

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

### THE BIRTH OF ISLAM THE PREACHING AND THE PERSECUTION

#### IV

THE grief and anxiety caused to the Holy Prophet by the sufferings and persecutions of his followers was, however, far greater than that caused by his own sufferings which he bore willingly and patiently, because he knew that the regeneration of the world could only be brought about by his sufferings. But the sufferings of his followers, especially of those belonging to the middle and lower ranks of society, were unbearable. They were subjected to all sorts of cruelties, and the most excruciating tortures were inflicted on them. The persecutions of women were simply horrible. One woman was put to death by her two legs being tied to the legs of two camels, which were then made to run in opposite directions. Slaves were made to lie naked on burning stones under the scorching heat of a tropical sun, and to this was added the further cruelty of whipping them. Even a stranger's heart would have melted at these sights, to say nothing of the Holy Prophet, who loved them as if they were his own children. It was on account of these cruel persecutions that he advised them twice to leave their homes and seek shelter in a foreign country or in some distant place, and chose to remain alone or with but very few followers in the midst of his enemies to carry on the work with which God had entrusted him. Thus he tried to lessen their sufferings, never caring for his own, which were enhanced by the whole force of persecution being turned against him in the absence of his followers. What a noble heart and what a sympathetic soul! History fails to present to us another such man.

I have not yet mentioned the great grief which gnawed the Holy Prophet's soul, in comparison with which sufferings and persecutions were nothing. It was the hardness and stubbornness of the people which grieved him most. His great concern for the unbelievers is several times referred to in the Holy Qur-ân in pathetic words. Thus in the chapter entitled "Poets," revealed at Mecca, it is said: "Perhaps you will kill yourself with grief because they do not believe. If We please We should send down upon them a sign from the heavens so that their necks should stoop to it" (xxvi. 3, 4). He was so eager for the conversion of the unbelievers that when they refused to forsake their evil ways and superstitions and to walk in the path of righteousness pointed out to them by him, his grief knew no bounds, and so great was it that it could have brought about the death of the Holy Prophet had it not been for the living assurance given to him by Almighty

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God that the time was coming when they would all humbly bow before Islam. This assurance is contained in the very next verse, where Almighty God tells the Holy Prophet that it has been the Divine law from the beginning that His messengers have been first treated as liars and then He has sent the powerful sign of punishment which has made the unbelievers bow their necks before the heavenly sign. Thus, the Holy Prophet is assured, it would be in the case of the unbelievers and, therefore, he should not feel despondent that his mission would be a failure, for the time must come when they would humbly accept him as their master. This was what happened about some 15 years later when the whole of the Quraish, in true humility, joined the ranks of Islam. Elsewhere the Holy Qur-án says, and this, too, when the Holy Prophet was at Mecca, when all circumstances still pointed to a failure of the Prophet's mission: "Then maybe you will kill yourself with grief, sorrowing after them if they do not believe in this announcement" (xviii. 6).

Not only various other verses in the Holy Qur-án show the Holy Prophet's extreme sorrow and grieving for the unbelievers, but his whole conduct throughout his ministry shows the same. Being very severely persecuted, he prayed to God: "O, my Lord! pardon my people, for they are ignorant." It is a well-known fact that the Holy Prophet used to pray after midnight till morning. In these prayers he used to lie prostrate for hours. Often would he go out in the dark of midnight to solitary places and there cry aloud before his Master. In one of the earliest revelations, the Holy Qur-án thus refers to it: "O you who have wrapped up yourself! Rise to pray in the night except a little" (lxxiii. 1, 2). And further on in the same chapter: "Surely your Lord knows that you pass in prayer nearly two-thirds of the night, and sometimes half of it and sometimes a third of it" (v. 20). This praying in the night was, as stated in these verses, in connection with the regeneration of mankind.

The deep yearning of the Holy Prophet's soul was to bring about a transformation in Arabia in the first place and in the whole of the world then, and it was this thirst of the soul which kept him waking for whole nights down on his knees before Almighty God, praying in words which came from the inmost of his heart that the prevailing ignorance and evils may give place to light and righteousness. These heartfelt prayers took him to solitary places in the silent darkness of night and made him brave every danger. This deep thirst of his soul to raise mankind to a better moral and spiritual condition, began to show its effect before he received the Divine revelation which imposed upon him the duty of messengership. He used to go, before he was

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called upon to warn people, to Hira, a cave about three miles from Mecca, and there passed days and weeks in prayers to God. Thither he bore some bread and water for his sustenance for the time that he was to remain there. It was a dreary cave where no human being was by, and there, in utter solitude, he opened his heart before God, praying for the regeneration of his people. Great was his anxiety for the betterment of his people, many the cries which he uttered for their sake in the solitude of midnight while they sat revelling in orgies, and hence great were the consequences which he brought about. Hence he is called in the Holy Qur-án "a mercy for the whole mankind." In the life of Jesus, the only record of long night prayers is that immediately prior to his arrest, and so far as the record goes, this prayer was only for his own safety, for the passing away of the cup. But in the case of the Holy Prophet there is a record of long night prayers for at least twenty-three years, and all these not for his own safety, but for the welfare of mankind. Hence the great difference between the transformations brought about by these two prophets. Who can fathom the deep sympathetic affection of the noble soul praying to God for hours and hours for the welfare of his own ungrateful persecutors! This is what none but a prophet can do. Greater persecutors of the Holy Prophet than the unbelievers of Mecca are the Christians of our own times, for they most ungratefully slight his valuable services in the cause of truth and humanity and heap all sorts of abusive names upon him.

The steadfastness and patience and the marvel of faith displayed by the Holy Prophet during the long struggle which began and ended only with his ministry, is not only unparalleled in profane history, as Muir admits, but even sacred history fails to afford an instance of it. Perseverance and faithfulness are no doubt admirable qualities in a man, but in the Prophet of God there is something besides which transcends the mere suffering of persecutions. He not only suffered the severest persecutions and trials with true apostolic patience, but what is nobler still, his hope and faith in the final triumph of his cause remained as firm and as unwavering as ever. Rejected by all but a few who were themselves driven from their homes, meeting failures and reverses on all sides, subjected to persecutions, threatened with death and destruction, laden with grief for the evil ways and anxiety for the reform of his people, surrounded by enemies on all sides, he still had the same sublime trust in the future, the same high confidence in his ultimate success. The torch of hope kept burning within him, notwithstanding the mighty tempests of trials, persecutions and hardships. Elijah too, whose faith and perseverance are considered by Muir to be equal to the faith and perseverance shown by

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the Holy Prophet, suffered persecutions; and he is no doubt a type of the suffering prophets of Israel, but the lofty trust in God which we witness in the life of the Holy Prophet is wanting in the case of Elijah. Unable to bear persecutions and meet failures, he "went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers" (I Kings xix. 4). Contrast with Elijah under the juniper tree in a wilderness praying for death because he could not bear the persecutions of his enemies, the Holy Prophet under the palm tree in the wilderness when rejected by the *Saqif* and bleeding with wounds, he poured forth his complaint to God. After ten years of cruel persecution and rejection, he did not, like Elijah, request that he might be brought to an end, but still showed his willingness to bear persecutions so long as it pleased God, and his confidence that he would not die in hopelessness and that his cause would ultimately be a success. Even Jesus Christ gave way to despair, so the Gospels would have us believe, when he cried out, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani," but never did such an idea cross the Holy Prophet's mind, though he passed through harder trials and witnessed more critical moments in his life.

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LECTURE BY KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN, AT UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE, CALCUTTA; HON. JUSTICE CHAUDHRI, JUDGE OF CALCUTTA HIGH COURT, IN THE CHAIR.

If progress and upliftment from the lower to the higher order may rightly be called as the main object for which religion was given to man, there seems to exist hardly anything in Nature which is without the same. Look to the open book of Nature, the same story of progress and unfoldment is written on its every page in bold letters. Everything in the universe is on its way to sublimation. "From the seedling to the mighty oak, from a sea-shell to a cathedral," and from a genital seed to a full-grown man, progress and development is the order in the universe with no retrogression, no retracement of steps once taken, and no transmigration to lower stages.

