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THE HOLY QUR-ÁN

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 مُحَمَّدٌ وَآلُهُ عَلَى سُلَّةٍ الْكَرِيمِ

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

ZILHAJJA, 1343 A.H.

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NOTES

Eid-ul-Fitr, 1925.

The Festival of Eid-ul-Fitr, of which a detailed account appears elsewhere in the present issue, fell this year on Saturday, April 25th, and was attended by upwards of two hundred persons.

The gathering, though to some extent marred by heavy showers, was in the highest degree enjoyable and, we may add, successful. Nevertheless, we may, perhaps, be pardoned for calling attention once more to a difficulty which is likely to become more and more insistent, as the date of the Festival begins to coincide more and more nearly with the season of winter.

Some suitable provision must be made, and that soon, to enable our Muslim brethren who assemble at Woking from the four corners of the earth, on these great days, to perform their devotions under seemly conditions, without being at the mercy of the English weather.

Prayer on the lawn in the brilliant sunshine of summer is well enough; it is, besides, picturesque; and the resultant photographs in the illustrated papers are doubtless useful from the standpoint of propaganda. But brilliant sunshine is the exception

rather than the rule in the average English summer, and there is a very different tale to tell when a keen north-easter is blowing, and the massed, leaden clouds threaten rain, hail, or snow, at any moment.

The Mosque is tiny; the congregation large. Marquees, however commodious, will always be unsatisfactory, as well as incongruous. Surely among the thousands who have journeyed to Woking in the past, at the time of Festival, or who purpose doing so in the days to come, some will be found to aid us in raising the funds necessary for the erection of a suitable building, wherein the spirit of worship may no longer be dogged by the dread of double pneumonia.

Efficient Life.

To the practical psychologist, who is primarily concerned with the application of Mind to the everyday affairs of life, health must necessarily be a subject of immense interest.

We cannot separate efficiency of the mind from efficiency of the body. Success depends on the harmonious development of all our faculties, physical, mental, and spiritual.

The living body is the instrument used by the mind for the Soul's expression, and the finer the instrument, the more brilliant will be the results of our endeavours. So the mind should control the lower or physical organism.

If the power of speech, the passion for appetite, and the sex-passion be checked, and the energy put into its proper channel and properly controlled, we can achieve the highest glory, and that is why the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him!) has promised to stand by such Muslims on the day of judgment.

Actually, however, the happy mind, filled with positive thoughts of health, communicates confidence and energy to every one of the millions of cells of

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the body ; and that is why every Muslim is asked to be content and cheery with whatever befalls him ; for fear and anger and jealousy are among the mental states which profoundly disturb our physiological well-being. So peace and poise of mind are sought in order to relieve it of the often cumbersome consequence of an overtaxed, emotional state.

But the moral qualities, which are latent within man, remain in a dormant condition unless called into action. We must also look for a perfect example and a complete model for humanity ; and this is found in the persons of the Prophets. In the Qur-án we find the last of the Prophets presented to the believers as a perfect model for mankind to follow ; who showed the greatest firmness in the utmost danger, confidence in Divine help, and steadfastness in the hardest trials. Wherefore the believers are told they must not lose heart, for it was in their power to behave like the example before them : “ Certainly you have in the Apostle of Allah an excellent exemplar, for him who hopes in Allah and the latter day and remembers Allah much ” (Holy Qur-án xxxiii. 21).

But the object of his advent was not to please sentimentalists by giving some moral precepts quite impracticable in the actual lives of men ; or by merely offering a noble example of steadfastness under severe persecutions ; but rather to give practical rules of guidance to men living and working in the world, and to illustrate them by his own noble example. If he had not led armies, he could not have served as a model for a general ; if he had not fought personally, he could not have been an example to a soldier laying down his life in the cause of truth, justice and freedom ; if he had not made laws for the guidance of his followers, he could never have been regarded as an outstanding example to a legislator, and if he had not decided cases, surely he would not have served as such an one for judges and

magistrates. If he, unlike Jesus (Peace be upon him!), had not married, and enacted so perfect a marriage legislation, he would have left men unguided practically in half of their everyday duties, and could not have shown how to be a kind and affectionate husband and a loving father.

Dr. Mingana and his Syriac Translation of the Qur-án.

Dr. Mingana's effort to impugn the authenticity of the existing text of the Qur-án some years ago, in his book *Leaves from Three Ancient Qur-áns*, will be quite fresh in the minds of our readers, who will doubtless also recollect how completely he failed in his attempt to assail the purity of that text—a fate which he shares with previous so-called “critics.” Certain “leaves” were said to have been purchased by Dr. Agnes Lewis from a commercial antiquary, containing three writings crossing each other; the oldest of these writings consisting of passages from the Qur-án. When these passages were written and who wrote them, are questions, the answers to which Dr. Mingana owes, even to-day, to the literary world. All statements to the effect that the leaves are pre-Usmanic are mere conjectures boldly put forward as “facts” to attract public attention; and one who knows the mentality of Europe can readily understand how easy it is to put conjectures as “facts”! Exactly the same course he has followed in his recent attempt to prove that the text of the Holy Qur-án has been tampered with. He himself is not sure of the conclusions he draws. He says on page 13: “No one is more conscious than we are of the gravity of the above suggestion, as to the antiquity of the Syriac translation, and we hope that the care with which we have expressed ourselves will prove—as a Syriac saying has it—a healthy deterrent to any Arabic and Syriac scholar, whether Christian or Muslim, who might accuse us

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of lack of caution or of hasty conclusions. We are face to face with a Syriac text, the character and the nature of which are not well defined . . . we are not able to ascertain with confidence the exact time of its appearance. The question, therefore, of authorship, and all the subsidiary points attaching to it, should be left open until further evidence is available." These sentences of Dr. Mingana are sufficient to make his attempt a vain one in the eyes of critical persons. Wherein lay the necessity, or advantage, of publishing conjectures? Nevertheless there was an advantage; and that had been achieved in a sufficiently striking manner. Every paper, every monthly magazine, has had its reference to his "discovery"; but not a single paper, not a single monthly, made mention of the doubts which he himself expresses. And then again, who would be so unwise as to accept his statements as regards interpolations in the Holy Qur-án on the basis of a Syriac translation, while the original exists in its own original language? Who, for example, would dare to come forward with an assertion that the text of the Holy Qur-án was corrupt on the basis of an English translation of the Book? This would be ridiculous on the face of it. One would have given credence to the Syriac translation, but unfortunately for Dr. Mingana the quotations of the translated passages emanate from the pen of a Christian writer. Why should one not rather believe that Barsalibi—the author of the manuscript under consideration—was playing "havoc with literary decency" than that there was some text other than the accepted one? It is an open secret that the Christians—and Barsalibi was a Christian—have always tried to distort and disfigure the beautiful teachings of Islam. An Easterner among the Westerners can very well realize what a gross misrepresentation of the teachings of Islam is prevalent in the West! Dr. Mingana can wait, and will wait, and will have to wait—

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to speak in his own language—for the “researches of scientific workers who will be able to explain more fully and more satisfactorily than we have done the difficulties inherent in the Syriac translation as compared with the traditional *textus receptus* of the Kurān and the various indications of the MSS.” The Qur-án said, 1,400 years ago : “ Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian ” (xv. 9). And this challenge is open to all—even to-day !

“The Mohammedan Menace.”

We would draw the attention of our readers to the recent bitter experience of the Rev. J. Bruce Gardiner in Africa, where the overwhelming force of Islam and its clear, simple and universal principles, are brushing aside the present-day Christianity of dogma and mysticism.

Mr. Gardiner, while expressing his sincere desire for the spread of his own faith, very earnestly warns preachers to check the onward progress of the opposing forces, and exhorts them, in the most vehement terms, to shake off their lethargy.

In Mr. Gardiner's own words : “ There is another missionary religion in Africa, powerful, active, vigilant and successful. Islam has assumed immense dimensions in this continent. . . . It is gathering vast numbers of native peoples into its elastic brotherhood. . . . There is much in the Moslem faith that is lofty and true.”

So far our friend has proceeded smoothly enough, and has very elaborately expounded the truths that light must succeed darkness, and knowledge take the place of ignorance—truths which harmonize very beautifully with the statement by the Holy Qur-án : “ And say : The truth has come and the falsehood vanished ; surely falsehood has no permanent hold ” (xvii. 81).

