

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

The Light

AND

ISLAMIC REVIEW

Exponent of Islam and the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement
for over eighty years

July - September 2006

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 dialogue based on reason and rationality.

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CONTENTS

No. 3

<i>Islam's Guidance for Serving Humanity</i>	3
By Hajira Ahmed	
<i>Slavery in Islam</i>	7
PART III — By Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din	
<i>Women: Love, Marriage and Property – A Rebuttal to Chapter 8 of the book Unveiling Islam</i>	12
PART II — By Dr. Hamid Rahman	
<i>Friday Sermon of Maulana Muhammad Ali</i>	17
Translated from Urdu into English by Dr. Mohammad Ahmad	

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احمدیہ انجمن اشاعت اسلام لاہور

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The Light was founded in 1921 as the organ of the AHMADIYYA ANJUMAN ISHA'AT ISLAM (Ahmadiyya Association for the Propagation of Islam) of Lahore, Pakistan. *The Islamic Review* was published in England from 1913 for over 50 years, and in the U.S.A. from 1980 to 1991. The present periodical represents the beliefs of the worldwide branches of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam, Lahore.

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The main objective of the A.A.I.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 grave 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 practise any creed or religion. Requires us to tolerate differences of belief and opinion.

Rational: In all matters, it urges 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 servants 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:

U.S.A.	Australia
U.K.	Canada
Holland	Fiji
Indonesia	Germany
Suriname	India
Trinidad	South Africa
Guyana	

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 founds 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 at 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 (d. 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.

Islam's Guidance for Serving Humanity

By Hajira Ahmed

[This article was presented at the Annual Convention of the USA Branch of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement held in August of 2006 in Columbus, Ohio. The author is a Junior at Scripps College in Claremont, California studying Politics and International Relations. As is evidenced by this article, she is actively involved in social programs directed towards helping the poor and underprivileged. In this article, Ms. Ahmed outlines the Islamic position on freedom, justice and equality, then reviews the Islamic duty imposed on every Muslim to serve humanity, and concludes by bringing attention to the fact that with all the resources available to man today, there are many practical ways in which Muslims may partake in being "doers of good" to others.]

"Do good to others. Surely Allah loves the doers of good."

– The Holy Qur'an (2:195)¹

"Feed the hungry, look after the sick, and strive for the freedom of the enslaved."²

– Prophet Muhammad

"No religion has laid so much stress on the uplift of the poor and the distressed as Islam, and it is also the only religion that calls for the abolition of slavery."³

– Maulana Muhammad Ali

In today's troubled world, many people are experiencing "spiritual hunger," or a deep desire to seek truthful meaning. Some have shied away from organized religion in favor of secularism, perhaps believing that all religions are irrational due to the general rise in fundamentalism. Others have turned to fanaticism themselves, and then there are those in-between.

Our responsibility is to spread the message of Islamic truth to everyone and lead by example. Because Islam is the religion of humanity, its inspiring values such as peace, tolerance, and rationality naturally appeal to truth-seekers everywhere. As Maulana Muhammad Ali aptly observed,

Islam has a claim upon the attention of every thinker, not only because it is the most civilizing and the greatest spiritual force of the world, but also because it offers a solution to the most baffling problems which confront mankind today. Materialism, which has become humanity's ideal in modern times, can never bring about peace and mutual trust among the nations of the world.⁴

The complexities of global crises clearly make them beyond the scope of this essay, but I hope to show how Islam addresses the origin of these social problems. The

root cause appears to be discrimination, which consequently results in oppression and inequalities. Islam corrects these destructive imbalances in society by enjoining freedom and justice for all. These important principles, repeated often yet even more frequently neglected, are *powerful* when applied with Islam's practical recommendations, as Prophet Muhammad's revolutionary transformation of society proved. This is because Islam effectively cultivates in its followers a strong spiritual desire to serve humanity.

Islamic Principles of Freedom

It all begins with the fact that Islam teaches its followers to strive to develop their best qualities, because that is the goal of existence. As Dr. Zahid Aziz explains,

God has given to each person various capabilities and resources, such as knowledge, money, strength, some talent or skill, etc. Every individual must use what he or she has been given to benefit other people as well as the rest of God's creation, not just for selfish ends. If this principle is neglected, then not only is there no relief for the distress and suffering of the needy, but man's increased selfishness makes him his fellow man's deadly enemy; and society as well as mankind become divided into factions and groups all trying to grab things from one another [and destroying God's creation].⁵

The Holy Qur'an's guidance on this matter is very straightforward, pointing out the two paths open to each individual: the path of righteousness and the path of transgression. The following verses contain valuable lessons for us concerning the difficult, but rewarding "uphill road" towards human progress and perfection:

And (have We not) pointed out to man the two conspicuous ways? But he attempts not the uphill road; And what will make thee comprehend what the uphill road is? (It is) to free a slave, Or to feed in a day of hunger, To an orphan near of kin, Or to the needy one lying in the dust (90:10–16).

The verse "(It is) to free a slave" (90:13) emphasizes that the first step on the road of guidance is to free slaves not only from one kind of slavery, but to work towards freeing humanity in general from every conceivable kind of slavery.⁶ As the next verse indicates, for instance, we should free the needy from hunger.

The ideal of freedom for all is based on belief in the innate dignity of every person, which is thoroughly established in Islam. Therefore, we must strive to eliminate the following ten categories of slavery,⁷ because each one is strongly condemned by the Qur'an as uniquely degrading and dehumanizing:

Slavery to false deities, or polytheism.

Physical slavery – The physical enslavement of a person by another has been historically prevalent and even continues *today*.

According to the International Labor Organization, some 12.3 million people are enslaved worldwide, yet there is little awareness of this “hidden” issue.⁸ Examples include human trafficking in the sex trade and child labor.

It is usually accompanied by various forms of torture or the threat of violence.

The worst example of modern slavery is in some conflict zones, where abducted children are often forced to either become violent soldiers or die.

Economic slavery, such as the unethical exploitation of workers by capitalists. A prime example is the sweatshop, defined as “a shop or factory in which employees work long hours at low wages under unhealthy conditions.”⁹ Despite their terribly inhumane conditions, sweatshops exist worldwide – even in the U.S.

Racial slavery – discrimination between black and white or brown, tribe and nation, as superior and inferior, which fuels ethnic conflict and other injustices.

Political slavery, or the tyranny of dictatorship and other abusive rulers.

Social slavery – the oppression of women by men.

With numerous regulations that protect women’s rights, Islam is inherently anti-patriarchal because it rejects rule by men in favor of obedience by all individuals, male or female, directly to Allah and Allah’s guidance for a moral, equitable society in which everyone is free to pursue growth through careful observance of personal and social responsibility. We must recognize that patriarchal domination is a major threat to the spread of pure Islam, because it restricts all-important freedom of religion, including the vital right of Muslim women to practice their faith. Tragically, violence against women continues to be a frequent worldwide problem.

Slavery to ignorance and superstition, which we can combat by improving literacy and education for the poor.

Slavery to wrongful customs or misguided traditions.

Mental bondage, or the blind following of religious scholars and clergy.

As Dr. Basharat Ahmad observes, “It is astonishing to hear so many Muslim religious scholars and jurists sing the praises of freedom in Islam while at the same time they connive at slavery and even justify it in everyday life. If the truth be told, they have subjugated the minds of the public to their

way of thinking, and they themselves have become slaves of their low desires [and thirst for power].”¹⁰

Slavery to self – self-indulgent slavery to one’s base emotions and passions, such as greed or lust. Islam teaches that it is every individual’s personal responsibility to avoid this kind of slavery.

When it comes to being denied freedom and human rights (numbers 2 through 9), there are too many sobering statistics that show that **women and children are the most frequent victims and always the hardest hit, whether by poverty or violence.**

Islamic Principles of Justice and Equality

The Qur’an commands us to free all kinds of slaves, and Prophet Muhammad demonstrated how to free every class of slaves. Furthermore, he established equality, which is the next step after freedom.

The idea of the oneness of humanity is Prophet Muhammad’s unique contribution to human civilization, and it came as a natural sequel to the foundation of his teachings: the Unity of God.¹¹ Perhaps the most important teaching that upholds the concept of the oneness of humanity is that there is one law by which all people are to be judged: the law of personal deeds. As the Qur’an says, “He who has done an atom’s weight of good shall see it. And he who has done an atom’s weight of evil shall see it” (99:7–8).

