



إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

THE MUSLIM SUNRISE

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In This Issue:

The Awaited One of All Ages

Beauties of Islam:

A Refutation of Christianity:
Proven From the Bible

Impact of the Holy Quran

Light From Majlis-e-Irfan

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THE MUSLIM SUNRISE

The Muslim Sunrise is the official journal of the American Fazi Mosque. It features articles written by renowned scholars. The magazine is open for discussion on Islam as well as topics relating to other religions. It highlights the role of Islam in a changing environment. It provides a platform for public opinion on current problems confronting humanity and their solution. This within the context of understanding the basic purpose of life here and hereafter. Opinions expressed in this magazine may not necessarily be those of the American Fazi Mosque.

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HAZRAT MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD THE PROMISED MESSIAH AND MAHDI

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad founded the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat in 1889 in Qadian, a small village in India's Punjab Province. Under Divine guidance, he proclaimed to be the Promised Reformer whose advent has been predicted by many world religions. Islam being the complete and perfect code of life for all mankind, he taught that the Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be on him, was the final law-bearing Prophet of God. The Promised Reformer was to be a subordinate to the Holy Prophet of Islam.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, a devout Muslim, championed the cause of Islam at a time when there was little understanding of true Islamic values even among the Muslims and Islam was under attack by the leaders of all other faiths. Hazrat Ahmad resolved to set forth the truth of Islam and the utter beneficence of its teachings in an epoch-making book, *Baraheen Ahmadiyya*. This book was acclaimed by the Muslims as an outstanding and matchless work and Hazrat Ahmad was acknowledged as the most renowned and honored personage in the contemporary world of Islam. He wrote more than 80 books expounding the beauty and truth of Islam. He revived the faith in ONE God, in the Prophethood of Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, and he established a community of Muslims who practice Islam in its true essence. They promote peace and live in complete submission to the Will of God.

Despite bitter and abusive opposition, soon the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat was to be recognized with awe and wonder all over the world as the most dynamic religious force championing the cause of Islam. At present the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat has ten million members spread throughout 117 countries, bonded in a universal love and brotherhood. They demonstrate full commitment to the betterment of mankind. Their spirit of selfless service and excellence of work is deeply appreciated everywhere the Jamaat has spread. They have built more than one thousand mosques in different parts of the world, and they have translated the Holy Quran in almost all the major languages. No barrier of color, race, language or nationality is permitted to stand in the way of selfless and tireless devotion to promote the unification of mankind through Islam.

THE AWAITED ONE OF ALL AGES

(Has The World Missed The Second Coming Of Christ)

In explaining what the role of the Awaited One of All Ages might be, let us go back to earlier times and start with the surprisingly similar, basic teaching of all the major religions. That is, the coming of a "Messiah".

All religions expect *The Messiah* to come in the so-called Latter Days, relatively close to the end of this physical world as we know it. Secondly, they all expect this person to be a "Second Coming" of some type, usually of a prophet they have come to give a special place to or even idolize. Examples can be seen from all the major religions: the Hindus expect Shri Nishkalank Avtar. The Sikh's scripture calls him Mahdi Mir. The Zoroastrians hope for the appearance of Soashyant, the third spiritual son of Zoroaster. The Buddhists believe that Buddhista Maitreya—the future Buddha, will ultimately descend from his present abode in one of the heavens. In Judaism, belief in and fervent expectation of the Messiah are firmly established tenets. Christians, since the early times after Paul have been expecting the second coming of Jesus Christ. The Sunni Muslims are also expecting the same Christ to descend from heaven but as a Muslim. And the Shiite Muslims believe that the "Hidden Imam" who mysteriously disappeared 1100 years ago, they say, will come back as Imam Mahdi.

So we know that all the followers of the major religions of the world are waiting for a Messiah. But what is this personage expected to do? Again all the versions agree on this: He is to be a Champion of Truth, waging war on evil and showing his followers the path to a happy reward in the after life. Some expect this war against evil to be more militaristic, but their holy writings only specify that he will bring truth. For example, Jesus told his apostles, who expected the "Kingdom" of his Second Coming to be a powerful one materialistically, that it was not of this world and that he would not champion the cause of truth with force.

What implications does this phenomenon have, that all the world

religions expect a Messiah in the Latter Days? For one thing, it is a very strong proof that their expectations are correct. But also, it gives rise to the question: where did the peoples of different religions derive this knowledge of a Second Coming? The answer is that it came from the prophets Allah sent to them and the Books that were revealed. And this very valuable information, when put together, included an entire portrait of the Promised One to come— his personality, mission, time and age, victories and struggles, challenges, and even aftermath. Certainly it seems that God Almighty wanted to make sure, out of His Mercy for mankind, that abundant guidance was provided for every group of people to recognize and accept this Promised One. Obviously his advent was a crucial one for human existence; otherwise, it would not have taken such a prominent place in religious teaching.

Consider, it wasn't enough to provide vague generalities or spiritual enigmas as to the Messiah's coming—specific prophecies were made, most notably by the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him. Of course we would like to examine some of these signs and prophecies, together with the criterion that the person himself be righteous and pure. After all this is at the crux of recognizing and accepting the Promised One. But first, let us examine a few preliminary observations based on religious history.

It has always been the way of God Almighty through his attributes of Al-Rahman, the Merciful and Al-Wadood, the Loving, to give a people both warning and clear guidance before punishment. This guidance comes in the form of a prophet who is Nadhir—a warner of impending disaster if one's ways are not changed; and Bashir—a good news giver, the good news being salvation and prosperity if man does submit to God. The Bible and the Quran are full of stories about people who were warned before disaster. Examples are the people of Lot, Saleh, and Shuaib. Of course the most well known is the story of Noah, and Noah's Ark has become a symbol of this entire concept. But these are far more than stories to amuse us or documentations of history. To think so would be an insult to Allah for He has placed these stories in the Quran for our guidance. So what lesson is to be learned by us today, living in this time?

Simply this, that God would not punish the utter immorality and disregard for righteousness of our time without first sending a

warner. It is not only the prophecies about this age that made us realize a guide must have come in our time, but what we actually see going on around us that makes us look for a Noah's Ark to cling to. Our message is that we Ahmadis believe that this ark has been built and is accepting passengers right now. And that a warner has already come to guide us inside, before Allah's flood overtakes this world.

