

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

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Exponent of  
Islam and  
the Lahore  
Ahmadiyya  
Movement  
for over  
seventy-five  
years  
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# *The Light*

## *& Islamic Review*

September – October 1999

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Presents  
Islam as:  
PEACEFUL  
TOLERANT  
RATIONAL  
INSPIRING  
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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 world-wide branches of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam, Lahore.

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### Beliefs and aims

The main object 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, good moral example, and the natural beauty of its principles. It neither aspires to gain political power, nor allows the use of force in support of the faith.

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 justly, 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 *Lā ilāha ill-Allāh, Muḥammad-ur rasūl-ullāh* (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 the following countries:

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

The Movement has members and supporters in many other countries as well. In Berlin, it has a large historical mosque constructed in the mid-1920s.

### 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, such as French, German, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Dutch and Polish.

The Anjuman has run several Muslim missions around the world, including the first ever in Western Europe.

The Movement's unique contribution to Islamic thought is summed up on the left.

### History:

**1889:** Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad founded 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:** Prof. Dr. Asghar Hameed, a distinguished retired University Professor of Mathematics, and learned Islamic scholar, elected Head.

## Racism and Islam

*Speech at Convention in Columbus  
July 1999*

by Aliyah Khan, New York

“And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colors. Surely there are signs in this for the learned.” — The Holy Quran, 30:22.

Most people know what it is, have heard it discussed countless times, may have even had personal experience with it. There is no need to define what racism is. It is something that is almost worthless as a scientific classification, because the genes which determine skin color account for a mere fraction of a percent of the overall human genetic makeup. But of course, no one can argue that the concept of race is so ingrained in the way people think that it's nearly impossible to get away from it. What's one of the first things that one person notices about another? What's one of the first physical characteristics listed when describing the appearance of a person? It is usually the color of his or her skin.

Throughout the world fair skin is equated with beauty, and even goodness. This may be partially blamed on Western colonialism, which has had a great impact even on the Muslim world. This Muslim world itself is a collection of artificial boundaries drawn on a map to create countries. This has led to the new phenomenon of nationalism, which may further intensify discrimination on the basis of skin color. There is the extreme example of the not so old South Africa and its system of institutionalized racism, or apartheid.

There is also the example of Guyana, where racism has destroyed the country to a point where it is nearly impossible to see how it can continue, since logic would dictate that if racial differences cause a country to become poverty-stricken and its people to flee in droves, then people would recognize what they're doing and cease. Yet it continues, and is even escalating to the point of violence.

In Western countries like this the United States, what can be observed is the more subtle discrimination experienced by blacks and non-whites in places where it is legally prohibited. America itself has not

had a stellar record where race relations are concerned. Even at its very founding, the infamous three-fifths clause, which counted a black person as three-fifths of a legal person, was written into the Constitution.

Now, legally speaking, there is “equal opportunity” in America, but the attitudes of people, bred by long history of racism, is a different thing entirely. Incidents like the Rodney King riots, the so-called New York cop killings (like that of young African immigrant Amadou Diallo) only serve to illustrate this idea. It is said that in the U.S. the worse thing one can be is a young black man. People make cynical references to things like DWB, or Driving while Black. Obviously, Western society still has quite a ways to go before it can become truly colorblind.

A law is a rule that the government says to obey for the good of society. Therefore, one person cannot kill another for racist reasons and expect no punishment from society. But there is nothing stopping that same person from thinking what he or she likes about others, or even, as in many instances, verbally airing those views in public.

But if one lives according to Islam, it is not possible to follow the letter of the law in public while believing something else in the privacy of one's own mind. Islam is a way of life. Islamic doctrine, or *Aqeedah*, addresses the same issues that its legal texts does. In other words, whatever personal belief the Holy Quran guides someone to, will be in accordance with how he or she must lawfully behave in society.

In addition, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), unlike other prophets, did not come to one people or tribe or nation. The Quran is addressed to all people, and while it notes that there are indeed physical differences among individuals, it also stresses that all human beings share a common ancestry. In Ch. 35 Verses 27-28 it is said:

“Seest thou not that Allah sends down water from the clouds, then We bring forth therewith fruits of various hues? And in the mountains are streaks, white and red, of various hues and (others) intensely black. And of men and beasts and cattle there are various colors likewise.”

But Ch. 4 Verse 1 reads:

“O people, keep your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same (kind), and spread from these two many men and women.”

This single *ayat* effectively negates the whole idea of racism by reminding us of our shared human heritage.

Islam has historically been a great unifying force because it does not determine the value of a person based on such an irrelevant thing as the way he or she looks. Rather, it focuses on right living and piety to determine the value of an individual.

But in the time of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), the tribes of Arabia used lineage to determine social standing. Partly as a result, black people were regarded as inferior and not fit for much else besides slavery. Slavery was one of the many institutions in pre-Islamic Arabia that was abhorrent to Islam. In one of the very earliest Quranic revelations, *Al Balad* (The City), it is said:

“And what will make thee comprehend what the uphill road is? It is to free a slave.” (90:12-13)

In his Quranic commentaries, Maulana Muhammad Ali says: “[Islam] is the only religion which enjoins the duty of granting freedom to slaves, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the only founder of a religion who showed the noble example of freeing all the slaves that he ever had and helping in the freedom of others.” Regarding Ch. 9 of the Holy Quran (*Al Bara’at*: The Immunity), Verse 60, Maulana Ali continues: “the State itself must spend a part of the public funds in purchasing freedom for slaves.”

