

REDEMPTION OF PLEDGE IN ISLAM

The Higher Mind—with its intuitions of truth, freedom, justice, beauty, love—is not the monopoly of one faith or one race ; it is a descent on the earth from the Kingdom of Heaven.

REDEMPTION OF PLEDGE IN ISLAM

By MR. MOHAMMAD YAQUB, B.A.

“ You make your oaths to be means of deceit between you, because one nation is more numerous than another nation.”—THE HOLY QUR-ĀN, xvi. 92.

PERHAPS one of the blackest pages in the history of the moral evolution of man is that of many a word of honour unredeemed. How many are the solemn promises made under the stress of circumstances, but never made good ! The so-called civilized specimen of humanity of the day has no better account to render in this respect. In him the vice has gone from bad to worse. He has added hypocrisy to infirmity. With the growth of society has grown in complexity the working of the mind of man. In the golden days of yore, even wrong was not devoid of a relieving feature—frankness and straightforwardness. The product of the twentieth-century civilization has made sin doubly sinful by giving it the varnish of artificial good faith.

What clumsy attempts are made to evade binding obligations, what verbal juggling is displayed to explain away a plain issue, is a bitter experience of our own day. Promises are made when expediency calls for them, but treated as worthless scraps of paper as soon as the pressure of the occasion is no more. Far-fetched interpretations are then put on the clear wording of the pledge to give it a moral look. No amount of whitewashing, however, can palliate the blackness of a breach of faith. It looks no less ludicrous than the justification of the tiger of Æsop to devour the lamb. As a matter of fact, it tends to aggravate the horridness of the misdeed.

Turning to Islamic history, however, we find a sublime conception of virtue. Islam recognizes no such sanction as expediency, which is another name for hypocrisy. Virtue for its own sake, under all circumstances, in fair weather or foul, is the watchword of moral life in Islam. Islam would not let us drift and toss this way or that with every ebb and tide of self-seeking passions. Islam would have us build on the bed-rock of immutable moral principles, regardless of the consequences. Islam would have us live for principles and die for principles. Islam admits of no compromise between right and wrong. Islamic history is, consequently, rich with a brilliant record of incredibly horrible tortures, cheerfully borne, in vindication of the cause of truth and righteousness.

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In Islam promises are not made to be broken at one's sweet will. An episode from the eventful life of the Holy Prophet will best illustrate in what high veneration a word of honour, solemnly pledged, was held in the hot struggle of life. The Holy Prophet and his companions are subjected to various forms of painful tortures for a period of full thirteen long years at Mecca. Some are flogged, some are made to fall prostrate on the scorching sands of an Arabian desert or on live coals, to make them renounce Islam. No stone is left unturned to take the very life of the Holy Prophet and thus put an end to his mission. The Prophet flees to a safer quarter and takes up his sojourn at Medina. The fury of the Meccan Quraish is yet unabated. He would not tolerate the peaceful growth of the Muslim brotherhood. He is ever at daggers drawn with the Muslim settlement at Medina. Conflicts between the Muslim camp and the Quraish are of no infrequent occurrence. At length comes the Treaty of "Hudaibiyya," which the Muslims hail as a guarantee of peace. They accept it, though not without grave apprehensions with regard to a particular term contained therein, which is as harsh as humiliating. It is agreed upon that in case a Quraishite joins the fold of Islam, he must be made over to the Meccans, but a Muslim that turned apostate was at liberty to desert the Holy Prophet with impunity. For obvious reasons this gives rise to murmurs among the Muslims, but is ultimately agreed to in the interest of peace, even though at a cost so dear.

But then comes the most tragic part of the affair. The veracity of a Muslim's word is put to the crucial test of practice. A Meccan, Abu Jandal by name, fascinated by the beauty and simplicity of Islamic teachings and the purity and sublimity of the Holy Prophet's life, declares his intention to join the fold of the Faithful. Thereat the Meccans' rage knows no bounds. They fret and fume and subject the poor helpless fellow to their wrath of fanaticism. After a good deal of suffering, he manages to make good his escape, and hurries to Medina, where he naturally expects a haven of safety for himself. But this was not destined for the unfortunate refugee. Two of the Meccans follow close upon his heels to the camp of the Holy Prophet and demand his extradition under the Treaty of "Hudaibiyya."

A crucial test indeed! Abu Jandal has suffered untold tortures at the hands of the Quraish for no other fault than his love for Islam. He makes a pathetic appeal to the compassion of the Holy Prophet, which moves the whole of Muslim brotherhood to tears. He uncovers his back which is yet swollen and dripping blood in consequence of brutal flogging. He has undergone all this for the sake of Islam, and now appeals to the Holy Prophet for the extension of his protection to him—an appeal irresistible even to the

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most inexorable. Compassionate and tender by nature as the Holy Prophet was, one may imagine what emotions must have agitated his breast, especially for one who bore so much for the mission of Islam. Excuses are not difficult to carve, where there is a will to do so. A hundred and one ways could be devised to evade the observance of this harsh term of the treaty under circumstances so peculiar. Twisting, stretching and bending is not solely of modern invention, and various skilful interpretations could be put upon the text of the Treaty, to refuse the extradition of Abu Jandal. But the Muslims were more of men than statesmen, and would not even think of equivocation and verbal jugglery at the expense of an imperative moral obligation. The path of righteousness, though steep and thorny, was there in the boldest possible relief, as it ever is. It would admit of no alternative line of action in any form whatsoever. It must be followed, regardless of consequences, however bitter. The Holy Prophet and his companions submit with resignation to the supreme call of Truth. Abu Jandal is made over to his oppressors.

Such is the contribution of Islam to the moral elevation of man in this particular respect—a scrupulous redemption of pledge under all circumstances and at all costs.

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II

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Resurrection, Continuity of Individuality, Spiritualism, &c.

By KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

BELIEF in life after death is an essential article of faith in every religion. It is very salubrious in its effects in moulding human character. It is a source of consolation to a disappointed heart, and a treasure of happiness to one in distress, especially when misery comes to him undeserved. The belief also is an efficacious check to wickedness and iniquity, even in cases where there is least chance of their detection. On the other hand, disbelief in the accountability of one's actions after his death will naturally weaken his sense of responsibility. Morality in absence of belief in post-accountability would become only a best policy to secure happiness in life, and therefore merely a matter of expedience. There will be no incentive to exercise virtue for the sake of virtue, and no person will even hesitate from committing wrong, if it serves his purpose, provided he could avoid or disregard public censure. But this all, what I say, is an apology, as a sceptic would say, and not a good ground for belief in the continuity of life beyond the grave.

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Belief in life after death has always been a hard problem for teachers of religion to solve, and they have from time to time been hard pressed by scepticism. It confronted Jesus in the person of Sadducees. They went to the Master for enlightenment on the subject, and the reply of Jesus was that if there was no life after death, why did they style their God as "God of Abraham and Moses?" By doing so the Sadducees, so argued Jesus, did evince their belief in the life after death of the said Patriarchs. The logic of the gentle philosopher from Galilee, however, was not without its flaws. It perhaps silenced the rationalists of his time, but the Sadducees of to-day will not fail to detect the fallacy of *petitio principii* in the argument of Jesus. He started with the presumption, lacking in proof, that the Sadducees were believers in life after death of the Patriarchs, if they styled their God as the God of Abraham.

Though the belief in question is a corner-stone of every religion, yet the whole sacred literature of pre-Islamic days is wanting in its proof. One will only waste his time and energy, if he goes page after page into the whole Biblic record or Vedic and Zoroastrian Scriptures, in search of something logical to substantiate the theory of Resurrection and continuity of human individuality, after his earthly frame has once been disintegrated. This paucity in logic is chiefly responsible for Materialism in Europe, and has raised Atheistic tendencies everywhere in Westernized mind. It would be a great diversion from my subject, and I may say out of place too, otherwise I would have given cogent reasons to show that the present conflagration into which the whole world has been dragged, did not come in defence of right on the part of all belligerents in the war, but was the outcome of lustful and greedy disposition of European nations, hardened by their disbelief in life after death, a natural consequence of defective Church theology in face of Rationalism.

Spiritism, popularly called Spiritualism, has, however, arisen in modern days to combat Materialism in this respect. Spirits of dead persons have been seen and talked to, so the report goes, by some of the new creed, which has not failed to secure support from some of the luminaries on scientific horizon, Lodge and Conan Doyle amongst them. I have got some of my best friends in Spiritualistic circles, who have personal experience of the sort, and I have got not the least reason to doubt veracity of their statement. Besides, such experiences are not new to Muslim divines. The Church in the West may style them as bedevilment and witchery, as she used to brand scientific researches of the days of Roger Bacon, but Islam need not question these experiences; it has got a very rich literature on the subject from very early days. I may say, however, that the said

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experiences being personal cannot be a substantial proof for others to believe in the life hereafter. A sceptic would accept the story of the Spiritualist as a true statement of what the latter thought he had experienced, but may explain it away in diverse ways—illusion and working of imagination, etc. Again, people who claim to have such visits from the world beyond the grave forget to note or tell all such circumstances which attended their spirit-experiences and make their case weak. Besides, much of swindling, unfortunately, is going on in the name of Spiritualism ; though the creed in my belief is very opportune in these materialism-ridden days. Finally this mode of proving life after death is not of permanent value. It is like the miracle of the olden days. A miracle could possibly satisfy some of those immediately around its worker, but it became a mere story in subsequent times and could not command universal acceptance.