The same phenomenon is observable in the whole course of evolution. From ethereal specks to the highest evolution of the matter in human frame, everything, no matter how insignificant in its position in the world, contains certain potentialities which by gradual development come to their full actualization. Everything seems to know the shape

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it has to assume, the material, its quality and measure it has to use, and the way it has to pursue in order to reach its goal. The course in fact has already been chalked out by some mighty Intelligence, and the various elements that have to convert themselves in the long run into different manifestations simply follow it with implicit obedience. The phenomenon has so beautifully been referred to in the following verses of the Holy Qur-án :—

“ *Rabbonallazi a'atá kulla shai-in khalqahoo summa hadá* ” :  
—“ Our Lord and Creator is He, Who granted everything its shape and measure, and then guided it on its way to perfection.”

Is this progress and the course of evolution, pursued by elements, only an accident and a freak of empiric Nature ? The whole working of Nature gives the lie to such a conclusion. Every atom in Nature seems to have been enchaind by the Law. The course which it pursues, the shape it assumes, and the matter which it uses in its build, are all pre-arranged and pre-ordained. We once believed in elements as the first entity, but they were discovered to be a subsequent collocation of atoms, which in their turn were traced to electrons, and now we have gone to ethereal specks as the first discovered cause of the whole universe. Even there, in the ethereal world, the government of the law has been discovered to move the whole machinery of evolution. All kinds of specialization in any order, electronic, atomic or elemental, follow the dictates of the law. Innumerable laws have recently come within scientific ken, which play their respective parts in Nature in her different kingdoms. One may sum them up into three main classes. Things become created, they receive their nourishment for their maintenance, they go on unfolding various qualities inherent in them until they reach their perfection. The law of creation, the law of nourishment and maintenance, and the law of evolution hold their absolute control everywhere, and receive unqualified and complete allegiance from the matter in all its shapes. This establishes precedence of the law over the matter. And if the law existed before the matter, pre-existence of Intelligence over, as well as its existence apart from, the matter becomes an undeniable truth. Matter, therefore, is neither self-created nor a self-existent entity, but a docile and submissive child of the Intelligence who as the Author of the said three laws, can rightly be styled Creator, Nourisher, Maintainer and Evolver. These four attributes of the First Intelligent Cause come within the meanings of an Arabic word “ *Rabb*.” To this truth the Qur-án refers in the following words : “ *Ela Rabbe-kal-muntahá* ” (wherever you may go) “ you will find your Rabb at the termination.” Our researches may reach any side of evolution, we will

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find everything under the government of Rabb—the Creator, the Maintainer and the Evolver.

Now to my subject. If everything in Nature possesses certain inherent qualities and its whole course of existence is to work out its nature, which it accomplishes through strict observance of pre-existing laws, it is not difficult to read and formulate "Religion of Nature." It is "Religion of Obedience" which every manifestation of Nature follows to work out its very nature. Islam literally means obedience, and whoever obeys Divine laws has been styled Muslim in the Qur-án: "And they seek religion besides religion of Allah, while everything in heavens and on earth, willingly or unwillingly, is Muslim, i.e. obedient to Him." In these words the Holy Qur-án brings home to its readers the truth and necessity of Islam to mankind. "Religion of commandment and obedience" is the religion of Nature, which governs everything coming out of Nature. Look to the whole solar system; how obedient and Muslim to the laws of God is its each and every member. The sun, the moon, the stars, the planets, each and every one in the system have their prescribed spheres. They never exhibit inclination to trespass:

"And a sign to them is the night: We draw forth from it the day, then lo! they are in the dark; and the sun runs on to a term appointed for it; that is the ordinance of the Mighty, the Knowing. And (as for) the moon, We have ordained for it stages till it becomes again as an old dry palm branch. Neither is it allowable to the sun that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day; and all float on in a sphere" (the Holy Qur-án, xxxvi. 37-40).

So empiric and inexorable is the government of the Law in the whole universe that even an intelligent being like man cannot utilize anything in it without paying full respect to the said régime. A simple thing like the raising of a crop needs observance of certain prescribed courses. We have to break the earth, to till the ground, to put in the seed, to manure the land, and to get it irrigated—everything in obedience to prescribed ways—transgression from which, no matter of howsoever the least magnitude, is not acceptable and would entail loss. "And they wish to pursue a course other than Islam—obedience to the Law—it will not be accepted and they will be the losers in the long run" (the Qur-án). Name any branch of your activities, think of any action on your part where you can dispense with the truth so lucidly enunciated in the Book of Islam, without suffering any loss. No, you cannot pursue any course but that of Islam in your doings. Has not Nature given you unchangeable rules and regulations even for such a simple thing like eating and drinking? Will

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you satisfy hunger by putting morsels into your ears? Can you see me by closing your eyes and opening your mouth? Please, put your fingers into your ears and keep your mouth ajar, will you be able to give audience to my utterances? Your action would be un-Muslim-like, something unwarranted under the dictates of Nature; it will not be acceptable, as the Qur-ánic words quoted above said, and you will be the loser in the long run.

All our progress and civilization, so much contributing to our comfort, are only fruits of our discoveries in the scientific realm. It was an impossibility if Islam were not the course pursued by Nature. Everything is bound by the law. They follow it and exhibit their various properties in obedience to it. Scientific researches simply go to discover such laws as govern components of Nature when exhibiting their inherent properties. Our different "ologies" are our various discoveries of the Law receiving submission from various things in heaven and earth.

Is it now difficult for you to discover your own Religion; are you not part and parcel of Nature? Does not every atom in Nature find its exhibition in your very body? Man has rightly been called the microcosm of the whole world by Muslim divines. All the members of the solar system and every product of the earth have found their room in your frame, as expounded by the Qur-án, some thirteen hundred years ago, and now established by science. If you possess such universally representative character of the cosmos, how can you afford to follow a religion other than what is observed by everything in you? And it is Islam. Like every other thing in the universe, the object of your religion ought to be to work out your own nature. As the Qur-án puts it—"And put your face to the straight religion—nature of Allah, the very nature on which man has been created by Him, no change in the creation of Allah, this is the right Religion." In these sacred words you have been given the object of your religion. Study your own nature, find out its capabilities, and follow such laws as may bring them to actuality, and you have discovered your religion. "Islam (obedience to Divine Laws) is the religion with God" (the Qur-án). Revelation comes to provide us with laws from the One who has created our nature. He only knows the ways and circumstances under which our nature has to evolve to its perfection. Muslim-like, we have to give complete submission to Divine Will, and we have fulfilled our religion.

But here we meet a new line of argument, a theology quite distinct from what has been taught by every other religious teacher, including Jesus, in the world; I mean the one emanating from the Church that got its structure from St. Paul. We are told that human nature became corrupt

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at the very outset on account of something that occurred in the garden of Eden. Our first parents violated the very first law given to them by the Creator. Human nature became tainted and sin came to us in heritage. We come with sin into this world and are therefore incapable of observing the law. We cannot by nature, therefore, the Church says, follow Islam—the Religion of obedience and commandment. What a degraded view of humanity and low estimate of ourselves! We believe every dumb and inanimate thing besides us to be perfect in its very nature, we believe everything in lower orders to be capable of observing the law, but when these different things find their place in human frame, the best handiwork of God, then we are told to believe, they lose their otherwise unchangeable character—a thing so absurd on its very face. If elements remain unchangeable in their nature and the accident of transformation and shape cannot affect it, they certainly cannot lose this quality when sublimated to the human body.

*(To be continued.)*

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

*(Continued from April number.)*

### II

Amongst primitive peoples there exists a firmly-seated conviction that the name of a person is an integral part of such individual, and that to reveal it is to place the owner thereof in the power of the person who has thus obtained knowledge of his name.

“The aversion which the savage has to telling his own name, or uttering that of any person (especially of the dead) or thing feared by him is concerned, the reason is not far to seek. It lies in that confusion between names and things which marks all primitive thinking. The savage who shrinks from having his likeness taken in the fear that a part of himself is being carried away thereby, regards his name as something through which he may be harmed, so he will use all sorts of round-about phrases to avoid saying it, and even change it that he may elude his foes, and puzzle or cheat Death when he comes to look at him.”<sup>1</sup>

It is this confusion between the objective and the subjective, between things and the symbols thereof, that gives rise to the idea that the name of a man is an integral part of himself, and that to reveal it is to put the owner in the

<sup>1</sup> Edmund Clodd, *Myths and Dreams*, p. 104.



