

“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

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May – June 1998

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*Presents
Islam as:*
**PEACEFUL
TOLERANT
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***Lessons in the Quran — Start of Chapter 2,
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◆ *Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha’at Islam Lahore Inc., U.S.A.* ◆
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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-ur-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.

Sacrifice of Abraham

*Id-ul-Adha address at Darus Salaam,
London, 7 April 1998*

by the Editor

“And when Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House (praying): Our Lord, accept from us; surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing. Our Lord, and make us both submissive to Thee, and raise from our offspring a nation submissive to Thee, and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us mercifully; surely Thou art the Oft-returning to mercy, the Merciful. Our Lord, and raise up in them a Messenger from among them who shall recite to them Thy messages and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them. Surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.”
(The Holy Quran, 2:127–129)

The festival we are commemorating today — *Id-ul-Adha* — marks the event of the readiness of Abraham even to sacrifice his son Ishmael when Abraham thought that he had been commanded by God to sacrifice him.

The first question which comes to mind is: Why should Muslims, the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, be required to mark this event, in the life of another prophet Abraham? Why doesn't Islam require instead the commemoration of some event in the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

The answer is that this shows the broad approach and attitude of Islam. It is giving honour to a man who is a revered religious figure of at least two other religions — Judaism and Christianity — and some scholars believe that the Hindu sacred figure Brahma mentioned in their scriptures is the same as Abraham, so that he is respected by a vast mass of humanity.

Islam does *not* teach that God's true guidance to mankind was given *for the first time* through the Prophet Muhammad, and that the religions which existed before his time were false. On the contrary, it teaches that God had been raising His true messengers before the Prophet Muhammad in all nations. Many of these prophets and their stories are related in the Quran. Their examples are also an inspiration for Muslims. The Prophet Muhammad's life showed a

reflection of the qualities of all these prophets, so that a Jew can see Moses in the Holy Prophet Muhammad, a Christian can see Jesus, and even a Buddhist can see Buddha in the life of the Prophet Muhammad.

The Prophet Muhammad came to revive the same fundamental teachings as all these prophets had been giving. The followers of earlier religions had drifted away from the original teachings given to them by their prophets, and the Prophet Muhammad came to remind them of those original teachings.

Significance of Abraham

It is here that Abraham becomes significant. From his son Isaac there grew the nation of Israel and the Jewish religion. Later, after the coming of Jesus in the nation of Israel, the Christian religion developed. Yet these two religions came to hold opposite and contradictory beliefs, as below:

<i>Jewish religion</i>	<i>Christian religion</i>
1. Belief in One God.	1. Belief in Trinity.
2. Following the Law leads to salvation.	2. The Law is a curse. Only belief in atonement leads to salvation.
3. Only outward forms and rituals of worship are of importance.	3. Only the spirit of religion is important, the form does not matter.

How could religions arising from one origin hold such opposite beliefs?

Islam gave its judgment on these differences. It said that this divergence was a result of a departure, by both Jews and Christians, from the simple and basic principles of religion taught by Abraham. The Jews made the law too complicated and elaborate, and the Christians made the beliefs too complicated.

The religion taught by Abraham was as follows: belief in One God, and devotion to and love for Him in one's practical deeds. The Christians forgot the belief and the Jews forgot the teachings about deeds.

Ishmael and the Arab nation

Abraham had another, older son, Ishmael. Through a command from God, Abraham settled him along with his mother Hagar in the utter wilderness where there now flourishes the city of Makka. God promised Abraham that from Ishmael would grow another nation, and in the distant future when the followers of Abraham through Isaac had turned away from his true

teachings, a man would be raised among the nation of Ishmael who would restore those teachings to their original form.

In fact, in that nation which grew up from Ishmael in the peninsula of Arabia, no prophets arose till that Promised Prophet, while in all nations of the world numerous prophets came, such as Moses, David, Jesus, Buddha etc. One deep wisdom in this was that the nation in which the Last Prophet arose, to judge between all the various religions prevailing in the world, that nation had no prophets or religious traditions of its own, so that that Last Prophet could be a fair and impartial judge of all the earlier religions. If there had been prophets among the Arabs before the Prophet Muhammad, as among the Israelites, then he would be considered biased in favour of his ancestral religion. And his followers would naturally have revered those Arab prophets as being their own, and held them above the prophets of other nations. But as it is, all the prophets before the Prophet Muhammad whom the Muslims respect and revere belong to other nations, so much so that the Muslims believe in and honour the prophets of nations with whom they have been at war in modern times.

Incident of sacrifice

Turning to Abraham's act of sacrifice that we are commemorating, the Holy Quran gives the following account:

“(Abraham prayed:) My Lord, grant me a doer of good deeds. So We gave him the good news of a forbearing son. But when he became of age to work with him, he said: O my son, I have seen in a dream that I should sacrifice you; so consider what is your view. He said: O my father, do as you are commanded; if Allah please you will find me patient. So when they had both submitted and he had thrown him down upon his forehead, and We called out to him saying, O Abraham, you have indeed fulfilled the vision. Thus do We reward the doers of good. Surely this is a manifest trial. And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.” (37:100–107)

The main points of this incident are as follows:

1. It was after much prayer that Abraham at last had a child, and that too in old age.
2. But he was then commanded to settle the infant and his mother in the wilderness of Arabia, which he immediately did.
3. Now when Ishmael reached his teens, Abraham saw in a dream that he was sacrificing him.
4. His attachment to his son was not only of love, but the son was of economic value as well. He could work and Abraham was old.
5. As human sacrifice was a common practice, although of course it was wrong and barbaric and not sanctioned by any teaching from God, Abraham thought that the dream was a command to sacrifice his son literally.
6. Abraham put it to Ishmael: What is your view? This teaches us that parents should seek their children's opinion about their lives. Abraham was not forcing this sacrifice upon Ishmael; the son's willingness was a part of this act of sacrifice. The Quran says: “So when they *both* submitted”; it was a submission of both of them.
7. But then God stopped them from going further and said that Abraham had already fulfilled the vision. He had already done the real sacrifice required by settling his son in the desert.
8. To commemorate this event, the practice of sacrificing an animal was instituted as a symbol.

