

## INTRODUCING THE AUTHOR

Dr. Muhammad Fazl-ur-Rahman al-Ansari al-Qaderi (born: 1914), whose essay on foundations of faith has been presented in this monograph is a scholar, author, journalist and missionary of international repute. His scholarship bears the stamp of versatility, with Theology, Philosophy and Comparative Religion forming his central interest. His authorship has already contributed more than a dozen books, all imbued with sincerity of purpose, depth of insight, logical acumen and wide knowledge. His journalistic talent has enriched the cause of Islam for more than twenty years inside the Pak-Bharat subcontinent as well as outside. His missionary endeavours have served far-flung human populations in Asia, Africa, Europe and America.

A pupil of Professor S. Z. Hasan, Dr. Phil. (Erl.) D. Phil. (Oxon.) in Philosophy, of His Eminence Saiyyid Sulaiman Ashraf in Theology and of His Eminence Muhammad Abdul Aleem Siddiqui Al-Qaderi in Spiritual Discipline and Missionary Work, he acquired his early education at different institutions, commencing with the memorisation of the Holy Qur'an, settling down finally at the famous Aligarh Muslim University (India) for higher education—both Western and Islamic. There he won the highest laurels in the B.A., B. Th. and M.A. (Philosophy) examinations, wrote his Ph. D. thesis on Moral Philosophy under Prof. S. Z. Hasan, and was hailed officially as “a new refulgent star on the firmament of Islamic Learning”, “a scholar of exceptional talent and ability”, “head and shoulders above others”—indeed, as “the best product of the Aligarh Muslim University” in view of his many-sided genius.

As an Islamic theologian, he possesses the rare distinction of combining higher education in Modern Thought with Islamic theological scholarship. As a scholar of Philosophy, he represents western as well as eastern disciplines. As a missionary, his love for humanity has carried him to distant lands. Besides miscellaneous tours, he has travelled in 1949-50, 1957, 1960-61, 1964 and 1969, five times round the world on Islamic missionary errand.

# Foundations of Faith

DR. F. R. ANSARI

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# FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH

## A COMMON-SENSE EXPOSITION

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**ETC:        ETC:        ETC:**

**CHAPTER I**

**INTRODUCTION**

**WHAT IS RELIGION?**

Religion has been defined in different ways by different philosophical thinkers. The following definition seems to be nearest to truth: "Religion includes a world-vision, a daring belief, a set of absolute obligations, a range of imaginative, emotional and practical experience that is denied to the non-religious mind. It is an interpretation of the universe, of both Nature and history; it is an answer in ultimate terms to the torturing difficulties which we compendiously call problems of life; and it is a way of living which with that interpretation is both noble and rational and both theoretical and practical. How theoretical it can be is evident from the volume and difficulty of theology. How practical it can be is evident from History."

**ROLE OF RELIGION IN HISTORY**

In his famous book, *Outlines of History*, a non-religious man and an eminent scientific thinker, H. G. Wells, says: "The over-riding forces that hitherto in the individual soul and in the community

have struggled and prevailed against the ferocious, base and individual impulses that divide us from one another, have been the powers of religion... Those clearly intertwined influences have made possible the greater human societies .... They have been the chief synthetic forces throughout this great story of human co-operation." It means that Religion has been the most vital factor in the life of mankind.

## PLACE OF RELIGION IN THE DOMAIN OF KNOWLEDGE

When we examine the different sciences into which human knowledge is divided today, we find that everyone of them is committed to a limited scope, beyond which it considers it unreasonable and unscientific for itself to go. Thus, psychology deals only with mental processes and it has nothing to do, for instance, with the properties of matter, which form the concern of Chemistry. Similarly, the science of medicine confines itself to the problems of disease and cure and does not meddle with, for instance, the movements of the stars, which form the field of enquiry for astronomy. Thus, for all practical purposes, the different sciences work in isolated and water-tight compartments, and their quest is directed only to particular cross-sections of experience and to certain parts of the universe. In other words, they are isolated and have partial views of Reality.

The different sciences may be broadly classified under three heads: (1) the empirical sciences, such as physics and chemistry; (2) the normative sciences, such as logic; (3) the human sciences, such as political science. As regards their relation with human life, the empirical and the normative sciences have only a technical utility and an indirect value, while the human sciences have a direct, vital and close bearing on the life of the individual as well as the society.

The basic human science is Metaphysics, or Philosophy proper, which is the attempt of the human intellect to understand the world as a whole. Philosophy gives a world-view. From the world-

view emerges Moral Philosophy and from Moral Philosophy emerges Social Philosophy. The application of Moral Philosophy to the practical moral problems gives the Moral Code. The application of Social Philosophy to the practical problems of social life gives Political Science, Economics and the various branches of Law.

Thus Metaphysics, or Philosophy proper, has a basic importance for humanity. For, on the one hand, it deals with the ultimate problems of knowledge and their solutions (such as, the existence of God, the nature of the universe, the function and purpose of human life and the destiny of man), and, on the other hand, it supplies the foundations for the Moral and Social sciences.

But Philosophy suffers from a very definite limitation in respect of its function, because it is always the product of some human mind which, because of the limited capacity of human reason to discover ultimate things and the unlimited capacity to make errors, cannot form the true instrument of comprehensive and sure knowledge.\*

Here arises the need for Revealed Religion, i.e., that knowledge of the ultimate and the fundamental principles of the universe and human life which is revealed by the All-Knowing God to mankind through His chosen Messengers. The existence of Revealed Religion alone can solve the basic human problems by providing *sure* knowledge.

Thus we come to the conclusion that revealed Religious Knowledge is more vital to the success of mankind than any philosophy, art or science. It is this knowledge which stands at the base of all knowledge. Philosophy, with a modified claim, comes next to it and stands as its hand-maid. After Philosophy come the various sciences and arts.

Religious Knowledge supplies the sign-posts to all human

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\*See my book: *Through Science and Philosophy to Religion*, published in the 'Alee-miyah Memorial Series'.

thought and serves as a corrective factor in the ultimate problems of all the branches of knowledge. It is thus Supreme Knowledge.

## FUNCTION OF RELIGION

Viewing the problem from the side of the practical aspects of human life, the function of religion is integration. It integrates the different aspects of the life of the individual. It integrates the life of the individual with the lives of other individuals. It integrates the life of the individual with the life of the cosmos. It integrates the life of the individual and the society with the Divine Scheme of Creation.

## DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

One distinction between revealed Religion and man-made Philosophy is that the former supplies *sure knowledge* of the ultimate values, while the latter does not and cannot. The other distinction is that the former orientates life in spiritual values (which refer to God and our *personal* relation with Him) while the latter stops, and must necessarily stop, at the level of *reason*, keeping us totally at a loss as regards the vaster and more fundamental domain of the *spirit*. The third distinction is that while the outlook of Philosophy is essentially theoretical, the outlook of Religion is essentially practical.

## FOUNDATIONS OF THE ISLAMIC FAITH

Belief in the following verities constitute the foundations of the Islamic faith :—

God with all His Attributes; Divine Revelation which has been finalised in the Holy Qur'an; Divinely-appointed human Messengers and Prophets, the last of whom is the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be on Him); Moral Order of the World; Moral Freedom and Physical Determinism, both existing in fixed measures; Immortality, or, Continuity of life beyond death; Destruction of

the present World-Order on the Last Day; Resurrection; Divine Judgment; Heaven and Hell.

## CONCEPTION OF RELIGION IN ISLAM

The conception of religion in the different creeds of the world is different. Some base human salvation on rituals and ceremonies, others on certain mysterious beliefs. Thus, for instance, in Christianity we have the dogma of the 'Original Sin'. We are told that Adam and Eve committed the original sin in the garden of Eden, after which they were sent to the earth as a mark of punishment, and because that sin had not been forgiven by God, humanity had to suffer its consequences. This state of affairs continued for a long time when finally God Almighty sent His "only begotten son" Jesus Christ to suffer on the cross and to pay the price of that sin with his blood. According to Christianity, Jesus died on the cross and those who believe that he atoned for the original sin of mankind will be saved. This is the Christian scheme of salvation.

The first step in this scheme is the conception of the Triune God, viz., three Gods in one and one God in three—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. Christianity says: this is a Divine Mystery and cannot be explained; believe in it and you will be saved.

The second step is the original sin. That it was not forgiven by God is again a mystery, because if God is All-Merciful and Love-personified, why was it not possible for Him to forgive that original sin there and then? Christianity says: it is a mystery; believe in it and you will be saved.

The final step is the sacrifice which Jesus Christ is said to have undergone. This also pertains to the realm of mystery, for the sin had been committed by Adam and Eve and not by Jesus. We never send an innocent man to the gallows in the place of the actual murderer. Then why should Jesus Christ have been made the scapegoat in spite of being innocent? And how could his blood wash away the original sin of Adam and Eve? Christianity says: it

is a mystery; believe in it and you will be saved.

In Islam, the case is different. It is not based on mysteries and irrational beliefs but on clear-cut principles and rational foundations. The very first principle of Islam is *Tauhid* or Unity of God. When the Holy Qur'an mentions it and asks us to have faith in it, it does not say: it is a mystery, believe in it and you will be saved. Rather, it invites our attention to the natural phenomena around us and to the working of the human personality, and on that basis it asks us to ponder whether there is God, and, if there is, whether there is one or many. Now the personality of God is actually of all things the most hidden and the most subtle; but in this respect Islam asks us to exercise our reason. It is evident, therefore, that it must ask us to do the same in connection with other things and this is what the Holy Qur'an actually does. Time and again we have been told in that Holy Book to use our reason and to employ our scientific observation in understanding as well as in practising the principles taught by Islam.

As regards the Islamic conception of religion, it is original and unique.

According to the Holy Qur'an, God Almighty has prescribed a course of law for everything, and everything except the human beings follows that course of natural law automatically. The sun follows its course and performs its function without deviating from its path or in its function even slightly. And so does the moon and all the other heavenly bodies. The earth itself moves according to the natural law laid down for it by God Almighty. Things found on the earth, whether they are plants, insects or the lower animals, behave similarly in conformity with the natural laws prescribed for them. A set of natural laws has also been laid down for human beings. Side by side with that, however, they have been endowed with a free will also, which means that they have been given the choice and the power either to act according to these natural laws or to violate them. The purpose of religion, according to Islam, is to state the laws of natural life for human beings and to ask them to follow them. To be Muslim, therefore, means

leading a life in conformity with the natural laws made and revealed to us by God.

