

"Muhammad is . . . the Apostle of Allah and the Last of the Prophets . . ."

—HOLY QUR-AN, 33 : 4

"There will be no prophet after me."

—PROPHET MUHAMMAD.

*The*

# *Islamic Review*

**FOUNDED BY THE LATE AL-HAJJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN**

**Editors : M. Abdul Majid, M.A. and M. Aftab-ud-Din Ahmad, B.A.**

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# THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

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## BY THE LIGHT OF THE HOLY QUR-AN.

And certainly We wrote in the Book after the reminder that (as for) the land, My righteous servants shall inherit it.

Most surely in this is a message to a people who serve (Us).

And We have not sent you but as a mercy to (all) the nations.

Say : It is only revealed to me that your God is one God : will you then submit ?

The Holy Qur-ân, Ch. XXI, vv. 105—108.

### The Purport

Righteousness is the prerequisite of supremacy in the world. Brute force and mere cleverness cannot assure any rulership or predominance worth the name. However-much it may appear otherwise, at bottom the political destiny of the nations is guided by this spiritual law. Herein lies an assurance for the people of faith. And as for the followers of the Holy Prophet

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Muhammad, they are further assured that the nations of the world are destined to be blessed through them, provided, of course, they adhere to this eternal principle of leadership in the world. Islam will come to be accepted by civilized humanity, sooner or later, and through this acceptance it will experience peace and happiness which has never fallen to its lot before. And the source of this bliss will be realization of the universality and unity of God, which form the essence of the Quranic teachings.

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### THE OUTLOOK FOR RELIGION

BY A BRITISH MUSLIM

The Muslim can look with disinterested eyes upon the condition of religion in the world at the present day, for he is not a participant in the many changes that are being brought about in the many and varied sects of Christendom. He, of course, regrets the unseemly disturbances in places of worship by one fanatical branch which disagrees with the form of worship introduced by a section to which those who complain and make the disturbances do not belong. There is a legal remedy for any and all breakers of the law, if common-sense and reverence fail, by which they can be brought to book. But none of these things affect the Muslim. His interest rather is drawn as an observer to the various developments in ritual and doctrine and organization in the various sects and the notable digressions in each which seem to have become a feature of organized religion in modern times.

To Muslims, however, there is one pleasing feature in the midst of all the confusion existing in the Christian world, that is, the rising appreciation, varied in words ungrudgingly given but yet sincerely, of Islam and the Prophet. Many such have been quoted from time to time in the *Islamic Review* and the latest I have seen comes from the pen of Shaw Desmond in a book, *Jesus*

## THE OUTLOOK FOR RELIGION

*or Paul*, which has created some attention by reason of its outspoken character. Shaw Desmond does not fight with kid gloves. He sees a lie and he nails it down with a sledge hammer. He is as militant against religious blunders and absurdities as Hannen Swaffer is with political errors. He arms himself with common-sense and facts before setting out to battle and slaughter. Shaw Desmond explains the reluctance of men to act even when confronted with glaring errors on the ground that :

Men, like young kittens, bear the light badly and so shut their eyes to it until they are able to tolerate it and it is able to tolerate them.

But in one instance, at least, Shaw Desmond has seen the light and he has drawn up the blinds and opened the casement windows in order that it may flood the room wherein the kittens lie asleep. He says :

Muhammad, in the writer's experience, when faced by the Christian missionary, almost invariably wins over the Christ, whom the Muslim venerates as equal to Muhammad himself, in contradistinction to the usual Christian belief.

Truth will sometime out, despite the efforts of interested missionary efforts to keep it confined within the dark room.

But the general outlook and attitude towards religion is being exemplified in speech and expression and has changed greatly during the last half century. Religion used to be regarded as more a matter of belief than as a ground of action. The cry was: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Saved from what? Why, from hell and punishment for non-belief and sins. One does not need to be a centenarian to recall the days of Moody and Sankey, Torrey and Alexander, Manton Smith and Fullerton, apart from that isolated stalwart, General Booth and the many smaller fry that could be mentioned. At the time of writing this, there is a much smaller and weaker voice

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crying out in the Midland wilderness, but it comes from one who, like Livingstone did, combines spiritual efforts with commercial travelling. In the olden times—if half a century can be so described—the enquiry room and the penitent form were the prominent features of a “mission ;” but outside men would stop strangers of both sexes in the street and ask, in a serious tone : “Are you saved ?” and one religious weekly (now extinct) was called over the coals by the ‘unco’ good’ for publishing a serial story containing the following two lines of dialogue :

And you, brother, have you found the Lord ?

No, good heavens ! have you lost him ?

It must be admitted that such scenes did not and do not to-day form a feature in missions conducted by Catholics although even here, high temperatures were often reached on the spiritual thermometer. Gerard Manley Hopkins, the Jesuit priest-poet, who was often sent out to conduct missions’ used to describe a Catholic mission as being one “without hysteria and allelujahs.”

But Catholics were and are just as eager to escape punishment for sin committed as Protestants—hence the teaching on penance and the invention of Masses. The anxiety of the Muslim, however, is to escape from sin itself, to escape from it at its source, to shape the life in accordance with the Will of Allah, an idea beautifully expressed in many Christian hymns but the very vigorous and joyful way in which they are sung demonstrates the fact that their meaning is but faintly, if at all, understood by the singers. The way of escape is a lonely path and must be trodden in single file.

There is no expeditious road

To pass and label men for God

And save them by the barrel-load

There are plenty of thorns on the road but there is also an abundance of balsam for the healing of the wounds they cause.

## THE OUTLOOK FOR RELIGION

One question is occupying the minds of Christians to-day. Is the movement to form one united Christian Church likely to succeed? That is to say, Is it likely to be effective, or will it end at the inception? An observer finds it difficult to imagine an Anglo-Catholic priest working alongside a Unitarian minister, for example. But perhaps, Unitarians will not be included but they profess to be followers of Jesus or Christ, to endeavour to live the life he lived, to engage in works of charity as he did. If the qualifications are to be doctrinal, the scheme will certainly be still-born. An observer also finds it difficult to conjure up the picture of the Anglo-Catholic wearing his cassock, almost as inseparable from his body as his skin, working alongside an Evangelical Christian minister, who may even be without a 'dog collar' and may quote the Bible as the foundation of his faith in preference to the Book of Common Prayer. Fashions in religion, however, change almost as frequently as the attire of models in the windows of the shops in Oxford Street and Bond Street is changed. Fifty years ago, Christendom was divided in the main between Catholics and Protestants, with several side-lines for the latter. To-day the division is mainly between Roman and Anglo Catholics, with a strong leaning towards Reunion with the first by the latter and both prefer to drop the adjectival territorial qualification. There is nothing more annoying for an Anglo Catholic priest than to remind him that he is an officer of state, an officer of the Church as by law established. He prefers to forget that fact and the important fact, also that the State is superior in age and power to the Church of which he is a member and that the Church has no power apart from the State which confers it.

But the Muslim desires union, unity and peace, not only within his own borders but in the territory of all his neighbours, in the realm of religion particularly and he longs for the time when peace shall reign among men of good will, also that there shall be good will among men.

## THE WAY OF LIFE

OF THE RICHES OF THIS WORLD

BY WILLIAM BASHYR-PICKARD, B.A. (Cantab)

Now that we have progressed a little distance upon the way we find it necessary to come to some clear and definite conclusion upon the goods and possessions of this life, so that, having taken consideration and come to a decision, we may from henceforth be free from all anxiety about the riches of this world, be free from all uneasy desires about the riches of this world and be under no delusion as to the good and evil hidden therein.

Come, then, let us consider.

The first aspect that we see is that of transience; riches here may not in any case endure with us. Even our bodies we shall lay down and leave. How much more so, then, the external possessions, money and and barns and gardens and property, houses and finery and the golden pomp of the daytime and the sheen and dazzle of luxurious nights! These do not endure with us. They are but the provision for a time, and the time is passing, passing.

Let us face the transience. Let us with steady mind and calmness of heart remember that we shall leave our bodies, our clothes, our houses, our lands, our possessions and our wealth laid up in banks.

We now recognize the transience, which simply means the heart must not be set thereon. It is said: "If riches increase, set not thy heart thereon." It may also be said: "If riches *decrease*, distress not thy heart therein."



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So, this way or that way, we see the result is the same. We must not engross our hearts or our attention upon riches. Our quiet heart must recognize their indifference. Towards worldly possessions we must take up a vantage ground from whence, overlooking the panorama of all the pride and pomp of this world, we may with an unassailable assurance realize that they are not matter of desire for us but an indifference. To have or not to have has become something external to our own trueness ; indeed an indifference to us.

. . . . .

Open the Qur-án. Many references are therein to wealth and the right manner in which wealth should be viewed.

Thus :

Abundance diverts you, Until you come to the graves.<sup>1</sup>

Most surely man is ungrateful to his Lord. . . . And most surely he is tenacious in the love of wealth.<sup>2</sup>

O you who believe ! do not devour your property among you falsely, except that it be trading by your mutual consent. . . . And do not covet that by which God has made some of you excel others ; men shall have the benefit of what they earn ; and women shall have the benefit of what they earn ; and ask God of His grace ; surely God knows all things. And whoever flees in God's way, he will find in the earth many a place of refuge and abundant resources.<sup>3</sup>

Having at length taken up our stand upon the pleasant mountain-side from whence we behold the transience and the indifference of wealth—not to be desired, yet not to be despised—we may now at leisure behold the benefits, many and multiform, which will incontrovertibly accrue to humanity from a realization of this intimate truth of affairs.

It has been said that the love of money is the root.

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-án : CII, 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* : C, 6-8.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* : IV, 100 & elsewhere.

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of all evil; or more exactly, "the love of money is root of all *kinds* of evil." Mark you, the *love* of money, not money in itself; not wealth in itself, but the *love* of wealth, the *desire* of wealth; *that* is the root of many and varied evils. And we by the death-ray of indifference have slain the evils at the root. Doing so, we are free and, might humanity do so, humanity would be free. Could humanity but forgo the desire of wealth, the obsession of wealth, humanity would be free and by any gate might enter the golden age.

Inasmuch as we must not desire wealth, by so much also must we not despise wealth. Who find the golden mean, they covet not, neither do they squander.

. . . . .  
Now to the advantages of wealth indifference—let us enumerate some of the benefits.

When the desire is no longer fixed upon wealth, we can see clearly the right use of wealth, where it may benefit, where by stagnation it may become harmful. We can see the right proportions in which wealth should be used in this direction or in that direction. Our judgment will not be swayed towards our own imagined advantage. Having wealth, we shall not be filled with the false preoccupations of wealth; not having wealth, our lives will not be distorted by the afflicting obsession of, at all costs, obtaining wealth.

Upon either consideration our peace will flow in undisturbed serenity.

. . . . .  
When our hearts are set free from the obsession of wealth, from the dominating desire of the acquiring and the enjoyment of the passing provision of this life, our time and our energy and our aspirations will also be set free to flow in ways beneficial to human happiness. We shall acquire an inner joy and well-being that will,

## THE WAY OF LIFE

consciously or unconsciously, express itself in a thousand actions of human brotherliness, a greater tranquillity in our thoughts towards God and a creative rapture, whether in works of social service or in the realms of the imagination, in art, poetry, painting, music, drama, design or literature in prose.

Strike out the motive of greed and what a bright and beneficial sun is set in the firmament over all human affairs !

. . . . .

Set free from the desire of wealth, much or little, how readily shall we appraise the truth of the Quranic verses ! and with what ease and clear vision shall we follow them !