Not only did the Prophet lay down the Islamic precept of equality; even more importantly, he translated it into practice.¹² As described in *The Living Thoughts of the Prophet Muhammad*,

From his early life the Prophet was a staunch supporter of the cause of the weak and oppressed. When quite young, he became a member of the *Hilfal-Fudzul*, an alliance formed to vindicate the rights of the weak and the oppressed against tyranny. Each member of this alliance was bound in honour to defend the helpless against all manner of oppression. The credit of taking the lead in the formation of this humanitarian organization belonged to the Prophet and his family, the Banu Hashim.¹³

In Prophet Muhammad’s earliest preaching, as much stress was laid on prayer to Allah as on service to humanity, and perhaps more on the latter.¹⁴ And long before slave-owner Thomas Jefferson famously declared that “all men are created equal,” Prophet Muhammad actually practiced what he preached: not only did he never keep any slaves, he also actively helped obtain their freedom.

Furthermore, the Prophet erased strong race and language prejudices from the Arab mind in order to make them model human beings. “He vindicated the rights of

women over men, of slaves over their masters, [and] of the ruled over rulers.”¹⁵ Black slaves and Quraish nobility were made to meet together in religious gatherings as equals before Allah. The remarkable level of social mobility meant that slaves became intellectual leaders and even kings.¹⁶

The five pillars of Islam all served as powerful equalizing forces in society. Arab society was transformed such that:

Deep-rooted idol-worship was replaced by the worship of one God; all superstitions were swept away and in their place came the most rational religion the world could imagine; the people who prided themselves on ignorance became the greatest lovers of knowledge, drinking deep at every fountain of learning to which they could get access; oppression of the weak, the poor, the slaves and women, gave place to justice and equality; and a nation steeped in the deepest vices was thoroughly purified and became charged with a burning desire for the noblest deeds in the service of humanity.¹⁷

In addition to his numerous and remarkable reforms, the Prophet frequently demonstrated his personal love for children, especially orphans, and advocated for animal welfare as well. Without fail he would visit the sick to enquire after their health and console them. His actions, which are recorded in countless *hadith*, show that even small kindnesses mean a great deal and should be practiced as often as possible.

Those were just few examples of the Prophet’s noble lifetime of service to humanity. We can also learn from the Prophet’s practical solutions to poverty and apply them today. This is crucial because economic injustice is a huge source of societal unrest. Until people stop amassing wealth and contributing to the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor, we must do all we can to eradicate extreme poverty. The world has reached a point where disparities in wealth are so skewed that we are morally obligated to do something about it. Consider that approximately half of humanity – nearly 3 billion people – lives on less than \$2 a day. Of those, 1.3 billion people worldwide live in extreme poverty, living on less than \$1 a day, and at least 70% of them are women. Meanwhile, for the first time in history we have the information, knowledge, technology, and resources to bring the worst of global poverty to an end. What we still need is the moral and political will to do so.

Islam’s solution works because it simultaneously ensures the worker the reward of his or her work and allots to the poor a share in the wealth of the rich.¹⁸ It calls for an organized system for feeding the poor and providing regular employment for them, requiring all Muslims to promote sustainable change by getting together and equipping the needy to become contribut-

ing members of society. One of the Prophet’s several reforms to remedy the evils of capitalism involved a system by which the poorer members of the community were able to start business with a small capital provided from the *zakat* fund, and then to increase it by their own diligence and hard work.¹⁹

Today, this is known as “microfinance” or “microcredit,” which involves developing a capital fund for the purpose of giving small loans for setting up business or education for the poor; in other words, providing targeted investments to lift people out of the trap of extreme poverty. The concept is said to have originated in Bangladesh in 1976, but Prophet Muhammad was evidently the first to advocate it. Modern studies have shown that microfinance projects are highly successful, especially when benefiting women, since women have proven much more likely to invest the money they make into their children’s health and education. The benefits are further multiplied when the businesses grow and create more employment opportunities, fueling the local economy.

We should do our part by supporting these increasingly popular solutions to poverty. For instance, non-profits such as Mercy Corps allow you to donate directly towards Women’s Small Business, and another way you can help is by buying fair trade goods online.

This progressive strategy to redistribute wealth so that it does not end up in the hands of a few while the masses starve is being proposed by renowned experts on poverty, so the fact that Islam advocated it long ago in the form of *zakat* is proof of its ultimate foresight.

Another essential benefit of Islam lies in its ability to combat excessive nationalism, which divides people and leads them to neglect essential principles of equality. As Maulana Muhammad Ali observed,

Christianity has failed to do away with race and colour prejudices. Islam is the only force which has already succeeded in blotting out these distinctions, and it is through Islam only that this great problem of the modern world can be solved. Islam is, first and foremost, an international religion, and it is only before its grand international ideal – the ideal of the equality of all races and of the unity of the human race – that the curse of nationalism, which has been and is responsible for the troubles of the ancient and modern worlds, can be swept away.²⁰

There are numerous examples of the perils of nationalism and empire, from the obvious case of Nazism to the more complex case of European imperialism. Modern examples include the radically conservative Christian nationalism that is currently controlling U.S. foreign policy, and the genocide in the African nation of Sudan. Both the perpetrators and victims of the genocide are mostly dark-skinned Muslims, yet one group’s self-

identified ethnic “superiority” has led them to persecute the other group in the most ruthless manner imaginable.

Early on, the Holy Qur’an established the important principle of brotherhood, which, when heeded, prevents such atrocities from occurring:

“And (all) people are but a single nation, but they disagree” (10:19).

“And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colors” (30:22).

“O mankind, surely We have created you from a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other. Surely the noblest of you with Allah is the most dutiful of you” (49:13).

These verses acknowledge diversity and explain that division into nations, tribes, and families should not lead to estrangement from each other, but to a better understanding of each other. Significantly, superiority over one another in this vast brotherhood does not depend on race, gender, or wealth, because these distinctions ultimately don’t matter. Instead, Allah values *moral* greatness, which is achieved by careful observance of a person’s duties to Allah and fellow human beings. To emphasize this theme, one of the names of the Qur’an is *Al-Furqan*, which indicates that it distinguishes between truth and falsehood.

Basic Quranic Guidelines for Doing Good

Having reviewed the crucial implications of the Islamic principles of the oneness of humanity, let us further explore how they apply to us today. Given our firm belief in the equality of all human beings, it is our vital duty as Muslims to defend human rights and correct injustices.

Allah has opened the path of our spiritual development by giving us free will, and the proper use of this benefit makes a person the vicegerent of Allah on earth (2:30). It is because of free will that a person is rewarded for her good deeds, which is mentioned in almost every page of the Qur’an. It directly states, “If you do good, you do good for your own souls” (17:7). A powerful way to show our gratefulness for the Divine privilege of free will is to strive to protect the freedom of others.

I would also like to point out a few important guidelines provided by the Qur’an in doing good:

The aim of serving humanity should always be Allah’s pleasure:

“And they [the righteous] give food, out of love for Him, to the poor and the orphan and the captive. We feed you, for Allah’s pleasure only – We

desire from you neither reward nor thanks” (76:8–9).²¹

The Qur’an also warns that prayer without good deeds is useless:

“Hast thou seen him who belies religion? That is the one who is rough to the orphan, and urges not the feeding of the needy. So woe to the praying ones, who are unmindful of their prayer. Who do (good) to be seen, and refrain from acts of kindness!” (107:1–7).

This next verse defines three degrees of goodness: “Surely Allah enjoins justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindred” (16:90). The three degrees of doing good are “justice,” which means returning any good that someone has done you with equal good; “do good to others,” which means taking the initiative in doing good to others; and “give to the relatives,” which implies doing good to people instinctively and naturally just as one does good to one’s close relatives.²²

Serving Humanity Today

Remember that in Islam, true belief necessitates activism, and in today’s interconnected world, we can have more impact on the welfare of humanity than ever before! So how exactly can we serve humanity today? First, we must learn more about the issues and stay well-informed. Knowledge is highly valued in Islam, so ignorance and apathy are not the answer. The Internet has made it easier than ever for us to connect to causes we care about, so we should embrace this technology to do good. Also, never underestimate the power of prayer, which allows us to seek Allah’s guidance in the right course of action and motivates us to serve humanity. Additionally, there are a variety of worthy causes that deserve our regular donations, and even small amounts make a difference.

It is also up to us to pressure powerful politicians and other decision-makers to take action. We must have the moral courage to point out injustice; as the Holy Prophet stressed, “The most excellent *jihad* is to speak the truth in the presence of an unjust ruler.”^{xxiii} This can be as easy as signing online petitions or receiving action alerts from certain websites, which conveniently notify you when to email, call, or write a letter to your representatives. When the letters add up, our leaders usually take notice. We must advocate for the needy who don’t have a voice, as Prophet Muhammad did.

Another important action is to exercise faithful citizenship by voting, because we should take advantage of the consistent moral ground that Islam provides us. Let us use the Muslim vote to influence our leaders to make ethical decisions for the common good. This is especially crucial in the United States, because our policies affect the entire world.