It is evident from the above that everything of this universe is Muslim, not by choice but by inherent constitution. As regards man, he has to become Muslim by choice. He has to exert his free will in moulding his life according to the pattern of natural law. That natural law has been given in its detailed form in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*.

## CHAPTER II

### THROUGH MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS TO ISLAMIC BELIEFS

#### SOME VITAL QUESTIONS AND THEIR SOLUTIONS

Man finds himself confronted with the most vital problem of his life, *viz.*, what have I to do and what have I to become? Naturally, he has to do and he has to become what is in harmony with and adequate to, his nature, the nature of the universe and the place he occupies in it. Hence the questions:

What is the nature of the universe?

What is the nature of Man?

What is the place he occupies in it?

and—What is the conduct befitting the place he occupies?

These questions are so deep-seated in human nature that they can never be ignored. Man must reach a satisfactory solution of them. Indeed, he does come to a solution, whether consciously or unconsciously, critically or uncritically.

The credit of man, however, lies in a conscious and critical solution. Therefore, when these questions are raised at the critical stage of reflective thought, there arises a question as a prerequisite of the solution of the fundamental problem of man,—the question, namely: What are the conditions of the solution of these questions?

Evidently, the solution of these questions is possible only if man is endowed with the capacities competent to know the nature of the universe, his own nature, as well as his place in the universe.

The philosophical attempts made by man to solve these problems may be divided into two stages: (1) Pre-Critical and (2) Critical, or, the stage of reflection and the stage of reflection upon reflection. The stage of reflection, *viz.*, the Pre-Critical, may, again, be divided into two eras, the Rationalistic and the Empirical.

At the *Rationalistic stage* the basis of the solution of the fundamental problem of man is the dogmatic assumption that theoretical reason alone is the faculty of the knowledge of ultimate Reality. At this stage, theoretical reason becomes conscious of its superiority over all human faculties and feels its privilege to sit in judgment over all kinds of truth, with the result that its inquiry leads to conflicting conclusions.

This conflict of conclusions unhinges faith in the competence of Reason and Rationalism asserts itself in another form, *viz.*, *Empiricism*, which is indirectly another interpretation of Rationalism itself. That is, not Reason but Experience is the avenue of the knowledge of Reality.

Reflection on the conclusions of Rationalism and Empiricism creates an attitude of despair and want of faith. Man, however, cannot stay in such an attitude and consequently the problem is raised afresh and in a modified form at the critical stage of reflection. Formerly, the problem was: What is the nature of the Object *viz.*, inquiry began from the side of the object. But at the Critical stage the inquiry begins from the side of the Subject and the question becomes: What am I? and How can I attain to perfection adequate to my nature?

#### PURPOSIVE ACTIVITY—ITS INSTINCTIVE AND RATIONAL ASPECTS

Now, "I", the human ego, is a kind of activity. This activity is purposive. Therefore, the nature of "I" as a purposive activity can be understood only with reference to the purposes to which it is directed. This purposive activity can be analysed into two aspects, *viz.*, *Instinctive* and *Rational*.

As for the *Instinctive aspect*, the question arises: What are the different instincts and the ends thereof?

“An instinct,” according to McDougall (*Outline of Psychology*, p. 110), “is an innate psycho-physical disposition which determines the organism to *perceive* (to pay attention to) any object of a certain class, and to experience in its presence a certain emotional excitement and an impulse to action which finds expression in a specific mode of behaviour in relation to that object.”

The chief human instincts and their ends are :—

- (1) *Instinct of Hunger*: It has primacy over all other instincts in the sense that when aroused in great strength, it overrides every other tendency. Its end is nutrition of the organism.
- (2) *Instinct of Repulsion or Disgust*: Its end is primarily the avoidance of noxious things, or their rejection if they have been taken into the mouth.
- (3) *Instinct of Combat*: It has two phases, ie., of threatening and of attack. Its natural end is getting rid of obstruction in the smooth progress towards its natural goal imposed by any other instinctive activity.
- (4) *Instinct of Escape*: Its end is to get out of a dangerous situation when combat is either impossible or risky.
- (5) *Acquisitive Instinct*: Its primary end is hoarding surplus food against possible future emergencies.
- (6) *Constructive Instinct*: Its primary end is to provide shelter.

N.B.—The above six instincts form one organic whole having the final end of *self-preservation*.

- (7) *Mating or Sex Instinct*: Its immediate goal is sexual union with an individual of the opposite sex, and its ultimate end is the *procreation of the species*.
- (8) *Parental Instinct*: It is distinct from Mating Instinct and is the most altruistic instinct in man. Its end is, in the first place, the protection of one's young offspring and, in the second place, of anyone in need or distress.
- (9) *Instinct of Appeal*: It is the master-key to the Parental Instinct. Its end is to obtain aid and comfort from others, primarily from the parents.

N.B.—The above two instincts working together serve the end of the *preservation of species*.

- (10) *Instinct of Curiosity*: The attitude of curiosity is one beginning of wisdom. The end towards which this instinct strives is fuller apprehension or clearer perception of objects.
- (11) *Herd Instinct*: Its end is the near presence of other members of the species for the three-fold purpose of: (a) mutual warnings of dangers; (b) collective defence and attack; (c) benefits secured from the keener sense or the superior intelligence of other members of the species.

This instinct combined with *Primitive Passive Sympathy* renders group-life advantageous to all members of the group and is the basis of all higher developments of sociability.

- (12) *Instinct of Self-Assertion*.
- (13) *Instinct of Submission*.

The end of both these instincts is the *preservation of social order*.

N.B.—Taken together, the common end of the last-mentioned three instincts is the *creation and preservation of social organism*.

(Cf. *Op. Cit.*, pp. 130—163).

The Rational aspect of purposive activity is directed to its own ends, viz., *Knowledge, Art, Morality, Religion*.

When the human ego is directed towards the world of objects in order to know it, it is the theoretical aspect of its nature and may be called *Knowledge Consciousness*.

When it is directed towards the apprehension or creation of harmony in the world of objects, it is *Artistic or Aesthetic Consciousness*.

When it is directed towards morality, it is *Moral Consciousness*.

When it is directed towards holiness and perfection as embodied and expressed in a Person, it is *Religious Consciousness*.

### THE MANIFOLD CONFLICT

The human ego is involved in a manifold conflict which is really the basis of all its idealistic efforts. This conflict may be classified as follows:—

- (1) The conflict (disharmony) between the instinctive activity and its ends. To put it in other words, the activity of the human instincts may often be disproportionate to their ends, as, for instance, the actual craving of hunger and sex seems to be excessively great as compared with the purposes, respectively, of the nutrition of the organism and the propagation of the species.
- (2) A conflict is possible in the activity of the different instincts themselves, as, for instance, the instinct of self-

preservation may come into conflict with the instinct of self-assertion or with the gregarious instinct; and this conflict may frustrate the end of one or the other instinct.

- (3) Instinctive activity may conflict with rational activity. In other words, the activity directed towards knowledge or art or morality or religion may be opposed and frustrated by some instinctive activity; or the pursuit of knowledge or art or morality or religion may demand the suppression of any of the instincts.
- (4) The various rational activities may clash and conflict among themselves. For instance, the activity directed towards knowledge may clash with that directed towards moral self-perfection or towards artistic creation.
- (5) A conflict between "I" and its rational ends is also conceivable in the sense that the ego finds itself incompetent to realise the ends towards which it is directed.

### NATURE AND CONDITIONS OF MORALITY

Moral consciousness is concerned with actions—modes of behaviour towards men; it yearns to do *good* (morally) and to avoid *evil*. Its problem, therefore, is: What is the nature of Morality? and, how is Morality possible?

Morality consists in certain modes of actions which are performed for their own sake—in actions performed in obedience to laws which are absolutely, universally and unconditionally binding. The question, therefore, becomes:

What are the laws which ought to be obeyed for their own sake, and what are the implications of the obedience to such imperatives?

Evidently the imperatives of the kind can be conceived as binding only if man is *free* to act according to them. Otherwise

there can be no responsibility.

Now, man finds himself face to face with two worlds—the world of inexorable *Necessity* and the world of *Freedom* both thrusting themselves upon him and both trying to penetrate into each other, thus rendering morality and success incompatible and irreconcilable. This incompatibility necessitates that human life must be infinite in its existence in order to render success conceivable. Thus besides *Freedom*, *Immortality* also is implied as a necessary condition of man's moral perfection.

But in spite of *Freedom* and *Immortality*, the attainment of moral perfection seems impossible unless the world is essentially in harmony with human pursuits, that is, unless the world is a *Moral Order*.

Again, even if the world be essentially in harmony with human moral yearnings and may ultimately admit of success in the moral struggle, the appearance of incompatibility that the world gives necessitates that there should be a *Personality* who should out of sheer *Grace* lead man to perfection adequate to his nature.

Thus we come to *Freedom of the Will*, *Immortality*, *Moral Order of the World* and *God* as necessary implications of success in the moral life (struggle) of man. Hence, it becomes necessary to determine the import of these concepts.

### FIVE MAJOR VERITIES

#### (1) *Freedom* :

*Freedom* means, positively, the possession of inherent independence in the object called free to determine the mode of its activity and, negatively, the absence of any kind of external restraint or internal constraint on its action.

How is freedom conceivable in this sense? *Freedom* is a quality *sui generis* which can be conceived in a situation of moral

conflict. When two motives—the motive to fulfil self-interest and the motive to perform Duty—conflict with one another, the moral agent deliberates over the situation, one moment leaning towards one motive, the other towards the other. Further, he has to choose between them and then resolves to translate the chosen motive into action. Now, if there had been any determining factor behind his choice, the action would have been causally determined, and moral responsibility consequently would have become inconceivable. But moral consciousness insists to hold that the choice of the motive translated into action is free from all kinds of compulsion. Such freedom is conceivable if it is borne in mind that all the force which lies behind the motive to fulfil the natural inclination consists in the feeling associated with the idea of its (natural inclination's) end; and the motive of the performance of Duty too is constituted of the idea of Duty, which is an abstract idea and the feeling of reverence associated with it. If the feelings associated with the idea of the end and with the idea of Duty conflict with one another, the idea of Duty and the idea of the end of natural inclination both are left bare, impotent and abstract ideas without any force behind them, leaving full possibility for reason to exercise its influence in favour of one or the other idea without any compulsion on the decision of reason. Thus freedom of the will is conceivable as a supersensible factor in the free decision of the moral agent.

