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The Muslim Sunrise

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in the light of

The Odes of Early Christians
and in the light of
The Dead Sea Scrolls

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etc.

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THE MUSLIM SUNRISE

The Muslim Sunrise is a quarterly magazine, founded in 1921 by Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq, the first Muslim missionary in the U.S.A. The magazine is an organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, founded by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India (1835–1908). The Movement is currently headed by Hafiz Mirza Nasir Ahmad – third successor – with Headquarters at Rabwah, Pakistan. The Movement aims at presenting to the world the true meaning and teaching of Islam. The American Headquarters of the Movement are located at:

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EDITORIAL

The Cult of Mary: Changing Images

Biblical scholars throughout the centuries have produced extensive and innumerable books on the history of the origins of Christianity. In our times, such studies have been vastly helped by the recently discovered Qumran documents, popularly known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. Most of them have been led to the conclusion, as a logical result of the overwhelming evidence available, that Jesus was accepted by his early followers only as a leader of the Nazarenes. The members of this community are known to have regarded themselves as the "maintainers" or "preservers" of the true faith of Israel. In general, there was always a great emphasis on the strict and faithful practice of the Mosaic Law among the Essene sects such as those in the valley of Qumran. The New Testament bears conclusive evidence to the fact that Jesus too claimed to have come to fulfill the Law of Moses.

It was only after the death of Jesus that the new belief in him as the "Savior" and the "Son of God" began to emerge. In his classic book, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, G. Vermes clearly alludes to the well accepted "role of the mysterious (or expected) Prophet." Only after a considerable period, the titles like the "Messiah" and the "Son of David" begin to be interwoven with the phrases such as the "Son of God." The role of St. Paul in projecting the new image of Jesus, and in developing the concepts of resurrection and redemption, is the subject of many books in the history of the Christian doctrine.

Consequently, many scholars have been led to the inescapable conclusion that the major tenets of Christianity, such

as Trinity, Redemption, Resurrection and Atonement, have frequently been subjected to conceptual changes. In fact, these frequent changes give the impression as if the Christian dogma continued to be custom-tailored to suit the moods and the trends of the times.

A recently published study on the Christian belief in Mary, the mother of Jesus, reinforces this view rather convincingly that her role has also undergone similar changes. Father Andrew Greely's book entitled *The Mary Myth* (Seabury Press) carefully explores the historical development of the place of Mary in the Christian dogma.

Evidently, the references to the historical Mary in the New Testament are rather brief and sketchy. Although the phenomenon of the conception and birth of Jesus is reported by all four Gospels, any further mention of Mary is quite meagre. In fact, whatever little is stated about Mary meeting Jesus after he started his ministry casts only a negative reflection on her. As St. Mark relates one such occasion when the mother and brother of Jesus came:

“And standing outside they sent to him and called him. And a crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, ‘Your mother and brother are outside, asking for you.’ And he replied, ‘Who are my mother and my brothers?’ And looking around on those who sat about him, he said, ‘Here are my mother and my brothers.’”
(Mark 3:31-34)

On the one hand is this proclamation by Jesus that henceforth his true kinship had shifted from his blood relatives to his disciples. On the other hand is the extremely exaggerated veneration given to Mary by the Catholic church which places her second only to Jesus. Perhaps she would have been given even higher position had it not been for the chastisement by Pope John XXIII to the Second Vatican

Council that "the Madonna is not pleased when she is put above her son."

The image of Mary has, of course, undergone several changes in the Christian history. Father Greeley's book gives an excellent account of this interesting historical development. Acknowledging the similarity of the belief in Mary with that in the goddesses in the pre-Christianity centuries, he writes:

"Mary is the Catholic religion's symbol which reveals to us that the ultimate is androgynous (uniting the characters of both sexes. *ed.*) that in God there is both male and female, both pursuit and seduction, both ingenious plan and passionate tenderness."

The same Mary whom Jesus is reported to have rejected in favor of his disciples was conferred the title of the "Mother of God" by the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. In the opinion of some scholars, including Father Greeley, this step fulfilled the need to express the feminine side of God in sharp contrast to the earlier Jewish writings which did not accommodate for the feminine aspect. Consequently, Christianity was influenced by the pagan traditions which were more receptive to this need. Such scholars point out the remarkable parallels between the Maryian feast days and seasonal celebrations of ancient fertility goddesses.

Later images of Mary continued to reflect the ever-changing cultural values. While the monastic orders found support for their vows in her perpetual virginity, the mystics devoutly glorified her purity. As observed by Woodland and Mark in an article in *Newsweek* (January 1, 1979), the average believers revered her more accessible human qualities — forbearance, compassion, maternal love — and turned her as "Mediator" of Christ's saving graces." They quote this

striking observation by theologian James Burtchael of Notre Dame University that "whenever Jesus takes on the image of the stern judge or excessively suffering Savior, popular devotion has swung to Mary as one who is *more approachable* to humankind."

Woodland and Mark further note that "By the Middle Ages Mary had attained an unofficial cultic status that neatly paralleled Jesus' own. She was known by the additional title of "Queen of Heaven" by that time. Special prayers were prescribed invoking her name. Later, the Jesuits enhanced her status as a symbol of Catholic commitment."

It was not until 1854, however, that Pope Pius IX proclaimed Immaculate Conception as a dogma of the Catholic faith. Lest some skeptics take it as a personal whim of the Pope, the First Vatican Council soon after declared the dogma of the papal infallibility (*Newsweek*, January 1, 1979).

The cult of Mary underwent yet another change when, in 1950, Pope Pius XII, on the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination, proclaimed the assumption of Mary as the official dogma of the Catholic church. It should be noted that, although the question of Mary's physical ascension was raised several times before, no pope had hitherto declared it as the official dogma. For example, as *Time* magazine reported, some two hundred years ago a monk wrote to this effect to Pope Clement XIII. Later, in 1863, Queen Elizabeth of Spain made the same request. Pope Pius IX became rather annoyed at a temporal sovereign's interference in sacred matters (*Time*, November 29, 1948). However, by the twentieth century, after thousands of petitions had been submitted to the Vatican, all earlier impediments were set aside and the dogma of Mary's physical assumption was officially adopted.

The place of Mary in the Catholic belief has been reemphasized with vastly increased force by Pope John Paul II. After years of reflection, the current Pontiff has issued his first Encyclical on March 11, 1979. This document, entitled "Redeemer of Man", discusses a variety of issues. On the role of Mary, His Holiness proclaims:

"If we feel a special need in this difficult and responsible phase of the history of the Church and of mankind, to turn to Christ, who is Lord of the Church and Lord of man's history on account of the mystery of the redemption, we believe that nobody else can bring us as Mary can into the divine and human dimension of this mystery. Nobody has been brought into it by God himself as Mary has. It is in this that the exceptional character of the grace of the Divine Motherhood consists. Not only is the dignity of this Motherhood unique and unrepeatable in the history of human race, but Mary's participation, due to this maternity, in God's plan for man's salvation through the mystery of the redemption is also unique in profundity and range of action." (*New York Times*, March 16, 1979).

In the context of the remarks of Jesus as reported in St. Mark, (3: 31-34) the Pontiff's proclamation poses a sharply contrasting picture. One wonders how these two roles can possibly be reconciled.

For the followers of Islam, the status of Mary has remained absolutely unaltered since the revelation of the Quran to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him). In contrast with some other religious scriptures, the text of the Quran has been preserved intact, free of any later interpolations and totally faithful to the form in which it was revealed to the Prophet. Similarly the revered role of Mary in the spiritual heritage of Islam was

never altered. As the Quran declared:

"O Mary! Allah has exalted thee and purified thee and chosen thee from among all the women of thy time." (The Holy Quran, 3:43)

And:

"Allah, through His word, gives thee glad tidings of a son named the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, honored in this world and the next, and of those who are granted nearness to Allah. He shall admonish people in his early years, and he shall be of the righteous. Mary said: Lord, how shall I have a son, when no man has touched me? He answered: Such is the power of Allah, He creates what He pleases. When He decrees a thing, He says to it: Be; and it is." (The Quran 3: 46-48)

The spiritual status of Mary in Islam is that of a righteous, purified, eminently exalted one among the women of her time. She is accepted as the mother of Jesus who conceived her son untouched by man. Neither the vicissitudes of time nor the emotional reactions to the social or psychological pressures of the ages have altered or dimmed this distinguished and revered position of Mary among the followers of Islam.

THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSON IN HISTORY

By

Dr. Mian Muhammad Abbas

Of the many billions of human beings who have lived on the earth during the last several thousand years of history, one may think of hundreds of thousands who greatly influenced the lives of a very large number of people, changed the destinies of nations and transformed the course of history. There have been founders of great religions, and great religious leaders, prophets and saints; great emperors and kings, philosophers, scientists, inventors, literary giants, great explorers and discoverers etc. If we consider all spheres of life during all ages, it is easy to see that the number of remarkable persons who have greatly influenced the human history will be quite large.

Are we thinking of the "great" and "famous" persons of history? No, not necessarily, since the concepts of greatness or fame are highly subjective and are dependent on everyone's own beliefs. On the other hand, one may establish some criteria to judge the influence of one person on others. Such criteria may include: the number of persons influenced, the number of years of influence, the number of nations or countries involved, whether the influence is expected to increase or decrease, the degree or the depth of influence, etc. These criteria will also include persons with a wicked or negative influence. Surely, even comparing or judging the influence on others in widely different spheres of life, cultures and ages is also a subjective pursuit, but to a lesser degree than comparing say, the "greatness" of two persons. Nevertheless, we may compare in a meaningful way the

persons who have influenced the human history most, and may ask: who were some of the foremost persons who influenced history most? We may even pursue the question a little further and ask: Who was the single most influential person in history?

