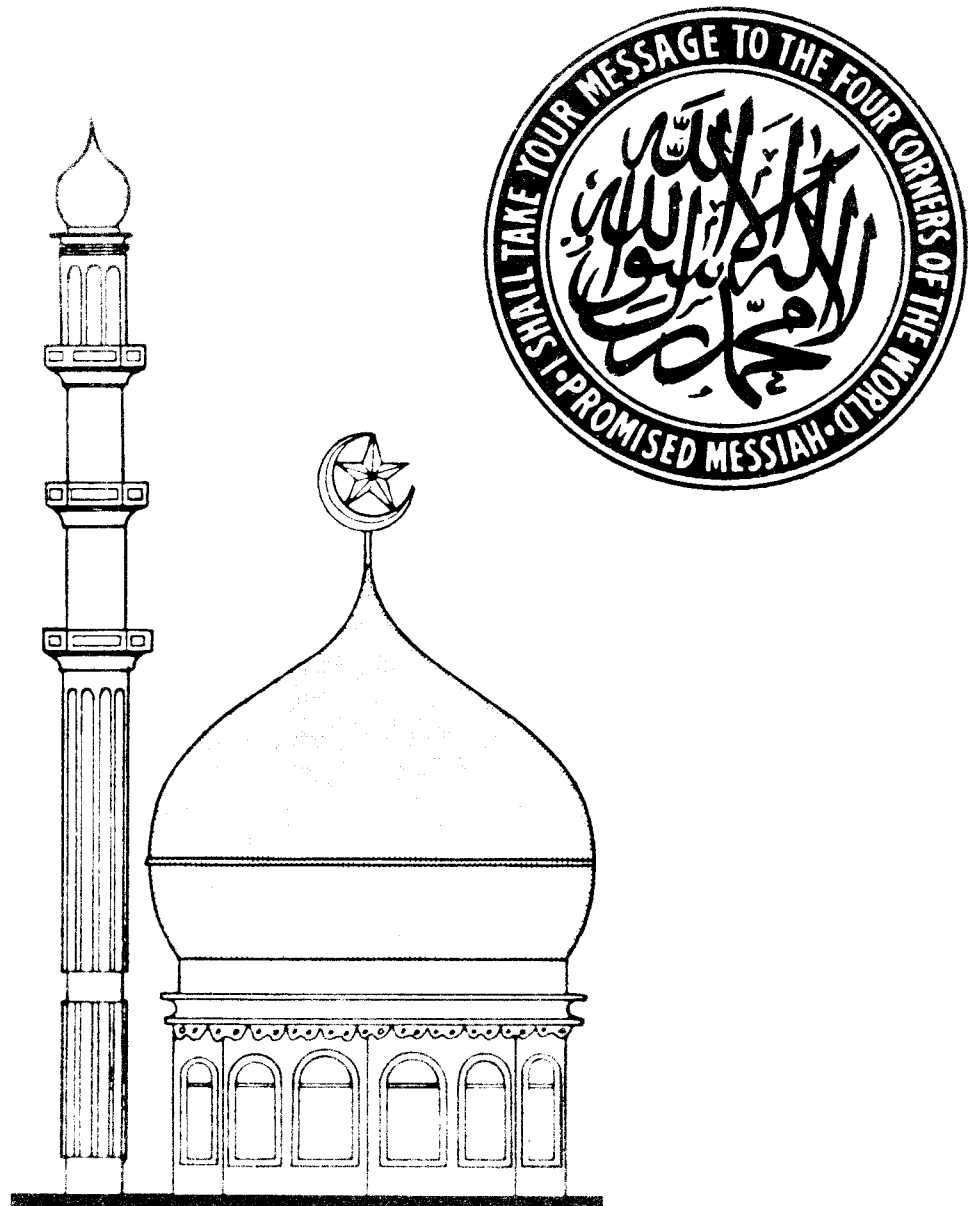


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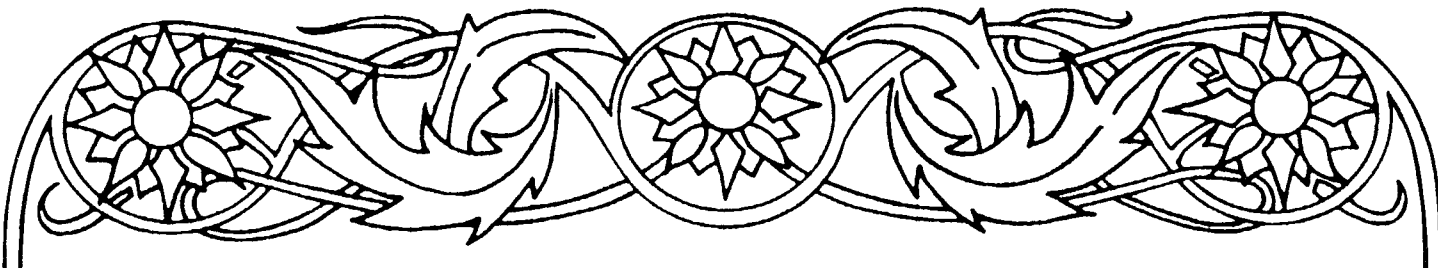
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# The ISLAMIC REVIEW



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## THE PROMISED MESSIAH SPEAKS

by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

### HE WHO DEVOTES HIS LIFE TO THE CAUSE OF GOD

#### IS A MARTYR



here are many verses of the Holy Quran and many ahadeeth, which show that the souls of people who are pure enter paradise as soon as they die. There are several ahadeeth that mention that the martyrs will eat of the fruits of paradise. The Holy Quran also says:

Do not account those who are slain in the cause of Allah as dead. Indeed, they are living in the presence of their Lord and are provided for (3:170). Previous Books also support this. This proves that the souls of the pure will enter paradise. Now paradise will contain physical bounties of diverse type and fruits of many kinds and entry into paradise means that those bounties should be availed of. In such case the entry of the soul alone into paradise is meaningless and useless. Will the soul enter paradise and yet not be able to avail itself of its bounties? The verse: enter into My Garden (89:31), clearly shows that a believer is invested with a body after death. All great Muslim thinkers are agreed that pure believers are invested with a holy and bright body as soon as they die, through which they enjoy the bounties of paradise. To confine paradise at that stage to martyrs alone would amount to disbelief. Can a true believer commit such impertinence as to affirm that the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, under whose grave paradise lies, is outside paradise, but those who acquired faith and righteousness through him and became martyrs are dwelling in paradise and are eating of its fruits? The truth is that he who devotes his life to the cause of God is martyr and the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, is the first of martyrs (Zameema Braheen Ahmadiyyah, Part V, P. 214).

An objection is raised that if every pure believer who is not burdened with sin enters paradise immediately on death, this would mean a rejection of resurrection and all its accompanying conditions, inasmuch as, according to the verse: They will not depart therefrom (15:49), their departing from paradise is not permissible; and, secondly, the whole system of resurrection and the events attendant thereupon would be falsified. The answer is that the Holy Quran teaches that pure believers enter paradise immediately on death and also teaches that there will be resurrection of the body and the dead will be revived and we believe in both. The only difference is that the entry into paradise on death is a general condition and the bodies that are bestowed on the believers immediately on death are imperfect. The day of the resurrection of the bodies is the day of the grand manifestation. On that day perfect bodies will be bestowed, but the connection of the dwellers of paradise with paradise will not be interrupted. From one aspect they will be in paradise, and from another aspect they will face God almighty (Zameema Braheen Ahmadiyyah, Part V, p. 213, footnote).

#### THREE GRADES OF HEAVEN AND HELL

Heaven and hell have three grades. The first grade, which is imperfect, begins when a person departing from this world enters his grave. This grade has been metaphorically described in the ahadeeth in several ways. One way is that for a righteous person a window is opened in the grave towards heaven through which he observes the splendour of heaven and enjoys its breezes. The size of this window corresponds to the grade of the faith or actions of the dead person.

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## OUR BELIEFS AND AIMS

The *Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore* is an international Muslim association (founded 1914) dedicated to the presentation of Islam by literary and missionary means. It believes that the world today, both non-Muslim and Muslim, badly needs to receive the true, original message of Islam. This is the message contained in the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad - a message which is today hidden under misconceptions and wrong popular notions.

We strongly believe that the mission of Islam is to *attract the hearts and minds* of mankind towards the truth, through rational arguments and the natural appeal of Islamic teachings. Islam does not seek political control over countries, nor does it use force to compel people to become Muslim or obey its teachings.

In this age, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908), uncovered and stressed certain vital aspects of Islamic teachings which had been forgotten over the centuries. He reminded the world that Islam is:

**International** - God raised prophets in every nation, and Muslims believe in them all. Good people and truth may be found in any nation. No people are God's favourite, not even Muslims, except those who do the most good.

**Tolerant** - Gives full freedom to everyone to hold and practise any belief or religion. Preaching to be by argument and example, not force. Muslims must also respect internal differences of opinion.

**Rational** - Religion to be studied in the light of reason and the ever-growing knowledge of mankind. Blind following disallowed and independence of thought granted.

**Non-sectarian** - Every person professing the words 'There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah' must be regarded as a Muslim. No religious board empowered to hold inquisitions into a Muslim's beliefs, or to expel self-professing Muslims from Islam.

**Peaceful** - Condemns all use of force except in unavoidable self-defense. Teaches Muslims to live peacefully under any rule which accords them freedom of religion.

**Living** - Worship is not a ritual, but provides living contact with a living God. God listens to man, answers his prayers, and speaks to His righteous servants even today as in the past.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a servant of Islam, with a mission to bring about the spiritual and intellectual triumph of the teachings of Islam over all forms of belief. He never claimed to be a prophet, but a God-sent *mujaddid* (renovator) within the long line of saints that arose in the history of Islam. He believed, and we believe, that after the Holy Prophet Muhammad - may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him - no prophet can arise, whether a new one or one from the past.

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## Significance of MARRIAGE

**I**mportance of the marriage institution. Marriage in Islam is a sacred contract which every Muslim must enter into, unless there are special reasons why he should not. Thus in the Holy Qur'an, it is said: "And marry those among you who are single and those who are fit among your male slaves and your female slaves; if they are needy, Allah will make them free from want out of His grace."; and Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing. And let those who do not find a match keep chaste until Allah makes them free from want out of His grace." (24:32,33) In another verse, Marriage-relationship is given the same importance as blood relationship: "And He it is Who has created man from water, then He had made for him blood-relationship and marriage-relationship." (25:54). Hadith also lays stress upon living in a married state. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said to certain people who talked of fasting in the day-time and keeping awake during the night, praying to God and keeping away from marriage: "I keep a fast and I break it, and I pray and I sleep, and I am married, so whoever inclines to any other way than my sunnah, he is not of me." Another saying of the Holy prophet laying stress upon marriage is worded thus: "O assembly of young people! Whoever of you has the means to support a wife (al-ba'ah), he should get married, for this (i.e., marriage) is the best means of keeping the looks cast down and guarding the chastity; and he who has not the means, let him keep fast, for this will act as castration." Celibacy (tabattu) is expressly forbidden. According to

one hadith, "the man who marries perfects half his religion." Another says: "Matrimonial alliances increase friendship more than anything else."