Beliefs, like the one in question, that constitute basic principles of religion should be fortified by rational grounds. They need not come within the scope of our senses, especially if the things to be proved lie beyond our normal comprehension. Reasoning by analogy may be helpful, but it is not a sound logic and often misleading. We may safely refer, however, to one class of phenomena in nature, to prove the other if the principle underlying both is one and the same. Most of our knowledge in the realm of science has come to us in this way.

It is not the question of Resurrection, but that of the continuity of individual personality of every man removed from this world to the next that arouses scepticism. If birth, death, and resurrection may be taken to be only popular names of the combination, disintegration, and re-combination of various elements and atoms that create different organism under the course of nature, the whole thing becomes clear as it comes under our daily observations every year in vegetable kingdom. Death overcomes trees in every autumn, while spring comes to resurrect them subsequently. Deeper observation by scientific eye will also show that every tree brings all its distinctive features back at this spring—resurrection. In winter we find trees stripped of all their foliage, flowers and fruits. All their constituent elements become disintegrated ; they mix confusedly with the rest of elemental and atomic world in the universe. The dry and dead trunks though still enveloped by the same mass of matter that nourished them in the past spring cannot assimilate it, as they have lost vivifying principle from them. Then comes summer with its showers of rain, and the water from heavens brings new life to every member of the vegetable kingdom. All those elemental components that clothed and constituted individual entity of each particular tree rush back to it again ; spring-winds with the help of rain-

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water and sunshine bring new life ; the whole dead Nature becomes resurrected and every tree resumes its respective individuality with all its distinctive features. The last book of God, revealed to man to create in him an intelligent belief in all religious truths, has not failed to refer to this spring-phenomenon when dealing with the doctrine of Resurrection in the following words :

“ Almighty God and the glorious Qur-án. Nay ! they wonder that there has come to them a warner from among themselves, so the unbelievers say : This is a wonderful thing : What ! *When we are dead and have become dust ?* That is a far (from probable) return. We know indeed what the earth diminishes of them, and *with Us is a writing that preserves*. Nay, they rejected the truth when it came to them, so they are (now) in a state of confusion. Do they not then look up to heaven above them how We have made it and adorned it and it has no gaps. And the earth, We have made it plain and cast in it mountains and We have made to grow therein of all beautiful kinds ; to give sight as and a reminder to every servant who returns frequently (to Allah). And We send down from the cloud water abounding in good, then We cause to grow thereby gardens and the grain that is reaped ; and the tall palm trees having spadices closely set one above another. A sustenance for the servants, and We give life thereby to a dead land ; *thus is the rising* ” ¹ (the Qur-án, ch. I, vv. I-II).

A thing when once comes to life never meets destruction, as long as the universe is existing. It contains in it some inherent qualities that must come to perfection through one or more shapes and stages. Death is the name of its passing from one stage to the other. But in this translation and transformation every thing manages to maintain its individual entity up to its final development. In the course of evolution whenever things reach a certain stage of perfection, they begin to lose all the accessories which contributed to their existence in the said stage ; then they die and disappear, but they never become annihilated, they assume a new shape with a size imperceptible to human senses. Their further potentialities remain in abeyance for some time—a period called Barzakh in Muslim theology, i.e. time intervening between death and resurrection—then they re-rise for further progress by being placed under favourable circumstances.

Leave aside preservation of our personal individualities after death, even our actions and movements, though lost sight of when once performed, remain intact in that great repository of Nature and may be brought before us when needed. Miss —— sings in England, but her melodies are recorded in Paris and heard in Berlin. It would have been

¹ Italics are ours.—ED.

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an impossibility to do so if her utterances had not been recorded on the big disc of Nature before Parisian disc was prepared. Similarly wireless telegraphy could not have come to our aid if there were no arrangement in Nature for permanent preservation of every note and sound that once receives utterance. Cinema pictures have come forward to prove that all our other movements as well remain preserved in the film of Nature and can be brought to us at any time as a witness to our past conduct. God be glorified ! Science has come forward, after all, to establish such Qur-ánic truths that, only the other day, aroused ridicule from ignorant Christian Missioners. The Holy Book, emphasizing on the accountability of our actions on the Day of Judgment, says the following :

“ On that Day we will set a seal upon their (people's) mouths, and their hands shall speak to Us, and their feet shall bear witness of what they earned ” (ch. xxxvi, v. 65).

The Book of God has alluded to another interesting natural phenomenon that has recently come within scientific ken, to prove continuity of individuality after it loses once its existing form. Fire which comes out of wood is not the child of a tree. At the first instance it comes from the big luminary of the universe in the shape of sunshine ; it then clothes itself with hydrogen and carbon which it separates from water and carbonic acid gas, to assume the shape of a tree—called “ bottled-sunshine,” for this reason in scientific term. What we call burning of fire is only separation of fire from the other components of tree, i.e. hydrogen and carbon. In this instance, we find continuity of individual entity not only of fire but of other things too, and with mathematical exactitude also. A unit of water (H_2O), contains two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen. Similarly a unit of carbonic acid gas (CO_2) consists of one atom of carbon and two of oxygen. Suppose one unit of fire was spent in one unit of water, and another in one of carbonic acid gas, to separate them of their respective components, the net result would be two units of fire from sunshine, two units of hydrogen from water, and one unit of carbon from the said gas. Suppose they combined to make one cubic inch of wood in a tree. This piece of wood when ignited will give back exactly two units of fire, two units of hydrogen and one of carbon. They all will go back to make sunshine, water and carbonic acid gas of the same magnitude out of which they had come before.

How the Holy Prophet of God (Peace be upon him), I wonder and my surprise knows no bounds, came to know these secrets of Nature and hundred other similar things, which have now become our acquisition, but we find them mentioned in the Qur-án in elucidation of its teachings, if the Book was not revealed to him from God.

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This phenomenon of fire which is the best illustration of the continuity of entities after they lose one shape, and assume other forms, has so beautifully been referred to in the Qur-án in elucidation of the subject in discussion. It says :

“ Does not man see that We have created him from the small life germ ? then lo ; he is an open disputant. And he strikes out a likeness for Us and forgets his own creation. Says he : Who will give life to the bones when they are rotten ? Say : He will give life to them who brought them in existence at first, and He is cognizant of all creation. He who has made for you the fire (to burn) from the green tree, so that with it you kindle (fire) ” (ch. xxxvi, v. 77-80).

All the illustrations I have hitherto taken from the Qur-án in this discourse refer no doubt to things material, and may not perhaps satisfy some persons demanding proof of the continuity of individual consciousness after death, as it is, one may say, ultra-material. Consciousness in the first place arises in animal organism. It becomes individualized in human frame. Every man differs from the other not only in his physique and outward appearance, but can be differentiated from the other members of his kind in his moral, mental and spiritual acquisitions. In short, every person possesses a marked and distinctive personality as far as his passions, morals and the other components of his consciousness go. Whether he will possess his individual consciousness when resurrected, is a question and I may say is the backbone of the whole doctrine of life after death, and that of the Day of Judgment. Individual accountability of actions cannot take place unless there is continuation of that consciousness which a person did possess when he left this world. The Qur-án could not bring better illustration in proving the doctrine than what we find in it in Sura “ Tariq ” (ch. lxxxvi) in the following words :

“ There is not a soul but over it is a keeper. So let man consider of what he is created. He is created of water pouring forth ; coming from between the back and the ribs. Most surely He is able to return him (to life). On the day when hidden things shall be made manifest.”

The life-germ, microscopic as it is in its size, is the repository of all the physical, intellectual, and moral features of its author. In one word, sperma is the most efficacious and safest vehicle of individual consciousness of the father and carries it to his children. It becomes affected when combining with ovum, and receives tinge of mother's peculiarities. Sometimes genital seeds bring along with them some of the traits of forefathers from generations removed. This fully illustrates that essential constituent of a thing can be epitomized into something microscopic. They leave their origin in imperceptible form and become fresh nucleus for further development. Death, as said before, does not

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mean annihilation. It is only a separation of a member of a species from the rest of the class when some event disables it to make further progress under the order it existed. It becomes translated after some time to another order always on its move to its goal. Man has rightly been called "miniature of the universe." His heart represents the earth in shape as well as in qualities. It contains the essence of the whole earth in it, as the Qur-án says :

"And certainly We created man of an extract of clay" (ch. xxiii, v. 12). A new world of passions becomes created in his heart, called in one word human consciousness ; they have to reach certain stage of perfection in this life, i.e. to be sublimated into high morals, philosophy, and spiritualities, then to leave the world for further progress in the life to come. In some cases they attain the required perfection in human frame, but in most cases their attainments are only partial. In such cases they only get capabilities for future development when some accident in life causes disintegration of the frame, popularly called death, and checks the progress. Something in gaseous form observable only by highly advanced spiritualities in trance comes out of human body through the head and rises towards heavens. It contains in it the whole essence of individual consciousness possessed by its owner in this life. It remains preserved in ethereal world with all its progressing faculties in abeyance. This period has been called Barzakh in Moslem theology, as I said before. It will remain so till the day of resurrection, when it will take a new garb for furtherance of its progress which is limitless and knows no bounds.