An answer to the above question is the subject of a recent, very interesting book⁽¹⁾ by Dr. Michael Hart, in which he gives his selection and the ranking of one hundred most influential persons in history. The author, who is a scientist and an astronomer by profession, makes his selection on the basis of influence alone as judged by the above criteria. The most influential person in the entire human history, according to the selection and ranking of Michael Hart, was Prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam. Some other well known names on his list with their rankings are: Isaac Newton(2) Jesus Christ (3) Buddha (4) Confucius (5) St. Paul (6) T'sai Lun (8) Christopher Columbus (9) Albert Einstein (10) Karl Marx (11) Galileo Galili (14) Lenin (15) Moses (16) Charles Darwin (17) Euclid (22) Martin Luther (24) George Washington (27) The Wright Brothers (30) Alexander the Great (33) Napoleon Bonaparte (34) Plato (40) Umar ibn Al-Khatab (51) Asoka (52) Thomas Jefferson (70) Zoroastor (89). Some of the names which did not make the list and ended as runners up include: Prophet Abraham, Archimedes, Gandhi, and Abraham Lincoln.

The author gives his reasons and justification for the choice and ranking of each person on his list. Of course this list is inevitably controversial and many would disagree with his choice or the ranking of the names. Each person may have a list of his own, but nevertheless there are a large number of names on the list which are bound to appear on all. Despite the controversial nature of the list and the rankings, this

book is extremely interesting and a very pleasant reading.

The author's choice of Prophet Muhammad to lead the list of most influential persons in history, must come as a surprise to non-Muslims who are generally either unfamiliar with his life and the development of Islam, or ill-informed about both. For the followers of Islam (for whom it is a part of their faith to believe in Prophet Muhammad as the most perfect and the most influential person who ever lived or will ever live) it is certainly gratifying to see Prophet Muhammad's influence and contributions to humanity recognized as such, With Christians perhaps exceeding the Muslims in numbers, and the Christian nations dominating the world for the last few centuries, why does the author and choose Prophet Muhammad to head the list of the most influential persons in history? It is of interest to read the justification offered by the author.

The main reason for his choice of Prophet Muhammad to head the list is because of his influence in both political and religious fields. Prophet Muhammad, he writes, "was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both religious and secular levels", and that "today, thirteen centuries after his death, his influence is still powerful and pervasive". He gives two principal reasons for ranking Prophet Muhammad higher than Jesus:

"First, Muhammad played a far more important role in the development of Islam than Jesus did in the development of Christianity. Although Jesus was responsible for the main ethical and moral precepts of Christianity (insofar as these differed from Judaism), St. Paul was the main developer of Christian theology, its principal proselytizer, and the author of a large portion of the New Testament."

“Muhammad, however, was responsible for both the theology of Islam and its main ethical and moral principles. In addition, he played the key role in proselytizing the new faith, and in establishing the religious practices of Islam. Moreover, he is the author of the Moslem holy scriptures, the Koran, a collection of certain of Muhammad’s insights that he believed had been directly revealed to him by Allah. Most of these utterances were copied more or less faithfully during Muhammad’s lifetime and were collected together in authoritative form not long after his death. The Koran, therefore, closely represents Muhammad’s ideas and teachings and to a considerable extent, his exact words. No such detailed compilation of the teachings of Christ has survived. Since the Koran is at least as important to Moslems as the Bible is to Christians, the influence of Muhammad through the medium of the Koran has been enormous. It is probable that the relative influence of Muhammad on Islam has been larger than the combined influence of Jesus Christ and St. Paul on Christianity. On the purely religious level, then, it seems likely that Muhammad has been as influential in human history as Jesus.”

“Furthermore, Muhammad (unlike Jesus) was a secular as well as a religious leader. In fact, as the driving force behind the Arab conquests, he may well rank as the most influential political leader of all time.”

The author of the book *The 100* has to be commended for his insight in recognizing the role and influence of Prophet Muhammad on the world history and in particular on the Muslims, despite the distorted image of his personality and the religion of Islam that is generally portrayed in the West,

It is clear, however, that a person who has been a dominantly moralizing influence on the lives of a significant part of the population of the world for thirteen centuries and continues to be a major influence on the personal lives of more than 800 million followers of Islam, can only be a highly virtuous and an exemplary personality.

Why is there such an enormous influence of Prophet Muhammad on the everyday lives of the Muslims? What are the roots and the sources of his influence and what is his status and role in Islam? In the following few pages, we give a brief discussion on the Islamic views about the above questions, since a clear understanding of the concepts involved forms the basis for an understanding of Islam and its developing role in the modern world.

First of all, the most fundamental doctrine of Islam is the concept of the absolute unity of God. This concept is basic to the teachings of all true prophets and messengers of God, who have appeared in all nations in all ages, and derives itself directly from God's revelation to the prophets. It is not a heritage of any particular prophet or religion. Man is capable of acquiring the divine attributes of God through intellectual, moral, and spiritual progress. The prophets of God attain the highest moral and spiritual levels and become manifestations of the divine attributes of God. They become recipients of revelation from God, through which spiritual guidance and knowledge of the unknown is given to them. They attain nearness to God, their prayers are heard most abundantly, and frequent signs of God's existence are shown to them. The prophets thus become the single most conclusive proof of the existence of God.

Islam recognizes that true prophets of God have appeared in all nations. Some of the great prophets who have been

particular mentioned in the Quran by name are Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. Because of the social conditions of the times, the missions of earlier prophets were for limited times and specific regions. They were the best persons of their times, who fulfilled the spiritual needs of their nations in their ages. Each prophet had the opportunity to show the perfection of certain types of moral qualities in accordance with the needs of the times.

The above is a brief summary of the concept of prophet-hood in Islam. For detailed discussions we refer the reader to more comprehensive sources. ⁽²⁾

At the time of the advent of Prophet Muhammad, mankind was entering into a new era of rapid progress in human living conditions. Human society and the world conditions, in general, were now sufficiently developed so that a great prophet's mission could extend to all mankind. In addition, it was now possible to preserve God's revelation to his prophet for all times. The spiritual guidance which had been given to the earlier prophets in peace-meal at appropriate times, could now be completed and revealed in its true form to a single prophet, free of any distortions of the times.

Prophet Muhammad was thus the chosen prophet who was the recipient of this final form of revelation for spiritual guidance of all mankind. The Quran, which is a compilation of the revelations received by the Prophet over a period of about 23 years, is thus the source of this guidance. It comprises of a summary of the true spiritual guidance revealed to the earlier prophets, and its completion and perfection revealed to Prophet Muhammad.

The Quran ⁽³⁾ refers to it in the following verse which was the last to be revealed. (The Prophet died 82 days after its revelation.)

"This day have I (God) perfected your religion for you and completed My favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as religion" (Quran, 5:4)

The advent of Prophet Muhammad was thus a culmination of the spiritual evolution of the Prophets, and his status in Islam is of the leader of the Prophets and the Master Prophet. The Quran refers to his status in the following verse:

"Muhammad is no father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets and Allah has full knowledge of all things." (Quran, 33:4)

The term "Seal of the Prophets" is interpreted to mean primarily as the leader, the master, the best, and the noblest of the prophets, and the "Seal" in the sense that he testifies to the truthfulness of the prophets. It is through his following alone that the rank of prophethood can now be achieved.

The above two basic concepts of Islam, namely, the absolute unity of God, and the Master prophethood of Muhammad as the best manifestation of the attributes of God through excellence and perfection of his moral qualities are contained in the most fundamental tenet of Islam, as revealed to the Prophet:

"There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger."

The first part of this apparently simple tenet is a declaration of belief in the unity of God, whereas the second part is the belief in following the example of Prophet Muhammad in the worship of God and acquiring the divine attributes of God. The above tenet forms a cornerstone of a Muslim's faith, and is universally employed as an oath for formal conversion into Islam.

Following the example of the Prophet is thus an intergral

part of faith for the believers of Islam. In fact, the love for God, and God's love for the believers are inseparably tied to the following of the Prophet, as in the Quran the Prophet is asked to say:

"Say (Oh Prophet), if you love Allah, follow me: then will Allah love you and forgive your sins. And Allah is Most forgiving and Merciful." (Quran 33:22) .

Prophet Muhammad appeared under the floodlight of history, and every aspect of his life is well recorded in great detail. For the followers of Islam, belief in Prophet Muhammad and his teachings is not a matter of faith alone. He is recognized as the Master Prophet because he fulfilled the conditions and showed the signs of the greatest prophets of all, on the same basis on which the prophethood of all other prophets is justified. He was the most perfect and the noblest of all men, and as the Master Prophet, he was a manifestation of the most perfect moral qualities and attributes shown by all earlier prophets. His life was the most exemplary life in all aspects of human behavior. For the Muslims, the excellence of his moral qualities is unparalleled in history.

The importance of his personal example and practices (Sunnah) and his sayings was realized from the earliest. Consequently, the sayings and the practices of the Prophet, collectively referred to as "traditions" (*Hadees*) began to be preserved in memory as well as in the written form, even in the lifetime of the Prophet. This practice very quickly led to the development of a form of science and whole schools dedicated to the collection, preservation, and interpretation of the traditions of the Prophet. Thousands of people during all periods of Islamic history, have dedicated their entire lives to the study and interpretation of traditions of the Prophet. Two of the greatest and monumental works of traditions

(*Hadees*) were compiled about two hundred years after the death of the Prophet by Bukhari and Muslim. These two works are regarded as the most authentic and reliable sources of traditions of the Prophet, second in importance only to the Quran. However, it should be noted that whereas the authenticity of the Quran is unquestionable, there are some traditions which have always been regarded as questionable or unreliable. However, there are a very large number of traditions which are generally regarded as authentic and are accepted as true. Thus, the sources of Prophet Muhammad's influence and the foundations of Islam are based on the Quran, which contains the revelations of the Prophet, and the traditions, which contain the practice and the sayings of the Prophet (much of which is also believed to be a form of revelation). Whereas the former is the Word of God, the latter is the Prophet's interpretation and practice of it. The believers are exhorted to follow the Prophet in order to achieve the highest moral and spiritual progress and to attain the nearness of God.

For more than thirteen centuries the goal of all the true believers in Islam has been to follow the example of Prophet Muhammad, in form or in spirit, in all spheres of their lives. It can be said very safely that there is no other person in the entire human history whose life, in public as well as in private, whose ideas, morals and actions in all spheres of life have been so well recorded and so well known. It can also be said there is no other person whose example has been followed so scrupulously by so many people. And certainly no other man has been loved and admired more than the Prophet, as he was so prophetically named "Muhammad", meaning, "the most admired". The magnitude of love and admiration for the Prophet perhaps may be judged from the

following data:

Of the about 800 million Muslims in the world, even if only ten percent are assumed to observe prescribed prayers in the shortened form of three times a day, (with ten recitations of the prescribed part of the prayers every day) about 80 million persons recite the prayer for blessings (Darood) on Prophet Muhammad and his true followers collectively, for a total of 800 million times every day. There is no parallel of it for any other person. Out of love and gratitude for the Prophet, they pray:

“Oh Allah, shower thy mercy upon Muhammad as Thou hast showered Thy mercy upon Abraham and upon the followers of both of them, for verily, Thou art the praiseworthy and Lord of Honor.”

