

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

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CONTENTS.

Mr. A. A. O. Abdul Ghani Dixon	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Notes	82
Hafiz and His Poetry. By MAULVI MUSTAFAKHAN, B.A.	85
God is Love. By MOBARIKAH PERRY	98
Thoughts of a Muslim. By YUSUF AL-KAZIMI	99
Blessings of Misfortunes. By MOHAMMAD HUSSAIN, B.A.	101
The Character of Muhammad. By MASUD ALI VARESI.. .. .	105

THE HOLY QUR-ĀN

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Friday Prayer and Sermon.—At the London Muslim Prayer House
—111, Campden Hill Road, Notting Hill Gate, London—every Friday,
at 1.30 p.m. Lectures on alternate Sundays at 3.15 p.m.
Service, Sermon and Lectures every Sunday at the Mosque, Woking,
at 3.15 p.m.

NOTES

Turkish Delegation Visit the Mosque.

On Sunday, 6th inst., His Excellency Bekir Sami Bey, accompanied by the members of the Turkish Nationalist Delegation, which is in London for the purpose of placing before the Supreme Council at the Conference at St. James's Palace the claims of Turkey as to the Treaty of Sevres, paid a visit to the Mosque at Woking. At the Memorial House His Excellency and the other delegates partook of luncheon, and among the guests also present were the Rt. Hon. Lord Headley, Dr. H. M. Léon, Mr. Lovegrove, and several others. The democratic spirit of Islam was fully displayed by the fact that the other Muslims, ladies and gentlemen, waited upon their brethren, and at the table itself all mingled upon a perfect plane of equality. The prayer in the Mosque which followed was indeed most impressive. The Azan, or Call to Prayer, was given by an Arab, and the Iqamat in the Mosque itself repeated by an English Muslim, whilst the prayer was conducted by an Indian—Maulvi Mustafakhan, the Imam of the Mosque. This in itself is an object-lesson which proves that national or racial barriers do not exist among Muslims. After prayer, a gentleman from Africa, who had been a Christian for seventeen years, announced his desire to embrace Islam, and repeated the formula of faith before His Excellency, the other delegates, guests, and members of the Woking Mission. Lord Headley then spoke a few words on Islam fitted to the occasion. His Excellency then spoke in Persian, his remarks being translated into English by Mohammad Gaffar Khan, Secretary to the Persian Consul. He said that he was very glad in his heart to have had the opportunity of saying his prayers in the Mosque, and he felt so happy to be in the midst of his brethren. Their mission to England was not only a matter of peace for their country, but was vital to the peace of the world. Islam was a religion which stood for peace and brotherhood for mankind. Islam was the essence of toleration, and was the democratic ideal for all nations. He did not intend to speak fully upon the subject of all that Islam stood for, he could leave that in the capable hands of the learned Imam, but he wished to say that Islam had as its basis five fundamentals: belief in the unity of God and in prophets, prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage. The belief in One God was essential to harmony; if there were two kings, there would certainly be division and discord, but belief in the One God stood for peace and brotherhood of mankind. Belief in the prophets was essential for union and progress, for Islam is a progressive faith. Belief in almsgiving was carried out in practice by Muslims, who devoted a percentage of their

NOTES

income to charity. Fasting was most beneficial to mankind, a sovereign remedy for many ailments, and taught the individual to control his desires and appetites so that these were his servants, not his masters. Pilgrimage carried out a splendid idea for enlightening the mind by bringing into contact people of all races and nationalities, so that by their interchange of ideas they progressed in every way, and the result would be most beneficial to the world at large. He did not intend, neither was it the time nor the place, to refer to politics, but Islam had not in any way interfered with Christians and Jews on account of their faith; Islam was so tolerant, but it was other nations who had attacked and put to trouble Muslim nations, and so it was necessary for the West to-day to understand more fully what were the real principles of Islam. Misrepresentation and calumny had given a false picture to the West, and this Mission at Woking was helping to present Islam in its true aspect, and he hoped that all would help in every way to spread the knowledge of Islam in the West. He thanked the learned Maulvi and his brethren and sisters for the happy day that he had spent, and he would send to Angora details of this visit, and he felt that all the Muslims there would rejoice that they were able to say their prayers among brethren in England, and to enjoy such fraternal welcome and hospitality.

At 3.15 p.m. the Mosque was filled for the usual Sunday sermon, which was delivered by the Imam. Many of the Turkish delegates were present, and afterwards Lord Headley, Dr. H. M. Léon, and Professor Kpakpa also spoke.

Colossal Ignorance.

Mr. J. L. Macintyre, writing in the March number of the *Church Missionary Review*, has made a statement, which forms a typical illustration of the colossal ignorance prevailing in the West pertaining to Islam. He says:—

It is one of the ironies of history that Muhammad, in spite of his fifteen or sixteen wives and half-wives, left only one daughter and no sons, so that according to Arab laws of descent, which follow the patriarchal system, there are no legal heirs of Muhammad. Modern apologists for Islam who claim that polygamy was allowed in order to ensure the continuity of the family have a striking instance of the complete failure of polygamy to provide even one son to succeed their founder.

That the Holy Prophet did not have "fifteen or sixteen wives and half-wives" is a historical fact. We should be much indebted to the author of this statement if he quotes any reliable authority to support his allegation. Accuracy and truth are very essential things, and any departure from them cannot be atoned for.

As regards the principle of Polygamy allowed in Islam,

it should be noted that the continuity of family is not the only condition under which plurality of wives is permissible. It may be A condition, but not THE condition. Those who know something of the Islamic history must be aware of the fact that polygamy was sanctioned after the battle of Uhd, when, owing to the decimation of the Muslim army, the male population was much reduced, and a large number of orphans and widows were in need of protection. At such a time of national calamity, polygamy was indispensable. It was therefore introduced for the welfare of society in general. The same principles of welfare can be applied to individuals as well. It should, however, be remembered that polygamy is ONLY ALLOWED in *some* well-defined circumstances, and is not a rule. It is, in other words, an exception to the rule.

The world has just emerged out of a great war, and the whole of Europe is teeming with a surplus population of women. The same problem is now before the civilized world ; yet we do not think that the Church, with her utopian monogamy, which admits no exception whatsoever, can arrive at any honourable solution of the problem. Europe will have to submit sooner or later to the Islamic solution of polygamy, or surrender to endless immorality.

A Brother in Islam.

We have great pleasure in introducing our brother in Islam, Mr. A. A. O. Abdul Ghani Dixon, of Freetown, Sierra Leone, who has recently, after the perusal of the literature on Islam which we sent to him, embraced Islam, and has very kindly sent his photo, which makes the frontispiece of this issue. In his letter Mr. Abdul Ghani, after an acknowledgment of our letter, writes :—

I have deferred a reply until I could go through most, if not all, of the books in order to make sure my conviction of accepting the religion of Islam. And this I have done with the full assurance that only the religion of Islam is capable of developing the mind in the way of Allah. In testimony of which I have identified myself with the religion, and with the greatest pleasure attach a declaration form duly filled.

With kind regards,

I am, your Brother in Islam,

AMOS AUGUSTUS O. DIXON.

HAFIZ AND HIS POETRY

HAFIZ AND HIS POETRY

By MAULVI MUSTAFAKHAN, B.A.

(The paper read before Société Internationale de Philologie, Sciences, et Beaux Arts.)

PERSIA has undoubtedly played a great part in the ancient history of the world. But unfortunately we do not possess an accurate and systematic record of her past eminence, except the casual references which we often come across in the works on Greek civilization and the Persian conquests of Alexander the Great. These notices, however meagre and scanty, establish the fact that even before the Greek conquest, Persia had a history and culture of her own. I do not propose here to go into the details of the Persian history, but the point which deserves consideration, as far as the scope of this paper is concerned, is that in the realm of poetry and literature, too, Persia had the greatness of her own. It is frequently alleged that the Persian poetry owes its origin and splendour to the Islamic influence; but the fact remains, as Professor Muhammad Hussain Azad has observed, that the Persian poets sang before the Arabs conquered Persia. This is pre-eminently borne out by the fact that the metres commonly used in the Persian poetry are quite different from those prevalent in the Arabic.

Again, it is absolutely impossible that a country entirely devoid of literature and poetry may make such a wonderful progress in this art within a short period of a few centuries, and may produce poets like Sadi, Ibn-i-Yamin, Khwaju of Kerman, and Hafiz of Shiraz. All these poets flourished in and about the sixth century of Hijra, i.e. only six hundred years after the birth of Islam; and yet their philosophic ideas, beautiful language, fascinating expressions, charming style, and appropriate similes and suitable metaphors, and above all the masterly way of their dealing with various subjects eloquently speak that this all-round perfection is not due to the hasty and immature influence of foreign literature; but traditional and inherent potentialities of the Persian literature and poetry have attained by-and-by the fullest form of development.

The limited scope of this paper does not permit me to treat this subject fully. I shall confine my observations only to the one brightest star of this galaxy. I mean Hafiz of Shiraz, who has left after him his imperishable *Diwan*, or the collection of odes. Before passing to the poetry of Hafiz, it will not be out of place here to make a few remarks about his life.

Shams-ud-Din Muhammad, which is the real name of

our poet, as Hafiz is only his poetical title, was born at Shiraz at the time when the kings of the Mozafar dynasty reigned in Persia. His father, named Baha-ud-Din, came from Isphahan to Shiraz and here enriched himself by commerce. He died young, leaving his business in confusion. For some time the family, which consisted of three sons and a widow, subsisted on the property which the deceased had left; but at length the elder children were obliged to leave their home in order to earn their livelihood. They went away, but nobody knows where. Hafiz, being the youngest, remained at home with his mother, and was subsequently compelled to earn his living by the sweat of his own brow. He became a menial servant in a restaurant, and used to help the chef in cooking and making bread. But from his very childhood he had a passion for learning. He began to attend a neighbouring school, and received a respectable education there, paying his tuition fees from the little he managed to save from his wages. At this school he learnt the Qur-án, and committed it to memory, which gave him the title of Hafiz, his *nom de guerre*.

At this time the people of Shiraz took keen interest in poetry. Every educated man talked of the poets who had sung, and aspired to become one. The receptive mind of Hafiz could not escape the influence of this atmosphere. He began to attend a meeting which was generally held at the house of a cloth merchant in order to discuss the poetical questions. Soon afterwards he commenced to compose and recite poems, but with little success. Being disappointed, one day he went to the shrine of Baba Kohi, and there devoutly prayed for success. The same night he saw in vision that an aged man gave him some mysterious heavenly food to eat, and told him that henceforth the gift of poetry would be his. Hafiz enquired the name of the old man, and was told that he was Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet. After this vision Hafiz began to compose remarkably beautiful poems, which readily won the appreciation of the public. The first ode, which he wrote after this event began with the couplet:—

*Dosh waqt-i-sahar az gussa nijatam dadand
Wandaran zulmat-i-shab a'b-i-hayatam dadand.*

Last night, at the time of dawn, they relieved me of the worry,
And in that darkness of night gave me [a draught of] water of life.