Before mentioning some signs of the time this prophet, or Warner, was to appear in, let us consider one other question. Since every major religion was expecting a different person to come as the Promised One, is it possible that they all could be right—that is, more than one person was coming? We must rule out this possibility for several reasons. First, it would be physically impractical. If we take just one example of the Muslim and Christian ideas of Jesus Christ's second coming, we immediately see a contradiction. How could Christ on one hand be a Christian and chastise all those who were not, and on the other hand be a Muslim and lead the whole world to Islam? Using the same logic, other expected Second Comings such as the actual Zarathustra or Buddha, if they are to be taken as literal, would conflict with one another.

Secondly, this is a time when very advanced communications and transportation have brought the whole world together. Nations are no longer isolated and self-sufficient. Therefore the whole world would **most** benefit from one **reformer** and **least** benefit from conflicting ones.

How do we justify this realization with all the religions' expectations of different promised ones? The following Bible quote from Matthew explains that: "And his (Jesus') disciples asked him saying, 'Why then say the Scribes that Elias must first come?' And Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you that Elias has come already, and they know him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they wished.' Then the disciples understood that he spoke unto them of John the Baptist."

In short, we already have an example of a prophet coming in the power and spirit of another. That is, John the Baptist was Elias come again just as Jesus explained. We also have the example of Krishna who said that whenever there would be a decay in dharma or faith, he would come forth. He would be born age to age.

Obviously, Krishna has never come back, so it must mean someone in his power and spirit. This is just how one Messiah, one Promised One, one Reformer all in the same person would be the Awaited One of All Ages and Religions.

We have established that the religions of the world are correct in waiting for a Promised One in the Latter Ages. We have shown that this was to be only one person for the whole world. And we have seen that this person would provide a chance for people of the world to be saved from a time of sin and darkness. What remains to be seen is when this person would come. We Ahmadis believe this person has already come. He was Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of India, but before anyone is asked to believe in him as Ahmadis have, let us look to some prophecies and signs laid out about the time and place the Promised Messiah was to come, using not only Muslim scriptures but other religious teachings as well.

The most prevalent prophecies talk of the condition of society at the time of the Awaited One. The Hindus call this time Kalyuga. At the time of Kalyuga the Bhagavada Gita Scriptures give the following conditions: There will be a gradual decay in dharma and faith, civilization and culture, piety and purity. The rich will be looked upon with honor and respect and the poor will be derided as unclean and untouchable. The unlearned and ignorant will pose as pandits and deliver sermons from high pulpits. A large section of the people will be atheists and turn away from the worship of the One True God. Places of worship will be deserted and desolate and wine shops and taverns will be much frequented. People, in spite of being poor, will indulge in sensual pleasures. Hairdressing of different styles will be considered as a mark of beauty. Women, with uncovered faces, will walk about in the bazaars as prostitutes. Girls of eight years old will become mothers. Sons will call their parents fools. The produce of the land will be small. The rainfall will be scanty, and out of time. Rivers will deviate from their courses.

From the Bible we have: Famines will stalk through the land and earthquakes will occur. The epidemic of plague will break out in a virulent form. Nation will rise against nation. Spiritual cleanliness and purity will become extinct. Love of God will fade away from the minds of the people. Fair dealings and honesty will become a thing of the past and people will be obsessed with the love of this world. (Some references are II Timothy 3:1-4 and Matt. 24:7).

The first thing to note here is that at the time of these prophecies, this was not the condition of society. It is easy to wonder what a miracle of foretelling the signs of this time is, because it is so easy to take our surroundings for granted. But times have changed immensely and unfortunately, as far as man's spirituality is concerned, not for the better. There is a serious decline in belief in any religion. Culture and the arts are no longer a prominent part of society. The rich are honored only because of their wealth. Bars and taverns have become centers of society and churches, mosques, and synagogues are becoming more and more empty. The poor still indulge in extreme promiscuity including a higher rate of unwed teenage pregnancy. Eight-year old mothers are not uncommon. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, some city high schools claim higher than 50% motherhood rates. Famine has become rampant in some third world countries and in large parts of Africa. And, in general, we see a fading in the love of God.

What does the Holy Quran and Hadith say about the time of the Messiah? A summary of some points listed about the Latter Days from Hadith and the Quran are as follows: Muslims will be in a sad state of affairs including practical indifference to Zaka'at (tax), disappearance of or hurrying through prayers, the wrapping of the Holy Quran in gold and silver but not being read, and the exaggerated devotion to the outer decoration of mosques. The Ulema shall turn their faces away from religion and expound on matters temporal. People will look to them for guidance but will find them to have become apes and swine. The rich will be indifferent to the needs of the nation. Singers and dancers will be held in respect, and a mention of the Most High God and His Prophet will be derided and disdained. Adultery will be excessively committed with a feeling of pride and arrogance. Men will try to look like women, and women will try to look like men. Intercommunication between the countries will improve. Camels will be thrown out of use, and their place will be taken by other means of conveyance run by fire and steam. Roads will be constructed through the mountains. People will fly in the air like birds. They will have steel hands to eat their food with. Steel will be more valuable than gold.

Again, how incredibly these signs foretell the era we are passing through right now. Who do children today most look up to? The singers and dancers. If someone today mentions God or His

prophets, he is laughed at and ridiculed. People eat with steel hands (forks). Communication and transportation have developed beyond earlier imagination. And because of industry, steel has actually become more valuable than gold.

We can thus conclude that this is the era that all the religious teachings have pointed to as the time of the Promised One. But the prophecies of the different Holy Scriptures give even more detail about the time the Awaited One will come in much more specific terms. Baba Nanak put the time of a Perfect Teacher from India as the 19th Century. And in Daniel Chapter 12 vs. 9-11, we read that the Messiah shall appear 1290 years after the Jews forsook the practice of making a burnt offering of a lamb every morning (per a verse in Ezekiel). Since this time corresponded with the coming of the Holy Prophet, the time to expect the Messiah, according to Daniel, was at the head of the 14th Century.

There is also a lot of evidence to place this Messiah 1300 years after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be on him, and as a sort of thirteenth Khalifa to him. First, striking comparisons between Muhammad and Moses have been made in the Bible and the Quran. One verse in the Quran compared their spiritual successors:

“Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most surely make them successors in the earth as he made successors those before them...” (24:56).

Also the Holy Prophet said, “How can my ummat be annihilated and undone when I am in its beginning and Jesus, Son of Mary at its close and twelve caliphs in between us.”

When we put all this together along with the fact that Jesus came 1300 years after Moses, it make a very strong case that the Messiah of our times would come 1300 years after Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be on him.

