

‘Prophets are the Word of  
God Almighty.’

## Muhammad the Great Exemplar

*(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)*

Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad<sup>ra</sup> (1889-1965), the Musleh Mau'ud (the Promised Reformer), was the son of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> and his second successor. He was elected as the khalifa of the Ahmadiyya Community in 1914 at the age of 25 and led the movement for 52 years. In the period of his khilafat, the message of Ahmadiyyat spread to countries as far and wide as the United States of America and Japan. He also set the foundations of the community's administrative structure and launched numerous initiatives for the propagation of Islam, most notably Tehrik-e-Jadid and Waqf-e-Jadid. A prolific writer, orator and the author of a ten-volume commentary of the Holy Qur'an, he leaves a profound and enduring legacy which lasts to the present day.

*Muhammad*  
*The Great Exemplar*  
*(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)*

Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad  
Khalifatul-Masih II

*Muhammad the Great Exemplar*

By Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad  
Khalifatul-Masih II

Present English Edition: UK 2017

©Islam International Publications Ltd.

No part of this book may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means graphic, electronic or mechanical, including photography, recording, copying or information storage and retrieval systems without permission of the publisher.

Published by:

Islam International Publications Ltd.  
Unit 3, Bourne Mill Business Park,  
Guildford Road, Farnham, Surrey UK, GU9 9PS  
United Kingdom

Printed and bound by CPI Group  
(UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

ISBN: 978-1-84880-909-3

## *Contents*

<i>Note</i>	i
<i>Foreword</i>	v
Muhammad as a Man	1
Muhammad as a Prophet	21
Muhammad as a Recipient of Revelation	34
The Holy Prophet in the Sight of an Enemy	49
	55
<i>Glossary</i>	



## *Note*

The words in the text in regular brackets ( ) and in between the long dashes—are the words of the author and if any explanatory words or phrases are added by the translator for the purpose of clarification, they have been placed in square brackets [ ].

The name of Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>, the Holy Prophet of Islam, has been followed by the abbreviation <sup>sa</sup>, which is an abbreviation for the salutation *Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam* (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The names of other prophets and messengers are followed by the abbreviation <sup>as</sup>, an abbreviation for *'Alaihis-Salam* (on whom be peace). The actual salutations have not generally been set out in full, but they should nevertheless be understood as being repeated in full in each case. The abbreviation <sup>ra</sup> is used with the names of the companions of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and those of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>. It stands for *Radi Allahu 'anhu, 'anha, 'anhum* (may Allah be pleased with him, with her, with them). The abbreviation <sup>th</sup> stands for

*Rahimahullahu Ta'ala* (may Allah have mercy on him). The abbreviation <sup>at</sup> stands for *Ayyadahullahu Ta'ala* (may Allah, the Mighty help him).

Because of their frequency of use and for ease of reading, Islamic terms such as *hadith* or *umma* have, for the most part, not been italicised or transliterated in the main body of the text. Anyone interested in the correct pronunciation of these words can refer to the glossary at the end of the book.

All English renditions of the verses of the Holy Qur'an have been taken from the 2004 edition of Maulawi Sher Ali's translation.





## *Foreword*

The Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> is the central figure of Islam. Described variously in the Holy Qur'an as a *mercy for mankind*, the *best example* and the *Seal of the Prophets*, the facts of his life have been seared into the conscience of all Muslims who for centuries have drawn inspiration from them.

In the Islamic perspective, he represents the very best of humanity, prophethood and revelation. Every aspect of his being ascends to the highest level of excellence. Without him, faith and existence remain incomplete.

In this short series of essays, Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad<sup>ra</sup> contemplates the life of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> through his humanity, his role as a prophet, as a recipient of revelation and through the eyes of his enemies.

This is not a conventional biographical study. Instead, the reader is asked to reflect on the deeper meanings and resonances of the Prophet's<sup>sa</sup> life. He was in every sense a regular man, rooted in and subject to the natural laws of

this world. As Huzoor explains, this does not diminish his status, rather his station is enhanced by his humanity, for it was on the foundations of his shared ties with other people that his prophecy and revelation rested. He is a guide and example only because his model of conduct can be easily followed and imitated.

Once chosen by God, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> came to occupy the most eminent position among the historical line of prophets. He was raised not for a particular community or people, but the entire world and his revelation reverberated with the power and scope of this mission, touching on the universal social, spiritual, ethical, domestic, political and communal concerns of all communities and peoples.

In our current times, where there is widespread misunderstanding about Islam and its founder is maligned in newspapers, movies and cartoons, the present collection of writings represent an important account of who the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> was and how he should be understood.

*Muhammad*  
*The Great Exemplar*  
*(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)*



أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ<sup>1</sup>

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ مُحَمَّدًا وَنُصَلِّيَ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ<sup>2</sup>

خدا کے فضل اور رحم کے ساتھ ہُوَ النَّاصِرُ<sup>3</sup>

### *Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> as a Man*

It seems incongruous, that a person who is held up as the chief of the prophets, should also need to be presented as a human being. Yet in truth, a claim to prophethood does not elevate an individual to a point where their human qualities cannot be reflected over; rather this station is one of the many human excellences people can attain, the primary purpose of which is to exhibit the highest virtues among the general run of people. In my estimation, prophethood is like a rain which cultivates and brings out the latent excellences of human nature; assuredly the soil which God chooses to have this water descend upon is the most receptive to

<sup>1</sup> I seek refuge with Allah from Satan the accursed. [Publishers]

<sup>2</sup> In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. We praise Allah, the Exalted, the Greatest, and we invoke His blessings on His Holy Messenger<sup>sa</sup>. [Publishers]

<sup>3</sup> By the grace and mercy of God Almighty—He alone is the Helper. [Publishers]

its effects and able to manifest, in the best manner, the finest human qualities to their highest order.

A PERFECT PROPHET IS A PERFECT HUMAN BEING

Let us qualify this further. Islam does not say human nature is inherently flawed and dependent on prophethood for its reformation. Instead, it posits the creed that the seeds of all merit and virtue are deeply embedded within the human condition, and are thus obtainable by all people. That being said, they stand in need of external agencies, just as the eye depends on light to see and soil requires rain. Prophethood comes not to subdue certain human traits but to properly nurture them. The perfect prophet must also be the perfect man. No one can attain prophethood until they develop all of the finest human excellences within themselves. And unless they respectively elevate these qualities to their highest degree, they cannot be referred to as a prophet.

EXCELLENCE IN CERTAIN FIELDS

Experience shows there are people who, within certain fields, possess extraordinary abilities; [so much so] the world is awed by their talents. However, it is seen that some among them perish in delinquency, meaning the attainment of a specific virtue does not equate to

the highest perfections of the human state; instead it merely demonstrates particular human attributes can develop to spectacular effect within a limited sphere. [For example], it is entirely possible an individual is so overtaken by the capacity to love, it overwhelms their other emotions, and by this they direct their affections not towards people, but to God, and neglect all else that is in the world. Yet anyone who fits this description can never reach the spiritual heights enjoyed by others. The intensity of their love is the result of an inner deficiency and does not emanate from proper care and nurture. Such people are like seeds which grow too fast when planted in exceptionally fertile soil. They sprout so rapidly, the ears of the plant that comes from them are empty of kernels. Though the plant may grow—it will produce mostly stalks—its yield of grain will be scant and partial. Conversely, those who manifest every human excellence have been brought up according to all the requirements of nature. They possess an inner equilibrium. Their every excellence flourishes to its full proportion. Their faculty of punishment develops concurrently with mercy, compassion, forbearance and judgement—all five being, [as a case in point], necessary requisites in dealing with a crime. If even one of them is deficient, a person's humanity is tainted and they cannot



come to manifest the highest excellences.