This ode made a hit, and afterwards gradually the fame of the poet spread not only all over the whole of Persia, but to foreign countries as well. On one occasion the Prince Shah Shujah, who was a bit jealous of Hafiz because the latter expressed a scorn for Imad, another contemporary favourite poet of the Prince, criticized Hafiz's verse on the

HAFIZ AND HIS POETRY

ground of its many-sided aspect : no one motive, he said, inspired it. It was at one moment mystical, at another erotic and bacchanalian, now serious and spiritual, and again flippant and worldly. " True," replied Hafiz, " but in spite of all this every one knows, admires, and repeats my verses, while the verses of some poets (probably Hafiz by this vague expression meant Imad) whom I could name never go beyond the gates of the city." The criticism of the Prince, however, is true ; but he little knew that in the garb of hostile criticism he was paying the best compliment to Hafiz. The universal appreciation which Hafiz's poetry has won, is, as a matter of fact, due to its many-sided aspects. All classes of people can find food for meditation and inspiration from his poetry. He has got the marvellous gift of studying all aspects of human nature, and depicting it with variegated colours. And the true poet is one who studies nature in its entirety. In short, Hafiz through his rare genius gained unprecedented celebrity during his lifetime. He himself says :—

*Ba shir-i-Hafiz-i-Sheraz me goindo me raqsand,
Siāh cheshman-i-Cashmere-o-Turkhan-i-Samarqandi.*

The black-eyed beauties of Cashmere and the Turks of Samarqand sing and dance to the strains of Hafiz of Shiraz's verse.

And again :—

*Na didam khustar az shir-i-to Hafiz,
Ba Qur-an-i-ke ander sina dari.*

I have never seen any poetry sweeter than thine, O Hafiz !
I swear by that Qur-ān that thou keepest in the bosom.

That the verse of Hafiz was appreciated during his lifetime by the people of foreign countries is borne out by the fact that two kings of India invited him to visit their courts. One of these was Mahmud Shah Bahmani, of the Deccan, a liberal patron of poets, who sent the poet an invitation with a large sum of money for his travelling expenses. Hafiz spent a considerable portion of this sum in paying off his debt, and the remainder he gave to a friend who needed monetary help. But the two Persian merchants, Khwaja Zain-ud-Din of Hamdan, and Khwaja Muhammad of Kazurun, who were on their way to India, offered to defray the expenses of the poet if he went to India. Hafiz agreed, and went with them as far as the port of Hurmuz, where a ship was waiting for them ; but, unfortunately, when the party was embarking a tempest rose, which caused a great consternation in the poet's mind, who, abandoning his intentions, returned to Shiraz, and sent to Mahmud Shah the beautiful poem beginning :—

ISLAMIC REVIEW

- (1) *Dame bagham basar burdan jahan yaksar name arzad,
Bamai bifrosh dalq-i-ma kazin bihtar namai arzad.*
 - (2) *Shikoh-i-taj-i-sultani ke bim-i-jan daro darj ast,
Kulah-i-dilkash ast ama badard-i-sar namai arzad,*
 - (3) *Bas asan mai namud awwal gham-i-darya babuai sud,
Galat kardam ke yak maujash basad man zar namai arzad.*
- (1) The wealth of the whole world is not worth the one moment spent in pain,
Therefore sell my dervish dress for wine, as it cannot fetch a better price than this.
 - (2) The pomp of the king's crown is beset with the danger of life; It is indeed a head dress much desired, yet it is not worth the headache of worry it brings about.
 - (3) At first the sorrow of the sea seemed exceedingly easy in the hope of gain.
O! I have blundered; a hundred maunds of gold are but an inadequate indemnity for a single wave of the ocean.

In passing I may draw your attention to a point of comparison between the Western and the Eastern poetry. In the second couplet quoted above Hafiz has expressed the same idea as the well-known English dramatist, in this memorable line, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." But a contrast between the two artists will at once reveal that while Shakespeare makes a plain clear statement of an observation, Hafiz derives a moral lesson from it; pointing out at the same time the weakness of human nature which is often attracted by the outward appearance. The beauty of his language can, of course, be appreciated only by those who have a thorough knowledge of the Persian language.

Another Indian king, Sultan Gayas-ud-Din, of Bengal, is said to have corresponded with Hafiz, who wrote for him the ode beginning thus:—

- (1) *Saqi hadis-i-sarv-o-gul-o-lalah me ravad,
Win bahas-i-ba salasa ghassalah me ravad.*
 - (2) *Shakar shilan shawand hama tutian-i-Hind,
Zin qand-i-parasi ke ba Bangalah me ravad,*
 - (3) *Hafiz ze shauq-i-majlis-i-Sultan Gayas Din,
Ghafal mashauo ke kar-i-to aznalah me ravad.*
- (1) O Cup bearer! there is a talk of cypress, rose and the anemone,
And this discussion is going on with the three cleansing draughts.
 - (2) All the parrots of India will crack sugar,
Through this Persian candy which is going to Bengal.
 - (3) O Hafiz! be not indifferent to the fondness of the court of
Sultan Gayas-ud-Din,
For thy affair is to be furthered by thy lamentation.

It is sometimes said that Hafiz was quite independent, and did not make his art the means of his living, i.e. he did not, like other poets, write panegyrics for money. This, however, is not supported by facts. He has composed some panegyrics, and even in his *Diwan* we find that he is praising one king or the other. The first prince whose

HAFIZ AND HIS POETRY

patronage the poet enjoyed was Abu Ishaq, a heedless, pleasure-loving, and negligent ruler, who soon lost his throne, and was put to death by his rival, Mubarak-ud-Din. Of Abu Ishaq's brief but genial reign, Hafiz says :—

*Rasti khatam-i-firoza Boishaqi,
Khus darakhshid wale daulat-i-mustajul buod.*

In truth the torquoise ring of Abu Ishaq
Flashed splendidly, but it was a short-lived prosperity.

The following verses also belong to the same period, and are in the praise of Abu Ishaq and his courtiers :—

*Ba'ahid-i-saltanat-i-Shah Shiek Abu Ishaq,
Bapanj shakhs 'ajab mulk-i-Faris bood abad.
Nakhust padshe hamcho u' wilayat bakhsh,
Ke goai fazal rabood u' ba'adal-o-bakhshush-o-dad.
Duwam bagia' abdal Sheik Ameen-ud-Din,
Ke bood dakhhal-i-aqtab-o-majma'-i-auotad.
Suwam chu qazi-i-'adal asil-i-milat-o-din,
Ke qazi-i-beh azo a'saman nadarad yad.
Dighar chu qazi-i-fazal 'azad ke dar tasnif,
Binai shrah-i-muafiq hanam-i-shah nihad.
Dighar karim chu haji qawam-i-darya dil,
Ke u' bajud chu Hatam hami sala dar dad.*

I need not translate these verses, as they only commemorate the chief ornaments of Abu Ishaq's court.

The next king who has been the object of panegyric odes of Hafiz is Shah Shuja, a mention of whom has already been made. This ruler appears to have removed the restrictions imposed by his predecessors on taverns; and this event is celebrated by Hafiz in the following verse :—

*Sahar ze hatif-i-ghanim rasid muyda bigosh,
Ke daur Shah Shuja ast mai dalir binosh.*

At the early dawn tidings reached my ear from the unseen voice.
It is the reign of Shah Shuja; drink wine boldly.

In another poem Hafiz says :—

*Qasam ba hashmat-o-jah-o-jalal-i-Shah Shuja,
Ke nest ba kasam az behr-i-mal-o-jah niza.
Babin ke raqs kunan mirawad banalah-i-chang,
Ksi ke izn name dad istama-i-sima.*

I swear by the pomp and rank and glory of Shah Shuja,
That I have no quarrel with any one on account of wealth and position
See how he who formerly would not permit the hearing of music,
Now goes dancing to the strains of the harp.

And then in another poem panegyricizing the same sovereign Hafiz says :—

- (1) *Chang dar Gulgula Amad hi kuja shud munkir,
Jam dar Qahqaha Amad hi kuja shud mannaa.*
- (2) *Umar-i-Khusro talab ar nafi Jahan mi talabi,
Ki wajudest ata Baksh-o-kareme Naffaa,*
- (3) *Mazhar-i-lutfiazal, roshni-i-Chashm-i-amal,
Jami-i-Ilm o Amal, Jan-i-quhan Shah Shujaa.*

ISLAMIC REVIEW

- (1) The harp began to clamour "Where is the objector?"
[And] the cup began to laugh "Where is the forbiddor?"
- (2) Pray for the king's life if thou seekest the world's welfare,
For he is a beneficent person and generous benefactor.
- (3) The manifestation of eternal grace, the light of the Eye, of the Hope.

The combiner of theory and practice, the life of the world, Shah Shuja.

Shah Shuja died in A.D. 1383, and was succeeded by his son Zaynul Abdin, who, however, was deposed and imprisoned by his cousin Shah Mansur. Hafiz celebrated the triumph of Mansur in the poem beginning:—

*Biya ke rayat-i-Mansur padshah rasid,
Nawid fath-o-zafar ta beh mehr-o-mah rasid.*

Come! for the standard of King Mansur has arrived,
The good tidings of conquest and victory have reached the sun and moon.

From what has been said, it is quite clear that Hafiz used to write panegyric poems, and enjoyed the patronage of the aristocracy. But what distinguished him from other poets is simply this, as Shibli Nomani has rightly pointed out, that unlike other poets, even of Anwari or Zahir's eminence, he never employed mean and despicable means to squeeze money from those whom he praised. If his panegyric failed he never resorted to satire for extorting money.

Having discussed Hafiz's relations with the contemporary princes, now I pass on to his personal circumstances. It is stated by some chroniclers that he fell in love with, and ultimately married, a girl called Shakh-i-Nabat (Branch of Sugar-cane), but there is no weighty evidence to support this story. It is true that the word *shakh-i-nabat* occur in his verses, but the term is applied to the poet's pen and not to any person. I have already quoted a couplet in which he talks of a certain poem of his as the "sugar of Persia," and carrying on the same metaphor the poet's pen may appropriately be called the "branch of the sugar-cane," as he says:—

*Hafiz chih turfah shakh-i-nabatast kilh-i-to,
Kish meva dil pazir tar az shad-o-shakar ast.*

Hafiz! what a wonderful branch of sugar-cane is your pen,
That its fruit is more delicious than honey and sugar.

