PROMISED MESSIAH SPEAKS
Life After Death
by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad
Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement in Islam

"And We have made man's actions to cling to his neck, and We shall bring forth to him on the day of Resurrection a book which he will find wide open...." (17:13)

What is the teaching of the Qur'-an as to the state of man in his life after death, is the next question which offers itself for solution.

Representation by Images

The state after death is not altogether a new state; it is in fact a complete representation, a full image of our spiritual state in the present life. Here the good or bad conditions of the deeds or beliefs of a man are latent within him and their poison or panacea casts its influence upon him secretly, but in the life to come they shall become manifest and clear as daylight. An idea of it, although a very imperfect one, may be had from the manner in which a person sees in a dream the embodiment of whatever is predominant in his temperament. When he is due for an attack of fever, he may see in a dream flames of burning fire, whereas he may find himself in floods of water when he is about to catch cold.

When the body is prepared for a particular disease, a dream may often disclose the embodiment of the conditions giving rise to it. From the manner in which internal conditions are represented in physical forms, in dreams, we can have an idea of the embodiment of the spiritual conditions of this world in the life to come. After our earthly course is ended, we are translated to regions where our deeds and their consequences assume a shape, and what is hidden in us in this world is there unrolled and laid open before us. These embodiments of spiritual facts are substantial realities, as even in dreams, though the sight soon vanishes away, yet so long as it is before our eyes it is taken to be reality. As this representation by images is a new and a perfect manifestation of the power of God, we may as well call it not a representation of certain facts, but a new creation brought about by the powerful hand of the Creator. With reference to this, the Qur'-an says:

"So no soul knows what refreshment of the eyes is hidden for them...." (32:17)
OUR BELIEFS

(1) That there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger.

(2) After the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), Allah has completely barred the appearance of a prophet, old or new.

(3) After the Holy Prophet, Gabriel can never descend and bring Prophetic Revelation (Wahy Nubuwwah) to any person.

(4) If Gabriel were to descend with one word of Prophetic Revelation (Wahy Nubuwwah) on any person, it would contradict the two complementary verses:
   “This day have I perfected your Religion for you” (5:5); “He is the Messenger of Allah and the Last of the prophets.”

(5) The Holy Prophet also said: “I am Muhammad and I am Ahmad and I am al-Aqib (the one who comes last) after whom there can be no prophet.” (Al-Bukhari: Kitab al-Manaqib)

(6) In the light of the above Islamic fundamentals, the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement never claimed to be a Nabi, but the God-Ordained Mujaddid (“The Promised Messiah”) of the 14th Islamic Century, having been expressly raised to re-establish the predominance of Islam in the world.

(7) He named his followers ‘Ahmadi’ after the Holy Prophet’s Jamali (beatific) name ‘Ahmad’.

(8) He proclaimed that no verse of the Holy Qur’an has been abrogated nor shall ever be abrogated.

(9) All the Companions of the Holy Prophet and the Imams are venerable.

(10) It is spiritually conducive to our Faith to accept the revivalist Islamic missions of all Mujaddids (Renovators).

(11) Any one who declares his faith in the Kalimah (Muslim formula of faith: la ilaha illallah Muhammadur Rasulullah) is a Muslim.

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EDITORIAL

SAYING MUHAMMAD-AR-RASUL-ULLAH (Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah) is Not Shirk
By Ch. Masud Akhtar

In the 'Muslim Perspective,' December 1986 Issue. Published by Masjid Tucson, 739 E 6th Street, Tucson, AZ 85719, there appears this statement under the caption 'Ismail Farooqi':

"Brother Chima retorted, "How can you condemn to Hell a man who said 'Laa Elaaha Ella Allah: There is no God except the One God!' I answered, 'Ismail Farooqi did not say, 'Laa Elaaha Ella Allah,' he used to say, 'Laa Elaaha Ella Allah; Muhammad Rasoolul-Laah: There is no God except the One God; Muhammad is a messenger of God,' and this is Shirk(idol-worship)." Brother Chima sounded surprised, "Isn't Muhammad Rasoolul-Laah?" I answered, "Yes indeed, and os is Moses, Jesus, Lot, Noah, Abraham, David, Solomon, Saalih, Hood, and many others. When you consistently say, 'Muhammad Rasoolul-Laah,' and neglect to say, 'Saalih(for example) Rasoolul-Laah,' this amounts to defacto denial of all other messengers. The Qur’an calls people who do this (These are the real disbelievers)."

"So, there is something wrong with saying 'Muhammad Rasoolul-Laah,' after saying 'Laa Elaaha Ella Allah.'" Brother Chima interrupted, "Certainly," I said, "For one thing it represents disobedience of God and His messenger Muhammad. The words of God that came out of Muhammad's mouth command us never to give distinction to any one prophet or messenger. Verse 285 (19 x 15) of Sura 2 orders us to give no distinction to any messenger, and to say, 'We hear, and we obey.' This last statement is significant, because obviously God knew that the vast majority of Muslims will fall into Satan's trap and will say, 'We hear, but we disobey.'"

Brother Chima said, "Don't you believe that Muhammad is Rasoolul-Laah?" I said, "Certainly; the fact that we are strict Qur’anists means that we definitely KNOW that Muhammad is Rasoolul-Laah; God's final prophet. And it is precisely because we uphold Qur’an that we know that LAAL ELAAHA ELLA ALLAH must stand by itself if we are worshipers of Allah ALONE. To add MUHAMMAD RASOOLUL-LA AH represents idol worship and a clear defiance of God and His messenger.'"

UNQUOTE

The above statement of Mr. Rashad Khaleefa runs contradictory to the teachings of the Qur’an on the subject, therefore, we deem it fit to expound the teachings of the Qur’an relating to this matter.

Not a Shirk.

In order to understand whether the statement, There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is messenger of Allah, is Shirk or not, one needs to know what 'shirk' really means. All muslims, without exception, strictly believe in Tawheed, i.e., 'the Unity of God.' 'Shirk', as against 'Tawheed', means belief in the plurality of God. Now the statement 'Muhammad is Messenger of Allah' clearly states that the relationship of Muhammad with Allah is that of His Messenger and, as such, bars his being raised to the status of a Deity. It is unimaginable that one can call some one a Messenger of Allah and Allah in the same breath. It is thus evident that the statement 'Muhammad is Messenger of Allah', rather than being 'Shirk', is a statement which eliminates all or any chances of Muhammad being raised to the status of a Deity. It is thus a shield against 'Shirk'.

Not a Defacto denial of Other Prophets.

Mr. Rashad Khaleefa in support of his supposed theory of Shirk advances this argument;

"Brother Chima sounded surprised, "Isn't Muhammad Rasoolul-Laah?" I answered, "Yes indeed, and os is Moses, Jesus, Lot, Noah, Abraham, David, Solomon, Saalih, Hood, and many others. When you consistently say, 'Muhammad Rasoolul-Laah' and neglect to say, 'Saalih(for example) Rasoolul-Laah', this amounts to defacto denial of all other Messengers......"

Beg your pardon. What an argument....One will need to learn his logic afresh from those who taught Mr. Khaleefa the art of making an argument without caring much whether it makes any sense or not. The gist of this argument is that by describing someone or something, one automatically becomes guilty of denial of the rest of the same kind or species or class. To illustrate, when we say, for example, Mr. Khaleefa is a Mauvil, this, according to him, amounts to a denial of all other Mauvis, or if we say Mr. Khaleefa is an Egyptian, this will amount to denial of all other Egyptians. These are two simple statements which describe Mr. Rashad Khaleefa's profession and origin; and only a person who has run out of his mind will understand from these descriptions any denial of the rest of the Mauvis or the Egyptians. Similarly, the statement 'Muhammad-ar-Rasul-ullah' describes Muhammad's status and can not, by any stretch of the imagination, amount to denial of other Messengers of Allah. Nor is any such denial ever intended by Muslims who utter this statement. As to why we say 'Muhammad-ar-Rasul-ullah' and do not mention the name of any other person from amongst the other Messengers of Allah, is not because of any denial of their status as Messengers of Allah but because of the fact that Muhammad, being the last and final Messenger of Allah to mankind, is the Messenger of the present time, while Messengers who preceded him were sent to their respective nations or people and their Missions were limited to that respective people and time in human history. From the study of the Qur’an it is evident that Messengers were sent to all the nations, names of some of whom have been mentioned in the Holy Book while others have not been stated. From this information in the Qur’an, we learn that, while the

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Mission of other Messengers was limited to a particular age, area or people, the Mission of Muhammad is much wider in scope, as he has been described as 'Rasul-an-ilan-Nas, i.e., Messenger to Mankind. Finality of prophethood with him makes him a prophet whose period of Mission extends to the day of reckoning. Since Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah from this our age, as well as future ages, hence the acknowledgement of this fact by saying 'Muhammad-ar-Rasulullah' and this in no way implies that others were not the Messengers of Allah to their respective nation in their time, nor any such meanings are derivable from this statement.

Nor does this amount to distinction between Messengers of Allah.

The third argument of Mr. Rashad Khaleefa is that by uttering 'Muhammad-ar-Rasul-lah' one becomes guilty of making distinction between Messengers of Allah. It seems the teachings of the Qur'an have gone above his head or else he would not have taken this erroneous view. It is true that in many verses of the Qur'an, believers have been asked to have belief in the 'Messengers', Books and Angels along with belief in Allah. But it is also true that at scores of places, the Qur'an in numerous verses has required belief in Allah and 'the Messenger', Muhammad, for example, and we quote a few of these verses hereunder:

15 The believers are those only who believe in Allah and His Messenger, then they doubt not, and struggle hard with their wealth and their lives in the way of Allah. Such are the truthful ones.

(AI-Hujurat-49-15)

28 O you who believe, keep your duty to Allah and believe in His Messenger — He will give you two portions of His mercy, and give you a light in which you shall walk, and forgive you. And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful — Ch. 57

54 Say: Obey Allah and obey the Messenger. But if you turn away, he is responsible for the duty imposed on him, and you are responsible for the duty imposed on you. And if you obey him, you go aright. And the Messenger's duty is only to deliver (the message) plainly.

56 And keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and obey the Messenger, so that mercy may be shown to you.

62 Only those are believers who believe in Allah and His Messenger, and when they are with him on a momentous affair, they go not away until they have asked leave of him. Surely they who ask leave of thee, are they who believe in Allah and His Messenger; so when they ask leave of thee for some affair of theirs, give leave to whom thou wilt of them, and ask forgiveness for them from Allah. Surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

(AI-NUR-24-52, 54,56 and 62)

Continued on Next Page
64 And We sent no messenger but that he should be obeyed by Allāh’s command. And had they, when they wronged themselves, come to thee and asked forgiveness of Allāh, and the Messenger had (also) asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allāh Oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful.

(Al-Bar’at 9:62, 63)

Now, from the above quoted verses of the Qur’an, it is established that in addition to the general requirement of belief in ‘Messengers’, believers have also more particularly been asked to believe in ‘Allah and His Messenger.’ If one was to agree with the arguments advanced by Mr. Khaleefa, then one has no option but to conclude that there are contradictory teachings in the Qur’an on the point of belief in Messengers. It is not true. Unfortunately Mr. Khaleefa has missed to properly comprehend the teachings of the Qur’an on the point.

From the above verses it is evident that Allah has insistently required the following of mankind:

1. Belief in Allah and His Messenger...not in Allah alone. This makes sense because disbelief in the Messenger will be tantamount to disbelief in the Message he was delivering. As such, belief in Allah is not complete without belief in His Message, which makes it incumbent to have belief in the messenger who delivered the Message.

2. In addition to belief, Allah has required ‘Ita’at’ obedience to Allah and His messenger. It is important to note that nowhere in the Qur’an does Allah ask for obedience of other messengers from us. Obedience from the people of their own time was required in their times (4-64). Muhammad, being the last and the final Messenger of Allah, is te Messenger of our time, therefore, obedience to him has been required of us.

3. When belief in all the Messengers of Allah has been made a part of the beliefs of Muslims then, Muhammad being a Messenger of Allah, belief in him too is a belief inclusive therein. Inspite of this general statement of belief in Messengers a specific requirement of belief in Muhammad, as per the above quoted verses of the Qur’an, definitely has some significance. Let us try to find it out from the verses of the Qur’an itself.

Qur’an on Iman.

Statements regarding Iman in the Qur’an start with the following verses of Surah Albaqrah:
3 Who believe in the Unseen and keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them.

4 And who believe in that which has been revealed to thee and that which was revealed before thee, and of the Hereafter, they are sure.

5 These are on a right course from their Lord and these it is that are successful.

(2:34)

In these verses, belief in the Unseen that is Allah and in the revelation from Allah has been enjoined. The Iman on Revelation has further been stated in two parts, i.e., Iman in whatever has been revealed to Muhammad and Iman in whatever was revealed before him.

