

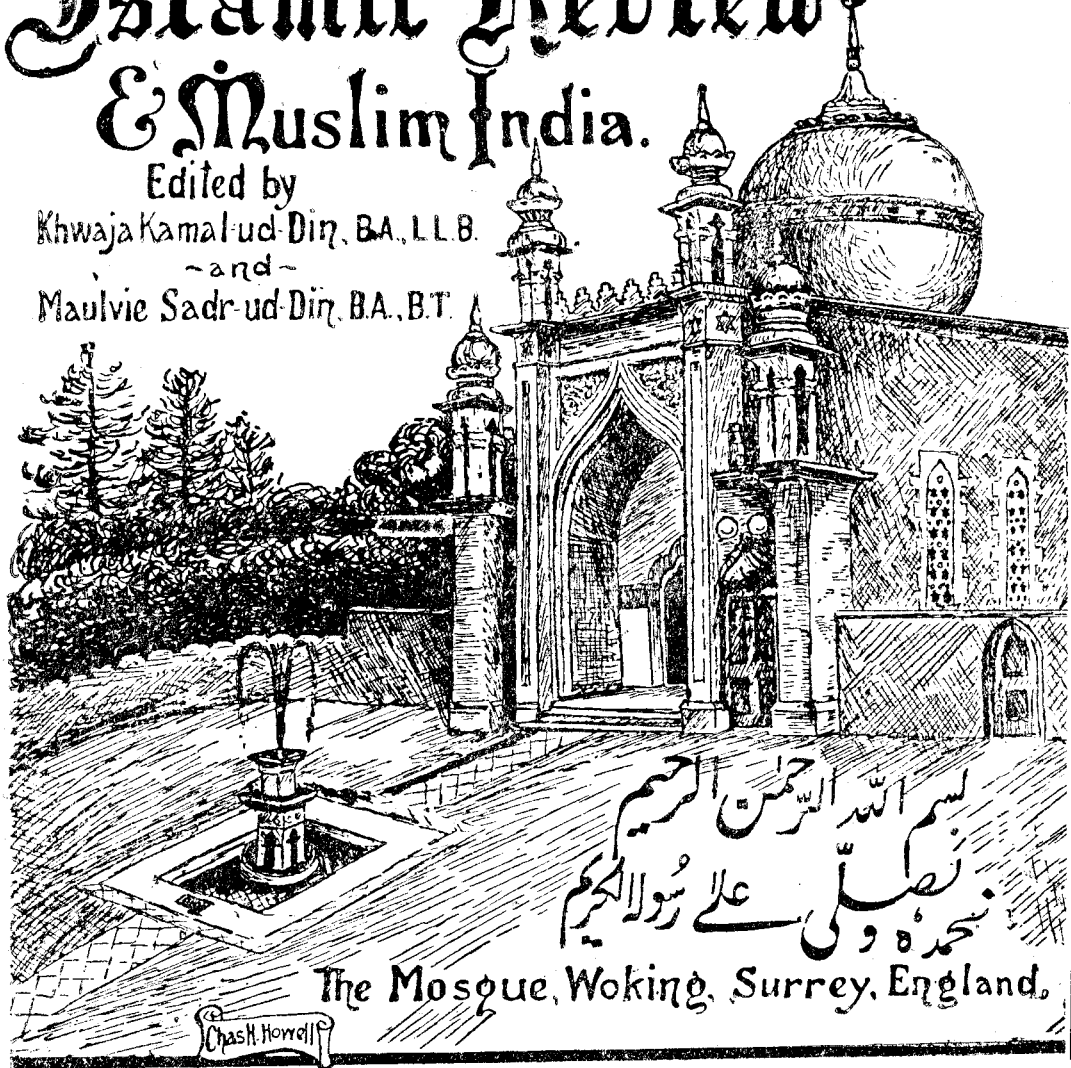
Islamic Review & Muslim India.

Edited by

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-and-

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

ISLAMIC REVIEW

AND

MUSLIM INDIA

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THE HOLY QUR-ĀN

With English Translation and Commentary, printed on high-class India paper, and bound in green flexible leather, *is now ready*. Price 22s.* 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.

Friday Prayer and Sermon.—At the London Muslim Prayer House, every Friday, at 1.30 p.m.

Service, Sermon and Lectures every Sunday at the Muslim Prayer House (111, Campden Hill Road, Notting Hill Gate, W. 8), at 7 p.m., and at the Mosque, Woking, at 3.15 p.m.

* The rise in the price of book-binding has compelled us to increase the price.

THE CELEBRATION OF EID-UL-FITR AT THE MOSQUE, WOKING

THE activities of the London Muslim Association continued with their characteristic vigour. Owing to the absence of Mr. Dudley Wright, due to unavoidable circumstances, Mr. S. Schleich and Syed Haidar Raza spoke on these several Sundays:—

June 1st.—Mr. S. Schleich on: "The Duties of Men and Women."

June 8th.—Mr. S. H. Raza on: "Islam and the Future."

June 15th.—Mr. S. Schleich on: "Our Ideal."

June 22nd.—Mr. S. H. Raza on: "The Characteristics of Al-Qurán."

The Sunday afternoon addresses by Mr. Abdul Qayum Malik at the Mosque, Woking, continued to draw good attendances. One of these was followed by interesting discussion.

It is with the greatest pleasure that we take this opportunity of describing briefly what took place at the Mosque on Sunday, June 29th. Invitations to come and participate in the celebration of the auspicious festival of the Eid-ul-Fitr having been sent out two weeks earlier, a large number of Musalmans and non-Muslim sympathizers and friends mustered in full strength on the above date at Woking. Among the British Muslims were nearly all the leading ladies and gentlemen whose adhesion to our common Holy Faith is the source of so much satisfaction to us and to them. Our Hindu fellow-countrymen, including Sir P. Pattani, the Indian State-Secretary's Councillor, formed a conspicuous part of the gathering; they had come to demonstrate the fact that Eastern people at a time of this crisis were standing shoulder to shoulder to share the burdens which circumstances imposed upon them. Punctually at 11.30 the "Takbir" for Eid prayers was called, and there followed a scene the thrill of which will linger for years to come in the hearts of those present. That the Imam, in the person of our esteemed brother Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall, was a native Englishman imparted a wonderful inspiration to the worshippers

THE CELEBRATION OF EID-UL-FITR

which was manifest from their faces. Mr. Pickthall led the service in a beautiful and his characteristically devotional manner. His recitations of the verses of Holy Al-Qurán during service was extremely edifying. Prayers over, he delivered an instructive sermon bearing upon the times through which the world was passing, and held the audience entranced for over an hour. In the purity of style and loftiness of interpretation the address of the Imam was an unsurpassed effort. We hope to publish it in full in our next.

After the worshippers had embraced each other in token of mutual affection the gathering sat down to assist in the passing of the following resolution, which was sent by telegram to the President of the Peace Conference at Paris:—

"That Moslems from India, Arabia, Persia, Egypt, Mesopotamia, China, Sudan, West Africa, as well as English Moslems assembled at Woking on the occasion of the celebration of the annual festival closing the Fast of Ramadan, resolved unanimously that a telegram be sent to the President of the Peace Conference at Paris protesting strongly against the tone and apparent meaning of the Allied reply to the Turkish memorandum.

"They deem it their duty to point out to the Allied Powers the serious consequences involved in any decision which may deprive Turkey of her sovereignty in Constantinople, Thrace, and Asia Minor, and deprive the Sultan of his suzerainty over other parts of the Turkish Empire."

Mr. A. Yusuf Ali, M.A., C.B.E., I.C.S. (Rtd.), was voted to the chair. Mirza Husheini Ispahani, the President of the Central Islamic Society, who has been working most strenuously at this crisis in the history of Islam, spoke briefly of its importance. Mr. Yusuf Ali, in moving the resolution, eloquently pleaded for the hearing of the Turkish case before the tribunal of the Allies. After it had been seconded by Shaikh M. H. Kidwai it was carried unanimously.

The Eid lunch which followed consisted of the usual national dishes of the Muslims. The Zuhur prayer was again led by Mr. Pickthall, and was followed by tea. The gathering broke up gradually with fervent prayers to the Only Giver of all Real Peace that His Mighty and Just hand will be extended to help His humble adorers and creatures amidst the trials and sufferings with which they are beset.

Our humble and grateful thanks are due to our sisters and brothers who co-operated most tirelessly to make the day a success.

MALIK.

THE MUSLIM'S PRAYER

O Almighty and Ever-present God, Thee alone do we look to. Thee alone do we adore and worship; accept our loving offerings of praise and thanksgiving, and increase our power of understanding Thy infinite wisdom, Thy infinite love, and Thy infinite compassion. Thou art our Creator, and Thou knowest that since we love Thee we also hate and loathe the devil and his miserable devices to take our thoughts from Thee.

Dear Father of Heaven and God of the Universe, make us beneficent towards all those of our fellow-creatures who may not think of Thee as we ourselves do: May we show a spirit of toleration and may we beg of Thee to so direct the hearts of all our brethren in this world that they may appreciate our earnest desire to welcome them in that fold where the Shepherd, in Thy Almighty, Glorious, and Merciful Presence, is ever to be found.

May we, O God our Preserver and Comforter, endeavour to follow in the footsteps of Thy Holy Prophets, Moses, Christ, and Muhammad, and, from their teachings, may we learn humility and patience. We are now entering upon a new era in which we shall have to combat the demon of Atheism, born of intolerance and superstition, and the demon of idolatry and all that tends to obscure our view of Thee, O Blessed God our Father.

Give us courage to follow in the footsteps of Thy Prophet, the Divinely inspired Muhammad, whose memory do Thou, O God, keep fresh and green in our hearts. May we emulate his sincerity and charity, and may we try to be like him in our desire to do justice to all mankind. May we never forget what our Lord Jesus Christ said of the Pharisees and Hypocrites, but, as Thou art All-Merciful, we implore Thee to forgive and change the hearts of those who are hostile to Islam, especially those who have wilfully misrepresented our Faith to the Western World. We pray for Thy Divine guidance; to Thee alone do we look. Thou art our Leader and Guide, our Ever-present Counsellor and Protector. Islam is our only watchword, and we feel safe in Thy Almighty Arms.

Dear Father, Thou art very near—
We feel Thy presence everywhere—
In darkest night, in brightest day,
To show the path, direct the way.

AMEN.

El Farooq.

PEACE THROUGH WAR

PEACE THROUGH WAR OR WAR THROUGH PEACE

By ABDUL QAYUM MALIK.

“And if two parties of the believers quarrel, make peace between them; but if one of them acts wrongfully towards the other, fight that which acts wrongfully until it returns to Allah's command; then if it returns, make peace between them with justice and act equitably; surely Allah loves those who act equitably.”

“The believers are but brethren, therefore make peace between your brethren and be careful of (your duty to) Allah that mercy may be had on you.”

Translation of Holy Qur-án, ch. 49, v. 9, 10, by Molvi Mohamad Ali, M.A.

WE wish we could say in years to come that war has come to an end for ever. The Great War has come to an end. True, the armistice has been signed, and so has the Great Peace,—after over half a year's labours of the leaders of the great nations of the world. This Peace will put an end to the orgy of organized carnage that had been going on. This is a great achievement indeed. The bringing into reality a problem of so great a complexity such as the adjustment of the world affairs for the future indicates the richness of human brain, even at a time when its sole pre-occupation had become the devising of the engines of destruction. Peace will now reign throughout the world, so say “the makers of peace.” Our fervent prayers go up to the only Sustainer of every righteous human effort calculated to benefit man's fellows, for the success of this result. The war had been a great war, may the Peace be great, too.

But let us pause and realize the strength of this Peace, of this so-called great peace, in the light of the import of the verses quoted above. The materialistic temperament of the large portion of the world judges the greatness and smallness of every achievement by the extent of its utility; but this utility involves the idea that one is benefited at the expense of another. Is it therefore an universally correct test? Most certainly not. There is a still higher test by which we could yet determine the value of such great results. The test is that of beneficence. Does the peace surpass the sordid degree of mere utility and transcend into the higher regions of beneficence? On the

practical fulfilment of this, therefore, rests the good of the great Peace, on this alone depends the fate of the orderly progress of the world that has been promised to us in the future. We have to see if the Peace is a beneficent peace, or is it a peace of mere utility?

The nations of the world who rushed to arms did so, as they say, to check the advancing tide of greed, of hatred, of arrogance, of self-centred selfishness. They have triumphed. Those they deemed the wronged and the weak have been befriended. But have they uprooted the principle of "might is right" for all times; which is the only peace. There are two ways to restore peace—in the words of the Holy Book, viz., by maintaining a state of harmony and cordiality amongst the people and peoples of the world; and, secondly, by befriending the wronged side, when it has been attacked by the stronger. The chief aim of either of these is the maintenance of peace broadbased on justice. Peace has been restored through war. It is the motive which makes every legitimate means justifiable. Passion of hate must be met with the opposite, and the noble passion of righteous anger. The circumstances of the last great conflict show that the noble passion of righteous anger has seemingly overcome its baser prototype. But is it a triumph of the principle which does not know the barriers of race or creed, the differences of nationality or colour. If it is, then we may say that might has given way to right. That's how eternal peace can come out of its direct opposite—the war.

So can the hateful war come out of its direct opposite—the sweet peace. Heaviest storm may be bred in the lap of a seeming calm. Let not the passion of righteous anger of men go to sleep because some sort of peace has been restored. It is needful that the valuable prize of victory after this last great war may not become an object of wonder and an antiquarian interest for posterity.

The Peace will have to be kept alive, kept growing in its proportions, in its powers by constant care, by never-ceasing vigilance. As a moral principle, its power will lie in the active exercise of the principles of righteous-

PEACE THROUGH WAR

ness, the principles of justice by all concerned, or there is danger that this Peace may degenerate into a fresh source for the manifestation of evil tendencies similar to those which brought about the Great War. Amidst the silver clarions of peace, low and inaudible mutterings of doubt and wrong try to make their voices heard. Corners of earth still unreached by its sound long for its coming. Portions of the earth yet wish that they were made sharers in this great peace; that God may come into the whole world. The joy of the world depended on the active vindication of the spirit of justice and equity, on the brotherhood between all men. For short of this great aim the efforts of all men and all nations, however great, sink into insignificance. Let us remember with bended knees before the altar of Allah that the only war was that which was waged for the spirit of justice, the spirit of humanity. There was no real war, no genuine quarrel, when such was not inspired by motives of righteous anger on one side and its opposite on the other. And the true peace was that which came after such a conflict. However great the sufferings, however prolonged its duration, there could be only one result of such a war, viz., the triumph of right over might and wickedness.

In order that the huge waste of life and resources built up with the care of long years of patience and labour may yet be repaired, it were needful that the principles of justice and equity were the guiding principles even in peace. There would be danger in the other circumstances of the subversal of the order and the relapse of human destiny into the caldron of war. This would be a war through peace, not built on the foundations of justice, equity, humanity, and brotherhood.

Here is a reminder to us in the Book, which says: "The believers (those who believe in truth) are but brethren, therefore make peace between your brethren and be careful of (your duty to) Allah that mercy may be had on you."

Aims which have for their motives the possession of lands, of dominions, of material gain, of political ascendancy, without their having been redeemed by features of justice,

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of equity, are doomed to failure, for they invite not the mercy of God, but His wrath, they do not try to bind men into a brotherhood, they disintegrate them. They do not aim at peace, they mean war; for such a peace can lead only to one thing, and that is war. However strong the glamour of seeming gain and our own self-importance, there is only one thing which sustains our activities as individuals and nations—the object of doing to others in justice and in fairness, exactly as we would wish to be done by. Justice is the criterion of the strength of our claims, not the force on which we may have to rely.

The words of the Holy Book furnish the only right and unflinching means whereby perpetual peace could be made the order of the day for all time to come. They say let justice be our aim, irrespective of the demands of our passion of exploitation, of ascendancy over others regardless of their rights. For, however calm be the outward demeanour of men made to live under such conditions, the stifled sobs of the wronged was a ceaseless state of war more terrible in its consequences than acts of overt hostility between armed men. Let us all bend our brows before the Throne of the Giver of Peace to keep us from becoming the source and instruments of another war, just as He has made us the means of this Peace. If we want to celebrate a real peace, let it be a peace based upon justice, and a peace founded on the rights and determination of all.

