

"Muhammad is . . . the Apostle of Allah and the Last of the Prophets . . ."
—HOLY QUR-AN, 33 : 40.
"There will be no prophet after me."
—PROPHET MUHAMMAD.

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَحْمَدُكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
وَنُصَلِّىْ وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ خَلْقِكَ الْبَرِّينَ

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

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BY THE LIGHT OF THE HOLY QUR-AN

No affliction comes about but by Allah's permission, and whoever believes in Allah, He guides aright his heart and Allah is Cognizant of all things.

And obey Allah and obey the Apostle, but if you turn back, then upon our Apostle devolves only the clear delivery (of the message).

Allah, there is no God but He ; and upon Allah, then, let the believers rely.

O you who believe, surely from among your wives and your children there is an enemy to you, therefore beware of them and if you pardon and forbear and forgive, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

Your possessions and your children are only a trial and Allah it is with whom is a great reward.

Therefore be careful of (your duty to) Allah as much as you can and hear and obey and spend ; it is better for your souls ; and whoever is saved from the greediness of his soul, these it is that are the successful.

If you set apart for Allah a goodly portion, He will double it for you and forgive you and Allah is the Multiplier (of reward), Forbearing.

The Knower of the unseen and the seen, the Mighty the Wise. —*The Holy Qur-án, LXIV : 11—18.*

MUSLIMS ARISE ! A CALL TO ACTION ! THE OBLIGATIONS OF BEING A MUSLIM

BY DR. MUHAMMAD SADIQ DUDLEY WRIGHT, PHIL. D.

The Christian world is in a sorry condition. That fact has been known for a long time to independent students of the signs of the times, but it has at last been admitted by professional Christian experts. The *Church Times*, the organ of what is known as the Anglo-Catholic party, in its current issue, draws attention to the decreasing membership of the principal denominations, as evidenced in official published statistics, but makes an exception in favour of the Roman Church, which is said to be advancing. There are, however, no means of checking this latter statement, since the numbers of communicants from year to year are not made public. With regard also to the Church of England, there are no official figures, but it would seem from the number of church buildings that have been demolished and the number scheduled for early demolition that this body must also be included in the general down-slide.

A pertinent explanation of the cause is offered by an Anglican vicar in a letter published in the same issue of the *Church Times*. He directs attention to a paragraph in the report recently issued on Evangelism, which states that this is an age without standards. No Muslim will disagree with that appraisal. He points to the absence of "clear, honest and deep thinking which is necessary for the foundation of all Christian thinking." It would certainly be a difficult task to mention a subject on which there is more confused, dishonest and slender thought than the Christian religion. Christianity has never possessed an authorized universal standard. The whole history of the Christian Church has been marred

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by doctrinal controversy and disputation, in which more attention has been paid to the personality of its prophet than to his teaching. "Who Jesus was" has always been regarded as of greater importance than the all-important question: "What did Jesus teach?" In 1896 a well-known American pastor, who has passed away within the last few days at a ripe old age, created a sensation in religious circles in all English-speaking countries by the publication of a book entitled *In His Steps or What Would Jesus Do?* That book was in great demand, passed through many editions and almost immediately it was translated into several languages. That demand has not ceased at the present day and second-hand copies, always well thumbed, do not long remain unpurchased when they find their way to the second-hand stalls and counters. A short time after its publication, however, some denominationalists in the Fundamentalist groups condemned the book on the ground that it contained no teaching on the doctrine of the Atonement. Small wonder that Stopford Brooke, a giant among Christian ministers of independent thought, as well as among literateurs, in his study of *Tennyson*, should refer to "the amusing theory that the Nicene Creed rather than the teaching of Jesus is the test of Christianity." That theory, however, is not so widely held to-day, thanks to the teaching of such men as Stopford Brooke. It is this purification of Christian teaching which has led to the outcry among some sections that Christianity is degenerating because it has become unstandardized. Strange, indeed, it is that there are still to be found men and women who still believe Creed to be of greater importance than Conduct.

The writer in the *Church Times* says that a word in a well-known sentence from Augustine's *Confessions*—*fluctuan* (v. 25) "*Dubitans de omnibus atque inter omnis fluctuan*"—is best translated by "dithering", a slang term for "constant uncertainty." This reminds me that

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on one occasion in a paper controversy I explained "Nonconformity" as "nonconforming to any known doctrine." Some Christians seem to spend their days in an endeavour to find out what they should believe, as a minimum, rather than what they should do.

In respect to certainty of faith and action Islam stands in striking contrast to Christianity. Muslims are more faithful followers of Jesus than Christians. Moreover, the Holy Qur-án, on which their belief and actions are founded has never been revised since it was first published. Its teachings have been accepted and are followed to-day by millions and they have been accepted and followed by myriads during fourteen centuries who have never questioned its authority as the guide in life and belief. The history of Islam has never been darkened by polemical discussions on doctrine. G. K. Chesterton once said that the nineteenth century had been "equally shocked by blasphemy and bored by theology."

Nor have the standards of Islam ever been varied. In fact, it has only one standard—Submission. Submission to whom? to what? To the Will of Allah. Islam is a personal religion, for just as the Muslim believes that it is not possible for another to make atonement for the sins he commits and the follies of which he is guilty, so it is impossible for him to make atonement for the sins and follies of another. But he can relieve the distresses, sufferings and ills of others and this he is enjoined to do by the Holy Qur-án, not by substitute, but by himself directly, not secondarily through any Charity Organization Society. Islam, as a personal religion, must be personally accepted, adopted and exercised. It has neither priests nor god-parents nor has it substitutionary atonement, for every Muslim, every day and at any moment can approach Allah without the offices of any mediator, human or divine. It is a rational faith, undisturbed by any scientific pronouncement and throughout its history it has remain-

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ed unaltered by any scientific discovery. It would be well occasionally for us as Muslims to meditate on the glorious heritage of which we are heirs in possession.

However favourable, however may be the comparison between Islam and Christianity, there is nothing that can exonerate Muslims from their obligations and every Muslim, whether he has been in the ranks of Islam from birth or entered as a recruit at a later period, has undertaken certain obligations, which he must fulfil, not in part but wholly. The age calls for fully-consecrated Muslims, men and women whose faith burns within them, a faith that must be demonstrated in their lives. This calls for serious consideration. We must live the Islamic life. Islam means entire submission, so that neither act nor thought is unaffected by our belief. Islam is a seven-day not a one-day religion—not conformity to be seen by the world on one day in seven but conformity on all the seven days of the week. We do not believe in the morbid practice of “examination of conscience” but it is of advantage sometimes to call a halt and look not only to the rock whence we were hewn but also to the path along which we are travelling, for by-paths are often seductive and alluring. Every Muslim is called upon to do missionary work. It is not necessary nor desirable that all should be orators. In fact, sometimes the fewer orators the better. The world gets tired sometimes of oral preaching but it never wearies of witnessing a good active life. A devout life is attractive up to the point of magnetism and many travellers have testified to the influence the devout lives of Muslims in all parts of the world has exercised upon them.

The first and foremost point for us as Muslims is to obey the daily call to arms, to don the armour of prayer. That is often a public act. But in private we are called upon to exercise Charity to which we are enjoined in the Holy Qur-án, of which alms-giving is but a part. Such charity may be exercised in word and deed also in our

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general intercourse particularly in our conversation. In the West we have cultivated and extended the art of talking, to the neglect of the science of conversation. Many men are great talkers but few are adept in the art of conversation. Let us aim to be not men of promise : there are too many about who are ready to make all sorts of promises, but let us aim to be men of fulfilment, men of action. Let our proud boast be not only that our word is our bond but that our promises find fulfilment in our actions.

POLITICS AND RELIGION

Rights and Obligations

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

Religion, as coming from God, defines the rights and obligations of individuals and groups *inter se*; and this in the interest of social peace and harmony, apart from their value as a means to spiritual illumination and the unfoldment of the self. But though it defines both, it emphasises on obligations alone as the primary factor of social existence. It does not discourage people from claiming their rights when these are denied to them, but this encouragement does not constitute the principal task of religion. The reason is obvious. The demand for rights can be effective only when the party from which they are claimed are also conscious of corresponding obligations. Thus while religion creates institutions for the maintenance of the inviolability of rights, and while it charges the society and the State to look after their sanctity, its appeal in the main is to the individual man and to his sense of obligations. Its one object appears to be to awaken the sense of others' rights than of one's own. What is called politics should, strictly

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speaking, be confined to and concerned with those provisions of religion which charge the society, or the State, as a whole, to look after the rights of people in general. It is for the State or the society to see that no individual, nor any group, is denied his rights. And it is a bad symptom of social life and a result of lack of appreciation of the true religion if the individual or the group is required or forced by circumstances to seek its own rights. Much nonsense is talked about the separation of religion from politics, as if rights and obligations have ever been defined by a representative assembly of people in any nascent society. Such a definition has always come through religion at its inception. All that can be said in favour of such a separation is that a religion, or even the general conception of religion in a particular country, having failed to provide for the rights of people, each individual, or group, had to look after, assert and fight for his own rights. This was styled from another point of view, the awakening of the political consciousness in a people. It only meant that religion had ceased to perform its principal function, to wit, of persuading or compelling the individual man or the group, to scrupulously fulfil his or its obligations to others. Left to itself, the society, seeing that it had somehow to go on, had to evolve a system that would at least work, however temporarily and imperfectly it might have been. It, indeed, provided a license to the individual to look after his own rights, and to ignore his obligations to others.