This has further been expanded in the following verses of Albaqrah to include all the stages involved in the Revelation from Allah:

178 Allah will not leave the believers in the condition in which you are until He separates the evil from the good. Nor is Allah going to make you acquainted with the unseen, but Allah chooses of His Messengers whom He pleases. So believe in Allah and His Messengers. And if you believe and keep your duty, you will have a great reward.

(3:178)

Allah exalted some messengers over others. About this excelling of some over others.

Verse 253 of Albaqrah (2-253) reads as under:

253 We have made some of these Messengers to excel others. Among them are they to whom Allah spoke, and some of them He exalted by (many) degrees of rank. And We gave clear arguments to Jesus son of Mary, and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit. And if Allah had pleased, those after them would not have fought one with another after clear arguments had come to them, but they disagreed; so some of them believed and some of them denied. And if Allah had pleased they would not have fought one with another, but Allah does what He intends.

And such an exaltation of Muhammad is clearly borne out by the following verses of the Qur'an.

56 Surely Allah and His angels bless the Prophet. O you who believe, call for blessings on him and salute him with a (becoming) salutation.

57 Surely those who annoy Allah and His Messenger, Allah has cursed them in this world and the Hereafter, and He has prepared for them an abasing chastisement.

66 On the day when their leaders are turned back into the Fire, they say: O would that we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger.

(Al-Ahzab-33:56,57 and 66)

1 And exalted for thee thy mention.

(94:4)
8 'Surely We have sent thee as a witness and a bearer of good news and as a warner, 9 That you may believe in Allah and His Messenger and may aid him and revere him. And (that) you may declare His glory, morning and evening. 10 Those who swear allegiance to thee do but swear allegiance to Allah. The hand of Allah is above their hands. So whoever breaks (his faith), he breaks it only to his soul's injury. And whoever fulfills his covenant with Allah, He will grant him a mighty reward. 2110

(48-9,10)

While others were messengers to their respective people, Muhammad was the messenger of Allah to the whole of mankind.

33 He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the Religion of Truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religions, though the polytheists are averse.

(61-9)

9 He it is Who sent His Messenger with the guidance and the true religion, that He may make it overcome the religions, all of them, though the polytheists may be averse. 2199

(9-33)

Covenant of the Prophets

Under the Covenants of the prophets, as contained in verse of Al Amran (3-80), Allah requires bearing witness of belief in Muhammad and it is in fulfilment of this covenant that we bear Witness that 'Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.'

80 And when Allah made a covenant through the prophets: Certainly what I have given you of Book and Wisdom — then a Messenger comes to you verifying that which is with you, you shall believe in him, and you shall aid him. He said: Do you affirm and accept My compact in this (matter)? They said: We do affirm. He said: Then bear witness, and I (too) am of the bearers of witness with you. 448

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THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PROPHET

By The Late Khawaja Kamal-ud-din

That Muhammad was the only prophet who could see his mission fulfilled in his own lifetime is a simple historical truth. The chief characteristic of the Holy Book revealed to him which no other book can claim is the wonderful transformation which it brought about, and it is to this characteristic also that it lays claim in the very commencement when it says: “This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide against evil.” That the transformation wrought by it is unparalleled in the history of the world is admitted on all hands, for it the Holy Prophet was “the most successful of all prophets and religious personalities,”(1) this success was due to no other cause than the Qur’an. Its injunctions swept off the most deep-rooted evils like idolatry and drunkenness, and left no trace of them in the Arabian peninsula, welded the warring elements of the Arabian society into one nation, and made an ignorant people the foremost torch-bearers of knowledge and of science. Besides, every word of the Qur’an gives expression to Divine majesty and glory in a manner which is not approached by any other sacred book; and hence the challenge of the Holy Qur’an remains unanswered to this day.

(1) See Encyclopedia Britannica, eleventh edition; art. “Koran.”

The whole human race, leave apart the Arabs, was at its lowest moral ebb when the Qur’an was revealed. Clouds of darkness and ignorance overhung the horizon of the earth. Libertinism was the order of the day; so much so that wickedness of the blackest dye was taken in some countries as an act of merit in the eye of God. In the four corners of the world, all laws of God had been violated and Divine limits transgressed. And the Arabs were the most wicked people that the earth of God had ever seen. They not only committed wrongs of the worst type, but they exulted in doing so and were great boasters of it. That was an age of the best poetry in Arabia. They used to meet in their fairs and festivals and vie with each other in their power of making poetry; they produced and read the finest specimen of their composition, and it often contained narrations of their villainous deeds. A people of this sort! and within less than a quarter of a century transformed into a nation of God-fearing men of piety and righteousness, keeping all the commandments of God and respecting all the laws of society. The most ignorant of the world became torch-bearers of knowledge and learning to the then benighted world. Those who kept the weaker sex at the lowest stage of degradation became the first champions of female rights, and infused into the world such a chivalrous spirit as was unknown before. And this all within the shortest space of time! History fails to refer to another regeneration like what was effected by Muhammad: May the choicest blessings of God be on him!

SPIRITUALITY SECRET OF SUCCESS

This success, so unique in its kind and so unparalleled in history, only speaks of that highest stage of spirituality which the Sacred Prophet had attained. No reform in any community can possibly be worked out unless its members entertain some regard for the reformer and are willing to obey him. But no worldly riches or power, nor even any amount of one’s working miracle, can inspire others with that love, respect, and obedience which always follows an advanced spirituality. The words of Muhammad were not the dictates of a potentate. Nay, he disavowed always possession of things which might influence others in his favor. In the words of the Qur’an, he would say often and often: “I say not to you, ‘In my possession are the treasures of God’; neither do I say to you, ‘Verily I am an angel’; only what is revealed to me do I follow.” But still he commanded submission and homage unimaginable. In fact his words were the words of the beloved, to be respected and cared for by the lover. And if such is the mental attitude of the people towards their teacher, no wonder he is “the most successful among all other religious personalities” in working out reforms. But one should first reach the height of the ladder of spirituality before he aspires to that success. Jesus might convert water into wine, but he could not convert the nature of his disciples into what he desired them to be. He wished they could possess a grain of faith. And his apprehensions proved true when the trial came. One most trusted betrayed him. If others deserted him, the one given the keys of heaven cursed and disowned him. Call them what you will, “infirm in faith” or “weak in spirituality,” but the fact remains the same. It does reflect on the weakness of the teacher’s spiritual influence. He seems to lack that “alchemy” which converts a base metal into shining gold. The followers of Moses also would not care much for their liberator. They would not listen to him on his way to the Promised Land. But the holy companion of the Sacred Prophet would always say: “Like the companions of Moses, we will not say: (O Moses) ‘Go thou and thy Lord and fight,’ but we will fight on your right and left, in your front and on your back.” And these were not mere lip expressions. Invariably they were put to the hardest trials, and
their words proved always to be true. The following unparalleled piece of bravery and fidelity of the Prophet's companions, so ably portrayed by Maulvi Sadr-ud-Din we also read in Bukhari, Zurqani, Ibn Hisham, and Sir William Muir.

A HUMAN FORTRESS

"It was in the battlefield of Uhud, in one of his defensive wars, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, being hard pressed by the forces of the enemy, fell down in a pit and fainted. "He had received over eighty wounds: two of the rings of his helmet had run into his cheek, his face weltered in blood, and a blow at his teeth made one of them fly away. The enemy was marching on and sending volleys of arrows, and the life of the Prophet was in danger. He being senseless and no breastwork to defend him against the enemy, disappointment and despair were staring him in the face, but the self-devotion and fidelity to their master, the unprecedented characteristic of the followers of the Holy Prophet, warded off the dire consequence of the situation. Abu Bakr, the first successor after the Prophet, was the first to see the danger, and was foremost in offering ready help, which example was at once followed by Ali, Talha, Zubair, Abu Ubaidah, Abu Dujana, and many others. The Prophet was in the pit, and a sure mark for the enemy. The fight being hand to hand, and the place being even and plain, the only fortification which could save the leader at the moment was a living wall of human beings, which, however, was not wanting. They fortified the pit and exposed themselves to the coming volleys. The human fortress gave a brave defiance. Talha strained two or three bows, and received thirty-five wounds in the endeavor to shoot back the pressing enemy, and proclaimed that no blow will reach the sacred body of the Prophet but through his own chest, and besought his esteemed leader to refrain from raising his head, and thus obviate the danger of any shot striking at him. Abu Dujana was afraid, lest the weak flesh in him should overcome his faithful love for his master; he therefore turned his back to the enemy and inclined over the Prophet. The other constituents of the living fortification made an impenetrable wall against the shots of the enemy. They fell dead one after the other, but their vacant places were filled up by other equally devoted. Ibn Comina, from the ranks of the enemy, came forward with the sword, but it was barely warded off his head by the naked hand of Talha, whose fingers were disabled for life thereby. "There were no hospital assistants or the sisters of charity to nurse the holy wounded, but love and devotion made up the deficiency. Abu Ubaidah applied his own teeth to extract the rings of helmet firmly embedded in the cheek of Muhammad, and had to lose his own two teeth before he succeeded in his endeavor. Water could not be found at that moment to wash the body and face of the Prophet besmeared with blood, but many a human tongue came forward to lick it off. Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet, with Saffiah and other renowned ladies, were busily engaged staunching the blood and nursing his wounds. But it was Umm Nasibah, daughter of Ka'b, whose desperate spirit greatly contributed to win the day. She wielded her sword and drew hew bow with the object of defending the Holy Person that lay in the pit. Other ladies like Umm Sulaim, Umm Saleet, 'Ayisha, and others caught her enthusiasm, and accordingly made an onslaught on the enemy, while nursing the wounded. "One of the young children was commanded by his mother to arm himself with a sword and dash upon the enemy to defend the Prophet." The above very highly speaks of the teacher and the taught— an instance the like of which can be boasted by chronicles. The followers of Muhammad proved true to their professions which they used to sing proudly as their war-cry:

"We are that very people that have pledged themselves to Muhammad to fight in defense of their faith throughout lives."

The spirit infused by the Prophet did not only find its exhibition in the exchange of arms, but it enabled "the sons of the desert" also to face courageously the most formidable of the foes that a man has to grapple with—his own corrupt nature and evil habits. History fails to refer to a single instance where a reformer met such an implicit allegiance to his precepts from the people he wished to reform, especially in the matter of eradicating their most deeply rooted evils. "Drink" was one of their evils. No Bacchanalian orgies elsewhere could surpass the Arab indulgence of alcohol in those days. Their daily meals were three, but they worshiped Bacchus five times a day. But when the time came for the Prophet to introduce into them total abstinence, the streets of Madina were over-flowing with the detestable contents of the wine barrels, which were emptied at the one magic word of the Prophet.

No appeal from the brain power of the nation to the Cabinet to stop liquor traffic— that only for a short period was needed. One word from the master-mind, and the five times fixed for the worship of Bacchus were converted into the five times of Allah's worship in Islam. Such radical revolutions in the morals of people cannot be worked out without one's being at the climax of spirituality— and so was Muhammad. After all, the whole prime of manhood spent in retirement in the Cave of Hira could not remain without bringing its fruits. Though they were the early days of his marriage, Muhammad would often retire to that cave and spend

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There is a tendency among non-Muslims to regard the Qur'an (or Koran, as it is generally named) with undisguised contempt, even by many who have sometimes expressed appreciation of and admiration of other sacred Books of the East; the Vedas, the Tripitaka, the Talmud and the Bible. They regard the Qur'an as unworthy of their close attention and study. This fact that it is seldom read by the non-Muslim and not studied by the self-constituted and unqualified critic, does not, however, deter him from passing a negative verdict on the value of its contents, with an utter disregard to the fact that it is held by millions of people to be an inspired volume, not only of religious belief, but also of public policy, a guide to daily living, including conduct in all the intricate details, while it is also a manual of jurisprudence. It is readily admitted that, to the Occidental, the Qur'an is singular in its language and not an easy book for him to study and this fact must be accepted as a partial explanation of his attitude. Since the introduction of paragraph newspapers and periodicals, there has been a pernicious tendency to avoid any study which necessitates concentration or even close attention for any length of time. Mind-wandering as a mental disease has developed to an alarming extent to the detriment of all intellectual and spiritual studies. But, like other works which demand application and mental labor, the study of the Qur'an has been found by all who have given time and attention to it to be more than worth the while.

It is possible, even probable, that there may be some who read these pages who will regard the placing of the Qur'an in juxtaposition with the Bible as exceeding even the bounds of criticism or beneath it in its implication of the suggestion that the Qur'an is worthy of comparison with the Bible and as entering upon a forbidden area, an act of trespass likely to be visited with dire consequences.