Marriage as the union of two natures which are one in their essence. The Holy Qur'an repeatedly speaks of the two mates, man and woman, as being created from each other: "O people, keep your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same (kind) and spread from them many men and women." (4:1); He it is Who created you from a single being, and of the same did He make his mate that he might incline to her." (7:189). Both these verses are generally understood as referring to the creation of the first man and the first woman, but that they signify the relation of man to woman in general is obvious from other verses: "And Allah has made wives for you from yourselves and has given you sons and daughters from your wives." (16:72); "And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find quiet of mind in them." (30:21). And thus, in a Makkan revelation of the middle period: "The Originator of the heavens and the earth; He made mates for you from yourselves.... multiplying you thereby." (42:11). Thus marriage is, according to the Holy Qur'an, the union of two equals which are one in their essence.

Multiplication of the human race through marriage. It will be noted that in the above verses, the multiplication of the human race is mentioned as one of the objects of marriage. But it may be said that the multiplication of the race can be brought about without marriage, as with the lower animals; That is to say, without uniting one man with one woman for their

whole life. This would be only true if man lived upon earth like other animals, if there was nothing to distinguish him from the brute creation, if there were no such thing as civilization, no society, no sense of respect for one's own obligations and the rights of others, no sense of property and ownership. Deprived of its civilization there would be no human race at all, but a race of brutes in human form. The family which is the real unit of the human race and the first coercive force which makes civilization possible, owes its existence solely to marriage. If there is no marriage, then there can be no family, no ties of kinship, no force uniting the different elements of humanity, and, consequently, no civilization. It is through the family that humanity is held together and civilization made possible.

Feelings of love and service developed through marriage. The institution of marriage is also responsible to a very great extent for the development of those feelings of love and service which are the pride of humanity to-day. The mutual love of husband and wife - a love based not on momentary passion but life-long connection - and the consequent parental love for offspring leads to a very high development of the feeling of love of man for man as such, and this to the disinterested service of humanity. This love is described as a sign of God in the Holy Quran: "And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find quiet of mind in them and He put between you love and compassion." (30:21). The natural inclination of the male to the female and of the female to the male finds expansion through marriage and is developed, first into a love for the children, then a love for one's kith and kin, and

ultimately into a disinterested love for the whole of humanity. The home, or the family, is in fact the first training ground of love and service. Here a man finds real pleasure in the service of humanity, and the sense of service is thus gradually developed and broadened. It is in fact a training ground for every kind of morality, for it is in the home that a man learns to have a sense of his own obligations and responsibilities, to have a respect for others rights, and above all, to have a real pleasure in suffering for the sake of others. The Holy Prophet is related to have said: "The best of you is he who treats his wife best."

Marriage and "free love." The West is undoubtedly leaning more and more to "free love" in the place of Marriage, but "free love" will certainly prove the ruin of European civilization. Marriage is being discarded, not on account of any inherent defect in it but simply because it entails certain responsibilities on both parties to the marriage contract, and it is really these responsibilities that are shirked in avoiding marriage. Marriage undoubtedly strengthens the ties of the natural love of the two mates, but it also requires them to share each other's cares and sorrows; for human life has its cares and sorrows as well as its pleasures. "Free love" makes each of the mates selfish in the extreme because, while the male and the female become each other's partners in happiness, each is free to leave the other, uncared for, in his or her sorrow. Marriage again makes the two mates jointly responsible for the welfare of the children, but in "free love" either the procreation of children is altogether avoided, and thus the end which nature has in view in the union of the male and the female defeated, or when either of the parents has had his or her satisfaction of the other, the

children may be left without a shelter. The institution of marriage is found in all countries and all nations has been practised in every age for thousands of years and has worked to the advancement and welfare of humanity on the whole. "Free love" if practiced on so large a scale for half a century, would either put an end to the human race altogether, or bring such chaos in society as would destroy its very foundations. It may suit a few irresponsible, selfish persons, who are the slaves of their passions but there can be no spark of true love in a union which may end abruptly at the whim of either, and it can serve no useful purpose for humanity in general.

### **Legal Disabilities**

Mut'ah or temporary marriage disallowed. A marriage for a fixed period was recognized before Islam. It went under the name of mut'ah, meaning profiting by or enjoying a thing. Besides the temporary marriage, four kinds of union of man and woman were recognized by the pre-Islamic Arabs. The first of these was the permanent marriage tie which, in a modified form, was recognized by Islam. The other three only legalized adultery in one form or another, and Islam did not recognize any of them, nor was any such practice resorted to by any Muslim at any time. Temporary marriage stood on a different basis, and reform in this matter was brought about gradually. Recently the idea has appealed to the Western mind which is seeking in temporary marriage, by way of experiment, a remedy for the rigidity of the Christian marriage laws. Islam, however, discarded the idea of temporariness in marriage, because it opens the way to loose relations of the sexes, and entails no responsibility of any kind on the father, for the care and bringing up of the children who, with

the mother, might thus be left quite destitute. Occasions may arise for the dissolution of a permanent marriage, and will continue to arise so long as human nature is what it is, but the remedy for this is divorce and not temporary marriage. The moment the idea of temporariness is introduced into marriage, it loses its whole sanctity, and all responsibilities which are consequently on it are thrown off. According to the Holy Quran, the union of the two sexes is only lawful because of the acceptance of the responsibilities. Consequent thereupon, and the idea of a temporary marriage is not in accordance with it. A union of the sexes with the acceptance of the consequent responsibilities is called *ihсан* (marriage), and without such acceptance it is called *safah* (fornication) and the Holy Quran allows the first while it forbids the second (4:24).

### **Prohibitions to Marry**

The Holy Quran forbids certain marriage relations:

"Forbidden to you are your mothers and your daughters and your sisters and your paternal aunts and your maternal aunts and brothers' daughters and sisters' daughters, and your mothers that have suckled you and your foster-sisters, and mothers of your wives, and your step-daughters who are in your guardianship, born of your wives to whom you have gone in -- but if you have not gone in to them, there is no blame on you -- and the wives of your sons who are of your own loins, and that you should have two sisters together, except what has already passed." (4:23)

It will be seen that these prohibitions arise either from consanguinity, as in the case of mother, daughter, sister, brother's daughter, sister's daughter, father's sister and mother's sister;

or from fosterage, such as in the case of foster-mother and foster-sister; or from affinity, such as in the case of wife's mother, wife's daughter and son's wife.

### **Marriage relations between Muslims and non-Muslims.**

The only other ground on which marriage is prohibited in the Holy Quran is shirk (idolatry). "And marry not the idolatresses until they believe, and certainly a believing maid is better than an idolatress even though she should please you; and give not (believing women) in marriage to idolaters until they believe, and certainly a believing slave is better than an idolater even though he should please you." (2:221) Along with this, it is necessary to read another verse which allows marriage with women who profess one of the revealed religions: "This day all good things are allowed to you, and the food of those who have been given the Book is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them; and the chaste from among the believing women and the chaste from among those who have been given the Book before you (are lawful for you) when you have given them their dowries, taking them in marriage, not fornicating nor taking them for paramours in secret." (5:5) Thus it will be seen that while there is a clear prohibition to marry idolaters or idolatresses, there is an express permission to marry women who profess a revealed religion (Ahlal-Kitab). And as the Holy Quran states that revelation was granted to all nations of the world (35:24), it is lawful for a Muslim to Marry a woman belonging to any other nation of the world that follows a revealed religion. The Christians, the Jews, the Parsis, the Buddhists and the Hindus all fall within this category.

It may be noted here that while

there is an express mention of a Muslim man marrying a non-Muslim woman who professes a revealed religion, there is no mention of the legality or illegality of a marriage between a Muslim woman and a non-Muslim man. The mere fact, however, that the Holy Quran speaks of the one and not of the other is sufficient to show that marriage between a Muslim woman and a non-Muslim man is not allowed.

A marriage which is otherwise legal may be illegal because it does not fulfil a requirement of the law. For instance, the divorced woman and the widow have both to observe the 'iddah, a waiting period, and marriage during this period is illegal. A woman who has been divorced thrice is not allowed to remarry her first husband. As the pregnant woman is required to observe 'iddah till delivery (65:4), marriage during pregnancy is not allowed.

### **Form and Validity of Marriage**

Preliminaries of marriage. The very fact that marriage is looked upon as a contract in Islam, shows that before marriage both parties must satisfy themselves that each will have a desirable partner for life in the other. The Holy Quran lays down expressly: "Marry such women as seem good to you (ma taba la-kum)" (4:3). The Holy Prophet is reported to have given an injunction to this effect: "When one of you makes a proposal of marriage to a woman, then if he can, he should look at what attracts him to marry her."

Hadith cites the case of a man who came to the Prophet and said that he was marrying a woman from among the Ansar, and the Holy Prophet said to him, "Hast thou looked at her?" On his replying in the negative, the Prophet said, "Then go and look at her." In another hadith, it is reported that when Mughirah ibn Shu'bah

made a proposal of marriage to a woman, the Holy Prophet asked him if he had seen her; and on his replying in the negative, he enjoined him to see her, because, "it was likely to bring about greater love and concord between them." The jurists are almost all agreed upon the *istihbab* (approval) of looking at the woman whom one intends to marry. And since the contract is effected by the consent of two parties, the man and the woman, and one of them is expressly told to satisfy himself about the other by looking at her, it would seem that the woman has the same right to satisfy herself before giving her assent. The consent of both the man and the woman is an essential of marriage, and the Holy Qur'an lays down expressly that the two must agree: "Prevent them not from marrying their husbands, when they agree among themselves in a lawful manner." (2:232). In this respect, however, much will depend upon the customs prevailing among a people, and satisfaction may be obtained either personally or through female relatives, as is generally the way in the East.

Proposal of marriage. When a man, who wants to marry, has satisfied himself about a woman, he makes a proposal of marriage either to the woman in question or to her parents or guardians. When a man has made a proposal of marriage to woman, others are forbidden to propose to the same woman, till the first suitor has given up the matter, or has been rejected. A woman may also make a proposal of marriage to a man or a man may propose the marriage of his daughter or sister to a man; generally, however, it is the man who makes the proposal. When assent has been given to the proposal of marriage, it becomes an engagement, and usually a certain time is allowed to pass before the marriage is performed. This

period allows the parties to study each other further, so that if there be anything undesirable in the union, the engagement may be broken off by either party. It is only after the marriage has been performed that the two parties are bound to each other.

