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January 1962

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# THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

WOKING • ENGLAND

JANUARY – FEBRUARY 1962



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Registration to all countries at the equivalent rate of 12s. per annum per parcel.

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# The Islamic Review

January—February 1962

50th YEAR OF PUBLICATION

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## Between Ourselves

### THE COVER

The picture on the cover is that of the late Al-Hajj Kwaja Kamal-ud-Din, the founder of The Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust and the *Islamic Review*.

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S.W.1. Telephone: VIC. 2591



نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّينَ

"Muhammad is...the Messenger of God and the Last of the Prophets..." —THE HOLY QUR'AN 33:40  
"There will be no Prophet after me" —THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD

Vol. I No. 1-2

January—February

Sha'haan—Ramadhaan 1381 A.H.

# To the Memory of KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

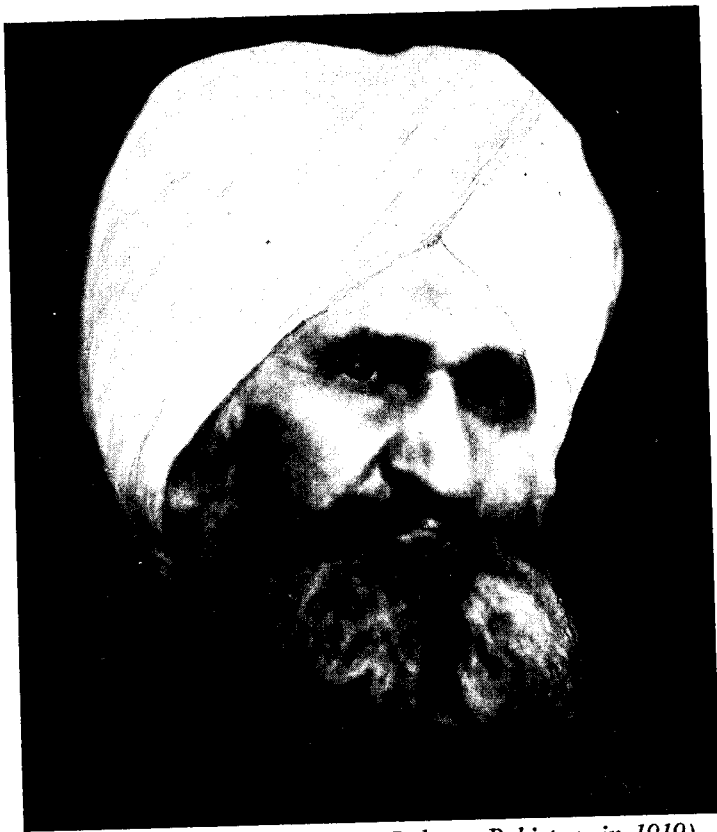
With this issue, *The Islamic Review* enters its fiftieth year of publication. The first number was published in February 1913, a dark period in the history of Islam which ended in 1918 by the loss of independence by the last Muslim State which remained truly sovereign at that moment — Turkey. As a result of political defeats, Muslim youth had almost lost all hope in the future of Islam. It was at this time that Al-Hajj Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din started his pioneer work of the rebirth of Islam in the West. By publishing *The Islamic Review* his object was to spread more correct ideas as to the essential features of Islam and the characteristics of those who profess that religion, and to dispel the many gross errors — sometimes due to malice, more often to mere ignorance — which were current in Europe as to its doctrines, ethics and practices.

Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din was born in 1870 in the Punjab, descended from an honoured Kashmir family which had already distinguished itself in the service of Islam. His grandfather, 'Abdur Rashid, a famous poet, was at one time chief Muslim Judge of Lahore during the Sikh period. He was educated at the Forman Christian College at Lahore, which explains his deep knowledge of the Bible, a knowledge which had been so useful in his missionary work in the West. As it sometimes happens with students studying at colleges run by Christian missionaries, he thought of converting himself to Christianity. But as luck would have it he was destined to play another role, of introducing Islam to the Christian West.

During 1912, Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din lost his wife. To forget this loss he started on a tour of India, giving lectures on Islam, and when he reached Bombay a certain gentle-

man persuaded him to go to England in connection with a legal case. This was the beginning of a new vision which resulted in the foundation of the Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust and *The Islamic Review*. Although he had some private business of that gentleman to attend to, the great ambition which was carrying him to England was to plead the cause of Islam in the West. Some of the people laughed at this though, and outward circumstances were not favourable to him, still, he was full of hope. Europe was not only politically dominant but Muslim countries had also come under the sway of its intellectual domination. If Islam was to be saved, the banner of Islam must be raised in the heart of Christendom. On his arrival in London he settled in Richmond. The Hyde Park Speakers' Corner provided him with the platform for his first lecture on Islam. He also started taking part in meetings of British theological societies. The first person to accept Islam at his hands was a European lady, the wife of an Indian Muslim. The work continued to progress slowly. And then came a providential opportunity. He discovered the existence of the Mosque at Woking. He and his friend Shaikh Nur Ahmad visited this place, which was almost deserted and gradually falling into ruins.

This Mosque was built in 1889 by Doctor W. G. Leitner, an Orientalist and ex-Registrar of the University of the Punjab, with donations from Indian Muslims, particularly Her late Highness the Begum Shah Jehan, ruler of Bhopal State, after whom the Mosque is named. After Doctor Leitner had retired from the Punjab he conceived the idea of establishing an institution for the study of Oriental



*Shaikh Nur Ahmad (died at Lahore, Pakistan, in 1919)  
To Shaikh Nur Ahmad goes the credit of being the first to  
share the early toils and privations of the late Khwaja  
Kamal-ud-Din in a task that was regarded by many as a wild  
goose-chase. He was not familiar with English.  
One could appreciate the nature of the privations and single-  
mindedness of the late Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, when it is  
recalled that at Woking his table was his writing-desk by day  
and bed by night. The late Shaikh Nur Ahmad was a very  
devout Muslim. The experiences of his dream-life were of  
an extraordinary robust nature.*

languages, cultures and religions. Unfortunately, before he could bring his scheme to fruition, he died. The Mosque remained closed and deserted for many years till it attracted the attention of this Muslim sage from the Punjab.

Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din and Nur Ahmad stayed at the Mosque for a few hours, and then the Khwajah asked his friend to return to London, but he refused, and told him that he could not leave this house of God in such a desolate condition. He was so persistent in his decision that the Khwaja also agreed to stay there. When the heirs of Dr. Leitner found two coloured persons living at the house adjacent to the Mosque they wanted to evict them. At this stage the Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din approached Sir Mirza 'Abbas 'Ali Beg, at that time the Muslim advisory member of the Council of the Secretary of State for India. Together they found the means for the satisfaction of the heirs of Dr. Leitner. A Trust was formed to hold the title deeds of the Mosque, of which, in 1913, the Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din became the first Imam. Now the Mosque at Woking became the centre of his activities in England. This was the humble beginning of the work started by this great pioneer of Islam in the West. In fact God never destroys the reward of the doers of good.

The Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din was entirely devoted to his work. And there lies the cause of his success. He became ill and exhausted during the last five years of his life, but he never stopped working. It was on 28th December 1932 that he died at Lahore while dictating a commentary of the Qur'an for the next number of *The Islamic Review*. But those who die in the cause of Allah are never dead. His memory will ever remain green in the hearts of those who have been led to the light of Islam by reading his works, *The Islamic Review* being one of these which is still carrying on the mission which was near and dear to him. May his soul rest in peace. Amen!

## IT MATTERS MUCH

It matters little where I am born,  
Or if my parents were rich or poor ;  
Whether they shrank at the cold world's scorn.  
Or walked in the pride of wealth secure.  
But whether I live an honest man,  
And hold my integrity firm in my clutch,  
I tell you, brother, plain as I am,  
It matters much.

It matters little how long I stay  
In the world of sorrow, sin and care ;  
Whether in youth I am called away,  
Or live till my bones and pate are bare.  
But whether I do the best I can  
To soften the weight of adversity's touch,

On the faded cheek of my fellow-man,  
It matters much.

It matters little where be my grave,  
Or on the land or on the sea ;  
By purling brook or 'neath stormy wave,  
It matters little or naught to me.  
But whether the Angel Death comes down  
And marks my brow with his loving touch,  
As one that shall wear the victor's crown,  
It matters much.

(Reproduced from *The Islamic Review*,  
Vol. 1, No. 1, February, 1913, p. 16).

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

# THE WISE MEN'S TESTIMONY

by THE MAULANA 'ABDUL HAQ VIDYARTHI

**"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him" (Matthew, 2: 1-2).**

The second prophecy according to the Gospel of St. Matthew is that certain wise men of the East saw a star by way of a sign at the birth of Jesus, and after travelling thousands of miles they came to Bethlehem to worship the babe whom they found lying in a manger and *presented unto him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.*<sup>2</sup>

The wise men's testimony is in fact a vision of great significance, but if taken literally it falls flat and only becomes a far-fetched fantastic story of no moral or historical value. Let me first analyse this prophecy as it is generally understood in the Christian world before giving its true interpretation from the Muslim standpoint.

## Difficulties in accepting the literal interpretations of this prophecy

In this story the following points deserve consideration:

1. The wise men saw the star in Persia and immediately understood that thousands of miles away from their place in the West was born, not the king of Persians, nor the son of their old God, but the king of their enemies, the Jews (the Magi being heathens).

2. It appears that according to the Gospel writer, astrology was an approved and systematic science — that merely by sighting a star the wise men knew that the King of the Jews was born and was lying at a certain place in a certain direction and was destined to become a king after thirty years. But, strangely enough, although they knew all these things they did not realize the most important aspect of his kingship — that it was not of this world.

3. From the strictly historical point of view, these fire-worshippers and practitioners of sorcery and necromancy saw the star two years before the actual birth of Jesus Christ(!) and three years after the death of Herod(!) (see No. 12 below), but when they reached Jerusalem they found Herod alive and the young child still lying in a manger at Bethlehem!

4. One must also appreciate the astounding wisdom of the star that, contravening all the laws of celestial order, it went before the wise men showing them the way. But when they reached the city it considered it expedient to disappear so that the people whose king was born might not know what had actually happened. The wise men had perforce to seek the help of Herod (who according to historical evidence should have already been dead). However, when he was asked, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" Herod was much troubled and he gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people, and demanded of them *where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, "In Bethlehem of Judea".* As soon as the wise men got out of the city, the star appeared again, and *went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.*

5. One also fails to understand the object of the disappearance of the star when its guidance was most needed. If it had not gone out of sight the governor would not have known by any chance about the birth of the King of the Jews, and would not have massacred thousands of innocent children in vain so as to kill the newborn babe whom God saved afterwards by sending his parents to Egypt.

6. Going to Herod, in the first place, and asking him about the whereabouts of the King of the Jews was not a wise step at all. And God's warning to the wise men that they should not return to Herod<sup>3</sup> was too late. The damage had already been done.

7. About Rachel's weeping and wailing over the massacre of the innocent children,<sup>4</sup> the sole responsibility lay on the uncertain and perilous behaviour of the rising of the star in the East which later guided the wise men to Jerusalem. The whole statement is rather strange. Rachel was the wife of Jacob and had died 1689 years ago, and the people living in Bethlehem were not her children but those of Leah. The ten lost tribes were supposed to be the descendants of Rachel.

8. Instead of some heavenly blessing descending upon the world on the birth of the "son of God", thousands of innocent children were put to death and the whole country resounded with the cries of weeping and wailing mothers. The wise men's visit to Bethlehem to worship the young Christ evidently caused such an unprecedented calamity.

9. It is true that other nations and races expected the coming of a Saviour, but there is no record in any history of Persia that on their return the wise men gave the glad tidings of the birth of Christ to their people, nor was any Persian converted to Christianity. On the other hand, the

<sup>1</sup> Being a chapter of *Muhammad in World Scriptures* in print.

<sup>2</sup> "The story of the Wise Men from the East," writes Dr. W. R. Matthews, Dean of St. Paul's, in the *Daily Telegraph*, London, for 6th January 1962. "who were led by a star to the cradle of the new-born King, beautiful as it is, raises questions about its historic accuracy, and one question which is not precisely historical. The Magi were evidently astrologers; are we to understand that astrology has biblical authority? In a wider sense, however, the story has an undoubted historical basis. There was at the time of Jesus's birth an expectation of the coming of a personal Saviour not only among the Jews but among many other races and nations." About the historic accuracy fuller discussion has been made in this article. "In a wider sense", this can only be applied to the Prophet Muhammad, as will be discussed by me in the latter half of the article. With regard to the astrological aspect readers may refer to Numbers 2, 4 and 5.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 2: 12.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 18.

Persians ever remained at daggers drawn with the Christian powers.

10. The Magi are heathens. It is not stated why they came to worship the King of the Jews, who were their enemies.

11. Again, it is not stated by what means they came to this conclusion that the King of the Jews was born. He was not the king, and never could be, because he himself said, "My kingship is not of this world".<sup>5</sup>

12. The time of the visit is also quite uncertain. If the Christian calendar is right the Herod referred to in this story had been dead five years before the birth of Jesus.

13. The narrative is not corroborated by any other Gospel.

14. The number and names of the wise men are not given, though afterwards their fancy names were used as charms to cure epilepsy and snake-bite. It is obvious that the whole story of the coming of the wise men of the East to Bethlehem and worshipping the young child is dubious.

15. The question could also be asked what did the parents of Jesus do with gold and other valuable gifts? How could they have remained poor after what they got from the Wise Men?

16. Surprisingly enough they never came again to see Jesus actually become the King of the Jews.

I will now quote some references from the works of Christian writers as to the authenticity of the visit of the Magi.

Dr. Farrar in his book *Life of Jesus Christ* writes :

"There is nothing but a mass of confused and contradictory traditions to throw any light either on their rank, their number, or their names."<sup>6</sup>

Professor H. Usener writes in *Encyclopaedia Biblica* :

"Every unprejudiced eye will perceive that the nativity-narratives of Matthew and Luke are mutually exclusive and irreconcilable. What they have in common — the figures of Joseph, Mary and Jesus, the designation of Jesus as Messiah, the date in Herod's reign and the birth in Bethlehem — were given data. Upon the common foundation the two evangelists rear quite different structures.

"Joseph's home in Matthew is Bethlehem, in Luke, Nazareth; the divinity of Christ in Luke by the angel's words to the shepherds and the song of the heavenly host, in Matthew by the appearance of the star in the East; the new-born Messiah receives his first adoration in Luke from the shepherds, in Matthew from the Magi. In Matthew the family of the Saviour flees from the wrath of Herod to Egypt and afterwards avoids Archelaus by settling in Nazareth; in Luke after fulfilment of all-ceremonial duties arising out of the birth, the return is made to Nazareth direct." etc.<sup>7</sup>

About the Star it has been mentioned in the same article :

"The embroidery comes from the same source as the warp and the woof. The appearance of a star in the sky heralding the birth had been prepared for by the popular faith of antiquity. . . . Also the recognition and proclamation of the birth of a new King of the Jews by the magi learned in star-lore find its parallel in a legend concerning Alexander. . . . The reign of Nero in may have been exactly the period at which the legends of the divine birth of Jesus began to take shape in the Christian world. . . . A massacre of innocents and, as the motive for it, fear of the threatened advent of a new ruler, were already current material for legend."<sup>8</sup>

Again the acknowledged authorities are at variance about these wise men of the East. Some say they were

Magis (Iranian priests) and others think they were Babylonians or Arabs (because the gifts were of Arabia). In this connection the following references I hope will also be read with interest :

"The fact that the term Magi and Chaldaei are sometimes used as synonyms has led some to fix on Babylonia as the country whence these gentile worshippers came; others, observing that the gifts they presented consisted of Arabian products, have concluded that they came from Arabia; others suppose them to have been Persians; others Bactrians; and there have even been found some to contend for their having been Brahmins from India, a supposition in favour of which some very plausible arguments may be added. As nothing certain, however, can be advanced, the subject is best left in that indefiniteness in which the Evangelist has stated it. . . . With respect to the time when their visit was paid we must place it either immediately after the birth of Jesus, or on the occasion of one of the annual visits which Joseph and Mary were wont to make to Jerusalem after their return to Nazareth (Luke 2:41). The narrative of Matthew, taken by itself, leads to the former conclusion; but when one compares it with that of Luke a difficulty arises from his statement that after the presentation in the temple Mary and Joseph returned to Galilee to their own city Nazareth (Luke 2:39). As the presentation took place when Jesus was but a few days old, and as immediately after the visit of the Magi his mother and her husband fled with him into Egypt, it is certain that either the visit to the Magi could not have been paid at this time, or Joseph and Mary could not have returned immediately after this to Nazareth, as Luke says they did. The only satisfactory outlet from this entanglement is to suppose that the visit of the Magi was paid on the occasion of the first and the second visit of Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem after their return to Nazareth. This falls in also with the statement that Herod caused all the children of two years old and under to be destroyed, which would have been a piece of needless cruelty if his object had been to secure the death of an infant only a few days old."<sup>9</sup>

"So, when they came to Jerusalem it is to ask not after 'our King' or 'The King of Israel' but, as the men of another race might do, after 'The King of the Jews'. The language of the Old Testament prophets, and the traditional interpretation of it, are apparently new things to them. Sometimes after the birth of Jesus (a) there appeared among the strangers who visited Jerusalem these men from the East. (b) The discordant views of commentators and harmonists indicate the absence of any trustworthy data. The time of their arrival at Bethlehem has been fixed in each case on grounds so utterly insufficient that it would be idle to examine them."<sup>10</sup>

"1. As in the Church Calendar on the twelfth day after the nativity (Baronius, Am. 1.9). 2. At some time towards the close of the forty days before the purification (Spanheim and Stollberg). 3. Four months later (Creswell) on the hypothesis that they saw the star at the nativity and then started on a journey which would take that time, or (4) as an inference from Matthew 2:16, at some time in the second year after the birth of the Christ (Comp. Spanheim, Duk. Evang. 1.C.). It is certain that our Lord was born before the death of Herod the Great. Death of Herod 750 after reigning 34 years. Many have thought that the star seen by the wise men gives grounds for an exact calculation of the time of our Lord's birth. It will be found, however, that this is not the case. For it has been assumed that the star was not properly a star but an astronomical conjunction of known stars."<sup>11</sup>

"It is argued that there is no record in other histories of a census of the whole Roman Empire in the time of Augustus. Such a census, if held during the reign of Herod the Great, would not have included Judaea, for it was not yet a Roman province."<sup>12</sup>

But according to my information we need not, however, go far in search of these Magi, or the origin of this story.

9 Kittle, *Encyclopaedia of Biblical Literature*, Volume 3, article "Magi".

10 William Smith, *Dictionary of the Bible*, London, John Murray, 1863, p. 1738.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 1381.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 1382.

5 John 18:36.

6 Farrar, *Life of Jesus*, p. 20.

7 *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, Vol. III, article "Nativity", p. 3343.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 3351.

In the Zoroastrian Scriptures the *Zend Avesta* and *Dasatir* there are clear prophecies in which the coming of the Arabian Prophet has been foretold. It is related in the Epistle of Sasan the First :

"There shall arise a man among the Arabs by whose followers the diadem, and the throne, and the government, and the religion, shall all be overthrown, and instead of an idol-temple or of the fire-temple, of the House of the Abad (Abraham) shall be seen a place toward which prayer is directed. . . . And the wise men of Hirat and others shall come in unto them."

In the Zoroastrian scripture there are several eloquent prophecies that in the course of time found place in the heart of the Magi or the "wise men" of Iran. St. Matthew, however, by the flight of his own imagination, directed them to Jesus of Nazareth. Because there was no firm foundation for such a claim they never bore any fruit for Christianity. These prophecies were, in fact, meant for another saviour, i.e., the Prophet Muhammad in whom all prophetic signs were fulfilled. The whole of Iran accepted him because of their long expectation of the coming of such a teacher. The Iranians turn their faces towards the House of Mahabad (Abraham) when praying. Idol temples or fire temples are no more to be seen there after the advent of Islam. A momentous prediction fulfilled word by word !

Sometimes it is suggested that the implication of Epiphany is that Jesus came for all men and people from far off lands who came to do him homage. In this respect also the Prophet Muhammad enjoys a unique distinction over other prophets. Except for this solitary incident, early Christians were sharply divided on the point of inviting to discipleship other people besides Jews. Jesus himself declared that he was sent to the lost sheep of Israel.

"One of the distinctive marks of Islam, compared with other great world religions, is the variety of people and races who have embraced it."<sup>13</sup>

In the footnote after this statement the following remarks have been added :

"Cf. Sir H. A. R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism*, London, 1949, 22; also al-Jahiz, *Tria Opuscula*, ed. Van Vloten, Leiden, 1903, 32: 'when we find the inhabitants of Sijistan, the Najdite, the Ibadite and the Sufrite, the *mawla* and the Arab, the Persian and the nomad, slaves and women, the weaver and the peasant, fighting on one side despite their difference of descent and habitation, we realize that it is religion which moulds them together."<sup>14</sup>

### Other aspects of this prophecy

This prophecy could be discussed from another angle as well. The Jews divide all the heavenly bodies into two categories, viz., the sun as the king of all, the moon as the queen. And all the rest are their hosts or army.<sup>15</sup> In the verse under discussion Jesus is described as the morning star. And it is confirmed by the saints as it is said :

"I Jesus sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and Scion of David the bright morning star."<sup>16</sup>

"And I will give him the morning star."<sup>17</sup>

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy, where unto ye dwell they ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a

dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."<sup>18</sup>

The morning star heralds the rising of the sun and brings hope for success. In sacred scriptures it signifies the announcement of the coming of the king with a precious jewel in his hand. Hence rising of the morning star (Messiah) had this significance :

"It is easy to Me, and that We make him a sign (of the rising sun) to men and a mercy from us. And it is a matter decreed."<sup>19</sup>

### Language of the gifts

Matthew in his brief account of the Magi's visit failed to understand the language of gifts. The newly-born babe had nothing to do with these gifts. A bottle of milk was more valuable for him than gold, myrrh and frankincense. As has been mentioned before, this incident cannot be literally interpreted. The only way left is to accept it as a vision seen by some pious people at the birth of Jesus — this illustrious figure in this world and the hereafter (as it has often happened at or before the birth of great spiritual leaders). The wise men's gifts, therefore, have another meaning. Visions are always susceptible to various interpretations. I, however, venture to give my own.

These gifts are gold, myrrh and frankincense.

Gold represents worldly wealth, and one of the implications in this gift was that he would be betrayed for worldly gain by one of his disciples to nations who drank the golden cup of Babylon because it was foretold :

"Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken, the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad."<sup>20</sup>

The second gift was of myrrh, which represented the bitter cup that was offered to him on the cross. This was bitter in this sense also, that his friends and foes both believed that he was cursed. His followers said :

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree."<sup>21</sup>

Again his own intimate friends cursed him also.<sup>22</sup>

The myrrh had another important role to play in his life. It was going to help heal his wounds when he was taken down from the cross.

"And then there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight."<sup>23</sup>

The third significance of this gift of myrrh was that the damage done to the teachings of Jesus Christ by his disciples would be put right by the teachings of the Prophet raised in Mecca. Myrrh has also been known as *Mecca balsam* :

"Schweinfurth holds that OT name for Mecca balsam was . . . *mór*. . . . Certainly *mór* was like (Mecca balsam) strongly aromatic."<sup>24</sup>

The third gift was of frankincense, which in Arabic is *luban*, particularly found in South of Arabia. In the Greek version of the Gospel it is *libanos*.

18 II Peter 1:19.

19 The Qur'an, 19:21.

20 Jeremiah 51:7.

21 Galatians 3:13; Romans 8:3; II Corinthians 5:21.

22 Matthew 26:74; Mary 14:71.

23 John 19:39.

24 *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, Vol. I, p. 463, under the word Balsam. See also Vol. III, p. 3246, under the word Myrrh.

13 W. Montgomery Watt, *Islam and the Interpretations of Society*, p. 1.

14 *Ibid.*

15 Deuteronomy 4:19, 17:3; Jeremiah 7:18.

16 Revelation 22:16.

17 *Ibid.*, 2:18.

It is not only an incense but an elixir for the poison of snake and scorpion. Metaphorically speaking the Qur'an is the *luban* of Arabia which cleared Jesus of false charges. It also manifested the truth that, God forbid, Jesus was not cursed by his enemies nor for the sins of his followers. He was a holy messenger of God, a Mercy and Word from Him and one greatly honoured by God.

### The significance of the appearance of the Lode Star

The morning star appearing on the horizon meant that the time of the rising of the sun was near. The Qur'an says :

"By the star when it setteth, your companion erreth not, nor does he deviate."<sup>25</sup>

Jesus was that morning star to betoken the rising of the sun of Islam in its perfect form. Before his departure from the world he plainly said :

"I did not tell you this at first, because when I was with you, but now I am going away to Him who sent me. None of you asks me : 'Where are you going ?' Yet you are plunged into grief because of what I have told you. Nevertheless I tell you the truth : it is for your good that I am leaving you. If I do not go, the Paraklite will not come, whereas if I go I will send him to you. When he comes, he will confute the world, and show where wrong and right and judgment lie."<sup>26</sup>

Thus the good of all the human race lay in this that the bearer of good tidings should go away and the most expected one come to the world. In the words of Jesus Christ :

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth, it is for your good that I am leaving you. If I do not go the Paraklite will not come."

Because it was in fact the Spirit of Truth who was going to give the whole truth to the world. Jesus's disciples were unable to bear that.<sup>27</sup> They had fallen into a profound error about his teaching and mission after his death. Jews also believed that they had brought an end to his message by killing him on the cross. But the Qur'an declared it in emphatic words :

"And for their saying : We have killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the messenger of Allah, and they killed him not, nor did they cause his death on the cross, but he was made to appear to them as such."<sup>28</sup>

It is sometimes said that these gifts were offered to Jesus because he was the King of the Jews. But Jesus himself declared that his kingdom was not of this world. However, these gifts were presented to him as a bearer of the good news of the coming of the King of Persians because the Magi came from Persia. It might be a glad tidings to them for, according to the prophecy mentioned in the *Zend Avesta* and *Dasatir*, a prophet's advent was foretold who would verify the religion of Zoroaster. Jesus never ratified Zoroastrianism. It was 'Umar, a companion of the Prophet Muhammad, who after conquering Persia decreed *Treat the Persians as the People of the Book*.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, the original teachings of Zoroastrianism are confirmed by the Qur'an. (This discussion has been made by me elsewhere.)

This should also be borne in mind, that Jesus never got the throne of David. That throne was also conquered in the name of Muhammad. Muslims were successors of both the Persian and the Roman empires.

It would not be out of place here to mention that prophecies relating to the Prophet of Islam in various ancient scriptures are quadrilateral, which is a unique Divine manifestation of its own kind.

- (1) They are recorded in ancient script.
- (2) They have been repeated by the prophets raised in that country and nation.
- (3) The prophets raised in other nations and countries have also confirmed quite independently such prophecies found in foreign scriptures and languages.
- (4) The Qur'an has confirmed the fulfilment of these prophecies in the person of Muhammad.

Each point mentioned above has a definite proof of its Divine origin. For instance it was foretold that Arabs, the least known nation in the world, would one day change the map and destiny of the world. This prophecy was repeated several times by other prophets as well. When this was corroborated by a prophet of another nation the origin of such information was declared to be a Divine revelation and not any other source. When we come to the Prophet of Islam he is also made to declare the truth of such future events, even at a time when circumstances were very unfavourable to him.

Although the ancient scriptures have considerably suffered at human hands, strangely enough, the parts relating to the advent of the Prophet Muhammad has been mostly preserved. This is the evidence of the working of God's hand in such matters.

The present *Zend Avesta* and *Dasatir* are a ruined remnant of the original texts, yet the prophecies concerning the Prophet of Islam have remained more or less unpolluted. On the other hand there has not been a single prophecy concerning Jesus Christ in the Old Testament on which doubts have not been cast by Christian scholars and advocates of higher criticism.

### The real heirs to the throne of David

The origin of the lode star prophecy is *Zend Avesta*, then it is recorded in *Dasatir*. This is in fact the prophecy about the wise men of Persia submitting to Islam. The Prophet Muhammad was made aware of this Divine truth that one day his companions would rule over Persia. He was shown in a vision that the keys of all the conquered cities had been given to him. Such claims were made at a time when Muslims were trapped in a most distressed state of affairs. So much so that some of the weak-hearted Muslims started grumbling that "Muhammad used to promise us that we should eat the treasures of Chosroes and Caesar and today not one of us can feel safe in going to the privy."<sup>30</sup>

This happened during the battle of the Ditch. When the Prophet was helping in hacking a difficult place he said God had opened to him the Yemen, Syria and the West as well as the East. Let us hear the whole story through a companion of the Prophet.

"I was told that Salman of Persia said : I was working with a pick in the trench where a rock gave me much trouble. The Messenger who was near at hand saw me hacking and

25 The Qur'an, 33 : 1-2.

26 John 16 : 4-8 (New Translation).

27 *Ibid.*, 16 : 12-13.

28 The Qur'an, 4 : 157.

29 *Sacred Books of the East*, Introduction by James Darmesteter of Vedic, p. 69.

30 A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad* (a translation of Ibn Ishaq's *Sirat Rasul Allah*), p. 454.

saw how difficult the place was. He dropped down into the trench and took the pick from my hand and gave such a blow that lightning showed beneath the pick. This happened a second and a third time. I said: 'O you dearer than father or mother, what is the meaning of this light beneath your pick as you strike?' He said: 'Did you really see that, Salman? The first means that God has opened up to me the Yemen; the second Syria and the West; and the third the East.' One whom I do not suspect told me that Abu Hurayra used to say when these countries were conquered in the time of 'Umar and 'Uthman and after, 'Conquer where you will, by God, you have not conquered and to the resurrection day you will not conquer a city whose keys God had not given beforehand to Muhammad'.<sup>31</sup>

The Prophet is also reported to have said that the treasures of Chosroes (Emperor of Persia) and Caesar (Emperor of the Roman Empire) would be spent in the way of Allah,<sup>32</sup> or that his followers would be triumphant over both these empires.<sup>33</sup>

These predictions were made at a time when these kingdoms were at the zenith of their power. The Persian Empire was so strong that the Eastern Roman Empire was defeated by them in all the territories near Arabia in the year 13 C.E. Jerusalem and Damascus fell and the following year Egypt also came under their sway. A Persian army invaded Anatolia and was threatening Constantinople itself in the year 615 or 616 C.E. At this time it was prophesied by the Qur'an that within the space of nine years the Romans would gain victory.<sup>34</sup> This prophecy was fulfilled in 624 C.E.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 452.

32 *Al-Bukhari*, Kitab al-Iman.

33 *Musnad Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal*, IV, p. 303.

34 The Qur'an, 30:2-4.

My object in mentioning these historical facts in brief is to show that these two great empires were almost equal rivals of one another in strength. Arabs were an unknown and insignificant people as compared to them. They were untrained recruits and had no experience in fighting the foreign powers in the whole of their history, although they had been fighting small battles among themselves. For the first time they were trying to establish a State of their own against heavy odds. At times their very existence was at stake in the process of their abiding by the rule of God. When Muslims were besieged in Medina and the enemy had come from all directions and the eyes of the believers had turned dull and their hearts rose up to their throats,<sup>35</sup> it was at that time that the Prophet saw the vision that his followers would become triumphant over both these great powers. Surely it was no time to make such a momentous prediction.

The wise men of the East came to do homage to Jesus Christ because at last, after waiting for thousands of years, the appearance of the most cherished and the expected one of all the prophets was going to become a reality. Jesus Christ was like the morning breeze that bears the message of the rising of the resplendent sun. Thus the vision seen at the time of the birth of Jesus Christ also gave the good news of the coming of the Spirit of Truth (i.e., Muhammad), whose followers were destined to overthrow the empires of Chosroes and inherit the throne of David. Islam guides mankind unto all truth and its message has remained uncorrupted and would remain so for all times to come. The wise men from the East as well as the West have been doing homage to its founder from the beginning of his call.

35 *Ibid.*, 33:10-11.

## WHAT IS VICTORY?

by NORMAN LEWIS

When man in reference to God changes from continuous reference to "Him", even in the profoundest belief, changes the direction of his utterance, and addresses Him as "Thou", then he has attained a relationship with God.

Within the sanctuary of the "Thou" speech, which should be in silence, man becomes aware of God at the centre of His galaxy, the one and only source of all the goodness known to us. Distracted hitherto by the search for separately labelled goods, fearful of their transitory nature, anxious for their preservation, he now relaxes in his own mentality, secure in the realization that no good can ever be lost because all good is a part of God.

What can be the nature of this Power, nearer to me than the blood in my own heart yet controlling the planets of the farthest stars? Surely He will not fail, and whatever good we have attempted will find somewhere its fulfilment. Who should care for the outcome of all our other projects? The good we have done is a part of God's life, sending its rays of light onward and outward to create more good whenever it comes in contact with compatible substance.

Thus does man lay hold upon the Eternal. Thus does he find his own immortality. To measure life by any other scale is folly.

The God who was known to Abraham can be known to us. We also can make our own covenant with God, a

pact "between Thee and me". And yet this relationship is not one to proclaim upon the housetops. It is too sacred to be communicated to men, and the root ideas of sacred and secret are the same.

Let us abandon all delusions that our projects can be successful apart from God, all apprehensiveness that there is no Power to sustain us in our efforts. The support we give to the projects of God will never be lost. All that matters is that God attains His victory. All that we can ever hope in the way of true success is that we have added our little power to the onward movement of God's ideas, to the eternal victory of His campaigns. This, through the years, will give the only satisfaction to be found in life, the only lasting glory.

Can there be any doubt in our mind as to what are the Projects of God? Every clear-minded man or woman can discern them. All that we can control is the commitment. We dedicate our lives to trifling things and know the bitterness of their dissolution, or we make our daily life a continuous victory. There can be no failure for the God-dedicated man. He has identified his aims with the aim of God. If he faces the termination of this life, he knows that he stands at the threshold of a greater life. The reward he has won for being of value to God is the opportunity to be of greater value to God.

# THE QUR'AN IS THE MOST ABIDING GIFT OF THE PROPHET

## Shah's Message on *'Id-i-Milad-un-Nabi*

The Shahinshah of Iran has said that the most abiding and enduring gift that the Prophet of Islam has left for Muslims is the Qur'an, "which has withstood the test of time and circumstances".

"Its universal message is addressed to the peoples of every race and creed. Nothing is left unrevealed or uncovered in its pages."

In a message to the people of Pakistan on the occasion of *'Id-i-Milad-un-Nabi* (the birthday of the Prophet, peace be on him), the Shah said :

"The birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) is not only the greatest event in the Muslim calendar but is also one of prime importance to the whole world. Muhammad, the greatest prophet of all times, brought light, compassion and virtue to a darkened world and the Muslim religion introduced invigorating influence on the minds of man.

### Great Day

"Throughout the entire Muslim world the heart of every devout Muslim is filled with joy and happiness on this great day in our lives. To the Lord Almighty we offer humble and sincere prayers.

"The Prophet Muhammad not only reassessed in terms of modern thought contemporary life and present-day necessity but also gave a vision of God as being Merciful, Compassionate and Just. These were the basic principles on which the faith developed.

"The life of the great Muhammad produced in the darkest hour a great revival of humanity and established a code of ethics, morals and behaviour which gave man a true spiritual insight and provided the necessary stimulant for the development of learning and knowledge.

### Perfection

"The human mind, if it is to develop the full measure of its capacity, must be free to grow, free to express itself, free to blunder and free to try again. To this end the great Prophet of Islam has obtained the freedom of the individual as one of the basic tenets of our faith.

"As we celebrate the birthday of our Prophet it is appropriate to reflect on the importance of his life and teachings to the world, the modernity of thought and the incisiveness of the Prophet's ideas and principles. His prophetic perception, his clear-sightedness and his profundity are a model of perfection.

"Were one to apply the principles of Islam to any individual, communal, national or racial problems, one could never go wrong. The answer, the right answer, the practical



answer is there for all of us to consult, to accept and to follow.

"The most enduring and abiding gift that the beloved Prophet has left for our guidance is the Qur'an. This Divine Book inspired by God has withstood the test of time and circumstance. Its universal message is addressed to peoples of every race and creed. Nothing is left unrevealed or uncovered in its pages. This exalted Book is the greatest miracle of all ages. We Muslims look to Heaven as the final arbiter.

"In celebrating the birthday of our Prophet let us lift our eyes and hearts to the sky, pray to the Lord Almighty to give us strength and the serenity of mind and spirit to follow in the path of our great Leader, and to make our devotion and faith worthy of his greatness," the message concluded.

# KHWAJA MAHMUD GAWAN

by SYED QUAMRUZZAMAN

**The Chief Minister to the Bahmani Sultans of Deccan in India, whose administrative reforms incurred the wrath of Deccanee nobles. They conspired to implicate him in a false case of treason resulting in his execution. The Bahmani dynasty lost their kingdom shortly thereafter.**

The ruler in man is mortal, but immortal is the man in the ruler, whose greatness solely depends on the degree in which he quickens his potential qualities of leadership into life. For more than a century and a half eighteen rulers of the same blood, one after another, held the sceptre of a kingdom in the Deccan, which in Indian history is known as the Bahmani Kingdom after the name of its founder, Hasan Gangu Bahmani, an Afghan officer in the service of the Delhi Sultan, Muhammad Ibn Tughlak. But, unfortunately these despots, without exception, were so weak as rulers that theirs is an historical story of dead personalities. But the crown of immortality was not to rust in vain. It must shine on somebody's head. And it did, but did so on the head of a man who was not a sultan but a servant of the sultans. His character was no destiny but it grew on the firm field of life. He was Khwaja Mahmud Gawan.

Mahmud Gawan was a Persian by birth. His exact date of birth is a point of controversy, and nothing of his early life has been authentically recorded by scholars. At best we can say that he was born at the beginning of the fifteenth century A.D.; his was not a royal family but a humble one, although in his early age he had undoubtedly received a good education. Roaming here and serving there, at last he came to the Deccan and took service permanently under the Bahmani Sultan, Ala-ud-Din the Second, in the decay of the first half of the fifteenth century. His ability and loyalty brought him soon to the notice of the Sultan. And in the course of time Humayun, the son of Ala-ud-Din the Second, recognized the potential qualities of Mahmud Gawan and made him his Chief Minister. This position he held with great distinction under the next two sultans. But this is not all. It is by no means the end. The chief interest about this man lies in the fact that he alone was responsible for the rise and glory of the Bahmani kingdom.

Mahmud Gawan was indeed a servant, but a servant with all the potential qualities of leadership far greater than his masters'. In him thought and action were united in a perfect fusion, and he was equally great as a general and as a civil administrator. In the first place, by his own military genius Mahmud Gawan enlarged the Bahmani kingdom to an extent never achieved before. The strong fortresses of Belgaum surrendered to his attack and he captured many forts from the Hindu rajas of the Konkan. From the very beginning the rulers of Warangal and Vijayanagar were deadly enemies of the Bahmani dynasty. They constantly waged war against this Muslim kingdom. Warangal was, however, reduced to a tributary during the reign of Muhammad Shah Bahmani the First. But Vijayanagar remained the usual menace to the progress and prosperity of the Bahmani kingdom. Harihar the Second led his troops twice against Firuz Shah Bahmani in order to capture the Raichur Doab. Firuz Shah Bahmani did all he could to ward off the enemy. He twice defeated Harihar and compelled him to pay tribute. Good relations between these two kingdoms would have been possible but for Deva Raya

the First, a son of Harihar the Second, who, soon after his accession to the Vijayanagar throne in 1406, renewed his aggression against the Bahmani kingdom. At first Firuz Shah Bahmani defeated him and compelled him to submit a Vijayanagar princess to him for his harem as a humble offering. But, at the close of his reign, Firuz Shah was defeated at Panugal in 1419, and Goa had passed into the hands of the king of Vijayanagar. More than sixty years passed but no means could be found for the Bahmani sultans to recover Goa. But the appearance of Mahmud Gawan in State affairs changed the entire course of events, and Goa once again came under the rule of the Bahmani dynasty during the reign of Muhammad Shah Bahmani the Third. Then Mahmud Gawan turned to Orissa, and the raja could not but surrender Kondapalli and Rajamundry to the Bahmani kingdom to save his head and crown alike. Here in this connection may it be mentioned that, during a campaign against Vijayanagar in 1480 or 1481, Conjeeverum or Kanchi, too, experienced the might of Mahmud Gawan's generalship.

