. The Holy Prophet's motive is expressed in the words, "Woe to the Divine will which the Prophet brings into action, and so the Prophet also desired the hereafter and not the goods of this world.

(2) When it was expressly laid down that none could be taken prisoner except in the time of war, the first method of enslaving people was totally stopped. But there was still scope for slavery being practised, for the stronger ones would find some pretext or other to wage war against the weaker ones. So it was necessary also to make rules about fighting. The Holy Qur'an says:

"And fight in the way of Allah with those who fight with you, and do not exceed the limits; surely Allah does not love those who exceed the limits." (ii. 190)

By "exceeding the limit" is clearly meant that the Muslims are never allowed to fight those who do not fight them first. Again, if war must take place, the Muslims are asked to follow the injunction:

"And if they incline to peace, then incline to it." (viii. 61)

Thus we find that Islam, in the first place, never allows waging war without a just cause, and if it is waged, the Muslims are always asked to incline towards peace, if they find a similar inclination in their opponents, and take steps to stop hostilities.

(3) But there still remains another question. If war is waged and the Muslims have to fight, what will be the fate of those whom the Muslims may take as captives? Will they be forever deprived of their freedom and become slaves of the conquerors, or does the Holy Qur'an teach something else? The Holy Qur'an gives a final judgement in the following words:

"So when you meet the unbelievers in battle, smite the necks until when you have overcome them, make them prisoners, and afterwards either set them free as a favor or let them ransom themselves." (xviii. 4)

Now the whole canvas is clear. In order to save oneself from the enemy's attack in warfare, one has either to kill one's enemy or to take him prisoner. In the pre-Islamic times such captivity used to be lifelong and the prisoners were kept as maids and slaves. But the Holy Qur'an declares that the captivity must not last for ever but should be for a temporary period only. So the third injunction of the Holy Book is that after the war is over such prisoners should be continued on next page
QUR'ANIC VIEW OF HUMAN FREEDOM

cont.

set at liberty either in exchange for some money as ransom, or in exchange for Muslim prisoners with the enemy. But if the enemy is unable to pay ransom or if the Muslims do not need it, they are required to release their prisoners as an act of grace and mercy. In fact, the second alternative, freedom as a favour, has been put, before freedom by ransom, for this is what a true believer is really expected to do. But if the believers do seek ransom, they are at liberty to do so. So this injunction of the Holy Qur'an has decided once for all that war-prisoners are prisoners only for some time, and they must be set free after the war is over either by getting ransom or as a mark of kindness.

The Holy Qur'an prevents Slavery for ever

It has already been stated that, according to the plain teachings of the Holy Qur'an, no tribe or community is authorised to take away the liberty of any other community or individual, except during the war; that war must always be defensive, and that those who are taken prisoners during the war must be set free as soon as the war is over. These three injunctions have for all times solved the question of slavery, and there remains not a single opening through which slavery might regain access into human society. Thus, we find that it was the Holy Qur'an which, for the first time in the history of the world, laid down such beautiful, appealing and beneficial principles and rooted the curse of slavery out. These principles, however, closed the door against slavery only for the future. What was to be done with the slaves and maids already in existence in large numbers? How could their interests be protected and how could they be delivered from tyranny and persecution? When we study the Qur'an we find that it has given injunctions for their betterment, also, and has not ignored their lot. From these injunctions, however, meant only for the amelioration of the lot of slaves already in existence, some superficial readers of the Qur'an have formed the impression that the Holy Qur'an sanctions the institution of slavery. This is absolutely wrong.

Gradual Emancipation of Slaves

It is said that when Islam aimed at the abolition of slavery and left no room for its practice and always tried to secure freedom for the slaves, why did it not at once liberate all the then maids and slaves in Arabia? A little deep thinking will show that the objection is quite absurd. In the first place, it was impossible for the early Muslims to raise so much money as could buy freedom of all the slaves. Secondly, had the Muslims, somehow or other, managed to secure their freedom, where could they have accommodated those thousands of homeless people? The slaves had no homes, no land, no means of earning livelihood, and if they had been set free all at once, they would surely have resorted to plundering, outlawry, mischief and vagabondism. They would surely have disturbed the peace of the country and created confusion. Even today, when the world has made great progress in civilisation and culture, we find that the unemployed people have often tried to upset various governments, which cannot fulfil their requirements, nor can they control them. So one can well imagine what the consequences would have been if all those slaves were at once set free, when the age-long slavery had made them worse than brutes and animals. Thus, it was necessary that their emancipation should take place by stages. Two things were, therefore, necessary. First, that the state of the slaves be ameliorated by giving them proper education and training, and, secondly, that they be given their freedom step by step so that when finally set free they could easily stand on their own feet and fend for themselves. Now let us discuss these two points at some length.

(1) Injunctions about improving the lot of slaves.

We find the following injunctions in the teachings of Islam in which a Muslim is taught to help the slaves and try to make their life better.

(a) The Muslims are asked to look after the slaves, paying due regard to their educational and other requirements. The Holy Prophet has said:

"If a man has a slave-girl and he gives her good education, teaches her good morals and makes her well behaved, then he sets her free and lastly takes her as his wife, that man will be doubly rewarded." (b) Those who possess maids and slaves are asked to treat them just as they treat themselves. They should give the same food to their slaves as they take themselves and should give them the same clothing as they wear themselves, so that the slaves may also consider themselves a member of the society, and may create and cultivate feelings of self-respect and protection of rights. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said:

"Verily it is your brothers who serve you, God has placed them under your hands (i.e. control and protection), so if a man is placed under any man, he should give him the same thing to eat that he himself eats and should dress him just as he dresses himself, and do not give such a heavy task to your slaves which is beyond their power to do; and if you do give them a difficult task, then also join hand with them and help them to do it."

(c) The Holy Qur'an says:

"And marry those among you who are single, and those who are fit among your male slaves and your female slaves." (xxiv. 32)

This is how Islam has tried to uplift the slaves by marrying them with one another and, giving them the form of families, has made them a component part of society.

(d) Not only this, the Holy Qur'an has actually recommended that slaves may be married to their masters or to other free people. Can there be a more superior conception of equality than what the Holy Qur'an preaches? It says:

"And do not marry the idolatresses until they believe, and certainly a believing maid is better than an idolatrous woman, even though she should please you; and do not give (believing women) in marriage to idolaters until they believe, and certainly a believing slave is better than an idolater, even though he should please you." (ii. 221)

So here the Holy Qur'an plainly teaches that Muslim male slaves can

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marry their masters. There can be no better way of uplifting and honoring the slave community and making their lot better.

(11) How to effect gradual emancipation.

After giving the slaves a good and respectable position in society, the Holy Qur'an suggests the ways and means to restore them step by step to complete freedom. It adopts the following measures:

(a) Poor-rate, or Zakat, was made incumbent on every Muslim (possessing some wealth) and all these funds, which amounted to millions, were collected in the State Treasury. The Holy Qur'an had set apart one-eighth of this fund to be spend on the emancipation of slaves only. Says the Holy Qur'an:

"Alms are only for the poor and the needy, and the officials (appointed) over them, and those whose hearts are made to incline (to truth) and the (ransoming) of slaves and those in debt and in the way of Allah and the wayfarer: an ordinance from Allah and Allah is Knowing, Wise." (ix, 60)

(b) Secondly, the Holy Qur'an has made setting free of slaves a recompense of ever major sin. One who has fallen short of virtue and good deeds, is also asked to make up the deficiency by liberating slaves. A man asked the Holy Prophet to tell him about some virtuous action which might carry him nearer paradise and away from perdition. The Holy Prophet said, "It is the setting free of slaves." Again, we find in the Qur'an:

"But righteousness is this that one should believe in Allah and give away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and for (the emancipation) of the slaves." (ii, 177)

The results of those teachings was that the people began setting the slaves free, for they knew that it was one of the greatest virtues. And everybody realised this fact also, that, whereas on the one hand the setting free of slaves was a virtue, the enslaving of the free was a very great sin.

(c) The Holy Qur'an has removed all obstacles and impediments from the way of a slave who is desirous of winning his freedom. If the master was not willing to set slave at liberty, the slave was allowed to buy his freedom by paying a certain sum in installments and make a written agreement with the master to this effect. Such an agreement was called as i.e. a writing. If a slave thus desired to buy his freedom by paying some money that he had earned through trade, labour or any other means, the master was also asked to help the slave with money, which, if he liked, he could realise from him afterwards in small installments.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"And those who ask for a writing from among those whom your right hands possess, give them the writing if you know any good in them, and give them of the wealth of Allah which He has given you: and do not compel your slave-girls to prostitution, when they desire to be married and keep chaste, in order to seek the frail good of this world's life; and whoever compels them, then after their compulsion God is Forgiving, Merciful." (xxiv, 33)

In this verse God commands that if a slave asks for a written agreement, we must give it to him or her, provided we are satisfied that there is no social harm in it and that his or her freedom will be beneficial to society. Secondly, if we find any good in them, we are enjoined to give them monetary help also, which they might use in starting some business or utilize it in any other way for making money to win their freedom. The case of the female slaves is particularly stressed. They must not be so compelled by demands of money that they may be driven to prostitution. They seek freedom in order to lead a pure and chaste life by marrying some freeman. But when their masters insistently demand money from them and they cannot provide it, they may resort to prostitution. This is why the Holy Qur'an calls it "frail good of this world's life", and enjoins that it should not be resorted to. In pre-Islamic times, maids often resorted to this dirty method of earning money, but Islam strictly prohibited it, and those from among the Muslims who had been receiving such money in the days of ignorance were also consoled that since they had given up that dirty practice, Allah would forgive them and treat them mercifully.

The sum and substance of all these teachings is that there could have been only three possible ways of emancipating slaves, and that Islam has worked out all the three. First, the treasury of the Islamic State is required to set apart one-eighth of its funds to be spent on the liberation of slaves. Secondly, the general public is induced to set slaves free, declaring that it is an act of great virtue. And, thirdly, the slaves and maids are also given a chance to work hard and to earn money for buying their freedom. And at the same time the masters are asked to afford facilities to their slaves in and, if necessary, to grant them some money from their own pockets. In the case of female slaves, the owners are particularly asked to be careful that they are not put to unnecessary trouble and dragged into evil practices.

A Challenge

This is what Islam teaches about the emancipation of slaves. Nobody can be made a slave except during a year. He cannot be imprisoned for ever, but must be released after the war is over. The slaves already existing were paid special attention to, given education and were properly looked after. They were gradually uplifted and given a respectable position in society which they had never enjoyed before. The fact is that the Holy Qur'an was revealed to do away with every kind of slavery, and here is an open challenge to the whole world to bring a better system and a better teaching for the removal of slavery than what the Holy Book of Islam has taught.

II

An important question generally raised in connection with the discussion of slavery is whether or not Islam permits cohabitation with the girl-slave without contracting marriage. In order to arrive at some definite conclusion, we must according to the injunction of the Holy Qur'an, turn towards the Holy

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QU'R'ANIC VIEW OF HUMAN FREEDOM

Book and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet. The Qur'an says:

"If you disagree on anything, refer it to Allah and the Apostle." (iv. 59)

The Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah, being thus the final authority, the saying or action of no other person whether an Imam, a priest, or a jurisconsult (faqih) can be binding on us. If some learned Ulama and faqaha ever exercised their judgement (ijtihad) and accordingly made things lawful in good faith and the people acted upon their judgement, we can neither hold those theologians nor the people guilty; for everything was done in perfect good faith. It is an accepted principle that if one thinks that one is acting according to the law of religion (Shar'ah) and is anxious to stick to the Shar'ah, but unfortunately makes a mistake in understanding that law or makes a wrong judgement without any bad motive, one is not guilty of any religious offence. So if, in the days of yore, anybody kept a girl-slave as wife without having actually married her and at the same time believed that he was not violating the law of religion, we cannot accuse him of any offense. Wrong judgement, provided motives are good, is certainly no sin. But when a thing becomes clear and the people definitely know the verdict of religion about it, anyone who violates that verdict is decidedly a sinner.

No Cohabitation without Marriage

In the first place, the very question whether keeping of maids is lawful is absurd. For, when the Holy Qur'an puts a stop to the very practice of slavery and, according to the Qur'anic scheme of society, there remain neither slaves nor maids, how can the question of the legality of keeping female slaves at all arise? The only point that needs discussion is: "What did the Holy Qur'an teach about maids who existed in Arabia at the time of the advent of Islam, and were not freed till then? Did the Holy Qur'an make it lawful to carry on cohabitation with them without taking them into marriage as if they were the free women?" On a reference to the Holy Qur'an, however, we find clear injunction therein as to the marriage of female slaves. Now, if it were lawful to keep them without marriage, there would certainly be no sense in revealing these injunctions. The very presence in the Holy Qur'an of these injunctions, therefore, shows that the Holy Qur'an does not permit the keeping of maids without marriage. Here are a few of these Qur'anic injunctions.

The First Injunction

The first injunction of the Qur'an is as follows:

"And if you fear that you cannot act equitably towards orphans, then marry such women as seem good to you, two and three and four; but if you fear that you will not do justice (between them), then (marry) only one or what your right hands possess; this is more proper, that you may not deviate from the right course." (iv. 3)

In order to understand this verse properly, a little change in the given construction will have to be made, so as to read it thus:

"Marry such women as seem good to you from among the (free) women or what your right hands possess." The conjunction (or) connects "what your right hands possess" with (women), which here means free women. This verse can also be read in the following way:

Here the conjunction will connect with meaning "marry such women as seem good to you from among the (free) women, one of them, or what your right hands possess." It means that if you get one free woman, you can marry her, but if you cannot get one even, you may marry what your right hands possess, i.e., your slave-girls. The discussion is continued at length in the same chapter, "The Women," from which the above verse is taken, and runs as follows.

The Second Injunction

"And lawful for you are (all women) besides those, provided that you seek (them) with your property, taking (them) in marriage, not committing fornication." (iv. 24)

Here it is made clear that the object of marriage is not the satisfying of passion or fornication, but a permanent state of wedlock. Therefore, all the matrimonial contracts that are made for a short time such as or in which the husband is not prepared to keep the tie till his death and wants to break connection after some time, are declared by the Holy Qur'an as unlawful. It is the relation secured by marriage, only which is based upon chastity; all other relations are nothing but different forms of fornication or debauchery, hence unlawful.

Again, says the Holy Qur'an:

"And whoever among you has not within his power amleness of means to marry free believing women, then (he may marry) of those whom your right hands possess from among your believing maids; and Allah knows best your faith: you are (sprung), the one from the other; so marry them with the permission of their masters, and give them their dowries justly, they being chaste, not fornicating, nor receiving paramours." (iv. 25)

How clearly has the Holy Qur'an explained that if one has not the means of marrying a free believing woman, one may marry a believing maid, for maids are also from among us, as we have sprung one from the other, and so we should not look down upon maids or slaves. Again, if a man does not possess a maid of his own, he can get one with the permission of another man who possesses her and can marry her on the understanding that he will pay her dowry. So we find that here also the Holy Qur'an suggests only matrimonial relation with the slave-girls and that, too, of a permanent nature, and does in no way allow sexual relation outside marriage whether carried overtly or covertly and denounces all this as fornication forbidden in Islam.

The Third Injunction

According to the clear teachings of the Holy Qur'an, one who cannot marry a free woman is advised to marry a believing maid. But it is quite possible that one may not be able to marry a slave-girl either. What should he do in

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that case? This is what the Holy Qur'an recommends under the circumstances:

"And let those who do not find a match keep chaste until Allah makes them free from want out of His grace." (xxiv. 33)

This verse decides the whole issue. Those who cannot get a woman in marriage must control themselves. Had it been lawful to keep a maid as wife without marrying her, this injunction would not have been given in this way, but should have stood thus: "Those who do not find a match nor can get a maid, should keep chaste." But the Holy Qur'an uses one expression only, viz., who do not find a match, which clearly shows that cohabitation is not permissible with any woman, whether free or slave, without contracting regular marriage.

Marriage or control - these are the only two alternatives the Holy Qur'an sanctions - nothing more.

The Fourth Injunction

Those who believe in the legality of keeping maids put forth the following verse in support of their contention:

"Those who guard their private parts, except before their mates, or those whom their right hands possess, for they are not blameable." (xxiii. 5-6)

In this verse they consider mates to mean "married wives", and what their right hands possess to mean unmarried slave-girls. But this is not so. The Holy Qur'an dwelt at length upon the question of marriage with free women and maids, in the chapter, "The Women." So, wherever we find brevity in expression, we shall have to keep in view that portion in which the question has been fully discussed. In the second chapter we find:

"And do not marry the idolatresses until they believe, and certainly a believing maid is better than an idolatrous woman, even though she should please you. Nor give (believing women) in marriage to idolaters until they believe, and certainly a believing slave is better than an idolater, even though he please you." (ii. 221)

Now, if the expression "a believing maid is better than an idolatress" means for the two classes of women. For example, in the case of adultery, the punishment for a married slave-girl is half of that for a married free woman. It was because the maids and slaves were brought up in sucha low and degraded atmosphere that they were not expected to possess good qualities and high character. Consequently, the Shariah made different laws concerning free women and maids, and gave some privileges to the slave-girls. It was necessary that the married slave-girls be called بنت (maids) until they were actually set free, for marriage alone could not make them free.

