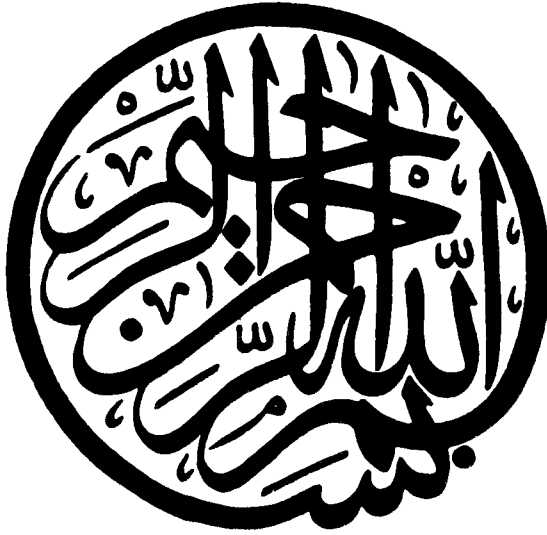


The Four Questions Answered



by
Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam Lahore Inc., U.S.A.

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**THE
FOUR QUESTIONS
ANSWERED**

The Four Questions Answered

An interfaith comparative study of:

- 1. Salvation,*
- 2. Monotheism,*
- 3. Love of God and God's love of humanity*
- 4. Light of the founders of Christianity and Islam*

by

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Mujaddid and Promised Messiah*

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eight years of his life.

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The *Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam* (Ahmadiyya Association for the Propagation of Islam) was founded at Lahore, Pakistan, in 1914 by the prominent followers of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. It exists to promote a liberal, tolerant and peaceful picture of Islam, as found in the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. It has published a vast quantity of highly-regarded literature on Islam in various languages, and has branches and members in several countries.

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Introductory Note

The second coming of Christ is a belief that is common to the two largest religions of the world — Christianity and Islam. Most Muslims, like Christians, believe that the prophecies regarding the second coming of Christ refer to the physical reappearance of the original Christ. However, in the nineteenth century India, there was a religious saint by the name of *Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad* (1835–1908), who claimed to be the Promised Messiah of the prophecies. He proved from the Quran and other scriptures that Jesus had died, and declared, based on revealed knowledge from God, that the tomb known as the tomb of *Yuz Asaf* in Srinagar, Kashmir, is in reality that of Jesus.¹ He argued that the prophecies about the second coming of Christ were not to be taken literally, but only referred to the advent of a person in the spiritual likeness and excellence of Jesus Christ. He claimed that God had revealed to him that he was that person — the Promised Messiah. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad founded a Movement for the propagation of Islam which is represented by the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at Islam, Lahore.

As soon as Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad claimed to be the Promised Messiah, the floodgates of opposition and persecution opened against him and his followers. The majority of the Muslims, who had been waiting for the original Jesus, charged that he was laying claim to prophethood, an anathema to Muslims who believe that Prophet Muhammad (may peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) is the last and final Prophet.

1. See, for example, *Jesus in Heaven on Earth* by Khwaja Nazir Ahmad, 1952, and *Jesus died in Kashmir* by A. Faber Kaiser, 1977.

All his life, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad denied that he claimed prophethood and repeatedly reaffirmed his firm belief in the finality of prophethood with Prophet Muhammad. He pointed out to other Muslims the inconsistency of their belief in the finality of the Holy Prophet Muhammad's prophethood while at the same time waiting for Prophet Jesus to return.

Several years after Hazrat Mirza died, his son, Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, affirmed the accusation of his father's opponents by claiming that his father was, indeed, a prophet. This was an attack on the pure principles of Islam and a desertion from the teachings of Hazrat Mirza. On this basis, the Movement founded by Hazrat Mirza split into two. One group under the leadership of Hazrat Mirza's son, who was nineteen years old when his venerable father died and twenty-five at the time of the split in 1914, stayed on in Qadian, the ancestral town of Hazrat Mirza. They came to be known as *Qadianis*. The other group comprised Hazrat Mirza's closest companions, who had spent a lifetime under his tutelage, and knew fully well the beliefs of their spiritual mentor. They could not put up with the heretical claims of Hazrat Mirza's son, and left Qadian for Lahore, where they founded the *Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement*, to continue the work of their Master.

Throughout his adult life, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad wrote profusely on religious subjects in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu. His literary skills and knowledge of religions was admitted by even those who opposed him. In the India of those days, there was an onslaught against Islam by the Christian missionaries who sought to gain converts by attacking Islam and Prophet Muhammad. Hazrat Mirza's heart bled on hearing these false charges. Consequently, many of Hazrat Mirza's writings defended Islam against these charges and took the battle into the Christian missionaries' territory by showing the irrationality of Christian beliefs.

In 1897, a Christian convert from Islam by the name of Robert Sirajuddin, who later became prominent as a professor

in Forman Christian College, Lahore, addressed four questions to Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. These questions covered the topics of salvation, monotheism, love of God and God's love of humanity, and the light of the founders of Christianity and Islam. Hazrat Mirza's replies were published in a small book in Urdu called *Sirājuddīn 'Īsā'ī key chār swālon kā jawāb*, (The Four Questions of the Christian Sirajuddin Answered). An English rendering of the original Urdu text is presented in this book.

Prior English translations of this book exist. I have an English translation by an unnamed translator. His translation style, as he states in the introduction, is to give, "as literal a translation as possible, the intention being to present to the reader the idiom and the working of a great master mind." I found the reading difficult and decided to translate from the Urdu text anew. Although I have relied in a few places on the existing translation, this work is my own, and I alone am responsible for any errors or shortcomings in the translation.

I would like to thank my spiritual mentor, the *Amīr* (Head) of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement, *Hazrat* Dr. Saeed Ahmad Khan, whose encouragement has given me the motivation to work for the religion of Allah.

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The four questions answered

A Christian gentleman from Lahore, by the name of Sirajuddin, has sent me a questionnaire with four questions and has asked me to answer them. I consider it conducive for the common good to publish these questions and my replies, which are accordingly set out below.

1. Salvation

Question: *According to the Christian belief, Christ came to the world for the love of mankind and to offer himself as sacrifice for its sake. Can the mission of the Founder of Islam be described in similar terms? Or can his mission be described in words even better than ‘love’ and ‘sacrifice’?*

The answer

The real purpose of the question is to ask whether the Quran presents an example of an accursed sacrifice for the salvation of sinners similar to the one allegedly made by Jesus Christ. According to the Christian belief, Jesus Christ appeared on this earth for the love of sinners. He took on the curse of their sins and was then crucified for these sins. The questioner then asks that if the Quran does not give a similar example, does it present any better method for the salvation of mankind?

The Quranic route to salvation is not through an accursed sacrifice.

Let it be known, Mr. Sirajuddin, that the Quran does not give any example of an accursed sacrifice. It is against the Quranic principle for the sins, or curse, of one person to be transferred to another, and the question of the transference of the sins of millions of people onto one person just does not arise.

The Holy Quran states explicitly: “That no bearer of a burden bears another’s burden” (53:38). According to the teachings of the Quran, deeds are the basis of reward and punishment.

Before I explain the Quranic teachings about salvation, I consider it essential to expose the errors in the Christian doctrine. This would facilitate comparison for those desirous of doing a comparative study between the Christian and Muslim teachings on the subject of salvation.

Ascribing an accursed death to Jesus is perverse.

The Christian doctrine is that God so loved humanity that He transferred the sins of transgressors, unbelievers and evildoers to His beloved Son, Jesus, as part of a plan for the salvation of mankind. Jesus was, thus, cursed with the sins of humanity and crucified on the accursed cross to rid the earth of the curse of sin. This doctrine is perverse and shameful in every way. From the standpoint of justice, such an action is flagrantly cruel. Human conscience revolts against the idea of an innocent person being punished for the wickedness of criminals. From the standpoint of spiritual philosophy and the reality of sin, too, this doctrine is fallacious. Sin is, in actuality, a poison that is created when a person cuts himself from submission to God, His love and His remembrance. Just as an uprooted tree, cut off from its nutrients, withers slowly and loses its green foliage, so also does a man, cut off from the love of Allah, wither as sin overpowers him. God has provided three remedies to stop the spiritual withering of man.

Three safeguards from sin.

The three safeguards from sin are:

1. Love of God.

2. *Istighfār*, which literally means the desire to suppress or cover sin. In the analogy of the tree given above, if the tree is firmly rooted, there is always the hope of a new foliage. (For a person who seeks forgiveness of Allah, there is the hope of a new spiritual life.)

3. *Taubah* or repentance, which implies vigorously searching for the elixir of life by turning to Allah, exerting to get near to

Him, and extricating oneself from the web of sin by performing acts of virtue. Real repentance is not just a verbal confession of sin but a change to righteous behavior in which all acts of virtue are done to enhance the efficacy of repentance. Thus, the essence of repentance is the desire to get close to God. Prayer is also repentance because with it, too, we seek nearness to God. Consequently, when God gave life to man, He named his spirit *Rūh*, which implies that it's real pleasure and comfort is derived from accepting, loving and submitting to God, and He named his soul *nafs*² because of its conformity with God. Man's real happiness lies in the love of God. A person who loves God is like a firmly rooted tree in a garden. Just like the tree sucks in water from the soil and uses it to rid itself of toxic vapors, so also does the man, who has a close association with God, sucks in the water of God's love and with it develops the ability to rid himself of the poison of sin. He receives pure spiritual sustenance from God, thrives, blossoms and brings forth good fruits. Those who are not rooted in God are unable to obtain this life sustaining water. They progressively wither, ultimately the leaves fall off and there remains only the dried up, ugly branches. Since this aridity of sin is a result of severance from God, the simple antidote, to which the laws of nature bear testimony, is the establishment of a firm connection with Him. It is to this that God refers when He states in the Quran:

“O soul that art at rest,
Return to thy Lord, well pleased, well-pleasing,
So enter among My servants,
And enter My Garden!” (89:27–30)

The sole antidote of sin is love of God.

