

Muhammad in World Scriptures

NEW EDITION — VOLUME 2:

*Buddha foretells the advent of
Prophet Muhammad*

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ



ti vā ti. Puna ca Metteyyassa bhagavato sabhāvagaṇaṃ
paridīpayamāna evaṃ bhaṇitaṃ: So anekasaḥassaṃ
bhikkhusaṅgaṃ pariharissati seyyathā pi ahaṃ etarahi
anekasataṃ bhikkhusaṅgaṃ pariharāṃṃti. Yadi bhante

Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi

MUHAMMAD
IN WORLD SCRIPTURES
NEW EDITION, VOLUME 2

Buddha foretells the advent of
Prophet Muhammad

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in World Scriptures

NEW EDITION, VOLUME 2:

*Buddha foretells the advent of
Prophet Muhammad*

by

Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi

Revised and edited by

Zahid Aziz

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Lahore Publications, U.K.

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1. Ch. 21, v. 107 of the Quran, “And We have not sent you (O Prophet) but as a mercy to all nations”, referred to several times in this book.
2. Photo: Barabudur temple complex, Java, Indonesia.
Acknowledgement: By Gunawan Kartapranata - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4838861>
3. From Pali text of Buddha’s prophecy about Maitreya. See page 60.

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Preface

The contents of this book were first published in English as a booklet in 1954. It was a translation from an Urdu version which had appeared in 1950 within Part 2 of Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi's famous book *Mīthāq-un-Nabiyyīn* ('Covenant of the Prophets'). Later, the Maulana incorporated that English booklet, with a few additions, into volume 3 of the second edition of his book *Muhammad in World Scriptures*. That volume was published in 1975, and this section occupied 98 pages in it.

The second edition of *Muhammad in World Scriptures* mentioned above, published between 1966 and 1975 in three volumes, was much in need of revision, including the re-checking of references and quotations, correction of misprints, and better formatting and printing. To meet this need, its part dealing with prophecies about the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad in the Bible (its volume 2) was thoroughly revised by me and Selim Ahmed and published in 1999 by the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore Inc., Columbus, Ohio, USA. Consisting of more than 400 pages, we designated it as volume 1 of the New Edition of *Muhammad in World Scriptures*.

Here I present a thoroughly revised, edited and enlarged version of that 98-page section *Buddha foretells the advent of Prophet Muhammad* from the second edition of *Muhammad in World Scriptures*. It is published here as volume 2 of the New Edition of *Muhammad in World Scriptures*.

The major and most essential aspect of my revision was to confirm the quotations given from other sources, of which there was a vast number. I was able to look up the necessary sources in all but

perhaps a couple of cases, which I excluded. In this revised version, every quotation has been verified against the cited source, and fuller details of the source have been provided than in the original book.

During this process I realized that, when this material was first published in Urdu, the author had, in a great many cases, rendered into Urdu the quotations he cited from English sources, without giving the English text, and subsequently, when his book was translated into English these quotations were translated back into English. Naturally, these re-translations differed in words, though not in substance, from the original English texts in the cited sources. I have now presented every quotation in its original text.

While reading through the sources mentioned above, sometimes I found, or was led to, other material of relevance which had not been referred to by the author. I have inserted such corroborating material, either in the main text or in the end-notes of chapters. In case of minor additions, I have not indicated these as additions, but in cases of lengthier additions this is indicated in an Editor's Note. I have also made some small additions based on the original Urdu version of this book, which were not found in its English translation, and also from a separate Urdu article by the author.

Other additions in this publication are: the sketch of Buddha's life as chapter 2, Appendix 1, Appendix 2, the Bibliography and the Index.

The author has, of course, often quoted from the Quran or mentioned some aspect of the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. In many such places I have provided additional quotations and information, and have also added precise references to Hadith books.

It is important to add here what Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi wrote about his travels to collect material for his book in general. Referring to a period during the 1950s and early 1960s, he wrote:

“...during this period the running stream of time drifted me towards the farthest corners of the world. I had the occasion to

explore the British Museum Library in London, the Buddhist libraries of Madras and Colombo in Ceylon, and the libraries of Hyderabad Deccan, San Francisco, Philadelphia and New York. I also studied minutely the original scriptures.” *

The author was not satisfied until he had, in person, seen and gone through the sources that he quoted in his book. He had to visit libraries in several countries and undertake arduous journeys, but during my revision I found the same sources conveniently online! In this connection, apart from websites of Buddhist organizations, the website www.archive.org proved most valuable.

It is essential to mention here that large sections from the earlier editions of *Muhammad in World Scriptures* have been reproduced by Muslim writers, first in print and more recently online. Very rarely have they acknowledged the original author; it is quite likely most of them do not know who it is, because they are copying from an already copied version which did not acknowledge the source.

Be that as it may, the most distressing aspect of this copying is that the material is presented for a purpose far from what was intended by Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi. Their aim seems to be to gloat and boast over other religions. The Maulana’s purpose, on the contrary, in researching and writing on this topic, was to promote harmony between Muslims and followers of religions. His book made as its basis the teaching of the Quran that prophets and messengers were sent by God among all nations on earth. Moreover, as the Quran also tells us, some of them are named in the Quran while there were others too who are not named in the Quran. Sages such as Buddha and the sacred figures of Hinduism can thus be treated as prophets according to Islam. Muslims are required, as part of their creed, to believe in all prophets equally without distinction, and to respect and honour them. When followers of other religions find that their sacred figures are believed in by Muslims, even though it is not as gods or partners of God, they too will no doubt feel a connection with Muslims.

* *Muhammad in World Scriptures*, Preface to the Second Edition, v. 1, 1966.

This will be all the more, Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi held, if they see their own scriptures looking forward to the appearance of a world saviour like the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

It is obvious that these prophecies about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, by great men such as Buddha, can only have been made if they were true prophets of God. This was the belief of Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi and of the Movement to which he belonged. However, when those who have copied prophecies from his book, and put them before the world, are asked whether the makers of those prophecies were true prophets of God, they give ambivalent replies.

Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi described Islam's relation with other religions as follows: "Islam is an inter-religious anthology, a hyphen connecting religions, a long bridge to meet all the Sages of the world, a thesaurus of all sacred scriptures, an ample junction where trains come from all directions and passengers from the four quarters of the earth meet together. It is a great restaurant hall with heavenly food meeting the needs of all. All are cordially invited and pleasantly served, and given a greeting of peace." *

I may add here that Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi was my maternal grandfather and when I was a child I lived in his house in Muslim Town, Lahore, during the 1950s. I recall him leaving for his long journeys to distant countries, as mentioned by him above. My heart is filled with gratitude to Almighty God that I have been enabled to re-pay some of the enormous debt I owe to the Maulana for arousing my interest in doing some work for the literary service of Islam.

Zahid Aziz, Dr
April 2020

* *Muhammad in World Scriptures*, Second Edition, v. 1, p. 439–440.

Life of the Author

Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi (1888–1977), who bore the title *vidyarthi* due to his extensive knowledge of the Hindu Vedas, was a scholar of the major religions of the world and their languages, and a missionary of Islam of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement. The environment of multi-faith debate, polemic and discussion, prevailing in the Indian subcontinent in the early 20th century, greatly influenced and interested him. This was one reason why, in 1907, he joined the Ahmadiyya Movement at the hands of its Founder, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, as this Movement had a broad, universalistic outlook towards other religions, regarding all of them as originally revealed, a fact first disclosed by Islam.

In 1914, when the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha‘at Islam was founded in Lahore by Maulana Muhammad Ali and his associates, Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi joined this Muslim missionary organization, in which he worked for the rest of his life as missionary, journalist, lecturer, writer and scholar. First he mastered the Hindu scriptures and studied the Sanskrit language. Later on, he studied Hebrew and other ancient languages of world scriptures. His purpose was two-fold: (1) to be better equipped to refute the storm of criticism and vituperative allegations against Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad by the Hindu Arya Samaj sect as well as Christian proselytisers; (2) to unearth prophecies about the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad which, according to Islam, are to be found in previously-revealed scriptures.

In the period 1918 to the 1940s, the Maulana was frequently called upon, by various Muslim bodies throughout India, to represent

Islam in public debates against Arya Samaj Hindus and Christian missionaries. He achieved supreme triumph in these debates, and his name became renowned and legendary. He also wrote several Urdu books in response to the Arya and Christian objections against Islam. On a purely scholarly front, he published an Urdu translation of part of a Hindu scripture, the Yajur Veda.

After the founding of Pakistan and the ending of the multi-faith environment, the Maulana toured the countries of Trinidad, Guyana, Suriname, and Fiji during the 1950s at the invitation of the local Muslim communities, and gave lectures to large multi-faith audiences, achieving fame and renown for his knowledge and noble character in those countries as well. During the same period, he also visited England and spent time in the U.S.A., collecting further material for the second edition of his book *Muhammad in World Scriptures* from reference works in libraries.

He originally wrote *Muhammad in World Scriptures* in Urdu as *Mīthāq-un-Nabiyyīn*, published in 1936. Then he had it translated into English and it appeared under the present title in 1940. A little later he published a second part in Urdu. He then went on to expand the English version considerably, and this second edition was published in 3 volumes between 1966 and 1975.

Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi was renowned and respected not only as a man of the highest learning and scholarship, but also as one who was thoroughly upright and saintly, and a recipient of extensive spiritual experiences. Having a humble and unassuming nature, and well-known for his good humour, Maulana Vidyarthi served the cause of Islam by pen, speech and personal example for more than sixty years in a unique and rare way which will have its own place in the history of religion.

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1. Introduction

Buddhism has more adherents than any other religion of the world. The number of its followers may be as much as one third of the whole population of the globe. It would, therefore, be sheer injustice on the part of God if He left such a large community without a guide. If it was true of the Jews, that they believed in God and in the messengers of God, why should not the Hindus and Buddhists have prophets amongst them so that they might believe in God and His messengers and follow the right course? The Holy Quran says:

“And there is not a people but a warner has gone among them.”
— 35:24

“And certainly We raised in every nation a messenger, saying: Serve Allah and shun the devil.” — 16:36

Some Muslim theologians think that the Holy Quran mentions only the prophets of Israel. This is a sheer misunderstanding. Assuredly there are prophets who do not belong to the House of Israel. It is stated in clear words in the Quran:

“And We sent messengers We have mentioned to you before (O Prophet) and messengers We have not mentioned to you.”
— 4: 164

After this verse, God Himself emphasizes:

“(We sent) messengers as bearers of good news and as warners, so that people should not have a plea against God after the coming of the messengers. And God is ever Mighty, Wise.” — 4: 165

This manifestation of the wisdom of God is as essential in the case of other nations as it is in the case of Jews. It is in the Holy Quran that Hūd was sent to the tribe of ‘Ād. This tribe lived in the desert of

Al-Aḥqāf extending from Oman to Hadramaut, in the south of Arabia. The prophet Sāliḥ was sent to the tribe of Thamūd. These are not the only prophets mentioned in the Holy Quran about whom the Bible is silent. It also speaks of a non-Israelite prophet who was contemporaneous with Moses and to whom Moses went in search of knowledge. He lived at the junction of the two Niles, i.e., at Khartum.¹ Again it speaks of Darius, a king of Persia, who is called *Dhul-Qarnain*,² or the two-horned one, on the basis of Daniel's vision in the Bible.³ There is a chapter in the Holy Quran, ch. 31, which bears the name *Luqmān*. Luqmān was an Ethiopian prophet, though commentators differ as to his identity; some say that he was a Greek, others think that he belonged to the tribe of 'Ād, and still others are of the view that he was an Ethiopian.

In addition to this, in the chapter entitled *The Prophets* of the Quran it is stated:

“And Ishmael⁴ and Idrīs and Dhul-Kifl; all were from among the patient ones. And We admitted them to Our mercy; surely they were from among the good ones.” — 21 : 85–86

In 21:83, referring to the afflictions, trials and troubles which came upon Job from God, it is said that he turned to God. A baby, when beaten by its mother, weeps and yet runs towards the mother for protection. So do the prophets of God run to God for protection even when it is from God that a certain calamity to them comes. Ishmael and his mother, for example, lived in absolute loneliness in a strange land under the order of God given to Abraham, yet they never complained against God and remained patient and faithful to Him as ever before. What is more, Ishmael in obedience to the Lord offered his very life in sacrifice. And Idrīs, another prophet of God, submitted his whole life, with patience and resolution, in learning the ways of God and acquiring knowledge.⁵

Dhul-Kifl

After these, God mentions a prophet who bears the name *Dhul-Kifl*⁶ who evidently was not of the Israelite race. It is a distortion of the

history of the prophets to say that he was an Israelite prophet. The story of Dhul-Kifl as given by Ibn Abbas in Quranic commentaries finds no mention in the Bible or Jewish and Christian traditions. On the other hand, Mujahid thinks that Dhul-Kifl is another name of Elias, and Abu Musa al-Ashari says that Dhul-Kifl was not a prophet. But Hasan al-Basri tells us that he was a prophet because he has been mentioned in the chapter *The Prophets*.

As he has been grouped with Ishmael and Idrīs, and they were admittedly prophets, this shows that he was also a prophet. It is said above that God admitted them to His mercy. This mercy is another name for prophethood. And Dhul-Kifl was a model of patience along with Ishmael and Idrīs. This endurance was that of prophets.

In the Quran the name Dhul-Kifl occurs twice, first in 21:85 quoted above and then in 38:48 as follows: “And remember Ishmael and Elisha (*al-Yasa’a*) and Dhu-l-Kifl; and they were all of the best.” In both places he is mentioned with two other prophets. In the first mention, he is counted among “the good ones” (*ṣāliḥīn*) in 21:86, and in the second he is counted among “the best” (*akhyār*).

Concept of *ṣabr* or patience

None of us is without troubles. We have to taste sorrow and suffering and submit to misfortunes. But it is only when the loss is suffered with total resignation to God that it becomes a spiritual quality. What is more, venerable is he whose sorrows are not for his own sake but for the sufferings of others and who gives his life for the welfare of others, never caring for his own interests. Honourable is he who loves mankind and shows his love by acts of help and charity. No doubt, he expresses his sorrows but he never complains. The Arabic word *ṣabr*, meaning ‘patience’, gives different meanings according to its use. In the terminology of Islamic theology, it means:

1. abstinence from doing a thing contrary to wisdom and law;
2. not to scream and cry at the time of trouble;
3. courage and bravery in the battlefield, or on aggression.

As the Holy Quran says, the truly brave are those who stand firm and behave patiently under ills and hardships, “the patient in distress and affliction and in the time of conflict” (2:177); their patience is only for God, “those who are steadfast, seeking the pleasure of their Lord” (13:22), and not to display bravery. True courage lies in patience and steadfastness in resisting one’s base passions, and standing fearlessly to support good and avert evil. To be content in mind at a time of distress and grief is patience of the heart. To refrain from returning abuse with abuse, and remaining silent under provocation, is patience of the tongue. The month of fasting is known as the month of patience, that is, to obey the Divine commandment patiently. To pray and serve God constantly and untiringly is to show patience in the obedience of God. Not to be frustrated in dealing with the enemy and to wait for the judgment of Allah is also patience which was enjoined upon the Holy Prophet:

“So have patience, as men of resolution, the messengers, had patience, and do not seek to hasten on for them (i.e., the doom to come upon the opponents).” — 46:35

“So wait patiently for the judgment of your Lord...” — 68:48

If a man, who is a reformer and leader of a large community, has the above quality of patience, and if he is seen toiling not for his own problems and his own daily bread but for the welfare of others, surely he is an inspired son of heaven.

Buddha’s example

Buddha forsook the crown and palace and all the comforts of life for the sake of destitute and troubled men, to bring them out of afflictions and miseries. Though he was a prince, he never mourned over his own ills and troubles but remained patient in face of them. He restrained his anger against his adversaries and showed the highest example of teaching his followers to adhere patiently to the truth. He stuck to truth when honour and even life was in danger. People believed in his truthfulness. He certainly fulfilled the description of

21:85–86 in being “from among the patient ones”, whom God admitted to His mercy, i.e., granted him prophethood.

There is a story narrated by Ibn Abbas about Dhul-Kifl, that there was a prophet whom God gave kingship. After a while, He revealed to him: “I will cause you to die soon, so hand over the kingdom to another person, who will be heir to you; he must worship God at night and practise fasting all the day long. He should not be furious while judging the people.” On the advertisement of the prophet, a man offered himself, claiming the said qualities. The devil came to try him hard but he proved perfect and thankful to God. Accordingly, God favoured him by the name of Dhul-Kifl.⁷ The other narrator, Mujahid, connects this story with Elijah. In this narration, if we omit the names, it is evident that this story, with a slight difference, is the story of the Buddha, who forsook his kingdom and observed hard ascetic practices. Mara (the devil) tried him, but he remained steadfast in resisting the evil whisperings of the devil. He shunned envy and wrath, although his enemies hated him bitterly. Those who have studied the biography of the Buddha know that he had all these high moral virtues.

Arguments that Buddha was a prophet and Dhul-Kifl

1. The Holy Quran repeatedly says that messengers of God appeared in every nation.⁸ The people of the Far East, living in places such as China, Japan, Korea and Tibet, constitute a large majority of the world’s population. How can it be reasonable to think that such a large number of people had no warner or messenger sent to them, and yet they established a religion which claims more adherents than any other?

2. On the Day of Judgment when the Divine law of requital will judge between the people according to the revealed books, if no book or law has ever been revealed to a certain nation through its messenger, on what ground will it be judged? It is to be noted that the Buddhist people are not primitive but a nation of ancient civilization and culture.

3. The reason given by the Quran as to why prophets were raised among all nations is: “so that people should not have a plea against God after the coming of the messengers” (4: 165). If no warner had ever come among the Indians, their plea on the day of judgment against God would be that He had not sent any messenger to them that they might believe in His messenger and might believe in Him.

4. It is stated in the Holy Quran: “And those who strive hard for Us, We shall certainly guide them in Our ways. And Allah is surely with the doers of good” (29: 69). And who will deny that the Buddha strove hard to know the right path and agonised himself in search for inner light?

5. His followers bore patiently their persecution by the Hindu kings, priests and the public, and left India, carrying their religion into other countries, such as China, travelling over mountains.

6. The first revolutionary thing in the life of Gautama is that he got the title of Buddha meaning ‘The enlightened one.’ He sat under a certain tree (afterwards called the Tree of Knowledge) and made up his mind that he would never get up until he received illumination. He had an iron will; so he was favoured with the title of Buddha from heaven. He went straight back to the hermits who had denounced him and they now rushed out to meet him calling him “Friend.” Thereupon, he answered: “O monks, address not the Perfect One by his name and call him not ‘Friend’. The Perfect One is the holy, supreme Buddha.”⁹ And it is written in the Quran:

“Is he who was dead, then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people, like him whose likeness is that of one in darkness from which he cannot come forth?” — 6: 122

The Buddha was raised from the dead and came to life; he now had with him the light by which he showed the way to others.

7. One day, after six years of rigid self-mortification, when he had reduced himself to a faltering skeleton, he was attacked by violent pains and fell in a swoon. He came to know that he must adopt

a ‘middle way’ (*majjhima patipada*) between ascetic self-denial and sensual indulgence, and this is the right path, the path of those on whom favours are bestowed, as the Quran says in 1 : 6.

8. Is it reasonable to think that such a large community was kept away from one who was the “mercy to all nations”, i.e., the Holy Prophet Muhammad, as he is so described in the Quran (21 : 107), that neither did he verify the Buddha, the “Light of Asia”, nor did Buddha prophesy for “the desire of all the nations”?¹⁰

9. In the verses 21 : 85–86 quoted above, there is mention of three great prophets — Ishmael, Idrīs and Dhul-Kifl — in one and the same category, and it is stated that they were patient (*ṣābirīn*) under all circumstances. Ishmael gave up his very life in obedience to God. Idrīs or Enoch dedicated his whole life in learning God’s attributes and walked with Him three hundred years.¹¹

The third is Dhul-Kifl: *kifl* in Arabic means twice, two-fold portion or reward. Therefore, *Dhul-Kifl* signifies “One who was given a two-fold reward”. There is another verse which throws light on the meaning of this epithet, to the effect that if the “People of the Book”, i.e., followers of earlier revealed religions, believe in the Prophet Muhammad, God will grant their reward twice:

“And when it is recited to them they say: ‘We believe in it; surely it is the Truth from our Lord; we were indeed, before this, submitting ones.’ These will be granted their reward twice, because they are steadfast (*ṣabarū*), and they repel evil with good and spend (on doing good) out of what We have given them.” — 28 : 53–54

The words “granted their reward twice, because they are steadfast (*ṣabarū*)” are on a par with “...Dhul-Kifl; all were from among the patient ones (*ṣābirīn*)” of 21 : 85. The reason for granting a double reward is given in the words: “because they are steadfast (in great trials) and they repel evil with good”. The people mentioned in these verses are the “People of the Book”, who believe in their sacred books as well as in the Holy Prophet Muhammad. It is evident that

the Buddha or Dhul-Kifl was one of them: he believed in his own book and prophesied the coming of the Maitreya Buddha in likeness to him. Therefore, God granted to him a double reward in accordance with the title of Dhul-Kifl.

The word *Dhul-kifl* can also mean ‘one who devotes or gives himself up to another’. In this sense all the three prophets mentioned here gave themselves up to ‘another’, i.e., to God, or to the creatures of God for whose welfare they devoted their lives and comforts.

10. It appears from Buddhist literature that before the Buddha, whose name was Shakyamuni Gautama, there had been several other buddhas. The well-known Buddha was from Kapilavastu. This name consists of *kapil* and *vastu*, meaning city or town of kapil. The word *kapil* in Sanskrit is the same as the word *kifl* in Arabic, which in European languages is *couple*. In these languages also, this word includes the significance of giving up individuality and joining with another in love. The aim of Buddha’s life and religion was *nirvana*, or to become one with the Truth.¹²

The three prophets

The three prophets named in 21 : 85 were great signs of the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Ishmael was the promised son of Abraham, from whose progeny the Prophet Muhammad was meant to arise. Idrīs is Enoch of the Bible and was a great prophet in the seventh generation from Adam. Therefore, among the prophecies of the prophets of the world about the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, Enoch’s prophecy occupies the first place. In the New Testament of the Bible, it is stated:

“Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him’.”¹³

This reference is to the book of Enoch. That book used to be considered forged and apocryphal, but has now been published.¹⁴ This is the same prophecy as that made by Moses in Deuteronomy:

“The Lord came from Sinai, and dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints; from His right hand came a fiery law for them.”¹⁵

This shows that the prophecy of the Promised One coming with ten thousands of holy men was revealed to several prophets. It is a historical fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad had with him ten thousand Companions at the time of the conquest of Makkah, and thus this prophecy was, in word and substance, fulfilled in his person. The same prophecy was made by Buddha:

“He will be the leader of a brotherhood several thousands in number as I am now the leader of a brotherhood several hundreds in number.”¹⁶

The name of Ishmael is also in 21:85 because his father Abraham and mother Hagar saw in dreams, and prophesied, that a glorious prophet would arise from their progeny who would create a great nation. That is why he was named *Ismā'īl*, which means one who is accepted by God. In reality this was a reference to the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

If it can be shown that Buddha prophesied the appearance of our Prophet Muhammad, it would be no surprise that he is Dhul-Kifl of the Holy Quran. It would link Islam with the Buddhist religion, just as Islam bears a relationship with the Jewish and Christian religions, and bring their nation under the shadow of mercy of the one who was “a mercy to all the nations”. Many years ago, when I was a student, I came across a magazine called *Orient* in Amritsar which reproduced a very clear prophecy of Buddha. I was very happy to see it and it inspired love in my heart for Buddha. I kept that magazine for a long time, but eventually it was lost. The effect it had on my mind led me to study the books of Buddhism. The language of these books is quite

similar to Sanskrit but it is written in an old script making it difficult to understand. Their English translations have made their study much easier.

In conclusion, I may say that Islam laid down the foundation of universalism. It proved to be not only the greatest but the only force unifying the discordant elements of humanity. For the first time it was proclaimed that every nation was given a messenger, and our Holy Prophet Muhammad is the verifier of all those prophets. And my book, *Muhammad in World Scriptures*, is a documentary evidence, produced for the first time in the history of Islam, of the great scriptural fact affirmed in the Holy Quran that all the prophets, who appeared before our Holy Prophet Muhammad (may peace and the blessings of God be upon him), prophesied about his advent.

Notes to Chapter 1:

1. The Quran, 18:60–82.
2. The Quran, 18:83–98.
3. “Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns...” (Daniel, 8:3), “The ram which you saw, having the two horns are the kings of Media and Persia” (*ibid.*, 8:20).
4. Ishmael is the Biblical form, the Arabic form being *Ismā’īl*.
5. Idrīs is identified with the Biblical Enoch. See Genesis, 5:18–24. According to the Book of Jubilees, which forms part of the Greek Bible, “he was the first among men who learned writing and knowledge and wisdom” (T. K. Cheyne, *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, art. ‘Enoch’: 2. Later belief).
6. Its proper transliteration from Arabic is: *Dhu al-Kifl*. The prefix *dhu* in Arabic is added before some property or quality, meaning one who possesses that quality.
7. *Tafsīr Kabīr*, classical commentary on the Quran by Imam Razi, v. 6, p. 136.
8. The Quran, 10:47, 16:36, 35:24.
9. Oldenberg, *Buddha: His Life, His Doctrine, His Order*, p. 126.
10. See Genesis, 49:10; the closing words of this verse, “to him shall be the obedience of the people” are also translated as “he shall be the *expectation*

of nations” (Douay-Rheims translation, American edition, 1899). In Isaiah, 11:10, the expected one is described as: “a banner for the peoples. The nations will *seek* him” (Holman Christian Standard Bible). In the closing words of Isaiah 42:4 it is said: “Distant lands *eagerly* wait for his teaching” (Good News Translation) or “people in foreign nations *long* for his teaching” (Contemporary English Version). Thus the Promised One was the *desire* of all nations.

11. Genesis, 5:23. *Enoch* in Hebrew means “dedicated one”.
12. If *Kifl* is taken as a proper noun, then it can be considered as the Arabic representation of Kapil, since the letter *p* of other languages is represented in Arabic by *f*. By this argument, *Dhul-Kifl* would mean “the one from Kapil”, i.e., Kapilavastu. Thus, whether taking *kifl* as a name or as the word meaning ‘double’, *Dhul-Kifl* can be applied to Buddha.
13. Jude, 1:14–15.
14. The earliest English translation is *The Book of Enoch, The Prophet*, translated by Richard Laurence (one of its later editions published London, 1883); this prophecy from it, as quoted in Jude, is at the start of ch. 2. Another translation is *The Book of Enoch*, translated by R.H. Charles, London, SPCK, 1917; in this the prophecy is in the last verse of ch. 1.
15. Deuteronomy, 33:2.
16. Translation of *Milindapanha* by T.W. Rhys Davids in *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 35, p. 225.

2. Life sketch of Gautama Buddha*

Gautama, the Buddha (Pāli *Gotama*), the founder of the Buddhist faith, which at one time numbered in all probability more adherents than any other form of religious belief, was born in or about the year 560 B.C., in the Lumbini Grove, near the ancient town of Kapilavastu.

The name *Gautama*, by which the future Buddha was known, is perhaps derived from that of Gotama, the ancient seer, to whom are ascribed some of the hymns of the Rigveda. He becomes *buddha*, or *the Buddha*, the ‘enlightened’ or ‘wise,’ only after his attainment of perfect wisdom under the Bo-tree. Other titles given to him are *Sākyamuni*, ‘the sage of the Sākyas’; *Siddhārtha*, ‘he who has accomplished his aim’; and *Tathāgata*, ‘he who has arrived at the truth.’

His father was named Suddhodana, the chieftain or prince of a Sākya clan, who ruled from Kapilavastu over a small kingdom in the N.E. part of the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh) and the neighbouring District of southern Nepal; and his mother, Māyā or Mahāmāyā, is said to have conceived him after a dream in which she beheld the future Buddha descending from the heaven, and entering

**Editor’s Note:* Various events and aspects of the life of Gautama Buddha have been mentioned and commented on by the author of this book, Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi. To help the reader gain a better understanding of the book, I have added this sketch of Buddha’s life as a separate chapter in this revised edition. The contents here are based on, and abridged and adapted from, the entry ‘Buddha, Life of the’ in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, contributed by A.S. Geden, in vol. II, p. 881–885.

her womb in the form of a white elephant. Hence the elephant is sacred to all Buddhists. Māyā herself, according to the tradition, died within seven days after the birth of her son.

Before his birth also the prophecy was uttered concerning him, that he would become either a Universal Monarch (*chakravartin*), or, abandoning house and home, would assume the robe of a monk, and become a Buddha, perfectly enlightened, for the salvation of mankind; and he himself, in the *Tuṣita* heaven, before consenting to undertake the office, makes the “five great observations,” in order to determine the right family in which to be born, the right continent, the appropriate district, the proper time, and the pre-destined mother of the Buddha. He is accordingly conceived in the womb of Queen Mahāmāyā, and she is delivered of a son in the Lumbini Grove, under the shade of a Sāl-tree, a branch of which bends down to her, that she may grasp it with her hand.

His father, mindful of the prophecy that he would retire from the world, surrounded the prince with all manner of luxury and indulgence, in order to retain his affections, and prevent him from undertaking a vow of solitariness and poverty. In particular, he endeavoured to keep from him the “four signs,” the sight of which, it had been announced, would move him to enter upon the ascetic life. The four signs were: a decrepit old man, a diseased man, a dead man, and a monk. On successive occasions, however, going out of the palace, he is confronted by the four signs the sight of which fills him with amazement and distress; and, realizing the impermanence of all earthly things, he determines to forsake his home and take refuge in the forest for solitary meditation, and “to obtain the highest immortality.” He is said to have been twenty-nine years old when he thus made the “Great Renunciation.”

On his horse Kanthaka he left the city by night, leaving behind his wife and child asleep. Later, sending back his horse and attendant, he proceeded alone and made his way to Uruvelā, a village or grove near Gayā, and there in the company of five ascetics entered upon a course of extreme self-discipline, carrying his austerities to such a

length that his body became utterly emaciated and lost all its brightness and grace; finally, he fell down senseless and was believed to be dead. For six years the “Great Struggle” continued, at the close of which, becoming convinced that the truth was not to be won by the way of asceticism, he resumed an ordinary course of life as a beggar living on alms. These six years are said to be “like time spent in endeavouring to tie the air into knots.” His companions, however, the five ascetics, now deserted him, because they regarded his action as a proof of faithlessness to his principles, and departed to the Deer-Park at Benares.

Then followed the assaults of Māra, the devil, who with his hosts endeavoured by every means, first by violence and then by varied allurements, to distract his attention and turn him from his purpose. Seated under the Bo-tree, Gautama remained steadfast and immovable, taking no notice of the showers of rocks and darts which, as soon as they reached him, turned into flowers. Here he resolved to remain — “Never from this seat will I stir, until I have attained the supreme and absolute wisdom.” The period of the temptation closed with sunset, when the army of Māra was finally driven off in utter defeat. During the following night, in deepest meditation, the desired knowledge and the perfect state were attained, and Gautama became *Buddha*, ‘the enlightened one,’ to whom all the secrets of the universe were laid open. He spent seven weeks under the Bo-tree. Until this time he had been merely a *Bodhisattva*, one who is destined to gain supreme wisdom, on the way to Buddhahood but not yet perfectly enlightened. After four weeks in the same place, he was approached by two merchants with gifts of food. The merchants declared their faith in the Buddha and his Law and begged to be received as disciples. Their request was granted, and they thus became the earliest lay-disciples in Buddhism.

After his return the Buddha is represented as debating in his mind whether he should undertake the wearisome and thankless task of communicating to men the profound truths which he had thus perceived. Brahma appeared to him, and with reverential obeisance

recalled him to high office and duty, reminding him of the misery and ignorance of mankind, who, if they do not hear the doctrine preached, cannot attain to salvation.*

The Buddha assented and decided that the five ascetics with whom he had previously lived in the practice of austerities should be the first to receive the new teaching. He therefore sought them out in the Deer-Park, *Isipatana*, at Benares, and to them delivered his first sermon, or brief exposition of doctrine, setting in motion the wheel of the Law. They accepted the truth and became the first members of the Buddhist Order of monks. The number of the disciples rapidly increased; and Gautama sent forth his monks on missionary tours here and there, bidding them to wander everywhere, preaching the doctrine (*dharma*), and teaching men to order their lives with self-restraint, simplicity, and chastity. They taught the principle that “whatever is subject to origination is subject also to cessation or destruction”.† Several men of high birth became Buddha’s lay-disciples, and some females became followers as well.

Thereafter the Buddha spent a life prolonged, according to the tradition, over forty-five years, in itinerating from place to place, and preaching the doctrine to all who would listen. His journeys were mainly in what are now the Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, but are traditionally said to have been extended into the Punjab and the North-West of the Indian subcontinent. The doctrines which he taught seem generally to have been received with approval, often with enthusiasm, although opposition was at times aroused.

His chief rival was Devadatta, a cousin of the Buddha, who is represented as being jealous of his influence and popularity, and as repeatedly seeking to compass his death. Devadatta had accepted Buddha but had never been a sincere believer. The final attempt

*In the Islamic sense, we may take Brahma as the angel Gabriel. There is a similarity here with the injunctions of the Quran to the Holy Prophet Muhammad to proclaim his faith.

†In this principle there is a close similarity with several verses of the Quran.

which he made to poison the Buddha was frustrated, and he himself, for making a false profession of faith, fell down into hell, where he was condemned to remain for an entire world-cycle.

At the age of over eighty years, according to the tradition, at the close of a long life devoted to teaching and preaching, Gautama Buddha realized that the time drew near for him to die, to leave his disciples and his work, and to attain perfect *nirvana*. Accompanied by his closest disciple and cousin, Ananda, the Buddha then came to the *Sāla*-tree grove at Kusanagara, in the country of the Mallas. His last hours were spent in giving counsels and directions to Ananda and the assembled monks. Finally, he invited his disciples to state any doubt or difficulty felt by them about his teachings, and to act on them after his death. But none of the five hundred raised any doubt or lack of understanding, so Buddha told them that they were assured of final salvation.

His corpse was given due honour for six days with processions, garlands and music by the local people, and the cremation was further delayed waiting for other important disciples to arrive. The bones and relics that remained from the fire were distributed among eight groups of his followers, and the pot containing these relics and embers of the fire went to other followers. At various places, monuments known as *stūpas*, or mound-like structures, were erected to house these relics, and these buildings became places of pilgrimage for Buddhists.

The article in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, from which we have derived the above information, concludes as follows:

“Among the prophecies uttered by the Buddha was one concerning the future of the religion which he established, and its ultimate decline and disappearance from the earth.”

We have given more of this extract, and discussed it further, on page 58.

3. Similarities between Buddha and Holy Prophet Muhammad

The name *Buddha*

“O people! manifest proof has indeed come to you from your Lord and We have sent down to you a clear light (i.e., the promised Maitreya Buddha).” — the Quran, 4:174

Mahatma Buddha, the eminent teacher and preacher of morals, otherwise known as the “Light of Asia”, which dispelled all darkness of ignorance and cured spiritual ills from the surface of India, was born in the town Kapilavastu in Nepal about 2,400 years ago. According to the Buddhist creed he was the last of a galaxy of religious reformers, as many preachers had emerged on particular occasions before him. His father Suddhodana of the Shakya dynasty was king, and his mother’s name was Maya Devi. His genealogy reached back to the famous Kshatriya Rishi Gautama, hence Buddha was called Shakyamuni Gautama or Shakya Singha.

Significance of the name *Buddha*

Buddha is a Sanskrit word and it means *aroused one, awakened, intelligent, clever, wise, enlightened, etc.*, or it connotes *a perfect man who has attained the knowledge of truth and righteousness and one having come out of worldly darkness into light*. In fact, the origin of this word is the Arabic word *ba'ath*, meaning *he roused him, excited him, or put him in motion or action*. *Ba'ith-un* and *ba'th-un* mean *a man whose anxieties or griefs awake him from sleep*. The Holy Quran says about the Holy Prophet Muhammad:

“He it is Who raised (*ba’atha*) among the illiterates a Messenger from among themselves, who recites to them His messages and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom — although they were before certainly in manifest error.” — 62:2

According to Buddhist terminology, it is not a name but a title which is vouchsafed to one who has come out of darkness into light and who calls others out of this abyss. There have been Buddhas even before Shakyamuni Gautama and there exists the prophecy of the advent of a Buddha after him. So the first similarity of the Prophet Muhammad to the Buddha is in his title and in his mission. In the verse quoted above, the Prophet Muhammad is spoken of as having been “raised” (*ba’atha*) or awakened to life.

