



THE MINISTER

VOLUME 26 ISSUE 7, JULY 2008, JAMADI AL THANI / RAJAB 1429

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THE MINISTER

Jamadi Al Thani / Rajab 1429

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(It is not necessary that the trustees may agree with the writer's view.)

The Amazing Quran

By Gary Miller

They could never challenge its authenticity because it really was new! In concurrence with the advice given in the Qur'an to research information, when Omar was caliph, he chose a group of men and sent them to find the wall of Dhul-Qamayn. Before the Qur'anic revelation, the Arabs had never heard of such a wall, but because the Qur'an described it, they were able to discover it. As a matter of fact, it is now located in what is called Darband in the [ex] Soviet Union (in part of the Caucasus Mountain Range in the Republic of Daghestan near the Caspian Sea). It must be stressed here that the Qur'an is accurate about many, many things, but accuracy does not necessarily mean that a book is a divine revelation. In fact, accuracy is only one of the criteria for divine revelations.

For instance, the telephone book is accurate, but that does not mean that it is divinely

revealed. The real problem lies in that one must establish some proof of the source of the Qur'anic information. The emphasis is on the reader. One cannot simply deny the authenticity of the Qur'an without sufficient proof. If, indeed, one finds a mistake, then he has the right to disqualify it. This is exactly what the Qur'an encourages. Once a man came up to me after a lecture I delivered in South Africa. He was very angry about what I had said, and so he claimed, "I am going to go home tonight and find a mistake in the Qur'an." Of course, I said, "Congratulations. That is the most intelligent thing that you have said."

Certainly, this is the approach Muslims need to take with those who doubt the authenticity of the Qur'an, because the Qur'an itself offers the same challenge. An inevitably, after accepting it's

challenge and discovering that it is true, these people will come to believe it because they could not disqualify it. In essence, the Qur'an earns their respect because they themselves have had to verify its authenticity. An essential fact that cannot be reiterated enough concerning the authenticity of the Qur'an is that one's inability to explain a phenomenon himself does not require his acceptance of the phenomenon's existence or another person's explanation of it.

Specifically, just because one cannot explain something does not mean that one has to accept someone else's explanation. However, the person's refusal of other explanations reverts the burden of proof back on himself to find a feasible answer. This general theory applies to numerous concepts in life, but fits most wonderfully with the Qur'anic challenge, for it creates a difficulty for one who says, "I do not believe it." At the onset

of refusal one immediately has an obligation to find an explanation himself if he feels others' answers are inadequate. In fact, in one particular Qur'anic verse which I have always seen mistranslated into English, Allah mentions a man who heard the truth explained to him. It states that he was derelict in his duty because after he heard the information, he left without checking the verity of what he had heard. In other words, one is guilty if he hears something and does not research it and check to see whether it is true.

One is supposed to process all information and decide what garbage to be thrown out is and what is worthwhile information to be kept and benefited from at a later date. One cannot just let it rattle around in his head. It must be put in the proper categories and approached from that point of view. For example, if the information is still speculator, then one must discern whether it's closer to being true or false. But if all of

the facts have been presented, then one must decide absolutely between these two options. And even if one is not positive about the authenticity of the information, he is still required to process all of the information and make the admission that he just does not know for sure.

Although this last point appears to be futile, in actuality, it is beneficial to the arrival at a positive conclusion at a later time in that it forces the person to at least recognize research and review the facts. This familiarity with the information will give the person "the edge" when future discoveries are made and additional information is presented. The important thing is that one deals with the facts and does not simply discard them out of empathy and disinterest.

The real certainty about the truthfulness of the Qur'an is evident in the confidence which is prevalent throughout it; and this confidence comes

from a different approach - "Exhausting the Alternatives." In essence, the Qur'an states, *"This book is a divine revelation; if you do not believe that, then what is it?"* In other words, the reader is challenged to come up with some other explanation. Here is a book made of paper and ink. Where did it come from? It says it is a divine revelation; if it is not, then what is its source?

The interesting fact is that no one has with an explanation that works. In fact, all alternatives have been exhausted. As has been well established by non-Muslims, these alternatives basically are reduced to two mutually exclusive schools of thought, insisting on one or the other. On one hand, there exists a large group of people who have researched the Qur'an for hundreds of years and who claim, "One thing we know for sure - that man, Muhammad (SAWA), thought he was a prophet. He was crazy!" They are convinced that Muhammad

(SAWA) was fooled somehow. Then on the other hand, there is another group which alleges, "Because of this evidence, one thing we know for sure is that that man, Muhammad (SAWA), was a liar!" Ironically, these two groups never seem to get together without contradicting. In fact, many references on Islam usually claim both theories. They start out by saying that Muhammad (SAWA) was crazy and then end by saying that he was a liar. They never seem to realize that he could not have been both!

For example, if one is deluded and really thinks that he is a prophet, then he does not sit up late at night planning, "How will I fool the people tomorrow so that they think I am a prophet?" He truly believes that he is a prophet, and he trusts that the answer will be given to him by revelation. As a matter of fact, a great deal of the Qur'an came in answer to questions. Someone would ask

Muhammad (SAWA) a question, and the revelation would come with the answer to it.

