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Holy Quran — the In-comparable, Unequalled Word of God

The Superhuman Character of Words and Works of God

By HAZRAT MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD

Founder of Ahmadiyyah Movement in Islam

When it has been firmly established that all things created by God are unequalled in their excellence, and, conversely, things which have no parallel are essentially of super-natural source, the puerile proposition, which asserts that it is not necessary that the Word of God should be unique or that its being unequalled does not neces-

sarily prove that it is from the Almighty, becomes baseless.

However, it is alleged that there exist in the universe many a word of man, the like of which has not so far been produced, and yet these have not been accepted as divine word. This erroneous conception has arisen from want of thought and deliberation ; otherwise, of human

word, howsoever precious it may be, it can never be claimed justly that it is beyond the power and possibility of human mind, and that the author of it has done a deed which may well be called God-like. A man can do what another man has done. When a word is called the word of man, the conclusion that it is, therefore, not beyond the power of another person, is indisputable and the possibility of its being unparalleled is also precluded.

There has never been a man who ever claimed that his words and deeds can be compared with those of the Divine Being. And, if there had been such an impudent person with such an arrogant claim, many would have challenged him. It should be known that it is exclusively the privilege and glory of God to have challenged all the nations of the world to produce, if they could, word like unto His Word, and to have roused them to summon all their resources for this contest. And when hundreds of reputed poets have laid down

their lives without being able to produce even one small chapter like that of the Quran, it will indeed be the limit of ignorance to call their writings as unsurpassable, and to associate them with the Almighty in this attribute of His. The Quran says that "if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it and call on your helpers besides Allah if you are truthful. But if you do (it) not — and you can never do (it) — then be on your guard against the fire whose fuel is men and stones ; it is prepared for the disbelievers." And again the challenge is thrown that "if men and jinn should combine together to bring the like of it, though some of them were aiders of others. And certainly We have made clear for men in this Quran every kind of description, but most men consent to naught save denying."

It is thus clear that the distinctive quality of being unparalleled
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IMMORTAL PRINCIPLES AND MORTAL PERSONALITIES

The source of all goodness, greatness, glory and grandeur is the Divine-Being. Man having been created in His image and having been breathed with His spirit, partially partakes of these essential attributes, to a more or less extent, according to his capabilities and his efforts. The Divine-Being as well as His attributes are the ever-living principles. They have the ever-abiding values, are ever-green and ever-fresh. Only these attributes are immortal. Every thing besides is ephemeral, transitory, unreal and passing. The immutable law of change and mortality is ever-operating upon one and all except

the Lord of creation and His eternal attributes. “Every one on it is subject to change. The Presence of thy Lord, the Glorious and Worthy, only abides”, as the Holy Quran has put it.

Man as His Vicegerent manifests in his life, to a limited extent, some of His living qualities. Prophets and Saints reflect in their lives some of the Divine-attributes to a more or less extent. But their bodies are mortal, in accordance with the general law and therefore subject to change and death. What remains after them are their good-works. In the words of the Holy Quran :-

“Wealth and children are an adornment of this world’s life, but the ever-abiding are the good-deeds which are better with thy Lord and better in hope.” (18:46)

By far the greatest tragedy with the holy founders of faiths has been that their followers come, sooner or later, to worship their bodies. Instead of imbibing the great, virtuous deeds of the founders, they begin to attach abiding value to their bodies. Personalities rather than principles become the pivot of the follower’s attraction and affection. Personalities take the place of the principles for which stood the Founders themselves and invited others to mould their lives. Various forms of rites and rituals come to take the place of development of the Divine-

traits reflected in the lives of the founders. Personalities are even given immortal qualities of the Divine-Being. The mortal man is invested with the immortal physical traits, thus raising him to the status of the Immortal Himself; making no distinction between the Creator and His creation. Those whose express rôle was to establish worshipping of the Lord are themselves made the centre of worship, love and service instead. While personalities are mortal, the principles of cosmopolitan and humanitarian values, are immortal. They have always been the same and would ever remain the same. Hence the eternal principles advanced by every Divine-faith have been similar, being unchangeable so long as human nature remains unchanged. It is for this reason that the teachings of the Holy Quran comprising comprehensively all the previous teachings in any faith beacon peoples of all faiths to unite on the common principle of Unity or alternatively to make a common cause upon the virtuous actions. Says the Holy Quran; - "Say, O, people of the Book, come to an equitable principle which is common between us and you, that we worship none besides Allah, associate none with Him and that we take not one another besides Allah, as our Lords." (3 : 63).

And again :-

"Say do you dispute with us about

Allah, whereas He is our Lord as well as your Lord, and for us (is the reward of) our actions and for you that of your deeds. We are sincere to Him alone". (2 : 139).

Speaking of good-deeds as the pivot of unity, the Holy Quran says :-

"Every person has a goal, towards which he turns, so vie with one another in surpassing in good-deeds; wherever you may be, Allah will bring you all together." (2 : 148).

Submission before the one Lord and an inter-relationship on the basis of good-deeds are the two cardinal pillars of a true faith and if followed in their true spirit and to their logical conclusion, are bound to result in creating a cosmopolitan community. However, it is seldom that mankind makes a common cause upon these common and basic principles; as Jesus expressed his wish : "Thy will be done, Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven". It is not often that the great humanitarian principles of justice, truth and equality are acted upon. It is only seldom that the arising of a great personality manifests in his life these grand principles. His personality and the humanitarian principles become one and the same, identification of the two becoming complete. The man of God becomes the very living embodiment of these principles and the two become

merged into one and the same.