As to his mission, he himself came out of darkness into light and he called others out of this abyss. Buddha thus describes his experience:

“This was the first true knowledge attained by me in the first watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and true knowledge arose, *darkness was banished and light arose*, as happens in one who abides diligent, ardent, and resolute.” (Italics ours)

He repeats the same for “the second true knowledge attained by me in the second watch of the night”, and “the third true knowledge attained by me in the third watch of the night”.¹

The Holy Quran declares in clear words:

“We have sent down to you a clear light.” — 4: 174

“A Messenger who recites to you the clear messages of God, so that he may bring forth those who believe and do good deeds from darkness into light.” — 65: 11

“Indeed there has come to you from God, a light and a clear Book, by which God guides such as follow His pleasure into the ways of peace and brings them out of darkness into light by His will, and guides them to the right path.” — 5: 15–16

Two things are here spoken of as having come from God: a light and a clear book. The light is the Prophet and the Book is the Holy Quran.

Of Buddha it is said that he was born “for the weal of the great multitudes”!² The Prophet Muhammad’s great anxiety for humanity is stated in the words of the Quran as follows:

“Certainly a Messenger has come to you from among yourselves; very painful for him is your falling into distress, most concerned (he is) for you, to the believers (he is also) compassionate, merciful.” — 9:128

This is the true picture of the heart which grieves, not for his followers alone, not for his tribe or country, but for all humanity. He grieves for the burdens of all, and he is most concerned for the welfare of all. The *whole of humanity* is meant here because the concluding words refer additionally to the believers. There is a special relation he bears to those who follow him; to them he is, in addition, compassionate and merciful.

His message claims to be the greatest spiritual force which is ultimately destined to bring the whole of humanity to perfection. And it really effected a transformation of humanity from the lowest depths of degradation to the highest pinnacle of civilization within an incredibly short time. To its unparalleled nature an anti-Muslim writer, Sir William Muir, testifies as follows:

“From time beyond memory, Mecca and the whole peninsula had been steeped in spiritual torpor. ... The people were sunk in superstition, cruelty, and vice. ... Their religion was a gross idolatry; and their faith the dark superstitious dread of unseen beings ... Thirteen years before the Hijra, Mecca lay lifeless in this debased state. What a change had those thirteen years now produced! ... Jewish truth had long sounded in the ears of the men of Medina; but it was not until they heard the spirit-stirring strains of the Arabian prophet that they too awoke from their slumber, and sprang suddenly into a new and earnest life.”³

Again, Buddha means one who has the complete knowledge of righteousness. We have in the Holy Quran:

“And say: The Truth has come and falsehood vanished. Surely falsehood is ever bound to vanish.” — 17:81

The advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad is here spoken of as the advent of truth. When the Holy Prophet entered Makkah as a conqueror, and as the house of the Holy One was cleared of the idols, he recited this verse and said:

“The Truth has come, and falsehood leaves not a trace, nor will it return.” — 34:49

It means that falsehood cannot stand before truth, and that truth must finally prevail throughout the whole world, as it prevailed in Arabia in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. And in another verse the message of the Holy Prophet is called *Al-Furqān*, and it is a name of the Holy Quran, according to the following verse:

“Blessed is He Who sent down the Discrimination (*Al-Furqān*) upon His servant that he might be a warner to the nations.” — 25:1

It is called *Al-Furqān* because of the distinction which it brings about between truth and falsehood, and its above chapter (ch. 25) deals with the mighty transformation brought about in the lives of the people. The addition of the words that the Holy Prophet may be a warner to the nations is to show that the transformation which was being brought about in Arabia would ultimately extend over the whole world, and all nations would benefit by it.

According to the teachings of the Holy Quran, righteousness consists of faith in God, or to hold communion with the Divine Being, and to imbue oneself with Divine morals and benevolence towards people.

The three connotations of the word *Buddha* discussed above are the attributes of Gautama Buddha and of Maitreya Buddha prophesied by Gautama as well:

1. To awaken the people lying in slumber, he was awakened and raised to Buddhahood.
2. In the darkness prevailing all around he was the light, calling people and showing them the right way to salvation.
3. He was an embodiment of truth and righteousness, which shattered all falsehood.

The Buddha Gautama foretold the coming of Maitreya Buddha in likeness to him. After Buddha only two messengers appeared in the world, Jesus Christ and Muhammad. But Jesus himself declared that the Spirit of Truth is yet to come to guide men into all truth:

“However, when he, the Spirit of truth, has come, he will guide you into all truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak; and he will tell you things to come.”⁴

No one has appeared in the world after Jesus Christ answering this description except the Holy Prophet Muhammad. And the disappearance of falsehood from Arabia before his eyes showed this assertion to be justified.

Secondly, according to the Christian creed, the tree which Adam was forbidden to approach was the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The message of Buddha is against it. According to the Holy Quran it is the tree of death, the spiritual death of man — the tree of evil — and it is evil which man is again and again forbidden to approach, and it is evil against which all prophets of God and all the Buddhas had warned people. Christians believe that the expulsion of man from paradise was because of eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. According to the Holy Prophet Muhammad it was not knowledge but ignorance that drove him out.

First likeness — Buddha and Muhammad’s sorrow for people

“Then perhaps you (O Prophet) will kill yourself with grief, sorrowing after them, if they do not believe in this announcement.” — The Quran, 18:6

“Perhaps you (O Prophet) will kill yourself with grief because they do not believe.” — The Quran, 26:3

Buddha, as I have already mentioned, was the son of a King. His life sketch in brief contains seven points.

In his early age once he saw an old man, a sick man and a dead man. On seeing these three calamities of human life he grieved so much that he resolved to know the cause of these miseries and the way to avoid them. Hence he exerted himself to save mankind from this horrible chaos. So he gave up the royal garb, parted from his wife and son, left the palace and observed a monkish life, withdrawing from all his worldly desires. He devoted himself solely to finding out the cause of the pain and grief prevailing over humanity. He visited many *rishis* and *munis* (Hindu saints) and held discussions with them. Disheartened by them he himself then exercised many fervent practices of the Hindu yogis without avail for six years. But his sympathy for the sufferings of humanity and his craving for the salvation of mankind drew down the beneficence of God, and at last under the Bo tree he received Divine favour and light.⁵ This procured for him the title “the Light of Asia.”⁶

Edward J. Thomas writes in his *Life of Buddha*:

“From the [Buddhist] Scriptures we learn that Gotama first sought instruction under two religious teachers, found them unsatisfying, and for six years practised austerities in the company of five disciples. Then abandoning his fasting and self-tortures he thought of a new method of religious exercise, and won enlightenment.”⁷

Those who have studied the life of our Holy Prophet know that he was severely shocked at seeing people sunk in immorality and obscene rites. He was so anxious for them that he kept awake at night and his heart soared aloft. Before attaining prophethood he often left his home and went to a cave on Mount Hira. Solitude became a passion with him. Here in this cave he often remained the whole night, pondering over the darksome fate of his people, praying and crying

before Almighty God to create a cultured nation out of savage tribes. A saint of our age describes it in these poetic words:

“I know not what great anxiety, grief and sorrow encompassed his mind / and drew him to that lonely cave, grieving and sad. There was no fear of darkness in his mind nor any terror of loneliness / no awe of death, no dread of poisonous reptiles. He cried painfully for the reform of his people / Praying to God day and night had become a passion with him. At last, owing to his humility, his prayers and craving / the Beneficent God bestowed favours upon the intensely dark world.”⁸

In this cave, God’s words uttered to him became at last the life-giving power of the world. Hence Mount Hira is called the Mount of Light (*Jabl an-nūr*). He was called to bear the heavy task of the reformation of mankind, and according to the prophecy of *Shakya-muni Gautama*, Muhammad was the honoured *Maitreya Buddha* of his cycle.

Second Anecdote — spurning worldly temptations

Buddha, though a prince, gave up his kingdom and led a hermit’s life. The Prophet Muhammad was not a prince nor a king, but the Quraish tried to win him over by temptation and approached him directly, with these offers:

“If your ambition is to possess wealth we will amass for you as much of it as you wish; if you aspire to win honour, we are prepared to swear allegiance to you as our overlord and king; if you have a fancy for beauty, we offer you the hand of the finest maiden of your own choice.”⁹

He replied:

“What I have brought you is not so that I may seek riches or honour or political power from you. I have been commissioned by God as a messenger to you and He has revealed a book to me. He has commanded me to be a giver of good news and a warner to you. I have delivered His messages to you and given

you good advice. Should you accept from me what I have brought you, you shall have felicity in this life and in the life to come; should you reject it, I shall act patiently on the command of God until God decides between you and me.”¹⁰

These offers were put to him on two occasions. On the first occasion he rejected them by reciting part of a chapter of the Quran, and on the second occasion he gave the reply quoted above.¹¹

A little earlier than the incidents of these offers to the Holy Prophet, the same opponents had delivered an ultimatum to Abu Talib, the Prophet’s uncle and his sole support, telling him to make the Prophet desist from his preaching or to withdraw his support from him. When Abu Talib related this to the Prophet, the latter stood adamant and said to his uncle:

“Should they place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left in order to make me renounce this mission, I should not do so; I shall never give it up until it shall please God to make it triumph or I perish in the attempt.”¹²

After many years of the hardest suffering for the good of the very people who took pleasure in inflicting on him the cruellest tortures, when he had climbed to the summit of royal glory, he lived on the same simple, humble food and wore the same simple dress. It is hard to give up a kingly throne and lead the life of a hermit, but it is harder still to wield the royal sceptre and at the same time to lead a hermit’s life. Though the ruler of a state, some nights he would go without food and for several days lived on mere dates. He always slept on a coarse matting of palm leaves.

No royal palace did he build for himself, nor did he crown himself with pearls and jewels. When his wives came to him asking for more finery and ornaments, they were coldly told that if they would have these things they were not fit to live in the Holy Prophet’s house.¹³ In his daily routines, he mended his shoes himself, milked the goat, kindled fire in the hearths of his wives, and served some needy widow.

Third anecdote — the tree

Coming back to the point, Gautama Buddha was ordained with Divine Knowledge, and he was enthralled with that Divine Light under a Bo tree, which changed his life *in toto*. It is in celebration of this that the Buddhists hold their congregations and meetings under Bo tree shades.

Theosophists also have followed the same path. Among Hindus also, trees like the Bo and pipal are regarded as sacred, for it is believed that gods take rest under these.¹⁴ In Brewer's *Dictionary of Phrase & Fable* it is written:

“According to Mohammed a lotus-tree stands in the seventh heaven, on the right hand of the throne of God, and the Egyptians pictured God sitting on a lotus above the watery mud. Jamblichus says the leaves and fruit of the lotus-tree being *round* represent ‘the motion of intellect’; its towering up through mud symbolizes the eminency of divine intellect over matter; and the Diety sitting on it implies His intellectual sovereignty.”¹⁵

The Holy Quran reveals that the Holy Prophet Muhammad attained the highest goal of spiritual knowledge as follows:

“And certainly he saw Him in another descent, at the farthest lote-tree (*sidrat al-muntahā*). Near it is the Garden of Abode. When that which covers covered the lote-tree (*sidrah*),¹⁶ the eye did not turn aside, nor did it exceed the limit. Certainly he saw some of the greatest signs of his Lord.” — 53: 13–18

These verses of the Divine revelation speak of the ascension or *mi'rāj* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. And what Buddha achieved under the Bo-tree was his ascension. Hence, “immediately after his enlightenment the archangel Brahma visited Buddha Gautama by the Bo-tree.”¹⁷ The ascension of Moses is mentioned in the Holy Quran at the union of the two seas of human and Divine knowledge (18: 60).

Buddhists mistook the Bo-tree to be the end of all. This elevation and exaltation is metaphorically analogous to the high tree, which the

Buddhists and Hindus consider as the *asvattha* (pipal) tree or Bo-tree. According to the Holy Quran, it signifies that the Holy Prophet saw signs and arguments of the existence of God — such an attainment that human knowledge does not go beyond it. His eye “did not turn aside, nor did it exceed the limit”, but the eyes of the idolatrous Hindus and the Buddhists did turn aside and they took to the worship of these trees themselves, whereas the tree connotes the spiritual tree of Divine revelation and Divine knowledge.

Fourth anecdote — ending monopoly of priests

The Buddha unveiled the much-concealed religion of truth, which was kept hidden by Hindu ecclesiastics. He criticised the Vedas vehemently. He brought an end to all exploitation in the field of religion and belief, and laid the foundation of equality and brotherhood. The Dhammapada contains the words:

“You yourself must make an effort. The Tathagatas (Buddhas) are only teachers.”¹⁸

About himself, he declared that he was a human teacher:

“In the Anguttara Nikāya (I, 22), there is a clear instance in which the Buddha categorically declared that he was a human being:

“Monks, there is one person (*puggala*) whose birth into this world is for the welfare and happiness of many, out of compassion for the world, for the gain and welfare and happiness of gods (*devas*) and humanity. Who is this one person (*eka puggala*)? It is the Tathāgata, who is a Consummate One (*arahat*), a Supremely Enlightened One (*sammā-sambuddho*)... Monks, one person born into the world is an extraordinary man, a marvellous man (*acchariya manussa*).”

Note the Pali word *manussa*, a human being.”¹⁹

In another work, a quotation from the Digha Nikaya (ii, 109) is given under the heading *The Human Teacher*, and it is said with reference to this quotation:

“In the following excerpt Buddha presents himself as a teacher, fully human.”²⁰

Bhikkhu Narada writes:

“The Buddha does not claim to be an incarnation (*avatāra*) of the Hindu god Vishnu ... Nor does the Buddha call himself a “saviour” who freely saves others by his personal salvation.”²¹

And further:

“The Buddha was a human being. As a man he was born, as a Buddha he lived, and as a Buddha his life came to an end. Though human, he became an extraordinary man owing to his unique characteristics. The Buddha laid stress on this important point, and left no room for any one to fall into the error of thinking that he was an immortal being.”²²

Similarly, the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad tell us that he was only a human teacher who cannot “save” anyone, and his followers must make their own efforts for salvation. The Quran lays down the clear principle:

“that no bearer of burden bears another’s burden, and that man can have nothing but what he strives for...” — 53:38–39

The Prophet is told to declare to people:

“Say: I am only a mortal like you — it is revealed to me that your God is one God. So whoever hopes to meet his Lord, he should do good deeds, and make no one a partner (with God) in the service of his Lord.” — 18:110

“So whoever goes aright, goes aright only for the good of his own soul, and whoever goes astray. Say: I am only a warner.” — 27:92

According to a Hadith report, if on the Day of Judgment any Muslim, bearing the burden of his neglect of duty in this world, calls on the Prophet, saying “O Muhammad (save me)!” the Prophet will reply: “I can do nothing for you. I had conveyed to you the message.”²³

It is a pity that the Mahayana sect of the Buddhists have gone so far astray that they have come to believe the Buddha to be God Almighty. As a matter of fact, as with the Buddha, much of the message brought by the Prophet Muhammad was meant to reform the previous religions. Doctors of law and monks among the Christians and Jews, and *pandits* among Hindus and Buddhists, had interpolated many innovations into their books. The Holy Quran reviewed them with arguments, logical and referential, thus ringing a death knell for the monopoly of the priests or the clergy and making incumbent on every person, male or female, to acquire a knowledge of religious truths.

Fifth scene in Buddhistic character — duty to wife and family

The Buddha's biography reveals a woeful anecdote of his parting from his near and dear ones, once for all. Marriage is a religious and legal bond between the husband and the wife. If neither is guilty, the severance of this covenant is quite illegal. The Buddha's mental attitude altered. He forsook mundane life and observed monkery, but his wife and child were in no case to blame for being thus deserted. No nation in this world can survive by following in these footsteps of the Buddha. Buddhists, however, have to marry, even against the example set down by the Buddha and have to associate with wives and children till the end of their lives.

Here there is no analogy between the Buddha and the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Provisional seclusion, however, has been followed by the righteous to serve God. The Prophet Muhammad, living amongst his wife and children, gives a message of Divine love, which, in fact, is the most practicable lesson for humanity. The example set by the Buddha in his own life does not seem to be practicable for people in general.

On the other hand, the ideal character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad can be followed by all. Nevertheless, his life does show gleams of his having parted from his wife and children, while drinking deep in the adoration and worship of God. According to a tradition, he was away from his wives as soon as he heard the call for

the prayer.²⁴ This is not an easy task; only psychologists can appreciate its significance. A man chatting in affection with his wife, enjoying the soothing company of the affectionate partner with all mirth and joy, draws away on hearing the call. The bond of love is cut on hearing the cry. He devotes himself entirely to the call and God. This is the time when he gets a chance to express his love for God, and at once gives up all worldly enjoyments, and faces God five times a day. In doing so, he says: Indeed there is love and affection for wife and children, but the solace of the heart lies in the worship of God. It was his spark of the love of God which led him to disappear from his wife even during the night time. As a result, he was often found prostrated before God even before midnight.²⁵ A man who has slipped away from his family, into the seclusion of a jungle, cannot attain to this high pedestal of adoration and renunciation every day.

Sixth lesson of Buddha's character — worship for self-reform

Religious rituals and all sorts of worship which have no effect on the moral and spiritual life of man are useless. Those who are in search of eternal redemption and ultimate truth have to guard themselves against selfish desires and emotions. Accordingly the Buddha says:

“Not the perversities of others, not their sins of commission or omission, but his own misdeeds and negligences should a sage take notice of. Like a beautiful flower, full of colour, but without scent, are the fine but fruitless words of him who does not act accordingly. But, like a beautiful flower, full of colour and full of scent, are the fine and fruitful words of him who acts accordingly.”²⁶

This may be compared with the following verse of the Quran:

“O you who believe, take care of your own souls — he who goes astray cannot harm you when you are on the right way.”
— 5: 105

According to the Quran, guarding against evil or being saved from sins is the primary object of worship. The purpose of prayer, it says, is to “keep (one) away from indecency and evil” (29:45). In a

short chapter, ch. 107, it condemns those who pray, but do not treat others kindly, as “denying religion”, being “unmindful of their prayers” and doing good “only to be seen”. The purpose of fasting is stated to be “that you guard against evil” (2:183), “walk in the right way” (2:186), and refrain from bribery and unlawfully taking the property of other people (2:188). In the sacrifice of an animal made at the Pilgrimage, “not their flesh, nor their blood, reaches Allah but to Him is acceptable the observance of duty on your part” (22:37). More generally, it is stated that “turning your faces to the east and the west”, which indicates outward and ceremonial acts of worship, does not make anyone righteous, but what is required is true faith accompanied by service of humanity out of love of God (2:177).

One who worships God for any greed or avarice has been referred to in the verse of the Quran:

“Have you seen him who takes his low desires for his God?
Will you (O Prophet) be a guardian over him?” — 25:43

It is not simply worship of idols that is condemned, but blindly following one’s desires is equally condemned.

Many people who consider themselves the servants of one God really bow in submission before the greatest of their idols, their desires. The Prophet Muhammad, from the cradle to the grave, passed through a diversity of circumstances, a diversity hardly met with in the life of one man. From being an orphan, he climbed to the summit of royal glory, but that did not bring about the slightest change in his way of simple living. He did all his own work and chores. When the mosque of Madinah was under construction he worked like other labourers.²⁷ This is the scene of asceticism towards all worldly desires and greed, which are explicit in the life of the Prophet Muhammad.

Buddha, too, considered worldly greed a delusion, the keeping away from which leads to final salvation. The Quran says:

“Wealth and children are an adornment of the life of this world;
but the ever-abiding, the good works, are better with your Lord
in reward and better in hope.” — 18:46

Thus the Quran did not teach any prayers asking for unrestricted gold, wealth or long life, as we find in the Vedas. On the other hand, it taught such prayers as help one to attain to the highest stages of righteousness, redemption and betterment.

Seventh anecdote — attainment of highest peace

Salvation (*nirvana*) is that stage of man's sanctity which is known as peace and tranquillity of mind. To annihilate petty conflicts in life and to sacrifice all for the acquisition of eternal solace is something hard to endure. Unless low worldly desires, as a sequel to greed and avarice, are obliterated from within, no man can be saved from the fire of hell. The Holy Quran, while discussing different stages of the human soul, speaks about the contented and peaceful soul:

“O soul that are at rest, return to your Lord, well-pleased (with Him), well-pleasing (Him). So enter among My servants, and enter My Garden!” — 89:27–30

According to Buddhist phraseology this status is called that of perfect peace, righteousness, concord and the higher wisdom.

To conclude, as the Buddha had foretold the advent of a Buddha like him, it has, therefore, been deemed fit to show similarities between Gautama Buddha and the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

Buddha's title Tathagata and Prophet Muhammad²⁸

Gautama Buddha is said to have followed the same path as buddhas before him in order to reach this station. This, in fact, is the foremost meaning of his title *Tathagata*: “he who has arrived in such fashion, i.e. who has worked his way upwards to perfection for the world's good in the same fashion as all previous Buddhas”.²⁹

T.W. Rhys Davids writes in his book on Buddhism:

“The historical Buddha ... is represented to have taught that he was the latest of a series of seven Buddhas, who had appeared at intervals in the world, and had taught the same system. After the death of each Buddha his religion flourishes for a time, and then decays, till it is at last completely forgotten, and wickedness

and violence rule over the earth. Gradually then the world improves; until at last a new Buddha appears who again preaches the lost *Dharma* or Truth.”³⁰

According to Hardy, many orientalist hold the view that the Gautama Buddha “was only the reviver of a system that had been previously taught by more ancient sages”³¹ and that his followers asserted that he was self-taught:

“...teaching the same truths as the former Buddhas, but deriving his knowledge from the intuitive power he received when he became Buddha, and not from either reason or tradition.

It is said in the Milinda Prasna: ‘The dharmma of all the Buddhas is the same, but there are four things in which they differ...’.”

The differences, which are then listed here, do not relate to any spiritual or theological doctrine. Hardy goes on to add:

“... it is the uniform testimony of the Singhalese authors that in doctrine the Buddhas are one.”³²

Compare this with the following statements in the Quran, addressed to the Prophet Muhammad. After mentioning eighteen prophets by name, ranging in time from Noah to Jesus, it is said:

“These are they whom God guided, so follow their guidance. Say: I do not ask you for any reward for it. It is nothing but a reminder for (all) the nations.” — 6:90

The Prophet Muhammad was also told:

“He (God) has made plain to you the religion which He enjoined upon Noah and which We have revealed to you (O Prophet), and which We enjoined on Abraham and Moses and Jesus — to establish religion and not to be divided in (regard to) it.” — 42:13

“Say: I am not the first of the messengers...” — 46:9

The word for “first” here, *bid'an*, means a novelty or a thing

existing for the first time. In these verses the Holy Prophet is, in fact, told that he was now the representative of all the prophets that had gone before him.

Another meaning of the title *Tathagata* is: “he whose words and deeds accord”.³³ This applies with absolute clarity to the Prophet Muhammad. It is stated repeatedly in the Quran that the Prophet should follow, and does follow, what is revealed to him by God, and nothing else such as his or other people’s desires.³⁴ His wife Aishah was once asked by someone about the morals of the Messenger of Allah. She replied: “Do you not read the Quran?” When he said, “Yes”, she replied: “The morals of the Prophet of God were the Quran.”³⁵

Another meaning, among what some consider as the eight meanings of *Tathagata*, is: The great physician whose medicine is all-potent.³⁶ The Quran says that it has come and has been revealed as a “healing” — a healing for what is in the hearts and a healing for those who believe in it.³⁷

Addendum: Buddha’s fasting³⁸

Regarding Buddha’s rigorous fasting which he had to abandon as unsuccessful (see page 22 above), it did not mean that he rejected fasting itself as a futile exercise. In a modern psychologist’s book on the many various aspects of fasting, it is stated:

“The Buddha spoke highly of fasting and said that during his fasts ‘my soul becomes brighter, my spirit more alive in wisdom and truth’. ... some historians believe that the Buddha’s fasting experience was the spiritual vehicle for his enlightenment. ... The Buddha’s fasting experiences were nothing short of transformational.”³⁹

Similarly, the Holy Prophet Muhammad sometimes performed continuous fasting over several days without a break. But he forbade it to his followers “out of mercy for them and because severity in religion is disapproved”, and he told them: “I am not like you, for while I spend the night the One Who feeds (i.e., God) gives me food and the One Who provides drink gives me drink.”⁴⁰

Notes to Chapter 3:

1. *Majjhima Nikaya*, sutta 4: *Bhayabherava Sutta*. See *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, translated by Nanamoli and Bodhi, p. 105–107, nos. 28, 30, 33. See also *The Majjhima Nikaya, The First Fifty Discourses*, translated by Sīlācāra, ch. IV: Fear and Terror⁷, p. 21–23.
2. *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 36, p. 56. The Questions of King Milinda, Part II, translated by T.W. Rhys Davids.
3. Muir, Sir William, *The Life of Mohammad*, revised by T.H. Weir, Part First, ch. VII, p. 161–162.
4. Gospel of John, 16: 13.
5. These events can be read in the following ancient biographies of Buddha:
 - (1) The *Buddhacarita* of Ashvaghosha, translated in *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 49.
 - (2) The *Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King* by Ashvaghosha, translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by Dharmaraksha (A.D. 420), and from Chinese into English by Samuel Beal, in *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 19.See the following places in these two sources:

For Buddha seeing suffering, see (1), Book III: 26–63 on p. 30–35, and (2), Kiouen I, Varga 3 on p. 29–37.

For his leaving the palace, see (1), Book V: 79 on p. 60 onwards, and (2), Kiouen I, Varga 5 on p. 58.

For his disappointment with saints, see (1), Book XII: 81 and 86 on p. 132, and (2), Kiouen II, Varga 7, no. 555 on p. 79, Kiouen III, Varga 12, no. 996–997 on p. 141–142.

For his devotions being of no avail, see (1), Book XII: 92, 97 on p. 133, and (2), Kiouen III, Varga 12, no. 1010–1011 on p. 143–144.

For his enlightenment, see (1), Book XIV: 64–80 on p. 154–156, and (2), Kiouen III, Varga 14, no. 1164–1168 on p. 163.
6. *The Light of Asia* is a highly acclaimed book on the life of the Buddha by Sir Edwin Arnold.
7. E.J. Thomas, p. 62.
8. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Ainah Kamalat-i Islam*, p. 23.
9. There are slightly varying versions of these offers, but all mention the offers of wealth, honour and kingship. See: Ibn Ishāq and Ibn Hishām's *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, translated by Guillaume as *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 133–134; and *Sīrat-un-Nabī* (Urdu) by Shibli Numani, v. 1, p. 153–154, Pakistan, 2002.

10. Guillaume, *op. cit.*, p. 134. See also Urdu translation of *Sīrat-un-Nabī of Ibn Hishām*, by Maulvi Qutb-ud-Din Ahmad, Part 1, p. 295–296.
11. Guillaume, *op. cit.*, p. 132–134; Urdu translation of *Sīrat-un-Nabī of Ibn Hishām*, *op. cit.*, p. 292–296.
12. Guillaume, *op. cit.*, p. 119; M.H. Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 89. See also: Muir, *The Life of Mohammad*, revised by T.H. Weir, p. 87.
13. The Quran, 33 : 28–29.
14. Atharva Veda, see V, 4, number 3 in Maurice Bloomfield’s translation in *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 42, p. 4. Rig Veda, mandal 1, hymn 164, verses 20–22 and mandal 10, hymn 135.
15. Brewer’s *Dictionary of Phrase & Fable*, art. ‘Lotus’, p. 569.
16. The word for lote-tree in this verse is *sidrah*. Its feminine ending letter *h* becomes *t* when it is followed by a word beginning with *al* (‘the’); thus *sidrat al-muntahā*. The word *sidrat* bears a curious resemblance to Siddhartha, the name of Buddha when he was a prince.
17. Silacara, Bhikku, *The Majjhima Nikaya: The First Fifty Discourses from the Collection of the Medium-Length Discourses of Gotama the Buddha*, p. 151. In *The Noble Eightfold Path* by Rev. W. St. Clair-Tisdall, it is stated with references to Buddhist sources: “...after spending four times seven days in meditation under various trees, during which time he at first thought of ceasing to exist, and thus entering at once on the enjoyment of his emancipation from all suffering, he at length decided to remain alive in this world in order to teach to others the way of deliverance which he had evolved from his own inner consciousness or intuition. The tradition says that he was induced to come to this resolution by the humble entreaties of Brahma Sahampati, the being who, in Buddhist mythology, rules over the highest of all the heavens. *This archangel, as we may term him*, most humbly kneeling before Buddha, said, ‘Let the Tathāgato preach the doctrine!...’” (p. 26–27; italics ours).
18. *Tumhehi kiccaṃ ātappaṃ akkhātāro Tathāgatā* — The Dhammapada, ch. 20: ‘The Path’, v. 276. *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 10, p. 67.
19. Piyadassi Thera, *The Buddha, His Life and Teachings*, p. 24–25.
20. *Readings in Eastern Religions*, edited by Harold Coward et al, second edition, Part Three: Buddhism, p. 148.
21. Narada Mahathera, *The Buddha and his Teachings*, ch. 3: The Buddhahood; Buddhist Publication Society, Sri Lanka, third edition, p. 23.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

23. Bukhari, book 24: *Zakat*, hadith 1402.
24. When his wife Aishah was asked, “What did the Prophet do in the house”, she replied: “He used to serve the people of his household, and when the time for prayer came, he would go out for the prayer” (Bukhari, book 10: Call to Prayer, hadith 676). She also said, in answer to a question about his prayers, that while he was in bed with his wife before dawn, when he would hear the call to prayer he would get up and perform his ablution and go out for the prayer (Nasa’i, book 20: Prayer at night and voluntary prayer during the day, hadith 1680).
25. The Holy Prophet used to stand for so long during his night prayers that his feet would become swollen. When asked why he underwent this rigour, he replied: “Should I not be a thankful servant of God?” (Bukhari, book 19: The *Tahajjud* Prayer, hadith 1130).
26. The Dhammapada, ch. 4: ‘Flowers’, v. 50–52. See *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 10, p. 17–18.
27. Bukhari, book 63: Virtues of the *Ansar*, hadith 3906 (near end of hadith).
28. This has been added from the Urdu version of the author’s book.
29. Robert Chalmers, *Tathāgata*, article in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, v. 30, issue 1, January 1898, p. 105.
30. T.W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 179–180.
31. R. Spence Hardy, *A Manual of Buddhism*, ch. IV, p. 86.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
33. Chalmers, *Op. Cit.*, p. 106.
34. See the Quran, 5: 48–49, 6: 50, 6: 106, 7: 3, 7: 203, 10: 15, 10: 109, 13: 37, 33: 2, 42: 15 and 46: 9.
35. Sahih Muslim, book 6: Prayers of travellers and shortening them, ch. 18: ‘Night Prayer’.
36. Chalmers, *Op. Cit.*, p. 106.
37. See the Quran, 10: 57, 17: 82 and 41: 44.
38. *Editor’s Note*: This brief addition has been made by me.
39. Dr Randi Fredricks, *Fasting: An Exceptional Human Experience*, ch. 10, p. 241–242.
40. Bukhari, book 30: Fasting, see chs. 47–49, hadith 1961–1967. See also ch. 7, note 38 of the present book.

4. Buddhist Scriptures and Sects

“Woe! then, to those who write the Book with their hands then say, This is from God.” — The Quran, 2: 79

It is an avowed fact that Buddha left no book or scripture after him. As Charles Henry Ward writes:

“The Buddha, (like Jesus), left behind him no written work, but immediately after his death, according to orthodox Buddhistic tradition, a great council of 500 monks came together at Rajagaha (modern Rajgar) and ‘Upaili and Ananda rehearsed respectively the Vinaya and Dhamma...’ No mention is made here of the Abhidhamma, the third division, which, with the Vinaya and the Dhamma, completes the Buddhist Canon.”¹

It happened so in spite of what the Buddha advised his disciples: “Learn what has been said; master it, bear it in mind.”² Nevertheless, Buddhists believe that the disciples of Buddha committed to memory all that he said, and before his teachings were written down they were honestly narrated. Though his disciples failed to learn by heart all his sayings, they must have remembered his meanings. But very soon these narratives underwent many changes. Ward writes: “In all the Pitakas there are elements of very early teachings mixed up with matter which is clearly later by centuries.”³ He goes on:

“...we may say there is a strong presumption that the Pitakas contain teachings actually given by the Buddha, and, possibly, some of them in the very form in which they were originally given, though not in Buddha’s own words, for we may be sure that he spoke to the people in their own vernaculars. ... But *the words of the Buddha* have come down to us in Pali, and in a perfected form of Pali which, probably, had not even come into

existence at the time when the Asokan inscriptions were made. Hence *the words of the Buddha* in the Pali Texts are a translation into another language of the words and expressions he actually used. Moreover the fact that these teachings were not committed to writing until centuries after the death of the Teacher, but existed only in the form of an Oral tradition, makes it very difficult to decide what the original teachings were.”⁴ (Italics are in the original.)

For the corrections of these books occasional councils were called, but were of no avail owing to the disruption in Buddhistic ranks giving rise to various sects and the suggestion of separate and different books.

In modern times, Buddhist scriptures are considered to be in three parts. In religious terminology these three parts have been described as the three Baskets (*Tripitaka*). The names of these are: the *Vinaya Pitaka*, the *Sutta Pitaka* and the *Abhidhamma Pitaka*. A part of the second one of these, the *Sutta Pitaka*, is known as *Dhammapada*. These Scriptures are written in the Pali language. History tells us that the language which the Buddha spoke has not reached us. The Pali language is a later thing, and it was not spoken nor written even at the time when the pillars of Ashoka were engraved with the preachings and doctrines of Buddha. So the Buddhists admit that the very words of the Buddha have not reached them without adulteration. An authenticated authority, Mrs. C.A.F. Rhys Davids, writes that in the Pitakas there is no mention of *repeaters*, i.e., persons who learnt oral traditions of Buddhism word for word from their teachers and then passed them down in the same way to the generation after them.⁵

Scriptures extant today were never agreed upon as authenticated by earlier Buddhists as a whole. In the council of Rajagaha, an ecclesiastic like Puran refused to agree to the authenticity of the text adopted by the council and preferred his own recollection.⁶

Buddhist sects

There are two great sections among the Buddhists: the *Mahayana* and the *Hinayana*. It is said that the former is far away from the teachings

of the Buddha. According to the Pali Pitaka, the Mahayana is a baseless and altered chimera. The people belonging to this sect believe that Buddha was not a corporeal entity. They believe that he was, rather, a superman. Ward writes:

“...the Mahayanists deny that the Buddha ever possessed a material body, or was in any real sense a man, or that he really entered Nirvana.”⁷

Then he quotes an authority as follows:

“Sakyamuni did not appear in person in the world, but deputed an image of himself to represent him.”⁸

On the other hand, the Hinayana sect disbelieved in God and revelation. Narada Mahathera writes:

“In Buddhism there is not, as in most other religions, an Almighty God to be obeyed and feared. The Buddha does not believe in a cosmic potentate, omniscient and omnipresent. In Buddhism there are no divine revelations or divine messengers.”⁹

He further writes:

“The Buddha was a human being. As a man he was born, as a man he lived, and as a man his life came to an end. Though a human being, he became an extraordinary man (*acchariya manussa*), but he never arrogated to himself divinity.”¹⁰

He quotes Buddha as declaring:

“To depend on others for salvation is negative, but to depend on oneself is positive.”¹¹

“Be islands unto yourselves, be a refuge unto yourselves, seek not for refuge in others.”¹²

As a matter of fact, the Pali language in which these Scriptures are written is solely responsible for the creation of these sects among the Buddhists. The Pali grammar is so ambiguous that any scholar can mould it according to his own views. In order to specify and

correct the teachings of the Buddha and to preserve them from alterations three successive councils at intervals of a century were convened.

But it is an admitted fact that these Scriptures were written much later after Buddha. Keith says that the *Sutta Pitaka* was written 200 years after the death of Ashoka and that a section of the *Abhidhamma Pitaka* was “still open to additions in the second century A.D. and later”.¹³ The different sects of Buddhists draw the authority for their beliefs from various books and scriptures. Every sect believes its scriptures to be the most authentic. But the learned compiler of the *Sacred Books of the East* writes:

“All Indian MSS. are comparatively modern, and one who has probably handled more Indian MSS. than anybody else, Mr. A. Burnell, has lately expressed his conviction that ‘no MS. written one thousand years ago is now existent in India, and that it is almost impossible to find one written five hundred years ago, for most MSS. which claim to be of that date are merely copies of old MSS. the dates of which are repeated by the copyists.’ ”¹⁴

According to decisions reached at the three councils, which were convened successively after each century, additions and omissions were made to the Scriptures. Some parts of the Pitakas were added to the Canon as a result of the convention of the 3rd council, said to have been held in 247 or 242 B.C.E.¹⁵ E.J. Thomas writes:

“But in the texts, there is much which does not claim to be in any sense Buddha’s utterance. This is recognised by the Buddhist commentators themselves, as when they explain that certain sentences or whole verses have been added by the revisers at one of the Councils.... To speak without qualification of the final revision of the Scriptures is perhaps to take too much for granted, but it is usually held that the general arrangement was fixed at the third Council, 247 B.C. There are certain works, particularly in the fifth Nikāya discussed below, concerning which other conclusions may be drawn.”¹⁶

Buddha is said to have declared: "After my decease, first will occur the five disappearances." Of these, one is "the disappearance of learning", that is, his words and teachings. A time will come when a Buddhist king will announce that anyone knowing a single stanza spoken by the Buddha will get a prize of a thousand pieces of silver in a golden box on an elephant. But none in the city will be found who knows a four-line stanza to win the prize even after its being announced two or three times.¹⁷

In the book *What is Buddhism?* published by the Buddhist Society, London, it is stated:

"Q. But do you not even regard your own scriptures as authoritative?"