ISLAM AND NATIONALISM

By SHAIKH MUSHIR HOSAIN KIDWAI OF GADIA
(AL-QIDWAI)

NATIONALISM in its crude and elementary form is a natural and hence universal sentiment. Peoples and clans grouped together in self-defence even at the dawn of human history. Some animals also live in herds to be in a better position to defend themselves. With the progress of civilization in man clans coalesced into nations. That gave rise to the feeling of patriotism. "My country whether right or wrong" became the cry of all nations. Even such tribes or clans that fought amongst themselves joined hands against a common enemy of their country or nation. Racial Nationalism and Territorial Patriotism became powerful instruments in the hands of monarchs and statesmen. People living in one country, under a common system of government, with a common language and, very often, with a common religion, traditions and customs, developed a keen National and Patriotic instinct, which was taken advantage of in forming Empires and was used even for making conquests.

Islam broadened the base both of Nationalism and Territorial Patriotism by a world-wide institution. The Islamic idea is to unite humanity with one cord—the cord of God. Its teaching is:

"Waatasemu bi hablillahe jamian va la taffarequ" (Al-Qur-án), which means "Hold fast the cord of God unitedly and do not make schisms." And it declares: "Kanannas ummatun vahidun" (Al-Qur-án); that is, "Humanity forms one nation."

The frontiers which separated country from country were demolished; racial differences were removed; even distinction of rank and class were done away with. In short, perfect democracy, not only inter-tribal but international or inter-racial, was established, and the ideas of local Nationalism and Patriotism were given a second place to that of universal and extra-territorial Brotherhood and Communism.

Professor John Joseph Lake says:

"It is a singular fact that whilst the rest of the world was sunk in serfdom Islam practised 'Liberty, Fraternity and Equality.' A Muslim could not hold another Muslim in slavery, a captive taken in war on embracing Islam was *ipso facto* free; and not only so, but whatever might be his colour was theoretically and practically on an equality with the rest."

Gibbon writes:

"But the millions of Asiatic and African converts who

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swelled the native band of faithful Arabs must have been allured rather than constrained to declare their belief in one God and the Apostle of God. By the repetition of a sentence, and the loss of a foreskin, the subject or the slave, the captive or the criminal, arose in a moment to the free and equal comparison of the victorious Muslims. Every sin was expiated, every engagement was dissolved; the vow of celibacy was superseded by the indulgence of nature; the active spirits who slept in the cloisters were awakened by the trumpet of the Saracens; and in the convulsion of the world, every member of a new Society ascended to the natural level of his capacity and courage."

Again he says:

"Upon the death of the last of the Ommiades the Arabian Empire extended to a hundred days' journey from the East to the West, from the confines of Tartary and India to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. . . . The language and the laws of the Qur-án were studied with equal devotion at Samarkand and Seville: the Moor and the Indian embraced as countrymen and brothers in the pilgrimage of Mecca." Even when separate Muslim States were established, even when, for the defence of these independent Muslim States, ideas of patriotism were forced upon the Muslims by natural instincts, the universal spirit of Islam never died. Until this day the language spoken by Muslims in the Mosques is the same all over the world. During the Boxer rising in China, when the Muslim soldiers from India visited the Chinese Mosque they spoke the same language and treated each other as brothers. There is no institution in the world which has proved so efficient in destroying all the prejudices and distinctions of race, class, country, colour, and even creed, as Islam. To a Muslim the whole world is his country, whether it be China, India, Thrace, Australia, or Tripoli. To him every Musalman is a brother, whether he is black, brown, yellow, or white. A black Abyssinian slave is the equal of the Quraishite Sharif of Mecca. Islam is the all-dominating factor which denounces all other distinctions and prejudices.

Centuries ago a Persian poet cried in amazement at the democratic and universal constitution of Islam:

"Hasan zi Basorah, Bilal az Habash, Suhaib az Rome,
Zi khake Mecca Abu Jehl een chi bul ajabeest"—
i.e. Hasan, Bilal (a slave), and Suhaib, who became the pillars of Islam, came respectively from Basorah, Abyssinia, and a Roman Province, but Abu Jehl, who was the uncle of the Prophet himself and had descended from the same ancestors as he, was an Arab, yet he was the deadliest enemy of the Muslims, and his noble birth, rank, position, race, country counted as nothing in the Muslim democrácy.
Being an Arab or a Turk, a European or an Indian,

ISLAM AND NATIONALISM

never carried any weight with Muslims. They only saw whether there was the common denominator of Islam between them or not. It would be a great mistake to think that this brotherly spirit of the Muslims which removed the prejudices of country and race and dominated over the sentiments of nationalism and patriotism, as understood by Europeans, is dead now. On the contrary, in late years it has become more and more acute under the pressure of the European Powers who have been absorbing and disintegrating, robbing and exploiting, Muslim States. The outrage of Tripoli by Italy, of Persia by Russia, and the Balkan war, were such shocks which aroused the spirit of universal brotherhood even among those Muslims in whom it had become dormant, and it should be a warning to those people who are planning a disruption of the Muslim Empire in Asia, now that they have almost finished it in Europe.

The Muslim civilization in India owed a great deal to the Persians. All respectable Muslims learnt the Persian language. But there is no such community between the Turks and the Indians. The Turkish language is unknown in India; the Turkish history is also unknown. There is no racial harmony between the two: they live in countries far removed from each other. But in spite of all these differences the Muslims of India made a common cause with the Turks when the latter were assailed by Italy and the Balkan States.

Indian Muslims are mostly poor, yet they sent thousands of pounds sterling to Turkey, and organized missions also at tremendous personal sacrifices. Why? Simply because the Turkish Empire was to Muslims as their own Empire. Turks, as Turks, carry no regards from Indians. Old associations do create a sympathy for the Arabs, but as far as the Turks as a race are concerned old associations go against them rather than in their favour. It was the Turks who, as Turks, before they accepted Islam, upturned the Khilafat of Baghdad. There is absolutely no other reason for Indian Muslims to have any sympathy with the Turks except the all-powerful reason of Islam. It is to the Turks alone that all Muslims look to safeguard their almost lost political glory. Musalmans can never live like the Jews—without their own independent and strong States, or at least one State. The very constitution of Islam demands this.

The Qur-án says:

“Atiullah va atiulrasool va ululamro minkum”—
i.e. Obey God and obey the Prophet and those who are rulers among you.

The ruler should be from among the Muslims themselves, otherwise there will be no harmony between the commands of God, the commands of the Prophet, and the laws of the Sovereign or President. Just as by “the Prophet”

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is meant the Prophet Muhammad, so by "those among you" is meant those among the Muslims. When the Muslim rulers and kings in India had to concede any territory the first condition in the treaty was always that the Muslims should be ruled under Islamic laws. As a Muslim tolerates even a tyrannical Muslim ruler against a less tyrannical non-Muslim ruler, so he prefers to live in a less developed Muslim country rather than in a better developed non-Muslim country. Every non-Muslim rule is an alien rule as far as the Muslims are concerned. History has proved this many a time. Most of the Cretan Muslims ran away to Turkey from the protection of the international rule of their island when that island was detached from Turkey. Such was the case in other parts of the Turkish Empire also when they were separated from the Muslim sovereignty and placed under non-Muslim sovereignty. Egyptian nationalists and also the Khedive preferred their connection with Turkey to that with England, although the latter is said to have brought prosperity to the country and its people. It might be necessary to take a plebiscite to find out whether the people of Alsace-Lorraine would prefer to be re-joined to France or to remain as part of Germany, but no such plebiscite is necessary to find out whether the inhabitants of Tripoli prefer the "blasting tyranny" of the Turk to the "civilizing rule" of the Italians. Tripoli is peopled by a race which is said to hate the Turks, i.e. by the Arabs, but still Tripolitan Arabs are continuing an unequal fight on behalf of the Turks against the murderous instruments of an alien power that has invaded their country to civilize, i.e. to rob and exploit, them.

That the universal spirit of Islam is far from dead in Muslims was demonstrated even during this war by the protest made by the Russian Muslims when Italy declared a protectorate over certain parts of Albania and in several other ways known to the British authorities.

It is true that the Sharif of Mecca has revolted from the Ottoman Government, but that is no proof that nationalism among the Muslims has overpowered the universal spirit of Islam. Muslims have unfortunately fought against each other before. Revolts against settled governments, though forbidden by Islam, have occurred before in the history of Islam.

The greatest proof of the revival of that Islamic spirit which dominates the sentiments of racial nationalism or patriotism was lately demonstrated by the Mujtahids (theological leaders) of Persia when even they, in spite of their sectarian differences, accepted the Ottoman Sultan as the chief head of the Muslim nation. With a view to weaken the Muslim nation beyond its political power of regeneration, efforts have been made very recently by

PRAYERS AND ABLUTIONS

certain non-Muslim persons and statesmen to draw a wedge in the homogeneity and brotherhood of Islam by introducing racial and tribal distinctions, so much so that even the Labour and Socialist parties in England have failed to appreciate the international nationalism of Muslims. There might be temporary successes in these efforts, but there can never be any permanent success. After this terrible war the Muslim peoples of the whole world will draw much nearer to each other than they were before, and the sentiments of narrow racial nationalism or territorial patriotism will be more powerfully dominated by the universal and truly democratic spirit of Islam which recognizes no limitations of race, class, sex, colour, and country in the universal brotherhood of man under the ægis of one universal God.

If permanent peace is desired, the idea of exploiting and disintegrating Muslim States and Empires must be ~~abandoned~~ for ever, and the efforts to arouse racial jealousies or territorial differences should be given up for good.

PRAYERS AND ABLUTIONS

To be always prayerful to God is the spirit of prayer, but if we fix special times for saying our prayers that is mere ritual: a plausible sentiment which sometimes comes to the lips even of those who possess devotional hearts. Misconception of the true functions of religion and its relation to mundane affairs is the cause of such expressions. Many people appear to think that what is readily acknowledged to be true of our worldly affairs cannot also be true of religion. This is quite a wrong notion. Religion came from God to govern our life in all its phases. Are not regularity in action and punctuality in time the great secrets of success in every walk of life? Can we give full justice to anything, even if it be ever present in our mind, if we fail to fix the time for its accomplishment? Fitful and random attention ever leads to failure. Should we disregard this ABC of our daily life in our duty to God? But even the theory itself is untrue on its very face. Our deeds are the real index of the interest we take in anything. If a thing is paramount in our minds, it cannot fail to find its translation into our actions. Why, then, should not this be the rule in the case of prayer? Unfortunately, those who theorize on the beauties of being ever prayerful in spirit often forget to repeat even a few prayers!

Another inconsistency that is frequently to be met with is seen in the tendency to chaff at the idea of our regular ablutions. People are ready enough to devote attention to the toilet before they take their places at the table or assume their part at some social function. To be neat and to look smart is the fashion of our life, necessitating frequent ablutions. Should this order of our lives change in our relation to God? Will He be more edified at seeing us in shabby attire, with slipshod manners and slovenly ways? If "Cleanliness is next to Godliness," can there be any harm in our resorting to it when going to speak with God?

RELATION OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

*"Hunna libásun lakum wa
Antum libasun la hunna."*

"Your wives are a garment for you as you are a garment for them."—THE QUR-ÁN.

WHAT a beautiful and apposite metaphor to explain the varied duties and obligations of man and woman in the married life. The garment when worn is next to our body; let man and wife be so attached to each other in their mutual love and affection. The garment hides one's nakedness and such physical defects as ought to be concealed; we have moral defects as well. They may remain hidden from the public eye, but man and woman become cognisant of each other's secret defects after the connubial knot is tied; and though we may be passed as the best of society in public estimation, yet we do possess some sore points in our life, which should always remain too sacred for public knowledge. This privacy is also useful for the good of human society. If our other half will not come to our help in this respect the exposure would lead to dire results, and the peace of domestic as well as of social life will be in peril. Let man and woman therefore hide each other's defects as the garment does in the case of physical deformities. Again, our clothes bring comfort to us against the inclemency of the weather. In winter and in summer they protect us against the cold and the heat. One may stand the severities of the weather,

BORN IN SİN

but to cope with social inclemency, when chill and breeze find their way into our domestic circles, is a trial severe enough to exhaust all patience and perseverance. Wife or husband are the only comfort in these trials. Again, the garment brings grace, beauty, and embellishment to the body ; so, too, are wives to their husbands, as the latter to the former. Thus pithily in one laconic verse the Qur-án gives the best that can be imagined of all the mutual duties and obligations of man and woman in their matrimonial life.

BORN IN SİN?

If sin was in me at my birth,
Sin is a gift of God to me :
If I do wrong or err on earth,
I only bow to His Decree.

I'm but the clay, He vivified
My form and Nature He did make—
Can God have cursed me from the first
That He might future vengeance take?

Atonement to redeem a loss?
A sacrifice to blot out sin?
Should God Almighty bear a Cross
To purge the guilt our souls within?

No, no, 'twere blasphemy to speak
Or think of such a direful act
As first creating us in sin
And then atoning for the fact.

Returning to its Maker dear
Each soul may meet Him all alone ;
No intercessor do we need
To die or suffer or atone.

KHWAJA.

DR. JOHNSON ON THE QUR-ÁN

IF it (the Qur-án) is not poetry—and it is hard to say whether it be or not—it is more than poetry. It is not history, nor biography. It is not anthology, like the Sermon on the Mount ; not metaphysical dialectics like the Buddhist sūtras ; nor sublime homiletics, like Plato's conference of the wise and foolish teachers. It is a prophet's cry, Semitic to the core ; yet of a meaning so universal and so timely that all the voices of the age take it up, willing or unwilling, and it echoes over palaces and deserts, over cities and empires, first kindling its chosen hearts to world conquest, then gathering itself up into a reconstructive force that all the creative light of Greece and Asia might penetrate the heavy gloom of the Christian Europe, when Christianity was but the Queen of Night.

GOD IMPRINTED ON HUMAN NATURE

ARE we not equipped with various cravings and needs which we do our best to satisfy ? Our whole life is spent in securing means to gratify our natural requirements. All that we call civilization solely sprang from men's efforts in this direction. To secure happiness and to avert pain is the great problem of life. But is not proper satisfaction of our natural desires the climax of pleasure ? Is not an ungratified need a great misery ? We cannot ignore the existence of two things in Nature : our needs and the existence of means in the universe to satisfy them. We have got ears and eyes : they demand pleasant sights and melodious sounds. Fine arts must come forward to provide them. We want good drinks and delicious eatables, and we have explored the whole world to find them. We experience higher cravings as well, and we spare no pains to meet their demands. We experience feelings of love, mercy, and generosity. We must find some occasion for their exhibition, though at any cost. Similarly do we not possess the faculty for admiration, praise and thanksgiving ? Do we not give expression to them when once these sentiments are aroused in our breast ? Beneficence and beauty are the only factors to give

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rise to these noble feelings in us, as they only consummate human happiness. Even a man callous and cruel at heart cannot be indifferent to it. Thus we are in search of beauty and beneficence, and when we secure them our praise and gratitude arise and must find expression. But beauty and beneficence often accrue to us through inanimate things. Do we praise them and express our gratitude to them? To do so would be a foolish act. If the beauty of a fine product of art contributes to our happiness, we do not look to it for our thanksgiving and admiration: we look up to the one who produced it or supplied it to us.

Is not Nature around us the sole source of our happiness? Does it ~~not~~ exhibit beauty and beneficence, even in its smallest particle? Do not its variegated beauties excite our admiration and praise? Is it, then, unnatural to feel grateful after enjoying its blessings? But we never give our thanks to dumb, inanimate things. We always tender our gratitude to some intelligent being who is the maker or supplier of what adds to our happiness. Whom should we look to for showing our gratitude if we have been benefited by all around us? To be grateful is human, to find an object to whom to express our gratitude is natural. Should we praise dumb nature and give our thanks to inanimate matter? We should be untrue to our very nature if we did so. We do need some intelligent being who should claim our admiration and gratitude. It is simply a natural desire. Our very nature looks for an intelligent benefactor to whom we may tender our thanks whenever we derive some benefit. Blessed be the Prophet Muhammad, to whom these mysteries of human nature were revealed. How beautifully the Book of Islam brings home to our minds the existence of God in the following. It speaks eloquently of the beauty and beneficence evinced in Nature, and thus appeals to our sense of admiration and gratitude, which must find expression in favour of some intelligent being, the Author of all:—

“ All praises and gratitude are due to Allah, the Creator, Nourisher, and Sustainer of all the worlds around us so necessary for our creation, sustenance, and nourishment.”

