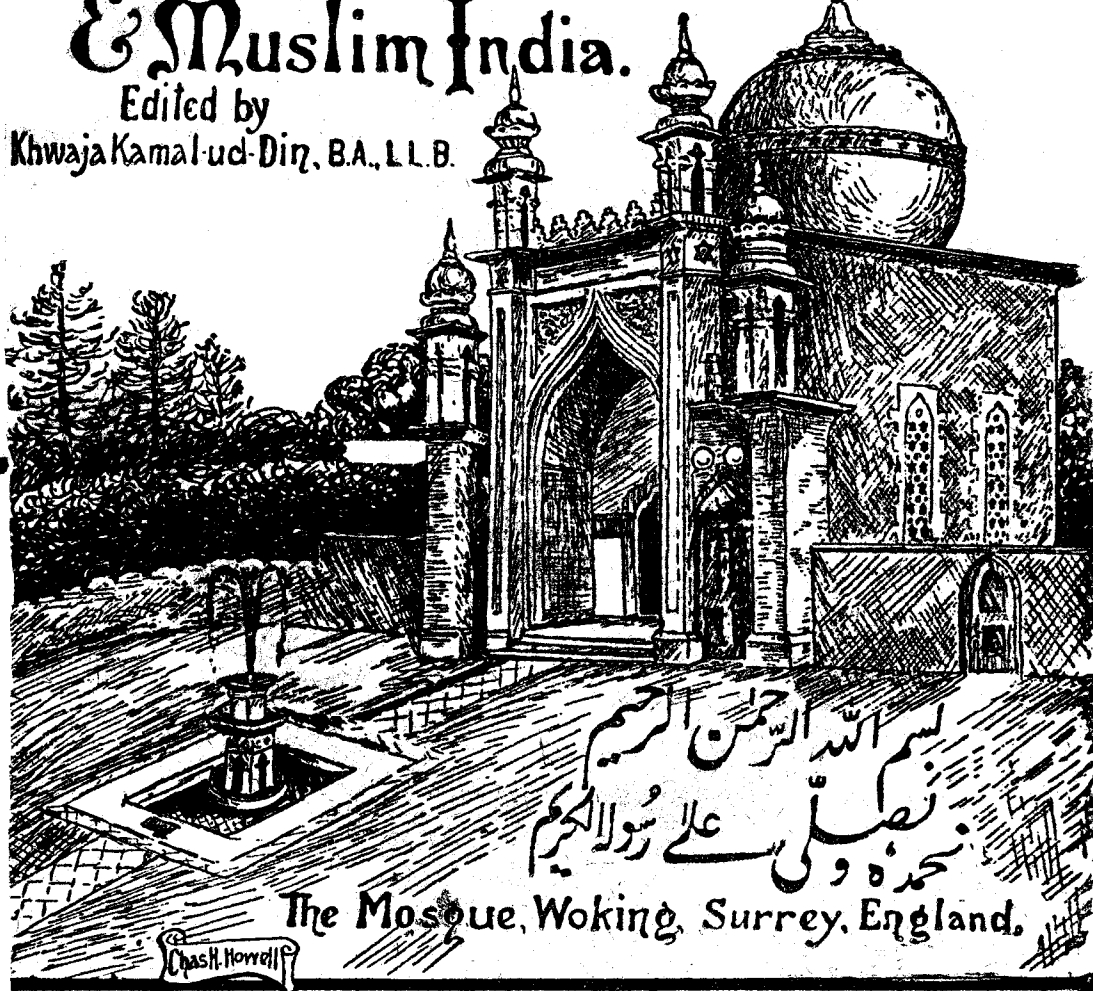


Islamic Review & Muslim India.

Edited by
Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, B.A., LL.B.



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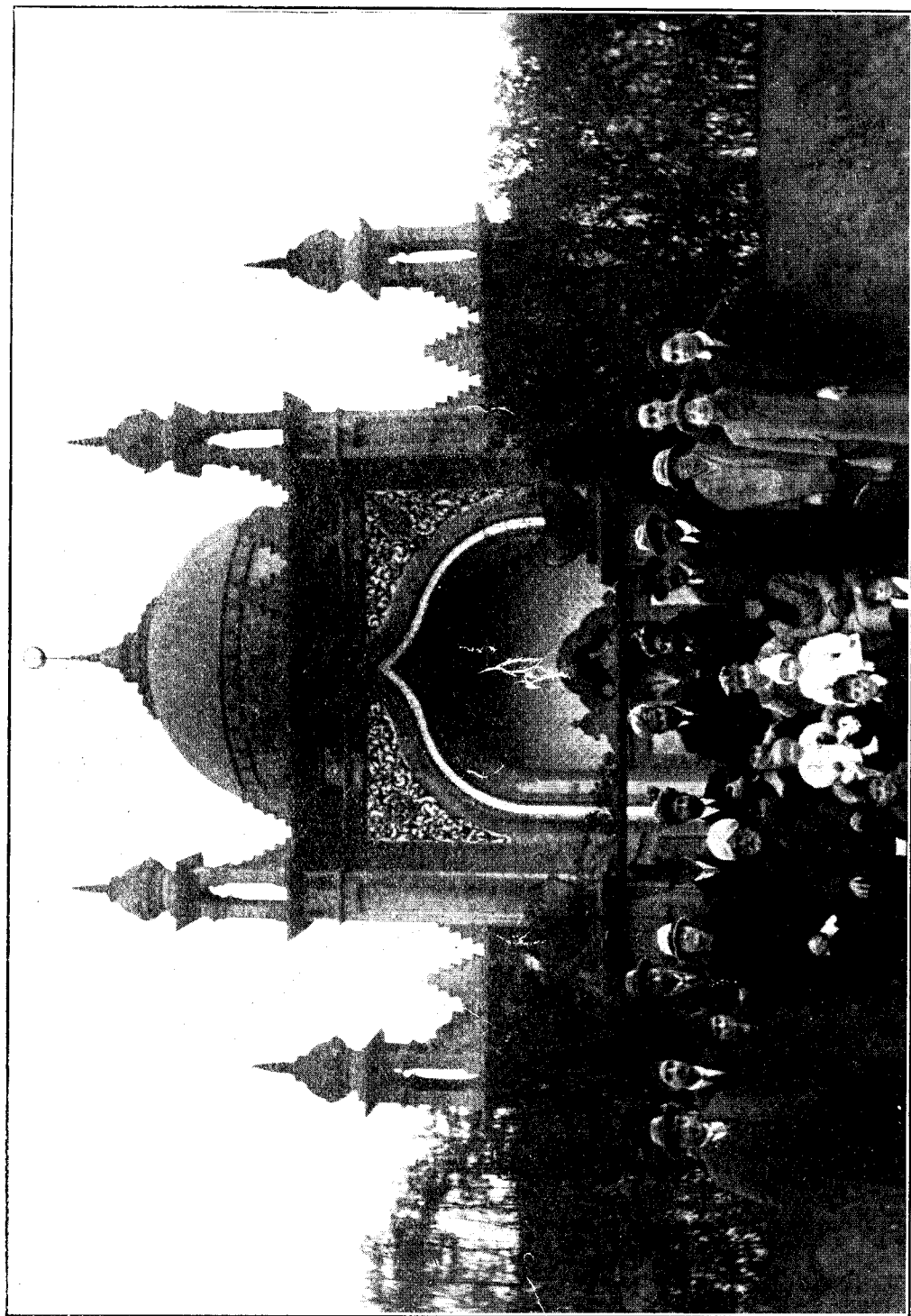
PRESS OPINIONS.

"We have here in an attractive form and bound in flexible leather cover the first English translation and commentary of the Qur-án by a Moslem theologian, President Ahmadiyah Anjuman-i-Ishaet-i-Islam, Lahore. The Arabic text, written by expert calligraphists in India, accompanies each verse. The commentary is based on the authentic traditions of the Prophet as interpreted by Moslem *savants*. A preface of 90 pages discusses the special features of Islam as disclosed in the Qur-án and the authenticity of the book. A detailed exposition of the prominent features of the study of the Qur-án is reserved for a later volume."—*Literary Supplement, The Times*, 25th October, 1917.

"... and have often felt that there was something lacking in editions prepared by Christian editors. The lack is removed by the issue of a very fine edition, 'The Holy Qur-án,' by a distinguished Muslim, Maulvi Muhammad Ali, of Lahore, who has devoted seven years to its preparation; the commentary is remarkably full and interesting; the preface is both a summary of Islamic teaching and practice and a history of 'the Book'; and—even in war time—the thinnest of thin India paper, gilt edges, beautiful type, and a limp green morocco binding make the volume an unusually sumptuous one."—*Westminster Gazette*, 12th November, 1917.

"To the clearly printed Arabic text are appended a translation, as literal as possible, and a commentary. The book is printed on thin paper, handsomely bound in flexible leather, and is altogether exceedingly well produced."—*The Athenæum*, December, 1917.

"This handsome volume witnesses in many respects to a highly praiseworthy and well carried out undertaking. The above text in parallel columns with the translation, has been specially transcribed for the purpose by competent calligraphists and its photographic reproduction leaves nothing to be desired. The English and the proof-reading are both remarkably good. It reads as well as any other English version and is superior to them in its systematic arrangement. The chapters are supplied with abstracts of the sections showing their connections with each other and also explaining the inter-connection of the chapters themselves, which are further broken up into verses, each verse being numbered. Indeed in general appearance and get-up THE HOLY QUR-AN might have come straight from the Oxford presses of *The Holy Bible*. As to the general reliability of the version, we have sought for competent guidance and have been assured on the one hand by a distinguished English Arabist that it has on the whole been carefully and well made, and on the other by a learned Indian Mahommedan that, if it errs in any way, it does so in being somewhat too literally faithful. It, however, does not read as though it were a slavishly literal version; its language is simple, straightforward, and impressive—in short, largely 'biblical.' On the whole then we may say that we have before us a version that is not only faithful but dignified; and that is high praise. It is certainly a work of which any scholar might legitimately be proud, and especially an Oriental scholar; it has further been completed in a remarkably short time for so difficult an undertaking. Eight years only have gone to its making, years therefore of such unremitting devotion and strenuous toil as legitimately to compel our admiration and praise. Maulvi Muhammad Ali, as we have been told by one who knows him intimately, is a man of rare intellectual gifts, who could easily have distinguished himself in any profession and made a very large income. He has preferred to devote himself to the service of religion and to live a life of poverty in that service. The translation is his alone; it has not been done by various hands and simply edited by him. As to the commentaries and the rest of the matter, though he has had the great advantage of being able to consult on all points many living Muslim scholars and theologians of the highest repute, as well as innumerable written and printed sources and authorities, the labour is still all his own, and the skilful presentation of the results of his researches show further that he has been an apt scholar in the school of Western methodology. Moreover, whenever in his version he departs from a generally accepted rendering, he tells us why he has done so frankly in the notes and sets before us the evidence for and against his new interpretation."—*The Quest*.



A FRATERNAL GROUP OF ENGLISH AND INDIAN MUSLIMS IN FRONT OF THE WOKING MOSQUE.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

ISLAMIC REVIEW

AND

MUSLIM INDIA

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[No. 2

THE HOLY QUR-ĀN

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MARCH NUMBER

Our next issue will be devoted entirely to the discussion whether the Christian Gospels are looked upon by devout Christian scholars themselves as inspired books, or as compilations prepared by human hands, with all the limitations of individual tendency, want of information, and, in some cases, of ability.

