

## Defending the Holy Prophet Muhammad against Western distortions and allegations

### *Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement showed how in 1934*

Just as these days we hear, from time to time, that some magazine in the West has published a scurrilous article attacking the Holy Prophet Muhammad, examples of articles of this kind can also be found from many years ago. In February 1934 a magazine, *Pearson's Weekly* of London, published such an article. In response the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement's English language weekly organ, *The Light* of Lahore, published a special issue of 16 pages, dated 24 March 1934, consisting of nine articles by Lahore Ahmadiyya scholars, each refuting a different allegation against the Holy Prophet made in the *Pearson's Weekly* article. This special issue was announced in preceding issue of *The Light* (16 March 1934) on its front page, where it is stated:

“In its issue of February 10, 1934, the *Pearson's Weekly* of London, in the course of an article on ‘Mahomet : Prophet of Allah’ has given a most distorted pen-picture of the Holy Prophet of Islam. Besides the outrageous illustrations of the Prophet, Hazrat Aysha and Hazrat Bilal, the entire article is extremely offensive in tone and absolutely unfounded in fact. It has naturally sent a wave of indignation throughout Muslim India and the Punjab Government has by a special notification proscribed the said number of the *Weekly*. That, however, is not where the true remedy of such effusions lies. The root cause lies in the mentality of these western writers. It is idle for us Muslims to be satisfied with indignation or proscription. So long as the mentality is there, such like writings are bound to appear from time to time. If the Musalmans really wish to put an end to this sort of offensive literature, they must change the mentality which is responsible for it. And that can only be done by extensive dissemination of a true picture of the Holy Prophet and by dispelling all false notions about him. With a view to counteracting the misconceptions created by the *Pearson's Weekly* we have asked certain scholars to take up each one of the allegations and in the light of reason and history nail it to the counter. These articles will be embodied in the issue of the *Light* for March 24, 1934, the whole of which will devoted to the same. It is desirable that friends should order extra copies of this issue and put these in the hands of educated non-Muslims, especially Europeans among whom these misconceptions about the Prophet are common and deep-seated.”

The analysis in this announcement, published in 1934, has proved perfectly correct over time, and hence we see that vituperative and disparaging articles and books of this kind have continued to appear from time to time in the West. This is because Muslims in general ignored the sound and wise advice, given above, that they must not “be satisfied with indignation or proscription” (i.e., protests or banning), and that the real solution is to counter such writings “by extensive dissemination of a true picture of the Holy Prophet and by dispelling all false notions about him”.

After these introductory remarks, we now append here images of pages from *The Light* as follows:

1. Front page of the 16 March 1934 issue.
2. All the pages of the Special Issue of 24 March 1934. (Note that pages 8 and 9 of this issue are a double spread, as we have marked on them.)
3. Page 4 and page 7 of a later issue, dated 8 April 1934, containing an article *The Prophet and the First Call*, for which there was not space in the Special issue.

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[www.ahmadiyya.org/islam/intro.htm](http://www.ahmadiyya.org/islam/intro.htm)

Organ of the  
Ahmadiya  
Anjuman  
Isha'at Islam,  
Lahore (India)

# THE LIGHT

Published  
on  
1st, 8th, 16th and  
24th  
of every month.

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## 'Pearson's Weekly' on the Prophet Charges Nailed to the Counter

### Special Number of "Light"

In its issue of February 10, 1934, the *Pearson's Weekly* of London, in the course of an article on "Mahomet: Prophet of Allah" has given a most distorted pen-picture of the Holy Prophet of Islam. Besides the outrageous illustrations of the Prophet, Hazrat Aysha and Hazrat Bilal, the entire article is extremely offensive in tone and absolutely unfounded in fact. It has naturally sent a wave of indignation throughout Muslim India and the Punjab Government has by a special notification proscribed the said number of the *Weekly*. That, however, is not where the true remedy of such effusions lies. The root cause lies in the mentality of these western writers. It is idle for us Muslims to be satisfied with indignation or proscription. So long as the mentality is there, such like writings are bound to appear from time to time. If the Musalmans really wish to put an end to this sort of offensive literature, they must change the mentality which is responsible for it. And that can only be done by extensive dissemination of a true picture of the Holy Prophet and by dispelling all false notions about him. With a view to counteracting the misconceptions created by the *Pearson's Weekly* we have asked certain scholars to take up each one of the allegations and in the light of reason and history nail it to the counter. These articles will be embodied in the issue of the *Light* for March 24, 1934, the

whole of which will be devoted to the same. It is desirable that friends should order extra copies of this issue and put these in the hands of educated non-Muslims, especially Europeans among whom, these misconceptions about the Prophet are common and deep-seated. Some of the charges to be dealt with are:

1. Did the Prophet suffer from epilepsy?
2. Hazrat Aysha's age at the time of her marriage with the Prophet.
3. The Prophet's marriages and the real motive behind them.
4. Are the Biblical narratives in the Quran the result of the Prophet's contact with the Jews and Christians or the direct revelation of God?
5. The so-called raid of the Prophet on a caravan to provide funds for his movement.
6. Did the Prophet have any doubts as to his mission when the "call" first came to him?
7. Do Muslims worship the Kaaba?
8. What is the Paradise of the Quran like?

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# THE LIGHT

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## A PRESENT TO "PEARSON'S WEEKLY"

To

THE EDITOR,

*The Pearsons's Weekly*, LONDON.

SIR, - I am sure you have by now learnt of the resentment which an article in your issue of February 10th on "Mahomet: Prophet of Allah" caused among the Muslims all over India. This special number of our Weekly, the *Light* is meant to convince you that the resentment has not been unjustified and that your contributor has really been uncharitable in his estimate of a great soul who, as he himself puts it, "shook the world."

Your contributor has reproduced things which may have passed for facts in the days of yore when Christendom and Islam were entangled in deadly grapple against each other and any stick to beat Islam with was considered good enough in the West. He forgets that the world has outgrown that stage of religious fanaticism and Islam and Christianity are already recognising in each other a sister faith springing from the same source and making friendly advances towards each other. The following pages seek to show that the old medieval stories re-told by your contributor can hold no water in the light of history.

This is, however, but a negative aspect of the picture. It should take quite a volume by itself to present the positive side and show that the Prophet Muhammad was one of the greatest benefactors of humanity. He shook the world as it was never shaken before, wiping a rotten, irrational, inhuman system of society out of existence and ushering in an order of which reason and humanity were the two corner-stones.

I am quite prepared to believe that in giving publicity to the article in question you meant no offence. To you, perhaps, it meant no more than just a weekly entertainment to your readers. But you will agree that you should have shown greater consideration for the feelings of the millions of Mussalmans the world over who hold the Prophet's honour dearer than their own lives. The tragedy of the thing is enhanced all the more when one finds, as the following pages prove to the hilt, that the slings are absolutely unfounded and unmerited.

You are welcome to hold whatever views you will. If, however, a perusal of these pages should at all convince you that your contributor has not been fair in his portrait of the Prophet, may I ask you to make amends for the unfairness by a refutation of the various charges in the earliest issue of your Weekly.

In order, however, to completely dispel the false impression created about the Prophet we wish to present a copy of this issue to each one of your subscribers. I understand you have a million on your list. Please let me know if we may arrange to supply you as many copies together with the postal and any other expenses that may be incurred thereon.

Yours Truly,  
M. Y. KHAN,  
Editor, The "*Light*".

Lahore (India)

## 15 not 9

**BORN** ... Year of Call,  
**BETROTHAL** ... 10th year of Call at age of 10.  
**MARRIAGE** ... 2nd Hijrah, i.e., 5 years after the  
 betrothal at the age of 15.

By Maulana Muhammad Ali

Before coming to the question of Hazrat 'Ā'isha's age at the time of her marriage, I would briefly note the circumstances under which she was married. In the tenth year of the Call (*bi'tha*), the Holy Prophet lost his faithful wife Khadija who at the time of her death was sixty-five years of age, while he was then fifty years old. During the many and hard trials through which the Prophet had passed, she had been his greatest comforter. The bereavement, therefore, was a great shock and told heavily on him. One of his followers, a lady, suggested to him that he should marry and proposed the name of Abu Bakr's daughter, 'Ā'isha. The young girl had already been betrothed to Jubair, son of Mut'im, and when the lady in question mentioned her proposal to Abu Bakr, he was glad to strengthen his already strong ties of affection with the Prophet but wanted first to settle the matter with Jubair. This being done, the *nikāh* (marriage ceremonial) was performed in the month of Shawwāl in the tenth year of the Call in Mecca, but the consummation of marriage was delayed for full five years, and took place in Medina in the month of Shawwāl in the second year of Hijra. For facility of reference I would refer to the *nikāh* as betrothal as it practically was, and to the consummation as the marriage.