Of all the specific prophecies made about the actual person to come, the Holy Prophet has made the best, both in quantity and quality and they are of shocking clarity. But before getting to these prophecies, a comment is merited about signs in general. First of all, the advent of a Messiah in our time is an event of magnanimous proportions. It is also something that people don't easily accept. So to help those who are searching for the truth, Allah out of His

Mercy gives many signs, some very specific, and He makes these signs available to all the people regardless of race or nation. This explains why there have been so many prophecies about the coming of the Promised Messiah.

Secondly, the signs of the time are often fulfilled *in part* at various eras of history; as well as part of the prophecies about the actual person fulfilled by many people. But with an event of such proportions the true claimant should be such a person and appear in such a time as *all* the signs are fulfilled.

Let us conclude with some prophecies of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be on him, about the Promised One. But first let us consider the other conclusions we have drawn so far. First, one Messiah was to come at the head of the 14th Century under the banner of Muhammad and Islam. Secondly, he was to come in India. Third, he was to be a spiritual guide and reform misconceptions about religions of the world.

Only four characteristics of the Messiah according to the Holy Prophet Muhammad will be mentioned here. Note how exacting they are. First, he will be born a twin. Second, he will suffer two diseases one of the upper part of the body and one of the lower part of the body.

About his nationality we have the following Tradition: The Holy Prophet Muhammad put his hand on a Persian companion known as Salman Farsi and said, "Should faith go up to the Pleiades, a man from among these would surely bring it back." This shows that the Promised One was to be of Persian descent.

As far as the appearance of the Promised One, we have the Hadith in Bukhari in which the Holy Prophet Muhammad was talking about his spiritual Ascension: "I met Isa (Jesus)... he was of fair complexion." But later the Prophet says "I saw a man of wheatish complexion...from among the people of wheatish color... I inquired who was he? They said, it was the Messiah, son of Mary." And again, "in a state of dream I found myself going round the Ka'bah and there was a person of wheatish complexion having straight flowing hair...I asked who he was? 'It was the son of Mary' they said." From this we can see that the Holy Prophet talked about two people of the same name, one of fair complexion of the Judaic era and one of the Islamic era having a wheatish

complexion. This is the Messiah we are speaking of, coming in our time—the Latter Days.

Even with all these signs and prophecies, there is one remaining—one that would be cosmic in nature and leave no doubt for the searcher of faith. In the words of the Holy Prophet: “For our Mahdi there are appointed two signs which have never been manifested for any other claimant since the creation of heaven and earth. They are: at his advent there shall occur an eclipse of the moon on the first of its appointed nights, and an eclipse of the sun on the middle one of its appointed days and both will occur in the same month of Ramadhan.”

This is no ordinary prediction. It makes a claim about something man would have no control over whatsoever and an occurrence extremely rare. In addition, not only has it been prophesied by the HOLY Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be on him, but also in the sacred scripture of the Sikhs we read: “When Avtar (or Awaited one) will appear, his coming will be proclaimed unto the whole world and the sun and moon will give his evidence” Note that this is also a proof that the awaited one would come to the whole world.

Even if all the other signs and prophecies leave one in doubt (which there is little chance of) this one sign would be the final convincing piece of evidence.

Our society is changing around us again and soon the signs prophesied will no longer apply. Just as one example, morality is coming back into focus in society and more people are turning to religion for answers. Therefore, we must conclude that the time has come and gone when the Messiah was to come.

Ahmadi Muslims claim that this Messiah was Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India. He was the only claimant to fulfill **all** the signs and his truth is witnessed in his more than ten million followers all over the globe. The question is: doesn't the rest of the world owe it to themselves to learn more about the Promised Messiah, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad?

A. Tariq Sharif

York, PA

BEAUTIES OF ISLAM

“I have chanced upon a gold mine and have been apprised of a treasury of precious stones and I have, by great good fortune, been provided with a most valuable diamond. It is so precious that if I were to distribute its proceeds among all my fellow beings, everyone of them would become richer than the one who today owns the largest amount of gold and silver. What is that diamond? That diamond is the One True God.”

In today's materialistic world it appears vain to expect from anyone a message so fragrant with the perfume of spirituality, love and sympathy as to remind one of Israelite Prophets — Moses and Jesus, peace be upon them, yet this unexpected message was conveyed to mankind less than a century ago.

These words were used by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, peace be on him, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, who claimed that he was the Promised One whose advent in the Latter Days had been foretold in the scriptures of all the great faiths. He was the Messiah for Christians and the Mahdi for Muslims. He presented the true teaching of Islam to the world and established that Islam is a living faith and the God of Islam is a Living God. He is the same God who appeared to Moses at Sinai, to Jesus at Seir and to Muhammad, the Chosen One, at Mount Paran, peace be on them. The same “Almighty and Most Holy God has manifested Himself to me and speaks to me.” declared Hazrat Ahmad, peace be on him.

But what is Islam? The name Islam literally means peace, surrender of one's will. The significance of the name Islam is the attainment of a life of perfect peace, and eternal happiness through complete surrender to the Will of God. The name Islam, is the name God Himself gave to the religion of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, and which long before him had found an honored place in the prophecies of earlier prophets. The Quran, the Holy Book of the Muslims, says:

1. “He (God) named you Muslims before, as well as in this Book” (22:79).

2. *“This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favor upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion” (5:4).*
3. And in the Bible: *“Thou shalt be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name” Isaiah (62:2).*

This divinely chosen name summarizes the message of the faith. This is one of the many unique features of Islam. No other faith can boast of it, or of anything resembling it.

No name can be more blessed than the name which God Himself chose for His servants and which He invested with importance by making other prophets prophesy about it. Who will give up this name?

It is dearer to us than our lives. The religion it connotes is for us the only religion, the only source of spiritual life.

According to Islam, the object of man's life is its complete unfoldment. Islam does not support the idea that man is born in sin. It teaches that everyone has within him the seed of perfect development and it rests solely with himself to make or mar his fortune. *“We created man in the best make”* says the Holy Quran. (95:4)

The cardinal doctrine of Islam is the Unity of Godhead. Our Kalima, our creed is: *“There is none worthy of worship but the One and Only God, and Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, is His Messenger.”* In the Arabic language, the word Allah, means Supreme Being. The word is never used for any other thing or being. It cannot be pluralized. Whereas, in the English language one can easily add “s” to God to pluralize it. We believe that Allah is free from all defects; Holy and Transcendent. He is All Good, all Mercy, and All Power. He has no partner, He neither begets nor is He begotten, because these are the traits of his creation.

Furthermore, Islam helps us to establish a permanent relationship with God and to realize Him during our earthly life as our Helper in all our affairs and undertakings. This unity of God is the first and foremost pillar (foundation) of Islam and every other belief hangs upon it.