The separation of religion from politics, or the church from the State was, therefore, a declaration by the society that the religion known to it had failed the nation in its social life. The torrent of secularization followed this event as a matter of course. The society was thus turned topsy-turvy. And this is no fantastic statement. The *laissez faire* policy was the logical outcome of this attitude of the society towards the rights of others. The

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evils it entailed assumed fearful proportions and had naturally to react in what is called totalitarian conception of the State. Had obligations formed, as intended by religion, the basis of social understanding, this extremist conception of State power and function would never have come into being. If one particular religion had failed the European nations in this respect it did not necessarily mean the failure of all religions.

But the fanatical prejudice of Christians against other religions compells them to keep the corpse of their inherited cult and suffer the infection of its decomposition. They will not consider another system that may have life and health. They will declare religion as a matter of private opinion and yet call their nation a Christian nation. They announce to the world that their religion has failed in the one thing religion is expected to do, that they have to base their social life on non-religious ideas and yet they will proclaim Christianity to be the only true religion in the world. But nature will not suffer this kind of nonsense ; it will punish them with ever-increasing fury till they become sensible and reasonable. A considerable part of the Western world is now smarting under the lashes of totalitarian state-dictatorship. But it seldom tries to realize that the only other alternative is to establish a living religion in the life of the nation—a religion which has an appeal for the individual and enforces mutual obligations. The so-called awakening of political consciousness in people will achieve the opposite. We have to awaken in them religious consciousness instead—a consciousness of one's obligations to others. People should be educated to be anxious to discharge their obligations rather than to clamour for their rights. They should be taught to respect and not violate the rights of others. This alone will suppress criminality in people. It should be a part of national culture that not only one should fulfil his personal ob-

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ligations to others, but he should also be ready to stand up for other's rights, when they are either actually violated or are in danger of being violated by some one else. It is when such an atmosphere is made to prevail in a society that the kingdom of God referred to by Jesus can be deemed to have come in this world. It is then that clashes between classes and nations will cease. In the terminology of Islam it is called the establishment of Khilafat.¹

Man is to act as the vicegerent of the unseen God in making the reluctant to give even the shy, the retiring or the weak, their just rights. The first address of Caliph Abu-Bakr made this perfectly clear. He said :

The weak among you shall be strong in my eye till I have vindicated his just rights, and the strong among you shall be weak till I have made him fulfil the obligations due from him.

The Caliph, as the successor of the Prophet, was acting as the agent of the Divine Will and, seen from another point of view, he was acting as the vehicle of the popular will as enlightened and guided by the Holy Qur-án. In both ways, however, he was reflecting the attitude of the Holy Qur-án towards the question ; and the Book is, out and out, for the giving of rights :

And give to the near of kin his due and to the needy and the wayfarer².

The ever-recurring burden of the Holy Qur-án "Fear God" or "Be careful of your duty to God", is in reference to what it chooses to call "Allah's limits" and which are nothing but obligations—the rights of others on a person. It is another thing that some progressive nations do not find in their respective scriptures all such rights and obligations properly defined as are the invariable accompaniments of international civilized life. But before they despair of the lead of religion in this matter it is their duty to go through the Holy Qur-án, the last

¹. The Holy Qur-an, 24 : 55.

². The Holy Qur-an, 17 : 26 ; 30 : 38.

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revealed dispensation of God to humanity. Although the principle of standing for other's rights is implied in all religions, yet it goes to the credit of Islam that it made it the basis of a world-wide culture, so much so that its deadliest enemies adopted it as a part of their own culture. It hardly needs any pointing out now that the age of chivalry in mediæval Christianity was the result of Islamic influences on the Christian mind. Christendom must revive that attitude towards life if it wants to save itself from a social suicide. The slogan of "right" is the slogan of jungle life. The slogan of "obligations" is the slogan of ordered social life, of civilised existence. The one is a challenge to the strength of the strong and the resources of the resourceful. The other is an appeal to the noble sense of neighbourly duties. If education and propaganda can arouse in man the spirit of animal assertion, a vigorous movement in favour of the religious attitude can certainly awaken in him the nobler emotions, to which the appeal for "obligations" can be made. The history of Islam furnishes ample testimony to this fact. Of course, for a successful experiment of this nature, two things are absolutely necessary. At the back of such a movement there should be a religious code that should suffice for the complicated social life of our age.

It should be comprehensive, liberal and enlightened. And secondly there should be no priestly class to control the state by its sheer claim to supernatural sanction. The interpreters of the code should be God-fearing men of the world, conscientious but having no mystical pretensions,—who are enlightened enough to understand life in all its bearings in the light of the principles laid down by religion. In other words, there should be no separate existence of the church to give rise to the question of its relationship with the state. The state itself should enshrine the spirit and the principles of the religious way of living. To be more concrete, humanity has to remodel itself on the lines

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of the early Caliphate of Islam if it wants to continue in its civilised existence.

In any case, the reign of "rights" has to be ended and the reign of "duties" and "obligations" has to be ushered in. In other words, the nasty atmosphere of so-called politics, which prevails at the moment, has to be purified by the diffusion of the spirit of an enlightened religious faith. Therein alone lies the safety of human civilisation.

JESUS THE SON OF MARY HIS BIRTH AND DEATH

BY KHWAJA NAZIR AHMAD

(Continued from Vol. XXXIV, p. 160.)

THE NAME, DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH

The Name

According to a Biblical prophecy,¹ alleged to have been fulfilled in Jesus,² he was to be called *Immanuel* (God is with us), but he was never so called; and, according to his own utterance, at a most crucial time of his life, instead of God being with him, he had, indeed, been forsaken by Him.³ Isaiah also mentions the other name of *Immanuel* as *Maher-shalal-hash-baz*.⁴ This name also was never applied to Jesus. So far as Jesus was concerned, therefore, this prophecy remained unfulfilled, and, as I will show later, did not, and could not, apply to him.

As foretold to both Joseph and Mary, in separate apparitions,⁵ the name should have been, and was in fact, *Joshua* (Aramaic : *Jesua* ; Arabic : *Īsá*) which in Greek is *Jesus*. Among the Jews of Palestine the name *Joshua* was exceedingly common. It was as if one were to be called a *Karl* among Germans, a *Louis* among Frenchmen,

¹ Isa., VII : 14.

² Matt., I : 23.

³ Matt., XXVII : 46.

⁴ Isa., VIII : 3.

⁵ Matt., I : 20-25 ; Luke, I : 28-31.

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a *Nicholas* among Russians and a *Smith* or a *George* among Englishmen. Jesus is also referred to in the Gospels as *Christ*, the Anointed; *Messiah*, the Wanderer; and *Nazarene*, the Warner. *Joshua* or *Jesua*, *Isa* or *Jesus* was his name, *Christ* his designation, *Messiah* his descriptive rank and *Nazarene* his significant title as a Prophet of God.

It has always been taken for granted that Jesus was called the *Nazarene* because he belonged to Nazareth. The declaration of the evangelists¹ on this point is so definite that even the present-day commentators and historians have accepted it almost universally. But, like so many other Christian beliefs, it has no foundation at all.

The word *Nazarene* appears in the Gospels in three different forms: *Nazarenos*, *Nazoraios* and *Nazorenos*; which the evangelists have taken to be interchangeable. But none of these forms is capable of being derived from *Nazareth*: the *t* or *th* (Aramaic *tsade*), which is represented by the Greek letter *sigma*, in *Nazareth* makes it impossible to connect these three forms with *Nazareth*. On the other hand the Greek letter *zeta* in these three words points to the contrary.

