

The **Islamic Review**

Edited by AL-HAJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.

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MUHARRAM, 1347 A.H.

JULY, 1928 A.C.

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THE HOLY QUR-ĀN

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 مُحَمَّدٌ وَآلُهُ عَلَى سُلَّةٍ الْكَرِيمِ

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

MUHARRAM, 1346 A.H.

VOL. XVI.

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No. 7.

NOTES

‘Ídu ’l-Azhá, 1346 A.H.

The Muslim festival of ‘Ídu ’l-Azhá, which commemorates the sacred memory of the great Patriarch Abraham’s supreme sacrifice for the love of the God he worshipped, was celebrated at the Mosque, Woking, on Wednesday, May 30, 1928, in glorious weather, such as has not been experienced for the past few years in England. Muslims look forward to such a reunion with their brethren as takes place in Woking on these days of festival, and hope for a fine day so that the tradition of the open-air service on the close-cropped, pine-fringed lawn of the Sir Salar Jung Memorial House may be maintained, and it is gratifying to note that on this occasion the English May reverted to its legendary aspect of a blazing sun tempered by cooling breezes.

To the shallow-minded such a festival, being time-honoured, may seem to be therefore time-corroded, but those who look more deeply into things cannot fail to perceive the significance of the ‘Ídu ’l-Azhá—celebrated all the Muslim world over to join in prayer those who are gathered together from all parts of the Muslim world to perform the ceremonies

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relating to the annual pilgrimage to the Holy City of Mecca, where stands the House first dedicated to the worship of Allah. That House was dedicated by the Patriarch Abraham—the father of Jew, Christian, and Muslim alike—to the pure and true worship of the one God, shorn of any crude sense of fetishism and irrational reverence.

The representative congregation, consisting of Indians, Egyptians, Arabs, Turks, Caucasians, Kurds, Persians, Afghans, Malays, and European Muslims and friends, many of whom covered long distances in order to participate in the ceremony, symbolized in a striking manner the welding together of the different Muslim nationalities and colours for the one great cause of worshipping God, and merging in that common fraternity, due to the Islam's power of assimilation which transcends all material barriers.

About three hundred persons were present, and the number, considering the fact that the Whit-Monday Bank-holiday fell on May 28, 1928, and the fact that Wednesday is a weekday, was fairly large. Prayers were performed at 11.30 a.m. and were followed by a short and pithy address from the acting-Imam, Mr. 'Abdu 'l-Majid, M.A., in which he laid stress on the moral force which lies hidden in the institution of the pilgrimage ceremonies, as conceived by the prophetic genius of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Islam, without any doubt—even the opponents of Islam concur in this—supersedes all other religions or religio-political institutions in the practical solution of social problems. It is unbeaten, as well in the race towards the goal of social progress as in its power of assimilating the different elements of human society, and may well serve as a source of inspiration and an example to those Western pioneers of to-day who are working on the lines of the League of Nations.

Luncheon was served in the big marquee pitched for the purpose, and Oriental delicacies afforded a most pleasurable break in the monotony of plain English food. Since we are on the topic of the great sacrifice of Abraham, who replaced the cannibal-like rite of human sacrifice by the sacrifice of an animal symbolically representing the beast in man, it will

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not be out of place to conclude this short note with the few verses from the Holy Qur-án descriptive of the scene:—

“Abraham said: My Lord! grant me of the doers of the good deeds.

“So We gave him the good news of a boy, possessing forbearance.

“And when he attained to working with him, he said: O my son! surely I have seen in a dream that I should sacrifice you; consider then what you see. He said: O my father! do what you are commanded to do; if Allah please, you will find me of the patient ones.

“So when they both submitted and he threw him down upon his forehead,

“And We called out to him saying, O Abraham!

“You have indeed shown the truth of your vision; surely thus do We reward the doers of good.

“Most surely this is a manifest trial.

“And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.

“And we perpetuated praise to him among the later generations.

“Peace be on Abraham.

“Thus do We reward the doers of good.”

(Holy Qur-án, xxxvii. 100-110.)

What They Think of Us.

The European Press is gradually devoting more and more space to the topics dealing with Islamic countries—certainly not with the idea that they interest it; and so we find Mr. Lancelot Lawton, who is well known as a student of Islam and the Far Eastern countries, contributing an interesting article to the *Sphere* for May 12th. We have thought it well to find a place for some excerpts therefrom in the pages of the *Islamic Review*, not so much with the idea that they have a good word to say for us as to show how the angle of vision of the European political eye is continually changing, and that it has once again begun to see looming large the everlasting bugbear of Pan-Islamism.

Europe attained its political sway over the Islamic countries

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during the nineteenth century; and even to-day all the countries where Islam is professed—with the exception of Persia, Afghanistan, Turkey, and Arabia—are to a certain extent, in one form or another, under the political influence of one or other of the European Powers. It would seem, moreover, from a perusal of Mr. Lawton's remarks that Europe cannot afford to tolerate any change of attitude in Muslim countries, towards each other.

He says:—

The transition now taking place throughout Islam is rightly described as revolution, not evolution; it is one of those immense occurrences which uproot the existing order and determine universal history. Not less than 250,000,000 Moslems, comprising one-eighth of the world's population, and living in communities stretching from remote Asia to Central Africa, are involved. What will be the outcome of this vast turmoil?

Are we witnessing (as some say) a glorious Moslem renaissance, or will a reformed Islam (as others aver) be no longer Islam? In either event, what will be the effect upon the relations of Islam with the West?

It is commonly believed that the Pan-Islamic movement, which sought to unite all Moslem communities, died with Sultan Abdul Hamid, and that in its place arose separate national aspirations in these various communities. It is true that the movement collapsed when the Young Turks deposed its chief patron, and that henceforth Nationalism found favour as the political creed of Moslem peoples. But the iniquitous peace that followed the Great War radically changed the situation. Pan-Islamism revived in a new form; this Pan-Islamism is not antagonistic to Islamic nationalism; on the contrary, it is complementary to it. For the ideal aimed at is a federation of independent Islamic nations.

Proof of the existence of this movement is forthcoming from many sides. Between Arabs and Turks there is a *rapprochement*. In the past the one hated the other, but such hatred by no means implied a preference for Western nations. Both, having since suffered cruelly from the duplicity of these Western nations, are now more appreciative of each other, and generally of Moslem ethics. It is known that Mustapha Kemal favours Arab unity. It is admitted that, owing to traditional rivalries, such unity could take only flexible shape. But the ideal of a federation of independent communities which has replaced the reactionary Ottoman aspiration for the hegemony of the Moslem world is well suited to modern Arab conditions.

Other important signs of Pan-Islamic revival in this new federative form must be noted. Conferences have been held at which the idea has been discussed by representatives of Islam communities in all parts of the world. In order to attend one of these conferences, no less a personage than the leader of the Sennussi Order emerged from his mystical habitation in the heart of Sahara. For some time the Moslem faith has been in a state of fermentation; of the nature of this inner conflict I will speak later. Meanwhile, it is necessary to explain that

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the Sennussi Order is one of those sects which believes that spiritual regeneration can alone afford a basis for Moslem unity.

Its proselytizing activity, conducted underground, has spread far in Africa; it is not an exaggeration to say that throughout vast territories its word, and not that of Western administrators, is law. Europe has to reckon now with this prospect—the conversion of the overwhelming majority of the black millions of Africa to the Moslem faith. Not merely is there identity of political aspiration between Africa and Asia, but also marked affinity of religious inclination, and frequently of racial tradition. The peoples of both continents, moreover, share the same grievance against white civilization. It may be true that this civilization brought with its sword incalculable benefits, but because of this (they ask) must the sword for ever remain suspended over their heads?

The Islamic Brotherhood.

The reality of the Brotherhood of Islam is so patent a fact that Christianity, as practised to-day, has no choice but to acknowledge its existence—with a bad grace, of course. Christianity has not been able to produce even so much as something approximating to its prototype after an existence and evolution of 2,000 years. For it is a fact that the wonderful fraternal spirit, transcending all barriers of race or country, which animates the great Brotherhood of Islam, is not discernible in any other community of mankind. And all this, let it not be forgotten, in face of flagrant spells of corruption and backsliding in the Muslim world!