In short, the only way to divest sin is through the love of God. Accordingly, all acts of virtue that spring from His love douse the flames of sin because they affix a seal of authenticity on man's love for God. The first stage of this love is to accept God

2. The dictionary meaning of *nafs* is “the very thing itself”.

in a way that puts His pleasure before everything else, including one's own life. This first stage is similar to the state of a newly planted tree. The second stage is that of *istighfār*, which means seeking God's protection from being rend asunder from Him — for a person divorced from God is an easy prey to human frailties. This stage is similar to the stage of the tree when it vigorously penetrates the soil and establishes its roots firmly in the ground. The third stage is that of *taubah* or repentance, which is akin to the stage of the tree when it extends its roots close to the water and begins to suck it. Philosophically, the genesis of sin lies in being distant from God, and hence the extrication of sin depends upon reestablishing a relationship with God. It is indeed naive to consider that someone's suicide can be a salvation from sin.

A rebuttal of the belief of Atonement.

It is, indeed, ridiculous for a person to injure his own head in sympathy for another's headache or to commit suicide to save another. I do not think that any wise person, anywhere in the world, can classify such conduct as an act of human sympathy. Undoubtedly, human sympathy is meritorious, and enduring an ordeal to save another is an act of great bravery. But is the conduct ascribed to Jesus the proper way to bear such ordeals? If Jesus had not committed suicide but had borne suffering, like any rational man, to bring comfort to those in need of it, then the world would have benefitted from his person. As an analogy, consider a homeless destitute who cannot afford to construct a house. If some mason takes pity and works vigorously for a few days, free of charge, to make the poor man a house, then, indeed, such a builder is deserving of praise for having helped the homeless person. Instead, if the mason was to wound his own head out of sympathy for the destitute, then this accomplishes nothing for the homeless person. Unfortunately, there are very few people in this world who adopt reasonable means to achieve the end of doing good to others and taking mercy on them. If it is true that Jesus committed suicide out of a belief that his death would save the people, then

his condition is pitiable, and his conduct, far from being publicized, deserves to be concealed.

The Christian belief in atonement is regrettable because of the disrespect that it shows to Jesus. In fact, by establishing this principle, the Christian nation is guilty of showing greater disrespect to its prophet than has ever been shown by any other nation to its prophet or messenger. According to the Christian philosophy, the creed that Jesus came to this world for the love of humanity and sacrificed his life for it has meaning only if one believes that Jesus was cursed by the sins of mankind and was crucified on the accursed cross. Thus, it is an integral part of the Christian belief that Jesus was cursed, even if only for three days, and if Jesus is not considered cursed, then the belief in his sacrifice and the consequent salvation collapses. The whole superstructure of this doctrine rests on the accursed Jesus. Consequently, we have previously referred to the sacrifice of Jesus as an accursed sacrifice. Sin caused the curse, and the curse led to the crucifixion. What needs to be ascertained though is whether a righteous person can be considered accursed in any sense?

The Christians consider Jesus as cursed, even if for three or lesser days, but this is a grave error because the term cursed connotes the inner condition of the accursed person. A person is called accursed when he turns away and becomes an enemy of God. Accordingly, the Arabic word *la'īn* (accursed) is the name of Satan and the term *la'nah* (cursed) means to be cast off from a relationship of favor. The word 'accursed' is used for a person whose heart has strayed far from submission and love of God, and, in reality, such a person has become an enemy of God. All lexicographers accept this as the meaning of the word *la'nah* (accursed).

Implications of Jesus being accursed.

According to this established meaning, to say that Jesus was accursed connotes that he abandoned the state of submission, love, and knowledge of God and became a target of His wrath.

It signifies that in the accursed period, Jesus apostatized, turned rebellious and became akin to the devil, resulting in mutual enmity and anger between him and God. Such a belief in respect of Jesus is akin to making him a companion of Satan. No one, save a very wicked person, can hold such a belief about a righteous Prophet.

Since the belief that Jesus was accursed is thus shown to be erroneous, it follows that a belief in the accursed sacrifice is false too, and merely a concoction of some ignorant persons. If salvation is only achievable by first making Jesus into an angry, satanical rebel, then a curse be on such salvation. It was better for the Christians to accept hell rather than to make a beloved of God into a devil. What a pity that these people have relied upon such absurd and unholy reasoning. On the one hand, they claim he is the son of God, His offshoot and a part of Him and on the other, they brand him as a devil because of being accursed, a characteristic peculiar to the devil. *La'in*, meaning accursed, is the name of the devil and accursed is one who is an offshoot of the devil, part of the devil and himself a devil. Thus according to the Christian belief, there were two facets of Jesus, one divine, and the other satanical. In the satanical phase, he imbibed the devilish qualities of rebellion, anger, and enmity with God, and thereby merged his personality with the devil. I ask you, Mr. Sirajuddin, to state honestly whether this alleged mission of Jesus is even remotely spiritual or rational. Can there be a worse belief than alleging, merely for the sake of achieving salvation, that a righteous person of God was disobedient to Him, His enemy, and a devil? Why would God, Who is All Powerful and Merciful, need such an accursed sacrifice?

Is salvation through accursed sacrifice found in Jewish scriptures?

Further evidence against the veracity of the accursed sacrifice doctrine is furnished by examining it in the light of the earlier Jewish scriptures. Apparently, if the only way open to God for the salvation of mankind was through the accursed sacrifice,

according to which He begot a son who took on the curse of all sinners and was crucified, then the mention of an accursed sacrifice should be in the Torah and the other Books of the Jews. No reasonable man can accept that God has been changing His eternal law of salvation, giving one law in the Torah, another in the Gospels, another in the Quran and yet others to prophets sent to people elsewhere in the world.

Even the most detailed examination of the Jewish scriptures does not reveal any mention of the accursed sacrifice doctrine. Accordingly, I wrote letters to several Jewish religious scholars and asked them to state under oath the teachings about salvation in the Torah, and whether there is any command to believe in atonement and the sacrifice of God's son? These Jewish scholars have replied that the teachings of the Torah in respect of salvation are in complete accord with those found in the Quran. They have written that the Torah emphasizes repeatedly that the way to salvation lies in turning to God, seeking repentance, controlling base desires, doing good deeds for the sake of God, and strictly following all His laws, rules and commands. All the holy prophets of God, they said, have enjoined this teaching and straying away from it occasions God's punishment. Besides their detailed replies, my Jewish correspondents have sent me rare and valuable books on this subject written by their renowned scholars. These books and letters are in my custody and are open for inspection to anyone who so desires. I plan to publish a comprehensive book containing these testimonials.

It behooves a rational and unprejudiced person to question why the Jews would keep this doctrine a secret and steadfastly oppose it if they had prior knowledge that God's ordained method for the salvation of mankind was by the sacrifice of His accursed Son, Jesus. The Jewish teachings were renewed by successive prophets, and Moses expounded the Torah publicly before hundreds of thousands of people. How is it possible then that the Jews could have forgotten this teaching passed on to them through successive prophets when they had been directed

to memorize the commandments of God, to teach it to their children and to write it on their doors, frames, and sleeves? Is it conceivable, and can anyone honestly allege that, in spite of these precautions, all the sects of the Jews lost this dear doctrine on which their salvation depended? The Jews have, not only now but from the earliest times, maintained that the doctrine of salvation in the Quran is the same as the doctrine of salvation in the Torah. This was their testimony when the Quran was revealed and this is their testimony now as evident by the letters and books that they have sent to me.

There is absolutely no reason for the Jews to conceal the accursed sacrifice doctrine if they had been informed about it. Conceivably, they could have disputed that Jesus was the ordained son of God, and that his crucifixion was the one decreed for salvation. They could have argued that this was not the real son of God whose sacrifice would lead to salvation and that the real son will appear in some later time. It is inconceivable, however, that all sects of the Jews would totally deny this doctrine that was present in their Books and had been renewed by successive prophets. The Jews, their books and their scholars are all accessible and if anyone has any doubt about the veracity of the above allegation, let him inquire without any hesitation.

Isn't the testimony of the Jews necessary for an intelligent seeker of truth in this matter? Aren't the Jews the first witnesses of the Torah and the ones who memorized it through the centuries? There is not a shred of evidence either in the previous revealed teachings passed down the generations, nor in the later revealed teachings about making a humble man into God and then calling him of the God and also of the Satan. How can pure natured persons accept such an irrational and filthy doctrine?

Can belief in the accursed sacrifice deliver one from sin?

The absurdity of the accursed sacrifice doctrine is apparent. It runs counter to the ancient teachings of the Torah, as passed down through successive generations. It espouses the trans-

ferability of sin. It alleges that a righteous person was accursed, forsaken and cut off from God, and became like minded with the devil. Notwithstanding these apparent shortcomings, the doctrine must still be examined to see if any benefits accrued to its adherents from believing in it. Did they eschew sin or were their sins forgiven?

Facts belie any claim that a belief in this doctrine restrains a person from sin and advances moral purification. According to Christian belief, David believed in the Redemption of Jesus. However, they also allege that subsequent to this belief (we seek refuge in Allah from saying so), David killed an innocent man,³ committed adultery with the murdered man's wife,⁴ misappropriated State funds for personal needs, married one hundred wives, and sinned most audaciously every day, repeating those sins till his last days. If the accursed sacrifice of Jesus can make people desist from sin, then David should not have been so steeped in sin as they allege against him. Similarly, according to the Christian tradition, three ladies from the maternal ancestry of Jesus committed adultery.⁵ It is obvious that if a belief in the accursed sacrifice causes internal purification, these ladies from Jesus' own ancestry would not have committed these shameful sins. The disciples of Jesus too, even after their belief, committed shameful acts of sin. Judas Iscariot sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, and Peter cursed him on his face three times, while the rest of the disciples took to their heels. It is obvious that cursing a prophet is a great sin. There is hardly any need to mention the widespread prevalence of fornication and drinking in the Western civilization. In one of my previous articles, I have referred to news reports from European papers about the adulterous affairs of many reputed Christian priests. It is apparent from all these events that belief in the accursed

3. II Samuel, 12:9.

4. II Samuel, 11:4.

5. Matthew's genealogical table of Jesus, and the Old Testament with reference to Tamar, Rahab, and Bathsheba which, however, we strongly repudiate.

sacrifice is incapable of delivering man from sin.