There are indications that the influence of Prophet Muhammad and Islam is still increasing on a worldwide basis. A religious revival of Islam along with political and social changes is sweeping the entire Muslim world at the present time. With the vast energy resources of world almost exclusively in their hands, social and political changes of major proportions are expected. But Islam has shown a remarkable resilience and inner strength to withstand the social and political changes of the past, including the communism and socialism of the twentieth century. Among the religious revivals, the most noteworthy and successful is that of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam founded by Hazrat Ahmad of Qadian, India (1835-1908). He claimed to be the Promised Messiah and the Mahdi, and the prophet of God who was expected in these times by Muslims and Christians, as well as by the followers of other religions. He produced a mass of literature in support of his claims and in defense of the superiority of Islamic ideas and teachings, and

left behind a Movement dedicated to carry on his work after him. A renaissance of Islam is taking place through him and his Movement at the moment. We refer the reader to several excellent works and sources of information which are available about the life and works of Hazrat Ahmad and the Movement founded by him.^(4,5) We conclude here on a prophecy of Hazrat Ahmad about the future of Islam and his Movement:

“My heart bleeds on the practice of worship of the dead, and I feel greatly depressed about it. What more grievous thing could there be than that a humble man has been made a God, and a handful of dust has been thought to be the lord of all the worlds. I would have long perished with this grief, had not my Lord and all powerful God consoled me that the belief of the true unity of God will eventually prevail, and the non-Gods will perish and the false-Gods will be removed from the positions of Godhood. . .”

There will be a new Earth and a new Heaven. The days are now near when the sun of truth (namely Islam) will rise from the West. . . The time is near that all religions except Islam will perish, and the weapons of all religions will be broken except the heavenly weapon of Islam which will neither break nor will be blunted till it disintegrates all the erroneous beliefs and falsehood about religion (“Dujjaliatt”). The hour is near when the belief of the true unity of God which even the inhabitants of the deserts and the people ignorant of all learnings feel in their hearts, will spread in all countries. Then there will not remain any atonement or any artificial God, and a single stroke of God’s hand will nullify all the plans of disbelief and falsehood. However,

it will not be through any sword or any gun, but through an enlightenment of those with righteous spirit and through a blessing of the divine light on the pure hearts..”

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4. See e.g., M. Zafrullah Khan, *Ahmadiyyat: The Renaissance of Islam*; A.R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*; M.B. Ahmad, *The Promised Messiah*; H.M.B. Ahmad, *Invitation*; Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *The Teachings of Islam*.
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**DELIVERANCE OF JESUS FROM THE CROSS
IN THE LIGHT OF
THE ODES OF EARLY CHRISTIANS**

By
Sheikh Abdul Qadir

An invaluable treasure of 42 Odes in Syriac, known as 'The Odes of Solomon', was discovered in the beginning of the twentieth century. The treasure belongs to the early Jewish Christians, references to which are found in the literature of Christians of the Early and Middle Ages but no copy of the Odes could be discovered for centuries. James Rendel Harris, the well-known scholar of Syriac, discovered in 1908, a copy of the 42 Odes, published them for the first time in 1909. What is most amazing about this discovery is the fact that the collection contains Odes in which Jesus Christ "Himself is the speaker". Their theme, their style and diction prove beyond doubt that they reflect ideas of a Messenger of God who speaks from personal experience on ideas which are at once deep and lofty, on spiritual experiences, of a prophetic nature, and incidents showing the special favors of God giving vent to deep thankfulness to God Almighty. Scholars are all praise for the beauty and the spiritual quality of these poems. Some statements in the Odes are a mystery to the scholars. The Odes have a striking resemblance to the Hebrew thanks-giving hymns of the Dead Sea Scrolls. They seem to be two fragments of the same gem set in the literary frame of early times in Syriac and Hebrew languages. In the Odes the personality of the Prophet of Nazareth is conspicuous, while in the Scrolls the "Teacher of Righteousness" is a hidden personality. Scholars are of the opinion that the Odes remind

us of the 'Hebrew Gospel' of early Christians. This Gospel was destroyed by the cruel hand of the Inquisition. Yet some quotations from this Gospel have been reported in the writings of Church fathers.

We give below some of the opinions expressed by scholars about the Syriac manuscript which is probably a late first-century Jewish-Christian hymn book.

A quotation from *The Lost Books of the Bible: The Forgotten Books of Eden* under the caption 'The Odes of Solomon', is reproduced below:-

"They have come down to us in a single and very ancient document in Syrian language. Evidently that document is a translation from the original Greek. Critical debate has raged around these Odes; one of the most plausible explanations is that they are songs of newly baptized Christians of the First Century.

They are strangely lacking in historical allusions. Their radiance is no reflection of other days. They do not borrow from either the Old Testament or the Gospels. The Inspiration of these verses is first-hand. They remind you of Aristide's remark, "A New People with whom something Divine is mingled". Here is vigour and insight to which we can find parallels only in the most exalted parts of the Scriptures". (Page 120)

According to *Encyclopedia Americana*:-

They were probably written towards the end of the first century and possibly are the work of several writers. They are quoted in the gnostic book of the 3rd century, *Pistis Sophia* and in the Institutes of Firmianus Lactantives. They were discovered in 1908 by James Rendel Harris (1852-1941) in a 16th century Syriac manuscript in his possession, which contained also the Psalms of Solomon. While they are undoubtedly of

Christian origin, they resemble the New Testament only slightly. (Solomon - Odes of)

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* states that:

The idea that the Odes stem from gnosticism is untenable - Greek has been regarded as their original language, but their content indicates that their home must be sought in Mesopotamia. There seems to be an echo of the history of Edessa, Syriac provenance also would explain some affinities with the thanksgiving Psalms found at Qumran. (Solomon - Odes of)

Hugh J. Schonfield in his book, *According to the Hebrews*, page 263, writes:

"The Odes are a valuable witness to other incidents in the life of Christ, as we have it (in Lost Gospel of Hebrews) and will repay careful study in this connection."

James H. Charlesworth, the author of *Qumran, John and the Odes of Solomon*, writes that:

"The Odes of Solomon were originally composed in Syriac and are contemporaneous with John; both were composed around A.D. 100" (P. 109) "Recent research disclosed that the Odes are indebted in many ways to the Essenes." (P. 109)

"-- The logical conclusion, therefore, is that the Odes are probably influenced by the Scrolls: indeed in some passages they may be directly dependent upon them. --" (P. 131)

"It seems likely that the Odes and John are influenced by the Scrolls." (P. 134)

"-- Moreover, if both the Odes and John share the same milieu, as is extremely probable, and if the Odes were originally composed in Syriac, as recent research

indicates, then it would be well for us to look to northern Palestine and Syria for the provenance of the Odes and of at least one recension of John." (pp. 135-136)

The Odes are no doubt the legacy of the early Christians. The language is Syriac, which was the mother-tongue of the Palestinian Christians. This language resembles the mother-tongue of Jesus Christ. J. W. Bowman writes:

"The arduous and fruitful labour of a succession of scholars over a period of fifty years has made it appear as nearly certain as the case will permit that Christian Palestinian Syriac is substantially like the Galilean Aramaic spoken by our Lord and his disciples. Intensive study of this type of Syriac has made it clear both that 'an Aramaic sayings - source or tradition lies behind the Synoptic Gospels', that this tradition is found 'most frequently and sometimes exclusively, in the words of Jesus', and that generally speaking these words both in sermon and in story parable are cast in the form of Aramaic poetry". (Peak's Commentary of the Bible, 1963, 643D.)

Scholars have come to the conclusion that Jesus was a perfect poet of his time. J. W. Bowman, in his essay, says:

"It is becoming increasingly clearer that Jesus was a poet of no mean ability, and that much of his sermonic material — was cast in the form of Aramaic poetical structure." (Peak's Commentary, 643d).

The theme of most of the poem is: God saved me from the jaws of death. I was taken for a dead man, but I am still alive. I approached my people that were scattered here and there. They hearkened to my voice and gathered around me. I breathed life into them; then I, with my followers became

settled in a land which is nothing less than a paradise and where there is peace and stability.

“Jesus and his mother stood on a lofty summit and uttered voice from one end of the earth to the other.” This message of Jesus may be either in his own words, or, they are words put imaginatively in the mouth of Jesus. We reproduce hereunder the Odes as contained in the Syriac manuscript:

I

In Ode 28, Jesus Christ alludes to his escape from death on the Cross, and says that “they sought for my death and did not find it”.

1. As the wings of doves over their nestlings; and the mouth of their nestlings towards their mouths.
2. So also are the wings of the Spirit over my heart:
3. My heart is delighted and exults: like the babe who exults in the womb of his mother:
4. I believed; therefore I was at rest; for faithful is He in whom I have believed:
5. He has richly blessed me and my head is with Him: and the sword shall not divide me from Him, nor the scimitar;
6. For I am ready before destruction comes; and I have been set on His immortal pinions:
7. And He showed me His sign: forth and given me to drink, and from that life is the spirit within me, and it cannot die, for it lives.
8. They who saw me marvelled at me, because I was persecuted, and they supposed that I was swallowed up; for I seemed to them as one of the lost;
9. And my oppression became my salvation; and I was their reprobation because there was no zeal in me;
10. Because I did good to every man I was hated;
11. And they came round me like mad dogs, who ignorantly

attack their masters;

12. For their thought is corrupt and their understanding perverted.
13. But I was carrying water in my right hand, and their bitterness I endured by my sweetness;
14. And I did not perish, for I was not their brother nor was my birth like theirs.
15. And they sought for my death and did not find it: for I was older than the memorial of them;
16. And vainly did they make attack upon me and those who, without reward, came after me;
17. They sought to destroy the memorial of him who was before them.
18. For the thought of the Most High cannot be anticipated; and His heart is superior to all wisdom.-- Hallelujah.