In the second place, Mahmud Gawan introduced many judicious reforms, including a new system of revenue which was based on survey, assessment and cash payment. The first and foremost motive behind these reforms was to curb the excessive powers of the Deccanee nobles, on whom the sultans wholly depended for military help, and of the Governors, who were then called the *tarafdars*. For these nobles and *tarafdars* would often ignore the authority of the sultans. As a result, administration was full of chaos and the condition of the people was very miserable. Hence Mahmud Gawan at first reorganized the royal army and introduced a stricter system of control and supervision. He divided the big provinces into two and entrusted the control of the fortresses to the officers, who were directly appointed and paid by the Sultan himself. Thus the Deccanee nobles and the *tarafdars* were deprived of their immense powers and privileges, and the solidarity of the Sultan's authority was once more brought back. Here Mahmud Gawan seems to appear on the same platform on which Ghyasuddin Balban and Ala-ud-Din Khilji stood. But here we should not fail to consider one thing, that, in the case of the Delhi sultans, it was the thought of self-aggrandisement that prompted their reforms, but, in the case of Mahmud Gawan, he was solely guided by patriotic motives and loyalty to the Bahmani dynasty. Thus Mahmud Gawan may be called a Warren Hastings, who, in fact, held tight the sheet-anchor of the Bahmani kingdom not only at times when wild were the tempests but also when the ripples were purling.

Not only was Mahmud Gawan great as a general and as a civil administrator, but also as a man of lofty disposition, a scholar and a patron of learning. He built and endowed a college of high standard at Bidar, the capital of the Bahmani kingdom, and, like Humayun the Mughal Emperor, himself was the master of a valuable library. In religious views, Mahmud Gawan trod in the footsteps of

the Delhi Sultan, Firuz Shah Tughlak. He was out and out a fanatical Muslim and he had little respect for the religious views of liberal-minded Muslims and of the Hindus. And, as a result, he caused their displeasure. But none can say that he had ever maintained partiality in the matter of justice. Justice to the people was his main concern, and this prompted him to his administrative reforms. His own personal life, like Sultan Nasiruddin's, was utterly simple and pure. You can now easily guess what might have been the lot of his beloved wife.

But, with all his noble virtues, Mahmud Gawan could not escape the black hands that were lurking around him in the dark. As they were deprived of their powers and privileges, so the discontented Deccanee faction began to contemplate his ruin. Under the leadership of one Hasan Malik, a Deccanee noble, they rose in silent revolt and at last carved out an opportunity of encompassing his end. They produced a forged letter in the royal court in order to convince the Sultan, Muhammad Shah Bahmani the Third, of Mahmud Gawan's treasonable intentions. The Sultan at first would not believe it. But since Mahmud Gawan was a foreigner by birth and his influence over the army and the people was far greater than that of the Sultan himself, a fear began to haunt Muhammad Shah. He thought that Mahmud Gawan might some day join hands with one of the enemy kingdoms and overthrow and behead him in order to capture the Bahmani throne for himself. The more he thought of this the more he lost himself in the grip of unsurmountable fear till at last he was convinced of the truth of what the Deccanee faction had produced against Mahmud Gawan. At first Mahmud Gawan pleaded not guilty, and so the army and the people prayed for his life. But the Sultan's fear was then like that of a Macbeth, although he did not kill a Duncan or Banquo or slaughter the family of a Macduff in order to fulfil his ambition. It was just a peculiar fear of its own kind. The Sultan under

his mental reaction could think of nothing but himself and himself alone. Mahmud Gawan smiled, while the Sultan signed the royal declaration of his execution. The Deccanee "roughs" drank deep in their mirth, while the army and the people shed tears in silence.

So, with the murder of Mahmud Gawan began the end of the Bahmani kingdom under the Sultan, Muhammad Shah the Third. Indeed, after Muhammad Shah, his 12-year-old son, Mahmud Shah, ascended the throne and ruled till 1518, but, in reality, he ruled like a puppet in the hands of his minister, Quasim Barid, who, unlike Mahmud Gawan, was after his own self-aggrandisement and personal ascendancy, quite heedless of the interests of the State and the Bahmani dynasty. The degeneration of the rulers led to the degeneration of the nobility, and we know that the factious struggle between the Irani, Turani and Hindustani parties was one of the main causes of the downfall of the Mughal Empire. So the factious struggle that dragged the Deccanee party and the foreign party composed of the Turks, Persians, Mughals and others against each other began to haunt the Bahmani dynasty like the curse of Heaven — and, in the end, it gave up the kingdom once more to the forces that struggled in chaos. The kingdom began to split up. The provinces, one after another, shook off their parent yoke, and at first four independent kingdoms — Berar, Ahmadnagar, Golconda and Bijapur — came into existence out of the ruin of the Bahmani kingdom. Only a small area round the capital, Bidar, remained under the nominal rule of Mahmud Shah Bahmani. After him, four puppet sultans reigned in this "kingdom" till 1526, when Amir Barid, the then minister, usurped the throne and proclaimed the Bahmani kingdom as the Bidar kingdom and himself as its rightful ruler. Thus he put an end to the Bahmani dynasty for ever. And, in the poet's imagination, only then did the haunting, restless soul of Khwaja Mahmud Gawan go to rest in its eternal home.

## THE SACRED JOURNEY by AHMAD KAMAL

PUBLISHED BY DUELL, SLOAN AND PEARCE, NEW YORK, 1961 — PRICE £2.3.0.

For the more than five hundred million who call themselves Muslims this is the official guide to *The Sacred Journey*, the Pilgrimage to Mecca, and for non-Muslims it is a gateway opening on to another world, the first full-scale picture of Islam as it appears to the followers of the Prophet Muhammad. The complete text, in English and Arabic, has an unqualified endorsement of the two great schools of Islam, Shi'ah and Sunni, a fact of unique and unprecedented importance. The world is witnessing an Islamic Renaissance and this book offers an authoritative key to understanding the emerging African, Middle Eastern and Asian nations.

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# A SUFI'S DIARY

by

THE MAULANA NUR-UD-DIN

## Night created for rest

In childhood I was taught a book which contained the following lines of a Persian poet :

*Shab chu 'aqd-e-nimaz may bandam  
Chi Khurad bamdád farzandam.*

When at night time I stand up to say my prayer  
The worry haunts me: What will my son eat tomorrow?

Now when I read in the Qur'án :

*Allah-ul-ladhi ja'ala lakum-ul-lailah  
li-taskunu fiha wannahara muhsira  
inn-allaha la dhu fazlin 'alannas  
wa lakinna aktharuhum la yashkurun.*

God it is Who made for you the night  
So that you may relax therein,  
Verily God is most bountiful towards people.  
But most of people are not thankful.

I am reminded how wrong it was what the poet said.  
It is ingratitude to God not to forget worldly worries even  
at night, which God has created for rest. A man of faith's  
nights must be free from all worries, given to complete rest.

## Never despair of God

I lost many sons. Whenever I lost a son I thought there  
must have been some defect in him : God would give me a  
better one.

One should never despair of God's blessings. To  
despair of God's blessings is the act of a disbeliever. When  
we do not show gratitude for the blessings we receive from  
God, we are deprived of those blessings. Indeed, God's  
blessings are never taken away except for ingratitude on  
our part. Nevertheless, even if we lose a gift of God, we  
should never despair of His kindness.

## Significance of "Kalma Shahádat"

*Ashhadu an Lá iláha ill-Allah* (I bear witness that there  
is no God but God). This is the first part of a Muslim's  
witness to God's absolute sovereignty. It serves a threefold  
purpose :

- (1) Whoever recites it is considered a Muslim.
- (2) It teaches that God is the source from which all  
worldly means and resources derive their validity.  
A true believer, when he makes use of these means  
and resources, does so in the belief that God has  
invested them with the efficacy we seek therein.
- (3) If repeated frequently, it paves the way towards  
God, removing the curtains and blinds that shut out  
the vision of God. Its first part, which is a negation  
of all false deities and objects of adoration, washes

off and keeps one away from sins. The other, the  
positive affirmation of God's sovereignty, is a  
means to rise higher and higher up the ladder of a  
virtuous life.

## Shield against sin

*Lá iláha* denudes the greatest worldly things of all value.  
Sin is committed only when certain unworthy things exercise  
a charm on our mind. When everything besides God  
becomes valueless and charmless, no occasion is left for  
inclining towards sin. This covers every one of the long list  
of sins of every imaginable variety.

## Key to self-advancement

*Ill-Allah* opens up an unlimited vista of achievement  
and advancement. This is how it happens. When cutting  
oneself off completely from all low and ephemeral objects of  
pursuit, one forges a link with God, the Source of all good  
and power and beauty and beneficence, the blaze of His  
light pervades the whole of one's being. Everything base,  
low and sordid, of itself, gets consumed in that flame, lead-  
ing to a better, higher and fuller life. On the one hand the  
seeker finds himself constantly under the care of God at  
every step in the struggle of life, on the other he keeps just  
one thing before his mind's eye in everything he does — the  
pleasure of God.

## The Prophet's witness

*Wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa Rasuluhu*  
(And I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and  
His Messenger). This is an essential complement to the first  
part above, without which faith can have no reality or  
depth.

The Prophet has been described in the Qur'án as the  
bearer of the two greatest divine gifts : first, as the per-  
sonification of the highest moral excellence (*innaka la 'alá  
khuluqin 'azeem*), and second, as one on whom God has  
showered the fullest measure of His grace (*Kána fazl-alláhi  
'alaika 'azima*). When God Himself speaks of the Prophet's  
morals as being of the highest possible order, and as a  
recipient of His grace in an abundant measure, it should  
give some idea of the greatness of the Prophet's personality.  
It was by virtue of these that he was made the *Khatam-an-  
Nabiyyin* — that is, one in whom all moral excellence and  
divine grace reached the highest apex and hence the terminal  
of the prophetic phenomenon.

And yet, with all this giddy height of greatness in  
personal riches of moral excellence and those of divine grace,  
he was just a humble servant of God. What a witness to  
the grandeur and glory of God beyond the reaches of human  
imagination !

# HUMANITY AT THE CROSSROADS

by SHEIKH SAMI' ULLAH

**"Say: in the grace of God and in His mercy, in that they should rejoice. It is better than that which they hoard." (The Qur'an, 10: 58)**

In this fast-changing world of ours, when knowledge means survival, ignorance is no bliss. The impact of the rapid advancement of scientific and technical knowledge upon human affairs raises problems of the utmost gravity affecting individuals, communities and nations, very often with international consequences. It is true that much of the knowledge gained has been of direct benefit to mankind. However, there is also much that could do serious damage to humanity as would outweigh all advantages. It is not only the present generation that may be adversely affected in consequence, even the future generations may not be able to escape the aftermath. It is being recognized with increasing anxiety that while man has gained mastery over the material world and has acquired unlimited power, he has not been able to discipline himself sufficiently so as to use this tremendous power wisely for the common good of his species. There is a grave risk that like a child playing with fire he might set the house ablaze, and it may be too late to stop the mischief.

Ballistic missiles, nuclear bombs, radio-active fall-outs, are today a reality, and God only knows what other instruments of destruction will be discovered in the future. The two power blocs are carrying on a bitter cold war for gaining supremacy in world affairs. The threat to world peace, to the very existence of mankind, is real. The world is in a state of turmoil. Like sheep at the approach of a storm, civilized humanity instinctively feels the presence of danger. There is a growing awareness that the human race is threatened with extinction if a solution of conflicting ideologies is not found out. Mankind is in a state of convulsion. Social and moral values are in a state of flux. Economic systems are on trial. Forms of government are changing as never before. Ideologies are competing for ascendancy. Man as an individual is losing his freedom of

action. The crux of the whole problem is: Are there any values which can help us out of the present state of chaos?

In a world full of constant fear, only the spiritual touch can bring peace and true happiness, which is a prerequisite for the survival of present-day society. If the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, then the doing of His commandments is the hope for salvation in this world. The Soviet Union is outwardly atheistic, and the basis of Western civilization has also been its revolt against all spiritual and religious values. In view of this outlook prevailing in the world today, one can easily understand why there is more hatred, strife and violent upheavals than ever before in history. Utility and pleasure have become the sole object of man's life, and traditional demands on chastity are being rejected. His existence is like a ship without a rudder, drifting on helplessly and aimlessly in the vast sea of the unknown.

No amount of scientific discovery can bring any hope of survival or progress to this materialistic world until man realizes that he must allow his innermost feelings to draw himself towards God, the Creator of all nature. That spark is there always, and it is within one's own power to allow that spark to grow into a light till it illumines his whole person and those around him.

The disturbed and fast-changing world in which we are destined to live offers a unique setting in which the Islamic principles of universality, fraternity, integrity, mercy, co-operation and goodwill should be brought to light in relation to the affairs of men and nations. The race between the conflicting ideologies of today is bound to end in atomic smoke unless the materialistic frenzy is mellowed by the intercession of spiritual outlook. Islam provides a practical forum for experimenting with the universal peace without weakness, and universal freedom without licence.

*Short Story*

## THE GILDED PRISON

by MARGARET MARCUS

In the long moment of frigid silence, Isma'il stood in the doorway, his face contorted with anxiety as he gazed into his father's feverish eyes. Awkward in the presence of his mother and his cousin, Isma'il felt too much a stranger in his own home even to dare step inside. Three years ago he left his family in Medina seeking better opportunities for work in Jiddah, where he had made for himself a new life. Only the most urgent emergency could have brought him back home.

"Father, I received the telegram from your friend that while you were working in the garden of the mosque, you fainted again, so I had to come at once. I have just arranged an appointment with the doctor at the hospital clinic connected to the factory where I work for you to be examined and treated."

But Ahmad Khalil only regarded his son with utter bewilderment. He scarcely recognized Isma'il dressed in his flannel plaid shirt and blue denim trousers.

"My son, is it not enough that you work for the Americans? Must you also look like one?"

"This is what we all wear in the factory. The robes are forbidden because they snarl in machinery." Isma'il regarded his father with a very critical eye. "What did you do with the money I sent you?"

"I sent it to 'Abd al-Rāziq so he could buy the books he needs at the university."

Isma'il's body tensed with rage. More than any living being, he despised his foster-brother. Although 'Abd al-Rāziq was a student at al-Azhar and came home only for the

month of Ramadhan, it seemed to Isma'il that his father thought of no one else.

"Didn't I tell you to buy yourself a pair of shoes and some decent clothes?"

Ahmad Khalil's voice rose. "What I wear is appropriate for working in the garden. A son has no right to tell his father what to do! What use have I for shoes when I have never worn them before in all my life?"

"Now that we have the means, you could at least make yourself presentable. I am ashamed to have my father look like a beggar."

Seeing the deeply hurt expression on his father's face, Isma'il was instantly contrite. "Please forgive me, father. I didn't really intend to say what I did. Father, are you ready to go? We must leave at once if we are to arrive in Jiddah in time for our appointment."

"Isma'il, I know you mean well, but I am not coming."

Rashid rose and clasped his cousin's hand. "If you go," he promised eagerly, "then I will come with you. I shall take care of you."

"That will not be necessary," snapped Isma'il. "You are neither a doctor nor a nurse."

Asmahan paused in her sewing to look up at her son. To her, Isma'il was as much a stranger as he was to her husband. She did not like his manner nor the tone of his voice. Yet she remained determined. "Ahmad Khalil, you must not refuse the help your own son offers. That you grow strong and well again — nothing else matters!"

Ahmad Khalil tried to protest, but when he saw his wife's pleading eyes, bright with tears, all resistance died.

Jiddah was so much bigger and noisier than Ahmad Khalil had remembered it when he was there more than twenty years before on his pilgrimage to Mecca. The streets were lined with huge ugly modern apartment houses and shops and were jammed to capacity with cars, trucks and buses.

"Here we are," said Isma'il at last.

In the Company clinic, Ahmad Khalil had to wait a long time, but he did not mind. Finally, when his turn came, the doctor examined him from head to foot with instruments so strange, they completely baffled him.

"What is that?"

"This," explained the doctor, "is an X-ray machine. We are going to take X-rays of your chest. Now stand still. This is not going to hurt at all."

Finally the doctor sent Ahmad Khalil out of the room and turned to Isma'il. "Your father has tuberculosis. The disease is well advanced but not, by any means, hopeless. These days, with all the new drugs and techniques, we can work miracles. But he needs prolonged treatment . . ."

"I am a foreman at the factory here," said Isma'il. "My salary ought to be enough to pay for my father's care."

The doctor smiled. "I think we can arrange everything."

The events that followed were so bewildering to Ahmad Khalil that he could not believe it was real. All of a sudden, he found himself standing in a white-tiled room. Jutting out from the wall was a white enamel tub into which flowed a steady stream of hot water. The rush of the water nearly hypnotized Ahmad Khalil. He had never seen so much of it before. When the tub was half-filled, the nurse abruptly shut the faucet.

"Now take off your clothes," she commanded, "and get in."

Ahmad Khalil waited for her to leave the room, but she stubbornly remained rooted to the spot, her arms akimbo.

"Well, hurry up so I can wash you."

Ahmad Khalil only stared at her brassy blonde hair and the big brown mole on her hard pink face. Just then half a dozen young girls with starched white uniforms trooped into the room.

"What's all the commotion about?" asked one.

"He won't undress and I need your help."

Frantic, Ahmad Khalil grabbed the towel on the rack and tried to cover his nakedness when the nurse snatched it from him. The girls burst out giggling. Dizzy and trembling with chills and fever, Ahmad Khalil could struggle against them no more.

"Now take that bottle of disinfectant," ordered the nurse, "and wash his head. If he has lice, I wouldn't be at all surprised. We can't afford to take chances."

Ahmad Khalil was put in a room with three other beds. Two were empty and the third was occupied by a very small child who could not have been more than four years old. Too exhausted to notice the child, Ahmad Khalil tried to rest, but the narrow iron bed was so terribly uncomfortable. He constantly feared he would fall out. He wanted to ask the nurse to raise the sides so he would feel safer, but he dared not.

Suddenly a familiar voice startled him.

"Father," Isma'il instructed. "Do everything they tell you to do and soon you will be well. As long as you are here, I will come every day to see you."

Ahmad Khalil longed for the sight of his cousin, his adopted son, his friends and his wife, instead, but distance made their visits impossible.

Isma'il had not been gone long when another nurse set a heaping tray of food before him. It looked so tempting that his mouth watered with hunger. Eagerly he scooped up a big chunk of meat, but before he had a chance to taste it the nurse made him drop it and shoved a fork into his hand.

"You ought to know better than that!" she scolded. "We do not permit the patients to eat with their fingers."

Clumsily Ahmad Khalil grasped the fork, but the meat fell from it before he could get it to his mouth, and the gravy dripped all over the clean white sheets.

"You are worse than a child!" exclaimed the nurse fretfully. "I will have to feed you."

Ahmad Khalil pushed the tray away and turned his face to the wall. "Go away!" he sobbed. "Go away and leave me alone!"

Night fell. Hour after hour Ahmad Khalil lay sleepless in the dark.

Suddenly the little boy began to cry. "It hurts! It hurts! Mother! Mother!"

No nurse came, and for a long time Ahmad Khalil lay awake in the darkness listening to the child's harrowing cries, until he could stand it no longer. Quietly he crept out of bed and walked over to the little boy and picked him up in his arms.

"Don't cry," he whispered, caressing his soft curly hair. "and I will tell you a story."

"But it hurts so much!" sobbed the child.

"Sh-sh-sh," hushed Ahmad Khalil. "You must be brave like the great heroes of Islam. Now I will tell you a story about when the Prophet was a little boy like you . . ."

And while he talked to the child, he took all the blankets off the bed, and wrapping them securely around himself and the child, he lay down on the floor in blissful comfort.

"Tell me another story," pleaded the child.

"I promise I will tomorrow, but now you must go to sleep."

He put his arm around the little boy and drew him close against him. Soon the child stopped crying, and lulled by his quiet regular breathing, Ahmad Khalil fell into an exhausted sleep. . . .

The next thing he knew he became aware of somebody standing over him.

"What are you doing on the floor?" shouted the nurse. "Now get back to bed at once and let's have no more of your silly nonsense!"

The little boy began to cry and the nurse picked him up roughly.

"What on earth are you trying to do — contaminate the child with your germs?"

The little boy began to scream and a doctor went up to the nurse.

"Take him to the paediatric ward. There is an empty bed for him now, and that is where he belongs."

The nurse walked out with the child screaming, "It hurts! It hurts so much! Mother! I want my mother!"

After the child had gone, a group of white-coated doctors and nurses approached him. On the table beside his bed the nurse spread out an assorted tray of cruel-looking instruments.

They stripped him to the waist and examined him carefully and thoroughly. Ahmad Khalil sat stoically in bed while a young intern ran his fingers across his bony ribs.

"He needs more flesh on him," he commented impersonally, addressing himself to the other doctors.

Ahmad Khalil was so embarrassed, he scarcely felt the long series of painful injections that followed. All the while the doctors were talking among themselves.

"This is a very bad case," one of them said to the others. "Both lungs are involved. We can't afford to lose any more time. This afternoon we'll have to collapse the one that is most infected."

Finally they walked away conversing among themselves in highly technical jargon, as if he were not a human being but merely a pair of diseased lungs.

At last they left him alone. His eyes burned and felt so hot and gritty. He had only been able to sleep for a few hours the night before with the child. He was so tired. He lay back on the pillow and closed his eyes, but sleep would not come. It was no use. He could only sleep on the floor.

He strained his ears to hear the solemn mingling and parting of melodious voices calling the early afternoon prayer. The faint echoes he caught began to reassure him. Avid for the sight of the slender minarets, he stared longingly out of the window, but all he could see were the bleak concrete slabs of the hospital walls. This gilded prison Allah had indeed abandoned, leaving its inmates to wander blindly in the dark. . . .

The hours passed slowly, interminably, and his body grew hot with fever. Asmahan's face swelled before him several times normal size. He listened to her soothing voice, but when he reached out his arms to embrace her, she was

gone. After several moments, however, she reappeared with his cousin, Rashid, and his beloved adopted son. He was convinced they were right in the same room with him, and he listened, comforted by the sound of their voices.

The phantoms disappeared when the nurse brought his tray, but he left the food untouched, as he had when she had brought it to him twice before earlier in the day. He knew he was forbidden to eat except with a fork, and that was impossible. Yes, he had learned his lesson well.

His memory wandered back, back, until he found himself walking the dusty streets of the tiny village where he was born and had lived until the Palestine war drove him from it. The waves of shimmering ripe grain swayed by the breeze caressed his face. And he knew he had only to walk behind the plough and scoop the rich black earth into his fingers and he would be healed. . . .

After a while his native village receded into the mists and before him rose the ancient grey stone and mud brick walls of the City of the Prophet, surrounded by the luxuriant gardens of palm trees, vegetables and flowers where he had lived and worked for so many years, trying in vain to forget he was a refugee.

All of a sudden he was lifted on the heavenly steed that carried the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, and from there up, up, up into the highest heavens into the presence of Allah the Most High. And he heard the Prophet say, "I know not how to utter Thy praise".

"Speak not," a voice said. "Deem yourself unworthy to praise Me and I will make the universe thy spokesman. Every atom in it shall praise Me for thee."

Then he saw the Prophet talking with a very young man in a long white robe and a face radiant with loving kindness. As Ahmad Khalil approached him, he stretched forth his hand and at once an exhilaration of well-being swept through him.

"Who are you?" asked Ahmad Khalil.

The young man looked him straight in the eye. "Don't you recognize me? I am Jesus."

"Then he heard Muhammad say, "I am closest to Jesus, the son of Mary, because our message was the same and there was no Prophet between us."

Suddenly Ahmad Khalil was startled by grave guttural voices. There were three prophets standing over him — Abraham, Moses and Jesus.

"You had better start giving him the anaesthetic now. As soon as he's under it, we'll wheel him into the operating room and collapse that lung."

Ahmad Khalil jumped. He bolted upright in bed and set such fierce penetrating black eyes upon the doctors that they shrank away. No, Jesus was not here. His power to heal the sick had come from Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate. He looked at the table of shiny sterilized instruments. No, Jesus did not belong here. If he had walked in, he would have been driven away.

"Put the mask over him."

Unable to control himself any longer, Ahmad Khalil swept all the sterilized instruments off the table. As they made a great clattering noise on the floor, he jumped out of bed and ran out of the room down the hall with the doctors at his heels. When they caught him he kicked and struggled. He was so wild, he was strong. It took half a dozen husky male nurses to restrain him before they finally got him back into bed.

The nurse with the tray of food ran up and asked, "For God's sake! What's happened?"

"He has a very high fever and is in a wild delirium."

"No, I am not!" contradicted Ahmad Khalil in a clear, ringing voice.

"Then do you know where you are?" asked the doctor.

"Yes! I am in Hell and you are the Devil!"

The following morning, when Isma'il came to visit his father, the doctors summoned him.

"We are giving you a prescription for some medicine he can take at home. It might slow the advance of the disease, and it should make your father feel more comfortable if he will take it..."

Isma'il's face paled. "But — but," he stammered, "I don't understand. My father came here only several days ago and you said he needed prolonged care."

The doctor shook his head. "I hate to say this to you, but it is best that I tell you the truth. We did all we could. I'm terribly sorry, but we can do nothing more for your father. We need every bed for patients who have hope for recovery."

Isma'il's body shook and his voice trembled. "But — but surely with the new drugs, the latest surgery, you promised me there was a good chance the disease could at least be arrested."

"We can do nothing for a patient who refuses to co-operate with us, and your father has been impossible."

When Isma'il went upstairs to see his father, Ahmad Khalil was lying with his face turned to the wall.

"Father!" he called.

Ahmad Khalil turned, but his expression plainly showed that he was not particularly glad to see his son.

"Father, the doctors say you cannot stay here any longer. I have come to take you home."

"Nurse, will you get him ready to go? We must leave by noon."

Ahmad Khalil's whole face lit up with a radiant light. Tears flowed from his eyes, he was so happy. He was as excited as a child. Asmahan, Rashid and 'Abd al-Raziq, he knew the mere sight of their faces would make him well again. . . .

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## WHOSE KINGDOM?

by NORMAN LEWIS

The essential thing in the State is that God should be honoured as the Head of the State.

Every act of legislation must be considered from this angle: if God were sending His messages through His messengers, would this be His desire? Would God approve of giving land to the landless? Would He approve of closer commercial ties between Muslim countries? Would He approve of the destruction of idols in all lands and States dedicated to Him?

If this is made the criterion, there should be no difficulty in reaching a decision. Did God create this world for all men or for a few? Does He want a closer relationship, materially and spiritually, between His worshippers who are hundreds or even thousands of miles apart? Does He want it made plain that in all Islamic countries every knee is to bow to the one invisible God?

The distribution of land should not become entangled in too many strings of bureaucracy. Also, what Malaya has that Egypt could use, and vice versa, should not be difficult to determine. Nor should there be any mystification as to what is to be done if Hindu idols are exposed to public gaze in Pakistan. Nor should there be any confusion if a crucifix or images of "saints" are visible to believers in the one invisible God.

Islam has two missions on earth: to live a pure life within its borders and to show to all mankind that there is a better way of life than the worship of idols.

It was said of William the Conqueror, a foreigner on the soil of England, that "he loved the great game as if he were their father". But many a Saxon freeman had a primary right to those virginal acres of the game preserves of his own country and a great need for that land.

It is probable that much trade of Muslim countries which is today being given to Communistic or capitalistic countries could be given to other members of the theocracy. When people awake to the reality of God and of His kingdom, will this rebirth of the soul of man take place in atheistic or materialistic countries? Or will it take place in countries where every child is taught the knowledge of the true God?

What is to be done if an image of Vishnu or Siva is exposed to the public gaze in an Islamic country? If a man worships an image he is a menace to the spiritual life of the whole world.

And is a crucifix to be worshipped within the borders of Islam? Will not the wrath of the true God fall upon all those who worship idols and all those who tolerate their worship? Is not the presence of images an offence to God and a reproach to all who proclaim that their country is part of the domain of God?

# IRAN MOVES FORWARD

Internal conditions in Iran have measurably improved in the past few months of the Amini Government's incumbency. Although much work remains to be done, the people of Iran have reason to be encouraged by the vigorous steps undertaken by the Government to accelerate the nation's progress.

The new Government has succeeded in putting the Persian economy on a sound footing, the result chiefly of belt-tightening austerity measures which have produced a virtually balanced national budget. Economic stability has been accomplished by a ban on indiscriminate imports of luxury goods — thus conserving valuable foreign exchange and encouraging exports — and by a drastic pruning of unnecessary Government expenditure.

Irregularities and inefficiency in the public sector are swiftly being rooted out. Offenders of the public trust must face criminal prosecution by the Government.

Firm measures are being taken to hasten land reform and to spread literacy throughout the country.

## **New university planned**

Under a joint agreement negotiated between the Iranian Minister of Education and German authorities, a new university will be constructed in Iran by the Association of German Universities for the training of Iranian students.

The German-financed institution, which is projected for completion within the next ten years, will have faculties in the fields of medicine, agriculture, science and engineering. The university will be staffed by German professors. Twenty per cent of the university's graduates will be sent to Germany to continue post-graduate studies under German scholarships.

Mr. Eng. Naficy, Technical and Training Under-Secretary of the Iranian Ministry of Education, told a Press Conference that the site of the university will be chosen by the Public Domain Administration.

## **Italo-Irano cultural exchange agreement**

Exchange of books and other publications, documentary films and exhibitions has been agreed upon by the Governments of Italy and Iran. Signed in Rome, the agreement is designed to promote reciprocal relations in the arts, literature, education and the sciences.

A mutual undertaking to provide study grants and scholarships to nationals of each country also formed part of the accord. Archaeological and Islamic studies will be encouraged and Persian and Italian taught at universities in both countries.

## **Epochal Land Reform Law approved by the Shah**

The recent disturbances in Iran have been brought under control. With the restoration of order, indications are now favourable that Tehran University will be re-opened shortly.

Iran can now move forward with its needed reform programme.

Described as "a landmark in the history of Iran", a bold new land reform measure has been signed by His Imperial Majesty the Shah which will soon make 5,000 peasant families in the Marageh area of Azerbaijan land-owners for the first time and which, eventually, will apply to Iran's 16,000,000 landless peasants.

The revolutionary land reform programme, designed to bring an end to the country's ancient feudal system, is scheduled to come into effect on the 41st day following royal approval (15th January 1962). Dr. Ali Amini, the Prime Minister, and Dr. Hassan Arsanjani, Minister of Agriculture, have pledged to enforce the measure vigorously.

Immediately affected by the law (an Amendment of the 1960 Land Reform Law) will be some 300 villages now owned by a small group of landlords, whose holdings, save for one village each, will be equitably distributed among 5,000 peasant families comprising more than 200,000 persons.

Landlords will be compensated for the land ceded to the peasants on the basis of their annual income, each due to be paid ten times the annual income of their land over a period of ten years.

The land taken over by the peasants is, under the law, to be paid for within a 15-year period. It is expected that ownership of the land he has been cultivating as a tenant will result in a doubling of the Marageh peasant's income.

Completion of the Marageh phase of the land reform programme will have been achieved in time for the summer harvest, officials in the Ministry of Agriculture believe.

An important part of the scheme is the setting up of multi-purpose co-operatives which will provide credit to the new farm owners, for seed, animals, fertilizers, etc., as well as act as purchasing and marketing agents.

Public opinion polls conducted by leading Iranian newspapers among all sections of the people have indicated wide support for the agrarian reform law.



*Dr. 'Ali Amini, Prime Minister of Iran*

# THE HISTORY OF THE SHRINES AT MECCA AND MEDINA

by R. A. JAIRAZBHOY

## THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE HARAM AT MECCA IN THE MIDDLE AGES

As a consequence of natural and human depredations, the Sacred Sanctuary of Islam at Mecca has suffered like all things constructed by human hands. But the stages of its growth and appearance from a purely architectural point of view have scarcely been exploited systematically, although abundant material lay within easy reach. This material was compiled by historians of the city of Mecca, and by pilgrim travellers who came to perform the Hajj. From their descriptions we can visualize how the shrine was enriched, its many vicissitudes, and how it must have presented a very different appearance from what it did in later times. The fact that it is now but a shadow of its erstwhile self is real reason why we should attempt to imagine it as it was at its prime. However, before we attempt to reconstruct it through medieval descriptions we will briefly detail its early history and before we close we shall refer to the subsequent fortunes which have made the Ka'ba and the Masjid al-Haram what they are today.

I. The first historical Ka'ba at Mecca of which we have details was built by the Quraish in the time of the Prophet Muhammad in 608 C.E., but before Islam had been revealed to him.<sup>2</sup> Previously there had been, according to Azraqi (d. 837 C.E.),<sup>3</sup> a rough and roofless wall 9 cubits high and measuring 32 x 22 x 31 x 20 cubits.<sup>4</sup> The Quraish got Bakum, a carpenter-builder who had been shipwrecked in a Byzantine ship on the Red Sea coast near what is now Jeddah, to rebuild the Ka'ba. He now built it 18 cubits high and with alternate courses of wood and stone. The entrance door was raised a little over 4 cubits high, and the roof was supported by six pillars distributed in two rows<sup>5</sup> (like a basilica). Evidently through the influence of Bakum, the interior was painted with figures of prophets, including the Virgin and Child, and Abraham practising divination with arrows. When the Prophet conquered Mecca in 630 C.E. he ordered the latter to be erased as blasphemous, but declared that the former, which was on the column nearest the door, was not to be tampered with.<sup>6</sup>

II. 17 A.H. (638 C.E.). There had been no mosque around the Ka'ba either in the Prophet's time or in that of Abu Bakr. Al-Baladhuri (d. 892 C.E.) says that 'Umar bought up, or if this was not possible, forcibly demolished, encroaching houses, and raised an enclosure wall not higher than a man's stature on which lamps were put.<sup>7</sup>

III. 27 A.H. (647 C.E.). The third Caliph, 'Uthman, again enlarged the area by buying up houses (with more resistance and severer penalty), and Baladhuri cites a report that this was the first time porches were erected in the mosque.<sup>8</sup>

IV. 64 A.H. (683 C.E.). 'Abdallah Ibn al-Zubair had been taking refuge in the Haram Mosque against Yazid when the Ka'ba was destroyed by fire,<sup>9</sup> some say accidentally and others that catapults had been aimed from the top of Jabal Abu Qubais.<sup>10</sup> Ibn al-Zubair rebuilt the Ka'ba on the old foundations but now with stone only, and joined

the black stone which had been split into three. He lengthened the Ka'ba by 7 cubits, and also raised its height from 18 to 27 cubits. This Ka'ba had two doors in it, one for the entrance and the other for the exit, and they were on ground level. In the interior the dry well Bi'r Ahsif still remained where the treasures were deposited, particularly the golden vessels that had been presented to the Ka'ba. The building was now not called *Baitallah* or "House of God" but the Ka'ba, after *ka'ab*, "cube".<sup>11</sup> According to Mas'udi this Ka'ba was decorated with mosaics transferred from a church at San'aa built by Abraha the Abyssinian (before 570 C.E.), and there were also three marble columns enriched with painted and gilt ornament.<sup>12</sup> The doors and keys are stated to have been plated with gold.<sup>13</sup>

V. 74 A.H. (693 C.E.). The catapults of al-Hajjaj had cracked the walls of the Ka'ba and the Omayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik authorized him to rebuild it. It was accordingly pulled down and rebuilt on the same foundations as that of the Quraish, but the Caliph often had occasion to regret this choice.<sup>14</sup> Hajjaj gave the house a double roof, closed the west door and raised the east door 4 cubits.<sup>15</sup> According to Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi this new building had the same height as its predecessor, that is 27 cubits.<sup>16</sup>

VI. 91 A.H. (709 C.E.). Under al-Walid the Haram Mosque was restored at a cost of 30,000 dinars. There were now introduced marble columns and marble panelling, glass mosaics, gilt spouts, and crenellations.<sup>17</sup> The door of the Ka'ba was for the first time plated with gold.<sup>18</sup> (But cf. IV above.)

VII. 137-140 A.H. (754-57 C.E.). The Abbasid Caliph al-Mansur enlarged the north-south sides of the Mosque, and made it twice as large as it had been before. He paved the ground adjoining the well of Zamzam with marble,<sup>19</sup> and made a surround of latticed wood.

VIII. 167 A.H. (783 C.E.). The Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdi enlarged the Haram Mosque, and for this purpose brought marble pillars by sea from Alexandria. Syrian and Egyptian artists have signed their names on the mosaics of the façade porticoes.<sup>20</sup>

Further work in the Haram under the Abbasid Caliphs is of a relatively minor nature and has been summarized as follows,<sup>21</sup> with further additions of ours:

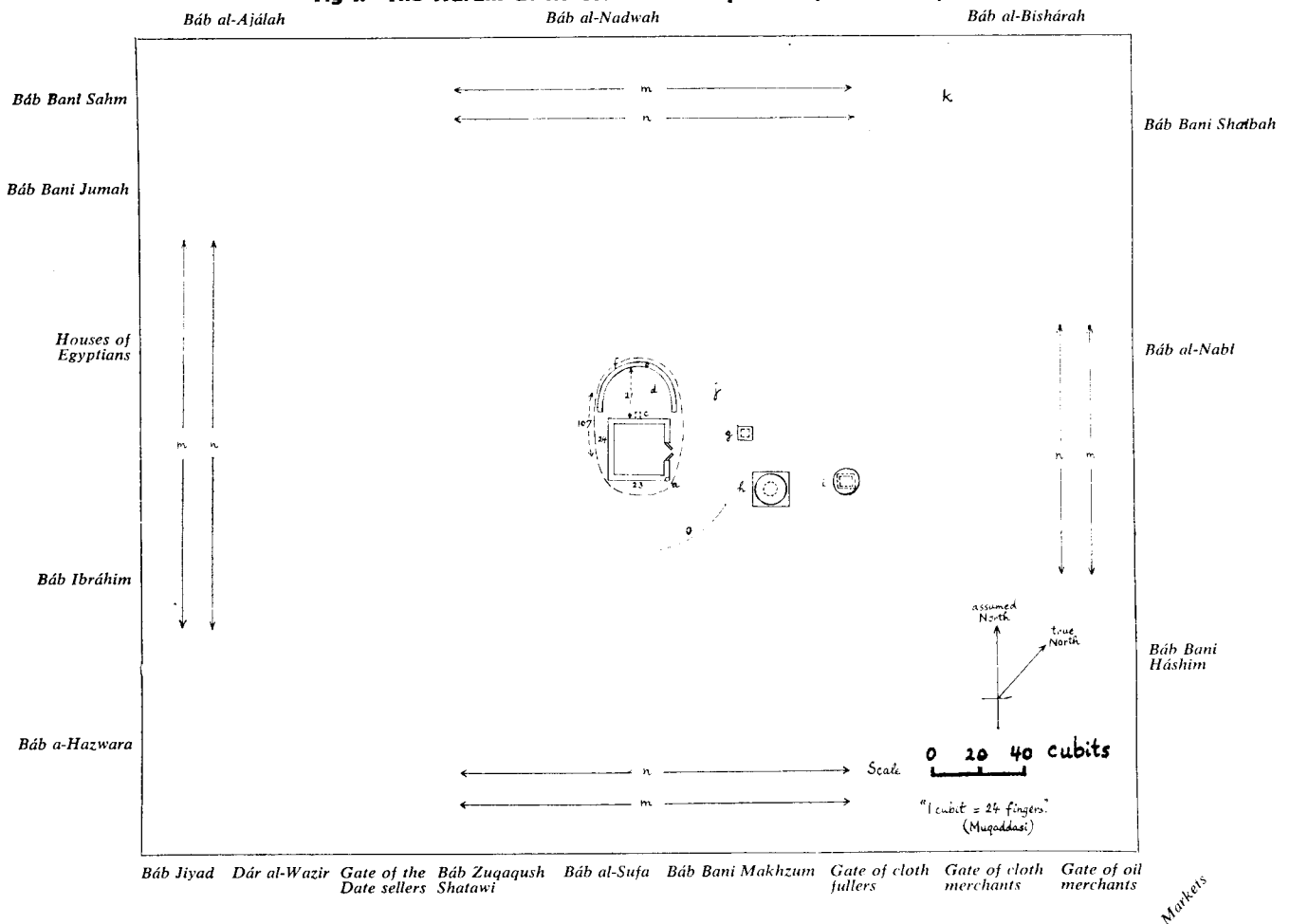
IX. Harun al-Rashid (786-809 C.E.) added a minbar<sup>22</sup> and renewed the silver rim round the Black Stone.