Let us illustrate this point from the example of the Holy Prophet and his illustrious companions. When the Holy Prophet of Islam first claimed his grand mission of reformation of humanity, Abu Bakr was the first person to believe in his truthfulness. Asked the reason for his believing, Abu Bakr replied without the least hesitation: "His very face is a sure evidence of the Holy Prophet's truthfulness". Truth and the Holy Prophet's personality were one and the same thing. Abu Bakr needed no other proof, no other sign or miracle. The two had become identical with each other.

When the Holy Prophet related his first prophetic-experience to his wife Khadija, she at once allayed his fears for the future with the words, "Nay, by Allah, He would never forsake thee, for thou safeguardest the blood-ties, givest succour to the weak and the poor". With these words the Holy Prophet was consoled by one closest to him. Khadija meant as if to say that as the Holy Prophet and the cause of sunken humanity were identical, the Lord would never forsake his personality because that would mean the abandoning the cause of human deliverance. Ali then a youngman and a cousin hearing of the claim, implicitly came to believe in the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet so much so, that later

on during the darkest hour of his trial of flight, Ali cheerfully accepted to lie upon the Holy Prophet's bed to become the victim of the fury of the assaïan's sword. Zaid was another early convert to bear witness to the truth of the Holy Prophet's high claim. Thus these four earliest of witnesses, old and young, men and women, of the closest family relation as well as those remotest in kinship, came to have an implicit belief in the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet's mission, through the very truthfulness of his personality. None of them required a miracle. none needed a super-natural sign. They were all convinced of the sublimation of both the principles of truth and service in the Holy Prophet's personality, indicating the eternal Divine-law that high principles find their outward manifestation when they are expressed in the life of a high person. The conviction infused through a personality's actions find no parallel. No other evidence could produce such a forceful conviction, neither reasoning, argument or any supernatural sign. The miracle of the holy personality's character and conduct is the greatest and the most forceful of all the miracles. A proverb expresses the same truth in the following words, "The light of truthfulness of Divine-origin shines upon the very face of a Prophet's personality."

But as we have said, truthful princi-

ples are ever-present, and ever-existent realities while personalities are mortal and short-lived. A distinction has to be made between the two. It is the great principle of Islamic *Tauheed* which makes this distinction. Men are mortal however high or lofty they may be while the ever-living principles emanate from the Ever-living-Being who never fades or faces death. This highest principle of *Tauheed* was distinguished by none other more clearly than by Abu Bakr. When the Holy Prophet breathed his last, almost all his companions received an unbearable shock. Some of them were not ready even to believe in the truthfulness of the news. Abu Bakr having arrived from outside Medina first went into the Holy Prophet's house. Having ascertained the truth of the Holy Prophet's death, he came out to deliver his first public sermon thus :-

"O ye Muslims ! Whoever worshipped Muhammad then be sure, the Holy Prophet has truly died. But whoever worships the Lord, then He is the ever-living Being never to die". Abu Bakr then recited the verse of the Holy Quran :

وما محمد الا رسول قد خلت من قبله الرسل ان مات او قتل انقلبتم على اعقابكم

"Mohammad is but only a mortal messenger. Messengers before him have all passed away. If then he also passes away, or be killed would you relinquish your faith, to turn back upon your heels" ? (3 : 143)

It is related that the recitation of the above verse by Abu Bakr set all doubts at complete rest "Muhammad the Holy Prophet no doubt has died as

all prophets before him had died." Not one amongst the companions rose up to controvert Abu Bakr by saying that messengers before the Holy Prophet such as Jesus were living, how could then the greatest of them (the Holy Prophet) die ?

The acceptance of all the Holy Prophet's companions of Abu Bakr's interpretation of the Quranic verse, is a proof positive that no one among them believed in the physical life of Jesus in heaven or any other prophet. Otherwise how could they remain silent to the reasoning advanced by Abu Bakr from the Holy Quran. No one loved the personality of the Holy Prophet more than Abu Bakr and yet he was the first to submit to the verdict of the Holy Quran. Their love and attachment to the Holy Prophet's personality was subordinate to the Divine-law of death of mortal beings, even though they be messengers. Emotions and cherished thinking were made to submit to Divine-dictates and law. It is noteworthy that the argument advanced by the Holy Quran is that as all previous messengers have been subject to the Divine-law of death, so the same law is applicable to the Holy Prophet's personality. The denial of Jesus' death or any other prophet therefore amounts to admitting a fallacy in the Quranic reasoning. Or it would then signify that Jesus was more than a mortal being. How tragic and painful is the fact that while Christians advance Jesus' supposed physical life as an argument for his personality being more than a mortal, some of the Muslims should also join hands with them ! (To be Continued) —A. B.

ARROGANCE

By PROF. M. HABIB-UR-RAHMAN, M.A., Model Town, LAHORE

Luciferian tricks

When Satan brought to completion his luciferian tricks designed to outwit men, he was up to influence the pious men and religious leaders of the day. Though kept at bay he, somehow or other, created a high opinion of their personal qualities, attainments and knowledge in them. Lucifer declares in no ambiguous terms that he and his cliques have sown seeds of dissension among the Muslims and the Non-Muslims alike. Just consider, the whites and blacks are at daggers drawn by his successful stratagems. He talks boastfully that he would swagger the pious men into a dread of his power and make them arrogant. In Afghanistan the Devil has set in motion the nefarious offensive campaign of *Daba tul-Arz*, who are freely killing and subjugating the patriotic Afghan *mujahedins*.

Types of arrogance

Arrogance aims at undue claims to dignity, authority, wealth, scholarship and artistic skill. There is no denying the fact that we have unfortunately developed imperialistic habits in our dealings with the common man. We see them, we meet them, but all the time

we inwardly believe that they are bound to do obeisance to us. We never pause to think that, as human beings, we should have no hesitation in greeting them first, before the poor pay their respects to us. But we, out of our superiority and arrogance, shall seldom condescend to salaam those less favoured by fortune. We feel a sense of elation in saluting the far-famed persons, who are rich or occupy higher status.