I also encourage you to volunteer your time, energy, and skills to causes of your choice. There are hundreds of great nonprofit humanitarian organizations, such as Doctors Without Borders, and local groups such as soup kitchens, homeless shelters, community health clinics, and food banks that welcome volunteers. Yet another way to help is to advocate, or spread awareness on important but overlooked issues. (For instance, only 13% of the American public knows that U.S. foreign aid is only a fraction of 1% – most think that it's a quarter of the federal budget!) Inform family and friends about issues you care about, or write a letter to the editor of a magazine or newspaper demanding media coverage of largely overlooked issues.

To summarize, we can help serve humanity today by regularly engaging in the following:

- Learning more about the issues
- Praying for guidance
- Donating to the best causes
- Voting for responsible leaders and initiatives
- Creating “moral/political will”
- Advocating on behalf of the needy
- Volunteering our time

As we've seen, “getting involved” in doing good is very Islamic indeed! Islam's rationality, as evidenced by its practical solutions for humanity, should inspire. ■

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15. See 11 [p.40]
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18. See 4. [p.11]

19. See 9. [p.121]

20. See 4. [p.10]

21. Also refer to verses 2:272, 92:19-21, 2:207, 2:263–265, 4:114.

Slavery in Islam

By Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din

[A booklet by this title, by Lord Headley and Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, was published circa 1930s responding to the allegation that Islam institutionalizes, or at least permits, slavery. With the resurgence of criticism on this very issue, we reproduce this work in three parts in this periodical. The first part, written by Lord Headley, was published in the April-June 2004 issue. Part 2 was presented in the April-June 2006 issue. Part 3, the final portion, is presented here.]

The Quran, to begin with, abolished all kinds of slavery with the sole exception of the bondage that resulted from fighting, provided that fighting was in self-defence. In other words, a Muslim has been forbidden, under the clear teaching of the Quran, to make others his slaves; he may make prisoners of others, but only in a self-defensive fight. In order to make distinction between the two – the slave and the war-captive – the Quran does not style the latter *abad*, the Arabic equivalent of the word “slave.” “Those whom your right hands possess”, rather, is the term used by the Quran to designate that class. It not only defines the exclusive mode in which a man could be brought under a Muslim's bondage, but it shows also that a Muslim's bondsman is not a slave, but a fallen foe, otherwise his equal, and that he should either be ransomed or set free out of favour; the latter was the course which was in most cases adopted by the Prophet himself.

When the Quran and the Prophet use the word *abad* – slave – as regards person in bondage, it should be remembered that the reference in such case is only to such as were already in bondage under the old custom. As to the liberation of such bondsmen, this presented a difficulty of a very intricate nature. The immediate abolition of slavery was likely to cause many and far-reaching complications. The slave class possessed no wealth. They had neither house, property, trade nor learning. Their immediate emancipation would have produced a class of penniless vagabonds and indolent beggars, seeing that their lifelong habit of abject dependence on their masters had killed all initiative in them. The task of Islam was not only to secure freedom for those already in slavery, but to make them useful members of society. And the Holy Prophet was quite alive to the situation.

Consider the generations of men who worked to abolish slavery in this county alone. Thrice a Bill was introduced into Parliament, and thrice it was rejected. Consider the amount of money that England and other countries had to pay in order to bring the slave-trade to an end. England had to pay three hundred thousand pounds to the Portuguese for giving up the trade in the north of the Equator. She paid Spain an indemnity of four hundred thousand pounds to bring the Spanish trade to an end, and an enormous sum went to pay off the companies and private adventurers, including the Church.

The Holy Prophet was not the owner of gold and silver, but he possessed an inexhaustible treasure of the soul and mind; and he did in this respect that which filthy lucre could not do. The most deep-rooted evils were swept off before his mighty word as a straw before a strong gale. It has already been stated elsewhere that the Quran and the Prophet made the liberation of the slave a matter of great virtue. A portion of the public money was set aside for this purpose. It was also declared to be a good atonement for many minor transgressions. But it was chiefly based on three considerations: 1) the socially elevated position of the slaves, 2) the treatment of equality that could be demanded by the slaves from their masters, and 3) the strict restrictions against hard treatment, that led to the uprooting of the evil and paved the way to its ultimate abolition.

In order to create a fraternal feeling between master and slave, the Holy Prophet said: "Verily your brothers are your slaves; God has placed them under you. Whoever, then, has his brother under him, he should feed with food of which he himself eats, and clothe him with such clothing as he himself wears. And do not impose on him a duty which is beyond his power to perform; of if you command them to do what they are unable to do, then assist them in that affair." This principle of brotherhood between master and slave, which was worked out to the very letter, evinces that largeness of soul that has been met with in no other philanthropist or founded a religion. In order to raise the status of the class, the Prophet laid special stress upon the good breeding and education of slave-girls. The Holy Prophet said: "if a man has a slave girl in his possession and he instructs her in polite accomplishments and gives her a good education, without inflicting any chastisement upon her, and then frees her and marries her, he shall be rewarded with a double reward." This should be compared with the Roman and Christian ordinances in this respect which prohibited marriage between slaves and freemen.

Mr. Lane, in his *Arabian Nights*, bears testimony to the good treatment which has been awarded to slaves in high Egyptian families. "They are," he says, "often instructed in plain needlework and embroidery, and sometimes in music and dancing. Formerly many of them possessed literary accomplishments, to quote largely from esteemed poets or even to compose extempore vers-

es." The Holy Prophet, in fact, made the position of the slave enviable when he said that had it not been for such and such a thing "I would have loved to live and die a slave." In this one sentence there is a volume in which may be read the sincerest desire of the speaker to raise the position of the most despicable class in the world. Is it, then, a matter of surprise that we find in Islam the slave of today becoming the Grand Vizier of tomorrow; as has been illustrated by Lord Headley in his masterly paper on the subject. The Prophet used to say: "Let no one of you say, when addressing his bondsman, "*abdi*" (i.e. my slave) or "*amti*" (i.e. my maid-servant), but let him say "my young man," "my young maid," "my young boy." Once he remarked: "Verily my friend Gabriel continued to enjoin kindness to slaves, until I thought that people should never be taken as slaves or servants." These were not lip homilies, but were meant to be brought into most literal practice. On one occasion he gave away a war-prisoner to one of his companions, enjoining him to treat the captive kindly. When the companion went to his wife and informed her of the Holy Prophet's gift, as well as of his injunction, his wife said to him: "Thou canst not carry out this injunction fully, except thou free the slave." Thereupon the captive was set free.

"Fear God in the matter of prayer and in the matter of those whom your right hand possesses," were the words repeated by the Holy Prophet on his death-bed, which show that no one else could feel so great an anxiety for the slave class. These are the last words he uttered; and mark how he makes the duty of being constant in prayer identical with kindness to slaves. One can multiply instance after instance in his precepts and examples showing how he abhorred ill-treatment of slaves, and I quote on of his well-known dicta which sums them all up. He said: "He who beats his slave without fault or slaps him on the face, his atonement for this is freeing him." Abu Masood, on the Ansar says: "I was beating a slave of mine, when I hear behind me a voice: 'Know, O Abu Masood, God is more powerful over thee than thou art over him.' I turned back and saw the Holy Prophet, and at once said: 'O Prophet of God, he is now free, for the sake of God.' The Holy Prophet said: 'If thou hadst not done it, verily fire would have touched thee.'" Ill treatment of a slave was sufficient grounds for his enfranchisement; and some slaves would go so far as actually create circumstances likely to excite the anger of their masters, in the hope of being ill-treated by them, thus gaining their freedom. It is related of Zainulabidin that he had a slave who seized a sheep and broke its leg, and he said to him: "Why didst thou do this?" The slave answered: "To provoke thee to anger." "And I," said he, "will provoke to anger him who taught thee; and he is Iblis (i.e. the Devil); go and be free for the sake of God."

Among the evils of the institution was the custom of making slave girls act as prostitutes, in order to profit by

their ignoble earnings, as revealed 24:33 of the Quran. It was strictly prohibited. The evil of concubinage was removed by making rightful wedlock an essential for cohabitation with women in bondage, as explained in 4:3 of the Quran. Marriage with slave girls was encouraged and such an alliance paved the way for emancipation. In this respect, the Quran says:

And marry those among you who are single and those who are fit among your male slaves and your female slaves; if they are needy, Allah will make them free from want, out of His Grace; and Allah is amply giving, knowing ... and do not compel your slave girls to prostitution (24:33).