A SERMON

A SERMON

By MARMADUKE PICKTHALL.

“By the fig and the olive, by Mount Sinai and by this land of sanctuary, verily He created man in the best fashion. Then we rendered Him the lowest of the low. Excepting those who believe and do good works. They have their due reward. Then who after this can call thee liar in the matter of the judgment? Is not Allah the best of all judges?”

WHAT are the fig-tree and the olive-tree? What is meant by Mount Sinai and “this land of sanctuary”? The two great branches of the Semitic Race, the two great races of mankind which claim descent from Abraham, the two divisions of that favoured section of the human race through whom the whole world has received the knowledge of the One True God, and of His will and purpose as regards humanity. The fig-tree here is an emblem of the Jewish dispensation, and Mount Sinai, where Moses received the Law, is the same. The olive-tree is emblematic of the Islamic dispensation, and “this land of sanctuary,” of course, is the town and valley of Mecca, where Muhammad was in the act of receiving the law when this Qur-án was revealed. It is called the “land of sanctuary,” or the country made secure, because from time immemorial it had been accounted sacred by the Arabs, on account of its ancient Temple, said to have been built by Abraham, and still in the Prophet’s day called Beyt Ullah—the House of Allah, or the One God—although the objects worshipped there were a multitude of idols, which were regarded as daughters of God and necessary intercessors. This Sûrah of the fig is one of the very early revelations before the opposition of the idolators of Mecca to the mission of the Holy Prophet had become anything more than a contemptuous refusal to take that mission seriously. They had heard of Allah, and they had always understood that the world was as Allah had decreed that it should be, that the idols which they worshipped were His daughters deputed to hear human prayers, and that their temple was His house, their priests His priests—in fact, that Allah was the sort of supreme and distant patron of all the bloodshed, superstition, lust, and orgies in which they indulged, as they supposed, in honour of their idols. Arabia was indeed in a disgraceful state. Those descendants of Abraham, still proud of their descent, still proud of having in their midst the House of God which Abraham himself had founded when he left his son Ishmael in a barren wadi of Hejjâz, those descendants of Abraham had become the lowest of the low. Yet behind them, looming through the mists of their tradition, was the memory of a man of perfect mould, a man whom Allah had created in

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the best fashion, Abraham the prophet, their own ancestor. What was the cause of their degradation? It was essentially the same as that of the humiliation and dispersal of the Israelites, for it is possible to be idolators of words and forms as much as of carved images of wood or stone. They had forgotten the purpose of Allah in this world; they had made observances an end and object in themselves, had gone deliberately back from light to darkness, with the inevitable result that they had lost the very idea of true belief through believing in all kinds of nonsense without question, that they had lost the very idea of that belief which is inseparable from good works. The spiritual downfall was the same in both cases, though the details and the circumstances differed greatly. So the Qur-án calls the fig and the olive (the emblems of the two religions) and Mount Sinai and the sacred territory of Mecca to witness how Allah created man in the best form, but how man afterwards had sunk to be the lowest of the low through choosing matters unessential to man's welfare, not always in themselves degrading things, and idolizing them, while leaving the essential things quite out of sight. "Excepting those who believe and do good works. They have unlimited reward."

Brethren, I am asking you to try to realize the greatest miracle which ever happened in this world, performed in full accordance with the natural order, so much so that the superstitious scoffed at it until its marvellous, complete success made them prostrate themselves. I mean the return of spiritual light to the world by the agency of Muhammad, Messenger of Allah (may God bless and keep him), speaking the Qur-án. No doubt our Holy Prophet had long perceived that the eternal mystery is one and indefinable in human terms; that the prophets—Abraham, Moses, Jesus—had proclaimed this truth to men. No doubt he early had conceived a shrewd suspicion that, wherever the Eternal Mystery has been defined in human terms or subdivided into several deities, that is the result of priestly trickery. But still he remained united with his people, who were all idolators, until God's angel called him in this month of Ramadân, when he was forty years of age. It had been for some time past his custom to retire into the desert for a month of every year for meditation, and on that occasion he was in the place of his retirement. It was night. He was entranced. He saw a strange light in the sky, and heard a voice commanding him to cry aloud in warning to mankind. The words he heard on that occasion were the first of the Qur-án to be revealed. It is agreed by all the most trustworthy commentators that they are the first five verses of chapter 96.

A SERMON

"Read in the name of thy Lord Who created (the creation),

"Created man from a clot.

"Read, and thy Lord is Most Honourable.

"Who taught the use of the pen,

"Taught man that which he knew not."

Very simple words, and really meaningless if taken by themselves, without the knowledge of the whole Qur-ân, which was to follow. They are simply a command to read, addressed to a man who could not read or write. He was to read in the name of his Lord, the Creator of man from a clot, his Lord the Most Honourable, Who taught the use of the pen, taught man that which he knew not. How many people in the history of the world have had visions in appearance more remarkable! The enemies of Islam to this day are crying that it and other visions were not supernatural at all; they were entirely natural, the result of certain tendencies in his constitution, of certain habits of life, and an accustomed train of thought. I agree that the vision was entirely natural. It was none the less divine, if the enemies of Islam, with minds still dimmed by superstition, would but see it. They say it was a natural infirmity, a disease, hallucination. Just look at the result in this Qur-ân, in the life-work of the Holy Prophet after that. In view of this marvellous book and of that marvellous life-story, I swear, by Him in Whose hand is the life and death, and health and sanity of every one of us, that it was not infirmity, disease, or hallucination. The proof is here, the only kind of proof that God accepts, the only kind of proof that men can properly accept if they would give fair judgment. The proof is here in works—works absolutely incomparable, inexplicable, and unique.

What were the Prophet's feelings on the occasion of his first vision? When he awoke out of his trance, with the words which had been spoken to him graven, as it were, upon his heart, still trembling, he went home to his wife, the lady Khadijah, and commanded:

"Cover me with cloth! Cover me with cloth!"

And they covered him as he desired. And when the fear departed from him he spoke to Khadijah and told her what had happened, and he said: "I am afraid for my life."

Khadijah answered: "Allah is my protection, O Abu-'l-Câsim. He will surely not let such a thing befall thee; for thou speakest the truth, thou dost not return evil for evil, thou keepest faith, art of a good life and kind to thy relations and friends; and thou art not a babbler in the market-place."

She urged him to be glad instead of sorrowful, for she believed with all her heart that he was called to be the

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prophet of his people. It is one of the most natural stories in the world, the story of how the Holy Prophet first heard the voice of the inspiring angel, first knew that he had authority to speak in the name of the Lord of Creation. It resembles the experience of every man who ever has been set apart for a high purpose, of every man who ever has had psychological experience. Like everything about the Holy Prophet's life it is not exceptional, it is typical. And like everybody else who has had such experience, Muhammad (may God bless and keep him) was at first afraid. Then Khadijah took him to her cousin Waraka ibn Naufal, an old blind man, who knew the scriptures of the Jews and Christians ; and he said :

“ I swear by Him in Whose hand is the life of Waraka that Allah has chosen thee to be the prophet of this people. The Namusu'l-akbar—the message from on high—has come to thee. They will call thee liar, they will persecute thee, they will banish thee, they will fight against thee. Oh, that I could live till those days ! I would fight for thee.”

The mysterious element, the divine influence in the life of Muhammad, comes in the natural way of the mysterious element, the divine influence, in all our lives, through the mind and soul of the man himself. It is psychological ; it involves no new phenomenon ; and so the greatest miracle on earth—this Qur-án from the mouth of an illiterate prophet—does not in any way transgress the natural order.

From the hour when he received his call until he died the Prophet lost all thought of his own interests. No other man in the whole history of the world, however mighty his enthusiasm for a cause, has served that cause so single-heartedly as did Muhammad. In the hour of triumph, as of that of adversity, he was the faithful servant of the Most High, doing his Master's work without a taint of selfish motive. For the first twelve years of his mission he endured such cruel persecution and distress as would have killed or driven mad a man of slighter faith. Then came the Hijrah, the flight from Mecca to Medinah, when he was fifty-two. In the ten years remaining of his life he succeeded in reforming all Arabia ; he destroyed idolatry ; raised women from the utmost degradation to an honoured and assured position, abolished useless bloodshed, made strict rules for war, and for the first time in the history of the world made universal brotherhood a principle and fact of common law. He did good continually. He is the only conqueror and ruler in all history of whom it can be truly said that he never wronged a fellow-creature in the least respect. And thousands of his followers were filled with the same spirit, vying with each other in good works, and perfectly obedient to the sacred law ; so that for a while the kingdom of Allah

A SERMON

was actually established on this earth, and rich and poor alike were happy in the bosom of Islam.

Well, those are a people which has passed away. To them their works, and to you your works, and you will not be questioned of what they did in their day. "Verily we created man in the best form. Then we rendered him the lowest of the low. Excepting those who believe and do good works. They have unlimited reward."

We all admire the form in which Islam appeared at first in the person of the Holy Prophet and his fortunate companions. And we all deplore the degradation of a large part of the Muslim world at present. We can add nothing to the glory of the Prophet and the early Muslims. It is past and gone. But the condition of Islam at present is our own affair. The truth on which our Faith lays greatest stress is this, that unless a man believes and does good works—belief and the doing of good works being not two separate things, but one and the same thing—he becomes the lowest of the low. We must strive by all means to revive the true Muslim spirit in every Muslim individual and society, but first and foremost in ourselves, for precept is no use without example. If any of us cherish enmity towards a fellow-creature wrongfully or in excess of the cause given, let us eradicate that enmity or reduce it to the limits of a just demand. If any of us have a quarrel with a fellow-Muslim, let us seek reconciliation, even at the cost of some slight sacrifice of pride. If any of us, in our conscience, know that we have wronged a fellow-creature, let us take steps to redress that wrong as far as may be. We must not think about it only, we must up and do it, as the Prophet and the early Muslims would have done. If any of us know of any Muslim who has pressing needs which we are able to relieve, let us go at once and ease his situation in such a way that he may not feel burdened with an obligation towards us.

Our fasting, our remembrance of the mercy of Allah in this month of Ramadân, in which the Qur-ân was revealed, will be a farce if we are content with prayer and meditation and good resolutions for some future date not specified. Belief and good works must go together. We must be doing even while we pray, or we shall be rendered, by Allah's invincible decree, the lowest of the low—the lower for the contrast with our great example, who was indeed "created in the best form," and whose triumph was the greatest that the world has ever witnessed.

Let us endeavour to repeat that triumph in our day. The feat is not beyond our power, for Allah, the Lord of the Heavens and the Earth, is still as near as ever to His faithful servants, and He has promised that "those who believe and do good works shall have unlimited reward."

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FANATICISM

TO-DAY we stand at a sign-post, its arms pointing to the East and West. In the sky are clouds, the aftermath of a great storm, through which the sun is sending a few faint gleams. The earth around is sodden with the deluge; many noble trees have fallen and their branches lie around in disorder. The road is strewn with wreckage, and great pools have formed here and there. Little streams rush swiftly along the pathway and, joining together, run madly to form another pool in some slight depression. The sign-post stands as a sentinel, challenging the wayfarer to stop and think, to read its message, follow the true direction and not go astray.