II

Ode 5 shows that the Jews, after the crucifixion, were on the lookout for Jesus but they failed to re-arrest him. Jesus was fully confident of his escape and says that, "They may not take hold upon me."

1. I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, because I love Thee;
- 2: O Most High, Thou wilt not forsake me, for Thou art my hope;
3. Freely I have received Thy grace, I shall live thereby:
4. My persecutors will come and not see me:
5. A cloud of darkness shall fall on their eyes; and an air of thick gloom shall darken them:
6. And they shall have no light to see: They may not take hold upon me.
7. Let their counsel become thick darkness, and what they have cunningly devised, let it return upon their own heads:

8. For they have devised a counsel, and it did not succeed:
9. For my hope is upon the Lord, and I will not fear, and because the Lord is my salvation, I will not fear;
10. And He is as a garland on my head and I shall not be moved; even if everything should be shaken, I stand firm;
11. And if all things visible should perish, I shall not die; because the Lord is with me and I am with Him. Hallelujah.

III

In Ode 17, Jesus refers to his escape from the Cross, his travels and to his intent to secure the release of his bondmen.

1. I was crowned by my God; my crown is living:
2. And I was justified in my Lord: my incorruptible salvation is He.
3. I was loosed from vanity, and I was not condemned:
4. The choking bonds were cut off by her hands: I received the face and the fashion of a new person: and I walked in it and was saved:
5. And the thought of truth led me on. And I walked after it and did not wonder.
6. And all that have seen me were amazed; I was regarded by them as a strange person:
7. And He who knew and brought me up is the Most High in all His perfection. And He glorified me by His kindness, and raised my thoughts to the height of His truth.
8. And from thence He gave me the way of His precepts and I opened the doors that were closed.
9. And brake in pieces the bars of iron; but my iron melted and dissolved before me;
10. Nothing appeared closed to me; because I was the door of everything.
11. And I went over all my bondmen to loose them; that I might not leave any man bound or binding;

12. And I imparted my knowledge without grudging: and my prayer was in my love:
13. And I sowed my fruits in hearts, and transformed them into myself; and they received my blessing and lived;
14. And they were gathered to me and were saved; because they were to me as my own member and I was their head.

IV

In Ode 11, Jesus speaks of the land which is like paradise and wherein he has settled with his followers.

1. My heart was cloven and its flower appeared; and grace sprang up in it: and it brought forth fruit to the Lord,
2. For the Most High clave my heart by His Holy Spirit and searched my affection towards Him: and filled me with His love.
3. And His opening of me became my salvation; and I ran in His way in His peace, even in the way of truth:
4. From the beginning and even to the end I acquired His knowledge:
5. And I was established upon the rock of truth, where He had set me up:
6. And speaking waters touched my lips from the fountain of the Lord plenteously:
7. And I drank and was inebriated with the living water that doth not die;
8. And my inebriation was not one without knowledge, but I forsook vanity and turned to the Most High my God,
9. And I was enriched by His bounty, and I forsook the folly which is diffused over the earth; and I stripped it off and cast it from me.
10. And the Lord renewed me in His raiment, and possessed me by His Light, and from above He gave me rest in incorruption;
11. And I became like the land which blossoms and rejoices

in its fruits:

12. And the Lord was like the sun shining on the face of the land:
13. He lightened my eyes, and my face received the dew; and my nostrils enjoyed the pleasant odour of the Lord;
14. And He carried me to His Paradise; where is the abundance of the pleasure of the Lord;
15. And I worshipped the Lord on account of His glory; and I said, Blessed, O Lord, are they who are planted in Thy land! and those who have a place in thy Paradise;
16. And they grow by the fruits of the trees. And they have changed from darkness to light.
17. Behold! all Thy servants are fair, who do good works, and turn away from wickedness to the pleasantness that is Thine:
18. And they have turned back the bitterness of the trees from them, when they were planted in Thy land:
19. And everything became like a relic of thyself, and memorial for ever of thy faithful works.
20. For there is abundant room in thy Paradise, and nothing is useless therein;
21. But everything is filled with fruit; glory be to thee, O God, the delight of Paradise for ever. Hallelujah.

V

Ode 33 indicates that the Jesus and his mother stood on a lofty summit and uttered voice from one end of the earth to the other.

2. And He destroyed perdition from before Him, and devastated all its order;
3. And He stood on a lofty summit and uttered His voice from one end of the earth to the other;
4. And drew to Him all those who obeyed Him; and there

did not appear as it were an evil person.

5. But there stood a perfect virgin who was proclaiming and calling and saying,
6. O ye sons of men, return ye, and ye daughters of men, come ye;
7. And forsake the ways of that corruption and draw near unto me, and I will enter into you, and will bring you forth from perdition,
8. And make you wise in the ways of truth; that you be not destroyed nor perish:
9. Hear ye me and be redeemed. For the grace of God I am telling among you: and by my means you shall be redeemed and become blessed.
10. I am your judge; and they who have put me on shall not be injured: but they shall possess the new world that is incorrupt:
11. My chosen ones walk in me, and my ways I will make known to them that seek me, and I will make them trust in my name. Hallelujah.

VI

In Ode 42, Jesus speaks of his persecutors who all perished before his eyes and of his disciples who hearkened to him and became enlivened.

5. All my persecutors are dead; and they sought after me who hoped in me, because I was alive:
6. And I rose up and am with them; and I will speak by their mouths.
7. For they have despised those who persecuted them;
8. And I lifted up over them the yoke of my love;
9. Like the arm of the bridegroom over the bride,
10. So was my yoke over those that know me:
11. And as the couch that is spread in the house of the

bridegroom and bride,

12. So is my love over those that believe in me.
13. And I was not rejected though I was reckoned to be so.
14. I did not perish, though they devised it against me.
15. Sheol saw me and was made miserable:
16. Death cast me up and many along with me.
17. I had gall and bitterness, and I went down with him to the utmost of his depth:
18. And the feet and the head he let go, for they were not able to endure my face:
19. And I made a congregation of living men amongst his dead men, and I spake with them by living lips:
20. Because my word shall not be void:
21. And those who had died ran towards me: and they cried and said, Son of God, have pity on us, and do with us according to thy kindness:
22. And bring us out from the bonds of darkness: and open to us the door by which we shall come out to thee.
23. For we see that our death has not touched thee.
24. Let us also be redeemed with thee: for thou art our Redeemer.
25. And I heard their voice: and my name I sealed upon their heads:
26. For they are free men and they are mine. Hallelujah.

VII

In Ode 36, the poet speaks of the songs he has composed and of the spiritual heights he has attained through Divine blessing.

1. I rested in the Spirit of the Lord: and the Spirit raised me on high:
2. And made me stand on my feet in the sight of the Lord, before His perfection and His glory: while I was praising

Him by the composition of His songs.

3. The Spirit brought me forth before the face of the Lord: and, although a son of man, I was named the Illuminate, the Son of God:
4. While I praised amongst the praising ones, and great was I amongst the mighty ones.
5. For according to the greatness of the Most High, so He made me: and like His own newness He renewed me: and He anointed me from his own perfection:
6. And I became one of His Neighbours: and my mouth was opened, like a cloud of dew;
7. And my heart poured out as it were a gushing stream of righteousness,
8. And my access to Him was in peace; and I was established by the Spirit of His Government. Hallelujah.

VIII

Ode 10, described as "A Vigorous Little Ode in which Christ Himself is the Speaker", proclaims:

1. The Lord hath directed my mouth by his word: and He hath opened my heart by His light: and He hath caused to dwell in me His deathless life;
2. And gave me that I might speak the fruit of His Peace:
3. To convert the souls of them who are willing to come to Him; and to lead captive a good captivity for freedom.
4. I was strengthened and made mighty and took the word captive;
5. And it became to me for the praise of the Most High, and of God my Father.
6. And the Gentiles were gathered together who were scattered abroad.
7. And I was unpolluted by my love for them, because they confessed me in high places, and the traces of the light were set upon their hearts:

8. And they walked in my life and were saved and became my people for ever and ever.

IX

Verses 8 to 10 of Ode 22, show the fulfillment of the vision of EZEKIEL Chapter 37.

1. He who brought me down from on high, also brought me up from the regions below;
2. And He who gathers together the things that are betwixt is He also who cast me down:
3. He who scattered my enemies had existed from ancient and my adversaries:
4. He who gave me authority over bonds that I might loose them;
5. He that overthrew by my hands the dragon with seven heads: and thou hast set me over his roots that I might destroy his seed.
6. Thou wast there and didst help me, and in every place thy name was a rampart to me.
7. Thy right hand destroyed his wicked poison; and thy hand levelled the way for those who believe in thee.
8. And thou didst choose them from the graves and didst separate them from the dead.
9. Thou didst take dead bones and didst cover them with bodies.
10. They were motionless, and thou didst give them energy for life.
11. Thy way was without corruption, and thy face; thou didst bring thy world to corruption: that everything might be dissolved, and then renewed.
12. And that the foundation for everything might be thy rock: and on it thou didst build thy kingdom; and it became the dwelling place of the saints. Hallelujah.

All the above Odes are from *The Odes of Solomon* as contained in *The Lost Books of the Bible*, The World Publishing Company, New York (1944).

The statements made in the Quran corroborate the above statements quoted from the *Odes of Solomon*. Jesus did not die on the Cross, nor was he killed but to the Jews he appeared as if he were dead. He was given shelter on a lofty ground having meadows and springs:

- (i) *and their saying: We did kill the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah; whereas they slew him not, nor did they compass his death upon the Cross, but he was made to appear to them like one crucified to death; (Holy Quran 4:158)*
- (ii) *and We made the Son of Mary and his mother a sign; and gave them shelter on an elevated land of green valleys and springs of running water. (Holy Quran 23:51).*

CHRISTIANITY ENTERS A NEW ERA CURRENT DEBATE OVER JESUS' DIVINITY

By

I. Ahmad Qamar, Ph.D.

Winnipeg, Canada

Christianity has entered into a completely new era of philosophical thinking. There is a growing debate about the status of Jesus—whether indeed the Church's claim that Jesus was both God and man can still be advocated as truth. The traditional views of Jesus being Son of God, Jesus being the incarnation of God, Jesus being a diety, and his physical resurrection and atonement, etc., are being questioned. Ironically, the questions being asked about Jesus come not from non-believers or non-Christians, but from influential Christian writers, theologians, historians and researchers. New literature is coming out and public forums are being held to deal with these issues.