Yet some Christian students who have taken up the study of the Qur'an in real earnest have learned to value its contents and have become acknowledged authorities by both Muslims and Christians in this field. Of this number none, perhaps, has held a higher position than Sir William Muir, one-time president of the University of Edinburgh, born in 1819 and the best-known Arabic scholar of his time. He was the author of the "Life of Mahomet," "Mahomet and Islam" and of The Koran, published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. His brother, John Muir, rendered a like service to the study of Sanskrit, for which he founded a chair in the University of Edinburgh. In his treatise on The Koran, Sir William Muir, says (p. 6):

The Koran is the groundwork of Islam. Its authority is absolute in all matters of polity, ethics and science, equally as in matters of religion. Where revelation is silent, tradition speaks: and upon the tradition of Muhammad's sayings, as well as upon the interpretation and analogy of the text of the Koran are built up the various schools of Islam. But the Koran is supreme and much of the tendency is so plain as to admit no question, even among contending sectaries.

To avoid confusion, in all future extracts, Qur'an and Muhammad will be spelt as in this paragraph, whatever may be the spelling in the extract quoted.

After the Fatihah, placed at the head of this chapter, the Qur'an opens in the second sura (or chapter) with a declaration of faith and confidence in its contents:

There is no doubt in this book, it is a declaration to the pious, who believe in the mysteries of the Faith, who observe the appointed times of prayer and distribute alms out of what we have bestowed upon them; and who believe in that revelation which hath been sent down unto them and that which hath been sent down to the prophets before thee.

The Qur'an is a history of the foundation of the faith, of the wondrous dealings of Allah and His faithful subjects, of the chastisements incurred and experienced by those who have openly rebelled, of forgiveness for the truly repentent, of the awards promised and bestowed upon the faithful and righteous, as well as being, as stated, a manual of Islamic law and polity.

The revelations to the prophets antecedent to Muhammad are in no way belittled or undermined by sane and reverent Biblical criticism has proved beyond doubt that, in the instance of the Bible, nearly all, if not, indeed, all the books have been subject to mutilation and additions since the original manuscripts were penned. Unfortunately none of the original manuscripts are available but there is ample substantial evidence to justify this assertion. Some of the additions have, without doubt, been made for the purpose of confirming and endorsing the "departures from the faith" of various sects. The Qur'an stands today, without alteration, as it was originally given to the Arabian people and, through them, to the world. There have been, of course, many translations, but in none of these is the sense or meaning of any text altered or varied.

The Qur'an consists of one book by one author and thus cannot be compared with the Bible, which consists, apart from the apocryphal, which is accepted by some and rejected by others, of sixty-six books by various authors, the authorship being, in many instances, disputed by reason of the loss or destruction of the original manuscripts. There is no agreement between Catholics and Protestants as to what constitutes the Biblical Canon, as to what books may be accepted as canonical. The Catholic version includes some of the apocryphal books, but not all. Generally speaking, Protestants reject all apocryphal books as non-canonical, though they may read and study them. At one time some of the apocryphal books were read publicly in churches, though not regarded as of equal authority with those books written in Hebrew and read in the synagogue. In its sixth article, the Church of England says of the apocryphal books that the Church doth read them for example of life and instruction of manners but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine.

The term "apocrypha" is generally...
applied to certain books of the Old Testament, supposed to have been written between Malachi and Matthew, but there are other books of the New Testament which are also termed apocryphal, that is uncanonical, concerning which the following extract from Croake-James’s *Curiosities of Christian History* may be of interest:

Certain books have been written and circulated in the early ages of Christianity which professed to recite events not mentioned in the four gospels or the New Testament. Though all are spurious or of uncertain authorship, there is, nevertheless, great interest in some of the incidents; and as they were so extensively read by early Christians, some account of these is acceptable to all readers of sacred subjects. Though in all ages treated with contempt by the authoritative teachers in the Church it is easy to comprehend how they came to attract so much notice, for there is an air of simplicity and verisimilitude in some of the incidents and, of course, no human being is in a position to affirm or deny the substance of the writings thus recorded. Milman says, some of these legends can still be traced in some of our Christmas carols. One of these apocryphal gospels is called the *Protoevangelion* or *Gospel of James*, who was one of the sons of Joseph the Carpenter (brother of Jesus and one of his disciples) and it records incidents of the childhood of Jesus. The existence of this gospel is traced to the fourth century. Another is the *Gospel of the Egyptian Martyrs of the Martyrs of Egypt* or *Gospel of St. James the Less*, said to be written in the fifth century. Another is the *Gospel of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist*, which was written upon James and supposed to be written in the fifth and sixth centuries. Another is the *Gospel of Thomas* or *Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus*, said to be written about the second century. Another is the *Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus*, ascribed to the fifth or sixth century. There is also a professed correspondence between Jesus and King Agbarus, part of which is said to belong to the sixth and part of the third century (but within recent years proved to be a forgery). There is also the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, supposed to be written in the second century. There are also letters and reports of Pilate and Herod about Christ professing to relate facts and incidents of that time. All these gospels or legends abound in miracles and prodigies, some of them very puerile.

The revelation of the Qur’an was dictated to Muhammad by one whom he held to be an angel, to whom he have the name of the arch-angel Gabriel. Being unable to read or to write, Muhammad, in turn, dictated what had been revealed to him to amanuenses, who wrote down what he said on palm leaves, tanned hides or dry bones, the common practice in those days. Most of the chapters, when completed, were learned by heart; but for fear that any of the writings might be lost, all the scattered fragments of these writings were gathered together and arranged, without regard to sequence, simple according to length. The shorter suras, which are the oldest, have been placed at the end of the volume, with the exception of the first, the Fatihah, which is regarded as the most valuable. This learning by heart, or by rote, was the common practice in both Orient and Occident, but particularly in the Orient, in the days before the invention of printing. Manuscripts, when rescued from the dust-heaps or cellars, were handed to scholars, who made copies in the scriptorium, an apartment in every abbey and monastery set apart for that purpose and, in addition, they were learned by heart by many as a check upon the copyists. At the present day, Dr. Norman Bentwich informs us in an interesting article in the *Contemporary Review* for August, 1944, any student applying for admission to the University of Al Azhur in Cairo must know the Qur’an by heart and be able to recite it in the manner known to Muslims.

Sir William Muir (op. cit. chap. ii) says that it seems probable that the greater part of the revelation was so arranged during the Prophet's lifetime and used in that form for private reading and for recitation at the daily prayers. After the battle of Yemana, which took place about a year after the death of Muhammad, Omar said to the Caliph, Abu Bakr:

I fear that the slaughter may again be so great among the reciters of the Qur’an (many of whom had been killed in action) in other fields of battle and that much may be lost therefrom. Now, therefore, my advice is that thou shouldst give speedy order for collecting the same together.

Abu Bakr at once recognized the wisdom of this advice and asked Zeid ibn Thabit, the chief amanuensis of Muhammad, to undertake this task which, to him, was as much, if not more, a pleasure than a duty. He, at once, set to work together from every quarter, the palm, leaves, tanned hides, stone tablets and bones, on which the verses of the Qur’an had been written from time to time. When this part of his mission had been completed, the collection was handed over to the care of Hafiz, a scribe. From this collection many transcripts were made during the life of Omar the Caliph, who had succeeded in that office.

Errare est humane and, as well may be surmised, the various transcripts were not in complete agreement, though the variations were mainly of dialect and expression. Othman, therefore, decided to appoint Zeid as editor of an authorized recension of the sacred volume, with three Coreish judges to act as a board of control. As Muhammad had spoken in the pure Meccan dialect, the various readings were brought into line therewith and all copies which differed were brought together and burned. Thus the recension of Zeid has been brought down to the present day unaltered. There is no revised version of the Qur’an.

Zeid made the collection of the scraps of the Qur’an within a year of the death of the Prophet and Othman in 651 A.C. (30 A.H.) and prepared the standard copy which is authoritative today. There is probably no other book in the world which has remained for twelve centuries with so pure a text. There is not space for a full discussion of this interesting topic which has been dealt with already in the most capable manner by Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A., LL.B, in *The Collection and Arrangement of the Holy Qur’an*, a book of 136 pages, which can be obtained from the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking.

Sir William Muir says (op. cit., pp. 39-40): There is every security that the work of Zeid was executed faithfully; and, indeed, the acceptance of the Qur’an by Ali and his party, the antagonists of the unfortunate Othman, is the surest guarantee of its genuineness. It is possible that some of the earlier and more ephemeral fragments which proceeded from Muhammad may have, before his death, become obsolete and thus escaped collection but the pious veneration with which the whole body of Muslims from the first regarded the revelation the word of God, the devotions with which they have committed it to memory and the evidence that transcripts existed, combined with the fact that Zeid’s collection came into immediate and unquestioned use—-all this leaves no doubt in the mind that the Qur’an, as read now, contains the very words delivered by the Prophet.

The various translations into language other than Arabic may not, of course, agree literally— it would be a difficult, if not an impossible, task to make them do so; but in meaning they are identical. I have compared the first English translation of 1649 (which is, in turn, a translation from the French translation made in 1632 by command of and guaranteed by the Sultan Amurat) with the last English translation of 1930 by Marmaduke Pickthall and find that though the wording varies in very many instances the meaning is identical throughout. It is to be regretted that the editorial board of control of the first translation should have thought fit to mar the production by the insertion of a prologue and an epilogue setting forth their own particular and peculiar views with regard to the Faith of Islam in such a manner that no opportunity for explanation or refutation was afforded those for whom the book was written or even to allow the Qur’an to speak for itself.

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The Qur'án is more than the basis, it is the substance of Islam, the absolute belief and teaching of Muhammad, not only at the time the words were dictated and written, but at the present day and as the Faith will continue to the end of time, for, in Islam, as in every word of God, there is "neither variability nor change of turning". No theory has yet been established or proved which has necessitated any variation in its teaching. Can the like claim be made for the Bible on behalf of Christianity! However vast the difference in the teachings of the warring sects, find the rationale for their different creeds in the "Word of God." "The Bible and Bible only," once the battle-cry of militant Protestantism, has become almost a dead letter through the onslaughts of Biblical criticism, which have proved that some of the doctrines of orthodox Christianity, chief among them being the trinity, substitutionary atonement and the resurrection of the material body, can no longer depend upon the texts once quoted in support, the forgery or interpolation of such texts having been demonstrated and proved.

Dr. Priestley, renowned as a Christian scholar and expositor as well as a scientist- he was the discoverer of oxygen- rendered great service to all unbiased biblical students by his work, The Corruptions of Christianity. He proved that the doctrine of the trinity was unknown in the apostolic age. It was never taught by Jesus and was only introduced into Christian teaching many years after the date assigned to his life and death. But the death blow to that doctrine was given by a stalwart trinitarian but an honest investigator. John Nelson Darby, the founder of the sect known as the 'Plymouth Brethren,' started on his career as a clergyman of the Church of England. He was a friend of the two Newmans- John Henry afterwards Cardinal and Francis William, also a great scholar and who became equally renowned as his brother, but as a Theist. At the time both were rigidly orthodox Protestants. There was a third brother, not so well known or respected, but who later acquired a certain notoriety as a Freethinker. It is not, I believe, generally known that in the early part of his career before he became leader of the Irish party, Charles Stewart Parnell, was also, for a time, a member of this sect of which his cousin Lord Congleton, became and remained an adherent. Darby became famous as a scholar, particularly in the depth and extent of his knowledge of Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic. When the Board of Revisers of the New Testament was being formed, Darby was invited to become a member, but, being a trinitarian, he refused to sit along with a unitarian minister and scholar, who had accepted a like invitation. He had, however, compiled and published a translation of the New Testament, a copy of which he sent to every member of the Board. Now the only solid foundation for the doctrine of the trinity to be found in the New Testament was in one verse, I John v, 7:

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.

As a faithful translator, Darby regarded it as his duty to point out that this verse was interpolation, not to be found in any of the early manuscripts and as an outcome of the resultant investigation on this point, it was decided to omit this verse from the Revised Version and thus the only verse in the New Testament that could be produced in support of the doctrine of the trinity is now no longer to be found therein. Andrew D. White, the erudite author of the History of the Warfare between Science and Theology, who was a member of a Christian church, wrote of this text:

The fate of this spurious text throws light into the workings of human nature in its relation to sacred literature. Although Luther omitted it from his translation of the New Testament and kept it out of every copy published during his lifetime and, although, at a later period, the most eminent Christian scholars showed that it had no right to a place in the Bible, it was, after Luther's death, replaced in the German translation and has been incorporated in all editions, save one, since the beginning of the seventeenth century. So essential was it found in maintaining the dominant theology that, despite the fact that Sir Isaac Newton, Richard Porson, the nineteenth century revisers and all other eminent authorities have rejected it, the Anglican Church still retains it in its Lectionary and the Scotch Church continues to use it in the Westminster Confession, as a main support of the doctrine of the trinity.