Our earth has passed through many storms and the recent outburst is fresh in all minds. We are travelling towards—what? Is it peace and security or trouble and discord? We are standing now at the parting of the ways. Great nations, powerful and haughty, lie in the dust, famine is spreading, is rushing through land after land as the little streams after the storm. Hatred and calumny, bloodshed and rapine, have burst upon fair lands, and now, like the wind in a tempest, they have spent their force. Shall we go on blindly as in the past? Shall we ignore our follies and again blunder along hugging the delusion that all is well? Europe is now trying to patch up states and nations, to make anew the map of the Continent. “The basis of nationality,” “self-determination,” these and other phrases are constantly before our eyes. We hear much of “reconstruction,” these little gleams of sunshine, but still in the sky are those black clouds. Are we really genuine in our efforts to bring about a lasting state of peace, or are we only cheating ourselves? Are we erecting artificial and unnatural frontiers that must cause further trouble in years to come? Those races who have to submit to force of arms now, will they agree with our ideas of justice or impartiality? Shall minorities rule majorities? Will the conquered forgive the victor? In Europe we find Venizelos referred to as a “patriot,” the Czecho-Slovaks are “patriots,” the Serbians are “patriots”; so be it. Thus we must remember that our standard being proclaimed must be so regarded by all nations as to apply equally to all. Those Turks who fought us so well, they must be “patriots” too. Let us remember that fact when we read so often in our press, so frequently that it becomes monotonous, that they are “fanatics.” Let us ponder for some time on this question: “Who are *really* the fanatics?” Is a Christian the only person in the world with a love for his country or religion? Are the list of virtues confined to the Christian alone? Is God partial? It is blasphemy. No! let us gaze at the sign-

FANATICISM

post, let us not be unheeding. Let our past ignorance be atoned for by our future conduct. We must not be classed as "bigots," for bigotry is the brother of fanaticism. We must think for the future in a wider sense; we must not always use our orthodox spectacles, but destroy these impediments to clear vision. Let us view humanity as a whole, let us realize that God is the Creator and Sustainer of all men. Justice and mercy have each to be applied on occasions, and one must not err on the side of severity when dealing with the weaker of the human family. Our complex system of logic has resulted in Christians, both good and bad, being regarded as disinterested "patriots," but non-Christian races, especially the Muslims, are vilified as "fanatics." Does the Muslim love his religion, country and family less than the Christian? Does he desire his house to be occupied by the stranger less than does the Christian? If forced to fight is he less courageous, albeit often his arms are inferior to those of the foe? Why then, in peace or war, in Europe or Asia, is he dubbed a "fanatic"? Isaac Taylor, writing of the period of the Crusades, says: "St. Bernard with the Gospel on his lips, incited again the Western nations to make a furious assault upon their brethren of the East: and in doing so became actively the author of incalculable miseries and bloodshed! . . . But the Crusades poured a feculent deluge, upheaved from the stagnant deeps of the European communities, upon the afflicted Palestine. The Saracenic conquests might be compared to a sunrise in the tropics, where the deep-azured night, with its sparkling constellations, is almost in a moment exchanged for the glare of day; and where the fountain of light not only darts his beams over the heavens, putting the stars to shame, but, with a tyrannous fervour, claims the world as his own. The Crusades might be better resembled to the tornado, which, sweeping over some rich Polynesian sea, and rending all things in its course, heaps together upon a distant shore the confused wrecks of nature and human industry."

Such is a modern writer's opinion of the conflict of East and West in those early centuries. Who then were the fanatics? Then he goes on to say, "Innocent III, finding that the effigy of the SARACEN would no longer serve to set the vindictive passions of Europe in a flame, substituted that of HERETIC; and forthwith Albigenses not Moslems became the victims of the martial frenzy of the Catholic world."

To-day the persecution of "heretics" has ceased, but are we falling back into the fanaticism of those crusading days? Is our education and civilization only a veneer to cover religious fanaticism? When we speak of Palestine to-day and consciously use the word "Crusader" in praising a famous general, are we really serious? Truly for thinking

ISLAMIC REVIEW

men and women the parting of the ways is at hand ! Can we go back to the dark theology of the Middle Ages ? Are we prepared to sink back into the dangerous pools of religious intolerance ? The sign-post points out two ways, one to world brotherhood and peace, the other to darkness and destruction. Christians, ponder well your future actions. God has presented to you to-day a book of guidance, a veritable sign-post, a revelation from the Divine Ruler. You stand in chaos for which you are alone responsible—your past fanaticism has rebounded to your own hurt. Will you think ? Will you alter your line of conduct ? Cease to misname others contemptuously as “ fanatics ” and “ natives,” but search out your own failings, look at home first and then seriously find out how far your own creed is responsible for the terrible storm. Fling aside superstition, and seek truth. Islam means peace and brotherhood to nations. Islam will give happiness to the seeker after righteousness, Islam will comfort and bring conviction to the doubter. We stand at the sign-post ; will you take the path to the Light from the East, or falter along the way of Darkness in the West ?

KHÁLID.

THE CHARACTER OF MUHAMMAD

By DUDLEY WRIGHT

It has been said by more than one great thinker that the most effective way of studying the history of a nation is by way of the biographies of its great men, and the force of that dictum will readily be seen. In all the great crises in history the man necessary for the moment has always been raised up, sometimes seemingly from nowhere.

Never an age, when God has need of him,
Shall want its Man, predestined by that need,
To pour his life in fiery word or deed,—
The strong archangel of the Elohim.

It was so at the historical period when the Prophet Muhammad, seemingly the most unlikely man for the mission with which he was entrusted and for which he was endowed by Allah, was raised up to be a blessing not only to his own race and nation, but to the world at large.

Long before the advent of the Prophet aristocratic prejudices and distinctions had prevailed among the Arabs. He, though poor and humble, came of a noble family. He belonged to a privileged caste or tribe, that of the Koreish,

THE CHARACTER OF MUHAMMAD

on whom had devolved for centuries the care of the Kaaba, or the sacred temple of Mecca, which afterwards was wrested by him from the idolaters to become a sanctuary dedicated once again to the worship of the Living God. He laboured long and hard for the abolition of class distinctions, and to-day, caste, tribe, or nation are unknown terms so far as the Faith of Islam is concerned, but all its adherents are members of one great brotherhood.

Muhammad never assumed any superhuman character, nor did he once lay claim to powers which belong to God alone. Listen to the statement made by one of his many biographers :

“ He did not strut like the proud, he carried not his head erect, as the disdainful man ; whatever he might be, he claimed neither place nor rank as his right. . . . When he mingled with the people to announce to them the word of God, or when he taught his disciples, he arranged his hearers in a circle and sat down indifferently amongst them.”

This characteristic has ever been a marked feature among his followers, and is to be observed wherever the Faith of Islam is preached. M. A. Ubicini in *Letters on Turkey* wrote :

“ Let us enter a Mosque ; there we shall behold no vain ornaments worthless in the sight of the Divine Majesty, and tending to divert the attention of the faithful from their prayers ; we shall see nothing but a few verses of the Qur-án inscribed on the walls, two pulpits, and mats or carpets, scrupulously clean, for the needs of the worshippers ; no pews, no seats of honour, no reserved places—only men engaged in prayer, abstracted and absorbed in their devotions. If the Sultan accidentally enters the Mosque, he takes the first vacant place ; and the beggar by whom he stands does not even turn to regard him. There are no collections, no alms-boxes. The Mosque is the house of prayer, the house of God, and no human interests, no thought of earth must penetrate within its walls.”

It was with a faltering step that Muhammad first set out along the path which he was called to traverse at the command of Allah, conveyed to him in an unmistakable manner through His angel or messenger. When convinced of the divine nature of the call, he set out upon his mission unhesitatingly and with a single aim—the glory of Allah. Never did he lose sight of this ultimate goal, and even his opponents, though sometimes grudgingly, are forced to admit that he accomplished his mission. In the words of the greatest English poet of the last century :—

He fought his doubts, and gathered strength,
He would not make his reason blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind,
And laid them ; thus he came at length

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To find a firmer faith his own ;
And Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the night alone.

It was no easy task that he set out to accomplish, though he trusted not in his own strength : that work being the abolition of idolatry in a nation and among a people in whom it had taken firm root. The doctrine of the Unity of God had been abandoned, and from the belief in a trinity of gods men had sunk lower and lower until polytheism prevailed. But in the declaration of the Unity of God, Muhammad was circumspect and unwavering. All the changing creeds of the past and present ages have had their origin in the abandonment of the doctrine of the Unity of God. History has proved that Walter Savage Landor was right when he penned the words :—

“ When we go beyond the Unity of God who can say where we shall stop ? The human mind is then propelled into infinite space, and catches at anything from a want of rest.”

His trust in God never faltered and seemed to grow firmer, the greater were the dangers and difficulties that encompassed him. The instances of the solidity of that trust in his life are numerous. On one occasion, when he and Abu Bekr were lying concealed in a cave, they heard the voices of their pursuers. “ What shall we do ? ” asked Abu Bekr, “ we are but two against so many.” “ Not so,” whispered the Prophet, in reply, “ we are three, God is with us.”

Equally unswerving was his adherence to the path of duty. He made it his rule of life

to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear,
And because right is right, to follow right.

But one of the remarkable features of the life of the Prophet Muhammad is the fact that, although by his marriage with Khadijah (a marriage, be it remembered, which was not the outcome of self-seeking) his worldly prospects were benefitted in a considerable degree, no alteration was made in the simplicity of his manner of living. In the Old Testament, Satan is represented as asking the question : “ Doth Job fear God for naught ? ” And the modern Christian has answered the question in an effective manner by cloaking himself with just a sufficient quantity of religion as will, in his opinion, ensure his escape from hell hereafter. The known instances of leaders of Christian thought who have bettered their position in life by means of the pulpit are so numerous that instances must be known to all. But the

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religion of the average Christian as put into practice is rather of a negative quality, and if it grants him, as he believes, release from hell, it does not grant him happiness or heaven here on earth, unless he regards self-righteousness as happiness.

The only difference in his habits which seems to have been made by his marriage was that his wife's wealth made it possible for him to devote more time to his habit of retirement for spiritual meditation.

"Contemplation and reflection," says Sir William Muir, "now engaged his whole mind. The debasement of his people, his own uncertainty as to the true religion, the dim and imperfect shadows of Judaism and Christianity, exciting doubts without satisfying them, pressed heavily upon his soul, and he frequently retired to seek relief in meditation amongst the solitary valleys and rocks near Mecca. His favourite spot was a cave in the declivities at the foot of Mount Hira, a lofty, conical hill, two or three miles north of Mecca. Thither he would retire for some days at a time, and his faithful wife sometimes accompanied him. The continued solitude, instead of stilling his anxiety, magnified into sterner and more impressive shapes the solemn realities which perplexed and agitated his soul."

His style of living was simpler even than the average ordinary Arab, who was not renowned for extravagant or sumptuous diet. When one considers the frugal nature of the Arab's diet, it is not difficult to understand the remark made by an Effendi to Lady Duff Gordon, on hearing the sumptuous dietary of the Europeans: "It is the will of God, but it must be a dreadful fatigue to them to eat their dinner." Ayesha declares that months used to pass and no fire would be lighted in the Prophet's house, either for baking bread or cooking meat. "How then did ye live?" some one asked her. "By the two black things, dates and water, and such of the citizens as had milch cattle would send us a little milk—the Lord requite them. The prophet never enjoyed the luxury of two kinds of food the same day; if he had flesh, there was nothing else; and so if he had dates; so, likewise, if he had bread."