A. Certainly not. The tendency of modern research is to show that the Buddhist scriptures, like the Christian Bible, consist of a miscellany of writings, compiled by different authors in different centuries, nor can any, or any part of these be relied upon as being the All-Enlightened One's own words."¹⁸

In his book *Buddhist Scriptures*, Edward Conze writes:

"For the first five hundred years the Scriptures were orally transmitted. They were written down only at the beginning of the Christian era, because at that time the decline in faith threatened their continued survival in the memories of the monks. Different schools wrote down different things. Much of it was obviously composed centuries ago, and some of it must represent the direct and actual sayings of the Buddha himself. At present we have, however, no objective criterion which would allow us to isolate the original gospel."¹⁹

Buddha as a reformer of the Vedic religion

It is generally thought that Buddha neither believed in God nor in the soul and that his refusal to believe in the soul is contained in the *Visuddhimagga* (ch. 16).²⁰ But Buddhist philosophers never succeeded in solving this problem. They surmise that there is ill-fate, but

not the ill-fated one; there is evil deed, but not the doer; there is salvation, but not its seeker; there is the way, but none tread upon it. In other words, there is misery, suffering, deeds and salvation, but the soul which feels all this is wanting. Action takes place without the doer, i.e., the soul. Truth and salvation exist and are achieved, but that which achieves these ends is not an entity or any substantial thing. How can Buddha deny the unanimous belief of all religions and what every individual has personally felt by his sense of feeling?

As a matter of fact, the denial of soul and God on the part of Buddha amounts to the denial of the conception of God and soul in the Hindu religion. In the Vedic religion the soul is supposed to be a piece of God and unchangeable, and everything is believed to be as God. In the eyes of the Brahmanas, Buddha was an atheist. Now, some of the Buddhist schools of philosophy were atheistical, but whether Gautama Shakyamuni, the Buddha, was himself an atheist is at least doubtful, and his denial of the popular *devas* would certainly not make him so. In the Rupnath inscriptions (221 B.C.) Ashoka takes credit that “he made the inhabitants of Jambudvipa,²¹ i.e., India, abjure the gods in whom they believed formerly”²² and boasts of it.²³

In the eyes of the Athenian judges, Socrates was an atheist, yet he did not even deny the gods of Greece, but simply claimed the right to believe in something.

Buddha disbelieves the Vedic conception of soul and God. According to him, the soul is more changeable than the material body and it lives and dies every moment. It is like a kaleidoscope. Whenever it is revolved, innumerable hues and figures are visible in it. A picture once made in it is never visible again, no matter how often you revolve it. So the present soul and mind and that of the future can never be like that of old. Names and figures are all variables that undergo change every moment.

Buddha also discarded the doctrine of incarnation according to which a man or an animal is believed to be as God. On account of

this it is surmised that Buddha denied the existence of God and soul. In fact, it is not a denial of God and soul but a denial of the Vedic belief that everything is God and he incarnates in everything, and that the soul is subject to transmigration.

Besides this, the Buddha opposed the rite of offering burnt sacrifices, which meant that man could attain to worldly as well as religious ends by merely offering these sacrifices before a god without doing any good deeds. With this belief in view, the Hindus appease the gods. Buddha raised his voice against this barbarous rite and opposed this idea vehemently.

Buddha disbelieved in the unreasonable teachings of the Vedas as well as in their Divine Origin. Nalinaksha Dutt writes:

“In the *Silavimamsa jataka* the Boddhisatta says: “Of no value are the Vedas, of no value is birth or kinsman for the future world; only one’s own pure virtue brings him happiness in the next world.” Buddha disbelieves the revealed character of the Vedas by remarking that the ancient sages ... never saw Brahman from whom they state to have received the Vedic texts (*Digh. Nik. I, Tevijja Suttanta*).”²⁴

Nagasena, the famous Buddhist sage and missionary of the second century B.C., who had mastered the Vedas as a child, said after his education in these scriptures:

“Empty forsooth are these Vedas, and as chaff. There is in them neither reality, nor worth, nor essential truth!”²⁵

Dr B.R. Ambedkar, the Indian jurist, scholar and social reformer from the ‘Untouchable’ community, who became a Buddhist, writes in his book *Buddha and His Dhamma*:

“20. The Buddha did not regard all the Vedic Sages as worthy of reverence. He regarded just ten Vedic Rishis as the most ancient, and as the real authors of the Mantras.

21. But in the Mantras he saw nothing that was morally elevating.

22. In his view the Vedas were as worthless as a desert.

23. The Buddha, therefore, discarded the Mantras as a source from which to learn or to borrow.

24. Similarly, the Buddha did not find anything in the philosophy of the Vedic Rishis. They were groping to reach the truth. But they had not reached it.

25. Their theories were mere speculations, not based on logic nor on facts. Their contributions to philosophy created no social values.

26. He therefore rejected the philosophy of the Vedic Rishis as useless.”²⁶

Oldenberg writes:

“Buddha discredited the [Vedic] sacrificial system; he censured with bitter irony the knowledge of Vedic scribes as sheer folly, if not as shameless swindle.”²⁷

T.W. Rhys Davids quotes from Buddhist scriptures as follows:

“Reading the Vedas, making offerings to priests, or sacrifices to the gods, self-mortifications by heat or cold, and many such-like penances performed for the sake of immortality, these do not cleanse the man not free from delusions.”²⁸

But that Buddha is not to blame for this denial even Dayanand writes in his *Satyarth Prakash*:

“Seeing these evil, popish practices as well as others [i.e., of Hindu priests], such as feeding the priest in order to satisfy the spirits of the dead, a most dreadful religion, called Jainism or Budhism, that reviled the *Vedas* and the *Shastras*, sprang up into existence.”²⁹

Buddhism and the verifier Messenger

The Holy Quran has vindicated many principles of Buddha. The doctrine of gradual growth on the physical and spiritual sides, the changeability of the soul and the denial of its aboriginality are the admitted principles of Islam. The Quran says:

“And they ask you about the soul. Say: The soul is by the commandment of my Lord, and you are not given knowledge but a little.” — 17:85

Three points are worth consideration in this verse:

1. The soul is a commandment;
2. It is the commandment of the Lord (*Rabb*);
3. The soul is a knowledge.

The first significance, that soul is a commandment, indicates that the soul comes into being by the command of God and is extant by the word of God. The second significance is that it is a command of the Lord (*Rabb*). In Arabic *Rabb* means he who creates a thing and gradually makes it progress, and it evolves after passing through various stages. The third significance is in reference to Buddha taking soul as being *gyan* or knowledge. So the Holy Prophet and Buddha verify each other in their conception about soul. Not only Buddha, but also all the Prophets of God, in opposition to the Hindu philosophy, are in agreement with each other in this belief.

The claim of Buddha is that he was a preacher of moral reform and good deeds. He believed that this goal is not achieved by animal sacrifices and performing rites or recitation of charms, and that no priest or *pandit* could intercede for the sins of human beings. On the other hand, he believed each individual to bear his own cross. And this is perfectly in consonance with Islamic teachings.

The claim of Buddha to be the reformer of the Vedic teachings conforms to the Islamic conception that, whenever errors creep into the fundamentals of a religion, a reformer must appear to rectify them.

Buddha has been blamed for having taken pork. But we find in explicit terms in *Outline of Buddhism*: “Some modern scholars suggest that Gotama did not eat pork, but a kind of truffle of which pigs are very fond, hence the name.”³⁰

Books on Buddhism relate only this much, that Buddha died of *Shushk Sukaramaddava*. *Shushk* means ‘dry’, *sukaramaddava* means ‘as soft as the flesh of swine’, and it is the name given to this truffle.

Edward J. Thomas writes about the word *sukaramaddava*:

“The word means pig’s soft food, but does not indicate whether it means food made of pigs’ flesh, or food eaten by pigs. The word however is not the obvious *sukaramamsa*, ‘pigs’ flesh,’ which we should expect, of this were meant.”³¹

Likeness of a prophet’s or a Buddha’s teachings to honey³²

Buddha said:

“As the bee collects nectar and departs without injuring the flower, or its colour or scent, so let a sage dwell in his village”.³³

Compare this with the following verses of the Quran:

“And your Lord revealed to the bee: Make hives in the mountains and in the trees and in what they build, then eat of all the fruits and walk in the ways of your Lord submissively. From their bellies comes forth a beverage of many colours, in which there is healing for man. Surely in this there is a sign for a people who reflect.” — 16:68–69

The Holy Prophet Muhammad’s revelation is likened to the outcome of the work of the honey bee. The Quran is that honey which was collected after twenty-three years of revelation, containing healing for all the spiritual illnesses of man. Without damaging the flowers and fruit brought into this world by the previous prophets, the Holy Prophet Muhammad’s revelation extracted wisdom from them all. It verified the truth of all the previous prophets, denying not one of them. Their scriptures, like the fruits of a previous year, no longer remained fresh, but their goodness and their gist was preserved in the Quran.

Notes to Chapter 4:

1. Ward, *Outline of Buddhism*, p. 15.
2. Rhys Davids, Mrs C.A.F., *Sakya or Buddhist Origins*, p. 384. See also Buddha's statement to his disciples about Kaccāna's exposition of his teaching: "If you had asked me the meaning of this, I would have explained it to you in the same way that Mahā Kaccāna has explained it. Such is its meaning, and so you should remember it" (*Majjhima Nikaya*, iii, 199; see English translation *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha* by Nanamoli and Bodhi, Sutta 133, near its end, p. 1049; italics ours).
3. Ward, *Outline of Buddhism*, p. 18. At this point Ward gives a list of authorities for more detailed information:
 1. Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy in India and Ceylon*, pp.13–32.
 2. Aung and Mrs Rhys Davids, *Points of Controversy*, pp. xxix–xxxi.
 3. Rhys Davids, T.W., *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 11, p. xi, ff.
 4. Rhys Davids, T.W., *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 35, p. xxvii, ff.
 5. Rhys Davids, T.W., *Buddhist India*, pp. 161–87.
 6. Rhys Davids, C.A.F., *A Manual of Buddhism*, chaps. I, II and XIV.
 7. Rhys Davids, C.A.F., *Sakya or Buddhist Origins*, chaps. XIX, XXI, and Appendices I and V.
 8. Nariman, G.K., *Literary History of Sanskrit Buddhism*, Appendix I by Sylvain Levi.
4. Ward, *Outline of Buddhism*, pp. 19–20.
5. Rhys Davids, Mrs C.A.F., *Sakya or Buddhist Origins*, p. 384; see also p. 360 and p. 389.
6. Geden, A.S., *Studies in Eastern Religions*, p. 223, footnote. Eliot, Charles, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, v. 1, ch. xii, p. 256. Law, B.C., *A History of Pali Literature*, see vol. I, Introduction, in particular p. xvii, and ch. 1. Suzuki, Teitaro, *The First Buddhist Council*, in v. 14 of the quarterly magazine *The Monist*, Chicago, 1904, p. 256–257 and p. 280–281.
7. Ward, p. 9. See also G. K. Nariman, *Literary History of Sanskrit Buddhism*, p. 5.
8. Ward, p. 9. The authority he cites is: L. De La Vallee Poussin in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, v. 1, pp. 95–96.
9. Narada Mahathera, *Buddhism in a Nutshell*, ch. iii: 'Is it a religion?' In 1982 edition by Buddhist Publication Society, see p. 22.
10. *Ibid.*, ch. i: 'The Buddha'. See p. 5 of 1982 ed.
11. *Ibid.*, See p. 6 of 1982 ed.

12. *Ibid.* For this statement, Narada cites the *Parinibbana Sutta*. See in the translation of Digha Nikaya by Maurice Walshe (entitled *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*), under ‘16 Mahaparinibbana Sutta’, 2.26, at p. 245.
13. Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy in India and Ceylon*, p. 23. See also p. 20.
14. *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 10, 1881, p. xi.
For the quotation from A. Burnell in this extract, the author cites the *Indian Antiquary*, 1880, p. 233; in that issue (v. 9, September 1880), see Book Notices, “On Sanskrit Texts Discovered in Japan”, p. 233–234.
15. See: (1) Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy in India and Ceylon*, p. 18. (2) Shwe Zan Aung and Mrs Rhys Davids, *Points of Controversy*, Prefatory Notes, p. xxix–xxx. (3) Nariman, G.K., *Literary History of Sanskrit Buddhism*, Appendix I by Sylvain Levi, p. 165.
16. Edward J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha, as Legend and History*, Appendix, p. 250, 251.
17. Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, p. 482–484.
18. *What is Buddhism? An Answer from the Western point of view*, compiled by The Buddhist Society, London, p. 176–177.
19. Edward Conze, *Buddhist Scriptures*, p. 11–12.
20. “For there is suffering, but none who suffers; Doing exists although there is no doer. Extinction is but no extinguished person; Although there is a path, there is no goer.” — *Visuddhimagga*, translated into English by Bhikkhu Nanamoli as *The Path of Purification*, xvi: 90, p. 528–529.
21. Name of a continent in Hindu and Buddhist cosmology, which seems to correspond to the Indian subcontinent or Southern Asia.
22. Bühler, J. G., *Three New Edicts of Ashoka*, in *The Indian Antiquary*, vol. 6, June 1877, p. 149, col. 1.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 154, col. 2.
24. Nalinaksha Dutt, *Early History of the Spread of Buddhism and the Buddhist Schools*, p. 7.

The reference he gives to *Silavimamsa jataka* reads as follows: “Apart from virtue, learning has no worth. Not birth, nor lore, nor friendship aught avails. Pure virtue only future bliss entails” (*The Jataka*, translated under the editorship of E.B. Cowell, vol. iii, p. 129, under No. 362).

For Dutt’s reference to the *Digha Nikaya*, see: (1) *Dialogues of the Buddha*, in *Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, v. 2, pp. 302–306; (2) The translation by Maurice Walshe, pp. 188–189.

25. *The Questions of King Milinda*, see *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 35, p. 18.
26. *Buddha and His Dhamma*, by Dr B.R. Ambedkar, Book I: 'Siddhartha Gautama — How a Bodhisatta became the Buddha', Part V: 'The Buddha and His Predecessors', Sec. 1: 'The Buddha and the Vedic Rishis'.
27. Oldenberg, H., *Buddha: His life, His Doctrine, His Order*, p. 172.
28. *Amagandha Sutta* quoted in T.W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism: being A Sketch of the Life and Teachings of Gautama, The Buddha*, p. 131.
29. Swami Dayanand, *Satyarth Prakash*, ch. 11. The quotation given here is from the English translation published as *Light of Truth*, p. 324. In the English translation by Durga Prasad, published Lahore, 1908, see p. 300.
30. Ward, *Outline of Buddhism*, p. 59.
31. *The Life of Buddha, as Legend and History*, p. 149, footnote 3.

In a more recent translation of the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, it is stated in a footnote:

“*Sūkara-maddava*: a controversial term which has therefore been left untranslated. *Sūkara* = pig; *maddava* = soft, tender, delicate. Hence two alternative renderings of the compound are possible: (1) the tender parts of a pig or boar; (2) what is enjoyed by pigs and boars. In the latter meaning, the term has been thought to refer to a mushroom or truffle, or a yam or tuber. K.E. Neumann, in the preface to his German translation of the Majjhima Nikāya, quotes from an Indian compendium of medicinal plants, the *Rājaniṅṅtu*, several plants beginning with *sūkara*.

“The commentary to our text gives three alternative explanations: (1) the flesh from a single first-born (wild) pig, neither too young nor too old, which had come to hand naturally, i.e. without intentional killing; (2) a preparation of soft boiled rice cooked with the five cow-products; (3) a kind of alchemistic elixir (*rasāyanavidhi*). Dhammapāla, in his commentary to Udāna 8:5, gives, in addition, young bamboo shoots trampled by pigs (*sūkarehi maddita-vaṃsakalīro*).” (*Last Days of the Buddha — The Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, translated by Sister Vajira and Francis Story, Buddhist Publication Society, Sri Lanka, 2010 edition, footnote 38 on p. 121. The footnote is referred from Part Four: 'The Last Meal', under heading 'The Buddha's Last Meal, verse 17.)

32. Material under this heading is added from the Urdu version of the author's book.
33. The Dhammapada, ch. 4: 'Flowers', v. 49. See *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 10, p. 17.

5. Prophecy of the Manifest Light

Dr Paul Carus writes in *The Dharma*:

Buddhism has rightly been called the religion of enlightenment, for the basic plan of the faith is to be guided by wisdom, illustrated by the light that is shed on our path, enabling us to make sure and firm steps. Hearers of the Word, as soon as converted, are generally reported to utter the following confession:

“Excellent, O Lord! this is excellent! As one raises what has been thrown down, or reveals what has been hidden, or tells the way to him who has gone astray, or holds out a lamp in the darkness that those who have eyes may see the objects, just even so has the Doctrine been made clear by the Lord in manifold exposition. And I, even I, take refuge in the Lord, his Doctrine and his Order. May the Lord receive, as a lay disciple, from this day forth as long as life endures, me who have taken refuge (in him).”¹

As Buddha means light and the early token of Buddhism is a lamp which signifies guidance, we find on old edicts and effigies a burning lamp engraved. Thus in the Gandhara rocks there is a sculpture in which a teacher is shown holding a lamp and disciple with hands folded in respect, looking at him. This reveals the fact that the followers of Buddhism have engraved the sign of the Promised One’s advent on stone tablets in order to act as a guiding lamp for posterity, according to the teaching of Buddha.

It is evident that the light which Buddha disseminated in the world is no more extant in Buddhism today, as we have already

shown in the last chapter. For the Buddhists, who are worshippers of Light, what has to be considered is whether the world stands in need of another Light after the one that manifested itself in the person of Buddha. If not, then why did the people before Buddha stand in need of it. The world stands in need of light after the Buddha and at the disappearance of his light (i.e., teachings), just as it did before him.

In the sculptures alluded to above, the teacher holding the lamp is not Buddha himself but a chimerical portrait of somebody else. The disciple with folded hands looking at the teacher with reverence is in fact a representative of Buddhism. Do not the sentiments which arose in the hearts of the devotees of Buddha at the time the shining lamp was carved in the sculptures demand of the followers of Buddha the quest after this shining lamp which is borrowed from the same source from which Buddha himself was illuminated? In their books as well as in the stone engravings there exists a light by which they can recognize the coming light or illuminated lamp.

Keeping this prophecy in view the Holy Quran says:

“O people, manifest proof has indeed come to you from your Lord and we have sent down to you a clear light.” — 4:174

For further elucidation of this guiding lamp it says:

“God is the (Creator of the) light of the heavens and the earth. A likeness of His light is as a pillar on which is a lamp — the lamp is in a glass, the glass is as it were a brightly shining star — lit from a blessed olive tree, neither eastern nor western, whose oil gives light, even though fire touch it not — light upon light. God guides to His light whom he pleases. And God sets forth parables for mankind, and God is Knower of all things.”
— 24:35

This verse refers to that light, the guiding lamp which at one time illuminated the Indian subcontinent and shed its light on China and Japan and was named the “Light of Asia”. Yet at another time it rose above the limitations of the East and West and illumined as the highest pillar of light for the whole world. It was enlightened with the

purified oil of revelation, untouched by terrestrial fire; that light is a far brighter light and is manifest from the extent of the Muslim population of Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Indonesia, Burma (Myanmar), Thailand and China. They recognized this light by the light given by Buddha. And that light upon light is Muhammad (peace be upon him). This parable of Buddha has been set forth nicely by Jesus in his “Ten Virgins” parable and he also foretold that this prophecy was to be fulfilled after him:

“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

Afterwards the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’

Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man* is coming.”²

In this parable, by the wise virgins are meant those people who recognize the bridegroom, get into contact with the Promised Prophet (Muhammad) and believe in him. Figuratively, a lamp represents Divine revelation, in the light of which a man treads. David in his Psalm says: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”³

*Note here the words “son of man”.

Samuel says: “For You are my lamp O Lord; the Lord shall enlighten my darkness.”⁴ And God said to David: “I will prepare a lamp for My anointed.”⁵ Quite in consonance, Buddha said:

“Like as the lamp shines in the dark, without a purpose of its own, self-radiant, so burns the lamp of the Tathâgata, without the shadow of a personal feeling.”⁶

So the Quran says, as quoted above: “even though (worldly) fire touch it not,” (24:35).

The interpretation of the parable of the Gospel goes thus: The bridegroom was betrothed to all the nations of the world, but five out of these, by dint of their internal light, recognized him and entered the abode of peace with him. But as for the foolish, their internal light went out on the bridegroom’s arrival; they remained outside. Even today they possess those lamps but their hearts and eyes are blind. Thus they had not been able to join the bridegroom, though they had been provided with torches and lamps which are still extant in their books, but their own inner sight has gone out. Their eyes lack vision and that is why they cannot perceive the manifest light.

In Scriptures, the words *lamp* and *torch* are metaphorically used for both spiritual light (revelation) and insight of conscience. Among the Israelites, lighting a lamp or a candle in the Temple is in vogue. About this the Bible says in the book of Exodus:

“And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually. In the tabernacle of meeting, outside the veil which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening until morning before the Lord. It shall be a statute forever to their generations on behalf of the children of Israel.”⁷

Note the above quoted words of the Bible, “pure oil of pressed olives for the light”, and compare them with the words of the Quran. This is the lamp lit from a blessed olive tree, neither Eastern nor Western, a law to all the nations of the world and it is giving light continually

for ever and ever, the prophecy of which is contained in the symbolic lamp of Buddha and the olive lamp of the Israelites.

This leads one to surmise as to why the Lord emphasized the lighting of a lamp in places of worship? It is so strictly followed that Roman Catholic churches contain lamps burning day and night incessantly. But it may be asked, what is the purport of burning the olive oil lamp? Wherever a man dwells, he burns a lamp.

It was, as a matter of fact, a most intelligible thing. Although there was no commandment for the Israelites to pray at night, yet there were strict edicts for burning a light at night. And, in fact, this is stated in the Gospels. The burning lamp of Buddha signifies the same as also the priests of Roman Catholic churches visiting their churches at night in quest of the Promised One (the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the Messenger of God).

The Holy Quran refers to it as follows:

“By the heaven and the Comer by night! And what will make you know what the Comer by night is? The star of piercing brightness.” — 86: 1-3

The reason is that the Holy Prophet appeared when total darkness was spread over the earth, as Jesus said:

“Therefore you also ready, for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”⁸

Note that it says “Son of Man”, not the son of God.

And again it is said in the Quran:

“Beneficent God! By the Book that makes manifest! We revealed it on a blessed night.” — 44: 1-3

And again:

“O Prophet, surely We have sent you as a witness, and a bearer of good news and a warner, and as an inviter to God by His permission and as a light-giving lamp.” — 33: 45-46.

By “lamp” is meant the lamp promised by the Prophets.

Notes to Chapter 5:

1. Carus, Paul, *The Dharma or The Religion of Enlightenment*, sixth edition, p. iii–iv.
2. Matthew, 25: 1–13.
3. Psalms, 119: 105.
4. 2 Samuel, 22: 29.
5. Psalms, 132: 17.
6. The *Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King* by Ashvaghosha, in *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 19, Kiouen III, No. 15, p. 170–171.
7. Exodus, 27: 20–21. See also Leviticus, 24: 2–3.
8. Matthew, 24: 44.

6. A Mercy to all the nations: Famous prophecy of Maitreya

Buddha has prophesied the advent of a Maitreya¹ and the prophecy is so famous that some of the Christian missionaries, Hindu *pandits* and theosophist propagandists have tried to apply it to their own reformers. This shows at least the authenticity of the prophecy.

Although Christians do not believe in the prophethood of Buddha, they have tried to apply this prophecy to Christ. Hindu *pandits* think it was foretold for Shankaracharya,² and theosophists try their best to apply it to one Krishnamurti;³ but they have failed signally.

Almost all Buddhist books contain this prophecy. It is in Cakkavatti-Sihanada Sutta. Two different translations of it are as below:

“...there will arise in the world a Buddha named Metteyyo (Sanskrit, *Maitreya*) (the Benevolent One) a Holy One, (*Arahat*) a supremely Enlightened One, endowed with wisdom in conduct; auspicious, knowing the universe; an incomparable Charioteer of men who are tamed; a Master of angels and mortals, a Blessed Buddha; even as I have now arisen in the world, a Buddha with these same qualities endowed. What he has realized by his own supernal knowledge he will publish to this universe, with its angels, its fiends, and its archangels, and to the race of philosophers and brahmins, princes and peoples; even as I now, having all this knowledge, do publish the same unto the same. He will preach his religion, glorious in its origin, glorious at the climax, glorious at the goal, in the spirit and the letter. He will proclaim a religious life, wholly perfect and thoroughly pure; even as I now preach my religion and a like life do proclaim. He will keep up a society of monks numbering

many thousand, even as I now keep up a society of monks numbering many hundred.”⁴

“...there will arise in the world an Exalted One named Metteyya, Arahant, Fully Awakened, abounding in wisdom and goodness, happy, with knowledge of the worlds, unsurpassed as a guide to mortals willing to be led, a teacher for gods and men, an, Exalted One, a Buddha, even as I am now. He, by himself, will thoroughly know and see, as it were face to face, this universe, with its worlds of the spirits, its Brahmas and its Maras, and its world of recluses and brahmins, of princes and peoples, even as I now, by myself, thoroughly know and see them. The truth [the Norm] lovely in its origin, lovely in its progress, lovely in its consummation, will he proclaim, both in the spirit and in the letter, the higher life will he make known, in all its fulness and in all its purity, even as I do now. He will be accompanied by a congregation of some thousands of brethren, even as I am now accompanied by a congregation of some hundreds of brethren.”⁵

In the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, in the entry on *Anāgata-Vamsa* (meaning ‘Record of the Future’, which is “a Pali poem of 142 stanzas on the future Buddha, Metteyya”), it is stated:

“As is well known, there are statements in the *Nikayas* ... that future Buddhas would arise, but, with one exception, neither the *Nikayas* nor any book in the *Pitakas* mention Metteyya. ... The exception referred to is a passage in the 26th dialogue of the *Digha* which records a prophecy, put into the Buddha’s mouth, that Metteyya would have thousands of followers where the Buddha himself had only hundreds. ...

There is sufficient justification for the comparison between Metteyya and the Western idea of a Messiah. The ideas are, of course, not at all the same; but there are several points of analogy. The time of Metteyya is described as a Golden Age in which kings, ministers and people will vie one with another in maintaining the reign of righteousness and the victory of truth. ... The personal name of the future Buddha is given in the poem, and elsewhere also, as *Ajita*, ‘unconquered’.”⁶

In the entry on *Avalokitesvara* (the great deity of Asia who is the personification of Divine mercy and pity) it is stated:

“There is reason to believe that Maitreya (the future Buddha), for example, whose doctrinal position is better established, must originally have taken precedence of him [i.e., *Avalokitesvara*] and there are noteworthy and well-authenticated writings, such as the Sanskrit-Tibetan Lexicon (*Mahāvīyūtpatti*) and the Chinese records, which lead us to believe that Maitreya was able to maintain his position. In any case, it must be noticed that the role of the ‘Good Bodhisattva,’ helpful and divine, the very noble (*paramārya*), the giver of security (*abhayandada*), etc., was divided among Kṣitigarbha and his companions, before it became the more or less exclusive designation of Avalokita.”⁷

In the entry on Buddha, the same encyclopaedia says:

“Among the prophecies uttered by the Buddha was one concerning the future of the religion which he established, and its ultimate decline and disappearance from the earth. The declaration is contained in the *Anāgata-Vamsa* (‘Narrative of Coming Events’) and was given at Kapilavastu in response to question by Sariputta. The history of the future Buddha, Maitreya (Pali *Metteyya*) is described; then at long intervals after his own death occur the ‘five disappearances’ of the attainments, when his disciples will rise to ever higher degrees of sanctity; of the method, when the knowledge of the precepts and the way of salvation shall be lost; of learning, when the sacred texts themselves shall be forgotten; of the symbols, the monastic robe, bowl etc. ... Then they will weep, saying, ‘From henceforth we shall be in darkness.’”⁸

Prayers are offered to Maitreya:

“Much more frequently implored are the celestial *bodhisattvas*, or nominally potential Buddhas among the gods ... One of these, common to Southern Buddhism and Indian Mahayana, is the Buddhist Messiah, Maitreya... Of this Buddhist Messiah many colossal images are carved on cliffs along roads in Tibet, and are the object of prayer to passers-by.”⁹

In the entry on *Lotus (Indian)*, it is stated:

“The use of the lotus seat has been extended to images of *bodhisattvas* not only in India but in Buddhist countries beyond its borders. ... In a modern Tibetan picture Maitreya is depicted on a lotus seat...”¹⁰

In the 11th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in the entry on *Maitreya*, T.W. Rhys Davids writes:

“Maitreya, The name of the future Buddha. In one of the works included in the Pali canon, Digha Nikaya, a prophecy is put into the Buddha’s mouth that after the decay of the religion another Buddha, named Metteyya, will arise who will have thousands of followers instead of the hundreds that the historical Buddha had. ... Statues of Maitreya are found in the Buddhist temples, of all sects, at the present day; and the belief in his future advent is universal among the Buddhists.”¹¹

In the 14th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in the entry on *Maitreya*, E.J. Thomas writes:

“**Maitreya**, the name of the bodhisattva who is to be the next future Buddha. ... Buddhism held that its truths have been repeatedly taught by Buddhas, who arise in succession, and that the doctrine after its decay and disappearance will be again realized and taught by other Buddhas in the future. ... The theory of recurrent Buddhas may not be primitive, but it certainly arose before the close of the Pāli Canon, as Metteyya is twice mentioned there (*Dīgha-Nikāya*, No. 26, *Buddhavamsa*, ch. 27), and the belief became established in all schools.”¹²

According to the *Encyclopedia Americana*:

“...when Maitreya, the messiah of the future, comes to earth ... ‘to establish the lost truths in all their purity’.”¹³

See also *The Coming World Teacher* by Pavri¹⁴ and *The Masters and the Path* by Leadbeater.¹⁵

The fame of the prophecy in later Buddhist Literature

There is a voluminous and authoritative book on Buddhism, *Milinda Prashnaya*. It contains the queries of *Raja* Milinda, a king who lived about 500 years after Buddha. He put some questions to a Buddhist missionary Nagasena, and having satisfied himself with the answers, collected these in a book. The book was published by the Buddhists of Colombo in 1877, at very great expense. It was translated into English by T.W. Rhys Davids and published in the *Sacred Books of the East* series. In 1880 the Pali text was transliterated into Latin characters by V. Trenckner at Edinburgh, which I have studied at the British Museum Oriental Library, London. The original Pali words of the prophecy are on page 159, beginning with line 6. The image of the relevant part of this page is shown below.

Bhante Nāgasena, bhāsitam - p' etaṃ Bhagavatā: Tathāgatassa kho Ānanda na evaṃ hoti: ahaṃ bhikkhusanghaṃ pariharissāmi ti vā, mamuddesiko bhikkhusangho ti vā ti. Puna ca Metteyyassa bhagavato sabhāvaguṇaṃ paridīpayamāna evaṃ bhaṇitaṃ: So anekasahassaṃ bhikkhusanghaṃ pariharissati seyyathā pi ahaṃ etarahi anekasataṃ bhikkhusanghaṃ pariharāmi. Yaḍi bhante Nāgasena Bhagavatā bhaṇitaṃ: Tathāgatassa kho Ānanda na evaṃ hoti: ahaṃ bhikkhusanghaṃ pariharāmi ti vā, mamuddesiko bhikkhusangho ti vā ti, tena hi: anekasataṃ bhikkhusanghaṃ pariharāmi yaṃ vacanaṃ taṃ micchā. Yaḍi Tathāgatena bhaṇitaṃ: seyyathā pi ahaṃ etarahi anekasataṃ bhikkhusanghaṃ pariharāmi, tena hi: Tathāgatassa kho Ānanda na evaṃ hoti: ahaṃ bhikkhusanghaṃ pariharāmi ti vā, mamuddesiko bhikkhusangho ti vā ti tam - pi vacanaṃ micchā. Ayam - pi ubhato - koṭiko pañho tavānuppatto, so tayā nibbāhitabbo ti.

Bhāsitam - p' etaṃ mahārāja Bhagavatā: Tathāgatassa kho Ānanda na evaṃ hoti: ahaṃ bhikkhusanghaṃ pariharāmi ti vā, mamuddesiko bhikkhusangho ti vā ti. Metteyyassāpi bhagavato sabhāvaguṇaṃ paridīpayamāna Bhagavatā bhaṇitaṃ: So anekasahassaṃ bhikkhusanghaṃ pariharissati seyyathā pi ahaṃ etarahi anekasataṃ bhikkhusanghaṃ pariharāmi. Etasmiṃ - ca mahārāja pañhe

The English translation of this by T. W. Rhys Davids in the *Sacred Books of the East* runs thus:

Venerable Nagâsena, it was said by the Blessed One: "Now the Tathâgata thinks not, Ânanda, that is he who should lead the brotherhood, or that the Order is dependent upon him."¹⁶ But on the other hand when describing the virtues and the nature of Metteyya, the Blessed One, he said thus: "He will be the leader of a brotherhood several thousands in number, as I am now the leader of a brotherhood several hundreds in number."^{* 17}

¹⁸There is a footnote by the translator at this point, within which he writes: "Metteyya is, of course, the Buddha to come, the expected messiah." The prophecy of the coming of the Maitreya (Pali: *Metteyya*) is thus confirmed here.

Another English translation of *Milinda Prashnaya* by I.B. Horner was published in 1963. The translation of the above extract in this work runs as follows:

Revered Nâgasena, this too was said by the Lord: 'Ânanda, it does not occur to a Tathâgata thus: I will lead the Order of monks, or, The Order of monks is dependent on me.' But again this was said by the Lord when he was extolling the special qualities with their essential nature of the Lord Metteyya: 'He will lead an Order of monks numbering several thousands, even as I now lead an Order of monks numbering several hundreds.'¹⁹

Here too, there is a footnote by the translator at the name 'Metteyya' stating that this means: "The next Buddha to come."

Raja Milinda then raises the question that there is here a contradiction in the sayings of Buddha: once he said there was no need of Tathagata or Buddha as a leader of a following, and on the other occasion he said Maitreya would be a leader of thousands as he himself had been a leader of hundreds. Nagasena, in reply, resolves

*This translation I found to be incomplete when I compared it with the Pali passage. In the original, these words are repeated twice. (A.H.V.)

the contradiction by explaining that the first statement means that a Tathagata does not seek to have a following, but acquires followers because they seek him. He says: “Attachment is a frame of mind put away by the Tathagata, he has put away clinging, he is free from the delusion that ‘This is mine’, he lives only to be a help to others”.²⁰ Somewhat similarly to this, the Prophet Muhammad is told by God in the Quran:

“If they accept Islam, then indeed they follow the right way; and if they turn back, your duty is only to deliver the message.”
— 3 : 20

“... your duty is only to deliver the message, and Ours (God’s) to call (people) to account.” — 13 : 40

He does not “own” his followers, as he is responsible for his actions and they are for theirs. When the masses began to join the ranks of Islam, the following instruction was revealed to the Holy Prophet:

“When Allah’s help and victory comes, and you see people entering the religion of Allah in companies, celebrate the praise of your Lord and ask His protection. Surely He is ever Returning (to mercy).” — ch. 110

This requires him to not become “attached” to his followers as the reward of his victory, but instead turn to God.

It also strikes us, regarding Buddha not making or seeking followers, that those who accepted the Holy Prophet were known as his “Companions” and he is called the “companion” of the people to whom he was delivering his message: “And your companion is not mad” (81 : 22). It may also be noted that repeatedly in the Quran the Holy Prophet is called the servant (*‘abd*) of God,²¹ while human beings in general are called servants (*‘ibād*) of God, using the plural of the same word.²² Jesus and other prophets are also called as servants of God.²³ It also describes and states the general principle that no prophet ever said to people: “Be my servants besides God’s”, but rather he said to them:

“Be worshippers of the Lord because you teach the Book and because you study (it).” — 3:79

So Islam teaches that no prophet sought followers in the sense of he being their absolute master, but rather he came to make them realize that god was their absolute master.