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"To merge in God" and to be "at one with Him" is the first and last desire in an average man—a noble human craving evinced from time immemorial, in different garbs of phraseology suiting different "times and climes." Religion creates and feeds this Divine passion in us. Man, it is said, has been made after the image of God. He possesses Divine element in him. His chief aim is to develop it, but he is hampered in this pursuit. He has other cravings in him. His nature represents the physical and mental sides. His sentimentality goes a long way to mould his character; an accumulation of conflicting elements, and yet it is only in their harmony that great results are to be attained. And who can deny this truth? The whole universe bears witness to it. Do not things of conflicting properties, when combined in proper proportion, create most desirable results; and why not in the evolution of humanity? But man without Divine help has often evinced his incapacity to solve this difficult problem of human evolution. He has often cultivated one side of his nature and ignored the other. If the world has never been without its followers of Epicurus, it has always counted generation of ascetics of the most austere rigidity in every nation and age. If luxury at the table carries carnal desires to extremes and kills spirituality, so ascetism, though favourable to spirituality in a way, causes mental imbecility and sentimental decrepitude. Under it certain latent faculties, no doubt, come to work; sometimes an ascetic works seeming wonders, but the real object is lost. He becomes a burden on society. We are sociable by nature; we have been given various faculties; we have to help each other and use those faculties for the good of humanity; but a monk is dead to all these noble sentiments. Nay, he sometimes shows moral weakness of the blackest dye. Not being in touch with common-day human society, he has not received the proper moral culture. He knows not how to observe his civic duties, and sometimes proves a moral delinquent. An average man is struck by his possession of power to work certain wonders, which he uses to his best advantage with

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a graceful show of piety, and the former takes him for a great divine. I have seen marvellous thought-readers and hypnotic healers in India. I have seen men working wonders, but at the same time manifesting a disgraceful character. This apparent anomaly admits of easy explanation. We have been equipped with wonderful latent faculties. If we cultivate some and neglect the others, we may excel others in some respects. If a best musician is a moral wreck sometimes, why not an ascetic with no knowledge of sacred and social relations, a blackguard with all his power of seeing unseen things? Asceticism within legitimate bounds is essential for spiritual growth. There can be no spirituality without control of the physical nature. But you cannot curb the latter; you do so for a time and then become a helpless victim to it when once aroused. It would be to find fault with the wisdom of Divine Providence if we pursue a course that kills passions in our nature.

CARNAL PASSIONS SUBSERVIENT TO SPIRITUALITY

In fact, all our lower passions and carnal desires are subservient to our spirituality, but they are indispensable. Any human institution, call it religion or otherwise, which helps only partial growth of our nature and ignores many other faculties, cannot claim perfection. We admit that God alone is and ought to be our final goal; but, on the other hand, He alone is responsible for equipping us with such versatile nature. How to evolve it is a great human problem. Our salvation, according to Islamic teaching, means our evolution. But how belief in a certain event in history, or faith in a certain dogma, can develop and control our various passions and morals is a great mystery to me. In all human affairs we believe in rules and regulations. But in religion, which only means a way to salvation, we are forced to certain beliefs, and our acceptance of them, it is said, guarantees our reaching the goal. An unpardonable absurdity on its very face! A hopeless failure in Europe for the last 2,000 years.

To reach God is to evolve that Divine element in us which is hidden in various coverings of human passions and morals,

physical as well as spiritual. How to harmonize these jarring elements, how to train and balance them? How to bring them to moderation, so that they may all be subservient to the achievement of one great end, viz., evolution of the Divine element, when the human soul becomes full-fledged, and man becomes imbued with attributes of God? It is to accomplish this great end that the mystic side of Islam comes into play.

MYSTICISM IN EUROPE

Mysticism in Islam should not be confused with what is understood by it in certain quarters here. When an average theologian fails to grasp the real meaning of some Bible text, or is unable to understand or explain some narrative in the Scripture on rational basis, his ingenuity comes to his help; he at once jumps to some forced explanation, and with full complacency of mind names this strange feat of his as mystical interpretation of the Scriptures. The miracles of the Lord of Christianity receive an allegorical explanation, and the high-sounding title of mystical meaning is given to cover this threadbare method of reading the Bible. "Nothing shall be impossible unto you," said Jesus, when speaking about working wonders. "Howbeit," he continued, "this kind goeth not but by prayer and fasting." What this fasting and prayer mean we are still to be enlightened upon by these mystics.

It has already been explained that the Divine element which demands evolution to make man a perfect image of God has been clothed in various human passions and desires, and unless death comes first over all of them, this high stage cannot be attained. The day on which death comes over our earthly life is the day of the triumph of spirituality and the day of the revelation of the Divine Being. We are blind as long as we are not blind to all other sights, and we are lifeless as long as we are not lifeless under the hand of God. "Die before you die," says the Prophet of Islam. This stage is not attained unless all the members of our body and all the faculties which sustain us are made to work in total submission to God; our life and

death have no other object but in the pleasure of God. When a Muslim mystic has thus submitted his will and intention to the will of God, the intention of God becomes his intention, and he has no delight but in obedience to Him. "Thy will and not mine" is his watchword. This is what Islam literally means. Islam is that burning fire which burns all low desires, and, setting fire to all false gods, offers our life, property, and honour as a sacrifice before God. Entering into this fountain we drink the water of a new life.

"A fire resembling that of lightning flashes out of us and a fire descends from above. These two flames coming into contact with each other consume all low motives and carnal desires and the love of others than God. A sort of death comes over the first life," and we become regenerated. This stage has been termed by Muslim mystics the meeting of God, for it is then that a man sees the face of God. His connection with God is so strong that he, as it were, sees God with his eyes. He is granted strength from above, the internal faculties are all brightened, and the magnetism of a pure, heavenly life works strongly. Upon reaching this stage, "God becomes his eyes with which he sees, his tongue with which he speaks, his hand with which he attacks, his ears with which he hears, and his feet with which he walks." ¹

Man becomes a perfect image of God. It is this stage of human perfection when Lazarus is raised from the dead and Naaman is cured of leprosy by man, when an exceeding great army can be raised in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, when dead are raised to life and hundreds of the companions in the Arabian desert get their thirst and other needs satisfied with one small water-skin.

What has been said above to attain this *par excellence* state of humanity may be epitomized in the following words of the holy Prophet of Arabia :—

"God saith, 'O man, only follow thou My laws, and thou shalt become like unto Me; and then say, "Be," and behold "It is."'"

¹ From the Sayings of the holy Prophet Mohamammad.

“Follow thou My laws, and thou shalt become like unto Me,” explains the process as well as the object of Mysticism. It is not in killing our various passions, desires, and faculties which hamper our progress, but in bringing them into subjection to the will of God that will help us to reach our goal. We pass through a course of discipline. We need laws and regulations to conduct all our faculties, and hence the laws governing our physical, moral, and spiritual conditions. The physical conditions of man are closely connected with his moral and spiritual state. So much so that even his movements in eating and drinking play a part in the moulding of his moral and spiritual qualities. If, therefore, his natural desires are subjected to the direction of the law, they take the form of moral qualities, and deeply affect the spiritual state of the soul. Hence a Muslim mystic, under the teaching of the Qur-án, lays special stress upon external purity and cleanliness in all forms of devotion and prayer, and in all the injunctions relating to internal purity and moral rectitude. In short, as the evolution of the soul wholly depends upon the subjection of all our faculties to the final end, so all our passions and desires need a governing code. Drinks, eatables, and external cleanliness are alike to be provided; our relation to others in our various walks of life are to be looked after; our morals are to be controlled.

If self-renunciation to God's will as preached by Jesus from the Cross is the only way through which one has to pass before he reaches his divine goal, every human faculty and desire must have its own way of immolation, and unless I know the will of God concerning my particular passion or desire, how can I immolate it to His high will? “Thy will and not mine” can only be fit in the mouth of one who knows the will of God as affecting every endeavour and walk of his life. Hence we need a Divine code to perfect our mystic course.

THE PERFECT IMAGE OF GOD

Adam was made after the image of God, as the Prophet said. Man has been equipped with wonderful capabilities. So says the Qur-án. They make their manifestation in

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some, but remain latent in many. But every one of us is His image, and must possess the attributes of God within the four walls of humanity. The door is not sealed against any. The holy founder of Islam gives the features of such an image in the following words:—

“God said: ‘The person I hold as a beloved, I am his hearing by which he heareth, and I am his sight by which he seeth, and I am his hands by which he holdeth, and I am his feet by which he walketh.’”

How to reach this high state, the holy Prophet again says:—

“God saith: ‘O man, only follow thou My laws, and thou shalt become like unto Me; and then say “Be,” and behold “It is.”’”

“Follow thou My laws” will enable you to possess all the “limbs and joints of God.” You say “Be,” and it will exist. There is nothing supernatural in it. If a person is in tune with the Universe and in complete harmony with the laws of Nature, then his will is in accord with the Divine will, and whatever such a person willeth cometh to pass. “Follow My laws” is the only key to this heavenly treasure, possession of which makes man a true image of God. The path is hard to tread on, but it is not an impossibility. If we are made after His image, His Divine features may be reflected through us. This high state of spirituality was more or less attained by all the faithful servants of God—Mohammad, Moses, Jesus, Krishna, and others, and is and shall remain ever open to all who “shall do and teach” the laws. Jesus, when in such beatitude, could say to others, “I am from the Father:” “One who believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” Lord Krishna went further, and said: “I am Bhagwan” (God). Those who serve Him, he says, in any way, they shall have their full reward. He had come to accept sacrifices of man, not as priest, but as “God.” Mohammad cast a handful of gravelstones and sand into the eyes of 1,000 Meccans who had come to destroy his life and that of his followers, and it caused confusion in the ranks of the enemy, to their utter defeat. And God says in the Qur-án in this connection:—

“Thou didst not cast when thou didst cast, but God cast.” Mohammad’s hand was the hand of God on that occasion.

There is another verse in the Qur-án which explains this in a more laconic way:—

“Say, O Prophet, to men, if they wish to be held as beloved of God, they can be so if they follow thee.”

And one who is held as a beloved of God, his limbs are “limbs of God.” One who follows Mohammad can become

a perfect image of God, because Mohammad follows completely all the laws of God. Thus to follow the laws of God is to reach this high goal of humanity.

We cannot understand those psychological moments in human minds which enable men in the West to accept certain words of one man as proof of his divinity, and reject similar words in the case of the other. Words similar to, and sometimes more forcible than, the words of Jesus have escaped the blessed lips of others. Why one is accredited with Godhead by them and others not, is a mystery. No miracle was ever performed by Jesus which was not done by other prophets, and still one is supposed to be God and others men.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TRUE RELIGION

By MR. DUDLEY WRIGHT

WHAT is religion? It has been said that "Men will wrangle for it, write for it, fight for it, die for it; anything but live for it"; but probably the writer of that epigram had in view the various forms of dogma, ritual, or ceremonial around which incessant warfare has waged for centuries. Nor is religion entirely a matter of intellectual knowledge. Aristotle declared that the intellect itself moves nothing: it has no dynamic force. A creed is valueless unless and until it is incorporated with the life. Intellectual knowledge must have added to it faith, which is an act of the whole personality. Religion is the one link between humanity and Deity; it is that which binds man to God, as the etymology of the word indicates. What, then, should be the characteristics of true religion?

One of the points from which the value of any religious system must be estimated is its practical and abiding influence on the common relations of mankind, in the affairs of everyday life, and its power on the masses. Its influence for good upon the individual who accepts its teachings should be not only immediate but permanent. The tenets must conflict at no stage in its history with any advance that may be made in science, and they must be of such a character that without altering in any way its fundamental principles the religion shall always be equal to the needs, both ethical and social, of a progressive community. Surely, also, one of the characteristics of true religion should be its universal applicability; it must not be limited to any one country or race. Some of the great religious systems have been and are limited in their territory of promulgation or adoption, e.g. Confucianism, Hinduism, and Buddhism; and a writer in the ISLAMIC REVIEW for April 1916, showed in a conclusive manner that

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the religion taught by Jesus was intended to be limited in its application. Efforts have been made of late years to extend the knowledge and adoption of Hinduism and Buddhism—the former certainly in a corrupted form—and to seek for converts to these faiths in the Western world, but it cannot be claimed that these attempts have been crowned with success.

True religion is a great unifier. When, after the death of the Prophet Jesus, the Christian Church was founded, brotherhood and equality were two of its recognized principles, although, apparently, they were not of long duration. In no religion is the spirit of brotherhood developed so naturally and firmly as in Islam. Canon Sell instances this as one of the causes of the sustained vitality and the increasing expansion of Islam. "It makes," he says, "a great help—one God, and Mohammed His Prophet—a great community from East to West, and at once gives a brotherhood in any Muslim house."

One great danger attendant upon all religious systems is when primitive sincerity and simplicity give place to formality. A well-known Canadian general said recently that in the conduct of war it is necessary to get back to the primitive and shed oneself of everything that is artificial. That is certainly true of religion. There should be, there must be—nay, there can be—nothing that is artificial in the relationship between man and God. Formality is very likely to step in where objects of worship are set up, whether inanimate objects as visible expressions of great truths or the prophet of the religion, whose personality, great as it may be, cannot ensure the permanence of the faith which he preached. That faith must be based upon irrefutable truth, and be able to stand by itself without requiring or demanding the support of its prophet. If not thus founded it will deteriorate, and ultimately vanish or become absorbed into another system.

Can there ever be an absolutely new religion? Islam was not a new religion. The Prophet Muhammad was particular in emphasizing the fact that he was not propounding any new doctrines. It was the belief of Muhammad—and a moment's consideration will be sufficient to convince any that the belief was an extremely rational one—that the only true religion had been revealed to man at the earliest stage in human history, and that such religion inculcated the direct and spiritual worship of the one true and only God, the Creator of the Universe, the King of all the worlds. He taught—and here the facts of history may be quoted in support—that this religion had repeatedly been corrupted and debased by man and outraged by idolatry, and that a succession of prophets, divinely appointed and commissioned, had been sent to restore this

truth to mankind, but again and again the faith so restored by them had become vitiated by their followers. The Prophet recognized that the principal cause of this corruption had been idolatry, and therefore, so far as it was possible for him to do so, he hedged around the truth which he resuscitated such safeguards that no human device could demolish. He prevented the deification and worship of himself by the wording of the *Kalima*: "There is no Deity but God, and Muhammad is His Prophet." That is all. Nothing more. Only Prophet, the messenger sent to declare the truth. There was nothing new in the religion. "We follow," says the Qur-án, "the religion of Abraham, the orthodox, who was no idolater. We believe in God and that which hath been sent down to us, and that which hath been sent down unto Abraham and Ishmael, and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and that which was delivered unto Moses and Jesus, and that which was delivered unto the prophets from the Lord; we make no distinction between any of them, and to God we are resigned."

For many years the Christian world has been discussing what means to adopt to cope with the evils of drink and gambling, and it is very seldom that one can take up a Christian periodical without encountering articles dealing with these two problems. The Faith of Islam is the largest and oldest temperance society in the world, while the curse of gambling is unknown wherever Muslims congregate. Why? Because both are forbidden by the Qur-án.

There are many remarkable characteristics about the Faith of Islam, and not the least remarkable is the fact that although, as even its opponents acknowledge, it is gaining ground rapidly wherever it is preached, it has no paid ministers or missionaries. The Rev. W. H. Gairdner, in his work "The Reproach of Islam," says:

How comes it that every Muslim is proud of Islam, loves Islam in his own fashion, and therefore stands for Islam wherever he goes: and so is a Muslim missionary? To the modern Christian world, missions imply organizations, societies, paid agents, subscriptions, reports. All this is practically absent from the present Muslim ideas of propagation, and yet the spread of Islam goes on.

"Every good Mussulman," says Canon Sell, "is a missionary. Christian traders have not done much to spread Christianity in the various lands they have discovered and explored, but the Arab merchants have won for Islam some of its famous provinces."

The various Christian revivals which have taken place in the past have been characterized by their evanescence, but there is no evaporation of enthusiasm in Islam, because it has not only breadth and height, but it has also depth.

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It is broad: it does not demand from any of its adherents subscription to creed or articles which hinder the individual's research and study into various realms of knowledge, because such pursuit might involve mental torture through doubting the truth of the creed to which he had subscribed. It is high, for it will lead the faithful plodder along the path of its commandments into the realm of communion with God. It is deep, for it is founded on eternal truth and cannot be shaken. No religion has yet stood, nor will stand, the test of time that is not founded, wholly or partially, upon eternal truth.

