THE HOLY QURAN

A TRANSLATION WITH COMMENTARY

According to Shia traditions and Principles.

SERIES NO. 42.

PART I

Surahs I & II with Introduction.

BY

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PART I

PREFACE.

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This work proposes to be a commentary on the Holy Quran strictly according to the spirit and letter of the Holy Book and strictly according to the traditions current among Musalmans from the earliest times particularly in the Shia church It also aims to justify these traditions in the light of present knowledge, science and philosophy, and to meet, as far as possible, all objections that have been urged by anti Islamic critics against the Quran or Islam in general

Nothing need be said about my incapacity for a work of such pretentions What to speak of Hebrew Syriac, Greek &c which are all in a way essential, my knowledge of Arabic itself is defective, and my acquaintance with Islamic literature itself is limited It was indeed presumptuous on my part to take this work upon myself Further I have to work miles away from books in leisure hours snatched from an all-occupying official life Yet I had to prepare myself for it to the best of my ability owing to pressing requests made by His Holiness, the Shamshul Ulama, Maulana Syed Najmul Hasan Saheb, who being intensely conscious of the need of such work in the present day has long been seeking that someone having a western education should do something for it, however imperfectly

The only qualification I can claim is that I know the difficulties and have no desire to shirk them Where the difficulties are merely subjective, as is usually the case I do not hesitate to show that the tendencies and points of view that create them are themselves wrong, and where they are some way real I try to deal with them, knowing that they are partly due to our imperfect knowledge and partly to our limited powers of understanding

As said before, this work stands up for the common traditional interpretation of the Quran which has been current from the earliest times. This will appear rather bold to the weak minded among whom the tendency has been to get rid as much as possible of any "beliefs", especially those relating to the supernatural But the book will show that "Faith in the Unseen" is much easier in these days of growing knowledge and research than it was any time before The only requisite is an all-round general knowledge of modern science and philosophy including spiritualism which is making rapid strides every day. Generally speaking this book

will, it is hoped, provide a fair Introduction to the ordinary well-known commentaries— none of which, however, are yet in English language except in brief notes in Translations of the Quran by western authors as Sale, Wherry &c

An apology may be required for repeated references to the Ahmadi Commentary—very frequently for the purpose of attack, I have nothing but admiration for this finely executed work which I regard as great in many respects But frequently to support his views and predelictions, more so to avoid the supernatural element in the Quran, the author systematically perverts the plainest meanings of words and passages, and in my opinion in this he has done an amount of dis-service to Islam that is incalculable

I am conscious that the book contains much that runs contrary to the usual trend of thoughts, many will find much that is new and unexpected, but the work is the result of years of thought and study, and I trust that those who at first reading may find themselves widely dissenting or unable to accept the arguments advanced will on repeated thinking at different times find themselves agreeing Many of the contentions flow from the general theories explained in the Introduction and it is requested the various chapters of it may be read before the main Commentary

Owing to the inordinate delay in preparation, owing to my difficulties, this volume is published incomplete Long notes which were set apart for Supplement are not being published Two important chapters which should come in the Introduction, and are not yet quite complete, are not inserted Only a very brief abstract of one of them appears as chapter X. They will appear very shortly in the Muslim Review and will be published in the complete form in the next volume to be issued shortly later, in which the Supplement also will be published If there is any criticism in the meantime I will be glad to consider it, and will also discuss it in the next volume for the benefits of the readers

The Madrasatul Waezin is indebted to Mohammad Sharif Husain Saheb of Zanzibar for the munificent donation of about Rs 6,400 for the publication of this Commentary It is hoped that the publication of this first volume will stimulate a wider class in this direction which is much needed

SITAPUR
26th December, 1930

A F BADSHAH HUSAIN, B A.

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THE HOLY QURAN.

INTRODUCTION.

I. What is Islam?

Islam professes to be a true, perfect, rational but revealed religion—a religion meant by God to supplant all previous creeds and to last without change, addition and alteration to the end of the world.

(A) By true it is meant that there is nothing like mythology in it—nothing seeking to be interpreted in a new light in days of growing knowledge and civilisation—nothing false (strictly speaking) as it is taught, but intended to symbolise or allegorise some truth to make it thus capable of being swallowed by minds not ripe for it—in short nothing requiring the genius of a Bacon as shown in his Wisdom of Ancients, nothing seeking to be defended by the glibs theory of Madame Blavatsky and other Theosophists Nor do its doctrines need for its reception in modern times the ingenuity of interpretation displayed by Mr Morries in his New Theology to rationalize the popular dogmas of Hinduism and Christianity

All its cardinal doctrines are true and capable of proof or positive evidence in the strictest sense of the words Its conception of God, as taught plainly and precisely by the Prophet or the Imams is true—as far as it is possible for the human mind to reach the Infinite and Incomprehensible Reality. On this subject the Imams have taught all that the most profound and sublime philosophy can ever attain to by reason, and supplemented on this by revelation on points that may be doubtful or not clear for unaided reason, but nothing inconsistent with it in the name of mystries of faith

So its teachings about the inspiration of the prophets and the Imams and the reality of spiritual world and future life are to be believed as all true There is no mere allegory in these things The spiritual greatness and inspiration of our Blessed Prophet and the Holy Imams after him is capable of the most solid, positive evidence—and this constitutes the main strength or proof of the truth of Islam as a revealed religion. Islam courts full enquiry on this The whole mass of teach-

ings about things in the spiritual world and the next life are incapable of verification as they do not belong to this life or this world They are to be believed merely, wholly and solely on the authority of these divine teachers. Hence the importance of enquiry into this evidence

However, in regard to these purely spiritual matters it is only a general sort of assent that is demanded Our power of conception being limited to sensory knowlege, all possible description can have but a shadow of resemblance to the truth So definite belief with a clear conception of these objects of belief—nature of angels for instance—is out of question here At the same time all ingenuity spent in making conjectures about them have little chance of resulting in anything fruitful.

Thus we see that Islam, in its profession and spirit at least, is a perfectly rational creed, basing its claims upon reason and commonsense and having little to do with mysticism, except in highly spiritual matters It is Rationalism in the modern sense of the word, except that it does not subscribe to the narrowness of thought which refuses to acknowledge that there might be things in heavens and earth which are not dreamt of in our philosophy

(B) The claim of Islam to be a perfect religion is based on a number of considerations some of which may be briefly explained here

(1) Unlike all the older creeds which sought to develop man in particular capacities, Islam wants man to develop in all capacities, intellectual, moral, devotional, spiritual, physical, social, political—all. Christianity, it is well-known, aims to develop the moral and devotional side at the expense of the rest Nay, it has nothing but contempt for these, particularly the intellectual side, and its long-continued struggle to crush the intellectual development of man is well-known Again of morals it may be said that it teaches absurd morals having no reference to social and political requirements Its abortive spirit of contempt for marriage, disgust for war &c are all old story Hinduism, if anything can be said of such an amorphous religion, ignores morals altogether and trains us for superstition and ritualism Of the higher philosophic Hinduism it may be said it has a tendency to develop metaphysical moods of thought, still ignoring the moral side altogether.

That Islam seeks to develop man in all capacities together and in due proportion is obvious and must be clear to all who know anything of it The very structure of religion is rationalistic and infuses

spirit of rationalism, investigation and enquiry There is nothing but contempt in the traditions of the Imams for simple unquestioning belief, and there is constant exhortation to acquire knowledge from the most distant corners of the globe 'Whoever is given *Hikmat* (philosophy or wisdom) great good is given to him' says the Quran Of the great and constant insistence on piety, virtue and devotion in the Quran and the Traditions the whole Islamic Literature is witness Piety and devotion develop a spirituality in man which the so called spiritualists have not even a conception of, spiritualistic powers are developed spontaneously without man's even knowing of them The life-long exertions of the spiritualists for the development of occult powers is denounced as it impairs the physical and mental energies The importance Islam attaches to physical, social and political development is too obvious to need description Witness its counting marriage and *Jehad* (war in cause of Islam) among duties, witness its gigantic codes of Law Its whole history will speak for itself

(2) Islam covers the entire life of man There is no function of life from the highest to the lowest which is beneath its notice There is nothing that man does, waking, sleeping, eating, drinking which has not a spiritual value—merit or demerit *according to the specific teachings of the Prophet and the Imams* Earning bread is an important religious duty, and religious devotion to the entire neglect of it is strongly reprobated There is no system so well devised to keep up the consciousness of the sanctity of the whole of man's life The same can hardly be said of any other religion And remember all this religious worth of the ordinary acts and functions of life is taught distinctly and specifically, very little is left to be inferred, so that there is no fear of perversion according to the taste or intelligence of the individual.

(3) It will also be remembered that, unlike other religions, Islam has no orders, no monks, clergies, priests &c as among Christians, no Brahmans, Kshatriyas &c as among Hindus, no Esseens, Sadduces &c as among the Jews, with special moral and religious duties of each Islam wants every individual to be as much of a devotee, philanthropist, warrior and so forth as it is possible for him to be A saint is worthless if he cannot perform the ordinary duties of a husband or cannot go to war if the occasion requires it. Islam wants no recluses, no men-devotees, but a perfect man having capacity for everything and rendering everything in his life holy by the spirit that rules his actions. The ideal is difficult of attainment, but it is there and all are enjoined to act up to it. It is

fully realized only in the prophets and the Imams A higher ideal cannot be conceived.

(4) Then the function of a religion ought not to stop short with teaching good morals, depending on its ministers or others for successful preaching of the same A perfect religion must devise suitable forms of religious duties, in the routine observance of which desirable virtues should develop of themselves and evil propensities may be eliminated according to the well-known laws of psychology And a perfect religion must thus provide for the development of *all* possible virtues and the elimination of all possible vices It is claimed that few other religions propose to do this, and where they do they do it very imperfectly Islam, however, has done it perfectly by the formulation of such ordinary religious duties as the five daily prayers, fasting, *Khums*, *Zakat*, pilgrimage, *jehad* &c This can be easily shown but a discussion of the psychological effects of all these would be too lengthy I have discussed them at length in my Principles of Shia Theology However reluctantly a man may leave his merry-making or other mind-engrossing pursuits, and however purfunctorily (to begin with) he may say his prayers, but the doing it and having had to do it five times a day cannot fail to have its effect The levity of mind and the complete swaying away of it by this and that thing must go away gradually and thoughts of devotion must arise from time to time So the one month's fast is efficacious for controlling the emotions and producing habits of patience and forbearance However reluctantly may a miser pay his *Khums* and *Zakat* in the beginning, but having had to do it again and again he finds his heart opened for charity.

All religions seek to provide duties having similar objects in view. The question is whether they are able to provide in this way for the development of *all* possible virtues and the elimination of *all* possible vices I find there is one thing, tenderness of mind, for which no religion provides any proper measure If mere preaching could do anything Christianity should have been the most successful in this respect But what does history say to this? It may be safely said that all the rest of the world put together has not shed so much innocent blood, devised so many excruciating forms of torture, and revelled so much in callousness and brutality as the Christians have done both as individuals and as a people The bare mention of the word 'Middle Ages' is sufficient to recall everything to the mind And to this day when the progress of culture ought to have quickened sensibility for poor men's sufferings, the Great War has shown how much callousness persists in the minds of the

races at least—by heredity So much unrelenting havoc of life for purely secular interests, and those too too fine to be appreciable to any but the professional economists, could hardly be imagined to be even possible in human civilization What is the worth of a religion if it cannot devise suitable psychological remedy for all this? And has any religion done it? Why the remedy is simple enough, only it was reserved for Islam (true Islam, I mean, according to the Shia sect) to enforce it If sympathetic feelings are naturally dull, why, make them sharp by suitable exercise Make it incumbent on every man to commemorate some great tragedy and *weep* over it That means realizing the distress in the fullest sense of realizing, with the rousing of all appropriate tender emotions The development of keen sympathetic feelings and the sharpness of sensibility against acts of callousness is then a physical necessity How finely is this provided for in our religion in its insistence on mourning over Husain—the great tragedy of Karbala—true, real mourning with torrents of tears! Can any such thing be found in other religions? And can such religions be called perfect in any sense without some such thing? Could Islam itself be perfect without it?

It requires only a cursory reflection over the other ordinary duties prescribed and recommended by Islam to see that if acted upon according to the directions given they must necessarily have training effect on the spirit and gradually develop all good moral instincts and sentiments and eliminate their opposites It would take us too long to discuss each in detail here

There are also many other things in the very structure of our religion designed to produce and keep up the right habits and attitudes of mind Thus we have spoken (in the notes on 2 182 and elsewhere) of the wonderful efficacy of the prayers prescribed and recommended to produce the spirit of devotion in minds not prepared for it

(5) Islam embraces and embodies the truth underlying all religions There is no religion however foolish, corrupt or depraved but that there is some truth at the back of it—some sentiment natural to man, and therefore an element of truth, though expressed in false grotesque forms There is in this sense a truth in the lowest forms of religion—man-worship, nature-worship, even idolatory Islam does not ignore or suppress these—it only corrects and regulates them and then gives them their right significance and importance in its spiritual system A detailed discussion of these would take more space than the preceding even and so we must refrain. It will suffice, however, for illustration to cite the great importance given in our religion to *Ziarats* (visits to the tombs of

the Imams) and to read the prescribed addresses of salutation to them if one cannot go to these places What is this but the truth felt so keenly by the great philosopher Comte as to be made the basis of his religion? Pious visits to the tomb of Comte and other great men are specially enjoined in that religion And what is this again but a refined form of the old man worship?

Also there is usually some great truth underlying the tenets of the various great religions, which have since been grossly corrupted into strange dogmas There is a truth in the doctrines of Logos and Double nature of Christ, both made absurd by turning them into elements of God, but perfectly intelligible in the Islamic doctrines of the Light of the Imams and their being the Living Word of God We have no space here for these highly spiritual doctrines. They are discussed at some length in my Principles of Shia Theology

(6) The most that other religions care about is to prepare the soul for devotion to God (each in its own way) and to develop virtuous habits or moods of mind for action in this life No religion cares to enforce the great necessity of intense attachment of love to *all* who are virtuous and intense hatred of *all* who are wicked—whether we have any dealings with them or not The importance of this should be clear to all who know anything of the direct action of spirits on each other If we love the pious and holy souls we will receive their spiritual graces for virtue and so be lifted ourselves spiritually If we are indifferent to them we are wholly or in a great measure deprived of this If we love the wicked, or even if we do and not actually hate them as much as we should, there is no protecting us from their evil influences Slowly but surely they will drag us some way, some distance, into their own realms—God save us from them! Love and hatred are the great means we have to receive or reject spiritual influences which are always silently and unconsciously working on us

The importance Islam (Shiaism, I mean) attaches to *Tawalla* (love) and *Tabarra* (hate, *lit* keeping aloof) is well-known It is the distinctive feature of our religion

The proper function of religion is the same as that of ethics Ethics is concerned with regulating the relations of man to his fellow-creatures The same is the purpose of religion, only it carries the relations of man to *all* existence, known and unknown—up to God As moral relations are impossible without a correct knowledge of the men we have to deal with so religion is first concerned with teaching about the

higher spiritual world—with God at its head But this knowledge is useless—worse than useless—unless a man seeks to enter into right relations with them As in ethics the true relations are those of the spirit—love, reverence, fear, hatred and the like and actions are only an expression of these emotions So the love and fear of God, love and reverence of those most holy in His sight, pre-eminently the holy prophets and Imams—in fact all occupying any high position in the spiritual world, and in the same way disgust and hatred of all known to be enemies of God or His religion or His blessed servants, may be said to be the essence of religion Religion is nothing besides this If there is no spiritual world there is no religion in the proper sense of the word All is mere mundane ethics If there is, the importance of knowing them correctly and fully and acting up to our knowledge is obvious. There is no question of salvation without it

(C) The last thing we said was that Islam is meant to be a lasting religion Our Lord Mohammed was the Last Prophet and no prophet is to come after him. The reason of this finality is two-fold First as shown above the ideal of a perfect religion is already realized in Islam No higher form or more complete system of religion can be conceived even Then the Prophet and the Imams teaching for over 250 years have given such a permanence to the cardinal teachings that there is no fear that they can ever be wholly corrupted Before the Imams left there were a large number of books which cannot all be obliterated The work of teaching could, therefore, be safely left to the community which, small as it was, could not wholly die out In short, though of course there is no absolute immunity against errors yet there is no likelihood of a complete corruption The essentials must remain to the end of the world The previous prophets, far from giving any permanence to their teachings, could not leave a sufficient trace of their existence even in the world, so that their very existence is now doubted by many

(D) Finally we have said that Islam is a revealed religion It is based on the teachings of the Prophet fully expounded and supplemented (according to Shias) by the Twelve Imams following him, who are all held to be inspired men The Prophet had not sufficient time and his career was too much occupied in clearing a way for Islam in the intensely ignorant, immoral and heathen country to give a full exposition of a perfect religion, perfect in everything, and to publish it in a way that would ensure its permanence, so as to become a final and lasting religion for all time to come This was the work of the Imams.

Everything in Islam, whether of doctrine, discipline, morals, law or civilization, is due to the Prophet and the Imams—nothing is taken from any extraneous source (among the Shias at least)—nay, not even from their own saints and ministers (as the Sufis and jurists of the Sunnies do) All that Islam can boast of for its truth sublimity and perfection is due directly to the Prophet and the Imams None can add anything, however good in appearance, in the name of religion it would be denounced as *Bidaat* Similarly no new interpretation of any old teaching will be recognized as valid

All its purity of theism, all the sublimity and metaphysical profundity of its conception of God is derived not from the philosophical discussions of its scholastic divines, but directly from the explicit and detailed teachings of the Imams which fill volumes of traditions It is to them that we owe all our civilization, all our codes of law and morality Nay, in practical life all the spirituality and spirit of piety and devotion that may be among us owes little to the preaching or inspiration of any saint or preacher—it comes mainly from the perfect form of religion they have devised and the devotional literature they have left These two have been and will ever remain self sufficient for the spiritual perfection of man Similary their lives and activities are the chief important factor of our history, the evolution of our religion and nationality is intimately bound up with them

And it is obvious it is only on their credit as inspired men that we receive all accounts of the spiritual world, the angels, the Hereafter and the like which by their very nature are incapable of the direct knowledge or verification So it is on their testimony that we believe in the prophets of old of whose existence even we could not be sure otherwise.

Thus the Prophet and the Imams are the warp and woof of our religion It is for this reason so essential for any one desiring to study our religion and appreciate its strength and vitality to study the lives and character and history of the Prophet and the Imams—to realize their intellectual genius and moral spiritual perfection, and weigh the evidences of their divine inspiration In fact it is possible to consider Islam as the production of their genius and spiritual elevation and to regard it as involving nothing but belief in and love and reverence for them. All the rest follows naturally of itself

It is clearly not possible to do justice to so vast a subject in the brief limits of an Introduction But we can afford to glance at some phase

of their greatness, however briefly and imperfectly, under suitable headings.

NOTE—It is clear that a highly spiritual religion requiring for its realization the highest powers of the head and the noblest qualities of the heart can be but imperfectly realised by the mass of people. Faith is a very great acquisition and many can only hang about at the portals of it All have not the time, education or occasion to understand the higher spiritual truths as those about the nature and attributes of God, nature of spiritual life as of angels or of the Holy Souls in their pre-existent state, so all have not the spiritual elevation necessary to appreciate their great spiritual greatness. All may not have the well-developed emotions requisite to love, as intensely as one might, the Holy prophets and the Imams. For all these there is a minimum expressed in the well-known testaments of Islam 'I believe in one God, angels, prophets with Mohamed as the last, Quran as the Book of God, Resurrection, Heaven, Hell *o'c*,' these are to be believed in a general way and the man is a Musalman This is *Islam* as distinguished from '*Iman*' faith, of which there are infinite degrees according to increased knowledge and comprehension and according to the intensity of religious emotion in connection with the things believed in The former makes merely for a possibility of salvation It is only a minimum without which salvation is impossible, and may count for nothing without some degree of *Iman* If it is attended with emotions opposed to those required by *Iman* then it is little better than infidelity However, though the lowest it is not the less important being adapted to all men of all culture, from the highest to the lowest, and as the higher stages of it are apt to come of themselves to the soul with the increasing seriousness with which the religion is held to it should be the first aim of the preacher, as it was with the Prophet of which more later on

II. The Prophet and the Imams.

1. *As inspired teachers of Divinity.*

That among a people used to the grossest forms of idolatory and polytheism a man should arise who should be convinced of the Unity of God and should have intense religious zeal for it is wonderful enough, but at least conceivable and barely possible, but that among a people sunk in the lowest depths of intellectual and moral degeneration a man or series of men should arise who should outdo the greatest philosophers in giving the purest conception of God as a Transcendental, Inconceivable yet Living Reality, Behind and Above, Creating and Sustaining all existence is hardly anything short of miraculous and for him this can only be the gift of divine knowledge

No one who has not read the orations of Our Lord Ali and the traditions of the Imams in Kafi and other collections can have any idea of the extent to which the Imams were concerned in in giving to the world the purest conception of God attainable to man Limited as we are to human terms the Imams were ever careful to point out and impress that all the attributes we assign to God must be divested of all anthropomorphic implications Thus though we call him Seeing, Hearing, Speaking, Willing, Loving *etc*, we should clean these terms of all mental associations implying sensation, affection and the like Of God's knowledge we read "He is knowing before the origination of knowledge and causality" showing that God's knowledge is something totally different from what we understand by the term and is not limited as ours is to the causal connection of things In one of his orations Our Lord Ali says "Between Himself and the things known there is no knowledge besides Him intervening," showing that God does not know things as we do by sensory impressions which are different both from ourselves and from things as they exist *per se* In short His is direct absolute knowledge of which we cannot form any conception even.

It is insisted that we have to conceive God by Himself—there is nothing that by analogy could supply the elements of His conception "O Thou" Says Our Lord Ali 'that leadest to Thy Being by Thine own Being; and is too pure to be homogenous with Thy creation, and too Exalted to have conditions attached to Thee" "He is One" but we are reminded 'not in the sense of number" as this implies the possibility in thought of another being beside Him.

An important point for theism is the necessity of uniting two opposite conceptions, both true yet both defective in their exclusiveness Is God external to or immanent in creation The Imams constantly try to make us reach a stand-point which over-reaches both Theism and Pantheism and includes either. "With all things, not in the sense of nearness and distant from all things, but not by separation" "Near to things without coming into touch with them Away from them yet not apart" "Present to things not being in touch with them Apart from them not by separation of distance He is apart from things by His Majesty and power over them, and they are apart from Him in their subjection and resort to Him" The Creation theory which Islam teaches is too apt to ignore the immanence of God. Hence the constant efforts to remind its truth

Another difficulty arises in connection with His attributes which are thought to be one with or the same as the Essence (or Being) of God, just as it is no matter whether we regard equiangularity as the essence or attribute of an equilateral triangle The latter cannot be conceived without the former This is a difficult conception for synthetic attributes as Hearing, Seeing etc , but since these are nothing but so many forms of expressing His Infinite perfection (without which He is nothing) that is the only right conception Our Lord Jaferel Sadiq says 'These names bespeak not attributes but that which He is—His Essence His attributes are not additional to His Being He is all these in His very Being' and this is the purity of monotheism Says Our Lord Ali 'The first thing in religion is to know Him' and the perfection of this consists in attesting to Him (*i e*, to believe Him as really existing, not to regard Him as a mere logical Unity of thought as, Kant did) The perfection of attestation consists in declaring His Unity The perfection of His Unity consists in purifying His conception and the perfection of this purification consists in denying qualities for him, as all qualities declare their distinction from what they qualify and everything qualified declares that it is different from its quality.

This does not certainly mean that God is pure Being, for pure Being is pure nothing It only means that He is an all-necessary Being, perfect in His Unity and Infinity, having nothing of the nature of synthetic contingent attributes about Him All His attributes are necessary to His Being The further conclusion follows that these attributes, so various in the senses we understand them, are all One in the case of God—as phases of one single Inconceivable Reality unifying them all in its Unity. Hence it is that, as I have shown in my principles

and elsewhere, the Great Name of God '*Isme Azam*' is said to be unattainable It represents a conception given separately by the well-known 'Blessed Names of God'

This much would suffice to give to the reader some idea of the metaphysical profundity of the Holy Prophet and the Imams It is needless to say that all is well reasoned knowledge, no vague religious instinct or mystic intuition The Imams spent their lives in arguing about God, proving His existence to the infidels and purifying His conception among the believers This was no easy task for an intensely degenerate country like Arabia, specially in the dreadful persecutions and hard conditions of life they lived in from the first to the last. See the notes on the Imams in the succeeding sections

All the facilities which literary arts can afford to help the mind to realize and retain a difficult conception were freely made use of The orations of Our Lord Ali are acknowledged to be masterpieces of Arabic Literature, and as such have been studied from the earliest times A selection of these made purely from a literary point of view—the Nahajul Balagat, turns out to be a treasure of theistic philosophy and is studied by the Shias and Sunnis alike for that purpose These orations may be said to have done more than anything else to establish the reputation of Islam for the purity of its monotheism Well might the great Motazali (Sunni) poet and philosopher Ibne Abil Hadid exclaim

'And Islam, but for Ali's knowledge great
Were only sceptic's butt or trampling ground'

Yet another step to popularise these highly abstruse conceptions was taken by the Imams They were dwelt upon in their longer prayers which must be used by everyone for some purpose or the other Thus there are hundreds of prayers which may well be studied for instruction in theistic philosophy In short all the purity of our monotheism we owe directly to the Imams and hardly to anyone else

The subject is important in as much as it shows that even in the matter of the inculcation and propagation of the true doctrines of faith Islam could not do without the Imams The Prophet had not sufficient time and leisure to do it as has been said in the beginning, and accordingly we find that very little of this kind comes to us from the Prophet all comes from the Imams.

This can be seen in a most clear way by contrast if we consider how it fared with the majority of the Musalmans for whom this door of guidance was closed, or nearly closed by sectarian prejudices As said above the Prophet had not sufficient time for the full guidance of the large country that was converted as if by charm in a space of ten years only Many were converted only in name and remained pagans at heart Those who were really converted were little better than others intellectually. They had merely substituted belief in one God for that in many gods In their new life they had pursuits of a character far different from an intellectual one Thus being incapable as well as indifferent, their minds remained unsophisticated as before and they retained their gross anthropomorphic conceptions of God

The Caliphate passed to the hands of the people on the distinct theory that the work of divine instruction had finished with the Prophet He had taught what was to be believed and what was allowed and forbidden, and that was all. There was no inspired, divinely commissioned successor of the Prophet to continue his work and there was no need for it. Historical reasons for the intense aversion of the masses to the Prophet's family and particularly to Our Lord Ali and his line of Imams which is so notorious in history we will consider later And even when there was no marked spirit of aversion then according to the tradition of the established church they were held no way much superior to other companions of the Prophet and so there was no particular reason to turn to them for spiritual guidance And certainly except the small number of adherents called Shias, none looked upon them as inspired men and their teachings as supplementary to, or equal in value to those of the Prophet.

Thus rejecting the Imams the people were left without any good source of religious instruction The Quran was never designed to be read independently for spiritual guidance, hence the need acknowledged by all sects to understand every verse in the light of expository traditions of the Prophet (and the Imams according to the Shias) Moreover it was collected in a manner which to say the least of it was most unsatisfactory, and none can be sure if portions of it at least are not mutilated, disarranged and lost The more highly spiritual teachings of the Prophet could not have been in abundance owing to historical reasons explained in the beginning, and moreover could not be preserved as the minds of the people were not ripe enough to understand and transmit them to others faithfully. They fell into the hands of Jews

whose legends fill their traditions and commentaries on the Quran. Anthropomorphism is rank among the Jews as everybody knows and was much more so in the old days in Arabia

Thus on all sides there were influences tending to corrupt their conception of God to the grossest and most shocking forms The extent of the tendency towards this can only be realized by one who reads the hundreds of admittedly false traditions invented by the people in the days when this was a lucrative profession Shahrastani in his Milal o Nihal has quoted a few briefly We will quote none Suffice it to say that one divine Maqatil 'bn Sulaiman boasted that he could tell about every part of God's body except his beard and an unmentionable organ! The number of persons, chiefly of Hambali sect, holding such gross views grew so inordinate that Caliph Razibillah who was influenced by rationalistic views had to issue a special mandate threatening to deal severely with all holding such infidel notions —(323 A H)

It will be interesting to see that whatever of reformation or elevation there was in the Sunni ranks from these deplorable conditions was due mainly to the contact of the Shias and was effected mainly by Motazalites whose leaders had the fortune of discipleship, immediate or remote of the Imams, and derived these sublime conceptions from their teachings This the Sunnis freely admit to this day Wasil' bn Ata the founder of this sect was a boy kept and trained by Abu Hashim son of Mohamed (son of Our Lord Ali) Abul Sabah Kanani was teaching the orations of Our Lord Ali to his disciples and spoke of Zaid 'bn Ali with being his disciple when the latter proclaimed Imamate

The teachings of the Imams differed from the popular views about the moral attributes of God They insisted on the justice of God, which with them meant consistency with His principle and design as the All-Good Thus His actions and dealings are within its limits open to moral criticism The Motazalites followed them in this also The opposite school thought that this detracted from His Infinite Power and Independence In their own way they reconciled His justice with any conceivable cases of oppression The potter has absolute power over his clay, so none can have any claim of any kind against God, ergo He can never be unjust to anyone whatever He might do They went further and taught that nothing was good or evil rationally it is only God's command o prohibition that makes it one way or another

There is a grain of truth in this Absolute Power theory which th Imams were not slow to recognise It takes all sorts of things to mal

a world. Differences must therefore have existed from the beginning of things andthere is no question of equity here A donkey has no right to ask why it was not created a man, nor a poor man to ask why he was not born a prince But there is a relative power given to every creature to see and do his best according to means and circumstances and duties are always relative to these, and in the exercise of these consists the individual perfection which is all that can be morally called good

This explains the famous position of the Imams, that of limited freedom in the thorny question of Liberty and Necessity or, as it was then understood, of predestination as opposed to personal freedom To follow out the subject philosophically is obviously out of question here One popular fallacy may, however, be exposed God's foreknowledge, it is said makes our actions certain We cannot falsify God's foreknowledge The fallacy consists in taking account of only part of God's foreknowledge If He knows I will steal, He also knows that I will do so of my own accord without irresistable compulsion within or without Thus my freedom of will remains unaffected Again knowledge depends on its object, not object upon knowledge If I were not to steal there would be nothing about this in God's Foreknowledge

The doctrine of compulsion, so unnatural to man, was much prevalent among early Musalmans Caliph Omar insisted on it in his famous reply about God's leading man astray It was much used by Omyeds to suit and vindicate their tyrrany Every oppressive act of theirs was attributed directly to God The theory is common among the Sunnis not tainted with Motazalite views, though being unatural it is never consistently believed or realized

Thus in divinity at least we see that taking the Imams as spiritual guides we have in Islam a revealed religion that is rational, true and perfect, and hence a lasting religion Rejecting the Imams we have nothing but a simple naive creed requiring to be supplemented by philosophy which, however, is most virulently denounced by the more orthodox of them The highest they attain to is Ahmed' bn Hanbal's teaching that God has hands, feet etc, (as these words occur in His connection in the Quran and the traditions) but we are unable to form any conception of them, any conception of them likening them to any known hands and feet is to be denounced Hughes is glad that this teaching makes the Musalmans of this such school conformable to the Christian doctrine. See his Dictionary of Islam, Art Wahhabi.

2. *As gifted with divine knowledge.*

Section 1

Their anticipations of scientific discoveries.

It is clear that the chief question of importance for Islam is whether the Prophet and the Imams were true in their claims to be such, for on their credit stands the probability of the vast body of Islamic teaching, about the pleasure of God in specific matters and all unverifiable spiritual doctrines and beliefs such as those about the angels and the Hereafter. We have to see what evidence there exists to-day for their inspiration and spiritual elevation This is a matter-of-fact question and requires a close and patient enquiry with an open mind It is claimed that such evidence is ample and is as direct and cogent for the Imams as for the Prophet and all taken together constitutes a vast body of evidence for Islam that is almost irresistable

Spirituality has many phases—intellectual, moral and those specifically called spiritualistic It is the perfection of them all that has to be sought for and is probably unattainable to any but the prophets and the Imams

We have seen some evidence of the first in their highly pure and sublime conception of God which was simply marvellous for the age and the country they lived in We can point to similar wonders in other branches of knowledge with which they were not directly concerned. Their anticipations of truths in physical sciences are an interesting branch of study and have been dealt with in my Science and Islamic Tradition They should appeal even to the most sceptical, for the Imams speak clearly and unequivocally of scientific truths which were not and *could not* possibly be known in the age in which they lived, were discovered centuries later by means of instruments and other elaborate appliances that were themselves the achievement of later ages, to say nothing of the great scientific culture required to handle them

From the nature of things these things should be few in number for it was no business of the Prophet and the Imams to teach science to the people On the contrary in cases of strange truths as that of the earth's motion it might have meant the death of their proper mission—the guidance of the people Yet if these holy men speak of nature at all it is natural they should occasionally betray their knowledge of it, sometimes, in some expressions at least.

Great precautions, however, are required To prevent self-deception which is so common among people in matters of this sort, it is necessary to start only with clear, precise and full statements, and it is only when a number of plain, unequivocal statements have been shown to be true in the light of indisputable scientific truths that we may venture to form an opinion about others which may possibly be inadvertent or admitting, however remotely, of another interpretation. There should be no twisting of the plain meanings of words, no searching of lexicons to find rare or unusual meanings that would serve the new interpretation The passages must be understood from the earliest times exactly in the sense in which we interpret it. Except in flagrant cases of inaccuracy which should be very rare no new interpretation should be allowed. Apologists of whom there have been so many in recent times in all religions who proclaim that none has ever understood their Sacred Books before themselves are victims of self-delusion, if not liars consciously

We have been taken too long in the preamble, but in a matter of this kind it is necessary to keep up our reputation To be brief, however, there are several verses in the Quran which are evidential in this respect. But these may best be reserved for the chapter on Quran as a standing miracle Here we are concerned with the Prophet and the Imams Since it is the traditions of the Imams that give us the most striking instances we may confine ourselves here to these only Here is one.

Our Lord Ali -e- Naqi (10th Imam) says 'When the night is halved (*Izantasafallail*) there appears a light (*zahara bayazun*) in the middle of the sky (*fi wastessamae*) like a pillar of iron (*ka amudin min hadid.n*) which illumines the world (*yazio lahad-dunya*) It stays for some time (*yaqumu saatan*) and then passes away (*summa yazhibo*) Then the tradition goes on to say that after this a light appears on the eastern horizon (zodiacal light) and then appears the true dawn of the morning (Kafi, 3rd cent A H) Any body can now see that the light spoken of in the middle of the night in midsky is the Gegenchein which was discovered only in the 19th cent being first observed by Brorsen in 1856

Our Lord Ali 'bn Abi Talib being asked about the legnth and breadth of the sun [*and the moon*, so the tradition as it is has it, though it is probably an inadvertent addition by constant association of sun and moon in parlance, and there is another report giving dimensions of the moon pretty correctly] Our Lord replied 900×900 Farsakhs (Uyun, 4th cent A. H) Any one who knows the diameter of the sun (880000 miles) which has been found by eight wholly different methods since the

eighteenth century can see that the figure given by Our Lord is correct of the length and breadth (*i. e*, polar and equitorial semi-circumferences) of the sun Any one who knows anything of astronomy knows that knowing the correct dimensions of the sun was simply impossible more than 300 years ago

Our Lord Hasan in the *khutbah* read on the death of his father said that day corresponded with the day of Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ In an article published some time ago in the Muslim Review I have shown the accuracy of this though it involves an elaborate mathematical calculation.

Our Lord Jafarel Sadiq speaks of the planet unknown to astronomers of the day which he called *sakina* (quiet i *e*, very slow-paced, the name being suggested probably by the name slow-paced given to Saturn by Hindus) and he also speaks of a Lowhe Mahfooz (preserved Table) which in the connection appears no other than the Invariable plane of the Solar System And he tells us that the inclinations of the orbits of Jupiter and Venus, of the sun (Ecliptic) and Sakina and of the sun (?) and the Lowhe Mahfooz are (nearly) the same (Kafi) The tradition is discussed fully in my Science and Islamic Tradition From the inclination it is clear that planet that is given the name of Sakina is Neptune

Our Lord Mohamed Baqir says the days and lunar months will be longer in the days of Our Lord the Mahdi of Islam (Irshad, 4th cent) Everybody knows now that days are increasing by 22 seconds per century And so the lunar months, both owing to tidal friction

Our Lord Ali 'bn Husain in one of his prayers (Sahifae Kamila Supplement) speaks of the weight of air—a reality discovered first by Torricelli in the 16th century. and what is infinitely more wonderful of the "weight" (*wazn*) of light—a thing which to many would appear simply absurd, but the reality of which is now a certainty—one of the greatest scientific achievements of the 20th century.

Our Lord Ali speaks in (Duae Simat) of the planets being controlled by the sun, of their sight being the same to all people (referring clearly to their small parallax), and in one of his questions to a Persian astronomer asks 'What is the position of Venus? Is it one of the attendants (satellites) or the system makers '(Jawame). The question is left without an answer but it speaks of itself.

Speaking of the creation of the Universe he says 'And God called out to it when it was yet in a state of smoke (*dukhan*) and the cords of its galaxies were intertwined (*faltahamat ora ashtajaha*) That two or more galaxies were intertwined to form the present milky way (in a corner of which our sun with its vast system is situated) appears from the proper motions of the stars (see A W Bickerton's Birth of the Worlds and Systems) Nahajul Balaghat, 4th cent.

Of the earth's motions Our Lord speaks so often and so plainly that the holy divine Allama Majlisi (who would be the last man to admit it) is constrained to say in one place (in Behar Vol XIV) that he who would postulate a rapid smooth motion for this globe can do so without difficulty But honestly speaking I am not satisfied that it is the astronomical motions of the earth that are referred to in these passages—it is rather the earth's internal motions there The passage that speaks most clearly of earth's motion is this one of Our Lord Jaferel Sadiq (Hadis Mufazzal) "All things speak (by their change) of their origination—the circuits of Falak (the totality of orbits) in respect of (the motion of) what belongs to them (the planets) (*hema fihi*) and these are the seven heavens, and the motion of the earth with (*Ar* and) those on it, and the changes of the seasons and the changes of time (due to annual and diurnal motions respectively)

Our Lord Riza says it is a blue orb behind the yonder veil (atmosphere) that causes sky to appear blue We now know that the sun is that blue Orb as has been shown by Langley—it would appear so if we could view it beyond the atmosphere And we know that it is the dispersion of its blue rays that causes sky to appear blue in daytime

These instances must suffice to set men athinking what kind of men these Imams were They are veritable, standing miracles, I say Physical miracles may pass away but these will abide to the end of the world And remember these are only instances. Of course I cannot give here a synopsis, such as the above is, of what fills my 'Science and Islamic Tradition' I will, however, conclude with something said obviously in jest, not in earnest An Arab, a typical Arab we may suppose, comes to Our Lord Ali and asks the question "Where do clouds remain?" (from where they come every now and then" "On a tree" says Our Lord "on a thick tree on the shores of the sea and thence they go where God commands them" (Kafi) This tree, let it be observed has been found out—in Peru. It is called Rain-producing 'tree there It collects the floating vapour in the air about it and then condenses it by the motion of its leaves, and so a continuous rainfall continues from its

twigs, day in and day out throughout the year Another tree having this peculiar property is a variety of Eucalyptus found in Australia.

SECTION 2

Their Prophecies.

Everybody admits that prophecy is a miracle, only it should be sufficiently precise and particular, and whether owing to distance of time or other reasons there should be no possibility of foreseeing the events that are predicted For these too we need not confine ourselves to the remarkable prophecies in the Holy Quran which the world has been seeing fulfilled to this day

In a way the whole life of the Prophet was a continuous series of the most remarkable prophecies as remarkably fulfilled They are the very warp of his history and it is not easy to pass them over as embellishments of later ages The Prophet's biographers were Sunnis, and they would be the last of men to publish sayings of the Prophet which go to make a reflection on their own holy Caliphs Witness the words in which the Prophet foretold the victory of Khaibar at the hands of Our Lord Ali after Abubecker and Omar were badly put to flight, "Tomorrow I will give the standard to a man who is a great charger and never knows a flight, who loves God and His Apostle and whom God and His Apostle love The fort will be won at his hands" And at the time he said this he knew that Our Lord Ali was suffering from sore eyes and hardly able to go to fight at all However over-critical we choose to be, it is not easy to pass over things like these However, I do not propose to dwell here on prophecies of this class There are simply hundreds of them depending more or less on the reporters for their credit But I cannot pass over the famous prophecy of the Prophet about the martyrdom of the holy Sahabee Ammare Yasir, "O Ammar, a rebellious people will kill thee while thou would be calling them towards heaven and they would be calling thee towards Hell" Ammar was killed in the battle of Siffin fighting against the forces of Moaviyah who had revolted against Our Lord Ali The Prophecy was so famous that some persons kept waiting to see the fate of Ammar and as soon as he was killed they came over to fight on the side of Our Lord Ali The thing produced such a consternation in the ranks of Moaviyah that to retain his hold on his own people he said that it was Ali who was responsible for Ammar's death, having brought that old man to fight for him (Mishkat). Certainly but for its being in every one's mouth Bokhari would have been the last man to give a thing so damning to his creed a place in his well-known book.

The same may be said of the well-known prophecy of the barking of the dogs of Howab which disconcerted Ayesha so much that she was abandoning her march altogether, and Talha had to make a number of people swear before her that the place was not Howab See account of the battle of Jamal in any history.

Among prophecies that were fulfilled long after they were recorded may be mentioned the memorable 'Fire of Hijaz' which as the Prophet had distinctly foretold made the necks of the camels in the town of Busra visible at night to the people of Medina The event occurred in 654 A H. and a detailed account of it is given by Qastulani who was eye-witness. The prophecy is to be found in Bukhari (3rd cent) The geologists say it was the rising of a mud-volcano that was responsible for this phenomenon

Of the same class—fulfilled long after being recorded may be mentioned those about the invasion of Turkomans (under Halaku Khan 656 A H,)' a number of them are cited in Rashiduddin Khan's history with their sources. The same may be said of the prophecy about Abbasides coming to the throne and the number of their monarchs being forty. This prophecy is cited by Al Ghazali who lived long before the dynasty came to an end As it happened the number of Abbaside sovereigns was thirty seven It was in round numbers that the number was given in the prophecy Finally the well-known prophecy about t he twelve Imams after him who should continue as long as the faith of Islam exists *i e*, to the end of the world yields to none in point of certainty Though so disconcerting to the Sunnis they have never ventured to deny the report. The number is exactly fulfilled in the twelve Imams of the Shias.

It is a question whether such predictions require special revelation from God, or whether they are the products of a power—their great spiritual perception or genius if I may so call it But whatever it is there is the same overflowing evidence for it in the case of the Holy Imams. As in the case of the Prophet, space cannot permit to enter even into an outline of the proper heads As to the numbers they are simply hundreds. It has taken 14 closely written folios in my father's Kitabul Kashfe Anil Ghasasah to give merely a list of the prophecies of one Imam only Our Lord Ali 'bn Abi Talib. And the thing to notice is that the vast, nay overwhelming, majority of them are from Sunni sources He has been particular about these as they have something of the value of hostile witnesses Indeed it is inconceivable why Sunnis should have set about to spread reports to the glorification of Our Lord Ali, while they are reticent in doing the same for their much beloved Caliphs,

Certainly that means something. Anyone who reflects over this will be able to see that *generally speaking* the Sunni reports at least of Our Lord's prophecies fulfilled before they were, presumably, committed to writing are not less certain than those that were fulfilled centuries after they were committed to paper. See a paper of mine published recently in the Muslim Review on the "prophecies of Our Lord Ali."

Then it is remarkable that several of the disciples of Our Lord as Misam Tammar, Raschid Hujri and some like Mukhtar who merely heard from these men were branded by their opponents as laying claim to the gift of prophecy. We know it was simply due to their giving utterance to these prophecies they learned from Our Lord It is noticeable that it is the disciples of Our Lord *and no others* who got that reputatation

Then as in the case of some prophecies of the Prophet the prophecies of Our Lord Ali have sometimes given rise to events which would be inexplicable without them Thus the Omyeds in the days of their power were always careful to prevent any youth in the line of Abbas (uncle of the Prophet), marrying any girl of Banu Haris clan This was due to prophecy of Our Lord Ali which had become famous that the destroyer of Omyeds would be an Abbaside youth having an Harisiya for his mother. As the fates would have it Caliph Hisham in some mood of mind (probably of unbelief) gave the permission to Abdulla 'bn Abbas, and his son Saffah literally exterminated the Omyeds from the country.

However, in the brief space at our disposal it would be better to confine ourselves to instances of prophecies fulfilled long after they were committed to paper. The following may be cited —

1. The destructive inroads of the Mongols under Halaku Khan Several Prophecies One is in the famous Khutbatul Bayan "The *Fatra* (*lit* interval has been completed and the 6th (century) from Hegira has come on The flat nosed will overspread the land and (even) the dresses (of people) will be snatched off The (ladies) in seclusion will be insulted and the freemen would be taken into bondage They will go to Kaisan (Kashan probably) and will devastate Khorasan" etc One scroll containing clear prophecies of these inraods and the inability of any to withstand them was in possession of Syed 'bn Taus, and so before they had made any conquests of consequence he made a petition to Halaku Khan to leave his district unmolested and mentioned this prophecy.

2. Prophecy about the rise of Ale Bowaih 4th cent who were foretold by Our Lord to get complete control over Caliphate and remain

masters for a century or more. So prophecies about the rise of Fatimite Caliphs in Egypt and the Syeds coming to rule at Tabrastan—all taken from Khutbatul Malahem cited by Ibne Abil Hadid (Sunni) in his great commentary on Nahajul Balagah.

3 Prophecies about the insurrection of Zanjis (Yaqut, Mojam, Zahabee cited in Durre Manzun and in addresses of Our Lord) So about the murderous Caramites (Ibn Abil Hadid from Khutbatul Malahem)

4 Prophecy about Sanjar (by name) the last Persian (probably meaning Seljuki) king living 80 years and dying of hunger (Rafeei, History.)

5 Submerging of Basra and its being destroyed by earthquakes (Yaqut, Mojam)

6. The desert of Karbala becoming a great City (Saduq, Uyun)

This is sufficient within the limits of an Introduction to show that in spite of the intense ignorance and barbarism of the people through whom Islam has come to us there remains the amplest evidence that could be desired for the divine truth of the Holy Prophet and the Imams after him. It is obvious that all this which has been transmitted to us is but an infinitely small remnant of the true prophetic sayings, much has been lost, obscured and disfigured in the intense darkness of the ages through which it has passed What would have been the effect if we were confined to the Prophet alone for these evidences We see that apart from the few passages in the Quran which have a clear scientific import there are few scientific traditions of the Prophet himself which we can put forward as irrefragible proofs of his divine inspiration The number swells in the case of the Holy Imams. Of the prophecies many have no evidential value, those that have had as much chance to be lost to the world as the thousands of others which, we have no doubt, were Thus even in the matter of evidences for Islam the Imams were almost as indispensable as the Prophet himself But for them the strength of Islam would not have been half of what it is to-day

Section 3.

Their other miracles.

The same principles that make us feel secure in affirming the truth of prophecies whose fulfilment was (possibly) before they were recorded apply to reports about physical miracles of which there is no other proof or evidence now available. The Sunnis might in their love for the

Prophet invent millions of tales to glorify him, they might do the same, let it be granted, for Our Lord Ali 'bn Abí Talib, but there can be no reason an earth why they should invent such tales to the glory of Our Lord Ali as would cast a reflection on their own Caliphs. Thus foreseeing what was coming after him it was the habit of the Prophet that when he wanted to do something to glorify Our Lord Ali be would first give a chance for it to Abubecker and Omar and in this way make their disgrace patent. Thus for building his first Mosque (at Qiba) he ordained that his camel would decide the area that it should occupy. He first made Abubecker and Omar ride it—the camel would not move. Then he bade Our Lord Ali to ride it and forthwith the camel started and made a circuit and the area was made sacred for the mosque (Abdul Haqq Jazbul Qulub etc) Why on earth, I ask, do Sunnis invent such tales and publish them? Granting that they are not hostile to Our Lord Ali, is not their testimony to a story like this, nevertheless, a testimony of a hostile witness? Instances of such miracles, can be multiplied without number but it is hardly pleasant, and neither we have space for many here. We can only afford to give principles

Thus it is with the Prophet's miracles Most of the miracles of which the works of Islamic tradition are full have certainly no evidential value for the enquirer. They are gone and their reality depends on the credit of the reporters which for the unbelievers would in such a case be very small and we can say no more to it But all are not such, there are others which carry their iron evidence with them, and the above is an instance of only one kind of it.

Then miracles which have led to important events in history which are inexplicable without them must have some basis of truth Thus to the Christians of Najran the challenge was given simply to pray for curse of God on the Prophet if he was a liar. They accepted the challenge at first and came to the appointed spot but as soon as they saw the Prophet coming with Our Lord Ali and his wife and children coming for prayer changed their mind and left the field agreeing to pay the Jezia. Why on earth did they do so, every sensible man would ask, if the accounts as we read in histories are all embellishments I have never found any Christian writer giving any explanation that could appeal to any man of sense. It is all very well to say that it was a strange mode of settling a question—or to-say with a great show of Christian charity and meekness that it is unbecoming for Christians to curse anyone. It is sufficient to say their ecclesiastical history is full of such instances. And it was a question of money and property. They

would have gladly cursed the whole world rather than pay a farthing of Jezia.

The miracles which have left relics or traces which are themselves wonderful do certainly require some consideration The splitting of the moon is a case to the point The two halves do not appear to have been completely joined together Sir John Herschell in his Outlines of Astronomy says there have been several well-credited observations in which the moon coming in transit in front of a star the star has not disappeared, as it should have done, but has continued to be seen *through the disc of the moon*, as if there is some mighty crack cutting the moon right through Certainly no other globe is known to have this strange structure So Sheikh Mufid speaks of a *sidr* lote tree which existed down to his day, and its leaves were much used by the people for cures etc Its trunk was for a man's height split in two parts separated by a space through which a man could pass Of this tree the tradition was that the Prophet walking to this tree in a state of drowsiness the tree was split asunder so that the Prophet passed through it unhurt Surely the formation is a strange one specially for a *sidr* tree having no very broad trunk to it.

The same may be said of the miracles of the Imams Granting that the Sunnis are not unfriendly to Our Lord Ali one must wonder how it is that while the traditions speaking of the miracles of their own Caliphs are exceedingly few those about the miracles of Our Lord are exceedingly numerous And the wonder must increase if one considers the conditions under which traditions came to them It is well-known that Moaviyah started public cursing of Our Lord Ali which was done in every mosque in the Muslim empire He also issued strict orders forbidding people to relate any tradition to the credit of Our Lord, prescribing severe penalties for this, enjoining them to publish tales to the credit of other Caliphs etc, and promising bountiful rewards for this In his Nasaehe Kafiya the great Sunni savant Mohamed 'bn Aqil has cited several mandates of Moaviyah to this effect The practice of cursing continued to the second century till the days of Caliph Omar 'bn Abdul Aziz who stopped it What effect this had on the ideas of the people about and their feelings towards him can be gathered from the method which he adopted to do it He tutored a Jew to come to him in full audience and ask his daughter in marriage to himself He doing this and the Caliph refusing on the ground of his being a Jew and a beggar, the latter replied (as he was instructed) that if he was a Caliph he was not better than the Prophet, and as to himself if he was a Jew he was not worse

than Ali 'bn Abi Talib whom the Musalmans curse publicly in their mosques. Pretending to avoid sneers of this kind the Caliph stopped this custom. Of himself it is said he never thought of it till he learned from his tutor that Ali had fought at Beder. As was natural the people —the masses at last—had forgotten all about Our Lord and knew nothing but calumny against him The Sunnis have had much ado to sift the rubbish that filled their traditions in this scandalous age The Abbasides were—though alternately and with intervals of irritation and persecution as in days of Mansur, Haroun, Mutawakkil—on the whole not unfavourable, and that helped to mend matters But as to the masses they remained much what they were in Omyed times Madaini related to Mamun that in one of the towns he was surprised to see that no man was named after Hasan, Husain etc Only one shoe-seller had given the name Hasan to his boy, and being asked about it he explained that he gave that name to him as he had often to use abusive language to him.

Such being the conditions among the people for centuries is it not a miracle by itself that any tradition speaking of the excellence of Our Lord Ali is to be found in Sunni writings? Indeed the extent to which the Sunnis having such a history behind them have got over their prejudice against Our Lord Ali is creditable to them. But this can be said only of the later ages The traditions were all collated in the age when among sections of people at least there was intense prejudice against Our Lord I cannot continue this very unpleasant topic any longer, but any who keep an eye on the intensely bad conditions of the time will agree with me that even after making every sort of allowance it remains that generally speaking the testimony of Sunni writers to the miracles and other excellences of Our Lord Ali and the other Imams are not of much inferior value for evidence than the testimony of a non-Muslim. Granting that the writers were all perfectly free from prejudice the men they wrote for were—the vast majority of them—greatly prejudiced and they would hardly have been able to get any reputation or popularity if they published any but the most well credited accounts on this particular head. The people of Damascus appear rather much prejudiced against Our Lord Ali. Nasai the author of one of the six correct books of the Sunnis thought he might correct them by reciting to them his small book Khasais dealing with traditions in honour of Our Lord Ali For some days the people suffered to listen—at length one day a man asked him if he had composed any similar book for Moaviyah, and on his replying that he knew of no reliable traditions to his credit they jumped upon him and beat him so much that he died. Of Saqae Wasite it is said

that one day in the course his recitals he dictated the Hadise Tair—a famous tradition to the credit of Our Lord Ali They pounced upon him and beat him out and then washed the place where he had sat. Thenceforward he stuck to his house, never recited a tradition to any body there Can it be imagined that any traditionist could have set about to invent tales in honour of Our Lord Ali and kept himself safe among populace to say nothing of keeping his reputation with them Of course there were infinite variations according to culture or education, contact with Shias and other conditions, but the above holds good of the infinitely vast majority.

We have been taken so long with principles that we cannot afford space for specific instances But neither do we need it. They are so very famous and on everyone's lips Who has not heard of Our Lord Ali's tearing out the gate of Khaibar fort and holding it for sometime in his hands setting it on the trench as a bridge for the Muslim forces to enter For details see Madarij or any other history The matter was so well-known and accepted of all that it got a place in the Ziarats of Our Lord taught as early as the 2nd cent.

The same may be said of the rerising of the sun for his prayers twice after it had set As to the first time when it was more a miracle of the Prophet than his own there are few Sunni works of authority without it. See Shifa of Qazi Ayaz &c As to the second time when it happened in his own Caliphate see Nasr 'bn Muzahim Kitabul Siffin (2nd cent) or any other classics of Islamic history One of the attendants, himself a Sahabee, extolled this miracle in verses in which he appears to extol not so much Our Lord himself as his own party of followers on whom he says this was a special grace of God, for the whole party following Our Lord had not said their prayers when the sun went down. Those who may be afraid there was a tremendous break in the course of nature here may be told that it is not at all necessary. It may have been a purely physical phenomenon such as may be effected by abnormal refraction. The miracle of producing a fountain of water (on the way to Siffin) on removing a block of stone that shut it is equally famous. It led to the conversion of a Christian monk And so on.

A mere list of the well-authenticated miracles of Our Lord would swell this article to an enormous size even if we confine the list to Sunni sources We hurry to note that the same may be said of the miracles of later Imams. It is true, as Sell says, that they were not much noticed by the Sunnis and their biagrophers were mainly Shias. They always remained under the evil eye of

the ruling Caliphs and so few would approach them Some passed the greater part of their lives in dungeons owing to political suspicion So accounts tending to glorify them in public estimation could not be openly published without great risk If we trust the Shia accounts one man was put to death by Caliph Harun for publishing a miracle of Our Lord Musa Kazim the 7th Imam Yet it was not that they were wholly unnoticed Though leaders of the condemned heretical Shias they ever continued to hold the highest reputation as holy men and saints. Shafeei the founder of one of the four great sects of Sunnis in law gave to the tomb of Our Lord Musa Kazim the name of *Babo qazail Hawaij* 'the gate of the fulfilment of wants' Ahmed 'bn Hambal the founder of the Hambali school of law said of the *sanad* (chain of transmitters) recited by Our Lord Riza (8th Imam) through his holy ancestors that it might well serve as a charm to heal the demented '*Haza saultul majanin*' The great Sufi saint Maroofe Karkhi was a disciple of Our Lord Riza and boasted of being called his porter All this must surely be due to something. The world has not known another instance of the leaders of one sect being regarded by men of other sects as saints and holy men

This does not certainly mean that the sect as a whole was very favourably disposed towards them Were it so the state could not possibly have treated them in the way it did Indeed owing to reasons explained in the beginning among the mass of men and their leaders there always remained a spirit of aversion against them The treatment to which Nasai and Saqae Wasite were put we have given above, and they are crying proofs of this For the prejudice of the leaders against the later Imams specifically it may be noted that Bokhari never took a tradition from Our Lord Jafeiel Sadiq, to say nothing of the later Imams, and said he felt something in his heart against him Imam Fakhruddin Razi wonders why Our Lords the 9th, 10th and 11th Imams never thought to learn something from the great traditionists and divines of the time.

Thus on the whole the miracles of the holy Imams recorded by the Sunni authors have great evidential value They are either testimonies of hostile witnesses or they explain how those who should in the natural course of things have been hostile or prejudiced were irresistibly attracted to them For these it is sufficient to take a book like Zakhiratul Maal, the work of a typical Sunni writer who would not allow even that Our Lord Ali delayed to do *Bayat* (swear allegiance) to Abubecker He cites from Shaqiqe Palkhi the famous miracle of Our Lord Musa Kazim reading his thoughts and turning sand into flour, Our Lord Ali e Naqi being placed in the cage of tigers at the bidding of Caliph Mutawakkil and

coming out unhurt the animals falling at his feet in supplication, Our Lord Hasan Askari exposing the trick of the Christian monk who made rain to fall quite at will—a thing that caused great consternation among the people and many were renouncing Islam. These out of a host cited by him and other writers ought to suffice to set a seeker after truth on the path of enquiry.

An interesting class of miracles are those which were effected by the Imams after their death Thus the Manaqibe Murtazawi cites from Waqidi the account of a man shown to him (along with others) by Caliph Harun having been changed into a dog and afterwards struck with lightning The man was in the habit of abusing Our Lord and being asked to repent would not The same writer gives an account of a man raised to life after he was helplessly killed and cut into pieces for admiring Our Lord Ali The tyrant was metamorphosed and killed shortly after. The same author records a case of punishment in his own time which made a great noise at the time reaching the ears of Emperor Jehangir, who then in his excitement did what he could for the man's disgrace after his death.

Finally the great Slaughter of Karbala is, as I have said in my Islam in the light of Shiaism, a miracle of miracles Take the bare skeleton of facts and just ponder over them Just try to conceive (for none can conceive adequately) four days of thirst and then conceive of engaging in hand to hand fight with forces a thousand times strong And then how they fought! Before the fight Our Lord Husain had arranged with Yezid's General Omar that one man shall fight against one man But he soon saw that in that way there was not the least chance of victory and he directed the rule to be broken Thus no one daring to approach Abis he was surrounded on all sides by archers and thus succeeded to be finished And so of many others It is useless to say anything of the fighting of Our Lord Husain himself who was literally surrounded on all sides and assaulted with all weapons together, fire and stones not excepted. And in this way they continued the fight from morning to afternoon. Then remember all were not stalwart youths able to fight There were old tottering frames amongst them like Habib 'bn Mazahir and Muslim 'bn Ausaja and there were little boys of twelve or so among them like Qasim whom Our Lord had to lift up to seat him on his horse These boys should not have known even the art of striking with a sword. And let us not forget the poor animals How were the horses able to work on the fourth day of their thirst. If all this is not a miracle I say nothing is a miracle.

SECTION 4

But are we limited to miracles recorded in books, whether the writings of Shias or Sunnis? Do miracles not actually occur before our own eyes? There are not only (A) occasional miracles which are witnessed from time to time (*a*) at the tombs of the Imams, (*b*) at Tazia Khanas and other places associated with the Imams, (*c*) all the world over. There are also (B) periodical miracles which can he witnessed on specific dates at various places and (C) permanent, lasting or standing miracles.

As in the case of the preceding space prevents us from giving any accounts however brief of these—and there is such a large number of them Everyone has in his knowledge some of them. We will give only one or two instances of each.

Instances of A (*a*) Only the last year saw the display of two great miracles One, a blind man restored to sight at the tomb of Our Lord the 7th Imam at Kazimain The man had been under the best available treatment of the European method and given up as hopeless. The news was first published by a (presumably) European correspondent of the Pioneer of 10-8-28 who had satisfied himself by enquiries that the man was really totally blind for years Details of the miracle with his previous treatment were published in *Alwaiz*, a journal of this association, and other papers later

Another, a paralytic quite unable to stand on his legs—power of walking restored to him at the tomb of Our Lord Ali at Nejef Published in *Sarfaraz* and numbers of other papers

There are literally hundreds of such miracles, only owing to their commonness and lack of missionary spirit no one cares to publish them, and in time they are forgotten The well-known poet Amanat of Lucknow was dumb He was given the power of speech at the tomb of Our Lord Ali at Nejef The thing would never have been recorded, but a Hindu patron of letters Munshi Newal Kishore published a collection of poems of a special type called Wasokhts and with each poet's Wasokht he attached a short account of the poet to whom it belonged. In that brief note in Shola Jawala the miracle is noted. The reader will excuse me more instances

Instances of A (*b*). Innumerable, and witnessed every year and all year round I have seen four whole volumes of miraculous cures &c. recorded to be performed at Joara in Rajputana, and I verified one having related to a relative of mine. The miracles at Jogipura near

Bijnor are, I dare say, well-known to everyone in these provinces though few have cared to publish any reports I have had occasion to verify some miracles published about Chowrathia District Kheri, one, the cure of a leper, was reported to me by a man who was quite a disbeliever and attributed it to faith cure—a thing I can not understand as leprosy is not a disease connected with the nervous system.

Accounts of miracles occurring at Tazia Khanas come to ears almost every year; only a few have begun to be published I know of one in my own house which though it created a great terror at the time in the city, which later proved to be quite right, was never published. Of examples of published miracles and of these too those that continued for a length of time so as to be witnessed by hundreds and thousands of persons may be mentioned the sights seen at Mir Wajid Ali's Tazia Khana some years ago at Mustafabad District Rae Bareli which a European Engineer thought might be something of the nature of refraction appearances in the strait of Messina—a foolish idea the absurdity of which I exposed in a number of Isna Ashari. The long-continued miracle of the Zarih at Zaidpur District Barabanki was witnessed by thousands I will not say a word about it, but simply ask the reader to enquire.

Instances of A (*c*) Under this head may also be taken miracles which take place in connection with Tazias or Moharram mourning. Readers of *Sarfaraz* and *Sirat* know that this very year (1930) there have been two horrible cases of punishments for wilful disrespect of this sacred period, in one a whole wedding party of Musalmans was involved, in another a Hindu ringleader Also this year saw hundreds of Tazias kept afresh by Hindus owing to horrible pestilence ceasing at once in village Sanhjar in Biswan Tahsil of Sitapur District on a Hindu's vowing that if it will go down he will keep Tazia. Though rather old I cannot omit reference to the restoring to sight of a Hindu Hiraman Murao at Biswan immediately on his praying to Our Lord Husain and vowing to keep Tazia. The fact is well in the memory of the people at Biswan. At Satrikh, District Barabanki, it is said, a Hindu Sozkhan much devoted to Moharram ceremonies would not burn at the funeral pyre. Two of his sons embraced Islam, one said he had perhaps done some such deed that even Fire would not take him.

As a most striking though somewhat old instance of this class of miracles I may refer to the case of revival of a dead child in Masauli District Barabanki about the year 1876 which forms the subject of

Mr Danish Ali Sahab's poem Qatiul Auham published about 1896 The author is an eye witness and, as he says, almost all men of the vicinity are eye-witnesses The father had in an intensity of spirit laid the child before his Tazia zealously trusting that the Imam would give back his life to him. The child was revived in a moment The fact made such an impression on the mind of the author that though a Sunni he observes Moharram with an intensity of devotion which may well be an example for the Shias, to say nothing of the Sunnis The poem was composed in reply to some Wahabis who went there to preach against Tazia-keeping But for this mischief they were causing, this case so important and so well-known might never have been recorded.

The raising to life of the husband of a Hindu Girl in Gujerat about the year 1852 is commemorated in a poem by Mufti Mohammad Abbas Mujtahid of Lucknow The chaste woman was persued by two armed Muslim scoundrels The husband who fled was pointed out by the helpless girl on their making Our Lord Husain their surety that they would not hurt him Then they perfidiously killed him, struck off his head with the sword Our Lord appeared in an instant, and hanged two men on a tree, and then joining the head to the body raised to life the poor man and restored him to his weeping wife. The miracle made a great noise at the time Two Christians and a number of Hindus who investigated into the matter were converted The news coming to Lucknow through letter of a Sunni merchant of Bombay numbers of poets commemorated the event in their poems

Examples of B (periodical miracles which can be witnessed on specific dates at various places)

1 At Amroha in several houses are rosaries to be seen, on the night of Ashura (night preceding the 10th of Moharram) They can be seen changing their colour from dusty white to bloody red and then reverting to their natural colour by the evening of 10th The beads of these rosaries are made of the dust of the tomb of Our Lord Husain to which none now have any access

2 The great Sunni Divine Moulvi Hasanuzzaman Khan of Hydrabad says in his Matamul Saqalain that he possesses a hair of Our Lord Husain It becomes bloody red on the night of Ashura

3 The wierd ceremony of *Matam* on fire is to be witnessed every 20th of Safar (Chehlum day) at Aurangabad in the Nizam's Dominions. Over a large area fuel is collected and lighted When all becomes cinder

a man (a special man whose ancestors got the Alam first in a well) goes with his Alam and begins *Matam*. Then everybody, you, I, any man, can go into the fire without the slightest fear of any harm. They may not do *Matam* there but there will be no injury Accounts are published from time to time in various papers

Before concluding we will ask the reader to reflect for a moment how the practice of Tazia-keeping has taken such a hold on the Hindus and Sunnis Whatever may be said of the latter, at least the former should not be disposed to observe a custom of an alien religion Granting that they are superstitious and their religion does not prevent them from holding in reverence saints of other religions how is it that it is only the Moharram ceremonies,—those belonging to an obscure minority sect only—that they singled out to borrow from Islam? And add to this it is not the low uncultured classses alone who do it Who does not know how zealously the Maharaja of Gwalior and Indore and a host of other Rajahs and Maharajahs observe the Moharram ceremonies and how munificently they spend upon them Surely they are not fools, idiots At Nimsar the great Tirath of the Hindus, where all are Hindus, there is hardly a Musalman at all, they observe both Moharram and Chehlum Can there be any sufficient reasons for this except that miracles are observed, their prayers are granted, wants are fulfilled? If you want the facts you can have them everywhere Ask how Moharram commenced to be observed at Gwalior Ask about the marriage of the parents of the late Maharajah If you do not believe these then guess for yourselves The result ought to convince you of their substantial accuracy But the way with the world is to disregard facts of this kind when they occur and when they are long past or forgotten to call them legends, tales

The last head we proposed was permanent, lasting or standing miracles Of these the most prominent instance is the Quran itself How it is a miracle we will see in another chapter and so need say nothing of it here Here we mean to mention two which are always before our eyes and so we do not much notice them

One is the mourning over Our Lord Husain. I have shown in my Principles of Shia Theology that the continuance of this mourning among us is a miracle It breaks the most elementary laws of psychology. Pain is self-abating However painful and tragic an event may be, be it connected with yourself or those dearest to yourself, and however much you may try to keep grief of it in your hearts it must go away and in time you cannot shed a tear over it, however much you may try to do so. Mourning over Husain is the only exception in the world to this.

The other is Istikhara. The Prophet and the Imams have taugh us a number of ways by which we can ascertain *definitely* what would b best for us in cases of difficulty These are all forms of prayer to Go through the Prophet and the Imams But prayer is a difficult thing an you cannot expect *clear* illumination in response Of course this i available only to believers, but unbelievers can by mixing socially wit us get information about our Istikharas (they are in common use among us) and watch the results. It is impossible to recount the wonders I have experienced myself.

SECTION 5.

Their moral character.

Such were the Prophet and the Imams! The above which is not a hundredth part of the evidence will be sufficient to show that the Prophet and the Imams were not men in the ordinary sense of the word, but someway a supernormal order of beings, having powers far transcending those of ordinary men. It may be said that supernormal men having abnormally developed capacities for some things are occasionally born—thus Mozart was a born musician, Swedenborg had a spontaneous gift of spiritualistic powers But (*a*) These gifts are only in special capacities, in other respects they are ordinary men. Those who get a capacity, innate or acquired, for spiritualistic powers are usually half-crazy men having little capacity for duties of ordinary life. There is a limited stock of energy and when one faculty is developed it must necessarily be at the expense of others But consider the lives of the Prophet and the Imams. They were warriors, generals, statesmen as much as they were philosophers, devotees, recluses spiritualists if we may use the word. That is the chief distinguishing feature of true miraculous gifts *i. e.* powers received as special gifts from God as distinguished from those acquired by due exercise or arising spontaneously as a freak of nature. (*b*) Granting that some powers can be abnormally developed in this way there is no comparison to the miracles displayed by the Prophet and the Imams. Has there ever been heard of any claim even to make scientific discoveries by means of occult powers. Is there anywhere any claim even to such things as periodical or permanent miracles (*c*) Granting that by some freak of nature some individuals may arise from time to time gifted with marvellous powers, yet it is against nature and so there is no example of it in history that for two centuries and a half the powers should be inherited or received by succession in an unbroken line from father to son and by a single member only at a time in the family—the one who should

succeed Even if the Prophet could be supposed to be a supernormal man, the continuance of the gift to our Lord the present Imam shows conclusively that it is something specially, purposively designed by God

However, for all that I would say that all this evidence of miraculous powers might be taken to be worthless if the life of the Prophet and the Imams were not by itself a miracle of piety, holiness, self-annihilation If there could be conceived even a life more holy, pious and devout than theirs—I will not say if a single fault could be found in theirs—all this evidence might be considered inconclusive or even misleading. I say this though I know that I must stop with saying this, only appealing to readers to peruse the lives of these holy men sometime at their leisure hours and reflect over them It is clearly out of question to write anything of the life of any one of them, to say nothing of so many of them. For want of space I have been forced to cut down all details of miracles—the very few that I spoke of, how can I devote pages to write accounts of their piety, charity, devotion &c? Nothing but a detailed description and evidence can suffice for this purpose That must therefore be foregone once for all though it is the most captivating part of the subject

There is one way, however, to tell almost all about it in a few words. There are tests by which the extent of piety and devotion can be gauged. If they result in things which transcend the powers of human nature they show they have reached—to say the least of it—the highest point that human nature is capable of Anyone who considers the achievements of Our Lord Ali as a warrior would imagine him as a man whose life was passed in physical self-culture like some of the renowned athletes and warriors of old as Rustam &c He would reject as exaggerated or false all accounts of his intense devotion, constant self-mortification in prayers, fastings &c But what are the facts? He never knew even what athletics and physical self—culture was It was merely his spirit of having sold his soul to God (2 · 207) and having no self of his own to care for that gave him the courage to face the mightiest and, God helping, always succeeded. If the essence of morality consists in disregard of the self, then certainly this is the highest point of it and so it comes as the last in the description of ideal virtue in Surah 2 · 177.

Let alone Our Lord Husain and his work at Karbala. It is simply inconceivable to us, human beings. Consider his son Our Lord Ali 'bn Husain There was never a more distressed, disconsolate life. Not only he had to pass through the dreadful tragic scenes of Karbala and after, but all his life was passed in constant cares, sorrows and humiliations.

Another man in his conditions of life might well have lost all faith in God But let that go, conceive just this His whole life was passed in devotion—prayers which were of the nature of soliloquies or supplication to God. Four volumes of these prayers very long prayers, often, are collected. It would not be unnatural if in all these prayers there were to arise occasionally thoughts of thankfulness for granting him strength to bear with patience the trials and tribulations that came to his lot chiefly the end of all dearest to him at Karbala—yet there is not slightest reference even to the great tragedy to say nothing of other events of less consequence It is as if all were a mere ordinary thing, not worthy of thought at all I, for one, cannot conceive a higher stage of selfless holiness Not only is all this quite forgotten, but the enemies—such fiendish enemies as Our Lord had—are actually prayed for. In the prayer book of Our Lord—the Sahifae Kamila there is a long prayer for those who were fighting on the frontiers of the Muslim Empire All is forgotten in the interest for Islam.

I earnestly appeal to all to study the lives of the Prophet and the Imams. The life of the Prophet at least is easily available to all Conceive a life more resolute, active, in the midst of worries, troubles disappointments, helplessness. And in the end when he was master of all Arabia what did he do for himself? for his children? for his relations? for his friends? Conceive a life of utter self-annihilation such as his and the whole force of arguments in favour of Islam falls to the ground It is easy to cut oneself off from the world and train the emotions accordingly, but to live in the world and to lead such a life is simply unthinkable

I have no space for anything more on this. Whole volumes could be written upon it The above is sufficient to set the reader on the path of enquiry. One thing, however, he must note. When a man is immeasurably greater than ourselves, has none of our weakness, or his functions and duties far different from ours, some of his actions must appear strange to us One who hears of Our Lord Abraham becoming readily prepared to make a sacrifice of his son to God may be apt to imagine that he lacked tender emotions. So the Prophet's sending away his cousin Jaafar to the battle of Muta almost immediately after his return from the long stay at Abyssinia might be almost unthinkable to us. It was not that they had no hearts at all, but their hearts had learnt a power of restraint which is simply inconceivable to us. Will be said that it was an act of callousness on his part to order the slaughter of the Jews of Bani Quraiza? And what of his pardoning all his ma

inveterate personal enemies, Abu Sufyan, Hind and others? Ave, Wahshi the murderer of his uncle Hamza, and Habbar who had nearly killed his daughter Zainab as she was coming to him from Mecca? On a mere show of embracing Islam these men were given a free pardon and admitted to all the privileges of Islam What to say of the Prophet even the commonest men with the merest vestige of sense in them could see that these conversions at the sword's point were simply nothing, and none could have blamed him if he had not accepted their submission and sent them off to where they deserved to go

So knowing as we do the reasons that obliged the Prophet to take to himself nine wives after he was over fifty years old, some of them very undesirable and make his house a hot bed of dissensions we cannot always conceive how a man who had so much national and spiritual work to do and was doing it, to say nothing of personal religious devotion of which no description could be given in words, could possibly have a mood of mind for such things

Yes, we who have a gross material nature and so are subject to inertia of the spirit cannot conceive a state of spirit without inertia. The inertia of matter is that when it rests it seeks to continue its rest and resists force trying to move it And when it is moving it wishes to continue its motion and resists efforts to stop it The inertia of the spirit is that when it is engaged in a certain direction it would continue in that direction and cannot easily change it When as usual there are differences in a mans's capacity for different things those for which there is great capacity determine his tastes and the others become practically impossible for him. We cannot conceive a state in which there are no tastes, no liking of one thing above another, and further no inertia, he who is engaged in a particular course this time can leave it in an instant and immed.ately set itself to another wholly different He has no self in our sense of the word All his tastes, likings are submerged in one great taste, love of God and obedience to His Will We cannot pause to explain how the taking in of one wife after another became necessary for the Prophet Those who know the facts know that there were reasons, great reasons, moral or politic for every one of them, and even the most ignorant can be sure that whatever they were it was not uxoriousness. An uxorious man in his power should certainly have liked to have taken better women to his harem—certainly not more or less old widows.

Conclusion.

The above will make it clear that to the Prophet and Imams we owe not only the teaching of our religion but all its strength. Without them Islam is nothing more than a theory of God and morals and certain beliefs which may or may not be true. Without them we do not get that inductive force for our religion which, Mill says, is wanting in the Design argument for God Himself Anyway without them God is apt to be believed merely as a philosophical theory, not as a Living Reality of whom we have direct consciousness Hence the supreme importance of them for the very existence of our religion. It would be almost nothing without them. Yet it is not merely because of their utility for evidence that they are so important The evidence will show that they really occupy a very high position in the sight of God and the scheme of His creation. So faith in them is almost as important as belief in God Himself. Also they were sent to show the heights to which the spiritual development of man can go by simply seeking to keep his will subservient to the Will of God

Further it will appear that the evidence for the Imams is nearly as cogent as that for the Prophet himself and the latter would be sadly crippled—if not indeed made to a certain extent defective—if it were not supplemented by that for the Imams. Taken with them the evidence for Islam is simply overwhelming

III. The Holy Quran.

The Quran is made up of Surahs of variable length, the shortest consisting of three short verses and longest (Surah II) consisting of 286 fairly long verses These Surahs have been and may be called chapters, but they can be called so only in a general sense, there is usually no division of subjects giving rise to the division Only a few, the shortest Surahs can be said to have a definite subject, the rest take up a variety of subjects, more or less few according to the period of revelation, and there is no marked distinction between them The only distinction is that of style, diction and rhyme which indeed is so marked that it is difficult to mistake the verse of one Surah for another The only parallel or analogue to them in any literature is the poems of Persian poets which are units only in respect of rhyme and metre and ramble through all sorts of subjects The Surahs are meant to be indépendent wholes, each a complete guidance by itself, more or less distinct according to the detail that is to be found in it and hence its length Some give only a a clue to guidance by exortation or a marked evidence of the truth of Revelation as Surah Kausar (108), others give chief principles in nutshell (as Surah 1), others give the whole of Shariat (Law) with more or less detail (as Surah 2, 3, 4 &c)

The word 'Surah' is said originally to signify a row, (Sell, Hughes &c) and the meaning is well applicable, the verses which by themselves or by sets of them are complete wholes, being simply brought together as in a row without *very much* regard of connection But this meaning I have not found in the Qamus and I am not aware of the use of the word in that sense The word is used to signify a lofty building, a fortification wall, and also a stage, and it is easy to see how these meanings could have been transferred to give the special sense in which the word is used for the units or divisions of the Quran The word is, however, also used in an abstract sense signifying the glory, light or life of a thing, thus the *surah* of a spirituous liquor is its heat (alchoholic strength), that of cold its intensity, that of nobility its signs of greatness, that of sovereignty its prestige, power &c (Qamus), and I think it is this abstract sense that has led to the use of the word to signify the units of the Quran as they are designed to be Lights, a complete light each by itself, to the soul

The verses are units by themselves—they are sentences or passages with a rhyme to mark their end Where the verses are very short it may take two or more verses to complete a sentence or a thought, in these cases it is this whole set that makes a unit. The longer verses are

usually full passages ending in rhyme and are each a unit by themselves. These are, as said above, rowed together without any *very much* regard of connection Usually some sort of connection, it may be a unity of subject, is kept in view, but this is not necessary and in many cases though a connect on can be traced it is very aerial. The verses it will be remembered were not always revealed together, sometimes verses revealed years before or after are joined together, and so it is clear not much connection be always observed.

This thing, the joining together of the verses revealed at widely different times is much complained of by the Western critics of the Quran (Sell, Muir Noeldeke &c) as a great nuisance. It is indeed quite unscientific and causes great difficulty in understanding the growth and development of Islam But this is simply due to the wrong way in which the Quran was collated for a book We know that Abdullah 'bn Masud's recension of the Quran contained notes attached to each verse giving what is called *Shane nuzul*, the occasion to which each verse refers Thus we know that verse 5 71 read in his recension thus 'O thou the Prophet, convey (to the people) what has been revealed to thee *concerning Ali* (*fi Alian*) and if thou dost not do so thou hast not fulfilled they mission and God will protect thee from the people' (See Duare Mansur, Suyute) The words italicised are omitted in the current Othmanite, recension. It is open to question if these wor ls formed part of the Quran and it has been plausibly supposed that they were comments excluded from but to be read with each verse so as to make them really useful. But unfortunately his recension and all other recensions have not been allowed to remain Why these explanatory notes were no part of the main revelation we see elsewhere The Quran was in fact never meant to be read alone. In absence of these more complete recensions the Imams have taught what the various verses relate to

Thus there is no occasion for a confusion The only thing is that the Quran is not written as it should have been and as it was meant to be written The right way to write the Surahs was to write them as they are with brackets interspersed between the verses giving the necessary explanatory notes These notes we believe were taught by the Prophet to his disciples and were presumably part of the revelation, though not part of the Quran, and so not required for public recital, that is for the ordinary liturgical purposes We will explain this in a later chapter.

Thus whoever arranged the verses in their present order in the Surahs, (and we are sure it was the Prophet in the vast majority of cases

at least), he could not have done anything better The verses were revealed at different times in various connections, and yet differing in spirit they differed in style, diction and rhyme To set them down in the serial order of dates may have been good for the historical method. but would have made the Quran a curious literary work with a jarring effect of discordance at every five and six lines, and so not well suited for ordinary liturgical use and rhetorical effect And the Quran was meant to be a miracle for its literary excellence As it is the composition of Surahs is comparable only to the composition of the units such as lyrics of the Persian poets The thing determining where a verse should go is not its date but its metre and rhyme So it was in the case of Surahs of the Quran though some connection of matter has been kept in view in arranging the verses The early small Surahs were usually revealed as complete Surahs. Many, however, were revealed partially to be added up and completed afterwards There were also isolated passages revealed in other manners of style and diction which could not properly come in any of those existing and they were allowed to remain as they were till other verses being revealed with a *Bismillah* they were added to make a complete Surah. Thus we know that 3 57 which now form part of a late Medina Surah were read by the cousin of the Prophet Jafar before the Abyssinian King, Najashi, in the 6th year before Hejirah

These verses were therefore arranged at different times in their respective places They were placed, as far as possible, in suitable connections, *i e* along with those of an allied surface purport—I say surface for many verses though historical in the sense of being revealed in particular connections, or in praise or condemnation of particular persons, or having special hidden meanings at their back were couched in general terms and could apparently be read as ordinary moral directions or exhortations These therefore could suitably be placed along with others having an allied purport or sense This juxtaposition of verses allied in purport and the same in style and diction adds to their effectiveness, and the ordinary reader finds in it a fairly connected elementary book of doctrine and discipline The well-informed are in no fear of being deceived by this arrangement. They must remember that the verses were revealed at different times and so must take each verse separately. It is for this reason that in this subsequent arranging no verses have been modified to suit the arrangement, all have been kept in tact Otherwise not only the addresses with their numbers and persons would have to be changed, but considerable alterations would have been necessitated owing to words having reference to or having meaning only in connection with the occasion or the original purpose or topic of the revelation.

How carefully these verses were arranged on these lines appears from the fact that it has been found possible to split up every Surah into smaller divisions according to general subject spoken of These are the sections or Rukus. We do not know by whom they were set up in the Quran, but they are evidently very early. If we reflect on the verses that come in these sections we will find that they all are fairly connected in subject. Occasionally, however, we will come across verses which apparently have no connection whatever with the subject of the section as a whole But on due reflection it will be found to have a very deep and beautiful basis of connection Thus verses in sec. 19 of Surah II deal generally with trials and afflictions necessary to be borne in the cause of God In their midst comes abruptly the verse 153 which says that Safa and Marwah are monuments of God and there is no harm in making devotional circuits of them There is no talk of Hajj anywhere near. But the notes on this verse will show that there is a very vital connection. Safa and Marwah are monuments of God because they are scenes of the patient endurance of Our Lady Hager on being cast out with Our Lord Ishmael in obedience to the command of God, and the running between these two hills prescribed in Hajj is only a memorial of the running about of the former in search of water when the latter was dying of thirst The above will suffice to illustrate concretely how verses belonging to different times and in different connections have been put together It will appear that thought has been spent upon it and in some cases at least it will have to be acknowledged that it has been done by a master-hand

It will, however, be observed that this question of finding a place for a verse arose only in the cases of isolated verses revealed Generally a number of verses were revealed together and in them the connection was manifest. They required only to be added in a Surah as complete sections. Sometimes whole Surahs were revealed together—not only the early small Surahs but fairly big ones also like Surah VI. It was only when isolated verses were revealed that place had to found for them When they could conveniently go in a set of verses (afterwards made into *Rukus*) they were placed there, otherwise they were placed in the beginning or end of these sections.

The above will be found to clear most of the difficulties that occur to the reader about the arrangement of verses in the Quran. In the conditions that the Quran was revealed and arranged afterwards (and collected still later) there could not be better arrangement expected. We are sure that in the generality of cases it was the Prophet who fixed the

places of the verses, his recital being presumably generally followed, but whether the arrangement of verses as we have before us in the extant Quran is *in each and every place* the same as was dictated by the Prophet—that certainly is more than we can know and say. A general presumption or belief is all we can arrive at, and that is sufficient for our purpose. This historical question we discuss in another chapter. Here it is sufficient to say that the question is not at all so important as it appears at first sight. The exact place of a passage is important only in a connected narrative or discourse, where the change of context may lead to a significant change in meaning or implications of the passage In the Quran, however, the verses (or sets of verses making a complete thought) are as stated complete units and their exact place in a Surah is only about as much significant as the place of a verse in a lyric So it does not appear that the Prophet took any very great pains in the matter or that the early Musalmans were very much particular about it.

IV. The Inspiration of the Quran.

SECTION 1.

The theory of inspiration.

According to the Sunnis—all except the Motazalites who were under the influence of the Shia views and are condemned as heretical the Quran is eternal in its original essence Thus Imam Abu Hanifa the great Sunni Imam says "The Quran is the Word of God, and is His inspired word and Revelation It is a necessary attribute (*Sifat*) of God. It is not God, but still it is inseparable from God. It is read in a volume. it is read in a language, it is remembered in the heart, and its letters and its vowel points, and its writing are all created, for these are the works of man, but *God's* word is uncreated (*ghaira makhuqin*) Its words, its writing, its letters and its verses are for the necessities of man, for its meaning is arrived at by their use but the Word of God is fixed in the essence (*zat*) of God and he who says that the word of God is created is an infidel" (Kitabul Wasiyat cited by Hughes)

As this position is wholly unintelligible to me I am unable to say a word about it I suppose how they reason is thus Speaking (*Kalam*) is one of the attributes of God The Quran is what God has spoken (also expressed by the word *Kalam*). So the Quran is one of the attributes of God. If it is not this they best know what it is The doctrine made a great noise in scholastic discussions, and under some of the Abbaside Caliphs who imbibed the Motazalite views the orthodox suffered persecution on account of this strange belief The remarkable thing about this is that doctrine appears wholly derived from reasoning There is not a word in the Quran or the traditions about it On the contrary word *Muhdasin* (newly coming in existence) in Surah 21 . 2 seems meant to debar the very possibility of any such belief gaining ground among the Musalmans. The curious thing is that those very people who would not allow Reason to interfere in the least in religion, so that they would not venture to interpret metaphorical expressions in the Quran, such as the hand of God, in the light of their obvious meaning, would insist that it was really hand in some inconceivable sense, would jump to this strange doctrine by mere dint of philosophy without having the least authority for it either in the Quran or the Traditions. Imam Ahmad 'bn Hambal sufferred much on account of this belief.

