

Revival of the Faith

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(This has been translated from an article by the Maulana in the Movement's Urdu paper *Paigham Sulh*, written in 1968 on the 60th anniversary of the demise of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.)

The *Sūra Yā Sīn* (ch. 36 of the Holy Quran) is customarily read before a Muslim on his death-bed, in order to turn his mind away from this world and to the next. The idea is good, but not as beneficial as it is thought to be. If a man neglected the Quran all his life, what can he gain by listening to it when dying? We are reminded of a story that a *Nawab* (aristocratic ruler) in the Muslim state of Hyderabad Deccan, India, heard that there was an old woman who recited the Quran melodiously. So he engaged her to live in his mansion and recite the Quran day and night. One day, as the *Nawab* passed by her, hearing her recitation he asked her what she was reading. “*Sūra Yā Sīn*,” she replied. The *Nawab* was struck with terror: “You are reading *Yā Sīn*!” he exclaimed, “You accursed woman! you are going to cause someone to die”. With these words, he expelled her from his house!

The *Sūra Yā Sīn* does not deliver the message of death to the living; on the contrary, it gives life to the dead and revives decayed bones. At the close of this chapter, there occur the words:

“Says he (man): Who will give life to the bones, when they are rotten. Say: He will give life to them Who brought them into existence at first, and He is Knower of all creation, Who made for you fire from the green tree, so that from it you kindle.” (36:78–80)

Many scientific truths are conveyed in this verse. The basis of life on earth is the green matter contained in plants. Discoveries in biological science tell us that life on earth began with plants. At that time there was only water and salt available, which could support plant life of a primitive kind, like algae on the sea-bed. Gradually, plants evolved and became more advanced. This is what is meant by the words:

“And We made from water everything living.” (21:30)

Life did not reach the animal stage from algae in a single step, but passed through numerous stages in evolution. No one knows how many stages had to be passed through from the algae to flowering plants and magnificent trees. Just as from the dim light of the glow-worm to the brightly shining sun, there are innumerable grades of light and heat, similarly there are countless stages in the evolution of plant life. “He is Knower of all creation” means that He knows not only all kinds of creation, but is the creator and knower of all these stages as well.

Animal life from the “green matter”

Commentators of the Quran have taken the “fire from the green tree” to refer to certain trees whose branches produce sparks by friction when they rub against one another. But these words do not refer to any accidental production of fire or any particular type of tree. Scientists tell us that in almost every type of tree there is a green substance called *chlorophyll* which not only provides the basis of supporting the life of the tree but all animal life is dependent on its action as well. This green substance, within which exists the fuel of life of all animals, produces the “fire” of life (oxygen), upon which depends all plant and animal life.

However, chlorophyll by itself is not sufficient. In fact, it is in a sense a burden on the tree. So when the tree can no longer make use of it, it sheds it. In the autumn when heat and light from the sun start to diminish, and the leaves cannot perform their function, nature causes trees to shed the burden of leaves.

The sun

That great sea of fire and heat, by those help chlorophyll does its wonderful work, is the sun. It is rightly said: Without the sun there would be no life at all upon this earth, no light and no life. The chapter *Yā Sīn* is a grand exposition of the power and the blessings of the sun, which brings life to earth after its death. In Arabic, Hebrew, and in fact all semitic languages, the words *sīn* (where *s* is the letter *sīn*) and *ṣīn* (where *ṣ* is the letter *ṣād*) are used with the meaning of “the rising sun in the east”. The Arabs call China as *aṣ-ṣīn* (*ṣ* being *ṣād* here) because for them it lies in the direction from where the sun rises. In semitic languages, the word for a year is *sāna* (*s* being the letter *sīn*) because the sun is the basis for measuring the year.

The purpose of the Holy Quran is not to teach astronomy but to convey in the words:

“*Yā Sīn!* By the Quran full of wisdom. You are certainly one of the messengers.” (36:1–3)

that the spiritual sun of the world is the Holy Prophet Muhammad who is elsewhere called “a light-giving sun” (33:46). Jesus is called “the morning star” (Rev. of John, 22:16) because he came to deliver the good news of the coming of this sun, the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The mention of the Quran shows that it is due to the Quran that the Holy Prophet became a light-giving sun.

The working of chlorophyll

Although the source of life is the sun, it is the green matter in plant life which, taking the light from the sun, becomes the source of life for both plant life and other life. Just as chlorophyll, with the help of the sun’s light and heat, breaks up carbon dioxide into its life-giving constituents, so does the spiritual tree, by receiving light from the Holy Quran, separate good and evil, and give life to the Ummah.

The words which follow, “so that from it you kindle”, do not refer to burning wood but to man kindling the fire of spiritual life within himself. Chlorophyll is a wonder of nature because it is extremely difficult to break down the carbon dioxide in the air into carbon and oxygen. To do this in a scientific laboratory requires creating high temperatures of thousands of degrees with expensive equipment and noisy machinery. Yet the leaf of a green tree, with the aid of sun-light, and without any expense or noise, can separate carbon and oxygen from ordinary air and support the life of countless animals. Is this not a strong proof of the existence of God, that only a Knowing and Wise Power can bring this about?

Rising of sun of Islam in the whole world

The sun whose blessings are mentioned in the chapter *Yā Sīn* bears a perfect analogy to the Holy Prophet Muhammad. This sun is to rise twice, once upon the eastern world and once upon the western world. This is the meaning of the Quranic verse “Lord of the two Easts and the two Wests” (55:17), i.e. this spiritual sun will be the nourisher of both the east and the west, and his religion will illuminate the whole world. But when shall this come to pass? It will happen when centres of the propagation of Islam are established in the western world, and the Holy Quran is translated into European languages, so that the “light-giving sun” rises upon those lands.

It is no secret who in this present age laid the foundations of this grand work. In his first book, *Barāhīn Aḥmadiyya*, the proofs of the truth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has presented from the Holy Quran constitute a brilliant introduction to the Quran. However, his aim that 300 such arguments will be presented could not be fulfilled for some Divinely-ordained reason. After reading the four parts of this excellent book, you wish that you could enjoy some more of this fruit of knowledge. But if Hazrat Mirza sahib had exhausted all the Quranic knowledge and the proofs of the truth of the Holy Prophet, he would have deprived us of the pleasure of work and research, and barred the way for us to show our love for the Holy Prophet. But these “green trees” do not come to make man’s reason and intellect redundant; on the contrary, they make it sharper and clearer.

In our age, according to Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, it was only Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who showed love for the Holy Quran, this being his way of showing love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad since the Holy Prophet’s own beloved was the Quran.

Hazrat Mirza raises tone of discussion

There was a time when the Ulama debated and discussed issues such as the following: whether in prayer one should raise hands when rising from the *ruku* position to the standing posture; how *āmīn* should be uttered, loudly or silently; whether the flesh of the crow was allowed or not; was the ‘*arsh* of Allah made of wood, creaking under the burden it was supporting; could Allah tell a lie; did a person become a believer or disbeliever through his own faith and actions, or had Allah since eternity fixed the number of believers and disbelievers. These questions were considered to be the fundamentals in determining faith. Who was it who, in this atmosphere and environment, performed life-giving work like a green tree? If Islam is a living religion, and the branches of this faith are green, full of chlorophyll, then spirit-reviving flowers will grow on this tree. The green tree and the sun (the Holy Quran) have the miraculous power, by acting together, to raise the dead to life.