And in another ode he says:—

*Kilh-i-Hafiz shakarin shakh-i-nabatesh bachin,
Ke darin bagh nabini samare behtar azin.*

The pen of Hafiz is a sweet sugar-cane,
Pick it up as in this garden you will not find a better fruit.

HAFIZ AND HIS POETRY

Thus, I think it is beyond any doubt that *shakh-i-nabat*, the branch of a sugar-cane, is only an epithet applied to the pen of Hafiz, and is not the name of his wife. This, of course, is quite certain that he was married and had several children, but the name of his wife is not handed down to us. We, however, know that he had a very high opinion of his wife, and mourned her death in the following touching couplet :—

*'An yar kazo khan-i-ma ja-i-pari bud,
Sar ta qadamash chun pari az 'aib bari bud.*

That sweet-heart through whom our house was a fairyland,
[And] who from head to foot like a fairy was free from blemish.

Hafiz lost a child in infancy, and it was a great shock to the poet. There is a clear reference to this unhappy event in this verse :—

- (1) *Dila didy ke 'an farzanah farzand,
Cheh did andar khum-i-in taq-i-rangin,*
(2) *Bajai loh-i-simin dar kinarash,
Falah bar sar nihadash loh-i sanghin.*

- (1) O heart, thou hast seen what that clever son
Has experienced within the dome of this many-coloured vault.
(2) In place of silver in his bosom,
Fate has placed a stone tablet on his head.

It is a pity that we know so little of this great poet of Persia, but from these little incidents of his life we can gather that he was a loving husband and an affectionate father. From his other verses we find that he loved his native place and did not choose to leave it. Musalla and the stream of Rukanabad were his chief favourite resorts. He himself says :—

*Name dihand ijazat mara ba sair-o-safar,
Nasim-i-bad-i-Musalla'-o-ab-i-Rukanabad.*

The zephyr and breeze of Musalla and the stream of Rukanabad
Do not permit me to travel or wander afield.

And in another verse he says :—

*Badeh saqi mai baqi ke dar janat nihai yafat,
Kinar-i-ub-i-Rukanabad-o-gulgast-i-Musalla ra.*

Give, O cup-bearer, all that is left of thy wine, in the garden of
paradise vainly thou'll seek
The lip of the fountain of Rukanabad and the bowers of Musalla
where roses twine.

And again :—

*Faraq ast ze ab-i-khizar ke zulmat jai ost,
Ta ab-i-ma ke manba'sh Allaho Akbar ast.*

There is a difference between the Water of Kizar which dwells in the
darkness,
And our water, of which Allaho Akbar is the source.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

It is a remarkable coincident that Hafiz, after his death, was interred in the place which he so loved during his life-time, and the chronogram, i.e. the date of his death, is also derived from the name of the same place. He was buried in the garden of Musalla, of which he sang so fondly. On his tombstone the following ingenious chronogram is inscribed :—

*Charagh-i-ahal-i-ma'ni Khwaja-i-Hafiz,
Ke shama bud az nur-i-tajala,
Chu dar khak-i-Musalla sakhat manzal,
Baju tarikhash az khak-i-Musalla.*

The lamp of spiritual man, Khwaja Hafiz,
Who was a candle from the Glory's light,
Has made his resting-place in the land of Musalla,
Therefore seek his date of death from the words *khak-i-Musalla*.

This shows that he died in 791 A.H.

The shrine of Hafiz is a beautiful garden, and after him is called "Hafizia." This place is much frequented by the people of Shiraz, and several other men of eminence, who sought proximity of the poet's grave, have been buried there. So that his own prophetic words have been fulfilled when he said :—

*Bar sar-i-turbat-i-ma chun guzari himat khah,
Kezarat geh-i-rindan-i-jhan khahad shud.*

When thou passest by our tomb seek a blessing,
For it shall become a place of pilgrimage of libertines of all the world.

Having given a brief sketch of Hafiz's life, now I pass on to his works. He has left a collection of his beautiful odes, the *Diwan*, which is the rarest gem in the realm of poetry. No doubt he has written some *qasidas*, i.e. panegyrics, yet his chief triumph lies in lyrical poetry. He chiefly sings of spring, rose, nightingale, wine, youth, and beauty; and therefore sometimes the superficial critic has charged his verses with sensuality. But it is not true. He is a mystical poet, and his language is generally allegorical. His wine is not of the juice of grapes, or the "draught of the vine," as it is called in the Persian literature, but Divine Love. Similarly, his *beauty* is the same as has been so beautifully expressed in Shelley's memorable line :—

Beauty is truth, truth beauty.

He is, of course, a great enemy of deceit and hypocrisy, and always condemns with profound abhorrence the priestly class who make a show of their virtues. In one verse he says :—

*Wa'azan kin jalva bar mehrab-o-mimbar mi kunand,
Chun bakhilwat mi ravand 'an kar-i-digar mi kunand.*

HAFIZ AND HIS POETRY

These preachers, who gorgeously appear in the vault of churches and
on pulpits,
When are in privacy do other things than they preach.

And in another verse he says :—

*In taqwa am bas ast he chun wa'azan-i-shar,
Naz-o-karishma bar sa mimber name kunam.*

This righteousness is enough for me that like the preachers of the
city,
I do not display coquetry and vanity on the pulpit.

When Mubarez-ud-Din Muhammad bin Muzaffar, who
ruled over Persia from A.D. 1353 (754 A.H.) to A.D. 1357
(759 A.H.), out of his pious nature ordered all the taverns
to be closed, Hafiz with characteristic humour said :—

*Dar-i-maikhana a bastand Khadaya mapasand,
Ke dar-i-khan-i-tazvir-o-rya bikushiand.*

They have closed the doors of the wine taverns ;
O God, suffer not that they should open the doors of the house of deceit
and hypocrisy.

It is generally admitted that "Sadi" is the first Persian
poet who laid down the foundation of *ghazal*, or ode, but
its perfection is universally ascribed to Hafiz. Khwaju of
Karman, who was a contemporary of Hafiz, is also one of
the eminent poets who excelled in *ghazal*, yet his style is
laborious and full of affectation, while Hafiz has got the
simplicity and charm of his own. "His style," in the
words of Sir Gore Ouseley, "is clear, unaffected, and har-
monious, displaying at the same time great learning, matured
science, and intimate knowledge of the hidden as well as
the apparent nature of things ; but above all a certain
fascination of expression unequalled by any other poet." Sadi's
ghazal is sometimes dry, without emotions ; but Hafiz's is
always full of passion. Moreover, he uses quite appropriate
words, and his mode of expression is so fascinating that it
enhances the beauty of the original idea. I will try to clear
this point with an illustration or two.

Sadi in one of his odes says :—

*Badam gufti-o-khursandam 'afakalla niko gufti,
Sagam khandi-o-khushnudam jazakalla karam kardi.*

Thou hast abused me, and yet I am pleased. God may forgive
thee, thou hast said good,
Thou hast called me a dog, and yet I am happy. God may reward
thee, thou hast done me a favour.

But Hafiz expresses the same idea thus :—

*Badam gufti-o-khursandam 'afakalla niko gufti,
Jawab-i-talakh me zebad lab-i-lal-i-shakar khara.*

Thou hast abused me, and yet I am pleased. God may forgive thee,
 thou hast said good,
 The bitter reply is certainly very meet from ruby-like lips, which are
 as sweet as sugar.

The reader will readily see that the second half of Hafiz's couplet is simply beautiful and very suitable to the context. Sadi has only made a simple statement with the repetition of words; but Hafiz puts in it sentiments, and implies that the bitter words of the beloved are sweetened by her lips, as there is a well-known Arabic saying, *Darb-ul-habib-i-lazizun*, i.e. the hit of a friend is pleasing. Those who are interested in the Persian poetry can easily realize that this mode of expression is remarkably appropriate for a *ghazal* or an ode.

Here is another example. Sadi says :—

Juzin qadar natawan guft dar jamali-to 'aib,
Ke mihrbani azan tab'a-o-khu name ayad,

No blemish can be said in thy beauty,
 Except that kindness is not to be expected from that disposition and temper.

But Hafiz says :—

Juzin qadar natawan guft dar jamal-i-to 'aib,
Ke khal-i-mihr-o-wafa naist rou-i-zaiba ra.

No blemish can be said in thy beauty,
 Except that thy beautiful face has not got the mole of love and faithfulness.

It will be seen that Sadi, while praising outward beauty, finds fault with the nature of his beloved, which appropriately seems out of place and awkward, but Hafiz has very beautifully blended the same idea with the external beauty of the face. The appropriateness of his figurative language for the expression of this subtle significance is past description, and can only be relished.

I need not, however, tax your patience with any more comparison of Hafiz's verses with those of his contemporaries or predecessors in the Persian language. But I cannot resist the temptation to bring to your notice Miss Bell's estimate of Hafiz in comparison with his elderly contemporary Dante, which I quote from Professor Brown's excellent work, *A History of Persian Literature*. She compares and contrasts Hafiz in the most illuminating manner with Dante, after characterizing whose poetry, she says :—

“To Hafiz, on the contrary, modern instances have no value; contemporary history is too small an episode to occupy his thoughts. During his lifetime the city which he loved, perhaps as dearly as Dante loved Florence, was besieged and taken five or six times; it changed hands

HAFIZ AND HIS POETRY

even more often. It was drenched with blood by one conqueror, filled with revelry by a second, and subjected to the hard rule of asceticism by a third. One after another Hafiz saw kings and princes rise into power and vanish 'like snow upon the desert's dusty face.' Pitiful tragedies, great rejoicings, the fall of kingdoms, and the clash of battle—all these he must have seen and heard. But what echo of them is there in his poems? Almost none. An occasional allusion which learned commentators refer to some political event; an exaggerated effusion in praise first of one king, then of another; the celebration of such-and-such a victory, and of the prowess of such-and-such a royal general—just what any self-respecting court poet would feel it incumbent upon himself to write; and no more."

"But some of us," Miss Bell continues, "will feel that the apparent indifference of Hafiz lends to his philosophy a quality which that of Dante does not possess. The Italian is bound down within the limits of his philosophy, his theory of the universe is essentially of his own age, and what to him was so acutely real is to many of us merely a beautiful or a terrible image. The picture that Hafiz draws represents a wider landscape, though the immediate foreground may not be so distinct. It is as if his mental eye, endowed with wonderful acuteness of vision, had penetrated into those provinces of thought which we of a later age were destined to inhabit. We can forgive him for leaving to us so distinct a representation of his own time, and of the life of the individual in it, when we find him formulating ideas as profound as the warning that there is no musician to whose music both the drunk and the sober can dance."