Age of marriage. No particular age has been specified for marriage in the Islamic law; in fact, with the difference of climatic conditions, there would be a difference as to the marriageable age in different countries. But the Holy Qur'an does speak of an age of marriage which it identifies with the age of majority: "And test the orphans until they attain the age of marriage." (4:6). The age of marriage and the age of maturity of intellect are identified with full age or the age of majority in this verse. And as marriage is a contract, the assent to which depends on personal liking, and since this function cannot be performed by any one but the party who makes the contract, it is clear that the age of marriage is the age of majority, when a person is capable of exercising his choice in matters of sexual liking or disliking. A man or a woman who has not attained to puberty is unable to exercise his or her choice in sexual matters and unable to decide whether he or she will like or dislike a certain woman or man as wife or husband. It is true that Fiqh, following the general law of contracts, recognizes, in the case of a marriage contract, the legality of the consent of a guardian on behalf of his ward, but there is no case on record showing that the marriage of a minor through his or her guardian was allowed by the Holy Prophet after details of the law were revealed to him at Madinah.

Essentials in the contract. Marriage is called a mithaq (covenant) in the Holy Quran, a covenant between the husband and the wife: "And how can you

take it (i.e. the dowry) when one of you has already gone in to the other and they have made with you a firm covenant?" (4:21). The marriage contract is entered into by mutual consent expressed by the two parties, the husband and the wife, in the presence of witnesses, and that is the only essential. This mutual consent is technically called ijab (affirmation or declaration), and qubul (acceptance or consent). The marriage is made complete by the expression of mutual consent in the presence of witnesses, but it was the practice of the Prophet to deliver a khutbah (sermon), before the declaration of marriage was made, to give it the character of a sacred contract. A dowry (mahr) must also be settled on the woman, according to the Holy Quran, but the marriage is valid even if mahr is not mentioned, or even if the amount of mahr is not agreed upon. The words of mutual consent may be addressed to each other by the two parties, but generally it is the man who delivers the khutbah who puts the proposal before each party, the latter giving consent to the proposal.

Mahr, or the nuptial gift. The second most important thing in marriage is the mahr or dowry. The word ajr, or saduqah, is used in the Holy Quran, and the word mahr in Hadith, to signify dowry, or the nuptial gift. According to the Holy Quran, the mahr is given as a free gift by the husband to the wife, at the time of contracting the marriage: "And give women their dowries as a free gift." (4:4). The payment of the mahr on the part of the husband is an admission of the independence of the wife, for she becomes the owner of property immediately on her marriage, though before it she may not have owned anything. The settling of a dowry on the woman at the marriage is obligatory: "And lawful for

you are all women besides these, provided that you seek them with your property, taking them in marriage, not committing fornication. Then as to those whom you profit by (by marrying) give them their dowries as appointed." (4:24).

It would appear from this that the Holy Qur'an renders the payment of dowry necessary at the time of marriage. Hadith leads to the same conclusion. The payment of the dowry was necessary even though it might be a very small sum. In exceptional cases, marriage is legal even though the amount of mahr has not been specified, but it is obligatory and must be paid afterwards. The amount of dowry in this case would depend upon the circumstances of the husband and the position of the wife. The Holy Qur'an makes this clear by requiring the provision for wife to depend upon the circumstances according to his means, and the straitened in circumstances according to his means." (2:236).

No limits have been placed on the amount of mahr. The words used in the Holy Qur'an show that any amount of dowry may be settled on the wife: "And you have given one of them a heap of gold." (4:20). Thus no maximum or minimum amount has been laid down. The Holy Prophet paid varying amounts to his wives; in one case when the Negus paid the amount to Umm Habibah (Abu Sufyan's daughter), who was then in Abyssinia, where the marriage took place, it being four thousand dirhams, while in the case of the other wives it was generally five hundred dirhams. The mahr of his daughter Fatimah was four hundred dirhams. The lowest amount mentioned in Hadith is a ring of iron, and a man who could not procure even that was told to teach the Holy Qur'an to his wife. In some hadith two handfuls of

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## ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

by Mrs. Ulfat Aziz-us-Samad



### INTRODUCTION

Fourteen hundred years ago the Holy Quran invited the followers of all revealed religions, including Christians and Jews, to join hands with the Muslims in forming a League of Faiths on the basis of mutual understanding and goodwill to keep alive the faith in the unity and goodness of God and to promote and strengthen the universal moral and spiritual values in the hearts of men and in human relations and affairs. Said the Quran:

"Say: 'O people of the Book (i.e. followers of all scripted or revealed religions) ! Let us not wrangle or quarrel over what may be regarded as controversial subjects. Let us at least agree and unite on that which is recognized alike by you and by us, i.e. that we worship none but God and associate nothing with him, and that some of us take not others for lords beside God. ' If even then they turn away, say 'Bear ye witness that the refusal comes from your side and we are those resigned to God alone." (3:64)<sup>1</sup>

Now it seems that after centuries of ignorance and prejudice, the Christians are responding to the Call of the Quran and showing genuine interest in a Christian-Muslim dialogue. The Ecumenical Vatican Council II has called for better and more sympathetic understanding by the Catholics of the non-Christian religions. In pursuance of this aim Pope Paul VI launched his appeal to the whole world inviting everyone to join in a dialogue for a more fraternal and active collaboration for the good of all humanity. He created a special Commission for the rapport with Islam "to shorten the distance to the Muslim brethren." The office for non-

Christian Affairs at the Vatican has produced a document, bearing the title Orientation for a Dialogue between Christians and Muslims, which recognizes "the past injustice towards the Muslims for which the West, with its Christian education, is to blame." Similar voices have been heard from certain liberal Protestant circles also.

Never in the long history of mankind was the need of developing better understanding between the peoples of different races, cultures and religions so great as it is today. The modern world finds itself one single unit. Science and technology have overcome the barriers of space and time. Economics, social and political phenomena are increasingly imposing upon us the obligation to regard all humanity as a single family. The time of monolithic predominance of a religion within definite cultural areas is gone. The development of our present world tends towards a pluralistic world society in which no religion can escape the necessity of maintaining dialogue with other creeds.

What a dialogue between Christians and Muslims should aim at is first of all mutual understanding. Some might say that this is stressing the obvious, but we believe it to be of the utmost importance. It is a well known fact that Christians and Muslims have been enemies for many centuries. Ages of animosity have created between them a deep rift. There are many misunderstandings and misconceptions that have to be removed.

However, all of us must realize that even if dialogue between Muslims and Christians is possible, it is not easy. There are two pitfalls, both equally disastrous,

that must be avoided, viz., polemics and compromise. The spirit of polemics (controversial proselytism) has done much damage in the past and has caused a lot of misunderstanding and falsification. Unfortunately, even now the danger is not past.

On the other hand, excessive compromise and secretism are equally harmful to dialogue. Genuine convictions cannot be treated as a merchandise which is easily exchangeable. Dialogue is not a form of politics, or the art of forging compromises, in order to find the lowest common denominator of religions. It exists on a higher level of human encounter. To be fruitful it demands commitment to truth and complete sincerity to one's own conviction, without fanaticism or aggressiveness. It is mutual openness, or relentless pursuit of truth for the confirmation and deepening of spiritual and moral values.

The Islamic view is that God has not chosen any particular nation, to the exclusion of other nations, for the purpose of revealing Himself and His messages. He is the loving Creator and Sustainer of all the worlds and the supreme Guide to all mankind. He has raised His messengers or prophets with the true religion at sundry times and in every nation of the world. Says the Quran: "There is not a people but a warner has gone among them" (35:24) and "Every nation had a Messenger from God" (10:47). The Muslim is directed by the Quran to have faith in the prophets of all the nations (including, of course, Jesus Christ) and in the original revealed books or scriptures of all the religions (including the Gospel of Jesus). We read in the Quran:

"O Muslims! Declare, 'Our way is this: we believe in God and we believe in the Quran which has been sent down to us and we believe in all those truths which were imparted to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and his children. And we believe also in the scriptures which were delivered to Moses and Jesus. Not merely this, but we believe also in all those truths which were revealed to all the prophets of the world by their Lord and we make no distinction between any of them. We are resigned to God (and will believe in the truth of God revealed anywhere and to anyone)" (2:136)<sup>2</sup>

It is, therefore, with a feeling of profound love and reverence for both Jesus and Muhammad and for the Divinely-inspired religions which they preached that I embark upon a comparative study of Christianity and Islam and invite the Christians of all denominations to an unbiased and meaningful Christian-Muslim dialogue. If at times I find myself differing with the Christians it is not over the religion of Jesus (in which I have as much faith as the Christians have) but over the somewhat altered shape and features that it developed after the departure of Christ. In the Words of Lord Headley, "Islam and Christianity, as taught by Christ himself, are sister religions, only held apart by dogmas and technicalities which might very well be dispensed with."<sup>3</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

1. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (translator), *The Tarjuman al-Quran* (English version), Vol. II, p. 159; Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1968.

2. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (translator) *The Tarjuman al-Quran* (English version), Vol. 2, pp 52-53.

3. Lord Headley, *A Western Awakening to Islam*, Woking Muslim Mission, Woking (England) and Lahore; second edition, 1949; p. 15. Chapter 1

## Chapter 1

### The Scriptures of Islam and Christianity

Both Christianity and Islam claim to be revealed religions. Jesus Christ declared that the message which he gave to the people was not his own but God's: "I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has Himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak" (John 12:49). He described himself as "a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God" (John 8:40). Similarly it is claimed in the Quran that the revelation which came to the Prophet Muhammad was from the Lord of the worlds: "And this is truly a revelation from the Lord of the worlds. The Faithful Spirit has descended with it upon thy heart (O Muhammad) that thou mayest be of the warners" (26:192-194). From this it follows that the truth of either religion depends on the accuracy with which the inspired words of its Founder have been recorded and on the textual purity of its scripture. If the message which was revealed by God to the Founder of a religion has been misreported or altered, then to that extent that religion may be regarded as having deviated from the truth. In this chapter we shall see how far the Gospel of Jesus (i.e. the message or truth which Jesus "heard from God" and conveyed to his people) and the revelations vouchsafed by God to the Prophet Muhammad have been faithfully recorded and preserved in the four canonical Gospels and in the Quran respectively, and how far these scriptures have remained free from any kind of human distortion or interpolation.