Last year, seven British theologians published a collection of essays entitled *The Myth of God Incarnate*, which stunned the church-going Christians by its assertion that Jesus was only "a man approved by God" for a special mission but that the notion of him as "God incarnate" is mythological or poetic. The authors argue that Jesus did not claim to be divine but was promoted to divinity by early Christians still under pagan influence. They say it will benefit the Church in an age of science if Jesus is regarded as a great teacher, because there are many who admire his wisdom but cannot accept his supernatural aspects.

Rev. John Hick, the book's editor and a United Reformed Church member, writes in the preface of the book: "Human knowledge continues to grow at an increasing rate and the

pressure upon Christianity is as strong as ever to go on adapting itself into something which can be believed."

Another interesting book (not theology but fiction) *Act of God* by Charles Templeton has appeared as one of the best selling titles. This novel has been reviewed in various Canadian newspapers extensively. It is estimated that *Act of God* will be published in 10 million paper-back volumes (presently it is available only in hard cover). Recently the author was in Winnipeg promoting his book. The *Winnipeg Free Press* (Oct. 4, 1977) carried the story:

It is "entirely possible" that an archaeologist could uncover Jesus Christ's skeleton in the Holy Land, author Templeton says. ... In that case, Templeton said, he would find it "enormously interesting" and it might touch him emotionally ... but it wouldn't affect his beliefs. Though an evangelist for 20 years, he's been an agnostic the last 20..

Resurrection.

He now believes Christ was "a superlative man ... the greatest man in the history of the world" but not a diety. "I'm not a Christian in any sense that would be a proper use of the word."

Discovery of Christ's skeleton, implying there was no physical resurrection, would profoundly affect the Roman Catholic and fundamentalist Protestant faiths. But liberal theologians said in recent interviews published in a Toronto newspaper that discovering Christ's skeleton would not affect their faith, the author noted. "I don't think it would make much difference to many people in the church who don't hold that (resurrection) as essential." (*Free Press*, Oct. 4, 1977).

One reviewer of the *Act of God* says:

"The theme of this new novel, *Act of God* the discovery of evidence that would disprove the divinity of

Christ — is not a new one. There have been several books that have used the same idea. One that comes to mind involved the discovery of a Gospel According to Judas, and a Pope who, fearing the consequences of its publication, dispatched a nasty and fanatical Dominion priest to do away with the discoverer.”

Mr. Templeton (author) sets his story several years in the future. Pope Paul has died and his successor is dying. The central character of the novel, Michael Cardinal Maloney, the archbishop of New York, is a leading candidate to succeed the ailing Pope. The plot hinges on the dilemma faced by the cardinal when an old friend, archaeologist Harris Gordon, returns from the Holy Land with what he claims are the bones of Jesus Christ, conclusive proof that Christ died, but never resurrected.

The cardinal's dilemma is compounded by the fact that while he is a “liberal” Catholic and believes that he could accept such a situation if it were proved to be true..., he realizes that millions of people could not. He sees clearly that such a revelation could mean the destruction of the church, since, as St. Paul said: ‘If Christ be not risen, then is our faith vain.’

The archaeologist has a passion for secrecy — he has removed the artifacts from Israel illegally — and only he and Cardinal Maloney know what he claims to have discovered. The Cardinal is aware, however, that once Gordon's research is finished and published, untold damage would be done to the church. ... He must decide between allowing the publication to go ahead, and killing Gordon and concealing the discovery. This provides the action in the first half of the novel. The second half deals with the events that result from the Cardinal's eventful decision...”
(*Winnipeg Free Press* Sept. 24, 1977).

THE BALANCED RELIGION

By

S. A. Hines

(Reproduced from *Yaqeen International*, June 22, 1978)

Islam is the religion of the middle road avoiding both extremes of leniency and severity, of indulgence and renunciation. In the words of the Quran Majeed, the Muslim community has been termed as *Ummatan wasatan*—

“Thus have We made of you an Ummah justly balanced, . . .” (2:143)

Islam is thus a healthy, sensible way of life. There is no dichotomy between the body and the mind in Islam.

Islam must be regarded as an ideology, a movement, a revolution or a complete way of life. The Holy Prophet himself was not just a preacher. He was an organizer, ruler, administrator, planner, strategist, statesman, and so on.

The first and foremost belief of Muslims, the followers of the religion of Islam, numbering well over 900 million and in more than forty-five full-fledged, independent and sovereign states in the world today, is that—

‘Nothing is worshipable except Allah and Muhammad is Allah’s prophet’.

The five pillars of Islam are: (1) To believe in Oneness of Allah, (2) To pray five times a day, (3) To fast during the whole month of Ramazan from dawn to dusk, (4) To pay *zakat* (poor-due) to the needy, and (5) To perform Hajj, financial position permitting.

Usuary, gambling, alcohol, extra marital sexual relations, etc., are totally forbidden in Islam. Theft, robbery, adultery, bribery etc. are among capital offences.

The greatness of Islam, its comprehensiveness, its sublime values, principles and systems and salutary influence on the conditions of mankind at all times and in all places are generally demonstrated by what Muslims have derived from Quran Majeed, the *Sunnah*, (the traditions of the Holy Prophet) and the *Shari'ah* (Islamic law).

Nationalism, Regionalism and Racism have lately torn the Muslims asunder. Captive to their territories, regions and races, they are unwittingly building loyalties opposed to Islam. This has fragmented and weakened them.

Huston Smith in his "Religions of Man" (Mento Books, pp 205-206) says—

"The religion of Islam permitted freedom of thought and scientific curiosity during a period when any such adventures into the realm of natural knowledge were regarded in western Christendom as evil undertakings, to be denounced and repressed as heretical by accessias-tical authorities.

"The Arabs cultivated observational and experimental science as well as extended the mathematical methods of the Greeks and the Hindus, and with the Moors, who became Muslims, made the cities of Spain brilliant centres of light and learning, leading in the civilized world while the rest of Western Europe lived in conditions of barbarous darkness. . . .

"The efflorescence of Arabian-Moorish culture reached its finest stage in the tenth century, when scholars from every country in Europe resorted to the renowned schools and libraries of Cordova, Toledo, Seville, and other great cities and centres of science in Spain.

"After the tenth century, Arabic learning and science,

with their spirit of inquiry and reasoning, began to influence other parts of Europe.

"In an age charged with supernaturalism, when miracles were accepted as the stock-in-trade of the most ordinary, Muhammad refused to traffic with human weakness and credulity. To miracle-hungry idolators seeking signs and portents, he cut the issue clean:

"God has not sent me to work wonders; He has sent me to preach to you. My Lord is praised! Am I more than a man sent as an Apostle?"

[From first to last he resisted every impulse to glamorize his own person.

'I never said that Allah's treasures are in my hand; that I knew the hidden things; or that I am an angel. . .

'I am only a preacher of God's words, the bringer of God's Message to mankind.')

"If signs be sought, let them be not of Muhammad's greatness, but of God's and for these one need only open one's eyes.

"The heavenly bodies holding their swift, silent course in the vault of heaven, the incredible order of the universe: the rain that falls to relieve the parched earth; palms bending with golden fruits; ships that glide across the seas laden with goods for man—can these be the handiwork of gods of stone?

"What fools to cry for signs when creation harbours nothing else!

"In an age of credulity, Muhammad taught respect for the world's incontrovertible order which was to awaken Muslim science before Christian."

**THE RISE OF ISLAM
and the ROLE OF AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT**

by Dr. Qazi Muhammad Barkatullah

Islam: The Religion

Islam is the name of the religion preached by Prophet Muhammad (Peace be on him) fourteen hundred years ago. The word Islam comes from the Arabic word 'Salam' meaning peace.

Islam simply means 'willingness to submit' (49:15)—complete submission to the will of Allah (2:115) Allah has chosen Islam for mankind:

"Surely the true religion with Allah is Islam" (3:20)

Actually the true religions were indeed, more or less, Islam in the literal sense of the word. For, all religions included belief in Oneness of God and submission to His Will. The Quran says:

"He has named you Muslims both before and in this Book" (22:79).

The words "He has named you Muslims both before, and in this Book" refer to Isaiah's prophecy: 'And thou shalt be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name ...' (Isaiah 62:2,65:15). Further the allusion in the words: "and in this Book" is to Abraham's prayer quoted in the Quran:

"Our Lord make us 'Muslims' to thee and make our offspring a people submissive to Thee." (2:129).

Again:

"When his Lord said to him 'Submit', he said I have already submitted to the Lord of the worlds" (2:132)

Moreover:

"The same did Abraham enjoin his sons — and Jacob

also – saying: ‘O my sons, truly Allah has chosen this religion for you; so let not death overtake you except when you are in a state of complete submission’ (2:133)

Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) is said to be the Prophet of Islam rather than ‘Founder of Islam’ inasmuch as he says:

“I am first of those who submit” (6:164)

Thus the believers say:

“We have adopted the religion of Allah; and who is better than Allah in teaching religion and Him alone do we worship” (2:139)

There is a clear injunction that no religion other than Islam is henceforth to be acceptable by Allah:

“And who so seeks a religion other than Islam it shall not be accepted from him” (3:86).

All through the Time Almighty Allah revealed a part of religion through His prophets prior to the Advent of Prophet of Islam. Muhammad (peace be on him) reaching the age of forty received his first revelation:

Recite thou in the name of thy Lord (96:2-6).

A new era dawned on mankind. The Prophet to all mankind for all the time had been raised:

“Say, O mankind, truly I am a Messenger to you all from Allah to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth” (7:159)

In him, the Jewish-Christian prophecies, including the one regarding ‘That Prophet’ had been fulfilled. (Deuteronomy (18:15,18 ; 33:2); Acts (3:22); John (1:21))

Having received his first revelation, the unique experience made Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) shiver and tremble all over his body. He came home under great emotional stress. He told his dear wife Khadija about the

condition he underwent with the Divine Call. She instantaneously remarked:

“Fear not, but rejoice. God will not let you suffer and fall into disgrace; for, you have been considerate to your relatives, helping the distressed, hospitable to guests, kind to the poor and neighbors. You have been true to your words and you have exhibited the noblest and rarest virtues of mankind” (Bukhari: Chapter ‘wahyy’)

So the sacred Book Quran was revealed to holy Prophet Muhammad between the years 610-632 A.D. The doctrines and Commandments affecting the physical and spiritual development of mankind have been embodied in the Quran in their most perfect form. Actually nothing has been left out which was needed for all phases of the development of mankind. The religion Islam through revelation to the Holy Prophet Muhammad became Perfect, as Allah said:

“This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favors upon you and have chosen for you Islam as religion” (5:4)

Incidentally this verse was the last to be revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be on him) who breathed his last only eighty-two days afterwards.