Certainly, if one is crazy and believes that an angel put words in his ear, then when someone asks him a question, he thinks that the angel will give him the answer. Because he is crazy, he really thinks that. He does not tell someone to wait a short while and then run to his friends and ask them, "Does anyone know the answer?" This type of behaviour is characteristic of one who does not believe that he is a prophet. What the non-Muslims refuse to accept is that you cannot have it both ways. One can be deluded, or he can be a liar. He can be either one or neither, but he certainly cannot be both! The emphasis is on the fact that they are unquestionably mutually exclusive personal traits.

The following scenario is a good example of the kind of circle that non-Muslims go

around in constantly. If you ask one of them, "What is the origin of the Qur'an?" He tells you that it originated from the mind of a man who was crazy. Then you ask him, "If it came from his head, then where did he get the information contained in it? Certainly the Qur'an mentions many things with which the Arabs were not familiar." So in order to explain the fact which you bring him, he changes his position and says, "Well, maybe he was not crazy. Maybe some foreigner brought him the information. So he lied and told people that he was a prophet." At this point then you have to ask him, "If Muhammad (SAWA) was a liar, then where did he get his confidence? Why did he behave as though he really thought he was a prophet?" Finally backed into a corner, like a cat he quickly lashes out with the first response that comes to his mind. Forgetting that he has already exhausted that possibility, he claims, "Well, maybe he wasn't a liar. He was probably crazy and

really thought that he was a prophet." And thus he begins the futile circle again.

As has already been mentioned, there is much information contained in the Qur'an whose source cannot be attributed to anyone other than Allah. For example, who told Muhammad (SAWA) about the wall of Dhul-Qamayn - a place thousands of miles to the north? Who told him about embryology? When people assemble facts such as these, if they are not willing to attribute their existence to a divine source, they automatically resort to the assumption someone brought Muhammad (SAWA) the information and that he used it to fool the people.

However, this theory can easily be disproved with one simple question: "If Muhammad (SAWA) was a liar, where did he get his confidence? Why did he tell some people outright to their face what others could never say?" Such

confidence depends completely upon being convinced that one has a true divine revelation. For example, the Prophet had an uncle by the name of Abu Lahab. This man hated Islam to such an extent that he used to follow the Prophet around in order to discredit him. If Abu Lahab saw the Prophet speaking to a stranger, he would wait until they parted and then would go to the stranger and ask him, "What did he tell you? Did he say, 'Black.'? Well, it's white. Did he say, 'Morning.'? Well, it's night." He faithfully said the exact opposite of whatever he heard Muhammad (SAWA) and the Muslims say.

However, about ten years before Abu Lahab died; a little chapter in the Qur'an was revealed to him. It distinctly stated that he would go to the Fire (i.e.. Hell). In other words, it affirmed that he would never become a Muslim and would therefore be condemned forever. For ten years all Abu Lahab had to do

was say, "I heard that it has been revealed to Muhammad (SAWA) that I will never change - that I will never become a Muslim and will enter the Hellfire. Well I want to become a Muslim now. How do you like that? What do you think of your divine revelation now?" But he never did that. And yet, that is exactly the kind of behaviour one would have expected from him since he always sought to contradict Islam. In essence, Muhammad (SAWA) said, "You hate me and you want to finish me? Here, say these words, and I am finished. Come on, say them!" But Abu Lahab never said them. Ten years! And in all that time he never accepted Islam or even became sympathetic to the Islamic cause. How could Muhammad (SAWA) possibly have known for sure that Abu Lahab would fulfil the Qur'anic revelation if he [i.e., Muhammad (SAWA)] was not truly the messenger of Allah? How could he possibly have been so confident as to give someone 10 years to discredit

his claim of Prophethood? The only answer is that he was Allah's messenger; for in order to put forth such a risky challenge, one has to be entirely convinced that he has a divine revelation.

Another example of the confidence which Muhammad (SAWA) had in his own Prophethood and consequently in the divine protection of himself and his message is when he left Makkah and hid in a cave with Abu Bakr during their emigration to Medina. The two clearly saw people coming to kill them, and Abu Bakr was afraid. Certainly, if Muhammad (SAWA) was a liar, a forger and one who was trying to fool the people into believing that he was a prophet, one would have expected him to say in such a circumstance to his friend, "Hey, Abu Bakr, see if you can find a back way out of this cave." Or, "Squat down in that corner over there and keep quiet." Yet, in fact, what he said to Abu Bakr clearly illustrated his

confidence. He told him, "Relax! Allah is with us, and Allah will save us!"

Now, if one knows that he is fooling the people, where does one get this kind of attitude? In fact, such a frame of mind is not characteristic of a liar or a forger at all. So, as has been previously mentioned, the non-Muslims go around and around in a circle, searching for a way out - some way to explain the findings in the Qur'an without attributing them to their proper source. On one hand, they tell you on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, "The man was a liar," and on the other hand, on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday they tell you, "He was crazy." What they refuse to accept is that one cannot have it both ways; yet they refuse to accept is that one cannot have it both ways; yet they need both excuses to explain the information in the Qur'an.

