



The Light

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International Organ of the Centre for the Worldwide Lahore Ahmadiyya Community.

WE BELIEVE

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) is the Last Prophet. After him, no prophet, old or new, can ever come.

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Broadcast Schedule (U.K. time)

- Mon to Thursday**
1900 - Urdu - تدریس القرآن
19:30 - English - Reflections on the Holy Quran
 - Friday** 13:00 Friday Service
 - Saturday**
 - 14:00 – Urdu – Pure discussions
WhatsApp group
- Podcasts of all broadcasts are available on Podbean and Spotify.

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Eid ul Adha

Date: 10th July

Prayer time: 11 am

Venue: on-line and at High Banks, 1 Butts Road, Chiseldon SN4 0NN

The Call of the Messiah

by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi



(Editor's note: "Predominance of Islam" is the English translation of the Promised Messiah's book, Fath-i Islam, by the late Mirza Masum Baig. In this, the Promised Messiah discusses his mission. The translation has been edited to bring the English up to date.)

Maulvi Sahib: This man (i.e. this humble servant) is no more than a mere simpleton, possessing no literary ability.

The Reply: I lay no claim to the wisdom and sagacity of this world. What shall I do with its craft and cunning which neither illuminate the soul, wash off and cleanse the internal filth and pollution, nor create lowliness and humility, but produce rust upon rust, and unbelief upon unbelief? It is enough for me that Divine favour and grace came to my help and conferred upon me that knowledge which can be acquired, not from any school, but only from the Heavenly Teacher. If I am called an *ummi* (i.e. illiterate), there is nothing derogatory to me therein. Instead, it is a matter of pride. The Great Preceptor of this humble servant and the whole human race, sent for the regeneration of man, was also an *ummi*. The head that is swollen with arrogance and conceit of knowledge I consider as worthy of no regard or respect. Its exterior, as well as its interior, are filled with darkness. Just ponder over the Qur'anic parable of the donkey. Is that not enough?

Maulvi Sahib: I asked him a few questions regarding revelation, but after making senseless replies, he assumed silence.

The Reply: I remember well that a comprehensive reply, enough for a man having some sense of justice in him, was given. But you could not understand it. Who, therefore, stands exposed in this - you or somebody else? Publish the same questions with my answers in some newspaper and have a test of your wishful thinking again.

Maulvi Sahib: It is hard to believe this man is the author of such fine books.

The Reply: What to say of you, this belief was not attained even by those infidels who had seen the Holy Prophet with their own eyes but having been wrapped up in a thick cover, the Holy Prophet's perfect excellences could not be disclosed to them, and they continued to repeat parrot-like that all those words of extraordinary eloquence which dropped from his lips, and the Qur'an which was being recited to the people, were, in reality, the compositions of other persons who taught him day and night in complete secrecy and seclusion. The unbelievers, in a way, had spoken the truth, and the *Maulvi Sahib*, too, has told the truth. The words in the Holy Qur'an, with all its excellent eloquence and unsurpassable wisdom, were far above and beyond the intellectual power of the Holy Prophet and the entire creation. And could not be composed by anyone other than the All-knowing, All-wise and All-powerful God. In the same way, the books compiled and published by this humble servant are all the outcome of hidden, heavenly help and much above my power and ability. It is an occasion for thanksgiving and gratitude that by this adverse criticism of the *Maulvi Sahib*, a prophecy recorded in *Barahin-i Ahmadiyya*, page 239: *A'ana hu qaum-un akhurun* (other people have helped him) has come true. The prophecy said that after reading this book, some people would say that it is not the compilation of this man.

Maulvi Sahib: Sayyad Ahmad, an Arab, whom I know to be a truthful man, said to me that he had stayed with him (this humble servant) for two months among his most trusted disciples and used to be present on every crucial occasion to find out the truth and discovered that he had some astrological apparatus which he skilfully used.

The Reply: "Come, let us call our sons and your sons, and our women and your women, and our people and your people, then let us be earnest in prayer, and pray for the curse of Allah on the liars".¹ This sacred verse of the Holy Qur'an is, as a matter of fact, the Reply from my side. I

¹ The Holy Quran 3: 61.

certainly do not remember who that gentleman, Sayyad Ahmad, was, who is said to have stayed with me for two months. Therefore, on the Maulvi Sahib rests the responsibility of producing him before me that he may be asked which instruments he beheld in my possession. But while I am still alive, let the *Maulvi Sahib* himself stay with me for two months to make his direct observation without the mediation of any Arab or non-Arab. [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Ahmadi, out of conviction and love (My conversion- a personal testimony)

By *Ocbany León López (Alí)*



(Editor's note: This is the English translation of the article by brother Ali. Its original appears in the Spanish section further along. Brother Ali is a dedicated member of our organisation in Cuba and doing outstanding work. The story of his move to our organisation shows that his dedication to Lahore-Ahmadiyya has not wavered despite tremendous hardship.)

When I converted to Islam in 2015, the words Ahmadiyya or Ahmadi had practically no meaning or particular connotation for Cuban Muslims. The Ahmadiyya did not have an official representation on the island of Cuba, nor was there an active community. All this changed when I returned to Cuba in the winter of 2019 after my Islamic studies in Iran. My stay in the Persian nation kept me away from my land and people for two long years, but my return to Cuba brought me many surprises and Blessings. As I have narrated in previous articles, I was burdened with many personal and spiritual disappointments on my return from Iran. Not a night passed without my asking Allah to guide me to the *siratal mustaqim* mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, chapter Al Fatiha. This is how my first days passed in the land where I was born, where I alternated my duties as a Persian language teacher with studying Islamic and Arabic jurisprudence.

My first meeting with Ahmadi Qadian missionaries. (Acceptance of the Promised Messiah)

As a Shiite Muslim, I regularly went to the

Shiite Islamic Center in my city; this was my weekly practice. However, I directed my steps to the Sunni mosque for Friday prayer on Fridays or Jummah. In Cuba, the Shiite Muslims did not have a sheikh or religious authority trained to perform said prayer or the corresponding *khutbas*. On one of those blessed Fridays, I had arranged to meet a friend, my Arabic teacher, at the King Abdullah Mosque to deliver some gifts I had bought for him in Iran. On the way to the mosque, my friend rang and asked me to meet him in another place since he would not be present at the mosque for the community prayer. That change of plans was not to my liking since it meant not participating in the Friday prayer. However, my friend assured me that we would certainly participate in a community prayer with other Muslim brothers who were visiting Cuba. I finally acceded and arrived at the agreed site.

I was surprised when I discovered that those foreign brothers were part of an Ahmadiyya Qadiani mission in Cuba, making the Ahmadiyya Islamic Community known. Those people received me warmly and were very interested in my spiritual path and me. All this interest materialised in an invitation to future meetings. In their own words, they wanted to deal with a matter of "great interest". That day I returned home with a different expectation and mood in my heart, a hope whose origin I did not know but that without a doubt it was the result of that encounter.

Meeting the Promised Messiah Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (The Gathering)

That day changed my life, and during this meeting with the Qadiani missionaries, many questions and spiritual dissatisfactions were answered. At that meeting, I learned that in a remote region of British India, a pious and holy man named Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian had been chosen by God to rescue Islam. And return to the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his authentic practices and teachings. Those missionaries justified their claims based on the Holy Qur'an and the authentic hadiths. However, the logic and justice of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam

Ahmad Sahib's claims brought down the dying remnants of my old beliefs and what I believed to be correct and orthodox in Islam.

Hazrat Mirza Sahib proclaimed that the original teachings of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had been adulterated, and this had brought about divisions, contradictions, infighting, fanaticism, extremism and other evils foreign to Islam. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad strove to eradicate these.

The Ahmadiyya Islamic Community claimed to be the heir and guardian of that message of the Promised Messiah. As expected, I joined this jamaat (community) without delay by signing a ba'iat or oath to its leader, Mirza Masroor Ahmad, who lives in London and from there regulates all the affairs of his faithful subjects.

At first, everything seemed wonderful to me. I visited London. The Ahmadiyya Islamic Community had invited me to participate in the Jalsa Salana or annual community meeting in England. This is the most important and unifying event in the Ahmadiyya. I met with the Khalifa, who officially named me his representative in Cuba and reaffirmed my oath of fidelity directly from his hand. Upon returning to Cuba, I remained active and immersed in the spread of Islam. I initiated many brothers who signed their ba'iat, and entire families entered the community with my hand. Thanks to my management, we had a place of meeting that functioned as an Islamic center. I organized a program of classes and activities. Everything was going very well. Most importantly, I felt at peace with myself. I was living my golden age of Islam in the XXI century.

First symptoms of the disease (racism and authoritarianism within the caliphate)

My first few months in the Ahmadiyya Qadiani Community passed in seeming tranquillity. The imam of Cuba lived in Guatemala, which gave me some freedom to make decisions, although I always had to consult beforehand. Over time and from my position as representa-

tive of the Caliph, I observed the functioning of this institution and very soon, to my regret, I discovered some fissures that were external symptoms of deeper evils. Due to my contact with Ahmadi brothers from different countries, I was able to verify that they had all experienced similar situations, and our conclusions about the jamaat coincided alarmingly:

Here are some of them:

- The representatives of the Caliphate behaved in an authoritarian manner and often did not even obey the orders of the Caliph himself.

- They had their missionaries from Pakistan who had gradually created a religious caste whose will was always imposed like a dictatorship over the wishes of those Ahmadis who were not Pakistanis.

- They ignored the culture and customs of the countries where they lived. They often did not speak Spanish, which brought unfortunate inconveniences and disappointments for the faithful Ahmadiyya from those countries, causing disappointments and significant desertions.

- When the Ahmadiyya communities elected a native (someone from their own country) as their leader, these missionaries used their influence over the Caliph to make him annul the results of those elections. Finally, they always chose a Pakistani missionary, ignoring the will of the native faithful of those countries. In conclusion, there was a total lack of trust in those members who were not Pakistanis and essential projects were never put in their hands.

- The Caliphate and its Caliph, as Allah had not instituted them, suffered from the same evils and defects of the caliphates after the *Khulafa Rashidun* or Guided, Righteous Caliphs.

In short, other problems can be mentioned, but some are so sensitive that it is better not to bring them up in this article. But if they search the news and social networks, they will see abuses and very serious situations involving the Caliph and his acolytes.

My opposition to these non-Islamic positions brought me many conflicts and disa-

greements with the missionary in Cuba. I wrote dozens of letters of complaints to the Caliph, but I always got silence in response. My letters arrived at his office, but he sent them to the imam in charge of Cuba. On the other hand, the love of the Promised Messiah tied me to the Qadiani community. And little by little, I put aside from my mind any idea of resigning from my position as president.

The real institution founded by the Promised Messiah is the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore or Ahmadiyya Movement for the Propagation of Islam Lahore.

In that time of tribulation, I questioned all my beliefs. I even questioned the veracity of the Messiah Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. But the logic of his proclamations and teachings was irrefutable. They were good for Islam and necessary for this universal religion's survival. In those moments of internal conflicts, I had a dream where a surah from the Koran al-Karim that I had already read before appeared before me:

Allah Almighty says in the Qur'an: "And when My servants ask you (O Muhammad) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am near. I respond to the supplicant's invocations when he asks Me (without any mediator or intercessor). So obey Me and believe in Me, so that you may be well guided" [Quran 2:186].

I experienced the veracity of this Qur'anic verse in my own life. Indeed Allah is *Al Muyib* (he who answers the supplications). And my supplications were answered!

Allah once again guided my steps to the right path and put the right person in my life. He is a great personality, Lord Shahid Aziz Sahib. A very pious and dedicated Ahmadi scholar in body and soul to the spread of Islam and the actual teachings of Hazrat Mirza Gul-lam Ahmad. Like a patient father, Lord Shahid Aziz showed me an Ahmadiyya community that I did not know and about which I had never been told. It was the Ahmadiyya Lahore Movement for the Propagation of Islam. Before he died, the Promised Messiah had established

this Anjuman or Council of Wise Men. So that the community of faithful Ahmadiis would have a more Islamic, democratic and just government. This wise imam also taught me that Hazrat Mirza Sahib was not a prophet but *Mujaddid* (reformer). This was very much in line with the words of the prophet Muhammad who said: لا نبي بعدي "There is no prophet after me."

But the greater surprise arose in me when Lord Shahid Aziz Sahib showed me with the own books of the second Caliph of the Ahmadiyya Islamic Community a much bigger problem. It was about the declaration of *takfir* (disbelief, the action of excluding a Muslim from the spheres of Islam) on those Muslims who did not accept Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and the caliphate. The sage Imam Shahid Aziz Sahib explained clearly to me that this had been the primary cause of schism in the Ahmadiyya community of Mirza Sahib in the past. That severe affirmation of the second Caliph Bashiruddin took millions of Muslims out of Islam. Of course, it was unfair and not in accordance with his father's vision, the Promised Messiah Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. This was my turning point and no return. Knowing that the Promised Messiah founded an institution, my stay in the Ahmadiyya Qadiani ended. It was a hard step and inevitably brought consequences, but my spirit was firm because I had reason on my side.

As soon as I declared to the imam ruling the affairs of Cuba my separation from the Ahmadiyya Qadiani community and my intention to join the Ahmadiyya Lahore Movement for the Spread of Islam, I suffered unprecedented marginalisation. Many friends and so-called brothers quickly forgot the friendship and the brotherly bonds of yesteryear. I was pointed out and ordered to repent and return to the obedience of the caliphate. Otherwise, I would face divine punishment, according to them.

My response to such intolerance and displays of hatred was patience. The Holy Quran says: إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ Surat al-Hujurat 49:10

For our Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore, this statement is not a dead or meaningless phrase. The Muslims are our brothers, whether they are Qadianis, Sunnis or Shiites. We must love them and show them the way forward regardless of their position of hatred or intolerance towards us. God's prophet faced similar opposition during his Divine mission yet never ceased in his spread of Islam. Our community, led by our pious *Amir* Hazrat Dr Abdul Karim Saeed Pasha Sahib and the council of sages, is committed to spreading Islam and showing its beautiful precepts to humanity. I am Ahmadi because I accepted the reforming role of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, and no imam, mullah, sheikh or Caliph can separate me from his teachings. No one has the power to exclude me from Islam, much less from the Ahmadiyya community founded by the humble servant of Allah Al Masih -e Mau'd (Promised Messiah)

Our motto: 'In-Allah-ha-Ma'anaa' ("Do not be sad, for surely Allah is with us." - The Holy Quran 9:40)

We find spiritual strength, courage and consolation, in times of trials and difficulties, from this divine revelation of the Quran, which descended on the pure heart of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) for comfort during one of the most dangerous moments of his life. ([Return to Contents](#))

The Promised Messiah's

Love of the Holy Quran

By Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ali



Translated by Dr Muhammad Ahmad

Edited by Lord Shahid Aziz

(A Friday khutba delivered on May 10, 1935)

وَقَالَ الرَّسُولُ يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي اتَّخَذُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ مَهْجُورًا
(الفقران 30)

And the Messenger will say: My Lord, sure-

ly my people treat this Quran as a forsaken thing.