Doctrine of accursed sacrifice opens the floodgate of sin.

A second aspect of this doctrine is that a belief in the doctrine results in forgiveness of all sins even if freedom from sin is not achieved. Such a belief gives total freedom to wicked persons to proceed against the property, life, and honor of peaceful citizens by any means they desire, such as killing, theft, false testimony and embezzlement. A simple belief in the accursed sacrifice can then wash off these heinous sins against these innocent persons and enable the perpetrators to enjoy their ill gotten gains. Similarly, adulterers can keep on living in the impure state of adultery and by a mere admission of belief in the accursed sacrifice save themselves from accountability before God. It is obvious that this cannot be so. To commit these heinous crimes and then to seek refuge behind the accursed sacrifice is nothing but the way of the wicked.

It appears that even Paul began to suspect that this was not an appropriate belief. Hence he remarked:

“Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.

For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.”⁶

The statement above suggests that the sacrifice of Jesus is for the first sin and Jesus cannot be crucified a second time. This statement, however, puts Paul in great difficulty. If it is true that the sacrifice of Jesus is only for the first sin, then it follows, for example, that Prophet David will be eternally damned. According to the Christians, he committed adultery with Uriah’s wife and kept her in his house, without God’s permission, to the end of his life. This lady is from the holy maternal lineage of Mary and a grandmother several generations removed of Jesus. In addition, David had about a hundred wives

6. Romans 6:9,10.

which, according to the Christians, is not allowable. These sins were not committed just once but were repeated daily.

Since the accursed sacrifice is no immunity against committing sin, it follows that among the Christians too there are many repeat sinners, i.e., persons who sin after their first sin. According to the principle laid down by Paul, sins repeated after the first time are not forgivable and their punishment is eternal damnation.

There is no need to go far in search of an example, Mr. Sirajuddin, just consider your own situation. Mr. Sirajuddin, originally a Muslim, first accepted the son of Mary as the son of God and was baptized into the belief of the accursed sacrifice. Then he came to Qadian and converted back to Islam after affirming that he had been hasty in getting baptized. He began to say the Muslim prayers and acknowledged many times before me that he now understood the absurdity of the doctrine of atonement and considered it false. After his return from Qadian, he was again ensnared into the Christian missionaries' trap and converted yet again to Christianity. This calls for reflection by Mr. Sirajuddin. After being baptized into Christianity, he reneged and by words and actions acted against the Christian faith. This, according to the Christian belief, is a cardinal sin and in line with the saying of Paul, this sin, having been committed for a second time, is unforgivable because it requires a second crucifixion.

It could be argued that Paul was either mistaken or lied outright in curtailing the doctrine of atonement and that, in fact, a belief in the accursed sacrifice nullifies all sins. If this argument is accepted, then such a faith, which has no accountability for any kind of sin, including theft, adultery, lies, murder, and embezzlement, will nurture sinfulness. It will be quite appropriate for the law enforcement agencies to require a guarantee of good behavior from the followers of a faith that has this belief.

Since this open invitation to sinfulness must, of necessity,

be rejected, the only resort is to backtrack to the first argument that a believer in the accursed sacrifice achieves moral purity and deliverance from sin. However, this argument has already been shown to be fallacious and was rebutted with the help of examples from the Christian scriptures about the alleged sins of Prophet David, the grandmothers of Jesus, and the disciples of Jesus. We have also mentioned news reports about the sinful ways of some Christian priests. In addition, all knowledgeable persons are fully aware of the depraved moral condition of the Western civilization.

Despite the above reasoning, if someone, to make an argument, cites the holy life of a Christian, what is the guarantee that the person is actually sinless? Many scoundrels, embezzlers, adulterers, shameless drunkards and atheists superficially lead lives of apparent purity, but, from within, these men are like sepulchres enclosing nothing but offensive carcasses and bones.

All nations have good and bad natured persons.

It would be incorrect to assume that all individuals are naturally inclined to goodness in some nations and to evil in others. God ordained laws of nature ensure dispensation of both kinds of persons in all nations. Each nation has its share of ill natured, immoral, malicious and wicked persons, just like it has its share of noble natured, moral, good character, and pious persons. There is no nation that is not subjected to this law of nature, be they Hindus, Parsis, Jews, Sikhs, Buddhists or even those who belong to the so called low castes of India. As nations progress in civilization and culture, the moral system begins to emphasize honor, knowledge and dignity. This creates the environment in which persons with basic goodness of nature are recognized in the community for their piety and noble character and become role models for others. No nation is devoid of such persons.

Unless a natural inclination to goodness already exists in a person, a mere conversion to another religion will not create it because the instinctive nature of man created by God does not change. It will have to be admitted by all genuine seekers of

truth that nature doles out a basic disposition and religion only provides a framework for the appropriate control and use of this disposition. Thus, some persons have a greater portion of meekness and affection in their disposition and others more of harshness and anger. The role of religion is to divert the fruits of basic goodness, such as love, obedience, sincerity and faithfulness, which idolaters feel for their idols or worshippers of men feel for their incarnate deities, to God and to make such persons show the same obedience to Him as had formerly been shown by them to their deities.

Effect of religion on human faculties.

The Gospels do not delve into the issue of how religion affects human faculties because the Gospels lack a scientific approach to problems. The Quran, however, comments on this issue repeatedly and in great detail. It states that the objective of religion is not to change the natural faculties of man and to show that a wolf can be turned into a sheep. It is outside the power of religion to do this but it can and does provide guidance for the right use of faculties according to the requirements of the situation. It is also within the competence of religion to advise the use of all faculties, rather than to emphasize reliance only on a particular sub set like mercy and forgiveness because none of the human faculties are inherently evil. It is only the excessive or deficient use of faculties, or their misuse, which is bad. A person is culpable, not for the natural faculties he is endowed with, but for their misuse. Thus, God, the Supreme Dispenser, has endowed to all nations an equal measure of natural faculties. Just as physical features like nose, eyes, mouth, hands and feet, are given to persons of all nations, so too is the dispensation of the internal faculties. Accordingly, in every nation there are good and evil persons depending upon whether they have used their faculties moderately or have been excessive or deficient in their use.

The credit for the level of goodness and civilness in a society cannot automatically be ascribed to the prevalent religion

of the community because much of it may be the result of a natural dispensation. The level of civic goodness of a community is, therefore, not a reliable test for the efficacy and truthfulness of a religion. A necessary and sufficient test for this purpose is that there exist in some perfect followers of that religion spiritual excellence unparalleled in followers of other religions. I state with great emphasis that Islam alone meets this test. Islam has propelled thousands of its adherents to that elevated spiritual life where it can be claimed that the spirit of God dwells in them. They accept the light of God and become a manifestation of His splendor. Such people have been found among the Muslims in all centuries and their pure life is not without proof, or merely their own claim, but God gives testimony to it.

Signs of a pure life.

The Quran gives the signs of an extremely pious life as the performance of miracles, acceptance of prayers, communication with God, prophetic revelations and God's help and assistance. Thousands of persons, throughout the history of Islam, have exhibited these signs. In this age, this humble person is present to show this example. But where are such persons in Christendom who exhibit the signs of true belief and pious life as stated in the Gospels?

Everything is recognized by its distinctive signs, just as a tree is recognized by its fruits. If the claim of a pure life is merely a claim, unsubstantiated by the established signs given in the Scriptures, then such a claim must be considered false. Do the Gospels not mention any signs of true and real belief? Do they not mention these signs to be the gift of the supernatural? Then if the signs of a pious life are given in the Gospels, all Christians that claim to lead a pure life should be measured against these signs. Compare, if you will, a holy Christian clergyman with the humblest Muslim in terms of their spirituality and acceptance of prayers. If the clergyman is found to have even a fraction of the heavenly light of the Muslim, I

stand to be contradicted and condemned. To prove this point, I have challenged the Christians many times but they have not responded. I state with total honesty, and with complete conviction, as God is my witness, that true faith and a genuine pious life, born from heavenly light, is not to be found in any faith except Islam. This pure life that I have been granted is not merely my own claim, but is corroborated by heavenly testimonies. Indeed, such a claim can only be verified with such evidence as there is no other way of knowing if the claimant is a hypocrite and a dishonest person. However, when there exist persons whose pure lives are heavenly corroborated, then others in the community that exhibit signs of piety would also be considered genuinely pure. Because the community is an organic whole, a single corroborated example of pure life is sufficient to show that the community is capable of receiving pure spiritual life.⁷

On this basis, I addressed an announcement to the Christians to resolve this contention conclusively. If they are genuine seekers of truth, they should have responded, but they have not. I repeat the challenge again. Christians and Muslims both lay claim to true faith and purity of life. The issue to be decided is which one of these two communities possesses the true faith and pious life in the eyes of God. The faith of the other community, it follows, is made up of Satanic ideas and its claim to holy life is a mere delusion born of spiritual blindness. I believe that the faith that is corroborated by heavenly testimony and shows signs of acceptance by God is the correct and chosen faith, and, similarly, the pure life is the one that is backed by heavenly signs. All nations of the world claim that persons of great piety have passed and are present among them and their deeds and conduct are cited in support of the claim. However, without the objective test mentioned above, it is not possible to judge the real validity of the claims. Therefore, if the Christians think that belief in the

7. It would be idle to bring in any old story, for all religions have their old tales to relate; what we want for comparison are living instances.

redemption of Christ leads to pure faith and a pious life, then it is incumbent upon them to come forward and enter a contest with me for the acceptance of prayers and manifestation of signs. If their lives are shown to be holy by the test of Heavenly signs, I shall be deserving of every punishment and dishonor.