Hence, in the verse

the azwaj (أزواج) are those who were free at the time of their marriage and were those who were maids at the time of their marriage and were not set free. Until they were freed, they had to remain in the category of بنت, i.e., "the possession of the right hands".

The case of Safiyya, a wife of the Holy Prophet, throws a flood of light on this point. It is narrated by Ans in the chapter on the Battle of Khyber in the Sahih of Bukhari that the Prophet on the occasion of his marriage with Safiyya halted between Madina and Khyber, and a separate tent was pitched for him. He invited the Muslims to his marriage feast. He ordered Bilal to spread the dinner sheet, and then dates, cheese and butter were served. The Muslims then began to question one another whether that wife of the Holy Prophet would be included in the فتيات or بنت (maids). It was suggested that if the Prophet asked her to put on a veil, she would be considered to be included in the فتيات (Mothers of the Faithful), and if she went about unveiled, she would be taken to be one of the maids. When the Holy Prophet left that place to resume his journey, he made Safiyya sit behind him on his riding beast and put a veil before her.

Then the whole thing became clear. As Safiyya came from the conquered people during the battle of Khyber, she was undoubtedly a slave-girl or "the possession of the right hand". The Holy Prophet married her and invited his continued on next page
friends to the marriage feast. After the feast was over, the companions of the Holy Prophet discussed the position that Safiyya was going to hold and the status that she was to be given. They asked one another whether she would be treated as one of their wives or would remain a slave-girl as she was. In other words, the question was whether the Holy Prophet had married her after setting her free or had taken her as his wife without freeing her. In order to decide the issue, they waited for the next step, whether she would go about with or without a veil. If she put on a veil, she would be one of the "Mothers of the Faithful". Otherwise, she was a maid. As the Holy Prophet did not like to marry a girl without freeing her, he made it manifest to the people by putting a veil before Safiyya to show that he had married her after setting her free. Thus, it is clear that the distinction of ٢٥١٧٦(azwaj) and ٢٥١٧٧ (maids) exists even after marriage, unless the maid is first freed. Hence, it is wrong to infer that (azwaj) are the married women and (maids) are those who one kept as slaves without being married. Both must necessarily be married. The only difference is that ٢٥١٧٦(azwaj) are married as free women and ٢٥١٧٧ (maids) are married as slave-girls.

Thus, we should always put that interpretation on the words of the Holy Qur'an which the context demands. Wherever the words are used, we must take them to mean the maids who have been duly married, and none else. The Holy Qur'an has expressly prescribed marriage with them, and it does not recognise any other connection between man and woman.

The Example of the Companions

It is thus clear that, according to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet, no sexual relation is lawful with a maid, except after regular marriage. The same example was followed by the Companions of the Holy Prophet. If a Companion of the Holy Prophet inclined towards a slave-girl, after these verses had been revealed, he would first set the girl free and then take her into marriage.

Previous Practice is no Religious Law

During the time when the Islamic States were at the height of their power and grandeur, some fuqaha did express the opinion that sexual relation with slave-girls could be carried on without marrying them. But we cannot accept this interpretation when the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet hold it unlawful. If these fuqaha base their judgement on a tradition or any other narration to the effect that some Companion of the Holy Prophet had kept a maid without having married her, we would presume that it was done before these verses were revealed. The Holy Prophet did not ever interfere in the affairs of his people, nor did he ever give any judgement or another unless he was directed by his Lord to do so. There were various evil practices prevalent in Arabia which continued even after the advent of Islam and the Holy Prophet did not declare any practice unlawful unless a verse of the Holy Qur'an declared it so. The Arabs continued to drink wine even after they had embraced Islam. The practice of muta' also continued and according to the old custom, the adulterers were stoned to death. But as the verses of the Qur'an continued to be revealed to the Holy Prophet, the use of liquor was banned. Mut'a too was prohibited and a new sentence of one hundred stripes replaced the Biblical law of stoning an adulterer to death. It is an admitted fact among all the Imams and Traditionists of Islam that all such traditions and narrations referring to the use of unlawful things among the Muslims as wine and muta', etc., relate to the period when they were not yet declared unlawful by the teaching of the Holy Qur'an. It is impossible to believe in the legality of a practice which the clear teachings of the Holy Qur'an declare to be unlawful. So when the Holy Qur'an enjoins upon the Muslims to contract regular marriage with slave-girls, and does not recognise any sexual relation between man and woman outside marriage, and when the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet is also in conformity with the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, we cannot attach any importance to any tradition and any narration of any Faqih and Imam. The only interpretation we can put on them is that they belong to the period prior to the revelation of laws on the point to the Holy Prophet.

The Holy Qur'an does not legalise Slavery

The Holy Qur'an, having elevated the status of maids and slaves and having given them a respectable

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position in society, for the future put a stop to the practice of slavery. The laws relating to slavery in the Holy Qur'an were revealed for the betterment and welfare of the slaves who were already there in Arabia at the time of the birth of Islam or those with whom the Muslims came into contact in other countries. The mere fact that laws relating to slavery are found in the Holy Qur'an does not lead to the conclusion that Islam has legalised the practice of slavery. These laws were meant to discipline the Muslims in their treatment of slaves. The Holy Qur'an was not revealed to preach slavery, but to liberate the world from all yokes of bondage, political, social or religious. Wherever the Muslims went they carried with them the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, and liberated the non-Muslims even from the worst types of bondage and the oppressions of autocracy and despotism. Rather than permit the practice of slavery, the Holy Qur'an has prohibited the Muslims to indulge in this bad custom. As I have shown above, the Holy Qur'an has liberated mankind from every possible form of slavery and has blessed the world with a universal message of freedom.

The two ways of Reform

It is an admitted fact that the Holy Qur'an within a short time uprooted all kinds of vices, corruptions and immoralities. Within a few years, the whole of Arabia was purged of polytheism, idol-worship, adultery, murder, drinking, gambling, theft, falsehood, dishonesty and all other evil practices leaving not a trace of them. But as regards slavery, Islam adopted another course. For the future it put a stop to the practice by laying down such rules and regulation as ordain freedom as the birthright of every individual. For those maids and slaves, however, who existed in all countries of the world, it adopted the course of gradual emancipation. Surely it would not have been a wise step either to liberate all at once, millions of slaves who possessed no morals and no sense of responsibility. Such a course was bound to culminate in riots, looting and hooliganism. They possessed no homes, no profession, no means of earning their livelihood, and if Islam had set them free abruptly, they must have proved a grave menace to the safety of society. The Holy Qur'an, therefore, adopted two measures to reform them - one immediate, the other gradual.

(1) The Immediate Reform The immediate step taken by Islam to improve the lot of slaves was that it at once raised their position and enjoined upon the Muslims to treat them as their equals. They were to give them the same food that they themselves took, and the same clothes as they themselves used, and if the work entrusted to them was beyond their capacity, the Muslims were commanded to help them in their work and not to over-tax their energy. The Muslims were so particular about their treatment of the slaves that once, when a Companion of the Holy Prophet got a slave from among the war prisoners, he was urged upon by his wife to liberate the man at once. “Why?” asked the Companion of the Holy Prophet. “Because,” replied the wife, “we are unable to give him those privileges which Islam enjoins for them and we cannot fulfil the conditions and obligations of keeping a slave. Set him at liberty and safeguard against the violation of the Qur'anic dictates.” Islam thus turned the curse of slavery into a blessing. The slaves received so many favours and privileges that the hands of Muslims that no dark man can ever receive at the hands of his white master, nor can an untouchable think of a similar treatment from a Brahmin. Islam raised their position, improved their lot and changed inhuman bondage into a veritable brotherhood.

(2) The Gradual Reform The second measure adopted by Islam for the betterment of slaves was that of giving them good training and making them civilised and then setting them free by paying for their freedom from the State Treasury. The Muslims were so keen about their freedom and betterment that, by the time of the battle of Ahzab, not a single Companion of the Holy Prophet possessed a slave. The same spirit was displayed by the Muslims during the Righteous Caliphate. But, with the spread of the Muslim dominions in all parts of the world and with the increase of their power and control, this spirit gradually began to fade. Whereas the non-Muslim nations of the world have been wholesomely influenced by the teachings of Islam, the Muslims, too, contracted the bad qualities. Thus, despotism of the non-Muslim world gradually began to take root among the Muslims, and the democratic spirit and sense of independence that Islam had created among its followers gave place to political servility, autocracy and despotism. The emancipation of slaves was also retarded, and the wrong judgement of some of the faqaha encouraged absolutism among the big people. But all the same position of the slaves was not changed, and they continued to be favourably treated by the Muslims. In spite of the power, grandeur and wealth of the Muslims, there was always a class of men present among them who upheld the teachings of Islam and spread the light of the Holy Qur'an, with the result that the seed of human freedom and liberty sown in the desert of Arabia grew into a big tree with its roots firm in the earth and branches spread all over the world.

The Testimony of History

Today, although Europe may or may not admit it, the pages of history bear a glowing testimony to the fact that whatever spirit of freedom and independence is now noticeably in the European nations is traceable to their contact with Islam. It must, however, be added that the sort of Freedom that Europe is now proud of showing to the world is but a poor imitation of what the Holy Prophet of Arabia gave through the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. It is a pale imitation, because Europe has failed to place man on that high pinnacle of freedom where the Holy Prophet had actually placed him. Though apparently slavery has been wiped off the face of this earth and everywhere democracy is replacing absolutism, yet slavery in its subtle and more dangerous form is still extant. The distinction of the white and the coloured, Western and Eastern and of high caste and low caste is still there. Europe could not do away with it.

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HOW MUCH OF EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION IS ISLAMIC?
by Dr. S. A. Khulushi, Ph.D.

Many uneducated or semi-educated people think that European civilization is all the product of Europe. They forget that several other nations have contributed to it and that it has incorporated more than one other foreign civilization. The most noticeable and by far the most effective of all is the Muslim civilization. Its influence has not been confined to one or two fields. It has practically permeated all departments of life: science, literature, architecture, medicine, arts and music.

How much is the West indebted to the Muslim East? This question has not yet been answered adequately. We shall not be able to give an accurate answer to it until all the manuscripts of Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad, Persia, India and the Escurial are thoroughly studied and their contents are brought to light. Until then we shall content ourselves by saying that the Western debt is great.

The Muslims started scientific research as early as 661 C.E. The greatest centre from which this research was conducted was the Academy of Jundeshpur, Iran, a member of which translated Ahron's Pandects (The digest, or abridgment, in fifty books of the decisions, writings and opinions of the old Roman jurists, made in the sixth century by direction of the Emperor Justinian and forming the leading translation of the Roman civil law.) into Arabic, which may be regarded as the first scientific work in that language.

Though the details concerning the scientific aspect of the time of the Umayyads (684-745 C.E.) in Damascus are not yet clear, those of the Abbasids are much more abundant and better studied. The Abbasids began their rule in 750 C.E. and at the very dawn of that rule appears the figure of Jabir Ibn Hayyan, the Geber of the Latin annals, the father of alchemy. Jabir wrote many scientific treatises which were unfortunately lost, excepting one on poisons that was recently recovered by Max Meyerhof. At the time of the second Abbasid Caliph the Academy of Jundeshpur doubled its research activities, giving impetus to the translation of Greek works into Arabic.

In the ninth century, a regular school for translation equipped with a library was established in Baghdad by the Caliph al-Ma'mun (d. 833 C.E.). The most voluminous part of the Greek scientific legacy was rendered into Arabic through the medium of this school. Several works of eminent Greek scholars were lost in the original and were preserved in their Arabic translations. This new school was a great rival of the Jundeshpur Academy. Eventually the latter dwindled and finally disappeared, its members having one by one been drawn to the illustrious capital of the Abbasids - Baghdad.

Translations apart, the Muslim scientist wrote innumerable original works. In physics the name of the Arab philosopher al-Kindi (850 C.E.) stands prominent. He is reported to have written no less than 265 works. His works greatly influenced the English scientist Roger Bacon (1294 C.E.) and other Western scientists. Arabic works on lapidary were later translated, and regarded as good patterns for imitation by Western writers. So, many precious stones, plants and drugs bear in European languages Arabic or Persian names, e.g., bezooz (Persian: pad-zahr, i.e., protecting against poison), campbor (Arabic word of Persian origin) and galanga-root (Persian: khulinidad).

The Muslims learnt paper manufacturing from the Chinese and passed it on to the West. In 797 C.E. the first Muslim paper establishment was set up in Baghdad.

In the golden age of Muslim scholarship al-Razi (Latin: Rhazes) (d. 932 C.E.) appears. He was by the explicit admission of Western writers one of the great physicians of all time (Dr. Max Meyerhof, Science and Medicine, in The Legacy of Islam, by Sir Thomas Arnold and Professor A. Guillaume, Oxford, 1931, p. 323). His book on Smallpox and Measles was translated into Latin, then into all the important European languages. The English version was printed forty times between 1498 and 1886 (see Myerhof's Science and Medicine). His other work, al-Hawi (the Comprehensive Book) was reproduced in translation form several times and had a profound influence on European knowledge of medicine.

Arabic systematization reached its apogee in the Canon of Medicine by Avicenna (d. 1037 C.E.), which affected the Western scholars with the mania of subdivision in their system of classification. The Canon remained one of the standard works that was read in Europe till the second half of the seventeenth century. Surgery also found its place in the Muslim pursuit of learning. Abulcasis (Arabic: Ab al-Qasim) of Cordova (d. ca. 1013 C.E.) wrote a complete section in his al-Tasrif on this department of medicine. His work contained illustrations of instruments used, and it can be said with justice that it laid the foundations of surgery in Europe.

But whatever one may say about Muslim medicine and Muslim surgery, the greatest medical glory of Islam lies in its contribution to ophthalmology. As late as the first half of the eighteenth century, the excellent treatises of 'Ammar of Mosul, Iraq, continued to be the best books on eye diseases. Mas'udi (d. 956 C.E.), in his voluminous work, Murtij al-Dhabab (The Meadows of Gold), gives a description of the first windmill, which is in all probability a Muslim invention. He also gives the rudiments of the theory of evolution. In Optics, Alhazen's (d. 1039 C.E.) name may be quoted with pride. The English philosopher Roger Bacon (d. 1294 C.E.) and all medieval European writers, including the Italian genius, Leonardo da Vinci (d. 1519 C.E.), and the German Astronomer Johann Kepler (d. 1630 C.E.), based their works on Alhazen's Opticae Thesaurus. The first hospital in the ninth century was established in Baghdad. Roving hospitals in the Muslim world came into existence in the eleventh century. Special wards for men and women with dispensaries were installed. In certain hospitals, even a library was annexed, which is also a common feature of modern European hospitals. In Cadiz, Spain, a physician initiated a botanical garden especially for medicinal plants.

It is a peculiar fact that a mosque was not only a place of worship: it was also a school, for lectures were held there and every mosque had a library attached to it. In them one could find, along with works on theological subjects, those on science and medicine. Just as the mosques helped the progress continued on next page
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cont.

of learning and research, so did the religious pilgrimage to Mecca. Students from India and Spain, Asia Minor and Africa often visited en route academies, libraries and hospitals, and acquired fresh knowledge from them that was not available in their native towns.

The next strongest point of Muslim scientists after the department of ophthalmology was pharmacology. In this field Ibn al-Baytar (1248 C.E.), born at Malaga, Spain, stands prominent. In his Collection of Simple Drugs, he describes 1,400 varieties that he collected over a belt extending from Spain to Syria. It is the greatest Arabic book on botany. Arabic pharmacology continued to influence Europe as late as the nineteenth century. Ibn al-Baytar’s treatises were read and studied until 1830.

Phychology, especially racial psychology, also found a place in Arabic scientific research. In this respect Avicenna’s importance cannot be denied. For instance, on the subject of the nature of the plague or the Black Death, as it was called, Ibn al-Khatib’s treatise was considered even by Europeans themselves as superior to all treatises written by Europeans between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. The contagious nature of the disease established by Ibn al-Khatib was not emphasized by Greek specialists, and was practically ignored by most of the medieval European practitioners.

The hypothesis of the greater density of water when nearer to the centre of the earth was proved by al-Khazin before Roger Bacon.

Muslim sciences, compared with those of the Greeks, were on the whole more practical and derived mainly from actual observations. In fact, in optics the mathematical genius of Alhazen (Ibn al-Haytham, d. 1020 C.E.) and Kamal al-Din (d. 1320 C.E.) surpassed that of Euclid and Ptolemy.