"Certainly We created man in the best make ; then we render him the lowest of the low, except those who believe and do good, so they shall have a reward never to be cut off" (ch. xcv, vv. 4-6).

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II

By MAULVI MUSTAFA KHAN, B.A.

The Skirmish of Meal-sacks.

THE victory of Badar was auspicious for Islam. Most of the Quraish Chiefs who were always thinking of the destruction of the new Religion, perished. Abdullah Bin Ubay, a well-known chieftain of Medina, who was still an unbeliever, joined Islam though hypocritically. The neighbouring tribes, who were watching the course of events, although they did not yet pay formal homage to the Prophet, were inspired with awe. In short, Islam appeared as a power for the first time. Besides those favourable

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results there were some adverse consequences. The Jews had already entered into an agreement with the Holy Prophet to be neutral, but this victory kindled the fire of jealousy in them. They had long held an aristocratic position in Medina, on account of their wealth and commercial concerns. But now the growing power of Islam was sapping their influence, and this made them jealous and the enemies of Muslims.

The Quraish on the other hand were infuriated by their defeat. They had lost a number of valuable lives on the battlefield; and almost every house in Mecca was the scene of mourning. Therefore they were afire to avenge themselves upon the Muslims.

The death of Abu Jab and Utaba left the leadership of Quraish to Abu Sufyan, and as head of the community he thought it his sacred duty to wreak vengeance for the blood of those who fell at Badar. He made a solemn vow that he would not go to his wife till he had taught a lesson to the Muslims. Therefore at the head of two hundred camels he advanced against Medina and fell upon Ariz, a place three miles away from that city, killing some Muslims and burning their houses and heaps of hay. When the news of this attack reached the Holy Prophet, the Muslims pursued the raider but he escaped, throwing away the sacks of meal for greater speed in flight. Hence this event is called Ghazwat-us-Suweek, or the Skirmish of Meal-sacks, in the history of Islam.

It was during these days that the Prophet gave another famous instance of nobility of soul. He was one day sleeping alone under the shade of a tree, at a distance from his camp, when suddenly a noise disturbed him and he saw Durthur, a hostile warrior, standing over him with a sword in his hand. "Who can save you now, O Mohammad?" asked the warrior. "Allah," replied the Prophet. Hearing this, Durthur was struck with awe and the sword fell from his hand. The Prophet seized it instantly, and brandishing the weapon asked in his turn: "Who can save you now, O Durthur?" "None but your mercy," was the reply. "Then learn mercy from me," said the Prophet, and returned the sword. This touched the heart of his adversary, so that he embraced Islam.

The Battle of Ohod.

The Skirmish of Meal-sacks, however, could not appease the anger of Quraish. Determined to annihilate Islam, they were once more busy making preparations for a great attack upon Medina. They had information of the animosity of the Jews against the Muslims, and were indeed encouraged in their undertaking by the knowledge that Islam had got new troubles at home. They were not only

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intriguing with the Jews of Medina, but were also making alliance with neighbouring tribes against Islam. In all directions they sent out their poet-emissaries who, by their fiery speeches and enthusiastic poems, inspired the folk with indignation and revenge. The two great tribes of Tihama and Kinana joined the idolaters of Mecca and promised to help them with men and money. The caravan of Abu Sufyan had already returned home with riches from Syria. The Quraish of Mecca resolved to spend that wealth upon another war against the Muslims. Thus, proud of its resources, the allied army of almost a large part of Arabia advanced towards Medina with Abu Sufyan at its head. The united force amounted to three thousand well-armed men, of whom seven hundred were mailed warriors. Marching on and meeting with no opposition the army of the idolaters took up a strong position to the north-east of Medina, where only the hill of Ohod and a valley separated it from the city.

The Muslims were now bound to defend themselves, although their hearts sank at sight of the enemy's strength. They thought over the matter and discussed the method of defence. Opinion was divided: the elderly people, including Abdullah Bin Ubbay, the leader of hypocrites, held that the Muslims should garrison the city and await within the walls the shock of the assault; the younger Muslims, full of enthusiasm, held, on the contrary, that they should sally forth and meet the enemy. The Prophet himself inclined to the former view; but as the majority was in favour of the latter, he accepted it and went out for defence. The Muslim army was a thousand men. But the ill-concealed enmity of the Jews resulted in the defection of Abdullah Bin Ubbay, the leader of hypocrites, with three hundred men, under the pretext that his proposal had not been adopted.

This desertion reduced the strength of the Muslim army to seven hundred men, with only two horses among them. With this small force, the Prophet marched against three thousand warriors. It was a common practice among the Arabs to bring women to their battlefields to rouse the soldiers' courage with the thought that their defeat would bring disgrace upon their women at the victors' hands. The Quraish, according to this practice, had brought a number of ladies with the army. This band of females, led by Hind, the wife of Abu Sufyan and daughter of that same Utba who was slain at Badar, marched before the army and excited the soldiers with this stirring song:

"We daughters of the star of morning; we tread softly on cushions; face the army boldly and we shall press you in our arms, but if you fly, we shall regard you with abhorrence."

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In short, the hostile armies met at Ohod. The Holy Prophet, after morning prayers, took up his position immediately beneath the hill. He posted about fifty archers on a height behind his troops to guard the rear, and gave them strict injunctions not to leave the place whatever happened. The Quraish, confident in their numbers, deployed upon the open plain, having their idols in the centre of their host. The women chanted war songs. The attack first made was fearful, but the Muslim host repelled it stoutly. There was some disorder in the Quraish army, and the Muslims under Hamza (uncle of the Holy Prophet) immediately dashed into their midst, dealing blows on all sides. Their victory seemed almost certain when by misfortune, thinking it secure, and seeing foes in flight, the archers abandoned their position and ran after plunder. Khalid Bin Walid, one of the Quraish knights, perceived their error and taking advantage of it, fell on the rear of the Muslims. The infantry of the Quraish also turned, and the Prophet's troops were surrounded by enemies. It was the most critical position for the Muslim army, and some of its most noted chiefs—among them Hamza—fell fighting. Abu Bakar, Umar and Ali were severely wounded. Now the efforts of the enemy were principally directed at the Prophet's person. At one time he was quite cut off from the main body, the object of severe attacks, the enemy showering arrows on him ceaselessly. Seeing this the Muslims within reach drew close around him. Abu Dujana, one of his companions, stood fast in front of the Prophet with his back towards the enemy and received the hostile arrows on his back. Talah warded off the Quraish swords with his hands, and lost one of them in so doing. While the enemy was thus fiercely trying to destroy the Prophet, he was praying for them in these memorable words: "O God, show mercy to them, as they are ignorant." He received some wounds in the head. But at last his friends succeeded in retreating to a summit of the hill, which was inaccessible to the enemy. Ali brought some water in his shield from the hollow of the rock, and Fatimar, the Prophet's daughter, who came to the battlefield, having heard a rumour of her father's death, washed his wounds and dressed them. The Prophet then said the midday prayers, sitting with his companions.

The Quraish were now too much exhausted to attack Medina or to endeavour to expel the Muslims from the heights of Ohod; so, after savage mutilation of the Muslim dead, they withdrew from the territory of Medina. Hind, the wife of Abu Sufyan, plucked out the heart and liver of Hamza and actually devoured a part of them, while she made necklaces and bracelets with the ears and noses of the other dead. The Holy Prophet was profoundly moved by

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grief and indignation at this insult to the dead ; but he would not let the Muslims thus maltreat the corpses of their enemies. Thus the inhumane practice of the mutilation of the dead, which had prevailed throughout Arabia from remote antiquity, was forbidden to the Muslims.

Shortly after his return to Medina, the Holy Prophet again gathered together his people and pursued the retreating enemy in order to show that the Muslims were still too strong to be attacked with impunity ; but Abu Sufyan hurried back to Mecca, killing some Muslims on the way, and thence despatched a threatening message to the Prophet that he would soon return to extirpate Islam. The Prophet, hearing of it, said : " We put our trust in God."

SOME DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF ISLAM

By MR. FAZAL KARIM, B.A.

ISLAM has many distinctive features which mark it out as something different from almost all other religions of the world. It does not merely inculcate belief. It is not a collection of dogmas which one may be required to entertain. In fact, Islam has no dogmas at all. The beliefs it advocates are deeply ingrained in human nature. Every atom in the universe proclaims the unity of its Creator. Whatever is in the heavens and in the earth, the sun, the moon, the whole host of heavenly orbs, the mighty ocean winds, every blade of grass, every petal of the sweet-faced flower ; in short, every phenomenon in nature that comes to our view as we turn a corner in life's long journey, speaks of one Great Supreme Power—God. " Say, if the sea were made into ink to write the words of my Lord, verily the sea would dry out before the words of my Lord are finished, even if we were to bring more seas to add thereto " (the Holy Qur-án) ; and the experience of all men points to one great fact, that there is a Mighty Hand behind all this external reality, a Supreme Ruler, a Law that brooks no breach, inexorable, immutable, a Law that does not change for a Moses or a Jesus or a Muhammad (God bless them all). " Thou shalt never find a change in the course of Allah " (the Holy Qur-án). And the spirit of man, the human soul, is ever striving and longing, with a maddening strife of love, to throw itself with one mad rush into that boundless, fathomless Ocean of Love, the supreme source of all goodness and mercy—God. Surely, this is no dogma. It is a fact writ large in the open book of nature.