The principal tenet of Islam, the Unity of Allah, is not only the keynote, it is the foundation of Islam and of the Qur'án, the root of the zeal of all Muslims for the honor of the Eternal, for the preservation and safeguarding of the Faith. It was the source and inspiration of every discourse delivered by Muhammad and any belittling of the honors or of the dignity due to Allah by men was met by an outburst of just wrath and indignation. There was never any hesitation in his utterances nor any suggestion of compromise. He was bold in his belief and he expressed himself boldly. His utterances were in striking contrast to the milk and water effusions of many modern unitarian divines who seem to search the orthodox creeds with the object of seeing how much of them they can retain and how little of the opposite view they can let slip through. That attitude is, doubtless, in a great measure due to the training of ministers, but, as the Rev. S. Baring-Goulard has admitted in his Origin and Development of Religious Belief (vol. ii, pp. 142-3):

To one who is simply an inquirer, groping for an authority which will make him embrace Christianity instead of Buddhism or Islam, the Scriptural evidence is by no means conclusive; it fails, no examination, to satisfy the demands of ordinary scientific reasoning.

It is singular how few theologians appear able to distinguish between deity and divinity and, unless that distinction is made and borne in mind, argumentation cannot fail to become confused. Baring-Goulard even falls into this mistake in the following extract taken from the work just mentioned (p. 139):

When we come to examine the gospels to discover what testimony they bear to the divinity (i.e., deity) of Christ, we find them singularly deficient. The three have not a passage on this point, not a single word identifying Jesus with God, not calling him God. He is named the 'Son of Man' and the 'Son of God'. The first of these expressions in no way implies the divinity (i.e., deity) of Jesus; it is said frequently to designate the prophets; and in the sermon on the mount all those who are peacemakers are called 'sons' of God as well as those who do good in return for evil (Matthew v, 45, 48). The same evangelist calls God the 'Father of men' and Luke calls men the 'sons of the Most High, the sons of God' (vi. 35, xx. 36). If the evangelists give men the title of 'sons of God' it is impossible to conclude from them that they give that title to Christ in any other light. In Exodus iv, 22 God calls the people of Israel, 'His first-born son' (I Chronicles xxvii. 13). God, in predicting the birth of King Solomon calls him His son and in Job i, 6, ii, 1, xxxvii, 7, the angels are called 'sons of God'. The Bible even gives the name of God to created beings; in Exodus vii, 1, Moses is called god to Pharaoh; in xxii, the judges are designated as 'gods' and in Psalm lxxiii, 1-6, the name of 'gods' is even given to those who 'judge unjustly and accept the presents of the wicked.'
In Job 1, as Baring-Gould might have mentioned, Satan is included among the "sons of God."

The gradual ascription of deity to Jesus by the Church is shown in the development of the doctrine of the trinity by the General Councils of the Church:

325. General Council of Nicaea stated the Son to be of the same substance with the Father.
361. General Council of Constantinople confirmed the Nican doctrine but added that the Holy Ghost was of the same substance as the Father and the Son, thus developing the doctrine of the trinity.
431. General Council of Ephesus affirmed the dual nature of the Son and confirmed the title of Theologos (mother of God) to the Virgin Mary.
451. General Council of Chalcedon reaffirmed the dual nature of the Son.
533. Second General Council of Constantinople affirmed that in Christ there were two natural wills and two modes of operation, that the human will was free.

In the Church of Rome the Councils decide what is to be believed by Catholics if they would make sure of their salvation. In the Church of England the thirty-nine Articles take the place of the Councils; while the standard for the Presbyterians is the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Article vi of the Church of England begins:

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.

This is described by Baring-Gould (op. cit. p. 365) as:

An article this, which falls, like Goliath, by its own sword, for it is impossible to prove the all-sufficiency of Holy Scripture from itself. Nowhere do we find that the Bible makes profession that it contains the whole faith; that it and it alone is the deposit and the faith of the whole Church. Had it been so we should have found it laid down in precise terms in the scriptures. But nowhere does the Bible profess to give us the faith, nor is there a word to show us that Christ commissioned his apostles to write books to contain the faith as authorized standards of doctrine.

The Westminster Confession of Faith tells us that:

The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from revelations and the spirit of traditions of men.

One feature of daily life in Islam which has aroused both surprise and admiration on the part of the Christian traveller has been the unfeigned devotion of the Muslim to the Qur'an and the reading of it, not as a duty but as a pleasure. It comes, like prayer, as a natural act to the Muslim. The Rev. D.M. Ross, in The Cradle of Christianity, writing of his visit to Damascus, says:

One of the sights which specially interested me was the devout merchant, with his Qur'an on an Arabic book-rest. He sits on a matraso (high bench) in front of his shop, cross-legged like a tailor. He has the dreamy air of a man who cares not whether customers come to him or not. He looks more like a mystic than an alert, enterprising shopman. When customers cease to trouble him he takes up his Qur'an, reads audibly chapter after chapter and as he reads sways his body to and fro like a boy learning memorize. A shopman as intent upon his devotional reading amid the bustle of a bazaar as a monk in monasterey is a curious sight; though there might be worse combinations than this interspersing of business with the precepts of a sacred book.

Muslims accept all so-called Sacred Books or Bibles, whether Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, Shinto, or of any faith, though it does not accord equal value to all. Many Muslims find delight in the reading of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments and in the study of the contents of all the Scriptures, excepting only such narratives as contain incidents or teachings derogatory to Allah or harmful to morals. The great advantage possessed by the Qur'an over the Bible is that it may be read aloud in any party in any company, from cover to cover, without bringing a blush to the cheek or the slightest hesitancy in the utterance. A serious blunder was perpetrated by well-intentioned advocates when they decreed that it was to be regarded as a sacred volume in the highest degree, verbally inspired by Allah and, therefore, beyond criticism. One such advocate even claimed divine inspiration for the punctuation marks (which are not identical in all languages) regardless of the fact that such marks do not appear in the manuscripts. Another gravely maintained that the vowel points in the Hebrew of the Old Testament were also inserted under inspiration, passing over the fact or, perhaps, ignorant of it, the vowel points were not invented when the manuscripts were written.

Writing on the Infallibility of the Bible, Professor T.H. Huxley (as quoted by Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell in his Life of T.H. Huxley, p. 236), said:

Wherever bibilology has prevailed, bigotry and cruelty have accompanied it. It lies at the root of the deep-seated, sometimes disguised, but ever antagonism of all varieties of ecclesiasticism to the freedom of thought and to the spirit of scientific investigation.

But, says Chalmers Mitchell, it was not against the Bible but against the application made of it and the implications read into it that Huxley strove:

In this nineteenth century, as at the dawn of modern physical science, the cosmogony of the semi-harborous Hebrae is the incubus of the philosopher and the opprobrium of the orthodox. Who shall number the patient and earnest seekers after truth, from the days of Galilee until now, whose lives have been embittered and their good name blasted by the mistaken zeal of bibliolators and who shall count the host of weaker men whose sense of truth has been destroyed in the effort to harmonize impossibilities whose life has been wasted.

There are many incidents and passages in both the Old and New Testaments which are an incentive to holy living by all, whether Jew, Buddhist, Christian or Muslim or of any other religious creed or even of no creed at all. Such, for instance, as that incomparable twenty-third Psalm and such golden texts as:

In thy presence is fulness of joy and at thy right hand pleasures for evermore.

But quotations of such excellence and charm and spiritual incentive could be multiplied thousand times.

But, on the other hand- and it is for this reason that Muslims not only do not recommend but discountenance the indiscriminate reading of the Bible- there are many passages in the Bible so dishonoring to Allah and inimical to morals that Muslims are repelled from them with disgust and horror. Incidents are recorded and described in all their ghastly detail in those pages glibly described as "Holy Writ" which make any decent person blush with shame to read and which, if written in any ordinary secular book, would undoubtedly result in a criminal prosecution; incidents of depravity so vile that a clean-minded man would hesitate to read them aloud in the seclusion of his own private chamber and which could certainly not be read in public, save, perhaps, in an assembly of scoffers of the most depraved character.
Promised Messiah Speaks
From Page 2

Thus the Lord describes the heavenly blessings that the righteous shall enjoy in the next life as having been kept secret because, not being like anything contained in this world, no one knows aught about them. It is evident that the things of this world are not a secret to us; we not only know pomegranates, grapes, milk, etc., but frequently taste of them. Consequently, these things could not be called secrets. The fruits of paradise have, therefore, nothing in common with these except the name. He is indeed ignorant of the Holy Qur’an who takes paradise for a place where only the things of this world are provided in abundance.

It may be added here, in explanation of the verse quoted above, that Prophet Muhammad said that heaven and its blessings are things which “the eye hath not seen, nor hath ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive of them.” But of the things of this world we cannot say that our eyes have not seen them, or that our ears have not heard them, or that our minds have not conceived of them. When God and His Prophet tell us of things in heaven which our senses are not cognizant of in this world, we should be guilty of cherishing doctrines against the teachings of the Qur’an if we supposed rivers flowing with the milk which we ordinarily drink here. Can we, moreover, consistently with the idea of heaven, suppose herds of cows and buffaloes reared in paradise and numerous honeycombs hanging on trees with countless bees busily engaged in collecting honey and host of angels busy day and night in milking these cows and getting honey and pouring them continuously into streams to keep them running? Are these ideas in keeping with the teachings of the verses which tell us that this world is a stranger to the blessings of the next world? Will these things illuminate the soul or increase the knowledge of the Lord or afford spiritual food as the heavenly blessings are designed to do? It is, no doubt, true that these blessings are represented as material things, but we are also told that their source of spirituality and righteousness.

The following verse, which may ordinarily be misunderstood, is far from describing the heavenly blessings as being identical with the worldly things:

“And give good news to those who believe and do good deeds, that for them are Gardens in which rivers flow. Whenever they are given a portion of the fruit thereof, they will say: This is what was given to us before, and they are given the like of it...” (2: 25)

Now the context clearly shows that the fruits which the righteous are said to have tasted here do, by no means, signify the fruits of trees or the things of this world. The verse in fact tells us that those who believe and do good works prepare a paradise with their own hands for themselves, with their faith for trees and their good deeds for fruits. It is of the fruits of this garden that they are spiritually made to taste here and of the fruits of the same will they eat in the next life; only the spiritual fruits of this life will be transformed into palpable and more delicious fruits in the next life. But, as they will have already tasted of them spiritually in this life, they will be able to identify the fruits of that life with those of this and, witnessing the close resemblance between the two, will cry out: “these are the fruits which were indeed given to us in the former life.”

Nature of next life

The verse quoted above tells us in plain words that those who spiritually taste of the love of God in this world will be physically sustained by the same food in the next life. The blessings of the next life will recall to their minds the spiritual blessings of the love of God which they tasted in this life, and they will remember the time when in seclusion and at the dead of night, alone and in silence, they found their sweet enjoyment in the remembrance of the Lord.

If it be objected that the words of this verse contradict the saying of the Prophet which describes the blessings of heavenly life as unseen by worldly eyes, unheard of by human ears and inconceivable by the mind of man, the answer is that the contradiction exists only when we take the words “these are the fruits which were given us in our former life” as indicting temporal blessings, enjoyable in this life by all men whether good or bad. But if the “fruits” spoken of here be understood to mean the fruits of good works, the spiritual blessings which the good enjoy in this very life, there is no contradiction. Whatever the good men enjoy spiritually in this life are really blessings, not of this but of the next life and are granted to them as a specimen of the bliss that is in store for them in the next life in order to increase their yearning for it.

It should further be remembered that the righteous man is not of this world and hence he is hated down here. He is of heaven and is granted celestial blessings just as the worldly ones are granted the dainties of this world. The blessings which are granted him are really hidden from the eyes, the ears and the hearts of men and they are quite strangers to them. But the person whose life in this world has been transformed so that he tastes spiritually the cup which he shall actually quaff in the next world, shall truly utter the words: “these are the fruits which were given us formerly.” However, he shall at the same time be perfectly aware that those blessings were quite unknown to the world, and as he too was in this world—though not of this world—so he also shall bear witness that his physical eye never saw such blessings, nor his ear ever heard of them, nor his mind ever conceived of them in the world. But in his second life, after his regeneration, he did witness specimens of these things but this was only when, all his lower connections having been cut asunder, higher ones were established with the next world.

The following verses will show how the Holy Qur’an has repeatedly asserted that the life after death is not a new life but only an image and a manifestation of the present one:

“And We have made every man’s actions to cling to his neck, and We shall bring forth to him on the day of Resurrection a book which he will find wide open...” (The Arabic word ‘tair’, used in this verse, literally means a “bird” and is here used metaphorically to signify the actions of men; for every action, whether good or bad, takes flight like a bird. The bliss or burden
which a person feels in the performance of an act vanishes but it leaves its impression upon the heart. The Qur’-an has disclosed the important principle that every act makes a mysterious impression upon the heart. Every action of a man is in fact followed by an action of God which imprints its good or bad effect not only upon the hearts but also upon the hands, the feet, the ears, the eyes, etc., of the doer. This book which, hidden from the human eye, is being prepared, recording every action in this life, shall show itself clearly in the next(17:13).