We enter into a room where common men are sitting. We shall hardly greet them, but automatically feel that it is their duty to stand and salute us first. We pass by ordinary people though they are virtuous and are gifted with knowledge and skill, yet we do not feel inclined to pay them compliments—arrogance pure and simple.

We are invited to a party out of mere love and veneration. Since the invitation does not come from a wealthy man or from high official, we treat it indifferently and fail to attend the party, nothing short of arrogance.

On an invitation we arrive at the inviter's residence. After the function tea or meals are served. If the invited person abstains from tea or meals, he

is guilty of self-conceit and improper behaviour.

Somebody comes to give or seek information. We are engaged in conversation with influential persons. If we do not attend to the man because he is lower in dignity, we are, to all intents and purposes, arrogant. If we treat one with distance of manners or neglect him altogether, we are marked by an air of disdain.

If we do not greet persons with open arms, on the other hand, the expression of our face is rigid, we are naturally affected by arrogance. We are lying. A guest is allowed to enter in. If we do not receive him by getting up or are unmoved, we set much value upon our position, ranks, attainments or possessions. That we fail to treat a person who out of affection calls on us, indicates our pride or arrogance.

It is not befitting an orator, or an author, or a poet, to plume himself and expect from others cordial welcome all the time.

Arrogance explained

Arrogance is a cancer, a malignant growth which eats up the jovial mood of a man. It exerts a baneful influence on man's morals and through his in-advertence, develops in him disaffection and apathy. Such a man cannot court the favour of the people, nor he can

organise communities and bring together men of conflicting opinions. A few may admire him due to his great qualities, but he is not generally known and liked by the populace.

Arrogance is a fruit of the Tree of Evil. Satan instigates men to taste this fruit. The supreme abettor of evil takes immense delight in inducing people to perversion and vituperation. Highly educated and cultured, zealously devoted to amass wealth, warmly glowing with health and beauty, cleverly skilled in arts and crafts—these categories of people fall an easy prey to arrogance. And Satan from his Olympian Heights dances and cuts capers and indulges in debaucheries to prove that he has won a signal victory over the forces of moral and spiritual tendencies.

Our traditions are merely oral and not practical]

We Muslims are exhorted to read the Holy Quran, to listen to the sermons, but is there any individual who, imbued with Divine graces, advises men to lie prostrate before God and solicit His forgiveness. It is one's action, one's practice, one's humble prayers that count the most. Mere attendance in meetings, wherein sermons are eloquently delivered, do not serve the real purpose. Sermons and religious lectures, no doubt, have their

own peculiar values, for they enlighten men's minds and inform them about God's unity, His immensity, together with the necessity of maintaining moral and spiritual virtues for the attainment of man's eternal salvation, and ultimately His good-will. But how much effort is made to induce the audience to bow submissively before the Lord of Creation in self-abasement and humiliation. Nay, our mosques are utilized more as preaching houses than giving ourselves up to Lord's true worship, veneration, adoration and reverence.

Even the preachers take more interest in swaying the hearts of people by their eloquence than laying emphasis on *submissive* prayers offered to increase their fear and love for God. and thus to defy manfully all evil propensities. They hardly carry out in action what they preach. These preachers say prayers, but not absorbtive prayers, the practice of highly spiritual persons.

So far as my experience goes—I am speaking from personal observation—salat, in the sense to which our Promised Messiah has drawn our attention, is not offered either in mosques or other religious places. Our very faces show that we are secular people devoted to this world and its pursuits. There is scarcely any facial glory, and radiating light by which

the faces of spiritual persons glow with charm and grace.

Despite all the virtues we practise, we are virtually not free from the traces of arrogance, because we, with a few exceptions, live in Devildom. We should have heaped thousand curses on the Devil, who incites us to bright and voluptuous temptations. But we surrender. As the flashing threads of false gaieties and glitter unravel before us, we are content to let things drift on. We tempt the Devil to tempt us. May God rain down His Mercies upon us !

Thus Spoke the Holy Prophet

Anas reported God's Messenger as saying, "None of you believes till I am dearer to him than his father, his child, and all mankind." (Bukhari and Muslim).

God enjoins you to treat women well, for they are your mothers, daughters and aunts.

Whoever hath a daughter, and doth not bury her alive, or scold her, or prefer his male childred to her, God bring him into Paradise.

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Al-Qur'an and the New Testament —

Unaccepted challenge and purity of Quran and confessed corruptibility of Biblical texts

Al-Quran — A Challenge Unaccepted

The Holy Quran is the foundation on which the entire superstructure of Islam rests. It is the compendium of the Divine message brought by the Holy Spirit (Gabriel) and delivered to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him), to be proclaimed to mankind. It was not the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) who spoke under the influence of the Holy Spirit; he merely repeated the actual words conveyed to him. The Quran says :—

“The Faithful Spirit has brought it” (26 : 193) “Say : The Holy Spirit has revealed it from thy Lord with Truth” (16 : 102).