Weil tells us that the Prophet did not like another to do for him anything he could do for himself. He might be seen patching his own clothes, cobbling his own sandals, milking the goats, helping in the house-work, or carrying a basket from the market.

"His manner," says a Christian biographer, "was that of a perfect Arab gentleman, who knows no distinction of ranks, and is as courteous and formally polite to rags as to purple. He was gracious, unassuming, most patient and kindly to his slaves, adored by his followers, captivating to strangers."

His character was intensely human. We read of him

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entering into games with his wife, Ayesha, who has said of him that he was "as bashful as a virgin behind her veil."

His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, "This was a man."

"Ten years," said Anas, his servant, "have I been about the Prophet, and he never said as much as 'uff' to me." His intense humanity is evidenced in his great fondness for children. One of the most affecting scenes in his life is that connected with the death of his infant son, Ibrahim. At first the frame of this strong man appeared shaken by uncontrollable grief, but at last he placed the dead body back into the arms of the nurse, saying: "Ibrahim, O Ibrahim! if it were not that the promise is faithful, and the hope of resurrection sure—if it were not that this is the way to be trodden by all, and the last of us shall join the first—I would grieve for thee with a grief deeper even than this."

D. S. Margoliouth, another Christian writer, bears testimony to this characteristic feature of his life.

"His humanity even extended itself to the lower creation. He forbade the employment of living birds as targets for marksmen, and remonstrated with those who ill-treated their camels. When some of his followers had set fire to an ant-hill he compelled them to extinguish it. Foolish acts of cruelty which were connected with old superstitions were swept away by him with other institutions of paganism. No more was a dead man's camel to be tied to his tomb to perish of thirst and hunger. No more was the evil eye to be propitiated by the blinding of a certain proportion of the herd. No more was the rain to be conjured by tying burning torches to the tails of oxen and letting them loose among the cattle. Horses were not to be hit on the cheek; and their manes and tails were not to be cut, the former being meant by nature for their warmth, and the latter as a protection against flies. Asses were not to be branded or hit on the face. Even the cursing of cocks and camels was discouraged."

Muhammad struggled to win men by kindness, but in all ages there have been those who do not understand this trait, and we have not to go very far back in modern history to find notable instances of this. His charity, using that term in its widest and its proper sense, was unbounded. Dr. Humphrey Prideaux bears grudging and unwilling testimony to this. He says:

"However, this is certain, that the Christians had better terms from him than any other of his Tributaries, and they enjoy them even to this day; there being no Mahometan

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country where their religion is not esteemed the best next their own."

It would be well if the Christians of to-day, who are agitating for an act of great injustice to be perpetrated upon the followers and adherents of the Faith of Islam, would ponder well upon these words. And yet on every page of Prideaux's work the Prophet is referred to as an impostor, and the revelation of which he was but the mouthpiece as an imposture.

His charity was noteworthy; his beneficence equally remarkable, and bestowed without regard to race or creed. Blanqui, in *Voyage en Bulgarie*, wrote:—

"There are no poor found in Turkey, not because every one is alike poor, but because everywhere hands are stretched out to relieve the unfortunate. The sentiment of equality reigns there supreme. The lowest servant may there rise to the rank of master, and, by his equity and intelligence, often proves himself worthy of his elevation. The simplicity of the mosques is only equalled by their size and their admirable management. No one neglects either the summons to prayer five times a day or the fasts prescribed by the Ramadân. The religious sentiment invests the meanest amongst them with a certain self-respect, which they rarely transgress.

Prayer, said the Caliph Omar, conducts us half-way towards God; fasting brings us to the gate of His palace; charity admits us.

Well might the poet Whittier write:

Oh, shame, the Moslem thrall,
Who, with his master, to the Prophet kneels,
While turning to the sacred Qibla feels
His fetters break and fall,

although Whittier made one mistake. Muslims do not kneel to the Prophet, nor worship him in any way.

But Whittier went on to write:

Cheers for the turbaned Bey
Of robber-peopled Tunis, he hath torn
The dark slave-dungeons open, and hath borne
Their inmates into day;

But our poor slave in vain
Turns to the Christian shrine his aching eyes—
Its rites will only swell his market price,
And rivet on his chain.

And in a note to one of the editions of Whittier's poems we read:—

"We often see advertisements in the Southern papers in which individual slaves, or several of a lot, are recom-

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mended as *pious*, or as *members of churches*. Lately we saw a slave advertised who, among other qualifications, was described as a *Baptist preacher*."

Muhammad was a man of unbounded energy. In the words of Dr. Marcus Dods :

"His step is described as resembling that of a man descending a hill, and he walked with such extreme rapidity that those who accompanied him were kept at a half run. This swift and decided walk seemed eminently characteristic. It was that of a man who knew where he was going, and meant that nothing should prevent him getting there."

His life was spent in activity, in work for Allah, for his work for humanity was work for God. His only respite was the period devoted to meditation and prayer, necessary to gather strength for the conflict. Is there any character in history which more nobly fulfils the injunction (Micah vi. 8) :—

"What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

Or that in the New Testament (James i. 27) :—

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

When towards the end of his life his strength was failing him, his uncle Abbas proposed that he should occupy an elevated seat in the Mosque in order that the people should not crowd around him. "No," said Muhammad, "surely I will not cease from being in the midst of them, dragging my mantle behind me thus, and covered with their dust, until the Lord give me rest from among them."

In the history of the world, many religious systems have arisen. Many have fallen, some remain. Of the latter, it will be seen by the careful and unprejudiced investigator and student that though they may contain numerous errors, and even doctrines, which take away glory and honour from Allah, yet their basic foundation is truth. And we who worship here believe that no faith is more honouring to God than that which has for its watchword: *La illah il Allah, Muhammad rasoul Allah*.

A SHORT SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF THE HOLY PROPHET

By MUBASHIR H. KIDWAI

THERE exist at the present day many detailed and prolix narratives of the life of the Prophet Muhammad, but my present aim is to set before you, in as summary a form as possible, the main occurrences during his life. It is not that the other facts are uninteresting: not even the minutest

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details of the life of that great and noble man can be uninteresting to a Muslim audience ; but I have not enough time to dwell much on details.

It will be best, first of all, to give a rough sketch of Muhammad's person and character. There can be no mistake in this, for he is one of those few illustrious figures the minutest details of whose life are recorded in the pages of history and require no embellishment from the world of fiction and legend. We can almost see the man—healthy and sound, with broad shoulders, piercing eyes, and handsome features—walking humbly through the streets of his native city, indistinctively loved by innocent children, honoured and respected by his countrymen, from whom he earned at an early age the appellation of Al-Amin, the trusty.

Look at him again, a little ripened in years, disgusted at the moral degradation of his people, soaring above them in search of that Being Who cannot long remain hid, until finally the recluse of Hira has found the object of his soul's searching, and has become conscious of the Almighty. He is thus described by an eminent Christian historian : " Before he spoke the orator engaged on his side the affections of a public or a private audience. They applauded his commanding presence, his majestic aspect, his piercing eye, his gracious smile, his flowing beard, his countenance that painted every sensation of the soul, and his gesture that enforced each expression of the tongue. In the familiar offices of life he scrupulously adhered to the grave and ceremonious politeness of his country. . . . His memory was capacious and retentive ; his wit easy and social ; his imagination sublime ; his judgment clear, rapid and decisive. He possessed courage both of thought and action . . . and the first idea which he entertained of his Divine mission bears the stamp of an original and superior genius " (Gibbon).

But all at once we see this man, so respected before, bitterly persecuted by his countrymen until the time when truth has conquered falsehood. Even during the strain of persecution the amiable character and disposition of the Prophet remained unchanged. Lane-Poole describes him thus : " There is something so tender and withal so heroic about the man that one is in peril of finding his judgment unconsciously blinded by a feeling of reverence and well-nigh love that such a nature inspires. He who, standing alone, braved the hatred of his people, is the same who was never the first to withdraw his hand from another's clasp ; the beloved of children, who never passed a group of little ones without a smile from his wonderful eyes and a kind word for them, sounding all the kinder in his sweet-toned voice. The friendship, the noble generosity, the dauntless courage and the hope of the man all tend to melt criticism

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in admiration. He was an enthusiast, in the noblest sense, when enthusiasm is the salt of the earth, the one thing that keeps men from rotting whilst they live. . . . He was an enthusiast when enthusiasm was the one thing needed to set the world aflame, and his enthusiasm was noble for a noble cause. . . . He was the messenger of the One God, and never to his life's end did he forget who he was or the message which was the marrow of his being."

Let us now turn to another picture. Behold him the king of all Arabia, when the whole peninsula lies obedient at his feet. What is his behaviour? It is such as to put to shame not only kings, but even men who have not the temptation of kings. The Apostle of God submitted to the menial offices of the family: he swept the floor, kindled the fire, and with his own hands mended his shoes and clothes; and this, mark you, when hosts of believers waited about him to perform any little service which he required at their hands, and at a period when a foreign ambassador exclaimed on seeing him: "I have seen the Courts of Persia and Byzantium, but I have found no king so much honoured by his subjects as Muhammad by his disciples" (Gibbon).

His constancy and zealousness are manifested by the following incidents: Once, when the Kuraysh threatened the Bani Hashim, Abu Talib, alarmed at the prospect, urged his nephew to desist from preaching, and received this memorable answer: "Though they should array the sun against me on my right hand and the moon on my left to draw me from my undertaking, yet would I not do so until God shall carry it to a successful issue, or I give up my life for it" (Abulfida). Bribery proved no more successful. The Meccans sent one of their number to Muhammad, who thus addressed him: "If it be thy ambition to acquire wealth by this strange conduct, we will collect a fortune for thee that shall make thee richer than us all; if honours and dignity be what thou desirest, we will make thee our chief and obey thy commands." (And be it noted that the guardianship of the Ca'aba, which gave its holder the control of Mecca, was almost certain, had he not preached Islam, to fall to Muhammad's share on the death of Abu Talib.) The Prophet was not shaken for a moment by the temptation, but immediately replied by quoting the Quranic command to turn to God and ask forgiveness of Him.

The son of Aminah and Abdullah, of the noble family of the Koreish, was born at Mecca in the year 570 of the Christian era, a few months after his father's death. It is said that his mother had been instructed in a dream to name her son Muhammad—the praised. The infant was, according to custom, handed over to Halimah, a woman of the Bani Sa'd, who brought him up with great affection until he reached the age of five, and for whom he continued to cherish the

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greatest love and reverence even in the days of his supremacy. A year after being restored to his relatives he lost his mother, and the care of the little orphan devolved on his grandfather, Abdul Mottalib ; two years later he also died, and left the boy of eight in the guardianship of his son, Abu Talib. Thus Muhammad had but little experience of the blessings of parental love, and yet in after-years he constantly urged his disciples to the greatest filial piety, reminding them by one of his happy expressions that "Paradise lies at the feet of mothers." Even as a child he did not take much interest in frivolous pursuits, telling his comrades on one occasion that man is made for nobler things.