Equality in the treatment of their bondsmen by the masters became a common incident, even during the lifetime of the Prophet. It is related that Abu Huraira, a companion of the Prophet, saw upon one occasion a man riding, with the slave running after him. The companion said to the man: "Take him behind thee on thy best O servant of God; verily he is thy brother and his soul is like your soul." It reminds me of an incident concerning the Caliph Umar that shows how literally the early Muslims obeyed the orders of their Prophet. When Jerusalem was besieged, the "Commander of the Faithful" was requested to come in person to the beleaguered city, because the Chief Patriarch of Jerusalem had declared his willingness to surrender if Umar personally came thither and settled the terms of peace. In this journey from Medina to Jerusalem, the Caliph was accompanied by his servant; but they had only camel for riding. So they rode by turns until they reached Jerusalem. It happened that at the last stage of the journey it was the turn of the servant to ride. They reached the camp of the Muslim general, Abu Obeida, while the slave was on the camel and the Caliph running after it. The General, fearing that the Caliph might be looked upon with contempt by the besieged, submitted that it did not become the Caliph to run that way, while his servant was riding. Upon this, the Caliph remarked:

None hath said the like before thee, and this they word will bring curse upon the Muslims. Verily we were the most degraded of peoples and the most spiteful and fewest of all. God gave us honour and greatness through Islam, and if we seek it now in other ways than those enjoined by Islam, God will again bring us into disgrace.

Can anyone refer to any other conquerer or any ruler even of the smallest state, in the course of history, who showed such moral courage or meted out such kind treatment to his servants. Omar did not care even to keep his prestige in the eye of the besieged. Is there a single country on the surface of the earth where servants are treated like this by such mighty masters as the Caliph Umar? And if the Muslims of the latter days wandered from his straight course, it is as the Caliph

Umar has said, "they sought honour in other direction than that pointed out by Islam, and they lost it."

High positions were not denied to slaves and freedmen. The Prophet gave his own cousin, the Lady Zainab, in marriage to his freedman and made his son Usama commander of an army.

The execution of a deed of manumission was compulsory when the slave applied for it, and it should be noted that the verse requires that the master should give the slave a portion of his wealth so that he might be able to make a start in life as a respectable person. The Holy Quran also enjoined masters to assist their slaves in gaining their emancipation. The words: "and give them the property which God has given you," makes the monetary assistance of the slave a necessity. In the case of a deed of manumission, such assistance took the form of the remission of a portion of the amount fixed upon for ransom. Muslims are also urged in this verse to contribute towards the sum which the slave has to pay. The Holy Prophet himself assisted Suliman of Persia in getting his freedom by planting three hundred palm-trees with his own hands. It was one of the conditions of manumission; the other condition was the payment of a sum, for which subscription was raised and Suliman got his liberty. The Lady Ayesha, the wife of the Prophet, similarly assisted a female slave in getting her freedom. In short, the ransom in of captive is one of the highest forms of virtue, according to the Quran. The slave is not left alone to labor for his manumission. It is the duty of his master and other Muslims to assist him.

Besides manumission, there are other cases in which the emancipation of a slave is compulsory. To be beaten by his master resulted in the freedom of the slave. To this I have already alluded. When a female slave was taken as wife by her master, and gave birth to a child, she was no more treated as a slave; and after her husband's death she was a free woman. When a slave was the common property of several masters, one such master could free him, paying the others to the extent of their shares. In such cases when a slave was freed someone was appointed as his patron (*mowla*), whose duty it was to provide the freed slave with the means of starting in the world, and to support him in his difficulties. The slave was called his freedman. Zamba, one of the Companions of the Prophet, caught his slave red handed committing a heinous crime, and mutilated him. The slave ran to the Prophet and complained against the master, who was also summoned. The Prophet heard the whole case, and said to the slave, while giving his judgment: "Go thou art freed." Then the slave asked: "O Prophet of God, whole freedman shall I be called?" "The freedman of God and His Prophet," was the reply. Accordingly, he and his family were granted maintenance during the lifetime of the Prophet and also after him. In the days of Omar he was given a grant of Land in Egypt. All these facts and those mentioned by Lord

Headley can mostly be found in Bukhari. Can it, therefore, be said with any shadow of sincerity that the idea of the abolition of slavery never occurred to the Prophet, or that it was Islam that engrafted slavery on humanity? And yet this is what I read in the writings of Christian critics on Islam; Professor Margoliouth must revise his statements of this subject before he can justly claim to rank as an authority on Islam.

Dr. Winnington-Ingram, Bishop of London, also seems to entertain erroneous views concerning the Muslim attitude towards slavery. But he must know that, from Moses up to Jesus, no prophet, nor yet the “Redeemer of Humanity” (as Jesus is called by his followers), ever troubled to concern himself with the slaves and their misfortunes. The ignoble institution synchronized with the human race almost from its beginning, and yet, for the benefit of the Bishop of London, I say that no prophet of the world ever dreamt of dealing with it. Is it not, then, a wonderful thing to find Muhammad not only the first, but the last as well, among the human race, who did what was necessary in this respect, and does not this one circumstance justify his claim to be the Apostle of God? It should, however, be admitted that slavery has not yet died the natural death designed for it by Islam, and negroes are still to be seen in certain wealthy Arab houses; but responsibility for this will be found to lie at other doors, if once the question be dispassionately considered in the light of the facts given above.

Islam abolished all the sources of slavery except war-captivity; and if, as it is reasonable to hold, this kind of bondage cannot properly be brought under the category of slavery, it is safe to assert that the Holy Prophet banished slavery from Muslim lands, where it is unknown to this day. It is the nations of Europe who revived it in Africa, for the purpose of supplying labor in the Colonies. African so-called “savages,” bordering barbarism, were easily induced by Christian exploiters to sell their own country men. Try to imagine what could be the after-effects of the working of forty factories on the nascent minds of the poor ignorant negroes. The factories, of the negro chief to enrich himself by selling his own people to others- tendencies awakened in the first instance by Christian exploitation. Islam, however, is making headway in Africa to-day, and as Bishop Fogarty of Damaraland, while speaking of the recent Islamic progress in South Africa and its salubrious effect there, also remarked, and very rightly:

It will make a real sense of brotherhood. The universal brotherhood established by Islam only, in the world, is a potent factor for bringing slavery to an end, though war-captivity will, on the other hand, continue as long as war exists in the world. But I would ask my Arab co-religionists to reflect that if they purchase slaves from these negro lands they are acting against the teachings of their own Prophet.

I cannot conclude the subject with saying a few words as to “The White Slave Traffic Market” alleged to exist somewhere in the lands of the Turks. The fact is, of course, that no such market exists there, and this statement I desire to emphasize. A century ago, London used to be a popular market for negro slaves and it began to revert to its old tradition in the early years of the present century. This time, the victims of the trade were the English girls. The trade was carried on clandestinely, and without the knowledge of the unfortunate girls who, under varying pretences, were enticed on board ships that carried them to far-off continents. There they were removed from one town to another and placed in the houses of ill-fame, and all beyond the control of the law and the police-to pander to the worst type of human brutality and lust. It was a horrible revelation to me to know that such an unimaginable thing was possible and actually being carried on in Christian lands by the Christians in the present days of culture and enlightenment. I used to hear and read about it with horror in 1912, and it surprised me that the Church did not raise its voice against it. But the war came with its sweeping insistence to claim all our attention. I wonder if the ignoble traffic has come to an end, though attention has been diverted from it to another channel, and we are told of a white slave traffic in Turkish lands with Armenian girls as its victims.

Nothing is impossible on this earth of God, but the very mention of the Armenian name – and that to substantiate some alleged Turkish atrocity – divests the charge of its claim to command any serious attention. This race, used as a cat’s-paw by the European, must have perished by this time, and become a thing of the past, if the stories of their slaughter by the Turks had been true; but they proved to be propagandist’s fiction, produced by Christian writers to blackguard Turkey. The present campaign also, in some of its features, savors of the same thing. Islam is asserting itself everywhere in the Western world and the Western world is awake to the fact. All the nonsense spread abroad by Christian missionaries against Islam is now being appreciated at its real value by the laity of England. People have begun to appreciate Islam in its true colors, and the enemies’ camp under these circumstances must do something against Islam

The *Slave Market News*, the official organ of the new movement, makes reflections on Islam of the nature that betrays, even in the eyes of a Western reader, only the ignorance and prejudice of the aspersion. In its November issue of 1924, I read an article with the heading “The Slave Woman under Islamic Sacred Law.” The writer seems to know more of our home life than we do. But he must know that a Muslim wife is the sovereign of the family. The Quran gives her right which a woman under Christianity cannot imagine. The writer begins thus: “But if the position of the wife is that of a mere

chattel in the hands of her husband, how infinitely worse is the position of the slave woman under the Quran.” And the article contains a sprinkling of sentences like this: “The unutterable cruelties which Mohammad allowed his followers to inflict on conquered nations in the taking of slaves have indeed lasted until this day, and *are countenanced by the Quran.*” The writer asserts that which is nowhere to be found in the Quran. But there is something in the article which seems to explain things a little; to let as it were, the cat out of the bag. For example, it says:

Grave warnings are sent from South Africa as to the real danger that exists there for white girls and children (whether English and Dutch) of being trapped and converted by Mohammedans.

