

Paigham-E-Haqq

MESSAGE OF TRUTH

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-I-Islam (Lahore) Fiji
(Ahmadiyya * Society for the propagation of Islam)
(* The term Ahmadiyya is derived from the name of the
Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) whose other name was Ahmad)

Our humble plea to the reader is not to let your prejudice cloud your views towards our Movement but to consider these articles in a cool and dispassionate manner.

“Call to the path of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with people in the best manner.” (Holy Quran 16:125)

In the spirit of the above-cited verse, this periodical attempts to dispel misunderstandings about the religion of Islam and endeavors to facilitate inter-faith and inter-denomination dialogue based on reason and rationality.

CONTENTS

Vol. 129

HAZRAT AISHAH SIDDIQAH'S AGE AT HER MARRIAGE	3
THE LAST AND FINAL PROPHET [MUHAMMAD]	5
MUHAMMAD - EXEMPLAR FOR MANKIND	9
THE MARRIAGES OF THE HOLY PROPHET (PBUH)	14
MAULANA MUHAMMAD ALI	17

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The main objective of the A.A.I.L is to present the true, original message of Islam to the whole world - Islam as it is found in the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, obscured today by great misconceptions and wrong popular notions. Islam seeks to attract the *hearts and minds* of people towards the truth, by means of reasoning and the natural beauty of its principles. *Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad* (d.1908), our Founder, arose to remind the world that Islam is:

International: it recognizes prophets being raised among all nations and requires Muslims to believe in them all. Truth and goodness can be found in all religions. God treats all human beings equally, regardless of race, nationality or religion.

Peaceful: Allows use of force only in unavoidable self-defence. Teaches Muslims to live peacefully under any rule which accords them freedom of religion.

Tolerant: Gives full freedom to everyone to hold and practice any creed or religion. Requires us to tolerate differences of belief and opinion.

Rational: In all matters, it argues use of human reason and knowledge. Blind following is condemned and independence of thought is granted.

Inspiring: Worship is not a ritual, but provides living contact with a Living God, Who answers prayers and speaks to His righteous servant even today as in the past.

Non-sectarian: Every person professing Islam by the words *La ilaha ill-Allah, Muhammad-ur rasul-ullah* (There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah) is a Muslim. A Muslim cannot be expelled from Islam by anyone.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad taught that *no* prophet, old or new, is to arise after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. However, *Mujaddids* will be raised by God to revive and rekindle the light of Islam.

About Ourselves

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore has branches in many countries including:

USA	Guyana
UK	Australia
Holland	Canada
Indonesia	Germany
Suriname	India
Trinidad	South Africa
	Philippines

Achievements:

The Anjuman has produced extensive literature on Islam, originally in English and Urdu, including translations of the Holy Quran with commentaries. These books are being translated into other languages, including French, German, Spanish, Dutch, Russian, Chinese and Arabic. The Anjuman has run several Muslim missions around the world including the first ever in Western Europe.

History:

- 1889: Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement.
- 1901: Movement given name Ahmadiyya after Holy Prophet Muhammad's other famous name Ahmad
- 1905: Hazrat Mirza appoints central body (Anjuman) to manage the Movement.
- 1908: Death of Hazrat Mirza. Succeeded by Maulana Nur-ud-Din as Head.
- 1914: Death of Maulana Nur-ud-Din. Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam founded Lahore as Continuation of the original Anjuman. Maulana Muhammad Ali elected as Head.
- 1951: Death of Maulana Muhammad Ali after fifty years of glorious service to the cause of Islam. Maulana Sadr-ud-Din (9.1981 becomes Head.
- 1981-1996: Dr Saeed Ahmad Khan, an eminent Medical Doctor and religious scholar, led the Movement, at a time of intense persecution
- 1996 -2002: Prof. Dr Asghar Hameed, a distinguished Retired University Professor of Mathematics, and learned Islamic scholar, served as Head.
- 2002: Prof. Dr Abdul Karim Saeed Pasha elected Head.

HAZRAT AISHAH SIDDIQAH'S AGE AT HER MARRIAGE

**Proves that: The Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) Married Hazrat Aishah When She was 19 Years of Age and not When She Was 9.] By Ghulam Nabi Muslim Sahib, M.A.
Translated by: Masud Akhtar, B.A., LL.B. The Light (Sep 24, 1981, pp. 13-17).**

[Note: Many anti-Islamic sites accuse our Beloved Holy Prophet, Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, of , God Forbid, marrying a minor. We present here an article that will clear our Beloved Holy Prophet (pbuh) off this blasphemous charge. May Allah guide the opponents of Islam aright, Aameen!]

Most narrations carry misstatements about the age of Hazrat 'Aishah Siddiqah at the time of her marriage to the Holy Prophet, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). They place this marriage in the tenth year of the Call and state that Hazrat 'Aishah was only 6 years old at that time. On proper sifting of the material facts, these statements turn out to be incorrect and it becomes evident that she, in fact, was about 19 or 20 years of age when she arrived in the house of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as his wife in 2 A.H.

It will be in the fitness of things to quote from the writings of two well-known Muslim scholars of the present century who are the main exponents of the view that Hazrat 'Aishah Siddiqah was 6 years old at her Nikah and 9 years old at the time of the consummation of her marriage. Both Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadvi and Maulana Syed Abul Ala Maududi are well-known Muslim authors of Seerat (biography).

Nadvi's View:

Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadvi writes on page 21 of his book 'Seerat-i-Aishah':

"Books of history and biography are generally silent about the birth date of Hazrat 'Aishah. The historian Ibn Sa'd, whom many later biographers have followed, has written that Hazrat 'Aishah was born in the fourth year of the Call, and was married at the age of 6 years in the tenth year of the Call. Apparently this cannot be correct, because if her birth in the fourth year of the Call be admitted as correct then her age at the time of her marriage in the tenth year of the Call works out to 7 and not 6 years. The fact remains that some matters about the age of Hazrat 'Aishah are admitted to be correct by most historians and biographers, and these are: She was married three years before Hijrah at the age of six years; the marriage was consummated in the month of Shawal in the year 1 A.H. when she was 9 years old, and she became a widow in Rabi-al-Awwal 11 A.H., at the age of 18 years. According to this account, the correct date of her birth works out to the end of the fifth year of the Call or 614 A.D. of the Christian calendar. For a proper comprehension of the events of history, one should bear in mind that out of a total period of 23 years of the Call,

the first 13 years were passed in Mecca and the last 10 years in Madina. Thus, the fourth year of the Call had already been out before her birth and the fifth year was running."

Maududi's View:

In the article, "The Nikah Date of Sayedah 'Aishah," published in the 'Tarjuman al-Quran' of September 1976, Maulana Abul Ala Maududi wrote:

"It is apparent from the detailed reports of Imam Ahmad Tibrani, Ibn Jareer and Baihaqi that the Nikah of Sayedah 'Aishah was solemnised before the Nikah of Sayedah Saudah. It is also evident that her Nikah with the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was solemnised in the month of Shawal of the tenth year of the Call, three years before Hijrah, when she was 6 years old. Here a question arises, that if Sayedah 'Aishah was 6 years of age in the Shawal of the tenth year of the Call, then she should have been 9 years of age at the time of Hijrah and should have been of 11 years in 2 A.H. at the time of consummation. But all narrators agree that her Nikah was solemnised when she was 6 years old and the marriage was consummated when she was 9 years old. Some Ulema have tried to meet this discrepancy by saying that the marriage was consummated seven months after Hijrah. Hafiz Ibn Hajar has preferred this view. On the other hand, Imam Nauvi in his 'Tahzeeb al-Asma'a al-Lughat', Hafiz Ibn Katheer in his 'Al-Badaya' and Allama Qustalani in his 'Mawahib al-Deeniah' report consummation in 2 A.H. Hafiz Badr-ud-Din Aini has written in his Umdat al-Qari that the marriage of 'Aishah Siddiqah was consummated in Shawal 2 A.H. after the return of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) from the battle of Badr. Both Imam Nauvi and Allama Aini consider the above-quoted reports of consummation of marriage seven months after Hijrah as irresponsible and untrustworthy. Thus we are faced with a question that if the marriage was consummated at the age of 9 years in Shawal 2 A.H., then what should be the date of Nikah which should tally with her age of 6 years? An answer to this question is found in Bukhari wherein it is reported from Urwah ibn Zubair, "Sayedah Khadijah died three years before Hijrah; the Holy Prophet solemnised Nikah with Sayedah 'Aishah two years after that. Then it was consummated at the age of 9 years." This works out to be correct that Nikah was solemnised one year before Hijrah when she was 6 years old and consummation took place in 2 A.H. when she was 9 years."

The above quotations amply bear out that both Syed Nadvi and Syed Maududi agree to the correctness of

reports stating the age of Sayedah 'Aishah at 6 years at Nikah and 9 years at the consummation. Their only worry seems to be the calculation of the correct year of the Call and the Hijrah for fixing these ages in those calendar years. Both of them start with a preconception that the age of 6 years for Nikah and 9 years for consummation are correct and true, and set out in search of the correct year of the Call and Hijrah in which these preconceived ages will fit in. This hardly can be called a scientific method of finding her correct age. This rather may be called an effort to find a correct date for a given age.

The Other View:

As far as my information goes the first voice against the common misconception about the age of Sayedah 'Aishah at her marriage was raised by Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A., LL.B., in 1924 in his 'Muhammad the Prophet', wherein he wrote:

"The popular misconception as to Aishah's age may be removed here. That she had not attained majority is clear enough, but that she was not so young as six years of age is also true. In the first place, it is clear that she had reached an age when betrothal could take place in the ordinary course and must therefore have been approaching the age of majority. Again, the Isabah, speaking of the Prophet's daughter Fatimah, says that she was about five years older than 'Aishah. It is a well-established fact that Fatimah was born when the Ka'bah was being rebuilt, i.e., five years before the Call or a little before it, and so 'Aishah was certainly not below ten years at the time of her marriage with the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in the tenth year of the Call. This conclusion is borne out by the testimony of 'Aishah herself who is reported to have related that when the chapter entitled 'The Moon' (the 54th chapter) was revealed she was a girl playing about and that she remembered certain verses then revealed. Now the fifty-fourth chapter could not have been revealed later than the fifth year of the Call, and therefore the report which states her to have been six years old in the tenth year of the Call when her marriage ceremony was gone through cannot be correct, because this would show her to have been born about the time of the revelation of the 54th chapter. All these considerations show her to have been not less than ten years old at the time of her marriage. And as the period between her marriage and its consummation was not less than five years, because the consummation took place in the second year of the Fight, it follows that she could not have been less than fifteen at that time. The popular account that she was six years at marriage and nine years at the time of consummation is decidedly not correct, because it supposes the period between the marriage and its consummation to be only three years, while this is historically wrong."