At the age of twelve he accompanied his uncle to Syria on his first journey, and thirteen years later he entered the service of Khadijah, the widowed daughter of Khuwaylid, of the house of Koreish, who was soon won over by his ability and charm of manner, and bestowed her hand on a poor youth fifteen years her junior. Her love for him grew every day, and he was no less devoted to her.

When only thirty-five years old he saved his country from the curse of civil war by his wisdom and resourcefulness over the troublesome question of the fixing of the black stone during the rebuilding of the Ca'aba. But with this exception his life, though spent usefully in such things as protecting the poor and helping the stranger, did not bring him into much prominence until he had reached the age of forty. It was then that the illiterate Prophet received the message in the Cave of Hira during the month of Ramadân : "Read in the name of thy Lord Who has created (all), created man from a clot of blood. Read ! for thy Lord is the most generous, who has taught men the use of the pen, and teachest man what he knew not."

When he had received his message he set his heart and soul to carry out the mission entrusted to him, and the world and its records bear witness to his success. In the words of Carlyle : "These Arabs, the man Muhammad, and that one century—is it not as if a spark had fallen, one spark on a world that seemed black, unnoticeable sand ; but lo ! the sand proves explosive powder, blazes heaven-high from Delhi to Granada !" His first conversions were those of his wife, his relatives, his servant, and his friends, and he won over Khadijah, Ali, Zaid, and Abubekr. The last mentioned, destined to be his successor, brought his wealth, moderation, and veracity to his support. Soon a dozen or more converts declared their adhesion. The faith of all these never wavered. Well may Ameer Ali argue that "If these men and women, noble, intelligent, and certainly not less educated than the fishermen of Galilee, had perceived the slightest sign of earthliness, deception, or want of faith in the teacher himself, Muhammad's hopes of moral regeneration

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and social reform would all have been dashed to pieces in a moment."

For the next few years Muhammad was subjected to constant insult by his fellow-citizens, and his handful of followers was tortured and persecuted, so much so that some of them had to fly to Abyssinia, and were followed even there, whilst those that remained, such as Bilal, were treated with the utmost barbarity. Even when in the greatest agony of pain and torture the one word that was heard from the lips of Bebel was "Ahadun, Ahadun."

The enmity of the Meccans continually increased, and Abu Jahal offered one hundred camels and a large sum of money for the head of the Prophet. Omar, afterwards the second Caliph, set out to kill Muhammad, armed with a naked sword, but he was converted by his sister before he could reach the Prophet's house. Hamzah, an uncle of the Prophet, followed Omar's example, and became, until his death at Ohud, one of the bulwarks of the Moslem army. The Kuraysh now began to realize that matters were getting serious for them, and so, after many futile threats, they placed the whole house of Hashim under a ban, forbidding all intercourse until it should surrender Muhammad. In spite of great sufferings the Hashimites persevered in their refusal to surrender their kinsman to certain death, and their constancy was rewarded after a period of three years by the removal of the ban. It was about this time that Muhammad was bereft of his powerful and generous protector and uncle, Abu Talib, and his beloved Khadijah, and finding his lot very bitter, he left his native city and went to Taif; but the inhabitants of this town treated him no better, and he had before long to leave it bruised and bleeding.

Mutim, one of those who had obtained the removal of the ban, took pity on the wanderer and brought him to Mecca under his protection. The idolators now forbade all to listen to his teachings, but such was the zeal of the converts that one of them, Abdullah by name, forced them to hear him in spite of the continuous blows which rained in upon him. In desperation the Meccans resolved to assassinate their uncorruptible opponent, and to divide the guilt each family was represented in the band formed to kill the Holy Prophet.

Meanwhile, in the course of two successive pilgrimages seventy-five Medinians had accepted Islam, and the Jews of Medina had begged for a teacher. This request was supported by the other people of that city, and their representatives offered the Baat at Akaba. When the Prophet heard of the situation at Mecca he set out for Medina, accompanied by Abubekr, while Ali took his place in the bed. The fugitives were pursued, and had to hide for three days in a cave, but with Divine help they at last reached their destination. Such is the Hegira, from which our era dates.

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At Medina, Muhammad was among friends, but his responsibilities had increased. He had to take up the sword to defend his fellow-citizens from the vengeance of Mecca. He repulsed the enemy's attacks, carried out social reform, established legal discipline, and began a fusion of clans at the same time as he preached the Unity of God, inculcated the principles of morality, and sent embassies to Syria, Egypt, Persia, Yemen, and Abyssinia, inviting all to embrace Islam. During this period the Prophet himself took part in nine battles and sieges, besides sending many expeditions. The first of these battles was fought in the first year of the Hegira in the fertile vale of Bedr, situated at a distance of three stages from Medina. The Muslims numbered 241 foot, 70 camelmén, and 2 horsemen, whilst the idolators amounted to 900 foot and 100 horse. Gibbon thus describes the battle: "His eye was fixed on the field of battle. The Mussulmans fainted and were pressed: in that decisive moment the Prophet rose from his place, mounted his horse, and cast a handful of sand into the air: 'Let their faces be covered with confusion.' Both armies heard the thunder of his voice: their fancy beheld the angelic warriors: the Koreish trembled and fled; seventy of the bravest were slain, and seventy captives adorned the first victory of the faithful."

The second battle, that of Ohud, soon followed. This place is situated only six miles from Medina; the proportion of Muslims to the Meccan host was the same as that at Bedr. This battle lasted long, and the fortunes of both sides wavered till at last the Kuraysh had to retire. The Prophet himself was wounded, and Hamzah and seventy other Muslims met their death. The next year Medina itself was besieged for twenty days, after which time the Meccan army, together with the confederates, was forced to retire, unable to check their invincible exile. There followed a busy time of internal reorganization, during which those who had proved traitors suffered a just measure of punishment.

In the sixth year of the Hegira the Prophet set out with many Moslems, unprepared for war, towards Mecca: "his march displayed the peaceful and solemn pomp of a pilgrimage"; but the Meccans refused him admittance, and by the Peace of Hodeiba he had to defer the completion of his pilgrimage until the next year. After this time Khalid and Amr both abandoned the sinking cause of idolatry, to start a career which added Syria and Egypt to the conquests of Islam.

About now a Muslim envoy sent to Heraclius, Emperor of Constantinople, was murdered by his officers, and so to avenge this outrage an expedition was sent against him. After a long battle at Muta, in which three leaders—Zeid,

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Jafear, and Abdullah—earned the crown of martyrdom, Khalid, “the sword of God,” retired in safety with the Muslim army before a superior number of Christians.

In the eighth year of the Hegira Muhammad returned with ten thousand followers to the city of his birth, which opened its gates without striking a blow. When the chiefs of the Kuraysh stood with bowed heads before the illustrious exile, he said: “What mercy can you expect from the man whom you have wronged?” “We confide in the generosity of our kinsman,” was the reply. “And you shall not confide in vain. Go! you are safe, you are free.” The idols of Mecca, however, did not escape: they perished ignominiously, and Ca’aba was once again dedicated, after centuries of pollution, to the worship of Allah, and once again the Prophet performed the rites of pilgrimage. The Thaquif now advanced to surprise the Moslems, but were met and defeated at Honain, and Taif itself was unsuccessfully besieged. No sooner, however, had the besiegers retired than the people of the city followed and offered unconditional surrender. Muhammad was now at the zenith of his temporal power, yet he despised the pomp of royalty. All Arabia lay prostrate at his feet, yet he chose those who had given him shelter in distress, and returned to his humble abode at Medina, and the people of that city were satisfied that they had the person of the Prophet and were content to allow others to take the gold.

The next year he paid another visit to Mecca, followed by 114,000 Moslems, and it was now that he issued his famous last injunction to his followers in these words: “O ye people! Harken unto my words! I know not if ever I shall speak to you here again. Your lives and your goods are sacred among you until the end of time. You must one day appear before Allah to give an account of your doings. Let every man be faithful. No more shall vengeance be allowed for bloodshed as in the days of your idolatry. Ye husbands, ye have rights, and ye wives, ye have rights. Husbands, love your wives and cherish them. You have taken them as your wives under the security of God. Treat them well. As to your servants—male and female—feed them with what you eat yourself, and clothe them with what you wear. If you cannot keep them, or they commit any fault, discharge them. They are God’s people like unto you, and you are to be kind to them. I leave unto you a law that shall always preserve you from error; a law clear and positive—a Book dictated from Heaven. Listen to my words and fix them in your minds. Verily all Muslims are brothers. They form one fraternity. Take not that which belongs to thy brother until he gives it to thee of his own free will. Beware of injustice and expropriation.”

He was in his sixty-third year, the tenth of the Hegira

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and the 632nd after Christ, when the end came and found him prepared with his mission accomplished. A little before his death he said : " If there is any man whom I have unjustly chastised, I submit my own back to the scourge ; if I have aspersed the character of any one, let him put me to shame in the presence of all. If I have taken what belongs to another, let him come forward and claim his own." Only one man appeared ; the money he claimed, three drachms of silver, was paid without question, and the creditor was thanked for reminding him of the debt in this world.

His last words after he had communed with God for some time with uplifted hands were : " O Allah ! be it so . . . among the blessed on high ! " And thus passed away the greatest benefactor of humanity and the final prophet, whose message was to all mankind. *Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi rajioon.*

THE BEST FRIEND OF HUMANITY

By MUHAMMED YAKOOB BABER, B.A.

Who can rightly be called the best friend of humanity ? Evidently one who should do the greatest good to humanity. He must bring to bear upon man all possible influences conducive to his general upliftment and progress, in every aspect of his life. He must enlighten man and provide him with ways and means to achieve an all-round good, noble and useful mode of life. In other words, I may say he must enable man to lead the happiest and most successful life.

The question naturally arises as to what interpretation should such a man put on the word " happiness " or " success," considering that there are so many conflicting views on the vexed point of human good obtaining in the world. With some, for instance, human good consists in no more than rescuing him from the iron grip of sin, an ingredient embedded in the very nature of man. Sin, according to this school of thought, is a part and parcel of man, bestowed upon him by Merciful Providence. The aim of his lifelong toils and labours should consequently be to attain what they term " salvation." But why on earth, I would ask, does it behove me to reject this favour of God ? The Almighty has gifted me with numerous blessings, such as power of speech, vision, hearing, etc. Would it be very seemly on my part to recompense Him by plucking out my tongue, eye or ear ? Why then should another similar part of my nature be got rid of ? Is not that equally a gift of God ?

" 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."

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An attempt to undo the effect of the sin in my nature would mean going against my nature. It is in the nature of water to flow towards declivity, and left to itself it cannot help doing so. How can I do otherwise and why should I? But the difficulty does not end here. The foundation being absurd, the superstructure must be no less so. If you say, "All right, tell me the method and I will try it," what is the remedy suggested? Have faith in the dogma that a certain person was sacrificed to atone for your sins and you are forthwith purified of all, past, present and future evils. What an absurd idea! Is it short of a death-blow to all morality?

Others there are who look upon the satisfaction of human reason or some other element of his nature as the end-all and be-all of life, to the neglect of hundred and one other aspects of his life. The best benefactor of humanity must at the very outset set up before man an ideal in harmony with the whole of his nature. What is the end pursued by other things in nature of which man is a part? The perfection of their latent capacities. An apple-seed, for instance, must grow up into a plant and bear proper fruit. This is the call of its nature, in responding to which consists the good of the seed. Why should man be an exception to the rest of nature? His good must also lie in the unfoldment, development and fruition of his dormant capacities. One who should undertake the work of human elevation must not omit to prescribe this as the highest good of human life.