#### (2) *Immortality* :

*Immortality* consists in the revival of the moral agent after death with the consciousness of self-same identity (to be the subject of reward or punishment of the actions performed in the temporal world). *Immortality* in this sense is compatible only with the idea of a God who is personal and who has created man and the universe out of absolute Nothing. All the difficulty that one has to face in conceiving immortality is due to the postulate of Architectonic Intelligence of the Creator in which it becomes inconceivable to bring together the constituent elements of the body of an individual when once they have disintegrated.

### (3) Moral Order of the World (Creation) :

That the world is a moral order is the requirement of moral self-perfection because the whole moral struggle seems to be absolutely futile even if the human ego is immortal unless the world is so constituted as to admit of man's success in his moral efforts. But that is possible only if the world be created *ab novo* without any aboriginal nature of its own. Otherwise, if it had some independent factor in its essence it must remain an obstacle not only in the way of man but also in Divine interference with the world-order. Creation of the world, therefore is another implication.

"Creation," says Dr. B. A. Faruqi (*Mujaddid's Conception of Tawhid*), "means bringing something into being out of complete nothing. This conception, however, is a stumbling block for the speculative consciousness, because such a coming into being appears inconceivable. The speculative consciousness, therefore, must stop in its logical regress at some being from which it could, by modification, deduce the actual world-order. It cannot conceive that a substance can come into being *ab novo*. About accidents or qualities of the substance it does not seem to be so sceptical,—new qualities do come into being as a matter of fact."

In reality, the difficulty in the way of speculative consciousness takes its birth in the attitude of conceiving substance and qualities as two separate entities. But, as Dr. S. Z. Hasan holds, substance may well be conceived as the sum of qualities, in which case the difficulty is entirely overcome.

From the point of view of religion, the concept of creation is necessary, because if the things exist or have come into existence independently of God's Will, a limit is set thereby to His power by their nature, and His control over them and over the events of the universe does not remain complete. He thereby ceases to perform the function for the sake of which His existence was postulated. That is, He cannot satisfy the religious consciousness unless He is also the Creator.

### (4) God :

"Man finds himself confronted in his course with insurmountable obstacles. On the one side stands he with his innate yearning after harmony with Reality, after moral perfection and happiness, after knowledge and after beauty. On the other stands the universe, stupendous, dark and brutal, full of sin and ugliness, unamenable to harmony with his moral and spiritual yearnings and unwilling to accede to the demands of his soul. He finds himself helpless—*forlorn*. There must be a Being who has the power as well as the will, to help him if he is to be rescued. Hence it is that Religious Consciousness affirms the existence of such a Being. He can help him in his natural wants and guide him to the right path.

"Such a Being must be *transcendent*. He must necessarily be over and above the world and man. He must be wholly another. Because the despair of man amidst the obstacles that originate in his own nature and those that originate in the nature of the world around him demands that help should come from a source which is other than the sources of his troubles, and which has full control over the whole world of men and things. Indeed, this succour from the source over and above the world is the very purpose for the sake of which Religious Consciousness postulates the existence of such a Being. That is why religious unity is necessarily transcendent.

"The religious consciousness is necessarily dualistic. For, the situation that has given rise to the postulating of the existence of a Divine Being, is that man is disappointed with his own self and the nature of the world. Neither of them is capable of according any help to him in his distress. He postulates the existence of a spiritual Being. To be in harmony with Him alone would enable him to realise his yearnings. This implies that God on the one side and the universe and man on the other, must be fundamentally different in nature. One is perfect, the other imperfect. Both exist—and exist side by side. 'One is other than the other' and is also conscious of being so.

“That God must be a *Personal Being* is the stubborn demand of religious consciousness. Personality implies consciousness; nay, it implies more, it implies self-consciousness, consciousness of itself as over and above—as other than something else, *i.e.*, transcending them. But we can conceive a Being who is self-conscious, and yet it will hardly deserve the name of personality unless it can determine its own action according to the principles of morality, that is, unless it is free. Again, such a Being may be just—absolutely just; it may be holy. But that is not enough; it would then be only the doctrine of *Karma* hypostatized. We want more. It should be capable not only of justice but also of *grace*. It is grace which forms the distinctive feature of personality. A man who always gives you but your deserts, neither more nor less, will be regarded by you as lacking in personal elements. Now the religious consciousness seeks a unity which is eminently personal. It seeks that the Divine Being should be aware of my actual conditions; and that it should be aware of my yearnings; more, it should have Grace—it should be capable of satisfying my yearnings in spite of my shortcomings—in spite of my failure to deserve what I yearn for. That is to say, the religious unity must be fully *personal*.<sup>1</sup>”

How can we affirm the existence of such a Being and of other metaphysical verities? This brings us to the fifth major step, *viz*<sup>2</sup>. :—

(5) *Revelation* :

Islam claims to solve this problem through *Revelation*. Revelation consists in coming down of the Supernatural to the natural to reveal His relevant nature to man, through His Chosen human Messengers and Prophets, and to prescribe a life according to His Will whereby man can attain to perfection adequate to his nature<sup>2</sup>.

1. Dr. B. A. Faruqi; *Mujaddid's Conception of Tawhid*, pp. 32, 33, 38, 41.

2. On the problem of the Necessity of Revelation, see “*Through Science and Philosophy to Religion*” by the Author, published in the same series.

## CHAPTER III

### A COMMON-SENSE EXPOSITION OF THE ISLAMIC FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH

#### COMMON-SENSE PROOFS FOR THE NECESSITY OF DIVINE GUIDANCE

##### (A) Argument Based on the Nature of Man :

In spite of all that a materialist might say, there is a very clear demarcating line between man and the lower animals. Both man and the lower animals possess certain instincts in common, *e.g.*, those of self-preservation and self-propagation. But while the life of the latter is chained to their instincts, the behaviour of the former is not, and this is because he possesses a self-directed will and a self-conscious personality which is capable of over-riding the instincts. For instance, he can willingly and consciously defy the instinct of self-preservation by laying down his life for a noble cause.

The question is: how is this ruling power in man—the self-conscious personality—built up in him? In the beginning it exists in just an embryonic form—hardly discernible in the human baby. At that stage, it is only the instincts which come into play. But very soon the seed of human personality starts flowering up through the *assimilation of instructions and influences* it receives from maturer personalities and its general environment. Thus, the outside influences and instructions,—in other words, *teaching and guidance*, play the *basic* part in the development of human personality. A human baby, to whatever race it might belong, can be reared up as a beast (as has actually happened in those instances when human babies were taken away by the wolves into the jungle and were brought up by them, and they acquired all the

habits of the wolves—running on all fours, growling like wolves, preying on other animals, etc.), or as a barbaric human being, or as a civilised person, in accordance with the type of teaching and guidance it receives.

Teaching or Guidance is thus essential for the development of the human personality. The question now is: Knowing that God has supplied every prerequisite of development to everything that He has created and has provided the human beings beforehand all that they needed for their physical development, would it be rational to suppose that He did not care to supply humanity with its most vital need, namely, Guidance? Certainly not!

**(B) Arguments based on God's Relation with the World and Man:**

(1) God has created the human beings, even as He has created everything else. The relation between God and the human beings may, therefore, be conceived on the analogy of the father and his children.

In the case of human beings we find that the love of the parents expresses itself most fundamentally in the guidance of the child, side by side with the function of providing his physical needs. It is this function of guidance which we find as the most important. In fact, this function is found to exist not only in the case of the human parents but also among the lower animals. For example, from the very first day the mother hen guides her chickens and teaches them how to live and behave in the world. The same is the observation with other animals. This means that the parents would not be true to themselves and to their children unless they perform this function faithfully. Indeed, we consider those parents at fault who do not take pains in the guidance of their children. Carelessness in this respect spoils the entire career of the child, in spite of the fact that he might get from his parents any amount of wealth or social status.

It would appear from the above that God would not be

God in the true sense of the word if, while providing for our physical needs, He fails to provide guidance for the multifarious problems of the complicated structure of human life.

(2) Every artist loves his creation of art and would never like it to be spoilt or deformed in any manner. God has created the world and the human beings. His entire creation, therefore, is His work of art. Would it be rational to think that while an ordinary human artist would never like his piece of art to suffer destruction in any manner, God would be so careless as to leave his creatures without guidance so that they may go headlong groping in the dark and smash their heads ultimately? Our common sense, therefore, tells us that God must send His guidance to us.

(3) Whenever an inventor invents a machine, the first thing he does much before he sends the machine to the market for the use of common people is that he trains engineers in the ins and outs of that machine and prepares a guidebook. We find such specialists in connection with every machine in this world and we also always find guide-books given to us whenever we buy a machine whether it is an automobile or a sewing machine or any other machine.

This is our universal experience in connection with human inventions. Now, the universe is the most complicated machine which could ever be conceivable and it manifests in every department of its activity workmanship of the highest order. Its magnitude is immeasurable and its mysteries are unfathomable. Inside the universe, the human individual himself has the most delicately-balanced machinery of his own, and the most important problem for him is how to work this machinery of his personality with accuracy and success and how to utilize the machinery of the vast universe around him to his benefit. For this purpose, all human beings need sure and comprehensive guidance.

On the one hand is this need of mankind for guidance and on the other hand is the human experience that every manufacturer

of every type of machine invariably trains engineers and prepares guide-books for the guidance of those who use those machines. The only rational conclusion, therefore, would be that God Almighty must have taken upon Himself the obligation of training specialist-engineers in the knowledge of the ins and outs of the machinery of the universe and of the working of the human machinery itself, as also of sending down guide-books for the guidance of mankind. Such divine specialist-engineers are called Prophets and Messengers in Islamic terminology and such guide-books are called Scriptures. Islam teaches that these Prophets and Guide-Books came to all the peoples of the world and God's self-imposed obligation of guidance was truly fulfilled.