This discussion is of an intellectual kind and cannot be understood in all its details without delving deep into psychology. The limited space I have to conclude this essay is certainly not sufficient to cover it fully. Therefore, with the aid of one or two examples, I will shed some light on this subject before turning to the actual topic at hand.

Loyalty is, for instance, a commonly esteemed trait. However, if it is used to keep undesirable company, it can and does lead to harmful consequences. [Let us take the example of] two criminals who conduct a felony. If one of them was unsettled by guilt, but made to sway from his good judgement by an inordinate sense of loyalty which overwhelmed his ability to distinguish between good and evil and silenced his conscience, while also whispering in his ear that regardless of what happens he should remain loyal to his friend, [then this would be an unfortunate consequence].

Again, love for one's children is commendable and also essential for the continuation of the human race. But if this emotion impedes the development of other excellences by exceeding the appropriate bounds, it becomes a sin and also causes one's progeny to go astray. To excel in one or several human attributes is not a sign of true excellence. Instead, in certain circumstances, it

becomes a matter of grave peril. Such merits cannot be held up as an example for mankind, for a true model is one which manifests growth concordant with human nature. Progress that goes against the natural order is not a feasible ideal for people to follow as the realisation of it is impossible. All virtues must be such that they can be emulated.

#### THE HOLY PROPHET<sup>SA</sup> AS A HUMAN BEING

Proceeding ahead from this preliminary explanation, I will now turn to the discussion at hand and expand on my own analysis regarding the Holy Prophet's<sup>sa</sup> qualities as a human being.

From what I have explained so far, the following can be concluded: first, prophethood comes to manifest human excellences in their most precise form. Secondly, it is essential for the perfect prophet to also be the perfect man. Thirdly, if an individual exhibits certain human qualities to their best degree, it cannot be taken from this they have attained the highest level of humanity. Rather, this imbalance is indicative of a physical or inner defect of the nervous system. Further, once this is understood, it becomes clear that those who think basic human needs and requirements run counter to prophethood, labour under a grievous misconception.

In truth, prophethood is a state of mind and the

proper fulfilment of human requirements is the physical manifestation of this state, without which a model [of conduct] cannot be perfected. Prophets do not come to change human nature. Instead, they are sent to practically instruct us on how best to fulfil human needs. Though it may be possible for the general run of people to defy the demands of [human] nature, this is not possible for the prophets as they are a model for their followers. The more of these requisites they neglect, the more their status is diminished.

#### A PERFECT EXAMPLE FOR MANKIND

When the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> is viewed in this light, one can see he was, in equal measure, the perfect man and the perfect prophet. His essential duties did not divest him of his human emotions. Rather, alongside his work, he fulfilled his human obligations in such a way as to set a perfect example for all people to follow.

Many who are ignorant of the highest human excellences, consider the consumption of fine foods a trait of beasts which defies the transcendent stages of spirituality. But this view contradicts the natural state of humans as created by God. A close symbiosis exists between a person's character and the food they eat. Different forms of nourishment affect our dispositions accordingly. Here we find that while the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>

taught moderation in matters of food, he never forbade the eating of delicacies. Indeed, whenever he was invited to a meal and served with rich and succulent fare, he would partake of it. He always instructed that the following ought to be kept in mind: first, food should not be wasted lest this offends the poor. Secondly, in times of famine or hardship, one should eat moderately so that their excessiveness does not deprive the underprivileged from access to even one meal [a day]. Thirdly, except in the most acute circumstances, food should not be hoarded lest others are deprived of their fair share.

Good humour and cheerfulness are, as a matter of course requisites of human life, while laughter is a natural human quality. A fine spirit is essential for any decent person who does not wish to encumber others [with the stresses of ill-temperament]. Yet there is a common misconception that godliness entails earnestness and sobriety. A smile is thought to undermine the station [of the holy] and laughter is considered to diminish their piety. But the erudite understand that if an individual is divested of these essential features [of human nature], the only thing left of them is a skeletal frame stripped of all pleasant features.

Despite his solemnity, his disregard for fleeting joys and the very greatness of his message and claim

which elevated him well above the general mass of people, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> never sought to subdue his natural emotions. From within his high rank and status, cheerful human sentiments would emanate with such felicity that those who came to see him expecting a grave and pensive leader, were astonished by his smiling countenance and joviality. Often as he sat among his companions and instructed them on his sublime teachings, the Prophet<sup>sa</sup> would lighten the mood with humorous anecdotes and even engage in harmless and playful banter. When children approached him, he would narrate to them stories of birds, and sometimes to make them laugh, he would sprinkle drops of water on them. In his domestic life, he would entertain his family members with fables popular among the Arabs. Yet he would always caution against amusement which belittles or hurts the sentiments of others; humour ought not to become a constant and inveterate habit and laughter should not be undertaken for its own sake, but rather when one is disposed to it; and stories and jokes ought to be rooted in truth, rather than falsity, so that the lesser emotions do not subdue the higher ones.

Cleanliness is one of the essential requirements of human life. That is, to maintain the hygiene of the body, face and clothes and to use fragrances that are pleasing to one's sense of smell rather than abhorrent

to it. Unfortunately, there are people who consider cleanliness inimical to the form and habit of those who walk on the path of virtue and righteousness. This way of thinking leads to the squandering of the pure things God has created for people, and those godly individuals who choose to make use of them are considered sinful. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> rejected all such false pieties and taught that God is pure and loves purity. Throughout his life, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> would regularly cleanse and bathe. Indeed, he mandated washing [with water] as a permanent feature of certain acts and practices. For example, after relations between a man and wife, whereby on account of domestic obligations it is easy to become careless in matters of cleanliness, he declared it obligatory to take a bath. And this was done with the command of God. Before each of the five daily prayers, he would wash those parts of the body which are normally exposed to the elements and instructed others to do the same. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> delighted in clean attire and encouraged his followers to wear fresh clothes particularly for the Friday prayer. He was also a lover of scents and perfumes, especially when worn at gatherings and functions. The Prophet<sup>sa</sup> instructed that places of congregation, where people from all walks of life come together, should be scented and kept clean to prevent the spread of contagious diseases. He would

avoid malodorous things and exhorted others to refrain from them also, especially when going out in public. Thus the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> was always mindful of the cleanliness of the body, clothes and the sensitivities of smell and again he would call on others to follow his example. However, he also warned against becoming so preoccupied with material cleanliness that a person begins to neglect the purity of the soul.