I emphatically declare that, judged by spiritual standards, Christians lead an extremely unclean life. The Holy God, who is the Lord of Heaven and Earth, abhors their beliefs even as we abhor an extremely dirty and rotten carcass. If they think I am not correct, or that God is not with me in what I say, let them resolve our contention in a rational and civilized manner as stated above. I repeat that the holy life, which descends from Heaven and illumines the heart, is not to be found among the Christians. However, as I have stated before, instinctive goodness of disposition is present in some of them just as it is present in persons of other communities. I am not, however, discussing here this instinctive goodness. Persons endowed with this goodness and meekness are to be found to a greater or lesser extent in every community and even those considered to be of lowly castes are not devoid of this instinctive goodness. My reference here, however, is to the pure spiritual life that is born out of the living word of God, descends from the heaven and is backed by Heavenly signs. It is this life that is not to be found among Christians. What then is the benefit of the accursed sacrifice?

Holy Prophet's mission was to teach purity, truth and patience.

The Christian belief of salvation, attributed by the Christians to Jesus, has been discussed in detail above. This naturally brings up the question whether the mission of our Prophet (peace and the blessings of Allah be on him) reiterates the same method of an accursed love and sacrifice for the salvation and purification of mankind or presents some alternate way? The simple answer to this is that Islam does not accept this grotesque method of the accursed sacrifice, and accursed love as a means of salvation.

Instead, for attaining real purification, it instructs us to sacrifice our own cleansed self, after washing it in the waters of sincerity and purifying it in the fire of truth and patience. Accordingly, the Quran says:

“Whoever submits himself entirely to Allah and he is the doer of good (to others), he has his reward from his Lord, and there is no fear for such nor shall they grieve.”
(2:112)

This verse implies that a person who places himself in the service of God, totally dedicates his life to Him, and is active in the performance of good deeds, will be rewarded through his closeness with God. For such, there is neither fear nor grief. Thus, God will reward and make free from fear and grief a person who performs acts of goodness and employs all his faculties in the way of God so that his word, action, movement, rest and his entire life is solely for Allah.

The word *Islām* implies righteousness.

The condition of submission (*islām*) referred to in the above verse has also been called righteousness (*istiqāmah*) elsewhere in the Quran. For example, the Quran teaches us the prayer, “Guide us on the right (*mustaqīm* from *istiqāmah*) path. The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favors” (1:5–6). This prayer beseeches the Lord to establish us on righteousness so that we may follow the path of those on whom the Lord bestowed reward and heavenly blessings. It should be noted that righteous conduct in any situation depends upon the objective, and the objective of man’s creation is to serve God. The righteous conduct for a person, therefore, is total devotion to God in accordance with the real purpose of his creation, i.e., the eternal submission to God.

When a person, with all his faculties, devotes himself totally to God then, without a doubt, he is blessed with the reward of a pious life. When a window is opened toward the sun, sunshine streams in through it. Likewise, when a man turns himself

totally toward God, and all veils are lifted between man and God, a Divine spark alights on him and fills him with spiritual light and washes away all his internal impurities. This great change metamorphoses him into a new man and it can be said that such a person leads a pious life. The place to achieve this pure life is here in this world. Allah, Glory be to Him, refers to this in the Quranic verse:

“And whoever is blind in this (world) he will be blind in the Hereafter, and further away from the path.” (17:72).

This verse shows that the spiritual faculties required to see God are taken from this world. Those who fail to develop these faculties here by confining their faith to mere stories and fables commit themselves to eternal darkness. Thus, to achieve piety and real salvation, God has taught us to commit ourselves totally to Him and fall down sincerely before Him. We must completely shun the abomination of taking a created for a God even if it means getting killed, cut to pieces, or getting burned, for in so doing we would certify to the existence of the true God with our blood. It is for this reason that God has named our religion Islam (submission) as it implies that we have surrendered ourselves to Him.

The laws of nature also testify that the way to purity and salvation taught by the Quran is in conformity with processes in the physical world designed to achieve similar objectives. It is common experience that plants and animals fed on a poor diet and deprived of good nutrition fall prey to disease. Nature has, therefore, provided for a preventive system that allows wholesome things to reach them while blocking the useless ones. For instance, the trees have two features that keeps them healthy. Firstly, they burrow deep into the earth with their roots so that they may not dry up by becoming detached from their source of nutrition. Secondly, they absorb water from the soil through the veins in their roots and obtain nourishment from it. The same principle applies to man in his quest for spiritual development. Only those are successful who, with sincerity and cons-

tancy, establish a firm belief in God, and by seeking His protection burrow deep into His love with their roots. With sincere repentance, they incline to God and in this way absorb, through their veins, humility and meekness, the spiritual water that dissipates the dryness of sin and removes their weakness.

Two meanings of the word *istighfār* (protection from sin) in the Quran.

Istighfār, or seeking protection from sin, strengthens the roots of faith. The term has been used in the Quran in two senses. One meaning is to fortify against sin by firming the love of God in one's heart through a close association with Him. To ask His help so that temptation to evil, which rages furiously when a person is distant from God, may seize to manifest itself. This is the *istighfār* of those who are close to God and know that separation from Him, even for a moment, is their doom. They, therefore, seek His protection so that God may continue to hold them in His love. The second kind of *istighfār* is to leave a sinful state for refuge in God, to implant His love in the heart and to draw pure nourishment from it, much as a tree implants itself in the ground to get its nourishment. By so doing, the repentant person is saved from the aridity of sin and spiritual decay. Both these situations are called *istighfār* because the root word *ghafar* from which *istighfār* has been derived means 'to cover' or 'to suppress'. Thus, *istighfār* is a prayer to God, by one established in His love, asking Him to suppress his inclination to sin, to keep him from exposing his human frailties by enveloping him in His mantle of Divinity, and to bless him with a portion of His purity. However, if sin has already been committed then *istighfār* is a prayer that God may cover it up and protect the sinner from its evil consequences. Since God is the source of all munificence and His Light is always available to dispel all darkness, the right path to a pious life lies in stretching out the hands, from the fear of an impious life, toward this Fountain of Purity so that it may flow toward us rapidly and wash us completely of all filth.

There is no sacrifice more pleasing to God than that we submit ourselves completely to Him even if it entails embracing death in His path. It is precisely such a sacrifice that God has taught us to make. Thus, in the Quran, He says, “You cannot attain to righteousness unless you spend out of what you love.” (3:92).

This is the path to salvation that the Quran has taught us, and numerous heavenly signs testify that this is, indeed, the right path. Human intellect also testifies to it. It follows then that an affair proven by testimony must over ride a mere uncorroborated allegation. Jesus acted according to the teachings of the Quran, and was therefore rewarded by God. Similarly, those who lead their life by the holy teachings of the Quran will become like Jesus. This holy scripture is ready to make thousands into the likeness of Jesus and has already done so for millions.

Most respectfully we ask the Christian priests, what spiritual progress have they made by deifying a weak and helpless man? If they can substantiate some spiritual progress, then certainly their teachings are worthy of consideration. But if they cannot, then O unfortunate worshippers of the created! Come and see our spiritual development and accept Islam as your religion. Is it not fair to say that the one who possesses Divine testimony to his holy life, has clear knowledge, and immaculate love of God is the one who has the right on his side, and the one who relies only on fables and stories is an unfortunate impostor feeding on filth?

2. Monotheism

Question: *If the aim of Islam is to guide mankind toward monotheism, then why is it that religious battles took place in the early period of Islam with the Jews, when their revealed Books teach nothing extraneous to monotheism? What is jihad? Or why should it now be considered essential for the Jews and other monotheists to accept Islam for their salvation?*

The answer

It is, first of all, pointed out that the Jews during the time of our Prophet had digressed greatly from the teachings of the Torah. Admittedly, monotheistic principles were to be found in their books but they had seized to derive any benefit from them. The real objective for which man has been created, and for which religious Books have been revealed had become completely lost to them. True monotheism entails not only belief in God's existence and acceptance of His unity, but also total commitment to obeying and seeking the pleasure of the Perfect and Bounteous God, and valuing His love above all else. In practice, this monotheism had ceased to exist in the Jews. The awe of God's Greatness and Glory had departed from their hearts. They paid lip service to God but their hearts worshipped at the altar of the Devil. They exceeded all bounds in their adoration of worldly objects, of hankering after worldly gains, and in committing deceit and fraud. They had taken their doctors of religion as gods, while extremely shameful deeds of indecency were rife among them. Hypocrisy had increased, and deception multiplied.

It is obvious that monotheism does not consist merely in repeating orally “There is no god but Allah” while the heart harbors thousands of idols. A person who thinks that his effort, stratagem, cunning or plan will suffice him instead of God, or who places such trust in a man as should be placed in God alone, or who gives himself importance as should only be given to God, is an idolater in the sight of God. Idols are not just the icons of gold, silver, brass, stone, etc. that are relied upon for some good by their worshippers, but every object, word or action that is glorified like God alone should be glorified is an idol in the sight of God. It is true that the Torah does not give a clear explanation of this form of idolatry, but the Quran makes this point abundantly clear. In the revelation of the Quran, therefore, it was one of God’s purpose to do away with this form of idolatry that was sticking to mankind like a chronic illness. The Jews of that time were sunk deep in this idolatry, but the Torah was incapable of extricating them because it did not contain this subtle teaching. In addition, this scourge had become so widespread in the Jewish nation that its eradication demanded a living personality of eminent perfection to act as an immaculate exemplar of monotheism.