About seven years ago, I had a minister over to my home. In

the particular room which we were sitting there was a Qur'an on the table, face down, and so the minister was not aware of which book it was. In the midst of a discussion, I pointed to the Qur'an and said, "I have confidence in that book." Looking at the Qur'an but not knowing which book it was, he replied, "Well, I tell you, if that book is not the Bible, it was written by a man!" In response to his statement, I said, "Let me tell you something about what is in that book." And in just three to four minutes I related to him a few things contained in the Qur'an. After just those three or four minutes, he completely changed his position and declared, "You are right. A man did not write that book. The Devil wrote it!"

Indeed, possessing such an attitude is very unfortunate – for many reasons. For one thing, it is a very quick and cheap excuse. It is an instant exit out of an uncomfortable situation. As a matter of fact, there is a famous story in the

Bible that mentions how one day some of the Jews were witnesses when Jesus raised a man from the dead. The man had been dead for four days, and when Jesus arrived, he simply said, "Get up!" and the man arose and walked away. At such a sight, some of the Jews who were watching said disbelievingly, "This is the Devil. The Devil helped him!" Now this story is rehearsed often in churches all over the world, and people cry big tears over it, saying, "Oh, if I had been there, I would not have been as stupid as the Jews!" Yet ironically, these people do exactly what the Jews did when in just three minutes you show them only a small part of the Qur'an and all they can say is, "Oh, the Devil did it. The devil wrote that book!" Because they are truly backed into a corner and have no other viable answer, they resort to the quickest and cheapest excuse available.

Another Example of people's use of this weak stance can be found in the Makkans'

explanation of the source of Muhammad (SAWA)'s message. They used to say, "The devils bring Muhammad that Qur'an!" But just as with every other suggestion made, the Qur'an gives the answer. One verse in particular states: *"And they say, 'Surely he is possessed [by jinn], 'but it [i.e., the Qur'an] is not except a reminder to the worlds."* Thus it gives an argument in reply to such a theory. In fact, there are many argument in the Qur'an in reply to the suggestion that devils brought Muhammad (SAWA) his message. For example, in the 26th chapter Allah clearly affirms: *"No evil ones have brought it [i.e., this revelation] down. It would neither be fitting for them, nor would they be able. Indeed they have been removed far from hearing."* And in another place in the Qur'an, Allah instructs us: *"So when you recite the Qur'an seek refuge in Allah from Shaytaan, the rejected. "*

Now is this how Satan writes a book? He tells one, "Before you read my book, ask God to save you from me." This is very, very tricky. Indeed, a man could write something like this, but would Satan do this? Many people clearly illustrate that they cannot come to one conclusion on this subject. On one hand, they claim that Satan would not do such a thing and that even if he could, God would not allow him to; yet, on the other hand, they also believe that Satan is only that much less than God. In essence they allege that the Devil can probably do whatever God can do. And as a result, when they look at the Qur'an, even as surprised as they are as to how amazing it is, they still insist, "The Devil did this!" Thanks be to Allah, Muslims do not have that attitude. Although Satan may have some abilities, they are a long way separated from the abilities of Allah. And no Muslim is a Muslim unless he believes that. It is common

knowledge even among non-Muslims that the Devil can easily make mistakes, and it would be expected that he would contradict himself if and when he wrote a book. For indeed, the Qur'an states: "Do

they not consider the Qur'an? Had it been from any other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy. "

(To Be Continued)

Important dates of this month
Subject to the sighting of the moon

- 1st July 2008 27th Jamadi Al Thani 1429
- 4th July 2008 1st Rajab 1429
- 6th July 2008 / 3rd Rajab 1429 Martyrdom of Imam Ali-un-Naqi (a.s.)
- 8th July 2008 / 5th Rajab 1429 Birthday of Imam Ali-un-Naqi (a.s.)
- 11th July 2008 / 8th Rajab 1429 Moon Confronting Scorpio
- 12th July 2008 / 9th Rajab 1429 Moon Confronting Scorpio
- 13th July 2008 / 10th Rajab 1429 Moon Confronting Scorpio
- 13th July 2008 / 10th Rajab 1429 Martyrdom of Imam Mohammad Taqi (a.s.)
- 16th July 2008 / 13th Rajab 1429 Birthday of Imam Ali (a.s.)
- 18th July 2008 / 15th Rajab 1429 Sad Demise of Bibi Zaynab (a.s.)
- 28th July 2008 / 25th Rajab 1429 Martyrdom of Imam Musa Al-Kadhim (a.s.)
- 29th July 2008 / 26th Rajab 1429 Sad Demise of Hazrat Abu Talib (a.s.)
- 30th July 2008 / 27th Rajab 1429 Me'raj and Be'that of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.)

Orders Regarding Things Which Invalidate Prayers

The following twelve things, which are called "mubtilaat" make prayers void:—

1. If while offering prayers one of the necessary conditions of prayers ceases to exist. For example, if the person concerned comes to know that the dress with which he has covered himself has been usurped.

2. If, while offering prayers a person is faced, intentionally or by mistake or due to helplessness, with a situation which makes his Wuzu or Ghusl void — for example if urine is discharged from his body. However, as regards a person who cannot control his feces or urine, his prayers will not become void if he acts according to the instructions detailed earlier in connection with Wuzu. Similarly if blood is discharged from the body of a Mustahaza, while she is offering prayers, her prayers

will not become void if she acts upon the orders detailed above in connection with Istihaza.

