

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



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THE FIRST ISLAMIC MISSION IN THE U.K. ESTABLISHED 1913 C.E. AS THE WOKING MUSLIM MISSION

Almadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore (U.K.)

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August 2001 C.E. Meeting

Assalamu alaikum

Venue: *Dar-us-Salaam*

Date: Sunday, 5th August 2001

Time: 3 p.m.

Topic: The wisdom of *ahadith*

by

Prof. M. A. Hami

Regular Activities

Radio programme Every Friday at 2 pm on Panjab Radio (Astra Digital Satellite ch. 880).

Dars-i Quran Third Sunday of every month at 3 pm.

Meeting of the Executive First Sunday of every month at 2 pm.

Meeting of the Jamaat First Sunday of every month at 3 pm.

Islam

my choice

By Dean Hussain Wilson

My father is unsure of what he believes. My mother on the other hand is a deeply religious person with many varied beliefs. My sister



confesses to be a "True Christian" and my brother is a Zen Buddhist. When pressed upon the matter of religion. I have always been searching.

I grew up in Italy, where I was branded a "heathen" by all, due to

the fact that we were not Catholic. My father worked for the British Navy when I was born, and fancied a change, so he enrolled for a job doing the same (telecommunications) but with an American company (ITT) under contract to the US Army (NATO) in Italy. We lived there for 11 years.

I knew Islam existed then, but the picture I received of it was not of a peaceable, benevolent force, but a band of fanatics who wanted to hijack planes and die in the name of Allah. This was the main, exported view of Islam from the US propaganda machine. They were bombing Tripoli at the time and helping Israel invade Lebanon.

I have always been interested in religion. When I left school I went straight into a job, deciding not to further my education.

I first encountered the Holy Quran in and around 1988. I discovered the Yusuf Ali translation in my local library. I read it all and thought how much like Christianity it was. I thought no more of it. In 1990-1992 I was a Buddhist, but could not get on with the idea of no ultimately

responsible God, or the fact that you cannot act to change a situation. I soon fell out of Buddhism and picked up Christianity. I was disillusioned with the fact that there is no correct Christian doctrine. One book, one million churches, divisions and sects. I purchased, at this time a set of World Religion Books; the Torah, Apocrypha, Rig Veda, Pali Cannon, Anecdotes of Confucius and the Holy Quran (translation by Yusuf Ali), and started to privately cross-reference the religions. I soon discovered that most of the World's religions have a book, a guide as well as a set of laws. I formed the opinion that God has sent prophets to all of the nations so as they could teach about Him in that nation's language. I also thought that it would be nice to study religion and get some qualifications at the end of it.

At this point the Jehovah Witnesses called at my door. They listened rather intently about my views on this and the fact Christianity has one book and one million churches, ideals, doctrines, disciplines and sects. I said wouldn't it be nice if

(Continued on page 2)

they could all agree on one thing? They replied that they, as Jehovah Witnesses did agree on one thing, and that they had revised the Bible and “ironed out” all the hypocrisies of the other sects and path of Christianity. Their clear path doctrine, though was the closest any Christian has ever come to putting across how Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) would have wanted it. I followed their teachings for a while, doing regular study with them, from their own publications and also from the Christian Bible. But all of the time I had questions, and more questions. Christianity gave me a head-ache.

At this time I was finally accepted on the Open University to study for a BA or B.Sc. In Religious Studies. On year 2, I started to study the Quran seriously, as it formed part of the Religious Studies unit. Just before the start of year 2, I contacted the AAAIL(UK) for a Holy Quran and also for help on doing a home study on Islam, the books and so on, I would need.

The Quran, when you open it and read its passages, its writing; there is no confusion, no misguiding language; it is open and sings. It affects your heart as you read. It is a beautiful book.