The theory that the word *Nazarene* was merely to indicate that Jesus belonged to a sect of that name is equally devoid of force; for no one has so far been able to prove that this sect existed at the time of Jesus. The reference to the word *Nazarite* or *Netser*,² a branch, signifying the Davidic descent, an offshoot of the stem of Jesse, has equally no application. Here, again, in both cases the presence of the letter *t* (*tsade* of Aramaic) and the absence of *zeta* will stand in the way. We will have, therefore, to look for another solution. In the word *Nazir* in Arabic (same in Hebrew, and Aramaic was only a dialect) we find the *zeta* of Greek, the *zain* of Hebrew or the *zal* of Arabic. *Nazir* means *holy*, *chosen*, *guard*

¹ Matt., 11 : 23 etc.

² Jer., XXIII : 5.

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or *warner*. Thus *Nazir* would be a fitting *title* for Jesus who was *holy* in character, a *chosen* man, a Prophet of God, a *guard* over the lost tribes of Israel and a *Warner* from God to them. The Greek equivalent of *Nazir* is *Hagios : the Holy one of God*.

Now, let us see if this word has been applied, in this sense, in the Gospels, to Jesus. In Mark we have an account of one of the first miracles of Jesus, the healing of a demoniac who, on seeing Jesus, exclaimed :

What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth ? Art thou come to destroy us ? I know thee who thou art, the *Holy one of God*.¹

In John we find Peter addressing Jesus thus :

And we have believed and know that thou art the *holy one of God*.²

In Luke the angel, which appeared to Mary, informed her :

That the thing which shall be born of thee shall be called *holy*.³

I will quote but one more passage from the Acts :

Ye men of Israel, hear these words ; Jesus the Nazarene a *man chosen of God* among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourself also know.⁴

I have given the translation of the *Codex Syriac Sinaiticus*.

Similar passages⁵ can be cited to show that the early Christians knew and applied the word *Holy one* to express the title of Jesus, and, at the same time, to impress upon the minds of others the idea of his character as the Messiah.

I have here only very briefly set out the grounds for holding that *Nazir* was the special descriptive title of

¹ Mark., 1 : 24 ; cf. Luke, IV : 34.

² John., VI : 69 ; also see next note.

³ Luke., 1 : 35. Both in Luke, 1 : 35, and John, VI : 69 the words used in the Authorised Version are : "the Son of God" and "Christ, the Son of the living God". But both these are subsequent forgeries. The texts given by me are according to the ancient MSS. See marginal notes on pages 1125 and 1177 of the *Revised Version*.

⁴ Acts., 11 : 22.

⁵ Acts. II : 27 ; Rev. III : 7.

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Jesus. The compilers of the *Encyclopædia Biblica* say :

Therefore, *Nazarene* must have taken the place of some title of the Messiah. The right reading must be *Nazir*, the Holy One, which is the title of the Messiah.¹

It is interesting to note that Professor Salvatorelli also came to the same conclusion, though on somewhat different grounds. In his wonderful work : *Il Significato di Nazareno* , he opined that the Promised Messiah must also bear this descriptive title of *Nazir*.

The Date of Birth

As one would expect, we find also a good deal of confusion regarding the date and place of birth of Jesus. The dates for the chronology of the life of Jesus group themselves round three points, the nativity, the baptism and the crucifixion. If any one of them could be settled conclusively the rest could be deduced. But, unfortunately, there is for none of them any demonstrative proof and no one can fix, with any certainty, the dates of any of these events.

Both Matthew and Luke place the birth during the reign of Herod, the King of the Jews. He reigned from 707 to 740 of the era of Verro, *i.e.* from 37 B.C.E. to 4 B.C.E. Herod, according to Matthew, sometime, not more than two years, after the birth of Jesus, ordered the murder of the Infants, and, consequently, Joseph fled to, and remained in, Egypt for the rest of the King's lifetime.² Thus, according to Matthew, Herod's death is the *terminus ad quem* for the birth of Jesus. The birth of Jesus must have, therefore, taken place two or, if the period of Joseph's stay in Egypt and his journeys is taken into consideration, three or four years before 4 B.C.E., the year of Herod's death ; and it must, therefore, be placed between 8 to 6 B.C.E.

The appearance of the Star of the Magi causes further confusion. Voigt has proved that this star was really

¹ *Ency. Biblica*, Col. 3360.

² Matt., II : 1, 13, 16, 19, 22.

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Haley's comet, which appeared in 12 C.E.¹ The compilers of the *Encyclopædia Bibilica* dismiss this incident by remarking :

The star shines only in the legend and derives its origin from Numbers XXIV : 17 and the apocryphal imagery (Rev. XII : 1).²

Luke dates the birth of Jesus by a general census ordered by Augustus and carried out in Syria by the legate Quirinius,³ but he also places, in the reign of Herod, an event which preceded it by six months, the birth of John, the Baptist.⁴ The only census carried out by Quirinius, as Governor of Syria, was in the reign of Augustus and could only have taken place after the deposition of Archelous in 6 C.E. This date (6-7 C.E.) is in point of fact also mentioned by Josephus.⁵ In any case, this census would not have affected the Galileans, who were subjects of Antipas. Luke, therefore, is not only in contradiction with Matthew but also with himself.

Dionysius Exiguus, the sixth century Scythian Monk, was the author of the Christian Era, which is sometimes called, after his name, the *Dionysius Era*. He has, however, never been relied upon as a sound mathematician, for he miscalculated the birth of Jesus and thus started the year of the Lord, in 754 A.U.G. i.e. 1 C.E.

The question is further complicated when we test the date of birth with the date of Baptism. Luke says :

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa and Herod being tetrach of Galilee, ...Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness.⁶

Tiberius ruled from 14 to 37 C.E. and, therefore, the event narrated by Luke must have taken place in 29 C.E. According to Matthew and Luke, the ministry of Jesus lasted for one year, i.e. up to 30 C.E. This

¹ Voigt., *Die Gesch Jesu und die Astrologie*, 611.

² *Ency., Biblica*, Col. 808.

³ Luke., II : 1-2. The Authorised Version gives the name as *Cyrenius*.

⁴ Luke. I : 5, 4, 26, 57.

⁵ Josephus, *Antiq.*, XIII, 13 : 2, 5,

⁶ Luke., III : 1-2.

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gives the clue why the Dionysius Era fixed 1 C.E. as the year of birth of Jesus, for its author merely deducted thirty years, the age of Jesus given by Luke,¹ when his ministry started. But Luke mentions another event : the murder of John the Baptist. This happened during the ministry of Jesus.² The execution of John is also related by Josephus. He connected it with the defeat of Antipas by Aretas, who waged war because Antipas had divorced Aretas' daughter in order that he may marry Herodius. This took place about 36 C.E.³ If we make allowance for the preparation of war, we can safely say that John was murdered in about 34 C.E. If this be correct the ministry of Jesus must have started later than 30 C.E. Again, Luke mentions that these events took place when Annas and Caiaphas were high priests. Annas was appointed high priest in 7 C.E. by Quirinius and deposed in 15 C.E. by Valerius Gratus.⁴ Caiaphas on the other hand was appointed by Gratus in 18 C.E. and was removed by Vitellius, the successor of Pilate. in 37 C.E.⁵

Luke is not, therefore, a safe guide to follow, and any attempt to reconcile his statements with chronology is futile, and in fact would be to do this evangelist too much honour. "He wished," says Schmidt, "to place Mary at Bethlehem and, therefore, time and circumstances had to suit his pleasure."⁶

It is equally futile to work out this date from the date of crucifixion. The Synoptics put the crucifixion on Friday, the 15th of Nisan.⁷ John places it on the 14th of Nisan.⁸ We have, therefore, to find the year in which 14th Nisan fell on a Friday, because the Jewish Passovers

¹ Luke., III : 23.

² Josephus, *Antiq.* XIII, 5 : 1.

³ *Ibid.*, XVIII, II : 2-3.

⁴ Schmidt, *Bibli fur Kritik und Exegese*, III : 1, S. 124.

⁵ Matt., XXVII : 62 ; Mark, XIV : 42, Luke, XXIII : 54.

⁶ John., XIX : 31.

⁷ Luke., IX : 9-11.

⁸ *Ibid.*, XVIII, II : 1-2.