The fall of Toledo in 1085 C.E. and that of Sicily in 1091 C.E. to the Muslims marked the beginning of a new chapter in human learning and civilization: European awakening was ushered in. Two movements began - Arabism and Hellenism. Both movements continued to struggle until about 1550, when they both succumbed before the Renaissance, which was the legitimate child of the two querulous parents.

It is only recently that the world has hailed Britain’s new medical scheme of offering free medical treatment. My readers will be surprised to know that nationalization of doctors and hospitals existed in the Muslim world at the time of the Almohades, rulers of Spain in the twelfth century (‘Al-Marakushi, al-Mujib, p. 190-191).

A foreigner could enter any of the Muslim hospitals and obtain free treatment. If poor, he was given money after leaving hospital for the whole period of his convalescence, until he was able to work again. The Sultan Ya’qub Ibn al-Mansur kept a vigilant eye on these hospitals (see al-Mujib, pp. 190-191).

Men doctors apart, there were women doctors, famous amongst whom was the sister of the grandson of Abu Bakr Ibn Zuhr, and her daughter (Tabaqat al-Atibba’, II p. 70).

In dentistry during the early Middle Ages, “... leading Arab physician was preaching the cleansing of the mouth and teeth, not only by medicated washes but by the use of pure water as a priceless agent in dental health. As a matter of fact, the real debt due to the Muslims for progress in dental as well as in medical science is rarely appreciated. It is true that their methods slowly and partially superseded many of the erroneous teachings of Hippocrates and Galen, but the operation of filling decayed teeth with gold foil, for example, was apparently known to the physician in attendance on the Abbasid Caliph, Harun al-Rashid (837 C.E.), and that medieval genius of Arabian surgery, Abulcasis, who lived in the tenth century, was in many respects far ahead of his time, not least in the stress he laid upon the importance of the early recognition and treatment of pyorrhoea, evidently then, as now, a widespread oral malady. At an even earlier date, Rhazes, a Persian of noble birth, employed opium to relieve pain and arsenic as a filling for dental cavities ...” (Forthnightly Review for June, 1929, pp. 804-7; see The Islamic Review for July, 1929, p. 256).

The Spanish Arabs were the first to think of the possibilities of flying. Naft al-Tib min Ghusn al-Andalus al-Ratib, a tenth century book on the history of Spain, has the following to say on the matter:

"Abu 'l-Qasim Ibn Finas, the savant of Spain, was the first to discover the manufacture of glass from sandstone, and he was the first to unravel the book of prosody of al-Khalil and explain music and invent the machine known as al-Mithqal to tell the time... he also devised a means for flying, by covering his body with feathers and affixing two wings to it. He managed to fly in the air for a long distance, but his device was not perfected as regards his coming down, so his bottom was injured, because he did not know that a bird usually fell on his hind part, thus he forgot to construct a tail... When Ibn Finas wanted to exhibit his invention before the people of Cordoba, a huge crowd gathered to watch him, but his success was small because he could not move his plane in the air. He remained stationary in one spot, then he fell on the ground."

It is not surprising that the Arabs should have made such an attempt, since for centuries they had been dreaming of such an invention. The flying carpet in The Arabian Nights is but one aspect of this long-cherished dream.

The Arabs were the first to discover America

Many think that Columbus was the first man to discover America, but the Arabs preceded him. When the Genoese sailor wanted to make his adventurous attempt to reach India by sailing westwards, it was the Arab geographers and cartographers who offered him advice and provided him with maps (This was not the only time that Arab geographers and sailors helped European discoverers, for when Vasco da Gama, after his circumnavigation of Africa in 1498, he had an Arab pilot to show him the way to India. He possessed a good sea map and maritime instruments. J. H. Kramers, The Legacy of Islam). An important theory that influenced Columbus (which was a

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legacy from Islam) was the "Arin Theory". It claimed that the Eastern hemisphere had a central summit equidistant from North, South, East and West. Consequently, Columbus thought that there should be such an Arin, or central summit, on the Western hemisphere as well.

Yet a Western scholar, the late Professor J. H. Kramers, of Holland, would mildly say, "Islamic geographical theory may claim a share in the discovery of the New World." (J. H. Kramers, Geography and Commerce, in The Legacy of Islam, Oxford, 1931).

It is highly probable that Ahmad Ibn Majid, the man who helped Vasco da Gama in his exploration of the Indian Ocean, was the inventor of the compass (J. H. Kramers, The Legacy of Islam), which was a great help to Columbus.

The Spanish mystic philosopher, Ibn 'Arabi (d. 1240 C.E.), seems to be the first man to think of the existence of another continent beyond the Atlantic Ocean (Muhammad al-Manuni, al-Uthman wa al-Abab wa al-Fumun 'al a'had al-Muwahhidin - al-Matba'a al-madhiyya, Tatwan, Morocco, 1950). According to the father of modern history, Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406 C.E.), Ibn Rushd, known in Europe as Averroes (d. 1199 C.E.), used to say: "There is more than the equator in the south exactly what there is in the north. Whatever land there is here has its counterpart there." (Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddima).

Al-Sharif al-Idrissi, a great Arab geographer (1154 C.E.), relates in his book al-Nuzha the story of the three conceited brothers who sailed the Atlantic Ocean to see its boundary and find out what there was inside it. Their adventure led them to the Antille Islands between North and South America (Muhammad al-Manuni, op. cit.). As for Ibn Fatim, the celebrated Muslim geographer and explorer, he managed to explore West Africa (Masalik al-'Absar).

In music Muslim influence is not very hard to prove, considering that so many European musical instruments have Arabi origin. Here are a few with their Arabic equivalents: Bugle, Buq; lute, al-'ud; Tambourine, tambur; rebec, rabab; guitar, qithara; naker, naqqara, etc.

Words connected with music like "masker" (Spanish: mascara) and troubadours cannot fail to show their Arabic origin; they are maskhara (buffoon) and mutrubun (entertainers).

One of the main uses of music and singing which was later borrowed by the troubadours of Provence was for spreading political views or expressing them to the ruler in a subtle way (H. G. Farmer, "Music" in The Legacy of Islam, Oxford, 1931, p. 362).

The Arabs improved on the Greek musical theorists. Dr. Farmer, a British scholar and one of the greatest authorities on Arabian music, has the following to say: "The introduction to al-Farabi's Grand Book of Music is certainly equal, if not superior, to anything that has come down to us from Greek sources. In the theory of the physical bases of sound the Arabs certainly did some advance, especially on the question of the spherical propagation of sound. Indeed, it is highly probable that when the works of the Arabic theorists have been edited with an adequate apparatus criticus, many a debatable word or passage in the Greek writers will be illuminated." (H. G. Farmer, "Music" in The Legacy of Islam, Oxford, 1931, p. 367-368).

Al-Farabi, one of the foremost Muslim theorists, continued to be the centre of interest in Europe till the seventeenth century. The Muslim faculty of music and other faculties were so high compared with those of Europe that when Roger Bacon was once speaking at Oxford to a gathering of Spanish students the latter kept secretly smiling at his faulty knowledge, as he was using the imperfect Latin translations of works which they knew in the original Arabic. The enthusiasm for Arabic and Muslim universities and schools became so great among the Europeans that men no less than Dr. Mirabilis and Adelard of Bath strongly recommended the leaving of European schools in favour of those of Muslims (The Legacy of Islam, pp. 371). In fact, their enthusiasm was as great as that of the Muslims for European universities today.

Mensural music is probably the greatest legacy that the Muslims left to Europe. Measured song prior to 1190 was unknown among Europeans. The Arabs knew it from the seventh century under the term of Iqa', or rhythm. It is fully described in a treatise by al-Kindi (d. 874 C.E.): "Not only mensural values in the notes, but even the rhythmic modes that we see in Franco of Cologne (c. 1190 C.E.) and his school appear to have been derived originally from the Arabs. In the Latin treatise De mensuris et discantu we have particular kinds of notes bearing such names as elmuahyn and elmuarfia, which are of Arabic origin. The Medieval hocket, which Robert de Handlo says is a combination of notes and pauses, is the Arabic iqa'at.

The most effective channel for disseminating Arabic music in Western Europe was the minstrels. Harmony as it is known in Europe was probably stimulated by the tarkib (combination), which was the striking of a note simultaneously with its fourth, fifth or octave. Also the word conductus, a form of composition known in the Middle Ages, is so reminiscent of the Arabic majra. And the musica ficta is only the Arabic lute perfected later by Spanish musicians.

Attempts to introduce Muslim melodies and Oriental effects of orchestration into European music have not been wanting. In the nineteenth century experimentation on this line was carried out by Rubinstein, Felicien David, Saint-Saens and others (H. G. Farmer, ibid.).

According to the French scholar, Baron Carra de Vaux, "... the Arabs have really achieved great things in science; they taught the use of ciphers ... and thus became the founders of the arithmetic of everyday life; they made algebra an exact science and developed it considerably and laid the foundations of analytical geometry; they were indisputably the founders of plane and spherical trigonometry which, properly speaking, did not exist among the Greeks. In astronomy they made a number of valuable observations. The Arabs ... formed a bond of union, a connecting link between ancient culture and modern civilization ... It was because the Arabs had preserved and perfected various branches of knowledge, kept the spirit of research continued on next page
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cont.

alive and eager and maintained it pliant and ready for future discoveries... They are more positive than the Greeks themselves.” (Carra de Vaux, “Astronomy and Mathematics” in The Legacy of Islam, Oxford, 1931.)

Logarithms were invented by the celebrated Muslim mathematician al-Khwarizmi, whose name in its corrupted Latin form gave the term algorithm, alternatively written as algorism (Carra de Vaux, ibid.).

The Muslim knew the zero, which is of capital importance in the numerical system, at least 250 years before it was ever heard of in the West. Without the zero the Europeans had to keep each figure in its proper place by means of columns of units, tens and hundreds, etc. (Carra de Vaux, ibid.). The words algebra, cipher, algorism, etc., survive to this day in all the Western languages as reminders of Western debt in mathematical sciences to the Muslims.

“We know how music is related to mathematics... all the musical theory of the Arabs is expressed in terms of fractions. It contains logarithms in posse,” (Carra de Vaux, ibid.) hence the Arabs paid particular attention to this lore.

As for algebra, “Omar Khayyam’s (1123 C.E.) algebra represents a much more advanced state of this science than that we see among the Greeks.” (Carra de Vaux, ibid.) In arithmetic the Arabs made several discoveries, such as the magic squares and amicable numbers.” (Ibid.)

Western Debt to Muslim Architecture

In spite of the controversies of the various schools of architecture as to the origins of certain architectonic features, Mr. Martin S. Briggs, author of Muhammadan Architecture, (Oxford, 1924) makes the following acknowledgment of the Western debt to Muslim architecture:
“... We may reasonably ascribe the invention of the pointed arch to Muslim buildings in Syria and elsewhere. The ogive arch almost certainly, and the ‘Tudor’ arch possibly, have a similar origin. The use of cusps and of cueded or multifoil arches comes from the same source, as probably does the tracery patterns of surfaces, and perhaps even the use of bar-tracery in windows. Plate-tracery may be derived from the pierced geometrical lattices in stone and stucco of the early mosques, or it may have originated still farther back in pre-Islamic Syrian or Mesopotamian buildings. The invention of stained glass is sometimes attributed to the East, but that attribution has not yet been proved. The use of engaged shafts at the angles of piers, so important in the history of Gothic vaulting, is a Saracen innovation of the eighth or ninth century. Ornamental and pierced battlements came from Mesopotamia to Cairo and were thence transmitted to Italy, afterwards becoming a feature of Gothic architecture. The carved inscriptions used decoratively in the late gothic work were anticipated in the ninth century at Ibn Tulun’s Mosque at Cairo, but inscriptions in Kufic characters (They are squarish characters, originated in Kufa (Iraq), hence the name) penetrated far into France during the Muslim occupation of her southern provinces, and rare examples of ornament even in England are believed to show Arabic influence... . The Arab mashrabiya or lattice of woodwork... was copied in English metal grilles. The decoration of surfaces in low relief, by means of ‘arabesques’ or diaper patterns, and the use of geometrical patterns in decoration, is certainly a part of our debt to the Muslim peoples, who were also the source or channel of much of our knowledge of geometry (Martin S. Briggs, ‘Architecture’ in The Legacy of Islam, Oxford, 1931, pp. 178-9). “The name ‘arabesque’, given to the conventional patterns in low relief used in England from Elizabethan days onwards, indicates that here we owe something to the Arabs of the Middle Ages.” (Ibid., p. 176. See also M.S. Biggs, ‘The Nature of Saracenic Ornament’ in Muhammadan Architecture in Egypt and Palestine, Oxford, 1924)

Muslim Literature

Apart from the great masterpiece the Qur’an, which inspired Dante with his Commedia, (c.f. The Divine Comedy and Islam, by Miguel Asin Palacios, London, 1926) Muslim literature comprises many great outstanding works which influenced the mind, soul and emotions of mankind. The quatrains of ‘Omar Khayyam, the verses of Hafiz (lived c. 1320-1390 C.E.-720-792 A.H.), of Shiraz, Iran and Firdawsi (b. 940 C.E., d. 1020 C.E.), stand at the forefront. But the most popular of all those works, in fact, the most popular work in the whole world, is The Arabian Nights. Be it Indian, Persian or Arabian, it is still the work of Muslim authors. It has reached the highest flight of human imagination. It has inspired so many writers of nationalities as diverse as the Chinese and English. And it has been a source of instruction and entertainment to so many millions throughout the ages that one would not hesitate for a moment to say that it is the greatest literary work that humanity ever produced. It is even greater than Shakespeare’s works put together! My contention in this case rests on two points:

(1) Popularity: no one can deny that the stories of The Arabian Nights are much more popular throughout the world than Shakespeare’s plays, for the simple reason that they appeal to a wider range of people, from little children to the oldest sages.

(2) Extent of influence and inspiration: many more writers derived their inspiration from the Arabian writers than from Shakespeare’s works.

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QU'AR'ANIC VIEW OF HUMAN FREEDOM
cont.

Similarly, intellectual slavery, social bondage, chains of custom and convention, economic bondage and the curse of usury - all still there, and man's servility to Satan and subjection to low passions is at its highest.

The wave of freedom that is now spreading all over the world is a tide that emanated from the fountain of Islam thirteen centuries ago. With the lapse of time, the current of that wave has no doubt slackened, but it still continues to nourish the human freedom that Islam had brought with it.

by late Dr. Basharat Ahmad
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cont.

The Arabian Nights is as mysterious as al-Hamra' (Alhambra) of Granada, Spain. Just as we do not know the great architect who designed and built that magical palace, we do not know the great Muslim genius who wrote The Arabian Nights. It is perhaps the Muslim spirit of selfnegation which made these two great men keep incognito.

That the work was written somewhere in the middle of the thirteenth century can be verified from the date given in one of the oldest and earliest stories in the book, "The Tailor’s Tale" (Richard Burton, The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night). And that the author was a Baghdadi can be proved by the dialectical words, idioms and turns of phrase that are still in use in Baghdad today, and are indeed peculiar to it.

I personally advise every European to study The Arabian Nights if for nothing else but to see for himself the wonderful position Muslim women occupied in medieval Islam. In this connection, Burton rightly says: "The next point I propose to consider is the position of womanhood in The Nights, so curiously at variance with the stock ideas concerning the Moslem home and domestic policy still prevalent, not only in England, but throughout Europe. Many readers of these volumes have remarked to me with much astonishment that they find the female characters more remarkable for decision, action and manliness than the male; and are wonderstruck by their masterful attitude and by the supreme influence they exercise upon public and private life." (Sir Richard Burton, The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night, 'Terminal Essay'.)

"The legal status of woman kind in Islam is exceptionally high, a fact of which Europe has often been assured, although the truth has not even yet penetrated into the popular brain." (Burton, ibid.)

"The greatest of Spanish plays, La Vida es Sueno (Life’s a Dream), is the story of Christopher Sly in The Taming of the Shrew, both of which are derived from 'The Sleeper Wakened' in The Thousand and One Nights." (J. B. Trend, 'Spain and Portugal', in The Legacy of Islam.)

It was The Arabian Nights which gave the European, and especially the English novel, a new trend. Novels of the seventeenth century did not have much appeal to the public mind until in 1704 Galland published his translation of The Arabian Nights, which the English public received with unparalleled enthusiasm. To satisfy the public demand, stories in imitation of The Thousand and One Nights appeared (H. A. R. Gibb, 'Literature', in The Legacy of Islam, Oxford, 1931.). In the course of the eighteenth century the book ran through at least thirty English and French editions, and has been published more than 300 times in all the European languages (Gibb, ibid.)

Without The Arabian Nights there would have been no Robinson Crusoe and no Gulliver’s Travels (Gibb, ibid.)

