

Outline Study Guide of the Kitab-i-Iqan

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Part One

I. To attain to the knowledge of God one must put his trust in Him and disregard the standards of men. -14

A. The guidance of recognized leaders has led people to oppose the Prophets. 4-5

B. The Manifestations of God have always been subject to persecution. 6

1. Only a few remained with Noah. 7

2. Hud, Salih, Abraham, Moses, all invited the people to the path of God and were scorned by the greater number. 9-12

C. The testimony of Providence has always been complete; it would be inconsistent were God to single out one being to guide all creatures and withhold all proof from the message given, and then to punish people for failure to accept it. 13-14

II. The reasons for failure to recognize and accept a Prophet are many. 14-89

A. The people have tested the proofs sent by God by the standards of earthly leaders and have rejected what they could not understand. 14-15

1. The leaders of religion have been actuated by a desire for leadership or by lack of knowledge; they have been content with temporal power. 15

2. They have never comprehended the signs of the advent of the Manifestation. 17-20

3. They have sought guidance from tradition rather than from the pure source of knowledge. 17

B. The mystery of the distinction between, and at the same time the unity among, the Prophets is not understood. 21-22

C. Symbolic language is a hindrance to the people.

1. Jesus' account of the signs heralding the new Revelation was taken literally instead of figuratively. 24-42

a. Because these signs did not occur literally the followers of Jesus maintain that His Dispensation will never end and that a return of Jesus means that His law will be reaffirmed, not changed. 27

b. The "oppression" of those days refers to spiritual affliction which is the essential feature of every Revelation. 29-31

c. The "sun" "moon" and "stars" refer primarily to the Prophets, the saints and their companions. 33-36

d. These terms also apply to religious leaders, whose light fades in the

coming of a new Revelation. 36-37

e. They may also mean the laws and teachings of each Dispensation. 38-41

f. The "sign of the son of man in heaven" refers both to an actual star in the physical heavens, preceding the appearance of a Prophet, and to a human being who foretells the Revelation to come. 61-66

g. The "coming in the clouds of heaven" refers to the fact that these Divine Beings at one and the same time dwell on earth and live in the eternal world of the spirit; are born like all men and yet descend to earth at the will of God.

66-67

h. "Clouds" refer to things contrary to the desires of the people, that accordingly act as veils to their comprehension.

(1) One type of "cloud" is the annulment of laws, abrogation of previous Dispensations, repeal of rituals and customs, and the exalting of the illiterate

faithful over the learned opponents. 71-72

(2) The other type of "cloud" is the appearance of the Divine Manifestation in the likeness of ordinary men, with human needs and physical limitations.

72-75

i. "Angels" refer to those who have risen above earthly traits and become purely spiritual in devotion to God. 78-80

2. The symbolism in the Qur'an has also been misunderstood. 43, 46-48, 71, 75-78

a. The use of "sun", "east", "west", "heaven" has not been correctly interpreted. 43-44

b. The "cleaving of heaven" means the annulling of a former Dispensation. 44

c. The "changing of the earth" means the changing of men's hearts. 46-47

d. "Earth" refers to human knowledge and "heaven" to Divine Revelation. 47-48

e. "Smoke" enshrouding mankind means dissension and the destruction of standards. 76-77

D. God purposely tests the people. 49

1. By the symbolism referred to. 49

2. By changes in ordinances, such as that concerning the Qiblih. 49-52

3. By incidents in the lives of the Prophets that cannot be reconciled by the people with Their Mission.

a. Moses was a murderer. 53-55

b. The father of Jesus was unknown. 56-57

c. The ways of the manifestation are contrary to the ways of ordinary men. 57

E. Earthly knowledge obscures the understanding of men. 57

F. People interpret the Holy Books according to their own imagination and desires. 84-91

III. In this age the story of past Revelations is being repeated.

A. Whatever has caused denial in the past has now led the people again to be perverse. 13

B. The waters of everlasting life are being bestowed upon mankind from Baghdad. 22

C. Once more has the Divine Spirit caused the spiritually dead to arise. 26

D. Again the people persecute the Prophet who has appeared. 58-59

E. Again in this most exalted Cause a visible star appeared in warning in the heavens, and Ahmad and Kasim on earth to teach the people. 65