Belief, a mere acceptance of a fact, counts for nothing in Islam. To be of any practical use, it must be followed up with good deeds. If it means nothing more than pinning

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one's faith to certain formulæ, it is, in the language of the Holy Qur-án, like breaking up a rough patch of soil and planting the seedlings but forgetting to water them. Surely no blossoms can be expected from such a process, much less fruits. The seedlings will die away in no time. To have a fruitful garden one must be always active. He must water the plants, remove the weeds, prune when it is necessary, and he will have a generous harvest, a fruitful garden—*Jannat* (paradise). "And announce the glad tidings to those who believe and do good deeds, that for them are gardens beneath which rivers flow" (the Holy Qur-án).

According to the teachings of Islam, life in the hereafter is only a continuation of life in this world. There is no break, no gap between the two. It is our conduct here—the way we behave in, the treatment we mete out to our fellow beings and the beings infrahuman, our attitude towards God and man, not by profession, but as shown in our life and conduct—that counts in the chancery of heaven. It is a blasphemy, an insult to the great goodness of God, to believe that a person, who was a scoundrel all his life, should be wafted on to heaven after death, simply because he had pinned his faith to the saving graces of the accursed death of an innocent person; while another person, who had waged a ceaseless war against evil all his life—a martyr to truth, should be damned to eternal perdition for no other reason than this, that he did not and could not find his way to believe in a certain set of dogmas? There is no sin in nature. A loving, merciful God could not be so cruel as to saddle man with this unbearable handicap. Every child is born sinless, a Muslim, i.e. invested with powers of observing the law, says the Holy Prophet Muhammad (God bless him). Sinlessness is the point to start from. Salvation, according to Islam, does not mean release from the shackles of innate sin. It means the development of the innate faculties of man, the realization or the expression of the enormous powers with which he is armed. It does not mean getting out of an abyss. It means ascending upwards, a flight Godward. And unbelief, as its Arabic equivalent *Kufr* shows, means a refusal to uncover and bring into play those hidden potentialities of man. This feature of the religious idea, this view of human nature, and this interpretation of the life of man on earth, bracing, healthy and hopeful as it is, is peculiar to Islam. No other religious system knows of it.

I have spoken of righteousness and good conduct. In a few words I may explain what righteousness means in Islam. It is un-Islamic to make destructive criticism on other systems. That is the exclusive privilege of the upholders of Christianity, who think the best way of maintaining that dogma is to vilify others. But truth is truth and need not

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stoop to that to keep itself above water. But liberal comparisons are always helpful in bringing out the salients more clearly, and in order to show forth the peculiar character of Islam, I will compare it with two other great missionary religions—Buddhism and Christianity. The first starts from the idea of pain: pain everywhere in the world. Man is always in a whirl, born and re-born; the course is endless. And every birth means pain. How to escape it? Well, the simplest method is to make oneself extinct, to cease to act, to achieve Nirvana—inactivity. Buddhism has been truly called the Creed of Negation. It places its *summum bonum* in utter renunciation, a flight away from the self and from the world. Hence, asceticism, monastic orders of monks and nuns, a life of inactivity and solitude away in the depths of the jungle. A good scheme of bringing the world to an early end. But it is impracticable. Human nature revolts against it.

Now, as to Christianity. It starts from the idea of the original sin, which was washed away by the blood of the innocent Lamb of Nazareth. But the temptation, the cause of all mischief—I find it impossible to repeat the anathemas of the Church—the daughters of Eve still remained. Marriage was, therefore, considered as something unholy, a necessary evil at best, which the sinful laity might indulge in. But the clergy and the religious must shun it. The spirit of asceticism came upon the Church. There came out orders of monks and orders of nuns, undergoing all sorts of austerities in their cloisters and monasteries, continually suffering from the consciousness of having committed some terrible wrong—wasting away their lives in humbug, ever busy in making themselves as useless as possible. To the pious Christian, the highest form of righteousness, the best way of appeasing the wrath of an angry God, consisted in shunning the world and its pleasures. Family morality, social morality, national and international morality formed no part of the code of morals sanctioned by the dogma of blood. An angry God was to be appeased somehow or other, and that could not be achieved except by utterly renouncing the world.

Islam, on the other hand, holds that if there is pain in the world, it is man's own making, and he can remove it. There is no sin in nature. Man is born sinless, and there is no angry God to be appeased. "He has ordained mercy on Himself" (the Qur-án). The love and mercy of God is the one constant theme of the Holy Qur-án. There is not a page in this book which does not contain verses proclaiming God's love and mercy and beneficence. There is no book on earth, there has never been any, which can stand in comparison with the Holy Qur-án in this matter.

What is Islam then? In the first place, it forbids

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asceticism. "There is no asceticism in Islam," says the Holy Prophet. Man is a social being, not by choice or utilitarian necessity, but by nature, and to thwart nature is sin. "Set your face upright for religion in the right state—the nature made by Allah, in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah's creation; this is the right religion" (the Holy Qur-án). This is Islam—acting in accordance with human nature. God is the source of all purity, goodness, love, mercy, beneficence. He is the God of all the nations. His grace knows no distinctions of the Jew or the Gentile. His mercy is not governed by geographical or ethnical considerations. All races, all countries, all people, high or low, rich or poor, enjoy His bounty alike. God's sun shines on all, His moon sheds her lustre on all; His air is breathed by all; and so on. Man is a factor in the divine scheme of the universe. He too has something divine in him. He has to develop and realize this divine element of his nature. In the language of the Holy Qur-án, he has to put upon himself the baptism of God. "The baptism of Allah and what is there better than the baptism of Allah." The baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, which was prophesied by the Baptist. It is the aim of Islam to produce men who can identify themselves with the divine scheme, who can spend their all in the service of humanity. "You cannot attain righteousness until you spend out of what you love," says the Holy Qur-án. It may be your possessions, your riches, your own internal faculties, your energies, your labour, your comforts—you must spend out of it in the way of Allah, in the service of humanity. This is the aim and an exclusive principle of Islam.

THE EXCELLENT NAME OF ALLAH

By PROFESSOR H. M. LÉON, M.A., LL.D., F.S.P.

(Continued from last number.)

WHEN we come to consider the question of the change of name of the wife of that great patriarch and prophet, Sidua Ibrahim (Abraham) (O.W.B.P.), we find that both Jewish and Christian commentators have had, and still have, considerable difficulty in endeavouring to give a feasible explanation of such change of name.

For instance, the Rev. James, F. Driscoll, S.T.D., in his article on the subject in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (vol. xiii, p. 468), says, "Sarah or Sara, princess; another form, Sarai, the signification of which is doubtful, is found in passages occurring before Genesis xvii. 15."

In order to fully grasp the point of the question let us briefly recapitulate the history of Sarah (or Sarai). Accord-

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ing to Biblical data she was the wife of Abraham, who for a long period remained childless (Genesis xi. 29-30). She accompanied her husband from Haran¹ to Canaan (Genesis xii. 5). Driven by famine to take refuge in Egypt,

¹ Haran: this word may mean "road"; compare Assyrian *barranu*, or it may signify the "hollow place," the latter meaning being the one which is assigned to it by that distinguished Hebrew and Oriental philologist and archæologist Joseph Halévy (b. December 15, 1827, at Adrianople, and subsequently professor of Ethopic in the Ecole des Hautes Etudes, Paris, and librarian of the Société Asiatique). This was the city to which Terah, the father of Abraham, went from Ur of the Chaldees, and where Terah died (Genesis xi. 31, 32). It was situated in Aram-Naharaim, generally translated "Mesopotamia" (Genesis xxiv. 10), and is definitely indicated as in Padan-aram (Genesis xxv. 20, xxviii. 2, 5-7). The third son of Terah was named Haran, who was the youngest brother of Abraham; he was born in Ur of the Chaldees, where he was killed during the lifetime of his father. He had three children: a son, called Lot, whose name subsequently appears in Biblical narrative, and two daughters, named respectively Milcah and Iscah. The elder of these subsequently became the wife of her uncle Nahor (Genesis xi. 27-29). Josephus states that Haran's monument could be seen in his time; and that there was also a son of Nahor (the father of Terah), who was begotten when Nahor was 120 years old (*Ant.* i. 6, § 5). According to Rabbinical lore, wherein the word *Ur* is interpreted to mean "fire," Haran was cast by Nimrod into the furnace, after Abraham. Haran, unfortunately for himself, had no firm conviction of, or belief in, the One Only and Eternal God, and he said to himself: "Should my brother Abraham perish in the fiery furnace, then will I side with Nimrod; but if he come out unscathed and alive, then I will be with Abraham." Such being his dubious condition of mind, God did not grant him His protection, and consequently Haran perished in the flames (Genesis, R., xxxviii; Yalkut, Genesis 62). Nahor, the son of Terah, settled in Haran, and it was sometimes called "the city of Nahor" (*vide* Genesis xxiv. 10, xxvii. 10). Rebekah was born at Haran, and it was thither that Eliezer went to meet her (Genesis xxiv. 10). Thither, also Jacob (Yakoub) fled from before his much-wronged and indignant brother, Esau; there he married the two daughters of his uncle Laban, Leah and Rachel, and there he acquired his great wealth (Genesis xxviii. 10, xxix-xxxi). Harran (Arab, *Harrān*) is situated about nine hours' journey from Edessa, on the small stream called Jullāb, at the point where the road from Damascus joined the great highway from Nineveh to Carchemish and Arpad. The commercial and strategical importance of its position may account for its name (Ass. *barranu*, "road"); Winckler, however, questions the connection between the words, and Dr. Inman gives two alternative significations of the word, one being "Parched by the sun;" and the other "A noble or free man." Both these interpretations appear to me to be far-fetched. Yākūt, the Arabian geographer, mentions the opinion that *Harrān* was named after Haran, the brother of Abraham (ii. 231, ap. Mez. *Harran*, 24).