Islam requires belief in all the prophets of Allah including Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Krishna, Buddha, Confucious, and

Zoroaster, peace be on them all. We regard them all, and many more, as heavenly teachers born to reform and regenerate man and lead him to God. Islam establishes peace between all religions.

We draw no line of discrimination. All we add is that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, was also a great teacher and a prophet of God. Due to the magnitude and extent of his work we regard him as the greatest of them all. Yet we do not believe that the Divine Door of prophecy and the door of communication with the Creator is closed for the future. It is now in the footsteps of the Master-Prophet Muhammed, peace and blessing of Allah be on him, that each one has to walk. Islam is not a dead religion of myth and wonderful tales of the past. It is a religion full of life for the benefit of the present generation. This is Islam.

But because in our time different groups of Muslims, out of regard for their special beliefs and outlook, have adopted different names, it becomes necessary for us to adopt a name to distinguish ourselves from others. The best name we could adopt was the name Ahmadi. This name has a significance for our time. Ours is the time appointed for the propagation, all over the world of the Universal Message of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessing of Allah be on him, and one of Muhammad's name was Ahmad.

It is the time for the diffusion of the Praises of God and for the spread of a knowledge of His Bounty and His Beauty, the time for the manifestation of the attribute of *Ahmadiyyat*, the attribute of *Muhammadiyyat* having had its manifestation in the first era. A better name could not have been adopted by us.

We are Muslims, those who follow the religion of Islam, with our heart and soul. We hold the beliefs a true Muslim must hold and deny the beliefs a true Muslim must deny.

This is Islam, and our founder Hazrat Ahmad peace be on him, recognized God through his personal experience and observation and found such matchless and perfect beauty in that Living God of Islam that he was irresistibly moved to invite the whole world to seek this treasure in the following words:

“Our God is our paradise. Our highest delight is in our God, for we have seen Him and have found every beauty in Him. This wealth is worth procuring though one might have

to lay down one's life to procure it. This ruby is worth purchasing though one may have to lose oneself to acquire it. O ye, who are bereft, run to this fountain and it will satisfy you. It is the fountain of life that will save you. What shall I do, and how shall I impress the hearts with this good news? What drum shall I beat to make the announcement that this is your God, so that people might hear? What remedy shall I apply to the ears of the people so they should listen?"

This is the true and real picture of Islam presented by the Spiritual Leader of the Age, the Messiah and Mahdi, peace be on him, where the countenance of the Living God may be beheld—the God who speaks to His servants, hears their prayers and loves them.

The One who in this age called mankind to the Living God, the Living Messenger and the Living Book was Hazrat Ahmad, peace be on him. He was born in 1835 in a small town in India. The purpose of his advent was to draw attention to the misguidance of false creeds and to guide mankind along the path of true redemption. For instance he refuted the doctrine of atonement through the supposed death of Jesus (peace be on him) upon the cross and demonstrated that Jesus was delivered from the accursed death on the cross and thereafter travelled to the East to carry his message to the lost tribes of Israel. He sojourned in the Middle East, in Afghanistan, in India and in Kashmir and after conveying his message to those tribes, died at a ripe old age in Srinager, the capital of Kashmir, where his tomb still exists and may be visited.

The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, founded the Ahmadiyah Movement in 1889 for calling mankind to God, manifesting the righteousness and grandeur of Muhammad, peace and blessing of Allah be on him, and for establishing the truth of the Holy Quran and the superiority of its teachings over all other faiths. He admonished his followers to occupy themselves with establishing the true Unity of God throughout the world and to devote their lives to the service of their fellow beings without distinction of color, race or creed, out of true sympathy and deep love for everyone. This is Islam!

In the atmosphere of terror and despair there is discernible only one ray of hope and that is Islam's message of peace and the Holy Quran's message of love. O despairing mankind, the solution of all your problems is to be found only in the Holy Quran.

In less than 100 years the Ahmadiyya Movement has created Islamic Centers—Mosques, Mission houses— in nearly all parts of the world, in addition to schools and hospitals. The work keeps expanding. Ahmadi Muslims believe that Islam will live again. Its major instrument is translations and explanations of the Holy Quran in all the languages of the world. Through renewed faith and insight, we hope (if Allah so Wills) to convert the world to Islam.

It may take time but it must come to pass for the Messiah, our Founder, peace be on him, has prophesied in no unmistakable terms:

“O mankind! hearken this is the prophecy of God Who made the heavens and the earth. He will spread this movement in all the countries and will give it supremacy over all through reason and argument. Remember, no one will descend from heaven. All our opponents who are living at present will die and not one of them will see Jesus, son of Mary, peace be on him, descend from the sky and then their children who survive will also pass away and none of them will see Jesus, son of Mary, coming down from heaven. Generations will also perish but they will not see the son of Mary descend from heaven. Then will God create restlessness in the hearts and they will say that the day of the glory of the Cross has passed away and the world has taken another turn, but Jesus, son of Mary, has still not come down from heaven. Then all the wise people will discard this belief and the third century from today will not have completed when all those who have been waiting for Jesus, both Muslims and Christians, will despair of his coming and, entertain misgiving and shall give up their belief and there will be only one faith in the world and one preceptor. I came only to sow the seed. That seed has been sown by my hand. It will now grow and blossom forth and nobody dare retard its growth”.

Abdul Rehman Sharif

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A REFUTATION OF CHRISTIANITY: PROVEN FROM THE BIBLE

This essay intends to refute the basic doctrines that make up the religion of Christianity. However, there is no intention to offend anyone in any manner. The author holds no prejudice against anyone, and is merely trying to convey his own opinion on the principles of Christianity. The purpose here is merely to inform, not to attack.

All assertions made by the author have the valid support of direct quotations from the Bible — whose laws and doctrines govern all Christians. The claims made in this essay are backed up solely by the Holy Bible and direct contemporary medical and scientific evidence.

The actual refutation is divided into four separate sections for the reader's convenience:

Crucifixion?

There have been a multitude of critics and scholars of this age who question the idea whether Jesus Christ (on whom be peace) really did die on the cross. The fundamental Christian belief is that Christ did indeed die on the cross as a result of crucifixion — and that he later reappeared, ascending to heaven. The stipulation that Jesus Christ did die on the cross has been subject to great controversy. The assertion that is made here is that Jesus Christ *did not* die on the cross, but rather, he died a natural death, after he was taken down alive from the Cross.

To begin with, in the Book of Matthew (12:38-40), it is said:

Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharises answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas. **For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the Whale's Belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**

In the above quotation, it is seen that some of the scribes and Pharisees who were with Christ, asked for a sign. Christ replied that no sign will be given except the sign of the Prophet Jonas.