Perhaps next to The Arabian Nights one can mention the Quatrains of Omar Khayyam, another great Muslim literary product, which has been translated into all European languages and is still read with great admiration, and the extent of appreciation it enjoys with the average European can be judged by the fact that its copies are often sent to friends as Christmas and birthday presents.

Influence of Arabic on European Languages

Arabic is the official language of Islam. It is the language of the Qur’an and the Hadith. It is also the language in which all prayers are conducted; but this does not mean that the Qur’an cannot be translated in foreign tongues.

Though in literature Arabic is the junior of Hebrew by one thousand years, yet philologically it is its senior by countless centuries. It is indispensable for the study of the Old Testament. It is also indispensable for the study of the legacy of the Middle Ages and the history of the European Renaissance.

Speaking of the genius of the Arabic language at its zenith, Professor A. Guillaume, of London University, thinks that "Arabic was a poverty-stricken tongue compared with Arabic, and not even classical Hebrew at its best could rival Arabic in its astonishing elasticity."

"Arabic is fitted to express relations with more conciseness than the Aryan language because of the extraordinary flexibility of the verb and noun. Thus, the ideas: break, shatter, try to break, cause to break, allow to be broken, break one another, ask someone to break, pretend to break, are among many variations of the fundamental verbal theme which can, or could, be expressed by vowel changes and consonantal arguments without the aid of the supplementary verbs and pronouns which we have to employ in English." (The Preface in The Legacy of Islam)

Further, Professor Guillaume goes on to account for the charm of the language of Islam by saying: "The charm which the Arabic language and Arabic literature never fails to exert on its devotees lies in its unexpectedness, its unaffectedness, and its love of direct speech... examples will be found of the contributions which the Arabic tongue has made to the languages of Europe. How many words lived only for a day or were slain by the European Renaissance only specialists can say. What, for instance, have the physicians done with the suda which once formed the opening discourse of the third book of Avicenna's Qanun?... This barbarous transcription stands for suda (headache), and comes appropriately enough from the root sada (to split)." (The Preface, ibid.)

During the Muslim rule in Spain, "Latin was a clumsy language to write compared with Arabic, and the Latin literature available was of no great interest; so we find a bishop in Cordoba reprimanding his flock not so much for lack of faith as for preferring Arabic poetry and prose to the homilies of the Fathers. Again, the Muslims had introduced paper, and books were more quickly and cheaply produced in Arabic than in Latin." (J. B. Trend in The Legacy of Islam, art. Spain & Portugal)

Many Arabic words have found their way into European languages, especially Spanish and Portuguese, and this only to be expected since the Arabs controlled more or less the whole of Spain for nearly eight centuries. Most of the words borrowed are nouns, particularly technical, commercial and naval terms.

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cont.

English and the rest of the northern European languages received their share of loan words from Arabic through Spain and Portugal, and also via the Crusaders. But we must be careful in deciding whether a word has really been borrowed from Arabic or the similarity is just accidental, such as the English word 'shari'f'. There are also a host of monosyllabic words that are identical in Arabic and English. These can be explained as being either onomatopoeic, hence they are international, or, according to the theory of the late Pere Anstas al-Kirmili, as the Semites were living in Iraq and the Aryans in Mesopotamia, they exchanged hosts of monosyllabic words, hence one comes across such astonishingly identical words as:

Arabic English
Kit . . . . Cat
Kat . . . . Cut
Sudd . . . Shut
'Add . . . Add
Ba'a . . . Buy, etc.

There are many words in both Arabic and English that are partially identical (i.e. in one or two letters only), or they have the same rhythm or have letters that are interchangeable. I personally maintain that there is hardly a word in English that does not bear resemblance to its Arabic equivalent in one way or another.

Apart from these words, there are others that are considered by historical and philological evidence as direct borrowing, such as:

Arabic English
Ta'rif . . . . Tariff
Tafrk . . . Traffic
Amir al-Bahr . . Admiral
Hashshashin . . Assassin
Dar al-Sina'a . . . Arsenal
Al-Kuhl . . . Alcohol
Bazz . . . Baize
Al-Jabur . . . Algebra
Tillasin . . . . Talisman

In the Middle Ages, the Europeans were dependent on the Muslim factories in Spain, Syria and Iraq for practically everything they wore. The Arabic names of various materials, preserved in European languages to the present day, will attest to this fact. (A. H. Christie, 'Islamic Minor Arts and their Influence upon European Work', in The Legacy of Islam, Oxford, 1931.)

(1) Muslin is the muszolina imported by Italian merchants from Mosul (a town in northern Iraq).

(2) Baldisco (corrupt form of the name 'Baghdad') is the rich silk fabrics brought from Baghdad.

(3) Fustian, the kind of cloth known in Chaucer's time, came from Fustat (Old Cairo), the Egyptian capital at the time of early Islam.

(4) Grenadines, dress fabrics from Granada.

(5) Taffeta comes from the Persian taffah.

(6) Taby silk (French and Italian, tabis) comes from the Arabic attabi, named after a quarter in Baghdad, al-Attabiyyah, which in its turn was named after Attab, a companion of the Prophet. It is interesting to note here that the name 'tabby cat' is derived from the same source, owing to the brown and yellow attabi fur of the animal. (G. le Strange, Baghdad under the Abbasid Caliphs, Oxford, 1900.)

(7) Damask comes from Damascus.

Further, it was the Arabs who introduced, among other trades, the manufacture of silk clothes into Europe. The Muslim silk factories in Sicily gave a great impetus to the industry in the whole Italian peninsula, which later became so well-famed for its silken stuffs.

Another trade the Europeans learnt from the Muslims was carpet weaving, especially pile carpets. (A. H. Christie, op. cit., p. 139)

Although paper was invented by the Chinese, the Europeans did not borrow it directly from them. They waited until the Arabs brought it along to them and taught them how to manufacture it. Again Sicily, Italy and Spain played a decisive role in this respect. The Arabs first knew of paper in 704 C.E. when they captured Samarcand. There are numerous Arabic manuscripts that date back to the ninth century, whereas Europeans cannot go further back than the twelfth or even the thirteenth century for any MSS written on paper. (op. cit.)

as one of the reference books on Islamic Jurisprudence. Marmaduke Pickthall wrote about this book:

"Probably no man living has done longer and more valuable service for the cause of Islamic revival than Maulvi Muhammad Ali of Lahore... In our opinion the present volume is his finest work. It is a description of Al-Islam by one well-versed in Sunnah who has on his mind the shame of the Muslim decadence of the past few centuries and in his heart the hope of the revival, of which signs can now be seen on every side. Without moving a hair's breadth from the traditional position with regard to worship and religious duties, the author shows a wide field in which changes are lawful and may be desirable because here the rules and practices are not based on an ordinance of the Qur'an or on an edict of the Prophet (peace be on him)."

This was translated into Arabic in Egypt and Miss Quterman, a Turkish journalist who visited Pakistan in 1950, informed that this had been translated into Turkish and the influence it wielded in Turkey was acknowledged by the message of the great Mufti of Turkey delivered by her to Maulana... It has since been rendered into many languages, the Dutch, the Indonesian, Urdu, and Spanish being some of these.

In 1945, Maulana published 'The New World Order' whereby he tried to draw the attention of the world intelligentsia to the fact that the concept of nationalism as worshipped by various nations has recent times proved to be the worst enemy of mankind. National jealousies and rivalries are the root cause of conflict and war between various nations.

The only hope for world peace is to be found in replacing the present glorification of nationalism with glorification of the concept of mankind as one nation' as preached by Islam. This great work of the Maulana will be a source of enormous wealth for intellectuals of the world till mankind attains the capacity to discover its destiny.

M. MUHAMMAD ALI cont.

cont.
Unlike any other book, the meaning and linguistic presentation of the Holy Qur’an form one unbreakable whole. The position of individual words in a sentence, the rhythm and sounds of its phrases and their syntactic construction, the manner in which a metaphor flows almost imperceptibly into a pragmatic statement, the use of acoustic stress not merely in the service of rhetoric but as means of alluding to unspoken but clearly implied ideas: all this makes the Qur’an, in the last resort, unique and untranslatable, a fact that has been pointed out by many earlier translators and by all Arab scholars. But although it is impossible to ‘reproduce’ the Holy Qur’an as such in any other language, it is none the less possible to render its message comprehensible to people who, like most Westerners, do not know Arabic at all or, as is the case with most of the educated non-Arab Muslims, not well enough to find their way through it unaided.

The Holy Qur’an Aroused a Spirit of Intellectual Curiosity and Enquiry Amongst the Arabs.

"Read in the name of thy Sustainer, Who has created man from a germ-cell!"

"Read! And thy Sustainer is the Most Bountiful, One Who has taught (man) the use of the pen - taught man that he knew not."

With these opening verses of the 96th Chapter with an allusion to man’s humble biological origin as well as to his consciousness and intellect began, early in the 7th century C.E., the Holy Qur’an to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, destined to continue during the twenty-three years of his ministry and to end, shortly before his death, with verse 281 of the second Chapter:

"And be conscious of the Day on which you shall return to God, whereupon every human being shall be repaid in full for what he has earned, and none shall be wronged."

Between the first and last verses (the first and last in the chronological order of their revelation) it is to be borne in mind that in its final compilation, the Holy Qur’an is arranged in accordance with the inner requirements of its message as a whole, and not in chronological order in which the individual Surahs or passages were revealed. It unfolds a book which, more than any other single phenomenon known to us, has fundamentally affected the religious, social and political history of the world. No other scripture has ever had a similarly immediate impact upon the lives of the people who first heard its message and, through them and the generations that followed them, on the entire course of civilization. It shook Arabia, and made nation out of its perennial warring tribes; within a few decades, it spread its world-view far beyond the confines of Arabia and produced the first ideological society known to man: through its insistence on consciousness and knowledge it engendered among its followers a spirit of intellectual curiosity and independent inquiry, ultimately resulting in the splendid era of learning and scientific research which distinguished the world of Islam at the height of its cultural vigour; and the culture thus fostered by the Holy Qur’an penetrated in countless ways and by-ways into the mind of Medieval Europe and gave rise to the revival of Western culture which we call the Renaissance, and thus became in the course of time largely responsible for the birth of what is described as the ‘age of science’: the age in which we are now living.

Never has any other book supplied to so many, and over so long period of time, a comprehensive answer to the question: How shall I behave to achieve a good life in the world and happiness in the Hereafter?

All this was, in the final analysis, brought about by the message of the Holy Qur’an: and it was brought about through the medium of the people whom it inspired and to whom it supplied a basis for all their ethical valuutions and a direction for their worldly endeavours: for never has any book, not excluding the Bible, been read by so many with a comparable intensity and veneration: and never has any other book supplied to so many, and over so long a span of time, a similarly comprehensive answer to the question, ‘How shall I behave in order to achieve the good life in this world and happiness in the life to come?’ However, other individual Muslims may have misread this answer, and however far many of them may have departed from the spirit of its message, the fact remains that, to all who believed and believe in it, the Holy Qur’an represents the ultimate manifestation of God’s grace to man, the ultimate wisdom, and the ultimate beauty of expression: in short, the true Word of God.

This attitude of the Muslim toward the Holy Qur’an perplexes, as a rule, the Westerner who approaches it through one or another of the many existing translations. Where the believer, reading the Holy Qur’an in Arabic, sees beauty, the non-Muslim reader often claims to discern ‘erudity’: the coherence of the Qur’anic world-view and its relevance to the human condition escape him altogether and assume the guise of what, in Europe’s and America’s orientalist literature, is frequently described as ‘incoherent rambling’, and passages which to a Muslim are expressive of sublime wisdom often sound ‘flat’ and ‘uninspiring’ to the Western ear, and yet, not even the most unfriendly critics of the Holy Qur’an have ever denied that it did, in fact, provide the supreme source of inspiration in both the religious and cultural senses of the word to innumerable millions of people who, in their aggregate, have made an outstanding contribution to man’s knowledge, civilization and social achievement. How can this paradox be explained?

The Western critics of the Holy Qur’an frequently point to the allegedly ‘incoherent’ references to God, often in one and the same phrase as ‘He’, ‘God’, ‘We’ or ‘I’ with the corresponding changes of the pronoun from ‘His’ to ‘Ours’ or ‘My’, or from ‘Him’ to ‘Me’. They seem to be unaware of the fact that these changes are not accidental, and not even what one might describe as ‘poetic license’, but are obviously deliberate, a linguistic device meant to stress the idea that God is not a ‘person’ and cannot, therefore, be really circumscribed by the pronouns applicable to finite things.

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Western Translations of the Holy Qur'an

It cannot be explained by the too facile argument, so readily accepted by many modern Muslims, that the Holy Qur'an has been 'deliberately misrepresented' by its Western translators. For, although it cannot be denied that among the existing translations in almost all of the major European languages, there is many a one that has been inspired by malicious prejudice and especially in earlier times by misguided 'missionary' zeal, there is hardly any doubt that some of the more recent translations are the work of earnest scholars who, without being actuated by any conscious bias have honestly endeavoured to render the meaning of the Arabic original into this or that European language; and, in addition, there exists a number of modern translations by Muslims who, by virtue of their being Muslims, cannot by any stretch of the imagination be supposed to have 'misrepresented' what, to them, was a sacred revelation. Still, none of these translations whether done by Muslims or by non-Muslims has so far brought the Holy Qur'an nearer to the heart or minds of people raised in a different religious and psychological climate revealed something, however little, of its real depth and wisdom. To some extent this may be due to the conscious and unconscious prejudice against Islam which has pervaded Western cultural nations ever since the time of the Crusades - an intangible heritage of thought and feeling which has left its mark on the attitude towards all things Islamic on the part not only of the Western 'man in the street' but also, in a more subtle manner, on the part of scholars bent on objective research. But even this psychological factor does not sufficiently explain the complete lack of appreciation of the Holy Qur'an in the Western world, and this in spite of its undeniable and ever-increasing interest in all that concerns the world of Islam.

It is more than probable that one of the main reasons for this lack of appreciation is to be found in this aspect of the holy Qur'an which differentiates it fundamentally from all other sacred scriptures: its stress on reason as a valid way to faith as well as its insistence on the inseparability of the spiritual and the physical (and, therefore, also social) spheres of human existence: the inseparability of man's daily actions and behaviour, however 'mundane' from his spiritual life and destiny. This absence of any division of reality into 'physical' compartments makes it difficult for people brought up in the orbit of other religions, with their accent on the 'supernatural' element allegedly inherent in every true religious experience, to appreciate the predominantly rational approach of the Holy Qur'an to all religious questions. Consequently, its constant interweaving of spiritual teachings with practical legislation perplexes the Western reader, who has become accustomed to identifying 'religious experience' with a thrill of luminous awe before things hidden and beyond all intellectual comprehension, and is suddenly confronted with the claim of the Holy Qur'an to being a guidance not only towards the spiritual good of the Hereafter but also towards the good life - spiritual, physical and social - attainable in this world. In short, the Westerner cannot readily accept the Holy Qur'anic thesis that all life, being God-given, is a unity, and that problems of the flesh and of the mind, of sex and economics, of individual righteousness and social equity are intimately connected with the hopes which man may legitimately entertain with regard to his life after death. This, in my opinion, is one of the reasons for the negative, uncomprehending attitude of most Westerners towards the Holy Qur'an and its teachings. But still another and perhaps even more decisive reason may be found in the fact that the Holy Qur'an itself has never yet been presented in any European language in a manner which would make it truly comprehensible.

When we look at the long list of translations beginning with the Latin works of the Middle Ages and continuing up to the present in almost every European tongue, we find one common denominator between their authors, whether Muslims or non-Muslims; all of them were or are people who acquired their knowledge of Arabic through academic study alone; that is, from books. None of them, however great his scholarship, has ever been familiar with the Arabic language as a person is familiar with his own, having absorbed the nuances of its idioms and its phraseology with an active, associative response within himself, and hearing it with an ear spontaneously attuned to the intents underlying the acoustic symbolism of its words and sentences. For the words and sentences of a language - any language - are but symbols for meanings conventionally and subconsciously agreed upon by those who express their perception of reality by means of this particular tongue. Unless the translator is able to reproduce within himself the conceptual symbolism of the language in question, that is, unless he hears it 'singing' in his ear in all its naturalness and immediacy, his translation will convey no more than the outer shell of the literary matter to which his work is devoted, and will miss, to a higher or lesser degree, the inner meaning of the original and the greater the depth of the original, the farther must such a translation deviate from the spirit of the former.

The Pecularities of the Arabic Language

No doubt, some of the translators of the Holy Qur'an whose work is accessible to the Western public can be described as outstanding scholars in the sense of having mastery of grammar and achieved a considerable knowledge of Arabic literature; but this mastery of grammar and this acquaintance with literature cannot by itself, in the case of a translation from Arabic (and especially the Arabic of Holy Qur'an), render the translator independent of that intangible communion with the spirit of the language which can be achieved only by living with and in it.

