

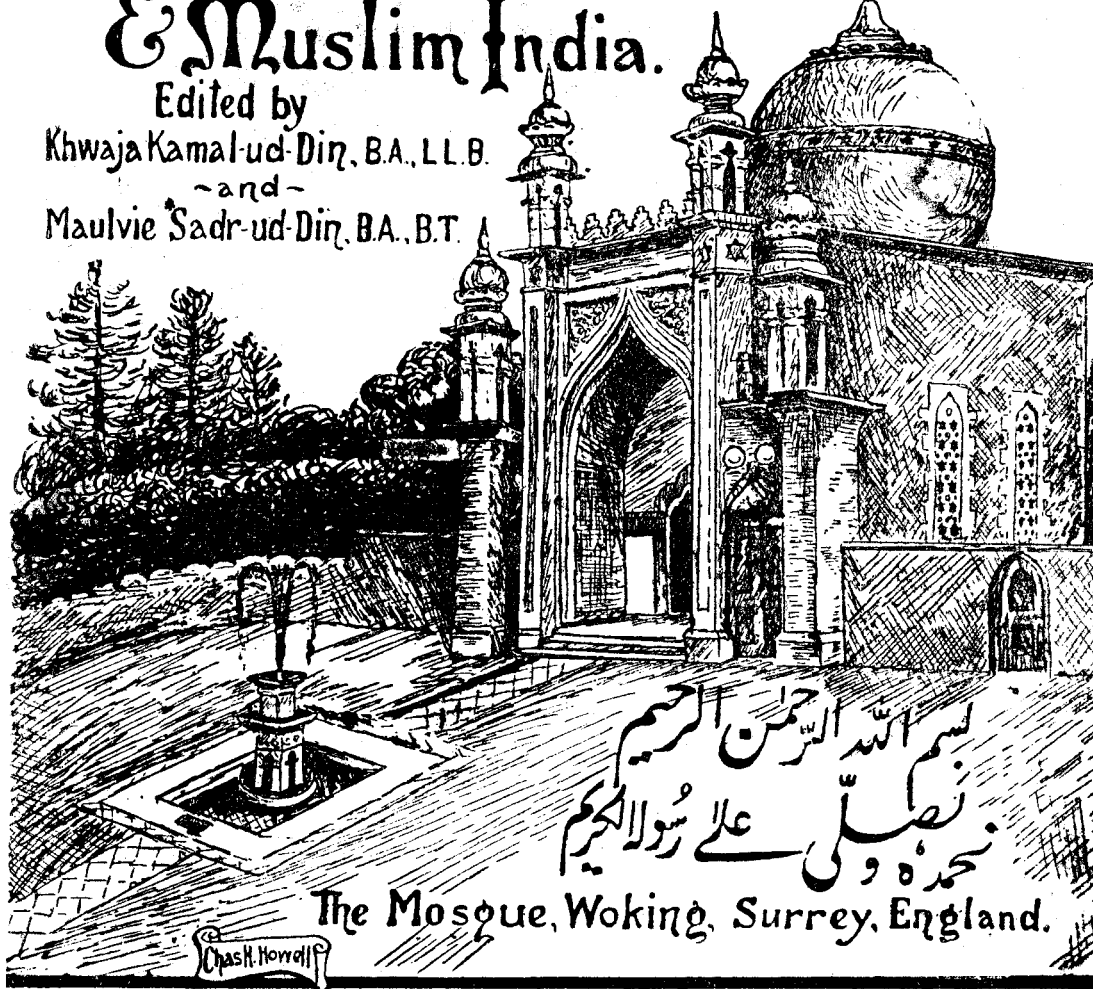
Islamic Review & Muslim India.

Edited by

Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din, B.A., LL.B.

-and-

Maulvie Sadr-ud-Din, B.A., B.T.



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

ISLAMIC REVIEW

AND

MUSLIM INDIA

VOL. VI]

JUNE 1918

[No. 6

THE HOLY QUR-ÂN

With English Translation and Commentary, printed on high-class India paper, and bound in green flexible leather, *is now ready*. Price 20s. Prospectus and sample pages sent free on application. Cloth-bound Edition, price 16s., postage extra. Prices in India: India paper, Rs. 20; cloth bound, Rs. 17. Apply in India to Ishaat-Islam Office, Nowlakha, Lahore. For Press comments see overleaf.

Qur-ân Class.—Lessons from the Qur-ân every Friday at the Muslim House (111, Campden Hill Road, W. 8) at 7 p.m., and every Wednesday at the Mosque, Woking, at 7 p.m. By KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN, B.A., LL.B. No fees charged.

Arabic Class (to study Arabic language).—Conducted by Mr. SYED EHSAN EL-BAKRI, at Muslim House, every Friday, at 8 p.m. No fees charged. More lessons by arrangement.

Friday Prayer and Sermon.—At the London Muslim House, every Friday, 1.30 p.m. By KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.

Service, Sermon and Lectures every alternate Saturday and Sunday at the Muslim House, 111, Campden Hill Road, W. 8, and every Sunday at the Mosque, Woking. For syllabus see the reverse.

NOTES

AT the urgent request of a large number of friends interested to know more of Islam, and who regarded our fortnightly Sunday lectures at the London Muslim House as not sufficient to satisfy the need, we have arranged from the first week of April to give a series of discourses on the "Study of Islam" on every other Saturday—the day of our At Home—which function is followed by a short speech by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din in the Muslim House Lecture Room, on some prominent feature of Islam; then questions are invited from the audience, to which he makes reply. The discussions which thus follow have proved very interesting and lively. These discourses, as well as other lectures in the Muslim House, are delivered on the constructive lines, in order to give the audience a clear and systematic insight into the practical side of Islam. We give below our syllabus of lectures and services held during the month of April.

7th April, at 3.15. The Mosque, Woking. By KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.
Subject: "Prayer."

6th April, Saturday, at 5 p.m. London Muslim House. **Study of Islam.**
Short speech by KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN, followed by questions and answers. Subject: "Articles of Faith in Islam."

14th April, Sunday, at 3.15 p.m. London Muslim House. Service and Sermon by KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN. Subject: "Muslim Prayer—Meditation in Silence."

14th April, at 3.15. The Mosque, Woking. By Mr. ABDUL QAYUM MALIK, B.A. Subject: "Islamic Outlook on Life."

20th April, Saturday, at 5 p.m. London Muslim House. **Study of Islam.** Short speech by KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN, followed by questions and answers. Subject: "Five Pillars of Islam."

21st April, at 3.15. The Mosque, Woking. By Mr. CH. SALMAN SCHLEICH. Subject: "Hopes and Rewards through Actions."

28th April, at 3.15. The Mosque, Woking. By Mr. ABDUL QAYUM MALIK, B.A. Subject: "Muhammad the Best Model."

28th April, Sunday, at 3.15 p.m. London Muslim House. Service and Sermon by MARMADUKE PICKTHALL, Esq. Subject: "The Kingdom of God."

OTHER LECTURES.

- 21st April. Lecture by KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN at Fulham Spiritualist Circle, 12, Lettice Street, Munster Road, W. 6. Subject: "What is Islam?—peace and way to peace."
- 25th April. Lecture by KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN at 17, Prince Henry's Room, Fleet Street, E.C., before the Cercle d'Etudes Ethnographique. Subject: "Arabic, the Language of Religion."

We have also started the Qur-án class, which, as its very name shows, is bound to have a very useful future before it. Muslims as well as others who are interested in the study of the Greatest Book are made welcome, and no fees are charged.

As an auxiliary to the above, an Arabic class is also held, instructions at which are also imparted gratis. The class is conducted by Syed Ehsan-el-Bakri, of Egypt.

THE LONDON MUSLIM SOCIETY.—On the 4th of April, Mr. Zahuruddin read a paper on the ever fascinating yet unsolved problem of the Unity of East and West. From a complete breadth of vision with which he handled his subject, and a large mass of telling arguments with which he developed his discourse, it was obvious he had done full justice to his task.

ADHESIONS TO ISLAM.—We are glad to announce that two members of a respectable Hebrew family—a gentleman and his daughter—have signified their acceptance of the Holy Faith of Islam.

As we are going to press for our June number a month in advance, we give below our

SYLLABUS OF LECTURES AND SERMONS FOR JUNE.

- 1st June, Saturday, at 5 p.m., at the London Muslim House. Study of Islam. "Almsgiving in Islam." By KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN, followed by questions and answers.
- 2nd June, Sunday, at 3.15 p.m., at The Mosque, Woking. Sermon and Service by KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.
- 9th June, Sunday, at 3.15 p.m., at the London Muslim House. Lecture on Islam. By Mr. MARMADUKE PICKTHALL.
- 9th June, Sunday, at 3.15 p.m., at The Mosque, Woking. "Human Fellowship in Islam." By Mr. ABDUL QAYUM MALIK.
- 15th June, Saturday, at 6 p.m., at the London Muslim House. Study of Islam. "Islam in Daily Life (in Family Relationship)." By KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN, followed by questions and answers.