Here we see what is at the bottom of the whole campaign. The real danger is a conversion of the Christians to Islam. It is this that troubles the mind of the writer. Islam and Christianity face each other in the open arena. Let them fight on their own merits. But the Christian cleric knows his weakness. In his own country he finds his dogmas collapsing. He knows that the foreign missions have been a failure, and his creed has no appeal even to the uncultured African. The propagandists must do something to save the situation. They must raise some hue and cry, and so we get the “Menace of Islam” – a popular headline in Christian newspapers. A well-known Bishop feels he must make out a case for Christianity and excite a crusade against Islam by asserting that conversion to Islam means the creation of disaffection in the colored races against the white; this may lead to world-wide war, as the Bishop thinks, and the only remedy, to his mind whereby the danger may be averted is the Christianization of South Africa. Bishop Fogarty of Damaraland, and Dr. Zwemer and the rest, are harping on the like theme in various keys. Are we not then justified in appraising the cry in the *Slave Market News* as a part of the same concerted piece?

The fact that we find a gentleman of Dr. Ingram’s caliber interested in the movement is its redeeming feature, though it is surprising to note that the white slave traffic carried on to pander to the lewdness of the debauchees of other continents did not appear to arouse active resentment from that quarter. We are ready to raise a voice against every kind of atrocity, whether against a Muslim or a non-Muslim, and to condemn its perpetrators, be they our own brethren in faith or not. We assure Dr. Ingram that our sympathies are with him, if his is the right cause. Let a Christian conscience slumber in face of the most inhuman and flagrant atrocities to which Muslim women and girls were subjected by the brutal Greeks in Anatolia and Smyrna in 1922; let the Church of Christ remain callous to the inhumanities of a Christian General in Amritsar (India) in 1919; but a Muslim conscience must condemn every kind of atrocity from whatever person and against whatsoever quarter it may come.

The question of the Armenian slave girls in Turkish houses, however, raises another issue for his lordship’s consideration. The Armenians were in the Great War fighting against the Turks. Are not these Armenian girls, as war-captives, subject to all the consequences attending war-captivity in Islam? The laws of Islam in this respect are most humane, and an Armenian girl, if in such a position, must receive the best of treatment. In conclusion, I will say somewhat to my Muslim brothers, in the words of Syed Ameer Ali, as follows:-

The time is now arrived when humanity at large should raise its voice against the practice of servitude, in whatsoever shape or under whatever denomination it may be disguised. The Muslims especially, for the honor of their Great Prophet, should try to efface that dark page from their history – a page which would never have been written but for their contravention of the spirit of his laws, however bright it may appear by the side of the ghastly scrolls on which the deeds of the professors of the rival creeds are recorded. The day is come when the voice that proclaimed liberty, equality and universal brotherhood among all mankind should be heard with the fresh vigor acquired from the spiritual existence and spiritual pervasion of fourteen centuries. It remains for the Muslims to show the falseness of the aspersions cast on the memory of the great and noble Prophet; by proclaiming in explicit terms that slavery is reprobated by their faith and discountenanced by their code. ■

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welcomes submissions of articles for publication. Preferably, articles should be between 5-10 pages long, single-spaced, in *Microsoft Word* format and submitted via e-mail. Authors from all faiths and denominations are welcome, the subject matter of the paper, though, must be substantively related to Islam. Please contact the Editorial Board for more information on Editorial Guidelines.

Women: Love, Marriage and Property

A Rebuttal to Chapter 8 of the book Unveiling Islam

By Dr. Hamid Rahman

[The U.S. branch of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement has been compiling responses to each chapter of the popular book 'Unveiling Islam' by Caner and Caner for the purposes of publishing a detailed response to the common allegations made against Islam found therein and repeated by others as authority. In this article, Dr. Hamid Rahman, Professor of Finance and Economics at Alliant University in San Diego California, provides a rebuttal to the chapter that deals with the status of women in Islam. He first reviews the rules of interpretation required to examine the various contentions in their proper context. He then systematically provides an overview of the Islamic position on each topic addressed by Caner and Caner, evaluates the validity of the specific allegations made, and finally, as a comparative analysis, reviews the Bible's position on each of the topics. Part 1 of this article appeared in the April-June 2006 issue of the Light; the concluding portion is produced herein.]

Multiplicity of the Prophet's wives

Caner and Caner write under 'Marriage, Sexuality and Desire', "Even though the Quran gives men a limit of four wives, Muhammad received special dispensation directly from Allah to marry as many as he wished...that amounted to thirteen wives and concubines." A little further on, it is stated, "Discrepancies occur in counting Muhammad's wives, because Muhammad's own 'classification' system of wives and concubines creates confusion."

The correct position is that Prophet Muhammad had twelve wives and no concubines. Concubines are not allowed in Islam as explained a little further on. There was one more marriage but it was annulled before consummation and so the lady in question is not counted among the Prophet's wives.

Polygamy is met with in the lives of many great religious personages who by a consensus of opinion led lives of transcendent purity. Prophet Abraham who is held in reverence by more than half the world had more wives than one. Similar was the case with the prophets Jacob, Moses, David and Solomon among the Israelites, and with some of the famous and revered sages of Hindus. Yet it is true that these great sages were not led away by sensual desires to a polygamous life. Purity in all respects

was the outstanding characteristic of their lives, and this fact alone is sufficient to condemn the attempt to defame them on the basis of their resorting to polygamy.

The domestic life of the Holy Prophet can be divided into four periods. Up to twenty-five, he led a celibate life; from twenty-five to fifty-four years, he lived in a married state with one wife; from fifty-four to sixty he contracted several marriages; and lastly from sixty till his death he did not contract any new marriage.

The most important period to determine whether the Prophet was a slave to his passions is the period of celibacy. He led an exceptionally chaste and pure life in a society in which there were no moral sanctions against an immoral life. It was among people who prided on loose sexual relations that the Holy Prophet Muhammad led a life of transcendent purity. His worst enemies could not point to a single blot on his character when challenged later. Even according to Muir, all authorities agree, "in ascribing to the youth of Mahomet a modesty of deportment and purity of manners rare among the people of Mecca."¹

When twenty-five years of age, he married a widow, Khadija, fifteen years his senior, and led a life of utmost devotion with her till she died, when he was fifty years of age. Polygamy was the rule in Arabia at the time; and the wife had no cause for complaint, nor did she ever grumble, if the husband brought in a second or a third wife. The Prophet belonged to the noblest family of the Quraish and if he had chosen to marry another wife, it would have been quite easy for him. But he led a monogamous life of the utmost devotion to his wife during all this while. When Khadija died, he married a very elderly lady named Sauda, whose only recommendation was that she was the widow of a faithful companion. The main part of his life from twenty-five to fifty-four, was thus an example for his followers that monogamy was the rule in married life.

At age fifty-four starts the third period of the Prophet's domestic life. In the second year of the Flight from Mecca to Medina, began the series of battles with the Quraish and the other Arab tribes, which appreciably reduced the number of males, the breadwinners of the family. These battles continued up to the eighth year of the Flight, and it was during this time that the Holy Prophet contracted ten marriages. These marriages for the most part were undertaken as acts of compassion or for cementing ties of friendship with tribes in politically troubled times. Even a Christian writer admits this when he says, "It should be remembered, however, that most of Muhammad'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 widows who were not remarkable either for their beauty or their wealth, but quite the reverse."² No other motive than compassion can be

attached to these marriages. If there had been any less honorable motive, his choice would have fallen on other than widows, and under the Arab custom a man in his position could have plenty of youthful virgins. Certain political reasons also led to some of the marriages. This was the case in the marriage with a lady belonging to the tribe of Bani Mustaliq tribe and with the widow of a Jewish chieftain. The Prophet wanted to conciliate both tribes and that was the only motive in these marriages.

The fourth period in the Holy Prophet's domestic life extends from age sixty to his death at age sixty-two in which he did not contract any marriages. With the conquest of Mecca in the year 8 A.H., internal warfare came practically to an end. Peace was established in the country and normal conditions were restored. And it is from the 8th year of the Flight to the end of his life that we find that the Prophet did not contract any new marriage.

The Prophet had no liking for polygamy. He passed the prime of his life, up to 53 years of age, as the husband of a single wife, thus showing that the union of one man and one woman was the rule under normal conditions. But when abnormal conditions arose, he did not, like a sentimentalist, shirk his duty for the sake of an idea. He saw that the chastity of woman was at stake if polygamy was not allowed, and for the sake of a higher interest he permitted polygamy as an exception to meet exceptional circumstances.