“Islamic brotherhood,” says the Reverend Murray T. Titus in his article “Islam and Christianity: a New Evaluation,” which appeared in one of the issues of *The National Christian Council Review* (Mysore City, India), of last year, “is a social and spiritual fact. Islam is not only a faith, it is a legal system and a social system as well. . . . Islam does possess a brotherhood which is a unifying factor amid the clashes of colour, race, nationality, and class. . . . Islamic fraternity is a constant challenge to Christians.”

Mr. Lawton, whom we have quoted in the previous note, proceeds to compare the religion of Islam with Christianity *in action*. We reproduce his views with an unimportant omission:—

The union of Africa and Asia is not so remote as many people think; the steps taken towards this goal since the War have covered much

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ground. Those nations who imagine that they will be able to recruit the black millions of Africa in defence of their Imperial conquests in Asia are destined to undergo disillusionment, for Africa is the political and religious convert of Asia, and both have very much the same feelings, the same grievances, and the same enemies.

As a religion the Mahomedan religion, it must be confessed, is more suited to Africa than is the Christian religion; indeed, I would even say that it is more suited to the world as a whole. For there is much in the contention of some Moslems that whatever the peoples outside Islam may preach, their conduct in certain important respects is not dissimilar from that of Mahomedans. Now, despite its partial truth, such a statement, I hold, does contain a libel on Islam.

Let us deal with the partial truth first. It is undeniable that polygamy, or, to speak more accurately, the principle underlying it, is not confined to Moslem peoples. To put the matter plainly, who can honestly say that the sexual morality of the West is superior to that of the Moslem East? A fair comparison would, I believe, very much favour the latter. Then it is undeniable also that faith in the power of a sword is by no means restricted to the Islamic world. Who can bear more telling witness to the truth of this assertion than Moslems themselves, who have suffered greatly from the sharp swords of the Western nations? Putting aside these two points of resemblance, the achievement of the Moslem faith enjoys, I maintain, a definite superiority, in proof of which may be cited Moslem abstinence, sense of fraternity, condemnation of usury, and recognition of prophets other than its own. Its quality may be summed up by saying that it takes man as he is, and, while it does not pretend to make a god out of him, seeks to regulate his conduct so that at least he shall become a good neighbour.

There is no question here of comparison with Christianity . . . but a comparison is possible between those who profess the one and those who profess the other. And the result, I repeat, is not unfavourable to the followers of Islam. Certainly against them cannot be laid the accusation of hypocrisy in the same measure as it can be laid against Christians. It is true that the Islamic religion, as occurred with all religions, became the sport of the theologians, and that, as a consequence of their wrangling, the simple and wise teachings of its founder were grotesquely distorted. It so happened that the crisis of this inner conflict coincided with humiliations inflicted from without. The result has been to shake Islam to its very foundations. The masses have remained ignorant, as masses always and everywhere do, and the educated classes have been split into divergent camps. Many Moslems abandoned Islam, only to become caricatures of Europeans. Some accepted Western philosophy whole-heartedly; others, having once accepted it, became disillusioned and fell into despair. On the whole, it cannot be said that the Moslem world was favourably impressed as a result of its contact with the Western civilization.

Yet, despite its doubts and its divisions, the reformation and unification of Islam is proceeding. It must not be forgotten that the foundation of Islamism is brotherhood—brotherhood of the faithful—and that in actual everyday life the relations between Moslem and Moslem are far friendlier, far closer, than between man and man of any other belief. It must not be forgotten that Islamism is more than a holy creed; it is a social system, a religious democracy based upon mystical

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belief in equality. Always it has been zealous in missionary effort, and wherever it triumphed it endured. Never has it been more vigorous than now, when it is in conflict with itself; it is winning converts everywhere, even here in England. The conclusion is unavoidable, therefore, that its tribulation is a manifestation of awakening vitality, not of irrevocable decay.

It is sad to think that the Western nations have little to offer Islam, sad to think that even this little she has rejected on the ground that it is saturated with rationalism. They can only offer her scepticism. They cannot offer her Christianity, for Christianity itself is still remote from Western practice.

The Gospels—for or against Divorce?

Anything and everything that deals with man and woman ought to be of permanent value and interest to every one. We animadvert on such topics as deal with life viewed both from the Christian and Islamic standpoint. We do so sometimes to show how inadequate and incomplete the teachings of the Bible are, or how they fail to take into account some of the abnormal contingencies of life because of its lack of understanding the demands of human nature.

Divorce is one such subject. Some have regarded divorce as a concession to human perversity. But as it is, it must be reckoned with. The civil law on divorce in practically all the so-called Christian countries varies in latitude. In some countries the marriage tie can be dissolved on a petty and trivial excuse, while in others it is indissoluble. The civil law of the European countries does not recognize the Church sacrament of matrimony, yet it has not outgrown the Church laws; for it is still overweighted with the Gospel teachings, which enunciate "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." And that it is such is something natural. But the breaking loose from the ecclesiastical control and making marriage a civil contract, just as Islam does, even though it is encumbered with idealistic, hence impracticable, shackles, is a sign for the better and a victory for the teaching of Islam.

In the Gospels we should not look for any political or social programme. For Jesus was never concerned with the mechanism of society. He does not lay down laws and introduce institutions through which we may realize some or any particular form of social

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life. To the man who asked Jesus to adjudicate on a question of inheritance, Jesus answered: "Man, who made me a judge and a divider over you?"¹ and he observed a like reticence as to all the specific arrangement of the social life. To this rule there is but one exception. The three synoptists are agreed, and Paul² bears out their testimony, that Jesus enacted a definite law on the matter of divorce. The precise terms in which he expressed himself are difficult to determine, but critical analysis of the various passages appears to leave little doubt that Jesus forbade divorce altogether. We reproduce below in excerpts such an analysis from the pen of Sir Hall Caine, the famous English novelist, who contributed an article to the *Sunday Express* for December 4, 1927, under the caption "The Bible—for or against divorce?" He was stimulated to express his views in view of an incident in a court of law in which a judge expressed his opinion that a woman who had asked for separation from her husband would have acted more mercifully and more wisely, and in the better interests of society, if she had asked for divorce. The pronouncement of the judge led to a prolonged discussion between Lord Buckmaster, Monsignor Canon Hewlett, and Archdeacon Charles, who in the course of the debate quoted references and cross-references to the decisions of Councils of the Early Church and to the opinions of certain of the Early Fathers and the Saints.

After having discussed the Mosaic code which does permit divorce, Sir Hall Caine goes on to say:—

Thus far marriage and divorce seem to have gone down to the time of Christ. Then it began to be felt by the Sadducees, in particular, that the Mosaic law was too hard on the man-sinner and perhaps on the offending woman also.

So the Pharisees, who knew of the freedom of Christ with the Mosaic law, and particularly of His tenderness towards women, came to tempt Him with a critical question. The story of their temptation is told in two of the Gospels only—Matthew and Mark.

Of these two Gospels, Mark was unquestionably the earlier, so I take it first. The Pharisees asked Jesus if it was lawful for a man to put away his wife (the later version says for "every cause," meaning for any cause) and He, after His customary manner of answering one

¹ Luke xii. 14.

² 1 Cor. vii. 10.

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question by asking another, asked (Mark x. 2-12) what Moses had commanded.

They said that Moses had suffered the husband to write a bill of divorcement and put his wife away. To this Jesus replied, quoting Adam, that for the hardness of their heart Moses had given them this precept, but that from the "beginning" God had made them male and female, and that for this cause a man should leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they twain should be no more twain, but one flesh. "What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

The Pharisees went away, apparently silenced, perhaps astounded, by this daring denial of the law of Moses and by the setting up by Jesus of a law of His own in its place. But His disciples asked Him again of the matter, and He added: "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband and be married to another, she committeth adultery."

Thus, according to Mark, there could be no uncertainty as to what Jesus meant, and it needs no further exposition. But years after Mark, perhaps many years, came Matthew, and in the meantime the apostles had begun to feel (as countless thousands do now) that the law given by Jesus was beyond the power of human nature to endure.