X. 226 A.H. (840 C.E.) in the reign of Mu'tasim the Well of Zamzam was covered with a roof.<sup>23</sup>

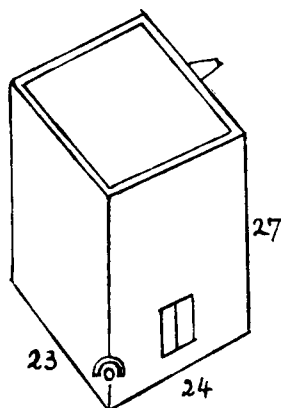
XI. 240 A.H. (854 C.E.). When Mustansir was but heir apparent he sent from Baghdad 100 blocks of marble which were sawn up at Mecca by workmen from Iraq and used to pave the floor of the Ka'ba to replace the primitive paving stones which had been broken.<sup>24</sup>

I I am grateful to Mr. D. Cowan for some suggestions.

**Fig I. The Haram at Mecca after Muqaddasi (c. 985 C.E.)**



XII. 241 A.H. (855 C.E.). Mutawakkil sent from Baghdad to Mecca more than 30 goldsmiths under the supervision of Ishaq Ibn Salima, who put a silver lock and plaques of silver on the Bab al-Rahmah or Gate of Mercy.<sup>25</sup>



**Fig 1a. View of the Ka'ba after the measurement of Muqaddasi**

XIII. 281 A.H. (894 C.E.) al-Mutadid rebuilt walls, made new gates, and enlarged the west side of the Mosque. He also made the galleried extension or annexe on the north exterior at the Dar al-Nadwah.<sup>26</sup>

XIV. 317 A.H. (929 C.E.). The Black Stone stolen by the heretic Karmathians under Abu Daher, and taken north of Medina, where it was kept in the vain hope of bringing revenue from pilgrims. It was returned to Mecca in 339 A.H. (950 C.E.), though in two pieces.<sup>27</sup> (Later in 413 A.H. (1022 C.E.) the mad Fatimid king al-Hakim sent a servant to club the Black Stone, but luckily there was not much damage.)

XV. 339 A.H. (950 C.E.) al-Muqtadir ordered Lu'lu, the slave of his mother, Sayyida, to cover pillars entirely with plaques of gold. Silver lamps attached to silver chains were suspended from iron bars which linked the pillars.<sup>28</sup>

XVI. 354 A.H. (965 C.E.) al-Muqtadir built the projecting vestibule near the gate of the mosque called Bab Ibrahim.

We will now examine in greater detail the eye-witness accounts of some medieval Muslim travellers — specifically Muqaddasi (c. 985 C.E.), Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi (c. 900 C.E.), Nasir-i-Khusrau (1050 C.E.), the anonymous Moroccan author of the *Kitab al-Istibsar* (before 1191 C.E.), and finally the Spaniard Ibn Jubayr, who was at Mecca in 1183. We will

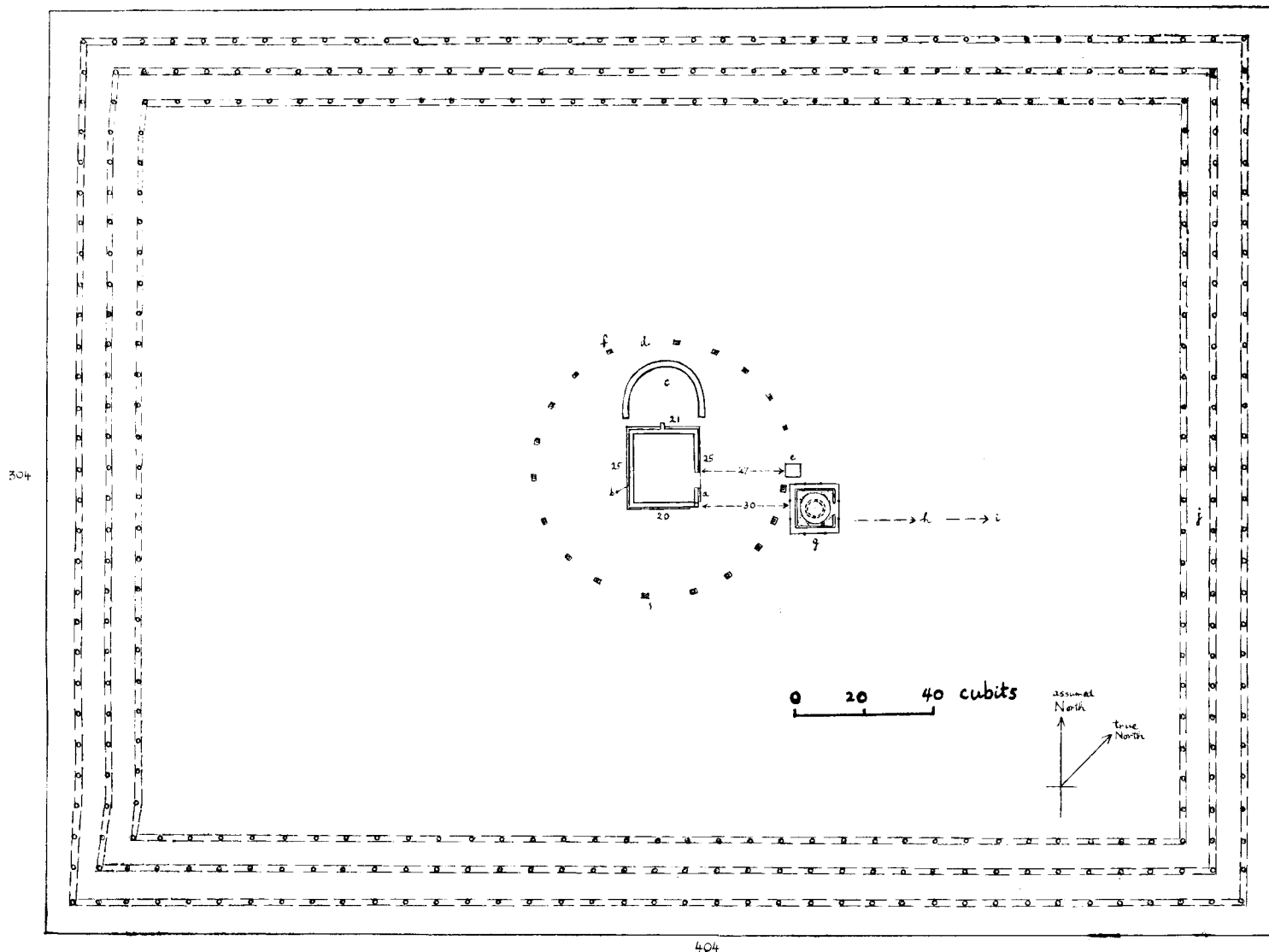
find that in respect of dimensions they do not all agree (sometimes because of the different length of the cubit), but we must nevertheless credit them for making acute and precise observations. By juxtaposing their reports, by critical analysis, and by allowing the data of one to supplement that of the other, an accurate picture of the Haram in the Middle Ages can be arrived at. In order to lessen the tedium of long detailed description we will adopt the visual approach and provide plans and, whenever the account is sufficiently detailed, perspective drawings and elevations as well. The essential features given in the descriptions of the various authors will be found itemized in the respective keys, and the positions on the plan marked by alphabetic letters or numerals. Once the drawings are before us we can make the comparisons and draw inferences.

Fig. I. Key to Muqaddasi's description of the Haram<sup>29</sup>  
(c. 985)

- (a) The Ka'ba measures 23 x 24 cubits, and is 27 cubits high. The Black Stone is at shoulder height on edge of angle. It has the shape of a man's head (Fig. 1a).
- (b) Silver gilt plates over two-leaved door raised over head height above ground.

- (c) Mizab or projecting gutter spout.
- (d) White marble pavement.
- (e) The Hijr, a specially holy area on the north side of the Ka'ba, is bounded by a waist high wall measuring 25 cubits around. This dimension must be incorrect. Ibn Khurdadbeh (p. 133) gives the circumference as 50 cubits, and Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi gives 21 cubits as the maximum distance of the Hijr from the House. Consequently we draw the amended dimensions here.
- (f) Hijr faced with white marble.
- (g) Maqam (Ibrahim) with large iron box containing reversed prints of Abraham's feet.
- (h) Vaulted building over Zamzam which is east of the door of the Ka'ba. The course of the *tawaaf* (circumambulation) lies between this vault and the door.
- (i) Dome of Drink over reservoir "at a little distance".
- (j) Sand over the *tawaaf* area.
- (k) Gravel in mosque.
- (l) Circuit of *tawaaf* measures 107 cubits. Using the formula  $2\pi r$  we can establish that the radius must thus be about 17 cubits. But from modern plans we know that the circuit is not circular but oval.

Fig II. The Haram at Mecca after Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi (c. 900 C.E.)

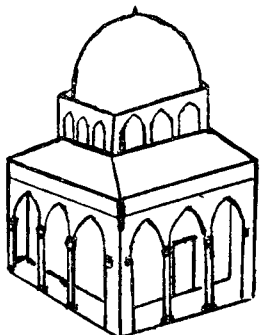


- (m) Three porticoes with white marble pillars round court brought by al-Mahdi from Alexandria. Mosque measures 370 x 315 cubits. The names of the Gates are listed, and are placed in their approximate position on our plan.
- (n) Mosaic on façades executed by Syrian and Egyptian artisans who have signed their names on work.
- (o) *Tawaaf* surrounded by pillars of bronze and posts fixed with lanterns for candles. (Their circuit must pass near the Zamzam since that appears to have been the outer limit of the *tawaaf*, as noted above.)

Fig. II. Key to Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi's description of the Haram<sup>30</sup> (c. 900 C.E.).

- (a) The Multazam, or the space between the Aswad corner and the door — 5 cubits (which indicates that the door cannot be in the centre of the east side, but that it is shifted to the south).
- (b) Plastered wall about a foot high and a foot wide around the Ka'ba, excepting the Aswad corner, to protect the House from torrents of rain water.
- (c) The Hija is paved with marble. It is bounded by a low curved wall whose maximum distance from the Ka'ba is 21 cubits. This wall is about 3 ft. high, and it stops before reaching the Ka'ba, leaving two cubit openings, one for entrance and the other for exit.
- (d) Hija wall covered all over with marble and interstices are filled with lead.
- (e) Maqam 27 cubits from Ka'ba to E. Irregular stone with footprints of Abraham set on a raised platform and protected by a perforated iron cage.
- (f) A ring of large rectangular iron pillars with gold shafts and capitals supporting lights for facilitating the nocturnal *Tawaaf*. About 27 cubits away.
- (g) Zamzam. The position of Zamzam is 30 cubits from the Ka'ba. Though he does not give dimensions our author provides a fairly clear description of the structure over Zamzam, which as we have seen (above X) was built by Mu'tasim in 840 C.E. Here follows the key to our reconstruction based on the author's description (Fig. IIa).

Fig IIa. View of the structure over Zamzam as described by Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi



well is on the east side.

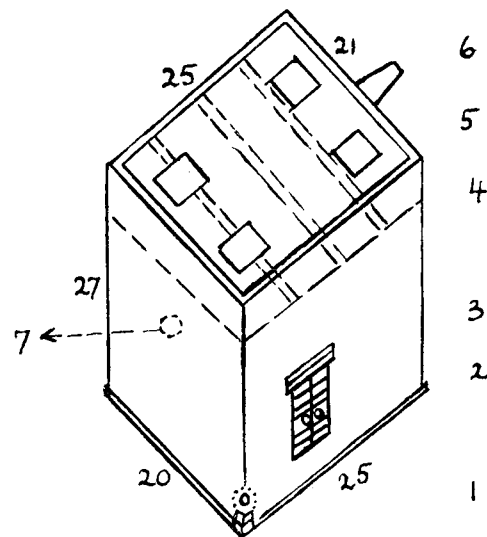
4. A veranda-like structure runs round the whole. Continuing with the other structures in the Haram :

- (h) Big room, with mosaic-covered arched roof, kept locked.
- (i) Big rectangular room covered with three vaults having a door on each side.<sup>31</sup>

1. Arched roof (dome?) decorated with mosaic work, resting on four angles (squins?) each supported on a pair of marble columns.
2. Space between the "angles" is closed with red wood balustrades (grilles?).
3. Door to chamber containing the

- (j) The dimensions of the Mosque, 404 x 304 cubits, does not concur with Muqaddasi's, but are based on Ya'qubi (889 C.E.), who adds that the area covered was 120,000 square cubits.<sup>32</sup> Muqaddasi's dimensions, incidentally, coincide exactly with Ibn Khurdadbeh (p. 132), i.e. 370 x 315 cubits. Nor does Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi's claim that the white marble columns of the triple porticoed mosque are about 10 cubits apart lead to the total he gives (434), or the 465 given by Ibn al-Fakih (XXI. 15), or yet the 484 given by Ya'qubi.<sup>33</sup> Spacing them 10 cubits apart as we have done on our plan we get 378 columns only. Our author does say that the 23 entrances (without doors) have at an average three columns each, so that we could add 69 columns to 378 and add another 8 from Zamzam, 3 from the Ka'ba, to give a total of 458 columns for the whole Haram area, excluding the annexes at the Dar al-Nadwah and Bab Ibrahim. Certainly 50 columns E-W along the court and 30 N-S cannot be right, even by Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi's own reckoning, for with 10 cubits spacing there should only be 35 E-W and 25 N-S.
- (k) The Ka'ba's dimensions are length 25 cubits, breadth 20 and 21, height 27<sup>34</sup> (Fig. IIb).

Fig IIb. View of the Ka'ba after the measurement of Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi



1. Plastered structure (a foot high and a foot broad) running round the Ka'ba except at the Aswad corner, as a protection against rain floods (cf. Azraqi, p. 217).
2. The door on the east, which is 5 cubits from the Aswad corner, is at a man's height from the ground. It is teakwood and measures 6 cubits 10 fingers x 3 cubits 18 fingers. It is plated on the outside with gold and inside with silver. Each of two leaves of the door have six crosspieces and two hooks into which a golden lock is fixed.
3. There are two lintels over the door, the lower of which is gold plated.
4. The Ka'ba has a double roof, the lower being supported on three rafters of teakwood ornamented and covered with gold plate.
5. The roof is pierced with four apertures, one opposite the other, for light. (According to Azraqi, p. 205, the

skylights were covered with transparent marble from the Yemen named Balaq (alabaster?), which let in the daylight.)

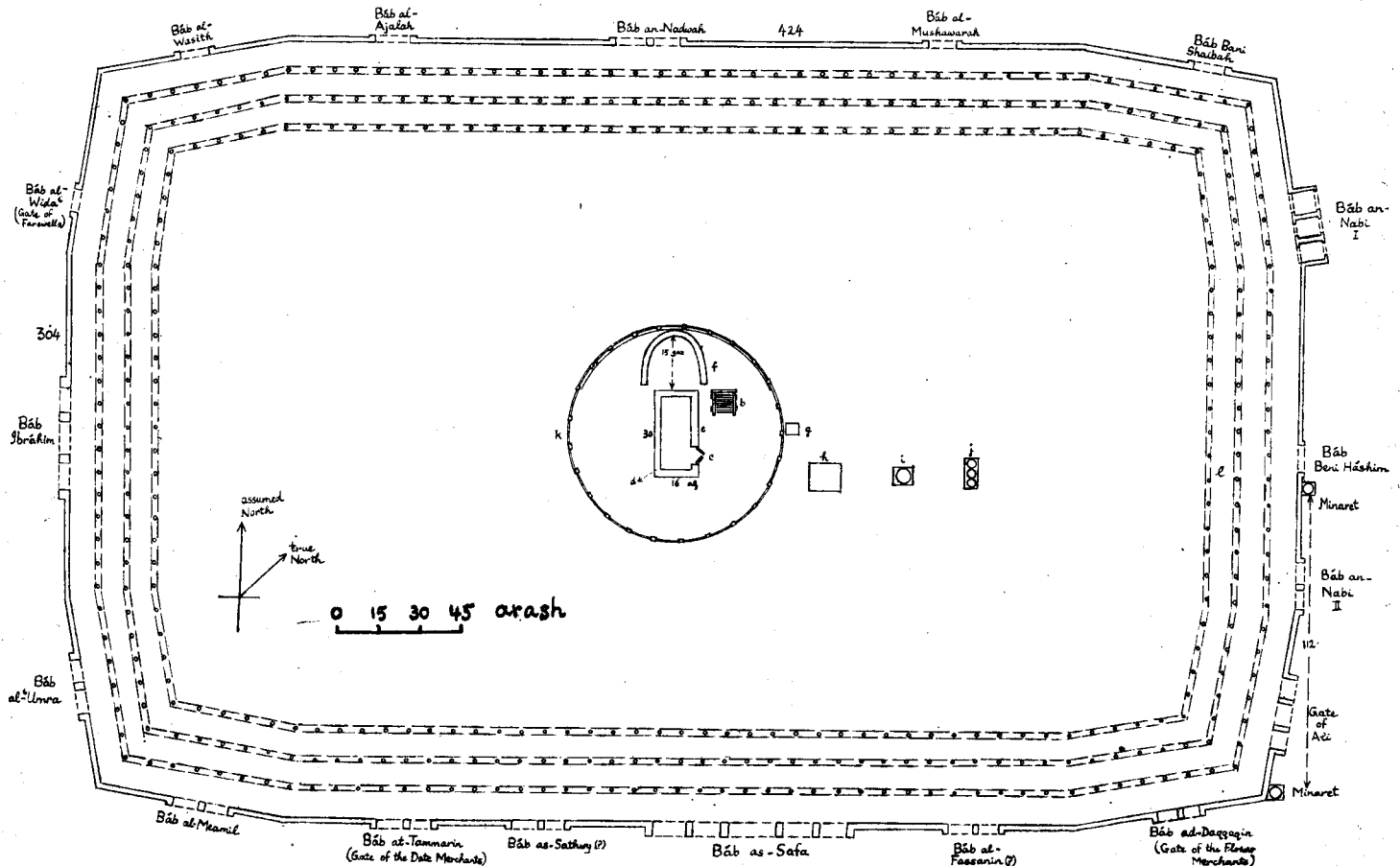
6. The rain-spout is in the middle of the north side of the roof, projecting from it about 4 cubits. It is 8 fingers broad<sup>35</sup> and 8 deep, and is plated with gold held in position with nails with golden heads.
7. Set in the west wall opposite the door at 6 cubits from the floor is the black and white banded onyx stone. It is 12 x 12 fingers in size and is circled by a 3-finger wide ring of gold.

Fig. III. Key to Nasir-i-Khusrau's description of the Haram (1050 C.E.).<sup>36</sup>

- (a) The measurement of the Ka'ba is given as 30 x 16 arash. (The width given is certainly wrong and can only constitute an internal measurement.)
- (b) Wooden staircase wide enough for 10 people which is rolled before the door whenever necessary (like the stair ramps at airports).
- (c) Teak wood door in two leaves each  $1\frac{1}{2}$  gaz<sup>37</sup> wide and  $6\frac{1}{2}$  arash high. The door is encrusted with silver patterned with circles and arabesques, and an inscription in gold and silver niello quoting the Qur'an, 3 : 95. The upper part of the door has two silver rings sent from Ghazni. Below are two smaller rings with a silver lock passing through them.
- (d) The thickness of the wall of the Ka'ba is 6 palms (or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ft.?).

- (e) The staircase to roof through a silver-plated trapdoor is in a square construction of 3 gaz. It is entered by a little silver door, the Bab ar Rahmah ("Gate of Mercy").
- (f)  $1\frac{1}{2}$  gaz thick wall with its extremities abutting at the two angles of the north wall of the Ka'ba. The summit of the circle it makes is 15 gaz away. The wall and the pavement between are covered with plaques of carved and coloured marble.
- (g) The Maqam is 30 arash east of the Ka'ba.
- (h) Zamzam is 46 arashs east of the Black Stone. The well has a diameter of 3 arashs. Wooden lattice-work on the ground prevents water from accumulating.
- (i) East of the latter is a domed square building called the Siqayat al-Hajj (Pilgrim's Fountain).
- (j) Beyond the latter is an oblong building with three cupolas called *Khazanat al-Zait* (Oil Store).
- (k) All round the Ka'ba stand columns linked at the summit by carved and painted beams.
- (l) The Masjid, measuring 424 x 304 arashs, has three circumscribing covered galleries with wooden roofs upheld by marble columns (which, it is claimed, were imported by sea from Syria at the order of the Abbasid caliphs). Twenty-three columns face the court along the width and 45 along the length. In order to obtain this given number of columns in the given space, we have estimated here that the columns must be a little over 8 cubits apart, and that there must be a total of 420. Nasir-i-Khusrau makes the extraordinary claim that the

Fig III. The Haram at Mecca after Nasir-i-Khusrau (1050 C.E.)



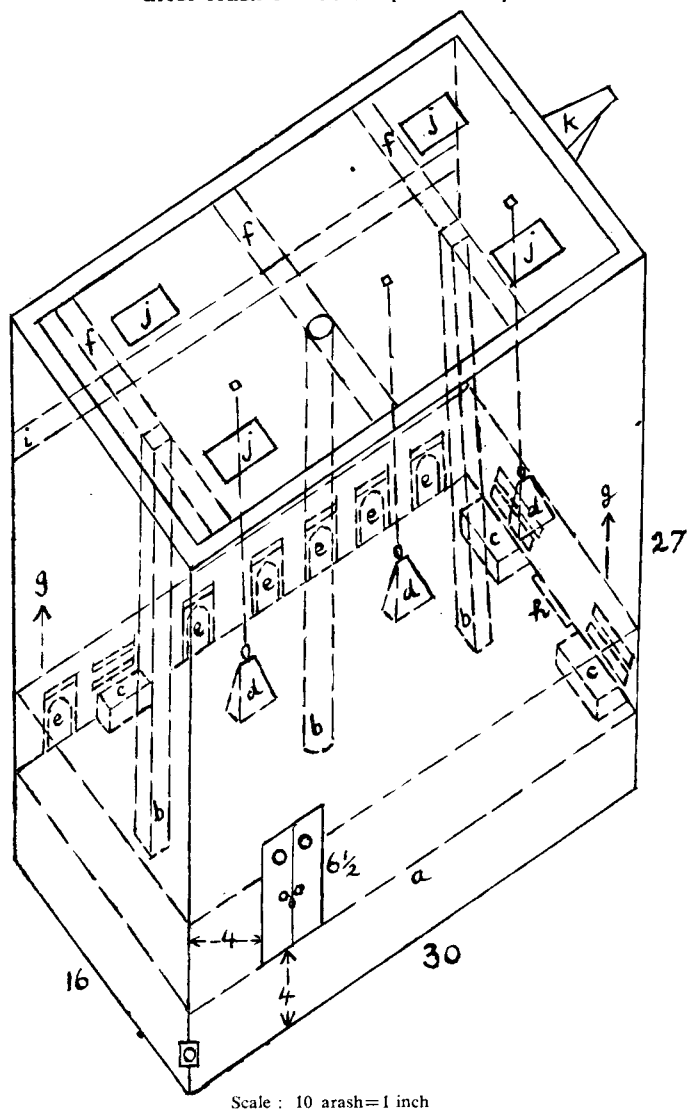
surrounding walls of the mosque are nearly rounded in shape, and confirms also that as a result the court appears to be at certain places narrower and at others larger. He explains this circular tendency by the necessity of praying from all angles towards the central point of orientation, which is the Ka'ba.

Nasir-i-Khusrau names and gives relative positions of 18 doors, and specifies the number of arches of each. They are supported by marble columns. He mentions one minaret near the door of Ali and one near the door of the Bani Hashim. (The three other minarets set in a square between the hills Safa and Marwa that he refers to evidently do not belong to the Haram, for these are directions respectively north-east and north of the Mosque.) From Ya'qubi we know that these two green minarets were 112 cubits apart, and were erected by al-Mahdi (780-81 C.E.).<sup>38</sup>

Fig. IV. Key to Nasir-i-Khusrau's description of the Ka'ba (1050 C.E.).

- (a) The door of the Ka'ba (and therefore the floor also) is raised 4 arashs above the level of the court.

Fig IV. A view of the interior and exterior of the Ka'ba after Nasir-i-Khusrau (1050 C.E.)

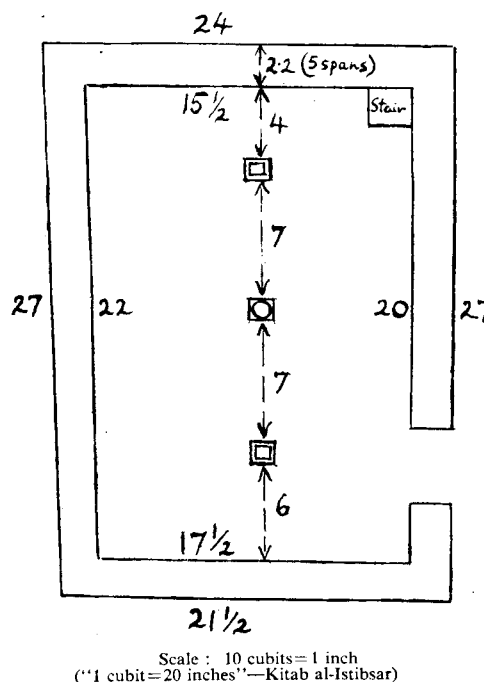


- (b) Teak pillars supporting roof are square but one is round.  
 (c) Three small seats or benches, one facing door and two on the north side. Above each of the seats are two planks fixed to the wall which are claimed to have come from Noah's Ark.  
 (d) Three lamps hanging between the pillars.  
 (e) On the west side fixed to the wall with nails are six silver mihrabs. Each is a man's height, and they are ornamented with incrustations of gold and dark niello.  
 (f) Ceiling is formed of beams entirely covered with satin.  
 (g) Walls are bare up to a height of 4 arashs from the ground, but above this right up to the ceiling there is a revetment of marble plaques ornamented with arabesques and carvings much of which is gilt.  
 (h) In the north part of the Ka'ba, resting on the ground, is a long rectangular plaque of red marble. The Prophet had prayed on this spot.  
 (i) On the wall below the ceiling is an inscription in gold naming al-Aziz, the Fatimid ruler who took Mecca from the Caliphs of Baghdad.  
 (j) Four windows, one at each of the corners, and each set with a pane of glass which lets in daylight and excludes rain.  
 (k) The gutter spout in the centre of the north wall is covered with inscriptions in letters of gold.

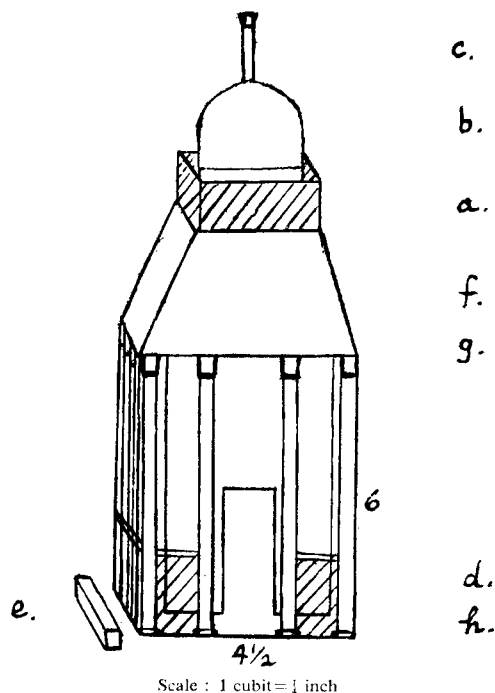
Fig. V. The plan of the Ka'ba after the Kitab al-Istibsar (before 1911 C.E.).<sup>39</sup>

This is the first precisely measured plan of the Ka'ba where all the external and internal dimensions are given, also the thickness of the walls and the spaces between the supporting pillars. We observe with some amazement that almost no two dimensions in the building are equal.

Fig V. The plan of the Ka'ba after The Kitab al-Istibsar (before 1191 C.E.)



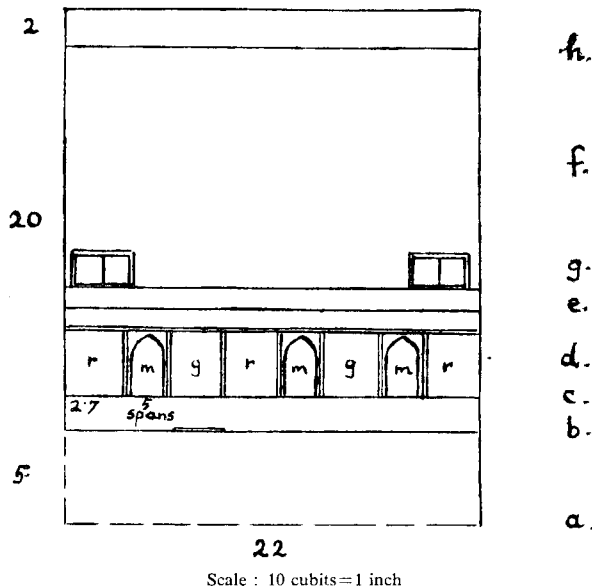
**Fig VI. Zamzam according to Ibn Jubayr (1183 C.E.) and The Kitab al-Istibsar (before 1191 C.E.)**



**Fig. VI. Key to Zamzam according to Ibn Jubayr,<sup>40</sup> and the Kitab al-Istibsar.\*\***

- (a) Perforated latticed balustrade of wood with terrace.\*
- (b) Minaret-like ball.\* Miniature dome.\*\*
- (c) Stuccoed column surmounted by iron vessel used as lamp in Ramadan.\* Chain of copper.\*\*
- (d) Balustrades surmounted by glass columns, some twisted like bracelets;\* also interlaced bars of iron attached to balustrades.\*

**Fig VII. Decoration of the West Wall of the Ka'ba as described by Ibn Jubayr and The Kitab al-Istibsar**



- (e) Marble bench.\*
- (f) Square dome covered with mosaic on 16 carved columns. Angles of dome fastened with iron grilles.\*\*
- (g) Ceiling of carved teak wood.\*\*
- (h) Pavement of marble.\*\*

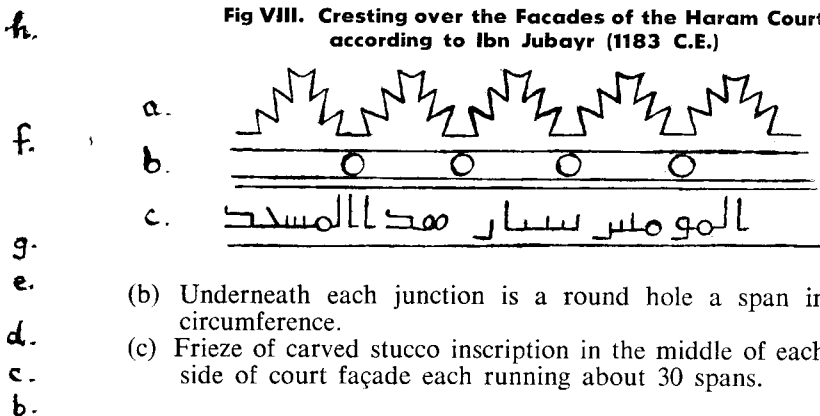
**Fig. VII. Key to the west wall of the Ka'ba as described by Ibn Jubayr\* and the Kitab al-Istibsar.\*\***

- (a) Internal dimensions of the wall must be 22 cubits wide and 20 cubits high (since the floor is raised 5 cubits above ground and space between two ceilings is 2 cubits).\*\*
- (b) The floor is of white marble.\*\*
- (c) The decoration of the wall begins at a height of 5 spans.\*
- (d) The zone of coloured marble is the height of a man. There are 5 slabs, 3 red and 2 green,\* \*\* 2 red ones are at the corners,\* then comes either a quartered white marble veined slab,\* or 3 silver mihrabs, each 5 spans long and 3 wide, with spaces between inscribed with the names of the Abbasid Caliphs al-Muti and al-Muqtadir.\*\* Next from left comes a green slab opposite which 3 cubits away is the *musalla* or praying place of the Prophet.\* Side of the slabs are braced with speckled marble mouldings 2 fingers wide.\* The coloured marble slabs are claimed to have been sent by the Omayyad al-Walid.\*\*
- (e) Immediately above are two inscriptional friezes each 2 spans wide with lapis lazuli letters on a gold ground.\*
- (f) Immediately above again starts the gold engraving (\*p. 90) or the gilt silver plates (\*p. 78) or the carved and gilt decoration.\*\* This is stated to commence at a height of 9 cubits from floor.\*\*
- (g) In each of the corners at a height are a pair of silver doors in the form of windows closed by leaves of green marble slabs.\*
- (h) Lower ceiling 2 cubits below roof is greenish gold,\*\* or covered with a veil of coloured silk.\*

**Fig. VIII. Key to the cresting over the colonnades of the Haram Court according to Ibn Jubayr (1183 C.E.).**

- (a) Roof of Haram Mosque crowned by continuous merlons each having three angles on each side (lowest angle touches angle of adjoining merlon).

**Fig VIII. Cresting over the Facades of the Haram Court according to Ibn Jubayr (1183 C.E.)**



- (b) Underneath each junction is a round hole a span in circumference.
- (c) Frieze of carved stucco inscription in the middle of each side of court façade each running about 30 spans.

#### General observations on the above

- (a) We have placed Muqaddasi first though he is not the earliest of the authors described. We have done this because his is the most cursory description and the least exact, though of course not altogether without value.

(b) We have drawn the structure over Zamzam following Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, who does not offer any dimensions. We have assumed that the veranda on columns was arcaded as well as the clerestory, and using our own proportions we have reconstructed a not unpleasing building. But in reconstructing it according to the 12th century writers (Fig. VI), one of whom has given us two of the dimensions we have had to reconstruct a rather stilted building. The four-sided dome could not have been a more sloping roof of wider pitch as in the former drawing, since the superimposed dome was but a miniature one by comparison, so we are told.

(c) We have proved Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi to be manifestly wrong in making the columns 10 cubits apart. We have followed him in this and consequently deliberately produced a faulty plan wherein the number of columns are too few. Both data could not be right, and we can say from other sources that he was more nearly right in his total number of columns in the Mosque.

(d) Nasir-i-Khusrau's description of the rounded plan of the Haram Mosque is borne out in modern plans only on the exterior of the S-E wall.<sup>41</sup> The fact that domestic houses of the town come right up against the exterior (some have even opened up windows in the wall to afford a direct view from their house) might perhaps explain how such a remarkable observation could have eluded others. Nor is the curving of the arcades been noticed, and is therefore subject to a certain amount of doubt. However, Burckhardt did observe in 1814 that none of the façades of the court ran quite in a straight line, "though at first sight the whole appears to be of a regular shape".<sup>42</sup>

(e) We conclude by comparing Figures IV and VII that the decorative treatment of the walls of the Ka'ba (specifically the west one) has undergone some change. The silver mihrabs have been reduced from six to three and the spaces between filled with green and red marble slabs. The Fatimid inscription appears to have been removed,<sup>43</sup> and replaced by two others lower down. Silver windows (blind?) have now been introduced at the corners. The benches or *karaasi*, which had been described by other writers as faced with gold plaques, covered with satin and resting on slabs of red marble,<sup>44</sup> now seem to have disappeared together with the beams of "Noah's Ark". Also the red slab (on which spot the Prophet prayed) has been transferred from the north wall to a spot in front of the door and facing the west wall. Along the east wall was introduced a basin which Ibn Jubayr piously reported was said to be "one of the pools of Paradise".<sup>45</sup> A further window must have been introduced in the centre of the ceiling, for Ibn Jubayr counted five, and they were of richly stained Iraq glass.<sup>46</sup> In the Iraq corner, the *Kitab al-Istibsar* (*op. cit.* p. 10) reports, is a column where is to be found a bar of silver; "here were the earrings of Maria, the amulet, and the ram's horn".

We must now stay a moment longer with our two 12th century writers and follow their observations of the remainder of the Haram.

### Ibn Jubayr

The Hijr is paved with marble mosaic tessellated with discs of varying sizes, chessboards, bendings, etc. (This is an important statement since no polychrome marble geometric mosaic pavement survives in Islamic architecture before this time, i.e. 1183.)

The triple aisled mosque has continuous colonnades. It is 400 x 300 cubits, and has 471 columns (which he himself counted), excluding the annexe on the north. In the north and

south colonnades inscriptions refer to the Abbasid al-Mahdi's enlargement of the mosque in 167 A.H. (783 C.E.), and his enlargement of the Safa Gate also.

The Haram has seven minarets: one at each of the four corners, one in the north wall at the Dar al-Nadwah, one in the south wall at the Safa Gate (but too narrow to be mounted), and one in the west wall at the Abraham Gate. The minarets are four-sided below and cylindrical above. The former stage is angulated at the four sides with carved masonry (*mukarnas* cells?) and is, surrounded by a wooden lattice (muezzin's gallery). The cylinder is encircled by the same, and is terminated by a globe. Each of the minarets is a variation upon this scheme.

A gold engraving on the door of the Ka'ba gives the name of the Abbasid al-Muktafi with the date 550 A.H. (1155 C.E.), and there it is claimed that he ordered the door to be erected.

In Ibn Jubayr's year of visit the Ka'ba was covered by a green silk veil (*kiswa*) with a red band sent by the Abbasid Caliph al-Nasir, but despite this the author noted that the walls were of large blocks of dark granite held together with viscous cement.

Finally we are informed that over Abraham's Maqam, which was 17 paces from the Ka'ba, was a wooden pyramidal dome 6 or 7 feet high. It used to be replaced by an iron dome at the time of pilgrimage.

### The Kitab al-Istibsar

The minbar on the east side of the Ka'ba for Friday Prayers was of three parts (door, stair, canopy?).

Between the Ka'ba and the Maqam were 30 cubits.

Between the Maqam and the limit of the Tawaaf 12 cubits. And the width of the Tawaaf was 42 cubits.

The Mosque measured 407 x 280 cubits. There were 470 columns in the Mosque, not to mention 129 in the annexes and 26 in doors, making a total of 621. The court had 46 arches on the long side and 31 on the short side.

There were 17 doors, and the statue of the pre-Islamic god Hubal was embedded in the threshold of the Gate of Banu Shaibah for people to tread on.

There were five minarets, whose positions are given. The small one over the Bab al-Safa is omitted, and also over the N.W. corner. (How can this omission be explained in view of the two authors being approximately contemporary?)<sup>47</sup>

The Dome of the Drink, which is 25 cubits from the Zamzam, is a sort of vault set on wooden feet covered by grilles and having a small door. The base is whitewashed, there is mosaic in the ceiling, and the cupola is surmounted by the figure of a copper bird, which turned with the wind (like a weather vane). It is extraordinary to find an animal representation in the Holy Sanctuary of Islam, especially when it is absent in other mosques, and when the Prophet had himself destroyed a wooden pigeon suspended from the roof of the Ka'ba in 630 C.E. upon his conquest of Mecca.<sup>48</sup> But in our opinion the copper bird was a talisman probably placed there by the Fatimids, for they had presented three such birds on columns to the al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo, their purpose being to prevent real birds from breeding and perching there.<sup>49</sup>

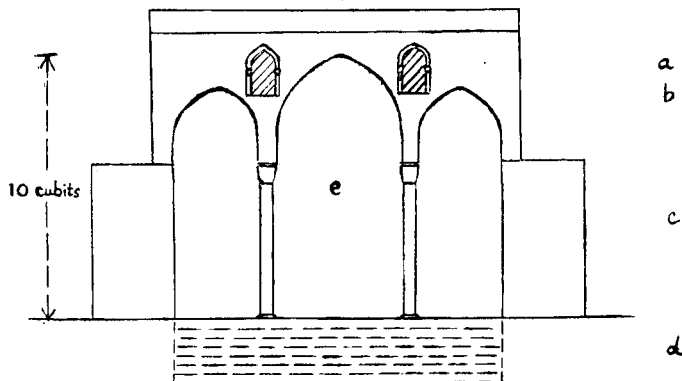
### Postscript

The exterior of the Mosque is invariably neglected in the various descriptions, but following Azraqi<sup>50</sup> we have

been able to restore at least the triple arched gates,<sup>51</sup> for which the key follows :

- (a) Grilled windows of carved and gilt teak wood.
- (b) Façade (spandrels) decorated with mosaics.
- (c) Jambs of the door faced with red and white marble.
- (d) Steps leading down to Mosque, in one case 4 steps, in the two others, 7 steps. (This is a reminder that the Haram was at a lower level than the surrounding buildings of the town.)
- (e) Arches 10 cubits high. Triple bay on two columns. (It seems that there never were any doors closing the arches so that the Mosque was always open and presumably accessible at all times.)