- 16th June, Sunday, at 3.15 p.m., at The Mosque, Woking. Sermon and Service by KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.
- 23rd June, Sunday, at 3.15 p.m., at the London Muslim House. Service and Sermon by RT. HON. LORD HEADLEY.
- 23rd June, Sunday, at 3.15 p.m., at the Mosque, Woking. "The Pilgrimage—a Movement for World-Federation of Nations." By Mr. ABDUL QAYUM MALIK.
- 29th June, Saturday, at 5 p.m., at the London Muslim House. Study of Islam. "Prohibitions." By KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN, followed by questions and answers.
- 30th June, Sunday, at 3.15 p.m., at The Mosque, Woking. Sermon and Service by Mr. C. S. SCHLEICH.

OTHER LECTURES.

A Lecture on "Cosmic Consciousness," by KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN, at 2, Scarsdale Studio, London, on 21st June.

The readers would remember our note of the last month about the shortage of paper and our intention of publishing the June and July numbers together. As the Holy Month of Ramadan begins on the 10th of June, and we are anxious to publish the June number containing an article on "Fasting" in time, we had to publish it early, though in a reduced bulk. It is a trifle less than its usual size, but contains a full quantity of the matter. We would, however, publish the July and August numbers together later on.

"CHRISTIANITY'S FAILURE"

STRIKING SERMON AT THE CITY TEMPLE

"Christ is the most maligned character in history, maligned by none so much as by those who most readily call him Lord !

"Conventional Christianity is a continuous crucifixion of Christ.

"THESE two utterances were embodied in a sensational sermon preached at the City Temple by the Rev. V. T. Pomeroy, of Bradford. For long, he said, thinking people had felt that something was lacking in the Christian Church, and with the crash of war it had become increasingly apparent that something was wrong, dangerously. Very evident had it become that conventional Christianity, as it was understood by laity and clergy alike, was not adequate for the wants of the world. It stood as a block instead of as an inspiration towards progress.

"A soldier acquaintance of the preacher had written to him saying, 'I was beginning to think that God was dead, and then came the glorious news from Russia.' Yet what part had the Church played in this great Revolution, this great movement for the good of millions of long-suffering people? None!"

The above is from a London paper, and the words quoted are from an English clergyman. They speak for themselves. In the columns of the ISLAMIC REVIEW it has been pointed out many a time that the Christianity of the Church is more than a useless institution. It is positively harmful. From a religious point of view it is pernicious because it replaces the One God of Moses with three gods supposed to be in one, because it has re-introduced heathen beliefs and rites in the purified monotheism, because it teaches the worship of a man. It is morally harmful because it takes away the responsibility of persons from their shoulders and puts it upon that of one man—Jesus Christ; because it introduces the theory of original sin, teaches man that he can secure salvation, not by his own good acts, but simply by an absurd and degrading belief in a filial murder or crucifixion. Socially, Christianity has degraded woman sex, and politically it has supported Cæsarly autocracy. Christianity has been responsible for most tortuous persecutions, murders, and inquisitions. In its more influential days it has always been an obstacle to all scientific progress and to every social or political reform.

Even lately many a Christian protested against the prohibition of alcohol in European countries. The conscientious verdict of many in England has been against the present war, as they consider fighting to be unchristian, though the broad fact is that the largest quantity of human blood has been spilt by such peoples and nations who call themselves Christians. There is no doubt that it is the Christians themselves who have acted most contrarily to the noble teachings of Christ. In fact, through their belief the purpose of the creation of such a noble soul in this world has been set at naught. They have deified him, and thus made him inaccessible to humanity, to reform and elevate which he was sent as a Messenger or Prophet of the merciful God. No Christian who believes Christ to be the only son of God can ever think of following his example, even in such

virtues which can be rightly attributed to him. They believe that the object of creating Christ was simply to put him to a disgraceful death. In their belief he was never meant to be an example to the sons and daughters of Eve, who have inherited their sinful nature from her. Therefore they do not care to study the life of Christ, or even to make sure what that was. The writers of the New Testament did not think it worth while to see that they do not contradict each other. The New Testament does not contain any such guidance for man which would make him a useful citizen of any advanced State, which would teach him how to secure the best form of government or how to lay down such practical laws that would ensure the freedom, the sobriety, the purity, and the progress of nations. There are certainly some beautiful ethical dogmas in the New Testament, as there are in those other sacred books which are attributed to those saintly men who came centuries before Christ. But there is nothing in the Christianity as known to us upon which any democratic government can be based. Christianity as a religion never did anything to discourage even slavery. It never taught man to respect liberty. Woman, according to Christian saints, was nothing but a deadly evil—man and woman both miserable sinners. Christianity has no doubt proved an utter failure, and this through no fault of that grand and noble soul—Jesus Christ, Son of Mary.

AL-QIDWAI.

SIMPLICITY OF FAITH

By LORD HEADLEY.¹

WHEN my dear brother Khwaja Kamaluddin asked me to give a short address on "Simplicity of Faith" I was very pleased, though I felt that I had not really sufficient time on hand to do justice to the subject. It is not a simple matter at all to deal with the simplicity of a particular religion without touching on the complications of other religions and running great risk of offending the susceptibilities of others on whom I should be very loath to inflict pain.

Nevertheless in these terrible days, when we are all faced

¹ This lecture was delivered by Rt. Hon. Lord Headley at London Muslim House on Sunday, the 17th March.

with deadly peril, plain speaking should be permitted and honest conviction treated with leniency: we may none of us have much longer in which to speak the truth, and it is better to speak out boldly whilst we can.

Many golden opportunities of doing good and advancing the welfare of the race have been lost through a fear of what others may think, say, or do. If we know that we wish to do good, that alone should be sufficient to give us courage to advance any sound proposition.

Not so long ago I made so bold as to mention one of the articles in the recent issue of the ISLAMIC REVIEW to a very narrow-minded lady who has so persistently refused to learn anything at all beyond the teaching of her earliest youth (in religious matters) that she still thinks that we Muslims are heathens with lots of wives and that we worship Muhammad. The result of my temerity was quite unexpected: she suddenly assumed a cataleptic attitude and begged me to say no more because it gave her *such agony to hear of such things*. In the face of such bigotry and want of perception one is puzzled: of course I said no more. Religion, or that compelling conviction which binds us to a particular line of conduct in all our dealings with ourselves and our fellow-creatures, may be simple and easily understood by the whole community or it may be rendered complicated to suit certain aims and objects altogether outside plain "Duty to GOD and neighbour."

Ever since those early days when human sacrifices were carried out with such revolting cruelty it has been the aim of certain persons professing special knowledge of the future state to secure for their own benefit certain temporal advantages.

In quite the earliest days of man's advent—long before the formation of any of the "religions" as we now know them—it was thought necessary to propitiate an angry god by a bloody sacrifice which was carried out in the following manner: A young man of special beauty and promise was selected and was fed up and given all the good things possible for a certain number of weeks: he was then conducted to the top of a hill and bound tightly to a stone slab; a priest then advanced and cut out his heart with a flint knife.

The bleeding heart was then held up towards the sky. and the people exclaimed, "Now is the angry god appeased." Of course it never occurred to the poor benighted creatures that a god who could only be propitiated by the horrible commission of a cruel murder was not one to be respected or loved: no, the priest, having gained his power by occult methods, persuaded the credulous people to believe in a loathsome god of his own imagination.

One can easily imagine the primitive man worshipping the sun, the moon, or the stars, or even a beautiful flower or tree, for there is something very attractive in the pantheistic idea of seeing the infinite power and beauty of GOD in all His wonderful works: no doubt the priest had very little difficulty in deflecting this natural human tendency to worship that which is above human comprehension to a belief in an occult deity whose ear he, the priest, alone had access to.

History teems with examples of successful manipulation of the "bogey" or angry god ever ready to pounce upon the erring and the fallen. Priestcraft very soon developed into a fine art, and, as human nature is ever apt to err, the opportunities for the exercise of sacerdotal authority have never for a moment failed from the days when the heart was cut out of the living man down to the present day, when the Christian Religion deliberately consigns to *everlasting damnation*—a far worse punishment than the cutting out of the heart—all those who cannot believe certain dogmatic assertions respecting sacraments, the divinity of Christ, the Trinity, etc. Thus it will be seen that a very complicated fabric was soon erected by the exercise of a little priestly cunning. Professing absolute power and the ability to pardon the erring, the priest adopted this line of argument with his flock: "Now, my poor friends, you are all born in sin; you are soon to appear before an angry god who will burn you in hell-fire, as you so richly deserve for daring to come into this world. You are even as worms, and there is no health in you, so you must infallibly be damned everlastingly: yet no—I can save you if you do what I tell you and believe all I teach you, but there are a great many conditions. You must unhesitatingly swallow all the dogmas and especially that one respecting the divinity of Christ, without a firm

belief in which even I cannot possibly save you. You are then to believe that Christ was or is GOD, but that GOD caused him to be put to a cruel death in order to propitiate Himself in respect to some failure on the part of mankind to come up to the specification ordained by the Great Creator who is also GOD. You need not say that you *understand* this, but you must believe it just as you would have to believe me if I told you that the earth was flat and the moon was a parallelopiped. I am an ordained priest of God, and you have no right to question anything I tell you. But I may as well mention that although I am chiefly concerned with your souls my interest in your temporal affairs is also considerable, and should not be neglected by any means. You must believe in the sacraments as being necessary to salvation, and the holy Fathers of the Church have also piled up a very considerable amount of controversial matter which will tend to make you doubt everything you ever did or saw or thought."