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always fell on the 14th of the first Jewish month and the Feast of the unleavened bread on the 15th of that month.¹ After making allowance for the intercalary month, we come to the Sabbatical year of 35 36 C. E. which may account for the three or four years of the ministry of Jesus as indicated by John in his reference to the three Passovers attended by Jesus.² The reference of Jesus to the fig tree for three years also supports John's version.³

The Synoptic Gospels speak of one visit of Jesus to Jerusalem, and confine the ministry to one year. If John's version be rejected, it becomes inexplicable how Jesus, in the short span of the feast days in one year, could have brought himself into such decided hostility to the ruling party in Jerusalem that they contrived his arrest and death. John certainly is more convincing when he says that it was gradually aggravated during his frequent visits. Besides, the Synoptics record an expression of Jesus which tells against their view. The words: "Jerusalem! Jerusalem! *how often* have I gathered thy children together"⁴ would be meaningless if he had seen Jerusalem once only during his ministry. Further, Jesus had no right to curse Jerusalem and its inhabitants if he had preached his Gospel to them but for a few days. All these presuppose many previous visits.

The date of crucifixion would therefore fall in about 35 C.E.

We can check our data by the fact that Pontius Pilate held office until 36 C. E. He was recalled, it is said, because of the crucifixion of Jesus. It would be natural that it should have occurred soon after the crucifixion. One or two years is not a long time to elapse, especially when it is said that Pilate had, in the first instance, to send his explanation to Cæsar. Pilate's

¹ Lev., XXIII : 5-6.

³ Luke., XIII : 7

² John, II, 13; VI : 39; XI : 55.

⁴ Matt., XXIV : 37; Luke., XIV : 34.

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successor Vitellius also removed Caiaphas, the high priest, in 37 B.C.E., because of the same event. Thus if the Matthean tradition regarding the date of the birth of Jesus is correct (as already indicated, *i.e.*, 8 to 6 B.C.E.) Jesus must have been 41 to 43 years old at the time of his crucifixion and must have started his prophetic career at about or over the age of forty. Irenaeus, who lived in the second century and was a Bishop of Lyons, noted that the Presbyters in Asia Minor had ascribed to Jesus an age of forty to fifty years. He also recorded a tradition, testified to by the elders, and which was said to be directly derived from "the beloved disciple of the Lord," to the effect that Jesus was not crucified at thirty years of age, but that he passed through every age, and lived on to be an oldish man.¹ John records an incident which confirms this conclusion :

Then said the Jews unto him. Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham ?²

Taking for granted that the Jews were talking in round figures, Jesus must have been over forty years age. Had he died in 29 C.E. he would have been between 30 and 40 years of age, and the Jews would have then said *forty* and not *fifty* years.

The birth of Jesus, therefore, took place in about 8 B.C.E., he started his ministry in about 32 C.E. and was put on the Cross in about 35 C.E.

The question regarding the date and month of the birth of Jesus is impossible to answer.¹

¹ Hær, II : 2 : 5, 1.

² John, VIII : 57.

³ There is every justification for believing that the evangelists or the subsequent redactors freely copied or reproduced events from the Mythos and presented them as *historical* in the Canonical Gospels. For the more hidden and uncertain is the meaning or significance of the Gospel history, the more satisfactorily and easily it is explained by the Mythos : the more mystical is the Christian dogma, the more clearly can it be proved to be mythical. It may, by way of illustration, be pointed out that the birth of *Christ* is really astronomical : and that this birthday can be determined by the full moon of the Easter. This event, as illustrated by the Epact or the Golden Number of the Prayer Book, can only occur once in every nineteen

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Before I close this discussion, I must point out why the thirtieth year was fixed by Luke as the year of the commencement of Jesus' ministry. Dean Milman gives the excuse :

years. Thus Jesus, or rather *Christ*, can, in accordance with the Metonic Cycle, have only a birthday, or resurrection, once in nineteen years.

Casini, the renowned French Astronomer, has demonstrated that the date assigned to Jesus is an Astronomical epoch in which the middle conjunction of the moon with the sun happened on March 24, at half-past one o'clock in the morning, at the meridian of Jerusalem, the very day of the middle Equinox. The following day (the 25th) was the day of Incarnation according to Augustine, but the date of birth according to Clement. Thus two birthdays are assigned to Jesus by the Christian father. One at the Winter Solstice, and the other at the Vernal Equinox. These, which cannot both be historical, can only be explained by the two birthdays ascribed to the double Horus in Egypt. Plutarch has recorded that Isis was delivered of Horus, the child, about the time of the Winter Solstice, and that the festival of the second or adult Horus followed the vernal Equinox.

Likewise is the difference in the date of the crucifixion. John asserts that it was on the 14th of the Nisan, while the Synoptics allege it to have occurred on the 15th Nisan. This difference can also be explained on the same basis. In lunar calculation it would be the 14th in a month of twenty-eight days, but in a solar month of thirty days, it must fall on the 15th of the month. If we unite the two on astronomical, and consequently on mythical, basis the difference disappears and is easy to understand.

Jesus' birth in the manger and the reference to the Caves remind one of the cave of Jupiter and the other mythical gods. Mithras is said to have been born in a cave. But the *Cave of Mithras* was the birth place of the Sun in the Winter Solstice, when this occurred on December 25, in the sign of the Ram. The Akkadian name the month, which roughly answers to December, as *Abbauddu* that is the CAVE OF LIGHT, Justin Martyr says : " Christ was born in the stable, and afterwards took refuge in the cave ", and he goes on to vouch for the fact that Christ was born on the same day that the Sun was reborn in *Stable Angiæ*, the stable of Angias. And we find that the stable and the cave both figure in the same Celestial sign of the Lion. Again, the birthday of Horus was figured in *Apta* ; but *Apta* is also the name of the *Crib* and the *Manger*. The same incident is repeated with Christ. This is also pointed out by the Star in the East : and we are told that *Orion*, the Star of the Three Kings, also called the Star of Horus, rose in the East and guided people to the newly born Sun-god. This birth then passed into the sign of the Fishes. The Talmud also said that the coming Messiah will be called *Dag*, the Fish, and connected his coming with a sign of the Fishes. The evangelists or the redactors made Jesus perform the miracle of Fishes to meet this demand. This discussion, though interesting in itself, is beyond the scope of this article, and I must leave it here. Those who wish to study the subject in greater details would do well to read *The Sources of Christianity* by the late Al-Haj Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din.

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The law prescribed the period of thirty years for assuming of the most important functions, and it was, therefore, not till he had arrived at this age, that Jesus again emerged from his obscurity.¹

In the Old Testament we find the age given is between 30 to 50 years ; ² and of course, Luke could not make Jesus wait much longer, and he fixed the minimum years for the commencement of the ministry of Jesus.

The Place of Birth

In the Gospels we have two contradictory versions regarding the birth-place of Jesus. Matthew and Luke, on different data, give Bathlehem-Judah as the place of his birth. Since Jesus was the Messiah, and tradition made it incumbent on the Messiah, a son of David, to have been born at Bethlehem-Judah,³ Matthew contented himself with an assertion that Joseph, the father of Jesus, belonged to Bethlehem Judah. Now, if Joseph really belonged to Bethlehem-Judah, why should he have tried to seek shelter in an inn, in that very town, in preference to his own house ? The truth is that Matthew was out to fulfil as many old prophecies in the person of Jesus as he could. The birth had to be in a cave,⁴ Jesus had to be worshipped by the *angels* and the *asses* ; ⁵ the visit of the shepherds from the field,⁶ the vision for flight to Egypt, ⁷ in consequence of the Murder of the Infants⁸—all these and many other prophecies had to be fulfilled ; and Matthew in his narrative had them fulfilled in Jesus. I will refrain from multiplying instances, as I have already touched upon the subject, and mentioned the birth in the manger. But whether it was for these or other considerations Matthew found no difficulty in asserting that Joseph belonged to Bethlehem-Judah.

¹ Milman *Life of Christ*, 135.

² Micah., V : 1-2 ; cf. Matt., 1 : 21.

³ Isa, I : 3.

⁴ Hos., XI : 1.

⁵ Nub : IV : 3, 47.

⁶ Isa, XXVIII : 16.

⁷ Exod., XIII : 1.

⁸ Jer., XXXI : 15.

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Luke attributed the journey of the family to Bethlehem-Judah because of the census of Quirinius, which, as I have already mentioned, did not take place in the time of Herod. Both Matthew and Luke agree that the nativity took place during the reign of Herod, and this must be accepted. The reasons of Luke, therefore, for the journey of Joseph to, and the consequential birth at, Bethlehem-Judah also disappear.