Some verses of the Holy Quran reflect those conditions and circumstances that the Holy Prophet faced in his lifetime. They may also reflect on events that happened a long time afterwards. This verse is one of those verses. The Holy Prophet invited the disbelievers to the guidance of the Holy Quran, which they rejected. Today we have Muslims who verbally acknowledge but practically abandon this guidance. Ordinarily, in their homes, Muslims place the Holy Quran in an elevated spot and give it a great honour. They avoid physically turning their back to it or putting it in some lower location. However, as far as practice goes, they stand accused of the behaviour described in this verse. In practice, they have put the Holy Quran behind their backs and have given it a lower priority in their lives. That is why we hear this lamentation of the Holy Prophet that his nation has forsaken the Holy Quran. Just as it was proven correct for the Quraish, it is also proven true for Muslims in this age!

An Incident to Learn a Lesson

I want to relate an incident in this regard. I had the opportunity to address some noblemen of the city. Besides some of my friends, the majority of this gathering included people who are proud to be called *Hanafis*.

When I said: "The prime importance is that of the Holy Quran, followed by the Hadith and the opinion of the Jurists. One person in the audience did not like my statement and remarked: "I had assigned a third-class status to their school of thought (*Hanafi*)." I responded to him thus: "Would you rather call the word of Allah third class?"

The Holy Quran no longer has priority in the Religious Life of the Muslims

Regretfully today, the Holy Quran no longer has priority in the religious life of the Muslims. In their view, Quran is not something that needs to be propagated. Let them consider and

see how much of their wealth is used to propagate the Holy Quran in the world? In this age, no one among Muslims except your small organisation has set out with the Quran in hand to propagate its message worldwide. All the strength of Muslims is being spent in trivial and extremely abject discord. Today's madness raging against Ahmadiyya was yesterday against the *Ahle-Hadith* and the day before against the *Shia*! It is even today raging in many places. Instead of giving priority to spreading the teachings of the Holy Quran, these people are involved in useless and trivial disagreements and thus wasting their time and resources.

The Idea of Spreading the Holy Quran in Europe and America

An individual stood up at the time and tried to create the love of the Holy Quran in the hearts of Muslims, the same kind of love that existed in the hearts of the noble companions of the Holy Prophet. At one time, a well-known personality, that is Doctor Sir Muhammad Iqbal told me: "One can see many people who are in love with the Holy Prophet, but there is only Hazrat Mirza Sahib, who is in love with the Holy Quran!"

Look at the poetry of Hazrat Mirza Sahib and his books. All are full of love and praise for the Holy Quran. He stood alone and put out the call to take the Holy Quran to the corners of the world. He commanded his organisation to take the Holy Quran to the nations it had not yet reached. Who was that nation? The Holy Quran had spread to Asia and Africa but not yet to Europe and America. A lone voice from the village of Qadian, unfamiliar with the English language and the world conditions, came up with the thought that the Holy Quran should be propagated to these people. People who had crossed moral bounds and where materialism and atheism were flourishing!

Muslims shut their eyes and called this person deeply in love with the Holy Quran a liar (*dajjal*) and a disbeliever!

I, however, have more regrets that a large

number of his followers failed to give the Holy Quran the exalted status that was his objective. I am not exaggerating. This is not something that can be called an ordinary matter and ignored. The larger portion of the followers of the Promised Messiah went in the wrong direction. Instead of giving priority to the publication of the Holy Quran, they gave preference to other matters. Otherwise, if such a large organisation had prioritised the Holy Quran's publication, it would have already been translated and published in all the major European languages. In this way, the fundamental objective of the advent of the Promised Messiah would have been fulfilled!

The Lahore Organization's Service of the Holy Quran

Only the tiny Lahore Ahmadiyya organisation is fulfilling this objective by the grace of God, but it is looked down upon disparagingly. Literature is published against it, such as the pamphlet "*The fate of the Deniers of the Caliphate.*" Is this the alleged exemplary warning that it has been able to spread thousands of copies of the Holy Quran worldwide? Moreover, the Holy Quran has been translated into several European languages? It has been approximately eighteen years since the English translation was published.

The Dutch Translation of the Holy Quran

I want to give you the good news -the complete translation of the Holy Quran in Dutch has been published from Java by Mirza Wali Ahmad Baig Sahib. He has printed it in the same beautiful format as the English translation and commentary of the Holy Quran. In my opinion, Mirza Wali Ahmad Baig truly deserves the meaning of his name.

The German Translation and Commentary

The German translation and commentary have also been completed, and only its publication remains. This is due to a lack of funds.

The Regrettable Unawareness of Muslims

Today, Muslims are in the most abject and the least successful state. Perhaps someone may think the untouchables in India are in the worst condition because the Hindus consider them as such. This is true, but the thought of maintaining their existence has arisen among the untouchables. This thought has as yet to evolve among Muslims. Undoubtedly, some individuals spend their wealth on the propagation and publication of the Holy Quran. However, among Muslims in general, one does not see a group spending their wealth and entirely focusing on this.

Success without the Holy Quran is Impossible

In my opinion, you have also not reached the state necessary for success. Remember well! We cannot succeed until we genuinely take the Quran in hand. Others have strength, wealth, and power. When I see our organisation, I see only helplessness and a lack of resources. However, a door remains open where you can take your helplessness and succeed. It is the doorstep of Allah. Yesterday Khan Bahadur Mian Ghulam Rasul Sahib said something very admirable! He said humankind's relationship with God should be like that of a child with his mother. The mother spans the child. Despite that, he does not leave her company, not calling someone else but repeatedly cries out mama! Mama!

We are Proud of Our Helplessness

Our opponents think, and they also include the Qadian group in this, that they will crush us in a few days. They are proud of their wealth, strength, organisation, and numbers, while we pride ourselves on our feebleness. In this helpless state, we should prostrate before the Almighty and get up with the determination to spread His pure Word all over. If we are destroyed, as our opponents wish, it is better to die with a good objective than remain alive with bad intentions. But I assure you that the nation that takes the propagation of the Holy Quran in hand will never be unsuccessful. The

Holy Quran states: We have not revealed the Quran to you that you may be unsuccessful.¹

With the revelation of the Holy Quran, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, Messenger of Allah, was not unsuccessful. The nation with the sole objective of propagating the Holy Quran in the world can also never fail. Remember, the Holy Quran was not revealed so that it may fail but for success. Give room to the idea of propagating the Holy Quran in your hearts and minds. Ninety per cent of the thoughts in your mind should be focused on this good deed.

Our Present Difficulties and their Solution

These days we are facing great difficulties. Two groups have joined hands to destroy us, and all obstructions are laid in our path. But these obstructions will not amount to anything if we divert our full attention toward the propagation of the Holy Quran. By what means we can enhance the propagation of the Holy Quran in the world should always be our concern. In this way, no impediment can cause us harm.

The Way of the Righteous

If there is a deficiency, it is from our side. Come, let us fall in humility before God to have our weakness rectified. This is the way of the righteous and what the Holy Quran teaches. Look inside your heart when the results are not as you wish. You will find some deficiencies over there. The famous prayer of *Hazrat Yunus* (Jonah) reminds us of this. He cried out in the depths of difficulties: ...There is no God but You; glory be to You! Surely, I am of the sufferers of loss.² O God, you are free of all fault; deficiency lies within me!

Europe is Thirsty for the Teachings of the Holy Quran

What I have said, I do not want to make it a basis of an appeal. I intend to create the idea in your hearts and minds about how to propagate

¹ The Holy Quran 20:2

² The Holy Quran 21:87

the Holy Quran, and this is our foremost objective. However, at this very moment, I remembered a suggestion to spread the Holy Quran in Europe and make Islam prevail through the Holy Quran. This thought first came into the mind of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. To my knowledge, no one before him expressed this thought. It is the wisdom of Allah the Most-High that, on the one hand, this thought comes into the mind of the Promised Messiah, and at the same time, an unprecedented change comes in the mindset of the Europeans. Europe considered Islam as the religion of darkness and barbarism. From there, a voice cries - the solution to the difficulties of Europe lies in Islam and the Holy Quran.

The Useful Proposition of Shedai Sahib

We have a friend, Muhammad Iqbal Sahib Shedai, currently residing in France. He has written that a conference is being held in Rome in September this year. Renowned Orientalists will be attending this conference. Shedai Sahib proposes that each one of these attendees should be presented with a set of four books. That would be the English translation of the Holy Quran, Teachings of Islam, Muhammad the Prophet, and the Early caliphate. These four books, by the Grace of God, have proven very successful and effective. Regarding the books Early caliphate and Muhammad, the Prophet, he wrote: "It is the most complete and satisfactory history of the early Muslims hitherto compiled in English."

Donation for One Set

Donating one set of these books does not cost much. It comes to a total of eleven rupees and twelve annas. Our organisation gives at half-price books for donation. With postage included, the price of one set comes out to be six and a half rupees. Therefore, I am requesting you to fulfil this need. Members of the congregation immediately responded to this appeal, and promises were made for several sets of books in a few minutes. Members of our organisations outside the country should also participate in this noble work.

Regarding the Orientalists attending this conference, their status in terms of knowledge is considered very high in Europe. One could call them the brain centres of Europe. Sending them literature on Islam will bring beneficial and long-lasting results. ([Return to Contents](#))

I won Muhammad and did not lose Jesus

By Murad Hoffman

Murat Hoffmann, a German national, obtained a doctorate in law from Harvard University. He served as German ambassador to the Kingdom of Morocco. In the prime of his life, Hoffman had a terrible traffic accident, and the surgeon said to him after he finished his first aid: "No one can actually escape from such an accident, and I expect that God has in store for you, my dear, something very special."

Fate believed this doctor's intuition, as he embraced Dr Hoffman Islam after deeply studying it and cohabiting with the good morals of Muslims in Morocco. When he declared his conversion to Islam, the German press fought him fiercely, and even his mother, when he sent her a message, turned away from her and said: "Let him stay with the Arabs!"

Hoffman did not care about this. He says: "When I was subjected to a fierce campaign of stabbing and defamation in the media because of my conversion to Islam, some of my friends could not understand my indifference to this campaign, and they could find the explanation in this verse: It is You we worship and from You we seek help.

After his conversion to Islam, Dr Hoffmann began his writing career. Among his books are Diaries of a German Muslim, Islam in the year Two Thousand, The road to Mecca, and Islam as an alternative, which caused a sensation in Germany.

Dr Hoffman talks about the perfect and accurate balance between matter and spirit in Islam, saying: "The Hereafter is nothing but the reward for work in this world, and from here came the interest in this world, for the Qur'an inspires a Muslim to pray for this world, not

just the Hereafter ((Our Lord, give us good in this world and the Hereafter) Even the etiquette of eating and visiting, you find a share in Islamic law.”

Dr Murad explains the phenomenon of the rapid spread of Islam worldwide, despite the weak efforts made to call for it. He said: “The spontaneous spread of Islam is a feature of it throughout history because it is the religion of instinct that was revealed to the heart of the Chosen One.”

“Islam is a comprehensive religion that is capable of confrontation, and it has the distinction of making education a duty and knowledge worship... Although Islam’s steadfastness. Its refusal to withdraw from the scene of events is considered by many Westerners as a departure from the context of time and history. Rather, they consider it a grave insult to the West!!”

Hoffman marvels at the hypocritical humanity of Westerners, writing: “On Eid al-Adha, the Western world views the sacrifice of an animal by Muslims as an act of cruelty. Even though the Westerner still calls his prayer (an offering) until now! He is still meditating on good Friday because the Lord (sacrificed) his son for us!!”

Islam’s date of victory:

Do not rule out that the East will re-lead the world in civilisation, for the saying “the light comes from the East” is still valid. God will help us if we change what is within ourselves, not by reforming Islam, but by reforming our attitude and actions towards Islam.

Dr Hoffman advises Muslims to retake civilisation’s lead with confidence and pride in this religion. He says: “If Muslims want a real dialogue with the West, they must prove their presence and influence, revive the obligation of *ijtihad*, and desist from the apologetic and justifying method when addressing the West. Islam is the only solution to get out of the abyss in which the West has fallen, and it is the only option for Western societies in the twenty-first century.”

Islam is the alternative life with an eternal project that does not wear out and does not expire, and if some see it as old, it is also modern and futuristic, not limited by time or place.

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Original Sin vs Original Grace I:

The Adamic Fall and the Primordial Covenant

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Introduction

This paper considers the Christian doctrine of original sin, the Islamic concepts of *fitra* and the primordial covenant. It argues that while the former leaves man in need of redemption through Christ, the latter makes no such demands as man is born in a state of divine grace due to acceptance of a primordial covenant before earthly existence. Intellectual reaffirmation of the primordial covenant is required if he reaches maturity only. The attendant problem of what happens to children who do not reach intellectual maturity is thus circumvented mainly in the Islamic conception but poses a significant issue for Christians. We will begin with original sin in Christianity before proceeding to the primordial covenant and the resultant natural disposition (*fitra*) of divine grace in Islam and complete our study with the issue of children who die in infancy.