The Holy Quran was revealed in the Arabic language in the dialect of the Quraish. The absolute perfection of the language of the Quran is one of its outstanding features. Even the idolatrous poets of Arabia who were known for their literary skill could not compete with it. The Holy Quran, as the Word of Allah, needs no champion, no advocate and certainly no apologist. It speaks for itself. It advocates its own cause. It puts forward its claims, gives reasons and arguments in support of them and throws a challenge for all

times—a challenge which has remained un-accepted to date. The challenge is reproduced below :

“And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it and call on your helpers besides Allah if you are truthful”. (2 : 28)

The arrangement of the verses in the Quran does not follow the chronological order. Whenever a verse or a group of verses were revealed, the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) indicated its place in the order and sequence of the Holy Quran. Our critics have continued to criticise. They deliberately attempt to distort historical facts. By way of an example Eric W. Bethman in his book “Bridge to Islam” writes: “When Muhammad died, the Quran was not completed in its written form. It certainly was not arranged. It was more or less in the hearts of the believers. The texts were written on whatever material was handy—palm branches, white-stone, leather, shoulder-bones of animals and the memory of men. At first, little attention was paid to get all revelations properly collected. But when during the first wars of

conquests many of the old companions, who had the Quran in their hearts, died in the battle, apprehension was felt that some of the precious knowledge might be lost." Eric Bethman believes "When Muhammad died the Quran was not completed in its written form" but at the same time he says that "the texts were written on whatever material was handy" so much so that he names the material. Both statements clearly contradict each other. He believes that the Holy Quran was not properly arranged but also admits that it was retained in the "hearts of men." How could an improper arrangement of any text be retained in memory? The Holy Prophet (peace be on him) himself authorized this arrangement. In fact, during the Prophet's lifetime the Quran was committed to memory and was recited in the order in which we find it today. Allah says:

"Surely, on Us rests the collecting of it and the reciting of it" (75 : 17).

This verse clearly shows that the collection of the Quran (i. e.—its gathering into one whole) with correct arrangement of its various parts was brought about by the Divine guidance. It is beyond understanding that such a large book, treating so many and such varied subjects, should have been committed to memory and regularly recited in and outside the prayers and taught

by one man to another, without there being any settled arrangement of its parts. The Holy Prophet (peace be on him) himself appointed four principal teachers of the Quran who used to memorise it under his supervision and then taught other people to commit it to memory. These persons trained a number of other people who became competent to teach Quran. The four teachers were Abdullah bin Masud, Salim Maula Abi Hudhaifa, Mu'adh bin Jabal and Ub'ayy bin Ka'b (may Allah be pleased with all of them).

In addition to the four principal teachers there were many others who had committed the whole Quran to memory. Among these were Zaid bin Thabit, Abu Zaid bin al-Sakan, Abu al-Darda Ansari, Abu Bakr, Ali, Abdullah bin Umar (may Allah be pleased with them all). Out of Muhajirin the following had committed the Quran to memory, Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, Talha, Sa'd ibn Masud, Hudhaifa, Salim, Abu Huraira, Abdullah bin Sa'ib etc. Out of women Aisha, Hafsa and Umm-i-Salma had memorised the Quran. Most of them had committed the Quran to memory during the Prophet's lifetime. The assertion that no arrangement was followed in the case of single verses revealed at different times is so absurd on the face of it

that it hardly requires a refutation. How was it possible for anybody to commit the Quran to memory, if there was no settled order in which the verses were read?

Bukhari relates that the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) once said whoever reads the last two verses of the chapter called Baqrah on any night, they are sufficient for him". This Hadith which reports the exact words of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) shows two things: Firstly, that the Holy Prophet (peace upon him) himself followed an arrangement which he had made known to his companions and they all followed the same arrangement. Secondly it shows that the verses with which the chapter entitled "Baqrah" now ends were also concluding verses of that chapter in the time of the Holy Prophet and therefore the arrangement in the copies of the Quran at present is the same as that followed by the Holy Prophet (peace be on him). According to another Hadith the Holy Prophet told his followers to recite the "first ten verses" of the chapter entitled "The Cave" at the appearance of Anti-Christ. Had there been no arrangement of verses "the first ten verses" would have been a meaningless phrase, because it would not have indicated any particular ten verses.

The Quran repeats its challenge at

another place.

"Or, Say they: He has forged it. Say: Then bring ten forged chapters, like it and call upon whom you can besides Allah, if you are truthful".

This implies that the chapters of the Holy Quran existed in a planned form at the time of the challenge, otherwise the challenge could not have been thrown. Bible—Its Authenticity?

The primary source of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ are Biblical — the canonical Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. The earliest of the Christian sources are the Epistles of Paul. Although Paul was a contemporary of Jesus, he neither knew him nor met him. It is probable that Paul did obtain, by hearsay, information about the life and teachings of Jesus. Paul being under the influence of the syncretistic mysteries of the pagans set up a creed of which Jesus knew nothing. Professor Arnold Meyer of the University of Zurich is of the view that the doctrines and teachings of the Christianity as preached today, such as belief in Divine incarnation, death and resurrection and the necessity for such beliefs for obtaining salvation, were founded by Paul and not by Jesus Christ.

To say that the Gospels are inspired is a wishful thinking. None of the writers claims so. G. A. Wells in his

book "The Jesus of Early Christians" says that "there is in fact little to support the convention belief the four Gospels derive ultimately from the information supplied by Matthews, Mark, Luke and John". He further argues that there are contradictions which show that the events as narrated cannot all be true. The narratives are also uncorroborated by external evidence and even when they do not contradict one another they often fall to bear out each other". Bishop B. F. Westcott notes that the title of the books of New Testament are no part of the text of the books themselves. Their ultimate authority is traditional, not documentary. K. Aland in "The Authorship and Integrity of the New Testament" reaffirms this view. William Creg says that "the Gospels nowhere affirm or even intimate their own inspiration which had they possessed it they would not have failed to put forward". High J. Schonfield in "The Passover Plot" after thorough investigation arrives at a decision that "the four Gospels on which we must largely depend for information about Jesus, were the product of historical circumstances which to an appreciable extent are ascertainable. On the showing of many Christian scholars who have devoted themselves to the study of these documents there was no special inspiration either in

their origin or composition. They are dramatisations with policy features and what inspired them was the need and conditions of particular communities of Christians in different lands". He concludes that "None of the Gospels is original in the sense that it is a first hand authority".