Clearly they were saying among themselves: "Can it be possible that a man is to be compelled to go on living, or being married to, an adulterous woman, or else be doomed to separation and lifelong celibacy?" So, quite innocently perhaps, and believing they were interpreting the teaching of Christ in a manner more in keeping with the weakness of human nature, they caused Him to limit, not wholly to wipe out, the law of Moses by saying (Matthew xix. 9): "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery."

They did not see at first that by this qualification they had destroyed Christ's teaching. But after receiving the same answer as in Mark, they said: "If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry."

I do not say I have thought too long on this subject to come to a hasty decision. But I cannot and will not attempt to evade the only conclusion which can finally be drawn from history, that, rightly or wrongly, mercifully or the reverse, in or about the year A.D. 33 Jesus condemned divorce.

The Qur-án—for or against Divorce?

It would be too much to say, as some biased critics of Islamic teachings would do, that Islam is for divorce, yet it would be equally untrue to assert that it is as peremptorily against divorce as the Gospels are; for otherwise Islam would have been as much of a Utopian system of life as Christianity.

Islam looks upon the custom of divorce with extreme dis-

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approval, and regards its unrestricted use as calculated to undermine the foundations of society. If, on the one hand, it makes provisions for the dissolution of the marital tie, it attaches a very high degree of sanctity to the institution of marriage. This is one of the reasons which accounts for the virtual absence of cases dealing with breach of marriage in the Islamic countries.

As Islam regards marriage as a purely civil contract, it confers on both the parties to the contract the power of dissolving the tie or relationship under certain specified circumstances: any conditions can be imposed by any party. The law gives to the man primarily the faculty of dissolving the marriage if the wife by her indocility or her bad character renders the married life unhappy; but in the absence of serious reasons no Muslim can justify a divorce either in the eyes of the law or religion. If he abandons his wife or puts her away from simple caprices, he draws upon himself the Divine anger; for "the wrath of Allah," said the Holy Prophet Muhammad, "rests upon him who repudiates his wife capriciously."

The pre-Islamic institution of divorce required no formula to make its action valid, and there was no check on the irresponsible power of the husband. A simple intimation from him to the effect that the tie was dissolved was considered sufficient. The Prophet Muhammad, in regulating the law of divorce, imposed several conditions on the exercise of the faculty possessed by husbands with the object of protecting women as much as possible from being thrown on the world at the mere caprice of man. He also gave to the woman the right of dissolving the marriage contract under certain circumstances.

When the dissolution of marriage tie proceeds from the husband, it is called *Taláq*; when it takes place at the instance of the wife, it is called *Khula'*; and when it is by mutual consent, it is called *Mubarát*.

Friday Prayer and Sermon.—At the London Muslim Prayer House—111, Campden Hill Road, Notting Hill Gate, London—every Friday at 1 p.m. **Sunday Lectures** at 5 p.m. **Qur-án and Arabic Classes**—every Sunday at 3.30 p.m.
Service, Sermon, and Lectures every Sunday at the Mosque, Woking, at 3.15 p.m. Every Friday at 1 p.m.

MUHAMMAD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

MUHAMMAD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

By PROFESSOR ABDULAHAD DAVOUD, B.D.

II

THE QUESTION OF THE BIRTHRIGHT AND THE COVENANT

THERE is a very, very ancient religious dispute between the Ishmaelites and the Israelites about the questions concerning the Birthright and the Covenant. The readers of the Bible and the Qur-án are familiar with the story of the great Prophet Abraham and his two sons Ishmael (Ismá'íl) and Isaac (Isháq). The story of Abraham's call from the Ur of the Chaldees, and that of his descendants until the death of his grandson Joseph in Egypt, is written in the Book of Genesis (chapters xi.-l.). In his genealogy as recorded in Genesis, Abraham is the twentieth from Adam, and a contemporary of Nimrod, who built the stupendous Tower of Babel.

The early story of Abraham in the Ur of Chaldea, though not mentioned in the Bible, is recorded by the famous Jewish historian Joseph Flavius in his *Antiquities*, and is also confirmed by the Qur-án. But the Bible expressly tells us that the father of Abraham, Terah, was an idolater (Jos. xxiv. 2, 14). Abraham manifested his love and zeal for God when he entered into the temple and destroyed all the idols and images therein, and thus he was a true prototype of his illustrious descendant Muhammad. He came out unhurt and triumphantly from the burning furnace wherein he was cast by the order of Nimrod. He leaves his native land for Hārān in the company of his father and his nephew Lot. He was seventy-five years old when his father died at Hārān. In obedience and absolute resignation to the divine call, he leaves his country and starts on a long and varied journey to the land of Canaan, to Egypt and to Arabia. His wife Sārāh is barren; yet God announces to him that he is destined to become the father of many nations, that all the territories he is to traverse shall be given as an inheritance to his descendants, and that,

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“by his Seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed”! This wonderful and unique promise in the history of religion was met with an unshaken faith on the part of Abraham, who had no issue, no son. When he was led out to look at the sky at night and told by Allah that his posterity would be as numerous as the stars, and as innumerable as the sand which is on the shores of the sea, Abraham believed it. And it was this belief in God, that “was counted righteousness,” as the Scripture says.

A virtuous poor Egyptian girl, Hagar by name, is a slave and a maid in the service of Sáráh. At the bidding and consent of the mistress the maidservant is duly married by the Prophet, and from this union Ishmael is born, as foretold by the Angel. When Ishmael is thirteen years old, Allah again appears to Abraham through His Angel and revelation; the same old promise is repeated to Abraham; the rite of Circumcision is formally instituted and immediately executed. Abraham, at his ninetieth year of age, Ishmael, and all the male servants, are circumcised; and the “Covenant” between God and Abraham with his only begotten son is made and sealed, as if it were with the blood of circumcision. It is a kind of treaty concluded between Heaven and the Promised Land in the person of Ishmael as the only offspring of the nonagenarian Patriarch. Abraham promises allegiance and fealty to his Creator, and God promises to be for ever the Protector and God of the posterity of Ishmael.

Later on—that is to say, when Abraham was ninety-nine years old and Sáráh ninety, we find that she also bears a son whom they name Isaac according to the divine promise.

As no chronological order is observed in the Book of Genesis, we are told that after the birth of Isaac, Ishmael and his mother are turned out and sent away by Abraham in a most cruel manner, simply because Sáráh so wished. Ishmael and his mother disappear in the desert; a fountain bursts out when the youth is on the point of death from thirst; he drinks and is saved. Nothing more is heard of Ishmael in the Book of Genesis except that he married an Egyptian woman, and

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when Abraham died he was present together with Isaac to bury their dead father.

Then the Book of Genesis continues the story of Isaac, his two sons, and the descent of Jacob into Egypt, and ends with the death of Joseph.

The next important event in the history of Abraham as recorded in Genesis (xxii.) is the offering of "his only son" a sacrifice to God, but he was ransomed with a ram which was presented by an angel. As the Qur-án says, "this was a manifest trial" for Abraham (Qur-án, xxxvii.), but his love for God surpassed every other affection; and for this reason he is surnamed "the Friend of Allah" (Qur-án, iv.).

Thus runs the brief account of Abraham in connection with our subject of the Birthright and the Covenant.

There are three distinct points which every true believer in God must accept as truths. The first point is that Ishmael is the legitimate son of Abraham, his firstborn, and therefore his claim to birthright is quite just and legal. The second point is that the Covenant was made between God and Abraham as well as his only son Ishmael before Isaac was born. The Covenant and the institution of the Circumcision would have no value or signification unless the repeated promise contained in the divine words, "Through thee all the nations of the earth shall be blessed," and especially the expression, the Seed "that shall come out from thy bowels, *he* will inherit thee" (Gen. xv. 4). This promise was fulfilled when Ishmael was born (Gen. xvi.), and Abraham had the consolation that his chief servant Eliezer would no longer be his heir. Consequently we must admit that Ishmael was the real and legitimate heir of Abraham's spiritual dignity and privileges. The prerogative that "by Abraham all the generations of the earth shall be blessed," so often repeated—though in different forms—was the heritage by birthright, and was the patrimony of Ishmael. The inheritance to which Ishmael was entitled by birthright was not the tent in which Abraham lived or a certain camel upon which he used to ride, but to subjugate and occupy for ever all the territories extending from the Nile to the Euphrates, which were inhabited by some ten

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different nations (xvii. 18-21) These lands have never been subdued by the descendants of Isaac, but by those of Ishmael. This is an actual and literal fulfilment of one of the conditions contained in the Covenant.