### The Source of the Gospels

There are four Gospels included in the Bible---the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark,

Luke, and John. They were composed between forty and eighty years after the departure of Jesus. The inspired sayings and discourses of Jesus were not written down during his lifetime. None of those who had conversed with him wrote any account of what they had seen and heard. But, as the first generation began to die away, a few collections of his "Logia" or "Sayings" were put together. Some of these, though now irretrievably lost; were available to the evangelists (or writers of the Gospels), who made use of them in writing their Gospels. One such record is known in critical nomenclature as Q (German Quelle = "Source"), an Aramaic document which reached the evangelists in a Greek translation. The writers of the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke incorporated this document into their Gospels. Another of these early documents is known to the Biblical scholars as L, a collection of reports about Jesus used only by Luke. Then there was U marcus, an early draft of Mark's Gospel, believed to have been written by him (so Papis tells us) on the basis of Peter's discourses. This document is also referred to as the "Triple Tradition," because it became the foundation of three of the four canonical Gospels---namely, the Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke.

The four canonical Gospels were written on the basis of oral traditions and some of the documents mentioned above. However, a comparison of the four Gospels will show that the evangelists handled their sources with considerable freedom. They appear to have felt no hesitation or compunction in changing, adapting or even coining sayings of Jesus to bring his teachings in line with the outlook and viewpoint of their respective sects. "The results of this scriptural research," writes Dr. Maurice Bucaille, "are of great

importance. They show how the Gospel texts not only have a history. . .but also a 'pre-history', to use Father Boismard's expression. What is meant is that before the final versions appeared, they underwent alterations at the Intermediate Document stage."<sup>1</sup>

The four Gospels included in the Bible do not anywhere claim to be Divinely-inspired, nor were they regarded as such by the early Christians. What was Divinely-inspired was the Gospel or message which Jesus himself had "heard from God" and delivered to his people. Thus William Grey writes:

"The Gospels nowhere affirm or even initiate their own inspiration, a claim to credence which, had they possessed it, they assuredly would not have failed to put forward. Nor do the Apostolic writings bear any such testimony to them."<sup>2</sup>

### **The Gospel According to Mark**

Mark's Gospel is the shortest of the four Gospels. It is also the oldest, but in spite of this it is not a book written by an apostle. It was written in Greek at Rome about 10 C.E. for the use of the local church. Many Biblical scholars regard it as an expanded version of Urmarcus, and it is difficult to say whether the elaboration and revision were done by Mark himself or by some other person. The oldest manuscripts do not contain verses 9 to 20 of the last chapter of the Gospel of Mark as we now have it, dealing with Jesus' post-resurrection appearances and Ascension. They appear to have been added later on by some editor or copyist. Dr. C.J. Cadoux, who was Mackennal Professor of Church History at Oxford, thus sums up the conclusions of many eminent Biblical scholars:

"It was written after Peter's martyrdom (65 A.D.), and at a time when Mark, who had not

himself been a disciple of Jesus, apparently had none of the personal disciples of Jesus within reach by whose knowledge he could check his narrative. These circumstances of its composition account for the existence in it, side by side, of numerous signs of accuracy and a certain number of signs of ignorance and inaccuracy."<sup>3</sup>

### **The Gospel according to Matthew**

This Gospel was written in Greek at Antioch about 90 C.E. No independent scholar regards it as the work of Matthew, the apostle of Jesus. However, Matthew may have been the author of Q, which this Gospel incorporated. According to the widely accepted, "two- document" hypothesis, the Gospel according to Matthew is a blend of Q and Urmarcus plus matter derived from oral tradition. Q and Urmarcus represented two opposite traditions---the former that of the Jerusalem-based Nazarene community, and the latter that of Paul and his followers. It has been plausibly suggested by many scholars that the author of Matthew's Gospel desired to bridge the gulf between the Nazarene and Pauline factions not only by utilizing these various sources, but by placing Peter in the position of the chief of the Apostles.

Perhaps the most striking feature in the Gospel of 'Matthew' is supernaturalism. Dreams abound and all sorts of prophecies, many of which have to be sadly distorted for the purpose, are "fulfilled." Regarding the liberties taken by the unknown author of this Gospel with his sources, C.J. Cadoux writes:

"But a close examination of the treatment he gives to his borrowings from Mark shows that he allowed himself great freedom in editing and embroidering his

material in the interest of what he regarded as the rightful honouring of the great Master. The same tendencies are often visible elsewhere when he is reproducing Q or providing matter peculiar to himself. Anything, therefore, strictly peculiar to 'Matthew' can be accepted as historical only with great caution."<sup>4</sup>

### **The Gospel according to Luke**

The third Gospel, the Gospel of Luke, was written somewhere in Greece about 100 C.E. for the benefit of the "most excellent" Theophilus, probably an high official of the Roman Empire. It is an apologetic addressed to non-Jews and is widely admitted to have had "Luke the Physician," Paul's traveling companion on several of his missionary journeys, for its author.

It appears that Luke had succeeded in amassing a valuable collection of traditions about Jesus' sayings and deeds; which scholars call L. Finding later a copy of Q., he is thought to have compiled a complete Gospel-story by interweaving Q. with his L- material. This preliminary Gospel is called "Proto-Luke." Later still, finding a copy of Mark's Gospel (or perhaps Urmarcus), he inserted nearly the whole of it in large blocks at certain points in his "Proto-Luke" and, by prefixing his narrative of the birth and boyhood of Jesus, produced the Gospel of Luke as we now have it. Scholars have pointed out that the author, who wished to make his Gospel acceptable to the non-Jews and bring it in line with the Pauline point of view, took even greater liberties with his sources than the earlier evangelists had done. "As to the work of Luke," writes Ernest Renan, "its historical value is sensibly weaker."<sup>5</sup> And this is what a more orthodox Protestant writer, E.E. Kellett, says:

"Luke is a Greek writer, and writes like a Greek historian. In

some cases, it is to be feared, he makes speeches of his own for his heroes; and a beautiful Story seems true to him because it is beautiful...The whole story is a popular legend, taken over and rewritten by a man of Herodotean gifts."<sup>6</sup>

### **The Gospel according to John**

The Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke are called "Synoptic Gospels," because they proceed on the basis of the same document and have much in common. The Gospel according to John is very different from these. A. Powell Davies, late pastor of All Souls Church in Washington, D.C., writes the following in this connection:

"The first three, or Synoptic, Gospels tell much the same story. There are discrepancies, but it is, possible, to a considerable extent, to reconcile them. John's Gospel, however, tells quite a different story from the other three. If John is right, then the other are wrong; if the Synoptic are right, John's Gospel must surely be in error."<sup>7</sup>

As Professor Kellet points out, John's Gospel "is not history in our sense at all, nor even history in the sense of Mark, Matthew and Luke." The fourth evangelist starts not with fact or history but with a doctrine, and the so-called 'history' is invented to provide a substratum for the doctrine. He makes Jesus say and do things that would illustrate and support his pre-conceived Christ- doctrine. We have, in John's Gospel, the presentation of Jesus not as a man but as a personified idea. The Logos (the Word or Reason of God), which was from the beginning and by which all things were made (a personification derived through Philo from Greek philosophy), is said to have become flesh in Jesus. Jesus' divinity and pre-existence are affirmed in this Gospel alone. Jesus acts and speaks like a divine being; his dis-

courses are all of theological, self-glorification type, and have nothing in common with the ethical injunctions in the Synoptics.

The fourth Gospel was written at or near Ephesus between the years 110 and 115 of the Christian era by some unknown man who was influenced by Greek philosophy and was anti-semitically inclined. No independent scholar regards it as the work of John the son of Zebedee, who, according to R.H. Charles, Alfred Loisy, Robert Eisler and several other scholars, was beheaded, together with his brother James, by Herod Agrippa I in the year 44 C.E., long before the fourth Gospel could have been written. The modern Biblical scholars, including several Church dignitaries, not only question the historical value of this Gospel, but also reject the genuineness of the words put by the author in the mouth of Jesus. This is what C.J. Cadoux writes:

"The speeches in the Fourth Gospel (even apart from the early messianic claim) are so different from those in the Synoptics, and so like the comments of the Fourth Evangelist himself, that both cannot be equally reliable as records of what Jesus said. Literary veracity in ancient times, did not forbid, as it does now, the assignment of fictitious speeches to historical characters: the best ancient historians made a practice of composing and assigning such speeches in this way."<sup>8</sup>

### **The Character of the Four Gospels**

The Gospels were written after the early Christians had become divided into different factions. The two main factions were the Nazarenes and the Pauline Christians. They had different conceptions of Jesus and his mission, different views of salvation and different attitudes towards the Law of Moses. There were

other factions also. The Gospels were written to propagate the special points of view and teachings of the different factions and the authors showed no hesitation in tampering with the earlier documents and other traditional material about the life and teaching of Jesus to bring them in line with the attitudes and viewpoints of their respective sects. The Rev. T.G. Tucker writes:

"Thus Gospels were produced which clearly reflected the conceptions of the practical needs of the community for which they were written. In them the traditional material was used, but there was no hesitation in altering it or making additions to it, or in leaving out what did not suit the writer's purpose."<sup>9</sup>

The four Gospels included in the New Testament section of the Bible were not the only Gospels written during the early centuries of the Christian era. There were many more, but they were suppressed by the dominant Church.

One of the suppressed Gospels was the "Gospel of the Hebrews," which was written in Palestine in Aramaic (the language spoken by Jews) about 65 C.E. It was regarded as their scripture and read in their religious congregations by the Nazarenes, as the Jerusalem-based early followers of Jesus were called. Another of the suppressed Gospels was the "Gospel of Barnabas." The author was an apostle of Jesus (Acts 14:14) and a cousin of Mark (Colossians 4:10). The Gospel of Barnabas was accepted as a canonical Gospel and read in the churches (particularly in Alexandria) until it was condemned by the Catholic Church through three successive Decrees. This Gospel has come down to us in an Italian translation, which is remarkable not only because it presents the viewpoint of the earliest followers of Jesus, the

Nazarenes, as opposed to the followers of Paul, but also because it contains many prophecies of Jesus in which he foretold the advent of the Prophet Muhammad, who is mentioned in the Gospel by name.<sup>10</sup>

Towards the end of the second century or the beginning of the third century, the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John were included in the Canon and the rest were declared to be heretical or apocryphal by the Catholic Church. By then the Pauline Christianity had triumphed over the Nazarene version of the religion of Jesus after a long and bitter struggle, and only those Gospels were included in the Canon which more or less supported the Pauline viewpoint.