Needless to say that according to the Shias the Quran is nothing but this book that we read, its revelation an act of God as much as the

creation of all that exists Revelation as an act of God is as much or as little of a mystery as creation itself, and we would never be done if we enter on a philosophical discussion of the metaphysical difficulties that have been raised and answered. It is to be noted, however, that the Quran makes the position sufficiently clear to dispel crude ideas about the matter. In 11 . 17 it speaks of its being revealed with the knowledge of God (*be ilmillah*) just as of creation it says it is done by His Will or command. As speech, as sounds uttered it is said to be the speech (*Qaul*) of an honoured messenger (Gabriel) Surah 81 : 19-21.

All the rest is detail, the nature, form, and manner of Revelation. The traditions, Sunni and Shia, which can be found in any book, give accounts from which some idea—as much as is possible for one who has no experience of such things—can be formed For a belief in these it is only necessary to be convinced of the reality of a spiritual world Fortunately this is a thing that has passed the stage of religious belief, passed even the stage of philosophical argument, it is now entering the stage of scientific knowledge The greatest scientists, men like Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Crookes, A R. Wallace and a host of others are coming to it And philosophy, modern philosophy which is no more based on mere abstract ideas, but is an advancing science based on observation and experiment is most pronouncedly spiritualistic The reality of a creative world spirit, of matter being only a creation of the spirit, is no longer a mere idea but a recognised truth based on the higher researches in physics and psychology. One has only to recall the name of Henri Bergson to feel the weight of this philosophy. And yet, let it be remembered, his philosophy draws exclusively on the psychology and the physical sciences and leaves spiritualism entirely alone, which, as we have said, is gaining an established position in current thought. And what if all that were not so? We do no depend wholly on this or that philosophy. The truths of religion, our religion I mean, carry by themselves an amount of evidence that is irresistible. We have had some of it in previous chapters. Is that not sufficient to establish something of a Reality above us however little we may understand it.

In my Principles of Shia Theology I have propounded a theory of a spiritual fountainhead for all existence, physical and spiritual, from physical and metaphysical considerations This does not concern our subject here very much, and so though it might throw light on many of the questions relating to the spiritual agencies concerned in the bringing down of the revelation to mind of the Prophet we do not wish to encumber this short discourse with it. One thing, however, must occur to all

who accept any account of the spiritual origin of matter. If the universal creative spirit which Bergson erroneously supposes to be the ultimate existence or God—it is only His first creation and creates only in a secondary sense—can by its activity give rise to material existence by detension of its own movement (as Bergson says) or by measuring its (spiritual) force according to fixed principles (as we would say) the forces being interpretable in experience as motion, which is sufficient to create matter as we know it in science, then matter as we know it need not be the only form of objective existence which the ultimate reality need thus create and express itself in to discrete consciousness It is not thus strange that some products chiefly the earliest products of this universal creative spirit should, like angels and other such beings, be not material in our sense of the word, whose objective existence determined, as ours is, by the needs of their being may be wholly or mainly phenomenal or only quasi-physical having no properties of matter as we know it, inertia, weight, resistence &c Then, however much the universal creative spirit may divide itself in the act of creation, there remains a spiritual continuum in which one existence can communicate and receive communication from others This on the plane of our low earthly life we call telepathy, but there may be infinitely higher forms of it The power decreases with attention to immediate needs of life and increases with effort at spiritual reunion. The continuum is such that every part or product can claim to be the whole if it can completely unite itself with the whole, so that the whole or any desired parts of it respond to its wishes. This becomes then the higher plane of being in which there may be thoughts hidden from ordinary consciousness but available at will or by suitable application, prayer &c. This is the mechanism of Revelation The universal spirit is moved with *i. e.* in accordance with and in obedience to the Will of God. Thence the angels communicate it to the human soul of the Prophet These things are difficult to understand but they are well worth pondering over. Those who know that God is a Reality transcending both activity and inertness, and so speaking in terms of our human consciousness to which we are limited is both active and unchangeable will see no difficulty in understanding how the Quran may be as a complete whole in the spiritual realms according to the knowledge and Will of God, and may even be known to the Prophet in the higher plane of his being and the same time be duly revealed to him as a man from time to time. The states he was seen in at the time of revelation, the overpowering feeling ending in unconsciousness, the experiences he felt as man such as light, ringing in ears &c. are described in traditions available to everyone. We need not pause to describe them here. They have been compared—by

Christian critics—to fits of epilepsy, but has an epileptic been ever known to have changed the face of the world? Is there any other instance of this or even approaching this in the world? But in this chapter we seek only to explain revelation, not prove it

A word may be said about the Quran being in *Lowhe Mahfooz* or preserved Table (Quran 85 22) and its descent therefrom to *Baite Maamur* on the 7th heaven in the month of Ramzan as is described in the traditions. Are they mere figurative expressions or have they any reality The great divine Saduq says definitely in his *Ietiqadiya* 'Articles of belief' that the Pen and the Table spoken of in the Quran (68 1, 85 22) and the traditions are angels, and he is right in as much as speeches are attributed to them in the traditions. showing they are certainly no mere blocks of dead matter But is there no reality corresponding to the description we get of these things in the traditions? The answer must depend on the answer to the question, What is it that we call reality?

If light and all the beautiful colours that we see in the world can be shown to have a mere subjective existence, to be merely vibrations of a subtle existence named ether, if the hardest bits of stone, lead, iron, gold and what not, can be shown to be merely appearances to us of a reality which is quite different, an infinite number of systems of electrical forces moving with enormous speeds, if all the perception we have of reality, and so all the conception we form of it, is conditioned by our Being and is strictly relative to the needs of our view—then surely it is nothing strange that some realities the essence of which may be spiritual should not only be expressible as, but should really appear to some minds viewing the things from some special standpoint as, something physical or quasi-physical, and this appearance would be no less real than the reality of the physical world before us The same things may appear different from other standpoints or known to be different in their original essence. Any one who reflects on this and takes it in continuation what has gone before about spiritual conditions in higher planes of being will find no difficulty in the suggestion of the learned author of Safi that the descent of the Quran to the *Baite Maamur* may mean revelation of it as a complete whole to the Prophet in some of the higher planes of his exalted soul.

In connection with revelation a question may be asked how is a man—a mere natural man—having a vision of angels, receiving communications from on high, to satisfy himself that these visions and communications are real and not some form of lunacy. The answer is obvious. It is just as we become sure of objective existence on the ground of

subjective impressions. Our unimpaired activity when we act on the basis of the theory gives us the assurance that the theory is true. If the revelation is accompanied with a spiritual illumination giving a better perception of things, some results of which can be verified in ordinary ways and all by their harmony with each other, so if it is attended with rise of new powers such as the power of working miracles—then there remains no doubt about the reality of the revelation. Other considerations, such as the remaining unimpaired of intellectual powers as shown by success in design &c, also can bring high degree of moral conviction but mental matters are so very complex that it must be admitted that perfect certainty cannot be obtained without a mass of real credentials for the new gift

Section 2

The Prophet, according to the Shias, was a prophet from his birth, only he was not commissioned to preach According to the Sunnis he was so only from the time he received the revelation of the Quran on mount Hara when he was forty years of age However, their traditions also show that previous to that he had been gifted with elementary forms of inspiration, true visions &c (see Mishkat) They also relate hundreds of miracles worked by him or observed in his connection from his very childhood These reports coming from men whose general view is that he was not a prophet from before clearly have great weight as evidence for the Shia views They indeed take such a low view of him that, according to their traditions, Abubecker might have become prophet in his place if the Prophet had not gone ahead of him in his attempt!

According to the accounts in Bokhari &c the Prophet was much perplexed at the sight of Gabriel on the first revelation, doubted the truth of the vision, feared he might he demented and was not consoled until assured by his wife, Our blessed Lady Kadijah. And afterwards too when revelation of the Quran stopped for some time he was wont to have doubts about his Apostleship, and sometimes he would be so distracted in mind that would think of committing suicide, rise to tops of hills to fling himself down. But Gabriel appeared duly in time to assure him that he was truly a prophet and so prevented him from taking that fatal course. Needless to say the Shia accounts have not a word of all this. He never doubted his apostleship for a moment. It would take us much beyond our purpose to enter on a criticism of these traditions in Bokhari

t shows that he had not the inner credentials, such as the power of working miracles, which must bring conviction to the man who was receiving a revelation from God. And if such was his own state of mind others were all the more justified in their taking a sceptical attitude towards him. Surely no such thing has ever been heard of any prophet before. Critics of Islam are fully justified in drawing what inferences they like from such accounts.

However, it will not do for the Shias to say that they are not responsible for them—not the slightest trace of them is to be found in their books They must explain how such views could arise at all in any sect of the Musalmans, and unless they can do so critics of Islam have a right to hold that they must have some basis of truth as they amount to admissions on the part of friends We hope we are fully able to explain the thing, but unfortunately this is a very long business to enter upon and what is worse there is no work available for English readers to refer to I can only refer to my Principles of Shia Theology ' which is not yet published, or the Hints for enquirers at the end of my Islam in the light of Shiaism.'

However, the main elements of this idea can be explained without much reference to the historical conditions bearing upon the traditions. It is not improbable that some of these stories might have their origin in a cautious way adopted by the Prophet to convince the people that he was truly made an Apostle Thus it is quite possible that considering authoritative announcement injudicious even to his wife he might have stated his experience to her in an air of bewilderment so as to induce her to examine the thing as best she would She was soon convinced on assurance from her uncle Waraqa 'bn Naufal, who was well-versed in scriptures and became the first convert Also some verses such as those assuring that he was not mad, God was not displeased with him, and so forth, which were really revealed to remove the misgivings arising from time to time in the minds of the early raw converts, might also have led to the notion that the Prophet had doubts about himself and that these verses were meant to assure him about them There were also other possible sources of misapprehension too numerous to be mentioned—chiefly imperfect and ill-understood information influenced by prejudicial preconceptions.

It is said that the first five verses of Surah 96 were the first to be revealed. With words which apparently do not convey much

information the whole of creation and the whole of spiritual knowledge and the whole scheme of teaching it to the world was laid before his eyes.

'Read in the name of Thy Lord Who created,
Created Man out of a clot of blood
Read and Thy Lord is Most bountiful
He who taught through the Pen
Taught Man what he knew not'

Taking the verses in their simple literal meaning one must wonder that even after this recommendation the Prophet never cared to learn, and always declared himself ignorant of reading and writing

The revelation of these verses was an indication that he had ed the highest stage of Apostleship—that in which a special Book of God is to be revealed. But, contrary to expectation for a long time, which the varying Sunna accounts state from 2½ months to 3 years, there was no revelation. This time was passed in a constant longing which we can have no conception of, and *possibly* with anxiety also as *theoretically* all promises of God to His servants are conditional to their keeping up to the standard required by Him, and the more a holy man advances in faith the more he becomes uncertain of himself In the end Our Lady Khudaijah began to fear that for some reason God became displeased with him but her fears were removed by revelation of 93 3 The object of the interruption was obvious The first verses revealed made him a prophet and also gave him the necessary equipment for it—higher spiritual knowledge Only he was not permitted to make his mission public and call men to the new faith This permission was given in the next Surah revealed, the 74th in the current collection All this time the Prophet was required to confine his efforts to his family, principally Our Lord Ali and Our Lady Khudaijah, who were to be trained to a degree approaching the Prophet himself Other members of the family were also more or less converted in this period—Abu Talib, Hamza, Abbas, Jafar &c—but for obvious reasons kept their Islam secret Of the first we have reasons to believe that he believed the Prophet to be a prophet even before the first revelations came to him This preliminary work in the family was necessary for the continuance of his work both in his life and after his death. The period of interruption also served as a further trial for the Prophet for patience &c, as he had so much concern for th regeneration of mankind but had to wait till he was commissioned.

The Quran was not the whole of the Revelation to the Prophe
converts would have little of any religious belie

and practices, for the earliest Surahs of the Quran hardly inculcate anything of doctrine or ritual Were it so all the wars that the Prophet fought were fought without any distinct order All the law and ritual that the Prophet taught was without any revelation. The fact is the revelation to the Prophet was of various kinds (1) General illumination by which he generally taught things to men without waiting for any special revelation at all (2) Special revelations which came from time to time in which directions were given but not the actual words inspired by God in the sense of the Quran (3) Revelations purporting to be in the words inspired by God, but not meant to be publicly recited as Quran—*Wahye ghaire Matloo* These are also called *Hadise qudsi* some of these may be in style of Quran (4) The Quran which was meant to be read before all and also for liturgical purposes.

As revelation there is no difference in the sanctity of any of these, any of the teachings of the Prophet and the Quran itself, there is no difference certainly between 3 and 4 which were apparently often mixed with each other The chief difference for us is in the amount of certainty about the authenticity and literal accuracy of the words, in which matter none of the first three can approach the Quran Another difference is that in the case of the Quran language (style &c) was meant to be a miracle The Quran was also meant to mark out the minimum of belief for the masses, so that the rejection of any of its plain teachings removes a man at once from the pale of Islam

The teaching of doctrine and faith was conditioned by the capacity of the disciples Those who were raw in faith were taught only the rudiments of Islam and its outward practices The more spiritual teachings were reserved for the initiates only, such as Salman, Abuzar, Ammar, Hozeifah &c It was the same with the giving of the Revelation to the people Before the unbelievers and the masses among the converts only the Quran was recited To the better class of believers, who were always few, the revelations called *Wahye ghaire Matloo* were also given which apparently cleared things for the faithful which were left purposely vague or indefinite in the Quran. Thus Surah IX (Tauba) we know is concerned, much of it, with hypocrites (Munafiqs) Hozeifah complains that it was much larger and contained details about almost all Sahabas. We suppose that these lost portions were *Wahye gaire Matlo* which, not being in public recital, were unknown to many and were gradually forgotten and lost, and we can see why these portions were not given to the masses They would have been offensive to the vast body of raw converts whose conversion had hardly risen above the nominal. And it was a

policy of Islam that all who could get to be enrolled as Musalmans should be taken in, however little the value of their faith might be. Having got to be called Musalmans they would naturally imbibe its higher teachings by and by It is possible that having due regard to the policy of the times some verses were given full to special disciples and only in a shorter form to the masses Instances will appear in the chapter about the collection of the Quran Though of course *all Wahye ghaire Matloo* need not be occupied with matters of this sort which it would be difficult for all to accept, whether owing to prejudices or incapacity of understanding, yet many of the *Hadise qudsi* that have come down to us do appear to be such One is the "My servant does not cease to devote himself in voluntary prayers (*Nawafil*) till I become the eye wherewith he sees, the ear wherewith he hears" &c It can easily be seen that such teaching could not well be given to the masses The Quran being the quintessence of faith, this and everything else can be deduced from it by proper application of the mind to it, but it is also so designed as to sleep in the ears of those who have not the capacity for it (See the chapter on the design and contents of the Quran). However, as said, all need not be of this character No *Wahye ghaire Matloo* is a miracle in respect of style &c

The revelations meant to be publicly read as Quran were read out to the people who were present, and writers were engaged to write them down, the Prophet kept a copy of them himself. Of the other revelations it does not appear that the Prophet was very particular. There is a Sunni tradition that the Prophet said "Write from me nothing but the Quran." But it does not appear true To say nothing of others Abubecker made a collection of the Prophet's sayings in his lifetime which he destroyed afterwards on coming to Caliphate (Zahabi, Tazkiratul Huffaz).

V. The Quran as a standing miracle.

Section 1.

General.

"Say if all mankind and genii were to unite to bring (a book) like this Quran, they will not be able to bring one like it, though they might be helping each other. (17. 90)

"Do they say, he has fabricated it, say then bring ten Surahs like it fabricated and call (to your help) whomsoever you can besides God, if ye are truthful

"So if they do not answer your call, then know that it was revealed with the knowledge of God, and there is no God but He Then are you believers? (11 16, 17)

"And if ye are in doubt about what We have revealed to Our servant then bring one Surah like it, and call your witnesses (*Shuhadaa*, leaders or helpers?) if ye are truthful

"Then if ye do not, and never will ye do it. then fear the fire of which the fuel are men and stones, appointed for the unbelievers (2 21, 22)."

This is the challenge of the Quran, as is well-known to the whole world, and yet throughout all the thirteen centuries no one has come forward to take it up The verses I have given in chronological order First the challenge was to bring a book like this Quran, then it was reduced to ten Surahs only, and finally to one Surah only. And the Surahs, as all know, are of very variable length, quite a number of them consisting of a few, one only three, short verses And yet no one has ventured to bring a composition that would be a match for some of these. Whatever the excuse that may be put forth, at least the prophecy that none will do it has continued to be fulfilled, to this day at least

It requires thought, and we will discuss it at some length here, but before we enter upon that it would be well to consider that in announcing the Quran to be a miracle a new departure was made in the history of miracles. The miracles hitherto known to the world were generally physical wonders in which the laws of nature were palpably seen to be broken. They were exhibitions of Divine power and signs of His special grace and favour on His apostles. And that is indeed the sole import

and purpose of a miracle—something to press the most refractory heads into submissive belief. But the vague, ill-defined belief in unknown powers—Satan, magic, delusion—have ever been found sufficient to explain away the wonder—the sole point in the argument, and even where some got a shade of belief in the miraculous in this way, the deep-rooted, subconscious and latent conviction of the uniformity of nature soon asserted itself, and threw off the supernatural yoke on the merest trial as soon as the miracle was no longer visible. Thus it is that people while they ever believe, never really believe in a miracle—there is an elbow-stroke from within at every thought of the supernatural, more or less sharp according to the culture of the individual This innate conviction ever screens God and all His best attributes, and tends to reduce Him to mere Law or Necessity or other mere empty name As the cause of this conviction is not any theory, but constant impressions of experience (including pre-natal experience) the natural tendency to be wary of the supernatural could be overcome only by a permanent standing miracle or an endless series of miracles to be witnessed in all ages

Islam being the last and the only abiding religion it was its duty to provide miracles of either sort, care being of course taken not to let them come to a complete induction, so as to remove the veil altogether and have nothing for hard, earnest enquiry and moral conviction after a sifting of apparent possibilities in which alone consists the sole moral value of religious belief Of the casual and periodical miracles we have seen before there are manifold classes and abundance instances everywhere.

Of the standing miracles the Quran is the most pre-eminent instance. The choice of this as a standing miracle bears witness to the great philosophical discretion underlying Islam. It is not a miracle for the faith of the masses, as were the miracles of antiquity It appeals to the cultured and to their intellectual attainments It requires candour to understand and appreciate it, the purpose being not so much to force the doctrine as to cultivate the minds to the reception of it and to embody the doctrine itself in a suitable word bearing witness to its divine origin. I say it requires candour to understand and appreciate it And to fix this postulate of candour its foremost appeal is to your taste, not to your intellect. True, the astounding prophecies which were most remarkably fulfilled within the sight of the very people to whom the Quran was given, as those about the triumph of Islam or the victory of Greeks over the Persians, were an important element in the proof of its divine origin, and still more are those that were fulfilled later, as also the remarkable anticipations of scientific discoveries which we perceive and appreciate to-day, but

they were not the only point in the challenge The thing which has ever since been held to be the main point in the challenge is its literary beauties and excellences (*Fasahat* and *balaghat*) Of late this has been questioned by some Western critics, but that this was so appears from 16 105 To the malicious suggestion of the enemies of the Prophet that he got information about the higher spiritual realities and other things from Salman, the Persian, the reply in the Quran was that 'the tongue of the man they refer to is foreign, but this is the plain Arabic language,' meaning that though possibly he may have some information about Heaven and Hell and other things he could not express them in the exquisitely beautiful language of the Quran Thus *in these matters at least* it was the language that constituted the main point in the challenge

This, it must be admitted, constitutes a very loose, unarguable point of superiority for discussion, and it is confessed that while in the case of many passages we can analyze and explain wherein consists the literary charm which makes it inimitable, "change one word for another and the whole beauty of Milton is gone," there are also many cases in which this is impossible, and we can only appeal to the good taste of the reader. And it may be added that tastes are a most complex thing It is possible for a man to deny that a rose is lovely, it is possible even to be disgusted with it and it would be hard for logic to answer him The Burmese get a nauseating feeling at the very sight of milk and butter and have a keen appetite for ill-cooked mice and frogs, and who can convince them that their tastes, not ours are bad? So with literary tastes far different from the eastern it is not wonderful that many Europeans may wonder what it is we are enraptured with in a Hafiz or a Mir So in the face of the deposition of millions it is possible for a Noldeke to deny the supereme literary excellence of the Quran and to ascribe the wide spread belief thereof to mere faith (see Ency Britt 9th Ed Art Koran under Mohamedanism). Whether faith can work a continuous miracle on millions of people for thirteen centuries may well be doubted

To explain why in the face of the bold challenge of the Quran none attempted to take up the gauntlet Noldeke tries to explain by saying that it would have made him a laughing stock among the people meaning apparently that it would require assuming an air of prophetship which, without its seriousness, it would have been an awkward thing to sustain. It is possible that a man when he sets his head to explain a thing and after great difficulty succeeds in explaining it away he may really believe that his explanation is the right one, but to all who have not undergone that mental self twisting it must appear that the challenge was not to

produce a similar prophet among the people but simply to produce a composition that in its literary charms and effect on the hearts of the people should be similar to that of the Quran. If the verses of the Quran have somehow an enrapturing effect and irresistibly impel men to faith, or at least create emotions auxiliary to it, the same could be done by another composition and the challenge was to produce it No restrictions of any kind were made, the poetic influence may go in favour of many gods or for one God as in the Quran, for death to be the end or for survival after death, for Hedonism or for asceticism It was not even insisted that the style or diction should be the same, it might have been different a hundred ways Only the effect on the hearts should be similarly powerful It is pitiable that one should be reduced to the necessity of misunderstanding so plain a thing simply to explain away a very plain truth of history.

It has been the habit of the Western critics to play fast and loose with the history of Islam, accepting what facts please them and rejecting those unpalatable Here it is convenient to deny the numerous accounts showing how one after another Arabian poets and literati attempted and eventually failed But what shall we say of the allusions in the Quran itself to the great mental consternation felt by the Prophet's contemporaries on the recital of the verses of the Quran ? "The unbelievers say, Do not listen to this Quran but shout nonsense in (during the recital of) it that haply ye may overpower" (Surah 41 25) Again more clearly in Surah Muddasir which is one of the earliest Surahs of the Quran, and long before any challenge was made to produce its equal we see how perplexed the contemporaries of the Prophet were about the magical effect the Quran had on the people.

'He reflected and set up a theory
So death be to him how he theorised
Again death be to him how he theorised
Then again he pondered
Then he frowned and made a face.
Then he withdrew on his back and (returned) swelled with pride
And he said this is nothing but magic transmitted
It is nothing but word of a man.' (Surah 47 . 18-24).

The verses relate to Walid 'bn Mughira who was nearly believing on the Prophet when he, being intrigued by Abujahl and others, and partly being filled with thoughts of pride, dignity and position, set up this fantastic fascination theory to quell down the voice within him

which constantly said to him that it was the word of God The story may be read in any commentary.

Indeed it is very difficult to deal with men who would deny the plainest facts of history These men do not believe that the Prophet worked miracles, they say he never claimed that power Why, then, in what sense, did they call him a *Sahir* 'Fascinator, magician" unless the words of of the Quran clung to their hearts as veritable spells, and they were moved irresistibly? Is that not a miracle in itself?—a miracle in a matter of taste in which it is so very easy to pretend and even assume listlessness And remember all this was in the earliest days of the Prophet's ministry when not only was there no challenge of any kind, but the Surahs consisted only of short verses, incoherent and unfinished utterances, sometimes filled with strange mystic oaths which must have appeared simply wild to the mass of the hearers, as they do to this day to those not conversant with the hidden spiritual meanings behind those words In short there was nothing appealing to the ordinary tastes of the people It was probably for this reason that they called the verses of the Quran incantations. They felt their irresistible overpowering effect on their hearts but could not see what it was in these apparently wild expressions that ravished them so powerfully That is the charm of literary fascination—the words, the mere sounds seem to have an effect, quite independent of the thoughts which are seen to be expressed by them Really it was this combined with a majesty of the spirit—another indefinable thing—that was carrying them away

Those who say that the challenge of the Quran relates not to the excellence of language, style or diction, but to the higher moral and spiritual teachings in it, may well consider these early Surahs There is not much of teaching—at least on the surface of it—in these Surahs There is only a Spirit filling the words which gives its glamour to the thoughts, otherwise staple and common place, and prepares the hearts for their purifying and edifying effect Moreover was it for his noble thoughts that his contemporaries dubbed him a magician? What has magic to do with thoughts? The effect of poetry has frequently been compared to fascination. Certainly these miserable subterfuges to avoid the truth make the truth glare out with increasing brilliancy

As the subject is vague and incapable of discussion I do not propose to deal with it at all There are other ways of proving that the Quran is a miracle both in respect of its matter and its literary composition. So out of a host of writers who have written all sorts of nonsense about it I

will select an admittedly able writer; his words will show how real the difficulty about the unanswered challenge of the Quran is and how difficult it is to explain this fact of history.

Palmer in his Introduction to his translation of the Quran (Sacred Books of the East series) says, "That the best of Arab writers has ever succeeded in producing anything equal in merit to the Quran itself is not surprising.

"In the first place they have agreed before-hand that it is unapproachable and they have adopted its style as the perfect standard; any deviation from it, therefore must be a defect Again with them this style is not spontaneous, as with Mohammed and his contemporaries, but is as artificial as though Englishmen should still continue to follow Chaucer as their model, in spite of the changes which their language has undergone. With the Prophet the style was natural, and the words were those used in every day ordinary life, while with the later Arabic authors the style is imitative and the ancient words are introduced as a literary embellishment. The natural consequence is that their attempts look laboured and unreal by the side of his impromptu and forcible eloquence.

"That Mohammed, though, should have been able to challenge even his contemporaries to produce anything like the Quran, 'And if ye are in doubt of what We have revealed unto Our servant then bring a chapter like it..... But if ye do it not, and ye surely shall do it not &c' is at first sight surprising, but as Noldeke has pointed out, this challenge really refers much more to the subject than to the mere style,—to the originality of the conception of the unity of God and of a revelation supposed to be couched in God's own words Any attempt at such a work must of necessity have had all the weakness and want of prestige which attaches to an imitation. This idea is by no means foreign to the genius of the old Arabs"

Far from refuting these explanations I would rather confess that after years of thought I have not been able to make out any intelligible sense out of his words. It may be my incapacity but I fail to follow him and I would seriously ask the reader to try and see if he can. What does he mean by saying that the Arabic writers have adopted the style of the Quran as the perfect standard? What to begin with is the style of the Quran? What are the characteristic features that distinguish that style from others? We know and can explain in words the difference between Ruskin's, Johnson's, Addison's styles, between the style of Genesis and Ezekeil. What is it that characterises the style of the

Quran as style *i. e.* apart from the spirit and energy of it? Yes here are these, hanging clauses, repeated parentheses, half-uttered sentences, constant change of address, confusion of numbers and persons. Is it this that the Arabian writers consider perfect standard? Is it not rather that they timidly try to explain these peculiarities as best they can? Were these things ever common, could they be ever common and natural to any man in Arabia or elsewhere? And granting these were literary excellences to Arabians how is it they never tried to imitate this style of the Quran in their compositions? Indeed one of our most powerful arguments for the Quran being a miracle of literary composition is that in spite of all these, which naturally must produce a jarring effect on the reader or the hearer, he does not even notice these things in his reading and remains enraptured with an irresistible charm that he cannot explain.

If by style he means (what no body else would mean) the varying lengths of verses in various Surahs, their measure and cadence and their appropriateness to the spirit pervading the verses or the Surah, the setting in of appropriate natural pauses to enforce thought on each separate part and impart a peculiar effectiveness on the whole, this by itself is an excellence of the highest order and the devising of a number of such appropriate dictions for an ignorant and unlettered man is by itself nothing short of a miracle What then does he mean by saying "they have agreed beforehand" &c., implying that our notions are by themselves not quite right? And how does the notion of unapproachable beauty of this diction affect their ability to use it for like effectiveness? And how is it to be reconciled with their never seeking to adopt it. Evidently the learned writer is missing the point altogether.

Again how some particular *style* can be spontaneous in a particular age and not in another is not clear Some manners of style may be approved in a particular age and become tasteless in latter times with the change of culture, temperaments &c; thus the verbose florid rhyming style of Surur (an Urdoo writer) which fascinated people in his day has become insipid and even offensive to our tastes now and we can hardly bear reading his works for any length of time So some manners of exhortation might be common in one age and might become ridiculous in another But then the effect of these changes is that books written in the old obsolete styles, or using a kind of rhetoric which does not appeal to us, become unbearable to read now. Is that the case with the Quran? If, then, there is anything peculiar with the style of the Quran which is discordant with the tastes of the present day it is another miracle of the

Holy Word that in spite of it continues to captivate and enrapture the hearts of men

He has said the style was spontaneous with Mohammed and his contemporaries Is this a fact? It is just on this point that we argue that the Quran could not certainly have been the work of the Prophet Hundreds and thousands of his speeches, addresses, orations have come down to us in the reports; we thus know what his style was, or rather what style or manner of speaking was spontaneous with him The diction of the Quran is wholly at variance with it, you cannot mistake a single bit of the Quranic verse that happens to be or may experimentally be mixed with it. And so of the Prophet's contemporaries Take any of their addresses—we have hosts of them recorded—and compare the style or diction of the Quran with it Not even a child can fail to perceive the difference Abubecker Baqilani has filled nearly half his book Ejazul Quran with samples of the speeches &c of various contemporaries of the Prophet merely to insist on this point of utter variance in style and diction In fact the style of the Quran was not only not natural, but could not possibly be natural and spontaneous with any man All that is peculiar in it is wholly unnatural, it is wholly unhuman There could hardly be a more ignorant opinion from a man of good sense and erudition

His comparing the effort to Englishmen continuing to follow Chaucer 'in spite of the changes which their language has undergone' is still more unfortunate Steingass the learned compiler of the English-Arabic and Arabic-English Dictionary has ably refuted this in an article contributed to Hughes' Dictionary of Islam I will only quote a passage from it. Referring to this comparison he says, "But is such a parallel justified in facts? In English, as among modern nations in general, the written language has always kept in close contact with the spoken language, the changes which the former has undergone are simply the registration and legalisation of the changes which in course of time had taken place in the latter Not so in Arabic From the moment when, at the epoch of its fullest and richest growth, it was, through the composition of the Quran, invested with the dignity of a literary language, it was, by its very nature, for many centuries to come, precluded from any essential change, whether this be considered as an advantage or not."

His speaking of the Prophet's using words in everyday life and our being obliged to used ancient words is also annoyingly incorrect. Can even one instance be cited of a single word used in the Quran or the traditions which has become obsolete in these thirteen hundred years?

The Quran and the traditions have really fixed the language of the Quran to the point of immutability

All these explanations thus appear to be signally devoid of sense. Moreover, all assume one thing which has no basis whatever It is assumed that in the parallel to be compared, the language, style, diction should all be the same I wonder how he has got at these restrictions. As stated before the challenge was a simple one Bring a Surah like the Quran From a literary point of view this means only, Bring a composition alike in effect to the Quran,—the word 'effect' being understood in its fullest sense. That should be possible in any language If in any language a literary composition can be produced which can compare in effectiveness with the Quran, then the claim of the Quran to remain unequalled fails from the literary point of view Here, however, is the point for candour I spoke of in the beginning The enquirer can judge about effect in the case of the Quran either from history or effect on his own heart when either, free from any thoughts, or even occupied in any thoughts (other than critical enquiry about the Quran itself) he accidentally hears or otherwise comes across any verse of the Quran Whatever his mood of mind may be cannot fail to feel a peculiar attraction for the verse, and with it its ennobling or admonishing or other effect as the verse in question may be concerned about

Hitherto while dealing with the inability of the later writers "to produce anything equal in merit to the Quran" the learned critic took the question from a literary point of view, but when he comes to the question of the Prophet's contemporaries he changes the position altogether and says, following Noldeke, that the "challenge refers much more to the subject than to the mere style,—to the originality of the conception of the Unity of God and of a revelation supposed to be couched in God's own words" What a beautiful idea for a challenge which never occurred to any Arabian for thirteen centuries! And granting it was so where was then the difficulty of it A mere parody would have have sufficed to silence all such challenges if there was really nothing more in it than the originality of the conception As the fates would have it whatever else might have been meant it was certainly not what he says 'the originality of the conception of the Unity of God and of a revelation supposed to be couched in God's own words" The Prophet had been distinctly teaching that Unity of God was a doctrine taught by all prophets from Adam, and as to revelation couched in God's own words this too was nothing peculiar to the Quran. All the books revealed were said to be such.

I assure the reader that this long criticism has been as wearisome to me as it would surely be to him—because of the airy intangible subjects involved, beauty of language, style and diction, the effect upon the heart and the like. But this is the stuff we get to deal with in the writings of the critics of the Quran on this point. The fault is not wholly theirs. The subject itself is not much capable of discussion. Frankly, it is a matter in which to the unprejudiced the mere reading of the Quran is sufficient, to the prejudiced not ten volumes of arguments can suffice. In the brief space I have at my disposal I want to deal with more tangible arguments in which I hope I can convince even those who know little or nothing of Arabic language. This I will do in the next section. But the reader will observe that here in this passage we have taken from Palmer there is a testimony of great literary excellence of the Quran, even if does not amount to a miracle.

Section 2.

In the last section while replying to Palmer's explanations we have come at least on one argument which must be convincing even to those who do not know Arabic language. By reading in a translation even one can see that the style of the Quran is not only very simple and artless, free from all those arts familiar to every one, by which writers seek to embellish their composition, but it has for its peculiar and distinctive features all those things which would make any composition in any language unreadable. It is full of hanging clauses, half-uttered sentences, repeated parentheses confusion of numbers and persons and the like also constructions grammatically unjustifiable, at least very peculiar and awkward. If one considers these one will hardly be able to imagine that the original (whatever the language might be) can be at all a smooth composition to say nothing of being admired for its literary merits. Yet the testimony of all (including non-Muslim critics as Palmer whose passage we have cited) is crying proof to the fact that it is so in spite of all the literary defects that we find in it It must at least be conceded that these pass the ear smoothly without producing any jarring sense of discordance, to say nothing worse of it Is this anything short of a miracle? Is there any other instance of this in the world? The majesty of the spirit and the glowing power of the words covers it all; the mind is carried away and does not feel anything. This is indeed the highest pitch of literary fascination No writer we are aware of has made the slightest approach to it except Ghalib in one verse only

گر یہ چاہے ہے حوائی مرے کاشانہ کی در و دیوار سے ٹپکے ہے بیاباں ہونا

(بیا باں ہو نا ٹپکے ہے is not idiomatic), or, in a minor degree, Zauq in one

Ghazal beginning with the verse

کیا عرض لائقِ حدائی میں ہوں دولت والے اونکا بندہ ہوں جو بندے ہیں محبت والے

(محبت والے - دولت والے and similar constructions are slightly out of fashion in polished language). And these are considered as veritable marvels of the poetic art What shall we say of the Quran which is literally full of real faults I say but for this indescribable power of fascination within it the mere rhasphodical structure which is apparent in every line of the Quran would have been sufficient to rule it out of court as a literary composition Surely so at least among the literati of such low culture as the East has produced

To avoid misconception let us say that speaking, as we have done, of the literary defects in the Quran we do not mean to say that they are real defects There is always some reason for them, which if known they would cease to appear as such Remember, the Quran is a revelation to the Prophet, not to us A hanging clause, a half uttered sentence might be found sufficient for the instruction required—to him ; the light of his mind is not in abeyance, on the contrary the revelation is often made in response to thoughts passing in or coming to his mind So what appears a confusing medly of numbers and persons might be perfectly clear to him from the manner in which the revelation was made to him, just as we can indicate a lot of things by suggestive gestures in speaking And as will appear later many of the deviations from the rules of grammer or established idiom might be purposely done for some high artistic purpose, in which case the apparent defects may turn out to be beauties of the highest order But obviously these things do not affect the wonder we have been describing For we do not know these things, we know nothing of the revelation as it was, we have only the words before us, and we must judge of the passage in the Quran like any other passage elsewhere.

We now proceed to illustrate a set of literary beauties in the Quran which though of such a nature as to be easily appreciated even by those who know little or nothing of Arabic language, will be acknowledged by all to be the highest achievements of literary art Indeed as far as we know far from trying to rise to them, the masters of literary art in the East have not yet risen to the very conception of them, they are only contemplated and attempted by the latest master-poets of the West as Tennyson &c (1) Readers of Tennyson would be familiar with a something that may be called 'sound echoing the sense.' The sound of the passage as heard would give some idea of the sense or the sentiment underlying the passage. Now, take two Surahs revealed about the same

time Surah Rahman No. 55 and Surah Qamar No. 54 The sentiment pervading the one is mercy (even punishment is there described as mercy), that pervading the other is threatening, terror. Have these two Surahs read before you (supposing you are ignorant of Arabic language), you cannot mistake the one for the other The short, smooth lucid verses of the former (*Al Rahman, Allamal Quran, Khalaqal Insan, Allamal bayan* &c) contrast strikingly with the boisterous, tempestuous tone of words and the threatening cadence of verses in the later. (*Iqtarabatiss-aatu wanshaqqal qamar Wa in yarau ayatan yo'rizu wa yaqulu Sihrun Mustamir. Wa kazzabu wattaban ahwayahum wa kullu amrin mustaqar* &c) For another example have the following verses of Surah Furqan properly read before a man knowing nothing of Arabic and see if he can feel anything of the sentiment pervading these verses

Yauma yaazzuz zalimo ala yadaihe (biting remorse), or
Iza Raathum min makanin baidin Samau laha Taqayyzan wa zafra
Wa iza ulqu minha makanan zayyeqan Muqarraninа daaow hunalika subura,
La tadul yauma suburan waludan wadu suburan kasira.

Contrast the hard gutteral and double letters filling the first lines with the smooth flow of the last when the sentiment is changed

Tennyson is so much admired for his lines
He stepping down
By zigzag paths and juts of pointed rock
Came on the shining levels of the lake (Morte d'Arthur).

(Contrast the hard sputtering letters of the first line and a hal with the smooth lucid flow of the end) Is it not the same and infinitel; better in the following short bit of a verse (13 14) Just have in min what is called pealing of thunder, and compare it with the sound c words *Yusabahur Raadu bihamdihi walmalaika'u min Khajateh*, and see how th sound makes repeated peals in the first part and then falls rapidly aft an expansion in *malaika* in perfect representation of crouching for fear

These are certainly no ordinary things for a literary composition Arabia thirteen hundred years ago Such artistic beauties are beyond tl conception even of Arabian literati to this day If the Prophet w the author of the Quran he not only conceived this culminating point advance in literary art, but successfully practised it. Is that not miracle?

We are now somewhat enabled to see how the contemporaries of t Prophet were quite incapable to produce anything like the Quran. I

rom attempting to produce a composition alike to it in literary effect hey had not the capacity even to understand where lay the charm that vas so infallible in its effect To appreciate the literary merits of the Quran duly we should not compare it, as is usually done, with the renowned masterpieces of Arabic literature which has not yet developed sufficiently enough, but with all that is highest in any literature, notably that of the advanced nations of the West

Before I proceed any further let me explain that, simple as it may appear at the first sight, it is sometimes a very difficult task for a literary writer to put a speech in the mouth of a person This speech must exhibit signs of all the peculiarities of the supposed speaker and any special things that may be about him at the time of his speaking If the man is supposed to be feverish it must appear from his speech that he is so Simple as this may appear it is one of the most trying arts for a literary writer Tennyson has signally failed in putting the biting words in the mouth of the child when speaking to Guinevere in the nunnery. It requires a power of psychological analysis besides the art of using it carefully in the composition.

Well, when any speech is attributed to anybody it must agree entirely with all his conditions and faithfully represent all that may be special or peculiar with him The greater the difficulties of this the greater is the skill of the writer Having understood this consider what would require to be done if a speech were put in the mouth of Almighty God Just stop for a moment to think of this and the task would appear something impossible The speech must represent something of the peculiarities of His Infinite Transcendental existence Numbers of poets have represented God as speaking. Milton's Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained are full of God's speeches But has this thing which I am speaking of been ever attempted? ever even thought of? They all make God a man, a big gigantic man and nothing more I do not say this in disparagement of these great poets. It would make one's head reel even to think of artistic representation of the great truths of divinity in human language Well, if the Quran does it, and does it satisfactorily, will it not prove that it is a miracle of literary art? For an unlettered son of the desert it would have been a miracle even to think that some such thing was requisite for a revelation purporting to come in the very words of God. The inference is obvious If we find something of this in the Quran then it is not merely a miracle of literary production, but possesses in itself immediate moral proof of its divine origin.

Before proceeding to give instances let me ask the reader to consider the following lines of Tennyson—they will give a clue to the way in which things of this sort can be done though of course not attempted.

The great brand,
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon
And flashing round and round and whirled in an arch

Notice that in the last line the metre is broken purposely to make an artistic representation of the parabolic motion of the sword as it was hurled into the sea

We have spoken of apparent literary defects appearing on due reflection to be beauties of the highest order One particular thing the Quran is literally full of from the beginning to the end You cannot miss it on any page of the Quran, and so it is useless to give instances. God is addressing the Prophet, and immediately, often in the same verse, the address changes to people, or the address ceases to be address at all and the people are mentioned in the third person There are infinite variations of this medlying of addresses and narrative forms Very often one set of persons are addressed and immediately another set of persons, or the Prophet or some specially holy persons are addressed or spoken of in narrative form, sometimes making it difficult to see precisely which is the person or class of persons that is addressed or spoken of in a verse At first sight this appears a literary defect, and so it would be if the speaker in the Quran were any other than God In the case of God it is an artistic beauty of the highest order It represents artistically, so far as human language which is subject to time is able to represent the higher truths of divinity, that to God all are ever present, there is no difference of the past and the present, and the present and absent to Him, and further He cannot attend to one (in address or description) to the exclusion of the others They are all in His thought and are attended to simultaneously Human language (and it is human language in which the Quran is revealed) is quite unable to give expression to this great reality. The nearest approach to it that is possible is the artistic representation of it in the way that we have in the Quran.

The artistic design explained above is also meant for representing the great reality that to God there can be no difference of address and description ; both are the same to Him But it can often be seen in a single verse. Thus " And they, if they were to come to thee and seek pardon of God, and the Apostle also prayed for their forgiveness, then they would have found God much returning to mercy, the Merciful." There is no

fference of 2nd and 3rd persons to God Such constructions are of ry frequent occurrence in the Quran One more instance will do " He id · Begone ! for whoever of them will follow thee, then surely Hell is our recompense, a full recompense

The above might be thought sufficient for the highest powers of istic representation Yet that is not all The Quran also seeks to epresent artistically the great truth that God is super-personal Per- ality is a limitation, and yet the very act of speaking implies it When God speaks of Himself as I or We it implies that there is some- hing outside Himself not contained in the I or We But see how beauti- ully is the difficulty removed by artistically combining both the first and he third persons in the same verse when speaking of God Instances of these also are very numerous in the Quran Thus,

" We have sent thee as a witness, and a bearer of good news and a warner, and as a caller towards God by His permission and a shining lamp " (33 44)

" Dost thou not see to thy Lord how He extends forth the shadow and if He liked He would have kept it unmoved Then We have made the sun a guide to it (25 45) "

All this will be acknowledged to be the highest power of artistic representation If it is (as will be acknowledged) one of the highest and most trying matters of skill in literary art to so arrange a speech that it would agree entirely with all his conditions, and faithfully represent all his peculiarities, and the greater the difficulties of this the greater is the skill of the writer, then it will have to be acknowledged that there never was, or is, or will ever be a work of art greater, or even approaching, the Quran In fact the impossible has been made possible and effected. Truths such as that God is above personality , He encompasses all persons and is Omnipresent, he is *Hazir* (I) and *Ghaib* (He) at the same time are difficult to be expressed in words what to say of making a successful representat on of them in the mere construction of a passage. Is this not in itself a miracle of the highest order ?

Notice one point, however All such constructions which violate the most elementary principles of speech must be repulsive in any language. A speaker may speak of himself in the first person or the third person, but he cannot speak of himself in both persons in the same sentence. Is it not a further miracle that such constructions do not strike the ear at all in the Quran. Will it be said that it is because of their justification

on account of the literary purpose we have explained? I claim that none before myself has pointed out these things The majority of the readers of the Quran have certainly not the slightest idea of these things. In fact the very idea of artistic representation is something beyond their comprehension

The acme of literary art consists in expressing a thing without saying or even making a slightest reference to it Thus verse 2.172 is apparently meant to make a clear definition of virtue, its chief characteristics &c and the object (not expressly stated) is to show that not only the Prophet and the Imams are embodiments of virtue but that in the highest sense virtue is confined to others can only be relatively virtuous There is, however, not the slightest mention of the Prophet and the Imams To indicate this artistically the verse begins first by the unusual expression 'Virtue is he who' &c For a time predicates are in singular, then they become plural, and towards the end the case too is changed, what (as should be) is nominative before becomes accusative The mystery of it all is to indicate that the verse (in its highest sense) refers to one who has become many, some of whom were destined to have active life in this world, but others had their active force in pure non-resistance I cannot conceive a higher power of literary art

So to indicate that this or that Prophet occupied a high position in the sight of God a frequent literary device in the Quran is that his words when reported in some narrative in the Quran are reported without any such words as 'He said' or the like see 67 9 for example The words get to be absorbed in revelation, become words of God as it were The first Surah which is meant to be a prayer for the believers (including prophets) has no word such as 'say' before it. So throughout the Quran there is only one instance in which the unbelievers are addressed directly by God In all other places the Prophet is directed to say this or that to them The believers are freely addressed directly It is for the reader to consider for himself whether a son of the desert could be expected to think of those nice little things to give an effect without saying anything directly

In another chapter we will have occasion to speak of instances of peculiar forms of expression meant to convey great truths not expressly stated

SECTION 3.

Some thing may now be said about the literary miracle in some of the small Surahs which seem to have nothing about them. Their miracle

consists chiefly in their design In the literary note appended at the end of Surah 1 we have shown how that little Surah of 7 verses is designed to be a complete light in itself, to teach almost everything by merely reflecting on the words used, and further to be both a prayer and its realisation And we see there is an artistic art of *Laffo nashre Muratlab* in it We need not repeat it here.

Take another Surah (112) "Say God is One (*Ahad* most one *Ahad*) God the Absolute on Whom all depend (*Samad*) He does not beget, nor is begotten, nor is there anyone like unto Him" In two words *Ahad* and *Samad*, the absolute Unity of the Divine Being, His Independence in the philosophical sense of the word and yet the dependence of all in Him, doctrines which would be acceptable to all, the falsity of all possible erroneous forms of belief, whether crude or philosophical is shown The emanation, evolution and pantheistic theories can be shown to be only refined forms of the three errors mentioned in the last verses

Take another Surah (109) "Say O unbelievers, I do not worship what ye worship, nor do you worship What I worship, nor will I worship, yours is your religion, mine is my religion" The literary art consists in the repetition, with the present stretched to the future, showing impossibility, and thereby the radical difference between Islam and other religions The infidels had proposed that if the Prophet would worship their gods for a year they would worship his God for the same space of time The answer was (1) that both are equally impossible, worshipping without believing is nonsense, and voluntary changing of belief is impossible (2) however much the infidels try to modify their beliefs so as to come near the worship of the One true God they cannot, and however much concession may a Musalman make in point of belief he cannot come near idolatory or any of the erroneous forms of belief It is commonly said all religions have one God This is not true None but the Musalmans believe in the God of Islam, and the Musalmans must reject the God taught in other religions To us he can be no true God who did not send some such prophet as Our Holy Prophet There is no toleration or compromise in these matters So much teaching (and more as may appear on due reflection) in a mere repetition of 'I do not believe,' 'you do not believe'!

Some of the small Surahs such as *Al Kausar* (No 108) and *Tabbat* (No 111) may be shown to be miracles from the prophecies contained in them. But this we are not at here.

The permeating of purely legal directions in the Medina Surahs with the spirit of God and His presence making it impossible to lose sight of grave religious responsibility in any matter even the most temporal, we have spoken of elsewhere and so need not repeat it here.

Section 4.

The wonders of literary art which we have been speaking of in the preceding section are those which may be appreciated by anybody whether he knows anything of Arabic language or not Those we speak of here require a little shadowy acquaintance with Arabic language such as Indians who read the Quran (the mere words of it without meaning) to enable them to say their prayers, for they must be said in Arabic Gradually they get some little acquaintance with the structure of Arabic language and can read other Arabic passages, such as prayers taught by the Imams, without well understanding what is said therein This stage has passed on me—indeed I have not quite passed that stage, for I never had a regular teaching in Arabic what I have learnt I have learnt by this natural method Well, I speak from personal experience, and have heard quite a number of such experiences from others Whenever a bit of a passage of the Quran is brought in a passage, as is often done for the sake of embellishment, it is ninety nine to hundred that you will be struck at the place where the word of God is brought in You will feel instinctively that it is something like Quran I had that experience in the case of four little bits when I was quite a boy and knew nothing but the letters of Arabic language My father who is a renowned scholar began to shudder and perspire with wonder when he found in a tradition that Ibne Muljim, murderer of Our Lord Ali, when arrested and brought before our Lord, said to him '*A'aanta tunqizu man finnar*' The words were taken from the Quran, but my father was not aware of it at the time. He began to shudder, as he thought that the position about none being able to produce a passage like the Quran was shaken There is a peculiar indescribable lustre about the word of God which cannot fail to strike you wherever they may be used or put in I do not know what to say of it when experiences such as this came to one like myself when I was quite a boy. The most that can be said that there was a nascent recollection, but this only shows that the words of God have a peculiar power to stick into the mind for I was never a frequent reader of the Quran—not certainly in the age I am describing of.

This introduces us to the peculiar power the word of God has in producing an effect on the hearts, which was the thing which so bewilder-

ed the infidels of Mecca that they called it fascination. Analyze it if you can There is nothing in the form of expression that makes it so effective We can very well understand how the words of Our Lord Jesus had such a magical effect on the people For they were couched in poetic figures and parables—he rarely said anything directly But there is nothing whatever like this in the Quran Yet the effect of it! As I have said it is impossible not to be affected Some persons have had their lives suddenly changed by chance hearing of a verse of the Quran. One we are told was changed from a thief to a saint as some one near the house he was scaling was reading the Quran As it came to 57 15 "Has the time not yet come for those who believe that their hearts be filled with fear at the recollection of God?" the words struck on his heart like a lightning and he was a changed man immediately Of one man we are told he fell down on hearing a verse of the Quran and died instantly Of course much depends on subjective moods of the listener, and sometimes the mind most away from a mood of devoutness is in the rightest mood to receive the admonition, but this will have no effect unless the words are by themselves such as to have piercing power on hearts

It is with reluctance that I pass to literary beauties which can only be appreciated by those who are scholars in Arabic language; and this is all the more unpleasant as I know that apart from a lot of explanation required nothing but a very long list of instances can be anything like conclusive But it is a fact that apart from the higher poetical beauties some of which we have tried to lay before the non-Arabic knowing reader there are beauties of language itself which make the reader enamoured of the Quran even in the case of simple narrative passages One or two instances will give the reader an idea of the nature of the thing admired. The chief thing is the right selection of words, having appropriate suggestions Thus there is a simple passage saying that Noah lived a thousand years except fifty years (29. 13) that is 950 years It would be hard to imagine that in this simple passage there could be any thing of particular literary beauty But in the case of thousand years the word used for years is *sanatan* and in the case of fifty years it is *aman* There is a slight difference between *sanatan* and *aman* and that constitutes the literary excellence of the passage The word *sanatan* has an implication that the years are hard ones, *aman* on the contrary implies that the years were passed well Noah's whole life was passed in worries owing to the people he had to deal with, only the last years of his life after the deluge were passed in peace. So the former are spoken of as *sanatan* and the latter as *aman*. Is that not a beauty of a very high and to

keep regard of such things in such simple passages is to the best of my knowledge and belief unique in any literature, to say nothing of contemporary Arabic literature in which certainly there can hardly be found any instance even approaching it So when winds are spoken of as a matter of mercy they are spoken of in plural, when as punishment it is singular. The reason is obvious

While we say all this, and are able, we hope, more or less to show it to those not gifted with a very good taste for literature, learned questions are put to us by way of objection by the great Western scholars which we pigmy Mullahs find it hard even to grasp or understand much less to answer Thus, though the root which gives rise to the word '*Masaniya*' 'repeated' is a very common Arabic root Rabbi Grieger (and he is followed by the whole herd of them) would have it that the word is not an Arabic word, it is really a corruption of Mishnah (the Jewish oral law) and incorrectly used in the sense that it was Details will come in the notes where this word occurs, here we have simply to say we are at a loss to see how to answer mere surmises of this kind.

Then it is said there are some coined words as *Taghut*, *Ghislin*, *Eliyun*, *Salsabil* &c some of which they trace to foreign sources, and say, like the above, that the original meaning are perverted These too will be discussed in the notes where they occur All that requires to be said here is that granting all that there appears no point of objection in it. On the contrary by doing so the Quran has given to Arabic language the starting point for further development It will be noticed that all these words are terms—names given to certain spiritual realities for which there were no names or terms in Arabic language There were two ways to do it—one, to specialise the use of a familiar word in special technical sense, thus *zacat* 'purification' for the poor-rate fixed in Islam, or Kausar for the Pond of the Prophet in Heaven, the other is the one before us to take an unfamiliar word from another language twisting it where the sense it bears in the original is not exactly what is desired Every language does it when in need of terms What is 'thermatol' for instance? How has the English language been built up of Greek, Latin, French, German Swedish words?—all changed so as to irrecognizable I see no point in the objection, if anything it is a matter of merit in the Quran.

Then it is said to suit the rhyme words have been distorted Frankly I will say that this objection is most annoying to me, for I cannot for a moment believe that anybody could imagine that it was really so. There are only two instances of it One in Surah 95 "*Wat tine wat zaitun, wa ture sinin, wa hazal baladul amin*" It is said *Sinaa* is made

un simply to suit the rhyme. The other is in Surah 37 130, '*Salamun la Ilyasin*,' Ilyas (the prophet) being made *Ilyasin* to suit the rhyme of the Surah I say what was the importance and indispensableness of the Mount Sinae in the first that so great a sacrifice was made for it Could it not be very easily changed for another? Is it not infinitely more probable that, as the commentators say the mount was named both ways in the days of the Prophet? As to the other, was it in the slightest way indispensable that the verse should end with the name of Ilyas Could it not be easily done thus '*Salamun ala Ilyas, innahu kana min ibadinal mukhlisun*' The traditions say it clearly that the word is not *Ilyasin* but *Al yasin*. Such is the stuff we get from the Western critics of the Quran!

SECTION 5

In this section we propose to give certain prophecies in the Quran well-known to have been remarkably fulfilled later and certain scientific truths which were discovered centuries later and which could not possibly have been known in the Prophet's day These are admittedly miracles

1 *Prophecies* The memorable prophecy of the victory of Greeks over Persians contained in Surah 30, *Al Rum*, is too well known to require description "The Greeks have been overcome, in the nearest part of land, but after their defeat they shall overcome (them), within a few years Unto God is the affair both what was before and what is to come, and on that day shall the believers rejoice in the success granted by God, for He granteth success unto whom He pleaseth" &c

The passage was revealed on occasion of a great victory obtained by the Persians over the Greeks, the news whereof coming to Mecca the infidels became strangely elated, and began to abuse Mohammed and his followers, imagining that this success of the Persians, who like themselves were idolaters and supposed to have no scriptures against Christians who pretended as well as Mohammed to worship one God and to have divine scriptures was an earnest of their own future successes against the Prophet and those of his religion to check which vain hopes, it was foretold in the words of the text, that how improbable soever it might seem yet the scale should be turned in a few years and the vanquished Greeks prevail as remarkably against the Persians History informs us that the successes of Khosru Parviz, King of Persia, who carried on a terrible war against the Greek Empire were very great, and continued in an uninterupted course for two and twenty

years Particularly in the year 615 about the beginning of the sixth year before the Hijra, the Persians, having the preceding year conqured Syria made themselves masters of Palestine and took Jerusalem, which seems to be that signal advantage gained over the Greeks mentioned in this passage . . and there was so little probability, at the time, of the Greeks being able to retrieve their losses, much less to distress the Persians, that in the following years the arms of the latter made still further and more considerable progresses, and at length they laid seige to Constantinople itself But in the year 625, in which the fourth year of the Hejira began the Greeks when it was least expected gained a remarkable victory over the Persians, and not only obliged them to quit the territories of the empire, by carrying the war into their own country, but drove them to the last extremity, and spoiled the capital city of Madayen, Heraclitus enjoying thenceforward a continued series of good fortune, to the deposition and death of Khosru" (Sell's note on the verse abridged) The word we have translated *a few* (years) is *Biz'e* which signifies from three to ten, not more

Muir who feels to the core of his heart the great evidential force of this prophecy, tries to get rid of it in this way In the event of the prophecy not coming out true the word '*Sayaglibuna*' (the Greeks) will overcome, could with a change of a vowel be read as *Sayaglibuna* 'will be overcome' *i. e.* will be further defeated' It is difficult to remain polite when one has to deal with men who would prefer to appear senseless rather than accept a conclusion against their liking What then is the meaning of "And on that day will the believers rejoice in the success granted by God" &c? But for this absurd note of Sir William Muir I should not have cared to give details of this well-known Prophecy and its fulfilment

But, great as this prophecy was it was not to my mind very much greater than the much earlier prophecy with which the Prophet began his preaching to the world, that if they would follow him they would soon become masters of Persian and Roman territories It was, as Sell thinks, partly owing to this that the Meccans were so much opposed to the spread of the new teaching "Give me a word" said the Prophet "whereby the Arabs may be governed and the Persians subjugated, say there is no God but Allah and renounce what you worship beside Him" In other words accept my teaching and Arabia shall be united and enemies subdued The Meccans realized the danger and replied "We are not sure whether the dominion will not be taken from us" (Sell, The Historical Development of the Quran) It is easy to call this a matter of

mus, a masterly stroke of political insight, but to dream of such xtreme results, to act up to the dream, and have the dream realized in ne's life is truly something wonderful.

Prophecies about the ultimate triumph of Islam simply abound in ie Quran, and we would never be done if we were to cite all I will cite ne from one of the earliest Surahs which will show that there was distinct knowledge that wars would be fought and the infidels would be put o flight "Or do they say We are a host allied together to help each ther?" 'Soon shall the hosts be routed and they shall turn their acks" (Surah 54 44, 45). The Prophet recited these verses when oing to the battle of Beder

So the last verse of Surah 73, about the third to be revealed, says distinctly, "He knows that there will be among you (some who are) sick nd some who travel in the land seeking of the bounty of God and others who fight in the way of God" Rodwell supposes the verse may be a ater addition May be, but it was certainly before any of the things escribed in the future had appeared Were the Prophet's followers immune from sickness all the thirteen years of the Meccan period?

The little Surah of three verses *Al Kausar* (No. 108 in the current collection, but among the earliest to be revealed) contains one of the greatest prophecies, that was ever made The Prophet's son Qasim having died As 'bn Wael (father of the notorious Amru, the crafty counseller of Moavyah) began to say that the Prophet was *Abtar* which signifies one who has no children and posterity The Surah was revealed to tell the Prophet that God had given him abundance (of everything including of course posterity which was the thing in question) and that his enemy (and those like him) will be devoid of posterity (*Abtar*) The world has been seeing the fulfilment of this prophecy to this day The posterity of Omyeds, particularly, has been literally cut off from the world, and the posterity of the Prophet, which was through his one daughter only, has literally filled all the Muslim countries, though it was subjected to the most dreadful persecution for centuries, while the former had about a century of power in Arabia and later in Spain They were weeded out by the curse of God on them, while the Prophet's generation will continue to spread to the end of this world.

As allied to the above may be noted the remarkable fact that all infidels in whose condemnation any verses were revealed in the Quran remained infidels and never embraced Islam I can recall only one instance which may be said to be an exception to this, Abdul Rahman son of

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Abubecker, about whom verse 46 16 is said to have been revealed, but the Islam of such men was nominal

A remarkable Prophecy of the Quran which remains fulfilled to this day is that among Christians (racial or sectarian) hatred will continue to the end of the world See Surah 5 17 The pages of history are red with the most horrible instances of sectarian hatred, and as to racial hatred the Great War in these civilized times is the most eloquent testimony

So is the Prophecy that the Jews will remain a disgraced nation to the end of all time

"They will (not be able to) do you any harm except worrying, and if they fight you they will turn their backs and will not be assisted And they have been struck with disgrace wherever they go, they cannot remain safe except under a treaty (*Al* cord) from God or from people, and they have taken themselves to the wrath of God and have been struck with humiliation"

The former part of the verse is also not less remarkable It predicts distinctly that the Jews in their fighting with the Musalmans will be routed and will get no aid either from infidels or the other Jews

We need only refer to the following —

Surah 59 11, 12 The dissemblers will not assist the Jews, though they had promised them to do so and in this way incited them to take up arms against the Musalmans

Surah 48, 110, 28 85 &c Conquest of Mecca Surah 110 has been placed by Muir among one of the earliest Suiahs

2 Coming to anticipations of scientific discoveries made centuries later these too are not a few in number We have occasion to speak of some of them in our notes to Surah II in this volume The remarks made formerly in Chapter II about caution in these things apply with full force here, and the examples here below stand, it is hoped, the strictest precautions that may be considered necessary.

(1) In Surah 27 · 9 we read "Thou seest the mountains and thinkest them to be fixed but they are moving like the moving of the clouds."

No words of comment are required, only compare them with Tennyson's lines

> The hills are shadows and they flow
> From form to form and nothing stands
> They melt like mist the solid lands
> Like clouds they shape themselves and go
>
> (*In Memoriam*)

Slowly but surely all mountains are changing their places And sometimes some hills do not care to keep on to their slow pace but suddenly begin to move with a portentous speed causing a great deal of havoc There have been several instances in recent times Was the thing even dreamed of by any man in the Prophet's day?

(2) In Surah 86 11 God says 'By the earth having cracks in it,' implying that there are cracks in our globe which must of course be of a size comparable to the size of it so as to be mentioned as its distinctive feature Are any such cracks visible anywhere The thing was discovered only in this 20th century when Col Burrard of the Survey of India showed in a Monograph on Himalayas that, not only theoretically this must be so owing to different parts of the globe having differences in physical and chemical structure, but actually there is a big underground crack extending from the Malay Archipelago to the Mediterranean Sea across Burmah and the skirts of Himalayas in India The thing has been discovered by geodetical plumb-line observations

(3) It is difficult to imagine a more clear reference (without direct teaching which was not desirable) to earth's motion than this one 'He it is who has made the earth a camel (*zalool*) for you, so you walk about on its sides (*Manakib*) (67 15) To suggest that the word *zalool* is really meant as in ordinary use to signify a camel, not to be interpreted etymologically as those ignorant of this great astronomical truth are constrained to do, the word *Manakib* is also used for sides which is appropriate only for the sides of a camel on which palanquins are set for taking a journey There can be no purpose in comparing the earth to a camel except to indicate its motion

(4) In quite a number of places the Quran appears to speak of the sexs of plants Thus 20 55 speaks of "pairs of various plants", 22 5 says the earth "grew forth every beautiful pair", 31 9 says "We made to grow forth there in a every bountiful pair" In all these cases (and there are others) the word *zouj* or *azwaj* (sexual pairs) is used Those

ignorant of this scientific truth take the word in the abstract sense of 'kind,' but it requires no scholorship in Arabic to know that the words are *the* words for husband and wife

(5). Both the sun and the moon move across the signs of zodiac, but in the Quran it is always the moon that is said to do so—the sun *is* mentioned to make the contrast, but this is not said about it This is in several places In one place the sun is said to move, but in a different way from the moon The moon moves in its mansions, but the sun moves in the area to which it is confined (*le mustaqarr in laha*) (36 38, 39), referring apparently to the sun moving round the centre of gravity of the solar system

(6) "The day when We will roll up the heavens like the rolling up of scrolls in books We will return creation to the state in which We began it" (Surah 21 104) The simile of rolled scrolls shows that in the beginning the heavens *i e* the matter which has been worked in to the solar and other stellar systems was in a spiral form This is exactly the theory that holds the day in cosmological speculations

The above are sufficient for instances If these are not miracles I wonder what else is a miracle There are a number of others besides but they would require something of explanation They are discussed in my Science and Islamic Tadition.

SECTION 6

The above is, I hope, sufficient to satisfy the most cautious and reticent enquirer after truth that the Quran is what it claims to be, a veritable miracle for the Prophet It is not one miracle, but a miracle of miracles and a miracle that will last to the end of the world It is not a miracle only for good Arabic scholars but for you and I, every man according to his capacity can see it is a miracle—even if he does not know Arabic at all

And yet all this long list of miracles in it is only for those who require to enquire about it For the believers who have passed that stage there is a further set of miracles which is available for them only—the others can only witness the things by mixing with them Thus the Quran if rightly used in firm faith is available for the healing of bodily and mental diseases Special Surahs are recommended to be read for special objects, and those who do so in right firm faith know how effective they are Then the Quran is available to be consulted in cases of difficulties for right direction or for knowing what will be the end of things that

much concern or perplex us This '*Tawaful*' is very much in use amongst us and I have myself seen hundreds of wonders of it It is useless to cite them One instance only I will cite from Mufti Mohammed Abbas Sahab's Nasrul Momnin Sultan Sulaiman of Turkey went to visit the tomb of Our Lord Ali at Nejef As the dome of the shrine began to be visible from a distance the Sultan thought he should get down from horseback One of the ministers said this was not at all proper for he was no way inferior to Our Lord, being a Caliph himself. The Emperor had divination made from the book of God and the verse came out "Take off thy slippers, for thou hast come to the Holy land" (20 12). *

* On this the Emperor had the counsellor beheaded at once Another minister composed the following lines on the occasion

Ta-ahamu tyamul muluke bi bainhi
Wa yaksuru midal a slam izdhamuha
Iza ma rau hu min baeidin tarajjala
Wa in hiya lam tajal arajjala ha i uha

At his gate there always remains a gathering of princes and their gathering increases at the time of kissing (the Holy Sepulchre) When they see it from a distance they get down to walk on foot, and if they do not their heads will go on foot

The author has given a case of his own in which he was able to tell a man that his wife had given birth to a child

VI. Literary development of the Quran.

The revelation we find collected in the Quran was, as said before, not the whole revelation that was given to the Prophet Indeed it was a very small part of it though in some respects it was of a distinguished character and so separated from the rest We will attempt later to see the chief points that separated it from the rest However, such as it was, it was not that it was wholly devoted to exposition of doctrine or practice, nor was it wholly spontaneous, revealed purely for instruction irrespective of any special circumstances having led to the revelation On the contrary we find it is of a very miscellaneous character and the revelations were very frequently excited by some of the incidents in the Prophet's life or the history of the times This certainly means that but for those incidents the revelation might have been different from what it was This at first sight is a matter of reproach for the Quran, but this reproach is based on a wholly erroneous view of what the Quran is or was meant to be It is supposed that the Quran is or should be an independent book of guidance or instruction by the side of the Prophet and independently of him, and this is just what the Quran was *not* meant to be It is nothing more than a collection of revelations to the Prophet, and the revelations too were not wholly or even mainly aimed at instruction in the ordinary sense of the word—the main purpose of the revelations was to *direct* and *help* the Prophet in his *practical work*, *preaching*, *enforcing*, *propagating* and *publishing* the new religion The Quran therefore represents one side of the life of the Prophet *viz* that in communication with God Any body can see that in his life that and every other side must be in connection with each other. The Quran and the Prophet are one and the same reality

The historical element which is so marked in the Quran, far from being a matter of reproach, constitutes its chief worth, indeed gives it the character that is characteristic of it, makes it, in one sense at least, a Living Book The teaching of Islam we can get with the light of reason aided with a little of historical knowledge but nowhere can we get the Prophet with his wonders and miracles, bringing by mere force of his preaching, the most wanton and stubborn hearts to true faith and devotion.

What, then, it may be asked, of the pre-existing Quran in the Preserved Table (*Lowhe Mahfooz*)? The same, we reply, as of God's foreknowledge. But it need not necessarily be that in a rigid sense God's foreknowledge need not make Him inactive in our sense of the words.

The Quran may indeed be a translation (in the etymological sense of the word) of that which is in the *Lowhe Mahfooz* If all is a great connected whole, if one great thought can imply all other thoughts, if the same spirit can express itself in a variety of forms and ways, in various actions, then the Quran, which in its essence is nothing but thought and spirit, can be contained in a single verse or even a word of its own, what to say of a *Lowhe Mahfooz* So the whole Quran is said in the traditions to be contained in the introductory verse, *Bismillah*, prefixed to each Surah, aye even the first word of it, even the first letter of it One has only to learn to think of higher things to understand these realities.

The opposite is also true The verses of the Quran though apparently meaning to refer to some particular event, fact, or thing are really meant to cover all similar things that can come under this verse This we know from the teaching of those through whom we have the Quran And sometimes there are indications in the verses themselves showing this to be the reality of the matter We will see instances of this in our commentary The stories of ancient peoples recounted in the Quran may be taken as predictions of similar things among the Musalmans Also there is what may be called science said to be taught by the Imams of applying the spirit, called variously as Jafr, Ilmul Huruf, which must appear mystical to us who are quite ignorant of it—I myself know nothing whatever about it—but the results are sometimes striking Thus Suyuti in his Tarikhul Khulafa cites from Ibn Barjan's commentary that from Surah 30 1-3 he predicted the return of Jerusalem to Musalmans with the exact year of it The event happened long after his death But we ignorant folk are not wholly obliged to train ourselves in that most difficult thing to perceive for ourselves the wonderful power of the Word of God Any one sorely in trouble about himself, his friends or relations can in a truly prayerful mood of mind seek light and instruction from the book of God by simply opening a page of the Quran in the ways prescribed by the Imams—blessing the Prophet and his sons The thing is of very common use among us Some instances we have given in the chapter on Quran as a standing miracle

This is the meaning of saying that it is the living Word of God Though the Book is on the face of it made up of passages revealed strictly in connection with events of the day it is a book for all time and not only can cover or have application to but does actually cover and apply to all things, past, present and future Of course the unbeliever cannot put himself in the right mood of faith to prove these things for

himself but he can, if he care to take the trouble, see the faithful obtaining results for themselves and verify them in true spirit of enquiry.

To return to our subject. The revelations being intended to direct and help the Prophet in the practical work he was engaged in, it is sufficiently clear why in the early Meccan Surahs it is mainly the infidels of Mecca, their polytheism and idolatory that is denounced In the Medina Surahs their place is taken by Jews and dissembling or other lukewarm sections of Musalmans, and also doctrine turning on the spiritual importance of the Prophet himself as also details of law and practice which were non-existent in Meccan Surahs are enforced on the believers This also explains what to Rodwell appears a matter of complaint and leads him to adverse conclusions "We lose the poet in the missionary aiming to convert and in the warm asserter of dogmatic truths, the descriptions of natural objects, of the judgment of Heaven and Hell, make way for gradually increasing historical statements, first from Jewish and subsequently from Christian histories, while in the twenty-nine (thirty ?) Surahs revealed at Medina we no longer listen to vague words, often, as it would seem, without definite aim, but to the earnest disputant with the opponents of the new faith, the Apostle pleading the cause of what he believes to be the truth of God He who at Mecca is the admonisher and persuader, at Medina is the legislator and the warrior dictating obedience, and who uses other weapons than the pen of the poet and the scribe, while we are startled by finding obedience to God and the Apostle, God's gifts and the Apostle's, God's pleasure and the Apostle's spoken of in the same breath and epithets and attributes elsewhere applied openly to Allah applied to himself 'Whosoever obeyeth the Apostle obeyeth Allah' The whole, particularly the last words, are very much exaggerated but there is a great deal of truth in them. Faith must be given to the people gradually Faith in, submission to, and love for the Prophet is the very test of faith in, submission to and love of God Without the former the latter is mere self-delusion

One other objection may also be disposed of in this connection It is noticed that in the early Surahs the pleasures of Heaven and the horrors of Hell are described in vivid detail These details become absent in latter Surahs It is suggested this may be due to objections of Jews &c Sell explains (after Osborn) the absence of physical pleasures of Heaven in later Medina Surahs by satiety In Mecca the Prophet was forced to lead a contented life In Medina he could have as many wives as he pleased So the pleasures which appeared intense formerly lost their relish afterwards It is clear that the revelations being meant to give

faith to people gradually, if there are any passing phases of faith, some stages through which ordinary people must pass in their way to piety and devotion, these must be duly provided for in the teaching The stage that Our Lord Ali speaks of 'I worship God not for desire of Heaven, nor for fear of Hell, but because God is fit to be adored' is not reached all at once And particularly so when, however, some may not very much care for them, the existence of these things is a reality never to be forgotten or lost sight of When in the maturity of sense these inducements were not much required there were no more revelations of that kind, but the early Surahs 55, 56 &c in which these details are given were much recommended to be frequently read after prayers &c

One thing requires, however, to be explained The revelations, it may be said, may change in contents according as they were revealed in connection with the infidels of Mecca, or in connection with the Jews or Musalmans at Medina, there may also be a progress in the exposition of doctrines, beliefs, and practices required for the faithful, the immediate requirements of the times may explain the former, the growing capacity of the Musalmans for faith may explain the latter—what is not explained is why the revelations should change in character, tone and style from period to period The earliest Surahs consist mainly of short spirited verses beginning usually with strange mystic utterances or oaths This disappears gradually, and in their place we have more of a calm didactic or polemical tone with lengthening out of verses to give one complete thought in each verse This too changes gradually, and the later Medina Surahs which are occupied mainly with directions of law and practice for the Musalmans the style is very prosaic, having nothing of the vigour of the early Surahs in it Sir William Muir in his Life of Mohammed dwells at length on this changing character of the revelation The following citation from the Supplment to chapter IV of his book may serve to illustrate his impressions

At first like a mountain stream the current dashes headlong, pure, wild, impetuous . As we advance the style becomes calmer and more uniform, yet ever and anon a tremulous rhasphody, like the unexpected cataract, charged with thrilling words of conviction and fervid aspiration. Advancing still, though the dancing stream sometimes sparkles, and the foam deceives the eye, we trace a rapid decline in the vivid energy of natural inspiration, and even the mingling with it of grosser elements. There is yet, indeed, a wide difference from the turbid, tame and sluggish course of later days but the tendency cannot be mistaken. The decay of life is supplied by artificial expedient Elaborate

periods and the measured cadence of rhyming prose convey too often simple truisms and childish fiction" &c

I have purposely quoted this passage from Sir William Muir to show the extreme position that can be taken in this respect Well, the answer is to be found in the words 'The main purpose of the revelations was to *direct* and *help* the Prophet in his practical work, preaching, enforcing, propagating and publishing the new religion' Directing and helping a man in a work is mainly, if not wholly, showing him how to do the work successfully, to the greatest effect This effect depends, in the case of preaching, on the character, intellectual and moral, of the people, the nature of the thing sought to be enforced, the spirit in which the work among them is done The Prophet had to begin with a people who were steeped in the lowest depths of degradation as regards culture and morality, had not merely a false but an intensely gross form of religion and were wholly alien to all higher spiritual ideas Even the sense of religious responsibility was to be created among them The object being to enforce upon them a highly spiritual form of religion, the first thing to be done was to make them familiar with the idea of higher spiritual things To begin with, a nascent, ill-defined notion of these things was to be created This is best effected by mystic language "By the fig, the olive, the Mount of Sinai, this secure city" The commonest things were taught to have a higher meaning, a something of spirituality about them. Those who know something of the psychology of low class people know they can assimilate vague ill-defined notions and yet they remain suspicious of clear, well-understood truths Further, before any preaching could have any effect a sense of moral responsibility was to be created The people were to be taught to look upon the commonest affairs of life as something serious, something liable to upset the whole design of creation. "And the heavens He has raised up and set up the Balance That ye do not transgress in the matter of the balance" To impress the importance of the sense of responsibility the whole creation from the sun and the moon to the soul of man is brought in Surah 91 to witness it

This stage is soon passed, a few Surahs only sufficing to produce the desired preliminary effect. The next stage was the more difficult one of making them receive the clear rational truths of Islam and give up their own nascent, ill-defined notions and prejudices with which they were clinging to their false gods and idols The style and manner of preaching must change, it must become more and more didactic, argumentative, polemical, and 'so calm and more uniform' as Sir William puts it, 'yet ever and anon a tremulous rhapsody, like the unexpected cataract charged

with thrilling words of conviction and fervid aspiration,' as Sir William views it, when the subject turns to the faith that was to triumph over it The style must change further towards the prosaic when the unbelievers are not addressed at all but believers, there is nothing to argue about, the thing required is just to enforce with authority and invest the ordinary directions, chiefly of law and discipline, with a halo of sanctity This is done by forcing in the name of God at every step so that the spirit of devotion, grave responsibility in these ordinary things, may not be lost sight of This is what Sir William says in disparagement of it "they ordinarily end with some such little expression as 'God is Knowing, Wise'—thus completing the rhyme and investing the record with an inspired and oracular character"

I cannot do better than cite a passage from Dr Steingass the learned compilor of English-Arabic and Arabic-English Dictionary

"But if we consider the variety and heterogeneousness of the topics on which the Quran touches, uniformity of style and diction can scarcely be expected, on the contrary it would be strangely out of place Let us not forget that in *the* book "there is given a complete code of creed and morals, as well as of the law based thereupon There are also the foundations laid for every institution of an extensive commonwealth, for instruction, for the administration of justice, for military organization, for the finances, for a most careful legislation for the poor all built up on belief in the *one* God, who holds man's destinies in His hand Where so many important objects are concerned the standard of excellence by which we have to gauge the composition of the Quran as a whole must needs vary with the matter treated upon in each particular case Sublime and chaste, where the supreme truth of God's unity is to be proclaimed, appealing in high-pitched strains to the imagination of a poetically gifted people, where the eternal consequences of man's submission to God's holy will or of rebellion against it are pictured, touching in its simple, almost crude, earnestness, when it seeks again and again encouragement or consolation for God's messenger, and a solemn warning for those to whom he has been sent, in the histories of the prophets of old the language of the Quran adapts itself to the exigencies of every-day life, when this every-day life is to be brought in harmony with the fundamental principles of the new dispensation"

VII. The design of the Quran.

To understand the design of the Quran it is necessary to remember that it was never meant to be read alone independently of its divine expositors Not only considerable portions of it are *Mutashabihat*, dubious, allegorical, of doubtful meaning, of which it is distinctly declared that "none know the meaning thereof but God and those well-rooted in knowledge" (3 5, see chap VIII) but as a book of guidance it teaches nothing distinctly, fully To say nothing of less important matters, it gives no clear authoritative statement about the questions that agitate the world about the vital problems of religion Its great mission is to enforce belief in God and His Unity, but it says nothing clear about the conception of God and the nature of His Unity The result is that Islam is divided in numerous sects quarrelling even about this fundamental tenet of Islam True, by careful application of mind, by bringing in a great deal of philosophy and erudition upon the words, you can argue about these things, but that is just why it is unsatisfactory—you might as well dispense with the book itself, what you get at is mainly from your philosophy, not from the Book—and many are incapable of philosophy at all, and certainly there is no immunity from error in philosophical discussions So the book is filled with teaching about Inspiration, but it nowhere teaches clearly what Inspiration is, what sort of thing it is, how it is effected

Coming to matters of lesser importance the law of Islam, which fills gigantic volumes of Islamic literature, would be sadly crippled if it were to be confined to the few directions in the Quran Admittedly these have to be supplemented by the traditions of the Prophet (and the Imams according to the Shias). And it would appear that while some things are given with minute detail other things, not less important, are simply mentioned, and no more Thus while the directions about *Wuzu* (ablution preceding prayers) are given with full details, not a word is anywhere said about the form and discipline to be observed in prayers.

Certainly the profession of the Quran to be a complete book of guidance, an exposition of all things (16 91)—there is nothing wet or dry but is in the plain guide, (36 12) if the term here means the Quran—has to be understood in a very special sense And that special sense is it introduces the Prophet and commands us to "take what the Prophet gives and refrain from what he forbids" (59 7). See the story in the Itqan of Shafeu proving that every direction of the Law can be found in the Quran in just this way. In short the Quran, *taken by itself*, is a

complete guidance in nothing, it has at every step to be commented and supplemented by the Prophet and the Imams. It was for this reason that the Prophet directed—the saying is famous and universally admitted among all sects of Islam—"I am leaving two weighty things among you the Book of God and my Itrat (family and generation)—so long as you remain attached to them *both* you will not go into error, they will not separate till they return to me at the pond" The Quran alone is not sufficient Its very structure is such that compels you to seek some expositors for its understanding. It never says anything clearly, distinctly, fully It is the neglect of the Prophet's direction that has divided (and will keep divided) Islam in so many sects. It was the height of ignorance and impudence that made Caliph Omar say "The Book of God is sufficient for us", and God only knows how much the mischief of sectarian divisions and errors of all are to be laid at his door for his destroying the collection of traditions made in his time saying "Mishna like the Mishna of the Jews!" (Ibn Saad)

The question now arises, what was the good, what was the wisdom in a Revelation of this sort, in giving a Book which to all appearance is so unsatisfactory, so imperfect in everything The answer is you have only to blame yourselves for using a thing beyond the purpose it was originally meant to serve It was never designed to make us independent of the Prophet and the Imams for guidance The purpose for which it was revealed, the requirement for which it was given to us and so much urged upon us, was something quite different It was not one thing but many, and we will do well to consider them

(1) The first and immediate purpose of the Holy Revelation was to provide a lasting standing miracle for the Prophet. We have seen sufficient proofs of this in preceding chapters.

(2) Its chief purpose for the purpose of guidance was to provide an incorruptible book for testing the accuracy of the reported teachings of the Prophet and the Imams in places and times where they may themselves be not available The reports of these teachings must necessarily come to us through fallible men There might be, and have been, hundreds of lies invented, and some might be such that may radically affect the cardinal doctrines of faith. Thus like the Christians the Mohammedans might also in time come to regard the Prophet as God or Son of God, relying on irresponsible traditions that such was his teaching There was no immunity against misrepresentations of any kind. Similarly a number of cardinal teachings of Islam might have come to be rejected by

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men to whom they are unpalatable. Thus, many at the present day would, if they could, deny that *Jehad* was ever taught by the Prophet. Thanks for the detailed description of Heaven and Hell in the Quran, but for it many would choose to teach that they are all purely spiritual In spite of all this detail those who have a loose sense of religious responsibility try to make believe that it is all allegorical No religion in the world has escaped corruption owing to lying teachers or transmitters of tradition—not even Islam, I may say, in an absolute sense Woe to religion, then, if even Islam is not able to provide an immunity against radical errors due to fancies of the people!

Clearly nothing but an absolutely undoubtable record of teachings could have provided the immunity required And a slight reflection will show that nothing but the very peculiar conditions of the Quran could have produced a record that should remain undoubtable to the end of the world Would the early records, if they were somehow preserved, offer the necessary guarantee of their truth? The world has known enough of forgeries to place any absolute confidence in mere records And those who know how newspapers in our own day befool the whole world, publishing lies and suppressing truth, would be perhaps not very much gratified if they could get a newspaper of the times of the Prophet or the Caliphs after him. The peculiar conditions of the Quran are (1) that it is a miracle of composition If anyone were to interpolate a passage of his own between the verses or make any alterations in them the interpolation was sure to be felt We cannot impress this, but we know that even the smallest bits of Quranic phrases, used ornamentally in other compositions, are at once felt to have a peculiar lustre, not only by the learned but even by those ignorant of Arabic language who simply have made several readings of the Quran, so as to have an ear for the Divine language (2) The care with which the Quran was preserved (the whole with some, different portions with others) in writings and on the hearts of the people, so that at the time of the collection, and ever since, every verse is *mutawatir*, well-known and accepted of all, not in a general sense but down to the most insignificant letters of it

The first of these things was out of question in anything but the Divine Book The second, too, it was possible to do only with a small book of quasi-metrical kind, as the Quran is, not with all the sayings of the Prophet, for which even the most gigantic volumes should not suffice These must be left to the credit of the reporters and their transmitters who are all fallible, and one may have his own opinion about individual traditions that have come in this way It is true from various circums-

tances, of transmission and otherwise, thousands of these traditions reach a very high degree of certainty and cannot possibly be doubted, but none reach the certainty that is claimable for the Quran—at least none can approach it in point of verbal accuracy

Thus we have an incorruptible Book, even the verbal accuracy of which cannot be doubted Now the reported teachings of the Prophet in the traditions can be placed before this Book If we find any doctrines or teachings that are clearly inconsistent with those in the Quran they are to be rejected at once If they are not inconsistent but only supplement or give a greater meaning to what might appear from the surface meanings of the words in the Quran they *may be* true They may be believed or not according to their merits, credit of the reporters, harmony with other teachings and the like The more a teaching can be covered by a verse, be seen to follow from it, the more it gains in certainty

It will be seen this does not afford an effective criterion of true and false traditions There may still be many baseless traditions which after all do not, to our powers of judgment, appear inconsistent with the Quran That may be so, but they would be such as do not affect the cardinal articles of faith, and there would be no great harm if one believes them in ignorance What would it matter if a man believes that the hair of the Houris or Ghilman are after a particular fashion? But not ten thousand traditions can make a Musalman believe that Mohammed was the son of God, that fasting and prayers are only things recommended, not compulsory, and so forth That was the thing sought for, and that purpose has been most effectively achieved The religion is made *substantially* incorruptible Which other religion can compare with Islam in this respect?