All this does not spell SIMPLICITY; it has always seemed to me that this complicating and confusing the points that really matter with those of minor importance has been effected in order to give priests work to do in order to justify their continuance in their so-called sacred office. Do not misunderstand my meaning. There have been good and saintly men in priestly offices and there is good in all the great religions of the world, but, take it all round, sacerdotal influence has tended to complicate beliefs and too often has led to bids for temporal power.

The idolatrous practices which prevailed in Arabia before the Holy Prophet Muhammad came into power were horrible in the extreme, but he immediately effected a change:—

1. He forgave all his enemies who fell into his power, and thus secured their love and support.
2. He broke up all the hideous idols with which Mecca was surrounded.
3. He abolished infanticide. (It had been the practice of the benighted people to bury their female infants alive at the feet of these idols.)
4. He regulated polygamy.
5. He laid down rules of life, gave the people sunk in darkness a religion of grand simplicity.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the great reformer Martin Luther followed up in north Europe what Muhammad had started over nine hundred years before in Arabia, viz. the clearing away of that which was founded on superstition and bigotry and putting in its place a faith of simple trust and belief in God.

It will hardly be denied that the elder branch of the Christian Church is complicated because of the numerous channels through which the Almighty has to be approached. The invocation of saints, the intervention of priests, the intercession of the Virgin Mary, are all so many stepping-stones without using which the Almighty should not be approached; and the advanced High Church party in the Church of England follows closely on the steps of the Church of Rome.

Allowing that the Christian Churches have spread light in dark places and advanced civilization in a wonderful manner, it by no means follows that they would not have done even better had they not been hampered by the dogmas imposed by zealots at various times during which the fabric was being, so to speak, built up. Now all the great religions inculcate the importance of our *Duty to our God and our Duty to our Neighbour*, and I think I may say that any one carrying out this great precept in life may hope for salvation after his departure from this life—to whichever religious denomination he may belong. For example, suppose we educate a child from the very earliest age to obey the commandments and believe in God and be good and true to all around him, but at the same time made him believe that his future salvation also depended upon a firm belief that the moon was made of green cheese—what would be the result?

We should have inculcated perfectly good principles and made a good citizen of the child; but we should have also insulted his intelligence and stretched his capacity for belief to breaking-point. By leading him to suppose that salvation is impossible without the adoption of the green-cheese theory we should infallibly lead him to ask questions which would very probably lead to his rejection of the whole of the religion which could impose such a belief as a *necessity to salvation*. Therefore I say it is incumbent on all of us to seek a religion which is free from very gross improbabilities and which holds out hope of Divine pity and aid to all who earnestly look to the One Great God and seek to do His Will and obey His laws.

When I am told that I am a miserable sinner I recognize much truth in the remark and accept it, but when I am told that the GOD I praise and worship will not receive me into His fold because I cannot believe certain dogmatic teachings of a particular Church I resent it as being altogether antagonistic to the very idea of a God of Mercy. Certainly we shall all be punished for our sins—the very commission of evil deeds brings its own punishment in the shape of remorse; but to tell people that they will be damned eternally because

they cannot swallow hideously improbable stories invented by those who were engaged in building up this or that particular form of worship is certainly insulting to the intelligence.

Almost the first letter I received after becoming a Muslim was one in which the writer put it quite plainly: "If you do not believe in the Divinity of Christ you cannot be saved." Only think of it: the unfairness; the downright cruelty! Here am I, a poor little mortal, created and placed in this world by a BEING so great, so wise, so merciful, and so mighty that I am unable to form even an estimate of my own idea of His Majesty, suddenly informed that it was very wicked of me to be born in sin and to be a child of wrath, and that so awfully wicked am I that nothing but the slaughter of an entirely innocent person can possibly save me. I am then told that my sins are of such an awful nature that my Maker (who presumably knows most about my construction and sin-capacity) has decided that He ought to be propitiated, and that in order that the sacrifice may be sufficiently important to satisfy Him and appease His anger, He has decided to put him to a somewhat cruel death by crucifixion. It should be remembered that this punishment is nothing to the other punishments inflicted from time to time by such pious institutions as the Holy Inquisition, e.g. the rack, tearing out the eyes with red-hot pincers, etc.; and it must be remembered also that the individual chosen was none other than the *only son* of this angry God and that this only son then became God, who could, of course, feel no pain.

So that it really comes to this: I have to believe that in order to bribe himself to be kind to me God has to consent to a very cruel sacrifice. Of course the question arises: Was God always thus cruel and unfair? Was He so before the creation of man?

The objects of "religions" seem to have been to raise doubts and ambiguities and controversies. Many of them are good, but why not choose the best? Why not adopt that simple Faith which, looking steadfastly to Allah the Lord of all creatures and begging His aid, surrenders all to Him and obeys His injunctions respecting good citizenship?

When the rich young man, addressing Christ as "Good Master," asked what good thing he should do in order to secure eternal life, the reply was: "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

The religion which runs entirely with Christ's teaching is not far from us; it appeals to all, it is free from dogmas, it is free from sacerdotalism, which is nearly always self-interested, and it does not condemn those who think differently to everlasting flames.

This religion is one of pure *Faith in God alone* and in good works. Islam is that religion, and we should all pray that it may soon become the universal and rational religion of the whole world.

THE EVOLUTION OF A MAN

By N. STEPHEN, A.S.P., F.P.C. (LOND.)

"Man is his own star, and that soul that can
Be honest, is the only Perfect Man."

FLETCHER.

IN the course of my fairly long life I have often been impressed by the way in which many students look for *the cause* of certain things, as though there were but one cause. A longer study, on broader lines, would soon show them that it is very rarely that any great or widespread effect is brought about by any single cause; if it were so, many problems would be easy of solution.

No, the things that matter are not so simple as that: they are the result of many causes, some great, some small, some even most contradictory, but all having their little say in the final result.

I lately listened to a long discussion as to *the cause* of religious decay, and the growing carelessness of the masses on that subject. There were some able speakers, and one said one cause and one another, nearly all of which were contributory; and at last a speaker rose and said, "It seems to me all these are trifles: there must be one primary cause, if we could find it, and I think it is a growth of indifference"; and so we have travelled in a circle and lost sight of the cause, to find ourselves back at the effect, for is not carelessness and indifference the same thing, or idea, in another form of words?

Why is this? It is because there is *no one* primary cause; but there are many causes, trifles perhaps, the cumulative effect of which is seen in a growing carelessness as to religious services or instruction.

So in the evolution of a man, there are many influences at work, some good, some bad, but all leaving their impress more or less strongly on the final product. There is a certain river some thirty miles from here (Liverpool) which I know well from its source to the sea; but let me use it as an allegory of man's life.

It rises among some limestone rocks in a lonely nook far from human dwelling, a pure, limpid stream, clear as crystal, flowing over a stony bed for some miles without visible change; then it receives the waters of a tributary stream which has come over the peat moss, and our river takes on a measure of its colour: it is no longer so clear, but is tinged with the brown of the peat. It is still a clean and pleasant river, but never quite the same as in those first miles: a new influence has entered into it which can never be quite got rid of. A little farther, another stream flows in, and this has come through farmlands and low-lying, muddy places, and when it joins our river that river loses its clarity, becomes less beautiful and more opaque, and its banks are no longer clean, for our river as it flows leaves along them the marks of its impurities in deposits of mud and refuse. And now it nears a large town, and more streams run into it, and some of these bear the refuse of factories and some

the outflow of dye-works, and our river reaches the town black as ink and foul of smell (you may see it so to-day). So the river which was once a pleasure to the eye and a source of health to the body has become an offence and a danger—all the resources of science have been called in to purify it, but only with partial success; and so on again it flows through fields to sandy flats, receiving many little streams of pure water which dilute its impurities, and at last it reaches the sea, God's mighty purifier. At first it discolours even that, but soon it is absorbed therein, and in ways known only to God made pure again.

So mote it be with all of us. Amen.

And this fairly pictures the evolution of man,¹ by which I mean not merely his bodily, physical growth, but the growth of all those higher faculties of thought and reason which place him at the head of creation as man and not mere animal, and which make him a responsible and in a large measure self-governing creature.

Alike and yet unlike, in what endless variety we see him: the noble and the debased, the sleek and the surly, the gentle and the vulgar, the sympathetic and the selfish, the clever and the commonplace, the good and the bad, but all men, growing together under similar conditions, yet so widely different.
Why?