3. If a person folds his hands with the intention that it is a part of the prayers to do so his prayers is nullified. In case, however, he does not do so with this intention but only as a mark of respect he should, on the basis of obligatory precaution, offer his prayers de novo.

4. The fourth thing which nullifies prayers is this that one may say Aameen without the intention of supplication or may consider it to be a part of prayers. In case; however, he utters this word with the intention of supplication or by mistake or by way of Taqayya (dissimulation) his prayers does not become, void.

5. The fifth thing which nullifies prayers is this that a

person may, whether intentionally or by mistake, turn his back towards Qibla or may move towards the right or left side of Qibla. In fact if he intentionally deviates from the direction of Qibla to such an extent that the people do not say that he is facing Qibla his prayers will become void even though he may not turn fully towards the right or the left side.

6. The sixth thing which invalidates prayers is this that one may utter any word consisting of one or more letters, although it may carry no meaning. A person offering prayers should not salute any one and if another person salutes him he should, on the basis of obligatory precaution, use the same words in reply. For example, if the other, person says 'Salamun Alaykum' he should also say 'Salamun Alaykum' in reply. However, he can use any phrase in reply to 'Alaikum as-Salam'

7. The seventh thing which makes prayers void is to laugh intentionally with voice. In case, therefore, a person laughs intentionally, but without voice, or by mistake with voice, his prayers are not invalidated.

8. The eighth thing which invalidates prayers is this that a person may weep intentionally with voice in connection with worldly affairs and the obligatory precaution is this that he should not weep for worldly affairs even without voice. However, if he weeps, with or without voice, on account of fear of Allah or for the Hereafter there is no harm in it and in fact it is one of the best acts which a person performs.

9. The ninth thing which invalidates prayers is performance of an act which may destroy the shape of prayers (for example clapping one's hands or jumping) and it is immaterial whether that act

is indulged in intentionally or by mistake. However, there is no harm in performing an act which does not change the shape of prayers (for example making a sign with one's hand). If a person performs an act during prayers or remains silent for some time and is in doubt whether or not his prayers has been invalidated, it is permissible for him to break the prayers and offer it again and it is better that he should complete the prayers and then offer it de novo.

10. The tenth thing which makes prayers void is eating or drinking. In case, therefore, a person offering prayers eats or drinks in such a manner that people do not say that he is offering prayers his prayers would be nullified whether his act (i.e. eating or drinking) is intentional or not.

11. The eleventh thing which

nullifies prayers is the doubt of the person offering prayers about the rak'ats performed by him in two-rak'at or three-rak'at prayers or about the first two rak'ats of four-rakat prayers, provided the person concerned continues to entertain doubt about the matter.

12. The twelfth thing which nullifies prayers is this that the person concerned may decrease or increase the basic elements (Arkaan) of the prayers either intentionally or due to inadvertence or may intentionally decrease something which is not a basic element or may intentionally increase something in the prayers or may inadvertently increase upon a basic element (for example Ruku and Sajdatain in one rak'at). However, increase in Takbirah-al-Ehram by mistake does not nullify the prayers.

Narrations About Imam Ali

Fondness for Prayer

Sulaiman bin al-Mughirah cites his mother, who said: "I asked um Sa'id, Imam Ali's (a.s.) maid, about his prayer during the month of Ramadhan. She said: 'Ramadhan and Shawwal are the same (to him). He prays the whole night'."

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) further said: Imam Ali (a.s.) used to pray, in his last days, a thousand times every day and night.

Worship of the Thankful

Imam Ali (a.s.) felt the greatness of Allah inside his soul. Worshipping Him, therefore, was an expression of his love and longing for Him, believing that it is only He Who should be worshipped, and no one else. Imam Ali (a.s.) worshipped Allah more than for the fear of His punishment, or desiring His Paradise, or than wanting

to attain what He promised the pious servants. Imam Ali (a.s.) did so in order that his tie with Him may be as supreme and as high in degree as that of his tutor, the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.).

Imam Ali (a.s.) himself explained the nature of his relation with Allah, the Exalted, by saying: "O my Allah, I worshipped You not for fear of Your punishment, nor because I coveted Your reward, but I found You worthy of worshipping, so I worshipped You".

This epitomizes the sincerity of a great believer with such generous faith!

Imam Ali (a.s.) defined different kinds of worship in an eternal world. He said: "One group of people worshipped Allah out of desire for reward. This surely is the worship of traders. Another group worshipped Allah out of fear; this is the worship of

slaves. Still another group worshipped Allah out of gratefulness; this is the worship of free men".

His worship was of this last sort, as it was his true belief that Allah is worthy of being worshipped. Founding worship on other premises is merely the worship of those who, like Imam Ali (a.s.) described as "traders", seek a price and demand compensation. There is a huge chasm between the goal of being thankful and wholly respectful and the goal of manipulation in Allah's scales

and judgement!

The Messenger's Prayer

Imam Ali's (a.s.) prayer, like all his other activities, was similar to that of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.), in its way of performance, submission, eagerness and love of Allah. In this respect, Mutraf bin Abdullah says: "One day Umran bin Husayn and I performed our prayer behind Ali bin Abi Talib. When we left, Umran held my hand and said: 'He prays like Muhammad. He reminded me of his prayer'."