Before they were canonized and accepted as holy scriptures, the four Gospels did not have that sanctity which they now have and no one felt any compunction in allowing them if anything contained in them did not suit his purpose or the purpose of his sect. The fact is that even after they were included in the Canon and declared to be the Word of God, changes continued to be made in them, as is clear from the differences in the various extant codices or manuscripts. Referring to this, the Rev. J.R. Dummelow writes the following in his famous Commentary on the Holy Bible:

"To begin with, the writers of the Gospels report in Greek (although they may have had some Aramaic sources) the saying of Jesus Christ who for the most part probably spoke Aramaic. Nor is it likely that those writers or their copyists had any idea that their records would go beyond the early Churches with which they themselves were familiar...Nor even in later centuries do we find that scrupulous regard for the sacred text which marked the transmission of the Old Testament. A

copyist would sometimes put in what was in the text, but also what he thought ought to be in it. He would trust a fickle memory, or he would even make the text accord with the views of the school to which he belonged."<sup>11</sup>

### The Summing Up

In considering how far the four canonical Gospels faithfully present the Gospel or message of Jesus we must bear the following facts in mind: 1) that no written copy was made of the inspired sayings of Jesus in his lifetime; 2) that the earliest records of the sayings and deeds of Jesus, which were made sometime after his departure, have all been irretrievably lost; 3) that in the Gospels, which were written between forty and eighty years after the departure of Jesus on the basis of some of those lost documents, the matter contained in the latter was handled with considerable freedom; the evangelists feeling no hesitation in altering it for what they considered the greater glory of Christ or to bring it in line with the viewpoints of their respective sects; 4) that the evangelists very often put their own words into the mouth of Jesus; 5) that none of the evangelists had known Jesus or heard him speaking; 6) that the Gospels were written in Greek, whereas the language spoken by Jesus was Aramaic; 7) that they were written to propagate the views of the different factions and that they were chosen from many others that represented different viewpoints; 8) that for about a century after they were written they were not included in the "Canon" and so could be and were in fact altered by the copyists of the different sects to bring them in harmony with the views of the sects to which they belonged; 9) that the earliest extant manuscripts of the Gospels--- the Codex Sinaiticus and the Codex Vaticanus--- belong to the fourth

century, and no one knows how much the Gospels had been altered during the centuries of which no manuscript is available; 10) that there are many differences at many places in the various ancient manuscripts; and 11) that the Gospels are full of inconsistencies and contradictions.

These facts, disclosed by a large number of Western scholars, including several dignitaries of the Church, go to show that the Gospel of Jesus, by which we mean the message which Jesus had "heard from God" and delivered to his people, has not reached us in its pure form. The four Gospels included in the Bible cannot be considered identical with the inspired Gospel of Jesus. The manner of their composition and the circumstances through which they have passed are such that they cannot be relied upon to give us exact knowledge of what Jesus had said and taught. C.J. Cadoux sums up the position in these words:

"In the four Gospels, therefore, the main documents to which we must go if we are to fill-out at all that bare sketch which we can put together from other sources, we find material of widely-differing quality as regards credibility. So far-reaching is the element of uncertainty that it is tempting to 'down-tools' at the outset, and to declare the task hopeless. The historical inconsistencies and improbabilities in parts of the Gospels form some of the arguments advanced in favor of the christ-myth theory. These are, however, entirely outweighed--- as we have shown--- by other considerations. Still, the discrepancies and uncertainties that remain are serious. Consequently many moderns, who have no doubt whatever of Jesus' real existence, regard as hopeless any attempt to dissolve out the historically-true from the legendary or mythical

matter which the Gospels contain, and to reconstruct the story of Jesus' mission out of the more-historical residue."<sup>12</sup>

### The Authenticity of the Quran

In the above lines it has been shown that the Gospel of Jesus—i.e. the truth which Jesus had "heard from God" and conveyed to the people—has not come down to us in its original form. The four Gospels included in the Bible are not reliable records of the inspired sayings and teachings of Jesus. In the words of Dr. Maurice Bucaille, "When we read the Gospel, we can no longer be at all sure that we are reading Jesus' word."

It is otherwise with the Quran, which has come down to us exactly as it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. The Quran contains nothing but the Divine revelations which came to the Prophet. It was revealed piecemeal in the course of more than twenty years. As soon as a revelation was received by him, he used to communicate it to his disciples and ask them not only to write it down but also to commit it to memory. On each such occasion he indicated in a precise manner the place to which the new fragment belonged in the fabric of what had already been received. This method of doubly preserving the text both in writing and by memorization proved to be of the utmost importance in safeguarding the purity and authenticity of the Quran.

After the passing away of the Prophet, Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, charged Zaid ibn Thabit, the chief scribe, with the task of collecting and compiling the written leaves in the form of a book. As long as the Prophet was alive and the possibility existed of a fresh revelation coming to him, this could not be done. Zaid consulted all the information he could assemble at Madina: the witness of those who had learnt the Quran

by heart (Hafizun), copies of the Book written on various materials belonging to private individuals, all with the object of avoiding possible errors in transcription. Thus an absolutely faithful copy of the Book was obtained.

Usman, the third Caliph, entrusted a commission of experts to prepare seven copies of the Quran from the text prepared in Abu Bakr's time. The commission rechecked and verified the authenticity of the document produced under Abu Bakr's instructions by comparing it with all the extant copies and by consulting the Muslims who knew the text by heart. The seven copies thus prepared were sent by Usman to seven different centres of the rapidly expanding Islamic world. His aim was to insure the spread all over the Islamic world of a text which was absolutely authentic. One of these seven copies is still in existence in Tashkent. The Czarist government of Russia had published it with a facsimile reproduction; and we see that there is complete identity between this copy and the text otherwise in use all over the world.<sup>13</sup>

From the time of the Prophet to our own time the practice of learning the Quran by heart has continued unbroken, and the number of those who have preserved the Quran in their memories (Hafizun) can now be counted in the world by hundreds of thousands. The result is that no scholar, Eastern or Western, Muslim or non-Muslim, friendly or hostile, has ever cast any doubt on the purity of the text of the Holy Quran. Even such an unfriendly critic as Sir William Muir admits: "There is probably in the world no other work which has remained twelve centuries with so pure a text."<sup>14</sup>



### Footnotes

1) Maurice Bucaille, *The Bible, the Quran and Science*; American Trust Publication, Indianapolis (U.S.A.), 1979, p. 75.

2) William Greg, *The Creed of Christendom*; Maximilian and Co., London, 1907, p. 23.

3) C.J. Cadoux, *The Life of Jesus*, a Pelican Book, Penguin Books, West Drayton, Middlesex, 1948; p. 13.

4) *Ibid*, pp 14-15.

5) Ernest Renan, *The Life of Jesus*, Modern Library, New York; p. 51.

6) E.E. Kellet, *A Short History of Religion*, a Pelican Book, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex; 1962; p. 173.

7) A Powell Davies, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*; a Mentor Book, the New American Library, New York, tenth edition 1960; p. 106.

8) C.J. Cadoux, *The Life of Jesus*, a Pelican Book, p. 16.

9) T.G. Tucker, *The History of the Christians in the Light of Modern Knowledge*, Blackie and Sons, Ltd., London; 1929; p. 320.

10) An English translation of the Gospel of Barnabas was prepared by Lonsdale and Laura Ragg and published by the Clarendon Press, Oxford, in 1907. It has been reprinted by the Begum Aisha Bawany Wakf, Karachi, eighth edition: 1980.

11) J.R. Dummelow, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*; Macmillan and Co., London, 1917; Introduction, p. xvi.

12) C.J. Cadoux, *The Life of Jesus*, a Pelican Book, pp.16-17.

13) The subject of the purity of the text of the Quran has been very ably and thoroughly discussed by Maulana Muhammad Ali in the introduction to his renowned translation and commentary: *The Holy Quran—Arabic text, English translation and commentary*; the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Isham, Lahore; fourth edition, 1951.

14) Sir William Muir, *The Life of Mohammad*, John Grant, Edinburgh; New Edition, 1923; Introduction, p. xxxiii.

(To be continued in next issue)

# INJUNCTIONS AND GUIDELINES OF THE QURAN

by HAFEEZ-UR-RAHMAN KHAN BAR-AT-LAW.

## Introduction

1. This key to the needed injunctions and guidelines of the Quran has been prepared to provide ready access to most of what the text forbids and what it directs.

2. The index endeavors to be self-contained on matters of substance and be able to answer briefly the immediate enquiry.

But it is not completely exhaustive. A reference to the text quoted would be required where it was necessary to know more or for clarity.

3. There is an immense amount of material in the Holy Book and some matters, though significant, may not have been included.

4. The index is arranged alphabetically according to "titles" under which the matters seemed to fall. It appeared, however, that a topic could appropriately be included under more than one title. Therefore some of the same version in addition to the other versions may be found in another appropriate title also; such as: (i) "Muhammad", "Messenger", "Prophet" (ii) "Moses", "Pharoah", "Aaron" (iii) "Children of Israel", "Israel", "Jews" (iv) "Conduct", "Command", "Righteousness", "Believers", "Successful" (v) "Forgiveness", "Mercy" and "Repentance", etc.

5. The topics included in a "title" are mentioned serially according to the Chapter and Verse of the Quran but some of the references to an identical version in a different verse or chapter have also been given in the same topic.

Verses distinct in some respect have been given their own separate place.

6. This arrangement seemed more convenient in a study in

progressive reference to the text in the Quran.

7. References to the Chapter and Verse have been given thus:- XVIII: 94.

8. Not all the verses relating to a topic have been mentioned in the index but those that have been mentioned contain the comprehensive though brief statement of the matter.

The matter or the story may, however, be contained in more than one verse or may continue from one verse to another. A "dash" like this "-----" after the quoted verse signifies that the statement of the matter or the story continues. Even if the dash is not there it would be prudent to peruse the verses, following the quoted verse, so as not to miss something of significance.

1. Ablutions for Prayer (Al-Wadhu)

1. Do not go near prayer when you are drunken until you know what you utter nor when you are polluted till you have bathed except when journeying on the road-IV:43

and

2. When you rise up for prayer (i) Wash your faces, (ii) Wash your hands up to elbows, (iii) Lightly rub your heads, (iv) Wash your feet up to ankles, (v) If you are unclean purify yourself. If you are sick or on a journey, or come from a closet or have touched women (had sex with them) and there is no water, then go to a clean high ground and rub your faces and hands with (some of) it. V:6, IV:43

2. Adultery

Chapter IV:15-16 deals with lewdness. 1. Verse 15 says confine women found guilty of lewdness to the houses until their death or (until) Allah appoints a way for

them.

The punishment prescribed is so severe that it could apply only to the gravest kind of lewdness (i.e. adultery) and not to every immodest behaviour. So the lewdness in IV:15 would mean adultery (intercourse) There is no other provision for punishing adultery until the verse XXIV:2 came, It could not be that there was no provision for punishing adultery until that verse came. And that is the earlier provision for the punishment of adultery and the punishment is not death but confinement.

There is no provision for punishing minor immoral sexual acts other than the above mentioned provision in IV:15 or the provision in IV:16 for the punishment of men guilty of lewdness. (until the provision in XXIV:2 -- for the punishment of adultery came later).

2. The verse IV:16, as stated earlier, is for the punishment of two of you guilty of lewdness. It says punish both the two guilty of it. If they repent and amend leave them alone.