That is the problem; and the question is not *What is the cause?* because there is no one cause, but *What are the causes?* for they are many, and, like the tributaries of our river, they fall in at various stages and with varied effects on the progress of life's journey.

Consider, the earliest of these—hereditary transmission—which many claim to be the most powerful of all. What a puzzling, interesting, and withal evasive thing it is, governed by no known laws, yet as easy to recognize as it is impossible to explain.

In olden times, when other influences were fewer in number and less general in application, when life was a simpler and less complicated thing than it is to-day, I can believe this was the great factor in the making of a man, and so thought our forefathers, for they said, "What is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh," and in another and older form, "Like father, like son"; but twentieth-century views do not accept this, but rather the view that what we inherit is only a tendency to certain things, ways, or habits which may be overcome by the power of will of the person, or by the force of other influences. Then this law is so uncertain in its action, and, to use a florist's term, it is not always true to type. The son of a musician is not always (in fact not often) musically gifted, and the son of an athlete may be a decadent, and the reason of this is just the elusive thing we have so far failed to grasp.

I know that many seek to explain it by going back some generations to find a parallel, and talk about reverting or shooting back

¹ I use the word all through as sexually inclusive.

to the original stock ; and there is much in favour of that view, for such reverting seems to be almost a law of nature ; but in spite of this, the real power of these pre-natal influences, the things which govern them, are among our unsolved problems: we see the effects of them but cannot explain, much less control, them by education, by example, and other things. We can modify or regulate them, but this can only be done after birth ; all that is pre-natal is beyond our reach : its work for good or evil is finished before human agency can act in any way. But note, its influence is universal : all men, savage or civilized, are subject to it. The savage knows no other leader ; he follows his inherited likes and dislikes unchecked, and is much more like his father (mostly) than the man of more civilized and artificial surroundings ; to use again that florist's term, he "breeds more true to type," but even here the student will find many curious and puzzling exceptions.

All our knowledge can carry us little beyond this, so why trouble ? Let us leave pre-natal matters and come to the stage immediately after birth, where we really begin life's battle and pilgrimage.

I think it was Confucius who first said, "Our death begins with our birth," but Young has the same thought :—

"While man is growing, life is in decrease,
Our cradles rock us nearer to the tomb ;
Our birth is nothing but our death begun."

Night-thoughts.

But that is a side-light. The condition of babyhood is common to all. As Mark Twain said : "We have not all the good fortune to be ladies, we cannot all be generals, or poets, or statesmen, but when we work down to babies we are on common ground."

Yes, we have all been babies, "mere bundles of undeveloped possibilities," and on the development or moulding of these possibilities depends the character of the man.

Note here that the civilized man is quite an artificial product ; he is never born "ready made." The embryonic intellect, the inherited passions in the child, are like clay on the potter's wheel, to be moulded by skill into any form desired ; but all his skill is not infallible, and may be brought to naught by some flaw in the clay or some failure in the firing. Still—

"'Tis granted, and no plainer fact appears,
Our most important are our earliest years.
The mind, impressible and soft, with ease
Imbibes and copies what it hears and sees ;
And through life's labyrinth holds fast the clue
That education gives it, false or true."

COWPER.

That education gives it. What a mighty power, then, are home influences, varying in different countries, perhaps, but strong in all ; here, long before the mind can grasp the meaning

of book or school, we begin to learn, while we possess only that faculty of imitation which is part of our nature, and none of the judgment which comes with more mature years, enabling us to distinguish right from wrong, to choose the good and shun the evil; while we are, in fact, as irresponsible as kittens or lambs. What a responsibility, then, lies with parents, that they should realize the vast importance of this period, when men are all little hero-worshippers, striving to copy those they love or admire.

It follows, then, that as our homes are, so shall we be ourselves; you cannot expect a child reared in the midst of carelessness to be anything better than a careless man, and those whose early years are spent amid pious and thoughtful surroundings never entirely break away from the influences of those early days. "As the twig is bent the tree is inclined," and all our later education is influenced by the habits and tastes of those first impressions.

Allied to these are the influences of habits and companions, and these two are so closely interwoven we may treat of them together, for our habits are often formed on those of our companions. How important, then, becomes the company we keep, for as the proverb says, "He who lies down with dogs will get up with fleas," or again, "He who sits by the fire will smell of the smoke," so the influence of habit can hardly be exaggerated, for "man is a creature of habit." The actions and even the thoughts of *many* men are controlled by little else, while *all* men feel, consciously or unconsciously, the "force of habit," and naturally fall into companionship with those of similar tastes, and these habits and tastes are generally formed early in life, and are very persistent. Some, of course, are good, such as cleanliness, which is next to godliness, tidiness or neatness both in work or person, punctuality; others are bad, such as drunkenness, gambling, drug habits generally; but, sad to say, the evil habits seem much stronger than the good, and, once formed, much more difficult to overcome. And here comes in the value of the wider education, when we learn intellectually, more than by imitation, so we develop on larger lines, learn that we must do, and decide, things for ourselves—in other words, shoulder our responsibilities, and no longer expect to have things arranged for us. But we are not yet quite independent; there are rules and laws which must be kept to: we are under discipline, and we shall be fortunate if that discipline is wisely enforced, so as to teach us self-control, perhaps the most important thing of all that goes to the evolution of a man, for man's greatest victory is to be master of himself, his habits, his passions, his temper, all held subservient to his intellectual powers, to his knowledge of right and wrong.

Here comes in the influence of religion, which in all its forms—at least all its comparatively modern forms—teaches us to distinguish right from wrong. I do not use the word as to matters of faith or dogma, which may be very doubtful, but in relation to its general teaching, and I say there is better hope for the man of wrong religion than one of no religion

at all, for this is one of the great restraining influences of life, teaching us that if we do right we shall have reward, if wrong punishment. That "the sins of the fathers are visited upon their children" may be open to argument, but this is certain, "The deeds we do return to us again, to bring us our reward, or shame."

So you see many causes go to the evolution of man, some merely impulsive, some restraining, and the final man is largely, if not entirely, himself responsible for what he is. He cannot excuse himself on the ground of heredity, because that can be conquered or modified; it is no excuse to say, "I am the creature of habit," for habit is largely a matter of choice, and should always be under the control of our higher powers.

It must not be thought this exhausts the influences at work, but the limits of this paper only permit me to name such things as opportunity, the force of circumstances, which often keep a man tied to a position he is not suited to, even which he utterly dislikes, but the necessity of earning a living, especially in our large cities, has made a slave of many men, who have never had a chance to take the position they were intellectually fit for. Still, these are mostly the exceptions; man in most cases is "the arbiter of his own destiny." Circumstances are plastic, and the strong man can mould them to his desire in most cases.

Thus we see there are many things go to the evolution of a man, but when we ask, Why is this man what he is, and that man so different? we face a new problem which in most cases we cannot solve. You may say Kismet, but that is the answer of the weak, who make no effort, sit down satisfied with any excuse, and ask no questions; he is the man who has stopped short in his evolution. But "the man who dare be honest with himself," choosing the right, shunning the wrong, ever ready to seek the point he has missed, it may be unawares, and to pick it up, the man who stands to fight life's battle, not dream it, has carried evolution much farther, has reached a higher plane in the scale of growth, and may go on to perfection and grow to be a *Man* in all the honour and grandeur of true manhood, and, as Shakespeare said, "What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason, how infinite in faculty!" Noble in reason: there is the point. Nobility not in rank, but in thought and act; these go far to make the perfect man, and these are the things a man must choose for himself in all honesty of purpose and striving of fight; he can win through if he will, but, as Fletcher says:—

"Man is his own star, and that soul that can
Be honest, is the only Perfect Man."

THE STUDY OF ISLAM

V.

RAMADAN, OR THE MONTH OF FASTING

THE Holy Month of Ramadan would begin on the tenth day of this month. The month is held in veneration by the Muslims the world over, and they observe fasting on all of its days. But the observance of keeping fasts is not peculiar to Muslims alone. Nearly all the great religions of the world have laid down this ordinance in one form or another, and in our own days there is a growing body of men who, although definitely uninterested in any religion, do recognize the wisdom and advantage of this practice. The peculiarity of Islam lies in this, that where it always presents all such of its features as are common to it and other religions in a highly purified and correct form, it has also laid down rules and regulations for the observance of fasting which clearly distinguish it from a mere ordeal of starving. These rules and regulations make it one of the most wonderful and ethical institutions that are yet known to men. The commencement of the Holy Month introduces in the Muslim world a visible change in their daily life. So far as the rules about the hours of partaking food go, a Muslim—after the new moon has risen—would take a breakfast before the dawn¹ of the next morning, and would abstain from taking anything till the sunset time of the day, and this course would be followed so long as the lunar month lasts. This feature of Islamic fastings is seemingly common to this institution in other religions, although there are some according to which the abstention from, or the partaking of, certain foods constitutes alone the observance. The same do help themselves to fruits, their juice, and some other similar refreshments. Islamic fasting, however, is an absolute and total abstention from taking anything to eat or drink. Islam besides prescribes injunctions which distinguish it from mere starvation. The Holy Preceptor of Islam has frequently said that mere abstention from food and drinks does not unveil the real significance of Islamic fasting. The verses of Al Qur-án which convey the injunction are explicit and to the point in their statement, which make it an institution for the improvement of the moral and spiritual condition of man. We

¹ The time of sunrise in this country in the month of Ramadan will vary from 3.45 a.m. to 3.56 a.m. The time of dawn, therefore, for the purpose of keeping fast, according to light-saving hours, will be sometimes between 2.30 and 2.45 a.m.—ED.

have given these verses and the commentary thereupon on pages 254-258.