Concept of sacrifice

This event also taught that human sacrifice was a wrongful practice. This practice prevailed very widely in the ancient world among most nations. Indeed, it continued among certain Hindu castes till modern times and had to be banned by law. Usually, a child was sacrificed physically in the belief that the offering would please certain gods.

Leaving aside the extreme of human sacrifice, the practice of sacrificing something such as an animal or burning some foodstuff such as butter or *ghee*, as a gift to certain gods, is an almost universal practice. It is believed that you make some god happy by giving him a gift, just as you make a person happy by a gift, so that the god would return the favour in some way.

But the Quran presented the true concept of sacrifice. It is that God does not need anything from man. The Quran says:

“He feeds and is not fed” (6:14),

“I (God) desire no sustenance from them, nor do I desire that they should feed Me.” (51:57)

What God wants is for you to sacrifice your lower and material desires for a higher purpose. We all want to have physical comforts and to satisfy our material desires, but God tells us that for our moral and

spiritual progress, for the betterment of our character, and to make us real human beings, there are times when we must sacrifice, willingly and voluntarily, some of our material possessions for a good cause.

The sacrifice of the animal that is carried out is an expression of our willingness to sacrifice our own animal desires. The Quran clearly says that it is not the flesh nor the blood of the animal that reaches God, but the dutifulness on your part. The sacrifice is accepted if it leads you to be more dutiful, to make a sacrifice of your own self and not of just the animal.

Christianity's highest sacrifice

The concept of sacrifice is so universal that we will see in just a few days another commemoration of what is held to be a great sacrifice for mankind. Christians will be marking at Easter what they believe to be the sacrifice by God Himself of His son, Jesus. It is believed that God sacrificed His son on the cross to make him suffer punishment for all the sins of mankind.

However, sacrifice is an act which cannot possibly be attributed to God, but can only be done by man. For, sacrifice means that you lose something which you possessed so that you then have to undergo hardship and loss because of that deprivation. But as God is all-powerful, how can He be said to make a sacrifice? He cannot possibly suffer a loss because He has the power to have anything. To give an analogy, suppose that a man could print as much money as he liked. Then no matter how much he gives in charity, even if it is billions, it is not a sacrifice.

Secondly, that sacrifice on the cross is claimed to take away the sins of mankind by paying the penalty for all the sins ever committed. But that sacrifice has not stopped, nor can it stop, people from sinning. In contrast, it is the concept of sacrifice as presented by Islam — the sacrifice by a person of his lower desires — that can take away sin by training people to abstain from wrongdoing.

Our sacrifice

Finally, to commemorate Abraham's sacrifice, we should make some real sacrifice of our desires and our possessions. Abraham made his sacrifice for the cause of religion, so that a nation be raised in the barren land of Arabia among whom the great Last Prophet would come. Our Movement, the Ahmadiyya Movement, provides us also with the opportunity to make sacrifices for the cause of religion.

From the beginning of our Movement till today, it has had in it people who made the most tremendous

sacrifices, much beyond their apparent capacities. They made sacrifices of their whole lives, and of properties, and the Movement today is the fruit of those sacrifices, doing the work of propagating the true picture of Islam which the world does not know.

In two days' time, it will be twelve years exactly since a man — Muhammad Anwar — lost his life who used to stand at this very pulpit and address you. He was killed for no reason except that he was working for this Movement. It is only when we have among us such people who are willing to accept these risks, even putting their lives in jeopardy, that this Movement can survive and advance.

Besides such examples of the ultimate sacrifice, there are other lesser sacrifices of money for this cause. However little you give, it is still a sacrifice on your part. The degree of sacrifice depends on how much you needed or wanted that money for some material end of your own, but disregarding your own desires you gave it for this noble cause. For one person, one pound may be a greater sacrifice than one thousand pounds is for another person. It is a matter only between that person and God.

May Allah enable us all to sacrifice in His way to the best of our ability! ■

Lessons in the Quran – 8

*Translation of Mr. N.A. Faruqui's book
Mu'ārif-ul-Qur'ān*

Translated by Dr. Mohammad Ahmad, Ohio

Al-Baqarah (The Cow)

“I, Allah, am the best Knower. This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who keep their duty.” 2:1–2.

Answer to the prayer of *Al-Fatihah*

These are the first two verses of *Surah al-Baqarah* (Chapter *The Cow*). In a way this is the beginning of the Holy Quran. In another place, the Holy Quran and *Al-Fatihah* have been described thus:

“And certainly We have given thee seven oft-repeated (verses) and the grand Quran” (15:87).