3. In general condemnation of adultery Allah says, "do not come near adultery -- it is an obscene and an evil way" and then XVII:32 ("one of the qualities of the slaves of the Beneficent mentions is not to commit adultery" XXV:63-68)

4. The verse providing for the punishment of adultery says. "The adulteress and the adulterer scourge each one of them hundred stripes ..." (not stone to death but flog)

XXIV:2 (It has been stated that flogging was done by hand, by shoes or a stick. There was no whip in Prophets' time. The aim was not torture.)

5. Verse 3(XXIV) provides as

to how the adulterer or the adulteress should marry. It shows that the killing of the guilty is not contemplated by punishment

6. Verse 4.25 provides that if the maid you marry is guilty of lewdness she shall suffer half the punishment (prescribed) for free women. As neither the punishment of death nor stoning to death could be halved they are obviously not the punishments intended for adulterer or adulteress in verse XXIV:27. The guilt has first to be established by the evidence of four witnesses XXIV:4

8. "And the Quran says that those who accuse honorable women and bring not four witnesses scourge them with eighty stripes and never (afterward) accept their evidence. They are the transgressors XXIV:4 (save those who afterward repent and act right for Allah is forgiving, Merciful XXIV:5)"

9. If a husband makes an accusation against his wife but has no witnesses he shall swear four times and each time state that he is speaking the truth and fifth time swear and say that Allah's curse be on him if he is telling a lie -- XXIV:6,7

10. The wife can avert the punishment by swearing four times and saying each time that what he said was false and fifth time swear and say that the wrath of Allah be on her if he speaks the truth. XXIV:8,9

11. Allah says there is a gang among them who is spreading slander and they will be punished for their sin XXIV:11-19

12. And admonishes that slander should not be repeated XXIV:17

13. Allah says those who scandalize virtuous believing women are accursed in this world and the hereafter and they will have an awful fate--XXIV:23

(to be continued in next issue)

### The Promised Messiah Speaks - continued from inside front cover

It is also recorded that those who leave the world in a condition in which they are wholly lost in God and who lay down their lives in the cause of the Beloved like the martyrs and siddiqs, who are even ahead of the martyrs, for them it is not merely a window that is opened into heaven, but they enter heaven with the whole of their beings and faculties. Nevertheless, they do not enjoy the delights of heaven to a perfect degree before the Day of Judgment.

In the same way, for the dead body of a wicked person a window is opened in the grave towards hell through which a consuming vapour arrives in the grave from hell and that wicked soul burns all the time in its flames. But for those who depart from the world in such condition that, on account of their persistent disobedience, they are wholly lost in Satan and in obedience to him they cut asunder altogether from God, it is not only a window that is opened for them after their death towards hell, they are cast into hell with their whole beings and all faculties, as God has said: Because of their sins they were drowned and cast into fire (71:26). Nevertheless, they are not subjected to the full torment of hell before the Day of Judgment.

There is a second stage of entry into heaven and hell which should be called the intermediate stage, which is attained after the resurrection, but before entry into the great heaven or the great hell. In this grade the faculties are sharpened and the manifestation of God's Mercy or His wrath is observed in a perfect way, and the delights of heaven or the torments of hell are felt more strongly on account of the nearness of the great heaven or the great hell, as God, the Glorious, has said:

Heaven Shall be brought near to the righteous and hell shall be uncovered for those who have gone astray (26:91-92) On that day some faces will be bright, laughing, joyous; and some faces will be covered with dust and gloom. These will be the disbelieving evildoers (80:39-43). In this second grade also people are not equal. There are those of a high grade who are accompanied by heavenly lights. They are referred to in the verse: their light runs in front of them and on their right hands (66:9). In the same way, there are great disbelievers in whose hearts a fire is kindled before they enter completely into hell, as it is said: It is Allah's kindled fire which rises over the hearts (104:8).

Above this second grade is a third grade, which is the last of the grades which people will enter after the Day of Judgment, and will enjoy or suffer in a complete and perfect manner.

In these three grades a person is in a type of heaven or hell, and in none of these grades is he excluded from heaven or hell. From one grade he progresses into another.

One of the ways of such progress is that, for instance, a person dies in a low condition of faith and action and a small hole is made for him towards heaven as his capacity for the manifestation of heaven is limited to that much. Thereafter, if he leaves behind righteous progeny, who supplicate earnestly for his forgiveness and for that purpose give alms to the poor or, if he had love for a man of God who supplicates earnestly for his forgiveness, or he has left behind him some project which is of public benefit, then by the blessing of these good actions that are carried on on his behalf, the window that is opened for him

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## Islamic Law of Marriage And Divorce

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meal or dates are also mentioned. The amount of the dowry may, however, be increased or decreased by the mutual consent of husband and wife, at any time after marriage; and this is plainly laid down in the Holy Qur'an: "Then as to those whom you profit by (by marrying), give them their dowries as appointed; and there is no blame on you about what you mutually agree after what is appointed of dowry." (4:24).

Publicity of the marriage. Where the Holy Qur'an speaks of marriage, it at the same time excludes clandestine sexual relations, "taking them in marriage, not fornicating, nor taking them for paramours in secret." (4:24, 25; 5:5). Thus the one fact distinguishing marriage from fornication and clandestine relations, is its publicity. The mutual consent of two parties to live as husband and wife does not constitute a marriage unless that consent is expressed publicly and in the presence of witnesses. An essential feature of the Islamic marriage is, therefore, the publication of the news by gathering together, preferably in a public place. There are hadith showing that marriage must be made publicly known, even with the beat of drums. With the same object in view music is allowed at marriage gatherings.

The Khutbah. The delivery of a sermon before the announcement of marriage is another factor which helps the publicity of the marriage, and, at the same time, serves the double purpose of giving it a sacred character and making it an occasion for the education of the community. When the friends and relatives of both parties have assembled, a sermon is delivered by someone from among the party, or

by the Imam, before announcing the marriage itself. The sermon begins with tashahhud which runs thus: Al-hamdu li-llahi nahmadu-hu wa nasta 'inu-hu wa nas-taghfiru-hu wa na'udhu bi-llahi min shururi anfusi- na wa min sayyi'ati a'mali-na, man yahdi-hi-llahu fa-la mudzilla la-hu, wa man yudzilil fa-la hadiya la-hu, wa ash-hadu an la ilaha ill-Allahu wa ash-hadu anna Muhammad-an 'abdu-hu wa rasulu-hu. All praise is due to Allah; we praise Him and we beseech Him for help and we ask for His protection and we seek refuge in Allah from the mischiefs of our souls, and from the evil of our deeds; whomsoever Allah guides, there is none who can lead him astray and whom Allah leaves in error, there is none to guide him; and I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger.

After the tashahhud, the Holy Prophet would take as his text the following three verses of the Holy Quran:

Ya ayyuha-lladhina amanu-ttaqu-llaha haqqa tuqati-hi wa la tamu-tunna illa wa antum Muslimun (3:101). O you who believe! Be careful of your duty to Him and die not unless you are Muslims.

Ya-ayyuha-n-nasu-t-ta-qu Rabba-kumu-lladhi khalafa-kum min nafs-in wahidat-in wa khalafa min-ha zauja-ha wa baththa min-huma rijal-an kathir-an wa nisa'a; wa-ttaqu-llaha-lladhi tasa'aluna bi-hi wa-l-arham; inn Allaha kana 'alai-kum raqiba (4:1).

O people! be careful of your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single being and of the same created its mate, and spread from these too many men and women; and be careful of your duty to Allah by whom you demand one or another of your rights and to the ties of relationship; surely Allah watches over you.

Ya-ayyuha-lladh ina amanu-ttaqu-llaha wa qulu qaul-an sadid-an yuslih la-kum a'malakum wa yaghfir la-kum dhunuba-kum wa man yuti'i-llaha wa resula-hu fa-qad faza fauz-an 'azima (33:70,71).

O you who believe! Be careful of your duty to Allah and speak the right word; He would put your deeds into a right state for you, and forgive you your faults; and whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, he indeed achieves a mighty success.

The sermon, of course, must expatiate on these verses and explain to the audience the mutual rights and duties of husband and wife. At the conclusion of the sermon is made the announcement that such and such a man and such and such a woman have accepted each other as husband and wife, and the dowry is also announced at the time. The man and the woman are then asked if they accept the new relationship, and, on the reply being given in the affirmative, the marriage ceremony proper is concluded. After the expression of consent by both parties, the whole audience raises its hands and prays for the blessings of God on the newly wedded couple. Generally some dates or sweets are distributed before the audience disperses. A consummation of the marriage is followed by a feast called walimah.

Guardianship in marriage. The essence of marriage being then, according to Islam, the consent of two parties, after they have satisfied themselves about each other, to live together as husband and wife permanently and accepting their respective responsibilities and obligations in the married state, it follows from its very nature, that the marriage contract requires that the contracting parties should have attained puberty and the age of discretion. The Holy Qur'an has

already been quoted on this point, and Fiqh also recognizes this principle. Thus, according to the Fatawa "Alamgiri," among the conditions which are requisite for the validity of a contract of marriage are understanding ('aql), puberty (bulughah) and freedom (hurriyah) in the contracting parties." A distinction is, however, made between a minor who is possessed of understanding and one who is not so possessed, and while a marriage contracted by the latter is recognized as a mere nullity, one contracted by the former can have its invalidity removed by the consent of his guardian. As regards those who have attained majority, there is no difference of opinion in the case of the man, who can give his consent to marriage without the approval of a guardian, but some difference exists in the case of the woman, whether she can give such consent without the approval of her father or guardian. The Hanafi view of the law of Islam answers this question in the affirmative: "The marriage contract of a free woman who has reached the age of majority, and is possessed of understanding, is complete with her own consent, whether she is a virgin or has been married before, though it may not have been confirmed by her guardian." The Shiah view is exactly the same: "In the marriage of a discreet female (rashidah, or one who is adult), no guardian is required." Both Malik and Shafi'i hold that the consent of the guardian is essential. Bukhari inclines to the same view as that of Malik and Shafi'i, the heading of one of his chapters being, "Who says that there is no marriage except with the consent of a guardian?" though he adds another, "The Father or any other guardian cannot give in marriage a virgin or one who has been married before without her consent." At the same time, he extends the

meaning of the word guardian, saying that "the king is a guardian," and cites under this heading the case of a woman who came to the Holy Prophet and offered herself for marriage, and she was then and there married to a person who could not even settle any dowry on her on account of his poverty. It does not appear whether or not she had a natural guardian (father or other near relative). Some Qur'anic verses are quoted which, however, do not speak of a guardian in express words. Thus: "and when you divorce women and they end their term of waiting, prevent them not from marrying their husbands when they agree among themselves in a lawful manner." (2:232). From this it is probably concluded that the injunction against preventing women from marrying husbands who have divorced them presupposes a right of the guardian.