Thus :

“ And give to the near of kin his due and to the needy and the wayfarer, and do not squander wastefully ; surely the squanderers of wealth are the brothers of the devils and the devil is ever ungrateful to his Lord. And if thou turn away from them to seek mercy from thy Lord which thou hopest for, speak to them a gentle word. And do not make thy hand to be shackled to thy neck, nor stretch it forth to the utmost limit of its stretching forth, lest thou shouldst afterwards sit down blamed, stripped off. ”<sup>1</sup>

And again :

“ And give away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarers and the beggars and for the emancipation of the captives. ”<sup>2</sup>

And :

“ The devil threatens you with poverty and enjoins you to be niggardly and God promises you forgiveness from Himself and abundance, and God is Ample-giving, Knowing. ”<sup>3</sup>

We see, therefore, that in regard to the riches of this world the one essential point alike for the happiness

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-ān : XVII, 26-29.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, : II, 177.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, : XIV, 3.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

of the individual and the welfare of society, is to atrophy the *desire* for riches, to destroy that root of evil—the *desire* for gain, the *desire* for wealth, the obsession of the mind and the attachment of the heart with money and profit. This desire must be annihilated; then all is well for mankind.

How so ?

With desire slain, the red veil of greed falls from before the eyes and the unhampered sight sees clearly the intrinsic value of all things in themselves, not their money value.

With detachment now acquired, the mind can with freedom follow the true use of the riches of this world. We can spend without niggardliness and without a wasteful extravagance. We can spend and give in the right directions, not biassed by hope of profit or worldly reward. It being a matter of indifference to us whether we have much or little, we are not likely to deprive others of their due or to drive hard bargains, much less to filch, steal, rob, embezzle or defraud. A blessed sense of contentment descends upon us. What we have and need that we can use : the days and ways of hoarding and the crampings of avarice will be done for us : These iron fetters will fall and our feet will walk freely and gladly in a spacious garden. If we have, we shall rejoice : if we have not, we shall also rejoice ; for now we recognize material things as truly external and inessential. The burden of our strong rooms and banks and safes will have been taken from our bowed shoulders, and the inward spirit will rejoice. Our world-activity will happily function in the right allocation of riches (if we have them) and (if we have them not) we shall be of equal mind, not distorted by the greed to possess what we have not and what, in very truth, we need not.

## THE WAY OF LIFE

Ah! how blessed! Set free from the obsession with material goods, our hearts, our time, our activities will be with us in an unassailable abundance for the enjoyment of the enduring riches of the intellect and the spirit. The silken cords of kindness will make strong our lives, and the binding of the bonds of brotherhood with all and sundry will make our lives wide and spacious, filled with an exhilaration divine and a peace unfading.

How apt and easy to light upon are quotations from the Quran! For the evil of the love of wealth was recognized in the Prophet's day: witness these Quranic verses:

"Those who love this world's life, placing it above the hereafter, and turn away from God's path and desire to make it crooked these are in a great error."<sup>1</sup>

And again:

"And those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in the way of God, announce to them a painful chastisement."<sup>2</sup>

And the exhortation:

"O you who believe! let not your wealth and your children divert you from the remembrance of God; and whoever does that, these are the losers."

And, as to the right use of the wealth of this world,

"They ask thee as to what they should spend. Say: whatever wealth you spend, it is for the parents and the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, and whatever good you do, God surely knows it."<sup>3</sup>

The way between excess and defect is made clear thus:

"And they ask thee as to what they should spend. Say, what you can spare."<sup>4</sup>

And the following verses:

"And those who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor parsimonious, and keep between these the just mean."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur'an: IX, 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, LXIII, 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 215.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 219.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* XXV, 67.

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No less are the wrong uses of wealth specified and denounced. Thus :

"And whatever you lay out at usury, so that it may increase in the property of men, it shall not increase with God: and whatever you give in charity desiring God's pleasure, it is these that shall get manifold." <sup>1</sup>

Reflect, O men and women, upon the denunciation of usury.

Thus :

"Those who swallow down usury cannot arise except as one whom the devil has prostrated by his touch does arise. That is because they say, Trading is like usury; and God has allowed trading and forbidden usury . . . and God does not bless usury and He causes charitable deeds to prosper . . . Be careful of your duty to God and relinquish what remains of usury, if you are believers. But if you do it not, then be apprised of war from God and His Apostle."

But now I hear it :

"This is good; this is in fact ideal. But to attain this is beyond us. The possessions of this life are the substance of this life and, however good it might be to do so, we cannot attain to an attitude of indifference towards them, much or little."

"Not so." I answer, "not so! Already, if you have desired this excellent indifference, you have progressed half-way towards attaining it. It must be in the heart first."

How, then, to acquire its outward manifestation?

Cut yourself loose. Give away portion of what you most love, and you are progressing still further towards a true and abiding happiness of heart.

God aid you herein !

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-án : XXX, 39.

## DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS IN ISLAM

### Government of God on Earth

BY M. A. C. M. SALEH.

The world is thirsting for a New Order in the affairs of men. Two Great Wars have been fought and many millions of lives have been lost to evolve a system capable of ensuring a sense of security and establishing the foundation of lasting peace for the progress and development of mankind. Nevertheless, in peace as in war the situation remains much the same. Great principles have been expounded and enunciated in the light of modern standard of advancement and the degree of civilization reached but a world which is engrossed in materialism and lacking in spiritual enlightenment cannot find a solution worthy of the highest ideals attained by men of vision who had been equipped with divine attributes and possessed of saintly qualities to lead aright.

Religion has been relegated to a position of no significance in the day-to-day life of human activities. Nations of Europe had discarded religion as a potent factor and their progress is believed to be due to being free from its thralldom. Religion is a matter of conscience for them and it is too private. Material prosperity is the criterion upon which conclusions are drawn so as to remain indifferent to religious influences. Spiritual value is seldom realised ; only on occasions and when impending danger threatens to destroy the fine fabric of human society then the feeling of fear and sympathy is aroused and the need for a spiritual balm is felt to dispel the darkness of the horizon.

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An experiment in the establishment of Government on the basis of religion has been proved to be a failure. It has been found wanting in the case of the creed that had been put to the test and it has now become a universal slogan that religion and politics are poles apart and they cannot be profitably reconciled to produce results conducive to good citizenship and the remarks that politics is a dirty game are daily dinned into our ears even by students who have not reached the age of maturity to grasp in practice its full implications. Such being the case, any attempt to revive a religious basis for a system of government that can shape and mould the destiny of mankind towards the path of ideal citizenship should be normally rejected as beyond the scope of human achievement. But it is not prudent or advisable to dismiss the possibility of an earnest and reasonable attempt in the direction chalked out by truly great men who have been inspired to evolve an ideal State based on religious principles.

Without a bias of a religious protagonist or the zeal of a missionary let this question be analysed from the Islamic point of view with particular reference to the success of its latest exponent—Muhammad—the Prophet of Islam, who was able to transform within the period of his ministry the prevailing system of tribal aristocracy in the Arabian Peninsula into a world-wide model of democracy accepted and acknowledged as the highest form of administration productive of all that is noble and sublime in human nature. The simple practices enjoined in the Holy Qur-án—the Bible of the Muslims—have a deeper meaning and a direction which is as wide as humanity itself and with it the simplicity of the faith manifested itself in the formation of a marvellous confraternity demonstrating to the world the majestic beauty



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and splendour of a government of One Universal God on earth.

The religion of Islam is a perfect form of theocratic monarchy<sup>1</sup> which can be evolved through the practice of its principles in the everyday life of a Muslim. He has to pray five times daily which to an uninitiated mind may mean nothing but the observance of certain rites and ceremonies followed by genuflections as a duty ordained without reference to its spiritual counterpart. For a correct understanding of its political importance it is necessary to know how it can help to prepare the ground. A Muslim should first inculcate in himself a feeling for the presence of God which enables him to undergo a course of training on the road to purity and moral rectitude. He becomes conscious of his shortcomings and makes an honest endeavour to avoid pitfalls.

The institution of prayer in Islam is intended to absolve a Muslim from the errors of his daily life, to imbibe the virtues of discipline and duty and of submission to the Will of God, Who reigns supreme and to draw inspiration from communion for his guidance in all his dealings. He has to respect and treat all alike and the ideal of equality and brotherhood is thus fostered. The institution of Muslim fast emphasises a similar virtue, and Zakat being the third institution makes the levelling of society more practical and the final stage of pilgrimage enables one to reap the harvest of the common bond of unity through obedience and reverence in the assembly of the multitude at Makka to round off any deficiencies and present a united body of one mass of humanity supplicating before the altar

<sup>1</sup> The term that best expresses the truth about the political ideal of Islam is Spiritual Democracy with an elected, benevolent and deposable Dictator as the executive head of the State.—*Ed. I. R.*

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of One Master—the God of the Universe—Allah the Maker. All these institutions are practised on the most accepted democratic lines for the establishment of the solid foundation of unity and uniformity.

A government which has its foundation upon such great ideals will produce the desired results. Without a true and lasting spiritual background in the government of any country the aim and ambition of life would be like a body without a soul. It is dead to all intents and purposes. The Muslim conception of life postulates that with birth life does not begin and with death it does not end. The sublime purpose of its mission has to be clearly understood before a system of government is evolved to suit the standard and requirement of the age.

The baneful effect of the difference in colour and the distinction of caste is due to the violation of human rights enshrined in the Holy Book of Islam. The accountability of man beyond the grave should be instilled and his mind should be taught to look upon this material world as means and not an end in itself. As Islam teaches that every material act should have its spiritual counterpart and without being aware of it the object cannot be completely fulfilled. This fact has a great significance in promoting social peace and in the establishment of government for the good of the people. With all the might of empires human carnage cannot be stopped, for there is some undefinable power above the power of man and the power that is vested in the government of the people should be surcharged not only with the odour of sanctity but also with the spiritual ingredients for the evolution of society towards the goal of human perfection. There should be limit to worldly power and glory for the ambition of life has greater and higher objects to achieve by pursuing a path that leads to righteousness and contentment in this world and in the hereafter.

## THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

### The Fourth Pillar—Charity

BY MUHAMMAD SADIQ DUDLEY WRIGHT, PHIL. D.

The Fourth Pillar of Islam is Charity, sometimes described as almsgiving.

There is one text in the New Testament which is very precious in the eyes of many ministers and pastors, which many of them quote, perhaps, more frequently than any other, particularly at anniversaries and missionary gatherings. Forced from its context, as it is generally nearly every time it is quoted, it consists of only four words, but those words are full of meaning to the man who gives utterance to them. The text will be found in I Corinthians xvi, 1 and the four words are: "Now, concerning the collection." They are quoted in all sorts of begging appeals. One denomination which advertises its meetings very frequently may always be identified from the fact that at the foot of every poster and handbill there is always printed in bold type or large letters the statement: "no collection," as an inducement to strangers to attend. You will never hear the jingle of coins in a mosque. There are no money-changers in the temples of Islam. Why? Because every Muslim, apart from his private and personal benefactions, gives, as a religious duty, two-and-a-half per cent. of his income annually into the mosque funds for the relief of the poor and distressed and for the spread of the Faith. This duty is enjoined in the ninth *sūra* of the Qur'ān:

Alms are only for the poor and needy and those who work for them [*i.e.*, in collecting or distributing them] and those whose hearts are reconciled [to Islam] and those in captivity and those in debt and those who are on God's path and for the wayfarer—an ordinance from God, for God is Knowing, Wise.

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This tax is called *Zakát* : it is compulsory, but there is also an optional contribution, a self-imposed tax, which is called *Khairát*.