There is a saying of the Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him, that these frequently repeated verses are those of *Al-Fatihah*. Besides other occasions every Muslim recites the *Al-Fatihah* at least thirty times in his five daily prayers. It is an essential component of every *rakat* (unit) of these prayers. The Holy Prophet himself called *Al-Fatihah* as the *Umm-ul-Kitab*, i.e., the Basis of the Book, because it contains the whole of the Quran in a nutshell. This essence of the Holy Quran was thus extracted and placed at the very beginning of the Holy Quran, just like a diamond crafted on top of a gold ring. Although a part of the ring, it still appears distinct from it. This also manifests the grandeur of *Al-Fatihah*, as the Holy Quran was revealed in reply to the prayer for guidance towards the right path in it. Thus in the verses under discussion today, we are told that the guidance you had asked for, has been provided by Allah in this Book.

Lessons to be learned from previous nations

Also in *Al-Fatihah* Divine guidance on the ‘path of those upon whom favors are bestowed,’ is requested, and ‘not of those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor those who go astray.’ The lesson implied by obligating the repetition of these verses in the daily prayers is that some nations upon whom favors were bestowed, became subject to the wrath of Allah on account of their misdeeds, and went astray after being guided. The Muslims are, therefore, given a constant reminder not to follow the path of these nations. Thus, in *Al-Baqarah*, after referring to the benevolence of a great blessing like the Holy Quran, and its many superb lessons of guidance, mention is made of the nation of Israel. This was the nation upon whom were bestowed both spiritual and worldly blessings in great abundance and at an unprecedented scale. A nation which had been in bondage for centuries, and persecuted by the Egyptians, was led to freedom by Allah sending prophets Moses and Aaron for this purpose. Towards the end, this persecution had increased to such an extent that by the command of the Pharaoh, the female progeny of the Israelites were allowed to survive, while the male offspring were killed. The intent of the plan was to destroy this nation while they put up with dishonor and degradation of their young women. When Pharaoh pursued the Israelites with his forces, Allah manifested His supreme power by safely delivering the Israelites through the falling ocean tide, and destroying the mighty army of Pharaoh with the rising ocean currents. The Israelites witnessed this great manifestation with their own eyes. Before this also, during

their period of slavery, this nation had seen great signs of Divine power. These are mentioned further on in *Al-Baqarah*.

Significance of the name *Al-Baqarah* (The Cow)

Despite these powerful signs and blessings, the Israelite nation did not recognize the Divine Being, and were ungrateful. They secretly continued to worship the cow which they had observed the Egyptians doing. At first they worshipped clandestinely a live cow which was a fine looking and healthy animal, but when this was sacrificed by Allah’s command, they made a calf out of gold and silver and started worshipping it. The Holy Quran says:

“And they were made to imbibe (the love of) the calf into their hearts on account of their disbelief”(2:93).

The point to note in this connection is that the cow they worshipped first, was an animal, and the subsequent one was an object of gold and silver. Today in Europe and America, in fact in most areas of the world which follow their lead, the worship of God has been discarded in favor of the animal within oneself, i.e., one’s base passions and animal desires.

Worship (*ibadat*), as I have previously explained in my commentary of *Al-Fatihah*, means service with humility and obedience of Allah. The place of the love of the Divine Being in our hearts has been taken over by the love of gold and silver, the search and acquirement of which has become the purpose of life today. The purpose of man’s creation on earth, as I have already discussed in my commentary on *Al-Fatihah*, is to search for and establish a relationship with God. Therefore, even today, the cow representing our animal desires, and the golden calf our lust for material wealth, is the god that many worship. In this respect, this topic and subject is as relevant today as it was in the description of the disbelief of the Children of Israel (*Bani-Israil*).

I have made these comments because most people consider this relevant only to the polytheistic beliefs of the Israelites, and do not understand its implications for the modern age. Moses liberated his nation from centuries of Egyptian political dominance, however, their slave mentality persisted, resulting in their worship of an animal, and gold and silver representing the gods of their former masters. Similarly today, although the political bondage of the European powers has diminished, their psychological dominance persists. The whole world thus follows their lead in

worshipping either their own animal desires, or making the pursuit of material wealth, rather than love of the Divine Being, as the sole objective of their lives. This is true also in case of the Muslims, amongst whom individuals influenced by Western thinking follow their low desires and make the love of gold and silver rather than love of God, as the purpose of their existence. No other subject matter can therefore be of greater importance today. I have elaborated this point for you so that you can perceive the excellence of the Holy Quran. It made us aware of these truths fourteen hundred years ago which can be applied towards every age.

Allah is the Author of this Book

Let us now consider the verses which mark the beginning of the *Surah Al-Baqarah*.

Alif Lam Meem

and letters like these precede twenty-nine chapters of the Holy Quran. These are called the *huruf muqatta'at* or letters that are read separately, i.e., abbreviations. For example, in this context these letters are not joined together and read as *ALM*, but are read separately as *Alif, Lam, Meem*. Most people do not interpret these letters, although their meaning has been reported by the honorable Companions, and it is most likely that they came to know of this from the Holy Prophet. Such letters, however, had been used previously in the Arabic language and their meaning in the appropriate context was understood. In other languages such as English, similar usage of letters exists, most frequently used of which is perhaps the abbreviation O.K. meaning it is quite all right or correct. Some commentators have misinterpreted these as being the names of the scribes who wrote copies of the Holy Quran. They do not give thought to the fact that these letters being part of verses of the Holy Quran have always been enumerated with these verses, and are therefore a part of the Holy Quran. They have always been read in the prayers or recited otherwise as part of the Holy Quran. If the names of the scribes, after being written down, have become part of the Holy Quran, then what guarantee is there that the rest of the Holy Quran is safe from interpolation? (I seek the refuge of Allah from saying so). This would be quite contrary to the Quranic verse:

“Surely We have revealed the Reminder, and surely We are its Guardian.” (15:9)

Hadith (Sayings of the Holy Prophet) tell us that the Holy Prophet and his Companions used to read these letters from the very beginning while reciting the Holy

Quran. Were they then reciting the abbreviated names of the scribes as part of the word of God? (I seek the protection of Allah).