I started to attend meetings with the Jehovah's Witnesses but when I pressed them on the issues I did not understand; for instance “how can God have a son?” They gave me an answer, but when I compared it with the Holy Quran it did not make any sense to me. **I have never accepted that Christ (peace be upon him) is God (Trinity) or that Jesus is the son of God. To me this is impossible, because the purpose of having a son is so that he can replace the father. The need for a son is as a replacement or successor, due to the fact the father is old, or about to die. How can God need replacing? How can God become old? Or about to die? Why the need for a son? I think then I started to read more of the Quran, Islam and the hadith. I think I understood that all of the fundamental principles of Islam, I**

had, or have already believed. I think then I made a fundamental discovery: “For you, your religion, for me, my religion.” They were Christians, ; I was not. I was a Muslim. It is then I decided I would make the effort to study Islam, to take it to heart, to learn as much about it as possible.

I stopped comparing Christianity. I started to see that the only way to explain Christianity was not to explain it as a Christian, as that shows the fundamental differences of Christianity as well as showing all of the flaws of the doctrine, but to explain Christianity as a Muslim. As a Muslim, all of the problems of being a Christian evaporate, as that remains of Christianity is not the falsified accounts of the “eye witnesses” but the truth of the Quran. It is then that I contacted Selim Ahmad for assistance in being put in contact with some one who could help me with Quranic recitation. I was put in contact with Shahid Aziz. We communicated via e-mail on this matter and it was then decided to get in touch with Imam Shaukat for further instruction. I contacted him and arranged to stay with him at 15 Stanley Avenue, Wembley, for study. This was arranged for the end of May 2001, for one week.

Within one day of being in Wembley, I accepted the truth of Islam and accepted my new Muslim name Hussain. I chose, this, the name of the martyred grandson of Muhammad (peace be upon him and blessings of Allah) and not Muhammad because I feel Muhammad is a great name with a lot of responsibility attached to it.

I have spent a lot of time searching for a religion. **It has taken me a long while to know and understand (and accept?) that I have always been a Muslim. I now shall endeavour to be the best Muslim I can possibly be.** I intend to continue my studies of Islam, and hopefully be able to obtain a doctorate in Islamic studies.

I have joined the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement and fully support the idea of propagating Islam's message of compassion, mercy and world unity.

For me, the long search, I think, is finally over. I have found the light of Islam and will do my best to fuel that light and keep it bright.

Surah 12:108 sums up my feelings at this time:

“Say: this is my way. I call to Allah with certain knowledge—I and those who follow me. And glory be to Allah! And I am not of the polytheists.”

I truly understand that Islam is the way forward for all of us. It is a beautiful and simple religion that only asks of us to serve and remember God. It is not a difficult thing to do. **I have tried a few religions, but this is the only one that bring tears of joy to my eyes and makes me feel happy. I thank Allah for this, and all of those who have helped me.**

Ar-Rahman III

(The Beneficent)

Chapter 55 (Verses 1 to 28)

Commentary by

Hazrat Dr. Basharat Ahmad

(Translated by Kalamazad
Mohammed)

(Continued from the July issue)

*He created man from dry clay like earthen vessels,
And He created the jinn of a flame of fire.*

Salsal is dry clay while *fakhkhar* are earthen vessels. Here the meaning is clay that is baked solid in fire. For this reason, earthen vessels are called *fakhkhar* because they are put into fire until they become hard.

The creation of man is mentioned first and that of the *jinn* comes after with the explanation that man was created out of earth while the *jinn* were created out of fire. Thus, in this verse man can in no way be included among the *jinn* for *jinn* really refer to invisible beings. With this meaning in mind, the word *jinn* can be applied to many different things. For

example, the rich and aristocrats can be called *jinn* for they are hardly seen by people, as well as those people who live on the mountains and in the wilderness, for they, too, are usually hidden from the eyes of people. The bacteria that cause illnesses are also called *jinn*, for without the aid of a microscope they cannot be seen. Similarly, those invisible beings that are created from fire and which inflame the passions of man are also called *jinn*. In the verse above, *jinn* refers to those invisible beings which arouse the animal passions of man because their nature is fire.