We admire the spirit which Mr. Gardiner seeks

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to inspire in the Christian preachers; but we grieve to note that the religion with the principle of "love thine enemy," has not, as yet, taught him sufficient magnanimity and candour to enable him to express himself, if not without malice, at least without prejudice. The writing is further saturated with virulence against the encompassing truth of Islam, that is penetrating even into the heart of Africa.

As his words run: "It leaves the native much in this life that is congenial to him, such as polygamy and concubinage in his domestic life, and it promises him a paradise, voluptuous and ideal, which just suits his taste. In face of this turgid tide flowing down from the north it is high time for Christians to awake."

We would venture to draw the attention of our readers, and especially of those who try to spread misconceptions and misrepresentations concerning Islam, to the following: "And if you fear that you cannot act equitably towards orphans, then marry such women as seem good to you—two and three or four; but if you fear that you will not do justice (between them), then marry only one, or what your right hands possess; this is more proper, that you may not deviate from the right course" (Holy Qur-án, iv. 3). This passage permits polygamy under certain circumstances—it neither enjoins it, nor does it permit it unconditionally.

It is admitted that this chapter was revealed to guide the Muslims under the conditions which followed the battle of Uhud; and the last portion of the last chapter deals with that battle. Now in that battle seventy men out of seven hundred Muslims had been slain, and this decimation had largely decreased the number of males, who being the bread-winners, were the natural guardians and supporters of the females. The number was likely to suffer a still greater diminution in the battles which had yet to be fought,

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while the number of women would be increased by the addition of prisoners of war. Thus many orphans would be left in the charge of widows, who would find it difficult to procure the necessary means of support. In the second verse the care of orphans is particularly enjoined.

In the third verse we are told that if they could not do justice to the orphans, they might marry the widows, whose children would thus become their own children; and as the number of women was now much greater than the number of men, they were permitted to marry two, or three, or four women.

By "what your right hands possess," are meant the females who were taken prisoners in war. We do not find any verse in the Holy Qur-án, or any instance in the Prophet Muhammad's life, sanctioning so-called concubinage. The carpers at Islam have always been misrepresenting us in the most callous manner, but the clear, simple truths cannot be darkened by such calumny.

Enigma of Sin and Ignorance.

In reference to the origin of sin and its connection with ignorance, the editor of the *Quest*, in the April number of that journal, after elaborately tracing the problem of the existence of sin in the nature of man, as variously expounded by the different systems of religious thought, observes: "As we all know, the dominant Occidental tradition of faith—Christianity—holding tenaciously to its interpretation of Semitic mythology beginnings, would have it that ignorance is fundamentally due to sin. The general tendency of this mournful and pessimistic view of the primal conditioning of man's life on earth is to regard the whole of existence here on this planet as a state of punishment or correction, ordained by an unoffended anthropomorphically imagined deity in retribution for one original sin of the first human pair."

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The writer, after a brief survey of the several phases of human thought, passes on to Islam, which, as he says, "has the same widespread notion as in the conceit of the primitive mind," and adds that "it is at a later stage that attempts are made to differentiate between crime as offence against human law, vice as offence against society, and sin as offence against the divine in nature and in man."

Further, he says: "And yet in some strange fashion acts of sin have to be regarded as acts of Allah—for according to Muslim theory all action, without exception, is His; no act can possibly be contrary to the will of Allah."

Now it is here that this most able writer has confused the two distinct ideas, the cause and the effect, i.e. the action and its consequence—the action by man and the punishment from God.

The whole parable of the Fall of Adam, in the Qur-án (chapter ii. 35-37) conveys a very beautiful idea of life and action. It means neither that physical rest and stagnation is paradise, nor that the intellect alone can bring enlightenment, but that the progress of the ego to a complete moral and spiritual self can be attained through development of will and character, the two links of the same chain; and that, through obeying Nature and God's commandments. The power of discretion is with each man, and though the path here, in this life, is beset with prickly thorns, the good or bad is the consequence of man's own action, for he has a conscience and liberty of choice. If he is ignorant, he can learn through knowledge and experience, and attain to achievement and success; and it is ordained that he shall learn by falls, which are pardonable by the All-bountiful and Merciful, whose love pervades the universe. The change of condition or environment is not a dooming to perdition, as the editor has taken it to be.

"Man shall earn by the sweat of his face" was

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the real aim of life—the zest for yet another forward dash, and a pleasure not in the object itself, but in its pursuit. It is a state of life which the virtuous and the wicked must all go through alike. The first state of ease is not a state of perfection, as in the child, but rather a state of striving to attain an end beyond the trials and tribulations which everyone must face.

THE VIRGIN-BIRTH OF JESUS CAN THE GOSPELS SHOW ANY PROOF?

By S. QUADRAT SHAH

INTENSE reverence for holy men has in some cases resulted in ascribing virgin-birth to them. Buddha was said to have been born without the agency of a male. But in order to get over the stigma which is attached to birth from the womb, the disciples of Buddha asserted that their teacher was born from the mouth of his virgin-mother.

The record of the virgin-birth of Jesus exists in two Gospels—St. Matthew i. 16 and St. Luke ii. 23. On the other hand, it is also in these Gospels that the genealogical tree of Jesus' descent from David is given; and in both cases the genealogical tree gives the descent, not of the mother of Jesus, but of Joseph, the alleged father of Jesus. Now, if Jesus had no earthly father, why did these two evangelists give a genealogy which is the genealogy of Joseph, the alleged father of Jesus? Jesus himself never referred to his birth, and never gave a hint that it was miraculous. Nor did his mother, Mary, even allege, when the gospel was being preached, that Jesus was born without any male agency. Nor did the two brothers of Jesus, James and Jude, who have each contributed a letter to the New Testament, refer to the divine birth of Jesus.

Some apologists say that a child, under the Roman and Jewish law, must be assigned to his father's

THE VIRGIN-BIRTH OF JESUS

family, otherwise he would have been considered illegitimate. But this assertion makes the case worse still. Why should the truth be suppressed and untruth preached? Why should the writers of the Gospels be afraid of the Roman and Jewish laws? Such an assertion gives credit neither to the religion of Jesus, nor to the writers of the Gospels.

Then when we look to St. Mark, who is the earliest writer of a Gospel, we find that he does not mention the virgin-birth of Jesus at all. St. Paul shows no knowledge of it. Nor does St. John mention the virgin-birth. St. John wrote his Gospel apparently to prove the divinity of Christ, and yet he omits to mention the virgin-birth. It is evident that the early Christians did not believe in the virgin-birth; it was not then an article of faith.

The evidence of virgin-birth could come only from the mother of Jesus, and she never made it known. If it had been a true story, a noble lady like Mary would not have kept quiet. Virgin-birth cannot be called a miracle. Miracles must be performed in the open and be seen by the public. But the virgin-birth did not happen in the presence of the public; it was rather a private matter. There was no good in performing such a miracle, which no one saw. Then again, how could it be a miracle when Jesus was still in the womb? It gives him no credit; rather it would be a miracle by his mother, if miracle at all.

If it be said that in order to show his power God created Jesus without a father, then it may be answered that it does not prove any greater power of God than that we see in Nature. Thousands of insects are being born daily without any parents at all.

In the beginning God made male and female. Each was essential to the other, and God put love in each other's heart and blessed them both in their sexual relations. But the doctrine of the virgin-

birth tells us quite a different story. It says that God, for some unknown reason, suspended the sacred institution of husband and wife in the case of Jesus, and deprived Jesus of the sacred thing called "father" and Mary of the holy thing called "husband." Is the thing called "husband" a holy or vile thing? Is the thing called "father" a vile thing? Who organized the family and society? Did not God create pairs¹ for everything, and put love² in them for each other? We know only one way of bringing children into the world.

The doctrine of virgin-birth makes the human desire of men and women for each other ignoble and base. Is the life of virginity holier than the human sex relations? Is the love of man and woman a degrading thing? If not, why did God give no husband to Mary, and no father to Jesus?

Should we not presume that the doctrine of the virgin-birth is a latter-day invention?