Arabic is a Semitic tongue: in fact, it is the only Semitic tongue which has remained uninterruptedly alive for thousands of years; and it is the only living language which has remained entirely unchanged for the last fourteen centuries. These two factors are extremely relevant to the problem continued on next page
which we are considering. Since every language is a framework of symbols expressing its people's particular sense of life values and their particular way of conveying their perception of reality it is obvious that the language of the Arabs - a Semitic language which has remained unchanged for so many centuries - must differ widely from anything to which the Western mind is accustomed. The difference of the Arabic idiom from any European idiom is not merely a matter of its syntactic cast and the mode in which it conveys ideas; nor is it exclusively due to the well-known, extreme flexibility of the Arabic grammar arising from its peculiar system of verbal 'roots' and the numerous stem-forms which can be derived from these roots; nor even to the extraordinary richness of the Arabic vocabulary; it is a difference of spirit and life-sense. And since the Arabic of the Holy Qur'an is a language which attained to its full maturity in the Arabia of fourteen centuries ago, it follows that in order to grasp its spirit correctly, one must be able to feel and hear this language as the Arabs felt and heard it at the time when the Holy Qur'an was being revealed, and to understand the meaning which they gave to the linguistic symbols in which it is expressed.

The Muslims believe that the Holy Qur'an is the Word of God, revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad through the holy medium of a human language. It was language of the Arabian Peninsula, the language of a people endowed with that peculiar quick-wittedness which the desert and its 'feel' of wide, timeless expanses bestows upon its children; the language of people whose mental images, flowing without effort from association to association, succeed one another in rapid progression and often vacillate elliptically over intermediate as it were 'self-understood' sequences of thought towards the idea which they aim to conceive or express. This ellipticism called 'iajaz by the Arab philologists, is an integral characteristic of the Arabic idiom and, therefore, of the language of the Holy Qur'an so much so that it is impossible to understand its method and inner purport without being able to reproduce within oneself, instinctively, something of the same quality of elliptical, associative thought. Now this ability comes to the educated Arab almost automatically, by a process of mental osmosis; from his early childhood; for when he learns to speak his tongue properly, he subconsciously acquires the mould of thought within which it has evolved and thus, imperceptibly grows into the conceptual environment from which the Arabic language derives its peculiar form and mode of expression. Not so, however, the non-Arab who becomes acquainted with Arabic only at a mature age, is result of a conscious effort that is through study: for what he acquires is but a readymade, outward structure devoid of that intangible quality of ellipticism which gives to Arabic its inner life and reality.

A Translator Must Acquire an Instinctive 'FEEL' of the Language.

This does not, however, mean that a non-Arab can never understand Arabic in its true spirit; it means no more and no less than that he cannot really master it through academic study alone, but needs, in addition to philological learning, an instinctive 'feel' of the language. Now it so happens that such a 'feel' cannot be achieved by merely living among the modern Arabs of the cities. Although many of them, especially the educated ones, may have subconsciously absorbed the spirit of their language, they can only rarely communicate it to an outsider for the simple reason that, however high their education, their daily speech has become, in the course of centuries, largely corrupted and estranged from pristine Arabic. Thus, in order to obtain the requisite 'feel' of the Arabic language, a non-Arab must have lived in long and intimate association with the people whose daily speech mirrors the genuine spirit of their language, and whose mental processes are similar to those of the Arabs who lived at the time when the Arabic tongue received its final colouring and inner form. In our day, such people are only the bedouins of the Arabian Peninsula, and particularly those of Central and Eastern Arabia. For, notwithstanding the many dialectical peculiarities in which their speech may differ from the classical Arabic of the Holy Qur'an, it has remained, so far very close to the idiom of Holy Prophet's time and has preserved all its intrinsic characteristics. It is to be noted that under the impact of modern economic circumstances, which have radically changed the timehonoured way of life of the bedouins and brought them, by means of school education and the radio, into direct contact with the Levantine culture of the cities, the purity of their language is rapidly disappearing and may soon cease to be a living guide to students of the Arabic tongue.

In other words, familiarity with the bedouin speech of Central and Eastern Arabia in addition, of course, to academic knowledge of classical Arabic is the only way for a non-Arab of our time to achieve an intimate understanding of the diction of the Qur'an.

Two Important Points which a Translator must take into Account.

Unlike any other book, the meaning and linguistic presentation of the Holy Qur'an form one unbreakable whole. The position of individual words in a sentence, the rhythm and sound of its phrases and their syntactic construction, the manner in which a metaphor flows almost imperceptibly into a pragmatic statement, the use of accoustic stress not merely in the service of rhetoric but as a means of alluding to unspoken but clearly implied ideas: all this makes the Holy Qur'an, in the last resort, unique and untranslatable, a fact that has been pointed out by many earlier translators and by all Arab scholars. But, although it is impossible to 'reproduce' the Holy Qur'an as such in any other language, it is none-the-less possible to render its message comprehensible to people who, like most Westerners, do not know Arabic at all or, as is the case with most of the educated non-Arab Muslims, not well enough to find their way through it unaided.

To this end, the translator must be guided throughout by the linguistic usage prevalent at the time of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an, and must always bear in mind that some of its

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expressions, especially such as relate to abstract concepts, have in the course of time undergone a subtle change in the popular mind and should not, therefore, be translated in accordance with the sense given to them by post-classical usage. As has been pointed out by that great Islamic scholar, Muhammad Abduh, even some of the renowned, otherwise linguistically reliable Holy Qur'an commentators, have occasionally erred in this respect; and their errors, magnified by the inadequacy of modern translators, have led to many a distortion, and sometimes to a total incomprehensibility, of individual Holy Qur'anic passages in their European renditions.

Another (and no less important) point which the translator must take fully into account is the *ijaz of the Holy Qur'an, that inimitable ellipticism which often deliberately omits intermediate thought-clauses in order to express the final stage of an idea as pithily and concisely as is possible within the limitations of human language. This method of *ijaz is, as I have explained, a peculiar, integral aspect of the Arabic language, and has reached its utmost perfection in the Qur'an. In order to render its meaning into a language which does not function in a similarly elliptical manner, the thought-links which are mission that is deliberately omitted in the original, must be supplied by the translator in the form of frequent interpolations between brackets; for unless this is done, the Arabic phrase concerned loses all its life in the translation and often becomes a meaningless jumble.

The Translator and the Rendering of Religious terms used in the Holy Qur'an.

Furthermore, one must beware of rendering, in each and every case, the religious terms used in the Holy Qur'an in the sense which they have acquired after Islam had become 'institutionalized' into a definite set of laws, tenets and practices. However legitimate this 'institutionalization' may be in the context of Islamic religious history, it is obvious that the Holy Qur'an cannot be correctly understood if we read it merely in the light of later ideological developments, losing sight of its original purport and the meaning which it had and was intended to have for the people who first heard it from the lips of Holy Prophet himself. For instance, when his contemporaries heard the words *Imam and *Muslim, they understood them as denoting man's 'self-surrender to God' and 'one who surrenders himself to God', without limiting these terms to any specific community or denomination, e.g., in 3:67, where Abraham is spoken of as having 'surrendered himself unto God' (*kana musliman) or in 3:52, where the disciples of Jesus say, 'Bear thou witness that we have surrendered ourselves unto God - *bi-ana muslimun).

In Arabic, this original meaning has remained unimpaired, and no Arab scholar has ever become oblivious of the wide connotation of these terms. Not so, however, the non-Arab of our day, believer and non-believer alike: to him, *Islam and *Muslim usually bear a restricted, historically circumscribed significance, and apply exclusively to the followers of the Prophet Muhammad. Similarly, the terms *kufr (denial of truth) and *kafir (one who denies the truth) have become, in the conventional translation of the Holy Qur'an, unwarrantably simplified into 'unbelief' or 'infidel', respectively, and have thus been deprived of the wide spiritual meaning which the Holy Qur'an gives to these terms. Another example is to be found in the conventional rendering of the word *kitab when applied to the Holy Qur'an, as 'book'; for when the Holy Qur'an was being revealed (and we must not forget that this process took twenty-three years), those who listened to its recitation did not conceive of it as a 'book' since it was compiled into one only some decades after the Holy Prophet's death but rather, in view of the derivation of the noun *kitab from the verb *kataba (he wrote or, topically, he ordained), as a 'divine writ' or a 'revelation'. The same holds true with regard to the Qur'anic use of this term in its connotation of earlier revealed scriptures; for the Holy Qur'an often stresses the fact that those earlier instances of divine writ have largely been corrupted in the course of time, and that the extant Holy 'books' do not really represent the original revelations. Consequently, the translation of *ahl al-*kitab as 'people of the book' is not very meaningful; in my opinion, the term should be rendered as 'followers of earlier revelation'.

**Two Fundamental Rules of Interpretation.**

In short, if it is to be truly comprehensible in another language, the message of the Holy Qur'an must be rendered in such a way as to reproduce, as closely as possible, the sense which it had for the people who were as yet unburdened with the conceptual image of later Islamic development.

A translator must observe consistently two fundamental rules of interpretation. First, the Holy Qur'an must be viewed as a compilation of individual injunctions and exhortation as one integral whole: that is, as an exposition of an ethical doctrine which every verse and sentence has an intimate bearing on other verses and sentences, all of them clarifying and amplifying one another. Consequently, its real meaning can be grasped only if we correlate every one of its statements with what has been stated elsewhere in its pages, and try to explain its ideas by means of frequent cross-references, always subordinating the particular to the general and the incidental to the intrinsic. Whenever this rule is faithfully followed, we realize that the Holy Qur'an is, in the word of Muhammad 'Abduh, 'its own best commentary'.

Second, no part of the Holy Qur'an should be viewed from a purely historical point of view; that is to say, all its references to historical circumstances and events both at the time of the Holy Prophet and in earlier times must be regarded as illustrations of the human conditions and not as ends in themselves. Hence the consideration of the historical occasion on which a particular verse was revealed, a pursuit so dear, and legitimately so, to the classical commentators must never be allowed to obscure the underlying purport of that verse and its inner relevance to the ethical teaching which the Holy Qur'an, taken as a whole, propounds.

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What was the secret of the success of “the most successful of all the religious personalities of the world?”

What was the thought upon which was based “the most complete, the most sudden and the most extraordinary revolution that had ever come over any nation upon earth?” How were men’s minds prepared for this unparalleled and through transformation? How was “a new and earnest life” breathed into a people that were sunk deep in “superstition, cruelty and vice?” How was the “impossible” task performed of uniting into one whole the warring factions that were bent upon destroying each other than whom “a more disunited people it would be hard to find?” What was the root remedy applied to the ills of humanity?

The secret of the Prophet’s success, a success admittedly unparalleled to this day, lay in his strong faith in God. He had a deep conviction that God had a plan for the uplift of man, to bring to perfection not one nation or one people but the whole world, and that no power in the world could frustrate the Divine purpose. When the first message came to him that he was commissioned to save a fallen humanity, he actually trembled. From his solitude in the cave of Hira, he came home to his wife, trembling, and asked her to wrap him up. It was the magnitude of the task which made him shake. But he set to work immediately. He was at first ridiculed, called an idle visionary, and treated with contempt as unworthy of serious attention. But as he gained ground, opposition started in real earnest, and he and his followers were subjected to the severest persecutions. Cruel tortures were inflicted on them, some of them had to suffer torture even to death. Unbaffled he advised his followers to betake themselves to Abyssinia where a Christian monarch ruled. “There is a land,” he said, “where no one is wronged - a land of justice. Stay there until it shall please Allah to open for you a way out of these difficulties.”

He had a deep conviction that difficulties would disappear. His followers thus reached a place of security but he himself stuck to his post, alone and undaunted. He was threatened with murder, and even Abu Talib, his uncle and his sole support, told him that he could no more withstand the united opposition of the Quraisy. “Do not charge me,” he said to the Prophet, “with a responsibility too heavy for me.” But the Prophet stood adamant. “Should they place the sun, O uncle!” he said, “in my right hand and the moon in my left, in order to make me renounce this mission, I should not do it. I shall never give it up until it shall please Allah to make it triumph or I perish in the attempt.” Failing in the attempt to persuade Abu Talib to hand over the Prophet to them, the Quraisy now tried to win him over by temptation. They approached him directly: “If your ambition is to possess wealth, we will amass for you as much of it as you wish; if you aspire to win honour, we are prepared to swear allegiance to you as our overlord the king; if you have a fancy for beauty, we offer you the hand of the finest maiden of your own choice.” The temptations were nigh irresistible. From a destitute, helpless and persecuted man to a mighty potentate rolling in the wealth and with beauty by his side was a big lift. But he replied: “I want neither riches nor political power. I have been commissioned by Allah as a warner to mankind, and I deliver His message to you. Should you accept it, you shall have felicity in this life as well as in the life to come; should you reject the word of Allah, surely Allah will decide between you and me.”

Referring to this it is said in one of the early revelations:

And they had indeed purposed to turn thee away from that which We have revealed to thee that thou shouldst forge against Us other than that, and then they would have taken thee for a friend. And had it not been that We had already made thee firm, thou wouldst certainly have been near to incline to them a little.” (17:73, 74)

To the Prophet the Qur’an was the great spiritual force bound to conquer the whole world: “And if there were a Qur’an with which the mountains could be made to pass away or the earth could be travelled over or the dead were made to speak; nay, the command is entirely Allah’s.” (13:31)

Had we sent down this Qur’an on a mountain, thou wouldst certainly have seen it falling down, splitting asunder, because of the fear of Allah, and We set forth these parables to men that they may reflect.” (59:21)

All opposition to the great truth which he had been appointed to establish, was to him a passing phase. Thus, in the earliest revelations:

And bear patiently what they say and avoid them with a becoming avoidance. And leave Me and those who reject the truth, the possessors of ease and plenty, and give them a little respite. (73:10,11)

Pharaoh disobeyed the Messenger, so We laid on him a violent hold. How then will you guard yourselves, if you disbelieve, on the day which will make children grey-headed? The heaven shall rend asunder thereby. His promise is ever brought to fulfilment. (73:16-18)

And for the sake of thy Lord, be patient. For when the trumpet is sounded, That, at that time, shall be a difficult day. For the unbelievers, anything but easy. Leave Me (to deal with) him whom I created alone. Then give him vast riches, And sons dwelling in his presence, And I adjusted affairs for him adjustably, And yet he is greedy that I should give him more! By no means! he offers opposition to Our communications. I will make a distressing punishment overtake him. (74:7-17)

The strong faith that all opposition to his mission would fail and that he would succeed in bringing about the reformation with which he was charged runs through every line of the Holy Qur’an, and the stronger the opposition grew the deeper became his faith in his ultimate success and in the failure of opposition. In another early revelation, it is said, after speaking of Pharaoh and other opponents of the truth:

We overtook them after the manner of a Mighty, Powerful One. Are your unbelievers better than those or is there an exemption for you in the Scriptures? Or do they say, We are a host allied together to help each other. Soon shall the hosts be routed and they shall turn their backs. Nay, the hour is their promised time, and that hour shall be most grievous and bitter. (54:42-46)

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The Prophet prayed the whole night at the battle of Badr when he saw his three hundred men, his total strength, in danger of being annihilated by one thousand strong and well-armed enemies, saying, “O Lord! I beseech Thee according to Thy covenant and Thine promise; O Lord! If such is Thy Will, Thou mayst not be served after this; O living, O subsisting One by Whom all subsist! I crave for Thy mercy,” and so on; and ultimately he came out of his hut reciting the above Quranic verses, showing that, notwithstanding the disparity of numbers and the utter weakness of his men, he was full of faith that this Divine promise was going to be fulfilled on that field. In fact, it was his strong faith in God that bore him up not only during the severest persecutions and trials at Mecca, but also during actual conflicts with the enemy in the battlefields around Medina when in numbers the Muslims were no match for the huge invading forces.

That all attempts at the reformation of Arabia before his appearance had failed, he knew for certain, but he was also certain that he would succeed in reclaiming not only the idolaters but also the spoiled followers of the Book:

*Those who disbelieved from among the followers of the Book and the idolaters could not have obtained freedom from sin until there had come to them the clear proof, A Messenger from Allah, reciting pure pages, Wherein are all the right Books.* (98:1-3)

If their hearts were hard as stones, or even harder than stones, he was yet hopeful that he would make streams flow from these stones and they would ultimately bow before God: “Then your hearts hardened after that, so they were like rocks, nay harder still, and there are rocks from which rivers gush, and there are some of them which split asunder and water flows from them, and there are some of them which fall down from fear of Allah.” (2:74)

The Prophet was, however, not only confident that his message would breathe life into Arabia, he had a still deeper faith that he had a message for the whole of humanity and that it was bound to succeed in the end. His idea of the Divine plan for the uplift of humanity was not limited to any one nation or any one generation. His well-known prayer, which is now the prayer of millions of his followers, five times a day, begins with the words:

All praise is due to Allah, the Nourisher to perfection of all nations. (The Arabic word used here is *Rabb* which, according to the best authorities on Arabic Lexicology, means *fostering of a thing in such a manner as to make it attain one condition after another until it reaches its goal of completion, and includes both the physical and the spiritual phases of life.)*

This was, therefore, the basis of his religion. According to him, the Divine plan was gradually to bring the whole of humanity to perfection. He was not raised as a Messenger for the Arabs only, he was the Messenger of God for the whole of humanity.