The writer of the article in *Pearson's Weekly* distorts these plain facts into the monstrous suggestion that 'Ā'isha was offered by Abu Bakr as a "bait" to the Prophet "to consolidate his position as chief adviser to the Prophet." The facts which every historian, friendly or hostile, has never contested are that the betrothal took place in the days when persecution against both the Holy Prophet and Abu Bakr was hottest, and both had, three years later, to fly for their very lives. At such a time there could be no idea of a ruler and his chief adviser. And further the relations of Abu Bakr with the Holy Prophet were of the closest friendship even before the Holy Prophet received the Call, in fact from the very days when both were yet in the prime of life. And Abu Bakr proved a pillar of strength to the Holy Prophet immediately after the Call, as he was not only the most zealous preacher of Islam next to the Holy Prophet but had also spent his whole treasure of wealth, being one of the richest merchants in Mecca, in saving poor persecuted Muslim slaves from the clutches of tyrannical masters. The close friendship of Abu Bakr with the Prophet and the strong support he gave to his cause from the earliest days has been admitted by Muir and all other Christian writers, and Muir has paid a tribute of praise to the sincerity of Abu Bakr. It is in fact a wonder how any person having the least

claim to the knowledge of the history of Islam could make the mean suggestion that Abu Bakr had offered his daughter as a bait to strengthen his position. Position in what? In the persecution which was at that time the lot of every Muslim!

I now come to the question of Hazrat 'Ā'isha's age. The reports on this point are varying. According to some reports, her age at the betrothal was six years and her age at marriage nine (Bukhari, 67 : 38, 39). According to others, her age at betrothal was seven and at marriage nine (Muslim, book 16, Ch. *Jawāz tazwīj al-ab-i' al-bikr-al-saghira*; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Vol. VI, p. 280, *Isāba* by Ibn Hajar). According to others still, she was nine years of age at the time of her betrothal (*Tabaqat ibn Sa'd*, Vol. VIII, p. 41, 42). The question to decide is which of these reports is supported by other historical facts. It must however be stated in the very beginning that by a consensus of opinion of all historians there was an interval of five, or at least of four, years between the betrothal (*nikāh*) and the marriage (consummation). The allowing of this long interval could be due only to one consideration, *viz.* that the bride should attain to the age of puberty before the marriage actually took place. Whatever her age at marriage may therefore be the one thing certain is that she had to wait for consummation till she attained full womanhood.

The question now is which of the varying reports which give 'Ā'isha's age at betrothal to be six, seven or nine is to be accepted. Along with this difference in reports there are matters over which there is an agreement and we will first consider whether such matters throw any light on this question. In the first place it is agreed that the betrothal of 'Ā'isha took place in the month of Shawwāl in the tenth year of the Call. After this the Holy Prophet remained at Mecca for three years and five months. The next point that is agreed upon is that the marriage took place in the month of Shawwāl in the second year of Hijra (*Isāba* by Ibn Hajar). No doubt the *Isāba* also mentions a report that the marriage took place in the first year of Hijra, but that this is wrong is shown by several other considerations, and the reports giving the second year of Hijra have generally been accepted as more trustworthy, and it appears that it was after the battle of Badr in the second year that the marriage took place. Thus there was an interval of full five years between the betrothal and the marriage. Therefore all these reports which say that 'Ā'isha was six or seven years old at betrothal and nine years at marriage must be rejected as due to some

(See page 4)

# THE LIGHT

Saturday, March 24, 1934

## A Man's Religion

A man's religion burning with the ecstasy of a man, it soon swept through the desert like a sand-storm. —*Pearson's Weekly.*

Throughout the volley of criticism levelled at the Holy Founder of Islam, there runs a consistency which is as strange as ironic. Every fling takes for its target exactly the point which forms the greatest beauty-spot in his personality. Pull any of these shafts out and underneath it you stumble upon a whole treasure of moral charm. Among all the world Teachers, Muhammad stands alone in inculcating reverence for all other faiths and their founders, even to the extent of making this an article of faith for his followers. Yet he of all that noble band has been singled out by the tongue of calumny and mud thrown on him as on no other religious founder! He vindicates the honour of Jesus and the good name of his holy mother against aspersions on her chastity. Yet a Christian writer is never so pleased as when he picks holes in his character and that of his household! He was the first religious founder to redeem womanhood from age-long servility and restore it to full human dignity. Yet "woman" looms so large in the charge-sheet against him! Living in a country and among a people where the use of sword was as common as that of a stick, he lived up to good old age without raising a little finger against fellowman. Yet "sword" is another big item in the list against him!

The fling in the *Pearson's Weekly* at the top is one such irony of things. It depicts him as if he were a self-centred, self-seeking man, standing for nothing higher or nobler than the sordid satisfaction of the self, while the fact is that history could hardly tell of another individual who so thoroughly identified himself, in work-a-day life, with his fellowmen! If there was one trait in his rich and variagated personality which might fitly be called the key-note of his personality, that trait, undoubtedly, was the touch of humanity in him.

From an orphan boy, and a persecuted refugee to an overlord, spiritual as well as temporal, of a whole nation, is a vast landscape, with its numerous ups and downs, its numerous hills and dales. And as you look at this panorama, even through this distance of time, at every step you find it so rich in beauty, so rich in fascination. It is a veritable fairy-land. Whatever part Muhammad was called upon by circumstances to play, he played it like a hero, shedding unearthly lustre on the whole game. Whatever position he was called upon to occupy, he brought to it a lustre, the like of

which the annals of man have not known. There is Muhammad, the Prophet. There is Muhammad, the General. There is Muhammad, the King. There is Muhammad, the Warrior, Muhammad, the Friend, Muhammad, the Foe. And in all these magnificent roles you find the aureole of the hero shine on his face. But there is nothing like Muhammad, the *Man*! His humanity out-shines all else in him.

It is the *Man* in Muhammad that marks the prettiest beauty-spot in an otherwise all-round beautiful picture. It is the human touch in all he was and in all he did that lends the whole thing a grace of its own. He was a *Man* first and a Prophet afterwards. As a king, he was the manliest of kings. Humanity was the warp of his being. Humanity was the woof of his being. He was *man par excellence*. His heart overflowed with the milk of human love. To serve man, to uplift man, to liberate man, to educate man, to enlighten man, to unite man, in one word, to humanize man—this was the be-all and end-all of his life. In thought, in word, in deed, he had the good of man as his sole inspiration, his sole guiding principle.

Never in the numerous vicissitudes of his eventful life did this all-dominating passion abate or subside. Ridiculed, pelted, stoned, with feet swollen and bleeding, when some one suggested imprecation against his tormentors, the *Man* in Muhammad revolted against the very idea. "I am not sent as a curse to mankind. I am sent as a blessing unto humanity!" And when lying in dust and his own blood at the field of battle, knocked down by the enemy, his heart beat with the same sentiment of human love. "Lord!", he was heard to murmur, "Lord! Forgive my people, for they know not."

Time came when fortune put the regal sceptre of the whole peninsula of Arabia in his holy hands—a position when man gets intoxicated with power and forgets himself. Yet there was not the slightest change in him. The King of Arabia, he would as usual stitch his own clothes, mend his own shoes, milk his own goats and even sweep his own house. He slept on no softer bed than a palm matting and even Umar was touched to see the stripes on his body.

It was at the conquest of Mecca that Muhammad stood at the zenith of his power. How did he utilize that great opportunity? Speaking of Napoleon at the zenith of his power and glory, an eminent English historian compares him to a cockeral on a dung-hill. This is how he strutted on his mountain of opportunity. How did Muhammad utilize his mountain of opportunity? In the self-same service which was the key-note of his life, the service, uplift and unification of man. "This day", he proclaimed, "I trample under my feet all distinctions between man and man, all hatred between man and man."

There is no greater proof of the truth of Muhammad, than Muhammad the *man*. An

honest man, the saying goes, is the noblest work of God. Muhammad was more than honest. He was human to the marrow of his bones. Human sympathy, human love was the music of his soul. Muhammad's humanity is the greatest testimony to the truth of Muhammad, the Prophet.

And right to the end of his life the human side of Muhammad shines with the same lustre. When a Jew was rude to him in demanding the money he had lent him, Umar felt enraged. "That isn't fair, Umar," protested the *man* Muhammad. "You ought to advise me to repay the money and the Jew to be more gentle in his demand." And when on his death-bed, what was his last anxiety? The same one anxiety whether he owed any human obligation. "If there is any one," he had it announced, "whom I owe anything, let him come forward so that he might be paid. If there is any one whom I may have wronged, let him come forward and avenge the wrong while I am yet alive."

Such was the human curtain that dropped on that great and glorious drama of life devoted to the service, sympathy and love of mankind. It is here that lies the invincible force of the Prophet's personality. And yet this is the man who, we are told, stood for nothing higher than the satisfaction of the self and gave the world a religion burning with the ecstasy of the flesh! The same inevitable irony of consistency—poking at a point which was the most lovely spot in the Prophet's personality.

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## HAZRAT A'ISHA'S AGE

(Continued from page 2)

misunderstanding. If she was six or seven at betrothal, she could not be less than eleven or twelve at marriage. The misunderstanding clearly appears to be that some later reporter mistook the betrothal for the marriage. The reports of Ibn Sa'd which give 'A'isha's age to be nine at betrothal are thus the only reports that can be relied upon.