Similarly, one ought not to care for the immaculateness of their attire to such an extent that it becomes detrimental to society, in so much as choosing to keep away from the company of the poor and underprivileged. Again, in matters of food, one ought not to be so finicky they deprive themselves of essential forms of nutrition. Instead, people should strive to make others feel at ease so they can become good citizens and ensure that their company is not off-putting. According to a school of thought, cleanliness and perfume make the body pure but the soul impure. Conversely, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said he was made to love beautiful smells,<sup>4</sup> and that God Almighty loves those who repent and purify their inner and outer selves.<sup>5</sup>

The relationship between a man and a woman is integral to the natural order and forms one of the principle

<sup>4</sup> *Al-Jami Us-Saghir*, Vol. 1, p. 122, 1321h Egypt [Publishers]

<sup>5</sup> *Surah Al-Baqarah*, 2:223 [Publishers]

foundations of world civilisation. It is the cornerstone of the progress of life on this earth. Curiously a large part of the world has deemed it removed from spirituality. Women are the principle agency by which the human race continues its existence. Without them, humanity is like a scarred and functionless body. They are like garments for men just as men too are their garments. Still many aver that women are impure and that holy men should forgo their company. In this way, their concept of purity conflicts with humanity and strikes against one of the very foundations of piety. Are human beings not like a vessel for all pure things? Without a container these exquisite subtleties cannot be preserved. Once the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> had found God, he did not abandon other human beings. Not only did he marry, but for the sake of his nation, the Muslim community and on account of the various circumstances of his wives, he entered numerous unions. After he had married, he was always affectionate with his wives and treated them in such a way that each one thought of herself as the most cherished among them.

The Prophet<sup>sa</sup> belonged to God and God belonged to him. He never suggested the Lord had chosen him on account of any otherworldly quality. Rather, he expressed the view that God appoints those who are the best from among the people, and God Almighty chose



him because he himself became the perfect man.

Another common misconception that existed was that one ought to distance themselves from their kith and kin and eschew family relations, for only then can an individual attain communion with God. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> rejected this and insisted it was [entirely possible] to meet with God through one's family. Every particle of the world is the creation of God and leads to Him; the more beautiful the creation the more it guides a person towards the path of the divine. And women are among God's finest creation. That is why the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> said a love for his wives was one of the gifts of this world<sup>6</sup> God had bestowed on him. He further said the best among the people are those who are kind to their wives and children<sup>7</sup> and considerate of their feelings. How great a contrast, that on the one hand the world said God had created women as beguiling serpents and warned men not to fall for their beauty and instead save themselves from their poison, while on the other hand the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> came with the message that Allah the Exalted had commanded him to love his wives and that this love was one of the many mercies his Lord had bestowed on him. It was said men should shun women and keep away from their evil, whereas the

<sup>6</sup> *Al-Jami Us-Saghir*, Vol. 1, p. 122, 1321*h* Egypt [Publishers]

<sup>7</sup> *Al-Jami Us-Saghir*, Vol. 2, p. 9, 1321*h* Egypt [Publishers]

Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> exhorted his companions to love them and reach God through this love. Just as God decreed that heaven rests beneath the feet of a mother, He made the prayers of a wife a means to attaining His nearness. Thus to bring happiness to one's wife is to earn the pleasure of God.

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> would always take into regard the feelings of his wives and treated them accordingly. He would help them in their domestic chores; show them love; look for different ways to express his affection; when one of them would drink water from a cup, he would drink from the same side; one of his wives of Jewish origin was once belittled by another who referred to her as a 'Jewess'. The Prophet<sup>sa</sup> comforted her and said: 'Why do you not say that you are not a Jewess, but a descendent of the prophets of God Almighty.' When his wives became ill, he would take it as his own illness and feel their suffering even more acutely than they did; he would always show concern for their emotions and would never interfere in their relations with their close relatives. Instead, he would help strengthen those ties. On one occasion, he entered the room of his wife Umme Habiba<sup>ra</sup> and saw her in a tender embrace with her younger brother Muawiyah<sup>ra</sup>—who would later become a great Islamic ruler. Instead, of displeasure, the Prophet<sup>sa</sup> was moved by this display of sibling love. He

sat next to her and asked her if she loved Muawiyah<sup>ra</sup>. She said yes. To this the Prophet<sup>sa</sup> replied: 'If he is loved by you, he is loved by me too.' How happy she must have felt at these words and at seeing the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> look on her relatives, not as a stranger but through her eyes. The depth of his love, by which he cherished those whom she held dear, [must have filled her with joy]. This sight was the manifestation of the verse:

من تُو شُدْم تُو من شُدِي من تن شُدْم تُو جاا شُدِي

I have become you, and you are as I; I am the  
body and you are the soul;  
None can say that we are separate to each other.

But still it ought to be remembered that despite this supreme demonstration of humanity, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> completely and utterly belonged to God and he expected the same from his wives.

Human nature is deeply ingrained with the will to survive [as a species]. The moment a female reaches puberty she desires progeny. This is expressed not through words, but by physical changes in her body. And men of good health, no matter how independent minded they may be, succumb to the same longing in their private moments. However, there are many who subscribe to the view that procreation is anathema to

the godly. Such people fail to comprehend that if the righteous do not give birth to any progeny of their own, who is to set an example regarding the essential human obligation of raising children.

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> took great pride in his children. He did not seek to hide his affections for them and said that they were a great blessing from God. He never showed neglect or indifference and gave his children his undivided attention and cared for their upbringing. He did not distance himself from them, but said that love for one's children was one of the most sacred divine obligations. In their tender years, when they lacked understanding and awareness, he nurtured them; as they grew older he looked after their upbringing and when they matured he focused on their education; as adults, when they took charge of their own households, he treated them with respect and they remained the focus of his love. Once his daughter called him to attend to one of his grandsons who had been taken ill. The child writhed in pain as he lived through the final moments of his life in great agony. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> took him in his arms, and at seeing his pain, the depth of his love and mercy brought tears to his eyes. A companion, who was present there and who did not realise the task of a prophet is not just to relay the commandments of God to people, but to also provide a perfect human example,

was amazed at this sight. He said: 'O Prophet of God<sup>sa</sup>, you teach us patience, yet today it is your eyes which swell with tears.' The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> looked at him and replied: 'Perhaps your heart does not possess mercy, but God has made my heart merciful.' What a wonderful lesson the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> gave through these words; that to love one's progeny and feel their suffering is among the highest human virtues. How then is it possible for a prophet of God to be free of such sentiments? Thus he was an example to others in the sphere of human emotions, just as he was in the sphere of higher morals.

Of the Holy Prophet's<sup>sa</sup> children, only Hazrat Fatima<sup>ra</sup> survived until his final days. Whenever she would enter his company he would stand up and kiss her and seat her next to himself. When his [grandchildren] would run and play around him, he would hoist them on his lap, show them tenderness and exhort them in accordance with their age and give them lessons in high morals. In this feature of humanity, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> established the highest example for us. Yet he would always instruct and act on the principle that love for a child ought not to be so excessive it makes people unmindful of their other obligations to God, nor should it lead them to forget their true responsibilities towards their progeny; that is, to provide them with the best upbringing, high moral training, education and guidance.

The body and soul are so deeply entwined that a fault in one perforce impacts the other. In this too, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> has established an excellent example. He did not consider exercise or a healthy body detrimental to piety or righteousness. A glance over his life shows how he would often travel outside the confines of the city and sit in orchards; ride horses; and when he saw his companions take part in games, he would encourage them rather than show displeasure. Once he came across his followers participating in an archery contest and expressed his own desire to take part. Over and above this, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> also encouraged women to undertake physical activities. On many occasions he raced against his wives and in this way drew the attention of both men and women to the importance of physical exercise. Again, as a precaution, he would always teach that one ought not to give preference to physical pursuits and that exercise ought to be seen as a means to an end rather than an end in itself.