Islam was the first religious system to consecrate Charity by the enrolment of this principle among its positive enactments, the *Zakát* being paid each year at the termination of Ramadhan. Among the injunctions in the Qur-án for the observance of Charity may be cited the following :

lvii. Believe in God and His Apostle and lay out in alms a part of the wealth whereof God hath made you inheritors, for unto such of you as believe and bestow alms, shall be given a great reward.

lxiv. Give alms also for your own weal ; for such as are saved from their own greed shall prosper. If ye lend God a generous loan, He will double it to you and will forgive you, for God is grateful, long suffering.

xxx. Whatever ye put out at usury to increase it with the substance of others, shall have no increase from God [cf. Psalm xv, 5] but whatever ye shall give in alms as seeking the face of God, shall be doubled unto you.

But Charity is dispensed in many other ways than in gifts of money, although Muhammad said that the giving of alms was the most precious deed in the sight of Allah. The first mosque erected at Madinah, erected largely with his own hands by the Prophet, had attached to it a courtyard which was used not only for the assemblies of believers, but also as a shelter for the homeless.

The Muslim gives to the term charity the widest application it is possible to make. This is the outcome of his complete resignation to the will of Allah, which, as seen already, is the essence of true religion. It must be developed and practised as a virtue, not as pastime, such as described by Clough :

I sit at my table *en grand seigneur*

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And when I have done, throw a crust to the poor ;  
Not only the pleasure, one's self of good living,  
But also the pleasure of now and then giving.

That is a form of selfishness, not of Charity.

We do not practise the virtue of Charity when we give publicity to stories detrimental to our neighbours, whether such stories are true or false, if they are likely to do them harm or injury or cause them annoyance or unhappiness. We are not exercising Charity when we look with a microscopical eye for faults in others, whether we publish those faults or not. We can exercise Charity over what we call "little things," e.g., by removing into the gutter orange peel, vegetable matter, wet paper and the like, from the pavement, because, if left there, it might cause accident to a blind or careless walker stepping on to it. It is those "little things" that count, such, for instance, as opening a door for another or placing a chair and many other acts which seem so trivial, but which help to make life brighter and happier. Muhammad said :

Every good act is Charity. Your smiling in your brother's face is Charity ; an exhortation to your fellow-men to do virtuous deeds is Charity ; assisting the blind is Charity ; removing stones and thorns and other obstructions from the road is Charity ; giving water to the thirsty is Charity.

We are struck with the prominence ascribed by Paul to the exercise of Charity, which, according to the proverb, derives its exercise, if not its generating power, from the Arctic region. This may have something to do with its sluggish exercise. Charity, presumably, was not unknown in Paul's day and may, in all probability, account for his repeated injunctions to the Corinthians and Colossians to put it more actively into practice.

It has become the custom in these days to explain that the word "Charity" is mis-translation and that the

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word really means "Love." There is no objection to the correction, save, perhaps, that there is in the English language no word more abused or misused than the word "Love"; but the contention is often used as a shield for withholding monetary gifts from deserving objects of beneficence. One of the acts of a lover, or a wife, in order to demonstrate love or affection is by the bestowal of gifts purchased with money, but the people who are so emphatic on the point that Charity means Love will invariably reply to a request for a donation with the phrase that "Charity begins at home." I have known instances where homes have been made miserable by the uncharitable acts of some of those "idealists." Charity should, of course, be practised in the home first and foremost, but there is neither commandment nor proverb enjoining it not to be practised outside. The glib manner in which the adage slips off the tongue show that the individual prefers to keep his money in his pocket until he sees an opportunity of investing it for his personal advantage or that it may be expended on his own personal creature luxuries and entertainment. True Charity is disinterested. Some people can only be charitable when there is an allurements of profit. They regard Charity as an investment and only exercise it when it is likely to yield a tangible dividend capable of reinvestment. It is then, of course, no longer Charity.

We are told by the medical profession that many people suffer from cancer who are unaware of the fact until the disease has developed beyond the power of the surgeon to afford either relief or cure. There is a kind of cancer which is more widespread than the physical complaint, which also is unknown until its grip has become so fierce that it is almost impossible for the victim to shake it off. It is the cancer of selfishness.

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Dickens, Marie Corelli and other writers have portrayed it in fiction with force and power, even as Paul did in his epistles. It can, however, be cured at any stage, although the longer it is allowed to go on unchecked, the more difficult becomes the power of curing it and eradicating it from the system. Charity is the only cure. Call it love if you like, for that is the highest exemplification of Charity and one thing is certain, the constant and consistent exercise of Charity will before long develop into Love.

Are we not commanded to love our neighbour as we love ourselves? "Büt who is my neighbour"? asked the lawyer of the prophet, Jesus (Luke x, 39) and the answer was given in a parable which emphasized the fact that love consists in showing mercy and charity to all, irrespective of any geographical limitation.

It is better to err on the side of liberality, even prodigality, in the distribution of gifts than in niggardliness. The Qur-án says (ii, 215):

They ask thee what they shall spend in alms. Say: That which ye spend for good to parents and near kindred and orphans and the needy and wayfarer. And whatsoever good ye do, Lo! Allah is aware of it.

We are also told that it is "More blessed to give than to receive." But the greatest blessing comes to him who makes his gifts personally, to he or to she who becomes a real "Brother of Mercy" or "Sister of Mercy." To a great extent in modern times "Charity" has become submerged into "Society" or "Organization." Thank goodness, these well-meaning people have not played ducks and drakes with Father Christmas. He still comes to fill the stocking (save in war-time) although the children know very well that he is only Daddy disguised, but they love the deception and it adds to the delights of the festive season. How dull Christmas would be if arrangements were made for the usual gifts to be sent by

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post through some society or association and "Father Christmas" to be banished from the toy-shops. The practice of giving donations by deputy in this manner deprives the donors of the spontaneity which should be at the back of their gifts, though it gives them an advertisement in the annual reports. So extensive has the practice become that many so-called "charitable societies" have become veiled trading concerns and their advertisements which are accepted by the daily as well as religious newspapers are really advertisements for increased capital. The Romans honoured their dead by recording their acts of charity or benevolence by inscriptions on tombstones; the modern practice, which is a grade lower is to insert the name of donors in subscription lists which are made public in their life-time.

Charity is not the peculiar possession of any one religion. Tacitus tells us in his *Annales* that when in the reign of Nero, the great amphitheatre at Fideriae fell in and buried in its ruins fifty thousand men, the wealthy Romans despatched physicians and all kinds of medical appliances to the scene of the disaster and received the injured into their houses.

Augustine, Chrysostom, Basil, Cyprian, Ambrose, Gregory of Nyassa and Gregory of Nazianzen were among the preachers in the early days of Christianity, who endeavoured to foster the practice of almsgiving, which they recommended as an investment. Cesarius of Arelate said :

Fasting is good but almsgiving is better. If one can do both, both are well; but if he cannot do both, almsgiving is the better.

The Qur-án says (ii, 275) that :

They who give their substance in alms, by night and day, in private and public, shall have their reward with their Lord; no fear shall come upon them, neither shall they be put to grief.



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There is no injunction against the accumulation of wealth in the Qur-án, but the Muslim law is that it may not be used for the purpose of ostentatious display by its temporary custodian. It must be used for the glory of Allah and the poor and distressed must be among the recipients.

Lactantius also tells us that :

Compassion and humanity are virtues peculiar to the righteous and to the worshippers of God. Philosophy teaches us nothing of them.

There is one direction in which, more than any other, the virtue of Charity should be exercised. There is more need to-day than ever to remember Paul's injunction (Ephesians iv, 15) to "speak the truth in love." Happily to-day we witness less bickering in religious discussion than was evidenced fifty years or so ago, owing partly to the birth and growth of societies where members of religions supposed to be in opposition, can meet and discuss their agreements and disagreements in a friendly manner. I have sat on the committee of one of these societies, composed of only twelve members. Our meetings were held in the dining-room of a wealthy Jew of world-wide renown as a scholar. Two of the Jewish members were Rabbis and one of the Christians was a Jew by birth. He was, in fact, a Cohen, that is a priest, but he was welcomed heartily by all and he made his contributions to the discussions without let or hindrance. Such phenomenon could not have been witnessed half-a-century previously. I know personally two former members of the Jewish faith who have become Roman Catholics and I also know personally two Roman Catholics who have become Muslims.

When people speak of differences in religious beliefs I suppose with many the thoughts turn naturally or automatically to the days of the Inquisition, to Luther, Huss, Bruno and the multitude of men and women who are ranged among the martyrs, but Protestants omit or

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forget to mention Calvin's treatment of Servians or Luther's vituperations against the Jews.

In the study of Comparative Religion, Charity should impel us not to take out the points of difference but, rather, the points of agreement, because there are basic facts common to all religious systems and such basic facts may, without doubt, be described as Truth. The survival of a religion to stand the test of time is due to the Truth, not the error, which it teaches. We have seen religions grow, causing temporary sensation and attracting followers and then collapse suddenly like a house made with cards. They had no substance. It is only the Truth that endures and makes us free and the sole object of religious discussion should be to find the Truth. A little more than fifty years ago, in 1891, Max-Muller, in one of the Gifford Lectures delivered before the University of Glasgow, said :

Why should we always dwell upon the differences which divide the Roman Catholics, the Greek and the Protestant Churches? Why should we be disheartened at the multiplicity of Protestant sects and at the numberless shades of doctrine and ritual which we see in cathedrals, and churches, chapels and meeting-houses? Are not the beliefs which they all share in common infinitely more numerous and infinitely more essential than those on which they differ? And yet these differences, in some cases so small as to defy definition are allowed to separate so called Christian denominations, while the magnificent inheritance of Truth which belongs to all of them is wilfully ignored. Christianity which, in the beginning, was the most tolerant of all religions, seems to have become the most intolerant. We say no longer : "He who is not against us is for us" we always seem to say : "He who is not with us is against us."

What is lacking is the virtue of Charity. But I would go even further than Max Muller. He has done much in the investigation of what the missionary described as "heathen" religions and dealt with the sublime truths which they inculcate but what is there to deter the investigation of what are known as "savage faiths" because

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one tenet common to Judaism, Christianity and Islam is that at no time in the history of the Universe has Allah left Himself without a witness. It is a work which must, however, be undertaken in Charity. Such a study would help us to shed many prejudices. When Macaulay was pursuing his candidature at Edinburgh for parliamentary honours he was heckled by some ministers of religion who wished to find out if from their point of view he was quite sound on certain points of doctrine. After lengthening questioning, Macaulay exclaimed :

Gentlemen, if you had lived for some years, as I have, in country where people worshipped the cow, you would not waste your thoughts on such trifles.

As Max Muller has said :

The essentials of religion may be found in almost every religion, even among those who have a superstitious feeling about a cow.

Asoka, the Buddhist Missionary emperor of India, said :

Whoever exalts his own faith and disparages all others from a strong devotion to his own, he will injure his own faith.

He found the root or life-spring of religion in mutual forbearance more particularly in the bridling of the tongue : both acts of Charity.

Islam, even now, after thirteen or fourteen centuries, is but emerging from the calumny which has dogged its preaching and propagation, that fact being a testimony to the Truth its apostles have sought to maintain, thus proving that their labours have not been in vain.

## ISLAM THE ONLY SOLUTION OF INDIAN UNTOUCHABILITY

BY M. Y. KHAN

(Continued from Vol. XXXV p. 95)

"In the Western Coast Districts," says Arnold:

The tyranny of caste intolerance is peculiarly oppressive. To give but one instance, in Travancore certain of the lower castes may not come nearer than seventy-four paces to a Brahmin and have to make a grunting noise as they pass along the road to give warning of their approach. *Similar instances might be abundantly multiplied. What wonder then that the Mussalman population is fast increasing through conversion from these lower castes, who thereby free themselves from such degrading oppression, and raise themselves and their descendants in the social scale.*"<sup>1</sup>

So much for the inhabitants residing in South India.