**Fig IX. Triple-Arched Entrance of the Haram as described by Azraqi (d. 837 C.E.)**



This account would not be complete without at least a brief summing-up of the subsequent state of the Haram. Here we have two authors who provide first-hand information closer to their times. One is Taqi al-Din al-Fasi, the Kadi of Mecca, who wrote his *History of Mecca* in 829 A.H. (1425 C.E.), and the other is Kutubudin al-Makki, who wrote his *History of the Mosque of Mecca* in 990 A.H. (1582 C.E.). A more leisurely monograph on this subject would make more detailed use of these works, but for our purpose it is sufficient to give a summary of the salient details.<sup>52</sup>

- (i) In 802 A.H. (1399 C.E.) a fire completely destroyed the north and west sides of the Mosque. Two years later, in 804 A.H., this was rebuilt at the expense of the Mamluk ruler Barquq, when iron bands were introduced for strengthening the columns for the first time. Wood was transported from Egypt, and locally from Taif, where the Arar tree grew (a species of cypress or juniper).
- (ii) In 818 A.H. (1415 C.E.) the Mamluk Muayyad sent a minbar from Egypt.
- (iii) In 906 A.H. (1500 C.E.) the Mamluk ruler al-Ghuri rebuilt most of the west side of the Mosque as an inscription over the Bab Ibrahim testified.
- (iv) In 923 A.H. (1517 C.E.) the Ottoman Sultan Salim built a Maqam for the Hanafi school of law, though this was rebuilt in 947 A.H. (1540 C.E.) by Khushgeldi, the Governor of Jeddah. (Maqams for the four orthodox schools existed in the 12th century, but as described by Ibn Jubayr, they were light fence-cum-trellis structures with suspended lamps and a mihrab. *Op. cit.*, p. 98).
- (v) In 959 A.H. (1551 C.E.) the roof of the Ka'ba was renewed in the reign of the Ottoman Sultan Sulaiman,

who also presented a white marble minbar in 969 A.H. (1561 C.E.).

- (vi) In 980 A.H. (1572 C.E.) Sulaiman rebuilt the side of the Mosque towards the street Masaa and erected domes over the aisles<sup>53</sup> (instead of a flat timber roof). He also had the Mosque paved (for the first time?) and the present paving round the Ka'ba is attributed to him. A gold mizab or waterspout was sent from Istanbul in 981 A.H. (1573 C.E.).
- (vii) In 984 A.H. (1576 C.E.) the Ottoman Sultan Murad repaired and partly rebuilt the remaining three sides of the Mosque. His inscription was over the Bab 'Ali and Bab 'Abbas.
- (viii) In 1039 A.H. (1626 C.E.) a torrent from Jabal Nur drowned everyone in the Mosque and carried away three sides of the Ka'ba. In the following year the fourth side was pulled down and the whole Ka'ba was rebuilt, according to Assami.
- (ix) In 1072 A.H. (1661 C.E.) the building over the well of Zamzam was re-erected, and in 1074 A.H. (1663 C.E.) the four maqams were built anew.

Thus we have seen in this sequel how in the course of two and a half centuries (1399-1663) the whole of the Haram was torn down and re-erected by the order of Egyptian and Turkish rulers. Most of the characteristic and individual features of the early years disappeared. The new buildings could not help reflecting the styles of the new patrons. It is true that the disposition of the main buildings remained, but domes and minarets were built in an alien style, and the gilt plating, glass mosaic, marble panelling, and carved timber from the peak periods of Islamic art vanished from the scene. The Haram is now but a severe utilitarian structure<sup>54</sup> scarcely to be mentioned in the histories of architecture, where once it was the receptacle of all that was most splendid in the Muslim world.

## THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE MOSQUE OF MEDINA IN THE MIDDLE AGES

The bitter hostility of the Meccans to the radical innovations of the Prophet arose from their deep roots in paganistic beliefs. His position in the city of his birth having become untenable, Muhammad migrated north on the 8th of the month of Rabi' I (622 C.E.=1 A.H.), arriving at Qubaa' on the 12th Rabi' I. After performing and leading the prayer at the mosque erected by the Banu Salim<sup>55</sup> (according to Ibn Hisham the first Muslim to build a mosque was 'Ammar Ibn Yasir<sup>56</sup>), on Friday 16th of Rabi', Muhammad made the three-mile journey<sup>57</sup> to Medina (then Yathrib). There on arriving he gave free rein to his she-camel al-Kaswa, and rejecting the hospitality of his "helpers" (*Ansars*), he descended where the camel knelt, and this became the site of his famous Mosque. Muhammad bought the *mirbad* from the orphans Sahl and Suhail for 10 dinars. This site was already next to a mosque in which Abu Ummah Asad used to lead the Friday prayers and where the Prophet also used to pray<sup>58</sup> (until his own Mosque was completed).

I. The Prophet began by ordering the land to be cleared of palm trees and graves, and to be drained of stagnant water. He had the (crude) bricks (*labin*) prepared, and himself helped by carrying them in his cloak.<sup>59</sup> A block of stone served to mark the orientation,<sup>60</sup> which was towards Jerusalem.<sup>61</sup> The Mosque measured 70 cubits x 60.<sup>62</sup> There

were three doors : one on the south, one on the west (the Bab al-Rahmah or Bab 'Atiq), and one on the east, the Bab Gibril, which was the Prophet's personal entrance.<sup>63</sup> Inside, there was an open court (*rahaba*), which in the early years was the scene of informal activities, while on the *qibla* side palm trunks served as columns to bear the roof,<sup>64</sup> which was of palm branches.<sup>65</sup> On the east side of the Mosque there were constructed two apartments for the Prophet's wives, Sawda and 'Ayesha, the latter's coming before and having a door on the north side.<sup>66</sup> The Prophet left the house of his host, where he had dwelt either seven or eleven months, and settled in the house of Sawda. Ibn Hisham gives the date of completion as the month of Safar 2 A.H. (623 C.E.).<sup>67</sup>

II. Some 16 or 17 months after his arrival at Medina the *qibla* or direction of prayer, which had hitherto faced Jerusalem in the north, was now turned to the opposite side or south towards Mecca following a revelation of the Qur'an (2:138-144). This was in the month of Shaban 2 A.H. (624 C.E.).<sup>68</sup> The modification to the Mosque entailed the transference of the sanctuary portico from north to south of the court, and the shelter of the poor followers, the Ahl al-Suffa, in the reverse direction.<sup>69</sup> Also a door in the north was opened, and the one in the south was closed. The Mosque continued to have three doors.<sup>70</sup>

III. In the year 7 A.H. (629 C.E.), following the wish of his people, the Prophet enlarged the Mosque, for which 'Uthman bought the necessary land. The plinth of the Mosque was now built of stone to a height of nearly 3 cubits. Above this was brick used in a bond called male and female<sup>71</sup> (alternating header and stretcher?). The walls were a little more than 1½ cubits thick, and either 5 or 7 cubits high.<sup>72</sup> After this enlargement the Mosque formed a square of about 100 cubits a side.<sup>73</sup> The first Mosque had three columns to the east of the minbar and three to the west in a space of 63 cubits.<sup>74</sup> The second Mosque had four columns on each side of the minbar in a space of 100 cubits.<sup>75</sup> The minbar that was made at this time, for delivering the address, *Khutba* (previously the Prophet had merely leaned against a palm trunk,<sup>76</sup> such as those that had served as columns), consisted of a chair of two steps and a seat made of tamarisk wood.<sup>77</sup> There was no paving in the Mosque or its court, and after one violent rainstorm some Muslims gathered little pebbles and spread them on the pavement, which (Samhudi says) led the Prophet to exclaim, "What a beautiful carpet!"<sup>78</sup> The call to prayer was made from a little square construction in the house of Hafsa or of 'Abdallah Ibn 'Umar, which was on the south exterior of the Mosque.<sup>79</sup> The Prophet built successive houses for his other wives and family. The house of Fatima was behind that of 'Ayesha and to its north,<sup>80</sup> while that of Hafsa adjoined the end position of the *qibla* wall.<sup>81</sup> It is believed the houses measured 6 or 7 cubits by 8 or 9 cubits,<sup>82</sup> and the doors 3 cubits by a little over 1 cubit. The ceiling was low enough to be touched by hand.<sup>83</sup> Four of the houses were of mud brick and had partitioned rooms, and five were simple chambers made of palm branches daubed with mud, and the doors consisted of curtains of black hair-cloth.<sup>84</sup> When the Prophet died on 13 Rabi' I, 11 A.H. (8th June, 632 C.E.), he was buried in the house of 'Ayesha, which was divided in two by a wall.<sup>85</sup> Before 88 A.H., when it was reconstructed, this tomb was described as follows : It was of square form and built of black stone and plaster. The south wall was the largest, the east and west walls were equal, while the north wall was the shortest and had the door.<sup>86</sup>

IV. In 17 A.H. (638 C.E.) 'Umar enlarged the Mosque so that it now measured 140 cubits north-south by 120 cubits

east-west. Two rows of timber columns were added to the west side of the court. The south was extended by 10 cubits and the north by 30. An enclosure wall of stone was built to the height of a man, and two more doors were introduced, making a total of six.<sup>87</sup>

V. In 24 A.H. (644 C.E.) the Caliph 'Uthman enlarged the Mosque so that it now measured 160 x 150 cubits. A teakwood roof was introduced as well as stone columns (drums) soldered with lead. Small pebbles were brought for paving.<sup>88</sup>

VI. In 44-5 A.H. (664-5 C.E.) a *maqsura* of carved stone (screen for the protection or privacy of the ruler) was erected in the Mosque by the Omayyad Marwan.<sup>89</sup>

VII. In 88-91 A.H. (706-710 C.E.) the Omayyad Caliph al-Walid wrote to his governor at Medina, 'Umar Ibn 'Abd al-Aziz, to rebuild the Mosque. Tabari (915 C.E.) says that the new Mosque measured 200 x 200 cubits and overlapped the area once covered by the houses of the Prophet's wives, which were now ordered to be demolished (to the great sorrow of the city's inhabitants). He adds that the Caliph requested and received from the Byzantine emperor (Justinian II<sup>90</sup>) 100,000 mithqals of gold, 100 workmen and 40 loads of mosaic.<sup>91</sup> Muqaddasi (985 C.E.) further claims that of the more than 20 workmen sent by the Greek Emperor there were 10 whose wages alone were worth 100,000 dinars.<sup>92</sup> In turn Baladhuri (d. 892 C.E.) specifies that there were altogether 80 Greek and Coptic artisans from Syria and Egypt, and they were under the supervision of Salih Ibn Kaisan.<sup>93</sup> Muqaddasi goes on to say that the Mosque was expanded towards the West by six pillars and towards the north by 14 pillars, 10 of which faced the court and four belonged to the porticoes. But the dimensions he has given, and his further claim that the Governor 'Umar Ibn 'Abd al-Aziz asked the elders of the Muhajirun and the Ansar to be present at the pulling down of the mihrab and rebuilding of the *qibla* lest he should be blamed for having changed it,<sup>94</sup> must be erroneous — the former for obvious reasons (the court cannot be bigger than the Mosque) and the latter because a new type of mihrab does make its appearance at this time.<sup>95</sup> This mihrab might already have been completed when, according to Ibn Rustah (903 C.E.), 'Umar Ibn 'Abd al-Aziz requested his own people to build the *qibla* since one of the foreign workmen had desecrated the grave of the Prophet.<sup>96</sup> The reason for believing that the foreigners built most of the sanctuary is that Samhudi, citing Waqidi (d. 823 C.E.), says that the Copts have erected the forepart, and the Byzantines the sides and rear walls of the Mosque.<sup>97</sup> And the evidence for the innovation of the form of the mihrab stems from a number of late Arabic authors to the effect that the mihrab in the form of a niche first appeared in Islamic architecture at the rebuilding of the Medina Mosque by 'Umar Ibn 'Abd al-Aziz. Their source has been traced back to the now lost Chronicle of al-Kindi (d. 961 C.E.), who has himself transmitted the information of Ibn Qodaid (d. 924 C.E.).<sup>98</sup>

Once again it is from a lost source preserved by a later author that we learn many more details of the Mosque of Medina as rebuilt under al-Walid.<sup>99</sup> The lost source is Ibn Zabala's *History of Madina* (199 A.H.—814 C.E.), and his work has been partly preserved in al-Samhudi, an Egyptian who lived 40 years in Medina and wrote an historical monograph of the city in 1488 C.E.<sup>100</sup> A supplementary source is the historian of the city, Ibn al-Najjar, who wrote his history in 1196 C.E.<sup>101</sup> We learn that al-Walid's enlargement consisted of 6 bays from east to west and 14 from south to north beginning from the square pillar

inside the tomb. Of the latter, 10 were in the court and 4 in the original covered building.<sup>102</sup> The width of the aisle in Samhudi's day was 10 cubits<sup>103</sup> or less.<sup>104</sup> The number of arcades in the south and north sides of the building was 11 each, and in the east and west 19 each. The upper part of each arch (tympanum) was closed by wooden grilles.<sup>105</sup> The height of the roof was 25 cubits above the ground.<sup>106</sup> This was covered with lead plates and had lead gutters, and there was a second decorative ceiling 2 cubits below the roof which was 23 cubits from the ground.<sup>107</sup> The ceiling of the prayer hall was of gilt teakwood, and its central part had received a special treatment. For the sake of economy the whole ceiling was not equally lavish; as it was the south wall and the area between the two ceilings had cost 45,000 dinars, so al-Walid was told when he came on pilgrimage in 710 C.E.<sup>108</sup> Ibn Rustah (903 C.E.) describes the number and position of panelling of the six-stepped socle on which the Prophet's chair had been raised by Marwan to form a minbar.<sup>109</sup> This new minbar remained in the position of the old, although the qibla wall was removed further back, and this explains why Muqaddasi says the pulpit was isolated in the middle of the roofed sanctuary.<sup>110</sup> The Umayyad Mosque acquired four minarets, one at each corner, the one on the south-east being a tower of square plan 8 x 8 cubits and at least 50 cubits high.<sup>111</sup> Finally, we learn that 'Umar Ibn Abd al-'Aziz constructed an irregular shaped enclosure wall around the room of the Prophet. He gave it such a shape for fear that if it resembled the cubical form of the Ka'ba it might come to be adopted as the qibla, and the prayer made in its direction.<sup>112</sup> This surrounding screen wall was 1½ cubits thick, and 13½ cubits high. (The grille carrying it right up to the ceiling was added later. According to Nasir-i-Khusrau it was intended to prevent birds from entering.<sup>113</sup>) The chamber was ceiled over only by a waxed material, and since there was a trapdoor which opened on the roof, it seems that the chamber of the Prophet was accessible only from above and only to the keepers of the Mosque. We give (Fig. X) a bird's eye view of the Mosque as it must have

Fig X. Bird's-eye view of the Great Mosque of Medina as restored under al-Walid

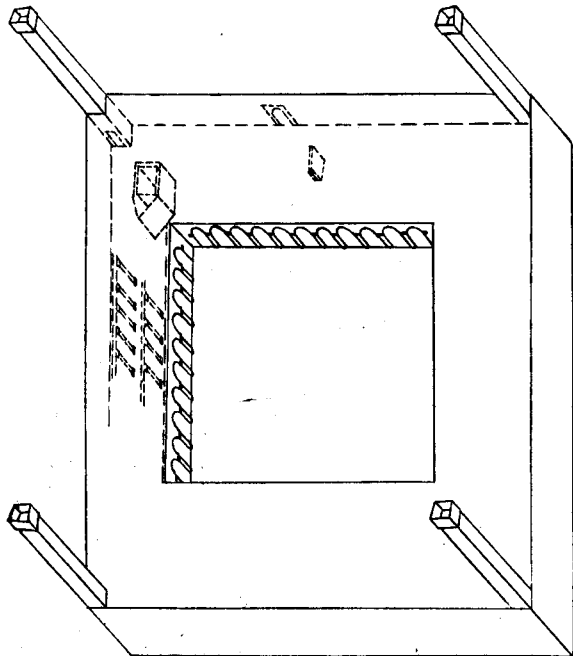
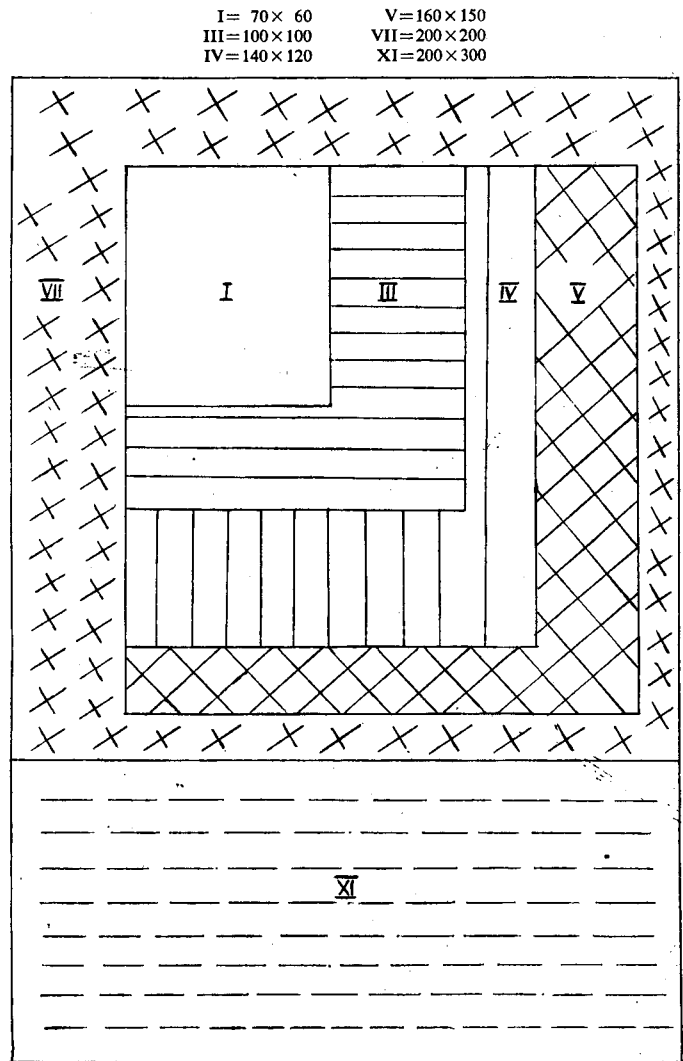


Fig XI. Growth of the Great Mosque of Medina from 1 A.H. to 165 A.H.



appeared at that time. The dotted lines indicating some of the internal features. We have supposed galleries to the minarets since Azraqi speaks of *shuraf* at the summit of the minarets of the Haram at Mecca.<sup>114</sup>

VIII. In 132 A.H. (750 C.E.) the first Abbasid Caliph, al-Saffah (the Blood Shedder), in the very year of his accession at Kufa ordered the restoration of the Medina Mosque.<sup>115</sup>

IX. In 138 A.H. (755 C.E.) the Abbasid Governor of Medina directed the insertion of a further entrance, the Bab Ziyad, in the Mosque.<sup>116</sup>

X. In 160 A.H. (776 C.E.) the Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdi visited Medina and ordered the maqsura, which had been raised 2 cubits higher than the surrounding pavement to be brought down to the general level of the Mosque, and set a new grille in teakwood all along the range of pillars bordering the south wall.<sup>117</sup>

XI. In 162-165 A.H. (778-781 A.H.) al-Mahdi enlarged the Mosque by adding 100 cubits to the north "which includes 10 bays in the Court of the Mosque, up to the body of the women's quarters", five of which were for the latter (so Samhudi reports from Ibn Zabala, who lived at the time of this construction).<sup>118</sup> Since this new enlargement of al-

Mahdi was the last significant addition to the dimensions of the Mosque we insert a plan (Fig. XI) which gives an immediate picture of the dimensional growth and progress of the Prophet's Mosque from its first inception.

The new extension had its walls revetted with glass mosaics (*fusaifisa*) which still survived in places till the 15th century C.E.<sup>119</sup> The new Court façade also had crenellations as on the sanctuary side of the court, but their number was not the same.<sup>120</sup> Incidentally, if Ibn 'Umar is to be believed, the Prophet had advised against the use of merlons in mosques.<sup>121</sup> Below these crenellations and running right round the court were Abbasid inscriptions (some dated) which have been preserved for us by Ibn Rustah and others, and their length and relative position has been carefully reconstructed by a modern epigraphist.<sup>122</sup>

XII. In 173 A.H. (789 C.E.) 70 decayed rafts were replaced by new ones. A range of dressed stones was set up before the hall of prayer as a protection against floods.<sup>123</sup>

XIII. Harun al-Rashid (786-809 C.E.) has work done inside between the Bab al-Nabi and Bab 'Uthman employing craftsmen from Jerusalem.<sup>124</sup>

XIV. In 202 A.H. (817 C.E.) al-Mamun restored the Mosque.<sup>125</sup>

XV. In 246-7 A.H. (860-1 C.E.) al-Mutawakkil ordered repairs to the Mosque and added a considerable amount of mosaic subsequently.<sup>126</sup>

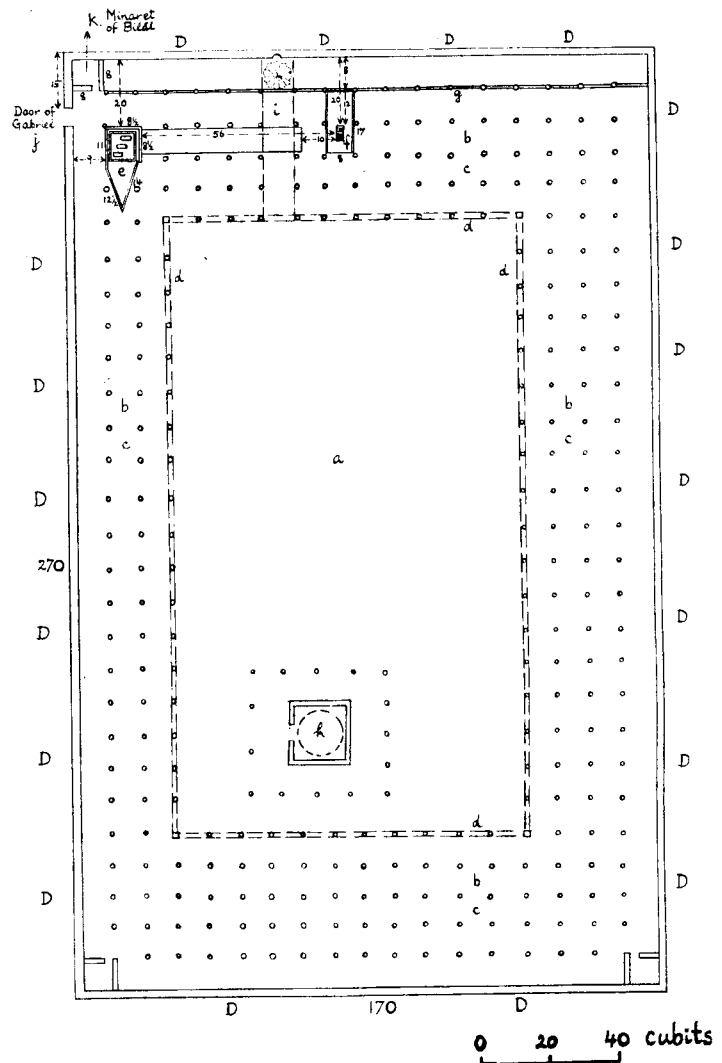
XVI. In 282 A.H. (895 C.E.) the Abbasid Caliph Mutadid restored the Mosque as it is known from an inscription inserted between the two inscriptions of al-Mahdi, which is also cited by Ibn Rustah.<sup>127</sup>

We have so far followed the architectural history of the Mosque on a chronological scheme so that were we to read a medieval description of the Mosque we would know exactly to which period a certain feature went back. We will now adopt a synthetic approach and build up an accurate and vivid picture of the Mosque on the basis of measurements and descriptions furnished by three writers whose homes lay in the Maghrib, the far west of the Muslim world. The authors are, once again as in the case of Mecca, Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi of Cordova, Ibn Jubayr of Valencia, and the anonymous author of the *Kitab al-Istibsar* of Morocco.

#### The Great Mosque of Medina after the Kitab al-Istibsar (before 1191 C.E.)\* and Ibn Jubayr (1184 C.E.)\*\*<sup>128</sup>

- (a) Mosque measures 270 x 170 cubits,\*<sup>129</sup> or 196 x 126 paces.\*\*<sup>130</sup>
- (b) The aisles are five each on the north and south, and three in the east and four in the west.\* \*\*
- (c) There are 276 columns\* or 290\*\*. If we accept the first figure<sup>131</sup> we estimate that the west portico will have 96 and the east portico 70 columns, while on the north and south there will be 55 each (for the area behind the court façades). The columns are described as superposed (drums) in black shellwork covered by a bed of lime,\* or composed of bored stone drums mortised together with melted lead, and coated with polished plaster to simulate marble.\*\* These columns, without arches, carry the ceiling on carved lintels. The entire ceiling is carved and painted.\*\* From Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi we know that there were large bases below the pillars.
- (d) Similar though shorter columns with arches form the court façades. They are encrusted with mosaic and bear teakwood grilles.\*\* We know from Samhudi that the mosaics represented "the forms of trees and mansions of Paradise".<sup>132</sup> There were 11 arches each on the north

Fig XII. The Great Mosque of Medina after The Kitab al-Istibsar and Ibn Jubayr

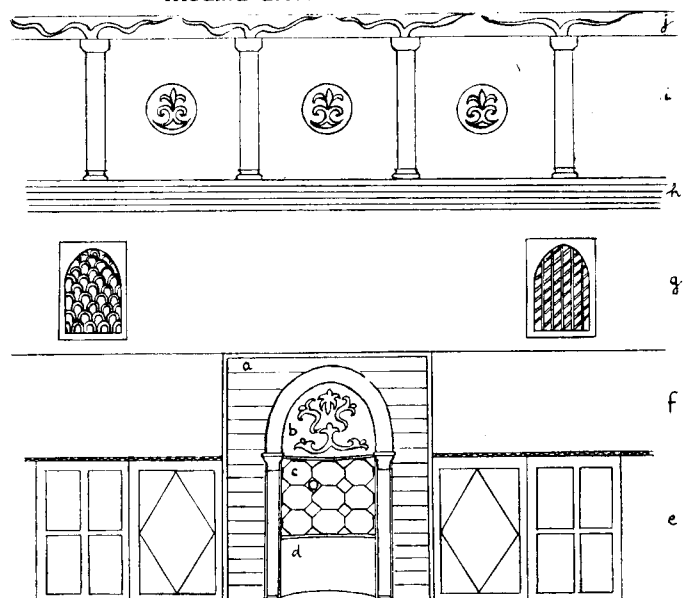


and south façades of the court\*\* According to Ibn Abd Rabbihi there were 18 columns along the court on the east and west façades.<sup>133</sup>

- (e) The Tomb enclosure in the south side of the east portico extends over two aisles and projects four spans into the third aisle.\*\* The measurements of the pentagonal enclosure wall are given starting with the qibla side and going anti-clockwise as 24 spans, 30, 35, 39 and 24,\*\*<sup>134</sup> or supposing the span to be a little over  $\frac{1}{3}$  cubit:  $8\frac{1}{2}$ , 11,  $12\frac{1}{2}$ , 14,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  cubits. The resulting figure is a much more elongated and sharply pointed one than has been drawn in the 15th century plan or that of Ibrahim Rif'at Pasha in 1925.<sup>135</sup> We are told that the Tomb enclosure enclosed six portico columns.\*\* The exact distance away from the Mosque walls is also known: 9 cubits from the east wall and 20 from the south wall,\* but in giving 15 cubits as the length of three of the walls (and 12 cubits heights)\* the two authors do not agree.<sup>136</sup> The Prophet is buried in the south-west corner of his room, his face to the qibla, and this point on the wall is marked by a silver nail. The graves of Abu Bakr and 'Umar lie parallel but each successively further north-east.\* \*\* The exterior of the outer Tomb wall is revetted a third of its height

with splendid marble; above this for another third is a 4-inch thick layer of ambergris, musk and saffron blackened and cracked by time; \* \*\* and the remainder of the space to the ceiling is filled in with wooden lattice-work.\*\*

Fig. XIII. The Mihrab and Qibla of the Great Mosque of Medina after Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi



- (f) The minbar (pulpit) lies 56 cubits\* or 42 paces\*\* to the west of the Tomb. It is 12 cubits from the maqsura, and 20 from the qibla wall.\*\*<sup>137</sup> This minbar is set in a basin (*hawd*) 6 x 14 paces, and a foot high. The basin is covered with marble. Eight paces away from it begins the little Rawdah which stretches right up to the Tomb and which is a specially venerated place for prayer.\*\* The ebony minbar, which is a little higher than a man, is 5 spans wide, 5 paces long, and has 8 steps,\*\* the eighth being covered over by an ebony board so that no one can sit on the original seat of the Prophet.\* \*\* A grilled door 4½ spans wide precedes the stairs; it is locked and is opened only before the Friday prayers.\*\* On the top right side is a silver ring placed on a silver star, with which the prophet used to amuse his grandchildren Hasan and Husain.\* \*\* South-east of the minbar, embedded in a pillar, is a piece of the palm trunk against which the Prophet used to lean,\* \*\* for the first seven years before the minbar was made (See above III.)
- (g) The maqsura is 8 cubits away from the qibla wall.\* It runs the whole length from east to west.\*\* Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi<sup>138</sup> describes it as being crenellated and having four doors.<sup>139</sup>
- (h) A large newly-built storage pavilion in the north part of the Court called Qubbat al-Zayt (*The Pavilion of Oil*) is surrounded by 15 palm trees.\*\*<sup>140</sup>
- (i) Pavement of dark pebbles covering three sides of the Mosque. The middle aisle of the sanctuary had a double carpet of Tabaristan in 528 A.H. (1133 C.E.).\* The court was covered with sand and gravel.\*\*
- (j) The Mosque has 19\*\* or 20 doors,\* only four of which are open, two on the west and two on the east.\*\* Taking the sides one by one, there are 7 doors on the east (of a square form with grilles), 7 on the west (among which one is arched, this being the only one of the kind), 4 large doors on the south, and 2 doors on the north.\* The thickness of the peripheral wall in which these gates were is known from Ibn al-Najjar: the west wall was a little less than 2 cubits thick, and the east wall was 2 cubits 4 fingers, this extra thickness as a protection against the flooding of the wadi.<sup>141</sup>
- (k) The south-east corner is the only one on which there rises a real minaret. In the two north corners there are only two small turrets.<sup>142</sup>\*\* The south-west corner had nothing, and we know in fact that very early this minaret was deliberately demolished by order of Sulaiman Ibn 'Abd al-Malik (715-17 C.E.), because it overlooked in an indiscreet fashion the house where the Caliph was residing.<sup>143</sup>

to the right of the mihrab and an opening guarded by an iron grating to the left of the mihrab, but neither distances nor dimensions are given.

- (e) The qibla wall has a marble wainscoting to a man's height. Ibn Jubayr says that these slabs vary in order and colour to form a marquetry.<sup>145</sup>
- (f) Separated by a convoluted cordon of marble 1 finger in thickness there comes above a wainscoting, narrower than the dado, which is painted with *khaluq*.
- (g) Next comes a band like the first in which are inserted 14 gilt and decorated windows similar in size to those of the Great Mosque of Cordova.
- (h) Next follows a Qur'anic inscription frieze in marble, citing the shorter chapters at the end of the Qur'an (ch. 91ff). The gold letters are 1 finger thick; they are written over an azure ground, and there are five parallel lines.
- (i) Next comes a band like the first, though with spaced discs having gilt ornaments. Alternating between the discs are columns (pilasters?), on the extremities of which are gilt rods.
- (j) Finally there is a band of about the length of a forearm covered with gilt branches and trees in low relief.<sup>146</sup>

Up to this height, which may be estimated as about 22 feet, there is no mention of mosaics on the qibla wall. But the height of the ceiling was 23 cubits, or about 42 feet (see above IV), and from Ibn Jubayr<sup>147</sup> we know that this upper stretch (of 20 feet) was covered with *fusaifisa* (gilt mosaic) representing fruit-laden trees of diverse form.

Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi tells us that in the middle of the gallery adjacent the mihrab (the head of the transept?) is a roof in the shape of a huge shield concave like a mother-of-pearl shell.<sup>148</sup> This description might fit the domes over the maqsura of the Great Mosque of Cordova which were built (965-68 C.E.) some decades after Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi had brought back this description of Medina to his home town. It would not be surprising if some features of the august sanctuary of Medina had lived on at the far extremity of the Muslim world.

#### The Qibla wall of the Great Mosque of Medina according to Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, c. 900 C.E.<sup>144</sup>

- (a) The mihrab is of a very large size and has bands, some gilt and others dark brown and black.
- (b) The concave niche is of gold with designs.
- (c) Below this there are octagonal gold plates in the midst of which there is an onyx stone in size about a span.
- (d) Stretching to the ground below is marble painted with *khaluq*, which is a bright red unguent. There was a door

Between the humble mosque of the Prophet (7 A.H.) to the splendid new one of al-Walid (88-91 A.H.) lay a whole new set of values. Like the true religious reformer that he was Muhammad advocated moderation and restraint in daily life, and consequently the place of worship for him would never have been an opportunity for ostentation. But in these few brief years of existence Islam had marched on from a new faith professed by a few tribes, to a world-wide religion encompassing the lands where the greatest civilizations had thrived and where high artistic endeavour was still prized. When once the Caliph had sat exalted on a royal throne and had donned resplendent garments and surrounded himself with a shining retinue, it was unlikely that he would have been content to worship in a shrine designed and conceived by the naïve mind untouched by sensuous sophistication. And so it proved. From their capital in the north where the Muslims learned the new techniques and saw the rich temples of their subjects, there emanated a new attitude consonant with their imperial ambition. And so it was that they made their mosque a place of breathtaking beauty.

The beauties of the Mosque of Medina vanished after the terrible fire of 654 A.H. (1256 A.D.). Gone was the roof, all the woodwork including the Prophet's minbar, the crenellations, and nearly all the marble of the qibla wall.<sup>149</sup> True a restoration followed in 655-57 A.H. (1257-9 C.E.), of which we have some details, and we have further details of successive work by Mamluk rulers,<sup>150</sup> but it was all to no

effect, for a new fire of great violence ravaged the Mosque in 1481, and Qait Bey's restoration completed by 892 A.H. (1487 C.E.), effected through 400 Egyptian workmen, resulted in drastic alterations.<sup>151</sup> After this the Ottoman Sultans continued to restore the Mosque from 1517 C.E. onwards, which culminated in the reconstruction of Abdul Majid in 1853 C.E.<sup>152</sup> Finally, Ibn Sa'ud's restoration (1952-56 C.E.) was the most radical of all. The area of the Mosque was doubled and it now covers an area of 16,326 square metres. The north, east and west porticoes of the Mosque were demolished and rebuilt, and the pillars with caterpillar cracks on the south side were reinforced with metal sheaths. Nine doors each weighing 2½ tons were installed. They are of American arrow wood studded with stars and plated with brass, and were made by a family of craftsmen in Cairo. In fact the architects themselves were Egyptian<sup>153</sup>, and 500 skilled Egyptian workmen were imported,<sup>154</sup> who have carved nearly two miles of floral and geometrical bas relief designs on the exterior wall, on door lintels, windows and up the pencil-shaped minarets that rise nearly 320 feet high. And repeating once again the example of al-Walid, the second most sacred shrine of Islam was decorated by the skill of Christian craftsmen: 70 Italian sculptors, working 7 miles outside the city (which is now forbidden to non-Muslims), cut polychrome marbles, and assembled mosaic work. Finally, as a reminder that Islam is alive to the assets of modernity, there was installed an air-conditioning system.

#### REFERENCES

- 2 According to Tabari the Prophet was 35 years old at the time, and it was in his 40th year that he received his prophetic mission. (*Chronique de Abou Djafer . . . Tabari*, tr. H. Zotenberg, 2nd ed. 1958, II, p. 390.)
- 3 But note that his MS. was further added to by Abu Muhammad Ishaq (d. 921) and by Abul Hasan Muhammad (d. after 961) (J. W. Fück in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed. 1960, I, pp. 826-7).
- 4 H. F. Wüstenfeld: *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka*, I, 1858, p. 106.
- 5 *Ibid.*, I, p. 104f. For plan and reconstruction see Creswell in *Archaeologia*, XCIV, 1951, p. 99.
- 6 *Ibid.*, I, p. 110.
- 7 *Kitab Futuh al-Buldan*, tr. P. K. Hitti, I, 1916, pp. 73-4.
- 8 *Ibid.*, I, p. 74.
- 9 *Ibid.*, I, pp. 74-5.
- 10 Masoudi, *Les Prairies d'Or*, tr. C. Barbier de Meynard, V, 1869, p. 166.
- 11 J. L. Burckhardt, *Travels in Arabia*, I, 1829, p. 243f. For reference see Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, II, 1940, p. 374.
- 12 Masoudi, *op. cit.*, V., p. 192.
- 13 Baladhuri, *op. cit.*, I, p. 75.
- 14 Baladhuri, *op. cit.*, I, p. 75.
- 15 Burckhardt, *loc. cit.*; Masoudi, *op. cit.*, V, p. 193.
- 16 *Al-'Iqd al-Farid*, III, 297.1.
- 17 Azraqi, ed. Wüstenfeld, I, pp. 146-7, 309-10. Burckhardt says capitals were covered with thin plates of gold.
- 18 Azraqi, p. 146f.
- 19 Azraqi, *op. cit.*, pp. 310f. 330. Cf. Tabari, *Chronique de Abou Djafer Mohammed Tabari*, tr. H. Zotenberg, 1867, IV, p. 371.
- 20 *Al-Muqaddasi*, tr. G. S. A. Ranking and R. F. Azoo, 1897, p. 115.
- 21 Burckhardt, *loc. cit.*
- 22 This minbar and that presented by Wathiq were still there at the time of Azraqi (*op. cit.*, p. 333).
- 23 Azraqi, *op. cit.*, p. 335.
- 24 Azraqi, ed. Wüstenfeld, 1858, p. 209.
- 25 Cf. R. Paret in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, II, fasc. 24, 1961, p. 128.
- 26 Azraqi, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-17.
- 27 See De Goeje, *Mémoire sur les Carmathes du Bahrain*, 1862, pp. 42-3, 54-5.
- 28 Azraqi, *op. cit.*, p. 205.
- 29 *Al-Muqaddasi*, tr. G. S. A. Ranking and R. F. Azoo, 1897, p. 113f.
- 30 Tr. Muhammad Shafii, *A Volume of Oriental Studies Presented to E. G. Browne*, 1922, pp. 423-29.
- 31 This pavilion, where the fermented liquid *nabidh* (date wine) was made, was first built by al-Mahdi (c. 783 C.E.), modified in 815 C.E., and demolished and rebuilt in 844 C.E. Azraqi (pp. 337-8) describes it as being of white dressed stone below, assembled "in the manner of Byzantine monuments", and brick covered with marble above. It was pierced with doors and with skylights protected with ironwork. There were three little domes covered with mosaic. Inside there was a vast basin of teak within which there was a basin of leather (cf. M. Gaudfroy-Demombynes, *Le Pèlerinage à la Mekke*, 1923, pp. 93-4; for modern descriptions of Zamzam see *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80).
- 32 Ya'qubi, *Les Pays*, tr. G. Wiet, 1937, p. 153.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 153. Here the height of the columns is given as 10 cubits, the number of arches as 498, and the gates as 23.
- 34 Ya'qubi gives 25 x 22 x 25 x 21, with the height 28 cubits (*Ibid.*, p. 153).
- 35 The measurement of the finger has been defined as the length of six barley-corns placed back to front, and the barley-corn the width of six mule-hairs (*The Ma'alim al-Qurba*, ed. R. Levy, 1938, X, 116, tr., p. 29). The Arabic law book the *Shara Vikayah* defines the dhira as 24 fingers, and each finger as six barley-corns, their bellies laid towards each other. Both fingers and barley-corns being variable measurements considerable trouble has been taken to convert these into fixed modern units (J. A. Hodgson in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, VII, 1843, pp. 42f).
- 36 *Sefer Nameh: Relation du Voyage de Nassir-i-Khusrau*, tr. C. Schefer, 1881, pp. 194-208.
- 37 Elsewhere Nasir-i-Khusrau gives the length of the royal cell (*gaz-i-malik*) as 1½ arash or cubits (*Diary of a Journey through Syria and Palestine*, tr. G. Le Strange 1888, p. 29).
- 38 Ya'qubi, *op. cit.*, p. 153. There was a green minaret at Baghdad also, at the Masjid al-Bukhariyah (Le Strange, *Baghdad During the Abbasid Caliphate*, 1900, p. 134).