It should be remembered that real monotheism, which God demands of us and on which our salvation depends, requires pure devotion to Him, uncontaminated by any associate, be it an idol, man, sun, moon, a person’s ego, stratagem or cunning. It requires acceptance of God as the Most Powerful, the Nourisher, the Most Honorable, the sole Helper, and the only one deserving of these attributes in their perfection. It dictates absolute devotion to God, and a conviction that He is the only resolver of fears, hopes, and problems. Thus monotheism cannot be complete without the following three specifications:

1. Unity of Person. This implies He is One — the Creator, and that all created have no reality beside Him, are subject to annihilation, and are of no consequence in comparison to Him.

2. Unity of Attributes. This implies that the qualities of

Divinity and Lordship, like the power to create, develop and sustain, belong only to Him, and that the apparent providers of sustenance and benefits are really only part of His scheme.

3. Unity in devotion. This implies total engrossment in Him as manifested by unadulterated love, sincerity and purity of worship, that is totally uncontaminated by other associates.

The Jews had lost the essence of monotheism, comprised of the three aspects described above, on which salvation really depends. They professed faith in God with their lips, but their immoralities bore clear testimony to the bankruptcy of faith in their hearts. Accordingly, the Quran charges the Jews and the Christians with want of faith, and declares that if they had kept to the guidance in the Torah and Gospel, they would have been blessed with spiritual and physical sustenance. They would have received Heavenly sustenance as evidenced by miracles, acceptance of prayers, visions and revelation, and also worldly sustenance. But they were left completely bereft of the heavenly sustenance, and as for the worldly sustenance, its acquisition was not by turning to God but by turning solely to this world. As such, the real blessing of both these sustenance was denied to them.

The battles with Jews and Christians were in self defense.

Conflicts did take place between the Muslims, on the one hand, and Jews and Christians on the other, as is evident by references to these hostilities in the Quran. However, these conflicts were neither initiated by the Muslims nor was their purpose the forceful conversion of the opposing party to Islam. On the contrary, these conflicts took place when the opponents of Islam either directly oppressed the Muslims or aided others in this oppression. They thus provoked God's wrath and brought His punishment upon them. However, the infinite mercy of God provided a way of escape from this punishment for those of them who accepted Islam or agreed to pay the *jaziya*.⁸ This

8. A capitation tax.

room for mercy is completely in accord with the nature of man made by God. For it is in human nature that when evil, in the form of disease or famine, overtakes a person as punishment, he inclines to prayer, repentance, and charity, and makes humble supplications for the punishment to be lifted. So it has been since time immemorial. This provides testimony to the fact that the merciful God Himself inspires within man the way for averting punishment. For example, the prayers of Prophet Moses found acceptance on several occasions and averted punishment from the Israelites. In summary then, the genesis of the conflicts lay in the oppression, aggression and tyrannical acts of the opponents of Islam. The military campaigns were a chastisement for these acts of the hardhearted opponents of Islam but Divine mercy left a provision for them to avoid punishment. The supposition that Islamic battles were fought to propagate monotheism is totally baseless.

Jews paid only lip service to an imperfect monotheism in their Books.

A response has already been given to the question about the need for Jews to accept Islam despite their adherence to a monotheistic faith. It has been pointed out that monotheism had ceased to exist in the practical life of the Jews. Monotheism was still to be found in their books, but even there the concept was far from comprehensively developed. It was, therefore, necessary for them to imbibe the true spirit of monotheism as without it, salvation is not possible. The Jews were in a state of spiritual death. Their hard-heartedness and repeated transgressions had killed their spirituality and left them bereft of any spiritual connection with God. The Torah, which had suffered alteration of words and meanings and loss of some parts, was not in a fit condition to provide complete guidance. God, therefore, revealed a new life giving message, akin to fresh rain. He invited the Jews to this message so that they may rid themselves of false delusions and errors, and thus be able to achieve real salvation. Among the needs for the revelation of the Holy Quran, therefore, were the following:

1. To teach the real meaning and practice of monotheism to the spiritually dead Jews.

2. To warn them of their errors.

3. To give detailed descriptions of issues that had only been dealt summarily in the Torah like, for example, the doctrines of Resurrection, the eternal life of the soul, and heaven and hell.

The Torah and Gospel prophecy about a complete and perfect guidance.

It is a fact that the seeds of truth were planted with the Torah and that the Gospel came forth from the sprouting of these seeds as a harbinger of another future message. Just like the healthy green sprouts of a field convey, by their condition, the glad tidings of good fruits and goodly ears of grain to follow, likewise, the Gospel came to give the good news of a complete and perfect guidance. With the Quran, that seed reached its perfection by bringing forth a complete guidance that clearly differentiated truth from falsehood, and took spiritual knowledge to the level of perfection. This had been clearly predicted by the Torah in the statement: “The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran.”⁹

Quran is unique in perfecting all facets of *sharī‘ah* (revealed law).

It is an established fact that it is in the Quran alone that all aspects of the revealed law have reached perfection. There are two main parts of the revealed law — the rights of God and the rights of human beings. It is only the Quran that has perfected both these parts. It was the plan of the Quran to transform the savage man into a civilized person, the civilized person into a moral person, and the moral person into a godly person. The Quran has so admirably fulfilled this mission that the Torah does not even come close by comparison.

9. Deuteronomy 33:2. Pharan is a mountain in the valley of Mecca.

Quran as the arbitrator of the dispute about the status of Jesus.

One reason, among others, for the revelation of the Quran was the need to resolve the conflict among the Jews and the Christians about the status of Jesus. The Quran adjudicated this dispute, and the Quranic verse: “O Jesus, I will cause thee to die and exalt thee in My presence” (3:54), is directed toward the resolution of this disagreement. The Jews believe that Jesus, the Prophet of the Christians, was strung on the cross and, according to the Law of the Torah, this made him accursed and incapable of exaltation before God. This, to their mind, is a proof that Jesus was an impostor. The Christians accepted that Jesus was accursed but maintained that he was accursed for their sake. Subsequently, the curse was lifted and Jesus ascended to God Who seated him on His right side. The above Quranic verse gave the verdict that exaltation before God was without delay, and that neither the assertion of the Jews of an eternal curse, which would prevent exaltation forever, nor the Christian assertion of a short lived curse followed by ascension was correct. In this verse, God has also explained that the exaltation of Jesus was not in contravention of the Law of Torah because the Law against exaltation of the accursed is applicable in case of death on the cross. A mere contact with the cross or the bearing of some suffering on the cross short of death does not make one accursed and debarred from exaltation. The intention of the Torah is that since the Cross is an instrument of death for criminals, whoever dies on it is accursed because of meeting his end in a criminal state.

Similarity between Jesus and Jonah.

But Jesus did not die on the Cross as God saved him from such an end. Jesus had prophesied that his condition was like that of Jonah the prophet.¹⁰ Just as Jonah escaped death despite being in the belly of the fish, so too did Jesus escape death despite

10. Matthew, 12:39,40.

being on the cross. His prayer, “*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani*”¹¹ was answered. If he had died on the Cross, Pilate must surely have been punished by God for the angel had warned Pilate’s wife that if Jesus died, calamity would befall them.¹² But no calamity befell Pilate. Additional evidence that Jesus was alive, when he was taken off the Cross, is furnished by the facts that his bones were not broken, and that blood flowed from him when his side was pierced.¹³ He showed his wounds to his disciples after the crucifixion,¹⁴ and, obviously, with a new body and life, the wounds would not be present. This evidence proves that Jesus did not die on the Cross, and hence was not accursed. Most certainly, he died an honorable death (much later) and, like the other honorable prophets of God, he too returned to God after his death and was exalted in His presence according to the promise, “O Jesus, I will cause you to die and exalt you in My presence.” If Jesus had died on the Cross, his own words would have given the lie to him because then there would be no similarity between him and Jonah.

Quran resolves dispute between Jews and Christians.

This on-going dispute between the Jews and the Christians was finally resolved by the Quran. It is surprising, therefore, to find the Christians questioning the need for the revelation of the Quran. O you who don’t reflect! the Quran brought to perfection our knowledge of monotheism, it harmonized reason with tradition; it provided proofs of God’s oneness and His attributes. It furnished proof of God’s existence both with logical and factual reasoning, and through the phenomenon of revelation. It put religion, which had been handed down through the ages as stories and myths, on an intellectual foundation. It clothed every tenet of faith in wisdom and brought to perfection the evolution of spiritual knowledge. It removed the stigma of an accursed

11. *Ibid.*, 27:46.

12. *Ibid.*, 27:27.

13. John, 19:33–34.

14. Luke, 24:38,39; also John, 20:27.

death from Jesus, and testified to his exalted status as a truthful prophet. With all this beneficence, is there still any doubt about the need for the revelation of the Quran?

Historical testimony on the need for the revelation of Quran.

The Quran cogently gives the need for its revelation. It states clearly: “Know that Allah gives life to the earth after its death” (57:17). In the period preceding the revelation of the Quran, historical testimony bears out that the moral and spiritual standard of the nations of the world had fallen abysmally. This is admitted even by a biased writer like Reverend Pfander, the author of *Mizān-ul-Haq*. In his book, he gives testimony that, at the time of the revelation of the Quran, the Jews and Christians were in an abominable state of moral depravity and sinking further, and the revelation of the Quran was a clear admonition for them. Despite this admission, he puts forward a completely untenable argument that it was God’s plan to admonish the Jews and Christians by sending a false Prophet. This is blasphemy against God. Can we attribute to the Glorious God such a loathsome act in which, finding a community sunk in evil, He conceives of a plan by which millions are lead astray to their damnation by His own hands? Do the laws of nature, as they operate in times of trial and tribulation, furnish this evidence about Him?

What a pity that the Judeo-Christian nations, from a love of this world, are heedless of the Quran whose light shines like the bright sun. They call a mere man a god, and accursed at the same time. However, they deny the great Prophet who came at a time when the nations of the world were spiritually dead, and question the need for the Book he brought.