Original sin is the doctrine that the effects of Adam’s sin permeate his entire progeny. This doctrine continues to be one of the most contentious issues in Christianity.¹ The debate seems to have its theological roots in the writings of Pelagius (d. 420). He adhered to a creationist view of the soul in which each soul is created at the moment of its infusion into the body, and the attendant result was that no soul was present within Adam when he committed his sin. Pelagius, therefore, denied inherited

¹ Clay Jones notes that only 52% of Evangelicals hold to the doctrine, whilst many more ‘avoid the conversation entirely.’ (Clay Jones, “Original Sin: Its Importance and Fairness.”)

guilt: the guilt of committing the sin and being complicit in it. By refusing to attribute *any* guilt to his progeny for Adam's act, Pelagius denied both Adamic natural headship and federal headship. The former is the belief that, since our souls are formed with our bodies (the traducianist position), our souls were actually in Adam, in much the same way as our bodies were in him as we are descended from him, and his sin is also our sin. Adamic federal headship, which adopts a creationist stance on the soul and consequently rejects that we were present at the time of the sin but accepts that as our representative, Adam's action was not only his own but ours as well, is also opposed by Pelagius. This means that neither did we, as descendants of Adam, sin nor is our soul corrupted by the sin of Adam, bequeathing us with an innate propensity towards sin. Adam's sin serves as nothing more than a bad example for his progeny and does not affect the intrinsic purity of the soul.¹

Pelagius argued that guilt proceeds from and is the product of free will. Accordingly, original sin could not be imputed to man when he had no say in the matter.² And if the doctrine of original sin was inherently unjust, added Pelagius, it also etiolated the inclination to uprightness as one's actions could never erase the stain of Adam's transgression.³ His beliefs provoked a fierce backlash, especially from St. Augustine of Hippo (d. 430), and they were anathematised first by the Pope in 417/8 and then by the Council of Ephesus in 431.⁴

Opposed to the Pelagian view, Augustine adopted a natural headship paradigm that imputed corruption and guilt to all of Adam's progeny as they were present at the time of and complicit in his sin. Therefore, not only did original sin corrupt the state of man (*peccatum originatum*), argued Augustine, he sinned him-

self (*peccatum originans*).⁵ Tainted by the sin of Adam, says Augustine, all his offspring became '*concupiscentiae subditi*'.⁶ Forever plagued with the 'incessant trouble of corrupted sensuality',⁷ man no longer enjoyed the opportunity of free will or the attendant possibility of redemption. As Bonaiuti and La Piana observe: ... mankind appeared to Augustine identified with Adam, in his sin and in his condemnation. Original sin is then described as an infection that propagates from father to son through the act of generation. Being an act of organic trouble caused by the sin, it is a sin itself and determines the transmission *ipso facto* of the sin to the new creature.⁸

Thus, the very act of procreation is dominated by and a product of concupiscence. It is concupiscence that has metastasised to the reproductive organs. Now congenitally incapable of atonement, Augustine comes to the ominous conclusion that humanity is '*massa peccati, massa luti, massa damnationis, massa damnata*'.⁹ The absolute impotence of man to change this is described by Augustine in these and many other equally explicit terms.¹⁰ This means that even if no one were to be saved and God chose to punish every individual, He would still not be unjust because 'being a *massa damnata*, nobody can claim the right to be saved.'¹¹ If He predestines to save some from this 'justly' damned collective, it is only through His 'gratuitous grace'¹² which man cannot comprehend, much less question.

Although splintered on whether to adopt a creationist or traducianist position of the soul's origin and the consequent view of natural headship or federal headship, respectively, the dominant Reformed stance is that of the

¹ Michael Pomazansky, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, 164.

² Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, 245.

³ Gustav Wiggers, *An Historical Presentation of Augustinianism and Pelagianism from the Original Sources*, 42.

⁴ Justo Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 450.

⁵ William Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 959.

⁶ Ernesto Bonaiuti and Giorgio La Piana, "The Genesis of St. Augustine's Idea of Original Sin," 162.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 163.

⁹ Ibid., 165.

¹⁰ Donato Ogliari, *Gratia Et Certamen: The Relationship Between Grace and Free Will in the Discussion of Augustine with the So-Called Semipelagians*, 343.

¹¹ Ibid., 345.

¹² Ibid.

Augustinian conception of inherited corruption and guilt from Adam. Nevertheless, Martin Luther and John Calvin denied the idea of inherited guilt, limiting the fallout of original sin to inherited corruption. Calvin writes,

‘Original sin, therefore, seems to be a hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature. It is diffused into all parts of the soul, which first makes us liable to God’s wrath, then also brings forth those works in us which Scripture calls ‘works of the flesh.’¹

Luther and Calvin are not the only ones to circumscribe the effects of original sin to inherited corruption. This is also the central tenet of the Semi-Pelagian and Arminian views.² The difference between these two positions is that the Arminian stance postulates the necessity of prevenient grace. This grace removes the guilt of original sin at birth, allowing the recipient to acquire a libertarian free will that enables him to choose or reject Christ. Although also subscribing to the idea of inherited corruption alone and the resultant free will, Semi-Pelagians do not believe the soul inherited guilt from Adam’s act such that its removal at birth would be required.

Nevertheless, it would be imprudent to parochialise the range of opinions within Arminian theology. Indeed, one finds the entire gamut of opinions, from a Pelagian denial of inherited corruption and guilt at one extreme to an Augustinian affirmation of both at the other. The latter position is adopted by James Arminius (d. 1609) himself, as attested by his following treatment of this issue:

However, the whole of this sin is not peculiar to our first parents. It is common to the entire race and to all their posterity, who, at the time when this sin was committed, were in their loins, and who have since descended from them by the natural mode of propagation, according to the primitive benediction: For in Adam ‘all have sinned.’³

Not having a monopoly on diverse opin-

ions, the Armenians are joined in their heterogeneity by the Roman Catholic Church, which held the Augustinian view until the Council of Trent, 1546, only to adopt a modern-day stance of simultaneous acceptance and denial of inherited guilt.⁴

If the positions of the various denominations vary vastly, the underlying scriptural substructure upon which they are constructed does not. We will therefore analyse the Biblical basis for the doctrine of original sin.

Scriptural Proofs for Original Sin

Many verses speak of or allude to Man’s postlapsarian sinful nature (Rom. 3:23; Rom. 3:9-10; Prov. 20:9; Eccles. 7:20; Ps. 14:3; Ps. 130:3, Ps. 143:2; I Kings 8:46; Ephes. 2:3; 1 John 1:8; Gen. 6:5). The primary textual proof for original sin, nevertheless, is Romans 5:12-21, in which Paul turns to and engages with the sin of Adam and its effect on humanity. ‘Just as sin came into the world through one man,’ begins Paul in verse 12, ‘and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.’ Paul draws an unequivocal connection between sin and its repercussion, death. To make his point even more forcefully, he elaborates, ‘Death reigned from Adam to Moses.’⁵ Death, the consequence of sin, reigned even when, as Paul points out, no law had been given to the pre-Mosaic community.⁶

Since a just God cannot mete out punishment if no law has been violated, the presence of death intimated the presence of an actual violation, of actual guilt. This is the guilt of original sin. On five occasions, does Paul use the term ‘trespass’ to describe Adam’s sin,⁷ which Craig Keener concedes indicates a ‘violation of a particular standard.’⁸ The legal consequence of Adam’s sin pervades his entire progeny in the form of death because they too are legally guilty of his ‘trespass’. Not only do they receive their corrupted nature as adverted

¹ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2.1.8.

² Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, 324.

³ James Arminius, *The Writings of James Arminius*, vol. 1, 486.

⁴ Joseph Ratzinger, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 114; John Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 847.

⁵ Romans, 5:14.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 5:13.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 5:15-18.

⁸ Craig Keener, *Romans*, 76.

to in the numerous aforementioned verses, but they also receive actual guilt. Lest there be any doubt, Paul continues, ‘one trespass led to condemnation for all men ... by one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners.’¹

Paul’s language is not subtle. It leaves little room for ambiguity, even less for doubt. A total of seven times in this single passage does Paul say ‘one’ in reference to the sin and impute the guilt of that one to the many.² This leads Martyn McGeown to conclude that the one man is Adam. The emphasis is on what Adam did as the representative head of the human race. If the ground of our condemnation is not the one imputed sin of Adam but our own depraved nature, the apostle would never have used the word ‘one.’³

Though some have chosen to interpret the words of Paul to denote a corruption of nature in postlapsarian humans,⁴ a literal reading of his perspicuous language swings the pendulum very much in favour of the imputation of actual guilt. Yet Paul does not stop there. Eliciting a categorical typological juxtaposition between

Adam as the archetypal sinner and Christ as the archetypal saviour, Paul comments in verses 15 to 21 that if one’s sin condemns humanity, it is another’s gift that redeems it. The implication could not be clearer: to deny actual guilt from Adam’s sin would simultaneously be to deny actual redemption through Christ. Millard Erickson has noted that Paul’s argument here is somewhat specious since the fall precludes choice, and redemption is predicated on it.⁵ Notwithstanding this valid objection, there seems little doubt that Paul remains unperturbed by the involuntary imposition of guilt and the autonomous acceptance of redemption. In 1 Corinthians 15:22, Paul reaffirms this

parallelism: ‘For as in Adam all die, so in Christ, all will be made alive.’ The interpretation of imputation of guilt finds a further champion in Psalm 51:5 where David confesses, ‘Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.’ David’s declaration, much like Paul’s, is not nuanced. Guilty of Adam’s actual sin at conception, let alone birth, David cannot find redemption but in Christ.

The textual evidence, then, appears to endorse the interpretation that Adam’s transgression corrupted human nature and imposed actual guilt on his progeny. If Biblical exegesis bears out that the sin of Adam is imposed on his progeny, the Qur’an promulgates a largely antithetical view.

The Qur’anic View: ‘No Bearer of Burden Shall Bear the Burden of Another’⁶

Though by no means uniform,⁷ this Qur’anic part-verse epitomises the majority position on this issue.⁸ The prolific sixteenth-century Shāfi’ī scholar Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505),⁹ in his work on the principles of Qur’anic exegesis, takes this verse as clear proof that ‘no one is taken to task for the actions of another.’¹⁰ He then mentions that ‘Ā’isha bint Abū Bakr (d. 58/678), the wife of Muḥammad, repudiated the claim that a deceased person would be punished for those wailing over his death. When asked whether a child born out of wedlock would be punished, she replied, ‘he has no part in his parents’ sin,’ after which she recited this verse of the Qur’an.¹¹

The highly influential tenth-century Sunni exegete and historian Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/ 923)¹² wrote in his commentary of this verse: A bearer will not bear the burden of an-

⁶ Qur’an, 17:15.

⁷ See below for details.

⁸ There are, nevertheless, two verses of the Qur’an that speak of one’s progeny following one in paradise (13:23 and 52:21).

⁹ For details on Al-Suyūṭī’s biography see E.M. Sartain, ed. *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī: Biography and Background*.

¹⁰ Al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Iklīl fī istinbāṭ al-tanzīl*, 125.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² For details on Al-Ṭabarī’s biography see the introduction by Franz Rosenthal in *The History of al-Ṭabarī*.

¹ Ibid., 5:18.

² Ibid., 5:19.

³ Martyn McGeown, “The Resurrection of a French Heresy: Joshua De La Place’s Denial of the Immediate Imputation of Adam’s Sin to His Posterity.”

⁴ See C.E.B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans: Introduction and Commentary on Romans I-VIII*, 278.

⁵ Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 655.

other besides his own in terms of sins. ... burden (*wizr*) is sin (*ithm*) ... so it is as if the meaning of His words is 'a sinner cannot sin the sin of another.' Upon every soul will be its own sins, not the sins of other souls.¹

Al-Ṭabarī is adamant that the term 'burden' (*wizr*) can only refer to 'sin' (*ithm*) in this context. Indeed, there seems to be a general exegetical consensus on this issue. The eleventh-century Shāfi'ī jurist and political theorist, Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058),² comments that there are four denotations of this verse, and each burden refers to sin:

1. No one will be taken to task for the sins of another;
2. No one sins for another;
3. It is not permissible for anyone to revolt for someone else's sin;
4. No one bears the sin of another, whereupon the perpetrator's sin is expunged.³

Arguably the most influential Ash'arite theologian, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210),⁴ whilst agreeing with Al-Māwardī on the first meaning, also observes that the verse cautions against imitation of sin wherein one commits sins just because someone else has committed them.⁵

Q17:15 is very clear - sins are the burden of their originators, and it is a burden that can neither be transmitted nor transferred. Consonant with the poetic cyclical repetition in the Qur'an, other verses, too, attest to the veracity of this sentiment. 'Every man is a pledge for that which he has earned,' avers Q52:21. Al-Ṭabarī's commentary of this verse is remarkably consistent with that of Q17:15. A pledge is made to each soul for what it has earned in terms of good or bad deeds; no one will be taken to task for someone else's sins; he will only be punished for his own sins.⁶

The Shāfi'ī exegete and historian of the

Mamluk era, 'Imād al-Dīn ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373),⁷ so often the sanitiser and bowdleriser of Al-Ṭabarī,⁸ finds no cause for expurgation here. He remarks that God will not take anyone to task for the sins of another because a pledge is made to each soul for its deeds, and 'the sins of other people will not be placed on it, no matter if they are fathers or sons.'⁹

Almost identical to Q52:21 is Q74:38, which reads, 'Every soul is a pledge for its own deeds.' The twelfth-century exegete and traditionist, Al-Ḥusayn ibn Mas'ūd al-Baghawī (d. 516/1122?),¹⁰ has nothing to add to the categorical and consistent commentaries of his forebears. 'A pledge is made to it,' he clarifies, 'that it will enter the Fire for its deeds and be taken to task for them.'¹¹ Abu'l-Ṭayyib al-Qinnawjī treads a well-trodden path when he explains that a soul 'is taken [to task] for its deeds, pawned for it: either it is redeemed, or it is ruined.'¹²

Quranic commentaries agree that sins cannot be transmitted - neither their guilt nor their corruption - to anyone but the perpetrator. Yet it is more than this. The Qur'an goes as far as to asseverate that the natural disposition (*fiṭra*) upon which man is created predisposes to monotheism, in contra-distinction to the Christian doctrine of postlapsarian corruption.

Natural Disposition (*Fiṭra*) and the Divine Covenant

The term *fiṭra*, which I have chosen to translate as 'natural disposition,' is notoriously difficult to define.¹³ The foundational prophetic

¹ Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, 17:402.

² For details on Al-Māwardī, see Wafaa Wahba's introduction in *The Ordinances of Government*.

³ Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Māwardī, *Al-Nukat wa'l-'uyūn*, 3:234.

⁴ For details on Al-Rāzī see Roger Arnaldez, *Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī Commentateur Du Coran Et Philosophie*.

⁵ Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātiḥ al-ghayb*, 20:311-12.

⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, 22:473.

⁷ For details on Ibn Kathīr see Younus Mirza, "Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373): His Intellectual Circle, Major Works and Qur'anic Exegesis."

⁸ See Norman Calder, "Tafsīr from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kathīr: Problems in the Description of the Genre."

⁹ Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-qur'ān al-'azīm*, 7:434.

¹⁰ For details on Al-Baghawī see J. Robson, "al-Baghawī" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

¹¹ Al-Baghawī, *Tafsīr al-Baghawī*, 8:272.