- 39 *Kitab al-Istibsar*, tr. S. Z. 'Abd al-Hamid, Cairo, 1958, p. 7f.
- 40 *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, tr. R. J. C. Broadhurst, 1952, pp. 96-7.
- 41 Cf. T. P. Hughes, *A Dictionary of Islam*, 1885, pp. 334-5. However, the plan of al-Batanuni in 1910 C.E. does not show rounded corners. On the other hand it shows that the walls do not form a rectangle but a parallelogram (*Rihlat al-Hijaziyya*, 2nd ed., 1329 C.E. Plan opposite p. 98).
- 42 J. L. Burckhardt, *Travels in Arabia*, 1829, p. 243.
- 43 At the al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo similarly there was a silver band in the mihrab placed there by al-Hakim which was removed by Saladin (B. Dodge, *al-Azhar*, 1961, pp. 22, 36).
- 44 Azraqi, *op. cit.*, p. 204.
- 45 Ibn Jubayr, *op. cit.*, p. 80.
- 46 *Ibid.*, p. 79. The *Kitab al-Itibsar* (*op. cit.* p. 10) must be copying a statement of older writers when it speaks of four skylights covered with white stone. We have noted already that glass had already replaced these by 1050 C.E.
- 47 One possible explanation of this is that the source of this book really was al-Bakri's *The Itineraries and the Kingdoms*, written in 1067 C.E., of which the relevant portion is lost (Cf. S. Z. Abdel Hamid, *op. cit.*, p. v).
- 48 Ibn Madja. *Sunan*, Lucknow ed. 1315 A.H., XXV, p. 28; A. J. Wensinck, *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition*, 1927, p. 120.
- 49 Maqrizi, *Khitat*, IV, p. 49.
- 50 *Op. cit.*, p. 324.
- 51 The Gates of Banu Shaibah, of Abbas Ibn Abdal Muttalib, and of Banu Hashim.
- 52 Burckhardt, *loc. cit.* For miniatures, tiles, etc., representing the Haram in the 15th century onwards, see R. Ettinghausen in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft*. Bd. 87, 1934, pp. 111-138.
- 53 There were 152 domes according to Qutbuddin in 990 A.H., but Burton counted only 118 (R. F. Burton, *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El Medinah and Meccah*, 1856, III, p. 192f).
- 54 For an accurate description with plan and elevations of the Haram in the early 19th century see *Travels of Ali Bey*, London, 1816, II, Fig. LIII, p. 74f; and for a recent description E. Rutter, *The Holy Cities of Arabia*, 1930, p. 213f.
- 55 Al-Baladhuri, *Kitab Futuh al-Buldan*, tr. P. K. Hitti, I, 1916, p. 18.
- 56 A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, 1955, p. 229.
- 57 R. F. Burton, *Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah*, 1855, II, p. 132n.
- 58 Al-Baladhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 19. But cf. Bukhari, II, p. 205.
- 59 Samhudi, *Wafa al-Wafa'*, Cairo, 1322 A.H., I, pp. 233-5.
- 60 *Ibid.*, I, p. 237. The text of Samhudi has been well utilized by M. Akkouch, whom we follow in the succeeding account ("Origines de l'Architecture Musulmane" in *Melanges Maspero*, III, 1940, p. 386f).
- 61 Bukhari, *al-Sahih*, Cairo, 1212 A.H., I, pp. 52-3; M. Akkouch, *op. cit.*, p. 386.
- 62 Samhudi, *op. cit.*, I, p. 238.
- 63 *Ibid.*, I, p. 240.
- 64 *Ibid.*, I, p. 233.
- 65 Bukhari, *op. cit.*, I, p. 57; also *A Manual of Hadith*, tr. Muhammad 'Ali, Lahore, n.d. p. 72.
- 66 Samhudi, *op. cit.*, I, p. 238. Another door was on the west side opening into the Mosque. See Akkouch, *op. cit.*, p. 389.
- 67 A. Guillaume, *op. cit.*, p. 230.
- 68 A. J. Wensinck, "Kibla" in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1927, II, p. 985f. According to Bukhari this revelation came to the Prophet in Qubaa', but according to Baidawi in a mosque of the Banu Salim (*Ibid.*, p. 686).
- 69 L. Caetani, *Annali dell' Islam*, 1905, I, p. 378; Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, 1932, p. 9. According to another view the porticoes were not transferred; instead the north portico remained and became the *suffa* or *zulla* for the homeless Companions. (References by J. Pedersen in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, III, 1936, p. 317).
- 70 Samhudi, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 256f, 240.
- 71 *Ibid.*, I, pp. 239-40.
- 72 *Ibid.*, I, p. 247.
- 73 *Ibid.*, I, p. 239. The majority of authors refer to this being the original dimensions of the Mosque, but they must be mistaken.
- 74 *Ibid.*, I, p. 248f.
- 75 *Ibid.*, I, p. 253.
- 76 Bukhari, *op. cit.*, II, p. 105.
- 77 Samhudi, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 277, 281.
- 78 *Ibid.*, I, p. 472. If this is an authentic report, then it still did not lead to the use of floor mosaics at the Medina Mosque, which, as we know, was at all times paved in a humble manner.
- 79 *Ibid.*, I, p. 375.
- 80 *Ibid.*, I, pp. 330, 496-7.
- 81 *Ibid.*, I, pp. 360-1.
- 82 *Ibid.*, I, p. 383.
- 83 *Ibid.*, I, p. 329.
- 84 *Ibid.*, I, p. 327; Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, I, p. 180f; Creswell, *op. cit.*, I, p. 4.
- 85 Samhudi, *op. cit.*, I, p. 385.
- 86 *Ibid.*, I, p. 388.
- 87 F. Wüstenfeld, *Geschichte der Stadt Medina*, 1860, pp. 68-9; Caetani, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 964-66; Creswell, *op. cit.*, I, p. 19. According to Bukhari, 'Umar said beware of painting the Mosque red or yellow (i.e., decorating it), "for thou wilt thus arouse people to fall into trial" (*A Manual of Hadith*, tr. Muhammad 'Ali, p. 74).
- 88 Wüstenfeld, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-1; al-Baladhuri, *op. cit.*, I, p. 20; Caetani, *op. cit.*, VII, p. 260; Creswell, *op. cit.*, I, p. 31.
- 89 L. Caetani, *Chronographia Islamica*, 1912, pp. 295, 493; G. T. Rivoira, *Moslem Architecture*, 1918, p. 4; Wüstenfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 71; al-Baladhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
- 90 Al-Walid had previously made a ten-year truce with Justinian II (685-695, 704-711 A.H.), wherein he had to pay a daily tribute of 1,000 pieces of gold, one slave and one horse of noble breed, and in turn the Emperor had ceded to him a share of the income of Armenia, Iberia (in the Caucasus), and Cyprus, which were henceforth to be held jointly by the two rulers. Also the Marionites were to be restrained from molesting the Arabs (*Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography*, ed. W. Smith, 1846, II, p. 675b).
- 91 *Chronique de Abou Djafer Mohammed Tabari*, tr. H. Zotenberg, 1867, IV, pp. 161-2.
- 92 *Al-Muqaddasi*, tr. G. S. A. Ranking and R. F. Azoo, 1897, p. 129.
- 93 *Kitab Futuh al-Buldan*, tr. P. K. Hitti, 1916, I, p. 20.
- 94 *Al-Muqaddasi*, *loc. cit.*
- 95 Some Arabic authors imagine that Uthman built the present qibla wall, and they actually name the mihrab after him (e.g. Ahmad Hamza in *The Islamic Review* for July 1951, plan on pp. 24-5).
- 96 Ibn Rustah, *Kitab al-'Alaq al-Nafisa*, p. 69; G. Fehervari, "Development of the Mihrab down to the XIVth Century," (Ph.D. Thesis, 1961, University of London), I, pp. 108-109.
- 97 Samhudi, *Khulasa*, ed. Mecca, 1316 A.H., p. 131; Creswell, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 98-9, and p. 162, where the same text is accidentally stated to refer to the Mosque at Mecca.
- 98 J. Sauvaget, *La Mosquée Omeyyade de Médine*, 1947, pp. 15-19.
- 99 Full credit must go to Sauvaget (*op. cit.*, pp. 69-92), for his skilful reconstruction of this Mosque, and the critical handling of his sources.
- 100 *Ibid.*, pp. 26-29.
- 101 *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.
- 102 Ibn Zabala in al-Samhudi, *Khulasat al-wafa'*, ed. Cairo, 1316 A.H. (1898 C.E.), p. 138.
- 103 Samhudi, *op. cit.*, pp. 112, 133f.
- 104 Sauvaget in his plan of the Umayyad Mosque (p. 91, Fig. 5), has to place his columns about 7 cubits apart.
- 105 Ibn al-Najjar, *Kitab al-Dorrat al-tamina fi akhbar al-Madina*, p. 34; Sauvaget, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
- 106 *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- 107 Samhudi, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-9.
- 108 Ibn Zabala in Samhudi, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
- 109 Sauvaget, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-89.
- 110 al-Muqaddasi, *op. cit.*, p. 130.
- 111 Ibn Zabala in Samhudi, *op. cit.*, p. 140; Ibn al-Najjar, *op. cit.*, p. 32; Sauvaget, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
- 112 Ibn al-Najjar in Samhudi, *op. cit.*, p. 147f.

- 113 *Sefer Nameh*, tr. C. Schefer, 1881, pp. 163-4. If this grille was already in place before 1050 C.E. it is not quite correct for Yaqut to state in 1224 C.E. that the Tomb was separated from the pillared hall by a space at the top (*Mu'djam*, ed. Wüstenfeld, IV, p. 458).
- 114 H. F. Wüstenfeld, *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka*, 1858, p. 331.
- 115 Samhudi, *op. cit.*, p. 142.
- 116 *Ibid.*, p. 179.
- 117 *Ibid.*, pp. 136-7. 143; al-Baladhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
- 118 *Ibid.*, p. 142. But by this addition the north-south dimension of the Mosque should have been 300 cubits as Baladhuri admits (*op. cit.*, p. 21), but Ibn Zabala elsewhere gives 240 cubits. (Samhudi, *op. cit.*, p. 172; Sauvaget, *op. cit.*, p. 70 n.6, for other alternative dimensions.)
- 119 Samhudi, *op. cit.*, p. 143.
- 120 Ibn Rustah, *op. cit.*, p. 76; Sauvaget, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
- 121 M. Akkouch, *op. cit.*, p. 409.
- 122 Sauvaget, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-68.
- 123 *Ibid.*, p. 53.
- 124 *Répertoire Chronologique d'Epigraphie Arabe*, ed. G. Wiet, etc., I, pp. 65-66; Creswell, *op. cit.*, II, p. 384; Sauvaget, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
- 125 F. Wüstenfeld, *Geschichte der Stadt Medina*, 1860, p. 78. Citing Ibn Qutaiba.
- 126 al-Baladhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
- 127 *Répertoire*, *op. cit.*, No. 786; Sauvaget, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-8.
- 128 *Kitab al-Istibsar*, tr. S. Z. Abdel-Hamid, 1958, pp. 24-27; *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, tr. R. J. C. Broadhurst, 1952, pp. 198-203.
- 129 If this measurement is correct then obviously al-Mahdi's Mosque did not measure 300 x 200, even allowing for slight differences in the length of the cubit. It is difficult at this remove to reconcile the discrepancies. There is the possibility, for example, that al-Walid's Mosque was not 200 cubits square as Tabari would have it, but 200 x 167 as related by Ibn Saad (*Tabaqat*, VIII, p. 118f).
- 130 This has been estimated at 261 x 168 cubits (D. D. Donaldson in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 50, 1930, p. 29).
- 131 Samhudi (*op. cit.*, p. 172) citing Ibn Zabala says there were 296 columns, but the plan in the 15th century Arabic MS. (Sauvaget, *op. cit.*, Plate II) has less than 280.
- 132 Samhudi, *op. cit.*, p. 131. They must therefore have looked very much like those on the west side of the Court of the Great Mosque of Damascus (706-712 C.E.). Both sets of mosaic were exactly contemporary, and were erected by order of the same ruler, al-Walid.
- 133 Tr. Muhammad Shafi' in *A Volume of Oriental Studies presented to E. G. Browne*, 1922, p. 434.
- 134 Samhudi gives quite different dimensions — south wall 17 cubits, west wall 16½, east wall 12, and the triangular sides 14 and 12½ cubits (Aly Bey Bahgat, "La Houdjra du Prophète," in *Bulletin de l'Institut Egyptien*, 5th series, VIII, 1915, p. 78). Evidently the building had been rebuilt and enlarged after the fire.
- 135 Cf. Sauvaget, *op. cit.*, Plates I and II, opposite pp. 62 and 94. Sauvaget himself draws the enclosure 16, 18, 15, 16, 18 cubits, but the position he has given it does not agree with the precise dimensions which we are following. Ibn Jubayr gives the circumference of the Rawdah, the venerated place between the Tomb and the minbar, as 272 spans.
- 136 The only conceivable way of reconciling them is by claiming that the former were internal dimensions, and the latter an approximation.
- 137 Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi (*op. cit.*, p. 433) specifies that it is at the beginning of the third gallery from the mihrab and to the right of it.
- 138 *Op. cit.*, p. 433.
- 139 For further Mosque furniture whose exact positions are not given see Ibn Jubayr, *op. cit.*, pp. 201 and 198.
- 140 Samhudi (*op. cit.*, p. 165) says that the Dome serving as the Treasury in the middle of the court was founded by the Abbasid Caliph al-Nasir. The trees were in front of the pavilion according to Donaldson's translation (*op. cit.*, p. 37).
- 141 Sauvaget, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
- 142 For the possible appearance of these turrets cf. J. Schacht, "Ein archaischer Minaret-Typ . . .," in *Ars Islamica*, V, 1958, pp. 46-54.
- 143 Samhudi, *op. cit.*, p. 140.
- 144 Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi died in 939 C.E., though he must have performed the Pilgrimage before 929 for the reason given (M. Shafi', *op. cit.*, pp. 421-2). But since he was 71 in this latter year, we must suppose that he had made the arduous journey to the holy places at least a decade or two earlier.
- 145 *Op. cit.*, p. 202, cf. Sauvaget's reconstruction (*op. cit.*, Fig. 3, p. 80), to which it is difficult to add anything.
- 146 We do not attempt to restore the various relics associated with the mihrab. They consisted of (a) a large star set beside the mihrab and studded with a hyacinth blue stone which was believed to be the middle stone of Fatima's ornament (b) a peg inserted in the lowest band of the mihrab on which the Prophet was said to support himself when rising from his prostrations, (c) a square yellow shining stone one span square said to be the mirror of Chosroes, once the property of Ayesha (*Kitab al-Istibsar*, *op. cit.*, p. 26; Ibn Abd Rabbihi, *op. cit.*, p. 432; Ibn Jubayr, *op. cit.*, p. 202).
- 147 *Op. cit.*, p. 202.
- 148 We have dotted these in on our plan (Fig. XII).
- 149 Samhudi, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
- 150 *Ibid.*, pp. 154f, 167. See the chronological lists in Sauvaget, *op. cit.*, p. 43f; also Aly Bey Bahgat, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-93.
- 151 *Ibid.*, p. 168-170; Sauvaget, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-48.
- 152 For a good description of the Mosque as it was before this date see J. L. Burckhardt, *Travels in Arabia*, 1829, II, pp. 161-168, and for a description and plan about contemporary with it see R. F. Burton, *Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah*, 1855, II, pp. 56-112. For a recent description see E. Rutter, *The Holy Cities of Arabia*, 1930, pp. 496f, 538f.
- 153 Fahmy and Mustafa Mo'men.
- 154 Burton remarks (*op. cit.*, II, p. 193), "Whatever strikes the traveller's eye in El Hejaz is always either an importation or the work of foreign artists. . . . If strangers will build for them, they argue, why should they build for themselves?"

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# TEACHINGS OF BAHAI FAITH ANALYSED

## The Manifestation

by THE MAULANA MUHAMMAD 'ALI

### Importance of the Doctrine of Manifestation in the Babi movement

The doctrine of the "Manifestation" occupies the same place of importance in the Babi or Bahai religion as the doctrine of Divine Unity in Islam or the doctrine of Trinity or Atonement in Christianity, and before we proceed to discuss the teachings of Babism it is necessary to understand what the "Manifestation" signifies in the Babi teachings. Without a clear understanding of this basic principle of the Babi faith, we cannot realize the true message of Babism. The present-day Babis (or Bahais, as the majority really is) hesitate to answer in plain words the question whether the "manifestation" is a prophet of God or God incarnate. The answer to that question is often given according to the taste of the listeners. To the Muslims, Bab and Bahau'llah are represented as Divine manifestations in the sense in which they understand the prophets of God as manifestations of the Divine Being, while to a Christian audience they are represented as Divine as the Christians believe Jesus Christ to be Divine. Yet the two views are poles asunder.

### Theory of the Manifestation summed up

Before clearing this point, however, I will quote Professor Browne, who has very ably summed up the Babi theory of the "Manifestation" in his introduction to the *Nuqtat-ul-Qaf* :

"According to the Bab's conception as set forth, for instance, in the Persian Bayan, God, while comprehending all things, is Himself incomprehensible. As 'none but Himself knowest Himself', knowledge of God must be understood as meaning knowledge of His Manifestation, i.e. of the Prophet of the cycle; refuge in Him as refuge in His Manifestation; meeting Him as meeting His Manifestation, 'for none can meet the Most Holy Essence' (2 : 7 and 3 : 7),<sup>1</sup> and 'what is intended by the return of the Angels to God is the return of the saints to 'Him whom God shall manifest', seeing that there neither hath been nor is any (direct) way to the Eternal Essence" (2 : 10).

What is manifested is the Will (*Mashiyya*) of God, which created all things and stands to them in the relation of Cause to Effect or Fire to Heat. This Will is the *Nuqta* or the 'Point' (2 : 13 ; 3 : 7-8) of each prophetic cycle and manifests itself in the Revelation proper to that Cycle. Thus Muhammad is the *Nuqta-i-Furqan*, or the Point of the Quranic Dispensation, as Mirza Ali Muhammad is the *Nuqta-i-Bayan*, or Point of the Bayanic Dispensation, and the two are identical (1 : 15 ; 8 : 2). Adam, who is placed in the Bayan (3 : 13) 12,210 years before the Bab, was the first Manifestation and 'that which was obeyed in him was identical with that which was obeyed in other Prophets' (7 : 2). These Manifestations of the Divine Will (*Mashiyya*) are identical (7 : 10 ; 8 : 2, etc.), like the Sun which rises day after day (6 : 12 ; 7 : 15 ; 8 : 1) ; all the earlier ones exist for the latest (4 : 12), which in turn needs all of them (5 : 4) ; and they have neither beginning nor end (3 : 15 ; 4 : 12), for

there were other worlds before Adam (4 : 14), and there will be other Manifestations after 'Him whom God shall manifest' (7 : 13 ; 9 : 9). Each Manifestation is more perfect than the last and includes all preceding ones (3 : 13), and each time the Divine Will returns with increased strength and fuller Utterance, so that Adam may be compared to the embryo, the Bab to a boy 12 years of age (the lapse of a thousand years in the life of the world evidently corresponding to one year's growth in the Manifestation, Adam, as we have seen, being placed 12,210 years before the Bab) and 'He whom God shall manifest' to a lad of 14 (3 : 12) or 19 years of age (3 : 15 ; 5 : 4). A new Manifestation comes as soon as the evolution of the human race has prepared men for it (6 : 13), but only God knows when it will be (7 : 10 ; 3 : 15)."<sup>2</sup>

### Two different conceptions of the Reformer

This is a very full and impartial statement, based as it is on the clear words of the Bayan, of the Babi theory of Theophanies, and the later law of Bahau'llah does not introduce any change so far as the basic doctrine of the Babi religion is concerned. The real question to be solved is whether what the Babi movement calls a Manifestation or a *Nuqta* (the Point) falls within any of the conceptions already accepted by any of the religions or nations of the world or it is a new conception altogether and if so what it is. The prevailing conceptions with regard to the office of the religious reformer are :

1. That he is a mortal just like any other mortal but he holds special communion with God Who reveals to him His will, and he thus becomes the recipient of Divine revelation. Such is the conception of the reformer in almost all the great religions of the world. Islam in particular lays stress upon this point, rejecting all theories to the exclusion of prophethood, and maintaining in the clearest words that revelation was granted to all prophets in the same manner as it was granted to the Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet is a mortal receiving a message from God, which he is commissioned to deliver to humanity.

2. That God Himself assumes the human form and becomes a mortal for a while to save humanity. Such is the conception of the Reformer to a limited degree in Hinduism and Christianity. I say *limited*, because while Christianity accepts that mortals receiving Divine Revelation continued to appear for thousands of years to reform the world, it adds to this long list a single case of God appearing in the flesh in the case of Jesus Christ, and though Hinduism does not limit the appearance of God in human shape to a single example like Christianity, yet it does recognize the appearance of prophets also, of mortals receiving Divine revelation. This is technically Divine Incarnation, and the reformer is both perfect God and perfect man. He has a twofold capacity ; he is Divine as well as mortal.

### The Babi Manifestation is God in flesh

It is evident that there can be no third theory in this connection. Either it is the man who receives the Divine

message or it is God who wears the human garb. We have therefore to see to which of these categories the Babi Manifestation belongs. We know that Mirza 'Ali Muhammad's first claim was that he was the Bab or the intermediary through whom access could be had to the hidden Imam Mahdi; his next claim was that he was the very Mahdi, or the Qaim, the Imam that was to arise; and lastly, that he was the *Nuqta* or the Point. The doctrine of the Manifestation did not assume its final shape till late in his life. As to the Bab, he may be only a "servant", but as the *Nuqta* or Point, he is quite different. The Point has two stations, one of Divinity (*ululhiyya*) and the other of servitude (*ubudiyya*), i.e., humanity. Now it is clear at a glance that a claim to two positions, the position of Divinity as well as servitude or humanity means nothing more nor less than being a Divine Incarnation. The only distinction between the Prophet and the Incarnation is that the Prophet has one capacity, that of humanity, while the Incarnation has two capacities, humanity as well as Divinity, and Mirza 'Ali Muhammad as the *Nuqta* lays claim in express words to Divinity along with servitude. The Bayan moreover tells us that "the Point has existed from all eternity . . . that it has always held the position of precedence; it is the Primal Will",<sup>3</sup> and what is recent in it is only the assumption of flesh.

### Bab's claim to Divinity

The claim to Divinity looks so audacious today that many people are not prepared to believe that the founders of Babism and Bahaism ever laid such a claim, nor that sensible people could accept it, and therefore they think that the opponents of Babism make an untrue accusation against that faith. As a matter of fact many Shia sects, called the *Ghulat* (or Extremists), have held a belief in the Divinity of some of their Imams, and Babism in its first phase was only one of these *ghali* (extremist) sects. As I have already remarked, extreme reverence for the Imams led many of the sects to develop the doctrine of the divinity of their Imams. For instance, the Sharifiyya believed that God entered into the Prophet, Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain, and according to some of them became one with them. Mughira, founder of one of the extremist sects, claimed Divinity for himself, and so did the founders of the Mansuriyya, Khitabiyya and some other sects.<sup>4</sup> The Nasiriyya and the Ishaqiyya are also two of the extremist sects who look upon the Prophet as God Himself, and one part of them believes in the entering of God into him and of becoming one with Him.<sup>5</sup> And if the diseased brains of some followers of Islam, which preached in the clearest words that the Prophet was no more than a mortal, could go to such extremes, the doctrine of the incarnation of the Divine being has found ready acceptance elsewhere in the world. And we find the Babi movement making an attempt similar to that of Christianity by accepting first Mirza Ali Muhammad and then Bahaullah as God. In common parlance, Mirza Ali Muhammad was known as *Hadzrat-i-Rabbiyal-Ala* (my Lord, the Highest) among the Babis, and *Haqq ta'ala* (God Almighty) is one of the titles by which Bahaullah is known in Persia.<sup>6</sup> Professor Browne, than whom none has more carefully studied the available Babi literature, comes to the same conclusion: "But, from the Bab's own later writings, such as the Persian Bayan, as well as from what is said by Mirza Jani and other contemporary writers, it is clear that he was regarded as a Divine being, and that in a very full sense."<sup>7</sup> In fact, Mirza Jani, the earliest historian of Babism, was so convinced of God appearing in human form that he upheld the views of

those who laid a claim to Divinity after the death of the Bab, thinking that this was the fruit which under healthy growth the tree of Babism must bring forth. In short, the Bab gave himself out as God and his followers believed him to be so.

### Babi and Sufi doctrines of Divinity in man

It must be further borne in mind that the Bab did not claim divinity in the sense in which some Sufis speak of the Divine in man. It is true that the Babis try sometimes to explain away the Bab's claim to Divinity in the Sufi sense, but this is rather due to the doctrine of *taqiyya* which the Babis have carried to the farthest extreme, so that it is difficult to say what their actual belief is. In this respect, as in many others, they resemble the Ismailis, and their doctrine is often not disclosed fully except to such as deserve to be fully trusted. Here is Professor Browne's experience of the Babis:

"That they adapt their conversation to those with whom they are speaking, there is no doubt. With a Muhammadan they will speak of the coming of the promised Imam Mahdi. . . . With a Christian they will speak of the expected coming of Christ and the signs thereof. . . . So also in speaking with a Zoroastrian or a Sufi, they will use arguments likely to commend themselves to their interlocutor."<sup>8</sup>

Professor Browne also relates an incident showing that the Babis hesitate to explain fully the doctrine of Bab and Bahaullah's divinity before a novice:

"I remember on one occasion, during a discussion in which I was engaged with a learned Babi at Shiraz, some point arose connected with the nature of the divinity which they attribute to Bab and Baha, and Manifestations of the Divine in general. One who was present was about to offer some further explanation when the chief speaker checked him, saying, *hanuz pukhta na shude ast* (he is not yet ripe). This remark naturally suggested to me the idea that the doctrine was only disclosed by degrees, as the mind of the enquirer was found prepared to receive it."<sup>9</sup>

That there may be some men with the Sufic tendencies even among the Babis cannot be denied, but the doctrine of the Divinity of Bab and Bahaullah as explicitly taught by the two is quite different from the Sufic explanation of the Divine in man. The Sufis do not believe that any man really becomes God. The basic Sufi idea goes only to the extent that certain Divine morals find, as it were, their reflex in man. Hence they never address a man as God, as Babis addressed Bab and Bahaullah, nor do they lay claim to the Divine attributes of being Omniscient and All-powerful, the Living, the Sustainer and so on, which words are repeatedly used by Bahaullah concerning himself. And not only do Bab and Bahaullah speak of themselves as Divine but the Bab also speaks of the next manifestation as being Divine. Here are a few expressions about him in the Bayan:

"He is the Most Great Name" (3 : 8).

"He is not to be asked why he does anything" (3 : 1).

"All excellence in the world of contingent."

"Being is from him" (3 : 13).

"He is Divine" (3 : 13 ; 8 : 1).

"All the Bayan is his and he knows best its meaning, since he is in truth its author" (6 : 1).

"He is the source of all Divine Names and attributes" (5 : 9).

"He is eternally pure" (6 : 17).

"He is the fulfilment of the words, there is nothing like him, *lais kamithli hi shaiun*."<sup>10</sup>

## Bahau'llah's claim to Divinity

So far as to Bab's idea of the Manifestation. But Bahau'llah is clearer on this point. Though he often refers to himself as the *mazlum* or the oppressed one, meaning one who was persecuted, yet he, at the same time, repeatedly calls himself God, Creator, Merciful, Mighty, Omniscient, Lord of the Day of Judgment, Controller of Winds, etc., and applies to himself every attribute which has been applied to the Divine Being. The following few examples taken at random from the *Kitab-ul-Aqdas*, Bahau'llah's chief work, which contains the new law he gave to the world, will show that Bahau'llah claimed Divinity for himself in no equivocal terms :

"When the morning of Manifestation spreads its banners *He who had spoken on the mount Sinai* came into the world, the learned men stood up against him. . . . Verily we mention in this place Muhammad who has got mixed his flesh with the flesh of his Lord and his blood with His blood and his body with His body and his bones with the bones of his Lord, the Mighty, the Gracious. My High pen bears witness that he has gained what no one else before him has gained and to him has come that the like of which the ear has not heard. On him be My glory and the glory of My Majesty and Omnipotence.

"O Abu Talib ! thou art he who hast aimed at the highest goal, and hast traversed lands and seas until thou didst reach this noble valley in which has been raised the voice of the Glorious One saying that there is no God but I, the Protector of all that exists and all that shall exist.

"O Aqa Bala ! the Lord of the worlds praised thee in His great Prison with a praise which brings thee nearer God, the Mighty, the Indulgent.

"O Abdul Khaliq ! see and think that when the Creator came, the creatures turned aside from Him . . . Say, I swear by God that the Hidden One has come and the dwellers of the Sinai have fallen down senseless.

"O Sayyid ! the Lord of the world praises thee from His Great Prison.

"O people of the earth ! when the sun of My beauty sets down and the heaven of my body is hidden, do not be perturbed. Stand up for the help of My affair and raising aloft of My word among the worlds ; We are with you in all circumstances and help you with truth, for We are powerful " (p. 14).

"O people of Insha ! listen to the call of the Master of Names : He calls you from the direction of His Great Prison that there is no God but I, the Powerful, the Lord of Greatness, the Controller, the High, the Knowing, the Wise " (p. 45).

"Surely He informed you beforehand of what this Reminder, the Wise one, shall speak. He said, and His word is true, that He shall speak in all conditions, that there is no God but I, the Alone, the One, the Knower, the Aware. This is a position which God has given specially to this Manifestation " (p. 49).

"O Isa ! be glad that the Lord of what is above the heavens and beneath the earth remembers thee. . . . Say this is the land in which the voice of the Son of Mary was raised who gave the people the glad tidings of this Manifestation, and when it appeared, the High ones began to say, surely the concealed Unseen has come with an authority which can be seen. This is a place about which the spirit and the residents of the highest paradise make circuits ; the Master of names bears witness to this but the people do not listen. Put off all besides Me and hold My Book and thus doth command thee the tongue of My Majesty from this resting place in which is seen nothing but God, the Master of Existence. O friends of the Beneficent one in the cities ! listen to the call of the Oppressed one who has appeared with His name the Sustainer " (p. 96).

"O great ones of the earth ! surely the day of help has come, and the One who spoke on the mount Sinai has appeared. . . . When thou has obtained the tablet of God and found the scent of the shirt, turn thy face in the direction of the Prison, and say, Praise to Thee, O my God, for Thou hast made me hear Thy call " (p. 101).

"Say, by God ! that has appeared which was written in the Books of God, the Lord of worlds. Surely He is the one who is called *Yawah* in the Taurat and the Spirit of Truth in the Gospel and the Great News in the Qur'an.

"Surely we mention now the third letter, the believer in Me . . . so that he came and stood near the door and entered after permission, meeting the Countenance, and heard and said, For thee is praise, O God, of the unseen and the seen, and for Thee is praise, O Lord of lords, I bear witness that Thou wast hidden in the eternity of eternities and Thou didst manifest Thyself " (pp. 111, 112).

"O Nasir ! the One Aware remembers Thee and He remembers the days when thou wast standing near the door and thou didst hear the call of God, the Lord of Lords. . . . See and remember when the One who spoke on the Mount Sinai spoke with thee and the face of the Manifestation turned to thee " (pp. 116, 117).

"Say, O people of the Bayan ! the Master of the servants has come on the appointed day " (p. 123).

"On thee and on those who believe it is incumbent that you recite the words in which we praised God, the Lord of the eminent chair — He is the Mentioner and the One mentioned " (p. 170).

"O Sikandar ! the Master of Decree has come for the life of the mortals and the people seized him and imprisoned him in this distant place.

"God bears witness that besides Him there is no God and the One that speaks in the Great Prison that He is the creator of things and the inventor of names ; He bears afflictions for giving life to the world and that He is the Great Name which was hidden in the eternity of eternities " (p. 330).

"Surely the signs have appeared and the arguments have become manifest and the Promised One has come with His name, the Guardian, the Sustainer " (p. 334).

## Both Bahai sections are agreed on Bahau'llah's Divinity

That Bahau'llah claimed to be an incarnation of the Divine being is too clear from the above quotations. He is the One who spoke on the Mount Sinai while those whom he addresses are those who become senseless on his appearance, referring of course to Moses and his companions. The one in prison is no other than the Creator. Now calling himself Creator, he has left no doubt as to his claim to Divinity, and if he has elsewhere spoken of himself as a man, it is just in accordance with the doctrine of Divine Incarnation or God in flesh. And his followers too took him for God. We have the clearest proof of this in the dissensions between Abbas Effendi and his younger brother Muhammad Ali. The former, following in the footsteps of his father, claimed Divinity for himself, and Mirza Jawad tells us in his historical epitome that one of the reasons why Dr. Khairullah, the famous Babi preacher in America, forsook Abbas Effendi after serving him for many years was that Abbas claimed Divinity and thus arrogated to himself the dignity which properly belonged only to Bahau'llah. I quote Mirza Jawad to show that even the leading followers of Bahau'llah, to say nothing of the ignorant masses, believed that Bahau'llah was really God Himself. Mirza Jawad, enumerating the different reasons which compelled sensible Bahais to throw off allegiance to Abbas Effendi, says :

"First, Abbas Effendi's claim to Divinity, in that He declared himself to be the Manifestation of Service which is the greatest of the Divine Manifestations, and peculiar to the Father, the Lord of Hosts (Jehovah) alone. This is the supreme limit of Manifestation which none claimed save His Holiness Baha (to whom be glory) who explicitly declared in numerous Tablets that He was the Servant, the Visage and Very Self of the Eternal Essence. Again he declares himself to be the Enunciator (*Mubayyin*), that is

God, as the Supreme Pen has explicitly declared in different passages. So likewise he claims to be the Centre of Covenant which is God alone, Baha, who Himself covenanted with Himself before the creation of the heavens and the earths that man should worship none save God alone."<sup>11</sup>

This passage from Mirza Jawad shows clearly that all Bahais looked upon Bahaullah as God and that they looked upon his words as very clear and explicit on this point to allow of the least doubt. After Bahaullah's death, the Babi (or Bahai) movement was again split into two, but neither of the sections differed with the other on the point of Bahaullah's Divinity. Had there been the least doubt on this point, a divergence of views among the contending sections would necessarily have been the result; and the unanimous acceptance of Bahaullah as God by all Bahais is the surest evidence that Bahaullah claimed Divinity for himself.

### **Bahai propaganda in America based on Baha's Divinity**

The Babi propaganda in America affords an equally strong and conclusive testimony on the point. I have already quoted Miss A. H. of Brooklyn, who was an interested yet impartial student of the Babi movement. Here are a few quotations on the point from her letters to Professor Browne: "According to this doctor, Baha was God Himself. He teaches that God did not manifest through the personality of Baha, as in the case of Jesus, but that He really was God. . . . God never takes a female form as He selects the stronger one to manifest Himself."<sup>12</sup> In the form of initiation into the Babi movement occur the words: "I humbly confess the oneness and singleness of the Almighty God, my Creator, and I believe in His appearance in the human form; I believe in His establishing His holy household."<sup>13</sup> "In lesson five it is clearly stated that Baha was a Manifestation of God, but in lesson eleven He is God Himself. I was much puzzled and asked Dr. Khairullah about it. He very humbly attempted to explain and began by saying that Baha was a Manifestation only, but before he ended he certainly spoke of him as being God."<sup>14</sup> In her abstract of the fifth lesson given by Dr. Khairullah, Miss A. H. of Brooklyn has said: "God is for ever unknowable. He wished to make Himself known, and as the finite cannot comprehend the Infinite, He made a form, He chose a 'Face' that through that He might become known to us. He is not the form; it only represents Him."<sup>15</sup> In the abstract of the thirteenth lesson we read: "People object to the Manifestation because of his being married. A real man ought to marry; a monk is the invention of priests. God came as a man, had a father and mother, fulfilled his own law, and married. . . . The greatest reason why God should marry is that the race is grafted through His having children. He is the Tree of Life and we are grafted."<sup>16</sup>

### **Bab and Bahaullah as distinguished from other Manifestations**

That the "Manifestation" in the Babi or Bahai movement is Divine Incarnation is thus clearly established by the testimony of the Bab, the claim of Bahaullah and the evidence of their followers. But, it may be argued, both Bab and Bahaullah look upon Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad, may peace be on them, as Manifestations. This is quite true but a distinction is made between the previous and the later Manifestations, or between the prophets of God and Bahaullah. In a pamphlet written by a Bahai, the difference between the claims of Bahaullah and the prophets that have gone before him is thus described:<sup>17</sup>

"The distinctive characteristic of this Manifestation (i.e. Bahaullah) from all other Manifestations (i.e. the prophets) is this, that they stood in two places. When they utterly forgot their own existence and annihilated their existence completely, they cried out, I am He, and when they were again conscious of their own existence, they said, I am I. But this shining Manifestation (i.e. Bahaullah) was the very He (God) who had worn the clothes of I (man). . . . Hence it was that he said, there is none in the world but myself. The Point also predicted that he would say under all circumstances, verily I am God, there is no God but I, the one and without a partner, the Omniscient and the Knower of all secrets. All the Manifestations that have hitherto appeared and that shall appear to the day of judgment were as looking-glasses, and every one according to his capacity spoke of that sun of reality (i.e. God), but this Manifestation is that very sun. . . . The essence of Unity is that the Manifestation of Truth and the Hidden One who cannot be known, should be considered as one, in this sense that the deeds and the injunctions and the prohibitions of the one should be considered as those of the other and that there should be no idea of union with or separation from Him. . . . This is a place which in the heavens and the earth is limited to one only and cannot be shared by anybody else. . . . Regarding the place of the Great Sinlessness and the dignity of doing what one likes, he (Bahaullah) says, 'In the Great Sinlessness this Manifestation has no associate, for he is the Manifestation of doing what he likes in the kingdom of will. This place God has particularized for His own person, and no share has been decreed for anybody else in this mighty place. Verily this is an embroidery which the hands of Power have woven for the person of God only, and it does not become anybody except Him Who sits on the throne of All-powerfulness doing what He likes.' And again he said, 'The Great Sinlessness is the characteristic of the Glorious God, none is an associate with him in this'."

### **The Great Sinlessness**

The position of Great Sinlessness which is the special privilege of Bahaullah only as distinguished from sinlessness which the prophets can claim is thus described in the Tablet entitled *Ashraaqat* (by Bahaullah):

"Know that sinlessness has several meanings and several grades. He whom God protects from falling into errors deserves to be called sinless in one sense, and so also the person who is preserved by God from sin and disobedience and turning aside and unbelief and *shirk* and other such things; every one of such persons may be called sinless. But as regards the Great Sinlessness, it is for him only who attains to such a high dignity that he no more submits to injunctions and prohibitions and who is purified from faults and forgetfulness, for he is the Light which is not followed by darkness, and he is the Right with which there is no wrong. If such a person pronounces water to be wine or heaven to be earth or paradise to be hell, it is all true in which there is not the least doubt, and no one has the right to object or to ask the why and wherefore of these things. He who objects shall be counted among those who have turned aside from the right path; thus it is written in the Book of God, the Lord of worlds. For verily he cannot be questioned about what he does while all others shall be questioned of all they do. For verily he has come from the heaven of the Unknown and with him is a banner that he may do what he wills, and with him are the armies of mightiness and power. Upon all others lies the obligation that they should hold fast and act upon the laws and commandments which are given them. If any one departs a single hair's breadth from these commandments, all his deeds shall be as naught" (p. 22).

### **God and Man in One**

The fact that Bahaullah speaks of himself as a man is not inconsistent with his claim to Divinity, for according to

the theory of incarnation God appears in the form of a man, and therefore God and man are combined in one personality that is spoken of sometimes as God and sometimes as man. Exactly the same is the position of Jesus Christ, who is regarded both as perfect God and perfect man. When Baha addresses himself to his disciples, he speaks of himself as God, the Ruler of the Universe, the Controller, the Omniscient, the Knower of the seen and the unseen, the Lord of the worlds, Aware of all secrets, the Mighty and so on; he even calls himself Jehovah. He sometimes speaks of God and prays to Him, but for all practical purposes he himself is God, as the God beyond is unknowable. He prays but he is the Supplicator as well as the One to whom supplication is made, the *Dhakir* and the *Madhkur*.<sup>18</sup>

His command is the command of God and cannot be questioned. Even if he calls the light dark or the south north, he is right and must be believed. But when he addressed himself to those high in position over him, he assumed humility. The letter written to the Shah of Persia stands in marked contrast with the tablets to his disciples. It begins thus:

"O king of the earth! listen to the cry of this slave. I am a slave who believes in God and His signs and I have sacrificed my life in His way. . . . I do not invite people except to thy Lord and the Lord of the world. . . . O Sultan! I was an ordinary man and sleeping . . . and He gave me the knowledge of what was . . . and He commanded me to raise a cry between earth and heaven."