O unmindful ones! The Quran came at a time of spiritual darkness unparalleled in the history of earlier prophets. It found the world steeped in darkness and gave it light, found it astray and provided guidance, found it dead and gave it life. Is there still need for any further proof to justify the revelation of the

Quran? If it is argued that the Quran did not bring anything new because monotheism already existed, then it reflects an inadequate understanding of the issue. As already stated, monotheism that existed at the advent of the Quran was imperfect, and it is impossible to show otherwise. Moreover, the real spirit of monotheism had died, and it had ceased to exist in practice. The Quran, not only reminded the people of monotheism but perfected it. Consequently, one of the names of the Quran is *Al-Zikr* or the Reminder because it is a Book that reminds. Reflect with an unbiased mind whether even the monotheistic teachings of the Torah were entirely new, the like of which had not been given to any previous prophets? Is it not true that Adam, Seth, Noah, Abraham, and all other prophets who preceded Moses received the monotheistic doctrine? It could then also be argued that the Torah did not present anything new. O people! There isn't a new and different God every day. The God at the time of Moses was the same as at the time of Adam, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph and hence the Torah expounded the same monotheistic doctrine that the earlier prophets had.

Why the Torah repeated the same monotheistic doctrine?

Some may raise the question that if monotheism was not a new concept, then what was the need for mentioning it in the Torah at all? The answer to it is that the issue of existence and oneness of God is not a new one and has existed from the dawn of human history. However, during some periods, it was abandoned in practice and debased. It was precisely at such times when the focus on monotheism had blurred and indulgence in polytheistic practices had proliferated that the prophets came, and the Books were revealed to restore the original luster of the monotheistic doctrine. During the course of history, this issue has been polished thousands of times, only to get covered and concealed by the rust of time. Whenever this happened, God sent a messenger to restore and propagate the doctrine. In this way spiritual darkness and light alternated with each other.

An excellent measure of the success of any prophet is to see the conditions prevailing at the time of his advent and the quantum of reforms he instituted. It behooves one not to be distracted by the clamor of prejudiced, mischief mongers and to apply this test honestly. The key is to examine the facts of each prophet, and to see the condition the people were in when he was charged with their reformation and then to observe the factual change that he caused in their faith, character and conduct. This would clearly show the ranking of the prophets by the dire need for their advent. The need of a prophet for sinners is exactly analogous to the need of a doctor for the sick. Just as the abundance of sick patients requires a doctor, so too does an abundance of sinners requires a reformer.

Prophet Muhammad ranks ahead of all other prophets.

Keeping this test in mind, if the history of the Arabs is examined with respect to their condition at the advent of Prophet Muhammad and the transformation that he wrought, there is no doubt that he ranks ahead of all other prophets in his holiness of spirit, his great impressive personality and spiritual munificence. It becomes self evident then that the need for this Prophet and the Quran was far greater than that of any other prophet or scripture.

Consider, for example, what was the need for the advent of Jesus and whether there is any proof that the need was indeed fulfilled? Did he cause any significant change in the morality, habits and faith of the Jews, or did he purify his followers to perfection? None of these changes can be proven. The only thing that can be established is that a few greedy persons became his followers, and in the end betrayed him shamefully. And if Jesus met with a self-invited death, I can find no justification for such a suicidal action that forever mars his humanity and intelligence. Can an intelligent man commit an action that even under all man made laws is a crime? Certainly, not. We ask, therefore, what did Jesus accomplish? Just the accursed sacrifice that appears futile both to our intelligence and sense of justice?

No incremental excellence in the teachings of the Gospels over the Torah.

The Gospels are merely a restatement of the teachings in the Torah and do not contribute any incremental excellence. Large portions of the Talmud, are to be found in the synoptic Gospels and many reputed Jewish scholars allege that this is the result of blatant plagiarism. I have recently read a book by a Jewish scholar in which he devotes several pages to giving proofs of this allegation and has presented testimony regarding the specific passages that have been plagiarized. I had ordered these books specifically to show them to Mr. Sirajuddin but, unfortunately, he left before the books reached me.

Impartial Christians admit that the Gospels are a summary of Jesus' favorite passages from the Jewish scriptures, and argue that the purpose for the coming of Jesus on earth was not to bring any new teachings, but to offer his person as sacrifice. So it is back again to the accursed sacrifice that, however, I forbear to criticize any further. Thus, Christians are under the mistaken belief that the religious law for man's conduct, i.e., *shari'ah* was completed in the Torah. Jesus, therefore, did not bring any new laws but instead brought the means for the salvation of the world. They contend that the Quran started a new code of conduct that was unwarranted because the previous code was complete. This mistaken supposition has kept them from believing in the Quran.

Their premise though is faulty. The fact is that human beings are prone to omission and forgetfulness so that the practical observance of God's commandments wanes with the passage of time. Consequently, there is always a need to remind the people anew and to impart spiritual strength to them. The Quran came to fulfill these two needs but these were, by no means, the only reasons for the revelation of the Quran.

The Quran completes and perfects previous Books.

The Quran completes and perfects the teachings of the previous scriptures. For instance, the Torah emphasizes retribution and the Gospels patience and forgiveness. Each prescribed what was most suitable according to the then prevailing conditions. The Quran uses both these approaches based upon the exigency of the situation. Similarly, in most issues the Torah leans toward harshness and the Gospels toward leniency, but the Quran follows a middle course, placing emphasis on the need to consider situational requirements.¹⁵

Although the real spirit of the teachings in the three Books is the same, there is a difference in the degree of emphasis. The Torah may expand and expound one aspect of an issue, and the Gospels may do the same with another aspect. The way of the Quran, however, is always to follow a middle course, in line with the nature of man. Since wisdom demands that the situational requirements be considered, the Quran is quite unique in imparting this wisdom. Like blood, when it comes into the breast, becomes the source of milk, the commandments of the Torah and the Gospels, when amalgamated in the Quran, become a source of wisdom. If the Quran had not been revealed, the efficacy of the commandments of the Torah and the Gospels would have been like the efficiency of a blind archer whose arrows may find the target once or twice but miss more often. In short, the religious code of conduct came to us from the Torah in the form of stories, and from the Gospels in the form of analogies, but the Quran cloaked them in wisdom and made it available for the seekers of truth.

Torah and Gospels cannot compare with Quran.

How can the Torah and the Gospels compete with the Quran? Even if the first chapter of the Quran, the *Fātiha*, consisting of

15. The prescribed harshness and leniency advocated by the Torah and the Gospels respectively were justified given the exigency of their times but these commandments did not constitute the core part of the teachings so that they could not be changed.

seven small verses, is compared with the whole of the Torah and the Gospels, the latter books suffer by comparison. The structure and form of the verses, the suitability of their arrangement, the natural progression of ideas, and the hundreds of religious truths and spiritual wisdom met in the *Fātiha* cannot be gleaned from the entire Books of Moses or from the rather brief Gospels although one may spend a lifetime trying to do it. This is not an idle boast, but a factual statement that the Torah and the Gospels cannot compete with the *Fātiha* in the sagaciously formulated spiritual knowledge. Unfortunately, the Christian clergy is not disposed to accepting any of my proposals to settle this matter.

However, I would like to make another proposal to them. If they consider their Torah and their Gospels the perfect exponent of the Divine word and the repository of complete wisdom and truth, then let them produce from their voluminous scriptures, which number about seventy, as I would from the *Fātiha*, the distinctive characteristics of the Divine word — the facts and knowledge of Divine ordinances, the wisdom and gems of knowledge contained therein and the beauty of the arrangement and structure of ideas. If the Christian clergymen can produce anything comparable, I am willing to pay them Rupees five hundred as reward, and if they consider this amount small, I am willing to increase it, at their request, to any amount I can afford.

To obtain a final judgment on this issue, I will first prepare and publish an exhaustive treatise on the *Fātiha*. I will show in it the extraordinary marvels of truth and wisdom contained in the *Fātiha*, quite impossible to find in a human work, and furnishing proof, thereby, of its Divine origin. It will then be the duty of the Christian clergymen to prepare a similar work using the Torah, Gospels and their other scriptures as a source. If they choose to enter this contest, both the documents will then be submitted to three judges belonging to other religions. If the judges rule that the finer points, knowledge, and the distinctive

characteristics of the Divine word shown to be in the *Fātiha* are also proven in the passages presented by the Christian clergymen, then I will forfeit the Rupees five hundred reward money, which I am willing to deposit beforehand with a person they trust.

Is there a Christian priest who has the courage to accept this challenge? The word of God has the perfection of His attributes and is easily recognized by it, just as the Divine origin of the creation is recognized by the marvels it exhibits. It is absurd to discredit divine origin of some parts of God's word by arguing redundancies. For example, the sky is full of stars, but if a person points to a particular group of stars and states that this is not part of God's creation because there was no need for it, or names a few herbs, stones or animals and states that they are not part of divine creation because life would have continued perfectly well without them, then such an argument can proceed only from a deranged or a very foolish person.

An analogical comparison of the Torah with the Quran.

The Quran is a compendium of all that is necessary for the perfection of the soul. An analogical comparison of the Torah with the Quran is that of an inn that has been reduced to a rubble by violent storms and earthquakes. The bricks of the inn lie helter skelter with the bricks of the bathroom lying in the kitchen, and those of the kitchen in the bathroom. The owner of the inn feels sorry for the wayfarers and in place of the old inn, he has a better and more comfortable new inn constructed immediately. The accommodation for the travellers is in beautifully designed, and comfortable suites and nothing of necessity lacks in the inn. In the construction of the new inn, the owner utilizes some bricks of the previous structure but provides enough new bricks, timber and cement to complete the new structure to perfection. The Quran is that second inn. Those with insight can see it.

A rationale for the shortcomings of Torah and the Gospels.