#### A PERFECT MODEL OF CONDUCT FOR THE WORLD

Thus in all walks of life, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> provided the most excellent and unparalleled example and showed that his life was an *uswa-e-hasanah* (excellent model of conduct) for the world to follow. If the purpose of his advent was simply to worship God and spread

great philosophical teachings, any reasonable person would conclude that the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> was a man of exceptional heart and mind and yet was devoid of normal human emotions which are common to people and, therefore, despite his high level of righteousness, he could not be held up as an example for humankind. However, the Holy Prophet's<sup>sa</sup> entire life refutes this suggestion. He felt the same emotions as us and was subject to the same duties and responsibilities. Moreover, he would never shy away from these responsibilities, rather he would understand their importance and consider it his religious obligation to fulfil them. He would undertake them in such a wonderful way that all people were able to comprehend his actions, in his own time and in the times to come. There can be no excuse not to follow in his footsteps. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> was a man just like any other; he had the same emotions and feelings and instead of suppressing them, he expressed them in the most complete and courageous way. In his life he had to overcome the same obstacles which blight the path of others. He removed these hurdles himself and carried his own burdens and crossed the bridge of righteousness and purity—which is finer than the breadth of a hair—fearlessly and without falter. Not for a moment did his footing slip. Therefore, when someone like ourselves is able to see to completion that

which people presume to be impossible and does it with such deftness and excellence, there is no reason why his example cannot be emulated.

God describes the humanity of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> in the most excellent manner. He says:

أَكَانَ لِلنَّاسِ عَجَبًا أَنْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنْهُمْ أَنْ أَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ وَبَشِّرِ  
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ لَهُمْ قَدَمٌ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ<sup>8</sup>

Is it a *matter of* wonder for men that We have inspired a man from among them, *saying*, ‘Warn mankind and give glad tidings to those who believe that they have a true rank *of honour* with their Lord?’

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> was a man from among us; anyone can strive to replicate his example and that which was possible for him is also possible for the rest of us. He was not a prophet who attained his station by neglecting his humanity. Instead, he perfected the human condition and became a prophet by fulfilling its requirements. With one hand, he reached out to God Who created him and caused him to succeed, and beseeched [His Lord] for His bounty and blessings. With his other hand, he tended to his own kind and

<sup>8</sup> *Surah Yunus*, 10:3 [Publishers]



his brothers among them. He encouraged them and inspired them to walk behind him, and promised them they would enter the heaven of God Almighty. In this sense, he became like one chord to two bows or closer still.<sup>9</sup> May God bless this perfect man with innumerable bounties, for he freed us from a life of doubt, and showed us the certain truth that our humanity was not an obstacle to righteousness, but [the principle means] to its attainment and to the attainment of the nearness of God. May he occupy an elevated station, for the closer he came to God, the nearer he was to us. He is surely ours and we are surely his.

وَأٰخِرُ دَعْوَانَا اِنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ<sup>10</sup>

(*Alfazl*, 31 May 1929)

<sup>9</sup> *Surah An-Najm*, 53:10 [Publishers]

<sup>10</sup> And the conclusion of our prayer shall be, 'All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. [Publishers]

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ مُحَمَّدًا وَنُصَلِّيَ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

خدا کے فضل اور رحم کے ساتھ ہُو النَّاصِرُ<sup>11</sup>

### *Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> as a Prophet*

To prepare an essay on a fundamental and complex issue for a newspaper [or other publication], requires focus on one particular aspect of it. Otherwise, it is impossible to expand on a subject over one or two pages which requires more substantial space [for its analysis]. For the purposes of this essay, which in truth would only be justly served by numerous written texts and even they would prove insufficient, I too will adopt this approach.

Prophets are the Word of God Almighty. He says:

قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مَدَادًا لَكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنْفَدَ  
كَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِغْلَابٍ مَدَدًا<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> I seek refuge with Allah from Satan the accursed. In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. We praise Allah, the Exalted, the Greatest, and we invoke His blessings on His Holy Messenger<sup>sa</sup>. By the grace and mercy of God Almighty—He alone is the Helper. [Publishers]

<sup>12</sup> *Surah Al-Kahf*, 18:110 [Publishers]

Say, 'If the ocean became ink for the words of my Lord, surely, the ocean would be exhausted before the words of my Lord came to an end, even though We brought the like thereof as *further* help.'

Thus prophethood is an endlessly vast subject, however, with due regard to circumstance, some part of it can be taken up for consideration.

#### THE ESSENTIAL TASKS OF A PROPHET

As recorded in the Holy Qur'an, the prophets of God are given four primary tasks which are identified in the following prayer of Abraham<sup>as</sup>:

رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ  
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ<sup>13</sup>

And, our Lord, raise up among them a Messenger from among themselves, who may recite to them Thy Signs and teach them the Book and Wisdom and may purify them; surely, Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.

A simple reading [of this supplication] is sufficient to

<sup>13</sup> *Surah Al-Baqarah*, 2:130 [Publishers]

show that through these words, the prophet Abraham<sup>as</sup> excellently describes the essential duties of a prophet of God. They are tasked with i) relating the signs of Allah the Exalted, ii) teaching people the divine book, iii) imparting a teaching of wisdom, iv) and purifying the souls of the people. One cannot better describe the functions of a prophet in such a brief and comprehensive manner other than this. Let us now look at how the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> fulfilled these tasks.

#### THE FIRST TASK OF A PROPHET

The first task of a prophet is to recite divine signs. In Arabic the word *ayah* (sign) means a warning sign or proof. Anything which guides towards something else can be referred to as an *ayah*. To recite the signs [of God] means to reveal things which draw people to belief in the unseen, for such matters are beyond human comprehension. God transcends all beings; the one true living presence. Yet He is so subtle, it is beyond human reach to comprehend Him. One can only attain His nearness through [divine] proofs, forceful signs and by the knowledge and observation of divine attributes. In this way, doubts about His being are removed from the hearts of the people. The same is true of the laws of nature, the angels, messengership, divine discourse and life after death—one cannot understand any of these

independently. They all rely on proofs and evidence which give us greater understanding of them, from both a spiritual and intellectual perspective, and let us identify with them in a way that we can see their hidden truths with our own eyes.

The significance of the above-mentioned articles of faith is substantiated by the fact that all religions, in one way or another, require belief in them and incorporate them within their primary tenets under various names, though the manner in which they are perceived may differ to certain extents. Therefore, a person who eases the path to conviction for people and stands them at a vantage point from where they can come to know these matters with such certainty that all element of doubt is removed, can be said to have elevated the station of prophethood to its highest point.

An inquiry into the teachings of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and a close look at his works, shows he fulfilled this particular duty in such a distinguished manner, one cannot find a similar example anywhere else. Any discussion about God Almighty must begin with His attributes, for as an infinite being, it is only through them that He can be known. If a person does not explain divine attributes in a way that awes the hearts of people with Allah's greatness, nor makes them understood intellectually to the full extent of human

comprehension, they cannot succeed in leading people to God Almighty.

The divine attributes described by the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> were such that not only did they satisfy the human intellect, but were also worthy of an infinite being who is All-Powerful (قَادِر) and the Creator of all Things (خَالِق). The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> showed God Almighty to be free from all material constraints and appearances and asserted His oneness so forcefully he presented a God Who was faultless and above defilement. At the same time, He revealed God's love for His creation and showed that the Lord wished to lead them to the highest levels of progress, whereby the human heart is filled with love and the human intellect is satisfied. But he did not stop here. He also established before the world the principle that those matters in which belief is an essential requisite of salvation cannot rest on intellectual foundations alone, instead their truth needs to be based on observation so that the heart is cleansed of any potential for doubt. He averred that divine attributes are manifested for the chosen ones of God in such a way they appear as miracles and fill the hearts of people with the highest degree of certainty.