(3) The Quran is so designed as to be a book that should be believed in by all This may appear a truism, but that constitutes its greatest difficulty It means that it should be a book for the learned and the unlearned alike—for men of all degrees of culture and all stages of civilization This it manages to do in this way It gives in clear words only those basic beliefs which are essential for Islam and must be believed by all, and those rules of practice in law and discipline which are sought to be the distinctive practice of the Musalmans in all places and to the end of the world Rejection of any of these cannot be tolerated, they amount to infidelity—the man can no more be called a Musalman, he will be treated as unbeliever All the rest that it seeks to teach, but it would be difficult and so cruel to impress upon all — it is adapted only to

those who have advanced some degrees in faith—it teaches by suggestions, suggestive words, peculiar forms of expression, which may be passed over by the cursory reader, but which give a world of meanings to the man who reflects The Quran is thus like the Islam it seeks to enforce It is primarily concerned with the Islam that should be the faith of all without exception The higher faith which we call *Iman* is not less important, but it is not something new or additional, it is only a further, a higher and more spiritual development of the Islam which is common to all (see note at the end of chapter 1) Those who have come into the pale of Islam and hold its beliefs with sincerity have already come to the portals of *Iman*, and for them mere suggestions may suffice

It is for this reason that while belief in one God is constantly enforced in Islam there are no clear details about the conception of God and His attributes These higher things which even the greatest philosophers would confess their inability to understand thoroughly could not well be enforced as a religion for the masses Were this done there would be continuous bloodshed among the believers about nice distinctions such as has so long been among the meek Christians of bygone ages Everyone would be declared an infidel by his neighbour who did not understand his thoughts As the Prophet says in a famous tradition "If Abuzar were to know what is in the heart of Salman (both very holy companions of the Prophet) he would kill him" This is the reason of the omission *i e* omission in plain words of these things in the Quran These things are for *Iman* (faith) not Islam This omission does not mean that those higher things are not important They are important, but they are beyond the designed scope of Quran for *full* treatment Thus it contains expressions such as "there is nothing like Him" &c which if rightly reflected upon may lead one to the right position about theism, and for the rest go to the Prophet and the Imams The accuracy of their reported teachings (if they are not available) can be tested by comparing the theistic expressions in the Quran

The same applies to the higher spiritual matters which are involved in the very conception of inspiration and without which no conception of the spiritual elevation of the Prophet is possibe A clear statement of these things is therefore out of question in the Quran Suggestive words such as "Witness over (*i e* watcher over) the prophets" are not lacking and these are sufficient For further detailed instruction the Prophet and the Imams must be approached

What to speak of the higher spiritual things the mere believing in the Prophet admits of infinite degrees and shades of belief which have

continued to our own day. Shibli, the typical Sunni writer of the present day in India claims for Omar the distinction of distinguishing between the apostolic and personal character of the Prophet, and approvingly says, "he freely disagreed with him when he thought he gave any directions only in his latter capacity." These men are certainly not to be excluded from the pale of Islam.

Imamate is not an article of belief for Islam, it is wholly an article of faith for *Iman*, and as such clear statements about the Prophet's succession cannot be expected in the Quran It is a matter requiring as much spirituality as the higher faith in prophets, and further in certain matters, the temporal implications of it, it requires not only complete subjugation but entire surrender of all self-interests, and the instincts of man naturally revolt against them But being so very important, as essential for *Iman* as the higher faith in the Prophet himself, there are a number of very clear verses chiefly bearing on the root-principle, Wilayet, 'Loving attachment,' which makes the importance of it clear to the least reflecting Remembering that the doctrine is meant only for those who have sincere faith in the Prophet, and have real attachment to him as such, it is not too much to expect that they would conscientiously reflect over the words of God, and not try to get away by means of loose interpretations, which of course are everywhere possible Instances will repeatedly come in my commentary, one or two elsewhere in this Introduction

(4) It is designed to serve as testimony for the prophets Belief in the prophets is one of the cardinal principles of Islam, yet from the meagre, extremely unreliable and (to some extent certainly) grossly corrupted accounts we have of them in the Bible &c we can in first place not be certain of their existence at all—existence of old prophets at least, as Noah, Abraham &c to say nothing of Adam &c, has been questioned as everyone knows—and even if we believe in the existence of some, as Moses and the later prophets, we cannot be sure that they were really prophets, on the other hand from the accounts we have of them we are likely to believe that they had grossly anthropomorphic ideas of God, and as to moral character we should be ashamed to speak of some of them as holy men at all These details are everywhere available and the reader will excuse us wasting our time on it Suffice it to say that this is such an established thing that protestant Christians consider it one of the grounds of the sanctity of the old testament Literature that it shows that the revelation of God to mankind was progressive according to their cultural development See Dummellow's or any commentary on the Holy Bible. The Quran was meant to give the most outspoken lie to this.

The prophets who were commissioned to teach to the people were, all of them, prophets in the fullest sense of the word, and they taught the same doctrines as are found in Islam, and as to character they were all sinless—all sins or faults of character imputed to them are simply false. To give permanence to this cardinal doctrine of Islam is one of the aims of the Holy Quran

Yet the Quran is not meant to be a book of history It does not mention all the prophets, openly says it does not, it only mentions them when of use for admonition to the people, or for consolation to the Prophet, or for serving as examples of things to occur in the history of the Prophet or Islam The first of these purposes (admonition) explains why it was only the prophets familiarly known to the people that are mentioned, examples of the last are, the condemnation of the son of Noah and the wife of Lot, the praise of the wife of Pharoah, the long life of Our Lord Jesus and the Sleepers of the Cave &c Any one who knows something of the dissensions that have been agitating Muslim theologians owing to sentimental reasons will see the incalculable use of bearing in mind these things in the history of the old prophets or in their connection Moses' history is so repeatedly recounted and with so much detail as he was the prototype of the Prophet in his apostolic career, and the history and religious development of the Musalmans was to follow *exactly* the footsteps of Moses' people.

(5) The Quran is not designed to give a complete history of the Prophet, out of it it selects things which it is necessary for men to remember about him, so as to form a right conception of him, as belief in him is one of the cardinal principles of Islam. In these it keeps a prophetic eye on the requirements of later times We have seen that but for the Quran the Musalmans were apt to come to regard him as something of a divinity How much this is true will appear from the fact that, though precluded in the case of the Prophet, some have come to regard Our Lord Ali as the Diety This nasty heresy was started in the lifetime of Our Lord himself, and inspite of his own persecution of it has continued to our own day It was necessary to remember that he was a mere man as any of us, though in saying this we mean much like as if we were to say (rightly enough) that Issac Newton was a mere animal, as any donkey or swine It was to give to this world that higher conception of man that the Prophet was sent down to us. In short he was both the friend and the humblest slave of God.

Even those who duly regard him as below God are apt to have grossly exaggerated misconceptions about his capicities, ignoring the

limitations that were put upon him by the design and nature of the work that he was sent to do He was not sent to convert men by exercise of spiritual force, or to use any miraculous powers for achieving his objects. All this is clearly stated, rather emphasised in the Quran Yet it is constantly forgotten more or less, and the Sunnis fondly try to believe that all who came into contact with him as Musalmans (if not as infidels) were miraculously changed from beasts to—not men but—angels And the Prophet's wives! Who can for a moment think that they could retain anything of evil about them? So some facts as the marriage with Zeinab, behaviour with Mary the Copt &c many would from sentimental reasons come to reject at once as false So revelations bearing on such things were needed. They like those referred to at the end of (4) above are of inestimable value for settling sectarian differences which is one of the most important purposes of the book of God, see Surah 2 209 They all have bearing on faith, *Iman*, if not on *Islam* Were it not for these historical verses God only knows what would have become of Islam by this time.

This design of selecting only those things in the life of the Prophet which were indispensable for right belief among the Musalmans looking to the tendencies of the people, is the reason why so very few miracles of the Prophet are mentioned in the Quran. The Musalmans were in no fear of forgetting these, on the contrary the natural tendency was to exaggerate them, to publish hundreds of baseless tales of that kind, which if believed, would lead one to suppose that a state of *Kafshe Ghata* (Uplifting of the Veil) had come on By no possibility could a man doubt that the Prophet was truly sent of God A corrective was needed in this direction. So verses like 17 92-95 abound in the Quran, which show that even in the case of challenge miracles *of the kind which the infidels wanted*—those which would remove the veil altogether, were refused to be displayed See note on Surah 2 112.

(6). In matters of law and discipline only some directions are given in detail to show that scrupulous regard to formed and established practice was desired The directions could not be changed from time to time, or according to the fancies of the people The ablutions before the prayers must be done in rigidly the same simple, easy way as is directed, bathing in the Indian ocean would not be sufficient So the shares of inheritance and other such things are to be taken as rigidly fixed—however the social conditions may change these must be followed exactly as laid down —not only in the Quran but in the teachings of the Prophet as well—for the Quran, by the few examples of detailed directions seeks only to

impress the importance of this. This inflexibility has been considered a matter of reproach of Islam; but it is really one of its excellences as a religion It ignores nothing that can be of value. Some provision must be made for uniformity of practice as a visible embodiment of the unity of Islam and further of historical continuity from one age to another It may be that in very much altered conditions of society some regulations may appear inconvenient, but the historical traditions must be kept up at all costs There is a spirit of obedience in this which is worth any inconvenience borne for it And further these observances would of themselves serve to prevent the society from altering very much, and the change will usually be found on close examination to be a disadvantage.

In this matter also there appears something of prophetic insight into the tendencies of later ages, similar to what we have spoken of in the (5th) above For nearly all the directions have been upset by some leaders of the popular churches owing to sentimental reasons or grounds of expediency The *Wuzu* (ablutions before prayers), the *Muta* form of marriage, the combining of *Umrah* with *Hajj* are notorious examples.

VIII. The interpretation of the Quran.

Section 1

In considering the interpretation of the Quran we have first to make an obvious remark which, however, it is necessary to bear in mind—those who read the Quran in a translation such as ours should never forget it. No translation can be a true complete translation of the thoughts expressed in the original There is no word which has not a number of associations by way of connotation which the equivalent words in other languages have not, and thus the sense as read in a translation is often not exactly like, and often not half of, what it means in the original. Thus *Rabb* which connotes the idea of nourishing and looking after the development or increasing good of the creation is sadly crippled when translated Lord Then many words have a number of closely allied senses, and the effect on the reader or hearer when he comes across these words is the sum-total of all these allied meanings, some being more prominent in the mind than the others Thus *zulm* may mean sin, oppression, injustice, transgression &c If we were to deal with these shades of meaning in our English commentary we would obviously never be done So it is only in a few places, where it appeared very necessary to do so, that we have pointed out the fuller significance of the original word, and in some places have cited the original word in brackets It is one of the literary characteristics of the Quran that out of the hundreds of equivalents that could be found in the prolific Arabic tongue, it always selects the word most full of suggestions, so that the words continue to emanate meanings like radium

Apart from this difficulty which occurs only to those who read in a translation, there are difficulties, more or less serious, which occur to those also who read in the original Arabic, like Sanskrit, is a very prolific language, and has been made still more so by lexicographers. If you take one of the bigger lexicons as the Qamus, you will find against every word, even one most commonly in use, a whole host of meanings, only some of which can be called very allied and implying one another There are etymological senses, transferred senses, figurative senses, many of which not generally in use, or only used in special connections, besides a number of quite unusual, rare, wholly unused senses which it would never be justifiable to use those words in These lots of meanings give rise to a not an inconsiderable amount of discussion about the meanings of verses, and it is mainly with these that the vast majority of the popular (chiefly Sunni) commentaries are full. There is a great deal of

erudition shown, all sorts of possible or impossible meanings are suggested as possible, but it is only commonsense that gives preference to one over the other. It is for this show of learning that these voluminous writers are so much admired No one who has not read these commentaries can form any idea of the extent these annoying differences go. There are few verses that are not subjected to these differences.

Commonsense is indeed sufficient to decide in all these things The principle should be to accept the plainest sense of the passage—the sense that would occur to every man on the first hearing of the words All rare, unusual senses of words should be discarded once for all The words should be taken in the senses most prevalent in common language, transferred and figurative senses can be allowed only where there is clear indication from the context that the words are used in the passage in these and *not* the ordinary senses The same applies to differences created by the extremely loose grammatical structure of the Arabic language. There are only a few grammatical forms which suffice for all the needs of human speech There is hardly a particle which may not be used to devote anything desired This too gives occupation to those who wish to fill their volumes with it, and thereby pass for learned men

The occasions for these differences would have been fewer than they are if the Quran had been in the form of a connected narrative or strictly scientific discourse, but the Quran is not such, even where there is some sort of connected narrative much is left out, for the Quran is never meant to be read by itself without the help of its expositors That, however, great as these difficulties might appear to those not conversant with the Arabic language, these difficulties, great or small, are not considerable to commonsense, appears from the fact that there have been hundreds of translations made by Muslims and non-Muslims, and they all substantially agree—hardly any differences of importance are ever observed, only the Ahmadi commentator who has a special, never-heard of teaching of Islam to elicit from the Quran, disagrees with them all, availing of rare, unusual meanings or even possible figurative uses of words or the looseness of Arabic grammar. The unsophisticated readers of the Quran, whether in the East or the West rarely disagree.

This point is thus clear—no rare, unusual meanings of words should ever be admitted There would be no demurrer to this except from the side of the Ahmadi sect, or those whose interest it is to make Islam square with the *so-called* Rationalism of the present day. This, however, does not mean that, by reference to etymologies or senses lost sight of, the

peculiar applicability of a certain word or its hinting to a certain truth, possible scientific truth not known in the day, might not be argued. We cannot pause to give illustrations as it would entail a deal of explanatory matter, but instances of these will come from time to time in the commentary.

The next thing which though equally obvious is equally necessary to insist on, is that within reasonable bounds which commonsense can easily decide, the Quran should be taken as plain prose, not high-flown poetry. Passages should be understood in their simple literal sense unless it can be shown that they are wholly inadmissible In these cases it is not sufficient that the ordinary literal senses are very unreasonable, for what we regard as unreasonable may be reasonable from a higher view of things which we have not attained to Up to the nineteenth century everybody would have thought that to talk of the weight of light was to talk pure nonsense But this is now an established scientific truth So in philosophy "unconscious psychical states" appears a contradiction in terms, but it is now an acknowleged reality, and philosophers see they must somehow explain it Moreover the point on which unbelievers are at issue with us is whether the author of the Quran was reasonable, at all So it is idle to take that plea before them The way to show the inadmissibility of a literal meaning of any passage is to show its utter inconsistency with other clear passages of the Quran or well-authenticated teachings of the Prophet and the Imams, for it is through them we have got the Quran and they are its divine expositors It is very desirable that we should have very distinct teachings of theirs about such expressions So we should be able to show that they were not understood in that crude literal sense in the earliest ages (and if there are differences, as may naturally be from the historical conditions those days) by some Musalmans at least

The above remarks will show what our view would be on the half-expressed surmises of those who would be glad to believe that some of the narratives in the Quran, such as those of Adam and the Seven Sleepers of the Cave, are more of allegories than facts We know this view absolves them from the undertaking to prove things which it is difficult to prove We sympathise with them for their trying to get away from difficulties which appear to them insuperable, but for ourselves we cannot take up a position without a very clear basis for it Those who can conscientiously believe that the Prophet took these things in the same light that they do and taught the same view of them to the people, are welcome to do so. We are not unconscious of the difficulties, we know that with the very

meagre sources at our disposal, it is not possible for us to unearth and lay bare all the truths of the past before the eyes of the sceptical, but we would perfer to acknowledge that rather than make the Prophet or the Quran say what we do not see they say.

Again remembering that the Quran is given to the world as the Word of God, every word in the Revelation must be taken to be most seriously meant It will not do to take a general sense from the general import of the passage and leave the actual words as of no consequence. Thus when God says in 2 148 that 'Wheresoever ye be God will bring you together' this does mean that, not a mere national unity of Musalmans. So when God speaks of the Prophet as Witness (*Shahid*) over all other prophets it means that he is witness in the truest sense of the word If people duly reflect over the words used in the Quran, higher spiritual meanings will be revealed which may be missed at first sight We will come to this again later

From words we pass to peculiarities of expression—peculiar forms of expression which give a lot of trouble to commentators are of frequent occurrence in the Quran When a master of style and composition uses a peculiar expression that nobody else would use, there must be some purpose, some meaning in it It must be to suggest some meaning of a higher character Thus in 16 121 Abraham is said to be a people (*Ummat*) In Surah 37 after narrating the miraculous escape of Ishmael from immolation we read 'We have spared him for a great sacrifice And we have left (that) *on him* in the after ages" We cannot pause to explain the higher spiritual truths that explain these peculiar forms of expression. They would naturally suggest themselves to the reader if he cares to ponder and reflect The latter verse we have cited here is really a prophecy for the great slaughter at Karbala

It is needless to say that in every case, and particularly in cases of difficulty, the meaning of words or implications of words explained by the Prophet (and the Imams) should be accepted Thus out of the number of significations of the word *Samad* that explained by the Prophet 'He to whom all turn for their wants,' is to be preferred Bokharee says that the Prophet having called out to a man who was saying his prayers the man did not reply, but the Prophet explained to him that 8 24 was general and applies to all cases

Then have to remember the appropriation of words and phrases to particular senses, and these we can know only from history The most well-known case is that of *Salat* (prayers prescribed in Islam). It originally

means praying *Zacat*, the poor rate, means purification But there are other cases which but for their historical notriety might be (and by many sought to be) easily forgotten In 8 42 describing the *Khums* or 20 % tax on gains God says it is for God, the Prophet, the nearest of kin (*zul qurba*) &c The words might appear to mean personal relations of the payer, but from history we know it was the Prophet's relations that is meant here So in 42 22 we read 'say I ask no recompense for this (*i. e* my work) except that ye love (my) relations *Qurba*' The 'my' is omitted But we know from the consensus of all, Sunni and Shia alike, that it was the Prophet's and none but the Prophet's relations that are meant here Indeed the Prophet could not have asked for any recompense His only recompense was that people should act up to the spirit and letter of his teachings, so what he was directed to ask for in this way must be that which, though apparently personal, was tantamount to the whole of his teaching, without which the observance of his directions becomes a nullity The same word is used in the same vague way in 17 49, but we know that on the revelation of this verse the Prophet gave away his lands of Fidak to his daughter (Ro vzatul Ahbab) The purpose of keeping these expressions vague seems to be to try the faith of the Musalmans They can be no *true* Musalmans if they blindfold their eyes to facts of history, though by *tawil*, they can remain *socially* as Musalmans

Generally it may be said that verses meant for Musalmans their duties &c are purposely left vague and undefined The Musalmans having entered the portals of faith, the least that is to be expected of them is that that they should have some conscience, some sense of duty, some desire to search for truth and willingness to accept, it from which ever source it may be forthcoming They should not insist on having everything laid down clearly for them in the book of God Thus the five daily prayers are enjoined but nothing is said about its prescribed form, *zacat* is enjoined but nothing is said about its rate We have had occasion to discuss on this important principle in ch VII above This will explain how it is that sometimes the plainest verses are left vague and require to be interpreted in the light of other knowledge or by due reflection on the indications in the verses themselves or other such means of ascertaining the truth The verses we have cited in the previous paragraph may also be taken as instances of this Another instance is 'O ye who believe, obey God and obey the Prophet and those in authority (*Ulul amr*) among you' ( ) Clearly these 'those in authority' must be such that obedience to them should be as binding as that of God and the Prophet themselves, there should be no fear of the commands of one conflicting with those of others; in short the *Ulul amr* must be infallible. The selec-

tion of the word having a vast amount of significance (which we cannot discuss here) in preference to such ordinary words as *Hukkam* &c. shows that some special men having an indefinite amount of authority are meant Other considerations also make it clear that certainly it is not the mere temporal rulers that are meant here

The same may be said of what may be called the generalising principle adopted throughout in the Quran It is well known that a number of verses were revealed in praise or condemnation of certain individuals. But in the revelation the names are omitted, the conduct only is praised or blamed, and that too often in a very general way making the verses apparently no more than exhortations to virtue or admonitions against vice At first sight this may be considered deplorable, but this is the general practice and there is incalculable wisdom in it The contrary would have led to envy and disgust of each other among Musalmans, misgivings of partiality on the part of the Prophet among the ignorant newly converted folk, and possibly many of these verses would in time come to be disputed and might eventually be lost to the world in the collection And all this further to give the impression that the verses were merely personal, and thus to lose the great purpose of the revelation which was to exhort men to virtue assuring them that they can approach those admired to any degree by following their example and further by uniting themselves spiritually with them in love, thereby becoming to some extent partakers in the honour of the revelation And the contrary of course in the case of those condemned.

However, it is not right that all such verses are so completely generalised that in the words no trace is to be found of those who have occasioned the revelation In many cases very clear traces are left for those who have eyes, rather the willingness to see Thus in 5 60 we have 'your guardian Lord (*Wali*) is only God and His Prophet and those who believe, those who set up prayers and pay *zakat* while they are bowing (in prayers)" The last words clearly show that they allude to some particular incident, and we get it not only in Shia but Sunni commentaries as well.

In the end I wish to draw attention to some things of general application The Prophet is the representative of his people Much of the address meant for the people is made apparently to the Prophet. Thus in 17 : 41. "Do not thou call on any other god with God, or thou wilt be thrown in Hell, despised, abased" on in 39 · 65. "If thou joinest other gods with God thy works will be made null and void." One pecu-

liar address is in Surah Talaq 65 . 1 "O thou the Prophet if ye divorce women" The people are clearly addressed (in the plural) but the address begins with 'O thou the Prophet' This is what Our Lord Jaferel Sadiq says 'God has sent His Apostle with *Iyyaka aani wa asmai ya jarah* 'To thee I address but hear thou O neighbour.'

This representativeness of the Prophet for his people is more real spiritually than may appear at first sight Those who believe in him, the more they get advanced in faith and attachment to him the more they come into real spiritual union with his own exalted soul The relation becomes as vital as that of the head in the physical body The Prophet feels the burden of our sins as if they were his and due to his shortcoming and repents for them as such And so we are rewarded through him in case of virtues and pardoned through him in case of vices It is this which explains passages such as that in Surah 48 1 which apparently speak of the pardoning of his sins past and future See the tradition of Our Lord Jaferel Sadiq on this verse in Qummis Comm It was a perversion of this spiritual truth that led to the doctrine of Atonement among Christians.

SECTION 2

"He it is who hath sent down unto thee the Book in which there are *Muhkamat* (plain, well-determined in meaning) verses—these are the mother *i e* the principal matter) of the Book and there are others which are *Mutashabihat* (dubious, differently interpretable) Now those in whose hearts there is crookedness—they go after that which is dubious therein in desire of mischief (*fitnah*) and in desire of interpretation (*Tawil*) But none knows the interpretation there of but God and those well-rooted in knowledge They say we believe in it—all is from the side of Our Lord and none take the lesson except those of understanding" Surah 3 5

Here the Quran proclaims that besides the plain passages which anybody might understand with fair amount of judgment and discretion, there are other passages which it is hopeless for man, whatever his genius or erudition, to understand rightly, or at least to be sure that his interpretation is the right one which is intended by God Who can presume to regard himself as *well-rooted* in knowledge? The most one can do is to make guesses, to maintain them, if one do so at all, strictly tentatively. Such are *pre-eminently* the letters (*Hurufe Muqattaat*) in the beginning of various Surahs, which are simply unintelligible, the strange oaths and other mysterious utterances such as 'By fig tree and the olive, and the mount of Sinae and this town of security' with which the early Surahs are full. This implies in effect there are some portions of the

Quran which are not meant for ordinary men at all. We cannot make out any sense out of them, but yet they were revealed and given to us for our reading which shows that they are somehow meant for our instruction or spiritual illumination What does this mean but that along with the revelation there were divine expositors, notably the Prophet himself, who could not be dispensed with for completion of religious instruction at least These passages were not meant for the use of the people directly They were meant for initiates only and people were required to refer to them for their exposition, or rather as it might appear for spiritual illumination in their connection It is foolish to take the passage as the Sunnis do meaning that they were not meant to be understood of men at all, for what was the use of their revelation at all, except possibly as a trial for the faith of believers? (To make the passage mean that they make a pause after 'except God') The passage really makes necessary the real existence of some divine expositors besides the Prophet himself (notice the plural used) The word used is *well-rooted in knowledge* Attention to these words will make the character of the men clear to the point of disclosing their identity The Prophet is the Alpha and Omega of all knowledge, all spirituality Those 'well-rooted in knowledge' are those having the closest spiritual union with the Holy Prophet

Two questions remain One is why these mystical passages and expressions at all? What is the use of this? The answer is firstly that they may relate to things which are inexpressible in words at all. The mass of mankind have no spirituality at all—no capacity to understand, or say rather, realize the higher spiritual truths So language which is only a product of their mental development is incapable even to express the higher spiritual ideas So instruction about these higher things can only be from mind to mind in a spiritual manner The second thing is that though the things might themselves be intelligible, if clearly explained in words, yet for other advantages of it God may in his Infinite wisdom choose to insist that we shall learn from His appointed teachers and not directly from Him And it would appear that not only these obscure passages, but the whole of the Quran is so designed that for a conscientious study one is compelled to look for the Prophet's and the Imams' exposition of it

The other question that remains is how that which is so very obscure, sometimes quite intelligible to us is perfectly clear and intelligible to these initiates, these well-rooted in knowledge The answer is firstly that Revelation was something very different to the psychical communications of the spiritualists. In these the mind of the recipient has to be

kept perfectly blank, else the communication may not be faithfully received. In the case of Revelation the mind of the Prophet is already filled with thoughts and the Revelation is generally in response to these thoughts A mere word may signify something in connection with these thoughts and might set on a new role of thoughts, whereas without these connections that same word may mean simply nothing Everybody knows of this in common speech. So the Prophet and those who are in spiritual union with Him and receive light directly from him are in a position to know a significance of words and the role of thoughts they lead to, which are simply non-existent for us The other thing is that Revelation was always attended with a Light, a spiritual illumination This the connected light, was as much a revelation as the words that have alone come down to us The things expressed in the spiritual light were surely connected with, of a piece with, the meanings that the words hold, but debarred from that supplement as we are there might remain little or nothing of significance for us in the mere words that remain Availing of instruction from those who have received the Revelation we may get something of the whole Revelation as it was

These remarks may apply also to many verses which on the surface appear plain in that they appear to convey a distinct perfectly intelligible sense There may be remote hidden meanings behind them as well and we need not be surprised if we find any such in the traditions It is for this reason that in another place (39 23) the Quran appears to say that it is, the whole of it, *Kitaban Mutashabihan*, a book obscure and allegorical, and in yet another place it says it is a book wherein the verses are well determined (*Uhkimat ayatuhu*) and then detailed (11 1) The fact is that the plain and the obscure or allegorical in the Quran is relative to the capacity of those who read it There are some to whom every verse is plain and some to whom the plainest verses give occasion for a lot of discussion as anybody can see from the gigantic commentaries in which there hardly appears a single verse about which there has not been a difference of opinion It is right to say that as is so common with the verses of the Quran in the case of these last verses, other interpretations of the root words *Hukm* and *tashabuh* have been suggested, and so we may not insist that these are the only possible ones though they are admittedly the most probable and apparent This discussion will come in the notes on the verses concerned

To sum up the following kinds of verses may be taken to be *more or less Motashabih*, obscure, allegorical or generally speaking admitting of other interpretations beyond the plain literal senses of the words.

1 Quite obscure verses such as the quite mysterious ones we have been dealing with The traditions of the Prophet and the Imams tell us what these verses really refer to.

2 Verses that if taken literally would imply an anthropomorphic conception of God Thus "And thy Lord came and the angels in rows" (89 23), "The Merciful sat on the Throne" "God has not yet known" &c All these expressions are poetical and in fact such language could hardly be always avoided even in a rigorously scientific discourse In a book that sought to appeal to emotions scrupulousness in such things would be singularly out of place And it would be all the more unnecessary as the Imams were careful to teach the true conception of God and the necessary qualifications when such words are used in the Quran, as shown already in this Introduction and will appear further in notes on different verses chiefly verse 2 255

The same observations have to be made about passages in which God speaks as if He wilfully causes men to go to sin and error There are hundreds of such passages in the Quran In all these places God identifies Himself with the agencies, the forces He has started which are all holy and for good See the essay on the problem of evil by Sir Oliver Lodge in his Reason and Belief

This way of identifying Himself with His agencies which are His creatures is one of the peculiarities of the Holy word and should never be lost sight of That has led to many passages which on the surface seem to speak of God but in reality it is some of His Exalted creatures that are spoken of Thus we read "The earth will be made luminous with the light of its Lord" Here the Lord is not God but the Imam In the same way we are told that God is the Light of Heavens and Earth' (24 35) and then the light is compared as a lamp in a globe of glass placed in a niche. The commentators say that by the comparison it is not God Himself but the Holy Prophet that is meant and the succeeding verse made this clear These expressions may be truly applied of God and the interpretation would not be wrong He is the true cause of those things and so in a figurative way all such passages are applicable to Him. The same considerations help to explain the manifestation of Divine glory on Mount Sinai at which Moses fell stunned This manifestation, whatever it was, was a creature of God God, as such, is incapable of manifestation in any way, else it would make Him conditioned and finite. In the traditions we find Our Lord Ali saying that it was he in his pre-existent state that appeared as fire to Moses and it was his splendour that had covered

Mount Sinæ. In all these places God identifies Himself with His holy agencies. Whatever he does he does through His agents, and whatever they do He does.

Thus there is a reason beyond the use of mere figures of speech why such figurative expressions abound in the Quran Allama Bursi has in his Masharıqul Anwar an excellent dissertation on his subject in which he shows that in most places where *Rabb* (Lord) is spoken of as having done a certain thing it was actually done physically by the Holy prophets and the Imams in their pre-existent state or higher spiritual planes of being. Thus there is a higher point of view from which all may be *Muhkam*.

(*c*) All the descriptions of angels and the spiritual world, Heaven and Hell are more or less *Mutashabih* (doubtful), because these higher realities of another world can by no possibility be expressed in human language, which takes its terms from the things in this mundane life. However analogous they may be, there must be important differences and it would be a great error to forget this Those who yeild to the tendency of the mind to regard itself as the measure of all things and to imagine that there can be nothing in heaven and earth but what is dreamt of in our philosophy seek to take all as allegorical, but this extreme view is utterly wrong, Were it so the Prophet and the Imams who were so careful to explain the corrections to be applied to the figurative language used in the case of God, His attributes &c, should have done so to some extent in the case of these also Moreover granting that the use of a metaphor here and there, occasionally, is permissible, the language of the Quran and the traditions should have been not systematically so, and there should certainly not have been such detailed descriptions. So the correct position is that these things are of a character some way analogous to the earthly description we find in the accounts of them

The rest may be taken as plain , but some divines restrict the term *Muhkamat* to those verses only which give legal directions about lawful or unlawful things, cardinal doctrines of Islam, and such like things All the others they place in the category of *Mutashabihat*, and their view is right in that in most of them there is room for, and actually there has been, difference of opinion, and many of these are capable of bearing higher senses or possibly hidden spiritual meanings beyond the surface meanings of the words.

This leads us to a very important point already hinted at concerning the right understanding of the Quran There is a world of difference between taking the words of the Quran as coming from God and taking them as spoken by an ordinary man. God must mean every word of it

seriously, very seriously, and in the deepest and highest sense of it. Thus Sura 1 5 which we have rendered 'Guide thus thou on the right path' and supplemented with a lot of explanation, we have seen translated as 'show us the right way' (Bilgrami) which is a quite correct translation as far as the words go, but does not convey one hundredth part of the meaning Guidance sought of God must be complete guidance with grace for practice and the right path must be nothing short of truth and spirituality in the most complete sense So in 48 29 we read 'Mohammed the Apostle of God and those *with* him, hard on infidels, but merciful among themselves Thou seet them bowing, prostrating' &c Hundreds of thousands of times has this passage been lovingly recited to us as a divine testimony to the holiness of the companions of the Prophet in general Unfortunately not a hundred thousand of such verses can shaken our belief about the facts of history The '*with*' is not sufficiently considered It is not certainly a mere physical crowding round that is meant here, but something truly spiritual So there is much more than the surface meaning in the command, '*Be with* the *truthful*' Every word must be thoroughly considered and given its due weight If that is done these three simple words would suffice to settle the Shia and Sunni differences for ever

This principle of rightly reflecting upon words will explain many comments of the Prophet and the Imams which at first sight excite wonder as hardly warranted by the words themselves Thus in 12 108 we read "On true perception (*Basiratin*) and I and he who follows me" The traditions say 'he who follows' here refers to Our Lord Ali, the implication being that others are not, at least in the full sense of the words The thing is there are degrees of *Basirat* and of following In a loose sense of the words every one can claim to be a follower and to have perception of the Truth, but in a full and true sense none but the Holy Imams can be said to have truly followed the Prophet and certainly none can be said to have a true direct perception of the Divine truths in all their completeness Hundreds of such passages will come before us in our commentary Sell in the Appendix he has attached to his Lives of the Twelve Imams has given a long list of such comments and thinks them all to be fanciful inventions for sectarian purposes The above considerations will suffice to show that they are necessary truths, if I may use the word, that is taking the Quran to be really a word of God I have tried to discuss everyone of these verses and others which he has omitted in his commentary

This is the fundamental principle of what is called *Butune Ayat* (the hidden and more spiritual meanings behind the surface meanings of the words) It is said in the traditions that there are or might be seventy

different meanings behind the surface meanings. Further, some of these may be connected with the occasion of the revelation, thoughts passing in the mind of the Prophet at the time of revelation, which it is very difficult for us to know to day So in some cases owing to want of connection the hidden meanings as we find in the traditions of the Imams may appear very strange and we may be totally at a loss to see how to arrive at them But there are not very many of these instances

One thing more in this connection might be said To know a passage fully it is requisite to know the mind of the speaker or writer at the time the words came from him The words may not express all his thoughts, but those thoughts are connected with the thoughts he expresses and often leave their impression on his modes of expression So it is alway possible to judge of the moods of mind from the manner of expression, and general character from style &c Many claim (and sufficiently vindicate their claim) to know the temperament, character &c of a man from his hand-writing Well, these things though not part of the meaning of the passage, written or spoken, are surely connected with it and to know the passage fully is to know all these remote things in its connection That may explain some of the comments for which there might appear no sufficient warrant in the words themselves God when He praises a course of action, such as charity, righteousness &c, or condemns another, such a lying, hypocrisy &c, knows all who deserve the praise or condemnation as the case may be In this the greatest prominence must be to those who greatest deserve this praise or condemnation This being vitally connected with the subject of the Revelation is, as it were, a side aspect of it, and no one can be said to know the Revelation fully unless he knows something of it Similarly when an event, say from the history of the prophets, is described, God surely has in His knowledge events that are similar to it or opposed to it in the history of Musalmans, and it is the chief thing there, for it is for their admonition that the Quran has been revealed That too therefore is a part of the meaning of these verses All these things will explain the saying of the Imams that "a third of the Quran is revealed about us, and about our enemies, a third is about examples and parables, the rest is about duties and lawful and unlawful things."

This is the highest we can reach in the study of the Quran This is a stage of spiritual illumination in which everything appears to have reference to the Holy Prophet and the Imams All teachings given, all duties imposed appear to be meant merely to serve as preparations for this which is the very essence of faith.

IX. Collation of the Quran.

Section 1.

The question that requires discussion in connection with the collation and redaction of the Quran is not the integrity of what of the Quran we have before us—that is admitted on all hands, by all sects of Islam, even by non-Muslim critics—but whether it is the whole of the Revelation as it was given to the Prophet, and supposing it appears that some portions were lost whether they were considerable or very material, also whether the arrangement of verses in Surahs is the same or very nearly the same as it was directed and followed by the Prophet.

All these are very difficult questions to settle and though the majority of the Shia divines are at one with the current belief of the Sunnis *i. e.* in the complete integrity of the Quran, both qualitative and quantitative, if I may use the word, controversies among the Sunnis and Shias on these points have been raging and have filled volumes of Islamic literature.

Before we enter upon these questions it is necessary to inform the reader that the accounts of the collation of the Quran are all from Sunni sources The Shia sources give very meagre information. The reason is it was all the business of the Sunnis, their Caliphs and Sahabas And usually, too, they say very little about the Caliphs, and their colleagues. All the information which makes them the unpleasant subject of Shia and Sunni controversies is derided wholly from Sunni sources All that is said here, all the sources and authorities that are mentioned here, should be taken to be Sunni unless it is specifically stated that the information comes from Shia sources.

First we have to deal with the question whether the Quran remained in an entire, unimpaired state in the days of the Prophet Were there no changes in the revelations themselves? The Sunni traditions seem to show that there were additions or corrections made to verses, or verses once revealed were cancelled and replaced by others The instance of addition is this. It is said that in the verse enjoining fasting to begin from the first streak of dawn in the morning the words are "you may eat and drink till the black thread is clearly distinguished to you from the white thread" Some Sahabas thought it meant actually distinguishing the colours in the darkness of the night and kept black and white threads for the purpose. The Prophet hearing of this, the words 'of the dawn' were further revealed. I see nothing of significance in this. The book was

after all a Living Book and the Prophet was not a mere recipient of communications from beyond, verses were revealed in response to thoughts passing in his mind.

For alterations in the Quran the only evidence we have is *the belief* that when any commandment was changed and replaced by another the obsolete verse was sometimes removed and the new one put in its place It was for this reason that in praise of Abdullah' bn Masud it was said that being present at the time of the Prophet's reading the Quran to Gabriel in his last year he knew all the latest additions and corrections So there is a report to the effect that when Othman was making his recension of the Quran Ibn Abbas asked him why he left a certain verse in the Quran when he knew that it was abrogated But Othman refused to interfere with the text From question of Ibn Abbas it may be inferred that there was a practice removing the abrogated verses from the Quran in the time of the Prophet, otherwise he would not have thought of such a thing Surely much cannot be said for certain from the mainly inferential matters as the above, but I say that there is nothing impossible in it On the contrary looking to the conditions of the time, Musalmans spread all over the country, with no good system of up-to-date information with them, and certainly not possessing complete up-to-date copies of the Quran with them, it was but judicious that obsolete verses which were no more required to be acted upon and had other commandments instead should be discarded from public recital, so that persons who had not heard of the new commandments should not continue the old practice, on the contrary being sure according to 2 106 that new verses must have been revealed in place of those thus omitted would naturally enquire about them. Only those abrogated versese were retained which were not wholly inconsistent with each other, and the older can still be regarded as commendatory if not obligatory, or the new revelation meant only a concession or reduction of the burden, or possibly there was some reason to be sure that the new verse would be generally known and acted upon. This, however, does not mean that in a complete record of revelations, such as the Quran should be, these omitted portions should not duly included This appears to be the opinion of Obay' bn Kaab if the substance of a report from Katibul Waqidi which Sir William Muir gives as follows in his usual way is substantially correct "Omar praised Obay Ibn Kaab, and said, 'That he was the most perfect reader of the Quran' 'We indeed' 'he added,' 'are in the habit of omitting some portions included by Obay in his recitation, for Obay is wont to affirm, I heard the Prophet saying so and I omit not a single word entered in the Quran

by the Prophet · whereas the fact is that parts of the book were revealed in absence of Obay), which cancel or alter some of the verses which he repeats " I am sorry I have not been able to verify this from the original. Syed Ahmad Khan disputes it, but he appears to do it on the authority of a very similar report in Bokhari, but which turns out to have a very different implication.

In short so far as the removing of abrogated passages from public recital is concerned I do not see any harm in it, rather think it was for good as they related only to law, discipline or ritual. Naturally this would be the case chiefly in Medina Surahs in which it is that these commandments are principally found But many verses which are placed in Medina Surahs are, and many others which though not definitely known to be such might be, Meccan. Indeed it would be strange to suppose that for thirteen years Musalmans had no law or ritual whatever, or that all directions in that long period were based only on general inspiration, and no verses whether of the *Wahye Matloo* or *Ghaire Matloo* kind were ever revealed about them. If during the ten years of Medina period there arose some occasions for the change of directions it is not impossible that one or two might also have arisen in the Meccan period. So it is not strange that we find some trace of abrogation in the Meccan period as well. Thus in Surah 16 103 we read When we changed an *Ayat* (communication or verse) in place of another and God knowest best what He revealeth the unbeliever said Thou art only a liar, Nay many of them know not ' The word *Ayat* is susceptible of two meanings It may mean a commandment or a verse of the Quran (And I would say it may mean a passage or verse of the *Wahye Ghaire Matloo* kind, for the additional matter in Our Lord Ali's collection of the Quran, believed as said elsewhere to be of this kind is also called *Ayats* in traditions) However, granting it means a verse of the Quran itself I see no harm in it, as Islam though persecuted in Mecca itself was silently spreading in different parts of the country. Thus, to give one instance only, along with the conversion of Abuzar (only a year or so after the Prophets' announcement of his apostleship) half of his tribe embraced Islam at once through his preaching (Muslim)

NOTE —The mere changing of one commandment for another is as harmless a thing and so natural in the evolution of a religious community that I need not say anything whatever about it. It is just like Our Lord Jesus Christ directing his disciples on the last day of his life that they should provide themselves with swords so as to be able to fight if need be for the defence of their religion, though previously the tenour of teachings was apparently against this. Yet this very thing when it appears in Islam is held out as a matter of reproach. We simply refuse to wrangle over this senseless objection of "Abrogation." Enough has been said in the note on 2 106 The only point that can arise is in purely legal matters When society changes why should further rules modifying those in the Prophet's day not be required. We have explained this elsewhere.

The Sunni traditions also say much about apparently aimless expunging of verses from the Quran—verses revealed once and read for a time as Quran, but afterwards cancelled without any clear reason, simply not permitted to remain as part of the Quran The Shias have no reports to this effect, and naturally one has to be cautious It is significant that in all the instances of this kind that have come down to us—and they are many, see Itqan Vol. II p 25—there is not a single report saying that the Prophet forbade such and such verse to be recited The most that we get is the *opinion* of some one that such and such verse was "*taken up*" Thus of the martyrs of Be'r Mauna, Anas says that about them a verse of the Quran was revealed till it was taken up 'Convey the news to our people that we met our Lord, He was pleased with us and made us pleased The reader will no doubt excuse us the trouble of citing all the instances as they are so easily available in ordinary books We can only suppose that either these verses were *Wahye Ghaire Matloo* (see later) and so were not generally read, and this gave the impression that they were taken up, or that being not admitted in Abubecker's collection, possibly for want of sufficient evidence, they were conveniently stated to have been taken up

The Sunnis have also a curious idea that one way of expunging the revelations once made was that they were taken away from memories of men Thus Ibn Omar says two men read (*i e* committed to heart) a Surah from the mouth of the Prophet, but once when they thought to read it in their prayers they could not recall a single word of it Coming to the Prophet they related this whereupon he said it was abrogated, so they should think no more of it Abu Musa Ashari says, that a Surah was revealed equal in size to the 9th and it was taken up afterwards only one verse of it remaining in memory 'Verily God will have this faith aided (in its work) through men who have no morals with them' &c. He mentions another Surah also—all forgotten except one verse of it

Needless to say the Shias have no reports of this nature Clearly portions of the Revelation, presumably *Wahye Ghaire Matloo*, did not gain a wide currency Some who had them—their memory failed in the course of time, persons occupied day and night with conquests and the like could certainly not be expected to be good *Hafizes* or to remain so all their lives.

The Sunni reports are also responsible for raising the question whether the Prophet forgot any portion of the Revelation that was given to him. In another place we have given a report saying that the Prophet

was given a Quran, or some portion of the Quran (Quranan) but he forgot all of it The implication of those reports also which as given above show that some Sahabas miraculously forgot portions of the Quran in his lifetime is that the Prophet also forgot them, for he could have easily reproduced them. Also there are several reports in Bokhari &c. showing that he occasionally forgot verses in his recital and was glad when someone made him recollect them—though this is hardly anything very material All these reports gain a show of plausibility from the following verses, "We will cause thee to recite and thou wilt not forget. Except what God pleases He knoweth what is (said or read) loudly and what is hidden" Which shows that it was at least possible for the Prophet to do so.

No body seems to consider the last words of the verse. The implication of these is that the portions of the Revelation which are publicly read out and so gain a wide currency are in no danger of being forgotten. It is only those that are hidden *i. e* not made public that may be lost The practice of addressing the Prophet when it is really his people that are meant is very common in the Quran There appears no other purpose of putting in this apparently irrelevant clause as a complement to the main thought in the verses It must also be remembered that *ma sha allah* need not necessarily mean what God pleases in the sense of quantity. It is also ordinarily used in the sense of as God pleases

Remembering that the Prophet was taught never to be confident of anything about God's grace upon him, on his happening to promise to give answer (in revelation) to the questions put by infidels about Zulqarnain &c—without the proviso that if God so wills—revelation was stopped for a considerable length of time, the proviso here made is not at all wonderful, and does not in the least imply that he was to forget portions of the Quran.

Section 2.

We now come to the question whether the Quran as left by the Prophet has come down to us in an unimpaired state

The Ahmadi commentator has in the preface to his edition of the Quran sought to establish the extreme Sunni position that not only it is the whole and complete Quran as it was left by the Prophet, not only the arrangement of verses as we have them is that fixed by divine inspiration, but even the arrangement of the Surahs follows the direction of the Prophet or God. The usual arguments with which all are familiar he

has stated at length in a way that cannot fail to be convincing to the ordinary readers and there is no doubt that there is much, a great deal, of truth in them The only drawback about them is that they ignore the most crying facts of history and draw too much on the good faith and true religious devotion of the early converts But it will be seen that after making every sort of allowance for conflicting evidence and for reasonable scepticism about the early ages there remains the most undoubtable evidence of the integrity of what of the Quran is before us, and so all are agreed about it and that is sufficient for us

A Evidence as to the writing of the Quran in the days of the Prophet

Even Sir William Muir, one of the most hostile critics of Islam, has had to admit it He says "There is good reason for believing that many fragmentary copies, embracing amongst them the whole Quran or nearly the whole were during his lifetime made by the Prophet's followers" There is not merely "good reason for believing" this but it is a most undeniable fact of history The practice of writing the Quran had begun from the earliest times Thus we know that Omar's sister had a copy from which she was reading Surah 20 when she was caught and seized upon by Omar, and the Surah eventually led to his conversion (Ibn Hisham &c) Writing was generally known at Mecca In Medina the Prophet engaged the services of many persons to write the Quran No less than forty-two persons are known to have occasionally written the revelations at the dictation of the Prophet when they were revealed It was his practice that when any revelation was received he would read it out to those present and have it written by some literate man who might be available Those who were frequently engaged got the distinction of being called *Katibul Wahy* 'writers of revelation' Abdullah 'bn Abi Sarh who afterwards apostatised and fled at the conquest of Mecca was one of them The object of employing all sorts of persons to write the revelation was clearly to give currency to the practice of writing the Quran, and it may be also to ensure purity of the text or to dispel doubts about genuineness of a text, should such doubts arise

The number of written copies of the Quran or their portions with the Sahabas was so great that in those troubled times of war it was found necessary to direct that 'Do not go with the Quran into the enemy's lands,' fearing that the infidels, if they got hold of them, would treat them with disrespect There are traditions purporting to say that reading the Quran with the Holy Book before one's eyes is better than reciting it from memory. All these indicate a general practice of writing the Quran.

It was from these manifold written scripts that Zaid compiled the Quran in Abubecker's time a year or so after the death of the Prophet

Also as the Ahmadi commentator says 'The repeated challenges made in the Quran to produce a book like it (17 88) even ten chapters like it (11 13) even one chapter like it (2 23) imply that the Surahs were well-known and were available to the infidels'

The thing might be plain to one who considers the Quran itself Not only does the Quran call it itself a Book which implies that it was a written book or at least intended and sought to be written as a book, but in the earliest Surahs such as 98 2 read 'An Apostle from God reciting pure pages (*Suhufan mutahharah*) wherein are right or standing books (*Kutubun qayyimah*)' In 89 11 another very early Surah we read of the Quran as in "honoured books exalted, purified, in the hands of scribes, noble, virtuous" Surah 56 77 99 also speaks for itself "Most surely it is an honoured Quran in a book that is protected (from eyes of people)—none shall touch it (the Quran) save the undefiled The last verses apparently refer to an original copy of the Quran written by the holiest of men such as Our Lord Ah, and kept in the personal custody of the Prophet This was different from the ordinary copies he got written apparently for public use by the numerous *Katabul Wahy's* which included all sorts of men

The keeping of written copies was indispensable for committing the Quran to memory which many of the Sahabas are well-known to have done So it is hardly necessary to refer to reports such as that of Ibn Abbas who says that he had all the longest chapters in his possession in the lifetime of the Prophet, or of Anas who names four of the Ansars who, he says collected the whole Quran before the death of the Prophet 'Obay 'bn Kaab, Maaz 'bn Jabal, Zaid 'bn Sabit, Abu Zaid' Partly to give the credit of precedence to Abubecker's collection and partly because Zaid 'bn Sabit's name occurs therein who made such a plea of the difficulty of the task in Abubecker's time, the collecting in the latter report has been held to mean committing to memory But we must remember that the report comes from Anas, and, as shown by the Ahmadi commentator in his preface, there is great probability that the report was tinged with spirit of partiality and rivalry There may be exaggeration in the case of some names as Zaid 'bn Sabit, and the omission of such well-known names as Abdullah 'bn Masud can be explained no way but on the supposition that here he chose to speak of none but the Ansars

The collections of Abdullah 'bn Masud and Obay 'bn Kaab are well-known, and if they were not already made in the Prophet's time we are

at a loss to say when they were collected They had certainly full materials with them, whenever they collected their recensions, for they never needed to search for verses from here and there as did Zaid 'bn Sabit, and it would certainly be a strange thing to suppose that they first took the trouble to commit the Quran to memory without writing and then wrote what they remembered in disgust for the collection made by Zaid 'bn Sabit under Abubecker's directions One Salim, slave of Abu Hufaiza, is reported to have first collected the Quran after the death of the Prophet, (Itqan) and Suyuti gratuitously supposes he was one of the persons appointed by Abubecker for the task

The number of copies of the Quran (complete or partial) with the people was so great that when Abubecker charged Zaid 'bn Sabit to make the collection (afresh) for him, Abdullah 'bn Masud who was very much disgusted with this act of the Caliph, and probably suspected sinister motives in it, made a public address to people in which he exhorted them to hide their "copies (Mushafs)' from Zaid, and privately too he advised men under his influence not to lay their Mushafs before Zaid (Jameul Usul, Fathul Bari) What Abdullah 'bn Masud suspected in this official work we will come to learn by and by

Above all there was the collection of Our Lord Ali This was from the scripts which were kept by the Prophet himself and which came to him after the Prophet's death, or, as the Shia accounts say, the Prophet gave to him shortly before his death The Sunni and Shia accounts agree in saying that he set immediately to the work and arranged it all in a short time The Sunni accounts add that it was this that prevented him from taking interest in the Caliphate of Abubecker They also say he arranged it some way according to chronological order One divine Ibn Sirin expresses his great regret that this copy is not forthcoming, otherwise it would have added greatly to our knowledge The Shia accounts (Kafi &c) say that on completion he brought it to Abubecker and said 'Here is the Book of God as it was revealed to Mohammed,' but they said 'We do not require it, we have the like of what thou hast' Then Our Lord said 'Know now, ye will not see it again for ever' From another Shia account (Ihtijaj Tabrasi) we learn that after the Quran was collected by Abubecker, Omar once (in the days of his Caliphate) came to our Lord and asked him to give him his Quran so that they may "agree upon that," but our Lord refused as before, and said it would only be shown to the world by Our Lord the Mahdi of Islam. We will come to see the wisdom of this by and by.

B Evidence that the Quran was committed to memory

After this powerful evidence about the writing of the Quran it is hardly necessary to say much to show that the Quran was committed to memory I will therefore be very brief

A number of Sahabas were distinguished with the title of Qurra 'reciters,' that is they could recite large portions of the Quran from memory. Seventy are known to have been slain in the battle of Be'r Mauna In the battle of Hunain when the Sahabas fled, one and all, the Prophet was crying to them, 'O ye the companions of Surah Baqara' &c, there being men among them who had learnt by heart such large Surahs as the second It was the large number of Qurra 'reciters of the Quran' being killed in the battle of Yemamah that raised the alarm in the mind of Omar, and he suggested to Abubecker the necessity of having a collection of the Quran

In fact, the Prophet's exhortations, with which the books of traditions are full to read the Quran, to teach it to children &c could not all go in vain The Prophet did not content himself with mere preaching in this respect He used to make people read the Quran before him saying he loved to hear others recite He is reported once to have waked up whole night to hear his disciples reading the Quran And this practice—committing passages to memory—was most common among them As the Ahmadi commentator says 'With the Arabs memory was the safest of repositories In fact, they placed so great a reliance upon memory that they took a pride in being called *ummis* i e men who did not know reading or writing, and for whom, therefore, memory served the purpose reading and of writing They had all their poems and long genealogies by heart' Indeed the Arab memory was proverbial So even if they did not attend to it o themselves the mere fact of their attending the mosques, in which in the public prayers fairly long passages or Surahs of moderate length were read, should have made considerable portions of the Quran stamped on their memory And the inducement to become a Qari was great for he was ordinarily given preference for leading the prayers Generally to it was a matter of distinction, for, after all, looking to the vast number o the quite ignorant the number of these Qurra was very small, and to them people looked for religious instruction

There are certain prohibitions in the reports such that long Surah should not be read in public prayers, or that the Quran should not b finished in less than three days—these also, if genuine, imply clearly tha there were some men who had the longer Surahs or the whole Quran b heart.

Some Sahabis, as Abdullah 'bn Masud and Obay 'bn Kaab, are stated in the Shia commentary Majmaul Bayan to have read the Quran repeatedly before the Prophet in order that any mistakes might be corrected

This evidence which we have given very briefly here and which may be read more fully in Ahmadi commentator's preface will suffice to convince the reader that when a year or so after the Prophet's death Abubecker set upon himself to make a fresh collection of the Quran, there were ample materials available for compiling it, and the task was not at all so difficult as Zaid 'bn Sabit whom he engaged for the purpose represented it to be He said if he had been told to move a mountain from its place it would have been more easy for him What he did was to sit at the Prophet's Mosque and ask every man who passed by if he had anything from the Quran with him and to ask for two witnesses for the same, rejecting those that were not thus attested and admitting those that were Thus he collected the Quran from palm leaves, slabs of stones, hides and bones of animals and what not, along with hearts of men The last three verses of Surah IX were found only with Abu Khuzaima, but they were admitted as the Prophet had taken his testimony to be equal to two men (Mishkat, Itqan &c)

Everyone who compares this account with what we have said in the beginning will be struck with a jarring sense of discrepancy There is something wrong in the matter, he will say, either the glowing account of the writing and learning by heart of the Quran is very much exaggerated or the above procedure was much of a show. But, patience, it is explained that this procedure was adopted for the sake of perfect assurance about accuracy It might be there might be mistakes in records, and the memories of men may also be deceitful (And if we accept the strange theories adopted later to explain away the missing portions of the Revelation, passages might have been expunged or cancelled but continued to be read by persons who were unaware of this This suggestion is mine, and I do not impute it to any author It is taken from Sunni traditions which state this as being a matter of frequent occurrence as we shall presently see).

In short the suggestion is that the materials, though existing, were not above suspicion and needed clarification What is never explained is why the scripts which were kept by the Prophet and which must have been with Our Lord Ali were not availed of? Why his own collection which he admittedly made was not made use of? Why the task of editing the Quran was not given to such well-known Qurra as Ibn Masud and

Obay 'bn Kaab, and given to a young Jewish convert Zaid 'bn Sabit? Of the former the Prophet said " Whoever wants to listen to Quran as fresh ly as it was revealed them let him read according to the reading of Ibn Umm- Abi" (Ibn Masud) Huzaifa says of him 'Surely the companions of the Prophet knew well that Abdullah (Ibn Masud) was the nearest of the Sahabas to the Prophet (in companionship), and he was the greatest of those who knew the Quran "

We will leave these questions here and turn to the other side of the picture Whether all revelations were committed to writing by the Sahabas is more than we know On the contrary it appears that the Sahabas exercised their discretion as to whether certain portions should be written at all Thus, among the numerous traditions about the verse about the stoning of adulterers, one is this Caliph Omar said 'Do not doubt about stoning, for verily it is right I had thought to enter it in the Book but I asked Obay 'bn Kaab He said, 'Didst thou not come to me when I was seeking to learn it from the Prophet and striking in my bosom thou said 'Art thou seeking to take the verse of stoning when they (the people) are playing foul like the asses' Ibn Hajar says this gives an indication why the verse was abrogated, namely, that there was a difference among people about it (!) (Itqan) In another tradition also cited in Itqan, it is stated that Zaid 'bn Sabit coming in the course of his writing to the place of this verse of stoning (and seeking to write it) Omar interfered saying that when this verse was revealed he went to the Prophet and asked leave to write it, but it appeared from his face that he disapproved of it Here he accounts it to the Prophet And in yet another tradition it is said that Zaid 'bn Sabit did not write it because Omar was the only witness and Omar himself is reported to have said that he would have written it in the text but that the people would come to say that Omar added in the Book of God—and these traditions are fondly cited as proof of the great care with which the Quran was redacted under the Caliphs It is difficult to know the truth in the interminable discrepancies of the Sunni reports, but it appears that the verse, if it was truly revealed, was not written down by the Sahabas in the lifetime of the Prophet—probably because they exercised their discretion in the matter.

Then if all the portions of the Quran had been written down as they were revealed there would not have been so many reports of considerable portions of the Quran being lost Thus Ibn Omar used to say 'Let no one say he has got the whole of the Quran, for how does one know what the whole of the Quran is—surely much of it is lost He should only say he has got so much of the Quran as has got currency.'

Ayesha says Surah 33 (Ahzab) used to be read in the time of the Prophet 200 verses So Obay 'bn Kaab says it equalled Surah 2 in size. (See Itqan for these and other traditions) Surah Taubah is said to have been much greater than it is, and it is said to have contained the names of hypocrites Huzaifa says there is not one of us who was not referred to in it (Durre Mansur).

The number of these forgotten and lost portions is so great that for these a special theory of abrogation is developed—these forgotten portions were miraculously taken away from the hearts of the people (See Itqan or any Sunni commentary) We have seen that mania for this has gone so high that it is affirmed the Prophet himself was given *quranan* (a Quranan or a portion of the Quran) but forgot it (Shiah Bazudi) I do not wish to say anything about this theory here, but it at least makes it clear that considerable portions of the revelation were not committed to writing As far as I know no miracle is reported that any written portions were found blank paper

These traditions cannot be passed over as easily as the Ahmadi commentator supposes by simply relegating them to the discreditable It is hard to imagine how stories so palpably impunging the integrity of the Quran could have been invented at all But for the fact that the expunging and forgetting theories were not wholly beyond their heads such reports should hardly have been allowed to reach us at all The narrators of false tales like these should hardly have been allowed to have kept their heads on their shoulders Moreover, as said, there are quite such a lot of them Their numbers show that there must be some basis for them

But, as already suggested before, the difficulty is not at all so great as it appears Revelations to the Prophet were of two kinds One which is the Quran and is termed '*Wahye Matloo*' *i e* that meant for recital as Quran The other is '*Wahye Ghaire Matloo*' *i e* revelation not meant for public recital It is possible that some Sahabas might have mistaken the latter for the former, and being undeceived later by finding them omitted in liturgical use might have thought that these passages were expunged, or having continued to recite it without being interfered with in the days of the Prophet, and then finding it omitted in Abubecker's or Othman's collections complained that portions of the Quran were lost or taken away from the Book This is just the way in which the learned (Shia) author of Qawaninul Usul explains (after the great Shia traditionist and divine Saduq) the Shia traditions that appear to show that the Quran

collected by Our Lord Ali was more in contents than that in Abubecker's or other collections His words (Vol I p 315) are, "What Sadiq says in his 'Articles of Belief' is that what the traditions, showing that the Quran collected by Our Lord Ali contained things not found in others, mean that they were of the nature of Hadis-i-Qudsi (another word for *Wahye Ghaire Matloo*) and not Quran."

It not only appears, but we positively know that Ibn Masud's edition of the Quran contained a number of additions to the verses which are extant in the Quran. Instances are. (The additions are given in italics)

"O thou the Prophet convey what has been revealed to thee *that Ali is the Lord of the Faithful* and if thou dost not do so thou hast not fulfilled thy apostleship and God will protect thee from the people," (5 71). (Suyuti, Durre Mansur)

"And God saved the Faithful the fighting *by Ali 'bn Abi Talib* and God is strong, powerful" (33 25) (Ibid)

"Verily God selected Adam and Noah, and the Sons of Abraham and the Sons of Amran *and the Sons of Mohammed* above the nations (3 30) (Saalabi)

It does not seem that these were mere words of comments for in the reports we find distinctly that he said 'In the days of the Prophet we used to read this verse (5 71) thus,' or that he used to read this verse (33 25) thus And remember Ibn Masud was a man who would not admit the last two Surahs in his Quran as he was doubtful whether they were meant to be Quran *i e* whether they may be used for liturgical purposes like other parts of the Quran

It appears therefore that besides a number of whole passages which for some reasons were not given to the people for public recital, which we therefore call *Wahye Ghaire Matloo*, many verses were so revealed that in conformity with the design of the Quran which we have explained in chapter VII portions of them *could* be omitted from public recital, and looking to the extreme refractoriness of his people the Prophet had them omitted The whole revelation was given to a few disciples most advanced in faith, the rest were allowed to read them in the short form, and in this sense these extra portions were also *Wahye Ghaire Matloo* I know it is a matter of grave responsibility to say positively that it was so, but this is the only inference I can draw from a study of reports of this kind which are met with both in Shia and Sunni writings. It is the

most comprehensive view that explains *all* reports and *all* views, Shias and Sunnis and all sections of them, and does not ignore any of them on the usual, convenient, but unproved and doubtful ground of unreliability. It is right to say, however, that these are offerred as personal conclusions, not as representing the views of any community.

Well, it was probably because these *whole* verses which he either believed to be part of the revelation as Quran, or as *Wahye Ga r Matloo*, or thought to be at least necessary to be preserved in the Quran for a right understanding of it, and he saw that these so very essential portions were expunged from the Quran (probably on the ground that they were not in current use in recital, and therefore were not *Mutawatir*, well-known, in the modern sense of the word)—it was probably because of this that Ibn Masud was so much opposed to the work started by Abubecker, and advised people not to bring their Qurans to him or participate anyway in the business There their Qurans, perfectly genuine in their own way, would be subjected to a most offensive examination For every verse two witnesses would be required, their testimony questioned, besides that many were away all over the country and thus many passages would be disputed and ruled off

May we say that he doubted the sincerity of Abubecker's purpose? Let us say this is more than we know, but the few extracts that have accidentally come to us in reports of his recension or readings, and which are only examples of the hundreds that might be, explain how it is that the Shias, though they suspect Abubecker's sincerity in everything, yet they place implicit reliance in the collection made by him If it was his interest to get rid of words or verses (if there might be such) favouring Our Lord Ali, and so undermining the position he himself had assumed, these having got currency in some copies, on the plea that they were not Quran in the strict sense of the word, and so of subordinate and perhaps questionable authority, and it was this which actuated him to undertake an edition of the Quran that should be free from all such extraneous matter, then it was necessary for him to do the work in the most open, thorough and searching manner, so that no suspicion might be cast upon him The way in which Zaid mercilessly rejected verses annoyed sometimes his own colleagues Thus Omar is reported to have once said to him in a certain matter 'This is not the Book of God in which thou might add or cut off at thy whim' The Quran, therefore, which he compiled was collected with the most scrupulous care, and this is indeed the greatest assurance we have of the accuracy of every letter of it The inaccuracies which we read of in our traditions are so few that they are hardly worth y

of mention at all Also seeing that the materials for a complete collection of the Quran (i e that which was meant for public recital and so had gained wide currency) were very ample we have every reason to believe that the whole of the Quran was collected, and so it is that the verses we hear of in traditions as having been left out are only to be counted on fingers, and these too are hardly above question What was lost was only that about which it might be questioned whether it was Quran at all and, whether in the form of whole verses or completing portions of verses, was not used in public recital, and so at least not *Mutawatir* (well known), and hence open to question However much the loss of this important source of information and instruction may be regretted, a great thing was done—an edition of the Quran on which all have agreed and none doubted

The wisdom of Our Lord Ali's withdrawing his Quran and sternly refusing to show it to the people would by this time have been apparent to the reader The additional matter it contained being wholly or mostly of the nature of *Wahye Ghair Matlow* was not in general currency These men would have disputed it, as much of it would be against their interests. The result would have been that among the newly converted folk either of the two Qurans would have ceased to have any credit It was still more impolitic to give it to the people in his own reign a quarter of a century afterwards It would then all the more appear to the people of immature faith as a pure invention Nor was it at all necessary What that revelation could teach he and the Imams after him could teach The special revelation, which was given to him and those few who were much advanced in faith, was meant only for the fulness of the times when all would be prepared to receive it

On this point of Abubeker's collection much could be written, but we refrain We cannot, however, omit to observe that this act of his was quite of a piece with his other act of putting to the flames the collection of the Prophet's traditions which he himself had made, explaining that he feared there might be inaccuracies in it (Zahabi, Tazkiratul Huffaz) May we not suspect that there might be something inconvenient in that collection

After what we have said about the collection of the Quran there remains little of interest to say about the arrangement of verses in Surahs The natural presumption is that the verses were arranged in the written Surahs in the order that was current in public recital, and the public recital followed the order on which the Prophet himself recited

the Surahs Surely if Surahs were committed to memory in the lifetime of the Prophet it must be concluded that the respective place of each verse was fixed in the Prophet's lifetime Traditions such as those about the excellence of " the last verses " of Surah II, " the opening verses " of Surah XII, " the last ten verses " of Surah XVIII, the saying of the Prophet to Omar on his repeated asking what is Kalala that the last verse of Surah IV should suffice for him, show that at least the opening and closing verses of every Surah were well defined The only question that can be is about the middle verses in which new revelations were generally placed For these too there is a tradition which goes to show that sometimes at least the position of these new revelations was fixed Osman 'bn Abul As said that on the revelation of 16 90 the Prophet specified its exact place saying Gabriel had directed it to him In the generality of cases, however, it seems it was only said ' Place this verse in such and such Surah " See Othman's reply to Ibn Abbas in Itqan p 60 Indeed commonsense was sufficient to fix position of a verse in such discursive Surahs as the Medina ones and it was in these that new revelations were generally added, being either new legal directions required, or praise or condemnation of persons

Remembering that every verse (or set of verses making a complete thought) is a complete unit which requires to be taken by itself irrespective of the verses that precede or follow, this was a matter of not much importance, at least the early Musalmans seem not to have been very particular about it Thus when the last two verses of Surah IX were found with Abu Khuzaima alone and it was decided to admit them Omar said " Had they been three verses I would have made them a Surah Now put them at the end of the last Surah of the Quran " Ibn Hajar says ' It appears from this report that they arranged the verses of Surahs according to their opinion, but other reports show they did nothing of the kind except by dictation of the Prophet ' Of course, as usual, another tradition has been forthcoming to show that they were indeed the last verses of the Surah (see Itqan), but anybody can see what is the truth Even if the report be baseless it shows that among the early Musalmans this was not considered a very grave or serious matter, otherwise the report would hardly have been allowed to come to us at all

Indeed it is a matter of grave responsibility to assert categorically that in the Quran collected in this way every verse is exactly in the place where it was read by the Prophet, not a single verse has missed its right position. So we need not be surprised if sometimes we find a verse like 5 5 ' To-day are the infidels despaired of your religion, so fear them

not but fear Me. To day I have perfected for you your religion and completed unto you My favour and am pleased with Islam for your religion' placed immediately in connection with a verse saying that dead animals, blood &c are unlawful as food, and separated miles away from verse 71 which we know historically to have shortly preceded it. Even without that historical knowledge I should have shuddered to think that these two verses are in their right position Generally we believe that in the vast majority of cases verses are rightly in position and that is sufficient. See also 'if' and 'then' in the first part of 4 . 3 and consider for yourself.

Othman's collection This was not a new collection; but only a publication of Abubecker's after necessary corrections Abubecker after collecting his Quran did not take any active steps to make it current or to suppress the private Mushafs that the Sahabas had with them Omar too in his long reign did nothing in this respect, he only made a few corrections where Zaid's text appeared faulty But naturally we must suppose Abubecker's recension which was compiled with so much show gained general reception, and it was that which was generally read and taught to the Musalmans in those long years In the course of time there naturally sprung up a number of discrepant readings and these were favoured by a popular notion that gained currency during this time that the Prophet said 'The Quran was revealed in *Harfs*" a vague sort of expression leading to much discrepancy but which probably means seven dialects (Our Lord Jaferel Sadiq denies the reality of this, but it is possible the Prophet who was a practical man might have allowed raw converts from distant places to read Quran as best they could) These discrepancies led to disputes, which it is said alarmed Our Lord Ali and Huzaifa, and on their suggestion Othman undertook to have a very correct copy from Abubecker's collection in the custody of Omar's daughter, and sent copies of it to the various provinces The various readings current were also compared and in cases of difference that in the Quraishite dialect was preferred It is said that after all this careful compilation the Book still appeared to his judgment to have some grammatical mistakes, but he did not think it necessary to interfere with these and they have continued to this day.

Along with this which must be considered a very laudable course of action Othman unfortunately resolved that all the copies of the Quran which then existed should be effectively destroyed. They were all burnt. This fatal step has closed the door of critical investigation for ever. Abdullah 'bn Masud refused to surrender his copy, but it was forcibly taken from him and he was so badly beaten that, it is said, his ribs were

broken He used to say, 'if I get into power I would do the same with Othman's recension as he has done with mine'

Was Othman's recension a faithful copy of Abubecker's one There is every reason to believe it was. One or two things might appear to tell against it, but they are easily explained. One is the saying of the revered Sahabee Ibn Masud quoted above. But it is plain that it was just because of his reading verses differently (*i e* with extra words) and sticking to his reading that he was kept out of court at the time of Abubecker's collection The other is Ayesha's saying that verse 33 56 was read so and so before Othman *altered* the scriptures Another, that she said Surah 33 used to be read in the time of the Prophet but when Othman wrote his copies we do not find more than we find now Ayesha, it must he remembered, had become one of the worst enemies of Othman She used to call him Naasal after a Jew, and incited people to kill him She was one of the firebrands that caused the revolt that eventually took his life. We believe the portions lost in Surah 33 were already lost in Abubecker's recension So there is no good reason to suppose that any substantial tampering of the text was made by Othman.

Concluding we cannot refrain to quote the following passage from the well-known commentary Majmaul Bayan which will make the position of the majority of the Shias clear to the reader.

"As to addition in it all are agreed that there was no such thing; as to loss in it a party our men and the superficial (Hashviya) among the Sunnis relate that in the Quran there has been change (in the position of verses) and loss (of portions), but the right view amongst us is against this and it is this view that was supported by the (old divine) Syed Murtuza"

X. The Quran and previous scriptures.

This chapter is chiefly meant to consider the arguments of those like Muir, Tisdell &c who showing easily enough that many doctrines and practices in Islam agreeing with older religions (Judaism &c) and many narratives in the Quran agreeing with and sometimes differing from accounts in Bible, Talmud &c, these are presumably borrowed from them from contact with and imperfect information received from men of these religions Now Islam never claimed originality for its teachings and if it is a revealed religion at all its teachings must agree with that of earlier religions except where the latter are corrupted, when it must correct them So however corrupt the older books might be, and however much of fiction may have crept in them they must still contain some reminiscences of truth, some traditions of the Prophets' days Thus criticism on these lines must remain inconclusive So 7 179 which refers to similar objections raised by infidels practically stops wrangling on these lines, and appeal is made to the literary excellence of the Quran which was set up as a standing miracle See chap V.

There is one case, however, in which at first sight they would seem to have made out a point. In Surah 5 35 the direction about murder of one man being like murder of all, ordained for Israelites, is said to arise from Cain's murder of Abel, but it does not appear how it so arises and why Israelites are specially mentioned The connection is found in the Targum of Okenalos where arguing on the plural used for Abel's blood in the account in Gen 4 10 almost the same words as in Surah V are given, and the direction is made effective for Israelites This is the basis of the objection But it is forgotten that, as has been repeatedly explained before, verses were revealed in response to thoughts coming to the mind of the Prophet in the course of revelation, and hence the connection is lost to the reader May it not be that as Cain's story was revealed the Prophet thought of this direction found in the Targum with the argument it was deduced from? Then the revelation came, yes, it was for this reason that it was made so *for Israelites*, these having in this way risen to the idea of the gravity of the crime It could not be the same for savages.

In note on 2 197 we have said sufficiently about the notion that Saul is confounded with Gideon So it is said that Haman, the minister of Ahasuerus of Persia (see Book of Esther) is made minister of the Pharoah of Moses' time But the Book of Esther is shown to be a mere fable, (see Ency Britt 11th Ed. Art Esther) and an intensely absurd one it is The scholars are speculating upon it as a myth and are tracing

ont names mythologically as they are all fabulous Haman also appears to be not a Persian name and is sought to be traced ont Much more conceivable is the idea that there was some old tradition of Haman being minister of Pharoah and the author thought this to be a fit name to be given to the chief author of the plot As a matter of fact from the name itself it appears that he was an Egyptian—*h-Ammon—i e* pertaining to the chief Egyptian god Ammon, the Hebrew form of an Egyptian title

The charge that the Quran confounded Mary mother of Christ, with Miriam, sister of Aaron, is merely absurd and need not be considered The idea that the descent of table of food prayed for by Our Lord Jesus Christ in Surah V is a travesty of the Christian Eucharist is equally foolish The traditions (see Qamm's commentary) clearly say it was a regularly recurring miracle that was prayed for Christians *after Christ* What has this to do with the Eucharist?

A curious line of criticism is that the Apocrypha, Talmud &c are all unreliable—*ergo* the Quran which gives place to some stories found in such books is not of divine origin, as if they must necessarily contain nothing but idle tales If one thought it worth while one could compare the relative reliability of the Biblical books with these For the Biblical books any reader can have information from any shilling book written by the most 'Reverend' authors of the day. For the Talmud it will suffice to cite the following from Ency Britt. 11th Ed "Literary and historical criticism places the discussion on another basis when it treats of the Mosaic Torah *in its present form* as a post-exilic composition (about 5th century B C) from sources differing in date, origin and history" Again in a note "It is known that a great mass of oral tradition was current, and there are a number of early references to written collections, especially of Hagadoth The theory of an esoteric tradition is distinctly represented in 2 Esdras XV where Moses receives words which were to be delivered to the wise men of his people Also the book of Jubilees knows of secret written traditions regarding sacrifices &c and Jacob hands over "all his books and the books of his fathers to Levi his son that he might preserve them and renew them for his children (*i e* the priestly caste) unto this day" (XLV 16)" Either represent traditions, at the most some were written earlier than others Just conceive that the Talmud was compiled as a matter of necessity when the very existence of the Jews was threatened and oral teaching was impossible "Is it to be imagined that idle tales were laboriously undertaken to be collected at this critical hour?

One or two points bearing on the Quran may be, however, noticed. It is said that the idea of Solomon having power over demons &c arose from mistranslation of two words in Ecclesiasticus and thence taken in the Quran Clearly if the words were interpreted wrongly this was due to previous belief that Our Lord had that power, and that must have originated in independent traditions So it is said that the story in Midrash of Our Lord Abraham being cast into the fire was founded on a wrong translation of the word *Ur* in Gen. We must suppose the ancient doctors knew their texts and their language better than a Hughes or a Tisdell. But see what Mr Cook writes in Ency Britt 11th Ed, article 'Midrash' 'Jewish traditions of Abraham in *Ur* of the Chaldees recur in the Targums, Midrashic works, and earlier in the book of Jubilees The legends of his escape from a fiery furnace may have a philological basis (*Ur* interpreted as "fire") but the allusion to the redemption of Abraham in Isa XXXIX 22 seems to indicate that the older tradition was fuller than the present records in Genesis"

As to the contempt shown for the Apocryphal Gospels I can only say that the Arabian Gospel of Infancy appears to me to be incomparably superior to the received ones And fortunately I am able to show this from a passage that has bearing on the Quran in that it speaks of Our Lord Jesus speaking and announcing his apostleship while quite an infant (Cf Surah 19 31) The passage is this —"In the book of Josephus, the chief priest in the time of Christ (and people say that it was he who was called Caphias), we find that Jesus spoke while he was in the cradle He said to his mother, "Verily I am Jesus, son of God and am the Word thou hast brought forth as revealed to thee by Gabriel" The writer writes as a historian, distinctly referring to his authorities among the writings of Our Lord's contemporaries This is at least respectable. Is there anything approaching this in the received Gospels?

NOTE.—A much fuller discourse on this subject is promised in the next volume to be shortly published and very shortly in the MUSLIM REVIEW about February 1930 Another chapter dealing with traditions bearing on the Quran is also reserved for the next volume. That also will appear shortly in the MUSLIM REVIEW.

THE HOLY QURAN.

PART I

SURAH I

FATIHA, OR THE OPENING

(7 VERSES WITH BISMILLAH).

In the name of Allah, the God of Mercy, the Merciful (R).

1. All praises to Allah, the Lord (*Rabb*) of all the worlds.
2. The God of Mercy, the Merciful.
3. The Master on the day of Judgment.
4. Thee (only) do we worship and Thee (alone) we seek aid from.
5. Guide Thou us on the right path.
6. The path of those Thou hast favoured unto—Other than those Thou hast been angry with, and not those who go astray.

Surah. Chapter of the Quran The word originally means 'Light' (See Introduction).

Bismillah. This verse precedes and opens every Surah of the Quran except the 9th, and is, according to the Shias, a part of the Surah to which it is attached. Hence in the daily prayers having read this verse with a particular Surah in mind, it is not held permissible to change the Surah, regarding it as a common introductory to all The Sunnis commonly hold it to be a distinct seperable verse—no part of the Surah to which it is attached, hence they do not usually read this verse in prayers But, as we learn from the commentaries of the Sunni sect as that of Fakhruddin Razi, several of the great divines of the Sunni sect hold the same view of it as the Shias Thus among Sahabas Ibn Abbas, Ibn Omar, Ibn Zobeir, Abu Huraira, among Tabieen: Ata, Taus, Said 'bn Jubair, Makbul, Zubri, among divines. Shaflee, Abdullah 'bn Murak, Ishaq, Abu Obeid So the practice of the Prophet in reading this verse before Surahs is clear from several of their traditions. But as is usual with them they have contradictory traditions and their divines have to use their discretion as best they can. That this is part of this Surah at least appears in Quran "We have sent to thee Seven of repeated verses مثانی and the great Quran," (15. 87). The seven repeated verses are recognised by all to be those of this Surah read twice in each prayer as our Lord Ali pointed out The rhyme shows the number of verses is seven by inclusion of this verse in

it According to a tradition of our Lord Ali the revelation of a new Surah was indicated by this verse preceding the main revelation.

The invariable introduction of every Surah with this verse hardly calls for justification. Every holy and virtuous act must begin in the name of God and in a conscious spirit of obedience to His will and seeking His pleasure and mercy This uniform practice of the Quran serves chiefly to emphasise this teaching of cardinal importance It is a matter of principle—not so much of any particular purpose. Hence it has been said that all that is contained in the Quran is contained in this verse—the true realization of God and consciousness of our relation to Him being the Alpha and Omega of all religion. In a word the object of placing this verse in beginning of every Sura is to prepare the mind for a deep consciousness of God which is indispensable for reading the Word of God and must continue at least as long as one is busy in it. That the Holy Name of God has wonderful efficacy is a thing that must be obvious to every religious-minded person and, as such, it is true that the Imams have taught that for success, etc, every act (rightful, of course) should be started with the Holy Name of God But to assume that this is the purpose here, and to argue thereon, as some lower order of critics do, that the Quran is the work of a creature, not of God, is, to say the least, gratuitous and hardly calls for refutation They suggest 'For the guidance of the people' instead A hundred other introductory phrases might be suggested suitable for different parts of Quran It does not take much reflection to see that the Blessed Name of God is the most comprehensive formula for all that is holy, pious and good and covers, all that the Word of God is Meant for—guidance being only one of its manifold functions and purposes So 'in the name of—' has the widest all-comprehending implications—'for the sake of,' 'to the service of' and so forth. as no man with a taste for literature can fail to see

'Allah.' This is called the *Isme Zat*, the name having reference to the pure Being of God—the Eternal, Infinite, Necessary Being, the Creator and Sustainer of all Existence The other names, called *Asma-ul-Husna*, Surah. 59:24 are all appellative and describe Him in relation to, and His ways of dealing with, His creatures Of these the most important and comprehensive is Benevolence, which is higher than justice, justice being nothing more than strict conformity to the principle and course (of benevolence) determined from all Eternity. (See my Principles, or Islam in the Light of Shiaism Chap 2.) Hence the special mention of *Rahman* and *Raheem* here in preference to the other numerous appellative names.

'*Rahman*' and '*Raheem*' These two names mean much the same thing 'Merciful,' the former however is used only of God—never of any thing else. This was so from pre-Islamic times Thus this word in its original connotation extended only to that much of God's Benevolence as could be observed by unaided human experience. It was, therefore, more of Benevolent than Merciful in its true significances Unaided by revelation, the world knows so little of God's Infinite Mercy and Providence that many are led to deny it altogether, and making the Law of Karma an inexorable law of nature, consider even forgiveness of sins an impossibility. So to supplement to and intensify the meaning, the other appellative *Raheem* was superadded and this gives us the far wider expectation we have from true faith in God, both in this life and in the next This word, therefore, has special reference to spiritual matters—its full realization will be in the life to come Hence according to a tradition of the Prophet '*Rahman* has reference to this world and *Raheem* to the next' (*Safi, in loco*) this does not however mean that the two worlds are wholly different, and God's whole character does not and cannot appear in this temporal world God is One—the same in this world and in the next, and the next life is only a continuation of this present life Only the vast extent of God's benevolence and mercy (which will be fully patent in the life to come) is perceivable in this life only by adequately spiritualizing it Hence, we see that those who have sufficiently raised themselves to the higher life by faith in and devotion to God attain to the power of working miracles, and the earnest prayer of even the humblest creature is responded to with special providences All these are mere impossibilities to the purely natural philosopher. who sees nothing of *Raheem* in the impersonal God he acknowledges

Verse 1. '*Hamd*' There is no English word which gives the full and exact connotation of this Arabic word It has been translated praise, but it is praise permeated with a sense of gratitude and thankfulness For thankfulness proper the word is شكر but, like the English word, it implies gratitude for some favour shown to the self *Hamd* حمد is quite impersonal It is thankfulness for all that is good and gracious, to whosesoever benefit or advantage it may be Hence the idea of admiration involved in it For admiration proper the word is *Madh* مدح which (unlike حمد) is used both for animate and inanimate objects, and so is used of things of beauty, value, etc, without necessarily implying that the existence of the qualities admired depends on the conscious will of the object—the only thing that commands real respect or admiration God deserves to be praised, not merely because He is an infinite, all powerful Being,

but because He has imposed the principle of Mercy on Himself VI : 12, (كتب على نفسه الرحمة) and while, absolutely speaking, no creature has any right against Him, He designs and makes provision for increasing happiness of all

The particle لـ used for all-comprehensiveness is noticeable here. All praise of thankfulness is due to God—meaning that none else deserves it except in a secondary way Whatever grace and favour one is able to show to another is ultimately derived from Him, so is the disposition to do so due wholly to His Grace, and also the capacity of one's enjoying it is also a matter wholly of His grant and bestowal.

Some scholasts taking the particle لـ here to signify perfection, argue in a curious way that faith is the direct gift of God so that unbelievers have nothing to blame themselves for their unbelief Faith say these wiseacres, is the highest good If this is the creation of man, then he, not God, is deserving of the greatest praise They never reflected that intellect within and spiritual guidance without, on which faith depends are far higher gifts than faith which is but an outcome of them and without which it would have no meaning It is also argued that if this were not so we could not rightly thank God for our faith as one of His blessings This is the same miserable pleading put another way and the reply is the same

" *Rabb* " Again there is no exact English equivalent for this word which is here translated ' Lord ' The main distinctive idea in *Rabb* is one who nourishes, sustains, protects Mere Lord or Master does not suffice The main thought, therefore, is that all in creation depend as much on God for their well-being, preservation and development as they depend upon Him for their existence Hence the preference of this word to *Khaliq*, creator, or *Malik*, master, in this verse Creatorship is already given in the very name Allah gone before, and as for mastery, the word *Rabb* gives it in full, if it is not already implied there The best translation of the word would be ' Fatherly Lord '

" All world " All universes, known and unknown The word is clearly indicatory of plurality of worlds, and existence of like forms of creation on other worlds than ours, else the word ' *Rabb* ' used for all worlds would lose much of its significance It is also the word of the widest application covering all possible forms of collective existence, organic and inorganic, physical and mental, temporal and spiritual, this world and the next

Day of Accounting or Judgment. So it is meant specifically here. But the word used is noticeable. Why is it preferred to يوم الحساب ? It is also pre-eminently a day of Faith, the day when the whole of spiritual truth, the whole expanse of spiritual world, which we now believe only by faith will be laid bare before our eyes God will be Master—the sole Master—pre-eminently on that day, so as to be patent to everyone, not as in this world when the world is so blindfolded by His rigid scheme of natural causation that His existence even is doubted by many It is this pre-eminence that is brought out here—not that He is not the real Master of this temporal world which is already given in the word '*Rabb*' used for it in the preceding verse.

Since it is pre-eminently a day of reckoning or judgment the lower type of critics, who wish to say something on every verse of the Quran, ask if God does not act justly or does not judge on other days Is it needful to ask in reply, whether the reservation of a particular day for awarding full reward or punishment exclude this, or would it in itself go against justice? Nay, would it be possible and just (except on divine fore-knowledge) to give an action its full merit of reward or punishment till its whole set of consequences in the endless future have come out and been measured? For, the seriousness of an action is to be measured both by the intention and by the consequences. Would the world as a scheme of trial for man exist in the face of such immediate punishments and rewards? Indeed would the world exist at all as it is, in the midst of such punishments and rewards We cannot digress further to show the necessity of a future day of judgment but we ask whether the theory of transmigration as ordinarily conceived does not also reserve a particular time for the award of punishment and reward for the actions

Again, as has been pointed out before, the next day is only a continuation of this present day and is no way wholly distinct from it So the Prophet says, 'Reckon yourself before ye are taken to reckoning and weigh your deeds before they are weighed for you,' "showing" as Tafsir-e-Safi says, "that it behoves every one to finish with the reckoning and weighment of his actions in this life so that he may not need this to be done in the next, and so do those who are truly wise try to do." It is since but few try in this life to realise the enormity of their sins that there is need of a further day when they will be able to do so They do not have a conception of the value of their virtues either.