### Her Year of Birth

There is another uncontested fact which supports the above conclusion, and as it throws light on the question of 'A'isha's age indirectly, its authority is unquestionable. Speaking of Fātima, the Holy Prophet's youngest daughter, the Isāba says that she was born five years before the Call, in the year in which the Ka'ba was rebuilt, and that "she was five years older than 'A'isha." This settles the question beyond any doubt, and shows that 'A'isha was born in the year of the Call, and thus she was between nine and ten years of age at the time of her betrothal in the Shawwāl of the tenth year of the Call. This indirect testimony thus supports the correctness of the report which gives 'A'isha's age to be nine at betrothal. And she must have been between fourteen and fifteen at the time of her marriage.

Another consideration which supports the same conclusion is 'A'isha's statement in Bukhari that when the 54th chapter, known as Al-Qamar, was revealed she was a girl playing about and that she committed to memory certain verses then revealed (Bukhari, book 66, Ch. 6). Now the 54th chapter which belongs to the earliest period of Mecca revelation according to all accounts was undoubtedly revealed before the 5th year of the Call. If the report which gives her age at betrothal in the tenth year of the Call to be six or seven were to be accepted as true, she would then be hardly a year or two old at the time of the revelation of the 54th chapter. How could then she speak of herself as being a girl playing about and committing to memory some verses of a chapter? This is another indirect testimony whose authority has never been questioned which shows 'A'isha's age to be nine or ten years at betrothal. Hence there remains not the least doubt that 'A'isha was between fourteen and fifteen years of age at the time of her marriage.

A fourth consideration to the same effect is that Fātima, the Prophet's daughter, is admitted to have been above eighteen years of age at the time of her marriage in the beginning of the second year of Hijra (see the Isāba), and therefore 'A'isha who was her junior by five years could not be less than fourteen years in the Shawwāl of the second year. All these considerations whose authority has never been questioned, and can never be questioned, agree in showing that the reports which speak of 'A'isha's age as six or seven at the time of betrothal must be rejected as due to some misconception and that the reports which show her age to be nine at betrothal are true. And there being undoubtedly an interval of five years between the betrothal and the marriage, she was fourteen or fifteen years of age at the time of her marriage.

# THE STORY OF EPILEPSY AND THE PROPHET

## A Pure Concoction

*But the forties, the dangerous years for Mahomet were approaching. He began to be troubled a little with epilepsy—a common complaint in Arabia —“ Pearson's Weekly.”*

There is one common malady among Western historians. Instead of following facts as they present themselves and coming to a conclusion on the strength of those facts, they start with a pre-conception of their own and mould facts according to this self-made angle of vision. And what is the result? They arrive at conclusions which have not a distant relation with the true state of things. The historians of the past, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, confined themselves to a bare recording of events. They were not in the habit of probing into the causes that led to those events nor did they discuss the consequences following from them. European historians, however, when they got hold of these events, were not content with such isolated facts. They tried to link them up into a regular chain of causation and in order to fill up the picture gave a wide berth to their own imagination, assigning causes or deducing consequences according to their own preconceived notions. If they happened to be swayed by prejudice, personal predilection or fanaticism, they coloured the events before them with the colour of these same glasses. Such exactly has been the attitude of the priestly-minded Christian historians of Europe when dealing with the history of Islam.

To illustrate this point, take the various wars which the Muslims were driven to wage. What is the explanation these Western historians give for these? Why, they invariably, trace them to the “loot-lust,” “blood-thirstiness” or “ill-will” of the Musalmans. Any better interpretation never enters their minds which happen to be already obsessed with such a picture of the Musalmans. Having been brought up to look upon the Musalmans as cunning, treacherous, blood-thirsty, lustful, they look at their history through the same coloured glasses and read the same motives in their various exploits.

There are instances when these historians have, in the blind pursuit of their own fond fancies, gone so far out of their way as to present conjectures of their own as facts of history. Here is a striking case of this sort of coining of facts. They have recorded that the Prophet Muhammad had a pigeon which he had so trained by putting corn in his ear that the bird would, when so beckoned, promptly flutter to his side and put its beak into his ear. This, the Prophet would represent to his credulous followers, as Holy Ghost come with a Divine revelation. At first glance at this statement one is left with the impression that it must be a fact of history, recorded in some book on history or *hadith*. One can not help thinking that the Prophet must at least have

been visited by a pigeon at the coming of revelation. As, however, any student of Islam knows, no such event has at all been recorded in any book of history nor in any *hadith*.

What is the mental process at the back of this concoction of history? They start with the theory that the Holy Prophet was a “false prophet” and the rest of the castle is built on this pre-possession. As Christians, they had been taught in the Gospels that the Holy Ghost descended on Jesus in the form of a pigeon. From this they jumped to the conclusion that the angel Gabriel who, the Prophet claimed, visited him must have the shape of a pigeon too. This is how the pigeon was introduced into the Prophet's picture. Since, however, they had started on the theory of a “False Prophet”, the pigeon they coined must also be a false pigeon—a mere trick on the part of the Prophet to impose upon the people that the Holy Ghost visited him with Divine revelation. And when once this story was set afloat, writer after writer reproduced it as Gospel truth, without bothering to ascertain the truth for himself.

The allegation that the Prophet was suffering from epilepsy is one such story, concocted to support the “False Prophet” theory and now only repeated by the writer in the *Pearson's Weekly*. Whenever he had an epileptic fit, it is alleged, he pretended that he was visited by the Angel with the Divine communication. Now the story once set going is repeated from every quarter, by priests and laymen alike, without the least trouble to find out whether it is at all based on fact. If asked to quote some authority for their allegation, they fail to produce any. They simply say they guess so from the fact that at the time of revelation, the Prophet's countenance underwent change. In biting cold weather, his body profusely perspired. His body became so heavy that even the camel bearing him would kneel down on the ground. Once his head happened to be resting on the thigh of one of his companions when he was overtaken with the visitation. The companion reports that his thigh seemed to break under the weight of the Prophet's head. Now this is all the information history records of the Prophet's condition at the time of revelation. Nothing could be more absurd than to base epilepsy story on such data. Europe is now much advanced in medical science. May I ask if any European doctor has so far put down any of these symptoms, as epileptic? Never! Epileptic fits are quite different. Their form is different, their symptoms are different. An epileptic patient loses consciousness and has a contraction of muscles. His mouth foams and his tongue is cut under

(See Page 13)

# THE PROPHET'S HIGH STANDARD of CHASTITY

## HIS MARRIAGES PROMPTED BY ANYTHING BUT SENSUALITY

(BY M. GHULAM MUHAMMAD)

During the centuries preceding the 18th, learned Europe when speaking of Muhammad did nothing but revile him, because, it was under the influence of the priest, had no freedom of thought, and its judgment was warped by centuries of ignorance and prejudice. But mark the change from Pocode and Grotions to Carlyle, Lane Poole and finally to Lord Headley. These men have succeeded in divesting themselves of the prejudices created by the mischievous propaganda of missionaries, and with dispassionate minds have studied the career of the Prophet with the result that they have bowed down before him in reverential acknowledgement of the sublime loftiness and purity of his character. These, however, are noble exceptions. Among the rank and file of Western writers, the medieval misconceptions about the Prophet still linger. The contributor to the *Pearson's Weekly*, is obviously one of this lot.

The character of a man is reflected in every act and incident of his life. How he lived shows what he was. Let us look at the kind of life the Prophet lived and then ponder well whether such life can be the life of a sensualist.

It is admitted on all hands that the Prophet never ate his fill. Throughout his life his food consisted of dates, milk whenever he could get it and parched barley flour. Sometimes he had to go without food for several days together. He kept fast through the greater part of the year over and above the fasts enjoined on Muslims in general and only those who keep fast in the strict Islamic spirit can realize what a Muslim fast means. Throughout the greater part of the night when the whole world enjoyed sweet sleep, he was engaged in prayers, so much so that his feet were often swollen. He never slept on a soft bed, and often on bare ground. He never even touched strong drink which is a never failing friend of people given to sensual pleasures. He passed most of his time in preaching, administering the commonwealth of Islam, defending his people against the attacks of enemies and in social service of which he was surely the originator.

Can history tell of a sensualist who led such a strenuous selfless life? To call such a man a sensualist who brought about a thorough moral transformation of a whole people in a short period of twenty-three years betrays either gross ignorance or a singular perversity of nature.

It is no exaggeration to say that Muhammad inspired such devotion among his followers that even the greatest of them was ever ready to sacrifice his life and every other thing he held dear at slightest gesture from him. Can a man of loose morality claiming to receive Divine Revelation ever inspire such devotion and reverence among millions? You will be tempted to inquire what sort of people they were who loved their Prophet more

than they loved their own selves. Well, if history is to be trusted, they were a people whose ideals of conduct were much higher than those of any other people present or past. Omar the second Khalifa was once engaged in examining some state papers, when somebody turned up, and entered into conversation with him. When Omar found that the talk was purely personal he put out the state lamp, and relighted it when the talk was over.