It is pertinent here to answer another argument. A true and perfect dispensation is one that considers the specificity of the situation in prescribing a code, and that explains all spiritual issues comprehensively. It may be asked, then why is it that the Torah and the Gospels have been left bereft of this while the Quran has taken these characteristics to perfection? The answer to this is that the fault lies not with the Torah or the Gospels, but in the ability and readiness of the nations to receive a comprehensive Divine communication. The Israelites, which Moses dealt with, had lived for about four hundred years as slaves of the Pharaohs. This experience under their tyrannical rule had left them unaware of the meaning of justice and the rule of law. It is natural that if the ruler, who stands in the position of a preceptor and educator to his subjects, is equitable then the same traits get reflected in the ruled, and an intrinsic sense of fairness is born in them. The civilization and culture that results is grounded in equity, and justice becomes a personality trait among them. If the king is tyrannical, then the subjects also become cruel and oppressive and are usually devoid of the trait of justice.

This is what happened to the Israelites. By staying in servitude to the Pharaohs for an extended period, and having been subjected to all kinds of cruelty, their sense of justice atrophied. The first priority with Prophet Moses was to recreate this trait, and consequently the commandments of the Torah lay great emphasis on ensuring justice. There are some verses in the Torah that deal with mercy, but a closer look at them shows that these verses are meant to define the limits of just conduct so that unbridled emotions, and undue rancor may not transgress these boundaries. The real reason everywhere is to safeguard the provisions of the laws on justice and equity.

This, however, is not the objective of the Gospels that emphasize forgiveness and eschewing revenge. When we read

the Gospels analytically, it becomes evident from the text that its addressor was convinced that the addressees were devoid of kindness, patience and forgiveness and that the addressor earnestly desired them not to covet seeking revenge, but instead to develop the traits of patience, tolerance, forbearance, and forgiveness. The reason for this is that in the time of Jesus, peace be on him, the moral condition of the Jews had degenerated to an extent where they had exceeded all limits of animosity and rancor, resulting in constant litigation. Under the pretense of being the supporters of justice, the Jews had completely lost the traits of forgiveness and forbearance. They were, therefore, admonished and advised in the Gospels, but these counsels were time and people specific and not meant to form the structure of an ever lasting law. Consequently, these injunctions were abrogated by the Quran.

The Quran teaches a middle course.

The Torah emphasizes revenge and rigidity as is obvious from the law of retribution, and this is the rationale it provides for the historical battles recorded in it. The Gospels embrace, almost exclusively, forgiveness, patience and forbearance. However, when we study the Quran intently and impartially, it becomes clear that the Quran emphasizes a middle course. It repeatedly exhorts its followers to *amr-bil-ma'rūf* (do good) and *nahy-'anil-munkar* (give up evil). The former phrase means adopting a course of action that follows the religious code and intellect, and best meets the situational needs. The latter phrase implies foregoing what is evil and repugnant to the religious code and intellect.

On reading the Quran, it becomes obvious that the Quran seeks acceptance of its laws, limits and commands by appealing to the intellect. It does not confine an individual into a given personal set of do's and don'ts but instead provides a generic framework for action. For example, it lays down the generic principle to do good (*ma'rūf*) and to give up evil (*munkar*). These two principles, i.e., to do good and to shun evil, are so

comprehensive that they provide the intellectual underpinning for all Islamic codes, and create an imperative in all situations to determine what constitutes real goodness in those circumstances.

Some examples of the use of these principles may be cited. In the case of a personal injury, one should examine what constitutes the greater good in that situation — forgiveness or retribution. Suppose someone asks for a loan of Rupees one thousand and the proposed lender can loan the amount. However, the intended use of the money is to finance an extravagant wedding of a son following the family tradition of having firework display, marching band and singing girls. The principle of *amr-bil-ma'rūf* and *nahy-'anil-munkar* requires one to reflect whether the generosity of advancing a loan is misplaced. Thus, for the material and spiritual welfare of the believers, the Quran requires them to carefully evaluate the impact of all proposed good deeds.

Battles with the Jews only in self defense.

I have now completed my detailed reply to the second question of Mr. Sirajuddin. I have stated that the battles with the Jews were not the result of any attempt to forcibly convert them to monotheism. In fact, it was the continuous mischievous activities of the opponents of Islam that caused the hostilities. Some of them took up the sword to kill the Muslims, while others aided them. Some went out of their way to prevent the propagation of Islam. It was to punish these mischief mongers and to repel their evil designs that God gave permission to wage war against them.

Those who make the baseless allegation that the Prophet did not wage war during the first thirteen years of prophethood because he lacked an organized party belie the facts of history. Such allegations may have had some place if the opponents of the Prophet had refrained from cruel, bloody persecution and plans to murder or exile him, and if the Prophet had voluntarily migrated to Medina without an attack on his person underway.

However, the facts are well known even to our opponents. For thirteen years, the Prophet patiently bore all manner of hardship, but strictly forbade his companions to seek revenge for the evils inflicted upon them. During this period, the opponents went so far as to murder some Muslims and the number that were wounded or grievously hurt by them is countless. Finally, they launched a plan to murder the Prophet, but God saved His Prophet from the evil of the enemies and brought him safely to Medina. God then gave him the good news that those who had raised the sword against him would now die by the sword. In all fairness, is it at all possible to conclude from this that the Prophet had been harboring a design to fight from the very beginning and it was manifested when he was able to gather a few men around him?

Alas! The Christian critics of Islam are completely blinded in their prejudice. It does not even cross their mind that when the Muslims fought their very first battle against the Meccan army that was coming in their pursuit to Medina, the Muslims were far from being an organized group. There were only three hundred and thirteen Muslims, mostly young and inexperienced, who took the field in Badr against all the braves of Arabia. Is it at all conceivable that this little band of Muslims had set out to punish the hundreds of thousand of Arabs, Christians and Jews? Clearly, the Muslim presence in the battlefield was not the result of a man made design or plan to vanquish their enemies and be victorious. For if this was the case, then an army of at least thirty to forty thousand should have been put together to take on the hundreds of thousand opposing the Muslims. It is abundantly clear then that the Muslims fought this battle, under very trying circumstances, not because of any reliance on material resources but because they had been so commanded by God.

Why was it necessary for the Jews to accept Islam?

It is necessary here to answer another objection. Some may argue that if salvation lies in monotheistic belief and righteous

deeds, then why were the Jews invited to accept Islam? Was there not even a single person among the Jews who was a practicing monotheist and submissive to the commands of God? We have already shown that most of the Jews during the time of Prophet Muhammad were transgressors and the Quran bears testimony to it in verse 3:109, where it says, "...most of them are transgressors." Since so many of them had ceased to practice monotheism and the performance of righteous deeds, God's infinite mercy desired their reformation. So, according to His ancient tradition, He sent His messenger to them. Even if we assume that there were a few among the Jews who were monotheistic and righteous, they ceased to be virtuous when they rebelled against the Messenger of God. When even a small sin dirties the soul, how can anyone who disobeys and opposes the Messenger have a pure soul?

3. Love of God and God's love for humanity

Question: *What verses of the Quran deal especially with the love of man and God, and the love of God for man?*

The answer

The essence of the Quranic teaching is that just as God is One and without partners, so also must our love for Him be unique and exclusive. The Muslim confession of faith, “There is no God but Allah,” which is constantly on the lips of the Muslims is an indication of this fact. The word *ilāh* in it is derived from *walāh* which means a beloved that is worshipped. This statement of faith is taught neither by the Torah nor by the Gospels, but only by the Quran. Its close association with Islam has made it the distinctive piece of this religion. Five times a day, this statement of faith is called out loudly from the minarets of the mosques — a practice that is often resented by the Christians and Hindus, making it appear that it is a sin with them to remember God with love. It is only in Islam that the break of dawn each day is greeted by the caller to the prayer calling out, *lā ilāha ill-allāh* — I bear witness that there is no God — dear and beloved — except Allah. The same cry issues forth from the Islamic mosques and floats skyward at the time of the afternoon, late afternoon, sunset and night prayers. Does any other religion show a comparable demonstration of the love of God?

The sense of the word *Islām* also indicates love.

The meaning of the word *islām* indicates that its source is love. The real meaning of the word *islām* is to submit to Allah and be genuinely ready to sacrifice everything for Him. This is a practical state that is born out of love. This goes to show that the Quran has not confined love to mere lip service but has also taught the practical aspects of love and sacrifice. Is there any other religion in the world whose founder has named it *islām* (submission)? *Islām* is a lovely word that is loaded with the sense of sincerity, affection, and love. Blessed is the religion that is named *Islām*.

Quranic teachings about man's love of God and His creation.

Allah states about the love of man for God, "And those who believe are stronger in (their) love for Allah" (2:165). In another place God says, "laud Allah as you lauded your fathers, rather a more hearty lauding" (2:200). In yet another place, God says, "Say: My prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are surely for Allah, the Lord of the worlds" (6:162). The Prophet here is commanded to say to those who seek to follow him that they too must make the same sacrifices as the Prophet had made. Again, God says:

"If your fathers and your sons and your brethren and your wives and your kinsfolk and the wealth you have acquired, and trade whose dullness you fear, and dwellings you love, are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His way, then wait till Allah brings His command to pass." (9:24)

In another place God says:

"And they give food, out of love for Him, to the poor and the orphan and the captive: 'We feed you, for Allah's pleasure only — We desire from you neither reward nor thanks.'" (76:8,9)

There is, however, a second part to this question that inquires whether, according to the Quran, God loves man? The fact is that the Quran is replete with verses that state, Allah loves those who oft return to Him,¹⁶ Allah loves those who do good, and Allah loves those who are patient. But the Quran does not state anywhere that God also loves those who love disbelief, evil and cruelty. Instead, the Quran puts forward the concept of having conferred a favor on them. For instance, the Quran says: "And We have not sent thee but as a mercy to the whole world" (21:107), where the word *'alamīn* (whole world) includes disbelievers, transgressors and sinners. Mercy for them is the holding open of the doors to salvation if they follow the prescriptions of the Quran.