The third point is that Isaac was also born miraculously and specially blessed by the Almighty, that for his people the land of Canaan was promised and actually occupied under Joshua. No Muslim does ever think of disparaging the sacred and prophetic position of Isaac and his son Jacob; for to disparage or to lower a Prophet is an impiety. When we compare Ishmael and Isaac, we cannot but reverence and respect them both as holy servants of God. In fact, the people of Israel, with its Law and sacred Scriptures, have had a unique religious history in the Old World. They were indeed the Chosen People of God. Although that people have often rebelled against God, and fallen into idolatry, yet they have given to the world myriads of prophets and righteous men and women.

So far there could be no real point of controversy between the descendants of Ishmael and the people of Israel. For if by "Blessing" and the "Birthright" it meant only some material possessions and power, the dispute would be settled as it has been settled by sword and the accomplished fact of the Arab occupation of the promised lands. Nay, there is a fundamental point of dispute between the two nations now existing for nearly four thousand years; and that point is the question of the Messiah and Muhammad. The Jews do not see the fulfilment of the so-called Messianic prophecies either in the person of Christ or in that of Muhammad. The Jews have always been jealous of Ishmael because they know very well that *in him* the Covenant was made and with his circumcision it was concluded and sealed. And it is out of this rancour that their scribes or doctors of law have corrupted and interpolated many passages in their Scriptures. To efface the name "Ishmael" from the second, sixth, and seventh verses of the twenty-second chapter of the Book of Genesis and to insert in its place "Isaac," and to leave the descriptive epithet "thy only begotten son" is to deny the existence of the former and to violate the Covenant made between God and Ishmael.

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It is expressly said in this chapter by God: "Because thou didst not spare thy only begotten son, I will increase and multiply thy posterity like the stars and the sands on the sea-shore," which word "multiply" was used by the Angel to Hagar in the wilderness: I will multiply thy offspring to an innumerable multitude, and that Ishmael "shall become a fruitful man" (Gen. xvi. 12). Now the Christians have translated the same Hebrew word, which means "fruitful" or "plentiful" from the verb *para*—identical with the Arabic *wefera*—in their versions "a wild ass"! Is it not a shame and impiety to call Ishmael "a wild ass," whom God styles "Fruitful" or "Plentiful"?

It is very remarkable that Christ himself, as reported in the Gospel of St. Barnabas, reprimanded the Jews who said that the Great Messenger whom they call "Messiah" would come down from the lineage of King David, telling them plainly that he could not be the son of David, for David calls him "his Lord," and then went on to explain how their fathers had altered the Scriptures, and that the Covenant was made, not with Isaac, but with Ishmael, who was taken to be offered a sacrifice to God, and that the expression "thy only begotten son" means Ishmael, and not Isaac. St. Paul, who pretends to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, uses some irreverent words about Hagar (Gal. vi. 21-31 and elsewhere) and Ishmael, and openly contradicts his Master. This man has done all he could to pervert and mislead the Christians whom he used to persecute before his conversion; and I doubt very much that the Jesus of Paul may not be a certain Jesus, also son of Mary, who was hanged on a tree about a century or so before Christ, for his Messianic pretensions. In fact, the Epistles of St. Paul as they stand before us are full of doctrines entirely repugnant to the spirit of the Old Testament, as well as to that of the humble Prophet of Nazareth. St. Paul was a bigoted Pharisee and a lawyer. After his conversion to Christianity he seems to have become even more fanatical than ever. His hatred to Ishmael and his claim to the birthright makes him forget or overlook the Law of Moses which forbids a man to marry his own sister under the pain of capital penalty. If Paul were

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inspired by God, he would have either denounced the Book of Genesis as full of forgeries when it says twice (xii. 10–20, xx. 2–18) that Abraham was the husband of his own sister, or that he would have exposed the Prophet to be a liar! (God forbid.)

But he believes in the words of the book, and his conscience does not torment him in the least when he identifies Hagar with the barren desert of the Sinai, and qualifies Sáráh as the Jerusalem above in heaven! (Gal. iv. 25, 26). Did ever St. Paul read this anathema of the Law:—

“Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people say: Amen”? (Deut. xxvii. 22).

Is there a human or divine law that would consider more legitimate one who is the son of his own uncle and aunt than he whose father is a Chaldean and his mother an Egyptian? Have you anything to say against the chastity and the piety of Hagar? Of course not, for she was the wife of a Prophet and the mother of a Prophet, and herself favoured with divine revelations.

The God who made the Covenant with Ishmael thus prescribes the law of inheritance, namely: If a man has two wives, one beloved and the other despised, and each one has a son, and if the son of the despised wife is the first-born, *that* son, and *not* the son of the beloved wife, is entitled to the birthright. Consequently the firstborn shall inherit twice that of his brother (Deut. xxi. 15–17). Is not, then, this law explicit enough to put to silence all who dispute the just claim of Ishmael to birthright?

Now let us discuss this question of the birthright as briefly as we can. We know that Abraham was a nomad chief as well as an Apostle of God, and that he used to live in a tent and had large flocks of cattle and great wealth. Now the nomad tribesmen do not inherit lands and pastures, but the prince assigns to each of his sons certain clans or tribes as his subjects and dependents. As a rule the youngest inherits

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the hearth or the tent of his parents, whereas the elder—unless unfit—succeeds him to his throne. The great Mongol Conqueror Jenghiz Khan was succeeded by Oghtai, his eldest son, who reigned in Pekin as Khāqān, but this youngest son remained in his father's hearth at Qārāqōrum in Mongolia. It was exactly the same with Abraham's two sons. Isaac, who was the younger of the two, inherited the tent of his father and became, like him, a nomad living in tents. But Ishmael was sent to Hijāz to guard the House of Allah which he, together with Abraham, had built (Qur-ān, ii.). Here he settled, became Prophet and Prince among the Arab tribes who believed in him. It was at Mecca, or Becca, that the Ka'aba became the centre of the pilgrimage called *al-hajj*. It was Ishmael that founded the religion of one true Allah and instituted the Circumcision. His offspring soon increased and was multiplied like the stars of the sky. From the days of Ishmael to the advent of Muhammad, the Arabs of Hijāz, Yemen and others have been independent and masters of their own countries. The Roman and Persian Empires were powerless to subdue the people of Ishmael. Although idolatry was afterwards introduced, still the names of Allah, Abraham, Ishmael, and a few other Prophets were not forgotten by them. Even Esau, the elder son of Isaac, left his father's hearth for his younger brother Jacob and dwelt in Edom, where he became the chief of his people and soon got mixed with the Arab tribes of Ishmael, who was both his uncle and father-in-law. The story of Esau's selling his birthright to Jacob for a dish of pottage is a foul trick invented to justify the ill-treatment ascribed to Ishmael. It is alleged that "God hated Esau and loved Jacob," while the twins were in their mother's womb; and that the "elder brother was to serve his younger one" (Gen. xxv., Rom. ix. 12, 13). But, strange to say, another report, probably from another source, shows the case to be just the reverse of the above-mentioned prediction. For the thirty-third chapter of Genesis clearly admits that Jacob *served* Esau, before whom he seven times prostrates in homage, addressing him "My Lord," and declaring himself as "your slave."

Abraham is reported to have several other sons from

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Qitura and "the concubines," to whom he gave presents or gifts and sent them towards the East. All these became large and strong tribes. Twelve sons of Ishmael are mentioned by name and described, each one to be a prince with his towns and camps or armies (Gen. xxv.). So are the children from Qitura, and others, as well as those descended from Esau mentioned by their names.

When we behold the number of the family of Jacob when he went to Egypt, which hardly exceeded seventy heads, and when he was met by Esau with an escort of four hundred armed horsemen, and the mighty Arab tribes submitted to the twelve Emirs belonging to the family of Ishmael, and then when the Last Messenger of Allah proclaims the religion of Islam, all the Arab tribes unitedly acclaim him and accept his religion, and subdue all the lands promised to the children of Abraham, we must indeed be blind not to see that the Covenant was made with Ishmael and the promise accomplished in the person of Muhammad (upon whom be peace).