The commercial importance of Harrān (Haran) in the sixth century B.C. is evidenced not only by Ezekiel xxvii. 23, but also later by Pliny, who enumerates among its specialties a certain odoriferous gum (*H.N.* xii. 40). Josephus also speaks of its plentiful production of amomum. There are also in it, he adds, the remains of Noah's ark (*Ant.* xx. 2, § 2).

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Abraham, fearing that her beauty would put his life in danger if it was known that she was his wife, proposed that she should pass as his sister. Subsequent events demonstrated that his fears were not groundless, although the subterfuge by which he endeavoured to save his own life at the expense of the renunciation of her marital dignity by his spouse, but for providential intervention, would have compromised her and his honour, for when in Egypt, the monarch of that country, who had learned of her matchless personal charms (Genesis xii. 10, *et seq.*), took her into his seraglio, and made rich presents to her supposed brother on her account. But, visited by troubles, the king commenced to suspect the truth; and severely censuring Abraham for his deceit, he ordered him to take his wife and depart from Egypt. Sarah being still childless, induced her husband to take the Egyptian princess, Hagar, whom Pharaoh had presented to her as a handmaid, for a wife, that through her she might be "built up." Hagar, finding herself pregnant, despised her barren mistress, whereupon Sarai bitterly upbraided her husband. Not desiring to be involved in this feminine quarrel, Abraham told Sarah to do with her handmaid as she deemed best, and the harsh treatment which Sarah thereupon meted out to Hagar caused Hagar to flee from the dwelling; but an angel appeared to her, announced that her seed would be numerous, and urged her to return to Sarah (Genesis xvi). After Hagar had given birth to Ishmael (Ismail), God commanded Abraham, whose name thitherto had been Abram, to change Sarai's name to "Sarah," announcing that she would bear him a son. Incredulous, on account of the age of Sarah, who was then ninety years old, that such an event could happen, Abraham burst into laughter, wherefor the son was to be called "Isaac" (Genesis xvii). Sarah overheard that she was to give birth to a son when, at a subsequent visit of the three messengers on their way to Sodom, the promise was renewed; she, also, was incredulous, and laughed inwardly, but when interrogated denied that she had laughed (Genesis xviii).

Abraham next removed to Gerar, a place or district in the extreme S.W. of Palestine, or perhaps more strictly (unless a second place of the same name be meant), in North Arabia—now generally identified with the ruins called Umm el-Jerār, about five miles south of Gaza, in a deep and broad torrent-bed styled Jurf-el-Jerār (the upper part of the Wady Ghazza). Here Sarah, then over ninety years of age, had an experience with Abimelech, "king of the Philistines," who resided in Gerar, similar to the one she had experienced in Egypt with Pharaoh, the monarch of that country. Abimelech, however, was warned in a dream. Reproved by the king for the wrong done, Abraham justified his and his wife's statement by the explanation

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that Sarah was the daughter of his father, but not of his mother (Genesis xx. 1-12). After this, Sarah bore a son, Isaac, which aroused her to say: "God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me" (Genesis xxi. 1-7). The fact that now she had a son of her own, "born of her body," increased her jealousy of Hagar and her child Ishmael; and, at her solicitation, Abraham was weak enough to send Hagar and her child (his own eldest son) away (Genesis xxi. 10 *et seq.*). Sarah's death is very briefly recorded as having taken place in Kirjath-arba (according to Winckler, "City of the god Arba"), an earlier name for Hebron, one of the oldest and most important cities of South Judea. She had then attained to the age of 127 years. Her corpse was interred by Abraham in the cave of Macphelah (Genesis xxiii, xxv. 10, xlix. 30). No other reference to Sarah is found in the Hebrew canon, except in Isaiah li. 2, where the prophet appealed to his auditors to "look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you."

When we turn to Rabbinical literature we find the biography of Sarah considerably enlarged and extended, for therein we are informed that she was the niece of Abraham, being the daughter of his brother Haran, and the sister of Milcah ("Queen" or "Counsel"), who became the wife of her uncle Nahor (Genesis xi. 29). If Iscah and Sarai the wife of Abraham are one and the same person (a theory which is open to grave doubt), then Abram and Nahor, both sons of Terah, eminent and godly men, each took one of the deceased brother's daughter to wife, thereby intermarrying within the prohibited degrees as forbidden in the Mosaic code (Leviticus xviii. 9-14). In order to overcome the difficulty of accounting for the commission of incest by these two godly men, the theory has been propounded that the surrounding families were all idolatrous, and therefore that it was necessary, to prevent these two girls marrying into such families, that their uncles should espouse them; but against this, at first sight, plausible theory comes the awkward fact that Terah, their grandfather, was not only an idolator, but actually a manufacturer of idols! In any case it is an awkward tangle. It is certainly strange, if Iscah and Sarah were one and the same person, that in the chronology of the descendants of Terah, as given in Genesis xi. 27-32, Sarah is neither described as the daughter of Haran, the sister of Milcah, nor the daughter of Terah, and half-sister of Abram, as in Genesis xx. 12 she was declared to be.¹ Sarah could not be the daughter of Haran, and also of Haran's father, Terah! To endeavour to get over this manifest impossibility, many Jewish and Christian

¹ "Yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife" (Genesis xx. 12).

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interpreters say that daughter is here used for granddaughter, and that she was the same as Iscah, the daughter of Haran, the brother of Abraham, and therefore the sister of Lot. This attempted explanation, however, will not bear scrutiny, for if such was the case, what necessity was there for Abraham to say "she is the daughter of my father, but not of my mother"? For there is nothing to show that Haran was not his full-blood brother, the son of his (Abram's) mother. Furthermore, if Sarah was Abraham's niece, why not declare such to have been the case to Pharaoh and to Abimelech? For that statement, at any rate, would have had the merit of truthfulness, and have been equally as efficacious in preventing him being slain for his wife's sake.¹

If we take the literal words of Genesis xi. 27-32, we will find that nowhere is Sarah alluded to as a blood relation of Terah, or of any member of his family, but that she is specifically described as his "daughter-in-law," which expression, naturally interpreted, would imply that she had married into the family from a foreign stock.

No one reading verse 29 of Genesis xi. could think that Iscah and Sarah were one and the same person. Let us quote the verse in full:—

"And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah."

Here it is clear that Sarai and Iscah were regarded as two different individuals. If they were one and the same person, one would have thought the genealogist would have said "the name of Abram's wife was Sarai, the same who was also called Iscah, the daughter of Haran, and sister of Milcah." There, therefore, appears to me to be no sufficient reason for believing that Sarah and Iscah were one and the same person.

The supposition advanced by the Christian commentators, Hyde, Wilson, and Kitto, that Iscah was the heathen name of Sarai, and that after her conversion she was known by the later name, in other words, that the lady's personal name was changed three times, namely, from Iscah to Sarai, and ultimately to Sarah, is ingenious, but lacks evidence to support it, although undoubtedly it was the custom to change names in order to avoid calamities or misfortunes; but if such was the case, then how is it that we are specifically told in the Genesis chronicle when and why Sarai's name was changed to Sarah, and yet there is no record of its transformation from Iscah (or more correctly in Hebrew, *Yiskah*) to Sarai?

The word *Ischah* may be taken to mean "one who will see," or is the possessor of what is termed "second-sight,"

¹ Genesis xx. 11.

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ischah in such case being the future or imperfect tense of the Hebrew verb *sachah* (compare Arabic *sihr* or *sahr*, "magic," "enchantment"). In the Talmud (*Megillah*, 14a), the name Ischah was bestowed upon the damsel because she had prophetic vision, and was even superior to Abraham in the gift of prophecy.