Age of Aishah at the time of marriage with the Holy Prophet

Caner and Caner write, "*Aishah was the daughter of Abu Bakr As Siddiq, who was a close friend of the prophet and in charge of his books. When he offered her as a legitimate wife to Muhammad she was eight years old.*"

In fact she was much older as the article below shows:

[Editor's Note: the article "Age of Aisha (ra) at time of marriage", that is included by Dr. Rahman at this point in this article is not being reproduced as it has already been published as a separate article in *The Light and Islamic Review*. Interested readers may refer to the October – December 2002 issue, also available at www.muslim.org/islam/aisha-age.htm, if they wish to review the article.]

Marriage with Zaynab bint Jahsh

Caner and Caner write, "*Another wife, Zaynab Bint Jahsh, had been Muhammad's daughter-in-law. When his adopted son Zaid saw that Muhammad wanted his wife, he divorced her so that his father could have her.*"

Zaynab was the Prophet's first cousin, being the daughter of his paternal aunt. When she reached the age

of majority, her brother offered her in marriage to the Prophet. But the Holy Prophet wedded her to Zaid, a slave whom he had himself freed and who was considered as his adopted son. Zaynab and her family had only reluctantly accepted this match. The couple could not however pull together and after a time Zaid wanted to divorce her. The Prophet dissuaded him as plainly stated in the Holy Quran:

And when thou said to him to whom Allah had shown favor and to whom thou hadst shown a favor: Deep thy wife to thyself and keep thy duty to Allah; ... (33:37)

But ultimately a divorce was found necessary. The above verse goes on to say:

...So when Zaid dissolved her marriage-tie, We gave her to thee as a wife, so that there should be no difficulty for the believers about the wives of their adopted sons, when they have dissolved their marriage-tie. And Allah's command is ever performed. (33:37)

After Zaynab was divorced, the Holy Prophet took her in marriage, that being the wish of the lady and her relatives before her marriage to Zaid, and the Prophet was morally bound to accept their wishes now that the marriage arranged by him had proved unsuccessful. Moreover, the Quran had declared against an adopted son being regarded as if he were a real son, and now there was an opportunity where the Holy Prophet could by his own example deal a death-blow to that custom. This reason is plainly given in the second part of the verse. The Quran does not give any other reason for the marriage.

If he had any desire of self-gratification or if he had any passion for the lady, he would not have refused her when she was offered to him as a virgin.

"Super-normal" marriages

Writing under the title "Special" Marriages' Caner and Caner write: "*Of special interest are Muhammad's "super-normal" marriages, about which he spoke on occasion. After his virtual 'flight into the seven heavens' (Al Israa wal Miraj), he told his first wife, Khadija, as she lay dying, 'Oh Khadija, know that God has wedded me to Mary, Christ's mother in paradise.' He repeated this to Aishah after the hijra, saying, 'Oh Aiysha, didn't you know that God Almighty in heaven wedded me to Mary the daughter of Imran, to Kulthum, Moses' sister and to Assiya, wife of the Pharaoh.'*"³

The Miraj or Ascension took place in Mecca some time after the Call to prophethood. There is some disagreement about the exact year but circumstantial evidence indicates it was in the early Meccan period since it was mentioned in the Chapter, *The Star*, which is an early Meccan chapter. There is also disagreement about

whether the Ascension was a physical or spiritual experience, a majority accepting it to be the former. However, the minority viewpoint is supported by such eminent personalities as the Lady Aiysha, Muawiyya and Hassan, who consider the experience to be a vision. The Holy Quran itself is the best arbiter of this disagreement. In verse 17:60, it is expressly called a *ruya* or a *vision*. Further proof of this is furnished in verse 17:93 where the nonbelievers' demand that the Prophet should ascend to heaven is rejected by saying, "Glory to my Lord! Am I aught but a mortal messenger."

The description of the life hereafter i.e. the spiritual world is always given in allegorical terms because the spiritual world is so far removed from a person's physical experiences that it defies an exact explanation. All descriptions of the blessings of the next life are only likenesses or a parable as is explained in the Quran:

A parable of the Garden which is promised to those who keep their duty: Therein flow rivers. Its fruits are perpetual and its plenty...(13:35)

The *hadith* mentioned above must, therefore, be interpreted allegorically. Since a husband and wife have a relationship of close kinship, all that is meant is that Allah had accorded the revered and pious ladies mentioned in the above *hadith* a close spiritual kinship with the Holy Prophet. This is a matter of great honor for the ladies concerned and for women generally because it is indicative of the high spiritual stature that can be achieved by righteous and pious women. To give any physical or sexual meaning to this *hadith* is ludicrous.

Islam does not allow concubines

Caner and Caner writing under, 'Marriage, Sexuality, and Desire' state that, "*Muhammad received special dispensation directly from Allah to marry as many as he wished...that amounted to thirteen wives and concubines...*"

Concubinage was undoubtedly practiced in Arabia before Islam, and the concubines were slaves or prisoners of war. Some Muslims may have practiced it until the revelation of the verse:

And marry those among you who are single and those who are fit among your male slaves and your female slaves;...and compel not your slave girls to prostitution when they desire to keep chaste, in order to seek the frail goods of this world's life (24:32,33).

By this revelation, concubinage was put to an end. A plain injunction had been received that all male and female slaves must be married. There is no exception in favor of the master. The Prophet had taken only two women as wives out of the prisoners of war, namely, Safiyyah from among the Jews, and Juwairiyah from among the Bani Mustalaq. They were not concubines

but lawfully married wives, taken as wives in as honorable a manner as any of the others. If there was any difference, it was this that their freedom was considered as their dowry. Thus, the Prophet's example shows that when a prisoner of war was elevated to the dignity of wifehood, she was also set free.⁴

Contention No.5: Wives are considered as the husband's sex objects in marriage and abusive treatment of wives is sanctified.

Writing under the title 'The Role of the Wife' and subtitle 'Wives as "Play Things",' Caner and Caner make several charges that are addressed individually below.

Caner and Caner write: "*Examples of Islamic sharia (law) that seem to suppress and oppress are those that prohibit a woman from even looking directly into a man's eyes, that forbid women from wearing shoes that make noise, that forbid them to become educated.*"

Islam requires both men and women to act modestly in public. Sexual promiscuity is considered to be destructive of spiritual development, which is the major objective of life. Therefore, behavior designed to attract or create temptations for members of the opposite sex are strongly discouraged. The following two verses of the Quran illustrate this point:

Say to the believing men that they lower their gaze and restrain their sexual passions. That is purer for them. Surely Allah is aware of what they do.

And say to the believing women that they lower their gaze and restrain their sexual passions and do not display their adornments except what appears thereof. And let them wear their head coverings over their bosoms. And they should not display their adornment except to their husbands or their fathers or...And let them not strike their feet so that the adornment that they hide may be known. And turn to Allah all, O believers, so that you may be successful.

The first thing to note here is that there is nothing discriminatory about the order. Men are asked to lower their gaze first before the same order is given to the women. In addition women are asked to dress decently in public places. As to the question what constitutes 'except what appears thereof' i.e. parts of a woman's body that may remain uncovered in public, Imam Abu Jafar, a well known commentator of the Quran states, "The most correct opinion is that the exception relates to the face and hands." The burqa, therefore, is not an Islamic requirement. Given the requirement of decent apparel and shunning flirtatious behavior, Islam does not put any constraint on women in terms of participating in the economic and social life of a nation. Indeed the Prophet's first wife was a very successful businesswoman, another was an entrepreneur, preparing and selling hides to gen-

erate an independent income for charitable activities; in the time of the Prophet, women went regularly to mosques, and said their prayers along with men, standing in a separate row. They also joined their husbands in the labor of the field; they even went with the army to the field of battle, and looked after the wounded, removing them from the field, if necessary, and helped fighting men in many other ways. They could even fight the enemy in an emergency. No occupation was prohibited to them, and they could do any work they chose.⁵ There is no restriction on the education of women. The Holy Prophet laid great emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge and there is no indication that his instructions were for men only. Currently, women head the administrations of the two most populous Islamic countries, Indonesia and Bangladesh. Pakistan and Turkey, two other very large Islamic countries, have had women head of administration. Compare this with United States where a woman has never headed the country's administration or even occupied the second position.

Bible on suppression of women

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.” (Ephesians 5:22-24)

“Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.” (I Corinthians 14:34-35)

“Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” (Genesis 3:16)

“The bible teaches that women brought sin and death into the world, that she precipitated the fall of the race, that she was arraigned before the judgment seat of Heaven, tried, condemned and sentenced. Marriage for her was to be a condition of bondage, maternity a period suffering and anguish, and in silence and subjection, she was to play the role of a dependent on man's bounty for all her material wants, and for all the information she might desire... Here is the Bible position of woman briefly summed up.”—Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Caner and Caner write, “*In truth, women are considered possessions in any orthodox Islamic regime.*” In truth, it has been shown in the discussions above that Islam permits a woman to own property, gives her a share in inheritance, allows her to work and earn an independent income and grants her the right of divorce. This was given to women, not after a hard struggle of

women emancipation, but as a dispensation from a Just God who created both man and woman equally and gave them bodies and qualities of mind and heart best fitted to suit the needs of their respective roles in life. It is, therefore, totally incorrect to allege that women are considered possessions in any orthodox regime.