The Presidential Address delivered by Babu Ram Charan, M.L.C., at the Special Adi-Hindu (Aborigines) Conference held at Lucknow on the 29th January 1928, eloquently expresses the feelings of 15 crores Adi Hindus, whose rights as human beings have been most ruthlessly and deliberately trampled underfoot for the past several thousand years. The President gives a very concise description of the most savage treatment meted out to these unfortunate millions by their Aryan overlords since the Aryan invasion of India. At the very beginning the conquering race gave the titles of Dasyu (dacoit) to the conquered people. "The hymns of the Rigveda Samhita breathe the bitterest hatred against the aborigines," observes the President.

All the nomenclature that was given to them conveys a very bad meaning. The terms Dasyu, Nihsada, Sudra are the terms generally applied to the aborigines. All of them attribute bad and disgraceful character of the aborigines of India."

<sup>1</sup> *The Preaching of Islam*, p. 220.

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After giving an idea of the mean estimation in which the aborigines were held with shastric quotations, the President remarks :

"That these epic and Puranic legends are utterly fictitious—nobody doubts. But fictions though they are they reveal the mentality of our conquerors and the low estimation in which they held us."

The awakening of the down-trodden masses of India is giving form to an all-embracing socio-cum-politico-cum-religious evolution. The Adi Hindus have now realised that it is not merely a social custom which has deprived them of their rights of human beings, but it is the most authoritative works of Manu, the greatest Hindu Law-giver, that have dispossessed these poor people of their elementary civic rights.

We further read from the speech on the "Anihilation of Caste" prepared by Dr. Ambedkar but not delivered owing to the cancellation of the Social Conference by the Reception Committee on the ground, says Dr. Ambedkar on the title page of the report published on 15th May 1936, that the views expressed in his speech would be unbearable to the conference. "The gentlemen," he added, "who presided over the session of the Social Conference lamented that the majority of the educated Hindus were for political advancement and indifferent to social reform!" Dr. Ambedkar further adds to our information on the disabilities imposed by the high caste Hindus on the untouchables as the aborigines of India are now called. He tells us :—

'Under the rule of the *Pashwas* in the Mahratta country the untouchable was not allowed to use the public street if a Hindu was coming along lest he should pollute the Hindu by his shadow. The untouchable was required to have a black thread either on his wrist or in his neck as a sign or a mark to prevent the Hindus from getting themselves polluted by his

The "Light," February, 18, 1928.

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touch through mistake. In Poona, the capital of the *Peshwa*, the untouchable was required to carry string from his waist, a broom to sweep away from behind the dust he treaded on lest a Hindu walking on the same should be polluted. In Poona, the untouchable was required to carry earthen pot, hung in his neck wherever he went, for holding his spit lest his spit on earth should pollute a Hindu who might unknowingly happen to tread on it. Let me take more recent facts. The tyranny practised by the Hindus upon the Balais, an untouchable community in Central India, will serve my purpose. . . .’ p. 4.

“The correspondent of the *Times of India* reported on the 4th Janaury 1928 that high caste Hindus have asked the Balais of about 20 villages that if they wished to live among them they must conform to the following rules :—

1. Balais must not wear gold-lace-bordered *pugrees*.
2. They must not wear *dhotis* with coloured or fancy borders.
3. They must convey intimation of death of any Hindus to relatives of the deceased—no matter how far away these relatives may be living.
4. In all Hindu marriages, Balais must play music before the procession and during the marriage.
5. Balai women must not wear gold or silver ornaments, they must not wear fancy gowns or jackets.
6. Balai women must attend all cases of confinement of Hindu women.
7. The Balais must render services without demanding remuneration, and must accept whatever a Hindu is pleased to give.
8. If the Balais do not agree to abide by these terms they must clear out of the villages.

The Balais refused to comply and the Hindu element proceeded against them.

(a) Balais were not allowed to get water from the village wells.

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(b) They were not allowed to pasture their cattle.

(c) Balais were prohibited from passing through land owned by a Hindu, so that if the field of a Balai was surrounded by fields owned by Hindus, the Balai could have no access to his own field.

(d) The Hindus also let their cattle graze down the fields of Balais :

"The Balais protested to the Indore Durbar but due to dilatory tactics of the high caste Hindus in the State they could get no timely relief and the oppression continued; hundreds of Balais with their wives and children were obliged to abandon their homes in which their ancestors lived for generations and to migrate to adjoining States, viz, villages in Dhar, Dewas, Bagli, Bhopal, Gwalior and other States. . . pp. 20, 21.

"Higher castes of Hindus have deliberately prevented the lower castes who are within the pale of Hinduism from rising to the cultural level of the higher castes. . . Under the authority of the *Peshwas* the Brahmins successfully put down this attempt on the part of the Sonars to adopt the ways of the Brahmins. They even got the President of the Council of East India Company's settlement in Bombay to issue a prohibitory order against the Sonars residing in Bombay. . ." p. 25.

'The capacity to appreciate merits in a man apart from his caste does not exist in a Hindu. There is appreciation of virtue but only when the man is his caste fellow. . . ' p. 28.

'*The Hindus claim to be a very tolerant people. In my opinion this is a mistake. . . .*' p. 25.

"What is your ideal society if you do not want caste is a question that is bound to be asked of you. If you ask me, my ideal would be a society based on Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. . .

'This is fraternity, which is only another name for democracy."

Islam and Islam only can give complete Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity to all human beings and observes no distinction of creed, caste or colour.

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As the high caste Hindus failed to give even an ordinary right of temple worship to the Depressed Classes the 'Bombay Government has placed on the Statute Book an important measure for the removal of certain disabilities of Harijans. The Bombay Harijan Temple Worship Bill recently passed by the Legislature has received the assent of the Governor-General.<sup>1</sup>

*(To be continued)*

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### JESUS THE SON OF MARY : HIS BIRTH AND DEATH

BY KHWAJA NAZIR AHMAD

*(Continued from vol. XXXV, p. 119.)*

I will now proceed to consider and analyse the significance of the various appearances as recorded in the Gospels. I have clearly mentioned in detail the discrepancies found in the different versions : and will endeavour to avoid, as far as possible, any repetition.

It is, to begin with, evident that the women were present besides the sepulchre when the angels appeared for they got their information from them that Jesus had risen, and they had further invited them to see the tomb for themselves. The angels also directed them to inform the disciples to proceed to Galilee to which place Jesus had gone. But Jesus, knowing his disciples, realised that this second-hand information may not be considered by them as trustworthy, so he had to appear himself before the women and give the same instructions.<sup>2</sup>

The manner in which the news was conveyed to the disciples, as already mentioned, is different in different

<sup>1</sup> *The Social Service Quarterly* for 1938.

<sup>2</sup> Matt., XXVIII: 6,7,10.



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Gospels. It is a peculiar fact that on getting this extraordinary news, none of the disciples took the trouble of going to the sepulchre. Luke goes on to give the reason :

And these words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.<sup>1</sup>

Luke, however, makes an exception in favour of Peter<sup>2</sup> and John appends to Peter another disciple "whom Jesus loved," who also went to the tomb, and found the grave empty and *they returned wondering*.<sup>3</sup> John, throwing overboard all the alleged prophecies of Jesus regarding his resurrection, which he is supposed to have made in presence of his disciples, gives an explanation :

For as yet they knew not the *scriptures* that he must rise again from the dead.<sup>4</sup>

I may mention here that the passage in Luke dealing with the visit of Peter to the tomb is another pious forgery of the early Christian Fathers ;<sup>5</sup> and John, who is alleged to have gone with him, must also disappear. None of the disciples, therefore, went to the tomb.

The first appearance after the resurrection was to Mary Magdalene, an hysterical woman, out of whom Jesus had cast seven devils, and whom he found weeping.<sup>6</sup>

In Mark directions are given to the women to inform the disciples that they should proceed to Galilee where they shall see him.<sup>7</sup> Matthew says the same.<sup>8</sup> This was in keeping with the prophecy of Jesus :

After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Luk, XXIV : 11

<sup>2</sup> Luke XXIV : 12.

<sup>3</sup> John, XX : 10.

<sup>4</sup> John, XX : 9.

<sup>5</sup> Dummelow, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 768. See also Peake's *Commentary on Bible*, 741.

<sup>6</sup> Mark, XVI : 9 ; John, XIX : 14.

<sup>7</sup> Mark, XVI : 7.

<sup>8</sup> Matt. XXVIII : 7.

<sup>9</sup> Matt., XXVI : 32 ; Mark, XIV : 38.

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In keeping with this prophecy Matthew describes Jesus' second appearance at Galilee to the disciples.<sup>1</sup> Mark, however, mentions certain appearances which must have been at Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> John, like Mark, knows nothing of the directions to the disciples to go to Galilee. In Luke not only is there no trace of an appearance at Galilee, but in fact Jerusalem, with its environs, is made the sole place of his appearance. Not only this, but Luke puts into the mouth of Jesus, when he appeared in the evening after the resurrection, a direction to the disciples at Jerusalem :

Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from the high.<sup>3</sup>

And in the Acts Luke expresses it more definitely though in a negative form :

That they should not depart from Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup>

Now, how could Jesus direct his disciples to journey to Galilee, and undertake the longest journey which a Jew could make within his own country, and yet at the same time to have commanded them to remain in Jerusalem until the Pentecost? And how could Jesus ask them to meet him in Galilee when he himself had the intention of appearing before them that very day in Jerusalem? Wolfenbüttele Fragmentist suggests that if Jesus appeared to his disciples at Jerusalem on the day of his resurrection and commanded them not to depart thence until the Pentecost: then it is false that he commanded them also within the same period to go to Galilee.

To this a very simple, but a very significant, answer has been given by a Church apologist. He says that Jesus originally intended to go to Galilee and directed his disciples to do the same. They were ignorant of, and doubted, his resurrection and being in hiding did not

<sup>1</sup> Matt, XXIII : 16-18.

<sup>2</sup> Mark, XVI : 12-14.

<sup>3</sup> Luke, XXIV : 49.

<sup>4</sup> Acts, I : 4.

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bestir themselves. Jesus was, therefore, forced to postpone his departure and had to appear before them at Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> I cannot controvert this assertion; but it does appear strange that either the "son of God" did not really know his disciples or he could not foresee the future. However, when he did appear to them:

They were terrified and affrightened, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.<sup>2</sup>

And to dispel their doubts, Jesus had to say:

Behold my hands and my feet, that it is *I myself*: handle me and see; for a spirit *hath not flesh, and bones*, as ye see me have.<sup>3</sup>

We are further told:

And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. And *while they yet believed not for joy and wonder-ed*, he said unto them: Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a boiled fish, and honey comb. And he took it and did eat before them.<sup>4</sup>

But in spite of these demonstrations, some doubted him.<sup>5</sup> I need hardly mention that the words *for joy* are a later Christian interpolation.<sup>6</sup>

Mark gives a version, similar to that of Luke, under somewhat different circumstances, but it has been now universally admitted that from Verse 9 of Chapter XVI onwards the remaining chapter, in which this narrative appears, is another pious forgery. The translators of the Revised Version content themselves by remarking:

The two oldest manuscripts and some other authorities omit from verse 9 to the end. Some other authorities have a different ending to the Gospel.<sup>7</sup>

If we turn to John, we find that Jesus first stood behind Mary Magdalene as she was running away from the tomb. She did not recognise him, and took him for the gardener until he called her by name. He

<sup>1</sup> Dean Whitney, *Resurrection of the Lord*, 327.

<sup>2</sup> Luke, XXIV : 37.