Dummelow in the "Commentary on the Holy Bible" writes, "A copyist would sometimes put in not what was in the text but what he thought ought to be in it. He would trust a fickle memory or he would make the text accord with the views of the school to which he belonged. In addition to the versions and quotations from the Christian fathers nearly four thousand Greek MSS (manuscripts) of the New Testament were known to exist. As a result the variety of reading is considerable." Tucker in his book "The History of Christians in the Light of Modern Knowledge" writes, "the Gospels were produced which clearly reflected the conception of the practical needs of the community for which they were written. In them the traditional material was used but there was no hesitation in attending it or making additions to it or in leaving and what did not suit the writers purpose". Dummelow concludes that "by a mere statement of the reasoning used in support that the hypothesis of an infallible literature is as base-

less as the fabric of a dream." Donaldson in "The Christian Orthodoxy" proves that the "question of inspiration of the New Testament is of a dogmatic, not of historical import".

John Allegro in his book "End of the Road" which is a follow up of his famous thesis "The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross" says: "Conviction of the historicity of the Gospels traditions has hence been steadily declining among the Scholars since the beginning of critical research into Bible. Indeed it is not uncommon now-a-days for a so-called liberal Christian researcher to acknowledge no more fact, in the Gospel story than existence of a teacher called Jesus, and some kind of public ministry culminating in his execution at the hands of the Roman occupying power. The miracles' have long ago been attributed more to pious exaggeration on the part of Jesus' followers than hard fact".

CONTRIBUTORS TO KINDLY NOTE

Due to daily increasing high rates of paper, printing & even postage, it has been reluctantly decided to increase the annual subscription of this paper to Rs. 25/- inland & £ 4 or \$ 8 foreign Manager

WE BELIEVE

(1) After the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) Allah has completely barred the appearance of a prophet, old or new.

(2) After the Holy Prophet Muhammad Gabriel can never descend and bring Prophetic Revelation (*Wahy Nubuwwah*) to any person.

(3) If Gabriel were to descend with one word of Prophetic Revelation (*Wahy Nubuwwah*) on any person, it would contradict the two complementary verses:

"This day have I perfected your Religion for you" (5 : 5); "He is the Messenger of Allah and the Last (Seal) of the prophets"

(4) The Holy Prophet also said: "I am Muhammad and I am Ahmad and I am *al-Aqib* (the one who comes last) after whom there can be no prophet." (Al-Bukhari : Kitab al-aMnaqib).

(5) In the light of the above Islamic fundamentals, the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement never claimed to be a *Nabi*, but Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad claimed to be the God-Ordained Mujaddid (The Promised Messiah) of the 14th Islamic Century, having been expressly raised to re-establish the predominance of Islam in the world.

(6) He named his followers 'Ahmadi' after the Holy Prophet's *Jamali* (beatific) name 'Ahmad'.

(7) He proclaimed that no verse of the Holy Qur'an has been abrogated nor shall ever be abrogated.

(8) All the Companions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Imams are venerable.

(9) It is spiritually conducive to our Faith to accept the revivalist Islamic missions of all *Mujaddids* (Renovators.)

(10) Any one who declares his faith in the *Kalimah* (Muslim formula of faith—*la ilaha ilallahu Muhammadur Rasulul lah*) is a Muslim.

“The Quran and the Bible - Which is God's Word ?”-I

N. A. FARUQUI, LAHORE

Under the above title, a controversy has been going on in South Africa between a Muslim, Mr. Ahmad Deedat and a Christian society for which Mr. John Gilchrist has written a booklet which has been sent to us for our comments. We have not had a copy of what Mr. Deedat had said. But we welcome the opportunity to comment on what Mr. John Gilchrist has said against the Holy Quran and in favour of the Bible.

Let us say at once that, according to the Holy Quran, Jesus Christ was a venerable *prophet* of God and he was given a revealed book called the “Injeel”. But that book is *not* the present Bible, which may contain some of the teachings revealed to Jesus but which does not itself claim to be the book revealed to Jesus. Instead of showing that the Gospels were the Word of God from their own testimony or that of history, Mr. John Gilchrist has only quoted the Holy Quran in his favour, in one breath, and then attacked it in the next ! We will, God willing, show that the Holy Quran does not support the myth that the present

Gospels are the Word of God, nor is Mr. Gilchrist's attack on the Holy Quran of any use to him.

Book of God

A book of God must obviously itself say that it is a book of God. To be more explicit, such a book should itself say Who has sent it, why has He sent it, to whom did He send it, and how did the book materialize from the unseen to the seen ? In fact even the language of the Divine message should be known and not left to guess-work.

To illustrate the above, I quote from the Holy Quran : “And surely this is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds, The faithful Spirit descended with it, on thy heart, that thou mayest be a warner, in Arabic language which explains (the Divine messages) fully” (26 : 192-195).

“And believe in that which has been revealed to Muhammad” (47 : 2).

“Say : Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel (such as the Jews were), so surely he revealed it to thy heart by Allah's command, verifying that which

is before it (i. e. previous revelations) and a guidance and glad tidings for the believers" (2 : 97)

The above quotations make it quite clear that the Holy Quran —

- (a) was sent down by Allah, the Lord of the worlds ;
- (b) the agency employed was Gabriel, the Faithful Spirit ;
- (c) which descends on the heart of the recipient,
- (d) the manner used was Revelation,
- (e) the same manner had been employed for sending previous revelation to all the prophets, which the Holy Quran confirms ;
- (f) the heart on which the Holy Quran was revealed was that of Muhammad (peace be upon him) :
- (g) the language of the revelation was Arabic selected because, of all the human languages, it is most suitable for giving expression to the profound meanings of the final Divine message.

Does *any* of the Gospels mention any of these essential points? Not one. On the other hand they bear testimony on their faces of their being written by human beings who, as we will show later, are unknown people. The contents of the four Gospels, again, leave no doubt that they are conflicting accounts of the life-story of

Jesus. But of that more later. Let us first answer the criticism levelled against the Holy Quran.