"On that day thou wilt see the faithful men and the faithful women, their light gleaming before them and on their right hands."(This verse refers to the heavenly life, while the verses which follow (102: 1-8) relate to the wicked people.) (57: 12)

"Abundance diverts you, until you come to the graves, Nay, you will soon know, nay, again, you will soon know. Nay, would that you knew with certain knowledge! You will certainly see hell; then you will see it with certainty of sight; then on that day you shall certainly be questioned about the boons."(God has here described three stages of certainty: ‘ilm al-yaqin (certainty by inference), ‘ain al-yaqin (certainty by sight), and haq al-yaqin (certainty by realization). A homely illustration would perhaps make the subject easily comprehensible. If a person sees a column of smoke from a distance, he readily concludes the existence of fire there, as nothing else can give rise to smoke. He thus obtains a certainty by inference with regard to the presence of fire, which is called the “certainty by knowledge” in the verses quoted above. But, if he walks on to the place from which the smoke rises and actually sees the flames, he obtains a knowledge with the eye, which is “certainty by sight”. To realize the truth of certainty, he must thrust his hand into it and the certainty he thus attains to is “certainty by realization”. These are also the states of human knowledge with regard to hell. The knowledge of certainty can be had in this world by those who will, but in the interval between death and resurrection man sees hell with the eye of certainty, while at the day of resurrection he shall realize the truth of the certainty by himself entering into hell.) (102: 1-8)

It may be recalled here that the Holy Qur’-an has described three worlds of three different states of man’s life:

World of earning
The first is the present one, call the “world of earning and of the first creation.” It is here that man earns a reward for the good or bad deeds he does. Although there are stages of advancement of the good after Resurrection, yet that advancement is granted simply by the grace of the Beneficent and does not depend upon human efforts.

Intermediate state
The second is termed ‘barzakh.’ The word originally means any “intermediate state”. It has been thus called because this world falls between the present life and Resurrection. But this word has from time immemorial been applied to an intermediate state and thus the word itself is a standing witness to the intermediate state between death and after-life (“Barzakh” is a word of Arabic origin and is a compound of ‘bar’ and ‘zakh’, and literally means that “the period of earning merit or demerit by deeds is over.” I might add here that I have shown in my book “Minan al-Rahman” that the words of Arabic language are the words of God, and that it is the only language which can claim to be Divine, the fountain from which all sorts of knowledge flow, the mother of all languages and the first as well as the last medium of Divine revelation. It is the first because Arabic was the Word of God, which had at last been revealed to the world, from which men learned to make their own languages, and the last because the last Divine Book (the Qur’-an) is also in Arabic.

The state of “barzakh” is that in which the soul leaves the mortal body, and the perishable remains are decomposed. The body is thrown into a pit and the soul also is, as it were, thrown down into a pit as is indicated by the word, because it loses the power to do good or bad deeds along with its loss of control over the body. It is body. A shock communicated to a particular part of the brain causes a loss of memory, while an injury to another part is certain to injure the reasoning faculty and may even destroy consciousness. Similarly, a convulsion of the brain muscles or a hemorrhage or morbidity of the brain may, by causing obstruction, lead to insensibility, epilepsy or cerebral apoplexy.

Experience, therefore, establishes the fact beyond all reasonable doubt that with all its connections severed from the body, the soul can serve no purpose. It is idle to assert that the human soul can, at any time, enjoy a bliss without having any connection with the body. It may please us as an interesting tale, but reason and experience lend no support to it. We can hardly imagine the soul to be in a perfect condition when all its connections with the body are cut off, in the face of our daily experience that the slightest derangement of the physical system interrupts the functions of the soul as well. Do we not witness that when a person becomes decrepit with old age, the soul also is enfeebled and age often steals away the whole store of its knowledge? With reference to the decrepitude of old age, the Qur’-an says:

“(A man lives to such an old age) that, after knowledge, he knows nothing.”(22: 5)

These observations should be sufficient to demonstrate that the soul is nothing unless it has its connection with a body. Had it any value apart from the body, the action of an All-Wise Being in uniting the soul with a short-lived body would have been quite meaningless. Moreover, man is essentially a progressive animal, and the advancement which he aims at is by no means a limited one. Now, if the soul is unable to make any advancement in the brief life without the assistance of the body, how could it attain to the higher stages of advancement in the next life?

Various arguments, therefore, prove conclusively that, according to the Islamic principles, the perfection of soul depends upon its permanent connection with a body. There is no doubt that, after death, this body of
clay is separated from the soul but, then, in the ‘barzakh’ every soul receives temporarily a new body to be in a position to taste of the reward or punishment of its deeds. This new body is not a body of clay but a bright or a dark body prepared from the actions of this life. It may appear as a mystery to some, but this much at least must be admitted that it is not unreasonable. The perfect being realizes the preparation of such a bright body even in this life. Ordinary human understanding may regard it as a mystery which is beyond human comprehension, but those who have a keen and bright spiritual sight will have no difficulty in realizing the truth of a bright or a dark body after death, prepared from actions in this life. In other words, the new body granted in the ‘barzakh’ becomes the means of the reward of good or evil I may state here that I have personal experience in this matter. Many a time, when full awake, I have had visions in which I saw those who were dead. I have seen many an evil-doer and a wicked person with a body quite dark and smoky. I have personal acquaintance with these matters and I assert it strongly that, as God said, everyone is granted a body either transparent or dark. It is not necessary that unaided reason should be able to look into these mysteries. The eye sees things, but it is in vain to expect it to serve as an organ of taste. Similarly, the muscles of the tongue may be used for tasting things, but as organs of sight, they are useless. In like manner, the deep secrets of the other world, upon which light is thrown only by visions, cannot be discovered by the help of reason. The Almighty has established certain laws in this world and particular means for the knowledge of particular things.

It must also be remembered in connection with this point that the Word of God has described those who walk in error and wickedness as dead and lifeless, while the good it calls living. The secret of it is that the means of life of those who are ignorant of the Lord, being simply eating, drinking or indulging in their bestial passions, are cut off along with their death. Of spiritual food they have no share and, therefore, their resurrection will only be for their punishment. We are told:

"Whoso comes guilty to his Lord, for him is hell. He will neither die therein, nor live." (20:74)

It may be added that the chosen ones of God do not die with their physical death, for they have their means of sustenance with them.

Resurrection

The third is the world of Resurrection. In this world, every soul, good or bad, virtuous or wicked, shall be given a visible body. The Day of Resurrection is the day of the complete manifestation of the Lord’s glory when everyone will become perfectly aware of the existence of God. On that day, every person will have an open and complete reward of his actions. How this can be brought about is not a matter of can be brought about is not a matter to wonder at, for the Creator is All-Powerful and nothing is impossible with Him. Thus He says:

Does not man see that We have created him from the small life-germ? Then lo! he is an open disputant. And he strikes out a likeness for Us and forgets his own creation. Says he: Who will give life to the bones, when they are rotten? Say: He will give life to them, Who brought them into existence at first, and He is Knower of all creation, Who produced fire for you out of the green tree, so that with it you kindle. Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like of them? Yea! and He is the Creator (of all), the Knower. His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it, Be, and it is. So glory be to Him Whose hand is the Kingdom of all things! and to Him you will be returned." (36: 77-83)

It is to be noted that in these verses the Almighty tells us that with Him nothing is impossible, for when He could create man out of an insignificant thing at first, He cannot be regarded as destitute of the power to bring him to life a second time.

Reward and Punishment

Before proceeding further, it seems necessary to deal with an objection here. It might be argued that when a long period of time must elapse before the world of Resurrection is brought into existence, the ‘barzakh’, where the souls of both good and bad men must remain in the meanwhile, is no better than a useless lock-up of souls. The objection is based upon ignorance, for the ‘barzakh’ is as well a place of reward for good and evil as the Resurrection itself. The Qur’an describes it as a place where punishment and reward shall be given though not so openly as after the Resurrection. It abounds with verses stating that a man meets with his due immediately after death. Thus speaking of a certain person, it says:

"It was said (to the man who believed in the Truth): Enter the Garden." (36:26)

With reference to another person, the Holy Book says the following:

"Then he looked down and saw him (his friend) in the midst of hell (37:55) (A good man had an unbelieving friend in this life and when they both died, the good man, anxious to know the state of his friend, was shown that he was in the midst of hell.)

Punishment and reward are thus bestowed immediately after death, and those whose proper place is hell are brought to hell, while those who deserve paradise are brought to paradise. But the Day of Resurrection is the day of the manifestation of the highest glory of God which His transcendent wisdom has ordained should at last be brought about. The Lord created man that He might be accepted as the Creator; He will destroy all that He may be recognized as a Vanquisher of al, and, finally He will give a perfect life to all and assemble them that He may be recognized as the All-Powerful Being.

Value of spiritual facts

The second point of importance, which the Qur’an has described with reference to the life to come, is that the spiritual facts of his life shall be represented in the next as embodiment:

"And whoever is blind in this (world) he will be blind in the Hereafter, and further away from the (right) path." (17:72) (In other words, the spiritual blindness of this world shall become apparent and shall be seen as actual blindness in the next.)
"Seize him, then fetter him, then cast him into the burning Fire, then insert him in a chain the length of which is seventy cubits." (69:30-32) (The thrusting into a chain of the length of seventy cubits reveals the same secret. The limit of age may, as a general rule, be fixed at seventy. The wicked person would sometimes even enjoy seventy years excluding the periods of childhood and decrepitude. These seventy years during which he could work with honesty, wisdom and zeal, he wastes away only in the entanglements of the world and in following his own sensual passions. He does not try to free himself from the chain of desires and, therefore, in the next world, this chain, which he indulged in for seventy years, will be embodied into a chain seventy cubits long, every cubit representing a year, in which he will be fettered.)

In these verses, the spiritual torture of this world has been represented as a physical punishment in the next. The chain to be put round the neck, for instance, represents the desires of this world which keep a man with his head bent upon the earth, and it is these desires that shall assume the shape of a chain. Similarly, the entanglements of this world shall be seen as chains on the feet. The heart-burning of this world shall likewise be clearly seen as flames of burning fire. The wicked one has, in fact, in this very world, within himself, a hell of the passions and inextinguishable desires of this world and feels the burning of that hell in the frustrations he meets with. When, therefore, he will be cast farther off from his temporal desires and will see an everlasting despair before him, his heart burning and bitter sighs for his dear desires will assume the shape of burning fire. The Holy Book says:

"And a barrier is placed between them and that which they desire." (34:54)

It should, therefore, be remembered that the punishment which overtakes a man is one prepared by his own hands, and his own evil deeds become the source of his torture. This law is elsewhere expressed in the following words:

"(O ye wicked ones) walk on to the shadow, having three branches, neither cool, nor availing against the flame." (77:30-31) (The three branches spoken of here represent bestiality, savageness and infatuation which, remaining unmodified, lead to transgressions and evil deeds. These three will appear on the Day of Judgement as three branches without any leaves and, therefore, availing nothing against heat.)

To declare the same law, the Almighty says of those who are in paradise:

"On that day thou wilt see the faithful men and the faithful women, their light gleaming before them and on their right hands." (57:12)

"On the day when (some) faces turn white and (some) faces turn black... (3:105)

"A parable of the Garden which the dutiful(to Allah) are promised: Therein are rivers of water not altering for the worse, and rivers of milk whereof the taste changes not, and rivers of wine delicious to the drinkets, and rivers of honey clarified..." (47:15)

From this verse, it appears clearly that the boundless paradise is only a representation of boundless oceans of all these things. The water of life which the righteous man drinks spiritually in this world shall there appear manifestly as a river; the spiritual milk with which he remains in a blissful state in this world shall assume the shape of a river flowing with wine, and the honey of the sweetness of faith, which he spiritually tastes here, will flow in paradise in palpable rivers. The spiritual state of every person will, on that day, become visible to all in his gardens and rivers, and God also will reveal Himself to the righteous in His full glory on that day. In short, the spiritual states will no more remain hidden but will manifest themselves palpably.

Infinite progress

The third point of importance that the Holy Qur'an has described in connection with the life after death is that the progress that can be made in that life is infinite:

"And those who believe with him(The Prophet), their light will gleam before them and on their right hands-they will say: Our Lord, make perfect for us our light, and grant us protection! Lo! Thou art Able to do all things." (66:8)

This unceasing desire for perfection shows clearly that progress in paradise will be endless. For, then they will have attained one excellence they will not stop there but, seeing a higher stage of excellence, will consider that to which they will have attained as imperfect and will, therefore, desire the attainment of the higher excellence. When they will have attained to this, they will yet see another higher excellence and thus they will continue to pray for the attainment of higher and higher excellences. This ceaseless desire for perfection shows that they will be endlessly attaining to excellences: the righteous will go on making progress and will never recede a step nor shall they ever be deprived of those blessings(The question may arise here as to the seeking of 'maghfirat' after entry into paradise and obtaining God's pardon. Such a question is, however, based upon ignorance of the actual meaning of 'maghfirat' and 'istighfar'. 'Maghfirat' really means "suppression of a defective state." The righteous will be continually praying to the Lord for the attainment of perfection and complete immersion in light. They will be ever-ascending upwards and will regard every state as defective in comparison with a higher one to which they will aspire and will, therefore, pray God to suppress the defective state that they may be able to get to the higher one. Their desire for 'maghfirat' will, therefore, be endless because the progress which they will have to make will also be endless. We can clearly see from this that the true significance of the word 'istighfar' and also that the desire of it is really the pride of man, because it is the only thing which leads him on to the highest excellences which a man can possess.)