If it should become necessary to formulate a religion demanded by the mental, moral, and spiritual requirements of a world without faith, what would be the result? Would it be a religion containing doctrines opposed to reason? Such, for example, as a Trinity of three persons in one? Or of God born as an infant of a human mother, growing up in the ordinary way to manhood, then, while still a young man, being crucified as a malefactor because others had transgressed the law which he, as God, had formulated and made his own death necessary to satisfy the requirements of that law? The absurd supposition that any man would invent such a religion as that may be dismissed without a moment's hesitation. Nor is it possible that a highly philosophical system such as Buddhism would be invented. But it is not beyond the possibility of conception that the religion devised would approximate very closely to the Faith of Islam, even if it did not run entirely upon its lines. Why? Because in Islam there is a lofty idealism conjoined with a rationalistic practicability. It does not ignore human nature, nor does it entangle itself in the tortuous pathways which lie outside the domain of the actual and real. It makes religion part of a man's life, and not a garment to be worn on special occasions and taken off when there is any real work to be done. For, to quote once more Mr. Gairdner's "Reproach of Islam":

It was no mere intellectual process, so far as can be made out, by which Muhammad passed to this belief in Allah, the one God. He did not merely come to possess it: it came to possess him. He was filled with a burning conviction that it was real, actual—that Allah was gripping him, and that neither he nor any created thing had any might at all as against Him. . . . He felt he had experienced Allah, a living, absolutely all-powerful and irresistible Being.

THE NATURALNESS OF RELIGION

By MR. DUDLEY WRIGHT

It is passing strange, but nevertheless true, that the fundamental principles and practices of the various religious systems of Christianity should, in many respects, be in opposition to common sense and the natural dictates of the human heart. The setting of one's signature to many of the doctrines of the Christian faith involves a forcing or straining of the intellect, if they are not in harmony with the practices and beliefs incidental to human experience and existence. This is true of some articles of the Christian creed only, not of all.

The belief in a Creator may not, perhaps, be in accord with some modern scientific theories, but it is certainly a perfectly natural belief. When one's gaze is turned upon a masterpiece of architectural skill, a complicated engineering design, a picture or a sculpture, the natural conclusion is that some masterly hand has been behind the production, and to the author is awarded a tribute of praise, if not even of adoration. Even so is it with life itself. When the origins of religious systems can be traced it is found that originally the common belief was in one Eternal Supreme Being. It was only in developments that corruptions crept in and that polytheistic ideas displaced the original monotheism.

It is not, however, in accord with the natural instincts to think that the Eternal (to adopt that expressive Jewish term bestowed upon the Creator of all mankind) should ever become so angry with the human race—His own creation and family—as to demand the sacrifice of one of His sons in order to appease His own wrath. It is equally in opposition to human thought and reasoning to imagine the direct incarnation of Deity into humanity, a sudden jump, which, even granting the ultimate absorption of the human into the Divine, as some maintain, is in direct contradiction of the fundamental teachings of evolution. Such a belief involves the straining of the intellect, and is, therefore, non-natural.

Or, to consider an alternative view of the doctrine of the Atonement, adopted and accepted by many who are known under the title of "Progressive Christians," it is not in accord with the natural view to believe that the Eternal, desirous of demonstrating to His own human family how greatly He loved them, should sacrifice deliberately one of His sons, not in appeasement of His own wrath, but as a revelation of paternal love.

Self-sacrifice is the most noble trait of character that can be exhibited, but an action such as that is a perversion of the meaning of the term and is contrary to the natural

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feeling, because no one can imagine any human being acting in a similar manner. Any religion which entails the suffering of any member of the human race is a non-natural one.

Communion between the Eternal and the human, whether direct or by the methods of angelic beings, is a natural belief and practice, and postulates the gradual unfolding and development of the individual to whom such communications are made. This development is the result of the utilization of spiritual methods, accessible to, though not taken advantage of by, all. The formulation of the desire must be followed by practice along the path. One of the steps was that taken by the Prophet Muhammad, to whom, when meditating in the cave, came messages from the Eternal which brought guidance, joy, and peace, not only to himself but to millions of the human family. Prayer is not only the preliminary, but the collateral, practice of this community with the Eternal. It is natural to pray, but it is not natural to pray in an unnatural manner. Gorgeous vestments and classical music are not the natural accompaniments of the act of prayer. Equally natural and essential for the development of the religious life in the individual is the practice of fasting, which does not consist merely in abstaining from the exercises of eating and drinking. "God cares not," said Muhammad, "that a man leave off eating and drinking, if he do not therewith abandon lying and detraction," and fasting as a means to the purification of the soul includes not only abstinence from food, but also from every kind of evil. The practice of fasting is adopted by some Christians, but not by all, notwithstanding the definite declaration of the Prophet Jesus: "This kind cometh not out but by prayer and fasting." Even where the principle of fasting is accepted, it is often, excepting among certain monastic orders, a mere make-believe. A man may keep the command as to fasting by the simple abstention from flesh meat, but may make up for the deficiency by a meal off salmon or lobster, and he will not be regarded as contravening the injunction if he indulges in an excessive consumption of alcoholic liquor, although he will thereby render himself guilty of the sin of insobriety. Not so with the Islamic rule and practice. As Marcus Dods has expressed it :

This fast [of Ramadan] is no make-belief, no abstinence during a hot month from the heavier articles of food to whet the appetite for the lighter efforts of cookery ; but it is a bona fide total abstinence from food, drink, and smoking from sunrise to sunset of each day throughout the whole month of the Moham-medan Lent

And conjointly with this the season is used as a period for spiritual discipline.

Religion does not consist of polemics concerning the fallacies of Arianism, the vagaries of Arminianism, or the contradictions of Calvinism. Nor does it consist of the writing or perusal of elaborate treatises on the Immaculate Conception, the infallibility of the elected head of any Church, the fate of unbaptized infants or adults, the borderline dividing venial from mortal sin, or the impossible task of attempting to demonstrate the rational character of the doctrine of the Trinity. The libraries of the British Museum and other institutions have many tons weight of ponderous tomes which have been written upon these and kindred doctrines, which have occupied the writers much time which might have been employed to better advantage in attempting to alleviate the evils which are far too common in human life and experience, often the accompaniment of unnatural theological dogmas.

Islam not only inculcates the tenets, but the practice as well, of a religion; it has endeared itself to many millions of the human family since the day when the Prophet Muhammad, in the face of tremendous opposition, first propagated its tenets; and side by side with its spiritual teaching it has, more than any other moral code, condemned intemperance in speech, food, and drink, gambling, incontinence in both sexes, and succeeded more than any other religion in eradicating the curses which are too often, alas, the accompaniments of Christian civilization. In countries where the faith of Islam prevails you will search in vain for the gambling-den, the house of ill-fame, or the wineshop.

Side by side with the ancient Jewish cry: "The Lord our God is One," may be uttered in a ringing, joyous strain, with no faltering in its tone or uncertainty in its delivery, the equally inspiring cry: "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Prophet," for in so doing one is honoured by declaring adhesion to a faith which, during the centuries of its existence, has not been found in opposition to common-sense and reason.

The Islamic belief in God is not a mere article of faith—a solitary item in a shadowy creed. It is deep-rooted and firm. It has been said frequently that Islam possesses the shortest creed of all the religions of the world, and though this may be the case, so firmly fixed is the Muslim's belief in the Supreme Being that he regards with abhorrence and as blasphemy any attempt to divide in any way the Unity of God. How can the Divine Being be reduced to the level of any other? Or how can He share His attributes with another? He is the Most High and He alone is to be adored, and to assert that there are three, or even two, in possession of omnipotence is, to the Muslim, a self-

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evident contradiction. To him the expression in the Creed of St. Athanasius :

For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one: the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal,

is meaningless, contradictory, and blasphemous.

Allah is King Eternal; His will should predominate every human desire. The Will of God should be the principle and object of every man and woman. Islam has a double meaning—submission to the will of God and entering into peace. The first is a means to the second, which is the end or aim. The Allah of Islam is not a tribal, not even a national God, and Islam is not a national religion, but the religion of humanity. Allah is Lord of all the worlds. If there are other inhabited worlds, then Allah is Lord of them also, and the brotherhood of humanity—one of the precepts of Islam, which is a belief put into practice—extends also to the inhabitants of those spheres. The Christian teaching of the relationship between God and man has led to an assumed intimacy between the Creator and the created which is repulsive to the spiritual mind, a deplorable lack of reverence, and an absence of worship. Man prays and as an outcome he realizes that blessings are showered upon him, and he realizes also the nearness of God. Is he jubilant? It would be more correct to say that as he ponders over the grace with which he has been favoured he is awed.

There is a majestic glory in the expressions *Ar-Rahman* and *Ar-Rahim* which cannot be found in any other words. No limits can circumscribe His beneficence. Is it a matter for wonderment that the Muslim, when he thinks of the all-embracing grace and beneficence, the majesty and glory of the Lord of all existence, should prostrate himself with forehead to earth in adoration and worship? To that Lord of all the worlds, the Muslim gives a name which is above every other name—the name of Allah—a name which has never been given to any except the only true God, a name which embraces all the excellent names which can be enumerated.

Islam is no mere creed: it is a life to be lived. In the Qur-án may be found directions for what are sometimes termed the minor details of daily life, but which are not minor when it is considered that life has to be lived for God. The Muslim lives for God alone. God is the centre of all satisfaction, all hope, all life. The aim of the Muslim is to become God-bound, and to endeavour to advance the knowledge of God in all his undertakings. From the cradle to the grave the true Muslim lives for God and God alone.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

The announcement of the glory of God—*Allahu Akbar*—is made to the new-born infant the moment he enters upon separate existence, for Muslims hold that this should be the first sound to fall upon the ears of a new-born babe, in order that the foundation-stone of a godly life should be well and truly laid. As the child grows, it is the name of Allah which is sounded in his ear by the parent or guardian when either grief or passion break in and disturb his normal existence. The foundation of learning is made by the teaching of the name of God, *Bismillah Al-Rahman Al-Rahim*. Five times a day he hears the cry *Allahu Akbar* in the call to prayer. The same jubilant words form his battle-cry should he sally forth to war. *La Ilaha il Allah* becomes the motto of his home life. That, too, is the final message whispered into the ear of the departing soul, and the same words are chanted as the body is placed in the tomb.

The Muslim believes that man can obtain nearness to God by the practice of self-sacrifice, self-denial, and obedience to His commands. Islam does not inculcate communion with God, say Christian objectors. What saith the Prophet? "God saith: 'The person I hold as a beloved, I am his hearing by which he heareth, and I am his sight by which he seeth, and I am his hands by which he holdeth, and I am his feet by which he walketh.'" One cannot get much nearer to God than that. Can we wonder that the Rev. C. F. Andrews, a Christian missionary, says in his work "North India":

The dignity and courtesy of the best type of Muhammedan gentleman, the orderliness of day and week, month and year, in each of which God is remembered, are great and real treasures which we need to regain within our Church.

The Muslim raises his heart in gratitude to Allah for the example set by all the long line of prophets, beginning with Adam and ending with Muhammad. He knows from the Qur-án that some were more highly endowed than others, but that they were all human: none was Divine in the sense of being equal with Allah. He rejoices in that knowledge, for he realizes that the lives of all the holy men of the past should be a stimulus to him to seek for a closer communion with God, to aim at living the life and possessing the character which they lived and possessed.

PRAYER

Wastaeenu bissabr wassalat (AL-QUR-ÂN).

PRAYER: ITS MEANING, ITS REALITY, ITS POWER

PRAYER has been defined as "the act by which man, conscious at once of his weakness and of his immortality, puts himself into real and effective communication with the almighty, the eternal, the self-existent God."

This is not a definition of prayer which could be universally applied. Peoples have been known to pray who never believed in their own immortality or in an eternal and self-existent God. Even to this day masses of people can be seen in India going to their idols with rice and flowers to offer prayers and supplications for the recovery of their beloved child or their pet cow. In China people say their prayers to the departed souls of their ancestors.

It is true that prayer is generally the result of the consciousness of man of his own weakness and so also of the superiority or strength of the other person or Being to whom prayer is offered, either directly or through a medium.

It is also true that the evolved consciousness of men does not stoop to pray except to a living, almighty, omniscient, and omnipresent Deity, that to an advanced humanity the realm of human power and might has been greatly extended even beyond the imagination of human beings of remote ages. How can a man with knowledge and sense now pray to a tree or a stone? How can he even pray to the sun or the moon when he has become conscious of the fact that he has in him certain capacities which make him master of the tree and stone, the sun and moon? The sun and moon, the tree and stone, have no will of their own. Man has, and so man is superior to them. If we limit prayer to its modern meaning, we can use the definition given above with a little more particularization—perhaps something like this:—

Prayer is an act by which humanity, conscious at once of its physical weakness and inner strength, puts itself, either directly or indirectly, into real and effective communication with the almighty, the living, the omniscient, and the omnipresent God, who responds to human call.

Prayers to a God who is not almighty and omnipresent, prayers to a "finite person," cannot carry much conviction, and their efficacy is also marred. If our God has no power, or is not willing to help us in all difficulties, anywhere and any time, then there is not much use calling upon Him.

Prayer brings man into real and effective communication with God, so prayer is the medium through which man imbibes the attributes of his Maker—His all-comprehensive,

impartial, inexhaustive beneficence, His mercy, even His majesty and might. Prayer is the key to piety.

But piety does not consist in merely going to church on one day—it does not consist in repeating fixed formulas of any particular religion. Prayers, mere lip-prayers, without the co-operation of the heart, without the co-operation of our whole being, are meaningless; they can do no good. By mere lip-prayers we do not imbibe the attributes of God. They do good neither to us nor to the world. It is only real prayers, real piety, which do good to individuals and nations and the world at large.

“There is no piety in turning your faces towards the East and the West (in your formal prayers), but he is pious (he is prayerful) who believes in God and the Day of Judgment, the angels, the scriptures, and the prophets, who for the love of God (i.e. not with selfishness) disburseth his wealth to his kindred, and to the orphans, and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask for, and for the redemption of captives; who observeth prayer and giveth alms, and who is of those who are faithful to their engagements when they have covenanted, and who are patient in adversity, and hardship and in times of trouble. These are they who are straight, these are they who are pious” (Al-Qur-án). These are they who have themselves profited by their prayers, and who have added to the progress of this world by their sympathy with and help for their fellow-men.

Prayer is an outpouring of its love and gratitude by the human soul to its Maker, to its Cherisher. Prayer is an expression of human desire for the help and guidance of the Master, whatever name may be given to Him. Prayer is an expression of the craving of the human soul to be in communion with Him from whom it came. The reality of prayer consists in its coming out of the human soul to Him who is the origin and the real essence of the human soul. Its reality consists in its being natural, in its linking the soul to its essence and also in its communicating to man his dependence upon the mercy and love of God, or Allah, Brahma, or Jehovah.

When a man comes in this world what does he find? He finds that all arrangements for his existence had already been made before he came in the world. There is pure air to breathe, and there are also other natural necessities for his existence. There is wonderfully nutritious milk to drink. Besides, in the maternal mind special affection and love have already been placed for him which look not only to his necessities but also to his luxuries. As a baby he is absolutely helpless. At that time of his life he cannot defend himself. But means have been provided which make him—a helpless baby though he is, a defenceless little mite

though he is—flourish and grow up into manhood. He, when he grows up, might prove himself a rogue and a villain, he, when he grows up, might one day be seen on the gallows, but when he is a baby such wonderful arrangements have been made that he finds himself among people—at least two such people—that would sooner give up their own life than see any harm coming to him. What would a mother not do to see her child happy and well!

Who provided all those natural requirements for his existence? Who put such a love and affection in the heart of his mother and of his father that they nourished him and spent money over his bringing up, even at personal sacrifices?

Surely he himself did not do it. Then, should he not be grateful for all that was provided for him, for all that was done for him? Should he not be prayerful to Him who was so merciful and compassionate as to provide everything which he was expected to require for his existence?

The great S'adi of Shiraz, a Persian poet, has said that man should be prayerful and thankful to God twice at every breath. First, because when he breathes out he sends out the air which was obnoxious to his health, and this saves his life; secondly, because when he breathes in he inhales life-giving oxygen.