### The idea of Revelation according to Baha

Though Bahauallah often speaks of revelation, but it is not revelation in the sense in which it is generally understood. It is not a message from a Divine source to a mortal; it is not the word which the Holy Spirit brings; no, it is not even under the influence of the Spirit that the mortal speaks. On the other hand, whatever the Manifestation says, it is all revelation. It is God Who speaks in the man. He often calls himself *Mukallim-i-Tur*, the One Who spoke on the Mount Sinai. He does not place himself in the position of Moses, the man spoken to, but in the position of God Who spoke. Revelation in a restricted sense is the word which the Spirit brings to the Prophet, and in a wider sense, the word which the righteous one speaks under the influence of the Spirit, but the utterances of Bahauallah do not fall in either of these categories, nor could they consistently with the theory that it was God Himself Who had appeared in flesh. This is evident to anyone who reads any of the Tablets or the *Kitab-ul-Aqdas*. I have already noted that when he prays to God, he calls himself *al-Dhakir* or the supplicator, by which is meant Baha the man, and *al-Madhkur* or the One to whom the supplication is made, by which is meant Baha as God. Again, he speaks of himself as being the speaker on the Sinai and the Revealer, which is inconsistent with the received idea of revelation. Thus:

"Surely, We have revealed a tablet about truth; joy for him who reads it and holds it firm — a command from Him Who commands the One Aware. . . . Thus has spoken my most high pen in this position which is decorated with the breathings of the revelation of thy Lord, the Hearing one, the Seeing one. O Husain, listen to what the speaker on the Sinai speaks."<sup>19</sup>

"O Nasir! the One Aware remembers thee and remembers the days when thou wast standing near the door and didst hear the voice of God, the Lord of Lords. . . . Surely he mentions thee afterwards as he mentioned thee before. . . . See, then remember when with thee did talk the Speaker on the Sinai and to thee did turn the face of the Manifestation."<sup>20</sup>

"Surely the most high pen has come into motion and intends mentioning his friends who have advanced towards the

rising place of the revelation of their Lord, the Mighty, the Praised one. . . . O party of God! to you has been sent a book written by the pen of God, the Lord of 'Arsh, the Great."<sup>21</sup>

### Relation of the two Manifestations, Bab and Baha

The most interesting question in this connection is as to the relation in which the two Manifestations, Bab and Bahauallah, stand to each other. That any importance which the movement set on foot by the Bab can claim today, nay its very existence in the world, is due to the impetus given to it by Bahauallah, is a matter on which there can be no two opinions. But the two Manifestations have followed each other with a rapidity which strikes at the very root of the Manifestation. The theory of the Manifestation was formulated and advanced by the Bab and upheld by Bahauallah. According to this theory Manifestations of the Divine Being will continue to appear in the world one after another, each succeeding Manifestation being more complete than the previous one and being necessitated by the new needs of humanity. Jesus appeared after Moses, and Muhammad (may peace be on him) after Jesus, and Bab after Hazrat Muhammad, and each time the Divine will returned "with increased strength and fuller utterance". Thus Adam is compared to an embryo and the Bab to a boy of twelve years of age, there being twelve thousand years between Adam and Bab according to the latter. Now six hundred years elapsed between Jesus and the Prophet Muhammad and over 1,200 years between the latter and the Bab. The question therefore arises, why was a Manifestation needed only fifteen years after the Bab? Bab, no doubt, according to the Babi theory, had come with a great message, with a more complete message than that of his predecessor, the Prophet Muhammad. The world had taken over twelve hundred years to need a new Manifestation after the Qur'an. Numerous revolutions had taken place during the interval; great and mighty changes had been witnessed by the world; the old world had gone and a new world had sprung up in its place; science and knowledge had made unthought-of progress; and the appearance of a new Manifestation of the Divine will was reasonable according to the Babi theory of Manifestations. But during the fifteen years that elapsed between the death of the Bab and Bahauallah's claim, there was not the least perceptible change in the world. Civilization had not advanced by one step; the world had not witnessed any revolution. The question is not only where was the need for a new Manifestation but also why was Bab's Manifestation so soon abrogated? Why a message more complete than the Qur'an, as Bab claimed it to be, lasted only for fifteen years? And even during this short interval, that message remained unknown to the world at large, none knowing of it but a fraction of the Persian Shia Muslims. Certainly God in His wisdom could not send message to humanity which was to be abrogated before it ever became known to the world.

### Bab as forerunner of Baha, an idea of later growth

The followers of Bahauallah do not face these questions, nor do they ever try to answer them. But they have tried to shelve the difficulty of the rapid succession of one Manifestation after the other by making the Bab a mere forerunner of Bahauallah, just as John the Baptist was a forerunner of Jesus Christ. Bab, it is said, was sent merely to announce the good news of the coming of "him whom God shall manifest". But the whole history of the Babi movement up to the time of Bahauallah and every word of the Bayan, the Babi scripture, belies the Bahai theory of

the Bab being a harbinger of Bahauallah. As Professor Browne says :

"The theory now advanced by the Bahais that the Bab considered himself as a mere herald or forerunner of the Dispensation which Bahauallah was shortly to establish, and was to him what John the Baptist was to Jesus Christ, is equally devoid of historic foundation. In his own eyes, as in the eyes of his followers, Mirza Ali Muhammad inaugurated a new prophetic cycle, and brought a new revelation, the *Bayan*, which abrogated the Qur'an, as the Qur'an had abrogated the Gospels, and the Gospels the Pentateuch."<sup>22</sup>

### **Bab's prophecy about the new Manifestation**

It is true that the Bab spoke of one coming after him whom he calls *man yuzhiruhullah* (he whom God shall manifest). It is also true that he spoke of him as being greater than himself, on whose coming the Bayan was to give place to the new law, but this was in accordance with his theory of the Theophanies, in which each succeeding Manifestation was greater than the previous one and therefore abrogated it. And if the Bab laid great stress upon the acceptance of the new Manifestation, it was due to the fact that he himself met with an obstinate rejection from the Muslims, and he did not want his followers to make the mistake which, he thought, was being made by the followers of his predecessor. He even went so far as to predict that it was impossible that anyone should lay a false claim to that office (Bayan 6 : 8),<sup>23</sup> whereas we find that before Bahauallah about seven or eight men laid claim to it and the Babis rejected them all under the guidance of Subh-i-Azal and Bahauallah himself. No doubt the Bab said the time of the appearance of the new Manifestation was known to God alone, but he could never conceive of his appearance so soon after him. Nay, there are positive indications in his prophecies that he could not appear so soon. In the Bayan, his revealed Scripture is met with the statement that the time of his appearance was to be within the number of *Ghiath*, that is 1,511 years, and that at any rate it could not exceed the number of *Mustaghath*, i.e. 2,001 years. It is not sufficient answer to this that these were the limits within which he was to appear and that appearing 15 years after the Bab still brings him within these limits. It is damaging to the Bab's authority as an inspired person that he should give the limits of fifteen hundred and two thousand years when the prediction was to be fulfilled within fifteen years. His giving these extensive limits and considering himself abrogator of the law of Islam shows clearly that he expected his appearance at a distance of time more or less similar to that at which he himself appeared after the Prophet Muhammad, whom he considered to be his immediate predecessor.

### **Universal acceptance of Babism was a condition precedent to the appearance of the new Manifestation**

As I have said, there are clear indications that the new Manifestation could not appear so soon. For instance, it is expressly laid down that when it comes, all should have been educated in the Bayan (5 : 5).<sup>24</sup> Now the Bayan, as we have seen, was incomplete when death overtook the Bab, and he had entrusted Mirza Yahya, his successor, with its completion. For all to be educated in the Bayan was simply impossible before it was completed, and we know that Mirza Yahya never completed it. Moreover the Bayan is, to this day, a book *unknown* to "all", nay, *unknown* even to the Babis. It has never gone into print; and the manu-

scripts made from it are so few that probably no Babi or Bahai, with the possible exception of the two heads of the movement, has got a copy of it. Therefore, as even the Babis — to say nothing of *all* — have not been educated in the Bayan, the condition precedent to the appearance of the new Manifestation was not fulfilled in 1867 when Mirza Husain Ali laid claim to that office; nay, it is not fulfilled to this day. It may be asked, why then did the Bab give instructions to Mirza Yahya, his successor in the leadership of the movement, that if "he whom God shall manifest" appeared in his lifetime, he should consider the Bayan abrogated. I think it was done simply to show the importance in which he held the new Manifestation. Or, maybe he was under the impression that his religion would be very soon accepted by the world and his work would thus be accomplished and a new Manifestation may then take his place. The Bayan states expressly that before the coming of the new Manifestation, "all must adopt his religion" (7 : 5).<sup>25</sup> The Bayan, we are told by Professor Browne, "contains regulations for the conduct of the Babi state, and implicitly assumes a time when Persia at least shall have adopted Babism as the State religion".<sup>26</sup> We further find it stated in the Bayan that no non-Babi should be allowed to live in five provinces of Persia, Azarbaijan, Fars, Iraq, Khurasan and Manzandran. The attitude to be adopted by Babi kings towards non-Babis was not to be one of tolerance; they are told to expel non-Babis from their countries. Now these directions assume the prevalence of the Babi religion and its adoption by kings as well as subjects. Hence if the Bab's statement regarding the new Manifestation's possible appearance in his successor's lifetime must be taken literally, the only conclusion which can be drawn from it is that the Bab was under the impression that his religion would be spread in the whole world in the lifetime of his successor, and the purpose of his advent being thus accomplished, the new Manifestation may appear soon. But this was only a very remote contingency, and the Bab's real view was that the time for which his law should last was nearer two millenniums than one millennium.

### **Baha gives 1,000 years as minimum limit for appearance of a Manifestation after him**

While Bahauallah claimed to have come within twenty years of Bab's death, in his own turn he made it incumbent upon his followers not to accept anyone within a thousand years. This was clearly a precaution against his authority being undermined by any one of his followers as he had undermined the Bab's authority. Bab had laid down that the next Manifestation would appear within 1,500 or 2,000 years after him. Seventeen years, argued Bahauallah, were as well within this time limit as 1,700; so as a safeguard against a similar claim after his death, he laid it down that no one appearing within a thousand years after him should be accepted. There seems to be very little seriousness in the whole affair about these time limits which became the playthings of this or that claimant. And what purpose did a new Manifestation serve, one may ask, seventeen years after the first? It is true that the new claim kept up the interest of those who would otherwise have become slack. It gives a new impetus to the movement no doubt and served to keep alive the old fanaticism inspired by a God in human form. But beyond that we find nothing. There is no new principle laid down which the Bab had not made known. The movement rests upon the basis of the Manifestation as the Bab preached. Even the details of the law do not show any great change. And if there is any change, what reason

in the world can be ascribed for it? A more perfect law than that of the Qur'an, we are told, was given in the Bayan; yet while the former lasted for nearly thirteen centuries according to the Bab's teaching, the latter could not hold its own for even twenty years.

### **The two pillars of the Babi movement, Bab and Bahaullah, cannot stand together**

While the claims of Bab and Bahaullah are the two pillars on which the foundations of the Babi movement rest and the fall of either brings the whole construction down, that movement has to face the serious question that the theory of Divine Manifestations falls to the ground if both Bab and Bahaullah were true in their claims. The theory of Divine Manifestations was preached by the Bab and he claimed to have come with a new message, a new religion and a new law. But that message was declared null before it was made known to the world, that religion was superseded before it was preached to the world and that law was abrogated before it was acted upon. Nay, the very book, which according to the Bab had to take the place of the Qur'an, was for ever thrown into the corner of oblivion before it was promulgated in the world. To say that the Bab was John the Baptist of the Babi movement is to show utter ignorance of the theory of Divine Manifestations. The Bab's claim was that he was a Divine Manifestation, independent of anyone who should come after him and complete in himself, not needing the help of any other Manifestation. He was entrusted with the whole message that was to be delivered to the world at that stage. He was as good a Divine Manifestation as the one that was to appear after him, and if the later Manifestation was greater than him, it was not due to any defect in him but it was a necessary condition of the theory of Manifestations in which each successive Manifestation was greater and more perfect than the previous one. It was, according to the Bab, a necessary law of growth. According to his theory Jesus was greater than Moses, and the Prophet Muhammad was greater than Jesus, while he himself claimed to be greater than all of them because he came after all; and in accordance with this theory he acceded superiority to him who should come after him. But he never accepted the minor position into which the followers of Bahaullah would put him for the sake of Bahaullah's claim. With Bahaullah's claim the Bab's claim thus falls to the ground, and the Babi movement stands on the horns of a dilemma. If it accepts Bahaullah, it must give up the Bab, but if it gives up the Bab, it can have no Bahaullah, as Bahaullah without the Bab is simply inconceivable.

### **THE LAWS OF BAB AND BAHAUDDIN**

Both the Shaikhi leaders preceding Mirza Ali Muhammad, viz., Shaikh Ahmad and Syed Kazim, were prolific writers, and so was Mirza Ali Muhammad. He began to write before he laid claim to be the Bab, and his first work written in his capacity as a member of the Shaikhi sect shows the extreme reverence he had for the Imams. Professor Browne, who obtained a copy of this book in his travels in Persia, gives a brief description of it in his article on Babism in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. The Ziarat Nama, as it is called, contains instructions and prayers for visiting the shrines of the Imams. Professor Browne says:

"This work seems to me of the utmost interest and importance in tracing the gradual formation of the Bab's ideas, and, so far as I know, it is the sole record of this early period

of his life, before he put forward any claim to Divine inspiration. In spite of the faults of grammar and obscurities of style which mark this along with all the other compositions of the Bab, there is something sublime and beautiful in the thought concealed beneath the somewhat uncouth phraseology."<sup>27</sup>

The following passage referring to the author himself would not be without interest to the student of Bab's claims at a later date:

"With what language shall I confess my faults? And with what regard shall I look upon my actions? By your glory! were any but you aware of what I had acquired (i.e. what sins were chargeable to me), he would not look towards me, and would fly from the terror of the justice of God with regard to me, but ye, notwithstanding the greatness of your state, and the loftiness of your rank, and the glory of your brightness, and the completeness of your proofs, have pardoned me, and concealed me, as though I had not committed any fault, nor wrought any wrong."<sup>28</sup>

Apparently, the Imams are here addressed as Omniscient and Omnipotent. They are aware of the sins of Mirza Ali Muhammad but they have pardoned him. He addresses them as a worshipper of God would address the Divine Being. As Professor Browne tells us, he approaches them in supplication, offers them praises, desires complete submission to them and total annihilation in them, nay his very "limbs quake" before them and "his skin creeps" as he adores them.<sup>29</sup> Only the most ignorant even among the Shias would stoop so low before the Imams and ascribe to them Divine dignity as Mirza Ali Muhammad has done in the Ziarat Nama. The devotion here paid to the Imams is quite incompatible with the idea of Divine unity as known to and preached by Islam. It is the worship of tombs and saints condemned by Islam as derogatory to human dignity as any other kind of idol-worship. But in this is concealed no doubt the germ of his own claim later on to be the Manifestation of the Divine Being.

The idea of a new law abrogating the Law of the Qur'an does not seem to have been entertained by Mirza Ali Muhammad at the time of the announcement of his *zahir* (manifestation). At any rate in his writings after that he is still a Muslim bowing before the authority of the Qur'an, only giving it his own interpretation. His earliest work after the claim to be the Bab is the commentary on the twelfth chapter of the Qur'an, i.e. the chapter entitled Joseph. This chapter contains 111 verses and the comment on each verse is called a *surah* of the Bab's book. A copy of the book is in the library of the British Museum, and Professor Browne, who has had access to it, gives a brief account of it in his article on Babism in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. The Bab claims it as a revelation from God. Professor Browne says:

"The book is entirely in Arabic and is obscure and ungrammatical, like the rest of the Bab's writings . . . it must have been composed between May 1844 and December 1845, and therefore stands midway between the Ziarat Nama and the Persian Bayan. In it a distinct claim to a Divine mission is put forward. . . . It is interesting to observe that the claim put forward at this period by Mirza Ali Muhammad is that he enjoyed a special spiritual communion with the twelfth or absent Imam (Imam-i-ghaib) whose return, as the Imam Mahdi, the Shiites are expecting."<sup>30</sup>

And again:

"Outwardly, at least, the dictates of Islam seem to be in the main accepted, and the Qur'an is not declared to be abrogated. Thus it is written, whoever denies Islam, God will not accept from him any of his actions on the Day of Resurrection. . . . The month of Ramazan is ordered to be kept as a fast, and no mention seems to be made of the new month of fasting, consisting of nineteen days, which was afterwards instituted."<sup>31</sup>

It was probably after his commentary on sura Yusuf that the Bab wrote one on sura Kauthar. Extracts from this book are given in the *Ihqaqul Haq* by Mirza Muhammad Taqi. Here too Mirza Ali Muhammad, while claiming a Divine mission, speaks of himself only as an intermediary between the hidden Imam Mahdi and the believers, and as one sent to serve the cause of the Qur'án. In view of the undeniable fact that he had given himself out as the Imam Mahdi as early as his pilgrimage to Mecca, the claims advanced in both these books are difficult to reconcile with the higher claim; but the doctrine of *taqiyya* seems to have facilitated matters for him and his followers, and while he claimed publicity only for the humbler position of the Bab, he was no doubt agitating the country by his claim to be the expected Mahdi through the secret organization at his command. A few quotations from the commentary on sura Kauthar would show how he was advancing both claims at one and the same time.

"Today it is not right that there should be an argument for anyone except my person, and truly God has made manifest his (my?) affair in such a state that no one dare hesitate in or doubt it, for He has chosen a man from among the non-Arabs for guarding the religion of His Apostle and his Saints."<sup>32</sup>

"They surely disbelieve who say that the Dhikr<sup>33</sup> of the name of thy Lord claims revelation and Quran."<sup>34</sup>

"And I bear witness that anyone who lays claim to Thy saintship or lays claim to bring the Quran or a revelation the like of which is forbidden to the people or diminishes anything from Thy religion or adds thereto, he is surely a disbeliever."<sup>35</sup>

We come now to the Bayan in which Mirza Ali Muhammad laid claim to be the founder of a new religion. With the basic doctrine of that religion I have already dealt with in the last chapter. Next both in importance and originality to the doctrine of the "Manifestation" in the Babi religion is the doctrine of the "Letters of the Living". In this world God is represented by the point (i.e. Mirza Ali Muhammad) and his eighteen disciples who are called *Huruf-i-Hayy* or the Letters of the Living,<sup>36</sup> the numerical value of the word *hayy*, which means *the living*, being 18. Mysticism plays a great part in formulating this doctrine. God is One, which is in Arabic *wahid*, and the numerical value of *wahid* is again 19. "Thus 'One' represents the unmanifested essence of God and 19 the first manifestation of the same."<sup>37</sup> In the Bayan this doctrine, like the doctrine of the Manifestation, is represented as a universal doctrine in all religions. For instance, in Islam, the Prophet, his daughter Fatima, the twelve Imams (as accepted by the Shias), and the four Babs are said to constitute the "Letters of the Living", although according to the doctrine preached, there should have been 18 besides the Prophet, who is the founder of Islam. And in the next cycle, "He whom God shall manifest" will make his own choice of the eighteen disciples,<sup>38</sup> as the Bab had made in his own cycle. The "Letters of the Living", we are told in the Bayan, "were created before all other things from the soul of Nuqta, or Point, and infused into all things . . . to them are given the 'Most Comely Names' which are the nearest of all souls to God". They are in fact "the signs of God's Names to His creatures . . . and their hearts are mirrors wherein only God is seen . . . each day of each month and each month of each year is specially connected with one of the Letters of the Living".<sup>39</sup> Strangely enough, Mirza Yahya was undoubtedly one of the Letters of the Living, though instead of being a mirror wherein only God is seen, he was the very devil according to Bahaullah who was also one of the Letters of the Living. Another of these Letters of the Living was Syed Muhammad, the Azali leader, who was murdered at Akka by Bahaullah's followers.

On account of this doctrine of the 18 "Letters of the Living" plus the "Point", the number 19 received the utmost sanctity in the Babi law, and its importance remained as great in Bahaullah's religion. According to the Bayan, the sacred number 19 was to flow through all things."<sup>40</sup> Hence it is that the Babi year contains 19 months, each month being of 19 days. The Bayan which was left incomplete was to consist of 19 *wahids* (parts), each *wahid* containing 19 chapters. The most trivial orders are based on the number 19. Everyone, whether male or female, was to serve the Point for 19 days (9 : 5). Everyone who had the means should present 19 precious stones to him whom God shall manifest (8 : 5).<sup>41</sup> Everyone who caused sorrow to any person should give away 19 *mithqals* of gold, or if he had not the means, 19 *mithqals* of silver, or, failing even that, should ask forgiveness 19 times (7 : 18).<sup>42</sup> Anyone who takes away the clothing of another had his wife prohibited to him for 19 days.<sup>43</sup> Nineteen rings inscribed with the names of God are to be left by every believer to his heirs (8 : 2).<sup>44</sup> Then there were 19 fasts, and 19 *mithqals* of gold were to be paid out of hundreds to the "Letters of the Living" or their descendants (8 : 16).<sup>45</sup> In short, as Professor Browne says :

"It is unnecessary to describe in detail the part played by the sacred number in the ordinances of the new religion. The system of coinage, the construction of places of worship, the fines inflicted for transgressions, and the taxes to be levied, are all arranged on the same basis, so that to quote from the Bayan (Vahid VII, ch. 8), 'it seems to be seen that the mystery of the vahid will gain currency till it pervades all things, until even the pens in the pen-case shall be according to the number of the vahid.'"<sup>46</sup>

In this connection, it may be noted that the Bab laid stress on the virtue of talismans. Thus in the Bayan he recommended the study of sciences bearing on the construction of talismans (3 : 16). For this purpose he recommended signs of red cornelian bearing the inscription : "Say, God is truth and besides God is creation and all are His worshippers."<sup>47</sup> Professor Browne has given a facsimile of a Babi talisman in his *Nuqtatul Qaf* which was given him by Subh-i-Azal in 1896. In this talisman there is an inner circle containing a square divided into seven equal parts both in length and breadth, each of these small squares containing a repetition of the same writing. Then there are seven outer circles, each of which is divided into 19 equal segments. Each of these segments contains either a letter or some other symbol, while the outermost has the Ayat ul Kursi (the 255th verse of the second chapter the the Qur'án) portioned into the different segments, and the one inside it has some Divine names. Professor Browne tells us that the writing outside the inner circle is in gold and lithographed, while the writing inside and around the inner circle is in black and in the Bab's own hand. There is not the least doubt that the Bab had much faith in the virtue of letters and signs. Rings were to be placed even on the fingers of the dead, the inscription in the case of the males being, "And whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth and between them is God's, and God is the knower of all things"; and in the case of females, "And the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is between them is God's and God is powerful over all things."<sup>48</sup> The permutations of letters play an important part even in the names of God without reference to the meaning conveyed by the word thus formed. For instance, the following different forms of *wahid* (one) are used in invocations, each to be repeated a hundred times *wáhid*, *wahid*, *wahhád*, *auhad*, *muwahhad*, *muwahhid*, *mutawahhad*.

The doctrine of Resurrection in the Babi faith, as stated by Bab as well as Bahauallah, assumes a peculiar significance. There are not many references to heaven and hell, and where there is any mention of these, heaven is synonymous with belief in the Manifestation, i.e., Bab or Bahauallah, and hell is unbelief, its essence being ignorance and denial. In the Index of the Bayan as given by Professor Browne, we find the following headings as to Bab's teaching on heaven and hell :

- "No heaven higher than belief" (2 : 1).
- "Believers in the Bayan themselves constitute heaven" (2 : 6).
- "Bayan is heaven" (2 : 9).
- "Heaven is wherever believers are or have been" (2 : 9).
- "The heaven of the Furqan (i.e. the Qur'án) is the Bayan" (2 : 16).
- "The heaven of everything is its perfection" (3 : 17).
- "The heaven of each age is the perfection of that age" (3 : 13).
- "No hell worse than unbelief" (2 : 1).
- "Hell truly exists and has endless aspects or phrases but ignorance (or unbelief) is the essence of all of them."
- "Hell is the Eternal No" (2 : 17).
- "Whoever turns from the Bayan is already in the hell" (2 : 6).
- "Wherever no believer is found, there is a portion of the land of hell" (2 : 10).
- "Whoever enters the Balance of Denial enters hell" (2 : 13).

There are references to heaven and hell after death, as for instance in Bayan 2 : 16, where it is stated that "whoever has entered the heaven of the Manifestation shall be in heaven after death",<sup>49</sup> or Bayan 8 : 11, where we find that unbelievers are "transported after death to the Treasury of the Hell".<sup>50</sup> Yet from the way in which all references to the Resurrection are explained away in the two Babi Scriptures, as indicating the coming of the Bab or Bahauallah, it does not appear that the Babi movement recognizes in true earnestness a life after death. If it does, it says nothing definite about it. The Resurrection or the life after death as spoken of in the previous scriptures is here interpreted as conveying quite a different meaning. The Resurrection, we are told in Bayan, "is the period of any Manifestation from the first appearance of the 'Tree of Truth' until its decline".<sup>51</sup> The following statement occurs in the Bayan, 3 : 15 :

"To the disappearance of the Tree of Truth is the Resurrection of the Quran, for till a thing does not reach its perfection, its Resurrection does not appear. The perfection of the religion of Islam ended with the beginning of the Manifestation (of Bab). And from the beginning of the Manifestation to its disappearance, the fruit of the tree of Islam, whatever it is, will become manifest. And the Resurrection of the Bayan comes with the Manifestation of *manyuzhiruhullah*, for the Bayan is today in the position of the life-germ, and in the beginning of the Manifestation of *manyuzhiruhullah*, the end of the perfection of Bayan will appear."<sup>52</sup>

"We are also told that the day of Resurrection 'is externally just like any other day and it passes by while many are unaware of it'.<sup>53</sup>

The *Kitab-ul-Aqdas*, which is the new scripture of the Bahais and which abrogated the Bayan, does not speak of heaven or hell, or of a life after death at all. In the other Tablets that are available there are but stray references. On one occasion we read : "Soon, will the polytheists see their place in the Fire, and the unitarians in the kingdom of

God, the Lord of what is and what shall be."<sup>54</sup> A little further on in the same collection, we read : "Surely the exertion of those who disbelieve is wasted ; they will soon find themselves in painful chastisement."<sup>55</sup> But the fire in which the polytheists, meaning all disbelievers in Bahauallah including Azali Babis, find themselves is only the fire of denial, as we find it explained in another Tablet : "They say, where are heaven and hell? Say, O you polytheists who doubt, the heaven is (your) seeing me and the hell is your own self".<sup>56</sup> In Bahauallah's writings, the Resurrection is explained as his own appearance, following the explanation given by the Bab, though contradicting him in the details :

"Some of them say, Have the signs come down? Say, Yes, by the Lord of the heavens. And has the Hour come? It has already passed away, by the Manifestation of the arguments. Surely the *Haaqqa* (lit., *sure calamity* but meaning *resurrection*) has come and the truth has come with argument and authority. The *Sahira* (lit., *a state of wakefulness* and meaning *resurrection*) has become manifest and the world is in fear and perplexity. The earthquakes have come and the tribes cry from fear of God, the Powerful and the Omnipotent. Say, The *Saakhkha* (lit., *the deafening cry* and meaning *resurrection*) has come, and this day is for God, the One, the Controller. And they say, Has the *Taamma* (lit., *the Predominating calamity* and meaning *resurrection*) been complete? Say, Yes, by the Lord of Lords. And has the Resurrection been established? Even the Sustainer with the kingdom of signs (has come). And do you see the people fallen down? Yes, by my Lord, the most High, the most Glorious. And have the trunks been hollowed? Even the mountains have been swept off, by the Master of the attributes. He says where are heaven and hell? Say, The first is seeing me and the other thy own self, O thou doubter, polytheist. He says, We do not see the Balance. Say, Yes by my Lord the Beneficent, none sees it but those having eyes. He says, Have the stars fallen down? Say, Yea, when the Sustainer was in Adrianople. So take a lesson, O you who have sight, all the signs appeared when we took out the hand of power from the pocket of majesty and glory ; the crier cried when the appointed time came. . . . He says, Has the Trumpet been blown? Say, Yes, by the King of Manifestation, when he was firmly sealed on the Throne of his name, the Beneficent . . . and the souls leaped in the graves of bodies. . . . Those who disbelieve say, When was the heaven rent asunder? Say, When you were in the graves of negligence and error. . . . Of them is he who says, Have the souls been gathered together? Say, Yes, by my Lord, when thou wast in the cradle of doubts."<sup>57</sup>

It will be seen that the words in which questions are put in the above quotation are almost all taken from the Qur'án where they occur concerning the Resurrection of the dead on the day of judgment. The *Haaqqa*, the *Saakhkha*, the *Taamma*, the *Sa'a*, are various names for the Resurrection day, while in one question even the *Qiyama* is spoken of. And so also the blowing of the trumpet, the falling down of the stars, the rending asunder of the sky, the passing away of the mountains, are all spoken of in the Qur'án as the signs of the Day of Judgment when the dead shall rise. Now if all things relating to *Qiyama* or Resurrection are thus explained away as simply allegorical expressions, the rising of the dead or the life after death and the judgment become simply a myth ; and the Babi scriptures thus deal a death-blow to one of the two basic principles of religion, i.e. a belief in a life after death, which alone can generate in man a sense of responsibility for all his actions. And by preaching that God is absolutely incomprehensible, the only sanction which makes religion a force is entirely destroyed. If God is absolutely incomprehensible, only manifesting Himself once in a thousand years in a human body, and if a life after death is denied, or thrown entirely into the background, the foundations of religion are almost pulled off, and this is what Babism has consciously or unconsciously done.

Throwing the doctrine of Resurrection or a life after death into the background, Babism has laid stress on the

doctrine of *raj'a* or returning to the present state of existence after death. In the teachings of the Bab, the doctrine of *raj'a* was very prominent. All the leaders of Babism were believed to be the return to present life of one or other of the great men in Islamic history, though, it must be added, like all other Babi doctrines, it was loose and was not formulated definitely. For instance, we find Mirza Jani saying that Muhammad Ali Barfurushi, called Quddus, claimed to be the return to life of the Prophet Muhammad, while the Bab himself was the *raj'a* of Ali (pp. 152, 153), but elsewhere the Bab is called the *raj'a* of the Prophet Muhammad (p. 272). To an ordinary mind the doctrine of *raj'a* is not easily distinguishable from the doctrines of transmigration or reincarnation, and hence it is that we find not only the opponents of Babism blaming it for teaching transmigration and reincarnation, but even the missionaries of Babism taught in America the doctrine of reincarnation. A reference to Browne's "Materials for Study of the Babi Religion" would show that Dr. Khairullah was explicit on this point: "Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua and Daniel are reincarnated and are at Acre"; "Abbas Effendi who is a reincarnation of Jesus Christ" (p. 118). Nay, we are plainly told that the whole world would be reincarnated: "Those who die without hearing of Baha are reincarnated and have another chance" (p. 117). But we are also told that Dr. Khairullah had differences with some other Bahai preachers on the question of the immortality of the human soul and the doctrine of *raj'a* (p. 102), and Abbas Effendi did not pronounce a judgment on the point when the matter was brought to his notice.

The above, along with the doctrine of Manifestation, are what may be called the peculiar doctrines of the Babi faith which forms its fundamentals. The author of the *Ihqaqul Haq* also mentions that the Babis hold the doctrine of *Bada*, which means that God can change His mind. The doctrine of *Bada* is no doubt held by all the heretical Shia sects called *Ghulat*, and is likely to have been entertained by the Shaikhs and later by the Babis; but as I cannot have access to the Bayan, which the author of the *Ihqaqul Haq* had, I am not in a position to say definitely whether the founder of Babism actually preached the doctrine of *Bada*.

A belief in angels was apparently held, for in the Index to Bayan we are told that "Angels are unwilling to approach places where there is no water" (6:2), and again that "70,000 angels watch over every letter to preserve it and rejoice when it is well-written" (6:19). We may pass over the details of the new law, as substantially it was the same as given by Bahaullah subsequently in the *Kitab-ul-Aqdas*, the abrogations relating only to some insignificant details such as, for instance, the prohibition of tobacco which was inculcated by the Bab but abrogated by Bahaullah, and I would therefore content myself by having a brief summary of the law of Bahaullah as given in the *Kitab-ul-Aqdas*.

The law of Bahaullah is taken almost entirely from the Islamic law with certain variations which appear to have been introduced with the object of affording some facilities to his followers. Thus the four fundamental principles of Islam are retained with some modifications in them. The number of obligatory prayers, which is five according to the Islamic law, is reduced to three, and the number of *rak'as* in all the prayers is stated to be nine: "Verily prayers have been made obligatory upon you, nine *rak'as* for God, the sender of signs (at three different times), when the day declines and in the morning and in the evening, and the rest we have annulled". This modification shows a trace of the Shi'ite sect of Islam, for the Shias generally combine into one

the two afternoon prayers and the two prayers after sunset. As in Islam, the prayers are declared to be obligatory from the time when a person attains to puberty. The different gesticulations of the body are nearly the same as in Islam, and *sajda* or the act of prostration is clearly enjoined. In saying his prayers the Muslim turns his face to the Ka'ba, the holy temple at Mecca, but the Babi is enjoined to turn his face to "the holy place where the higher beings make a circuit", an expression which must be understood to mean Akka, the place of the imprisonment of Bahaullah. The order relating to the saying of prayers in congregation as given in Islam is declared to have been abrogated except in the prayers which are said for a deceased person. The ablution or the washing of the hands and the face before saying one's prayers is also retained.

Fasting is also made obligatory, but as the Babi month comprises nineteen days, the number of fasts is reduced from thirty to nineteen. Fasting is declared to be obligatory, just as in Islam, upon all followers except when a person is on a journey or when he is sick and except in the case of pregnant women or those who are suckling babes. Before the month of fasting sets in, a few days are set apart for enjoyment, while the *Nauroz*, or the Persian New Year's Day, is declared to be the 'Id of the Babis, the day of feasting and rejoicing which follows immediately the Babi month of fasts. The fast is to be kept from sunrise to sunset.

As regards *Zakat*, the setting apart of a fixed portion of one's property for the poor, which is the third fundamental principle of Islam, we have the following direction in the *Kitab-ul-Aqdas*: "Verily, it is made obligatory upon you to purify provisions and what is besides them by payment of *Zakat*. This is what the Sender of signs has ordered you in this powerful paper. In future we shall detail to you its *nisab* (the amount of property the possession of which renders payment of *Zakat* necessary) when God wills and intends it." I have not been able to find these details anywhere in the *Kitab-ul-Aqdas*.

Polygamy is also sanctioned by Bahaullah. On page 22 of the *Kitab-ul-Aqdas* we read: "Verily, God has enjoined marriage upon you but beware that you do not marry more than two wives, and as for him who contents himself with one woman only, he himself and the woman will both live in peace, and there is no harm if a person keeps a virgin for his service. So has the commandment been written with truth by the pen of revelation. Marry, O people! so that from you may spring up those who should remember Me among My servants." No marriage is legal without *mahr* (payment of a sum to the bride), different amounts of which are fixed for people living in villages. When the husband goes on a journey, it is obligatory upon him to fix a limit for his return of which he should apprise his wife. If he is unable to return at the end of the time fixed for any good cause, he should inform his wife of it and try his best to return as soon as he can. But if he has either no good cause for lengthening his stay beyond the fixed limit or does not come back at the time agreed upon, the wife should wait for nine months and then she is at liberty to contract a new marriage. *Idda*, or waiting for a prescribed time before contracting a second marriage, is also necessary for the divorced wife and the widow by the law proclaimed by Bahaullah. If there is disagreement or hatred between the husband and the wife, the husband cannot immediately divorce his wife, but he must wait for a full year. If during this period the disagreement or the hatred is not removed, then the husband is at liberty to divorce his wife. There is no

objection to the marriage of the divorced parties so long as the wife does not contract a new marriage.

The law of inheritance follows in principle the Islamic law of distribution of property into parts. The property of the deceased is directed to be divided into seven unequal portions in the following proportions: eighty-one portions for the children, sixty-four for the husband or the wife, as the case may be, forty-nine for the father, thirty-six for the mother, twenty-five for the brothers, sixteen for the sisters, nine for the teachers. Immediately after this division we read the remark: "When we heard the crying of children in the backs of their fathers, we doubled their portions, reducing those of others." If a person dies and he has no children, their portion is directed to be paid into the *Bait-ul-Adl* (lit., *the house of justice*), so that the trustees thereof may spend it for the welfare of the widows and the orphans and for the benefit of the public. But if a person has children and there are no inheritors besides them, two-thirds of the whole property is directed to be distributed among the children while one-third goes to the *Bait-ul-Adl*. In case there is none of the inheritors named above, but there are other near relatives such as children of brothers and sisters, two-thirds of the property goes to them. In their absence, the same share is inherited by the paternal and maternal uncles and aunts, or by their children if the uncles and aunts are dead, the remaining third in each case going to the *Bait-ul-Adl*. If none of the persons named is alive to inherit the deceased, the whole of the property goes to the public fund. The house in which a person lives and the clothes which he wears belong as of right to the male among the children, the daughters and all other inheritors being excluded.

Some random directions are given here and there. For instance, there is an injunction requiring the members of the sect to change completely the furniture of their houses after the lapse of nineteen years. Houses should be built and decorated in the best possible manner but there should be no pictures in them. The "rehearsing of the signs of God", or reading one of Bahaullah's books to others, is not permitted in a standing posture. The reciter should sit down on a chair on a raised platform, for, we are told, "God loves your sitting on chairs and raised platforms". The kissing of hands is forbidden. Gambling and the use of opium are also prohibited. The feet should be washed once in every twenty-four hours in the hot season and in every seventy-two hours in the winter. Some other very minute details are given which it would be a mere waste of time to describe here. The law given, however, is by no means a complete law, and while directions are given on some very trivial points, many of the most important matters are altogether neglected, and no fundamental principles of the law are given.

Injunctions are also laid down for the punishment of certain offences. "Burn the person who burns a house intentionally." The severity of this punishment is a little softened further on where after stating that culpable homicide should be punished with death, it is added: "And if you order them to be imprisoned for life, there is no sin upon you in the book." Adultery is not looked upon as a criminal offence, nor is the aggrieved party entitled even to damages. "Verily God has ordered for every adulterer and adulteress a payment into the *Bait-ul-Adl* of nine *mithqals* of gold," *mithqal* being equal nearly to sixty grains. This punishment is a little enhanced when the crime is repeated by the same offender, the amount to be paid into the *Bait-ul-Adl* being doubled. For the thief it is deportation and imprisonment, but if he commits theft a third time, his forehead should be marked with a mark by which he may be recognized wherever he goes.

Certain rights to the property of his followers Bahaullah claimed for himself. Nearly one-fifth of one's possessions must be made over to him by every follower. "The person who owns a hundred *mithqals* of gold, nineteen *mithqals* are for God, the Creator of earth and heavens. Beware, O people! lest you keep back your souls from this mighty grace. This commandment we have given you though we stand in no need of help from you and from all who are in earth and the heavens. . . . Say, by this it is meant to purify your properties and make you attain the stages which are not attained by any except him whom God wills. O people! be not dishonest in paying the dues of God (Bahaullah) and do not in any way handle them except with his permission." In fact, all properties set apart in the way of alms are the sole property of Bahaullah and after him of his sons. "Verily what is set apart for charity returns to God, the manifest of signs. No one has any right to handle them in any way except with the permission of the rising-place of revelation, and after him the charge of such property shall be solely in the hands of *Ghusns* (the *Ghusn-i-Azam* and the *Ghusn-i-Akbar*, the two sons of Bahaullah) and after them this right shall vest in the *Bait-ul-Adl*, if it is firmly established in the country." Thus Bahaullah himself had the charge of all charities and the fifth in his lifetime, and after his death all sums were to be paid to his sons. The *Bait-ul-Adl*, which is mentioned here, was really an association of the followers of Bahaullah. Every city where there were Babis was required to have a *Bait-ul-Adl* having eight members or more who should be trustees of the public funds.