In short, heaven and hell, according to the Qur'an, are images and representations of a man's own spiritual life in this world. They are not Continued On Page 26
THE DIVINE LAW OF CREATION
AND THE BIRTH OF JESUS

By Maulana Hafiz Sher Muhammad

ONE LAW OF CREATION by God relates to the beginning when nothing existed. This law, by which God brought things into being originally, is known in the terminology of the Holy Qur'an as the law of Ihdă (or origination). It is a manifestation of His Divine power, and only He knows how the creation was originated in the beginning.

After that, the second means of creation began, by which God created everything from a pair. This second law of creation is termed the law of I'dā (reproduction or repetition) or the law of Zawj (pairing).

These laws have been referred to in the Holy Qur'an:

A. THE LAWS OF ORIGINATION AND REPRODUCTION
   i) "Surely He originates the creation and reproduces it." (The Holy Qur'an, 85:13)
   ii) "God originates the creation, then reproduces it, then to Him you will be returned." (30:11)

B. THE LAW OF ZAWJ OR PAIRS
   i) "Glory be to Him Who created all the pairs, of what the earth grows, and of their own selves, and of that which they do not know." (36:36)
   ii) "He has created for you pairs from amongst yourselves, and pairs from amongst cattle. Thus does He cause you to spread." (42:11)
   iii) "And We have created you as pairs." (78:8)

The male-female pairs in man and animals cause the species to propagate.

C. THE DIVINE LAW OF HUMAN BIRTH
   i) "Then (after the first creation) He made his progeny from an extract of insignificant water." (32:8)
   ii) "Surely We have created man from sperm mixed (with ovum)." (76:2)
   iii) "O people! Surely We have created you from a male and female." (49:13)

   iv) "Let man see what he has been created from. He is created of water pouring forth, coming from between the back and the ribs." (86:5-7)
   v) "Surely He has created the pairs, the male and the female, from the sperm when it is cast." (53:45,46)

This is the law relating to the creation or birth of a human being as set forth by God in the Holy Qur'an. No human child can be born contrary to this law of pairs.

D. NO CHANGE IN DIVINE LAWS:

   "And you will not find any change in the laws of God." (33:62; 35:43)

Neither Jesus nor anyone else is outside this law of God, since the Holy Qur'an considers Jesus to be a mortal messenger. This is the first proof that the birth of Jesus in fact took place under the law of pairs, as is the case with other human beings, and he was not born without a father. Let alone the question of a human being born without a mother or father, if it is supposed for the sake of argument that God could have a son, even that could not happen without the law of pairs, as the Holy Qur'an says:

   "How could God have a son when He has no consort." (6:101)

As God has clearly laid down in the Holy Qur'an His law of creation by pairs, unless He equally clearly states that He created Jesus, or some other individual, in contradiction to this law in a novel manner, one must accept that the means God brought about for his birth were all according to the law of pairs. The issue here is not the unlimited power of God, as to whether He can create a human being without a father, for He has the power to create a human being even without a single parent. The question is only whether it can be proved from the Holy Qur'an and authentic Traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad that God caused Jesus to be born without a father.

When God Himself explains a law of creation through pairs, then unless He also says that He demonstrated His power by going against that law in a specific case, we cannot take any event as infringing that law. Our community does not give any importance to this particular issue (of the birth of Jesus); nonetheless, it is the duty of every Muslim to make known his sincerely and honestly drawn conclusions from the Holy Qur'an. Believing Jesus to have had a father or to have been born of a virgin does not affect our religious beliefs at all, because the issue of Jesus' birth has no place in the fundamentals of Islamic faith.

As with other prophets, the prophethood of Jesus too must be acknowledged by a Muslim. The details of how and where he was born, where he spent his life, and where he died, are not constituents of faith. These are historical questions, knowledge of which can be acquired by research. In fact, modern research about Jesus has progressed so much that matters previously unknown are no longer secrets. Muslims and Christians have written hundreds of books on these topics.

1. BIRTH OF JESUS IN THE HOLY QUR'AN

The first chapter of the Holy Qur'an to deal with the birth of Jesus is "The Family of Amran," Chapter 3 of the Holy Book. At the outset (3:6) this chapter teaches Muslims the principle that some verses of the Holy Qur'an are "decisive" or "basic," and some others are "allegorical," "figurative" or not clear-cut, and that the latter type of verse should be interpreted according to the definite, unambiguous teachings of the former type of verse. Otherwise, the chapter warns the Muslims, you too will stumble in understanding the correct position of
Jesus and Mary, as did the Christians err by not distinguishing between fundamental teachings and allegorical expressions.

At the beginning of the chapter "The Family of Amran" God has mentioned the spiritual blessings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, that only those who follow the Holy Prophet shall be loved by God. In support of this claim, the example of Mary (the mother of Jesus) is cited to show how in former times an Israelite woman attained nearness to God by following a prophet. Then the Holy Qur'an mentions the spiritual favors Mary received due to her following of her prophet.

In the history of Mary given here, the Holy Qur'an has given three main points of guidance to Muslims. Firstly, the Holy Prophet Muhammad is commanded: "Say: If you love God then follow me. God will love you and forgive you your sins."(3:31) It is conveyed in this verse that those who follow the Holy Prophet shall become the lovers and the beloved of God. To prove this assertion, the Qur'an adds that if you study the histories of the great prophets, such as Noah, Abraham, and Moses, you find that amongst their followers there arose many men and women who were loved by God, who were spoken to by Him and guided by Him at every step. The example given is that of Mary. The verses point to her purity of character and devotion to God even during her childhood and youth. Due to her piety and righteousness, angels used to descend upon her and guide her by disclosing news of the future. The Muslims are told that if they too want angels to descend upon them, and God to speak to them and guide them at every step, like Mary, they should become pure and devoted to worship. And if they follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad perfectly, God will give them the spiritual blessings He bestowed upon Mary. This is one reason for the Qur'an to give the history of Mary at this point.

Secondly, when God grants His revelation and Knowledge of the future to His righteous servants, those people who are worldly-minded and have gone astray from Divine guidance, consider these revelations of the holy ones to be based on the recipient's own desires and make many false accusations against the righteous servants of God, as the Jews did against a lady as holy and pure as Mary. When God gave Mary, before her marriage, the news of the birth to her of a great son, this revelation which gave her comfort and increased her faith was used by the Jews to level all sorts of false allegations against her. The Holy Qur'an refuted every one of these charges and not only proved her to be pious, godly and pure, but instituted among the Muslims an honor and title named after her, so that whoever would follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad perfectly and purify his character in God's sight he would be the like of Mary or the like of the son of Mary. Thus did the Holy Qur'an not only clear Mary of the Jews' allegations against her, but bestowed upon her a high regard in the religion of Islam. Many righteous saints have there been amongst the Muslims who received from God the title 'Mary' and styled themselves as 'Mary' or the 'son of Mary.'

Thirdly, the Christians exaggerated the status of Jesus and Mary, raising them to divinity. So God in the Holy Qur'an refutes their divinity with great wisdom by asking how a man could be the son of God who ate, drank, answered the call of nature, developed in his mother's womb for nine months, was born in the ordinary manner, passed through childhood and adulthood, etc., and died. Both mother and son shared these characteristics, so both were human beings, neither being God or an associate with God. The reason the Qur'an describes these events about Mary (i.e., the conception and birth of Jesus) is to refute the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus, not to show that there was any miraculous element in what happened.

As prior to the revelation of the Holy Qur'an the details of Mary being the wife of Joseph, the carpenter, and having other children from him, were already to be found in the Gospels, there being no disagreement amongst the Christians on these, the Qur'an felt no need to repeat these matters. Nor does the Qur'an consider it necessary to mention such points- the details of which are correctly supplied by the Gospels, and regarding which there is no disagreement amongst the followers of the Christian scripture. This is especially so if the matter in question is not even a fundamental of faith. The Qur'an tells Muslims that regarding these points they may obtain further information from the followers of the previous scriptures: "So ask the 'people of the Reminder' if you do not know."(16:43)

As the issue of the birth of Jesus is not related to the fundamentals of faith, but to history, i.e., where was he born, what is his genealogy, where did he spend his life, the details of these events can be obtained from the followers of the Gospels. However, the prophethood of Jesus is related to the basics of faith, and therefore every Muslim must believe in it.

2. JOSEPH AND MARY BEING HUSBAND AND WIFE IN THE GOSPELS

i) "...and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ."(Matthew, 1:16)
ii) "When Joseph...took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son."(ibid, 1:24,25)

This testimony of the Gospels shows clearly that Mary was the wife of Joseph.

a) Jesus' family tree:

"Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son(as was supposed) of Joseph...the son of Adam, the son of God."(Luke, 3:23-38)

This passage plainly shows Jesus to be the son of Joseph. The parenthetical words "as was supposed" have been added to the original, and are not part of the original text, for in that case they would not have been in parenthesis. It also appears from this that in Jesus' time people took him to be the son of Joseph; hence these words.

b) Mother's evidence:

"Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; and when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the company they went a day's journey, and they sought him among their
kinsfolk and acquaintances; and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him: 'Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously.' " (Luke, 2:41-48)

c) Followers' evidence:

"And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there, and coming to his own country he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, 'Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us?' " (Matthew, 13:53-56)

d) Jesus' evidence:

"The Jesus then murmured at him because he said, 'I am the bread which came down from heaven.' They said, 'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know.' " (John 6:41-42)

"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us." (Mark, 6:3)

All the four Gospel writers have described Jesus as the son of Joseph, the carpenter, and according to their accounts the Jews did not level any accusation of immorality against Mary, but were expressing surprise at Jesus' teachings. Had Jesus not been Joseph's son, he could not have had brothers and sisters. According to the Gospel statements, Mary being Joseph's wife, Joseph being Jesus' father, and in addition to this, Jesus having several brothers and sisters from the same parents, all these facts are so clear and explicit that no one can deny them. As these statements correspond to the law of creation through pairs, the Holy Qur'an has not contradicted them. Had Joseph not been Mary's husband and Jesus' father, the Holy Qur'an would have refuted these statements, as it refutes other erroneous statements of the Gospels. The Holy Qur'an's not rejecting these statements is the second proof (the first being the law of procreation of man through a male and a female) that Jesus was not born without a father, and that these Gospel statements are correct.

3. THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S EXPLANATION

After the Holy Qur'an, the next authority is the Holy Prophet Muhammad to whom this Book was revealed, and who had the best understanding of its meanings. The whole world can err in interpreting a particular point of the Holy Qur'an, but the Holy Prophet cannot. He is the premier commentator of the Holy Qur'an, and an explanation given by him has precedence over every other person's explanation. So the verdict that the Holy Prophet gave on the birth of Jesus, during his discussion with the visiting Christian delegation from Najran, must be considered by a Muslim to be the most correct in this manner. This discussion is recorded as follows:

"The commentators of the Holy Qur'an say that the delegation (of Christians) from Najran came to the Holy Prophet. It consisted of sixty mounted men, of whom fourteen were their prominent men. One of them was called al-Aqib, who was their leader and whose real name was Abdul Masih...A third was Abu Haritha ibn Alqamah, who was their religious head. He was in charge of their schools, and was the most respected of them. He had mastered all their literature, thus acquiring a deep knowledge of their faith. The Roman (Byzantine) emperors held him in high honor and had built churches in his name. These people came for an audience with the Holy Prophet...

"After their prayers, their leaders began talks with the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet asked them to adopt Islam. They replied that they were already following Islam. He told them that they were wrong because they believed God to have a son, and that their worship of the cross and eating the flesh of swine was contrary to Islam. The Christian leaders replied that if Jesus was not the son of God, then who was his father? Thus they continued to debate with the Holy Prophet about Jesus. Eventually, the Holy Prophet asked them: "Do you not know that there is no son but he bears resemblance to his father?" They replied, 'yes.' He said: 'do you not know our Lord lives forever, will not die, but Jesus came to an end?' They replied, 'yes.' He said: 'Do you not know that our Lord maintains everything, guards and sustains it?' They replied, 'yes.' He said: 'Do you not know that Jesus was conceived by a woman as women conceive, and she gave birth to him as women give birth and fed him as children are fed? And he used to eat food, drink water, and answer the call of nature?' They replied, 'yes.' He said: 'Then how can your claim be true? They could not answer and became silent." (Asbab Nuzul al-Qur'an by Allama Abul Hasan Ali Neshapuri, 2nd edition, p. 53)

Therefore, in reply to the Christians' question as to who was Jesus' father, the Holy Prophet Muhammad silenced them and rendered them speechless by expressing the view that Jesus had a father. Had the Holy Prophet believed that Jesus was born of a virgin, he could not have given this reply. This is the third proof that Jesus was not born without a father. This discussion between the Holy Prophet Muhammad and the Christian delegation from Najran is recorded in almost all standard classical commentaries of the Holy Qur'an such as Tafsir Ibn Jarir, Tafsir Kabir, etc.