THE CONCEPTION OF GOD IN ISLAM

By M. T. AKBAR

(Continued from Vol. XIII., Nos. 4 and 5, p. 139.)

HIS very words, "Be sure they sleep not whom God needs!" his very consciousness that he thought God needed him, a tiny atom, betray that Paracelsus was doomed to failure. According to Islam, Paracelsus is a type of Iblis, the accursed.

Oh! man, you are they who stand in need of God and God is He Who is the Self-Sufficient, the One to Whom all praise is due (chapter xxxv).

Let me here quote two passages showing the grandeur and splendour of God:—

God is He besides whom there is no God, the ever-living, the self-subsisting by whom all subsist; slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in

¹ The Holy Qur-án, xxxvi. 36.

² xxx. 21.

THE CONCEPTION OF GOD IN ISLAM

the earth is His ; Who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission ? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what He pleases ; His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them both tires Him not, and He is the Most High, the Great.

And with Him are the treasures of the unseen ; none knows them but He ; and He knows what is in the land and the sea ; and there falls not a leaf but He knows it, nor a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything green or dry but (it is all) in a clear book.

There are hundreds of passages in the Holy Qur-án in this strain, and it is curious to note how often the appeal is made to the appalling splendours of the Universe for a true conception of the might of the Eternal God. It is also curious to note how all the references to the sidereal world are absolutely true to astronomical laws :—

You see no incongruity in the creation of the Beneficent God ; then look again, can you see any disorder ?

Then turn back the eye again and yet again ; your look shall come back to you confused while it is fatigued (chapter lxvii).

Referring to the stars and planets, and the immensity of space :—

Glory be to Him who created pairs of all things, of what the earth grows, and of their kind and of what they do not know.

.

Neither is it allowable to the sun that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day, and all float on in a sphere (chapter xxxvi).

Referring to the nebular theory.

And God made in the Moon a light and made the Sun a lamp ; And God has made you grow out of the earth as a growth (chapter lxxi).

And one of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and what He has spread forth in *both of them*, of living beings ; and when He pleases He is all-powerful to gather them together (chapter xlii).

Do not those who disbelieve see that the heavens and the earth were closed up but We have opened them ; and We have made of water everything living ; will they not believe ? (chapter xxi).

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This is the Muslim faith, belief in the Eternal Omnipotence and Omnipresence of the Creator and an entire submission to His Will.

Whichever way you turn you will see the face of God.
Wherever you may be, there God is with you.

Muslims believe in Divine revelation—not only in the Holy Qur-án, but in the truth of Divine Revelation in all ages and to all the races of the world.

And certainly We sent apostles to nations before you; then We seized them with distress and affliction in order that they might humble themselves.

Thus, Muslims believe in the Divine missions of Buddha, Confucius, Krishna, Moses, Jesus. They regard them all as Prophets of God, sent with missions to direct the world aright.

They believe that the last true revelation, verifying all previous revelations, is to be found in the Holy Qur-án, to which their beloved Prophet appealed as the only and sole miracle of his mission.

In chapter xv we find this reference to the Holy Qur-án :—

Surely We have revealed the Reminder, and We will most surely be its guardian.

This is a most remarkable prophecy; for over 1,300 years this Holy Book has stood, and still stands, and will for ever stand, exactly as it was revealed to the Holy Prophet, with not a dot altered, in all its absolute and pristine purity.

And God is He Who sends the winds so they raise a cloud, then We drive it on to a dead country, and therewith We give life to the earth after its death; even so is the quickening (chapter xxxv).

When the rain from the heavens, which stands in this passage for Divine revelation, gets mixed with the dross of the earth, it becomes tainted and has to be renewed. This is the explanation in Islam for the successive Divine missions of the various Prophets.

EID-UL-FITR

If we are to be not mere "Light half-believers of our casual creeds," but if we are to be

Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,
Which much to have tried, in much been baffled, brings,

Muslims believe that it is only a Divine revelation, standing for all times in its original virginal purity, which can make the perennial appeal to human hearts.

Longinus, in his treatise on the sublime, says :—

That on the contrary is grand and lofty, which the more we consider, the greater ideas we conceive of it ; whose force we cannot possibly withstand ; which immediately sinks deep and makes such impressions on the mind as cannot be easily worn out or effaced.

To a Muslim the Holy Qur-án will ever remain of sublime—nay, of Divine—origin. That is why when the Holy Book is read in any assembly of Muslims all the world over, it is listened to with rapt attention and so much reverence. To them it is the only Book that has had for so many centuries, and has for all times, the power of humbling human hearts and drawing tears from human eyes. It makes an appeal direct to the heart, and it was first revealed to the greatest of all human hearts.

And most surely this is a revelation from the Lord of the Worlds. The Faithful Spirit has descended with it upon thy heart that you may be of the warners.

EID-UL-FITR

SATURDAY, April 25th, the day of the Festival of Eid-ul-Fitr, which marks the end of the Muslim Month of Fasting, dawned bright and sunny, with every prospect, to the inexperienced eye, of uninterrupted fair weather, for twenty-four hours at least. But to the weather-wise, the promise of the morning was too fair, and so it proved; for by ten o'clock the clouds were gathering fast, and by half-past, rain was falling heavily. Though the downpour was not

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continuous, nevertheless the steady succession of drenching showers, accompanied by an icy wind, could not fail to detract somewhat from the success of the day.

Eid at Woking must, under present conditions, be essentially an outdoor celebration. We have been extraordinarily favoured in the past, seeing that on only two out of some twenty-seven occasions has a really wet day been experienced—a circumstance which, in our English climate, must constitute something of a record, which, however, we cannot reasonably hope to continue indefinitely.

Of late years an attempt has been made to cope with the difficulty by the erection of marquees—of which three were in evidence on April 25th—to serve as a refuge in case of necessity. So far they have served their purpose as well as could be expected, because we are still in the region, so to say, of potential warm days; but the time is at hand when Eid must be celebrated on days of frost and snow; and the prospect of three marquees pitched among Arctic surroundings is practically unthinkable. In this connection a plea is made in our Editorial Notes, a plea to which, it is earnestly hoped, our readers will lend a sympathetic ear.

Apart from the weather-drawback, the day must be reckoned among the most notable of that long line of brilliant gatherings which has marked successive Eids, since the inception of the Woking Muslim Mission.

The fact that it was Saturday prevented a number of guests from attending, but in spite of the deterrent claims of business, it is estimated that between two and three hundred persons were present; and the scene on the lawn when, punctually at 11.30, the Mufti of the Mosque, Abdul Mohi Arab, gave the Call to Prayer, was profoundly impressive. The Prayers were led by the Imam of the Mosque, Khwaja Nazir Ahmad, who, in his virile and eloquent

EID-UL-FITR

sermon that followed, spoke earnestly and with a simple force that went home, I think, to the heart of every one of those whose privilege it was to hear him. He chose as the subject of his discourse (which is printed in full elsewhere in this issue) the Ninety and Nine Names of Allah. God does not, as the Christians vainly teach (so he said, in effect), wrap Himself away in a cloud of mystery—hold Himself aloof and apart from, and ever beyond the ken of groping man whom He has created more for the purpose of man's bewilderment than anything else, but He is very near to us; He desires that man should comprehend Him as He really is, and for that purpose has endowed him with the gift of human reason, by the use of which he shall at last, if he do but strive worthily, come to the full comprehension of that Reason which is Divine. The note of hope that he sounded so steadily, held, to my mind, more than a little of that sublime, triumphant confidence which shines so strangely in Browning's "Rabbi Ben Ezra":

Grow old along with me ;
The best is yet to be,

The last of Life, for which the first was made !

It is a confidence which human reason acclaims—founded in and built on the rock of that Reason which all the forces of Dogma are powerless either to help or hinder.

Luncheon, consisting of the delicious dishes of the East, prepared and seasoned by Indian *chefs*, was served at 1.30, and was greatly appreciated by the many to whom such fare came as a revelation.

Muslims from India, Afghanistan, Burma, China, Egypt, and Nigeria (many wearing their gaily coloured national dress) mingled on the crowded lawn with their brethren from Britain, Czecho-Slovakia, and the United States of America; and among those present were H.H. The Begum of Saduor, Lord Headley, Abdul Majid Khan, the Malay Chiefs Raja

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Musa and Raja Azham, and the *personnel* of the Afghan and Egyptian Legations.