With regards to the angels, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> rejected the views of those who deny their existence as well as those who likened them to simple courtiers of a king. He

explained they were as integral a part of the spiritual and corporeal working of the universe as those elements and particles which can be observed by humans. The angels cannot be equated with those who attend the court of a temporal king, rather they are the first link in the process of creation and thereby fulfil the commandments of a transcendent and immaterial God. They are the basis of both the material and spiritual realm, and just as a building cannot be raised without foundations, the universe cannot exist without the angels.

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> made the laws of nature so simple to understand that scientists who inquire into the causes and effects of the material world; philosophers who devise theories on the basis of rational thought; sufis who devote themselves to spiritual pursuits; and members of the public who look at the world in more basic terms, were able to comprehend them. All such people gained insight into these matters in accordance with their own [intellectual] capacity. Their investigations led them to satisfaction and established the truth of the claim of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. One cannot doubt the truth of a matter which is examined from all angles, and always produces the same result.

The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> used the laws of nature to explain the need for messengers of God and for divine discourse. [For example], he demonstrated that when

God has created the sun for the sake of the human eye, it was for certain that He would also have produced a spiritual sun and a spiritual light for the sake of the spiritual eye. The former is temporary, whereas spiritual sight serves a person in this life and in the hereafter.

He explained the issue of life after death from multiple perspectives and in a way that it became more of a practical concern than an intellectual one. Human deeds endeavour for great rewards, therefore it is necessary to keep these incentives hidden from them, for if they were revealed, people would be deprived of free will and be subject to predetermination. The hereafter is not an alternative realm, rather, it is a continuation of this world wherein the human soul is liberated from material influences and roams freely on those paths it had prepared for itself through its earlier deeds. God Almighty is not a wrathful king. His attributes necessitated the creation of humankind and those same attributes also necessitate that in the end all people reach their ultimate goal. At some point, whether before or after, everyone will be united with the Being Whose mercy brought them into existence.

Thus the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> took those hidden matters which constitute the foundations of faith out from the cloud of uncertainty, and placed them under the shining light of the sun for everyone to see them with



the eye of their intellects, perceive them through their spiritual understanding and forgo doubt for certainty and satisfaction.

#### THE SECOND TASK OF A PROPHET

The second task of a prophet is to teach the scripture. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> fulfilled this undertaking in such a way that no similar example can be found in the life of any other person. (1) He explained how the sharia was a divine blessing. In order to better and improve their lives in this world and in the hereafter, human beings require God Almighty to express His will to them. In this way, the spiritual journey for which they have been created, can be undertaken with full certainty instead of with doubt. The sharia is not a burden which has been imposed on an already encumbered species to crush them further, nor is it the result of any punishment. Instead, it emanates from love to guide people against hidden obstacles, winding roads, steep and high mountains, dangerous and speedy rivers, overarching tree branches, thorny bushes, filth and grime which line the long path of human life and are potential discomforts on this journey. It is not a form of punishment or trial. It is a guide and conductor. None of its commandments are for the sake of elevating the greatness of God Almighty, rather they are there to serve the needs of people. (2) The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> showed for

the first time a divine law could be universal and cater to people of different temperaments and capacities. Any scripture which [claims to be all-encompassing but] fails in this regard, precludes certain parts of the world from attaining salvation and thereby negates the very reason for which it was sent. (3) The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> established the principle that the sharia ought to fulfil two primary needs: it ought to elucidate on all those matters which are essential for religious, spiritual and moral progress as well as assist humans in their intellectual progress, rather than cause the intellect to stand so still it begins to rot. By addressing these two primary requirements, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> also closed off two perilous paths which lead to the destruction of true spirituality. That is, license which sacrifices spiritual prosperity at the altar of material pleasure and the path of blind imitation by which individuals come to resemble a putrid basin of water, turning their minds into a fetid environ which destroys all capacity for growth.

#### THE THIRD TASK OF A PROPHET

The third task of a prophet is to articulate a teaching of wisdom. In this too the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> set an unparalleled example. Despite his eloquent and unmatched assertion of God's majesty and might, he also pioneered the argument that divine omnipotence did not mean that God could

issue any command of His choosing which people would not look to question. Where God is All-Powerful, He is also Independent (غَنِيّ)—His commandments are not for His own benefit. He is Wise (حَكِيم)—His edicts are not devoid of wisdom.

Every detail of a teaching that is attributed to God Almighty must conform to wisdom and all divine commandments must serve a purpose. Wisdom permeates all that which is associated with God and is determined by the highest objectives. How could a Wise and Independent God issue an edict that runs contrary to this? Accordingly, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> explained the underlying wisdom behind each aspect of his teachings through a gradual process. He also elaborated on the benefits of following the commandments he gave and the disadvantages of violating them and did the same with everything he prohibited.

Those who followed his teachings felt no aversion to them in their hearts. Rather, they were gladdened and pursued them with enthusiasm. They recognised that the commandments they had received were beneficial both for them as individuals and for society as a whole. They also knew this was true for those things which were forbidden. This spirit of cheerfulness brought a wonderful transformation within them and they happily followed the sharia and considered it a necessity rather

than a burden. In their eyes it was a great mercy [of God].

#### THE FOURTH TASK OF A PROPHET

The fourth task of a prophet is to purify people. That is, to cleanse their hearts and instil in them the requisite qualities to achieve lasting nearness to God Almighty, through which they can absorb divine blessings and exhibit them before the world and become a manifestation of God's power. And with regard to the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, both his friends and foes acknowledged the perfect manner in which he fulfilled this task.

The plight of the land of his birth and the condition of the people to whom he belonged is hidden from none. It was a desolate time. Arabia and the rest of the world were in a state of religious, moral, intellectual and behavioural decay. A darkness had descended over the earth. The pure teachings of earlier faiths were corrupted and that which remained went unfollowed. What can be said of religious values when even basic humanity did not survive and integrity and virtue had all but disappeared. Idolatry, innovation, wicked customs, violation of human rights, sinfulness, injustice, murder, shamelessness, ignorance, slothfulness, discord, insobriety, gambling, arrogance, selfishness and indeed all forms of iniquity prevailed everywhere, while in comparison, virtue was extinct. All sense of right and

wrong had disappeared and acts of impiety drew pride instead of shame.

Though born during this terrible epoch, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> set upon the task of bringing reform to a nation that exceeded all others in sin and evil. His people knew no form of governance and took the greatest pride in the absence of law and order. Yet the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> suffused them with the breath of his pure spirit. But as is always the way, that which is considered unpalatable is met with resistance, and so the Prophet<sup>sa</sup> also encountered vehement opposition. However, he continued his mission with patience and fortitude and paid no heed to these hostilities. He was beaten and hurled with invectives yet still remained steadfast, unable only to tolerate a world lost to transgression.