Sulaiman Nadvi took Maulana Muhammad Ali to task (for his above-quoted view) in note 2 on page 26 of the third edition of his 'Seerat-i-Aishah' in the following words:

"Some irresponsible persons who think that the marriage with a girl of tender age was not befitting for the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) have tried to prove that the age of Hazrat 'Aishah Siddiqah at her marriage was 16 years instead of 6 years. All such efforts are useless and all such claims are illogical. Not a single word is the Hadith and history can be found in their support."

Nadvi Contradicts Himself:

In spite of this severe criticism of Muhammad Ali's view, Nadvi not only contradicts himself about the age of Hazrat 'Aishah, but provides supporting evidence to Muhammad Ali's views when, writing about the last days of the life of Hazrat 'Aishah, he writes at page 111 of the same 'Seerat-i-Aishah': "Hazrat 'Aishah was a widow and she passed 40 years of her life as a widow." Further, at page 153 he writes: "The last days of Khilafat (Caliphate) of Amir Muawiyya were the last days of the life of Hazrat 'Aishah and her age at that time was 67 years." Now if we deduct 40 years of her widowed life from 67 years then we find she was 27 years of age at the time of the passing away of the Holy Prophet in 11 A.H. and not 18 years as reported by Nadvi in the earlier pages of the same book. Since the total period of the Call is 23 years, therefore, according to this account she was born about four years before the Call and not in the fourth year of the Call as Nadvi tried to make us believe in his earlier pages quoted herein above. Consequently, her age at the time of the Nikah in the tenth year of the Call works out to 14-15 years and not 6 years, as Nadvi himself so assertively reported. According to this account, Hazrat 'Aishah's age at the time of consummation of her marriage in 2 A.H. works out to 19-20 years and not 9 years as stated in earlier pages of Seerat-i-Aishah. A further enquiry is most naturally necessitated to find out which of the reports of Nadvi should be given credence.

Other Sources:

There are other important events recorded in history which provide definite evidence about the age of Hazrat 'Aishah.

1. The well-known historian Ibn Jareer al-Tabari writes at page 50 of volume 4 of his 'Book of History': "Abu Bakr married two ladies in the days of ignorance (pre-Call era). Fateelah daughter of Abd al-Aza was the first, from whom Abdullah and Asma were born. Umm-i-Rooman was the second, from whom Abd al-Rahman and 'Aishah were born. All the four children of Abu Bakr were born in the days of ignorance (Jahiliyyah, i.e., pre-Islamic days) from the above-named two ladies.
2. It is a well-known fact of history, that Abu Bakr's son Abd al-Rahman fought against the Muslims in the battle of Badr. His age at that time was 21-22 years,

and although he was older than 'Aishah, there is no evidence to show that the difference between their ages was more than three or four years. This fact lends support to the view that Hazrat 'Aishah was born four or five years before the Call.

3. The well-known historian and scholar 'Allama 'Imad-ud-Deen Ibn Katheer writes in his 'Al-Badayah' about Sayedah Asma' daughter of Hazrat Abu Bakr' (Allah be pleased with him) (and we hope Maulana Syed Abul Ala Maududi must have seen it as he referred to 'Al-Badaya' in his article): Asma' died in 73 A.H. at the age of 100 years. She was ten years older than her sister 'Aishah. Now according to this report 'Asma' would have been 27-28 years old at the time of Hijrah and since she was ten years older than Sayedah 'Aishah, therefore the age of Sayedah 'Aishah would have been 17 or 18 years at the time of Hijrah. Accordingly, her birth falls about four or five years before the Call, and her age at the time

of the consummation of marriage in 2 A.H. will work out to 19-20 years.

4. The author of the well-known collection of Hadith 'Mishkat al-Masabeeh', Sheikh Waheed-ud-Deen, writes in his well-known book 'Ahmal fi Asma' al-Rijjal':

"At the time of the consummation of her marriage Sayedah 'Aishah's age was not less than 18-19 years." All the above quotations give ample refutation to the common misconception that Sayedah 'Aishah's age at the time of her Nikah was 6 years and at the time of consummation of marriage it was only 9 years. If Muslim scholars of the present era deem fit to make an objective research instead of beating the old track, they will find ample material in the pages of history to arrive at a correct age for Sayedah 'Aishah. This indeed would be a great service to the cause of Islam. – Islamic Review, December 1980, U.S.A.

THE LAST AND FINAL PROPHET MUHAMMAD [PBUH]

By Imam Kalamazad Mohammed

Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets. And Allah is ever Knower of all things (33:40).

Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the Latter Day and remembers Allah much (33:21).

He it is Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of Truth that He may make it prevail over all religions. And Allah is enough for a witness (48:28).

He it is Who raised among the illiterates a Messenger from among themselves, who recites to them His messages and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom – although they were before certainly in manifest error – and others from among them who have not yet joined them. And He is the Mighty, the Wise (62:2-3).

That the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was the most pre-eminent of all the Prophets of Allah is a fact generally known and accepted by Muslims in every century and in every country. But a question mark still hangs over the question of whether he was truly the Last Prophet. Our Sunni and Shai friends believe that the Israelite Prophet, Jesus (pbuh), was taken up alive into Heaven (from the Cross) and that he will return in later times and, together with the Promised Mahdi, will wage a bloody war with the infidels in order to restore the glory of Muslims to its former state.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Mujaddid of the 14th

Century Hijrah, Promised Messiah and Mahdi, has proven from the Holy Qur'an, the Hadith, historical records, his own researches, revelations, etc., that Prophet Jesus indeed did not die on the Cross but was saved by Allah and that he journeyed to Kashmir where he fulfilled his mission to the Lost Sheep of Israel and died at the ripe old age of 120 years and that his tomb is still there in Khan Yar Street, Srinagar. (See Masih Hindustan Mein.) I must point out here that Lahore Ahmadi literature is replete with proof of the above and Khwaja Nazir Ahmad's Jesus in Heaven on Earth, a foremost example of erudite scholarship, is the definitive work on this subject.

Mirza Sahib has also pointed out that it is an insult to the honour of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) for another prophet to return to complete the work of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). (No prophet, new or old, will appear, he affirms.) In fact, he says that if all Muslims should unanimously proclaim that Prophet Jesus is dead, then that will spell the death-knell of Christianity, but ironically it is we, Muslims ourselves, who are upholding Christianity and keeping it alive by insisting that Prophet Jesus himself will return. This erroneous view is in itself an enigma akin to the Christian dogma of the Trinity, for it raises several troublesome questions: In what capacity will Prophet Jesus return – as a full-fledged prophet? Then the khatm-e-nabuwat (seal of Prophethood) would be broken. (Our Rabwah friends should ponder over the explanation of the word seal given here by the Founder.) Again, will he come back as an ordinary Muslim or as a mujaddid? In that case, will Allah demote a Prophet

of His, or will He eject a Prophet from Paradise in contravention of His word in the Holy Qur'an? And then, what will be his age and his physical condition when he returns?

Mirza Sahib has given conclusive proof from the Holy Qur'an, the Hadith and the writings of the mujaddids and saints of Islam that he was the Promised Messiah – the spiritual counterpart of the Prophet Jesus, the first Messiah, and he was also the Mahdi – la Mahdi illa'Isa [a hadith] (the Messiah and the Mahdi are really one person and not two separate individuals as understood by other Muslims – and he was sent according to prophecy in the 14th Century Hijrah, as Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was the Israelite Messiah in the 14th Century after Prophet Moses (pbuh), in order to lay the foundation for the final regeneration and triumph of Islam over all religions.)

On the other hand, our Rabwah friends, following the lead of Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, have also found themselves in a "monkey pants" when they explain Khatam-an-Nabiyyin not as "the Last of the Prophets" but as meaning that by following the Holy Prophet, more prophets (perhaps thousands) will be made in future and as such, Mirza Sahib was a mustaqil and haqiqi (genuine) prophet.

Again, Lahore Ahmadi literature abounds with arguments and definitive proof to counteract this blemish on the Founder's name and his Movement. I refer here specifically to An Nabuwwat fil Islam (Prophethood in Islam) and Akhiri Nabi (The Last Prophet, which is a part of Prophethood in Islam but was published separately) by Maulana Muhammad Ali (and translated into English by Maulana S. M. Tufail).

In this latter book, Maulana Muhammad Ali has directed his attention specifically to the above belief of the Rabwah group (that more haqiqi prophets will appear in this ummah) and he has taken the arguments of Mirza Mahmud Ahmad one by one and demolished them so devastatingly that I fail to understand how a person who has read this book can still accept the false teachings of the Rabwites. But, I guess a pir parast [blind follower of a religious leader] is impervious to reason, or perhaps there may be other considerations that overshadow the strict adherence to truth.

This small but deadly book – deadly to the misguided doctrines of the Rabwites – contains six chapters, namely:

- The Question of Prophethood and Mirza Mahmud Ahmad
- The Meaning of Khatam-an-Nabiyyin in the Hadith
- Views of other Muslim Theologians and Companions of the Holy Prophet quoted by Mian Sahib
- The Saying of Hazrat A'isha, the Righteous
- Finality of Prophethood and the Founder of the

Ahmadiyya Movement

- Mian Sahib Explained Khatam-an-Nabiyyin as Last of the Prophets in 1910

From the above, you can guess at, if you have not read the book, the complete demolition of the Rabwites' house of straw.

Besides the above, there are many other writings. For example, Hafiz Sher Muhammad's La Nabiyya Ba'di, The Ahmadiyya Case, compiled and translated by Dr. Zahid Aziz (which I consider the Lahore Ahmadi handbook), and many others too numerous to mention, that contain quotations from the works of Mirza Sahib in which he denied to the end of his life that he was a haqiqi nabi as claimed by his son, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, in his book Haqiqatun-Nubuwwat, volume 1. It is interesting to note here, that after Maulana Muhammad Ali replied with An Nubuwwat fil Islam, volume 2 never came into being.

The following selections from Mirza Sahib's writings (after 1903) are a few references worthy of deeper scrutiny, especially by our friends from the other side.