It may be argued that, black or not, those slaves who converted to Islam did so because anything, and certainly Islam, which after all provided for the eventual freedom of all slaves, was preferable to slavery. But this does not explain the conduct of Hazrat Bilal, a black slave who was freed after conversion to Islam. Bilal, the black man, stood firm in his devotion to Islam when many of the earliest converts, under torture, did not. It is reported that “in the depth of his anguish the persecutors could force from him but one expression, ‘Ahad! Ahad!’ (One! One! God).”

Nevertheless, believers and unbelievers alike continued to believe in the inferiority of darker-skinned people. Such was the feeling of disdain for them that after the conquest of Mecca, when the Prophet gave the honor of climbing onto the Kaabah and calling out the *Adhaan* for the first time to Bilal, it is reported that one Harith bin Hisham said: “Could not Muhammad find anybody else besides this black crow to call out the *Adhaan*?”

The Prophet soon after this received a revelation:

“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)

Before revealing this to the people, the Prophet addressed them, saying:

“O people! Allah has abolished all forms of discrimination based on lineage or creed. There are only two classes of men. A pious and God-fearing individual is honored in the sight of Allah while a disobedient and sinful individual is debased in the sight of Allah.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad then recited what had been revealed to him, illustrating that the only thing which distinguishes one person from another in the sight of Allah is his or her individual behavior and adherence to Islamic teachings.

The Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at Islam Lahore is perhaps by nature uniquely qualified to spread the message of tolerance. Members of the movement are all very familiar with the fact that it is prohibited to denounce as *kafir* anyone who recites *La ilaha illallah, Muhammad-ur Rasulallah*. Islam is also the only religion which protects the rights of non-Muslim citizens in a Muslim state. Similar to these protections, according to the Quran and Prophet Muhammad, a Muslim may not discriminate against another Muslim or non-Muslim simply on the basis of physical appearance.

It is senseless to harbor such prejudices. Does the color and makeup of human blood vary with skin color? Is it skin color that stops one human being from donating his or her blood or organs to another person of a different color and sustaining that individual’s life? Certainly not.

Islam teaches unity and brotherhood. True individual worth is, in the end, determined by Allah, Who will judge according to what He has revealed in the Holy Quran:

“O you who believe, be upright for Allah, bearers of witness with justice; and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably. Be just; that is nearer to observance of duty.” (5:8)

# Scientific and spiritual truths about creation and evolution revealed in the Holy Quran – 1

Compiled by Dr. Mohammad Ahmad,  
Columbus, Ohio

## Introduction

This discussion includes two articles by the late Nasir Ahmad Faruqi, one on the Divine command, “Be, and it is,” and the second on “Fire from the green tree”. In addition I have quoted extensively and verbatim from Maulana Muhammad Ali’s translation and commentary. I hope this effort will be beneficial for those who come across it.

The Holy Quran specifically encourages mankind to explore and study the Divine creation; it states:

“Say: Travel in the earth then see how He makes the first creation then Allah creates the latter creation. Surely Allah is Possessor of power over all things.” (29:20)

It is interesting to note that the current concepts of evolution and creation were proposed and developed by scientists who traveled all over the world to study plant and animal life, earth geology and discover fossil evidence. This article will discuss the Quranic verses which describe the creation and evolution of the physical universe, and of man. Also those verses dealing with the unique nature of man’s creation will be discussed. It will be pointed out how the Holy Quran relates the physical with the spiritual and how modern scientific discovery supports the Quran. It is further stated in the Holy Quran:

“Glorify the name of thy Lord, the Most High, Who creates, then makes complete, and Who measures then guides.” (87:1-3)

These verses speak of four Divine acts, i.e., creation, completion, measuring, and guiding. Everything in this universe is subject to these four laws and so is man. He is created from a very humble and low beginning, his first condition being that of a life germ which cannot be seen. Then it develops gradually to complete human form. This is the subject-matter of verse 2. The third verse then lays down that everything in creation is held under control; it is made according to a measure and its progress lies along a

certain line; and that it is God Who guides it or makes it walk along that line. The whole is in special reference to the spiritual advancement of man through Divine glorification.

## Beginning of creation

The Quranic phrase, “Be, and it is”, which signifies the Divine command for the beginning of creation, is mentioned in the Holy Quran seven times. It is first stated:

“Wonderful Originator (*Badi*) of the heavens and the earth! And when He decrees an affair, He says to it only, Be, and it is.” (2:117)

The original word is *Badi* which is applicable to the thing made as well as to the maker. A thing is *badi* which is *not after the similitude of anything pre-existing*, and *badi* is *also the person who makes or produces or brings into existence for the first time and not after the similitude of anything pre-existing*. Imam Raghīb, renowned authority on Quranic lexicon states that when this word is used for Allah, it means creation of a thing without use of instrument, matter, time or space. When the Holy Quran presented this magnificent concept, no one could have imagined that Einstein fourteen hundred years later would prove that the concept of time and space is relative, i.e., both these entities do not have an independent existence, but are based on every individual’s own perception.

The second verse where the Divine command, “Be, and it is”, is mentioned in the Holy Quran is in the verse:

“She said: My Lord, how can I have a son and man has not yet touched me? He said: Even so; Allah creates what He pleases. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, ‘Be’, and it is.” (3:47)

According to the text of this verse such barriers exist in the way of creation that cannot be overcome. To this the reply is given that nothing can stop the decision of Allah the Most High from being carried out. He makes the matter deemed impossible, feasible by giving it the Divine command, “Be, and it is”.

The third verse in this regard is:

“He created him (man) from dust, then said to him, Be, and it was.” (3:59)

This verse indicates that besides the creation of the heavens and the earth and in fact all of creation, the creation of man also begins with the Divine command, “Be, and it is”, although man’s pride may lead him to

think that he was created in some other manner. He is thus informed of the reality.