In his reply Nagasena compares the work of the Buddha among his followers to that of the earth which, he says, “is a support to the beings in the world ... and they depend upon it, but the broad earth has no longing after them in the idea that ‘These belong to me’ — just so is the Tathagata a support ... but has no longing after them in the idea that ‘These belong to me’.” Similarly, he gives the example of the rain cloud which “pours out its rain, and gives nourishment to grass and trees, to cattle and to men ... but the cloud has no feelings of longing” that “these are mine”.²⁴ It is curious that the Quran also mentions the earth and the rain-giving clouds as providing the essentials for human life:

“(Your Lord is He) Who made the earth a resting-place for you and the heaven a structure, and sends down rain from the clouds then brings forth with it fruits for your sustenance...” — 2:22

“And the earth — We have spread it out and made in it firm mountains and caused to grow in it of every suitable thing. And We have made in it means of subsistence for you and for those (creatures) for whom you do not provide. ... And We send the winds fertilizing, then send down water from the clouds, so We give it to you to drink; nor is it you who store it up.” — 15:19–20, 22

It also tells us that God “has made the earth subservient to you” (67:15) and it speaks of “the cloud made subservient between heaven and earth” (2:164).

It was not only during the age of Raja Milinda, but Buddhist missionaries have always announced with all emphasis that Maitreya Bodhisattva is yet to come. Even in our time, a Burmese priest, Ledi Sayadow, propagated that the advent of the Buddha Maitreya was

very near. In this connection he declared that the Blessed Maitreya had left the Tushita heaven and was on earth in 1914 C.E. as a boy.²⁵ Similar references of this prophecy can be found in sacred books on Buddhism in different languages such as Burmese, Chinese and Sinhalese with slight verbal changes.

The meaning of *Maitreya*

The term *Maitreya* is found in all books on Buddhism with slight differences of pronunciation. In Pali it is *Metteyya* and in Sanskrit *Maitreya*. In Sinhali it is *Maitri*, in Thai it is *Phrai*, it is *Byampapa mgon po* or *Chamra* in Tibetan, and in Mongolian we find *Maidari*.²⁶ In Burmese it is *Arimeitaya*,²⁷ in Chinese *Mei-ta-li-ye*,²⁸ *Mi-Lo Fwo* or *Milè Púsa* or *T'zu-shih*,²⁹ and in Japanese it is *Miroku*.³⁰

As we have seen, in different countries its pronunciation is slightly different along with its accent. The meaning also changes slightly as will be shown below:

- a. *Maitreya* in Sanskrit means friendly, benevolent,³¹ loving, compassionate.³² “No wonder then that this Maitreya — whose very name implies love and tenderness towards mankind, and who was destined to become, like Gautama, a Saviour of the world by teaching its inhabitants how to save themselves — became a favourite object of personal worship after Gautama Buddha’s death.”³³

It is added by Monier-Williams: “In Hiouen Thsang’s Travels a heavenly Rishi is represented as saying: ‘No words can describe the personal beauty of Maitreya. He declares a law not different from ours. His exquisite voice is soft and pure. Those who hear it can never tire; those who listen are never satiated’.”³⁴

- b. “Gautama is the fourth Buddha ... He is to be followed by the fifth Buddha, Maitreya (a name meaning ‘full of love towards all beings’).”³⁵

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- c. The word *Maitreya* originates from *maitrī*, and that stands for love, and “good will or kindness (Maitra).”³⁶ *Maitrī* means “friendship, friendliness, benevolence, good will, one of the 4 perfect states with Buddhists”.³⁷
 - d. It indicates “love, amity, sympathy, friendliness, active interest in others.”³⁸
 - e. “The Blessed One [i.e., Buddha] said: He will be known as Maitrēya, which means ‘he whose name is kindness’.”³⁹
 - f. “Universal love”⁴⁰ or “benevolence”.⁴¹

Prophet Muhammad deserves title *Maitreya*

According to this prophecy of Buddha, the name *Maitreya* needs consideration. The above references manifestly show that the word *Maitreya* signifies *merciful* or *kind friend*. The Holy Quran has described the Prophet Muhammad as such, and the corroboration of this is found in his life. The Quran states:

1. “And We have not sent you (O Prophet) but as a mercy to all nations.” — 21: 107
2. “Thus it is by God’s mercy that you are gentle to them. And if you had been rough, hard-hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you.” — 3: 159
3. “... and (he) is a mercy for those of you who believe.” — 9: 61
4. “Certainly a Messenger has come to you from among yourselves; very painful for him is your falling into distress, most concerned (he is) for you, to the believers (he is also) compassionate, merciful.” — 9: 128

This is the true picture of the heart which grieved, not for his followers alone, not for tribe or country, but for all humanity. He grieves for the burdens of all, and he is solicitous for the welfare of all. But there is a special relation he bears to those who follow him: to them he is, in addition, compassionate and merciful. That is why

the Holy Prophet Muhammad proves to be the promised Maitreya, because of his mercy, kindness and abundant compassion.

There are other reasons for his being the Promised Maitreya. In *Dynamic Thought*, Henry Thomas Hamblin writes:

To the ordinary “man in the street” a thought is an “airy nothing” — a mere flash in the consciousness — it comes, it goes, and there is an end to it. To the student of Mind however, thought is known to be the power that is greater than any other power — a force that controls all other forces. An American writer speaking of Universal Mind says:

“It thinks, and Suns spring into shape;
It wills, and Worlds disintegrate;
It loves and Souls are born.”

... As in the macrocosm so is it in the microcosm; the subliminal mind of man is the same in essence as the Universal Mind of the Universe; the difference is not one of kind but of degree.⁴²

There is a saying in Latin, *Lex orandi, lex credendi* — the best way of discovering the fundamental beliefs of a man is to study the words he uses when he prays. It is exactly in the same way that a prophet’s mind shoots at the same epithet like a fountain, when that epithet of God is oft-repeated in his Divine communications. A true lover always repeats the name of his beloved. The mercy of God is the basis of all teachings of the Quran, as we show below.

1. In no other book of religion or scripture is the name of God as Beneficent and as Merciful so often repeated as in the Holy Quran. Christians claim that God is love. But as a quality of Godhead, even this description of God is hardly mentioned by Jesus himself.
2. The Holy Prophet Muhammad has described the manifestation of God’s mercy as the object of man’s creation: “Except those on whom your Lord has mercy; and for this did He create them” (the Quran, 11:119).

3. The Holy Prophet has described mercy as the foundation stone of all religious beliefs. He called all matrimonial alliances and blood relations the means of the manifestation of God's mercy (30:21).
4. Divine revelation, the existence of angels, the advent of messengers, are all manifestations of mercy (55: 1, 2; 40:7; 6: 147; 7:156).
5. Argument and reasoning are the mercy of God, the Prophet Muhammad emphasized (16: 125).
6. Justice, equity and civics are based on Divine mercy, the Prophet Muhammad claimed (16:90).
7. On war and crusade, which are the gravest mischief of Satan, he imposed limitations, metamorphosing them into sheer mercy.
8. The origin of creation, earthly striving and life after death, he attributed all to Divine mercy (11:119; 25:47-49; 28: 73; 32:6-7; 42:28-29).
9. Even at the sad hours of a man's life he did not let men forget the beneficence and mercy of God. He preached that one should not impeach God even for the death of a near and dear one, but should recite the praise of His mercy and beneficence (2: 155-157).

These are the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad was an embodiment of Maitreya, the kind, the merciful messenger, and thus deserved the prophecy of Buddha.

Maitreya's (Muhammad's) Book will be perfect truth.

Buddha lucidly predicted, as quoted earlier:

1. "The truth lovely in its origin, lovely in its progress, lovely in its consummation, will he proclaim, both in the spirit and in the letter." (See p. 57.)

2. “The exquisite voice of the Bodhisattva is soft and pure and refined; those who hear it can never tire; those who listen are never satiated” (see p. 64 and note 34). That is to say, his revelation will be most eloquent; those listening to it will not be tired of listening, they would like to listen to more of it.
3. “What he has realized by his own supernal knowledge he will publish... wholly perfect and thoroughly pure” (see p. 56).

The Holy Quran is called “perfect truth” because:

- a.* It was sent by God, the True God.
- b.* It was revealed at the time when it was most needed (revealed at the true time).
- c.* Falsehood could not find any way into it, nor shall it be ever able to do so. It is immune from alterations and changes (the Quran 41 :42).
- d.* All the prophets had prophesied the advent of a Prophet to all the nations who would verify the truth of all the prophets and religious scriptures (the Quran 3 :81).
- e.* In future no prophecy in it shall remain unfulfilled (the Quran 41 :42).
- f.* It has come from the Perfect Truth and leads to the same (the Quran, 17 : 105; 2:213).

Exposition of truths

Previous nations believed in their own books only. Although the Jews and Christians followed the same book, yet they denied the whole truth and truthfulness:

“And the Jews say, the Christians follow nothing (good) and the Christians, say the Jews follow nothing (good), while they recite the (same) book.” — The Quran, 2: 113

They do not believe in the existence of nobleness in anybody outside the fold of their country or nation. The Holy Quran was revealed and it brought with it the good tidings:

“And there is not a people but a warner has gone among them.”
— 35:24

“And certainly We raised in every nation a messenger, saying: Worship God and shun the devil.”— 16:36

This truth was denied before the advent of Islam. It may be asked: Is not the present day world as disbelieving and denying of the universal truth? Nay, Brahma Samajists and Theosophists, among the Hindus, Unitarians and rationalists among the Christians, declare the unparalleled avowed truth of the Holy Quran. The great antagonists of Islam melt before its truthfulness. In fact, the transformation wrought by the Holy Quran is unparalleled in the history of the world.

The whole Quran committed to memory

The revelation and insight of the Buddha is to be appreciated for his prophecies regarding the Holy Quran. Centuries before, he described the Holy Book as a collection of distinguished merits, as quoted earlier from the Digha Nikaya (see p. 57 above and its note 5). The Holy Quran being inscribed in the minds of people — indicated in the words “will he proclaim, both in *the spirit* and in the letter” — is an unsurpassed merit, as there was no Gospel or any religious book or Scripture which could be maintained in the memory of people.

There may be undoubtedly some writings which people love and value more than their very lives, and they commit their contents to memory. But the continuity with which the Holy Quran has been committed to memory has no example anywhere else. No scripture, writing or book has got so many people to its credit who learn it by heart, as the Holy Quran has. Religious scriptures underwent vicissitudes and had dark ages upon them, such that their very contents and their existence became suspect.

It was in this obscurity that the Vedas grew from one into four, and then from four to as many as 1131. There is a verse in *Maha Bhashya* which explains that there are one hundred and one shoots of Yajur-veda, one thousand of Sama-veda, twenty-one kinds of Rig-veda and nine of Atharva-veda. In these days we can see a dozen vedas published, a fact which throws light on their vicissitudes.

The Masorah and Septuagint versions of the Old Testament, the different authorized editions of the Sadducees and Pharisees, the apocryphal literature believed as part of inspired scriptures by some sects and rejected by others, and the different versions of apocryphal Gospels, prove the credibility of the fact that no religious scripture was kept intact or properly maintained or committed to memory in the lifetime of the prophet to whom it was revealed.

To what great extent the truth which was preached by Buddha himself was not maintained by his missionaries, we have proved above in chapter 4: *Buddhist Scriptures and Sects*.

However, regarding the Holy Quran Sir William Muir bears testimony:

“But there is good reason for believing that many fragmentary copies, embracing amongst them the whole Koran, or nearly the whole, were during his lifetime made by the Prophet’s followers.”⁴³

There is an authoritative tradition that, even before the emigration to Madinah, Abu Bakr had built a small mosque at his house in Makkah, and it was in this mosque that he used to recite the Holy Quran.⁴⁴ He was very fond of committing it to memory. Not only men, but women also were found to excel in this respect. Amongst women there were Aishah, Hafsa, Umm Salamah and Umm Waraqah, who had learnt the whole Quran by heart.

The Quran simultaneously revealed and written

Gautama Buddha had foretold with regard to the promised Maitreya that his message would be published (see p. 56 above). Among all

heavenly Scriptures and Gospels, it is the Holy Quran alone which was reduced to writing as it came down to the Prophet. Further, it was committed to memory, which the Prophet did by reading it out to those around him. For this reason the history of the revelation of the Holy Quran is far more complete than in the case of any other Scripture. In authorized Muslim tradition, the time of revelation, the place at which a verse was revealed, and the background of every single verse, is recorded in detail. Each antique copy of the Holy Quran has a history behind it, which is extant even today, and the chain of the memorizers leads us direct to the Holy Prophet.

It was due to those human souls who committed the revelation to memory that a rancorous critic like Sir William Muir had to admit the correctness and perfectness of the Holy Quran in these words:

“The recension of Othman has been handed down to us unaltered. So carefully, indeed, has it been preserved, that there are no variations of importance — we might almost say no variations at all — to be found in the innumerable copies scattered throughout the vast bounds of the empire of Islam. Contending and embittered factions, taking their rise in the murder of Othman himself within a quarter of a century from the death of Mohammad have ever since rent the Mohammadan world. Yet but One Koran has been current amongst them; ... There is probably in the world no other work which has remained twelve centuries with so pure a text. ...

Assuming, then, that we possess unchanged the text of Othman’s recension, it remains to inquire whether that text was an honest reproduction of Zeid’s, with the simple reconciliation of unimportant variations. There is the fullest ground for believing that it was so.”⁴⁵

He concludes his discussion on the authenticity of the Quranic text as follows:

“... we may upon the strongest presumption affirm that every verse in the Koran is the genuine and unaltered composition of Mohammad himself, and conclude with at least a close approximation to the verdict of Von Hammer: That We hold the Koran

to be as surely Mohammad's word, as the Mohammadans hold it to be the word of God." ⁴⁶

As a matter of fact, the Orientalists are led to believe so because of undisputed facts. The Holy Quran was kept safe and secure right from the earliest period. It was made clear that the revelation needed to be kept in custody. Its copies were sent to different countries and different nations. The nations on whom it was charged, expanded in the East and the West in a very small period of time, and therefore the copies of the Holy Quran also spread throughout the world.

Moreover, it is an admitted fact that though there are many sects among Muslims today, all of them believe in and follow the same Quran. Not a particle or a single letter of the Book has been altered. And this, in fact, is what was prophesied by Buddha and other prophets as well. The preceding prophets had foretold that the revelation of the Promised Prophet would be kept secure and safe. And it was this attribute of the Holy Quran which confirmed the Holy Prophet as being the Last of the Galaxy of Prophets.

In the Holy Quran, God claims Himself to be guard of the Book (15:9) and He declared it to be the last revelation, by virtue of which Islam stands as the last religion (5:3).

Basanta Coomar Bose writes:

"So there has been no opportunity for any forgery or pious fraud in the Koran which distinguishes it from almost all other important religious works of ancient times. ... It is exceedingly strange that this illiterate person should have composed the best book in the language." ⁴⁷

Charles Francis Potter writes:

"It is more read than any other book in the world. The Christian Bible may be a world best-seller, but nearly 250 million followers of the prophet Muhammad read or recite long sections of Alcoran *five times a day*, every day of their lives, from the time they can talk." ⁴⁸

John William Draper, while denigrating the Quran, still says:

“The Koran abounds in excellent moral suggestions and precepts; its composition is so fragmentary that we cannot turn to a single page without finding maxims of which of all men must approve. This fragmentary construction yields texts, and mottos, and rules complete in themselves, suitable for common men in any of the incidents of life.”⁴⁹

Paul Casanova, French writer, archaeologist, and orientalist, asserted:

“Whenever Muhammad was asked a miracle, as a proof of the authenticity of his mission, he quoted the composition of the Quran and its incomparable excellence as proof of its Divine origin. And, in fact, even for those who are non-Muslims nothing is more marvellous than its language which with such a apprehensible plenitude and a grasping sonority with its simple audition ravished with admiration those primitive people so fond of eloquence. The ampleness of its syllables with a grandiose cadence and with a remarkable rhythm have been of much moment in the conversion of the most hostile and the most sceptic.”⁵⁰

James A. Michener declared:

“The Koran is probably the most often read book in the world, surely the most often memorized, and possibly the most influential in the daily life of the people who believe in it. Not quite so long as the New Testament, written in an exalted style, it is neither poetry nor ordinary prose, yet it possesses the ability to arouse its hearers to ecstasies of faith. ... The Koran was revealed to Muhammad between the years 610 and 632 in the cities of Mecca and Medina. Devoted scribes wrote it down on ‘scraps of paper, bark and the white shoulder blades of animals’.”⁵¹

And here is the reflection of Laura Veccia Vaglieri:

“We find there vast stores of knowledge which are beyond the capacity of the most intelligent of men, the greatest of philosophers and the ablest of politicians. ... We have still another proof of the divine origin of the Quran in the fact that its text

has remained pure and unaltered through the centuries from the day of its delivery until today... Read over and over again all through the Muslim world, this work does not induce in the believer any sense of weariness. On the contrary, through repeated reading it endears itself more and more each day. It arouses a deep sense of reverence and awe in one who reads or hears it. ... It was not the use of force nor the efforts of insistent missionaries that brought about the rapid spread of Islam. Rather, it was the fact that the Book which was presented by the Muslims to the conquered people, with freedom to accept or reject it, was the Book of God, the word of the Truth, the greatest miracle that Muhammad could have presented to the faltering ones on earth.”⁵²

Notes to Chapter 6:

1. *Maitreya* is the Sanskrit version, while in Pali it is *Metteyya*.
2. Adi Shankaracharya, was a major Hindu religious philosopher who lived around the 8th century C.E.
3. In 1911, Annie Besant, leader of the Theosophical Society, proclaimed a young Indian, Jiddu Krishnamurti, as World Teacher. Krishnamurti (1895–1986) later publicly rejected this claim.
4. *Buddhist and Christian Gospels*, by A.J. Edmunds and M. Anesaki, v. 2, p. 160–161.
5. *Dialogues of the Buddha*, translation of the Digha Nikaya by T.W. and C.A.F. Rhys Davids, Part III, D. iii. 76, p. 73–74. It is published in the series *Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, v. 4.

In the later English translation of the Digha Nikaya by Maurice Walshe this passage is worded as follows:

“There will arise in the world a Blessed Lord, an Arhant fully-enlightened Buddha named Metteyya, endowed with wisdom and conduct, a Well-Farer, Knower of the worlds; an incomparable Trainer of men to be tamed, Teacher of gods and humans, enlightened and blessed, just as I am now. He will thoroughly know by his own super-knowledge, and proclaim, this universe with its devas and maras and Brahmas, its ascetics and Brahmins, and this generation with its princes and people, just as I do now. He will teach the Dhamma, lovely in its beginning, lovely in its middle, lovely in its ending, in the spirit and in the letter, and

proclaim, just as I do now, the holy life in its fullness and purity. He will be attended by a company of thousands of monks, just as I am attended by a company of hundreds.”

(*The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, under ‘26 Cakkavatti-Sihanada Sutta’, p. 403–404.)

6. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, v. 1, p. 414.
7. *Ibid.*, v. 2, p. 258.
8. *Ibid.*, v. 2, p. 885.
9. *Ibid.*, v. 10, p. 203. See also v. 7, p. 123, 124.
10. *Ibid.*, v. 8, p. 143.
11. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edition, v. 17, p. 447, art. ‘Maitreya’.
12. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 14th edition, v. 14, p. 696, art. ‘Maitreya’.
13. *Encyclopaedia Americana*, 1959 edition, art. ‘Mahayana’, v. 18, p. 135.
14. According to Pavri, the Prophet Muhammad was one of the messengers sent by “the Lord Maitreya” with the mission “to light again the lamp of knowledge” and to teach the unity of God” (p. 23).
15. Leadbeater writes of the “Lord Maitreya” that “throughout the centuries he has sent forth a stream of his pupils” and that “among these was one of his pupils who was sent to found the Muhammadan faith” (ch. 14 ‘The Wisdom in the Triangles’, under heading ‘The Bodhisattva Maitreya’).
16. At this quotation, “Now the Tathâgata thinks not, Ânanda, that is he ...”, Rhys Davids adds a footnote referring to his translation of Buddhist Suttas. In that translation (see *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 11, p. 37), the word *it* is inserted between *that* and *is*: “Now the Tathâgata, Ânanda, thinks not that it is he who should lead the brotherhood...”.
17. *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 35, p. 225.
18. *Editor’s Note*: From this point up to the beginning of the paragraph “It was not only during the age of Raja Milinda” on p. 63, is an addition by me.
19. *Milinda’s Questions*, vol. I, translated from the Pali by I.B. Horner, p. 223–224. *Editor’s Note*: This translation was not available when Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi wrote this book.
20. *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 35, p. 226.
21. See the Quran, 2:23, 8:4, 17:1, etc.
22. The Quran, 2:186, 3:182, 4:118, etc.
23. The Quran, 4:172, 12:24, 14:11, 17:3, 19:30, 27:19, etc.

24. *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 35, p. 226.
25. *The Coming World Teacher*, by Pavri, p. 50.
26. Eitel, *A Sanskrit-Chinese Dictionary*, Part I, p. 92.
27. Also spelt *Arimettaya*; see *Karaoke Fascism* by Monique Skidmore, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004, p. 11 and 206. It is spelt as *Aremideia* in *The Life or Legend of Gaudama, The Buddha of the Burmese* (third edition, 1880) by the Right Rev. P. Bigandet, vol. I, p. 16, footnote 5.
28. *Si-Yu-Ki — Buddhist Records of the Western World*, translated by Samuel Beal, v. 2, p. 348, p. 47.
29. For *T'zu-shih*, see Jan Nattier, *A Few Good Men*, p. 342.
30. Sir Charles Eliot, *Japanese Buddhism*, p. 200 and 355.
31. *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, by Monier-Williams, p. 834, col. 2, under entry 'Maitreya'.
32. *Buddhism*, by Monier-Williams, p. 181.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 181–182.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 182. For this quote about Maitreya, Monier-Williams refers to *Beal's Records*, p. 228. The text there is as follows: "No words can describe the marks and signs (*the personal beauty*) of Maitreya. With respect to the excellent law which he declares, the principles of it are not different from those (*of our beliefs*). The exquisite voice of the Bodhisattva is soft and pure and refined; those who hear it can never tire; those who listen are never satiated." — *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, translated from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang (A.D. 629), by Samuel Beal, v. 1, p. 228.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 128 (see first line and further down the page under number 9).
37. *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, by Monier-Williams, p. 834, col. 2, under entry 'Maitrī'.
38. *The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary*, edited by T.W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, p. 164, col. 2, under entry 'Mettā'.
39. *The Gospel of Buddha*, by Paul Carus, under 'XCVI. Maitrēya,' p. 218 of the 1909 edition, p. 245 of 1917 edition.
40. *The Essence of Buddhism*, by P. Lakshmi Narasu; in 1907 edition see pp. 54, 61, 135; in 1948 third edition see pp. 73–74, p. 81, p. 174 for the same.
41. *Ibid.*, in 1907 edition see pp. 35, 57, 65; in 1948 third edition see pp. 43, 76, 87 for the same.

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42. *Dynamic Thought*, by Henry Thomas Hamblin, Part vii, p. 147–148.
 43. Muir, Sir William, *The Life of Mohammad*, revised by T.H. Weir, Introduction, Chapter I, p. xix.
 44. Bukhari, book 8: Prayer, hadith 476; book: Merits of the *Ansar*, hadith 3905.
 45. Muir, Sir William, *The Life of Mohammad*, edition as above, p. xxii–xxiii.
 46. *Ibid.*, p. xxviii.
 47. Basanta Coomar Bose, *Mahomedanism*, Introduction, p. 4.
 48. Potter, Charles Francis, *The Faiths Men Live By*, p. 81.
 49. Draper, John William, *A History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, v. 1, pp. 343–344.
 50. Paul Casanova, Professor of Arabic language and literature at the Collège de France, *L'Enseignement de l'Arabe au Collège de France* (The Teaching of Arabic at the Collège de France), see under I: *Leçon d'ouverture*, 26th April 1909, p. 15.

The original French text is as follows: “Mohammed, chaque fois qu’on lui demandait un miracle comme preuve de l’authenticité de sa mission, alléguait la composition du Coran et son incomparable excellence, preuve de son origine divine. Et, en effet, même pour ceux qui ne sont pas musulmans, rien n’est plus merveilleux que ce langage d’une plénitude et d’une sonorité si prenantes dont la simple audition transportait d’admiration ces peuples primitifs si épris d’éloquence! L’ampleur de ces syllabes à cadence grandiose et à rythme si large fut pour beaucoup dans la conversion des plus hostiles et des plus sceptiques.”

This book is available in digital form at Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt (<https://bibliothek.uni-halle.de/>).

51. *Islam: The Misunderstood Religion*, by James A. Michener in *The Reader’s Digest* (American edition), May 1955, p. 70.
52. Laura Veccia Vaglieri, *Apologia dell’ Islamismo*, Rome, 1925, translated as *An Interpretation of Islam*, ch. II: ‘The Simplicity of Islamic Dogma’, p. 41–42.

7. Identification of Maitreya by Buddha

In Pali the Sanskrit name *Maitreya* is *Metteyya*, which is said to come from the word *Metta*, meaning loving-kindness. There is a well-known discourse of Buddha known as *Metta Sutta*, or Buddha's words on loving-kindness, which lists a number of qualities to be acquired by those striving to reach the rank of a buddha. Maitreya "may be taken as a mythic personification of the virtue of 'loving-kindness'."¹ Thus the qualities mentioned in the *Metta Sutta* should be possessed *par excellence* by the Maitreya.

From the version of the Metta Sutta in the Anguttara Nikaya (*Mettanisamsa Sutta*),² we may deduce that the Promised Maitreya, according to Buddha, must be:

1. Compassionate for the whole creation.
2. A messenger of peace, a peace-maker.
3. One who sleeps undisturbed.
4. A deep thinker, a wise man.
5. One who does not entertain nightmares.
6. Will be under the guardianship of angels.
7. The intense lover of mankind.
8. Unharmd by poisons.
9. Under Divine protection in war.
10. Safe from the harm of fire and water.
11. Successful in the world, and after death near to God.³

In the *Karaṇīya Metta Sutta* Buddha laid down the standard of moral conduct required by one who wishes to attain the ultimate purity and peace:

“This is what should be done, By one who is skilled in goodness, And who knows the path of peace.”⁴

It follows that Maitreya would abide by this standard to the highest level and be renowned for it. As a teacher of morals he is defined by Buddha to be:

1. Truthful. Various translators have this as: “upright and conscientious”,⁵ “honest and upright”,⁶ “upright, and straightforward”,⁷ “upright, exceedingly upright”,⁸ “straight — quite straight”⁹, and “upright, perfectly upright”.¹⁰
2. Self-reliant, self-respecting. Various translators have this as: “not demanding in nature”,¹¹ “not grasping”,¹² “nor greedy after gifts”,¹³ “without desire for the possessions of others”.¹⁴
3. Gentle in speech.¹⁵
4. Noble. “And let him not do anything mean for which others who are wise might reprove (him)”¹⁶ and “Let him not perform the slightest wrong for which wise men may rebuke him”.¹⁷
5. Not proud. Various translators have this as: “not arrogant”,¹⁸ “Humble and not conceited”.¹⁹
6. Not a deceiver of any one.
7. Not at all looking down upon others.
8. Restraining anger.
9. Not exultant at others’ loss.
10. As kind to creatures as a mother.²⁰
11. The embodiment of always planning to do good: “Standing, walking or sitting or lying, as long as he be awake, let him devote himself to this mind.”²¹
12. His way of living should be the best example to others. Various translators have this as: “...this (way of) living they say is the

best in this world”,²² “This they say is the noblest living here”,²³ and “For this is what men call ‘the highest state’.”²⁴

Now let us see how far the Holy Prophet Muhammad fits this criterion as set by the Buddha.

1. Compassionate for the whole creation. It was because of this merit of the Prophet Muhammad that he was styled in the Quran as “A mercy to all nations” (21:107). Mercy and affection for other creatures have different significations from the point of view of various religions. Generally, it is understood by Hindus and Buddhists that the slaughtering of animals is against compassion or mercy towards creatures. As a matter of fact, Muslims, Christians, Jews and even various sects of Hindus and Buddhists differ in opinion from vegetarians. In this respect the very words of the Buddha may be quoted:

“Where is love in a man who believes that the slaughter of an animal recompenses his sins? Can a new sin obliterate the preceding one? Can the blood of a sinless creature purge a man of his sins?”

These words of Buddha only show that to consider an animal sacrifice as an atonement for sins is a great blunder. In his own time, Brahmins, according to their Vedas, used to burn alive hundreds of animals as sacrifices to gods. They believed this act would atone for their sins and evil deeds. They used to enjoy the sight of animal fights. Often they set them at large only to destroy poor people’s harvest and fruit. Buddha witnessed all these cruelties on animals and raised his voice against the unreasonable usage.

What we believe is mercy and affection towards animals is not to harm or afflict them, and that the best use of them should be made for what they had been created for, and that in so doing we must not exceed limits. Sick, unhealthy, weak and emaciated animals should not be used for any work. Care should be taken in feeding them properly. This is how we should treat animals and use them for what they are fit. To let them loose to wander abroad, or to worship them,

or to increase their number to exceedingly high limits, so that they create anxiety for mankind, is also against the teaching of Islam and rationalism.

Islam is not a religion of ascetics. It is, rather, a practical one. According to Islam, animals are created for our benefit, as the Holy Quran explicitly reveals:

“And surely there is a lesson for you in the cattle. We make you to drink of what is in their bellies, and you have in them many advantages, and of them you eat.” — 23:21

There is no doubt about the fact that we gather much knowledge from animals. They profit us much, as they give us skins, bones, wools, guts, etc. For many of our requirements we are dependent upon these things. And there are some animals which are of no use except for meat. In all cases, slaughter is indispensable.

It is no hyperbole to say that the affection and mercy which the Prophet Muhammad had in his heart for animals has no parallel anywhere. Even the Messiah and Buddha show no greater signs. In our books of Hadith and in the Holy Prophet’s biographies, much has been written about this. A synopsis of the same may be found interesting.

- a) “He (Prophet Muhammad) entered the garden of a man from the *Ansar*. All of a sudden when a camel saw the Prophet it wept tenderly, producing a yearning sound and its eyes flowed. The Prophet came to it and wiped the temple of its head. So it kept silence. He then said: ‘Who is the master of this camel? Whose camel is this?’ A young man from the *Ansar* came and said: ‘This is mine, Messenger of Allah.’ He said: ‘Don’t you fear Allah about this beast which Allah has given in your possession? It has complained to me that you keep it hungry and load it heavily which fatigues it’.”²⁵
- b) “We were with the Messenger of Allah during a journey. He went to relieve himself. We saw a bird with her two young ones and we captured her young ones. The bird came and

began to spread its wings. The Messenger of Allah came back and said: ‘Who distressed her for its young ones? Return its young ones to it.’”²⁶

- c) The Holy Prophet strictly prohibited the cutting of flesh from live animals, as was generally done, and cursed those who did so.²⁷
- d) He forbade afflicting any creature with fire. “He (the Holy Prophet) also saw an ant colony that we had burnt. He asked: ‘Who has burnt this?’ We replied: ‘We have.’ He said: ‘It is not proper for anyone to punish with fire, except for the Lord of fire’.”²⁸
- e) He prohibited the instigating of animals to fight with one another.²⁹
- f) “The Prophet said: While a dog was going round a well and was about to die of thirst, a prostitute from among the Israelites saw it and took off her shoe and watered it. So Allah forgave her because of that good deed.”³⁰
- g) The Holy Prophet said: “A woman was punished in hell because of a cat which she had kept locked till it died of hunger.” He added that Allah said to the woman: “You neither fed it nor watered when you locked it up, nor did you set it free to eat the insects of the earth.”³¹
- h) Anas ibn Malik, a Companion of the Holy Prophet, says that the Companions of the Prophet would take off the saddles from their camels as soon as they stopped while journeying and then say their prayers.³² This meant that the animals were left to get fodder freely and to relax.

2. Prophet Muhammad as a peace-maker. The very name of his religion *Islam* means *peace*. The Prophet has been called the first peace-maker: “And I am the first of peace-makers” (6: 163).³³ This quality of his is not confined to its dictionary meaning only. The religion of Islam is, all in all, a message, a code and a guide for peace

and tranquillity. There is not a single edict which does not take cognizance of peace.

3. One who sleeps undisturbed. The Quran speaks of the Holy Prophet as saying:

“My prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are surely for God, the Lord of the worlds. — 6: 162

What a solace, contentment, peace must there be rampant in the Holy Prophet’s breast, whose life and death is but for God! Hadith records that the Prophet used to offer his nightfall prayers before going to bed. He used to praise God, and render thanksgivings to Him at that hour. He would never sleep without reciting some chapter of the Holy Quran. And on his bed, he used to pray: “O God! with Thy name I die and I live.”³⁴ And on getting up from his slumber, he used to pray: “God be thanked, He Who has given life after death.”³⁵ This shows how undisturbed and peaceful a slumber the Prophet would enjoy, with all resignation towards God. About other prophets the Holy Prophet has said that their eyes slept but their hearts did not sleep;³⁶ and about himself he has said that his eyes slept but his heart did not sleep:³⁷ it was busy in communion with God.³⁸

The well-known incident may be added here that once, on the way back from an expedition, the Holy Prophet and his Companions took rest in woodland, and were lying dispersed among the trees, all of them asleep. The Prophet had hung his sword on a branch of the tree under which he was sleeping. He suddenly called his Companions to him and they saw that there was a bedouin sitting alongside him. The Prophet told them:

“This man came to me while I was asleep, and he took my sword stealthily. I woke up and he was standing by my head, holding my sword unsheathed. He said: ‘Who will protect you from me?’ I replied: ‘Allah’. So he put away the sword and sat down, and here he is.”³⁹

It is added that the Holy Prophet did not punish him and let him go. According to other versions, the man had repeated twice more,

“Who will protect you from me?”, and the Prophet replied each time: “Allah.”

4. Wisdom of the Holy Prophet. The Quran declares repeatedly that the Holy Prophet has been raised to teach people “the Book and the Wisdom”⁴⁰ and in many more places that his revelation contains wisdom.⁴¹ It describes wisdom as “a great good” for anyone upon whom it is bestowed, and as a great “grace” bestowed upon the Prophet, who is commanded to use “wisdom” in calling people to the way of God.⁴²

The very beginning of the life of the Holy Prophet presents an anecdote when he showed unparalleled wisdom. It was at the time when the Quraish took in hand the reconstruction of the Ka’bah. The various tribes vied with one another in the lifting of the Black Stone to its place. This rivalry seemed likely to lead to bloodshed. Then came the Prophet and laid down his sheet of cloth, asking the tribal leaders to hold its borders, lift it up and thus participate in undertaking the much esteemed and sacred task.

In war councils, in conversations, in exchanging views with visiting delegations, and in ordinary circumstances, he displayed wonderful wisdom. It was due to this wisdom and to his exertions that the shifting particles of the sands of Arabia were cemented into one solid and tenacious bulwark.

5. Immune from nightmares. Here, we understand, are meant bad dreams due to over-eating and excited emotions. In the Holy Quran, it is said about the Prophet Muhammad:

“God indeed fulfilled the vision (*ru’yā*) for His Messenger with truth.” — 48:27

He saw many visions in his youth and they came true like daylight. Bad dreams due to gluttony or excited passions and emotions have nothing to do with prophets. According to a saying of the Prophet: “A vision (*ru’yā*) comes from God, and a bad dream (*hulm*) comes from Satan”.⁴³ In another Hadith report it is said by the Holy Prophet’s wife, Aishah, that “revelation granted to the Messenger of

Allah, may peace and the blessings of Allah be on him, began with true dreams (*ru'yā sāliḥ*) in a state of sleep, so that whenever he dreamt a dream the truth of it shone forth like the dawn of the morning".⁴⁴

6. Angels will guard him. In all sacred books and scriptures it is mentioned that the prophets are guarded by angels. According to the Vedas, *devatas* have been appointed to guard the heavens and the earth and people. In Buddhist scriptures, the Bible and the Zend Avesta, the protection of the righteous is made the task of the angels.

In this respect it is interesting to mention that Devadatta, a monk who was both a cousin and brother-in-law of Buddha, seeing the remarkable excellences of Buddha, conceived in his heart a jealous hatred, thus losing all power of rational thought. He ever plotted wicked schemes to put a stop to the spread of the true law. Ascending a mount, he rolled down a stone to hit Buddha; the stone struck another rock and split into two parts, each part passing on either side of him. Only one of his feet was injured. Thereupon Buddha said to Devadatta:

“Great, O foolish one, is the demerit you have brought forth for yourself, in that with evil and murderous intent you have caused the blood of the Tathagata to flow.”