And so, one by one, he won over the hearts [of his enemies] in a contest that would last for many years. Numerous resolute souls would relent, but the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> remained firm throughout. Much like water which flows from a mountain peak and forges a path through supple patches of ground, creating a steep incline from which to surge in a steady stream, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, through his good example and eloquent speech, strived to reform the world until a day came when people were convinced of his piety. A new soul was awakened within the spiritually dead; those who slept were touched by the

pleasant glow of the sun; the sick regained their health; a surge of strength coursed through the weak; and the very outlines of the world were reconstituted. Oppression gave way to justice; the sun of knowledge shone through the clouds of ignorance; cold and stagnation were succeeded by peace and vibrancy; the children of men took the first breath of spiritual life, turned on their side and then as they awoke from their stupor, they looked upon the miraculous transformation which the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> had wrought through his selfless struggle. And so, they cried out and accepted him not just as a prophet, but as the chief of the prophets.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى  
آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَّجِيدٌ - وَأَخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنْ الْحَمْدُ  
لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ<sup>14</sup>

With Humility,  
Mirza Mahmud Ahmad  
(*Alfazi*, 31 May 1929)

<sup>14</sup> Bless, 'O Allah, Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> and the people of Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>, as Thou didst bless Abraham<sup>as</sup> and the people of Abraham<sup>as</sup>. Thou art indeed the Praiseworthy, the Glorious. And the conclusion of our prayer shall be, 'All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. [Publishers]

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ      تَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

خدا کے فضل اور رحم کے ساتھ ہُو النَّاصِرُ<sup>15</sup>

### *Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> as a Recipient of Revelation*

Those who are sent by God Almighty fulfil a various number of roles. For example, they are at the same time, prophets, messengers, recipients of revelation, divine appointees, arbiters, teachers, and missionaries. Each of these functions is like a priceless jewel which excites and elicits happiness. People are enamoured by them and their hearts recognise that the conduct [of God's chosen servants] emanates from a greater power. For the moment, let us proceed to consider the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> in his capacity as a recipient of revelation, whereby he excelled over all of humanity and the entire gallery of prophets.

<sup>15</sup> I seek refuge with Allah from Satan the accursed. In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. We praise Allah, the Exalted, the Greatest, and we invoke His blessings on His Holy Messenger<sup>sa</sup>. By the grace and mercy of God Almighty—He alone is the Helper. [Publishers]

THE POWER OF DIVINE REVELATION

When reflecting on [the role of] a prophet as a recipient of revelation, the content of his divine message must be carefully considered. The grandeur and potency of this word is the barometer by which the eminence of these prophets is judged. All forms of revelation are only as robust as the scope of the message they bring. If it is accepted that the weaponry of the prophets is their revelation, the ammunition given to them must accord with the intrinsic purpose of their mission. If their task is to conquer a formidable enemy and secure magnificent victory, they require a heavy arsenal to succeed in their aims. It is curious how the world has not understood this simple principle and many foolish souls insist that apart from the Holy Qur'an no other miracle was given to the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>; implying that the Holy Qur'an is not a miracle in itself. Therefore, [they conclude,] if even this is not a miracle the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> did not show any divine sign at all.

However, this notion proceeds from ignorance and a lack of understanding. It is not true the Prophet<sup>sa</sup> was given no other divine sign [in his support] except for the Holy Qur'an. Every aspect of his life was a miracle and the abundant signs granted to him were unmatched by all the prophets combined. But even if we accept



this, the Qur'an in itself is the greatest miracle of all and sufficient to show his superiority over his fellow messengers.

#### THE MIRACLE OF THE HOLY QUR'AN

According to a school of thought, the miracle of the Holy Qur'an is its unlimited eloquence as a book. [So those who oppose Islam] look to find fault with it and consequently commit such injudicious errors one cannot help but be amused. In his book, *The Life of Mahomet*, Sir William Muir argues that prior to the hijra, from the fifth to tenth year of his mission, the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> began to insert elements of Jewish scripture into the Holy Qur'an. This involved a shift in tone from the previous Qur'anic style as the Prophet<sup>sa</sup> laboured and toiled to transcribe Jewish stories into the Arabic language. Yet owing to his commitments, this was not possible by day and so according to Muir: 'For this end a midnight hour must have been stolen from sleep.'<sup>16</sup> Muir refers to the following passage of the Holy Qur'an to support his thesis:

يَأْتِيهَا الْمُرْسَلُ ○ قُمْ اللَّيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ○ نَّصَفَهُ أَوْ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا ○ أَوْ  
زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا ○ إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا ○ إِنَّ

<sup>16</sup> Sir William Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, 102 [Publishers]

نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْأً وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلاً ۖ إِنَّ لَكَ فِي النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا  
طَوِيلًا ۖ وَادْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبْتَئِلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلاً<sup>17</sup>

Sir Muir may well be a great scholar. Yet it did not occur to him that the above verses are unanimously accepted as dating from the first year of prophethood, and *Surah Muzzammil*, the chapter to which they belong, is from among the earliest [revealed portions]. Some researchers even consider it one of the first chapters. Perhaps the greatest miracle is that a part [of the Qur'an] which was revealed in the first year of prophethood, was fulfilled and acted upon by the Prophet<sup>sa</sup> in the fifth to tenth year of his mission as Muir seems to suggest, for it is not possible for a person to foretell a thing which is to occur five or six years into the future when they have no control over it.

In short, the enemies of Islam strive to diminish [the radiance of] this brilliant sign, yet ultimately their efforts only serve to show that in their hearts they accept

<sup>17</sup> O thou who art bearing a heavy responsibility, stand up in Prayer at night except a small portion thereof — Half of it, or make it a little less than that or make it a little more than that — and recite the Qur'an slowly and thoughtfully. Verily, We are charging thee with a weighty Word. Verily, getting up at night is the most potent means of subduing the self and most effective in respect of words of prayer. Thou hast indeed, during the day, a long chain of engagements. So remember the name of thy Lord, and devote thyself to Him with full devotion. *Surah Al-Muzzammil*, 73:2-9 [Publishers]

the miracle of the Qur'an, otherwise why would they be so agitated by it?

THE HOLY QUR'AN IN COMPARISON TO OTHER SCRIPTURES

The truth is when compared to the Holy Qur'an, no other divine book can be considered a miracle. [When earlier scriptures were revealed] they were indeed a magnificent sign for the people of that time, but after the sun rose their light faded like the glow of the stars. Now they seek to compete with Islam through the tales and myths found in their scriptures, for there are no limits to which one can exaggerate or embellish a story. Where there is an episode of the Holy Prophet's<sup>sa</sup> powers of healing, [Christians] produce ten of their own. And when one expresses astonishment at their claims, they immediately reply that if the accounts [of the life of the Prophet<sup>sa</sup>] are to be believed, then so must their own historical traditions be accepted. But if it is said to them the Holy Prophet's<sup>sa</sup> greatest miracle is the Holy Qur'an, which is a living and verdant sign, and that its foundations are based on fact and not myth and legend, they turn to silence. They do not cite their own scripture because they themselves admit it has been redacted and interpolated. And if there are some among them who are so stubborn as to deny even this, then at the very least, the historical evidence is so overwhelming it cannot be rejected.

There are so many different versions of the Vedas each one appears as though a separate book. Therefore, bits and pieces have been taken from these various texts to produce a single edition. The state of the Torah is such that in one place it recounts the death of Moses<sup>as</sup> and says no prophet like him has ever been born, and yet it is also claimed that the whole book was revealed directly to Moses<sup>as</sup> himself. And as far as the Bible is concerned, its various editions are so contradictory that [when looked at in juxtaposition], they cannot be recognised as the same book. Time and again Christians change and alter it. At one moment, a particular verse is included in the Bible and considered canonical, and at another it is deemed to be false and taken out. Today, whole chapters have been removed altogether on the pretext that they were added at a later date. But the real issue is that if the Bible had been collated from authentic sources, then the period of interpolation and redaction would not have extended to 1900 years. Admittedly, it can be argued the [Christians] of the past failed to understand biblical verses as lucidly as those who came afterwards. However, in terms of its actual content, it is difficult to justify that early Christians were mistaken in what they inserted and that only now, some 1900 years later, can it be conclusively determined what the makeup of the Bible should consist of. [Accordingly], those who

followed extraneous chapters and verses wasted away their lives and their spiritual perception was reduced to nothing. How can people be expected to believe a divine scripture which for nearly 2000 years has been susceptible to numerous redactions? And what is the guarantee other chapters will not be taken out in the future. It is possible, as some scholars have suggested, a time will come when the only part of the Bible that will remain are the words *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani* (my God, my God, why have you forsaken me), for they will be considered the sole recorded saying of Jesus<sup>as</sup>; this sentence will comprise the entire Bible and everything else will be done away with. However, can a lament of abandonment bring people closer to God?