The arrangements, which worked without a hitch of any sort, were throughout in the capable hands of the Imam, Khwaja Nazir Ahmad, who has left us.

J. B. D.

EID SERMON

THE MOST EXCELLENT NAMES OF ALLAH

LA-ELAHA-IL-ALLAH

(*"There is no other object worthy of adoration, but Allah"*).

"He is Allah, besides Whom there is no God; the Knower of the Unseen and the Seen; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful.

"He is Allah, besides Whom there is no God; the King, the Holy, the Author of Peace, the Granter of Security, the Guardian over all, the Mighty, the Supreme, the Possessor of every Greatness. Glory be to Allah from what they set up (with Him).

"He is Allah the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner. His are the Most Excellent Names; whatever is in the heavens and the earth declare His glory; and He is the Mighty, the Wise."—THE HOLY QUR-AN, lix. 22-24.

THE mission of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was to proclaim *La-Elaha-il-Allah* (*"There is no other object worthy of adoration but Allah"*). But this was only the subjective form of his message. Objectively, he exhorted us "to imbue ourselves with the Divine Attributes." The significance of these holy words becomes apparent when we realize that the secret of success and prosperity in worldly affairs lies in keeping ourselves in tune with Nature. For Nature is but a manifestation, or as Goethe has put it, the living garment of the Great Mind, the Sovereign Author of the Universe. If all the forces, or laws, of Nature prove to be only a form of the Divine Attributes, as Islam tells us, our being in tune with Nature, or with the Infinite, will be then tantamount to, and the object achieved by, imbuing ourselves with the Divine Attributes, and reproducing the

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Divine Morals. The "conflict between Science and Religion," that dreary, persistent echo from the Atheist or Materialist, will no more jar on our ears if Science and Religion are each free from falsehood; for true Science and true Religion are one and the same thing. They both reveal the same laws of God, working in the various manifestations of the Universe; the one on the physical plane, the other in the moral or spiritual sphere. They all emanate from the same First Intelligent Cause, and cannot, therefore, admit of any discrepancy.

We know nothing of the Essence of God. He is neither *He* nor *She*; for "nothing is like a likeness of Him."¹ So far above human conception is the Divine Being, that even metaphorically we cannot imagine a likeness of Him. He is not only above material limitations, but even beyond the reach of thought or metaphor. Says the Holy Qur-án:—

Wonderful Originator of the heavens and the earth, How could He have a Son when He has no consort, and He Himself created everything and He is the Knower of all things.

That is Allah, your Lord, there is no God but He; the Creator of all things, therefore serve Him, and He has charge of all things.

Vision comprehends Him not, and He comprehends (all) vision; and He is the Knower of subtilities, the Aware.²

If Religion tries to bring God within the physical vision of man by seeking to visualize Him, as it were, in a human body, it cannot possibly convey even the faintest conception of the Infinite. Human vision, physical or spiritual, can in nowise comprehend Him. All that we know of Him is either through true Science, that manifests His laws working in the Universe, or through His own words revealed to various Prophets, who, under Divine inspiration, inform us of His Attributes. If scientific researches can neither exhaust nor examine all the secrets and recesses of Nature, which are the only index of the Great Mind on the physical plane, all that which a

¹ Holy Qur-án, xlii. 11.

² vi. 102-104.

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Messenger from God can bring to us will be that which comes within the limits of our human comprehension. Our own knowledge of the Divine Being is too meagre to bring Him within the scope of a definition. But He has revealed Himself to us, according to our own capacities. The Holy Qur-án gives us some ninety-nine Attributes of God. They do not exhaust the list of His Most Excellent Names. They only describe those aspects in which the Divine Essence has disclosed Himself to the human mind. In other words, He has exhibited Himself in ninety-nine ways, under which He was pleased to accomplish the grand design He had in view in creating the Universe, with man as its lord upon earth. The Universe, and the laws that work in it, are nothing but a materialization of those Divine Attributes. Thus, the God of the Holy Qur-án is the God of Nature. If the working of Nature discloses a reign of law, which demands implicit obedience to it from all the component parts of the Universe, and if different forms of the law exhibit different characters and features of that Great Mind, Who is admittedly working behind the scenes, it is not difficult to arrive at some of the conceivable Attributes of the First Intelligent Cause. A true Religion must reveal them.

From the ethereal world to the plasmic congeries in the human brain, every evolutionary stage seems to work under certain great laws—the laws of creation, sustenance, nourishment, development and so forth. Every organism, as soon as it is created, finds all that is needful for its sustenance and nourishment already, in existence in the Universe; and utilizing such materials, it begins to disclose its latent faculties. The product always exceeds the matter used. Thus, Creation, Nourishment, and Development are unceasingly working on, in all the departments of Nature. If any organism fails or does not come up to the prescribed standard, the working hands of Nature at once repair the defect.

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These verities are too obvious to need any substantiation.

But the very idea of the existence of the law makes us, perforce, believe in the existence of the Law-Giver, Who is also the Creator, the Nourisher, the Maintainer, the Evolver, the Reclaimer. The very opening verses of the Holy Qur-án, speak of the Being Who possesses such Attributes as manifest themselves in the workings of Nature. Thus, He is :—

1. *Rabb*—The Creator, the Nourisher and Evolver of everything that is in the world.
2. *Rahman*—The Beneficent Lord, Who creates necessities before the need actually comes into existence.
3. *Raheem*—The Merciful, Who rewards abundantly.
4. *Malik-i-Yoummeddin*—The Master of the Day of Requit, Who reclaims all.

The God of the Qur-án, then, is the God of Nature. Can Science or Theology be in conflict under this conception of Godhood ? All the laws of Nature, all social, civic, and moral laws, are but a semblance of the requirements of one or the other of the Excellent Names of Allah. If a worldly-wise man respects all these laws and achieves success and prosperity in life, such an object will be more amply and more surely gained by a Muslim if he strives to keep his conduct in consonance with the demands of the Most Excellent Names of Allah as given in the Holy Qur-án.

Science does not claim to bring all the laws and forces of Nature within our ken. Scientific researches are continuous, but we cannot always rely on their inferences. The research of to-day falsifies the inferences of yesterday. Through hardship and suffering we come to truth. Should we not enrich our knowledge if we made our researches in the light of these Qur-ánic Names of God ? What a treasure of knowledge would lie before us if we ponder over the

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working of these Most Excellent Names of God. If Nature is the handiwork of God, the workings of Nature must be commensurate and in consonance with His Attributes, and the Word of God should enlighten us with regard to them. I hope you will now appreciate that which I asserted at the commencement of this discourse, which is that to be in tune with Nature only means to be in tune with the Divine Attributes. Success in every branch of life, then, depends on how we translate our Muslim formula of faith into action.

The traditional saying of the Holy Prophet that "He who says *La-Elaha-il-Allah* will enter into Paradise," is the key of the whole problem. Mere lip-recital of the formula is an absurdity. It must guide our actions, and so, as a living and abiding influence will inevitably lead to a most successful life—a life of Paradise here and in the hereafter.

The Holy Qur-án is a commentary on *La-Elaha-il-Allah*. Allah is the central figure of the Holy Book. It mentions His Attributes and illustrates their working in connection with the various aspects of the Universe. It styles such actions of ours as conform with these Attributes, virtues; and those that are not in unison with these manifestations of Allah, evil. It mentions the Law which would enable us to safeguard against evil. It refers to the Prophets through whom He sends His guidance, who, by their personal example, are to be our ideals. And, lastly, it speaks of the life after death, which is based on the same principles, that is to say, those that have been able to imbue themselves with Divine Attributes will have an abode of everlasting felicity, called Heaven, while the others, who have failed to reach the standard, will have to go through a condition of life to enable them to make up the deficiency. Islam does not admit of an eternal hell.

Thus it is evident that the Holy Qur-án has been revealed only to tell of God and His Ways, and to

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give guidance whereby we may abide by His ways ; and, in consequence, we can say that the Muslim formula of faith is the basis of Muslim ethics.

The word *Allah* means *The Obeyed*, i.e. the Deity Who receives obedience through His Laws from everything in Nature. Every organism owes its existence, maintenance and perfection to its obedience to the All-Designer. In doing so, it follows the Religion of Islam, i.e. the Religion of Obedience to Law.