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Cultural Revolution

By Sayid Mujtaba Musavi Lari

No better evidence of the passion of Islam for the spread of erudition, from its very inception, can be given than the words of the Prophet himself who said, after the battle of Badr and the Muslims' victory, to the huge crowds whom they had taken prisoner, that any of them who wished to buy their freedom but had no cash for a ransom could employ their literacy as their resources; and any polytheist who trained ten Muslims to read and write should win freedom. His pronouncement was put into practice; and it was thus that a large number of his original adherents were started on the road of education.

His nephew and successor, the Imam Ali, on whom be blessing, declared that the spreading of science and knowledge and culture and intellectual ability was one of the merits to be coveted and achieved by every Muslim

government. In the record of his words it is reported that he said: "O people! I have rights over you and you have rights over me. Your right over me is to insist that I shall always give you guidance and counsel, and seek your welfare, and improve the public funds and all your livelihoods and help raise you from ignorance and illiteracy to heights of knowledge, learning, culture, social manners and good conduct."

215 years after the Hejra the Abbasid Caliph Ma'amoun founded a "House of Wisdom" in Baghdad to be a centre of science, and furnished it with an astronomical observatory and a public library, for which he set aside 200,000 dinars (the equivalent of some 7 million dollars). He gathered together a large number of learned men who were acquainted with foreign languages and different disciplines, like Honain and

Bakht-eeshoo' and Ibn Tariq and Ibn Muqafa' and Hajaj bin Matar and Sirgis Ra'asi, and others too numerous to mention, and set aside a large sum for them, dispatching many of them to all the different countries of the world to collect books on science, medicine, philosophy, mathematics, and fine literature, in Hindi, Pahlevi, Chaldean, Syriac, Greek, Latin and Farsi. It is said that the vast collections they sent to Baghdad exceeded 100 camel loads!

Europe had not one university or cultural centre to show for itself in those centuries when Islamic lands had large numbers staffed by experts and specialists in all branches of knowledge. These Islamic centres were beginning to radiate waves of brilliant new thinking to the world at the very moment when the Crusades were launched. In fact it might be said that it was the new learning fostered by Islam which itself furnished the Europeans with some of

their new thinking that made possible whatever prowess they achieved in those disastrous wars and fired the passion of jealousy and cupidity which made the West wish to seize for itself the treasures which they saw Islam bringing to the nations under its sway.

Dr. Gustave Le Bon writes on page 329 of volume III of his "History of Islamic and Arab Civilisation": "In those days when books and libraries meant nothing to Europeans, many Islamic lands had books and libraries in plenty. Indeed, in Baghdad's 'House of Wisdom' there were four million volumes; and in Cairo's Sultanic Library one million; and in the library of Syrian Tripoli three million volumes: while in Spain alone under Muslim rule there was an annual publication of between 70 and 80 thousand volumes."

G. l'Estrange in his "Legacy of Islam" page 230 writes: "The Mustansariyya University was

furnished with equipment and built in a huge campus with college edifices of such splendour that its peer exists neither in the Muslim world nor elsewhere. Its four law-colleges, each with 75 students and a professor who taught the pupils gratis, paid its professor a monthly salary, while each of the 300 students was given a gold dinar a month, A college kitchen provided the daily meals. Ibn-el-Farat says that the library contained priceless and unique volumes, on many branches of science, for any student to borrow. Pens and paper were provided for the notes anyone might wish to take. The university had hammams (baths) and infirmaries. Its doctors conducted a daily inspection of the colleges, and wrote prescriptions for any who were ill. The college stores were able to dispense drugs prescribed immediately. All this at the beginning of the 13th century AD!"

Dr. Max Meyerhof writes: "In Istanbul the mosques possess between them more than 80 libraries, with tens of thousands of books and ancient manuscripts. In Cairo, Damascus, Mosul, Baghdad, and in cities of Iran and of India there are other great libraries full of treasures. A proper catalogue of the precious volumes in all these has not yet been published complete in print. Moreover, the Escorial library in the Iberian Peninsula contains a huge section Filled with books and manuscripts produced by the Islamic scholars of the West, which also awaits completion of its cataloguing."

Dr. Gustave Le Bon writes on pages 557/8 of his "Islamic and Arab Civilisation": "The Muslims pursued the sciences with profound application. In any town they took, their First act was to build a mosque and thereafter a college. This led to the production of majestic institutions of learning in a

vast number of cities. Benjamin Toole (ob.1173 AD) said that in Alexandria he found more than 20 colleges at work. Baghdad, Cairo, Cordova, and other places all had great universities with laboratories, observatories, huge libraries and all the other requirements for tackling intellectual problems. In Andalusia alone there were 70 public libraries. The library of Al-Hakem II in Cordova contained 600,000 volumes and it took 44 volumes to catalogue the library's contents. When Charles the Just, four centuries later founded the Bibliotheque Nationale of Paris he was only able to assemble a total of 900 volumes, and that after great labours, while one-third of that 900 were books on religion."

The same author on page 562 adds: "The Muslims launched science on the road of exactitude, experiment and forward-looking discovery by hypothesis, with a particular enthusiasm, while producing books and treatises and high

schools that spread their intellectual prowess to all corners of the world. They thereby opened for Europe the road to its renaissance. So it is with justification that the title of 'Europe's Professor' is given to the newly-arisen Islamic power, since it was through them that the treasures of ancient Greek and Roman science were rediscovered and enhanced and given back to Europe as she began to emerge from the Dark Ages."