The Christian apologists object that, if Joseph did not belong to Bethlehem-Judah, why did not Matthew, like Luke, create an excuse for the presence of the family at the crucial time in that town? The answer is a very simple one. Matthew knew what he wanted to establish and was better informed. To explain the real position, I must mention first that in Galilee there was a very small village called Bethlehem. It is mentioned in the Talmudic literature as Bethlehem *en* Nosiriyyah, which according to the Old Testament fell to the lot of Zebulun.¹ This village was situated, in the valley of Esdraelon, at about seven miles north-west of Nazareth. While most of the evangelists correctly stated that Jesus was born at Nazareth, Matthew, for reasons already mentioned, took advantage of the fact that Joseph belonged to this Bethlehem, and dishonestly stated in his narrative that Jesus was born at Bethlehem, knowing that the mere mention of this name would be construed as if Jesus was born in Bethlehem-Judah. While discussing the question the compilers of the *Encyclopædia Biblica* say :

Bethlehem without any explanatory addition, was supposed to be the Southern Bethlehem, and the well known narratives, so poetic, so full of spiritual suggestion (and may I add : so full of lies) in Matthew (Chapter II) and in Luke (II : 1-20), which are not supported by any other Gospels, have arisen in consequence.²

I will now show from the evangelic and other records that Jesus was born in a small town in Galilee called Nazareth. In the *Evangelium de Nativitate de Mariæ*

¹Jos., XIX : 15. ² *Ency. Biblica*, Col. 3362. The words in brackets are mine.

we are told that Joachim and Hanna (*or* Anna) the parents of Mary, lived in a small town called *Maiden en Nasara*,¹ or, as it has come down in Western history, Nazareth.²

This little town was cut off from the rest of the world, being far removed from the great "highways of the Seas" and the caravan routes. It was a peaceful Galilean town, half-way up the hills, cultivating its own fields, and orchards, busying itself in all manners of handicraft. It was, as it were, sunk into its own self-seeing visions, dreaming its dreams. This was a fitting place for the birth-place of a moralist and reformer, for his visions and dreams. It was to this town, her parents' old residence, that Mary returned, from the village Bethlehem, to give birth to her first born.

Nowhere in the New Testament, apart from Matthew and Luke, whose assertions have already been shown to be false is the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem-Judah mentioned, nowhere does Jesus subsequently appear within his alleged birth-place; nowhere does he pay any visit, except on his last journey to Jerusalem; nowhere does he appeal to this fact as a concomitant proof of his Messiahship although he had direct inducement to do so: for many were repelled from him by his Galilean origin and defended their prejudices by referring to the necessity that the Messiah should come out of Bethlehem-Judah, the city of David.³ Insults were flung to his face; his mission was being denied: the disputants were challenging:—

Can there any good come out of Nazareth?⁴

And again,

Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.⁵

¹ It was from this name that the epithet *Nasrani* originated; which has been and is till to-day applied to the Christians by Jews and Arabs alike. Nazareth is called by the Arabs, to this day as *Nasara*.

² The present-day Nazareth does not stand on the site of this ancient town. It was destroyed and rebuilt at a place below the old town.

³ John, VII: 42.

⁴ John, I: 46.

⁵ John, VII: 52.

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But he never asserted his being a Bethlehemite, and only complained:

A prophet is not without honour save in his own country and his own house.¹

John records an incident which throws a flood of light on the subject. When certain people heard Jesus preach, they said:

Of a truth this is the prophet. This is the Christ, but some said, shall Christ come out of *Bethlehem the village*? Hath not scriptures said that Christ cometh out of the seed of David, and out of the town of *Bethlehem* where David was. So there arose a division among the multitude regarding him.²

I have quoted from the Syriac manuscript to show that it was acknowledged by all that Jesus had come out of Bethlehem in Galilee. It may be explained that amongst Jews the residence town of a father was always attributed to be also that of the son. The denial of his mission was pointedly based on this fact, so much so that it caused a division among those present at the time. John must have accepted the fact that Jesus was born in Galilee and not at Bethlehem-Judah, for he also, like Jesus, did not try to contradict those who asserted otherwise.

Mark directly gives us to understand that Jesus was born in Galilee. It is true that he does not name the town, but since Jesus was wandering at the time when he is said to have preached in "his own country",³ it is clear that Mark styled Galilee as "his own country". Luke from the very beginning gives Nazareth as the abode of Mary.⁴ It was to this place, when circumstance permitted, that the parents of Jesus returned as *their own city*.⁵ Thus according to Luke, Nazareth is evidently the native place of Jesus.

¹ Matt., XIII : 57 ; Mark, VI : 4.

² John, VII : 40-43. See margin of Revised Version p. 1179. The Authorised Version uses the phrase *Shall Christ come out of Galilee*?

³ Mark, VI : 1. The proper translation is "*his native place*."

⁴ Luke, I : 26.

⁵ Luke, II : 39.

Matthew says Jesus was born at Bethlehem-Judah; no doubt, as already stated, to fulfil a prophecy. But he is in conflict with himself for he speaks of the prophetic advent of Jesus in Galilee,¹ basing his claim on the well-known passage in Isaiah.² Besides, if Joseph belonged to Bethlehem-Judah, as Matthew would have us believe, he has no right to call Nazareth, as he does, as the home of Joseph³ like his predecessor was able to do.⁴

Now and again, Jesus is spoken of in the Gospels as Jesus of Galilee,⁵ Jesus of Nazareth,⁶ and sometimes as Jesus, Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee,⁷ but never as Jesus of Bethlehem-Judah or as the Bethlehemite. There are various passages which speak of Galilee as Jesus' "own country".⁸

It is from Nazareth that he set out to meet John the Baptist.⁹ Nazareth is the place from which he goes out to preach¹⁰ and returns to it time and again.¹¹ In short, as Luke says, Nazareth was *his own city*, the city in which he was born and brought up.¹²

Before concluding this chapter, I will quote a passage from the *Encyclopædia Biblica* wherein its compilers are compelled to admit that :

The discrepancies of the evangelists compel us to make some hypothesis : Jesus was born in Nazareth and not in Bethlehem-Judah, and the transmitters made a mistake—some said Bethlehem and some said Nazareth.¹³

It is, therefore, evident that the evangelical statements that Jesus was born in Bethlehem-Judah is destitute of all valid existence ; nay it is contravened by positive facts as stated in the Gospels themselves.

(To be Continued.)

¹ Matt., II : 23 ; IV : 14-15.

² It would be an interesting pastime to trace all the strained coincidences in the life of Jesus, with the prophecies of the Old Testament ; cut which by themselves, because of this peculiarity, do not inspire the least confidence in the incidents which they are supposed to corroborate.

³ Matt., XIII : 54, 57.

⁴ Mark, VI : 1.

⁵ Matt., XXVI : 69.

⁶ Matt., XXVI : 71 ; Luke, IV : 34 ; Acts, IV : 40 ; X : 39 ; XXII : 3.

⁷ Matt., XXI : 11.

⁸ Matt., XIII : 54, 57 ; Mark, VI : 1, 4 ; Luke, II : 39, III : 39.

⁹ Matt., IV : 13 ; Luke, II : 40.

¹⁰ Matt., III : 13 ; Mark, I : 9.

¹¹ Matt., IX : 1 ; Luke, II : 51.

¹² Luke, IV : 16.

¹³ *Ency. Biblica*, Col. 3361.

THE IDEA OF GOD IN THE HOLY QUR-AN

BY S. MAQBOOL AHMAD, B.A.

"It were better," says Bacon, "to have no opinion of God at all than such an opinion as is unworthy of Him. For the one is unbelief, the other is contumely. Superstition is the reproach of Deity." Bacon must have read his Old Testament, and one wonders what he thought of God as depicted in the Old Testament—a savage, blood-thirsty, man-God, jealous, vindictive, sly, cruel, soothed with the burning smell of blood and flesh of sacrificial animal, ordaining laws and rituals that have no sense or moral objectives, punishing the transgressors with horrible deaths, and feeling no compunction or mercy for defenceless men, women and children of the enemies of his proteges—the Jews. It is related that when Goths were converted to Christianity, and the Bible was translated in their language, the wise bishops sedulously avoided the books of Old Testament that smelled strongly with blood, so that the Goths might not get more incentive and inspiration for their already cruel and intractable nature. It is an undeniable fact of history that millions of men, women and even children who received their cruel baptism of fire by being roasted alive at the stake would have been spared if the Old Testament had not been known in Europe. Even the suffering of the Jews would have been mitigated, who could well apply the old Persian adage for themselves: "What is from us is on us." The Old Testament guided and influenced the Christian thought and if it was not the Old Testament, one must explain the enormous loss of life at the hands of Christians in the Crusades, French and Russian revolutions, periodical pogroms on the Jews, and last but not the least, the crimes, of the Nazis in our own time.

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It is true that the man-God conception of the Old Testament gave place to the spirit God of the New Testament—the Trinity of the Holy Ghost, the son and the Father dethroned Jehovah, but the bloody idea of appeasement and sacrifice remained, and the confusion which the nature of spirit God created in the mind of their votaries yielded the only result of swords wielded on each other's neck as soon as it came in their grasp.