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power of the one who has learned his secret. A North American Indian asked Kane whether his desire to ascertain his name arose from a wish to purloin it; the Araucanians would not permit their names to be told to strangers, lest they should be used in sorcery and enchantments. So with the Indians of British Colombia; and among the Ojibways husbands and wives never told each other's names, the children being expressly warned against repeating their own names lest they should cease growing. The Abipones of Paraguay had a similar superstition.<sup>1</sup> They would knock at the door of Dobrizhoffer's house at night and when asked who was there, would not reply for fear that if they uttered their own name some dreadful calamity would ensue to them.

The Indians of British Guinea, according to Mr. im Thurn, have an intricate system of names, but it is "of little use, in that owners have a very strong objection to telling or using them, apparently on the ground that the name is part of the man, and that he who knows it has part of the owner of that name in his power." In Borneo the name of a sickly child is changed, to deceive the malignant and evil spirits that have tormented it; the Laplanders change the baptismal name of a child for the same reason, and among the Fuegians, the Lenguas of Brazil, the Abipones, the Indians of the north-west of America, and other tribes of a corresponding level of intelligence, when any member died the relatives would change their names in order to elude Death when he should come to look for them, and they also were in the habit of giving their children horrible names in order to frighten away the evil spirits. Throughout the entire barbaric world we find a great dread of uttering the name of a dead person, lest by mentioning such name the owner thereof should think he was summoned to return to the earth, and his ghost would appear to the person who had uttered his name; some peoples add that when the ghost of the departed person thus appeared, on finding that there was no pressing necessity for his return from the land of shades, and that his name had been uttered carelessly, he would become exceedingly angry at being thus disturbed in his rest and brought back to the earth, and would revenge himself by doing some injury to the individual who had, by his utterance of his name, occasioned the ghost to perform a useless journey. An aged Indian of the Lake Michigan district explained why tales of the spirits were only told during the winter, by saying that when the deep snow lay on the ground the voices of those repeating their names are muffled; whereas in summer the slightest mention of them must be carefully avoided, lest the spirits be offended. Can it be that the custom in England of telling ghost stories only at winter time arises originally from the same cause?

<sup>1</sup> Dobrizhoffer.

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Among the native tribes of California the name of the departed when spoken inadvertently caused a shudder to pass over all those present. Among the Iroquis the name of a deceased person could not be used again in the lifetime of his eldest surviving son without the consent of the latter, and the Australian aborigines believe that a dead man's ghost creeps into the liver of the impious wretch who has had the temerity to utter his name. Dr. Lang relates how he endeavoured to obtain the name of a relative who had been killed, from an Australian. "He told me who the lad's father was, who was his brother, what he was like, how he walked, how he held his tomahawk in his left hand instead of his right, and who were his companions, but the dreaded name never escaped his lips, and I believe no promises or threats could have induced him to utter it." Dorman gives a touching and pathetic illustration of this belief in the quaint story of Yellow Sky, in *Shawnee Folk-lore*. "She was a daughter of the Shawnee tribe, and had dreams wherein she was told that she was created for an unheard-of mission. There was a mystery about her being, and none could comprehend the meaning of her evening songs. The paths leading to her father's lodge were more beaten than those to any other. On one condition alone, at last, she consented to become a wife, namely that he who wedded her should never mention her name. If he did she warned him that a sad calamity would befall him, and he would for ever thereafter regret his thoughtlessness. After a time Yellow Sky sickened and died, and her last words were that her husband might never breathe her name. For five summers he lived in solitude, but, alas, one day as he was by the grave of his dead wife an Indian asked him whose it was, and in forgetfulness he uttered the forbidden name. He at once fell to the earth in great pain, and as darkness settled round about him a change came over him. Next morning, near the grave of Yellow Sky a large buck was quietly feeding. It was the unhappy husband."

This idea of a calamity happening through the mention of a name existed among races possessing a high degree of civilization.

The ancient Greeks had a belief in the existence of beings known as the Erinyes or "Furies,"<sup>1</sup> whom they euphemistically termed the Eumenides or "gracious ones," thus using a delicate word or expression for one which was harsh or offensive to delicate ears. In Greek mythology, they were female divinities who were the avengers of iniquity. According to Hesiod they were the daughters of Gæa (earth), sprung from the blood of the murdered Uranus; according to Aeschylus and other classical writers they were the offspring of Night and Darkness. They were termed by

<sup>1</sup> Eumenides (Greek) from *eu*, well, and *menos*, mind.

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the Romans, Furiæ or Diræ. Mentioned by the earliest Greek poets, they play a prominent part in the writings of the tragedians. They are representatives of the mighty powers who punish those who offend against the unwritten laws of conduct. Their home is in the lower world, but their power extends into this life, and they hunt the sinner to his ruin. Some of the Greek epic poems describe them as the punishers of perjury, homicide, and such sins in the household as neglect of parents and ill-treatment of guests, and in particular they guarded the rights of the first-born.<sup>1</sup> In the tragedies there are indications of a more general conception of them as guardians of the universal laws. They either take vengeance on the living or carry off the sinner to the lower world, where others can punish him. They are also the torturers of sinners in the other world. As pursuers of criminals, they are represented in the short tunic and boots of the huntress or accompanied by hounds; as avengers, they bear whips or burning torches; while the snake of chthonic divinities appears in their hair or is carried in their hands. At first their number is not mentioned by the classical writers; Homer once uses the singular, and a Demeter Erinys was worshipped at Thelpusa, in Arcadia. In his lyrico-dramatic spectacle of *Eumenides*, Æschylus (525-455 B.C.), the first of the three great Athenian poets, brings fifteen of these creatures upon the stage, but Euripides (480-406 B.C.), the latest of the three great Greek tragic poets,<sup>2</sup> reduces the number to three, and later learning bestowed upon them the names of Alecto ("the unresting"), Megæra ("the jealous"), and Tisiphone ("the avenger").

The Eumenides are generally regarded as the impersonations of an evil conscience, the incarnated scourges of self-reproach. Such dread deities, however, are terrible only to the sinner; to the honourable and the pure they are the bringers of blessing and protection. According to ancient Greek legends they pursued Orestes for the murder of his mother, Clytemnestra, even though this was vengeance prescribed by the Delphic Apollo. Professor Blackie says of them: "There is something volcanic in their indignation, whose eruption is too terrible to be common. They chiefly frequent the paths that are dabbled with blood. A murdered father or a murdered mother especially were never known to appeal to them in vain, even though Jove's own prophet, Apollo, add his sanction to the deed. An Orestes may not hope to escape the bloody chase, which the 'winged hounds,' invoked by a murdered Clytemnestra, are eager to prepare—the sacred precincts of an oracular Delphi may not repel

<sup>1</sup> Homer, *Odyssey*, xiv. 57; *Iliad*, xv. 204.

<sup>2</sup> The three great Greek tragic poets are Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

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their intrusion—the scent of blood ‘laughs in their nostrils,’ and they will not be cheated of their game. Only one greatest goddess, in whose hands are the keys of her father’s armoury of thunder, may withstand the full rush of these vindictive powers. Only Pallas Athena, with her panoply of Olympian strength, and her divine wisdom of reconciliation, can bid them be pacified.”<sup>1</sup>

Æschylus, in his play, pertinently shows how “a soft answer may turn away wrath”:

“So the mild accents of the soothing tongue,  
Attuned by wisdom, win their easy way.”