Here the reader must be made aware of the sign of the Prophet Jonas (Jonah). In the Book of Jonah, it is related how Jonah was swallowed by a great whale. It further relates that Jonah remained *alive* inside the belly of the whale for three days and three nights — and then came back out *alive*:

Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. (1:17)

Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly. And said, I cried by reason of my affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. (2:1-2)

And the Lord spake unto the Fish and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land. (2:10)

The above quotations clearly indicate what transpired as the "miracle of Jonah" — that is, that Jonah went in *alive*, was inside *alive*, and came out *alive*. The miracle therefore, is that Jonah survived the agony of being consumed by the whale because of his ardent supplications to God.

Viewing the above mentioned facts, it is found that since Christ compared himself to the prophet Jonah, it must follow that the miracle of Jonah must correspond to whatever miracle Christ is going to show. For, Christ said that just as Jonah remained in the belly of the whale for three days and nights, so shall he himself remain in the earth for three days and nights. Therefore, his miracle must come to pass — in the same manner as Jonah's.

However, the Christian doctrines state that after Christ was crucified and taken down from the Cross, he was taken, in the care of his disciples, to a nearby sepulchre — a cave-like room hewn out of rock that served as a tomb for the dead. After a period of three days and nights, he was seen outside the tomb alive — thus making it appear that he had come out of the earth alive, in accordance with the miracle of Jonah. Yet they say he did not go in alive, nor did Christ remain in the earth alive. Rather, he was killed and was then brought, *dead*, to the sepulchre:

And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: And he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. (Matt. 27:59-60)

How can Christ's miracle of remaining in the earth for three days and nights be analogous to the miracle of Jonah, when Jonah went in and came out of the whale alive, and Christ went in dead??

The only way that Christ's statement could hold true is if Christ *did not die on the Cross*. Then, he would have entered the earth alive, remained in the cave alive, and left the cave alive, as well. The Christian belief that Christ died on the Cross refutes the very saying of Jesus Christ, himself.

Of course, Christians can use several arguments to defend against this claim, as well. For one thing, they assert that Jonah wasn't alive in the belly of the whale to begin with. Therefore, the analogy to the miracle of Christ fits with the miracle of Jonah.

However, the one fundamental problem regarding this idea is that the Bible itself says that Jonah was *alive* when inside the belly of the whale:

Then Jonah prayed unto God Out of the Fish's Belly. And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the Belly of Hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. (Jonah, 2:1-2)

The above quotation clearly shows that the Prophet Jonah was indeed alive when in the belly of the whale.

There is another incident where, through the Bible, the assertion that Jesus died on the Cross is refuted. The Bible states:

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. (Galatians, 3:13)

The above quotation states that whosoever is hung on the Cross, (the "tree") he dies an accursed death. Yet, didn't Christ die on the Cross? Did he die an accursed death? How can the beloved and dearest to God die an accursed death? The assertions contradict each other.

If Jesus Christ did not die on the cross, then what happened to him? We believe that he was put on the Cross but survived this

ordeal. Let us further analyse the events as recorded in the Bible to see whether they support our theory.

To begin with, there transpired a significantly unique event — even prior to the time of Christ's death sentence. The wife of Pontius Pilate — (Pontius Pilate was governor during time of Christ's crucifixion) — had a very vivid dream in which she saw Christ being murdered, even though he was innocent:

When he [Pontius Pilate] was set down on the judgement seat, his wife sent unto him saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. (Matthew, 27:19)

Pontius Pilate's wife's dream had a great effect on Pilate's mind. Because of his wife's dream and her persuasion, he wanted to set Christ free. When all of the chief priests and elders said that Jesus must be killed, Pilate gave up and washed his hands of the whole affair:

When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. (Matthew, 27:24)

When Pilate's wife had the dream of the murder of Christ, it was two days before the Sabbath. The Sabbath, let it be noted, was the holy day of the Jews. According to Jewish law, none was to be hung on the cross starting from the evening before Sabbath. Therefore, it was necessary to crucify Christ before the Sabbath started.

Since Pontius Pilate's wife had seen the dream and managed to persuade Pontius Pilate to deem Christ innocent, he did everything possible to insure that Christ would be saved. He made sure that Christ would not be taken out until a few hours before the Sabbath began. Also, the two thieves who were crucified with Christ had their legs broken with clubs while Christ's legs were not broken.

Now a series of events transpired which are very significant. When Christ, as discussed earlier, related himself to the miracle of Jonah, he prophesied that he would enter the tomb alive, stay there alive, and come out alive. Therefore, Christ was assured of his survival.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ ardently prays to God to relieve him of the burden of crucifixion. This happens prior to Pilate's wife's dream. He says:

O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt... He went away again the second time and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, Thy will be done. And he left them and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. (Matthew, 26:39,42,43)

Quite understandably, Jesus Christ was very much agitated by the prospects of crucifixion. Therefore, he supplicated ardently to God, "being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke, 22:44).

Now, Christ had full confidence that his prayers and supplications would be answered and accepted:

And all things, whatsoever, ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. (Mathew, 21:22)

When he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared (Hebrews 5:7).

Thereupon, soon afterwards, Christ was apprehended, and condemned to crucifixion. From the sixth hour of the evening to the ninth hour, the crowds were ridiculing and hurling abuses at him. Then, about the ninth hour, Christ cries out:

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Matthew, 27:47)

The above quotation shows the doubts that begin to gnaw at him — due to the fact that he thinks that there is little hope left for his liberation, even though he was so sure that God was going to help him. Thus, the statement, why hast thou forsaken me.

Nauseated, cramped, dizzy, and hurt from all the proceedings — all of Christ's physical senses were about to be overcome:

After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they

filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and He bowed his head and gave up the ghost. (John, 19:28-30)

The most noteworthy item regarding the last few lines in the above quotation is that all four Evangelists used the same expression to describe the termination of the tragedy on the Cross. It is not stated that Christ died, rather that he "gave up the Ghost":

Jesus cried in a loud voice, and gave up the Ghost (Mark, 15:37)

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the Ghost. (Luke, 23:46)

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the Ghost. (Mathew, 27:50)

...and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost (John 19:30).

Now "giving up the ghost" does not necessarily mean death. This expression means something different. In the Greek version of the quotations above, the following expressions are found:

- (a) Apeheken to pneuma
- (b) Exepneumen
- (c) Paredoken to pneuma

In each case, the root word, pneuma is found, which means breath, air, Holy Spirit, etc. In short, the word pneuma actually connotes the process of breathing.