In order to lay down the best course of escaping evil, Islam expects its follower to even abstain from those things during the month of Ramadan the use of which would be permissible to him at other times; and all this in the name of God of Mercy and Greatness. This indirectly enables him to practise in a very effective way the resistance to evil inclinations when he is capable of abstaining from all lawful indulgence during this month. During the time of fasting one has to give up all those connections which arise out of one's matrimonial state, as well as to resist every expression of this carnal instinct in man or woman. So that Islamic fasting does not merely mean the fasting of one's organs of receiving food, but also the fasting of eyes, ears, lips, etc. It constitutes the strict non-indulgence in any physical gratifications. According to the ways of the Holy Prophet, an observer of it should not merely keep his organs of doing and feeling from unlawful indulgence, but should on the other hand employ them in doing meritorious acts. One who fasts and cannot keep his eyes from casting lustful looks is not at all observing the rule. Likewise one who hears foul language or speaks it, or one whose limbs and organs move in unholiness, commits wrong and violates the sanctity of fasting. Islam puts a ban on evil thoughts and reflections. Islam expects its followers to develop to their fullest limit all those faculties in them which are noble and good; that is why the Holy Prophet, besides his habitual benevolence of disposition, was even more generous during the days of the Ramadan. He was foremost of all in giving with a free hand out of what he had. The Qur-án prescribes the same mode for the suppression of a passion like anger in man:—

“Wal kázimin alghaiz, wal ‘áfin anannás, walláho yuhibbul muhsinín.”

“The true believer is he who controls his anger and forgives peoples. Verily Allah loves those who are benefactors of their fellow-men.”

As a matter of fact all our passions arise from our different natural appetites, and can never be killed; but directed in the right channels they will become assets of incalculable value to humanity. This is the reason why the Holy Book has enjoined upon every man not only to control his anger but also to exercise a little extra generosity towards the one who had been the cause of it; and to do so, particularly when a Muslim is fasting, constitutes part of his observance of the ordinance. He should, moreover, be bountiful in freely ministering out of his possessions to the wants of others. The exercise of all other noble qualities in the fasting month is especially recommended. A month thus spent in charity and abstemiousness would never fail to yield the best of results for the rest of the year. This fact holds good in regard to every other quality in man. Besides, if the eagerness to do the opposite of bad to the highest degree can create high order of morality, observance to a course of discipline like the Muslim fasting could never fail to build an enduring character in him for a whole lifetime.

CHRISTIAN VIEW OF FASTING.

Unfortunately injunctions like fasting have always been regarded in the Christian world as systems of mortification and penance—a necessary part, as they think, of the Old Covenant. To them such institutions therefore seem to be just ordinances descending upon ordinary mortals in the garb of religion from an all-powerful autocrat who takes delight in making his creatures suffer. And since according to Church theology man was incapable of bearing the burden of this heavy task—"the law," the latter became a source of malediction to him—Jesus came to relieve humanity from its baneful effect. A supreme penalty was paid to the Tasking Master—to relieve us from all kinds of penances and mortifications. A new covenant was entered into and "the Blood" placed a seal of confirmation on it.

What a misnomer of theology and a puerile and trite conception of religion! The real function of religion is the reform of our morals, and if the observance of fasting, such as is laid down by Islam, can and does promote this reform, can any atonement or intercession absolve us from the necessity of observing it? Islamic fasting happily is neither a mortification nor a course of wicked starvation. It is far from being that over which an imperious tyrant gloats. It does not atone for any sin, nor has it anything to do with a painful incident. It is only a means, and a potent means, for the reform of our morals and the best ethical ideal for one to strive for. Does it not, as we all know, furnish the best weapon to fight out any lack of patience or perseverance? If we regard resolution of purpose as the highest moral quality in man, then it is the chief function of every correct system of religion, not only to hold up this quality in our esteem, but also to lay down the mode of its acquisition. Islam did not content itself to say that humility and gentleness are the best of virtues, but has laid down rules how these could be possessed and exercised. It has placed fasting among such modes. One of the sayings of the Holy Prophet reads:—

"Assaumo nisfus sabr."
(Fasting is half-patience.)

How can one deny the value of fasting, even though its definition was reduced to mere abstinence from food and drinks between certain hours? We are very well acquainted with the physical helplessness and total dependence on medical aid of those to whom the *summum bonum* of life is eating and leading an easy life. To them a course of fasting would be what an elixir of life is to the dying. Besides, rich foods and drinks in a glutton give rise to all those base passions to which a man of abstemious habits would be a stranger. Evil deeds hardly fit well with a hungered body. If the above is undoubtedly true, is it not more than the truth that during the month of fasting all doors are closed upon Satan, as the Noble Prophet remarked?

MUSLIMS' LIFE DURING RAMADAN.

It has been pointed out that we have not only to shun evil during Ramadan, but also to exercise our faculties of generosity and benevolence to our utmost capacity. That is why in Islamic countries ordinary business is a little less attended to during these days than in others. It is therefore a universal wish to save out of a years' earnings for use during this Holy Month. An unusual social and moral atmosphere is the visible feature of this month. Hearts move towards piety and goodness as if by instinct. After usual night prayer there is another prayer known as the "Taráveeh" prayer. This prayer is in fact the substitute of midnight prayer. "Tahájjad," or midnight prayer, is the sixth prayer, which is not obligatory, and is said between 1 a.m. and early dawn by the pious. But during Ramadan its observance becomes essential for all. After breaking their fasts, and having taken their suppers, the Muslims leave their houses and come to the mosques to pass most of the night in prayer, but as the place of worship becomes crowded with the votaries one of them assumes the duties of Imam,¹ while others follow him in prayers. He recites the Qur'an in an audible tone and arranges to finish the whole of it within the month. This prayer of Taráveeh consists of twenty Rakâat, which ordinarily take some three hours to finish. Then they go to their homes and retire to rest, but leave their beds again some two or three hours before the dawn. Some of the Muslims prefer to say their Tahájjad—midnight prayer—in place of Taráveeh at this time. Then some breakfast is taken. This over, the morning prayer is said. A brief nap is taken by some after they have said their morning prayer, to make up for the want of rest which long hours of waking during the night might have caused. The normal business is resumed. All those for whom the suspension of their business in the month is possible—and Muslims mostly take care to save something in eleven months to enable them to dispense with their work in this month—generally resort during the day and the night to devotional places; there they do reading from the Qur'an, if by themselves, or busy themselves with religious and prayer exercises and study works on morals, ethics, etc. The mosques are generally very crowded during these days, which remain open day and night with the exception of a few hours at night-time; but what is most conspicuous is the fact that the spectre of the want of the daily necessities of life is banished from the land. This is due entirely to the fact that rich and poor are all eager to be helpful and sympathetic to those who need this kind of assistance and charity. Good-fellowship, conscientiousness, and devotion become the order of the day. Even the most indigent in the society find plentiful help from the charity of their more blessed neighbours. Those in the West, who are beginning to recognize now that silence and contemplation too play no small part in the achievement of human enfoldment, would do well to note the truth of the above in Islamic countries, especially during the month of Ramadan.

¹ One who leads the prayer.

LAILA-TUL-QADR—THE MOST SACRED NIGHT OF THE YEAR.

It is one of the popular traditional beliefs amongst Muslims that one of the last ten nights of the month Ramadan is one for the fulfilment of human prayers and supplications. This particular night has not been very definitely distinguished from the other nine, but the experience of those who have been blessed with those most propitious moments generally goes to fix it as one of the odd nights in the last ten nights of the month. Some regard the 27th or the 29th as the Night, although the greater consensus of opinion is in favour of the 27th. Let it not be regarded that this night is all a myth, but is a reality which is fully borne out by the experience of those who had the supreme bliss of witnessing it. The writer of these pages too is not unfamiliar with the inspiring effect of this experience. The Holy Qur-án designates the night as the "Lailá-tul-

THE BLESSED NIGHT

Arabic metre Mufáeelun, Mufáeelun, Mufáeelun, Mufáeelun.

IN darkest night, in rainy day,
My eyes upon Thy shining face ;
With horrid looks when comes dismay
My rock of hope, Thy blessing grace.

Can I forget that "blessed night"
When I was bled with darts of love?
How beatic, how charming sight,
When heart which, flying like a dove,
Began to melt into a cloud
To rise to Thee, in regions high,
Soul wished to leave its earthly shroud
To see the Beauty, eye to eye.
I wish, my Love! if that had been
The final moment of this life,
With joyful heart, with mind serene,
I would have left this earthly strife.