Verse 5 This verse has been rendered by some with a slight change of meaning —Guide us to the right path, or show us the right way The

words are of the widest application but all senses apply equally A true believer has to pray as much for this as a man who is groping in the dark about the truth or is only an initiate in Islam Even if the right path be restricted to matters of doctrine, it is obvious that the higher spiritual truths which are taught in Islam are so far above the intellect of the greatest and most advanced minds that it would be folly for any man to think he has the whole truth, and understands and realizes it perfectly For the finite mind of man there is never a completion to the understanding of divine truths Guidance in this respect is the grace to enable us to understand the higher truths perfectly Ignorance of these is in some measure a swerving from the true straight path Then, owing to historical reasons, it is only a part of the true teachings of Islam that have come down to us and that too through sources not immune from error Much that we receive as the true Islamic teaching we receive only to the best of our knowledge, hence, as is well known, Our Lord, the Mahdi will change much that we hold to be sacred tradition, so much so that many will have the presumption to anathemise him on this account Guiding in this respect is helping us to correct error or to find out new truths

But the straight path in the verse has not the chief reference to matters of doctrine of religious knowledge Man is man, and his rational element is always liable to be swayed by emotions and passions affecting his moral character, dragging him into sins, and thus taking him away from the straight path At least they become a source of interruption and make constancy in devotion and obedience impossible For a time at least man wanders away from the straight path Intellectually too these give rise to prejudices affecting his capacity to receive truths in face of evidence and also making him incapable to receive higher spiritual illumination Guiding in this sense is bestowing the grace to strengthen the mind to constancy in following the right path

All this comes mainly under the ordinary sense of guidance in the sense of direction But in the Quran the word is chiefly used in the higher sense of spiritual assistance, enabling a man to reach his destination in the spiritual world Thus this guidance on the straight path is frequently spoken of as a matter of grace to the prophets See Sura 37 119 The right path in this sense is spiritual attachment to the Prophet and the Imams, and thus it is easy to understand how in the traditions the right path is identified with our Lord Ali This will be more fully explained in note to Sura II 1 and other verses, but meanwhile it must be obvious that an essential requisite for following the right path is

intense love or fascination for a type of character which should be the highest we can conceive

." Not favoured merely in the English sense but favoured with gifts. The Arabic word implies active blessing What are these gifts and who are those so favoured? Manifestly it cannot be ordinary temporal gifts, or the straight path would be the impious ways of the most wicked men of wealth and power, of whom there are so many in this world This is absurd enough, and with equal show of reason might one argue upon the words to absolute wilfulness Clearly it is some special spiritual gifts and it is some particular persons, who having been so favoured have worked out a path which we are sought to seek and follow

If anything remains to make the suggestion complete this is supplied by the subsequent words, which show that they are such that they never go astray or do anything that could incur displeasure of God The gift, therefore is the gift of mental and moral perfection to the point of incapacity for sin or error This passage, therefore, teaches that for salvation we should seek to follow the guidance of such persons only as have attained to this degree of perfection Indeed it would be very precarious to follow other guides for there can be no security against their own being or becoming blind leaders of the blind Innocent error does not necessarily invoke the displeasure of God, but such people should not take upon themselves to act as guides or pontiffs, and people should not blindly set themselves to follow them It will be seen that to know such persons mere grace is insufficient, the direct instruction of God is necessary, for immunity from sin or error is a negative matter which can never be known without Omniscience

It is, therefore, clear that the path referred to is the path of the infallible Prophet and the infallible Imams after him and it is they who are meant with those favoured of God in this verse This is clearly stated in Sura IV 71 "And whoever follows God and the Prophet—it is these who are with those whom God has favoured unto—the prophets, the testifiers, the martyrs, the pious—an excellent companionship they have"

Hence the various comments of the Prophet and the Imams which show that it is the Shias that are meant by the words, 'Those Thou hast favoured unto,' and the other sects and all other creeds come under the category of the succeeding words The Jews are the type of people who consciously and wilfully reject the truth and sacrifice it to

their tradition,' and the Christians are the type of those who indolently fall a prey to their own imaginations without having a spirit of obstinate opposition to the truth Hence these are sometimes said to be meant by these last two phrases

Note that it is the path of the prophets that we are taught to seek for in this verse, or their spiritual companionship in Sura IV 71—not participation in their special functions Yet the Ahmadi Commentary argues from here that "the gift of Divine revelation being one of the chief of them (Divine favours) can still be bestowed upon the righteous who follow the right way" This to make out a possibility of the prophethood of Mirza Ghalam Ahmed of Qadian.

FINAL NOTE

Here we have the typical prayer of Islam It begins with preparing the mind for devotion by recalling the infinite Majesty and Graciousness of God, and ends with prayer for having the grace for devotion It is, therefore, both prayer and its realization in one, for the devotion sought for is already attained in part at least All the well-known prayers that have been left to us by the Imams are designed on the same ideal and hence their characteristic efficacy is creating the spirit of devotion in all minds and at all occasions, in however indifferent a mood they may happen to be.

Again notice, by using words of the widest implications, this brief Sura of seven verses covers the entire system of Muslim theology, one has only to reflect seriously over the words and he has the whole spiritual system laid bare before him. Finally from a literary point of view we notice an artistic correspondence of the later petitionary and the former Hallelujistic portions Thus "Thee do we worship" corresponds with Allah, worship being due to God as the Supreme Being "Thee we seek aid from" corresponds with "*Rabb*", see the force of the word *Rabb* in the note above 'Guide us Thou on the right path, the path of those Thou hast favoured unto' corresponds with *Rahman* and *Rahim* The last words in which error is sought to be avoided harmonise with the epithet of God as the master of the day of judgment Such an artistic arrangement is called *Laf-o-Nashre Murattab*, designed by Persian poets centuries after the Prophet's time, and by them too used only for sounds of words—not of their spirit and sense

SURAH II.

THE COW (AT BAQRAH).

Revealed at Medinah with some Mecca ones.

SECTION 1

[The Word of God a perfect guidance Requisites for the same, Rejection seals the heart against it.]

In the name of Allah, the God of Mercy, the Merciful (R).

1 A. L. M. (Alif, Lam, Mim) That's *(zalika)* the Book (P). No doubt therein—a guidance for the pious (God-fearing, B)

2 Who believe in the unseen, and keep up prayer and expend out of what We have bestowed on them;

3. And who believe in that which hath been sent down unto thee and that which hath been sent down before thee, and in the next world they have undoubting faith, (are sure of the hereafter A)

4 These are on guidance from their Lord and these are they who prosper (shall thrive B)

5 Verify those who reject, it is the same for them whether thou warnest them *whether* thou warnest them not, they will not believe.

6. God hath set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing and there is a covering over their eyes and a great punishment is *in store* for them.

Bismillah. See notes in Surah 1 The rendering which has been taken from Rodwell is expressive in that it keeps up in English the peculiarity of the Arabic word *Rahman*, that while it means much the same thing as *Rahim*, it is the word used exclusively for God and never of anything else The phrase 'God of Mercy' is analogous to such expressions, in common use as the man of noble heart—the 'of' here indicating distinctive quality With the capital G used there is no fear of confounding the epithet with the gods of heathenism.

A L M There are several Suras that begin with letters like this Some hold that the meaning intended by these letters is known to God only but this seems hardly reasonable—what would then be the good of revealing them at all? Others say the understanding of these letters and their interpretation is reserved only for the Prophet and the Imams This is quite reasonable, there is nothing absurd in the idea that some portions of the revelation were meant not for the people at large but for those only to whom the revelation was given It is wrong to think that the whole of the Quran was meant merely for the guidance of the people and that too by itself (See note on Surah III, 5, note on متشابهات) These letters are crying proofs to the fact that portions, if not the whole of Quran, are not meant to be read and understood of themselves and their right meaning can be known only according to the interpretation given them by those who are appointed by God Himself to be its teachers

Some traditions show the numerical values of these letters were used by the Imams in framing a sort of philosophy of history and theology, foretelling future events Noeldeke, who is always after creating new theories of his own, thinks these letters were no part of the revelation but were simply initials of collators prefixed to the Surah to memorise their services In this view he is followed by Rodwell, Palmer, etc It never occurred to these men how wonderful it was that, contrary to their design, every trace of them was forgotten and of the thousands of Sahabas who jealously fought about every letter of the Quran, not only no one cared to question the propriety of this method of perpetuation, but all so completely forgot this simple origin that they themselves began to look upon them with a superstitious sense of mystery There are hundreds of prayers transmitted from the earliest times in which these letters are cited with a mysterious import It is right to add that I learn Noeldeke has recently discarded this old conjecture of his regarding the origin of these letters

Zalika—As noted by Palmer it is wrong to translate *Zalika* by 'this" The correct rendering is that Book To explain or, rather, to explain away the use of this word here several conjectures have been made One very learned commentator says, the meaning is, 'This is that Book *viz*, that Book which was prophesied of by the former prophets' Lane suggests that the word has been used to indicate the high estimation in which the Holy Quran is held in the sight of God Palmer imagines that here a heavenly scroll containing the text of the Quran was shown to the Prophet, basing his opinion on the popular Sunni tradition that some such was shown to him on the revelation of the first verses of the Quran, Surah, 96 1—5

All these conjectures are plausible enough, but to me it seems it is Palmer's that comes nearest the highest truth as explained by Our Lord Jafer el Sadiq to which we are coming presently There is no doubt there is reference here to the original complete Book, the *Ummul Kitab* in heaven. To those who might think there are literally libraries of books in heaven nothing need be said, but to those who think these are expressions of higher spiritual realities, say thoughts expressible in certain words, the question must arise what do thoughts reside in but in a spirit? This simple thing, if rightly understood will enable the reader to see that in its highest sense it is the Living Word of God that is meant here

The Quran as it was revealed to the Prophet was something quite different from what it is when we read and study it To him it was a Light, every verse of it, giving a direct intuition of realities that we might search for in the words but only in vain The truth is we have not the complete word of God before us, the complete word of God is the Revelation *plus* the light that attended it—the Light that teaches all things The words revealed may be said to contain the germs of all truths, but practically they express only a minute fraction of them For the rest they are practically symbols only, keys to the revelation of new truths in minds that have access to that Light All this has been sufficiently explained in the Introduction The sum of it all is that the Word of God is something more than a mere set of passages It is a living reality—the manifestation of a spirit, or a spirit in itself, as it calls itself in Surah 42 52. It is this complete Word of God that is spoken of here

All this may appear very wonderful to us who are steeped in the gross materialism of this age but anybody can see that there must be a world of difference between a revelation from God to His Prophet and the communications of the spiritists which we are apt to think these revelations to be like But for it there could be no assurance to any prophet that he was really receiving a communication from God.

The subject is as important as it is difficult, and so we beg a little more patience from the reader over it. There is a truth in the Christian doctrine of Logos, a truth misunderstood, and carried as far as divinity, but a truth of spiritual philosophy all the same The prophets and the Imams are themselves Word of God. Those who know anything of spiritualism know that when one mind acts on another there is practically a case of possession, a participation of one spirit in another This participation may be partial or complete, temporary or lasting—any way it is a case of union and might become a case of complete identity We also know that we are much greater than we know ourselves to be Our souls

have powers of which we know nothing Spiritually we act and are acted upon though we never become aware of either There may be thoughts, feelings, and emotions—all our own yet we know nothing of them. Consider now the spirits of men infinitely greater than ourselves—the Prophet and the Imams Like ourselves they must have spirits over and above their conscious souls in this physical plane of existence. They should be immeasurably greater, holier and more powerful than our own. There, in that plane of existence their spirits must be permeated with the spirit of God—the light that constitutes the Word of God They must participate in it to the point of identity They must therefore be the veritable Word of God in that place of existence, and, so far as they are in touch with it, they are so in physical life as well As men on the physical plane, subject to the limitations of the flesh they receive its illumination as from without, in the spirit, that constitutes the distinctive feature of their existence Thus there is an element of truth in the Christian doctrine of Christ's Double nature as well It was this great truth that they brought to the height of absurdity by conceiving the other nature to be no other than God

It is to this great truth of the double nature of the prophets and Imams as men and as Word of God in spirit, that when commenting on this verse our Lord Jafar el Sadiq says that the Book here is Our Lord Ali, i e, in spirit (*See Tafsir Ali 'bn Ibrahim, &c.*) See also *safi, in loco*

The same truth can be brought home philosophically in other ways as by reference to Spinoza's doctrine of the same reality expressed in different forms of existence But the note has already become lengthy enough and we refrain

'No doubt therein' That is, owing the obviousness of its inspiration from God Being a miracle it carries the evidence of its origin with itself even for unbelievers The light that attends it gives assurance to the Prophet who receives it.

'Guidance for the pious' These words emphasize the truth of what we have said in the last note It is a low conception of the Word of God to say that it is meant merely or mainly for the instruction of the unbelievers, and those who are fairly guided into belief and piety may dispense with it thereafter For such elementary instruction as the unbelievers require for their conversion their mere reason might be sufficient. However the Quran serves as a guide for them too To begin with, what they require is chiefly admonition The Quran is full of it. Then they require miracles as evidence for the truth of Islam as a mission from God The Quran supplies these in numbers That may take them to the portals of faith—belief and piety From there will begin the higher guidance that the Word of God is especially meant for. Hence it is that

the word guidance is usually used in the Quran in connection with the faithful—in the sense of higher instruction—*an illumination or grace to them for spiritual elevation.** The word used usually in connection with unbelievers is *Inzar* warning or admonition

The truth is the Quran is guidance for all, but in different degrees according to their moral capacities to yield to its guidance and receive its illumination. Even for his bare conversion the unbeliever requires certain moral qualities analogous to those of believers described in the verse

How the faithful stand in need of a further guidance has been explained at length in note to Surah 1 5 and we need not repeat it here Indeed, however far advanced a man may be in faith and virtues he does stand in need of a guidance further, to lift him upwards in spirituality The thing is repeatedly emphasized in the Quran Thus in Surah 20 24 God says 'I am the forgiver for him who turns (to God from sin and error) and believes and practises virtue and then is guided' (*Summa Ihtada*) What is this extra guidance which is sought over and above true religious and moral conversion? Whatever it is, it is this that is spoken of here, for the succeeding words in this and the following verse apparently seem to describe a believer perfect in faith and righteousness The truth is, perfection in these matters is out of question and higher elevation is always to be sought For this, even in matters of belief man requires, not only further instruction but illumination of mind to understand and duly assimilate higher spiritual truths far removed from the general trend of ordinary knowledge Again he requires grace first to keep him up in faith and virtue and to prevent him from swerving from the right path For either of these things man's personal efforts are not of much avail He requires guidance in the sense of spiritual assistance from without—from the Word of God as explained in last note What he requires to do is to keep himself attached—by the strongest ties of love to the Holy souls of the Prophet and the Imams so as to be able to receive their spiritual graces and influences He has to yield to this higher guidance, keep his mind prepared to receive it, and the guidance will come as a matter of course

Even in matters of ordinary faith, it will be observed, man cannot do without spiritual assistance from without Man is so complicated a thing, subject to such complicated forces, both within and without—heredity, temperament, habits, education, society, to say nothing of the secretly

* NOTE.—Guidance has been distinguished to be of two kinds, one like that of a road pointer which simply serves to point the right path if one chooses to adopt it, the other is that of a guide proper who takes the man along with him and sees him reach his destination. It is the latter and higher sense that word is usually used in the Quran. The former is hardly of any value.

working influences, subconscious thoughts and feelings, telepathic influences of other spirits, that it is vain to expect from him consistency of his feelings with his thoughts How can he, then, be perfectly adapted for faith, which is nothing but consistency of feelings and emotions with beliefs? Were this so, every believer in God would be god-fearing, it would be impossible for any believer in the Holy Prophet not to love him intensely—and not only him but his family as well, for feelings are as much subject to the laws of association as thoughts He should intensely hate their enemies, for love without that is meaningless Everybody knows how far this is realised in history, in his own life and in others The thing is that the normal consciousness of man which is alone amenable to reason is too much restricted, too much swayed by passions, prejudices, and other influences, within and without These so alter the character of his faith, so seriously impair the consistency and commensurability of his emotions with his beliefs, that his faith, as it is, becomes sham, worthless, vain How can he then do without constantly seeking grace from God and those He has appointed to administer it? This is the higher guidance that is to be sought over and above ordinary faith and practice and this, the word of God, the complete word of God, is specially meant to impart

Such being the nature and work of Guidance it can easily be seen how much of it depends on the Living Word of God as explained in the first note But it would be wrong to think that the Holy Quran—the Surahs and verses of it—are wholly unavailable for this purpose There are books and books There are books that simply teach, and there are books that—by the power of words—stir and stimulate fill the mind with emotions carry the reader away into the spirit of the author And the Holy Quran is a miracle for its effect on the reader By the mere power of words it can fill us with its spirit This by itself is receiving grace from the Living Word of God Any way, by reading it the mind will be filled with a spirit of holiness and thus prepared gradually to receive grace and illumination from the Holy Imams

To sum up, the Book of God is truly a perfect guidance but only when taken as an expression of the Living Word of God—as leading to the Prophet and the Imams both by direct teaching and by a sort of spiritual influence on the spirit But, for this to be effective there should be a spirit of willingness, rather of seeking to receive the higher guidance, in short a spirit of piety analogous to faith If there is any spirit of aversion or even indifference to the true source of guidance the teaching of the Quran may do something for moral elevation, but it will never be a complete guide to true spiritual life

Indeed even for ordinary teaching from the Quran we cannot dispense with the Prophet and the Imams For it itself declares (Surah 3 6) that parts of it are not intelligible to any—any except God and those firmly established in knowledge Who will presume, for himself or for others, to be such without divine warrant? The truth is, the two elements in the Word of God—the Book, and the Prophet and the Imams, are no way seperable, as the Prophet has several times declared expressly both according to the Sunni and Shia traditions We should never forget that the Quran was never meant to be read alone independently of its divine exposition At least, when so read it can never be a complete guide

Verses 2 & 3 Faith consists in assent to and belief in the reality of things taught in religion but not open to direct observation, such as existence of God known by reason, inspiration of prophets and the Imams believed in by its special evidences, existence of angels, and nearly all about the spiritual world and the life to come, on the testimony borne to in the revelation and the teachings of the Prophet and the Imams Of these there is much about which there can be no pretension to a distinct conception even, what to say of knowledge, yet assent is given to all that is taught however incomprehensible it may be The sole value of faith depends on the openness of mind to give assent to whatever is established on satisfactory evidence, however difficult it may be to harmonise it with the familiar world of knowledge and observation This want of perfect harmony in consciousness constitutes the main difficulty of faith and in the evercoming of this difficulty consists its chief moral value If all were open to observation, or even easily intelligible, or if the set of evidences were so overwhelming as to compel belief, without requiring any special qualities of the head and heart to receive them, belief would lose all its value as it will do in the last day This state is called *Kashfe Ghitaa* or upliftng of the veil There is no moral value of knowing that iron rusts or that the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the sides

"Keep up prayers" etc Religious duties are meant to serve as an exercise for the development of moral excellences that are requisite for higher spiritual life Of these the principal are submissive devotion to God and charity to fellow creatures Hence prayer and charity are singled out as the representative of all the rest Also faith calls into play not only the gifts of the intellect but also emotions The healthy development of sublime emotions is essential for it, and the intensity and profusion of these feelings make amends for what is lacking in knowledge to produce a thorough conviction.

ve 5 There is a distinction between *kufr* as a doctrine and *kufr* as a spirit. The former is simply misbelief and may be due to ignorance or indolence or similar causes The latter is unbelief due to a spirit of obstinay, jealousy, opposition, and other intense prejudices Again the latter may be conscious or it may be hidden in the deeper strata of consciousness transmitted by heredity. It is those that have this spirit of *kufr* that properly come under the category of this verse, and so they are spoken of as those that have rejected. The *allaẓina-kufraru* has a far different force from *kufa-* which has come to be general word for all misbelievers, and it is a great mistake to render *kafiru* as such, as Palmer does in the numerous verses in which it or its root is used. In most cases the best rendering of the word would be 'those who reject' as in the first instance it is those of the Prophet's day that are spoken of in the verse of the Quran Thus the *allaẓina-kafaru* in this verse are properly the infidels in the immediate neighbourhood of the Prophet who were called to Islam, were constantly witnessing miracles and other evidences, yet persisted in rejecting that evidence and deliberately refused to believe owing to national or traditional prejudices Thus the true import of the designation here—those whose unbelief or rejection of truth was a mood of their mind or was a conscious act of their own rather than a passive result of their ignorance Of these it is always true that their conversion is very difficult, and even if they got converted as in the latter days of Prophet's triumph, their Islam did not rise above that of the Munafiqs (dissemblers) or half-believers, which is hardly anything better Strictly however, the verse refers specially to the chief infidels of Mecca and Medina whose position and influence was such that their conversion should have greatly facilitated and hastened the progress of Islam, and so owing to the persistent unbelief of these the Prophet was very much dejected. Thus God says in Surah 26 2 لعلك باخع نفسك الا يكونوا مومنين "perhaps thou wouldst kill thyself with grief that they do not come to belief"

Of the conversion of the masses he knew by divine foresight and this had already been foretold in one of the Mecca Surahs

But whether the words refer to particular men or to unbelievers generally it is wrong to infer from the strong words used that the Arabs such as they were, or those that may be like them now or in the future, they are all of them wholly incapable of conversion With growing long-cherished prejudices the capacity for true rectification goes diminishing to the vanishing point, yet it never vanishes altogetner So in another passage where similar words are used there is a slight reservation, 'But God has sealed on their hearts so they will not believe except a few (or a little). 4 154 (For further discussion see note in Supp).

SECTION 2

Hypocritical and half believers Are self-deluded, have only partial faith, and lend themselves to error Two parables showing how their partial faith is useless and easily extinguished

8 And of men there are some who say We believe in God and the last day, but there are not at all believers

9 They would deceive God and those who do believe but they deceive not save themselves, and they do not perceive

10 There is ailment in their hearts and God hath increased to them their ailment, and for them there is a grievous woe (azab) for that they wont to lie

11 And when it is said to them, Do not make mischief in the land they say, Nay, rather we set things right

12 Behold! Verily they! They themselves are mischief-makers, but they perceive it not

13. And when it is said to them, Believe as the people believe, They say, Shall we believe as fools believe? Behold! Verily they! they themselves are the fools though they know it not

14 And when they meet those who believe, they say, We do believe, but when they are alone with their devils they say, We are with you, we were but mocking

15 God mocketh at them and carrieth them on in their rebellion (so) they (go about) bewildered

16 These are they who buy error in exchange for guidance so their traffic profiteth not and they are not guided.

17 Their parable is like the parable of one who kindleth a fire and when it hath lighted all around him,

God taketh away their light and leaveth them in utter darkness—they cannot see

18 Deaf, dumb (and) blind; wherefore they will not turn back

19 Or like a storm-cloud from the sky wherein are darknesses and thunder and lightning—they put their fingers in their ears, because of the thunder-claps for fear of death, but God encompasseth the unbelievers

20 The lightning would well-nigh snatch off their sight, whenever it is bright for them they walk therein but when it is dark over them they halt, and if God pleased He could surely take away their hearing and their eyes; Verily God hath power over all things

Verse 8 This and the next 12 verses are devoted to the Munafiqs, a people who were in the first place never converted or were only half converted and made only a show of conversion owing to the increasing strength and political power of the Musalmans The leader of this party was Abdullah 'bn Obai who had been nearly settled on to be made the ruling chief of Medina—this in order to put an end to the long-continued wars and contentions that had been going on between Aus and Khazraj, the two principal tribes of Medina This prospect of his sovereignty vanished altogether when the Prophet came from Mecca to Medina, and conversions soon following, the hostilities of the two tribes died a natural death and a new kind of supremacy, the spiritual one, was acknowledged for the Prophet This set up an ineradicable spirit of jealousy in the heart of this man and his partizans and these became a centre of the disaffected, dissembling or half-believing factions

It must be remembered that the term Munafiq, which occurs frequently in the Quran is not restricted to those who were deliberate hypocrite and feigned Islam from worldly considerations Thus mention is made of them even in the early Meccan Surahs when there was little likelihood of dissembling from temporal interests See Surah 29 10 and all the preceding verses in that Surah The term is applied to all who were no

Note —The numbering of verses has from this section been changed so as to agree with the Ahmadi version. Verse 8 therefore is really verse 7 of the Quran.

sincere believers It covers all shades of indolent half-conversion, all whose conversion was not based on a firm conviction of the truth of Islam, or even having that conviction, did not realize it well, and, having low ideas of what a prophet should be, had not the appropriate emotions of love and reverence for him in an adequate degree so as to submit to him in all matters and be attached to him with a wholehearted attachment,—all these were more or less of Munafiqs

Pure hypocrites who were simply making a show of belief were probably not a very wide class The majority were half-believers who were either not true religious converts, or being really so had little capacity for higher spiritual conceptions and the requisite religious emotions Witness some people suspecting the Prophet of theft Sura 3 155 note It is easy to see that such people would hardly be able to keep up their faith when the teachings of Islam or the practical commands given to them did not well harmonise with everything else in their minds, anything that they otherwise held or perceived to be probable or true Witness their doubts and reluctance to cut down date trees in the seige of Banu Nazeer Surah 59 5 note On their reluctance to perform the rites of Hajj after the, to them, humiliating treaty of Hudaibiyah Surah 48 19 note On their murmers when the Prophet proclaimed general amnesty at Mecca and they were disappointed of their looting All these men would hardly be said to be believers in any true sense of the word, yet believers they surely were in their own way and it would be unfair to class them as pure hypocrites Between perfect faith and decided unbelief there are infinite degrees of acceptance and rejection—the majority of men always remain in a state of half-belief, however little they may know it themselves It is only in cases of trial, whether of faith or action that their wavering condition becomes patent to themselves This is the self-delusion which is referred to in verse 9 When such is the case among ourselves who are born and bred in Islam for generations, it must clearly have been much more so among the early converts, who further had, most of them, not the capacity even to understand the faith they had adopted It is not surprising therefore that we find Calif Omar confessing with remorse that he got to have serious doubts about the truth of the Prophet's apostleship on his consenting to the peace of Hudaibiyah

The Sunni commentor Haqqani makes three classes of Munafiqs (1) Pure dissemblers with downright unbelief inwardly (2) Not an unbeliever truly, but neither a true believer withal (3) Truly assenting to faith, but not a perfect believer so that when worldly temptations prevail it may not be impossible for him to take up sides against believers and revile religion.

He adds a fourth of an inferior kind, one who is not true to his professions in practical conduct

'They deceive God and those who have believed truly' Perfect realization of God's infinite and immanent knowledge is a very difficult attainment, or sins might become a practical impossibility Man is always liable to think that his real motives and purposes are hidden from God Thus when a man is forced (from worldly considerations, as to keep up his reputation or to secure the good will of others) to do an act ostensibly virtuous, he persuades himself that he has done it in a truly virtuous spirit and expects God to reward him as such This is nothing but deceiving God though it is no more than self-delusion Our Lord Jafar-el-Sadiq says, the Prophet being asked, wherein consisted salvation, he replied, 'In this that ye do not deceive God for He will then deceive you Whoever deceives God, God deceives him and takes away faith from him If he could understand he would see it is his own mind that he is deceiving'

In the note on the previous verse we have seen that the transition from the faith of the true believers to that of the hypocrites is continuous Hypocrisy might lurk in all and requires to be particularly guarded for in ourselves It must have been much more glaring in most early converts who were generally little better than half-believers However much they pretended it to others, or even resolved to hold it in their minds, their assent was never complete and did not go down to their hearts And however much they concealed it they never got rid of their spirit of envy and grudge, so natural against a man rising to power and setting up a theocracy with himself and his family at its head It is this which all were trying to conceal, some from their own minds by thinking it away as much as they could, and thereby became victims of self-delusion The downright dissemblers who really disbelieved but made only a show of belief of course concealed their thoughts and feelings from others This the half-believers were also wont to do in matters in which they could not thoroughly appreciate the teachings of Islam but they had to profess their assent to and belief in them Here the concealing was in the main from others, but the word applies equally to them The word 'Anfusahum' might be rendered both as 'their souls,' and 'their fellows,' so that the passage might also be rendered to mean that they deceive their fellows

How in this latter sense could they possibly be imagined to be, consciously or inconsciously, deceiving God? The answer is whatever behaviour one bears to the Holy Prophet, it means the same behaviour to

God. Thus in 4 82 we are taught 'Whoever obeys the Prophet he has obeyed God' and the Prophet says 'Fatima is a part of me, whoever gives pain to her, does the same to me and whoever gives pain to me does the same to God' The original Arabic repeats the word *asa* 'gives pain to' each time in this famous tradition.

Verse 10 The ailment is understood to be doubt or unbelief, more probably it is their spirit of envy and jealousy Even if it is the former the verse is only an expression of the natural tendency of predispositions and prejudices to increase with time, and is as little open to criticism as verse 6 commented alone In the case of these men, Munafiqs, however, it may be truly said that in an indirect way God increased their desease, for it was God who was at the back of the Prophet and his success was due pre-eminently to His providence The more his success was complete the more was their impotent rage inflamed and the more they began to hate the Prophet and his true assistants.

Verse 11 To explain this verse some commentators say that the Munafiqs (the conscious deliberate dissemblers of the party of Abdullah 'bn Obai and the like) continued to mix with the jews and the infidels and remained intimate with him, and when this excited suspision, they said they were *muslihun* (in the sense of peace makers) that is they sought to bring infidels to friendly terms with the Musalmans But their real object was to upset the growing power of the Musalmans—by their duplicity and underhand practices So far this is intelligible enough But how is it that being deliberate mischief-makers, doing that consciously though secretly, they not only said they were doing well, but did not really know what they were doing (see next verse) To explain this some give a different turn to the words altogether Thinking that by their duplicity and their efforts to set the infidels against the Muslims they improve their own position in life, they really spoil it, for like the Musalmans the infidels too do not trust them So that the word mischief-makers in verse 12 is used in reference to their own interests!

The two verses make it clear that the Munafiqs spoken of all through this section are not confined to those of the deliberate dissembling class Rather than these, who were not very many in number and were mostly well-known to all, these verses relate specially to those nominal half-believing converts who believed in Islam in their own way considering it a good form of religion after all, yet giving their assent to it only so far as it agreed with their notions and inclinations In their own way they were believers, but they were not in a mood even to trust the Prophet in all matters, much less to love him or have regard for his relations on his

account Consciously or unconsciously, they retained their spirit of prejudice and aversion to the Prophet and his relations, both personally and politically As a spiritual theocracy was being evolved these men were feeling it very keenly and were intriguing and being intrigued to maintain the temporal power in their own hands, and in their feeble nominal belief many thought *really* that this was the best for the world. They could not appreciate the purely spiritual government the Prophet was seeking to set up with himself and his decendants at their head, and thought that would make the world too hot for them to live So they thought that what they were doing to prevent this was the best for the world Nay, says God, they themselves are the mischief-makers on earth little knowing what they do

Verse 13 This verse shows that they believed in their own way but were not prepared to accept the teachings or directions of the Prophet in all matters Faith is indeed a very difficult acquisition and many people are almost incapable of it Unless the teachings of religion harmonise entirely with all other knowledge and notions in the mind, and are congenial to the tastes, emotions and inclinations in the heart it is a very difficult thing to believe And herein lies the great trial of faith and its chief spiritual value

Verse 15 'God mocketh at them' That is, owing to their persistence in infidelity God has left them to their state and cut off His grace from them (see note at end of section 1 in Supp) The expression repeating the same word in the retort is the strongest form of Arabic expression for giving tit for tat Requital, be it reward or punishment, is emphatically expressed by using the same word in both cases though it does not necessarily involve community in the nature of the two acts, or even any similarity between them except in the general moral effect The mockery of God is explained in the verse to consist in His granting respite to these men Having nominally embraced Islam they are admitted to its society and all the special rights and privileges of Musalmans are applicable to them They continue to enjoy them till in the course of time they delude themselves that they have its true spiritual graces and so hope for salvation in the Hereafter—there to be disappointed

Verse 16 Mark the expression They purchase error by or at the price of guidance *i.e* exchange the one for the other This could not be said of persons who had never believed at all Surely they had something of true faith in them, but they parted with it to have misdirection instead

Verse 17 In this simile it is their Islam that is compared to the fire kindled for light The momentary light they get is the social privileges they gain thereby, the outward moral advance they get to by its aid, and the service they render in spite of themselves to the cause of Islam 'God taketh away their light,' after death as is supposed by some, but not necessarily The spark of faith that is kindled in them is easily extinguished by the adverse emotions—envy and malice—that are raging in their hearts Notice, it was they that had kindled the fire for light, that is, had in some sense became believers really The expression could not be used of pure downright hypocrites To avoid this the Ahmadi Comm says the kindler of the fire here is the Holy Prophet!

Verse 18 On this verse the Ahmadi Comm is forced to admit that 'the description seems to apply to those spoken in verse 5 (true believers) and accordingly the first parable may apply to them in stead of to the hypocrites ' What, indeed, are they to return to, having never been believers at all ? For deaf, dumb and blind Cf 22 45 "Now it is not eyes that become blind but the hearts that are in the chests "

Verse 19 Faith is the life-giving shower of rain which quickens the dead dry earth, but it is attended with darkness of things unknown and mysterious and with dreadful calls of duty and terrors of punishment in the Hereafter From the latter they turn away as if it were death for them and this well-nigh affects their capacity to understand Whatever is intelligible to them in doctrine or is palatable to them in matters of conduct they accept, all else they view with secret misgivings—doubting and amazed—and are no way ready to go on with it. Having thus crippled their faith it is meet that God should put an end to their outward senses too, on which they rely so much, but God is not going to do that. When a condition is expressed by *law* for ' if ' it is understood that the condition is not to be realised

SECTION 3

The blessings of God on man place him under an obligation to serve and adore him The Quran is a standing miracle None can ever produce the like of it Those who yet do not believe are doomed to Hell, believers if they are virtuous are to be rewarded with a happier and more perfect life in the next world, with features not essentially distinct from this Revilers not able to comprehend the Quran They are those who break the covenant of God and cut off the bonds that could attach them to higher souls for spiritual life Death not the final goal. All creation has been working for needs of man.

21. O ye men! Serve (with adoration, *Eabudoo*) your Lord (Rabb) who created you and those before you, that haply ye may fear

22 (He) Who made the earth a bed for you and the heavens *(Samaa)* a canopy *(binaan)* and sent down water from heaven and brought forth therewith fruits as sustenance for you Set not up therefore peers unto God, knowing (what ye do)

23. And if ye are in doubt regarding what We have sent down unto our servant (adoring, *abd*) then bring forth a surah like unto it, and call on your witnesses, (any) besides God if ye are truthful

24 But if ye do it not, and never surely will ye do it, then fear the fire, whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the unbelievers

25 And bear thou to those who believe and do acts of righteousness the glad tidings that for them are gardens beneath which flow rivers, they will be supplied therefore with fruits (for sustenance, *Ruziqoo*) they will say, This is what we were supplied with before, and they will be provided with it in a like form (*mutashabihan*) and there will be pure wives for them and therein they shall abide for ever.

26 Surely God doth not blush to make use of a parable, be it a gnat or anything beyond; now as for those who believe they know it is truth from their Lord, and as for those who believe not, they say, what is it that God meaneth by this parable (Thus it is that) with it He leadeth many astray and (also) leadeth many aright thereby, but it is none He leadeth astray thereby except the wicked *(fasiqeen)*.

27. Those who break the covenant of God after the fixing there-of and cut off that which God hath bidden to be attached and make mischief in the land, these it is that are the losers.

28 How (is it that) ye deny God? Whereas ye were without life and He made you alive, next he will cause you to die, next will restore you to life (again) and next shall ye be brought back to Him

29 He it is who created for you all that is on earth, then He made for the heavens and fashioned them seven heavens and He knoweth all things

Verse 21 Mark the word *laalla* 'perhaps' This expressive word is word artistically of God to show what He aims at, yet that it is not his fixed and final decree, else there would be no room for human liberty Similar expressions abound in the Quran and all have to be understood in a similar way Thus in 29 10 we read 'That God may know the Munafiqs from the believers, ' in 3 186 ' 'God has not yet known' Clearly such expressions are all mere figures of speech Indeed God having undertaken to speak in the language of man, He must necessarily set limitations to Himself, and whereever He speaks of Himself the language must be figurative

Also mark how the word Rabb 'protector or nourisher (see note I 1) has been selected here in preference to the numerous others to show that worship and obedience should be done in spirit of thankfulness for His abiding grace and favour Our Lord Ali excellently distinguished obedience as of three characters, one, that of slave (for fear of punishment), second, that of men of business (in hope of gaining a reward) and, third, that of free men (in thankfulness for gifts and favours) The verse gives five arguments to show that God is Rabb in the fullest sense, being not only their Creator and Master but also their Upholder, and Caretaker—making provision for their life happiness and development

Verse 23 See Surah 17 90 'Say even if the men and genii were to unite to bring a composition like this Quran they will not be able to bring its like even though they set themselves to assist each other' The challenge was reduced into bring ten surahs like it and here it is reduced to only one though some consist only of three or four short sentences Thus shows that that the challenge refers to Surahs individually and not to the total effect of the whole Book which the Ahmadi Comm seems to think is all that is challenged He says 'Is it a question of mere style and diction? The Quran itself does not say so, nor does any saying of the Holy Prophet. That the Quran is a unique production of Arabic literature goes without saying, but the chief characteristic of the Holy

Book, in which no other book can claim equality is the wonderful transformation which it accomplished, and it is to this characteristic that it lays claim in the very commencement when it says "This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who guard against evil Besides every word of the Quran gives expression to Divine Majesty and Glory in a manner which is not approached by any other sacred book, hence the challenge of the Holy Quran remains unanswered to this day'

The multifarious sets of arguments which show that the Quran is a veritable miracle have been given at some length in the Introduction Thus apart from literary excellences there are prophecies fulfilled long after, and remarkable statements about facts of nature which could not have been known to any man in that age yet the progress of scientific knowledge has thoroughly established their reality Also as to the literary excellences of the Quran, it is shown that most of these are of a very high order which were far beyond the conception even of the Arabs of the day, and can be compared only to the higher developments of the literary art in the cultured nations of the West Far from being able to imitate, it was difficult even to see clearly wherein consisted the attraction that was palpably felt to be irresistible Hence it was that from the earliest days of the revelation the Quran was held by the unbelievers to be effective fascination See Surah 74 25

Who are the 'witnesses' *Shuhadaa* whom the unbelievers are to call to their aid? Some explain it as meaning 'leaders,' others suppose it here signifies helpers This may be so if the purpose of the call is to help them in producing the required composition But it seems to me that is not the sole purpose here The Quran trusts to the good sense and candour of the mankind at large to declare if the rival composition does really approach the excellence of the Quran Hence the word used 'witness'

Verse 24 Stones are idols Cf 17 98 'ye and what ye worship are fuel of Hell'

It is a peculiar thing with the Ahmadi Commentator that whereever fire is mentioned he would understand it as a metaphorical expression for war To account for *hijarah* (stones) here he shows that the allied word *hajar* (stones) has been used metaphorically for a man difficult to deal with and therefore he translates the word *hijarah* here by leaders Such attempts to make the simple language of the Quran systematically figurative are only actuated by the desire to secularise the whole trend of the Holy Book which manifests itself throughout the whole work.

Verse 25 Just as the physical world is the necessary objective counterpart or manifestation of the spirit that acts through it (in the Hegelian Sense) and so, though not spiritual in the ordinary signification of the word, is yet a necessary element in the spirituality of the spirit, so is the case with the paradise we expect in Heaven—an objective reality just as the physical world of ours, yet an essential element in the spirituality of the spiritual world Without such an objective existence to oppose it and call for its activity upon it the spirit would lose all its meaning and become a non-entity Yet there is this difference, owing to the greater perfection of life in the other world Here the world is given as it is, and we are bound down to it, there, owing to securing the pleasure of the Creator, there will be practically a sort of creative power with us Whatever one wishes, he will have it Also in the traditions Paradise and all that appertains thereto is said to be created from the Light of Prophet and the Imams, (for explanation of which see my Principles of Shia Theology) and so is permeated with the spirit of Holiness

'They will be given of a like kind' As explained above, but for differences of perfection and spirituality there is no essential radical difference between the two worlds Indeed the next life being the continuation of the present one, only one of perfect adjustment in objective relations it is but proper and reasonable that the blessings thereof should be the same or at least analogous, so as to be capable of enjoyment by us, only adapted for this higher and more perfect life

'Wives' The Arabic word may be rendered husbands in the case of female elect This verse leads us to hope that in some cases husbands will be saved for the sake of their wives and wives for the sake of their husbands The bond of love will have its full play in the next world We are told that parents will be saved for the sake of their children died in infancy (as these must go to heaven) and friends for the sake of holy men they love If a wife has had several husbands she will be joined to him who has been most kind and loving to her

Verse 26 Words expressive of human emotions are used of God, but it must be understood that it is not the emotions (which imply change in mental state and are accompanied by physical counter-parts) but their final result that can be rightly attributed to Him See Islam in light of Shiaism p Our Lord Ali was very careful in this respect and constantly dwelt upon the corrections that have to be made in using such words as mercy or wrath of God. See his words quoted in note on 2 256 and other verses

Usually the commentators say that the parables to which objection was made were those speaking of the weakness of the false deities as in

29 41 "The parable of those who take guardians besides God is as the parable of the spider that makes for itself a house and most surely the frailest of the house is the spider's house" It is possible, that the mention of such contemptible things might have been objected to in the rude age but any one can see that there was really nothing incongruous or objectionable in that, that it should be supposed that God should be ashamed of such parables, and at any rate there seems no necessity of taking serious notice of such revilers It may be that such revilers are referred to in this verse, but the condemnation surely extends to a wider class of objectors to which some attention was surely required, especially after verses relating to the blessings of paradise which to many appear much too earthly Higher spiritual realities cannot be expressed except in terms of earthly things which hardly bear any comparison to them But it must be remembered that there is a unity of system and design in His creation, which binds the lowest to the highest, though it requires the most profound knowledge to see the connection and appreciate the aptitude of the representation In a way the whole of the Quran is a parable Words apparently meaning very ordinary things are really meant to teach truths of highest spiritual significance (see Introduction), and it is very often difficult and even apparently hopeless to see how they could stand for them So people are amazed at the apparent commonplace of many of the verses and when they are told they are meant to represent higher truths they get all the more amazed, and when the true interpretation is taught them according to the teachings of the Imams, they are unable to accept it Here is a trial of faith for the common believers That this is specially meant here is apparent from the next verse

'Leadeth astray ' Far from showing, as some would have it, that this verse shows that God takes up the part of the Enemy in misleading the world,it shows clearly that it is men alone who by their own voluntary acts expose themselves to alienation from the grace of God for guidance and thus fall into error None, says God, are misguided thereby but the wicked who break their faith &c Their own actions and course of life make it increasingly difficult for them to receive the guidance of God as has been shown in a previous note In a similar strain He says in other places 'And God misguides the sinful ' (14 32)

'Verily God doth not guide him who is extravagant and great liar ' (40 30)

Thus God doth misguide the people that reject (40 74)

In short, it is absurd to take the word *Yudillu* as meaning literally to infuse error in minds (as some schools of Sunnis hold) or like agents of

Satan to call and seduce people to embrace it All it means is the withdrawing of His grace for guidance, that too being a thing voluntarily to be sought for and accepted and not capriciously poured over the souls of the Elect

Verse 27 Which promise? The first promise, we are told, was taken of our spirits before our birth The second was on our embracing Islam But how few are those that have really surrendered their souls to God and to the authority of the Prophet and would never rebel against it! In a way every sin may be looked upon as an implied breach of pledge with God, but this cannot be the meaning here, nor does every sin doom a man to infidelity There must be some direct pledge taken by God and His Prophet from the Musalmans (for the verse relates to no others) such as was taken (see note to Sura 5 5) for Our Lord Ali's spiritual Lordship at Ghadeer Khum (and of our spirits too in the one antecedent to our birth)

"And cut off" Anything that another can rightfully claim of us, or it is our moral and religious duty to do for him, the most immediate in ordinary social relations being *Silae Rahm* or careful regard for and all sort of assistance to our relations in want and that in spiritual relations being the recognition and fulfilment of our duties to our spiritual parents, the Prophet and the Imams The chief purpose of religion is to place us in right relations in the spiritual world as that of ethics is to establish right relations in the social world The latter is thus only a preparation for, and its duties, while not less important, serve as symbols for, the higher duties required for the next

Any sin may be "mischief in the land" but the words used elsewhere have a more momentous significance as see 2 201 and note thereon The chief thing is tyranny, usurping rightful government which it is for God alone to institute on earth

It will be noticed that almost the same words are used in Surah 13 20, 21 and 25 as the distinctive features distinguishing true believers from infidels This could not be so unless the words have reference to something relating to faith—not virtues and vices merely

The implication of all this is that the words have specially reference to those who do not recieve the Imamate of Our Lord Ali and the Imams after him There can be no better proof of the truth of this than that the great Sunni commentator Hafiz Ibne Kasseer cites a report from Saad 'bn Waqqas who said that the people who fought against Our Lord Ali at the battle of Nahrwan were those referred to

in this verse (See Tafsir Ibne Kaseer *in loco*, Tafsir-i-Mawahib *in loco*, Saad 'bn Waqqas was himself an opponent of Our Lord Ali and was a friend of Moavyah He is one of the ten blessed companions of the Prophet according to the Sunnis

Verse 28. This passage is supposed to be addressed to Jews and idolatorers, but is really addressed to all There were hardly any atheists in those days and even the idolatorers with all their polytheism recognized the existence of a supereme Deity So in this verse they seem to be supposed to have some belief, nascent at least in the main doctrines of religion—resurrection &c Yet, such as they were, they are addressed as rejectors or deniers of God The truth is, every forgetfulness of God and idolence in religious matters, lack of the sense of religious responsibility which characterises the heathen is in a measure a rejection of God Again it must not be forgotten that conception of God is the main thing and this involves all that is taught in a true revelation If a man has right belief in God he is virtually a Muslim, the whole system of religion is but a corrollary from that great truth Now the right conception of God is for the most part to be arrived at only by the right method We must observe and reflect on His creation, as is repeatedly impressed in the Quran and should be cautious and sparing in the use of tradition in such matters This was the fault of the Jews who bound up their tradition inseparably with their belief in God

'Were dead'—*that is* were non-existent on this plane of existence. The pre-existence of souls in a preceding spiritual state is implied here They existed but were dead just as they will be after death *i e*, unable to take active part in the life on this earth This being dead before life is quite a different thing from the actually causing death spoken of in verse 40 11 where the infidels say to God 'Thou hast caused us to die twice and raised us to life twice, now is there any way to return,' (to earth life) (See note on that verse)

In the verse before us the *Summa*, then, in the last clause requires to be noted This shows clearly that the raising to life, spoken of before it, is something different from the final resurrection when all will return to God It has reference to the raising of the dead on the appearance of Our Lord the Mahdi of Islam

Verse 29 Some see a contradiction here to what is said in 79 30 that the earth was set on after the heavens It is replied that the proper signification of the word is, however, like the English *again* used both for succession in time and for enumeration of facts But apart from this if the

Samaa here stands for the Solar System, as is shortly to be explained, all the members of it existed together in a more or less consolidated state and it is an open question, which of them was the first to attain the definite form of a planetary body In some sense the earth may be said to be created before heavens and in some sense the reverse may be the case—in their elements they all existed together

What the seven heavens are has given rise to much speculation The ancients naturally confused it with the seven spheres of Ptolemy The modern view which has evidently been borrowed from Allama Hibatuddin (*Al-Hayatu wal Islam*) is thus sammarised by the Ahmadi commentator "In the first place it should be noted that the word *Sab'a* which signifies the number seven in the Arabic language is also used in a vague manner as meaning seven or more, several or many as Baizawi says on 9 80 (Lane's Lexicon) According to Lisanul Arab, the Arabic equivalents of the numbers seven, seventy and seven hundred are all used to indicate a large number by the Arabs Similarly Azhari explains the word *Sabien* meaning seventy as occurring in 9 80 Hence the seven heavens may signify a large number of heavens Secondly the significance of the word Samaa which means only what we see above us, should not be lost sight of Raghib Isphahani makes the meaning very clear when he says 'Every *Samaa* i e, heaven, is heaven in relation to what is beneath it, an earth in relation to what is above it' Thirdly in 65 12 it is affirmed that as there are seven heavens, so there is a like number of earths, which corroborates the conclusion drawn above Fourthly the seven heavens are on one occasion called the seven ways (23 17) and in this sense the orbit of a planet may be called its heaven In fact, this interpretation makes the significance of 65 12 very clear, for each of the seven earths, together with our earth would thus make up the eight major primary planets of the solar system"

Much of the above is sound enough, but much also that looks like mere *Tawil* (forced interpretation) There must be some reason why the word seven is used for a mere indifinite multiplicity and that not once or twice, only but always The traditions also always speak of heavens as seven though that may be due to preference for the Quranic expression. If the word seven was really used in that sense (as it is probable it was) the reason might be that the expression 'seven heavens' was in common parlance at the time, due evidently to the seven spheres spoken of by astronomers, and the traditional seven heavens spoken of by the Jews The expression was taken as it was, it was not considered proper to interfere with it, as while that might distract and unsettle the minds of the people it was after all unnecessary as teaching of exact science is no part of religion.

Any expression that could in any way represent the truth could suffice for matters like this

Similarly that the word *Samaa* stands originally for all that is above and has actually been used for atmosphere or clouds in various places in the Quran, is all very well It is certainly quite an unwarranted restriction of the word to say that it means the sky and nothing else But the presumption is in its favour, it would be the first meaning that would strike the reader and unless there are clear indications to the contrary, it would be held to mean the sky or something that might practically be a sky for us, as the Milky Way in which the solar system is placed, or the solar system itself in its primitive nebulous stage

The truth is, we have no sure guide about the Quran except the Imams The Quran is too sacred a thing to be interpreted by surmises more or less justifiable The traditions of the Imams have been analysed by the author of *Al Hadis wal Islam*, though the author is occasionally too free in his interpretations They have also been discussed in my Science and Islamic Tradition It becomes very clear that, as might be expected from the various significations of the word Sama'a this word is used in a variety of senses Thus Our Lord Ali says, 'And He cried to it (Sama'a) when it was smoke and the cords of its galaxies were intertwined' (*Nahajul Balaghat*) Anybody can see evidence for this intertwining of galaxies in the directions of the proper motions of stars (See A W Bickerton's Birth of Worlds and Systems) Here the word is clearly used for what the sky is in its true scientific sense In another address he says,

"And he made them seven heavens, the lower (part) of them being pent up wave (*Maujan Makfufan*) and the upper one of the roof preserved, the direction high, in the rolling *Falak*, the moving roof, the moving tablet" Here the description agrees with planetary orbs The lower part is the body of the planet (which being liquid at first has been condensed or at least controlled by the central force of gravitation) and the upper part in the case of everyone is the heavens we have

In a tradition Our Lord Riza speaks of each of the seven earths (Quran 65 12) having its Sama'a above it like a dome

These and other traditions and sayings of the Prophet and the Imams help us to have reliance on the general indications shown in the Ahmadi Commentator's note The subject has been treated at some length in my Science and Islamic Tradition It may, however, be pointed out that the seven ways in 23 17 are Falaks, not Sama'as and it is not right to confuse the two terms which are quite distinct In a tradition Our Lord Jafar-el

Sadiq explains that the revolution of the Falaks is due to or in respect of the bodies that move in it, (see my Science and Islamic Tradition)

The Ahmadi Commentator spoils his otherwise good and sensible note by adding at the end, "Or the seven heavens may be taken to apply to the whole of starry creation—the reference may in this case be to the seven magnitudes of the stars which may be seen by the naked eye"

SECTION 4

Creation of Adam Angels bow down to him but Satan refuses, Adam placed in Paradise of this earth Is forbidden to eat of a certain tree but, being tempted by Satan, does so and is expelled Repentance brings him back to divine favour, and word of guidance is promised to his seed Those who follow truth shall be in peace, those who rebel shall be doomed to torment

30 And when thy Lord said unto the angels, I am about to place a vicegerent on the earth, they said Wilt thou place on it one who would do evil therein and shed blood, whereas we celebrate thy praise *(nusabbihu)* and hallow *(Nuqaddisu)* Thee (God) said, verily I know what ye know not

31 And He taught Adam the names, all of them, then He set them before the angels and said, Tell me the names of these if ye are truthful

32 They said, Glory be to Thee (*Subhanaka*). We have no knowledge save what Thou hast taught us, for verily Thou! Thou art the Knowing, the Wise

33. He said, O Adam, declare to them their names and when He had declared to them their names, He said, Did I not say to you, I know all that is hidden in the heavens and in the earth, and know what ye shew forth and what ye were wont to conceal

34. And when We said to the angels, prostrate (yourselves) (do Sijdah) before Adam, they prostrated themselves

(all), but Iblis! he refused and was swelled with pride and became one of the unbelievers

35. And we said 'O Adam dwell thou and thy wife, in the garden and eat freely (of the fruits) thereof, wheresoever ye will, but do not approach this tree, lest ye twain become of the number of the wrongdoers

36 But Satan caused the twain to slide therefrom and drove them from the (happy state) they were in and We said get ye down, one of you the enemy of the other, and for you there shall be on earth an abiding place and a provision for a season

37 Then did Adam receive from his Lord (certain) words so He turned towards him (favourably) (for) verily He is the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful.

38 We said Go forth from hence, all of you, and if, (hereafter) there shall surely come guidance unto you from Me, then who-so follows My guidance there shall be no fear for them, neither shall they grieve

39 But those that reject and call our signs lies, they are the fellows of the Fire; therein shall they abide for ever.

Verse 30 Angels These, according to the teachings of the Quran and the traditions are real, finite, rational beings, immaterial, but capable of manifesting themselves to form-bound creatures, as the prophets, in special forms They are a form of existence wholly unknown and inconceivable to us But the inconceivablity is only due to our limitations and that is no reason to reject their reality Thus one of our limitations is that we are confined to three-dimentional space and can conceive no other though the possiblity of special existence in higher dimensions is an admitted truth in Mathematics Indeed the great physicist Zoolner used the idea to account for the physical manifestations of spiritual powers If there is a real 4 —dn world our 3 —dn world would be to it as the surface is to a cube, always affected and controlled by it, and having 4 —dn existences at every point in it, yet we should be wholly unaware of its existence and incapable to conceive it We do not mean to say that angels are such

four or higher dimensional beings, we know practically nothing about them, we mean to indicate the possiblity of a form of existence inconceivable to us, yet all the time in and about us and controlling the forces of nature known to us. Their existence is purely an article of belief for us, we cannot prove their existence They belong to a wholly different plane of existence All their descriptions must therefore be more or less allegorical We must take them as they are without any attempt to form a distinct conception All such conceptions being limited to physical forms must be essentially wrong

Morally they are believed to be sinless, they have different grades of knowledge, and so there may be errors of judgment. It does not appear that freedom of will is wholly taken away from them, but they occupy a scale of existence in which temptations in our sense of the word are out of question They may have shortcomings of their own kind which are wholly above our conception.

It is wrong, utterly wrong to take them as the Ahmadi Commentator and other rationalists do to take them as a mere name for the powers of good Were it so there must have been something to indicate this in the way they are mentioned And having been believed as real existences from ages prior to the time of the Prophet, it was all the more unjustifiable to speak of them again in a form that would perpetuate the old erroneous conception.

Khalifa The word (from *Khalafa*, he came after or succeeded another) etymologically means a successor, any one who comes after or succeeds another But the word in this form is used only of a successor or vicegerent in a position of authority The "Calif" of English writers is the same word and indicates a successor of the Holy Prophet. Ibn Masud and Ibn Abbas explain *Khalifa* as meaning one who judges among or rules the creatures of Allah by his command *(Tabari)* compare Surah 38 25 "O David, We have made thee *Khalifa* on earth so do thou rule (or judge) among mankind with justice" This restriction of the word to the sense of a ruler is not a matter of the Islamic terminology, it was used in that sense from the earliest times Thus when in compliance with the verse 'And warn thy nearest relations' Surah 26 214 the prophet invited his kinsmen to dinner and, inculcating Islam to them as a religion that would make them masters of Arabia and Persia, offered to them that whoever would on that occasion stand up to accept the offer and stand by his side would be his minister, heir, Calif &c, Our Lord Ali alone responded, and the Prophet proclaimed him as such On this all rose up in disgust and laughingly said to Abu Talib 'Now do thou obey thy son' It was this very term used

on this occasion (Baghawi) The addition that Islamic terminology made to the sense of that the was that the word came to denote Muslim monarchs not only as successors of the prophet, but as vicegerents of God on earth Thus the arch-infidel Hajjaj, the governor of Calif Abdul Malik is reported to have once said to the people 'Is not a man's calif better than his messenger' (Iqdul Farid) meaning that Abdul Malik was better than the Holy Prophet It is certainly in this sense i e as vicegerent of God that the word is used in this verse and in Surah 38 25 cited above

All this restriction in the meaning of the word as a specific term for Muslim monarchs is limited to the singular form Khalifah The plural forms, Khalaef, Khulafa continue to be used in the loose general sense of successors Thus "He it is who has made you rulers (Khalaef) of the earth" (6 166)

Thus the connotations of the singular and the plural forms are different and it is not justifiable to take the passage as referring "to the whole mankind," "an allegorical description of the preference of man above the whole of creation and then of the election of those righteous servants of Allah from among men themselves who lead others into the right path "

It need hardly be said that only the Elect of God can be so appointed by Him Himself to act as His vicegerent or representative on Earth He must be fit to represent God as much as any finite Being can in his knowledge, power goodness &c The course of evolution and progress may admit of increasingly higher grades of perfection in spiritual attainment, but at any stage of the world the Calif of God must be free from imperfections at least, mental, moral and spiritual

The object of the appointment of a Calif is clear—it is moral and spiritual government of the world—as is declared in the verse 38 25 cited above For this it becomes necessary to have temporal power, but if that is snatched away or usurped by men that would make no difference to the authority that the true divinely ordained Calif has from God It remains incumbent on people to obey him under whichever government they may be living He will have regard of their difficulties as by permitting Taqiya in cases of danger The *Khalifa* may be a prophet, but not necessarily, for there are prophets of various grades and the functions of all do not necessarily involve temporal government—of course in the presence of a prophet it would be odd to make him subject of one who is not so

The verse indicates the principle of God in His moral government of world Wherever there are fallible rational creatures liable to be swayed away by passions and ignorance, and yet are liable to be punished for this.

He in His Wisdom sees it right to set up some one to rule over them, guide them and control their affairs This necessarily involves that there must be some Calif of God at all times on earth, who should hold temporal authority over the whole world only if people would submit themselves to it for there is no compulsion in religious matters (ii 257)

It is also manifest that only God Himself can appoint such a Calif to act as His vicegent, people have no hand whatever in the matter This is a clear matter of reason, but has scriptural support for it in this verse and 38 25, cited above

" Wilt thou place " &c. It will be observed that the reason for their surprise was that a ruler is required only where people are liable to fall into all sorts of sins and crimes The angels were above these things and so on this Will of God being revealed to them they inferred that a creature liable to crimes of all sorts was about to be set upon earth They themselves had at God's command extirpated one such creation, (see the full tradition in Kafi) and so they wondered that the same thing was being done over again The question related not to the Calif (none, much less the angels, could be so foolish as not to know that God's Calif must be His Elect) but to the wisdom of setting up a fallible creation

For the sake of those who ask it, it may be said that the question which is only an expression of their surprise was not made in a spirit of objection and presumption to find fault with God's wisdom It was only a natural desire to understand His purpose Similarly note that God had simply revealed His Will as He invariably does in the case of prophets, long before their advent, as it appears from the prophecies about them

Verse 31 ' And God taught Adam the names ' &c Names of what? Some suggest it was the names of the various things in some one or in different languages This was the teaching of the Jews (See Midrash Rabbah on Numbers 4 para 19) and has been followed by some Musalmans Others, more thoughtful, say it was the knowledge of the realities of things That the latter is the more correct view is obvious on considering that arbitrary names do not require to be taught at all Apart from serving as symbols for things the main object of naming a thing is to know it from its name Hence in the primitive languages every word was onomatopaec, its sound representing some distinctive features—(chiefly auditory) of the object A perfect name is therefore one that serves not merely to mark it off from other things, but also tells us what the thing exactly is Hence scientists discovering new compounds do not give them arbitrary names They try rather to invent

names that should serve equally well to define their composition or their distinctive features—Sodii Bicarb &c When this is the ideal of names invented by man, what should we think of the names taught by God They should be expressive of the most complete knowledge of things including their history up to creation Thus the teaching of names to Adam is tantamount to imparting complete knowledge reduced to principles, or giving him the capacity to know all things by spiritual insight—words were only invented by man for convenience in social converse

Where does this lead to? They very next words give a clue to this Having taught these names to Adam God asks His angels to tell the names of these—men, the gender of these is now changed to that of rational beings Granting that knowledge of things was first imparted, the chief value of this consisted in the knowledge thus arrived at of certain Holy beings, the comprehension of whose qualities and excellences baffled the intelligence of the angels That higher knowledge *maarifat* was the culminating point of the knowlege imparted to Adam If the knowledge given to Adam was not a mere revelation, but a true spiritual insight it can be seen that this higher knowledge was arrived at through the knowledge of the things in general For, as said before, the complete knowledge of things involves knowledge of their history up to creation. This, to be complete, must include the knowledge how physical existence is derived from the spiritual This most difficult question of spiritual philosophy cannot be discussed here The reader may be referred to my Principles of Shia Theology for it

'When he taught them their names' The same rational gender continues When Adam taught them their names, that is, what these holy men were morally and spiritually, the angels were enabled to see the Infinite Power and Wisdom of God that could raise up such beings out of the stock they had derided They also saw that the Califs God had designed to set up on earth were infinitely superior to themselves It is strange that the Ahmadi commentator completely passes over the use of the gender for rational beings in this verse There can be no doubt that the names were the names or epithets of the Holy Prophet and the Imams, as, we are told, was the case in the sacred traditions The verse is but an instance of what is a constant practice in the Holy Book—the use of curious forms of expression to hint at things left untold leaving the reader to the Prophet and the Imams for further guidance The Quran was never meant to be read alone See Introduction

Verse 33 What you were hiding The angels, believed to be holy sinless creatures, were not deliberately hiding anything But they were

not the only creatures in existence There were the *Jinn* amongst them who were fallible and capable of anything evil They were joined with the angels in the command given to do obeisance to Adam, and they rebelled against it And when, apart from this, all creatures, fallible and infallible were one, of one genus, quite homogenous—being, all of them, God's creatures, so it was right on a general address like this to speak for God in this way to His angels though they themselves might have been above such things It is the same as we all do in our public addresses imputing all sorts of virtues and vices to the audience who may all be quite innocent of them In fact the "you" refers to all creatures whether existing at the time or not, for they were all present to His Infinite Above-time Presence Such variations in numbers and persons in address are very frequent in the Quran, and we have explained it at length in the Introduction They are designed to indicate, as far as is possible in language, His Infinite super-personal personality

It will be noticed that the justification of the angels is only necessary if by the term is to be understood only the holy absolutely infallible angels If the term is used here in a more extended sense, as some Sunni Divines have thought, there seems no necessity for this (See Mawahib)

It does not appear how the Ahmadi commentator understands the passage when he says, 'What you did hide' refers to those qualities in man which preponderate the evil in him and which remain hidden until they are made manifest through the Divine gift of knowledge The immense capability of man for progress remains hidden while the evil of shedding blood is manifested in a very primary stage of his growth'

Verse 34 *Iblis* was not one of the angels as is shown by 18 50, which says that he was "of the *Jinn*, so he transgressed" Of the angels it is said in 66 6 that "they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them and do as they are commanded" This distinction makes it necessary take *illa* 'except' in this verse in the disjunctive sense called by grammarians *Istisnae Munqate*, the thing excepted being of a different genus altogether, and therefore the statement about it being practically a new statement cut off from the first Any way it is clear that the command to make obeisance to Adam was not restricted to angels such as those in 66 6, but to all spiritual world, and the word 'angels' in the verse before us is used either in a more extended sense to include all beings in their spiritual state, or the word 'angels' is used as they are the chiefest of and hence typical of them. As such it is hardly necessary to take *illa* in the rather unusual disjunctive sense (For full discussion see *Mawahib in loco*).

The account of angels doing obeisance to Adam, though not given in the Bible, is found in Jewish traditions (Talmud) Seeing that that the Jews do not regard Adam to be a Prophet and have no special veneration for him, (See Ency Britt Art Adam 11th ed) it is not likely that they wantonly invented such stories tending to elevate him at the expense of angels The traditions must therefore be due to some real teaching to that effect transmitted from the prophets.

Verse 36 'Get down.' The word used signifies fall, going down from a high place to a low one, but it does not necessarily imply degradation Thus the same word is used in verse 61 of Moses' people who ceasing to have relish for the *manna* they got from heaven sought for change and were accordingly told to settle in a city i e till the ground and lead settled lives In both cases the same word is used and in both it signifies a change in the form and character of life, from a supernatural and providential one to one more natural and entailing the hardships of life There is no implication of moral degradation in either

One the enemy of the other' The sentence given is in the plural having application to all seed of Adam—those that were not born even as yet They were all present to His Infinite Above-time Presence It is the same in *Verse 38* below This is indeed the most obvious interpretation and certainly it is wrong to restrict the sentence to Adam and Eve (as some lower order of critics do), adding serpent and Satan to them to make up the plural and then to ask when did hatred and enmity possess Adam and Eve against each other Clearly the expression related to the future state of Adam's seed

Verse 37 *Jannat* 'paradise' As stated in the Introductory Note in Supp on the strength of the explicit teaching of Our Lord Jafarel Sadiq " this paradise was one belonging to this world having the sun and moon rising and setting in it Were it one of the paradises of Eternity (promised to us in the Hereafter) Adam would have never got out of it and Satan could not have had access to it " The same was the teaching of Abdullah 'bn Abbas, cousin of Our Lord Ali and other distinguished Sahabas The more thoughtful of the Sunnis also, chiefly the Motazalites, who have imbibed many of the Shia doctrines are at one with us on this point (See Rowzatussafa) We have seen in the Introductory Note how the giving of certain powers could make a real paradise on this earth Nothing is wanted for it but a state of perfect adjustment of the external conditions to the requirements of life, and this can be easily effected anywhere if one has the proper energies, physical and spiritual, for it The garden of Eden could thus have been located anywhere on this earth, yet the essen-

tial features of life in it as thoughts, perceptions, were spiritual But it will be noted that Adam even if he had continued to live in it would have been mortal—it was immunity from this that tempted him to taste of the forbidden tree at the suggestion of Satan, (Surah 7 20).

"This tree" Accounts differ as to what that forbidden tree was, some say it was wheat, others camphor, others grapes and so forth One tradition says it was all, the tree of paradise being unlike trees of this earth, producing various sorts of fruits on its boughs (This tradition is interesting as showing that the Imams thought it possible that a composite tree of that kind could exist. Modern science has proved it completely and composite trees are actually produced producing fruits of different varieties, if not species on its boughs) On the other hand there are traditions giving it a wholly moral or spiritual interpretation. Thus some say it was tree of knowledge, others that it was that of jealousy The most probable account is that it was the tree of divine knowledge God had reserved for the Prophet, Mohammed, no one having admittance to it without God's permission He alone prospered with it who humbly sought the grace of God, for it was a curse to him who sought to attain to it without His leave and without the necessary spiritual preparation (For these traditions see *Safi in loco*) A little patient reflection will show that the other accounts which seem so divergent are really true but one-sided phases of this great truth The tree which we have seen was a composite one represented earthly plant life in general This earthly nourishment has two sorts of effects On the one hand it makes us earth-bound and so in a way debases us and removes us from spirituality On the other hand it becomes an element in our mental growth and is able to carry us to the highest depths of spirituality if it is partaken of with due regard to the proper methods, the chief of them being prayer and obedience to God's commands. This latter, which is its sole benifit, is to be derived only by overcoming and controlling the opposite effects of tendencies of the former, and no one was ever able to do it so completely as Our Holy Prophet It was he alone who was destined to make use of it in all its completeness The fault of Adam was to aspire to it without the necessary spiritual equipment, it made him earth-bound without adding much to the knowledge he was given *as a gift* and without giving him the immortality he had aimed it

This was the sin of Adam He became "of the sinful" because of aspiring to a difficult position of perfection without God's bidding But it must be remembered that aspiration is no sin at all from our human point of view It is only a moral weakness, a deficiency of the spirit of

resignation. It is rather a thing which at God's bidding becomes commendable Thus God says "For a thing like this (paradise) let the aspirers aspire" (88 26) any way it was not a sin in the usual sense of the word Hence Our Lord Riza says 'This happened to Adam before his apostleship and it was not one of those great sins which drag one on to Hell. It was only one of those small turpitudes which are possible to prophets before their inspiration (to apostleship) When God selected him for apostleship and made him a prophet, he was infallible and was never guilty of any sin, great or small' In another tradition we read 'God made Adam His Argument (Hujjat) and His Calif on this earth He had not made him so in His Paradise' The transgression was then, not on earth, and it was to realise the decree of Almighty God So when he was taken to the earth and made Argument of God and His Calif thereon he was infallible" The decree was obviously meant to prepare Adam for holiness and practical infallibility in the midst of freewill

It will also be observed that the forbidding of a thing does not necessarily mean that the act prohibited is unlawful, sinful Sometimes an act is prohibited merely as not worthy of one's position, though if done by others below him it might count as nothing In that case moral perfection consists in regarding it as practically sinful, though this is so only in view of one's exalted position It was as such that God rebuked him for disobedience and Adam himself took it in that light From Surah 20 115-118 it is clear that the admonition was meant merely for the personal comfort of Adam, not that the thing was sinful God forewarning Adam of the temptation of the Enemy says the effect of his being cast out would be that he would be put to hardship, whereas here he has neither to be hungry nor thirsty nor needs any clothing Had any sinfulness been attached to it He should have said, Thou shalt be cast into Hell for it

Verse 37 *Taba* originally means 'returned' and is spoken both of masters and servants In the case of master it is used with prep *ala* and may be translated 'was reconciled to' In the case of servants it is used with *ila* and may be rendered 'repented' From this comes the word *Tauba* repentance which is in every body's mouth when asking for forgiveness of sins It is meaningless unless there is a real change of life, a real moral conversion Not only there should be a determination not to revert to old sins, but the man should strive to undo, so far as possible, the wrong he has done—the injury he has caused to others In fact the word, as the Ahmádi commentator observes, gives us the whole philosophy of repentance The utterance of certain words, the muttering of certain prayers, avails nothing unless there is real change in the habits of

mind And then the acceptance of it becomes a moral certainty In this case, however, as shown above the repentance and the reconciliation relate not to a veritable sin, but what was taken in that light owing to the exalted position of the prophet concerned

Verse 37 "Adam got words from his Lord" The words may have been inspired but the form of the expression implies an active element in Adam in receiving them from Him Adam had set his mind to God and the inspiration was in response to it

The words were the words of prayer in which Adam was to pray to God so as to be acceptable to Him Surely there was something special and particular about them, they could not be mere ordinary prayers of forgiveness as they are represented to be in ordinary commentaries The thing is so obvious that Khwaja Kamaluddin, who takes it all as an allegory, renders this as receiving word of guidance from his Lord similar to that promised to his generation in Verse 38 See extract from his essay in the Introductory Note in Supp

What could those words for prayer be then? Our surest guide is the traditions, but even irrespective of them we can guess something of it when we know that the turpitude consisted in aspiring to the Divine knowledge God had reserved for our Blessed Prophet It could only be something involving recognition of his spiritual greatness Hence in his supplication he was taught to pray in the name of Mohammed and his sons This, not according to the Shia traditions alone The Sunnis also have several traditions to this effect for which see Suyuti's *Durre Mansur*.

SECTION 5

The covenant with Israelites and its fulfilment in the appearance of the Prophet Patience and prayer enjoined

40 O! children of Israel! remember the blessing with which I blessed you and keep your covenant with Me, so shall I keep my covenant with you, Me therefore, Me should ye fear

41 And believe in what I have sent down confirming that which is with you and be not the first to reject it, and

do not waste my signs for a little price and Me, of Me beware;

42 And clothe not truth with vanity, nor hide the truth knowing (what ye do)

43 And keep up prayer and pay the poor rate (Zacat) and kneel (in prayer) with those who kneel.

44 Shall ye bid men to righteousness and take no heed of yourselves Yet ye read the Book, do ye not then understand

45 And seek ye the aid of patience and prayer, though that surely is a hard thing save to the humble in spirit

46 Those who are aware that they must meet their Lord and unto Him they must return

Verse 40 Here begins the appeal to Israelites in particular, and with them we see the strength of Islam in its second—the historical aspect. For the mass of mankind only philosophical considerations were available to convince them of the truth of Islam The prophecies in which their prophets of old had declared of this last Prophet were for the most part lost in oblivion and had at least become mere matters of legend or tradition Not so the Jews With them continuous tradition, however disfigured in the long lapse of ages and over-loaded with excrescences, had continued to retain its force and vigour *as a piece of history*, and there was no reasonable doubt about its substantial truth in all its essentials Much in what passes by the name of sacred scriptures and much in what was current as oral tradition collected in the Talmud may be mere baseless fiction, but it is idle to doubt the substantial accuracy of the main facts of Israelite history which have been most firmly believed and transmitted from one generation to another and proclaimed before all the world without a shadow of denial from any quarter Some of these were recorded early by some writers known or unknown and in the course of ages became sacred scriptures others remained confided to oral instruction till a late age and were collected in the Talmud As records of facts and beliefs both have equal value—neither to be implicitly believed, neither to be poohpoohed and discarded Also when accepting any fact found recorded in either, we must be careful to note that the accounts are after

all written by human beings, like all human writings they were written with a purpose and the selection of things to be recorded depended on the purpose that was to be immediately served by them Also owing to sectarian, communal, or even personal prejudices much was suppressed, disfigured or altered altogether

Verse 40 The pledge here referred to is the pledge they were bound to under the word of Moses to receive a Prophet like unto Moses that was to be raised "out of their brethren" i e of Ishmael's Seed (See Dent 18 15-20) "The Lord, thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee—of thy brethren like unto me, unto him ye shall hearken According to all that thou desiredest of the Lord, thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord, my God, neither let me see the great fire any more, that I die not' And the Lord said unto me, 'They have well spoken that which they have spoken I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee and put my words in his month and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him And it shall come to pass that whoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name I will require it of him'

That our Prophet was like unto Moses in all essential features of his apostolic character and even general career of life is obvious enough In fact it is too late in the day to expiate on these salient points of resemblance (1) Both were commissioned with the use of sword in their work (2) Both were law-givers and to both scriptures were given (3) To both was the word of God given in actual words (To Moses in The ten Commandments, to our Prophet in the Quran) (4) Both were nation-builders and unified their dispersed and oppressed people (5) Both established independent theocracies for their people (6) Both stood up for their work with the aid of an assistant in brother or cousin (7) The religion set up by both covered, besides doctrines and religious practices, all temporal concerns including goverment and civilization (8) The people in both cases fell away soon from the injunctions of their masters, remaining united to him in name only and eventually getting dismembered into numerous sects On the other hand in the whole host of prophets that history has given to us, there is not one whose career resembled Moses in so many salient features The slightest acquaintance with the history and preachings of Our Lord Jesus Christ will convince any one that, far from being like unto Moses, he was so far unlike as two apostles can possibly be He was not a law-giver, rather if we accept the Christian account he depreciated that idea and abolished it, at all events he did not intefere with

the law of Moses So little was he of a military man that he is represented by Christians as discountenancing it, to say the least He founded no nation, no state His religion was all concerned with moral and spiritual matters Nor was he a writer like Moses, and though on the authority of the Quran we must hold that a scripture was given to him, yet it was probably never redacted and was so little known that it is only on the authority of the Quran that we know of its existence

So much ought to suffice for the contention of the Christians that the prophecy related to Our Lord Jesus Christ Further it is clear that the Jews expected another prophet besides Messiah See John 1 21 et Seq "And they asked him and said unto him (John the Baptist) Why baptizest thou, then, if thou be not that Christ nor Elias, neither that Prophet." (Verse 25)

Where was the Prophecy for 'that Prophet' if it is not this? Better than Jesus might Joshua have a claim to this prophecy, he at least continued the work that Moses had begun But the inapplicability is so obvious that no one claims it. That he was much inferior appears also from Deut 34-10 Moreover he was present before Moses and so clearly cannot be object of a prediction

In the prophecy it is clearly stated that he would arise out of the brethren of Israelites To emphasise this, in the first verse (18 15) it is stated as a correction to the previous expression, 'from the midst of thee' which, though in fact a general expression, was capable of being interpreted in the sense of descent. Then in the next verse (18 17) it is omitted altogether, showing that it is only 'out of thy brethren' that was really meant

Who were the brethren of the Israelites? Certainly it could not refer to one of the twelve tribes, for they were one, and Moses was for them all That Ishmaelites were the brethren of Israelites goes without saying, but we have scriptual authority for this in Genesis 25-18 where the generation of Isaac are spoken of as brethren of Ishmael, Cf also Numbers 20-14 where *Edomites* are spoken of as the brethren of Israelites.

The warning given in verse 23 requires to be considered Whoever will not listen to him God will require it from him. What this requiring means is clear from Acts 3 23 where this prophecy is thus rendered, 'And it shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people' It was this decree of God that obliged the Holy Prophet to wage wars against the

infidels and particularly the Jews The killing of the Jews in the war of Bani Quraiza is objected to I say, had he not done that he would not have been "That Prophet" It was necessary that it should be manifest to the world that if the people do not listen to him they must be destroyed on that account and that only The Prophet only did the minimum that was required in this matter The declaration of God to Moses therefore applies in all its details to the Prophet of Islam He was out of the brethren of the Israelites, he was like unto Moses in mentality and talents and all salient points of apostolic career God put His words into his mouth and he spoke to them all He commanded them And those who persistenly refused to listen to him were destroyed

What other prophet has ever arisen these 2,000 years combining in him features that answer to all those details! Nay, it is promised in the following verse 20 that anyone pretending to be such should die an unnatural death And it is a matter of general belief among the Musalmans that God put off the honour of martyrdom from the Holy Prophet and transferred it to his sons, Hasan and Husain, simply for this reason that the thing might not raise doubts in the minds of the people in view of this old declaration Christians do not see that by their story of crucifixion they expose Our Lord Jesus to this charge

In verse 22 the sign of the true prophet is said to be that his prophecies should be fulfilled It is implied they should not relate to remote times, so as to be incapable of verification for ages The fulfilment of several prophecies of Our Holy Prophet, as the defeat of Persians is well known His life and career were themselves the continuous fulfilment of the repeatedly proclaimed prophecy of the triumph of Islam Of the prophecies of Our Lord Jesus we know but one that is said to have been fulfilled at the time—that of resurrection—and that we know was something secret and unknown to the mass of people

There are many other prophecies relating to Our Prophet, discoverable in the Old Scriptures which we will discuss on in other appropriate places. This one suffices for this rather lengthy note, and it suffices to show that in effect a pledge was taken from the Israelites to hearken to the Prophet of Islam, and that on the pain of death

If the Jews had faithfully abided by this, God would have fulfilled his pledge to them to grant them national independence with autonomy of Jerusalam which is their national craving and spiritual ideal to this day.

Verse 41 Christian opponents of Islam urge this testification of the Quran to the former scriptures to extend to every part of it—seeking thereby to rebut the Muslim charge of corruption in these books, and also to argue against the doctrine of abrogation of the antique laws Every child can see that it need not extend to all, but only to some essential parts of it As shown in the Introduction, the authenticity of all the sacred scriptures is very uncertain For the most important of these, the Pentateuch, even the authority of continuous tradition cannot be contended Of several even the authorship is unknown. In the early days of the Israelites faith was kept up by the authority of tradition supplemented by miracles of the Prophets of whom no age was wholly free But this had changed long ago Faith was now left without a basis which could appeal to the rationalism of the new age which the advent of the Holy Prophet opened (One of the titles given to him in *Ziarats* &c is 'Sealer up of the old and opener of the new age') Thus whatever of truth even the Jews had with them required something by way of attestation to make it worthy of credence It was only the Holy Quran with living miracles of its own and those of the Prophet and the Imams that gave a sort of authority to the Israelite traditions, which is available only for those who accept it as the Word of God Those who reject it find no secure authority to believe either in the scriptures or the traditions, the latter at least of which have been hopelessly given up by all as old wives' tales It will be noticed that the word used in the Quran 'that with you' is general and covers both the scriptures and the traditions

No doubt, the chief thing in the old scriptures which the Quran attested or verified—showed to be true was "the fulfilment of the promise" contained in Deut 18 15-18 It is nowhere but in the Holy Quran that the "word of God" as promised here is "put into the Prophet's mouth," and no Prophet ever claimed to have come in fulfilment of this prophecy except the Holy Prophet, Muhammad The whole of the Israelitish history after Moses is silent as to the appearance of the promised Prophet of Deuteronmy Even Jesus Christ never said that he came in fulfilment of that prophecy, and the apostles truly felt that difficulty when they thought that that prophecy would be fulfilled in the second coming of Christ How much the Prophet proclaimed this in his own case is clear from the fact that, as Sir William Muir admits, this was the chief cause of the rapid conversion of the people of Medina See note on Verse 89 The claim is often repeated and impressed in various ways in the Holy Quran All this is very true, but there is no reason to restrict the verification to that as the Ahmadi Comm seems to do.

"Take a mean price for it" They rejected the commandments of God and the evident signs of truth in the Holy Prophet "fearing to lose their high positions as temporal and spiritual leaders of the people, and sacrificed truth to the inducements of this life," and these took a mean price for it," for as said in 4 77 'The provision of this world's life is short.'

Verse 42 The Rabbis were the repositories of the traditional lore among the Jews Much of this was oral which they were careful not to commit to record alleging that the compilation of it was a great sacrilege (See the history of Talmud in the Introduction) Even after the compilation of Talmud there was certainly left much that remained confined to breasts to which only the initiated had access They were thus free to play fast and loose with the prophecies of the prophets transmitted by unpublished tradition and the details regarding the Prophet arrived at by spiritual illumination of sages or occult rules of interpretation, such as those on which the Kabbala was based When the less cautious of these Jews gave out some of these signs and evidences favourable to the Prophet's claims they were rebuked by their elders as giving the weapon into enemy's hands (See Verse 76) Those who had something of conscience and moral courage in them recognised the truth and embraced Islam

The charge is serious, so serious that to a man of conscience it may hardly appear possible that there ever existed men with so loose a conscience But one has only to open his eyes to what goes on all about us even in this age Who has not heard of practices as disgraceful as these among religious bodies engaged in sectarian controversies or interested in proselitising work—Musalmans certainly not excepted However absurd it may appear to sound reason there is such a thing as perversity of conscience in religious matters, and support and vindication of one's religion at the expense truth and wilful tampering and concealing of evidence in favour of opposite views is not only common but is generally held to be meritorious to this day But for this prevailing spirit much of the religious literature so much admired among the sections that publish it would, surely, never have been written It is most offensive to have to deal with these well-meaning but knowingly dishonest authors

Verse 43 Apparently the Jews continue to be addressed, but the duties enjoined are pre-eminently Islamic, showing that in these matters revealed religion continues unchanged Only the form changes, but in substance the duties are prescribed in every revealed religion as a systme

of training for the development of true religious devotion, and if those beyond the pale of Islam continue to observe them on the lines prescribed in their religion, they will not fail to have a moral effect on their minds and they will be well on the way to recieve the New Light which requires a certain degree of piety and spirit of devotion to attain to it. Unfortunately the Jews lacked in this respect even Except the limited order of Esseens, who were ascetics, the leaders of the Jews had made their religion a pleasant social system

There are three duties singled out for mentioning here—out of a host that Islam preaches, as they are the most cardinal ones and cover the entire spiritual perfection as conceived in Islam *Zacat*, training us for parting cheerfully with money, becomes the starting-point for cutting off our attachment to things of this world *Salat* 'worship' prepares us for devotion and spiritual meditation, and develops all the appropriate religious feelings in relation to God Finally is the direction to bow down in prayer *with* those that do so The 'with' here seeks to inspire a spirit that, appearing first in congregational service, soon expands to create a living spirit of national unity under spiritual leadership In congregational service every one is primarily supposed to pray with, that is under the lead of and having a sort of spiritual attachment with the imam, the man who leads the prayers, and the acceptance of his prayer is believed to have a similar effect, by way of grace on those of the followers Hence it is essential (according to the Shias) that the imam who leads the prayers should be a very holy, pious God-fearing man Thus this finally elevates us to spiritual attachment to the Prophet and Imams in the spiritual world

The force of *Maa* (with) in this verse is the same as that of it in the verse 'Be with the truthful' which is acknowledged to have a much deeper meaning than mere external companionship It is unfortunate that the Sunnis permitting prayers to be led by any man without regard to his morals miss this higher spiritual meaning altogether, though there are, no doubt, social advantages in the practice of holding congregations frequently, and the moral effect of the high and low, rich and poor standing in one row beside each other is certainly very impressive, and these things give a moral value to congregational, service even in its lower, merely external form

Mark that bowing *Ruku* is mentioned here in preference to prostration (*Sijda*) The prayer of Islam is offered in a regular round of postures, each of which is suitable, and aesthetically harmonises with a parti-

cular spirit of devotion. The *Ruku* is a manifestation of the spirit of obedience, *Sujdah* that of pure worship, the other two postures *Qiyam* (standing) and *Qsoud* (sitting) being for religious meditation and spiritual receptivity. The *Ruku* being mentioned here, the chief thing that is sought to be impressed is humility and obedience The meaning therefore is, 'Humble yourselves with others that do so for the Majesty of God, so as to follow His commandments, and submit to the Friends of God whom He has set above you' (Tafsir-e-Safi).

The object of giving this injunction to the Jews is (1) to put them on the track of spirituality which they might have in some measure, even if they do it on their own lines and, (2) to make them appreciate the excellences of Islam as a religion which gives its followers such an excellent discipline for moral and spiritual advancement.

Verse 45 Seek assistance,' i e not only for temporal but also for your spiritual needs as in Surah I, Verse 5

'Patience' According to traditions this word has special reference to fasting The verse tells us in effect that bodily mortification is essential by way of discipline for spiritual advancement, a truth hardly to be disputed, only the mortification must have reference to some religious commandment Those who, like Protestant Christians, clamour for faith and spiritual perfection, at the same time holding the forms prescribed in our religion as extraneous, make religion only a body of precepts without providing adequate methods for the development of moral character—a religion hardly worth anything

Those that fear God cannot find rest in anything but devotion to Him and for such it becomes a strength of their soul and actually takes the place of nourishment Our Lord Ali was welknown to have confined himself to the merest name of diet, and he himself tries to explain in a letter how with that meagre nourishment he had all the valour for which he is so famous He points out how unlike the small delicate plants of the garden and fields which remain weak, though so much cared for, the great trees of the forest are ever strong and mighty though no one cares to water or otherwise look after them Vitality is God's gift and stands little in need of nourishment to sustain it.