¹² Al-Qinnawjī, *Faḥḥ al-bayān fī maqāṣid al-qur'ān*, 14:418-19.

¹³ Adang, for instance, leaves the term untranslated due to the lack of consensus on its interpretation (Adang, "Islam as the inborn religion of mankind: the concept of *fiṭra* in the works of Ibn Ḥazm," 393). Carl Sharif El-Tobgui, in his excellent analysis of the con-

tradition on this topic runs: ‘Every child is born on the *fiṭra* then its parents make it a Jew or a Christian.’¹ Explanations for *fiṭra* are at times rather nebulous; Sirāj al-Dīn ibn al-Mulaqqin (804/1401), the Shāfi‘ī jurist and traditionist,² simply believes it to be a synonym of gnosis (*ma‘rifa*).³ Some scholars take an ephectic approach, such as the Māliki jurist and exegete, Abū Bakr ibn al-‘Arabī al-Ishbīlī (543/1148?),⁴ who remarks that this prophetic tradition means children will be judged ostensibly (*fi’l-zāhir*) according to the religion of their parents. Still, the reality of the matter is entrusted to God alone.⁵ The prominent judge during the Almoravid era, ‘Iyaḍ ibn Mūsā (d. 544/1149),⁶ remarks that it means, ‘Islam, uprightness (*istiḳāma*) or monotheism (*ḥanafīyya*).’⁷ Analogously, ‘preparedness to accept Islam’ (*isti’dād al-qubūl li’l-islām*) is cited as a possible explanation.⁸

Among the most detailed engagements with the topic of *fiṭra* is that of Ibn Taymiyya, who devotes hundreds of pages to it in his encyclopedic *Dar’ al-ta’arūḍ al-‘aql wa’l-naql*.⁹ In this work, Ibn Taymiyya inveighs against Ibn

Sinā (d. 428/1037), who limited the epistemological scope of *fiṭra*, arguing that ‘ethical propositions are not known from the perspective of human nature.’¹⁰ The Hanbalite reformer, as Vasalou astutely observes, reformulated the notion. So that it could be the ‘foundation’ for ethical norms because it was an innate human ‘desire for objective good.’¹¹ The *fiṭra*, says Ibn Taymiyya, allows us to know God. We are thus born with a ‘disposition’ to know God,¹² but an inevitable entailment of knowing Him is loving and obeying Him.¹³ It is in this way that the epistemological becomes ethical.

In a sense, Ibn Taymiyya marks the halfway house between the Mu’tazilite and Ash’arite positions on *fiṭra*. The Mu’tazilites used the notion of a natural disposition to know God as a basis for defending God’s justice,¹⁴ whereas the Ash’arites, predictably, resisted this urge. Ibn Taymiyya, for his part, ‘combined an affirmation of our natural knowledge of God and a deterministic position.’¹⁵ On the one hand, he rejected the Mu’tazilite ‘free-will theodicy because it posits humans as creating their own acts.’¹⁶ On the other, he excoriates Ash’arites for making God’s justice voluntaristic.¹⁷ The two-pronged Ash’arite defence is that God can do just as He pleases because (a) one can never be unjust in dealing with one’s property as he sees fit, and (b) injustice is opposing a command that should be obeyed. Since we are God’s property and He is not subject to any commands, argue Ash’arites, He cannot be unjust. Ibn Taymiyya counters that (a) one can certainly be unjust in the way one acts on one’s own property, and (b) God has subjected Him-

troversial fourteenth century jurist, Taqī al-Dīn ibn Taymiyya’s (d. 728/1328), *Dar’ al-ta’arūḍ al-‘aql wa’l-naql*, defines *fiṭra* as ‘original normative disposition’ (El-Tobgui, *Ibn Taymiyya on Reason and Revelation*, 260). In its nominal form, the term occurs only once in the Qur’an when God says, ‘So set your face toward the religion, being upright, the natural disposition (*fiṭra*) of God, according to which He created mankind’ (Qur’an, 30:30).

¹ Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 4:2047; Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān ibn al-Ash’ath al-Sijistānī, *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, 7:97; Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī, *Shu‘b al-īmān*, 1:183; Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, *Mukhtaṣar ṣaḥīḥ al-īmān al-Bukhārī*, 1:398.

² For details on Al-Mulaqqin see Nathan Hofer “Ibn al-Mulaqqin” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

³ Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Al-Tawḍīḥ*, 10:108.

⁴ For details on Ibn al-‘Arabī see Ateş, A. “Ibn al-‘Arabī” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

⁵ Al-Ishbīlī, *Al-Qabas fī sharḥ muwatta’ Mālik ibn Anas*, 1:435.

⁶ For details on ‘Iyaḍ ibn Mūsā see Al-Husayn ibn Muḥammad Shawat, *Al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ: ‘Ālim al-maghrib wa imām ahl al-ḥadīth fī waqtih*.

⁷ Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, *Sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ Muslim li’l-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ*, 1:501.

⁸ Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Ḥasanī, *Al-Tanwīr sharḥ al-jāmi’ al-saghīr*, 7:460.

⁹ Ibn Taymiyya, *Dar’ al-ta’arūḍ al-‘aql wa’l-naql*, 8:359-535.

¹⁰ Sophia Vasalou, *Ibn Taymiyya’s Theological Ethics*, 78. See also Jon Hoover, “Fiṭra” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Hoover notes that whilst Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) follows Ibn Sinā in restricting the epistemological ambit of *fiṭra* in order to emphasise the primary of revelation, Ibn Taymiyya expands it (Ibid., 105).

¹¹ Vasalou, *Ibn Taymiyya’s Theological Ethics*, 68.

¹² Ibid., 80.

¹³ Ibid., 81.

¹⁴ Ibid., 79; Hoover, “Fiṭra,” 104-05.

¹⁵ Vasalou, *Ibn Taymiyya’s Theological Ethics*, 174.

¹⁶ Hoover, *Ibn Taymiyya’s Theodicy of Perpetual Optimism*, 213.

¹⁷ Ibid., 216.

self to the command of forbidding injustice.¹ God is not, therefore, as capricious as Ash'arites would have us believe.

In his ethics, Ibn Taymiyya employs and deploys *fiṭra* to assert the essential harmony between reason and revelation, as El-Tobgui apprises us: God is said to have *faṭara* (created, fashioned) the '*uqūl* (minds, intellects) of humanity in a particular manner, a statement that makes it quite evident that the *fiṭra*, for Ibn Taymiyya, closely overlaps with what we might call innate or intuitive knowledge and, fundamentally, with reason (*'aql*) itself.²

Despite the differences in the epistemological reach of *fiṭra* between scholars, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that most scholars associate it with Islam in some way.³ The twelfth-century Andalusian traditionist, Ibrāhīm ibn Yūsuf al-Ḥamzī (d. 569/1174?), known as Ibn Qurqūl,⁴ for instance, writes that every child is 'created safe from unbelief (*kufr*) and other such things, it is prepared for accepting righteousness and guidance (*ṣalāh*).⁵ He is a little more forthcoming about what this entails when he comments that babies are 'created upon the right path, prepared for accepting guidance, and its meaning is that they were Muslim when they accepted the covenant.'⁶

If Ibn Qurqūl draws an explicit connection between natural human disposition (*fiṭra*) and the Divine Covenant—when God asked all souls to testify that He was their Lord, and they did so - alluded to in Q7:172, he is by no means

the only one. The ninth-century exegete Abū Bakr al-Kalbī (d. 273/886?),⁷ the influential Shāfi'ī traditionist, Yaḥyā ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277), known for his commentary on Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim,⁸ the acclaimed linguist and exegete, Sharaf al-Dīn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Ṭībī (d. 743/1342?),⁹ and the traditionist and grammarian, Ḥammād ibn Salama (d. 167/783?)¹⁰ are emphatic in their assertion that *fiṭra* refers to all souls' acceptance of the divine covenant.¹¹ Indeed, Ibn Taymiyya begins his protracted treatment of the issue in the Dar' by observing that *fiṭra* is: the acknowledgement of gnosis (*ma'rifa*) of God, the Exalted. And it is the covenant (*'ahd*) which He made with them in the loins of their fathers when He stroked (*maṣaḥa*) the back of Adam, and He brought forth [all] his progeny like particles (*dhurr*) while they testified against themselves. 'Am I not your Lord?' [He asked]. They replied, 'Yes!' And there was no one who did not affirm [this].¹²

Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī (d. 855/ 1453), the well-known Ḥanafī rival of the renowned Shāfi'ī traditionist Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 856/1449) who wrote perhaps the most influential commentary of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī entitled *Faṭḥ al-bārī*,¹³ delivers the most categorical association between *fiṭra* and the covenant. In his commentary on the aforementioned pro-

¹ Ibid., 217-8. It is noteworthy that the Andalusian Sufi Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240) takes this idea further when he speaks of God making mercy incumbent upon Himself (Ibn 'Arabī, *Al-Futuḥāt al-makkiyya*, 2:239). For details on how Ibn 'Arabī's concept of metaphysical mercy affects his ethical discussions, see Ronald Nettler, *Sufi Metaphysics and Qur'ānic Prophets*, 156-75. See also Nettler, "Ibn 'Arabī's Conception of Allah's Mercy," 219-29.

² El-Tobgui, *Ibn Taymiyya on Reason and Revelation*, 262; see also Vasalou, 233.

³ Adang, "Islam as the inborn religion of mankind," 393.

⁴ For details on Ibn Qurqūl see Shams al-Dīn al-Dhababī, *Siyar al'ālam al-nubalā'*, 20:520.

⁵ Ibrāhīm ibn Yūsuf al-Ḥamzī, *Maṭāli' al-anwār 'alā ṣiḥāḥ al-āthār*, 5:235.

⁶ Ibid., 2:316.

⁷ Abū Bakr al-Kalbī, *Nāsikh al-ḥadīth wa mansūkhuh*, 163.

⁸ Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Kirmānī, *Al-Kawākib al-durārī fī sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 7:134. For details on al-Nawawī see Fachrizal A. Halim, *Legal Authority in Premodern Islam: Yaḥyā b. Sharaf al-Nawawī in the Shāfi'ī School of Law*.

⁹ For details on Al-Ṭībī see Shams al-Dīn al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn li'l-Dāwūdī*, 1:146.

¹⁰ 'Abd al-'Azīz Rashīd al-Ayyūb and Aḥmad Yūsuf al-Naṣaf, "*Maṣīr atfal al-mushrikīn fi'l-akhira*," 977. For details on Ibn Salama see G.H.A. Juynboll, "Ḥammād b. Salama b. Dīnār Abū Salama" in *Encyclopedia of Canonical Hadith*.

¹¹ Sharaf al-Dīn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Ṭībī, *Sharḥ al-Ṭībī 'alā mishkāt al-maṣābīḥ*, 2:547.

¹² Ibn Taymiyya, *Dar' al-ta'arūḍ al-'aql wa'l-naql*, 8:359.

¹³ For the academic rivalry between Al-'Aynī and Ibn Ḥajar see Anne Broadbridge, "Academic Rivalry and the Patronage System in Fifteenth-Century Egypt: al-'Aynī, al-Maqrizī, and Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī."

phetic tradition, he writes: This [tradition] indicates the principle that children of polytheists are also born on the *fiṭra* and that if they die before breaking that [primordial] oath, they will be with the Muslims in paradise.¹

Al-'Aynī declares that children who die in infancy are in a state of divine grace as they remain in the pristine state of accepting the primordial Divine covenant. Al-Ṭībī rationalises this by stating that, since there will be no birth in paradise, those who die in infancy - irrespective of the religion of their parents - will be the eternal youths of the paradise mentioned in Q56:17 and 76:19².

Al-'Aynī seems to be in illustrious company in his assertion of what may aptly be designated as 'original grace.' Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī and, on his authority, Ibn Kathīr record that when the second-century ḥadīth narrator, Al-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Mazāḥim's (d. 106/724?) son died, aged just six days, he remarked that he would be 'asked about the covenant he accepted when he was in the loins of Adam.'³ Upon being pressed as to what this entailed, he added: Ibn 'Abbās narrated to me: Surely God stroked (*maṣaḥa*) the loins (*sulb*) of Adam, so every person (*nasama*) that He will create until the Day of Resurrection was taken out from it. At that time, He accepted a covenant from them, so whoever among them reaches the last covenant (al-mithāq al-ākhir) and fulfils it, the first covenant will [also] benefit him. The first covenant will not benefit whoever reaches the last covenant and does not fulfil it. And whoever dies in infancy before reaching the last covenant will be on [his acceptance of] the first covenant, upon the *fiṭra*.⁴

¹ Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī, *Nukhab al-afkār fī tanqīḥ mabānī al-akḥbār fī sharḥ ma'ānī al-āthār*, 7:417.

² Al-Ṭībī, *Sharḥ al-Ṭībī*, 9:3015.

³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, 13:230; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-qur'ān al-'aẓīm*, 3:452-53.

⁴ Ibid. Al-Ṭabarī also mentions another statement from Ibn 'Abbās that largely corroborates this one: He [God] created Adam, then He brought forth his progeny from his back like tiny particles (*dharr*) and He spoke to them. Thereafter, He returned them to his backbone so that there was no one but he spoke and proclaimed, 'My lord is God!' ... and this is the natural disposition (*fiṭra*) upon which God has created man. (Al-Ṭabarī, 13:238).

'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abbās (d. 68/687) throws the synonymy between acceptance of the primordial covenant and natural disposition (*fiṭra*) into sharp relief. He also underscores that the primordial covenant may either be ratified or overturned by acceptance of a second covenant once one achieves intellectual maturity. This 'covenant of rationality' reinforces the primordial covenant of believers, in which case the upholder reaps the fruits of both covenants; or it may be nullified in those who fail to acknowledge God as their lord on reaching adulthood; after that, they will not enjoy the benefits of initial acceptance of the primordial covenant. The final category is reserved for those who never make it to the covenant of rationality and die in infancy - they will remain upon their original recognition of the primordial covenant.

In her paper on the primordial covenant, Wadād al-Qāḍī comments that God ensured the soundness of it by making man an active participant in accepting it and by safeguarding it from corrupting influences by returning all the souls to Adam's loins immediately after the covenant was concluded.⁵ It is on the strength of this covenant, then, according to Ibn 'Abbās, that all infants are not arbitrarily accorded paradise but merit it. But since it is bestowed on everyone without effort, it may be justly described as universal divine grace or original grace.