Hafiz's *Diwan* is a fine combination of philosophy and sentiments of all description. He possesses the rare gift of expressing every idea with a vivid and graphic elucidation. He does not use far-fetched metaphors and similes of remote significance, but his simple, plain, and idiomatic words have a charm of their own. The appreciation of his poetry is universal because every man can pick up something out of it of his own relish and taste. Professor Muhammad Husain Azad, the great linguist and philologist of India, therefore, describes the *Diwan* in his favourite figurative language as a bottle full of a wonderful liquid, which is understood by some to be milk, by others *sharbet* (syrup), and by others wine of Shiraz. These different aspects of his poetry, coupled with the vividness of expression, are the secrets of Hafiz's popularity. Hafiz's social ethic is based upon a very noble principle of morality. He has got a tender loving heart, which is full of sympathy for all. He says:—

*Mabash dar pai 'azar-o-har che khahi kun,
Ke dar shari'at-i-ma tar azin gunhai nest.*

Do not seek to trouble any one ; and do whatever you like,
Because in our Shari'at [religion] there is no other sin than this.

His religion is of universal toleration :—

*Jang-i-haftad do millat hama ra uzr banih,
Chûn na didand haqiqat, rahe afsana zadand.*

Pardon the quarrels among all the seventy-two sects of the Faith,
As they, not seeing the Reality, have picked the path of Story.

Hafiz lived in an age during which the throne of Persia passed quickly from one sovereign to another. This must have impressed upon his mind the transitoriness of the world. Of this theme he has sung sweetly. I will quote here two or three couplets of a poem :—

- (1) *Rasid myyda ke ayyam-i-gham nakhajad mand,
Chunan namand-o-chunin niz ham nakhahad mand.*
 - (2) *Ghanimate shumar ae sham'a wasal-i-parwana,
Ke ain m'amala ta subha dam nakhahad mand.*
 - (3) *Sarud-i-majlis-i-Jamshid gufla and ain bud,
Ke jam-i-bada bya war ke jam nkhahad mand.*
- (1) The glad tidings arrived that the days of sorrow will not remain,
The past has not remained and the present will also not remain.
 - (2) Take the union of a moth as a boon, O candle !
Because this course of affairs will not remain in the morning.
 - (3) The song of the court of Jamshid, they say was this,
That bring the cup of wine as *jam* will not remain.

Those who have read the *Diwan* with a critical eye must have noticed another feature of Hafiz's poetry, which I may call the harmony of words. In some of his odes we find that the words are of the same measure and sound, and therefore when recited together create by themselves a harmonious tune which falls deliciously on ears. This symphony of expression gives a tone to the music and creates a sensational vibration in the soul of the hearer. To illustrate this I will quote a few verses here without translation :—

- (1) *Bya ta gul bar afshanaim-o-mai dar saghar andazaim,
Falk ra saqaf bishgafaim-o-tern-i-nau dar andazaim,*
- (2) *Agar gham lashkar angaizad ke khun-i-'ashiqan rezad,
Man-o-saqi baham sazaim-o-bunyadash bar andazaim,*
- (3) *Chu dar dastat roode khush bazan mutrab sarude khush,
Ke dastafshan ghazal khanaim-o-pa ko ban sar andazaim.*
- (4) *Yake az ishq mai lafad digar tamat mai bafad,
Baya kin dawar-i-ba pesh-i-dawar andazaim.*

The *Diwan* of Hafiz has not only established the poet's fame in his own country, but has made him known to the West as well. Many a translation of the work has been published in the English, German, Latin, and French languages. There are good many editions of the *Diwan* and its commentaries in Urdu, Persian, and Turkish. Some editors have given many interesting stories in connection

HAFIZ AND HIS POETRY

with the different odes. I will mention only one of them. It is stated that Hafiz's well-known *ghazal*, which begins with the following couplet :—

*Agar 'an Turk-i-Shirazi nadast arad dil-i-ma ra,
Ba khal-i-hinduash bakhsham Samarqand-o-Bukhara ra.*

If that Turk of Shiraz takes our heart in hand [i.e., makes conciliation],
I shall give Samarqand and Bukhara for her one black mole.

was brought to the notice of the then King of Persia, who sent for the poet and said to him : " You are funny indeed. I have conquered this country with so many troubles, and you are giving it away only for one black mole." " True, your majesty," replied Hafiz, " this very extravagance has reduced me to this poverty." The king laughed, and gave some money to the poet.

Before I conclude this paper something must be said about the practice of taking auguries from the *Diwan* of Hafiz, which is so prevalent in Oriental countries, and which I think is the unique feature of Hafiz's poetry. The student of the Persian literature knows that Hafiz is often entitled *lisan-ul-gaib*, i.e. the tongue of the unseen ; and *tarjaman-ul-asrar*, the interpreter of mysteries ; and it is generally believed that valuable information may be obtained by opening the *Diwan* at random, after the utterance of suitable invocations and taking the first verse of the right-hand page, or the seventh couplet from the top, to be the reply of the questions. But some people adopt their own way of taking augury. There are some very interesting auguries, and remarkably to the point. I will only state one or two of them. It is stated that when Hafiz died some of his enemies objected to his funeral prayers being said by Muslims, but on an augury being taken the following very appropriate verse came out as reply :—

*Qadam derygh madar az jinaza-i-Hafiz,
Ke garchah gharq-i-gunahhast merawad ba bhishat.*

Withhold not thy footstep from the bier of Hafiz,
For though he is immersed in sin, he will go to Paradise.

The second instance refers to a king, Shah Tahmasap, who one day while playing with a ring, which he valued very much, dropped it, and in spite of an exhaustive search under carpet and cushions could not find it. An augury being taken from Hafiz gave the following result :—

*Dalc ke ghaib numaist-o-jam-i-jam darad,
Ze khatame ke damai gum shawad chah gham darad.*

What cares a heart which mirrors the Unseen and possesses the Goblet
of Jamshid,
For a ring which is mislaid for a moment.

The king, it is said, clapped his hands on his knees in admiration of the appropriateness of the verse, and immediately felt the ring in a fold of his robe, into which it had accidentally slipped.

The anecdotes of such auguries may be multiplied, but I think the above-mentioned instances are sufficient to give an idea of this practice, which I think is based upon a more popular assumption.

GOD IS LOVE

BY MOBARIKAH PERRY

It has been said the East is the East ;
The West, 'tis said, is the West ;
And the twain shall never commingle,
But God in His wisdom knows best.

To the sons of the East God freely gave
Of the sunshine warm and bright,
And the hearts that beat 'neath dusky skins
Are noble, good and white.

One great gift God gave to the East—
The gift of faith, in prayer.
A similar gift gave He to the West,
Where the fruit of the gift grows rare.

Other great gifts He gave to all
The sons of the East and the West:
The power to live, and in living to love,
And in living and loving be blest.

To East, to West, to North and South,
Whate'er your colour may be,
God waits at the end of the journey
For the like of you and of me.

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THOUGHTS OF A MUSLIM

THOUGHTS OF A MUSLIM

By YUSUF AL-KAZIMI (*A British Muslim*)

IN the matter of the great Mosque of the Holy Wisdom at Constantinople, our militant ecclesiastics and the pious crusaders of the laity have retired temporarily from the fray discomfited.¹ It has been wisely decided that "no change is to be made," and that the victory of the Allies over Turkey, due in so large a degree to the assistance of the Muslims of India and Arabia, is not to be used as an occasion for such a blow to Islam as the forcible taking away of this great Mosque from Islam. I believe our rulers have been concerned for Islamic sentiment in this matter, but I cannot avoid feeling that Islam has been helped also by the differences among the Christians, particularly between the Greek and Roman Church.

The ethical considerations involved in the matter of religious edifices which have been diverted from the use for which they were founded is an interesting and a practical one. There are to be found in abundance Protestant churches that were originally Catholic, Christian churches that were pagan temples, mosques that were churches and finally (but not least germane to this issue) churches that were built as mosques. This last point seems generally to be conveniently overlooked by our Christian controversialists. They calmly forget, for example, the great and wonderful Mosque of Cordova, now the Cathedral of that city. By all means let there be a restoration of religious edifices to their original purpose, if that be judged desirable, but let it be an all-round restoration and not strike at Islam alone !

I sincerely trust that no Christian will argue that the great Mosque at Constantinople must be returned as there are Christians there to receive it, while it is not practical to restore the Cathedral of Cordova to Islam as there are no Muslims in Spain to make use of it ! No ! this fact speaks volumes for the comparative tolerance of the two religions, no doubt ; I am well aware that all the Muslims in Spain were slain or driven out to the last individual, while Christians always survived in Turkey, but I trust that the tolerance of Islam and the intolerance of Christianity will not be adduced as reasons for a discrimination *against* Islam !

* * * *

A little time ago, on the occasion of a visit of His Majesty

¹ Since writing the above I read in the papers that the Greek Patriarch is in London for the purpose (amongst other things) of laying before the Near Eastern Conference a request for the "restoration of St. Sophia to the Greek Church."

ISLAMIC REVIEW.

the King to some neighbourhood, an individual came forward unofficially and addressed His Majesty on behalf of the unemployed. The next day this simple incident was reported with great headlines in the newspapers, and at least two papers made it the sole subject of their placards.

In our modern democratic states sovereigns and ministers are separated from the ordinary individual by great barriers which made an incident like the above remarkable, but it would not have been considered at all extraordinary in the old Muslim Kingdoms. There, ordinary civilians freely addressed the sovereigns and ministers. And where there remains something of the old Muslim spirit to this day, there we find this same freedom and true democracy. In Nejd, for example, in Central Arabia any of his subjects may freely address the Amir; and when his young son, the attractive and picturesque youth the Amir Faisal (not to be confounded, of course, with the Amir Faisal of the Hejaz) visited this country recently he was addressed by his suite and his acquaintances simply by his name Faisal, and lest it be said that such could be the case only with small kingdoms, we have only to remember the empire of the Caliphs which at one time extended from the Atlantic to China. It is of Nejd that a European writer has said that there alone has he found liberty, equality and fraternity in practice; and Nejd is, I suppose, the only Muslim state left in which the old Muslim fervour and spirit is still intense. Most of the other Muslim rulers have sold the birthright of their Eastern dignity and traditions for the unsatisfying mess of potage of a half-assimilated Western culture; as they have quitted the enduring garb of their forefathers and the majority of their subjects in exchange for the passing fashion of the Frank, so have they exchanged the old Muslim virtues for the insecure, unstable and changing philosophies and social makeshifts of the West. Would to God that they had rather worked to preserve the past civilization of Islam, while learning all that the great civilization of Europe had to teach them in purely material sciences! Then had they been wise!