History records innumerable instances to show how fine was the distinction which the disciples of the Prophet drew between right and wrong. Abu Bakr, the first Caliph used to receive a few annas a day from the Public Treasury for serving the commonwealth of Islam. His wife contrived to save something every day from this paltry allowance and in course of time had saved enough to have a very fine sheet of cloth made. With legitimate pride she one day showed the sheet to her husband who admired the cloth, praised his wife's frugality, but sent the sheet to the treasurer writing to him to reduce his allowance by the amount his wife used to save every day. Could people with such a finely developed moral faculty, and possessing such a keen sense of moral values believe a sensualist to be a Divine messenger?

Let us look at the ideal of chastity which Islam holds up to the world. The Quran relates the history of Joseph, and gives greater prominence to one episode in this history than to any other. Joseph lived as a slave in the house of the Pharaoh. The wife of the Pharaoh fell in love with him, and tried her best to prevail upon him to return her love. But in spite of the fact, that she was a lovely queen and he a poor slave, she did not succeed in shaking his virtuous determination. Now ponder well! A humble slave successfully resists the advances of a woman who is not only a powerful queen but is also the most beautiful woman of her time, and as a consequence suffers disgrace and imprisonment. Does history record a higher ideal of chastity? This is the ideal of Islam and its Prophet.

I give below an authentic tradition which will serve to show what a high value the Prophet set upon chastity and what amount of self-restraint and discipline he demands from Muslims if they wish to please their Maker.

Three men were travelling together. Being overtaken by rain they betook themselves into a cave. They had hardly got inside when a huge boulder rolled down the side of the hill and settled before the mouth of the cave so as to completely block the entrance. When they had recovered from their horror, they began to heave and tug at the stone, but their efforts were in vain. They could make no impression on it, and sat down in bewilderment, utterly at a loss what to do. When they realized that no physical means could help

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# THE SO-CALLED RAIDS OF THE PROPHET

## Myth of a Black Flag

[ By Maulana Muhammad Ali ]

*Early in the Medina days, Mahomet decided that the movement needed funds. So began those raids on the caravans of the desert that have continued until to-day. Hordes of men were soon galloping across the sands, the Black Flag carried before them. The Black Flag was the shirt of Mahomet's girl wife, Ayesha, carried on a lance.—Pearson's Weekly.*

One of the many wild statements made in *Pearson's Weekly* is that the Holy Prophet being bent upon establishing his religion with the sword needed funds, and that therefore immediately after reaching Medina he sent hordes of men in all directions to plunder the peaceful trade caravans. That such writings could pass for history in this twentieth century in a country which boasts of being a centre of learning only shows that Europe is still living in the dark age so far as its knowledge of Islam is concerned. A handful of men who had to fly for their very lives from Mecca defying the millions of Arab warriors who were all bent upon their extirpation! They could not guard themselves against the persecutions of the single tribe of Quraish at Mecca but they could intimidate each and every one of the Arab tribes including the Quraish immediately on reaching Medina!

It is a mistake to suppose that the Muslims were safe in Medina. The opposition there was even stronger than that at Mecca, with this difference only that they could perform their religious obligations without interference within the city itself. But they were by no means secure even within the city. There were three powerful Jewish tribes plotting against them day and night. There was Abdullah ibn Ubayy, the man who was about to be crowned king before the advent there of the Holy Prophet, and who even after his advent exercised a mighty influence over Medinites. This man was in correspondence with the Quraish, the people who had turned out the Muslims from Mecca. And all around Medina there were Arab tribes as inimical to Islam as the Quraish at Mecca, and all of them had united to extirpate Islam, as a report says:

"When the Holy Prophet and his companions came to Medina and the Ansar gave him shelter, the Arabs shot against them from one bow (*i.e.* all the Arab tribes rose up against them) and they (*i.e.* the Muslims) were in such danger that they used to go to bed wearing arms" (Hakam).

With enemies within the city and enemies all around actually in arms against the Muslims, it is nothing but a travesty of facts to say that "hordes of men" sent out in all directions by the Muslims were to rob the peaceful Arab tribes.

That the Muslims were not the first to take up arms is abundantly shown by Holy Quran:

"Permission to fight is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed, and God is well able to assist them; Those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say, Our Lord is God" (22: 39, 40).

"And fight in the way of God with those who fight with you and do not go beyond this limit, for God does not love those who exceed to limits" (2: 190).

"Fighting is enjoined on you and it is an object of dislike to you" (2: 216).

"And they will not cease fighting with you until they turn you back from your religion they can" (2: 217).

These are the earliest directions on the subject of war and they make it clear that it was not the Muslims who declared a war on their opponents but *war was made on them*, after they were expelled from their homes. They also show that the Muslims were averse to taking up arms even in self-defence because they knew that they were but a handful in the midst of enemies on all sides. And the express direction given to them was that they should not exceed the limit of fighting with any except those who first took up the sword and fought against them.

What happened actually was this that the Quraish could not see Islam—Islam which they had tried their best for thirteen years to uproot—flourish even in distant Medina. The Quraish leaders were now bent upon extirpating it with the sword. They first tried to use Abdullah ibn Ubayy as an instrument. They told him in plain words that he should either have the Muslims put to the sword or at least turn them out of Medina:

"You have given shelter to our man (meaning the Prophet); and we swear by God that you should either kill him or turn him out of Medina, otherwise we would attack you in a body until we kill those of you who can fight and take possession of your women" (Abu Dawood, Vol. II, p. 67, Ch. *Khabr al Nadzir*).

Thus no choice was left to the Muslims but to take up arms in self-defence as a last resort. The Holy Prophet had to keep himself aware of the movements of the enemy and had to send reconnoitering parties as a precaution. And it is these that have been converted into "raids on caravans" by biased writers like Muir, only

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# Did Islam go with a Sword

Permission to fight is given to those upon whom War is

*Much has been said of Muhammad's propagating his religion by the Sword. The Sword indeed! there it dwells as yet. One man alone of the whole world believes it. There is one man again*

*"The glory of Islam had begun and Mecca soon fell to the war a religion that encouraged the Sword and promised p*

## Thirteen Years of Non-Resistance to Persecution

### PERIOD OF RELENTLESS PERSECUTION

When the Prophet proclaimed his message of One God, One Humanity, a relentless campaign of persecution was started against him and his followers. For instance, one man was made to prostrate on burning noon-tide sand with heavy slabs of stones on his chest. A woman was tied by her legs to two camels and the animals driven in opposite directions, tearing the victim's body into two.

### EMIGRATION TO ABYSSINIA

To escape the fury of the Meccans, twice did the Prophet send some of his followers to seek shelter in Abyssinia. The Meccans were soon upon their heels to claim them back. But the Christian King, Negus refused to hand them back to the Meccans.

### THE FLIGHT

This campaign of persecution lasted for 13 years. The Meccans at last conspired to kill the Prophet at night. Assassins surrounded his house. In the dark of the night the Prophet made good his escape and took refuge in Medina, 250 miles from Mecca.

## DID ISLAM ENCOU

### PROPHET PURCHASES PEACE AT HEAVY COST

In the year 6 A. H., The Prophet along with 1,400 followers undertook a journey to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage, a privilege open to friend and foe during a particular month when, under the unwritten law of time-honoured tradition, all bloodshed came to a standstill. The Muslims carried no arms. At Hudaibiyya, just outside Mecca they were stopped by the Meccans. A battle was imminent. The Prophet, however, averted it by concluding a truce for ten years, at most humiliating and disadvantageous terms. The Muslims objected to it but the Prophet was anxious to have peace at any cost. The terms were:—

"In case some one from among the Quraish should embrace Islam and go over to the Muslim camp, he shall be handed over to the Quraish, should the latter so demand. 2. In case, however, some one should renounce Islam and go over to the side of the Quraish, the latter need not hand him over to the Muslims."

# rd or in spite of a Sword ?

← made because they are oppressed.—*The Quran (XXII: 39)*

*Every new opinion at its starting is precisely in the minority of one. In one man's head alone it is all men. That he take a sword and try to propagate with that will do little for him.—Carlyle.*

*riors who had found a religion that went with a sword.....*

*Paradise for the warrior killed in battle".—PEARSON'S WEEKLY.*

## Only when attacked in his last asylum he turns at bay

### THREE REPEATED ATTACKS ON MUSLIMS

Not content with having driven the Prophet and his handful of followers out of their homes and hearths, the Meccans did not let them alone even in their distant asylum. They made three repeated attacks on Medina. The Muslims had no alternative left but to turn at bay and give the enemy a manly battle.

Name of Battle	Where fought	When	Distance in miles From		Relative Strength		RESULT
			Mecca	Medina	Meccans	Muslims	
Badr ...	Badr ...	2 A. H.	220	30	1,000	313	Battle fought, Meccans defeated.
Ohad ...	Ohad ...	3 A. H.	247	3	3,000	700	Muslims sustained heavy losses. Meccans also left the field. Issue undecided.
Ahzab...	Medina..	5 A. H.	250	...	24,000	1,000	Medina is besieged by Meccans and their confederates. After a month's futile struggle, they get exhausted, raise the siege and turn back.