Thy Words I read in sacred Book,¹—
Thou listenest to the one aggrieved.
My Love! come, shine, in gloomy nook
Of heart, that bleeds and feels bereaved.

KHWAJA.

¹ The Qur-án.

Qadr,"¹—"the Grand Night," and the hours between the midnight and the early dawn are those of Divine Grace in it. It is generally supposed that it is invariably a clear night, and the sacred moments are attended by a cool breeze and a fine drizzling which exhilarates the soul. The pious, deep in his contemplation, finds a strange and indescribable emotion arising out of him. The universe all round him appears to have donned a robe of purity. All of his low desires and carnal passions are dead in him. He finds himself most eager to lay out his heart, his bosom, before the Great Lord; and when he stands before Him in this attitude he finds himself entirely lost in Him—he feels crushed by a nameless weight which entralls him, and he is ecstatic. He is oblivious to the posture or the position in which he is, thus wrapped up in his contemplation. Whether he is standing up, bowing, sitting down, or in prostration, he is incapable of changing any of these postures. A stream of prayer bursts out of him, like that of a spring, and he feels a melting down all over. When he is in this state a kind of liquid is emitted by his tongue which is refreshing and sweet. His bosom is unlocked, and there is a feeling of freshness all about him. Although there is no one near him, yet he finds himself overpowered by the assurance that he is in the presence of his God, who is encouraging him to approach Him with his prayer which would be fulfilled. These few remarks describe but partially the most wonderful sensation that a true and devoted seeker experiences during the brief hours of bliss that occur during this night. One would willingly give his whole life for these few moments of true Divine Beatitude which a Muslim, only Muslim, can achieve in the said night.

I'TIKAF.

To obtain this transcendental good fortune there is a religious usage amongst Muslims of contemplation alone and in silence. This is called "I'tikaf." All larger mosques in Muslim lands have attached to them small cubicles as silence-chambers for the purpose of "I'tikaf." Those who desire to go through this form of devotion during Ramadan leave their homes on the 21st night and take up their habitat in these cubicles, which they only leave for necessity. Their food, which never exceeds bare subsistence, is brought to them by their people. This meal is taken by them between sunset and dawn. This routine is kept up for ten days between the 20th of Ramadan and the rising of the next crescent. "I'tikaf" consists of contemplating the attributes of God and a searching inquiry into the votaries' own shortcomings. Their readings of the Qur-ân are always done with a serious eye to find the points of agreement and disagreement between their ways and the teaching of the Holy Book. They then earnestly approach the Lord for the right and straight guidance. The life of the Holy Prophet and the teachings of Al Qur-ân are set up

¹ See p. 261.

by them as ideals, and they pray for being given the courage to reach up to them. The nightly hours are mostly spent in prayers, meditation, and contemplation. To find the propitious moments of the said sacred night is not the chief aim of the worshipper in I'tikaf. He looks more to have his life in tune with the Universal Spirit, and in the dark hours of the chamber he tries to kindle divine flame in him and receive true illumination. The people of the worshippers receive a special request to minister alms to the poor on their behalf. The above might excite a sceptical smile in this materialistic world, but experience knows the enormous spiritual and moral value of these exercises. It is not a traditional belief, but it is a reality and an experience.

THE 27TH NIGHT OF THE RAMADAN.

It has been indicated that a special grace attaches to the "Laila-tul-Qadr" night in Muslim countries, which is generally taken to be the 27th of the month. Those who are not in I'tikaf celebrate it with special celebration: mosques are decorated with taste for the occasion. When the time of breaking fast draws near, worshippers in their hundreds flock to mosques. Well-to-do people bring light refreshments to the mosques. This is a matter of course on all other evenings of the Ramadan, but the 27th night is observed in a special manner. All in the mosque share the light refreshments taken on the occasion of breaking the fast, and then offer their prayers together. It has been mentioned before that the special prayer which is said after the night prayers is called the "Taráveeh," and a portion of Al Qur-án is recited in it. At some places, however, it is arranged that the whole of the Qur-án is recited by different Imams, and thus this night of 27th is spent. This briefly is a description of the month, which ends by the rising of the crescent of Eid, which literally means happiness, and is celebrated as a thanksgiving to God for the privilege of having enjoyed the blessings of the Ramadan and not as an occasion which brought an end to starvation, as the calumniators of Islam in the person of Christian propagandists would suggest. Every Muslim looks forward, for the month and the last Friday of Ramadan is observed with a sense of mourning, as the very name *Jumna-tul-Vida* shows—the Friday of Farewell to Ramadan. The special feature of this Friday is that almost all the Muslims of cities prefer to say their Friday prayer together in one big mosque, and observe the day as a holiday. We do not know of any occasion in the Christian world corresponding to this month. The Christmas was the happiest occasion to celebrate the advent of one of the most truthful men, who ushered the spirit of righteousness in the world. But the way in which it is celebrated indicates it much more that of a Bacchus worship than the commemoration of the Righteous as he was. It must be confessed that all Muslims do not observe fasting, but then it would be difficult to meet any such who would assume any attitude of irreverence towards it. One would never dare

to publicly dishonour its tenets, but would always try to act in as upright a manner as possible. To tell a Muslim of his being with fast, or the month being that of fasts, is the most potent reminder to him of virtue. To say that one is fasting is a sure guarantee of the truth of his speech. From all these statements it is apparent what a powerful institution fasting is for the balance of passions and the development of character.

WHEN FASTING IS NOT OBLIGATORY.

Fasting need not be observed in illness and in travel. This remission, however, might be redeemed at other times. It would be rather difficult to definitely lay down rules to meet all kinds of individual cases. Every man is the best judge of his own conditions, and can know when one is really ill. The easiest way to determine this inability is to follow medical advice, which should clearly say that fasting would do harm. Women with child at the breast, in pregnancy, or during those few days of the month peculiar to their sex, need not also observe it.

In the end we give below those verses of Al Qur-án which lay down the injunctions with explanations of verses taken from the translation of Al Qur-án by Molvi Mohammed Ali. The foot-notes are very useful. They supplement further information which the writer has not given for the same reason.

SECTION 23

Fasting

183, 184. Fasting enjoined. 185. The month of Ramadán to be observed as a month of fasting. 186. Acceptance of prayers. 187. The limits of fasts. 188. Rights of property to be respected.

183 O you who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard (against evil),²²⁵

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

225 Fasting is a religious institution almost as universal as prayer, and in Islam it is one of the four fundamental practical ordinances, the other three being prayer, poor-rate, and pilgrimage. The words of the Qur-án show that fasting was enjoined on all nations by the prophets who passed before the Holy Prophet Muhammad. "Fasting has in all ages and among all nations been an exercise much in use in times of mourning, sorrow, and afflictions" (Cr. Bib. Con.). Fasting has also been in vogue among the Hindus. Even Christians, who think that they have no need of any religious exercise on account of Jesus' atonement, were commanded by that prophet to keep the fasts: "Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance. . . . But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face" (Matt. 6:16, 17). Again, when the Pharisees objected to Jesus' disciples not keeping the fast as often as John's, his only answer was that when he will be taken away "then shall they fast in those days" (Luke 5:33-35).

But Islam has introduced quite a new meaning into the institution of fasting. Before Islam, fasting meant the suffering of some privation in times of mourning and sorrow; in Islam, it becomes an institution for the improvement of the moral and spiritual condition of man. This is plainly stated in the concluding words: *So that you may guard against evil.* The object is that man may learn how he can shun evil, and hence fasting in Islam does

184 For a certain number of days; ^{225a} but whoever among you is sick or on a journey, then (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days; and those who are able to do it may effect a redemption by feeding a poor man; ²²⁶ so whoever does good spontaneously it is better for him; and that you fast is better for you if you know.

185 The month of Ramaḍān ²²⁷ is that in which the Qur-ān ²²⁸

أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ
مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ
أُخْرَى وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُخَيِّفُونَ ذِلَّةً
طَعَامَ مَسْكِينٍ فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا
فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ وَأَنْ تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ○

شَهْرَ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ

not mean simply abstaining from food, but from every kind of evil. In fact, abstention from food is only a step to make a man realize that if he can, in obedience to Divine injunctions, abstain from that which is otherwise lawful, how much more necessary it is that he should abstain from the evil ways which are forbidden by God. All the institutions of Islam are, in fact, practical steps leading to perfect purification of the soul. But along with moral elevation, which is aimed at in fasting, another object seems to be hinted at. In fact, the twofold object is that Muslims may be able to guard themselves, (a) *morally* and *spiritually*, against evil, for one who is able to renounce the lawful satisfaction of his desires in obedience to Divine commandments certainly acquires the power to renounce their unlawful gratification; and (b) *physically* against their opponents by habituating themselves to suffer tribulations which they must suffer in defence of Islam and Muslims.