The Eumenides were honoured at Sicyon, Argos, and elsewhere, but we are best informed about Athens, where they had a sanctuary near a cave on the east side of the Areopagus, and a sacred enclosure at Colonus. The ancient Greeks were careful not to mention the name of the Erinyes (“Furies”) in ordinarily speaking of them, for fear that even the mention of such name might bring them forth from their subterranean caverns, and in their fury they might wreak vengeance on the utterer of their name, they, therefore, “spoke them fair,” made votive offerings at the shrine dedicated to them, and, when they thus paid adoration, called them by the euphemistic names of the Eumenides (“Kindly,” “Well-minded”); Semnai (“Revered”), or Potnai (“Queenly”), thinking by such flattery and “soft speech” and “aptly added titles, to compose that rage, whose swelling tide o’erflows all bounds,” and thus turn the Erinyes from furious fiends into beautiful powers of blessing.

This same notion of offering verbal bribes to the creature sought to be appeased is still in existence amongst certain peoples, for example, the Finnish hunters called the bear “the apple of the forest,” “the beautiful honey-claw,” “the pride of the thicket”; the Laplander speaks of the same creature as “the old man with the fur coat”; in Annam the natives call the tiger “grandfather,” or “lord”; and the Dyaks of Borneo speak of that dread disease, the small-pox, as “the chief,” or “jungle-leaves.”

This change of name and a mystic signification thereof is not confined to savage or heathen people; both the Jewish and Christian scriptures record instances of the same. The name of Abram was changed into Abraham (Genesis xvii. 5), Sarai to Sarah (Genesis xvii. 15), Jacob to Israel (Genesis xxxii. 28), Gideon to Jerubbaal (Judges vi. 32; vii. 1; viii. 29, 35), and Saul to Paul (Acts xiii. 9).

The incidents surrounding these changes of names are, in connection with our subject, worthy of consideration.

In the case of the patriarch (Ibrahim = Abraham),

<sup>1</sup> Blackie, *The Lyrical Dramas of Æschylus*: Introductory remarks to *Eumenides*, p. 178.

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*Khalid-Ullah*, "the Friend of God" (James ii. 23), we learn from the Book of Genesis that "when Abram was ninety years old and nine," that is to say thirteen years after the birth of his son, Ishmael (Heb. *Ishmael*, "He whom God hears"), "the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, 'I am *El-Shaddai*, the All-Powerful God,<sup>1</sup> walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.' And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for Me, behold My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee."

In the same chapter we read (verse 15), "And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be." The popular explanation of this change in the patriarch's name is that his original cognomen, *Ab-ram*, signified "high-father," or "exalted father," and that it was altered to *Ab'raham* = "father of a multitude" or "father of many nations," to remind the recipient of the new name of the covenant made with him by *El-Shaddai*, the All-Powerful One. Bishop Wordsworth, in commenting upon this passage, says: "*Abraham*, literally a *father* of a *multitude* of nations; from the Arabic root, *raham*, a multitude, especially when in commotion (*Gesenius*, pp. 9, 759; *Delitzsch*, 382; *Füerst*, p. 17). The word for multitude, *raham*, from *raham*, to make a noise (to hum like a swarm; *Gesenius*, pp. 9, 759), signifies a tumultuous sound, as of heavy rain (1 Kings xviii. 41). It is properly applied to a multitude in motion (Isaiah xiii. 4), and to a plentiful abundance of water (Jeremiah x. 13; li. 16). "Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram." *Abram*, *father of exaltation*—*Ram* is from *rum*, to be lofty; whence *Ramah* (1 Samuel xxii. 6) and *Jehorum*, etc., "but thy name shall be *Abraham*" = *Father of a multitude*. *Raham* is an unused root, still existing in Arabic (*ruham*), and has the same meaning as Hebrew, *hamon*. (Vide verse 4, "a multitude," and *Gesenius*, pp. 5, 759; and *Delitzsch*, 382.)<sup>2</sup>

In Dr. Ellicott's *Old Testament Commentary*, the learned commentator makes the following observation upon verse 5 of Genesis xvii: "Abraham = *Father of a multitude*, 'raham' being an Arabic word, perhaps current in Hebrew in ancient times. Another interpretation of Abram is that it is equivalent to Abi-aram, or Syria. This, too, is an Arabic form, like Abimael in chapter x. 28. By some com-

<sup>1</sup> In the Authorized Version this title of the Deity is rendered "the Almighty God." The words I have used are, however, in my humble opinion, a better translation of the Hebrew word.

<sup>2</sup> *The Holy Bible, in the Authorized Version; with Notes and Introductions*, by Chr. Wordsworth, D.D., Bishop of Lincoln.

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mentators the stress is thrown upon the insertion of the letter "h" as being the representative of the name Yahvah or Yehveh (compare the change of Oshea into Jehoshua (Numbers xiii. 16))."

Professor Crawford Howell Toy, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Hebrew in Harvard University, Camb., Mass., the author of *The Religion of Israel, Judaism and Christianity*, etc., in an article upon "Abraham," in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*,<sup>1</sup> says: "The original and proper form of this name seems to be either 'Abram' or 'Abiram' (Kings xvi. 34; Deuteronomy xi. 6) with the meaning 'my father' (or 'my God') 'is exalted.' The form 'Abraham' yields no sense in Hebrew, and is probably only a graphic variation of 'Abram,' the *h* being simply a letter, indicating a preceeding vowel *a*; but popular tradition explains it 'father of a multitude' (*ab hamon*) given as a new name on the occasion of a turning-point in the patriarch's career (Genesis xvii. 5). The name is personal, not tribal: it appears as a personal name in Babylonia in the time of Apil-Sin (about 2320 B.C.; Meissner, *Beiträge zum Altbabylonischen Privatrecht*, No. III), and is not employed in the Old Testament in an ethnical sense (for example, it is not so employed in Micah vii. 20, nor in Isaiah xii. 8)."

It is worthy of observation that both Abu-Ramu and Sarai or Saraia (Sa-ra-a-a) occur as names of individuals on Babylonian tablets. A German Orientalist, Hugo Winckler, 1863-1913, regards both Abraham and Sarah as originally lunar deities, and that the twofold relation of Abraham to Sarah as husband and brother is undoubtedly of mythological origin.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Thomas Inman in discussing the name of the Assyrian, or Chaldee, who emigrated from Ur of the Chaldees into Palestine, in company with his father and his family, in his interesting work, *Ancient Faiths Embodied in Ancient Names*, says: "As the name must be assumed to be Chaldaic, it shows us that the faith which was current in Mesopotamia at the time of the patriarch's birth did not essentially differ from that held in Caanan. The word is compounded of two syllables, the first of which, *ab*, signifies "the father"; respecting the second, viz., *ram*, we have either to select one signification out of many, or we must consider that a second syllable has been selected to qualify the first, of so very ambiguous a meaning that nothing but a *double entendre* was designed.

*Ram*—"he is high," "he lifts himself on high," "he is prominent," "he cries," "he rages," "he roars," "he is red," like coral.

*Rem* or *raim*—"a buffalo, or wild bull."

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> Winckler, *Geschichte Israels in einzeldarstellungen*, 2, pp. 23, 72.

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*Rum*="he is grown high," "he is exalted," "he is mighty,"  
"he exalts himself."

*Rom*="a height."

*Rum*="a height."

*Ram*="high, prominent."

*Ram*=a proper name (Genesis xxii. 21).

In further commenting upon this subject, Dr. Inman points out that the second syllable of the word *Abram* may signify an idea analogous to the notion of a heaven in the sky above, or one which is intended to convey a hidden phallic meaning. Dr. Inman is of opinion that the latter is the true meaning of the word, and that the name was subsequently changed by later writers to a name, which although it also contained a *double entendre*, was less conspicuous, as such, than the original cognomen.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Inman is also of opinion that the name Abiram, mentioned in the Book of Numbers (xvi. 1) is the same as Abram, with the addition of *yod*, so as to prevent any man, other than the patriarch, using his distinctive cognomen.<sup>2</sup>

Another theory is that Abram was a pagan name bestowed upon the owner thereof by his father, who was an idolater, and that the final syllable thereof is associated with Sun-worship, and is akin to the Egyptian "Ram'eses;"<sup>3</sup> some even trace a likeness between it and the Indian Rama, and carry the theory so far as to suggest that the story of Abram and Sarai is simply another version of the legend of Rama and his devoted wife Sita. This, however, appears to me untenable.