Josef Marc Kapp writes, concerning the first centuries of Islam's progress in culture, in his book "Muslim Splendour in Spain" (p. 170): "Even in the lowest classes in society was a thirst to learn to read; and humble workers limited their expenditure on food and clothing and spent their last pennies on buying books. One worker collected such a library that men of learning flocked to him. Freed slaves and the children of slaves entered the ranks of the learned: and men like Vafyat-ul-A'iyah Ibn Khalkan laid the

foundations for great progress”.

Nehru wrote concerning the benefits conferred on social progress and the cultural revolution of the Muslims in Andalusia in his book “A Glimpse at World History” (p.413): “Cordoba had over a million inhabitants, a magnificent public park of about 20 kilometres and suburbs stretching 40 kilometres, with 6,000 palaces, mansions and great houses, 200,000 smaller houses of beauty, 70,000 stores and small shops, 300 mosques, 700 hammams with hot and cold baths for public use. There were innumerable libraries of which the most

comprehensive and important was the Royal Library, which contained 400,000 volumes. Cordova University was famous throughout Europe and in western Asia.

At the same time education was provided for the poor. Indeed one of their contemporary historians writes that nearly everyone in Spain in those days could read and write, while in the rest of Christian Europe, apart from the monks and clerical persons who were educated through religious houses, no one, including the highest members of the nobility, thought it worth his while even to attempt to master basic arts of reading.”

General Beliefs

By Ayatullah Jafar Sobhani

Now that it is clear that the wisdom of the Prophet must, of necessity, have led him to offer guidance on the principle of leadership of the Islamic *umma*, we should consider the solution proposed by him. Here, we shall critically address the two main perspectives on this question: [either] (a) the Holy Prophet, under divine command, chooses a great individual, one eminently qualified for the task of leadership of the *umma*, publicly appointing him as his successor; [or] (b) the Holy Prophet leaves to his people the responsibility for choosing a leader after his death.

It should be clear which of these two perspectives is corroborated by the Qur'an, the Sunna and the events in the life of the Prophet. A close examination of the life of the Prophet—from the day he was commanded to proclaim the new faith first to his near of

kin, then to all mankind—reveals that he repeatedly made clear the distinctive qualities of his successor, thereby indicating that the means by which the leadership of the community was to be established was that of explicit designation (*tansis*) and not election by the people. This point can be proven by the evidence we offer below:

1. Hadith: *Yawm al-Dar* ('The Day of the Home'). Three years after the beginning of the Prophet's mission, he was Commanded by God to proclaim openly his call, with the revelation of this verse: *And warn thy tribe of near kindred.* (Sura al-Shu'ara', xxvi:214) The Prophet invited the chiefs of the Banu Hashim and said to them: I have brought for you the best of this world and the next. God has commanded me to invite you to this [religion of Islam]. Which of you will help me establish this religion, to be

my brother and my successor?' He repeated this question three times, and each time it was 'Ali, alone, who stepped forward, declaring his readiness to help the Prophet. Then the Prophet said: 'Truly, this is my brother, my heir and my successor among you.

2. Hadith: *al-Manzila* ('The [Spiritual] Rank'). The Prophet, on various occasions indicated that the station and rank of Ali in relation to him was that of Aaron in relation to Moses, denying Ali only one degree comprised in the station of Aaron, that of prophethood. The Prophet said in a hadith that is almost *mutawatir*. 'O Ali, your rank (*manzila*) in relation to me is that of Aaron in relation to Moses. Now, according to the Qur'an, Aaron had the rank of a Prophet, a caliph and a minister (*wazir*) at the time of Moses, and this hadith proves that Ali clearly had the rank of a caliph and a minister, like Aaron, but not that of a Prophet. Naturally, if the meaning were other than that

of affirming, in regard to Ali, all the ranks apart from prophethood, there would have been no need to make an exception of prophethood alone.

3. Hadith: *al-Safina* ('The Ark'): The Prophet likened his *ahl al-bayt* to Noah's ark, saying: Is not the likeness of my *ahl al-bayt* among you like the ark of Noah among his folk? Whoever takes refuge therein is saved and whoever opposes it is drowned.

We know that Noah's ark was the sole place of refuge for people seeking to save themselves from the Deluge. Thus, according to this hadith, the *ahl al-bayt* of the Prophet is the sole refuge for those seeking protection against the tenebrous phenomena—sources of delusion and confusion—that confront humanity.

4. Hadith: *Aman al-umma* ('Security of the community'): The Prophet made it known that he saw his *ahl al-bayt* as a

source of unity and a means of distancing his *umma* from divisiveness, saying: 'Just as the stars are a means of securing (*aman*) the people of the earth against drowning, my *ahl al-bayt* is the means of securing (*aman*) my *umma* from division. If a tribe among the Arabs opposes them, they fall into dispute and become part of Satan's minions.'

5. Hadith: *al-Thaqalayn* ('The Two Precious Things'): This hadith is one of those classified in Islam as *mutawatir*, and is found in many books written by scholars of both branches of Islam. In this hadith, the Prophet is preaching to the whole community: 'Verily, I am leaving with you two precious things, the Book of God and my progeny, my *ahl al-bayt*, for as long as you cling to these two, you will never go astray; and truly they will not be parted from each other until they join me at the *Hawd* [a pool] of Paradise, identified with al-Kawthar.'