Bhikkhus (disciples of Buddha) gathered to guard the Buddha, but Buddha said to them:

“This, O Bhikkhus, is an impossible thing, and one that cannot occur, that one should deprive a Tathagata of life by violence. The Tathagatas, O Bhikkhus, are extinguished (in death) in due and natural course.

There are, O Bhikkhus, these five kinds of teachers now living in the world. And this, O Bhikkhus, is an impossible thing, and one that cannot occur, that a Tathagata should be slain by any act set on foot by anyone besides himself. The Tathagatas, O Bhikkhus are extinguished (in death) in due course (of nature). Go, therefore, O Bhikkhus, each one to his Vihara,⁴⁵ for the Tathagatas require no protection.”⁴⁶

Now consider the Holy Prophet, i.e., the Maitreya Buddha. In Makkah the Prophet's only enemies were the Quraish. In Madinah the Jews were a powerful nation, and a plain condemnation of their iniquities had made them the most dreadful enemies. Similar was the case of the Christians. The other tribes of Arabia had also by this time been successfully incited by the Quraish to side with them.

No kindness or generosity, however, on the part of the Holy Prophet would satisfy the Jews; nothing could conciliate the bitter feelings with which they were animated; they soon broke off and ranged themselves of the side of the enemies of Islam. The Christians also declared that they preferred idolatry with all its attendant evils to the creed of Muhammad.

In these dreadful circumstances it was revealed to the Holy Prophet in the Quran:

“And God will protect you from people.” —5:67

He would remain under Divine protection amidst the innumerable dangers that threatened him from all quarters and the numerous plots against his life. When this verse was revealed he called the guard of his house and told him to go away because God had promised to protect him.⁴⁷

The Holy Prophet was given the assurance from on High that even if no one helped him, God would do so:

“If you do not help him, Allah certainly helped him when those who disbelieved expelled him — he being the second of the two; when they were both in the cave, when he said to his companion: Do not grieve, surely Allah is with us. So Allah sent down His tranquillity on him and strengthened him with forces which you did not see, and made lowest the word of those who disbelieved. And the word of Allah, that is the uppermost.” — 9:40

When the Prophet was forced to flee from Makkah, his enemies came in pursuit. He had only one Companion with him, Abu Bakr, “the second of the two” in the above verse. They took refuge in a cave.

Abu Bakr expressed the fear that their pursuers might see them under their feet through the small entrance to their cave. At this most critical juncture, the Holy Prophet assured him: surely Allah is with us. Allah strengthened them “with forces which you did not see”, which were the angels protecting him.

As we read in the Buddhist books, there were only two or three enemies of the Buddha and when his followers gathered to guard and protect him, he told them that it is “an impossible thing, and one that cannot occur, that a Tathagata should be slain ... Go, therefore, O Bhikkhus, each one to his Vihara, for the Tathagatas require no protection.” Though the enemies of the Holy Prophet came upon him in thousands, it was impossible for them to deprive him of life by violence. Whenever any attempt was made upon him, he was saved by the angels.

7. The lover of mankind. Primarily, the Holy Prophet cried out against the injustice of man and invited people with love to do justice to every human soul. His anxiety for the reform and delivery of mankind from its grave ills is expressed in the Quran in the words:

“Then perhaps you will kill yourself with grief, sorrowing after them, if they do not believe in this announcement.” — 18:6

“Perhaps you will kill yourself with grief because they do not believe.” — 26:3

Instead of cursing the evil-doers, he exerted himself so much to bring about their reform that his anxiety for them is described here by saying that it was as if he was almost killing himself with grief.

When persecuted and threatened by huge forces he, like Abraham,⁴⁸ Krishna, Moses and David, was compelled to physical resistance, although it was an unequal warfare. There is no parallel for it in the history of war that a man fought with so small a number of companions against double, triple, nay sometimes ten times greater foes, yet nearly every time he was victorious. In ten years he conquered a million square miles. However, in all these battles only 150 men of the enemy were killed and 125 men of the faith gave their

lives for him. This is an unparalleled example of sparing human bloodshed. Never in the history of war has anyone, with so little bloodshed, conquered so large an area in so short a time. It is a great miracle of the love for humanity which the Holy Prophet Maitreya had. The gracious result of this very small loss of human life was that the warring tribes of Arabia gave up their hostility.

8. Unharmed by poison. Out of all those poisons which are fatal for man, Satan excels all others in efficacy. He not only attacks our body, but goes deep into our spiritual self and is a cause of the utmost deprivation and devastation. Why the Holy Prophet was not afraid of the poisonous adder of Satan or evil has been answered by himself. The Prophet once said that every man has a Satan in him, but that his Satan had converted into a Muslim and was no more something to be afraid of.⁴⁹ Therefore, Satan never tempted him to commit anything evil.

As for the ordinary poisons, it is said that many people adulterated his food with poison, but they did not harm his health. A Jewish woman brought him poisoned mutton which he ate. Then he called her back and asked her about it, and she said: "I had planned to kill you." The Prophet said: "Allah will never give you the power to do that." His Companions asked: "Should we not kill her?" The Prophet replied: "No."⁵⁰ Often it happened that the Holy Prophet came to know that the food was adulterated, and he would at once abstain from it. Once a group of Jews presented him with a gift of a roasted sheep, which was poisoned. The Prophet asked for all the Jews of the area to be brought before him and he asked them to tell the truth if they had poisoned it. They replied that they had. He asked them why they had poisoned it. They replied: "We wanted to know if you were a liar, in which case we would be rid of you, and if you were a prophet then it would not harm you."⁵¹

9. Under Divine protection in war. See No. 6 above.

10. Secure from the danger of fire and water. There are stories about many prophets that their enemies cast them into fire or

tried to drown them in water but fire and water did not harm them. In reality this is not a marvellous miracle. There are many fire-walkers and they are not even godly men. According to the Quran, Allah put out the *fire of war* against the Holy Prophet:

“Whenever they kindle a fire for war Allah puts it out, and they strive to make mischief in the land.” — 5:64

However, this sign was also fulfilled in the person of the Holy Prophet in this way. In the very lifetime of some prophets when their nations turned a deaf ear to the Divine message, storms of fire and water came upon them. The blessings of the Holy Prophet not only saved him from any mishap from fire or water, but his whole nation was kept safe from any such chastisement. The Quran refers to this as follows:

“And when they said: O God, if this is indeed the truth from You, then rain down on us stones from heaven or inflict on us a painful punishment. And God would not punish them while you were among them nor would God punish them while they seek forgiveness.” — 8:32–33

An incident is reported in a most authentic hadith that once, as the Holy Prophet was delivering a Friday sermon, a Bedouin stood up and asked him to pray for rain because of drought. Anas ibn Malik, who reported this, says:

“He (the Holy Prophet) raised his hands and we could not see a patch of cloud in the sky. By Him in Whose hand is my life, he had not lowered his hands when billows of clouds appeared, and he had hardly left the pulpit when I saw rain dripping from his beard.”

The rain continued for a week, and on the following Friday, as the Holy Prophet was delivering the sermon, a Bedouin stood up and said that the rain was causing great damage. The report says:

“He (the Prophet) raised his hands and said: ‘O Allāh, (let it rain) around us and not upon us,’ and any cloud he pointed

towards, it cleared away... Anyone who came from anywhere talked of nothing else but heavy rainfall.”⁵²

According to another version of this report: “So the rain stopped and we came out walking in the sun.”⁵³ In other versions we have: “I (Anas ibn Malik) saw the clouds dispersing right and left and it continued to rain but did not rain on the people of Madinah” and “it (the cloud) was torn away from Madinah as clothes are torn”.⁵⁴

In the battle of Badr, a strong shower of rain caused heavy damage to the enemy, whereas the same rain proved a great blessing to the Prophet and his Companions.⁵⁵

11. Successful in this world and the hereafter. There can be no better success for a man than to fulfil his mission in the teeth of all opposition. When the Holy Prophet came to the pulpit with the sacred message there was no friend nor anybody to sympathise with him. If the grandeur of the design, the scantiness of the means, and the immensity of the results are three measures of the genius of a man, who will dare compare humanly any great man of modern history with Prophet Muhammad? It was no less than a miracle that the man, who had not a single friend or sympathiser at the commencement of his mission, found at the time of his passing away not a single opponent of his in the country. He found the nation sheer idolaters. He moulded them into Muslims, with the hatred of worshipping false gods, and a passion for one, immaterial God. He metamorphosed a people full of evil into a praiseworthy righteous one. One can judge the spiritual greatness of the Holy Prophet in the world-to-come by the success which he gained in this life.

According to Buddhist teachings, he will go to the Brahma-world, the *Brahma Loka*, or the “highest realm” (see notes 2 and 3 to this chapter). Compare this with these verses of the Quran:

“O soul that are at rest, return to your Lord, well-pleased, well-pleasing. So enter among my servants and enter My Garden.”
— 89:27–30

The Holy Prophet's last words were: "Blessed Companionship on High, Blessed Companionship on High".⁵⁶ Having accomplished fully his duty of companionship with human beings in this world, the spirit of the great Prophet took flight to the Companionship on High.

The preacher of morality and the embodiment of sublime morals

It is said to the Holy Prophet in the Quran:

"By the inkstand and the pen and that which they write! By the grace of your Lord you are not mad. And surely yours is a reward never to be cut off. And surely you have sublime morals." — 68:1-4

Buddha's greatness is in that glowing light of morality which he preached to the people. He believed that the performance of miracles is no criterion for a religious reformer, a preacher, or a prophet. It is the morals and morality which testify to their being righteous. Nations cannot be built with the performance of miracles, but with high spiritual teachings.

The moral sanctity of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, as a possessor of sublime morals, was not only appreciated by Buddha, but it might be estimated from its efficacy upon the people whom the prophet came to reform.

For a preacher may be an eloquent preacher, but there may not be the least efficacy in all that he preaches, or all his high-sounding edicts may be impracticable. The Prophet of Nazareth seemed to be very high-sounding, but it had no effect upon his followers. On the other hand, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, by virtue of his moral teachings, succeeded triumphantly in raising his people to a higher and more sublime goal. It was these morals which cemented the separate particles of sand into one solid wall. The life of a nation depends much upon individual strength of character. It comes from the development of all those capabilities and energies which are entrusted to each human being by God. As quoted earlier from the *Karaṇīya Metta Sutta*, Buddha described the Promised One as an embodiment

of twelve moral virtues (see page 79), and in this respect the Holy Prophet is unsurpassed and unparalleled.

1. His unique truthfulness. Naturally, man is truthful. And generally, unless he is compelled by selfish motives, duress or fear, he always likes to be truthful. For all prophets it is the first and foremost sign to be above all selfish desires and fear. And it should be a matter of pleasure for us that truth and truthfulness are qualities accepted as essential by all religions. Buddha has said:

“The person who tells a lie, who transgresses in this one thing, transcending concern for the world beyond: there is no evil he might not do.”⁵⁷

“...overcome a liar with truthfulness. Speak the truth...”⁵⁸

He taught that anything you say should have five qualities:

“It is spoken at the right time. It is spoken in truth. It is spoken affectionately. It is spoken beneficially. It is spoken with a mind of goodwill.”⁵⁹

In other words, you should not tell a lie, should speak the truth, and speak it freely and fearlessly and with a loving heart. While truth and truthfulness is the very life of all religions, if the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the promised truthful one according to Buddha, had only possessed this quality to an ordinary level he could not be described as one having “sublime morals”. In various Scriptures such as the Vedas, Zend Avesta, Torah and in the New Testament as well, although much emphasis is laid on speaking truth, yet some exceptional occasions have been admitted when telling a lie is preferred to speaking the truth. There appear to us to be four such occasions:

- a) Exaggerations in praising gods;
- b) Seeking selfish gains at the expense of other religions and nations;
- c) Glorifying spiritual leaders, saints and prophets, like God;
- d) Sometimes for selfishness or out of fear.

Ecclesiasts had applied euphemisms to such kinds of lying and deception to ease their consciences. The Holy Prophet Muhammad's life, his heroic condemnation of the superstitions of his countrymen, his courage in facing the fury of idolaters, his constancy in enduring them for thirteen years in Makkah, his incessant preaching, his recourse to warfare under severe disadvantage, his forbearance in his victory, and his complete devotion to principle, all bear witness that by all standards he was a truthful man.

Here is the testimony of his enemies:

(a) When the Holy Prophet's opponent Abu Sufyan appeared in the court of Heraclius, ruler of the eastern Roman empire, while questioning him Heraclius asked: "Did you find him (Muhammad) telling a lie before (i.e., before his claim to be a prophet)?" Abu Sufyan replied: "No." At the end of the questioning, while explaining what he had learnt from it, Heraclius said about this reply of Abu Sufyan: "So I knew that it could not be that a man who had abstained from telling lies about people should tell lies about Allāh." ⁶⁰

(b) Early in his mission, the Holy Prophet climbed a mountain and called the Quraish leaders and asked: "If I tell you that a great army is coming from the other side of the mountain to attack you, will you believe me?" They unanimously replied: "Yes, because we never found you to tell anything but the truth." ⁶¹

(c) With reference to the words of the Quran, in which the Holy Prophet was consoled, "for surely they do not call you a liar, but the wrongdoers deny the messages of Allah" (6:33), it is related in commentaries of the Quran that Abu Jahl, a great enemy of Islam, one day said to the Holy Prophet: "We don't call you a liar, but we call that message a lie which you brought." ⁶²

(d) In the peace treaty of Hudaibiyah with the Quraish, the Holy Prophet accepted the condition that anyone from Makkah embracing Islam and seeking refuge with the Holy Prophet should be returned to Makkah. As a matter of fact, this meant sending newly converted Makkan Muslims back into the hell of the enemy after they had

sought refuge with the Muslims. But the Holy Prophet was so truthful and honest in his word, that he followed the treaty most strictly and scrupulously.⁶³

The character of a man is shown by his weaknesses. One who talks about his morality and does not confess his weakness cannot be called truthful. People have so much eulogised their prophets and seers that they have raised them to exactly the same status as that of God. But the Prophet Muhammad declared many times in explicit words that he was a only mortal like other human beings.⁶⁴

There is a touching incident how a blind man interrupted the Holy Prophet's conversation with some of the chiefs of the Quraish. The Holy Prophet took this untimely interruption ill, on which he received this revelation:

“He frowned and turned away, because the blind man came to him. And what would make you (O Prophet) know that he might purify himself, or be mindful, so the Reminder should profit him? As for him who considers himself free from need, to him you do attend. And no blame is on you, if he does not purify himself. And as to him who comes to you striving hard, and he fears, to him you pay no regard.” — The Quran, 80: 1–10

The Prophet's inattention to an intruder, while he had not yet finished his conversation, was quite natural. Again, he did not chide the intruder for his interruption, but only disliked it. At any rate if it were left to the option of the individual, he himself would be the last person to give permanence to a reproval for his own act.

What a surpassingly truthful one he is, not to have concealed a revelation which exposed his inattention to a blind man, and for it to be written in the Quran and repeated and recited forever. Buddha, when he prophesied that the Promised One should be “honest and upright”, “upright, exceedingly upright”, meant that he will be extraordinarily truthful, as we have shown of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

2. Self-reliance and self-respect. We live with co-operation and depending on one another. But to demand sacrifices from others, ourselves not undertaking any, is against self-reliance and self-respect. A distinguished trait of the Holy Prophet Muhammad's character was the doing of good to others, but he never expected a favour from anyone. If by chance someone did any favour to him he would acknowledge it, otherwise he could not fitly be called self-reliant.

There was a commandment for him in the Quran: "And do no favour seeking gain" (74 : 6). It is an insult for both, the one who gives as well as the one who receives. Similarly on the receiver's behalf, if he desists from repaying the favour done to him, that is the negation of self-reliance and shameful in the eyes of others.

Self-reliance is an important part of good morals. Anecdotes reveal how self-reliant the Prophet Muhammad was:

(a) Abu Bakr was an intimate friend and the only companion of the Holy Prophet in the cave of Thaur. He was loyal and obedient, and was always prepared to spare anything and everything for his noble friend. Even he was repaid by the Holy Prophet when he presented a camel when the Holy Prophet went on his migration to Madinah.⁶⁵

(b) The site which the Holy Prophet found most convenient and fit for the mosque at Madinah, he paid its cost to the owners, although the latter wished to give it free of charge.⁶⁶

(c) On accepting any present the Holy Prophet used to make some return for it.⁶⁷ The King of Yemen once sent a cloak as a present to the Prophet, and he in return presented another cloak to the King.

(d) In accordance with this feature of the Holy Prophet's character, he refused to accept anything from the obligatory charity collection (*zakāt*) for himself, his family, and his children.⁶⁸

(e) The Holy Prophet's self-reliance is also reflected in the fact that he did all personal work by his own hands: dust and clean his house, patch his own clothes, mend his own shoes, milk his own

goats, tie his own camel and look after it personally, and assist his wives in house work. When his wife Aishah was asked: “What did the Prophet do at home?”, she replied: “He used to work for his family and when it was time for prayer he would go out for prayer.”⁶⁹

3. Politeness in conversation. Politeness and mildness is a great feature of good breeding. God has described it as His mercy. The Holy Prophet was polite, mild and generous. The Quran says: “Thus it is by Allah’s mercy that you are gentle to them” (3 : 159).

Throughout his life, the Holy Prophet never abused anybody. He never treated anybody with harsh words or hardness. He would convince men most politely, mildly and affectionately, and he stopped others from using harsh language. The Jews used to speak to him most harshly but the Holy Prophet always kept himself from retaliating, and he taught others to be as polite and mild as himself.⁷⁰

4. Being gentle and noble. The Holy Prophet was gentle and noble by birth and instinct. He came from the distinguished tribe of the Quraish and his noble behaviour was expressed in his sublime morals. When Heraclius, the Byzantine emperor, asked Abu Sufyan, who was at that time an opponent of the Muslims, “What is his family standing among you?”, Abu Sufyan replied: “He is a man of noble descent among us.”⁷¹

The house of the Holy One in Makkah was under the guard of this very tribe. Throughout the Arabian peninsula rich caravans were looted, but the Quraish were so honoured and esteemed that their caravans feared nothing.

5. Immune from pride. The Holy Quran enjoins upon all Muslims in general and the Holy Prophet in particular not to walk proudly upon the earth:

“And do not go about in the land exultingly.” — 17:37

“God does not love such as are proud, boastful.” — 4:36

“And the servants of the Beneficent are they who walk on the earth in humility and when the ignorant address them, they say, ‘Peace’.” — 25:63

Notwithstanding the elevated position which the Prophet held amongst his own people, he never liked haughtiness or distinction for himself. The most respected Quraish used to go for the pilgrimage and stay in Muzdalifah, where no one else was allowed to enjoy this privilege. But the Holy Prophet himself, though a Quraish, never liked to accept such distinctions.

Even before and after his claim to prophethood, he always lived among common people, and he never liked a distinguished place to be reserved for him, nor did he like any special shelter from the sun, while others were refused the same. His Companions made an offer to reserve a seat for him but he remarked that whoever reached it first deserved that privilege. He used to participate in any task which others would do. While the mosque at Madinah was being built, he himself worked as an ordinary labourer, carrying bricks with his Companions.⁷² During the digging of the trench around Madinah at the battle of the Allies, he worked alongside his followers and was seen covered with dust up to his abdomen.⁷³

In all his deeds he was on a level with his Companions. He never used any throne nor any dais, but sat with his Companions on the same mat, so much so that a newcomer could not distinguish which among them was the Prophet and asked sometimes: Which among all of you is Muhammad?⁷⁴

6. Above all deceit. There are many occasions when the Holy Prophet gave a proof of his absolute honesty. An instance or two may be quoted here.

(a) Before he was raised to prophethood at Makkah, once Abdullah ibn Abi al-Hansa struck a bargain with the Holy Prophet and asked him to wait at a certain place where he promised to come and settle the accounts. Somehow he forgot to keep his word. After three days, when he was reminded of it, he found the Holy Prophet just where he had left him. The Prophet, on seeing him, remarked that he had been waiting for him the whole three days.⁷⁵

(b) In the battle of Badr, the Muslims were very few in number and they were in dire need of soldiers. Two of the Holy Prophet's Companions, Abu Hudhaifah ibn al-Yamān and his father Husail, while coming from Makkah, were detained in the way by the enemy, but were released when they pledged on oath that they would go to Madinah and not take part in the battle on the Prophet's side at Badr. They narrated the whole incident to the Holy Prophet, and he told them: "Depart, you two (i.e., go to Madinah). We shall abide by the promise made with them and seek the help of God against them."⁷⁶

7. Free from contempt. The Holy Quran says:

"O you who believe, let not people laugh at other people, perhaps they may be better than they; nor let women (laugh) at other women, perhaps they may be better than they. Neither find fault with one another, nor call one another by (offensive) nicknames. Evil is a bad name after faith; and whoever does not repent, these it is that are the wrongdoers." — 49:11

Other prophets have, of course, exhorted individuals not to look down upon one another, but it was only the Prophet of Islam who preached that whole nations should not disdain other peoples. He gave all mankind a status of complete equality and rang a death-knell to all discriminations of caste, country, colour and race. He cemented together all Muslims as brothers. He has acknowledged the coming of warners, messengers, and prophets among all nations and declared that all nations are the creation of one God.

8. Not overpowered by wrath. The Quran gives this description of true believers:

"...those who restrain (their) anger and pardon people." — 3:134

"...whenever they are angry they forgive." — 42:37

The Holy Prophet had repeatedly given them this advice: "Do not become angry and furious."⁷⁷

This was one of the most exalted qualities of the Holy Prophet. In the days of peace as well as in time of war, he was forbearing and

patient. On ordinary occasions a man may be forbearing, but to manifest this trait of character at the time when he is in possession of the sceptre and the diadem is very rare. Then often he retaliates against those at whose hands he has received afflictions while in distress.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad had a different story to tell. When he wielded the great power of kingdom at the time of his conquering Makkah, he forgave all the vanquished opponents of Islam. "Say, O ye Makkans, What do you expect of me today" was the Holy Prophet's remark to the vanquished tribes who had all along persecuted him. And he forgave them all they had done, especially at the time when he was by all means able to take vengeance upon them as he held the reins of government.⁷⁸

Hind, the wife of a great opponent of Islam, Abu Sufyan, was so brutal that, after the Holy Prophet's uncle Hamza was killed at the battle of Uhud, she cut open his breast and chewed his heart, liver and kidneys out of bitterest enmity. At the time of the conquest of Makkah, she appeared in a veil before the Holy Prophet but was recognized by her proud attitude. The Holy Prophet did not recall the sad and harrowing event. Hind at once cried out: "Messenger of Allah, there was no family on earth that I wanted to see disgraced more than your family, but today there is no family on earth that I want to see honoured more than your family."⁷⁹ The Prophet forgave her. Generally on such an occasion, man is enraged and nothing checks him from retaliating for what has been meted out to him before. Wahshi, the man who killed Hamza, lived in Makkah. When Makkah was conquered by the Muslims, he fled for his life and reached Ta'if. However, he could not live there peacefully as that city also embraced Islam. Finding no refuge, he came to the Holy Prophet, and found peace in remaining under the protection of Muhammad.⁸⁰

There are so many occasions like these in the history of the most forbearing Prophet, which reveal how the Holy Prophet not only held in check his own anger and rage, but also by his mercy cooled down the rancour and rage of others.

9. Sad over others' loss. Makkah was the birthplace of the Holy Prophet, but the Makkans were his great enemies. For three years they kept him under a blockade. They were determined not to let a single grain of food reach him. After many sufferings the Holy Prophet had to leave Makkah. After his flight a horrible famine overtook the city, so much so that people were forced to eat bones and dead animals. Then came Abu Sufyan to the Holy Prophet and said: "O Muhammad! The people of your tribe are perishing, so pray to Allah for them". The Holy Prophet at once raised his hands and prayed for his enemy to be redeemed from this affliction.⁸¹ In the battle of Uhud, the Prophet was stoned so much so that his teeth bled. But the forbearing one did not resort to curses. On the other hand, he prayed: "O Allah! Forgive these people for they know not."⁸² Unlike other earthly kings, the Holy Prophet neither rejoiced at the loss of others, nor exulted in the victories he won.

10. Kind towards people as a mother. All philanthropists have loved mankind during their lives. But a natural and instinctive love such as a mother has for her children is worth consideration. The treatment of the opponents of the Holy Prophet and enemies of Islam in Makkah may well be compared with the treatment of naughty and disobedient children by their mother. How the Makkans had treated the Holy Prophet is not concealed from anybody.

The way in which the Holy Prophet showed his instinctive love, affection and earnestness for their betterment is a clear proof of his merciful sentiments. He had the utmost sympathy for down-trodden, wretched slaves. An instance may be quoted here. Zaid ibn Haritha was a slave who was set free by the Prophet. Zaid's father came to take him home, but his love for the Holy Prophet was so strong in his heart that he preferred the love and sympathy of the Prophet above that of his own father.⁸³ Again, a person once asked him: "Messenger of Allah, how many times should I forgive a servant?" The Prophet remained quiet. He repeated the question but the Prophet still kept quiet. He asked the same question a third time, and the Holy Prophet's reply was: "Forgive him seventy times every day."⁸⁴

To forgive for a fault, and indeed the fault of a slave, and beyond that to forgive seventy times a day, is really something unattainable. It is only a soul the like of a mother who can be the possessor of so much love and mercy as to do all this. The Holy Prophet actually put all this in practice. Anas, who was the servant of the Prophet, says: "I served the Prophet for ten years, and he never said 'Fie' (i.e., a word of exasperation or annoyance) to me".⁸⁵

11. Always thinking of doing good, standing, walking or sitting or lying. The Holy Quran says:

"Those who remember Allah, standing and sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord, You have not created this in vain!" — 3 : 191

And again it commanded the Holy Prophet to say:

"Say: My prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are surely for the Lord of the worlds." — 6 : 162

A man who remembers God sitting and standing will every moment be thinking of ways of doing good to other people. It was his very anxiety for the betterment of humanity that compelled him to prostrate himself and to implore God earnestly and humbly in his prayers. Despite all opposition, he prayed and was most anxious and worried for the improvement and the righteousness of his people.

12. An exemplar for others. The Prophet Muhammad is the only prophet in the whole world whose life has been written in the minutest detail. People found salvation in following his way of life. This was in accordance with the statement in the Holy Quran:

"Certainly you have in the Messenger of God an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much." — 33 : 21

Companions of the Holy Prophet in myriads

Just as the Holy Quran had been predicted as being the miracle of the Last Prophet, so the achievement of myriads of his Companions was a predicted fact. If the Holy Quran was his verbal miracle, then the

assemblage of his Companions was his highest spiritual miracle. That is why many preceding prophets called them saints. As a matter of fact, it was a living evidence and a marvellous sign for his extraordinary sanctity. Buddha has said that the coming Buddha Maitreya would be like unto him. There are many resemblances between Buddha and the Holy Prophet Muhammad. One resemblance is the love of virtue and hatred of evil by their companions. The Holy Quran says of the Companions of the Holy Prophet:

“But Allah has endeared the faith to you and has made it attractive in your hearts, and He has made hateful to you disbelief and transgression and disobedience. Such are those who are rightly-guided.” — 49:7

And they are said by the Holy Prophet to be like stars to guide people: “My Companions are as stars; whomsoever of them you follow, you follow the right course.”⁸⁶

They are purified from sins:

“A messenger (of Allah) from among themselves, who recites to them His messages and purifies them.” — 62:2

Another resemblance which Buddha has foretold was that the Promised One would be as follows:

“He will be the leader of a brotherhood several thousands in number as I am now the leader of a brotherhood several hundreds in number.”⁸⁷

The greatness of the Companions of the Holy Prophet was not in number only, but their real eminence was in virtue and purity in life. The Comte de Boulainvilliers says:

“And yet we may truly say, that no history can boast events, that strike the imagination in a more lively manner, or can be more surprising in themselves, than those we meet with in the lives of the first Muslims, whether we consider their Great Chief, or his ministers the most illustrious of men; ...”⁸⁸

There were a few hundreds of Buddhists at the time of Buddha's death but they very soon lost the teachings of their master. Elizabeth Reed writes:

“...Buddhism has developed into contradictory systems in different countries, presenting a new phase in each locality, while in India, the land of its birth, it changed greatly even during the first ten years of its existence.”⁸⁹

On the other hand, the followers of the Holy Prophet committed the whole Divine message into their hearts, and executed it into practice. They loved the message and the Messenger so much that they were ready to give up all for him. In number they were thousands and in deeds they were unparalleled, in their service and chastity, and they were moths to the Holy Prophet's flame.

Credit goes to the Holy Prophet that he produced a class of followers who were an embodiment of righteousness, truth, love for Divine truth and nobleness. Buddha rightly foretold about them in the *Saddharma Pundarika Sutra* (known as the Lotus Sutra):

“Be well prepared and well minded; join your hands: he who is affectionate and merciful to the world is going to speak, is going to pour the endless rain of the law and refresh those that are waiting for enlightenment. And if some should feel doubt, uncertainty, or misgiving in any respect, then the Wise One shall remove it for his children, the Bodhisattvas here striving after enlightenment.”⁹⁰

As to the description, “he who is affectionate and merciful to the world”, we note that the Holy Prophet Muhammad is described in the Quran as *Rahmat-ul-lil- 'Ālamīn*, meaning: “a mercy to all nations” (21 : 107). It is further stated about them in the Lotus Sutra:

“And at that moment the following thought arose in the mind of the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Maitreya ... We never yet saw so great a host, so great a multitude of Bodhisattvas; we never yet heard of such a multitude, that after issuing from the gaps of the earth has stood in the presence of the Lord to honour, respect, venerate, worship him and greet him with joyful shouts.

Whence have these Bodhisattvas Mahāsattvas flocked hither?

...

Whence and how do these mighty persons come? Whence have they come here under the form of great bodies? All are great Seers, wise and strong in memory, whose outward appearance is lovely to see; whence have they come?"⁹¹

H.G. Wells writes:

"Can a man who has no good qualities hold a friend? Because those who knew Muhammad best believed in him most. Kadija for all her days believed in him — but she may have been a fond woman. Abu Bekr is a better witness, and he never wavered in his devotion. Abu Bekr believed in the Prophet, and it is very hard for anyone who reads the history of these times not to believe in Abu Bekr. Ali again risked his life for the Prophet in his darkest days."⁹²

Addendum:

Pilgrimage of Sudhana and his meeting Maitreya⁹³

The Gandavyuha Sutra chronicles the journey of a young boy, called Sudhana, who travels in search of enlightenment, during the course of which he meets various teachers. It is no doubt a vision and a spiritual journey. Close to the end of his search, he meets Maitreya. This is described by various writers as the climax or a most spectacular crescendo of the boy's voyage. Maitreya lives in a "Splendid Towering Palace" and is surrounded by "a host of Heavenly Beings". When Maitreya opens the doors of the palace by snapping his fingers:

"... Sudhana enters a world of unequalled splendour. He admires its magnificent interior and witnesses countless miracles performed by Maitreya."⁹⁴

The Gandavyuha Sutra is the last and 39th book of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, the Flower Ornament Scripture. We quote below from the translation of this scripture by Thomas Cleary.⁹⁵ Sudhana is advised towards the end of his journey as follows:

“Go to Maitreya and ask how an enlightening being is to seek the practices of enlightening beings, clarify the path of enlightening beings, ... Why? Because the enlightening being Maitreya has entered into all practices of enlightening beings; he has reached the goal of aspirations of all enlightening beings; he has comprehended the actions of all beings; he has confronted the developmental guidance of all beings; he has fulfilled all the transcendent ways; he has been through all the stages of enlightening beings; he has attained all the tolerances of enlightening beings; he has attained the certainty of enlightening beings; he has received all the predictions of buddhahood; he has roamed in all the liberations of enlightening beings; he has held the empowerments of all buddhas; he has been anointed by all buddhas with the consecration of the realm of omniscience.”⁹⁶

According to this advice, the disciple must follow Maitreya because Maitreya himself has already followed the path in which this aspirant is seeking to go. The Quran says the same about the Holy Prophet to his followers:

“Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah *an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much.*” — 33 : 21

The above advice to Sudhana then continues as follows:

“As a spiritual benefactor, he will nourish your roots of goodness, increase your determination for enlightenment, make your will firm, purify all your roots of goodness, increase the powers of your enlightening faculties, show you the realm of nonobstruction, bring you into conformity with the stage of universal goodness, introduce you to the means of carrying out all the vows of enlightening beings, describe to you the perfection of the virtues of the practical undertakings of all enlightening beings, and tell you about the practice of universal good.”⁹⁷

This description seems to fit very much how the Holy Prophet Muhammad is described in the Quran:

“He it is Who raised (*ba'atha*) among the illiterates a Messenger from among themselves, who recites to them His messages

and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom — although they were before certainly in manifest error.” — 62:2; see also 3:164.

A similar statement addresses the people as follows:

“Even as We have sent among you a Messenger from among you, who recites to you Our messages and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the Wisdom and teaches you what you did not know.” — 2:151

Moreover, Abraham had prayed to God to raise such a messenger:

“Our Lord, and raise up in them a Messenger from among them who shall recite to them Your messages and teach them the Book and the Wisdom, and purify them.” — 2:129

Sudhana was told that Maitreya is “a great being” who lives in “a great tower called Chamber of Adornments of Vairocana”.⁹⁸ Sudhana went there and “prostrated himself before the great tower” and “circled it respectfully hundreds of thousands of times”.⁹⁹ To us this seems to be a vision of the Ka’bah, around which Sudhana is performing the circling known in Islam as *tawaf*.

Here Sudhana voices lengthy praises of those who dwell in this abode. We quote below a few points from these praises (we have added here superscripted numbering in square brackets as references to our explanation which follows):

“This is the abode of those who dwell ... in the state of non-attachment to all worlds, in the state of non-reliance on what all worldlings rely on, in the state of having shed everything,^[1] ... in the state of presence with all buddhas^[2] ... in the state of the unity of one being and all beings as one being;^[3] ...

“This is the abode of those who have dropped all attachments to the world yet appear in the abodes of all beings in order to develop them to maturity;^[4] those who are not attached to any land but travel in all lands in the service of buddhas;^[5]...”¹⁰⁰

The qualities mentioned here apply clearly to the teachings of Islam which a true Muslim must believe in and practise:

- [1] A Muslim should have no attachment to, or reliance upon, the material world, in the manner of worldly people.
- [2] This can be taken as referring to the belief of Muslims in all the prophets, so that they are in the presence of all buddhas.
- [3] When Muslims are at the Ka'bah, they are only conscious of the One God, and they are themselves like one body.
- [4] Despite having given up all attachments to this world, a Muslim still goes around to guide the people of this world.
- [5] The Quran says: "O My servants who believe, surely My earth is vast, so serve Me only" (29:56). Muslims have travelled to all lands in the service of guiding people everywhere.

Then Sudhana praised Maitreya in verses in a lengthy poem, beginning as follows:

"Here is the compassionate, pure-minded Maitreya, / Radiant with love, striving for the good of the world,"¹⁰¹

These were certainly qualities of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, who is described in the Quran as "a mercy to all nations" (21:107), who thus has compassion and love for everyone. He is also told as follows about how to conduct his mission: "and your garments do purify, and uncleanness do shun, and do no favour seeking gain" (74:4–6). This is purification of both body and mind, and he is told to do good to others without seeking recompense. That a person should strive to do good to others is clearly laid down in the Quran:

"And those who strive hard for Us, We shall certainly guide them in Our ways. And Allah is surely with the doers of good."
— 29:69

According to this verse, striving to attain nearness to God includes the doing of good to others. The Arabic word used for "doer of good" here is *muhsin*, meaning one who is a benefactor of others.

The poem ends as follows:

“And to the noble Maitreya, best of enlightening beings, Unhindered in action, incomparably pure in mind, always aware.”¹⁰²

As to being “always aware”, it was said of the Holy Prophet by the people of his time that “the eyes of the Messenger of Allah sleep but his heart does not sleep”.¹⁰³

Later in the account of Sudhana meeting Maitreya, it is related Sudhana “stood respectfully before Maitreya” and addressed him. Among what he said is the following:

“It has been predicted by all the buddhas that noble Maitreya will become supremely perfectly enlightened in one lifetime; and one who is sure of supreme perfect enlightenment in one lifetime has gone beyond all the stations of enlightening beings...”¹⁰⁴

The following words occur in a verse of the Quran revealed to the Holy Prophet near the end of his life, being almost his last revelation:

“This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour to you and chosen for you Islam as a religion.” — 5:3

At the end of his one lifetime, religion had been revealed to him perfectly and God’s favour to him completed. We may add that the start of his mission is mentioned in an early revelation as follows:

“And surely the later state is better for you than the earlier. And soon will your Lord give you so that you will be well pleased. Did He not find you an orphan and give (you) shelter? *And find you groping, so He showed the way?* And find you in want, so He enriched you?” — 93:4–8

The italicised words above show that the Holy Prophet was groping for the truth and God showed him the way. He enriched him with spiritual knowledge and wealth. His later state was better than his earlier state. By the end of his life the Holy Prophet Muhammad was “supremely perfectly enlightened”.