## RAGE THE SWORD ?

### BLOODLESS CONQUEST OF MECCA AND GENERAL AMNESTY

Within two years of the Truce, the Meccans violate one of the terms and attack a tribe in alliance with the Muslims. Bound as they were by the terms of the Treaty, the Muslims had to avenge the wrong done to their allies. The Prophet marches against Mecca at the head of 10,000 strong. Mecca surrenders without bloodshed. The erstwhile blood-thirsty enemies, guilty of horrible crimes against Muslims now stand at the sole mercy of the Prophet. He grants them general amnesty. Mark the humility of his triumphal proclamation :—

"This day I trample under my feet all the false pride, all the spirit of revenge, all blood money of the Days of Ignorance. O Quraish! God has crushed the whole of your vain-gloriousness and social superiority. Listen! All human beings are the sons of Adam and Adam was made out of dust.

"O people! God has created you out of one male and female. There is no superiority in castes and tribes. These are only meant for identification. The test of greatness is virtue."

## DO MUSLIMS WORSHIP the KAABA?

[M. Y. K.]

*"And what, stripped of its religious and fanatical imagination, do these hundreds of millions of bowed heads (Muslims in prayer) visualize? An old house (Kaaba) crumbling into rubble. A black stone which occasionally reflects red streaks."—Pearson's Weekly.*

*"It is no virtue that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but virtue is this that you should have faith in God... and spend your wealth for His love on the near of kin, the orphans, the needy, the wayfarers, the beggars and the emancipation of slaves..." The Quran, 2 : 177.*

The allegation that the Musalmans worship the Kaaba is the greatest compliment that could be paid to the uncompromising iconoclastic attitude of Islam. It only shows that Islam has so thoroughly obliterated every vestige of polytheism that a critic, out to fish out some such weak spot in it, can find nothing firmer to stand upon.

Islam is the one religion which has taken every possible precaution against the polytheistic tendency of the human nature. Divine unity is the repeated burden of its teachings and lest in their hero-worshipping zeal, the Musalmans should raise their Prophet to the pedestal of Divinity as done by followers of other faiths before, it was made an integral part of the very *Kalima*, the formula of faith, that the Prophet was but an apostle of God. In the Quran the Prophet is made to proclaim: "Surely, I am but a man like unto you." To say of such a faith that it teaches the worship of a room of brick and mortar is either the height of ignorance or prejudice.

The Quranic verse quoted at the top should once for all nail this fib to the counter. It tells us that facing a particular direction, as such is not even an act of common virtue, much less of worship, as the writer of the *Pearson's Weekly* insinuates. That a Musalman should "visualize" a particular room and a particular stone while standing to prayer is absurd on the face of it. The Prophet's personality occupies with him a sanctity only next to God. Even of him he does not form any mental picture in prayer. For, that would mean associating him with Divinity in some way. How could he associate a house or a stone with God in his worship? History still preserves the memorable words of Umar, the second Caliph in which he, pointing to the Black Stone, said it was no more than just a stone.

For the information of the *Pearson's Weekly*, I may mention the exact words which every Muslim from China to Peru utters when he stands up to prayer:—"I turn my face towards Him who created the heavens and the earth, standing upright and I am not of the polytheists." As if to forestall this objection

of Kaaba-worship, a Muslim has been taught to proclaim that his facing the Kaaba must not be misunderstood; for the face of his soul is turned towards God. The Kaaba is nowhere in his thoughts.

The assumption in this allegation, seems to be that according to the Musalmans the Kaaba is the house of God in the sense in which each one of us has a house. From this it follows that God must be residing there and hence the facing in that direction. Nothing could be further from the Islamic conception of God. The Quran describes Him as—"He pervades the heavens and the earth"; "whithersoever you turn, there shall you find the face of God." So God is not localised to a particular house. Even at a time when the Kaaba was in the hands of polytheists and contained 360 idols, the Muslims turned their faces towards it in their prayers. If they were to worship the denizens of the Kaaba, as is presumed, they should have waited till it had been cleared of the idols; for no Muslim could worship an idol. The fact, however, is that the Kaaba has never been looked upon as the residence of God.

The Kaaba is no doubt known as the house of God but not in the human sense of residing therein. It means the house for the worship of God. There is only one peculiarity which it enjoys and for which it has been chosen for the converging point of all Muslims. It was the first house built for the worship of one God and hence if facing towards it carries any significance it is its emphasis on the Unity of God for which the Kaaba stands as a monument. What was meant to emphasize the pure Unity of God-head, has by a strange perversity, been converted into a charge of polytheism against Islam! The Quran, however, has not been content with any general refutation of such a false impression that was likely to arise. It has put it down in so many words: *لا يدبروا رب هذا البيت* "Let them worship the God of this house." In other words, not the Kaaba but the One True God for whom the Kaaba stands as an ancient memorial is to be worshipped.

It must further be remembered that it is not always essential to face towards the Kaaba. There are circumstances when one may not. For instance, a man on his sick-bed may keep his face any way, so a man on a conveyance—a train, a boat, a car, an aeroplane or an animal. If Kaaba were really an object of worship, no prayers should have been possible without keeping it before one's face as the idol-worshippers keep their idols before them.

The fact, however, remains that as a rule a Muslim must face towards the Kaaba when saying his prescribed prayers. Why this insistence on it? When God is not localized to any particular place and He is everywhere,

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# BIBLICAL NARRATIVES IN THE QURAN

## WERE THEY DISTORTED or CORRECTED ?

(BY MAULANA ABDUL HAQ)

"But it was certainly the Talmudic stories told him by Jewish traders that took root in his brain. They re-appeared much distorted in the Koran."—*Pearson's Weekly*.

It is one of the stock charges of Western writers against Islam that the Prophet Muhammad took his inspiration to found a new religion from his frequent contact with the Jews and the Christians of his day, that in fact he reproduced in the Quran in a distorted shape the stories that he had heard, from these sources. This is perhaps the best and the quickest way to dispose of the faith of Islam and create indifference towards it. It is by now no secret that the Bible has lost all hold on the Western mind. Neither its conception of God is much flattering to the dignity of the Deity nor is its authenticity beyond reproach. To bring the Quran into disfavour, it is therefore, enough to describe it as a copy of the Bible. A comparative review of the two, however, shows that the Quran may more aptly be described, besides much more, as a *revision* of the Bible, correcting the errors that have crept therein.

In a comparative survey of the two, the Bible and the Quran, one's attention is arrested first and foremost of all by the event known as the "Fall of Adam"—for, this is the starting point of the appearance of man on this planet. According to the Bible, Adam and Eve lived happily in the Garden of Eden. They were at liberty to help themselves to any fruit in that Garden. One tree, however, was forbidden to them. They were not to taste of the fruit of that tree. It was the tree of knowledge:—

"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying: Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

"But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2: 16, 17).

Adam, however, contravened this prohibition and did taste of this fruit too. As a punishment, he along with his wife had to quit the Garden bag and baggage. Now take the Quranic version of this very episode. According to it this garden was no more than the peace and bliss of a pure soul. Here too Adam was forbidden to touch the fruit of a particular tree. It was however not the tree of knowledge but the tree of sin. Adam's "fall" in the Bible was brought about by knowledge; in the Quran it was due to sin as says the verse: "O sons of Adam! let not Satan mislead you as he ejected your parents (Adam and Eve) from paradise. He stripped them of their dress of righteousness with the result that their ugliness became manifest to them." Thus, the

Bible and the Quran stand at the antipodes on this point. The Bible punishes exercise of reasoning faculty but the Quran makes this the very first attribute of man—"He taught Adam names of all things;" "Lord! increase my knowledge;" "whoever is given wisdom, is given the goodliest of wealth." "Why don't you ponder," "Why don't you reflect" is the repeated burden of the Quranic teachings. "In the creation of heavens and the earth, in the alternation of day and night," "in the blowing of winds," "in the clouds," "in the ocean and the ships that sail therein"—there are signs for the people who have knowledge. Thus in *knowledge*, according to the Quran, consists the dignity of man; whereas *knowledge*, according to the Bible, was responsible for driving man out of paradise. Would you call it a distortion or a correction?

As a champion of the free exercise of reason which the Bible had banned, the Quran did a great service to the cause of science and progress. It emancipated the mind of man from the clutches of the clergy who, having forbidden the use of reason on the authority of the Bible, held the people in subjection.

Another point noteworthy here is that the Bible makes Eve responsible for tempting Adam and leading to the "fall." The Christian theory of original sin is based on this very fact, and hence in Christian literature woman is regarded as the origin of sin. The Biblical Adam shoved the responsibility on to Eve's shoulders, saying that it was she who led him astray:

"And the man said the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat." (Gen. 3: 12).

Not so in the Quran. The Quranic Adam is too noble and too chivalrous to take any mean advantage of the weaker sex and lay the blame at her door. He confesses his own mistake—"And he (Adam) committed a mistake, though he did not mean it." The Quran holds Adam and Eve both responsible for their sins, not woman alone, as does the Bible—"He (Satan) stripped them of their clothes of righteousness." Is it distortion or correction?

Now let us take another episode—the deluge of Noah. This is how it was caused according to the Bible:

"And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man and beast and the creeping thing and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them." (Gen. 6: 6-7).