A more feasible theory is that of my friend Sheikh Abdullah, Effendi, of the Mevlevi Dervish, whose view was that when Khalid-Ullah rejected idolatry and embraced Islam,<sup>4</sup> his name was changed from Ab-Ram, which the Sheikh interpreted as "the servant of Ram," one of the names of a solar deity, or a burning orb (from the Semitic root, *ramida*, to be burning hot), or possibly the servant of Ramih (the Arabian name for a large star situate between the "legs" in the constellation of Boötes) to Abdur-Rahim (servant of the Merciful), and that in process of time this name was "bitten down," by the Jews to Abraham, and

<sup>1</sup> Inman, *Ancient Faiths Embodied in Ancient Names* (published 1868), vol. i, pp. 191, 192.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 188.

<sup>3</sup> In Exodus i. 11, Raamses is one of the cities built by the Israelites as Egyptian serfs; in Exodus xii. 37 they march from Raamses eastwards to Succoth (compare also Numbers xxxiii. 3-5). In Genesis xlvii. 11, the family of Jacob received from Joseph "a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded." The "land of Rameses" is probably synonymous with Goschen.

<sup>4</sup> The story of Abraham's conversion to Islam is given in Sura 6 ("Cattle") of the Quran-shareef.

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by the Arabs to Ibrahim.<sup>1</sup> If instead of rendering the first syllable *ab*, as *abdul* (servant), we retain it as *Ab* (father), the original name might then mean "My father (or my protector) is Ramih," and when the patriarch renounced the worship of the heavenly bodies, this was changed to *Ab-Rahim* (my Protector is the Merciful One)—the theory is one worthy of consideration.

In connection with this subject it should be mentioned that so late as the period of the advent of Mahomed, the last and greatest of the prophets (on whom be peace!), Magiism and Sabæism had also their votaries among the Arabs, this being especially the case among the Himyarites: the Banû-Asad worshipped the planet Mercury, whom they styled *Utiārid*; the Jodham adored *Al-Mustari* (Jupiter); the Banû-Tay, Canopus; the descendants of Kays-Aylan, *Shirā* (Sirius, the greater "Dog-star"), as we learn from the 49th ayat of An-Najm, the 53rd sinu of the Koran.<sup>2</sup> A portion of the tribe of the Koreish worshipped the three moon-goddesses—El-Lat, the bright moon, Manāt, the dark, and Al-Uzza, the union of the two—who were regarded as the daughters of a high god (*Benāt-ullah*). The Kinana, closely allied to the Koreish, both by ties of blood and political influence, paid adoration to Aldebaran, sometimes called "the Bull's eye," a star of the first magnitude in the constellation of Taurus.

I have heard another theory advanced, and that is that the substituted name of the patriarch was bestowed upon him, because his eldest son, Ismail (Ishmael) had become very proficient in the use of the bow, and was an expert archer, and hence he was styled *Abu-rami*, "the father of the archer." In support of this theory it is pointed out that the patriarch's name was changed when his son Ismail was thirteen years of age, and might, by that time, have exhibited considerable skill in archery.

Another suggestion is that *ram* is a curtailment of *ramz*, an Arabic word signifying a nod, wink, sign, signal, intimation, hint, an enigmatical discourse or writing, a cypher, a subtle

<sup>1</sup> In the account of Stephen's Apologia given in Acts vii, in rebuking the house of Israel, he says (v. 43): "Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them." This god Remphan, Rephan, or Raiphan, as it is variously written, is the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew *Chiun* in Amos v. 26. The best explanation of this appears to be that Ræphan was the Coptic or Egyptian name of the planet Saturn, well known, of course, to the Septuagint, and that *Chiun* is the Hebrew and Arabic name of the same luminary, which they therefore translated *Ræphan*. The value of this reference is that it shows that the Israelites had from time to time lapsed into Sabianism and that the association of the name given to Abraham by his pagan father might contain a reference to star-worship.

<sup>2</sup> Sirius is also known by the following names in Arabic: *Shira al-yamāni*, *al Kalb* (the Dog), and *Kalb-al-jabbar*.



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distinction or mark, a secret, etc., while yet another theory is that the word *ram* is derived from and is a curtailment of *raml*, "sand." I have heard a most ingenious and interesting discourse given, in true Qabbalistic style, in which the names of the great ancestor of the prophet Muhammad were claimed to contain a *ramz* or subtle mark, and to prove that he was to be the ancestor of many prophets, one of whom, Moosa (Moses), was to lead the children of Israel out of the *raml* (sand) of Egypt, over the *raml-al-bahr* (sand of the sea) of the Red Sea, into the *sahra* (wilderness), where all is *raml* (sand); that another descendant of his, Isa (Jesus) should fast for forty days and nights in the sandy desert, and that finally, the last and greatest of his *asl* (lineage) should be born in Mecca, and bring the whole of *ramli* (sandy) Arabia to Islam, so that the inhabitants thereof became worshippers of Ar-Rahman, Ar-Rahim, the Most Merciful and Compassionate God, and that, as millions of persons have accepted Islam, the promise of God to the patriarch has been fulfilled, and he has in truth become the "father of a multitude."

In this same ingenious discourse much stress was laid on the Qabbalistic value of numbers in the various names of persons and places mentioned, Alif=1, Ba, 2, Ra, 200, Ha, 5, and Meem, 40, and so on.

As Bishop Wordsworth refers the origin of the names of the patriarch to certain Arabic roots, it may be useful to here give a number of words in Arabic, with their meanings in English, in order that the English reader not acquainted with either the Hebrew or Arabic languages may judge for himself the reliability or otherwise of the theory enunciated by the learned Christian ecclesiastic.

The root word *Rahm* signifies in Arabic the womb, uterus, matrix. From it are derived the following words: *rahm*=compassion, mercy, pity; *Rahmān*=God, the Merciful, the Compassionate; *rahmat*=pity, compassion. God's mercy in a future state; *Rahmut*=the quality of being the God of Mercy; *rāhim*=pitying, pardoning; *Rahīm*=God the Merciful.

The words generally used in Arabic for "a multitude" are *jam*, *jamā'at*, *jam'iyat*; "a great multitude"—*jam*, *katīr*; multitude—*katrat*; many (a great many)—*kasīr*.

A "tumult" in Arabic is generally expressed by the words *fitnat* or *sajas*.

"Progeny" by the words *nasl* (plural, *ansāl*), *awlād* (son=*walad*), *nasab* (plural, *ansab*), *asl* (plural *usūl*), *zurriyat*, *durriat* (plural *durriyāt*), *far*.

It will be observed that the above Arabic words for "a multitude," "a tumult," and "progeny," are all derived from quite different roots than those akin to *rahm*.

The following Arabic words may be compared, but should not be confused, with those derived from *rahm*: *Rannat*=

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sound of metals, glass, etc. when struck ; *ranam*=sounding, singing, modulating, cooing (as a dove) ; *ranin*=twanging (as a bow-string), groaning, vociferating, crying out, making any noise with the voice, listening to an afflicted woman, groaning and lamenting.

The following Hebrew personal and place names may be considered in connection with this subject :—

**RAHAM** (also written **REKEM**)—son of Shema b. Hebron (1 Chron. ii. 43). **Rekem**, **Rakem**, **Raham**, **Jorkeam** and **Carmel** are all probably corruptions of **Jerahmeel**.

**RAM**—The name of a Judahite family (1 Chron. ii. 9).

**RAMA** ; **RAMAH**—"the height." A city of the tribe of Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 25 ; Nehemiah xi. 33).

**RAMATH-MIZPEH**—a place on the northern border of the Gadites (Josh. xiii. 26).

**RAMATH OF THE SOUTH**—apparently the most remote of the Simeonite towns (Josh. xix. 8).

**RAMATHAIM-ZOPHIM**—the name of the city of Elkanah in the hill-country of Ephraim.

**RAMATHEM**, or **RAMATHAIM**—the seat of one of the governments formerly belonging to Samaria, which were transferred to Judæa under Jonathan by King Demetrius (1 Maccabees xi. 34).

**RAMIAH**—"Yahwè is high," name of a layman who joined in the league against foreign marriages (Ezra x. 25).

**RAMOTH-GILEAD**—"Heights of Gilead" (Josh. xx. 8), also mentioned in the Talmud.

*(To be continued.)*

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## GOD SPEAKS TO MAN (REVELATION)

By M. MUHAMMAD YAQUB, B.A.