The fourth verse where the command, “Be, and it is” is mentioned is in the verse:

“And He it is Who created the heavens and the earth with truth (*bil-haq*). And when He says, Be, it is.” (6:73)

When the Holy Quran mentions the heavens and the earth, it frequently refers to the life after death and the earthly existence of man. Similarly the phrase “with truth” (*bil-haq*) means for a higher purpose. This verse thus indicates that Allah has created the earthly existence of man, and after that his existence in the spiritual heavens, for a very exalted purpose. When He will, therefore, bring him back to life in the hereafter to fulfill this higher objective, it will come about on His command.

The fifth verse with the command, “Be, and it is”, is:

“Our word for a thing, when We intend it, is only that We say to it, Be, and it is.” (16:40)

This verse indicates that besides the extraordinary matters of creation of the heavens and the earth, when Allah the blessed, Most High has any intent to carry out, even in the mundane affairs of daily life, the command, “Be, and it is” suffices to accomplish it. From the most extraordinary to the ordinary what He desires is thus carried out by His command “Be, and it is”.

The sixth time this command is mentioned is:

“Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like of them (*mis-la-hum*)? Yea! And He is the Creator (of all), the Knower. His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it, Be, and it is. So glory be to Him in Whose hand is the kingdom of all things! and to Him you will be returned”. (36:81-83).

In these verses the argument given in support of life after death is that it is not possible for the Magnificent Creator Who has created the heavens and the earth, to recreate man? The Arabic word *mis-la-hum* used in this context is used only for intelligent beings and therefore refers to mankind. He is thus informed that his re-creation will not be the same as the first one but rather the like of it. Like the first creation it will be brought about by the command, “Be, and it is”. If the purpose of man’s creation was only his earthly existence, i.e., to eat and drink and eventually perish,

it indeed appears to be trivial. The magnificent creation of the heavens and the earth for this purpose would then appear pointless. Allah Who is free of all faults could not have undertaken such a futile action. Just as all His creation has a purpose to it, mankind has been created with the intent to recognize Allah the Most High, and benefit from the recognition of His attributes.

The seventh verse where the words “Be, and it is” occur is:

“He it is Who gives life and causes death, so when He decrees an affair, He only says to it, Be, and it is.” (40:68)

In this section of the Holy Quran arguments have been put forward in support of unity of the Divine Being, and His omnipotence (which in itself is the greatest argument in support of the unity of the Divine Being). All the different creations in this world are amazing, however, above all of these is the creation of life. Any living organism whether it belongs to the human or animal species, once it is given life, does not want to part with it, and makes the utmost effort to keep from dying. Man who is the best of creation, and being the vicegerent of God on earth, has been empowered in certain matters, is unable to give life or save himself from death. Allah the Most High is manifesting the magnificent sign of His omnipotence, i.e., the giving of life and death every moment, with His command, “Be, and it is”. Thus we observe that any particular moment, there are many lives that are coming into existence, while simultaneously there are many which are departing from this world. Can this wonderful sign be denied by any human being whose mind accepts the truth? This argument is presented very distinctly in the second chapter of the Holy Quran in these words:

“How can you deny Allah and you were without life and He gave you life? Again, He will cause you to die and again bring you to life, then you shall be brought back to Him.” (2:28)

All these seven verses quoted earlier, contain the words, “Be, and it is”. Man, who conceptualizes based on his own physical limitations, finds it hard to conceive that a matter as extraordinary as the creation of the universe, his own creation and even the mundane affairs of his daily life are accomplished by the Divine command, “Be, and it is”.

Additionally there are verses in the Holy Quran which deal with the existence of the Divine Being, His omnipotence and omnipresence, concepts that a

superficial observer finds hard to assimilate. For example, the Holy Quran states: “And He is with you wherever you are” (57 :4), “He is the Hearing, the Seeing, Knower of what is in the hearts, We are nearer to him than his life-vein (50:16), He is Ever-Living, Self-Subsisting by Whom all subsist.

The founder of the Ahmadiyya movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, has commented on this in his book *Nur al-Quran*, Part 2, which I quote below:

“It should also be known that in accordance with Islamic belief, Allah the Most High is the Creator of all, whether it belongs to the spiritual or the physical realm. Everything has been brought into existence as a manifestation of His omnipotence. It is therefore the Quranic belief that just as Allah the Most High is the Creator of all, He is also really and truly their Sustainer, i.e., the subsistence of everything is because of His Being, which is the source of life for all existence. If one presumes His non-existence, then the non-existence of everything is essential. Thus for all existence to be, His association is mandatory.”

Further on he states:

“Everything is connected to Allah the Most High in such a manner that it is a consequence of His power and intent.”

This statement of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement is from around 1895. During this period the creed of materialism and reliance on material resources was running strong, as a result of which atheism was spreading fast. In reality, during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, scientific knowledge had made great strides and was accompanied by progression of materialistic and atheistic tendencies. The reason for this was that when scientific research determined that atom was the smallest particle of matter, they reached the conclusion that it could not be broken down further. Since matter was all composed of atoms, it meant matter was indestructible. They further observed that although matter changes its forms, its ultimate component, the atom remains as such. Since the process of their creation was not seen, they concluded that matter could not be created nor destroyed. Hence the question arose what was the need for God the Creator and where would the Life Hereafter be? This materialistic and atheistic philosophy was also the basis of the doctrinal belief of the Arya Samajist movement in India, which believed that matter and soul were co-eternal with God and He stands in need of them to bring about creation. Since materialism and atheism were the greatest spiritual

illnesses of the time, the Reformer of the Age, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, has written extensively on this matter.