Notes to Chapter 7:

1. *Anāgatavaṃsa Desanā*, translated by Udaya Meddegama, p. 22, footnote 3.

In the book *Maitreya — on the Image of God, Book I* by Elizabeth Clare Prophet and Mark L. Prophet, it is written:

“The name Maitreya is taken from the Sanskrit word *maitri* (Pali, *metta*), meaning “kindness,” “love,” “benevolence,” “friendship,” “friendliness” or “goodwill.” Thus Maitreya has been referred to as the “Loving One” or the “Friendly One,” the embodiment of all-encompassing love.

In the *Gandavyuha Sutra*, which has been described as the “Pilgrim’s Progress” of Buddhism, the young pilgrim Sudhana characterizes Maitreya as ‘the venerable compassionate Maitreya endowed with a great loving heart and undefiled knowledge and intent on benefiting the world’.”

Maitri is one of the principal Buddhist virtues. The *Metta Sutta* describes this quality of loving-kindness:”

After this, the *Karaṇīya Metta Sutta* is quoted in the book. See the link: www.summitlighthouse.org/pearls/1984pows/pw84bk1int.html

See also *Maitreya on Initiation* by Elizabeth Clare Prophet, p. 32–34.

2. According to this, Buddha said:

“Monks, eleven advantages are to be expected from the release (deliverance) of heart by familiarizing oneself with thoughts of loving-kindness (*metta*)...

1. He sleeps in comfort. 2. He awakes in comfort. 3. He sees no evil dreams. 4. He is dear to human beings. 5. He is dear to non-human beings. 6. Devas (gods) protect him. 7. Fire, poison, and sword cannot touch him. 8. His mind can concentrate quickly. 9. His countenance is serene. 10. He dies without being confused in mind. 11. If he fails to attain arahantship (the highest sanctity) here and now, he will be reborn in the brahma-world.”

Metta (Mettanīsaṃsa) Sutta: Discourse on Advantages of Loving-kindness (AN 11.16), translated from the Pali by Piyadassi Thera. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, 13 June 2010. Link:

www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an11/an11.016.piya.html

3. In the book *The Heart of Compassion* by Dilgo Khyentse it is stated:

“The *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutras* mentions the eight supreme qualities that arise from meditation on love: 1) gods and men will rejoice,

and 2) they will protect you; 3) you will not be able to be harmed by poison, nor 4) by weapons; 5) you will have a happy mind; 6) you will experience all sorts of happiness; 7) you will effortlessly accomplish your aspirations, and 8) even if you do not achieve liberation immediately, you will be reborn in the highest realm.” (See note 71 on p. 225)

We may relate “effortlessly accomplish your aspirations” to what Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi has here described as successful in the world, and “you will be reborn in the highest realm” to the Maulana’s “after death near to God”.

For these eight qualities, see also: *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, ch. 7 (‘Loving-Kindness and Compassion’), p. 129.

4. *Karaniya Metta Sutta: The Buddha’s Words on Loving-Kindness* (Sn 1.8), translated from the Pali by The Amaravati Sangha. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, 2 November 2013. Link: www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.1.08.amar.html
5. *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 10, Part II, The Sutta-Nipāta, p. 24, verse 142.
6. *Karaniya Metta Sutta: The Hymn of Universal Love (Sn 1.8)*, translated from the Pali by Acharya Buddhārakkhita. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, 29 August 2012. Link: www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.1.08.budd.html
7. *Karaniya Metta Sutta: Good Will* (Sn 1.8), translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, 30 November 2013. Link: www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.1.08.than.html
8. *Karaniya Metta Sutta: The Discourse on Loving-kindness* (Sn 1.8), translated from the Pali by Piyadassi Thera. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, 29 August 2012. Link: www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.1.08.piya.html
9. Andrew Olendzki’s translation in *19 Translations of the Metta Sutta — Sutta Nipata 1.8* at: the link www.leighb.com/mettasuttas.htm
10. Translations by Ven H. Saddhatissa and Ven W. Rahula, at the source in note 9 above.
11. Amaravati translation (see note 4 above).
12. Translation by A.L. Basham, at the source in note 9 above.
13. Translation by F.L. Woodward, at the source in note 9 above.
14. Chenrezig Project, at the source in note 9 above.

15. Amaravati translation (see note 4 above) and Buddharakkhita translation (see note 6 above).
16. *Sacred Books of the East* (as cited in note 5 above), verse 144.
17. Piyadassi Thera translation (see note 8 above).
18. *Sacred Books of the East* (as cited in note 5 above), verse 143.
19. Amaravati translation (see note 4 above).
20. Qualities number 6 to 10 are found in words such as these in this order in all translations cited above. See *Sacred Books of the East* (as cited in note 5 above), verses 147–148.
21. *Sacred Books of the East* (as cited in note 5 above), verse 150.
22. *Sacred Books of the East* (as cited in note 5 above), verse 151.
23. Translation by Ven H. Saddhatissa, at source in note 9 above.
24. Translation by F.L. Woodward, at the source in note 9 above.
25. Abu Dawud, book 15: Jihad, ch. ‘Proper care for riding beasts and cattle’.
26. Abu Dawud, book 15: Jihad, ch. ‘Abhorrence of burning enemy with fire’.
27. Bukhari, book 72: Slaughtering and Hunting, ch. 25: Abhorrence of *muthlah*.
28. Abu Dawud, book 15: Jihad, ch. ‘Abhorrence of burning enemy with fire’.
29. Abu Dawud, book 15: Jihad, ch. ‘Regarding instigating beasts to fight’.
30. Bukhari, book 60: Prophets, hadith 3467. See also book: Beginning of Creation, hadith 3321.
31. Bukhari, book 42: Distribution of Water, ch. 9: ‘The greatness of providing water’.
32. Abu Dawud, book 15: Jihad, ch. ‘Dismounting at a stage (in journey)’. There is also a chapter after this, the title of which begins: ‘Being kind to horses...’.
33. This is translated also as: “And I am the first of Muslims” — *wa anā awwal-ul-muslimīn*.
34. Bukhari, book 97: Oneness of God (*Tauhīd*), ch. ‘Asking Allāh by his names’, hadith 7394.
35. Bukhari, book 80: Invocations (*ad-da ‘wāt*), ch. ‘What to say when getting up in the morning’, hadith 6324.
36. Bukhari, book 61: Virtues of the Prophet and his Companions (*Manāqib*), ch. ‘The eyes of the Prophet used to sleep but his heart did not sleep’, hadith 3570.

37. *Ibid.*, hadith 3569.
38. When people asked the Holy Prophet why he forbade them continuous fasting (i.e., without the evening meal to end the fast or the morning meal to start it next morning), while he himself practised it, he replied: "I am not like you, for my Lord gives me food and drink" (Bukhari, book 30: Fasting, ch. 'Fasting continuously', hadith 1964).
- It is also reported in a hadith that Ibn Abbas said: "The Prophet was protected (*mahfūz*)", meaning by Allah during his sleep, "and Aishah reported that the Prophet said: My eyes sleep but my heart does not sleep" (Abu Dawud, book 1: Purification, ch. 'Ablution from sleeping').
39. Bukhari, book 64: Expeditions (*al-Maghāzī*), hadith 4139; see also hadith 4135. A similar report is in Sahih Muslim, book 43: Virtues (of the Prophet), ch. 4: 'His trust in Allah, and Allah protecting him from people'.
40. The Quran, 2: 129, 2: 151, 3: 164, 62: 2.
41. The Quran, 2: 231, 3: 58, 4: 113, 17: 39, 31: 2, 33: 34, etc.
42. The Quran, 2: 269, 4: 113 and 16: 125.
43. Bukhari, book 91: Interpretation of dreams, ch. 'Good dreams are from Allah', hadith 6984.
44. Bukhari, book 1: How revelation began, hadith 3.
45. Monastery or hermitage.
46. Vinaya Texts, Part III, in *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 20, p. 245–247. See also E.J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha*, p. 131–133.
47. An incident is recorded in Bukhari that a woman went to the house of the Holy Prophet to see him in some connection and "she did not find any guard at his door" (book 23: Funerals, ch. 'Visiting Graves', hadith 1283).
48. See Genesis, 14: 14–16.
49. Sahih Muslim, book 52: Description of the Judgment Day, Paradise and Hell, ch. 16: 'Mischievous of Satan and his sending of his forces to tempt man, and that every human has a companion'. See later p. 172.
50. Sahih Muslim, book 39: Greetings, ch. 'Poison', hadith 2190.
51. Bukhari, book 76: Medicine, ch. 'The poison given to the Prophet', hadith 5777.
52. Bukhari, book 11: Friday Prayer, ch. 'Praying for rain during the Friday sermon', hadith 933.

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53. Bukhari, book 15: Prayer for rain, ch. 'Praying for rain in the main mosque', hadith 1013. According to this version the Holy Prophet's prayer for stopping the rain was: "O Allāh, (let it rain) Around us and not upon us, O Allāh! On the plateaus, on the mountains, on the hills, in the valleys and on the places where trees grow."
 54. *Ibid.*, see hadith 1015 and 1016.
 55. See the Quran, 8: 11 and 25: 25.
 56. Bukhari, book 64: Military Expeditions (*Al-Maghazi*), ch. 'The illness of the Prophet and his death', hadith 4436. The words here are: "To the Highest Companion" (*fir-rafīq al-a'lā*).
 57. Dhammapada, ch. 13: 'The World', v. 176. See *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 10, p. 47 which gives a different translation with the same significance.
 58. *Ibid.*, ch. 17: 'Anger', v. 223–224. See *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 10, p. 58 which gives a different translation with the same significance.
 59. Anguttara Nikaya, 5.198. See the link:
www.accesstosinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an05/an05.198.than.html
 60. Bukhari, book 1: How revelation began, hadith 7.
 61. A version of this famous incident is in Bukhari, book: *Tafsir* of the Quran, hadith 4770.
 62. It is also reported that another opponent of the Holy Prophet, Akhnas bin Shariq, asked Abu Jahl in private for his opinion about the Holy Prophet, and he replied: "Muhammad is a truthful man and has never told a lie."
 63. Bukhari, book 54: Conditions, ch. 1, hadith 2711–2712, and ch. 15, hadith 2731–2732.
 64. The Quran, 17: 93–94, 18: 110 and 41: 6; see also 14: 11 and 21: 34.
 65. Bukhari, book 34: Sales and trade, hadith 2138.
 66. Bukhari, book 63: Virtues of the *Ansar*, hadith 3906 (near end).
 67. "The Messenger of Allah used to accept gifts and used to give something in return" — Bukhari, book 51: Gifts, hadith 2585.
 68. Sahih Muslim, book 12: *Zakat*, ch. 'Not appointing the family of the Prophet in charge of charity', hadith 1072b.
 69. Bukhari, book 10: Call to Prayer, hadith 676.
 70. See an incident reported in Bukhari, book 78: Good Manners, hadith 6024 and 6030. Another incident is reported in which a Jewish scholar stayed with the Holy Prophet in order to test if he met the qualities of the Promised

Prophet as mentioned in the Torah. Upon finding that the Holy Prophet did possess those qualities, he told the Prophet that according to the Torah these qualities were that: “He will not be abusive in language nor hard-hearted, nor will he shout loudly in the streets, nor will he indulge in foul talk” (Mishkat al-Masabih, book 27: Tribulations (*Al-Fitan*), ch. ‘Morals and habits of the Holy Prophet’, sec. 3. See the Urdu translation by Maulana Abdul Hakim Khan Akhtar Shajahanpuri, v. 3, p. 141–142).

71. Bukhari, book 1: The beginning of revelation, hadith 7.
72. Bukhari, book 63: Virtues of the *Ansar*, hadith 3906 (near end of hadith).
73. Bukhari, book 64: Military Expeditions, hadith 4104.
74. Bukhari, book 3: Knowledge, hadith 63. Abu Dawud, book 2: Prayer, hadith 486.
75. Abu Dawud, book 43: Good Morals, hadith 4996.
76. Sahih Muslim, book 32: Jihad, ch. ‘Upholding Agreements’, hadith 1787.
77. Bukhari, book 78: Good Morals, hadith 6116.
78. Guillaume’s *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 553. See also Muir, p. 411–412.
79. Bukhari, book 93: Judgments, hadith 7161; see also book 83: Oaths and Vows, hadith 6641, and book 63: Virtues of the Helpers (*Ansar*), hadith 3825.
80. An account by Wahshi himself is reported in Bukhari, book: Military Expeditions, hadith 4072.
81. Bukhari, book 15: Prayer for rain, hadith 1020 and 1007.
82. Sahih Ibn Hibban, book: *Ar-Riqāq*, hadith 973. See Urdu translation by Muhammad Muhiy-ud-Din Jahangir, Lahore, v. 2, p. 135.
83. *Sirat Ibn Hisham*. See the Urdu translation by Muhammad Ihsan-ul-Haq Sulaimani, Maqbool Academy, Lahore, p. 138; and the Urdu translation by Maulana Qutb-ud-Din Ahmad Mahmudi, v. 1, p. 249–250.
84. Abu Dawud, book 43: Good Morals, hadith 5164.
85. Bukhari, book 78: Good Morals, hadith 6038. See also Sahih Muslim, book 43: Virtues, ch. 13. Abu Dawud, book 43: Good Morals, hadith 4774. Tirmidhi, book 27: Righteousness and Goodness to Relatives, hadith 2015.
86. Mishkat al-Masabih, book 27: Tribulations (*Fitan*), ch. ‘Qualities of the Companions’, section 3, last statement. See the Urdu translation by Maulana Abdul Hakim Khan Akhtar Shajahanpuri, v. 3, p. 222.

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87. Translation of *Milindapanha* by T.W. Rhys Davids in *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 35, p. 225.
 88. *The Life of Mahomet*, English translation of the French book *La Vie de Mahomed* by Count of Boulainvilliers, p. 4.
 89. Elizabeth Reed, *Primitive Buddhism*, ch. I, p. 25–26.
 90. *Saddharma Pundarika Sutra*, ch. 1: ‘Introductory’, 99–100. *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 21, p. 29.
 91. *Ibid.*, ch. 14: ‘Issuing of Bodhisattvas from the gaps of the Earth’, 4, 6 and 7. *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 21, p. 286, 287.
 92. H.G. Wells, *The Outline of History*, revised edition, Book VI: ‘Christianity and Islam’, ch. 30: ‘Muhammad and Islam’, p. 605.
 93. *Editor’s Note*: This section, up to the end of the chapter, is an addition by me in this revised edition.
 94. *The Pilgrimage of Sudhana* by Jan Fontein, p. 14.
 95. Thomas Cleary, *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, Shambhala Publications, Boston, USA, 1993.
 96. *Ibid.*, p. 1446.
 97. *Ibid.*, p. 1446.
 98. *Ibid.*, p. 1445.
 99. *Ibid.*, p. 1454.
 100. *Ibid.*, p. 1454–1455.
 101. *Ibid.*, p. 1457.
 102. *Ibid.*, p. 1463.
 103. Bukhari, book 4: Ablution, hadith 138. Tirmidhi, book 44: Parables of the Messenger of Allah, hadith 3100.
 104. Cleary, p. 1473.

8. World renown of the prophecy of Maitreya

If a prophecy bears testimony both from friend and foe, that is the biggest proof of its importance and authenticity. It is different if there is a divergence of opinion as to its correct assessment. The authenticity of this prognostication is evident from the fact that Christian missionaries, Theosophists and Hindu scholars have tried to attach it to their own saints and prophets. Not so long ago I was in Madras where the Theosophical centre of Adyar held a religious conference which was attended by Theosophists from all parts of the world. On this occasion quite a good deal of literature was published in which the object of the coming teacher of the world, the Maitreya, was discussed in detail. The promised Maitreya has been mentioned in Christian and Theosophist books in these words:

1. “The fifth, Maitree-Buddha, is yet to come. This latter is the expected kabalistic King Messiah, the Messenger of Light, and Sosiosh, the Persian Saviour, who will come on a *white* horse. It is also the Christian Second Advent. See “Apocalypse” of St. John.”¹
2. The Buddhists are waiting for the advent of Maitreya who “will appear at his last advent to save mankind before the final destruction of the world”.² So are the Hindus expecting the *Kalki Avatar* of Vishnu “which is yet to come as an armed warrior mounted upon a white horse”, waving a sword over his head.³ “Maitreya is the secret name of the *Fifth* Buddha, and the Kalki Avatar of the Brahmins — the

last Messiah who will come at the culmination of the Great Cycle.”⁴

3. “The Hindus believe in the ten principal incarnations of Ishvara ... the last of whom — Kalki — is yet to come. In the Srimad Bhāgavata, where Rishi Maitreya (the present World-Teacher) is described as a friend of Dwaipayana Vyasa,* (the last World-Teacher who became the Buddha)...”⁵
4. Maitreya is said to have first manifested himself as Krishna, and then as Jesus: “Lord Maitreya, on the other hand, when He appeared as the Christ, exhorted His disciples, saying, Love one another as I have loved you”.⁶ The same authority writes further that Kalki Avatara and Maitreya are two separate promised ones. Writes he: “Again, there is a prophecy in the Vishnu Purāna that Rishi Maitreya will teach spiritual knowledge in the Kali Yuga† and found a better civilisation based on love and brotherhood. The coming World-Teacher is not the Kalki Avatara who is a very long way off; but Rishi Maitreya was long ago announced as a future World-Teacher in the Bhāgavata Purāna...”.⁷
5. In another book of the Theosophists, *The Masters and the Path* by C.W. Leadbeater, a person named Krishnamurti is declared as the Promised One and it is written that “the Lord Maitreya ... visited Palestine two thousand years ago”.⁸
6. In the book *Christ and Buddha*, Jinarajadasa writes: “In those days two only among the millions of men stood towering above them in might of grace and love — Sumedha and Another. In later days we know them as Gautama and Maitreya, Buddha and Christ.”⁹

*Dwaipayana Vyasa was the author of the Mahabharata which contains the Srimad Bhagavata.

†The age of darkness.

7. Edmunds writes: "The Christ-Metteyyo is yet to come."¹⁰ Johanna refers to the claim, while refuting that claim, that the expected Supreme Teacher of the World is Christ and that: "Lord Maitreya and Christ are the same."¹¹

Some Hindu writers have tried to attribute these prophecies to their own ecclesiastic Shankaracharya. It was the same person who perpetrated all sorts of afflictions upon the Buddhists in India because he was of the view that the Buddha was opposed to the Vedas (mention has already made before of Buddha's views about the Vedas). He massacred Buddhists to such an extent that none of them remained in India. Either they were killed or they fled out of India. In spite of all this, to consider him to be the promised Maitreya is ridiculous.

As to the claim of the Theosophists that Krishnamurti is Maitreya, after a while they have failed in propaganda and are now only awaiting the coming of Maitreya. This was a lesson from God to the Theosophists and to those who think that a prophet is man's make-up or fabrication. God fulfilled the Buddha's prophecy in the person of Muhammad 1400 years ago.

As regards the claim of our Christian friends, it will be noted that the attributes of Maitreya could not be found in the person of Christ and it is enough to solicit their attention towards Monier-Williams' book on Buddhism, where he expresses the utmost embarrassment at the congruence of the Messiah and the Buddha. In a special chapter at the end of his book he writes:

"It seems a mere absurdity to have to ask in concluding these lectures: — Whom shall we choose as our Guide, our Hope, our Salvation, 'the light of Asia,' or 'the Light of the World?' the Buddha or the Christ? It seems a mere mockery to put this final question to rational and thoughtful men, in the nineteenth century: Which book shall we clasp to our hearts in our last hour — the book that tells us of the dead, the extinct, the death-giving Buddha, or the Book that reveals to us the living, the eternal, the life-giving Christ?"¹²

As a matter of fact this chapter is entitled: *World Renown of the Prophecy of Maitreya*. The claims of the Christians, Theosophists and Hindus have proved that this prophecy is famous in most unambiguous terms in books of Buddhism. A brief summary of their positions may be given below:

- a. Buddhists, like Zoroastrians, Hindus and Christians, are waiting for a Promised One.
- b. His name will be Maitreya.
- c. He will be a Maitreya in the real sense of the word. He will be an embodiment of mercy and affection for all.
- d. He will be the possessor of a sword, the sword of truth, but he will also have to use a sword in defence of the truth as the Holy Quran says: "Permission to fight is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed, and Allah is well able to assist them, those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say, our Lord is Allah" (22:39-40).
- e. The Coming Maitreya, Vishnu Avatar and Sosiosh on a white horse refers to the unadulterated and the most sublime life that the Promised One will lead. It also connotes the supremacy of the spiritual self over the animal self. According to Muslim traditions, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, on his spiritual journey known as *mi'rāj*, rode a white horse Buraq.¹³ This enigma is very finely interpreted in the Revelation of St. John, which reads:

"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war" (19:11).

The sword in hand and a white horse to mount upon proclaim that the Promised One is honest and truthful, and that he judges with the help of truth and strives for its diffusion. Each word of this revelation proves Prophet Muhammad as

the Promised One referred to above. He was avowedly known as the faithful (*al-amīn*) and the truthful (*aṣ-ṣiddīq*) even by his enemies. The Revelation of St. John was after Jesus in 96 C.E. After the Messiah it was the Holy Prophet who had to fight and strive for the dissemination of the truth. Literally too, the Holy Prophet had two white horses, called Luḥaif and Sabḥa.¹⁴ It is remarkable that no prophet of the Israelites was allowed to ride a horse. God forbade trade with Egypt which was famous for trade in horses.¹⁵ Only Solomon has horses. The judges and princes of Israelites used generally to ride on mules and asses. Therefore, in the prophecy the rider of a horse is Muhammad and the rider of an ass is Christ.

- f. That Maitreya was the friend of Vyasa is evident from prophecy which was foretold about the Holy Prophet by Vyasa in Bhavishya Purana.*
- g. Maitreya was the last Buddha and Promised One. The Quran says: “Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of God and the Seal (i.e., last) of the Prophets” (33 : 40).
- h. Maitreya will be the messenger of mercy and love to the whole universe. The Quran describes the Holy Prophet Muhammad as “a mercy to all nations” (21 : 107).
- i. His advent will take place in the Dark Age, *Kali Yuga*. In Hindu terminology the age of the world is divided into four ages: Satya Yuga, Trita Yuga, Dvapara Yuga, and Kali Yuga. All the Hindu *rishis* (apostles) appeared in the first three *yugas* (periods). Therefore Maitreya (i.e., the Holy Prophet Muhammad) appeared in Kali Yuga.

*This is discussed in the *Hindu Scriptures* part of our book, *Muhammad in World Scriptures*.

Sources of Maitreya's Prophecy

Another thing which authenticates the importance and renown of this prophecy about the advent of the promised Prophet is the list of sources given below:

1. The prophecy was conveyed by the famous and distinguished disciples of the Buddha.
2. Mention is made of it in the Buddha's conversation.
3. The Buddhist kings set up statues of the coming Maitreya in various cities in Asia, such as Gandhara, Gaya and Benares, in North-West of the Indian subcontinent, the Deccan, Burma, China, Japan and the farthest places of central Asia. Some of these statues are as high as 120 ft.
4. Not only was the Gautama Buddha, but all the Buddhas previous to him were also expecting the Promised One.
5. In the most authentic and standard books on Buddhism, the physical features of the Promised One are clearly described, lest the people should be deceived in recognizing him.
6. Some description of the special traits of his character have also been given.
7. His moral qualities are described in a eulogy written in clear and explicit terms.
8. The time of his advent has been mentioned, but not in precise terms. There is difference of opinion about this question.
9. Maitreya, the Promised One, has been described as a guide to the whole of mankind.
10. It is mentioned in overt terms that he will be the last of the prophets, that no Buddha will come after him.
11. In the historic literature of Buddhists, it is mentioned as a fact that the Promised One is awaited everywhere earnestly.
12. The very name Maitreya connotes the one who is recognized without any doubts.

13. The Buddha called the Promised One a Buddha and described his own flight as similar to that of the promised Buddha.
14. The Buddha emphasized this prophecy so much that his disciples entirely forgot their sorrow at his death.
15. Buddhists were so anxious about Maitreya that they suspected each and every reformer as the Promised One. There are many instances of this in Buddhist history.
16. In the Buddha's scriptures mention is not only made of the sublime morals and the statues set up to him, but the signs and qualities of his disciples, believers and followers are given in detail.
17. Certain of the Maitreya's qualities are described which were not found in any other reformer.

Tradition by the famous disciples of the Buddha

There is a book entitled *Anāgata-Vamsa* (History of Future Events), in which it is written:

Hail to that Blessed One, that saint, and supreme Buddha!

Thus have I heard.

On a certain occasion The Blessed One was dwelling at Kapilavasthu in Banyan Grove on the banks of the Rohaṇī River.

Then the venerable Sāriputta questioned the Blessed One concerning the future Conqueror:

“The Hero that shall follow you
as Buddha, of what sort is he?
Th’ account in full I fain would learn.
Declare to me, thou Seeing One.”

When he had heard the elder's speech,
The Blessed One vouchsafed reply:
“I tell it thee, Sāriputta,
pray lend your ears for I will speak.
“Our cycle is a happy one.
Three leaders have already lived,

Kakusandha, Koṇāgamana,
And eke the leader Kassapa.

“The Buddha now supreme am I,
but after me Metteyya comes,
While still this happy cycle lasts,
Before its tale of years shall lapse.

“This Buddha, then Metteyya called,
Supreme, and of all men the chief —”¹⁶

The original words, in the text of the *Anāgata-Vamsa*, of the prophecy in the last two verses quoted above, which I copied from the *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, 1886, page 34, at the Museum Library, Colombo, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), are as follows:

*aham etarahi sambuddho metteyyo cāpi hessati
idh' eva bhaddake kappe asaṃjāte vassakotiye
metteyyo nāma nāmena sambuddho dvipaduttamo*

A copy of this is also in the Mg. Hpo Hmyin Library at Rangoon.

This narrative is from a great disciple of Buddha and a companion of his. These words speak of the glory of the Prophet. And it is because of this that the Promised One is considered the founder of the religion of all mankind.

Narrative of another disciple, Ananda

Ananda was another narrator of the prophecy, who always enjoyed the company of the Buddha. His words from *Milinda Prashnaya*, as translated by T.W. Rhys Davids and published in the *Sacred Books of the East* series, have already been quoted earlier (see pages 60 onwards). In regard to its authenticity and authority, Rhys Davids wrote:

“Written in Northern India, at or a little after the beginning of the Christian era, and either in Sanskrit itself or in some North Indian Prakrit, it has been entirely lost in the land of its origin, and (so far as is at present known) is not extant in any of the homes of the various sects and schools of the Buddhists, except

only in Ceylon, and in those countries which have derived their Buddhism from Ceylon. ...

Preserved there, and translated at a very early date into Pāli, it has become, in its southern home, a book of standard authority, is put into the hands of those who have begun to doubt the cardinal points of Buddhist doctrine, has been long a popular work in its Pāli form, has been translated into Sinhalese, and occupies a unique position, second only to the Pāli Piṭakas ... From Ceylon it has been transferred, in its Pāli form, to both Burma and Siam, and in those countries also it enjoys so high a repute, that it has been commented on (if not translated). It is not merely the only work composed among the Northern Buddhists which is regarded with reverence by the orthodox Buddhists of the southern schools; it is the only one which has survived at all amongst them. And it is the only prose work composed in ancient India which would be considered, from the modern point of view, as a successful work of art.”¹⁷

Buddha's will on his death-bed

The Buddhist book *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* recounts the last days of the Buddha. Its translation by T.W. Rhys Davids is found in *Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, v. 3, Part 2, published in 1910, and in the earlier *Sacred Books of the East* series, v. 11, published in 1881. It is recorded in chapter V of the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* that the Buddha went forward with a big party of his followers to the Sāla grove of the Mallas which was in Kusinārā (Koshinagar) on the other side of the Hiranyavati river. On reaching there he addressed Ananda, saying: Bring me a couch; its head must be towards the north between two sāla trees. He said he felt weak and wanted to lie down. The couch was brought for him, and the Buddha lay on it. Then while he was in his senses and quite awake, some extraordinary signs appeared on the trees and in the heaven and on the earth. Ananda took these to signify respect. But the Buddha said these signs had nothing to do with honouring or venerating him, but what honours and venerates him and pays him homage would be a devout follower who fulfils all

his duties, great and small. He exhorted Ananda to be constant in fulfilment of his duties.

After receiving further instructions about the faith, Ananda went outside and wept at the thought that he was as yet a mere novice, a seeker after truth, and far away from the ultimate goal, but his master, the kind teacher, was about to pass away. The Buddha then asked his disciples and asked: "Brothers, where is Ananda?" A person called Ananda, and he came. The Buddha told him not to be sorrowful or weep and said: "Have I not already, on former occasions, told you that it is in the very nature of all things most near and dear to us that we must separate from them and leave them?" He told him that he had been near to him for a long time by invariable acts of love, words of love and thoughts of love, and if he were to continue to strive in the same way he would achieve redemption from the low desires, superstitions and ignorance.¹⁸

According to the book *The Gospel of Buddha* by Paul Carus, in its section XCVI, the following then occurred:

And Ananda, suppressing his tears, said to the Blessed One: "Who shall teach us when thou art gone?"

And the Blessed One replied:

"I am not the first Buddha who came upon earth, nor shall I be the last. In due time another Buddha will arise in the world, a Holy One, a supremely enlightened One, endowed with wisdom in conduct, auspicious, knowing the universe, an incomparable leader of men, a master of angels and mortals. He will reveal to you the same eternal truths which I have taught you. He will preach his religion, glorious in its origin, glorious at the climax, and glorious at the goal, in the spirit and in the letter. He will proclaim a religious life, wholly perfect and pure; such as I now proclaim. His disciples will number many thousand, while mine number many hundred."

Ananda said: "How shall we know him?" The Blessed One said: "He will be known as Metteyya, which means 'he whose name is kindness'." ¹⁹

The inference from this quotation is that Buddha has not only admitted the existence of previous Buddhas, but referred in emphatic terms to the advent of the great one to come. The Prophet Muhammad possessed all the qualities that Buddha has mentioned above would be found in the Buddha to come.

1. He will be a Holy one, immune from evil and sin. There is a verse in the Quran about the Prophet Muhammad usually translated as: “And Allah will protect you from people” (5:67). According to Raghīb’s classical dictionary of the Quran and some commentaries of the Quran, the “protection” here is protection from sins, as the word used, *ya ‘şimu*, is related to *‘işmat* or innocence from sins. The verse therefore also means: From among the people, you are the one whom Allah will make safe from commission of sin.

2. Again, he is described as “supremely enlightened”. Due to his spreading light in his benighted land the Holy Prophet is called “a light” which came from God with a clear book (5:15), and “a light-giving sun” (33:46). Moreover, because of his giving light to all the nations of the world, it is said in the Quran by a parable that the heart of the Holy Prophet was “light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He pleases” (24:35).

3. “Endowed with wisdom”: The Book he brings with him is described in the Quran as follows: “These are the verses of the Book full of Wisdom” (10:1). The Holy Prophet’s wives were thus told in the Quran: “And remember what is recited in your houses of the messages of Allah and the Wisdom” (33:34).

As to “wisdom in conduct”, in its chapter 17, in verses 23–38, the Quran teaches Muslims the best conduct in various aspects of life and says at the conclusion: “This is from the wisdom which your Lord has revealed to you” (17:39). Regarding preaching and holding arguments with people of other beliefs, the Quran requires Muslims to exercise wisdom and good manners: “Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in the best manner” (16:125).

4. “Knowing the universe”: The Quran says about the Holy Prophet: “Nor is he miserly (with knowledge) of the unseen” (81:24), meaning that he was granted abundant knowledge of the unseen which he disclosed to the world and did not withhold it.

5. “An incomparable leader of men”, he certainly was. As to being “Master of angels and mortals”, the Quran says: “Surely Allah and His angels bless the Prophet. O you who believe, call for blessings on him and salute him with a (becoming) salutation” (33:56) and “surely Allah is his Patron, and Gabriel and the righteous believers, and the angels after that are the aiders” (66:4).

6. “He will reveal to you the same eternal truths which I have taught you”: the Quran presents the Holy Prophet as “a Messenger verifying” the teachings that people already had with them (2:101 and 3:81).

7. “He will preach his religion”: The Prophet Muhammad is told that preaching is his most basic and main duty: “Arise and warn” (74:2) and “O Messenger, deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do not, you have not delivered His message” (5:67).

8. His religion is glorious “in its origin, at the climax, and at the goal”: At the origin of the Holy Prophet’s mission, it was revealed as a prophecy that he would be glorious: “(Have We not) exalted for you your mention” (94:4) and “surely the later state is better for you than the earlier” (93:4). A little later he was promised: “maybe your Lord will raise you to a position of great glory” (17:79). At the climax, when the goal was achieved in Arabia, the Holy Prophet was told: “He it is Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the Religion of Truth that He may make it prevail over all religions” (9:33) and “This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed my favour to you and chosen for you Islam as a religion” (5:3). The man whom the opponents had planned to expel from his native city as a helpless man was to be raised to a position of eminent dignity.

9. “He will proclaim a religious life, wholly perfect and pure”: He not only led the most righteous life himself but he moulded thousands of people in sinlessness. The Quran says that he had the most sublime and the highest morals (68:4). He said to people: “My prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are surely for Allah, the Lord of the worlds — no partner has He. And this am I commanded, and I am the first of those who submit” (6:162–163). In other words, he submitted to God perfectly, wholly and purely, and being the “first” he set an example for his followers.

10. Again, that he will enjoy the company of thousands of his followers and disciples is evident from the historical fact that at the time of the conquest of Makkah, the Holy Prophet led ten thousand Arabs.²⁰ And immediately after his death the number rose to more than seventy thousand. What a great miracle for a man, being opposed by tens of thousands of people and he being a magnet to convert them all into his well-wishers and friends and follower! There can possibly be no better success than this. He thus ruled over them not only physically but also spiritually, as affection and love for him was inveterate in their hearts.

Further consideration of extract in *The Gospel of Buddha*²¹

In the various editions of Paul Carus’ book *The Gospel of Buddha* there is some difference in the wording of Buddha’s reply to Ananda’s first question. The above extract (see page 125) is from the eleventh edition, published in 1905. In the later 1917 illustrated edition,²² the above extract occurs without the words “His disciples will number many thousand, while mine number many hundred”. The fifteenth printing of 1921 appears to be a reprint of an earlier edition, and this extract in it is as quoted above.

In the earliest editions of Carus’ book, such as the 1895 edition, Buddha’s reply to Ananda’s first question is as follows:

“I am not the first Buddha who came upon earth, nor shall I be the last. I came to teach you the truth, and I have founded on earth the kingdom of truth. Gautama Siddhārtha will die, but

Buddha will live, for Buddha is the truth, and the truth cannot die. He who believes in the truth and lives by it, is my disciple, and I shall teach him. The truth will be propagated, and the kingdom of truth will increase for about five hundred years. Then for a while the clouds of error will darken the light, and in due time another Buddha will arise, and he will reveal to you the selfsame eternal truth which I have taught you.”²³

Ananda’s follow-up question, “How shall we know him?”, and Buddha’s reply to it, in which he gives the name of the future Buddha as Metteyya, is the same in all editions of Carus’ book.

In the translations of the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* itself as a work, whether those by T.W. Rhys Davids mentioned above (see page 124) or later ones, this entire extract, consisting of Ananda’s first question and his follow-up question, and Buddha’s replies thereto, is absent. See chapter V in these translations. It is not clear why Carus has inserted this at this point near the death of Buddha. In his table of references at the end of his book, for this extract he gives references to the mention of Metteyya in various sources. However, these appear to be general and not specific to what Buddha said at his death. Nonetheless it is worth quoting from one of them, *Buddhism* by T.W. Rhys Davids:²⁴

“The *Dīgha Nikāya*, one of our oldest documents, mentions the name of the Buddha of the future, who, when the religion of Gautama will have been forgotten, shall again reveal the Path to men. His name is Metteyya, and his legend plays a great part in later Buddhism.”²⁵

In his chapter on Tibetan Buddhism, he writes:

“... the spirit of kindness out of which all virtues rise, and by the strength of which the Buddhist church will once more triumph throughout the world and conquer all sin and unbelief, has been personified as Maitreya Buddha, the future Buddha of kindness.”²⁶

and in a footnote here on “conquer all sin and unbelief” it is stated:

“Maitreya’s personal name is Ajita, the Unconquerable. Maitreya is the family name, a patronymic chosen for its connection with Maitreya, ‘benevolent.’ ”

Prophecy in other scriptures

There is hardly any book on Buddhism which does not mention the coming of the promised Maitreya.