Verse 46 The use of the word *zann* here is characteristic Ordinarily it signifies thought, opinion or conjecture, but also knowledge or certainty which, as the Ahmadi commentator cites from Lane's Lexicon, "is obtained by considering with endeavour to understand, not by ocular

perception, or not such as relates to an object of sense" The proper significance of the word is thought in which the ideal or inferential element preponderates over direct knowledge As such it has two kinds of import, a qualitative import distinguished from the observational or intuitive knowledge and a quantitative import in respect of conviction in which it is in ordinary usage opposed to certainty. In the first of these the applicability of the word to religious beliefs is obvious, and so it is used here to signify its distinctive character as Faith in the Unseen (See Verse 2 and note thereon) In its quantitative import usage has certainly extended it to all degrees of opinion down to mere conjecture, but that is simply due to its ideal character and it may equally ascend upwards to absolute moral certainty. In a way all our knowledge including the most certain, that of the external world comes merely under the category of *Zann*, being merely inferential and that too of the weakest kind It can be shown, as has been done by Ueberweg (See his system of Logic), that our knowledge of external world is based on reasoning by analogy Strictly therefore it is *Zann* or *Qyas*, but no one will say that it yields in certainty to the most immediate sensation or the most axiomatic truths of Mathematics

This explains what we find in the traditions of the Imams that the word is here used in the sense of conviction or moral certainty That this is so appears clearly from the usage of the word in other places in the Quran similarly in connection with fears of people on the day of judgement which must amount to certainty in their case "And (other) faces on that day shall be gloomy Knowing (*Ta-annu*) that there will be made to befall them some great calamity Nay! When it comes to the throat. And it is said, who will ascend And he is sure (Zanna) that it is the (hour of) parting (75 24-28)" All depends on the vividness with which religious beliefs are realized and that varies infinitely in different men, so the word Zann was the most proper to use as it covers all degrees of conviction—the real state required being one of certainty

SECTION 6

Consequences of the Israelites forgetting the covenant which required living faith in the Holy Prophet. They become stubborn and insensible to miracles and the most striking instances of God's favour as their deliverance from Pharoah, and fall into idolatory The idolatorers are ordered to be killed by their own kinsmen but later are pardoned this on return to faith They insist to see God and are killed but raised to

life again They are given cloud overhead and providential food to serve them in their wanderings Yet they are loth to do anything requiring faith in the unseen and pervert the order to do *Sijdah* on entering a sacred town

47 O! children of Israel! Remember My favours which I favoured you with and I have lifted you above all worlds.

48. And beware of the day when one man shall not avail another in aught, neither shall intercession be accepted for him, nor shall aught be taken in compensation for him, nor shall they be helped

49 And when We saved you from Pharoah's people who put you to grievous torment, slew your men children and saved your women alive, and therein was a heavy trial for you from your Lord

50 And when We devided the sea for you and delivered you and drowned Pharoah's people, (even) while ye looked on

51 And when We covenanted with Moses for forty nights, then ye took the calf (unto you) in his absence and ye were the wrong-doers

52 Thereafter We forgave you that haply ye might prove grateful.

53 And when We gave to Moses the Book and the Discrimination that haply ye might find guidance

54 And when Moses said unto his people, "O! my people! verily ye have wronged your souls by taking (unto you) the calf, wherefore turn ye (penitently) unto your Creator and slay one another—that will be better for you in the sight of your Creator And (thus) did He turn towards you (favourably) for verily He! He is the oft-turning (to mercy), the Merciful."

55 And when ye said, "O Moses! We will not believe on thee, until we see God plainly" · thereupon did a thunder bolt smite you, while (yet) ye looked on.

56 Then did We raise you after your death (Maut), that haply ye may be grateful.

57 And We caused the cloud to overshadow you and sent down unto you the *Manna* and the quails (*Salva*) saying, "Eat of the good things we have given you (for sustenance)" — And Us they wronged not, but it was themselves they were wronging

58 And when We said, "Enter ye this town and eat of its (abundance) freely wheresoever ye will, and enter the gate prostrating (yourselves) and say Remission, (Hittatun), We will forgive you your tresspasses and will anon increase (Our favours on) the virtuous."

59 But those who were wont to sin changed the saying into other than (that which) was told them, wherefore We sent down upon those that did wrong, a chastisement from heaven, for that they were prone to sinfulness.

Verse 47 In this and the following verses, in conformity with the usage prevalent among the Arabs, the 'you" really means the forefathers of those addressed, their—virtues and vices being alike recounted to their sons as members of the same national or rather racial unity The address is general, and as such the strict application of every word of it to every member of the present (the then existing) or even the past generations is simply absurd

Here in this verse Israelites are simply spoken of as God's chosen people to whom some sort of superiority was given over all creation. That this superiority consisted mainly in the raising of great prophets as Moses and Jesus from amongst them, is beyond question As a matter of fact there remained a gift of prophecy among them so that there arose more prophets from amongst them than in the rest of the world put together (See Ency Britt 11th ed Art Jews) There can be no doubt that this was a special favour which gave them a point of superiority over the whole of God's creation So it is as needless as unwarranted to res-

trict the meaning of *Alamin* (worlds) and translate it by the word 'nations' as the Ahmadi commentator does following some old Sunni commentators

But the point to see is if this did not give the Israelites any real point of superiority as a race over the rest of mankind They were a race pre-eminently descended from the prophets, and the mere fact of this descent must have given them some of the higher spiritualistic powers by heredity We know that like all other faculties and powers these also are transmissible by heredity This transmission is either in the form of general capacity for spiritualistic powers or the spontaneous development in isolated individuals of marvellous occult powers These occult powers are purely spiritualistic and have no reference to spirituality in the religious sense They are consistent with moral depravity and unbelief and do not carry any merits with them Still they are gifts which, if not shared by the rest of mankind, constitute a point of physical superiority The Israelites claimed some such superiority for their race and we readily concede it to them

The truth of this will be further apparent by considering the analogous case of Syeds of the Prophet's descent. As a race their religious and moral character has not been all that could be desired, but the spontaneous development of spiritualistic powers in isolated individuals and the continued transmission of special gifts in particular families is a matter of common knowledge We cannot afford to give particular instances with the mass of evidence for them, but everyone in India must have heard some such accounts in every old and well-known family of pure descent, such as those of Amroha, Barha, Zaidpur &c Nor are the miracles all of an occasional character so as to be incapable of verification at the present day Witness the Matam of several families of Syeds on glowing cinders such as at Siwait (District Allahabad) and other places Witness the scorpions careful not to sting in the shrine of Shah Wilayat at Amroha, though doing so if taken out of it. It is said they refrain from stinging, even if taken out, if a time is specified to them by the experimenter, but will do so if the time is exceeded Every one must have heard of these things Indeed, since as we have shown in the Introduction, the chief object of recounting stories of ancient prophets and peoples in the Quran is to prepare the minds to expect similar things in the history of the Prophet and his people—this verse may be held to serve for vindicating the belief common among the Shiahs and Sunnis alike in the general spiritual superiority of the Syeds as a race

It may be noted that as powers transmissible by heredity—all such powers are liable to disappear gradually with time disuse and abuse, or may be developed by right use and cultivation

There was yet another reason for superiority of what may be called a moral character Whatever they were morally and spiritually, being descended from the prophets, people were in a sort of moral obligation, out of reverence for the prophets to show respect to them and hold them as their superiors This, we know, is the teaching of Islam in the case of Syeds (both according to Shiahs and Sunnis) and presume it was the same in the former dispensations And naturally this should be so After all emotions are subject to the laws of association, and, it would be an unnatural religion that did not enjoin the veneration of the sons as a necessary element in the veneration of the forefathers

Verse 48 Not that intercession will be absolutely debarred, for we know of its possibility subject to God's permission "Who is it that shall intercede before Him except by His permission" (2 256), but that there will be no intercession for infidels, for they will say "We have no intercessors" (26 1000), and it is said "The unjust shall not have any compassionate friend nor any intercessor who should be obeyed" (40 19) Here in this verse we are told simply that even if they do intercede it will not be accepted. For the validity of intercession by itself see note on 2 256 *Shafaat* comes from the root *Shafa* (pairing) and is not only justifiable but necessary when there is real pairing of souls in spiritual union by ties of love, and it must be accepted if God has any regard for His holy and righteous servants The thing, therefore, that is required is faith, right belief with appropriate emotion of love, and if that is wanting there is no question of intercession or its acceptance

'Substitute,' A clear denial of the Christian doctrine of atonement. According to this doctrine God being infinitely just cannot leave the slightest sin unpunished. Hence, out of His infinite mercy for His creatures, He incarnated Himself in Our Lord Jesus Christ and made him suffer an unjust. an ignominable death, his suffering (as God) for a second even outweighing in value the suffering of all creation for ever Thus suffering having been inflicted (no matter on whom) in return for the sins of mankind God is free to take them back to His favour The absurdity of this doctrine is obvious It is one of the acknowledged mystries of Christian faith It seems to me this doctrine really originated in the doctrine of *Shafaat* 'intercession,' which is perfectly rational, but it was perverted in the uncultured minds of the ignorant Christians

Verse 49 See Exodus 1 15-18 and also 1 : 22

Verse 50 The Sea is the Red Sea. The story is too well-known to need description Moses emigrating from Egypt with his people, Pharoah

persued them to the sea. They had no vessels to carry them away while Pharoah was fast behind By the command of God Moses struck the waters with his rod and the sea readily shifted on each side leaving a dry passage for the Israelites to pass on The persuers too coming close upon their heels sought to take advantage of this, but as soon as they had all got in, the waters closed in upon them and they were all drowned. See Exodus ch 14

Apart from the scriptural authority of the Bible (which in its present state is no doubt not above criticism), we have full justification for credit in the continuous tradition of the Israelites and their commemoration of the day of their miraculous delivery which, we have every reason to believe, has been uninterruptedly observed from the earliest times And the Israelites were a militant race creating strong prejudices against themselves in every nation. So the Egyptians were certainly a very advanced nation in civilization. If the Israelites had gone about publishing unfounded stories of this kind they were sure to have been met with ridicule and controversy, and in time such stories would have died a natural death Yet it must be admitted that in the present state of knowledge we have no *perfect* assurance of the truth of the story except on the authority of the Quran, and hence its need as a testifier of the older scriptures.

We have some sort of confirmation for the truth of the story *of an indirect kind* in the Muslim date given to the event by the holy martyr, Misame Tammar in the tradition cited in Behar Vol X and other books. The holy martyr, a trusted disciple of Our Lord Ali, to whom he had imparted some of his divine knowledge about the future and who was brutally murdered on this account on one occasion prophesied the slaughter of Our Lord Husain at Karbala and the traditions that his enemies would avail of to make the day of his slaughter a festival of joy and gladness They will say, he says, that on this date happened several important events of relief to the holy prophets, among them the splitting of the sea for Our Lord Moses. They lie, he says, the event happened in the month of Rabia I Now to verify this would be easy if we knew the precise solar date of this event according to the Biblical account. The Biblical chronology is, however, defective and so there are differences in the various calculations made. The most reliable authorities, however, on Biblical chronology are Cunninghame and Clinton. By totalling the successive periods given in Judges and other Books to the building of Solomon's temple, the year 1639 B C is arrived at. But a year or two must be added to this owing to the ommission of months in the periods of

the various judges, as only years are given and months are ignored Any way it was not far from 1639 B. C The time we know was about the Vernal Equinox as the beginning of the year was changed to Nisan in its memory Converting this to lunar years we find that the Vernal Equinox took place in 1640 B C about 27th of Rabia I, and in 1641 about 17th Rabia I, which remarkably confirms the saying of the holy martyr It is clear that so accurate a knowledge of history was beyond his means, particularly as it involved also a difficult mathematical computation which was simply impossible for a man of his age and country The knowledge must be ascribed to inspiration and must have been derived from Our Lord Ali, whose companion and disciple he was Thus independently of Quranic authority this part of the scriptural account seems an indisputable truth

The miraculous element in the story drives the Ahmadi commentator to explain it away somehow First he has recourse to his favourite method of finding rare, unusual meanings of words "The word *bahr*" he says "means a sea or a river If it was a river the explanation is simple The bed may have been practically in a dry condition when the Israelites passed, but a tide may have swept off Pharoah's army that pursued them" It would be interesting to ask the writer how many instances he can cite from literature for the use of the word *bahr* in the sense of a river Then he approvingly cites the foolish explanation of the late Syed Ahmad Khan "The Red Sea is shown on the basis of ancient geographies to have had a large number of islands, from which the *conclusion* (italics are mine) is drawn that at that time it was not the deep sea that it now is The crossing happened at the northern extremity of the left hand branch and the shallowness of the sea, combined with the ebb, enabled the Israelites to cross it safely while the tide drowned the Egyptians" It never occurs to these men that when a fact has been erroneously believed in an exaggerated supernatural form and it is sought to relate it knowing that these are mere exaggerations it is necessary to recount it in a way that would exclude the very possiblity of its being understood in the old form

Verse 51 'Forty nights' See Exodus 24 18 According to Surah 7 146 Moses was commanded to wait thirty nights and days in fasting after which the Law would be revealed to him This was subsequently extended to forty nights This was sufficient among the half believing Israelites to be incredulous about the reality of his mission, and they were deluded into calf-worship The incident shows how difficult it is for faith in the supernatural to have stability in man's mind in spite of the clearest exhi-

bitions of divine providences and interferences Being unable to fit in with all the rest of knowledge arrived at by daily observation and reasoning so as to form a harmonious whole, there always remains a chasm in the understanding and a conflict in the ordinary course of thoughts in which the rare, the unusual, the inexplicable must give way to the constant and the intelligible For the former there is always a *terra incognita* in the mind in which they repose in peace without any definite opinion, or become victims of absurd suspicions created in the lower strata of consciousness, being remnants of ancient beliefs held in the past by the individual or transmitted from former generations These, it is well-known, are never thoroughly eliminated on conversion For this state of things, the true remedy is the realisation of faith and attachment to the prophets and particularly Our Holy Prophet, belief in whom Our Lord Moses had distinctly inculcated and impressed on his people That should serve as a constant source of guidance, in the sense of spiritual assistance as explained in note to 1 5 This explains what we find in the traditions that the cause of their falling on this and other occasions was that they had no adequate faith in Our Holy Prophet It is most probably for this reason that the Jews are reminded of these things in these verses

Verse 53 *Furqan*, from *farq*, making distinction between two things, signifies some thing which makes the truth very clear and easily distinguishable from falsehood In this sense the word is used in 8 42 of the battle of Beder and in 25 1 of the Quran itself, as in both there are "evident signs for men who understand" Here, as distinguished from the Book, the word is used of the collective set of evidences, miracles and the like which made the divine truth of Moses' mission quite patent to every one and left no doubt in the matter, they include his wars as well, all of which were a clear indication of God's grace and favour being at his back Only in the case of Moses this set of evidences is distinguished from the Book, whereas in the Quran the distinction is withdrawn, as the Quran is itself a miracle of miracles, which the Torah was not meant to be According to one tradition the Furqan consisted in a sort of Light or Splendour that marked the faces of those who had faith in the true sense This was probably akin to the spiritual grace we mark so clearly on the faces of our holy men—we mark with our blunt eyes—for spiritual sensitives it is real spiritual splendour

Verse 54. True faith requires strong emotions and, yet those emotions must be well regulated with regard to those they relate to, and at the same time unconditionally subject to the all-engrossing sense of duty and devotion to God. It is a duty to love our parents and other rela-

lives, yet one who is not prepared to slay his father or mother, brother or sister, son or daughter when called to do so as matter of religious duty is not wholly fit for the kingdom of God Few are ever able to rise to this perfect command over feelings, and this is one of the weaknesses which only intense attachment to Our Holy Prophet, and the Imams after him who were the embodiment of such control, can help to overcome or at least to alleviate it in the sight of God A large section of the people having taken to calf-worship, the rest were commanded to slay them as enemies of God This was too hard for many as they were all their kinsfolk. They began to say that though guiltless themselves they were put to a torment which is hardly less serious than the fate of those who had actually sinned, not reflecting that by their hesitation they showed lack of faith which deserved the torment they were put to. But the Merciful God is ever content with a little that helps towards perfection in the future He ordered them to pray in the name of the Holy Prophet and the Imams to help them out of this distress, which being done, God excused not only these persons, but also those ordered to be slain, they too having prayed for forgiveness in the name of these holy souls on hearing from them of this acceptable mode of praying to God. By praying in the name of the Prophet and the Imams they attached themselves to their lists in the spiritual world which brought them the grace of faith as has been explained in note to verse 1 1,2.2etc The verse is really meant to draw attention to the greatness of the Prophet in the sight of God We are unable to show that some traditions to this effect existed among the Jews of the day, but were it not so, there would hardly be any purpose in appealing to the Jews on the matter, indeed of any reference to the event in the Quran.

Verse 55. These were the seventy elders of the Israelites, who when they were called upon to accept the covenant that was to prepare them for the Furqan explained in note to verse 53, got disgusted with the enormity of faith imposed upon them, and as usually happens in such cases their latent spirit of unbelief, only recently suppressed by raw conversion, began to assert itself in the preposterous demand to see God and hear from Him directly The blasphemy deservedly brought down a lightning upon them and they were killed in an instant. But this was only the beginning of the religious development, and God in his Infinite Mercy had not meant men to be doomed to perdition for every error, so He revived them shortly after to witness another of His signs in their own lives and believe better than before This incident is thus quaintly described in the Talmud. 'When the Israelites demanded two things from God—that they may see His glory and hear His voice, both were granted to them' But these

things they had no power to resist as it is said, "My soul escaped as He spoke" The Taurat however interceded for them and so their souls returned, whence it is said that the "Doctrine of God is perfect and brings back the soul" (Abada Sarah 112)

The Ahmadi commentator not only interprets lightning as punishment, and death in the next verse as stupor, but actually translates these unequivocal words as such He justifies the former by referring to verse 7 155 where in describing the same event, that people are stated to have been seized with an earthquake He does not see that the two may be parts of one phenomena, electrical disturbances always accompanying violent shocks of all kinds, and two verses taken together show a knowledge of this grand natural truth which was beyond the capacity of the Arabs of that age (See description of the great earthquake at Lisbon in any physical geography) It is just as right to say that they were overtaken by earthquake as that they were struck with lightning In earthquakes as such death may be due to concussion of brain and the like, it can never be one of stunning as was in this case It is, therefore, gratuitous to take the words as he has done in a figurative sense, and still more absurd to say, as he does at the end of his note, that it here signifies the rumbling noise which precedes an earthquake

The very clear word *Maut* the Ahmadi commentator has the boldness to translate as stupor, what to speak of his interpreting it as such. The Quran, however, leaves not a shadow of doubt that it was real cessation of life, not merely loss of sensation and the like The state of swoon came upon Moses who fell down in a swoon, "*Kharra Musa Saeqa* (VII 143)," and the statement is followed by the words *Fulamma Afaqa* "when he recovered" In the case of the elders not only the word used is *Maut* but the reviving is expressed as *Baace*, a term for the resurrection of the dead Nothing can make the difference plainer, yet in his zeal to get rid of the miraculous the Ahmadi commentator does not see this and says, "A similar fate overtook his companions, and therefore the word here signifies only loss of sensation or a swoon stupor"—*(Similar')*

Details are given in Exodus 18 21 which for the Ahmadi commentator are too miraculous to be believable We have no traditions to support or reject the Biblical account.

Verse 57 "Clouds" See Exodus 18 21 et. seq *Manna* is supposed to be *Turanjbin* called *Alhagi* by botanists A saying attributed to the Holy Prophet would appear to make it a term and more general in its application. He is reported to have said that truffle is a kind of *Manna* But this is from Sunni sources and we are not able to form an opinion.

Certainly it was something of a supernatural character, otherwise it could not have been mentioned in the way it is done *Salwa* is supposed to be quails—a kind of bird sent they caught in nets.

Verse 58 'This city' We have no account from the Imams to show what particular city is meant here It is said to be Areeha a town near Jerusalem in Syria, as Moses had never reached the latter The probability is in favour of Jerusalem as has been suggested by some early commentators The fact that plague or other pestilence subsequently overtook them, has led the Ahmadi commentator to suppose it to be Shittim or Jericho (see Numbers 33-49, 50) See verse 59 Whichever city it was, it was meant to be a prototype of Jerusalem in being centre of worship having a temple which should dispense with the necessity of carrying about the Tabernacle with them

Notice that the words are the same as used to our Parents when placed in the garden of Aden. The place was meant to be a centre of their social and political life, and from it they were meant to expand all over the world. Their return to this home of forefathers is still the fond ideal of Israelite nation They lost it for their iniquities as our Parents lost Paradise for a trivial disobedience

"*Sujjadan*" This is gratuitously taken by some commentators followed by the Ahmadi commentator to be figurative for spirit of submission while abiding in the city There is nothing unreasonable in directing a people to make a bow of veneration when entering a holy city The Shiah traditions state that on this gate there were figures set up of our Holy Prophet and Our Lord Ali, and the bow was meant to be a bow of veneration for them, and it was this that they were taught to regard as a forgiveness for their sins The same is the implication of a Sunni tradition as will be shown later That this is not in the least improbable appears from the fact that Our Lord Moses was very particular about impressing on his people the necessity of belief in and adherence to the Holy Prophet that was to come after him

It is to be noted also that images appear to be important features of the primitive Israelite religion Thus if we trust the Biblical account there were figures of cherubim on the Ark as well as the Tabernacle that Moses is stated to have made for the people There was a brazen serpent the sight of which is said to have healed those bitten by snakes

The analogue of our Parents as suggested by the words used, further strengthens the probability The fall according to some traditions (see Safi *in loco*) was due to imperfect realisation of position which led to a

spirit of emulation Here too the main disobedience consisted in the contempt for this direction to bow to the image of a prophet whom they had not seen and of whom they knew nothing except by mere prophecy

Hittatun (from *Hatta* he put it down) means something that takes away the burden of our sins It is thus equivalent to *Kaffara* In this sense it is frequently used in Islamic literature The attempt made by the Ahmadi commentator to make it a prayer for forgiveness is utterly wrong The word is in the nominative, and can only be construed thus. *Tilka Hittatun li zunubina.* Even if we take the tradition cited by him from Ibne Hisham it would mean only that the repeating of the expression, 'I seek forgiveness of God and return to him (penitently),' is a *Kaffara* for sins, and as such the Israelites were commanded to repeat it when entering the city, or on occasions' But the meaning here is plain They were directed to bow down in veneration for the images and to say (i e to hold and realise) that this act of theirs was a *Kaffara* for their sins The word, it is said, was allied to another, meaning wheat, and in their contempt they repeated that in stead

The same incident is referred to in almost the same words in the earlier Surah VII, 161 162 The whole is emblematic of what was to be done by the Musalmans after the Prophet, انا مدينة العلم و علي بابها is the well-known saying of the Prophet admitted by all sects of Islam The Prophet is the city of knowledge, and Ali is its gate Entry to the temple of faith is impossible except through loving attachment and bowing veneration for Ali—yet how did the people deal with him and his holy descendants That this is the principal implication in verse 59, is clearly stated in a tradition quoted by Ayyashi from Our Lord Jaatar Sadiq And the Sunni traditions also say the same thing Thus Darqutni cites a tradition of the Prophet saying, 'Ali is the Gate of Forgiveness *(Babo Hittatin)*, whoever enters it is faithful and whoever gets away from it is infidel'—This is approvingly cited in Rowza Nadia and other Sunni works of authority

SECTION 7.

Moses prays for drinking water, and on striking with his rod, twelve springs come out The Israelites get tired of providential food. Their transgressions lead them to infidelity

60 And when Moses prayed for drink for his people then We said, strike the rock with thy staff; and there

gushed forth therefrom twelve springs, and all the tribes knew their drinking places: Eat and drink of the provision made by God, and do not go about doing evil on the earth mischievously.

61. And when ye said, 'O Moses we cannot have patience (to live) on one (kind of) food, so call on thy Lord for us that He may produce for us of that which the earth bringth forth, even of its *(green)* herb, and its cucumber, and its garlic,, and its lentil and its onion.' He said, 'Seek ye to substitute that which is meaner for that which is best. Go ye (then to settle) in a city; for verily what you ask for is there for you:' And they were smitten with abasement and poverty, and drew on themselves the wrath of God—this because they were wont to reject the signs of God and to slay the prophets unjustly; this because they rebelled and were wont to transgress.

60 The words are as clear as anything When Moses prayed for his people for drink he was commanded to strike the rock with his staff, and twelve springs miraculously came out corresponding to the number of tribes The incident is well-known and given in Exodus 17 1—6, only there is no mention of the number of springs there But this information is supplied in the Liturgy of St Thomas (Vide Christians of St. Thomas by Howard p 244, referred to in Hughes' Dictionary of Islam) We know that the Christians of St Thomas in India were the purest sect of early Christians and dated from the second Cent A.D, and their traditions brought over by their founder at so early a date have at least as much title to credit as the History of Josephus written about the same age. So the idea of the Christian critics that there is a confusion here of the miracle at Rephidim (Horeb) and the 12 wells found by Israelites at Elim (Ex 15 27), is quite unfounded It is unfortunate that the Ahmadi commentator takes this suggestion from them in favour of the wells at Elim—though his reason there is that there was no miracle there He tries to discredit the account of the miracle at Horeb by showing that a place Marah (Ex 15:23), is now known by the name of Uyune Musa, Springs of Moses, as if if there happened something about springs here it was necessary that the account of the miracle at Horeb was wrong We know brackish water was turned sweet there, and that by itself could have given origin to the name even if nothing else had happened there

Verse 61 See numbers 11 5—10.

Misr is generally understood by commentators as a common noun meaning city—not the land of Egypt which bears that name But though there should be nothing surprising in an ironical reply of that kind in answer to a complaint such as was made to him, that rendering which is adopted by Sale and Bilgrami is only correct according to the grammarians, on the reading of Ibn Masud and Ubay 'bn Kaab who read Misra instead of Misran, which is the generally received text according to Othman's recension. (See Ibn Jarir *in loco.*)

Verse 61. Our Lord Jafar Sadiq says on this verse, "By God they never struck them with their hands nor killed them by their swords, but they heard their stories (accounts of their sufferings at the hands of others) and they lightly passed them over, so they were called to account for this" In similar spirit does Our Lord Jesus hold them guilty for all the righteous bloodshed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias (Matt 23 35) That some prophets had in fact been killed at the hands of people, appears from Our Lord's denunciation of them for their hypocritical assertion that "If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets"

As the Prophet says on this verse, 'Ye servants of God, beware of sins and think not lightly of them For, sins bring upon a man a severence from the grace of God, and this leads him to greater sins, and he continues to sin and become more and more heedless of them, and thus gets more and more severed from grace till this leads him to rejection of *Wilayet* (loving attachment to the Imams), and then to the rejection of the Prophet himself, and ultimately to infidelity about God himself" The meaning is that moral aberrations of the Israelites led them on to acts of infidelity, murder of prophets and the like At first it was only a moral weakness, a desire for the rich variety of earthly food, this led insensibly through lack of resignation to want of trust in God, and this further on to other perversities and depravities It is for this reason that the first and final stages are brought together in the same verse and the last stage is traced successively to the first Thus there can certainly be no charge here of ignorance of the development of Israelite history Note that it was first only a moral weakness that led the people of Kufa to desert Muslim, but it was this that the soon led to the murder of Our Lord Husain with all the horrors of the tragedy of Kerbala

SECTION 8.

Salvation does not depend on professions but requires true faith and conscience Covenant with Israel and its being cast aside The fate of the Sabbath-breakers turned into apes an admonition to all The beginning of the judaic spirit of overscrupulousness in little things of no consequence. Moses orders slaughter of a cow but people worry him with questions and are punished with restrictions

62. Verily those who believe and those who are Jews and the Nazarenes and the Sabians—whoso believes in God and in the last day and does what is right—they have their reward with their Lord, fear shall not come upon them, neither shall they grieve.

63 And when we took a pledge from you and lifted up the mountain above you: Take what We have brought you with firmness and bear in mind what is therein, that haply ye may (be wont to) eschew sin

64. (Yet) ye turned back thereafter, and had there not been the grace of God upon you and His mercy ye had surely been of those who are lost.

65. And surely ye know of those among you who transgressed on the Sabbath—We said unto them, Be ye apes despised and spurned.

66. So We made them an example to those before them and those (who should come) after them and an admonition to the God-fearing

67 And when Moses said to his people, God commandeth you to slaughter a cow, they said, Art thou making a jest of us. He said, God forbid that I should be one of the ignorant.

68 They said, Call on thy Lord to make it plain for us what she is to be. He answered, God saith: it is a cow, nor

old nor young, of middle age between the two, so do what ye are bidden

69 They said, Call upon thy Lord for us that he may make clear to us what her colour should be He answered, God saith, she should be a dun cow, intensely dun, pleasant to the beholders.

70. They said, Call on thy Lord for us that He may make plain to us what she should be, for cows appear to be the same to us, then we, if God will, shall be guided.

71. He answered God saith, she should be a cow not broken to till the earth, or water the field, sound, with no blemish on her They said, Now hast thou brought forth the truth Then they slaughtered her though they lacked but little of leaving it undone

Verse 62 Sabians These are representatives of the oldest Chaldean religion having Seth and Enoch, Noah for their prophets, but rejecting all others from Abraham downwards, indeed decidedly hostile to them Their chief temple was in Harran where they all congregated for performing a sort of Hadj Star-worship was the distinctive feature of their religion, otherwise they were monotheists and their ceremonial contained several things very much resembling Islam Thus they had three, or five, or seven times of daily prayer and had one full month for fasting The star-worship was in the main due to belief in the propitious and malignant influence of stars on the life and fortunes of men and their powers to produce or withhold rain. Their religion was much modified at various times and places by Jewish, Gnostic and Zoarostrian influences, and so there are conflicting accounts of them in various Muslim authors. One variety of them existing at the present day is described as a semi-Christian sect of Babylonia closely resembling the so-called Christians of St. John the Baptist. The majority of Muslim divines do not include them among the Ahl-e-kitab, people following a revealed Book

Verse 62 This verse apparently lends support to the idea that Isavation is not confined to Islam , any man who has belief in God and the day of judgment and does good deeds will attain to it, whatever religion he professes, and whether he embraces Islam or not. But this is in flagrant contradiction to 3 75 which distinctly says 'Whoever likes any other than

Islam for (his) religion it will not be accepted of him and he will be of the losers in the hereafter' A slight reflection, however, suffices to clear the difficulty Any one who deliberately rejects Islam knowing its truth and sticks to his own religion, or does not care to enquire about it knowing fully well of its proclamation to the whole world, and also perhaps of some of its evidences which make at least a *prima facie* case for it is certainly not one of those who do good deeds, however virtuous in other respects he may be There can be no sin greater than religious indifference So the most that this verse can do for men of other religions is to protect those who are really excusable in the sight of God As a matter of fact the verse seems meant to protect only those who having lived piously as Jews and Christians, faithfully and conscientiously following these creeds—in their purity so far as possible—died, a short time, say a year or so, after the Prophet's mission, and so had not occasion to hear his name even They must be counted among those who preceded the time of our Holy Prophet and would be judged according to their faith and actions This is borne out by the following tradition of the great companion of the Prophet, Salman the Persian He says the verse was revealed on the occasion when he on his conversion related to the Prophet how his journey to Arabia seeking him was made at the suggestion of certain Christian hermits who told him that the time of the rise of the Prophet was near at hand and he would be found in Arabia, (Mawahib from Ibne Abi Hatam) The occasion of the revelation of the verse shows that it was meant for such men as these—and these were truly Muslims to all intents and purposes Indeed no true Jew or Christian can fail to be a Muslim if (ignorance apart) he really believes in the prophets he adheres to, for they all had prophesied of him in the clearest terms

Again it must be obvious that there must be some meaning in the words 'Has belief in God and the Hereafter' The grossest anthropomorphist can claim to be a theist and so, as a matter of fact, does a most enthusiastic denier of God as Hackel So also can a transmigrationist call himself a believer in the hereafter There must be some specific meaning to these words, and that makes all the difference A slgt reflection will show that the expression 'Has belief in God and the Hereafter' is equivalent to saying 'Is a believer in Islam'—no way short of it. A deist is not a believer in God if he does not believe in revealed religion. He ignores some of His best attributes which make the sending of prophets and the like a moral necessity Islam is a system of truths organically related to each other, and so a full, correct and consistent belief in any one of its cardinal doctrines necessarily involves belief in all the others. The recognition of the apostleship of the prophets and of our Holy Prophet follows

immediately from a clear conception of a personal All-wise, Just and Merciful God, and his design in creation Having created mankind in a state of mental culture advanced enough to seek after truth He could not justly refuse them to attain to it—at least in its essentials Having created him with limited senses, with just light enough to see that there is a spiritual world beyond him he could not but provide means to man to adjust his life accordingly The case becomes still more simple if to the belief in God is joined belief in a Hereafter Then the necessity of the sending of the prophets and the moral obligation on our part to find them out by close observation of facts around us becomes obvious Similarly the necessity of a succession of the Imams after the Prophet becomes clear from a full conception of the work the Prophet had to do and the amount of work he was actually able to do in his life The other doctrines hang on these two

Thus it is that only two things, belief in God and in the Hereafter, are mentioned here as representative of, and equivalent to, the whole of Islam as the only perfect and true religion. It was for this reason that the Prophet once said to Abu Huraira to proclaim through the streets (of Medina and the vicinity) that whoever believes in the unity of God will enter paradise Omar seeing him thus proclaiming only half the formula of Islam seized upon him and brought him wrangling to the Prophet. Similarly in another of his traditions he is said to have told to the people on behalf of God, "No God but Allah" is my fortress Whoever says this enters my fortress and whoever does so is saved from my punishment It was this tradition that Our Lord Ali' bn Musa Raza selected to relate to the vast concourse of people that had assembled at Naishapur and besought him to relate a tradition transmitted through his holy forefathers from the Prophet.

Now these proclamations were made in Medina at a time when even according to the Christian writers the system of religion had fully developed itself Salvation was clearly taught to be procurable only in Islam and no other religion Is it not gratuitous then to infer from such passages as these as Muir does that "in this growth of Mohammad's opinion there was an intermediate stage in which salvation was not confined to Islam, but might be obtained by any religious man, whatever his religion, provided he was only pure from idolatory"

It is said that the object of placing this verse in the place it is in is that the preceding verse was a strong denunciation of the Jews and so this verse was inserted here to show that all need not have been such, and those who believed truly and were pious will have their full reward

Why are the believers joined to Jews, Christians and Sabians? Why are they mentioned at all in this verse? Why is the statement not left alone in all its generality? To all it is sought to impress that it is consistency of faith united with virtues on the moral side that is the chief requisite for true faith and salvation in the end A Jew, Christian or Sabian would be true Muslim if he only strives to attain to a true belief in the Unity of God and in the Hereafter and seeks to be only rational and consistent in these beliefs A Muslim needs to be warned of this as much as the others as not only there was (and is) much of mere lip-profession, but it was the want of true realization of the doctrines and consistency about them that precluded and still precludes many from accepting the Imamat of the Imams, which is the final thing necessary for true faith and salvation Thus it is that while Sabians (not a people of the Book) are taken in, Magians, Hindus and other idolators are significantly omitted. These have not even the form of true belief about God and the Hereafter

Verse 62 'And we raised the mountain above you' The words say clearly that the mountain was raised above their heads and the same thing is stated in VII 170 'We shook the mountain over them as though it had been a covering and they imagined it was falling upon them' Yet to avoid the miraculous the Ahmadi commentator takes his stand on the English translation of Exodus 19 17. 'They stood at the nether part of the mount" and says, 'There is nothing in the words of the Quran to support the baseless story that the mountain was suspended in mid-heaven over the heads of the Israelites' etcetra Those curious may read his note to see how he seeks to avoid this natural sense of the plain words in the Text It is true there is no detail of the event in Exo-dus 19 17 to make the meaning clear and precise, but the Jews certainly knew their text better than later translators and also their traditions have preserved a memory of this event. See Talmud Aboda Sarah 1 2 'I will cover you with the mountain like a roof' Thus also in the Text Sabbath fol 88 1 "R Avdimi Saith, These words teach us that the Holy One, blessed be He, turned the mountain over them like a vessel and said to them, If ye will receive the law well, but if not, there shall be your grave" See also D, Lewis Pent Prayers fol 150 We are indebted to Rodwell for these references

Verse 65 This event though not traceable in the Bible or in the exising Talmud appears to be well-known among the Jews of the Prophet's day It is mentioned twice in the Quran and each time by way of appeal to the Jews Here there is only an allusion to it, fuller details are given in the Meccan, Sura VII 163—166 Had it not been fully accepted of the

Jews they would have given the lie to it, and it would at least not have been repeated It is also distinctly referred to though in a general way in 4:47 and 5:60 (Both Medina Suras), in which, as in the case of the present, the Jews are distinctly addressed, and the verses must have been read over to them. Again it was so well-known that the term 'Brethren of apes and swines' was used derisively of the Jews, and the Prophet is said to have addressed the Bani Quraiza on one occasion in these terms. They themselves are said to have scrupled to make an attack on Musalmans on saturday fearing they too might be changed into apes for breaking the Sabbath. Thus there can be no doubt of the reality of the miracle, at least according to the belief of the Jews The incident is said to relate to the town of Elah on the Red Sea, and it was in the time of Our Lord David

Fishing being forbidden on Sabbath days, the people resorted to the usual Jewish methods of evading the Law They made canals leading to the sea and cast nets at their mouths on Friday The fish getting in were unable to escape, and so they would be easily caught on sundays As has been observed in the case of certain animals (see Proctor's Nature Studies) the fish had a consciousness, nascent perhaps, of the day of their immunity, and they came in numbers on the Sabbath Days The people were repeatedly admonished for this by the prophets but they would not listen and grew very rich by this deceitful occupation Only some few remonstrated, others either indulging in the practice or conniving at it Only the former escaped, all the rest were metamorphosed into apes and died, all of them, after three days

Some (Sunni) commentators have taken the view that the words are figurative, they were only morally debased and depraved They do not see that the event is twice described (and twice referred to) in the Quran and each time in the same words This implies literal accuracy Moreover we know that the language of the Quran is always plain and never figurative except in highly spiritual matters which, indeed, can in no way be expressed accurately in our human terms At all events the Book of God is too sacred thing to be played fast and loose according to the fancies of this and that 'commentator. There must be distinct authority for the assertion that the language is figurative.

The Ahmadi commentator naturally favours this view and to show his erudition writes a lengthy note about the etymology of *Qirad* (ape) and the like which hardly calls for serious discussion His argument that there was no metamorphosis in the case of the Jews as, he says, was threatened in 4:47 is utterly unfounded as the thing was not threatened

at all The verse simply says, 'Believe before We curse you as We cursed those who broke the Sabbath' That does not mean that the curse was necessarily to be the same Moreover, we are told in the commentaries that on the revelation of that threatening verse, some Jews as Abdullah 'bn Salam actually ran over to the Prophet and made a public profession of conversion. The Shia commentaries as Khulasatul Manhaj also say the same thing Was that not sufficient for the All-merciful to forego even if a thing of that kind was really intended? That something physical was threatened is, however, clear from the fact that the other thing threatened in the same verse 'turning of heads on the back-side' is also physical, though the Ahmadi commentator has attempted to alter the meaning of that also

It will be observed that as in other cases the verse though primarily addressed to the Jews is meant chiefly to serve as a warning for the Musalmans for whom the Book was revealed Several cases of such metamorphosis seem to be well-credited as they are related by the Sunnis of their own men when they went too far in hatred of Our Lord Ali Thus of the Omyed Califs, Abdul Malik and Walid, it is related that after their death their heads were found turned on the backside (Rafa'l sitr, Moulvi Abdul Hai) A case of metamorphosis in life is recorded in the Manaqib of Akhtabe Kharazmi Several other cases may be cited These things further lead us to think that it is not improbable that some such event took place in an age when, in accordance with the requirements of the culture at the time, miracles were of much more frequent occurrence than now

Verse 67 It seems to be this eve t which has led to the quaint law among the Israelites that whenever an uncertain murder took place a red heifer should be slain as an act of expiation for it Deut 21 1—9 That the slaying of the heifer was expected to work a miracle appears from the attempt to avoid the experiment being tried as this would have led to an exposure of their priest-craft. Apparently it was for this that it had a whole treatise to itself in the Mishna where its qualifications were elaborated to such a point that at last R Nisin said that "No one since the days of Moses had been able to find one fit to be slain" (Ency Bib col 846 quoted by the Ahmadi commentator though with a different purpose.) It is indeed difficult to understand otherwise why the Jewish priests should be so very particular about making the practice an impossibility.

All Muslim commentators, Sunni and Shia, relate the same story with only insignificant differences about details The Sunni traditions, it is

well-known, are derived from Jewish sources We give the account from Shia sources as of more reliable authority

The original law of Moses compelled 50 men of the suspected tribe to swear their innocence and ignorance (in case they were not able to trace out the murderer), and on this they were to pay the blood-money of the deceased This raised great murmers when a case of this description actually occurred, and they insisted on Moses for praying to God to reveal the name of the murderer, which Moses was refusing, that being contrary to the principle of temporal government This apparently led to scepticism in the half-heathen faith of those days, and as the case actually proved to be a concocted one it appears there was already a conspiracy to try the prophetic powers of Moses in this last case On his praying in the matter, instead of revealing the name, the command of God was to slay a cow which was still more offensive to them, as with the heathen thoughts they still retained (witness their worship of the golden calf See note on v 84), cows and bulls were held in great veneration

They laughed this away and on being insisted to do it they began to worry Moses with questions, once about its size, then about colour, and so forth This, either to delay the unpleasant task till inability to find one answering to the description might afford them a pretext for non-compliance Or this was due to in the Judaic spirit of finding out niceties about formalities which is *clearly ridiculed and reprobated in these verses Our Lord Riza says that any cow would have sufficed but they impos d particulars upon themselves, and the more they did so the more did God impose the restrictions as a punishment for their folly* All this while Moses, acting under inspiration, was driving them to purchase a particular cow belonging to a particular man who was very holy and pious and deserved to be favoured They had to pay him an enormous price for this cow which was the only one now available Hence "they were very near not doing it"

The cow being slain its tail was put on the sacral part of the murdered man, and he rose to tell that the very men who had raised the cry for his blood had murdered him See next verse It was probably for a memory of this event that the Israelites got to have a custom of killing a red heifer in case of an uncertain murder

The incident gives us the beginning of the Judaic spirit of seeking out niceties about formal things of no consequence

It cannot be too often impressed that the chief object of relating old stories in the Quran is to warn the Musalmans of similar things in their own history. As a matter of fact the Musalmans have imbibed this spirit

from the Jews to a very remarkable degree, and their legal and disciplinary literature is full of such things, though there is no doubt that the spirit which prompts these nice discriminations is one of God-fearingness The habit of asking questions about legality or otherwise, of things about which there is no distinct revelation is reprobated in 5:101.

SECTION 9

The slaughter of the cow used as a miracle to bring a dead man to life Yet their hearts harden and they pervert the Word of God to conceal the truth, and reprove those who let the Musalmans know of the prophecies favouring their religion. The masses are simply ignorant and believe vain things

72 Also when ye slew a man, and thereafter disputed among yourselves about it, while God purposed to bring to light that which ye had hidden :

73. Wherefore We said, Smite ye him with part of her. Thus doth God quicken the dead, and manifest to you His signs, that haply ye may understand.

74. Then did your hearts harden thereafter, and they were (even) as stones or harder still ; for, there be some stones, in sooth, from which gush forth streams ; and some, indeed, which, when cleft, water cometh out of them ; and verily some which fall down from fear of God : and God is not unmindful of what ye do

75 Do ye then covet that they will believe on you, whereas there were a body of them that were wont to hear the word of God, and then pervert it, after having understood it, well knowing (all the while.)

76. And when they meet (Ar *mel*) those who believed, they would say, We believe ; but when they are (Ar *were*) alone one with another, they would say, Do ye speak to them of what God hath made known unto you, that they may

dispute with you therewith before your Lord, do ye not then understand?

77 What! Do they not know that God knoweth that which they hide and that which they make known?

78 And among them are unlettered folk who know not the Book but only what is read out *to them* (or only lies, or idle tales, or vain desires, *Amaniyya*), they have only vague fancies.

79 Woe! then, unto those who write the Book with their own hands and thereafter say, This is from God, that they may earn therewith a small profit, woe! then unto them because of what their hands have written and woe! unto them because of that which they earn

80. And they say (Ar *said*) the fire shall by no means touch us save a counted number of days Say, Have ye obtained a promise from God? then surely God will not break His promise; or do ye impute to God that which ye know not?

81 Ay! Whoever has acquired sin and his wickedness encompasseth him—these are the inmates of the fire, therein they shall abide for evermore

82 While those who believe and do the things that are right, these are the dwellers of paradise; therein they shall abide for evermore

Verses 72 and 73 The miracle is not mentioned in the Bible and has not been found in the Talmud either but it must have been well-known to the Jews who were publicly addressed and rebuked in these verses There must have been a continuous tradition to that effect among the Jews, which is at least as good as any record in their, so very doubtful, sacred literature. All commentators, Sunnis and Shias alike say that the cow spoken of in the last section was used to revive the murdered man, referred to in these verses The man may have been murdered by his nephews coveting his property, but, as the Shia traditions say, there was

a conspiracy about it and the conspirators were ill-believing Jews who thought that the Prophet Moses had no means of finding out their guilt and proving it to the satisfaction of all Having murdered him they laid his body in a neighbouring village, and so there began disputes in different sections of the community about those responsible for the murder The tail or some other part of the cow was attached to the murdered man's body and thereby he was quickened to life and told the names of his murderers

That the dead man was raised to life by a miracle is beyond question, but the fact that a special method was directed and used for the purpose raises the suspicion that the method might have some real scientific value in itself or might have some affinity to a method that might be successful in at least milder cases of this sort In this connection it might be interesting to note that recently the doctors are reported to have succeeded in saving a man on the point of death by joining to his arm the arm of a girl who had just died of an automobile accident,—the man had stabbed himself in the heart and lost a great deal of blood (see the *Pioneer* July 29, 1929) In this case both the girl that had died and the man who was dying had apparently good sound blood in their bodies—not one spoiled by natural causes of death—and so the transfusion of blood from the one to the other succeeded in resuscitation With differences, no doubt marked and important, the case is similar to that referred to in the verse Neither the cow nor the killed man had died a natural death, and transfusion of blood from one to the other might have had some reviving effect It may be noted that the words do not necessarily mean that the man had expired

The Ahmadi commentator in his own typical way tries to read in these verses a reference to the alleged crucifixion of Our Lord Jesus Christ whom he holds to have been saved on the cross before life was extinct. He tries to make 'you slew a man' as equivalent to 'you made like one who is killed' and puts the word 'almost' in brackets in the translation—the word may be used in a loose way to attempted murder though life may not be actually extinct. Similarly he interprets the words 'smite him with a part of her,' which he renders as 'strike him with (margin *liken his affair to*) somewhat of it' as meaning, 'liken his condition to that of a partially dead man,' the 'it' referring to 'death' understood So the verses mean in effect 72, you tried to murder Jesus and then disputed about it and tried to hide it. 73, But We said (to angels ?) that he should get only somewhat of death Thus God saves those who are nearly murdered. In his own words, "The Jews wanted

to do away with Jesus but Allah had decided that he should not die" He conveniently passes over the words which he himself translates 'Then you disagreed with respect to that, and Allah was to bring forth that which you were going to hide' May we ask him to consider when did the Jews ever dispute about the death of Our Lord at their insistence and when did they ever try to hide it or deny the charge of it? But this is the typical way of the Ahmadi commentator's interpretations He has devoted about two pages to it.

After this brilliant display of jugglery in turning the meanings of words and making whole sentences disappear from the sight of his readers, one may be excused to pass over the round-about indications which assure the author that it was Our Lord Jesus and no other who is referred to in these verses But to satisfy the curiosity of the reader we will briefly say that he sees in three verses of Surah Nisaa, 4 158—155 a parallel to sections 6, 7 and 8 of this Surah, and he argues that as 4 157 speaks of Jesus Christ so the verses before us must also refer to him, only the name is not mentioned here Nothing need be said about this argument and its basis, but we cannot omit to note that this verse 4 157 is the most emphatic pronouncement in the Quran to the effect that the Jews did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, they were simply deluded in this respect He strengthens it by the argument that the address being made to the Jews in general the crime appears to be imputed to the whole community Anyone who knows anything of the Arab usage knows that this is not necessary And what to say of Arabs it is not uncommon anywhere to taunt a people with a scandalous act done by one individual only, when the community has not taken immediate action to express its intense disapprobation of it. Here, however, we have said, the murder was the result of a conspiracy among the ill-believing Jews and vast sections of the people were engaged in disputing about it.

It is really degrading to have to deal with such class of writers. Thus apparently to make it appear that the story of the Israelite's resuscitation is not the one unanimously accepted, he says 'another explanation is that the incident refers to a Jew murdering a Muslim woman in the time of the Holy Prophet . an incident which is narrated in the Bkh' (*Sahih Bokhari*) No such alternative "explanation" is ever suggested by any commentator, Sunni or Shia The incident referred to is simply this that a woman having been murdered she nodded at the name of her murderer, several names having been called out before her This was considered sufficient and the man was sentenced to death No commentator ever thought of applying this incident to this verse which speaks

clearly of a resuscitation by some part of something being struck to the body of a man (A man *Sic*, not a woman, by the way)

There is one amusing thing, by the way, in the Ahmadi commentator's note which I may be excused to notice here In his attempt to show that the word a *qatl* 'murder' need not necessarily imply that resulting in death he cites an author (I have not verified this) who appears to have tried to mitigate in this way the force of Calif Omar's frenzied pronouncement against the holy companion of the Prophet, Saad 'bn Obada. 'Kill him, may God kill him,' when the latter refused to acknowledge Abu Bakr as the duly elected Calif of the Prophet.

Verse 74 'Then did your hearts harden after that.' The miracle had a temporary effect in bringing the Jews to faith, but it vanished when miracle was no longer before their eyes and became a tradition.

'And some, indeed, which, when cleft, water cometh out of them' Who, I wonder, has ever seen this, but professional students of geology armed with all the delicate instruments of modern scientific research? It is a fact that most of the stones keep concealed in their veins or laminae small quantities of water, which when the stones are cut or cleft must come out, though the quantity is so small and so soon evaporated in the heat of cleavage that ordinary eyes cannot perceive it Water can thus be drawn out of various rocks (hard stones) to the extent of ½ to 2 *per cent* of their mass See any Text book of Geology I consider this passage as one of the anticipations of modern scientific discoveries in the Quran.

'And some, which, verily, fall down from fear of God.' There is no need to take the words figuratively. Stones can be seen to do all these things, if a man having sufficient faith commands them to do so in the Holy name of God or His Prophet, Imams &c, as there are many recorded instances of these and similar wonders Indeed, if feats approaching these can be effected by spirit agency as claimed by spiritualists (and there is no reasonable doubt left now about facts of this kind—the physical experiences of Dr Stainton Moses, the performances of Home, Slade Eusapia Palladino &c witnessed by numerous first class scientists) then it should not be surprising that the spiritual energy infused by faith should enable a man to move a stone from its place in the Holy name of God As to the rationale of it, it must be remembered that the Quran repeatedly teaches that all things, even dead inanimate things, have a kind of soul wherewith they some way sing His glory and follow his commands See 17 46 etc.

From the metaphysical side this idea has been vindicated by many eminent philosophers, Clifford and others, and one physicist thinks that it is only in this way that gravitation can be explained But apart from all metaphysics, Dr. J. C Bose has conclusively shown that things like metals too have a kind of rudimentary sensibility which can manifest itself experimentally in the form of response to stimuli See his epoch-making work, Response in the Living and the non Living This sensibility being rudimentary and incoherent, diffused through the mass of inorganic matter, bears no comparison to the psychical life of even the lowest of organisms, yet as sensibility it is something psychical, and so liable to come under the influence of strong spiritual forces so as to act much as a fully conscious living being This will explain the numerous miracles recorded in our traditions of stones making salute to the Prophet and other such things They are miracles, but do not imply any change in the constitution of nature.

Verse 75 The alteration and corruption of the Scriptures by the Jews is a constant charge made by the Quran, and modern Biblical criticism has proved it beyond all possibility of doubt. Nay, it has proved whole books to be mere forgeries and to have no authenticity whatever Take any of the books of the Bible and read the articles thereon in any well-known critical works or in the Encyp Brittanica (See Introduction)

Verse 76. This apparently shows that there were some hypocritical converts from Judaism, but no such names and no such incidents of their hypocrisy have come down to us in history. All the known converts, Zaid 'bn Sabit, Kaab 'ul Ahbar and others are believed to be true converts—by Sunnis at least. However, between thorough belief and thorough rejection there is a state of respect for all religions, which commands a wide assent This frequently grows into a dreamy indolent assent in the truth of another religion without at the same time being prepared to part with one's own and get converted to it This intermediate state may be well exemplified even in the present day by the Hindus of the old type They will keep the Tazias of Our Lord Husain with as much faith and religious fervours as any Musalman would do To them a number of religions may be true, of divine origin, at the same time, and one may subscribe to any without any unpleasant necessity of going into the question, how they disagree, and how the rejection of one truth or acceptance of one error or the other would affect their salvation Such men are found everywhere in societies of low mental culture Apparently it was this type of men among the Jews who when meeting with Musalmans and conversing with them on religious subjects would frankly admit that

Islam was a true religion and the prophecies about the coming Prophet were well fulfilled in Mohammad, yet they could not forsake their own old and time-honoured religion and embrace Islam formally They would also give them information about the prophecies and traditions in the unwritten lore of the Rabbis that were favourable to the claims of Islam. For this they were remonstrated with by their leaders or more cautious friends that they were giving the weapon in the hands of their opponents and taking away the ground from beneath their own feet Not only that—such was the ignorance of the times—they were warned that by these disclosures the Musalmans would successfully contend against them before their God and thus seek their condemnation—the notion being that if they were not to make those disclosures there would be no one competent to argue against them for their unbelief and they would be saved It is this notion that invokes the reply, 'Do they not know that God knoweth that which they hide and that which they make known?' V 77

Verse 78 Notice the choice of the word *Amaniya* here used for what is read over to them It means also lies or idle stories and also vain desires These meanings have all a measure of truth in the present case, and throwing their side reflections on the main sense make the import of the passage all comprehensive It is probably the Talmud that is given the epithet here, abounding, as it does in idle tales according to the admission of the Jews, themselves (See Disraeli's Curiosities of Literature) This should be a warning to all the common folk who take their religion from their priests and savants without thought about their character and godliness See a tradition of Our Lord Jafarel Sadiq on this verse in Safi

Verse 79 'Who write the Book with their hands', *i e* corrupting the text—particularly they would make false additions and alterations to the prophecies concerning the Prophet, and their interpretations and amplifications by the prophets and the Rabbis See further in Supp

Verse 80 "It is a received opinion among the Jews at present that no person, be he ever so wicked, or of whatever sect, shall remain in hell above eleven months, or at most a year except Dathan or Abiram and atheists who will be tormented there to all eternity"—Sale (*in loco*)

Verse 81 Mark the words whoever *earns* evil and his sinfulness *encompasseth* him A man actually earns evil by yielding to evil inclinations One sin prepares the man for others The conscience is gradually deadened till a man loses character entirely, and it is then that he reaches a stage that however long he might live he would be the same abandoned character, and it is this that justifies eternal punishment The same applies to perversities about religion arising from indolence or prejudice or other sentimental reasons (See note to verse 10 above).

SECTION 10

God's covenant with his people How Israelites have violated it

83. And (remember) when We took a pledge from (or made a covenant with) the children of Israel ye do not serve (or adore *abd*) any but God; and (shall do) good to parents and to the near of kin and the orphans and the poor, and speak kindly unto all men, and set up prayer and pay the poor-rate (*zacat*). Then ye turned back, save a few of you, and (now too) ye turn aside

84. And when We took a pledge from you ye shall not shed each other's blood, nor drive your people out of your homes, and ye gave the promise, yourselves being witnesses

85 Yet ye are the very people who slay one another and turn a party from among you out of their homes, backing each other up against them with iniquity and malice, while if they came to you as captives ye would ransom them, whereas it is unlawful for you to drive them away Believe ye then part of the Book and deny ye part? What, then is the reward of such among you as do this, but disgrace in the life of this world and on the day of resurrection they shall be sent back to the most grievous punishment; for God is not unmindful of what ye do

86 These are they who have bought the life of this world (in exchange) for the hereafter, so their punishment shall not be lightened for them, neither shall they be helped

Verse 83 In a sense every moral duty may be said to be of the nature of a pledge between God and man, but when a covenant is said to be made with a special people it implies as its counterpart that the people (as the Israelites claimed to be) would thereby be associated with the name of God and called chosen people of God This must consist either of distinctive yet all-important doctrines of belief or of distinctive practices of ritual &c whereby that people can be distinguished from the rest of the

world. The Pentateuch is full of such covenants of either class Here, however, it is the pledge of the former, more essential class, that is reminded And the object of the reminding is to tell them that they have not fulfilled their part of the covenant, and to take the same pledge from the Musalmans if they are to be successors of the Israelites—if they are to be the chosen people of God (*Ummate Marhuma*) after them

For this the words—every word—must be taken in a truly serious sense, otherwise there would appear nothing distinctive about them, all religions may be said to teach the same things Thus all religions, even the most idolatorous and polytheistic would claim to believe really in one God and to worship Him alone though apparently rendering worship to numbers of smaller gods and godesses It is true the Jews, though occasionally relapsing into idolatory, were monotheists, as a people, in the sense of not admitting other false gods in their worship, but still they were far from being true monotheists The gross anthropomorphism of their Scriptures is well known to all Their God walked about in the Garden, was afraid of Adam's getting to the tree of Eternity, wrestled with a prophet, and so forth But even after growing culture had refined the theistic idea their God remained a tribal deity, and their arrogant claim *as a race* to be the chosen people of God is only a remnant of that false narrow idea of their God So the words must be taken seriously if they are to mean anything distinctive, otherwise it is all very ordinary thing Indeed a true conception of God (so far, of course, as is possible to man) is about the minimum that is required for religion The next thing is to keep His worship pure for Him (*Mukhlisina lahuddin* 7 28 &c) as the Quran repeatedly impresses Anyone who offers prayers or does any act of virtue to be seen of men or having the slightest regard for any earthly benefit is virtually worshipping some other god besides the One True God So, within limits, every yeilding to the temptation of Satan is in a way worshipping him as the Quran says so in 36 60 It is only in some such serious sense that a pledge can be called truly worthy of God

So of the other item doing good to parents This is repeatedly associated in the Quran with the direction to worship God alone as see 17 24, 31 11, 18 &c

But without seeking to make the slightest reflection on the importance of this paramount duty one must observe that the duty next in importance in religion to that of devotion to God is that of belief in and love and reverence for the Prophet and the Imams Nor is kindness to parents a duty any way peculiar to the Israelite or other shemetic religions What is meant, however, is that the duties must be taken and

be fulfilled in their fullest and widest sense The word 'parents' must be understood not only in the ordinary but in the spiritual sense as well It must be extended to include spiritual parents teachers &c and this must go on widening so as to reach the ultimate source of guidance, the Prophet and the Imams Thus 'I and Ali' says the Prophet, 'are parents of this community' All this is distinctly explained by our Lord Jafarel Sadiq in a tradition cited by Safi *in loco* Any one can see that there is something distinctive for a divine religion in this So the gift of receiving message from the Lord through prophets was itself something peculiarly Israelite (see Art Jews Ency Britt 11th Ed)

Similarly *Zul Qurba* 'those related to the parents' should be extended to the Imams and other holy men The orphans are merely symbolic of those who are cut off by ignorance or want of means from sources of guidance The poor are not merely those needy pecuniarily so that they pass unpleasant lives, but all those who are prevented for any reason from missionary life

'Speak kindly unto all men' This is tantamount to saying 'Behave excellently towards all men' for otherwise the speaking kindly would be a farce All men' the unbelievers as well as the faithful—there should be no distinction in this respect as is distinctly explained by Our Lord in the tradition referred to above He says, this may help towards their guidance

The various items of the covenant given in this verse agree substantially with the Decalogue and some other commandments, but in this form the covenant is not traceable in the Torah or elsewhere It is idle to speculate about this when the materials about Our Lord Moses' teachings are so insufficient

So much about the substance A word about the literary character of the verse may not be amiss here The grammatical changes that artistically represent the various orders of duties in the covenant require to be noted The all-important duty of belief in the unity of God and not associating any other with Him, which was to be chief distinctive feature of their religion and without which they could not for a moment remain within the pale of this previleged religion, is given in the Aorist (present and future) having the force of an undisputed truth The moral duties of doing good to parents &c which they were specially charged with and which had a special meaning for them are put in the substantive and the verb is omitted They form the very core of religion and as such they form a necessary factor in the pledge It is but just a little lower than

the first. The practical duties such as saying prayers and paying *zacat*, the neglect of which is, after all, pardonable are put in the imperative case And yet the whole is one sentence all component parts being simply joined by 'and' s Such a construction can hardly be called a mooth one and would not be tolerated in the modern civilized languages yet the artistic design as explained above makes it a beauty of the highest order And the miracle of it is that the construction, though so curious, passes smoothly off the ear, else it would have been objected long ago Arabs have no conception of artistic designs of this sort

Verse 84 There seems a difference of opinion among commentators as to who, Jews or Musalmans are addressed in this verse The Sunni commentators agree in saying that it is Jews who are addressed here The Shia commentator Ali 'bn Ibrahim says definitely that this and the next verse have a prophetic reference to the unfortunate expulsion of the holy companion of the Prophet Abuzar from Medina at the command of Calif Othman, from which it appears that it is the Musalmans who are chiefly addressed here The truth seems to be that both are addressed here, chiefly the Musalmans Any way this covenant is not traceable in the Pentateuch The Ahmadi commentator thinks that it has reference to the spirit of the compact that the prophet entered into with the Jews when he first settled at Medina If this were so the next verse would mean that the Jews continued bloodshed among themselves after the compact and would drive away their brethren and then ransom them if they were taken captives in war (!)

Verse 85 This charge, on the Shia view is quite intelligible enough It has reference to the *esprit de corps* of Islam However much the Musalmans might shed each other's blood among themselves and drive away people from their homes they would not tolerate these victims of theirs to be taken captives by infidels and would ransom them at any cost This everyone knows and feels in himself It would be true even of persons persecuted for sectarian differences The Sunni commentators, however, who would have this verse refer exclusively to the Jews relate the following to explain it

'The Jewish tribes Bani Quraiza and Bani Nazeer living side by side at Medina made an alliance with Aus and Khazraj the two rival tribes of Medina respectively, and when the latter fought against each other their allies took part in fighting and thus one Jewish tribe slaughtered and imprisoned the other and laid waste their habitations, but afterwards collected subscriptions for the release of Jewish prisoners, giving reason

for this that their law commanded them to redeem the prisoners and they fought for the honour of their allies' The reference,' it is said, 'is to this inconsistent action on their part.'

SECTION 11

Their rejection and murder of prophets They reject the Prophet because he is not an Israelite though before his advent they used to look for his day They never believed really on Moses too True test of faith is the boldness to invoke death

87 Of a surety we gave the Book unto Moses; and after him We caused to follow (a succession of) apostles, and We endowed Jesus son of Mary with clear evidences and aided him with the Holy spirit *(Ruhul Quds)*, What! whenever then a prophet came unto you with that which your hearts desired not, ye became stiff-necked, so some ye gave the lie to and some ye are murdering

88 And they say, Our hearts are uncircumcised *(Ghulf)* Nay, God hath cursed them because of their want of faith, wherefore they believe but little

89 And when there came unto them a Book from God, verifying that which is with them, and aforetime they were wont to pray for victory against those who believed not, now, when there came unto them that which they recognised they rejected him, wherefore the curse of God is on the rejectors

90 Vile is the (price) for which they have sold their souls that they should deny what God hath revealed, out of envy that God should send down of His grace on whomsoever of His servants He listeth, wherefore they have drawn on themselves wrath upon wrath, and for the unbelievers there shall be disgraceful punishment

91 And when it is said unto them, Believe in that which God hath sent down they say, We believe in that

which hath been sent down to us, and they reject that which is besides that, while it is the truth verifying that which they have. Say, why, then, have ye been killing the prophets of God from before, if ye (indeed) were believers

92. And most certainly Moses came unto you with clear evidences but ye took (unto you) the calf after him and (therein) were ye wrong-doers

93. And (call to mind) when We took the pledge from you and lifted the mountain over you, (saying) Take hold of that which We have brought unto you with firmness and hearken (with obedience). They said, We have hearkened and we have disobeyed; for *lo!* (Ar *and*) in their hearts they were made to drink in (the love of) the calf by reason of their unbelief Say vile is that to which your faith biddeth you if ye *indeed*, have faith.

94 Say, If for you alone among men be the abode in the Hereafter with God, then wish for death (invoke death A) if ye indeed say sooth.

95 But they will never wish for it (invoke A *yatamannaunahu*) because of what their own hands have sent on before, and God (well) knoweth the wrong-doers.

96 And thou wilt surely find them of all men the most covetous of life, (greedier even, Ar *and*) than those who join other gods with God, (each) one of them would fain that he lived a thousand years, and (yet) his living a long life will in no way remove him further off from the punishment, and God seeth well what they do.

Verse 87 'And aided him with the Holy spirit' The same is said of Our Lord Jesus in 2 254 and 5 110, and appears certainly something distinctive of Our Lord, as it is repeatedly said of him and not of the others The latter verse 5 110 gives us some indication of the peculiar virtue of this gift. Though his ministry as apostle was only for a short time towards the end of his life on earth, he began to show miracles from

his infancy speaking to men as soon as he was born and infusing life in tov birds and so forth Other prophets may occasionally have shown power to work miracles before their apostleship, this was certainly the case with our Holy Prophet, but this was first distinctly visible in Our Lord Jesus and in a way may be said to be something distinctive of him And the reason is obvious. But for this, no one would have listened to him as he would have acquired an ill name owing to the peculiar character of his birth Also, it *may* be said, that owing to the very brief period of his ministry he had no sufficient time to do his work and his preaching would in a very short time have come to nothing had the Holy Spirit not descended on the apostles, as is said in the Acts, and given them power to work miracles This, I say only by conjecture, and only on the authority of the Acts and so it is open to the Musalmans to be diffident about it, but the account is not inherently improbable and may have substantial reality

For the Holy Spirit see 97 4, 'The angels and the *Ruh* descend,' and 78 38, 'The angels and the *Ruh* stand in rows,' from which it is clear that it is a real existence like angels and something above them as is clearly stated in the traditions See any commentaries on these verses, Sunni or Shia It was this Spirit *Ruh* about which according to the traditions and the concensus of opinion among the commentators the question was made to the Prophet at the instance of some 'people of the Book' which brought forth the reply, "Say the Spirit is a matter of my Lord and ye are given but little knowledge" 15 87 The Sunni commentatory Sirajul Munir cites traditions from Said 'bn Jubair and others to the effect that God did not create a Being greater than the *Ruh* except His Throne In 58 22 we read of a 'Spirit from Him' aiding the true believers and in some traditions of the Prophet and Imams certain individuals are said to have been backed by the Holy Spirit or Gabriel when engaged in religious discourses In some prayers that have come down to us from the Imams we are taught to salute to the Holy Spirit along with angels

These references, only a few among hundreds, make the real existence of a Holy Spirit bevond the possibility of a doubt and the Ahmadi commentator's attempt to make it mean no more than Holy Revelation is simply preposterous He does not take the trouble to enquire why it was something peculiar with Our Lord Jesus he does not ask why this unusual expression was used for it chiefly when it was monopolised by Christians for a special sense, and he relies only on three verses 16 2, 40 15 and 42 52 where the word *Ruh* can be understood in the sense of a spiritual or emotional influence, or inspiration as he chooses to render it

everywhere But the inapplicability of that simple meaning here is obvious,—all the more so because of the reasons stated that it appears something distinctive of Our Lord and that it would have been misleading for the Quran to have used the term at all and particularly so in connection with Our Lord Jesus, if it had not meant it in a sense closely akin to that it had acquired in the Christian usage So the remark made by Sale on this verse that it would be an error to confound the Holy Spirit of the Quran with the Holy Ghost in the Christian acceptation of the word is correct only to a limited extent It is correct only if by the Christian acceptation we understand that unintelligible conception of it which makes it one of the coeval members of Godhead constituting the Holy Trinity But apart from that I see no essential difference between the Christian and Islamic conceptions of the Holy Spirit Thus, we are told, Justin martyr placed it in the number of angels as the chief or the highest angel In the Shepherd of Hermas, which is one of the earliest Christian writings written about the middle of the 2nd century and regarded by some fathers as inspired and publicly read in the Churches according to Eusebius we are taught the Holy Spirit was God's creation to which a special body was given According to some versions it was that from which all things were made

What then is the Holy Spirit As we are told in 15 87 we have little knowledge and it is hopeless to know it in any sense of knowing All we know is that it is a spiritual entity of a very high order whose function is to guide, inspire and infuse prophetic spirit in and confer miraculous powers on holy souls Among the early divines there was a tendency to identify it with some more well-known existences as Gabriel on the strength of 26 : 193 where the world *Ruh* is applied to him, or to the soul of Our Lord Jesus himself, as he is called 'Word of God and Spirit from Him' in 4 171 For the admissibility of these and other interpretations see Supplement on this verse

'Some ye gave the lie to and some ye are murdering' The proper force of 'gave the lie to' *kuzzabtum* is that they maliciously or obstinately refused to believe in them believing all the time that they were truly sent of God This obstinate rejection may be complete as in their attitude towards Our Lord Jesus or partial as in the case of their faith in Our Lords Moses and Aaron They believed in him formally but would not easily give their assent to their commands when these were against their inclinations, or there was anything in their teachings which was rather too high for their capacity of faith and belief The other prophets to they rejected chiefly in specific teachings In the case of Our Lord Joh

the Baptist too, whom the Jew Herod put to death, it does not appear that he was held by any to be a false prophet, only his protest against the prince's marriage was not convenient The same was the mentality of the half believing Musalmans, see note on verse 8 above In fact they were spiritually one and the rebuke applies equally to them So Munafiqs are frequently called 'Jews of this community' in the traditions of the Imams

'And some ye are murdering' The tense is preterite '*Muzare*' used for the present and future, and the change is obviously meant to allude to the attempts the Jews (and the hypocritical Musalmans *equally*) were making on the life of the Prophet. Though they did not succeed in this in the case of the Holy Prophet, as they did not succeed either in the case of Moses and Jesus, the Musalmans *of their type of mind* did kill Ali, who was the "Nafs" of the Prophet according to 3 54 and the Imams after him Spiritually they are one with the Prophet It was apparently for this reason that the word murder is simply used—not in the form signifying the seeking of it For the verse having a side reference to the murder of the Imams after the Prophet see tradition cited by Safi *in loco*

Verse 88 'Our hearts are uncircumcised' An instance of Jewish equivocation It may mean, Our hearts are sealed and so we are prevented from accepting what the Prophet says. Or it may mean their hearts were repositories of knowledge, and being themselves repositories could not accept from others

Verse 89 Whatever fulfills a prophecy becomes an evidence for the truth of the prophecy The advent of the Prophet fulfilled numbers of prophecies of their prophets which, if we reject him, remain unfulfilled to this day Also Jews had so hopelessly lost their sacred books and had so overloaded whatever reminiscence of truth they still retained in the extant Scriptures that it needed corroboration to be fit to be believed in.

There was constant expectation among the Jews of the promised Prophet soon appearing in Medina, and they always threatened the idolatrous tribes about them that when he would appear they would join his standard and expel and exterminate all of them But when he did appear it was the idolatrers who came over to his side and believed in him in numbers, and the Jews met the fate that was foretold of them by Our Lord Moses. See Deut Ch 18 15—19. "And it shall come to pass that whoever will not hearken unto my words which he (the Prophet in v 15) shall speak in my name, I will require it of him"

That the Jews were expecting a prophet besides Christ and the resurrection of Elias, and that the prophecy was so well-known among them that a mere reference to him by the word 'that prophet' was sufficient to make it well understood, appears from John 1 25 "Why baptisest thou, then, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet."

But about this time the expectation seems to have become very strong and lively We too have an expectation of a Mahdi to arise, but we do not threaten others or console ourselves that the wrongs we suffer would soon be rectified and retaliated for us Nor are the Jews known to have done so at any earlier period But in this case the threats of this were so constantly made that when the Prophet addressed the pilgrims from Medina they spoke to one another "Know surely this is the Prophet whom the Jews are threatening us with So make haste to believe in him" (Muir, Life of Mohammad)

Even Sir William Muir with all his prejudice against Islam has had to admit that this is no mere Mohamedan fiction but has had a good basis of truth Indeed, he makes use of it to explain the wonderful rapidity with which Islam spread in Medina *All this shows that there is truth in the traditions that say that the Jews knew that the time of the advent was near at hand, and knew even the place where he would make his appearance* Without such proximity of time and place no such living consciousness can be awakened

Verse 91 Notice that here too, as in verse 88, the murder of prophets is spoken of in the preterite in place of past with a 'before' to make the charge more precise All having sympathy with the murderers of the prophets and all of a like mind are actually one with them

Verse 93 'Took the pledge' This is the ten commandments See Deut 5 3 See note to verse 63 above Any way they were so frightened that they sought that God should not speak to them again lest they die Exodus 20 19

They said 'We have hearkened and disobeyed' *i e* while accepting outwardly, disobedience was the underlying current of their thoughts Or it may be literally true of some, as some commentators suggest, as Galileo is said to have done when forced to deny earth's motion.

'And in their hearts they were made to drink in the calf' The meaning is that they were made to imbibe the love of the calf, but the form of the expression is already suggested by actual facts See Exodus 33 : 20 and Deut 7 21 In Muslim traditions one account agrees

with the Biblical one that Moses made them drink of water mixed with ashes of the calf, and another says some of them themselves rushed into the sea and drank off the water where the ashes were floating. Any way the use of the expression is artistic

Verse 94 The expression 'If the future abode with God be specially for you to the exclusion of (the rest of) the people' is equivalent to their religious theory that they were God's specially chosen people And it was this preposterous idea and others of a similar nature that made them reject the Prophet in spite of the multifarious sets of evidences for him. The gift of prophecy, they said, was an exclusive privilege of their own no prophet could arise beyond the pale of Israelite nation and particularly the Prophet foretold by Moses (in Deut 18 15-19 and others) could not be other than an Israelite

The object of the verse is to appeal to them candidly and conscientiously to see whether they had sufficient ground to be sure that those preposterous assertions were true If they were really so sure that they were a people specially favoured of God life should be a burden to them They would be longing for death to come to the everlasting bliss of Paradise as speedily as possible Or instead of seeking plans, or making use of the force of arms, against the life of the Prophet and his people (which, of course, God does not prevent in the case of any) they might in their hours of devotion appeal to God against him and pray for his death and destruction That too required a depth and intensity of conviction which they were lacking, and in this case they were certainly sure that they would bring their own destruction Commentators are divided as to whether the former or the latter meaning is to be preferred, the first view is favoured by the use of the word *Tamanna* wish' instead of prayer and the words 'because of what their hands have done' in the next verse, and the latter by the point in dispute being mentioned, 'If you think that the abode of the Hereafter is specially for you to the exclusion of all others' But the latter is the older explanation dating from the time of the Prophet (Ibne Abbas) and the word *Tamanna* might have been preferred to *Dua* 'prayer' to imply that they being specially favoured of God, in a matter so just and reasonable, even their wish might be responded to though they may not even pray for it If they did not do so, and the next verse says emphatically that they will never do it,—this shows, on the first view that their pretensions to a special grace of God are idle and it is virtues and vices that count as on the Muslim theory, and on the second view that they dare not do so, as they know that the claims of the Prophet are true and they themselves are liars 'Their misdeeds' on this

view is the corruption of their Scriptures of which they must be conscious for it was on these corruptions that they took their stand.

Verse 96 An observation that is true to this day and cannot have failed to strike even a casual observer And the reason is plain Those who have no (or at least very feeble) consciousness of a life in the hereafter naturally seek to make the most of this transient life and so are most attached to worldly matters This is common to Jews and the Eastern pantheistic and polytheistic religions, and now to the nominal Christians of the West as well

SECTION 12

The Jews' hatred of Gabriel as the angel opposed to them and favouring the Prophet, and their breaking the pledge that Moses had taken of them to believe in him They are addicted to sorcery the art of which they falsely attribute to the prophet Solomon

97 Say, whoever might be enemy of Gabriel, yet verily he it is who hath brought it down unto thy heart by God's permission (or command *Izn*), confirming that which is before it, and a guidance and good news for the believers

98 Whoever is an enemy unto God and His angels and His apostles and Gabriel and Michael—then verily God is an enemy unto the unbelievers

99 And to thee verily We have sent down clear signs and none disbelieve in them except the profligate (or rebellious *Fusiqeen*)

100 What! whenever they make a pledge a party of them cast it aside? Nay, most of them do not believe.

101 And when an apostle came unto them from before God confirming that which was with them, a party of those to whom the Book was given cast the Book of God behind their backs as if they knew nothing

102. And they followed what the devils were wont to devise against the power (or kingdom *Mulk*) of Solomon, but Solomon was not an apostate, it was the devils who became infidels, and teach men sorcery and that which was sent down unto the two angels at Babel, Harut and Marut, yet those two teach no one until they have said, We are only a temptation, therefore be not an infidel So they learn from these twain that wherewith they might part man from wife, yet they hurt none thereby save by the leave (*Izn*) of God, and they learn (only) that which would harm and not profit them; and they surely knew that, of a truth, whosoever bought it, for him there was no portion in the life hereafter, and verily a vile thing (it was) for which they have sold their souls, had they but known

103 And had they believed and feared (or guarded themselves against evil *Ittaqau*) reward from before God had surely been good, had they (only) known

Verse 97 Difficult as it must be for a cultured man of the present day to understand the perverse logic of primitive people, he will do well to familiarise himself with the quaint modes of thought among the low-cultured and the primitive type of men in our own times It should never be forgotten that much of the question in those days was not of truth or falsity of a religion, but simply of my religion and your religion Your religion may be a true one, but my religion is also good and true in its way, and so I will not have anything to do with what you have It was a notion of Jews that Michael was their guardian angel (see Daniel 12 1 'the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people') And they looked upon Gabriel as their enemy because he was considered to be the avenging angel who brought down divine punishment upon the guilty It was he that generally inspired the prophets, and it is well-known their messages were generally imprecations against the Israelites for their perversities Thus it was he that announced to Daniel (see 8 16, 9 21, 10 13 and 14 &c) 'what shall befall thy people in the later days, for yet the vision is for many days' It was he who announced the birth of Our Lord John the Baptist (Luke 1 19) whose fate at their hands or by their neglect was the main curse to their nation Particularly, it was he that announced to Mary the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ whom

they hated so peevishly The traditions add that they hated him also because it was he that saved Nebuchadnezzar out of their hands when he was quite a boy, and this Nebuchadnezzar afterwards caused their destruction and destroyed their Temple In short, for these reasons the Jews had a sort of prejudice against Gabriel. This soon led to the notion that Gabriel was charged to take the prophecy to some one of the Israelites, but out of spite for them he took it to an Ishmaelite, Mohammad.

The passage is said to have been occassioned as follows —A Jew named Abdullah 'bn Suriya came to the Prophet and put certain questions to test his gift of prophecy He was soon convinced that he was a true prophet, but at the end it struck him to ask which angel it was that communicated messages to him Being told it was Gabriel, he said he would never believe, as Gabriel was enemy of his people For a parallel instance of such prejudices leading to perversities in religion witness the fact now well recognized that after the splitting up of Aryans into Persians and Indians Devas became the name of devils in Persian, and Asura (primarily name of Supreme spirit in the oldest parts of the Veda) laterly acquired the directly opposite meaning of demons

Mark the artistic use of the word *Isn* here The word clearly means command here, and though the use of the word in that sense is allowed in lexicons, yet the usual application of the word is the sense of permission, and it may be safely said that the use of the word in the sense of command is hardly ever to be met with in literature Yet it is used in the sense of command not only here but in many other places, as see 25 45 the Prophet is said to be 'Caller unto God' by His permission (or command *Isn*) In 42 51 angels are said to inspire prophets by God's leave (or command *Isn*) Thus the word is repeatedly used in the Quran in a sense implying command, but only where there is mention of granting commission to prophets and the like Why so, except to indicate that command is made in response to the wishes of some one else? In fact the initiative is taken by the prophet himself It is only when he himself is sorely touched by the corruption of the times that God, proving His sincerity and fitness for the task, gives him the commission to guide the people by methods most suitable for the times The discipline given is also in most cases designed by the prophet, and only approved of by God. Thus the command is virtually a sort of permission in their case.

Verse 102 The commentators say that the devils spread tales to the effect that the great power that Our Lord Solomon had over nature was due to witchcraft and they forged a book in his name on the art of fascination. As in magical practices false deities are invoked as directed by

the devil, so the indulging in this sort of magic is pure infidelity It was possibly this way that the belief spread that Solomon became infidel For a vindication of Our Lord Solomon against the blasphemous change of being tempted into polytheism which the Bible imputes to him see the article in Ency Biblica by the Rev T K Cheyne, col 4689. We are indebted to the Ahmadi commentator for this reference Having shown how mistakes crept into the Bible statements he concludes, 'That Solomon had a number of wives, both Israelites and non-Israelites, is probable enough, but he did not make alters for all of them, nor did he combine the worship of his wives' gods with that of Yahewe'

That in the face of facts which have converted men like Sir O Lodge, Sir William Crookes and other greatest men of the day to spiritualism, the intellectual atmosphere of this materialistic age should continue to look down upon belief in spirits, good and bad, and their powers to materialise and take part in material affairs, is a species of prejudice that must be well observed and borne in mind It will make it easier to understand how the Jews, Quraishites and so many others, continued to disbelieve in the face of hundreds of miracles worked before their eyes But we are not concerned with that here The fact of the existence of good and evil spirits capable of corporeal manifestation has an amount of evidence at the present day that falls short only of direct personal observation. Full discussion is reserved for note on some future verse The same applies to *Sihr* 'fascination'

Anything done by invoking the agency of spirits, and anything done in imitation of it by subtly concealing the source of power is condemned as *Sihr* in the law of Islam Much of the *Sihr* we are occassionally confronted with is certainly independent of spirit agency being either imitation—trickery, or effected by spiritualistic powers of men which the materialistic science has been ignoring but in the present age is beginning to recognise, however slowly and reluctantly At a time when this last source of occult practices was little understood Our Lord Jafar el Sadiq plainly assigned to it a place in the sources of fascination He says it is based on three things partly on tricks, partly on mental energies and partly on league with the Evil Spirit (Ihtijaj)

Fascination chiefly of the lower, imitative and spiritualistic type had much increased in Babylonia and other centres of old civilisation. This created difficulties in men's reception of true religious faith They were unable to distinguish true miracles of God from these acts of sorcery and were easily deluded To remedy this state of things God sent two angels Harut and Marut to the prophet of those times to teach him these

secret arts for the exposure of those that so deluded the people At the instance of this prophet they themselves remained for sometime on earth in human shape and taught them the secrets of the occult art, warning them at the same time that they should not be tempted to indulge in these arts This knowledge communicated through men and evil spirits is the second source from which the Jews derive their arts of exorcism &c. (See Safi *in loco*)

The horror of the supernatural leads the Ahmadi commentator to turn the whole verse in another way, and in this, it must be admitted, he is well helped by the parsimony of Arabic grammer which uses the same forms and particles for a variety of senses Thus *ma* is a relative pronoun 'that which' as well as the negative particle 'not' This enables him to translate *Wa ma unzila* as 'it was not revealed' (to the angels) only it leaves *unzila* without a subject But that is little matter for a man of his calibre and he quitely takes the little word 'it' to be understood, not caring to know that it must be taken as a relative pronoun unless some subject as *Shaun* 'anything' were distinctly given So he renders *Hatta yaqula* as 'so that they should have said' instead of 'until they have said and says from his prophetic insight that it was a common belief that the angels gave the warning. We are only a trial, therefore do not disbelieve This statement was added to their story to save the character of angels as penitent But for these little things his rendering must be confessed to be perfectly admissible But there is another thing which one must beg to differ '*Ma yufarriquna bihi bain al mar'e wa zaujihi*' by which every one understands that they make a division (in the sense of quarrel) between man and wife, he softens down to 'make a distinction between man and his wife' and this to support the admirable conceit on which he dwells at some length that the reference in this verse is to secret councils among the Jews (against the prophet) 'of the nature of Masonic societies, for it is in freemasonery and in no other religious society of the world that women are totally excluded"!! The object is to get over the reality of the efficacy of sorcery, which is plainly affirmed here subject to the will of God However the central idea is good that the complaint about their sorcery may have some reference to their using it against the Holy Prophet The two Surahs at the end of the Quran are said to have been occasioned by a Jew's using this black art to kill the Prophet, and we are told it had some effect when the recital of the Surahs as directed nullified it There is nothing improbable in supposing that some Jews might have been using their exorcism to breed dissensions between him and his wives, which, if it was so, was certainly efficacious in the case of at least two of them who are complained of in Surah 66 :4

There is a story of Harut and Marut to the effect that these angels having been given the passions of men fell in love with two women, and from that went to all sorts of sins and as a punishment were confined in a well at Babylon This story is given from Sunni sources by Sale, Rodwell and others in their editions of the Quran and is dwelt upon at length by anti-Muslim critics who show that the story is of Persian origin As to Sunnis it is true that there are numerous traditions, some traced to the Prophet, so that in Siraj the author concludes that there must be some truth in the tradition Yet it is discredited by some writers as see Mawahib *in loco*. As to the Shias they have no traditions from the Prophet, on the contrary we have *very emphatic denials* of the story by Our Lords Riza and Hasan Askari There are only two traditions in which it is said to have been related by the Imams, one by Our Lord Baqir at the question of the Sunni Ata and the other by Our Lord Ali at the question of the Khariqite Ibnul Kawwa Both of these questioners being decidedly hostile it is clear no weight can be attached to these two traditions

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SECTION 13

The Jews' hatred of the Prophet, and their trying to breed doubts in the minds of believers sometimes regarding the abrogation of verses and sometimes regarding the why and wherefore of specific directions They would have then relapse into idolatory Their idea that salvation is confined to themselves is unscriptural

104. O ye who believe! Say not *Raina*, but say *Unzurna*, and hearken, and for the unbelievers (there) is painful punishment

105. Neither the unbelievers among the people of the Book, nor those who associate others with God, love that aught that is good should come down unto you from your Lord; but God chooseth especially for His favour whomsoever He listeth for God is the Lord of mighty grace

106. Not a verse do We cancel or cause it to be forgotten but that We bring one better than it or like it; knowest thou not that God hath power over all things?

107 Knowest thou not that verily God! to Him belongeth the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and that beside God there is for you neither friend nor helper.

108. Would you question your Apostle (even) as Moses was questioned of old? But whosoever changeth faith for unbelief, he hath of a surety missed the right path.

109. Fain would many of the people of the Book turn you back to be unbelievers after ye have believed, because of the envy in their hearts after the truth hath become manifest to them; but forgive and pass over till God bring about His command, verily God hath power over all things

110. And keep up prayer and give *zacat* (poor rate) and whatsoever of good ye send on before you for yourselves, that shall ye find with God, for verily God seeth all ye do

111 And they say, none shall enter paradise save those who are Jews or Nazarenes—such are their (fond) delusions (*Amaniyyahum*, vain desires), say, Bring forth your proof if ye say sooth

112. Aye! He who hath resigned his face before God and is virtuous, he shall have his reward with his Lord and fear shall not come upon them neither shall they grieve

Verse 104 *Raena* is equivalent to 'have regard for us.' Whenever the Musalmans did not closely follow the Prophet in his teachings they used that word to request him not to go too fast, and explain the matter over again But with a slight change of accent it may come to mean 'stupid' or 'cattle-tender' The Jews seized on this for derision and began to say *Raena* to the Prophet in that twisted way. The offence this must have given can be imagined. Saad 'bn Maaz, a Medina chief of fiery temper noticed this and his fury knew no bounds There would have been much blood-shed, but as in the revelation that came in time they were simply directed to change that word for another they felt themselves bound not to go beyond that and so nothing happened. In the word *Unzurna* there is no such occasion for play upon the accents of words

These offensive practices of the Jews meant to annoy and irritate the Prophet and the Musalmans continued for a long time. Thus in Sura IV also there is a similar complaint about such habits 'Of those who are Jews there are those who alter words from their places and say "We have heard and we disobey, and hear without being heard, and *Raena*

distorting it with their tongues and taunting about religion and if they had said we hear and we obey and hear, and *Unzurna* it would have been better for them, but God has cursed them for their unbelief so they do not believe but a little" verse 46 Notice the softness of the language in a matter so irritating

Verse 105 The psychological influence of personal prejudices should always be borne in mind It is this spirit of envy that, whether consciously or not, created a spirit of aversion in their minds against Islam and prevented its acceptance, and it was the same that created the spirit of aversion among the Munafiqs

Verse 106 '*Nasikh*.' Originally removing as in the expression نسخت الشمس الظل 'The sun removed the shade' is used in Law for a command once in force being cancelled by a different one In such cases the first command must be supposed to be only of temporary nature, and it is only because we are not informed of the period from before that we think there has been any real change in the divine law Thus in changing the Qibla it is precisely stated that the former Qibla was meant only to be a trial for the people of Mecca (see note on verse 143).