Conditions imposed at the time of marriage. It is lawful to impose and accept conditions, which are not illegal, at the time of marriage, and the parties are bound by such conditions. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "The best entitled to fulfillment of all conditions that you may fulfil, are the conditions by which sexual union is legalized." Illegal conditions are those which are opposed to the law of Islam or to public morality, for instance, that the wife shall have the right to frequent immoral places or that she shall not be entitled to any dower or maintenance or that the husband and the wife shall not inherit from each other. If such a condition be imposed, the condition is void while the marriage is valid. Examples of legal conditions are that the wife shall not be compelled to have her dar (conjugal domicile), that the husband shall not contract a second marriage during the existence of the first, that the husband and the wife

or one of them shall live in a specified place, that a certain portion of the dower shall be paid immediately and the remainder on death or divorce, that the husband shall pay the wife a certain amount by way of maintenance, that he shall not prevent her from receiving visits from her relatives, that the wife shall have the right to divorce for a specified reason or for any reasonable cause, and so on.

Polygamy. As a rule, Islam recognizes only the union of one man and one woman as a valid form of marriage. Under exceptional circumstances it allows the man more wives than one, but does not allow the woman more husbands than one. Thus, while a married woman cannot contract a valid marriage, a married man can do it. There is no difficulty in understanding this differentiation, if the natural duties of man and woman in the preservation and upbringing of the human species are kept in view. Nature has so divided the duties of man and woman, in this respect, that while one man can raise children from more wives than one, one woman can have children only from one husband. Therefore, while polygamy may at times be a help in the welfare of society and the preservation of the human race, polyandry has no conceivable use for man.

Polygamy is an exception. In the first place it must be borne in mind that polygamy is allowed in Islam only as an exception. It is expressly so stated in the Holy Qur'an: "And if you fear that you cannot act equitably towards orphans, then marry such women as seem good to you, two and three and four; but if you fear that you will not do justice (between them), then (marry) only one." (4:3). This is the only passage in the Holy Qur'an that speaks of polygamy, and it will be seen that

it does not enjoin polygamy; it only permits it and that, too, conditionally. Before we consider the significance of this verse, it must be understood clearly that polygamy is here allowed only when there are orphans to be dealt with, and it is feared that they will not be dealt with justly. This condition relates more to the welfare of society than to the needs of the individual.

The meaning of this verse is further explained by 4:127: "And they ask thee a decision about women. Say, Allah makes known to you His decision concerning them, and that which is recited to you in the Book, concerning orphans of the women to whom you give not what is appointed for them -- and you are not inclined to marry them -- nor to the weak among children, and that you should deal towards orphans with equity." The reference to "that which is recited in the Book" is admittedly to 4:3. and the reference in "Whom you give not what is appointed for them .....nor to the weak among children" is to the Arab custom, according to which women and minor children did not get a share of inheritance, the recognized usage being that only he could inherit who could ride on the back of a horse and take the field against the enemy. The position was therefore this, that when a widow was left with orphans to bring up, she and her children would get no share of the inheritance, nor were people inclined to marry widows who had children. In 4:3, the Holy Qur'an has therefore enjoined that if you cannot be otherwise just to orphans, marry the mothers of such orphans so that you may thus be interested in their welfare, and for this purpose you are allowed to contract other marriages.

A consideration of the historical circumstances of the time when this chapter was revealed

corroborates this conclusion. It was a time when the Muslims were compelled to carry on incessant war against an enemy bent upon their extirpation. The bread-winners had all to take the field against the enemy, and many had been lost in the unequal battles that were being fought by the small Muslim band against overwhelming forces. Women had lost their affectionate husbands and young children their loving fathers, and these widows and orphans had to be provided for. If they had been left to the mercy of circumstances, they would have perished, and the community would have been weakened to such an extent that it would have been impossible to maintain the struggle for life. It was under these circumstances that the fourth chapter was revealed, allowing the taking of more wives than one, so that the widows and orphans may find a shelter. If you fear, says the revelation, that you will not be able to do justice to orphans, marry women (the mothers of the orphans) up to four, but only on condition that you are just to all of them. That by women here are meant the mothers of orphans is made clear by v. 127, as already shown.

It might be said that other arrangements could be made for the maintenance of widows and orphans. But a home-life could not be given to them in any other manner, and home-life is the real source whence all those good qualities of love and affection spring which are the greatest asset of social life and civilization. Islam bases its civilization on home-life; and under exceptional circumstances, where monogamy fails to provide a home for widows and orphans, it allows polygamy to extend to them that advantage. Even if it be half a home that the women and children find in a polygamous family, it is better

than no home at all. Moreover, a community the ranks of whose fighting men were daily dwindling stood in urgent need of increasing its numbers by all possible means, and hence also it was necessary to provide a home for the widows so that they might be helpful in strengthening the numerical position of the community. The moral aspect of the question is not the least important. The war had decimated the male population and the number of women exceeded that of men. This excess, if not provided with a home would have led to moral depravity, which is the greatest danger to a civilization like that of Islam, which is based on morality.

The question of war is not peculiar to one age or one country. It is a question which affects the whole of humanity for all ages to come. War must always be a source of decrease in the number of males, bringing about a corresponding increase in the number of females, and a solution will have to be sought by all well-wishers of humanity for the problem of the excess of women over men. Monogamy is undoubtedly a right rule of life under normal conditions, but when abnormal conditions are brought about by the excess of females over males, polygamy must be allowed that this difficulty can be solved. Europe is today confronted with that question, independently of war, and war only aggravates its seriousness. Professions may be opened up for women to enable them to earn bread, and Islam has never closed the door of any profession against women. But the crux of the question is, not the provision of bread but the provision of a home-life, and that question cannot be solved without polygamy. It may be added here that polygamy in Islam is, both in theory and in practice, an exception, not a rule, and as an excep-

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tion it is a remedy for many of the evils of modern civilization. It is not only the preponderance of females over males that necessitates polygamy in certain cases, but there is a variety of other circumstances which require polygamy to be adopted under exceptional circumstances, not only for the moral but also the physical welfare of society. Prostitution, which is on the increase with the advancement of civilization, and which is eating into it like a canker, with its concomitant increase of bastardy, is practically unknown to countries where polygamy is allowed as a remedial measure. It may be further stated that the institution of polygamy, which was allowed by Islam only as a remedy, has largely been abused by sensual people, but then there are people in every society who would abuse any institution, however necessary it may be to the right growth of human society. In countries where polygamy is not allowed, the sensuality of man has invented a hundred other ways of giving vent to his carnal passions, and these are a far greater curse to society than the abuse of polygamy. Indeed, that abuse can be easily remedied by the state by placing legal limitations upon its practice, while the state is quite helpless against the evils which result from its entire rejection.

**FOOTNOTE**

1. Merely being poor is not sufficient excuse for not marrying because the needy are told that if they marry, Allah will make them free from want out of his grace. The Holy Prophet is reported to have performed the marriage of a man who did not possess so much as a ring of iron.

(To be continued in next issue)



towards heaven widens daily and this process is accelerated by the Divine pronouncement: My mercy outruns my wrath till the window becomes a wide gate and he enters heaven like the martyrs and siddiqs. God Almighty has made so much provision for the widening of this window that it appears clear that His purpose is that if anyone travels towards Him with a particle of faith and action that particle will be constantly nurtured. If by any chance all sources of good that should reach a dead person from this world are unavailable, at least this source remains available that God Almighty has imperatively commanded all believers and pious people and martyrs and siddiqs that they should most sincerely supplicate for the forgiveness of those of their brethren who have passed on from this world. It is thus obvious that a supplication that is made by a host of believers will not be in vain, but will work daily to widen the window that was opened towards heaven for the sinful believers who had died. These supplications have so far widened numberless windows so that countless persons have entered paradise who were bestowed in the early days only a small window for the contemplation of heaven.

In this age some of the Muslims are under the misconception that only the martyrs will enter heaven immediately after death and that all other believers, including Prophets and Messengers, will remain outside heaven till the Day of Judgment and that only a window will be opened for them towards heaven. They have not considered that all Prophets and siddiqs are spiritually superior to martyrs and that being kept away from paradise is a type of torment which cannot be contemplated for those who have been forgiven. Can one concerning whom God

Almighty has said: He exalted some of them in ranks (2:254); remain behind the martyrs in good fortune and the achievement of his purpose? It is a pity that through their lack of intelligence, these people have reversed the law. They conceive that the first entrants into heaven will be the martyrs and that the turn of the Prophets and siddiqs would arrive after countless years. These people are guilty of great disrespect and can derive no benefit from vain excuses. Everyone can understand that those who are foremost in faith and action should be the first to enter heaven and not that they should only have a window opened for them like those who are weak of faith, and that the martyrs should have access to all the fruits of heaven as soon as they die. If entry into heaven depends upon perfect faith, perfect sincerity and perfect devotion, then there is no one who is ahead of the Prophets and siddiqs. Whose whole life is so devoted to God Almighty that they are like the dead and yearn that they should be martyred in the cause of Allah, and be revived and be martyred again.

It is thus clear that there is such great provision for entry into heaven that almost all believers will enter it completely before the Day of Judgment and that the Day of Judgment will not expel them from heaven, but will bring it even nearer. From the illustration of the window, it should be realized how heaven is brought near to the grave. This does not mean that heaven is brought physically close to the grave. It is brought spiritually near. In this way, the dwellers of paradise will be spiritually present in the Day of Judgment and will also be in paradise. The Holy Prophet, peace be on him, has said: Heaven is under my grave. This is worth reflecting upon (Izala Auham, pp. 183-187).

# ISLAM, THE TRUE AND LIVING FAITH

by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

continued from last issue

**T**he second aspect of devoting one's life to the cause of God Almighty is that one's life should be devoted to the service of His creatures and to sympathy with them and to sharing their burdens and sorrows. One should suffer pain to bring them comfort, and one should experience grief to bring them consolation.

This shows that the reality of Islam is a very superior thing and that no one can truly deserve the title of Muslim till he surrenders the whole of his being to God, together with all his faculties and desires and designs, and till he begins to tread along this path withdrawing altogether from his ego and all its attendant qualities. A person will be truly called a Muslim only when his heedless life undergoes a total revolution and his evil-directing self, together with all its passions, is wiped out altogether and he is invested with a new life which is characterized by his carrying out all his obligations to Allah and which should comprise nothing except obedience to the Creator and sympathy for His creatures.

Obedience to the Creator means that to make manifest His Honour and Glory and Unity one should be ready to endure every dishonour and humiliation, and one should be eager to undergo a thousand deaths in order to uphold His Unity. One hand should be ready to cut off the other with pleasure in obedience to Him, and the love of the grandeur of His commandments and the thirst for seeking His pleasure should make sin so hateful as if it were a consuming fire, or a fatal poison, or an obliterating lightning from which one must run away with all one's power. For seeking His pleasure one must surrender all the desires of one's ego; and to establish a relationship with Him one should be ready to endure all

kinds of injuries; and to prove such relationship one must cut asunder from all other relationships.