IF the West is boastful of its achievements in the domain of dead matter, the East has the prouder claim of having wrought wonders in the world of spirit. Since the dawn of life the East has been the nursery of philosophy and the cradle of religions. To the one matter is all in all, but to the other the reality of life consists in the things of spirit. The occidental discards spiritual truths as idle fancies ; the oriental, however, may regard his material products as worthless dolls, and wonder that so many grown-up men and women should be absorbed in playing therewith. Let not therefore Western scepticism be in haste to view with discredit the spiritual phenomenon that God speaks to man nor regard it as a figment of a perverted state of mentality, as it is wont to do, without hearing out the plea, attempted in the following lines.

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I would first of all invite attention to the book of Nature, which is the work of God in common with the mind of man ; in other words, this vast universe and the human mind are both the handicraft of the same God. The Creator of the two realms, the physical and the spiritual, being one and the same, it is but logical to conclude that unity of purpose and unity of principle must pervade both of them. If we observe, for instance, a process of development in the outer world of matter, we notice the same process in the sphere of mind. The physical and the spiritual are, so to say, two streams running parallel to each other, subject to the same set of laws. This being admitted, I would next invite attention to a particular law in nature, which is as undeniable as universal. All through nature we observe that where there is a demand there is a supply, where there is a craving there is an object of satisfaction. That excessive heat is a forerunner of rain, is a matter of everyday observation. Exactly the same is the case with man, who is part and parcel of the same universe and hence subject to the same set of laws. Human nature is endowed with a number of passions corresponding to which there are objects in nature to satisfy the same. Craving for thirst on the one hand and existence of water on the other reveal the divine plan that every human craving presupposes an object for the gratification thereof. This is a law as clear as broad daylight, and cannot be gainsaid in any reasonable quarters. This leads to the quite logical conclusion that wherever there is a need, a craving, there must also be something to meet it—a corresponding remedy. This is the law at work in the physical side of man. The same must hold good in the intellectual and the spiritual spheres. Let us take the intellectual side first. We notice that we are born with a spirit of inquisitiveness. We always hanker after the how and why of things. But Providence has so arranged that for every such “ why ” there is a corresponding cause to gratify that natural prompting of the brain—a cause for every phenomenon. This universe is, so to say, nothing but a field for the realization of the inner promptings of the whole of human nature.

Nothing, in short, is amiss in the machinery of human nature. Every screw, small or great, has got its proper place to fit in, in the nature he has to live in. There is not a necessity felt within him but there is something in the outer nature to respond thereto. If he has eyes to see with, there must be light to enable him to answer to this call of nature ; if ears, there must be air to enable him to hear. To me a mouth is the guarantee of the supply of food. Such is the beneficence of Almighty God. He has been so gracious as to look to our physical wants with so minute a care. In the intellectual and every other sphere as well, He has been pleased to bestow the best of His attention on man.

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Would it not mean a slur on His consistency if such a Providence should at all be indifferent to the wants of our spirit, which is the best and the only abiding part of our self? Surely not. He must have provided means to gratify the promptings of our spiritual nature too.

Let us now turn a glance inward within ourselves, and we discover that there is a keen-felt longing in the human nature for immortality, for an eternal life. This incites to the acquisition of a thorough knowledge of the Divine being and of the life hereafter. Now this desire has so strongly asserted itself in some cases, that steps were actually taken to put an end to this life in order to satisfy the curiosity as to the life after death. Acquisition of perfect knowledge of God is the very essence of man's nature. Now in harmony with the rest of human nature, the spiritual part too must be under the effect of the same principle. When the desire is so persistently there, there must be means to satisfy the same. But unfortunately there is no stretch of human reasoning that could possibly convince us of the existence of God. The flight of the wings of reason being restricted to the four walls of human experience, it is not possible that we should thereby enable ourselves to arrive at a state of thorough confidence in the existence of God. The greatest height intellect can elevate us to, is that there *ought to be* a God. But whether He is actually there, is a question that surpasses the region of our stereotyped intellect. No amount of argumentation can bring home to the blind that light is there. What he can perceive is only this much, that there *ought to be* something called light, as there are so many reports to show its existence. But the law of nature, where there is a demand there is a supply, compels us to believe that there must be some solution or other of the problem. So far as man's capacity for the acquisition of knowledge is concerned, he has two instruments, sense-organs and intellect. But both of these are ineffective to take us beyond the quagmire of doubt and suspicion so far as the existence of God is concerned. The craving for first-hand sure knowledge is there. Law of nature requires the possibility of means to satisfy the craving. Sense-perception and intellect, the two sources of knowledge, are not potent enough to help us out of the difficulty. Therefore, there must be some other channel of ascertaining truth, to accept which we must not be reluctant. History of Religion has been an antique record to show that God does speak to man. We have it on the authority of men of the most unimpeachable integrity. They are unanimous on the point that God impresses His speech upon the mind of man with indelible depth. The experience, they say, is accompanied by as much of conviction as any sense-perception causes. Is it then in the fitness of things that we should venture to discredit the report from the most reliable quarters

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regarding a matter, need for which is so keenly felt? We are by no means justified in attributing it to perversion of mentality; otherwise, we shall be compelled to look upon the entire perceptible nature as no more than a dream or hallucination. What, after all, is the maximum degree of the certainty of a piece of knowledge? Why visible, audible and tangible objects drive home into our hearts the reality of their existence? We cannot resist conviction in the reality of such objects, constituted as we are. Exactly the same amount of conviction is carried by the experience under discussion. It would therefore be grossly unjust and illogical to believe in the reality of the one and discredit the other.

Furthermore, the words thus communicated are of supernatural character, inasmuch as they relate to the occurrence of certain unimaginable events in the future that turn out true to the very letter or contain pure moral and deep philosophic lessons, that uplift a whole nation. The Gita, the Buddhist philosophy, the Bible, and the Qur-án, are to this day standing monuments of the sublimity of the message thus imparted by God to man. The recipients have one and all been the leaders, the reformers, the philosophers and what not, for the respective nationalities among whom they were raised. Each has left an ineffaceable stamp on millions of people. Is it then consistent with common sense that such communications should be discarded as mad utterances and their recipients drowsy monomaniacs? If so, then blessed is such mania, such perversion of brain. It leads to a sure knowledge of the existence of God, and thus explains this enigmatic problem of "being." The universe, which is otherwise a bewildering confusion and chaos, is reduced to a perfect system with God as the pervading and over-ruling principle. It elevates man from a self-centred brute to cosmopolitan heights, where he loses himself in the service of humanity at large. The word of God is a never-failing solace to him in thick and thin. When confronted by overwhelming odds and insurmountable obstacles to which the greatest of moralists may yield, the courage, perseverance and optimism of such a man are found indomitable. When hiding for life in a cave on his way to Medina, with Abu Bakr in his company, the Holy Prophet is as confident of his safety and ultimate triumph as ever, even when the talk of the pursuers at the mouth of the suspicious cave is heard within. God's words came down as gentle dew to cheer them up in this critical hour of trial, and the Holy Prophet thus consoles his companion therewith: "Do not have any anxiety; for God is with us" (the Holy Qur-án, ix. 40). Even to-day, there are men amongst us who stand firm like a rock in the midst of the highest storms of opposition. Their tranquillity of mind is never perturbed,

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for they have anchored in the haven of Divine protection, beyond the reach of hostile hands. Such is the practical utility of revelation.

In view of what has been said as to the necessity, the certainty, the utility and the sublimity of the phenomenon that goes by the name of revelation, there is not the slightest room left for the faintest shadow of doubt that the experience is the outcome of an abnormal state of mind. There is no doubt of the fact that the activities of the physical sense-organs are suspended for the time being, and one grows perfectly oblivious of his immediate physical environments. His attention is absorbed by the charming magnetism of the Divine, and he becomes all eyes and ears to receive the sweet impression. Nevertheless his mental powers are wide awake, and all sorts of physical impressions are barred out to avoid interruption. He is thus transported beyond the limits of space and time and, wrapped up in celestial glory, becomes one with God.