### UNIVERSALISM AND PERFECTION OF DIVINE GUIDANCE

Divine guidance, according to Islam, has been universal. Adam was the first man and also the first Prophet of God. After him guidance continued to come from God to all the communities and countries of the world. The Holy Qur'an says: "Every people had a Guide." This guidance was fundamentally the same wherever it came, because it came from the one God and it came to the same humanity. Though the same in its fundamentals, it was at the same time evolutionary, expanding and developing in scope as the various human communities progressed from a lower stage of culture and civilisation to a higher one, until when humanity reached maturity it was finalised, matured and perfected in the Divine Guidance given in the form of the Holy Qur'an to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him!), who is the last and the greatest Messenger of God. As regards the Holy Qur'an, it is not only the last Book of God but also the only one which exists without any interpolation and change up to this day.

A parallel phenomenon might be sought in the education of the child. The child is sent to the school by his parents to begin his education. The first book that he gets to read may be spoilt and torn and thrown away by him on the way-side a number of times. This negligence and lack of understanding and appreciation

of the value of education continues for a long time. But neither the parents nor the teachers are wearied of it. The parents continue to supply him fresh copies of books when he tears down those in his possession, while the teachers continue to teach him lessons again and again when he misunderstands them or forgets them. A stage ultimately arrives when the child attains maturity of understanding and is capable of appreciating the benefits of knowledge and education. It is only then that he preserves his books as well as his knowledge. A point of ultimate perfection in studentship is finally reached in the degree of Doctorate, when he is told by his educators that he can no more be considered as a student to be spoon-fed and to be awarded degrees. He is told that he has attained maturity in studentship and should thenceforward pursue knowledge on the basis of his personal initiative and research.

### ROLE OF THE LAST PROPHET IN HUMAN HISTORY

The Holy Prophet's personality and mission form a landmark in the history of mankind. He came as the last Messenger of God with the Crown of Final Revelation in the form of the last Book of God, the Holy Qur'an, on the one hand, and to inaugurate the Era of Science, on the other. He gave to humanity a Book from God which proclaims the attainment of maturity by humanity, which contains complete and comprehensive guidance for humanity in all her multifarious problems without the limitations of time and territory, and which is destined to abide with humanity for ever without the change of a dot or a dash. And he also laid down the principles of rational quest for enabling humanity to walk with her own feet under the Light of Divine Guidance vouchsafed in the Holy Qur'an, gave the Inductive Method and built up an ideological community which established and developed modern science.\*

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\*See Robert Briffault's *The Making of Humanity*: "The debt of our science to that of the Arabs does not consist in startling discoveries of revolutionary theories; science owes a great deal more to Arab culture, it owes its existence. . . . What we call science arose in Europe as a result of a new spirit of inquiry, of new

## THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Belief in the existence of a Supreme Power above and beyond the visible and experiencible world has been held almost universally by mankind in one form or the other throughout the ages, so much so that it appears to be innate in human beings. It has not been upheld only by the civilised communities but also by those who live hardly above the animal level. Thus, for instance, if anyone questions a primitive dweller of the jungle who has never experienced what we call civilisation, as to who has created him, his tribe and his jungle, he will invariably raise his index finger towards the sky and utter words in his language which refer to a Supreme Power.

In spite of this universal fact, however, there have been, and there still are, some persons who have denied the existence of any such Power or Being. They are called atheists.

Atheistic thought, like theistic thought, has two levels: (1) the philosophical level; (2) the common-sense level. We cannot enter here into a discussion at the philosophical level, because that would involve us in technical knowledge of philosophy, which is beyond our scope of study. Rather, it is the common-sense level to which we shall confine ourselves.

The atheistic position at the common-sense level may be summed up in the following words: "I do not see God anywhere as I see those things whose existence I affirm. Therefore, God does not exist. I will believe in God if you show Him to me."

This objection can be answered in the following way. We do not know everything and every fact even of the experiencible world only by seeing it. There are only certain things which we

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methods of investigation, of the method of experiment, observation, measurement of the development of mathematics in a form unknown to the Greeks. That spirit and those methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs." (p. 190).

know through our eyes, while there are others which we know through other senses, i.e., the senses of hearing, smell, taste and touch. Therefore, we cannot reasonably say even about those facts of experience that are within the reach of our five senses that we will not believe in their existence unless we see them.

Side by side with this there is the fact that there are many things which are not experiencible by means of even all the five senses combined, and yet we all acknowledge and affirm their existence. And such things are found within man himself, as for instance, reason. It is common knowledge that whenever a person is confronted with a problem, he thinks for a while and arrives at a solution. From this we infer the existence of 'reason' in him and, for the matter of that, in all human beings.

Again, no one has ever seen, heard, smelt, tasted or touched what we call energy, and yet all of us believe in it on the basis of other evidences. Thus, for instance, when we find that there are some persons who can lift certain loads and others who can lift heavier loads, we infer the existence of a variable capacity in human beings, i.e., strength, which enables them to lift the loads and which functions on the basis of what we call available energy. In other words, we neither observe strength nor energy directly by means of any of our five senses, but still none of us doubts their existence.

The above instances lead us to several conclusions. The first conclusion is that there are two sources of human knowledge: (1) Direct observation by means of the five senses, and (2) Inference. The second conclusion is that the more abstract a thing is the more hidden it is from the human eyes, and it is by actions performed by that thing and not by our five senses that we perceive its existence. The third conclusion is that the more powerful a thing is the more hidden it is from the eyes. For instance, the electric current is the repository of enormous power, but the impossibility of seeing it with the eyes is as enormous too. The fourth conclusion is that the more basic a thing is the further removed it is from the human observation at the normal level,

e.g., the electrons.

We have seen in the above discussion that observation by means of our senses is not the only source of knowledge. There is another source, namely, inference on the basis of scientific observation and logical reasoning which is considered to be as sure a source as observation. If it is said that there is a great chance of error in logical inference, the answer is that there is a likelihood of error also in observation by means of the senses. For instance, if we dip a stick in water, the portion which is dipped appears to our eyes as curved and not straight. Similarly, if we observe a railway track, the lines of the track appear to us at some distance not as parallel but as convergent. Therefore, the chances of error as well as of true judgment are practically the same in direct observation and in inference. Moreover, it is impossible to build any science or any system of philosophy purely on the basis of observation by the senses. Inference comes at every step. And the more distant a thing is, the more we have to fall back on inference. For instance, we know the diameter of the sun and the existence of the gases which are to be found near the sun not by any direct observation but by inference. Would it be in the fitness of things, after all these facts, to say that inferential knowledge about God and inferential belief in the existence of God are unscientific or meaningless?

We may now come to common-sense arguments in support of the existence of God. We all know that every event we see in this world is the effect of some cause. Indeed, it has been the belief of science that every physical thing must have a cause. The inference from this is that the entire physical world also must have a cause for its existence. That ultimate cause is God.

An objection is raised by the atheists in this connection. They say, it is true that everything has a cause. But in that case He whom we call God should also have a cause for His existence. And that cause should have another cause and so on up to infinity. The answer is that our observation about the existence of a cause for every event and every thing is confined to the physical world,

and once we postulate that God is non-physical, it would be irrational to apply this law to Him, because every law in this world is applicable to things of the same category. Here another objection might also be raised with seeming plausibility by the atheist. It might be said that the Cause and the Effect must belong to the same order of things, and that because God has been conceived to be non-physical, He cannot be regarded as the valid Cause of the physical world. But this objection is without foundation, because we all have the experience that our minds cause physical or physiological effects in us when we are angry or sad or happy. Here the cause is non-physical while the effect is physical.

We find arrangement, order and design everywhere in nature, whether we study a rose-leaf or a honey-bee or the human personality or the constellations of stars. But so far as our experience goes, every arrangement is the outcome of a *plan* and every design is designed for some *purpose*. Then, every plan is the creation of some *planner* and every purpose pre-supposes the activity of continuous direction, sustenance and preservation on the part of the planner. This brings us to the Islamic conception of God, Who is the *Rabb-ul-Alameen*, i.e., the Creator, Planner, Evolver, Maintainer and Fulfiller of the destiny of the universe and of everything that it contains.

Those who deny the existence of God in spite of the existence of design and purpose in nature deny nothing else than their very nature, which is rational, and their very experience, which is their life-blood. No one among them would say on seeing a boat, for instance, that the trees from which its wood came cut themselves into the planks of the requisite size by themselves, that the nails and the screws which have been fitted into it rolled themselves into shape of their own accord, and that the planks and the nails and the screws fitted into each other according to a definite plan and for the service of a definite purpose without any conceiver of design and purpose and without any fitter. But they try to say such things when they consider the universe as a whole. Obviously, their denial of God rests on a perverted mentality rather than on intellectual necessity.

The existence of God is the demand of Moral Consciousness also. Because, in order that morality may be a rational pursuit, it is necessary that the universe should be a Moral Order. And it cannot be a Moral Order unless there is a Moral Creator and Ruler Who has created it for a moral end and endowed it with a moral constitution and who rules and governs it for the fulfilment of a moral purpose. Indeed, as we have proved elsewhere, morality has no valid and inviolable sanction except in the belief in the existence of God.

Above all, God's existence is the stern demand of the Spiritual Consciousness of humanity, which found a most vigorous expression in the lives of numberless Spiritual Luminaries throughout human history, which influenced human destiny in a manner as no other force did, and which has been a fact of immediate experience for every normal human being. Indeed, the quest for holiness has been one of the highest quests for the noblest and the sanest human beings, for which they welcomed the greatest sacrifices and bore the severest hardships. It cannot be, therefore, dismissed as a sheer fantasy. Rather, it should be affirmed as one of the truest facts of human nature, and the fact that none of the spiritual pilgrims ever returned from his quest frustrated and discomfited proves beyond any shadow of doubt that the ideal of their quest, i.e., God, Who is the Embodiment and the Source of all Holiness, exists. Had the spiritual pursuit been a will-o'-the-wisp, we would have found many renegades and many decriers.