Firstly, Rabwah missionaries are apt to shout at the top of their voices challenging all and sundry to produce a verse of the Holy Qur'an which supports the meaning of Khatam-an-Nabiyyin as "Last of the Prophets". Well, Mirza Sahib himself has given us the verse which is: This day I have perfected for you your religion and chosen for you Islam as a religion (5:3) and he has added the hadith, La nabiyya ba'di as further proof. On the other hand, Maulana Muhammad Ali has requested that they produce even one verse of the Holy Qur'an or one reliable hadith to support their claim that Khatam-an-Nabiyyin means more prophets will come after the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

Secondly, he has established the criteria for judging a full-fledged prophet as opposed to a majazi (metaphorical) orzilli (reflective) or juz'i (partial) prophet. "A claimant to prophethood," he says, "must believe in Allah, the Unique. He should claim that Allah sends down on him wahy (revelation) which he must impart to the people. He should also form an ummah (community) who regard him as a Prophet of Allah and he should also bring a Book from Allah" (Akhbar al-Hakam, no. 2, vol. 7, 10th June, 1903). We ask our friends: Does Mirza Sahib fall into the above category?

Thirdly, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad claims that there are three kinds of prophethood (in an earlier writing he asserted that there were only two kinds), and he quotes Ibn Arabi to support his contention. But this is what Mirza Sahib has to say on this point: "Mohiyyidin Ibn Arabi has written that whilst prophethood with law is unlawful, prophethood without law is. But my belief is this – that the door of all

kinds of prophethood is closed **except** reflection of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.”

In this connection, a woman once claimed to be a prophet, contending that only the prophethood of men had come to an end. (La nabiyya ba'di and not la nabiyyata ba'di.) But, Mirza Sahib, quoting the verse: Men are the maintainers of women (4:34) negated that belief saying that women were also subsumed in many of the Qur'anic ordinances given to men. (Akhbar Badr, no. 13, vol. 2, 17th April, 1903.)

Lastly, the opponents of Mirza Sahib proclaimed that they had issued the Fatwa of Kufr against him because although he was claiming with his tongue to be a zilli, majazi, baruzi, juz'i nabi and a mujaddid, yet in his heart he considered himself a haqiqi nabi. Mirza Sahib took oath solemnly declaring that that accusation was not true.

We ask our friends again: What kind of prophethood was he denying when he took that oath? Or, Allah forbid, was he a dissembler as the opponents claimed and his own son wittingly or unwittingly supports?

Now we come to the second part of the topic with special emphasis on the spread and final predominance of Islam through the Ahmadiyya Movement.

The Holy Qur'an itself testifies to the exalted status of the Holy Prophet as the following verses attest:

And surely thou hast sublime morals (68:4).

O Prophet, surely We have sent thee as a witness, and a bearer of good news and a warner and as an inviter to Allah by His permission and as a light-giving sun (35:45-46).

Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the Latter Day and remembers Allah much (33:21).

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

Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, in his book, *The Ideal Prophet*, has explained the above verses by elucidating the following points: The Prophet's message was the ideal one, his call was the perfect one, he was the ideal personality, the ideal character, the ideal exemplar, the possessor of the noblest of virtues, the ideal success (and this point in particular is shared by non-Muslim critics who acknowledge the Prophet as the most successful personality in the history of mankind).

To appreciate the magnitude of the Holy Prophet's task

and his consequent greatness, one has to look at the state of the society to which he was sent and the result he achieved.

The Holy Qur'an says: Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what men's hands have wrought, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, so that they may return (30:41). And according to historians, civilisation was on the brink of collapse and disintegration. Man was only one step away from becoming perfect beasts albeit in human form. Darkness prevailed in every corner of the earth, but Arabia was the darkest spot with every imaginable type of sin and immorality being prevalent.

A quotation from a non-Muslim source will suffice to illustrate the point:

“From time beyond memory, Mecca and the whole Peninsula had been steeped in spiritual torpor. The slight and transient influences of Judaism, Christianity or philosophical enquiry upon Arab mind had been but as the ruffling here and there of the surface of a quiet lake; all remained still and motionless below. The people were sunk in superstition, cruelty and vice.... Their religion was a gross idolatry; and their faith the dark superstitious dread of unseen things.... Thirteen years before the Hejira, Mecca lay lifeless in this debased state. What a change had these thirteen years now produced! Jewish truth had long sounded in the ears of men of Medina; but it was not until they heard the spirit-stirring strains of the Arabian Prophet that they too awoke from their slumber, and sprang suddenly into a new and earnest life” (Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, ch. 7).

But look at the marvellous transformation wrought by the Holy Prophet in such a short space of time. Mirza Sahib tells us of this:

“A strange phenomenal event took place in the deserts of Arabia, when hundreds of thousands of the dead became alive within a few days, and those who had been corrupted through generations took on Divine colour. The blind began to see, and tongues of the dumb began to flow with Divine wisdom. Such a revolution took place in the world as no eye had seen and no ear had heard of before. Do you realise what this was? All this was brought about by prayers during the darkness of night of one who had been wholly lost in God and which created an uproar in the world and manifested such wonders as seemed impossible at the hands of that unlettered helpless person. O Allah! Send down blessings and peace on him and on his followers in proportion to his concern and suffering for the Muslim ummah (the people of Islam), and shower upon him the light of Thy mercy forever” (Barakat-ud-Du'a, pp. 10-11).

Non-Muslim historians concur with the above as the following quotation attests:

“Never has a people been led more rapidly to civilisation such as it was, than were the Arabs through Islam” (H. Hirschfeld, *New Researches*, p. 5).

But if we look at the condition of Muslims presently and also over the past centuries, the casual observer may be tempted to agree with the non-Muslim Western propaganda that Islam is a spent force, a barbaric religion of the Middle Ages, totally unsuited to the demands and exigencies of a modern society – that Islam had its Golden Age but it peaked in the past and will now suffer the fate of all past civilisations.

But that is only a superficial view. It is true that the Holy Prophet is physically dead and the so-called Golden Age of Islam lies in the past. Nevertheless, the Holy Prophet is still alive spiritually and his message will also live to the end of time and triumph over all the religions, because Allah has made provisions for this success.

When Muslims were in the deepest despair, decay and decadence, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad brought life and hope to Muslim hearts as prophesied by the Holy Prophet Muhammad:

“Most surely Allah will raise for this community at the head of every century one who shall revive its faith” (Abu Dawud). And:

“What will be your condition when the Son of Mary will descend among you and he will be your Imam from among yourselves?” (Bukhari).

We are further directed:

“When you find the Mahdi, perform bai’at at his hands. You must go to him even if you have to reach across icebound mountains on your knees. He is the Mahdi and the Caliph of Allah” (Ibn Majah). And:

“Whoever from among you meets Jesus, Son of Mary, should convey my greetings to him” (Dar Manshoor). We are also warned:

“He who dies in a condition that he has not recognised the Imam of his age, dies a death of ignorance” (Ahmad ibn Hanbal).

And as testimony to the truth of the Mahdi, the Holy Prophet prophesied:

“Surely two signs will appear which have never appeared before (as signs of truth for anyone else) since the creation of the heavens and the earth. In the month of Ramadhan, the moon will be eclipsed in the first of its night (of eclipse) and the sun will be eclipsed on the

middle day (of its days of eclipse). Both these eclipses will take place in the same month of Ramadhan. And these two signs have never occurred before since Allah created the heavens and the earth” (Sunan Dar Qutni). (See 75: 7-9 and note 2610 of Maulana Muhammad Ali’s English translation of the Holy Qur’an.)

It is interesting to note that these eclipses occurred twice in the life of the Mahdi and were seen both in the East and the West during the month of Ramadhan – 13th March (moon), 28th March (sun) in Qadian (1894) and 11th March (moon), 28th March (sun) in the West (1895). [Read a related article by clicking here.] But more than the above, the Holy Qur’an tells us: He it is who raised among the illiterates a Messenger from among themselves, who recites to them his messages and purifies them and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom – although they were before certainly in manifest error – and others from among them who have not yet joined them. And He is the Mighty, the Wise (62: 2-3).

Mirza Sahib has explained verse 3 as referring to the second advent of the Holy Prophet and said that this was fulfilled in himself and his companions. He explained in *Tohfa-e-Golarwiyya* that although religion was perfected and completed yet the perfection of the propagation of religion was not, because conditions in the time of the Holy Prophet were not appropriate. But in this age, all the necessary arrangements are in place – scientific progress has made the world a global village and the means of spreading the message are multitudinous. But since the designated task was that of the Holy Prophet, it was necessary for him to return to complete his mission. However, the law of God precludes the reappearance of a person who has died, so to fulfil 48:28 of the Holy Qur’an, a person who is the zill [spiritual reflection] of the Prophet in heaven or someone possessing a portion of the Prophet’s grace has to descend, and this is, of course, our Imam, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who incorporates in himself, but to a much lesser degree, all the excellence of the past prophets just as the Holy Prophet is the compendium of all the virtues of the previous prophets. It was on this premise that he founded the Ahmadiyya Movement, which he prophesied would bring about the total dominance of Islam in the last thousand years of this Adamic Dispensation, in order to defeat the second manifestation of Gog and Magog and the Dajjal. Accordingly, he says that the mention of Dhul Qarnain in the Holy Qur’an is a prophecy of the conditions that will prevail in today’s world and this is how he explains his journeys. This, of course, will help to underline the reality of our mission as Ahmadis.

In his first visit to the West, Dhul Qarnain reached the setting place of the sun and he found it going down into a black sea (or a black pool of mud)... (18:86). This, the Founder says, refers to the Western nations that were

given the clear and pure teachings of the Injil and other scriptures, but they corrupted and distorted them and turned them, as it were, into black mud.

His second journey was to the East. Then he followed a course. Until, when he reached the (land of the) rising sun, he found it rising on a people to whom he had given no shelter from it (18:88-90). These refer to the mass of the Muslims who have rejected all the mujaddids, and the present Imam of the Age in particular, and so are not privileged to remain under his shade and consequently are singed and scorched by the trials and tribulations, the shame and degradation, internal and external, that beset the whole Muslim world.

In his third journey: He followed a course. Until, when he reached (a place) between the two mountains, he found on that side of them a people who could hardly understand a word. They said: O Dhu-l-qarnain, Gog and Magog do mischief in the land. May we then pay thee tribute on condition that thou raise a barrier between us and them? He said: That wherein my Lord has established me is better, so if only you help me with strength (of men), I will make a fortified barrier between you and them" (18:92-95).