An advanced man who does some scientific research work should be more conscious of these hidden bounties of God which were waiting to be discovered to help in the advancement of human comfort and civilization. If these hidden forests of coal had not been provided for, ages ago, by a providential Nature in anticipation of the invention of the steam-engine, half the material progress of the world would be impossible to-day. Should not man then be thankful for all that has been provided for him, even in anticipation of his needs and progress?

There can be no doubt that man owes a great deal, in fact all, to a merciful Providence, and so a prayer to Him cannot but be real—an instinctive expression of human gratefulness. The sense of weakness is common to whole humanity, therefore is the instinct of prayer common.

The more man realizes his dependence on the mercy and will of God as a higher Being, the more his prayers will be real and sincere. Even the cleverest scientist of the age cannot deny that human life can be destroyed in a second by accidents. The fact is that there is nothing strange in death. It is life which is a marvel. Think of all those poisonous germs which co-exist with man in this world. Think of all those accidents which can occur to any man any minute. And then will it be possible to realize human dependence upon Providence, and then will the reality of prayer be impressed upon the human mind. The

love a child has for its mother is real, so is the hankering of the human soul for its Author, its parent, its original. The more a man realizes his true position in the economy of the world, the more man becomes conscious of the immortality of his soul, of his inner strength, of his true origin, of the *raison d'être* of his existence, the more real his prayers are.

THE REALITY OF PRAYER IS ALSO THE POWER OF PRAYER

The human soul is not mortal.

“Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the Soul.”

The Qur-án says, “*Nafkhto fih min ruhi*” (God breathed His Soul into man).

Jesus said: “Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me He doeth the works” (John xiv. 10). The sayings of great Hindu saints are full of such sentiments.

A great Muslim saint has also said:

“I became Thou and Thou becamest me. I became the body
and Thou the Soul.

So that nobody should say any more that I am different and
Thou art different.”

Not only have the three sister religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—taught man to believe that he possesses something of Divine in him, but so did even the old religions. Man in his physical capacity is nothing but an animal. He is weaker than many animals. At a certain time of his life he is more helpless even than an ant. An ant can find its food, but a human baby at his birth cannot even do that. Physically, man is a weak creature. He has not developed much more than his “ancestor,” the ape, in certain physical respects.

God is infinite. God is free from all weakness. God has no physicality. When man puts himself in “real and effective communication” with God, he does so only through his spirit. And because God is All-powerful—Almighty—this spiritual communication with Him, which man secures through prayer, gives him power and might. It is not easy to explain exactly spiritual affairs by words spoken by mouth or written by pen, and it is not easy to explain how prayer gives power. But some idea can be formed if we, for the sake of illustration, and illustration only, take God to be a centre of electricity. When we pray we connect, as it were, a wire to that centre and get a current of that electricity. The stronger the wire—that is, the more

sincere, solemn, and pure our prayers are—the more strength we shall get. Through the power thus gained men have performed wonderful miracles. When man submits his own will to the will of God, when man gets into communion with his Maker, he can do many more things than “are dreamt of in philosophy.” The maxim “Thy will and not mine,” if fully acted upon, can make man do wonders. It can awaken all that is Divine in man.

The human soul holds the first rank among all created things because it has something of Divine in it. It is immortal because it has something of Divine in it. Its power is also due to the same reason. It is the human soul which should rule the body if man desires to be above animals. Man's duty as man, as being higher to all other creation, higher even than the sun and the moon, is to cultivate his soul, to cultivate and develop in him that part which is Divine. If he does so he will become powerful. He will be able not only to rule his own body but also that of others. His eyesight will become clearer; he will be able to see the departed souls, will be able to talk to them. The future will be as clear to him as the present. He will be able to read the very thoughts of the living persons. He will be able to transfer his thoughts, without any physical or material medium, thousands of miles. By his will he will be able to influence and even dominate the wills of others. He will be able to rule even over the elements. Knowledge is power. What is knowledge? A development of the latent faculties in man to enquire into and grasp the realities of things. Knowledge depends upon reason, and reason is but one of the many functions of the soul. By the development of reason and wisdom alone man has been able to master the air and the sea. How much more power could he get if he would develop the soul fully and perfectly? The perfection of the soul is only possible by linking it with its Original—from whom it came and to whom it returneth. What is that link? Prayer. By a real and effective communication with God we can secure power. Hence, man has been advised to seek assistance from patience and prayer in the time of affliction and trouble. “*Wastaeenu bissabr wassalat.*”

By prayer one can approach the Almighty. By approaching the Almighty one can secure power. Thus by prayer one can secure power. Prayer is the manifestation of human weakness as compared with the Almighty power that rules over him and the whole universe. But it is also a means of securing such power as to enable man to become the vicegerent of that almighty God Himself, and to rule over all other creatures. Because prayer gives man a knowledge of his own weakness, and because knowledge is power, therefore, even as a manifestation of weakness, prayer is

in truth nothing but power. When a man has purified his soul, when he has put himself in effective communication with God through prayer, his power extends over the dead and the living, over the organic and inorganic parts of the world. He can never be God. He can never be all-powerful. Even at his best he can have but an infinitesimal current from that *Centre of Electricity*. But his spiritual power can, through that electric current, infinitesimal though it be, transcend not only his physical strength but that of all other creatures. He can rule all other creatures which do not possess that current even to the extent he possesses. He can continue to develop that power more and ever more. Physical death cannot stop him from that development. Prayer can give power not only when man is in his physical body but also when he leaves for regions higher and heavenly. It is, therefore, that those who are in Paradise are always engaged in prayer—i.e. in more and more purification of the soul, in greater and greater progress and advance. They secure greater and yet greater power.

ITS PLACE AND VALUE TO THE INDIVIDUAL

Prayer is a pillar of faith. It is the diet of the human soul. The human soul cannot rest content unless and until it has held communion with its Origin. Everything delights when it is in its own elements, so does the soul. The soul is in its elements when it is in communion with God. The best way to hold communion with God is prayer.

Prayer has the same effect on our souls as protoplasm has on our physical bodies. Prayer supplies nourishment for the soul, and it is for this reason that certain religions, like Islam, have made even formal prayer obligatory five times a day. Physical body seeks nourishment five times a day, so does the human spirit. In fact, the human spirit should be more looked after than the human body. Human body is mortal: it decays; even if it is looked after with all possible care it cannot last long. It can never be made immortal. All the pleasure and pain it gives, or gets, can but be transitory. But human spirit, human soul, is immortal. The more nourished it is, the more happiness it will give, and as its happiness shall be everlasting, it deserves to be more valued. Man must look to his spiritual good even more than to his physical good. In any case he must not neglect his soul. If he does not hold his communion with God, if he does not pray to his God, he is sure to neglect his soul. He must not live by bread alone, but by the words of mouth—by prayer, as Jesus Christ has instructed; his prayers must find a place in his daily life. The prayer

of the heart needs no language. The well-known mystic Hafiz says :

"Relate thou the incidents of love in whatever language thou knowest."

And Hakim Sanai, another Persian poet, says :

"When thou speakest of Faith speak it in any language thou knowest, whether it be Hebraic or Syrian ;
When thou seekest the abode of Truth seek it in any country, whether Jabalka or Jabalsa."

Prayer may be offered without the use of a single word, but offered it must be. Human nature demands it, craves for it. Very often man becomes prayerful instinctively. In distress and in danger, particularly on board a ship, in mid-ocean, when a storm rages even such men have been found to have taken recourse to prayer that never did so before. Even such persons that did not believe in a God became believers when overtaken by some serious affliction. It is, as it were, instinctive to look to God for help when man finds himself in trouble. And what a solace, what a comfort, a sincere prayer affords to the human mind when every other means to secure comfort and satisfaction is found wanting ! Prayer affords a great spiritual and moral satisfaction to a believing mind. It saves man from despondency and despair. It encourages him to face danger and even death. It induces him to work even when he finds his work hard. He feels more active. His prayer has an energizing effect on him. He knows that everything in this world depends upon a cause ; that for every work exertion is necessary. But, then, experiment teaches him that no man in the world has as yet been able to master all circumstances. Even with the best human effort the cherished object is sometimes not achieved because of some sudden adverse circumstance. Sometimes it requires repeated efforts to secure success. Sometimes it is after repeated failures that success is gained. He may do his best and work his utmost to secure the means of his success, but how can he master all unforeseen circumstances ? He is not the master of the world. He cannot foresee every possible incident. He cannot forefend every possible accident. But he knows that God is master of all that exists. He knows that by securing His help he can avoid all adverse circumstances over which he himself has no control. While he does his best, all that is humanly possible to achieve his object, he instinctively feels that he must also avoid all adverse circumstances and accidents, and must approach by solemn and sincere prayers Him who is almighty and all-powerful to vouchsafe him His help. Because God

says in the Qur-án, "Pray unto Me and I shall answer," a man feels doubly confident of success when he mingles his prayers to his God with his own efforts to achieve his object. The more confident we are of success, the more hard work we can put in. By prayer we get more confident; therefore, if we are prayerful we can put in more work and more enthusiasm.

Because prayer saves from despair, being addressed to Him who is all-powerful, who is above all laws and circumstances, it encourages a man to face failure after failure. Human endeavours might fail. But if prayer secures God's assistance failure becomes impossible. Why then should he despair? Why should he not make another effort with a whole-hearted prayer even if he has failed once, twice, or a hundred times? If he has faith in prayer, failure will never tire him out.

The moral value of prayer to the individual is also very high. God is perfect. He is all-holy. When a man seeks communion with Him through prayer, he has to see that he does not approach Him with an unholy heart, with an impure mind. It is for this reason that it has been said:

"Rehearse that which has been revealed unto thee of the Book, and be constant at prayer, for prayer preserveth from crimes and from that which is blameable; and the remembering of God is surely a most sacred duty" (Al-Qur-án).

With a guilty conscience nobody can have a heart to go to Him who is all-knowing, all-holy and pure, and who is omnipresent. The good of instituting repeated formal prayers every day is the same. That helps to awaken man's conscience. When he goes to pray he has to present himself before God. He has to judge himself and his doings every time he goes to prayer to be judged by his God, and this quite naturally has a beneficent moral effect upon him.

As regards the spiritual place and value of prayer, prayer has the first and foremost place and the highest value. It is only by repeated communication and communion with God that we can purify our soul, our spirit, and we must make ourselves fit for communion with God.

Prayer is valuable to the individual, to man, because it discovers himself to him—it reveals to man his weakness and also his greatness, what is mortal in him and what is immortal in him. *Nosce teipsum* is a good motto. Shakespeare has truly said that he who is true to himself will consequently be true to others. 'And still a grander saying is, "He who knows himself, knows his Lord." Through prayer man knows himself; through prayer man knows his Lord.

An iron when it is put in the fire takes in many attributes

of fire. In the same way does wood also ; but while the wood gets burnt quickly to ashes, the iron does not. A human soul also in communion with God takes in God's attributes. If, however, the soul is not prepared and purified beforehand, it will not be like iron but rather like wood. Moral purity, in certain respects even physical purity, is concomitant with spiritual purity. When a man possessing physical, moral, and spiritual purity engages in prayer, his soul with God is like iron with fire. Thus, morally and spiritually both, prayer should hold a high place in individual life. Its value is great in moulding the character of the individual, in saving him from despair and in giving him encouragement in his work.

A prayer with good motives, with sincere desire, and one which has the good either of the individual or community as its objective, is sure to be heard. But even if it is not heard for the time being it is not in vain. It does one good simply to pray. It is a moral gain to the individual. It is his duty to pray. Hafiz sweetly says :

*" Hafiz wazifaey tu dúa guftanast o bas
Der bund an mabash ki nashneed ya shuneed "*

(O Hafiz, it is thy duty to pray and nothing else.
Take no thought whether He hears thee or not).

In Isaiah i. 13-17 is given these conditions which make the prayers acceptable :—

" Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth : they are a trouble unto me ; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you : yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear : your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean : put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes ; cease to do evil ; learn to do well : seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."

A man has a right to go to his Creator and Cherisher for everything—even for temporal benefits, for his daily bread, for rain, etc. However low the object of the prayer be, the very fact that the man has gone to his God for it is a moral gain. It matters not if different persons pray to the same Deity, at the same time, for contrary things. It is not man's business to anticipate the difficulties in the way of the prayer being heard. Nothing is impossible for God, and He knows best which prayer should be heard and which rejected. He has ordained that all that is humanly possible to achieve an object, however temporal, should be done by man, and for the success of the undertaking sincere prayer should be offered and the help of Him invoked who is the Master of the Universe.

THE VALUE OF PRAYER TO THE "CHURCH"

The value of prayer to the Church depends upon the forms of prayer and the organization of the Church.

The greatest work which was set to Moses by the all-wise God was to uplift a down-trodden nation. That nation was morally degraded, therefore it was politically in bondage. If Moses had united the spiritual regeneration of the nation with its moral and physical regeneration, that would have been too much for its capacities; therefore, for the time being, he contented himself with leading his people out of bondage and with improving their morals through rigid laws and strict discipline. He had to be firm and rigid in his laws, and he was perhaps a little too firm and rigid in making his people work for their liberty. The development of the ideas of after-life and of prayer was left to later prophets and reformers.

Almost every religious *system* worth the name has recognized the institution of prayer. That is, every church has found prayer to be of some value. The early Hindu temples were crowded with men with their offerings and sacrifices. Invocations and *Mantras*, or prayers, were also repeated. The Bhagwat Gita is a spiritual and energizing book of great value to the Hindu Church up to this day. But among Hindus the existence of a priestly class—the Brahmins—deprived, as it were, the masses of their individual right of worship and prayer. It was only through the Brahmins that any worship, any prayer, could be conducted. Perhaps it strengthened the position of the Hindu Church in a way, but sacrifice and prayer lost nearly all their moral and spiritual value. Modern tendency of Hindus is to curtail the power of priests.

The Zoroastrians were a very prayerful people. So were the Magians. But with these also spiritual life became the monopoly of the ministers of religion. Among the great religious systems, Buddhism has been unique in respect of its ideas of God Himself, what to say of any prayers to Him. Buddhism has no church. It has dispensed with prayer, or rather has substituted meditation for prayer, although there is not very much difference between the two.

The credit of expounding noble ideas of our future life and of giving the true character to prayer rests with Jesus. It is true that the Jews, shortly after the Great Law-giver Moses, also became prayerful people. The idea of God became less anthropomorphized, and from the primitive use of the name of Jehovah in invocation regular and serious prayer developed; but it was through Christ that prayer realized its spiritual height. The value of prayer to the Christian Church is immeasurable. There is no religion in the world which has such a highly organized Church system

as Christianity. And the Church owes its organization mostly to prayer. Missals, councils, liturgies, and convocations were held to settle articles of faith, and matters of conscience. The Lord's Day institution has been of the greatest possible value to the Church. As the Lord's Prayer is a glorious prayer, so from the Church point of view is the Lord's day a glorious day; a day reserved for prayer and worship is a very beneficent institution for the Church. In these days of scepticism, but for Sunday institution as a day of prayer there would hardly have been any prayer in congregation, and the Church system would have suffered greatly. Congregational prayers which are said under the auspices of the Church are more acceptable to God, even though the congregation be very small.

"And again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew xix. 20).

Intercession, Holy Communion, mediator's prayer, prayer of consecration, confession, etc., all played important part in increasing the value of prayer for the Church of Christianity. Congregational prayers under the Church give the Church a hold over the conscience of the nation. In fact, the Church rules the masses through prayer. Of course, for the purpose of the Church some formalism had to be given to the prayers, and prayer lost its voluntary effect. Not only man but everything created by God should know its prayer to its Creator. Every individual should have the amplest scope for the heartiest outpouring of love and gratitude, devotion and humility to his Maker, Cherisher and Sustainer—to the all-merciful and compassionate yet requiting and reckoning God. Islam is the religion which, while establishing formal and congregational prayers as well, has seen to it most of all other religions that the value of prayers be not lost to the individual. Islam is too democratic in its character to have allowed any Church organization to have been perfected in it. It has no priests, and no church can exist without priests. Besides this, as an English writer, Mr. Hunter, says: "It is one of the glories of Islam that its temples are not made with hands, and that its ceremonies can be performed anywhere upon God's earth or under His heaven."

Still, Islam has established formal congregational prayers. There are prayers said five times a day which should preferably be said in congregation and in a Mosque. There is also an institution of Friday prayers in congregation said in Mosques. There are other large congregational prayers of Eid said twice a year. But the value of these prayers is more to the State and nation than to the Church of Islam.