<sup>3</sup> Luke, XXIV : 39.

<sup>4</sup> Luke, XXIV : 40-43.

<sup>5</sup> Matt., XXVIII : 17.

<sup>6</sup> Revised Version, p. 1167.

<sup>7</sup> Revised Version, p. 1123.

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directed her to inform his disciples. And the same day :

when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in their midst, and saith unto them, *Peace be unto you*. And when he had so said he showed unto them his hands and his side.<sup>1</sup>

Thomas, however, was not present at this occasion. When the other disciples told him of this appearance, he replied :

Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of nails, and thrust my hand into his side. I will not believe.<sup>2</sup>

Thus Jesus was compelled, eight days later, to appear again and had to invite Thomas to see his hands and thrust a finger into his side.<sup>3</sup> I might here mention that the phrase put into the mouth of Thomas : " My Lord and My God " <sup>4</sup> could never have come from the mouth of a Jew, and is now admittedly a later Christian addition.

The episode related in John<sup>5</sup> is much more interesting. It is a kind of an appendix, inserted by another hand, to the Gospel. It is in fact a secondary and tendentious addition, clumsy and inconsistent. It upsets the whole plan of the Gospel which clearly ends with verses 30 and 31 of ch. XX, and was probably added to make the Gospel acceptable to the Church which adhered to the Synoptic version. The author of the Gospel accepts the appearance at Jerusalem, while the interpolater follows the tradition of the appearance at Galilee. The juxtaposition of chapters XX and XXI discloses an inexplicable contradiction, except if it is considered as extra information being thrown in for the benefit of the believers. Ignoring the contradiction in the fourth, the seventh and the twelfth verses, the entire

<sup>1</sup> John, XX : 19-20.

<sup>2</sup> John XX : 27.

<sup>3</sup> John, XX : 1-14.

<sup>4</sup> John, XX : 25.

<sup>5</sup> John XX : 28.

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chapter is of a legendary character. The last two verses and the talk of Jesus with Peter could not have been from the pen of the author of this Gospel. The words "*we know*" clearly disclose that this chapter was appended to the Gospel by the Ephesian elders "who first put it in circulation." The basis that the author of this Gospel was "the beloved disciple" is derived from verses 20-24. Peake, in his *Commentary on the Bible*, gives cogent reasons for holding that the entire chapter was a subsequent addition.<sup>1</sup> Dummelow describes it as "an appended addition at a later time."<sup>2</sup>

This chapter introduces a sudden and a complete change of the scene. The disciples, we are told, had taken to their former life in Galilee, when Jesus appeared to them in the morning twilight at the sea of Tiberias.<sup>3</sup> As usual his disciples knew him not and were afraid, and none of them dared ask him "who art thou?"<sup>4</sup> Once again, he could only dispel their doubts by distributing bread and fishes and asking them to eat;<sup>5</sup> and no doubt himself partaking of same.

It is often alleged that Jesus did not appear to his disciples in a physical body. But Ignatius in his Epistle to the Church at Smyrna wrote:

I know and believe that He was in *flesh* even after the Resurrection, and when he came to those with Peter he said: "Take, handle me and see that I am not a bodiless phantom."<sup>6</sup>

Origen quoted a similar passage from the *Gospel of Peter*. It has also been quoted and relied upon by Jerome and Eusebius. In the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* it is recorded:

Now James had taken an oath that he would not eat bread... (And the Lord said) Bring a table and bread; and he took the bread and blessed and broke; and afterwards gave it to James, the

<sup>1</sup> Peake, *Commentary on the Bible*, 764-765.

<sup>2</sup> Dummelow, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, 810.

<sup>3</sup> John, XXI: 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, XXI: 12.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, XXI: 13.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, III: 1-2

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Just, said to him, my brother, eat thy bread for the son of Man has risen from *the sleep*.<sup>1</sup>

James was sceptical and Jesus said :

Take hold and handle me and see that I am not an incorporeal spirit.<sup>2</sup>

Now, either it was a natural and perfectly human life and body which accordingly continued to be subject to the physical and organic law, or his life was already of a higher super-human character and his body was transfigured. The human form in all its aspects, the continuance of the marks of the wounds, the human speech, the acts of walking and breaking bread are incompatible with a heavenly corporeality ; but all doubts must be set at rest in face of the fact that Jesus consumed earthly food and allowed himself to be touched. Further, we observe in him precisely the same progress as might be expected in the gradual cure of a severely wounded man. In the first hours after getting out of the tomb he was obliged to remain in the vicinity of the garden. In the afternoon he had strength, sufficient for a walk for the neighbouring village of Emmaus, and only later was he able to take the more distant journey into Galilee. Again, he took as much time, nay longer, to reach Galilee, for his appearance there was *after* the arrival of his disciples. Then again, there exists the same remarkable gradation in his allowing others to touch his body. Immediately after the resurrection his wounded body was yet tender and sensitive and he asked Mary Magdalene not to touch him ; eight days after he himself allowed Thomas to touch and feel his wounds.

The fact that Jesus, after his supposed resurrection, was so seldom with his disciples, and for so short a

<sup>1</sup> Andrews : *Apocryphal Books of the Old and New Testaments : Gospel According to the Hebrews*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibi* .

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time, is a proof that his natural human body, weak with wounds, did require longer rest after some exertion. His absence thus shows that he was conscious of the real position. Had he been resurrected from the dead he should have shown himself to his enemies also and thus convinced them of his Divine Origin. But he did not do so. In fact, he did not wish to face another trial and ordeal, and so he used to disappear as suddenly as he used to appear. It may be urged that if he needed bodily rest he should have remained with his disciples who would have attended him with love and care. But Jesus could not run the risk of another betrayal, he had already had a foretaste of it, and his disciples even after his appearances were *wondering and doubting*. The question then arises: where did he live during the long intervals between the appearances! in the wilderness or in the mountains? The answer to this could only be furnished by the *two men in white garments*, or perhaps the members of the Secret Order, the Essenes. In his peculiar circumstances there could be no suitable abode for a suffering man like him except among his *secret* colleagues of whom even the disciples knew nothing and from whom he could come as and when he liked. I will, a little further on, discuss in detail this aspect of his life.

It may be objected that the coming of Jesus in rooms with doors shut indicates that he did not have a physical body. But did he pass *through* the doors, for it is nowhere said that he passed *through* the wooden boards. Peter is said to have come out of closed prison.<sup>1</sup> No one has ever suggested that the gates of the prison were closed and yet he got out. Now the gates had to open even though of their own accord.<sup>2</sup> It would have been superfluous, perhaps absurd, for the evangelists to

<sup>1</sup> Acts, XVII : 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

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have stated that the door was opened. It must be taken for granted, unless it is stated that it was shut and continued to remain shut and Jesus passed *through* the wooden boards. I might mention here that the removal of the stone from the sepulchre clearly shows that Jesus had got out of the tomb in his earthly body and that the *angels* who were seen there were also in physical bodies. Again, the *first* information conveyed by the women was "that he (Jesus) was alive,"<sup>1</sup> which absolutely negatives any idea of a spiritual resurrection. That is why the doctrine of Resurrection was expanded in the Fourth Article of the Religion of the Church of England in the following words :

Christ did truly rise again from death and took upon his body, with flesh, bones and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature ; wherewith he ascended into heaven and there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last day.

Paul, it is true, spoke of the nature of the resurrected body and asserted that it had changed from one of flesh and blood to one spiritual, incorruptible and immortal, in such a way that there was no trace left of the corruptible body of flesh and blood which had been laid in the tomb. This really amounted to the acceptance of the Jewish cosmogony whereby it was believed that all dead souls had to descend into Hades. The death of Jesus, therefore, involved for him, as for other men, according to the Jewish belief, the same journey. To prove the death of Jesus, therefore, he was made to descend into Hades. In the New Testament the references to Jesus' descent to the under world are only incidental. The *post* Pauline Epistle of Peter tells us that Christ :

being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the

<sup>1</sup> Luke, XXIV : 23.



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Spirit : by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.<sup>1</sup>

And a little further on that :

For this cause, was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.<sup>2</sup>

But according to the Jewish belief the soul of the dead person remained near his body for three days, at the end of which it departed and corruption set in. Therefore three days and three nights were fixed for his sojourn in hell, and a comparison was made with the prophecy of Prophet Jonah,<sup>3</sup> though by doing so the following prophecy had to be overlooked :

After two days will He revive us : in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight,<sup>4</sup>

But Jehovah had promised :

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.<sup>5</sup>

The Acts, therefore, attributed to David a saying :

Seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.<sup>6</sup>

It is obvious that these contradictory assertions are the result of a confusion. In the Apostolic or Sub-Apostolic Age no one felt impelled by dogmatic considerations to insist on the descent of Jesus into Hades as an Article in the Baptismal Creed. Harnack has suggested a solution. According to him the empty tomb complicated matters and confused the traditions. Some took Jesus to hell, others to heaven.

The Synoptic tradition is no better informed, and so it had to assert that Jesus departed from his disciples in whatever body he had resurrected and went up into heavens in the same body to sit on the right hand of God.

*(To be continued.)*

<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter, III : 18-19.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Peter, IV : 6.

<sup>3</sup> Jonah, I : 17.

<sup>4</sup> Hos., VI : 2.

<sup>5</sup> Ps., XVI : 10

<sup>6</sup> The Act, II : 31

## MUHAMMAD THE CHOSEN<sup>1</sup>

BY SALEH M. HAFFAR, B. COM.

“Say : Praise be to God and Peace upon His servants whom He has chosen.”<sup>2</sup>

### Preface

Although in his daily prayer a Muslim praises God and asks for peace upon Muhammad as well as upon all those holy men whom God has chosen for His service, to-day this prayer has a special significance to us. Muslims all over the world meet during this third month of the Hijrah year to celebrate the Birthday of Muhammad and ponder over the message of Unity and Peace he brought to all who are willing to listen to him and obey. It is an occasion to revive our sense of indebtedness to Muhammad for all the best in our culture and further to receive inspiration from his example and teachings. It is also an occasion to deepen our faith in God and sing His Praises for all His blessings in all forms. “Alláhu-Akbar, wa lilláhil-ḥamd.”

### The True Meaning of “the Chosen of God.”

One reads in the Old and New Testaments about the Chosen of God, be he man, as for instance Abraham, or a nation, as in the case of the Israelites. Perhaps if one peruses the sacred literatures of other nations, he will find evidence of the same idea, for it is natural to attribute the sudden appearance and pre-eminence of these spiritual leaders, at intervals in human history, to the Divine hand Which guides all destinies.

<sup>1</sup> Being the text of lecture delivered on the occasion of the Birthday of Holy Prophet Muhammad on 3rd February 1947 at the Islamic Cultur Centre, London, N.W.

<sup>2</sup> The Holy Qur-án, 27 : 59.

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The Qur'án also confirms this idea, but it gives it more of a universal and a rational application as we shall soon see :

We read in the third Chapter of the Holy Qur-án, verse 33 :

"God did choose Adam and Noah, the family of Abraham and the family of Imran above all people, offspring one of the other and God heareth and knoweth all things."

We also read of a good woman as "a chosen of God" further on in the same chapter, verse 42 :

"Behold, the angels said : O Mary. God hath chosen thee and purified thee and chosen thee above the women of all nations. O Mary ! worship thy Lord devoutly. Prostrate thyself and bow down (in prayers) with those who bow down."

Thus the superiority of Mary is tied up with her continual devotion to God, for in no other way, she is told, can she be worthy of God's grace. This is very clearly stated further in Chapter XXXVV : 10 :

"If any do seek for glory and power, to God belong all glory and power. To Him mount up (all) words of purity and goodness. It is He who exalts each deed of righteousness."