*Say, O People! I am the Messenger of Allah to you all, of Him Whose is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth.* (7:158)

*And We have not sent thee but as a mercy to the nations.* (21:107)

*Blessed is he Who sent down the Furqan upon His servant that he might be a warner to the nations.* (25:1)

And in the earliest revelations: And it is naught but a reminder to the nations. (68:52;81:27)

It shows a boundless faith in his ultimate triumph to reform the whole of humanity when it is repeated thrice: *He it is Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth that He may cause it to prevail over all the religions.* (9:33;48:28;61:8)

If a deep-rooted faith in God was the secret of the Prophet's own wonderful success, it was also the foundation-stone of the great reformation which he brought about. He did not start by applying himself to this or that vice or superstition or degrading usage or evil custom; he applied himself, first of all, solely to grounding men in faith in God. Almost the whole of his Mecca revelation has but one theme: God is the Creator of all, He is the Nourisher of all, He reveals Himself to man, He makes His will known to man, He is the Holy One, He is nearer to man than his own soul, He is the Beneficent One, the Merciful One, the Loving One, the Affectionate, the Forgiving One, the Giver of all gifts, the Ample-giving. He listens to every man’s prayer, He loves good and hates evil, He loves the truthful ones, and so on.

The man who has faith in God is like a live wire and those who come in contact with him imbibe faith from him. Full of faith as the Prophet's own heart was, full to overflowing, it had a magic effect on those who came in contact with him, and their hearts were filled with the same strong faith. The current of faith which was thus transmitted from the heart of the Prophet to the hearts of those who sat at his feet was further strengthened by the constant stress which revelation laid on the existence of God. The whole of nature testified to the existence of God:

*Do they not look up to the heaven above them, how We have made it and adorned it and it has no gaps. And the earth We have spread it forth and cast upon it mountains and We have made to grow therein of all beautiful kinds, To give sight and as a reminder to every servant who turns (to God) again and again! And from the cloud We send down water abounding in good, then We cause to grow thereby gardens and grain that is reaped, and the tall palm-trees having spadices closely set one above another, A sustenance for the servants, and We give life thereby to a dead land; thus is the resurrection.* (50:6-11)

What is the matter with you that you hope not for greatness from Allah? And indeed He has created you through various grades (These words imply that man has been brought to the present state of physical perfection after passing through various conditions and contain an allusion to the theory of evolution.). Do you not see how Allah has created the seven heavens alike, And made the moon therein a light and made the sun a lamp? And Allah has made you grow out o the earth as a growth, Then He returns you to it, then will He bring you forth a (new) bring forth. And Allah has made for you the earth a wide expance, That you may go along therein in wide paths. (71:13-20)

Who created death and life that He may try you - which of you is best in deeds; and He is the Mighty, the Forgiving: Who created the seven
heavens alike; thou seest not incongruity in the creation of the Beneficent God; then look again, canst thou see any disorder? Then turn back the eye again and again, thy look shall come back to thee confused while it is fatigued. (67:2-4; The oneness of law in the whole universe is referred to as an argument for the unity of God)

In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships that run in the sea with that which profits men, and the water that Allah sends down from the clouds, then gives life with it to the earth after its death, and spreads in it all kinds of animals, and the changing of the winds and the clouds made subservient between the heaven and the earth, these are signs for a people who understand. (2:164)

Such were the arguments drawn from the material universe that it must have a Creator. Another class of arguments regarding the existence of God related to the human soul in which we implanted the consciousness of Divine existence. An appeal is again and again made to man's inner self.

Or were they created for nothing? or are they the creators? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? (52:35,36)

Am I not your Lord? (7:172)

God-consciousness was thus shown to be part and parcel of human nature. Sometimes this consciousness is mentioned in terms of the unimaginable nearness of the Divine Spirit to the human spirit:

We are nearer to man than his life-vein. (50:16)

We are nearer to your soul than yourselves. (56:85)

This meant that the consciousness of the existence of God in the human soul was even clearer than the consciousness of its own existence. But it differed in different natures according as the inner light of man was bright or dim. Thus God was to the Muslim the central fact of human life, and he therefore turned to Him again and again to seek help and guidance from Him. Faith in God assumed a practical shape in the form of prayer. Five times a day did he pray to God, the essential part of the prayer being the short Opening chapter of the Holy Qur'an:

All praise is due to Allah, the Nourisher to perfection of the worlds. The Beneficent, the Merciful. Master of the day of requital. Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech help. Guide us on the right path, the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, Not of those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor of those who go astray. (1:1-7)

The yearning of man's soul after God is manifested in his prayer to God, but this yearning becomes more manifest when man finds himself in distress:

And when distress afflicts a man, he calls upon his Lord, turning to Him frequently, and when He grants him a favour from Himself, he forgets that for which he called upon Him before. (39:8)

When harm afflicts a man, he calls upon Us, and when We give him a favour from Us, he says, I have been given it only by means of (my) knowledge. (39:49)

And when affliction touches a man, he calls on Us whether lying on his side or sitting or standing, but when We remove his affliction from him, he passes on as though he had never called on Us. (10:12)

man was not only told to pray to God in all circumstances, in ease as well as in distress, and to seek help and guidance from Him on all occasions, but it was further impressed on him that God did listen to the prayer of man:

And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, then surely I am very near; I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls on Me; so they should respond to Me and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way. (2:186)

He was further taught to rely on God in all circumstances so that he should not lose heart in failures and difficulty:

With none but Allah is the direction of my affair to a right issue; on Him do I rely and to Him do I turn. (11:88)

And what reason have we that we should not rely on Allah, and He indeed guides us in our ways, and certainly we would bear with patience your persecution of us, and on Allah should the reliant rely. (14:12)

Rely on the Living One Who dies not and celebrate His praise, and Sufficient is He as being Aware of the faults of His servants. (25:58)

And whoever trusts in Allah, He is Sufficient for him; surely Allah attains His purpose, and Allah indeed has appointed a measure for everything. (65:3)

He was also taught to seek refuge in God whenever he found himself in danger of being led astray or in affliction:

I seek refuge in the Lord of men, the King of men, the God of men. (114:1-3)

O my Lord! I seek refuge in Thee from the evil suggestions of the evil ones, and I seek refuge in Thee, O my Lord! that they should be present with me. (23:97,98)

And if a false imputation from the evil one afflicts thee, seek refuge in Allah; surely He is Hearing, Knowing. (7:200)

In God was contentment of mind to be sought:

Those who believe and whose hearts are set at rest by the remembrance of Allah; now surely in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest. (13:28)

God was indeed the Creator and the Ruler Supreme, but He was also the Friend of man:

And surely the unjust are friends of each other, and Allah is the Friend of those who have regard for their duty. (45:19)

Or have they taken guardians besides Him? But Allah is the Guardian-Friend, and He gives life to the dead and He has power over all things. (42:9)

Allah is the Friend of those who believe; He brings them out of darkness into the light. (2:257)

And Allah is sufficient as a Friend, and Allah is sufficient as a Helper. (4:45)

The kindness and mercy of God are boundless, beyond the conception of man: He is merciful to the believers and to the unbelievers, to the righteous and to the sinners alike:

O My servants who have acted extravagantly against their own souls! Do not despair of the mercy of Allah, for Allah forgives the sins altogether. (39:53)

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Our Lord! Thou embracest all things in mercy and knowledge. (40:7)
Sav. in the grace of Allah and his mercy, in that they should rejoice.
(10:58)
Except those on whom Thy Lord has mercy, and for this did He create
them. (11:119)
Despair not of Allah's mercy, for none despairs of Allah's mercy except
the unbeliever. (12:87)
He has ordained mercy on Himself.
(6:12,54)
Your Lord is the Lord of all-encompassing mercy. (6:148)
And My mercy encompasses all things. (7:156)
And if you count Allah's favours, you will not be able to number them.
(14:34;16:18)
Surely thy Lord is full of goodness towards men, though most of them are
ungrateful. (27:73)
The very first revelation taht came to the Prophet, and that commissioned
him with the task of the reformation of mankind, speaks of the love of God
which brought about the creation of man:
Recite in the name of thy Lord Who created. He created man out of
love. Recite and thy Lord is the most Bounteous. (96:1-3)
In a saying of the Prophet, God is spoken of as saying:
I desired that I should be known, so I created man.
Wadad, or the Loving God, is one of the attributes of the Divine Being:
He it is Who originates and reproduces, And He is the Forgiving, the
Loving. (85:13;14)
Surely my Lord is Merciful, Loving. (11:90)
It is the attribute of love in the Divine nature that is reflected in man's
love to God:
And they give away food out of love for Him to the poor and the orphan
and the captive. (76:8)
And there are some men who set up equals with Allah - they love them as
they ought to love Allah - and those who believe are stronger in their love for
Allah. (2:165)
Say, if you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you. (3:30)
God being Holy and Good, there is a special manifestation of Divine love
towards those who eschew evil and do good:
Allah loves those who do good to others. (2:195;3:133,147)
Allah loves those who turn much to Him and He loves those who purify
themselves. (2:222)
Allah loves the patient ones. (3:145)
Allah loves those who fulfill their duty. (3:75;9:4,7)
Allah loves those who judge equitably. (5:42)
Interspun with the basic principle of faith in God is the great idea of the
accountability of human actions. Every good deed has its reward, and every evil
deed has its requital. Every man is responsible to God for what he does. In
fact, man's highest responsibility is not to society or to the State but to God:
Every soul is held in pledge for what it earns. (74:38)
He Who has done an atom's weight of good shall see it, And he who has
done an atom's weight of evil shall see it. (99:7-8)
And We have made every man's actions to cling to his neck, and We will
bring forth to him on the Resurrection day a book which he will find wide
open. Read thy book; thine own self is sufficient as a reckoner against thee this
day. Whoever goes a right, for the benefit of his own soul does he go a right;
and whoever goes astray, to its detriment does he go astray, and no bearer of a
burden shall bear the burden of another. (17:13-15)
Everything done or said by man is preserved and bears its fruit; nothing is
wasted:
Nay! But you give the lie to the judgment. And surely there are guardians
over you, Honourable recorders; they know what you do. (82:9-12)
When the two receivers receive, sitting on the right and on the left. He
utters not a word but there is by him a watchet at hand. (50:17;18)
Or do they think that We do not hear what they conceal and their secret
discourses? Aye! and Our messengers with them write down. (43:80)
This is Our book that speaks against you with justice; surely We wrote what
you did. (45:29)
And they will say, Ah! Woe to us! What a book is this! It does not omit a
small thing nor a great, but numbers them all. (18:49)
A man is judged by the preponderance of good or evil in him, and it is in this connection that the
setting up of a balance is spoken of:
And We will set up a just balance on the day of Resurrection, so no soul shall
be dealt with unjustly in the least, and though there be the weight of a grain of
mustard seed, We will bring it and Sufficient are We to take account.
(21:47)
The measuring out on that day will be just; then as for those whose measure of
good deeds is heavy, they shall be successful. And as for those whose measure of
good deeds is light, these it is that have made their souls suffer loss.
(7:8,9)
An action leaves its effect upon the doer as soon as it is done, for God is
"Quick in reckoning" (2:202;3:18,198). That effect is not seen by the human eye,
but will be palpably manifest on the day of Resurrection when man's vision
becomes keener by the removal of his earthly environments:
Certainly thou wert heedless of it, but now We have removed from thee
thy covering, so thy sight this day is sharp. (50:22)
The day when hidden things shall be made manifest. (86:9)
Thus God not only made man, but He also takes account of everything
done by him, and this is really the essence of faith in God. It was this
significance of faith in God which the Holy Qur'an stressed, and which the
Prophet impressed upon his followers to bring about a transformation in their
lives. While this was the basis of a future life, paradise and hell being only the
ultimate manifestations of this great law of good and evil, life on this earth was
also an expression of the same law, good leading to a good and evil leading
to an evil end:
Your strivings is surely directed to various ends. So as for him who gives
gifts and guards against evil, And accepts what is good, We will ease his
way to the state of ease. And as for him who is niggardly and considers himself
free from need (of God), and rejects what is good, We will ease his way to a
continued on next page
difficult end; And his wealth will not avail him when he perishes. (92:4-10)

The law of good and evil applied not only to individuals but also to nations. Every nation had a book of deeds according to which it was judged in this very life:

And thou shalt see every nation kneeling down; every nation shall be called to its book; this day you shall be required for what you did. This is Our book that pronounces against you with truth; surely We were writing what you did. (45:28,29)

Faith in God, built up on these foundations, received further strength from the spiritual experience of humanity which was the surest evidence of the existence of God. God had been revealing himself in all ages to all nations; such was the broad basis of the Prophet’s faith in God. Man could make all discoveries in the sphere of the finite and he could conquer all forces of nature, but God was Infinite; and outside the sphere of man’s discoveries: Vision comprehends Him not, and He comprehends all vision. (6:104)

So out of His great mercy, He revealed Himself to man; He revealed Himself to man through His chosen servants in every age and in every country:

Surely We have revealed to thee as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him; and We revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon, and We gave to David a scripture. And We sent messengers We have mentioned to thee before and messengers We have not mentioned to thee. (2:163,164)

And every nation had a messenger. (10:47)

And there is not a people but a warner has gone among them. (35:24)

Only mortals to whom God revealed Himself were sent as reformers because none but a mortal could serve as a model for men:

Had there been in the earth angels walking about as settlers, We would have sent to them from heaven an angel as a messenger. (17:95)

And We did not send before thee any but men to whom We revealed. So ask the followers of the reminder if you do not know. And We did not give them bodies not eating food, and they were not to abide for ever. (21:7,8)

God had thus been revealing Himself to all nations, and Divine revelation was recognized as a universal fact. While revelation in its highest form - revelation through the Holy Spirit - was peculiar to prophets, in its lower forms - in the form of the infusion of an idea into the mind, of a dream, a vision or inspiration - revelation was granted to others as well, to men as well as to women:

And it is not for any mortal that Allah should speak to him except by infusing an idea into the mind or from behind a veil or by sending a messenger and revealing by His permission what He pleases. Surely He is Exalted, Wise. And thus did We send to thee the Spirit by Our command; thou didst not know what the Book was, nor what Faith was, but We made it a light, guiding thereby whom We please of Our servants, and thou truly showedst the way to the right path. (42:51,52)

And We sent a revelation to Moses’ mother, saying: Give him suck, and when thou fearest for him, cast him into the river and do not fear nor grieve, for We will bring him back to thee and make him one of the messengers. (28:7)

Unbelieving people are also spoken of as seeing significant and truthful dreams- the lowest form of revelation. Thus, in the history of Joseph:

And two youths entered the prison with him. One of them said, I saw myself pressing wine; and the other said, I saw myself carrying bread on my head of which birds ate. (12:36)

And the King said, I see seven fat kine which seven lean ones devoured, and seven green ears and (seven) others dry; O chiefs! Explain to my my dream. (12:43)

Both the youths and the king were unbelievers, and the three dreams were interpreted by Joseph as speaking of the future, being thus prophetic in their essence.

Revelation was thus a universal human experience, and in its lower forms, others than prophets had experience of it. There was one further fact in this connection on which the Prophet laid the greatest stress. Truth thus revealed to man through Divine messengers had Divine sanction behind it. Wherever and whenever a prophet appeared in the world, he stood in the minority of one to a whole nation which not only rejected the truth revealed to him but did its utmost to destroy him. But opposition to truth, however strong it was, had always been brought to naught. Powerful rulers and powerful nations were destroyed when they opposed the truth, and the lonely messenger of God, persecuted by all, was made triumphant and succeeded in establishing the truth:

Hast thou not considered how thy Lord dealt with Ad, the people of Aram, possessors of lofty buildings, the like of which were not created in the lands; and with Thamud, who hewed out the rocks in the valley; and with Pharaoh, the lord of hosts, who committed inordinacy in the cities, so they made great mischief therein: Therefore thy Lord let down upon them a portion of the chastisement. (89:6-13)

And those who disbeliefed said to their messengers, We will drive you out of our land, or else you shall come back into our religion. So their Lord revealed to them: Certainly We will destroy the wrong-doers, and We will settle you in the land after them. (14:13,14)

And truly We wrote in the Book after the reminder that the land - My righteous servants shall inherit it. In this is a message to a people who serve Us. (21:106,107)

Then We said, go ye both to the people who reject Our communications, so We destroyed them with utter destruction. And as to the people of Noah when they rejected the messengers, We drowned them and made them a sign for men, and We have prepared a painful chastisement for the unjust. And Ad and Thamud and the dwellers of Rass and many generations between them. And to every one We gave examples and every one did We destroy with utter destruction. (25:36,39)

Then We made Our promise good to them, so We delivered them and whom We pleased, and We destroyed the extravagant. (21:9)

And how many a town which was iniquitous did We demolish, and We raised up after it another people. (21:11)

continued on next page
FAITH IN GOD

cont.