These are some of the laws laid down by Bahaullah and the observance in these is obligatory upon all those who follow him. The principle laid down in the very beginning of the *Kitab-ul-Aqdas* is that the acceptance of his claims is useless unless a man acts upon the injunctions given by him, just as the performance of these obligations is useless unless the claims of Bahaullah are accepted. And as every one of the injunctions is mentioned, it is accompanied with the remark that it is a Divine commandment. In one place it is said after relating the forms of prayer: "These are the limits of God which have been written by the great Pen in books and tablets. Hold fast by the injunctions of God and His commandments and be not like those who follow laws laid down by themselves and throw the laws laid down by God behind them because they follow conjectures and whims." And again: "And the sincere ones find in the limits of God the water of life for people of all sects and the lamp of wisdom and success for those in the earths and the heavens. . . . Beware lest you refrain from acting upon anything which has been plainly laid down in the tablet." It would be interesting to learn how many of the Western follows of Bahaullah believe in and follow the laws laid down by him. The Babi missionaries in the West never mention that Bahaullah prescribed forms for many of the deeds which should be daily done, and these directions, he asserted, could not be changed, at least not for a thousand years. Misconceptions actually prevail on many of the points taught by Bahaullah as, for instance, in relation to polygamy which it is thought Bahaullah actually prohibited, while as a matter of fact he plainly taught that a man could have two wives at one and the same time.

## THE SOURCES OF BABISM

### The Ismailiyya

Babism, as we have already seen, took its birth among the Shaikhiyya, one of the Shia sects which are known under the common name of *Ghulat* or religious extremists. Among

these heretical sects Babism comes nearest, both in its doctrines and its ideals, to the Ismailiyya, an old Shia sect. The Ismailiyya take their name from Ismail, eldest son of Imam Jafar Sadiq, who is the sixth Imam recognized by all Shias. Imam Jafar first nominated Ismail as his successor, but afterwards learning of some indiscretion on his part, nominated his second son, Musa, as his successor. The Ismailiyya do not admit this alteration, and though Ismail died before his father, he is still looked upon by them as the rightful Imam. They are called *Batiniyya* on account of their esoteric doctrine and allegorical exposition of the Qur'an. The sect afterwards became notorious on account of Hasan Ibn Sabah, who secretly took possession of the fortress of Alamut and caused terror by his raids all round. The *fidais* (lit., those undertaking to sacrifice their lives), as the initiates into the movement were called, assassinated secretly every person whom they thought an obstacle in their way, and for a time the name of the Ismailiyya became a terror in the Muslim world. When Sultan Malik Shah tried to seize the fortress, the followers of Hasan Ibn Sabah made a night attack and routed the royal forces. And the Vizier Nizamul Mulk was murdered by a *fidai*.

As I have already said, the cardinal doctrine of the *Ghulat* relating to the person of the Divine Being is a belief in *hulul*, or God manifesting himself in human form, which is nearly the same as the doctrine of Incarnation in Christianity. Now the Ismailiyya and the Babis are both one in holding that God is incomprehensible and cannot be known, and it is only through the Prophet or the Imam according to the former, and through the "Manifestation" according to the latter, that God can be approached or addressed. According to the Ismailiyya, God "made manifest Universal Reason in which are all the Divine attributes and which is God in his implied outward manifestation. As prayer cannot be addressed to an inaccessible Being, it is turned towards his exterior Manifestation, Reason, which thus becomes the real Divinity of the Ismailiyya."<sup>58</sup> Further, the Prophet with his successors, the Imams, is only an earthly incarnation of Reason, so that in fact the Imam is the real Divinity, and though in theory he may not be acknowledged as such, his command is the command of God and must be blindly obeyed. Exactly the same is the position of the "Manifestation", or the "Point", in the Babi movement, as has already been shown. The knowledge of God is the knowledge of the Manifestation; refuge with God is refuge with him; and meeting with God is equivalent to meeting with him, for none can meet the most High Essence. The Divine Volition by which all things are created is the Nukta or the Point, so that the Point or the Manifestation in the Babi doctrine takes the place of the Prophet or the Imam in the Ismailiyya. The slight difference in terminology in the two movements disappears altogether in practice. Just as in the Ismailiyya the word of the Imam is final, being the word of God, and must be accepted blindly; the same is the case with the Manifestation in the Babi movement. Bahaullah has laid even greater stress on this point than the Bab. Writing under the heading of *Isma-Kubra* or the Greatest Sinlessness, he says:

"*Isma-Kubra* (the Greatest Sinlessness) is special for him whose rank is above commandments and prohibitions, for he is the light after which there is no darkness, and the very correctness which is not affected by the least error. If he should call the water wine, and judge the heaven to be earth and the paradise to be hell, he is perfectly right and no one has the right to object to him or to say why and wherefore. And he who objects is of those who turn back on the book of God, the Lord of the worlds. Surely he is not questioned as to what he does, and all others are questioned about everything. Surely

he has come from the heaven of the Unseen, and with him is the banner of 'he does what he pleases' and the hosts of power and control, and for everyone beside him it is compulsory that he should hold fast the laws and orders with which he is commanded: and if he should depart from them by so much as a hair's breadth, his deeds shall become null."<sup>59</sup>

It is not only in the basic doctrine of the faith that Babism so closely resembles the Ismailiyya. There is a marked resemblance in most of the other principal doctrines. For instance, the Babi doctrine relating to paradise and hell may be clearly traced to the Ismailiyya who taught that "paradise allegorically signified the state of the soul which had reached perfect knowledge while hell was ignorance".<sup>60</sup> Bab and Bahaullah both recognized no other heaven than belief in themselves and no other hell than their own denial. The doctrine of *raj'a* (return to present life) was also one of the important doctrines of the Ismailiyya. They recognized that "no soul was condemned to hell eternally; it returned to earth by metempsychosis until it had recognized the Imam of the epoch and had learned theological knowledge from him".<sup>61</sup> Exactly the same doctrine was taught by Dr. Khairullah, the Bahai missionary in America: "Those who die without hearing of Bab are reincarnated and have another chance."<sup>62</sup>

A most striking point of resemblance between the two cults is the importance attached to the numerical value of letters. Just as calculations made from the numerical value of letters played an important part in the Ismailiyya, so do they in Babism. We have seen how Mirza Ali Muhammad puts down his own name as Ali Nabil in his will in favour of Subh-i-Azal, simply because the numerical value of *Nabil* is equal to the numerical value of *Muhammad* according to the *abjad* system, and in the same document he calls his successor *Al-Wahid* (the One), because the numerical value of *Wahid* is the same as that of Yahya. In fact, for the proof of the claims of the founder of Babism we have either allegorical explanations of plain words of the Qur'an or arguments deduced from the numerical value of certain words. For instance, in the chapter entitled *al-Qiyama* we read: "He asks, when is the day of Resurrection? When the sight becomes confused and the moon becomes dark and the sun and the moon are brought together; man shall say on that day whither to fly to? By no means! there shall be no place of refuge; with thy Lord alone shall on that day be the place of rest" (75:6-11). Now Bab and Bahaullah both claim to be the Resurrection spoken of in the Qur'an, and the author of the *Bahrul Irfan* reads the name of Ali Muhammad in these words, for the sun signifies Muhammad and the moon Ali, and their bringing together is the appearance of a person of the name of Ali Muhammad. Add to this the numerical consideration: "With thy Lord alone shall on that day be the place of rest." Now the Arabic for Lord is *Rabb*, and on the basis of a numerical calculation *Ali Muhammad* and *Rabb* are the equivalents of each other, each having 202 as its numerical value. Hence Ali Muhammad is meant when the Lord is spoken of. Again, where the Prophet is commanded to say prayers: "Keep up prayer from the declining of the sun till the darkness of the night" (17:78), the *Bahr ul Irfan* finds a clear prophecy of the advent of another Law, for the words for the *darkness of the night* are *ghasaq illail*, and their numerical value is 1231, but according to the author of the *Bahr ul Irfan* it is 1261, and the meaning is, not that prayers should be said beginning with the declining of the sun till the darkness of the night, which is the time for the last prayer of the day before going to bed, but that a new law would be revealed in the year 1261 A.H.! The Bayan itself contains strange

instances of a resort to the numerical value of letters. For instance, the Bab himself makes out the year of his appearance 1270 by the following calculation. The attribute *Aghfar* of the Divine Being (meaning, very forgiving) has its numerical value 1281; deduct from it the numerical value of *huwa* (meaning *he*), which is 11, and you get 1270 as the year of the appearance of the Bab. Again he calls Kirman the land of fire, because the numerical value of *Kirman* is the same as that of *niran* (pl. of *nar*, meaning *fire*). The time of the appearance of the new Manifestation after the Bab — he whom God shall manifest — was to be met with either in the numerical value of *Ghiath* (meaning, one coming for succour) or that of *mustaghath* (meaning, one from whom succour is sought) being 1511 in the case of the former and 2001 in the case of the latter, though actually Bahaullah did not wait for more than seventeen years to lay claim to that high office.

Even the name Bab seems to have been taken by Mirza Ali Muhammad from the Ismailiyya. It is true that the orthodox Shias recognized four Babs after the disappearance of the Imam Mahdi, but in orthodox view the death of the last of them brought the period of Babhood to a close. It was among the Ismailiyya that the Bab was identified with the spiritual leader, and the Shaikh or the head of the sect who initiated into the mysteries of religion received the title of the Bab, and it was from them that Mirza Ali Muhammad borrowed the term, attaching the same *quasi*-divine character to the holder of the title as the Ismailiyya did.

It is not only in doctrine and name that Babism bears such a strong resemblance to the Ismailiyya. It is in the nature of its teachings that the fact comes out clearly that Babism was only a more modern form of the Ismailiyya. It is well known that on account of their esoteric doctrines, the Ismailiyya are called the *Batiniyya*, and though some other extremist sects also sought esoteric meaning in plain words, yet the name *Batiniyya* has been particularly applied to the Ismailiyya. And we find the Babi leaders plainly teaching that their master, the Bab, was a teacher of the *Batiniyya* doctrine. The later Babis, or Bahais, while practically adhering to the *Batiniyya* methods of propagation, do not in theory cherish the idea, but Mirza Jani, the earliest historian of Babism, and the early Babi leaders are very outspoken on this point. A law regulating the actions of men and meant to keep them within the bounds was no more needed according to Muhammad Ali of Barfurush, whom Mirza Jani quotes approvingly: "Commandments relate to those who are still on their way to reach a goal. When the traveller reaches the goal, the commandments relating to the journey are cancelled in his case." In still more clear terms, Babism and *Batiniyya* are declared to be one: "The commandments of His Holiness are the commandments of *Batin* (i.e., relating to the hidden) and necessarily when that which is hidden comes, the outward commandments go."<sup>63</sup>

Thus the principle on which the Ismailiyya and Babism are based is one and the same, the seeking of hidden meaning in plain words and discarding the outward commandments. This coincidence cannot be accidental and affords

the clearest proof that Babism drinks deep at the fountain of the Ismailiyya. The practical side of the two movements discloses a similar resemblance. The history of Babism as narrated in the foregoing pages brings out two facts in all clearness, *viz.*, the adoption of secret methods of propagation and keeping the masses in ignorance as to what the movement really taught. Even those who were initiated into the movement had not the whole mystery revealed to them at once. Professor Browne tells us how on one occasion when he was trying to understand the doctrine of Divinity in Babism, one Babi warned another not to reveal the whole truth because he was not yet ripe to receive it. The masses never had access to the Babi books, and only the chosen few could get copies of them. And though there were not marked degrees of initiation, as in the Ismailiyya, yet there is not the least doubt that the Babi masses resembled the *fidais* of the Ismailiyya, and were required to obey blindly the orders of their superiors.

If both movements worked up a high degree of fanaticism among their followers, they both aimed at the same thing. The horrors of Alamut as connected with the Ismailiyya have their counterpart in the secret murders with which Babism started and which culminated in the open insurrections against the Persian Government and the attempt on the Shah's life. In both cases there was an attempt to bring about a revolution, and to establish a new order of things. It is true that both the Ismailiyya and Babism are religious movements, and just as the risings of the Babis against the government do not entitle us to place it among the purely anarchial movements, so the assassinations connected with the name of Hasan Ibn Sabah and his *fidais* do not exclude the Ismailiyya from the category of religious movements. But both tried to bring about a religious reform through a political change. The only difference, if any, is that the Bab and his lieutenants were even more impatient and less prudent than Hasan Ibn Sabah, and they started on an insurrectionary course without gaining sufficient strength. The claim to Mahdism, coupled with the weakness of the existing Government, was the great temptation which led them to precipitate things, and the result was that the attempt to bring about a change of rule and establish a kingdom of the Babi saints was a gigantic failure which almost crushed the Babi movement, and it found a new lease of life only in the message of Bahaullah. But let it not be assumed that Bahaullah's message with all its claims to establish love and peace was free from the tinge of secret murders which tarnished the name of the Ismailiyya. As I have already shown, Bahaullah and his followers found themselves too weak to start on a career of assassination against either the Persian Government, or their new masters, the Turks, but the spirit of the Ismailiyya showed itself unmistakably in the cold-blooded secret murders of the adherents of Mirza Yahya, the rival leader. Thus Babism, along with its offshoot, Bahaism, is clearly a repetition not only of the doctrines of Ismailiyya but also of the horrible deeds of murder and the attempt to bring about a revolution.

#### REFERENCES

- 1 The references in brackets are to the Persian Bayan.
- 2 *Introduction to Nuqtatul Qaf*, pp. xxvi-xxviii.
- 3 Index to Bayan, Professor Browne's *Introduction to Nuqtatul Qaf*.
- 4 *Ma'ariful Millat in Najiyya wan Nariyya* by Syed Abul Qasim, pp. 62, 63.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 60.
- 6 *Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics*, article "Bab".
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1889, p. 882.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 882.
- 10 See Professor Browne's *Introduction to Nuqtatul Qaf*. The concluding words are the words in which the Qur'an speaks of the Divine Being.
- 11 *Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion*, p. 111.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 117.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 121.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 126.

- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 132.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 141.
- 17 I take this quotation from an article written by me in the *Review of Religions*, Vol. VI.
- 18 *Kitab ul Aqdas*, p. 170.
- 19 *Ibid.*, pp. 114, 115.
- 20 *Ibid.*, pp. 116, 117.
- 21 *Ibid.*, pp. 120, 121.
- 22 *Introduction to Nuqtatul Qaf*, p. 24.
- 23 Professor Browne's Index of Bayan : see *Introduction to Nuqtatul Qaf*, p. lxxi.
- 24 Professor Browne's *Introduction to Nuqtatul Qaf*, p. lxxi.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. xxx.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p. xxv.
- 27 *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1889, p. 901.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 901.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 901.
- 30 *Ibid.*, pp. 905, 906.
- 31 *Ibid.*, p. 907.
- 32 *Ihqaqul Haq*, pp. 118, 119.
- 33 It is one of the titles by which the Bab is known.
- 34 *Ihqaqul Haq*, p. 119.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 119.
- 36 *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, p. 921.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 920.
- 38 Index to *Nuqtatul Qaf*, p. lxxv.
- 39 *Ibid.*
- 40 Quoted in *Ihqaqul Haq*, p. 152.
- 41 *Ihqaqul Haq*, p. 158.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 193.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 194.
- 44 Introduction to *Nuqtatul Qaf*, p. lxxviii.
- 45 *Ibid.*, p. xc.
- 46 *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, p. 923.
- 47 Introduction to *Nuqtatul Qaf*, p. lxxxix.
- 48 *Ibid.*, p. lxxxviii.
- 49 Professor Browne's Index of Bayan.
- 50 *Ibid.*
- 51 *Ibid.*
- 52 *Ibid.*
- 53 *Ibid.*
- 54 *Kitabul Aqdas* and other Tablets, printed 1308 A.H., probably in Bombay, p. 335.
- 55 *Ibid.*, p. 341.
- 56 *Ishraqat* (printed at Azizi Press, Agra), p. 30.
- 57 *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.
- 58 *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.
- 59 *Ashraqat*, pp. 21, 22.
- 60 *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.
- 61 *Ibid.*
- 62 *Materials for Study of the Babi Religion*, p. 117.
- 63 *Nuqtatul Qaf*, pp. 150, 151.

# GOD AND THE STATE

by NORMAN LEWIS

God's administration is always wise and always just. And, since God is the prototype of man, it is required that man's administration be just.

We do not know what punishment God metes out to the unjust administrator who has never heard of Him. But all believers must realize that the punishment of a believer who errs will be great.

We owe allegiance to God, not to mankind. Divinely inspired leadership may displease men, at least for a time. The leader who is firm as the Rock of Gibraltar will eventually win their respect, but it is not their respect which he seeks. It is the approval of the Divine One. He, as an individual, was placed upon earth to fulfil a certain mission. Every man who spends time daily in meditation knows what his individual destiny is. It may not be revealed to him at the time of his meditation but later while he walks alone on a green and silent meadow or on a crowded street. It may come in the stress of great activity. But it will come.

From that moment he knows why he came into the world. And if he is wise he will tell no one. Deeds will speak for him, not words.

God's man alone is a hero. He alone is not influenced by the attitudes, prejudices, opinions or emotions of his fellow-men.

If he persists in what he knows to be God's course he sees a look, first of incredulity, then of outright disapproval, on the faces of his friends. This disapproval may pass into the phase of violent conflict. Eventually they will acknowledge him as right. But he cares nothing for that. In all probability, like Confucius, he will be gone by that time from the haunts of men.

As God is transcendent, so His vision for the world of men is transcendent. It is far above the understanding of

ordinary men. It is "revealed" to those who seek it. It may take them years of searching to attain it, but when it is attained it is never lost.

God can work through such men. They act for Him, which is even more important than to speak for Him. They shape the world to His liking by deeds which are usually called political. Yet how few of the political leaders of the world have been God's men, striving with a giant's power to change the world to the image which is in God's mind!

Today all things hang in the balance. The next few decades, or even the next few years, will show whether God's way will win with men. But if God wins it will be through the brains and hands of men.

A knowledge of this responsibility can be almost overwhelming to those who hold the reins of power. But it is a stimulus and an inspiration. With God, man makes his right decisions. Without God, man converts all human life into an abode of evil.

'Those who rule the world today, politically, are either God's men or they are not. If they are not, no amount of persuasion from well-wishers, no amount of letters, telegrams or personal entreaties will ever sway them.

The man who is under Divine guidance does not need to be entreated or encouraged. He does not need to be instructed by men, because he is instructed by God.

The Godless man who has political aspiration seeks first and above all to make his fellow men believe that he is a good fellow. This good fellowship has often been indicated in the United States by the handing out of free cigars.

If all God's men turn their backs upon the political field, it will soon fall into the hands of scoundrels.

# Introducing a young Pakistani artist: IQBAL GEOFFREY

by A. S. ALI

Writing about 23-year-old artist Iqbal Geoffrey, Sir Herbert Read, D.Litt., remarks: "...and that he should already have established a reputation as a painter in Europe seems as miraculous as if he had safely crossed the intervening oceans in a rowing boat..." Geoffrey was born in January 1939 in West Pakistan — first artist in a family which has a very distinguished religious background. He was educated at a public school and later graduated from the Faculty of Arts of the Government College, Lahore, where he was on the Executive Council of the Fine Arts Society. In London he has studied at the Chelsea School of Arts. He has been painting since he was six, and it was at the age of nine that his delicate imagery in draughtsmanship and the innocent beauty of his handwriting first attracted attention, and an Inspector of Schools gave him his pen as a prize. In 1952, while still at school, he won the Albairuni Prize for Graphics. Geoffrey is young but his work (which he emphasizes is the development and not the denial of the figurative approach) reflects a maturity of poetic vision and richness of imagination which is pregnant with aesthetic content and enduring impact.

Geoffrey came to London in 1960 — without any contacts and with no friends. Since then he has come a long way. His work has been exhibited at such eminent galleries as the Kaplan (Modern Masters' Exhibition), Molton (Twentieth Century Painting), Maas, Brook Street (Contemporary Painters), Gallery 43, Federation of British Artists, Royal Institute and Guildhall (City of London Art Exhibition). He has held successful one-man shows at Galerie de Seine, Lincoln Gallery, Canaletto Gallery and Crystal Palace

Gallery, London, and also at Chandos Gallery, Middlesex and Elisabeth Art Gallery, Coventry. His work has been represented in group shows at Art Today Gallery, Shoreham, Bear Lane Gallery, Oxford, and the Reading Museum. His exhibitions are scheduled in Paris and New York later this year and in Tokyo in 1963. His promise and potential has attracted the attention of discreet connoisseurs and critics of modern art. Life for him has been tough in London, but he has never lost patience or confidence and has avoided offers of "promoting" him. He has said: "I have suffered often because I always call a spade a spade. But I feel one can be considerate without being compromised or used."

His are the paintings with a point of view and a wealth of spirituality which he interprets in the emotional manner of Indian miniatures. He aims at a penetrative and passionate analysis of the society we all live in by portraying the temperature and the tensions of its "inscape" (to use Hocking's expressive term). He does not believe in formula painting or exploiting today's fashionable trends, as he has once remarked, "The ultimate validity of the image is the criterion that distinguishes true painting from pop painting". He is very dismayed about most of the artists who merely splash and drip colour; such people he maintains are the black sheep of a profession which is otherwise very noble. He is very sensitive about his reaction towards this atomic age of ours, but what he detests is the "beatnik philosophy of life" so popular among the defeatist youth of the Western hemisphere. He has said: "Every wise person is against the possibilities of the extinction of human life by nuclear weapons, but wearing creaseless trousers and untrimmed beards is *not* an effective protest." Some people who meet him invariably remark, "But you don't look like an artist". To this Geoffrey replies, "You don't have to look like a painter to paint like an artist". In his current work Geoffrey has developed the symbolism which has its roots in the oldest civilization in the world. Mohen-jo Daro (Mound of the Dead), in Indus Valley, and he reinforces his graphic forms with aesthetic variations on Oriental calligraphy (i.e., *Khatt-i-nast'aliq*). The richness and purity of Islamic design and the traditional beauty of Eastern calligraphy has fascinated Geoffrey, and he takes pride in his background and religious heritage.

Lately Arabic calligraphy has been adapted by such established names in modern art as Mark Tobey and Henri Michaux, but Geoffrey has been experimenting with this approach to aesthetics as far back as 1950. He paints in the Eastern tradition but he supplements his technique by Western methods of oil painting, over which he has acquired a remarkable mastery and control in the handling of his materials. He claims that contemporary painting in the international style owes a lot to Islamic patterns and the art of Oriental calligraphy. "I paint truth because it is universal," he once said to explain his approach towards aesthetics.

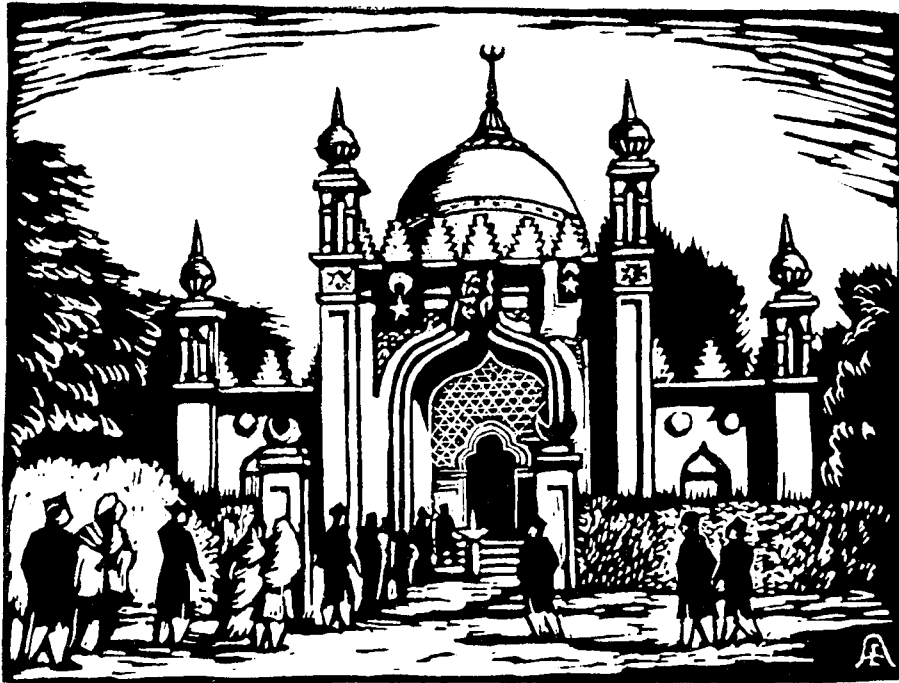
"...Certainly we shall hear more of M. J. I. Geoffrey, because in spite of an international reputation his work remains simple and sincere," concludes Cotti Burland, notable art critic, in his write-up in the *Arts Review* for 21st October, 1961. Iqbal Geoffrey has already been hailed as one of the leading Eastern artists working in Europe today, but he has a long way to go yet. Who knows in him we have today — a master of modern art of tomorrow? It will be rewarding and interesting to follow his career.

## CALLIGRAPHIC CONSTELLATIONS

This painting has been admired by some of the most eminent art critics on the British aesthetic scene. Use of "Nasta'liq" calligraphy and incorporation of an Islamic design (which has been derived from decorative motifs of architecture inspired by Muslim non-figurative dynamics) has created a beautiful painting with a quality and appeal which is at once universal as



# ISLAM IN ENGLAND



*Mrs. Addison's lino-cut reproduction of The Shah Jehan Mosque. A painting of the 'Id al-Fitr, the Muslim fastbreaking festival, included in the Hove exhibition in January, 1962.*

The controversy about the cancellation postmark depicting the picture of the Shah Jehan Mosque at Woking continued in the local papers. Some other letters are reproduced below :

## ISLAM IS AN ENEMY OF CHRISTIANITY !

Dear Sir.—I should like to put straight the question of "Is Islam an enemy of Christianity?" by quoting a few words from a translation of "The Holy Qur'an" by Maulana Muhammad Ali.

These come from an introduction to chapter 5, Medina—16 sections, 120 verses. The chapter deals with Christians in general. This chapter stands in almost the same relation to the last as the third to the second. Thus while the fourth chapter deals chiefly with hypocrites, the contents of this chapter are chiefly concerned with the Christian violation of their covenants. The tenth introduces the subject of Christian deviation from the truth. The fourteenth section, containing further directions for the Muslims, lays special stress on the gravity of the sin of polytheism, which has led the Christians farthest away from the truth, while the sixteenth, which is the last section, contains a plain condemnation of the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus.

These are but a few of the Qur'an's references to Christianity. Would your readers think these the words of a friend?

Might I be permitted to make a suggestion to your correspondents of last week? The next time they visit their friends at the Mosque, they might acquire a copy of this "Muslim Bible" and read it.—Yours sincerely (name and address supplied.—*Woking News and Mail*, Friday 10th November 1961.

## ALL MEN ARE BROTHERS

Dear Sir.—In recent weeks a controversy has broken out in your paper concerning the differences between Islam and Christianity. I admit that there are fundamental differences between the two faiths, but these are really a matter of interpretation of certain Scriptures.

It has been said that Islam is an enemy of Christianity. This I dispute. The fundamental difference lies in the two ways in which the faiths think of the person of Christ. The Muslims accept him as a great prophet and venerate him as such, taking and using his teachings as he gave them to his followers, but will not accept the myth that was built up around him and accepted by the Christians, giving him divinity.

There is no question at all about Muslims being "enemies" of Christians, for indeed anyone who cares to read the Holy Qur'an cannot but notice the continual praise given to Christians and the reverence in which Christ is spoken of. Indeed, whenever his name is spoken it is followed by the words "May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him".

In one place the Qur'an says: "Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabies, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good, they have their reward with their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve" (2: 62).

In other places he is referred to in these words: "God's word, spirit (mercy) from Him (4: 171) a word from God and worthy of regard in this world and the Hereafter and of those who were drawn nigh to Allah (3: 44) He also performed miracles and was sinless in His character. He was favoured of God and was made an example to the children of Israel (43: 59). He was granted a revelation of God" (5: 110).

Could these words of praise come from an enemy? I would most certainly think not. Even great churchmen have admitted this. I would like to give a quotation ascribed to Pope Pius XI in L'Ultima, Anno VIII, 75-76, p. 261—Florence, 1953. When speaking to Cardinal Facchinetti, whom he had just appointed Apostolic Delegate to Libya, he said: "Do not think that you are going among infidels. Muslims attain to Salvation. The ways of Providence are infinite."

I do not believe that anyone can possibly consider Islam as an enemy to anyone. Perhaps we should all remember one thing: "All men are brothers."—Yours sincerely, L. Worsfold, Rochdale,

### LOVE OUR NEIGHBOUR

Dear Sir,—There are some Christians who regard Muslims as “heathens” just as there are some Muslims who regard Christians as “infidels”. I would suggest that the religious outlook of these people is relatively unimportant and is becoming less and less significant as each day passes and toleration grows.

The really important fact is that, in the face of the common, atheist, materialistic foe, and for the infinitely more worthy reason of a growing sense of brotherly love one for another, a rapidly increasing force of those who believe in God, no matter how they express and interpret that belief, is sweeping away the narrow confines of sectarianism and clearing the way for the coming of the Kingdom on Earth.

I suggest that the balance of opinion as reflected in your correspondence columns during the past few weeks bears out this assessment of the truly exciting age in which we are privileged to live. Let us not, therefore, waste our time in bandying about quotations out of context, whether they be derived from the Qur'an, the Bible or any other collection of sacred writings. Rather let us follow to the utmost the second of the two great Commandments and love our neighbour, whether he worships in church, synagogue, chapel, mosque, temple or meeting house. Let us, in fact, be true followers of Christ.—Yours sincerely, L. Rampton, Chairman, Old Woking Branch, Theocratic Union.—*Woking News and Mail*, Friday 17th November 1961, p. 9.

### Baba Nanak's Birthday

The Sikh community at Southall, Middlesex, celebrated Guru Nanak's birthday on 2nd December 1961. The function was attended by over a thousand people. In the evening various speakers paid homage to their leader. The Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Mr. S. Muhammad Tufail, addressing the gathering in Punjaabi, expressed his gratefulness to Mr. Tarlok Singh and Mr. Ram Singh, who provided him with the opportunity of saying a few things about that great mystic of India who was born in Talwandi in 1469. Nanak was a great upholder of the Unity of Godhood.

Saith Nanak : “The True One is He  
From whom all perfection springs.”

Nanak's message, continued the Imam, had an element of universality in it. According to him the hearts could only find rest in the remembrance of God. He also revolted against the rigid caste system. The low-born was not he who was born in a low caste but the one who was unmindful of his Creator. How beautiful was his evening prayer, in which the whole message of Nanak had been summed up :

### EVENING PRAYER

If I remember Him I live,  
If I forget Him I die,  
Hard very hard indeed it is  
To contemplate His Name :  
If a man hungers after His Name  
In that holy hunger  
He consumeth all His pains.  
True is the Lord  
True is His Name.  
O Mother, how can he be forgotten?

Even in praising a tiny part of His Name  
Men grew weary but His true worth is not weighed :  
If all men were to meet, and begin to try to exalt Him,  
He would grow neither greater nor lesser by their praise.  
He does not die, He does not suffer sorrow :  
Ever He giveth, and never His store faileth.

This is greatest wonder in Him,  
That there never was nor there will be,  
Another like to the Lord.

As great as Thou art, O my Lord,  
So great are Thy gifts : as Thou madest the day,  
So Thou madest the night also.  
He who forgets Thee is low-born  
O Nanak, without His Name  
Man is like the Lowest of the outcasts.

(*The Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*,  
published by George Allen & Unwin.)

After the meeting the guests were entertained with *Karha Parshad* (Indian sweet dish).

### Nottingham University

Mr. B. Chokvathana, Secretary of the Asian Society, University of Nottingham, invited the Imam to address their Society on 7th December 1961. The lecture was arranged by Mr. 'Usman Ghulam 'Abbas.

On 9th December the Imam attended an Educational Conference held at the Institution of Education, Malt Street, London, W.C.1.

### Birthday of Hadhrat Imam 'Ali

The London Shi'ah Islamic Society held a meeting at the Islamic Cultural Centre on Friday 22nd December 1961 in commemoration of the birthday of *Hudhrat* Imam 'Ali. His Excellency Monsieur Muhammad Kabir Ludin, the Ambassador of Afghanistan, presided over the meeting. Mr. Jafar Qasimi recited the Qur'an. Mr. Muhammad Tufail, Dr. Muhammad Taqi Khalili and Lt.-Col. Abdul Baines-Hewitt spoke about the life of Ali. Sayyid Mahdi Khorasany thanked the speakers and afterwards served the guests with tea and biscuits.

### Personal Testimony

Mr. Lawrence Mohsin Worsfold, of 7 Shackleford Road, Old Woking, gave a talk on 16th January 1962 at a meeting of the Theocratic Union, Old Woking, on the “Faith of Islam”.

Mr. L. L. Ginn invited the Imam to address the Humanities Society of the Guildford County Technical College, Guildford, on 22nd January 1962. The subject of the talk was “Islam and the Modern World”.

### Service at All Souls' Unitarian Church

The Imam was invited on Sunday 28th January 1962 to conduct the service at All Souls' Unitarian Church (Hoop Lane, Golder's Green, London, N.W.11) by the Reverend Magnus C. Ratter. Mr. Abdul Wahab Jaulim, of Mauritius, accompanied the Imam, and recited the Qur'an before and after the sermon.

### Monday, 29th January, 1962

Mrs. N. C. Mansfield, of Danehurst, Church Road, Bisley, Surrey, brought a party of young children to the Mosque at 6.45 p.m.

### Friday, 22nd February, 1962

Mr. Graham Theobald (92 Orchard Drive, Woking), Secretary of the Student Christian Movement, County

Grammar School for Boys, Woking, invited the Imam to speak on Islam and Christianity.

The Maulana Muhammad Yakub Khan, Director, Woking Muslim Mission, on the same night went to speak to the members of the Woking Congregational and Presbyterian Youth Club. The lecture was arranged by Mr. Nicholas Brook (Mayford Cottage, Mayford Green, Woking).

### Monday, 5th February, 1962

Mrs. O. M. Middleton (Rockbourne, Horsell Rise, Woking), Secretary of the Woking Discussion Group of Housewives, invited the Imam to address one of their meetings on "History and Associations of the Mosque in Woking".

### Service at John Pounds' Unitarian Memorial Church, Portsmouth

A service of All Faiths was arranged by the Rev. John R. Sturges, D.P.A., J.P., at John Pounds Memorial Church (Unitarian), High Street, Portsmouth, on Sunday 11th February 1962. The following note was printed in a Portsmouth daily about this service :

#### MUSLIM PREACHER FOR PORTSMOUTH CHURCH

Almost certainly for the first time in Portsmouth's history, a Muslim preacher will address a Christian congregation in church on Sunday. He is S. Muhammad Tufail, the Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque at Woking, and he will be speaking at the evening service at John Pounds Unitarian Church in Old Portsmouth on "The Islamic Conception of Worship".

The church's minister (the Rev. John Sturges) told me : "This visit has been arranged to assist the breaking-down of barriers of exclusiveness among people of differing religions. We feel that many would like to understand and appreciate the religious faiths of other peoples, especially as so many students and others live among us in Portsmouth."

S. Muhammad Tufail was born at Simla, India, and was educated at Delhi, Amritsar and Lahore. He worked for several years in Holland as a missionary for Islam before coming to this country to be Imam of the Woking Mosque and joint editor of *The Islamic Review*.

The well-known Shah Jehan Mosque at Woking was built in 1889 by Dr. G. Leitner, the distinguished orientalist, with donations from the Begum Shah Jehan, ruler of the Bhopal State in India. It is reported that the Shah of Persia once visited the Mosque for prayers.—*The News*, Portsmouth, Saturday 10th February 1962.

### Donations for South Shields Mosque

Sayyid Ghulam Hussain Shah, Chairman of the New Mosque Trust Fund at South Shields, informs us that the Ruler of Kuwait has donated £1,000 to the construction of the new Mosque at South Shields. The foundation stone would soon be laid. More funds would be needed to complete the mosque and the attached school.

### "Islam beach suit"

Mr. G. H. E. Vanker, Secretary of the Islamic Propagation Centre (47 Madressa Arcade, Durban, South Africa), in his letter of 17th January, drew the attention of the Imam of the Mosque at Woking about a picture of a female model wearing a beach suit called "Islam". The suit was one of the beachwear fashions shown at Paris. The picture was in the *Natal Mercury* dated 15th January 1962. The matter was referred to Father L. Gillet and Mrs. H. McConnel, secretaries of the World Congress of Faiths (Younghusband House, 23 Norfolk Square, Paddington, London, W.2), who in turn wrote a letter of protest to Paul Popper Ltd., the photographic agency responsible for supplying this photo to the *Natal Mercury*. The following is the text of the letter :

World Congress of Faiths,  
Younghusband House,  
23 Norfolk Square,  
London, W.2.  
1st February 1962.

Mr. Paul Popper,  
24 Bride Lane,  
Fleet Street, London, E.C.4.  
Sir,

The attention of the World Congress of Faiths (an inter-religious organization whose President is the Baroness Ravensdale, a member of the House of Peers, and the Chairman, Mr. R. W. Sorensen, a member of the House of Commons) has been called by our Muslim members to the publication of a photograph published on 15th January 1962 in a Durban daily called the *Natal Mercury*. This photograph of a female model wearing a beach suit called "Islam" has been considered in Muslim circles as an insult to the religion of Islam. We entirely associate ourselves with this feeling and protest, and we are in contact with Muslim organizations in order to see what steps ought to be taken on this occasion to avoid such cheap, irresponsible and offensive actions. Your name has been associated with this publication, although we do not know what exactly is the part played by yourself and by the newspaper's columnist in the publication and caption of the photograph. Anyhow, the person or persons responsible deserve that their names should be made known and circularized with appropriate comments, unless they express their apologies. We wish yourself and the columnist concerned to know that we are following up this matter.

L. GILLET,  
H. McCONNELL,  
Joint Secretaries of the W.C.F.

In reply to the above letter it was submitted by the photographic agency that :

"We just put in our caption the information as it was given to us. We have no right to alter names or facts but appreciate the objections raised by the Islamic Propagation Centre, whom we have supplied, at their request, with the name of the promoters of this fashion show.

"Though no blame can be attached to us we wish to apologize for the resentment which the publication in the *Natal Mercury* may have caused to members of the Islamic faith. The address of the promoters of the fashion show is as below, should you wish to communicate with them :

Union des Createurs de la Mode Cote D'Azur,  
2 Boulevard Victor Hugo,  
Nice (A.M.), France."

The following statement was printed in the *Daily Sketch* :

#### NOT ON THE BEACH

"The Imam of the Woking Mosque, Mr. Muhammad Tufail, is protesting about a beachwear suit displayed at a Paris collection, which was named 'Islam'. 'This hideous insult to the religion of Islam should stop at once,' says Mr. Tufail, who has taken up the matter with those concerned."—*Daily Sketch*, Friday February 9th, 1962.

A letter of protest has been sent to Nice.

### Persian scholar memorialized in Cambridge Lecture

The life and work of Professor E. G. Browne (1862-1926), the distinguished Cambridge scholar in Islamic studies and Oriental languages, was recounted in a lecture at Pembroke College, Cambridge University, on 15th February, before an audience that included Their Excellencies Mr. Mohsen Rais, the Persian Ambassador, and Dr. I. Sadigh, former Iranian Minister of Education.

Professor Browne's great affection for Persia — for her people as much as for her history, literature and arts — provided the keynote for the lecture given by Professor A. J. Arberry, Litt.D., F.B.A., Sir Thomas Adams's Professor of Arabic, Cambridge.

Among those present were the two sons of Professor Browne. Dr. Sadigh, a Persian contemporary of the late

scholar at Cambridge, also delivered a eulogy of Professor Browne, recalling his visit to Persia in 1887-88 that resulted in the publication of "Year Amongst the Persians", one of more than 30 works for which he was responsible during his long Cambridge tenure.

### Iranian journalists visit London

A group of Iranian newspaper publishers and radio journalists are at present in London as the guests of the

British Foreign Office. The four-man party will remain here for three weeks, during which time they will be given a conducted tour of London and other cities in England.

The visitors are Mr. A. A. Amirani, editor and publisher, *Khandaniha*; H. Mostaufi, writer, *Radio Iran*; Mr. E. Pourvali, editor and publisher, *Bamshad*; and Mr. Muhammad 'Ali Afsar, head of *Radio Iran's* Arabic Section. The latter two visited the Mosque at Woking on Saturday 17th February 1962.



*THE STUDENT'S QUR'AN*, by H. Amir Ali. Asia Publishing House, 447 Strand, London, W.C.2; pp. 154; price 12/6.