After confirming earlier Prophets chosen by God from amongst all nations, the Qur-án confirms the choice of Muhammad for delivering the last Divine revelation to mankind,<sup>1</sup> and of the followers of Muhammad for carrying this message of Truth and Goodness to all mankind.<sup>2</sup> At the same time it is clearly indicated that this choice or superiority is conditional on the fulfilling of certain obligations to God and man :

Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong and believing in God.

It is however admitted, in another Chapter (XXXV : 32) that "not all Muslims are true and faithful to their charge" as indeed we see too painfully around us to-day.

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-án, 33 : 40.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 111 : 110.

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Commenting on this verse, the learned Yusuf Ali, goes on to say : "Just as mankind was chosen collectively to be Vicegerents for God and yet some among mankind fall into evil, even so, some in the House of Islam fail to follow the light given to them and thus wrong their own souls. But some follow a middle course : in their case ; 'the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak' : their intentions are good, but they have much to learn yet of the true Muslim life and Muslim virtues. Then there is a third class : they may not indeed be perfect, but both their intentions and their conduct are sound, and they form an example to other men ; they are ' foremost ' in every good deed. They are so, not by their own merits, but by the Grace of God" . . . . .

From the foregoing study and other verses in the Holy Qur-ân we must arrive at the following conclusions :—

1. Islam admits the universal application of the principle of "the Chosen of God", be he a man or a nation.

2. That the hall-mark of their being "Chosen of God" is devotion to God and usefulness to their fellow-men.

3. That the chosen would forfeit the Grace of God as they cease to be true to God and man.

4. That whoever pretends to be "a Chosen" of God and fabricates Divine revelation does not prosper and will ultimately perish unless he repents and reforms.

The threat to false prophets is to be found in both the Old and New Testaments : in Deuteronomy, chapter 18 : 20, where the prophecy of the advent of a Prophet like Moses (who else could he be except Muhammad), is followed by these words : "But the prophet which shall

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presume to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that Prophet shall die". In the New Testament, according to St. Matthews: 7: 19:

"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire."

In similar strong terms the Holy Qur-án, after affirming its Divine origin and refuting false charges against Muhammad, (may the blessings and peace of God be upon him), says:

"And if he (Muhammad) had fabricated against Us some of the sayings, We would certainly have seized him by his right hand, and We would certainly then cut off the artery of his heart."

How stupid then are those who claim to be "The Chosen" of God, who, when judged by common sense, are found to be false to the object of their choice, namely the worship of God and the service of their fellow-men and even to all peaceful animals.

Muhammad Al-Mustafa, i.e. the "Chosen of God", was not a worshipper of false gods, race, colour, class or rank. These are human appellations to distinguish one from another only. They count for nothing in the eyes of God. For we are all from Adam and Adam is from dust, as the Prophet used to say. Righteousness only is the test and "hall-mark" of the "chosen" of God. It is therefore only self-deception to think otherwise. Allegiance to this or that faith without bringing forth the good fruit of righteousness enjoined by all true religions may have its value socially but not morally or spiritually.

In the light of what has just been said, let us judge the claim of Muhammad as "The Chosen", for the task of uniting all mankind to the worship of the One God, or in Arabic, "Allah" and co-operating in the uplift

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-án. 69 : 45-6.

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of humanity to higher and higher levels of prosperity and happiness :

I have chosen from the preface of the book, "Muhammad the Prophet", by Mulana Muhammad Ali of Lahore, one of the greatest of living scholars of Islam, the following appreciation of our Holy Prophet :

"I believe, as every Muslim does, that every nation had its superman, the luminary who gave it light, reformer who inspired it with noble ideas, the prophet who raised it morally. But, Muhammad (may peace and the blessings of God be upon him) is 'par excellence' THE PROPHET, because he is the Prophet not of one nation but of all the nations of the world, because it was he who declared belief in all the prophets of the world, as an essential of the faith he preached and thus laid down the basis of everlasting peace among different nations because 'he is the greatest of all reformers' (Bosworth Smith), having brought about a transformation the equal of which has not been brought about either before or after him, and lastly because 'he is the most successful of all prophets and religious personalities' (En. Br. Art. Koran). Every man ought to be judged by what he does, and Muhammad the Prophet accomplished within twenty years what centuries of the labours of Jewish and Christian reformers could not accomplish notwithstanding the temporal power at their back. He swept away centuries-old idolatry, superstition, credulity, ignorance, prostitution, gambling, drinking, oppression of the weak, internecine war and a hundred other evils from a whole country. History cannot show any other reformer who wrought so wonderful and complete a transformation on such a large scale within so short a time. Never 'was reform more hopeless' at the advent of the Prophet, as Muir has remarked, and never was it more complete than when he departed. In one word, 'it was a birth from darkness into light' as Carlyle says. A life so great cannot be devoid of potentialities as great for the future; it cannot but inspire the noblest ideas of the service of humanity into any heart. If there is any one trait of his character which is more marked than another, it is his care of the orphan and the widow, his support of the weak and the helpless, his love of labour and work for the distressed. It is the life of a man who lived for God and who died for God. 'If ever man on this earth found God, if ever man devoted his life to God's service with a good and

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great motive, it is certain that the Prophet of Arabia was that man' (Leonard).

The celebration of this day in the Muslim world varies according to the cultural level of society. The young hear about the miraculous stories preceding and succeeding the birth of the Prophet and the more developed prefer a more rational account. They sing or hear hymns chanted in praise of the Prophet and of his ideal yet practical teaching and example. But in the atmosphere of the Islamic Cultural Centre, I feel that you may well afford to listen to a sophisticated member of the Centre developing a thought worthy of public attention by Muslim and non-Muslim alike, I mean the thought of "the Chosen of God", which oppresses the thoughts of all communities in general and one in particular and I hope I have succeeded in driving home to you that Muhammad has proved himself a "Chosen of God", by raising many people of God and for giving the world a common ground to build a universal brotherhood based on mutual respect and free development.

I have already quoted an appreciation of Muhammad as "The Chosen of God", as the creator of an Arab nation, nay, a world-wide Muslim brotherhood, made up of diverse nations above race, colour and other dividing lines.

But I want to assure you that nothing would please our beloved Prophet now on this occasion, more than following in his footsteps and assisting each in his own way, in bringing peace and unity to a distracted, unhappy and divided world. Remember, we bear a great responsibility in the same proportion as our great heritage.

When you listen to the enchanting recitation of the glorious Qur-án, which, by the way, I am very much missing to-day, remember that it is the voice of God, which Muhammad was chosen to deliver to you. The Qur-án is the enduring Miracle of all Miracles and a tangible link with the Divine.

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We are fascinated by the ascetic and literary value of its pure Arabic language, but we must go beyond that and beyond still until we reach the Divine source. I consider this short address incomplete until I recite, even in my poor voice, the following passage from the Holy Qur ān, most pertinent to our subject "The Chosen of God."

### Read from Chapter XLIX : 11-18

11. O you who believe! let not (one) people laugh at (another) people, perchance they may be better than they; nor let women (laugh) at (other) women, perchance they may be better than they; and do not find fault with your own people nor call one another by nick-names; evil is a bad name after faith and whoever does not turn, these it is that are the unjust.

12. O you who believe! avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin, and do not spy nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? But you abhor it; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, surely Allah is Oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful.

13. O you men! surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honourable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty); surely Allah is Knowing, Aware.

14. The dwellers of the desert say: We believe. Say: You do not believe but say, We submit; and faith has not yet entered into your hearts; and if you obey Allah and His Apostle, He will not diminish aught of your deeds; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

15. The believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Apostle; then they doubt not and struggle hard with their wealth and their lives in the way of Allah; they are the truthful ones.

16. Say: Do you apprise Allah of your religion, and Allah knows what is in the heavens and what is in the earth; and Allah is Cognisant of all things?



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17. They think that they lay you under an obligation by becoming Muslims. Say : Lay me not under obligation by your Islam, rather Allah lays you under an obligation by guiding you to the faith if you are truthful.

18. Surely Allah knows the unseen things of the heavens and the earth ; and Allah sees what you do.

“Say : Praise be to God and peace upon His servants whom He has chosen and upon thee in particular, O Seal of the Prophets, “ the Chosen of God.

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## THE CONCEPTION OF SIN IN ISLAM

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD DIN AHMAD

As the idea of sin is fundamentally connected with the idea of evil, it is necessary to know the attitude of Islam towards the question of evil. Islam does not recognise any absolute existence of evil. There is no evil as such either in the mind of man or in the outside world. Speaking of the objects of the creation the Holy Qur’ân says :

Our Lord ! Thou hast not created all this in vain.

In other words, everything in creation has a purpose to fulfil. This purpose is further explained in the words :

We have made subservient to you all that is in the heavens and the earth.

That is to say, everything in creation is to assist man in his self-unfoldment, in attaining the object of his life.

And as for man’s own constitution, we are told :

We have created man with the best of potentialities.

Thus there is nothing basically wrong in human nature. All the faculties of body and mind are potentially good.

Neither is man inherently disobedient to God and His Commandments. Thus speaking of his inner nature God says in the Holy Qur-ân :

I have breathed My spirit into it.

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If it is inspired by God, it cannot be vicious in nature. Further with reference to the original natural response of the human nature to the call Divine, God describes the position in the form of a dialogue. It is written :

Am I not your Lord? They (the souls) said, "Yes"! which means that so far as the inner nature is concerned every soul is ready to obey the commandments of the Lord.

Sin is thus no inalienable part of human nature. Now if there is nothing wrong in things and acts as they are and if there is no sin in the mind of man either, wherefrom come sin and evil? The Holy Qur-án has a wonderful and perfectly satisfying reply to this question. It lays down the principle that everything in the outside world and every faculty of body and mind has an ordained measure wherein it is good and beneficial and that evil or sin consists in either deficiency or excess in this appointed measure :

Who created everything, then ordained for it a measure.

Further :

And He made the measure that you may not be inordinate in respect of measure.

And again,

And keep up the balance with equity and do not make the measure deficient.

Thus everything in nature, every emotion, every faculty of body and mind, is good unless it is used in a wrong measure. But the moment one commits any inordinacy or deficiency, one becomes guilty of sin and acquires evil.

It is the persistent and unfailing use of the proper measure that constitutes *the right path* (Sirát al Mustaqím) spoken of in Muslim Lord's prayer *Al-Fatiha*.

Any deficiency in this measure leads one to *Maghzu-biyah* or the state of being visited by the wrath of God. Whereas any excess or extravagance in this matter opens the door for *Dzalālah* or the state of going astray.

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Against both these errors the Holy Qur'án warns its followers in the very concluding words of this immutable prayer for light, because both of them lead to sin and perdition.

The wisdom of the Holy Qur'án in respect of this rule of measure has been testified by the sciences of Physics and Chemistry, Medicine and Dietetics. The powers of observation and experiment in man enables him to discover the right measure of things in these realms. We can rely on our intellect to a great extent in this matter. We say to a great extent advisedly ; because experience shows that there are rules of hygiene and medicine which have eluded the scrutiny of the most advanced intellect. The subject of alcoholic drinks, for instance, has divided the doctors of medicine into two antagonistic groups, but with the latest and most complete religion, we mean Islam, it is a clear case of prohibition admitting of no relaxation. Some of the delicate points of personal hygiene, regarded as preliminaries in religious cleanliness, are still debatable questions with the experts of Medical science. These include certain questions of sex-relationships, matters of common knowledge among the Muslims.

Thus, when the intellectual powers of man are proved insufficient even in the physical plane of existence, it must prove much more defective in the social and moral spheres—spheres far subtler for intellectual comprehension.