Caner and Caner write, “*A man can threaten divorce if his wife is not meeting his sexual needs, according to Surah 66:5: ‘It may be, if he divorced you that Allah will give him in exchange consorts better than you.’ In both public appearance and private sexual encounter, the onus is on the woman to satisfy her husband’s desires.*”

Caner and Caner’s conclusions from the cited verse are a figment of their imagination because the context of the verse, if anything, is totally the opposite. The context of the verse can be gauged by reading it with the previous verses. The complete reading, therefore, is as follows:

1. O Prophet, why dost thou forbid (thyself) that which Allah has made lawful for thee? Seekest thou to please thy wives? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.
2. Allah indeed has sanctioned for you the expiation of your oaths; and Allah is your Patron, and He is the Knowing, the Wise.
3. And when the Prophet confided an information to one of his wives – but when she informed (others) of it, he made known part of it and passed over part. So when he told her of it, she said: Who informed thee of this? He said: The Knowing, the One Aware, informed me.
4. If you both turn to Allah, then indeed your hearts are inclined (to this); and if you back up one another against him, then surely Allah is his Patron, and Gabriel and the righteous believers, and the angels after that are the aiders.
5. Maybe, his Lord, if he divorces you, will give him in your place wives better than you, submissive, faithful, obedient, penitent, adorers, fasters, widows, and virgins. (66:1-5)

The first verse shows that the Prophet had given up something lawful to please his wives. Quite contrary to what Caner and Caner allege that, “...*the onus is on the woman to satisfy her husband’s desires,*” this is a case where the Prophet has gone above and beyond to please his wives by giving up something lawful. The verses then mention an incident in which the Prophet had confided some information to one of his wives and she breached his trust by passing on that information to the others. As a result, it appears that a confederation of wives was formed against the Prophet. It is in that context that verse 66:5 that Caner and Caner cite chides the Prophet’s wives that Allah will give him even better

wives if he decided to divorce them. There is no sexual connotation in these verses at all and Caner and Caner's conclusion are not only unwarranted but show a lack of research on the subject they are writing.

Caner and Caner then state, "*The wife is considered the husband's sex object. The Quran states in Surah 2:223, "your wives are as a tilth unto you, so approach your tilth when and how you will."*

The Quran contains directions for the physical as well as the moral and spiritual welfare of man, and it deals with the most delicate questions in language unapproached in its purity in any other law dealing with similar questions. The Holy Quran itself introduced many of the phrases dealing with the delicate relations of the sexes, and its literature is therefore one that brings no shudder to the fair reader; unlike many of the descriptions in the Bible such as:

1. Rejoice with the wife of your youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy you at all times. *Prov. 5:18*
2. We have a little sister, and she has no breasts. What shall we do for our sister on the day when is spoken for? I was a wall, and my breasts were like towers. *Song. 8:8*

The comparison of the woman to the tilth is simply to show that it is she who brings up the children and through whom is made the character of the man. The verse previous to the one cited prohibited certain relations when the woman has her courses on; this one states that keeping that prohibition in view, a man may have relations with his wife when he likes and as he likes. It is difficult to see what Caner and Caner find objectionable with the verse. As to their statement, "*The wife is considered the husband's sex object,*" one wonders how many western women would love to be their husband's sex object rather than knowing that their husband's sex object is elsewhere.

Abuse of wives is sanctified

Writing under the title 'Beating the Wife', Caner and Caner state, "*One of the most troubling admonitions in the Quran allows marital punishment. Because the husband has to train his wife, the Quran gives men much latitude in the area of punishment. The man can be physically abusive or withhold sexual favors from a wife whose conduct is sanctioned. 'As to those women on whose part you fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them, refuse to share their beds, beat them' (Surah 4:34).*"

The Quran lays the greatest possible stress on kindly and good treatment towards the wife. "Keep them in good fellowship" and "treat them kindly" is the oft-recurring advise of the Quran (2:229, 231; 4:19, etc.). Kindness is recommended even when a man dislikes his

wife, for "it may be that you dislike a thing while Allah has placed abundant good in it (4:19). The Prophet laid equally great stress upon good treatment of a wife. "The most excellent of you," he is reported to have said, "is he who is best in his treatment of his wife."⁶ In his famous address at the Farewell Pilgrimage, he again laid particular stress on the good treatment of women: "O my people! You have certain rights over your wives and so have your wives over you... They are the trust of Allah in your hands. So you must treat them with all kindness."⁷

In one tradition that enjoins kindness to women, the woman is compared to a rib, "The woman is like a rib, if you try to straighten it, you will break it."⁸ The rib is bent in its make and not straight, and it serves best its purpose in the state in which it is created, and so of the woman it is said that being like a rib she serves her purpose best in the state in which she has been created; to straighten her, i.e., to make her work just as the man pleases, or to try to make her possess the sterner male qualities of man, is to break her down. The temperament of man differs from that of woman in one respect. Man is stern and harsh, therefore largely unyielding; it was necessary that he should be so, so that he might be able to face the hard struggles of life. The woman who is meant to bring up the children has been so created that the quality of love preponderates in her and she is devoid of the sternness of man; she is therefore inclined to one side sooner than the man, and on account of this quality she is compared to the rib. Her being bent like the rib is adduced as an argument for being kind to her and for leaving her in that state. This is a far cry from what Caner and Caner state, "*the husband has to train his wife.*"

Exception to this kind treatment arises in case of immoral conduct. Islam places the highest value upon the chastity of the woman, and therefore if there is a falling off from the high standard of morality, the woman is not entitled to that honor and kindly treatment that is accorded to her otherwise. The Quran allows stern measures in the case of *nushuz*, which means 'the rising of the wife against her husband' or 'her revolt' and includes resisting the husband, and hating, and deserting him. The word covers a wide range of meaning and, therefore, the remedy suggested in such cases is of three kinds. "and as to those on whose part you fear desertion (*nushuz*) admonish them and leave them alone in the beds, and chastise them" (4:34). Depending upon the gravity of the wife's conduct, the husband is allowed appropriate remedy. A tradition in the Collection of *Hadith* called Muslim says, "And be careful of your duty to Allah in the matter of women, for you have taken them as trust of Allah...and they owe to you this obligation that they will not allow any one to come into your house when you do not like. If they do, then give them (slight) corporal punishment which may not leave any effect on their bodies."⁹ This shows that the inflic-

tion of slight corporal punishment is limited only to the extreme cases. And if even this step does not make them mend their ways, matrimonial relations may be ended.¹⁰

Islam prescribes a code of dress for women

Caner and Caner writing under the title 'In Public Appearance' state, "*The protocols for a woman in public are too numerous to mention here. Many Quranic admonitions stress the woman's responsibility to submit in public in both gaze and dress:*

And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what appears thereof, that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty. (Surah 24:31)."

The Islamic dress code for women has already been discussed above. The above translation is quite accurate except the word veils should appropriately be rendered as head covering. This verse was discussed earlier and it was shown that the opinion of Imam Abu Jafar regarding the term, "except what appears thereof" is that the exception relates to the face and hands. Thus, wearing a veil is not part of Islamic injunction or practice. In fact, women are expressly forbidden to wear the veil at the time of the pilgrimage, which is the most sacred of all occasions.¹¹

Conclusion

One must apologize for the length of this paper but it is in the nature of rebutting criticism that one-line accusations sometimes require lengthy explanations to bring in the context and correct interpretation. However, the accusations made by Caner and Caner in the *Chapter 8: Women, Love, Marriage and Property* of their book, *Unveiling Islam* have been fairly comprehensively answered with appropriate references to show that Islam accords fair and equitable treatment to women. They are looked upon as equal but complimentary partners with men and accorded appropriate rights with their interests protected by Quranic injunctions and sharia. The situation regarding women in the Bible is quite the reverse. The following internet quote says it all:

Why do women remain second-class citizens? Why is there a religion-fostered war against women's rights? Because the bible is a handbook for the subjugation of women. The bible establishes woman's inferior status, her "uncleanliness," her transgressions, and God-ordained master/servant relationship to man. Biblical women are possessions: fathers own them, sell them into bondage, even sacrifice them. The bible sanctions rape during wartime and in other contexts. Wives are subject to Mosaic-law sanctioned "bedchecks" as brides, and male jealousy fits and no-notice divorce as wives. The most typical biblical labels of women are "har-

lot" and "whore." They are described as having evil, even satanic powers of allurements. Contempt for women's bodies and reproductive capacity is a bedrock of the bible. The few role models offered are stereotyped, conventional and inadequate, with bible heroines admired for obedience and battle spirit. Jesus scorns his own mother, refusing to bless her, and issues dire warnings about the fate of pregnant and nursing women. ■