F. It behooves us to see to it that the clouds of the trials sent by God do not blind us to the message of His Prophet. 75

G. The divines who would admit that the signs preceding the Manifestation of Muhammad were not to be taken literally nevertheless declare in connection with the new Revelation that the traditions regarding the Qa'im have not been fulfilled. 83

IV. The people of the Bayan should take warning not to forget the wishes and admonitions of their Holy Book, lest they in turn inflict upon a new Manifestation what was inflicted upon the former. 92-93

Part Two

I. The Manifestations reveal an all-compelling power. 97-139

A. God is exalted beyond every human attribute and is everlastingly hidden. 98

B. He therefore sends His Manifestations, with power and authority, to teach mankind. 99-100

C. All things testify of God; man more fully, the Manifestation most completely. 101-103

D. All Prophets are equally the embodiment of all the attributes of God and only differ in the comparative intensity of their revelation. 104

E. True sovereignty belongs to the Manifestations of God. 106-135

1. This sovereignty is not of the nature that men imagine. 106

2. The Prophets have always in foretelling a new Manifestation spoken of the sovereignty which he would possess. 106

3. Sovereignty in this sense is the spiritual ascendancy of the Manifestation over all that is in heaven and earth. 107

4. This sovereignty becomes evident in the world in due time in proportion

to the spiritual receptivity of the world. 107-108

a. Muhammad suffered severe persecution in the early days of His Dispensation. 108-110, 116

b. Eventually the authority of Muhammad has been confessed by numerous peoples. 110

c. The early sovereignty of a Prophet may be established either before or after His ascension. 111

5. The Word of the Prophet acts both to separate the believer from the infidel and to unite believers. 111-112

6. He who turns to the Prophet is forgiven and enters spiritual life and he who turns away suffers spiritual death. This explains the significance of resurrection, judgment, paradise and hell 113-123

7. The sovereignty of the Creative Word of the Manifestation is immeasurably superior to that of kings. 123-124

8. The sovereignty of the Manifestation cannot refer to the outer evidence of earthly power, because this is not true even of God, in the sense that His enemies have always appeared to exercise power; nevertheless in the midst of persecution and apparent lack of earthly success, the prophets are all-powerful. 125-134

9. The followers of Muhammad have in this day made the same objections to the sovereignty of the Qa'im that the Jews and Christians uttered against Muhammad. 135

II. The greatest of blessings is to attain to the presence of the Manifestation in the Day of Resurrection. 139-147

A. Attainment to the presence of God means attainment to the presence of His Manifestation. 139-142, 170

1. Approach to the essence of God is impossible. 141

2. The Prophets mirror forth the attributes of God. 142

3. Knowledge of God is impossible except through knowledge of His Prophets. 142

B. Attainment to the presence of the Manifestation (and hence to God) is possible only in the Day of Resurrection. 143

C. This Day is so important that one virtuous deed done now equals all the acts of virtue performed for centuries. 144

D. The learned who fail to recognize the manifestation in the Day of Resurrection are truly ignorant, while the illiterate who do so are endowed with spiritual wisdom. 145-147

III. In each Dispensation occurs a return of the qualities exhibited in earlier Dispensations. 148-161

A. Muhammad accused His opponents of having murdered Abel and other Prophets of the past.

B. Muhammad spoke of Himself as identical with the Prophets people had formerly known. 150

C. The Manifestations are all sent from God and all deliver the same Cause; hence each may be regarded as the return of the previous Prophets. 152-154

D. Those who follow or oppose the Prophets are likewise repeating the former actions of the followers and opponents of earlier Manifestations. 155-160