At the same time he must not draw a dark and dismal picture of human nature, such as referred to above. It is a fact well known to all interested in the upbringing of children how seriously a depressing remark by the teacher tells upon the career of a student. Tell a boy, however intelligent he may be, that he is good for nothing, and you will find in the course of time that the poor fellow is nowhere in the class. Encourage a dullard, assure him that he can do better, and you will one day find him among the best of his class. It is a characteristic of human nature and cannot be gainsaid. Under depressing circumstances he tends to sink down, while in encouraging atmosphere he soars high. The best friend of man must consequently make it a point to draw a picture of his nature, hopeful, bright and endowed with vast capabilities. If sin is the inevitable lot of man, let him die with despair. He knows all his struggle to improve himself must be futile; why then should he bother about it? So it must be impressed upon him that he is gifted with mighty powers and is capable of accomplishing great deeds.

EXTENSIVENESS OF THE SPHERE OF ACTIVITIES.

Who does not know that the various latent capacities of man require a certain set of circumstances, particularly

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sued to their growth. To grow and develop, it is indispensable that a seedling should be sown, watered and tended in suitable conditions. Exactly in the same manner, certain opportunities must arise and man placed therein, in order that this or that power in his nature may come into play and thus evolve into an actual virtue. Unless one should have to face great hardships and trying difficulties it is next to impossible that he should cultivate the virtue of perseverance. The greater the number of situations one may have to meet, the greater the exercise of the various faculties. Cut off a man, for instance, from human society and you deprive him of a number of opportunities for the development of certain enviable virtues. The progress of man is co-extensive with the field of his activities. The wonders of modern science would not have seen the light of the day had not man poked his nose in the nature round about him. He brought such things as water, fire, air, etc., under his operation, and consequently so many vistas of learning and art have been opened. But they who worship the forces of nature and regard them with awe and reverence consider it blasphemous even to think of manipulating them. A horse, for instance, cannot serve me for riding if I attach some sanctity to it. But as soon as I bring them to a subordinate position as subservient to myself I set about utilizing them. The friend of mankind will therefore have to raise the sense of human dignity in man and extend the scope of his activities, with a view to affording him opportunities for the cultivation of his innate powers.

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS.

Having created a sense of greatness in man, having placed a right and lofty ideal before him, and having opened to him a vast field of opportunities for the actualization of his innate powers, the next duty that devolves upon the friend of man is to show him the straight path, treading along which he may win the crown of success. Which way to go and which to avoid must be definitely pointed out to him. Guidance to the right path is absolutely necessary to keep away from the numerous pitfalls and stumbling-blocks.

MODEL.

Model is nowadays considered as a most effective instrument of teaching. That example is better than precept is a matter of everyday experience. No matter how favourable the circumstance may be, human strength is sometimes not a match for the hardships of the journey and one has to yield to overwhelming obstacles. It is example that comes to his help at such a crisis. The sense that another has done so arouses enthusiasm. He takes

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heart on seeing the footsteps of his predecessor, girds up his loins and shoulders the wheel afresh. "What one man has done another can do" is a very encouraging thought. A schoolboy when set a hard feat in the drill period, does not much like the drill master's look at him. He thinks the feat is too hard for him. But when the instructor gives him a model, he feels encouraged. The impression of what he has to do, that was dim at first, grows clearer. One thing, however, must be borne in mind at this stage. A model serves its purpose only in the case when there is no great difference between the powers of the teachers and the taught. I see an eagle soaring in the clouds, but this does not inspire me to imitate it.

When, however, I behold a white man rambling in the skies in his aeroplane, I have a longing to do the same. In short, the capacities of both should be proportionate. Somebody with godly powers, though human, cannot be a source of inspiration to me. I feel that he is far superior to me. It is no humiliation to me if I cannot imitate him. When he is superhuman, why not his actions? His example is therefore no more stimulating to me than that of a horse in respect of swiftness. I am human, and as such must have a man for a model. The guide of mankind must therefore be no more than man.

In short, the one who combines in his person the following qualities among others is entitled to be called the best friend of humanity :—

1. He should draw a correct and encouraging picture of human nature.
2. He should set up an ideal before man in harmony with his nature.
3. He should extend the field of man's activities.
4. He should supply guidance.
5. He should present a practical illustration of what he teaches.

I am very little of a sentimentalist, and would not subscribe to a particular form of thought on the simple ground that I was so born. A rational being, I am free to think for myself and choose whatever form of belief should in my opinion promote human welfare. It is my birth-right. I will not forgo it, and nobody shall oppose me on that account. The world has seen many a reformer more or less up to the aforesaid standard. They were one and all a noble band, no doubt, and contributed their quota to the cause of human edification. There is not a nation but has had some such personage to guide and uplift it. But Providence, in His wisdom, so ordained that their teachings should not come down to us intact from the corrupting influences of time. As they are at present, they are destitute of their original purity and sublimity.

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Neither can we avail of a true picture of their lives. At any rate whatever light is thrown upon them, we glean therefrom that they had the good of their fellow-brethren at heart. I would therefore call them the friends of humanity. But there has been one, each and every incident of whose life shines in the pages of history, one whose teachings are intact to the very letter. I would like to subject him to the light of criticism, and see to what height he comes up according to the criterion set above.

First of all I will test the corner-stone of the building he has erected, i.e. the picture of human nature he draws. A fable correctly explains the situation. A young tiger was brought up among a fold of lambkins, and so considered himself as one of these meek creatures. But one day when he saw his reflection in a stream, he grew conscious of his nature and forthwith assumed a fiercer air characteristic of his race. He says that God has created man in the best possible make; that those who have faith and do good shall have unlimited success. What a sublime idea! He imposes no depressing limitations on human progress. He assures man of his unbounded capacities, and thus fills his bosom with aspirations to rise higher and higher. What an optimistic vein! It is no mean good to the human race to be convinced that it is capable of doing wonders. Nay! this benefactor of humanity goes further and does not content himself with saying that there is no evil in the nature of man, that it possesses vast virtues in a potential form. He gives a still more sublime view of this universe. He says there is evil in the whole of nature. Everything in nature is meant for the good of man, and if evil creeps in somewhere, it is due to the misuse of a particular thing by man. Water is a gift of God and a most precious one. But take too much of it and you convert the blessing into a curse. What a bright view of man and the nature in which he lives! Has he not brought paradise itself to the very door of man if only he would care to regard it as such.

2. The next point to be considered is what ideal he has placed before man. Is it worthy of man and suited to him? Yes! Perhaps the best ever conceived. Let the philosophers ranged in different camps on this very question knock their heads in vain against one another. This inspired philosopher settles the whole dispute at a single stroke. One single word, *falah*, sums up all that constitutes human good. What a comprehensive and pregnant term! It is a beauty on which the Arabic language may rightly pride that, when a certain word has two meanings, the common sense generally expresses a purpose and the derivation sense the means with which to achieve it. *Falah* is one of such words. It conveys in common parlance a sense akin to success, but higher and deeper. Its root

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meaning is the uncovering of hidden things. A farmer who furrows the soil and brings out to the surface what lies underneath is called a *falah*. A hunter who startles animals and turns them out of their hiding-places is also so called. Now this latter sense of the word is a means to achieve the end, i.e. success. In other words, success of man depends upon the unfoldment of all those capacities latent in his nature. Self-expression or self-realization, in short, is the success or good of man. It has already been pointed out that human nature is endowed with unlimited capacities. Hence the field for the actualization of these must also be unbounded. Let man struggle for self-upliftment, for the perfection of his dormant powers, he will never find his progress at a standstill. A boundless field for advancement! A sublime ideal! A comparative view of this and the salvation ideal may help to bring out the real dignity of the former. "Salvation" aims at coming out of the depth of degradation into which an angry deity has hurled down man, and the verge of the abyss is the highest point to attain. The self-realization ideal uplifts man to heights celestial, far above the clouds of mundane cares and worries. It takes for the starting-point what is the goal of "salvation" view. It enables man to achieve positive good and cultivate higher virtues, while salvation theory is content with something negative, i.e. getting rid of sin. This is a subject requiring separate treatment.

3. Now to turn to the third point, i.e. how far he has contributed to expand the field for human activities. Man's capacities being unlimited, the opportunities to bring them into play must also be so. The sphere of operation must be commensurate with his powers. He places the whole universe at his disposal. Everything on earth and in heaven is for the good of man. A time there was when people were given heart and soul to the worship of the various forces of nature. Sun, moon, stars, fire, air, and water worships, etc., prevailed among mankind. Could any progress in the domain of physical science be possible in such a case? Surely not. He eradicated all such false notions root and branch from human mind, and thus opened an unlimited field for the exercise and development of his unlimited capacities.

4. Let us, then, see if he satisfies the fourth condition. Human nature is so complex and complicated. The various laws necessary for its realization or expression cannot be thoroughly comprehended but by the author of the nature, who must be conversant with each and every part thereof. Does he satisfy this need? Yes! in the highest degree. He has brought us guidance and light, not of his own prescription but from the creator of our machinery. "This is the book which is plain, and guide of those who would

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guard against evil." "This is the book that leads from Darkness towards Light. This is the only book of its kind, preserved to this day in its pristine purity, beauty and sublimity. It is overflowing with the choicest pearls of deep philosophic and lofty moral ideas.

5. Last but not the least, our hero must present a practical illustration of his teachings to serve as a concrete model to the world in every walk of life. This is a crucial test for a human leader or reformer, but it is particularly here that our hero shines at his best, soaring far above the ordinary level. Pass as he did through innumerable phases of life, from a helpless orphan to a mighty monarch, placed as he was in trials and temptations, the various shades and colours of his character were so distinctly brought out. When I say that he was a perfect model for humanity, up to its needs in all walks of life, I am stating a bare fact. It is a subject that requires volumes to discuss. His versatile character was free from all blemishes and possessed of the highest forms of virtues. Tried and weighed at every step, he was never found wanting. I must not detain you to tell you that he was known as *Amin* among his people, even in his early life, for his scrupulous honesty and veracity, nor attempt to show how persevering, sympathetic, just, merciful and forbearing he was, or how he raised the status of woman. These and many besides are the virtues so prominent in his character that even the most hostile critic has to bow to their force. I will only sketch a few traits that have a bearing on the modern burning questions of civilization.

EQUALITY AND FRATERNITY OF MAN.