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BLESSINGS OF MISFORTUNES

BLESSINGS OF MISFORTUNES

By MOHAMMAD HUSSAIN, B.A.

"And We will most certainly try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits; and give good news to the patient, who, when a misfortune befalls them, say: Surely we are Allah's, and to Him we shall surely return. Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the followers of the right course."—QUR-ĀN, ch. ii, v. 155-7.

PHENOMENA occur in the course of our daily life for which we can give no account. Innumerable events, small and great, happen before our eyes and bewilder our senses. The great development of our mental powers, the scientific habits of investigation and the wonderful exploitation in the vast field of Mystery, are yet unable to link into the chain of cause and effect, events which affect humanity but are out of human control. They are repeatedly occurring since the birth of man, but he is no wiser on that account. There are miseries which attend human life, irrespective of age, creed and rank. They appear in the shape of death, famine, epidemic and failures. In most cases they originate from no apparent cause, and are of such a sweeping nature as to confuse the guilty and the innocent, and bring them down to the altar of destruction, all alike. Deeper the reflection, greater the perplexity. This has given rise to different schools of thought regarding the existence and attributes of God.

Seeing the afflictions and calamities rampant in the world, people who pride themselves on the powers of the brain at the expense of ignoring the singularly exquisite mechanism of the heart, with all its peculiar susceptibilities, have openly proclaimed their inability to reconcile the heart-rending cries of suffering humanity below with the loftiest attributes of mercy and clemency of the Creator above. The painful agonies of a dying child, with all its purity and innocence, have turned many a man into an atheist, who can ascribe such merciless acts only to the blind powers of nature and not to the All-Merciful God—if there be such an Entity at all.

The sages of India have not fared well in their attempt to solve this mystery. They could not forgo the belief in God, and were at the same time unwilling to attribute the quality of guilt to the Almighty, which is highly detestable even in man. They, therefore, propounded the plausible doctrine of the transmigration of soul. The sufferings of an innocent child, they argued, were not due to the unaccountable caprice of nature, of the rage of a deity, but to the calculated infliction of punishments for the acts which the child had done in his previous life. It is the

ISLAMIC REVIEW

demand of justice that wickedness must be punished. The Divine justice has therefore found its manifestation in bringing down miseries on human souls for their evil deeds in a previous birth. Every person in the world has to suffer more or less. The happiest among us has also sad stories to relate. Are we then to conclude that virtue is the only quality which does not characterize man? Moreover, the greater the man, greater are his troubles. The great Rishies, the most pious and virtuous people, the deliverers of humanity, have suffered untold miseries, and may one ask for what fault of theirs? Were all these Prophets, Rishis and Mahatmas the greatest offenders of their time? An answer, consistent with the transmigration theory, will be simply shocking even to its staunchest adherents. Again, the question may be viewed from a different standpoint. In all the civilized countries, even in the semi-barbaric states, punishments are inflicted on the guilty after informing them of their guilt, so that they themselves and the world at large may realize that the commission of such and such crimes elicits such and such punishments. But what purpose on earth is served by punishing an offender for unknown crimes committed in an unknown state of existence? The advocates of this theory have unconsciously detached the quality of wisdom from God, in order to clear Him from the imaginary charge of cruelty.

Islam has, however, solved this mystery and has expounded the loving aspect of Divine character in quite a new light. It stands in its naked beauty, perfect in glory and splendour, as will appear from the verse quoted at the beginning of this article, which I quote again. "And We will most certainly try you (or disclose your hidden qualities) with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits; and give good news to the patient, who, when a misfortune befalls them, say: Surely we are Allah's, and to Him we shall surely return. Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the followers of the right course." Thus the diverse misfortunes that befall a man emanate from the Divine Will, and are not due to the malice, rage or caprice of a malignant deity. They are, on the contrary, indicative of the intention of a loving and patronizing Providence, who wants to reform, develop and perfect the character of man. Certainly for the development of our character we need occasions for practice. In the absence of danger we all are equally brave; but at the appearance of danger there will be few whose hearts will not throb. We are loyal and faithful to those whom we profess to love, but when an opportunity comes and our loyalty is put to test, how many of us succeed in the trial? Patience

BLESSINGS OF MISFORTUNES

is the noblest quality, and one would like to write volumes in its panegyric, but a little bereavement or a small accident will perhaps throw him into a delirium. Our noblest qualities come into play only then, "when God tries us with fear, hunger, loss of property and lives." It is simply the development of our character and display of our potential powers which are aimed at in causing misfortunes to visit us in this life.

The second principle underlying the worldly mishaps, as is clear from the above verse, is that the object of a Muslim's life is resignation to the will of God and implicit obedience to his Commander. But this resignation and obedience can never be better shown than by a person whose heart is most sorely afflicted by a most frightful accident, but he neither loses his head nor heart and speaks out calmly, "Surely we are Allah's and to Him we shall surely return." The whole life of a Muslim, with all its aspects and activities, his range of action, his discharge of duties and responsibilities, his enjoyment of pleasure and comfort, his natural devotion and patriotic exertions, his domestic affairs and family ties all are governed by his desire to be obedient to God. This is what the Qur-án has taught him thirteen hundred years ago, in the most picturesque way in the following verse:—"Say my prayer and my sacrifice, nay my life and my death are all for the sake of God who is the Lord of the worlds." In order to develop this spirit of obedience and resignation it was necessary to throw him into the hardest trial and to put his love for God to the sorest test. If, under the pressure of the heavy circumstances he murmurs not, but attains to the consolation of the heart which is given expression to in the words "Surely we are Allah's and to Him we shall surely return," it is then and then only that the voice of God calls him aloud, saying, "O soul that art at rest! return to your Lord, well-pleased (with Him), well-pleasing (Him); so enter among My servants, and enter into My garden" (Qur-án, ch. lxxxix, v. 27-30).

Then we are told in the same verse the peculiar effect on the heart of man who has, after suffering great pains, directed his attention towards his Lord and got strength and inspiration from the Divine source. These very pains and miseries which came to tear him up are instantaneously transmuted into blessings and become expressions of Divine mercy, because they are calculated to improve, develop and strengthen his character. "Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the followers of the right course." They understand the spirit of these misfortunes and construct them under the light of Divine inspiration and are therefore rightly guided.

Is this an Utopian philosophy which looks majestic in

the eyes of the world of theory, but dwindles into a clumsy and haggard shape when applied to the world of practice? Certainly not. Every moment of the Prophet's life is a practical illustration of his teachings. Prophets and philosophers there are many. Each has left his noble teachings and pithy maxims. But the whole annals of human history fail to supply us with a single example other than the Arabian Prophet, where we can see (minutely identified) the verbal teachings with the practical illustrations to the smallest details of life. The Prophet of Arabia was a practical teacher. He himself practised what he preached.

Muhammad (peace be upon his revered soul) was born after his father died. He was deprived of his mother when he was only six years old. This seemingly helpless orphan of Arabia was destined to change and control the destinies of so many millions of human beings, and to become the greatest of all prophets, the noblest of all the teachers, the truest of all the friends of humanity, the most successful reformer of the world. At every stage of his life he met with difficulties, the very conception of which is so alarming. But he always relied on a God who was ever his Sustainer, Nourisher and Perfecter. His children died before his eyes. His most beloved and most loving wife, Khadija, died in his life-time. His uncle, who was a great support to him when the opposition was raging high, left him for ever at a time when the fury and number of his foes knew no bounds. Once more he was left alone in the most terrible circumstances. But he was never daunted. He remained firm and resolute, with the result that the numberless hordes of his enemies were vanquished. The whole of Arabia was at his feet. He was the proclaimed king of the Arabs, who previously knew not what unity and federation meant. He it was who taught them, "Hold fast by the covenant of Allah all together and be not disunited, and remember the favour of Allah on you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts so by His favour you became brethren; and you were on the brink of a pit of fire, then He saved you from it; thus does Allah make clear to you His communications that you may follow the right way" (Qur-án, ch. iii, v. 102). Such was the prophet of Arabia whose love is still inspiring one-fourth of the human population.

The subject under discussion can be more clearly elucidated by referring to the first words of the prayer offered to the funeral bier by the friends of a deceased. It is enjoined upon the Muslims to begin their funeral prayer with the following words: "All praise be unto God, Who is the Nourisher, the Sustainer and Perfecter of all the worlds." Imagine a man afflicted with the shock of his father's death. The corpse is not yet buried. The

THE CHARACTER OF MUHAMMAD

very fountain of his help and strength has just dried. His imagination depicts before him, in dark colours, the future difficulties of his life. His great source of consolation is no more. New duties and responsibilities devolve upon him. Just at that moment when melancholic thoughts are surging in his bosom he gets up and offers prayer to God, saying, "All praise be unto God, Who is the Nourisher, the Sustainer and the Perfecter of all the worlds." At once truth dawns upon his mind and he is reminded of the self-evident fact that the deceased was not in reality his nourisher, sustainer and perfecter, but there was another being, Omnipotent and Omniscient, who nourishes all His creatures, and that the deceased himself was a small creature of the same Power. It was God Who commanded the deceased to render him the temporary support. He it will be Who shall again derive some means for the growth of His living creature, and that in the very death of his father lie the germs of his moral growth. Self-reliance and self-dependence will undergo further development. The virtue of patience will attain to its perfection. Thus is consoled the heart of a bereaved Muslim whose faith in God grows stronger at the happening of misfortunes. And this consolation does not come from the dogmas enunciated in a beautiful language, but it draws its force from the Life of the Prophet, which is a series of illustrations of the lofty teachings inculcated in the Holy Qur-án.

THE CHARACTER OF MUHAMMAD

By MASUD ALI VARESI

I

MUHAMMAD'S CHILDHOOD

OF the early days of this greatest personality we know but little. Who could then dream that in him lay dormant all the moral and spiritual powers of the highest and purest order, to entitle him to be called in no distant future as the last and the pride of the prophets: that he would render a wonderful change in the geographical divisions not only of Arabia but that of the whole world, and would impart to it the highest and noblest perfection of truth in thoughts, words and deeds. It is, however, an admitted fact that in his cradle and childhood he showed signs of extraordinary strength of moral character, and all those virtues becoming the greatest man.