It is alleged also that Ischah implied that the lady was a "seer," others allege that the word is akin to the Arabic *ashkar*, "of a fine bright red," "fair," in allusion to the colour of the hair of the lady in question, while yet others associate the name with the Arabic *ishka*, "complaining, mourning, lamenting," and say that as there is no record in the Bible of the marriage in that name of the damsel in question, she lamented her fate of being left in single-blessedness, when her sister Milcah had been married, albeit she had been obliged to take her uncle as a husband. Ewald advances the hypothesis that Ischah was the wife of Lot, but this is pure conjecture, although if it was permitted for an uncle to marry his niece, it is not a much greater offence for a brother to espouse his sister, for both are equally forbidden by the Levitical code.

Before leaving the consideration of this particularly perplexing puzzle of the identity or non-identity of the two females (if two there were) it should be mentioned that Josephus, Augustine, Jerome, and Jonathan considered them to be one and the same person, basing their opinion upon the wording of Genesis xx. 12, to which we have already alluded, while on the other hand so erudite and distinguished a biblical scholar as Johann Georg Rosenmüller¹ emphatically states that this opinion "is not supported by any solid argument."

We will now, after this somewhat long digression, return to the story of Sarah as narrated in Rabbinical literature.

Her beauty is said to have been so great as to everywhere attract general attention and warm admiration (*Megillah*, 14a, Talmud). In fact she was so enchanting in her beauty that all other persons appeared to be apes in comparison with her (*Baba Batra*, Talmud). On the journey to Egypt Abraham hid his wife in a chest in order that no one might see her. At the frontier this chest had to pass through the hands of certain officials, who insisted on examining

¹ Johann Georg Rosenmüller was born at Ummerstadt in 1736. On the completion of a very brilliant academic and theological course he entered the ministry, and in 1773 became professor of divinity in the University of Erlangen. After holding this position with considerable credit, he removed to Giessen, and in 1785 finally settled in Leipsic, in which city he died in 1815. His best-known works are *Scholia in Novum Testamentum* (which appeared in 1801-8); *Historia Interpretationis*, in 5 volumes (published 1795-1814), a scholarly work evincing sound learning and great industry; and *Emendationes et Supplementa ad Novum Testamentum* (published 1789).

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its contents so that they might determine the amount of duty to be paid thereon. When the box was opened the whole chamber was suddenly illumined with the brilliant light which proceeded from Sarah's beauty. Every one of the officials at once fell violently in love with her, and desired to secure possession of her for himself, they all offered large sums to Abraham, each offering a higher sum than his rival. One ran to Pharaoh, the king, and informed him of the matchless and incomparable beauty of the female who had thus entered his realms, and the monarch at once ordered that she should be brought before him. When she arrived in Pharaoh's presence Sarah declared (pursuant to the agreement previously made between her husband and herself) that Abraham was her brother, whereupon the monarch bestowed upon the latter numerous valuable presents and marks of distinction.¹ Pharaoh became so madly in love with Sarah, "whose witching beauty shone as resplendent as doth the sun at its meridian," that as a token of his love he donated by solemn deed his entire property to her, giving her the land of Goschen as her hereditary possession; for this reason the Israelites subsequently lived in that land.² He also bestowed his own daughter, the princess Hagar, upon her as a slave. Sarah prayed to God to deliver her from the king, and He thereupon sent an angel, who struck Pharaoh whenever he attempted to touch her. Pharaoh was so astonished at these blows, and felt so sore after them, that he spoke kindly to Sarah, and begged her to confess to him the truth and to say if there was any just impediment to prevent her becoming his wife and his having marital relations with her. Sarah then acknowledged that she was the wife of Abraham, whereupon the king then ceased to annoy her.³

According to another version, Pharaoh persisted in his attentions to her, even after she had informed him that she was a married woman (in an Arabic version of this same story the actual words *amraah muzawwajah*, "a married woman," are also employed), and went so far as to seize her by the arm and attempt to drag her to him, whereupon the angel struck him so violently both on the arm, the head, and the body that he was felled to the ground and became so ill that he was thereby prevented from continuing to trouble her. According to one tradition it was when Pharaoh experienced the effects of these miracles wrought on behalf of the preservation of the chastity of Sarah that he gave her his daughter, Hagar, as slave, saying, "It is better that my daughter should be a slave in the house of such a woman, who is under the constant protection

¹ *Sefer ha-Yashar*, section "Lek Leka."

² *Pirke Rabbi Eli'ezer*, xxxvi.

³ *Sefer ha-Yashar*, section "Lek Leka."

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of her God, than she should be the mistress in another house."

Abimelech, according to the Talmudical traditions, underwent similar experiences, when he sought to espouse Sarah. One curious feature of the story of the life of Sarah, brief and incomplete as it undoubtedly is, whether set forth in Genesis, in the Book of Jubilees ¹ or recorded in the traditions of the Rabbin, is the indisputable fact that it presents curious repetitions, for example the incident of the allegation made by Abraham to Pharaoh, and at a subsequent time, under almost precisely similar circumstances, made again to Abimelech at Gerar, as to the relation in which Sarah stood to him; for although in primitive times marriages with half-sisters were not regarded as incestuous, and amongst some tribes were considered as meritorious, it is extremely improbable that Abraham would have been so foolish as to have run the same risk twice; furthermore, an almost similar incident is recorded in regard to Isaac (Yeshaq) who, like his father, goes to Gerar and tells the same tale as Abram is narrated to have done of his wife being his sister. It is in this connection that in Egyptian mythology Isis was said to be the wife and at the same time the sister of Osiris, and

¹ The Book of Jubilees was written in Hebrew by a Pharisee, between the year of the accession of Hyrcanus to the High-Priesthood in 135 and his breach with the Pharisees some years prior to his death in 105 B.C. It is the most advanced pre-Christian representative of the midrashic tendency which had already been at work in the Biblical Chronicles. In this work the author has incorporated a large body of legendary lore, which the midrashic process had placed at his disposal, and also a number of fresh legal enactments that the exigencies of the past had necessitated. His work constitutes an enlarged Targum on Genesis and Exodus, wherein difficulties in the Biblical narrative are solved, gaps filled, offensive dogmatic elements eliminated, and the true spirit of a later and enlightened Judaism infused into the primitive history of the early days of that branch of the Semitic race to which the author belonged. The object of the author appears to have been to protect and defend Judaism from the attacks of the Hellenistic spirit that had been in the ascendant one generation earlier and was still powerful, and to prove that the Law was of everlasting validity. Though revealed in time it was superior to time. Before it had been made known in sundry portions to the fathers it had been preserved in heaven by the angels, and to its observance henceforward there was no limit in time or in eternity. The work was known by two distinct titles even in Hebrew, namely: "Jubilees," and "The little Genesis." According to Epiphanius, "Jubilees" appears to have been its usual designation. This name admirably describes the book, as it divides into jubilee periods of 49 years each the history of the world from the creation of the world to the legislation on Sinai. The writer pursues a perfectly symmetrical development of the heptadic system. Israel enters Canaan at the close of the fiftieth jubilee, namely, A.M. 2450. The epithet "little," in the book's alternative title, does not refer to the extent of the work, for it is larger than the canonical Genesis, but to its character. It deals more amply with details than the Biblical work. The "Book of Jubilees" is, evidently, the work of one author, largely based on earlier books and traditions.

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that, in Hellenic myth, Ceres was also said to be the wife and sister of Jupiter.

According to Rabbinical literature Sarah treated Hagar well, and induced females who came to visit her to also call upon Hagar. When Hagar, however, found herself pregnant by Abraham, she was "puffed up with pride" and began to act superciliously toward Sarah, whereby the latter was provoked to treat her harshly, to impose heavy work upon her, to say harsh words to her and even to strike her.¹

Sarah was originally destined, like Abraham, to reach the age of 175 years, but forty-eight years of her originally allotted span of life were deducted therefrom because she complained against Abraham, blaming him as the chief cause that Hagar no longer respected her,² although it was at her solicitation and instigation that Abraham had taken Hagar as his wife. On this point the Book of Jubilees is very clear :

"And Sarai advised her husband, Abram, and said unto him : 'Go in unto Hagar, my Egyptian maid : it may be that I shall build up seed unto thee by her' And Abram hearkened unto the voice of Sarai, his wife, and said unto her, 'Do (so) by her.'

"And Sarai took Hagar, her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to Abram, her husband, to be his wife. And he went in unto her, and she conceived and bare him a son, and he called his name Ishmael, in the fifth year of this week ; and this was the 86th year in the life of Abram."³

All Jewish authorities agree that Sarah was barren until long after the period when women bear children, and allege that through a miracle the blessing of becoming a mother was bestowed upon her after her name was changed from Sarah to Sarai.⁴

When her youth had been restored and she had given birth to Isaac (*Ishaq*) the people in the district where the patriarch and his wife resided, refused to believe that a miracle had been accomplished and alleged that Abraham and Sarah had adopted a foundling and pretended that it was the offspring of Sarah. To disprove these allegations Abraham gave a banquet on the day whereon Isaac was to be weaned, and invited all the notables of the district to attend thereat with their wives. Two large tents were set up, in one of which sat the men and in the other the females. Sarah, in the presence of all the women, gave suck to her own child, and subsequently the same to all

¹ *Genesis Rabbah*, xiv. 9.