During the time period of Christ, the cessation of breathing was regarded as death. However, our modern-day scientific knowledge shows that death is not necessarily present because of a lack of breathing. What doctors generally do agree on today is that heart stoppage is the vital function which can cause death.

When Christ stated that he was thirsty, that was a natural reaction. But how could he know that the soldiers would give him vinegar? For vinegar causes uncontrollable choking, if inhaled and swallowed too deeply and quickly. Therefore, the vinegar caused Christ to be unconscious and he appeared to be dead. This is proven through the following quotation:

Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. (John, 19:32-34)

The two thieves, who were to be crucified along with Jesus, had both of their legs broken, so that they could be taken down from the Cross, (because the Sabbath was about to begin). However, since Christ was unconscious because of the vinegar, the guard mistook him to be dead; and therefore did not break his legs — since cessation of breathing was deemed as a sign of death at that time. However, the soldier did stick a spear in Christ's side, and "forthwith came there out blood and water."

The above quotation also strengthens the argument that Jesus was merely unconscious for, in a dead person, it is a fact that blood is coagulated. If blood and water came out of the body of Christ, it was a sign of life, for blood was still flowing freely in his body. Therefore, he was alive! This argument alone proves the fact that Jesus Christ did not die on the cross.

These arguments conclusively prove that Christ died on the cross to be a fallacy. Rather, he was unconscious though deemed dead by the people.

2. Salvation?

Salvation, in its true connotation, signifies the repentance one seeks through a direct relationship with God.

The Christian assertion of salvation has a different connotation. According to the Christian doctrine, God transferred the sins of the rebellious to His own beloved son, Jesus; to free the world of sins God hung Jesus on the Cross.

To begin with, how can X be burdened with the sins of Y? One's conscience can never approve of having someone else bear the burden of his responsibility. For example, if X has a headache, having Y take aspirin to cure X's headache is ridiculous! If Christ bore all the sins of mankind to come, why does society still employ courts of law as well as jailhouses?

Another point which needs attention is that the Bible states that

to be hung on the Cross is to die an accursed death. Therefore, if Christ died on the cross, according to the Bible, he died an accursed death. If Christ bore the responsibility of all our sins, how can that help us? Christ is accursed to begin with!

The above mentioned assertions also prove that this concept of salvation is not logical. Salvation is achieved through a direct relationship with God, not an indirect one through Christ.

3. Trinity

In Christianity, Trinity is the concept of having an established Godhead consisting of God, the Father, Christ, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. This Christian doctrine asserts that all three components of this Godhead are tied inextricably with one another, forming an intrinsic part and parcel of one entity.

This reasoning implies that God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost are consubstantial, that is, single and made of the same substance. Of what substance are the three persons in the Trinity made? If we determine the substance of one person, can we establish the substance of the other two, due to the fact that all three are made up of the same substance.

The Bible states:

Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh. (Romans, 1:2)

In view of the quotation above, and the principle on which Trinity is based, is it not then true that the Father and the Holy Ghost are of the same substance as Jesus, i.e., of the seed of David?

In Matthew it is stated:

And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt...He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, Thy will be done. (Matt. 26;29,42)

Why is Jesus praying so intensely in the Garden of Gethsemane as seen in the quotation above? If he is equal in status to the Father and the Holy Ghost in the Godhead of Christianity, why does he

have to pray? For that matter, to whom is he praying? He is equal with the Father, so why pray to him?

Christians assert that Jesus is co-equal with the Father. Yet it is states in the Bible:

My Father is greater than I. (John 14:28)

Why is this statement mentioned? Another major point regarding the concept of Trinity is that the Son and the Holy Ghost are not Father. Likewise, the Father and the Holy Ghost are not begotten, nor are the Father and the Son proceeding. Christian theologians claim that each component of the Godhead is as distinct as light is from darkness. How, then, can they merge into one another without losing their separate identities?

One of the most controversial points against the Christian doctrines of Trinity is the fact that it is mentioned in the Bible (Luke, 2:21) that Jesus Christ was circumcised. The missing foreskin was an indication that he was not in the perfect form as when he was born. Consequently, how can an imperfect man be equal to perfect God?

Until these mysteries are solved with distinctive answers, the concept of Trinity will be all the more controversial.

4. The Fall of Man?

Another Christian concept is that man is born sinful in nature. Christianity advocates that since the first man, Adam, sinned by eating of the tree of "good and evil", the rest of mankind is spiritually sinful in nature. Christians also believe that since Jesus Christ was not born or conceived from a father, he was therefore purified from all the sins of this world. Mankind, according to Christian beliefs, has inherited the sinful spirit and body from Adam's transgression.

Christians also believe that the traits of a person are hereditarily passed through the father. Therefore, Mary, mother of Jesus, was pure as well—even though she had a father. The Christians assert that although it appeared that Christ was born from the womb of Mary, Mary was only an instrument through which God brought Jesus into this world. Since she was only an instrument, her traits were not passed on to Jesus.

If a man was a thief, how come his son isn't born a thief? Since, sin is passed, it should be so.

The assertions, claims, and viewpoints, made in this essay were intended to present another perspective on Christianity, without tainting it with prejudice. No offense was intended or inferred. The author sincerely hopes that he has merely stimulated the reader into thinking about the claims of Christianity.

Arshad Khan



Recite the account of Mary according to this Book, when she withdrew from her people to a place towards the east... then We sent Our angel to her... the angel said: I am but a messenger from thy Lord, that I may give thee tidings of a righteous son... it is so ordained that We may make him a Sign unto people and a source of Our mercy. (The Holy Quran 19:17-22)

Jesus taught: I am a servant of Allah. He has given me the Book, and has appointed me a Prophet; He has made me blessed wheresoever I may be, and has enjoined upon me Prayer and almsgiving throughout my life... Peace was ordained for me the day I was born, the day I shall die and the day I shall be raised up to life again. Such was Jesus son of Mary. This is a statement of truth about which they entertain doubt. It is not in accord with the Majesty of Allah that He should take unto Himself a son. Holy is He. When He decrees a thing, He says concerning it: Be, and it is. Jesus taught: Allah is my Lord; so worship Him alone. This is the right path. (The Holy Quran 19:31-37)

And the Jews say, Ezra is the son of Allah, and the Christians say, the Messiah is the son of Allah; that is what they say with their mouths. They imitate the saying of those who disbelieved before them... They have taken their learned men and their monks for lords besides Allah. And so have they taken the Messiah, son of Mary. And they were not commanded but to worship the One God. There is no God but He. Too Holy is He for what they associate with Him. (The Holy Quran 9:30-31)

IMPACT OF THE HOLY QURAN

The Holy Quran holds a distinctive status among religious books, both in its beauty and effectiveness. The Quran alone possesses the dynamic influence that can lead man from his basest desires all the way to the purity of soul that is the highest objective of man's creation. It can truly bring about a moral and spiritual revolution, the like of which cannot be claimed by any other religious book. This is borne by the prolific examples furnished by the history of Islam in all times and ages. Thus Quran can, rightfully, claim the distinction of an eternal truth and an ever-living book, the fruits of which can be found at all times. Its profound and potent influence in effecting spiritual revolution and its ability to purify the heart is evident by the following few examples taken from the pages of history.