## BIBLICAL NARRATIVES IN THE QURAN

Hardly a very complimentary picture of God ! No God worth the name would show such lack of foresight to do a thing of which He repented later on and bemoan like this. Then again, it was the man whose "wickedness was great in the earth" which had so enraged God. But why visit His rage on the poor "beasts" and "the creeping things" and "the fowls of the air"? People who in season and out of season shout that the Quran is a distorted copy of the Bible had better have a look at the Qurānic narrative of this very episode. They will find no such ridiculous things therein. God in the Quran never repented of the creation of man. On the other hand He is proud of it: "Verily, We have created man in the goodliest of make." Still more ridiculous part of the story, however, comes further on. After having vented his wrath by destroying all things God was propitiated by burnt sacrifices :

"And the Lord smelled a sweet savour and the Lord said in his heart I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake.....neither will I smite any more everything living as I have done." (Gen. 8 21).

Another fit of repentance ! In a fit of rage He destroyed every living thing. Now He repents of this too, because His mood has been changed by the sweet smell of burnt offerings of fowls made to him by Noah. He even enters into a covenant with the people and every thing that He would never do so again. Lest, however, He should forget it, He appoints a token whereby, He would be reminded of His covenant and that token is the rainbow :

And it shall come to pass when I bring a cloud over the earth that the bow shall be seen in the cloud. And I will remember my covenant. And the bow shall be in the cloud and I will look upon it that I may remember the everlasting covenant.

(Gen. 9 : 14-16).

What a God to need a rainbow to remind Him of His covenant. And what a scientific explanation for a rainbow ! To call the Quran which gives the most sublime conception of God and is free from any such ridiculous things, even while describing this very episode, shows certainly a very low standard of criticism.

I am afraid within the limits of an article it is not possible to draw the comparison at any great length. I will now give a brief survey of the Biblical portraits of the various prophets who from time to time came as models of conduct for mankind.

**Noah :** The Bible describes him as having drunk wine and made himself naked:—

"And he drank of the wine and was drunken ; and he was uncovered within his tent."— Gen. 9 : 21.

The Quran mentions no such incident and describes him as "One of God's virtuous servants."

**Lot :** In the Bible his daughters made him drink wine and went into his bed and:—

"Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father." —(Gen. 19 : 36).

The Quran exonerates him of this charge, saying "he was one of Our righteous servants."

**Abraham :** A number of times he is described in the Bible as telling a lie. In Gen: 20 :—

"Abraham said of Sarah his wife She is my sister."

In 22 : 8 he told a lie to his son. In Genesis 16 and 21 he is described as having shown cruelty to his wife Hagar and her son. The Quran not only does not mention these incidents but refutes these charges by saying "Indeed, he was a righteous man, a Prophet." Encyclopedia Britannica says about his account in the Bible :—

"He must be regarded as a historical character though the accounts of his life have mythical elements inter-mingled with much that is traditional or legendary."

**David :** Biblical picture :

"And it came to pass in an evening tide, that David arose from off his bed and walked upon the roof of the king's house ; and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. And David sent messengers and took her and she came in him and he lay with her. And the woman conceived and sent and told David and said I am with child." —(II Samuel 11 : 2-5)

The Quran not only does not mention any such incident but refutes it, saying :—

"And remember Our servant David who was a man of power and submissive to God."

By what canons of criticism can all this be called a *copy*, a *distortion*? Not distortion! The Quran is a correction of the Bible.

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## The Story of Epilepsy and the Prophet

(Continued from page 5)

the teeth. These are some of the most common symptoms of epilepsy. Even if there are no convulsions, the patient makes some very curious actions. Ostler in his *Practice of Medicine* observes:

"After the attack the patient may be dazed a few seconds and perform certain automatic actions which may seem to be volitional. As mentioned, undressing is a common action but all sorts of odd actions may be performed some of which are awkward or even serious"

These symptoms have not the remotest connection with the Prophet's state at the time of revelation. In order to be able to commune with the Unseen, it was only natural that he should have himself altogether cut off from this world of matter. That the inner faculties might have the fullest play it was necessary that the physical senses should have suspended their operation. Properly speaking, these so-called "fits" were spiritual trances in which the Prophet was transported beyond this mundane atmosphere to high celestial regions of the spirit. In order to attune his spiritual senses to these Higher Heights, it was essential to have stilled the din and dust of their mundane existence. What has such a state in common with epileptic fits? In case of epilepsy, there is complete loss of consciousness. In the Prophet's trance, the Prophet's consciousness reached its climax, enjoying, even though oblivious to his immediate surroundings, sweet glimpses of the Eternal. The fact that he profusely perspired was a natural consequence of his spiritual detachment and the strain it involved. The fact that others felt the extraordinary weight of his body is only another proof to show it was a superhuman spiritual phenomenon and not a brain disease—a phenomenon which passed on from the original recipient to others, making them realize that something uncommon was on.

Epilepsy is a common disease and anyone can at a glance tell it. The writer in the *Pearson's Weekly* says that this malady was very common in Arabia. If so, it should have been all the easier for the people to detect what the Prophet was suffering from. His claim should have been dismissed summarily and not a single man should have minded his preaching, putting it down as the effusions of an epileptic fit. What is the fact, however? The elite of the community, men like Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali and so many others known as much for their probity as for their experience of men and matters, rallied to his standard! What an epilepsy! The Prophet's opponents should have been the first to seize on this charge. In fact, if it was really a case of epilepsy, they should have needed no other weapon to fight the Prophet with. They had only to declare the malady to turn people away from him and frustrate his mission at a single stroke. What are the facts, again? Whereas

they brought every other imaginable charge against him, epilepsy was never mentioned—not once by any one. They called him a poet, an enchanter, a mad man but never epileptic.

Epilepsy is a disease of the brain. An epileptic man is extremely weak of brain, incapable of any mental exertion, peevish, cowardly, unsteady, having no stamina. He can not conceive of higher things of wisdom nor is he capable of any high morals. He suffers from general debility, having a pale complexion, thin blood and emaciated body. Every minute, he is in danger of losing his life. Any time the fit may come, throw him into fire and burn him dead. Any time he may drown himself. Can a single instance of the kind be pointed out from the Prophet's magnificent eventful life, so strongly and so successfully lived? Is it not a fact that he was blessed with a most robust physique, flushed red with an abundance of blood? Is it not a fact that on the field of battle he displayed feats of prowess which could beat the most daring and skillful of generals? It is recorded on the authority of his comrades that whenever, in the thick of the battle, the latter were seized with consternation, they sought courage by rushing to the side of the Prophet. Is it not a fact of history that the stiff boulders which no axes could break, gave way before the Prophet's strength of arm? According to which medical science, can a man of such robust body and strong arm be at all suspected of epilepsy?

The Prophet was not a mighty potentate who, notwithstanding this alleged malady, could have scored phenomenal success with the help of his counsellors and generals. As Carlyle puts it, he was just in the minority of one, with the whole of the nation pitched in opposition to him. Certainly it could be the work of no epileptic, in the face of such odds to carry on for twenty-three long years, a relentless crusade against ignorance, polytheism, superstition, immorality and a thousand and one evils into which he found his people sunk and ultimately purge Arabia of all these evils. Neither adversity nor prosperity could for one moment swerve him from his lofty ideals. The most luring temptations were placed in his way; he spurned at them. The most dreadful threats were hurled at him; he stood unmoved. "This mission shall succeed or I shall perish in the attempt"—he declared. Like a rock he stood adamant in the midst of the waves of opposition that incessantly raged around him and in the long run transformed the entire face of the peninsula. As the writer himself puts it he "shook the world". Pray, has medical science ever known an epileptic patient, incapable of looking after himself who has shaken the world?

Then consider the Prophet's high example in politeness and meekness of temper, in his forgiveness and kindness, in his general amnesty to his deadly enemies at the fall of

## The Story of Epilepsy and the Prophet

Mecca. Can an epileptic patient be credited by any stretch of imagination with a semblance of these high moral traits? The words of wisdom that flowed out of his lips proved a source of blessing not only to Arabia but to the whole world. The whole of Arabia was transformed, semi-barbarians were reclaimed and made into highly civilized men. Polytheists were converted into staunch unitarians, superstitious into most rational beings. Can this be the work of an epileptic brain? Can an epileptic patient work all these miracles?