Towards the end of the 19th century the scientific thought also supported the idea that the universe was like a machine which functioned on basis of the law of causation. The first dent in this concept was made by the Quantum theory, which stated that cause and effect were not absolute, but the chain of these events was broken and had gaps and periods. It was first thought that the development of the universe was progressing like the hand of a clock. However, it was later on determined that these intervals unlike the motion of the clock hand were undetermined and were under the influence of an unknown force or external influences. It should be remembered that the law of causation and the belief that as a result of it the universe worked like a machine, were the wrong concepts which strengthened materialism and atheistic beliefs. This idol was shattered with the innovation of the Quantum theory. In support of this I will quote the following passages from the book *The Mysterious Universe* by the British scientist Sir James Jeans:

“We would no longer think of the External Reality as a machine. The operation might be mechanical but in essence it would be a reality of Thought.”

“It is conceivable that happenings entirely outside the continuum determine what we describe as the course of events inside the continuum”.

The second idol, that matter is indestructible, was demolished as a consequence of the breaking down of the atom towards the end of the 19th century and the discovery that it was made up of electronic particles. It was later determined that these electronic particles were in fact waves of energy and not particles of matter.

The third sensational discovery was Einstein’s theory that space which was considered a material element and time which was perceived as immaterial were not separate elements but in fact two sides of the same picture which could not be separated. He proved that in the universe space which was composed of three dimensions, i.e., length, breadth and height, had another dimension to it, i.e., time, and all four of these together shaped the universe. He also proved that the concept of time and space was subjective, i.e., the perception of an individual’s mind, and did not have an objective reality of their own.

In short, as scientific thought developed the older concepts pertaining to the universe kept on changing. I will now present some of the current scientific thinking in this matter. A lot of different and complicated books have been written on this subject. An easily understood is the one I have quoted earlier. The author of this book was an atheist as he himself admitted in the beginning of the first edition of his book. Nobody can therefore say that this was written by someone with religious bias. After mentioning the new discoveries of science, he writes the last chapter of his book under the heading *Science in grave difficulties* and details this as follows:

“Many people think that the chief work of twentieth century physics lies not in the theory of relativity with its joining together of space and time, not in the theory of quantum with its present idea that there is no law of causation, not in the breaking of the atom with the resulting discovery that things are not what they seem, but in the general recognition that we have not yet reached the True Reality”.

Further on he writes:

“Objections are often made that many of the mathematicians’ ideas, for example, that space is not endless, that it can be curved, that it is growing in size, and so on, have no meaning for the ordinary person. It is true that if we accept the nineteenth century idea that the universe can be materially represented, then we are talking nonsense. But modern science cannot possibly accept nineteenth century ideas about space, the universe cannot be materially represented. The reason is, I think, that the universe may be pictured, very roughly and imperfectly, as consisting of pure thought”.

He then writes: “A thought or idea cannot, however, exist without a mind in which to exist”.

Thus we can see how scientific thought is coming towards Allah the Most High. He is Self-Subsisting by Whom all subsist. Everything owes its existence to His thought and intent. This conclusion is itself elaborated further by the scientist quoted earlier:

“Berkeley said: ‘All those bodies which make up the frame of the world have not any substance without the mind — so long as they are not actually seen by me, or do not exist in my mind, or that of any other human being,

they must either have no existence at all, or else exist in the mind of a Higher Being’.

Modern science seems to me to lead, by a very different road, to very much the same idea. We come to the same ideas as Berkeley. But we reach them from the other end, that is why we come to this third idea, first, and others appear unimportant by comparison. It does not matter whether objects ‘exist in my mind, or that of any other human being’ or not, the fact that they are objects is because of their existence ‘in the mind of a Higher Being’.”

Glory be to Allah and all praise is His, Glory be to Allah Who is Incomparable in Greatness! By analyzing these statements we observe how a scientist who is an atheist, is not only admitting to the existence of Allah the Most High but also supporting this Quranic concept that everything comes into existence as a result of His thought, which is the meaning of the phrase, “Be, and it is”. I will explain this further later on.

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## Yusuf Ali and Daryabadi’s Quran translations — an evaluation nearer their time of publication

[We reproduce below the editorial which appeared in ‘The Light’ in its issue of July 1, 1943.]

The late Allama Iqbal had a wonderful knack for exposing things by turning his flashes of wit on them. One of such wit-flashes about a Punjab Knight and his appearance at a party in dinner suit is already public property. Another of his flashes which is not so commonly known illustrates the point which forms the theme of these reflections. A Shia friend once called upon the Poet as he was lying on his *charpai*, enjoying the soothing puffs of his faithful *huqqa*, and during the conversation put to him the question: “Who in your opinion has been the greatest *mazloom*, i.e., most wronged against”, expecting, of course, the reply that it was the great martyr of Karbala, Hazrat Imam Husain. To his utter bewilderment, however, came the reply, as if with a flash, that the greatest *mazloom*



(aggrieved) was the Quran. Disappointed, the visitor asked how the Quran was the greatest *mazloom*. "Why," rejoined the Poet, "it has fallen into the hands of Abdullah Yusaf Ali." Mr. A. Yusaf Ali was at the time writing a translation of the Quran into English.

Mr. Yusaf Ali, better known as Allama Yusaf Ali, is no doubt a great scholar of English and possesses a great command over the language. But to Arabic, the language of the Quran which he had undertaken to render into English, he is a perfect stranger. To enter upon a holy undertaking like giving the world the Quranic message in English with such poor credentials was an outrage that could hardly escape the vigilant eye of Iqbal. The rebuke was richly deserved.