### A CRITICISM OF AGGRESSIVE ATHEISM

While the position of Theism is so rational and clear, the position of aggressive Atheism is most irrational and absurd. And this fact becomes clear the moment Atheism moves from the non-committal form of Scepticism to the definite assertion of formal belief that there is no God—a definiteness and an aggressiveness assumed, for instance, by Communism under the materialistic philosophy of Karl Marx. A person might honestly say that he does not know whether God exists or not. He might also honestly say that he has not seen God. But to turn this deficiency in one's

experience or knowledge into a definite belief and to assert positively that there is no God is something which is absolutely unwarranted and hence totally absurd. On the other hand, the statement that God exists can be made with absolute validity. This truth can be understood when we realise the difference in the conditions which have to be fulfilled for ensuring validity in connection with a statement which affirms the non-existence of a thing and a statement which affirms the existence of a thing. The statement affirming the *non-existence* of a thing cannot be considered valid unless it is proved that he who makes the statement has complete and comprehensive knowledge of the time and place to which reference is being made in connection with the non-existence of that thing. On the other hand, no such condition is necessary for affirming the *existence* of a thing. Namely, the knowledge of the person who affirms the existence of a thing at a particular place need not be comprehensive. Indeed even a partial knowledge to the extent of that thing may be enough. Thus, if anyone says that there is no God, he should first prove that he has observed every particle and examined every corner of this universe and that, after this complete and thorough survey, has found that there *is no* God. But, the knowledge of no individual, not even the knowledge of all human beings combined, can comprehend the whole universe. Hence, the assertion that there is no God would be most unwarranted and absurd for anyone to make.

### THE UNITY AND THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

Islam affirms not only the existence of God but also His Unity, and this is the most distinctive mark of Islam among the world's religions. For, all other religions, with the sole exception of Judaism (which also suffers from indecision between anthropomorphism and transcendentalism), are pluralistic. But the pluralistic position is totally unacceptable. Why this is so can be understood fully from the following simple and short argument. God, in order to be God, must be regarded as the embodiment of all Perfection. This means that He should be above all limitation—above and beyond finitude. In other words, He must be Infinite. Because, finitude is limitation, limitation is shortcoming, shortcoming is

defect and defect is imperfection.

Now, there can be only one Infinite. Because, the second Infinite can begin only where the first Infinite ends. But, Infinite is that which has no beginning and no end. Hence, the existence of more than one Infinite is impossible. In other words, there can be only one God. Thus, the only true conception of Godhead is the monotheistic transcendental conception given by Islam.

Is God a Person or is He impersonal? As regards Islam, it affirms the Personality of God and regards the notion of an impersonal God as a contradiction in terms. For, the denial of personality to God would mean the denial of self-consciousness and self-directed will, which in its turn, transforms the idea of God into that of a blind force. And this gives rise to some very serious objections: (1) Human beings need God for obtaining help from Him. But a blind force is itself helpless; and the helpless cannot help others. (2) A blind force (for instance, Electricity) cannot undertake any planned activity by itself. It needs a planner—an intelligence—behind it. This means that another Power shall have to be postulated beyond and above the impersonal God. (3) If the Source of this world is blind, from where have intelligence and personality come? Certainly not from that blind Source. Hence, an intelligent Power above the impersonal God shall have to be postulated. (4) Personality is superior to impersonality. Now, human beings are persons, and if God is regarded as impersonal that would make human beings superior to Him—a most absurd position! (5) The concept of an impersonal force has no moral content. Hence, an impersonal God can provide no moral inspiration for human beings. (5) Impersonality is imperfection. Hence, impersonal God is imperfect God, which is a contradiction in terms.

### CREATION

Three points of view can be possible about the origin of the world, and it is these which are maintained respectively by the various ideological groups of mankind:

(1) There is a certain section of people who believe that the world came into existence by itself through a blind mechanical process and that there is no supreme mind or intelligent power which might have created it. These people are called atheists and materialists.

This theory postulates absence of plan (because of affirmation of chance) and absence of intelligence (because of affirmation of blind beginning). But, had it been so, there would have been no plan and no intelligence in this world. Taken the other way, the presence of plan in every thing and intelligence in abundance proves that the world owes its origin to the Plan of an Intelligent Planner and not to chance as postulated by Atheism.

(2) There is another section of mankind which holds that the world, so far as its physical basis is concerned, has been in existence by itself. But it also believes that side by side with eternal matter there has been an eternal God Whose function has not been that of a Creator but only that of a Giver of Forms, which means that God is not the originator of the world but only a fashioner, an Architectonic Intelligence.

This theory is untenable from two points of view: Firstly, the latest advances in Physics have progressively moved in the direction of abandoning the notion of eternal matter. Secondly, the fashioner-god of this theory, by virtue of his being not the creator of the world but only the fashioner of the forms of things, turns out to be, in the final analysis, an immoral being. This becomes evident on the basis of the following facts: (1) According to this theory, the human beings owe their present condition to his arbitrary action: (2) the present condition is full of misery; (3) it is the fashioner-god who is responsible for this condition; because if he had not interfered and brought matter and soul together, this condition would not have emerged; (4) but he is not the Creator—he has not created the world *ab novo*; hence he had no moral right to do so; (5) the only right that can be postulated for him is that of 'might is right'; (6) such a personality, if accepted as God—the personification of all Perfection—can logically inspire

nothing else than the law of the jungle, or in other words, rank immorality. The human moral consciousness revolts against all this, and no healthy human mind can be prepared to accept it.

(3) There is a third section of mankind which believes that God alone is Eternal and Self-Existent and that matter and everything else beside God is transitory. According to this view, there was a time when all this world and everything that is to be found in it was non-existent. Then God willed this world to come into existence and so it came to exist. Thus the world owes its origin to God's Act of Will and it can again become totally non-existent when God wills it to be so. This is the view held by Islam.

One might raise the objection that coming into existence out of non-existence is an inconceivable fact. But the question is: Is it actually so? Not only it is *not* so, but, as we shall just now see, non-existence is *conceptually* the very foundation of existence. The following are the considerations worthy of note in this connection.

(1) We have the conception of 'beginning', and we hold this conception to be valid and true. The question is: Where does the thing which beings to exist, exist prior to its beginning? Certainly nowhere!

(2) We might take the case of geometrical figures and the foundations of their existence. What is a square made up of, for instance? It is made up of points. Now, a point is that which has no length, breadth or thickness. It means that a point has no form and no quantity. In other words, it has no physical existence. It is just a conceptual fact, and its existence is sheer hypothetical existence. But the square is a physical thing inasmuch as it possesses dimensions and a form. Now, if it is true that every square is made up of points, it means that physical non-existence goes to build up physical existence.

(3) We may also consider the Arithmetical Series. Every physical thing has the quality of being countable according to these

series. The question is: What is the foundation of the Arithmetical Series? It is Zero. What is a Zero? A zero is that which stands for the total non-existence of quantity. But both sides of the Arithmetical Series, namely plus and minus, emerge from zero. Take out zero and there will be no Arithmetic. It means that the foundation of quantity is zero. In other words, the foundation of the physical world which is quantitative should also be conceived as Zero or non-existence.

Thus the creation of the world from Non-Existence is conceivable. According to the Islamic teaching, God's Act of Will caused the formless Non-Existence to blossom forth into a world of forms. According to the science of Geometry, our act of will stretches out the formless point into a whole world of forms.

The creation of the world from Non-Existence is not however, only conceivable but also necessary. We have been told in Mathematics that if any form is attributed to the point by considering it as having dimensions, it will be no longer a point, and all our calculations of solid bodies would become wrong. It means that for this world to come into existence it was absolutely essential for it to emerge from Formlessness or Non-Existence.

Indeed, a study of the latest advances in Physics compels the human mind to believe that the world must have come into being through the process of what might be called the transformation of Quality into Quantity.

The following remarks of Dr. Isaacs in connection with the creation of matter from energy are worthy of note: "If a primary cosmic proton collides with an orbital electron of an atmospheric atom, it will impart to it a great part of its enormous energy. As a result of this acquisition of energy the electron will travel at a velocity very close to the velocity of light, and consequently will have the ability of passing right through the orbital electrons of other atmospheric atoms, so that in some cases such an electron will strike a nucleus. When this happens a photon of extremely high-energy gama-radiation will be produced which can, in certain

circumstances, materialise into an electron pair (one electron and one positron). This is an example of the direct creation of matter from energy." (*Introducing Science*, p. 192).

### GRADES IN CREATION

The latest advances in the domain of Physical Science real that the basis of "Matter" is "Energy<sup>1</sup>"; and we may reasonably regard the world to have begun in the form of "waves of probability". Again, the analysis of the atom demonstrates that the basic constituents of matter are the electric particles whose fundamental attributes are "light" and "heat".

The Islamic thought on these problems is similar. According to Islam, the universe, which is of an expanding and evolutionary character, began within, the "waves of probability" as a nucleus of Light—known in Islamic terminology as the "Light of Muhammad<sup>2</sup>". That nucleus has been continuously "unfolding" itself. Thus, the first form which the universe assumed was that of a "world of Light". Then, after a period of time, a portion of the universe assumed the form of the "world of Fire". Later on, a portion of the "world of Fire" cooled down to assume the form in which we find the surface of the earth today—the form of "Clay."

Science classifies the things of the world into inorganic, organic and living beings. As regards the attribute of personality<sup>3</sup>, Science confines it, and that quite naturally, to human beings. But, Islam teaches that God created three distinct and different types of

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<sup>1</sup> That Energy and Matter are interconvertible has been stated by Einstein in his famous theory of Relativity. His formula is:  $E=mc^2$ . Here E = energy, m = mass, and c = velocity of light. As regards the source of Energy itself, Dr. Alan Isaacs says: "The ultimate source of the energy of the universe is a subject for speculation; it is possible, indeed, that it is being continuously created by a power beyond the scope of our understanding." (*Introducing Science*, p. 130)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the famous Hadith: "I (i.e., the Holy Prophet Muhammad) am from the Light of God and entire creation is from my Light."

<sup>3</sup> Personality implies self-consciousness and self-directed will.

personality, corresponding to the three different stages in the life of the universe and the three different types of "worlds" which exist today.

The first type of personality is that of the Angels, who have been made of "light" and whose function is to execute the Will of God in the universe. One of them, Archangel Gabriel, enjoys the distinction of having acted as the medium between God Almighty and His human Messengers for the communication of Divine Guidance.