Characteristics of a Muslim:

The follower of Islam is known as a Muslim which means peaceful and submissive. A Muslim, therefore, in submission to the will of Allah, devotes his/her life in establishing peace on earth. The teachings of Islam are explicit on the fundamental belief in Allah, His Angels, His Book and His Messenger:

“The Messenger of Ours believes in That which has been revealed to him from his Lord and so do the believers; all of them believe in Allah, and His angels and His Books and His Messengers” (2:286)

A Muslim pronounces by tongue and believes in heart what is known as 'Kalima':

"Besides Allah there is none worthy of worship (and) Muhammad is His Messenger"

A Muslim, without reservation, professes the Kalima and accepts the cardinal beliefs or the five pillars of Islam:

1. Tauheed: Believing in Oneness of Almighty Allah.
- Salat: Offering obligatory prayers, five times daily, at prescribed time and encouraged for other prayers especially in the later part of the night.
3. Zakat: Contributing a certain percentage of wealth in charity.
4. Hajj: Performing pilgrimage to Mecca, if physically and financially capable of, at least once in life.
5. Fast: Fasting during the whole lunar month of Ramazan

So the Holy Quran says:

"...but truly righteous is he who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the Angels and the Book and the Prophets and spends his money out of love for Him... and observes prayers and pays the Zakat..." (2:178)

According to a well known Hadees (Saying of the holy Prophet), Islam is simply to proclaim that there is none worthy of worship but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger:

According to the holy Quran a Muslim should not be called a non-Muslim:

"And say not to any one who offers you salutation, Thou art not a believer" (4:95)

The Ahadees are explicit in the matter of Faith. Some of the sayings of the Holy Prophet are mentioned here:

1. "The requirements of Faith are that you should believe in Allah and in His Angels and in His Books and in His Prophets and in the Last Day and you should also believe

in Allah's determination of good and in his determination of evil" (Muslim)

2. Islam is based on five (pillars): Testimony by heart and tongue that there is none worthy of worship but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger; observing prayers; paying Zakat; performing the pilgrimage to the House of Allah and fasting in the month of Ramazan. (Bukhari).
3. "The Muslim is he from whose tongue and hand the Muslims are safe" (Bukhari).
4. "Abusing a Muslim is a transgression and fighting with him is kufr (unbelief)" (Bukhari).
5. Whosoever offers prayers as we do and turns his face to our Qiblah and eats the animal slaughtered by us, he is a Muslim for whom is the covenant of Allah and his Messenger so do not violate Allah's covenant". (Bukhari).

The Future — The Ahmadiyya Movement:

Through the times the Muslims lost their hold and grandeur which once they enjoyed spiritually and otherwise, and fell into a state of spiritual humiliation. In the thirteenth century Muslim calendar such deplorable degradation had reached its apex. A Messiah cum Mahdi was restlessly awaited to bring back the spiritual uplift of the Muslims. The earthly and heavenly signs were being fulfilled that the Leader of Islam be raised. Under these circumstances, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, born in a small town Qadian, India, proclaimed the glad tidings that in him all the prophecies of the advent of the Promised Messiah cum Mahdi had been fulfilled.

Although Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad came to know in 1880 A.D. that he was the promised reformer but he did not form any organization immediately. It was however, March

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22, 1889 that under the direction of Almighty Allah he formally established the Movement to bring back the glory of Islam. Ahmadiyya Movement was then established for the propagation of Islam.

In his book, *Taryaqul-Qoloob*, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad unequivocally mentioned that the name Ahmadiyya was assigned to the movement for Ahmad, the other name of the Holy Prophet of Islam, whose names were Muhammad and Ahmad. It was explicitly mentioned that the British Government was taking census and the other Muslim organizations had their names. But, by that time, no name other than just being 'Muslims' was given to the followers of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. It was then deemed fit that a distinguishing name be assigned to the movement to announce clearly and comprehensibly that, the Ahmadiyya Muslims are the true followers of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). "It is our duty", Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad declared in annual congregational speech 1905, "to establish reality and truth of Islam". The ten commandments or the Solemn Promise required for initiation to the Ahmadiyya Movement clearly point out toward upholding and following the principles of Islam.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has repeatedly said, "We believe in the five pillars of Islam: and we exhort our followers to believe with true heart in proclaiming the Kalima:

"There is none worthy of worship but Allah (and) Muhammad is His Messenger" (*Ayyamul-Sulh* pp. 86-87)

It is thus clear that the advent of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad marks the beginning of a new era to bring back the glories of Islam. Almighty Allah graciously revealed to Hazrat Ahmad:

“Rejoice! Your time (for your wish to be fulfilled) has reached near and the feet of the followers of Muhammad (Peace be on him) will (once again) be firmly established on the path of Light” (Translation from original revelation in Persian)

The Rise of Islam is now clearly associated with the efforts and activities of the Ahmadiyya Movement. The Ahmadiyya Muslims being the true followers of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) are urged to follow righteousness as prescribed in Islam. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has repeatedly declared without reservation:

“We are Muslims by the grace of God, Muhammad (Peace be on him) is our Leader and Imam.

Again:

We are on the Faith of Muslims and from the core of our heart in service of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be on him)

It is thus clear that the Ahmadiyya Muslims believe in all the Fundamental Principles of Islam. Truly and sincerely the Ahmadiyya Muslims believe in the Kalima:

“There is none worthy of worship but Allah (and) Muhammad is His Messenger.”

It is evident that the Ahmadiyya Movement has been established to propagate Islam and Islam alone. And that Islam will be triumphant over all religions in all parts of the world through the propagational activities of the Ahmadiyya Movement. The founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad pronounced:

“Hear ye people and bear witness to it that God Almighty, the Creator of heavens and the earth, has foretold me that He shall spread His own Ahmadiyya Movement in all parts of world and make triumphant over all (religions) by dint of reason and intuition. The

days are approaching, rather at hand, that this (Islam) will be the only religion held in esteem (by all). God shall bless this religion (Islam) and this (Ahmadiyya) Movement in an extraordinary manner. . . There shall be only one religion (Islam) and one guide (Holy Prophet Muhammad) in this world. I was raised only to sow the seed (for renovation of Islam) and I have done it. It (Islam) shall now grow and flourish and no one can check its (Islam's) growth." (English translation from *Tazkiratul Shahadatain*, p. 65).

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad the Promised Messiah and Mahdi passed away peacefully on May 26, 1908. He was succeeded by Hazrat Maulana Noorud Din, unanimously elected, with the title Khalifatul Masih I. The Ahmadiyya Movement continued its activities of the propagation of Islam during that time. Hazrat Maulana Noorud Din, Khalifatul Masih I, after his demise, was succeeded by the son of the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Bashirud-Din Mahmood Ahmad, with the Title Khalifatul Masih II on March 14, 1914. Later on, it became evident that in him the signs of being the Promised Son of the Promised Messiah, Musleh Maood, had also been fulfilled. A dissidence occurred after his election as the Khalifatul Masih II. A group of people, apparently renowned in the movement, did not pledge allegiance to Hazrat Mirza Bashirud-Din Mahmood Ahmad Khalifatul Masih II. They left Qadian, the headquarters of the Ahmadiyya Movement, and settled in Lahore to form what came to be known as Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam.

Hazrat Mirza Bashirud-Din Mahmood Ahmad Khalifatul Masih II, under Divine Guidance, steered the Ahmadiyya Movement through thick and thin. The headquarters of the Ahmadiyya Movement had to be moved as a result of

partition of India, a new town Rabwah was consequently established in Pakistan. Propagation of Islam continued and the Missions of the Ahmadiyya Movement were established in far parts of the world. Numerous Mosques (Muslim place of worship) were established throughout the world. Holy Quran was translated in many languages of the world. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II himself penned many books including a Commentary on the Holy Quran. Hazrat Mirza Bashirud-Din Mahmood Ahmad Khalifatul Masih II, passed away peacefully on November 8, 1965. He has been succeeded, through electoral college, by Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad as Khalifatul Masih III, Imam (Head) of the Ahmadiyya Movement. Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad Khalifatul Masih III is Hafiz-i-Quran (i.e., he has committed the Holy Quran to his memory). He also happens to be the eldest son of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II and as such grandson of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah. In him, thus, a long awaited prophecy has been fulfilled.

“It is also said that he, (that is the Promised Messiah) shall die and his Kingdom (spiritual) descend to his son and grandson” (Talmud, New York: Collier and Sons, 1901, p. 34).

It is noteworthy that we are approaching the beginning of a new (15th) Muslim century. Thus the office of the Mujaddid (Renovator) of the 15th century appears to have been blended into Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih III. Just like the office of the Mujaddid of the 14th century, Muslim Calendar, was blended into Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad the Promised Messiah and Mahdi. Thus we are very fortunate to be living right in this spiritual auspicious era.

JESUS CHRIST AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

By

B. A. Munir, Ph.D.

With the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls, a lot of new information is now available to us regarding the theological developments during the period of the birth of Christianity. There is no mention of Jesus by name in the Qumran writings, but if we look a bit carefully, we find that the Teacher of Righteousness, so profusely mentioned in these scrolls is none other than Jesus Christ himself. Some of the scholars working on these documents have come to the same conclusion.

The Qumran scrolls were recorded by a religious order known as the Essenes who chose to live in the wilderness of Judea and tried to follow the Jewish traditions very rigorously.

There is ample evidence that John the Baptist had lived with the Essenes and, in fact, Jesus must have lived with them for a period. We know very little about his early adulthood. We know that he met John the Baptist and was baptized by him in the same general region where the Essenes were abiding. There is enough evidence to indicate that some of the disciples of Jesus were from the Essene brotherhood. John, the author of one of the four canonical books of the New Testament had a lot in common with them.¹ Joseph of Armethea, who asked Pilate and got the body of Jesus when taken down from the cross, was one of the Essenes.