And what sort of stuff is it that these so-called epileptic fits gave to the world? Why the Quran, which has for the last thirteen centuries remained a standing challenge to the world in respect of its eloquence, its profound wisdom as well as its miraculous effect in wiping an old order out of existence and ushering in an altogether new era. The Holy Quran which is full of the mighty signs of the Hand of God! While the Prophet was yet a persecuted refugee, with the horizon all dark about him, the Quran thus challenged the united forces of opposition: "Exhaust all your resources! Do your worst." And as subsequent events showed these very words then considered the ravings of a mad man found wonderful fulfilment. The opponents left no stone unturned but all their efforts ended in smoke. It certainly could not be the work of an epileptic patient—such a bold challenge and such a literal fulfilment. Again the Quran challenged the world to produce a single chapter to compare with it. The Arabs were proud of their power of speech but neither they nor any other people since have been able to take up this challenge. Again it declared: "They would gather in hosts against the Prophet but would turn their backs." These mighty prophecies were not confined to Arabia. Even about far-off Roman Empire it was declared that though it had been defeated by Persia, it would within a few years become victorious and this event would synchronize with the victory of Muslims over their opponents in Arabia. And as history bears out, quite against all human calculations, the Romans defeated the Persians within the prescribed period and at about that very time the Meccans were defeated by the Muslims. While running away for his very life, the Prophet was made to announce "that He who had enjoined the Quran on you will bring you back to this place." And the fall of Mecca after a long struggle put a seal of confirmation on the Divine origin of these words.

The limits of a newspaper article do not permit of going into details or I could have multiplied at any length such mighty signs of the Hand of God in the Holy Quran. And yet we are told that it was just the outpouring of an epileptic brain and no more! The fact is that this epilepsy story is on all fours with the pigeon story of old, both coined to bolster up the "False Prophet" theory

which unfortunately, has formed an unshakable obsession of the average western writer.

History will vain rummage its dusty heaps to point to a single instance of an epileptic man who set the highest of ideals before himself, and having set them fought steadfastly for them for long years, knowing no wavering in the face of a whole nation's opposition till the same were realized. The world has yet to come across an epileptic patient capable of such Herculean enterprises. Here is a man who spends most of his night time in Divine meditation and when the day dawns, he goes about preaching to the people, conducts daily prayers, assists in household work, fights his foes, instructs his friends in the highest of wisdom—one who is a king, a general, a judge, a labourer, a consoler of the afflicted, a supporter of the widows and orphans, all in one. Here is a standing challenge to all the world doctors to say if by any science of medicine such a superman among men could be suspected of epilepsy—a man who was the founder of a mighty civilization, who was the deliverer of humanity from the slough of superstition, moral trutitude, tyranny and injustice, and who welded humanity into a universal brotherhood.

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## THE PROPHET'S HIGH STANDARD OF CHASTITY

(Continued from page 6)

them to get out of their living tomb one of them proposed that each of them should recall the best deed of his life, and as a reward for that, call upon God to deliver them from their living tomb. One of the prayers which was answered ran, thus: "O God, Thou knowest that I was madly in love with a cousin of mine; that in spite of my most earnest entreaties she would not yield to my wish. Then came famine. I was rich, but in spite of the pinch of hunger she continued to repel me. At last death by starvation staring her in the face proved too much for her constancy and my persistence triumphed. But when she was completely in my power, and there was nothing between me and the consummation of my desire, she brought tears into her eyes and addressing me said, Fear the day of judgment and let me alone. Hearing this warning I at once stepped aside and for Thy sake forewent the gratification of the desire which I had cherished so long and which I was about to realize after years of painful and persistent entreaty."

If common sense has any value in judging of men's character then I believe no sane person can accuse of sensuality a man who holds up such a lofty ideal of chastity and resistance to carnal desires. The Prophet had only one wife till the age of fifty-three. He took all his other wives within five years of this when the cares of his prophetic office had worn out his frame. Most of these wives were widows and of advanced age. Now if a man who sits in judgment on the Prophet is himself pure and possesses even a modicum of common sense, he may ascribe any other motive for the Prophet's marriages but not sensuality.

## THE SO-CALLED RAIDS OF THE PROPHET

(Continued from page 7)

'because the reconnoitering parties sent out would generally travel in the night time and rest in the day time. Now this was simply due to the unbearable heat of the Arab desert, where even caravans have to travel in the cool of the night. Even Muir is unable to record a single case where any caravan was looted. If the Holy Prophet had not taken these precautionary measures, the handful of Muslims would have been swept off in a few days. The Prophet was no doubt the spiritual guide of his people, but he was also the head of the small community which had gathered around him, and as such he was responsible for their weal and woe. It was through his foresightedness and his self-sacrifice that a community hemmed in on all sides by deadly foes was saved. The enemy used sometimes to reach the very outskirts of Medina and it was the Prophet's alertness that saved the situation. Not one

instance is quoted of any caravan having actually been looted, yet the wild statement is made that hordes of men were galloping on all sides to commit raids!

The Holy Prophet would no doubt have contravened no law of warfare if he had actually seized the merchandise carried by enemy caravans when there actually existed a state of war. Do not the civilized nations resort to similar actions by seizing boats and trains carrying goods for the enemy? And yet no one gives the name of raids to such acts. The charge of raids against the Holy Prophet is not however substantiated by a single incident of this kind. It is a myth pure and simple, just like "the Black Flag" made of "the shirt of Muhammads girl-wife" in *Pearson's Weekly*. Even Muir speaks of white standards carried by Muslim armies, and the Black Flag of the raiders exists nowhere but in the imagination of the writer.

## DO MUSLIMS WORSHIP THE KAABA ?

(Continued from page 10)

why not allow perfect freedom of choice to face whithersoever one may like? What is the good underlying this rigid uniformity all over the World of Islam?

The significance underlying the Kaaba-facing is two-fold. In the first place, as already said, it is a monument to the unity of God handed down from time immemorial and in order to emphasize this fact, it has been fitly chosen as the centre of Islam. And secondly, it is intended to serve as a centre for the unity of all Musalmans. All Muslims facing one way obviously inculcates a sense of one-ness in their minds and its nation-building value is thus obvious. This significance of Kaaba is further emphasized by a saying of the Holy Prophet: لا تكفروا اهل قبلتكم i. e. "Do not call men of your *Qibla* as Kafirs". The idea thus is that a common centre should create a feeling of community among the Muslims. The fate of the foregoing faiths was before the Prophet. Split into sects and schisms, they presented the appearance of a house divided against itself. To save Islam from such a doom the Prophet laid down that anyone who should just face towards the Kaaba, while in prayer, must be regarded as a Muslim.

This is the profound national significance underlying the Kaaba which uncharitable criticism has distorted into Kaaba-worship on the part of Muslims!

# WHAT IS ISLAMIC PARADISE LIKE?

A description in human language of life on a non-material Plane

[ BY IQBAL-UN-NISA ]

In speaking of things spiritual, a material language is inadequate. To begin with, language itself was developed with man's material growth and physical needs. Those who meditate know how difficult it is to express that subtle sense of things got in meditation. One senses a sweet odour, one expresses it as "having smelt sweet flowers". There were no physical flowers, but our material senses deal with the word flowers and our eyes with "the thing" that flowers signify. We come back from the subtle and express in "words" and "things" we are conscious of in our material life. "That" which is really inexpressible in the language we have to express it in.

It is as if an artist tried to express with a rough charcoal from the jungle wood fire, the subtle difference of colour and form. He would but give a hint, and that only to those who previously understood what colour and form meant.

Thus the Prophet, in that state in which he gave out the Holy Quran, had only the material means to do so in, even then Arabic was a more subtle language than English.

"They shall have no food but of thorns..... To drink from a boiling spring"—Are not most of us at moments conscious of thorns?

One enters a strange room,—something 'vital' in us is uncomfortable, feels pricked! One touches some article and an instinct comes to drop it. "Something" is not to our taste and feeling. Thoughts even in our material state touch as uncomfortably. In our subtle state when the material universe is destroyed how far more forcibly will we feel and sense "things"!

Those "things" were understood and sensed by the Prophet in that subtle state, and were only possible to express in the language of the people he lived among, and in the things they understood as comfortable or uncomfortable.

"Other faces on that day shall be happy".

"Well pleased because of their striving".

Striving meaning, struggle, activity, creating that vibration of thought and feeling, for the best we know. That atmosphere made has a "force" that, like the soul of man, works out its destiny in Time. No honest effort goes unrewarded.

One should ever remember "silence" alone expresses, and that too, inadequately, the Highest Truth, for it is beyond expression and vision.

The expressed Truth is but a vague picture of "That" towards which the Universe is progressing will-nilly, for "From That we come and to That we return."

This has been made perfectly clear both in the Quran and the authentic sayings of the Prophet. Just consider the following:—

1. "No soul knows what is in store for it of

the coolness of eyes (i. e., bliss)—a reward for the good they have been doing." —*The Quran.*

2. "The likeness of the paradise promised to the virtuous is : therein flow rivers of water that does not alter and rivers of milk the taste whereof does not change and rivers of wine delicious to those who drink and rivers of honey clarified." —*The Quran 47 : 15.*

3. "And hasten towards the forgiveness of your Lord and the paradise whose breadth is the breadth of the heavens and the earth, prepared for the virtuous ones." —*Ibid.*

4. "O soul that art at peace! Return to your Lord well pleased (with Him), well-pleasing (Him). So enter among My servants. And enter into my paradise." *The Quran 89 : 27—30.*

The first plainly tells us that we can form no conception of what heavenly blessings are like. The second tries to describe them by likening them to rivers of water, milk and wine yet not exactly the water, milk or wine we have here. They do not change or bring unpleasant reactions. The third shows that paradise consists in God's forgiveness and is not the name of a particular locality. The fourth tells us that paradise can be obtained in this very life by cultivating the sort of soul described as the "soul at peace." We all know what that paradise of a clean contented conscience is like—nothing material. From this we can infer the nature of the paradise to come. Hell is likewise described as "the fire of God which fans into flames in the hearts of men." Add to this the light which the following saying of the Prophet throws on the nature of paradise :

"God says I have prepared for My righteous servants what no eye has seen, no ear heard and what no human heart has conceived."