1. Sir Charles Eliot, once ambassador of Great Britain in Japan, in his *Japanese Buddhism*, writes:

“Maitreya is of special importance for the history of doctrine, for he connects the older and the newer conceptions of the nature of a Bodhisattva. He is mentioned in the Pali Canon but with few details. ... All branches of Buddhism recognize him, and he is mentioned frequently in the later Pali literature and in such Sanskrit Buddhist texts as the *Lalita-vistara* and *Mahāvastu*.”²⁷

2. Again, a famous scholar from Madras, Pandit Coomaraswamy, in his *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism*, writes:

“Of future Buddhas, only the Bodhisatta Metteyya, the personification of Loving-kindness is mentioned, and that in the *Milinda Pañha*, which is a little later than the canonical scriptures.”²⁸

3. R. S. Hardy writes in his book *Manual of Buddhism*:

“During the residence of the Buddha²⁹ at Wéluwana, his father Sudhódana, who had heard of his attainment to the Buddhahip, sent to him a noble, with a thousand attendants, who delivered this message in the king’s name:-

‘It is my wish to see you; therefore come to me; others have the benefit of the dharma, but not your father or your other relatives; it is now seven years since we saw you.’ ...

On arriving at the garden, Buddha sat upon a throne, surrounded by the 20,000 priests. The seniors among the Sákya princes said, 'Siddhártha is younger than we are; he is our nephew; we are his uncles and grandfathers.' They therefore told the younger princes to worship him, while they sat down at a little distance. Buddha knew their thoughts, and said, 'My relatives are unwilling to worship me; but I will overcome their reluctance.' Accordingly, he rose up from the throne, ascended into the air, ..."

Then it is related that he performed various feats with fire and water, and "caused an image like himself to appear in the air", and the original Buddha and his identical image walked and sat and conversed with one another. It is added:

"These things having been observed by Seriyut from Rajagaha, he came through the air with 500 disciples, to the same place. ... After Seriyut had worshipped Buddha, he related the Buddha-wansa, in a thousand stanzas; after which he requested Buddha to relate the history of Maitrí Buddha, which he did, by delivering the discourse called Anágata-wansa. At its conclusion, Buddha descended from the sky to the throne he had previously occupied." ³⁰

Maitreya is also mentioned in a few other places in Hardy's book, for example:

"This long period of remediless ignorance was succeeded by the Maha-bhadra kalpa, in which five Buddhas are to appear; ... The first four have already appeared; and Maitrí will be the next Buddha who will arise to bless the world." ³¹

The Maha-bhadra kalpa, according to Buddhism, is our present age, the "Age of wise men", in which the fourth Buddha was the Gotama Buddha.

4. The advent of Maitreya is mentioned not only in the Pali scriptures of Buddhism but also in its Sanskrit scriptures. There is a renowned book named *Buddhacarita* of Ashvaghosha. It reads:

“Brahman and the other gods came surrounded by their attendants, summoned each from his own world; and Maitreya with the deities of the Tushita heaven came for the turning of the wheel of the Law.”³²

In this quotation the events have been observed in a spiritual vision. Buddhists conceive that the Promised One Maitreya is concerned with *Tushita* heaven:

“It is important, however, to remember, that at the moment of his attaining Buddhahood he [Gautama Buddha] had transferred the Bodhi-sattvaship to Maitreya, ‘the loving and compassionate one,’ who became the Buddha-elect, dwelling and presiding as his predecessor had done in the heaven of contented beings (Tushita). There he watches over and promotes the interests of the Buddhist faith, while awaiting the time when he is to appear on earth as Maitreya, or the fifth Buddha of the present age. ... In fact, the aspirations of few pious Buddhists in early times ever led them to soar higher than the happiness of living with Maitreya and listening to his voice in his own Tushita heaven.”³³

“The fourth heaven is that of the Tushitas or ‘perfectly contented beings.’ It is a peculiarly sacred region, as it is the home of all the Bodhi-sattvas destined to become Buddhas. Gautama Buddha once dwelt there, and Maitreya now presides in it.”³⁴

Tushita signifies real solace and contentment of the heart, from which it can be inferred that the Promised One will reach the highest stage of peace, solace and satisfaction. This is seen to the highest degree in the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Even when facing the utmost danger he always remained calm and full of unshakeable confidence in God’s help. There is a well-known incident that once, on a military expedition, the Holy Prophet was sleeping alone under a tree, with his sword hanging on it, when a man grabbed hold of his sword, and when the Holy Prophet woke up the man said to him: “Are you afraid of me?” The Holy Prophet replied: “No.” The man said: “Who can save you from me?” He simply replied: “Allah.”³⁵ The sword fell from the man’s hand, and the Holy Prophet, taking it

up, put the same question to that man. Then he forgave him.³⁶ Another instance is that, during his flight from Makkah to Madinah with his Companion Abu Bakr, when the two of them hid in a cave, the pursuing enemy reached the mouth of the cave. Abu Bakr became anxious but the Holy Prophet said to him the famous reassuring words: “Grieve not, for surely God is with us” (the Quran, 9:40).

According to the Quran, those who achieve the greatest closeness to God in this life, and none did so more than the Holy Prophet, are addressed at the time of their death as follows:

“O soul that are at rest, return to your Lord, well-pleased (with Him), well-pleasing (Him). So enter among My servants, and enter into My garden.” — 89:27–30

This is the Tushita heaven of the Buddhist conception in which the Holy Prophet presided like Maitreya. It was nothing but the rest and solace of his mind which kept him calm even while facing hardest trials at the hands of his opponents. He never complained before God for his afflictions. On the other hand, he praised and prostrated before God night and day. We can better imagine from this how developed was his peace of mind.

5. Another Sanskrit book, the authoritative scripture of the Mahayana sect of Buddhists, is the *Lalitavistara*, which describes the life of Buddha. Chinese Buddhists much respect and put firm belief in this book. It contains mention of Maitreya in most explicit terms:

“After Avalokita and Mañjuśrî the most important Bodhisattva is Maitreya, also called Ajita or unconquered, who is the only one recognized by the Pali Canon. ... There is no reason to doubt that Gotama regarded himself as one in a series of Buddhas: the Pali scriptures relate that he mentioned his predecessors by name, and also spoke of unnumbered Buddhas to come. Nevertheless Maitreya or Metteyya is rarely mentioned in the Pali Canon. He is, however, frequently alluded to in the exegetical Pali literature, in the *Anâgata-vam̐sa* and in the earlier Sanskrit works such as the *Lalita-vistara*, the *Divyâvadâna* and *Mahâvastu*.”³⁷

From the start of chapter 5 of the *Lalitavistara* we learn that when Buddha prepared to descend from Tushita heaven to take birth on earth, those in heaven cried at his departure, saying that without him the heaven will lose its splendour. Buddha replied that Maitreya would now be their teacher of religion. Buddha then took off the crown from his own head and placed it on the head of Maitreya saying: After me, you will awaken to perfect Buddhahood, you will instruct the good people in perfect knowledge. He thus placed Maitreya on the throne of heaven, appointing him as his successor. This strikes us as a vision showing that the Holy Prophet Muhammad would come as successor to Buddha, be the teacher of religion to people after him, and restore spiritual splendour in the world.³⁸

In the Sanskrit book, *Sādhanamāla*, volumes I and II, published under the authority of the Government of the Maharaja of Baroda, a description of the Lord Maitray is given.³⁹

6. A.B. Keith writes:

“... we find no idea in early Buddhism of seeking to become a Buddha; the Buddhas are few and far between; the advent of one Buddha to be, namely Metteyya, is recognized in the Canon.... Metteyya appears as the Buddha of age to come, to supervene on a period of exaggerated evil and sin.”⁴⁰

In this passage, on the word “Canon” he gives a footnote referring to the Digha Nikaya, iii. 76.

7. In *Buddhist and Christian Gospels* by Edmunds and Anesaki, it is stated:

“There are eight passages about Maitreya in the Chinese Ekottara...”⁴¹

Notes to Chapter 8:

1. H.P. Blavatsky, *Isis unveiled*, vol. II — Theology, ch. III, p. 156, footnote. In online edition by Global Grey at www.theosophy.world, see p. 860.
2. *Ibid.*, ch. VI, p. 260. In Global Grey online edition, see p. 973.
3. *Ibid.*, ch. V, p. 237. In Global Grey online edition, see p. 948.
4. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, Book I, Part II, Section VIII, p. 384.
5. P. Pavri, *The Coming World-Teacher*, p. 48–49.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 21–22.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
8. C.W. Leadbeater, *The Masters and the Path*, p. 51.
9. C. Jinarajadasa, *Christ and Buddha, and Other Sketches*, p. 5.
10. A.J. Edmunds and M. Anesaki, *Buddhist and Christian Gospels*, vol. I, p. 164.
11. Johanna, *The Coming Christ — Christ in Humanity*, Preface, p. v.
12. Sir Monier Monier-Williams, *Buddhism*, Lecture XVIII, p. 537–563. See p. 563.
13. Bukhari, book 63: Merits of the *Ansar*, ch. 42, hadith 3887. Muslim, book 1: Faith, ch. 74.
14. Al-Luḥaif is mentioned in Bukhari, book 56: Jihad, ch. 46, hadith 2855.
15. Deuteronomy, 17: 16. See (1) Eliezer Segal, *Ask Now of the days that are past*, article ‘Horse Sense’, p. 269–273, and (2) Lincoln H. Blumell, *Lettered Christians*, p. 88, footnote 281.
16. Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, chapter V: ‘The Order’, section 102: ‘The Buddhist Apocalypse’, pp. 481–482.
17. *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 35, Introduction, p. xi–xii.
18. T.W. and C.A.F. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha in Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, v. 3, part 2, p. 149–159. *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 11, p. 85–97.
19. Paul Carus, *The Gospel of Buddha*, 1905 edition, published Chicago by The Open Court Publishing Co., p. 218.
20. Bukhari, book 64: Military Expeditions, ch. 47, hadith 4276.
21. *Editor’s Note*: This section on Paul Carus’ book has been added by me in this revised edition.
22. Paul Carus, *The Gospel of Buddha*, 1917 edition, p. 245.

23. Paul Carus, *The Gospel of Buddha*, 1895 edition, published London and Chicago, p. 217–218.
24. T.W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism, being a sketch of the life and teachings of Gautama the Buddha*, London, 1912 printing of the May 1910 edition.
25. *Ibid.*, ch. VII, p. 180.
26. *Ibid.*, ch. VIII, p. 200.
27. Sir Charles Eliot, *Japanese Buddhism*, pp. 118–119.
28. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism*, p. 226.
29. In Hardy's book, Buddha and derived words are spelt with one 'd': Budha.
30. Hardy, *A Manual of Buddhism*, p. 198–201.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 95–96.
32. *The Buddhacarita of Ashvaghosha*, translated by E.B. Cowell in *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 49, Part I, see Book XV : 118 on p. 173.
For Maitreya in this book, see also Book XVI: 1, 2 on p. 174, XVI: 52, 53 on p. 180, XVII: 2 on p. 190, and XVII: 27 on p. 198.
33. Sir Monier Monier-Williams, *Buddhism, in its Connection with Brahmanism and Hinduism*, p. 181 and p. 182–183.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 207–208.
35. Bukhari, book 64: Military Expeditions, hadith 4135, 4136.
36. Mishkat al-Masabih, book 26: *Ar-Riqāq*, ch. 'On reliance on God and patience', sec. 3. See the Urdu translation by Maulana Abdul Hakim Khan Akhtar Shajahanpuri, v. 2, p. 522.
37. Sir Charles Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism, An Historical Sketch*, v. 2, p. 21–22.
38. *Editor's Note*: This paragraph has been added by me in this revised edition. The references for its contents are: (1) the English translation of the *Lalitavistara* by Rajendralala Mitra, ch. V, p. 73–74, and (2) A modern translation of the *Lalitavistara* entitled: *The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra "The Play in Full"*, see chapter 5: Setting Out. For further details of these two sources, see our Bibliography under *Lalitavistara*.
39. See pages 20, 23, 49, 71 and 510. A description of Maitreya is also found in *Maitreya Sadhunam*, p. 50.
40. A. Berriedale Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy in India and Ceylon*, p. 133–134.
41. A.J. Edmunds and M. Anesaki, *Buddhist and Christian Gospels*, vol. II, p. 160–161, footnote.

9. Statues of the Maitreya

Islam does not permit the raising of statues to prophets. And Muslims especially could not tolerate a statue of the Prophet Muhammad. But it is a fact that we believe the Maitreya mentioned in the Buddhist Scriptures is the Prophet of Islam. The statues of the Maitreya were raised by the Buddhists all over the continent of Asia, and they did it all merely out of their love and affection for him. In the Holy Quran God, while describing His bounties on Solomon, reveals thus:

“And some of the *jinn* worked before him by the command of his Lord. And whoever turned aside from Our command from among them, We made him taste of the punishment of burning. They made for him what he pleased, of synagogues and images, and bowls (large) as watering-troughs and fixed cooking-pots. Give thanks, O people of David! And very few of My servants are grateful.” — 34 : 12–13

In these verses the *jinn* were no other than the foreign tribesmen whom Solomon subjected to his rule and forced into service.¹

As regards the images or statues made for Solomon mentioned in the Quran, some commentators opine that they were the statues of animals and some are of the opinion that they were the images of angels and other people. Therefore these commentators have expressed the view that the raising of statues was not against Solomon’s religion, and that only the making of such statues was prohibited which were used as objects of worship. Abraham was a staunch believer in the unity of God and was bitterly opposed to idols, but his opposition was directed against idols which were worshipped. The Quran relates about him: “When he said to his Sire and his people, What are these images to whose worship you are devoted?” (21 : 52).

However, a clear proof of the coming of the promised Maitreya is given by the statues. They set them up for a noble cause and out of respect for him in countries like Afghanistan, China, India, Japan, Chinese Turkistan, Burma and Ceylon. They reveal the affection of these people towards him. They must have taken pains to carve these images, and it further reveals their sincere love towards one whom they expected at any moment. Hundreds of thousands of Buddhists kept on waiting for him. As a matter of fact, it is something magnificent and stupendous, how the Buddhists carved images of him upon big rocks hewn out of mountains. Here the Buddhist nation stands unique in its expression and exertions of its love for Maitreya. In fact, their religion is one of despondency and disappointment. And that is why their aim in this world is an abhorrence from every desire without the least tinge of love for anything or anybody, love, that is, in the proper sense of the word.

They have, as they believe, no hope nor redemption in this world. The chief aim of a Buddhist is considered renunciation and it carries with it the suppression of all desire for self or suppression of the self itself. For one whose ultimate object is the hope to annihilate himself, it is strange that he may exist in the world. We have heard that our life is nothing but a hope to live. But Buddhism hopes to live and throb for one thing even after its objective of eschewing all hope, and though it is a faith of disappointment and despondency. This hope is its expectation for the promised Maitreya. And this may warrant the Buddhist claim that they live only to wait for Maitreya. The hope and expectation of the advent of the Maitreya in the minds of Buddhists is so deep that everyone of them is prepared to sacrifice everything for it. Their love for the Promised One has taken an imperishable turn and entered in the pericardium of their hearts. This is evident not only from their books but from the age-long transformation of stones into images, the beautiful statues of the promised prophet. The Buddhist sculptor really seems to have given a solid expression to his innermost sentiments in carving the image of the beloved one, that he does his best to add to its beauty.

So, this fact cannot be bypassed or underrated, that the statues of the Maitreya or the Promised One, as constructed by Buddhist sculptors, are not mere stones or toys carved from stones but, by giving them the shape of one earnestly waited for, hundreds of thousands of sentient souls must have given expression to their feelings and sentiments. A brief description of this affection and love may be given here. About twelve miles to the west of Peking (Beijing) there is a magnificent temple of Pi-yün sī. It has a big hall and six galleries. The door of the temple is towards the north. It contains many idols, and to one entering through the maingate the most conspicuous of all the statues is that of Maitreya.²

It is not only in Peking (Beijing) that we find such statues, but all over the country. There are numerous temples where statues of the Maitreya exist. Whether the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad knew anything about these statues and the prophecy of Buddha or they did not know, but it is a fact that they first of all decided to spread the light of Islam in China. They were commanded by the Holy Prophet to search knowledge in far off lands such as China. In fact, this led them to come to the land and thus they achieved a great success in propagating Islam there.

Hsüan Tsang's love for Maitreya

Hsüan Tsang,* a Chinese traveller, was born in 602 C.E. He travelled from China to India at the time when he had to tread almost unpassable routes through mountains and wastes. The pains he took to undergo all the hardships of travel with its trials and obstructions can well be imagined. He travelled on foot the whole length and breadth of India. But why did he undergo all these afflictions? There must have been some great ideal. From Nalanda he set off for Bengal, and reached Kaputa. This is a place replete with temples. In the centre of these temples there is a huge sandalwood statue of *Avalokiteshvara*, considered as the Lord who looks down at people with compassion, and is venerated in the Buddhist world. People come with most

*Modern spelling: Xuanzang.

fragrant garlands of flowers of fascinating hues and with the utmost humility they prostrate themselves before it. Bearing in mind the object for which they come to seek the divine help, people throw the garlands on the arm of the statue. If the garland sticks to the arm or remains there, then the person who presented it is supposed to have succeeded in his object. On the other hand, if a palpitating poor creature cannot reach the arm, and is unable to keep his garland there, that is supposed to indicate his distress, disappointment and the beginning of the future obscurity for the pilgrim. The Chinese pilgrim Hsüan Tsang appeared before the idol, and much of the purpose of the long, long travels was expressed in this cry which arose from his innermost heart:

“I desire to be born again one day in the heaven of the Blessed Gods, and to serve Maitreya. If this wish is to be fulfilled, I desire that these flowers may hang on your two venerable arms.”

It was with this and two other wishes that he threw the garland of flowers on the arm of the idol. To his great good fortune, the idol accepted the garland.³ And with that the sublime traveller forgot all the pains and afflictions of his journey, and became joyful.

It was also the love and affection for Maitreya which had led him to the Sārnāth Temple near Benares:

“In the suburbs of the town, in that same Sārnāth, stood the Park of the Antelopes, commemorating the first preaching of the Blessed One [Buddha]. ... Hsüan Tsang paid a lengthy visit to the Park of the Antelopes.”

Here King Ashoka had built a pillar in his honour at the sacred place:

“Not far from there was a stūpa marking the place where Maitreya, the Buddha of future ages, had received from the Blessed One the announcement of his Messianic role.”⁴

When close to his death, Hsüan Tsang told his disciples:

“I desire to see the merit I have acquired by my good deeds poured out on other men; to be born with them in the Heaven of the Blessed Gods (Tushita), to be admitted into the household of Maitreya and there to serve that Buddha who is full of tenderness and love.”

Then his last prayer was as follows:

“All devotion be paid to thee, O Maitreya Tathāgata, who art gifted with sublime understanding; I desire, in common with all men, to see thy countenance. All worship be given to thee, O Maitreya Tathāgata! I desire, after leaving life, to return to the hosts that surround thee.”⁵

This brings to light the deep love which was burning in the heart of the Chinese traveller for the Promised Prophet and who sacrificed all to this love.

I-Tsing

Another Chinese traveller to India, by the name of I-Tsing (Yijing), who was born in 634 C.E., prayed at the Buddhist holy places for himself and for his friends left behind in China who had asked him to pray for them:

“I prostrated myself at full length upon the ground. I had but one thought left — that of respectful sincerity. For China I asked the Four Benefits; then for all the Buddhist world, the knowledge of the sacred tradition, a general reunion under the dragon-flower tree, a meeting with the venerable person of the Merciful One (Maitreya, the future Buddha), the acquisition of perfect knowledge.”⁶

These are earnest desires for: (1) knowledge of the sacred scriptures; (2) gathering of all people under one tree, i.e., one universal religion; (3) a meeting with the Promised Prophet; (4) attainment of perfect spiritual and inner knowledge.

A Chinese wealthy man's longing for Maitreya

There is a prayer inscribed on a statue of the Wei or T'ang period which reads as follows:

“I, a servant of Buddha, Ts’ui Shan-tê, have long been abandoned and left forlorn by my dead parents. Before a tree shaken by the wind I think long of my parents and I question heaven without obtaining any reply. I wish I might give myself up to the spirits that they might snatch me away from my lonely path, and so I give the wealth of my family to have this *stèle* with images made with all reverence. On the front of it I have engraved the image of Maitreya (Mi-lo-Fo), behind that of Kshitigarbha (Ti-tsang).”⁷

These words reveal the depth of this wealthy man’s love and affection for the Promised Prophet. He sacrificed all his wealth to give an expression to his deep-rooted love in the shape of statues.

Fa-hsien in search of Maitreya

Another famous Chinese traveller, Fa-hsien (Faxian), set out on his journey from China in search of sacred Buddhist sites and to bring back any Buddhist scriptures not found in China. He reached India, and then, crossing untrodden forests and wastes, reached the Frontier Province of present-day Pakistan. There he saw a statue of the Maitreya in an ancient temple. Buddhists were very much in earnest about the truth of the Promised One, and the reason why they underwent such trials and hardships of travelling to far-off countries, thousands of miles away from home, is further commented on by Sir Charles Eliot as follows:

“He [Maitreya] appears to be represented in the oldest Gandh-aran sculptures, and about A.D. 400 Fa-hsien saw a celebrated statue of him in Udyana which was considered to be very ancient. ... The Chinese pilgrims not only mention statues and sites connected with Maitreya but seem to feel a personal devotion for him and to think of him as occupied in protecting the faith while waiting his own time to appear on earth.”⁸

Again, in his *Hinduism and Buddhism*, he writes:

“After Avalokita and Mañjuśrî the most important Bodhisattva is Maitreya, also called Ajita or unconquered, who is the only one recognized by the Pali Canon. This is because he does not

stand on the same footing as the others. They are super-human in their origin as well as in their career, whereas Maitreya is simply a being who like Gotama has lived innumerable lives and ultimately made himself worthy of Buddhahood which he awaits in heaven.”⁹

He “does not stand on the same footing as the others”; in fact, he will be above all. By nature and by their lives, all Buddhas are superior to other human beings. Maitreya, however, is a humble mortal who, like Gotama, acquired the status of Buddhahood because of his love for mankind, and was waiting on high for the time of his appointment on earth. Sir Charles Eliot adds that the Maitreya is:

“frequently alluded to in the exegetical Pali literature, in the Anâgata-vam̐sa and in the earlier Sanskrit works such as the Lalita-vistara, the Divyâvadâna and Mahâvastu. ... His images are frequent in all parts of the Buddhist world: he was believed to watch over the propagation of the Faith ... In paintings he is usually of a golden colour: his statues, which are often gigantic, show him standing or sitting in the European fashion and not cross-legged. He appears to be represented in the earliest Gandharan sculptures and there was a famous image of him in Udyâna* of which Fa-Hsien (399-414 A.D.) speaks as if it were already ancient. Hsüan Chuang describes it as well as a stupa erected† to commemorate Śâkyamuni’s prediction that Maitreya would be his successor.”¹⁰

Fa-Hsien writes in his travels that this image is:

“eighty cubits in height, and eight cubits at the base from knee to knee of the crossed legs. On fast-days it emits an effulgent light. The kings of the (surrounding) countries vie with one another in presenting offerings to it. Here it is — to be seen now as of old.”¹¹

*This is in Swat, Pakistan.

†Here Sir Charles Eliot adds the following footnote: “The stupa was apparently at Benares but Hsüan Chuang’s narrative is not clear and other versions make Râjagriha or Śrāvâsti the scene of the prediction.”

(Note: A cubit is about 18 inches. Thus eighty cubits is about 120 feet.)

The other Chinese traveller, Hsüan Tsang, notes the following legend:

“By the side of a great *saṅghârâma* in this valley of Ta-li-lo is a figure of Maitrêya Bôdhisattva, carved out of wood. It is golden coloured, and very dazzling in appearance, and possesses a secret spiritual power (*of miracle*). It is about 100 feet high, and is the work of the Arhat Madhyântika. This saint by his spiritual power caused a sculptor to ascend into the Tushita (Tusi-to) heaven, that he might see for himself the marks and signs (*on the person of Maitrêya*); this he did three times, till his task was finished.”¹²

It is added in a footnote here that Madhyântika was a disciple of Ananda, the latter being one of the closest disciple of Buddha.

The love, affection, devotion, sentiments and sacrifices of these lovers of the Maitreya can well be imagined. How indefatigably the sculptors and these devotees of their religion carved gigantic mountains to give expression to their innermost love for the Promised One! This was no easy task. It all required assiduity, hardwork and wealth. To illuminate a statue in those days, one from which light radiates, must have been the work of great intelligence. The sacrifices made by kings and princes, and the size of the gatherings of visitors, reveal their devoted love for the man, of whom the statue was but an image. As a matter of fact, there was no other nation so earnestly and devotedly preparing to welcome the Promised One as were these people.

In the monasteries and temples of China there are superb and magnificent engravings on the wooden and stone walls. Almost all the temples in China face towards the south, and all of them seem to be built of a similar shape. In the midst of the temple is a magnificent statue, which those people call *mi-lo-fu*, meaning ‘the coming Buddha’. The statue seems to be that of a bold and watchful personality. Its chest is wide and open. There is a smile on its face. It is an imaginative representation of the magnificent Maitreya which the Buddhist

temples in China reveal. Some Buddhist divines of China are of the opinion that the Promised One, to whom the magnificent statue refers, is to appear 3,000 years after the death of the Buddha, and that he will be the origin of a great metamorphosis.¹³

Maitreya in Java

The monuments of the island of Java with their statues are famous for their height. They are, moreover, most beautiful and fascinating. These are in the central and eastern parts of the island. Famous amongst these is the temple of Barabudur, which is highly ornamented with galleries of sculpture on its sides on every storey. It is said to have been erected about the year 850 C.E. and is purely Buddhist art with no hint of Hindu influence. On its third gallery is seen the statue of Maitreya prominently, who seems to be teaching something to his companion. The pilgrims and devotees walked round the galleries, in order, looking at the images and giving expression to their love and devotion. Sir Charles Eliot, after relating this information, goes on to say:

“The fourth gallery seems to deal with the five superhuman Buddhas... In spite of the importance of Śākyamuni, a considerable if mysterious part is played by the five superhuman Buddhas, and several Bodhisattvas, especially Maitreya, Avalokita and Manjusri.”¹⁴

Later he writes despite the images of the five superhuman Buddhas:

“...the personality of Śākyamuni is emphasized; his life and previous births are pictured in a long series of sculptures and Maitreya is duly honoured. Similar collections of pictures and images may be seen in Burma which differ doctrinally from those in Java chiefly by substituting the four human Buddhas and Maitreya for the superhuman Buddhas.”¹⁵

It may be noted that the scenes represented by these images are based on the story of Buddha in the Lalitavistara,¹⁶ even though this book and other related literature “was probably known only in the original Sanskrit and only to the learned”.¹⁷

The temple of Barabudur is the largest in a compound of three monuments, which also contains the Mendut temple, the oldest of the three, dating from about 779 C.E. Its outer walls have statues of bodhisattvas including that of Maitreya.¹⁸

The Maitreya in Ceylon (Sri Lanka)

After the establishment of Buddhism in Ceylon, there followed a period of defeat for it under Tamil rule:

“A series of Tamil usurpers reigned over Ceylon, and the sacred edifices [of Buddhism] fell into decay, till a restorer of the national independence appeared in Dhātusena (A.D. 463). Amid the lists of the great tanks which he made for irrigation and of the dagabas which he repaired or built, occurs a feature which deserves special notice. He erected, we are told, an image of Metteyya (Maitrī), the coming Buddha. This is the first mention of any erection for the cultus of this personage ... and King Dutthagamini had a special devotion to him, and is to be — when the time comes — his chief disciple. He is often mentioned in later books, and is even now often on the lips of Buddhists as a kind of ideal...”¹⁹

The Chinese traveller Fa-hsien, mentioned above, has reproduced a sermon that he heard in Ceylon in which the preacher recited the prophecy of the future coming of the Maitreya in detail from a Buddhist scripture. Fa-hsien writes that he “wished to write it down as a portion of doctrine; but the man said, ‘This is taken from no Sūtra, it is only the utterance of my own mind’.”²⁰ This reveals the fact that, whatever the beliefs of any people in matters of faith, they all waited earnestly for the promised prophet.

The Maitreya in Tibet

Like other Buddhist countries, mountainous Tibet is not devoid of effigies of the Maitreya. In the Tibetan language, or in the religious terminology of the Tibetans, his name is *Champa* which connotes a fragrant yellow flower. His future coming is mentioned in their scripture the *Bardo Thödol* or ‘The Tibetan Book of the Dead’. The Tibetans are as anxiously waiting for him as are other people of the

Buddhist countries. The translator of this book has added a footnote at a mention of Maitreya to say:

Text: *Byams-pa* (pronounced *Cham-pa*): Sanskrit *Maitreya*: ‘Love’; the Buddha to come, who will reform mankind through the power of divine love.²¹

The translator, in his addenda, comparing Northern and Southern Buddhism, writes as follows of the Southern branch: “The only Bodhisattva appealed to and imaged in temples is the coming Buddha, Maitreya.”²²

Hence, by the order of the Dalai Lama, a huge statue as high as 80 ft. was constructed in Tibet representing Maitreya. It was gilded with gold so that the Maitreya might accept it and come to the world soon.²³

Maitreya in Central Asia

Besides India and the other above-mentioned countries (see page 138), statues of Maitreya are to be found as far as Central Asia. As a matter of fact, the prophecy of the advent of a Promised One was engraved in countries which would be the field for the propagation of Islam. Sir Charles Eliot writes:

“A temple of Maitreya has been found at Turfan in Central Asia with a Chinese inscription which speaks of him as an active and benevolent deity manifesting himself in many forms.”²⁴

The “many forms” here can be taken to refer to the numerous attributes of the Holy Prophet Muhammad expressed in all his names.

Statues of Maitreya — a summary²⁵

Below we quote from a section in the book *The Gods of Northern Buddhism* by Alice Getty relating to the statues of Maitreya in different countries.

“Maitreya is the only Bodhisattva known to Hinayana Buddhism, and statues of him are found in Ceylon, Burma, and Siam, usually in company with Gautama Buddha. Although the cult of Maitreya was evolved before Aśoka’s time, his worship was

not at its height until the fifth century A.D., and there are many statues of him in the Gandhāra sculptures of that period. ...

In the Indian sculptures, as Bodhisattva, he is standing. His hair is arranged mitre-shaped. His hands form the usual *mudrā*, and in the left is a vase which is round, while in the sculptures of the Gandhāra school the vase is oval or pointed in shape.

Maitreya must have been known to Central Asia in the fifth century, for a temple at Turfan, according to inscriptions, was dedicated to him in 469 A.D.

In the bas-reliefs of the temple of Boro Boedoer, there are many representations of Maitreya which date from the ninth century. In Java he is also found in statuary form, as for instance in the temple of Tjandī Mendut, where he is figured seated, the legs pendent and the hands in the *dharmacakra mudrā*.

The early Mongolian images of Maitreya are also generally standing, and hold in their hands, forming 'argument' and 'charity' *mudrā*, the stems of flowers called 'campa', which, however, in the bronzes often resembles the lotus-flower. If painted, the campa is white with a yellow centre.

In Tibet, Maitreya is also represented both as Buddha and Bodhisattva. ... He is the only divinity in the Northern Buddhist pantheon represented seated in European fashion. ...

In the Gandhāra sculptures, Maitreya was represented much larger than his assistants. According to Hsüan Tsang, there is a statue of Maitreya at Dardu, north of the Punjab, in wood, which is one hundred feet high....

The Chinese claim that Maitreya was thirty feet high. According to Edkins, in the province of Che-kiang there is a stone image of Maitreya forty feet high, and still another seventy feet high. At Peking in the Yung-ho-kung, there is a wooden image still higher. ...

There is a form of Bodhisattva found in Japan as well as in China which is claimed by some to be Maitreya. ...

In Mahāyānist countries, Maitreya is found in a triad with Gautama Buddha and Avalokiteśvara; and also accompanied by the two goddesses, Kurukullā and Bhṛīkuṭī.

In Japan, he is seated with legs locked, his hands in *dhyāna mudrā* holding a vase, and in this form he somewhat resembles the Tibetan Amitāyus.”²⁶

The Coming Buddha, One and the Last

In Pali and Sanskrit literature on Buddhism there is a diversity of opinion regarding the number of Buddhas; it is from six to three hundred million:

“According to the oldest Pāli tradition, there were six Buddhas who lived before Gautama Çākyaṃuni [i.e., the Buddha Shakyamuni]. Their names are mentioned in the *Mahāpadāna-sutta* of the *Dīgha-Nikāya* (ii, 2 ff.). The number of these Buddhas is seven, because the ancient world believed in the existence of seven “planets” (Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn). These seven Buddhas correspond to the seven *ṛṣis* of the Indian tradition, who have also an astronomical origin. Their Sanskritized names are mentioned in the *Dharma-saṅgraha* (Section 6), the *Lalita-vistara* and the *Mahā-vyūtpatti*. The number of the Buddhas, who preceded Gautama Çākyaṃuni and predicted his advent, was increased to twenty-four in the Pāli *Buddhavaṃsa*. But the Sanskrit writers continued the process of multiplying the Buddhas. The *Lalita-vistara* speaks of *koṭis* (ten millions) of them, as does also the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka*. The *Suvarṇa-prabhāsa* tells us of “thousands”, while the *Sukhāvātī-vyūha* estimates their exact number at 81 *koṭi-niyuta-çata-sahasrāṇi* (81 million million *niyutas*). The *Karuṇā-puṇḍarīka* and the *Çata-sāhasrikā Prajñā-pāramitā* speak of many Buddhas who have their *kṣetras* (fields). The *Mahā-vastu* refers to 300 million Buddhas of the name of Çākyaṃuni, 60,000 Buddhas of the name of Pradyota, and so on.”²⁷

However, the coming promised Buddha Maitreya is only one. There may be a difference of opinion regarding the actual number of

Buddhas who came before Gautama Buddha, but it is an established fact that there will be no Buddha after the Maitreya. Prof. R.S. Hardy writes:

“This long period of remediless ignorance was succeeded by the Maha-bhadra kalpa, in which five Buddhas are to appear; Kakusandha, Kónágamana, Kásyapa, Gótama, and Maitrí. The first four of these have already appeared; and Maitrí will be the next Buddha who will arise to bless the world.”²⁸

So the prophecy refers to only one Promised, whose name is *Metteyya* or *Maitreya*. There is no allusion to anybody else. And the references given also explicitly manifest that the coming Promised One will be the last prophet or the last Buddha.*

Buddhists’ love for the Maitreya

The sons of Adam in every age were led to love their Prophets and reformers after they had seen them enduring toils, suffering pains and leaving no stone unturned to guide their people to the right course. Nations were at last moved to see it all. They respected and loved them much. But the Buddhists’ part in this love is unique. They loved the coming Maitreya very much, although they did not see him in their own lifetime. They became devout lovers of the Promised One. Love encompassed their hearts for one who is yet to come after centuries. There is no doubt that when a person sees a handsome and charming fellow he may droop desperately in love; and a philanthropist may be loved by others; but the Buddhists drooped in love for him who is as yet unseen and unfamiliar to them. To carve and model a beautiful statue with their own hands and then to fall in love

**Editor’s Note:* The following quote may be added here: “Although some texts speculate on later Buddhas who will come after him [i.e., after Maitreya], ... from the point of view of most Buddhist lay people, as well as many ordained clerics, Maitreya’s arrival would represent essentially a final dispensation. Accordingly, this figure’s consummation of Buddhist heritage sometimes casts him in the role of an eschatological cosmic savior who, at the end of the empirical world order, will establish a utopian state of justice, peace, and truth.” (Joseph M. Kitagawa, Professor Emeritus of the History of Religions at the University of Chicago, *The Many Faces of Maitreya*, in *Maitreya, the Future Buddha*, edited by Sponberg and Hardacre, p. 7.)

with it, was, in fact, inspired into their hearts by the Buddha. The very life of a devout Buddhist is an enigma. He is alive, yet loth to live. He lives in the world, yet he believes all mundane desires deceitful, and he wants to be immune from deceit. To perish and perish for ever is his ultimate goal. In order to live in the world, there is need of having love and interest in the things of the world, but for him this brings a great chastisement. In this dark and oblivious world of the Buddhist there is one resplendent light. It is the belief in the Maitreya. In quest of him, the Buddhists have sacrificed all and sought much. They cut mountains and gigantic rocks and shaped them into statues. They crossed rivers and pathless jungles, and sought after him and his signs, like mad lovers. They proclaimed that their object was nothing but to see the Maitreya.