This was a striking feature of our hero's personality. To him there was no distinction between man and man on the silly ground of colour, creed or birth. He says the most respectable among you in the eyes of God is he who is the best in point of character. It was one of the main objects of his mission to establish universal brotherhood of man. The God he glorifies is not the God of his own clan or country. He is the Lord of the whole universe, of everything and of all people. Modern civilization, with all its boasts of moral force, justice and leagues of nations, can stand no comparison. If a prophet were raised among these civilized people of the twentieth century, I doubt whether he would condescend to extend the protection of his own God to the black people of the East. Perhaps he may allot us a separate "black" God. This may be the reason why the All-Wise deprived these races of the highest form of blessings, and never raised a prophet from among them, considering them to be unfit as the custodians of the interests of His teeming millions. Upright conduct is the only credential of respect-

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ability to him. He does not kick out the *kala log* to a separate third-class church. The low and the high, the poor and the rich, and above all the white and the black, are equal in his eyes. All must stand in the presence of their common Lord, shoulder to shoulder in the same line. Nay! he enjoins more than this: "Listen and obey, even if a negro with a head covered with abscesses is put in authority over you." He would say or do nothing that would give him an air of superiority over his fellow-men. With all the glory of a high character, and the dignity of one who commands the spiritual and temporal allegiance of thousands, he says, "I am no more than a man like yourselves." He is so simple in dress and demeanour that a stranger from the desert stands in need of inquiring, "Which of you is Muhammad?" He has not surrounded himself with the halo of authority and power to inspire and strike awe into the minds of people. To him there is no distinction between himself, his great follower, Umar, and a "despicable" Jew, so far as justice is concerned. He owes some debt to the Jew who makes the demand in an unbecoming manner by girding his turban round the Prophet's neck. Umar gets enraged at the impudence of the Jew, scolds him and asks permission if he should smite his head. What is the reply he gets? "Umar! that is not just. Why, instead of ill-treating the Jew you should advise me to repay the debt and the Jew to make his demand in a more generous manner." The Prophet plainly warns him that he must not violate the sacred right of man, a Jew though he may be. The Prophet makes no attempt to indemnify the mistake on the part of the mighty Umar. He disapproves of his ill-treating the Jew outright, because with him he is the creature of the same Lord Who sustains and nourishes all.

AS A VICTORIOUS GENERAL.

He does not draw the sword but as a last resort in self-defence. He observes all the chivalrous laws of warfare more humane and appropriate than could ever be imagined by the promoters of the Hague Conference. A stream of water flows from his camp towards his foe, but he strictly forbids to deprive them of the use of its water. He knows no blockades, nothing mean and underhand. When sole master of the land, he does not subject the people to hard martial laws as witnessed in the recent Great War, in Belgium and elsewhere; he does not make people "salute" him; he does not reduce man to the stage of a reptile by requiring him to "crawl on hands and knees"; he does not turn the non-believers, bag and baggage, out of their homes and hearths. He does not demand the extradition of the ringleaders to subject them to trial by a self-constituted jury. He submits no indemnity bills to the vanquished.

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He does not explain away the promises he ever held out during wartime, but makes them good to the letter. Those who never ceased torturing him for years together, when brought as prisoners of war before him, receive at his hand what they neither deserve nor expect. What is the treatment meted out to them? General amnesty. He imposes no hard conditions on the defeated foe such as would crush their power for all time to come and sap their energies. They enjoy perfect freedom of religion and have equal rights with the believers. Such was the Prophet of Arabia (may peace and the blessing of God be upon him).

He draws a bright picture of human nature to inspire confidence in man as to his ability to make unlimited progress. The ideal he places before them is in harmony with his nature and is indefinite. He gives him an unbounded universe teeming with opportunities to develop his capacities. He supplies him Guidance and Light, the most perfect ever conceived. Above all, he furnishes him with the best and the most perfect model in his own life. Is it not, therefore, meet to call him the best friend of humanity? Are not the words of the Holy Qur-ân quite justified when it says, "We have not sent you but a blessing to the whole world"? How aptly somebody depicts him in the couplet: "All the prophets are no doubt of natures pure, but Ahmad is the purest of them all."

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IN the following few lines I have attempted to set forth in briefest outlines some of the most salient features of Umar the Caliph's life as an emperor alone, various other interesting phases of his life having not been taken into consideration.

Umar, son of Khatab, came of a respectable family of Quraish. As a boy he was entrusted with the duty of tending camels, by all means an honourable occupation for an Arab boy! It may be noticed in passing that Umar's father was very harsh towards him. When Umar grew in years and was just fit to acquire all that was looked upon as essential for the right development and sound equipment of an Arab's life, an effort was made to provide all that was necessary for the unfolding and development of his potentialities. In short, before he grew up into a sturdy and rash Arab youth as he did, he was a poet, wrestler, soldier, speaker and a great master in the art of chronology. It is noticeable that this rash Arab youth, a future Caliph of Islam, was one of those seventeen literate persons whom Arabia could boast of.

Umar was twenty-seven years old when it pleased God to deliver to the world the Holy Qur-ân, His word of

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wisdom and guidance in its final perfect and most comprehensive form, quite in keeping with the demands and needs of a society on its way to a marvellous intellectual progress. Islam, like every new movement, met with stupendous opposition on its birth, chiefly because its teachings were antagonistic to the views and ways of thought in which the Arabs had so long indulged. Umar wielded a tremendous influence in society, and like all leaders he was dead against Islam. In Umar's unsparing opposition and subsequent submission to Islam the deep discerning eye witnesses the most artistic design of the Master Head. Is it not wonderful that this adversary of Islam lived to be the builder of that unique Muslim Empire, the springing up into existence of which within such a short space of time is nothing short of a miracle—a riddle in history which defies all solutions?

Umar had begun to tyrannize over the Muslims, but his giant force was met with a spirit of passive resistance. Finding his efforts always futile, he determined to stop the very spring of troubles by putting an end to the life of the Prophet. He set out from his home for Muhammad's (peace be upon him) place in order to test the sharpness of his sword as well as the strength of his arm. He met Nuim bin Abdullah on his way to the Prophet's place, who taunted him with not having at first reformed his own house, alluding to the fact that his sister had become Muslim. Umar retraces his steps, darts to his sister's house, and he is furious beyond all bounds when he hears his sister and his brother-in-law reciting the Holy Qur-án. A well-directed blow, and the door, purposely closed against obnoxious visitors of Umar's type, bursts off its hinges. Umar beats severely his brother-in-law and does not spare his sister even when she intervenes. Having beat them to his heart's content, he sits down and desires them to read out to him what they were reciting, and the following was read out to him:—

“O man, We have not revealed the Qur-án to you that you may be unsuccessful. Nay, it is a reminder to him who fears. A revelation from Him who created the Earth and the High Heaven” (chap. xx, section 1).

These words proved sufficient to transform Umar. He starts for Muhammad's (peace be upon him) place, and having arrived there, knocks at the door and with a sparkling sharp sword in his hand enters the room where comrades of Muhammad sat in despair. Muhammad (peace be upon him) with that prophetic confidence in the sacredness of his mission so characteristic of him, rises and having placed his hand on Umar's shoulders, inquires of him, “What brings you here, Umar?” Lo! one who comes to deprive the world of Muhammad's mission stands vanquished at his feet and the spell of the Prophet's penetrating words

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is a bit relaxed; the great soldier whose gigantic staff was a source of greater terror to the Arabs than the swords of many, utters in faltering accents, "The declaration of my conviction," and speaks out, "God, there is no God but He, and Muhammad is His messenger."

Thus it was how in a peaceful manner one of the deadliest foes of Islam was converted into the warmest friend, but for which accident, to all outward seeming, the History of Islam would have been a far different record.

Umar, after his conversion, becomes a devoted comrade of the Prophet, and has his life and all moulded under the instruction and influence of Muhammad till the Prophet breathes his last. After a reign, both spiritual and temporal, extending over a period of two years, Abu Bakr submits to the Lord's call, and finds a worthy successor in Umar.

European historians have tried to the best of their capacities to explain away the vast conquests of Umar, by saying that some of the kingdoms which he conquered were at that time tottering to their fall, and possessed no longer the heart and the means to repel any foreign invasion. It may be partially true in one or two cases at the most, but the real causes of the conquests are to be found elsewhere.

The Prophet, in fact, had infused into the hearts of the Muslims a fire of enthusiasm, determination, perseverance, and dauntless courage which, nourished under the fostering care of Umar, could barely find a rival, and for the greatest of Emperors to survive the strokes of those restless sons of the desert was an impossibility.

There were in addition other virtues in the Muslims which helped to keep under their sway the conquered emperors. It is not the dread of a superior up-to-date military equipment that can serve to keep a nation under another's subjection. These materials help to conquer a nation, but the keeping of it requires far different tools. On the other hand, it is the strength of a superior civilization in the conquerors above that does secretly and silently, yet most surely, compel the subject race to bear with love the yoke it is placed under.

The Muslims won from their subjects, in spite of different religious professions, a loving admiration for their sterling virtues and that contributed considerably to the tranquillity and stability of the Muslim rule.

The gradual evolution of the democratic form of government out of the despotic one is looked upon as a very great achievement of the modern times. Yet Umar has been rightly recognized to be the herald and perfecter of a sound democratic form of government.

People had the greatest share in the administration of the Emperor, and the Caliph was looked upon as an ordinary head of the people with no personal privilege.

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A Senate consisting of a number of capable representatives was created. The Senate held its sessions in mosques, where, after long deliberations and keen discussions, the affairs of the Empire were settled by a majority of votes. On some topics of common interest huge public meetings were convened in mosques, where every one present was allowed an expression of his view and matters were settled by consent of the majority.

The greatest blessing of democracy is a claim extended to all individuals and classes of defending their rights. Umar publicly announced in an assembly of his Governors and officials that they would be held responsible for any charges and complaints that may be received against them. Unlike modern times, permissions were never required, and if ever required could under no circumstances be denied to the deputations proceeding from the dominions to place before the Imperial Government of the Caliph the grievances and complaints of the subjects.

Umar ever greeted these deputations cheerfully. On a complaint being lodged in the Caliph's court against any official, without hesitations and half-measures public inquiry into the conduct of the official would be started. The inquiry commission held its sittings in mosques, and everything was conducted in the open, and no camera proceedings were allowed. Every one was entitled to appear as a witness, and mosques were chosen for the purposes of sittings of the inquiry commission, simply because of the idea of sanctity attached to them, for one finds it rather difficult to massacre his conscience in such a place. The official had to bear the consequence of his actions if found guilty.

Umar publicly declared in an assembly of his officials that they were responsible to him for any complaints that may be lodged against them. Governors and other officials were often appointed in consultation with the people, and sometimes the right of election was extended to the public and the imperial consent to the election was readily given. Governors and officials on appointment were made to make a solemn pledge as to their official conduct. They were not allowed to lead a life of official seclusion, which does so much to keep the poor aggrieved away from the exalted person of the ruler.

Umar's politics was diametrically opposed in spirit to politics of modern times. Shibli, the great modern Muslim historian, has so beautifully set forth the beauty of his statesmanship in the following words :—

“ From one end of Umar's kingdom right up to the other there reigned perfect peace and tranquillity coupled with prosperity and peaceful progress. Doubtless the world has seen other emperors as well whose reigns witnessed similar calm and quiet, but they were the apostles of a

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different politics. They set aside all consideration of even the most fundamental principles of justice on the least suspicion of a rising, arrested whole families for the crimes of individuals and administered savage punishments to political offenders."

Umar's politics, in spite of all the disadvantages of his situation, was of a vastly different type. Unlike modern statesmen, he never styled deception and trickery a diplomacy, and never interpreted the time-serving inventions and conventions as policy; the stress of circumstances never led him to make promises which in a more convenient hour he would seek to put an evasive interpretation upon; he never considered treaties as scraps of paper! His was not, in short, a politics of leagues and intrigues. His was an open public politics, binding alike upon the friend and the foe, the high and the low.