² *Rosh ha Shanah* (Talmud) 16 b ; *Genesis Rabbah*, xiv. 7.

³ *Book of Jubilees* xiv. 22-24. As to the calling of Hagar a wife see also *Genesis*, xxv. 1.

⁴ *Genesis Rabbah*, xlvii. 3 ; *Rosh ha Shanah* (Talmud) 16 b.

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the strange children who had not been already weaned and who had accompanied their maternal parents to the banquet. All present were thus convinced of the authenticity of the miracle, and the legitimacy of Isaac was thus established.¹

In that early work of Palestinian midrashic literature known as "*Genesis Rabbah*," Sarah's behaviour towards Ishmael (Ismail), whom she drove away from his father's roof, is sought to be justified by the allegation that she saw him commit the three greatest sins, namely, idolatry, unchastity and murder (*Gen. R. liii. 15*). This allegation, however, is, on the face of it, manifestly absurd, when one recalls that Ishmael was only 13 years of age when he and his mother were sent away. To imagine a child of that age committing those three heinous crimes requires a greater amount of credulity, and a smaller knowledge of human nature, than is possessed by the average individual. Such an allegation practically carries its own refutation with it.

No such excuse for the conduct of Sarah is vouchsafed in any portion of the Jewish or Christian scriptures, and, if known to Josephus, was evidently not given any credence by him, as his account of the occurrence runs thus :

"As for Sarah she at first loved Ishmael, who was born of her own handmaid Hagar, with an affection not inferior to that of her own son, for he was brought up in order to succeed in the government; but when she herself had borne Isaac, she was not willing that Ishmael should be brought up with him, as being too old for him, and able to do him injuries when their father should be dead; she therefore persuaded Abraham to send him and his mother to some distant country. Now, at the first he did not agree to what Sarah was so zealous for, and thought it an instance of the greatest barbarity to send away a young child and a woman unprovided of necessities; but at length he agreed to it, because God was pleased with what Sarah had determined; so he delivered Ishmael to his mother, as not yet able to go by himself; and commanded her to take a bottle of water, and a loaf of bread, and so to depart, and to take Necessity for her guide. But as soon as her necessary provisions failed, she found herself in an evil case; and when the water was almost spent, she laid the young child, who was ready to expire, under a fir-tree, and went on farther, that so he might die while she was absent. But a divine angel came to her, and told her of a fountain hard by, and bid her take care and bring up the child, because she should be very happy by the preservation of Ishmael. She then took courage, upon the prospect of what was promised her, and meeting with some shepherds, by their care she got clear of the distresses she had been in.

When the lad was grown up, he married a wife, by birth an Egyptian, from whence the mother was herself derived originally. Of this wife were born to Ishmael twelve sons; Nabaioth, Kedar, Abdeel, Mabsam, Idumas, Masmaos, Massaos, Chodad, Theman, Jotur, Naphesus, Cadmas. These inhabited all the country from Euphrates to the Red Sea, and called it Nabakene. They are an

¹ *Baba Mezi'a* (Talmud) 87 a; compare also *Genesis Rabbah*, liii. 13.

² Josephus here calls Ishmael "a young child," at that time the boy being about 13 years of age.

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Arabian nation, and name their tribes from these, both because of their own virtue, and because of the dignity of Abraham their father."¹

This account of Josephus, as to the reason for the expulsion of Hagar and her young son, is supported by the opinion of Von Hummelauer (*Comment. in Genesim*), and also by the Roman Catholic divine, the Rev. James F. Driscoll, S.T.D., who says, "Later we find Sarah *through jealousy* ill-treating her handmaiden Agar the Egyptian, who had borne a child to Abraham, and finally she forces the latter to drive away the bondwoman and her son Ishmael (Gen. xxi)."²

Genesis Rabbah also bears within itself the confutation of the wicked libel upon Ishmael of being guilty of the three heinous sins alleged against him, for it declares that Sarah put "the spell of the evil eye" upon Ishmael, and he fell so sick thereunder that Abraham was obliged to lift the lad and place him upon Hagar's shoulders, whom she bore away.³

The idea of a child who could be borne on his mother's shoulders being guilty of committing the vile crimes of idolatry, unchastity and murder is too absurd to require any further comment. Some Rabbis state that the cause of Sarah's fear (not jealousy) of Ishmael was that she saw the boy, who was a skilful archer, playfully pointing his bow, wherein an arrow was strung, in the direction of Isaac, and she was afraid that in order to secure the whole inheritance, Ishmael might be tempted at some time to slay the younger child.

In that portion of the Talmud known as *Berakot* (Blessing) it is stated that whoever sees Ishmael in a dream will have his prayer answered by God. This statement is doubtless based on the fact that the name *Ishmael* in Hebrew signifies "God hears," or "Heard by God."

In connection with this subject it should also be remembered that it is specially stated in the Book of Genesis that God promised Abraham that His blessing should be upon Ishmael, who, He foretold, would beget twelve princes and would become a great nation (Gen. xvi. 15, 16).

Kedar, the son of Ishmael, was the direct ancestor of the prophet Muhammad (U. W. B. E. P.).

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, book xii, secs. 3 and 4.

² *Catholic Encyclopædia*, vol. xiii, p. 468, article "Sara."

³ *Genesis Rabbah*, liii. 17.

(To be continued.)

BELIEF AND ACTION

BELIEF AND ACTION

‘O ye believers! fear God as He deserveth to be feared! and die not till ye have become Muslims’’ (Sura iii. v. 97).

“Think men that when they say ‘We believe,’ they shall be let alone and not put to proof?” (Sura xxix. v. 1).

THE above verses from the pages of the Holy Qur-án are full of significance to those who profess Islam to-day. Let us remember that Islam is a *religion of actions*, not a creed which promises eternal salvation for a certain belief. When ignorant people of other faiths read the Holy Qur-án in the translations made by Christians they cannot understand the phraseology of certain verses or fail to read them in conjunction with those verses which precede or follow, and so fall into error. Let those of other religions who read the Holy Qur-án remember that to do so properly they must first of all strip from the mind the dogmas of their own particular belief and read with clear understanding of what really constitutes the Faith of Islam. To the born Muslim the significance of the verses is quite plain, but particularly I would commend those who accept Islam as their religion after serious thought and reasoning to go still further in their studies. They no doubt fully understand the beautiful Pillars of Faith and how practical are the teachings, but there is so much more to learn. These divine truths should stimulate actions, and to be really Muslim it is necessary to translate into action the precepts inculcated by the Holy Qur-án. Naming oneself Muslim is not sufficient; any one can do so, but every soul must be put to the test. If the actions of a person are at variance with the beliefs held by that individual can we condemn the creed? Certainly not! but we blame the offender for not acting up to the teachings of his particular religion. We must, first of all, be sure of ourselves; not lean on others. We have no other shoulders on which to lay the responsibility of our deeds. We must fear God in the proper sense, and obey His commands. We must kill all those ideas which are pernicious, throw away the false notions which have helped to mar our lives and restrain us from upward progress. If we have been asleep, then let us awaken. It is essential to realize that the cardinal difference between Islam and some religions is that Islam awakens the soul to a consciousness of *individual responsibility*, whereas some creeds deny that the individual is morally accountable. We must realize that Allah is All-Sufficient and that nothing that we do can diminish in any degree His glory and power. If we act aright we benefit mankind, if we deliberately do wrong then mankind suffers. Is it not an inspiring thought that whereas others believe that some one else bears their burden, yet in Islam mankind is trusted, man is deemed a being worthy of the confidence of Allah? Does it not give

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a special significance to even the smallest action of our daily life? We are not slaves; we are free. A Muslim who is a Muslim is a real example to mankind. If our minds and hearts have submitted to the will of Allah, we can go through life confidently, and when we pass through the stage called Death it has no terrors for us. The Holy Prophet said, "Death is a bridge that uniteth friend with friend," and if any of our brethren have gone ahead, as Muslims we know that we shall meet again. Our life here is but a portion of the infinite; we live in heaven or hell here, and our actions determine our portion. When we cross that bridge we are translated to a higher sphere, our good actions sustain us and we do not fall into the pit of desolation and misery. Muslims! the Holy Prophet said, "Die before ye die," and this means that we must strive in this life to purge away the dross, to make ourselves pure, and kill all base desires. We must also realize that when we accept Islam we are required to act up to the ideals taught us by the Holy Qur-án, and it is every day that we are being put to the test in some way or another. We live here amongst non-Muslim peoples, and they possess many vices which are forbidden to us. Have we the moral courage to resist temptation, especially when these things are common amongst those around us? We must resist! Remember that we are few, but in the early days of Islam there was but a handful, but that handful conquered the hearts of the non-Muslim by force of example. To-day we Muslims of the Occident must stand shoulder to shoulder, we must cement our ties, we must not allow any false pride or alien prejudice to stand in our way. We must help our brethren, and our brotherhood must be of such a quality that it must cause wonderment to the non-Muslim. We must go forward confronting those who as yet have not had audience of the Light with the firm courage that inspired the little band of the faithful in those early days at Mecca. Our salutation must be always "Peace be with you!" and Allah in His mercy will reward us. The day will come when our friends and foes alike will reply, "And with you be peace!" British Muslims, remember that Islam will be judged by the British public according to your *actions*, and all Muslims in every part of the world must also *live Islam*. We do not conquer by the battleship or cannon; we conquer the heart by the revelation from Allah to our Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) given to mankind in the pages of the last Gospel, the Holy Qur-án. It is Allah that sustains us in time of trouble, it is He who rewards us according to our actions, it is He who shows us the triumph of Islam, and we must do all we can to hasten the day of peace for mankind by following the teachings of Islam, and by our example to our fellows make them also fully illumined by the Divine Light.