This, of course, refers to the Founder's Jama'at and we can see with dazzling clarity the only people who are safe from depredations of the second coming of Gog and Magog are those who are truly under the protection of Mirza Sahib's teachings, for he was told in revelation (in 1891): I shall make thee known with honour to the ends of the Earth and shall exalt thy name, and he himself, gives us the good news:

"Listen all of you. This is a prophecy of Him Who has created the heavens and the earth that He will spread this Community in all regions and will make it supreme over all, through arguments and proof.... The days are coming, indeed they are near, when there will only be one religion that is honoured in the world. He (Allah) will bless this Movement abundantly and will frustrate everyone who seeks to destroy it. This supremacy will endure forever till the Day of Judgement" (Tazkiratush-Shahadatain, p. 64). If we look at the paucity of members and means of the Ahmadiyya Movement and the internal dissension, that is, the deviation of the Rabwah group, then this may seem like an idle dream of a false visionary. But Mirza Sahib has told us that Allah does not need earth-shattering events or equipment to bring about a mighty revolution. Sometimes the weakest and most insignificant of creatures can perform His will with telling and devastating effect. And this is how he explains chapter 105 of the Holy Qur'an:

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Hast thou not seen how thy Lord dealt with the possessors

of the elephant? Did He not cause their war to end in confusion? And send against them birds in flocks? Casting at them decreed stones – so He rendered them like straw eaten up? The birds which destroyed the first Abrahah were a foreshadowing of today's Ahmadis who will similarly destroy the present Abrahah, that is, Gog and Magog and the Dajjal."

To this effect, he has given us detailed instructions and counsel on how we can prepare the way for this crushing victory. He advises us, the members of his Jama'at, who consider and accept him as the Promised Messiah, to rid ourselves of unclean habits and all kinds of sinfulness, hidden and manifest, and to show sympathy to all mankind – to cleanse our hearts of spite, hatred, envy, malice, resentment; in short, of all things negative, and to imitate the angels in obedience and purity – the only way that leads to a pure religious life is to colour ourselves with Divine attributes. We must show compassion to all on earth so that Heaven may shower mercy on us. He invites us to a way of life that will make our light brighter than everyone else's light, but that path demands the eradication of all kinds of envy and low passion and the inculcation of love for all in our hearts and the immersion of our identity in the ocean of the love of God. In addition, we must develop in ourselves the most sublime virtues, for this is the way to procure blessings, grace and favours from Allah and to gain acceptance of our supplications and to be blessed with assistance from the angels.

But this is not the work of a single day. Rather, we must make steady, consistent progress every day of our lives. "Leave off idleness and sloth and choose the path of lowly tazarro (humility). In privacy, make deep supplication to Allah that he may keep your faith sound and that He should be pleased with you," he exhorts.

We should take a lesson from the washerman who first places dirty clothes overnight in a kiln or furnace so that the heat cleanses the clothes of all kinds of impurities; then the next morning he carries them to the river, alternately beating them with a stone and washing them so that they come out as lily-white as they were in the beginning. In this way, we, too, must apply heat and beating and washing on our vile passion for our salvation lies in the purification of our souls, for Allah tells us in the Holy Qur'an:

Successful is he who purifies his soul (91:9). Mirza Sahib also exhorts us thus:

"I have said many times that in the point of name, there is no distinction between my Jama'at and other Muslims. You are Muslims and they, too, are called Muslims. You profess belief in the Kalima (declaration of faith) and so do they. You claim to follow the Holy Qur'an and they, too, make the same claim. In short, as regards claims, both groups are equal, but Allah is not pleased with mere

claims, and He is not happy until there is truth in what you say and in your actions there is proof of what you profess, and there is evidence that your condition is undergoing transformation.

I notice that there is a steady increase in the number of bai'at (pledge)-takers, but is everyone aware of the reality of the bai'at and what it entails? This is the essence of the bai'at: that there be discernible change in the personality of the taker and fear of God is born in his heart, and the true purpose of life having been discovered, he makes himself a true and worthy exemplar."

He further exhorts us to engage in taubah and istighfar continuously and with weeping hearts and make du'a (supplication) to Allah. In our daily lives, we must always obey the commands of Allah and the sunnah of our Holy Prophet. We should be careful in speech and must hasten towards the doing of righteous deeds and always be on the lookout for opportunities for beneficent service.

MUHAMMAD - EXEMPLAR FOR MANKIND

by Kalamazad Mohammed

Allah, Most High, himself bears eloquent testimony to the supreme status of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as the following verses of the Holy Qur'an testify:

Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the prophets. And Allah is ever Knower of all things (33:40).

Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the Latter day, and remembers Allah much (33:21).

O Prophet, surely We have sent thee as a witness, and a bearer of good news and a warner, and as an inviter to Allah by His permission, and as a light-giving sun (33:45-46).

And surely thou hast sublime morals (68:4). He it is Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of Truth that He may make it prevail over all religions (48:28).

The former Scriptures also prophesied his glorious advent and are suffused with glowing descriptions of his personality so much so that in the ancient Hindu Books, his coming is described as that of God walking upon earth. Non-Muslim writers, some of whom are even hostile to Islam, pay tribute to this unique personality. One quotation will suffice:

"An idea is a spark falling upon straw...(quoting Dumas). Thus was it with Muhammad. God was the spark, the

We must train ourselves to become like this: Allah's will must become ours, His pleasure ours, and we must have no private ambitions, and motives but everything must be done for His sake alone.

Finally, he warns his Jama'at that if there is no true brotherly love amongst members, then destruction is inevitable and Allah will raise others in our place.

In conclusion, I fervently hope and pray that we all uphold the conditions of the bai'at and do whatever we can to hasten the time of the final triumph of truth over falsehood and prove to the world the truth of the prophecies of the Holy Qur'an:

And say: The truth has come and falsehood vanished. Surely falsehood is ever bound to vanish (17:81). He it is Who sent His Messenger with the guidance and the Religion of Truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religions, though the polytheists are averse (9:33).

vital spark of spiritual flame, and this humble but honest Arab trader was the straw that after twenty years of silent but tenacious smouldering, God had set a light to" (Bosworth Smith, Muhammad and Muhammadanism, p. 344).

As Muslims, we all know that the Holy Prophet was the best of all creation and the most successful of all religious personalities in the history of the world. How can we get an insight into the mind of the Holy Prophet and the qualities that made him a living success for all times? We have to bear in mind that he combined in himself to the highest degree all the virtues of the preceding Prophets. Furthermore, his superiority lies in the fact that he has to face every circumstance of life and every temperament that it is possible to encounter.

I have tried to put myself in the place of a non-believer who has never heard of the Holy Prophet and also in the place of one who, because of upbringing and culture, has formed a negative stereotype of our Holy Prophet and I have tried to imagine what would make such a person understand the secret of his success and attract him to the religion of Islam.

A non-Muslim is apt to question the credentials of the Holy Prophet on three main areas:

- His motivation
- His consistency
- The relevance of his message to the present time

The first question that a non-believer may ask is this:

What was the mainspring of the Prophet's life force? To this we can say with all truth and sincerity that it was his deep faith in God, his love for the Almighty and his selfless concern for the regeneration of mankind that kept him labouring a mighty labouring from the beginning of his life till the end.

As regards his strong faith in God, Maulana Muhammad Ali says: "He had a deep conviction that God had a plan for the uplift of man, to bring into perfection not one nation or one people, but the whole world, and that no power could frustrate the Divine purpose (Living Thoughts of the Prophet Muhammad, p. 40).

And: "He was threatened with murder, and even Abu Talib, his uncle and his sole support, told him that he could no more withstand the united opposition of the Quraish. 'Do not charge me,' he said to the Prophet, 'with a responsibility too heavy for me.' But the Prophet stood adamant. He said: 'Should they place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, in order to make me renounce this mission, I should not do it. I shall never give it up until it shall please Allah to make it triumph or I perish in the attempt.' Failing in the attempt to persuade Abu Talib to hand over the Prophet to them, the Quraish now tried to win him over by temptation. They approached him directly: 'If your ambition is to possess wealth, we will amass for you as much of it as you wish; if you aspire to win honour, we are prepared to swear allegiance to you as our overlord and king; if you have a fancy for beauty, we offer you the hand of the finest maiden of your own choice.' The temptations were nigh irresistible. From a destitute, helpless and persecuted man to a mighty potentate rolling in wealth and with beauty by his side was a big life. But he replied: 'I want neither riches nor political power. I have been commissioned by Allah as a warner to mankind, and I deliver His message to you. Should you accept it, you shall have felicity in this life as well as in the life to come; should you reject the word of Allah, surely Allah will decide between you and me.'" (ibid. p. 41).

He recounts an incident in the life of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) which exemplifies his unshakeable faith in God: "On a certain journey, while resting under a tree all alone, an enemy came upon him, and unsheathing his sword, shouted: 'Who can save thee now from my hands?' Calmly, the Holy Prophet replied: 'Allah.' And the next moment the same sword was in the Holy Prophet's hand and he put the same question, on which he (the enemy) assumed a tone of abject humility, and the Prophet let him go" (ibid. p. 38).

But what was the reason for this unswerving faith? The answer is this: He knew that his message was not a concoction of his mind nor was he speaking out of his own desire, but instead, it was a revelation from God,

Most High, and as such there was no power that could deter him from his task. As regards his love for God, nothing in the history of man can approach this poignant prayer of his when rejected by the people of Taif, pelted and bloodied, he turned to his Beloved as he retreated in sorrow and agony:

"O my God! To Thee I complain of the feebleness of my strength and of my lack of resourcefulness and of my insignificance in the eyes of people. Thou art the most merciful of the merciful, Thou art the Lord of the weak. To whom wilt Thou entrust me, to an unsympathetic foe who would sullenly frown at me, or to a close friend to whom Thou hast given control over my affair? Not in the least do I care for anything except that I may have Thy protection. In the light of Thy face do I seek shelter, in the light which illumines the heaven and dispels all sorts of darkness, and which controls all affairs in this world as well as in the Hereafter. May it never be that I should incur Thy wrath or that Thou shouldst be displeased with me. There is no strength, nor power, but in Thee" (ibid. pp. 6-7).

In fact, every action of his was activated by his love for and devotion to God. He was never sluggish nor too tired to turn to Him in prayer and he would do so even to the point where his feet would swell as he stood long and deep in salat (prayer). The recitation of the Holy Qur'an by someone else would immediately bring tears to his eyes, so deep was his love for God, His Word and, of course, His creation.