Before concluding this article I wish to draw the attention of the students of the Bible, especially that of the Higher Biblical Criticism, to the fact that the so-called Messianic Prophecies and Passages belong to a propaganda in favour of the Davidic Dynasty after the death of King Solomon when his kingdom was split into two. The two great Prophets Elias and Elisha, who flourished in the Kingdom of Samaria or Israel, do not even mention the name of David or Solomon. Jerusalem was no longer the centre of religion for the Ten Tribes, and the Davidic claims to a perpetual reign were rejected.

But Prophets like Ishaia and others who were attached to the Temple of Jerusalem and the House of David have foretold the coming of a great Prophet and Sovereign.

As it was said in the first article, there are certain manifest marks with which the coming Last Prophet will be known. And it is these marks that we shall attempt to study in the future articles.

EUROPE'S DEBT TO ISLAM

EUROPE'S DEBT TO ISLAM¹

By DR. GUSTAV DIERCKS

(Translated from the German by 'Abdu 'l-Majid, M.A.)

II

The Early History of the Arabs ; the Semitic Race—the Arabs especially ; their Character, their Physical and Psychic Type ; their Literature, State Institutions and Social Circumstances before Muhammad.

FROM time immemorial Arabia had attracted the attention of civilized peoples; for, firstly, it was known to the world as being the source of various articles of luxury, e.g. scent, amber, and other spices, which were eagerly sought for even in antiquity by all nations who had overcome the uncouth rough stage of nature and had trodden the way of civilization; secondly, Arabia had attracted towards itself the interest of the outside world because of its peculiar inhospitality which made it inaccessible to all but the Arabian Bedouins. Moreover, Arabia appeared to the world, in a manner different from Egypt to be a land of wonders, to explore which greater efforts were made than ever. Moreover, owing to their singularity, the inhabitants of this region must have caught the eye of foreigners, and the fact that the Arabian tribes occasionally participated in the wars of the outer world is shown to us by Homer, who in his *Odyssey* makes mention of the Erember which the Alexandrine grammarians explain as Arabs.

The reports which the olden writers give us on Arabia and its inhabitants in sum total are very numerous. But it should not be forgotten that they are at the same time very weak. They are interwoven with fables, and therefore scarcely afford us a clear picture of the circumstances which in the earliest times must have obtained in that great peculiar penin-

¹ A translation of *Die Araber im Mittelalter und ihr Einfluss auf die Kultur Europa's*, by Dr. Gustav Diercks. Leipzig, 2nd edn., 1882, pp. 28-35.

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sula. The most reliable informations—principally those of Strabo—pertain only to those parts which had become famous owing to the busy merchandise traffic of the Egyptian Phœnicians, Greeks, and Romans with the inhabitants thereof, and in which there was very little noteworthy concerning institutions, the nature and the character of the Arabs of the desert proper. Hence it is that not only can we understand the position ourselves, but also feel no surprise when Strabo tells us that the Arabs are not a martial and warlike people, but comb-sellers and traders. He had in his mind's eye only that small portion of the Arabian peninsula and its population which made its living through merchandise and trade and, having enriched itself thereby, had thus forfeited its rough Arabian Bedouin character, and had become tender by adopting the cultural conditions which had little or nothing in common with the Arabs of the desert. It is rather an extravagant exaggeration when Strabo, in speaking of the expedition of Alexus Gallen during the reign of Cæsar Augustus, tells us that on one single open battlefield ten thousand Arabs and two Romans fell, and that throughout the whole of the expedition only seven Romans were killed by the hand of the enemy. If we were to bring together the entire mass of material which offers itself to us for passing a judgment on the appearance of the Arabs, we should find that to characterize the Arabs as unwarlike people would be fully untenable. It was the Arabs on whom the Empire of Zenobia in Palmyra rested; it was the Arabian soldiers who were highly valued and prized by the Persians as well as by the Byzantines, and all the notices on the appearance of the Arabs agree in the fact that the Arabs, right from the beginning, from time immemorial, had been a people invariably mobile, warlike, freebooting, and hostility-loving, just as even to-day the Bedouins of the desert of Arabia are, and just as they were in the times of Muhammad. The confirmation of this fact we find in the oldest Arabian poems and in the few traces of the old Arabian culture generally. At all times the nomadic Bedouins have hated those living in the towns of the coastal region, and they have constantly maintained warfare with them. The former, in

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especial, have always preserved the character of the aboriginal Arabs, and to all intents and purposes have done so even to-day, to a miraculous degree. The Bedouins, indeed, were the real carriers of the national character, the props of all the great undertakings which shot forth from the Arabian peninsula.

The position of Arabia fitted in with this conservative element of the Arabian nature, just as much as, on the other hand, it made the country and its coastal people so important for the history of the trade of the world.

Enclosed on three sides by the sea, and on the fourth side by an element much more dangerous and much more difficult of access to a foreigner, namely, the desert of Africa and of the Asiatic continent, protected also through its very nature against all kinds of invaders into the interior, the interior itself cut up by high mountainous ranges and climatically divided into dissimilar zones, Arabia, whose area is more than twelve hundred thousand miles, or, in other words, is about one-third of the size of Europe, made, so to say, an island, and is so described by the Arabs themselves as *Jazīratu 'l-'Arab*. This mass of land was divided by the ancients in general into three divisions, which are: (1) Arabia Felix: the south and western coast with their immediate hinterlands, called Felix, because a flourishing agriculture was carried on there by which Nature had helped to make the place a fruitful paradise. In this district there had arisen a series of civilized kingdoms. (2) Arabia Deserta—the middle plateau which by mistake has been regarded by the ancients as a complete desert, but, like Arabia Felix, it possessed in its valleys an exceedingly fertile soil and in the eighteenth century gave rise to the great cultural kingdom of the Wahabites. (3) Arabia Petræa—the north-western part of the peninsula and the part enclosing Sinai called Petræa, after the old town of Petræ, which was important for its old commercial history. Nowadays the island is divided into (1) Hedjaz, by which they understand the northern part of the coastal country situated on the Red Sea; (2) Yaman—the southern part on the corner of Bábu 'l-Mandab; (3) Mahra—the south coast whose hinterlands are known as Hazramaut; (4) Oman—the south-eastern corner of

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Arabia. The inner part is generally called *Al-Jauf*, and falls into several landscapes, amongst which Nejd, Shammar, Nufud, are especially worthy of note.

This extensive region was, even in ancient times, pierced with the caravan roads, which to this day remain unchanged, and along which at all times the goods of Arabia were exported to foreign countries and the goods of the Far East and those of the West were exchanged. For intermediary trade no other people were better suited than the Arabs, who in this respect were favoured in the highest degree. To the west lay the old kingdom of Egypt, in the north-west Phœnicia, in the north Syria, in the north-east the old civilized kingdoms of the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Parthians, and the Persians, and in the east India, with which relations were maintained by the enterprising Arabian tribes who lived on the Persian Gulf and were known to be bold, rash sailors, both valued and feared. Their desert town of Gyrrha had become the emporium for the goods which they brought from India or which the Indian ships took over to the Persian Gulf unless they exchanged them with the Egyptian and Phœnician goods in the island of Socotora, which is situated towards the south of Arabia and east of Africa. The whole of the intermediate trade between all these countries lay so exclusively in the hands of the Arab traders that foreigners described many products which were brought first to Arabia from the Far East as Arabian, and it was to the interest of the Arabs not to dispel these ideas, lest by intimating to the Eastern and Western trade friends the respective sources and places of production of the articles they should bring about direct trade relations between them. Very zealously and very enviously they watched over the Egyptian, Greek, and Phœnician ships, which were not allowed a chance of going on to India, and the Arabs exercised simultaneously a very strict sea-police service and carried on a hazardous sea piracy. Even in the later periods we hear of isolated places at which foreign ships no sooner touched than they disappeared. Perhaps they were captured in order that they might not reach the far Indian cities. Although the Arabs were mere coasters, they must

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in the ancient age have ventured in their boats made of leather tubes far into the sea like those bold pirates who, in still smaller conveyances, tried to intercept the way of the Portuguese to West India and often fought European seamen with success.