The concept of divine grace was explained by Ibn 'Abbās, the man anointed 'the leader of Qur'anic commentators' (imām al-mufasssīrīn) and the 'commentator of the Qur'an par excellence' (tarjumān al-Qur'ān),⁶ would be expected to exert considerable influence. Yet it behoves us to interrogate how prevalent this concept of original grace is in the tafsīr tradition. (continued in the next issue)

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⁵ Al-Qāḍī, "The Primordial Covenant and Human History in the Qur'an," 336. Al-Qāḍī also points out that while Sunnis accepted that the covenant actually took place at a definite time and place, the rationalism of the Mu'tazilites and Shi'ites led them to interpret the Verse of the Covenant figuratively (Ibid., 337).

⁶ Abū Bakr 'Abd al-Qāḥir al-Jurjānī, *Daraj al-durar fī tafsīr al-āyī wa'l-suwar*, 1:85, ft. 4.

DOING RAMADAN ON PURPOSE



Iain Dixon

I'm not sure if the phrase "doing Ramadan on purpose" is good English - but you will get my point! Even though I am not a Muslim, I love the month of Ramadan. Over the last few years, it has been a wonderful opportunity to draw near to my Muslim brothers and sisters in friendship and solidarity - and it is the perfect season to learn more about the Islamic faith! I want to share my thoughts on how I made Ramadan 2022 *special* this year and how I kept it spiritual and focused.

Often Criticised

Islam has many critics, and each year, even Ramadan comes under the scrutiny of its chief opponents. It is often pointed out that rather than Ramadan being a month of fasting, it appears to be merely a month of feasting - with more food being consumed by many households than at any other time of the year. Also, the incredible amount of food wasted at this time supposedly belies the purpose of fasting - part of which is remembering the poor who are genuinely hungry and unsure from where their next meal will come. Criticism is also put forth that Ramadan does not create unity but confusion. This arises from the different starting and end dates for the month (based on different rulings being followed by different groups and leaders) - and the vast amount of permissions, penalties, and exceptions - applicable to different people who are fasting (or not) during the thirty days. There is no uniformity.

A Different Perspective - Searching for Hidden Treasure

Outwardly Ramadan can seem confusing to the outsider, being seen not as much as a time of fasting but rather as a month of 're-shuffling' eating and drinking habits. But I have chosen

to see things from a different perspective! Forget the criticisms! Even if there appears to be excesses or confusion during Ramadan, the secret to misuse is not disusing. The secret to misuse is RIGHT use! I would like to share my positive experiences of "doing Ramadan on purpose", setting goals and targets - and purposely looking for 'hidden treasure' in all my Ramadan activities.

Making Sacred Space

Have you ever thought about why you use a prayer mat? Is it only handy to keep your forehead, hands and feet clean as you prostrate before the Emperor of the Universe? Or is there a more significant reason? As a follower of Jesus, I am mindful of the importance and power of prayer. I am also keenly aware of how prostration in prayer is part of my devotion to God. In the Old Testament scriptures, one of the Hebrew words for worship is '*shawkar*', which means to 'bow down.' We are told, "Come, let us bow down, let us worship and kneel down before the LORD our maker."- Psalm 95:5. We are also reminded of a snap-shot of Jesus at prayer revealed to us in the Gospel where we are told, "And [Jesus] fell on his face, and prayed saying, "O my Father."- Matthew 26:39. Prostration in the scriptures is seen both as an act of worship and submission. As I see it, a prayer mat is not only a practical tool; it also creates a 'sacred space' and a sacred place. It is a physical area which becomes a special chamber where we meet God. My prayer mat is only about 13 inches by 13 inches. It is just big enough to place my forehead and hands on it when I make my prostrations.

Although I have other prayer mats given to me, this Ramadan, I bought myself a new full-size Islamic prayer mat, which was green, gold and blue! I wanted to make Ramadan extra special and purposeful, and distinct! A fresh prayer mat! Maybe that is something you might like to consider for yourselves. Why not buy a fresh prayer mat just for Ramadan? Just a simple thing that can bring more focus to your religious devotion.

Studying the Scriptures

Each Ramadan, I like to read through the entire Qur'an. I can't read Arabic, but I do use an English translation. This year a Muslim doctor friend gifted me with 'The Bridges' Translation of the Ten Qira'at of the Noble Qur'an' - by Fadel Soliman, which has copious notes on the many variant readings and text from other different Arabic Qur'ans. The comments and footnotes on different Arabic words were very beneficial. Although we don't all have to be experts and masters of the original language, the scriptures were written to achieve closeness with our Creator; there is a truth that reading merely a translation is like kissing your bride through a veil! There is a dimension that is missed! I like that Ramadan has an 'atmosphere' of reading the Qur'an that seems widespread. I want to share in this, and there is always much to learn.

I also played an audio version of an Arabic Qur'an in the background this Ramadan just to 'set the scene'.

Spiritual Reading

Other goals I set for myself were to read some books which would feed my soul and widen my perspective on Islamic beliefs and culture. This year I chose to read 'Secrets of Divine Love - A Spiritual Journey into the Heart of Islam' by A. Helwa - a great book looking at Qur'anic verses, Hadith, and sayings and poetry of Muslim mystics. On page 69, the author suggests: "We have each been created with different thumbprints by God, as a reminder that every one of our imprints on this world is unique." How true this is!

In addition, over the wonderful Ramadan period, I also chose to re-read an excellent book called 'Dialogue of Life - A Christian among Allah's Poor' - by Bob McCahill. Such a wonderful diary of a Catholic Priest who has given his life to love and serve the people of Bangladesh. His great love and respect for the humble and beautiful Bengali people shine through on every page. His insights on language, culture and religious beliefs among the

people he serves are second to none. Every page, every line - is full of quotable quotes!

"If we really understand love, love as taught to us by God in Jesus, will we not lay down our lives for others?"

"All good things are possible for faithful Muslims, Hindus, Christians, and others who love the Almighty."

In commenting on how the poor and the sick respected him as a believer in their midst, he suggests: "If you want [people] to feel the aroma of Christianity, you must copy the rose. The rose irresistibly draws people to itself, and the scent remains with them."

Oh, that we may all bear the scent of a rose and that our fragrance would touch those around us!

Generosity and Kindness

Ramadan (and everyday life) provides opportunities to be kind and generous. This Ramadan, I 'upped' the stakes and prayed for more and more opportunities to show kindness, to do good - and be good. Not just with money, but with time and listening to people. Sometimes the greatest gift we can give is ourselves.

For many, Ramadan can literally be watching the clock tick by, waiting for the next meal and glass of water. But there is so much more if we put our minds to it. Ramadan 2022 was so meaningful for me. I think this is because I "did Ramadan on purpose" - setting goals for spiritual growth and seeking to achieve goals over the special thirty days. It is said that if you never set goals - you will achieve that failure every time! How different Ramadan can become when we enter it with purpose and direction.

Did I achieve all I set out to do? Did I reach the heights I wanted to reach? Absolutely not! But I became a better person for trying.

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Italian article

ISLAM, ortoprassi... ("Imam di strada")



By **Lucaa del Negro**

(Twitter: @MshAllh_theBook)

<https://autorenegro.org/5056-2/>

(Editors' Note: We are printing this article in English and Italian at the author's request.)

The topic in the title cannot be reduced to a few lines. In my opinion, such a theme should return to the forefront after numerous articles concerning, for example, "hijab", "Islamic marriage (Nikah-ul -Muta'a)", and "Islam of peace". It is a challenge that I probably already lost at the start.

The only "dogma" - may God forgive me and accept my simplification! - in Islam is the Shahada. Islam is the Religion of the correct "middle ground". The believer should be immune from exceeding the limits, especially those imposed by the Law (of Man). Fidelity to Allah's Message has emerged above all other human social groups. (For salvation, it is essential to act and, in addition to believing, practice the acts of worship and perform good works). Does the Ummah, increasingly on the move and almost attracted to the Western shores, too often indulge the enlightened thought of statesmen and politicians with a secularist background? (Free State in free Church...)

The only question I ask with respect for the answers that I will not want and will be able to read regarding the compromise about the "loan to be paid" (*ribā*). And another example is of those we use to justify the absence of the Muslim in a terrorist attack with "Islam of peace", resignation, and endurance to the bitter end according to a Catholic evangelical line.

Italian

Ridurre a poche righe un argomento del genere, quello che Vi ho anticipato nel titolo,

tema che dovrebbe come deve ritornare - secondo me- in prima linea dopo innumerevoli proposte di lettura che riguardano ad esempio "hijab", "matrimonio islamico (Nikah-ul-Muta'a)", "Islam di pace" e così via, è una sfida, una che probabilmente io ho già perso in partenza.

L'unico "dogma" -che Dio mi perdoni e accolga il mio semplicismo!- nell'Islam è la SHAHADA. L'Islam è la Religione del giusto mezzo. Il credente si dovrebbe mantenere immune da tutto ciò che travalica i limiti, soprattutto quelli imposti dalla Legge (dell'Uomo). La fedeltà al Messaggio di Allah, è emersa ortopraticamente al di sopra di tutti gli altri gruppi sociali umani. (Per salvarsi, è necessario agire, oltre a credere, praticare gli atti del culto e compiere opere buone).

La Ummah, sempre più in movimento e quasi attratta verso i lidi Occidentali, troppo spesso asseconda il pensiero illuminato degli statisti e dei politici di formazione secolarista? (Libero Stato in libera Chiesa...) Questa è l'unica domanda che rivolgo e lo faccio con rispetto delle risposte che non vorrò e potrò leggere, quelle che abbozzano al compromesso del "mutuo da pagare" (*ribā*) e per un altro esempio a quelle che utilizziamo per giustificare la non presenza mussulmana in un attacco terroristico l'Islam di pace, rassegnazione, sopportazione ad oltranza secondo una linea evangelica cattolica. ([Return to Contents](#))

ISLAM E LIBEDO ARBITRIO



By **Abdul Jalil Travagliani**

L'Islam, quale religione di legge rivelata, implica l'esistenza di un'intelligenza capace di cogliere il significato di tale legge e di una volontà suscettibile di sottomettersi o non sottomettersi. Nella sua realtà di messaggio rivolto all'uomo e a beneficio di quest'ultimo, l'Islam riconosce nell'essere umano una creatura in grado di comprendere il contenuto della verità rivelata e di accoglierla secondo il proprio volere. Da questo scaturisce il concetto basilare di responsabilità, fondata sulla libera e

volontaria accettazione della legge. L'uomo dunque, quale creazione divina, sarebbe da Dio stesso voluto e designato come suo vice-reggente e vicario (cfr. Corano 2,30) per adempiere la sua missione terrena di continuare l'opera creatrice di Dio nell'universo.

Nella teologia islamica la nozione dell'uomo come delegato di Dio diventa potenzialmente alternativa a quella di libertà. Concorrendo alla creatività divina secondo condizioni individuali, il musulmano, nel suo mettersi in rapporto con Dio, si riconoscerebbe fieramente quale Suo servo o 'abd, prendendo coscienza della trascendenza del suo Signore e della conseguente distanza esistente tra umanità e divinità; riconoscerebbe in Dio il proprio rabb, signore e maestro e nell'esercizio della divina rubūbiyya (signoria) riscoprirebbe l'onnipotente sovranità del Creatore. Corollario della condizione dell'uomo quale servo di Dio sarebbe il non aspirare a una normale forma di libertà (ikhtiyār).

L'inferiorità del servo sarebbe comunque riscattata dall'investitura divina che lo rende Suo amministratore sulla terra. Tale "eredità", che per il credente è meccanismo insieme di riscatto e responsabilizzazione, viene affidata secondo l'Islam a ogni individuo all'interno del suo campo d'azione: «Iddio non imporrà a nessun'anima pesi più gravi di quel che possa portare. Quel che si sarà guadagnato sarà a suo vantaggio e quel che si sarà guadagnato sarà a suo svantaggio» (Cor. 2,286). Lo scontro, apparentemente irrisolvibile, tra i concetti di libera volontà, intesa come umano libero arbitrio, e di determinismo, ossia divina predeterminazione, è da sempre oggetto di grande interesse, ma soprattutto di accesa controversia, delineandosi non esclusivamente come problema accademico o teologico-filosofico, ma anche politico, in virtù delle ripercussioni che tale dottrina possiede in ambito sociale. Secondo una serie di tradizioni, lo stesso Profeta avrebbe scoraggiato le speculazioni in materia.

Il primo secolo islamico

Il Corano sembra sostenere simultaneamente l'onnipotenza di Dio e il libero arbitrio

umano. Dio è «Creatore di tutte le cose» (6,101; 13,12; 25,2; 39,62). «Creatore del cielo e della terra e di tutto ciò che è in essi» (5,17-18; 15-57), Egli è anche il «Creatore degli uomini e di ciò che fanno» (37,69). Non meno fortemente il libro sacro dell'Islam insiste sulla responsabilità personale di ciascun essere umano verso le proprie azioni e dunque indirettamente sul libero arbitrio, in versetti quali 18,29, 73,19, 74,37, 76,29 e 8,53.

I due concetti, antitetici alla nozione di libera volontà, di qadā' e qadar, sommariamente tradotti con "decreto divino" e "destino", non sono in realtà propriamente islamici, ma poggiano sulle basi semitiche fornite dalle tradizioni religiose babilonese e israelitica, che consideravano il mondo come replica di quanto già registrato in libri o tabelle celesti. Predominante nell'Arabia preislamica era poi la concezione dell'aspetto distruttore e vendicativo del destino o dahr, inteso come fato cieco e ineluttabile.

Una vera e propria teoria predestinazionistica cominciò a manifestarsi con i primi interpreti del Corano, che adottarono un'ottica tendenzialmente fatalistica, divenuta popolare per effetto delle brutali sofferenze sopportate dai musulmani, in particolare gli abitanti dello Hijaz, intorno alla metà del primo secolo islamico. Una serie di sconvolgimenti sociali e politici - dalla brutale uccisione del terzo califfo ben guidato fino all'instaurazione del corrotto califfato omayyade - predisponne la psicologia della giovane comunità di fedeli a una forma di pubblica rassegnazione, una sorta di inevitabilità, preparando la mentalità a sviluppare, non si può dire quanto inconsciamente, una fatalistica nozione del qadar, tacitamente legata a un graduale processo di fraintendimento del termine.