The Holy Qur'an tells us:

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

It is true that Allah had charged him with nothing but the clear deliverance of the message, but his heart pined for the upliftment of his people who were sunk into the torpor of moral, intellectual and spiritual decadence and the Holy Qur'an itself bears testimony to this overriding concern of the Holy Prophet:

Then maybe thou wilt kill thyself with grief, sorrowing after them, if they believe not in this announcement (18:6).

And: Certainly a Messenger has come to you from among yourselves; grievous to him is your falling into error, most solicitous for you, to the believers (he is) compassionate, merciful (9:128).

Therefore, in his daily life, his love made no distinction, no differentiation as regards race, religion, class or gender. Among his Companions could be counted people of many races and all were able to achieve high rank, socially and spiritually. In fact, there was no limit to anyone, neither was there a superior or inferior race. All were equal in the eyes of God and in his eyes, too.

Although he made no compromise when he preached against the false beliefs of other religions, yet in his dealings with individual members of these religions he was careful not to hurt their sensitivity. He once reproved Abu Bakr for telling a Jew that he, the Prophet, was superior to Prophet Moses (as) even though the Jew had started the argument and even though he himself knew that he was superior to all the Prophets, for he did not want to hurt the Jew's feelings.

He came as a mercy to all the nations and all the social classes, but he was extremely solicitous of the poor and downtrodden who had nothing to fall back on to raise their self-esteem. And to the most downtrodden of these classes belonged the slaves. He urged good treatment and encouraged the freedom of slaves. "If a person owning a slave sets him free, God will in recompense save every part of his body, corresponding to every part of the slave's body, from the torment of Hell," he exhorted. Furthermore, he made provisions (for example, from the zakat fund of the state), for their education and emancipation.

And we all know that no man ever did as much to raise the position of women from that of degradation to one of dignity and honour in the home and the society at large. From being themselves considered property, he conferred on them the right of inheritance and gave them equal right with men and equal opportunity for all-round advancement. Furthermore, the treatment of his wife was made the touchstone of a person's worth and nobility in the eyes of God and man, and his life abounded with examples of the most perfect treatment he meted out to his wives.

The second big question is: Was he consistent in his teaching and practice? Firstly, the Holy Prophet hated hypocrisy. "The hypocrites are in the deepest depths of the Fire," he warned, and admonished: O you who believe, why say you that which you do not? It is most hateful in the sight of Allah that you say that which you do not do (61:2-3).

Instead, he exhorted mankind to be sincere in obedience to God and so whatever commands he received from Allah, he imparted to the people but above all, he himself put them into practice, openly and secretly. "His life was the Qur'an," his wife, Lady Ayesha testified, and who can know more of a man than a wife or a valet? And, of course, his servants all bore witness to the beauty of his character and temperament. Anas (rta) recalled how he worked as a servant to the Holy Prophet for ten years and although he was young and apt to make mistakes, never once, he said, was the Holy Prophet harsh to him. And those who restrain anger and pardon men (3:133) was a guiding principle in his dealings with every class of mankind.

If he preached truthfulness, he himself steadfastly adhered to it. Even before he became a Prophet, he was known in Makkah by all and sundry as Al Amin, the Trustworthy, the True. It is interesting to note that later on in his life, when he claimed prophethood and preached against their idols, his opponents called him all kinds of names - magician, sorcerer, enchanter, madman, poet, and showered all kinds of abuse and vituperation on him, but never once did they refer to him as a liar!

If he preached forgiveness, he practised it to a fault, and never in his life did he avenge a personal insult or injury. Instead, on record is the greatest act of forgiveness in the annals of man when he conquered Makkah and told his erstwhile enemies, as they lay at his mercy: "This day there is no reproof on you." It was on this occasion, too, that he displayed a supreme act of humility when he rode into Makkah as the head of a conquering army not with head raised high and chest pushed forward, but with head bent low over the saddle.

If he preached that mankind was a single race, he practised it to the hilt, and furthermore, left, as the sole criterion for judging the excellence and worth of a person's character, his taqwa (piety). Surely the noblest of you with Allah is the most dutiful. Surely Allah is Knower, Aware (49:13). He himself never discriminated against anyone on any grounds whatever and in his farewell address he underlined the equality of the human race: "All of you are equal. All men, whatever nation or tribe they belong to, and whatever station in life they may hold, are equal." If he taught religious tolerance, he practised it to its limit, as the example of the Najran Delegation amply demonstrates. Not only was the discussion held in the Prophet's Masjid (Mosque) in the most amicable atmosphere, but he also allowed them to hold their prayer service right in the Masjid even though they had requested permission to pray elsewhere.

Whilst it is true that he fought wars against his enemies, yet these were forced upon him and his small band of followers by the enemy who wanted to extirpate every trace of Islam and Muslim from Arabia. He bore persecution for thirteen years in Makkah without lifting a finger in self-defence or retaliation and it was only when he had to flee to Madinah and was pursued there was permission given by God to fight, but only in defence. And fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you but be not aggressive. Surely Allah loves not the aggressors (2:190). He followed this command to the letter so much so that never in his battles did he strike the first blow.

If he preached patience in adversity, he was the foremost in the practice of it and the circumstances of his life bear ample testimony to this. He was orphaned at an early age, suffered persecution in his native city and was later

forced to flee with a price on his head; he lost near and dear relatives and friends and eleven children including Ibrahim, his only son whom he dearly loved, yet he never complained either to God or to man and never did he allow those sorrows to affect him in his relationship with others or in his task of reclaiming mankind - no bitterness, no resentment, no grievance - instead, a cheerful countenance and kindness to all.

As regards the dealing of justice to all regardless of whether it was family, friend or foe, the Holy Prophet stands head and shoulders above all other luminaries the world has known. It was this quality - the ability to give redress to even the most abject of society - that endeared Islam to the hearts of millions in the past, present and, I venture to say, will do so in the future also. This is what he preached: O you who believe, be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness for Allah, even though it be against your own selves or (your) parents or near relatives - whether he be rich or poor, Allah has a better right over them both. So follow not your own desires, lest you deviate. And if you distort or turn away from (the truth), surely Allah is Aware of what you do (4:135).

One example from hundreds will suffice to exemplify the point: "He was called Al Amin and no one, even his bitterest enemy, ever accused him of breaking his word. These are the injunctions he gave: The believers are those who are keepers of their trusts and their covenant (23:8) and They fulfil the promise (5:1)" Maulana Muhammad Ali's Translation of the Holy Qur'an, note 620, p. 220).

When the Emperor of Rome questioned Abu Sufyan, the Quraish chief and an implacable foe of the Holy Prophet, whether the Prophet had ever broken a promise, he had no choice but to confess that the Holy Prophet had never done so. And so it was with the treaties he made with the enemy tribes. These treaties he considered as sacred documents, something the "civilised modern nations" of today can do well to consider and imitate, especially in light of what obtains in international relations, for these verses point to the heart of an insidious present-day problem: And fulfil the covenant of Allah...and break not the oaths after making them fast.... You make your oaths to be means of deceit between you because one nation is more numerous than another is.... And make not your oaths a means of deceit between you... (16: 91, 92, 94).

Secondly, his consistency was evident not only in his faithfulness to what he preached but also in the many vicissitudes of his existence here on earth. Let a non-Muslim speak:

"On the whole, the wonder is to me not how much, but how

little under different circumstances, Muhammad differed from himself. In the shepherd of the desert, in the Syrian trader, in the solitary of Mount Hira, in the reformer in the minority of one, in the equal of the Persian Chosroes and the Greek Heraclius, we can still trace a substantial unity. I doubt whether any other man, whose external conditions changed so much, ever himself changed less to meet them; the accidents are changed, the essence seems to be the same in all.

Power, as the saying is, no doubt put man to the test. It brought new temptations and therefore new failures, from which the shepherd of the desert might have remained free. But happy is the man who, living 'in the fierce light that beats upon a throne, and blackens every blot' can stand the test as well as did Muhammad" (Bosworth Smith, Mohammed and Mohammadanism, pp. 140-141).

And finally, the sceptic may ask: can his teachings be applied to today's world and all its complexities? Let us remember that circumstances may change but human nature does not and whatever the criteria for success in the fifth century A.D., or the first century, they still hold good now and for all times. Also, let us not forget that those same principles built not only a strong individual, a strong community, a strong nation, but also a famous empire, the like of which never existed before or after, and the like of which has been promised during the last thousand years of this Adamic Dispensation. He it is Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of Truth that He may make it prevail over all the religions. And Allah is enough for a witness (48:28).

To substantiate this point, let us examine just two quotations from two unbiased non-Muslim personalities of high stature in the Western world. "It is not the propagation but the permanency of his religion that deserves our wonder, the same pure and perfect impression which he engraved at Makkah and Madinah is preserved, after the revolutions of twelve centuries by the Indian, the African and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran...and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion" (E. Gibbon and S. Ockley, History of the Saracen Empire, p. 54).

"I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to possess that assimilating capability to the changing phases of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today.... I have studied him (i.e. Muhammad), 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 bring it the much-needed peace and happiness. Europe is beginning to be enamoured of the creed of Muhammad. In the next century, it may go still further in recognising the utility of that creed in solving its problems, and it is in this sense that you must understand my prediction" (George Bernard Shaw, *A Collection of Writings of Some of the Eminent Scholars*, published by the Woking Muslim Mission, 1935 edition, p. 77).

Simple, humble, selfless and consistent in love for God

and man and service to all, this "denizen of the desert" left no material inheritance but two things which he himself said will keep us safe and elevate us if we obey them – the Holy Qur'an and his Sunnah.

Certainly We have revealed to you a Book which will give you eminence. Do you not then understand? (21:10)

Say: If you love Allah follow me: Allah will love you, and grant you protection from your sins. And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful (3:30).

May Allah bless us all.

THE MARRIAGES OF THE HOLY PROPHET (PBUH)

By Arfaque Malik. The Light (Vol. 62 – No. 2; Nov. 24, 1982; p.5 - 6, 15-19)

[Note: Many anti-Islamic sites spread misconceptions relating to our Beloved Holy Prophet Muhammad's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) marriages. We present here an article that will clear our Beloved Holy Prophet (pbuh) off these blasphemous charges. May Allah guide the opponents of Islam aright, Aameen!]