Say: The truth has come and the falsehood vanished; surely falsehood is a vanishing thing. (17:81)

Nay! We cast the truth against the falsehood, so that it breaks its head, and lo! it vanishes. (21:18)

This spiritual experience of humanity, an experience to which sacred history bore testimony in every age and every country, was the crowning argument which grounded faith deep in the hearts of the Prophet's followers. And now in the person of the Prophet himself they had a further living experience, seeing with their own eyes how truth was gaining ground day by day in the face of the severest opposition, and how it ultimately swept away every vestige of falsehood from the vast peninsula of Arabia. They were further trained from the first to obey every order of God in the form of the call to prayer. Five times a day in the midst of their daily work, the call went forth that they must give up all work and resort to the mosque to bow their heads before God, standing side by side, the master and the servant, the high and the low, the rich and the poor. “God is the Greatest” was the refrain of this call, and implicit obedience to the orders of God became ingrained in them. Faith in God was thus translated into practice, and willing and thorough submission to His orders became the rule of life for a Muslim.

This prepared the Prophet's way to a thorough reformation of those who accepted him as their guide. Every order which came from on High was to be obeyed implicitly. The why and wherefore of it was not questioned. It was God's order and must be obeyed. Deep-rooted faith in God had given them a new outlook on life. The iron chains of customs and usages now appeared to them as threads which it did not require any great effort to break. One after another all such usages were swept away as the details of the new law came from on High. The new spirit not only changed the individual, it transformed society, and thus the whole nation.

The evil of drink is perhaps the hardest to combat. The United States tried to root it out by law and failed hopelessly. The Arabs were addicted to it as much as any nation of today. It was towards the end of the Prophet's life that the order came:

O you who believe! Intoxicants and games of chance and sacrificing to stones set up and dividing by arrows are only an uncleanness, the devil's work; shun it therefore that you may be successful. The devil desires only to cause enmity and hatred to spring up in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer; will you then desist? (5:90, 91)

As these verses were promulgated and a crier went forth proclaiming that wine was prohibited, every jar of wine in a Muslim house was emptied of wine and broken into pieces, so that wine flowed in the streets of Medina like water. And to this day, the Muslims, in whatever country they may be living, are as a nation free from this evil to a far greater extent than any other nation. It was not only that evil usages and customs and evil habits were swept away, but faith had infused into the Arabs and later on into other nations that accepted the message of Islam, a new life which made them the vanguards of civilization, the torch-bearers of physical, moral and spiritual advancement in the world.

DIGNITY OF MANHOOD

cont.

This last cry of the life hereafter is also the first cry of the Muslim in this life when he prays to God, at various times:

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. (1:1)

The realization of the spiritual, however, is limited here owing to the earthly environment, while the next life opens out unlimited fields of advancement to higher and higher stages:

But those who fulfil their duty to their Lord shall have high places built for them, above them higher places still. (39:20)

O you who believe! Turn to Allah a sincere turning; maybe your Lord will remove from you your evil and cause you to enter gardens in which rivers flow, on the day on which Allah will not abase the Prophet and those who believe with him; their light shall run on before them and on their right hands; they shall say, Our Lord! Make perfect for us our light and grant us protection, for Thou hast power over all things. (66:8)

Paradise was thus, according to the Prophet, the startingpoint for an advancement to higher and higher spiritual stages; hence the high places to which the faithful shall be raised know no end, as there are still higher places above them, and hence the ardent desire for more and more light in that life.

Even those who wasted their opportunity in this life by engrossment in lower desires would ultimately be saved, hell being only a remedial stage in the higher life of man. It is called a mauel, or friend, of the sinners in one place (57:15), and their umm, or mother, in another. (101:9)

All men, both believers and unbelievers, were created for mercy (11:19), and the purpose of God must ultimately be fulfilled. They shall have a hard life in hell because they avoided here the “hard striving” which was needed to enable them to “meet their Lord” (84:6). All men will ultimately be made fit for the service of the Lord, because He had “not created the jinn and the men except that they should serve Me” (51:56). And the Prophet is reported to have said:

Surely a day will come over hell when there shall not be a single human being in it. (Kanz al-Ummal)

Surely a day will come over hell when it will be like a field of corn that has dried up after flourishing for a while. (Ibid.)

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RELEVANCE OF AHMADIYYAT
IN PRESENT ERA
by CH Masud Akhtar, M.A., LL.B.

A speech delivered by CH Masud Akhtar, B.A., LL.B, at Ahmadiyya Convention at Newark, California, U.S.A.

Hadrat Ameer, Brothers and Sisters,
Assalamo-Alaikum - A few days back my nephew, a college student at Lawrence, Kansas, asked me as to why I think it necessary to be an Ahmadi? It is easier to answer this question quoting from the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, that whosoever fails to recognize the Imam of his century or era dies an ignorant's death. That is a good answer to quieten a Muslimquestioner. The same technique I used in answering my nephew's query. I noticed that young man, though quietened, appeared uneasy. Probably he was not convinced. My answer did not satisfy him. Gone are the days when people used to quietly submit to any dictat of religion without weighing in their minds the whys and wherefores of such teachings. To-day's man is much more informed than his predecessors. Probing is almost a habit of the present generation. Inquiry or 'Probe' is the watchword of this age and in order to successfully put the message through their minds, the message must pass the test of their inquiries, of their probing minds. I have felt the need of explaining myself in a little more detail for the satisfaction of my nephew, my sons (who were present at that discussion) and the members of their generation.

To my mind, the question is that of relevance, that is how I think the Ahmadiyyat is relevant to our lives in the present age, for in present days no one has time to waste on matters not directly or indirectly relevant to his life. Since Ahmadiyyat is a religious movement, it cannot be separated from the question of the relevance of religion to our lives. Ahmadiyya Movement is not a new church or religion. It is a movement within the fold of Islam, hence the question of relevance of Islam to the present age arises ipso facto. Please do not get uneasy. I am fully conscious that in these 20 minutes allowed to me for this talk I can hardly afford to enter into a detailed discussion of proving the relevance of religion and the relevance of Islam to our lives in the present era. The question of the relevance of religion to the lives of the generations which will live through the 21st century was addressed to the renowned historian of this century Professor Toynbee in the late sixties by a professor of history and philosophy of a university in Japan. The question not only asked about the relevance of religion, it also enquired about the type of religion which will be acceptable and also asked about the fate of existing great religions. I happened to read this book in 1978 when I was in the United Kingdom. It is a very valuable and impressive study. I sent it to our most learned member Mr. N. A. Faruqui, hence I will quote from my memory. Professor Toynbee has very ably and in great philosophical detail and logical manner answered these questions. Suffice for our purposes his conclusions which I can briefly put as follows:

1. Toynbee tells us that in spite of gigantic leaps taken by mankind in the fields of science and technology, man in all eras will need and have belief in some kind of diety or religion.

2. Secondly, mankind will not give up the material gains made and comforts and luxuries enjoyed as a result of developments and discoveries made in the field of science and technology; hence, he will accept only that religion which not only does not hamper his pursuits in the field of science and technology but also guarantees the keeping of material gains available to him and helps in the future development of these fields.

3. Thirdly, the man of the present and future eras, being much more informed than his predecessors, will not follow the rituals of religion in blind faith, nor will he consider any individual holding a position of monopoly in the field of beliefs. Being capable of analysing the matters for himself, such a man will not stand in need of priests etc. He will rather like to discover his diety or God himself and maintain his relationship independently without feeling the need of any intermediaries. Thus both priests and myth will ultimately disappear.

Having set these standards, Toynbee goes on to analyse and judge the presently existing great religions of the world on these standards. He concludes that none of the presently existing religions of the world in their present form come up to the requirements of the future generations of mankind.

If one was to completely agree with Toynbee, then the matter will end here. The question stands answered in the negative. But I beg to differ partially with Toynbee; and I have cogent reasons for this difference of opinion. My difference with him is not on the standards he has set but rather to the analysis of the position of great religions on his standards. I find that Toynbee has examined in some details the beliefs, the dogmas, the rituals and the structures of Buddhism, Judaism and Christianity and been given sound reasons showing how these do not come up to the standards for becoming the religion of the future man, but, for reasons best known to him. Toynbee did not try to analyse the merits or demerits of the case of Islam according to his standards. Islam, as all know, differs from the above said three religions in essence, spirit and practice. It not only takes care of man's spiritual life, but also regulates his worldly and material life. Hence, more than any other religion, it deserved to be considered on the merits or demerits of its claim of suitability for the future generations of man. However, another celebrity amongst the men of letters of this century, George Bernard Shaw, discovered and recognized the merits of Islam's claim of acceptability by the future generations of Europe as he wrote in his letter in reply to the Imam of Woking Mosque, and which appears on the back page of every issue of The Islamic Review.

Judged by the standards of Toynbee, Islam is the only living religion which likes to see mankind rich both spiritually and materially. It not only does not stand in the way of scientific and technological research and development, rather its teachings spur such pursuits; and finally, priestcraft in any form is alien to its teachings. Thus Islam fits all four in the standards laid down by Toynbee. But my young friends may object, that Toynbee and Bernard Shaw belonged to a generation which has passed away, hence why should we be required to agree with their opinions. All right, there is yet another angle from which we can hit the problem before us. Man, as we all know, is comprised of body and soul which interchangeably is called the spirit. Which of the two is more important should be clear to us by the fact that when the soul departs, the body, the life extinguishes and the body (the container of the soul) decomposes. Strange though it is, yet the fact remains that, since times immemorial, man has been paying more attention to the container than the content. Innumerable aids, systems and devices have been discovered and/or developed for keeping the physical being of man in good shape. Hundreds of thousands of physicians and surgeons are trained and marshalled in the science of body, but the soul, the content, very often remains ignored, resulting in an imbalance. This imbalance is at the center of all the miseries of the human race. Allah, the creator and sustainer of both the body and the soul or, put in proper religious terminology, the physical and spiritual being of a person has been taking care of this neglected aspect, this imbalance, and in His infinite mercy has been raising amongst mankind persons who set right this imbalance. Noah, Abraham, Budha, Moses, continued on page 37
The Voice of Sanity that was Ignored (Payam Shahjehanpuri, the Editor of Taqazey Lahore, published an article in his fortnightly 'Taqazey' Lahore, Pakistan) whether it accepts these or rejects these, but we simply like to ask as to what do the Qadianis do in their prayer places? This is the crux of the matter. As far as we know, they call Azan in their mosques and offer salat and recite the Holy Qur'an and read the prayers of the Sunnah. What matter out of these poses danger to us? Do we want to stop the Qadianis from worshipping Allah? If it is so, then I demand from the government that it is a belief of the Muslims that 'there is no God but Allah!' It is a belief only of the Muslims and none else should be allowed to adopt it, therefore, the Qadianis be ordered to not have this belief but be asked to believe that there are many Gods in addition to Allah (may Allah forbid from this). The second part of our Kalima is "Muhammad, peace be upon him, is the messenger of Allah." Since it is a belief of the Muslims, therefore Qadianis be ordered to proclaim that Muhammad, peace be upon him, is not the messenger of Allah (may Allah forbid from it). Holy Qur'an is the last and complete book of God, this is a belief of the Muslims, hence Qadianis can not have this belief and they be ordered to proclaim that (may Allah forbid from this) Qur'an is not the word of God. If we want to stop the Qadianis from calling Azan, then we will have to compel them to deny the unity of Allah, to deny the messengership of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, and to deny that Holy Qur'an is the word of Allah. Since these are our beliefs and Qadianis can not use our beliefs and our terminologies, please for a moment, is this any service to Islam?

Till this day we keep cursing the Hindues and Sikhs for their transgressive acts that simply because of religious differences they did not allow to call the Azan and used to stop from prayers being offered in mosques. They had dismantled hundreds of mosques and religious schools. Do we like to accomplish the same now by our selves? Can we be called Muslims thereafter? What difference will then be left between Hindus and Sikhs and us? Please think how much of bad reputation we will acquire in the nations of the world by stopping Qadianis from calling Azan, or by dismantling their mosques or by stopping them by Law from building mosques? What opinion about us will be formed by the world? How many difficulties for us will be created by our sectarianism and narrow-mindedness?

Secondly, please don't lose sight of the fact that to day we have jumped up with a determination to either dismantle or take over the prayer places of the Qadianis. If this precedent is set, then tomorrow there may be people from amongst us who will demand that Imam Baras (the Shiat places of Mournings) should be annihilated because, according to them, they are against the Qur'an and Sunnah. The third demand will be that all shrines and tombs be bulldozed because, according to them in their precincts, Shirk (making associates with Allah) is committed. This is all Bidat (prohibited). Please think how dangerous a step we are taking. And what a suicidal path we are treading. It is strange that whole Pakistan is watching this drama but is dumbfounded. Is there not a single righteous person in this multitude of human beings who may raise his voice against this extremely dangerous state of affairs, and may tell his countrymen as to what they are doing? Has our moral strength completely been finished? Probably we are scared. If we expressed ourselves on this problem and differed with the movement mounted against Qadianis, then we may not be labeled as Qadianis. In our opinion, this is the reason for the silence of country's intelligencia and sages in this matter. But let us not forget the fact that knowing that a matter is dangerous to the interests of the country and the nation and then turning away eyes from it is cowardice. It is an unforgivable crime, punishment wherefor we will have to undergo one day or the other. Please make the government and the prudent people understand that this amounts to playing with fire. The country is surrounded with threats and the enemy is sitting in wait as to when disorder prevails in Pakistan so that it may get an excuse for fulfilling its dirty ambitions. If this came to pass then the country will be destroyed. May be such people have crept into our ranks who are raising the slogan of Islam but are in fact playing this dangerous game at the instance of some foreign power. We entertain great respect for the Ulema of every sect, Muslims, but request them respectfully to cast a look on their rights and lefts and consider lest they are being deceived.

We have reflected over one matter again and again but have failed to understand that if a person claims that he is wali Allah (a Saint) that he is recipient of Ilham; that he is Qutab, is an Abal; that he has relationship with Allah; that he is a Mujaddid and is a Nabi (prophet), amongst his audience one considers his claims correct and true he may gladly join him while the other does not consider his claims correct and true he has a right to deny the wallayat, the Mujaddidiyat and Nabuwat of that claimant. What is the matter for dispute in it? Yes, if that claimant was to impose on others his claims forcibly or through persecution, then it will be a cause for dispute. If Qadianis have forced their beliefs on us or are doing so anywhere, continued on next page
then such persons may be pointed out and a demand made on the government to arrest such persons, prosecute them and exemplary punishments meted out to them. Rioting and violence simply on difference of opinion or beliefs is wrong and destructive.

Are Qadianis unpatriotic, or are agents of Israel or are busy sowing discord in Muslim world as is being alleged against them? If so, then all the governments which were in power in Pakistan during the last 36 years are also to be held guilty of connivance for turning away their eyes from the crimes of the Qadianis. Those who are making such allegations, it was their duty to demand appointment of a bench of the high court or supreme court judges and to produce documentary evidence against Qadianis. We wonder why such a simple and straight procedure was not followed or even now is not resorted to. We support such an inquiry.

One more aspect of this problem is worth consideration. Certain circles are demanding that Qadianis be declared Zimmis and Jazya be collected from them. But these simple hearted and uninformed persons do not know that Zimmis are the non-Muslim residents of that country which is conquered by the Muslim Army. Was Pakistan conquered by Muslim Army? Pakistan had come into being as a result of the popular ballot. Muslims of whole of India had voted in favor of creation of Pakistan and Qadianis were included in these votes. All India Muslim League, under the leadership of Qaide Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, had admitted Qadianis to Muslim League, had made them its members and members of this sect had supported Muslim League and had voted for Muslim League’s Candidates. Before the establishment of Pakistan, we had promised that people belonging to any religion or sect will have a right to remain in their religion and sect and shall have freedom of exercising their beliefs and religion freely. If we compel the Qadianis to not to call their prayer places as mosques, if we dismantle their mosques or if we stop them from calling Azan, then this amounts to breaking our promise and breaking promise (even with your enemy) is a great sin in Islam. Did we tell the Qadianis during Pakistan Movement that they should vote for Muslim League, that they should support us in struggle for achieving Pakistan but remember that, when Pakistan will be established, we will dismantle your mosques, we will stop you from calling Azan, we will deprive you of freedom of expression; you will be our Zimmis. Apparently, it was not so. Then under what principle and law we are taking these extreme and unjust steps?