IV. All the manifestations are at the same time the first and the last, the beginning and the seal. 161-175

A. Abraham declared, "I am all the Prophets. " Since He was the first, he was also the last. 162

B. The terms "first" and "last" are applicable both to God and His Manifestations. 163

C. It has been stated repeatedly by the Prophets themselves but has always been misunderstood by the leaders of religion. 164-169

D. The people have accepted the verses of the Holy Scriptures that agree with their opinions and interests and rejected those that are opposed; hence they have been unable to understand the verses referring to the Manifestation. 169-175

V. The Manifestations of God have each a twofold station. 152-154, 176-181

A. One is the station of essential unity. 152, 176

1. In this station each can be called by the name of all the others and each has the attributes of all. 152

2. All call the people to acknowledge the oneness of God. 152-153

3. All exemplify the same speech and the same Faith. 153-154

4. In this station the attributes of Godhead, Divinity, Supreme Singleness and Inmost Essence are applicable to the Manifestations. 177

5. They reveal the beauty of God and utter His commands. 177-178

6. They can, from this station, declare themselves to be God. 178

B. The second station is that of distinction as to individuality, mission and predestined Revelation. 176

1. In this station the Prophets show absolute servitude to God. 178-180

2. They can, from this station, declare themselves to be the Messengers of God. 181

C. Apparent contradictions in statements of the Prophets arise from the difference in Their specific mission. 177

VI. The seeker after Divine Knowledge must turn to the Prophets and to the

illuminated in heart. 182-191

A. No one should interpret the Holy Books according to his own understanding, nor reject their truth if contrary to his own inclination. 182

B. The religious authorities have always called the Prophet ignorant if His answers have not agreed with their standard and that people have followed the ignorance of the theologians instead of the wisdom of the Heavenly Messenger. 182-191

C. Only a really spiritual leader can give a spiritual interpretation. 191

VII. The requirements for one who seeks the knowledge of God are as follows. 192-195

A. He must cleanse his heart of acquired knowledge. 192

B. He must sanctify his soul from all that pertains to the earth and from all attachments. 192-193

C. He must cleanse his heart of love, lest it incline him to error, and of hate, lest it repel him from the truth. 192

D. He must beware of the fire of the tongue and remember that backbiting kills the soul. 193

E. He should be content with little and free from inordinate desires. 193

F. He should avoid worldly people and associate with the worldly-minded. 194

G. He should commune with God at dawn each day. 194

H. He should help those in distress and be kind to animals and to his fellow-man. 194

I. He should be willing to die for God and not be turned away from truth by the disapproval of men. 194

J. He should keep promises and not wish for others what he does not wish for himself. 194

K. He should avoid the company of sinners but should pray for them and not despise them. 194

VIII. The seeker thus endowed (cleansed of all impeding attachments) will be transformed. 196-199

A. He will be given knowledge and certitude. 196

B. He will have a new eye, a new ear, a new heart, a new mind; will perceive in every atom the mysteries of God unfolded. 196

C. He will perceive all the signs of God and be attracted by the appearance of God's favors, regardless of distance. 197

D. He will discriminate between truth and falsehood. 197

E. In the City of Certitude he will find spiritual wealth and eternal life and will comprehend all mysteries. 197-199

IX. By "the City of Certitude" is meant the Word of God, which is the greatest proof of the Manifestation. 199-211

A. This City is renewed about every thousand years. 199

B. In the Dispensation of "Him Whom God will make manifest" the City is His Book, which is supreme among all previous scriptures. 199-200

C. These Cities give unity, guidance, learning, understanding, faith and certitude to those who seek. 200

D. Muhammad appointed His Book as the mightiest guide until the Day of Resurrection. 200-202

1. Since God has declared that this Book, the Qur'an, is guidance to all beings, it is not fair for people to seek other standards of knowledge. 203

2. He who fails to acknowledge the truth of the Qur'an has also failed to accept the previous Scriptures. 204

3. The excellence of the Qur'an is unsurpassed and its verses convey God's wisdom. 205

4. Those who do not accept the verses of God are warned by Muhammad of punishment. 206-212

E. Understanding of the Word of God depends not on human learning but on purity of heart and soul. 210-211

F. Those in this day who are ignorant of acquired learning but understand the words of the Manifestation are blessed with real wisdom and understanding. 211