The several marriages that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) contracted have been much misunderstood and subjected to derogatory remarks beyond all limits of justice and decency. Notwithstanding the fact, that the institution of polygamy existed before the advent of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and a majority of Biblical prophets were polygamous, our critics single him out "heaping abuses, calumny and derogatory epithets, upon him." ¹ The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) contracted a number of marriages after the age of fifty-three. The accusation of being licentious is nothing but a product of their own fertile imagination. Dr. Besant refutes this assertion: "But do you mean to tell me that the man who in the full flush of youthful vigour, a young man of four and twenty (24), married a woman much his senior, and remained faithful to her for six and twenty years (26), at fifty years of age when the passions are dying married for lust and sexual passion? Not thus are men's lives to be judged. And you look at the women whom he married, you will find that by every one of them an alliance was made for his people, or something was gained for his followers, or the woman was in sore need of protection." ²

The famous author of the book called "Mohammad and Mohammedanism", Bosworth Smith explains: "It should be remembered, however, that most of Mohammad's marriages may be explained at least, as much by his pity for the forlorn condition of the persons concerned

as by other motives. They were almost all of them with widow who were not remarkable either for their beauty or their wealth, but quite the reverse." ³ The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) contracted marriages either for the protection of the females whose husbands had died for the cause of Islam or for cementing the bonds of love with those who could by their position and influence be of service to Islam or for the benefit of humanity at large. "In every single case it was a personal sacrifice on the part of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to have contracted the marriage, or circumstances obliged him to do so whilst there was as yet no law limiting the number of wives." ⁴ The ladies who married the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did so of their own volition. None of them was forced into marriage. The youthful days of the Prophet prior to the beginning of revelation, "were free from every blemish; neither his worst enemies during his life nor the mud-slinging critics of the later times have ever been able to find the slightest fault with this critical period of his life. His veracity, chastity, innocence and pureness of heart were proverbial for he never indulged in anything unbecoming of a true should youth like him." ⁵ From twenty-five years up to the age of fifty he remained with a wife older than him. During this period of his age he remained devoted to his wife and even after her death he remembered her with love and compassion." ⁶

It is narrated on the authority of Jabir ibn Abdullah that Abu Jahl and some of the chiefs of the Quraish approached the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said: "If you are anxious for leadership, we are prepared to declare you our leader, if you need riches we would collect for you an enormous amount of wealth that will suffice not only for you but even for your descendants; if you are impelled by sexual urge, you may chose ten beautiful damsels out of the

whole tribe of Quraish. The Holy Prophet kept silent and did not utter a word. When their talks concluded, the Holy Prophet recited the following verse of the Qur'an : "Beneficent God! A revelation from the Beneficent, the Merciful : A Book of which the verses are made plain, an Arabic Qur'an for a people who know – good news and a warning. But most of them turn away, so they hearken not" (41 : 1.4).

The Holy Prophet concluded his reply on the verse: "Then if they turn away, then say: I warn you of a scourge like the scourge of 'Ad and Thamud, (41:13)." ⁷ This solitary event is enough to refute the charge of licentiousness. The worldly pleasures had no significance for him. "His was a life of perfect sublimity and single-minded devotion to Allah, absolutely free from the taints of base desires." ⁸

A Western biographer of the Holy Prophet pin-points the common weakness of the occidentals who try to bring in a verdict on the marriages of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him): "Muhammad's married life must not be looked at from an occidental point of view or from that set by Christian conventions. These men and women were not occidentals and they were not Christians. They were living at a period and in a country where the only known ethical standards were theirs. Even so, there is no reason why the codes of America and Europe should be considered superior to those of the Arabs. The people of the West have many things to give to the people of the East. They have much to glean, too, and until they can prove that their way of living is on a higher moral standard than any body else's, they should reserve judgements on other creeds and castes and countries." ⁹

The Holy Prophet lived a simple and modest life. Being the Head of State, the Chief Justice, the Commander-in-Chief, the instructor etc., he was the most busiest man of his time, still he spent considerable part of his nights in prayers and meditation.¹⁰ His furniture was simple (i.e. mats, jugs, blankets etc.). His life was so simple that his wives did not have worldly comforts. Could this be a life of a lustful and passionate man? At the advent of Islam in Arabia the practice of polygamy was common and deeply rooted in the social life." ¹¹ He contracted various marriages in accordance with the custom of the country.

The limitation of the number of wives was fixed at the end of the eighth year of Hijrah and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) had married all his wives before that period. He was commanded by Allah to keep those whom he had already married but was forbidden to marry any more. ¹² The Quranic verse,

"It is not allowed to take wives after this, (33 : 52) implies that the Holy Prophet, like all his other acts contracted those marriages perfectly in accordance with the will of the Lord. There was a divine purpose behind them and when it was achieved a restriction was placed upon him." ¹³

The above facts clearly belie the wrong notions that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) contracted these marriages in response to physical needs or biological pressures. Those who doubt moral integrity or spiritual excellence of our Prophet, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) should answer questions such as: "Why did he start his first marriage at the age of 25 years after having had no association with any female? Why did he choose a twice-widowed older lady who was 15 years senior to him? Why did he remain with her until her death when he was over fifty? Why did he accept all those helpless widows and divorcees who possessed no particular appealing qualities? Why did he lead such an austere and hard life, when he could have had an easy and comfortable course? Why did he contract most of his marriages in the busiest five years of his life, when his mission and career were at stake? How could he manage to be what he was, if the harem life or passions overtook him? ¹⁴

Reasons for the Marriages:

The factors that prompted the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to contract several marriages are being briefly discussed below:

1. An Ideal Model:

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) being the last and the Final Prophet ¹⁵ and "Mercy for the nations" ¹⁶ was required to present to humanity an ideal and perfect model for all stages of human experience and moral test and for that very reason the Holy Quran calls him an "excellent exemplar." ¹⁷ Mankind learnt from him the best ways. As a husband he was kind, "He lived with one wife and with more than one, with the old and the young, with the widow and the divorcee, with the pleasant and the temperamental, with the renowned and the humble; but in all cases he was the pattern of kindness and consolation." ¹⁸ To be an ideal model he had to undergo the trials and complexities of human behaviour, which were hard and by no means pleasurable. He gave to the world an ideal example of (i) a celibate life up to the age of twenty-five, (ii) a monogamous life with an old widow and (iii) finally a polygamous life after the age of fifty. In each and every aspect, his life was perfect. He indeed is a model for humanity - an excellent exemplar. Such an example could not have been possible without contracting all these marriages.

2. Education of the Ummah:

With the migration of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) and the Muslims to Medina, the Islamic society was established. The Muslims were required to conform their social and personal behaviour to the teachings of Islam. The Holy Prophet himself meticulously observed the Quranic commands and regulations and solved difficult problems concerning Muslims' social and political life. The Holy Prophet encouraged Muslims to convey the knowledge they had gained to other Muslims. He paid special attention towards female education. For this purpose the Holy Prophet required fully trained ladies. The ideal way to solve this problem was to personally train some ladies. Who could be more trained and witness to the private life of the Holy Prophet than his wives. "It was not an ordinary work but an important task of vast magnitude which was admirably accomplished by these pious ladies." ¹⁹

3. Preservation of the Holy Prophet's Private Life:

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) was undoubtedly, the greatest teacher of mankind. He lived an exemplary life, which was a living commentary on the Holy Quran. "Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed." ²⁰ By marrying with women of varied temperaments he was able to get his private life and actions preserved in a better way in order to set a complete and perfect example to the mankind. It was possible for men to forget many things of his personal life on account of their constant conflict with the outside world but women (house-wives) cannot forget them. It was necessary, therefore, to marry with a number of women of different places and clans having varied tastes, habits and temperaments. Besides, a number of laws and rules of the Shariah concerning women could be promulgated only through wives." ²¹This, perhaps, is one of the most important reasons for the Holy Prophet's marriages. The wives of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) were required to serve as models of virtue to the Muslims and to teach them all that was "recited in the house, of the messages of Allah and the wisdom." ²² Thus they were required to remember and convey to the Muslims whatever the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) taught them at home.

4. Elimination of Racial and Tribal Distinctions:

By contracting some of the marriages the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) removed the distinctions between different clans and tribes. He eliminated racial and national distinctions and prejudices and upheld piety as criterion of integrity and superiority. He married some of the humblest and poorest women, a coptic girl from Egypt and a Jewess. Thus he removed the distinction of race and creed and gave a

practical demonstration of the fact that after accepting Islam all are equal in the sight of Allah and the Shariah revealed by Him.

5. Status of a Divorced Woman:

Divorced women were looked upon as inferior in status and were not allowed to remarry in pre-Islamic era. By marrying a divorced lady the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) taught that such a marriage is not only lawful but desirable to grant a divorced woman an honourable status in the society.

6. Marriage with the Divorced Wife of an Adopted Son:

Some of the Prophet's marriages were for legislative reasons, in order to abolish certain prevailing evil customs and practices. Before Islam an adopted son was considered as a real son and was entitled to all rights and privileges similar to a real son. Islam abrogated this practice. The Holy Prophet demonstrated his disapproval by marrying Hazrat Zainab, who was previously married to Hazrat Zaid, a freed slave, and who was considered his adopted son. Thus he established correct status of an adopted child.

7. Protection of Widows and their Children:

The Holy Prophet also married widowed women. This helped in solving the problem of providing care and protection to widows and their children in peace as well as in war when due to death of large number of male members, women were left with no one to support them.

8. Status of Freed Prisoners of War:

Before the advent of our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) the prisoners of war were taken as slaves. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) set an example by freeing them on ransom and on several occasions without charging any thing. They were encouraged and assisted to settle down through legal marriages, or earning money by working or even educating people. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) not only paid ransom for some and freed them but also married two of the captive women.

9. Political Reasons:

Some of the marriages were political in character. He was concerned for the future of Islam. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) was ever anxious to bind his followers belonging to different clans and tribes in mutual love and affection. That was, doubtlessly, the object in marrying Juwairiyah (may Allah be pleased with her), daughter of Haris, the Chief of Bani al-Mustaliq. The whole clan of that tribe and

their allies were thus won over to Islam. It was through marriage with Safiyah (may Allah be pleased with her) that the enmity of a section of Jewish Community was neutralised. Similarly by marrying Mariya the Copt, (may Allah be pleased with her) the Holy Prophet developed blood relations with a ruler of great magnitude.