We do not say that Qadianis may not be confronted or that difference with them be eschewed. Confront them fully and completely, but this confrontation should be done with arguments. For winning them around our view point we must use the Ahsan (nice) way, because the Holy Qur’an enjoins us: ‘Say nice words to people.’ When Allah had appointed Moses and Haroon as his messengers and ordered them to go to Paroha at that time He told them to ‘talk to him in soft words’.

Therefore, we too shall use nice and soft words for bringing people around our view point. This is the way of the prophets and definitely better results will be flowing from this method and we will be spared the bad reputation and blood shed. Our opponents will be convinced by our strong arguments and will join us. But by resorting to persecution and by making oppressive Law, we will neither be doing any service to the country and nation nor we will be able to win over the Qadianis to our view point. Rather we will be generating hatred in their hearts against ourselves. Hatred can not be a substitute of love nor any positive results flow from it. Rather hatred always leads towards destruction.

Supposing ever after that Qadianis do not listen to us and remain firm in their beliefs, then we need not indulge in any excesses on them. Let us leave them in their condition and let them be answerable to their God. Who can claim more love and honor for Islam then Allah and Holy Prophet, peace be upon him. Allah told the Prophet, peace be upon him, ‘we have not appointed you an overseer or inspector over them’, i.e. do not try to win them over forcibly but preach them with prudence and wisdom. So we should also be following the example of the Prophet, peace be upon him.

We owed it as a debt to the country and nation so we discharged it. Our mind is at peace that we have explained in detail the facts before our government, our Ulema and the intelligenza of our nation. Now, accepting these or rejecting is their choice.

Jesus and Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon all of them, were all such personages who helped mankind steer its ship on the right channel towards its destined goal.

Though our achievements in the fields of science and technology are gigantic and dazzling, yet if we pause for a moment to find the direction of all these achievements, then we find that this present era of ours is not different than the past ages. Are not all our efforts directed only towards the advancement of our physical being? Can any one point out even one sphere where the modern research and development is taking care of the spiritual aspects of the man? Muslim world is no different than the rest of the world in this behalf. Every where all efforts are directed at physical and material sources. Wherever there are movements labelled as religious, these are badly ridden with priestcraft or else name of religion is being paraded as a vehicle to political power. There is an ever widening gulf between the professed beliefs and the practice. The same imbalance which had existed in the past ages exists even in this era. Did not this demand that Allah in His mercy may raise some one for setting right this imbalance? Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, the last of the prophets about whom we have a belief that no prophet of any kind, new or old, shall ever appear after him, gave us the good news of the appearance of such holy personages at the head of each century. In the Islamic terminology they are called the Mujaddids, literally meaning the Renovators of Religion. Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, claimed to be the Mujaddid of the 14th Century of the Islamic Calendar - Hijra; and I lay emphasis on the fact that none but him alone from the whole world claimed to be the Mujaddid of that century. He urged upon his followers to rally back to the Qur’an and Sunnah, that is to the commands of Allah and the practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. He told us to translate these sublime teachings of Islam through our deeds, our day to day actions in life. He brought home the fact that being a Muslim is to strike a proper balance between the demands of our physical, material life and our spiritual lives; that Islam demands a life style wherein a balanced development of both the physical and spiritual being of a person is made possible, wherein the demands of both the container and the content are taken proper care of by putting them in their proper places. This is Ahmadiyyat in a nut shell and this is what he demands of us to pledge ourselves with him when one joins the Ahmadiyya Movement - “That I
ISLAM MY CHOICE
by L. R. Priestley
(Australia)

It is years since I embraced Islam, and the decision taken is one I have never regretted. With it was lifted the weight of doubt and frustration which had been my constant companion over many years. It is a burden which one cannot share. Looking back over those years in retrospect, they fall into four clear stages. I would like to tell, briefly, the story of this evolution.

The first stage commenced when, as a small boy, my parents sent me to Sunday School. It was a Baptist School, chosen for no better reason than the fact that it was quite near to my home. Here, the simple story of Jesus Christ (May peace be on him); the name became associated with little children, the inn, shepherds and parables. It was accompanied by simple but rather nice hymns, and attendance was encouraged through the medium of an annual outing, and a presentation for regular attendance. This stage lasted several years, until I became of age to join the Scout Movement.

The troop I joined had, in its leaders and ranks, young men who were members of the Church whose hall was used for our weekly meetings. Once a month we had to attend a Church Parade, and thus the stage was set to drift into stage two. From a child’s Sunday School to the adult Church is a big step. No longer was it a question of teaching a simple story; it now involved Latin phrases, the presence of a priest, and the performing of, or suggesting of, mysterious things was deemed to be essential.

I questioned the differences in the form and matter of the teaching but my elders frowned, telling me that it was my ‘duty’ to believe without question, and told me, furthermore, that I must not blaspheme. Thus were sewn the seeds of doubt, and this stage continued until frustration gained the upper hand, and, finally, I ceased to attend the Church or the Scout Movement.

So I drifted for a number of years until, eventually, in the early days of the war, I enlisted in the Army. Here I found yet another change. The Army brand of faith is not concerned with the spiritual welfare of the inner man so much as with the paradigm of the outer man. The service of any denomination was prefaced by cleaning and polishing, parading and inspecting, and if the individual was below standard, one awaited the officer’s pleasure; and so Church Parade and the act of attending service became not a pleasure but something one avoided, as a point of honour. Even these standards and methods varied from unit to unit; no one, it seems, ever suggested that the state of a man’s soul should be the criterion for parading, rather than the parading being justification for going to worship. Later the opportunity arose to change my regiment, and at the new induction I became one of the vast number with ‘nil’ against my religion, and continued to follow this path until I entered the Palestine Police Force, and the final stage.

With my interest aroused at the thought of going to the Holy Land, I made an effort to sweep away the mental cobwebs of the years, for there, I imagined, I should find some of the answers to my queries. Far from finding answers, I was faced with even more differences in form and teaching, and worse, an undercurrent of hate and distrust between the various sects, with a liberal dash of politics thrown in for good measure. Then, by accident, a newcomer to Jerusalem, I wandered into the sacred grounds of the Haram-Sherif. From this chance encounter I made new friends and gathered information on their particular beliefs. My questions I found could be answered, logically and in full. Whereas the Church had never mentioned the Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace!), I found that the names of Jesus, Moses, Abraham and many others were well known to, and venerated by, Muslims.

Gradually Islam claimed me; slowly I learned. Conviction, supported by logical argument and reasoned explanation, is a very powerful force, and here, I feel, is the basis of one of the major failings of the Christian Church. Conviction it may well have, but not logical argument or reasoned explanation. Thus, after many years of doubting and avoiding, I have found my answers, and my faith.

Members of the Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Ishaat Islam (Lahore) believe that:

- After the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), God has barred the appearance of any prophet, new or old.

- Angel Gabriel cannot bring ‘prophetic revelation’ to any person as this would contradict the two complementary verses: “This day have I perfected for you your religion.” (5:3) and “Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the prophets.” (33:40). It would otherwise violate the sanctity of finality of prophethood in Islam.

- All the Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ashab) and all the spiritual leaders (imam) are venerable.

- It is incumbent to believe in the missions of all reformers (mujaddid).

- He who believes that “there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet.” (kalimah) cannot be regarded an unbeliever or infidel (kafir).

- No verse of the Holy Qur’an has been, or shall ever be, abrogated.

AHMADIYYAT THIS ERA
cont.

shall ever keep the religion above my worldly affairs.” You see, there is no negation of the either. Simply the order of priority has been fixed and the lack of this order of priorities is at the center of the imbalance which is now threatening the very existence of mankind on this globe of ours. Survey, the whole world and you will see that there is no other religious group, not even in Muslim world, which has made the restoring of this balance the central point of its activities. This makes Ahmadiyyat a unique body in the whole world. It takes care of both the here and the hereafter and by restoring of balance it makes one taste the paradise in this life, the hereafter being only the continuance of the same.

My friends, so long as this imbalance exists, need for the Ahmadiyya Movement will remain relevant.

Thank you, God bless you all.
GOD SPEAKS TO MAN
by DR. ALLAH BAKISH

Ours is an age of Science. Secular science is based on our senses, aided or unaided by instruments. Sensuous feelings are interpreted by our minds and our intellectual analysis by logical inferences. This is how our knowledge of secular sciences advances. But God is transcendental to matter and beyond our physical senses. So are other eschatological realities. Is it possible for the metaphysical and unlimited verities to be comprehensible through the physical and the limited?

The modern scientific man's difficulty, who is solely dependent on the physical and the material, in believing the existence of God and spiritual varieties, is therefore quite understandable. It is true that the cosmological and teleological arguments lead him to conclude that there ought to be a Being. But how is he to know his qualities and characteristics? Moreover, if man wishes to overcome his earthly and inferior emotional urges, a mere surmise of God is not sufficient. The conviction and God consciousness ought to be much deep-rooted and stronger in his sub-consciousness. It is therefore quite wrong to make a supposition that it is man who out of his intellectual arguments has created Him. Nay! It is God Himself, Who reveals to man! It is the process of communication or speaking of God to man or His revelation, or sometimes called religious experience, through which God has come to be known. It is to this effect that a Hadith says, 'I was a treasure concealed, then I wished to be known, so I created Adam'. Some persons, especially in this age of reason and science, are yet under the misconception that God's speaking to man is just a myth and has no significance in human life. Speech heard from outside is generally considered as if an idea is inspired into man's mind, but words in which the idea is translated are of man's own making. This accordingly is what is implied by God speaking to men.

However, such is not at all the significance in which the word revelation to man has been employed in the Qur'an. One of the fundamental characteristics of Divine Revelation as used in the Holy Qur'an is that it fortells of coming events or gives knowledge of unseen things. Were divine revelation to man a mere instillation of good and fine ideas in the mind, then every ingenuous imaginative device or poetical idea would have to be regarded as Divine-Speaking. How can an idea originating in the human mind and expressed by man in his own words be a Divine message or a communication? How can such an idea of man's own creation instil conviction into man about unseen realities? How can thoughts arising within man's mind reveal to him of future events or of past historical happenings? The Holy Qur'an says, "By the Lord of the heaven and the earth, it is surely the truth just as you speak, (with each other)" 51:23. Just as men speak to each other, so is God's speaking to man a reality. At another place, the Holy Qur'an has explained the exact kind of ways through which He speaks to man: "It is not voucshafed to a mortal that Allah should speak to him, except by revelation or from behind the veil, or by sending a messenger and revealing by His permission what He pleases. Surely He is High, Wise. "And thus have We revealed to thee a Book by Our Command. Thou knowest not what the Book was, nor what faith was. But We made it a light, guiding thereby whom We please of Our Servants" (42:51).

Maulana Muhammad Ali explaining this verse in his commentary says: "This verse shows how Allah speaks to a person or makes known His will to him. Three modes of this are states: (1) By Wahy, the primary significance of which is a hasty suggestion. Hence the inspired word, which enters the hearts of the Prophets and the righteous. Hence it is called wahy of revelation because it is like a hasty suggestion made directly to the heart of the inspired. It is in this sense that a revelation is spoken of as being granted to the mother of Moses (28:7) and to the apostles of Jesus who were not prophets (5:111). (2) The second mode of Allah's speaking to His servants it that He speaks from behind the veil such as a scene is shown in a vision, carrying a deeper significance or words are heard by the person spoken to as from behind a veil. (3) The third form of revelation is in which a messenger - an angel - is chosen by the Almighty to deliver His message to the person to which He wishes to speak. This is the highest form of revelation. The Qur'an was revealed to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) through Gabriel. This revelation is granted only to the Prophets but the other two may also be granted to righteous who are not raised to the dignity of prophethood. It should, however, be borne in mind that in all these cases the recipient of the revelation is granted certain other senses. He sees what others do not see and he hears what others do not hear. It is therefore with what may be called the spiritual senses that he hears and sees and feels things which others do not hear, see, or feel" (Foot note No. 2235).

The prophetic-revelation which contains divine-guidance for man having been made complete with the revelation of the Qur'an and having been preserved safe for all the time, is therefore discontinued in conformity with the verse, "This day have I perfected you for you your faith, and have completed by favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your faith" (5:3). But the non-prophetic kind of revelation continues to be granted as before. This consists mostly of news about future happenings and good tidings for the righteous as the Holy Qur'an says: Those who believe in this world's life and in the Hereafter. That is the mighty achievement" (10:63-64). At another place it has, "Those who say our Lord is Allah, then they remain deadfast, angels descend upon them (saying) have no fear nor be aggrieved, we are your friends in this life and in the Hereafter and be of good cheer for the paradise you were promised with" (41:30-31).

Divine-relation is a universal phenomenon. The process of granting visions and true dream to the righteous as well as the non-righteous is a universal process. The Holy Qur'an thus mentions the visions and dreams of King of Egypt and the two co-prisoners of Joseph as having come true. Divine-communion has never ceased to exist and will ever continue. If this relation of God and man were to continue, then there would be no more need for worshipping Him. The Holy Qur'an has itself advanced this reasoning against continued on next page
God Speaks to Man

cont.

worshipping false deities who neither hear nor can give any assistance to man, when it says: "They serve besides Allah those who could neither harm nor benefit them" (10:18). And again, "Call not on besides Allah on him who can neither benefit nor harm thee" (10:106). "When he (Abraham) said to his sire, O my Sire! Why worshippeth thou that which heareth not, nor seeth, nor yet can avail thee aught?" (19:42). The Holy Qur'an condemns worshipping and praying to such gods who never answer: "Those to whom they pray besides Him give them no answer" (13:14). Those whom you call on besides Allah are slaves like yourselves. So call on them, then let them answer you, if you be truthful" (7:194). Islam teaches praying to a God Who hears, answers and helps man in his distress and difficulties, while it questions the worshipping to a God who neither hears nor answers. To say therefore that the God of Islam neither listens nor gives replies to the supplicant is to deny the God presented by the Holy Qur'an.

Finality of Prophethood

There is a grave misunderstanding about the doctrine of Finality of Prophethood: While the unbelievers in the phenomenon of Divine revelation deny the existence of a speaking and communicating God, there are others who believe that God used to speak before but has now ceased to speak any more with man because of the doctrine of Finality of Prophethood. Finality does imply that God has perfected His guidance with the Holy Qur'an and after it no new guidance is to be revealed. The source of all guidance for man in the future would be the guidance of the Qur'an. Moreover, the Holy Prophet, may peace be upon him, is the final and the last guide. There would be none who would claim to bring any new guidance not to be found in his life, as he has shown all true paths in his illustrious life. Thus finality of Prophethood does signify both these things, completion of Divine guidance with the Qur'an and perfection of all moral and spiritual elevation in the life history of the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. However, it never implies that God has ceased to speak or communicate with man in the non-prophetic way. The attributes of hearing and speaking are at work for all times to come. As a matter of fact completion and perfection of Islam, with the Qur'an and advent of the Holy Prophet, demand that his followers should be able to reach God and communicate with Him. If faith means that God should not remain isolated from man but should reveal Himself to them, then perfection of faith must signify that the perfect followers of a perfect faith must to be able to reach God and therefore be able to speak and communicate with Him. Does perfection imply and include a perfect follower reaching and speaking to God or does it signify that man is no longer able to reach God? Before perfection, man could reach and speak to God but after its completion he can no longer communicate with Him? Surely then in such an eventuality perfection would no longer prove a blessing if it were to deprive man to reach God? Finality of Prophethood does not signify cessation of the process of Divine speaking and communicating of God with man. It is on this account that the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said that God used to send prophets before, whenever any prophet died another was raised. But after me there would be no prophet at all. However, there would arise after me my vicegerents. He has again said that before there were persons with whom God used to speak, without their being prophets and if there is any such person in my Ummat he is Umar. Again the Holy Prophet likened Hazrat Ali to Aaron in the words "your likeness to me is as that of Aaron to Moses but there is no Prophet after me". How could then it be maintained that the process of Divine communication in its non-prophetic form has been discontinued after the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him.

a quiet people of quiet ways living out their quiet days with gentle joys turned toward life with lips of grace and quiet smiling eyes a quiet people i would see dwelling in their homes and free to serve their God as they might choose without abuse without cruel war and enmity a quiet people i would see a race made of humanity (a quiet people) safe and free to live in peace and amity with gentle joys and dreams of right who dwell amid the sacred light and share the work of living truth with quiet speech with deeds of truth—good ways in quiet days of peace—a choice a pious folk can choose a time to search a path to take

David Sparenberg

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MUHAMMAD THE GREATEST MAN OF HISTORY

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

—Alphonse de Lamartine in Histoe de la Turquie

QUR'AN, THE GREATEST SPIRITUAL FORCE

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

—Bosworth Smith

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

—New Researches by H. Hirschfeld

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

—Dr. Steingass, Hughes' Dictionary of Islam

THE BEAUTIFUL CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAM

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

—George Bernard Shaw