Those who have seen royal decrees know that in the beginning of every such document is the name and title of the emperor. These *muqatta'at* or abbreviations used in the Holy Quran indicate to us the titles or attributes of Allah, the greatest Emperor of all. The attributes they refer to have a deep and meaningful connection with the subject matter of the verse or chapter in which they occur. For example, Ibn Abbas, a Companion of the Holy Prophet, has narrated:

Ana Allah a'lam

(I, Allah, am the best Knower)

as the interpretation of *Alif-Lam-Meem*. The first letter *Alif* was taken from the word *Ana* (I), letter *Lam* was taken as the second letter from *Allah* and the last letter *Meem* was taken from the Arabic word *A'lam* (am the best Knower). Thus the abbreviation *Alif-Lam-Meem* stands for “I, Allah, am the best Knower,” which is a most elegant and appropriate explanation for the context.

The Book of Guidance

The reason for the verse, “I, Allah, am the best Knower,” is further elucidated by the words that follow. Allah replies, “This (here is the) Book,” in response to the guidance asked for by mankind in *Al-Fatihah* in the form of the prayer, “Guide us on the right path.” The One most capable of giving guidance is the One Who possesses the greatest amount of knowledge. Thus when somebody falls ill, we seek the advice and direction from a physician regarding what kind of medication to dispense, and what form of dietary precautions to take. This is because the doctor has more knowledge than us in this matter. If the doctor needs further consultation in this matter he would refer us to a specialist, who would have greater expertise in that field.

Who possesses greater knowledge than Allah, the Creator of the universe? All knowledge, scientific, or otherwise, is based upon discovering the laws of the Creator, and the study of His creation. Thus, Allah is the Source of all such knowledge. Allah created man and within him His spirit, He also created angels and the devil (*shaitan*). We shall, if Allah please, study the great purpose behind this creation in the study of the fourth section (*ruku*) of this Chapter *Al-Baqarah*. Who possesses greater knowledge than Allah regarding the purpose of man's creation? What is the path he needs

to follow in order to fulfill the objective of this life and the life Hereafter (of which only Allah has knowledge)? What are the apparent and hidden dangers which one needs to avoid? In the matter of guiding mankind what could be a better and more appropriate statement than this, that Allah Who possesses the greatest degree of knowledge, including knowledge of the unseen known only to Him, is the One most capable of giving such direction.

The words *Dha-li-kal-Kitabu* (This Book) mean this Holy Quran is that book of direction. The Holy Quran from the very beginning has been called ‘The Book,’ indicating it will be written down and preserved in this form in this world. The Holy Quran is the only scripture which was written down as it was being revealed. I shall discuss this in the next lesson.

The Death of Jesus – 2

by Maulana Hafiz Sher Mohammad

Part 1: Evidence of the Holy Quran

Fourth Evidence: Death of all Prophets

1. “The Messiah, son of Mary, was only a messenger; messengers before him had indeed passed away.” (5:75)
2. “And Muhammad is only a messenger — messengers have already passed away before him. If, then, he dies or is killed, will you turn back upon your heels?” (3:143)

The second verse here explains the first one. Both verses are similarly worded, the first referring to Jesus, and the second to the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The Quran’s verdict here is very clear for a truth-seeker. The first verse explicitly states that all prophets before Jesus had died — and all Muslims accept this. In the second verse, the same words are used to state that all prophets before the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him) had died. In fact, since no prophet arose between Jesus and the Holy Prophet, the second verse could only have been revealed specifically to show that Jesus had died. Classical works of Arabic grammar tell us that, owing to the prefix *al* (*the*), the word *messengers* (*al-rusul*, lit. “the messengers”) in the above two verses really means *all messengers* (see *Bahr al-Muḥīṭ*, vol. 3, p. 68).

Meaning of *khalā*

It should be remembered that the word *khalā* (translated above as “passed away”) in the past tense without a particle, when used about human beings, refers to their death (see *Lisān al-‘Arab* and *Aqrab al-Mawārad*). In the Quran too, whenever the words *qad khalat* without the particle *ilā* are used about any persons, the meaning is that they passed away and died, and will not return to this world. For instance:

1. “Those are a people that have passed away (*qad khalat*).” (2:134)
2. “...before which other nations have passed away (*qad khalat*).” (13:30)
3. “...among nations that have passed away (*qad khalat*) before them.” (46:18)
4. “Such has been the way of Allah with those who have passed away (*khalat*) before.” (33:38)

In interpreting the two verses about all prophets before Jesus and the Holy Prophet (may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him) having passed away, the commentators have generally adopted the same meaning:

“The Holy Prophet would leave the world as had done previous prophets, by natural death or murder.” (*Qanwā ‘ala Baiḍāwī*, vol. 3, p.124)

In fact, the above verse about the Holy Prophet (3:143) itself clarifies the meaning of *khalā* (passing away of all previous prophets) by using the words “if he dies or is killed” with regard to him. Obviously, the “passing away” of all previous prophets must also be one or other of “dying” or “being killed”.