Clearly if truth and the moral and spiritual development of man is the one grand object of religion doctrines and matters relating to morals must remain immutable All practical matters, legal regulations of all kinds and forms of devotion and religious discipline are liable to change from time to time owing to varying conditions of people and society But it must be remembered that though when originally enunciated these were generally adapted to the people and society to whom they were given—they are not liable to change *ipso facto* with every change in their conditions Even when they cease to be well adapted, they serve to preserve the historical continuity of the community and prevent an obliteration of its distinctive features This is an important point to be remembered in connection both with purely religious rules and temporal laws having religious sanction or sanctity (This point is discussed in detail in my Principles) There is also here something of the privilege of the prophet. However the social conditions may have altered, the laws enunciated by him continue in force as a token of people's loving obedience to his will till another equal to him or greater comes to cancel and institute new laws in their stead

The case is still more true of disciplinary regulations. Most of the forms of devotion prescribed in religion are simply sanctioned of God, the

Prophet being in fact entrusted with the training of the people for spiritual life, devises what regulations and forms of devotion he thinks fit and in our obedience to him consists our spiritual perfection Here particularly as in everything else, it is the spirit of faithful obedience that is of chief importance all else is comparatively nothing That this is no new thing with Islam and older laws have been abrogated by later prophets and by the same prophet at different times must be well-known to every reader of the Old and New Testament

Nunsiha, 'Cause it to be forgotten' The Sunni commentators, most of them, take it literally and relate several stories of verses and even whole Surahs having been miraculously forgotten and they explain the shortness of Surah IX in current editions on this theory (see Siraj *in loco*) It is said this Surah was equal in size to the present Surah II, and contained detailed particulars about Munafiqs, the dissembling Musalmans

It is a mute point whether this was so or not, all that can be said is that it is not very likely, though the policy of the times makes it not impossible that some such course might have been adopted (see Introduction) At all events we know that all human acts, good or bad, are repeatedly ascribed in the Quran to God in the predestinarian sense explained in note at end of sec 1 in Supp Whether forgotten by neglect of men or by natural failing of memory or by miracle, as the Sunnis would have it, the Quran was a Living Revelation, and it was not necessary to actually reproduce the verse lost in this way Another and a better one could be revealed, if required, or it might be left to the Living Word of God, the Prophet and Imams, to teach the substance of it

But, for all that has been said above, it is remarked that both the words used *Naskh* (for abrogation) and *Nasy* (for forgetting) have other meanings, which seems meant to show that the abrogation is to be understood here in a restricted sense We have seem that *Naskh* originally means removing in place, so *Nasy* does also mean *in common language* delaying in time Actually Siraj has taken that meaning in preference to the other, though the author is a Sunni and believes in the 'forgetting' theory What it shows is this Nothing that cannot stand, as untrue statements or immoral or unjustifiable directions, is ever revealed. All that is abrogated or forgotten is that which, in itself true and just, can be cast into shade for a time owing to varying conditions of life or, it may be, owing to certain principles, thus verse 115 below has the appearance of being abrogated by 144, but any child can see that there is no real discrepancy in principle, only the directions change in special cases And if the Sunni view is right that certain portions of the Revelation are lost by forgetting

implying that there may be something relating to belief in them, then the mere forgetting of them do not make those beliefs unsound or untrue

The Ahmadi commentator has a sort of horror for abrogation and so tries to make it the abrogation of Jewish Law by the Islamic one. It does apply to that and all previous religions but there is no reason to restrict it to that

It may be noted that according to Qummi there is a slight mistake in the popular reading The correct reading is *Naate be khairin minhaa* 'We bring something equally good,' the new command is always equal in excellence to the old one Looking to the old conditions the old command cannot be said to be inferior

Verse 108 'Put questions to the apostle' *i. e.* about reasons for this and that direction, as was the habit of Israelites who inspite of witnessing so many miracles were always grumbling whenever there was unpleasant experience in carrying out orders

Implicit trust and obedience constitutes the very life of faith, and all such questioning about disciplinary matters, and generally all matters of obligation, is a species of infidelity

Verse 109 'Till God bring about' &c A clear prophecy of their downfall Mark the prejudice of the Jews They did not mind to see people converted to Judaism, but would rather have them relapse into idolatory than retain the purer faith of Islam This is stated more clearly in 4 51

The context must not be passed over here Verse 106 says directions of practice can be changed at any time, verse 108 reprimands Musalmans for asking the why and wherefore of specific directions The verse before us is connected with these The Medina people had a sort of respect for the Jews and their Scriptures, and it was their testimony that led them to believe in Islam (see note an verse 101 above) They now sought to throw doubts in people's minds by pointing out that the Prophet sometimes directed things that were unlawful in the old Scriptures and sometimes changed his own directions How much this, even the former, had effect on the people in the low culture of the days we see in their refusing to cut down date trees when ordered to do so in the seige of Bani Nazeer (see Surah 59 5 note)

Verse 111 An instance of the profound knowledge the Prophet must have had of those religions and the scriptures they receive The

Israelite was pre-eminently a national religion and their scriptures are engrossed with them and them only They were indeed directed to slay those who worshipped strange gods—and they may be presumed to be cursed in next life too, though even this much is problematical That the strange gods were false gods—a pure fiction, is an idea of very late growth—these foreign gods were simply to be disregarded and not to be worshipped At all events there is not the slightest hint anywhere about the fate of those that, not believing in strange gods, should also not be a Jew The idea that salvation is confined to Judaism was a mere "vain desire" engrafted upon their religion probably after the rise and growth of Christianity But, strange to say, in the case of Christians too there is no more foundation for the doctrine of exclusive salvation. Nowhere it was thought so by Christ, it was only added later by the Church fathers In fact the Unitarian Church is emphatic in denying this doctrine to be any part of Christ's teaching

Verse 112 This is the doctrine of Reason and therefore carries its own evidence of truth But before one can be sure that he submits himself heart and soul to the one true God he must try to know Him and see if there are reliable means to find His pleasure Only on this latter condition can he be said to be a true seeker after God

SECTION 14

Differences in religions are due to perversion of truth Vanquishment of those who ruin mosques To attribute a son to God is to deny His perfection Demand for direct revelation or other such miracle The Prophet not responsible for the persistent unbelief of the people and not to make any relaxation for them Only those attached spiritually with him are perfectly guided

113 And the Jews say, The Nazarenes rest on naught and the Nazarenes say, the Jews rest on naught, yet they read the Book Even so say those that know not (of revelation) the like of their saying. But God will judge between them on the day of resurrection regarding that about which they differ.

114 And who is more iniquitous than he who hinders the mosques of God from that His name be remembered

there and strives after their destruction These! it were not (fit) for them to enter therein except in fear For them is disgrace in this world and a great punishment in the Hereafter.

115. And God's is the East and the West, so whithersoever ye turn, there is the face of God Verily God is the Comprehending (or every where (B) or ample giving (A) *Wasei*) the Knowing.

116 And they say, God hath taken unto Him a son—Glory be to him! Nay, His is all that is in heavens and earth; all are obedient to Him.

117 Originator of the Heavens and the Earth! And whenever He decreeth a thing He only saith to it, Be and it is

118. And those that know not (ignorant heathens B) say, Unless God speak to us or a sign come unto us....., Even so said those that were before them the like of their saying—their hearts are alike. Surely the signs We have already made clear to those who become sure.

119 Verily We have sent thee with the Truth, a bearer of good news and a warner, and thou shalt not be questioned as to the dwellers of Hell.

120. And never will the Jews be content with thee—nor the Christians, until thou follow their religion Say it is the guidance of God that is (the true) guidance; and surely if thou follow their fancies, after that which has come to thee of (true) knowledge thou shalt have from God neither a friend nor a helper.

121. They to whom We have given the Book read it as it ought to be read, these believe therein, and whoever believes not in it, these then are the losers.

Verse 113 'Those who do not know' are the heathens whose religious systems have no place for revelation or inspiration in our sense of the word The last words show that all rest on something, Reason or Revelation, it is only lies and prejudices that have so completely encrusted themselves on each that they cannot recognise each other On the day of resurrection God will make it plain to all how much of bias they have allowed to be swayed away with, and so perverted the teaching of Reason and Revelation

Verse 114 A prophecy about the ultimate triumph of Islam and downfall of its opponents The wording of the verse is general and a number of historical facts have been noted by the commentators as covered by this verse or stated to be particularly referred to there Qummi says it was the hinderance offerred by the Quraishites to let the Prophet come to Mecca for pilgrimage in A H 7 Others say it is the mosques, places reserved by early Musalmans at Mecca for devotion, the infidels doing their best to prevent them in their worship But none of these things come to actual striving for the destruction of mosques which, it may be added, were very few in that early period There was however an attempt well-known to history by the Munafiqs (hypocritical converts) to kill the Prophet on his return from Tabuc and then to raze to the ground all the mosques of Medina and elsewhere The words apply fully to this and the verse seems to be a prophecy of this turn the progress of events took in the history of Islam It may be noted that infidels are not to be allowed to enter mosques at all, and their entering it in fear means that they have taken to the profession of Islam though only in appearance

Verse 115 *Tuwallu* 'turn' does not necessarily mean turning one's face in a specific direction in prayer, and it has been said that this verse has no reference to it at all It is said to mean in effect, whichever side you Musalmans turn you will have victory Or the infidels may be addressed here Whichever way they turn fleeing they will meet with the might of God against them But under this verse a relaxation is made in the case of optional prayers While in compulsory prayers one has to turn towards the fixed Qibla and so should get down for prayer from a moving conveyance (except a ship of course) for fear it may turn to other directions the optional prayers are allowed under this verse on such conveyances without any such scruples about the subsequent change of direction

Verse 116 *Subhanahu* The word signifies purity *i. e* freedom from all limitations and imperfections to which all and even the totality of creation is subject. Metaphorically, all may be said the sons of God and

as a metaphor it was current among Jews of Christ's time. But among masses it is difficult to keep metaphor as a metaphor and when the Christians made the term distinctive for Christ the natural implications of the word, homogeneity and equality with the father, could not help to be resisted and corruption of the sublime faith of Christianity was inevitable. Hence the offence taken in Islam against the use of this word of anyone particularly, whether as a matter of doctrine or even as a metaphor. Whoever remembers that all the highest as much as the lowest depend upon Him and submit to His will as a matter of inherent necessity (*Qanitun*) will not have the boldness to use that expression of anyone.

Verse 117. Badie Not merely the maker, but the original designer of the form of creation without any previous similitude whatever. This is a point that Our Lord Ali lays stress on again and again in his addresses. Thus he says "He created the creation in the perfect sense of creating and began it in the perfect sense of beginning, without a thought rolled in his mind and without an experience to avail of and without motion excited, or attention devoted to it." (Nahajul Balagah).

Thinking out even a quality of a thing without having previous experience of it is impossible, much less can it be possible for one to conceive a form of being without knowing it previously The thing is really as difficult as creation of the substance itself.

'Be, and it is.' As explained by our Lord Ali 'Not by sound uttered, nor by voice heard. His word, Blessed be He, is action proceeding from Him'

Verse 118. 'Unless God speak' &c Reference to the preposterous demands of the Israelites to see God and the like This verse (and there are others like it) raises an important question Did the Prophet disclaim the power of working miracles? If so all the miracles recorded in history and authentic traditons are mere tales and even those recorded in the Quran, as the splitting of the moon have to be explained away, as best we can, by relegating them to poetical language or the like Fortunately we have very positive means to settle this question, for our belief that the Prophet was gifted with power of working miracles, is based not on mere testimony of others, but on facts of direct experience. As shown in the Introduction and other writings of mine, we have clear evidence of higher spiritual powers of the Prophet and the Imams in the numerous anticipations of scientific truths that were

impossible even to be guessed at in that age and country Then we have numbers of prophecies fulfilled in history—some long after the prophecies being entered in extant writings Then we have an overwhelming mass of miracles connected with the holy shrines of the Imams and places associated with their names Miracles connected with Tazias are published every year and there can be no doubt about their authenticity Some have their time and place fixed so that they can be witnessed every year Finally then are the Istikhara and the mourning over Husain which are permanent miracles in the lives of all true believers Even of the miracles recorded in history some, we must bear in mind, have the most undoubted authority for them The miracles of the Imams recorded by prejudiced Sunni writers have all the credit of hostile or at least unwilling witnesses in their favour It is clear all the miracles of the Imams have to be taken to the credit of the Prophet as he was the source of all their spiritual powers Not ten thousand verses then of the Quran can shaken our conviction that the Prophet was gifted with power of miracles and must have exhibited some of it in the days when he was living

What then was the sign they wanted and was not given them? To see this consider the most prominent of his miracles—the splitting of the moon Even this was attributed to magic—a continual and persistent witchcraft (see Sura Qamar v 1 and 2) What other could be given? What they wanted was a sign that could convince them that it was certainly of divine origin, could not by any possibility be attributed to inferior powers Can any such be conceived? It would be hard for many to conceive any such, and I would say, yes, but only such as would bring about the very undesirable state of things called *Kashfe Ghita* 'Uplifting of the veil,' most glorious wonders filling heaven and earth, so prominent that no eye can escape them and so permanent that in time the suspicion of fascination and witchcraft and the like may naturally wear away That as a matter of fact it was such wonders that were sought of the Prophet by people we are clearly told in several places in the Quran Thus in Surah 17 92 95 we read "And they say, 'We will never believe in thee till thou, bring out springs for us from the earth, or that there be a garden for thee of dates and pomegranates, and springs run in it plentifully, or that the heavens might fall (as thou thinkest) over us, or thou bring God and His angels in a tribe Or that thou have a house of gold or ascend up to heaven and we will not believe they ascending till thou bring down in us a book that we might read" Even in the verse before us it is clear the sign they wanted was something akin in gravity and prominence to God's own speaking with them Now it is clear such wonders would take away all value of faith, there would in fact be no question of faith at all Faith

and trust in God would be like the conviction that fire burns or that iron rusts

Again it must be remembered that much depends on the spirit in which the demand for miracles is made It is quite legitimate to demand from a prophet some proof that he is more than a man and that he is really chosen by God to convey his message but this assurance should be sought in an enquiring spirit and in a mood of mind free alike from scepticism and credulity If neglecting all that has been done every body were to put a new demand to satisfy his lust for wonders it would indeed be preposterous to satisfy them, certainly it was no business of a prophet to proclaim himself a Thaumaturgist And this is no new thing for our Prophet When instead of seeking evidence of the hundreds of miracles that Our Lord Jesus Christ worked of his own accord they still demanded a sign from him he said 'Verily I say unto you No sign shall be given to this people except the sign of Jonah the Prophet' Similarly when he was brought before Herod and he asked him to show his miracles Our Lord did not deign even to reply to him Similarly in our case enough evidence of supernatural gifts and powers had been given from time to time of his own accord to leave any necessity of multiplying them in answer to preposterous demands This is what the verse says in the end 'Indeed we have made the signs clear for a people who become sure—*yuqinun*' Mark the use of this word *yuqinun* here instead of the more usual *yominun*, believe or have faith They trust to their reason, and come to a conclusion without indulging in vague possibilities, such as unknown forces of nature or occult powers When they see there are sufficient grounds to be morally sure about the reality of a miracle and its divine origin that is enough for them and they do not require anything more to be convinced Those who do not trust to their reason, but are always haunted by thoughts of unknown possibilities can never be convinced

Verse 119 That no prophet can be responsible for the faith of the people goes without saying but the Holy Prophet had a crushing sense of responsibility in the matter and so there were repeated revelations to this effect to allay his fears Also there is some show of responsibility in the case of half-believers who had associated themselves with his name by formal profession of faith, yet were not attached to him and his family in any real degree To cut them off it is said in v 121 that they are not the people to whom the Book is given Seeing that these men were much interested in conciliating Jews and Christians, whom they respected, warning is given in v 120 that no compromising spirit in religion is to be permitted

Verse 120 An instance of what Our Lord Jafar el Sadiq says of ایاك اعنی واسمعی یا جاره in the Quran i e here it is people that are chiefly meant to be threatened in the words of threat addressed to the Prophet, apparently with the object that the people may take the matter all the more seriously This is a common mode of speech and is very frequently adopted in the Quran Though there is no question that he was not so made as to be infallible absolutely speaking, yet if he was just as much liable to fall into error as all other men it would simply mean an ill judgement on the part of God to select him above all others for this high office and also none could be positively sure that he did not actually do so in some cases, and it would be but right to be cautious in receiving any of his teachings.

Verse 121 It may well be questioned if there are or were in those days many people who could come under the category of 'reading the Book as it ought to read.' This 'as it ought to be read' is a very great thing, and facts cannot be cast to the wind to make the generality of Musalmans, or even Sahabas, come to have the distinction for it. All that can be said is that the more they approached this high condition the more they would have a title to it. The words, however, imply that there are some to whom the words are fully applicable, and these were those "*to whom God had given the Book.*" The Book was *given* to the Prophet and *in the same sense* the word can be used of others *only* in so far as their souls have spiritual union with the holy soul of the Prophet These were pre-eminently the Imams for they were one soul, one self with the Prophet according to the traditions—and Quran too (see the famous Mubahala verse 3 54) Others can approach to the distinction by rising as much as possible to their level in holiness To the masses the Book was given only in a secondary sense, and they never read it as it ought to be read Needless to say it means, as Ibn Abbas explains, they follow it as it ought to be followed.

SECTION 15

The distinction and favours bestowed by God on Israelites should not make them heedless of the hereafter The prayer of Abraham to grant Imamate to his seed accepted only with regard to those who are not sinners Purification of Kaaba at the hands of Abraham and its security. Meeca to be made a centre for a prophet from among Ishmael's descendants.

122 O children of Israel! Remember the blessings with which I blessed you and that I gave you superiority over all people (*Fazzaltukum alal alamin*)

123 And beware the day when no soul shall avail another in the least, nor shall aught be accepted in compensation from it, nor shall intercession profit it, nor shall they be helped

124 And when his Lord tried Abraham with certain commands (*Kalimatin*, words) and he fulfilled them, He said, Surely I will make thee a leader (*Imam*, spiritual leader) for men he said, And of my seed? He said, My covenant (*Ahd*) reacheth not the evil-doers (sinners, *zalimin*)

125 And (remember) what time We made the House a resort for men and a sanctuary, and, Take the standing-place of Abraham for a place of prayer And We charged Abraham and Ishmael that ye two purify My House for those who make a circuit (of it) and those who kneel and prostrate (their heads therein)

126 And when Abraham said, Lord, make this a town of security, and provide its people with all fruits—those of them who believe in God and in the last day He said, And whoever believeth not I will grant him enjoyment for a short while, and thereafter will I drive him to the torment of fire and an evil destination it is.

127 And when Abraham raised the foundations of the House with Ishmael: Our Lord! accept from us, surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing.

128 Our Lord! And make us faithful (*Muslim* submitting) to Thee and out of our descendants a people faithful to Thee and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us (mercifully), for verily Thou art the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful

129 Our Lord! And raise up in them an Apostle from among them who shall read unto them Thy revelations (*Ayat*, signs) and teach them the Book and wisdom and shall purify them; for verily Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.

Verses 122 & 123 Notice these verses are exactly a repetition of verses 47 &48 which open section 6, in verse 122 we have exactly the same words, in verse 123 only the words about intercession availing nothing are changed but the meaning remains substantially the same The reason for the repetition appears on reflecting on the import of the section as a whole Sec 6 is concerned merely with the Israelites and recounts instances of their stubbornness in the past which have shown them to be unworthy of the distinction God gave them (by granting the gift of prophecy to them) for which they boasted as being the chosen people of God This distinction was therefore taken away from them and given to Ishmael's children who thenceforth began to call themselves the favoured people, *Ummate Marhuma* This section is mainly concerned with showing how this change was effected without break of pledge to Abraham As the Ahmadi commentator says in his note on verse 124, "The Israelite contention was that prophethood should always remain in the house of Israel and that the promised Prophet of Deut 18 18 should be an Israelite In this section they are told that the covenant was made not with Israel but with Abraham and Ishmael and that the seed of Ishmael and Isaac were equally to be blessed" In the whole of this section there is nothing further about the Israelites whether as a people or as a religion The reason of the repetition is thus obvious These verses before us, though addressed ostensibly to the Israelites are meant specially to serve as a warning to the Musalmans that they too should expect nothing better in the Hereafter by merely associating themselves with the name of the Holy Prophet—an instance of 'To thee I say but hear thou the neighbour' which, as Our Lord Jafarel Sadiq says, the Quran is full of

In the notes on verse 48 we have seen that intercession as the very word *shafaat* shows is entirely a matter of attachment by ties of love It is meaningless and cannot be accepted unless the condemned has real attachment with his intercessor Thus in a tradition, which must be admitted to have some basis of truth, as it comes from Sunni sources, we are told that some Sahabas (companions of the Prophet) would be repulsed from the Pond and not allowed to drink, and the prophet trying to speak on their behalf would be stopped with the words, 'Thou dost not know what these men did after thee' So his general intercession for his

Ummat (people) will avail them nothing unless they have something to make them really deserve it As to the other prophets we are told in the traditions that they will hesitate to intercede for their people fearing it may not be accepted and will leave it to Our Holy Prophet, and in any case will not certainly intercede in case of those who wilfully reject him or any other prophet That may be a reason for the slight change of word about the availability of intercession in this verse from those in verse 48

Verse 124 This is a very important verse in the Quran as it decides many of the questions on which the two great sects of Islam are divided The import and implication of its words must therefore be duly considered

(1) The first thing to notice is that Abraham was already a prophet from before The distinction of Imamate was bestowed later upon him after his showing steadfastness in the trials of faith One of these was his readiness to slay his son in obedience to divine command communicated to him in a vision Far from being an act of virtue it would have been a heinous crime for him to do so, if he had not already known that he was a prophet Similarly the cry made to him to prevent him from doing it makes it clear that he was already a prophet As a matter of fact the use of the peculiar word *kalimat* (words) in this verse seems specially meant to make it clear that these commands were not the ordinary commands of reason and faith but special commandments revealed to prophets *in words* For those who may not know it it may be said that (as we are expressly taught in the traditions) there are prophets of various grades and classes Some are prophets for their own souls merely and are not charged to teach others, some know commandments by vision only and would not see the angels in waking life, and were not commissioned to teach others but were themselves following another prophet as Lot was a follower of Abraham Jonah was able to see angels and was sent to a people to preach yet he was only a follower of other prophet Such prophets who follow others or have only a special commission cannot be called Imams except in a loose sense of the word It is only great prophets as Abraham and Our Holy Prophet who are sent to the whole world with an independent law that are Imams for all men

(2) God's declaration that his covenant does not reach the sinners shows that sinlessness is necessary for the office of the Imamate But in this matter no one can be sure even of himself—much less of others without distinct declaration to this effect by inspiration This absolute

immunity from sins is termed *Ismat* 'infallibility' in theology That it is this condition that is requisite for an Imam is clear from this verse, for the words apply to all kinds and classes of sins, great or small, open or secret It is curious that Fakhruddin Razi in his great commentary while admitting the justice of this view discards it for no better reason than that it does not agree with Sunni principles He says 'The Shias argue from this verse the correctness of their theory of *Ismat* sinlessness, open and hidden But as to us we say the verse does indeed require this, but we forego the consideration of the hidden and so outward justice would remain sufficient to be considered' Nothing need be said about an unblushing refusal of this kind to accept an inconvenient inference

(3) The term sinner applies as much to one who has given up his sinful courses (even though his sins be supposed to be forgiven) as to one who continues to be sinful Repentance cannot bring back the past so as to make the moral development of the man equal to that of a man who has not sinned all his life At all events certainly it cannot take away the reproach of past sins So the Imam must be one who has remained sinless from birth to death and none can claimed to be such except the Prophets and Imams according to Shia beliefs

(4) God's granting this posit on to Abraham after his trials, his prayer to God to do the same to some in his gene ation, God's calling this office his covenant (or charge *Ahd*)—all show that it rests only with God to grant the office to such as he thinks fit People have no hand in the matter, else the prayer would have been foolish and God would have said so in reply

The point in all this is that as a prophet, as a law giver, the work of Our Holy Prophet had been completed in his life He had given a *perfect* religion with a *perfect* code of law and morals that would suffice for the spiritual needs of all men to the end of this world So he was the Last Prophet—there was no need of any prophet coming after him But as a guide, as a leader of men, his work was only begun when he passed away Anyone who can conceive the inconceivably low mental culture and moral depravity of the Arabs of the Prophet's day can easily see that, however much they might have improved under the Prophet's teaching, they were still very far from the capacity to continue the Prophet's work of guidance and publication and propagation of his holy religion To say nothing of the higher spiritual truths which their minds were simply incapable of understanding, they were incapable to transmit faithfully even the ordinary external law of discipline and social life That even

requires certain qualities of the head and heart, but for the majority of men even that much is too much to look for, as is manifest from the very unpleasant history of those degraded times Thus the Prophet could be the Last Prophet only by leaving a succession of Imams after him who should be competent to do the same work that the prophet would have gone on doing had he continued to live

The Sunnis demur to every word of this; but it is only a matter of history and it can decide which view is the more correct one The insufficiency of the popular cult as transmitted by the Sahabas led to the revolt (in their own ranks) of Motazalites from the rationalistic side and of the Sufis from the spiritualistic side, both of whom are denounced by the orthodox and yet both divide a large section of the Sunni world between them It is significant that both schools emerge from the disciples of Our Lord Ali, whom they both pridingly claim to be the great founder of their systems A great Sunni Divine Ibn Abil Hadid says in one of his Qasidas

الا انما الاسلام لولا عارضه لعرضة طاول و لهنة كافر

"know that Islam but his (Ali's) manifold knowledge were the butt of sceptic's objections and the tampling ground of the infidel"

All the innumerable sects into which they are divided are simply due to their not recognizing an Inspired Imam though he was so absolutely necessary in the very immature age following the death of the Prophet.

The other function of the Imam is to be the leader of men in their practical life With divine knowledge the Imam is able to see the consequences of things in the distant future and so is able to dictate to them their policies in every situation which may never have to be repented. And so generally he is to be their director showing them what is best to do or not to do from every possible point of view In short he is to control their evolution and determine their history How unfortunate the history of the Musalmans became chiefly from the time of Moavyah is well-known to every one. On the other hand the direction of the Imams enabled the Shias to multiply and propagate in the midst of the direst persecution till they soon became the preponderating power as much in politics as in religion and culture

(5) The Imam being so very necessary both for guidance and for national evolution it is necessary that there should be an Imam at every time This is clear by a matter of reason Though it is impossible that all

throughout the length and breadth of the world should have easy access to the Imam, yet the Imam must exist so that when there is any real need of him at any place he should be able to present himself there His great spiritual powers enable him to do so He may appear in person, or do what is necessary in other ways In short he must exist at all times to be able to meet the situations as they arise Islam attaches so much importance to this and to the people knowing the Imam of their age that any who does not know him is supposed to die an infidel There is a famous tradition of the Prophet, admitted by Shias and Sunnis alike, which says that "Whoever dies while he does not know the Imam of his time he dies the death of ignorance"

There are many other important things to note about Imamate but this note has already swelled to the inordinate extent and we refrain Any way it should be clear to all that Abraham prayed for people in his generation to be Imams in the same sense that he was himself an Imam He was never a temporal ruler and, for aught we know, never tried to have any political power He had not the means to force men to obey him, yet he was their divinely appointed ruler, and it was their duty, if they were believers at all, to obey him in everything whether temporal or spiritual

Verse 125 The *Maqam* or praying place of Our Lord Abraham is a small building close to Kaaba, on which the holy patriarch stood when he built the Holy Temple

Mark the use of the word *Ahidna* 'covenanted with or took a pledge from' for 'enjoined' This implies that the command to purify the House was of the nature of a covenant transmitted to the Prophet who with Ali on his back cleared it of idols on the conquest of Mecca A H 7, and it appears had also done something of the kind in days of Meccan persecution as well

The word 'purify' *Tahhira* shows that Kaaba was there even before Abraham though like the Kaaba of the Prophet's day it was profaned with idols So in 3 95 it is said to be the 'First House' made on earth for the worship of God and 22 29 it is called 'The Ancient House' *Baitul Atiq*, though Abraham might to some extent have rebuilt it (verse 127) It might even have ceased to exist as an edifice and Abraham built it entirely afresh, in which case purification would mean isolation of the Holy Spot for sacred purposes—the clearing of it from the profanity of the rest of the world As Qibla the Kaaba is sacred to the opposite point of earth in the other hemisphere.

The prayer enjoined in this verse is the two Rakaats of Tawaf in pilgrimage Our Lord Baqir is reported to have said "How much do the people (Musalmans) of Syria lie on God! They say that when God ascended to Heavens He set His foot on the stone (Sakhrah) of Jerusalem, (referring to a current Sunni tradition) It was only one of the servants of God that having set his foot on a stone, God ordered us to make of it a place of prayer" Here we see (as against Wahhabis) the great desirability of setting up mosques by way of memorial of places connected with the Holy Prophet and Imams and attaching special sanctity to them Islam is an expanding religion, and it could never have been such if it were not to provide for or at least approve of the exercise of all pious emotions

With his turn of mind and prejudice against Islam Muir is naturally sceptical about the association of Kaaba with the names of Abraham and Ishmael But Burton (Pilgrimage III 336 cited by Rodwell) says that as the Arab tradition speaks clearly and consistently as to the fact of Abraham having been to Mecca to build the Kaaba it may be considered an open question So also Fretvag cited by the same author says there is no good reason that Kaaba was founded as stated in this passage See Rodwell in *loco* It is hardly necessary to point out that "the connection of Ishmael's name with Arabia is an incontrovertible fact, for Kedar (son of Ishmael, Gen 25 13) stands throughout the writings of the old Testament for Arabia (Ps 120 5, Isa 42 11, 60 7 etc)" Also as has been pointed out by the Ahmadi commentator "The Arab tradition representing Abraham as coming with Hagar and Ishmael is quite independent of the Bible statement (of Hagar's expulsion Genesis 21 14-21) and the two taken together justify us in drawing the conclusion as to the truth of the Quranic statement"

Verse 126 Again in this verse nothing is said about the acceptance of Abraham's prayer There is in fact nothing to say about it—a prophet's prayer not is rejected Only in order to prevent the Kashfe Ghita (the uplifting of the veil) it is said that in temporal matters such as this believers and unbelievers will be equally blessed—the latter to be condemned in the next life The verse also shows that infidels do not deserve blessings of this life even, and what they have is only curse for them in the Hereafter If they had none they might be near the state of *Mustaz'afin* weak ones and so liable to be excused for their unbelief

Verse 127 Mark the artistic ommission of any such words as saying, praying or the like This to mark the very great exaltation of these holy men in the sight of God and their nearness to Him in spiritual life.

Their words are as if absorbed in the Revelation proceeding from On High For a like construction with a like import see verses 285, 286 and note thereon

Verse 128 & 129 These verses justify the belief taught in traditions that some people from Ishmael's time to that of Our Holy Prophet have always retained true belief in God (for a prophet's prayer not is rejected) and that it was in *fi* (not among) them that the Holy Prophet was raised Apart from the accounts in the traditions we have direct testimony for the faith of Hashim, the great-grand-father of the Prophet One of the documents written by him was preserved to the time of Ibn Nadim who saw it himself Hashim writes that he gives 7,000 Dinars to so and so as a loan calling on God and the two angels (and these alone) as a witness to the same It is vain at the present day to look for a like instance of living faith in God's Presence Few would be prepared to lend even a trifling sum on a bond like this, contenting themselves with the witness of God and angels alone Ibn Nadim says the writing was like the writing of women (Fihrist)

Note that the word *Ummat* (people) need not in Arabic necessarily denote a whole community Any section of people, great or small, agreeing in beliefs would be called an Ummat, and the Quran uses the word of one individual man too, Verily Abraham was people (Ummat) praying to God (16 . 121), though here a spiritual sense is apparently involved

SECTION 16

Abraham and Jacob bequeath their religion to their descendants So the religion of Abraham is the basis, but Islam requires a belief in all the prophets No sectarianism, but the worship of God the common basis of all religions The doctrines of Judaism and Christianity unknown to the ancestors of the Israelites who were prophets

130 And who shall turn away from the religion of Abraham, but he who debaseth his soul to folly And certainly We have chosen him in this world, and in the next he shall assuredly be one of the righteous

131. When his Lord said to him, Submit, he said, I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds

132 And the same did Abraham enjoin on his sons and (so did) Jacob! O my sons verily God hath chosen for

you a faith, therefore (see) ye die not but that ye be Muslims

133 Were ye present when death approached Jacob, when he said unto his children, 'What will ye worship after me?' They answered, We will worship thy God and the God of thy fathers, Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac One God only, and to him do we submit

134 This is a people which have passed away, for them is that which they earned and (so) for you is that which ye earn and ye shall not be asked about (the works) which they had been doing

135 And they say, Be Jews or Christians, that ye may have the guidance Say, Nay! the religion of Abraham, the upright one (*Hanifan*), and he was not of those who join others with God (*Mushrikin*)

136 Say ye We believe in God and that which hath been sent down to us and that which was sent down unto Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes and which was given to Moses and Jesus and that which was given to the prophets from their Lord No distinction do we make between any of them and to Him do we submit.

137 Then if they believe the like to what ye believe in Him they are indeed guided, but if they turn away, then they are only in opposition And God will suffice thee against them, for He is the Hearing, the Knowing

138 The Baptism (*Sibghat*) of God! and who is better to baptise (*Sibghatan*) than God? And Him do we worship.

139 Say, Do ye contend with us regarding God? When He is our Lord and your Lord! And for us are our works and for you are your works and we are sincere to Him

140 Do ye say that Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes were Jews or Nazarenes? Say, Have ye better knowledge or God? And who is more iniquitous than he who conceals a testimoney that he hath with him from God and God is not heedless of what ye do?

141 This is a people that hath passed away; they have that which they earned and ye shall have what ye earn, and ye are not to be asked about (the works) which they had been doing

Verse 130 *Safiha Nafsahu*, makes light of his mind, disgraces it and treats it with contempt. Islam in its essentials is the natural religion for man Only those that turn away from the voice of Reason can follow any other religion This may be a result of indolence or religious indifference but it is not much less culpable than active, conscious rejection of faith

Righteous in the Hereafter This is the highest praise that can be given to a man for his spirituality For all are righteous in heavenly life, Paradise is itself a place of intense purity, and none but the righteous can have a place there (See note to verse 25 in Supp &c) The distinct mention of a man as righteous in the hereafter means something very extraordinary

Verse 132 Cf Genesis 18 19 "For I know him that he will command his children and household after him and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgement"

Verse 133 *Were you witnesses? i e* There is no doubt this is true, but see how you believe it The thing is given in your traditions, but see if you have any reliable authority for believing in these traditions Questioned by your reason you will have to cast aside these things as mere tales or will have to fall back on the authority of a Prophet who carries the evidence of his inspiration with himself For the traditional account Rodwell cites Midrash Rabbah on Gen par 28 and on Deut par 2 etc "At the time when our father Jacob quitted this world he summoned his twelve sons and said to them, Hearken to your father Israel (Gen 12 2) Have ye any doubts in your hearts concerning the Holy One, Blessed be He! They said, Hear O Israel, our father As there is no doubt in thy heart, no neither is there in ours. For the Lord is our God and He is one"

Verse 134. You *are* not to be questioned about their deeds that you boast yourselves upon them

Verse 135 *Hanif* is from the root *Hanf* meaning *inclining*. Hence *Hanif* is one inclining towards the truth The word is often mentioned in connection with the name of Abraham, and the Holy Prophet and his followers are also enjoined to *Hanif*. It is an instance of a word of abuse changed to an appellation of honour by a change in the implied connections Thus Rafizee was originally a term of contempt for the Shias as those who cast aside the orthodox creed But we now take pride in using that name of ourselves in another connection According to a tradition one of the Imams consoled the Shias that the name was given them by God, possibly having in view the change made by God in the original meaning of the word Hanif

Verse 136 As the Ahmadi commentator notes, "This shows the cosmopolitan nature of a Muslim's belief Not only is belief in the great prophets of Israel an article of faith with a Muslim, but the words, *that which was given to the prophets from their Lord* makes the Muslim conception of belief as wide as the world" The Musalman is not merely prepared, but is obliged under the pain of losing his faith, to accept any prophet who might have arisen in India, China, Japan or America Some of the great religious teachers and saints reputed in various religions may have been prophets, but in absence of any clear evidence of this and of the reality of the teachings attributed to them nothing whatever can be said about them Their historical existence even is uncertain and there are certainly no reliable data about their life, miracles, and teaching which might enable us to conclude that any one of them was a prophet in our sense of the word Any way we must be sure that if any one of them was really a prophet his teaching must consistent, rather substantially one with Islam

Verse 137 The last words show as the Ahmadi commentator notes, "that the Jews had become active opposers to the spread of Islam at this early stage and formed plans to take the life of the Holy Prophet

Verse 138 *Sibghah* means coloring or dyeing From the same root is Istibagh the term for the Christian rite of baptism which was symbolical of spiritual coloring by or immersing in faith. Islam has no such rite, and the word is used in its original sense to indicate the distinctive feature of Islam As colour becomes inseparable from the cloth that is dyed, so are the minds so to speak to get a dye from the religion of God. Your minds, your souls, remember, require to be dyed, and so the question naturally arises how possibly can minds get any such dye unless

Kaaba in great reverence, and a whole Surah al-Fil No 105 describing the divine interposition to save it from Christian attack and the next one No 106 were among the earliest that was revealed, and though there was so much attachment to it among the Meccans that making a Qiblah of it would no doubt have helped to win over their hearts, at least would have reduced much of the persecution there—yet to try the faith of the old converts, to see that it was not alloyed by any lower prejudices—the Musalmans were bidden to turn their faces in prayer towards Jerusalem, keeping as far as possible the Kaaba also before them This continued to the almost 16 months after the flight, when owing to the sneers of the Jews, the prophet prayed to God for the change and this was granted

We thus see that from the beginning it was Kaaba that was meant to be Qiblah—there was a temporary command for Meccan proselytes to turn towards Jerusalem for a special reason

This is the account of the affair as given in the Shia reports from Imams (see Tafsir Safi and other commentaries) The further reason for the change, as we are able to see clearly, was that by prophetic insight the Prophet saw that while the idolatorous infidels of Mecca would soon be completely vanquished and all converted to Islam so that Kaaba would be an exclusively Muslim temple this will never be possible in the case of Jerusalem and its profanation by the Jews and Christians (better, but not very much better than the heathen) would continue more or less even in the days of Muslim occupation The fact is the change of Qiblah towards Kaaba was the clearest prophecy of the triumph of Islam with conquest of Mecca, for an idolatorous temple could not with any decency remain long as a Qiblah of the Musalmans Jerusalem threatens to be more or less exclusively Jewish in a not remote future There is a famous prophecy of the Prophet that the Christians will sway all lands, only Mecca and Medina will remain safe from their occupation

The main charge of non-Muslim critics is based entirely on some Sunni traditions for which see Tafsir Baizawi &c It comes to this that when the Prophet was at Mecca he worshipped towards the Kaaba but after the flight he changed the Qiblah to Jerusalem in order to conciliate the Jews, but that after one year owing to reasons stated, he longed once more to pray towards Mecca and then the instructions were revealed It is to reconcile with this account that the Sunni commentators try to construe the simple words in verse 143 ' *Wa ma jaalnal Qiblata allati kunta alaiha* ' as meaning " We did not make that which thou wouldst have to be Qiblah " spending all their grammatical erudition to make this rendering possible. It is strange that even the Ahmadi commentator does not see this and

follows them blindly Nothing need be said about these accounts, especially when plain words of the Quran have to be misconstrued to reconcile with them From some Sunni traditions it would appear that at one time (Meccan period) there was no Qiblah at all

Other objections relate only to the political wisdom of the measure. Thus Osborne says, "There have been few incidents more disasterous in their consequence to the human race than this decree of Mohammad changing the Qibla from Jerusalem to Mecca Had he remained true to his earlier and better faith the Arabs would have entered the religious community of the nations as peace-makers, not as enemies and destroyers To all alike Jews, Christians, and Mohammadans there would have been a single centre of holiness and devotion" &c Exactly the reverse How many crusades, memorable in history, and the much subtler compaigns of later days have been fought and continue to be fought to this day for the mere fact that Jerusalem happens to be under the domination of a Muslim ruler Deliverance of Jerusalem from Muslim hands is the sacred ideal of all the Jews and all Christian nations in the world And what success they have had to this day is due to the fact that Muslims as a people have no great interest in the matter What would have been the result if the place had been their Qiblah? Would not the struggle have been more fatal and disasterous to all? It is strange that the same men who thankfully praise the policy of Omar in removing away for prayers from the Temple of Jerusalem, fearing that the Musalmans might build a mosque there, should object to the Prophet's measure for having separate centre of devotion distinct from Christians whom he knew, as prophecies show, to dominate more and more to the end of time

Verse 143 Before we enter on a discussion of this verse it will be convenient to put down a few notes on the words used in it

(1) *Ummat* means a people, not necessarily a community Any set of people having something common to them will be called an *Ummat* And the Quran has used the word of a single individual—the prophet Abraham *Inna Ibrahima kana Ummatan qanitan lillahi*.

(2) *Wasat* is middle, and hence has been understood as used here in the sense of good, upright, just or equitable (as being removed from inclination either way) Or it may mean excellent as understood in the case of *Wusta* in verse 239. Or, as the Ahmadi commentator would prefer it, it means best, "as the middle position can only be occupied by one and therefore has no second to it" All are agreed that the word is here used in the sense of great praise.

(3) *Shahid* means witness Followed by *ala* it is used in the sense of *Raqib* or *Muhaimun* i e close watcher, careful observer, witness in the pure sense of the word without any implication as to whether the witness' home is to be in favour of or against a man Thus God is witness over all things *ala kulle shaien shahid* (22 17 &c) See also the words of Jesus in 5 117 "And I was witness over them as long as I was among them, but when Thou took me away Thou wert watcher over them and Thou art witness over all things" In a transferred sense the word may be used in the sense of leaders, teachers, purifiers &c as these can bear witness to the work they do and the effect of their work on the people These transferred meanings are insisted on by the Ahmadi commentator both in this verse and in verse 23 above simply to avoid the difficulty of the original sense

The questions now are —

(1) How is the *Ummat* (supposing it to mean the Muslim community) a good, just or equitable nation? Many might fear it may be the worst

(2) How is this *Ummat* a close watcher of and witness over all mankind?

(3) What point of similarity or other connection is there between the Musalmans being *Shahid* or watcher over all mankind and Kaaba being made Qiblah for the Musalmans?

It is easy to explain away everything in a loose general sense, and the Sunni commentators naively rehearse the following tradition to explain it As the former *Ummats* will deny the work of the prophets sent to them they will be required to produce some witness to their having duly fulfilled their mission in their people None will be found except the Muslim community who will bear witness to it on the basis of their faith Our Holy Prophet will then bear testimony to the reality of their faith and their character as witness It will be thus that the unbelievers of old times will be condemned (see Siraj *in loco*) The same is said to be meant in 4 45 where as a matter of fact it is the Prophet, not his *Ummat*, that is said to be witness of the former prophets

We have no space to deal with loose explanations of this kind. Suffice it to say that granting that the *Ummat* is witness in a special sense and for a special purpose there is no connection of between this and the Kaaba becoming Qiblah for the Musalmans. The Ahmadi commentator tries to get rid of the ordinary meaning of *Shahid* and has recourse to the

transferred meanings we have mentioned above The "Thus" he explains by saying, 'By making the Kaaba their Qiblah Allah had made it known that they were the people for whom Abraham had prayed'

The Shia interpretation is quite different The *Ummat* is not the Muslim community It is the Imams See traditions in Safi *in loco* They are witness over, keep an eye over the people in the literal sense of the word, as the prophets are said to be, with Our Holy Prophet 'witness over them,' in 4 45 referred to above And the connection of it with the Qiblah of the Musalmans is that it is only a symbol of it As the Kaaba is the Qiblah to which all faces must turn in prayer, so the Imams are the spiritual centre to which all hearts must turn for faith And Kaaba was the birth-place of the first of them—no other having had that honour besides him Also both are to bear witness of how the people pay regard to them For those who may not know it it may be said that according to traditions the Holy Black Stone has been endowed with some sort of sight and watches and will bear witness about those who kiss it and about people in general (This we believe merely on the authority of the Prophet and the Imams and we cannot argue about it with the unbelievers)

It may be asked how the address suddenly changes to the Imams and they are addressed without any special words making the people clearly excluded It may be answered they are not meant to be absolutely excluded—only for all practical purposes they are so The more they are able to come to spiritual union with the Imams the more they approach to this great honour Thus there is a well-known tradition 'The *Ulema* (divines) of my *Ummat* are like the prophets of Bani Israel' See also the tradition 'Salman is among us the *Ahle Bait*' To those also our hearts must turn in love and reverence for guidance. And they may be *Shuhadaa* witnesses of the people in some of the loose transferred senses of the word But the words in the verse have full application to the Imams and them only See further in Supplement

Kunta Alaiha The Qiblah thou wast on, *i e* Jerusalem The Sunni commentators unnecessarily try to make it mean as that which thou had firmly set thy heart that it should be Qiblah *i e* Mecca The facts as stated in note to 142 are simply these As directions are given gradually we may presume that in the earliest period there was no particular direction about Qiblah, and Suyuti has a tradition to this effect on verse 115. At sometime of which we have no account, but no doubt early in the Meccan period the direction was given to face in prayer towards Jerusalem to try the faith of the early Meccan converts as stated in this verse, as there was strong attachment to Mecca among the Meccans, and its greatness as

the House of God was acknowledged by the Prophet Turning therefore in prayer towards Jerusalem must therefore have been very offensive to the people But this was meant to be a temporary direction for a special purpose, and so no verse was revealed in the Quran about it This continued to a year or so after the *Hijrat* to Medina, and then the original Qiblah was resorted to It is said some Medina converts began to have doubts or even actually relapsed into idolatory when the Jerusalem Qiblah was changed though no such names have come down to us.

Le yaalama, 'that we might know' The Quran is full of such expressions which taken literally would imply that God does not know the secrets of the heart or has no foreknowledge of things But in an equal or greater number of verses or verse-endings it is sought to be impressed that God knows all things So not the most senseless even will think of taking these words literally It is unnecessary to justify the use of such expressions by distinction between knowledge of the realities of things and knowledge by actual appearance of things

'*God is not to make your faith fruitless*' As explained by Ibn Abbas in Sunni reports the words were revealed to allay the fears of some who thought that their prayers offerred towards Jerusalem might be wasted as void But it may mean that the truly faithful—the highest in the ranks of the believers, as those in the family of the Prophet, knew by faith what their Qiblah was to be, and this their faith was not to be wasted.

Verse 144 The Prophet was in prayer with his face towards Jerusalem when this verse was revealed and he turned himself at once towards Kaaba, the congregation following him, and the rest of the prayer was offerred towards Kaaba A mosque has been built in honour of this event. It is the first verse on the subject The verse shows how careful the Prophet was in the matter of *Shariat* (Law) He knew that the right Qiblah was Kaaba, and intensely felt the need of it (for at Medina in turning his face towards Jerusalem he had to turn his back to Kaaba, Medina being situated between Mecca and Jerusalem)—yet in spite of the sneers of the Jews he did not change the practice and only prayed that the right Qiblah may be restored. As the Ahmadi commentator says, "If his revelations had been the outcome of his own desires he would not have waited for sixteen months for a revelation from On High to change the Qiblah."

Those who are given the Book are the Jews. They know that the Holy Prophet is a true prophet being foretold in several places in their

scriptures, see note on 2 83 Or they know that Kaaba with the Holy Black Stone in it was destined to be the Qiblah of the faithful See how this Holy Stone is remembered by Our Lord David in Psalms 118 22 and how it is commented on by Our Lord Jesus in Matthew 21 42—45 For the importance of it I will cite Psalms 118 22 with some verses before and after.

"The right hand of the Lord is exalted, the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly' 17 I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of Lord 18 The Lord hath chastened me sore but he hath not given me over unto death 19 Open to me the gates of righteousness I will go into them, *and* I will praise the Lord 20 This gate of the Lord into which the righteous shall enter 21 I will praise Thee for Thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation 22 The stone *which* the builders refused is become the head *stone* of the corner 23 This is the Lord's doing, it *is* marvellous in our eyes 24 This *is* the day *which* the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it. 25, Save now, I beseech Thee, O Lord, O Lord, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity 26 Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord. we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord"

Whoever reads these verses with the slightest attention (and the whole Psalm is to be read carefully) will see that Our Lord David here speaks of an Exalted Holy Prophet who is to be rejected by his people, the Jews There can be no other purpose in speaking in his connection of a stone which the builders refused but which afterwards became the head stone of the corner He will also see that this stone is not something of a metaphor It is really, literally a stone, somehow connected with that Prophet In the whole Psalm there is not another verse which savours of figurative language—not one word which is purely metaphorical The words 'hand of God,' 'gate of God' and the like are well-known titles of Our Lord Ali and apply with equal force to the Holy Prophet, as the two were one The words cannot apply to Our Lord Jesus as he was an Israelite and so there was nothing marvellous in his being the Messiah and exalted with any amount of honour The wonder is simply in a rejected Ishmaelite's attaining to that high position And there is a stone connected with him the stone which he has *set in the corner* of the Holy House. Nothing can be plainer indeed

Now see how Our Lord Jesus makes use of this Psalm to threaten the Jews. After the parable of wicked husbandmen which shows what will be their fate if they reject him 'He will miserably destroy these wicked men, and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbandmen, which

shall render him the fruits in their seasons' (exactly as it was; after trying the Israelites the covenant of God came to an Ishmaelite), Our Lord says, (verse 42) 'Did ye never read in the scriptures The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner · this is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes? 43 Therefore I say unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof 44 And whoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder

Clearly Our Lord is here warning the Jews of their disgrace from the Kingdom of God which Our Lord Mohammad announced As a forerunner of Our Holy Prophet it was his duty to do so And clearly Our Lord is here speaking of a particular nation to whom the Kingdom of God will be given in place of the Israelities This cannot refer to those who believed on him, for they were the Jews and Our Lord's ministry is said to have been limited to them see Mathew 15 24, 26 Or if the latter spread of Christianity be considered it would be the whole world and no special nation can be meant In Islam though the religion is for the whole world yet the spiritual leadership is for the Prophets' decendants only So they alone constitute the Kingdom of God as rulers

Verse 145 'Notwithstanding that the Jews and the Christians both looked to the temple at Jerusalem as their central temple, they were not agreed upon it as their *Qiblah*, for the Christians turned towards the east' (*Muir*) Moreover there are differences among the Jews and Samaritans though they both follow the law of Moses

Verse 146 It is said Abdullah 'bn Salam on his conversion said he was more sure of the Prophet being truly sent of God than of his own sons being really his sons (Siraj), but as the Ahmadi commentator suggested it may mean that they know him as they know their own prophets *i e* those who appeared among the children of Israel "They knew this not only because blessing had equally been promised for both sons of Abraham, but also because of the clear prophecy of Moses that a prophet *like him* would be raised among the brethren of Israelites, *i e* the Ishmaelites, and because no prophet answering that description had appeared among the Israelites" Indeed it is difficult to give in a few words all the manifold sets of proofs and evidences which made it clear to them that he was "that Prophet" foretold by Moses. it is sufficient to say that it was chiefly their testimony given in unguarded times that led to such a rapid conversion of the people at Medina (see note to verse 89 above)

SECTION 18.

A centre was necessary to typify the unity of the Musalmans The House sanctified by Abraham is made the centre for the Apostle who appeared in fulfilment of the promise to Abraham

148. And for everyone there is a direction to which he turneth. Hasten then to precede (each other) in good (deeds); wheresoever ye may be God will bring you together. Verily God hath power over everything.

149. And so from whatsoever place thou goest forth turn thou thy face towards the Sacred Mosque. For verily it is the truth from thy Lord; and God is not heedless of what ye do.

150. And from whatsoever place thou goest forth turn thou thy face towards the Sacred Mosque, and wherever ye be turn ye your faces towards it that there may not be for men an argument against you, except (*Illa*, or as to) those who are unjust among them. So fear ye not them but fear Me; and that I may complete My favour upon you, and that haply ye may be guided aright.

151. Even as We have sent among you an Apostle from amongst yourselves who reciteth to you Our communications (*Ayat*, signs) and purifieth you and teacheth you the Book and the Wisdom, and teacheth you that which ye did not know.

152 Therefore remember Me I will remember you; and be thankful to Me, and be not ungrateful.

Verse 148 'Everyone has a direction to which he turns himself,' and which therefore serves as a symbol for their unity in mind, faith, beliefs &c, and comprehensively speaking, of their having one guide and ruler to whom their hearts turn for faith and guidance. The Ahmadi commentator prefers unity of purpose, which we may understand as the carrying the torch of guidance to benighted countries This also is included in having one Imam if we follow him and it is this all-important purpose that is stated in verse 143 above

This verse says that unity of faith will lead to spiritual unity and will culminate in becoming a physical reality "Wherever ye may be God will bring you together" The truly faithful will actually come together in Rajaat under the standard of Our Lord the Mahdi of Islam, as we learn from the Imams See Safi *in loco* It will be then that what we do in symbol will be actually realised It is for this r ason that the verse ends with the words "Verily God hath power over all things"

The Sunni commentators say this great result will be in the Hereafter, but clearly there is no point in this—*all* will come together on the day of judgement whether any have a Qiblah or not The Ahmadi commentator in his usual way avoids the words altogether, and simply says "The meaning is that Allah intends to make all Muslims as one people, therefore He requirs all to turn to one direct on, to set one goal before them, and to have one centre to turn to wherever they may be"

Verse 149 'Thou goest forth' *i e* for Jehad See note on then ext verse The latter part of the verse seems meant to impress the sanctity of the Holy House on the Musalmans 'God is not unmindful of what ye do" God knows how the Holy House would be profaned at the hands of the Musalmans Yezid destroyed the Holy Temple Caliph Walid held a party of debauch on its roof In the days of Caliphs Abdel Malic and Mansur other Kaabas were set up at Damascus and Baghdad respectively for pilgrimage, (Tabaree, Zaidane's Tamaddun Islami)

Verse 150 'Thou goest forth' *i e* for Jehad Mark that, as in the preceding verse, the words used for the Prophet are 'From whatever place thou goest forth' while for the people the words are 'wherever ye may be' The implication is that in the Prophet's wars the main object in view should be the sanctification of the Holy House and its permanent immunity from domination by infidels This in a way may be *a* purpose in making it a Qiblah for the Musalmans in general, but in our case it is so only in a very secondary way We are not commissioned to fight at all except under the standard of the Prophet or the Imam unless, of course, we are forced to do so in self-defence For the most part the work required for this was done by the Prophet and we are only to sustain it—the Qiblah being an outward sign of our spirit in the matter.

'That people may have no *Hujjat* against you' *Hujjat* means argument, and is here used in the sense of something wherewith they might sneer against you. Thus the Jews are said to have been taunting the Musalmans that they had to turn to their temple in their prayers. At the time this verse was revealed the Kaaba was also an idolatorous

temple and so the change of the Qiblah was apparently only making matters worse. But, as remarked before, there was here an assurance of the victory of Kaaba—there could not certainly have been a more clear prophecy

'That I may complete my favour upon you and that perchance ye may be guided' The reference is clearly to the spiritual counterpart of the Qiblah spoken of in verse 143, the second verse on the subject. For the completion of favour see Surah 4 verse 4 and the occasion on which it was revealed For guidance see note to 1 5 and 2 1 They required to be guided further to the Imams referred to in verse 143

Verse 151 This was exactly the prayer of Our Lord Abraham, see verse 129 above The object however was guidance of the people and completion of favour upon them as stated in verse 150 above For this purpose the Qiblah was set up which serves as a symbol which typifies spiritual unity of the Musalmans under one guide and ruler, both temporal and spiritual

Verse 152 God's remembrance is the bestowing of His favour—chiefly grace for virtue, which is *the* true blessing, and His forgetfulness, leaving men to their fate For the use of such words as these of God see note to verse 21, 26 &c.

SECTION 19.

Hard Trials necessary in the cause of faith and the assistance of God must be sought for through patience and prayer Those who lose their lives in the cause of God do not die but gain eternal life An example of how patience is rewarded Fate of those who conceal the truth and die infidels

153. O ye who believe! Seek aid of patience and prayer; verily God is with the patient.

154. And say not of those who are slain in the cause of God that they are dead: Nay (they are) living, but ye do not perceive.

155. And most surely We will try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and (some) waste of wealth and of lives, and fruits; and give glad tidings to the patient.

156. Those who, when an affliction befalleth them say, Verily we belong to God, and unto Him we are surely to return

157. These, on them are the blessings from their Lord and grace and these it is that are (rightly) guided.

158 *Safa* and *Marwa* are among the monuments (R) of God (*Shaaerullah*), wherefore whosoever maketh a pilgrimage to the House or performeth the Umra, there shall be no sin on him to go round the twain, and whoever of his own accord doeth a good deed, then surely God is appreciating (*Shakir*), knowing.

159. Verily those that conceal that which We have sent down of clear evidences and guidance, after what we have (so) clearly shewn to men in the Book, these, God doth curse them and (also) those that curse shall curse them.

160. Except those that repent and amend and make manifest (the truth)—these then I will turn towards (mercifully) and I am the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful.

161 Verily those that believe not (B *Kafaru*) and die while they are unbelievers, on them shall be the curse of God and the angels and men all together.

162. Abiding in it (for ever) ; their torment shall not be lightened for them, nor shall they have respite.

163. And your God is one God! there is no God but He. He is the God of Mercy, the Merciful.

Verse 153 In the preceding sections we have been taught that the chief object of the Qiblah is to serve as a symbol for the spiritual unity of the Musalmans (verse 148), under one guide and ruler, so that the ultimate object is guidance (verse 151) in its highest and most perfect sense as explained in note to 1 5, 2 1 &c This naturally leads to the subject of guidance, and in the opening verses of this section we are taught that for the work of guidance hard trials are necessary and must be borne with patience and prayer.

Faith, if it is anything real and not merely empty words, must express itself in two things, patience and prayer One who feels he has sold his soul to God (see verse 207 below) will not care what comes to him, he will be glad to bear any hardships in the cause of God, consoling himself with the thought that he is God's, (has no soul of his own to be sorry for) and to Him he will speedily return (see verse 156 below) So a man having a living consciousness of God cannot but constantly prostrate himself in supplication to Him He will think little of his own energies or the favourable conditions round about him, even the forces of nature he can command will appear of little avail in his sight, his sole trust and confidence will be in God So it is that without some measure of these qualities faith is merely empty words and hardly worth anything So it was that the Jews were also exhorted to it in verse 45 above

There is one thing more. One should strive for and pray for a thing, even though that thing may be morally certain Thus in 33 65 we are taught to pray to God that He may bless the Prophet, though in that very verse we are told He does bless him In such cases prayer is partly an expression of harmony with the will of God, and partly it has an efficacy of its own (with the pleasure of God) in intensifying the result or accelerating the desired object So if this verse is really placed here with special reference to the conquest of Mecca we may say with the Aḥmadi commentator that, in spite of the clear prophecy about it in the making of the Kaaba a Qiblah for the Musalmans, they were taught that "to attain to that great object they must seek Divine assistance which would be granted them if they endured trials with manliness and prayed to Allah" The words are, however general, and apply to all times, and there is no assurance about the special reference conjectured

Verse 154 More clearly in 3 163 where the martyrs are precisely said to be *Aḥyaun inda rabbihim yurzaqun* alive, given sustenance in the sight of their Lord

The commentators say this verse was revealed about the Musalmans slain in the battle of Beder The Sunni accounts say merely that the Prophet objected to the people saying that So and so died, or that the infidels began to say, these men lose their lives for nothing, and that occasioned this verse (Razi) But it is the Musalmans who are clearly addressed here, and it is probable that some Musalmans being recently converted did share these views And as pointed out above this is not the only verse about it, we have a clearer one in 3 163 showing that, as might be expected, the teaching was slow of acceptance. It is now a

recognised article of belief in all sects of Musalmans It is simply idle of the Ahmadi commentator to explain it away metaphorically. See his note on the verse which it is rather too long for us to quote here

It is hardly necessary to point out that evidence of the survival, in some form, of personality after death is accumulating in the psychical researches of the day, and the most eminent scientists as Sir Oliver Lodge are subscribing to it Sir Oliver Lodge has written a special work upon it, 'The survival of man,' which must be convincing to many

Verse 155 Mark the double emphasis We will most certainly try you There are numerous traditions to show that the more a man rises in faith and in the quality of patience the more he is beset with trials in the form of calamities, and as he endures these he is raised more and more in the sight of God. Those who have not had many calamities to bear are not much to be congratulated on that account It is to be feared they are not considered fit to be tried Any way the Prophet and the Imams being the highest in the ranks of believers it was these that are specially addressed in this verse, and their lives are full of the most heart-rending particulars And it was once only in history that all the trials mentioned in this verse came together and in the highest degree conceivable—to Husain and his party falling on the plain of Kerbela Hence it is that the verse is said to refer specially to that event, as it was in that event only that the verse saw its full realization In a dissociated way for different individuals among the faithful these trials marked the age of the Omyeds, and will also mark the age shortly before the advent of the promised Mahdi of Islam

Verse 156. See this explained in note to verse 153

Verse 157 Salawat This in the case of God may be rendered as blessings, but, even as such, the word connotes something of recognition of merit, respect, honour, exaltation, and the like Thus in 33 56, 'Verily God and His angels bless (*Yusalluna ala*) the Prophet, O ye the believers, bless him (*Sallu alaihi*) and submit to him in the perfect way of submitting' There must be some community in the nature of the act, by God and his angels and the believers, to justify the use of the same word. The use of this very high word here further strengthens the view that those specially referred to in verses 155 & 156 are some very high souls—not ordinary believers. Few would dare to pray for the holiest men or the greatest martyrs with the words '*Allahumma salli ala* . . . . . .

Verse 158. This verse shows how hardships borne by the truly holy are rewarded by God. Safa and Marwa are two hills near Mecca. They

were the scene of Hagar's running to and fro in search of water when Abraham left her here alone in the wilderness with her son Ishmael It is by way of a memorial of these hardships borne by her in fulfilment of the command of God that running to and fro between these hills is a compulsory part of the pilgrimage As the places were not yet cleared of idols, some idols—were kept on these historic hills, some Musalmans had scruples about this practice, and the verse was revealed to remove these scruples

Shaaerullah 'Signs of God' Anything that by any sort of association calls to mind God or His worship or is associated with a holy person, say a prophet or an Imam, whose rememberence would itself be an act of devotion to God is a Shaaerullah It is as such that we regard Tazias, Alams, Tabuts &c as Shaaerullah *Shakir* (from *Shakara*) strictly means thankful, grateful In the case of God it means appreciator of merit, and, in effect, bountiful in rewarding

Verse 159 These are the Jews who are held to have known all about the Prophet, and probably also about the sanctity of the Kaaba and its environs (for the evidence of which see note on verse 144), but concealing all this from the people out of their spite for the Prophet The Ahmadi commentator cites extracts from Duet 28 20—68 to show that the Jews were most vehemently cursed by Moses in the event of their failing to observe all his commandments There is no point in confining the curses to the neglect of the commandments in chapter 28 Certainly wilful disregard of the Prophet foretold in chapter 18 exposed them to these curses apart from the penalty of death foretold for it in that chapter

"Curse as implying an imprecation of evil is not the exact equivalent of *laanat* which implies the banishing or estranging of one from good though unfortunately it comes to the same thing, as, such is the constitution of nature, that stationariness is impossible—one who does not go towards good must go towards evil

The cursing, *laanat* prayed for, by angels and men is an expression of their harmony with the will of God, and so the Shias do it as a matter of duty, just as they pray for blessing of God on the Prophet, though it is known that God doth bless him. As there is distinct command to that effect in 33 . 56, so there is clear approval of this in the verse before us.

The Sunnis demur to cursing any by name who have made a profession of Islam, however their conduct may give the lie to that profession.

The Shias see the force of this, but there is no point in it when their infidelity is a matter of certainty leaving no shadow of doubt about it, as when the thing is expressly declared of them by inspired teachers, the Imams. Moreover, granting that any are saved, (say by repenting at the point of death), their being hated and cursed in this life may count as a punishment for their misdeeds and may be actually a matter of mercy for them

Cursing as an expression of hatred and disgust is useful also for ourselves There is no better way to avoid the spiritual influence of these bad souls, the reality of which is a matter of common knowledge to spiritualists Note also that, as every psychologist knows, expression is necessary for the sustaining of an emotion If the expression is suppressed the emotion itself is liable to vanish altogether

Verse 160 Mark that repentance is never complete until a man tries, as much as he can, to undo the mischief he has caused

Verse 161 *Allazina Kafaru* 'Those that reject' that is consciously and wilfully by perversity or in indolence Surely not all unbelievers, all non-Muslims come under the category of these hard words, A clear exception is made in 4 99 about "the weak among men, women and children who have no means at command, nor are they led to the way" So 9 107 speaks of others who are made to wait for the command of God, whether He punish them or whether He turn to them (mercifully) for God is Knowing, Wise" Referring to these verses the great divine, Allama Majlisi says in Haqqul Yaqin 'The other party are those persons who are weak of intellect, and so are unable to distinguish truth from error, or those, who living in the lands of our enemies, have not the means to leave their homes and search for the true religion, or who lived in the days of ignorance and interregum between prophets when the followers of error preponderated and the followers of truth were concealing themselves for their lives And so are all those in conditions similar to these These are those who await God's command, and their salvation is probable" Hell is only for those who wilfully reject the truth or having means to attain to it do not care to do so

For the eternity of the punishment see the tradition of Our Lord Jafarel Sadiq about the eternal happiness of those in Paradise cited in note to verse 25 in Supp. The virtuous are to have eternal bless, for in this life they were such that, however long they might have lived, they would have continued to obey God in spite of its hardships. In the same way those who are perversely wicked deserve eternal damnation, as, how-

ever long they might have lived they would have continued in their state of perversity or indolence

Verse 163 This verse is plausibly supposed to indicate the grand object which was set before the Muslims It is the focus on which all the work of guidance must turn.

SECTION 20.

Divine Unity is manifest in God's creation Those who join others with God in obedience to their leaders will sorely repent

164 Verily in the creation of heavens and earth and the alternation of the night and the day, and in the ships that sail over the sea with that which profiteth mankind. and in that which God sends down of water from heaven and quickeneth therewith the earth after its death and scattereth therein of every (kind of) animal, and in the changing of the winds and the clouds prisoned (or made subservient *Musakkhar*) between heavens and earth are surely signs for those who understand

165 And of men there are some who take unto themselves others beside God, and love them with love (due) to God But those who are faithful are stronger in (their) love for God. And O! that the iniquitous had seen (now what they will know) when they behold the torment that unto God belongeth all power, and that verily God is severe in punishing.

166. When those who are followed shall renounce them that follow them, and they see the torment and the ties between them shall be severed.

167. And the followers shall say, O that for us were a return (to world) then we would renounce them as they have renounced us. Thus will God show them their deeds (turned to) regrets for them and they will not come forth out of the fire.

Verse 164 All nature bears witness in its own unity and interdependence to the Unity of God. In this verse we are exhorted to reflect over creation and find out this unity in the midst of all the diversity and manifoldness of natural objects and phenomena Also all the forces working in nature are purposive driving towards the evolution of life and the advantage of living beings chiefly man, showing that God is not a mere metaphysical necessity of thought but a Living Intelligent Creator and ruler of heavens and earth Finally a God who has so much regard for His creatures that He has created this vast creation for their use would not leave it all undone by making no provision for their guidance and spiritual development

Verse 165 They love their idols with the love due to God The Arabic expression is 'like the love of God' The meaning seems to be 'as much as they might otherwise (but for these others) have of the love of God' Associating them with God all their affections centre on them at the expense of God who is but nominally believed in. This partly because they are nearer their comprehension, and partly because it is they that form the distinctive feature of their religion Hence it is that we see these men look with complacent eyes on the growth of scepticism and atheism, but they are wild in fury when their idols or religious leaders are attacked The same applies to all mere creeds

The truly faithful have greater love for God, for not only their spiritual leaders but all they love they love merely on account of God If they love their sons and daughters it is because it is their duty to do so Independently of God they should have no affections for anything Conversely they must *love*, for the sake of God, all the faithful they know, however remote they may be from themselves Such is the Muslim ideal If they fall short of it they are crippled in faith See Kafi, Chapter on 'Love on account of God and hate on account of God' So intense must their love of God be that it must enable such a vast extension of their affections merely on account of Him—by a mere association of feelings.

Verse 167 The Ahmadi commentator says 'It should be noted that it is the *intense regrets* for the evil deeds done which is here described as being the *fire* from which there is no escape' I do not see where this is in the verse It may be true that the torments of hell are only physical manifestations of their evil deeds, as is held by some, but what the Ahmadi commentator says is simply baseless

SECTION 21.

Injunction to use lawful and lawfully acquired things for food. Blind following of old customs deprecated The concealing of truth and corrupting it for worldly gain amounts to eating of fire.

168. O ye men, eat of that which is lawful, good, out of what is on earth and follow not the footsteps of Satan, for verily he is an open enemy unto you.

169. He only enjoineth you to evil and abomination and that ye impute to God that which ye know not.

170 And when it is said unto them, follow that which God hath sent down, they say, Nay! We follow what we found our fathers upon. What! and though their fathers had no sense at all, nor were guided aright.

171 The likeness of those that disbelieve is as the likeness of one who shouteth to that which heareth naught but a call and a cry. Deaf, dumb, blind, wherefore they do not understand

172. O ye who believe! eat of the good things We have provided for you and thank God if it is Him ye worship.

173. He hath but forbidden you that which dieth of itself and blood and the flesh of swine and whatsoever hath other name than God's invoked upon it, but whoever is forced to it without (spirit of) revolting or transgressing (*Ghaira Baghin wa la aadin*) then there shall be no sin upon him. Verily God is Forgiving, Merciful.

174. Verily those that hide that of the Book which God hath sent down and barter it away for a small price—these, they do not eat ought but fire in their bellies, and God will not speak to them on the day of resurrection and will not purify them, and for them there shall be grievous torment.

175 These are they who have taken error in barter for true guidance and the torment for forgiveness, O how (bold) they are to endure the Fire.

176 That is because God hath revealed the Book in truth, and verily those that differ about the Book are in a great opposition (*Shiqaqin baid*).

Verse 168 Lawful, good "The lawful things are not only those which the Law has not declared to be forbidden, but even unforbidden things become unlawful if they are acquired unlawfully, by theft, robbery, cheating, bribery &c" The good things are those that are wholesome, not only physically but also morally and spiritually There is not the least doubt that food plays an important part in the formation of character, and the heart and brain powers are clearly affected by the quality of food Some articles as lobsters &c, are believed to have an aphrodisiac effect and must be hurtful morally, if not physically Some intoxicants are recommended as aid to spiritualistic powers but they are hurtful mentally, morally and physically It is difficult for man to judge which food may be best for man in all respects tending to produce the normal character that is desired in Islam—having no quality over pre-ponderating at the expense of others So the Prophet and Imams were particular in specifying the kinds of food (usually flesh) which is lawful for Musalmans to use, allowing some only with a disapprobation (*Karahat*) these to be abstained as far as possible The directions must be followed without any question about the good or evil in each case, for it is very difficult to know it though usually we come to know it in time Thus swine's flesh so much in use among Christians is admitted to be a very dangerous thing if the proper precautions are neglected Also it is believed to have a detrimental effect on modesty and shamefulness

Verse 169 'Impute to God' *i e* fictions as trinity &c, and also, in name of God, as the setting up of legal and disciplinary directions without authority from God or his prophets See traditions warning us of the latter in Safi *in loco* These include inventions with the best of the motives—a warning to the Ahmadi commentator

Verse 171 "The likeness of those &c" *i e* in thy call to them for faith, as explained by Our Lord Baqir The higher spiritual realities of faith are unintelligible to the infidels and they simply think that the Prophet is calling them to a new and strange faith,

Verse 172 Notice that spirit of thankfulness must accompany dining, otherwise it is like the dining of the infidels—a thing to which, strictly speaking, they have no right in God's creation, for they worship others besides Him Hence the repeated injunctions of the Prophet and the Imams to begin dining with the name of God *Bismillah* and to finish it with *Alhamdu lillah* Some go so far as to say these words with every morsel of food taken—making their dinners a veritable function of devotion

Verse 173. *Innama* has been held by the grammarians to signify comprehensiveness, 'only,' 'nothing but' : *e* to the exclusion of anything besides But this it need do only in a perfect sense Generally speaking there need not be any absolute negation of anything besides what is said Thus the things specified here are further amplified in verse 5 3 &c but only as a further exposition Besides this we are enjoined in verse 59 7 to obey the Prophet and accept all he directs His directions about lawful and unlawful animals for diet being therefore as obligatory as any in the Holy Book Sometimes, it seems, the force of *Innama* is simply that of the Urdoo *to*, saying something as a corrective of something said or supposed, held by exaggeration, and the like

Verse 173 Necessity may be of two kinds, one that brought on by disease, extreme want &c so that life is in danger if the unlawful food is not taken In these cases it is allowed provided that one does not dine for pleasure and does not continue to eat beyond the quantity necessary for subsistence, otherwise one will come under the category of *Bayhi* or *adi* : *e* sinful, revolting against God, as every sinful man is

The verse is, however, meant chiefly as a warning to those who undertake journey for unlawful purposes If these come to a place where they can get no lawful food they will not be held excusable even if they are dying of hunger or thirst *Baghi* means revolting : *e* against the Imam *Adi* means transgressing : *e* going for any other sinful purpose This includes game for purpose of sport merely, as distinguished from that meant for providing food for self and family

Verse 174 This verse coming on in this section which is concerned only with directions for Musalmans seems clearly meant to be a warning to them that they should not like the Jews conceal anything that God has revealed and sell away their faith for a mean price, else they would be no better than them Everyone should be on his guard and see if he can see any tendency towards this among his spiritual guides and leaders It is known that some sects have been dubbed by their opponents as Jews of

this *Ummat*, and it is time we enquire with a conscientious spirit and settle our historical disputes for the future

The expression 'they eat nothing but fire in their bellies' is clearly metaphorical for that they are spoiling their spiritual life even now However strictly they may follow the ceremonial of the Law about food and everything else it is vain for them

Mark the terms in which the punishment of the hereafter is mentioned Before saying anything of the physical torment they are told that God will not speak to them and will not purify them, clearly indicating that it is God's displeasure and the lack of His grace for purification that is the chief thing of moment, all else being only a sequel to it. Indeed, the latter might be bearable to the faithful, not the former As says Our Lord Ali in a well-known prayer of his, "So if Thou place me in tortures by side of Thine enemies and join me with those in Thy tribulation and separate me from Thy friends and lovers, then let me grant I suffer in patience Thy torment, but how will I have patience about Thy separation, and let me grant I suffer in patience Thy fire how will I have patience to be debarred from the sight of Thy magnanimity.

Verse 175 "They take error in barter for true guidance" This further shows it is the Musalmans chiefly referred to in the preceding verse The Jews being unbelievers had never anything of true guidance to barter it away

Verse 176 "Differ about the Book" The Book here is the complete Word of God, as explained in note to the first verse of this Surah

SECTION 22.

Righteousness consists not in formalities but in accepting the great principles of faith and practising charity and religious duties, showing strength of character and patience under trials and steadfastness in the battlefield Retaliation, though allowed as a necessity for society, may be pardoned as an act of charity Bequests for charitable purposes allowed, but should not be meant to injure any legal heirs.

177. Righteousness is not (this) that ye turn your faces towards the East and the West, righteousness is rather one who believeth in God and the Last day, and the angels

and the Book, and the prophets, and giveth (of his) his wealth out of love for Him to the near of Him and the orphans and the poor and the wayfarer and the beggars and for those in bondage; and keeps up prayer and pays the *Zacat*; and those who fulfil their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in time of war—these are they who are true and these are they who are righteous.

178. O ye who believe! Retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the slain, the freeman for the freeman, the bondman for the bondman, the woman for woman, yet whoever is remitted aught by his brother, then (there should be) following (his example) in reason (*Ittibaun bil maruf*) and payment made to him in a good manner. This is a relief (for you) from your Lord and a mercy, so whosoever shall be offender after this, for him there will be grievous punishment.

179 And there is life for you in (the law of) retaliation, ye men of understanding, that haply ye may guard yourselves

180. It is laid down for you when death approach one of you if he leave behind wealth that he make a bequest to his parents and near relations according to reason—a duty on the God-fearing

181. And whosoever shall alter it after he has heard it—the sin of it then is only upon those who alter it. Verily God is Forgiving, Merciful.

Verse 177. Of this verse it is sufficient to say what the Prophet said "Whoever acts up to this verse has attained to perfection in faith" The spirit cannot fail to strike even a most careless reader Wherry says, "This is one of the noblest verses in the Quran We clearly distinguish between a formal and a practical piety Faith in God and benevolence towards men is clearly set as the essence of religion."

Ala hubbihi (translated for love of Him) The pronominal particle *hi* here has been otherwise understood to refer to *ita* spending in charity (contained in *Ata*) the meaning being for the love of charity, or to *mal* property the meaning then being 'in spite of love of property,' as God says 'you will never attain to virtue till you spend (in charity) out of what ye love' Absolute indifference to property or other things of earthly value being not the ideal, but the complete subordination of it to the spirit of charity and duty

Fi-Riqab *Riqab* (plural of *Raqabah*) means necks and thence the term comes to signify those in bondage as slaves, captives &c These are usually men made captives in war, that is were enemies of the Musalmans before As the Ahmadi commentator says, "No religion in the world other than Islam has told us how love for the enemy may be shown in practice What kind of conquering nation does Islam require its followers to be? A nation of conquerers who must spend part of their wealth for setting free those enemies who have been captured in war! No nobler teaching, no practical ordinance is met with outside the pages of the Holy Book However noble the teaching "Love your enemies" it did not pass beyond the domain of dream in Christianity, only the practical benefactor of humanity could say "For the love of Allah give away your wealth in freeing those enemies whom you have captured in war" Elsewhere the setting free of a slave (*Fakko raqabah*) is one of the cardinal virtues of faith, 90 13 Besides the general recommendation of it as a work of merit in the Quran and the traditions the emancipation of slave is made a *Kaffara* (expiation) for several sins, see 4 . 94, 5 91, 58 4

Note that the *mal* money &c to be spent on these is something over and above the compulsory poor-rate *zacat* which is specified separately later in this verse

'Fulfilment of promises' is another characterestic which should distinguish the truly faithful It includes fulfilment of the pledge made to God (2 38 &c) and promises made to each other both in the individual and in the public capacity Breach of promises is said in the traditions to be one of the marks of hypocrisy in faith, *Nifaq* Nothing need be said about its importance in public relations As the Ahmadi commentator says 'Faithlessness to treaties and pledges on the part of nations has wrought greater havoc on humanity than any other cause'

'The patient in distress and affliction and in time of conflict.' This last is the characterestic *par excellence*, for it shows that the man has really

sold his soul to God, 2 203, 9 112 &c. A man who realizes and feels that he has sold his soul to God and keeps it merely as a trust from him would certainly not care what comes to it Indeed life would be a burden to him, the sooner one is relieved of the trust the better Such a man cannot but have unshakeable fortitude in the direst conflict Any who show the slightest cowardice in war, or are otherwise sorry for themselves in distress and affliction show they have not sold their souls—they still think it something their own, and so can be called faithful (*Momin*) only in a secondary sense.

'These are they who are true' These words are important, for in another place we are directed "to be with (*i. e* follow) the true ones" The verse is indeed a clear definition of those we should follow and associate ourselves spiritually with All the qualities mentioned can be found together and in an ideally perfect sense in the case of the Imams and these only The Muslims will do well to see if history can bear testimony to the popular Caliphs coming up to the ideal.

Literary Note In this verse we notice the following (1) The Expression 'Righteousness is One who believes in God &c' (2) It is singular from 'One who believes' to 'pays *zakat*' and then it is plural (3) Those who fulfil their promises is in the nominative form, but the next phrase 'the patient in distress &c' is in the accusative form All these peculiarities have been shown by the commentators to be consistent with the literary practice of the Arabs See the very able discussion of these in Amali of Sharif Murtaza where instances of similar unusualities are given from Arabic poets. But since I believe that unusual forms of expression have some great purpose at their back—usually artistic representation of some great truth, I think that these are meant represent artistically the great spiritual truth that, as taught in the traditions, (1) the soul of the Prophet in his pre-existent state is the Alpha and Omega of all virtue, all others are virtuous only by participating more or less in his holy soul, so he is called not virtuous but virtue itself, (2) that this one great spiritual entity further differentiated into 14 lights—the Imams with their mother Fatima and the Prophet, and so in the later part we have the plural (3) The change of case from nominative to accusative is due to the two characters of their life as rulers and subjects The fulfilment of promises is something active and hence in the nominative, patience is something passive and hence put in the accusative form. See similar expressions in verse 189, 9 . 19 &c.

Verse 178. Arabia was a country in which bloodshed and warfare was of daily occurance. And, what is worse, any murder once effected was sure to breed an endless hereditary animosity between the tribesmen

of the murderer and the murdered, a sufficient number of the men of the other party being killed in retaliation for those slain on their side. This was considered a matter of honour; and superstition also helped to keep it up The souls of the slain were supposed to be crying for the satisfaction of their blood in the shape of the screeches of the owl, and the sons and grandsons of the slain felt themselves bound in duty to satisfy them. So the blood animosities were literally hereditary and continued for generations without the slightest sign of abatement It was no easy matter for the Prophet to stop this altogether, and the extent to which he succeeded must be considered simply wonderful In 49 9 it is directed that when whole parties attack each other it is the duty of the Musalmans to have a reconciliation effected somehow, using force if necessary . anyhow the matter must be settled and end there There is no retaliation to be sought for the individuals slain The faithful are brethren and must be reconciled In the case of private murders, and in all cases of private assault not amounting to a regular fight it is the duty of the State to insist on retaliation. But the law makes provision for three things One thing is that the actual murderer is to be put to death The other is that the heirs of the murdered man may be allowed to pardon the murderer for a momentary consideration The latter was evidently an act of clemency befitting the faithful The murderer is still called their brother-in-faith in the verse The former it was necessary to insist on as the pre-Islamic Arabs used sometimes to insist when the man killed was of noble descent that the chiefest among the party of the murderer be killed in retaliation They were not content with the death of the actual murderer if he happened to be an ordinary man

The third thing provided for was that in prescribing retaliation by death regard must be had as to whether the murderer and his victim were freemen or slaves, men or women, father or son, and so forth Every case is dealt with by jurists in works of Law based on this verse and supplementary traditions of the Imams Generally, this verse says, a freeman is to be put to death only on account of a freeman, not for a woman or a slave, except under conditions laid down in the books of law which cannot be detailed here So it might be supposed in the case of a woman or slave murderer But it is understood this is not the case, if they may be put to death in case of their equals they are much more liable to it in case their victims are superior The *Qisas* (equality) is not satisfied in such cases even with death

There is a fourth provision contained in the very word *Qisas* The murderer should ordinarily be put to death in the same way that he killed his victim.

Of these two things (1) composition of the offence and (2) the consideration of the relative ranks of the murderer and the murdered may be considered as open to serious objection.

These can be easily disposed of, but before we enter unto discussion of these it is necessary to point out that besides the penal powers the Imam has as a judge he has indefinite powers (extending even to death) of *Tazir* (chastisement) Where considerations of public weal demand it he can deal with any case with as much severity as he thinks fit Besides this society has its own ways of expressing its hatred and disgust of a criminal, and the two together can make the life of a man as miserable as it can possibly be Then it must be remembered that in the strict sense of punishment as a requirement of justice neither death nor any other earthly penalty is regarded as absolving the man from the sin—the punishment for wilful murder of the faithful being eternal damnation (see 4 95), of course unless truly repented and made amends for The penalty of death or the payment of the bloodwit to the heirs is effective only as regards the claim of the murdered man against the murderer In 4 93 bloodwit is prescribed only in cases of murder in ignorance, here it may by the utmost stretch of the words be held to include cases of grave provocation. In such cases even the law in modern times allows concession in the form of imprisonment or transportation, only (what is most objectionable) while it makes the criminal subserve the interests of the State it does nothing whatever to help the poor relations of the murdered man who suffer most by his sudden untimely death Our law aims chiefly at this

Then it must be observed that, as is well-known to every one, not 50 per cent of the cases of murder succeeded to be traced out, and of those that do not three in ten get to be convicted, though in many cases it becomes easily certain, morally, who is the actual offender. Owing to the very serious nature of the punishment the judges have to exercise the utmost caution and the benefit of doubt is given to the criminal in every possible and impossible way. It is this that keeps the number of murder cases in these 'civilized' countries undiminished from year to year: people always think they can avoid the hold of law upon them by suitable precautions. In our system the possibility of the offence being compounded and the thought that it will be difficult, very difficult, to do so if it is denied and efforts are made to spoil the evidence will no doubt minimise the temptation to do so, and few cases will remain unpunished.