4. PROPHETS' ANCESTORS IN THE HOLY QUR'AN

The Holy Qur'an has not just left the matter of explaining the law of procreation through a pair of parents, but where it mentions the prophets collectively it states that they all had ancestors (on the father's side). We give below a translation of the Urdu rendering of verses 6:83-87 of the Holy Qur'an by Maulana Abu Kalam Azad, the famous Indian Muslim scholar of this century:

"And (look), this was Our argument which We gave to Abraham against his people...And We gave to Abraham, Isaac and (Isaac's son) Jacob. We guided them all to the right way...
had guided Noah before Abraham. And from the descendants of Abraham, We guided David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses and Aaron. Thus do We reward the doers of good (for their good). And to Zacharias, John the Baptist, Jesus and Ilyas—all of these were of the righteous. And also to Ishmael, Elisha, Jonah and Lot—We graced them over the people of the world. And of their fathers and descendants and brothers, many did We guide aright. We elevated them and guided them to the right path." (Tarjuman al-Qur'an, Vol. 1, 1st ed., pp. 433,434)

5. MARY’S MARRIAGE IN THE HOLY QUR’AN

After all this proof, there was no need to mention specifically events such as Mary’s marriage, but to provide a conclusive argument to the people of the world, the Holy Qur’an has also mentioned this. It tells us that before Mary’s birth her mother had dedicated the child in the womb to Divine service in the Temple. When Mary was born, her mother prayed to God:

"I have named her Mary, and I seek protection in Thee for her and her offspring from the Devil." (The Qur’an, 3:36)

From this prayer it appears that, despite the fact that she devoted Mary to the Temple, it was not her intention that her daughter should remain a spinster for life. Rather, she knew that on growing up Mary would marry and have children. So she prayed not only for Mary but also for her offspring. When Mary reached the age of training, her mother gave her in the charge of Zacharias at the Temple. Under him she received the best spiritual upbringing, and upon reaching youth prayers were enjoined upon her. As the Qur’an records:

"O Mary! obey thy Lord, and prostrate and bow down with those who bow down." (3:43)

After this, the Holy Qur’an mentions that guardianship about which there arose a dispute. The Qur’an is a very orderly Book, and here all the events are narrated in the chronological sequence. First Mary’s birth is mentioned, then her being entrusted to the charge of Zacharias, then her righteousness, purity and saintliness, and then the command to her to obey God and keep up prayer. These events lead up to her reaching adulthood. Then, that guardianship is mentioned to deal with the question of marriage when a girl reached adulthood, but as she had been devoted to the Temple, neither they, nor her parents could propose a match. As was customary, it was decided by casting lots as to who should take charge of her as his wife. Such a decision was believed to be the Divine verdict. And as Mary was well-known for her piety and noble character, it was natural that many that should contend to have her as wife.

While all these matters were being discussed, it was natural that, hearing about them, all sorts of worries should arise in Mary’s mind. So God set her mind at rest through His angels and gave her the happy news of a great son. She expressed astonishment at this prophecy in the words:

"How can I have a son when no man has touched me, nor have I been unchaste." (19:20)

As she was not married at the time, or because there were hindrances in her way as one dedicated to the Temple, or because the sudden news of a son before marriage would be astonishing for a virgin, Mary expresses surprise as to how this would happen. The angel replied: "God says, It shall be so;" i.e., it would be according to the natural law of mating that is being referred to. In other words, all the obstacles will be removed and she would be married, and the child would be born in the chaste manner. This same point has been mentioned twice elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an:

i) "And Mary, daughter of Amran, who guarded her chastity by marriage(absanat)." (66:12)

ii) "And she who guarded her chastity by marriage(absanat)." (21:91)

In these verses, Mary’s marriage is mentioned, for the Arabic word absanat is used to mean marry. In the Holy Qur’an the words muhsanat, muhinnin, and tahassun-yan-all from the root H-S-N-mean, respectively, married women, men who enter into marriage with women, and to marry. In the light of this, the words absanat farah-ha occurring in the above two verses mean that Mary guarded her chastity by marriage.

It is wrong to assert that these words mean that Mary guarded her chastity by remaining a virgin. Muhammad Asad, a renowned present-day Muslim scholar, in his recently published Message of the Qur’an, comments on these words as follows:

"...it is to be borne in mind that the term ihsan...has the tropical meaning of 'abstinence from what is unlawful or reprehensible,' and especially from illicit sexual intercourse...thus, for instance, the terms muhsan and muhsanah are used elsewhere in the Qur’an to describe, respectively, a man or a woman who is 'fortified (by marriage) against unchastity.' Hence the expression allati ihsanat farah-ha occurring in the above verse as well as in 66:12 with reference to Mary, is but meant to stress her outstanding chastity and complete abstinence, in thought as well as in deed, from anything unlawful or morally reprehensible." (Note 87 on verse 21:91, p. 500)

Hence this expression is applicable to remaining chaste by marriage, as Asad says.

In short, the Holy Qur’an has discussed all aspects of the issue of the birth of Jesus, without leaving anything out, and said that he was not born without a father, but had a father, as did all prophets, and as do all human beings. This is the fifth proof that Jesus had a father.

'These are a few points of principle about Jesus’ birth which we have concluded from the Holy Qur’an. If you disagree with our conclusions, please ponder upon the Holy Qur’an because it invites everyone to think and reflect upon it. However, as the Holy Qur’an is a clear and decisive Book, please do not let alien beliefs influence you, for the Holy Qur’an is far and above these.

6. JESUS’ CONTEMPORARY JEWS

After the Holy Qur’an, we give a few passages from the Gospels which prove that Jesus was Mary’s son by her husband. Had that not been so (God forbid), the Jews would not have
allowed him to undergo rituals and ceremonies in the holy Temple. However, the Gospels record that Mary and Jesus always performed their religious obligations in the Temple:

i) "And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb." (Luke, 2:21)

ii) "And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, as it is written in the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, as it is written in the law of the Lord they every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord." (Luke, 2:22,23)

iii) "And when the parents brought in the child Jesus (i.e., to the Temple), to do for him according to the custom of the law." (Luke, 2:27)

iv) "And his father and his mother marvelled at what was said about him." (Luke, 2:33)

So these verses of the Gospels make it plain that Jesus was born in the same manner as other children, and they clearly mention his parents. This is the sixth proof that Jesus was not born without a father.

v) "And when they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth." (Luke, 2:39)

It appears from these extracts from the Gospels that, in accordance with the law of Moses, Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day after birth, as had been the case with John the Baptist. And for forty days Mary was in the state of pollution due to which she could not go to the Temple. After that period, she bathed herself, and went to the Temple, taking along a pair of doves for sacrifice, to fulfill the religious obligations.

7. MUSLIM VIEWS

There have been Muslim scholars from time to time who did not accept that Jesus was born without a father:

i) The sect known as Batiniyya deny the virgin birth: "And they deny that Jesus was born without a father." (Tahzib al-Ikhlaq, vol. i, p. 382)

ii) Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, famous Muslim thinker and educationist of nineteenth century India, and Ibadulla Akhtar, B.A., also denied that Jesus was born of a virgin.

iii) From the Ahl-Hadith sect, Maulvi Hafiz Inayat Ullah of Wazirabad writes:

"Mary left her husband's house, which was on the western side, in displeasure and went and stayed at her parents' house on the eastern side. She was not inclined to return. Meanwhile, the truth came out and Zacharias was also grieved. Recourse was had to both prayer and medicine, which God blessed, and addressing him revealed that He would grant her a son. At this, Zacharias let this revelation be known to her husband, and told him to go and tell Mary about it and bring her home. But when he got there, she made the same complaint which prevented her return, and asked for a divorce. 'I seek refuge (divorce) from you, that we cannot have relations.' She also mentioned her state of health. After some discussion, he told her that the revelation had said clearly that this union would be blessed and God would grant a pure boy. She wondered that since he, her husband, had not touched her, how she could have a son? He explained things to her and told her that her guardian (Zacharias) had sent him to inform her of the revelation and bring her home. At last, she returned with him, and at the appropriate time became pregnant. Then she had to accompany her husband on a long journey for some worldly purpose. It so happened that her pains started when they were near a palm tree in Bethlehem. She lamented the fact that it had not happened in a better place, so that she would have been relieved of it less painfully. The owner of the tree, who happened to be sitting under it selling his dates, out of sympathy let her pick any dates that she wanted, whenever she felt the need, and let her drink from a stream flowing under the tree as much as she wanted. He told her to rest, and if anyone spoke to her, to just say that she had undertaken a fast of silence. She then returned back to her people, and seeing the baby in her arms, they objected that this type of domestic life, in breach of her parent's vow, was against the religious law. They added that her father did not break his word, nor did her mother like such things. Mary pointed to her guardian, Zacharias, that they should talk to him, as he had been responsible for it. They said that her marriage had set a bad example for others, and that other children dedicated to the Temple would also marry after growing up, disrupting the whole organization." (Oyon Zamzam fi milad Isa ibn Maryam, pp. 172-176)

iv) Ghulam Ahmad Pervaiz writes:

"If you bear in mind this point about the creation of a human being, the significance of the verse in question ('Surely the likeness of Jesus with God is as the likeness of Adam') becomes clear. In other words, whatever belief the Christians may hold about Jesus' birth, they are told that in God's eyes his birth was like the birth of any human child, which from its inception reaches its completion through a number of stages. Thus did it happen with Jesus. 'O Prophet! What is revealed to thee about Jesus being a human being, and about his birth, is the truth from thy Lord; so there is no room for thee to argue or debate.' (3:59)

"The Holy Qur'an has called Jesus the like of Adam also because, according to the Gospels, he used to call himself the son of man. For instance, 'Then he came to the disciples and said to them, sleep and take rest, the time has come and the son of man is handed over to the sinners.' (Matthew, Ch. 26) Hence, he who calls himself 'the son of man,' his birth is like the birth of Adam (or man). He is the son of man, and born like a human." (Shulah Masura, pp. 132-133)

v) The famous Indian Muslim scholar of earlier this century, Sayyid Sulaiman Nadawi, wrote:

"Jesus had a mother and, according to the Gospel account, brothers and sisters as well, and even a human father." (Khitbat Madaras, p. 51)

vi) In his journal Sidq, Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi of India received the following inquiry:

"I have seen two letters of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, dated August 7, 1870 and April 8, 1882, addressed to Maulvi Mumtaz Husain. In both these letters Sir Sayyid has emphasized that (God forbid) Jesus being born without a
father is not proved from the Holy Qur'an. His birth, says Sir Sayyid, was a natural human birth. However, in verse 20 of the chapter 'Mary' of the Holy Qur'an, Mary says to the angel Gabriel, 'How can I have a son when no man has touched me, nor have I been unchaste?' (Yours faithfull, Abul Wafa Sadiqui, Delhi-6)

"Sidq: Yes, the majority of religious scholars have taken this verse, and other verses, in the meanings which are well-known. But Sir Sayyid and his co-thinkers have interpreted these verses to mean, for instance, that the obstacles in the way of Mary becoming pregnant were removed—whether this conclusion is correct or not, this interpretation does not make one subject to a verdict of heresy." (Sidq) addid, Lucknow, April 7, 1972

vii) Allama Al-Sayyid Abdul Qayyum Qayoomi writes:

"It is a matter of great astonishment that despite the facts that Mary was married and went to live with her husband, that they lived together, and that everything took place, yet the son to whom Mary gave birth had no father! God forbid, God forgive us! Thank God that, in this book, by proving the marriage of Mary, her living with her husband, and Jesus having a father, from the Holy Qur'an, the Gospels, books of Tradition, and statements of Sunni Muslim scholars, in a most detailed and factual manner, we have refuted the false belief that Jesus had no father and established the reality which daylight clarity." (Haqiqat Al-Masih, p. 237)

viii) In this recently-published Message of the Qur'an, Muhammad Asad, the internationally-known Muslim scholar, writes:

"In connection with the announcement of a son to Mary, the Qur'an states in 3:47 that 'when He wills a thing to be, He but says unto it, Be, and it is': but since neither the Qur'an nor any authentic Tradition tells us anything about the chain of causes and effects (asbab) which God's decree 'Be' was to bring into being, all speculation as to the 'how' of this even must remain beyond the scope of a Qur'an-commentary." (Note 15 on verse 19:11, p. 459)

Hence, according to Asad, "neither the Qur'an nor any authentic Tradition" tells us that Jesus was actually born of a virgin. Consequently, not the slightest blame can attach to any Muslim who believes that Jesus had a father.