Every Muslim has his church in him. Any Muslim can lead the prayers. Any Muslim can say formal prayers for his dead brother. Any Muslim can bind two willing persons in marriage anywhere. It is therefore that the church system in Islam is not so well organized as it is in Christianity, and it is therefore that there is no church to which prayer is so valuable as it is to the Christian Church. In fact, nearly all formal prayers, except the Lord's Prayer, of Christianity have been the work of the Church. It will not be wrong to say that to the Christian prayers the Church has been as valuable as the prayers to the Church. In Islam all formal prayers are to be the same as those which were said by Muhammad himself. However, generally speaking, prayers are the backbone of the Church—every church.

THE VALUE OF PRAYER TO THE STATE

The value of prayer to the State in Christian and Buddhist countries is getting less and less because their religion itself has been divorced from the State. In England that schism is not so great as in other Christian countries. In England there is a State Church, although that Church has given up even the moral and social care of the people to the State. The State can reach the heart of the people through the Church, and as the Church has to use the medium of prayer to reach the masses, the value of prayer becomes great to the State. The greater the value of prayers as a moral agent, the more their value to the State. A man who is true to God cannot but be true to himself and to his fellow-creatures. The State is always in need of such men.

On such emergencies and catastrophes as great wars the value of congregational prayers to the State becomes very great indeed, because it is through prayer that the State can make an appeal to the public to make a solemn, united and hearty effort to achieve peace and victory. The State secures the moral support of the whole nation through organized prayers. The State secures the will of the whole nation to win the war through prayers.

Since prayers are always more sincere at the time of distress and affliction, and they appeal most to a merciful God, the State gets a spiritual support also through prayers at a time of national crisis.

There is one more gain secured to the State through prayers, and it is that when the life of a number of near and dear relations of the people is at stake they are more in a prayerful mood to secure, as it were, the safety of their relations. But when they go to pray the idea naturally comes to them that they should not expect their prayers to be answered unless they are offered with a chaste mind

and then they try to free themselves of impurities. This gives to the State better citizens to deal with. France found it to its cost during the great war that it was not quite the right policy for the State to have ignored the Church. There was a revival of religiousness in France. The churches were not quite neglected and the attendance for prayer in the churches was not small. The State also benefited by the Red Cross organization.

Generally speaking, however, the value of prayers to Muslim States is the highest, and so is the value of prayer to the Muslim nation. Muslim congregational prayers breathe the spirit of democracy, equality and fraternity, and as they are held every day a number of times, they have a wholesome and lasting effect on the mind of the people. Muslim formal prayers are also good for the State and the nation because they teach every day lessons in early rising, punctuality, and cleanliness to the people. They have very high moral value and have great disciplinary effects. They teach humility before God, before whom every Muslim prostrates in his prayers, and have a beneficent influence on the devotee's general character when he finds himself in the presence of the omniscient and omnipresent God five times every day. This repeated presence before the Great Judge does great good to the individual, and as it is the individuals who form the nations and States, the value of prayer to the nation and State is not less than to the individual. Prayer teaches man to do his duty. The State demands the same. The State cannot work unless its citizens are taught to do their duty. Thus prayers are very helpful to the State.

THE VALUE OF PRAYER IN EVERY-DAY AFFAIRS OF LIFE, IN HEALING AND IN SICKNESS

It has been said that the institution of one day as the day of prayer has helped in the organization of the Church. But it must also be acknowledged that it has not been such a beneficial institution to the individual for his every-day life. It has, in a way, given an encouragement to the people to reserve only one day for prayers and the rest of the week for the business of the world. This has, as it were, made the care of the soul less important than that of the body. Human affairs of ordinary life should be conducted with purity of mind. Prayer is the best agent to secure purity of mind. Prayers, formal prayers, congregational prayers, should be said every day to keep the mind in a pure condition. He who fears God has to fear nothing else. If a man finds himself fit to approach the all-knowing God a number of times every day, he will face any work

without fear. And how very valuable a prayer like the following is to lighten our daily work to us :

“ O Lord ! punish us not if we forget, or fall into error. O our Lord ! lay not on us a load like that which Thou hast laid on those which were before us. *O our Lord ! and lay not on us that for which we have not strength.*”

All men can say to their God, “ Show us the right path ” in every walk of life, in every work they have to undertake.

Our daily work should begin with prayers. Prayers should influence our daily life. The value of prayer increases immensely if we do not separate our daily work from our prayers. It is not right to let rest and worship go together—to reserve only one day for prayer as well as rest. Rather work and prayer should go together. Our prayers should sanctify our work and bless it. We should always be ready to attend to the call to prayer. We should always be willing to sacrifice our daily comfort, even our worldly work, to attend to the needs of our soul. There is no doubt that as long as we live in this world we must not neglect our work. But we must not neglect our soul either. If work is necessary to get bread and bread necessary for sustenance of the body, so is prayer necessary for the sustenance of the soul. Therefore work and prayer should both take a part in our every-day life. Prayers keep our minds clean, our life clean, and our work clean. They save us from going wrong—in speech, in act, even in thought.

Prayer cannot but have a healing and curing effect if it really puts the devotee in an effective and real communication with the All-beneficent, Merciful and Powerful God. It has been experienced by many physicians that the will-power of the patient and the innate vitality of the spirits play an important part in bringing the disorganized system of the human body to its normal condition. Prayer, if it is sincere, if it really means an application to the All-beneficent God, must be a source of strength to the will-power and must have a reviving effect on the spirits. The firmer the faith of a person in God, the greater the influence of prayer on his spirits, and through his spirits also on his physical body. People quite healthy in body have sometimes died by sudden excitement of pain or pleasure. Cheerful news sometimes does more to uplift the spirits of a man than a dose of strong tonic. Prayer can take the place of cheerful news. It can arouse the drooping spirits. It can produce health-giving excitement. It was by empirical knowledge that man first found out that such and such herb is useful for such and such an ailment. It was by experience that it was found out that prayers are helpful in reviving the spirits of persons who are religiously inclined. It is not only healing and curing that man can do through prayers, but many more things, provided that the prayer

really becomes a means of communion with God. It is revelation from God Himself which teaches man how his prayers can become a means of communion with God. Hence the necessity for Divine messengers to teach man effective prayers. But in this material world of ours it will not be right to expect that prayers alone will join a broken leg. Man has been given wisdom and reason to find out medicines for his physical ailments, and he must use that wisdom and reason and find out medicine for any disease of his body. God in His mercy has provided medicines for all ailments of the body. But man is weak. His knowledge is also imperfect. Prayer should be used to make up for the human weakness by securing the help of the Almighty God. Prayer should be used to make up for the deficiency of human knowledge, for guidance in the diagnosis of the ailment and the right use of the proper medicine.

THE VALUE OF PRAYER IN TIMES OF DISTRESS AND NATIONAL DANGER AND IN RELATION TO NATIONAL IDEAL AND WORLD-PROGRESS

The value of prayer in times of distress and national danger has been discussed before. The greater the danger to the nation, the more necessary it becomes to secure a united effort, not only physical but also moral and spiritual, on the part of the whole nation to meet that danger. Moral and spiritual and through that physical effort could best be secured by common prayer which will bring home to every heart the danger that the nation has to face, and would impress upon the whole people their community of interest. In an organized State any desire of the nation, if it is expressed unanimously, finds a ready response. To the King of all kings a unanimous petition sent in the form of hearty prayers cannot remain unanswered. The moral and spiritual effect of prayers at the times of distress and national danger is very great. The material effect is also not small, because it unites the whole people on one point, and union is always strength. Prayer also encourages in the individual the spirit of mutual help, sacrifice and self-abnegation, and at a time of national danger the spirit of mutual help and sacrifice in the individuals cannot but be most valuable to the nation and to the State.

Prayer also sets national ideals. For example: what was the national ideal the Muslim nation in its early rise set before it? The same which has found expression in its prayer: "O Lord, Thou art our Maker. Give us success against the idolatrous people." Early Muslims set before them one national ideal and proclaimed it in their prayers.

"Our prayers and supplications, our life and death, are all for none but the Cherisher of the Worlds."

The Muslims of the East and the West, the North and the South, all had one and the same ideal before them, and it was through this unity of ideal as a nation that they overcame the inherent prejudices of race, country, and colour and made lightning progress in all the walks of life, and established a universal brotherhood among themselves.

Prayer not only sets an ideal but also takes it to the heart of every member of the nation, and thus secures for that ideal great moral and spiritual as well as material strength. When the whole nation backs an ideal it comes into practice more generally, and as strenuous efforts are made by each individual its realization becomes easier and more assured.

There is a saying : " If two hearts unite they can move a mountain." Young boys, little girls, grown-up men and women all take up an ideal set by prayer. That ideal is sure to be realized as a national ideal. But human ideal should be universal—common to all nations. World-fraternity and good should be the human ideal, and human prayers should help in achieving it.

It is a pity that humanity as a whole has not yet realized the value of prayers as a great asset to the progress of the world. Each nation, each people, seem to have monopolized that One Being who is the Creator, Evolver, Cherisher and Sustainer of all the nations of the world, of every age, country, race, colour, and creed. We notice that His natural bounties are for all His creatures. The same elements, the same air, water, fire, etc., are for the use and benefit of all the people. The stars, the sun, the moon, the sea, the land, the fruits, are at the disposal of all people. God is universal and impartial in all His bounties. If we all seek communion with Him ; if we all have been created by Him ; if we all try to do His will as represented by His work in Nature, why then do we not all, the whole humanity, pray to Him and Him alone, and thus confirm the community of interest of the whole humanity ?

Prayers can be constituted to be the means of bringing the whole of humanity before One Creator. The ideals of humanity can be made one. Then perhaps we shall have no more of such catastrophes as mankind has passed through now in blood and fire, a curse to civilization and culture, a disgrace to humanity itself.

If through prayers to a common Creator and Cherisher the idea is impressed on the minds of the people of all races and countries and creeds that the whole humanity is one brotherhood, that it has come from one and the same Source, that it goes back to the same, these ideas of the world-domination by one nation, this oppression of the weak by the stronger nations, these colour and racial prejudices, may cease to exist and these terrible wars might come to an

end. God's earth is wide enough for all the people. There is sustenance in it for all the people. What is wanted is to engrave in human mind the idea of toleration and of goodwill. Prayers can do it.

If there is one God, then we should all pray to Him, and in Him we must all meet. What an amount of progress the world would see, what an amount of happiness would accrue to the whole world, if the whole of humanity would only realize its common brotherhood, and would call on one Cherisher and Creator in its prayers!

It is true that prayer has already played a part in the progress of the world. The nearer we come to our age, the more universal we find the character of the prayers. The horizon of human eye has extended. Tribal and racial deities are not invoked. The idea of universal brotherhood has gained ground. The Christian Lord's Prayer is universal. The *Fatiha* of the Musalmans is more wonderful. It runs thus :—

*"In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful
Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds!
The Compassionate, the Merciful!
King of the Day of Reckoning!
Thee only do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help,
Guide us on the straight path,
The path of those to whom Thou hast been gracious, with whom
Thou art not displeased, and who go not astray."*

It is also true that because Muslims have stuck to their prayers in one language (Arabic) and to one Book (the Qur-án) all the Muslims of the world, whether they be in India or in China, or in America or in Australia, or anywhere else, understand each other in the Mosque, and thus territorial boundaries have been done away with. In every Mosque of the world the language spoken is the same. This has increased the feelings of fraternity in the Muslim nation spread all over the world. It must also be said to the credit of Islam that it has tried to harmonize the people of the world with one another, and has thus contributed to the good and progress of the world. Prayers have played a prominent part in this world-harmonization.

Under the religious laws laid down by Islam, rich and poor Musalmans of different races and colours meet together every Friday in Mosques and offer prayers without any distinction of place or position, under the leadership of any man elected by the assembly. Twice a year, in a larger and more numerous congregation, all the Musalman residents of a town meet together to say their prayers and to embrace each other with fraternal affection. Every Musalman is enjoined to visit Mecca at least once in a lifetime, at a fixed time, in company with thousands of his brother Musalmans, to offer his prayers. This great gathering, in which hundreds

of thousands of true believers meet together from far and near at one central place, all wearing the same simple unsewn garment, bare-footed and bare-headed, princes and peasants, from different countries and places, of various colours and races, standing shoulder to shoulder in their prayer, is an annual demonstration of Islamic Socialism, and sets a grand practical example of brotherhood and equality. In this gathering not the slightest difference can be noticed between a monarch and his subjects, a plebeian and a patrician. The idea boldly forces itself upon every mind that all human beings are one people and that it is incumbent upon them to treat each other with perfect equality as members of the same brotherhood. This annual gathering demonstrates not only an outward and formal similarity and equality between man and man, but it also declares an identity of purpose and singleness of object on the part of all humanity. These myriads of men and women, old and young, come to that sea of sand bearing innumerable hardships and in great peril of life and property, with only one purpose, one object, to pay homage to Allah, whom they can find everywhere, who is "Nearer to them than the vein of their neck," yet whom they love to proclaim at a common gathering as their common Deity—the one Cherisher of them all—the *Rubbulalamin*. The idea in assembling this vast mass of humanity is to demonstrate at one and the same time common fraternity and spiritual affinity, the "Fatherhood" of God and brotherhood of man (Islam and Socialism).

But this spirit requires still greater liberality and scope. The prayer to the "Lord of the worlds" should create a bond of fraternity with the people of the world of every creed who believe in Him.

The Lord of the worlds does not stand in need of human prayers. All His creation sings praises of Him and offers prayers to Him. Our prayers should do us good. They must help in the happiness and progress of the world.

Now that the world has realized that there is only *One* Being who deserves human worship—over all creatures man is supreme; now that stone worship and star worship, and even man worship, are being abolished—even the Hindus proclaim that they are Monotheists; now that the world has been drawn closer together—distance is being shortened by easy mode of conveyance; now that religious tolerance is also increasing among people of different places and creeds; it ought to be now not difficult to fix a place where representatives of all races and creeds could meet each other with fraternity, without the distinction of colour or nation, to offer their prayers to the One Cherisher and Lord of the whole universe for the Kingdom of Heaven on this earth—for peace and goodwill everywhere in the world. Political conferences for peace have failed. War,

most deadly and inhuman war, has raged in spite of Hague conventions and conferences. It will be worth while to give prayer and faith a trial. The idea of common brotherhood of man can best be impressed by instituting common prayers to One Lord of the whole universe. To send up prayers through Christ or Krishna is no good if prayers do not help us in becoming good and useful and progressive citizens of this big Empire—this world. Man wants salvation in this very world as well. Our prayers should mould our actions and make them of general beneficence and progress for our fellow-men.

By our prayers we should be able to realize the needs of our fellow-beings. If we have something in our possession and the other person has not and needs it, we should be ready to give it to him. Do we not expect our God to give us what we do not possess and what He possesses? We must not forget :—

“Woe to those who pray,
But in their prayers are careless
Who make a show of devotion
But refuse help to the needy.”

Nor this :—

“If thou bring thy gift to the altar and then rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, then come and offer thy gift.”

When we say our prayers we must not forget the real purport of those prayers. If we inspire ourselves with the same spirit in which we expect God to answer our prayers, if we also get determined to be beneficent as far as we can to others, what progress the world would make in every respect. Suppose some people are labouring under bondage and we can make them free, we should do so. Suppose there are peoples and nations who need education; suppose we can give that education, we should be willing to give it. Prayers ought to teach us to be selfless benefactors. If they are real, they must be beneficial not only to us but to the world at large. They must add to the progress and happiness of the world. Colour or social bars are fatal to the progress of the world. All humanity forms one nation.

When we pray we should be imbued with the spirit of the following immortal lines of the great American poet :—

“We owe allegiance to the State, but deeper, truer, more
To the sympathies that God hath set within our spirit's core;
Our country claims our fealty; we grant it so, but then,
Before man made us citizens, great Nature made us men.
He's true to God who's true to man: wherever wrong is done
To the humblest and weakest 'neath the all-beholding sun;
That wrong is also done to us; and they are slaves most base

Whose love of right is for themselves and not for all their race.
God works for all, ye cannot have the hope of being free
With parallels of latitude, with mountain range and sea.
Put golden padlocks on Truth's lips, be callous as ye will,
From soul to soul o'er all the world, leaps one electric thrill."

