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Founded by the Late AL-HAJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

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RABI'UL-AWWAL, 1353 A.H.
JUNE, 1934 A.C.

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CONTENTS.

Mr. John Fisher	<i>Frontispiece.</i>
	PAGE
A Declaration	181
Id-ul-Azha (1352 A.H.) at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking	181
Muhammad the Man : by Sayyid Arif Shah ..	185
Personality in a Religious Movement : by Maulvi Aftab-ud-Din Ahmad	193
Twenty Years Ago	201
Islam the Natural Religion of Man : by M. Abdus Samad	202
Essentials of Sufism : by Professor S. Muzzaffar-ud- Din	208
The Holy Qur-an and its Commentary : by the late Khawaja Kamal-ud-Din	215
What is Islam ?	219

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شَهِدَةُ وَفِي عَلَى رَسُولِ الْكَرِيمِ

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

Vol. XXII.

RABI'UL-AWWAL, 1353 A.H.

No. 6.

JUNE, 1934 A.C.

A DECLARATION

I, John Fisher, son of Charles Fisher, of 3, Cambridge St., Newcastle, hereby faithfully and solemnly declare of my own free will that I adopt Islam as my religion; that I worship One and only Allah (God) alone; that I believe Muhammad to be His messenger and servant; that I respect equally all prophets—Abraham, Moses, Jesus, etc., that I will live a Muslim life by the help of Allah.

La ilah ill-Allah, Muhammad al Rasul-Allah,

ID-UL-AZHA (1352 A.H.) 1934.

At the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, England.

The festival of Id-ul-Azha commemorating the immortal sacrifices of Abraham and Ishmael was celebrated under the auspices of the Muslim Society of Great

ISLAMIC REVIEW

Britain on Monday the 26th March, 1934 at the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, England. For the time of year, the weather, which is the determining factor in the success and failure of any out-door function in England far exceeded our expectations. The day opened with a thick misty morning, but as the hours sped by, the sun broke through in triumph and the time the hour of prayer arrived the day had become a glorious one.

The prayers, as usual, were offered at 11-0 a.m. under the leadership, on this occasion, of His Excellency Shaikh Hafiz Wahba, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of His Majesty King Ibn Saud. The festivities, however, were overshadowed by the sorrowful news of the hostilities which had broken out between the two premier Muslim States of Arabia.

The huge gathering that assembled, comprised members of all conceivable nationalities—Muslim brothers from England, Morocco, Arabia, Afghanistan, Somaliland, Iraq, Egypt, India, Malay and Persia. It is in such a gathering that one sees a demonstration, simple, impressive and above all convincing, of the real meaning of prayer in Islam, its actuality and its power ; for in this homogeneous congregation of all races, one realises that the division of mankind into nations, and tribes, is, as the Holy Qur-án puts it, for purposes of identification only, and here the Non-Muslim could realise that Islam knows no priesthood. It is in such congregations that we have a great example and a great promise for the redemption of Humanity. “ If Islam had done nothing else than eliminate, as it incontestably had done, the unconscionable barriers of racial antipathy and national exclusiveness from one-fifth of the human race, scattered over the surface of the globe, and covering every land and clime, then it must hold civilization its debtor for ever.”

ID-UL-AZHA (1352 A.H.) 1934

The moral significance of such an occasion in England cannot well be over-estimated. Europe which owes its glory as well as its undoing to the lethal concept of Nationalism cannot yet bring itself to appraise justly the greatness of Islam, which alone of all the religions of the World, has joined together by the common bond of the Islamic international Brotherhood, Muslims of every nation. The brotherly atmosphere which pervades these gatherings is quite a new thing to Europe. The average European finds himself hard put to it to reconcile his conventionally stiff attitude with the informal behaviour of the Muslims in these gatherings.