But the Qur-ánic conception of God is different. With its help one can distinguish between superstition and belief, between inspiration and fabrication.

There is, however, one problem, common between ourselves and Christians—if not the Jews, for these latter do not believe in any future life—*viz.* the doctrine of heaven and hell or the retribution of sin that needs a passing remark. With both of us there is a day of Judgment when men shall be judged according to their deeds and receive punishment or rewards. It has been remarked that this doctrine is self-contradictory, seeing that God as the Creator must be creating evil tendencies and thoughts in us, and yet He is to punish us for what He has Himself created. I do not know if any satisfactory answer is given to this question by the Christians or by any other religious school of thought, but the question is, after the simple and natural belief in the existence of a Creator, has anybody answered the question : who created God ? Both these questions are of the same nature and are not governed empirically ; intuitionally we must shut this up without answer ; our very nature makes the problem acceptable to us and the question which empiricism creates does not worry us. There are so many questions which Science creates but never answers. In describing the nature of God, the Holy Qur-án has also taken notice of human nature in this regard, and this I will discuss at the proper place. Here I should content myself with an example

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which might help us in understanding the doctrine of retribution as given in the Holy Qur-án. A man commits adultery. He does it under sexual urge which God has created in him, but God has forbidden him to do this, and as a punishment of his transgression he sometimes suffers from horrible venereal diseases. Now God has surely punished him for his transgression, but you can also say that God Himself put the urge in him. How many persons suffering from such a disease have blamed God for that? None I suppose. Even the athiest will admit that it was his doing and he should only thank himself for it, and remember that this sin is met even unto his successive generations.* So God has given you instincts which are neither evil nor good, It is you who by misusing it create good or evil for yourself, and suffer consequently by your own deeds. This is the explanation of heaven and hell in the Holy Qur-án.

Now I take up the verses of the Holy Qur-án which depict God and His nature. God in the Holy Qur-án is neither man God nor spirit God, both are liable to bring our conception into culdesac. Incarnation has been conceived in Hinduism and Christianity because God was supposed to be a spirit capable of making his home in the human frame, and converting that frame into divinity. The man God is liable to multiplicity, so the Qur-án describes God as *Noor*—Light, pervading the universe.

God is the light of the heavens and the earth ; His light is as a niche in which is a lamp, and the lamp is in a glass, the glass is as though it were a glittering star ; it is lit from a blessed tree, an olive neither of the east nor of the west, the oil of which would well-nigh give light though no fire touched it,—light upon light !—God guides to His light whom He pleases ; and God strikes out parables for men, and God all things doth know. ¹

No better simile can be advanced for describing an

¹ The Holy Qur-án, XXIV : 35.

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Infinity then with a universal light. Spinoza's Pantheism must have been influenced by this verse of the Qur-án. The clear glittering light of olive lamp could be in our time substituted with electrical light in the bulb which gives light though no fire touched it, and just as we have found in the electrical energy a thousand and one miracles, similarly the mind and energy of the Divine light controls the whole universe in a mysterious way. There will not be much difficulty in assigning this light the power of will, and knowledge, or the hundred and one attributes which the Qur-án has given to this Universal Light so beautifully painted by Edwin Arnold in his admirable poem the Ninety Nine Beautiful Names of Allah, a gist of which is given in the following verses.

God, there is no god but He, the Living, the Self-Subsistent. Slumber takes Him not, nor sleep. His is what is in the heavens and what is in the earth. Who is it that intercedes with Him save by His permission? He knows what is before them and what behind them, and they comprehend not aught of His knowledge but of what He pleases. His throne extends over the heavens and the earth, and it tires Him not to guard them both, for He is High and Grand.¹

The Qur-ánic doctrine of God is again summed up in the following beautiful chapter which is found at the end of the Book.

Say, He is God alone! God the Eternal! He begets not and is not begotten! Nor is there like unto Him anyone.²

The Jewish and Christian ideas of God are denied and contradicted in the following verse.

God did not rest on the seventh day of Sabbath.

Verily your Lord is God Who created the heavens and the earth in six days; then He made for the throne. He covers night with the day—it pursues it incessantly—and the sun and moon and the stars are subject to His bidding,—blessed be God the Lord of the worlds.³

Say, what! do ye really believe in Him who created the earth in two days, and do ye make peers for Him?—that is the

¹ The Holy Qur-án, II : 256.

² *Ibid.*, VII : 51

³ *Ibid.*, CXII : 1.

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Lord of the worlds! And He placed therein firm mountains above it and blessed it, and apportioned therein its foods in four days alike for those who ask. Then He made for the Heaven and it was but smoke and He said to it and to the earth: Come ye too, whether ye will or not. They said, 'We come willingly!' And He decreed them seven heavens in two days, and inspired every heaven with its bidding; and We adorned the lower heaven with lamps and guardian angel; that is the decree of the Mighty, the Knowing One.¹

We did create the heavens and the earth and what is between the two in six days, and no weariness touched us.²

The sacrifice of animal does not appease God.

Their meat will never reach God, nor yet their blood, but the piety from you will reach Him.³

Jews are not chosen men of God.

They say: None shall enter: paradise save such as be Jews or Christians, that is their faith. Say thou, Bring ye proofs, if ye be speaking truth. Aye, he who resigns himself to God, and who is kind, he shall have his reward from his Lord, and no fear shall be on them, and they shall not grieve.

Verily, whether it be of those who believe, or those who are Jews or Christians or Sabeans, whosoever believe in God and they act aright, they have their reward at their Lord's hand, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.⁵

But the Jews and the Christians say: We are the sons of God and His beloved. Say: Why then does He punish you for your sins? Nay, ye are mortals of those whom He has created! He pardons whom He pleases, and punishes whom He pleases; for God's is the kingdom of heavens and the earth, and what is between the two, and unto Him the journey is.⁶

The Jewish Chauvinism denounced.

And of the people of the Book, there are some of them who, if thou entrust them with a talent, give it back to you; and some of them, if you entrust them with a Dinar, he will not give it back to thee except so long as thou dost stand over him. That is because they say: We owe no duty to Gentiles; but they tell a lie against God, the while they know.⁷

¹ The Holy Qur-an, XLI : 8.

² *Ibid*, XXII : 37.

³ *Ibid*, II : 59.

⁴ *Ibid*, III : 69.

⁵ *Ibid*, L : 38.

⁶ *Ibid*, I : 105.

⁷ *Ibid*, V : 21.

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The trinity of Christians condemned.

O ye people of the Book ! do not exceed in your religion, nor say against God aught save the truth. The Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, is but the apostle of God and His word, which he cast into Mary and a spirit from Him ; believe then in God and His apostles, and say not 'Three'. Have done ! it were better for you. God is only one God, celebrated be His praise that He should beget a Son ! His is what is in the heavens and what is in the earth ; and God is sufficient for a guardian. The Messiah doth surely not disdain to be a servant of God, nor do the angels who are nigh to Him ; and whosoever disdains His service and is too proud, He will gather them all together to Himself. But as for those who believe and do what is right, He will pay their reward and will give increase to them of His grace. But as for those who disdain and are too proud, He will punish them with a grievous woe, and they shall not find for them other than God a patron or a help.¹

Finally here is summed up the Qur-ánic idea of God :

Say : I am forbidden to worship those ye call upon besides God ; say : I will not follow your lusts, for then should I err and not be of the guided. Say : I stand on a manifestation from my Lord, which ye call a lie. I have not with me what ye fain would hasten on, that the matters might be settled between me and you ; but God knows the best who are unjust. With Him are the keys of the unseen. None knows them save He ; He knows what is in the Land and in the Seas ; and there falls not a leaf save that He knows it, nor a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor aught that is moist nor aught that is dry, save that is in His perspicuous Book. He it is Who takes you to Himself at night, and knows what ye have gained in the day ; then He raises you up again that your appointed time may be fulfilled ; then unto Him is your return, and then will He inform you of what ye have done. He triumphs over his servants ; He sends to them guardian angels, until, when death comes to anyone of you, Our messengers take him away ; they pass not over any one, and then are they returned to God, their true Sovereign. Is His not the rule ? but He is very quick at reckoning up : Say, Who rescues you from darkness of the land and of the sea ? ye call Him in humility and in secret. Indeed, if He would rescue us from this, we will surely be of those

¹ The Holy Qur-án, IV : 169.