KHALID SHELDRAKE.

THE GENIUS OF ISLAM

THE GENIUS OF ISLAM

By PRINCIPAL T. L. VASWANI, M.A.

EUROPE has failed to do justice to the Turk ; it finds it difficult to rise above the interests of its capitalistic imperialism ; it has also dense prejudices against El Islam. The Turk is known for courtesy, for beauty, for bravery, for kindness to animals ; the Turkish women are very patriotic, and some of the speeches of Hanum, the famous woman leader of Turkey to-day, are kindled with the fire of intense patriotism. Turkey has suffered on account of constant European interference ; Europe has not appreciated the Turkish problem in a spirit of sympathy ; Europe does not appreciate, does not understand the faith and culture of Islam. Not many of the non-Muslims in India do so either ; but if the so-called Hindu-Muslim unity is to be an abiding force in the life of India, it is necessary for the Hindu and the Muslim to be in sympathy with each other's culture and faith. My sympathy with my Muslim brethren is deepened, when I think of the noble teachings of their great faith and the historic part it has played in the life of humanity ; and I would have young India grow in the new spirit of sympathy and appreciation of the great values of Islamic faith and culture.

The notion that Islam is intolerant has grown out of interested motives, partly out of ignorance. The very word Islam means "peace," and the Qur-án abounds with passages breathing a beautiful spirit of peace, goodwill, and love. Every surah of the Qur-án begins with the significant words : "In the name of Allah (God), the Compassionate, the Merciful." In a beautiful passage in the Muslim scripture, we read : "The people of the Books, such as Christians, Jews, Muslims and those who believe in the unity and singleness of God, and the immortality of soul, and practise charity and are benevolent and kind to the poor, and take care of the orphans—they are the people of salvation." Yet in another passage we have the following remarkable injunction, "Let there be no compulsion in religion." The Prophet, with a catholic vision, said Abraham was a Muslim ; and one of the sayings attributed to him indicates what his view of a true Muslim was. "A perfect Muslim," he said, "is he from whose tongue and hands mankind is safe."

The rule of life for the true Muslim, the Prophet expressed in the following words : "Do unto all men as you would wish to have done unto you, and reject for others what you would reject for yourself." It is no surprise the Jews have been better treated by Muslims than by Christians, and have preferred to stay in Muslim rather than in Christian lands. One day a bier passed by the Prophet ; being told it was the

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bier of a Jew, he said : " Was it not the holder of a soul, from which we should take example and fear ? " Yes—the Jew has a soul as much as any other child of God ; how often has not Christian Europe forgotten this ? And Islam was tolerant not simply to the Jew but also to the Christian. The Christian Church in Muslim Spain was given large lands and considerable revenues ; Christian envoys were received with courtesy and allowed to take away relics of Christian saints and martyrs from the Muslim territory. Gibbon tells in his *Decline and Fall* that " Muslim rulers even transcribed an Arabic version of the Cangeolus of the Councils of Spain for the use of the Bishops and Clergy in the Moorish kingdoms." Haroon Al-Rashid, hero of the *Arabian Nights*, planted in his kingdom a large number of schools ; the head of these schools, his Director of Education, was a Christian named John. Islam when in power has been tolerant to Christians and Jews ; and the much-maligned Turk has not been a stranger to the tolerant spirit of Islam. During the Balkan War, the Bulgarians attacked Turkey, they reached Chatalji and it was feared they might take the city at any moment ; just then died a prelate of the Greek Church in Constantinople ; the Turks even in those anxious days made ready to give the prelate an imposing public funeral. Yet Europe accuses the Muslim of intolerance ! It was a Muslim who said there was no quarrel between Muslims and Christians, " for God will gather us both in, and unto Him we shall return."

CULTURE OF ISLAM.

A whole volume could be written on the subject. Europe is indebted to Muslims more than she cares to remember to-day. In the Middle Ages, when Europe was in darkness, it was the scholars, and thinkers, and scientists of Islam who held high the torch of culture. They translated Greek and Roman classics and so became heralds of the renaissance movement in Europe, they taught sciences, medicine, history, art, poetry, philosophy, religion. Jabir was a great chemist ; he discovered sulphuric acid, nitric acid. Ibn Musa wrote on spherical trigonometry ; Alberuni was a botanist and indeed stayed in India for forty years to collect materials on botany ; the words alembic, alkali, etc., derived as they are from Muslim language, indicate how much the Muslims had made chemistry their favourite study. Some Muslim scientists established observatories, and a French writer points out that Kepler owed not a little to Nur-ud-Din, the author of a book on the " Sphere." Muslim kings established free libraries and colleges and schools of learning ; Haroon Al-Rashid attached a school to every mosque he built. Cairo had a school of science, and a free library on a grand scale ; Cordova, Seville and

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF SACRIFICE

Granada had famous Universities. In architecture as in science, Muslims made themselves famous. There are several theories of the origin of Muslim architecture: there is the Egyptian theory which attributes much to the Copts; there is the Indian theory which emphasizes the influence of Indian craftsmen on the mosques; there is the Roman theory, developed by Rivorie in a recent book, which looks to the Imperial city as the centre of those influences which shaped the Muslim style. One thing is clear: Muslim architecture has enriched Europe and Egypt and India with some of the noblest buildings man is proud of; Muslim architecture has made a positive contribution to the spiritual or æsthetic stock of the human race.

Islamic civilization, too, has subordinated money to the immaterial values of life; it has not, like Europe, worshipped mammon as its God; it has not shared Europe's commercial faith; it has not, like the Christian nations, clamoured for coal-fields, oil-fields, and economic exploitation of Eastern countries. "The love of the world," said the Prophet, "is the root of all evil." What a sad commentary these words on the civilization of modern Europe! Capitalism, imperialism, commercialism, land-grabbing, exploitation—the root of it all is "love of the world." Europe has yet to know what it is to place love of man above love of the world, and there can be no democracy without love of man as man. This democracy is the very essence of Islam. *Alla ho Akbar!* God alone is great! What a faith, what an inspiration, this ringing cry! Islamic culture does not therefore recognize any supernaturalism; it has never deified the Prophet; how often did he not declare that he too was a man; a man like others, a mortal, a servant of Allah the Merciful. All are equal in the sight of Allah, all need His mercy: such is the Muslim's conviction. This faith makes Islam a brotherhood, an international brotherhood, a fellowship of many races and tribes, a League of several Nations.

This faith is not dead even in these days of Muslim decline and decadence, this faith the Muslim cherishes in his heart at this dark hour in his history, this faith is the promise of his future.

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF SACRIFICE

By DUDLEY WRIGHT

(Continued from last Number)

ACCORDING to a Persian tradition all living creatures were born of the blood of the sacred bull immolated by

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Mithra, and Mithra was not only the creator but the mediator between the Supreme God and man. He was the conqueror of evil and the saviour of souls.

The object of the sacrifice of the totem among the Greeks was to deify the faithful who took part in it and to assimilate them to the god as closely as possible.

The Roman sacrifice of the taurobolium had a similar meaning. There a bull was immolated, and its blood was made to drip between the boards of the floor on to the head of the person who made the offering, and this was supposed to render him divine. Among the Romans there was the idea that there was no atonement except by blood, and that some one must die to procure the happiness of the others.

The transition from this conception to that held by modern orthodox Christians was an easy one, notwithstanding the fact that the orthodox doctrine of atonement and substitution for sin by means of a human sacrifice is opposed entirely to the teaching of Moses, Jesus, and all the prophets.

The Prophet Jesus was not the author of a system of dogmatic theology: he was "the author and finisher of faith." He did not come as the founder of a school of thought, but as the reformer who sought to lead men back to the true conception of God and of their duties to God and man. The mission of the Prophet Muhammad was the mission of Jesus—the message was the same and the mission identical. The mission was also identical with that of all the prophets who had preceded them. The immediate followers of Jesus were not even called "Christians"—that was a later development, and the term "Christ" is not even a name, but a title, denoting a high state of attainment, that in which the material is subordinated to the spiritual.

It is only since the time of St. Paul that the ruling idea of the Christian religion has been that the redemption of man, supposed to be guilty by the sin of another, and that other a prehistoric individual, can only be effected by the suffering of an innocent superman for the guilty, and guilty not of themselves, but through an inherited taint. The idea is an archaic one, which was condemned by enlightened Athenians when it was suggested four centuries before the Christian era. It was developed and reached its complete form of statement when it was formulated.

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