Fifth Evidence: All “gods” are dead

All those who are taken to be gods besides the One God are described by the Quran as “dead”:

“And those whom they call on besides Allah created nothing, while they are themselves created. Dead (are they), not living. And they know not when they will be raised.” (16:20-21)

And as to Jesus being taken for a god, the Quran itself bears witness:

“Certainly they disbelieve who say: ‘Allah, He is the Messiah, son of Mary’.” (5:72)

These verses prove conclusively that Jesus, who is taken to be ‘god’ by a large section of mankind and is

called by them as “Lord Jesus”, must have been dead when these verses were revealed. Otherwise, this exception would have been mentioned here.

After *amwāt* — “Dead (are they)” — the words *ghairu ahyā’in* — “not living” — clarify the matter absolutely, and re-affirm the death of these “gods”.

Sixth Evidence: Jesus’ second coming contradicts Finality of Prophethood

Jesus’ coming again into this world would infringe the principle of the Finality of Prophethood because the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him) is the last and final prophet according to that principle. The Quran says:

“Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the prophets.” (33:40)

The Holy Prophet’s being the last prophet (*Khātam an-nabiyyin*) necessitates that after him there should not appear any prophet, neither a new one nor a former one. Just as the coming of a fresh prophet would infringe the Finality of Prophethood, so would the appearance of a former prophet, because the Last Prophet is the one who appears after all other prophets. If Jesus comes after the Holy Prophet, he (Jesus) would be the Last Prophet, the *Khātam an-nabiyyin*.

It is wrong to argue that, in his supposed second coming, Jesus would not be a prophet (*nabī*). For the Quran says:

“Jesus said: I am a servant of God: He has given me the Book and made me a prophet, and made me blessed wherever I may be.” (19:30-31)

So, were he to return to this world he would still be a prophet. His coming without prophethood would be meaningless, for the task of leadership of the Muslims (*Imāmah*) and successorship to the Holy Prophet (*Khilāfah*) could be performed by a member of the Muslim community. Hence it stands proved that Jesus died, as did all other prophets, and that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him) is the Last Prophet.

Seventh Evidence: Holy Quran specifically mentions Jesus’ death

Having explained so many general principles on the subject of life and death, it was not necessary that the Holy Quran should speak specifically of the death of Jesus. Nevertheless, Almighty God has particularly

mentioned Jesus’ death in the Quran. When the Jews succeeded in their plans to have Jesus sentenced to crucifixion, he prayed to God to be delivered from this fate, and was answered by Him thus :

“O Jesus, I will cause you to die, and exalt you to My presence, and clear you of those who disbelieve and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve till the day of Judgment.” (3:54)

Here God made with Jesus four promises:

1. “Cause you to die” (*tawaffā*), i.e., Jesus would not be killed by the Jews, but would die a natural death.
2. “Exalt you in My presence” (*raf’a*), i.e., he would not be crucified, which the Jews sought to do to prove him accursed, but rather he would receive Divine nearness. In fact, *raf’a* is the opposite of *waq’a*, the latter meaning disgrace and the former meaning honouring.
3. “Clear you of those who disbelieve” (*taḥīr*), i.e., he would be cleared of the Jews’ allegations against him, as he was by the Holy Prophet Muhammad.
4. “Make those who follow you above those who disbelieve till the day of Judgement”, i.e. his followers would forever have the upper hand over his rejectors.

The above verse proves that Jesus has died, for *raf’a* (exaltation to God’s presence) is attained only after death when all the material veils have been removed. Every righteous person is granted *raf’a* to God after his death. The Holy Prophet has said:

“When a believer nears death, angels come to him. So if he is righteous, they say: ‘O pure soul! leave, you were in a pure body’ ... So that pure soul comes out, then they take it to the heavens and its gates are opened for it.” (*Mishkāṭ*).

Hence, whenever a righteous individual dies, the angels take his *soul* up to heaven. The very same happened in Jesus’ case, so that after his death it was his *soul* that was raised to heaven, and he joined the ranks of the righteous among the dead.

Thus God fulfilled all the above promises in order: He rescued Jesus from the hands of the Jews, and eventually granted him a natural death; after his death, God honoured his soul with Divine nearness; He cleared him of the Jews’ allegations against him

through the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him) and He gave Jesus' followers the upper hand over his rejectors.

Eight Evidence: Christians went astray after Jesus' death

Jesus' statement, on the Day of Judgment, that his people made him a "god" *after* his death, is recorded in the Holy Quran as follows:

"And when God will say: 'O Jesus, did you say to men, Take me and my mother for two gods besides God?' He will reply: 'Glory be to Thee! it was not for me to say what I had no right to say. If I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it. Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I know not what is in Thy mind. Surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen. I said to them naught save as Thou didst command me: Serve God, my Lord and your Lord; *and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when Thou didst cause me to die Thou wast the Watcher over them. And Thou art Witness of all things*.'" (5:116, 117)

This extract proves the following:

1. Jesus shall deny preaching the erroneous present-day Christian doctrine of his divinity;
2. He shall confirm the teaching he actually gave to his people;
3. So long as Jesus was among his people, his followers held correct beliefs;
4. It was after Jesus' *tawaffā* (translated above as 'Thou didst cause me to die') that their beliefs became corrupted.

Meaning of *tawaffā*

Lexicons of Arabic tell us that *tawaffā Allāhu fulān-an*, i.e., 'God did the act of *tawaffā* to such a one', means that God took his soul and caused him to die. This is the meaning given in *Tāj al-'urūs*, *Al-Qāmūs*, *Şurāḥ*, *Asās al-Balāghah*, *Al-Şiḥaḥ* and *Kullyāt abi-l-Baqā*.