Now the question arises, to what race this people living in the peninsula belongs; this people which by the anthropologists, ethnographers, and travellers has been described, in general, as one of the noblest and the most gifted of peoples (referring primarily to the representatives of the stock type—the Bedouins).

Here, as well, there are many obstacles, because the ethnographical material for our researches on the people of the Arabian peninsula available to us in the Bible, the writings of the Greeks, the Romans, and the Arabs of the Middle Ages is very unreliable. Only for modern times, aided by the careful comparative study of the languages, has it been reserved to solve the ethnographical questions.

What was the nature of the original people, what was the race to which they belonged, is not to be ascertained with any certainty. The very first recognizable traces reveal the Hamitic branch of the race living in the interior part of the country. The Hamites were the nearest relatives of the Semites and the destinies of these two people were everywhere more or less bound up within each other. Living together originally in the vicinity of the Sea of Aral, to the north of Erau, both the stocks migrated at a time when they had a common language, which had not as yet outgrown the simplest radical forms. The Hamites were the first to emigrate towards the south-west, crossing over to settle down in the provinces of the Euphrates and the Tigris. Thence again driven onwards by the Semites, who were pushing them from behind, they migrated still farther to the south-west, and came to people principally the north of Africa, where indeed they were able to create the great civilized kingdom of Egypt in the valley of the Nile. During the emigration some isolated members had broken loose from the stock. These, presumably going along the Persian Gulf, reached the Arabian Peninsula and

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conquered it. But they could not withstand the Semites who had followed them here as well, just as they had followed in the wake of the Hamites. They were subjugated by the Semites and only isolated, unknown, unimportant tribes of Southern Arabia survived as the remnants of the early Hamitic population. The tribes of 'Ād and Samūd, too, about which the Qur-án repeatedly talks, are looked upon as Hamitic or Kushitic by the ethnographer Müller. Moreover, the statement that the Semitic immigration did not take place all at once, but gradually, is supported by the fictitious history of the Arabs and the division of the latter into Joktanids and Ishmaelites, between both of which there had always existed quite a sharp contrast. The former derive their origin from Joktan, a scion of Sem, while the latter trace their origin from Abraham's son, Ishmael. The Joktanids, who in historical times had conquered Yeman, seem to have had an inclination for colonization. The Ishmaelites, on the other hand, took pride in being Bedouins and nomads. Moreover, the Semitic immigration must have proceeded not only from the side of Chaldea, but also along the Red Sea as well, and the fabulous history, which arose under the influence of Jewish history and derives very little direct from Chaldea, tries hard to sketch the connections of the different factors of population under the guise of genealogical stories, which we can easily afford to pass over. This much is certain, that the population of the Arabian peninsula in historical times, and as far as the majority, if not all, of the antique statements go, was Semitic. Therefore it will be necessary to discuss the nature of their relationship in a few words, to comprehend the relation of the Arabs to their neighbours.

The Semitic people are divided into those of the north and of the south, into those of the east and of the west. To the eastern belong the Assyrians, Babylonians, Chaldeans, Phœnicians, and the Israelites. All these together make the northern family. The southern consists of the different tribes of the Arabs: Ishmaelites in the north and the interior, Yoktanids or the Himyarites or Sabians in the south, whence also proceeded the colonization of Abyssinia, whose

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language, Geez, is still most closely connected with the Himyarite. The language of the Ishmaelites, the Musta'riba, has, nevertheless, through the Qur-án attained prominence and authority, and their dialects are the ones which to-day are spoken by most of the Arabs, with the sole exception of the southern Arabian tribes, which still cling, with a real characteristic tenaciousness, to the sister languages of the old Himyarite language.

Further, the isolation of the Arabian peninsula contributed an explanation why the tribes of the interior, the nomadic 'Bedouins, preserved the pure racial character more than any of the Semitic people. The tribes of the Arabs can, therefore, with every right, even to-day, pass muster as the carriers of the Semitic original type, and it is indeed truly astonishing to find with what purity have been preserved the customs, habits, view-points, and traditions of the half-savage, uncivilized Bedouin tribes. The Bedouins themselves also, with great ambition and envy, kept a jealous eye over these customs and traditions, so that the pure Arabian blood which courses in their veins has not forfeited its purity through being mixed with that of the foreigner.

(To be continued.)

ISLAM'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN AND ORPHANS

By C. A. SOORMA

[WE have much pleasure in printing the first chapter from the text of a lecture read at one of the winter-session meetings of the British Muslim Society, London, which holds its weekly meetings at the London Muslim Prayer House, 111, Campden Hill Road, Notting Hill Gate, London, W. 8. As the title shows, it deals with a question of perennial interest. Although the subject has been more than once dealt with in these pages, yet our justification for entering on beaten ground is the thick crust of misconception which envelops this social aspect of Islam. We have to break through it. By its publication we can only hope that it will tend to vindicate the teachings of the Qur-án and the words of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and help to dissolve a part, if not all, of the chronic misconceptions regnant in the West in particular and the world in general.—ED. *I.R.*]

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CHAPTER I

WOMAN UNDER ROMAN LAW

PERHAPS there is no other aspect of Islam which has been so bitterly—and wrongly—criticized, as its attitude towards women. Islam has been accused of having degraded woman; it is attacked as having reduced her status, socially, morally and spiritually; and above all, it is criticized for not having given to woman her rightful place as man's comrade and companion in life. To an unprejudiced student, however, the facts appear to be otherwise. A comparative study of woman under different religious and social systems will enable us to appreciate the great services rendered by Islam in raising her

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status, legally and socially, and with this object in view I now propose to sketch briefly the story of woman from historical times to the advent of Islam. I shall begin this most interesting study with the story of woman under Roman Law.

Those who are familiar with Roman history know that the Roman family was based on the paternal power or *patria potestas*. As an institution, it is older than the State and formed an *imperium in imperio*. The head of the family was its sole representative, and he alone had any *locus standi* in the Councils of the State. Under Roman Law a daughter, by marrying and entering into another household, became subject to a different authority. Legally, she ceased to be a member of her father's family. Her children, similarly, became strangers to her father's hearth, and therefore no legal relationship existed between them and their grandfather's family. Again, sons released from their father's *potestas* ceased to be members of his family (Hunter, *Introduction to Roman Law*, pp. 37-8).

The relation of husband and wife under Roman Law is of peculiar interest to us. This depended on the Roman's *manus* over his wife. *Manus* was the name for the rights that the husband possessed over his wife and which normally resulted on marriage. A wife, if under her husband's *manus*, was called *materfamilias*; if not, simply *uxor* or *matrona*—i.e. wife or matron (Hunter, *Roman Law*, p. 222).

Lecky says that there were three kinds of marriage among the Romans:—

Firstly, there was the *Confarreatio*, which was celebrated before the Pontifex Maximus and the Priest of Jupiter. This involved a very solemn religious ceremony and only the children of such a union were eligible for the higher priestly offices. This form of marriage was practically indissoluble, and only patricians could be married under *Confarreatio* (Lecky, *History of European Morals*, vol. ii. pp. 322-3).

The second type of marriage was called *Coemptio in manum*, or marriage by sale. This was a purely civil contract, and the wife passed *in manus* to the husband by *mancipatio*; that is, by a fictitious sale. She was thus nominally *sold* to the husband

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and conveyed by the same forms as if she were a chattel real. The husband acquired complete authority over the person and property of his wife. Gaius says that her legal position in her husband's household was that of a daughter: "If a wife in any case, and for any reason, is in her husband's *manus*, it is decided that she obtains the rights of a *daughter*" (Gaius, i. 115).

The third form of marriage was called *usus*, or prescription. This became general during the Empire. It was effected by a simple declaration of an intention to cohabit as man and wife. Under early Roman Law, the possession of a wife for a *whole* year gave the husband his *manus* over her by right of *usus*, just as he acquired his *poteslas* over any other person or thing. The law of the XII Tables, therefore, provided that if a woman wished to escape this *manus*, then she should stay away for three nights each year (called *trinoctium*) in order to break off the *usus* of that year. This interruption in the period of his *manus* had a very important legal consequence, for, although the woman was married, legally she was not under the guardianship of her husband, but of the father, she being not in *manu mariti or viri*. The wife thus gained absolute legal independence, with right to separate ownership of property independently of her husband. But the wife could not compel the husband to maintain her, nor had the husband any right or control over the wife's property (Hunter, *op. cit.*, pp. 223; Buckland, *Text-book of Roman Law*, pp. 102-3).