The second type of personality was created, at the stage of the stabilisation of the "world of Fire", in the form of the *Jinns* (Genii) who are made of "fire". They appear to have been the original inhabitants of the earth when it was a "ball of fire". One of them, known as *Iblis* or Devil, refused later on to acknowledge the superiority of Adam out of haughtiness and jealousy; and he, along with his hosts, forms the anti-Adam force in the moral and spiritual domains.

The third type of personality was created in the form of Man when the earth had cooled down and conditions for the emergence of the highest form of living organisms had stabilised. The human species appeared on the scene as the most evolved form of personality and the highest in the scale of creation.

The creation of the angels, the *jinns* and the human beings in a serial order seems to be a case of the "repetition of forms", because it appears from a study of Islamic thought that an angel, a *jinn* and a human being are basically similar in "form" but different in "nature". We might note here certain characteristics of each one of them.

#### *The Angels\*:*

- (1) They are made of "light". Maybe, they are a "form of energy bottled up in the shell of Personality".

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\*Belief in the angels forms an article of faith in Islam.

- (2) Like electrons, they are imperceptible. But their constitution being flexible they can change to perceptible state of existence, appearing to the human eyes as human beings.
- (3) They are immensely mobile, possessing a speed which seems to be infinitely greater than the known speed of light (186,000 miles per second).
- (4) They are passion less and incapable of sin. Hence they are non-moral and sinless.
- (5) They do not appear to have sex-life. Procreation is, therefore, out of the question.
- (6) They possess intellect as well as will, but their intellect and will function in total subordination to the Will of God. In other words, they are incapable of disobedience.
- (7) They are stable beings in the sense that since their creation they have continued, and appear to be destined to continue, to exist in the same form. In other words, they have not to pass through the ordeal of death.

#### *The Jinns\* :*

- (1) They are made of "fire". Their constitution seems to be gaseous, related probably to Hydrogen and Helium. Their special habitat appears to be the sun and other fiery planets.
- (2) Like the gases, they are imperceptible for the human eye. Moreover, their constitution is fluid. Hence they can transform themselves.

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\*The creation of the *jinns* from the fire and their existence as a distinct class of living beings has been clearly mentioned in the Holy Qur'an.

- (3) They are very mobile, *i.e.*, they can move at great speed within a fixed circle in the universe.
- (4) They possess passions as well as free will. Hence they are moral beings, subject to reward and punishment.
- (5) They have sex-life and they procreate.
- (6) They possess intellectual powers—though not of the high order which the human beings possess—and also a self-directed will.
- (7) They are subject to decay and death, although the span of their life in the present spatio-temporal order is very long.

#### *The Human Beings :*

- (1) They are formed out of "Clay" and possess a highly-developed body.
- (2) They are perceptible beings. Moreover, their constitution is "fixed". Hence they cannot change their "gear of existence" or their form at will.
- (3) Their mobility is very limited. They are not self-mobile like the angels and the *jinns*, but need external vehicles for acquiring mobility beyond their natural limits.
- (4) They have a strong element of passions in their lives, enjoy the prerogative of free will and possess a highly developed moral consciousness. Hence they are moral beings, subject to rewards and punishments.
- (5) They have a highly-developed sex-life and they procreate.
- (6) They possess, in all creation, the most highly developed form of intellect—creativity being its distinguishing

characteristic—and also a self-directed will.

- (7) They are subject to disease and death and the duration of their life on the earth is short, although they are destined to continue to exist indefinitely after death.

Those who deny the existence of the angels and the *jinns* or refuse to attribute personality to them, have no scientific foundation for their negative belief. Rather, scientific thought, as hinted in the foregoing, falls in line with the accepted Islamic belief on the subject. At least there is no conflict between physical science and Islam in this matter.

As regards the special characteristics of the *jinns*, we might make here certain observations in the light of accepted scientific facts. For instance, according to Boyle's Law, when a gas is compressed its volume decreases but its pressure increases, and when a gas expands its volume increases but its pressure decreases. Now, if this is true, how is it inconceivable for a *jinn* to assume different shapes through variation in pressure and the consequent change in volume. Moreover, the molecular theory of motion in gases states that the expansion in gases gives birth to rapid motion and hence the production of energy. (It may be any form of energy). This provides the scientific clue to the great mobility of the *jinns*. Also, we are told that density and pressure are related by the simple formula :  $P_1/D_1 = P_2/D_2$ , where  $P_1/D_1$  are the initial density and pressure and  $P_2/D_2$  are the final density and pressure respectively. Now, according to this relation, it is quite possible for the *jinns* to change their form—volume and density being connected by the relation  $V_1D_1 = V_2D_2 = \text{Mass}$ .

We said above that the highest in the scale of creation are the human beings. Now, according to Islam, the highest among the human beings themselves are the Prophets and Messengers of God. It is they who are the embodiments of true human perfection, which is spiritual. Among the Prophets and Messengers of God, again, the highest in the scale is the personality of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (God bless him). For, his perfection is comprehensive,

while others were blessed only with basic perfection.

Three grades of perfection have been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an below the category of Prophets and Messengers. They have been graded in their order of merit as "the Truthful" (or, Embodiments of Truth), "the Martyrs" (or, Embodiments of Sacrifice in the Way of God) and "the Righteous" (or, Embodiments of Righteousness).

The Prophets and the Messengers are perfectly sinless in spite of their humanity. This forms the foundation of their perfection. The Truthful, the Martyrs and the Righteous stand below them serially in their order of merit and their immunity from sinfulness is in accordance with their grades.

The Prophets and the Messengers of God are "born and not made". Indeed, no human being can acquire this high office through any personal effort for spiritual development. Rather, it is a divine gift.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be on him) was the last last of the line of Prophets and Messengers, and there can be no Prophet or Messenger after him. However, the way is open to acquire, in ascending order, the status of "the Righteous", "the Martyr" and "the Truthful"; and this way consists in imitating the greatest embodiment of human perfection, *i.e.*, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be on him), thereby acquiring angelic virtues and traits and rising ultimately above the angels. In this connection, the methodology of Islamic Personality-Culture has been expounded in detail by the spiritual luminaries of Islamic history like Ghaus-ul-Azam Saiyyid Abdul Qadir Jilani of Baghdad.\*

## PURPOSE OF CREATION

Has the human life any purpose behind it and is the external

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\*For a brief exposition see: "The Forgotten Path of Knowledge" and "Quest for True Happiness" by the eminent missionary of Islam, His Eminence Muhammad Abdul Aleem Siddiqui Al-Qaderi, published in this series.

world so constituted as to admit the realisation of this purpose? This is a question which has a vital importance for every human being.

The human life cannot have a purpose unless the entire world itself has got a purpose. Now, the world at large can have a purpose only if it has a plan, and it cannot have a plan unless it has a Supreme Mind behind it which conceives that plan and carries it out during the different stages of its existence. In short, if there is no Supreme Being, there can be no plan and no purpose.

The human thought on this problem runs into two channels. One school of thought says that there is no Supreme Mind behind the world. This is the opinion of the atheists. They say that the world came into existence by chance and that every fresh form of existence appears just by chance. It means that there is no plan either in the world at large or in the life of mankind. And if there is no plan, there can be no genuine purpose also. The world is a blind process and the human life also is a meaningless combination of certain forces. It has no purpose to fulfil except some transitory expediency. There is no absolute law which governs life and there is no absolute end which is to be achieved. The code of moral action which emerges from this point of view is that only that action is morally good which brings momentary physical pleasure. Beyond that there is no end attainable.

This atheistic point of view appears to be false on the very face of it. Firstly, it says that everything in the world owes its existence to chance. But it fails to explain how and why does chance exist.

It is false also on the basis of common human observation. We all know that chance is the negation of law. But it is law which we find working in this universe in everything we observe. We see, for instance, that the sun rises and sets in accordance with an immutable law. The moon appears and vanishes in accordance with certain unchanging laws. The human beings are born and live and die in accordance with certain laws. In fact, everything

in this world obeys its own code of law and is not subject to chance in any phase of its existence. Hence, the atheistic hypothesis of a purposeless universe is false.

Coming now to the other school of thought: Creation of the world from non-existence implies that it was created by a Supreme Power, that the act of creation was an intelligent act, that there was a plan under which creation took place and that the world is not only a Physical Order but also a Moral Order. In other words, the world does not consist merely of physical facts based on physical causes and physical effects but it is also a moral world in which moral goodness alone is the right course of human conduct, while moral evil is actually the negation of the plan under which the world was created. This means that this world is so constituted in its foundations and its ultimate consequences that in spite of all the setbacks that virtue might encounter, it must ultimately thrive and prosper and evil must ultimately vanish. This is the Islamic teaching and it is in sharp contrast to the teaching of materialism and atheism according to which even the physical order of the world is just a chance-order because of its blind origin, and so far as its moral content is concerned there is none.

Indeed, the Islamic conception of the creation of the world is based upon moral and spiritual foundations, and in that light the purpose of creation so far as mankind is concerned is the moral and spiritual perfection of the human individuals.

An important point arises here. Moral and spiritual perfection does not appear to be fully attainable under the conditions that are to be found in the physical life of man. This point is clarified by Islam by saying that our present life is not the whole life. It is only a part of it. It is only a stage in the evolution of all life in general and the human life in particular. Therefore, moral and spiritual perfection need not necessarily be attainable in the present life. The next life being the life of further growth and vaster opportunities shall be the life in which the ideal of moral and spiritual perfection shall be attained.

## CHARACTER OF THE UNIVERSE

What is the character of the universe which we inhabit, and how are we related to it? These are the two fundamental questions which have confronted all religions and philosophies of the world, and each religion and philosophical system has tried to answer them in its own way.

Closely connected with these questions is the problem of the nature of relationship between mind and matter—between the 'spiritual' and the 'bodily' aspects of life, and a solution of this problem alone can form the basis of our world-view and our life-programme.