Says the Holy Qur-án :—

Is it then other than Allah's religion that they seek (to follow), and to Him submits whatever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and to Him shall they be returned.¹

Again :—

And whatever is in the heavens and the earth makes obeisance to Allah only, willingly and unwillingly, and their shadows too at morn and eve.²

This truth found expression through various Prophets.

The message of Krishna was "Acquire wisdom" ; of the Buddha, "Forsake desire" ; of Zoroaster, "Purify thyself" ; of Christ, "Be charitable" ; and of Muhammad, "Seek God." The Holy Prophet made it clear that on no plane could we thrive and reach our goal except through submission to the Divine Will. In order to "seek God," therefore, we must be at one with the Lord, or, as the Holy Qur-án puts it, we must be imbued with the Divine Attributes.

Among the ninety-nine Excellent Names of Allah, we find, *Al-Hakim*, "The Ever Wise" ; *Al-Ghani*, "One Who is above every need" ; *Al-Quddus*, "The Pure One" ; *Al-Haleem*, "The Meek" ; *Al-Wadood*, "The Loving" ; *Al-Barr*, "One of Great Goodness."

Thus, to "seek God," we must acquire wisdom, forsake desire, be charitable, meek, do good, and lead

¹ The Holy Qur-án, iii. 82.

² xiii. 15.

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a pure life. Therefore, we, who follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, must needs do all that has been taught by all the Prophets of yore and then only can we "seek God." But acquisition of wisdom, love, meekness, charity and purity, or the forsaking of desire, do not make up the sum total of humanity. Further truths and tenets in clearer and plainer form are necessary. These are embodied in the ninety-nine Attributes of God. It is very difficult, almost impossible, to give a proper and adequate rendering of these Arabic names. They are :—

1. *Ar-Rabb*, the Creator, the Nourisher, the Maintainer, the Evolver. 2. *Ar-Rahmán*, the Beneficent. 3. *Ar-Raheem*, the Merciful, the Compassionate. 4. *Al-Málik*, the Master, the Owner. 5. *Al-Quddús*, the Holy, the Pure. 6. *As-Salám*, the Author of Peace. 7. *Al-Mumin*, the Granter of Security. 8. *Al-Muhaimin*, the Guardian over all. 9. *Al-'Azeez*, the Mighty. 10. *Al-Jabbár*, the Supreme, the All-Compelling. 11. *Al-Mutakabbir*, the Glorious, the Dignified. 12. *Al-Kháliq*, the Creator, the Combiner. 13. *Al-Báree*, the Maker, the Moulder. 14. *Al-Musawwir*, the Fashioner. 15. *Al-Ghaffár*, the Great Forgiver. 16. *Al-Qahhár*, the Great Dominant. 17. *Al-Wahháb*, the Great Bestower. 18. *Ar-Razzáq*, the Great Provider. 19. *Al-Fattáh*, the Great Opener. 20. *Al-'Aleem*, the All-Knower. 21. *Al-Qábiz*, the Straightener. 22. *Al-Básit*, the Amplifier. 23. *Al-Kháfiẓ*, the Abaser. 24. *Ar-Ráfi'*, the Exalter. 25. *Al-Mu'izz*, the Honourer. 26. *Al-Muzill*, the Degradar. 27. *As-Samí'*, the Ever Hearer. 28. *Al-Baseer*, the All-Seer, the Observer. 29. *Al-Hakam*, the Judge. 30. *Al-Lateef*, the Knower of Subtleties. 31. *Al-Khabeer*, the One Who is Aware of Everything. 32. *Al-Haleem*, the Clement, the Meek. 33. *Al-'Azeem*, the Owner of Greatness. 34. *Al-Ghafoor*, the Pardoner. 35. *Ash-Shakoor*, the Great Grateful. 36. *Al-'Alee*, the Exalted. 37. *Al-Kabeer*, the Ever Great. 38. *Al-Hafeez*, the Ever Preserver. 39. *Al-Muqet*, the Ever Maintainer. 40. *Al-Haseeb*, the Reckoner. 41. *Al-Jaleel*, the Ever Glorious, the Benign. 42. *Al-Kareem*, the Ever Bountiful. 43. *Ar-Raqeeb*, the Ever Watchful. 44. *Al-Mujeeb*, the Ever Hearer of Prayer. 45. *Al-Wási'*, the Granter of Felicity and Facilities. 46. *Al-Hakeem*, the Ever Wise. 47. *Al-Wadood*, the Living. 48. *Al-Majeed*, the Glorious. 49. *Al-Bá'is*, the Resurrector. 50. *Ash-Shaheed*, the Witness. 51. *Al-Haqq*, the Truth. 52. *Al-Wakeel*, the Guardian, One Who has Charge of All Things. 53. *Al-Qawee*, the Ever Strong, the Mighty. 54. *Al-Mateen*, the Firm. 55. *Al-Walii*, the Friend, the Patron. 56. *Al-Hameed*, the Ever Praiseworthy. 57. *Al-Muhsi*, the Accountant. 58. *Al-Mubdi*, the Great Beginner. 59. *Al-Mu'eed*, the Restorer.

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60. *Al-Mohyi*, the Life-Giver. 61. *Al-Mumeet*, the Causer of Death. 62. *Al-Hayy*, the Ever-Living. 63. *Al-Qayyoom*, the Self-Subsistent, One Who sustains others. 64. *Al-Wájid*, the Finder of Everything. 65. *Al-Májid*, the Glorious, the Noble. 66. *Al-Wáhid*, the One. 67. *As-Samad*, the Eternal. the One on Whom All depend, the One Who depends on no one. 68. *Al-Qádir*, the All-Powerful. 69. *Al-Muqtadir*, the Possessor of Every Might and Power. 70. *Al-Muqaddim*, the Foregoer. 71. *Al-Muakhkhir*, the Ender of Everything. 72. *Al-Awwal*, the First. 73. *Al-Akhir*, the Last. 74. *Az-Záhir*, the Without, the Manifest, the Evident. 75. *Al-Bátin*, the Within, the Hidden. 76. *Al-Wálee*, the Governor. 77. *Al-Muta'álee*, the Most Exalted. 78. *Al-Barr*, the Righteous. One of Great Goodness. 79. *At-Tawwáb*, the Great Forgiver. 80. *Al-Muntaqim*, the Avenger. 81. *Al-Afuww*, the Pardoner. 82. *Ar-Ra'oof*, the Lenient. 83. *Málik-ul-Mulk*, the Ruler of All Kingdoms. 84. *Zul-jalál-i-wal-Ikrám*, the Lord of Majesty, Glory and Honour. 85. *Al-Muqsit*, the Equitable. 86. *Al-Jámi'*, the Gatherer. 87. *Al-Ghanee*, the Rich, the Independent, One Who is above all needs. 88. *Al-Mughnee*, the Enricher, One Who makes others above their needs. 89. *Al-Mu'tee*, the Giver. 90. *Al-Máni'*, the Preventer, the Withholder. 91. *An-Náfi'*, the Propitious, the Benefiter. 92. *An-Noor*, the Light. 93. *Al-Hádi'*, the Guide. 94. *Al-Azlee*, the Eternal. 95. *Al-Badí'*, the Incomparable. 96. *Al-Báqi*, the Survivor. 97. *Al-Wáris*, the Inheritor. 98. *Ar-Rasheed*, the All-Guidance, the Director. 99. *As-Saboor*, the Patient.

Besides these ninety-nine Most Excellent Names of Allah, the Muslim Divines have deduced many other Names from the description given of God in the Holy Qur-án :—

Hoo, He ; *Al-Muheet*, the All-Pervading ; *Ash Sháfi*, the Healer, the Giver of Health ; *Al-Jameel*, the Beautiful ; *Al-A'lá*, the Most High ; *Al-Malik*, the King, and so forth.

All that is good, all that is noble and sublime, is comprised within the province of these Most Excellent Names of Allah. All high morals and spiritualities are but a shadow and a passing semblance of these Attributes of God. They foreshadow all the demands of a healthy society, all the requirements of a perfect civilization, and all the needs of humanity. All the forces of Nature discovered, or yet to be discovered, by science are, and will be, merely the working forms of these Attributes.