Thus the scriptures of all other religions are so unreliable their missionaries dare not compete with the Holy Qur'an. The same is true of other unique excellences which divine scriptures ought to commonly possess. [People of other faiths] are unwilling to debate on whether the word of God can be considered a miracle, despite the fact that the miracle of revelation is greater than all other signs, for proof of it can be furnished at any time. Conversely, the fog of mythology and legend is able to obfuscate other types of miracle. And unless external proofs and evidence can be called upon, it is difficult to distinguish between truth and

falsehood.

The miracle of the divine word, as I have detailed above, has many aspects, and all of these are possessed to their highest excellence by the Holy Qur'an. But in an essay such as this, it is not possible to expand on each of these features, therefore, let us turn to a brief discussion on two in particular. I challenge those [of other faiths] to present similar miracles from their own scriptures—for they claim that their books are also divinely revealed—and then seek to determine whether they can in any way stand comparison with the Holy Qur'an.

THE PRESERVATION OF THE HOLY QUR'AN

The first of these examples is that of the text of the Qur'an. Allah the Exalted says:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ<sup>18</sup>

Verily, We Ourselves have sent down this Exhortation, and most surely We will be its Guardian.

As a general principle, tools which fulfil their purpose are kept and preserved [for their utility]. And when they cease to live up to the function of their design, they are cast

<sup>18</sup> *Surah Al-Hijr*, 15:10 [Publishers]

aside. So, perforce, any divine scripture must be protected for as long as it serves a need in the world. And when its protection ceases it can be rightly assumed the world has no more need for it and it is thus abandoned. The people to whom the Holy Qur'an was revealed were bereft of all knowledge and learning. In contrast, other scriptures were given to literate peoples and nations. But despite their more pronounced sophistication, they were unable to preserve their original texts. The Holy Qur'an on the other hand is just as it was at the time of the demise of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>. It cannot be said that its preservation owes itself to more favourable circumstances than other holy books, nor can it be claimed its authenticity has yet to be truly tested by historical scholarship and that when it is subjected to rigorous dissection, faults and discrepancies will reveal themselves. In order to conceal [and deflect attention from the] inaccuracies of the Bible, Christian scholars have, for the past century, studied the history of the Qur'an and been so scrupulous in their efforts that at times, it might appear to someone who does not know them well, that they hold the Qur'an in even greater esteem than Muslims. But despite their exertions, they have failed in their objectives—that is to say, they have been unable to produce even a single word which is a later insertion and not an original part of the Holy Qur'an.

Muslims are spread among numerous nations and countries. They all possess copies of the Holy Qur'an and yet not one example can be found where one version differs from another. After extensive research, a certain Dr Mingana claimed to have discovered three different ancient versions of the Holy Qur'an. But when he had a few of their pages published, his findings were [immediately] proven false, and he set aside any plans for having the others brought into the public domain. The ones that were published were not accurate renditions. Instead, the mistakes in them were the work of an ignorant and inexperienced [scribe] and were, therefore, not an error in any real sense. A [true textual error] would be one by which people are misled. There was no need for Dr Mingana to go so far back into history. It was enough for him to present any misprinted copy of the Qur'an as published by Muslims, and point out the relevant verses to prove there are alternative versions. There used to reside a priest in Sialkot who would keep various copies of the Holy Qur'an and note down all the misprints he could find. Then whenever he met a Muslim he would say that contrary to their claims, certain words are written differently in various versions of the Qur'an. And yet he too could have made his point in a simpler manner. He only had to ask a person with a stammer to recite the Holy Qur'an, and with every mispronounced



word, his point would have been proven. Again, this foolish soul failed to realise that an error is that by which people are led astray. A mistake which is recognisable on a second reading even to the scribe who wrote it, does not go against the promise made to preserve the Holy Qur'an. The Qur'an is preserved in the minds of people and in its various editions. Typographical errors have no bearing on its teachings or commentaries, as these types of inaccuracies do not lead to mistaken translations or interpretations.

I will say nothing from myself of the divine protection received by the Holy Qur'an. Instead, I will cite the testimony of a devout Christian who has made every effort to undermine the notion the Holy Qur'an has been preserved in its original form. Ultimately though, even he was forced to accept that any such criticism was erroneous and out of place and that the Qur'an of today is the same as the one which existed when the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> departed this world. In his book, *The Coran*, Sir William Muir variously writes:

The recension of Zeid has been handed down unaltered. So carefully has it been followed, that there is but one and the same Coran in use throughout the vast bounds of the Mahometan world.

The few variations are almost entirely confined to the vowel forms and the diacritical points, which, having been invented at a later period, formed no part of the original or of Zeid's recension.

There is every security that the work of Zeid was executed faithfully; and, indeed, the acceptance of the Coran by Ali and his party, the antagonists of the unfortunate Othman, is the surest guarantee of its genuineness.

—all this leaves no doubt in the mind that the Coran as we read it now contains the very words delivered by the Prophet.<sup>19</sup>

When a believer [makes] an argument from their own faith, there exists a degree of uncertainty as to whether they have in some way exaggerated the truth. But the excerpts above are from the writings of an individual who stridently endeavoured to denigrate Islam and its founder. Only God knows of the pain Sir Muir felt in his heart as he acknowledged this truth. But it was unavoidable. He was compelled to admit that the Qur'an has been safeguarded. This testimony shows even the enemies [of Islam] are forced to acknowledge it is free of adulteration. And so the prophecy—*Verily,*

<sup>19</sup> Sir William Muir, *The Coran*, 39,40 [Publishers]

*We Ourselves have sent down this Exhortation, and most surely We will be its Guardian*—has been manifestly fulfilled. And the miracle of this text is such that no other scripture can point to its like.

THE PROTECTION OF THE ESSENTIAL MEANINGS OF  
THE HOLY QUR'AN

As a second example, I will present another interpretation of this verse. The word [of God] is protected in various ways. Its content is safeguarded as are its meanings and outcomes. Having discussed the protection of its words, I will now move on to demonstrate the miracle of the safeguarding of its deeper meanings. It is entirely possible for the words of a scripture to be preserved in their original form, yet fail to be understood according to their actual intent. Let us cite here the Vedas. Though much of it is interpolated, there are still elements of its truth which have been preserved. Yet the language of its transmission is now so ancient and rare its true meanings cannot be determined with any degree of certainty. [Teachings about] monotheism, idolatry, superstition, celestial worship, medicine, the finer points of sexual conduct and many other subjects are interpreted in contradictory ways. The words are the same but the meanings extrapolated from them are completely different. It is able to give rise to beliefs as

disparate as Vedic philosophy and the tenets of the Wam Margians, all at the same time. The differences exist not in their meaning but in the literal understanding of the words and not just in isolated cases, but throughout the text. But the words of the Holy Qur'an are protected to a degree that though one word which has multiple meanings may be interpreted in different ways at various places, the distinction is not profound. Also, the solution to this problem is found in the Qur'an itself, so it is impossible to formulate an erroneous interpretation. The Holy Qur'an elucidates the meaning of its own verses and if a person subscribes to a false meaning, then another verse of the Holy Qur'an will expose their error and in this way the promise that God Himself will protect the Qur'an is again fulfilled.