Una prima forma di protesta speculativa contro questa visione predestinazionistica fu avanzata a Damasco, verso la fine del VII secolo, dai teologi qadariti, partigiani del potere dell'uomo sui propri atti e della loro determinazione in bene e in male. I qadariti promuovevano la nozione di tafwīd, ossia di delega all'uomo da parte di Dio del potere di

agire, avvicinandosi così al concetto cristiano di autoexousios. Le loro posizioni venivano evidenziate nella lettera probabilmente composta da una tra le più rinomate autorità religiose del primo secolo dell'Islam, al-Hasan al-Basrī (m. 728), in risposta a una missiva del califfo omayyade 'Abd al-Malik, preoccupato dall'interesse che l'influente teologo aveva manifestato per il tema della predestinazione. In questa missiva che, indipendentemente dalla sua attribuzione, resta tra i primi documenti ad affrontare in modo sistematico la questione della responsabilità umana in relazione alle nozioni coraniche di pre-conoscenza e determinazione divina, si sottolineava come Dio non potesse ordinare atti contrari al suo Decreto, il cui vero significato risiedeva nel Comandamento. Di conseguenza, la trasgressione alla legge divina e le ingiustizie non erano da considerarsi tra gli atti predeterminati dal Signore. In termini simili, la mancanza di fede, pur pre-conosciuta da Dio, era considerata come derivante dalla libera scelta degli uomini e dal perseguimento dei loro interessi personali.

In totale contrapposizione alla teoria del libero arbitrio si schierarono i sostenitori del puro determinismo, i jabariti (da jabr, "costrizione"), secondo cui l'onnipotenza divina privava l'essere umano di qualsiasi potere di agire. Elemento portante della dottrina jabarita, inaugurata da Jahm Ibn Safwān (m. 746), era infatti l'assoluta supremazia e unicità divina, per cui risultava impossibile attribuire ad altri esseri al di fuori di Dio qualificazioni quali agente, creatore o esistenziatore.

Mu'taziliti e ash'ariti

A partire dal IX secolo la discussione sulla libera volontà lasciava spazio nel pensiero musulmano alla sottile riflessione circa l'estensione del potere umano d'azione (isti-tā'a); il dibattito sulla predestinazione e il libero arbitrio si mutava così in disputa tra le rispettive sfere d'azione di Dio e dell'uomo nell'originare e determinare il corso degli eventi.

Nel sunnismo, tra le scuole di teologia speculativa (kalām), i mu'taziliti e gli ash'ariti

in particolare sentirono l'esigenza di riconciliare l'idea di un Dio onnipotente creatore di ogni cosa, inclusi gli atti umani, con il concetto di un Dio giusto, che non può rendere uomini colpevoli di atti iniqui – mai scelti o voluti – punendo poi gli individui per azioni imposte loro necessariamente. La visione della scuola mu'tazilita, tesa a salvaguardare la natura etica di Dio, riconosceva nella giustizia ('adl) la vera essenza divina e spiegava che Dio può fare e volere solo ciò che è salutare per l'uomo, ordinando ciò che è buono e proibendo ciò che è condannabile. I mu'taziliti focalizzavano la loro attenzione sulla nozione della qudra o potere di causalità efficiente e riconoscevano l'uomo non solo come essere conoscente, intendente e volente, ma anche come agente e pertanto vero e proprio "creatore" (khāliq) delle sue azioni. In particolare, al-Jubbā'ī (m. 915-6), tra i maggiori esponenti della scuola mu'tazilita, considerava la causalità umana come effettivamente creatrice perché attiva indipendentemente da Dio, identificando nell'uomo la causa ontologica dell'azione, l'agente che la pone in atto. L'agire umano veniva pertanto a coincidere con il senso di "porre in essere", cioè di "produrre" in senso limitativo: nella specifica funzione di ideatore-innovatore (muhdith) dell'atto, l'uomo diveniva "avventore", capace di portare all'esistenza dalla non-esistenza: un produttore ex nihilo.

Maestro della scuola mu'tazilita di Basra, Abū al-Hudhayl al-Allāf (m. 840-1) concepiva invece l'istitā'a come potere di volontà piuttosto che come capacità di realizzazione. Secondo la sua teoria dei momenti, l'essere umano agisce in un primo momento (il momento dello "star agendo" – yaf'alu), mentre l'atto accade in un secondo momento (il momento dell'atto avvenuto – fa'ala). Tale visione implicava la considerazione della volontà umana come assolutamente necessaria e della capacità di agire come necessaria prima dell'atto, ma non più nell'istante dell'avvenuta realizzazione. Nel dominio interiore della volontà, dunque, l'essere umano poteva esercitare una definita libertà di iniziativa e, attraverso la sua scelta, compiere alcune azioni nel mondo esteriore della natura causando effetti. Secondo tale dottrina, l'uomo esercitava una

libera scelta che consentiva di optare tra atti giusti o ingiusti, discernendo il principio di giustizia racchiuso nella Rivelazione indipendentemente da quest'ultima e con il solo supporto della ragione.

L'abilità umana di giudicare gli atti, la comprensione dei principi morali universali e il potere di capacità efficiente finirono per costituire per i mu'taziliti le caratteristiche essenziali dell'agente autonomo. Sebbene l'istitā'a si configurasse come accidente permanente dell'uomo, secondo Abū al-Hudhayl la sua reale potenzialità di realizzazione era data solo nei termini di una specifica situazione, che in se stessa non poteva essere scelta. La capacità dell'essere umano di trascendere l'attualità delle cose e delle situazioni non era perciò in nessun modo quella di una spontaneità creativa, ma solo quella di una scelta tra due alternative all'interno di un contesto definito.

Per gli ash'ariti in generale, e in particolare per il capostipite della loro scuola, Abū al-Hasan al-Ash'arī (m. 935), l'intera questione del libero arbitrio era invece racchiusa nella nozione di onnipotenza divina, che riconosceva in Dio l'unico vero autore di ogni azione, buona o malvagia che fosse. Dio, inteso come Creatore del potere di causazione umano, era pertanto creatore dell'atto o dell'evento che tramite questo potere si realizzava. L'uomo si limitava a impossessarsi, tramite acquisizione (kasb), degli atti creati da Dio. L'atto acquisito si rivelava tale per l'esistenza nell'essere umano di sentimento opposto a quella impotenza caratteristica degli atti forzati, ciò che rimandava indirettamente alla distinzione tra atti volontari e atti obbligatori.

Nello specifico, al-Ash'arī concepiva la capacità (qudra) come effettivo potere di causazione da parte dell'uomo al momento della realizzazione dell'evento: «attributo che specificamente determina la realizzazione di uno dei due poli della potenza». Dio creerebbe nell'agente umano tale potere di causalità solo simultaneamente alla realizzazione dell'atto. Esso tuttavia, come accidente, apparteneva all'essere dotato di potenza (qādir), cioè all'uomo, che ne diventava pertanto il suo muk-

tasib, ossia colui che realmente lo realizzava.

La qudra, creata da Dio con l'atto e per l'atto, si delineava come realtà costitutiva del qādir che, comunque, era da concepirsi come tale solo in quanto locus (mahall) in cui il potere divinamente creato si attuava. Da questo concetto sarebbe poi derivata anche la negazione della capacità del potere su due volizioni. Contrariamente a quanto sostenuto dalla maggioranza dei mu'taziliti, per i quali la qudra, essendo anteriore all'atto, consentiva all'uomo, tramite libera scelta, la realizzazione o non realizzazione dell'atto stesso, al-Ash'arī insistette infatti nel ritenere che la qudra cominciasse a esistere contemporaneamente all'atto e che fosse causa di un unico evento e non del suo opposto.

Sostenitore di un nuovo metodo d'indagine filosofica, l'ash'arita al-Bāqillānī (m. 1013) si allontanò dalla dottrina avanzata da al-Ash'arī e propose una versione originale del ruolo dell'essere creato nell'agire. Partendo dal presupposto che la potenza umana non fosse ontologicamente designata a porre in esistenza l'atto e vedendo in Dio l'unico creatore, al-Bāqillānī riconosceva però alla potenza generata una efficacia su diversi modi o qualificazioni dell'azione. Secondo tale prospettiva, lo stato specifico, ossia una delle specifiche modalità dell'atto, sarebbe stato il prodotto o l'effetto dell'applicazione (ta'alluq) della potenza generata all'atto medesimo; tale applicazione altro non era se non una "relazione specifica" che veniva etichettata come "acquisizione". Nel tentativo d'illustrare il significato del verbo acquisire, tipico della teologia ash'arita, al-Bāqillānī, specificando la differenza tra atto forzato e atto acquisito, dichiarava: «Acquisire significa che [l'uomo] compie liberamente i propri atti in virtù di un potere [generato] congiunto a tale atto e che gli fa "acquisire" una qualificazione differente dall'atto forzato... Tale qualificazione dell'atto è appunto l'acquisizione». Era in relazione a questo stato specifico che l'atto comportava ricompensa o castigo. In particolare, sebbene non accreditasse all'uomo il potere di rendere l'atto buono o malvagio, al-Bāqillānī riconosceva all'essere umano la capacità di far sì che la

“forma” dei propri atti coincidesse con quanto voluto o rigettato da Dio, conferendo, in tal modo, connotati morali alle azioni.

«Né assoluta costrizione, né assoluta delegazione»

Nello sciismo duodecimano il dibattito teologico tra libero arbitrio e divina predestinazione, affrontato soprattutto nel IX e X secolo, approdò a una posizione intermedia, come testimoniato dal detto attribuito al sesto imam Ja'far al-Sādiq (m. 765): «Né assoluta costrizione, né assoluta delegazione, ma qualcosa d'intermedio (lā jabr wa-lā tafwīd wa lākin amr bayn amrayn)». Così per Hishām Ibn Hakam, compagno dell'imam, le azioni umane, create da Dio, potevano classificarsi simultaneamente come azioni libere in quanto scelte e azioni obbligate in quanto procedenti da una causa prodotta da Dio.

Tale dottrina, adottata dalla scuola teologica di Qom e dal tradizionalista imamita al-Kulaynī (m. 941), fu brevemente sostenuta anche dallo shaykh al-Sadūq Ibn Bābawayh (m. 991) il quale, come Hishām, ribadiva che Dio, pur essendo creatore degli atti, non andava considerato responsabile della loro attuazione, essendone soltanto il predeterminatore, cioè colui che ne aveva conoscenza fin dall'eternità. In contrasto, lo shaykh al-Mufīd (m. 1022), appartenente alla scuola imamita di Baghdad, sosteneva che Dio non fosse da ritenersi né creatore degli atti né volitore delle azioni umane malvagie, in tal modo rifacendosi alla corrente mu'tazilita. A suo avviso l'espressione del sesto imam lā tafwīd, che negava l'assoluta delegazione, indicava semplicemente come Dio avesse imposto all'umanità una legge divina. Questa interpretazione è ancora oggi ufficialmente caratteristica dello sciismo duodecimano.

Nel pensiero ismailita, speculazioni teologiche e filosofiche sul tema della predestinazione e del libero arbitrio trovarono espressione nelle opere di grandi pensatori quali, tra gli altri, Abū Hātim al-Rāzī (m. 934), Muhammad Ibn Ahmad al-Nasafī (m. 942), Abū Ya'qūb Ishāq Ibn Ahmad al-Sijistānī (m. circa 971), il

giurista fatimide al-Qādī al-Nu'mān (m. 974) e il “missionario” (dā'ī) Hamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (m. circa 1021-22), i quali concorsero a definire i termini coranici qadā' e qadar, stabilendo precise corrispondenze con le gerarchie ismailite religiose e celesti.

Gli autori ismailiti del periodo fatimide, espandendo la dottrina imamita del lā jabr wa lā tafwīd, sostennero che l'uomo, pur capace di scegliere tra bene e male, non fosse in grado di cogliere a pieno le verità del messaggio coranico nella loro essenza essoterica ed esoterica né di distinguere correttamente tra i precetti e i divieti contenuti nella legge religiosa o shar'ā. L'umana conoscenza, desiderosa di salvezza e ricompensa nell'aldilà, necessitava pertanto di un perfezionamento. Questo veniva offerto dalla guida di una gerarchia di maestri divinamente designati tra cui i profeti, i loro legatari, i legittimi imam e l'intera catena di dignitari e funzionari religiosi ismailiti, autorevoli interpreti, attraverso il ta'wīl o esegesi esoterica, dell'autentico significato spirituale della rivelazione islamica. In tal modo il dibattito sulla libertà umana veniva da ultimo ricollegato all'individuazione dei criteri etici dell'agire e alla questione dell'autorità religiosa. [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

[French Article](#)

LA PATIENCE (*Sabr* صبر)

By Abou Tiéné - Cote d'Ivoire



... Et soyez endurants, car Allah est avec les endurants. (Qur'an, 8: 46)

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (ra) a dit: “Véritablement, le sabr est pour la foi ce que la tête est pour le corps. Le corps périt sans la tête, et de même lorsque le sabr s'en va, la foi disparaît aussi.” [Al-Kulayni, al-Kafi, vol. 2, bab al-sabr, p. 128, hadith # 2] Les Mérites de l'âme.....

Patience (*sabr*)

Lorsqu'on demanda à l'Imam Ali (ra) à propos de la foi (*imane*), il répondit: « La struc-

ture de la foi est soutenue par quatre piliers: La Patience (*sabr*), la Conviction (*yaqin*), la Justice (*'adl*) et la lutte (*jihad*). Donc quiconque a la ferveur d'atteindre le Paradis négligera les mauvaises tentations ; quiconque a la peur du feu de l'enfer s'abstiendra des péchés ; quiconque pratique la piété supportera facilement les difficultés et les épreuves de la vie sur terre ; et quiconque anticipe la mort se hâtera pour accomplir de bonnes actions.' » [Al-Amidi, *Ghurar ul Hikam wa Durar ul Kalim*, hadith # 2897]

La définition de Sabr

_ Le célèbre savant Nasir al-Din al-Tusi a dit: « *Sabr* veut dire se retenir de l'agitation lorsqu'on est confronté à des choses indésirables. »

_ Le grand gnostique (*'arif*) Khwajah `Abd Allah al-Ansari a dit: « *Sabr* signifie se retenir de se plaindre à propos d'angoisses cachées. ».

Les Genres et les Degrés de Sabr

Il y a plusieurs degrés et niveaux de *sabr* comme indiqué dans les nobles traditions; et les récompenses et les mérites varient selon le degré et le niveau.