To be a governed nation has always been identified in history with the greatest of misfortunes and has always proved highly detrimental to the growth of national genius. It is most fortunate under these circumstances, then, to have tolerant and sympathetic rulers. On the other hand, a ruling nation's treatment of its subjects is the true index of its civilization. To look back in the story of nations for a more tolerant and loving treatment than one accorded by Umar to his non-Muslim subjects must be a despairing and disappointing attempt. Not only that; the standard-bearers of modern civilization even to-day have nothing to show to the world even by way of an approximation to it, in spite of all their unending claims of advancement and culture.

The life, religion, and property of the non-Muslim subjects were under the protection of the State. Muslims, the rulers, were prohibited from buying land from the non-Muslim subjects in order to secure their right in land, and land in a conquered country was, contrary to all modern usage, never declared State property.

The best of all rights to be granted to a subject race is the right of having a voice in the administration of the country they belong to, which, in popular terms, is known as self-government. This privilege Umar, that magnanimous friend of humanity, that saintly Emperor, extended to his non-Muslim subjects without their having asked for it. Nothing concerning the non-Muslim subject was ever settled without their previous consultation and consent.

Rising of a subject race against the authority of the ruling nation, whether open or a secret attempt, even the most unfounded suspicion of it paralyzes the modern statesman's sense of obligation to humanity and makes him forget the sanctity, dignity and beauty of human life.

Maulana Shibli, the great Muslim historian, has very

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beautifully painted this state of affairs. "It is remarkable," he says, "that if ever the non-Muslim subjects began to spread sedition or anarchy or rose in rebellion against the Government, very considerable leniency was extended to them in handling the situation. The modern civilized nations, so highly boastful of their progress and culture, on the least grounds for a suspicion of a political stir in their subjects, set at defiance all claims of kindness and sympathy, and this suspicion, justified by consequent events or not, wreaks such a cruel, inhuman and beastish vengeance as behoves not even the most savage of races."

Syria falls and the sceptre of sovereignty passes to the hands of the Muslim. A certain section of inhabitants of a town, Aurbox, keep on secretly sending information with a view to invite their help against the Muslim Government. Interpreted in the modern exalted language of law, they were in league with His Majesty the Caliph's enemies. Umar is informed of the state of affairs. He issues a royal warning to the inhabitants of the town in the following terms :—

"Whereas We have sufficient reasons to believe that certain inhabitants of . . . in Syria, are carrying on a seditious propaganda against our Government ; therefore we are hereby pleased to order that these people should abstain from sending or causing to be sent any information with regard to the state of affairs in Syria to any neighbouring State. Their conduct shall be closely watched for one year, after which period, in case they neglect the warning, most drastic measures will be taken against them." The warning goes unheeded, and then is the time to take the most drastic step. Umar, that saintly Emperor, possessed of a prophetic patience and sympathy, after a year's warning and indulgence, condemns them to transportation for life and forfeiture of property. This is how he explains his transportation for life and forfeiture of property. The order to his Governor was as follows : "Confiscate their lands, property, goods and cattle, put them to public auction and pay them double the price they fetch, and ask them to shift out of my kingdom to whatsoever place they will."

Hardly any justice can be done to Umar as an administrator in the course of such a short article, still we cannot totally ignore him in this aspect as well.

He is looked upon as the pioneer of a well-organized Revenue System in Arabia. It brought to the State Treasury the greatest net revenue ever received by a Muslim State on the one hand, and was in the point of lightness approved of even by the non-Muslim subjects on the other hand. The establishment of Public Works is looked upon by many as an affair of recent growth. But it has been recorded to Umar's credit the establishment of the depart-

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ment. Roads, canals, tanks and agriculture were all carefully looked after by the State. In Egypt alone one hundred and twenty thousand labourers worked the whole year round in constructing canals.

Public buildings, courts, treasury houses, prisons, rest houses for the travellers were all under the State management. Census Department too was established by Umar.

There were orphanages established to look after the orphans. Stipends were granted to children from the State Treasury, as would be the case under a Socialistic regime.

There was a well-managed Famine Relief Department for administration of relief during the outbreak of a famine.

Courts for securing justice were opened in mosques, to afford an easy access to all. There were no stamp fees, and the judges were directed to speak to the poor in a cheerful and encouraging way so as to avoid the awe of the court affecting the free expressing of their cause.

In glaring contrast with the modern methods, he appointed spies to watch the doings of his officials and not of his subjects.

"Ignorance of law is no excuse for crime" is the essence of the attitude of the modern civilized Governments towards the action of individual. But there exist no arrangements to make the laws of the realm known to all, whereas all, with all the disadvantages of their situations in life, are expected to know the laws of the State. The department for the spread of the laws of the realm worked at its full strength in Umar's days, and every citizen could consult free of charge on legal points the great Doctors of Law appointed for the purpose.

Umar's reforms in the military and the police stand in need of a special treatment in a separate article, and may therefore be omitted in any article of this description.

Justice, unsparing and uninfluenced by the dignity and rank in life of the offender, was the secret of Umar's success as an Emperor. His own Abu Shama drinks wine. He whips him publicly as the law requires, and the young man dies of the punishment.

Jablah, King of Syria, a fresh convert to Islam, comes to a pilgrimage, and on finding the skirts of his cloak trampled upon by a poor fellow-Muslim he administers a heavy slap on his face. The matter is referred to Umar, and this matchless Emperor, who gave to the world liberty, equality and fraternity without a revolution, says to the King of Syria, "Apologize to him or be prepared for the penalty." "If such a poor and mean fellow were to display even indifference, much less that unpardonable rudeness, towards a king he is punishable with death even," observes Jablah. "Doubtless such was the case," speaks out the magnificent

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Emperor, whose beauty and glory lay in his justice and service to humanity, "in the pre-Islamic days, but Islam makes no distinction between the high and the low." On Jablah's request some time is granted him to consider his choice between the two alternatives offered. In the veil of night Jablah, denouncing Islam in the words, "Farewell to an Islam that fails to find the difference between a mean beggar and a mighty king," rode away and thus paid the greatest compliment to Islam.

UMAR'S SENSE OF IMPARTIALITY AND EQUALITY.

A suit is filed against the great Caliph in the court of a Kazi. He is summoned and presents himself in the court along with his plaintiff. The judge pays him his respects and offers him a seat, and how beautifully the mighty Umar admonishes the judge in the words, "This is the first wrong you have done me," and takes his seat by the side of the plaintiff. Now the plaintiff wants the great Emperor to make his statements on oath, and the judge rightly wants to spare the Emperor the indignity of such a process.

Here Umar exclaims again, "That is the second wrong you have done me, and unless Umar, the great Emperor, and the common street beggar be equal at your bar you do not deserve to be a judge."

Umar takes his stand upon the pulpit to address a congregation and begins with the words, "Will you act up to what I say?" From amongst the congregation stands up an uncouth Arab with all the coarseness of his manners about him and gives him a positive "No," adding, "We find some traces of corruption about you. Your cloak evidently is made up of two sheets of cloth, whereas by right you were given only one out of the bounty." This makes the great Emperor quit the pulpit and take his stand on the same level with the congregation. Umar calls upon his son to explain to the congregation the mystery of the matter, and when a satisfactory explanation has been forwarded to the assembly the same Arab stands once again and says, "Come on, Umar, take your stand on the pulpit and we will act up to what you say."

One does not know whether to admire more the great Emperor for his keen sense of justice and impartiality or the rustic Arab for his dauntless spirit of democracy. History, some say, repeats itself, yet it stands a fact unchallenged that the world has produced neither an emperor of Umar's vision nor a man of the Arab's type.

He was a man of a tremendously high sense of duty. In the scorching midday sun a party of Arabs see at a distance a person coming towards them with a camel following him at his heels. When the person approaches

UMAR, A SAINTLY EMPEROR

the party he is recognized to be Umar the Caliph. One of the party remarks, "Whence do you come, sir? This is not the time to stir out; life is not safe under the burning sun." "Yes," says the Caliph, "but the Bait-ul-Mal camel was lost." "You could ask your servant to fetch it." "But if the severity of the season made him evade or avoid it and the Bait-ul-Mal camel were to be found no more, the guilt of it must have rested on Umar's shoulders," calmly remarks the Caliph.

It is highly interesting to notice this great Caliph in his daily life. Just in the morning he is seen sitting on the threshold of a house writing letters from inmates to friends and relatives on active service. After a short time you see the same man, distinguishable for his gigantic height, purchasing foodstuffs for families which could not afford to engage servants. A moment later the mighty Caliph, the mere mention of whose name is sufficient to make many an emperor tremble on his throne, may be seen working as a water-carrier for the sake of widows that need help. Some time after the first meals you see the mighty Caliph putting on a shirt darned with a dozen patches, loose hanging turban, wearing a pair of shoes distorted out of long service, stepping into a mosque where he finds envoys from mighty kings awaiting the imperial arrival. He opens negotiations with them, sends directions and orders to his generals fighting in distant lands, orders the dismissal of tried commanders without the least uneasiness whenever he thinks it necessary. After prayers you find him waiting in the mosque for some aggrieved person to demand justice at his hands. Some time after that the mighty Caliph, after hard work, may be seen taking his rest in a quiet corner of the mosque. In night, under a disguise, the same man is seen serving as a watch-keeper for the protection of a band of travellers that had arrived late in the evening.

Umar grew to be what he was simply for his having sat long at the great Master Muhammad's feet. In Umar's contact with Muhammad the world has seen an unparalleled transformation by contact, and it leads us to divine the depth of the Master's mind that moulded and transformed Umar into a picturesque personage in history.

Saddi, that famous philosopher of Persia, has a beautiful short poem, and the simile has never appeared to me so apt as in the present case.

The short, beautiful poem may be offered in the following reading, although an attempt would amount to a corruption of the original:—

"A clod of fragrant clay from my friend
Did I once receive;
Thy bewitching fragrance has intoxicated me.
Said I thou art amber or musk I conceive,

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Long with sweet roses have I lived,
From them this scent I did achieve.
Otherwise it said, I am the common clay,
That you best can perceive."

Muhammad—who transformed a reckless and rash Arab youth, as undoubtedly Umar before his conversion was, into a unique merciful commander, a pious ambitious conqueror, a great political philosopher, a man of an uncommon intellectual calibre, a selfless saintly Emperor, and who made him for the high and the low a great leveller; in the cause of humanity a great worker and a loving and a forgiving master—for this one gift to humanity surely so richly deserves the description so graciously bestowed upon him by God Himself in the words, "We have not sent thee but as a blessing unto the world."

Muhammad's transformation of Umar is to the writer's mind one of the greatest miracles that a prophet had ever worked.

Surely any one who observes the situation to-day in a spirit of meditation and sympathy feels all the more keenly that the world to-day stands in need of a political philosopher and reformer of Umar's type, whose strong and yet sincere and just hand would serve to still the storms of racial hatred and stop the stupendous strife of struggling nations; whose justice and equality would serve as a sure balm to the sore and sorrow-smitten heart of man, who would make the world realize that the service of humanity and happiness and prosperity of the people, and not superior military strength, is the pride of emperors, who, guided by his rare skill as a political sailor, would steer clear of all whirlpools the barge of human destinies to-day tossing on uncertain seas, and who would thus convert the short span of life granted to man into a pleasant and peaceful voyage towards that beautiful unseen land, where, let us hope, God in His mercy stands eager to embrace us all in His love.

SH. ATA-ULLAH.