References

- 1 Sir William Muir, *Life of Muhammad*
- 2 Bosworth Smith
- 3 Kanzul Amal, Vol. 12 page 145
- 4 For an excellent and detailed discussion of the subject, see "There is no concubinage in Islam," in *The Religion of Islam* by Maulana Muhammad Ali.
- 5 Maulana Muhammad Ali, *The Holy Quran with English Translation and Commentary*, page I-54.
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- 7 Imam Abu Husain Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj *al-Sahih al-Muslim* 16:17)
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- 9 Imam Abu Husain Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj *al-Sahih al-Muslim* (15:19)
- 10 For a more detailed exposition of this subject see, Maulana Muhammad Ali, *The Religion of Islam*, the narration under "Stern measures allowed in case of immoral conduct," page 482
- 11 For a more detailed exposition of this subject see, Maulana Muhammad Ali, *The Religion of Islam*

Friday Sermon of Maulana Muhammad Ali

*Translated from Urdu into English
by Dr. Mohammad Ahmad*

[This Jumma Khutba (Friday Sermon) was given by Maulana Muhammad Ali in the late 1930's. In this short piece, Maulana Muhammad Ali, very directly yet ever so eloquently, provides guidance for improving the functioning of the Jamaat by drawing attention to two most important issues every member of the Movement must recognize: 1) the principle objective of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement, and 2) what is required by each individual member of the Movement in order to achieve this objective. Aside from its topical importance, this piece is of special significance because it is derived from an audio recording of Maulana Muhammad Ali presenting this Khutba which, as it turns out, is the only source of Maulana Muhammad Ali's voice available today.]

To this then go on inviting, and be steadfast as thou art commanded, and follow not their low desires, and say: I believe in what Allah has revealed of the Book, and I am commanded to do justice between you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord. For us are our deeds; and for you your deeds. There is no contention between us and you. Allah will gather us together, and to Him is the eventual coming. (Holy Quran, 42:15)

A clear and straight forward statement has been made. We say that God, the Creator of the earth and the heaven, is your Lord and our Lord. Deeds are what make a difference for a person. The way an individual or a nation can benefit in this world, or the Hereafter, is based not just on faith, but deeds. Truth is that you should exemplify your own person, that you are really doing the work of God and His religion. You have to show a practical example of this in your activities. I am an eyewitness of the progress this Ahmadiyya Movement made in its early years, in the times of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad did not have any missionaries who would go outside and give lectures and do the work of propagation. Any one who took the *bai't* (pledge) at his hands, wherever he went to, whatever village or town, he formed a *Jamaat*. This was accomplished, because on one hand people saw the dedication of these Ahmadis, and they also witnessed their practical example. Human nature is intrinsically possessed with the capability to perceive and accept this Divine Light. Thus, this is the way people entered the fold of this movement.

Today also, I am telling you with certainty, that this is the way to strengthen the *Jamaat*. What is the strength of this *Jamaat*? It is the strength of the army that carries the message of Islam in this world. If you want to strengthen this work of propagation of Islam, it has to be done in two ways. Those who are our members have to make themselves useful by doing some work of propagation of religion with their own hands. You know that we have all kinds of books and tracts available to draw the attention of Muslims towards righteousness, prayer, faith and the existence of God, cultivating the love of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in their hearts and to answer the objections of people from different religions. When all this material is available to us, then what keeps each individual member of our *Jamaat* from taking these materials in the form of seeds and spreading them all over the world. It is quite possible that if you plant these seeds, they may not grow in nine out of ten places; however, if even one seedling grows and bears fruit, do you know that it will produce seven hundred seeds and even more than that, as Allah says in the Holy Quran,

And the parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is as the parable of a grain growing seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains.

And Allah multiplies (further) for whom He pleases. And Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing. (Holy Quran, 2:261).

If that one seed finds the right kind of soil it can accomplish a great task. I, therefore, want to draw your attention to this, that you should participate in this *jihad* not only with sacrifice of your wealth, but also practically. If you do not participate practically in this *jihad*, then there is no benefit of being a member of this *Jamaat*. You thus needlessly subject yourself to the scorn of society without accomplishing any useful work. The benefit of this social degradation is really this, that we should cut ourselves from social ties and dedicate ourselves fully to this great task. I want to tell my friends to pay attention towards this. Take this literature, look into your sphere of influence and spread this message with your own hands and through your word of mouth. If you have carried this message to a hundred places and planted this seed, it will bear fruit in at least ten.

Therefore, take up this task in accordance to this Quranic verse. "For us are our deeds, and for you are your deeds." This is a very firm principle of God that your deeds and your actions are what will bear fruit. Mere words do not suffice. You have to combine words with deeds to achieve results. You know that we have started a scheme to provide you with free literature to be handed over to people who can benefit from it. You will have to become a laborer and a farmer to plant these seeds. You have to organize yourself in such a way that you can do your worldly tasks. But, I am telling you with truth, if you want to get some real pleasure and contentment in this life, then set aside a period of time from your worldly affairs and dedicate it to the work of God. This will bring such pleasure to your heart that this world will appear like paradise to you and the thorns in your way will become like a bed of roses. Do not pay any attention to the various obstacles, and as much as possible carry forth this message which has been given to you through the Imam of this age. This was a message that awoke a nation from its slumber. People from that nation today are carrying this message of Islam with great zeal all over the world. This is not a small task. Since the time of the companions of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, no doubt hundreds of thousands of souls have dedicated their lives for this purpose. However, in this day and age when people had gone furthest away from their religion and had forgotten their duty of propagation of Islam, if anybody rekindled this spirit, it is the *Imam* of this period, *Hazrat* Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. It is he who has handed over this task to you and now you have inherited his work. You can only be true to this inheritance by carrying on his mission, not by merely praising his name. Then only can you truly honor his memory. Therefore, today in this *khutba*, I wanted to draw your attention to this. ■

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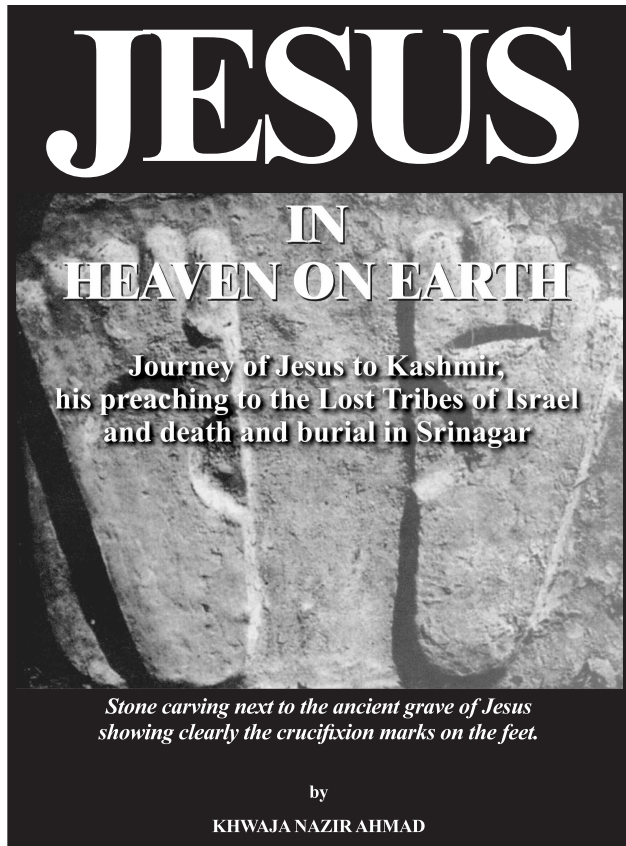
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6. On the third day, the rock at the entrance of the tomb was removed (Mark 16:4); this was not necessary in the case of a spiritual rising.
7. Jesus disguised himself as a gardener and feared being caught again (John 20:15), clearly inconsistent with the view that he was now immortal.
8. Jesus still felt hunger (Luke 24:39-43) and still bore the wounds of the crucifixion (John 20: 25:28), being in the same physical state as before.
9. Jesus undertook a journey to Galilee, a major port city, with two disciples (Matt 28:10), clearly unnecessary to rise to heaven but convincing evidence of an escape elsewhere.
10. Jesus prayed the whole night before his arrest to be saved from dying on the cross (Matt 26:39) and his prayer was answered: “When he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him who was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared” (Heb. 5:7).

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