8. HAZRAT MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD'S VIEWS ON THE MARRIAGE OF MARY AND THE DIVINE LAW OF PRO-CREATION

i) "Man originally was not created from sperm, but one being was created from another. After that, the second law took effect, by which human beings are created from sperm." (Chashma Marifat, p. 215)

ii) "Every sensible person must admit that the first era was a period of pure Divine creation, when the general law prevailing was that everything was accomplished without means. It is not correct to apply that to the present ages; for instance, no child is now born without a mother or a father. If, however, man's creation in the beginning had depended upon the pre-existence of parents, how would the world have come into being?" (Barahin Ahmadiyya, p. 335)

iii) "Every human being is born of a male and a female. If you follow this chain to its origin, then mankind will prove to have descended from Adam and his wife." (June 10, 1903)

iv) "This is an error of history amongst the Muslims. Authentic history shows that Mary married Joseph, and had children from him." (Al-Hakam, October 30, 1902)

v) "It is a great mistake to consider Mary as being a spinster throughout her life and never marrying. We cannot deny historical facts." (Ibid)

vi) "Jesus worked with his father Joseph as a carpenter till the age of 22 years." (Izaloh Aham, footnote, p. 37)

vii) "One should not be at all surprised that Jesus, paternal ancestor Solomon, may have shown this miracle of wisdom to the opponents of the time." (Ibid, p. 304)

viii) When 'Master' Imam-ud-Din of Gujrat was about to write his book Al-Tanzih fi wilaatul Masih, in which he proved Jesus to have a father, he wrote letters to various Muslim scholars including Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, asking for their opinion on this issue. By order of Hazrat Mirza, the following reply was sent:

"In reply to your postcard of September 19, 1894, it is stated that at the present time the Promised Messiah is engaged on such important religious matters that he cannot devote his attention elsewhere. He says that if the Almighty God were to reveal something to him about this, you would certainly be informed. One's concentration does not work under one's own direction. When God wishes to reveal something in the interest of mankind, He directs His servant's attention towards that point. Yours humbly, Abdul Karim, Qadian, September 23, 1894."

Regarding Jesus' death too, until God informed and corrected him by revelation, he continued to believe that Jesus was alive in heaven, as did other Muslims. This is why he says that until he receives some disclosure from God about the birth of Jesus, he cannot say anything. He acted on this principle all his life, that unless God informed him on an issue by revelation, he held the same view on that point as the Sunni Muslims.

ix) "The person who accuses me of not honoring Jesus- I respect and honor not only Jesus but even his four brothers for all the five had the same mother."

As a footnote to the above, he wrote: 'Jesus had four brothers and two sisters, i.e., all were the children of Joseph and Mary.' (Kishti Nuh)

x) During Hazrat Mirza's life, some of his followers expressed the view that Jesus had a father. Hazrat Mirza, while differing with them, was always tolerant and broad-minded. "Once Hazrat Mirza asked Shaikh Qamar-ud-Din of Helum to show him the verses of the Qur'an from which the Shaikh believed that Jesus had a father. At first, the Shaikh sahib, out of respect for Hazrat Mirza, remained silent. But upon Hazrat Mirza repeating the question, he mentioned the arguments..."
from the Qur'-an that he knew. Hearing the arguments, hazzrat Mirza said: "Your arguments are certainly strong but until God gives me to understand this point I will follow the views of the majority of Muslims...Hazzrat Mirza said to Hakim Fazal din (who had complained about Shaikh Sahib’s belief): 'How can you declare as heretic someone who bases his arguments on the Qur'-an?" (Muqaddid Azam, Life of Hazzrat Mirza, vol. ii, p. 1342)

xi) "The Christians cannot stand their ground against Islam because they have taken as god a man who had a father, four brothers and two sisters, and was constantly persecuted by the Jews." (Ruhani Khaza’in, No. 2, vol. x, p. 53)

xii) Hazzrat Mirza believed, like Shah Wali-Ullah of Delhi (d. 1763), that Mary did not conceive from the Holy Spirit, and Jesus' birth without a father was just a wonder of the creative power of God. He wrote:

"One of the beliefs we hold is that Jesus Christ and John the Baptist were both born miraculously...And the secret in creating Jesus and John miraculously in this manner was the manifestation of a great sign...And the first thing God did to bring this about was the creation of Jesus without a father through the manifestation of Divine power only." (Mawahib al-Rahman, pp. 70-72)

9. VIEWS OF HAZRAT MAULANA NUR-UD-DIN

i) 1) "The Islam taught to us by that Divine Scripture, the Holy Qur'-an, does not say anywhere that to become a Muslim you need to believe that Jesus had no father.

2) The Holy Prophet has not told us that a part of Islam is to believe that Jesus had no father.

3) Our beloved holy Companions, our four leaders of jurisprudence, and other great Imams, have nowhere instructed us that it is necessary to believe that Jesus was born without a father.

4) Our respected Sufi saints have not exhorted us anywhere in their teachings that to attain the ranks of Divine nearness, to accomplish self-reform, and to acquire noble morals, it is necessary to believe that Jesus had no father.

5) Besides Jesus, how many prophets, messengers and appointed ones of God, have there been? Is the genealogy of any one of them recorded in the Holy Qur'-an? In fact, God says, 'None knows the host of thy Lord, save He.' So it is not necessary to know of the existence of everyone, let alone how they were born." (Book Nur-ud-Din, pp. 181, 132)

ii) When 'Master' Muhammad Saeed sent his book Sa-adar Maryamiyya, about the birth of Jesus by a father, to Maulana Nur-ud-Din he gave the following reply:

"God does not waste anyone's effort. He says, 'Whoever desires the Hereafter and makes an effort for it, and he is a believer, these it is whose effort is rewarded.' When it is accompanied by your sincerity and the backing of the Qur'-an, you become servant of Divine gratitude...I myself have held these beliefs since childhood, but you have not given the arguments which I had in my mind. However, Hazzrat Mirza had said that we have not been told by revelation to devote energy on this point. Otherwise, this is no great issue, and if there is Divine support we can write about it. Therefore, I am silent, and will remain silent till a Divine command comes. This is a particular matter. But your labor cannot be worthless." (Published in Periodical Paigham Sulh, March 22, 1929)

iii) Shaikh Muhammad Jan, secretary of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman of Wazirabad, made a written inquiry from Maulana Nur-ud-Din in 1911 which ran: "Sir! If a person amongst your disciples does not believe that Jesus was born without a father, is this to the detriment of his faith?" The answer was given as follows: "As far as my understanding goes, this issue is not a part of faith. There is no explicit direction in the Holy Qur'-an or Hadith to the effect that one must hold this belief. If someone's research forces this conclusion that Jesus had a father upon him, he cannot help it. This is my view, Nur-ud-Din." (Al-Mahdi, January 1915)

10. THE QADIANIS

i) In a booklet called Izhari Haqiqat published just before the death of Maulana Nur-ud-Din by the Ansarullah group of Qadianis, containing signatures of forty prominent men of the Ansarullah, they answered an objection raised by someone against Maulana Nur-ud-Din to the effect that he was associated with those who believed Jesus to have a father. It is written in this reply: "You should first answer whether he (the Maulana) was associated with the Promised Messiah, or not. Prove from Islamic law that those who believe Jesus to have a father should be excluded from Islam, or should be declared to be transgressors and disbelievers like those who deny the caliphs." (Izhari Haqiqat, p. 23)

ii) Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, the Khalifa of the Qadianis, replied to a Christian preacher in 1913 as follows:

"The reverend says that all Muslims are agreed upon this issue, except Sir Sayyid who has rejected it on rational grounds, but that no one has rejected it on the basis of the Holy Qur'-an. However, I will go on to show that he is wrong in saying that no one has rejected it from the Holy Qur'-an. I will prove that people have shed light on this from the Qur'-an itself and have proved that Jesus was not born without a father, but was born like the rest of the world. What I mean to say is that there have been differences on this issue, and that some people have believed Jesus to have had a father." (Tashiz al-Azhan, April 1913, pp. 165-170)

iii) In 1917, the following reply was given on behalf of Mirza Mahmud Ahmad to a question about the birth of Jesus:

"the Khalifat-ul-Masih II (Mirza Mahmud Ahmad) says that it is not on the basis of a clear verdict that he believes Jesus to have been born without a father, but it is a mere deduction, against which other people deduce the opposite view. However, historically the Ahmadiyya Community has held the belief that Jesus had no father."
VIEW OF HAZRAT MAULANA MUHAMMAD ALI

In his Urdu commentary of the Qur'ân, Hazrat Maulana writes:

"Christians believe in the virgin birth of Jesus, and so do Muslims generally. But there are Christians who do not believe this, and also Muslims who do not. There is, however, one difference. If, in fact, Jesus was not born without a father, it does not have any effect on any religious belief of the Muslims because it is not part of their faith to believe in the virgin birth. But the very foundations of the structure of Christianity are uprooted if it cannot be proved that Jesus was born without a father. For if he had a father, then Mary did not conceive of the Holy Spirit, nor was Jesus divine, nor is the doctrine of atonement correct.

"So, Jesus not being born of a virgin uproots Christianity altogether, but does no harm to Islam. A Muslim equally believes in the prophethood of Jesus whether he had a father or not. He only wants to consider what the Holy Qur'ân says, or what can be established from the Holy Prophet's Sayings. If these record birth without a father, he will accept that, otherwise not. Nor would being born without a father show him to be superior to the prophets who had fathers because, for that matter, Adam and Eve had no father, and the Bible mentions someone else who had neither father nor mother (see Hebrews, 7:3). In this case, these three would be considered superior to Jesus. But, in fact, the very argument is wrong that one born without a father is superior.

"Besides this, a Muslim does not hold that Mary conceived from the Holy Spirit. If he was born without a father, this would merely be one of the wonders of creation, that Mary possessed both types of faculties. In fact, it is not even a miracle because it is necessary for a miracle that someone should be a witness or observer. But none except Mary could be a witness to her conceiving without a husband. What sort of a miracle would this be? So all we have to determine is what the Holy Qur'ân and the Hadith disclose about this.

"God Himself says that He has put into effect the law for mankind that after the beginning this race propagates by the sperm, and He says that He makes man from the sperm of the male mixed with the female. So unless God explicitly says that He created Jesus against this law of mating, and in a different manner, we would have to accept that the means which God brought about correspond to this law. There is no question here of whether God has the power to do such a thing or not. He can create someone without a father or a mother. The question is only whether it can be shown from the Holy Qur'ân or authentic Hadith that God made Jesus without a father. When He Himself explains a law, then unless He Himself says that in a certain case He displayed His power as against that law, we cannot take something to have happened to break off His law. So if some person concludes from the words of the Holy Quran that Jesus was born without a father, let him believe it. I do not draw this conclusion from the Qur'-anic words. Though I do not consider this issue to be of any great importance, I think that it is a Muslim's duty to make known his honestly and sincerely drawn conclusions from the Qur'-an. Believing Jesus to have had a father, or believing him not to have had a father, does not affect our religious beliefs or practical actions in any way."

(Beyan al-Qur'ân, note, p. 427)

Islam My Choice
From Page 8

31, 1976, I stated my Shadah; I bear witness that there is no God but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) is his Messenger. I am not sure as to whether I stated Shadah on that day at San Quentin State prison because I believed in Allah or because I wanted to change my life or, simply because I liked those people and their moral manners and discipline. I think probably because of the later, as I continued to gamble and to use and, even to sell, drugs for about twelve months even after declaring my Shadah.

When did I become a true Muslim in my heart? When did the change take place? When did and how did I put aside the ignorant deeds and start to develop a sense and spirit of Taqwâ? When did my spirit grow from a "spirit prone to evil" to the stage of "a self-accusing spirit"? These questions are hard to answer. All I can say is that it was a gradual transition that continues even now. I have discovered that spiritual journey is an endless journey, which continues even after death and I feel extremely fortunate that I have at least started on this path. I am not yet the type of Muslim I would like to be and hope to be. I pray to Allah to grant me wisdom and strength to fortify my moral spiritual self in such a way as is pleasing to His sight and to grant me the strength to overcome the weaknesses of which I suffer. Amen.

What change my accepting Islam has worked in my lifestyle and in my outlook towards life can easily be discovered and detected by those who know me since my pre-Muslim days. A former rapist, burglar, forger, robber, drug dealer and murderer is now a crusader against all these evils rampant in our American society and a soldier in the path of Allah who now cares not only about myself, his family, and his community but also about the sufferings of all mankind. From a debased criminal, Islam has turned me into a self-respecting human being who is aware that his creation and his life has a purpose which can be put in two simple statements: "Submission to Allah and Service to Mankind."
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"If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad? . . . Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask: Is there any man greater than he?"

—Alphonse de Lamartine in Histoire de la Turquie

QUR'AN, THE GREATEST SPIRITUAL FORCE

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

—Bosworth Smith

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

—New Researches by H. Hirschfeld

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

—Dr. Steingass, Hughes’ Dictionary of Islam

THE BEAUTIFUL CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAM

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

—George Bernard Shaw