_ Imam 'Ali (ra) a dit, "Le Messager d'Allah (s) a dit: "**Il y a trois genres de Sabr: *sabr* lors d'une affliction, *sabr* face à l'obéissance, et *sabr* face à la désobéissance (à Allah). Et le troisième genre est supérieur aux deux premiers."** [Al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 2, bab *al-sabr*, hadith # 15]

_ Imam 'Ali (ra) a dit: "**Il y a deux types de Sabr: *sabr* pour ce qui vous déplaît et *sabr* pour ce qui vous plaît."** [Mizan al-Hikmah, hadith # 10099]

Relation entre Sabr et Ma'rifah de Dieu

_ Tant qu'une personne ressent une angoisse intérieure face aux malheurs et détresses de la vie, son *ma'rifah* (gnose) de Dieu restera déficient. Lorsqu'une personne atteint le contentement (*rida*) et l'agrément face aux mal-

heurs et détresses, son âme atteint un stade plus élevé vers la proximité de Dieu. Le *Sabr* par rapport à l'abstinence de péchés et l'accomplissement des obligations (*ta'at*) est lié à la connaissance des secrets de *ibadat* (vénération) et des formes dans l'au-delà des actes de péchés et d'obéissance.

_ Lorsqu'une personne a la ferme croyance que ce qu'il obtiendra dans l'au-delà est une forme de ses propres actions pendant sa vie sur terre, il ne sentira aucune détresse face aux épreuves et aux situations hostiles. Au contraire, une telle personne est contente des difficultés rencontrées dans l'accomplissement des obligations divines. Sa joie devient plus grande que l'angoisse d'une personne normale face aux mêmes difficultés. Son attachement à Dieu augmente pendant les circonstances défavorables.

_ Imam Reza (ra) a dit: (parmi les exhortations du Prophète (s) à Abu Dharr (ra): « **...Si tu es capable d'agir pour le plaisir d'Allah (*rida*) avec une conviction ferme, alors fais-le. Et si cela n'est pas possible alors pratique le *sabr* face aux situations désagréables car cela t'apportera beaucoup de bénédictions.** » [Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 82, p. 136, hadith # 21]

Le Résultat de Sabr

_ Le *Sabr* produit beaucoup de bons résultats y compris la discipline et l'entraînement de l'âme. Si une personne supporte avec patience les malheurs et les calamités pendant quelques temps, endure sérieusement la détresse lors de vénération et rites, et endure l'amertume causée par la renonciation de plaisirs interdits, alors, si tout ceci est fait pour l'obéissance à son Maître et Pourvoyeur, il devient peu à peu facile pour lui de supporter les détresses et les difficultés.

L'âme d'une personne patiente surmonte son état préalablement incontrôlé et elle développe une faculté lumineuse durable qui l'élève au-dessus du niveau de *sabr* à des niveaux spirituels plus élevés. En pratiquant le *sabr* tout en appelant au bien et en interdisant

le mal (*amr bil ma'ruf wa nahi 'anil munkar*) une personne devient plus ferme.

_ La tourmente, l'angoisse et les gesticulations fâcheuses lors de perte financière, de mort, de désastres naturels etc., sont le signe de faiblesse de l'âme. Ils empêchent la stabilité et la dignité de la personnalité, ils atténuent la détermination, et affaiblissent l'intellect. Dans ces moments délicats, le *sabr* reste la clé des portes de félicité et de délivrance. Il renforce le pouvoir et la volonté pour surmonter les situations défavorables, prendre les décisions rationnelles et agir avec sagesse.

_ Le *Sabr* face aux péchés est la source de *taqwa* (la crainte de Dieu). *Sabr* face à l'obéissant (*ta'at*) est la source d'intimité avec Dieu et Son amour. Et le *sabr* face aux malheurs est la source de *rida* envers le destin et les décrets divins.

Les Niveaux plus élevés de *Sabr*

_ *Sabr fi Allah* (*sabr* en Dieu): Ceci signifie la fermeté dans la purification de soi en s'efforçant de se débarrasser des mauvaises habitudes (par exemple, le mensonge, la calomnie, l'avidité) et des traits laids (par exemple, l'égoïsme, l'hypocrisie, l'envie) ; et s'abstenir des objets d'amour et d'attraction (tels que s'abstenir de la musique haram, sacrifier son sommeil pour les prières nocturnes, manger modérément). C'est le déni de soi sur le chemin du Bienaimé (Dieu). Ce niveau appartient aux voyageurs (*ahl al-suluk*).

_ *Sabr ma'a Allah* (*sabr* avec Dieu): Un voyageur passionné dans le chemin de Dieu atteint, pendant ses *ibadats* et ses efforts sincères, un tel état d'altruisme qu'il éprouve de temps en temps l'intimité avec Dieu. La lumière de Ses attributs et Ses noms illuminent son cœur et sa vision. Il doit être patient et se protéger contre les légères traces d'amour de soi, de fierté etc. pendant ces phases pour pouvoir atteindre des niveaux plus élevés.

_ *Sabr 'an Allah* (*sabr* de Dieu): Ceci appartient au stade des amoureux de Dieu qui, après leur expérience de Son amour intense, doivent

retourner à leur monde physique et supporter la séparation avec Dieu. Ceci est le stade le plus difficile. Ce niveau sublime de *sabr* est exprimé par Imam 'Ali (ra) dans le fameux Du'a Kumayl "à **Supposer, ô Mon Dieu, Mon Maître, Mon Souverain et Mon Seigneur, que je puisse supporter le supplice que Tu m'infligerais, comment pourrais-je endurer ma séparation de Toi??!**"

_ *Sabr bi Allah* (*sabr* pour Dieu): Ceci est l'état de perfection éprouvé par la personne ayant atteint le stade d'exister seulement pour Dieu (*baqa' bi Allah*) et s'ayant modelé aux normes d'Allah (*takhalluq bi akhlaq Allah*). Ce niveau appartient à ceux qui sont bénis de stabilité et de constance, et il est atteint après le *Sabr* avec Dieu.

La récompense du *Sabr*

_ Imam al-Sadiq (ra) a dit: "Celui des croyants qui supporte avec patience une tribulation qui lui advient, obtient la récompense de mille martyrs." [Al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol.2, bab *al-sabr*, hadith # 17]

_ Imam al-Sadiq (ra) a dit: "Lorsque le croyant entre dans sa tombe, la *salat* est sur sa droite, la *zakat* sur sa gauche, la vertu en face de lui, et le *sabr* son abri. Lorsque les anges chargés des questionnements entrent vers lui, le *sabr* dit au *salat*, à la *zakat* et à la vertu, "prenez soin de votre compagnon, et si vous ne l'assistiez pas je prendrai soin de lui moi-même." [Ibid, hadith # 8]

Un conseil pour atteindre le *sabr*

Ce monde est la prison du croyant. Récoltez toute la force en votre pouvoir et soyez patient et tolérant durant ses hauts et ses bas. Avec courage et force, confrontez ses adversités et ses calamités. Essayez de vous convaincre que l'agitation et la douleur intérieures impliquent non seulement un grand déshonneur, mais sont parfaitement inutiles pour confronter les souffrances et les calamités. Soyez content de Dieu et ne vous plaignez pas devant Ses créatures concernant Ses décrets irrésistibles et ses prescriptions inévitables. Durant les

moments difficiles, tournez l'attention de votre cœur vers le point focal de la Perfection Absolue (Dieu) et vous éprouverez ses effets dans ce monde et votre cœur atteindra une telle ampleur qu'il deviendra le domaine de la manifestation de la souveraineté de Dieu. Votre cœur sera ainsi dominé par une telle richesse et un tel contentement que tout ce qui est relatif à ce monde deviendra insignifiant à vos yeux. *Sabr*, indulgence et retenue apportent des récompenses abondantes et justes et ils ont des formes sublimes et belles dans le monde de *Barzakh* (purgatoire). Si vous avez la foi en Dieu et vous croyez que toutes les affaires sont dans Ses mains puissantes, alors vous ne vous plaindrez pas au Dieu Tout-puissant pour les épreuves de la vie et les adversités qui vous frappent. Au contraire, vous les accepterez volontiers, vous remplierez vos obligations et vous Le remercerez avec gratitude pour Ses bontés. [Adapté de Al-Khumayni, *Forty Hadith*, chapitre 16, 'Sabr']

Conclusion:

_ Imam 'Ali (ra) a dit: "Celui qui pratique le *sabr* ne sera jamais privé de succès, même si cela prend longtemps." [*Nahjul Balagha*, locution # 153]

Qu'Allah le Tout-Puissant nous arme de patience face aux épreuves de la vie. [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

[Spanish Article](#)

Ahmadi por convicción y amor

(Mi conversión, testimonio personal)

By Hno Ocbany León López
(Alí)



Cuando me convertí al islam en el año 2015 las palabras Ahmadiyya o ahmadi no tenían prácticamente ningún significado o connotación especial para los musulmanes cubanos, la Ahmadiyya no tenía una representación oficial en la isla de Cuba ni existía una comunidad activa. Todo

esto cambia cuando en el invierno del año 2019 regreso a Cuba luego de mis estudios islámicos en Irán, la estadía en la nación persa me mantuvo dos largos años alejado de mi tierra y pueblo pero el retorno a Cuba me deparaba muchas sorpresas y bendiciones. Como he narrado en artículos anteriores a mi regreso de Irán cargaba con muchas decepciones tanto en el ámbito personal como espiritual. No pasaba una noche sin pedir a Allah Ta'ala su Hidayah, su Guía, que me guiara por el siratal mustaquim que mencionaba el sagrado Corán en el capítulo Al Fatiha. Así transcurrieron mis primeros días en la tierra que me vió nacer donde alternaba mis funciones de profesor de idioma persa con el estudio de la jurisprudencia islámica y el árabe.

Mi primer encuentro con misioneros ahmadies qadianis.(Aceptación del Mesías Prometido)

Como musulmán shiita acudía regularmente al centro islámico shíi de mi ciudad, esta era mi práctica semanal. Sin embargo los días viernes o Jummah dirigía mis pasos hacia la mezquita sunní para la oración del viernes pues en Cuba los musulmanes shiitas no tenían un sheij o autoridad religiosa capacitada para realizar dicha oración ni las jutbas correspondientes. Uno de esos viernes benditos había quedado con un amigo, quien era mi profesor de árabe en vernos en la mezquita King Abdullah a fin entregarle algunos regalos que había comprado para él en Irán. Camino a la mezquita mi amigo se comunica telefónicamente y me pide que lo encuentre en otro lugar, pues él no estaría presente en la mezquita para la oración comunitaria. Aquel cambio de planes no fue de mi agrado puesto que significaba no participar en el rezo del viernes no obstante mi amigo me aseguró que ciertamente participaríamos en una oración comunitaria pero con otros hermanos musulmanes que estaban de visita en Cuba. Finalmente accedí y llegué al sitio acordado.

Grande fue mi sorpresa cuando descubrí que aquellos hermanos extranjeros eran parte de una misión Ahmadiyya Qadiani que estaba en Cuba dando a conocer la Comunidad Islámi-

ca Ahmadiyya. Aquellas personas me recibieron con mucha calidez y se mostraron muy interesados en mi camino espiritual y en mi persona particularmente. Todo este interés se materializó en una invitación para futuras reuniones donde deseaban tratar según sus propias palabras un asunto de "gran interés", ese día regresé a casa con una expectativa y ánimo diferente en mi corazón, una esperanza cuyo origen desconocía pero que sin dudas era el resultado de aquél encuentro.

Conociendo al Mesías Prometido Hazrat Mirza Gullam Ahmad (La reunión)

Aquel día cambió mi vida, ese día y durante el transcurso de este encuentro con los misioneros qadianis muchas preguntas e insatisfacciones espirituales fueron respondidas. En aquella reunión conocí que en una remota región de la India británica un hombre piadoso y santo llamado Mirza Gullam Ahmad de Qadian había sido escogido por Dios para rescatar el islam del profeta Muhammad (que la paz y las bendiciones de Allah sean con él), sus prácticas y enseñanzas auténticas. Aquellos misioneros justificaban sus afirmaciones basados en el santo Corán y los hadices auténticos o Sahih. Sin embargo fue la lógica y la justicia de los reclamos de Hazrat Mirza Gullam Ahmad Sahib los que derribaron los restos moribundos de mis antiguas creencias y lo que yo creía correcto y ortodoxo en el islam.

Hazrat Mirza Sahib pregonaba que las enseñanzas originales del profeta Muhammad (que la paz y las bendiciones de Allah sean con él) habían sido adulteradas y esto había traído las divisiones, contradicciones, luchas internas, fanatismos, extremismos y otros males ajenos al islam los cuales Hazrat Mirza Gullam Ahmad se esforzó por erradicar.

La Comunidad Islámica Ahmadiyya proclamaba ser la heredera y guardiana de aquel mensaje del Mesías Prometido y como es de suponer me uní sin dilación a esta jama'at (comunidad) mediante la firma de un ba'iat o juramento a su líder Mirza Masroor Ahmad quien radica en Londres y desde allí regula todos los asuntos de sus fieles súbditos.

En un principio todo me pareció maravilloso, visité Londres, la Comunidad Islámica Ahmadiyya me invitó a participar en la Jalsa Salana o reunión anual de la comunidad en Inglaterra la es el evento más importante y aglutinador en la Ahmadiyya, me reuní con el propio Califa quien me nombró oficialmente su representante en Cuba y reafirmé mi juramento de fidelidad directamente de su mano. Al regresar a mi país me mantuve activo e inmerso en la difusión del islam, inicié a muchos hermanos los cuales firmaron sus ba'iats, familias enteras entraron a la comunidad de mi mano, gracias a mí gestión tuvimos un lugar de reunión que funcionaba como centro islámico, organicé un programa de clases y actividades, todo iba muy bien y lo más importante me sentía en paz conmigo mismo. En fin..... estaba viviendo mi propia época dorada del islam en pleno siglo XXI.

Primeros síntomas de la enfermedad (racismo y autoritarismo dentro del califato)

Mis primeros meses en la Comunidad Ahmadiyya Qadiani transcurrieron en aparente tranquilidad. El imám de Cuba radicaba en Guatemala y esto me daba cierta libertad para tomar decisiones aunque siempre debía consultar antes. Con el paso del tiempo y desde mi posición de representante del Califa fui observando el funcionamiento de esta institución y muy pronto para mí propio pesar descubrí algunas fisuras que eran síntomas externos de males más profundos. Debido a mí contacto con hermanos ahmadies de diferentes países pude constatar que todos habían experimentado situaciones similares, nuestras conclusiones sobre la jama'at coincidían de manera alarmante:

He aquí algunas de ellas:

- Los propios representantes del Califato se comportaban de forma autoritaria y muchas veces ni siquiera obedecían las órdenes del mismo califa.