In early times in Rome there was no necessity to obtain the authority of any tribunal for the dissolution of marriage. By a simple intimation, either party could at once terminate the union. This undoubtedly led to a great number of divorces, and marriage, as a social institution, degenerated because of the looseness of the tie.

Although polygamy was not legalized, yet Ameer Ali, in his *Life and Teachings of Mohammed*, p. 219, says: "After the Punic triumphs, the matrons of Rome aspired to the common benefits of a free and opulent republic, and their wishes were gratified by the indulgence of fathers and lovers."

Marriage soon became a simple practice of concubinage which was recognized by the law of the State.

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"The freedom of women and the looseness of the tie which bound men to them, the frequency with which wives were changed or transferred, betoken in fact the prevalence of polygamy only under a different name" (Ameer Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 220; also Howard, *A History of Matrimonial Institutions*, vol. ii. pp. 14-19).

A Roman kept several concubines and slaves who were either purchased in the open markets of Rome or were captives of war. Children born of these slaves could not be properly called Roman citizens, unless their father was subsequently married to their mother. There is no doubt that a species of morganatic marriages had grown up in Rome and was a popular institution. One of the chief causes of the decline of the Imperial power of Rome was the prevalence of licentiousness and luxury in many of its undesirable forms. The social life of the Romans, even at the height of their glory, was not free from those vices and corruptions, which, very often, come into existence with pride of power and conquest. The presence of houses for immoral purposes, the fondness for nude and vulgar paintings and sculpture which I have myself seen in the ruins of Pompeii, all indicate the low status which woman occupied in Roman society for many centuries.

This, in spite of the praises of the poets and the eulogies of the dramatists who idealized the Roman woman by putting her on a pedestal; but as a matter of fact, she never did occupy that eminent position.

To sum up the status of the Roman woman, we observe the following characteristics:—

- (1) No woman could be without a guardian.
- (2) When unmarried, she was under the perpetual *tutelage* of him who exercised *patria potestas* over her.
- (3) No marriage could take place without the consent of the father.
- (4) In early times a father could even kill his son or daughter for disobedience or misconduct.
- (5) She became her husband's property in the truest sense of the term, being sold and conveyed in *Coemptio in manum*

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in much the same manner as goods were sold and delivered by means of "the copper and the scales."

(6) The husband could kill his wife for misconduct and adultery.

(7) The wife's property passed to the husband on marriage, except the *Dos* which reverted to her on divorce. This happened only in cases where the wife was in *manu viri*, but not otherwise.

(8) No civil or public office could be held by a woman.

(9) She could not adopt, nor could she be a surety or a tutor; this continued until the end of the fifth century A.D.

(10) When in *manu viri*, she had to renounce all claims to paternal love and relationship.

Such was the status of woman as given by historians in an Empire which is considered to have been the most magnificent and civilized, and from which modern Europe has adopted many laws and is proud of having done so.

THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

By R. LISSAN

THE sacrament of Holy Matrimony is said to have been established by Jesus, along with others in use by the Church. Its name is derived from the Latin *matrimonium*—in relation to the mother.

The object of the matrimonial sacrament is twofold—to secure legal privileges for the results of the marriage and to fulfil and safeguard the social and individual rights of the wife and children in the evolving state of society and social conditions. The social group rests absolutely on the question of marriage; if monogamous, the consorts and their children; and if polygamous, the man, his wives and their children. While marriage is the foundation of the family, it is probable that the clan organization has grown out of the state of society in which individual marriage did not exist, but marriage, as such, is now the means by which descent, property, inheritance, rank, succession, and social grades are regulated.

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It is not proposed to go into the history of the evolution of marriage, nor its various phases and developments in its racial customs, for the subject is wide and its literature extremely extensive, but simply to deal with it from the Christian and allied viewpoints.

POLYGAMY.

Among the Israelites and Jews, polygamy was practised even among the elect—David and Solomon. It was the rule in the ancient world, and at the time of the rise of Christianity.

The New Testament does not set forth any new idea or law on the theory of marriage. The teaching and legislation of the Christian Church on the subject may, therefore, from all points of view be regarded as clues or attempts to define more clearly what is implied in the words of the original institution. It deals with it as an established social institution. Polygamy was not expressly forbidden in the Old Testament, nor was it uncommon in Ancient Israel (Hastings, *Encyclopedia*, "Marriage," p. 433).

There is no need for Christian protagonists to endeavour to close eyes to the fact that in the Old Testament plurality of wives and concubinage was not uncommon. But as Hastings says, it was extremely common; the lives of the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, David, Solomon, Jacob, bear evidence to this. David was a man after God's own heart, and Solomon was renowned both for his wisdom and his establishments.

CELIBACY AND ITS EVILS.

According to Genesis, marriage was first introduced to satisfy man's social nature: "It is not good for man to dwell alone." But it was far from being a state of social equality; for among the Jews and Romans, and to an extent among the Greeks, the relation of wife to husband was, to all intents and purposes, that of a slave to her master. This state seems to have continued right down through the ages, and is not yet entirely freed, either in law or custom.

The teaching of St. Paul as to marriage being the symbol or analogue of the mystical marriage of Christ and the Church,

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although Gnostic in its esoteric meaning, had a profound effect on Christian thought (Eph. v. 22-34), but it could not have lasted long, for in the third century we find the commencement of the promulgation of enforced celibacy of the Church and the bitter and venomous attacks of Tertullian and others on the female sex, commenting on her in any but flattering terms.

The idea that there is something necessarily impure and degrading in the union of the sexes finds no place in the New Testament. Notwithstanding the strict inculcation of the general principle of self-denial, there is nothing to suppose that the celibate or virgin state is higher than the estate of marriage. The prevalence of vice and immorality creates a feeling of repulsion against all forms of indulgence, and the third century, as remarked above, saw the rise of asceticism. Throughout the Middle Ages, the doctrine of the superiority of the virgin state held its ground, but the history and records of the way in which the doctrine was regarded in the lives of the clergy, high and low, forms a terrible indictment of the Church. Ecclesiastical and civil history is full of records showing human depravity following the non-recognition of natural emotion.

The re-enforcement of the celibate state of the clergy by Pope Gregory I (A.D. 590), decreeing priests to separate from the women they loved, had terrible results. According to an historian, a year after the promulgation of this edict, having given orders to fish in the ponds which he had constructed to preserve the fish, six thousand heads of new-born children were drawn from the water. The holy father thus learned that his decree was contrary to the laws of nature; he immediately rescinded it and imposed a severe penance to obtain pardon from God for the abominable cruelties of which his Church was guilty, and of which he was the first cause (La Haye, *History of the Popes*, vol. i. p. 131; Philadelphia, 1846).

This is not the only instance, there are many others. The whole history of the unnatural attempt to repress the emotional nature of humanity corrupted the clergy and their flock, and turned monasteries and convents into dens of vice and

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debauchery. For more full information on this unsavoury subject, H. C. Lea (*History of Sacerdotal Celibacy*) and J. McCabe (*The Popes and their Churches*) will satisfy any inquirer.

A comparison of the sacrament of marriage in the Western world, where it is ecclesiastically controlled or claimed to be as such, with that of ancient nations and races, as well as of the Orient to-day, who hold perhaps more to the civil than the ecclesiastical side, is in favour of the Oriental. The Church, when it attained power under Constantine, in a mistaken view, promulgated the decree of celibacy.

"The Jews remained a semi-barbarous race when Babylon and Egypt were hoary nations. The position of their women was greatly inferior in every respect to the women of Ancient Babylon. Up to the fifth century B.C. polygamy of an almost primitive character survived among the Hebrew people. The practice was not even reprobated by some of the early Christian reformers. It lingered till the Reformation and was permitted by Martin Luther.

"The priestess had wielded power in the old civilizations of the East, but under the rule of St. Paul, Christian women were forbidden to speak in the churches. The celibate life was exalted. Later, St. Gregory of Nyassa taught that 'wedlock is the outcome of iniquity.' St. Augustine, who believed in woman's inferiority, declared that bigamy might be permitted if a wife were sterile" (Gallican, *Woman under Polygamy*, p 51; London, 1914).