225a The number of days is definitely stated in the next verse as being the twenty-nine or thirty days of the month of Ramaḍān. For details of fasting see Preface.

226 The word *ṣadyah* used in this verse is thus explained by Rgh: *That by means of which a man saves himself, being the wealth which he spends on account of some devotion in which he has fallen short.* The word also indicates the giving away of property by which freedom of any kind is purchased. By those who are able to do it are meant those who are able to feed a poor man. As regards those who cannot keep the fasts on account of constant or long illness, or who are too old or too weak (including in this class the woman who is with child or who gives suck), the practice has been to give away the measure of one man's food to a poor man every day during the whole month (Bkh, AD). Doing good to others is enjoined in addition to fasting in the month of Ramaḍān. We are told that the Holy Prophet, who was universally recognized for his abundant charity, was most charitable in the month of Ramaḍān (Bkh). In its mildest form the injunction is generally observed by giving away the measure of a poor man's feeding at the close of the month, which is called the *sadaqat-ul-ṣitr*, and which is obligatory on every male, female, and child, master and servant (Bkh).

227 The revelation of the Holy Qur-ān commenced in the month of Ramaḍān, which is the ninth month of the Arabian year (Rz), hence, the month of Ramaḍān is particularly spoken of as being the month in which the Holy Qur-ān was revealed. The root meaning of Ramaḍān is *excessiveness of heat*; the month was so called because "when they changed the names of the months from the ancient language, they named them according to the seasons in which they fell, and this month agreed with the days of excessive heat" (LL, Bd). Some say that it is one of the names of Allah, for which, however, there is no reliable authority.

228 *Al-Qur-ān* is the name by which the Holy Book revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad—peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him!—is known, and by this name the Holy Book is frequently mentioned in the Divine revelation. The word is an infinitive noun from the root *qara-a*, which signifies primarily *he collected together the things* (LA, TA-LL). The secondary significance of the root-word is *reading* or *reciting* a

was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the distinction; ²²⁹ therefore whoever of you is present in the month, he shall fast therein, and whoever is sick or upon a journey, then (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days; Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire for you difficulty, and (He desires) that you should complete the number and that you should exalt the greatness of Allah for His having guided you and that you may give thanks.

Ar. Rec.

186 And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near; I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should answer My call and believe in Me that they may find in the right way. ²³⁰

هُدًى لِلنَّاسِ وَيَذِّبُ مِنَ الْهُدَى
وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ
فَلْيَصُمْهُ وَمَنْ كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى
سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ يُرِيدُ
اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ
وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ
عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ
وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي
قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا
دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا
بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

book, the word being applied to reading or recitation because in reading letters and words are joined to each other in a certain order (Rgh). The name *Qur-án* really refers to both the root-meanings, for on the one hand it signifies a book in which are gathered together all the Divine Books, a distinction to which the *Qur-án* itself lays claim in 98 : 4 and elsewhere (Rgh); on the other it means a book that is or should be read, the Holy *Qur-án* being the book "that has been truly described as the most widely read book in existence" (*En. Br.*). The commentators have pointed out thirty-one different names under which the Holy *Qur-án* is spoken of in the revelation itself, the most important of these being *Al-Kitáb*, or the Book, and *Az-Zikr*, or the Reminder.

229 There are three statements made here regarding the Holy *Qur-án*; firstly, that it is a guidance for all men, and that therefore it contains teachings which are suitable for the various classes and grades of men in different countries and ages; secondly, that it contains comprehensive arguments of the guidance, thus demonstrating the truth of what it asserts; and thirdly, that in addition to the arguments it affords a clear distinction, separating the truth from the falsehood by making the faithful taste the fruits of faith and the rejecters the evil consequences of their rejection of truth. The battle of Badr, which is called *yaum-ul-furqán*, or the day of distinction, in 8 : 41, also took place in the month of Ramaḍán.

230 The connection of this verse with the previous and the following verses consists in the fact that fasting, which includes *shunning every sort of evil*, brings a man nearer to the fountain-head of purity, and the more a man is brought near to the Holy One, the more do his supplications find acceptance with his Master. Hence, it is related that in the month of Ramaḍán the Holy Prophet exerted himself the greater in his prayers (Bkh), and induced his followers to do likewise (Muslim).

That the prayer of a devout suppliant is accepted is plainly stated here, but two points must be noted in connection with this subject. In the first place, there is an impression that the efficacy of prayer in some way interferes with resorting to practical means to attain an object, so that if this impression has produced a class of men who totally deny the efficacy of prayer, it has also led others to think that by resorting to prayer

187 It is made lawful to you to go in to your wives on the night of the fast; they are an apparel for you and you are an apparel for them;²³¹ Allah knew that you acted unfaithfully to yourselves,²³² so He has turned to you (mercifully) and removed from you (this burden); so now be in contact with them and seek what Allah has ordained for you, and eat and drink until the whiteness of the day becomes distinct from the blackness of the night at

حُلِّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةُ الصَّيَامِ الرَّفْعُ إِلَى
نِسَائِكُمْ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ
لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ عَلَّمَ اللَّهُ أَنْتُمْ كُنْتُمْ
غَافِلُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَ
بَعَا عَنْكُمْ فَالآنَ بَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَ
ابْتَغُوا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا
حَتَّى تَبْيَضَ لَكُمْ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ
مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ

a man may dispense with all external means for the attainment of his object. Both these views are wrong, and opposed to the true doctrine of the efficacy of prayer as taught in Islam. The fact is that there is an indissoluble connection between practical means and prayer. Any one who sets before himself the attainment of an object first looks for the practical means to achieve it, and endeavours to his utmost to find out the agencies by which he can possibly attain that end. In this search for means he has to apply all his faculties to the object before him, and to give his whole attention to the finding of those means which will secure his object. This deep reflection or will-power may be called a prayer in a certain sense. For when we strive hard in search of what is hidden from us and unknown to us, we really seek for guidance from a Higher Power from whom nothing is hidden in a language which is expressed by our very condition. It cannot be doubted that when, in search of a thing, the soul stretches itself out in true zeal and ardour to the Giver of all gifts, and finding itself weak and unable to attain the end by itself, seeks for light from the Higher Source, it is plunged in a prayerful meditation, and its condition then is truly that of one who prays to God. The difference is only this, that the truly wise, the holy men of God, pray with due respect to Him whom they recognize to be the Source of all blessings, and their supplications are based upon a clear knowledge; while the prayer of those upon whose eyes a veil is cast is like wandering in darkness, and it takes the form of meditation and reflection. Thus those who neglect prayer in search of means and do not reflect well upon their course in a prayerful mood are as wrong as those who do not resort to practical means on account of their prayers.

Secondly, it should be borne in mind that the efficacy of prayer does not mean that every object for which a man prays to the Divine Being should be immediately attained. This is made clear by the Holy Qur-ān itself: "Him you will call upon, so He clears a way that for which you pray if He pleases" (6: 41); so that every object prayed for may not be attained. And again: "And We will most certainly try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits" (v. 155); so that trials and hardships must be undergone even by the faithful, and they must be prepared to suffer every kind of loss. But just as the efficacy of a medicine cannot be denied because it does not prove efficacious in all cases, so the efficacy of prayer cannot be denied on this ground.

231 This description of the mutual relations of husband and wife, and the mutual comfort they find in and the protection they afford to each other, is unsurpassed in beauty.

232 All that the reports narrated in connection with this verse show is that the Muslims at first thought that it was illegal to go in to their wives, even at night-time, on the days during which they kept fasts, but this practice, which, according to AbM, was adopted from the Christians (Rz), was, at any rate, according to the unanimous opinion of all commentators, not based on any Quranic revelation, the only revelation on this point being the one given in this verse, which pointed out the error of the view and removed the rigour under which the Muslims had placed themselves.

dawn,²³³ then complete the fast till night, and have not contact with them while you keep to the mosques;²³⁴ these are the limits of Allah, so do not go near them. Thus does Allah make clear His communications for men that they may guard (against evil).

188 And do not swallow up your property among yourselves by false means, neither seek to gain access thereby to the judges, so that you may swallow up a part of the property of men wrongfully while you know.²³⁵

Ar. arab.

ثُمَّ آتُوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى الْبَيْلِ وَلَا
تَبَاشِرُوهُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ
تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرُبُوهَا كَذَلِكَ
يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لِنَاسٍ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ
وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ
وَتَذْلُوا بِهَا إِلَى الْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقًا
مِنْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ وَأَنْتُمْ
تَعْلَمُونَ ۝

233 *Khait* originally means *thread*, but is not limited to that use. The *Khait alraqbah* (lit., the thread of the neck) means the spinal cord of the neck (S, Q-LL). And *Khait Minasubah* is also said to signify a tint of the dawn (TA-LL). Hence you say, *Tabayyanal Khait minal Khait*. The night became distinct from the day (TA-LL). Hence *Alkhait alabyaz* signifies the whiteness of the dawn and *Alkhait alaswad* the blackness of the night (LL); so here the break of the dawn is meant, after which no food or drink should be taken till sunset.