There are many similarities between Jesus and the Essenes which strengthen the theory that Jesus and the Essenes were certainly well acquainted with each other. Repentance is the

central theme for the Essenes, and so did Jesus preach. The Last Supper described in the Bible is very similar to the Communal Meal described in the Dead Sea scrolls. The principle and practice of brotherhood are the same with both. Both believed deeply in the Law of Moses. Both held the Scriptures in the highest regard and considered it very important to gain knowledge of God through their study. A demand of absolute loyalty from the Essene members is matched by a stricter demand for the same by Jesus. The weeping of Jesus over Jerusalem and the lamentations of the Essenes over this city for its slaying of its prophets, and the frequent sojourns of Jesus to the desert to pray suggest a strong affinity of the two. They both place a high value on poverty, meekness and forsaking the worldly goods. The concept of "the God's Elect" was the same with Jesus as well as the Essenes.

We must remember, however, that Jesus was a Prophet of God. He was bound to preach as he was directed by God and did not have to take all the beliefs and practices of the Essenes even if he was raised up among them. Differences are, therefore, bound to exist which will be primarily doctrinal differences. But the similarities are too numerous to be ignored or explained away.

The Teacher of Righteousness

Let us examine the Teacher of Righteousness mentioned in the Dead Sea scrolls. He was a prophet in the conventional Jewish tradition. He called upon Israel to repent of their sins. Common folks tended to accept his teachings as wisdom. Duncan Hewlett, in his book *The Essenes and Christianity*, writes:

"If we read the psalms with the thought that they

may describe the Teacher of Righteousness, even if they were not written by him, we find that, like the prophets, he incurred the ire of the civil and religious leaders of Israel. He openly denounced them as transgressors of the Law and they, on their part, sought to be rid of him. He called them "oppressors", "treacherous", "wicked", "those of uncircumcised lips and alien tongue" and "a people without understanding." They "gnashed their teeth" against him and accused him "in the assembly".

The Teacher of Righteousness was an interpreter of knowledge in the usual prophetic tradition. He was persecuted by the religious leaders of the day who tried to kill him. But God saved him at the eleventh hour and foiled the designs of his opponents to kill him.

One of the scrolls known as the scroll of *Hodayot* or Thanksgiving Hymns, is considered to have been composed by the Teacher of Righteousness. Following the translation by Menahem Mansoor, published under the title *The Thanksgiving Hymns*, we quote:

"And against me the band of wicked doth rage, and they roar as the gales of the seas; when their billows are raging mire and mud so they cast up. But thou hast made me a banner to the chosen of righteousness, and an interpreter of knowledge by wonderous secrets, to test the men of truth and to try the lovers of correction." (II:12-14)

"I praise Thee O Lord, for Thou hast placed my soul in the bundle of the living. And Thou hast fenced me off from all the snares of the pit, for tyrants have sought my life while I held firmly to Thy covenant... They know not that from Thee is my stand. And in Thy

lovingkindness Thou savest my life, for my footsteps are guided by Thee... So that Thou mayest be glorified through the judgement of the wicked and through me manifest Thy might before the sons of men." (II:20-24)
"In a lasting measure prescribed by the mouth of God and by the testimony of Him that is, was, and will be. And there is no end, and apart from Him nothing existed, and shall be no more, for the God of Knowledge hath established it. And there is none else with Him. But I, being an enlightened person, I have knowledge of Thee, my God, by the spirit which Thou didst place within me. (XII:9-12)

Who else but a true Prophet of God would utter such words. Passages like these are plentiful in the hymns under discussion. There is also a graphic description of the persecution suffered by this prophet. We quote a few passages giving this description:

"Thou didst redeem the soul of the needy whose blood they had sought to destroy; to shed for Thy service, except that they knew not that from Thee are my steps directed." (II:32-33)

"When all the arrows of the pit darted about with no turning back and were hurled beyond hope, when the measuring line fell upon judgement, and the lot of anger fell upon the abandoned ones and the outpouring of wrath upon the disassemblers and periods of fury to all Bilial. And deadly pangs have surrounded me with no escape and the torrents of Belial have overflowed..." (III:27-29)

We know of no other prophet who appeared at about the same time as Jesus. The Teacher of Righteousness could not be anyone else but Jesus Christ himself. We know that Jesus

was put on the cross. Here is a graphic description of this torture by the Teacher of Righteousness:

“I become a man forsaken... I have no protection, for my wound has spread into bitter pains and unto a desperate pain that cannot be stayed... and with the dead He setteth my spirit adrift. For my life drew nigh unto the pit and my soul waxed faint, day and night with no respite... And severe pains were let loose upon me and my soul is utterly cast down within me for my strength was extinct from my body and my heart was poured out like water and my flesh melted as wax and the strength of my loins has become a terror. And my arm was broken from its shoulder-joints, unable to swing a hand, and my foot was caught in the fetters, and my knees dripped like water.” (VIII:27:34)

“And it became a violent pain and a malignant plague in the body of Thy servant to cause his spirit to stumble and to exhaust his strength so that he could not hold firm his position. And they overtook me in the narrow straits, so that there was no escape... and my adversaries made noise with the harp and with jeering songs together their sneering, with clatter and crashing – horrors seized me and pains like the pangs of a woman in travail, and my heart groaned upon me. I was clothed in darkness, and my tongue cleaved to the roof of my mouth... their heart and their evil device was manifested to me for bitterness, and the light of my countenance was dimmed into darkness, and my fresh color was turned to gloom.” (V:28-32)

What a graphic description of the torture on the cross. For a moment Jesus saw no apparent deliverance from this ordeal and cried out: “Eli Eli Lama Sabachtani.” This is referred to

above as "to cause his spirit to stumble" in the quote above. The same moment is described elsewhere thus:

"Then I said in my transgression: I have been abandoned by Thy Covenant." (IV:35)

The age of the manuscript we have quoted from has been determined by the well-known and very accurate carbon-14 method. This determination was carried out by W. F. Libby, at the University of Chicago's Institute of Nuclear Studies. This study puts the date of the manuscript to be 33 A.D.² This is remarkably close to the date of the crucifixion of Christ. As is well-known, the era A.D. begins with the birth of Christ, and he was 33 when he was put on the cross.

The difficulty in identifying the Teacher of Righteousness with Jesus comes from the common belief that Jesus died on the cross whereas the Teacher of Righteousness escaped at the last moment. If, however, we discard the notion that Jesus died on the cross, then no such difficulty will exist. We will also be able to explain very easily the appearance of Jesus among his disciples on a number of occasions after the event of crucifixion, as mentioned in the Bible, without invoking the supernatural. After all, if the event was really supernatural, then there would be no need for Jesus to hide from the public view and only reveal himself to his disciples in private. Also he would not have to show them his wounds to convince them that he was, in fact, Jesus. Why were the wounds now necessary for a risen son of God.

There is plenty of evidence from many sources to corroborate the theory that Jesus did not, in fact, die on the cross. We will not go into the details of this evidence here but refer the reader to other sources (e.g., *Jesus in India, Where Did Jesus Die?, The Tomb of Jesus, Jesus Died in Kashmir*, etc. See Bibliography).

We will only summarize here the thesis expounded in the literature cited above. Jesus was put on the cross but was taken down alive, although in a swoon. Joseph of Armethea, who took his body to a sepulchre, was in fact a member of the Essene brotherhood. Members of the Essene brotherhood helped to revive Jesus, prepared an ointment for his wounds and healed his wounds with it. This ointment, known as the *Ointment of Jesus* is mentioned in hundreds of old medical books with a description that it was applied to the wounds of Jesus.³

Jesus must have stayed with the Essenes during his period of recovery from this ordeal. The hymns quoted above were most likely written during this period.

After a while Jesus left Judea and travelled eastwards. After all, he had other sheep he had to tend to. There were only two of the twelve tribes of Israel in Judea. He had to convey his message to ten other tribes also. So he migrated eastward until he reached India where he died of ripe old age.

This is the story which makes sense when we look at all the evidence available from the Bible, from the Dead Sea scrolls, from the Holy Quran, and from other recent discoveries like the Holy Shroud of Turin and the mention of Jesus and his teachings in the very old books of Buddhists in Tibet.

There is no other way to explain the mention of Jesus in the Holy books of the Buddhists. A noted traveller by the name of Nicolas Notovich was laid up in the Himis Monastery due to a broken leg. While there, he got interested in the very old records preserved by Buddhists. A translation of these records, giving the details of the coming of Christ to India and Nepal were first published in French under the name "Vie inconnue de Jesus-Christ." Later, this book was translated by Alexina Loranger and published by the Rand

McNally & Co., under the name of *The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ*.

Finally, the discovery of the tomb of Jesus in Sirinagar, Kashmir, India, adds the final proof of the above thesis. It is up to the seekers after truth to undertake an expedition to investigate this tomb and see whether it can be proven to be anyone else but Jesus Christ buried there.

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CURRENT TOPICS AND TRENDS

MUSLIM SICILY

A recent issue of *Aramco World Magazine* (Nov.-Dec. 1978) carries an article by Gian Luigi Scarfiotti and Paul Lunde with the title of "Muslim Sicily", recounting the prosperous and flourishing past of Sicily under the Muslim rule. They observe that Sicily was taken over by the Norman Christians in the eleventh century. However, for more than a century "their achievements in statecraft, administration, learning, architecture, agriculture and science were largely an inheritance from Sicily's Islamic past."

According to Scarfiotti and Lunde, the Muslim interest in Sicily goes back to the very threshold of Islamic history. The first military expedition against the island took place during the caliphate of Uthman, only 20 years after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him).

The authors note that the "unique achievements of the (Muslim) period in Sicily are hardly mentioned in the works of the historians." They state:

"Under the Muslims, Sicily once more became a granary to the world, as it had been under the Romans. While both the Byzantines and the Romans before them had been interested almost solely in the cultivation of grain, however, the Arabs introduced many new crops: cotton, hemp, date palms, sugar cane, mulberries and citrus fruits. The cultivation of these crops was made possible by new irrigation techniques brought in by the conquerers. These innovations, especially the breaking up of large estates and the redistribution of land, meant an end to the long years of economic and social

depression. Sicily began to bloom.