- Tenían sus propios misioneros de Pakistán quienes habían creado poco a poco una casta religiosa cuya voluntad siempre se im-

ponía cual dictadura sobre los deseos de aquellos ahmadies que no eran pakistanies.

- Ignoraban la cultura y costumbres de los países donde radicaban. Muchas veces no hablaban ni el español y esto traía lamentables inconvenientes y sinsabores para los fieles ahmadies originarios de esos países causando decepciones y grandes deserciones.

- Cuando las comunidades ahmadies elegían a un nativo(alguien de su propio país) como su líder estos misioneros usaban su influencia sobre el califa para que este anulara los resultados de esas elecciones. Finalmente siempre escogían a un misionero pakistaní haciendo caso omiso de la voluntad de los fieles nativos de esos países. En conclusión había una falta total de confianza en aquellos miembros que no eran pakistanies y nunca se ponían en sus manos proyectos importantes.

- El Califato y su califa como no habían sido instituidos por Allah adolecían de los mismos males y defectos de los califatos posteriores a los Khulafa Rashidun o Califas Guiados, Rectos.

En resumen se pueden mencionar otros problemas pero algunos son tan sensibles que es mejor no traerlos a colación en este artículo pero sí buscan en las noticias y redes sociales verán abusos y situaciones bien graves en las que están involucrados el califa y sus acólitos.

Lo anterior descrito y mi oposición a estas posturas no islámicas me trajeron muchos conflictos y disgustos con el misionero al frente de mi país. Escribí decenas de cartas de quejas al califa pero siempre obtuve el silencio como respuesta, mis cartas llegaban a su oficina pero él las enviaba al imám encargado de Cuba. Por otra parte el amor al mesías prometido me ataba a la comunidad Qadiani y poco a poco aparté de mi mente cualquier idea de renunciar a mi cargo de presidente.

La verdadera institución que fundó el mesías prometido (Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore o Movimiento Ahmadiyya para la difusión del Islam Lahore)

En ese tiempo de tribulación cuestioné todas mis creencias incluso puse en duda la veracidad del mesías Hazrat Mirza Gullam Ah-

mad pero la lógica de sus proclamas y enseñanzas eran irrefutables, hacían bien al islam y eran necesarias para la supervivencia de esta religión universal. En esos momentos de conflictos internos tuve un sueño donde una sura del Corán al Karim que ya había leído antes apareció ante mí:

Allah Todopoderoso dice en el Corán: "Y cuando mis siervos te preguntan (Oh Muhammad) concierne a Mí, entonces (contéstales), estoy cerca . Respondo a las invocaciones del suplicante cuando él me pide (sin mediador o intercesor). Así que obedecedme y creed en Mí, para que puedan ser bien guiados" [Corán 2:186].

La veracidad de este versículo coránico la experimenté en mi propia vida, ciertamente Allah es Al Muyib (él que responde las súplicas) Y mis súplicas fueron respondidas!

Allah azzawajal una vez más guió mis pasos hacía el camino recto y puso a la persona adecuada en mi vida. Se trataba de una gran personalidad, Lord Shahid Aziz Sahib, un académico ahmadi muy piadoso y dedicado en cuerpo y alma a la difusión del islam y las verdaderas enseñanzas de Hazrat Mirza Gullam Ahmad. Lord Shahid Aziz cual padre paciente me mostró una comunidad Ahmadiyya que no conocía y de la cual nunca me habían hablado, se trataba del Movimiento Ahmadiyya Lahore para la Difusión del Islam. El propio mesías prometido antes de morir había establecido este Anjuman o Consejo de sabios para que la comunidad de fieles ahmadies tuviese un gobierno más islámico, democrático y justo. Este sabio imám también me enseñó que Hazrat Mirza Sahib no era profeta sino Muyaddid (reformador) algo que estaba muy acorde con las palabras del profeta Muhammad quien dijo:

لا نبي بعدي "No hay profeta después de mí"

Pero mayor sorpresa surgió en mí ser cuando Lord Shahid Aziz Sahib me mostró con los propios libros del segundo califa de la Comunidad Islámica Ahmadiyya un problema mucho mayor. Se trataba de la declaración de takfir(incredulidad, la acción de excluir a un

musulmán fuera de los ámbitos del islam) sobre aquellos musulmanes que no aceptaron a Hazrat Mirza Gullam Ahmad y al califato. Me explicaba con claridad el sabio imám Shahid Aziz Sahib que en el pasado esta había sido la causa principal cisma en la comunidad Ahmadiyya de Mirza Sahib. Aquella grave afirmación del segundo califa Bashiruddin sacaba del islam a millones de musulmanes y por supuesto era injusta y no acorde con la visión de su padre el Mesías Prometido Hazrat Mirza Gullam Ahmad... ese fue mi punto de inflexión y no retorno. Teniendo ese conocimiento y sabiendo que existía una institución fundada por el propio Mesías Prometido mi permanencia en la Ahmadiyya Qadiani había llegado a su final. Fue un paso duro y trajo consecuencias inevitablemente pero mi espíritu estaba firme pues tenía la razón de mi lado.

Tan pronto declaré al imám que regía los asuntos de Cuba de mi separación de la comunidad Ahmadiyya Qadiani y mi intención de unirme al Movimiento Ahmadiyya Lahore para la Difusión del Islam sufrí una marginación sin precedentes. Muchas amistades y supuestos hermanos rápidamente olvidaron la amistad y los lazos fraternales de antaño. Fuí señalado y conminado a arrepentirme y retornar a la obediencia del califato, de lo contrario enfrentaría según ellos el castigo divino.

Mi respuesta ante tal intolerancia y muestras de odio fue la paciencia. Dice el Sagrado Corán:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوِيكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ "Los creyentes no son más que hermanos, así que haz la reconciliación entre tus hermanos y teme a Alá para que puedas recibir misericordia". Surat al-Hujurat 49:10

Para nuestra Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore esta afirmación no es una frase muerta o carente de significado. Los musulmanes son nuestros hermanos, sean qadianis, sunnis o shiís tenemos el deber de amarlos y mostrarles el camino a seguir sin importar su postura de odio o intolerancia hacia nosotros. El propio profeta de Dios enfrentó una oposición semejante durante su misión divina

sin embargo nunca cesó en su difusión del islam. Nuestra comunidad dirigida por nuestro piadoso Amir Hazrat Dr Abdul Karim Saeed Pasha Sahib y el consejo de sabios está comprometida con la propagación del islam y en mostrar sus bellos preceptos a la humanidad. Soy ahmadi pues acepté el papel reformador de Hazrat Mirza Gullam Ahmad y ningún imám, mullah, sheij o califa puede separarme de sus enseñanzas, nadie tiene el poder de excluirme del islam y mucho menos de la comunidad Ahmadiyya fundada por el humilde siervo de Allah Al Masij -e Mau'd(Mesías Prometido)

Nuestro lema: ' In-Allah-ha-Ma'anaa '

("No te entristezcas, porque ciertamente Alá está con nosotros". - El Sagrado Corán 9:40)

Encontramos fuerza espiritual, coraje y consuelo, en tiempos de pruebas y dificultades, de esta revelación divina del Corán la cual descendió sobre el corazón puro del Santo Profeta Muhammad (que la paz y las bendiciones de Allah sean con él), para consolar al profeta durante uno de los momentos más peligrosos de su vida. [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

[Dutch Articles](#)

Religie en verering van levenloze dingen (Fetisjisme)

Uit het boek Tafelgesprekken (Engels: Table Talks) van Khwaja

Kamal-ud-Din



Door: **Imtiaz Hoeseni**

Wanneer wij iets aanbidden, of dit nu in onze verbeelding of in de werkelijkheid is, in de overtuiging dat dit ons in dit leven en het hiernamaals het grootst mogelijke goed zal brengen, zonder enige inspanning onzerzijds, doen wij precies hetzelfde als de fetisj-aanbidders van Centraal Afrika, en het is dan ook ongepast dat we hen uitlachten wanneer zij een eierschaal of een tinnen blik als voorwerp van hun aanbidding kiezen. Iedere tijd en ieder land heeft zijn eigen manier van verering

van levenloze zaken gekend.

De mensen hebben met dezelfde overtuiging de (combinaties van) elementen aanbeden. Sterren, rivieren, bomen, stenen en dieren hebben van de mens de eer ontvangen die slechts verschuldigd is aan de Almachtige. Als sommige mensen in India [binnen alle religies] een bepaald ding met hetzelfde gevoel van eerbied benaderen als waarmee anderen een eierschaal hebben benaderd, dan is het onmogelijk op verstandelijke gronden enig verschil tussen beide filosofieën te zien. Fetisjisme verschijnt in verschillende vormen en gedaanten, in verschillende tijden en klimaten. Wanneer wij de religieuze ceremonieën, die bekend staan als goddelijke aanbidding, verichten in de overtuiging dat dit op zichzelf voldoende is voor onze verheffing, is dit slechts fetisjisme in zijn ultieme vorm.

De Koran leert ons het volgende: *Het is geen rechtschapenheid dat jullie je gezichten naar het oosten en westen wenden, maar rechtschapen is degene die gelooft in Allah en de Laatste Dag, en in de engelen en het Boek en de profeten, en (die), uit liefde voor Hem, rijkdom weggeeft aan de naaste familie en de wezen en de behoeftigen en de reiziger en aan degenen die erom vragen en om slaven te bevrijden, en (die) het gebed onderhoudt en de armen belasting betaalt; en de uitvoerders van hun belofte wanneer zij een belofte doen, en de geduldigen vol smart en droefenis en in tijden van conflict. Dit zijn degenen die waarheidlievend zijn; en dit zijn degenen die aan hun plicht voldoen (2:177)*

Zolang de mens het klaarspeelt zijn godsdienst en zijn verstand in twee verschillende waterdichte compartimenten van zijn geest te bewaren, zal fetisjisme zich blijven manifesteren. Toets de tot dogma verheven doctrines aan dat door God gegeven geschenk – want alleen daardoor wordt de mens boven het dier gesteld – en daar wordt verstand mee bedoeld, en al uw goden en godheden zullen tot stof vergaan, en zullen niets anders dan voorwerpen blijken te zijn, ontdaan van alle

Field Marshal Ayub Khan, President of Pakistan at the Woking Mosque with the Ahmadi imam Ghulam Rabbani.



elegante kledingstukken die hen door onwetendheid en lichtgelovigheid geschonken werden.

Zaken die van God afkomstig zijn vullen elkaar aan. Ze verschillen wellicht in sommige van de eigenschappen die zij bezitten, maar zij werken harmonieus samen. Als godsdienst een geschenk van God is, evenals ons verstand, dan is iedere godsdienst die dat niet in overeenstemming gebracht kan worden met verstand, geen religie van boven, maar slechts fetisjisme.

God heeft geen behoefte aan aanbidding door ons. Als onze aanbidding Hem zou behagen, dan zou dat betekenen dat Hij een God zou zijn met dezelfde emoties als wij; hieruit ontstaan dan weer een antropomorfe opvattingen, en het belooft niet veel goeds, wanneer wij onze moraliteit hiernaar vormen.

Als de mens, zoals wordt gezegd, het beste is dat God heeft voortgebracht, dan moet hij wel haast geschapen zijn om een groots doel tot stand te brengen. Bij eten, drinken en de voortplanting van zijn soort kan niet gesteld worden dat er sprake is van een groots doel. Alle lagere leden van het dierenrijk staan in dit opzicht op hetzelfde niveau met de heer en meester van het universum. Maar de mens bezit nog iets meer – het geweten, het ethische en morele besef, spiritualiteit en het opstijgen van de ziel naar het heilige gebied van de Allerehoogste. Als deze latente krachten in de mensen geen realiteit worden wanneer hij deze of gene geloofsovertuiging nastreeft, dan zijn

dergelijke overtuigingen slechts diverse vormen van fetisjisme en geen godsdienst.

De Islam heeft de godsdienst een nieuw doel gegeven

De Islam verschaft de mens regels welke, wanneer men ernaar handelt, zijn latente vermogens in feitelijke vermogens omzetten. De aanbidding in de Islam houdt volledige onderwerping in aan goddelijke wetten, en wat moslims in hun moskeeën doen is een aanwijzing voor wat er in hun geest omgaat. Dat zij buigen en zich ter aarde werpen, toont slechts hun bereidheid aan zich te verlagen en ter aarde te werken voor Zijn Wil, om dat grootste doel te bewerkstelligen waarvoor de mensheid geschapen werd, namelijk om zich voor te bereiden en te kwalificeren voor een verdere verheffing in de regionen aan de andere zijde van het graf.

Over Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din

Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din werd in 1870 in India geboren. Hij studeerde af als jurist en ging de advocatuur in. Toen hij als gevolg van de intensieve christelijke zendingsactiviteiten onder de moslims in zijn studententijd op het punt stond zich tot het Christendom te bekeren, stuitte hij bij toeval op het boek Barahin Ahmadiyya, dat ter verdediging van de Islam geschreven werd door *hazrat* Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, de hervormer van deze tijd en de Beloofde Messias. Dankzij dit boek

werden zijn ogen geopend voor de waarheid van de Islam en hij sloot zich aan bij de Ahmadiyya Beweging; hij werd een van de meest vooraanstaande leden van de Beweging en een naaste medewerker van de oprichter. Onder invloed van en geïnspireerd door *hazrat* Mirza, gaf hij later zijn juridische praktijk op om een moslimzendeling te worden.

In 1930 richtte Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din de bekende Woking Muslim Mission op vanuit de Woking Mosque in Engeland. In datzelfde jaar startte hij ook het bekende tijdschrift *The Islamic Review*.

Deze missie is enorm succesvol geweest in het corrigeren van het valse beeld dat er in de westerse landen over de Islam bestond. Ook zijn een groot aantal Britten en anderen tot de Islam bekeerd, waarvan Lord Headley de bekendste was.

Naast zijn werk in Engeland reisde hij in de jaren 20 van de 20^e eeuw ook door de landen van Europa, Afrika en Azië om de boodschap van de Islam uit te dragen. Zijn openbare lezingen genoten grote bekendheid. Verder schreef hij verscheidene boeken over de Islam, het Christendom en over vergelijkende godsdienst. [\(Return to Contents\)](#)

Prince Faisla, later to become King Faisla at the Shahjehan Mosque, Woking



Thanks

The Light thanks its contributors, proof readers and distributors; especially who share it with others.

Allah bless you all.

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore

Founders of the first Islamic Mission in the UK - established 1913 as the Woking Muslim Mission.

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