This year we made an effort to synchronise our Eid in England with the celebrations in Mecca. It is our wish that all over the Muslim world the festival of Eid-ul-Azha should be held on the same day, so that throughout the length and breadth of the spiritual territories of Islam the hearts of Muslims may be lifted up in sympathy with our more fortunate brothers gathered together in the sacred city of Mecca. One can imagine some reasons for the confusion and variation of dates on the Eid-ul-Fitr day, but to us, there seems no excuse, for ourselves or for any other part of the Muslim World, for holding the Eid-ul-Azha on any other day than the day on which it is kept in Mecca, for the simple reason that it takes place ten days after the appearance of the crescent. Thus we took a practical step in this direction. We arranged, through the good offices of the Saudi Arabian Legation, to ascertain the exact date of the appearance of crescent and it was on the receipt of official news to this effect that we fixed the date of the festival. It thrills us to look forward to the day when the Government of Saudi Arabia shall make arrangements for the broadcast of the Hajj Sermon by Radio, in many languages, from Mecca. Let us hope that that day is not far distant.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

After the prayer, His Excellency read his sermon which was very much appreciated. It was replete with sound advice to the Muslims and studded with verses from the Qur-án. The prayers having been brought to a close, Muslims wished each other a Happy Eid. Many of them expressed their happiness by embracing each other. Then followed the enjoyable luncheon hour. We are very grateful to the Proprietors of the Khyber India Restaurant, London, for the loan of their chef, who prepared the Indian dishes in a very efficient manner.

Later, a meeting of all the Muslims who had come to join the prayers, was called to consider three Resolutions which were passed unanimously under the Chairmanship of Mr. J. W. Habeebullah Lovegrove. They read :—

Resolution One.

“ This representative meeting of Muslims in Great Britain views with alarm and sorrow the resort to hostilities by the two premier Muslim states of Arabia and earnestly beseeches His Majesty King Ibn Saud and His Highness Imam Yehya to preserve peace of Arabia, particularly during the sacred month of Hajj and exert their utmost to settle their dispute by amicable means.”

Resolution Two.

“ This meeting would like to call the attention of all Foreign powers that any trouble in these regions of Arabia is absolutely an internal affair of Muslims and interference, be it financial, political or otherwise, will give the whole of the Muslim world a strong and just cause of resentment.”

Resolution Three.

“ This meeting authorises and requests the Chairman of the Muslim Society of Great Britain to convey these resolutions to the representatives of His Majesty King Ibn Saud, His Highness Imam Yehya, the British, the Italian and French Foreign Offices and the Press.”

MUHAMMAD THE MAN

MUHAMMAD THE MAN

BY SAYYID ARIF SHAH, B.A.

(Continued from Vol. XXII, page 178.)

Muhammad (peace be on him), was peace-loving, and a peace-maker by nature. It was mainly on this account that he preferred the Peace concluded at Hudaibiyya to continued bloodshed, though, according to the terms of that Peace or rather Truce, the concessions obtained were almost nil, and the Muslims were treated as though conquered. Notwithstanding the fact that warfare was alien to his nature, he was, by sheer force of circumstances, driven to take up arms and lead his soldiers to battle. For war, like polygamy, is a necessary evil, and there are certain times when it becomes inevitable. How could he be a perfect example to humanity at large had he refused to resort to arms? He is, as we have seen, a perfect model, and as such, had to pass through many difficult times.

In word and action he was the same. He was the best of men, nay, the only man, who himself put into practice all the principles he taught to others. He was the exact antithesis of that one sung by Shakespeare, who

.....like a puffed and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own rede.

There is not a single ordinance or injunction from above that did not find complete manifestation in his own action. "We read homilies and sermons elsewhere, we find idealistic and unpractical theories of morality and ethics," says the Sage of Woking, "but we fail to find them in their own teachers." Muhammad is the only and noble exception, who practised rather than preached. In other words, his morals were the Qur-ánic verses. How

ISLAMIC REVIEW

can the precepts and homilies that are not practised by their own teachers infuse into others any enthusiasm or any electric waves of acceptance ? Surely, we are not to be guided by those who “reck not *their* own rede.” The actions of teachers far more than their words should entitle them to our allegiance. “In fact, an ethical aphorism written on a wall is as good as in the mouth of a teacher, if he has never been able to put it into practice,” says that brave soldier of Islam, Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din. The History of Christianity would have been quite different had there been some actions of its Law-giver to explain his precepts. With due deference to all the religions of the world, and to the disparagement of none, I declare most emphatically that none can dare to prove the contrary of the fact that whatever the Prophet preached, that he practised. We have no concern whatever with what the teacher has in his mind. “Potentiality is no proof of actuality.” Mere lip-teaching does not at all show us what we have to do. Saying is quite another art than doing. It furnishes no proof that we possess the morals which we preach to others. Action is the thing. In that way, every one of us is a hero, if only we be given a chance. But what of man who neglects the time and opportunity afforded him ? Words and ideas converted into actions can alone show our worth.