X. Every Dispensation has believed its Prophet to be the final Manifestation. 135-137, 212-221

A. The Jews believed that no messenger would follow Moses. 135-137

B. Muhammad pointed out that the people had in the past disbelieved in the Prophet until His death and would then declare that there would be no Messenger after Him. 212

C. The Christians also believed the Gospel would never be annulled. 213

D. The leaders of religion are veiled and do not see this inconsistency. 214-215

E. In this day the Revealer of the Holy Book has again been persecuted and rejected by the divines. 215-221

XI. There are, however, many proofs of the truth of the New Revelation. 221-257

A. One of the proofs of this New Revelation is the character of the

early followers. 221-229

1. Among the early believers were about four hundred men of distinction, wisdom and influence. 222-224
2. They sacrificed their lives in testifying to the truth of their belief, and their testimony should be accepted because their deeds agree with their words. 224-226
3. They have by martyrdom born witness to the verse "Wish for death, if ye are men of truth. " 227
4. Very few of them, however, have occupied posts of authority, for very rarely does material influence coincide with spiritual insight. 228-229

B. The Bab has prepared the way for a following Dispensation by warning His followers not to turn away from the succeeding Manifestation. 229

C. He has revealed His Cause with constancy and fearlessness in spite of the fact that it was contrary to the desires of the people in general. 230-231

D. He declares in His writings that He yearns for martyrdom in the path of God. 231-232

E. His detachment from the world is so complete as to be impossible save for a Prophet. 232

F. His steadfastness is a proof of His Message. 233-234

G. The ascendancy that He achieved, unaided, is another proof. 234-236

H. The repudiation and execration of the people are the mightiest proof of the truth of the Prophet. 236

1. "And when the Standard of Truth is made manifest, the people of both the East and the West curse it" because they oppose the annulment of rules and customs to which they have become habituated. 238

2. Muhammadans, Jews and Christians will not heed the verses of the Holy Books that point to a new Revelation. 239-240

3. The people do not recognize the signs of the new Revelation that have already been fulfilled.

a. Muhammadan writings refer to the fact that there will come One who will transform religion and demolish what had been previously established. 240

b. Several passages in Muslim writings refer to the coming of a Youth from Bani-Hashim (the family of Muhammad) with a new and divine Book. 241-242

c. Sadiq, the son of Muhammad, declared the Revelation of the Qa'im would excel all others, but the result of such a marvel is to arouse opposition. 244-245

d. Other traditions foretell the character of the Qa'im and the martyrdom of His followers just as this took place, a prophecy that implies the changing of religious laws, since without change there would not be opposition. 245-247, 253, 254

4. This situation will be repeated when the Lord of the Age appears at the time of Mustaghath. 248

a. It is foreseen that persecutors will again rise, along with believers. 248

b. It is known that unbelievable malice, hate and envy will appear when the new Message is revealed. 249

(1) Bahá'u'lláh states that people are leagued against Him. 249

(2) In spite of love, forbearance, humility and charity, He has suffered from enemies and even more from those that professed to be friends. 250

c. During the two years that have elapsed since Bahá'u'lláh's return from His voluntary retirement His enemies have ceaselessly tried to bring about His death. 250-252

I. The Holy Manifestations speak a twofold language. 253-257

1. The outward language has an unconcealed and evident meaning, to guide the people. 253-255

2. The inner language is veiled and concealed, a divine standard to test the servants; it is not to be taken literally and is understood only by those who have turned to God. 255

a. The people should seek enlightenment on traditions not yet literally fulfilled from those who are the recognized Expounders of these utterances. 256

b. Instead of so doing, however, mankind fails to seek the guidance of the Divine Manifestation, and the people will be forgotten by God, if they reject His signs. 256-257

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