1. Hazrat Omar (the second Khalifa of Holy Prophet Muhammad) was once an arch enemy of Islam and had a reputation for being daring and hot tempered. One day he set out determined to kill the prophet of Islam, Muhammad, peace be upon him, and thus put an end to the "mischief" called Islam. He entered the home of his sister with a sword in his hand and anger on his face, but when he heard a few verses of Holy Quran being recited by his sister, instantaneously the magic and majesty of the Quran overpowered him. He lost the strength even to hold the sword in his hand. He left the house most humble and convinced of the truth of Islam. He accepted Islam and earned the title Farooq—one who distinguishes between right and wrong.
2. Asaad bin Zarara, a famous chief of Medina, decided one day to throw Masaab bin Umair, the first missionary of Islam, out of town and teach him a lesson. Asaad was furious because Masaab's preaching had effected 70 conversions in Medina. But he too, when he heard the verses of Quran from Masaab, lost all his contempt and hatred. Instead, an amazing change overtook him and he accepted Islam. Ironically, the very Masaab he had intended to kill, initiated him to Islam.
3. Another bitter enemy of Islam was Samama bin Asal. To him there was no man more repulsive than Muhammed, peace and

blessings of God be upon him, and no place more abominable than Medina. Such was his hatred for Islam. But after just two days of listening to the message of the Quran, he surrendered himself to Islam and the prophet of Islam in all humility and devotion.

4. Khalid bin Aaqba was totally overwhelmed by the Quran when he first heard it. He was mesmerized and then he uttered the following words: "I swear by God that this text has a sweetness of its own and it has a freshness unique by itself. Its roots are well watered and its branches are laden with fruits. No man can ever compose anything like it".

The Holy message of the Quran possesses such potency and influence that millions of people and hundreds of nations and tribes have been reformed by it, as if they have been reborn. A comprehensive and sweeping change has been effected by this magical spirit of the Quran. A few more examples of this impact are presented here:

5. Ashma was a Christian ruler of Najash. Hazrat Jafar Tayyar recited some verses of Surah Maryam to him when he was seated on his throne with the court in attendance. He was so moved by the words that tears started rolling down his cheeks.
6. Hazrat Abu Bakr would weep while reciting the Quran and even children and women could not help getting moved by this spectacle. Ibne Hasham has reported that, "Abu Bakr was very tender hearted. When he would recite the Quran he would become so passionate as to cry loudly; children and slaves and women would be seized by his cries." The Quraish of Mecca approached Ibne Daghna who had given refuge to Abu Bakr and complained that Abu Bakr was creating problems for them. In their words, "When this man stands up to pray and starts reciting the Quran, he becomes so overwhelmed that he starts crying. He goes into a strange trance. We are afraid that this will affect our children and women and the weak. You instruct him to pray and recite the Quran only inside his house".
7. Once Hazrat Omar, during the period of his Khilafat, was on his way to the mosque, when suddenly he sat down looking aghast. Nobody could understand the reason for such a dramatic change. Hazrat Omar had to be helped back to his home. It was later learned that the change had been brought about by a verse

- recited by somebody that contained a warning about Allah's wrath. Omar was so awed that he couldn't even stand up.
8. Lubaid Aamri was a great poet whose poems were so popular that it was said about his works that they were worth getting engraved on the skin of ones' neck even if this was done with a knife. Once Hazrat Omar asked Lubaid to read some of his poetry to him. Lubaid replied in these words, "Since I have come to know the Quran, I have lost taste for my own poetry".
 9. When Abu Talha Ansari first heard the verse of the Holy Quran, "*You cannot attain true virtue unless you spend in the cause of Allah what is most precious to you.*" He immediately proceeded to the Holy Prophet of Islam and donated his very valuable garden whose earnings in just one year exceeded \$50,000.

These examples and many others like them bear ample testimony to the profound impact and overwhelming influence of the Holy Quran. The effect of the Glory and Majesty of the Holy Book revealed upon the Prophet of Islam is acknowledged by the Promised Messiah in these words. "We still find, with the grace and mercy of Allah, the examples of the rewards and blessing of the teachings of the Quran. And even today, we obtain all the distinctions and honors conferrable through true obedience to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be o him."

In summary, the Quran is a magnificent scripture, replete with knowledge and wisdom. Its teachings bring about a revolution in individuals and nations alike. It was due to this power of the Quran that in just 23 years, the Arabs, who had labored for centuries under the most heinous moral and social evils, became a dominant moral force in the world. The people who couldn't rid themselves of idols made of clay started teaching the world lessons on morality and spirituality that are unmatched even by today's standard.

The Holy founder of Ahmadiyyat, Hazrat Ahmad, peace be on him, paid tribute to this miracle of the Quran in the following words "the effectiveness with which the Quran has established the monotheism in Arabia, Iran, Egypt, Syria, India, China, Afghanistan, Kahsmir etc. and with which it has destroyed even the foundation of worship of idols and other deities, is an accomplishment, the like of which cannot be found anywhere".

LIGHT FROM MAJLIS IRFAN

(The Supreme Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV, responds to questions asked in sessions known as Majlis-e-Irfan. The first two questions listed below were asked in a session on October 5, 1987, at Washington, DC, USA, while the third question is from a session on February 16, 1985, at London, U.K.)

Q: Scientists are unable to decide when the fetus of a particular individual should be labeled as an individual.

A: A child is either taken out through an operation, you call Caesarean, or is delivered normally. If at the stage he's delivered he is capable of living an independent existence, then that child can be declared as live. If whatever may happen to save him he simply cannot survive, that means he has not been granted an independent existence. So according to my definition of life, this should be the criterion.

Suppose a mother aborts at the end of the fourth month. Can you conceive any reasonable possibility of that embryo, that fetus, surviving with an independent existence? No. Obviously not. So the doctors are now trying to pinpoint that area of independent existence. Some of them are already raising the question, when can we call it murder when a child is consciously killed?