We must need some super-intellectual light to comprehend the laws working in these planes. In other words, we need the light of revelation, even revealed Dispensation. The claim of the Holy Qur'án in this respect is very striking. It touches the rest of the question. The Qur'án claims to be an exposition of the

Nature made by God on which He has made man.

Indeed, the only function which revealed religion is

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expected to perform and to perform satisfactorily is to enunciate and define the laws of our mind in relation to our social and moral behaviour, and it is this that the Holy Qur-án undertakes to set forth. It gives us the proper measure of every social and moral action—the right occasion for and the proper manner of displaying each social and moral faculty with which we are endowed.

But while we must have revealed rules for our guidance in social and moral affairs, such rules should neither go against the canons of reasoning nor should they be belied by experience. No doubt, revelation is a higher light than reason but a higher light supplements but never nullifies the lower light. If, therefore, any rule claiming to be revealed contradicts any established rule of reasoning or nullifies experience, it cannot be a genuine piece of revelation. The manner and method of displaying any particular faculty of body and mind as prescribed by religion must appear reasonable on the face of it and prove beneficial when adopted in practice.

It is a well-established fact that the law of measure is the very basis of our existence. A wrong measure makes even the most essential thing not only injurious but sometimes even fatal to our existence. The sun-beams, so essential to our physical health and vigour, cause sun-stroke in the wrong measure. And what is true of things physical is equally true of things moral. Even such a highly valued act as speaking the truth, if exhibited on the wrong occasion and out of a bad motive, will undoubtedly be classed as a sinful act. Whereas non-exhibition of such an apparently evil passion as anger at certain moments of importance, constitutes positive sin. If a man's blood does not boil to see an innocent man oppressed before his very eyes or a chaste woman outraged in his presence, he must be regarded as guilty of the vilest sin.

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In Islam misuse of anything of creation, even of water, of any organ of the body or any faculty of the mind constitutes sin, whereas their proper use and right application is an act of virtue.

Quite in consonance with this view of virtue and vice the goal of man's spiritual struggle is characterised as *falāh*, meaning literally 'proper cultivation', secondly success. The expression is significant. So many faculties of our mind and body stand in need of cultivation, and cultivation presupposes method and measure. Consequently what is called sin is only the adoption of a wrong measure in the exercise of our faculties and this results in retarded growth with consequent suffering implied in the term 'hell'. Islamic hell is thus a state of undeveloped moral faculties. It is painful inasmuch as all suppressed or paralysed faculties cause pain and disability. And the cause of this defective growth is invariably the misuse or misapplication of the faculty concerned. There is another point of view from which the question of sin has been considered in Islam. Acts of virtue has been called *Ma'rūf*, i.e., such as are recognised by the nature of man, whereas acts that are sinful are called *munkar* i.e., such as are repulsive to or are disowned by human nature. The nature of man may be unaware of a certain act of virtue but, the moment it is apprised of it, it will recognise it as good and beneficial. Similarly, one may go on committing a sinful act in ignorance. But once it is pointed out to him that it is sinful and injurious, his inner voice will agree that it is so and he will be unable to repeat it without some compunction and uneasiness of his soul.

In short, the question of virtue and sin is a clear one. It is defined by true religion, supported by reason and verified by experience and what is more, its demarcations receive recognition by the intuitive sense of man.

A false philosophy of a false civilization has been at pains to confuse even such a clear issue as this. But it is

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a vain attempt. Its attempts may succeed only so far as there is want of any clear light of religion. But where true religion happens to shine in full brilliance of revealed truth such attempts are bound to fail. Whenever such a religion makes its appearance people can no longer be persuaded to believe that there is no such thing as sin, that there is no rule of moral action, that the idea of sin is a product of convention. As we have seen even common sense ridicules such a view of sin. If there are inviolable measures appointed for things physical, it is only reasonable to assume, to say the least about it, that there must be similar inexorable laws in matters social and moral.

In fact, all administrative laws tacitly assume such a system of law warranting their own existence. The English Law is still supposed to be based on the Ten Commandments. But although all administrative laws have, more or less, a religious background, the former are not generally faithful to the latter. Nay, some systems of law with avowed religious foundation gradually slip off in actual practice to secular channels with the passage of time. And in so far as they do so they drag people imperceptibly in the quagmire of social disruption. Indeed, social peace and harmony in a nation depends on the measure of allegiance the administrative laws pay to the rules laid down by religion. If the two are identical the Kingdom of God or *Khilāfat* as it is called in Islam, may be regarded as ushered in a given nation. An instance of the identity of the administrative law with the code of religion may be found in the legislation for suicide. All civilized laws agree in denouncing this act as a crime, while all religions agree in decrying it as sin. But this kind of identity becomes an exception rather than a rule in all societies materially advanced. A glaring instance of such a departure is the attitude of the administrative laws in all progressive countries, towards the question of sexual misconduct. Whereas all religions hold it to be a major sin, our modern administrative laws have no

## THE CONCEPTION OF SIN IN ISLAM

punishment prescribed for this crime as such. It is such divergences which lie at the root of the present social chaos in the world. It is the reluctance of the secular mind to recognise in their entirety the measures defined by religion for faculties of body and mind at the time of their exhibition that lies at the bottom of such divergences.

It may be said in defence of this delinquency that the official religion of the leading nations of the world has very little of guidance in it for the advanced and complicated social life of our modern times. But the blame again goes to these people. They should have considered the latest revealed restatement of religion and compared it with the one which they call their own and which has actually outlived its time. Islam the latest statement of the eternal principles of religion should have been consulted before religion could have been justifiably pronounced as incapable of furnishing us with light and guidance in our social affairs. In any case we have to be enlightened on the immutable laws that work subtly on the social and moral planes of our existence and we must base our administrative laws on that knowledge if we are not to experience a social collapse in the near future. As a preliminary to this we must acknowledge that there are such laws actually in existence, that 'sin' implying a violation of those laws, is not an empty word and that we can bring about true social justice only if we recognise those laws and make sincere efforts to embody them in our administrative laws. In other words, we can get at the true social laws only when we have the knowledge of the whole range of social sins and we make our definition of crimes conformable to these sins. This is sin in its social aspects as viewed by Islam.

## THE TRADITION OF MUSLIM CHIVALRY

It goes without saying that the Muslims of today are not the same what they were, when they led the van of human civilization. As a matter of fact their fall from that exalted position is due to their deterioration in religious life. And yet it is striking that even now they specialize in the exhibition of certain traits of character and it is those traits exactly on which the Qur-án lays the greatest stress in its teachings. One of these is their conduct in warfare. Muslims have never believed in fighting for fighting's sake or for self-aggrandisement but they do believe in fighting in self-defence and in defence of religious freedom in general. The Qur-án says :

“ Fight in the way of God with those who have made war on you.”

For reasons which we refrain from discussing here, a kind of war has broken out between the Hindus and the Muslims living in India. We sincerely wish this fighting had never taken place and we fervently pray that those responsible may soon realise the shame of this kind of warfare in a land with a very ancient religious tradition.

In the meantime it raises great hopes in our heart, to know that in the midst of this acute bitter feeling from both sides, Muslims have not altogether forgotten the spirit of chivalry handed down to them by their noble Prophet. It is heartening to see that even now they do not refuse mercy and help, whenever these are sought from them. Least of all, they never go back on their word once they have given any assurance of protection.

There have been innumerable instances of this all over the country during these troublesome days, accounts of which have been published in newspapers, both Hindu and Muslim, but we reproduce below only three of these



## THE TRADITION OF MUSLIM CHIVALRY

because we have personal knowledge of them :

(1)

We the Hindu residents of Azim Street, Brandreth Road, Lahore, feel obliged to declare publicly that the Muslim residents of this street have provided us with each and every comfort and facility during this terrible period of communal bitterness.

We have life long brotherly neighbourhood with the Muslim residents of the street and during all the hours of need, especially at present, they have not hesitated to provide us even with the smallest needs of our daily life.

We therefore, in order to make it public, express our heartfelt gratitude to the Muslims of this street.

Undoubtedly they have set an example of true fraternity and brotherhood of neighbours. We from the bottom of our hearts appeal to the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs to follow this noble example, to wipe off the communal hatred. Peace can only be maintained if the people of the Province learn to live like us.

Dated 13th March 1947.

(Sd.) MADAN LAL MEHRA.

(Sd.) MOHAN LAL MEHRA.

(Sd.) RUP LAL MEHRA.

(Sd.) KAHN CHAND.

(Sd.) VISHWA NATH.

(2)

We the undersigned Hindu residents of Kucha Mela Ram, inside Bhati Gate, Lahore, do hereby condemn the state of affairs created by the resignation of the last Ministry and the consequent bloodshed and arson since March 4, 1947, as a result of political differences among the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. We thank our Muslim neighbours that they protected us and kept us safe in their areas even though we are in a minority. They also provided us with all facilities that we needed. We hope that in the future too they will give proof of the same generosity.

We appeal to our Hindu and Sikh brethren that wherever they are in a majority, they should give the same protection to the Muslim minorities. This behaviour and treatment will not only

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

be beneficial to the community but will also foster Hindu-Muslim-Sikh unity, and thus lead to the progress of our Province.

(Sd.) MANOHAR LAL.

(Sd.) BENARSI LAL.

(Sd.) RAM RATTAN ANAND.

(Sd.) VISHWA SURI.

(Sd.) MADAN GOPAL.

(Sd.) JHANDU RAM.

(Sd.) SARDARILAL CHADDHA.

(Sd.) RAM LUBHAYA SURI.

(Sd.) MOOL CHAND

and others.

(3)

Under the caption "They set an example for others" the *Tribune*, a Hindu daily of Lahore publishes the following in its issue of 8th March, 1947 :

In this unprecedented frenzy of communal fanaticism which has so rudely shaken the whole of the city of Lahore and the province, the spirit of human sympathy and fellow feelings displayed by the Muslim residents of Nawankot and its suburbs in protecting the lives and property of their Hindu and Sikh brethren living in Janak Nagar who are in a hopeless minority in that locality will serve as a beacon light to all the Punjabis.

In a signed statement issued to the press some of the leading Hindu and Sikh gentlemen from this area say that the Muslim brethren kept watch over the whole of the locality during day and night and looked after their safety at a great risk to themselves.

In an atmosphere where even women in seclusion and babies in cots are not spared, this kind of chivalry points to a great tradition which still peeps out from behind a thick veil of centuries long moral lethargy and which promises, even now, if revived and put to use, to bring back peace and amity to the warring sections of humanity. This again reminds us of a Qur-ânic teaching on the subject, which it is doubtful if many Muslims are consciously aware of now for many centuries. The teaching is :

"And if they incline to peace then you (too) incline to it and trust in God ; surely He is the Hearing, the Knowing—And if they

## CORRESPONDENCE

intend to deceive you—then surely God is sufficient for you..... (8; 161-162).

We know observance of this principle is likely to cost Muslims much, as in fact it has cost them in the past, but then this sacrifice is the price we must pay for our spiritual victory in the world and will be decisive in establishing the superiority of Islam over other faiths.

It is our strict adherence to this principle that will prove to those who profess faith in absolute non-violence that believers in resistance the Muslims are yet the most peaceful people in the true and spiritual sense of the term.

---

## CORRESPONDENCE

38 Woodside Park Avenue,  
London, E. 7.

18th November 1946.

Dear Sir,

Glancing through a number of periodicals recently, during a train journey to the north (it is my habit sometimes to take a bundle of accumulated journals and pamphlets with me for such journeys) I found a friendly though critical reference to myself in your journal.