The revolution in agriculture generated a number of related industries, such as textiles, sugar manufacture, rope-making, matting, silk and paper – the latter introduced to Europe by way of Sicily. The beautiful silks of Sicily became internationally known, and garments made from them were the prized possessions of both Muslim and Christian rulers. This industry continued to flourish under the Normans – and Sicilian silks carried an embroidered mark, the *Tiraz*, that guaranteed their provenance. One example which has survived – the “Mantle of Roger II”, now housed in the National Museum of Vienna – suggests the richness and quality of this work.”

Almost one hundred years after the conquest of the Muslim Sicily by the Normans, one famous Muslim, Ibn Jubair, returning from a pilgrimage to Mecca was shipwrecked in the straits of Messina off the coast of Sicily. Having been rescued by her inhabitants, Ibn Jubair visited through Sicily and wrote an account of his impressions. An English translation of his writings was rendered by R.J.C. Broadhurst and published in 1952 (Jonathan Cape, London). Describing Palermo, the capital city called *Al-Medina* in the Muslim period, Ibn Jubair wrote:

“The capital is endowed with two gifts, splendor and wealth. It contains all the real and imagined beauty that anyone could wish. Splendor and grace adorn the piazzas and the countryside; the streets and highways are wide, and the eye is dazzled by the beauty of its situation. It is a city full of marvels, with buildings similar to those of Cordoba, built of limestone. A permanent stream of water from four springs runs

through the city. There are so many mosques that they are impossible to count. Most of them also serve as schools. The eye is dazzled by all this splendor.”

The authors have also taken note of the impact of the Muslim period in Sicily on the Medieval Europe. They write:

“But the Arab past of Sicily, which must now be painfully recovered from the few material remains which survive, is nowhere more evident than in the intellectual and scientific legacy which was passed from the Arabs of Sicily to Italy and then to all of Europe. Under the rule of the extraordinary Roger II, Sicily became a clearing house where eastern and western scholars met for the first time since the fall of the Roman Empire, and in an atmosphere of tolerance and beauty exchanged the ideas that were to wake Europe from the dark ages and herald the coming of the renaissance. The Arab tradition of tolerance towards other religions, perpetuated under the Norman kings, led to free discussion and a climate of intellectual freedom that was the envy of the world. Astronomy, medicine, philosophy and mathematics were the subjects of discussion, and books on these subjects were translated into Latin and became the standard textbooks in the universities that in the 12th century were beginning to be founded throughout Europe. The University of Salerno, founded in the 13th century, became the most famous medical school in the world, and it was there that Avicenna (Ibn Sina) was translated into Latin, and the first scientific dissections were performed.”

ON THE TOMB OF JESUS

The following dispatch, filed by Leslie Murphy, appeared in *The Japan Times* (July 14, 1978), one of the leading Japanese daily newspapers:-

Tucked away down a muddy lane in the oldest part of Srinagar is an ancient tomb that many Moslems believe contains the remains of Jesus Christ.

Their belief is that Christ, venerated as a great prophet by Moslems, did not die on the cross but that He fled from Palestine to Kashmir where He lived and preached and died at the age of 120.

The thesis, which has been argued for the last 80 years, is propagated principally by the evangelical Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, which has organized an international conference in London to discuss and attempt once again to prove it.

Some serious scholars here say there is fairly convincing circumstantial evidence that Jesus did spend at least part of His life in India, Kashmir and Tibet.

Excavation Urged

Others favor the excavation of the Srinagar tomb, known as Rozabal, in the crowded city locality of Khanvyar, to compare its contents with the impression on the famous Shroud of Turin.

The plain stone tomb here, its surface worn smooth obliterating any inscription it may have carried, gives no clue to who is buried there.

But an old Persian inscription on a wooden tablet above the grave claims it is the last resting place of Yuz Asaf, who is identified in the classic manuscripts of this region as being the same person as the Prophet Isa, or Jesus Christ.

The theory of Christ's burial in Kashmir was first put forward by the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, in a book titled "Jesus in India," published in 1899.

Ahmad's Claim

Ahmad claimed that Jesus did not die on the cross. He escaped and journeyed to India with his mother Mary in search of the 10 Lost Tribes of Israel.

He quoted Christian as well as Moslem scriptures, old medical and historical texts and ancient Buddhist records in an attempt to show that Jesus traveled via Persia, Afghanistan, Sind and Punjab and Kashmir and Tibet.

His book points up striking similarities between Buddhist and Christian teachings and between the life of Christ and Buddha, who lived 500 years before him.

The Ahmadiyyas have since published a mass of literature on the subject and won some striking support from outside the movement for their theory.

German Philosopher

The most comprehensive recent work on the subject is by the German philosopher Andreas Faber-Kaiser whose book "Jesus died in Kashmir" argues its correctness in great detail.

Prof. Mohammad Yasin, head of the post-graduate department of history at Kashmir University — a Moslem but a strong opponent of the Ahmadiyya sect — concluded after a three-year study of the subject that Jesus was indeed buried here.

He is one of those pressing strongly for a careful scientific investigation of the Rozabal crypt. The study, he says, should involve the Kashmir Government, Christian and Moslem representatives and the appropriate scientists to date the

tomb and whatever remains it contains.

'Buried in Srinagar'

Jesus Christ, he says, is "in heaven, no doubt, but spiritually, the earthly remains of Jesus Christ lie buried in Srinagar."

The Ahmadiyya thesis has come under strong attack from Christianity as Christ's death on the cross and his resurrection is one of its principal beliefs.

But the Moslems have also been outraged by the Ahmadiyyas, particularly by the claim of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad that he was the promised mahdi or messiah. The sect was declared non-Islamic in Pakistan after serious communal riots there four years ago.

"His great discovery was buried under the debris of religious controversy." Dr. Yasin said.

Islamic Style Tomb

The gray-and-white structure over the tomb at Rozabal is clearly much less than 1,900 years old. It is constructed in the Islamic style with geometric wooden screen work and tiled floor.

Dr. Yasin says the tomb itself is undoubtedly much older and is unusually large. Beside it is a large stone bearing two footprints which its custodian says are those of Yuz Asaf.

The tomb is overlooked by ancient houses and nearby are other Moslem mosques and shrines that date back several centuries.

It is looked after by orthodox Moslems, not Ahmadiyyas, and Moslem residents of the area touch the building in reverence as they walk past.

Its custodian holds a decree dated 1766 from five muftis (judges) of Srinagar which attests that it is the shrine of

Prophet Yuz Asaf.

Few Visitors

The Kashmir Government once showed interest in promoting the tomb as a tourist attraction but later dropped the idea, and it now receives few visitors.

The claim that Jesus came to Kashmir is based on careful research, according to Dr. Yasin.

Dr. Yasin supports the long-disputed theory that the Lost Tribes of Israel settled between Afghanistan and Kashmir. Many of the people of this region have strongly Jewish features and old Jewish graves are found all over Kashmir.

He also supports the claim that Moses too is buried in Kashmir and Mary in the nearby Pakistan hill station of Murree, known originally as Mari, and includes pictures of their purported graves in his book.

'Promised Land'

There is strong evidence from a comparison of place names and physical descriptions that Kashmir and not Palestine was the Promised Land of the Old Testament, Dr. Yasin says.

He compares the biblical Bethpeor with Bandipur, formerly Behatpoor, in Kashmir and Mt. Nebo with Baal Nebu or Naboo Hill, which commands a fine view of the Kashmir valley.

Faiber-Kaiser and Ahmadiyya authors linking Christ with Kashmir say there is ample evidence in the Gospels and other writings of the time to prove that Jesus did not die on the cross.

He was on the cross for only three to six hours while death by crucifixion usually took three days or longer, they contend. He was not buried when taken down but placed in a large, airy sepulchre where doctors tended His wounds.

Travel to East

After several secret meetings with His apostles, Jesus set out with Mary and Thomas for the east on what was at that time already a well-traveled route. Thomas traveled to South India where He died spreading the Gospel and Jesus and Mary went north.

Faber-Kaiser says Christ may also have been in Kashmir and Tibet during the period of His life from 13 to 29 which the Bible does not detail.

He lists Isa, Issa, Yousa, Yus, Yusa, Yusu, Yuz and Yuza as some of the variants of Jesus's name. Several localities in Kashmir are named after Moses and the highest point in Srinagar is known as Takht-e-Sulaiman, or Solomon's throne.

The former Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, a Kashmiri himself, wrote in his "Glimpses of World History": "All over central Asia, in Kashmir and Ladakh and Tibet and even farther north, there is still a strong belief that Jesus or Isa traveled about there . . . there is nothing inherently improbable in His doing so."

The comment of one tourist in the visitors' book at the Rozabal tomb however seemed to sum up Western scepticism of the theory: "Interesting, but I doubt it."

THE CHIEF KADHI OF KENYA GIVES HIS VERDICT

Following is an excerpt from an editorial published in *Sauti Ya Haki* (The Voice of Truth), Mombasa, Kenya.

It may be noted that the editor, Sheikh Muhammad Qasim Mazrui is also a former Kadhi of Kenya.

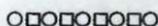
The Chief Kadhi of Kenya, Sheikh Abdalla Saleh Farsy, has issued his verdict concerning the death of Jesus Christ. He was asked by a suni Muslim of Mombasa, Mr. Ismail Abdalla,

whether Prophet Isa, Peace on him, was dead or alive.

Writing in a Swahili journal published quarterly under the auspices of Anjuman Himayat Islam, Nairobi, the Chief Kadhi replied:

“It is more correct to believe that he died as explained in chapter *Al-’Imran*, verse 144 and chapter *Al-Anbiya*, verse 34. While translating the words “*Inni Mutawaffika*” used for Prophet Isa, the same is written in *Suhul Bukhari*, part III, page 79. Imam Malik has said likewise as reported on page 286 of *Majmau Biharil Anwaar*, Vol. I. Imam Muhammad al-Ghazaly has expressed the same opinion on page 37 and 44 of his book *Nadharatun Fil Quran*.

“What has been rejected by the Holy Quran is the idea of his being killed or suffering death on the cross.” (*Sauti Ya Haki*, October, 1978).



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