It was a purely business venture. Neither the author nor the publisher had any interest in it except the sale that it would command. As it happened, Maulana Muhammad Ali's English Translation had by the time won universal popularity and esteem throughout the world. It was, however, not difficult to smooth the way for the new venture. In India any mountebank who panders to sectarian passions is sure of a hearing. The new Translation was advertised as an "orthodox" translation and when people took exception to certain texts rendered in an unorthodox way, the translation was changed in a revised edition just to suit popular notions. For a time the trick paid. The slogan of orthodoxy was exploited. But it was soon discovered that excellent as it was as a piece of English composition, as a translation of the Quran and a commentary to get at the underlying message of the Word of God, Yusaf Ali's Translation was positively misleading.

In the present issue we reproduce reviews on another translation of the Quran into English, one from the *Eastern Times* of Lahore, the other from the *Dawn* of Delhi. As a perusal of these would show, this new venture has also failed to justify itself. The author, Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi, certainly knows more of Arabic than Abdullah Yusaf Ali. He has certainly spent devout pains and thought on it too. Nevertheless, we are pained to see that the result of all his labours that has appeared in the form of Part 1 has evoked very severe criticism. The *Eastern Times* reviewer thinks it is full of grammatical mistakes and clumsy constructions. The *Dawn* reviewer is equally merciless. He says:

"Not long ago Mr. A. Yusaf Ali translated the Holy Quran with the palpable disadvantage of not at all knowing the Arabic language, but his translation was at least readable in that it was couched in chaste English. Any new

effort called for a distinct improvement. The Maulana (Abdul Majid) who has a 'passing acquaintance with Arabic' is not possessed of the gift of rendering his thoughts into good English." [Z. A. Suleri, *The Dawn*, Delhi]

Herein lies the greatest weakness of this new attempt at translating the Quran into English. The least recommendation that a translation must possess is that it must be free from palpable mistakes and it must be readable enough. According to the reviews both in the *Eastern Times* and the *Dawn*, neither of these merits can be claimed for this new translation and it is painful to see that all this labour and expense should have been undertaken without any corresponding advantage, so far as the dissemination of the Quranic message is concerned.

There will always be room for a re-interpretation of the Quranic message. The Quran is a message for all time to come. It is a fathomless ocean of wisdom and truth, containing light and healing for the changing needs and ills of all the infinite generations yet unborn. Someone shall always be needed to delve deep into this ocean and bring out its priceless pearls of wisdom for the good of mankind. But such a man must be gifted with a qualification which is so commonly and conveniently ignored. This qualification has been laid down by the Quran itself when it says:

"No one but the pure shall have a grasp of it."  
(56:79)

Purity of soul, Godliness, spiritual elevation — this must be the first and foremost equipment of a would-be translator of the Quran. The Quran is a spiritual wave from God and only those with mental receivers well-attuned to those waves are capable of catching them. With all respect to Allama Yusaf Ali and his scholarship in English, not the best of his friends would suspect him of the least weakness for things spiritual. A typical product of the Western civilization, he is simply incapable of bringing anything but that gross coarse mental outlook to bear upon that fine message from God. His beautiful English cannot make up for this temperamental incapacity for the great task.

It is wrong to suppose that in order to get at the essence of the Quranic message and render it into another language, one need only be a scholar in Arabic or the language of the translation. Abu Jahl was certainly well-versed in the niceties of the Arabic literature but he failed to see the light of the Quran. What is needed, above all else, is the spiritually attuned mind. That is the first pre-requisite but for which no other qualification can carry a translation

very far. Given that, one must have command both of Arabic and the language of the translation. The best results can be expected only when all of these three factors combine.

Abdullah Yusaf Ali was utterly bankrupt, so far as the two main of these factors were concerned and small wonder that a lover of Islam like Iqbal lost patience at his presumptuousness to translate the Quran. Maulana Abdul Majid is decidedly a much superior man, so far as an Islamic heart and Arabic knowledge are concerned. His poor English, however, has greatly crippled his attempt.

If Maulana Muhammad Ali's translation still holds the field, in the face of so many subsequent attempts, if it still remains to be the best dependable means to get at the spirit of the Quranic message, the reason is that in him all the three factors are found combined in a decidedly much higher degree. So far as attunement of soul to things spiritual is concerned, he stands perhaps all alone as a solitary figure in the world of religion. His life has been a dedication to the dissemination of the light of Islam ever since he stepped out of the portals of the University laden with academic degrees. As the late Mr. Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall says of him, while reviewing one of his many books on Islam, *The Religion of Islam*:

“Probably no man living has done longer or more valuable service for the cause of Islamic revival than Maulana Muhammad Ali of Lahore.”

Maulana Abdul Majid himself, while announcing in his paper *Sach* his idea to bring out an English translation of the Quran, observes:

“To deny the good qualities of Maulana Muhammad Ali's translation, to deny its impression on the mind, to deny its success as a missionary weapon, is to deny the light of the sun. It has been decidedly helpful in making thousands of strangers into friends, in bringing thousands of sceptics nearer to Islam. From my personal experience I must confess with pleasure that some 15 or 16 years ago when I was wandering about in the dark wilderness of doubt and unfaith, this English translation was one of the very few books which helped me come nearer Islam. The name-sake of the translator, Maulana Muhammad Ali of the *Comrade*, was similarly impressed and always praised it.”