In his book *Buddhist Scriptures*, Edward Conze writes in the last chapter entitled *Maitreya, The Future Buddha*:

“At present, many Buddhists look forward to his coming. In South Asia these eschatological hopes are little stressed, whereas in Central Asia they are a source of great religious fervour. To be reborn in Maitreya’s presence is the greatest wish of many Tibetans and Mongols, and the inscriptions ‘Come, Maitreya, come!’ on the rocks of numerous mountains testifies to their longing.”²⁹

In *The Law of Christ* Jinarajadasa writes:

“... there can be no greater reward of good Karma for a soul, than to be on earth when a “future Buddha” walks among men. Pious Buddhists, as they offer flowers before the image of the Buddha, say, ‘May I be on earth when the Bodhisattva moves among men.’”³⁰

The travels of Hsüan-tsang from China to India are described in the book *In the Footsteps of Buddha* by René Grousset, translated from French by Mariette Léon. Even in commencing his journey he faced great obstacles. The Chinese authorities forbade him to leave China, his horse died, and his two companions showed themselves incapable of going with him. We read:

“The Master of the Law [i.e., Hsüan-tsang] now found himself alone. He bought a new horse and besought the Bodhisattva Maitreya to send him a guide, to enable him to pass through the last frontier posts.”³¹

This shows that he set off from China with the fire of the love of Maitreya illumining his heart most resplendently.

A dramatic incident occurred during his travels in India at the modern city of Allahabad. His boat, going along in the Ganges, was attacked by pirates. They sought to put him to the sword as a sacrifice to their god, a cruel divinity. He begged them to give him a few moments before killing him so that he may “enter nirvāṇa with a calm and joyous mind”:

“Then the Master of the Law thought with love of the Bodhisattva Maitreya, and turned his whole mind to the Heaven of the Blessed, earnestly praying to be born again there, in order to offer this Bodhisattva his respects and homage, to hear the excellent Law expounded, and to attain perfect Understanding (the state of a Buddha); then to descend and be reborn on earth again in order to teach and convert these men [i.e., the pirates], that they might practise deeds of high virtue and abandon their infamous calling; and finally to spread abroad all the benefits of the Law, and to procure peace and happiness for all creatures.”³²

This desire to learn from Maitreya the excellent religion he would teach and to reform people by its teachings, and to spread them in the world, shows what kind of Promised One they were looking forward to as appearing. The Holy Prophet Muhammad fulfilled those characteristics.

It is then related in the story that Hsüan-tsang “firmly fixed his thoughts on Maitreya Budhisattva without allowing any alien idea to rise up.” He felt he was rising and passing through the heavens till he seemed to see:

“the palace of the Blessed, the venerable Maitreya, seated on a resplendent throne, and surrounded by a multitude of gods.

At this moment he was floating with body and soul on an ocean of joy, not knowing that he was near the altar of sacrifice nor thinking of the pirates who thirsted for his blood.”

As his companions screamed and cried at his impending execution, a furious wind arose, blowing sand around and creating huge waves in the river. The pirates were terrified at this sign of the wrath of “the spirits of heaven” and repented before him of their evil deeds. Hsüan-tsang remained astonishingly serene throughout the entire episode.³³ Such was the powerful effect produced by merely thinking about the Maitreya, even though he had never been seen physically. This shows the depth of their faith in this future Buddha.³⁴

We are also told that Hsüan-tsang climbed a wild mountain “where, according to tradition, Mahā Kāśyapa, the great disciple of Sākyamuni, has been awaiting for several centuries, in ecstatic immobility, the coming of Maitreya, the future Buddha.”³⁵

When Hsüan-tsang reached Nalanda, he was given a great welcome by the monks who conducted him into the presence of the head of the monastery, called Silabhadra. He was much moved by Hsüan-tsang’s object of studying religion under him, and he related to Hsüan-tsang a dream he had had sometime before when he fell so seriously ill that he wished to die. Silabhadra told him that he saw three gods standing before him. Their bodies were very beautiful, their faces glorious, and they were clad in shining attire. One of them had a golden colour, another dark blue, and the third silver. They were Manjusri, Avalokitesvara and Maitreya respectively. They all exhorted him to live in order to propagate abroad the sacred religion. For this purpose, the three divinities told him to await the arrival of a monk from China. Hsüan-tsang replied that as his arrival accorded with this dream the head of the monastery should become his teacher and “crown [his] joy” by accepting him as his devoted disciple.³⁶ Thus Hsüan-tsang was happy and over-joyed that Maitreya himself had appeared to the head of the monastery in the dream, asking him to remain alive to be teacher to the monk coming from China.

Christ in Buddhist colours

There are some Christian advocates who advance their cause at the expense of others. They illuminate Christianity by blackening other religions. They sought the sources of Islam and the Quran in other religious scriptures. They do not realize that morality, after all, is a common property. They must know that most of the Sermon on the Mount is a re-echo of the past. The Buddha and Jesus gave similar precepts to the world. Many of the parables of Jesus were only renderings of the parables in Buddhistic literature. Jesus, we believe, did not owe his enlightenment to the Buddhistic lore; all his knowledge came directly from God. A close study of the religions will enable people to appreciate the Quranic truth that no nation was left without a Divine message. But the contemporaries of the prophets did not keep full records of the words of their Masters. Coming generations were given a religion which was never taught by the Master, not even imagined by the respected founder.

Notes to Chapter 9:

1. See 2 Chron. 2:2–18. The images or statues of the angels are mentioned in 2 Chron. 3:10–13.
2. Rev. Joseph Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 254.
3. Rene Grousset, *In the Footsteps of the Buddha*, ch. VIII, p. 173–174.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 153–154.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 256.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 272–273. The words in parentheses, “(Maitreya, the future Buddha)”, occur as such in the original.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 326–327.
8. Sir Charles Eliot, *Japanese Buddhism*, p. 119.
9. Sir Charles Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism, An Historical Sketch*, v. 2, p. 21.
10. *Ibid.*, v. 2, p. 22.
11. *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms, being an account by the Chinese Monk Fâ-Hien of his travels in India and Ceylon*, translated by James Legge, p. 25.
12. *Si-Yu-Ki — Buddhist Records of the Western World*, v. I, p. 134.

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13. For this information on Chinese temples, please refer to J. Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism*, ch. XIV, p. 239–240.
 14. Sir Charles Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, v. 3, p. 165–167.
 15. *Ibid.*, p. 177.
 16. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
 17. *Ibid.*, p. 170.
 18. The following is the link to information about the Borobudur Temple Compounds on the website of UNESCO: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/592/>
 19. Reginald Stephen Copleston, Bishop of Calcutta (Kolkata), *Buddhism, Primitive and Present, in Magadha and in Ceylon*, second edition, 1908, p. 219.
 20. *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms, being an account by the Chinese Monk Fā-Hien of his travels in India and Ceylon*, translated by James Legge, p. 109–110.
 21. W.Y. Evans-Wentz, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, third edition, p. 108.
 22. *Ibid.*, p. 232.
 23. *Editor's Note*: The author's reference here may be to the gigantic statue of Maitreya at the Tashi Lhunpo monastery built by the 9th Panchen Lama in 1914. It is more than 26 metres high and more than 11 metres wide across the shoulders, and is said to be the largest and tallest bronze figure of the future Buddha. It is coated with gold and brass. See: (1) the page on the Tashilhunpo monastery at the chinadiscovery.com website, (2) *A repository of religious relics* at Chinadaily.com.cn for 2019-06-03, and (3) History of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery on the website of this Monastery run by its monks in exile in India: www.honorpanchenlama.org. The Monastery was founded in 1447 by the 1st Dalai Lama, who built a statue of Maitreya after being advised to do so in a dream.

In 1970 the Maitreya Temple was erected in Ladakh, India, containing a 15-metre high statue of Maitreya, to commemorate the visit of the 14th Dalai Lama to the Thikse (or Thiksey) Monastery. The construction of a statue of Maitreya (Gyalwa Jampa) in Ladakh, India, was started in 2007 and it was inaugurated by the Dalai Lama on 26 July 2010 (see report on website: www.dalailama.com). For interest, please see also Jessica Falcone's book *Battling the Buddha of Love*, Cornell University Press, 2018. It deals with the "Maitreya Project" organization's controversial attempts to build a 500-foot statue of Maitreya in India, which would be the world's tallest statue.
 24. Sir Charles Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, v. 2, p. 22, footnote.

25. *Editors's Note*: This summary, consisting of the quotation from Alice Getty, has been added in this revised edition.
26. Alice Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, p. 22–24.
27. Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, p. 24–25.
28. R.S. Hardy, *A Manual of Buddhism*, p. 95–96.
29. Edward Conze, *Buddhist Scriptures*, p. 237.
30. C. Jinarajadasa, *The Law of Christ*, p. 191.
31. R. Grousset, *In the Footsteps of Buddha*, pp. 34–35.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 133–134.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 134–135.
34. *Editors's Note*: In this revised edition I have added more details of this incident to those given by the author.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 164.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 167–168.

10. Some Significant References

1. The Maitreya will be the last and perfect light:

“He shall be the last to reach superior enlightenment and become a Lord known by the family name of Maitreya, who shall educate thousands of *koṭis* [i.e., ten million] of creatures.”¹

2. In the history of Buddhism there are mentioned fifteen Buddhas. The last of them is Maitreya.²

3. James Bissett Pratt wrote his book *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism and a Buddhist Pilgrimage* after travelling to Buddhist lands to give the reader an understanding of Buddhism as a whole and how it is actually lived. Of the Buddhists of Ceylon and Burma, he writes:

“Not only was I unable to learn of any one who had even heard of the attainment of complete enlightenment within modern times; it is held as a definite theory that there are no more Arhants and that there will be none till the coming of Maitreya, the next Buddha — he who is now awaiting in the Tusita heaven to descend to earth and restore the Dhamma. This, however, will not happen till Buddhism has so degenerated that the Teachings of the Buddhas have been all forgotten. Some of the monks with whom I talked, particularly in Burma, felt that we were already witnessing the decline which the Buddha had prophesied and which is to precede Maitreya’s descent to this earth.”³

Of the condition of Buddhism in China, he discovered:

“Several of the most enthusiastic and intelligent Buddhists that I met in China expressed themselves as having very little hope for the future of their religion in their native land. ... Another

told me that his only hope for Buddhism was that ... the scientific study of Buddhist history and philosophy that is now being carried on by Europeans and Americans he thought might stimulate a new interest in the religion among the Chinese. Naturally, however, he was not very sanguine over this possibility and contented himself by pointing out that the Buddha himself had predicted the complete disappearance of the Dharma from the earth. After his prophecy is fulfilled Maitreya will come and re-establish the Law, Buddhism will spread throughout the world, and a reign of happiness and universal peace will begin.”⁴

4. Maitreya will be the prophet who will bring a Law abrogating some of the commandments of the former religion as required by the needs of the new times. This can be concluded from the following statements in the *Buddhacarita* of Ashvaghosha:

“...and Maitreya with the deities of the Tushita heaven came for the turning of the wheel of the Law.”⁵

5. In the *Anāgata-Vāṃsa* (further on from the passage we have already quoted starting on page 122), it is also written which kinds of people will not recognize Maitreya:

“But who shall not behold Metteyya, The Blessed one?... ”

One who creates a schism in a church ... performing the five crimes that constitute ‘proximate karma’, those cherishing wholly heretical views, and those who slander the noble disciples, shall not see him. The naked ascetics who create a schism by denying the congregation allowable privileges shall not see him.”⁶

By “church” is meant the community of worshippers. The “five crimes that constitute ‘proximate karma’ ” are said to be that a person:

“...should deprive his mother of life, should deprive his father of life, should deprive a saint of life, should in a revengeful spirit cause a bloody wound to a Tathāgata, should cause a schism in the church.”⁷

Such were the opponents of the Holy Prophet Muhammad who did not recognize him, and instead became his enemies.

As to schisms, the Quran condemns those who “split up their religion and became sects”,⁸ this disunity arising from reasons of ego and self. This was the case with the Jews and the Christians, of whom the Quran says:

“And the Jews say, The Christians follow nothing (good), and the Christians say, The Jews follow nothing (good), while they recite the (same) Book. Even thus say those who have no knowledge, like what they say. So Allah will judge between them on the day of Resurrection in that in which they differ.” — 2: 113

As to killing the father and the mother, the pre-Islamic Arabs were constantly involved in internecine warfare, killing one another, regarding which the Quran told them after their acceptance of Islam:

“And remember Allah’s favour to you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts so by His favour you became brethren. And you were on the brink of a pit of fire, then He saved you from it.” — 3: 103

The Companions of the Holy Prophet, who were the “noble disciples” and the “saints” in the words of Buddha in the above quotations from Warren’s book, lost their lives at the hands of the rejectors of the Holy Prophet, who did not recognize him, i.e., the Maitreya. The Quran mentions the Israelites as killing their prophets,⁹ and both the Jews and the Arab opponents of the Holy Prophet attempted to kill him, and even succeeded in causing him “bloody wounds”. As to the mention of “naked ascetics”, there was a pre-Islamic Arab practice of going around the Ka’bah naked which had to be prohibited by Islam.¹⁰

6. Although there are hundreds of statues of Maitreya, yet this is a miracle, because it is written that he will himself be strictly opposed to sculptures and their worship. Maitreya is said to have answered a question from his heavenly abode as follows:

“The custom of the world is to form a lump of clay, and with wheel make it into a porcelain image. How can this image compare with the sages or be continued to later generations?”¹¹

7. In the Chinese Tripitaka, the Buddha, replying to Sariputra, said:

“Afterwards a righteous king will succeed, and Maitreya will send down 300 youths, born apparitionally among men, who will recover the law from the 500 Arhats, and go amongst men instructing them, so that once more the Scriptures, which had been taken to heaven by Maitreya, will be disseminated in the world.”¹²

8. Again Buddha said:

“What reason should I have to continually manifest myself? When men become unbelieving, unwise, ignorant, careless, fond of sensual pleasures, and from thoughtlessness run into misfortune, then I, who know the course of the world, declare: I am so and so, (and consider): How can I incline them to enlightenment? how can they become partakers of the Buddha-laws.”¹³

9. It seems that Maitreya is not only the Promised One of Gautama Buddha but that all former Buddhas prophesied his advent. In an English rendering from the Buddhist *Jataka*, or birth stories of the Buddha, it is written by the translator:

“But since Kassapa, The Blessed One, there has been no Supreme Buddha, excepting our present one. Accordingly, our Future Buddha has received recognition at the hands of twenty-four Buddhas, beginning with Dīpaṅkara.”¹⁴

As the Holy Quran says:

“And when Allah made a covenant through the prophets: Certainly what I have given you of Book and Wisdom — then a Messenger comes to you verifying what is (already) with you, you shall believe in him, and you shall aid him. He said: Do you affirm and accept My compact in this (matter)? They said:

We do affirm. He said: Then bear witness, and I (too) am a bearer of witness with you.” — 3:81

10. Major Arthur Glyn Leonard writes:

“In reality Mohammed was an ultra great man. The difference (as it appears to me) between other great men and himself was wide. The ordinary type of great man — a John Knox for example — is a patriot essentially. He is for his country first, then for God and humanity. As I have shown, with Mohammed it was just the reverse. An Arab by accident of birth, he put God and nature before everything. It was this that made him a humanist; this that placed him before his age. For Mohammed, without a shadow of a doubt, was centuries before his age.”¹⁵

And this is the real sense of Maitreya: “*A mercy to all nations*”.

It is my fervent prayer that Almighty God may bless this, my humble research, and make it instrumental in inspiring the hearts of seekers after truth from all religions with the love of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the “mercy to all nations”, Buddha Maitreya, *Amin*.

Notes to Chapter 10:

1. The *Saddharma-Pundarika*, translated by H. Kern in *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 21, p. 28, no. 94.
2. E. A. Wallis Budge, *Baralam and Yewasef*, v. 1, p. lx.

Editor's Note: The US Library of Congress holds the ‘Gandhara scroll’, dated approx. between 1st century B.C. and 1st century A.D. In its summary, it is stated: “The scroll discusses the lives of fifteen buddhas. The text is narrated by Shakyamuni Buddha who gives very short biographies of thirteen buddhas who came before him, followed by his birth and emergence as Shakyamuni Buddha, and ending with the prediction of the future buddha, Maitreya.” See: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018305008>

3. J.B. Pratt, *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism and a Buddhist Pilgrimage*, p. 136.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 691–692.
5. This has already been quoted on page 132 from *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 49, Part I, Book XV, p. 173, number 118.

6. Warren, *Buddhism in translations*, p. 485. See also Jan Nattier, *The Meanings of the Maitreya Myth*, in the compilation *Maitreya, the Future Buddha*, edited by Alan Sponberg and Helen Hardacre, p. 38, note 13.
7. Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, p. 130.
8. The Quran, 6: 159. See also 3: 105, 23: 53, and 42: 13–14.
9. The Quran, 2: 51 and 2: 87.
10. Bukhari, book 8: Prayer, ch. 10, hadith 369, and book 65: Commentary on the Quran, hadith numbers 4655–4657.
11. Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 80.
12. The *Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King* by Ashvaghosha, in *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 19, Introduction, p. xv.
13. The *Saddharma-Pundarika*, translated by H. Kern in *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 21, ch. xv, p. 310, no. 22–23.
14. Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, ch. I: ‘The Buddha’, sec. 2: ‘A List of former Buddhas’, p. 33.

Editor’s Note: From reading this reference in Warren’s book, it looks as if by “our Future Buddha” he means, in fact, Gautama Buddha, not Maitreya, and is saying that the previous twenty-four Buddha had recognized Gautama Buddha (i.e., had prophesied about him), he being the 25th Buddha. Even if this is what he means, it may still be concluded that the previous Buddhas prophesied the coming of Maitreya indirectly through Gautama Buddha. Moreover, a corroboration of this is found in an article *A Brief History of Maitreya* by the Buddhist leader Lama Thubten Yeshe (d. 1984), based on the teachings he gave in Holland in 1981, in which he writes: “Eventually the time will come for Maitreya to appear as the fifth universal Buddha of this world age and turn the wheel of dharma for the benefit of all. ... According to *the prophecies of all the Buddhas and his own promise*, this will be the time when Maitreya Buddha will appear in this world as a universal teacher.” (Italics are ours. See the link: www.fpmt-osel.org/teachings/maitreya.htm).

In a translation of the Chinese version of the *Lotus Sutra* (Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, California, revised edition, 2007), it is stated near the end of chapter 1 (Introduction) that, before he reaches the rank of a buddha, Maitreya will have met “innumerable buddhas” and “paid homage to all of them” and “practised the great path after them” (p. 20). We may say in this connection that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, near the beginning of his mission, beheld the visionary experience known as the

mi'rāj, during which he met the previous prophets. He “paid homage to all of them” by requiring his followers to believe in all of them and their revelations, and he cleared them of the false charges against them found in their own scriptures. He also followed their path, as the Quran says: “He has made plain to you (O people) the religion which He enjoined upon Noah and which We have revealed to you (O Prophet), and which We enjoined on Abraham and Moses and Jesus — to establish religion and not to be divided in (regard to) it” (42: 13).

15. A. G. Leonard, *Islam — Her Moral and Spiritual Value, A Rational and Psychological Study*, p. 109.

Appendix 1

Mughal general in 16th century writes about encountering Buddha's prophecy in Tibet

Writing in the Lahore Ahmadiyya English weekly journal *The Light* in 1944, Dr Nazirul Islam, M.A., Ph.D., begins an article as follows:¹

“Here is another useful addition of a reference to Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi’s book ‘Muhammad in World Scriptures’. I am editing now-a-days a well known work ‘Rashidī’ — a history of the Mughals of Central Asia, written by Mirza Haider (b. 905 A.H., d. 958 A.H.) — a cousin of Emperor Baber. Mirza Haider conquered Kashmir in 948 A.H. (1541 A.D.) and ruled this country for about ten years. It was during this time (951 A.H.) that he wrote his book ‘Tarikh-i-Rashidī’.

In 938 A.H. when Mirza Haider was in the service of Sultan Sa’id of Kāshghar he led an expedition under the orders of Sultan Sa’id against Tibet. Mirza Haider invaded that country and invited the inhabitants to accept Islam. In his history Mirza Haider relates an interesting story about the religious beliefs of the ‘Ulamās of Tibet at that time.”

In the rest of his article he quotes from Mirza Haidar’s book on what the Buddhist religious leaders told him about their religion and that Buddha had prophesied the appearance of the Last Prophet, coming after a large number of prophets, who would be an orphan. He also shows some of the quotation in the original Persian text.

Having read this article, I traced a complete English translation of *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, published in 1895.² The extract quoted in *The Light* from this book is from chapter XCI (91), *Tibet and the customs of its people*, in which Mirza Haidar relates his talks with the religious

leaders of Tibet, conducted through an interpreter. He notes that, on the finer points of religion, the interpreter was at a loss to understand these and could not explain. However, Mirza Haidar was able to discover their "tenets and rites", and he sets them out in this chapter. Towards the end of his description of their faith, he writes:

"Such are the tenets of the religion of Shaká Muni. All Khitái is of this faith, and they call it the religion of "Shakiá Muni"; while in Tibet it is called "Shaká Tu Bá," and "Shaká Muni." In histories it is written "Shaká Muni." In some histories, Shaká Muni is reckoned among the prophets of India, and some hold that he was a teacher [*hakim*]. Also, it is maintained that no one goes to Heaven by the mere acceptance of the faith and religion, but only in consequence of his works. If a Musulmán performs good acts, he goes to Heaven; if he do evil, he goes to Hell. This also applies to [these] infidels. They hold the Prophet in high esteem, but they do not consider it the incumbent duty of the whole of mankind to be of his religion. They say:

"Your religion is true, and so is ours. In every religion one must conduct oneself well. Shaká Muni has said: After me there will arise 124,000 prophets, the last of whom will be called Jána Kasapa, an orphan, without father or mother. All the world will comprehend his religion. When he is sent, it will be necessary for the whole world to submit to him, and blessed will he be who hastens to adopt his faith. I bequeath my own religion in order that it may be handed down from generation to generation until the blessed time of his appearance. The semblance of this prophet will be in this wise" — and therewith he gave an image which the people were to remember, for in this form the prophet would appear. People should believe in him before all other men.

At the present time, the chief idol (which they place in the entrance of all the Idol Temples) besides all their fables, have reference to him. This idol is the figure of Jána Kasapa. And they attribute most of those qualities to Jána Kasapa, which apply to our Prophet. I observed to them: "What Shaká Muni said refers to our Prophet." They replied: "Shaká Muni said he would come after 124,000 prophets, and after him would come

no other prophet. Now of those 124,000, but few have appeared as yet." I insisted earnestly that they had all appeared, but they would not admit it, and so remained in their error."³

It appears from the statement at the beginning, "In some histories, Shaká Muni is reckoned among the prophets of India..." that Muslims even earlier than when this book was written around 1540 C.E. had recognized that prophets had appeared in India and Buddha was among them.

The appearance of a total of 124,000 prophets is mentioned in Hadith by the Holy Prophet Muhammad. It may, however, be noted that the renowned 18th century theologian Shah Waliullah of Delhi writes that this number refers not only to prophets but includes Divinely-inspired saints as well, such a one being known as a *muhaddath*.⁴ As noted in ch. 9 (see page 149), Buddhist literature mentions the appearance of a large number of Buddhas before the Gautama Buddha, this number greatly varying and going up even to millions. The belief of these Buddhists of Tibet about 124,000 prophets is consistent with the hadith report mentioned above, and the occurrence of the same number in Islamic and Tibetan Buddhist tradition is evidence of both religions being revealed by God.

As to their statement that these prophets would arise *after* Buddha, this may have been miscommunicated by the interpreter who, as Mirza Haidar has mentioned at the outset of the chapter, "was at a loss both to understand and to explain" certain religious points.⁵ The name given by them of the last prophet, Jána Kasapa, is similar to that of the Buddha who preceded the Gautama. Again, it may be due to the same miscommunication that Maitreya has been confused with Kassapa.

In any case, Mirza Haidar recording this exchange does show that Muslims, many centuries ago, realized that Buddha was a prophet like the prophets that appeared in various lands according to the teachings of Islam, and that he prophesied the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

In the article in *The Light*, the Persian text of a part of the above quotation is printed in modern typed form. It runs from the words “Shaká Muni has said:” to the words “People should believe in him before all other men”. An image of it is below:

میگویند که شکامونی گفته است که بعد از من
صد و بیست و چهار هزار پیغمبر بیایند آخرین
ایشان را جان کسبه نام باشد از پدر و ما در یتیم
مازد و تمام عالم دین و فری گیرد چون و مبعوث
شد بر تمام خلافت اطاعت و فری گردد - سعادتمند
در آسمان آوردن بوسه سبقت نماید - و من امت خود
را وصیت میکنم بانکه بطناً بعد بطن این وصیت مرا
با یکدیگر کرده باشند تا زمان مبارک ظهور و
صورت این پیغمبر چنین خواهد بود صورتی داده که
همه کس صورت را نگاه دارند - بدین صورت نبی
پیدا شود - از همه خلافت بوسه آسمان آرند -

Notes:

1. *The Light*, Lahore, 1 April 1944, pages 6 and 8. Dr Nazirul Islam worked in the Department of Education in Kashmir. While doing his Ph.D. in Germany in the 1930s he briefly served in 1939 as Assistant Imam of the Berlin Mosque of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement. In the late 1970s, after retirement, he served as Imam of the Lahore Ahmadiyya branch in the UK.
2. *The Tarikh-i-Rashidi of Mirza Muhammad Haidar, Dughlát*, London, 1895. The translation was done by the orientalist and linguist Denison Ross (d. 1940) at the suggestion of the explorer and diplomat, Ney Elias (d. 1897) who then edited Ross' translation and added a commentary. In 2009 it was re-issued as an e-book by Karakoram Books of Srinagar, Kashmir, to which the editor, Mohammed Murad Butt, has added many images of miniature paintings relating to the places and scenes mentioned by the author.
3. See p. 415–416 of the 1895 edition. The words within square and round brackets in this extract are in the original book.
4. *Al-Khair al-Kathir*, the fifth *Khizānah*. See the English translation by G.N. Jalbani, published by Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1974, p. 97.
5. See p. 414 of the 1895 edition, cited in note 2 above.

Appendix 2

Prophecy in *Maitreya-vyakarana*

This is a Sanskrit text declaring the prophecy of the coming of Maitreya by Gautama Buddha. In the book *Buddhist Scriptures* by Edward Conze, an anthology of extracts from Buddhist scriptures, the last chapter is translated from the *Maitreya-vyakarana*, and it is entitled *Maitreya, The Future Buddha* (Part III, chapter 2, pages 238–242). In this Appendix we examine the Maitreya prophecy as translated in this chapter.

Sariputra, a great and very knowledgeable disciple of the Buddha, asks him:

“Some time ago you have spoken to us of the future Buddha, who will lead the world at a future period, and who will bear the name Maitreya. I would now wish to hear more about his powers and miraculous gifts.” (p. 238)

Buddha then tells them (see p. 238–9) that the land in which Maitreya will be born would have inhabitants “who will commit no crimes or evil deeds, but will take pleasure in doing good ... moral offences are unknown among them”. Herbage will be luxuriant and beautiful, the land prosperous, and the people will have great good health. At that time, one by the name of Shankha will rule the world and “he will make the Dharma prevail. He will be a great hero, raised to his station by the force of hundreds of meritorious deeds”. Then Maitreya will be born to a spiritual advisor of the king, a very learned man and a Brahmin, and his wife, a beautiful and renowned woman.

Before going further, we may ask: if such is the wonderful condition of the people and their ruler, who have the best moral conduct

and character, what would be the need for a supreme reformer and guide to arise among them? Moreover, as we have seen earlier, Buddha himself prophesied that Maitreya would come when the Dharma has declined and disappeared from the world, and according to the *Anāgata-Vaṃsa*, in answering the same question from the same person, Buddha mentioned the “five disappearances”, at the end of which people “will weep, saying, ‘From henceforth we shall be in darkness’ ” (see pages 41, 58, 59, and 158 above). This part of this Sanskrit text is clearly at complete variance with, and opposite to, the prophecy of the five disappearances.

We can only conclude that the account in this Sanskrit text is garbled and that perhaps the originally intended meaning was that this would be the state of the people and the country *after* Maitreya had done his work. The Holy Prophet Muhammad carried out the moral and spiritual reform of his followers for thirteen years at Makkah and then became their ruler at Madinah. There he continued his reform work, and in the end he became the ruler of the whole of Arabia. We suggest that the king Shankha and his people of this prophecy are the Holy Prophet and his followers in the second phase of his life, after the Holy Prophet had appeared as Maitreya.

Moving on to what this prophecy says of Maitreya, we are told that as soon as he is born he will say:

“This is my last birth. There will be no rebirth after this one. Never will I come back here, but, all pure, I shall win Nirvana!”
(p. 239)

This corresponds to the Holy Prophet being the Last of the Prophets, after whom no prophet will come. As to “never will I come back here”, when the Holy Prophet died and many Muslims refused to believe that he was dead, Abu Bakr went to see him, and finding that he had died he said:

“Allah will never combine two deaths on you. You have died the death which was ordained for you.”¹

Then the prophecy says that Maitreya's father will see signs of greatness on his son and say: "he will either be a universal monarch, or a supreme Buddha" (p. 239). The Holy Prophet became both a temporal and spiritual head, and through the spread of his followers in the world his headship became universal.

Among the qualities and attainments of Maitreya will be that "he will have a heavenly voice which reaches far" (p. 239), when he becomes a supreme sage "he will with a perfect voice preach the true dharma" (p. 240), and under his guidance "hundreds of thousands of living beings shall enter upon a religious life" (p. 240). Compare this with the Holy Prophet's mission being repeatedly described in the Quran as that of delivering the message he receives from God, so much so that if he does not do it he has not delivered the message (5:67). That message, being from God, is the "heavenly voice". It "reaches far" because the Quran calls itself several times as a "reminder for the nations" (12:104, 38:87, 68:52 and 81:27). And it is a historical fact that hundreds of thousands of people entered into a religious life under the Holy Prophet's guidance. The Quran says: "When Allah's help and victory comes, and you see people entering the religion of Allah in companies..." (110:1-2).

The prophecy goes on to say that Maitreya will address the people, and in this speech he will say about the Buddha:

"It was he who has set you on the path to deliverance, but before you could finally win it you have had to wait for my teaching."
(p. 240)

This again is what the Prophet Muhammad said to the followers of earlier prophets. They are asked to believe in what God has revealed to him "verifying that which is with you" (2:41, 4:47), "verifying that which is before it" (2:97, 6:92, 35:31, etc.), and most relevant of all:

"And when Allah made a covenant through the prophets: Certainly what I have given you of Book and Wisdom — then a Messenger comes to you verifying what is (already) with you, you shall believe in him, and you shall aid him." — 3:81

They were set “on the path to deliverance” by the earlier prophets, in whom they believed, through being granted revelation and wisdom. This would now be completed at the hands of the Prophet Muhammad, through whom religion was perfected (the Quran, 5:3).

Maitreya will continue in this address to tell the people that it is because they adhered to the teaching of the Buddha, in its various aspects, that they “have arrived here to hear my teaching”. In other words, by following the previous guidance they were blessed with turning towards the new revelation. The Quran says the same:

“And if the People of the Book had believed and kept their duty We would certainly have removed from them their evils, and made them enter gardens of bliss. And if they had observed the Torah and the Gospel and what is revealed to them from their Lord, they would certainly have eaten from above them and from beneath their feet. ... Say: O People of the Book, you follow no good till you observe the Torah and the Gospel and what is revealed to you from your Lord.” — 5:65–66, 68.

It should have been sufficient for them to observe “what is revealed to you from your Lord”, by which is meant the revelation brought by the Prophet Muhammad. So what is the purpose of adding before this that they should observe the Torah and the Gospel? It is to indicate that it is by observing these earlier revelations truly that they would be led to belief in the Prophet Muhammad’s revelation.

This prophecy then says that “the king of the gods” will salute “the leader of the world”, paying him homage as the “noblest of men, the best of all men” (p. 241). This is the same concept as the angels being spoken of in the Quran as blessing the Prophet Muhammad (33:56), and their head, Gabriel, referred to separately as follows:

“then surely Allah is his Patron, and Gabriel and the righteous believers, and the angels after that are the aiders.” — 66:4

Mara, the devil, “will be there, and he also will salute the leader of the world, and praise him” (p. 241). This may be compared with the Holy Prophet’s statement that everyone has “appointed over him

his associate from among the jinn and his associate from among the angels". On being asked, if it also applied to him, the Prophet replied: "The same is the case with me, but Allah has helped me over him [i.e., over the associate jinn], so he has submitted and does not command me anything but good."² Thus the devil had submitted to the Holy Prophet, and instead of trying to mislead him prompted him to do good.

The effect of the teaching of Maitreya is then described. The entire earth will be crowded with Arhats, that is, people who have reached spiritual perfection, or saints. It is added:

"They also will lose their doubts ... and, as a result of Maitreya's teaching, they will lead a holy life. No longer will they regard anything as their own, they will have no possessions, no gold or silver, no home, no relatives! But they will lead a holy life of chastity under Maitreya's guidance. They will have torn the net of the passions, they will manage to enter into the trances, and theirs will be an abundance of joy and happiness; for they will lead a holy life under Maitreya's guidance." (p. 241)

This description applies perfectly to the great transformation brought about by the Holy Prophet Muhammad in his Companions. They lost their doubts, acquired full certainty of faith, and as a result led holy lives free of sin or misconduct, as the Quran says of them:

"Allah has endeared the faith to you and has made it attractive in your hearts, and He has made hateful to you disbelief and transgression and disobedience." — 49:7

"These are they into whose hearts He has impressed faith, and strengthened them with a Spirit from Himself, and He will make them enter Gardens in which rivers flow, abiding in them. Allah is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him." — 58:22

"He it is Who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers that they might add faith to their faith." — 48:4

They did, of course, have possessions, homes and relatives but they did not regard them as their own because they were ever willing

to sacrifice possessions, homes and ties of relationship for the sake of the cause of truth. The Quran told them that “your fathers and your sons and your brethren and your wives and your kinsfolk and the wealth you have acquired, and trade whose dullness you fear, and dwellings you love” must not be “dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His way” (9:24). Not wealth, not children, nor any relations, such as brother, mother, father, spouse, son, can help or avail a person when he is judged for his deeds by God (see the Quran, 26:88, 80:34–36, for example).

Gold and silver, referred to in the above prophecy, are also mentioned in the Quran as things the desire for which holds man back from God:

“The love of desires is made attractive to people — of women and sons and hoarded treasures of gold and silver and well-bred horses and cattle and crop produce. This is the provision of the life of this world. And Allah — with Him is the good goal (of life). Say: Shall I tell you of what is better than these? For those who guard against evil are Gardens with their Lord, in which rivers flow, to abide in them, and pure companions and Allah’s goodly pleasure.” — 3:14–15

This is tantamount to the words of the prophecy above that Maitreya’s followers “will have torn the net of the passions” and “theirs will be an abundance of joy and happiness”.

Notes:

1. Bukhari, book 23: Funerals, ch. 3, hadith 1241–1242.
2. Sahih Muslim, book 52: Description of Judgment Day, Paradise and Hell, ch. 16. See earlier p. 88.

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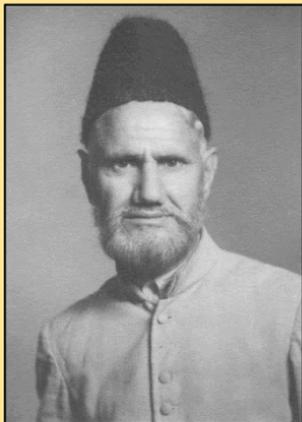
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Muhammad in World Scriptures is a research work by Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi (photo left, d. 1977) which has as its basis the ‘Covenant of the Prophets’ (*mīthāq-un-nabiyyin*) verse of the Quran. This verse states that God made a covenant with the followers of the prophets who appeared before the Prophet Muhammad, that just as God had given them His guidance through their prophet, a later Prophet would arise who would verify the truth of that guidance, and when that Prophet arises they should

believe in him and assist his cause. Muslims since the beginning of Islam have been putting forward prophecies of the Biblical prophets, including Jesus, which were fulfilled by the coming of the Prophet Muhammad. Those prophets and their prophecies are specifically recognized in the Quran. Maulana Abdul Haq Vidyarthi studied these in detail in the original scriptural languages, but also extended his work to tracing prophecies in Zoroastrian, Hindu and Buddhist scriptures.

The result was his book, first in Urdu as *Mīthāq-un-Nabiyyīn*, and later in English as *Muhammad in World Scriptures*. The present book is a revised and expanded edition of the section of *Muhammad in World Scriptures* dealing with prophecies by Gautama Buddha.

The author’s aim was to inspire love for the Prophet Muhammad in the hearts of followers of other faiths, and love for their prophets in the hearts of the Muslims.

Besides prophecies, this research also shows the great similarities, of lives, works, aims, qualities, and spiritual experiences, between earlier prophets and the Prophet Muhammad. Even those who are not inclined to accept the author’s conclusions, or those who do not believe in any scripture, will find these similarities most thought-provoking.