The service of one's fellow-beings means to strive for their benefit purely for the sake of God in all their needs, and in all the relationships of mutual dependence which God has established out of true and selfless sympathy for them. Everyone in need of help should be helped out of one's God-given capacity and one must strive for their betterment both in this world and in the hereafter (Ayenae Kamalat-e-Islam, pp. 59-62).

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I would now wish to enlarge upon the fruits of Islam. When a true seeker of God establishes himself fully on Islam and everyone of his faculties begins to tread naturally upon the paths of God Almighty without any kind of artificiality, the ultimate result of his effort is that the higher manifestations of Divine guidance, freed from all obstructions, are directed towards him. Diverse types of blessings descend upon him and the commandments and doctrines which were accepted on faith and as hearsay, are now experienced by him as realities and certainties through dreams, visions and revelation. The mysteries of the faith and the law are revealed to him and he is afforded a view of the Divine kingdom so that he should arrive at the stage of perfect certainty and understanding.

A blessing characterizes his tongue and his words and all his actions and his movements. He is bestowed extra-ordinary courage and steadfastness and his understanding is expanded at a high level. The narrowness of human obstructions and meanness and miserliness, and the tendency

towards frequent stumblings, and shortsightedness and proneness towards passion and lowness of behaviour, and every darkness of his ego are totally removed from him and he is filled with the light of Divine attributes. Whereupon, he undergoes an entire change and puts on the garment of a new birth. He hears through God Almighty and sees through Him and moves with Him and stops with Him, and his anger becomes the wrath of God Almighty and his compassion becomes the compassion of God Almighty.

When He arrives at that stage, his prayers are heard as a mark of his having been chosen, and not merely as a trial; and he becomes the proof of God on earth and personifies security from God. There is joy in heaven on his account and the highest gift that is bestowed upon him is the word of God which descends upon his heart free from any doubt, like the light of the moon shining through without any mistiness. It carries an effective sense of delight with it and bestows satisfaction, such as a friend receives from a friend. We can only define it by saying that it is a special manifestation of God the Glorious which is conveyed through a favourite angel. Its purpose is to give intimation of acceptance of prayer, or to communicate a new or secret matter, or to make aware of something that is to happen in the future, or to warn of God's pleasure, or lack of it, concerning any matter, or to create certainty and understanding concerning some matter. It is a Divine voice which manifests itself in the form of converse in order to create understanding and satisfaction. It is not possible to define it any further. It is a voice which proceeds from God and is experienced in delicious words full of blessings, which is not induced by any think-

ing or reflection or any intrusion of self and is surcharged with a Divine manifestation and Divine majesty (Ayenae Kamalat-e-Islam, pp.226-233).

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I believe in Islam alone as a true religion and consider all other faiths as bundles of falsehoods. I perceive that by believing in Islam, fountains of light are coursing through me. Through the love of the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, I have arrived at that high stage of converse with the Divine and of acceptance of prayer which can only be achieved by a follower of the true prophet and by no other. If the Hindus and the Christians and others were to supplicate their false gods, even unto death, they could not achieve that stage. I hear the words of God which the others believe in only as a theory. I have been shown and have been told and I have been made to understand that Islam alone is the true faith in the world, and it has been disclosed to me that I have received all this through the blessing of following the Khatamul Anbiya, peace be on him, and that the equal of it cannot be achieved in any other religion for they are all false (Ayenae Kamalat-e-Islam, pp. 275-276).

A thousand thanks are due to Almighty God Who has bestowed upon us a religion which is such a means of attaining to the knowledge of God and to the fear of God as has had no equal in any age. Thousands of blessings be upon the immaculate Prophet through whom we have entered this faith and thousands of Divine mercies be bestowed upon his companions who irrigated this garden with their blood.

Islam is such a blessed and God-indicating religion that if a person follows it truly and acts upon the teachings and guidance

and admonition that are contained in the Holy Word of God Almighty, the Holy Quran, he would see God in this very life. For the recognition of God Who is hidden from the sight of the world behind a thousand screens, there is no other means except the teachings of the Quran. The Holy Quran guides towards God Almighty through reason and heavenly sign in a very easy manner. It comprehends a blessing and a magnetic power which draws a seeker of God every moment towards God and bestows light and comfort and satisfaction. A true believer in the Holy Quran does not merely contemplate like the philosophers that there ought to be a Creator of this wonderful universe; he acquires a personal insight and being honoured with a holy vision he sees with the eye of certainty that that creator in fact exists. He who is bestowed the light of this Holy Word does not merely guess like those who rely upon reason alone that God is One, without associate, but through hundreds of shining signs which take him by the hand and lead him out of the darkness, observes in fact that God has no associate in His being or in His attributes. He is able to demonstrate to the world that he believes God to be such a Unity. The majesty of the Unity of God so fills his heart that in comparison with the Divine will, he regards the whole world as no more than a dead insect and indeed as nothing at all (Braheen Ahmadiyyah, Part V, pp. 16-17).

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The God of a true religion should be so much in accord with reason and the light of nature that His existence should be a matter of proof for people who possess reason but who have no heavenly book in which they believe. He should be such as does not savour

of coercion or artificiality. Such perfection is characteristic of the God Who is presented by the Holy Quran. The followers of other religions have either abandoned the true God, as have the Christians, or have attributed improper and low attributes to Him, as have the Jews, or have deprived Him of His attributes, as have the pagans and the Aryas. The God of Islam is the same true God Who is seen through the mirror of the law of nature and is visible in the book of nature. Islam had not presented a new God but has presented the same God Who is presented by the light of man's heart and by man's conscience and by heavens and earth.

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Another quality of a true religion is that it should not be a dead creed. The blessings and greatnesses which were cultivated in it in the beginning should persist in it till the end of the world, for the promotion of the welfare of mankind, so that ever fresh signs should confirm its past signs and should not permit the light of its truth to become an old tale. I have been writing over a long period that the beneficence of the Prophethood which was claimed by our lord and master Muhammad, the chosen one, peace be on him, and the heavenly proofs in the form of signs which he had set forth, still continue in Islam and are bestowed upon his followers so that they should arrive at the state of complete understanding and should witness the living God directly.

The signs which are attributed to Jesus are mere stories, and are nowhere to be seen, and therefore this religion which teaches the worship of the dead is itself dead like its god. A verity cannot be confined to old tales. Every people has a store of tales setting

forth alleged miracles and wonders. It is a characteristic only of Islam that it does not present merely the defective and imperfect comfort of tales and stories, but satisfies the seekers with living signs. A seeker after truth should not be satisfied with senseless worship of the dead and should not be put off with sorry tales. We have come into the market of the world to purchase the best. We should not waste our faith by exchanging it with false things. A living faith is that through which we can find the living God. The living God is He Who can inspire us directly, or could at least bring us in contact with one who is directly inspired.

I convey this good news to the whole world that the God of Islam is such a living God. Those with whom no one can now speak are dead and are not God. No one can see their signs today. He whose God is dead would be put to shame in every field and would be humiliated and would not be helped in any way. My purpose in making this announcement is that a religion which is true does not change. As it was in the beginning, so it would be at the end. A true religion would never become a dry tale. Islam is a true religion and I call everyone, Christians, Aryas, Jews, Brahmos, to show them the truth of Islam. Is there anyone of them who seeks the living God? We do not worship the dead. Our God is living. He helps us through His inspiration and revelation and through heavenly signs. If there is a single Christian who is truly a seeker after truth, let him make a comparison between our living God and his dead god. For such a trial, a period of forty days would suffice.

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The Islam whose qualities we have set out is not something for proof of which we have to refer only to the past and to have to

point only to the ruins of tombs. Islam is not a dead faith so that it may be said that all its blessings have been left behind and that there is nothing ahead. The principal quality of Islam is that its blessings always accompany it and that it does not speak only of the past but presents present blessings. The world is always in need of blessings and heavenly signs. It is not as if it needed them in the past and does not need them now. A weak and helpless human being who is born blind is in need that he should know something of the heavenly kingdom and that he should see some signs of the existence and power of God in Whom he believes. The signs of a past age cannot suffice for a subsequent age, for hearing is not the same as seeing and by the passage of time past events become like stories. Every century starts a new world. Therefore, the God of Islam, who is the true God, manifest new signs for each new world. At the beginning of each century, especially at the beginning of a century which has strayed far away from faith and integrity and is enveloped in many darknesses, He raises a viceroy of the Prophet in the mirror of whose nature appears the form of that prophet. Such a viceroy, through his person, demonstrates to the world the excellences of the Prophet whose follower he is and convicts all opponents through the truth and the display of reality and the frustration of falsehood (Ayenae Kamalat-e-Islam, pp. 245-247).

The sign of a true religion is that through its teaching such righteous ones should continue to arise who should arrive at the stage of a Muhaddas to whom God Almighty should speak face to face. The foremost sign of the truth of Islam is that all through it produces such righteous ones with whom God Almighty talks as is said in the Holy Quran; angels

descend upon them reassuring them, fear not, nor grieve (41:31). This is the test of a true, living and acceptable religion. We know that this light is to be found only in Islam and that the Christian faith is without such light (Hujjatul Islam, p. 3).

We can furnish conclusive proof to every seeker after truth that from the time of our lord and master the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, up to today, in every century there have appeared men of God through whom God Almighty has guided other people by the display of heavenly signs. Of these were Syed Abdul Qadir Jilani, Abul Hasan Kharqani, Abu Yazid Bistami, Junaid Baghdadi, Mohyuddin Ibn Arabi, Dhunnoon Misri, Mueenuddin Chishti Ajmeri, Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, Fareeduddin Pakpattani, Nizamuddin Dehlavi, Shah Waliullah Dehlave, and Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, may Allah be pleased with them. Their number exceeded thousands and so many extraordinary happenings concerning them are set out in the books of the learned ones that even a very bigoted opponent has to admit that these people manifested extraordinary signs and miracles. I tell you truly that through my research so far as it is possible for one to discover about the past, I have come to the conclusion that the number of heavenly signs in support of Islam and as a testimony of truth of the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, which have been manifested through the aulia of this Ummat, is not to be equalled in the history of other religions.

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# SOME AUTHENTIC WORKS ON ISLAM

*By Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad—*

*The Promised Messiah & Mehdi*

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## MUHAMMAD THE GREATEST MAN OF HISTORY

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

—Alphonse de Lamartine in *Histoire de la Turquie*

## QUR'AN, THE GREATEST SPIRITUAL FORCE

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

—Bosworth Smith

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

—*New Researches* by H. Hirschfeld

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

—Dr. Steingass, *Hughes’ Dictionary of Islam*

## THE BEAUTIFUL CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAM

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

—George Bernard Shaw

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