The name is a bit misleading. The book is nothing of the kind of a primer in the study of the Qur'an as the name at first sight would suggest. It reflects a deep scholarship and quite an original approach. It takes the reader along the stream of the Qur'anic revelation as it flows in the natural way — taking him first to the source, as it were, when the spring first gushes forth, then, as in the course of its rocky path, it struggles its way out in the face of obstructions and finally, as it winds its way in the plains of an organized society with its multiplicity of demands. In his Prologue the author, keeping this natural method of getting at the spirit of the Qur'anic message, divides the 114 chapters into three distinct parts. The first part, covering the first five years of the Prophet's Mission — that is up to the first emigration of his followers to Abyssinia — comprises 52 chapters, one-tenth of the entire Qur'anic text. Here the main concern of the revelation is to emphasize the essentials of the universal faith, the true values of life, the repudiation of idolatry. These chapters are brief, replete with rhyme and assonance, easy to memorize. The second part covers the exigencies of the following eight years of the Prophet's ministry, ending with his migration to Medina. It comprises 40 chapters — 60 per cent of the Qur'anic text. A characteristic of this part of the revelation is repetition and reiteration, hammering the spiritual truths "like a patient goldsmith", as it were, in the minds of the people, recalling the life stories of Abraham, Moses, Jesus and other prophets and the doom that overtook their opponents. The third part covers the ten years of the Medina period when the exigencies of the newly-formed State called for legislation to regulate social life, such as laws pertaining to peace and war, matrimony, divorce, prisoners of war, and so forth. To ensure the State's stability, fifth-column activities and sabotage had to be strongly warned against. This part comprises 22 chapters — about 30 per cent of the Qur'anic text, and in keeping with its function, the revelation of this period has a flavour of its own.

To these three parts, each covering a special period, and catering for the demands of that particular period, the author assigns three distinct names — *Al-Qur'an* (i.e. the Annunciation), *Al-furqan* (i.e. the clarification), and *al-Kitab* (i.e. the legislation).

This division of the whole of the Qur'an chronologically into three parts, as adumbrated in the Prologue, is a blueprint of the whole scheme which the author has in mind. The volume under review is just a sort of exploratory attempt in that direction, being confined to only 25 out of 52 chapters comprising the first part. They are:

'Alaq, Qadr, Zalzalah, 'Adiyat, Qari'ah, Takathur, 'Asr, Humaza, Fil, Quraish, Ma'un, Kauthar, Kafirun, Nasr, Lahab, Ikhlās, Falaq, Nās, Tin, Sharh, Duhā, Lail, Shams, Balad, Fajr.

The author, who seems to be gifted with a keen insight into the working of the human mind, has adopted this line of approach to a proper appreciation of the Qur'anic message because, as he tells us, every bit of the revelation that was given at a particular moment was given against the background of the then obtaining conditions, and can therefore be properly understood only in the context of those conditions. He says:

"One of the explanations of the effectiveness of his (Prophet's) teachings in obtaining the immediate and enthusiastic response of his followers, ever growing in number, was that every verse of those revelations was promulgated at what we now call the psychological moment. The nature of his following was continuously evolving and the circumstances too changed from indifference to antagonism and through periods of peace and war, ostracism and resentment. Throughout these variations the revelations were such as to meet the needs of the moment but *without deviating from the basic and unalterable truths*. In other words, the same lesson is taught, the same injunctions are conveyed but the tone and rhythm have changed to suit the particular circumstances. The passages revealed in times of peace are as persuasive as the gentle breeze. Those revealed in times of war are as awesome as drums of battle. Unless we have some means of distinguishing the period and the circumstances in which a particular passage is revealed, we may understand the meaning of its words but its spirit will often elude us."

*The Student's Qur'an* has been so named because the author wants his readers to be his fellow-students in getting at the correct significance of the verses dealt with therein. He gives the literal translation of every chapter, verse by verse. Then he tries to dig out the underlying significance as he understands it. But he is not satisfied that what he has read into a verse or chapter is the correct thing or the whole thing it seems to convey. He, therefore, invites criticism, by way of correction, amendment or supplementation of his own views. He wants it to be a joint study between himself and his readers — somewhat like students in a class engaged on a common lesson. For this purpose his own explanation of a chapter is followed by blank, ruled pages, for the reader to make notes as he goes through his exposition.

There have been many translations of the Qur'an into the English language, the author tells us. The first one, by Alexander Ross, appeared in 1640. Sale followed with his in 1736, i.e., in the 12th century of the Islamic era. The 13th century of that era saw two more, by Rodwell (1861) and Palmer (1880) respectively. The current century can boast of at least ten translations into English. But while every new attempt should be welcomed, he rightly observes, it is no more than "coming nearer and nearer to the spirit and flavour of the original". It should never be taken to represent it perfectly, for the translation from any language into another can never adequately convey the spirit of the original. This is much more so in the case of translating the Word of God. The most eloquent confession as to the incompetence of any human language to convey the full sense of the Qur'anic revelation has come from the renowned orientalist H. A. R. Gibbs in his book *Modern Trends in Islam* (1945, pp. 3-4), which the author has aptly quoted as follows :

"The Koran is essentially untranslatable. The seer can never communicate his vision in ordinary language. He can express himself only in broken images, every inflection of which, every nuance and subtlety, has to be long and earnestly studied before their significance breaks upon the reader — images, too, in which the music of the sounds plays an indefinable part in attuning the mind of the hearer to receive the message. To paraphrase them in other words, can only be to mutilate them, to substitute clay for fine gold, the plodding of the pedestrian intelligence for the winged flight of intuitive perception. . . . An English translation of the Koran must employ precise and often arbitrary terms for the many-faceted and jewel-like phrases of the Arabic ; and the more literal it is, the greyer and more colourless it must be. In passages of plain narrative, legislation and the like, the less may be less great, although not only the unevenness and the incoherencies of the compilation but also the fine shades, the hammer strokes and the eloquent phrases (if they can be reproduced at all) may have a disconcerting, or as Carlyle said, "a crude and incondite" effect. Even in so simple a sentence as 'We give life and death and unto Us is the journeying' it is impossible to present in English (or perhaps any other language) the force of the five-times repeated 'We' in the six words of the original (50 : 42). Allowing for all this, however, we shall still not grasp what the Koran means to the Arab until we make an effort to appreciate the part that language plays in determining the psychological attitude."<sup>2</sup>

The Prologue rightly brings out into prominent relief the salient features of the social milieu in which the Qur'anic revelation was vouchsafed, as well as those of the personality of the Prophet who was its recipient. This is how he sums up the latter :

"This intelligent, presentable, honest, respected and, above all, intensely sincere man reaches the age of forty. The tumultuous years of youth are over. He has been a faithful husband content with one wife in a society in which polygamy is the rule. And in his austerity he is used to spending several days and nights in the little cavity on the top of a solitary rock

protruding from a plain and overlooking a vast panorama, extending under clear skies even to the sea, forty miles towards the setting sun. This is how the personality has been carved for the man who received the Call."<sup>3</sup>

As if to give the whole study a regular classroom air, the book winds up with a summing-up of the whole discussion in the foregoing pages constituting the lessons proper in an Epilogue — something like a recapitulation in the form of questions and answers between a teacher and pupils.

The "Acknowledgment" reveals the author's wide range of studies, covering all the available English translations. Of all the English translations by Muslims he was specially impressed with that by the Maulana Muhammad Ali, to which he pays tribute in the words :

"The first work published by any Muslim with the thoroughness worthy of Quranic scholarship and achieving the standards of modern publications. He has pacified the orthodox by conforming to tradition in the text of the translation and left room for a more liberal translation by giving alternative meanings of words in the margin and footnotes. His first edition appeared in 1917. He strongly defends the existing traditional sequence of the Suras."<sup>4</sup>

A perusal would show that *The Student's Qur'an* touches the pretty high level of post-graduate study, and scholars, Muslims or non-Muslims, religious or otherwise, interested in understanding the origin and purpose of human life should find in this handy volume much food for thought, and illumination. It is to be hoped the author will go ahead with carrying through the whole of his translation and exposition without waiting for the comments of his readers. He seems to be giving too much credit to the modern mind to expect a response on any large scale.

#### REFERENCES

- 1 *The Student's Qur'an*, pp. 17, 18.
- 2 *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 11.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

\* \* \* \*

*ISLAM AND THE WEST*, by Norman Daniel. The University Press, Edinburgh ; pp. 443 ; price 63/-.

Those modern-minded Muslims who feel fed up with religious controversies, and see no use for the propagation of what the Qur'anic message stands for, should find disillusionment by a perusal of this book. It is the blackest, ugliest picture of Islam that could possibly be printed. And yet this actually was the deformed image of the Faith that was in common currency in Christian Europe from the very earliest to most recent times. The author must have put in Herculean labour to dig into this centuries-old intellectual dunghill, and fling the rubbish in the face of modern enlightened Western men and women, which their forefathers in all seriousness believed in. He has, of course, done it with the best of motives. It amounts to saying to the modern, better informed, more sensible and fair-minded Christian, "Look ! How ignorant, prejudiced, fanatical and unfair your forefathers were in their attitude towards Islam !" Conscious, however, as the author is, how painful reading the book must make to a Muslim, he, in his Foreword, begins with the following explanation :

"I hope that Muslim readers will not be scandalised by some of the things in this book, or consider that I have been wrong to revive the memory of, among other things, certain silly and unpleasant libels of their religion and their Prophet. My primary purpose has been the scientific one of establishing a series of facts, and this I believe to need no justification. My

secondary purpose has been (in chapters VIII and IX) to see what is implied by this unpleasantness and ignorance in men's attitudes towards those they suppose to be their enemies. Both these aims involve asking Europeans to recognize how many erroneous ideas their civilization has in the past accepted; but Muslims, on their side, may suspect that they themselves have done (*mutatis mutandis*) very much the same, although this is not my subject. My final chapter is concerned, not to bring up to date the whole history of the European attitude to Islam since 1350, but to bring out particular aspects of post-medieval development which may help Europeans and Muslims alike to identify prejudices which still, after so many centuries, affect European attitudes; and which do so, despite the great contemporary improvement in understanding, on which many Muslims — recently, for example, the editor of *The Islamic Review* — have remarked.”<sup>1</sup>

Having done this, the author still considers a formal apology due to the Muslim reader, which he offers by dedicating one full page before the Introduction to the well-known Islamic maxim :

*NAQIL-IL KUFRI LAISA BI KAFIRIN*

(One who just reports a blasphemy does not commit blasphemy).

While the book is a reproach to modern Europeans, intended to sting them into realization of the grossly unfair attitude of their civilization towards Islam, one cannot help feeling whether a share of the blame also does not go to past generations of Muslims for dangling too much of their sword in the face of Europe rather than unfolding the beauties of the Qur'anic message, especially the soft corner it has for Christianity and the hand of fellowship it extended to Christendom at a time when the contemporary trend of inter-religious fellowship was poles away from the intellectual horizon of mankind. One wishes some Muslim scholar could find time to probe into the Muslims' contribution (if any) which the author alludes to in his Foreword, towards the embittering of the relationship between the two faiths. For aught we can say, Muslims could not possibly say anything offensive to the Christian mind, for the obvious reason that the Qur'an, by the high position it confers upon Jesus Christ in the hierarchy of the world's great prophets, has for all time not only sealed the lips of Muslims to utter one word against his holiness even by way of retaliation to Christian abuses of the Prophet, but has ensured him a place of deep veneration and sincere love in their hearts. As we are able to see it, at this distance of time, the campaign of vilification was a one-way traffic, the product of a Church steeped deep in ignorance and busy fomenting bitterness, hatred and persecution even within its own fold. It was the Medieval Church, the breeding ground of all kinds of germs of ignorance and fanaticism, that was responsible for whipping up the Crusaders' religious passions to travel thousands of miles from all parts of Europe to engage Muslims in a so-called holy war in their own homelands. The book itself contains abundant evidence to that effect, when under the heading "The Martyrdom of Crusaders who died in battle" it says :

"The history of the Crusades is full of descriptions of Christians who rashly provoked fighting in which they were killed; the classic example is Reginald of Chatillon's provocation of the Hattin campaign. If after the fighting a prisoner were offered his safety on condition of apostasy, and refused to apostatise, he must presumably be deemed a martyr, even although he had provoked the fighting originally; his behaviour would not, however, be set up as model behaviour, whereas a prisoner who had not brought trouble on himself would in such a case count without question as a martyr. The position was much the same as for those who called martyrdom upon themselves by grossly and publicly insulting Islam.”<sup>2</sup>

The fantastic stories current about both the Prophet and the Qur'an are too numerous to reproduce. Here are some as a sample. Some writers "mentioned his (the Prophet's) father's name as Habedileth, that is, slave of the idol Leth".<sup>3</sup> Some wrote that "the people were deceived by a cow that was supposed to have come from Heaven, bearing the Qur'an on her horns".<sup>4</sup> The chapter entitled "The Life of Muhammad" describes all the ignorant views current about the Prophet's personality and the vile things attributed to him by various Christian writers from time to time. The summing-up of all these, as given by the author, boils down to the following :

"The three marks of Muhammad's life were thought to be the violence and force with which he imposed his religion; the salacity and laxness with which he bribed followers whom he did not compel; and finally his evident humanity, which it was constantly believed to be necessary to prove, although no Muslim denied, or even wishes to deny, it; and although Christian and Muslim concepts of holiness differ very greatly. It was on these three points that the total fraud seemed to be based: fraud was the sum of Muhammad's life. Violence, salacity and humanity were what his pretence to receive Revelation was used to justify. Muhammad was the great blasphemer, because he made religion justify sin and weakness. It seems incredible now that so much of what was said of Muhammad was believed in good faith; but not only audiences, but authors, believed whatever tended to show that Muhammad could not really have been the Messenger of God.”<sup>5</sup>

Unable to account for the deep impression which the Qur'anic teachings made on the minds even of these critics so prejudiced, this is how these writers explained them :

"In the first chapter (i.e., surah 11) he (the Prophet) immediately praises prayers and alms, that is, in order that under the appearance of seeming good he may entice the unwary to believe in him. Notice throughout the whole book that, with marvellous cunning, when he is going to say something ungodly, or recalls having said it, he soon puts in something about fasting, or about prayer, or praising God. . . . In that religion there are both many truths inserted into the lies, and good things mixed with the bad, even with malice to deceive; namely, so that the false things should be believed because of the true, or else that the bad things should be received because of the good.”<sup>6</sup>

One chapter is devoted to how Islamic teachings put a premium on self-indulgence. The categorical prohibition of evil in the Qur'an was painted paradoxically as "permission" to indulge in all kinds of evil. Here is a specimen of this kind of logic used by one writer :

"Although the Qur'an sometimes forbids robbery and perjury and some other evils, yet that prohibition is a kind of permission (*est quisedam permissio*). For it says, *do not do such and such evils, which are not pleasing to God; but if ye do them, He is compassionate and He will easily forgive you.*"<sup>7</sup>

This very writer, Ricoldo, who happened to sojourn in Muslim countries and saw for himself the Muslims' life of piety and devotion, was yet not convinced that there could be any outside the Church. To him all this was just pretence. This is how he belies his own observation :

"And what indeed shall I say of their prayer? So great is their scruple in prayer, and so great their devotion, that I was astonished when I saw it and proved it by experience. For three months and a half I travelled with and accompanied Muslim camel-men in the Arabian and Persian desert, nor once did the camel-men break up for any danger, without praying at the set hours both by day and by night, and especially morning and evening. They make the pretence of such devotion in prayer as to dismiss all other things entirely.”<sup>8</sup>

Ricoldo also could not help being impressed with the provision made in Baghdad for the teaching of religion at the two foundations, Nizamiyyah and Mustansiriyyah.

Students were provided with free board and lodging out of public funds. He was also struck by the austerity of a bread and water diet of these students and yet their contentment and devotional contemplation and study. He also noticed the deep reverence shown to the Qur'án at these institutions, which he thus described :

"But in their common schools, where the Qur'án is expounded . . . they never enter, except barefoot. Therefore the master who expounds, as much as the pupils who listen, leave their shoes outside, and go into the schools barefoot ; and there they read and dispute with the greatest gentleness and moderation."<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, he had no doubt, he says, that "even the learned Muslims derided secretly the Qur'án in which they publicly professed their faith".<sup>10</sup>

This same writer was perplexed by another of his observations, which, to his utter surprise, he found among these "infidels" the Muslims :

"On the subject of pity for the poor, it ought to be known that Muslims are most generous of alms. They have a strict command in the Qur'án to give a tenth ; and they are required to give a fifth part of such things as they acquire by force of arms. Yet beyond these things they make great legacies, and put them in a treasury, and at an established time they open them, and give them to a trustworthy Muslim, who goes off to the different provinces and redeems prisoners, and Muslim slaves who are held prisoner among Christian or other nations. Often they even buy Christian slaves who are held prisoner among the Muslims themselves, and take them to the cemetery and say, 'I redeem so much for the soul of my father, and so much for the soul of my mother,' and give them letters of freedom and send them away. But for the poor, who cannot redeem a slave, these Muslims carry wild birds in cages, and cry, 'Who wants to buy these birds and free them for his father's soul ?'"<sup>11</sup>

"Equally astonishing to him," the author adds, "were testamentary gifts to feed dogs and river birds, and finally the existence of an agreeable hospital with medical provision for the mentally deficient."<sup>12</sup>

The author notes with surprise "the contrast between what was observed and what was inferred".<sup>13</sup> This he puts down to the common human weakness of the Christian mind whose sole concern was to serve the purpose of the current polemic with the Islamic religion. He rightly observes :

"Self-deception is so easy in communal loyalty. If it is sufficiently desirable that a thing should be true, it often seems to be so, especially in cases where the consuming good of a great society or a great ideal is thought to require it. A thing becomes true because it serves a higher end ; men who would be horrified to assert that the end justifies the means, readily come to believe a means to be just in itself, if it leads to an end of sufficient moment, as they suppose, to the world. In this case, every demonstration of the villainous character of Muhammad and the pernicious nature of Islamic religion seemed to be of the highest value to the faith of Christ — and therefore seemed to be true."<sup>14</sup>

The medieval prejudices persisted even so late as the 17th century, and when in 1649 Alexander Ross translated the Qur'án into English from the French translation done two years earlier by Andre du Ryer, he thought it prudent to append a "needful admonition" to the reader, saying :

"Good reader, the great Arabian Imposter now at last after a thousand years is by way of France arrived in England, and his Alcoran or gallimaufry of Erros (a Brat as deformed as the Parent and as full of heresies, as his scald head was of scurffe) hath learned to speak English."<sup>15</sup>

This attitude, however, underwent a gradual transformation, and there arose discordant notes here and there against this hymn of hate against Islam. The first thorough-going change, the author tells us, came with Carlyle, who wrote :

"'Sincerity,' he said, 'in all senses seems to me the merit of the Koran. The Romantic thus reversed almost every traditional view : The indulgences, criminal to us, which he permitted, were not of his appointment. . . . His Religion is not an easy one' ; and, in contradiction of the most popular opinion of all : 'We shall err widely if we consider this man as a common voluptuary'. Even the dogma of Islam's dependence on violence Carlyle shook : 'The sword indeed : but where will you get your sword ! Every new opinion, at its starting, is precisely in a minority of one'."<sup>16</sup>

This new trend of sympathetic understanding of Islam, the author notes, is increasingly noticeable in the recent writings of Christian scholars of Islam. In the sphere of mysticism the writings of L. Massignon in France, M. Asin Palacios in Spain, R. A. Nicholson in Britain, underline much that is common between Christian and Muslim mystics. On the theological level, the author points to the contributions towards better understanding by such eminent Orientalists as M. Guillaume, L. Gardet, Pere Anawati, Fr. C. McCarthy, Sir Hamilton Gibb, Pere 'Abd al-Jalil and Kenneth Cragg.

*Islam and the West* will no doubt rank as the most solid contribution towards better understanding between Christianity and Islam.

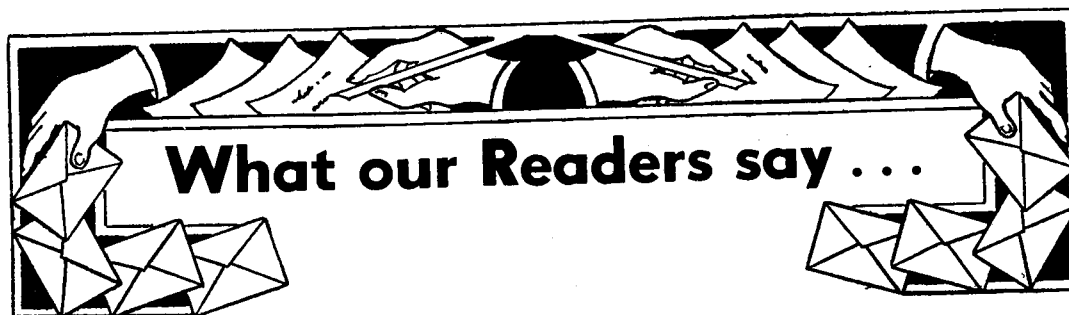
The whole purpose of this most painstaking voluminous research, which will be greatly appreciated by men of goodwill in both religions, could not be better summed up than has been done by the author in his concluding call :

"Both Christianity and Islam suffer under the weight of worldly pressure, and the attack of scientific-atheists and their like. Both may reconsider the old controversies, not in any pointless expectation of ceasing to disagree, but in the hope of learning something new. There is also an opportunity of making sure that disagreement has not been exaggerated needlessly or wilfully. Christians may suddenly find that Islam is inherently attractive without there being need to surrender (still less, pretend to surrender) any of their own beliefs. What in the past was frozen has begun at last to thaw ; what the medievals studied we may study again, making use of what they did ; but we may do it for its own sake, and without thought of propaganda, and without hatred."<sup>17</sup>

#### REFERENCES

- 1 *Islam and the West*, p. v.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 314.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 83.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- 5 *Ibid.*, pp. 107, 108.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 164.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 155.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 214.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 216.

- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 216.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 223.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 223.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 227.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 249.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 284.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 292.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 307.



### HOW IS JESUS A SIGN ?

Dear Sir,

In chapter 21 (The Prophets) of the Qur'an, the following occurs about Jesus and his mother Mary, which puzzles me, and I would be grateful if any reader of yours could explain it satisfactorily :

"And she who guarded her private parts, and We breathed into her of our spirit, and We made her and her son a sign unto the worlds" (v. 91).

It is the last word which puzzles me. I know *Ahsanat Furjaha* is the same as what is called *Muhsina*, which means a married woman. Since it is already said that Zacharia gave her in custody to a young man of Israel whose pen floated in the Jordan, and that young man, according to the gospel of Nativity, was Joseph. I am not so much troubled about the parentage of Jesus, nor the breathing of spirit business, which is not the speciality of Jesus. In Adam, too, spirit was breathed, whatever that means, but what kind of sign is he for the whole world ?

In this very chapter, the Prophet Muhammad has been spoken of as "mercy to all mankind", which one can understand, as he was to bring peace to the whole world. But what is this Jesus being a "sign" for the whole world ? Now if we refer to the story of Noah, therein it is said :

"And the people of Noah, when they said the apostles were liars, We drowned them, and We made them a sign for men" (25 : 39).

Here it is easy to explain. The story of Noah and his flood is known to nearly all races of mankind — Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, Persians, Hindus, Chinese, Jews, even Red Americans and Polynesians, and thus we have full confirmation of the word, but what of the "sign" mentioned of Jesus ? Does it mean that *Jesus* is also known to the people of the world ? If so, then we must admit that Christian missionaries have made the world acquainted of it and thus they have carried out the meaning of the Qur'an in their activities.

It is my personal belief, which I expressed in my article in *The Islamic Review* for July 1960, that Islam (not in the form of Muhammedanism) will sooner or later replace Christianity, for this is not only a promise of the Qur'an but the progress of Islam in the world has shown the same phenomenon which is aptly described by Jesus Christ in the parable of the Leaven, for Islam is the kingdom of heaven and its king or Messiah was Muhammad.

Yours truly,

S. A. AHMED.

### JESUS AS A "SIGN"

149 Oriental Road,  
Woking.

Dear Sir,

With regard to this query of Mr. S. M. Ahmad, I would refer him to the prophecies of Jesus as to the advent of the Prophet Muhammad :

"And I will ask the Father and He shall give you another Paraclete that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14 : 16).

"But I tell you the truth : it is expedient to you that I go. For if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you" (John 16 : 7).

"I have many things to say to you ; but you cannot bear them now.

"But when he the spirit of truth is come he will teach you all truth, for he shall not speak of himself but whatsoever he shall hear that he shall speak ; he will show you things to come ; he shall glorify me" (John 16 : 12, 13).

These prophecies have a clear internal evidence that they refer to and were fulfilled in the advent of the Prophet.

This is corroborated in the Qur'anic verse :

"And when Jesus, son of Mary, said : O children of Israel, surely I am the Messenger of God to you, verifying that which is before me of the Torah and giving the good news of a messenger who will come after me, his name being Ahmad" (61 : 6).

It is in this sense that Jesus has been described in the Qur'an as a "Sign". The deluge of Noah marked an important event of history, and as such was described as a "sign". The advent of Islam is likewise one of the greatest events of all history. Jesus foretold the dawn of that great epoch.

Christian missionary societies have rendered the gospels in all the languages of the world, and thereby unwittingly become instrumental in carrying this prophecy to the most far-flung parts of the world. In this sense as well the movement initiated by Jesus has become the harbinger of the last and perfect message of Islam, and as such a "sign" to the coming of the new Islamic era in the history of mankind.

The trend of contemporary Christian thought also points to the conclusion that Christendom cannot for long cling to the Church dogmas of Trinity, Sonship, Atonement, etc., and is bound sooner or later to accept the perfectly sensible Islamic teaching of the Unity of God and Jesus as a human prophet. Thus the Qur'anic word "sign" used about Jesus also carries the much bigger historic significance of Islam becoming the dominant religion of Christendom.

The word *mubashshiran* of the Qur'an carries the same significance as *injl* (i.e., giving a good news). "Good news" is always about a coming event, and cannot be applied to Jesus' own teaching. That coming event of which Jesus proclaimed the good tidings was the coming of the All-World Prophet, Muhammad, with the All-World Message, the Qur'an. That is how he was a big signpost along the road of human development.

Yours truly,

ABDUL HAQ VIDYARTHI.

## IS HELL EVERLASTING?

Muhammad Noori Haj Ismail,  
3rd Year of Economics,  
College of Arts,  
Baghdad, Iraq.  
2nd December 1961.

Dear Sir,

I have just read for the first time your June 1961 issue of *The Islamic Review*.

On page 38, question No. 82, "Will Hell remain for ever and ever?" your answer was "No, Hell will become empty after the last sinner is cleansed" ("A Muslim Catechism," p. 10). But I have been taught: Hell will remain for ever and ever as it has been stated in the Qur'an.

I would like to have your comments on this point.

Yours sincerely,

M. N. ISMA'IL.

### REPLY

"According to the teachings of the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet, all those who are in Hell, shall ultimately, when they are fit for a new life, be released from it. This is a point on which misunderstanding prevails even among Muslim theologians. They make a distinction between the Muslim sinners and the non-Muslim sinners, holding that all Muslim sinners shall be ultimately taken out of Hell, but not the non-Muslim sinners. Neither the Qur'an nor the Hadith upholds this view. There are two words, *khulud* and *abad*, used in connection with the abiding in Hell or Paradise, and both these words, while, no doubt, indicating *eternity*, also bear the significance of a long time. Not only do all authorities on Arabic lexicology agree on this, but the use of these words in the Qur'an also makes it quite clear. The word *khulud* has been freely used regarding the chastisement in Hell of Muslims as well as of non-Muslim sinners. I will quote but one example of its use regarding Muslim sinners. After stating the law of inheritance, it is said, 'These are Allah's limits; and whoever obeys Allah and His Apostle, He will cause him to enter gardens in which rivers flow to abide in them; and this is the great achievement. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Apostle and goes beyond His limits, He will cause him to enter into Fire, to abide in it (*khálidin*), and he shall have an abasing chastisement' (4 : 13, 14). Here clearly Muslim sinners are spoken of, and yet their abiding in Hell is expressed by the word *khulud*.

"Take the other word, *abad*. This word occurs thrice in the Qur'an, in connection with the abiding of sinners in Hell. Ordinarily, it is taken as meaning *for ever* or *eternally*, but that it sometimes signifies only *a long time* is abundantly clear from the fact that both its dual and plural forms are in use. *Rághib* says that this is owing to the fact that the word is, in that case, used to express *a part of time*. And explaining its verb form *ta'abbada*, he says it signifies the thing *existed for abad*, and is taken to mean *what remains for a long time*. Thus *a long time*, as the significance of *abad*, is fully recognized in Arabic lexicology. That in the case of those in Hell, it signifies *a long time* and not *for ever*, is clear from the fact that the abiding in hell of even the unbelievers is elsewhere stated to be for *ahqáb*, which is the plural of *huqba*, meaning *a year or many years* (LA), or *eighty years* (R.). At all events it indicates a definite period of time, and hence serves as a clear indication that even *abad*, in the case of abiding in Hell, means *a long time*.

"The two words *khulud* and *abad*, which are generally construed as leading to an eternity of Hell, being thus disposed of, I will now consider the verses which are generally adduced in support of the idea that those in Hell shall for ever and ever suffer its endless tortures :

'Thus will Allah show them their deeds to be intense regret to them, and they shall not come out of the fire' (2 : 167).

'Those who disbelieve, even if they had what is in the earth, all of it, and the like of it with it, that they might ransom themselves with it from the chastisement of the Day of Resurrection, it shall not be accepted from them, and they shall have a painful chastisement. They would desire to go forth from the fire, and they shall not go forth from it, and they shall have an abiding chastisement' (5 : 36, 37).

'Whenever they will desire to go forth from it, from grief, they shall be turned back into it' (22 : 22).

'And as for those who transgress, their abode is the fire : whenever they desire to go forth from it, they shall be brought back into it, and it will be said to them, Taste the chastisement of the fire which you called a lie' (32 : 20).

"These verses are self-explanatory. Those in Hell shall desire to escape from it but shall not be able to do so ; even if they could offer the whole earth as a ransom, they would not be able to get out. The evil consequences of sin cannot be avoided, howsoever one may desire, and even so is the fire of Hell. None shall escape from it. But not a word is there in any of these verses to show that God will not take them out of it, or that the tortures of Hell are endless. They only show that every sinner must suffer the consequences of what he has done, and that he cannot escape them ; but that he may be set free when he has undergone the necessary chastisement, or that God may, of His boundless mercy, deliver the sinners when He pleases, is not denied here.

"Even if *abad* is taken to mean eternity, the abiding in Hell, according to the Qur'an, must cease at some time, because a limit is placed on it by the addition of the words *illa ma sha a Allah*, or *except as Allah pleases*, which clearly indicate the ultimate deliverance of those in Hell. The following two verses may be noted in this connection :

'He shall say, The fire is your abode, to abide in it, except as Allah pleases, for thy Lord is Wise, Knowing' (6 : 129).

'So as to those who are unhappy, they shall be in the fire ; for them shall be sighing and groaning in it, abiding therein so long as the heavens and the earth endure except as thy Lord pleases, for thy Lord is the mighty Doer of what He intends' (11 : 106, 107).

"Both these verses show that the abiding in Hell must come to an end. To make this conclusion clearer still, the Qur'an has used a similar expression for those in Paradise but with quite a different ending :

'And as to those who are made happy, they shall be in the garden, abiding in it as long as the heavens and the earth endure, except as thy Lord pleases : a gift never to be cut off' (11 : 108).

"The two expressions are similar ; those in Hell and those in Paradise abide, each in his place, so long as the heavens and the earth shall endure, with an exception added

in each case — except as thy Lord pleases — showing that they may be taken out of that condition. But the concluding statements are different. In the case of Paradise, the idea that those in it may be taken out of it, if God pleases, is immediately followed by the statement that it is a gift that shall never be cut off, showing that they shall not be taken out of Paradise; while in the case of Hell, the idea that those in it will be taken out is confirmed by the concluding statement, that God is the mighty Doer of what He intends.

“This conclusion is corroborated by the Hadith. The Prophet is reported to have said: ‘Then Allah will say, The angels have interceded and the prophets have interceded and the faithful have interceded and none remains but the most Merciful of all merciful ones. So He will take out a handful from fire and bring out a people who have never done any good’ (Bu. 97 : 24).

“Three kinds of intercession are spoken of in this hadith; of the faithful, of prophets and of the angels, and the intercession of each class is undoubtedly meant for people who have some sort of close relation with that class. The faithful will intercede for people who have come into contact with them personally; the prophets will intercede for their followers; the angels, being the movers to good, will intercede for people who are not followers of a prophet, but who have done some good. And the hadith adds that the most Merciful of all still remains, so He will bring out from the fire even people who have never done any good. It follows that, thereafter, none can remain in Hell, and in fact the handful of God cannot leave anything behind.

“Other hadith state even more explicitly that all men shall be ultimately taken out of Hell. ‘Surely a day will come over Hell when it will be like a field of corn that has dried up after flourishing for a while’ (KU). ‘Surely a day will come over Hell when there shall not be a single human being in it’ (FBn. IV, p. 372). And a saying of ‘Umar, the second Caliph, is recorded as follows: ‘Even if the dwellers in Hell may be numberless as the sands of the desert, a day will come when they will be taken out of it’ (FBn. IV, p. 372). A similar saying is recorded from Ibn Mas‘ud: ‘Surely a time will come over Hell when its gates shall be blown by wind, there shall be none in it, and this shall be after they have remained therein for many years’ (LJ-C.XII, p. 66). Similar sayings are reported from many other Companions, such as Ibn ‘Umar, Jabir, Abu Sa‘id, Abu Huraira, etc., and also from the *Tabi’in* (FBn.). And later Imams, such as Ibn ‘Arabi, Ibn Taimiya, Ibn Qayyim and many others have held similar views (*Ibid*). Thus there can be but little doubt left that Hell is a temporary place for the sinner, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, and this also supports the view that the chastisement of Hell is not for torture, but as a remedy, to heal the spiritual diseases which a man has incurred on himself and by his own negligence, and to enable him to start again on the road to the higher life. The truth of this has already been established from the Qur‘an, but a hadith, also, may be quoted here which expressly speaks of inmates of the fire as being set on the road to the higher life: ‘Then will Allah say, Bring out (of the fire) every one in whose heart there is faith or goodness to the extent of a mustard seed, so they will be taken out having become quite black; then they will be thrown into the river of life and they will grow as grows a seed by the side of a river’ (Bu. 2 : 15). This hadith is conclusive as to the remedial nature of Hell, and establishes beyond all doubt that all men will ultimately be set on the way to the higher life.”—Muhammad Ali, *The Religion of Islam*, pp. 309-314.

## BAN THE BOMB DRIVE

“Tresco,”

146 Great Tattenhams,  
Epsom, Surrey.

1st January 1962.

Dear Sir,

In your editorial in the issue of September 1961 you commented on the sit-down demonstrations organized by the anti-nuclear Committee of 100.

The Qur‘an clearly says that we shall under no circumstances kill our fellow men for any reason whatever except in just war. On the basis of this prohibition I suggest that to kill in just war covers only killing done for self-preservation. Obviously if one of the soldiers of the enemy stood above us aiming a machine gun at our hearts we would be justified in killing him to save our own lives.

I do not on the other hand consider that exoneration of killings committed in wartime in self-defence covers mass murder of innocent non-combatant women and children, for since when has the murder of an innocent child won a war? In the words of the famous English poet of the First World War :

“Unless you are blind it is hard to find a living,  
I could never bring myself to eat a child”

*We Live in a Blind Time*, by Alex Comfort.

If, as you appear to want, all the decent-minded people in this country were to stifle the feelings of revulsion they felt at every mention of this evil monster, and to take no steps to try to rectify the state of affairs which they consider to be so wrong, our world would be in a very sorry state indeed. Even the faith of Islam would not have been known to the extent it is today, had not its propagators spoken out against the society against which they felt so strongly.

I also feel that your references to Earl Russell were most insulting. This gentleman is one of the finest brains in this country. He has a great reputation as a philosopher and thinker and his reasoning is almost unquestioned within his own fields of thought. He is not a person who would lend his support to an organization such as the Committee of 100 without having given it a great deal of consideration.

I would suggest that time spent in sitting down on a pavement for hours on end to advocate the abolition of a weapon of mass destruction is time well spent. If you would rather see the complete destruction not only of Britain, Pakistan and the rest of our civilization, but the destruction of our faith as well, in preference to sitting for one afternoon, then of course you are entitled to your opinion. I myself have no qualms as to which path I should take, and I am sure that more educated people than I are of the same opinion.

Unfortunately this subject has like so many other noble causes been dragged into the fields of party politics, but if an intelligent person examines it carefully he will discover that support or rejection of the idea of nuclear disarmament lies solely in the power of man to discern right from wrong. Murder is wrong, supporting a murder is wrong; and because it brings about mass murder the nuclear bomb is wrong, and by a process of simple logic it should be abolished unquestioningly.

Yours in Islam,

PHILIP H. EASTON.

[We are afraid, on another look at the Note in question, we find nothing therein to warrant the conclusion our Epsom correspondent has read into it. On the contrary it is a denunciation of war, and a tribute to Lord Russell for his efforts to save humanity from its horrors. It says :

“All honour to the philosopher-humanist for undertaking at an advanced age this crusade against the demon of nuclear weapons which, if implemented, would spell the end of the present civilization.”

Further on the Note says that the root cause of the repeated wars and threats of war lies in the fact that modern man has turned a blind eye to the spiritual values of life, and unless he turns back to God, no protests and demonstrations would prove of much avail to stave off the menace of war for long. This is just disagreement with Lord Russell's method, in no way disrespect towards him or the noble motives behind his anti-bomb drive.—I.R.]

\* \* \* \*

### THE CALIPH AND HIS SON

Jaami'ah Street,  
Brandreth Road,  
Lahore 7, West Pakistan.  
27th December 1961.

Dear Sir,

In the August 1961 issue of *The Islamic Review* the article which was published about the Caliph and his son is not about the Caliph 'Umar, the second successor of the Prophet, but about 'Umar Ibn Abdul 'Aziz. I hope you will kindly publish these few lines in your esteemed journal.

Yours faithfully,

GHULAM QADIR DAR.

\* \* \* \*

### THE FATE OF MUSLIMS IN THE SOVIET UNION AND IN COMMUNIST CHINA

Dar-ul-Mahmood,  
Bhera, Pakistan.  
27th January 1962.

Dear Sir,

Our hearts bleed when we recall the awful plight of forty million Muslims in the Soviet Union, who are experiencing persecution of their faith and victimization at the hands of Communists.

Under the guise of dissemination of knowledge of natural sciences, the Soviet authorities are organizing a systematic campaign against Islam. The historic role of Islam in North Caucasus is blatantly falsified and presented as a reactionary phenomenon in the history of this territory. Anyone who is even slightly familiar with the history of Islam in the North Caucasus is fully aware that Islam was in fact the pioneer of culture and progress among the peoples of that region. This is all being done to transform the Soviet Union's forty million Muslim population into an amorphous mass of godless, faithless, anthropoid creatures. Our brethren in Communist China are facing the same misery and oppression.

Whether anything substantial is being done by the

leaders of the free Muslim world for our enslaved brethren is the question that should be asked over and over again.

Yours faithfully,

MUHAMMAD 'UMAR.



Mr. Nasir Ahmad, Secretary of the Working Muslim Mission and Literary Trust, Lahore, Pakistan, giving the first prize to Mr. Abdus Sami 'Umar, whose speech was considered best on the subject, "Islam and the Modern Conditions of Life," in a meeting held on 25th December 1961 at Ahmadiyyah Buildings, Lahore, West Pakistan. The Aftab-ul-Din Memorial Shield was won by the Government College, Lahore, in the same contest.

### NEW ISLAMIC MISSION IN NIGERIA

44 Tokunboh Street,  
Lagos, Nigeria,  
West Africa.  
12th February 1962.

Dear Sir,

Mr. Bashir Ahmad Minto, who has worked for some time in the United States as a missionary, arrived at Lagos, the capital city of the Federation of Nigeria, from Pakistan recently with his son, Nazir Ahmad Minto, to open a new Islamic Mission in Nigeria.

Mr. Minto has since his arrival attended special prayers and given sermons during the month of Ramadhan. He is getting on well with the natives, as he is staying in the middle of the township among brother Muslims.

Mr. B. A. Minto would like to tour the whole Federation of Nigeria regions and make friends with Muslims throughout the Federation of Nigeria. We convey our sincere congratulations to the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam, Lahore, Pakistan, for sending him to Nigeria for propagation of Islam.

We all welcome our new friend from Pakistan and wish him every success.

Yours faithfully,

S. OLA SALVADOR.

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