In the above verse, Jesus speaks of two distinct periods of time. The first one is mentioned in the words "so long as I was among them", and the second one when only "Thou wast the Watcher over them"; 'them' being Jesus' people, the Christians. The first period (that of Jesus' presence among his people) changed into the second period (that of only God, not

Jesus, being their watcher) as a result of *tawaffaitanī* or "when Thou didst cause me (Jesus) to die".

Now according to the above verse, the Christians held right beliefs in the first period, and wrong views in the second. As the Quran tells us repeatedly, and as all Muslims believe, Christian beliefs had become corrupted (or, in other words, the second period had begun) by the time of the advent of the Holy Prophet. So Jesus was dead by that time, as the second period was to come after *tawaffaitanī* or the death of Jesus.

Summary

According to the Holy Quran, Jesus holds no more than the following three positions:

1. He is a mortal from among mortals;
2. He is a prophet of God from among the prophets;
3. He is one of those who is worshipped as god by some people.

The Jews believe him to be an ordinary mortal, while the Christians worship him. The Muslims accept him as one of God's prophets. The Quran has proved Jesus to be dead with respect to each one of the above three positions.

1. Jesus as an ordinary mortal:

The Quran states:

"We have not made before thee (O Muhammad) any mortal to abide for ever. If you die, will they (the opponents) abide?" (21:34)

This verse shows that the human body is never immune from change, and that it must live and die here in this world. As Jesus too was human, he must be subject to the laws God has established for men. Therefore, under the Quranic law "every soul must taste of death", he has died.

2. Jesus as a prophet:

"And Muhammad is only a messenger — messengers have already passed away before him." (3:143)

This verse proves the death of *all* previous messengers by the time of its revelation. Jesus was thus dead by that time.

3. Jesus as a supposed Deity:

As regards all those who are taken for gods besides Allah, the Quran tells us:

“Dead (are they), not living. And they know not when they will be raised.” (16:21)

It is universally known, and confirmed by the Quran, that Christians believe Jesus to be divine and call to him in their prayers. So, according to the above verse, Jesus is dead and “will not answer them till the day of Judgment.”

Hence it is fully and conclusively proved that Jesus died long ago, and belief in his continued life is against the clearest teachings of the Holy Quran. ■

The age of deception

by Dr. Zainib Ahmad, U.S.A.

In connection with the chapter *Al-Kahf* or ‘The Cave’ of the Holy Quran, the Holy Prophet, may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him, is reported to have said:

“He who remembers the first ten verses of the chapter entitled ‘The Cave’ is protected from the tribulation of the *Dajjal* (Anti-Christ).” (*Sahih Muslim*)

In another report the last ten verses of ‘The Cave’ are mentioned instead of the first ten (*Abu Dawud*). A study of these verses shows that they draw a picture of the Christian nations, their origin and progress to their present state. The first and the last ten verses actually are a summary of the entire Chapter. In the present age when the *Dajjal* or Antichrist is on the rampage and the materialistic outlook of life is the *in* thing, these enlightening verses of the Holy Quran serve as a beacon of light to guide us and save us from the worst of evils, the evil and deception of the *Dajjal*, for the very word *dajjal* indicates deception, and the name has been so given because the *Dajjal* deceives by subtle means and covers truth with falsehood.

Allah, the most High, exhorts mankind in this chapter to see through the attractions of this world, for He says:

“Surely We have made whatever is in the earth an embellishment for it, so that We may try which of them is best in works.” (18:7)

Further on in the same Chapter we are warned from the fate of those who did not bear in mind the real objective of ‘whatever is in this earth’ and who lost

their souls in pursuit of the vanities of life. It is said with regard to them:

“Say: Shall We inform you who are the greatest losers in respect of deeds?” (18:103)

Praise be to Allah! How clear are the prophecies and the warnings of the Holy Quran. It can only be Allah, the Knowing, the Wise, Who informs of the real nature of the deeds and actions of the most powerful nations of the world, who it seems have dominated the world and who are apparently the leaders, the rulers, the winners in all worldly affairs; it is only Allah Who informs that they are *not* winners; they are the losers and the ‘greatest losers’. Furthermore, Allah has given us the necessary guidance to enable us to be saved from the greatest menace of the last age.

Apart from this clear warning in the Quran, the Sayings of the Holy Prophet provide further information with regard to the type of deceptions the *Dajjal* will employ. In this context the description given by Hazrat Dr. Basharat Ahmad in his biography of the Promised Messiah, *Mujaddid-i Azam*, is an eye-opener for every person who is fortunate enough to be aware of the prevalence of the *Dajjal* in the present age.

A number of sayings of the Holy Prophet are to the effect that with the *Dajjal* will be what he would call ‘Paradise’, but it would be ‘Hell’, and vice versa. A collective study of the traditions proves that the words heaven and hell have been used in a metaphorical sense, as is often the case with holy visions and dreams. The word ‘Paradise’ actually denotes economic prosperity and abundance of means of luxury and entertainment. This means that the people who shall associate themselves with the *Dajjal* will also partake of the abundance of worldly goods and shall live in the lap of luxury, while those who shall oppose the *Dajjal* or keep away from him, their means shall be straitened and economic prosperity will be denied to them. That is confirmed by the following traditions:

“The streams of the world and its fruits will be made subservient to him (*Dajjal*). So whoever will follow him, he will give him to eat and make him a disbeliever; whoever will disobey him, he will deprive him of his provisions and stop his means of livelihood.” (*Kanz al-Ummal*, No. 2090)

“And with him will be mountains of bread, and people will be in difficulty except those who follow him.” (*Kanz al-Ummal*, No. 2104)

So the *Dajjal* shall be accompanied by all earthly resources, which will be within his control and at his command. All these traditions leave us to understand that worldly goods and all manner of luxury and entertainment shall be within the power and domain of the *Dajjal*; he shall give them to whom he pleases and shall snatch them away from whom he pleases, thus exerting his influence throughout the world, *on those who crave such things*.