You quote an observation I made when I was in India in February, viz, "If I were converted to Islam...does it mean I should agitate for the Isle of Wight for my Islamic brethren?" You then go on to state that this to me is a real difficulty and "to an average Englishman of to-day religion has ceased to be of any practical utility...he recognizes its value as a convention but cannot see how it can have anything to do with the social and cultural life of the people," etc. (*Islamic Review*, July-Augus ).

It is quite true, dear sir, that large numbers of people would fall into that category, not only in England but also in India and Turkey as well. There are nominal Christians, Muslims and Hindus who act very inconsistently with their faiths. Apparently on the basis of my utterance you classify me as one of those. That, indeed, is the purport of quoting me and the consequential observations.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

But why should you make that assumption? On the contrary, *because* of my religious faith I am not only conscious but constantly emphasise that religion has a great deal to do with our social and national life. On the other hand, there are many who are not particularly religious minded in the conventional sense who nevertheless are also most active regarding social and national affairs. Is Mr. Jinnah, for instance, an orthodox devout Muslim? I gather he is not (although I may be misinformed) but his zeal and devotion to principles he holds dear are beyond question. Maulana Azad is, I believe, a distinguished Muslim scholar and his religious convictions lead him to an exactly opposite political conclusion to that of Mr. Jinnah, who may be less firm in traditional Islamic beliefs.

What I am endeavouring to submit is that religious conviction can be expressed in a variety of ways. It may lead to the Jews demanding Palestine as the national home but it may lead Muslim Arabs into resisting this. It may lead some Muslims to demand Pakistan or perish and others to demand Pakistan if possible but not to perish as an alternative; and still others to repudiate Pakistan. In view of these and other variations in practical interpretation I would ask these questions:—

1. Who is to decide which is right?
2. Even assuming there is an absolute authority to decide, is this not meditated through fallible human judgment?
3. Are not variations and interpretations, of which the historic difference between the Shi'as and Sunnis is one, inevitable?
4. In this case are we not involved in living together in society and practising the religiously ethical principles of toleration, fraternity and good will?

It is precisely because of my religious convictions about the imperative need of the moral virtues I mention that I am apprehensive about a state founded entirely upon the domination of one particular theological creed or form of faith.

There was an attempt made to found and preserve nations on the basis of Roman Catholic Christianity and it led to frightful persecutions. Another attempt was made by Calvin to establish Geneva on the basis of his particular Protestant Christian pattern and that, too, involved persecution.

One can understand why. If a particular theological form of religion requires embodiment in a separate sovereign state then that form is so important to its adherents as to be likely to induce sincere but fierce hostility to any person within the sovereign

## CORRESPONDENCE

state who advocates contrary views or who even departs from traditional orthodoxy. Hence the U.S.S.R. cannot tolerate the persistent, active group advocacy of any other ideology within its borders than its own particular conception of Marxism. It is quite logical—and spiritually tragic!

My own religious faith is strong and deep and among its elements is the belief in toleration, fraternity and good-will to all men as the only possible social cement. Therefore, your observations respecting my political views are entirely erroneous. It is because I hold religious faith that I must urge not the segregation of this or that community with their profound form of faith but association and co-operation in the interest of a common humanity and in vindication of the true values in every form of faith, including Islam.

With good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
R. Sorensen (M.P.)

[We did not really mean that you or many other Englishmen like yourself are not religious-minded. What we meant to say was that a long and bitter experience in the past having proved the futility of all attempts to reconcile Christian religiosity with the peaceful and progressive political life of the people modern Christians fail to see how religion can be any basis for, nay even be closely associated, with an active political life. And this is what you yourself make so admirably clear in your very illuminating letter. Had we been a little more explicit on the point we could have very well avoided the annoyance we have unwittingly caused to you.

We are afraid the rising tide of secularism in the East is a reflex of the religious situation in the West, which for good or evil, is leading the van of civilization at the moment. We are sure if disappointed with its one-sided progress and discovering a religion which suits its progressive social life, the West becomes religious-minded to-day, this apathy of the Easterners towards religion in general will disappear in no time.

If we have understood you rightly you seem to hold that religion has much to do with our social and national life and yet beneficial social activities can proceed from men without any profound religiosity, nay strong religious-mindedness cannot be trusted with state powers without running the risk of the prevalence of intolerance and even persecution. We submit that here a

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distinction should be made between a scholastic theologian and a plain but enlightened man of religion, as also between a fire-brand ritualist and a devout man of faith, whose life breathes religion.

Islam has always upheld a plain man of faith and condemned the mere theologian, who has no charity and benevolence and no understanding of men and manners and the broad issues of life. (See Qur-ân 2 : 177 and ch. 107).

You have raised the question of the fallibility of human judgement. Islam has always recognised it unless of course it is enlightened by a prophetic vision. At any event our religion has always believed in the motto "Live and let live" and has categorically forbidden coercion in matters religious. "There is no compulsion in religion,"—says the Holy Qur'ân. Hence its history differs altogether from that of Christianity. There has been nothing in Islam like the horrors of Inquisition and Reformation. Hindus, Jews and Christians have always been given the fullest religious and cultural freedom under Muslim rule. The Shia-Sunni differences are nothing like the differences between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. The differences between these two sections of the Muslims appertain neither to doctrines nor to worship. The quarrel is over the question of succession to the leadership after the Holy Prophet. It was accentuated by the pre-Islamic tribal jealousies between Banu Hashim and Banu Umayya. The acrimonies no doubt have been bitter and long-drawn but it will surprise outsiders to know that the allegiances of the two parties are not mutually exclusive. The Sunnis pay allegiance to all the twelve Imams of the Shi'as. Perhaps you are not unaware that Mr. Jinnah, the present leader of the Indian Muslims is a Shi'a whereas the bulk of the Indian Muslim population is of Sunni persuasion. The long and glorious rule of the Mughals in India presents the happiest example of Shi'a-Sunni fusion and collaboration in the progressive cultural life of Islam.

There is nothing in the past history of Islam nor anything in its present history to justify any apprehension of the proposed Indian Muslim state being run on the lines of the Holy Roman Empire. Muslim states have always been run on modern lines. They have never been left at the mercy of men of the type of Peter the Hermit. The reason is that Islam as a religion is absolutely different from Christianity as a religion. This latter was never meant to be an international religion. Jesus Christ was out and out a Jewish reformer whose mission was confined to the Jews. Mark utterances like.

"I am not come but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel."

## CCORRESPONDENCE

"It is not meet to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs."

Evidently the gentiles were regarded as dogs. This parochialism has been retained throughout in the Christian social outlook. Added to this is the fact that Christianity is silent on questions social and political. As a consequence, in Christianity there is no social obligations to the people of other faiths excepting what may be deduced by far-fetched interpretations from certain ambiguous statements of the Master. The result has been that the Old Testament spirit of intolerance, ruthlessness and parochialism, coupled with the vagaries and caprices of unredeemed human mind have persistently coloured the history of the Christian nations. The case of Islam is absolutely different. In it the international and intercommunal duties and obligations are clearly defined.

A Muslim defaulter in such matters has a definite code to be judged by. We do not say that a Muslim can never go wrong. On the contrary we are painfully aware that there have been quite a large number of aberrations in the history of our faith. But with all this we have the indubitable advantage of possessing a code which is unalterably fixed for all times and based on religious faith and which defies all criticism even of this age of ours supposed to be the most liberal and tolerant of all ages. Absence of such a code in any other community of people, religious or secular, makes its position absolutely undependable, whatever safeguards one may devise against any possible outburst of fanaticism on the part of the dominating creed—be it British Protestantism or Russian Marxism. At one time quite tolerant, the same people may, like the Germans, turn out to be the most intolerant. Your scheme of neutralising the effect of such possible outbursts by blending divergent religious creeds into one political constitution may, in the absence of a better method, be tried with some advantage in such communities. Islam, however, does not stand in need of such man-made and hence insecure devices to keep it on the path of tolerance. Its religious creed is a better guarantee for toleration and goodwill than any such improvised safeguards; it makes its followers believe in a God to Whom all lands are equally sacred and all nations equally chosen; it gives religious recognition to inter-religious marriages; it makes it obligatory to mention the names of the founders of other religions with respect; it makes it a part of the believers' duty to protect the life, property and the religious freedom of non-believing subjects of the

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Muslim state. No such clear definition of inter-religious obligations is to be found in Christianity. No wonder this latter religion had to wade knee deep in blood to come to a settlement not only with non-believers but with the heretical views within its own house and even now nobody knows how a particular sovereign Christian nation will behave in the future with its non-Christian minority. The position of Hindu religion is still worse in this respect.

That the association of religion with the state power is neither a help nor a hindrance to the atmosphere of religious tolerance is proved by the history of Great Britain. For a long time in the past the King has been the head of the Church in this country. At one time it was extremely intolerant of unofficial religious views but at this moment it happens to be the most tolerant of all states. On the other hand, Russia has banished and even declared war against all religions but has made a fetish of a secular ideology so as to persecute every other ideology in the world. In this certainly there is food for thought for all those people who think that religion alone is the breeding ground for intolerance and bigotry.

It is a tragedy of history that the most tolerant of all powers that Great Britain happens to be at the moment, it should refuse to come to the help of ninety million followers of a tolerant, liberal and accommodating Book, such as the Qur-án is, who are genuinely apprehensive of being swept away culturally and politically by a community which roused by a new and reactionary religious movement within itself and inspired by the exclusive nationalism of the West, has of late, become extremely hostile to all outside cultural influences and international ideals and which continues to be guilty of the most atrocious of social crimes, known to history, viz. Indian 'untouchability.'—Ed.]

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## WHAT IS ISLAM ?

[The following is a very brief account of Islam, and some of its teachings. For further details, please write to the IMAM of the Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England, or to the Editor, *The Islamic Review*, Aziz Manzil, Brandreth Road, Lahore, India.]

**ISLAM: THE RELIGION OF PEACE**—The word "Islam" literally means: (1) Peace; (2) the way to achieve peace; (3) submission, as submission to the Master's will is the only way to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

**OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.**—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code, whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

**THE PROPHET OF ISLAM.**—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last Prophet of the Faith. Muslims; i.e., the followers of Islam, accept all such of the world's Prophets, including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

**THE QUR'AN.**—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur'an. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book. Inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur'an, the last Book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

**ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM**—These are seven in number: Belief in (1) Allah; (2) Angels; (3) Books from God; (4) Messengers from God; (5) the Hereafter; (6) the Premeasurement of Good and Evil; (7) Resurrection after Death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the Hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in Heaven. State after death is a counter part of the spiritual state in this life.

The sixth article of Faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination; he believes in Premeasurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

**PILLARS OF ISLAM.**—These are five in number; (1) Declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad; (2) Prayer; (3) Fasting; (4) Almsgiving; (5) Pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine at Makka.

**ATTRIBUTES OF GOD**—The Muslims worship One God—the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Just, the Cherisher of all the worlds, the Friend, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has

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no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

**FAITH AND ACTION.**—Faith without action is a dead letter. Faith by itself is insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden and none can expiate for another's sin.

**ETHICS OF ISLAM.**—"Imbue yourself with Divine Attributes," says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His Attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine Attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

**CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.**—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature, which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels, and leading him to the border of Divinity.

**THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN ISLAM.**—Man and woman come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainments. Islam places man and woman under the like obligations, the one to the other.

**EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.**—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches and family honours are accidental things: virtue and the service of humanity are the matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

**PERSONAL JUDGEMENT.**—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgement and respects difference of opinion, which, according to the saying of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

**KNOWLEDGE.**—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to angels.

**SANCTITY OF LABOUR.**—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

**CHARITY.**—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others, and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.

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