The answer is, to my knowledge, very similar to the one I have already given you. They say we must first determine whether the child would have survived an independent existence, survived as an independent unit, once he was born naturally or was removed from the uterus. If not, then he was dead. Nobody can say he was killed. But still it is not so easy. He was dead with potential to live. That is a different stage. He was not dead in the sense of an ordinary dead thing. He was dead with potential to live. Now, when you go farther back, each sperm has got that potential too. Each ovum has got that potential too. But you can make a dividing line by saying that their potential has not developed into a real potential as long as the sperm did not enter the ovum. So the question

can be divided into phases. Starting from the moment the sperm enters the ovum we should follow the development closely and decide where we can see life having entered.

In the Traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad it is very clearly stated that the soul is breathed into the fetus, not immediately at the time of the union of the sperm with the ovum, but later on. And the time calculated to be, as far as I remember, is around four months ten days, or so. That is the time when the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of God be on him, tells us that angels of God appear and breath the soul into the fetus.

Q: Sometimes newcomers to Ahmadiyyat are concerned about how to differentiate between what is cultural in a Muslim country and what is Islamic. For example, questions arise regarding some marriage customs or attitudes of some men about women, even attitudes about class and color in some cases. It may be confusing to newcomers if they observe the actions of some Muslims in our Jamaat. Could you explain?

A. No, it shouldn't be confusing at all. The fact is that Islam is in the Holy Quran, in the words of our Hazrat Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be on him, and in the conduct of our Hazrat Muhammad. Whatever else you find is not Islam. It is culture. It may be based on some Islamic injunctions growing out of that background, but not Islam at all. So this is why Islam has grown differently in culture in different countries.

We as Pakistanis have no right to make them follow those customs which we have inherited from an Indian culture, and not from Islam. If we do it, we'll be responsible for the bad results, for the consequences of reactions having been generated in these people. So tell them honestly and simply that if you want guidance, seek guidance from the Holy Quran and from the Holy Prophet of Islam. We are not models for you. Only in some areas where we are very clear that Hazrat Masih Mauood (the Promised Messiah), peace be on him, gave us instruction in representing Sunna, we will make it clear that 'here we have guidance for you as models.' But in ordinary habits, there are some bad, some good habits of Pakistanis. You may like them, you may not like them. You have the complete option.

Q: Huzoor, do you think that the Islamic punishment of the cutting off of the hands of an habitual thief is going to be accepted by Western society?

A: Do you think that the punishment of imprisonment has proved to be an effective deterrent against theft, stealing, robbery, anywhere in the world? Or has it failed? It looks very much like it has failed. And do you know what misery thieves are causing to peace-abiding innocent citizens all over the world?

The Western society only looks in one direction and doesn't pay attention to the other side of the picture, which is very horrid. The misery caused by thieves is so much and so unjustified. Just to snatch \$10.00 sometimes, they kill or maim a person and put the family to the torture. When I visited America in 1978, I enquired about the incidence of mugging. I was surprised to learn that there is hardly one among the Ahmadies living there who has not been mugged in his life. Some, for small money, have been murdered. A young Ahmadi boy was shot dead in a restaurant and the incident brought so much misery to the family.

People completely forget these horrid incidents and the immense torture stealing is causing the entire society. They look back at only one or two thieves who are caught and who's hands are severed. They must have some sense of proportion. In defending Islam you must also point out the other side of the picture and weigh it in the scale of your mind. If you have any sense of justice then decide for yourselves, which is better? To root out of the society this evil, or to have pity on thieves?

If this punishment is accepted by the world, I am quite certain that within a matter of a very short time this condition of stealing would disappear from the world. It is highly important for the society to find an effective weapon against a disease, a calamity or a problem, and the effectiveness of the weapon is proved by its results. For instance, smallpox was a very dangerous disease all over the world. It has taken millions of lives: Finally, scientists found an effective weapon against it. The proof: smallpox has disappeared. You would not call it a weapon if it doesn't work? All your remedies have failed — because you have rejected the only remedy (pointed by Islam) which was to be effective. Try that and then you'll see the result. This disease which has been torturing

society for too long now, will be wiped out if you follow Islam's remedy, instead of censoring or criticizing it.

Western law has pity on thieves and not on innocent men, and they call it justice, fair play. They call it "modern society." It's all stupid.

Edited by Jaleel Akbar

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WHAT IS ISLAM?

Islam means *peace, surrender*. The significance of the name Islam is the attainment of a life of perfect peace and eternal happiness through complete surrender to the Will of God.

Absolute and uncompromising belief in One God is the central doctrine of Islam. *There is none worthy of worship but the One and Only God (Allah) Who possesses all excellences and Muhammad is His Messenger*. This is the most important doctrine of Islam.

Islam helps us to establish a permanent relationship with God to realize Him during our earthly life as our Helper and Guide in all our affairs.

Islam requires belief in all the prophets and spiritual guides including Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Krishna, Buddha, Confucius and Zoroaster. Islam represents the completion of the mission of *all* the prophets from the dawn of history. It teaches that *all the prophets of God came with one and the same mission*. Thus Islam establishes peace and unity between all religions.

The Holy Quran—the Muslim Scripture—was revealed to the Master Prophet Muhammad 1400 years ago and has been preserved intact without the slightest change. A large number of Muslims know the whole Book by heart. It is an inexhaustible treasure of spiritual truths capable of satisfying the needs of all people in all countries and all stations of life.

The establishment of true democracy and universal brotherhood without any discrimination of caste, creed, color or country is the unique and unrivalled distinction of Islam. Islam has fulfilled and realized the splendid principles of democracy in the actual life and action of human society.

According to Islam, life after death is a continuation of life on earth. Heaven and Hell begin right in this life. Heaven is eternal and everlasting, while hell is temporary. Hell is a hospital for the treatment of the human soul. As a soul is cured, it goes to Heaven. Heaven is the attainment of a life of everlasting progress and complete joy and happiness through union with God and by the development of the fine spiritual qualities and the unlimited capacities which have been implanted in human beings.

A few of the distinctive features of Islam are:

1. Liberation of women by establishing the equality of both sexes, safeguarding their rights and liberties and raising their status.
1. Absolute veto on all intoxicants.
3. Equitable solution of all economic problems.
4. Furnishing mankind with the noblest practical ethics.
5. Promotion of science and education.

Some of the obligatory duties laid down by Islam are:

1. Five daily Prayers.
2. Fasting in the month of Ramadhan.
3. Paying *Zakat* for the relief of poverty.
4. Pilgrimage to Mecca, once in one's lifetime, if circumstances allow.