An Ideal Husband:

The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, treated his wives with even kindness and affection. He gave to the mankind best possible example in respect of dealing with wives of different age groups having different temperaments and social status. It is reported from Hazrat Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) the wife of the Holy Prophet that her husband had remarked many a time that "the best of you is he who is good to his wife". And according to a report from Abdullah ibn Umar, the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, declared : "The whole world is a thing to be made use of and the best thing in the world is a virtuous wife." ²³

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- 8 Abdul Hamid Siddiqui, op. Cit. P.241.
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- 10 Al-Quran : Al-Muzammil, 73 : 20 : "Lo ! thy Lord Knoweth how thou keepest vigil sometimes nearly two-thirds of the night or (sometimes) half or a third thereof, as do a party of those with thee..."
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- 15 Al Quran, 33 : 40.
- 16 Ibid., 21 : 107.
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MAULANA MUHAMMAD ALI

His Influence on Contemporary and Later Muslim Scholars

By Ch. Masud Akhtar, B.A., LL.B.

[This article provides an excellent summary of the widespread influence Maulana Muhammad Ali's literary works had on his contemporaries and later scholars. In particular, Maulana Muhammad Ali's English translation and commentary of the Holy Quran was the initial work in the arena of Muslims rendering the Quran into the English language and served as a prototype for most (if not all) later translations. As very ably demonstrated in this article, Maulana Muhammad Ali's works were regarded as premiere Islamic literature for English readers and a source of scholarly information for academics in the West. The superior quality of Maulana Muhammad Ali's literary treasures and their utility in the promotion of authentic Islamic education is once again being recognized and valued today, ironically in

the East. Most of Maulana Muhammad Ali's works are being translated from English into Arabic (and a host of other languages) and are being received with much admiration, recognition and appreciation by individuals and academic institutions alike.]

When The Review of Religions started its publication from Qadian, India in 1901, Maulana Muhammad Ali became its first editor. The depth of his knowledge in the teachings of Islam portrayed through his articles and editorials surprised not only the scholarly elite of the Ahmadiyya Community but also of the contemporary Muslim world. His articles on comparative religions are a treat to read. (The Review of Religions file is available in the Library of Congress in the U.S.A.) Merit of his learning

was discovered and recognized by the Mujaddid of the 14th century Hijrah and the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam in the early days of his contact with him and accordingly he had ordered that all articles to be published in Urdu magazines of the Movement be first shown to and approved by Maulana Muhammad Ali. Not only this, the venerable Imam of the 14th century Hijrah chose this young man from amongst a circle of the scholarly personages who had gathered around him as his disciples, each one of whom was an authority on the teachings of Islam in his own right, for that great work of translating the Holy Quran into English and for writing a book on the teachings of Islam for exposing the sublime teachings of the Quran and Islam to the Western nations. This was a great honour for a youth in his early thirties, as Maulana Muhammad Ali was at that time.

Maulana Muhammad Ali started work on the English translation of the Holy Quran with Commentary in 1909 and it was completed in 1917 when its first edition was published. (He completed its revision in 1950 and the revised edition was published in 1951, a few days before his passing away.) For these nine years he worked very hard, and thus the first complete English translation of the Holy Quran from the pen of a Muslim became available to the world of religion. About the salient features of this translation he himself wrote in the preface to the first edition which is reproduced hereunder:

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

Wherever a departure has been made from the ordinary or primary significance of a word, reason for this departure has been given in a footnote and authorities have been amply quoted. There are some novel features in this translation. The Arabic text has been inserted, the translation and the text occupying opposite columns. Each verse begins with a new line in both the text and the translation, and verses are numbered to facilitate reference. Necessary explanations are given in footnotes in serial numbers, and generally either authorities are quoted or reasons given for the opinion expressed. This made the work very laborious, but I have undertaken this

labour to make the work a real source of satisfaction to those who might otherwise be inclined to be sceptical regarding many statements which will appear new to the ordinary reader. I have tried to avoid repetition in the explanatory footnotes by giving a reference where repetition was necessary, but I must confess that these references are far from being exhaustive. When the significance of a word has been explained in one place it has been thought unnecessary, except in rare cases, to make a reference to it. For the reader's facility I have, however, added a list of the Arabic words explained, and the reader may refer to it when necessary.

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

The introductory notes also show whether a particular chapter was revealed at Makkah or Madinah, and also the probable period to which it belongs. Exact dates and specified order of the revelation of different chapters are often mere conjectures, and therefore I have avoided this useless task.

The references to the authorities quoted in the notes are explained in the list of abbreviations given on p. ix. Among the commentators, I have made the greatest use of the voluminous commentaries of Ibn Jarir, Imam Fakhr al-Din Razi, Imam Athir al-Din Abu Hayyan and the shorter but by no means less valuable commentaries of Zamakhshari, Baidawi and Jami' al-Bayan of Ibn Kathir. Among the lexicons, Taj al-'Arus and the Lisan al-'Arab

are voluminous standard works and have been freely consulted, but the smaller work of Imam Raghīb Isfahani, known as *Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran*, has afforded immense help, and it undoubtedly occupies the first place among the standard works in Arabic lexicology so far as the Quran is concerned. The valuable dictionaries of Hadith, the *Nahayah* of Ibn Athir and the *Majma' ul-Bihar* have also proved very serviceable in explaining many a moot point. It will, however, be noted that I have more often referred to Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon, a work value of which for the English student of Arabic can hardly be overestimated; this has been done purposely so that the reader of this volume may have the facility to refer to an easily accessible work. It is a pity that the great author was not spared to complete his work, but up to the letter fa, Lane has placed the world under the greatest obligation. Besides commentaries and lexicons, historical and other works have also been consulted. Among the collections of Hadith, Bukhari, *Kitab al-Tafsir*, or chapter on the commentary of the Holy Quran, has been before me through-out, but the whole of Bukhari and other reliable Hadith collections have also been consulted.

And lastly, the greatest religious leader of the present time, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, has inspired me with all that is best in this work. I have drunk deep at the fountain of knowledge which this great Reformer - Mujaddid of the present century and founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement - has made to flow. There is one more person whose name I must mention in this connection, the late Maulawi Hakim Nur al-Din, who in his last long illness patiently went through much the greater part of the explanatory notes and made many valuable suggestions. To him, indeed, the Muslim world owes a deep debt of gratitude as the leader of the new turn given to the exposition of the Holy Quran, he has done his work and passed away silently, but it is a fact that he spent the whole of his life studying the Holy Quran, and must be ranked with the greatest expositors of the Holy Book.

The principle of the greatest importance to which I have adhered in interpreting the Holy Quran is that no word of the Holy Book should be interpreted in such a manner as to contradict the plainer teachings of the Holy Quran, a principle to which the Holy Word has itself called the attention of its reader in 3:60; see 387. This rule forms the basis of my interpretation of the Quran, and this is a very sound basis, if we remember that the Holy Quran contains metaphors, parables, and allegories side by side with plain teachings. The Practice (Sunnah) and Sayings of the Holy Prophet, when contained in reliable

reports, are the best commentary of the Holy Word, and I have therefore attached the greatest importance to them. Earlier authorities have also been respected, but reports and comments contradicting the Quran itself cannot but be rejected. I have also kept before me the rule that the meaning to be adopted in any case should be that which suits the context best, and the only other limitation to which I have subjected myself is that the use of that word in that sense is allowed by the lexicons or by Arabic literature.

Existing translations have rendered me great help, but I have adopted an interpretation only after fully satisfying myself and having recourse to original authorities. Many of the stories generally accepted by the commentators find no place in my commentary, except in cases where there is either sufficient historical evidence or the corroborative testimony of some reliable Saying of the Holy Prophet. Many of these stories were, I believe, incorporated into Islamic literature by the flow of converts from Judaism and Christianity into Islam. I must add that the present tendency of Muslim theologians to regard the commentaries of the Middle Ages as the final word on the interpretation of the Holy Quran is very injurious and practically shuts out the great treasures of knowledge, which an exposition of the Holy Book in the new light reveals. A study of the old commentators, to ignore whose great labour would indeed be a sin, also shows how freely they commented upon the Holy Book. The great service which they have done to the cause of Truth would indeed have been lost to the world, if they had looked upon their predecessors as uttering the final word on the exposition of the Holy Quran as most theologians do today.

The Urdu paper *Wakil*, which was published from Amritsar, India, and of which both the editor and the proprietor were orthodox Muslims, published a review of this translation in the following words: We have seen the translation critically and have no hesitation in remarking that the simplicity of its language and the correctness of the version are all enviable. The writer has kept his annotations altogether free from sectarian influence with wonderful impartiality, and has gathered together the wealth of authentic Muslim theology. He has also displayed great skill and wisdom in using the new weapons of defence in refuting the objections of the opponents of Islam.

Rev. Zwemer's quarterly, *The Muslim World* of July, 1931, offered this comment: One cannot read far in the translation of Maulvi Muhammad Ali or in his notes without being convinced that before he began his work

on the Koran he was already widely read in the Arabic authorities listed on page lx, to which frequent reference is made in his notes; also his quotations from Lane's Lexicon indicate that he was not altogether oblivious to the results of European scholarship (p. 303).

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

English translations of the Holy Quran by Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall and Mr. Ghulam Sarwar appeared a few years after Maulana's translation. About the influence on Mr. Pickthall and Mr. Sarwar, we have to quote once again from *The Muslim World*, July, 1931, Rev. Zwemer's quarterly: "A careful comparison of Mr. Pickthall's translation with that of the Ahmadiyya translator, Maulvi Muhammad Ali, shows conclusively that Mr. Pickthall's work is not very much more than a revision of the Ahmadiyya version" (p. 289). We have made a thorough examination of about forty verses in the second chapter, sixty verses in the third, forty verses in the nineteenth, and all of the last fifteen chapters, comparing his renderings with those of Sale, Rodwell, Palmer and Muhammad Ali; as well as with the Arabic.

From this careful investigation we have come to the conclusion that Mr. Pickthall's translation, in all that part of his work which we have examined, resembles very closely the version of Muhammad Ali, the difference between the two versions in many passages being merely verbal (p. 290).

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

The dependence of Mr. Pickthall upon the work of MA is also indicated in an occasional footnote, and those who will compare these footnotes with the notes in the 1920 edition of MA, which contains his commentary, will find

that throughout chapter 2 almost every footnote is based on the Ahmadiyya Commentary (p. 293).