Criticism Answered

Before we do so, let us make it clear that while the Christian Gospels themselves bear witness that they are not the revealed Word of God, as we will show later, Mr. John Gilchrist's criticism of the Holy Quran is not based on anything contained in that sublime Book but only on what some other people have said, and even that is misrepresented and exaggerated unwarrantably.

Shias and the Holy Quran

The first fault found by Mr. John Gilchrist in the Holy Quran is that "the Shi'ite Muslims claim that a whole Surah, the Suratu'n Nurain, is missing from the Quran".

To give the impression that *all* Shias make that claim is an exaggeration, which is unwarranted. Even if, in the heated Shia-Sunni conflicts of the early centuries of Islam, *some* Shias said so, why is it that the missing Surah was not included by them in their copies of the Holy Quran which were in their own hands and from which they recited day and night? That this was not done shows that even those few Shias did not really believe in what they alleged. In all the fourteen centuries of Islam, there have been inde-

pendent Shia kingdoms and countries which were free to do whatever they liked. Proof of such independence is that the Shia Muslims have openly held all their beliefs and tenets. They have practised Islam as they saw it. They have written freely about what they thought was right. How come that there is not a single case of a Shia copy of the Holy Quran being different from the Sunni copies even in the smallest vowel point, leave alone the main text? That is the miracle of the Holy Quran, and undeniable proof of the truth of the Divine promise made in the Holy Quran that it will be preserved for all time to come.

On this point let me quote Sir William Muir, a severe critic of anything he found objectionable, from his "Life of Mohammad" —

"The Shias, indeed, of later times pretend that 'Usman left out certain *suras* or passages which favoured 'Ali. But this is incredible. When 'Usman's edition was prepared, no open breach had taken place between the Omeyyads and the 'Alyites. The unity of Islam was unthreatened. Ali's pretensions were as yet undeveloped. No sufficient object can, therefore, be assigned for the prepetration by 'Usman of an offence which Muslims would have regarded as of the blackest dye. Again, at the time of the recension there were still

multitudes alive who had learnt the Quran by heart as they had heard it originally delivered; and copies of any passages favouring 'Ali, if any such passages ever existed, must have been in the hands of his numerous adherents, both of which sources would have proved an effective check upon any attempt at suppression. Further, the party of 'Ali, immediately on 'Usman's death, assumed an independent attitude, and raised him to the Caliphate. Is it conceivable that, when thus arrived at power, they would have tolerated a mutilated Quran, mutilated expressly to destroy their leader's claim? Yet we find that they continued to use the same Quran as their opponents and raised not the slightest objection against it."

May we add here that —

(a) Hazrat Ali was one of the dignitaries called in by Hazrat Usman for consultation before undertaking the copying out of the original prepared in Hazrat Abu Bakr's time. And Hazrat Ali was an approving party to the whole work.

(b) Before Hazrat Usman was assassinated, and even afterwards when the campaign of maligning him continued to justify his assassination, not one of his opponents — however unscrupulous — uttered a word about anything wrong in the preparation of the copies of the original Quran by Hazrat

Usman:

As we had said earlier, it is an unwarranted exaggeration to give the impression that all Shias, at any time, believed that there was anything wrong with the copies of the Holy Quran prepared at the instance of Hazrat Usman. Maulana Muhammad Ali, the world-renowned translator and commentator of the Holy Quran says in his introduction to the 1917 edition: "The Shias, however do not all believe that portions of the Holy Quran have been lost or that passages favouring Ali's claims were intentionally omitted by Zaid or 'Usman. The vast majority of them admit that the Holy Quran has been handed down to us in all its purity".

Opinion of Shia Scholars

It would be interesting to hear the learned Shias themselves on the Question. *Tafsir Sa'fi* is an important Shia commentary on the Holy Quran. It was placed and taught in all Shia schools. The learned author, Mulla Muhsin thus denounces the ignorant Shias who thought that certain portions of the Holy Quran were lost:

"Certain men from among us and the Hashwia masses have reported that the Holy Quran has suffered loss and alteration. *But the true belief of our friends is against this, and such is the belief of the vast majority.* (Italics ours). For the Quran is a miracle of the Holy Prophet

and the source of all knowledge relating to law and all religious injunctions, and the learned Muslims have taken the utmost pains for its protection, so that there is nothing to its vowel points, its recital, its letters, and its verses, which they do not know. With such strong measures of protection and such faithful preservation of the Holy Book, it cannot be supposed that any alteration or loss could take place." (p. 14)

The learned author goes on to say: —

"Surely the Quran was collected and arranged in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet exactly as it is in our hands ——— All these facts show conclusively that the Holy Quran was complete and collected in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, and it was not dispersed or scattered. It has been stated that those from among the Hashwia and Imamia sects (of the Shias) who hold a contrary view *are nothing compared with the vast majority who hold the right view. It should also be borne in mind that the contrary view was held only by some of the reporters who gave circulation to very weak and unreliable reports.*" (Italics ours)

After this the learned author quotes the opinions of several learned Shias, honoured and respected by the whole Shia world, who taught in clear words that "the Quran as sent down by God to His Prophet is exactly what is now between the two boards (i.e. between

the covers of the written volume) and in the hands of the people”.

We repeat that if any Shias, however few, *really* believed that certain portions of the Holy Quran were missing, what was there to prevent them from inserting them in their own copies? The fact that the Holy Quran throughout the world, even in the hands of Shias, is identical to the last letter or vowel-point, is proof that it is miraculously preserved, possible only at Divine Hands.

Destruction of Un-authorized Copies

The next criticism of Mr. John Gilchrist is that since, after the preparation of authorized copies of the Holy Quran, Caliph Usman ordered the destruction by burning of the unauthorized copies, there must have been serious differences or discrepancies to justify destruction by burning. And Mr. Gilchrist thought so highly of this criticism that he has repeated it more than once.