Man was created from dry clay like a potsherd. The object here is to point out that although it is an established fact that man was created out of earth, yet what must be remembered here is that that piece of earth was first baked in fire. The purpose of this is to draw attention to the fact that the present surface of the earth came into being after having passed through fire, and today science has proven that this planet, Earth, was once a piece of burning fire which gradually grew cooler and cooler until the upper crust became solid. Regarding the fiery condition of the earth, the Holy Quran states elsewhere: *And the jinn, We created before of intensely hot fire (15:27)*. And elsewhere it has been likened to *fakhkhar (55:14)*, which means *clay that has been baked* showing that the earth's surface itself has been baked in fire. It was undoubtedly originally a lump of fire.

The word *before* is a sure indication that prior to its present condition the state of the earth was furnace-like and, in accordance with this original condition some creatures of a fiery temperament called *jinn* were created.

In these verses attention is drawn to the creation of man to demonstrate the point that if the earth did not have to pass through fire, then the dirt from which man originated would not have had the capacity to give birth to man, and this after gradually progressing through several evolutionary stages. If we

now carry the reasoning process a little further and make an inference concerning the hidden from our observation of the manifest, we shall see that to become perfect man also has to experience the test of fire. Man's nature is like moist clay and the Holy Quran uses the word *tin* over and over to remind us of this. And moist clay is such that it can be moulded into any particular shape. Thus, when a utensil is fashioned out of soft earth it is put repeatedly into fire till it becomes hard and solid, after which it remains permanently moulded in the same shape we choose for it. Similarly, in order for man to become perfect it is essential that his nature, which is originally weak and like moist clay, can be moulded into an ugly or beautiful form according to choice, should be put into fire again and again. Only then will his inner self become solid and, like a baked utensil, it will remain forever in the same shape that was intended for it.

That fire into which man has to be thrown to be moulded like an unbaked piece of utensil is provided by those beings called *jinn*, which are invisible creatures that serve to arouse man's animal instincts. It is because of their existence that man's passions are hot, for fire is the essential nature of *jinn*. We must bear in mind here that when these *jinn* arouse man's animal passions to such a pitch that he begins to overstep the limits of Allah, then in Islamic terminology they are called Satan. In other words, Satan is another name for the one who influences man's passions, but as long as man remains within the limits set by Allah, this being is not called Satan but *jinn*. In short, the *jinn* or Satan wages a constant battle against man as either one strives to excite his emotions. This gives rise to a fire in which the seeker after truth falls as he attempts to transcend the many hurdles on the way to his destination. However, by Allah's grace, if he displays patience and perseverance he will emerge from this furnace safe and sound, just as a piece of utensil of moist clay emerges intact from the heat. But

this is not all. Just as a piece of earthen utensil becomes solid after passing through fire so, too, the character of the spiritual becomes like steel in the fire of Satan's assaults.

In other words, satanic attacks on a righteous person only help to strengthen and improve his moral and spiritual powers. If there is no opposing evil force then man cannot advance in piety. For example, in order to develop his strength and power, a wrestler confronts other wrestlers in the arena and by exerting himself against them to the fullest he increases his strength and ability. Similarly, if righteousness is not challenged by evil and man does not strive with might and main to save himself from iniquity, then he cannot improve his potential power to do acts of goodness.

If a person is presented with opportunities to tell a lie, to do which, in the eyes of a worldly-minded person, is decidedly mandatory — for example, to give false evidence in a court matter, or to save oneself from harm when people think they must speak untruth — and a believer in such circumstances turns away from falsehood and holds fast to the path of rectitude, then the result will be that his power for telling the truth will continually increase.

In short, when he falls in this fire of Satan's attacks, his utensil of righteousness, as it were, will be further solidified, and no matter how many times he is thrown into this furnace, each time his piety will be further reinforced. This is why Hazrat Shah Abdul Aziz, the *Muhaddith* from Delhi, once wrote that every time a believer lowers his gaze in the presence of a strange female, his faith grows a degree stronger. That is, if every time his desire is excited and temptation strikes, he lowers his eyes and protects himself from lustful glances, his moral qualities of modesty and chastity become correspondingly stronger.

Similarly, if a person in time of dire

necessity does not commit a dishonest act in spite of Satan's temptation and promise that no one will know and that his most pressing need will be fulfilled, and if, in spite of Satan's allurements and seductions, he is not overcome by this fire of temptation, then the consequence will be that his virtue of honesty will gain additional power and become more entrenched in him.