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

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

Zwemer also wrote: By comparing these two passages with Mr. Sarwar's rendering given on page 133 of the last issue of this journal, it will be seen that both Mr. Sarwar and Mr. Pickthall have followed MA very closely (p. 294). Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali is another translator of the Quran into English. He has rendered a translation from Arabic verse to English verse. For such a translation in poetry it is really hard to remain true to Arabic. The true meanings have to be sacrificed for the sake of poetical rhythm and meter. Abdullah Yusuf Ali was conscious of this problem and we have it at the authority of late Mirza Masud Beg, a retired Divisional Inspector of Schools, Government of the Punjab, who became the Secretary General of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam Lahore and had been working in various positions for the Anjuman for the most part of his life, that Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali, when he was a lecturer in Anjuman Himayatul-Islam Lahore's Islamia College he had an arrangement with Maulana Muhammad Ali whereby he used to send each verse of the Quran that he rendered into English poetry to Maulana for approval, who will return it to Abdullah Yusuf Ali with necessary suggestions as to keeping nearer to true meanings.

The late Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi, Editor, Such, Lucknow, has also translated the Holy Quran. He was a recognized leader of orthodox Muslim opinion. He admits the influence of Maulana Muhammad Ali's translation in the following words in his paper of 25th June, 1943: To deny the excellence of Maulvi Muhammad Ali's translation, the influence it has exercised and its proselytizing utility, would be to deny the light of the sun. The translation certainly helped in bringing thousands of non-Muslims to the Muslim fold and hundreds of thousands of unbelievers much nearer Islam. Speaking of my own self, I gladly admit that this translation was one of the few books which brought me towards Islam fifteen or sixteen years ago when I was groping in darkness, atheism and scepticism. Even Maulana Muhammad Ali of the Comrade was greatly enthralled by this translation and had nothing but praise for it.

Whether his translation be counted amongst the orthodox or the modernists, Maulana answers this question in these words: There is not a single doctrine of the religion of Islam in which this Translation differs from orthodox views. I hope to be excused for clearing up this point by a quotation from Mr. Pickthall's review of my Religion of Islam in the Islamic Culture for October, 1936:

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

Mr. Pickthall was an orthodox Muslim, and what he has said of The Religion of Islam is true of this Translation. There is not a hair's breadth departure from the essentials of Islam, and this Translation does not contain anything contrary to the views of the great Imams and learned Ahl Sunnat that have gone before. That there have been differences in the interpretation of the Holy Quran among the greatest commentators, among even the Companions of the Holy Prophet and the great Imams, cannot be denied. But these differences do not relate to the essentials of the faith of Islam on which all Muslims are agreed; they relate to minor or secondary points. All Muslims believe in the Unity of God and the prophethood of Muhammad.

They believe in all the prophets of God and in His Books. They believe that Divine revelation came to perfection with the Prophet Muhammad who is thus the last of the prophets - Khatam al-Nabiyyin - after whom no prophet will come, and the Holy Quran is the last Divine message to the whole of humanity. All these doctrines find clear expression in my translation and the explanatory footnotes. The only important matter wherein I may be said to have differed with the majority relates to the death of Jesus Christ. But in the first place the belief that Jesus is alive somewhere in the heavens has never been included among the essentials of Islam. It has never been included among the religious doctrines of the faith of Islam. There are Muslims who still believe that four prophets are alive—Khidr, Idris, Elias and Jesus Christ - but that is not an article of faith with any Muslim.

Many learned Muslims have held such belief regarding the first three to be based on Israelite stories and as having nothing to support it in the Holy Quran and authentic Hadith. They are not looked upon as unorthodox for that reason. Why should this Translation be looked upon as unorthodox for saying the same thing about a belief in Jesus Christ being alive? I may call the reader's attention to another fact as well. Most learned Muslims all over the world, if not all, are today convinced that Jesus Christ died like other prophets and many of them have given expression to such views, among them being the famous Mufti Muhammad 'Abdu-hu and Sayyid Rashid Rada of Egypt.

Now this opinion that Jesus Christ did not bodily ascend to Heaven and is not alive there and that he died a natural death like other prophets was not only followed by Mr. Pickthall and Mr. Sarwar but found place in the first edition of Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali's translation. For reasons best known to them the publishers deleted it from the later editions. Recently, Allama Muhammad Asad's translation has been published and it, too, has carried the same opinion and interpretation about the death of Jesus Christ as expressed by Maulana Muhammad Ali in his translation.

Ahmad Deedat of South Africa is another Muslim scholar of the present days who believes in the death of Jesus Christ and is in agreement with the opinion of Maulana Muhammad Ali on almost all important matters of the teachings of Islam. How did Maulana Muhammad Ali come to exercise so much influence on his contemporary and later Muslim scholars? He was not seeking worldly laurels or prizes. He was consciously working for transforming the world around him; and this was possible only through revival of Islam - the mission of the Mujaddid whose disciple he was. Thus his was the labour of love, devotion and dedication. The labour which Maulana had put in this is recounted by him in these words: My work was a work of labour. For every rendering or explanation I had to search Hadith collections, lexicologies, commentaries and other important works, and every opinion expressed was substantiated by quoting authorities. Differences there have been in the past, and in future too there will be differences, but whatever I have differed I have given my authority for the difference.

Moreover, the principle I have kept in view in this Translation and Commentary, that is, seeking the explanation of a problematic point first of all from the Holy Quran itself, has kept me nearest to the truth, and those who study the Quran closely will find very few occasions to differ with me. I may here add that it is not

only in having recourse to Lane's Lexicon that I have taken advantage of European scholarship. For full nine years before taking up this translation I was engaged in studying every aspect of the European criticism of Islam as well as of Christianity and religion in general, as I had specially to deal with these subjects in The Review of Religions, of which I was the first editor. I had thus an occasion to go through both the higher criticism of religion by advanced thinkers and what I may call the narrower criticism of Islam by the Christian missionaries who had no eye for the broader principles of Islam and its cosmopolitan teachings, and the unparalleled transformation wrought by Islam.

No wonder then that his translation is a leading star for later translations of the Quran. After the English translation, Maulana Muhammad Ali wrote a voluminous Urdu commentary of the Quran under the title Bayan-ul-Quran in three volumes which extends over 2500 pages and is much more explanatory than the notes in the English Translation. This translation and commentary became the most popular exposition of the teachings of the Quran in the Urdu language in the nineteen thirties and forties; so much so that many maulanas who were otherwise opposed to the Ahmadiyya Movement made extensive use of this commentary in their khutubat (sermons) and dars-i-Quran.

The only precaution they took was to tear off the title page where the name of the author and publisher was printed. But there were other honest and strong characters who did not deem fit to do away with the name of the author and publisher. The late Sheikhul Islam, Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani, the then Principal of the well known Darul Ulum at Deoband (India) was one of them.

The late Maulana Aftab al-Din Ahmad, a student of the Sheikhul Islam at Deband who later became Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey, U.K. and translator of Sahih Bukhari into English in his account of joining the Ahmadiyya Movement reported that the Sheikhul Islam used to deliver very inspiring and enlightening dars-i-Quran and while on a visit to his home Maulana Aftab al-Din found that Maulana Usmani made use of the Bayan al-Quran of Maulana Muhammad Ali for his dars-i-Quran. Having noted the name of the author and the publishers, Maulana Aftab al-Din came to Lahore during summer vacations and joined the Ahmadiyya Movement.

(This account was published during the life of Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani and during a period of about twenty years between publishing and his death Maulana Usmani did not contradict or disown it.) On the emergence

of Pakistan Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani came to Pakistan and became Sheikhul Islam of Pakistan.

After this Maulana Muhammad Ali wrote his well known book on the teachings of Islam under the title of The Religion of Islam. Allama Iqbal wrote about it... An extremely useful book almost indispensable to the students of Islam. The University of the Punjab (now in Pakistan), in appreciation of this work, granted Maulana Muhammad Ali a special reward, and included this book as one of the reference books on Islamic jurisprudence. Marmaduke Pickthall wrote about this book:

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

This was translated into Arabic in Egypt and Miss Qutorman, a Turkish journalist who visited Pakistan in 1950, informed that this had been translated into Turkish and the influence it wielded in Turkey was acknowledged by the message of the great Mufti of Turkey delivered by her to the Maulana ... It has since been rendered into many languages, Dutch, Indonesian, Urdu and Spanish being some of these. In 1945, the Maulana published

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

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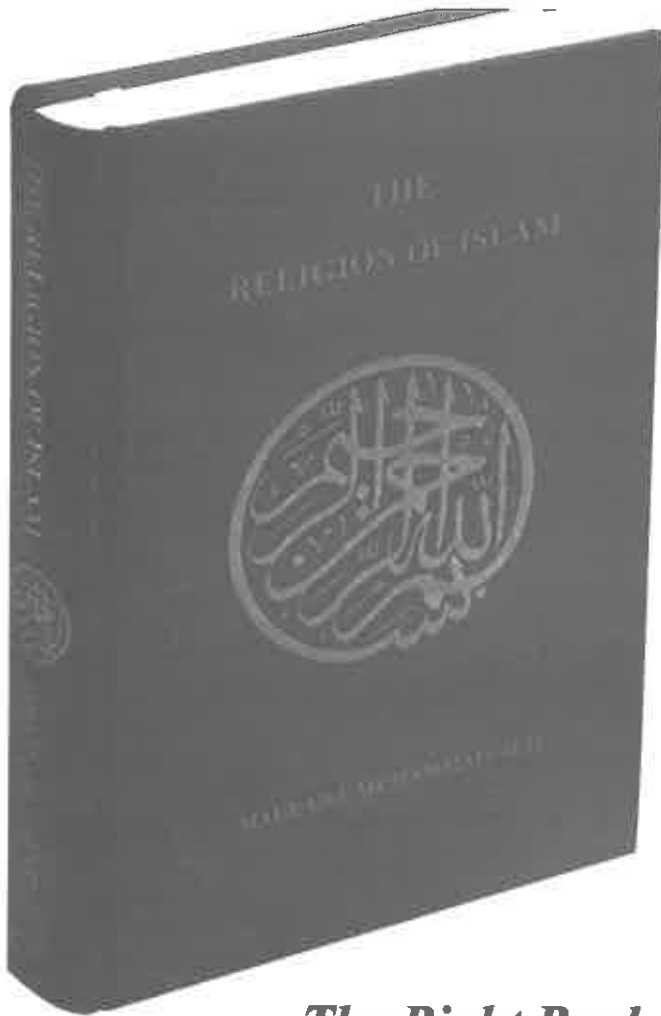
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