Now here is some food for thought for Maulana Abdul Majid and everyone else who cares to approach the question with the seriousness and openness of mind it deserves. What is it, after all, that has lent Maulana Muhammad Ali's Translation the magic of infusing faith into sceptical hearts and winning them over to Islam? How is it that although so many attempts were made after that not one can claim a fraction of that wonderful alchemy which sinks into the heart of man and transmutes it?

The answer is not far to seek. As we said, it is not mere book knowledge that is needed for an insight into the deepest beauties of Islam. There is a sixth sense that is needed — the soul-sense that is born of purity and devotion to God.

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## The Death of Jesus – 8

by Maulana Hafiz Sher Mohammad

Views of modern Muslim religious scholars

### VI. Ulama of the Indo-Pakistan Sub-Continent

12. Allama Niyaz Fatehpuri writes:

“Thirty-eight years ago I wrote in detail in *Nigar* that it is clearly proved from the Divine word that he (Jesus) died his natural death.”

(Monthly *Nigar*, Lucknow, India, June 1961)

13. The chief editor of *Al-Jami'at*, Delhi, **Maulana Muhammad Usman Farqleet**, gives his view as follows:

“Had belief in the second coming of Jesus been a fundamental article of faith and a means of salvation according to Islam, the Holy Quran would certainly have mentioned this doctrine explicitly since it claims to contain all matters of guidance: *inna 'alai-na la-l-huda*, ‘it is Our responsibility to show the path of guidance’ [92:12]. However, the Holy Quran nowhere speaks of the second coming of Jesus. Hence it is right to conclude that the second coming of any prophet, and that too after the *Khatam al-mursalin*, is absolutely against the Quran ... By saying *Khatam an-nabiyyin* the Quran has, with *alif, lam*, closed the door to every type of prophethood. Furthermore, there is Jesus' statement that

‘Ahmad shall come after me’; he himself cannot come after Ahmad.”

(*Shabistan Urdu Digest*, New Delhi, November 1974, p. 18)

14. Muhammad Hasan ibn Muhammad Abbas, *mujtahid* and *ustad* at the Madrasa Nizamiyya, Lucknow, India, wrote:

“The findings of authentic, established books and the Quranic commentaries of the great scholars prove the *wafat* of Jesus, i.e., that he died. Thus, two verses in particular provide evidence for his death: firstly, *inni mutawaffika wa rafi‘u-ka ilayya*; and secondly, *falamma tawaffaita-ni kunta anta-r-raqiba ‘alai-him*. These verses are quite sufficient to prove Jesus’ death. If these do not suffice, I can write still more and give many hadith in support.”

(as quoted in *Tashhiz al-Azhan*, April 1921, p. 39)

15. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, in the *first edition* of his English translation and commentary of the Holy Quran, rendered verse 3:55 as: “I will take thy soul and raise thee to Myself.” In the footnote at this point in the first edition, he wrote:

“Read this along with 4:157 where it is said that the Jews neither crucified nor killed Jesus, but that another was killed in his likeness. The guilt of the Jews remained. But Jesus completed his life and was when he died taken up to God.”

16. Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi, former deputy head of the Jama‘at-i Islami writes:

“The meaning is that Muhammad (peace be upon him) too is a messenger of God, just as there had been many other messengers of God in the world. He too may have to face the same kind of trials and tribulations that they encountered. Just as all messengers (*tamam rasulun*) had had to pass through the stage of death, he too would die one day. His being a messenger of God does not mean that he would not die or cannot be killed.”

(*Tadabbar Quran*, vol. i, p. 287, under verse 3:144, published in Lahore, 1967)

17. Sayyid Abul ‘Ala Maudoodi has written the following upon this topic:

- i. “The most appropriate course of action according to the Quran is to refrain from giving further details of *raf‘ jismani* (bodily ascension) and of *maut* (death) ... In fact, one should consider Jesus’ ascent to be an extraordinary manifestation of Divine power, and leave its exact nature in brief terms as God Himself has left it brief.”

(*Maulana Maudoodi par i‘trazat ka ‘ilmi ja‘iza*, by Maulvi Muhammad Yusuf, Part I, p. 169)

- ii. “I think that this issue is among the *mutashabihat* (unclear verses), for we cannot comprehend the exact nature of Jesus’ ascent, his staying alive somewhere, and his subsequent descent at some future date. What we have been taught about the *mutashabihat* is that we should not investigate them further, but merely believe in however much has been told to us. To undertake investigation of the *mutashabihat*, and to be indifferent to the *muhkamat* (explicit verses), is clear sign of perversity.”

(Letter dated 1 January 1951, ref: 760/71, Ichhra, Lahore)

- iii. In answer to a letter, Sayyid Abul ‘Ala Maudoodi had his reply written by Mr. Naeem Siddiqi as follows:

“As to what I have understood from the Holy Quran regarding the death of Jesus ... I have already explained it, and you can read it. As to Jesus’ second coming, I cannot put it higher than a possibility because the Quran gives no explanation of it, and the basis of firm faith cannot be laid upon Hadith. It could be that God may send Jesus to earth again, and if He so wishes there cannot be any bar against it. In any case, this point is not part of Islamic doctrine.”

(*Rukh Kardar* by Chaudhary Habibullah, p. 243)

- iv. “The Quran does not explicitly state that God raised up Jesus, body and soul, from earth to heaven. Nor does it clearly say that he died a natural death on earth, and that only his soul was raised up. Thus, on the basis of the Quran, neither of these views can be definitely rejected or confirmed.”