This should leave no room for doubt that the Quranic Heaven and Hell are an attempt to describe in human language the phenomena of a life on a non-material plane.

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# THE PROPHET AND THE FIRST CALL

## HIS SO-CALLED DOUBTS

(By Maulana Ahmad)

[For lack of space this could not be inserted in the special number in refutation of *Pearson's Weekly*.—EDITOR.]

"Even Mahomet himself suspected that these visions might be conjured by the devil."

—*Pearson's Weekly*.

"Your companion (the Prophet) never erred nor did he go astray.

"What he saw the heart did not belie."

—*The Quran* 53: 2, 11

The story goes in certain circles that when the Prophet received his first revelation in the cave of Hira, he was terrified, thinking that he had fallen into the hand of the Devil. In this distressed state of mind he came away to his house where he asked his wife, Khadija, to cover his body. When he got over it, he related to her what had happened to him in the cave. Thereupon she consoled him and took him to one of her cousins, Warqa, who had become a Christian. Warqa assured him that he need have no fear, that the devil had nothing to do with it, that this was exactly the angel that visited Moses and that he had been made the Prophet whose advent had been prophesied in the Bible.

There could be no greater insult to the phenomenon of revelation. The story only betrays a complete ignorance of what revelation is like. It presumes that revelation is something like a common vision, and indeed the writer calls it by that name. It is no vision. It is an experience as vivid and as clear as broad day-light. It carries its own conviction. If you can ever doubt the existence of the sun while basking in the glare of the noon-tide sun, you might as well doubt the truth or otherwise of revelation from God.

The Quranic verses quoted at the top should give some idea of the impression a revelation carries. It is impossible for the recipient of it to be left in doubt or error. Whatever the eye beholds is no error and the heart puts a seal of confirmation on its truth. To say that the Prophet was in doubt whether it was from God or devil is to knock the bottom out of the very institution of Divine revelation and the entire fabric of faith as represented by Prophets from time to time crumbles like a house of cards.

If the Prophet doubted his own mission, he was certainly in error, whereas the Quran says that he never erred. Besides how on earth could he so vehemently denounce his opponents for their disbelief. They could have very well replied that when he, the original recipient was himself once in doubt about his mission, they were excusable if they could not understand it.

The Quran in another place describes the very night on which the first revelation came to the Prophet as "a night of blessing" and "a night of majesty". This one night is called better than a thousand months. But how at all could it be so called, if, as alleged, the Prophet, rather than have his bosom illumined with light Divine, had it filled

with the dark clouds of doubts. Nothing could be further from the Quranic description which shows that all groping in the dark was gone, the mist lifted, the curtain was up and the Prophet stood face to face with the Ultimate Reality he had been so long hankering after. It was that supreme experience that made the very night a night of "blessing" and "majesty".

What is the truth about the story, then? Just this that when the Prophet received his first revelation he had had to go through a great physical strain. The coming of revelation was even ever afterwards accompanied by this detachment from the physical environment. Even in winter days the Prophet would perspire. This being his first revelation, it specially told on his nerves. On arrival home he therefore asked to be wrapped, feeling cold after profuse perspiration in consequence of the revelation he had just received. If he were in any doubt, certainly wrapping is not the way to remove doubts nor fear, as suggested. At the same time he was feeling the weight of the responsibility which the mission involved. That is what made him say that he was feeling apprehensive. The reformation of a fallen and corrupt society like the Arabs of the day was no easy task and he knew it too well to feel light-hearted about the call. Besides, he knew he would have to face a storm of opposition. All these things put together naturally shook his nerves for the time being and he sought relief in a quiet repose in a blanket or the like.

The way in which Khadija re-acted to the Prophet's condition at the time should furnish the conclusive testimony on the nature of the condition. If it were a case of doubt, she should have said something to dispel his doubts. She should have told him that it was the word of God, not of devil. But what does she actually say? She assures him that he would never fail. Had he not been a friend of the weak, the widow and the orphan? Had he not been known for hospitality? Was he not kind to all in distress? She recounts his virtues one by one and assures him that God would never leave him in the lurch and that he must succeed. This shows beyond a doubt that what made him anxious and feel crushed was the weight of the responsibility the mission imposed on him. And it was on this point that Khadija, as a true wife, cheered him up. It is also recorded that Khadija there and then accepted his mission. How could she do so if the thing was yet enveloped in doubt? In fact, she not only accepted the mission but she felt so enthusiastic about it that she immediately took this glad tiding to her cousin Warqa, who, she knew, was expecting like so many other Jews and Christians the advent of the Prophet foretold in the Bible. It was certainly not

(See Page 7)

# Questions & Answers

**M. Kunhahamed, Ponani**

1. What is your opinion about the Hindu Muslim unity in India?

A. We think unity is not possible until there is a revolution in mentality. The Hindus look upon Muslims as foreigners and on Islam as a foreign faith. They must shed this narrow exclusiveness, and must learn to respect Islam, even as Islam enjoins respect for Hinduism. Then the Hindus being ahead of Muslims in all walks of life have the monopoly of power. They should part with that monopoly and let Muslims have their due share. Thirdly, as a majority community, they should be prepared even to go out of their way to win the confidence of the Muslim minority, even as the Muslim majority in Egypt has won that of the Copts, the Christian minority.

2. Muslims sacrifice animals in the name of God on the day of 'Idul Adha' and why not on the day of 'Idul Fitr'? Is it forbidden to sacrifice animals on the latter day? If it is, why?

A. The sacrifice is associated with the pilgrimage to Mecca and is in commemoration of the sacrifice of Abraham. The Hajis who visit the Kaaba, the house associated with the name of Abraham, revive the tradition of the sacrifice of his son on the part of the latter. Hence it is done on Haj occasion and not on 'Id-ul-Fitr' which marks the close of the month of fast and has nothing to do with Haj.

3. How much do you appreciate the attitude of Mr. Gandhi in connection with the uplift of Harijans?

A. We wholeheartedly appreciate the spirit underlying the attempt. We think however that the true salvation of the Harijans lies in Islam—the religion which stands in daily life for uncompromising equality of man and man. We fail to understand how Mahatmaji can uplift them in the name of Hinduism which actually enjoins caste. We think Mahatmaji is here suffering from a false loyalty to the creed of his birth.

4. Who is His Highness Agha Khan? What personality does he hold in the Muslim Community?

A. He is a descendant of the Prophet and has a large following among a particular section. He is also looked upon by the Muslims of India in general as their foremost political leader.

5. A Muslim wants to marry a Hindu or a Christian girl and she refuses to change her faith. Does Islam permit him marrying her? His Highness Aga Khan has created a great sensation in marrying a Roman Catholic, who is reported to have declared that she would remain a Christian all her life. How far this marrying is permitted in Islam? What will be the religion of their children if children were born to them?

A. Marriages with *Ahli-kitab* are permissible in Islam. The children should have the father's religion. This must be the explicit stipulation at the time of such marriages.

6. Is it prohibited to build a beautiful grave? Does a beautiful grave harm the soul? Is there any objection in the Islamic Shariat?

A. The beauty or otherwise of a grave does neither good nor harm to the soul of the deceased. You may please yourself by all means.

7. Is it forbidden to see a drama for a Muslim? If it is so, why?

A. Certainly not.

**J. M. Mohd. Ibrahim, Trichnopoly**

1. Is the system of co-education beneficial? Anything un-Islamic in it?

A. Up to a certain standard, say the primary stage, it may be permitted. Beyond that it is not advisable. Islam is not in favour of free intermingling of grown-up males and females.

2. Does Bolshevism or Facism involve any Islamic principle?

A. Their anxiety to ameliorate the lot of the down-trodden masses is an Islamic element.

3. Is there any *bona-fide* institution in Lahore for coaching the Muslim youths in missionary work?

A. The local Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam runs a regular institution for the purpose.

4. Except the Ahmadis, have any other sects like the Sunnis, or the Shias done anything till now for Isha'at-i-Islam in India and abroad?

A. Yes, there are associations for the propagation of Islam both among the Sunnis and Shias. In the foreign fields, however, the Ahmadis alone are seen at work.

5. Does Islam sanction erection of statues of famous leaders? If not, why so?

A. No harm.

(Continued from page 4)

to seek a certificate from Warqa, as the story would have us believe, but to give him the happy news that the Prophet and Khadija both went to Warqa. The latter, on hearing of the Call, at once testified to its truth and even foretold from his knowledge of the scriptures that the Prophet would some day be turned out by his people. It is ridiculous on the face of it to suggest that whereas the original recipient was yet in doubt about his mission, already he had made two converts. Doubt there was none. It was just anxiety as to the enormity of the task before him.

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