Since the *Dajjal* shall be a worshipper of the hedonistic way of life, luxury and entertainment is the paradise of the *Dajjal*, and being deprived of them is his hell. In another tradition it is foretold that whosoever gets into the Paradise of the *Dajjal*, he strays far from the right path, and there is no reward for him in the Hereafter, and whosoever goes in to the hell of the *Dajjal*, he has been saved. The meaning of the tradition is clear, for the Paradise of the *Dajjal* comprises of music and dance, theatre shows and cinemas, mixed parties of men and women, liquor and gambling and similar 'fun', and these activities do not leave any chance for a person to ever think of God, so how can such a person have a share in spirituality and the rewards of the Hereafter, after he has forsaken God, Who is the ultimate aim?

Even the constructive efforts of the *Dajjal* are to reap no benefit because he has no vision or intention to seek or gain the higher values of life. Surah *Kahf* portrays the pitiable plight of such people beautifully:

"Those whose efforts go astray in this world's life and they think that they are making good manufactures. Those are they who disbelieve in the messages of their Lord and meeting with Him, so their works are in vain. Nor shall We set up a balance for them on the day of Resurrection. That is their reward — hell, because they disbelieved and held My messages and My messengers in mockery." (18:104–106)

So it is really *hell* to which the *Dajjal* beckons subtly and leads the way, or rather *misleads*, making his followers think that they have found Paradise. Indeed, in the view of the *Dajjal* and his followers, being deprived of the fun-loving life they pursue, is akin to hell. Above all, they are imbued with a remarkable sense of confidence and superiority; they do not consider those who do not partake of these enjoyments to be alive or to be human. The great truth and reality is, however, that he who forsakes the amoral pleasures of this world is indeed the one who has escaped hell and has been saved.

It is our belief, as proved by the Holy Quran and Tradition, that Gog and Magog and the *Dajjal* are one and the same, both being symbolic names for the Western powers and their nefarious activities in various spheres of deception. Their influence is not easy to escape and that is why it is of supreme importance to constantly bear in mind the recommended antidote or shield against the *Dajjal*: the verses of Surah *Al-Kahf*. By reciting them daily and keeping them foremost in one's mind it is easier to avoid the daily temptations we face, to prevent our homes and our minds from being pervaded by the culture and the ideals of the *Dajjal*, and to realize that in this much-dreaded 'last age' it is better to be alone, even to be scorned by others, than to fall into the deadly trap of the *Dajjal*. Indeed wise and fortunate is the person who strives and struggles against the *Dajjal* for whom the traditions say, "From the creation of Adam to the Day of Resurrection there would be no greater danger than the *Dajjal*" (*Mishkat*, Chapter on *Dajjal*). May Allah, the most High, guide us all on the straight path. In the end, I wish to quote another Tradition which I find most thought-provoking: "The Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him) said that there shall come on mankind such an age that the *mu'min* (true believer) shall go about among people, hiding himself just as in these days the hypocrites hide themselves" (*Kanz al-Ummal*, vol. 6, page 42), and in the last age the *Mujahid* (one who strives in the way of Allah) will be "the one who goes to sleep". This means that to remain confined to a corner of one's house, abstaining from the culture perpetrated by the *Dajjal*, is equal to striving in Allah's way, for the greatest jihad or struggle is with one's own self, to safeguard against evil. ■

... Unreliability of the Biblical Text ...

Continued from page 14, bottom of 2nd column:

century) was based on a text containing numerous errors! How can you claim that these scriptures have been available for hundreds of years before Islam, when what was available even as late as the last century has been shown to contain errors and has had to be corrected in this century?

Please also remember that the above quotes are not from any hostile or ignorant critics of the Bible, but from Christian scholars responsible for translating the Bible into English. ■

Diary

Compiled by the Editor

1. “Faith heals the elderly”

Under the above headline a news item is published in *The Daily Telegraph* (London, April 29, 1998) which tells us that: “The stronger an elderly person’s religious beliefs, the faster they recover from depression”. This is shown by a study of hospital patients carried out by a team at Duke University, North Carolina, published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*. The news report quotes an author of this study as saying: “This is the first study to show that religious faith by itself, independent of medical intervention and quality of life issues, can help older people to recover from a serious mental disorder.”

2. Muin-ud-Din Chishti guided more people than all Israelite prophets, say *qawwali* singers

Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti, the most renowned Muslim saint of India who lived some eight centuries ago, is highly honoured as a pioneer of Islamic propagation work in the Indian sub-continent, and is said to have used the *qawwali*, a form of religious singing, to convey the message of Islam. Recently in Lahore, two famous *qawwali* singers, the brothers Sher Ali and Mehr Ali, gave a press conference about the promotion of their art. The news report of this press conference in the *Daily Jang* of Lahore (December 31, 1997) begins as follows:

“Of all the prophets who arose among the Israelite nation, none of them made so many people into Muslims as the number of persons who entered Islam at the hand of one saint from among the followers of our Holy Prophet, Khawaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti. This holy man led more than 9 million people in the Indian subcontinent to accept the truth.”