No charm, no sweetness, no pleasant sensation whatsoever, they say, can illustrate even approximately the flavour of what they taste. Surely all this cannot be "Maya," illusion, epileptic fit or any other frenzied mood of mind.

A brief reference to another view of revelation, professedly favourable, but in fact no less derogatory to the dignity thereof than outright discredit, would not be out of place. There is a school of thinkers, and an influential one, who admit the validity and genuineness of the experience, but put thereon an interpretation which reduces its worth to little more than self-deception. They hold it to be a feat of the mind, an internal process, a function of the mind itself. The content of the revelation corresponds no doubt to facts and truths; but the process is all from within. The mind, they argue, is endowed with all sorts of truths, which lie hidden underneath heaps of earthly dross. When this base element is removed therefrom, the mind is polished and the truths embedded therein gush up like spouts of a water-spring. However plausible the explanation, it is no less far from reality. There is nothing in the inter-relation between man and universe to bear testimony to its truth. In nature, we observe that every heavenly good that we receive is the resultant of interaction between the innate power of man and an external stimulus. Our eyes are possessed of the capacity of receiving light, but cannot give birth to light of itself. Light must come from without through some extraneous medium. Sound is not the product of the ear itself, but the consequence of the internal capability of auditory nerves and the external vibrations in the air. Similar is the process of transmission in every other form of beneficence that God may shower on us. Interaction is the indispensable element. Why then an exception in the

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case of revelation? We cannot afford to make a departure from the fixed and immutable laws of nature.

Revelation must also spring from two forces meeting each other: internal capacity and external stimulus. As a matter of fact, when the mind gets purified of all earthly alloy, it becomes transparent and as such constitutes a receptacle fit enough for the reflection of truth. But *truth* must come from outside, as the binding law of nature requires. And it does come from without through mediums known as angles in religious terminology, from the luminous Source of Truth just as light emanates from the sun and is brought by ether to the eyes of man. Shorn of this characteristic, revelation loses much of its worth and is brought down to the level of what may be likened to a poet's inspiration, which cannot claim to be free from the tinge of doubt and untruth.

To sum up, there is an irresistible longing in the nature of man to obtain knowledge of God. Law of nature requires that the longing cannot but have some means or other to satisfy it. Reason is not adequate enough to help us out of the perplexity. At best it lifts us to the misty plane of *ought* and not the sure light of *is*. We must therefore have some source other than sense-impression or reason to satisfy this natural craving of ours. In quest of such a source we come across the fact that from times of hoary antiquity we have had amongst us men standing for the truth that God actually spoke to them. These men have been the greatest and most successful of their race, and have left a lasting impression on posterity and bequeathed to them a rich legacy of morals. Even to-day we claim the existence of men among us, bearing living testimony, on the score of personal experience, to the fact that this spiritual phenomenon is a hard reality and no imaginary fiction. Have we, consistent with reason, any alternative left but to believe that God does speak to men?

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## ISLAM AND PROGRESS

By Mr. KHALID SHELDRAKE

It is a common error in the West to assume that whereas on the adoption of Christianity by a race all possible encouragement was given to literature, science and arts, the advance of Islam caused stagnation or retrogression. Naturally, it is very difficult to persuade one who is brought up with this idea, inculcated so religiously for centuries, to read impartially to discover the real truth. So, often in these busy days, the individual is content to assume a position without verification, and shrinks with repugnance at any

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suggestion that it is just possible that an error has been perpetuated. In Pagan Greece and Rome we have the spectacle of highly civilized communities; art, literature and trade were flourishing to a great extent, and the laws of Rome were a pattern for succeeding empires and states. It is not the object of the present article to go into the details whether the advent of Christianity proved a blessing or otherwise when adopted by European nations, but a very interesting booklet entitled "Christianity and Progress," by Mr. Chapman Cohen, is worthy of perusal by every honest thinker; it also deals with the question of woman and her status in Rome prior to Christianity, and after it had been adopted as the state religion. It is necessary, first of all, to deal with the reforms inaugurated by the holy Prophet amongst the Arabs, as the subsequent actions of the Islamic states have been governed by the code given to mankind in the pages of the Holy Qur-án, and by the example and sayings of the last and greatest of the Prophets. It will suffice if we ask the reader to obtain an account of the life and teachings of our Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and the blessings of Allah), of which there are many, and so read the many benefits which we to-day derive from following the laws of Allah, revealed to mankind by the sacred lips of Muhammad Al-Amin.

At the time of the Holy Prophet's mission the custom of burying alive female children prevailed. This he immediately suppressed. Drunken feasts and drunkards were common, and he abolished all this. Gambling was an obsession carried to extremes, and this was also finished by the revelations which came to the Holy Prophet. Vice was, indeed, rampant in its wildest forms, but at the command of the Great Unitarian it slunk away to other lands and reared its head no more in Dar-ul-Islam. To-day, in the twentieth century, the Western nations are attempting by legislation to bring about reforms which Islam brought into the Eastern world thirteen hundred years ago. Slavery existed in the world at the time of Jesus, but we find nothing in the Bible which condemns slavery, no word of Jesus which tends to better the condition of the slave, but rather, in the Bible, we find verses undeniably supporting the institution of slavery. Let us not forget that slave-owners of all countries appealed to the pages of the Bible to support their traffic, and quoted text after text as Divine authority. Do Englishmen remember the names of the slave-ships of Admiral Sir John Hawkins in the reign of Queen Elizabeth? Their names were the "Jesus" and "John the Baptist." To come to later times, a slave-ship referred to in a Royal Commission in 1837 was called "Jehovah." How recently it is that the abolition of slavery came about in the West! I wish here to ask a question: When Islam makes the slave



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a brother, and no Muslim can hold another Muslim as a slave, was not the spread of Islam the most powerful agent in suppressing the slave trade? It remained for the Prophet of Arabia to lift up his voice for the freedom of the captive, and one of the most meritorious actions in Islam was to give a slave his freedom. It was also a token of repentance for a fault committed. Alms must be given for ransoming the captives. Let us remember that in the Churches of Christendom slaves were sold as property when an abbey or church changed hands. In trade, the caravans of the Arabs went far afield, the obligations of the Muslim were to be honest in dealings and to give just measure. The holy Prophet was a trader, and so is a splendid example to the merchant of to-day. With regard to knowledge, Muslims are charged always to learn and impart their wisdom to others. "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave"; "The acquisition of knowledge is a duty incumbent on every Muslim, male and female"; "Excessive knowledge is better than excessive praying, and the support of religion is abstinence. It is better to teach knowledge one hour in the night, than to pray the whole night"; "Philosophy is the stray camel of a believer; take hold of it wherever ye shall find it"; "The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr"; "Acquire knowledge. It enableth its possessor to distinguish right from wrong; it lightest the way to heaven; it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when friendless; it guideth us to happiness; it sustaineth us in misery; it is an ornament amongst friends and an armour against enemies."

These few sayings of our Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) will show how necessary it always has been that the faithful should investigate the sciences, and develop their faculties to the fullest extent. How, then, can any person, who is not either blinded to facts or ignorant of them, charge Islam with being inimical to progress?