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Various Prophets of God have come among different nations. They were an embodiment of the burning aspirations of the human soul for truth, purity and justice. Each came to provide for the spiritual necessities of his age, to elevate a degraded race, to reform a corrupt commonwealth, to purify an immoral nation. They came as teachers of a smaller culture to meet and provide for further needs of the day. But the time of the ministry of the Holy Prophet was different. The advent of this Great Warner of Humanity and Teacher of Mankind, whose life, from his very birth to the moment he breathed his last, is a verifiable record, was not a mere accident, or a disconnected episode in the history of the world. The same causes, the same crying evils, the same necessity for guidance, operated still with greater force in the seventh century of the Christian Era. The Holy Stream of Divine Beatitude, which had tricked down from Olivet to fertilize and purify the Valley of the Jordan, had become polluted with dogmatic beliefs. The Holy Fires of Persia kindled by Zoroaster to consume impiety, had been quenched in human blood. It was an epoch of disintegration—national, social and religious; the phenomena called for a revival with a fresh force, of a positive faith. All the wandering forces recalled and pointed to the necessity of a more organic revelation of Divine Guidance than that hitherto received. Never in the history of the world had the need been so great, the time so ripe, for the appearance of a “Comforter” and a “Deliverer.”

The Holy Prophet of Arabia did not come for one age or clime, but was sent as a Divine Mercy¹ to all nations,² to the end of the world.³ He exhorted his followers to “seek God” and taught the way to walk humbly with the Lord. The Last Book of God points out the *Sirat-i-Mustaqeem*, the straight path.

¹ The Holy Qur-án, xxi. 107.

² vi. 91.

³ xxxiii. 40.

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Time does not permit me to discuss at length the ninety-nine Names of God. A few of the virtues included and implied therein are : Mercy, generosity, bravery, peacefulness, security, greatness, patience, forgiveness, honour, chastity, good government, insight into the subtleties of Nature, and full knowledge of the suppression of evil propensities ; gratitude, benignity, watchfulness, truth, power, firmness, independence, riches, and guidance, in addition to the virtues emphasized by the several Prophets, which also come within the purview of certain Holy Names.

If man is the image of God, that image cannot come to fulness of life unless and until we work out, so far as it lies in us, all the morals of which we read in the Qur-án. "Seek God," i.e. "Imbue yourself with Divine Attributes," or in other words, *La-Elaha-il-Allah*—this alone can be, and shall ever be, the best, the most comprehensive message to humanity.

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THE knowledge of God's Unity
And that He doth pre-measure all,
And naught without Him can befall,
Frees life from all its misery ;
In worldly things we take our part
But with deep Peacefulness of Heart.

For why should we fear death or life ?
All doth The Merciful decree ;
He is the Lord of Destiny.
Calm are we in the midst of strife ;
The blows of Fate, have lost their smart,
Naught can disturb our Peace of Heart.

F. H. A.

Friday Prayer and Sermon.—At the London Muslim Prayer House
—III, Campden Hill Road, Notting Hill Gate, London—every Friday
at 1 p.m. **Sunday Lectures** at 5 p.m. **Qur-án and Arabic
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Service, Sermon, and Lectures every Sunday at the Mosque, Woking,
3.15 p.m.

THE ESOTERIC ASPECT OF ISLAM

By KHWAJA SALAH-UD-DIN AHMAD

(Continued from Vol. XIII, No. 4 and 5, p. 136.)

THE theory of Emanation explains the descent and ascent of man; which are called the Greater and Lesser Mysteries. It, in fact, involves a discussion of the origin and the ultimate goal of man—a discussion of his various manifestations, according to his limitations. In this connection Muslim Sufis mention seven stages. The first is called *Ahdiyyat*. In it the Essence is above limitation, nor are any attributes to be found; it is Absolute, Unlimited, Colourless. The second stage, which is the first limitation, is called *Wahdat*. It is also termed the *Haqiqat-i-Muhammadi* or the Reality of Muhammad. It may be described as a borderland between the first and the third stages, just as the present lies between the past and the future. It is a mirror through which God sees His Attributes. In it four *itibárát*, or potentialities, are found; that is, Knowledge, Existence, Light and Power, but the difference between them is not marked. The first potentiality becomes apparent when the Essence manifests itself in His own *Knowledge*. This involves the idea of *Existence*. Light is the realization of its *Existence*, which, ultimately dawning on itself, results in *Power*.

The third stage, or the second limitation, is called *Wahdiyyat*. In it the *Knowledge* of Self becomes cognizant of the *Shu'únat*, that is to say, becomes fully aware of its potentialities. Thus, Existence becomes Life; Light, Ego; and Power, Will. It is at this stage that man becomes a free agent. He does what he wills, or he either submits to his ego, or suppresses it by leading a righteous life. It is here that he has clear manifestations of the five senses, of which two, hearing and seeing, are included by implication. By

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adding the remaining three we get the seven attributes called *ummahát-us-Sifát*. The fourth stage is the world of Souls; the fifth the world of *Misál* (Similitude); the sixth, the external world, which is materially in existence; and the seventh is *Insán-i-kádmil*, the Perfect Man.

The four *itibárdt*, potentialities, of the second stage, called *Wahdat*, i.e. the first limitation, when multiplied by the seven Attributes of the third stage of *Wahdiyyat*, or the second limitation, give twenty-eight *Sifáts*, of which the world is a manifestation.

An Oriental scholar has explained in tabular form the relations between the Divine and the worldly manifestations. I append a list showing their relative position:—

<i>Al-Badí'</i>	The Incomparable	<i>'Aql-i-Kul</i>	Absolute Reason
<i>Al-Bá'is</i>	The Cause	<i>Nafs-i-Kul</i>	Absolute Breath
<i>Al-Bátin</i>	The Unmanifest	<i>Tabiyat-i-Kul</i>	Absolute Nature
<i>Al-'Akhír</i>	The Exterior (The Last)	<i>Jawáhir-i-Habba</i>	Essence of Matter
<i>Az-Záhir</i>	The Manifest	<i>Jism-i-Kul</i>	Absolute Corporality
<i>Al-Hakeem</i>	The Wise	<i>Shakl-i-Kul</i>	Absolute Form
<i>Al-Muheet</i>	The Surrounding	<i>'Arsh</i>	The Throne of God
<i>Ash-Shakoor</i>	The Large Reclining	<i>Kursí</i>	The Seat
<i>Al-Ganee</i>	The Independent	<i>Falak-ul-Mandzil</i>	Crystalline Spheres
<i>Al-Muqáddir</i>	The Exerter of Influence	<i>Falak-ul-Burjú</i>	The Sky of the Zodiac
<i>Ar-Rabb</i>	The Creator, the Evolver	<i>Zuhul</i>	Saturn
<i>Al-'Aleem</i>	The All-Knowing	<i>Mushtarí</i>	Jupiter
<i>Al-Qáhir</i>	The Overwhelming	<i>Mirikh</i>	Mars
<i>An-Noor</i>	The Light	<i>Shams</i>	The Sun
<i>Al-Mussawwir</i>	The Fashioner	<i>Zuhra</i>	Venus
<i>Al-Muhsi</i>	The Accountant	<i>'Utárid</i>	Mercury
<i>Al-Muhaimin</i>	The Guardian over All	<i>Qamar</i>	The Moon
<i>Al-Qábiz</i>	The Curtailer of Life	<i>Nár</i>	The Sphere of Fire
<i>Al-Hayy</i>	The Ever-Living	<i>Hawá</i>	Air
<i>Al-Mohijí</i>	The Life-Giver	<i>Má</i>	Water
<i>Al-Mumeet</i>	The Annihilator	<i>Arz</i>	Earth
<i>Al-Azeez</i>	The Valuable	<i>Ma'dan</i>	Minerals
<i>Ar-Razzáq</i>	The Great Provider	<i>Nabátat</i>	Vegetables
<i>Al-Muzill</i>	The Degradator	<i>Haywán</i>	Animals
<i>Al-Qawee</i>	The Powerful	<i>Maláyk</i>	Angels

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<i>Al-Lateef</i>	The Minute Ob- server	<i>Jin</i>	Jinn
<i>Al-Jámi'</i>	The Gatherer of All	<i>Insán</i>	Man
<i>Ráfi'-ud- Darjád</i>	The Elevator of Rank	<i>Insán-i-Kámil</i>	The Perfect Man

From *Falak-ul-Mandzil* to *Qamar* are the planets, which work in the inferior material world, which control all, from the sphere of Fire to that of Man. Man is a conglomeration of all, therefore the heavenly bodies also influence his destiny, inasmuch as each heavenly body would seem to be a manifestation of a corresponding Attribute of God. Thus the position, or as it is generally called, the sign of a particular heavenly body, has its influence on the destiny of a particular individual at a particular time. Thus a person born with Mars in the ascendant, would be of an irascible and violent temperament, and so forth.