Again anyone who keeps an eye on actual facts will not fail to observe that, in civilized countries at least, murder cases are almost aways cases of grave provocation, 80 per cent cases in India are cases of honour

(due to adultery) and we sympathise more with the murderer than his victim Here the laws of Islam are as strict as they can possibly be. But such is the inversion of moral sentiments in the present boasted civilization that our laws in this respect are held to be brutal and barbarous. As a matter of fact adultry is nothing in modern civilization and under the British laws implanted in India and elsewhere one of the parties—the woman is not punished at all The same is the case with most other incentives, drinking, gambling &c all of which are practically passed over in the present 'civilized' governments Islam on the other hand seeks to strike at the root of the evil,—and when the crime has occured it seeks to rectify and make amends for the consequences as far as possible Murder connected with robbery comes under the head of robbery and there is no compounding there

Further, we have said that society has it own ways of dealing with the criminal And all know that society is the best corrective of social evils It is very difficult for any man to resist the disgust or resentment of the public against him Murder excites a sensation of horror which casts into shade all the provocation that may have led to it But such is the weakness of human nature that when the criminal is sought by the State to be put to death the same sense of horror accompanied by regard for his innocent relatives impels people to sheild him and make him escape the penalty as far as possible This feeling will go away completely and be turned into one of intense resentment and disgust for the offender if he is let off as a matter of grace by the relatives of the murdered man I say no man on earth can resist such feelings in all about him, and however beastly one may have been one cannot to fall into a remorseful attitude of mind I say even if he is such that he is not touched by the grace of his pardoners this will make him do it and he will be their slave for all his life

Will the society be better or worse for this? The man will be rectified, the men suffering from his act will have some compensation. What, on the other hand, is the good of the present system of insisting on his death? I have said that owing to the great chances of avoiding it it is not in the least effective in preventing others from following his example. No other good can be imagined This, I say, is amply provided for by the law prescribing it unless pardoned Indeed does it more for it prescribes that the man will be put to death in the same way that he killed his victim. not in the painless ways that the modern civilization insists on. But the view of present governments is different. The chief thing in their eyes is that people should not take the law into their own hands

Murder is a State offence and they must punish it As for the poor creatures who suffer by the act they have not the slightest consideration It is satisfactory that many governments in the West have now abolished capital punishment altogether, though that is going to the other extreme But murder is still with them a purely State offence, and the relatives of the murdered man have no chance to show their clemency and so make the murderer their slave, morally Nor is there any thought in the law of helping these unfortunate men in their distress

The composition of the offence being thus not only justifiable but advisable not much need be said as regards the concession allowed for the various classes of murderes in relation to the persons slain by them It is obvious that whoever meets unnatural death, whether by wilful murder or by way of its retaliation, it is the various elements of society, they severally belong to, the kinsmen they have and maintain, that suffer by these acts

Now it is clear that the death of a slave does not cause so much suffering as that of a free man, he has few relations at all So too a woman is ordinarily much more limited in her relations than a man Hence the lives of the latter may be spared though besides the bloodwit they have to pay they can otherwise be punished as severely as may be required both by the State and by society Moreover the murder of a son by his father, slave by his master, woman by a man will be usually be due to some serious provocation—the last will usually be connected with indecent life

Retaliation was compulsory among the Jews, the Christian religion on the other hand insisted on forgiveness in everything The former allowed no development of the feelings of mercy—the latter was simply impracticable The law of Islam is a relief against both extremes, and in providing for composition as a concession both purposes are served. The original duty is to punish the murderer with death, but since the Musalmans were to be a reasonable tender-hearted people they were allowed also to forgive without pressure from the law either way

Verse 179 In Qisas *i e* putting the murderer to death in the same way that he killed his victim—not in the painless ways modern ingenuity has invented Moreover for full moral effect the murderer should be publicly executed. There is no good of doing it away from men's eyes in jails as it is done at present.

Verse 180. Khair according to most commentators of both sects here signifies a large property It is said Our Lord Ali had a freed man

possessing 700 Dirhams When he was on his deathbed he asked about bequest under this verse, but Our Lord prevented him saying he had not a large property A similar incident is related of Ayesha, the amount in this case being 400 Dirhams

The bequest is to be for charitable or other specified purposes, and may be made to parents or other kindred who inherit under 4 11 or to those who do not take under that verse The amount of the bequest is to be limited to one thirds of the property

The Sunnis hold it to be abrogated by IV 11 in which the various heirs have their shares alloted to them, but this is wrong as not only the Imams teach to the contrary, but the instances noted above and others cited by the Ahmadi commentator show that bequest continued to be made under this verse till late after the death of the Prophet I am glad the Ahmadi commentator has taken the Shiah view on this question

Verse 182 : e If the proper limits are exceeded, or it is not for rightful purposes, or it is sought thereby to deprive the heirs of their due claims Not only proper advice may be given to the testator as the Ahmadi commentator says but if he does not listen the bequest may be altered by proper agreement between the heirs and those in whose favour the bequest has been made

PART II.

SECTION 23.

Fasting enjoined The holy month of Ramazan to be observed as the month of fasting Acceptance of prayers. The limits in fasting. Rights of property to be respected

183 O ye who believe! Fasting has been laid down for you as it was laid down for those before you that haply ye may eschew sin.

184. For a fixed number of days, but whosoever among you is sick or on a journey then (he shall fast) that number of other days; and for those who are able to do it a redemption by feeding a poor man, however he who shall follow his impulse to good it shall be good for him; and that ye fast is (the greater) good for you if ye were knowing.

185. The month of Ramzan! That in which was sent down the Quran! A guidance for men and clear signs of guidance and discrimination! So whosoever of you witnesseth the month, let him fast therein, but he who is sick or on a journey the same number of other days God desireth for you that which is easy; He desireth not for you that which is hard, and that ye fulfil the tale (of days), and that ye glorify God for His having guided you, and that haply ye may be thankful.

186. And when My servants ask thee about Me—then verily I am nigh. I answer to the prayer of the supplicant when he calleth to Me; let them therefore answer My call and believe in Me that haply they may have the right direction.

187. It is made lawful for you on the night of the fast to be with your woman, they are an apparel for you and ye are apparel for them God knoweth that ye are wont to act unfaithfully to your souls, so He has turned towards you (mercifully) and forgiven you Wherefore now lie you with them, and seek that which God hath laid down for you, and eat and drink until the white streak of dawn becometh manifest to you from the black streak, thereafter fulfil the fast until night; and touch them not while ye abide in mosques: these are bounds set by God wherefore draw not near thereto; thus doth God make plain his signs unto men that haply they may guard (against evil)

188 And do not swallow up your property among yourselves by false means, neither take it to the rulers that ye may swallow up a portion (*fariqan*) from the property of men wrongfully while ye know.

Verse 183 'As it was laid down for those before' Thus it has been much in vogue among Hindus, though in that religion its chief value recognised is either as an aid to health, or as a penance to gain spiritualistic powers Among the Jews it was "much in use in times of mourning, sorrow and affliction."

Christ commanded his disciples to keep fasts as it appears from his direction not to do it as hypocrites do (Matt 6. 16, 17). Here too the spirit seems to chiefly that of Jewish fasts For in answer to the Pharisees who objected that his disciples do not fast as often as those of John the Baptist his answer was that when he will be taken away " then they shall fast in those days " Sabians, the representatives of the oldest Chalden religion had one full month of fasting (see note on Sabians in verse 62 above), and in their case the spirit seems nearest to that of Islam as a mortification of the soul for moral and devotional purposes It is perhaps owing to the corruption of the ancient religions that we find these variations of spirit, as also that we cannot show that it was a compulsory institution in the case of any except perhaps the Sabians, though that alone would be sufficient for the words in the verse

Any way, whatever may be the spirit in which the ancient people may have observed fasting, in Islam it is an institution for the improvement of the moral and spiritual condition This is, plainly stated in the concluding words 'that haply ye may eschew sin' So also it is that the section concludes with warning about unlawful possession of other men's property

Verse 183 'That haply ye may eschew sin'—the object of enjoining fast is to train men to purify their souls—to attain a complete mastery over the lower possions and appetites and to keep the whole self absorbed in devotion For this we are trained to suppress even our legitimate appetites, hunger, thirst &c, and that in a spirit of obedience to the command of God It is clear the least effect of such a training should be that we should be careful about indulgence in what is prohibited, though it must be sorrowfully admitted that many practise this merely as an obligation imposed by religion, without any thought that it is meant to be a moral discipline What true fasting should be and in what spirit the month must be observed will appear from the following passages in the prayer of Our Lord Ali 'bn Husain

" Praise be to God who has guided us to His praise and made us among its people (that we do so), so that we may be of those that are thankful for His favour, and that he grant to us for this the reward of the pious And praise be to God that has favoured us with His religion and selected us for His community and made us take to the paths of His grace that we walk therein by His grace to His pleasure—praise that He accept from us and be pleased for it with us And praise be to God that has made His month of Ramzan one of these paths—the month of fasting the month of Islam the month of purity the month of absolution from sins.

the month of standing up in prayers, the month in which was brought down the Holy Quran, guidance for people, and manifest evidences for guidance and distinction So He made manifest its superiority over other months in His appointing for it many restrictions and well-known excellences. Thus for regard of the greatness of the month He made unlawful in it that which is lawful in others, prohibiting in it all sorts of food and drink for its respect . . .

"O Lord, bless Mohammad and his sons, and inspire to us the realization of its excellence and respect for its glory, and the keeping up of the prohibitions Thou hast made in it And give us Thy aid to keep up its fasts by keeping away the organs of our body from Thy sins and using them in what pleases Thee Thus that we do not listen idle speech with our ears, and do not speed with our eyes to vain pastimes, and that we do not stretch our hands to the prohibited things, or carry our steps to things directed to be forsaken—that our bellies do not take in aught but what Thou hast made lawful, and our tongues either do not utter aught but what Thou hast Thyself given as an instance. (In short) that we do nothing but what makes us near to Thy reward and practise naught but what spares us Thy punishment Then make all this pure from the desire to be seen or heard of men—that in this (devotion) we do not partake anything (as end) with Thee and have no aim whatever except Thee.

"O Lord, bless Mohammad and his sons, and give us the grace therein to pray the five prayers at their appointed times with the restrictions Thou hast imposed and duties Thou hast assigned and the after-devotions Thou hast appointed . in the greatest and most perfect purity and the most marked and far-reaching devotion And give us the grace that we treat our kinsmen with kindness and charity, and enjoin charitableness and liberality on our neighbours, and keep what property we have free from sinfulness, and purify it by the taking out of *zacat* from it. And that we take back (to friendship) him who has forsaken us, and do justice to him who has unjustly dealt with us, and make peace with him who has been our enemy &c. &c."

Verse 184. In case of illness fasting is not allowed where there is fear of the disease being aggravated In case of journeys the minimum distance is 8 Farsakhs (about 27 miles) The purpose of the journey must be strictly lawful and the journey occasional. Where there is a halt for ten days or more the fast must be observed. Journeys for worldly purposes should be avoided, and the month spent in devotion as far as possible Ease and comfort in travel is no considera-

indulge unnecessarily in journeys for worldly purposes and as an element of obedience for those who have to undertake them but do so with great reluctance and regret for the loss of their devotion in this holy month. Also it is not sought that those barely able to fast while on journey should be abashed to see numbers of their brethren fasting though in the similar state of travel

There remains the case of those who are neither ill nor on journey, who are able to fast in the strict sense of the word, but in whose case it is inadvisable as it is apt to produce a great strain on their system Such for instance are old men, mothers with child, wet-nurses &c Their state is not likely to improve in a few months before the next Ramzan. They may forgo fasting altogether and feed the poor instead This is aptly expressed by the word *yutiqunahu* 'able to do it' which is less than *yaeunahu*, 'well able to do it,' for God says 'He does not compel a soul to anything but what it is well able for (*illa Wusaaha*)' The word 'able' wide as it is, has been purposely used without any distinct qualifying word as barely &c to leave it entirely to individual discretion and conscience Only it is said it would be better for them if they fast. The Sunni commentators missing the point altogether say, either after one divine that *la* (not) is here understood or after others that this was a concession at first but afterwards withdrawn.

Verse 185 The Quran is always spoken of as having been sent down in the month of Ramzan Nowhere is there any indication that the expression is used merely because it began to do so that month, as some commentators have conjectured According to traditions admitted both by Sunnis and Shias the Quran came down as a complete whole to the *Baite Maamur* in the month of Ramzan, and from thence it was revealed in parts through the course of 20 years What is the *Baite Maamur*? According to the traditions it is a counterpart of the Holy Temple of Kaaba in the 1st, 4th or 7th heaven and is constantly visited by angels It is understood to be a spiritual counterpart in a spiritual heavens. Thus the Author of Safi thinks that the sending of the Quran as a whole to the *Baite Maamur* may be allegorical for the revelation of it to the heart of the Prophet. The thing will be easily intelligible to those who know that consciousness. as we know it, is only a very insignificant portion of our whole psychic life. Thoughts may be passing and emotions working in the lower strata of our consciousness of which we know nothing whatever, but the reality of which is quite certain in psychology. It is this inner and hidden consciousness that is chiefly operative in telepathy and other psychic phenomena It may thus be readily intelli- [illegible] may be revealed and so known to the Prophet

in the spiritual plane of his being from the first day of his inspiration, yet in his human practical life he may act as if he had but a part of the revelation and waited for more This double nature in the personality of the prophets and Imams seems to have been the origin of the Christian error of the duality of nature (Divine and human) in Christ But the truth is very important and must not be forgotten In short according to this interpretation the revelation of portions of Quran in moments of inspiration meant the bringing out to the physiological plane what was already there in the higher spiritual planes In this change from the heavenly to the earthly plane there may be real changes of form It may be translated with modifications suggested by the requirements of the times or thoughts passing in the human mind of the Prophet Thus puerile objections of the unbelievers may be refuted, and references may be made to current events, and so forth The subject is highly spiritual and the few reports that have come to us from the Prophet and the Imams go only to extend the information without helping us to assimilate the same and understand it perfectly

Guidance &c The month of Ramazan is guidance to men in two ways one is direct in that it brings the souls of those who observe it in closer union with the spiritual world and this is true guidance in the sense explained in notes to I 5 & II. 2 The other is indirect Every year in the night of Qadr in this month there is a special visitation of the angels to the Prophet and after him to the Imams (See Surah Qadr) in which there is special expression of the word of God with special reference to His decrees relating to the time, and he is thus able to guide the world accordingly This Matter will be discussed more fully in the notes on that Surah So too as regards manifest signs there is a twofold meaning. In the case of ordinary men there is an indescribable internal sense of Grace of God over-shadowing their souls, which as said above is true guidance Externally there is a clear grace of godliness on the face of the man who fasts in the true sense of the word. And this is فرقان in the sense explained in note to verse 53 above. In the case of Imams there is the visitation of angels which is itself manifest signs of God The word *Furqan* (Distinction) is said to be here taken from the word, used for this night in Surah 44 . 4. 'Wherein is separated every fixed thing'

Verse 186. Prayer is an expression of the consciousness that God is a living reality and controls the affair of the world He is not a mere dead Law, nor is He in any way bound by the laws He has made His immutability consists in His Freedom and is no way distinct from it. In fact it is not true that the

laws of nature that we, with our limited senses see in operation in our narrow field of experience are all and there is nothing in heavens and earth besides Only these higher sources of power are not given to us to be used as a matter of course, and must be approached through supplication to Him and seeking His grace and favour

Prayer must be answered as there is a promise distinctly made to that effect in this verse, though it does not necessarily mean immediate fulfilment, nor fulfilment exactly of what is sought for Allowance must be made for what He in His wisdom sees best for us. But in all ordinary cases fulfilment does follow, and sometimes under conditions extremely unfavourable Everybody knows this from his own experience Everyone of us, the Shias, must have witnessed wonders of *Istikharah* hundreds of times in his life, and what is *Istikharah* but prayer for specific direction in dubious matters

The requisites laid down in the teachings of the Imams for the efficacy of prayers are many, and for ordinary men difficult of attainment. They all come under the two words 'answer My call' and 'have 'faith in Me' used in this verse 'Faith in God' means a vivid realization of His Living presence and the truth of His having care of us 'Answering His call' means doing what He commands, and this covers everything moral and religious God says 'fulfil your promise to Me I will fulfil Mine to you' Notice the form of the expression used *Yastajibuli* may also be rendered 'let them ask Me for an answer' as Palmer has done This is artistically to imply that both are practically the same thing Obedience must be attended with the grace of God But certainly God is too gracious to insist on all for granting a poor creature's prayer

The chief things to be noted are (1) not to neglect the practical means that may be available It is God's command taught expressly by the Imams that we should labour to earn bread, to go to a physician in case of illness and so forth But this should be only in spirit of obedient compliance The result is to be looked for only from God. (2) Next not to be wholly absorbed in our own troubles so as to forget those of others, to be particularly careful in praying for others along with our own needs (3) Again to approach God through i e pray in the name of the Holy Prophet and Imams, as they are the golden link between God and man, and neglecting them means slighting of God's scheme of spiritual governmet, and lastly (4) to glorify God and pray for forgiveness of sins before coming to the main object in view The last two are the most important. All mean that when one seeks a temporal object from God he should learn first to forget it for a time and seek to do that

which should be pleasing in the sight of God The prayers taught and recommended by the Imams—volumes of which have been collected—are excellent models of this In using them for prayer there is this further advantage that owing to their literary charms they never fail to produce a spirit of devotion in minds, not well having the mood for it

All this is very much against the Hindu notion of prayer, which in reality is no prayer at all. When practised as a religious duty it takes the form of meditation and when for any temporal object it takes the form of an incantation Coming directly to the object, it strives to keep the attention fixed intensely upon it. It is strange that the Ahmadi commentator while demurring to this for its lack of prayerful mood, seems to accept its principle in all its essentials in his note on this verse He says 'Any one who sets before himself the attainment of an object first looks for the practical means to achieve it In this search he has to give his whole attention to the finding of those means which will serve his object. This deep reflection or will-power may be called prayer in a certain sense For when we strive hard in search of what is hidden from us we really seek for guidance from a Higher power from whom nothing is hidden in a language which is expressed by our very condition'

Verse 187 The primary thought involved in clothing is that of decency then of comfort and protection As the Ahmadi commentator says, 'This description of the mutual relations of husband and wife and the mutual comfort they find in and the protection they offer to each other is unsurpassed in beauty

Verse 187 The latter part 'Eat and drink &c' is said to have been revealed to remove the scruples of those who having fallen asleep without dining in the early part of the night would not dine afterwards even if they rose up before the morning A case of this kind is recorded of 'bn Khawat bn Jubair who owing to this reason fell down senseless the next morning in the battlefield For the earlier part about going into wives, 'God has known that you play foul with your souls,' the Sunni commentator, Zamakhshari relates the following incident of a much revered Sahabee and Caliph as having occassioned the revelation. Having done this act he repented afterwards and confessed it to the Prophet. 'Thou art not the only man' said the Prophet, and on this many others confessed the same thing According to Durre Mansur the wife tried to be excused saying she had slept, but he

commentators also relate the same incident as having occassioned this part of the verse which is clearly of the nature of a rebuke followed with a concession for the future The Ahmadi commentator tries to make it appear that the practice was never forbidden but the words clearly show that it was, as the Shiah commantator Qummi says

Food and drink must be abstained from the first streak of dawn to sunset This applies to the major portion of the globe where the days are appreciably below 24 hours to admit of the two prayers in the night. In the frigid zones where days and nights might last longer than a complete rotation of the earth it must be remembered that 30 days fast must be completed in a lunation There, " the days should be measured according to the duration of their days " as the Prophet is reported to have said in certain traditions *i e* according to their measure in Medina

Verse 188 " The injunction to abstain from illegally taking other men's property is a fitting sequel to the injunction relating to fasting, for by fasting a man abstains from using what he has a legal right to simply in obedience to Divine commandments Fasting, in fact, enables a man to control his passions and once the passions are mastered, the greed for illegally acquiring what belongs to others will vanish " See further in Supp

SECTION 24.

Religious institutions should be according to lunar dates Right ways to be adopted for guidance Fighting in self-defence and to put an end to the state of *Fitnah* in the country enjoined. The sanctity of the Holy City to be respected, sacred months may be disregarded by way of retaliation Rules about pilgrims when prevented and about combining Umrah with Hajj.

189. They will question thee concerning the moon's changes; say, They are time-marks for men and for the pilgrimage. Righteousness is not this that ye enter your houses from behind them, but righteousness is he that feareth God; and enter ye your houses by their doors, and fear God that haply it may be well with you.

190 And fight in the cause of God against those who fight with you; but be not aggressive, for verily God loveth not the aggressors:

191. And slay them wheresoever ye come upon them, and drive them away wheresofrom they drove you away, for mischief is more grievous than slaughter; but fight not with them nigh unto the sacred temple until they fight with you therein, but if they fight with you then slay them: Such is the recompense of the unbelievers.

192. But if they desist, then verily is God Forgiving, Merciful.

193. And fight against them until mischief (*Fitnah*) vanish, and religion be for God, but if they desist, then there is no hostility save against wrong-doers.

194. A sacred month in reprisal for a sacred month and reprisal (is lawful in) things sacred: wherefore whosoever acts aggressively unto you, offer ye to him a violence the like of the violence offered by him to you; and fear God, and know that God is with those who fear.

195. And expend in the service of God, and cast not yourselves with your own hands into perdition, and do good, for verily God loveth those who do good.

196 And fulfil the pilgrimage (*Ḥajj*) and *Umra* for the sake of God, but if ye be hindered, (*Uhsirtum*) then whatsoever is the easiest offering; and shave not your heads until the sacrifice reach its place; but whosoever of you is sick or hath an ailment in his head, then let him atone with fasting, or alms or sacrifice. But when ye are secure from hindrance, then he who profiteth by combining the *'Umra* to *Hajj* (pilgrimage) let him offer whatsoever is the easiest offering, but he who is not able, let him fast three days during pilgrimage and seven when ye return, this is the complete

ten. This is for him whose people dwell not at the Sacred Temple; and fear God and know that God is severe in chastising.

Verse 189 *Ahilla* is plural of *hilal*, the earliest crescent shapes of the moon, and hence has been translated as 'new moons' by Rodwell or 'phases of the moon' by Sale and Palmer. The commentators say on the authority of some traditions that the question was about the reason of, or the wisdom in giving us a light that changes in quantity and time every day Ignoring these as usual the Ahmadi commentator thinks that the question was about the distinction of sacred and ordinary months, the answer being that war being forbidden in the former they were reserved for pilgrimage and peaceful occupations This felicitous explanation which is agreeable to the subject of the section as a whole however hangs on the applicability of the word *ahilla* in the sense of months, but unfortunately there is no instance of it in literature even lexicons do not write any such meaning. So it has to be received with caution. Also the traditions cited by the commentators should not be lightly passed over

In a superficial view both the question and the answer may seem too simple to be worth taken up in the Revelation Everybody knew that our fasts and festivals, pilgrimage &c are fixed in lunar months and the phases of the moon help us to find out the dates when necessary. What they did not know and what they are taught here by implication is that in the design of creation (for we believe there was design in creation) the moon was designed to fix periods (*a*) for man and (*b*) for his religious life This implies that (*a*) there should be something in the life of man really connected with the phases of the moon or, what is the same thing, the positions of the moon relative to the sun and earth which gives rise to these phases and (*b*) that in the nature of things religious festivals should be fixed according to lunar months, and not according to the solar, as is done in other religions

As to (*a*) above we now see that there is some real connection Thus the period of gestation in man and all other animals (including the hatching of eggs in birds) is either in weeks, or fortnights, or lunar months. The same may be seen in the periodicity of diseases caused by germs, as typhoid fever. The periods are again weeks or multiples of weeks. The evolutionists explain this as due to the fact that the primitive animal forms lived in the sea and their lives were affected by tidal changes. The tidal changes, everybody knows, are connected with the position of the moon with regard to earth and the sun *i. e.* in connection with its phases.

If there is any reality in the subtler influences of the planets such as is claimed in occult sciences the moon has certainly a great share in it, possibly the greatest owing to its proximity to the earth

As to (*b*) we see that it is necessary in the nature of things that pilgrimage and all other religious festivals should be held according to the lunar year (of 354 days as in Islam), and not according to the solar year (of 355 days) or any adjustment of the lunar with solar years as is done by Jews and Hindus In the latter systems of the calendar the months fall invariably in the same season of the year while in the former they make a round throughout all seasons in the course of 33 years Now suppose the Ramzan were fixed according to the solar or luni-solar year about the month of January It would all be very well for us in this northern hemisphere, but it would be death to the people living in southern hemisphere In our system not only no country is better off than another, but everyman having an average life of seventy fasts both in his youth and in his old age throughout all of these seasons

Hajj is here symbolic for all religious practices Originally too the word means *qasd* 'setting mind to a purpose' It is selected in preference to the others, apparently, as in this long journeys are involved and here it is that the phases of the moon are quite indispensable They give us the readiest means to determine the longitude of a place, and so help us to localise the place where we are

It may also be said that the crescents of the moon fix the happy or propitious days according to the traditions, if these are well credited This is of utility both for temporal and religious requirements

'Enter houses by their gates' To explain this latter part of the verse the commentators say that it was a practice among the Arabs that after taking to *Ihram* (pilgrim's garb) they considered it unlawful to enter their houses through the doors, but would cut out openings in the back walls, or scale the roof for this purpose Only five tribes including the Prophet's were exempted from this These were called *Hums* collectively One day one man in *Ihram* entered his house by the door, not caring that he was not one of *Hums*, and on being questioned by the Prophet about this said he had only followed his practice This verse abolishing the custom was revealed on this occasion approving of his conduct. It is said this was also a practice when any one set out from his home for some enterprise but failed to accomplish it

How this latter part of the verse is soldered to the first part is a mystry to the commentators They make all sorts of puerile suggestions,

such that questions about the two things were put to the Prophet together, or that the mention of *Hajj* in the first part suggested a direction in connection with *Hajj* in the second part The Ahmadi commentator is discreetly silent about it To us the connection seems clear The verse may have abolished these customs if they existed, but the object of the revelation is certainly much wider Entering by the back, as Razi says, is a figure for turning aside from the right course, while entering by the door signifies sticking to the right course After citing several instances in which door and back are used in common parlance to devote right and wrong methods he says there is no right interpretation of the verse but this (Tafsire Kabir) It comes to this then in our opinion that though lunations and the moon's phases therein fix periods for devotion such as fasting, pilgrimage &c yet the knowledge that such and such thing should be done on such and such date and in such and such month should come from the right sources and not from indefinite tradition, as was the case with the Quraishites, and is usually the case with other false religions Even if they do a right thing in this way it is only like entering a house like thieves from its back

Everything is now clear The house is the house of guidance The door is the right source to gain admittance into it It remains only to remind one of the famous saying of the Prophet, 'I am the house of (divine) wisdom (*Hikmat*) and Ali is its Gate, whoever wishes to come to the *Hikmat* he should come to it through its Gate,' and one is able to see where lies the door to spiritual advancement And history has abundantly proved the justice of the Prophet's remark That the Shias derive all in their religion and philosophy from Our Lord goes without saying, but even among Sunnis the Motazalites (Rationalists) and Sufis (spiritualists) publicly announce that their systems are derived from the teachings of Our Lord Ali In short, all guidance, all that is true, noble and sublime in Islam comes from that door and that door only See futher in Supplement

Note that here too as in verse 177 the form of the expression is "Virtue is he who is God-fearing" identifying virtue with a virtuous man, and the object seems that pointed out in the end of the note on that verse It is significant that this form of expression is never used in the Quran of any other thing In verse 177 we have that those who come up fully to the description are God-fearing and Virtue itself So here the Virtue itself is the same man or men It only requires taste to appreciate the use of the artistic expression in that verse, and more particularly in this where the door of guidance is mentioned.

Verse 190. Introductory The Gospel of fighting in the cause of God is the second (the first being as a lawgiver) great point of resemblance that made Our Holy Prophet 'like unto Moses' showing it was he, not Christ, that was foretold in Deuteronomy 18 15,18 The gospel of fighting was the same, but if *we are to judge from the very corrupt account we have in the Pentateuch* there are important differences both in the object and in the character of Jehad in the two cases The Israelite wars were wars of extirpation—heartless massacres of which the world hardly knows a parallel instance Thus at the conquest of Median "they slew all the males," "took all the women of Median captives and their little ones and took the spoil of all their cattle and all their flocks and all their food And they burned all their cities" &c But that was not sufficient. Moses "was wroth with" them and said "Have ye saved all the women alive . Now therefore kill every male among the little ones and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him But all the women children that have not known a man by lying with him keep ye alive for yourselves (Numbers 31 7-18) And all for what? What was the fault of these men? The Israelites as they abode in Shittim "began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab here," "and they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods and the people did eat and bowed down to their gods And Israel joined himself unto Baal Peor and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel" (Numbers 25 1—3) The anger against Israel was easily appeased, but as to the Midianites with whom they were tempted the Lord spoke unto Moses saying 'Vex the Midianites and smite them for they vex you with their evils wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor" &c Similarly Sihon, King of Heshbon interrupted the passage of Israelites through his territories And the punishment was that 'we smote him and his sons and all his people And we took all his cities at that time and utterly destroyed the men and the women and the little ones of every city we left none to remain only the cattle we took for a prey unto ourselves and the spoil of the cities we took'

Instances can be multiplied without number But we refrain It is clear the wars were of extirpation in the fullest sense of the word, and the object was no more than to gain possession of the land of Canaan as God's chosen people Any pretext that could be available was seized upon to have the land cleared of the old inhabitants as far as possible. What to say of checking religious persecution on the part of the heathen there was no desire on the part of the Israelites to convert the heathen by force, even that could have been a justification in those primitive times. Let me repeat, however, I do not impute all this to Our Lords

Moses, Joshua and other holy prophets I am sure the accounts have been very much corrupted and exaggerated to justify the callous massacres of later days The thing that remains however after this allowance is that Moses fought relentlessly with the infidels in the cause of God, and if his surroundings, the character of people he had to deal with justified him in this would it be wrong in another prophet placed exactly in the same position and with the same sort of people to deal with or even worse?

The Christians along with admitting "with regret," as they do, that they never scrupled to take up the sword and to commit brutalities when opportunity served them to force the Gospel on the world must also disown in plain words their belief in the word of God that came to Moses which was fully subscribed to even by their God the Christ, yet what comparison can there possibly be between the wars (reputed of course) of Moses and those of Our Holy Prophet. Our wars were clearly of self-defence These are not the first verses that were revealed about Jihad, though they may be some of the earliest in the Quran we have Yet in these verses there are the directions Fight (only) with those who fight with you and do not exceed the limits, verily God does not have those who exceed the limits But if they desist then verily God is Forgiving, Merciful And fight until there is no more trouble and religion be for God (alone,) so if they desist there should be no hostility except against the oppressors

These are not the earliest verses as I have said The first command to fight is in Surah Hajj 22 39, 40 "Permission is given to those that fight for they have been oppressed, and God is competent to help them Those that were driven out from their abodes without any just cause, only that they say 'Our Lord is Allah", And were it not that God should repel some people by others certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which God's name is much remembered And surely God will help him who helps His cause Surely God is Strong, Mighty" (Zarqani and Mawahib from Zuhri)

Nobody who has any idea of the miserable condition of the early Musalmans, would for a moment imagine that this handful of people could have wantonly set themselves to provoke the active hostility of the whole world about them They would quitely have borne any provocation—rather than take the risk of fighting with hordes without number. If they did engage themselves in this way, one would presume that circumstances had forced them to it; unless their very existance were in

peril, they could not possibly have thought to plunge themselves into a mortal struggle This is so clear apriori that even if in the wars the initiative did appear to be taken by the Musalmans, no sane-minded person would for a moment suppose that they were really offensive wars—they must have been offensive with a defensive import The circumstances had forced them to take action, and if the Prophet had not been quick to it and had waited for a formal assault from the other side he would only have given the enemy time to collect their forces, and who can doubt that in that case the world would soon have heard the last of this little band of Musalmans.

Yet such is the perversity of prejudice that no such considerations, obvious as they are, are allowed to have any weight with writers like Muir, Sell, Noeldeke and others All they can see is that in the Battle of Bedar and its prelude, the raid of Abdullah bin Jahsh, it was the Musalmans that began the quarrel with the infidels What the infidels had been doing all the time before is, as a matter of principle, ignored and forgotten

How deep-rooted was the acrimony which drove the infidels on against the new converts may be easily judged from their pursuing them down even to Abyssinia where they had fled to avoid the horrible tortures they were suffering at their hands They would not let them live in peace even in another country Could it be imagined that they could all complacently see them flourish and develop their mission from a centre only 70 miles away from themselves? What are the facts? Soon after the emigration of the Prophet they wrote to the chief of Medina Abdullah 'bn Obai as follows —" You have given protection to our man We have sworn by God that you either kill him or expel him, otherwise we will come upon you with all of us, and kill your fighting men and take hold of your woman as lawful for us" (Abu Daud, Sunan) Obay bin Kaab says, " When the Prophet and his people came to Medina and the Ansars took them under their protection, all Arabs were united to make an assault upon them" (رمتهم العرب عن قوس واحدة) They never lay down to sleep except with their weapons with them (Hakim)

This is not the place to give an account of the various wars and battles that were fought. They will be described under the various verses relating to them

This is merely an introduction that may help us to understand the true state of things at the time. All is silently passed over by European critics of Islam.

Finally it should be noted that as without Jihad the correspondence of Our Prophet to the career of Our Lord Moses would fail to be perfect, Islam would also fail to be a complete and perfect religion for the world. Fighting has well been said to be the direst necessity of human nature, a religion that did not provide for it, did not regulate its principles and define its rightful limits would not be a perfect religion, much less a final religion, for the world

Verse 190 This verse teaches us that fighting should be limited to the cause of God and is permissible only when religion is in danger, people take up arms against us because of our following our religion or trying to preach it to others The hostilities should be limited to those who actually fight or have fought with us and there is no indication of their desisting for the future (see verse 192) In no case is anything to be allowed which can come under the category of the word *letida* exceeding the limits This is explained in Safi as beginning the assault, falling upon the enemy unawares without due invitation to Islam, maiming the persons overcome in war, slaughter of forbidden persons such as women, children, aged men, persons under contract, so also hermits, monks &c

Verse 191 As the Ahmadi commentator says, 'To kill the enemy wherever one finds him is nothing strange when a state of war exists, and yet the critics of Islam draw the most grotesque conclusions from these simple words The verse, read together with the first, runs thus And fight with those who are fighting with you and kill them wherever you find them Do the civilized nations fight with each other to spare their enemies? Razi says And the personal pronoun in the words *kill them* refers to those with whom fighting is enjoined in the previous verse In fact it cannot refer to anything else, nor to unbelievers generally, who are nowhere mentioned in the previous verses, not even in the previous section'

It seems to me, however, that the verses here give only a general injunction about fighting and the broad general principles that should regulate their military operations None of these verses have been revealed to enjoin any particular attack or any other particular event in history And it was for this reason that the injunction we are considering seems never to have been carried out There was never any such thing as anarchical assaults on private individuals That shows that the verse was not meant to enjoin any such thing It only meant that fighting should not be restricted to persons actually assaulting them just at the time.

The sacred territory was, however, to remain inviolable notwithstanding the fact that it was the centre of all attacks upon the Musalmans.

Verse 192 Fighting must cease if the infidels desist from their hostilities

Verse 193 *Fitnah* is a difficult word to give the exact equivalent of. Originally it means temptation, and so it applies to any corrupt and undesirable state of things in political situation which makes it difficult for a man to stick to his conscience, and he is led away irresistibly to a course of life or religion which he knows is not the right one It therefore applies preeminently to states of flagrant persecution, though it can extend to any corrupt state of things having more or less the effect like to that of open religious persecution

'That religion may be for God' This has been held to mean that Islam becomes the preponderating religion But in view of what is said above it seems sufficient to end fighting that there remain no obstacles in the way of the religion of God In its full sense religion will be God's alone in the days of Our Lord the Mahdi of Islam Every age and country has remained, and will remain more are less in a state of *Fitnah* in the sense explained above

Note In connection with the subject of Jihad which is introduced in this section and is continued later it is essential to make the position of the Shias clear on this point As this requires a rather lengthy note we will do it in the Supplement

Verse 195 'For if you withhold monetory aid to your own people your very existence would be in danger and thus by your slackness in helping the cause of the community you would be casting yourselves to perdition with your own hands

Verse 196 *Hajj* and *Umrah* differ slightly The latter which may be rendered lesser pilgrimage or visit may be performed at any time, while the former has its months and dates rigidly fixed Also the ceremonies to be observed in *Umrah* are fewer Both are compulsory though there is difference of opinion among the Sunnis about the latter However pilgrims coming from distant places do both in one combination as laid down in this verse though the Sunnis discountenance this owing to a prohibition made by Caliph Omar about it

For the benefit of those who may not know it a brief description of the routine to be observed in pilgrimage may be given here On arrival at the last stage (*Miqat*) near Mecca the pilgrim bathes and performs two *Rakaat* prayers and then divesting himself of his clothes puts on his pilgrim's dress called *Ihram* which consists of two seamless wrappers only,

one being wrapped round his waist, and the other thrown loosely over shoulders, the head being left uncovered So shoes also must be cast off though sandals may be worn From this time forth the pilgrim must abstain from all worldly affairs and all thoughts of the comforts of the body must be given up He must not annoint his head or shave any part of the body, pare his nails, nor wear any other dress than the *Ihram* He is not allowed to hunt or take any life down to the vermin on his body or in his bed He must not even scratch himself lest the vermin be destroyed, he can only rub himself with the open palm of his hand And in this state he has to live for days and days together.

He then proceeds to the Holy City steeped as far as possible in thoughts of devotion and crying *Labbaika* 'Here am I O Lord' (*i e* to the service of God) On arrival at Mecca he performs the legal ablutions in the Great Mosque round Kaaba and then kisses the Holy Stone (*Hajarul Aswad*) He then makes seven circuits *Tawaf* round Kaaba reciting prayers He then proceeds to the Maqam Ibrahim mentioned in verse 125 above and performs two *Rakaat* prayers there, after which he returns to the Holy Stone and kisses it He then proceeds immersed in thoughts of devotion and in the memories of Abraham, Ishmael and Hajar to Mount Safa, and runs between the two hills Safa and Marwa, a distance off, seven times repeating prayers This is the sixth day of *Zulhija* the evening of which is again spent at Mecca and circuit (*Tawaf*) is again made round Kaaba The seventh and eighth days are spent in devotion at Mecca and Mina respectively On the 9th the pilgrim proceeds to Arafat and stays there engaged in prayers &c In the evening he leaves Muzdalifa and spends the night there The next day is the Eidul Azha when, after a ceremony of casting stones at the devil to symbolise the resolution to kick him out in future life, the pilgrimage ends with sacrifice in honour of the heart-thrilling sacrifice that Abraham prepared himself to make in obedience to the divine command The pilgrim's dress, *Ihram* is then taken off, and the pilgrim gets himself shaved and his nails pared and he returns to ordinary life However he should stay at Mecca for three days, and before returning perform circuits round Kaaba and throw stones at the devil He also drinks of the water of the Zamzam well found by Hager when her child was dying of thirst In *Umrah* the *Ihram* is put on and circuit is made round Kaaba and the running between Safa and Marwah is done but the other ceremonies are ommitted.

The above outline which gives only the barest routine of the ceremonies will suffice to show that *Hajj* is a week of intense devotion

continued in the midst of the most miserable conditions. To say nothing of the vast concourse of some hundred thousands heterogeneous of people in a space barely sufficient for them, which is alone sufficient to make the mind dizzy, even the most elementary comforts of the body are tabooed and yet the mind is expected to be constantly fixed in devotion to God The prayers and other acts of devotion that the pilgrim remains engaged in fills volumes, and I cannot give even the barest idea of it In the supplement I propose to translate a prayer that, after the example of Our Lord Husain, the Shia pilgrims read on the 9th (the Arafa day) This single prayer will suffice to show that it is not mere ceremonial but real devotion that the pilgrims are (at least are meant to be and expected to be) engaged in in their Hajj Yet neglecting all this the Christian writers stigmatize it as "puerile rites and ceremonies" "We know of nothing" says Hughes "which can justify the act of giving *the stupid and unmeaning* ceremonies of the pilgrimage all the force and solemnity of a divine enactment" And yet it is not necessary in reply to refer to the real devotion which fills these ceremonies This these men will always pass over It is sufficient to reply that it is a "stupid and unmeaning" religion which only gives precepts but does nothing to train the people for the cultivation of the moral qualities that are sought to be developed by these precepts It is one thing to say that a man should continue to fix his mind on God in the midst of the most mind-distracting conditions It is another to force a man to place himself occasionally in these distracting conditions and then try to realize that ideal in oneself That is the difference between Christianity and Islam Islam tries to *make* its people what it wants them to be It does not content itself with empty words Think of it! Rich, well to do persons—for such the majority of Hajis must be, for these are alone able to pay for the expenses of the journey—some lords and even kings, who have never known anything but luxury and delicacy in their life, compelled to live and go about like the most miserable beggar—not allowed even to clean their body or bed of the vermin that may infest it And yet in that state they have to devote his mind as much as they can to God Is that easy? and does that have no moral effect? No difference, no vestige of a difference, between the highest and the lowest—a king, a prince, a noble, a magnate, running miles of distance between the pushes of a million unknown people, many of whom may not have the position even to stand before them Does that all go for nothing? Does it not help to make them realize, and also remember again afterwards, their absolute nothingness in the sight of God and the equality of other men with them Thus even neglecting the devotion and the influence of memories called up, neglecting everything of the higher religious and spiritual

matters the Hajj has a value of its own as a moral exercise which makes it indispensable—there are no other duties that help to develop the moral qualities of this kind. The chief object of religious duties being gradually to prepare the mind for moral qualities of *all* kinds, Islam would have been sadly lacking as a religion if it had not prescribed some duties analogous to this All exercises, whether they be physical, or moral, disciplinary or spiritual, must appear "stupid and meaningless" to those who do not care to consider the object that they are meant for The drills practised by police and military men appear strangely 'stupid and meaningless" to the ordinary people Alas, it is too much neglected, being much too unpleasant for the rich, (who can alone afford for it, and whom really it is specially meant for) otherwise it would have sufficed to change the moral tone of the Muslim community The mere consolidating effect of the annual gathering would suffice to make the Musalmans a power in the world

Objections are also made on account of the "callous" "waste of life" that follows the Hajj in the sacrifices and is done in memory of it all the world over It is said that of all civilised religions Islam is the only one that has retained animal sacrifice to this day Yes, Islam seeks its followers to be callous" and "brutal" at times In the same Hajj where so many animals are slaughtered the Haji is given the greatest lesson for respect of animal life Not only is hunting of all kinds forbidden, even the frightening of animals in *Haram* is regarded a sin Not only in Hajj but at all times of the year it is a mortal sin to shoot the pigeons of the *Haram* Every pilgrim brings a load of corn on his head for the feeding of these pigeons in the Holy Mosque Not even a bug or mosquito may be killed by a Haji as long as he is in *Ihram* No person who has the meagrest sense in him can fail to see *and feel* that unless there were something intrinsically good in regard for the life of low creatures these directions could not have been given He must see *and feel* that, though *for the necessity of it* the killing of animals is allowed elsewhere, it is not a commendible thing in itself, or it could not be held to violate the sanctity of the Holy place The extent to which Islam is particular in the matter of animals can hardly be realized by any not conversant with the traditions of the Prophet and the Imams In the instructions that Our Lord Ali gave on his deathbed he did not forget the ducks kept in the house, and he enjoined his sons to have particular regard for their feeding A disciple of his having killed some pigeons in irritation, Our Lord Jafarel Sadiq made him make an expiation of his act by giving away one *Dinar* for each one of them in charity. A dog having come where Our Lord Hasan was dining his companions wanted

to have the unclean animal turned out, but preventing them Our Lord began to take one morsel himself and give another to the dog and said, "I feel ashamed of God that a creature of His should look to my dinner and I turn him away"

Such should be the feelings of Musalmans towards lower animals; such should necessarily their feelings become when they cultivate the feelings of tenderness so carefully by the practice of mourning over Husain And such must gradually be the feelings of all if education and culture have to have any effect upon them It is just here that the greatness of Islam appears as a moral discipline It knows how feelings can overgrow, and so take possession of the soul that they can prevent a man from overcoming them when duties calling for this arise Few will find themselves prepared to act as executioner to put to death a friend, supposing that he is rightly condemned by Law This overgrowth of tenderness Islam regards as a moral weakness, and it can only be removed by proper exercise This slaughter of animals is rightly a shadow of the great sacrifice which Our Lord Abraham had prepared himself for, and making us accustomed to the pangs of tender emotions, seeks to make us equal, however imperfectly, to the task of overcoming them For some men at least it is a great sacrifice, and they would gladly have it substituted by anything however costly for them

Then, it is said it is a compromise with idolatory I do not see what shadow of idolatory there is in the Hajj If a holy shrine the pagans appropriate for themselves and make of it an idolatrous temple, and then a man comes and clears the place of idols and restores the shrine to the worship of the one true God, will that be a compromise with idolatory? True, Islam has done something for idolatory It has given permanence to what was just and good in it—the spirit of holding in veneration things associated with something truly venerable It has not allowed itself be carried away by a frenzied spirit of iconoclasm It destroyed the images which purported to represent false gods But it retained and kept in reverence the relics, such as the slab of Abraham or the Black Stone believed to have come from heaven So it retained the veneration attached to Safa and Marwah If that is idolatory we are proud of it, and do not wish to part with it. No religion can be truly perfect without making due provision for the cultivation of these sublime emotions

Verse 196 'Whoever profits by combining *Umrah* to Hajj' This means that after performing the rites of *Umrah* the pilgrim casts off his *Ihram* and resumes it for Hajj when its season approaches. This is

specially meant for those whom is not in Mecca or its precints This gives them the advantage of doing both in one journey, and they are also relieved of the hardships of *Ihram* in the interval The Caliph Omar was very much against it and presumed to make it unlawful, but he was not listened to as it has got a place in the Quran 'Shaving the head' marks the termination of Hajj

Note "A remarkable point about the injunction *to fight in the way of Allah* is that it is very often mentioned in connection with the subject of pilgrimage, as here and in the 3rd and 22nd chapters From this may be concluded what is clearly stated many times, *viz*, that fighting was permitted or ordained as a measure of self defence and to put a stop to religious persecution, the pilgrimage to Mecca which is one of the four fundamental principles of Islam, being impossible so long as the holy place was in the hands of unbelievers who had driven the Muslims from Mecca by cruel persecution"

SECTION 25.

Further ordinances regarding pilgrimage Hypocrites would hide their time to do mischief Muslims warned of falling into *Fitnah* Necessity of complete submission

197 The (time of) pilgrimage is (in) the well-known months, whoever then taketh upon himself to do pilgrimage therein, then let there be no lewdness, nor transgression nor disputing during the pilgrimage; and whatever good ye do God knoweth it; and make provision, verily the best provision is the fear (of God); and fear Me, Oh! ye people of understanding.

198. On you then shall be no sin if ye seek bounty from your Lord; them when ye return (*afaztum*) from Arafat remember God nigh the holy monument, and remember Him as He hath guided you although of a surety ye were theretofore of the erring.

199. Again, pass ye on (from Arafat) the way other people pass on, and seek forgiveness of God, verily God is Forgiving, Merciful.

200. Then when ye have completed your rites of pilgrimage, remember God as ye remember your fathers, rather with a more intense remembrance; for of men then be one who saith Lord! give us in this world—and for him there shall be no portion in the next;

201. And there be some among them who say. O! Lord! give us good in this word, and good in the next, and keep us from the torment of the fire

202. For these there shall be (their) lot from that which they have earned; and verily God is swift to reckon

203 And remember ye God on the appointed days; then he who hasteneth away in two days on him there shall be no sin, and he who tarrieth on him (also) there shall be no sin—this for him who feareth God. wherefore fear ye God, and know that verily in the end unto Him ye shall be gathered

204. And among men there is one whose talk concerning the life here below pleaseth thee, and he taketh God to witness as to that which is in his heart, yet is he the most crabbed in disputing

205. And when he cometh to rulership (or turneth his back *Tawalla*) he speedeth through the land that he may spread disorder therein and lay waste tilth and life; but God loveth not mischief-making.

206. And when one saith unto him, Fear God, pride (or power *Izzat*) driveth him on to sin So hell (alone) shall suffice him, and surely what an evil resting-place!

207. And among men there is also one who selleth his life seeking the pleasure of God; and God is kind (tender *Rauf*) unto His servants.

208 O ye who believe! enter ye into peace (or submission *Silm*) wholly, and follow not the footsteps of Satan, for verily he is for you an open foe:

209 But if ye slip after that which hath come unto you of evidences, then know that God is Mighty, Wise.

210. Await they aught but that God come unto them in canopies of bright clouds, and the angels, and the doom be fulfilled But unto God are all things committed (or returned *Turjaa*)

Verse 197 The well-known months are Shawwal, Ziqaad and the first nine days of Zil Hijja In these months the *Ihraam* (pilgrim's dress) can be put on as a beginning for the rites of Hajj the principal of which come only in the month of Zil Hijja Whoever starts on pilgrimage in this way must put an end to all unbecoming acts inconsistent with devotion though perfectly lawful and allowed at other times Thus *Rafas* is lawful sexual intercourse and all that appertains thereto and *jidal* includes every ordinary disputing Instead of this 'Whatever good you do God knows it' God knows everything, but the meaning is that your Hajj is known and appreciated of God in the measure of the virtue you do therein

Verse 198 'Seeking bounty from God' here stands for trading That is not prohibited The *Mashaaril Haram* (literally the Holy sign or monument) is the place known as Muzdalifa where the pilgrims stop for the night after their return from Arafat on the evening of 9th Zil Hijja The association of the place with worship has given it this epithet See note on verse 158

Afeezu (advance). The word signifies pressing on in journeying with a multitude

Verse 199 The Quraish and Kenana who styled themselves Hehms as superior to the rest of the Arabs used to stay at Muzdalafa thinking it beneath their dignity to join other pilgrims in going forth to the plain of Arafat This distinction is reprobated here as it was contrary to the practice of Our Lord Abraham, and no people can be allowed to have any distinction in matters of religion

Verse 200 'As you remembered your fathers' Reference to the old custom in the days of ignorance that after the pilgrimage they

spent time in Mina boasting of family greatness in eulogistic poems They are told to stop this and spend time in praising and glorifying God instead As they praise God they must naturally pray, for prayer is the best expression of faith, and unless a man prays there is no certainty he really believes that God is what he talks about Well, this prayer if confined to worldly matters shows that he is a worldling and he has no portion for him in the hereafter

Verse 201 Those who pray for the Hereafter only and not at all for their welfare in this life show either that (*a*) they feel themselves some way secure in this life without praying to God for help, or that (*b*) they are careless of this life, while it is a great trust from God and is a thing of great value if rightly used, or that (*c*) they do not sufficiently believe in God, thinking Him to be possibly good for the Hereafter but here He is tied up to the things as they are So the true believer must pray both for this life and the next

Verse 202 'Earnest' Mark the word The best deeds done by a man may be wasted unless accompanied by an humble spirit of prayer for their acceptance.

Verse 203 The numbered days are the three days following the day of sacrifice and are called the days of *tashriq*

Verses 204 to 206 Why these verses and the rest of this section which have no connection with Hajj are placed here Razi explains by saying that in verses 200 & 201 it is said there attend the Hajj two sorts of persons (1) Infidels (verse 200 I should like to say, worldlings) (2) True believers (verse 201) There remain the hypocrites and these are mentioned here

It is preferred to say that these verses are general and no particular person is meant But traditions show that from the earliest times specific persons or their events have been held to have occasioned these verses, and not only these but verse 207 also which was in contrast with these Also there is too much detail in the verses, leaving there no doubt that some particular person is meant The words cannot apply to the hypocrites generally One version and that commonly received is that the person referred to was Akhnas 'bn Shuraiq This man, according to one account, dissuaded a party of Meccans from fighting against the Prophet in the battle of Bedr and made away with them This pleased the Prophet, and so these verses were revealed to tell him that he was a blaguard. It was owing to this act of his that he was nicknamed Akhnas (concealer)

by the infidels His real name was Ubay Another account is that sometime he made a profession of faith and love to the Prophet making an impression on the mind of the Prophet, but as he went away (*Tawalla*) from him he burned a field belonging to some Musalman and that occasioned the verses One should say with Razi that the first account does not make him deserving of this damnatory revelation, and as he was an insignificant person after all there seems hardly any purpose to notice him in a Revelation meant for all time As to the other one must beg to say that there was hardly any need for a revelation If his fair words had deceieved the Prophet his conduct must have undeceived him

The other version is that some infidels among Quraish sent word to the Prophet that they had embraced Islam and that they wanted some learned men among his disciples to be sent to them to teach them the new faith The Prophet sending a party of such men accordingly, they fell upon them and killed them So these verses were revealed in connection with the infidels, and verse 207 in honour of those who suffered martyrdom on this occasion This incident is historical, but as in the first case it is hardly intelligible why there was revelation in this form—unless the object is to blame him for what he did, and to warn him that there are many such people round about and that he should beware of them I wonder if any Musalman has such a low conception about the Holy Prophet that he is prepared to believe that he deserved such a rebuke from God Moreover why have a number of persons been denounced in words which show it is one man who is referred to? The singular is sustained in all the three verses Usually we find that revelation meant in praise or denunciation of one man is generalised and the words are in the plural Here those who are many are held to be spoken of as one. Again who remonstrated with these infidels?

The worthlessness of these explanations is evident There is nothing in the Quran but is meant for the teaching of the Musalmans. The '*thee*' in 'whose speech pleases thee' is simply an *Iyyaka Anna wa asmaee ya jarah* (The address is to the Prophet but the people are meant) of which the Quran is full One should be glad to believe, if possible that no particular person is meant, and that the words apply generally to all the Munafiqs But, as said above, there is too much detail in the verses, and few of the well known Munafiqs can be shown as coming up to the description (1) He is nimble tongued (2) Counsels the Prophet or the Musalmans about matters of temporal interests (3) Is very solicitous to make it appear that he is sincere (4) Is likely to be made a ruler (*Tawalla*) *Qila iza Sara Walian* (*Abu Saud*, also *Razi*, *Siraj*) (5) As ruler he would be

oppressor and would kill men and lay waste the lands (6) He would be remonstrated with for this by the people, but (7) considerations of power would force him to continue his atrocities (8) He is some way in contrast to the man in whose honour the next verse 207 is revealed This makes everything clear to those who know anything of the early history of Islam.

As Razi says the mischief spoken of in this verse is the greatest that can be imagined, and there are hardly any more thrilling words in the Quran about anybody

Verse 207 The Shia and the Sunni commentators agree in saying that this verse was revealed in honour of Our Lord, in reference to his sleeping in the bed of the Prophet on the night when, the infidels collecting to kill the Prophet, he went away leaving Our Lord in his place on his bed Only the Sunni commentators have some other accounts which make the honour go to other men One is that it was revealed in honour of the men who sufferred persecution at Mecca such as Ammare Yasir, his father and mother, Bilal, Khubab &c For *some* reason the name of Suhaib most frequently appears in books, though he is said to have been very easily let off on parting with his property The other alternative account is that it refers to some unnamed person who admonished men about right and wrong On the face of it, the account which says it was in honour of Our Lord Ali has claim to preference, for on this traditionists, both Sunnis and Shias, agree, and the other two are confined to the Sunnis only But the verse ending itself serves to show which is the correct account For God closes it with the words 'And God is Affectionate to the servants" This implies that the man-in-question's selling his life seeking God's pleasure was an act of grace on the part of God to His servants What would have been if Our Lord Ali had not undertaken to remain behind in that hour of danger and sleep in his bed? The Prophet could not go away and was sure to be killed Not only had he the articles of the infidels left to his trust, and it was unbecoming on his part to go away without making them over to their owners, but it was unbecoming on his part to leave a place of danger without leaving in his place one who is, as it were, veritably, really his own self—the same to him as his own life (See 3 54) And this was not the only occasion when he did this When he went to the Jews of Bani Nazir seeking to take a loan from them, and the Jews seeing it was a fit opportunity arranged to have a millstone thrown over his head, he went away unnoticed, but not till he made Our Lord Ali stay in the place where he was. When the Jews saw it was Ali who was there and the Prophet had gone they refrained from doing the murderous act. (Siraj).

Verse 208. 'O ye who believe' This address is clearly to the Musalmans, and it is foolish to take it, as some have done, to the Jews. It is strange Razi approves of this in his comment on verse 210. *Silm* is peace, or submission, whence the word has been understood to mean Islam. The meaning of the passage is obvious in the light of the comments made on the previous verses They should submit wholeheartedly and not rebel against his commands They should accept him whom he proclaims to be their guide and ruler after him.

Verse 209. This verse is obvious The Prophet had a very clear idea of how the people would fall after him See the hosts of traditions collected on this point in Miskhat Particularly see the traditions in Sahih Bokhari relating to the Sahabas coming to the Prophet on the pond on the day of judgement and being repulsed

Verse 210 If this verse was revealed before the battle of Beder it may have reference, as the Ahmadi commentator suggests, in a metaphorical way to that battle No commentator seems to have made that suggestion before In Surah 25 sec 3 which he refers to verse 32 is clearly in complaint of Musalmans

SECTION 26.

The fall of Israelites a warning for the Musalmans Schismatic differences spoil religions, and only a few retain the right path Trials and tribulations in store for Musalmans in the future Sacrifice of money must be made and there should be no shirking in fighting in the cause of God

211. Ask the Israelites how many a clear sign have We given them; and whoever changeth the favour of God after it hath come to him then surely God is severe in requiting (*Eqab*, punishing with torment).

212. Life here below hath been made to look fair to those who believe not, and they mock at those who believe, but those who fear God shall be above them on the day of resurrection; and God provideth subsistence for whom He will without measure.

213. Mankind was one people, thereafter did God send unto them prophets with good tidings and warnings, and sent

down with them the Book with the truth that it might judge between men in that wherein they differed about it; and none differed therein save those very to whom it was given, after that clear proofs had come to them, out of spite among themselves; whereupon God guided those who believed regarding that wherein those (others) differed about the truth, with His permission, and God guideth whom He listeth to the right path

214 Think ye that ye will enter Paradise when upon you hath not yet come the like of that which came upon those who have gone before you, distress and affliction came upon (*massathum*, touched) them, and they were shaken until the apostle saith and those who believed with him, When will come the help of God? Behold! the help of God is nigh.

215. They question thee regarding what they shall spend. Say, Whatsoever ye spend (in charity) let it be for parents, the near of kin, and the orphans, and the poor, and the way-farer, and whatever good ye do, surely God knoweth it.

216 Fighting is enjoined on you albeit it is hateful to you; and belike you abhor a thing whereas it is good for you, and belike ye desire a thing whereas it is bad for you: and God knoweth but ye know not.

Verse 211 By the favour of God is meant here the revelation of the Holy Prophet as the Ahmadi commentator says The changing of it after one has received it cannot mean its rejection (by unbelievers) as he understands, it refers clearly to the corruption of Islam by changing its teachings (doctrinal or disciplinary) as the Jews have done with their "Shariat" The verse does not seem directed against the Jews, as the Ahmadi commentator and others would have us believe. They appear mentioned simply as a warning for the Musalmans.

Verse 212. This verse though on the face of it referring to the infidels seems also in place here. Look to the state of true believers, the partizans of the Prophet's household after his death—chiefly in the

Omyad, and Abbaside times The concluding words also can apply to them, as they applied to the believers in the Prophet's day Those who were mocked at on account of their poverty eventually got an abundance even of the provisions of this life

Verse 213 The same subject is continued If all people had continued to follow the Book rightly without perverting it to suit the views they sought to force upon it, the reason for this being their prejudices in their hatred of each other, there would not have been so many religions Only a select few kept strictly to the right path The same is stated in verse 253, where too the reference is to sectarian differences The verse requires to be carefully understood

"All mankind was one people" *i e* without doctrinal differences. This can be either a state of *Imân* (faith) or *Kufr* (unbelief) or *fitrat* (state of nature in which man followed his reason or instinct unaided) The first is the most probable meaning as Adam himself was a prophet, there seems no time when mankind was left without a divinely appointed religions teacher So the view that differences arose before the advent of the prophets, and that they came to settle these differences seems untenable Even if the primitive state of mankind were a state of nature without any religion in the proper sense of the word—even then doctrinal differences would seem to arise only after the advent of the prophets. It was these who first taught men something over and above what their unaided reason taught them to believe On this some possibly might have rejected and so differed in this way, but the majority took the point (of supernatural religion) from the prophets, but professing to believe them added new interpretations of their own upsetting sometimes the whole doctrine Thus polytheism and idolatory was originally a perversion of the true monotheistic doctrine taught by the prophets. Pantheism and the like were simply one-sided views of it. Thus it is that the various false religions which appear to have no foundation whatever in revealed religion were really perversions of it due to differences arising among believers or followers of the true religion. Absolute rejection of supernatural religion was an idea foreign to the minds of primitive people and is hardly probable. In highly concentrated religious systems such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam which grew to be associated with the name of a great teacher these differences came to be called sects, in others not so well associated with a particular teacher they became different religions Thus in the first instance the prophets were not sent to settle differences existing before them, as some followed by the Ahmadi commentator say, though afterwards this may be so.

Then the prophets were sent and the Book was sent with them "to judge among men in that in which they differed *about it*", that is, about the Book or the truth that was taught This shows what the Book is primarily intended to be It was meant to and should be able to decide differences among the followers that were likely to arise till another prophet is raised The Book was chiefly meant *for the followers after the prophets* as the Quran is for the Musalmans (see Introduction) The prophets when they were living were able to settle the differences themselves They were the Book themselves (see note to verse 1 of this Surah). This is important to bear in mind, as it puts an end to the question which might otherwise be raised that only a few of the prophets were given special Scriptures such as Taurat, Injil, Quran All prophets were the Book—their teachings which should have been preserved were the Book Special revealed Books were given for special reasons (see Introduction) Really the teachings of the prophets serve the purpose of the Book whether any special Book was given or not

"And none differed about it (*i. e.* the Book or the doctrine) except those who were given it." That is it was the followers, no others, who differed about it (*fihi*) Indeed no others could be said to have 'differed" about it. These others simply rejected it. This shows conclusively that the verse is dealing with the falling away *of followers* after receiving guidance and manifest proofs of the truth The reason is stated to be "Out of spite among themselves" which we know to be too well the case in the case of schisms in Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

So the believers whom God guided or kept on guidance in what (*lima*) they differed are those who stuck to the right path

The Ahmadi commentator in his note on this verse first seeks to translate the opening words of the verse as 'all people *are* a single nation,' a translation which cannot possibly stand, and the illustration he has given '*Kana insana Kafuora*' is simply inapplicable as everybody conversant with Arabic language knows. Then he has—God knows how—passed over the *fihi* 'about it' in 'as to that in which they differed about it' and dividing the passage into two parts reads an entirely novel meaning in the verse. Prophets came to settle differences existing before them, but the people upset this by introducing fresh differences So a prophet was required to show the right way to all nations, and this, he says, is stated in the second part of the verse "Thus" in his words "among the different national religions of the world Islam occupies the position of an international religion."

Verse 214 Mark this is said after the Musalmans, most of them, had suffered the extreme persecution at Mecca There seems no time for the Musalmans in the Prophet's days after the revelation of this verse about A H 2 which can really be said to be hard for them—except perhaps the few days of terror at the time of the Battle of Confederate (*Ahzab*) which came suddenly to an end by the fall of one champion only, by the hand of Our Lord Ali And according to one report the passage was revealed *at the time of* the battle of *Ahzab* as a rebuke to the Musalmans who were losing their patience at this time (Mawahib) The state, if it was ever to come upon the Musalmans, must have come after the death of the Prophet and the thoughtful reader conversant with history can easily determine what and when it was Also note it is *distress* and *affliction* that is spoken of in the verse.

Verse 215 The verse shows the order in which charity should proceed The first claim is of that of the parents then of the nearest relations, and so on (Razi) The end of the verse makes provision for all others not expressly mentioned in the verse It seems to me that it is chiefly to give permanence to this order that the verse got a place in the Quran Many people are fairly generous to others but neglect their parents and relations For parents we are taught to see that they do not require to ask anything of us The passage may have been put in here to imply that any sacrifice of money they make in time of war goes only to their own kindred, as the Ahmadi commentator suggests

Verse 215. "Let those who think that the Muslims fought for booty ponder! They were too weak to carry on the struggle against the mighty forces that were bent upon their destruction and disliked the war. Only a diseased brain could come to the conclusion that the Prophet " had now determined to resort to the sword to accomplish what his preaching had failed to do " (Wherry). Where were the military forces with which the Prophet was going to convert the proud and warring Arabs who had not listened to his word. His first army at Beder, when the Quraish of Mecca were marching upon Medina with a thousand of their most experienced warriors, was 313 including boys of thirteen years of age. Could any sensible man say that the Prophet was now going to convert the hundreds of thousands of Arab warriors with his 313 unequipped and inexperienced followers "—Ahmadi commentator's note. The whole note is excellent.

SECTION 27.

War is not more serious than mischief Infidels seek to drive Musalmans to apostacy and will not cease to fight them till they do. Wine and gambling prohibited The properties of orphans must be carefully looked after Intermarriage between Muslims and infidels condemned.

217 They will question thee concerning the sacred month, about war therein Say, War therein is a grievous sin; but to hinder (people) from the way of God and deny Him, and (to hinder people from) the holy temple and drive its people therefrom, is more grievous in the sight of God, and mischief (*fitnah*) is more grievous than bloodshed And they will cease not to fight with you until they turn you from your faith if they can But those of you who will turn from their faith and die while they are unbelievers, their works shall be naught in this world and the next, and they are the inmates of the fire, therein shall they abide for evermore.

218. Those who have believed, and those who have fled from their homes and have striven in the service of God—these hope for the mercy of God, and God is Forgiving, Merciful.

219. They question thee concerning wine and gambling. Say, In both these is grievous sin, and also benefits for men; but their harm is greater than their benefit And they will question thee regarding what they shall spend in alms. Say, Whatsoever can be spared. Thus doth God make clear to you the signs that haply ye may ponder.

220. Concerning this world and the next. They will question thee regarding orphans. Say, To look after their interests fairly were best. But if ye become partners with them, they are your brethren, and God knoweth the foul-dealer from the fair-dealer, and if God so willed He could surely make it hard on you, verily God is Mighty, Wise.

221. And marry not women who join others with God, until they believe, for, of a surety, a believing bondswoman is better than a freewoman who joineth others with God, albeit she please you; and wed not your women to men who join others with God, for, of a surety, a believing bondsman is better than a freeman who joineth others with God, albeit he please you. These call (you) to the Fire, whereas God calleth you to Paradise and forgiveness by His will, and maketh clear His signs for men that haply they may take warning.

Verse 217 'The last verse contains the Divine injunction to fight in spite of the odds against them This verse gives the reason which necessitated the taking up of the sword The infidels will not cease fighting with you until they turn you back from your religion, if they can" Yes, the infidels were fighting with the Musalmans at this time—before the battle of Beder Let alone the dreadful atrocities they inflicted on the Musalmans when they were in their hands at Mecca They would not let them sit at ease even at Medina and had sent their ultimatum to Abdullah 'bn Obay threatening to kill them one and all (see note on verse 187) They were simply waiting to collect their forces to do this What remained more for a state of war to be created The only recourse for the Prophet was to prepare his men to fight and to provoke the infidels to attack him as soon as possible without having time to collect all their forces The incident which gave rise to the question in this verse was one of the moves in this direction The Prophet sent his cousin Abdullah 'bn Jahsh with eight other men to raid a trading caravan of the Quraish One man of the caravan was killed and the merchandise was taken as booty This according to the infidels' version was on the 1st of Rajab (a sacred month when fighting was not allowed by the old custom) while according to Abdullah's statement it was the last day of Jamadi II and the new moon of Rajab was seen when the sun went down 'The infidels who made much of this incident are told that having done all those acts of violence against the lives and property of the helpless converts of Islam within the sacred territory and never earning for the sacred months when persecuting the Muslims they could not question the legality of what Abdullah had done."

Verse 218 *Khamr* means wine or grape wine . . . It has common application to intoxicating expressed juice of anything (Qamus;

Tajul Arus) or any intoxicating thing that clouds or obscures (lit covers) the intellect as some say (Mughni, Misbah) and the general application is the more correct, because *Khamr* was forbidden when there was not in el Medinah any *Khamr* of grapes (Lane's Lexicon cited by the Ahmadi commentator) It is unfortunate that the Hanafi school insists on *Nabiz* and other kinds of spirituous liquors (prepared from other bases than grape) to be lawful But Abu Hanifah was obliged to decide in favour of their lawfulness owing to several very much revered Sahabas continuing to use these other kinds of spirit To his mind the practice of the Sahabas could not be wrong

This is the first verse that was revealed in prohibition of drinking, for many it was effective, but some continued the habit and were seen inebriated at prayers, this occasioned 4 46 Finally 5 92, 93 did not leave any excuse for anybody in the matter

Maisar was a game of hazard among the Arabs and in legal language includes all games of chance

"Thus doth God make clear to you His signs (*ayat*) that ye may reflect—on this world and the Hereafter" (verse 220) The object of these commandments is not that we stick to the letter and casuistically seek to find ways to legalise things unlawful as in the case of *Nabiz* described above, we should reflect on the spirit of the commandments and act accordingly For this reason the commandments are given with some statement of the reasons thereof

Verse 220 Co-partnership with an orphan is expressly allowed here, because when strict injunctions were given regarding the safeguarding of orphan's property some men thought it may be a sin to have anything to do with it

Verse 221 Marriage is essentially a matter of love and hence of spiritual union It is impossible that in such relations one should not influence the other The effect on the infidel mate may be only some change in views which may mean little or nothing for salvation, but the same 'some change in views' may in the case of a believer drag him down to Hell The same was the teaching of Judaism and Christianity, (see Deut 7. 3, 4 and 2 cor 6 14) There is no reason to account for this law which is for all time by mere reasons of policy as the Ahmadi commentator has done—the idolators being the enemies of the Musalmans, though the wisdom of caution in the matter is obvious from this side too.

SECTION 28.

Sexual relations are matters of grave responsibility The woman is a tilth for man, and should be approached devoutly with due regard of the object—pro creation. The limits of temporary separation Divorce Period of waiting and the re-establishment of conjugal relations

222. They will question thee concerning menstruation Say it a pollution (or slight evil *Aza*) wherefore keep away from women when in their courses, and approach them not until they have cleansed (themselves) ; then when they are cleansed go in unto them as God hath directed you to do; Verily God loveth those who turn unto Him and He loveth those who seek to be clean.

223 Your women are your tilth, wherefore enter your tilth when (or as *anna*) ye please and make provision beforehand for yourselves ; and fear God, and know that ye shall meet Him (one day) : and carry thou glad tidings to those who believe

224 And make not (the name of) God in your oaths a hindrance against that ye may do good, and be pious and bring about good-will among men, and God heareth, knoweth.

225. God will call you not to account for a vain vow, but He will call you to account for what your hearts have earned, and God is Forgiving, Forbearing

226. For those who swear to abstain from their women is ordained a waiting of four months ; then if they come back, then verily God is Forgiving, Merciful.

227. And if they resolve on a divorce, then verily God is Hearing, Knowing.

228. The divorced women shall await the space of three monthly courses ; and it shall not be lawful for them

to conceal that which God hath created in wombs, if they be believers in God and the last day; and their husbands shall be entitled to take them back during the period, if they wish for reconciliation, and for the wives shall be rights (over their husbands) like as there are (for the husbands) over their wives in a just manner (*bil maaroof*) and men are a degree above them; and God is Mighty, Wise

Verse 223 *Anna* meaning *mata* 'when' also means *Kaif* 'how' Taking the word as meaning when it cannot make lawful what is prohibited in the preceding verse 222, taking it in the second sense it cannot make lawful unnatural practices for which a people were smitten with God's punishment see 7 79-82 &c This very verse seeks to impress that sexual relations are matters of grave responsibility, and man should enter upon them in true spirit of fear and devotion to God, 'And make provision beforehand for yourselves, and fear God and know that you will meet Him' What more could be required to impress the extreme sanctity of the matter But such has been the moral and intellectual degradation of the Musalmans in the past, and so, such the evolution of science of Law (*fiqh*) among them—it must be sorrowfully admitted—that all commentaries, Sunni commentaries at least, have to devote whole pages of the most disgusting matter, if only to disprove that preposterous venery could be allowed under this verse See Durre Mansur, Tafsire Kabir, Mawahib &c The doctrine made a great noise in the early days when *fiqh* was the all in all of the Musalmans, and some great names have been arrayed in its favour, God knows with what truth

Verse 224 *Urzah* means a thing set as an obstacle in the way of a thing, or a thing that is set as a butt like the butt of archers The meaning is that you should not every now and then swear by God that you will not do such and such a thing, so that you deprive yourselves of the occasions of doing good alleging God to be an obstacle in your way, whereas He bids you to do good The verse is put here as *ila*, the temporary separation of husband and wife dealt with in the following verse 226, rested on an oath on the part of the husband from going in to his wife. But the verse is general and discourages oaths of all kind See the tradition of Our Lord Sadiq in Kafi in which he approvingly cites the teaching of Our Lord Jesus Christ to abstain from swearing at all. Islam while it does not go to the extent of making it illegal disapproves of it see 68 10

Verse 225 By vain oaths is meant unintentional swearing in ordinary conversation, and by what the hearts have earned is meant an oath intentionally taken The former have no binding effect, and a man may do what he has sworn in this way to abstain from. But the moral evil of taking vain oaths—that is a different thing.

Verse 226 *Ila* signifies an oath that one shall not go in to one's wife This was an old custom among the Arabs, and sometimes the wife passed her whole life in bondage being neither in the position of a wife nor that of divorced woman to marry else where The law of the Quran declares that if the husband does not come back *i e* reassert conjugal relations within four months the wife shall be divorced

Mark the verse ending In verse 226 'God is Forgiving Merciful", in verse 227 'He is Hearing, Knowing' What *true* believer but will not tremble to hear these words

Verse 228 *Talaq* divorce' is one of the institutions of Islam which shows the all-comprehensive view of the Prophet as a prophet, and hence the perfection of Islam as a religion It is recognized as a necessary evil Of all things which have been permitted to men divorce is the one most *hated* by God" But permitted it must remain, and to all time, for the conditions of men are so complex that it must ever remain necessary that in some cases the marriage tie must be dissolved Thus marriage is essentially a matter of love, a union without love is a body without a soul, and the sooner it is ended the better And irrespective of that too occasions must arise from time to time when separation must be an act of charity A whole volume can be written on the conceivable cases, and of actual cases hundreds must be in the knowledge of everyone. And so it is that the law must be elastic, as it is in Islam, and must not strictly define and restrict the causes of divorce, as Judaism and Christianity do In these religions divorce must be limited to cases of "uncleanliness," more strictly fornication, and the result is that since nature must have its course and will not be controlled by rules prescribed by men the school of Hillel among the Jews extended it to the most trifling causes, and among the Christians it gave rise to special divorce courts whose proceedings have continued to furnish a mass of scandalous reading matter for the sale of the newspapers And now one of the countries at least has upset everything, and grants divorces not only without assigning any reasons, but also without requiring that the other party should be informed of it

Islam allows it as a necessary evil, but discourages it, and expresses its disapproval of it in words that should make even the most reckless

believer to shudder It makes regulations for its exercise imposing restrictions which should limit the separation to only the most hopeless cases These are described in detail in the succeeding verses

This verse says that first there should be temporary separation for three months during which conjugal relations may be established 'If there is any love in the union its pangs would assert themselves during this period of temporary separation, bringing about a reconciliation" This is the *Talaqe Sunnat*, and is admitted to be the best form of Divorce Remember this is one divorce only (see verse 229) He can marry her twice again, and she need not go to a second husband

"And they (wives) have rights similar to those upon them, and the men are a degree above them And God is Mighty and Wise" The women have a right to be loved and cared for tenderly, as they owe to their husbands that they obey him and do not go against his will The husbands are a degree above them in that for them is the position that calls for obedience from the wife, and in the matter of divorce they can exercise their judgement which the woman cannot She can go to the Qazi for flagrant cases of maltreatment, or purchase her release by parting with a portion of her dower This latter may be regarded as an unfortunate feature of the Law, but it is essential owing to the relative social relations of man and woman Man is in free social intercourse with the whole world, and everybody can bring moral pressure upon him if he is acting wrongly The woman is too much isolated and restricted in her relations She need not care and ordinarily will not even know what the world thinks of her And there are a hundred other reasons, well evident to every one

In the end remember the verse-ending "God is Mighty, Wise" God has established these relations on full consideration of all circumstances and He is well able to punish those who go against His moral commandments (Abu Saud)

SECTION 29.

When divorce becomes irrevocable Effects of this The woman's rights to be carefully looked to

229. Divorce (shall be lawful) only twice; then (there should be) either keeping them in good fellowship (*be maa-rufin*) or sending them away with kindness; and it shall not

be lawful for you to take away aught ye have given them. But if (in absence of divorce) the twain fear they shall not (be able to) keep the bounds set by God, then if ye fear that they shall not (be able to) keep the bounds set by God there shall be no sin on the twain about what she gives up to relieve herself (from him) These are the bounds set by God, wherefore overstep them not ; for those who overstep the bounds set by God, then verily they, they are the unjust (*Zalimun* iniquitous).

230 So if he divorce her she shall not be lawful to him until she marry a husband other than he, and if he (the second husband) divorce her, there shall be then no sin on the twain if they return one to the other, if they think that they shall (be able to) keep to the bounds set by God And these are the bounds set by God He maketh them clear for a people who understand

231. When ye have divorced your women and they reach the appointed period, then retain them in a fair manner (*be maarufin*) or put them away in a fair manner ; and keep not hold of them to their hurt, that ye may treat (them) with cruelty, for whosoever shall do this, he shall surely hurt himself: and make not a mockery of the commandments of God, and remember the favour of God upon you and that He hath sent down unto you of the Book and Wisdom (*Hikmat*) admonishing you thereby ; and fear God and know that God is the knower of all things.

Verse 229 In the days of ignorance a man used to divorce his wife and take her back within the prescribed period even though he might do this a thousand times (Razi) Islam reformed this practice by allowing a a revokable divorce twice, so that the husband must make his choice after the second divorce either to retain her permanently or bring about a final separation Repeated marrying and repudiating is simply scandalous. If there be any genuine affection or possibility of true union in the spirit two experiences of remorse must be sufficient to keep them within

bounds for the future The man cannot marry her again except in the degraded condition stated in verse 230.

It is not lawful for you to take (or withhold) anything out of what you have given (or promised to pay) them (of dower *Mahar*). This acts as a great check upon the husband in resorting to unnecessary divorce as the sum is usually large and in practice much of it remains unpaid all through life. Also whatever the husband has given to his wife besides dower he cannot take back from her.

The next part of the verse deals with what is technically called *Khula* or *Mubarat* in Law If the wife becomes impatient of her husband and cannot bear to live with him she may seek to get rid of him by giving back her dower or any other additional sum that the husband may propose (*Khula*) This is when it is the wife alone that is disinclined to continue the marital relations If there is disinclination on both sides nothing but the dower need be renounced (*Mubarat*) Both are subject to the willingness of the husband to grant the divorce But here the *Hakim Sharaa*, the Mujtahid, whose function it is to administer the Law can interfere and make the husband accept reasonable terms The sudden change of address in " And if ye fear that they cannot keep within the limits set by God " is to this class of persons Thus the drawback in the matter is to a great extent removed In fact he should interfere from the beginning when things have not come to this stage Clear directions about this are given in 4 35 ' And if ye fear a breach between the two, then appoint an arbitrator from his people and one from hers if they both desire agreement God will effect harmony between them Surely God is Knowing, Aware " The decision of the arbitrators appointed by the *Hakime Sharaa* will be binding on the husband and wife unless they decide a separation which will not be binding (Sharael Islam). Failing a *Hakime Sharaa* or in absence of reference being made to him the people may remonstrate and bring about a reconciliation If this is done the occasions for *Khula* or *Mubarat* will be exceedingly rare And indeed so rare they are that few have even heard of these terms of law, and as to divorce the most that can be said is that people know it

Note that if the woman is to be kept she should be kept *be maan ofin i e* honourably (Rodwell) or in good fellowship (Ahmadi) And if she is to be sent away it should be ' with kindness " The same is repeated in verse 231

Verse 230 Divorce *i e.* the third time.

Verse 231. ' Do not retain them for injury ' That is, if after divorce you resume the conjugal relations this must be for genuine desire

to keep her, not for the purpose of troubling her by doubling or trebling her period of waiting

Mark the appeal in the latter part of the verse

Note. It is unfortunate that the Sunnis while they admit that divorce is proper and regular only when given according to the restrictions given in these verses do not regard these restrictions as essential to the validity of the divorce. Thus they admit the most irregular forms to have legal validity They give it the name of *Talaqe Bidaat* An irrevocable divorce might be pronounced at once by merely repeating it thrice It may not even be properly expressed, or even expressed in words at all This is admitted to be irregular but is not the less effective One form of making a divorce irrevocable, the pronouncing of it thrice, once in each *tuhr* (period of woman's purity) is allowed to be regular by Hanafees though condemned by Imam Malik Further, the greatest laxity is allowed in the matter of intention "If a man pronounce a divorce whilst in a state inebriety from drinking fermented liquor, such as wine, the divorce takes place Repudiation by any husband who is sane and adult is effective, whether he be free or slave, willing or acting under compulsion, and even though it were uttered in sport or jest, or by mere slip of the tongue instead of some other word" (Fatawae Alamgiri cited by Hughes)

It is these things that have brought the Islam Law of divorce into contempt and ridicule And it is responsible sometimes for the most unfortunate cases, so some strange methods have been devised by some to get rid of the effects of these irrevocable divorces

The Shias condemn all the irregular forms and regard them as void and ineffective And for them it is necessary that "the man must be an adult of understanding, of free choice and will, and of design and intention when he divorces his wife" It "does not take effect if given implicatively or ambiguously whether intended or not" And "it is also absolutely necessary that the sentence should be pronounced by the husband in the presence of two just persons, who shall hear and testify to the wording of the divorce" This last condition is based on the teachings of the Imams who were very strict in this matter And this not required for disputes about the *Talaq*, but absolutely, without this the divorce is simply void and nothing The wife continues to be his wife in fact though he divorce her a hundred times The restriction was apparently made to make it sure that no one divorces his wife without previously letting others know of it This will give them a chance of remonstrating with him in the matter.

SECTION 30.

Divorced women not to be prevented from remarrying The giving of suck to child by the divorced wife The period of waiting for widows. Remarriage within the prescribed period of waiting is illegal

232. And when ye have divorced your women, and they have thereafter completed their appointed period, hinder them not from marrying their husbands when they have agreed between themselves in a fair manner with this is admonished whosoever of you is a believer in God and the last day: this is the purer for you and cleaner; and God knoweth and ye know not.

233. And mothers shall give suck to their children two entire years for one who desireth the completion of the suckling; and on the father shall devolve their food and clothing in a fair manner; no soul shall have imposed upon it anything except according to his capacity; nor shall a mother be made to suffer on account of her child, nor a father because of his child, and on the heir shall devolve the like of this But if both desire a weaning by agreement between them and mutual consultation, there shall be no blame (Ar sin) on them But if ye desire to employ a wet-nurse for your children then there is no blame on you so long as ye pay that which you have settled to give according to custom; and fear ye God and know that He beholdeth what ye do

234 As for those of you who die leaving widows, these shall wait four months and ten days, and when they have completed their appointed period, there shall be no sin on you in what they may do with themselves in a fair manner; and God is aware of what ye do

235. But there shall be no sin on you in indirect proposals of marriage that ye may make to the women or keep to yourselves; God knoweth that ye will mention them,

but make no secret engagements with them except that ye say that which is fair. And resolve not on wedlock until the period is reached (Ar the writing comes to its end), and know that God knoweth what is in your minds; wherefore fear Him, and know that God is Forgiving, Forbearing.

Verse 232 The incensed relations of the divorced woman may not like her to go again to the husband who had divorced her even though the woman may be willing This verse is meant to admonish them in the matter

Verse 233 The verse refers to nursing of the child and applies to all mothers It is, however, divorced mothers that are meant here in particular as Razi says

'A similar duty on the heir' If the father dies before the child is weaned the heir is bound to pay the expenses The mutual consent is that the mother is allowed to go away with the child and keep her separately in her house

Verse 234 After four months and ten days the widow may remarry

Verse 235 It is unbecoming to talk about marriage to widow during their period of waiting It is permitted, however, to do so in a very cautious way The writing is the period of waiting written down for women 'God knows,' that is, this is, not approved though owing to weakness of men it is not accounted a sin

SECTION 31.

Provision for women divorced before consummation of marriage. Prayers should be observed though facing the enemy Bequest in favour of widows for residence and maintenance for one year Divorced women also should be given maintenance.

236. There shall be no sin on you if ye divorce women, when ye have not touched them nor made any settlement on them; but provide for them—he, who is in easy circumstances according to his means and he who is poor according to his means—a provision in fairness—a duty on those who do what is right.

237. But if ye divorce them ere ye have touched them, but have already made a settlement on them, then give them one-half of the settlement unless they forego, or he in whose hands is the marriage-knot foregoes; and that ye should forego is nigher righteousness; and forget not generosity between yourselves, verily God beholdeth what ye do

238 Be strict in the observance of prayers and (especially) of the most excellent (*Wusta*) prayer, and stand up praying (*Qanteen*) before God.

239 But if ye be in fear, then (pray as ye may) on foot or riding, but when ye are safe remember God like as He hath taught you what ye knew not.

240 As for those of you who die leaving widows, they shall bequeath them a year's maintenance without causing them to quit their homes, but if they quit their homes, there shall be no sin on you in that which they may do with themselves in a fair manner, and God is Mighty, Wise

241. And for the divorced women (too) let there be a provision in a fair manner *custom*—a duty on those who fear God.

242 Thus doth God make clear to you his statutes that haply ye may understand.

Verse 236 *Furizah* is the dowry commonly called Mahar in law. So provision must be made according to one's means for the injured woman even if the dowry has not been fixed

Verse 237 The man in whose hands is the marriage tie is apparently the Wali (guardian i e the father or grandfather) in case the girl is a minor. Some followed by the Ahmadi commentator have understood it to mean the husband supposing that he had paid the dowry in full and so he is entitled to get back half the dowry

Verse 238 *Wusta* is most middle and hence most excellent (see note on *Wasat* verse 143). There are various accounts as to which prayer

is meant here, the majority of traditions Sunni and Shia, is in favour of the *'Asr* (afternoon) prayer, Bursi takes it to be *Maghrib* to the offering of which at the earliest (*Fazelat*) time great importance is attached, and suggests a highly spiritual explanation which applies to *Asr* as well See Supp *Qanitin*, praying, *Qunut*, prayer, is a very important part of the five daily prayers if not quite indispensable It is allowed in Sunni traditions but is not commonly in practice with them The word has, however, been understood by them otherwise as meaning remembering God or being obedient to Him Imam Shafee, however, agrees with us

Verse 239 Mark the importance attached to the five daily prayers It cannot be allowed to be foregone even in danger and may be offered running or on horseback Indeed even a drowning man is not excused from it The prayers are necessarily curtailed, coming in case of men dying to mere signs

'Then when ye are secure then remember Him as He has taught you what you did not know' As He has taught you, *i e* in spirit of gratitude for His guidance That is the gratitude, and hence your remembrance of Him must be proportionate to the favour (guidance) you have received

Verse 240 This verse enjoining bequest to be made for maintenance of wives for one year if they do not leave their homes has been held to be abrogated by verse 235 above and 4 12 assigning shares in inheritance for the wife, but, as the Ahmadi commentator says, there appears nothing inconsistent. Any way the making of such bequests is not obligatory

Verse 241 Note this provision is in addition to the dowry which must be paid to them This and all the other regulations we have discussed above show how much regard Islam has for women and their rights

Verse 242 That you may see to the spirit of them and regulate your behaviour towards women accordingly See the well-known tradition of Our Lord Ali 'bn Husain about Rights in Makarimul Akhlaq

SECTION 32.