This [last] hadith places side by side the authoritative knowledge of the *ahl al-bayt* and the Qur'an, thereby requiring Muslims to hold fast in matters of faith both to the Qur'an and the *ahl al-bayt*. But it is a great pity that some people knock on all doors except the door of the *ahl al-bayt*. The hadith *al-Thaqalayn*, upon whose authenticity both Shi'a and Sunni alike are in agreement, can help to bring about a truly unified *umma* among the world's Muslims; for if the two groups differed over the question of political leadership and authority after the Prophet's death, they are still able, despite this difference over historical interpretation, to be as one as regards the sacred significance of the *ahl al-bayt*. The Prophet provided no grounds for a schism to occur between the two groups; on the contrary, there ought to have been—according to this universally acknowledged narration—unison of will and singleness of purpose.

In general, during the period of the caliphate, the caliphs themselves referred to Ali as their source of authoritative knowledge, and disputes over religious matters were resolved by recourse to him. In truth, from the time the *ahl al-bayt* of the Holy Prophet was set aside as a source of religious authority, a spirit of sectarianism set in, and groups with different names crystallized, one after the other.

In the hadiths quoted above, the Holy Prophet clearly indicated who was to be his successor, either in a general or a specific way, such that any one of them would suffice as proof for those who objectively seek after the truth. Nonetheless, in order that his message on this issue reach the ears of all the Muslims, far and wide, and in order to foreclose any possibility of doubt or hesitation on this score, the Prophet halted the great mass of pilgrims returning from the Hajj at a place called Ghadir

Khumm, telling his companions that he had received a command from God to deliver a message to them. This divine message pertained to the accomplishment of a momentous obligation, one so great that if he did not carry this out, the Prophet would not have performed his duty. As the Qur'an says: *O Messenger, make known that which hath been revealed to thee from thy Lord, for if thou do it not, thou wilt not have conveyed His Message. God will protect thee from the people.* (Sura al-Ma'ida, 5:67)

A pulpit was erected; he stood upon it and then proclaimed: 'Shortly, I shall be answering *labbayk* ['at Thy service'] to my Lord's call; what will you say of me?' In reply, the people assembled said: 'We bear witness that you have conveyed unto us the religion of God; you wished only for our well-being, and you exerted yourself to the utmost. May God bestow the best of rewards upon you!'

Then he asked: 'Do you testify to the Oneness of God, to my message, and the reality of the Day of Resurrection?' All those present so testified. Then he said: I shall enter the Pool (*al-Kawthar*) before you; take care how you treat two precious things that I am leaving behind.' Someone asked what was meant by the 'two precious things'. The Prophet replied: 'The one is the Book of God, and the other is my progeny. And God, the Subtle, the Aware, has told me that these two will not be separated until the Day of Judgement, when they shall join me. Do not come too close to these two things, lest you perish; and do not stray too far from them, lest you perish.'

Then he clasped the hand of Ali, raising it aloft, so that all could see the two hands together, and spoke as follows: 'O people, who has a greater claim over the believers than their own souls?' They replied: 'God and His Messenger know best.' The Prophet said: 'Truly

God is my *Mawla* and I am the *mawla* of the believers, and I have a greater claim over them than their own souls.' Then he said three times: 'For whoever has me as his *mawla*, Ali is his *mawla*.' Then he said: 'My Lord, be the friend of whoever is 'Ali's friend, and the enemy of whoever is 'Ali's enemy; love whoever loves him and hate whoever hates him; help whoever helps him and abandon whoever abandons him, wherever he may be. Let those who are present convey this to those who are absent.'

The hadith of Ghadir is accounted *mutawatir* (most authenticated) being related by companions, the followers of the companions, and countless narrators of Hadith down through the ages. A total of 110 companions, 89 of those in the succeeding generation, and 3500 scholars of Hadith have transmitted this hadith, so there can be no question of disputing its authenticity. Also, a group of scholars have written books on this hadith, amongst which the one which

brings together most comprehensively all the chains of transmission for the hadith is *Shanfal-Ghadir*, by Allama Abd al-Husayn Amini.

At this point, we must address the question of what exactly is meant by the term *mawla*, in respect both of the Prophet and of Ali. There is considerable evidence to show that the meaning of this term is authority and leadership. We allude to some of this evidence below:

1. Upon the occasion of Ghadir, the Prophet halted the caravan of pilgrims at a place that had neither water nor pasture, in the middle of an extremely hot day. The heat was so intense that those present wrapped one part of their cloak over their heads and the other part beneath them, to protect themselves against the heat. In such circumstances, the halt must have signified that the Prophet meant to speak about a matter of the utmost importance for the guidance of the *umma*, a

key address that was to affect the destiny of the community—and indeed, what could be more crucial to the destiny of the *umma* than the issue of determining the successor to the Prophet, an issue which, properly resolved, would be a source of unity for the Muslims and of the safeguarding of the community?