This criticism should not have been made at all since the report on this point makes it clear that when the Muslim empire reached its zenith in the time of Hazrat Usman, and non-Arabic speaking peoples came into the fold of Islam, differences only of pronunciation or readings of the Holy Quran arose. Even some non-Quraish tribes of Arabia pronounced certain words differently from the Quraish in whose language the

Holy Quran was revealed. For instance, they pronounced the word *haffa* as *affa*. And this difference of pronunciation is common to all languages and all nations—even the English whose masses drop the *h* and pronounce *horse* as *orse*.

Let us consider what happened in Hazrat Usman's time. An authentic report narrated by Bukhari thus describes the circumstances :

“Anas son of Malik relates that there came to Usman, Huzaifa who had been fighting with the people of Syria in the conquest of Armenia and with the people of Iraq in Azerbaijan, and who was alarmed *at their variations in the mode of reading* (Italics ours), and he said to Usman : “O Commander of the Faithful ! stop the people before they differ in the Holy Book as the Jews and the Christians differ in their scriptures”.

It is quite clearly stated that the differences in the far-flung corners of the empire were only of *qiraa't* (i.e. recitation or the mode of reading). So they were not serious or substantial as in the case of the scriptures of the Jews and Christians. But, as remarked by Maulana Muhammad Ali, it was feared that if nothing was done to put a stop to the differences of readings they might, after the lapse of a few generations, develop into serious differences. The Companions of the Holy Prophet were so jealous of the

sanctity and safety of the Holy Book that even in the Holy Prophet's time, Hazrat Umar on hearing Hisham pronouncing certain words in a different way put Hisham's own *chador* (wrapping ing cloth) round Hisham's neck and dragged him to the presence of the Holy Prophet. And in the time of Hazrat Usman differences of readings were leading to the charges of heresy by one party of Muslims against the other as related by Maulana Muhammad Ali. So to put an end to this evil, and to the possibility of different readings eventually leading to different writings by irresponsible people, Hazrat Usman had authentic copies prepared of the Holy Quran and sent to all centres of the Muslim empire to serve as master copies for reference and rectification. The copies unofficially compiled previously by private persons were naturally ordered to be destroyed.

Such a simple and straightforward event has been distorted by the hostility of the critics of the Holy Quran for the purpose of fault-finding.

Hazrat Umar's Report

The next fault found by Mr. Gilchrist in the Holy Quran is based on the following report attributed to Hazrat Umar uttered allegedly from the pulpit of the mosque at Madinah when he was Caliph :

"Surely God raised Muhammad, may

peace and the blessings of God be upon him, with truth, and He revealed to him the Book, and there was among what was sent down upon him the verse relating to stoning ; we read it, and guarded it, and understood it, and the Messenger of God, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, stoned and after him we also stoned. But I fear that when time lengthens with the people, a sayer will say : 'Surely we do not find stoning in the Book of God', and thus they will go astray by forsaking an injunction which God has sent down; and surely stoning is truly in the Book of God a punishment for the person who commits adultery, whether man or woman, either after its having been proved by witnesses, or by the woman's conception or the confession of the accused". (Muslim: Kitab-ul-Hudud)

The above report must have wrongly been attributed to Hazrat Umar for the following reasons :

(a) The Holy Quran was put in the book form at the instance and on the insistence of Hazrat Umar, in the time of Hazrat Abu Bakr.

(b) Hazrat Umar was one of the amanuensis who wrote down the Holy Quran in the time of the Holy Prophet. So he must have had a copy of what he wrote down.

(c) After Hazrat Abu Bakr had agreed

to the Holy Quran being put in the book form, it was Hazrat Umar who went to the pulpit and addressed the Companions of the Holy Prophet assembled in the mosque saying that all those who had any written portions of the Holy Quran should bring them along, with two witnesses to swear to the correctness of the writings. Such writings were checked with one another and with the hundreds of *Qura'a* who had committed the whole of the Holy Quran to memory in its proper order in the time of the Holy Prophet himself.

(d) The copy thus prepared had the approval of all the Companions of the Holy Prophet including Hazrat Umar.

(e) The copy was kept in the custody of Hazrat Abu Bakr and, on his death, *it was taken over by Hazrat Umar himself.*

(f) It remained in his custody for ten long years. If there was anything missing in that copy why didn't Hazrat Umar rectify the omission? He was a very powerful Caliph who promulgated major reforms. He was bold enough to remonstrate even with the Holy Prophet at the time of the peace of Hudaibiyah when he thought that a mistake was being made. How is it that though the Holy Quran was collected at his instance and he urged all Muslims to bring along any writings of the Holy Quran that they may

have, he did not bring along his own writings containing the alleged verse about stoning, for he was one of the scribes? Those who know anything about Hazrat Umar know full well that he was not the sort of man to utter merely a plaintive remark as attributed to him. He would have carried out the correction in the Holy Quran even if nobody had supported him if he thought that what he was doing was right.

(g) In the plaintive remark attributed to him he is alleged to have said "we guarded it (the verse about stoning the adulterer)".

Is the long recital above of the opportunities he had to include the alleged verse in the Holy Quran, but his failure to do so, the way he guarded it? If he meant, "we had memorized the verse in question" why didn't he quote it when referring to it? And why didn't the hundreds of others who had memorized the Holy Quran in the time of the Holy Prophet support him? If, as alleged, stoning used to be done by the Holy Prophet and his Companions, why didn't any one of the latter stand up for Hazrat Umar's alleged stand?

(h) Hazrat Umar scrupulously enforced the laws of Shariat (Muslim Law) to the extent of whipping his own son for drinking, as reported in another tradition. Did he ever require the stoning of any person guilty of adultery in his long

spell as the most powerful Caliph of Islam over an extensive empire in which crimes including adultery were committed?