The same author also writes on p. 283: "The restless and inconstant passions of men and women break the conventional fetters, and the phenomena of pseudo polygamy and polyandry are manifest in every civilized state. This fact demonstrates that deeply rooted in the breasts of a vast number of Western people dwells a powerful desire for variety in love. The Church has striven by suasion and by threats and penances to suppress this vagrant human impulse."

But the inquirer is entitled to ask, Have the clergy, cardinals, and popes set the example of virtuous lives? History answers "No," not even as late as Pope Pius VI (elected

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A.D. 1775), regarding whose morals Govani accuses, in his *Secret Memoirs of Italy* (Paris, 1793), of adultery, sodomy, and incest, and who led the life of a sybarite, and had two sons by his sister; and it is reported that after the marriage of a daughter by Countess Falconiere, he committed incest with his daughter" (*Trinity of Civilization*; New York, 1924). And these are the Vicars of Christ, to whom all power in heaven and earth is given, and who are "infallible"!

BIBLE AND POLYGAMY.

"Luther, when approached by Philip of Hesse Cassel, gave a hearing to his plea for permission to marry a second wife while cohabiting with the first. A council was called, and they decided that, as the Gospels do not distinctly command monogamous marriage, and that as more than one wife was allowed in the days of the Patriarchs of Israel, the plea should be granted" (*op. cit.*, p. 285).

"Until A.D. 1060 there was no authoritative mandate of the Church against polygamy" (McCabe, *Religion of Woman*). "Even after its prohibition, there were instances of polygamous marriage and concubinage in Christian communities. The 'social evil' flourishes chiefly where there is the strictest insistence on permanent monogamous marriage. We, as monogamists, are bound to accept this too-evident fact. Before English religious reformers attempted to dispel the creeds and customs of India there was practically no bartering of the sexes in the form which we now know only too well. Quite involuntarily, the missionaries have, by their condemnation of Eastern practice in marriage and extra-matrimonial associations, fostered an evil that was previously unknown. This is especially the case in Burma" (*op. cit.*, pp. 285-6).

Lea, in his *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy*, vol. ii, p. 175-6, says that the chronicles of Christianity in the Middle Ages are "full of the evidences that indiscriminate licence of the worst kind prevailed throughout every rank of the hierarchy." Prelates used to levy taxes on priests for keeping concubines.

Even such a distinguished Christian cleric as Kingsley

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declared that "There will never be a good world for women until the last remnant of Canon Law is civilized off the earth" (H. Ellis, *Psychology of Sex*, vol. vi, "Marriage").

EFFECTS OF THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE.

From a comparison of the sacrament of marriage in Western and Eastern lands, the ethical value of the Oriental usages point to the influence in restricting social evils. Whatever our trend of custom or thought may be, as Kingsley says, the Canon Law is an obstacle to morality and the elimination of social disorder. Our peculiar culture and religion traced from the rise of Christianity to power, right down to the present time, has not succeeded in establishing a freedom from evils not found in the Orient.

A FEW CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THE PRESENT-DAY CONDITION OF THE SACRAMENT.

Before concluding this subject, attention may be drawn to the serious state of affairs brought about by the Papal attitude towards Protestant or civil marriage. By the "infallible" Decrees of the Council of Trent in 1564, all marriages not contracted in Catholic churches, and before three witnesses, are invalid; and we owe it solely, as an archbishop tells us, to "the mercy of the Church" and to the gracious condescension (which may be withdrawn at any time) of His Holiness the Pope that the Decrees have not been put in force canonically in England. But for his paternal benevolence, Protestant married folk might all be living to-day, to borrow the elegant language of Pius IX, in a state of filthy concubinage. By a Decree in 1907 Pius X revised the Decrees and made them binding throughout the world, sweeping away, except in Germany and Hungary, all dispensations. Startling developments have followed in numerous cases. A Catholic and a Protestant are married in a Protestant church; the State says they are man and wife, but Mother Church says "No" and puts her foot down. The ceremony, she tells them, is "worthless," "null and void," "invalid." The parties are

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described as living in concubinage and sin, the wife as a harlot or concubine.

Thus stands the sacrament of marriage in the modern Christian world, under ecclesiastical instead of civil administration, and we are told that Jesus instituted this sacrament.

THE PROPHET'S ESCAPE

By DR. AMHERST D. TYSEN, D.C.L., M.A.

WHEN Muhammad was about to migrate from Mecca to Medina, the chief men of the town foresaw the political effects of such an act, and determined to prevent them by murdering him. They then ordered some guards to surround his house; but his faithful follower, 'Alí, anticipated the guards, enabled him to escape, and then hid himself in the Prophet's bed, so that the guards might think that he was still there. We may picture to ourselves 'Alí's thoughts as he lay awaiting the result.

'ALÍ'S HYMN.

Now hath the sun withdrawn his light,
Now every friend is gone;
And in this dark, and dreadful night
I here am left alone.
Friendless and dark, I need not fear;
I know, my God, that Thou art near.

Mine enemies their plots have laid
And I perforce must wait;
For every hour their blows are stayed
May make those blows too late.
Their plots, their blows, I need not fear;
I know, my God, that Thou art near.

And now approach the murderous band;
I hear their threatening tread:
Their cunning chief, his last command
In muttered tones has said.
That band, that chief, I need not fear;
I know, my God, that Thou art near.

And now I hear their swords unsheathe;
Their work will soon be o'er:
I know the deadly hate they breathe;
Their hand is on the door.
Their swords, their hate, I do not fear;
In life, in death, Lord, Thou art near.

THE PROPHET'S ESCAPE

It speaks well for the Meccan chieftains that they did not kill 'Alī. There was clearly a nobility of character among the Arabians of that period. Meanwhile Muhammad, with one attendant, rode off; but, their horses becoming exhausted, and knowing that they were being pursued, they took refuge in a cave. Here the attendant's courage failed him; but the Prophet cheered him, saying: "Be not distressed; God is with us." We have a striking parallel to this incident in the history of the Prophet Elisha, as told in the Bible. We read (2 Kings vi. 8-18) that the King of Syria found that his efforts to entrap the King of Israel were thwarted by Elisha; and, hearing that Elisha was in Dothan, he sent an army to surround that town and capture him. "And (verse 15) when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold an host encompassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." We then read that the Lord smote the Syrians with blindness, which we may regard as a poetical way of expressing that they failed to recognize Elisha.

We may compare this with the words in the Qur-án, Sura ix. (Sale's Koran, Davenport's edition, p. 154; Rodwell's Koran, cxiii. 40): "If ye assist not (your Prophet), God assisted him formerly, when the unbelievers drove him forth in company with a second only, when they two were in the cave; when he said to his companion, Be not distressed; verily God is with us. And God sent down His tranquillity upon him, and strengthened him with hosts ye saw not."

We may turn this episode into verse, and say:—

THE PROPHET IN THE CAVE.

The Prophet, with one faithful friend,
In the dark cavern stood;
A thousand horsemen scouring round,
All thirsting for his blood.

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"Alas, my master," spake the liege,
"Our term of life is sped;
Hark how the murderous bands without
Approach to strike us dead."
"Be not distressed," in accents calm
The Prophet's voice replied;
"For God is mightier far than they;
And God is on our side.
Will He we live, no mortal power
May take our lives away;
Will He we die, to Him we pass;
No need to feel dismay.
Oh, may we thus through life's rough voyage
With all its tempests cope;
Make God the rock whereon we cast
The anchor of our hope.
Come weal, to Him we give the praise,
Come woe, on Him we rest:
E'en death is bliss to hearts assured
Whate'er He sends is best.

There was another incident at this period of the Prophet's life, which corresponds with an experience which St. Paul underwent. We hear that Muhammad's escape from Mecca was effected by his being let down over the wall from the house of his follower, Abu Bakr, which adjoined the wall. And we read in the Acts of the Apostles (ix. 25) that St. Paul escaped from the city of Damascus in this way. And St. Paul himself confirms this statement; for we read in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians (xi. 32): "In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: and through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands."

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 IMÁM 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-ÁN.—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-án. 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-án, 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 believe 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.