I should prefer, rather than use my own words, to quote from the pages of "The History of Mohammedanism," by W. Cooke Taylor, LL.D., as to the progress of the Muslims in the realms of law, art, science, architecture, trade, etc. In the chapter entitled "Effects of the Mohammedan Religion," he writes: "In the Byzantine and Persian empires, justice was openly bought and sold; corruption was not merely tolerated, but avowed; bribes were offered and accepted in public. On the contrary, the Saracens established a rigid administration of law, and so strict was their system of criminal justice, that the sovereign, for many years, had not the power of pardoning a man whom the judges had condemned. Mo'awiyah was the first who exercised the prerogative of mercy, being prevailed upon

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to arrest the course of justice by the beauty of the verses in which the culprit solicited pardon. The feudal system, which so long was the disgrace and bane of Europe, had no place among the Saracens ; whilst throughout Christendom honest industry was regarded as the sign of subjection, and trade esteemed disgraceful, the Arabs gave every encouragement to labour and commerce. The countries that they subdued were long free from the fatal influence of feudalism ; it has never penetrated into Corsica ; it was unknown in Sardinia, Sicily, and Lower Italy, until after the expulsion of the Moors. In consequence of the protection and patronage granted to industry by the Saracenic monarchs, especially in Spain, agriculture and manufactures flourished, and commercial communications were formed, which extended from the extreme east of Asia<sup>\*</sup> to the extreme west of Europe. The few manufactories which still exist in Spain are those that the Moors established. Perhaps it would not be too much to say that it is to the example of the Saracens we are indebted for the progress of maritime discovery ; since Spain and Portugal, whence the expeditions sailed that discovered America and the Cape of Good Hope, had learned the art of navigation from their Saracenic masters. Scarcely had the Arabians permanently established themselves in Western Asia, than they began to cultivate the sciences possessed by the vanquished, with a zeal and earnestness to which history furnishes no parallel.

“ Al Mansúr, after having vanquished the forces of the Greek Emperor, Michael III, was entreated to grant peace on any terms ; all he demanded from the conqueror was copies of the works of the best Greek authors, and these he brought to Baghdad in triumphal procession, as the noblest trophies of victory. Before the close of his reign, the Arabians had become well acquainted with the medicine, philosophy, mathematics and natural history of the Greeks ; and possessed good translations of the works of Hippocrates, Galen, Theophrastus, Ptolemy, Euclid and Aristotle. The astronomical works of Al Fargani, written during this reign, were translated into Latin by Goliers, and still possess considerable repute among the learned.

“ The cultivation of literature among the Saracens produced more immediate effects on the general condition of the people, than the revival of learning did on the nations of Christendom. The Arabs had no learned language, all the knowledge acquired was published in the vulgar tongue and was freely open to all who sought information. Such an advantage they long possessed exclusively ; notwithstanding the noble example of making knowledge easy of access, exhibited by the Moors in Spain, the vulgar tongues

<sup>\*</sup> About a century after the death of Muhammad, the Saracens established a factory at Canton.

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throughout the greater part of Europe were used only in discourse. All writing—literary, scientific, or political—was in Latin.

“Architecture was the art in which the Spanish Saracens displayed most strength. Their mosques, palaces and public halls were erected on a scale of magnificence beyond those displayed by Greece or Rome in their proudest days. To enumerate the remains of their splendid buildings would require several volumes; we need only mention the Alhambra, to show how great a share the Saracens had in reviving the architectural art in modern Europe. To them, also, we owe the science of chemistry, which was, in fact, the first branch of experimental philosophy, as it is still one of the most important. For it must be remembered that those who led the way to the cultivation of experimental science, Gerbert and Adelhard, had both studied in the Moorish universities. The obligations of mathematical science to the Arabians are universally acknowledged, the very name of Algebra proves its Oriental origin.”

He goes on to say: “It is not necessary to extend this subject further; those who wish to know more of the benefits conferred on modern Europe by the scientific and literary exertions of the Saracens will find ample information in the words of the Rev. Dr. Forster and Mr. Sharon Turner; *enough has been said to show that the charge, commonly urged against the Mohammedan religion, of being adverse to knowledge and civilization is a groundless calumny.*”

A further paragraph is worth noting in this book which will readily appeal to all who pride themselves on the fact that the world is gradually becoming more democratic, and will repudiate a further libel on the Faith of Islam which is often repeated even to-day, that is that Islamic rule is tyrannical and despotic. On Page 263 we read as follows:—

“It has been commonly supposed that the government of the Khaliphs was an absolute despotism; no supposition can be more erroneous, there never was a more perfect democracy than that which existed under the four first successors of Mohammed. The monarch was elective, his power was limited, not only by the laws of the Qur-án but by the unwritten traditions of the prophet; public opinion controlled every important action, and the meanest soldier possessed a liberty of remonstrance, which would scarcely have been permitted even in a republican army.”

It is unnecessary to say anything further on this subject, as the reader will have read the injunctions of our holy Prophet (on whom be peace and eternal felicity) and later the words of a Christian writer which testifies to the progress and civilization of the Muslims. The holy Prophet said, “Who are the learned? Those who practise what they know.” It is for modern Muslims, who are the inheritors

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of such a glorious past, to emulate the example of their ancestors and revive the glories of the Muslim civilization which is our own, not slavishly follow the West, whilst accepting all that is good from whatever quarter of the world it comes, and to teach the world the glorious truths revealed in the pages of the Holy Qur-án.

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## THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF SACRIFICE

By D. M. SADIQ

SACRIFICE is as old as religion, because it has always been regarded as an act of religious worship. It is an acknowledgment by man of the kingship of the God he worships, a thanksgiving for blessings received, and, in course of time, it became also an act of supplication for new blessings.

The form and nature of sacrifice depend upon the definition of religion given by the individual, as well as the view he has formed of the God he worships.

Bishop Wilkinson gives as a definition of religion :

“That general habit of reverence towards the divine nature whereby we are enabled and inclined to worship and serve God after such a manner as we can conceive most agreeable to His divine will.”

Dr. Watts is somewhat broader in his definition :

“Religion or virtue in a large sense includes duty to God and our neighbour,”

—while Sir James Frazer defines religion as

“A propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life.”

In the early days of the period known as Paganism, sacrifice was extremely simple. Not even incense or perfumes were offered, simply the green herbs as they were gathered. These were offered to the Supreme Being in an act of thankfulness. Such were the offerings of the Egyptians, the earliest sacrifices of which there are any records. Afterwards they offered frankincense and libations, accompanied with suitable thanks and praises. They shed no blood in their temples, nor did they bring any victims to their altars. “Every shepherd,” we are told in Genesis xlv. 34, “was an abomination to the Egyptians.” Not because of their occupation, for the Egyptians had shepherds and flocks of their own, but because, in the course of time, it became the custom of shepherds to offer the firstlings of their flocks in sacrifice. Pausanias, speaking of the Greeks, says that although they had an altar consecrated

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to Jupiter, the Most High, no living thing was offered there, but only simple offerings.

So, among nations and tribes regarded as less civilized—for example, among the Fuegians—there are no traces of propitiation by food or sacrifice. With them it was conduct that was of all importance. It was the same with the aboriginal Australians, the most primitive savage race. They offered no propitiatory sacrifices of food. They regarded the Supreme Being as too sacred to be named and too sacred to be represented by images.

The idea of sacrifice developed, and we find among other races that in course of time animals were not killed for food, except under the pretext of sacrifice. The savage idea came, in course of time, to keep the gods they worshipped in a good humour towards them by offering them board wages and propitiating them by offerings of flesh.

From sacrifices of animals to the sacrifices of human beings was but a short step. At first, as among the Druids, the sacrifices consisted in the offering up of criminals and prisoners taken in battle, and this barbarous custom spread over the face of the earth. The Moabites (Leviticus xx.) sacrificed their children to Moloch and burned them in the cavity of the statue of that god. Men were offered in sacrifice to Saturn, even in Greece and Italy.

The form of sacrifice depended in a large degree, if not entirely, upon the aspect from which man viewed the Supreme Being. The Slavs, according to Procopius, believed that there was a god who forged thunderbolts and was the sole maker of the universe. When they found themselves in danger of death they made a vow that if they escaped they would offer a sacrifice of oxen and all kinds of beasts, believing they could ransom themselves by those means. The same or a similar principle is current among many Roman Catholics of the present day. Men sacrificed to the gods to thank them for favours received, to render them propitious, and to appease their anger.

In Japan, human sacrifices formed part of the funeral rites in ancient times and the servants and horses of warriors were immolated; but after the first century these practices died out and clay statuettes were substituted. A similar practice prevailed among the Dahomeys and the Ashantis, where horrible human hecatombs were offered to the spirits of deceased chiefs.

In the myth of Osiris there is implied the sacrifice of a sacred bull, which, however, was cut up into fourteen pieces and eaten in communion by the faithful.

The sacrifice *par excellence* among the Hindus was that of the horse, which was regarded as an auxiliary of celestial fire, but there are no traces of human sacrifice.

(To be continued.)