2. Before expressing Ali's status of *wilaya*, that is, his being made *mawla*, the Prophet spoke of the three principles of *Tawhid*, Prophecy and the Afterlife, eliciting from the Muslims acknowledgement that he had indeed conveyed the divine message. By associating his message with the elicited confession by the Muslims of these three principles, he indicated the importance of the message he was about to deliver, the momentous nature of the issue he was to raise; it could not be about something so trivial as a recommendation to be the 'friend' of some person.

3. At the beginning of the discourse, the Prophet spoke of his impending death, thus indicating his concern over the state his *umma* would find itself in after his passing away. What could be more appropriate than providing for his followers a means of charting their course, according to his design, through the dangerous, stormy seas that lay before them?

4. Before conveying the divine message concerning Ali, he spoke of his own quality of being a *mawla*, his *mawlawiyya*, and his own

precedence (*awlawiyya*), saying: 'God is my *Mawla* and I am the *mawla* of the believers, and I am closer to them than they are to their own selves.' This shows that Ali's status as *mawla* derives from the same root as the *mawlawiyya* and *awlawiyya* of the Prophet; it is by divine decree, then, that Ali's *awlawiyya* was confirmed.

5. After conveying the message, the Prophet instructed those present to report it to those who were absent.

Activities

- English Monthly Magazine "The Minister".
- Urdu Monthly Magazine "Al-Moballigh".
- Audio Magazine "The Voice".
- Religious Madressa. (Mon, Tue and Wed).
- Islamic Library (a collection of manuscripts and printed books in Arabic, Persian, English and Urdu languages).
- Weekly Religious Gathering:
 - Thursday 8:00 pm – Dua-e-Kumayl and Majlis
 - Friday 8:00 pm – Dinner, Lectures (English & Urdu), followed by questions and answers.
 - Saturday 7:30 am – Breakfast followed by lecture on Different topics.
 - Sunday 11:00 am – (First Sunday of every month) Medical Lecture by a Doctor.

We need Momeneen's views and help.

Al Baqi

By Rosemary (Mariam) Al Attar

The Place of Burial is bare,
No shadow cast by Arabian sun;
No sign of who is buried there,
No record of life, its end, when begun.

Four members of the Family are here:
The Prophet's Descendants whom we revere;
Imam Hasan and sick Imam Ali so dear,
With Imams Al-Bakir and As-Sadeq near.

Their graves are only marked by stones –
Scarcely above the ground they show;
At dusk a mournful wind moans,
And more sorrowful our hearts grow.

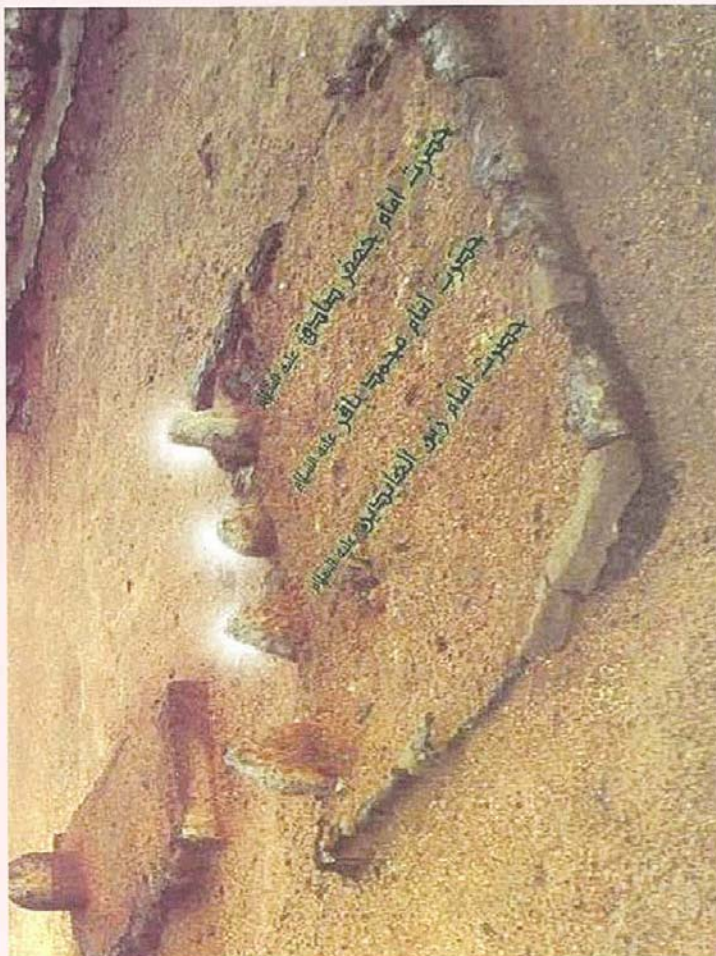
Long years ago laid here to rest,
Those noble souls held justice high,
In Allah's Cause they did their best –
And for this, they had to die.

No record of life, its end, when begun,
No sign of who is buried here,
But the Descendants names in memory run
And to the eye bring many a tear.

Never forgotten, remembered every deed –
They are in folk memory enshrined;
To be with these martyrs we pray we'll succeed,
And in their company will ourselves find.

Album

Jannat-ul-Baqi



To:

Our Motto

Faith, Piety, Courage, Justness,
Knowledge, Tolerance, Modesty,
Abstinence, Sacrifices and
Propagation.

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