ISLAM AND MASS PRAYER

who give Him thanks. Say : God rescues from the darkness thereof, and from every trouble, yet ye associate others with Him. Say : He is able to send torments on you from above you and from beneath your feet, and to confuse you in sects, and to make some of you taste the violence of others.¹

Proving the existence of God by analogy and example of nature is another theme which fills the pages of the Holy Qur-án but the infinity cannot be reconciled with such arguments, it is to instil in man his utter dependency and helplessness which reminds him of yet a greater force controlling him, and the verse just quoted takes cognizance of this aspect of man's nature in his relation to the idea of God.

ISLAM AND MASS PRAYER

BY MIZANUR RAHMAN, M.A.

The efficacy of prayers is universally admitted. Islam enjoins compulsory prayers five times a day, Juma prayers on Fridays and 'Id prayers twice a year. There are other forms of additional prayers. In short, prayer or *Salat* is one of the five fundamental pillars of Islam.

Islam lays great stress on prayers in congregation. Two or more Muslims, when gathered together at the daily prayer times, must perform certain prayers jointly : they cannot do so singly or separately, though individual prayers are permissible. Friday and 'Id prayers must need be performed in congregation.

There are deep meanings behind these mass prayers. Merit is, of course, there. According to Islamic injunctions, the bigger the congregation the greater the merit or *sawab*. This is significant. Apparently, these injunctions are intended to encourage congregations. And why? The reasons are obvious, and hardly need elaborate exposition.

¹ The Holy Qur-án, VI : 55.

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Islam is a democratic polity. It is based on universal brotherhood of mankind under the common overlordship of one, and only one Allah. Islam does not recognize barriers or distinctions between man and man. "The Believers are surely Brothers"—that is the Qur-ânic declaration in most emphatic language. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God be on him) also said :

The Arab has no superiority over the non-Arab ; neither has the white any superiority over the black, nor the latter over the former, *except through piety*.

The Qur-ânic dictum and this declaration of the Holy Prophet are absolutely clear. These leave no room for doubt or dissertation. These are the rock-bed on which the Islamic edifice is built. The Prophet of Islam was no visionary, or dreaming philosopher. He was a practical man. He never preached what he did not, or could not, practise, or what could not be practised by each and all. Realism is the *raison d'être* of the Islamic polity, as promulgated by the Holy Prophet Muhammad under Divine inspiration and Guidance.

The injunctions for mass prayers are calculated practical steps at implementation of the universal brotherhood of the Faithful. These are daily reminders and demonstrations of the salutary principle of a equality and brotherhood of mankind. A peep into mosque or prayer-place will furnish the proof of this assertion. The Muslims array themselves into prayers on terms of absolute equality. The master and the servant, the rich and the poor, the prince and the peasant, the king and the subject, all are equals over here. No distinction, no separatism, exists inside of the sanctuary of the mosques.

The Christians also have their churches for mass prayers on Sundays. But the picture there is different. There are reserved pews for the dignitaries. The clergyman to conduct the Mass is preassigned, or preappointed. That is not necessarily the case inside mosque.

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There are no seats apart for the grandees. Any good Muslim may lead the prayer. The most pious amongst the congregation, be he a very humble Muslim, is to be the *Imam*. The appointed *Imam*, if any, is supposed to be the most pious and the well-versed. There are no professional *Imams* in Islam.

Even the humblest amongst the congregation has the right to question the *Imam* or the leader. History records that even Caliph Umar the Great had to face such question, when on the pulpit of the Prophet's Mosque at Madina. The Caliph was about to deliver his Friday sermon. One in the crowd rose and questioned the Commander of the Faithful as to how the Caliph could make the *pirhan* he was wearing. It was a new one, but the quota of cloth per head, as recently distributed from the *Bait-ul-Mal*, was not sufficient for such a *pirhan*. Surely, the Caliph was not entitled to appropriate to himself more than a commoner's share like the questioner's.

The Caliph stood silent. He knew that the question was due to misconception. The Caliph's son was there. He rose and explained that he had given his share of the *Bait-ul-Mal* cloth to enable the Caliph to make the *pirhan* he was wearing, as the Caliph's old one was worn out. The explanation satisfied the congregation. The Caliph delivered his sermon and led the Friday prayer. He did not get annoyed at the question. The proletariat have the right to demand such explanation from the leader under Islamic dispensation. As the Prophet said: "The leader of the Nation is but its servant." This is Islam.

Mark the saving clause — "except through piety" in the Holy Prophet's declaration quoted at the outset. The test of superiority in Islam is not rank or position, power or pelf, or bank balance : it is PIETY. Piety is the criterion. Take again the Holy Prophet's saying :

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"The best of men is who does good to humanity." And says the Holy Qur'án, "Verily, the noblest amongst you, in the eye of Allah, is the most pious amongst you." These are dictums, which need no elucidation.

That being the position in Islam, the Holy Prophet enunciated the principle of mass prayer and made it compulsory for the Muslims, daily, weekly, annually, so that his followers could never forget the fundamental tenets and teachings of Islam. The Holy Prophet's practical wisdom has served its purpose. It has kept the intrinsic democratic spirit of Islam intact through ages and centuries, through climes and countries.

Nay, the spirit has proved infectious and worth emulation even in the caste-ridden India where the temples dedicated to Divinity are closed sanctuaries for the so-called untouchables !

THE KENOTIC THEORIES

By M. Y. K. SALIM CHISHTI

Dorner's View

This German writer believes in a gradual incarnation. He repudiates the idea of a "lessening or reduction of the Logos himself". He prefers to speak of a "limitation of the self-communication of the Logos to humanity."

But how does this help us to understand the limitation of Christ's consciousness in the flesh if he personally is the omniscient Logos ?

Dorner meets this difficulty by repudiating the doctrine of the impersonal manhood: Jesus was a human person, whom the Logos had, from the first, personally assumed into himself and with whom he was inseparably united, but who nonetheless retained the personal independence of his manhood sufficiently to make possible the development of a properly human consciousness and

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the gradual communication to him of the divine¹ consciousness, till at last there resulted the development of one perfect divine human person and the Incarnation was complete and absolute. But Dorner is as obscure and ambiguous as Ebrard and the reason for this is not far to seek : both are reading their own views into the plain words of the text.

St. Paul says : Jesus Christ was God, but he (for 33 years) divested himself of his godhead and assumed the form of a servant. Dorner, in his zeal to explain this passage in keeping with the dicta of philosophy, explains the whole thing away.

Bishop Gore also admits that "Dorner's exposition of his idea is diffuse and difficult to state," and criticises it as "at the bottom Nestorian and unscriptural."

Let us examine Dorner's theory—

(1) Dorner says, "Jesus was a human person whom the Word had assumed into Himself." This statement is quite unscriptural ; the Logos did not assume Jesus into himself, but the Logos himself assumed the form of a man."

(2) Again, Dorner says : "The Logos was inseparably united with Jesus." The question is—was the Logos united with Jesus, soul or his body alone, and, secondly, which Logos was united ? If the Logos united himself with his body alone, this is Apollinarianism. And if the Logos united himself with his soul the latter becomes or is thereby rendered quite superfluous. The eternal Logos, or the depotentiated one. If the former, this is unscriptural and if the latter, the personality of Jesus could not be termed a divine human personality.

(3) If the man Jesus retained the personal independence of his manhood (as admitted by our erudite author) we cannot say that the Logos was inseparably united with Jesus.

¹ Gore—*Dissertations* p. 194.

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(4) Jesus had full human consciousness, says Dorner. Very good; now this man Jesus had the Logos too within him, in a mysterious manner, and this Logos gradually communicated to Jesus his divine consciousness.

This means that Jesus lived a double life or had a double personality, which is unscriptural and that at least Jesus came to realise that he was not man, but God. Now, what did he think of himself at this last stage? Man or God, or both? Certainly not man—this is unscriptural. God plus man is also unscriptural. If so, how could he reconcile his humanity with his divinity? Moreover, if he was God plus man, how could he say that he was ignorant of the hour?

In conclusion, it may be said that the aim of the Kenotic theory is to show how the eternally pre-existent Logos, second person of the Trinity, made himself capable of incarnation after the manner recorded in the Gospels, and that all the five types, as detailed above, fail miserably in this attempt.

Finally, I would like to ask all the advocates of this theory a few more questions pertaining to all of them collectively—according to the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds, the three persons are equal in majesty, power and glory; they are co-essential and co-substantial; if so, why the Son—the Logos—and not the Father became incarnate?

The following alternate answers are possible :—

(a) The Father commanded or directed the Son to empty himself of his godhead and assume the form of a servant. On this supposition, the Father is undeniably and certainly greater than the Son—mightier; the son is a minor or lesser god—being under the sovereignty of the Father, consequential unequal.

(b) The essence of the Son is susceptible to change, while that of the Father is not. If this be the case, the Father and the Son are not consubstantial or co-essential.