Trade of son for sinners not found in Quran.

I admit that the Quran does not speak of the kind of God's love for man where He puts the curse of all the sinners on His own dear son and then kills him on the Cross in redemption for these sins. A curse on the Son of God is, God forbid, a curse on God Himself because the Father and the Son are not separate identities. It is obvious that an accursed God is a contradiction in terms. Reflect, also, on the manner in which God showed His love for the sinners. He killed the good for the love of the bad. No righteous being can pursue such a conduct.

Quran reserves the use of the word 'love' only with God.

The third facet of this question, is directed at finding out the Quran's teaching about the love of man for man. The words in which the Quran has chosen to describe this relationship are mercy and kindness because the pinnacle of love is worship and so the word 'love' is appropriate for God alone. Hence, for human beings the words mercy and goodness are used instead of love because just as the perfection of love requires worship,

16. God's love of man is not like the love of human beings, where separation from the beloved causes pain and sorrow. The real meaning of God's love is that He deals with those who do good in the manner of a lover towards the beloved.

the perfection of mercy requires kindness.¹⁷ This distinction has not been appreciated by other nations, and so they have given over the right of God to others. I do not believe that Jesus could have uttered a word with such polytheistic connotations. It is my opinion that these odious words were introduced into the Gospels later and ascribed to Jesus.

In short, the holy word of God has used the word mercy for describing the relationships between mankind. For instance, God says that believers are those who “exhort one another to truth” (103:3) and “exhort one another to mercy” (90:17). In another place, He says: “Surely Allah enjoins justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindred.” Thus it is the command of Allah that men be just to others; of still greater virtue is that they do good to others; and an even greater virtue is that they show kindness to men like they would to someone near and dear to them.

Can there be a better moral teaching in the whole world? The command to do good has not been confined to merely conferring favors on others, but has been taken to the next higher stage where the doing of good becomes an instinctive urge, described in the verse by the term ‘giving to the kindred’. Although a person who does a good deed as a favor performs a virtuous act, there is some motivation of recompense and reward. Such a person may get annoyed if the favor is denied or not acknowledged, and sometimes, in the heat of emotions, he may remind others of favors conferred. However, doing goodness out of an instinctive urge, which the Quran has compared to goodness done to the kindred, is the highest stage of performing virtuous acts, and there is no stage of virtue after it. Examples of this stage are the acts of goodness performed by a mother in caring for her child for which she seeks no recompense and gratitude.

17. Even if the word ‘love’ has been used, in some places, to describe the relationship between men, the use of the word is to be interpreted in an allegorical sense. According to the Islamic teachings, real love is particular to God alone and all other loves are metaphorical and not real.

Torah and Gospel devoid of these stages of man's duty to man.

These are the three stages of man's duty to man (i.e., to do justice, to do good, and instinctive goodness) that the Quran has commanded. When we compare this with the Torah and the Gospel, we have to say, in all honesty, that they are devoid of this morally high level of teaching about the rights of man. How can we expect them to preach goodness, which is at the third level, when they do not even fully explain the first two stages?

Since the Torah was revealed only for the Israelites, and Jesus was sent only for the sheep of Israel, it is understandable that the Torah and the Gospel did not deal with justice and goodness toward outsiders. Instead, their commands were limited in scope to the Israelites. If these teachings were not constrained only to the Israelites, then why was it that when a gentile woman pleaded with Jesus and made her humble and sincere submissions, Jesus did not act mercifully toward her, but said that he was sent only for the Israelites.¹⁸ When Jesus did not set an example of mercy and good treatment toward the gentiles, how can it be expected that his teachings would command acts of goodness toward non-Israelite nations. Jesus said very clearly that his ministry was not for other nations, and it would be futile to expect his teachings to contain instructions of merciful dealings toward other nations. Accordingly, the thrust of Jesus' teaching is toward the Israelites, as he did not consider himself authorized to give advise to any other. How could he then give a universal message of mercy? If the Gospels contain anything contrary to the teaching of Jesus that his preaching and sympathy were restricted to the Israelites, then such a statement has to be a later addition because of the obvious contradiction with the former statement.

18. Matthew, 15:24.

Unlike the Torah, teachings of the Quran are universal.

Similarly, the Torah was directed toward the Israelites and its teachings also are directed only to the Jews. However, it was only the Quran that brought the universal message of justice, goodness and sympathy. God states: “Say: O mankind, surely I am the Messenger of Allah to you all” (7:158), and: “And we have not sent thee but as a mercy to the whole world” (21:107).

4. Light of the founders of Islam and Christianity

Question: *Christ said, “Come to me, you who are tired and weary, I will give you comfort,” and, “I am the light, I am the way, the life and the truth.” Did the Founder of Islam also make these or similar statements about himself?*

The answer

Prophet Muhammad is the Light and the way to Allah.

The Quran states very clearly:

“Say: If you love Allah, follow me: Allah will love you, and grant you protection from your sins.” (3:30)

This promise, that Allah will make those who follow the Prophet His beloved, is a far superior statement than the preceding statements of Jesus because there is no better station in life than that of being the beloved of Allah. Who has a better right to call himself the Light than the one whom God certifies as the guide to His love? Consequently, Allah, Glory be to Him, has named the Prophet ‘Light’ in the Quran when He says: “Indeed there has come to you from Allah, a Light” (5:15).

The statement, “Come to me, you who are tired and weary, I will give you comfort,” is absurd. If by comfort is meant worldly comfort and freedom from restrictions, then this statement is certainly correct because, being a Muslim, requires the discipline of praying five times a day. A Muslim has to get up before sunrise for the morning prayer and perform ablution even

when the water is freezing during the winter months. Five times during the day, he has to repair to the mosque for prayers, and spend part of the night, after getting up from sweet sleep, in the *tahajjud* prayer. He has to refrain from alcohols, intoxicants and looking at women outside the prohibited degree. Every year, he has to carry out God's command to fast for one month. In short, he has to strive with his wealth, body and life in the way of Allah.

When an unfortunate person, who was first a Muslim, converts to Christianity, he rids himself of this burden. Sleeping, eating, drinking wine, and bodily comfort become the objects of his life, and he is relieved of his former difficult obligations. He begins to live an animal existence where eating, drinking and unchaste bodily pleasures are his only pursuits.

If this is what is meant by giving comfort in the above statement of Jesus, then I admit that the Christians, by virtue of their unbridled existence, have much comfort in this temporary, inferior life. In fact, there is no parallel to it. Like a fly, they can alight on anything and like a swine, they can eat anything. The Hindus refrain from eating beef and the Muslims from eating pork, but the Christians can eat both without any restraint. How true is the saying, "Be a Christian and do whatever you like." The Torah has not only issued repeated injunctions against eating pork, but has prohibited even touching it, and has made it clear that this prohibition is for all times to come. But Christianity did not even forbid the eating of pig — an animal that was abhorred by all Prophets. I accept that the Bible portrays Jesus as drinking wine, but does it show anywhere that he ate pork? In fact, Jesus uses the analogy, "Do not cast your pearls before the swine". If pearls stand for the holy words then swine stands for defiled persons. This analogy bears clear testimony that Jesus considered the swine to be unclean because a relationship between the objects compared is a condition of the analogy.

Christians lack spiritual qualities identified by Jesus.

Thus, the physical comfort that the Christians enjoy is the outcome of a permissive and unrestrained life, but, as God is my witness, I state that they are completely devoid of spiritual comfort that is achieved only by communion with God. Their eyes are blind and their hearts dead and in darkness. They are unmindful of the true God, and have wrongfully made a humble man, of no consequence before the Omnipresent, a god. Their hearts are without spiritual light and they are devoid of the blessing of revelation. They have no love of the true God and, in fact, have no knowledge of the true God. There is none among them, not even a single one, that exhibits the signs of true belief. If faith is a blessing then it must manifest some signs. Is there a single Christian who has the signs of spirituality identified by Jesus in the Bible? It follows that either the Bible is wrong or the Christians have failed to achieve spirituality.

Signs of a true believer given in Quran found in all ages.

The signs of a true believer mentioned in the Quran are found in all ages. The Quran states that the righteous persons receive revelation, they hear the voice of God, their prayers are accepted more than that of anybody else, they are given knowledge of the unseen, and the assistance of God is with them. Just as these signs were manifested in the previous eras, so too are they manifested now. This proves conclusively that the Quran is the word of God and the promises of the Quran are the promises of God.

Arise, Christians! If you have the strength, come and debate with me, and if I am a liar, kill me. Otherwise, know that you are guilty in the eyes of God, and treading the path to hell fire.

Peace be on him who follows true guidance.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad,
Qadian, District Gurdaspur.
June 22, 1897.

About the author

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835–1908) arose in India at a time when the faith of Islam was under the heaviest attack by its critics. It was being misrepresented as a primitive, crude and violent ideology. Muslim leaders, with their out-dated knowledge, narrow vision and their own misconceptions about Islam, were entirely failing to meet these challenges. Hazrat Mirza, in his writings and lectures, put forward the captivating picture of Islam as found in the Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad — a religion of reason, peace and tolerance. He refuted all charges against Islam and established its superiority over the opposing faiths and philosophies.

His achievements in the revival of Islam and the reform of Muslims proved his claim of being one of the *mujaddids* (Reformers) of Islam who arose throughout Muslim history. He also claimed to be the Messiah whom the Muslims were expecting would come at the most critical time in their history. He repeatedly denied the false allegation made against him of claiming to be a prophet; on the contrary, his mission was to preach Islam in its pristine purity, as taught by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the Last of all the Prophets.

About the book

In *The Four Questions Answered* Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad answers questions sent by a Christian to compare the beliefs of Islam and Christianity on four points. These relate to:

1. How salvation is attained,
2. Why do other believers in One God belonging to other religions need to accept Islam,
3. The concept of love for God and God's love, and
4. The founders of the two faiths being the *light* for their followers.