(*Tahfim al-Quran* by Maulana Maudoodi, p. 240)

**18. Ghulam Ahmad Pervaiz**, in his Quranic commentary, under the verse “They planned, and God also planned”, writes:

- i. “Thus, that nation became divided into two parties, one supporting the truth and the other opposing it. The opponents started using secret means and plans in order to lay their hands on Jesus. Countering this, God produced hidden ways and means of saving him, and it is evident that the means devised by God are superior in every respect. Their final plan was to have Jesus arrested and crucified, so that he would, according to them, die in disgrace and humiliation. But God said to Jesus: Be not perturbed, this conspiracy of theirs can never succeed; you will die a natural death, and I will grant you high ranks; I will take you far beyond the reach of these enemies, and clear you from the accusations coined against you; your followers appear to be weak at this time, but in the end I will make those who follow you to be ever above those who deny you.”

(*Mafhum al-Quran*, Sura 3, vv. 53-54, p. 132)

- ii. “Verse 156: The list of their crimes does not end here, but carries on further. The denial of truth and persistence in haughtiness and arrogance made them reach such a stage that they levelled a grievous slander against a virtuous woman like Mary. And regarding a glorious prophet like Jesus, to this day they proudly claim to have killed him, making him die in disgrace. However, the fact is that they neither killed him nor made him die, according to them a death of disgrace, by putting him on the cross. What actually happened was different from what they thought had happened, and the reality became obscure to them. On the other side, the people who differ from the Jews on this matter, i.e., Christians, do not know the truth either. Their explanations too are based on conjecture and guess work. Thus neither the Jews nor the Christians know the truth of the event, neither of them having any sure knowledge. The truth is what has been stated above, i.e., Jesus was not killed, nor did he die an accursed death upon the cross as asserted by the Jews, but rather, God elevated him in status.”

(*ibid.*, Sura 4, verses 156 to 158, p. 229)

- iii. “Verse 117: I (Jesus) said to them only what You (God) commanded me, i.e., ‘worship God, your Lord and my Lord. Whilst I was among them I watched over them (so that they may not go wrong), but when You caused me to die I ceased to be the watcher, and after that You were their guardian, not only theirs but You are the guardian of everything in creation.”

(*ibid.*, Sura 5, verse 117)

- iv. “From the above explanations the fact has come to the fore as to how the Holy Quran has refuted this false belief of the Jews and the Christians that Jesus was crucified. As to the Christian belief that he was raised up to heaven alive, this does not find support in the Quran either. On the other hand, it contains evidence which makes it clear that, like other prophets, he completed his span of life and died.”

(*Shu‘la Mastur*, p. 72)

- v. “The fact is that the concept of Jesus being raised up to heaven alive is a later invention of the Christian religion. The Jews gave currency to the idea — and it seemed to be so on the face of it — that they had killed Jesus upon the cross. The disciples knew that this was not true, but for reasons of expediency they could not contradict it.”

(*ibid.*, p. 83)

**19. Maulana Sayyid Abdud-Da’im Jalali** writes:

“It is recorded in an authentic hadith that the Holy Prophet Muhammad stated: ‘Had Moses or Jesus been alive, they would have had to follow me’.”

(*Tafsir Bayan as-Subhan*, on Part 3, p. 349)

**20. Abu Zafar Nazish Rizvi** wrote a poem entitled *Dastan-e Haram*, a verse of which says of the Holy Prophet Muhammad’s demise:

“After Moses and Jesus, from the world  
Did the honoured Messenger depart to  
eternity.”

(Newspaper *Azad*, 12 October 1951)

**21. Lt.-Colonel Khwaja Abdur Rashid** writes:

“As the Ulama of Islam, among whom were many converts from the *Ahl al-Kitab*, had raised Jesus to heaven, the difficulty then arose for the Quranic commentators as to how

he should be brought back in order to die his natural death. Hence, to prove this 'return to earth', he was presented as a sign of the Judgment Day. Iqbal grasped the reality, and so it was that he said:

'Look for the descent of God upon the minaret of your own heart, And give up waiting even for the Mahdi or Jesus.'

(Weekly *Chatan*, 1st December 1958, p. 7)

**22. Maulvi Muhammad Ali of Jalandhar** writes:

"One day I was sitting in a mosque in Multan, where a Mirza'i was having an argument with a Maulvi Sahib. The Mirza'i kept on repeating that Jesus had died, and the Maulvi Sahib would shake his head in denial. Fifteen or twenty minutes elapsed in this argument. I came and sat with them, and said to the Mirza'i: Please excuse the Maulvi Sahib, and talk to me instead. He at once said: Jesus has died. I raised my hands and said: Let us pray that God grants him paradise."

(Newspaper *Azad*, Lahore, 25 January 1952, p. 1)

**23. Professor Ilyas Barnee**, the author of the famous anti-Ahmadiyya book *Qadiani Mazhab*, states in his book *Islam*:

"As to the second point, how Christ was raised up to God, it is further explained as below: 'Behold! God said, O Jesus! I will take thy soul (make thee die) and raise thee to Myself and clear thee (of falsehoods of those who blaspheme that they crucified thee, Jesus is cleared by the Quran)' — section 6 of sura III *Al-e Imran*. 'And I (Christ) was a witness over them (Christians) whilst I dwelt amongst them, (but) when Thou took my soul (made me die) Thou wast the watcher over them and Thou art a witness to all things' — Section 16 of Sura V *Ma'ida*. 'So peace is on me (said Christ) the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life again (at resurrection)' — Section 2 of Sura XIX *Maryam*."

(Vide *Our Movement*, by Mr. Naseem Saifi, p. 71)

**24. Khwaja Ibadullah Akhtar**, B.A., of Amritsar expresses his view as follows:

- i. "We do not wish to say any more on this issue than that Jesus was certainly nailed to the

cross. However, he did not die on the cross, nor could have any man died on the cross in such a short period. But he fell into such a state of unconsciousness as to make people suspect that he had died. In that state of unconsciousness he was taken down from the cross, and being thought to be dead, placed in a tomb a sketch of which we have given in this book. When he became conscious, he left the tomb by himself."