No authenticated traditions furnish us with any details of those virtues and facts which eagerly prompted all the

leading men of the day to accord him all possible esteem and affection, and so we are not in a position to know more than the barest outline. The venerable Shaikh (chief) of the *Quraish* community, the aged man of eighty—Abdul-Muttalib—was so strongly attached to this six years old child that he would not for a moment tolerate to part with him. The sacred trust of this venerable man is transferred to Abu-Talib, who cannot stick to Mecca, but has to make long journeys to distant lands and towns for commercial reasons, but under no circumstances he is willing to leave his beloved nephew even temporarily in Mecca, but takes him along with him with fostering care and tender solicitude. It may perhaps be contended that it was because of the love and affection which an uncle should bear to his deceased brother's motherless child left alone in the world to carve out his own career, but this at once proves that Muhammad possessed exceptional charms of good manners and spiritual power, and something supernatural to make himself so popular and to command universal love and respect at so tender an age.

This ratiocination is based on no partial judgment, but is in consonance with all those facts of the Prophet's early days handed down to us from reliable traditions and authenticated works. The Ahadis (traditions) are at one that the Prophet had no tendency at all towards games and sports in his childhood. His natural turn of mind had made him absolutely indifferent to indulgences of a worldly order. It is stated by Ibne Abbas that Abu-Talib's children came out in the mornings in dirty clothes, but Muhammad (peace be on him) was always seen decent and tidy. He never shared in their quarrels. He always had his meals with a dignified seriousness, although other children entered upon quarrels and snatched the morsels from one another. The result of this early upkeep of excellent character was that Abu-Talib would not allow him to mix with other children in meals. (Khasaes-e-Kubra lis Seoti.)

Umme Aiman says that she never heard him complaining of hunger or thirst. He used to drink some *Zamzam* water in the morning. It occasionally happened that whenever he was persuaded by them to eat something, he would meekly say, "I won't eat. I am not hungry." (Khasaes-e-Kubra lis Seoti.)

Once in narrating the facts and recollections of his childhood, the Prophet said, "In my childhood, also, it never occurred to me to take part in the absurd and contemptible occupations of the 'Period of Ignorance' save on two occasions, and on these two also God the Almighty kept me off from actually sharing in them. The children of the *Quraish* community and I used to graze our different goats. One day I said to a shepherd-boy, 'If you would

THE CHARACTER OF MUHAMMAD

kindly look after my goats as well, I may, too, go to the town to hear romances.' Accordingly, when I approached the floor of a house in Mecca, I heard mingled voices of singing and music. On enquiry, I learnt that it was all in connection with a marriage ceremony. I set my ears to it, but the very sound of it made me asleep. I had so sound a sleep that I woke up till late the next morning. I returned to my chum and told him the story. The next evening, I did the same and went to hear the music. But the same happened, and I got up when it was broad daylight. When I returned to my friend, he asked me what I had done. I was speechless out of shame (for I had passed the second night also without partaking of the nuptial rejoicings). God is my witness that excepting this I never determined to partake of the peculiar ways and characteristics of the 'Period of Ignorance'." (Khasaes-e-Kubra.)

These facts happened long before he had attained maturity. His unassuming modesty, even in the days of ignorance, can no better be illustrated than as follows. Once the members of the *Quraish* community were carrying slabs of stones to repair the *Kaaba*. In those days, it was not at all indecent to walk naked, but he always used to wrap a cloth round him. His uncle, Abbas, fearing lest the heavy stones might bruise his shoulders, addressed him thus: "If you take off that cloth, I may put it on your shoulders to protect them from any possible injury." With these words, Abbas snatched the cloth. Muhammad's remorse at the shame of his nakedness was so revolting to him that he at once fell on the ground unconscious. Thereafter he was never seen naked. (Bokharee and Khasaes-e-Kubra.)

Though we know but little of his early days, still his chastity, truthfulness, dignity of character and fairness in dealings can best be ascertained by the fact that, with the common consent of the people, he had, when budding up into youth, received the rare and most coveted title of *Ameen* (trustee), from so aristocratic and conceited a people as the *Quraish*, and was always elected as the arbiter of their disputes, especially when the outlook was overcast with the most gloomy and terrible forebodings.

The tradition goes on to say that when the *Kaaba* was burnt and the Meccans began to fell it down to restore it again, a dispute arose among the different families as to who would have the privilege of picking up the *Sange-Aswad* (the Black Stone) and fixing it in its right place. The stone was held very sacred long before the advent of Islam, and every family and clan had the foremost desire of having the honour of placing it where it should be. The controversy assumed such tremendous proportions as to bring about inevitable bloodshed. It was, however, fortu-

nately unanimously agreed upon that whosoever attended the place first, should be made an arbitrator and his word should have the force of law for the final settlement of the dispute. To the good luck of the people Muhammad (peace be on him) appeared on the spot shortly after this decision. The assembly was elated with pleasure to see him and welcomed him with a hearty applause. "Here comes Muhammad. He is the *Ameen*. We leave it to him to decide the question," resounded all in a chorus. Muhammad (peace be on him) saved the situation. His most admirable intelligence and keen foresight made them obedient to his will. The facts of the dispute were narrated before him. When the hearing was over, Muhammad spread his sheet, placed the Black Stone on it, and ordered that all the headmen of the different clans should catch hold of the corners of the sheet and carry it to where the Stone should be fixed. Thus, nobody had the slightest complaint to make. They were all reconciled. The most ordinary friction, if allowed to develop, should have caused the most sanguinary bloodshed and a civil war of a long duration in the days of ignorance. Through Muhammad's wise counsel the darkest clouds passed off and the crisis ended in an amicable settlement. Muhammad has said: "God is my witness that I am an *Ameen* both in heaven and on earth as well." (Shafa.)

Impressed by Muhammad's beautiful nature, sterling worth and characteristic virtues, which had already gained him an enviable reputation far and wide, Hazrat Khadija (peace be on her), a wealthy lady, deputed him as the controller of her commercial enterprizes and the head of her caravan bound for Syria, on two different occasions, although he was a little over twenty years of age only. Her direct dealings with him in commercial employment perfectly convinced her of the truth of all the good things that were said about him. His innumerable virtues so deeply impressed her that she, in spite of her wealth and affluence and high dignity in society, preferred him to be her suitable husband above all the other great men and the nobility of Mecca rolling in wealth, and who so devoutly longed for her hand in marriage. He was only a poor man, but transcended all others in character, and this was the strongest recommendation for him. This one fact in itself is the best and most reliable testimony to demonstrate that his rare virtues held his contemporaries spellbound, and he commanded universal respect and love, the like of which is little known in history. This marriage relieved him of his poverty. But this was the most critical time of his life. Youth and wealth are the greatest test of a man's character. It is a plain truth that want and penury are the great causes of a man's saintly character. Muhammad

THE CHARACTER OF MUHAMMAD

(peace be on him) had received no Divine message up to this time, but his sudden affluence merely helped him to devote his spare hours in devotion to God with redoubled energy and ardour. The time he devoted in earning his livelihood was now utilized in the contemplation of the Deity and His secrets. Now he used to go out to a cave called the *Ghar-e-Hera* and spend days and days therein in rapturous devotion. The whole month of Ramazan specially was spent there. (Sirat-e-Ibne-Hesham.)

It is transparently clear that from the cradle to the grave, nature had ordained him for the Divine service, for which God the Almighty had selected him in the very eternity without a beginning, and for which time was a matter of question only.

Here it would suffice to relate one important event to show the deep influence he had already exercised, before he became a Prophet, on his antagonists also, with the strength of his moral character and his sundry virtues. They left no stone unturned to injure his good reputation, and did all they could to give him a bad name, but they had to surrender to the truth engulfing this greatest man. Abu Sufyan says: "When Muhammad invited Heraclius, the Emperor of Greeks, to embrace Islam, I had also gone to Syria in connection with commercial affairs. Heraclius sent for us in the city of Ailia to question us about him. We attended the royal court. The leading gentry of Rūm were sitting close to Heraclius. The Emperor sent for an interpreter and ordered him to put the following questions to us. 'Is any one of you a relation of this man who claims to be a prophet?' 'I am a near relation of him,' I answered. Hearing this, he called me close to him and ordered my companions to stand behind me. 'Tell these men that I want to put certain questions to this man (Abu Sufyan) about this affair, and direct them to object if he spoke a lie,' ordered the king to the interpreter. I swear by God that I couldn't speak a lie on account of the presence of my companions, for I feared that my slightest lie would make them spread wild report that I was a liar. I had therefore no other alternative than to speak truth. Heraclius first of all asked me about the descent of Muhammad."

I.—He is the noblest man in descent amongst us.

HERACLIUS.—Has any of you ever before this laid such a claim?

I.—No.

HERACLIUS.—Has any of his predecessors been a king?

I.—No.

HERACLIUS.—What sort of men are his followers? Are they respectable and leading men or poor and humble?

I.—Poor and humble.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

HERACLIUS.—Is their number increasing or decreasing ?

I.—They are swelling in number every day.

HERACLIUS.—Has any of them after once embracing this faith become an apostate ?

I.—No.

HERACLIUS.—Has any of you ever attributed falsehood to him before his claim to being a prophet ?

I.—No.

HERACLIUS.—Has he ever broken a pledge ?

I.—No. But we have lately made a truce with him temporarily. Now it is a matter of question what he is going to do in this interval.

Excepting this last fact I could get no other chance to say against him. Then the Emperor asked me if I had ever fought against him.

I.—Yes, several times.

HERACLIUS.—With what result ?

I.—We are against one another. Sometimes we have succeeded against him, and sometimes he has defeated us.

HERACLIUS.—What does he want you to do ? And what are his doctrines to which he claims your allegiance ?

I.—He commands us to worship the one God only, join none with Him, and to relinquish the teachings of our forefathers. Besides this he asks us to offer our prayers, to speak truth, to lead a chaste life and to observe the rights of others.

Thereupon Heraclius said to the interpreter : ' Tell this man as follows : I asked thee about this man and thou answered that he is of noble descent. Well, before this all the prophets of the bygone days have also been of noble descent. Then I asked thee if any member of thy community has ever before this made such a claim ? And thou answered in the negative. If thou hadst affirmed this fact, I could have inferred from it that he is imitating his predecessor. Then I questioned thee if any of his forefathers had been a king ? Thou replied in the negative. If thou hadst said that such was the case I could have presumed that he is laying his claim to his ancestral kingdom. This was followed by the question if thou hadst laid a claim of falsehood against him before this ? And thou said, ' No.' I can infer from this that he who does not lie before a man should not make misrepresentations against God also. Then I interrogated thee about his followers, and thou answered that they are poor and humble people. History is an evidence of the fact that such are the men who have been the first followers of prophets. I questioned thee afterwards about their progress or fall in number. Thou testified to their increasing number. In fact such is the case with faith, with the result that ultimately it attains perfection. I asked thee thereupon if any of his followers had become

THE CHARACTER OF MUHAMMAD

an apostate? Thou said, 'No.' There is not a quota of doubt that faith having once entered into hearts never gets out. Then I questioned thee if he had ever broken his pledge. Thou said, 'No.' Certainly prophets always keep their word. Then I asked thee about his teachings. Thou said that he directs you all to worship one God and forbids you from the worship of idols, and directs you to resort to prayers, truth and chastity. If thou speakest truth, he is sure to become one day the king of this place, where we are. We already knew that such a man would make his appearance, but we never dreamed that he would be one of you." (Bokhari.)