Before passing on to *Insán-i-Kámil*, or the Perfect Man, I will briefly discuss the question of the worlds of Soul and Misál (Similitude). "Soul," according to the Holy Qur-án, "is the Command of the Almighty." It, therefore, belongs to the World of Command and comes after these stages. It is also a limitation, that is to say, it may be either ignorant and blind, and thus go from bad to worse; or it may be enlightened, and suffer, and, after effort, improve. The faculty of sight being the characteristic of the soul, it is said to be neither in the body nor without it. Just as when the sun illuminates a house, the illumination is neither within the house nor without it.

The soul is said to have three sights. First, when its sight is in its reality (*Zát*). It is then called the *Trusted Soul*. The sight in this case is called the *Trusted Sight*. The second stage is referred to as being in the *Thought-world*, and is called the *Stationary Soul*. Its sight is called Eye Sight. It reaches its third stage in what is called the *Causal Existence*, and is described as the *Travelling Soul*. This soul leaves the body in sleep and wanders about in the

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Spirit-world. The soul has a more influential sight in the body in wakefulness than in sleep. In sleep it has a more influential sight in the world of Similitude, which is the borderland between the Soul-world and the Causal-world. It does not consist of matter, yet it is dimensional, characterized by colour like the world of dreams. It is also described as a world that is outside our sight.

Thus says Maulana Rumi :—

The Misál world (world of Similitude) has clouds and rain of its own.

Has a different sky and sun.

This is not open to the eye of the ordinary man,

Who is deceived by the phantasmagoria of the world.

The Thought-world must not be confused with the world that comes after death, which is called *Barzakh*. It is a Thought-world which is as real as this world. It is with the shape of the Thought-world that angels are said to appear on earth. Thus Gabriel used to appear before the Holy Prophet in the form of Dahaya Kalbi; and Omar, the second Caliph of Islam, could appear before the army of Sáriaah, and direct him to seek shelter behind a mountain in Mesopotamia; while he himself was preaching from the pulpit in the Mosque at Medina.

These conceptions from the ordinary practical point of view are of little importance; and, besides, they are apt to be misleading. A poet has well said :—

If a believer but knew what faith is, he would see that there is faith even in idol worship.

If the polytheist only knew what idols are, how would he be wrong in his religion ?

But he sees in the idols naught but the visible creatures.

And that is the reason that he is a heathen.

To put the whole theory in a nutshell: the Essence saw its manifestations in Attributes. This was the Realization of the self. The *Sifát* (Attributes) may be represented as the mercurial coating of a

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mirror. In its final stage the realization of the self manifests itself as the soul, which, in similitude, exhibits itself in the body.

When the coating of the body and the gaze of the seer disappear, the seer (the soul) himself remains. So also, finally when Essence's gaze disappears, the Absolute alone remains.

The physical world is the manifestation of the name *Az-zâhîr* (The Manifest). Just as the Soul-world and the *Misâl*-world are to be found in man, so is also the physical world. The twenty names from *Al-'Arsh* (The Throne of God) to *Insân* (Man) are described in him thus : *Kursî* (the seat), Primum Mobile, skull ; Crystalline Spheres (Firmament of no Stars), membrane in the skull ; Saturn, spleen ; Jupiter, liver ; Mars, kidneys ; The Sun, the black spots in the heart ; Venus, the gall-bladder ; Mercury, the brain ; the Moon, the lungs ; sphere of Fire, the bile ; sphere of Water, phlegm ; sphere of Air, blood ; sphere of Earth, black bile ; minerals, the teeth ; vegetables, hair and nails ; animal, lust ; Angels, the affections of the mind ; the Jin, the suspicions of the mind ; Man, the mind ; the Perfect Man, the conglomerate of all above.

The Zodiac is also represented in, but does not control, the body. Thus, Ram (Aries) is represented by the head ; Bull (Taurus) by the neck ; Twins (Gemini) by the hands ; Crab (Cancer) by the nipples ; Lion (Leo) by the breast ; Virgin (Virgo) by the heart ; Balance (Libra) by the navel ; the Scorpion, by the private parts ; the Archer (Sagittarius), the buttocks ; Waterpot (Aquarius), by the legs ; Fishes (Pisces), by the soles of the feet.

The twelve gateways in the human body are said to represent the twelve constellations of the Zodiac. In man there are said to be three hundred and sixty bones, which are said to represent mountains ; three hundred and sixty arteries, which likewise represent rivers and streams. The stomach is the

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ocean replete with reptiles. Hair on the skin represents the trees, the teeth are carnivora, birds represent spirituality. The face is the populated area, and the back the barren land. Infancy is spring; youth, summer; old age, autumn; dotage, winter. Health and wealth represent Paradise; poverty, hell; and so on.

Thus, man was from eternity in the original knowledge of God; and he is here, even now, as he was then, and he will be for ever, for God's knowledge is eternal. Thus death is merely the disappearance from the Manifest into the Hidden; sleep and forgetfulness are reversions to the first stage of *Ahdiyyat*, in which the Essence is self-absorbed. God, the *Al-Ghanee* (The Independent) created man by His will. The same appears in man in the form of helplessness, fear or sorrow. God is All-Powerful and man all-powerless. The One has the consciousness of Self, and the other of "nothingness."

It will not be out of place to point out that the number twelve is considered to be the perfect number. Thus the twelve Signs of the Zodiac, the twelve great Patriarchs, the twelve tribes of Israel, the twelve Apostles of Christ, the twelve caligraphists of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the twelve Imams of the Shiah, the twelve months, a dozen as a standard of measure—all these among many others have a deeper significance, more so than the ordinary man would attach to them. Every mathematical problem can be solved by reducing the figure to a divisible of twelve.

If we consider the symbolical aspect, we are forced to the conclusion that the Essence, like Euclid's point, is indefinable. It is easier to say what it is not, than what it is. Thus, when a point lengthens itself into seven points, it is considered to have become cognizant of itself (*Alif*). These seven points represent the seven Attributes: Knowledge, Light, Existence, Observance, Hearing, Seeing and Speech.

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Now the word Allah is composed of four *Alifs* (the four limitations of Emanation) and a straight line, which is part of the latter *H*, making five in all. In this way some have claimed that Allah is written all the world over, in the human face, hands and body; and also symbolically in trees, birds and quadrupeds. It is said that if a man stares a wild beast in the face, it is overcome with fear because of the delineation of this word on the face. Similarly the word Muhammad is said to represent symbolically the shapes of the human body, face, etc. It likewise represents the position of *Sajdah* (prostration) in the Muslim Prayer; as also the position adopted by the child in its mother's womb.

In conclusion I can but repeat the well-known verse of Maulana Jalal-ud-Din Rumi, wherein he says :—

We have taken the marrow from the Qur-án, And have cast the bones before the dogs.

The creation of the universe, and all that is in it, is a manifestation of the All-Mighty, the Beneficent, and Merciful Lord. He created the universe with a grand design in view, and has informed us of His Divine Will through various Prophets. We know but little—and in fact only that which lies within the limits of our human comprehension. Though the manifestations are ever changing, the Essence remains the same. When man overcomes his animality and brings the Divine element to the fore he has well-nigh reached the goal.

And again he says :—

We have grown like grass often,
Seven hundred and seventy bodies have we taken.
From the inorganic, we developed into the vegetable;
Dying from the vegetable we rose to animals;
And leaving the animal we became man.
Then what fear that death will lower us?
The next transition will make us perfect.
Then shall we rise and merge in Infinity,
Have we not been told, that all of us will return?