There are three distinct answers offered to our inquiry in this connection, namely: (1) by the pre-Islamic religions; (2) by the post-Islamic materialistic thought of the West; and (3) by Islam:

(1) The pre-Islamic religions were deeply impressed by the notion of an acute conflict between man's moral and physical existence, or, in other words, between 'the biological within' and 'the mathematical without'. This dualistic idea led them ultimately to find a way for the affirmation of the spiritual self in man in the rejection of the physical reality as either meaningless or dangerous. Hinduism regarded the world of matter as *maya*, namely, illusion, and prescribed a life of renunciation for the spiritual development of its devotees. Buddhism considered the physical world an obstruction in the onward march of the soul and pointed to the annihilation of the individual self and the severance of its emotional links with the material world as the way to achieve *nirvana*. Christianity similarly recognised the antagonism between the physical and spiritual aspects of life and conceived the world of matter, or to use a more Christian term, the world of the flesh, as essentially the playground of Satan. Consequently, it standardised perfection in the type of the ascetic saint.

Such a despising attitude towards the material aspect of life affects humanity in two ways. Firstly, it shuts the door to all material progress, not to speak of scientific advancement, because

our indulgence in material pursuits is considered detrimental to the ideal of spiritual perfection. Secondly, it gives rise to a perpetual conflict within us, because on one side is the religious call to shun the world, while on the other side exists the natural urge to enjoy it. Such a state of affairs can only culminate in creating a continuous feeling of bad conscience and thus defeat the very purpose of our idealistic attitude.

(2) The post-Islamic materialistic thought of the West adopts a path which is radically different from the pre-Islamic idealism. It asserts that the world of matter alone is real and worthy of our attention and that the realisation of human destiny lies in the conquest of Nature with the ultimate aim of achieving the highest amount of physical pleasure. It ignores all transcendental values and spiritual considerations simply because they do not fall within the scope of empirical sciences. There is only one criterion of ethics which it recognises and that is the criterion of practical utility for the enhancement of the earthly or 'carnal' pleasures of man.

Now, the physical world being essentially a battlefield of conflicting appearances, an exclusively materialistic interpretation of Reality, even though it may be concealed behind the otherwise fascinating mask of scientific spirit, is bound to unbalance human life. This is what the West is experiencing today. Nations are at daggers drawn against one another and individuals are indulging in the pleasures of the flesh in a way which precludes all possibilities of life's spiritual expression. Peace and piety both have been thrown away to winds.

(3) What, then, is the message of Islam which stands between the ancient world which stressed the exclusive validity of the spiritual aspect of life and the modern world which interprets all reality in terms of matter? Has it any solution to offer to reconcile this sharp antagonism; has it any teaching to give in the light of which we may develop all our faculties evenly and work out our destiny without prejudice against either our natural surroundings and the physical conditions of our life or our idealistic yearnings, which are certainly not an illusion but a positive reality and are

ingrained in our very nature?

To start with: Islam does not consider the universe as composed of two self-existing and conflicting entities. It conceives all life as a unity because it proceeds from the Divine Oneness, and reality, according to it, is neither material nor mental but "a realm in which thought and thing, fact and value, are inseparable, neither having any existence apart from its correlative; the real world is a coherent organic unity, spaceless and timeless, but including all happenings in space and time in their proper relations to itself."

In addition to this principle of harmony, Islam emphasises the purposive nature of all existence, whether spiritual or physical. Thus says God in the Qur'an: "We have not created the Heavens and the earth and whatever is between them in sport: We have not created them but for a serious end: but the greater part of them understand not." (XLIV: 38, 39).

Thus our earthly surroundings are not a meaningless projection of the play of blind forces—a mere empty shell with no content. Nay, the tiniest particle of sand, the smallest drop of water, the frailest rose-leaf is full of meaning and music and functions under a definite and well-planned Divine scheme.

### CONCEPTION OF MAN

This being the character of the universe, what is the nature of man? Should we conceive him as a being who is originally born low and who cannot attain the pinnacle of purity and perfection except through the tragedy of renouncing the worldly pleasures or of passing through a continuous ordeal of transmigration? This is the way Hinduism, Buddhism and some other religions go. Or, should we believe him to have been born in sin and therefore incapable of working out his destiny except through a mysterious Divine sacrifice. This is the doctrine of Christianity. To these questions Islam replies in the negative. It is emphatic in its assertion that man is born sinless and is the chosen of God, as we read in the Qur'an:

"Of the goodliest fibre We created man." (XCV:4).

"Afterwards his Lord chose him (Adam) for Himself and was turned towards him and guided him." (XX: 114).

"And it is He who hath made you His Vicegerents on the earth." (VI:165).

Starting his life with a sinless birth, man is entitled, or we might say, destined, as an evolutionary being, to scale the loftiest heights of perfection and to surpass God's all creation, including the angels, in his uniqueness and purity. Thus we read in the Qur'an:—

"It needs not that I swear by the sunset-redness and by the night and its gatherings and by the moon when at her full, that from state to state shall ye be surely carried onward." (LXXXIV : 17—20).

### MAN'S RELATION TO THE UNIVERSE

What then should be our attitude towards our material environment? Should it consist in renouncing the world and repressing our physical desires? No. Islam says nothing of the kind. Instead of recognising antagonism between the moral and physical existence of man, it emphasises the co-existence of these two aspects as the natural basis of life. It maintains that our earthly sojourn is a positive factor in the Divine scheme of creation and a necessary stage in the evolution of our soul-life. Consequently, it seeks the affirmation of the spiritual self in man, not in renouncing the world of matter, but in the active endeavour to master it with a view to discover a basis for a realistic regulation of life. "The life of the ideal consists not in a total breach with the real which would tend to shatter the organic wholeness of life into painful oppositions, but in the perpetual endeavour of the ideal to appropriate the real with a view eventually to absorb it, to convert it into itself and to illuminate its whole being."\* It is, therefore, impossible for

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\*Sir Muhammad Iqbal : *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.

Islam to despise our earthly existence and activities, and here it differs radically with other religions of the world.

This realistic attitude of Islam may not, however, be identified with that of the modern West. The latter ignores our spiritual existence altogether and regards our earthly career as an end-in-itself, and that in a way which amounts to worship. Islam, on the other hand, conceives it not as an end but as a means to a higher spiritual end.

And what is that higher end? It is submission to the Will of Allah and seeking His pleasure, as the Qur'an says:

"Say: Verily, my worship and my sacrifice and my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the Worlds, Who hath no partner." (VI: 163).

## LIFE AFTER DEATH

### Different Theories

There are different schools of thought in connection with life after death. Broadly speaking, these schools can be divided into the following two fundamental categories:

(1) Those who deny the continuity of life after death. For them the present earthly life of the individual human being is the only life and it comes to an end when death occurs and the physical frame disintegrates. This school of thought is represented by Materialists and Atheists.

(2) The other school of thought is represented by those who believe that the human personality is not merely physical in character, that there is an enduring substance in this personality which is non-physical, that this enduring substance is the thing which in common parlance is termed "soul", and that this enduring substance or soul survives the physical death and disintegration. This school of thought is represented fundamentally by most of the

religions of the world.

The first school of thought mentioned above is further divided into two sub-schools. One of them maintains that all existence is purely physical and consequently the death of the physical frame means the total annihilation of the total personality. The other sub-school thinks that there is a psychic factor which exists side by side with the physical personality, manifesting itself as mind or intellect in the physical frame of the individual. This psychic factor is a part and parcel of the World-Mind, and this being so, it is re-absorbed into the World-Mind after the occurrence of the physical death. In this case also the continuity of the personality of the individual is actually denied, because the psychic factor no longer retains its individuality, just as when a drop of water mixes up with the ocean its individual existence is totally lost, although it continues to exist fundamentally.

The second school of thought mentioned above is also basically divisible into two sub-schools. One sub-school is that which is represented by Hinduism and its sister-religions. It upholds the theory of cyclic existence based on the doctrines of *Karma* and *Awa-gawan* (i.e., Transmigration and Reincarnation of Souls). According to this theory, matter and the individual souls exist from all time and will exist up to all time, that the forms of living matter are different not only with regard to their shape but also as regards their functions, and that the individual souls enter the different moulds in accordance with the virtuous or vicious life which they lead in the preceding existence. Thus a Brahmin (who belongs to the highest category of human beings according to Hinduism) is born in the next life as a Sudra (who stands in the lowest scale of humanity) if the Brahmin leads a vicious life in a certain measure. He might be born also as a dog or a pig if his vices are more. Thus the succeeding life is either a reward or a punishment of the *Karma* (or, moral actions performed in the preceding life). This succession of life continues in an endless cycle until the stage of *Mukti* (salvation) is reached, which implies freedom from the inexorable cycle of transmigration through the attainment of the status of divinity.

As opposed to this sub-school stands that one which is represented by Islam and, with certain variations, by Judaism and Christianity. According to this school nothing is eternal except God. There is a type of immortality which the soul enjoys, but this immortality is of an individualistic character. This individuality of the human personality is fully observable in the physical life and it is this individuality which survives the physical death and plays a very important part as an individual beyond the grave. The continuity of life beyond death consists in the growth of this individuality within the grooves of its individual existence and not its fusion or dispersion into other moulds of physical existence found on the earth.

### Criticism of the non-Islamic Points of View

The atheistic point of view of the discontinuity of life as such at the occurrence of the physical death is against the Doctrine of Evolution which is supported and affirmed in one form or the other by the entire scientific world. As regards Evolution, the most meaningful view is that in which the evolutionary process is conceived to develop progressively from inorganic existence to organic existence, and then from conscious organic existence to self-conscious organic existence. In other words, Evolution has been from inanimate state to animate state and then from the purely physical existence to moral existence, because self-consciousness is the foundation of conscience which is not a physical but a moral quality. Then there is a further form of consciousness which goes beyond the moral consciousness. It is the consciousness of spiritual values, and it consists in the search for holiness. It endeavours to come into contact with God Who is the embodiment and source of all holiness.

This means that if we accept the evolutionary point of view and do not refuse to accept its logical consequences we are bound to admit evolution from the physical to the mental, from the mental to the moral, and from the moral to the spiritual levels of existence. So far as the transition from physical to mental and from mental to moral is concerned, we possess ample evidence in that behalf. Inorganic matter has only physical characteristics but no mental or

moral qualities, nor any tinge of what we call 'life'. Above the inorganic matter stand the plants. They possess physical qualities as well as life, but no mind and no morality. Above the plants stand the animals, and they constitute an advance insofar as they possess brains and conscious mental activity based on perception and rudimentary memory. Above the animals stand the human beings. They embody in their persons not only the physico-chemical properties of matter but also the animate behaviour of plants, a mind and a mental activity more developed and of a higher quality than that possessed by the animals, and two unique qualities of their own, namely, the 'Conscience' and the 'Quest for Holiness'—the former expressing itself in Morals and the latter manifesting itself in Communion with the Infinite.