There is an Arab maxim that "the best recommendation is one which the enemies even entertain." It is an admitted fact that Abu-Jahl, Abu-Lahab and Abu-Sufyan were the inveterate and bitterest enemies of Muhammad (peace be on him). It is a different thing if one does or does not place his trust in the arguments of Heraclius, but there is no gainsaying the fact that his high qualities before he became a prophet were in exact keeping with those of a prophet.

II

MUHAMMAD'S PLAIN LIVING

FROM a worldly standpoint, Muhammad's (peace be on him) life from the cradle to the grave is a wonderful record in its different aspects, in its ups and downs. He had lost his father before he was born. He had not even attained the age when a child can roughly form a rational judgment about the consequences of his acts, when the untimely death of his devoted mother deprived him of her loving embrace. In a word, his childhood was a period of endless misfortunes. In his youth also he suffered for several years from want and poverty. At last, at the age of forty, the merciful God conferred on him the services of the Divine Mission, i.e. he became a prophet—a status with which no earthly riches or the highest worldly honours and ranks can be compared at all. But it was by no means an easy duty to discharge. He had to face insurmountable difficulties and a horde of inveterate enemies. The aggression of his kinsfolk became unbearable, and after suffering a regular persecution of ten years the only alternative he had to choose was to leave his home and make a flight. By and by the times changed, and after years of disappointments, circumstances arose contributing to the completion of the prophetic mission by the grace of God. Then came the time when the cries of *La Elaha il Lallah, Muhammad-ar-Rasul-al-Lah* (There is no god but God, and Muhammad is His Prophet) resounded beyond the boundaries of Arabia, and with lightning

speed burst upon the very palaces of Heraclius and Chosroes. Amidst all these revolutions and vicissitudes there is one outstanding feature of the Prophet's life which cannot be overlooked. It is the plain living and the humility of his nature which characterized his prosperous and triumphant years all through. When he was penniless, he was contented. When Providence favoured him with matchless glory and riches in profusion, he was the same simple and plain Muhammad without the least touch of pride, conceit, affectation or a luxuriant appearance. And it was next to impossible to let such imposing greatness affect him when he looked upon the worldly belongings and dignities as wholly worthless and absolutely insignificant. The Qur-ân-e-Shareef expressly pronounces its judgment on this point. It says: "Wealth and children are an ornament of the worldly life, and the surviving charitable acts are better in the eye of thy Lord as regards Divine merit and hope."

Exactly as he did graze the goats in his childhood, he used to milk them when an empire was at his feet. Little importance can be attached to the milking of goats when the Prophet did not care to ask his attendants to perform any of his private works. He always did his works personally. Hazrat Ayesha (peace be on her) says: "He never distinguished himself in the performance of worldly things as against others, but he used to perform his domestic duties exactly as you do perform them in your houses. He himself milked his goats. He himself used to sew his clothes. He himself stitched his shoes. In a word, he used to do all his personal works himself." (Bokhari and Tirmizi.)

It occurred many times that if any one unscrupulously blew his nose or spitted in the mosque, he silently overlooked this most unpleasant affair and cleaned the pavement himself, and addressed them thus: "When anyone of you stands to say his prayers, he rather whispers to his God and the Creator stands between him and the *Qibla*. You must therefore never spit before you in the mosque." (Bokhari.)

When the Prophet's mosque was being erected in Medina, he shared all the works of its construction, in so far as he fetched like ordinary labourers bricks for it. (Bokhari.)

Likewise in "the battle of the ditch" he helped others in the digging of a trench and did not feel reluctant in carrying loads of the earth and in breaking stones. At last his chest was full of dust. (Bokhari.)

Shortly speaking he never felt ashamed in the performance of his works, but rather always helped others in their work. He never drew a line of demarcation between himself and his humblest servant as far as work was concerned.

As to his food, he ate barley bread. (Bokhari and Tirmizi.) He had no filter to separate the chaff from flour, so the

THE CHARACTER OF MUHAMMAD

chaff was cleared off by blowing it. Beyond this, he could tolerate no other flavour or any fastidiousness in his kitchen. (Tirmizi.) But the greatest wonder lies in the fact that occasionally this even was not available to him. Accordingly it is related by Hazrat Ayesha (peace be on her) that in his lifetime the Prophet, his wives and children never had even barley bread sometimes for two consecutive days, to their heart's content.

On another occasion, she declared : " We who constituted the family of the Prophet could not sometimes light a fire in our homes for a month together (i.e. could not cook our food because of chill penury), and had to live simply on dates and water." (Shafa.)

Abu-Talha says : " Once we attended the Court of the Prophet, complained of hunger, lifted our skirts, and in demonstration of our request showed our stomachs with stones fastened on them. The Prophet, in order to reconcile us, lifted his own skirt, and we saw that there were two stones attached to his stomach." (Mishkat.)

Another tradition says that Masruq, the foster-brother of Hazrat Ayesha, called on her. She sent for food and said : " Whenever I eat to my satisfaction, I feel as if I would weep." Her foster-brother questioned her about the cause of this grief. " It reminds me of the Prophet, who in his lifetime—God stands my witness—never had his food two times a day to his heart's content," she answered. (Tirmizi.)

Hazrat Uns (peace be on him) says that " The Prophet throughout his life never had his food on table-cloth and never ate a bread of filtered fine flour." (Tirmizi.)

Abu-Huraira says that " he never looked upon any food with contempt, but ungrudgingly ate what was available. And in case he was not hungry he did not eat." (Bokhari.)

His clothing consisted of shirt, mantle, a cloth to wrap round the legs or trousers, and turban. Usually all these things used to be of cotton and of ordinary stuff. He had forbidden his male followers to use silk. His garment was stripped of any show or splendour whatever. His sandals were of leather, to which were attached two straps to be tied in fingers.

The bed he used is worthy of notice. They asked Hazrat Ayesha of the bed which the Prophet used in her house. " It was made of very rough leather, filled in with the bark of palm trees," she answered. (Bokhari and Tirmizi.)

The same question was put to Hazrat Hafsa, and she said that " it was a piece of sackcloth, which I used to double, and on it the Prophet used to rest. One night I thought that the cloth, if made into four layers, would be more comfortable. Accordingly I did it, and when the morning dawned I was questioned by him as to the nature of the

bed that was made for me for the night. 'It was the same piece of sackcloth, but I had made four layers of it in order to make you more comfortable.' 'No,' the Prophet answered, 'Make it just the same as it was before. It held me off last night from saying my night prayers.' (Tirmizi.)

The Prophet did not feel ashamed to ride on a donkey. Accordingly the day the Khaibar was conquered he rode on a donkey, with bridles of the bark of palm tree. Uns says that "when he went to make a Haj, pilgrimage, the pack-saddles were so old as to cost, according to my calculation, not more than four Dirhams (one rupee)." (Shafa.)

This is a brief sketch of his plain living. Now to the directions he made to his relations to lead their lives. It is related by Hazrat Ali that once Hazrat Fatema heard that the Prophet had some slave. She was suffering with painful blisters on her hand, as she had to revolve the handmill with her own hands for grinding purposes. She approached the Prophet to ask for the slave. He was not at home, so she told the whole story to Hazrat Ayesha and returned to her house. When the Prophet came back, Hazrat Ayesha told him about the visit of his daughter. He immediately went to see Hazrat Fatema, and having seated her and Hazrat Ali (her husband) by his side, addressed them as follows. "Let me teach you something better than the possession of a slave. Listen. When you go to bed, repeat Subhan-Allah 33 times, Alhamdo-Lillah 33 times, and Allah-o-Akbar 34 times. This is better for you than a servant." (Bokhari.)

These are the barest outlines of the Prophet's most simple life. He exclaimed before he died: "My inheritors shall have nothing in cash." (Tirmizi.)

In fact he had nothing of the worldly trash to be inherited by his heirs. He had an iron-armour which was mortgaged to a Jew for thirty Dirhams. He had not so much cash as to redeem it. (Bokhari.)

The only property he left after him were some weapons, a mule and a plot of land. And these also he ordered to be given in charity.

Is not the life of the Prophet praiseworthy and full of appreciable sanctity? It is no wonder if millions of men have been willing to sacrifice their lives to demonstrate their regard and appreciation of such high and unprecedented virtues and self-denial, with unmitigated sincerity, zeal and fervour.

"And peace be on him on the day he was born, on the day he died, and on the day of his resurrection." (The Qur-án.)

Such was the plain living and simple life of the man against whom blind and shameless accusations are laid that he raised his sword merely for the realization of his personal

THE CHARACTER OF MUHAMMAD

objects and individual desires, for establishing an empire and for raising himself to a high rank, and in the garb of religion allowed the blood of nations to be spilt. There could be no more disgraceful and cowardly attack in view of the noblest example the Prophet has laid for the world. Had he done all this for self-glorification? Does his simple life afford us the slightest evidence to corroborate the accusations? Was not his life full of endless miseries and troubles even in the days when he was lord and monarch of a vast empire? Can the history of the world furnish us with a single illustration of a man who was able to establish a permanent empire with worldly aims and ideals, retaining his simplicity of life and suffering a series of unending calamities till his dying moments? There is not one instance in the pages of history of such a man. There are men who have led a miserable life without ever being lifted to the head of an empire. There are men who have ascended a throne after they have suffered a good deal, but never have they been able to retain the piety that distinguishes them as men of real eminence. They may perhaps come forward to lay the example of Buddha in support of their contention, who gave up his kingdom and led a simple life. I would most emphatically declare that those who proudly claim themselves to be the meanest slaves of Muhammad have done like Buddha. Ibraheem Adham, the King of Balakh, and Shah Shuja of Kirman, etc., etc., are examples of men who have looked upon themselves as the meanest slaves of the beggars of the mausoleum of Muhammad. Islam does not lack in supplying us with such examples. It is a fact that the life of Muhammad was unrivalled for its sanctity; its simplicity of character being of the highest and noblest stamp, and ordained so by God the Almighty.