THE LAW OF CRIME IN THE QUR-ÂN

THE LAW OF CRIME IN THE QUR-ÂN.

By SYED MAQBOOL AHMED, B.A.

ALLAH in the Qur-ân is called Just, as well as Merciful. He is *Ghafoor-o-Rahim*, and He is also *Adil-o-Munsif*. Obviously the two opposite attributes of justice and mercy cannot go hand in hand. He must be either wholly just, or wholly merciful. Partial justice and partial mercy may be very desirable in man, but would be altogether unthinkable in God the Almighty, Who, in Islam, possesses all attributes in the highest perfection. He cannot be both just and merciful without compromising one for the other. Does God compromise in His attributes? It would be indeed blasphemy to say so.

I suppose this was the problem before Christianity too, when she, quite gallantly, cut the gordian knot at a single blow by enunciating the doctrine of Christ's crucifixion and atonement for sin. Islam cannot, however, conform with this fanciful Christian idea, and so it has given to the world a very common-sense explanation, and one in perfect accord with the essential simplicity of our faith. God is just, says Islam, when He punishes a sinner who has sinned against the rights of man, which include also his own self. God is merciful when He forgives a sinner who has sinned against His own exclusive rights. Sin in Islam is thus divided into two classes: sin against fellow-beings and sin against God. The former includes nearly all those offences which have been penalized in all civilized countries. Sin against God is, of course, purely religious; for example, refusing to carry out the four ordained practices of Islam. A sinner who has sinned against the right of God alone need not be hopeless of God's boundless mercy and forgiveness, provided he comes to Him with a repentant and humble spirit, recognizing Him as his Creator and Forgiver. There is no necessity for intercession or atonement. His forgiveness can be obtained

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by the humblest, without conjuring up any metaphysical or supernatural apparition. But in the case of sin against a fellow-being (and the Prophet has said that even a man who commits suicide, a sin against one's own self, would surely go to hell), until and unless the aggrieved party is reconciled by the offender himself, God will not show mercy to him. Justice must take its course. How serious the offence against the rights of man becomes, in comparison with the offence against the rights of God, may be illustrated from the following well-known tradition of the Prophet: A man informed the Prophet that a certain woman was constantly praying, but that she had an evil tongue, whereby her neighbours were distressed. "She will go to hell," said the Prophet. Then mention was made of a woman who was careless in prayers, but was very kind and amiable to her neighbours. "She will be rescued," said the Prophet.

The punishment meted out to such evil-doers may be either worldly or heavenly: but it should be noted that Islam recognizes a *res judicata* in the heavenly justice if the offender is duly punished by his ordained "khalifs on earth," unless it is a mixed crime involving the rights of God too. There is no further punishment waiting for him in the next world. If he has been adequately punished by earthly justice, that punishment purges him of his sin altogether. A man commits adultery, for instance, which does not involve any right of God; his action has offended a husband or the parents of the girl or the girl herself; or if it was done with mutual consent of man and woman, and the woman has no guardian, inasmuch as it results in upsetting society by bringing into the world an uncared-for child, or evading the responsibility of parenthood, they have committed offence against society and that innocent child. In either case adultery is dealt with in Islam by worldly justice, and if it be according to the Qur-án, no other punishment is given in the

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next world. So the Prophet, when a woman was punished by him for adultery, and the woman was afterwards jeered at by his followers, turned to them and said: "Keep ye quiet, for verily the woman has been made as clean as she was when she was born." It follows, therefore, that while man may take cognizance in punishing offenders against the rights of men, in the name of God, it is the prerogative of God alone to punish men committing sins against His own rights; and I strongly dissent from the accepted views of some of our jurists, who have laid down fanciful and horrible punishments for persons who refuse to pray, keep fast, give alms, or who raise schism in the accepted doctrine of Islam. I do not know anything in the Qur-án, or the Tradition, which has given authority to "khalifs on earth" to deal with such persons. These jurists of Islam have been apparently misled by the action of the first Khalif, Abu Bekr, when he made war upon apostate Arabs for refusing to pay alms, and siding with the impostors that raised their heads in Arabia after the death of the Prophet. The first Khalif's action has not gone unchallenged, and was strongly criticized by Khalif Omar in his own time, as the following tradition of Al: Bukhari relates. When Khalif Abu Bekr succeeded the Prophet, and the Arabs went astray by refusing to pay alms, Abu Bekr called men to arms to fight them, whereupon Omar said to Abu Bekr: "How will you make war upon those who refuse to pay alms?" (seeing that the Prophet never did so). Abu Bekr replied: "Even if they refuse to give a camel rope, which they used to give in alms in the time of the Prophet, I will fight them for the same." The action of Abu Bekr was, however, a political expedient to suppress a wide-spread rebellion which was threatening Arabia, as every student of Khilafat history knows; and those who have deduced from his action a ruling for the punishment of persons found wanting in right belief and duty towards God, have seriously erred.

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Islam is not responsible for their errors, and they will answer to God for imitating the terrible Inquisition of mediæval Christianity, unless of course they can explain that the measures recommended by them, out of their own *qyas*, were meant for special political expediency, to save a kingdom from dissent, strife and chaos.

In regard to sins against man, God has delegated His authority of judging to the rulers of the earth; and only when justice fails here, through the inherent weakness and lack of insight in man, then the party will be brought before the throne of God on the Last Day of Judgment, and He with His highest attribute of Justice, shall give the persons concerned their due; and woe for the day when the evil-doer shall try to compensate his victim with all the riches of the world, but cannot reconcile him, for worldly riches will then be worthless to him. The best commodity in that day will be one's own good deeds, which may all go to the reconciling of the injured man. This is the simple solution of God's conflicting attributes of Justice and Mercy in Islam.

Further, God in Islam takes no notice of any sin or crime in man, until an overt act is done or wilfully omitted, or of any sin or crime committed without any evil intention. We have two reliable traditions of Al Bukhari on these points, one is from Abu Huraira to the effect that the Prophet of God has said: "God takes no notice of what evil intention man has in his mind, until he acts upon it by employing any member of his body." The second tradition is related by Khalif Omar, that the Prophet has said: "All actions depend upon intention." Therefore, unlike Christianity, Islam considers it within the power of man to be immune from sins and crimes, and that to indulge in the idea that a sinless man, nay God Himself in different shape, must come and rescue men from inborn wickedness, by penance and self-mortification, is absolutely uncalled for.

(To be continued.)

WHAT IS ISLAM ?

WHAT IS ISLAM ?

[The following is a very brief account of Islam, and some of its teaching. For further details please write to the IMAM of the Mosque, Woking.]

ISLAM, THE RELIGION OF PEACE.—The word Islam literally means: (1) Peace; (2) the way to achieve peace; (3) submission; as submission to another's will is the safest course to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

THE PROPHETS OF ISLAM.—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last Prophet of the Faith. Muslims, i.e. the followers of Islam, accept all such of the world's prophets, including Abraham, Moses and Jesus, as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

THE QUR-ÂN.—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-ân. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book, but, inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur-ân, the last Book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.—These are seven in number: belief in (1) Allah; (2) angels; (3) books from God; (4) messengers from God; (5) the hereafter; (6) the measurement of good and evil; (7) resurrection after death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in heaven. State after death is an image of the spiritual state, in this life.

The sixth article of faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination; he believes in Premeasurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

PILLARS OF ISLAM.—These are five in number: (1) declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad; (2) prayer; (3) fasting; (4) almsgiving; (5) pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine of Mecca.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.—The Muslims worship one God—the Almighty, the All-knowing, the All-just, the Cherisher of all the

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Worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is Indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the heaven and the earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

FAITH AND ACTION.—Faith without action is a dead letter. Faith is of itself insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden, and none can expiate for another's sin.

ETHICS IN ISLAM.—"Imbue yourself with Divine attributes," says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels and leading him to the border of Divinity.

THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM.—Men and women come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainment. Islam places man and woman under like obligations, the one to the other.

EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches and family honours are accidental things; virtue and the service of humanity are the matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

PERSONAL JUDGMENT.—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion, which, according to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

KNOWLEDGE.—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to angels.

SANCTITY OF LABOUR.—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

CHARITY.—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God, for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others, and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.