This means that the human beings stand highest in the scale of Evolution and their unique characteristics, viz., Moral and Spiritual characteristics, stand at the top of all those characteristics which other things possess.

Now, in order that the demands of Evolution may be fulfilled, this world should be such that moral and spiritual ideals of humanity should be fully realisable in it. But we find that in our physical existence it is practically impossible even to realise fully our moral ideals, not to speak of the spiritual ones. The evolutionary process must, therefore, ensure a state of existence in which the moral and spiritual ideals should be fully realisable. It must mean a change in the form of life. This, in its turn, is perfectly rational and scientific, because forms have been actually changing for the progressive realisation of ever-widening ideals. To suppose that life should evolve only to the extent that we observe in our present state of existence and that Evolution should stop haphazardly without attaining its logical goal, namely, the fullest realisation of moral and spiritual values, although Evolution has been progressing in a perfect manner during the preceding stages, would be most irrational and unscientific.

Therefore, the stand-point of the atheist with regard to the abrupt cessation of life at the occurrence of death is untenable and

unwarranted.

The cyclic theory of life, based on the doctrine of *Karma* and transmigration of souls, is also neither scientific nor feasible from the point of view of commonsense. We might mention here two very simple objections to this theory:

(1) No human being, whether he is leading a life of happiness or of misery, has any remembrance, even in the slightest degree, of any previous existence and of any good or evil deeds performed by him in that supposed existence. It is, therefore, impossible for him to rectify his past mistakes or to derive inspiration from his past good conduct in his present life. It means that, without the continuation of memory, the theory of Transmigration of Souls defeats its very purpose and turns out to be practically meaningless.

(2) This theory goes against the accepted fact of Evolution. All of us know that if a seed has not evolved in the proper measure and has been separated from the tree which bore it in an unripe and imperfect state, and is, consequently, incapable of producing a tree, we do not, in order to bestow perfection on the seed, stick it back on the tree by some mechanical device. Rather, what we do is to rectify the deficiencies and imperfections of the seed by supplying better conditions of soil and richer manure in order that the seed might ultimately perform its evolutionary function of becoming a tree.

### The Islamic Point of View

It may be remarked at the very outset that the Islamic doctrines concerning the nature of death, continuity of life, resurrection and the Last Day have full support in human experience. The following observations are worthy of note in this connection:

Death is not annihilation. Islam says that it is merely *intiqal*, or, transfer from one state of existence to another. We shall prove it shortly.

Also, the death that we experience after having lived our life on the earth cannot be regarded as our first death. This fact emerges clearly when we view the progress of our life backwards. There we find that scientific knowledge has so far traced our existence to the life-germ. But our scientific reason insists that we must have lived in some form or forms even before that. Indeed, we must have lived since the time of Creation, even as the Holy Qur'an says. And thus we must have experienced numberless deaths in our journey towards higher forms of life.

However, if we confine ourselves only to the experientible duration of our existence, even then our problem of understanding the Islamic point of view is solved.

We suffer first *known* death when we leave the habit of our father's body and move into our mother's body, where we are entombed in the mother's womb for a period of time. We may reasonably call it a grave, because the earthly grave which we enter later on in life does not differ much from the belly of the mother which bulges under the outward pressure of pregnancy. Inside this first *known* grave of ours we stay for a period of time to undergo continuous transformations until our initial form of the life-germ changes to the form of a full-fledged baby. Then we emerge "resurrected" from our "grave" of the mother's womb with severe "shakings"—pangs of birth—and move out into the open world—an infinitely larger world than the mother's womb.\* In that new form of life we pass through different stages of our evolution (about which we have spoken already), ultimately facing death again. Then we are buried for the second time in a grave. This time our grave is the "womb" of the Mother Earth.

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\*Our departure from the mother's womb may also be regarded as "death" in the sense of transfer from one state of existence to another. The particular form of life that we possess inside the mother's womb does come to a definite end, indeed, and as such, while our emergence into the world may be characterised as "resurrection", as has been said above, our departure from the mother's body may be reasonably called "death". In other words, our birth as a baby synchronises with our death as an embryo, which is actually our second known death.

The materialists say that our burial in the grave forms the 'end of the road'—that our physical death means the annihilation of our personality. Islam, on the other hand, says that we shall stay inside our graves in a state of *Barzakh*, or, state of transition, till the day of *Qiyamah* or the Last Day, which will come in the form of severe Shaking and shall be accompanied by Resurrection on a mass scale.

Let us stop here and reflect. There are certain very logical and valid considerations which can assist us in understanding the true nature of death, life after death, the Last Day and the Resurrection. They are as follows:—

- (1) We have seen that there are at least two deaths which occur before what is regarded in the superficial view as the only death. Now, these two previous deaths are only crises which bring about transfer from a lower state to a higher state of existence. To regard the third—and, in the superficial view, the only—death as annihilation is, therefore, totally unwarranted, irrational, illogical and unscientific. Rather, we are compelled to view it with Islam as a crisis which paves the way for further evolution, or, as a gateway to another and higher form of existence.
- (2) The materialist view of regarding the earthly grave as the first one is wrong, because our first *known and observable* grave is the mother's womb and not the earthly grave.
- (3) So too is the materialist view of regarding the grave as the 'end of the road' entirely wrong. Because, if the first known grave, i.e., the mother's womb, does not form the 'end of the road' but only a stepping-stone to further evolution, to hold an opposite view for the earthly grave shall be most unwarranted, irrational and arbitrary.
- (4) Similarly, the materialist view of regarding the Islamic doctrines of the "rising up from the graves" and the

Resurrection on mass scale on the Last Day as fantasies turns out to be most unwarranted. Because, our emergence from the mother's womb is our first *known* "rising up from the grave" and "resurrection", and the existence of these phenomena tears into shreds the materialist insinuation and proves to the hilt the validity of the Islamic teaching.

- (5) Also, the pangs of birth, or, severe shakings and jerks, which precede our first known resurrection, form an illustration and evidence of the occurrence of the "Great Shaking" which, according to the Holy Qur'an, shall take place on the Last Day when the womb of the Mother Earth shall open under the impact of that "Great Shaking" as a prelude to Resurrection.

In brief, the Islamic verities relating to death and beyond are not based on blind dogmas but on *facts* which already exist in human experience. For, what Islam teaches about the future exists already in the present, the only difference being that the scope and the level of the phenomena of present experience are narrower and lower than the scope and the level of future experience. Indeed, it is a case of repetition of phenomena, and no better and more solid ground for proof could be sought and found.

Viewing now the problem of life after death on the basis of the principle of Evolution: we might repeat what we have already said in different words. Every human being observes life evolving in this world from stage to stage. For instance, we find that the human individual is a mere speck at the start, which gradually grows, changing its forms, until it becomes a full-fledged human baby and is born into this world. The baby starts on its evolutionary journey with new qualities emerging and developing at different stages of its growth. At the very beginning of its earthly life it is only a physical entity with only a rudimentary instinctive activity. Later on, its senses are gradually activated and its sensations develop into meaningful sense-perceptions. After that the mental growth starts until the child who had practically a clean

slate so far as his mental activity was concerned, is transformed into an intellectual giant like Imam Ghazzali with his mental processes becoming immensely complicated. Soon after the commencement of the intellectual growth another quality also begins to take shape—the quality of Conscience. Then his moral ideas of good and bad lead him to a quest for a personality who is Absolutely Good, i.e., God. This is the beginning of the spiritual growth and it is, so to say, the last to take place.

This is one of the immediately-observable phenomena of Evolution which falls into the ken of observation of even the least intelligent human being. When we enter the domain of scientific enquiry we find the same phenomenon being repeated on a world-scale. We are told that this world was first of all constituted of inorganic matter only. Then there came a stage when a very rudimentary type of organic existence emerged. That rudimentary type was still just a lump of physical qualities, possessing only very vague sensations. After that the rudimentary type was succeeded by a type of living beings possessing more complicated physique and better-developed senses. This evolution of types and forms continued through the milleniums until the reptiles, the birds and the quadrupeds came to exist. They had highly developed physiques, perfect senses and also a type of mental activity. At the last stage emerged man, enjoying all the good qualities of physique and acuteness of sense-perception, and also possessing in addition to them self-consciousness, creative thinking, moral conscience and the quest for spiritual realities of life, including God Himself.

This is the rational story of Evolution. Islam accepts the common-sense point of view as well as the tele-finalist scientific theory of Evolution. But Islam goes beyond the point where scientific observation has to stop because of its natural limitations. It says that just as life has been evolving and the human being is the last and final product of this process of evolution, there is no ground for believing that evolution should stop at this point. It is logical as well as scientific to believe that it should continue.

Now, the continuation of evolution can mean nothing else than that those qualities which are attained by the human being last of all and which cannot find the fullest scope for their expression and evolution within the limitations of this life (which is dominated by the physical element) should form the basis for further evolution. Consequently, Islam says that death is only a crisis—only a transition from one state of evolutionary existence of the human individual to another state. The disintegration of the body takes place at the time of death because the human personality has now to soar into higher regions which are spiritual in their character and constitution. In the very nature of the case, it does not require those qualities which have become redundant. They were only the stepping-stone for further stages of evolution and as such they had quite naturally to be left behind. Heaven,\* according to Islam, is a spiritual world of unlimited evolution, while hell is a spiritual hospital where those who have sinned and have thus broken their wings, becoming incapable of pursuing the flight of spiritual evolution, are to be treated of their imperfections and deficiencies.

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\*For the Islamic conception of Heaven, see my book '*Beyond Death*' published in the "Aleemiyah Memorial Series."

## **WORLD FEDERATION OF ISLAMIC MISSIONS**

### **IDEAL:**

**Service to humanity through Islam**

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(i) The Aleemiyah Institute of Islamic Studies; (ii) The Islamic Research and Publications Bureau; (iii) The Health Centre, (iv) The Darul Qur'an; (v) The Ladies' Industrial Home; (vi) World-chain of Islamic Organisations.

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