The following is a soul-inspiring prayer, for every Muslim, from the Holy Al-Qur-án:—

"Our Lord! do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake. Our Lord! do not lay on us a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us. Our Lord! do not impose upon us that which we have not the strength to bear; and pardon us and grant us protection and have mercy on us. Thou art our Patron, so help us against the unbelieving people."

FRIDAY SERMONS

V

THE MUSLIM CONCEPTION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to the East and to the West; but righteousness is whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and the Angels and the Holy Scripture and the Prophets, and gives wealth for love of Allah to kindred and to orphans and to poor people and to homeless people, and to beggars, and to emancipate slaves; and who is constant in prayer and pays the poor-rate; and those who keep a treaty when they make one, and who are patient in disaster, tribulation, and adversity. Those are they who are sincere. Those are the God-fearing.—AL-QURÁN.

لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ
الشَّمْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ
آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ
وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ ۚ وَآتَى الْمَالَ
عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَ
الْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ ۚ السَّائِلِينَ
وَفِي الرِّقَابِ ۚ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى
الزَّكَاةَ ۚ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا
عَاهَدُوا ۚ وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ
وَالضَّرَاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ
صَدَقُوا وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ۝

THE first words of this verse, "It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West," are generally taken as referring to the question of the "Qibleh," the direction towards which Muslims were to turn their faces when they prayed. At the time when this verse was revealed at El Medinah, that direction had just been changed. At first the Qibleh had been the Temple at Jerusalem, thenceforth it was to be the Kaabah at Mecca. The Jews, who had hoped from the first command that the Prophet had an inclination towards their faith, and would in time become a Jew, were disappointed and angry at the change. They made much talk about the question, which, as Jews, the strictest of all formalists, they regarded as of very great importance. The Qur-án, upon the other hand, declares it to be of small importance as compared with individual good conduct and public faith and endurance in a just cause, virtues for which the Jewish tribes of El Medinah were so little famous that their name has become a by-word for unjust dealing and bad faith. Yet they considered themselves righteous and God-fearing so long as they turned their faces in prayer towards Jerusalem, and conformed to a host of other traditions, Scriptural or

rabbinical. To the congregation which assembled in the little mosque at El Medinah—the first mosque of Islam—where the Prophet himself used to preach, leaning against the trunk of a palm-tree, where there were fewer formalities than in any other place of worship that the world had known—that must have been the meaning of this verse. It was a lesson for the Jews, much more than for the early Muslims, whose chief characteristics were sincerity, simplicity, and honest conduct. But in the course of years, as Islam spread and developed in the world, its full meaning became apparent to the thoughtful, and to-day it is a lesson for the Muslims rather than for any other community. In proportion as they take it to heart, so shall the Muslim world regain success and superiority.

First, let me call your attention to the peculiar grammatical structure of this verse, so peculiar as to give the reader at first sight the shock he would receive from a mistake in grammar.

“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to the East and the West, but righteousness is whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day,” etc.

We should have expected to read “but righteousness is that you believe in Allah and the Last Day.” Well, that is the natural sequence, but it has nothing like the force of meaning of that “whosoever” in the Qur-án. How often in the history of the world had men been told to do right, and how repeatedly had they accepted the injunction, and neglected to apply it to their actual conduct. Righteousness is no vague counsel of perfection; it cannot be attained by any ritual acts or blind acceptance of a creed or formula. It is the actual doing of right; and you cannot realize righteousness save in the person of the man or woman who does right. All injunctions, exhortations, counsels of perfection are as nothing to the good example of one righteous man. Righteousness—active, practical righteousness as distinct from sentimental dreams of what should be in an amended world—is “Whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and the Angels and the Holy Scripture and the Prophets, and gives wealth for the love of Allah to kindred and to orphans and to poor people and to wanderers and to the homeless and to beggars and for the emancipation of slaves, and is constant in prayer,” and does his duty towards the State. And then again there is an odd grammatical change from the singular to the plural: “And those who keep a treaty when they make one; and the patient in conflict, tribulation and adversity. Those are they who are sincere. Those are the God-fearing.” That is to say, that righteousness can be realized in the community which does right as well as in the individual which does right. But in order that a community shall do

right it must contain many individuals who do right. It was not a large or influential company which gathered in the little courtyard at El Medinah where the Prophet preached, leaning against the trunk of a palm-tree. Yet the members of that congregation in their lifetime conquered and converted half the world. What was the power which they possessed above all other nations of the world? It was the force of faith and personal righteousness described in this verse, a singleness of purpose such as has never been known in any community before or since, and a self-surrender to the will of Allah, which is righteousness, a lack of selfish ambitions such as never has been known in a community before or since.

They turned their faces towards the East and West in another sense. They carried the banner of the faith to the Atlantic on the one hand and the frontiers of India on the other. And it is no wonder that their descendants and successors should have come to regard the great Muslim Empire which they founded as the greatest part of their achievement. It was not. The greatest part of their achievement was that they preserved their simple, honest conduct, their personal righteousness, and wherever they went spread righteousness by their example.

Brethren, that Muslim Empire, though so great and in its origin illustrious, was nothing to the greatness of Islam. Yet how many Muslims have identified the greater with the lesser, and when the Muslim Empire is humiliated, say: "Islam has suffered a defeat." The enemies of Islam say that, but they are much deceived. Too long have we been turning our faces to the East and West, saying: "So far the Muslim Empire has extended in this direction or in that. We are Muslims, therefore we are superior to all mankind." The Jews of El Medinah thought themselves superior to all mankind because they were Jews. The Christians thought themselves superior to all mankind because they were Christians. The Qur-án teaches something very different. Islam is the true religion which Abraham, Moses, Jesus taught before Muhammad; but righteousness does not consist in being technically a Muslim or a Christian or a Jew; but righteousness consists in doing right with earnest purpose. Look through the history of Islam and you will find that when Muslims have been most distinguished for personal righteousness, and for the simple faith and tolerance which always go with it, they have been most successful politically. And when they have regarded themselves as privileged and superior people, sure of Allah's favour, simply because they say the "tashahhud," they have failed. They have done precisely what Islam has told them not to do; they have trusted to the formalities of belief, neglecting

action and that true belief which always moves to action.

One righteous man in the sense of this verse of the Qur-ân is worth ten of these formal Muslims; and a score of righteous men, if they could come together, would be worth a regiment. The influence and power of Islam can be restored only by the growth among us of true righteousness; and that growth must be fostered by charity, enlightened education, prayer, and brotherly acts of all kinds from one Muslim to another. This is a small room in which we are assembled, yet it is the only Muslim masjid in all London. The congregation is a small one, and contains no person of great influence; but in that congregation there is more than one individual who for belief, sincerity, and pure simplicity in righteous conduct may compare with those first Muslims who assembled in the first small mosque of El Medinah, when the splendours of Islam were yet to come. Brethren, the splendours of Islam are yet to come if we but do our duty. "The latter portion shall be better for thee than the former."

Never till now has the whole world been ready to tolerate and understand Islamic teaching, which is, and always was, for all the world. As an Englishman and, I hope, a patriotic Englishman, I pray that from this little, humble masjid here in London may go forth a helpful and reviving spirit, a spirit of true brotherhood in righteous action among Muslims, to found a Muslim Empire in the world far greater and more durable than any that the military power of Muslims ever founded.

VI

EVERY DAY, LORD'S DAY

"O ye who believe. When the call to Friday prayer goes forth, haste to the remembrance of Allah and leave your business. That is better for you if you did but know.

"And when the prayer is ended then disperse in the land and seek of Allah's bounty, and remember Allah's bounty much that you may be successful.

"But if they see some bargaining or sport afoot, they break away to it and leave thee standing. Say: That which Allah has to give is better than sport and better than the object of your trading. And Allah is the best giver of sustenance."—THE QUR-ÂN.

THE Muslims have no day which corresponds to the Jewish Sabbath or the Christian Sunday, no one day in the week

which is set apart for the service of Allah, while all the other days are relegated to the commerce of this world. Our Friday is simply the day of assembly, the day on which we all assemble in the Mosque and hear a sermon, and say the prayer together behind one imam, the day on which we remember Allah collectively, as members of one holy institution and one mighty brotherhood. And then we go back to our commerce, or our study, or our labour—our daily work, whatever that may be. But is our duty done for all the week? Certainly not. Every day of the week is for a Muslim the Lord's Day. We must remember Allah much at all times if we will succeed. I hope that nobody who comes here thinks that by listening to the sermon and joining in the congregational prayer he or she has done his or her duty for the week. It would be better to stop away than to come here on that understanding. That idea of worship can only be held by people who believe that in their service of Allah they need the ministrations of a particular class of man—a priest, or minister, or rabbi, or whatever they may choose to call him, who is not in every place, at every time available. No such necessity is recognized in El Islam. There is no reason why I should lead your prayer to-day more than any other member of this congregation, except that I possess more Arabic than some of you, and that I have been chosen to act as your Imam during the illness of a much more worthy man. And it is the same with all the rites of our religion. Any one who knows Arabic and the legal ceremonies is qualified to perform them. There occurs in the Qur-án a verse which puzzles some people. Its meaning always seemed to me as clear as day:—

“Thou shalt assuredly find the most violent of mankind in enmity to those who believe to be the Jews and the idolators; and thou shalt assuredly find the nearest to them in affection to be those who say: Verily we are Christians. That is because there are among them priests and monks, and they are not puffed up with pride.”

Of course, if you take the verse to apply to worldly intercourse, it is unintelligible, for the Christians were then, and have been ever since, more formidable enemies to El Islam than were the Jews. And that they should be nearer to us “because there are among them priests and monks”—a class of people which Islam abolished—makes the meaning still more hard to grasp in that connection. But apply it to the purpose of Islam, the service of Allah, and to Muslims, Jews, and Christians, not in their political relation to each other, but in their respective attitudes towards Allah, apply it not to the worst, but to the best among them, and the sense is clear. The Jews and the idolators are most strongly opposed to Muslims because, for different reasons and in

different ways, both are puffed up with pride in their relation to Allah, and there are no individuals among them who devote themselves exclusively to Allah's service. And the Christians are nearest to us, because there are among them persons who dedicate themselves to Allah's service, as every Muslim, every Muslimah is bound to do; and who are humble in their attitude towards Allah.

Every Muslim is, or ought to be, a priest, a man completely dedicated to the service of Allah, but in the business and the battle of the world, not out of it, shut up in a church or monastery. Every Muslimah should be a priestess, or, if you like it better—I do not—a nun in her devotion, while fulfilling all her natural functions and her worldly duties as a daughter, sister, wife, and mother. According to strict Muslim notions, women should have on ordinary occasions their separate prayers, their separate sermon, with some lady learned in religion for their leader and instructress. Muslims of both sexes are enjoined to pray five times in every twenty-four hours. The Christian priests and monks and nuns do much the same, but not the laity. Again, the fraternity existing between monks of one community or nuns of one community is like the fraternity which should exist among Muslim men and women. So you see, the Friday prayers are really but a small part of our worship. We are not religious people on Fridays and worldly people on every other day of the week. But while on other days we say our prayers alone, or with a little circle of our friends, coming to the mosque, if we are near a mosque, for the purpose at any time within the lawful hours, each group assembled choosing its Imam, to-day we pray together at one moment in congregation behind one Imam, and we listen to a discourse on some religious subject. If we were to put it into terms which Christians would understand, you are not to-day a congregation benefiting by the ministrations of a priest, or "sitting under" some ordained or licensed minister, but you are priests and ordained ministers yourselves, both men and women, who have appointed one of your number, in no way your superior, to preach the sermon and to lead the prayer on this occasion. I detail all this—which is, of course, perfectly well known to you—because last week, when we dispersed, a lady who had been present asked me whether I was "a Mohammedan priest." I hope we all are priests and priestesses of the order of our lord Muhammad (may God bless and keep him!), who abolished priesthood and monasticism, bidding every man and woman use intelligence, as priests alone had been allowed till then to use it in religious matters, and to dedicate themselves to Allah's service in the world, as only priests and monks and nuns till then had dedicated themselves to Allah's service in seclusion. But I am certainly not a Mohammedan

priest in the sense in which that lady used the term, and no more is anybody else on earth.

^ If you regarded attendance at these Friday prayers as the sum-total of your Muslim worship for the week, you would be in a terrible and deadly error. If you regarded this assembly every Friday as some mystic rite conferring spiritual benefits on those who come here irrespective of their conduct in the world, again you would be in a terrible and deadly error. If you thought that here in this room, or in the most glorious mosque in the world, you are nearer to Allah, or bound to greater sanctity of conduct than is the case in your own homes or in your place of business, you would be in error. This place is only holy with the holiness we bring to it. The benefit which we derive from prayer in congregation is in direct proportion to each individual's contribution of earnest piety, which is the result of striving after righteousness and private prayer. Without that striving after righteousness, those private prayers which are the daily bread of the believer, the Friday prayers become a mere formality, in no way better than the practice of the lukewarm Christians, who give a formal adherence to their faith by putting in an appearance at church once every week. But the Friday prayers are of immense importance, as my text shows plainly. We must not allow any business or amusement to detain us from attending them, nor any thought of business or amusement to distract us after we have stood to pray. Cannot you picture the simplicity of those meetings of the early Muslims, when men could break away, attracted by some noise of concourse in the street, and leave the Prophet standing? They thought no harm, perhaps, until this Scripture was revealed, and then they knew, and we know also that these prayers are no mere priestly ceremony, which the Imam—even when he was the holy Prophet—can perform alone, or on behalf of others. Every member of the congregation must perform his own part for himself. It is an act which we perform together, we free worshippers of Allah, we the nation of priests; not for the satisfaction of our Lord, for He is independent of His creatures; not to seek the spiritual light and rapture of the soul's communion with the Lord of all the worlds, for that can be sought only by the way of lonely prayer and meditation and remembrance of Allah; but to show and to feel that we are members of one brotherhood, every one of us dedicated and devoted, sacrificed completely, to the will of the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Merciful, the living King who sleepeth not nor dieth—Allah, whose holy purpose will encompass and sustain us when all the business and amusements of this world have passed away. We are not hermits, and we are not monks and nuns that we should dwell apart, each group or individual absorbed

in separate devotions. We are fellow-workers in the cause of righteousness, fellow-servants of the One Eternal Lord, fellow-subjects, fellow-soldiers of God's kingdom upon earth. And if we do not hold together, if we have no discipline, if we do not come together once a week to remember Allah in congregation, and to remember all that He has done for us, in giving us this guidance and befriending us; if we forget that we are all one brotherhood, and hold aloof one from another, then we withdraw ourselves from the kingdom of Allah, which is of this world just as much as of the world to come. While we are on earth, the Kingdom of God on earth claims all our service, and through that service only can we reach the Kingdom of God hereafter—that paradise which He has promised to His faithful servants. Our Friday prayers are thus of very great importance, and I do not think that any Muslim, any Muslimah, who was able to come to them, would stop away. I know that it is difficult in this country for Muslims employed in business houses, or the public service, to obtain permission for the necessary time. But that is very largely our own fault. If all of us had realized the great importance of the Friday prayers, the English would not now be under the impression that Muslims can dispense with their observance. That notion, as you all know, does exist, and is the cause that no allowance of time off on Fridays is made to Muslims in the service of the English. But as things are, it is wellnigh impossible for Muslims thus employed to join us here. But what must be said of those who let any avoidable business or some project of amusement turn them away from joining their brethren in this sacred and solemn assembly, like those of old, who broke away and left the Prophet standing? Do they not perceive that “that which Allah has to give is better than sport and better than the object of your trading, and Allah is the best giver of sustenance”?

VII

BELIEF AND PRACTICE

“But when they are bidden, Spend of that which Allah has bestowed upon you, those who disbelieve say to those who believe: Shall we feed those whom God could feed if He so willed it? Verily you are in nothing less than error manifest.

“And they say: When, pray, is this promised judgment, if you speak the truth?

“They are only waiting for one shout, which shall surprise them while they are contending.

“And they will not be able to make dispositions nor to return to their own folk.

“And the trumpet will sound, and lo! out of the places of corruption they shall hasten to their Lord.

“Saying: Woe unto us! Who has roused us from our resting-place? This then is what the Merciful One promised, and the Apostles spoke the truth.

"There will be but one shout, and behold ! they will all be gathered in Our presence.

"On that day shall no soul be wronged in anything. You will only be repaid for that which you have done.

"Verily those who deserve Paradise on that day will be happily employed.