How people flying from death were killed by God and then revived. Muslims enjoined to lay down their lives and wealth to save themselves. Saul is made king of the Israelites, but they demur and a sign is given.

243. Hast thou not considered (or seen *Tara*) those who went forth from their homes—and they were in thousands—for fear of death; then God said unto them, Die; and thereafter brought them back to life; verily God is bountiful to men, albeit most men give not thanks.

244 And fight in the cause of God, and know that God heareth, knoweth.

245. Who will lend to God a willing loan? So will He double it to him many times; and God straiteneth and spreadeth out, and unto Him shall ye be returned

246 Hast thou not observed the elders of the children of Israel, after Moses, when they spake to a prophet of theirs saying, Raise up over us a king that we may fight in the cause of God? He said, May it not be that if fighting were laid on you, ye would not fight? They said, What aileth us that we should not fight in the cause of God, when behold! we have been driven forth from our homes and our children? But when fighting was laid on them, they turned back save a few of them, and God knoweth the unjust.

247. And their prophet spoke unto them saying, Verily now hath God raised up Saul to be a king over you. They said, How can there be kingship for him over us, whereas we are worthier of it than he who is not gifted with abundance of wealth He said, Verily God hath chosen him before you and gifted him with increase of knowledge and stature, and God giveth His kingship to whom He listeth, and God is Bountiful, Knowing.

248. Then their prophet spoke unto them saying, Verily the sign of His kingship shall be that the Ark (*Talut*) shall come unto you wherein shall be Sakinah (lit tranquility) from your Lord and some of the relics left by the family (*al*)

of Moses and the family (*al*)of Aaron ; the angels shall bear it; verily therein shall be a sign for you if ye be indeed believers.

Verse 243 The people had left their town owing to repeated visits of plague, but that availed them nothing They all died but afterwards were raised to life again on the prophet Ezekiel's praying for them and sprinkling water on their bones as he was commanded to do on this occasion It is in memory of this event that we sprinkle water on each other on Nowroz (New Year's Day) when the sun enters the first point of Aries

In its essentials the miracle of the dead being raised to life is given by *all* commentators, Sunnis and Shias alike, the slight differences in the accounts only help to make the reality of the old tradition certain But this is too much for the Ahmadi commentator, and he does not even make a mention of the traditional accounts Taking, in his usual way, the death and the revival to be both metaphorical he interprets the verse as referring to the exodus of the Israelites under the lead of Moses and their wanderings and death in wilderness as punishment for their refusal to enter the holy land owing to fear of the much more powerful people that inhabited it (5 21—26 compared with Numbers ch 13 & 14) Then their revival is this that the next generation was able to possess the land This is all very well if his way of taking all to be poetic and metaphorical in the Quran is right But we may be excused to stick to the old commentators, as there we are not begged to do so and we have some authority for what we say The reality of the fact as narrated by the commentators derives some support from the fact that one part of the traditions that state that the miracle was worked on a Nowroz day is corroborated by mathematical evidence For the same tradition states that it was also on this day (Nowroz) that the Holy Prophet announced Our Lord Ali at Ghadeere Khum to be the Lord of all true believers *i e* to be his vicegerent and successor after him The date of this memorable event is stated to have been the 18th of Zil Hijjah, year 10 A H Now it can be easily seen by mathematical calculation that this date corresponded with the 79th day of the year 632 A. D. If we are allowed to suppose that owing to the non visibility of the moon it was the 19th that passed for 18th Zil Hijjah we see that that night or the next morning was the vernal equinox. Clearly the calculation was beyond the scientific attainments of the early Arabs, and the Imam (Our Lord Jafarel Sadiq whose tradition it is) must have known of the correspondence by inspiration. (For details see my Science and Islamic Tradition) It will be readily

admitted that the truth of this one part goes a great way to create a probability at least in favour of the other parts of the same tradition.

It may be noted that the way in which the fact is stated in the Quran 'Hast thou not seen &c' shows that the thing was well-known to everyone. How is it then that all the earliest commentators, Sahabas and Tabien, did not know what it was and so invented a story to explain it Whether it was this thing perverted in Ezekiel ch 37 or some other event of the prophet's life we do not know Any way we have sufficient authority and evidence to believe it It was believed that the stink which has been marked in the Jews' persons both by Mohammedans and Christians was a lingering trace of this revival from the dead (Raz)

Verse 245 Mark the comparison of virtue to *Qarze Hasanah* A good loan is that in which a lender lends, but does not care much whether it is paid sooner or later or whether it is paid at all—ever Any act of virtue done with a close eye upon its reward in the Hereafter is at best only a mercenary service and is not entitled to much credit Only the pleasure of God is the thing of value to be sought and as to the rest it is sufficient to know that He is Infinite in grace and favour He can add to or reduce the reward of our actions according to the heart with which we have done it The loan here specially appealed for is pecuniary gift for charity or for expenses of Jihad

I wonder why the Ahmadi commentator is at pains to make us believe that *Qard* here does not mean loan at all In the translation he renders the words thus, 'will offer to Allah a goodly gift' In the margin he says 'Or cut off for Allah a goodly portion' He has written a long note about it So *Yaqbiz* 'straitens' disconcerts him, and in the text he translates it as 'receives' and leaves straitens' for the margin Much of the point and the teaching in the verse is lost in this attempt to correct the language of the Quran

Verse 246 The prophet here referred to is Samuel For the sufferings of the Israelites at the hands of Philistines and Ammonites in the times of Judges (Circa 1206 B C) see Judges ch 10 They were again in the hands of Philistines for forty years in the later half of the 11th cent B C (Ibid ch 13) The Holy Ark of the Covenat that had been taken by Israelites in their battle with them was taken about the year 1141 and remained with them for seven months but was afterwards returned The Philistines were subdued about the end of the 11th cent. and from that time Samuel peacefully and religiously judged Israel. About 1112 Samuel being old he entrusted his work to his sons, but they

were incompetent and it is said "took bribes and perverted judgment" (1 Sam 1 3). It was this according to the Biblical account that made Israelites ask for a king—not the necessity of fighting in the cause of God as would appear from the verse before us It is owing to this that the Christian critics of Islam call the Quranic account here as "a garbled rendering of Israelitish history" Anybody can see that if the only reason for their asking for a king was their dissatisfaction with the rule of Samuel's sons they would have simply set them aside and asked Samuel to appoint some other men to judge over them Why did they insist on having a king and persist in it though Samuel showed to them in a vivid description what sorts of things kings are and how they would fare under them (1 Sam 8 11—18) Yet 'Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel and they said, Nay but we will have a king over us, That we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles" (Ibid 19, 20) This reply shows they were long disgusted with the loose spiritual rule of the Judges and wanted to have a strong government The *alleged* corruption of Samuel's sons was perhaps only an exciting cause—the dissatisfaction had much deeper grounds Also had the complaint about the misrule of Samuel's sons been a just one God would not have been incensed at it and called it virtually a rebellion *against Him*, "for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me that I should not reign over them"

What are the facts? The rule of the Judges was spiritual, in the military conditions in those times their function was simply exhortation, and the people were free to obey them or disobey them according to the strength of their conscience There was no force to compel obedience "In those days there was no king in Israel every man did that which was right in his own eyes" The times were such that everyone was required to be a warrior, and yet everyone was shirking from it That was the essential weakness of their disorganised government What they wanted was a king who should have an *army*, specialised for military work, leaving to others the choice of peaceful occupations That is the essential difference between a spiritual and a temporal government, the latter keeps an army to compel obedience and to serve in the times of war without much troubling the population at large Morally it is an evil, for the same force can be an instrument of evil under a bad king, but for political troubles it is the best remedy—almost indispensable It was this that the Israelites were hankering for. They distinctly said that they wanted a king that they might be "like all the nations" and "that the king might go out before us and fight our battles" They were dissatisfied at having inexperienced warriors with inexperienced leaders being

called every now and then to repulse the attacks of the well-organized forces of the neighbouring people It is thus clear that the Israelite history as given in the Bible fully bears out what is said in the verse before us; only it has to be rightly understood What perhaps nobody can answer is that from the mere words "after Moses" the Christian critics infer that "Muhammed was ignorant of the long interval between Moses and Saul" (Hughes) Moses' age was about 1450 B C and after him was all this incompetent rule under the Judges we have been speaking of

Verse 247 It is an ingenious suggestion of the Ahmadi commentator that the name *Talut* is given to Saul owing to his tall stature, (from *tala* meaning he was tall) "And when he stood among the people he was higher than any of the people" (1 Sam 10 23).

The verse shows that the only righteous form of government is that in which the ruler—even a mere temporal ruler—holds his office by divine appointment; further that divine selection is based on mental and moral qualifications, and that neither the choice of the people, nor force of arms, nor influence of wealth and property has any concern in the matter It would be well if Sunnis give serious attention to this verse

Verse 248 The *Tabut* is the same as Hebrew *Tebah*, the word used in the Bible for the Ark of bulrushes in which the mother of Moses set him afloat in the waters (Exodus 2 3 and Quran 20 39) thus confirming the Shia tradition that it was the same. For the Ark of the covenant the word used is not *Tebah* but *Aron* this if it had any origin at all and was not simply an invention of later Israelites with images of cherubim and a Mercy seat for God between them, could only be a design for the popular religion, though owing to the association with Moses and the Holy Name of God it may have had some miracles attached to it as is alleged It was this Ark *of the covenant* that was brought out from Shiloh to help the Israelites in their war with Philistines, but was taken and remained with them seven months This has nothing whatever to do with the Ark (*Tabut* or *Tebah*) mentioned in this verse and stated precisely in our traditions to have been the Ark in which Moses was saved That was indeed a great relic for Moses and the prophets, and so it is probable that, as the traditions say, it was in this that Moses had placed the original tablets and other things extremely holy, and through it in cases of difficulty the spirit of God would speak to the prophets and other holy men To this the ordinary folk who were their own example in degradation could certainly have no access. It was not taken by the Philistines but, as our traditions say, was taken up to heavens or kept secret by the prophets The case seems similar to that of the relics of Our Holy Prophet.

The Imams are known to have kept them and transmitted them from one to the other without ever letting anybody have a sight of these things. But as the possession of these remains imposes on the masses exceedingly false relics have never ceased to be with the Abbaside and Ottoman Caliphs and should still be somewhere in the Sultan's Treasury

That original relics being lost, the Israelites never scrupled to make imitations and pass them on for originals appears from the Brazen Serpent which, by the blessing of Moses is said to have healed those bitten by snakes, is yet said to have been destroyed by Hezekiah saying it was only a piece of brass (see II Kings 18 · 4 against Num 21 9) The same might be the case with the Ark if it was really that and not the Ark of bulrushes that we are dealing with here But we have clearly shown it was the latter, not the Ark of covenant, that is spoken of in this verse. It was never taken by Philistines, and so there is no question of its being restored to Israelites long before the time of Saul as the Christian critics would have us believe

It is partly to avoid this objection and partly to get rid of the miraculous that the Ahmadi commentator seeks to translate *Tabut* by heart and *Baqiyah* (relics) by best And here let it be said that those who can believe that here, as in all places where there is something supernatural, the language of the Quran is poetic—to them he will certainly appear to have made out a case for himself After showing that heart is frequently compared to chest (for learning &c) and has sometimes been metaphorically spoken of as a chest he says with great show of plausibility that tranquility resides in hearts and is not a thing to be placed in boxes Quite true, it may be said, but a material thing can be a source of tranquility and as such it can be said with great propriety, 'Herein is tranquility for you' He also thinks that his view is supported by 1 Sam ch 10 where it is said that after his annointment by Samuel, Saul became a changed man (got another heart) and the Spirit of God came upon him and he prophesied But it is doubtful if he was a prophet, and if we can trust the Bible he did such acts that "the Lord repented that he had made Saul King over Israel" His saying that the Ark which was taken away by the Philistines was drawn by bullocks, not angels is nothing to the point, for we have shown that it was not that thing at all.

By *al* (children of) Musa and *al* (children of) Harun, commentators say, are possibly meant Moses and Aaron themselves, the form of the expression being meant for their exaltation (Siraj). The relics, they say, are the tablets, the rod of Moses and his clothes &c. and something of the *Manna* that used to come to them for food (Ibid).

SECTION 33.

The Israelite religious war and their victory over infidels, but for all the prophets sent to guide them people upset everything by creating differences and fighting among themselves.

249. Then when Saul sallied forth with (his) hosts he said, Surely God will try you with a river; whosoever of you shall drink of it then he is not of me, but he who shall not taste of it shall be mine except that he drink a draught out of the hollow of his hand. But they drank of it save a few of them: and when he had crossed it, he and those who believed with him, they said to each other, We have no strength this day against Goliath and his hosts; but those who knew that they were to meet God spake saying, How oft hath a small host prevailed against a large host by God's will, and God is with the patient.

250. So when they appeared against Goliath and his hosts they said, Lord! Pour out steadfastness over us and set our feet firm, and help us against the unbelieving people.

251. Thereupon they vanquished them by the will of God, and David slew Goliath, and God gave him kingdom, and wisdom, and taught him of whatsoever He pleased. And were it not for God's repelling men, some of them by means of others, surely the earth would be in disorder, but God is bounteous to all (His) creatures.

252. These are the signs of God; with truth do We rehearse them to thee, and verily thou art one of the apostles.

253. These apostles, We have raised some of them above others; of them are some to whom God hath spoken; and some He hath raised many degrees; and We gave clear signs to Jesus son of Mary and aided him with the Holy Spirit: and had God so willed, those who came after them

had not fought among themselves after that clear signs had come to them. But they split up, and of them there were some who believed and some who became unbelievers; and had God so willed they would not have fought among themselves, but God doeth what He willeth.

Verse 249 The Bible says nothing of this trying of forces by thirst in the case of Saul, but relates a somewhat similar incident in the case of Gideon (Judges 7 5 & 6) And so the hostile critics of Islam cry out that here there is a ridiculous jumble Granting (what it requires a large heart to grant) that there could be no ridiculous jumble in the Biblical narrative itself, is there anything strange that Saul followed Gideon's example and that the incident in his case was omitted to be recorded in the Bible? Will it be said that the Bible gives such a full and detailed record of the whole history of the Israelite nation that it could not have omitted a single incident? Saul was only the second deliverer of the Israelites after Gideon and acted only 150 years after him It is natural he should have followed his example Were the people so changed in these 150 years that God who saw such a trial of forces necessary in the case of Gideon's army did not do so in the case of Saul's. That the two incidents are different is clear from the fact that Gideon tried his forces by "the well of Harod" (Judges 7 1) and Saul by a river And that a river was there in the campaign in which David fought with Goliath is clear from the maps for the Philistines had gathered together at between Shochoh (1 Sam 17 1) and Azekah which is near the river Sorek and it had to be crossed to fight them It would be a very strange coincidence that the prophet who had such a hopelessly deficient knowledge of Israelite history should in making his mistake fix upon a point which would show that he had accurate knowledge not only of history but also of the geography of Palestine

Verse 251. For an account of the might of Goliath and the dismay of the people at his challenge see 1 Sam 4—11 David Slew Goliath in single combat, and as soon as the Philistines saw this they all fled and the battle was over It was just the same in the battle of the Confederates (*Ahzab*) Though all the tribes of Arabia had united in one body against the Musalmans and had come upon them with a mighty host twelve thousand strong there was hardly any fight at all The giant-like warrior Amr 'bn Abd Wood came forward crossing the ditch (that the Musalmans had dug to keep them away) and challenged them to come and fight him. None would dare to do so except Our Lord Ali, and he slew him. As soon as he was slain they all took to their heels. It is not improbably

owing to this event which was shortly to happen in the history of Islam that this event of the Israelite history is recounted in the Quran We have explained in the Introduction that in the Quran the stories of the old prophets are always related with some particular purpose in view—the most general being that similar events are to take place in the history of the Musalmans There is probably no other instance of great battles in the history of the world, and probably will never be, except these two in which Our Lord David and Ali 'bn Abi Taleb were engaged which came to an end merely on one champion being vanquished Referring to the thirst with which Saul tried his forces it may be remembered that in this battle of the Confederates the companions of the Prophet had to suffer the hardships of the siege in the month of Ramazan, and of one it is recorded that having had no meals in the previous night he fell down senseless, about mid-day Yet they did not break their fast

Verse 252 These stories are recounted to thee so that thou mayst guide thy people accordingly The same sorts of things are to happen to thy people and they should be prepared to do likewise on similar occasions

Verse 253 It will be noticed that the sections 32 & 33 which end here are a continuation of section 24 & 26 in which are devoted mainly to the subject of fighting with infidels In section 25 there are verses 204 to 209 referring to the failing of the Musalmans after the Prophet. In section 26 there is reference to the differences that will arise among the Musalmans Now in this verse there is again reference to the Musalmans dividing and fighting amongst each other for, as the previous verse has hinted at, the same things that have happened to the people of the older prophets will happen to this Thus it appears that whenever fighting with infidels is mentioned there is a passing thought that, however unfortunate it may be, the religion for which so much is being done at so much cost of life is itself soon to become a battlefield of schisms, and the work of guidance will be lost except to a select few There seems no other purpose in putting at the end of this section a verse relating to sectarian differences among the people of the past prophets and their fighting among each other in consequence.

'Among them are some to whom God spoke' God speaks to all prophets but the distinction here brought out lies in communication without the agency of angels and not in the form of inspiration, as it was to Our Lord Moses and Our Holy Prophet. That God cannot speak in the ordinary way is obvious, but He can cause things to speak, to utter

sounds that convey what He desires to communicate As He Himself says, 'It is not for man God should speak to him except by inspiration or beside a veil or send a messenger who might reveal by His permission what He likes. He is the High, the Knowing' The veil is the thing He speaks through—by causing it to utter sounds What particular things He selects to be His manifestation in this way (and yet remaining a veil for Formless Unconditioned Existence) we will discuss in our note on that verse and other suitable passages It is sufficient to say here that it must be some very high form of Existence, and it was that which had shone for Moses on Mount Sinae when it flew into splinders and Moses fell in a swoon see 7 139 We have no space to discuss it here. For *Ruhul Quds* see note on verse 87 above

The meaning of the passage is this For the guidance of Mankind God has sent the greatest apostles with the highest honours and the clearest proofs of their great mission But all this design, however perfect, it may seem to be to guide all mankind to the truth was not designed to force the truth upon them and so obstruct their passage towards error. That sort of guidance is not designed of God, nor would it have any moral value whatever But that the people remain sincere to Him and to the Truth He does not undertake to keep even those once rightly guided on the straight path The followers of the prophets fell into schisms after them and fought amongst each other Only a few remained believers, others became infidels in their schisms God could have prevented this if He had liked, but equally so He could have guided them without the aid of prophets—directly by mere instinct 'He does what He intends' *i. e.* He keeps to the original principle on which He has designed His creation—that the creatures should raise themselves to faith and virtue by their own willing efforts His practice of sending apostles from time to time is not meant to upset His original design of creation

Note that Part (*Juzw*) III of the Quran begins with this verse in ordinary editions But I prefer to take it from the next section. As it is a division by size merely it does not matter.

PART III.

SECTION 34.

Charity an essential thing for salvation. The great attributes of God: His all comprehensive knowledge and power. No compulsion in religion. Unbelievers get into the hands of the devil. Believers are succoured of God.

254. O ye who believe. Spend in charity out of what We have bestowed on you ere the day come wherein there will be no trafficking, nor friendship, nor intercession: and those who believe not they are the wrong-doers

255. God! There is no god but He, the Living the Great Sustainer! neither slumber seizeth on Him nor sleep: to Him belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth: who shall intercede with Him save by His leave? He knoweth what is before them and what is behind them And they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge save what He willeth: His *Kursi* (*lit.* chair) embraces the heavens and the earth, and the upholding thereof is not grievous to Him, and He is the Most High, the Great.

256. There is no compulsion in religion; truly hath the right way become distinct from error, wherefore he who shall reject the *Taghut* (devils) and believe in God, shall surely have laid hold of the stoutest cable which snappeth not, and God is Hearing, Knowing.

257. God is the guardian (*Wali*) of those who believe; He bringeth them out of darkness into light And those who believe not, the *Taghut* are their friends (*Aulia* guardians) they bring them from light into darkness, they shall be the denizens of Hell, therein shall they abide for evermore.

Verse 254 This verse is probably placed here as the true criterion of sincerity to a man is the extent of willingness or pleasure with which one is able to part with his own for the sake of the other It is this sincerity alone which can prevent men from falling away after the Prophet is taken away from their midst (see last verse) and there will be no chance of doing anything in the next life when there will be so much need for it for intercession.

Verse 255. This is the very well-known and much repeated verse which goes under the name of *Ayatul Kursi*, or the verse of the all comprehensive power and knowledge of God. It gives in a nut-shell all we can know about Him.

'No God but He' That means not only that there *is* no God besides Him but that the very thought of Him excludes the possibility of there being any other God For if there *can* be any other that "can" takes away the quality of necessary Existence from him, and so he remains no God. Necessary Existence can only be One Also the quantum of Existence whether taken as substance or attributes would be divided Neither would remain infinite So in thinking of two Gods we are not thinking of God at all, The word God means something, and to use a word without meaning it fully is nonsense Defined as an Infinite Necessary Existence there can be but one God.

The great formula of faith aims, however, not merely at the denial of other false Gods, but also at absolute Unity of God by Himself. There should be no vestige of complexity in Him, for every part would be a finite dependent God, and so the whole This we have to remember even in the highest conception we can form of Him Thus we talk of His attributes, knowledge, power &c. We must bear in mind, and see we realize, that they are essential to and essentially one with and inseparable (even in thought) from His Being He is nothing, inconceivable, without them They are as essential for his Being as equiangularity is for an equilateral triangle, else there would be complexity This is true of God and of nothing but God All objects being complex can be conceived with or without one of the attributes that make up their conception. God must be such that He cannot be *conceived* without all His attributes together—that is in a necessary sense I wonder if any can rise to the conception.

Still that is not the end of it Like His Being all his attributes are essentially one if we knew them right His knowledge is no way different from His power, justice, and so forth, for that difference even would be a manner of complexity in attributes. But we can never hope to rise to that high conception: we are limited to our human terms in our conception of God It is that high conception that is represented by the Great Name of God, which none know except whom He pleases—the Prophet and the Imams

The sum of it all is that God is a Transcendental Reality, Unknowable, Unthinkable as much as regards attributes as regards nature. Both are unfathomable to our finite consciousness.

And yet we know He is, for we come from Him Nay, He should be even if we and all else never existed. He is Necessary Existence. And so we know Him—within the limits of human knowing.

'Living' *i. e* a being real, conscious, knowing, willing, active and possessed of all energy.

'*Qayyum*' is Self subsistent, not dependent on another existence Also it means Sustainer—that without whom nothing can continue in Existence It must be understood that all the words such as conscious, active &c which we use to express the attributes or relation of God to His creatures must be understood with large qualifications in their meaning It is true that to express them at all we must express them in our human terms, but then we must be careful not to be led away by their finite implications Thus He is active not in the sense of putting forth energy in our human sense of the word Indeed, even when thus divested of all their necessary implications, we must remember that the notion, however pure and perfect to our human intellect, is but a shadow of the reality which really transcends all our powers of comprehension

To show that all this high conception of God is not the refinement of scholastic philosophers, but has been expressly taught by the Imams I propose to give in the Supplement a few quotations out of a host from Nahajul Balagah and other collections

'Slumber overtakes him not nor sleep' That means that He is not subject to change

'His is whatever is in Heavens or the Earth' Nothing could be His completely if he were merely a fashioner of things out of material existing eternally not created by Him, as is taught by a modern school of of Hindu teachers In this case both the supposed Maker and the material on which He works are finite, and neither can be God

'Who is he that can intercede with him but by His permission?' That means that with all His greatness and independence He is Gracious and Merciful It is noticeable that of all the things that could be said to show this quality it is intercession that has been selected here The one thing is that it shows in one word both the greatest graciousness that could be shown to His obedient servants and the greatest regard that could be shown for His sinful creatures As for the former it is clear that no creature, however exalted, could have any greater honour, for intercession is a business of almost equality in rank—indeed but for God's gift no creature could even think, of much less aspire to, that honour. To the sinners it proclaims, 'Be you ever so wicked and worthless, if you only retain a human heart so as to love those who cannot but be loved you will have a chance to be taken into the Mercy of God. What

more could one wish for? Indeed one could hardly imagine that for this little thing which is hardly even an act of his own all the sins of his lifetime could be forgiven But such is the mercy of God that it will be so, only that should not make him more fearless, so as to draw him more to sin

The other thing is that it is intercession and that only that reconciles mercy to justice, nay makes them one undivided whole For what is the accepting of intercession, but setting a high value to the intercessor and the attachment of the souls to him by ties of love It is a matter of grace, which is above justice for it is the original design of creation The question of justice arises only when a principle, as the punishment of sinners, once adopted is sought to be broken

Intercession is entirely a matter of attachment of souls by ties of love This is well expressed by the Arabic word *Shefaat* (joining) It must be stated, however, that of all self-delusions it is that of love that is the commonest, slightest matters sometimes cleave the fastest friendships asunder No one can be sure that he really loves a man unless he finds in his heart a never-ending desire to do at any cost to himself some act of obligation to him So no one can be sure that he loves the Prophet or the Imams unless he feels really grieved to have done something which, he knows, must have grieved them, and would not be glad to be able to do something which should please them So a true lover of the Prophet would naturally try to follow his commands and avoid his prohibitions as soon as possible This is quite true But there are infinite types of character There has been real cases of love, most intense love of the Imams, combined with loose moral character and without much attempt at self-correction They can no doubt hope for intercession and we trust it will be accepted It is a very low view of the Holy Prophet's intercession which the Ahmadi commentator has taken, namely that those only who try their best to follow the Prophet but fail owing to weakness of human nature will be benefited

'He knows what is before them and what is behind them' God's omniscience

'And they do not comprehend anything of His knowledge except what He pleases' His knowledge is absolute and above the connection of things Hence in Duae Adila "He was knowing before the origin of knowledge and causality" (*qabla ijadil ilme wal illate*). Hence fore-knowledge in spite of free-will in creation, and not destroying it, is possible to God only None can have any access to it except what He Himself pleases to reveal.

'His *Kursi* extends over the Heavens and the Earth' *Kursi* means chair or stool and, like *Arsh* 'throne' in other places in the Quran, is clearly used here metaphorically, the meaning being divine attributes in relation to creation such as knowledge, power &c These " relations " with things in time and space make him *as it were*, as He can be conceived by His creation, conditioned though He in the Infinitely Transcendental Reality of His Being is simply above and unaffected by relativity. Thus things become as it were a *seat* for Him who is otherwise far above 'any such limitation We say He is here, there, everywhere, though we know that He is above the very category of where In a word, such as it is, He must be conceived in these relations though we know He is above them. Thus words such as *Arsh*, *Kursi* &c stand for His attributes in relation to creation, such as knowledge, power &c.

But, obvious as it is, it is desirable there should be precise authority for this interpretation The following citations will suffice for this.

(1) Mufazzal 'bn Omar says he asked Our Lord Sadiq about *Arsh* and *Kursi*, ' what they are ?' He replied, ' In one of the senses (*fi wajhin*) *Arsh* denotes the totality of creation and *Kursi* a bag (that holds all in it) And in another of the senses *Arsh* is the knowledge that God has pleased to make known to His prophets and other *Hujjats* (Imams) '

(2) Hafs 'bn Ghiyas says he asked Our Lord Sadiq about *Kursi* in the verse before us He replied 'His knowledge '

(3) The word *Arsh* is also used to denote His sovereignty or dominion. Thus in the course of a long tradition Our Lord Sadiq says " The words ' The Lord of the great throne ' mean that He is the Lord of the great dominion And so ' The Merciful sat on (*Istawa*) the throne,' meaning that He pervaded the dominion "

Note Allama Majlisi thus explains how the totality of creation comes to be designated His throne consistently with the true interpretation of the term as denoting His divine attributes .—

' For there is nothing whatever in heavens and earth but is a sign of His Existence and bears marks of His Power, Control and Wisdom So all creation is the *Arsh* (throne) of His Might and Grandeur as through it does God shine forth to men of knowledge with His perfect attributes '

I may supplement this by citing the words of Our Lord Ali in the prayer known as Duae Kumail

" And by Thy *names* which have filled the *bases* (*arkan*) of all things."

'And the preservation of them tires Him not' That means that though all things are sustained by Him and but for Him, nothing could continue in Existence, yet there is nothing in all this having the remotest analogy to the putting forth of energy

'And He is the Most High, the Great.' Understand in the light of the notes above

Verse 256 'No compulsion in religion' Note this is a Medina verse when Jihad was already entered upon, or at least contemplated That shows that in the holy wars there was not the slightest thought of making men change their religion by force But note that the words 'No compulsion in religion' does not necessarily mean that there should be no exercise of force in the interests of religion This latter is rather necessary First on the very surface of it, the infidels have to be subdued so that they may not remain in a position to obstruct the progress of Islam (to say nothing of destroying it), or even to tempt away by show of force or in other ways those who might otherwise be inclined to receive the truth Further (and this is rather more important, though too often forgotten) there is such a thing as indolence in religion and it is this that prevents the mass of mankind from entering seriously on religious enquiry This easy going levity and lack of the sense of responsibility in religious matters is the characteristic feature of all idolatorous religions, but as it depends much on culture, education, and individual temperaments, pursuits and engagements it has been and will ever be sufficiently common in all mankind At the present day it seems to be a marked feature of the over advanced sections of the people in Europe, Japan and other countries There is but one remedy for this—compulsion—in some form or the other People must see that retaining their old creeds they cannot live as pleasantly and felicitously as they might The situation must be made bad for them. Then they will be forced to open their eyes and reflect from time to time how far their old creeds are worth suffering all this for With an intensely wordly-minded people this may lead for a time to hypocrisy (as it did in the case of Islam), but hypocrisy cannot last as a religion, and in time they all become true converts This was the policy of the Prophet He knew very well that the faith of the millions of his people was hardly worth anything (even if they were not consciously hypocritical), yet he was glad to have any that could be enlisted, no matter how they came to be enticed to join the pale of Islam History bears ample witness to the wisdom of this course of action Hypocrisy died a natural death in a century or so, and all Musalmans, however divided into sects, became true Musalmans in all essentials By mere

preaching Islam might not have spread in the country to this day With all the support of the mightiest powers of the world the missionaries have not been able to this day to change the religion of (to say nothing of converting to their own) the lowest fetish worshippers of India Who was to bear the blame of it if the road to salvation lies only in Islam? How Christianity has spread in the West all the world knows

'Whoever rejects (*yakfur bi*) or refuses to have faith in *Taghut*' *Taghut* is from *tughyan* and stands as a generic name for the Devil and all devilish agencies and influences One cannot fail to admire the artfulness of the Ahmadi commentator in translating '*yakfur*' here with 'disbelieves in'—simply to find a way to avoid the belief in angels that is taught expressly in verse 177 above as a cardinal tenet of Islam Seeing no way to get rid of this as a basic principle of Islam, he translates *yakfur bit Taghut* in this verse with disbelieves in the Devil, and says in the note on that verse (177) 'That it does not mean that we should admit that there are angels is clear from the fact that not only we are not required to believe in devils, whose existence is as certain as that of angels, but we are plainly told that we should disbelieve in the devils (verse 256)' I hope the infidels when they disbelieved in the Prophet did not go to the extent of disbelieving his existence

It is the same with believing in God It is not sufficient to believe in God as the deist, do It is necessary to believe in the full sense of keeping the mind sincerely attached to Him seeking to receive His guidance Also even as a mere matter of belief it must be complete as explained in note to verse 62 above When this is done God will guide him or keep him on guidance through his apostles—spiritually if need be, as explained in note to 1 5 above This is the strong cable which leads man to, enabling him to rise to, God

The light is the light of faith, the darkness is the darkness of unbelief If a man does not stick fast to the cable of God the devils will take hold of him and lead him from faith to some shade of unbelief

'God is the *Wali* (guardian) of those who believe' See 5 60, 61 from which it will appear that God is the only *Wali*, yet He is so along with the others described in the verse showing there is unity between the two So one cannot reject the latter without rejecting the former So all who in any way lead men to error are one with the devils

SECTION 35.

Abraham's argument with Nimrod How the dead are brought back to life Process shown by actual revival to Ezra and Abraham Ezra himself raised to life with his donkey. Abraham told to make an experiment on birds

258. Hast thou not considered him who disputed with Abraham about his Lord, because God had given him kingdom; (how) when Abraham spake unto him (saying) My Lord is He who maketh alive and causeth to die. He said, I give life and I cause death. Abraham said, And surely God causeth the Sun to rise from the east, do thou then cause it to rise from the west, whereupon he that was unbeliever was confounded; and God guideth not an iniquitous (or unjust *zalimun*) people.

259. Or like him who came upon a town and (lo!) it had fallen on its roofs; and he said, How shall God make this alive after its death. Whereupon God made him die for a hundred years and thereafter raised him to life. He said, How long hast thou tarried? He said, I have tarried a day or part of a day He said, Nay! thou hast tarried a hundred years, but look thou at thy food and thy drink, years have not passed over it (*lam yatasannah*) and look thou at thy donkey; and (this) in order that We may make thee a sign unto men; and look thou at the bones, how We make them stand together, thereafter We clothe them with flesh: then when the thing became clear to him, he said, Now I know that God hath power over everything.

260 And remember when Abraham said, Lord! let me see how thou makest the dead alive. He said, What! hast thou not faith? He said, Yea! but only that my heart may be at ease. He said, Take thou four birds and draw them towards thee, and then put parts thereof on each hill, and thereafter call them, and they will come to the running: and know that God is Mighty, Wise

Verse 258 Because God gave him the kingdom' No mortal ever claimed divinity in the full and complete sense of the word but in idolatorous countries kings have been worshipped as manifestations of God, as having an element of divinity in them See for instance the highly conceited account of this in Manu Smriti chapter VIII It is thus that kings come to be worshipped as veritable deities in degraded countries A remnant of such beliefs has come down to our own times in such highly civilized countries as China and Japan It was this that being combated by Abraham was urged by Nimrod when he said, I give life and death, arguing that his power over the life and death of people proved him to be a deity It was for this reason that Our Lord passed over this as it would have led to more discussions, and passed to other signs of God to show that there was infinite difference between him and the Creator

This is according to the majority of the commentators. Some, however, take the pronoun in *Atahu* to Abraham and for this purpose take *Ata* to signify not 'gave' but 'promised'—a possible but unnecessary departure from the original and ordinary meaning of the word They would have us suppose that the grant of temporal kingdom to his seed being announced by the patriarch to Nimrod he disputed the possibility of this and that led to the discussion All this is mere supposition and has no great probability to recommend it. The Ahmadi commentator follows it merely because he has a horror for the raising of the dead to life, and he everywhere seeks to make it a figure for the revival of dead nations to life In fact he makes this the heading for this section trying to explain away the very clear verses that follow in that sense

Verse 259 'Or like' Much has been made by the Ahmadi commentator of this which he renders as 'or the like of him' thinking this would help to take away the force of reality from the incident described He also approvingly cites the strange construction Syed Ahmad Khan puts upon it construing it thus او الذی کالذی مر علی قریۃ thus making it mean 'or him who, *as it were* passed by a town' Needless to say that by no possibility can grammar be stretched to allow of such jugglery and somersault The beginning of the verse with 'or like' is no doubt very abrupt, but all abruptness vanishes if we read this verse after, not before the next verse Verse 260 tells how God's power of reviving the dead was shown to Abraham, this one tells of a more modern instance of the same kind.

The Ahmadi commentator's note on this verse makes one see that not even the clearest words, the minutest details can be proof against the

mis-interpretations of those who want to get rid of them He (1) translates *amatahu* 'caused him to die' as caused him to remain in a state of death, and in the notes says it was only symbolical death to represent the desolation of Jerusalem from B C 599 when it was taken by Nebuchadnezzar to B C 537 when it was granted permission by Cyrus to be rebuilt He thinks that the prophet was shown his food and drink which remained intact to convince him that he had not really died for a hundred years, though it was only God who had said so, the Prophet had not even dreamt of it (2) renders *anna* (how) as 'when' to make it appear that here there was only a question about the length of their misery, no wonder about God's raising them to life in the Millenium or at the Resurrection, though the latter part of the verse and the closing words make it as clear as anything (3) takes the setting together of bones and clothing them with flesh to be a vision identifying the event with that described in Ezekiel chapter 37, following in this the suggestion of some hostile Christian critics who make it to show that the event described therein or Nehemiah ch 2 has been perverted in the Quran The Muslim commentators however, say distinctly it was not the prophet Ezekiel but the prophet Ezra who is referred to in this verse, and it is probable that it was thus that he was enabled to give back the law after it was quite lost to and forgotten by the people

Why the Quran does not clearly say that it was all a vision he seeks to explain by calling our attention to the way in which Joseph recounted his dream to his father (12 4) saying that he saw the sun and the moon and the stars bow down to him, and not saying in clear words that it was in a dream he saw this Surely a man must be pitied if he is really unable to see any difference between the two cases He also relies on his identification of the story with the vision of Ezekiel, though it has not anything in common with it, as it says nothing whatever of his own death, nor anything about his ass or his food (It may be noted here that according to the commentators it was only himself and his ass that were revived—the dry bones of the dead bodies in the town were not revived as is said in Ezekiel ch 37) The use he has made for the particle *Kaf* (for like) in the beginning of the verse we have dealt with above.

We have said that it was Ezra not Ezekiel who is referred to in this verse. We have the authority of Ibn Abbas, the cousin of the Prophet for this We have said that it was in this way that he was enabled to give the law after it was completely lost to the people That it was he appears also from the incredibly long age he must have had. Ibn Abbas says he was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, and from the Bible we learn that

his brother Jehozadak (1 Chronicles 6 15 compared with Ezra 7 1—5) was one of those taken captives by him. So there is no reasonable doubt about the truth of the traditional statement Now Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Israel was about the year 607 B C But Ezra appears in Ezra 7 as coming up in the year 457 with the mandate of the Persian King Artaxerxes giving complete liberty to the people to return to Jerusalem and make offerings to the Temple there sending some presents of his own there. From this time he began his work of reformation for which he is so famous (see Ezra ch 8 to 10) Thus he must be young about the year 607 B. C. His age must, therefore, be something between 150 and 200 years Granting that life can be continued to this length of time there is hardly any other instance in history of active life at such an exceptionally old age. The only explanation is that about a hundred years were somehow cut off from his life There is a vague idea afloat that this may be possible by something analogous to hybernation of animals, which is death to all intents and purposes. If this is so it should be very easy thing for God to effect it by a miracle Anyway there remains no reasonable doubt about this part at least of the story as related in the Quran Notice also that if Ezra had continued to live all the time during the Babylonian captivity there should not have been any consternation and despair about the Law being ever found again Before him the Israelites were released from Babylon under Cyrus in 536 B C and under Darius in 520 B C, and negotiations for complete religious liberty of the people were going on all the time Had Ezra been known to be living he should have continued to teach the Law, and certainly there should have been no despair about the holy Books being for ever lost

As to the miracle of the dry bones of the ass being raised to life it has to be observed that it was a prophet who was shown it He had prayed to be shown how resurrection is effected and he was shown the process He was first shown how his food and drink underwent no change all along these hundred years while his ass was reduced to ashes The immunity of the former from change is expressed by the expressive word *lam yatasannah* which means that years did not pass over it This is the first lesson. As Ernst Mach says 'Time and that certain changes go on is one and the same thing' Change is the necessity of existence It is implied in the very continuity of being But change as manifestation of force can also reverse itself How forces can be reversed in direction and what effects would follow from it he was shown by the collecting together of the bones of the ass and clothing them with flesh, and ultimately infusing it with life. "It is a well-known law in dynamics that if at any instant the direction of motion of every molecule of a body were reversed,

but the magnitude of the velocity kept exactly the same, the body would move along the path it had come, and at every point of its backward path its speed would be exactly the same as when it passed through that point in the forward direction. It is conceivable, therefore, on the materialistic hypothesis, that if at any instant the motion of every particle of matter in the universe were reversed, the course of nature from that instant would be reversed for ever after" What this will come to may be described in Lord Kelvin's words "The bursting bubble of foam at the foot of a waterfall would reunite and descend into the water, the thermal motions would reconcentrate their energy and throw the mass up the fall in drops, reforming into a close column of ascending water Heat which had been generated by the friction of solids, and dissipated by conduction and radiation with absorption, would come again to the place of contact, and throw the moving body back against the force to which it had previously yielded Boulders would recover from the mud the materials required to rebuild them into their previous jagged forms and would become reunited to the mountain peak from which they had formerly broken away" These are not visions but hard scientific possibilities It was only an instance of this that the prophet was shown in the coming together of the bones of his ass and the clothing of the same with flesh It is true, Lord Kelvin with his usual carefulness was reticent to apply these physical generalisations to biology In his opinion the real phenomena of life infinitely transcend human science. But that is a moot point. Those who are convinced of the unity of all existence must acknowledge that resurrection of the dead is possible in this way It was this that the prophet had wished to see (*i. e.* see in a way to understand) and that he was shown so that, as the verse says, it was all clear to him.

Needless to say he was in his revival after death a sign to the people about *Rajaat* or the raising up of the dead from their graves in the days of our Lord Mahdi of Islam The final resurrection of the dead is to be for the other world. Here he was raised up to live and do a prophet's work in this world

Verse 260. The Ahmadi commentator interprets this verse also as referring to the life and death of nations Abraham's seed was given kingdom and he asks God to show how this is to be. "The answer to Abraham's *how* as given in the Quran is a perfectly intelligible parable. If he should take four birds and tame them, they would obey his call and fly to him even from distant mountains. If the birds, then, obey his call, he being neither their maker nor the author of their existence, would not

nations submit to the call of their Divine Master and the Author of their existence . . . . . Whenever He wishes to destroy a people He brings together the causes of their decline and evil fortune overtakes them, and when He wishes to make a people prosperous He creates those causes that bring about the rise and prosperity of nations" This is what he makes out of the verse, but we suppose that in his sober moods he even would not consider the great prophet Abraham to be an idiot not to understand so simple a matter. To make a show of support for his view he identifies the prayer of Abraham with his question in Genesis 15 · 8, and supposes the text tampered with in the sequel (verses 9 to 11), which he pretends to be unintelligible as a sign of the grant of the land of Canaan promised to him. Anybody can see, however, that as a sign of this he was asked to make a sacrifice; (compare Lev 1 . 17 and Jer 34 . 18, 19), if all fares well with it he will get it without much delay, but if it does not his generation will be afflicted for a length of time before they are able to attain to it. It did not fare well, the fowls came to the carcasses and he had a vision (verse 17) and he was told that down to his fourth generation his seed will suffer servitude in a strange land (verse 13) It is difficult to see what connection (to say nothing of identity) has all this with the verse we are on here It is a relief to turn from all this to the old simple commentators It has never occurred to them that the prophet's prayer to be shown *how* the dead are raised to life meant anything other than the resurrection of dead bodies With the exception of one all say on the basis of traditions that Abraham tried the experiment and succeeded in restoring the birds to life. As directed he took four birds, cut them into pieces and put slices of them on different mountains, and on his calling out to them they came back to him flying. There has been some discussion about the want of any words in the verse signifying command to cut them into pieces The discussion has simply been due to some old commentators making the word *Surhunna* signify this, otherwise there can be no doubt about that being implied. When one says, Take four birds and put parts (*Juzw*) of them on *all* (*Kulle*) mountains that may be available, no one can understand that it is desired to place one each on four mountains, as the Ahmadi commentator prefers to take it following a curious old commentator Abu Muslim.

The difficult and, as I think, the significant word is *Surhunna ilaik*. *Surhunna* means bend them or attach them (the other meaning, cut them, being inadmissible owing to being followed by *ilaik*, to thyself). The commentators usually say that the object is to recognise them fully, so as to identify them when they return. Abu Muslim, followed by the Ahmadi commentator, thinks the significance to be that of taming them

so that they might obey his call In this sense the object might be to show him that not only are bodies revived but their individualities are preserved in tact. They would come to him not in obedience to the command of God but because they had been attached to him in life. I, however, suppose this word gives the key to the whole thing. Abraham prays to be shown (*i. e* shown so as to understand) *how* the dead are to be raised to life at resurrection or in the Millenium, *how* the various particles spread across the four winds are to be joined together and shaped into the original living bodies God replies that he should be able to do that himself if he attaches them spiritually to his own great and powerful soul, in the fullest sense of attaching If he does that he will have *complete command* over the material particles wherever they are If he wants the parts or particles of his birds to come as they are they will do so, and if he wants them to be united to one another in the form they were as living bodies they will do so and they will return to him as living birds Nor is this to be wondered at. Little as we know of life all indications point to the fact that life is a function of the structure and the organism If the organism can someway be restored completely in the fullest physiological sense life should be found returned to it. As to the first thing the obedience of the material particles to one's command, this though unintelligible to us is a thing claimed by spiritualists to be not only possible but actualy manifested to some extent in spiritualistic phenomena Of course ordinary spirits, our limited souls, can never hope to perform the feat that Abraham did, but every one of us can do something of it in a very elementary way and to a very elementary extent. Thus it is that the verse closes with the words, And know that God is Mighty, Wise Resurrection is not a work of God's power merely. It is as much a work of His infinite knowledge of all things and consideration of right means to an end

In the end it is to be noted that the prayer of these prophets to be shown how the dead are raised to life does not imply any want of faith or certainty about the power of God to effect this. This is clearly stated in the story of Our Lord Abraham in this verse. But faith, however perfect, falls short of direct knowledge, there remains a blankness in the mind as to the *how* of it, and it is natural for man to wish that the deficiency may be removed.

SECTION 36.

Money spent in charity compared to seed sown in fertile land. What may destroy the effect. Those who spend for show will not prosper.

261. The likeness of those who spend their property in the cause of God is as the likeness of a grain that produceth seven ears, in each ear whereof are an hundred grains: and God giveth increase to whomsoever He listeth, and God is Bounteous, Knowing.

262. Those who expend their wealth in the cause of God, thereafter follow not their gift with the laying of an obligation or with annoyance, for them shall be their reward before their Lord, and fear shall not come upon them, neither shall they grieve.

263. A kind word and forgiveness is better than charity that is followed by annoyance, and God is Self-sufficing, Forbearing.

264. O! Ye who believe! turn not your charities to naught by the laying of obligation or annoyance, like one who giveth of his wealth to be seen of men and believeth not in God and the last day The likeness of him is as the likeness of a smooth stone with earth upon it, then a heavy rain falleth upon it and leaveth it bare. They shall not be able to gain anything of what they have earned; and God guideth not an unbelieving people.

265. And the likeness of those who expend their riches seeking God's pleasure, and for the certainty of their souls (in confirmation of the faith that is in them *tasbitam le anfusihim*) is as the likeness of a garden on an elevated land over which falleth heavy rain, so that it yieldeth fruit twofold, and if heavy rain fall not over it, then a gentle rain; and God beholdeth all that ye do.

263. Would any of you like that there should be for him a garden of palms and grape-vines with the rivers following beneath it, in which he should have every fruit, and that old age should overtake him, and he should have helpless children, and that a whirlwind in which is fire should then smite it so that it should be consumed? In this way doth God make clear to you His signs that haply ye may ponder.

Verse 261 It is to be noted that the increase of seven hundred-fold or more is *for* the individual, whether this be considered in this life or in the hereafter. As to the hereafter it requires no saying As to this life it must be remembered that he is no true Muslim who does not identify himself with the interests of his brethren in faith and does not realize this intensely so as to be really happy in their happiness and really miserable in their misery

'And God increases (or multiplies) for whom He will' All depends on the condition of faith in which the charity is given—not on the amount of it. A poor man's anna may be increased a hundred million times, and so may be greater in its effect (both in this life and in the next) than large sums of money spent by others

'*262* *Mannan Mann*, originally the conferring of a favour, has the secondary meaning of doing anything to remind one of the obligation, making the recipient of the gift feel humiliated or stung with reproach Hence the donor is forbidden even to mention the thing afterwards to anybody. And we should do what we can to make the man feel as little of shame and humiliation as possible even at the time of receiving the gift from us. It was the practice of Our Lord Husain that whenever anybody came to beg of him he would go inside the house and give him from behind the door so that he might not be ashamed in his presence Our Lord Ali 'bn Husain would first kiss the hand of the man to whom he gave charity saying it represented the hand of God (referring to Quran 9 : 105).

Aza signifies harm or annoyance, and might refer to the same when the object is actually to humiliate one in the eyes of others. Thus many having supported some poor men think they have a right to treat them with contempt.

Verse 263. Kind speech (*Qaulun Maarufun*) is sympathetic speech to the man who begs, and forgiveness refers to forbearance if his begging or

insistence in it worries you On no account should one show any sign of irritation at a poor man's importunity

264 'And does not believe in God and the last day' There can be no stronger and more thrilling denunciation of charity to be seen of men The thing is said to imply in effect a disbelief in God And a lack of faith it certainly is No one who has firm belief in God and reward and punishment in the last day would do any act of virtue, much less one involving self-sacrifice to be merely seen of men The verse applies to all, Muslims and non-Muslims—not "to the efforts of the unbelievers to deal a death blow to Islam" as the Ahmadi commentator says They are said to be unbelievers only in effect The Meccan unbelievers were not spending what they did to destroy the power of Musalmans merely to be seen of men

Verse 265 Notice, charity is the source of strength to the soul That faith is a source of strength to the soul goes without saying, but faith unless realized in the acts of faith is mere empty words, and the mind feels the blankness of it The Ahmadi commentator turns everything to the ultimate triumph of Islam, he explains the certainty of the souls thus "Every act of self-sacrifice being due to their certainty of the ultimate triumph of *truth*, which in its turn made them more certain of it"

Note that it is the spirit underlying charity that counts—not the circumstances mainly accidental that help to make it productive The tall *garden* trees do not depend very much on the extent of rainfall They absorb sufficient moisture from the ground they grow upon It is this ground, *Rabwah*, elevated land with streams running in them (*Siraj*), that is compared to the spirit underlying charity It will make little difference to them whether it rains heavily or lightly This heavy or light rain is the external circumstances that seems to make a difference in the result to be gained Thus it may be thought that charity given to keep up the life of a man having no importance to society or nation may be wasted, or may be of infinitely less value than charity given to the distressed musalmans in the Prophet's days when Islam was struggling for its existence and, the grace of God abounding, conditions of the times were so directed that every little effort of self-sacrifice was bountifully rewarded, and that before the eyes of men that did it Persons in other days and in other conditions may well despair that they can do anything of equal virtue in the result. Nay, says the verse, every act of virtue has an energy of its own to grow in this life and in the next, and it has

fountains of life to draw upon even if there are no good showers to nourish them.

Verse 266 Their charity may be real charity to begin with and so have good prospect of bearing fruit in this life and in the next. But the reproaching and annoyance that follows it may destroy it altogether—may even cause greater harm than the good it could do to the self and the society.

SECTION 37.

Good things and lawfully acquired may only be given in charity. Charity brings abundance not poverty Charity may be given both openly and in private Persons fit to receive charity

267. O! Ye who believe! spend in charity out of (only) the good things you have yourselves acquired and out of that which We have raised for you from the earth, and choose not the bad for alms-giving, whereas ye would not accept such yourselves except that ye connived at it; and know that God is Self-sufficing, Praiseworthy.

268. The devil menaceth you with poverty and enjoineth on you sordidness, whereas God promiseth you pardon from Him and abundance, and God is Bounteous, Knowing.

269. He giveth wisdom (*Hikmat*) to whomsoever He will, and he who hath been gifted wisdom hath been given abundant good; and none take the lesson to heart except the wise.

270. And whatever alms ye give or (whatever) ye vow, verily God knoweth it; but they who act unjustly have no helpers.

271. If ye give alms openly it is well, but if ye hide it and give it to the poor, it will be better still for you, and will do away with some of your sins, and God is aware of all that ye do.

272. Not with thee lieth their guidance, nay! God guideth whomsoever He listeth; and whatever ye shall expend in alms shall be for your ownselves, so ye give not except seeking God's countenance; and whatever ye shall expend in alms shall be measured back to you in full and ye shall not be defrauded.

273. (Charity is) for the poor that are beleagured in the cause of God and are hindered thereby from going about the world. He who knoweth them not taketh them for well-to-do folk because they beg not; thou wouldst know them by their appearance; they ask nôt of men with importunity and whatsoever money ye shall expend in charity, verily it will be known to God.

Verse 267 This verse is meant to impress the necessity of conscientiousness in paying the legal dues when they are paid in kind *Khums* and *Zacat* being personal obligations imposed by religion it is not desirable that the Imam's officials should periodically inspect the belongings of every man so as to get what is due It is for men to see of themselves what is equitable and pay it To the persons he appointed as collectors of *Zacat* Our Lord Ali used to give a memorandum of directions in which he enjoined them to see that they do not harass people in any way It is distinctly said that they should only proclaim that they have come to take *Zacat* and take whatever the people would offer, never pressing those who say they have none or no more dues to pay (Nahajul Balagah) It is not to be a State-tax but a free voluntary religious contribution for which the people are themselves morally and religiously responsible Paying *Zacat* as a State-tax and the seeking to give away deteriorated or worthless things in payment of it is hardly worth anything. The same applies to voluntary charity A man who keeps on giving away casts off clothes and other things of no more use to him, should not flatter himself that he is really doing something very virtuous Verse 3. 86 says "ye will never attain to virtue unless ye spend out of what ye love."

Verse 268 *Fahshaa* usually meaning indecency is here used of niggardliness or tenaciousness (*bukhl*), the implication being that one should be as much ashamed of it as for indecent conduct

Verse 269. *Hikmat* 'wisdom' is not like the English rendering of it, something purely or predominantly intellectual. It implies knowledge

duly associated with proper emotions and a seeking to act up to one's knowledge and conscience The knowledge is mainly spiritual with capacity for spiritual illumination or guidance under the grace of God as occasion requires it—this being conditional on the constant seeking for it. Hence according to Suddi it means the gift of prophecy But that is the highest stage of it. It is sufficient that it does not mean mere earthly wisdom or intelligence It is something truly spiritual which can only be attained by attachment to the Imams leading to spiritual union with their holy souls It will be thus and through them that the grace of God will completely enshroud the faithful and keep them from swerving from the right path (1 5) Others can only rely on their intelligence which is much too finite and subject to the accidents of time and is not much available for man's relations in the spiritual world It is when a man has gained something of this "Divine Reason" that he can be said to have attained to a "*great* good," and it is only "men of understanding" who can duly appreciate this

Verse 270. *Nazr* 'vow' is voluntarily making an act of virtue binding on oneself in thankful gratitude for some special favour prayed for God knows it *i e* appreciates it and will reward it, over and above the grant of the thing prayed for The vow and the money spent must be something virtuous in itself Vows of or made for unlawful things, and likewise, money spent for illegal purposes are not only void but are sins and call for the denunciation at end of the verse The last words may also apply to those who prevent men from right charity or right vows

Verse 271 By the giving of charity openly are meant the payment of *Zacat* in a Muslim state to persons appointed by the Imam to collect the same from people It may also mean "the giving of subscriptions for works of public utility or for national defence, or for the advancement of the national or public welfare" As the Ahmadi commentator notes, "The teaching of the Gospels (Matt. 6 1—4) is really defective because it lays all the stress upon private acts of charity and makes no mention at all of subscriptions for works of public utility and for organised efforts for dealing with the poor without which national growth is impossible. The Quranic teaching is perfect, as it takes into consideration the varying circumstances of human society and enjoins public as well as private acts of charity"—the former may not be of less importance.

It is said this verse was revealed in answer to some questions about the relative worth of giving alms secretly and openly (Siraj). The Prophet in his teachings had so much insisted on the hiding of charity

"so that one hand may not know what the other has given" that people may well have doubted whether the giving of charity in public was of much worth. The answer in the verse is it is well, but the hiding of it is better especially when it is given to individual men in poverty. Generally, according to the traditions, compulsory payments such as *Zacat* prescribed by the Holy Law should better be given in public, and all private voluntary charity it would be best to give as secretly as possible The former is not to be depreciated though the ideal is the spirit of hiding it Sometimes the openly giving of charity may be necessary in the case of private individuals too as it may help to induce others to follow the example

Verse 272 'Their guidance' Whose guidance? We know that a portion of *Zacat* collected was paid to that well-known class of hypocritical converts called *Muallafatul Qulub*, see 9 60—the object being to keep them attached to the Musalmans and prevent them from causing mischief It is probable that people grumbled to see their money wasted on such persons, and it is possible the opening clauses of verse were revealed in reference to them There could be no assurance that the payments would make them truly faithful Yet all the same payments should not be stopped to them What was spent in this way was still for their own good, was still for the pleasure of God, and would be rewarded in the Hereafter

This illustrates a matter of principle in regard to acts of charity for the benefit of the unbelievers If the thing is done in the idea that it may attract their affections and gradually open their hearts to the word of guidance, or may at least prevent them from throwing obstacles in the way of Islam it is commendable Even without any such thought in view it is permitted in 60 8 but, it must frankly be stated, it cannot be said to be an act of much religious merit It may be positively condemnable if the appearances are that feeding upon the wealth of the Musalmans they might spend their resources in breeding troubles for them The principle applies to all charity both public and private It is best that money may be freely spent for the benefit of the non-Muslims but with some provision for preaching to them attached to it.

Verse 273 The people most deserving of charity are those who are confined in the way of God Among these are included (1) those who had to fight in defence of Islam but had no means of livelihood, (2) those who could not go forth to trade because of the insecurity of the roads and the constant raids of the enemy (3) those who are wounded in fighting

(Razi) But, as in verse 195, confining (*Hasr*) need not be that of the enemy only Nor is the way of God confined to fighting in the cause of Islam. All religious life, all useful and honest life is life in the way of God and is a struggle against the powers of evil. Anyone aspiring to it but prevented from want of means would come under the category of "those confined in the way of God" To say nothing of men with higher capacities as for missionary work, there is no doubt that those who but for their means would be able to lead a respectable, honourable life, useful in any measure, however small, would come under this head

The ignorant man thinks them to be rich on account of their abstaining (from begging) Islam is very strict in denunciation of beggary—as strict in that matter as it is particular in enjoining the giving of charity to those who really deserve it The Prophet is said to have cursed the man who stretches out his hand to beg Here in this verse the men deserving of charity are said to be those who, however afflicted they may be with want, try to conceal it and keep an appearance of pecuniary independence on their faces If forced to make a request at all they do it with great reserve, and do not do it importunately

To what extent prejudice can blind even an able man or can drive him to dishonest practices can be seen in Palmer's protesting that the right rendering of the phrase '*Zarban fil arz*' journeying in the land, should be 'knocking about in the land' in the sense of wandering here and there in a rough causeless and aimless way With this meaning sticking in his mind as the only appropriate one he naturally regards the language of the Quran to be "really rude and rugged" The basis of this is no more than this that the word *zarb* signifies beating, striking &c., and there is a colloqual English phrase 'knock about' in which the word knock has a sense analogous to striking It is difficult to believe that a writer of Palmer's ability should not know that the idiom of the Arabic language has given to the word *zarb* quite a number of senses in various connections and *Zarban fil arz* meaning nothing but journeying in the land, (seeking sustenance and for purpose of traffic) and has not the slightest implication of knocking about aimlessly in the country. It is difficult to find in literature a single instance of the use of that phrase with that implication.

SECTION 38.

The religious virtue of charity. Usury forbidden. Its evil effects on the soul. Interest on loans already made to be foregone and capital to be recovered with levity.

274. Those who expend what they own by night and by day, secretly and openly, for them there shall be their reward before their Lord, and fear shall not come upon them, neither shall they grieve.

275. Those who swallow usury will not rise except as riseth one whom the devil hath confounded with his touch; this because they say, Trade is only the same as usury; whereas God hath made trade lawful and hath forbidden usury; wherefore whosoever will desist when an admonition from his Lord hath come unto him, shall keep what hath gone before, and his affair shall rest with God; but those who will return to usury, they shall be the inmates of hell, therein shall they abide for evermore

276. God wasteth (*yamhaqu*) the gains of usury but He blesseth with increase what is given in alms, and God loveth not any ungrateful sinner.

277. Those who believe and do what is right and observe prayer and give the appointed alms, they shall have their reward before their Lord, fear shall not come upon them neither shall they grieve.

278. O! ye who believe, fear ye God and forego what remaineth of usury if ye be indeed believers

279. But if ye will not do so, then be ye warned of war from God and his Apostle. But if ye will turn from usury, then shall ye have your capital, neither injuring (your debtor) nor being injured (yourselves).

280. And if one be in straitened circumstances, then let there be respite until he is easy in fortune. And if ye forego it were better for you if ye only knew.

281. And dread ye the day when ye shall return to God and each one shall be measured back in full what he hath merited and they shall not be defrauded.

Verse 274 This verse even according to the admission of the Sunni writers was revealed in honour of Our Lord Ali The very much prejudiced commentator Shirbini has it thus in Siraj. 'This was revealed in honour of Abu Bekr, he having given away forty thousand Dinars (Dollars) = £2000), ten thousand by night, ten thousand in day, ten thousand secretly, and ten thousand openly, and also in honour of Ali, he had only 4 Dirhams (shillings) = about 5s), nothing but this, but he gave away one in charity by night, one in day and one secretly and one openly' The readers can easily judge which is the original and the true story, and which was invented later to cast it into shade The writer cites another interpretation which is too amusing to be omitted Ausaie says this verse *was* revealed about those who keep horses for use in Jihad. They are given fodder by night and by day, secretly and openly Ausaie is a celebrated divine of considerable talents, yet the spiritual disgrace which attends wilful rejection of the Imams does not infrequently make a man senseless—at times

It will be noticed this verse should have gone in the preceding section which deals with charity, it is not much in place in the present which is occupied with denunciation of usury It is possible that the verses in the preceding section were read together to the exclusion of this and verse 277 in honour of Our Lord Ali, which being revealed on a special occasion were in general reading isolated from the rest Some have misgivings of a purpose here, but we cannot be sure of anything.

Notice the giving away of four Dirhams, having no other money besides, is not by itself something very impressive or creditable, especially in the case of a man like Our Lord Ali, who gave away his all in the cause of God, so as to call for a special revelation in commendation of the act. Others may also do similar charity in similar conditions, without exciting a single word in the Revelation in their honour It is the man who does it, not the act by itself, that counts in the sight of God. He deserved to be honoured and so is honoured, not every other man whatever he may do To be remembered of God one should make oneself beloved of God, and that is a condition not easily attained to by isolated acts of virtue By imitating the example of the Imams with due sense of obedience to them one can claim something of the remembrance of God, and so can hope to be covered, however indifferently, by verses revealed in their honour (That is the reason of the plural form used in the verse. See Introduction) Thus it is that it is only the most angelic or the most devilish souls that are specially referred to in the Revelation for approbation or condemnation respectively. The others are only indifferently touched by the verses that can apply to them.

Verse 276 *Ribo* (literally an excess or addition) means an addition over and above the principal sum that is lent and includes usury as well as interest. Both are absolutely forbidden in our religion It must be remembered that charity is an essential principle in Islam It is a duty, not something voluntary Whoever has means to help his brother in need, to say nothing of distress, and does not is sinful and must pray for forgiveness. See the prayer of Our Lord Ali 'bn Husain about the rights of Muslim brothers If he persists in this or takes a slighting view of the thing he is virtually not a Muslim at all The minimum that is to be expected of a Musalman is to lend to relieve his brother in want expecting full repayment and taking due precautions for it Even for that little service God promises a great reward But to take advantage of the distress of another, to extort money from him and make it a source of income to the self—this is simply fiendish and cannot possibly be tolerated

The social evils which this system of lending money on interest gives rise to, are patent to a every one Among the lending classes it produces miserliness and inordinate love of money for its own sake Nobody can have failed to notice this among the Mahajans in this country. The root evil is that the man becomes " obsessed by selfishness " and this is the very death of religious spirit in a man It also promotes habits of idleness in the lending classes as they are able to make an income without toil or labour On the other side the facility this system gives to borrowing ruins families by promoting habits of extravagance Islam seeks to do away with this fruitful cause of ruin by reducing the possibility of lending at all When no gain is to be expected lending would be confined to cases where it is, as should be, a real matter of charity The lender would have to see whether the borrower really deserves the pecuniary help he asks for

A question arises to money required for trade and other productive purposes There it seems the capitalists who help to finance the business, has a right to a share in the profits Quite so, but not by lending money on interest. He may directly become a sharer and share its profits and losses. A mere lender has no concern whatever whether the business is well or ill worked He has his money assured to him on adequate securities and he does not care for anything As sharer, he would have interest in the business and he would see it is properly carried on This is the distinction between trade and usury which is made out in this verse. ' Whom the devil has prostrated by his touch ' ; such will be their state at the time of resurrection The touch of Satan is said to be

insanity. This will be their state then probably because the mentality a man has at the time of death he will retain at the time of resurrection. Obcessed as these men are with love of money for its own sake these men would become mad if some day in their life they learned that all the money they had laid out in debts was gone and they would not have a pie of it So they would rise delerious from their graves. The touch is attributed to Satan as it is due to their love of Mammon.

'He shall have what has already passed' If any had actually received any sum as interest before the prohibition was revealed he was not required to pay it back for such a procedure would have upset business. The prohibition was only operative from the time the verse was revealed.

Verse 276 *Mahq* originally signifying the blotting out of a thing is here used in the sense of taking away the *barkat* or blessing thereof (Raghib) "Usury is here condemned while charitable deeds are commended as being the real source of prosperity or of humanity in general There may also be observed a prophetic reference to the general tendency in the growth of civilization to lessening rates of interest, so much so that usurious dealings, in the proper sense of the word are almost becoming extinct, while the tendency for public charity or personal sacrifice in the interests of a community or even humanity in general is daily gaining ground." Ahmadi commentator's note.

Verse 278 The balance of interest which may be due at the time when the prohibition was made known must be given up

Verse 279 'Be apprised of war from God and His Apostle' There can be no stronger words in condemnation of usury They should make a true Musalman shudder even at the thought of usury. This means that, as the commentators say after Ibn Abbas, that the Imam (head of the Muslim State) should seize on the Musalmans who continue this practice and make them abjure it for the future If they do not, or having done so, revert to the practice they should be beheaded (Mawahib)

It is strange that from this verse the Ahmadi commentator draws "the conclusion that interest received on deposits in banks may be given away for the propagation of Islam, for this is really a war against the enemies of Islam." If the receiving of interest on deposits in banks is by itself wrong the spending of it on anything, however laudable, would come under the prohibition in verse 267 above. It is quite a different thing if, as has been held, the prohibition relates only to taking interest from the Musalmans it does relate to taking interest from the non-Muslims.

Verse 280. Our Lord Sadiq is reported to have said, "Whoever wants that God may grant him shade on the day when there will be no shade for him except His ownshadow—(and said this thrice in a way that people were afraid to ask him), then said—let him give respite to his debtor who is in straitness or remit him something from his due" The Prophet is reported to have said, "Whoever gives respite to his debtor in straitness the amount due shall be accounted as charity on his part, each day till it is paid up." Zurara says that once he told Our Lord Sadiq that one of his debtors was contemplating to sell his house to pay him up On this Our Lord said, "I charge you in the name of God not to take away the shade over his head"—and repeated it twice

Such is the kind of sympathy Islam demands a man to show to others Nor is this all. The Imam undertakes to pay up the sums due from the people if the debts have really been taken in cases of dire necessity As Our Lord Riza says, 'Whoever seeks livelihood by lawful methods to serve for the maintenance of himself and his family he is like fighter in the cause of God And if that be beyond his power let him borrow on (the security of) God and His Prophet what will serve for their maintenance and if he dies without payment then it is on the Imam to pay it up.'

SECTION 39.

Contracts to be put down in writing and witnesses procured. Security may be taken when the debtor cannot be trusted.

282. O, ye who believe! when one of you hath loaned a loan to another for a given term, write it down, and let a scribe write it down justly between you, and let not a scribe refuse to write as God hath taught him. Let him write then, and let him that oweth dictate, and let him fear God his Lord and minish not aught thereof. But if the one who oweth be witless or infirm, or if he be not able to dictate himself, then let his guardian dictate with fairness and let two of your men be called to be witnesses, but if both be not men, then a man and two women, of those ye approve for witnesses, so that should one of the twain forget, one of them should remind the other; and let not the witnesses refuse

when summoned: and weary not ye of writing it down, be the transaction small or big, with its time of payment. This is the fairest procedure in the sight of God, and the most suitable for evidence, and nearest to the removing of doubt; except it be a current traffic that ye exchange between you, for then there shall be no sin on you if ye write it not down: and call witnesses when ye traffic together, and let not the scribe or witness come to harm, for if ye do, verily it will be a wickedness in you; and fear God, for God teacheth you, and God knoweth everything.

283. But if ye be on a journey and ye find not a scribe, then let a security be handed over; but if one of you, trust the other, let the one who is trusted fulfil his trust, and fear God his Lord; and ye shall not hide evidence, for whosoever hideth it his heart is verily sinful, and God knoweth all that ye do.

Verse 282 "It is noteworthy, as the Ahmadi commentator says, "that these directions were given to a people notably illiterate as a nation, so much so that they took pride in being called *Ummi* or unlearned people —and that too at a time when the Muslim society was itself in danger of being swept away This shows that the Quran was the word of the Almighty Being who knew that the Muslims must soon become a great nation and that, therefore, they would need all these instructions of which a well-developed society stands in need"

A few legal points are all that need be noted

(1) The writing of loan transactions is not compulsory It is only recommended though very strongly.

(2) The obligation on any particular literate man to write the transaction obtains only if others are not available.

(3) So too is the becoming witness to the document according to the majority of the Shia jurists.

There are various reasons why two women's evidence is held equal to that of one man. Owing to confinement at home andowing to Purdah system they cannot be expected to have a keen perception of all the material facts required for satisfactory evidence in a Law Court. They

may not be able even to recognise the parties some years afterwards so as to swear they are the same. So too their judgement in matters outside of their limited field of action is not so developed, Then they are more subject to tender emotions, and so can be more easily influenced in special cases, particularly as they have not to mix freely with the outside world. Finally it is not at all desirable that they should appear in Law Courts as witnesses and indeed they cannot be, with propriety, put to cross examination so freely as the men can be

SECTION 40.

All that is in heavens and earth belongs to God Men are accountable not only for their actions but for their thoughts as well. The pleading of the Prophet on behalf of his people before God

284. To God belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, and whether ye make known that which is in your hearts or hide it, God will call you to account for it, and thereafter will He forgive whomsoever He will, and punish whomsoever He will, and God hath power over everything.

285. The Apostle believeth in what hath come down to him from his Lord, and so do the faithful, all believe in God and His angels and His books and His Apostles. We make no distinction between any of His apostles, and they say, We hearken and We obey; grant us Thy forgiveness, Lord! for unto Thee do we return.

286. God burdeneth none except according to his capacity, for him shall be (the good) he hath earned, and him (the evil) he hath laboured to acquire. O Lord! call us not to account for our omissions and our errors. O Lord! lay not on us a burden like unto that which Thou laidest on those who lived before us. O Lord! cause us not to carry that which is beyond our power, and forgive us our trespasses and cover over our sins, and have mercy on us, Thou art our protector, help us then against the unbelievers.

Verse 284. From the passage as a whole it seems to me, though it is not necessary, the heavens and earth spoken of in the beginning of the verse may be understood more particularly in the higher spiritual sense; the heavens standing for the spiritual realm and the earth for the physical one. Both belong to God and both are to be kept sacred and not defiled. Correct deportment is not all that is wanted. Evil thoughts and evil inclinations are as much punishable without expression as when they express themselves in speech or action "By what is in the hearts does God requite His servants," says Our Lord Ali, and this applies as much to faith and affections as to conduct See the tradition of Our Lord Sadiq cited from Ayyashi in Safi. Evil thoughts arising in spite of self because of temperament &c and promptly striven to be excluded are pardonable But it must be remembered that the possibility of this can be increased or reduced by man's efforts and herein is a matter of infinite complexity in which God alone can judge men according to their merits

"He will forgive whom He will and will punish whom He will" (*Leman yashaa* in both cases) the construction as in other similar passages in the Quran being such that it can also be rendered 'him who seeks it' (*i. e* his punishment or forgiveness) But both come to the same thing if we recognise (what the majority of the Sunni theologists dispute unnecessarily with us and the Motazalites) that God is not unprincipled ruler, and whatever He does, whether He forgives or punishes, will be strictly according to justice.

Verse 285 & 286 The construction of these verses will be marked by the careful reader Some words appear to come from God, others are submissions by the people. And they are all joined together without any connecting words such as 'they say' or 'said' or the like. According to a tradition of Our Lord Jafarel Sadiq they are made up of words which passed between God and His Holy Apostle on his Ascension (*Meraj*) to heaven. God said "The Apostle has believed in what has been revealed to Him from his Lord." The Prophet said "And the people, all believe &c" The opening words of verse 286 are again from God and the succeeding prayer is again from the Prophet on behalf of the people. This, to indicate the highest honour that the Prophet had in the sight of God. His words are absorbed in Revelation as the words of God Himself. Mark the words "Do not lay a burden on us &c." People have no business to pray as to what kind of religion they should have. It shows (what we are taught by the Imams, see Kafi) that the Prophet was entrusted with the task of *Tadib* or training his people in the ways and by the methods that appeared most suitable to him. He only did this duly consulting the pleasure of God in everything.

[Reprinted from the Contributions of the Society for Research on Meteorites, POPULAR ASTRONOMY, Vol XLVI, No 7, August-September, 1938.]

On the Meteoritic Origin of the Black Stone of the Ka'bah

By MOHD A R. KHAN,
Begumpet, Deccan, N S R, India

Abstract—Various descriptions and a history of the Black Stone of the Ka'bah, and speculations as to its nature and origin, are included in this paper In the opinion of the writer, many people would prefer to assume that the tradition about the Stone's having been brought by the Angel Gabriel and given to Abraham and Ishmael for setting in a wall of the Ka'bah, arose out of an attempt to explain its witnessed fall as an aërolite, which may have happened not long before the first recorded rebuilding of the Ka'bah

Conflicting reports were published about the origin of the Black Stone of the Ka'bah in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by European writers on Arabia, some of whom had the privilege of actually (though hurriedly) examining the Stone while visiting Al-Makkah (Mecca), disguised as pilgrims, while others based their conjectures on the accounts published by these travelers or on writings of older Arab historians As may be expected, early Arab writers attribute to the Black Stone a "celestial" origin, as having been brought by the Angel Gabriel and fixed by Abraham and Ishmael in the northeast corner of the Ka'bah, when it was rebuilt after the Deluge—a modest, roof-less building, cubical in shape (as the name signifies) At the birth of Islam it was again rebuilt from the wreckage of some Greek ships, picked up on the shore of the Red Sea (Al-Azraqī, "Akhbar Makkah," ed Wustenfeld, Leipzig, 1858, pp. 104-7) About the origin of the Black Stone, Azraqī (*loc cit*, p 10) writes that it was originally one of the stars of Paradise and was then (of the color of) a bright ruby Folklore was mixed up with fact when some credulous pilgrims believed in the past (and may believe possibly to the present day) that the Stone was a transparent crystal when first brought from heaven, but gradually lost its transparency and assumed its present black color and opacity as a cumulative effect of sins committed in successive generations! On account of the sanctity of the Ka'bah from time immemorial and the association of the Black Stone with the ceremonials of Hajj (the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Makkah), it is by no means easy for even a Muslim scientist to photograph the Stone, much less examine it under the microscope or analyze a piece of it chemically The accompanying figure is a photograph of the clear illustration published in Sir William Muir's "The Life of Mahomet" (Smith Elder & Co., 15, Waterloo Place, London, 1894), which is reproduced presumably from an engraving by "Ali Bey" (the Spanish traveler and geologist, Domingo Belia Y Leblich), as it agrees exactly with the rather dim copy facing p 78 of Professor D S. Margoliouth's book "Mohammad" ("Heroes of the Nations Series," pub-

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lished by G P. Putnam's Sons), taken from "Ali Bey's" "Travels" (London, 1816).

FIGURE 1
SIDE AND FRONT VIEWS OF THE BLACK STONE OF THE KA'BAH
(For reference, see the paper)

Though held in reverence from the earliest times down to the present, the Stone had a very checkered history during the civil wars of the Umayyad and 'Abbasid empires. The first injury done to it was when Al-Husayn ibn-Numayr al-Sukūni, chief officer in charge of the Syrian army from Damascus, besieged Makkah, where 'Abdullāh ibn-al-Zubayr had taken refuge, after his defeat in the struggle for the Caliphate with Yazid, son of Mu'āwiyah. Ibn-Numayr's catapults rained stones onto the holy mosk of Makkah, and the conflict became so fierce that the Ka'bah itself caught fire and the Black Stone was split into three pieces (Tabari, Vol II, p 427) Meanwhile, Yazīd died, and the Syrian army, having raised the siege of Makkah, 'Abdullāh ibn-al-Zubayr rebuilt the Ka'bah and had the broken pieces of the Black Stone joined together in a silver framework and placed in the old northeast corner (about 683 A D.)

The second injury which the Stone was destined to receive occurred in the year 930 A.D., in the reign of the 'Abbasid Caliph Al-Muqtadir, when Abu Tāhir Sulaymān, the Qarmatian chief, having laid waste most of lower Al-'Iraq, cut the pilgrim routes and seized Makkah. A drunken Qarmatian soldier entered the circuit border of the Ka'bah, seated on horseback, and, dealing a heavy blow with a hammer, knocked the Stone down from its setting and took it away (Ibn-Taghri Birdi, Vol. II, p. 237, Leiden, 1857) For over twenty years the Stone remained with the Qarmatians. It was restored to the Ka'bah in 951 A.D. by order of the Fatimid Caliph al-Mansūr (Baghdādī, ed. Hitti, pp 176-7, Ibn-al-A-thīr, Vol. VIII, pp. 153-4)

Ibn-Taghri Birdi (*loc cit*, pp 327 and 331) gives the following details "In 339 A H. [950 A.D.], the Qarmatians sent the Black Stone to Caliph Muti' through Muhammad ibn-Bashīr Before this they refused an offer of 50,000 dinars made by the Amir-ul-Umara', Bajkam, for its delivery, saying that they would return the Stone only when ordered by the authority that enjoined upon them to remove it. And when they delivered it to Caliph Muti', they said they were acting under instructions from that same authority According to Musabbihi, Sanbar bin-al-Hasan, the Qarmatian, accompanied by the Amir of Makkah, brought the [broken] Stone to the Ka'bah, put its pieces together with the help of silver lining, and fixed the framework in mortar in a corner of the wall of the Ka'bah. In 340 A.H. [951

A D], the Stone was again taken out of its setting and refixed in a silver frame to present the same appearance as in the days of 'Abdullāh-ibn-al-Zubayr "

The following description of the Stone, with other details, from "Ali Bey's" "Travels" (previously cited), quoted by R. H. Kiernan in "The Unveiling of Arabia" (George Harrap, 1937, pp 109-11), throws light on the views then held with regard to its origin

"As accepted by the Royal Geographical Society and the British War Office, Makkah [Mecca] has latitude 21° 25′ 18″ N and longitude 39° 49′ 41″ E.

"The 'Temple' of Makkah comprises the House of God Beit Allāh or Al-Ka'bah, the Well Zemzem, Bir Zimzem, the 'Cobba' or place of Abraham, Maqām Ibrahim, the places of the four Orthodox rites, Maqām Hanīfah, *etc*

The Black Stone (Hajar Aswad) is raised 42 inches above the surface and is bordered all round with a large plate of silver about a foot broad The part of the Stone that is not covered by the silver is almost a semicircle, 6 inches in height, by 8 inches, 6 lines [in] diameter at its base We believe that this miraculous Stone was a transparent hyacinth brought from heaven to Abraham by the Angel Gabriel as a pledge of his 'divinity'[?], and, being touched by an impious woman, became black and opaque!

"This Stone is a fragment of volcanic basalt which is sprinkled throughout its composition with small, pointed crystals and 'varied' with feldspar, upon a dark background like coal, except one of its protuberances, which is a little reddish.

"The continual kisses and touchings of the faithful have worn the surface uneven, so that it now has a 'muscular' appearance It has 15 'muscles' and one deep hollow Upon comparing the borders of the Stone that are covered and secured by the silver with the uncovered part, I found [that] the latter [had] lost nearly 12 lines of its thickness, from whence we may infer that if the Stone was smooth and even in the time of the Prophet, it has lost a line during each succeeding age "

Evidently "Ali Bey," at the time of writing this account, was unaware of the damages done to the Stone by the Syrians and Qarmatians.

A number of European writers of the last century were of the opinion that the Black Stone was a piece of lava, *e.g*, (*a*) Sprenger, in "Das Leben und die Lehre des Muhammad II," p. 341, thought it was lava containing white and yellow particles, (*b*) Sir Richard F Burton in his "Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madīna and Mecca" (Memorial Edition, Vol II, 1893, pp. 300-3), writes as follows ("Appendix II")

"At the northeast corner of the Ka'bah, near the door, is the famous Black Stone,* it forms a part of the sharp angle of the building,† at four or five feet above the ground. It is an irregular oval about seven inches in diameter, with an undulating surface, composed of about a dozen smaller stones of different sizes and shapes, well joined together with a small quantity of cement, and, perfectly well smoothed, it looks as if the whole had been broken into many pieces by a violent blow, and then united again. It is very difficult to determine accurately the quality of the Stone which has been worn to its present surface by the million [millions of] touches and kisses it has received. It appeared to me like a lava con-

*A footnote (presumably by the editor, Lady Isabel Burton, adds " *It appeared to me [to be] a common aërolite, covered with a thick, sloggy coating, glossy and pitch-like, worn and polished* "

†Another footnote describes its appearance in profile thus "The Hajar [Stone] has suffered from the iconoclastic principles of Islām, having once narrowly escaped destruction by order of Al-Hākim of Egypt. In these days the metal rim serves as a protection as well as an ornament."

taining several small extraneous particles of a whitish and of a yellowish substance Its color is now a deep reddish-brown, approaching to black It is surrounded on all sides by a border composed of a substance which I took to be a close cement of pitch and gravel of a similar, but not quite the same, brownish color This border serves to support its detached pieces, it is two or three inches in breadth and rises a little above the surface of the Stone. Both the border and the Stone itself are encircled by a silver band, broader below than above, and the two sides, with a considerable swelling below, [look?] as if a part of the Stone were hidden under it The lower part of the border is studded with silver nails"

(*c*) Burkhardt, in his "Voyages en Arabie," 1935, Vol I, p 182, expresses his view in favor of the lava origin, while (*d*) Sir W Muir (*loc cit*, p 27) writes, " This Stone, which is semicircular, measures some six inches in height and eight in breadth, it is of a reddish-black color, and, notwithstanding the polish impressed by myriads of kisses, bears to the present day in its undulating surface, marks of a volcanic origin"

These accounts suggest (as has been remarked by Professor Margoliouth in a recent communication to the present writer) that plagiarism was a common practice. Concerning the notion about the meteoritic origin of the Stone, he thinks that this is based on the tradition that it was brought by the Angel Gabriel (Qutb-al-dīn, died 990 A H., ed Wüstenfeld, p 30), and suggests that "perhaps some guidance may be got from the fact that it was split by the heat when the Ka'bah was burned" (Azraqī, *loc cit* ed Wüstenfeld, p 153) A number of arguments may be cited in favor of the meteoritic origin It is well known that even in the first decade of the nineteenth century, men of science were not sure of "stones falling from heaven" There can be no wonder that, for lack of adequate information about the nature and characteristics of meteorites, even geologists of those days went wrong in their "diagnoses" of the Black Stone

It is significant that Thomas Carlyle, in "Hero as a Prophet, says " Diodorus Siculus mentions this Caabah [Ka'bah] in a way not to be mistaken, as the oldest, most honored temple in his time, this is [was] some half-century before our era Silvestre de Sacy says there is some likelihood that *the Black Stone is an aërolite* In that case, some man might see [have seen] it fall out of heaven! It stands now beside the Well Zemzem, the Caabah is built over both "

Azraqī's statement that the Stone was originally a star of Paradise (*loc cit* p. 10) suggests that it may have been *seen at some time to fall as a shooting-star* In the present writer's opinion, many people would prefer to assume that the tradition about the Stone's having been brought by the Angel Gabriel and given to Abraham and Ishmael for setting in a wall of the Ka'bah, arose out of an attempt to explain its witnessed fall as an aërolite, which may have happened not long before the first recorded rebuilding of the Ka'bah

Lt-Col W Campbell Smith (now Keeper of Minerals in the British Museum) in his paper, "A New Meteorite from Suwāhib, Arabia" (*Min Mag*, for March, 1932, p 47) writes "The only other *meteorites* from Arabia are the famous 'Black Stone,' set in the wall of the Ka'bah at Mecca, of which the history goes back beyond the seventh century, a meteoric [meteoritic] iron, of which two large masses were found in 1863 in the Wadi Bani Khāled in Nejed (Nejd), and a gray bronzite-chondrite, which fell in the spring of 1910 at Et Tlahi in the HedJaz"

W F Denning (Hutchinson's "Splendour of the Heavens," p 438), under the heading of "Falling-Stars," says "In the seventh century, a stone fell which was built in the northeast corner of the Kaaba [Ka'bah] at Mecca, and afterwards

worshiped by the Moslems" It may be pointed out here that the fall did not occur in the seventh century, but, in all probability, much earlier, perhaps at the time of Abraham, and that, though the Stone may have been worshiped along with other idols of the Ka'bah by the Arabs before the advent of Islam, it has been, since then, only *kissed* by the pilgrims in their circuit of the Ka'bah The statement in Professor H H Nininger's "Our Stone-Pelted Planet," on p 226, concerning the date of the finding of the Mecca (Kaaba) Stone, as A D 1772, also needs correction Philip K. Hitti of Princeton University, in his "History of the Arabs" (Macmillan, 1937, p 100) writes of the Ka'bah as a building of primitive simplicity, originally roof-less, serving as a shelter for a *black meteorite*, which was venerated as a fetish

In the bibliography of the Black Stone, mention may be made of a book in Arabic by Ibrahīm Rif'at Pasha, entitled, 'Mir'at-al-Haramayn," 2 vols, published by Dār-ul-Kutub al Misriah, Cairo The Stone is described in Vol I, pp 301-8 Two papers in Urdu, by Alī Shabbīr of Hyderabad, published in *Lis-ān-al-Mulk*, Vol III No 2, pp 69-88, and No 4, pp 189-222, October, 1924, based mostly on the foregoing authorities, are full of interesting historical and anecdotal details, on the subject of the Black Stone.

The present writer has much pleasure in expressing his indebtedness to Professor D S Margoliouth of Oxford, for references to the works of Azraqī and other Arab historians mentioned in this paper, which have been consulted wherever possible References to Ibn-Taghrī Birdī have been kindly furnished by Professor Jamīl-al-Rahmān of the Osmania University

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