234 By this is meant those who cut themselves off from all worldly connections during the last ten days of the month of Ramadán, passing day and night in mosques. This practice is known as *I'tikáf*. But it is voluntary and not obligatory.

235 The injunction to abstain from illegally taking other men's property is a fitting sequel to the injunction relating to fasting, for by fasting a man abstains from using what he has a legal right to, simply in obedience to Divine commandments. Fasting, in fact, enables a man to control his passions, and once the passions are mastered, the greed for illegally acquiring what belongs to others will also vanish.

SELECTION FROM BUKHAREE.

THE following on the subject of fasting has been culled from Bukharee, the most reliable book of the Prophet's traditions:—

1. When the month is that of Ramadan, the gates of Heaven are made wide open, and the Satan is bound in chains.
2. Commence fasting after seeing the new moon of Ramadan, and cease fasting after seeing the new moon of Shawwal. If it is cloudy, fast for thirty days.
3. Says Abdullah bin Abbas: "Holy Prophet was foremost of all in doing good to others, but during the month his generosity was even greater."
4. One who abandons not deception and telling lies, then Allah does not need his keeping himself from eating and drinking. Allah says: "Every one does good deeds for

himself, but he fasts for My (God's) sake, and I alone can reward him."

5. Fasting shields from sin. When fasting, let no one speak foul, nor let him be boisterous. If he hears any one speaking foul to him, or using force against him, let him content with saying: "I am fasting."
6. If there be one unmarried, and being in fear of his yielding to evil passion, let him fast.
7. Let none fast on the day or two days preceding the month of fasting. But let one fast who is in the habit of fasting on a certain day, which happens to come before the month of Ramadan.
8. In Qur-án *Khait-alabyaz* means the light of dawn, and *Khait-alaswad* means the darkness of the night.
9. Let no one cease eating his early morning meal when he hears Bilal calling to prayer.
Hazrat Bilal, a companion of the Holy Prophet, used to call to prayer. Sometimes he gave the call for morning prayer before time, which induced some to begin their fast; hence the saying.
10. To partake the early morning meal (before fasting) is *mustahab* (desirable), not *wájib* (obligatory).
11. If one with fast pours water in his nose which passes down the throat, and he cannot emit it, his fast is not broken.
12. Feeling like sea-sickness does not break the fast, as something is discharged, not taken in.
13. The fast is broken by that which is swallowed, not by that which is given out.
14. When the night turns its back on this side, i.e. the east, and when day turns its back on that side, i.e. the west, and the Sun sets, it is the time of breaking the fast.

FASTS OTHER THAN THOSE OF THE RAMADAN.

1. Says Lady Aishá: "Holy Prophet did not fast in any month more than in that of Shabán (besides Ramadan), and used to fast during the whole of this month. He used to say: 'Do good to the extent of your ability only.'"
2. Says Abdullah bin Aud bin As: "Holy Prophet addressed him, saying: 'Abdullah, I have heard you fast in the day, and spend the night standing in prayers. Do

- not do to such an extent. Do keep fasts, and give yourself relief from it as well. Say prayers, but do sleep as well; for your body and your eyes have a right (to be properly taken care of) on you, your wife and your guests have claims on you. Fast not more than three days in one month, for every good deed is rewarded tenfold.' The Prophet added: 'Fast like Prophet David, and do not excel him in this.' 'How did he fast?' I asked. 'He fasted on alternate days,' was his reply."
3. Let none of you fast on Fridays, excepting when you are fasting on the two days, viz. the one preceding and the other following it.
 4. Holy Prophet forbade fasting on Id-ul-Fitar and Id uddahá days.

LAILA-TUL-QADR.

1. Seek for it in the odd nights of the last ten nights of the Ramadan.
2. Holy Prophet went into I'takáf—during the last ten days of Ramadan.
3. One may go into I'takáf even for a night.
4. A wife may see her husband in I'takáf (and no more).

GRACE AND SIN

My sins, Thy grace, my faults, Thy love,
My wrongful deeds, Thy forgiveness,
O Counter of the Days! do tell
Which greater is and which is less,

I know my life is evil full,
But who can count Thy grace as well?
I bask in shining rays of hope,
Undaunted of all fear of hell.

Thou dost not need some price for sin
In compensation of mercy.
In things from Thee "no give and take";
Thy gifts, Thy blessings, ever free.

But if Thy wrath is unappeased,
And wants "the blood" in penalty,
Adieu, O Lord! to Thee adieu;
What difference is in me and Thee?

KHWAJA.

CHAPTER XCVII

THE MAJESTY

(Al-Qadr)

REVEALED AT MECCA

(5 verses)

	In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.	بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
Ar. night of majesty.	1 Surely We revealed it on the <i>grand night</i> . ²⁷⁷⁷	إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ
Ar. thee.	2 And what will make you	الْقَدْرِ
Ar. night of majesty.	comprehend what the <i>grand</i> <i>night</i> is?	وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ

General remarks.

THE very first revelation of the Holy Qur-án contained in the last chapter is suitably followed in arrangement by one that relates when the revelation of the Qur-án began. It was the night of Majesty (one of the last ten nights of the month of Ramaḍan) which first witnessed the shining of that light which was destined to illumine the whole world. And the coming of the first revelation on the night of *Majesty*, which gives its name to this chapter, contained a clear indication that the most majestic of all revelations was now being granted to the world, and that the majesty of this revelation, as well as of its recipient, should be established in the world. The chapter is unquestionably one of the very earliest revelations.

2777 *Lailat-ul-qadr*, which I have rendered as the *grand night*, and which literally means *the night of majesty* or *grandeur* or *greatness*, is a well-known night in the month of Ramaḍan, being the 21st or 23rd or 25th or 27th or 29th night of the month, or more probably one of the latter three. In 44: 3 it is called the *blessed night*. From 2: 185 it appears that the Holy Qur-án was revealed in the month of Ramaḍan, and from the above it appears to have been revealed on the *grand night*; by revelation of course being meant its first revelation, because the whole was revealed in portions during twenty-three years, and the word Qur-án is applicable as well to a portion as to the whole. It is for this reason that the *i'tikāf*, or adhering to the mosques, is fixed for the last ten days of the month of Ramaḍan, and in fact *lailat-ul-qadr* owes its importance to the fact that it was on this night that the most blessed and perfect of all revelations was vouchsafed to the world. Moses' fasting for forty days previous to the receipt of revelation (Exod. 24: 18), and Jesus' keeping fast for the same number of days before he was called upon to undertake the office of prophethood (Matt. 4: 2), show that the gift of revelation comes with fasting; hence the Muslims are required to fast every year for thirty days, and special Divine blessings are promised to them in the concluding days of the fasts.

Ar. night of
majesty.

Or, spirit.

3 The *grand night* is better
than a thousand months.²⁷⁷⁸4 The angels and the in-
spiration descend in it by the
permission of their Lord for
every affair.²⁷⁷⁹5 Peace! it is till the break
of the morning.²⁷⁸⁰

لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ نَهْجَةٍ
تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلَكَةِ وَالنُّزُوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ
رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرِ
سَلَامٌ تَقْدِيسٌ حَتَّى مَطْلَمِ الْفَجْرِ²

But the *lailat-ul-qadr* carries another and deeper significance. The time during which a prophet appears is usually a time of darkness, and, as such, is often compared to a night in the Holy Qur-án; but as in this darkness comes a blessing from on high in the person of a Divine messenger, this night is a blessed and majestic night. Hence the period of the advent of a Divine messenger may also be metaphorically called *lailat-ul-qadr*. Its designation as the *blessed night* in 44:3, followed as it is by the statement that in it "every wise affair is made distinct," shows clearly that the other significance of the word is based on the Holy Qur-án itself, because it, is during the time of a prophet's advent that true wisdom is distinctly established.

2778 A thousand months are equal to about 83 years, leaving 17 years to complete a century. There is a saying of the Holy Prophet according to which a *mujaddid*, or a reformer, will appear among the Muslims at the commencement of every century. The deeper significance of *lailat-ul-qadr* given in the previous note finds additional support in the circumstance that such a reformer would, under ordinary circumstances, work for some twenty years, and this period is therefore better and richer than the remaining eighty years marked by the absence of a reformer.

2779 The descent of the angels and the "inspiration" also show that *lailat-ul-qadr* has a deeper significance, for though a particular night in the month of Ramaḍān may be characterized by great Divine blessings, it is more especially in connection with the mission of one appointed by Allah for the regeneration of the world that "the angels and inspiration" come down from heaven, such being the Divine support of his cause. For the meaning of *ruh* see 653, 2183.

2780 "Peace" is the chief distinction of *lailat-ul-qadr*. This *peace* comes to the hearts of the true devotees in the form of a tranquillity of mind which makes them fit to receive Divine blessings. Its continuance "till the break of the morning" is quite clear when the night is taken literally; the break of morning would signify the approaching end of the reformer, when truth, like the light of the day, has made itself fully manifest.