III

THE Prophet's plainness and simplicity of life has been already dealt with in the foregoing pages. It should be borne in mind that this austerity was not due to want of riches or helplessness. The proceeds of the *Fidak* garden, the Khyber and the fifth portion of the revenues were quite sufficient to meet his requirements. His poverty cannot be attributed to seclusion, isolation from the world and the unmarried life of an anchorite. These were expressly held illegal by him, for they deprive a man of the rightful discharge of duties involved on him and practically lead one to shift his burdens on others. The Prophet acted as an ordinary mortal in his absolute abhorrence of the farcical, ambitious and presumptuous side of life, in his rejection of physical comforts, in his self-sacrifice, self-denial and deep love for humanity. Here, we have, however, to scrutinize the

ISLAMIC REVIEW

attitude he held towards his relations and dependents, in spite of his unrivalled piety and boundless humility.

There is a well-known saying that a man can never be a hero in the eyes of his dependents. In his relations with the outer world other than domestic, he may maintain the most dignified appearance, may predominate his fellow-beings with his influence, but he cannot do the same within the four walls of his home and in private. A man, in his domestic life, is most likely to expose to detection his rudeness, harshness, fickle-mindedness, his weakness and the vulnerable points in his character in the very minor details of the daily routine of his life. Holding it as an inviolable criterion, we should test the centrifugal aspect of his character towards his devoted votaries with the help of the following authenticated traditions.

Uns (of blessed memory), a servant of the Holy Prophet, says: "I attended upon the Prophet when I was eight years old, and I served him regularly for ten years, but throughout this period the Prophet never scolded me and never reprimanded me for the doing or omission of an act." (Mishkat.)

Again he says: "The Prophet was benevolently polite. Once he commanded me to go to a certain place, but I refused to do so simply because it was the Prophet's command. Subsequently I walked out and reached the *bazar* where some children were playing. There the Prophet came and laid his hand on my neck. When I turned back I saw him smiling. "Well, Uns, did you go to where I asked you to go?" he said. "I am going there, O Messenger of God," I responded. (Mishkat.)

The Medinites frequently brought jugs full of water early in the morning, and asked him to dip his hand in them for the sake of blessing. And the Prophet was so polite as to do it gladly even when winter reached its climax. Even the poorest and the humblest would lead him to wherever they liked, and he would never feel reluctant or think it derogatory to his position to accompany them to their destination. (Mishkat.)

It is related on the authority of Uns that never an indecent or absurd remark emanated from the Prophet's lips: he would never curse any one; would never impeach any one. If his anger reached its highest pitch, he would only pass the pregnant remark, "What has become of him? May his forehead become dusty." (Bokhari.)

Abu-Horaira (peace be on him) says that the people asked him to invoke the wrath of God on the infidels. "I have come not to curse, but God has sent me as an embodiment of kindness." (Mishkat.)

The Prophet has ruled that the best criterion of a man's goodness and sweet manners lay in his domestic relations. He has accordingly declared: "The best amongst

THE CHARACTER OF MUHAMMAD

you are those who are amicably disposed towards the members of their household." (Mishkat.)

He himself was naturally and practically the noblest example of this principle. He was very kind to his relations and adherents. He entered into wedlock with Hazrat Khadija in the prime of his youth. She was fifteen years older than he and, comparatively speaking, had passed the prime of her youth. In spite of this his association with her for full twenty years is a perfect and most appreciable illustration of the most tender-hearted and harmonious relations that should exist between a husband and a wife. During this pretty long period nothing happened to afford the slightest cause of unpleasantness to her. After her death, when the Prophet had to marry different ladies for causes suited to the occasion other than the personal gratification of his desires, the lady friends of the late lamented Hazrat Khadija (the Prophet's first wife) were the first distinguished sharers of the offerings that were made to God by the Prophet. He always spoke of her with undying love and affection, inasmuch as to arouse the emulation of Hazrat Ayesha, the most beloved wife of the Prophet. But practically speaking, his deep love was not confined to Hazrat Khadija only. The Almighty God had engrafted in his nature all the ennobling virtues in their highest perfection. After the death of Hazrat Khadija, the number of his wives rose to nine, but his equity and good conscience and his benevolent treatment never gave them cause to regret or to entertain any form of complaint against him. Keeping these facts in view we should not ignore for a moment the poverty and the simplicity that constituted the integral factor of his life. This affords us sufficient food to reflect on and adore his charming manners and courtesy. As a matter of fact the chilling penury that reigned in his home should have made his wives envious of one another for very trivial matters, but they were all happy with their lot. Was it not a miracle? God had expressly asked his beloved Prophet to convey to them His Divine words :—" O Prophet, tell thy wives that if you desire the worldly life and its spring (fruits), do come, I bestow on you the riches of the world and amicably sever my connection with you. And if you give preference to God and His Messenger and the home in the next world—then certainly God has ordained magnanimous compensation to those of you who lead a virtuous life." This Divine message being conveyed to them, none of them could tolerate the idea of giving up the delightful company of the Prophet. Even if it be taken for granted that those revered ladies looked upon one another with envious looks, which they never did, they simply tried their utmost to excel in contributing to the happiness of the Prophet and to convert their poor home into a paradise. Never in their wedded

life with the Prophet did they entertain the slightest wish for physical comfort and worldly delights. On the other hand, the Prophet never overlooked justice being administered to them. He always observed their rights and privileges, and treated them most generously and compassionately. To corroborate the testimony of this fact, Hazrat Ayesha has stated that the Prophet was free from any form of indecency or absurdity: he was never harsh, never returned evil for evil, but always practised forbearance and pardoned liberally. Hazrat Ali says that the Prophet was very broad-minded, most truthful, extremely tender-hearted and intensely polite. If any member of his family or his companions or friends called him, he would always, irrespective of age or rank, tenderly respond, "Labbaik," i.e., "I am at your service, I am at your service."

He had great love for little children. Accordingly he used to seat his granddaughter Amama (by his daughter Hazrat Zainab) on his shoulder or in his lap, and say his prayers. When he bent in prayers to lay his hands on his knees, he would seat the child on one side, and when he would sit in prayers, he would take her again. (Bokhari.)

To extend such an endearing treatment in prayers to a child is demonstrative of his high standard of love and liberality towards the innocent. To give it a philosophical bearing, it may be explained that in doing so, he, perhaps by personal illustration, wanted to impress the people with the honour due to females and not to wrench from them their prerogatives and rights they were entitled to. His deep affection and fostering solicitude to his little granddaughter may have been meant to sweep off the demoralizing disrespect prevalent among the Arabs of the day to the fair sex. The Arabs in those days looked upon their daughters very contemptuously, they undervalued them, they took them as a tremendous calamity, a source of recurring indignity and a blot on their honour and position. The leading men and the aristocrats of Arabia felt it an ineffaceable shame to have a daughter. The character of Muhammad (peace be on him) deserves an everlasting gratitude of the world to have effaced that broad and intelligible, but shameful line drawn by certain nations of those days between the stronger and the weaker sex. He loved his grandsons Hasan and Husain very dearly. His affection was not limited to his grandchildren only. He loved this tiny creation without any distinction. Whenever any child approached him, he would tenderly seat it in his lap. They passed water on him, but he was always regardless of it. He would chew dates, and when softened, he would give them to eat and pray for their good luck. (Bokhari.)

Hazrat Uns says that the Prophet used to frequently play with his (Uns') little brother Abu Omair. The latter

THE CHARACTER OF MUHAMMAD

had tamed a nightingale (Bul-Bul), and had great liking for it. The Prophet used to ask Abu Omair about the welfare of the bird. (Bokhari.)

Ibne Abbas states that once the Prophet went to Mecca. The children of Bani Abdul-Muttalib went running to welcome him. He very affectionately rode with them, having seated one of them in front and another behind him. (Bokhari.)

The strongest argument in favour of his kindness and compassion towards little children lies in his own statement, which runs thus: "When I stand up for prayers, I feel to prolong them, but in the course of praying whenever I hear a child crying, I curtail them, for to me it is very unbecoming to be harsh on the mother of the child, for I cannot bear the idea of keeping the mother engaged in prayer and let the child cry." (Bokhari.)

This conclusively proves that, in the eyes of the Prophet, tender care and affectionate treatment of children are of greater merit than prolonged prayers and devotion.

Jarpir, son of Abdullah, states: "The Prophet never disallowed me entering the precincts of his house since I became a Moslem. Whenever he saw me he smiled. He also used to be witty with his companions, and used to take part in their society and conversation. He played with children and gave them a seat in his lap. He accepted with equal politeness the invitation of the free, the slave and the indigent. He called on the sick living in the remotest corners of the town. He would entertain a plea if made by any one as to his helplessness. (Shafa.)

The charms of his manners were not restricted to the Musalmans only. He was kind to all, irrespective of caste or creed. Accordingly Uns narrates: "The son of a Jew served him. Accidentally the boy fell ill. The Prophet went to see him and took a seat near his head. Then he invited the boy to embrace Islam. The boy winked at his father close to him. *The Jew directed the son to act on the Prophet's bidding.* The boy became a convert to Islam, which made the Prophet happy. When he came out, he exclaimed, "Thanks to God, the boy is saved from the torments of Hell." (Bokhari.)

It is obvious that the conversion of the boy to Islam during his last moments was of no personal advantage to the Prophet. But his efforts in this direction and his happiness subsequent to the success achieved was purely the outcome of his universal altruism and sincerest solicitude for the spiritual welfare of humanity. Uns says that the Prophet never withdrew his head unless a man finished his whispering speech. He never of his own accord withdrew his hands when shaking them with others. He never stretched his feet against others. He was the first to say

ISLAMIC REVIEW

greetings and shake hands. He gave a reverent reception to every one who paid a visit to him, and often spread his sheet for him and seated him on it. If the visitor declined for the sake of formality, he would insist till he was comfortably seated. He never called the names of his companions, for the sake of reverence, but always called them by their patronymic or title and always gave them affectionate and endearing epithets. He never intruded upon others in their speech. If any one passed an unpleasant remark he would prohibit him from doing so, or stood up in order that the other party might be convinced of the rudeness of his speech and stop it. (Shafa.)

His standard politeness and elaborate manners are best evidenced by the fact that he curtailed his prayers if anyone called on him. When he finished them in part, he would attend to the visitor and having done for him what he could do, resumed his prayers. (Shafa.) This happened in *Nafil* (optional) prayers only, because the *Farz* (compulsory) prayers were said in the mosque. In compulsory or mandatory prayers a devotee is by no means entitled to make any curtailment. In optional or directory prayers the Prophet's example is the best guide.

Abdullah, son of Haris, says that he found no human being more polite and charming in manners than the Prophet.

In a word, he gave practical and most assuring proofs of the Divine words: "And We have sent thee an embodiment of kindness for all the inhabitants of the world." The stretch of this Islamic courtesy does not exclude even the opponents and the enemies of Islam.

(To be continued.)

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