"They and their wives reclining upon thrones in pleasant shades.

"Wherein is fruit for them, and all that they require.

"Their message from a merciful Lord is : 'Peace !' "—AL-QURÁN.

THE verses I have just read to you, with my own translation of them, are part of Surat Yá Sín, a chapter of the Qur-án which in many parts of the Muslim world is recited in the presence of the dying. You may think it a depressing chapter—even a terrifying chapter—but it is one of the most beautiful in the whole book, and there is nothing terrifying or depressing in it for the true believer. The word believer in the Qur-án invariably means one who not only believes in El Islam, but practises El Islam. For what, I ask you, is the worth of the belief without the practice? Islam is all a matter of obedience, of self-surrender to the will of the Merciful One who has bidden us express belief in works. Other religions have been told : believe and you are saved. We are told : believe and do. Belief alone will not preserve us from the fate of those who disobey the will of God, whose conduct goes against God's purpose in creation. We must try to do what we are told to do in this sure guide of conduct which has been revealed to us. We shall not be judged by our belief at all but by the fruits of our belief in conduct.

"You will only be repaid for that which you have done."

"And when they are bidden, Spend of that which Allah has bestowed on you, those who disbelieve say to those who believe : What, are we to feed those whom Allah Himself could feed if He so willed it?"

There you have the unbelievers mocking Muslims for practising Islam. For them, belief in Allah, an omnipotent, almighty God, does away with the need for man to act at all benevolently. They do not understand that man is Allah's deputy on earth, and that the welfare of humanity is made dependent upon man's behaviour, subject to the guidance which has been given to him at divers times through God's appointed messengers. It is this high position of man as the deputy, the Khalifah, the successor of Allah, which makes the awfulness of his position if he goes astray after receiving guidance.

The scoffers mentioned in this verse who asked, "What !

shall we feed those whom Allah could feed if He wished? " were men who daily listened to the preaching of the final Prophet. Yet they scoffed, and would not do what they were told to do. They set themselves deliberately to deride, and so far as they could, to frustrate the beneficent purpose of Allah, who once again had sent a messenger to show men the straight path to happiness—they who, as the sons of Adam, shared the high position of Khalifah of Allah on earth! To man has been handed over the government of this world, as Allah's deputy, yet men deliberately shirk their part in it, and strive to make it bad instead of good. They do not believe in Allah's purpose. They do not believe that the course they are pursuing is so very bad; they do not believe in the punishment of which the Holy Prophet warns them.

"They say: When will this threatened judgment come to pass, if you are truthful?"

And Allah makes this answer to all evil-doers:

"They are only waiting for one shout, which will surprise them while they are contending.

"They will have no time to make dispositions, nor will they return to their own folk.

"The trumpet will sound, and lo! from the places of corruption they will hasten to their Lord.

"Saying: Woe upon us. Who has roused us from our resting-place? This then is what the Merciful One promised. So the messengers spoke truth!"

The Merciful One did really exist. The messengers had really spoken truth. Obedience, the doing of good to men, the feeding of the hungry "whom Allah could have fed if He had wished to do so," had been really by command of the Lord of all the worlds. The practice of Islam had been really worth while after all. All that they disbelieved had actually come to pass. They had been opposing the will of the Creator of the heavens and earth. What was their position, what their feelings, when the earth, where by permission of Allah they had enjoyed free will, the right to choose, and had possessed some dignity, some power of self-control—think of it, when earth and its conditions, all that gave them any grandeur or importance had passed away from them, when they found themselves before the Maker of the Heavens and the earth, as His opponents—the opponents of the Universal King, compared with whom they were as nought, and absolutely helpless in His presence, having no befriender, no intercessor, objects of scorn and derision to the whole universe. That was their punishment. It is said to them in this same Surah:

"Stand forth, separately, on that day, O evil-doers. Did I not enjoin upon you, O sons of Adam, that you

should not worship the Devil—verily he is an open enemy to you—and that you should worship me. That is the straight path. But now he has seduced great numbers of you, had you then no sense? This is Hell, which you were promised. Burn in it to-day for that you disbelieved.”

This is Hell, this all-too-late discovery of the faithfulness of Allah’s promise and the truthfulness of the Prophets. What a fire of scorn, self-horror and remorse! One’s spirit shrivels at the very thought of it.

“This is what the Merciful One promised.” And the Apostles spoke the truth.

In that day the wicked themselves, in their despair, call Allah by His name of Er-Rahman, the Merciful, seeing clearly that the guidance which He sent to them by His Apostles, the repeated warnings, the repeated threats were a great mercy. For the gift of reason which He had bestowed on them alone, of all the creatures of this earth, should of itself have been sufficient to prevent their doing wrong.

These warnings, terrible though they may seem, are merciful. The threat of punishment is not personal, much less vindictive, against any individual, man or woman. It is a warning addressed to me and you and everybody, of what will be our state hereafter if we disobey the will of Allah and obstruct His purpose in this world.

Brethren, since I met you last a week ago, I have had a great shock. The man whom I had reason to regard as my most cruel enemy, and whom, rightly or wrongly, I had come to regard as the most bitter enemy of El Islam in England, died suddenly, in the prime of life, wealthy, famous, having everything that men desire. While he was alive I had regarded him as a typical Kafir—an unscrupulous opponent of the truth. But when I had the tidings of his death, my feelings changed. I thought, he has passed out of the region of man’s judgment; he has gone before the Judge who reads the secrets of men’s breasts, who “knows what is before them and what is behind them, while they can comprehend nothing of His knowledge save what He wills.” And I thought, I too shall go before that Judge to-day, to-morrow, in a few years’ time. Only a little while remains to me at any rate, compared with all the precious moments I have spent already, and have wasted. And, as I looked back on my own past life, remembering a host of episodes I am ashamed of, the feeling of enmity disappeared, and I found myself saying from the bottom of my heart: “Allah, have mercy on him!”

There is no difference between the good and bad save in the mercy of Allah; and Allah alone is able to adjudge the difference. Allah alone can judge the deed with its

intention, and make allowance for the disabilities which cripple certain men. Allah alone can make excuses for man's faults. As Al Ghazzali wrote: "He comprehends whatever passes from the extremest parts of earth up to the highest heaven, so that an ant's weight would not escape him either in earth or heaven; but he would know the creeping of the black ant in the dark night on the black stone." It is not for us to say, "This man is bad; he will go to Hell"; or "That group of people are wicked, Allah will punish them." We have enough to do in keeping watch on our own conduct.

Oh, Muslims, we who have this knowledge of the greatness of Allah, we who, on every page of the Qur-án, are warned of the tremendous consequences of transgression, neglect and forgetfulness, we who have been commanded to put forth our strength in a continuous effort after righteousness; we, who know that "we shall only be repaid for what we have done," what, in the name of Allah, are we doing? We, who have the final revelation from on high, who, therefore, more than any other of the sons of Adam, now hold the high, responsible position of our Lord's Khalifah upon earth, who have a duty from our Lord to all mankind, what are we doing? We are commanded constant effort. The blessings promised to us, the reliefs allowed to us, are all conditional upon that effort—our Jihad. And we are idle. Or rather we are quarrelling among ourselves, backbiting one another, betraying one another, frustrating one another's effort—all things we are commanded not to do. In Eastern lands, before I was a Muslim, I used to be amused by one worldly-wise Muslim coming to me to warn me solemnly against some other Muslim, and then that other Muslim coming to me to warn me solemnly against my first adviser. And then next day, perhaps, I saw the two of them walking together hand in hand, apparently the closest friends in all the world. The thing amused me then. It horrifies me now. And that is not the case only in Eastern lands, but is also in the West. Here in London the Muslims, being few in number, ought to be the more united. We sometimes try to pick holes in one another, striving to belittle and deride each other's efforts, seeking small points of difference and eccentricity rather than essential points on which we all agree. What kind of a Jihad is this? The crying need of the Islamic world to-day is unity. We hold a truth of inestimable value to the world, we have a duty to the whole world as custodians of that truth. All that is needed in order to recommend—nay, to enforce—that truth, is our example. There is nothing wrong with our religion. All the fault is in ourselves.

Brethren, our property, our worldly reputation, worldly

pride, the little piques and private grudges which divide us each from each based upon altogether worldly matters—these are things which pass away. Remember, we are all of us upon the way to meet our Lord. It is but a little while in any case before the shout will come for us. Shall it surprise us while we are contending? Then all those worldly things will fail us utterly. We can take nothing with us then. We shall be utterly alone, and destitute. Nay, brethren, please God we may find something waiting for us—"the good things which our hands have sent before us"—the result of our Jihad, our striving after goodness here on earth. That is the only wealth which can avail us, then. Look at the Muslim world—Allah's Khalifah upon earth—and tell me, is there nothing that wants doing? Look at the poor, triumphant rulers of the earth, wandering in hopeless error for lack of knowledge of the truth we hold in trust for them. Look at the poor insurgent nations of the earth rising up with reckless bloodshed, threatening destruction to themselves no less than others. Their revolution could be made beneficent if they but knew the laws of God. The course of our Jihad is clearly indicated: first for the healing, re-uniting and uplifting of the Muslim brotherhood, so as to set a great example to the world, and secondly by that means to spread Islam throughout the world.

Our effort must begin at once, and here in London. Work for unity. By all means seek the ground of union with our Muslim brothers. Co-ordinate such efforts as are being made, so that they may no longer even seem to work against each other. Above all, keep up prayer together, help the poor and the afflicted, refrain from stupid quarrelling and backbiting, remember we are going all of us to meet our Lord, to whom we have to render an account of all our doings; and the only thing which will have value for us on that day is the account of our Jihad, our effort after righteousness, and effort for the spreading of the light of truth. If that is satisfactory, by Allah's mercy, then is His promise sure. The message from our Lord to those who did their best on earth is: Peace.

VIII

SPIDER'S HOUSE

"The parable of those who take unto themselves protectors other than Allah is as the parable of the spider when she taketh to herself a house. And verily the most fragile of houses is the spider's house, if they but knew" (AL-QUR'ÁN).

THE spider's web has always been regarded as a type of man's imaginings—or man's illusions, if you will—because of its fragility in spite of all the pains the spider takes with its con-

struction, and all the delicate beauty of the finished structure, and because the spider draws the material for it from within herself. Cobwebs are among the frailest and most evanescent things in nature. They are always being torn and brushed or blown away, and the spiders are for ever reconstructing them; and so are men for ever seeing their imaginings proved false, and reconstructing them on what they think a stronger framework. There is nothing ridiculous or contemptible about the spider's web, it is a miracle of workmanship, which ought to lead men to perception of God's providence. And there is nothing ridiculous or contemptible about the imaginative dwellings which men and women spin from their own brains. The spider is in no way to be pitied or despised for spinning because the web it spins is frail, the sport of every breath of air; and man is no way to be pitied or despised because he uses his imagination for the purpose for which it was given to him—to build a spiritual dwelling for himself.

Let us refer back to the text:

"The parable of those who take unto themselves protectors other than Allah is as the parable of the spider when she taketh to herself a house."

Every translator of the Qur-án that I know of, has taken the spider's house to mean the spider's web. But the Arabic word, which I have translated "taketh to herself," means "taketh after choosing from among others." But the spider does not choose her web in any sense, nor does she take it. It is a part of herself, her own natural production. But she may be said to choose the supports to which she hangs her web and the position in which she hangs it. And on the nature of those supports and that position, not upon the strength or weakness of the web itself, depends the durability of her handiwork. The spider's house in this parable means the cobweb in the place to which the spider has attached it. And the spider really cannot choose. She hangs it on to anything that seems convenient—two twigs which the wind will blow apart next minute, the corner of a room which is swept daily. She has not man's perception of these things. She is obeying Allah's law in her own sphere, without intelligence. But man has been given not only intelligence, but heavenly guidance. Yet see, he hangs the delicate and lovely fabric of his brain to objects which are bound to fail him and destroy that fabric, which might, had he but taken care, have had eternal value instead of shrivelling to nothing like a spider's web. He has free choice. And yet he chooses to construct a perishable spider's house, rather than a durable, palatial dwelling for the soul here and hereafter. Every man and woman in existence has to choose between the perishable and the everlasting, and it is not always easy to distinguish, for the perishable often seems so very strong

that we are tempted to hang all our hopes upon it for a time at any rate. And the fabrics men have spun out of their own brains are often beautiful enough to make a man or woman fall in love with them, forgetting that they are illusions no more lasting than the spider's web. Such was the old Greek idolatry; such are some of the religions in the world to-day. But is it only those who worship idols or who join their faith to intercessors no more potent than themselves who can be described as taking to themselves protectors other than Allah? Surely every man who values wealth or power or any of the blessings of this world so much that in his secret heart he ranks that blessing first and Allah second, every one who recognizes in his heart that wealth or power or human love, or a certain position in the world, or any art or talent he may have, has grown essential to his inner life—surely every man or woman who has thus exalted temporal things to the position which belongs to Allah only, is as much a dweller in the spider's house as any worshipper of idols.

“And verily the most fragile of houses is the spider's house, if they but knew.”

We must not suffer the idea of rank or wealth or power or pride in anything of earth ever to invade our inner life. In our own private thoughts and dreams about ourselves such matters of congratulation must rank as what they really are, mere accidents that may be taken from us any day, and will assuredly be taken from us one day. The only thing we have to ask ourselves is, are we doing the best we can, in Allah's way, with all the means He has bestowed on us, including intellect; or have we hung our whole imaginative building to some false ideal of our own importance or of the importance of our own opinions or our own school of thought or our own position or our own race; which causes us to look with coldness on some fellow-creatures whom we ought to look upon as brothers, to offend and perhaps oppress some fellow-creatures whom we ought to help. That would be to spoil our effort. Make sure that nothing intervenes between you and Allah, that nothing, no one, under Allah, has your soul's devotion, that you are doing to the very utmost of your power your Muslim duty with the means bestowed on you, and then you can be absolutely certain that you are not dwelling in the spider's house. But make quite sure, every day of your life.

Thirteen hundred years ago and more there lived a gracious lady who gave up all that she possessed to Allah's Messenger (God bless and keep him), to be spent by him in Allah's way. She gave it all, as if it had been nothing, to him, her husband, of her own free will. She did not live to see the triumph of Islam save with the eye of faith, but never for a moment did she doubt that triumph. She was

the first believer in the Prophet's mission, his comforter on many sad occasions. She believed in him when men derided; she gave him all her wealth to spend when men denied him. And an angel (it is said) came to our lord Muhammad with the tidings that, as the consequence of what she had done, a splendid mansion stood prepared for her "in that garden where toil and sorrow are not."

That is the sort of house that we must try to build, and it cannot be built without the sacrifice of this world's good. Sacrifice does not necessarily mean the giving up of all the blessings of this world, but the holding of them always as a trust from Allah, the readiness to give up all or any of them at a moment's notice in the cause of righteousness, the consciousness at all times that they are but fleeting things. Many people at the present day are dazzled by the inventions of this wonderful civilization of the twentieth century. Curiously, many seem to think that the discovery that man can do so much that was once thought impossible detracts in some way from the Majesty of God, and does away with the need of worship. Surely the discovery that the laws and providence of nature—Allah's laws and providence—are much more wonderful than men of old imagined, ought to increase, and not diminish reverence! But man is self-sufficient, so they say. Is he?

Some one once told me of a flying accident which he had seen. The body of the airman, he said, among the débris of his machine, reminded him of a crushed spider in its web. Is this civilization with its wonderful inventions of more permanency than a monstrous spider's web compared with human life and death and life again? Let not a Muslim in the world be daunted or deceived. These are no miracles that men have wrought against Allah. They are proofs of the infallibility of certain natural laws—the laws of Allah—discovered by the ingenuity of learned men and brought to use by human skill and energy and perseverance. If those who use them transgress the laws of Allah by but the fraction of an inch, they perish with their whole contrivance. These things are henceforth part of man's achievement in the world, the gifts vouchsafed to him, and everybody ought to learn about them, to command them, for they are a source of power. But it is with them as with all other gifts of God to man, they must not become the end and object of man's effort. Use them for good, according to the sacred law, regarding them as what they are, a trust from God, and they will help the edifice which we desire to build; use them for evil, or allow them to become a source of foolish pride, as if we really thought that man was equal to Allah because of those inventions governed by His law—ah, then indeed we shall be dwellers in the spider's house.

"And verily the most fragile of houses is the spider's house, if they but knew."