Thus, by stating that the *jinn* were created from a blazing fire, the Holy Quran wants to establish the fact that that very fire was created in order to solidify man's nature which comes from soft clay, just as an unbaked earthen jar is put into fire and is made hard. Therefore, the existence of *jinn* is essential for man's advancement and that is why it is one of Allah's greatest favours. Thus, the Holy Quran asks rhetorically:

Which then of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?

People often raise the objection as to why Allah created *jinn* and Satan. Allah replies that they are indeed created as a blessing for man for, were it not for the fire that arises from their temptation and arousal of desires, then man's moral beauties cannot be transformed from the state resembling an unbaked utensil to that of a solidly moulded one. Thus man should not look askance at this favour but should be grateful instead.

Lord of the two Easts, and Lord of the two Wests.

Which then of the bounties of thy Lord will you deny?

In the verse, *Lord of the two Easts, and Lord of the two Wests*, there is sure evidence that the earth is round because two Easts and two Wests can come about only when the earth is round; for when the sun rises over one region it sets in another, and when it sets in one sphere it rises in another. Thus the actuality of two Easts and two Wests can clearly be seen.

Now let us look at the inner or spiritual world of man. It is an established fact in the physical world that the reason for the rising and setting of the sun is that in the course of the earth's revolution, whichever half of the earth faces the sun gets the sunrise and becomes bright. Similarly, the other half of the earth which is turned away from the sun, or which, in a manner of speaking, has its back to the sun, experiences the setting of the sun and its consequent darkness.

The same thing happens in the spiritual world. Any nation that turns its face towards guidance finds that the sun of guidance and progress begins to shed its rays on it, and this is so whether the enlightenment is physical or spiritual. In other words, to whatever kind of education a man directs his attention, the sun of that kind of guidance shines on him.

On the other hand, if a nation turns its face away from guidance it will be enveloped in the darkness of decadence and perdition. Thus, there is one East that pertains to the physical growth and perfection and another East that relates to spiritual advancement and perfection, and these are the two Easts mentioned in the verse above. Similarly, there are two Wests — one pertaining to physical decline and decay and the other to spiritual degradation and deviation from the true path. These conditions overtake nations in turns and this is so because of people's own deeds.

From another vantage point, we find that today, too, the world is divided into two Easts — a near East and a far East — and two Wests — a near West, referring to Europe, and a far West, meaning America.

In short, these verses tell us that Allah is the complete Lord of both Easts and both Wests. As proof of His physical Providence, His physical sun shines on people in the East as well as those in the West. Similarly, why should His spiritual

Providence not allow the Holy Quran, His spiritual sun, to illuminate the nations of the East and the West as well? And why should the East and the West not live under the same spiritual law? This comprises the second East and the second West.

In fact, these verses contain a prophecy that although at this time the sun of the Holy Quran shines on the Eastern nations, yet a time will come when that light will also irradiate the people of the West. But this has a resemblance to the physical system, that is, just as when the physical sun sets on the East it rises in the West, so, too, this spiritual sun of the Holy Quran will rise in the West just when the people of the East turn their backs on the Holy Quran and because of this abandonment of the Book all kinds of misery and darkness will overtake them. When this happens, this spiritual sun will rise over the Western nations who will then bow their heads before the verities of the Holy Quran and will be illuminated by its splendour. This is the meaning of the prophecy recorded in the *Hadith* that before the Day of Resurrection the sun shall rise in the West. Thus, there is a remarkable prophecy hidden in this verse that the sun of the Holy Quran which now shines through the grace of the Holy Prophet (*sas*) in the East will one day illumine the Western world. And why should this not be so when Allah is not only the Lord of both East and West but the Lord of both kinds of Easts and Wests, that is, the physical and the spiritual East and West, and His Providence encompasses the physical as well as the spiritual kingdoms? If the physical sun gives light to both the East and the West, why should the spiritual sun of the Holy Quran not illumine both East and West? Thus, how unjust it is to deny these marvellous bounties of the Almighty!

(To be continued)