What is being described here is known in Islamic theology as the concept of “partial excellence of a saint over a prophet”. It has always been recognised by Muslim religious scholars that a follower of the Prophet Muhammad can, in certain aspects of his achievements, excel a prophet of the past. In the press statement above it is claimed that Muin-ud-Din Chishti gained a larger number of converts to the true religion than any Israelite prophet had done. We are sure that there will be *no* outcry or indignation whatsoever from our fellow Muslims at this opinion,

with allegations being vehemently made that the followers of Chishti regard Chishti as a prophet and are placing him superior to all the Israelite prophets!

Yet what Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad wrote regarding his “partial excellence” over Jesus was no different from this press statement. He said that as he was the follower of a Prophet, i.e. the Holy Prophet Muhammad, who had come for all the nations bearing a message of universal applicability, therefore his (i.e. Hazrat Mirza’s) mission of Islamic propagation is for the whole world, and the message he is spreading meets the needs of the whole of humanity, while Jesus was a prophet only to the Israelites, his mission was limited only to them and the scope of his teachings was also confined to the needs of one nation. So, said Hazrat Mirza, what I can do in this age as a follower of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, cannot be done by Jesus by returning to this world.

This “partial excellence” which Muslim saints can have over prophets is due to their being followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and thus reflecting his greatness over other prophets. As Hazrat Mirza sang in a poetic verse about the Holy Prophet Muhammad:

“The glory of Ahmad is beyond comprehension and imagination; whose servant, look, is the Messiah of the age.”

3. Need for an organization

We recently received the following question by e-mail from a Muslim who sent it after reading our Internet site:

“I read the defense of the Ahmadiyya Movement but I do not understand the need for setting up a separate organization.”

I replied as below:

Thank you for reading our Web Site and sending us your question. An organization was set up because the Holy Quran requires Muslims to establish such an organization. It says:

“There should be from among you a group who invite to good and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. These it is that are successful.” (Sura Āl-Imran, chapter 3, verse 104)

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad found Islam under severe attack by its critics with very little defence offered by Muslims. So he called on Muslims to join him in defending and propagating Islam. Very few did. But those who did then formed a movement which worked for this purpose. To do any work on a

large scale you need to have an organization of people.

There are in the world tens of thousands of Muslim organizations doing particular types of work for Muslims (e.g. women's organizations, youth organizations, doctors' associations). In Muslim countries there are organised "Islamic parties" (e.g. Jamaat-i Islami in Pakistan), several of them in each country, which have their own organization, membership, mosques, schools, etc. But people only object to us having an organization!

Now let me give you another example. Some 90 years ago some Muslims in India got together to form the Muslim League. This organization later campaigned for a separate Muslim homeland in India. Some Muslims were members of it, some Muslims were not members but supported it, and some Muslims opposed it.

So this body was a "separate organization". If a Muslim wanted to join it, he had to accept its conditions of membership, sign up and pay a subscription.

Was it wrong to have this organization? Its work resulted in the creation of Pakistan.

You might perhaps say that these organizations did not have different beliefs from other Muslims. I would say that: (1) We also do not have essentially different beliefs from other Muslims; (2) Muslim opponents of the Muslim League used to condemn the League as having un-Islamic views, so in that sense it was also like a separate sect with its own, distinctive interpretation of Islam!

But the whole of Pakistan, and even Muslims all over the world, are today grateful to that Muslim League for achieving the creation of Pakistan.

In the end, I reiterate that the Ahmadiyya Movement was formed only to present and propagate Islam (the Islam of the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad, free from the wrong ideas added later). To do this work an organization with a membership is needed, and the Quran itself requires Muslims to have such an organization. None such existed, so Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad brought one into existence.

4. Unreliability of the Biblical text

A Christian sent the following comment to our Web site by e-mail:

"Have the following facts ever occurred to you:

"1. The Hebrew Bible was written hundreds of years, over 700 before Muhammad was born and it is their story.

"2. The Christian religion which grew out of Judaism was in existence over 500 years before Muhammad was born.

"In the case of the Christian New Testament there is manuscript evidence from 20 years following the death of Christ plus thousands of Greek, Latin, Syriac and Coptic texts which document the reliability of the New Testament."

I replied as follows:

These are not facts at all. Let me quote to you from the Preface to the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, published by Collins. This is what the Translation Committee of this version have to say about the Old Testament:

"The present revision is based on the consonantal Hebrew and Aramaic text as fixed early in the Christian era and revised by Jewish scholars (the 'Masoretes') of the sixth to ninth centuries. The vowel signs, which were added by the Masoretes, are accepted also in the main, but where a more probable and convincing reading can be obtained by assuming different vowels, this has been done. ...

"Departures from the consonantal text of the best manuscripts have been made only where it seems clear that errors in copying had been made before the text was standardized. ...

"Sometimes it is evident that the text has suffered in transmission, but none of the versions provides a satisfactory restoration. Here we can only follow the best judgment of competent scholars as to the most probable reconstruction of the original text. ..."

So the written text of the Old Testament along with the vowels, which are essential for understanding the meaning, was not fixed until more than 2000 years after Moses received the law! But even that text contains errors, and the translators have to assume other vowel signs than those occurring in this text!

The same Preface says of the New Testament:

"The King James Version of the New Testament was based upon a Greek text that was marred by mistakes, containing the accumulated errors of fourteen centuries of manuscript copying."

So the English translation of the New Testament that was the approved one for about 400 years (till this

Continued on page 12, bottom of 2nd column

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