No external source is required to understand the essence of the Holy Qur'an. God has instilled it with such meanings that any erroneous interpretations can be swiftly identified. Those who commit mistakes cannot match their interpretation with any other part of the Qur'an. This is a miracle of the Qur'an which cannot be found in any other scripture. Other texts are composed in such a way that if one of their passages is interpolated, the other parts are unable to identify the point of digression. But all the verses of the Holy Qur'an safeguard one another. When a person makes a

mistake, other verses draw attention to it and the error is apprehended.

Thus in his capacity as a recipient of revelation the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> was greater than all others. His revelation is alive and eternal. It possesses such miraculous effects that no other form of revelation can compete with it and no scripture can stand alongside the Holy Qur'an.

*(Alfazl, 25 Oct 1930)*

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ مُحَمَّدًا وَنُصَلِّيَ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

خدا کے فضل اور رحم کے ساتھ ہُوَ النَّاصِرُ<sup>20</sup>

### *The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> in the Sight of an Enemy*

Sir William Muir K. C. S. I.—a civilian resident of UP (Uttar Pradesh) who eventually rose through official ranks to become the Lieutenant Governor of the province—authored a biography of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>, which if not the finest, is still considered one of the best works on the subject by a western scholar. The writer was a strident opponent of both Islam and its founder. However, his relations with Muslims and the eminence of his government post, precluded him from unleashing the full fury of his pen against the religion. Still his prejudice often seeps into his writings. The foul and poisonous tone with which he speaks against the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> is hardly a cause for surprise; a vessel can only pour out that which it contains. Instead, what

<sup>20</sup> I seek refuge with Allah from Satan the accursed. In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. We praise Allah, the Exalted, the Greatest, and we invoke His blessings on His Holy Messenger<sup>sa</sup>. By the grace and mercy of God Almighty—He alone is the Helper. [Publishers]

is extraordinary to note is how, on occasion, the beauty of the Prophet's<sup>sa</sup> character lights the flame of insight and perception even in his eyes, and he too can be seen succumbing to the delightful charms [of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>].

This marksman of Christianity fires his arrows at the Prophet<sup>sa</sup> like one driven by madness. And yet the heart cannot be but moved to see him fervently prostrate towards the earth and respectfully caress the blood his arrows have spilled. At such junctures, he embodies the contradictory emotions which arise when enmity and astonishment weave in coalescence in the manner of a [thunder] cloud which nature has at once invested with fire and water. And when these moments pass, Muir again reaches for his arrows.

Many opponents of Islam allege the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> was a product of his time. That is to say, they claim he did not impact the age of his existence, but was forged by the circumstances of his life. [According to their argument, the Prophet<sup>sa</sup>] came when the people of Arabia were disillusioned and increasingly drawn to Christianity. They were eager to be reformed and needed only a mould to fashion them according to its prescription—and that mould was the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> who had been readied by the environment of his time. The hearts of the Arabs followed him and adopted a new

identity and a new name for themselves by which they spread across the earth. However, [in real terms], the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> did not impart onto the world at large a new law, nor did he initiate any sort of world reform. Muir, as per his disposition, is a firm proponent of this thesis. But at times, the breeze of the Holy Prophet's<sup>sa</sup> character unsettles the sureness of his footing, and in a state of fear and trembling, he stumbles and yet thereafter his spirit soars from the earth to a new realm. At one such moment his pen flows with the words:

The fabric of Islam no more necessarily grew out of the state of Arabia, than a gorgeous texture grows from the slender meshes of silken filament; or the stately ship from unhewn timber of the forest; or the splendid palace from rude masses of quarried rock. Had Mahomet, stern to his early convictions, followed the leading of Jewish and Christian truth, and inculcated upon his fellows their simple doctrine, there would have been a "SAINT MAHOMET"—more likely perhaps a "MAHOMET THE MARTYR"—laying the foundation stone of the Arabian Church. But then (so far as human probabilities and analogy indicate) Arabia would not, certainly in his day, have been convulsed to its centre, or even



any considerable portions of it converted. He abandoned his early convictions; for the uncompromising severity of inflexible principle, he substituted the alluring designs of expediency and compromise; and then, with consummate skill, he devised a machinery, by the plastic power and adaptive energy of which, he gradually shaped the broken and disconnected masses of the Arab race into a harmonious whole,—a body politic endowed with life and vigour. To the Christian, he was a Christian;—to the Jew he became a Jew:—to the Meccan idolator, as a reformed worshipper of the Kaaba. And thus, by unparalleled art, and a rare supremacy of mind, he persuaded the whole of Arabia, Pagan, Jew and Christian, to follow his steps with docile submission. Such a process is that of *the workman shaping his material*. It is not that of the material shaping its own form, much less (as some would hold) moulding the workman himself. It was Mahomet that formed Islam: it was not Islam, or any pre-existing Moslem spirit, that moulded Mahomet.<sup>21</sup>

Whether walking the earth or soaring across the

<sup>21</sup> William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet*, vol. I, p. ccxl,ccxli [Publishers]

heavens, Muir is who he is; his [waspish] sting is inseparable from his being. And yet the honey sucked from the flowers of the garden of Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> flows even from his tongue. [It is of little import] how many times he asserts that Islam was a deceit contrived by the Prophet<sup>sa</sup>—he is after all a foe inhabited by enmity. But the truth written by his pen cannot be reverted, no matter how hard he and his companions might try. That is, that the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> was not a product of his circumstances, instead he was the creator of a new world, and none can see such a thing to fulfilment except [with the support of] the angels of God. Worldly leaders are of this temporal realm; only those who come to guide humanity can give birth to a new world—for those who come from their creator are invested with the power of creation.

*(Alfazi, 25 Oct 1930)*



## *Glossary*

**Ahmadiyyat or *Aḥmadiyyat*** (أَحْمَدِيَّة) a religious community within Islam founded by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who claimed to be the Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi.

**Hadith or *Ḥadīth*** (حَدِيث) the recorded sayings and traditions of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup>.

**Hazrat or *Ḥadrat*** (حَضْرَت) an honorific Arabic title.

**Hijra or *Hijrah*** (هِجْرَة) the migration of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> from Mecca to Medina.

**Khalifa or *Khalīfah*** (خَلِيفَة) a term used for Islamic spiritual leaders, particularly the successors of the Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> and the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>.

**Khalifatul-Masih or *Khalīfatul-Masīḥ*** (خَلِيفَةُ الْمَسِيحِ)

a title conferred on the spiritual successors of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>.

**Khilafat or *Khilāfat*** (خِلَافَت) an institution led by a

supreme spiritual head known as the khalifa.

**Sharia or *Sharī‘ah*** (شَرِيعَةٌ) literally ‘path’ or ‘way’. The

word *sharia* is often used with reference to Islamic law or the various duties and obligations of Muslims.

**Umma or *Ummah*** (أُمَّة) the global community of Muslims.

**Uswa-e-hasanah or *Uswa-e-ḥasanah*** (أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ)

excellent model of conduct.