So the alleged remarks of Hazrat Umar cannot be accepted, particularly in the light of the clear provision in the Holy Quran that a person guilty of adultery should be given 100 stripes (which may be with a light cane, or a bunch of twigs or even with a shoe). It is a well-known principle that traditions (sayings or deeds) of the Holy Prophet himself must be looked at in the light of the Holy Quran for he never said or did anything contrary to the Quran. That test should be much more forcibly applied to any tradition attributed to a Companion of the Holy Prophet — which Hazrat Umar was. Mr. Gilchrist must be aware that the scholars of *Hadith* (sayings or doings of the Holy Prophet and sometimes of his Companions) have set up carefully prepared standards of testing the veracity of a report. And they came to the conclusion that a number of traditions were forged by *zindeeqs* (i.e. those who profess Islam but are heretics or disbelievers at heart). A number of Jews who professed Islam as a matter of expediency played this treacherous role quite a lot. The report attributed to Hazrat Umar (through Hazrat Anas allegedly) must have been forged to

bring Islam into line with Judaism which provided for the stoning of adulterers.

Last Criticism

Mr. John Gilchrist quotes the following tradition:

“Ibn Shihab said: Kharejah-b-Zaid-b-Sabet informed me that he heard Zaid-b-Sabet say: I missed a verse from the (Surah) “Allies” (33Q) at the time when we copied (the correct translation of the Arabic word *nasakh* is to write) the compilation. I used to hear the Apostle of Allah read it. We searched it and found it with Khuzaimah-b-Sabet al Ansari: ‘Among the believers there are men who are true to the covenant which they made with Allah (33: 23Q)’. So we introduced (the correct translation of the Arabic text is “joined”) it in its chapter in the script”. (*Al Hadis*, vol. 3, p. 709)

Based on the above report, Mr. John Gilchrist says that this was *after* the copies had been made in the time of Caliph Usman from the original Quran collected in the time of Caliph Abu Bakr: therefore the verse in question was not in the original copy: hence the Quran is not preserved.

This conclusion is based on a prejudiced reading of the text. Mr. Gilchrist has alleged that the discovery of the verse in question took place *after*

the copies were made in the time of Caliph Usman, because the report occurs after the one relating to that copying. Actually the report in question is in two parts and is *not* one report as alleged by Mr. Gilchrist. The first part of which the narrator is Anas-b-Malik ends with the copying done in the time of the Caliph Usman. The second part is *by a different narrator* named Ibn Shihab and relates to the original compilation of the Quran in the time of Caliph Abu Bakr. This is clear from the same volume III of Al-Hadis page 707 (i. e. only 2 pages earlier) in which Zaid-b-Sabit himself narrates the same discovery of the verse in question *at the time of the original compilation of the Quran* in the time of Caliph Abu Bakr and its insertion in the *original* copy. So the verse was there when copies were made in the time of Caliph Usman, and it was *not* introduced later as misconstrued by Mr. Gilchrist. Those conversant with the books of Hadis know that those who wrote them repeat the same report again and again according to the requirements of the subject matter.

As already stated, the Holy Quran was assembled in one written book in the time of Caliph Abu Bakr for the first time, as it could not be assembled in one book while the Holy Prophet was alive and revelation was coming

all the time. But it was committed to memory as a whole in the time of the Holy Prophet himself. When compiled as a book, Hazrats Abu Bakr, Umar and Zaid-b-Sabit (the scribe) required the written manuscripts, which were in bits and pieces prepared as and when revelation came down, to be produced. The fact that the verse in question was found only in one writing is due to the fact that the Holy Prophet used to call one scribe at a time whoever was available. These written pieces, supported by the sworn testimony of two witnesses, were checked with those persons who had memorized the whole Quran. It was from such memory that Zaid-b-Sabit was searching for the written copy which he eventually found with one of the scribes.

So we are afraid Mr. John Gilchrist's castle on sand collapses.

(To be Continued)

Thus Spoke the Holy Prophet

"Abdullah b. Amr reported God's Messenger as saying, "The Muslim is he from whose tongue and hand Muslims are safe, and the Emigrant is he who abandons what God has prohibited." This is Bukhari's wording. Muslim has: "A man asked the Prophet, "Which of the Muslim is best?" He replied, "He from whose tongue and hand the Muslims are safe."

(Continued from p. 2)

lled and unapproachable in excellence belongs exclusively to the Divine Word and Deed. It is this very argument which helps to induce belief in the existence of the Creator, and without which the way to reach Him through the gateway of reason would have been closed. The fact of the existence of God, it cannot be gainsaid, is so closely connected with this great principle that it will be nothing short of cutting at the very root of Reason and Faith if we should dare admit mortal men into its purview, and ascribe to them the divine attribute.

If a person should refuse to accept this general principle, established after a careful observation of the laws of nature, he should not, thereafter, refer to Reason nor speak of the Laws that govern this universe, and should discard all books on logic and philosophy. How will he feel when he asserts that a bee, so perfect in its make, has undoubtedly been created by God, but His Word, with all the gran-

deur of its phrase and greatness of its teaching cannot be so perfect as to evince its super-natural source? Is it not a matter of regret that, whereas in the case of a bee, he professes that its physical structure is such that it lies beyond the power of man to produce a like thereof, but in regard to the Divine Word he avers that its like can be produced?

Such a person contemplates that man cannot create honey, but he has all the power to produce word like unto the Word of God. Does he not feel that if there should be, in the Divine Word, not even as much excellence as in the make-up of an insect, the objection thereof would have to be laid at the door of the Almighty, Who has exalted the inferior creation over and above the superior and higher in excellence, and has endowed the former with such arguments, pertaining to his own person, as have not been conferred on the superior one?