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(c) They decided the question by means of ballot. On this score the Father and the Son both stand robbed of their omniscience.

(d) Some being higher than both the Father and the Son ordered the Son to become incarnate.

If Jesus was in reality God, who had emptied himself of his godhead, can he, in all honesty, be held up as a pattern or model for humanity to follow and imitate?

Can we possibly give him any credit for being sinless when we know that he was 'god'? How can I walk in his footsteps when I am conscious of his being infinitely above the category of human beings?

Man how much-so-ever he may aspire and exert himself can never become god. He can imitate a human being—one like himself—but how can a frail human being, saturated with sin, ever hope to become God? This question—how to reconcile the doctrine of Christ's divinity with the facts of the Gospel history—has perplexed the minds of the Church fathers all through the ages and various attempts have been made involving a recognition of the need of a Kenosis, in order to preserve the humanity of Jesus, so that he may be held out as a man; but all these attempts have miserably failed because of the belief of the Church in the perfect divinity of Christ alongside his humanity; and so long as the Church sticks to the Athanasian creed, the doctrine of the person of Christ must remain a riddle—or a puzzle

Emphasize his humanity and you fall into the slough of Nestorianism; emphasize his divinity and you are caught up in the meshes of Apollinarianism.

Why did not Jesus during his three year's ministry ever inform his disciples of the fact that he was in reality "Second person of the trinity, the eternal Logos, Consubstantial with the Father, but had voluntarily emptied himself of his godhead in order to become flesh"?

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The only possible course which can be accepted in order to exonerate Jesus of the above-mentioned charge, is to admit that he knew nothing about all these fantastic and unscriptural dogmas. It took the Church more than three centuries to make Jesus a full-fledged god.

First stage: In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus appears as a man—son of Mary.

The second stage in his apotheosis is reached in St. John's Gospel where he is declared to have been the Logos who became flesh. The Christians in their zeal to make him acceptable to the Greek mind, cast on his shoulders the mantle of the Logos—a term introduced by the Stoices and adapted by Philo, before the birth of Jesus. But at this stage this Logos is not eternal but a creature.

When God wished to express beings in substance, there took place the birth of the Word. It was created to assist God in the act of creation.¹

The most royal, sovereign and beneficent nature is that of the Son. It is one which approaches most nearly to Him who alone is Omnipotent.²

All was made by the Word, but the Word is not the supreme cause of things. That cause is a being greater than the word. And who is he other than the Father.³

Doubtless the son is Exalted above the thrones and denominations, but he cannot bear comparison with the Father.⁴

Up to Origen's time the son of God, the second Person of trinity, i.e., the Logos, was not eternal or co-equal with God; but the Council of Nicæa (325 C.E.) with one stroke of pen, made him "very God of very God."

¹ Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 6.

² Clement of Alexandria, *Strometa*, 7 : 2.

³ Origen, *Commentary on St. John*, 2 : 6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 13 : 25.

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The fifth and the final stage was reached when St. Athanasius made him consubstantial with the Father and the finishing touch was given by St. Augustine when he said that the Father and the Son "are one single principle."¹

(5) Is this so-called Kenosis (self-emptying) metaphysically possible? Can the true and Almighty God depotentiate Himself? Can the Infinite One limit Himself? Can the Omniscient One reduce Himself to the state of an ignorant man? If God is immutable, how can He become flesh?

And when the second person became flesh, was not the trinity of the three persons reduced to mere Dualism—only two gods left?

(6) Lastly, I would like to ask, how can an Infinite Being reduce Himself to the category of a finite being? If Christ is equal to God it means that the finite is equal to the Infinite; but we know that "there are fundamental differences between the finite and the infinite."²

Take any treatise on Theism by any Christian writer and you will find that God is described as

- (a) Infinite, Eternal, Immutable and Omniscient.
- (b) Above the categories of space and time, free from defects, wants and human propensities.
- (c) Perfect, self-existent, single, strictly one, without any trinitarian tinge, and Creator of the Universe.

But when these very writers put off the gown of a philosopher and kneel before the altar, they make God of a mortal who, they very well know, was born of a woman; who "grew in wisdom as in stature;" who did not know the hour; who was just like ourselves a human being; and they never pause to

¹ Augustine, *On the Trinity*, 5 : 14.

² "Foundation of Christian Belief," by Dr. Strickland, p. 81.

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reflect, how can God empty himself of his godhead and yet remain God?

Bishop Gore says that "Christianity is faith in the person of Jesus Christ considered as very God-incarnate."¹ If this statement is true, I am afraid, a Christian's faith is no more than a myth, as the Church has never been able to prove the possibility of the existence of the person of Jesus Christ. How can a man pin his faith to the person of a being whose very existence is a logical as well as metaphysical impossibility? His person being a mystery cannot satisfy the requirements of faith.

Being unable to solve this "Mystery", the saner element in the Church is gradually coming towards Unitarianism and the day is not very far when the West shall echo the memorable words of the Holy Qur-ân:

Jesus son of Mary is but an apostle (of God), (many) apostles before him passed away and his mother was (also) a truthful woman; they both used to eat food.²

¹ God's Dissertations, p. 17.

² The Holy Qur-ân, 5 : 75.

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THE WAY OF LIFE

The reply is: "Mere everyday activity is not true life; neither is the life of the world eternal life. Again, the seethings of the passions, the machinations of power-obsessed minds, the craftiness of the avaricious, the subterfuges of cowards and the outward shows of the hypocrites—these are but the blusterings of an empty wind and the spirit of life shineth not from such."

If, therefore, any man desires to know the way of life, let it now be made clear that the way of life is an orderly way, a sure and steadfast path through the wilderness of doubt and disillusion, a safety for the feet amid the quagmires of luxury, a plain track winding with progressive beckoning past hardships, frustration and failure, preserving those that walk therein with a manifest hope, ever renewed, while they cross the delectable mountains and enter the region of eternal peace.

Blessed and happy are the true Believers,

They who humbly adore God,

Who hold themselves far from the pomps and vanities of this world,

And who duly acquit themselves of the obligations of charity;

They who are modest and shamefaced in bearing and conduct,

And who honourably guard the deposits confided to their care, faithfully observing all their promises and engagements.

Such are they who will inherit Paradise.¹

Now, before we can enter in upon the way of life, there are certain prerequisites necessary. Certain qualifications must obtain before man or woman can walk the progressive way.

And what are these required preliminaries?

There must be humility, for the proud He knoweth from afar. There must be an intense and sincere desire to know and an earnest longing to put the knowledge,

¹ The Holy Qur-ân, XXIII : 1-7. The Qur-ânic verses quoted are taken from *The Wisdom of the Qur-ân*. The Arabic original of the Sacred Text translated into French by Maḥmūd Muḥtar-Kâtircioglu and thence into English by John Naish, M.A. (Oxon.), D.D. (Lond.), published by the Oxford

A CORRECTION

We apologise to our readers for a very serious mistake of printing in our last issue (April 1946). It involves reading matter extending over two pages (123 and 124). As most of our readers keep the file of the *Islamic Review*, we hasten to amend for this mistake by printing these two pages afresh in their correct form and attaching the leaf with the current issue. We request our readers to replace the wrong leaf by this right one.

EDITOR.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

when acquired, to practical use. Of no avail will be any idle curiosity to know and then to pass by, to put the knowledge obtained in thy locked storehouse of information and to disport outside with the delights that vanish.

Those whom the fear of God rendereth pensive and thoughtful,
Who believe in the messages which come from their Lord,

And associate no other beings with Him in their worship ;

Those who help others with their substance and give alms,
fearing lest they should do too little, convinced in their
hearts that they must one day give account before their
Lord of their stewardship here below.

All such make speed and press on in well-doing and outstrip
their fellows therein.¹

Except God's will, no one can be a believer. Therefore every soul hath need of the grace of God in order to enter upon the way of life. To those who in humility and sincerity beseech this bestowal of the divine grace, can it be that God will not incline and out of His mercy bestow that grace? Whom God loveth, He openeth their hearts to Islam.

Nor should fear of poverty nor any apprehension regarding the supplying of temporal needs deter a man from advancing boldly and with a good heart upon the way eternal.

Very true, very apposite and very beautiful are the words of the *Hitopadesa* upon this subject, even thus :

Ah friend !

Who made geese white and parrots green,

Who peacocks made with varied sheen,

Ah ! doubt it not ! He, too, will be

The giver of a livelihood for thee.

So, with this trust in the bountiful provision of God for all His creatures and, at the same time, using well the faculties with which He has endowed mankind, it will be possible for a man to pursue the highest while