(*Damishq*, p. 54, published by the Steam Press, Amritsar, India, 1911)

- ii. "The Christian religion is so bound up with the person of Jesus that if the Christians were to believe that Jesus has died this religion would also be dead. Thus this religion is based upon the person of Jesus." (*ibid.*, p. 50)

**25. The editor of the monthly *Balagh al-Quran*, Lahore**, writes:

"Just as un-Quranic ideas have made the birth of Jesus a riddle, so it is also said about his death that he has been living in the fourth heaven for two thousand years, that he shall return, marry, have children, and then die. The argument for his being taken up to heaven is based upon the words *Bal rafa'a-hu Allahu ilai-hi*, the meaning of which we have explained on page 29, that God caused him to migrate (*hijra*) to Himself, in accordance with His law for all the prophets. For if *raf'* be taken to mean *lifted up to heaven*, then it would have to be believed that the prophet Idris too is alive and living in a high place, as God has said of him: *wa rafa'na-hu makan-an 'aliyyan* (19:57) — 'We raised him to a high place'. Obviously, just as the word *rafa'na-hu* is used about Idris, the meaning of *rafa'a-hu Allahu ilai-hi* according to the context is to raise in status by migration (*hijra*), not raise up to the sky.

Now let us consider whether Jesus is alive or dead. For this, the following two verses of the Quran should be examined: 'Muhammad is only a messenger of Allah; many messengers before him had passed away' (3:144); 'The Messiah, son of Mary, is only a messenger of Allah; many messengers before him had passed away' (5:75). Both verses contain the expression: 'Messengers before him had passed away' (*qad khalat min qabli-hi-r-*

*rusul*). According to this, if a messenger before Jesus were alive then it could be believed that a messenger before the Holy Prophet Muhammad, i.e. Jesus, was also alive. But if, according to this expression, no messenger before Jesus himself can be believed to be alive, then it should be remembered that Jesus too, as a messenger before the Holy Prophet Muhammad, according to 'messengers before him had passed away', is included amongst these prophets and has died. And as, by the clear testimony of the Quran and in accordance with the laws of nature, Jesus has died, neither is the view correct that he went up to the fourth heaven nor can the idea of his return arise.

The following verse is also adduced to prove that Jesus is alive: *Qul fa-man yamliku min Allahi shai'-an in arada an yuhlika al-masiha ibna Maryama wa umma-hu wa man fil ardi jami'-an* (5:17). Its usual translation runs: 'Say (O Prophet): Who is it that can interfere in Allah's purpose if He wishes to destroy the Messiah, his mother, and all the creatures on earth'. If, on the basis of this usual translation, Jesus is believed to be still alive, his mother would also have to be believed to be alive because after *masih* (Messiah) occur the words *umma-hu* (his mother). However, as Mary is accepted as having died in accordance with the Divine law 'every soul must taste death', Jesus too must be considered dead according to this law. Moreover, since according to the Quranic verdict 'Muhammad is only a messenger, messengers before him had passed away', Jesus passed away before Holy Prophet Muhammad, i.e., he died like the other prophets, the verse under discussion must be translated according to the rule that in Arabic the past may be referred to using the imperfect [i.e. present or future] tense. Remembering also that the *wa* (and) in *umma-hu wa man fil ard* (his mother and all the creatures on earth) indicates companionship, the correct significance of this verse, corresponding to the laws of nature, is this: 'Say (O Prophet): Who is it that can interfere in Allah's purpose if He wishes to destroy, along with the Messiah and his mother, all the creatures on earth'.

"In this Quranic verse it is correct to take the imperfect tense as referring to the past, just as in the following verse about the history of Joseph the imperfect tense must be taken to refer to the past: 'And thus did We give to Joseph power in the land — he *had* mastery (*yatabawwa'u*) in it wherever he *liked* (*yasha'u*)'. In this verse the two verbs *yatabawwa'u* and *yasha'u* are in the imperfect, but they cannot be translated except in the past tense. To say about the deceased Joseph that 'he *has* mastery in it wherever he *likes*' is absolutely wrong.

Jesus' death in his own words — On the Day of Judgment God will ask Jesus: 'Did you tell people to take you and your mother as gods besides Allah'? He shall reply: 'Certainly not! So long as I was among them I watched over them, and did not let them make any such idolatrous utterance. However, when You caused me to die, You were the watcher over them'. Here the words 'when You caused me to die' convey that it was after he died that his people made him and his mother gods. This topic is explained in *Sura Ma'ida*, verses 116 and 117. The words of the verse are: *falamma tawaffaitani kunta anta al-raqiba 'alai-him* — 'when You caused me to die, You were the watcher over them'. Since it is proved from the Holy Quran that Jesus and Mary were taken to be gods after the death of Jesus, it follows from this that he has died."

(Monthly *Balagh al-Quran*, December 1963, p. 32, published by the *Idara Balagh al-Quran*, Samanabad, Lahore)

### Conclusion

In this book we have put forward passages from the Holy Quran, Sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*ahadith*), the unanimous verdict (*ijma*) of the Companions, observations of the Righteous Caliphs and other Companions, conclusions of the great Imams and early elders of Islam, and the writings of modern Muslim scholars, Arab and non-Arab, of all schools of thought. It is hoped that all this evidence will satisfactorily settle the issue of Jesus' death, leaving no scope for any doubt or query in the reader's mind.

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