It was no fault of Jesus that he could not translate all his sayings into actions for he had not such opportunity or occasion for moulding the various moralities into practical shapes as had Muhammad. Almost all the moralists seem to have laboured under two disadvantages. Firstly, they did not pass through the vicissitudes of life as did Muhammad, and, secondly, though they did their best, they could not complete the task before them. On the other hand, those who had such chances, and who took full advantage of them, have left us a very

MUHAMMAD THE MAN

meagre record of their lives, and that record, not the true narrative of the actual events. Muhammad's, then, is the unique personality of which both the records and the experiences satisfy all that could be demanded of a true prophet and a real man. In fact, his whole life was an eloquent and practical commentary on the Holy Qur-án.

Muhammad as a ruler also entered into treaties with his enemies, who would at times demand his assent to terms that were derogatory both to his mission and his personal honour ; yet even then he would accept them and act on them and observe them under all circumstances, whereas the Western Political Conscience feels not the least compunction in breaking covenants and throwing promises to the winds. In the battle of Badr, the numerical strength of his followers was much inferior to that of the enemy. During the retreat two of his followers lagged behind, and were cut off and made prisoners but released on the understanding that they would on no account rejoin the Prophet. They, however, returned but when they told their story he lost no time in sending them back to those with whom they had made their covenant, though at that time the Prophet could not afford to lose a man. Again, after the truce with the *élite* of Mecca, he would not allow any of his followers to join him at Medina.

Though himself illiterate, the Prophet enjoined the acquisition of knowledge upon all Muslims, both male and female. He would say to his followers : " Acquire knowledge from the cradle to the grave." "Acquire it even if you must go to China to find it." "To seek after knowledge is incumbent on both man and woman." " Teach your children as best as you can." He would often remind them of the words of God Who says : "Whosoever is given knowledge, is given in reality much goodness." At times he would exhort the assembly to acquire knowledge of anything and everything that the world contains. He

ISLAMIC REVIEW

was often heard to say : “ The Pen is mightier than the Sword, and a drop of ink from the writer’s quill is more sacred than the blood trickling from the wounds of the martyr.” For he knew full well the value of knowledge which “ gives a man a clear conscious view of his opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them. It teaches him to see things as they are, to go right to the point, to disentangle a skein of thought, to detect what is sophistical, and to discard what is irrelevant. It prepares him to fill any post with credit, and to master any subject with facility. It prepares him for the world.” Knowledge is an inexhaustible treasure, the more you draw from it, the richer it grows. An ignorant person is, in fact, so much lumber, which is seldom wanted in life, if not a curse on society.

In the administration of justice Muhammad was scrupulously even-handed. Muslim or non-Muslim, friend or foe, high or low, young or old, all were alike to him. Even before he had received the *Call*, his impartiality and integrity were admitted on all hands. People would bring their disputes to him to be settled. Even the Jews, the most inveterate enemies, both of his mission and person, would recognize his honesty and abide by his decisions. Just, in the highest sense, even in the treatment of his servants, everywhere he observed the same principle of equality. Anas, his slave, is reported to have said that during the ten years he was in the service of the Apostle of Allah, he was not once reprimanded by him. Whenever the *élite* of Mecca were unable to solve a problem or remove a difficulty they used to bring the case to him, and he, out of sheer good-will, would settle the question in such a way as to excite among those present admiration for his power of judgment, and wonder at the mental balance which always retained so stable an equipoise.

MUHAMMAD THE MAN

Self-sacrifice, too, was one of the most prominent characteristics of the life of the Prophet. He had four daughters, of whom *Bibi Fatima*, the mother of Imam Hassan and Imam Hussain, was the youngest. It fell to her to perform, by herself, all the household duties. Once she asked her father to get her a servant to help her but he refused flatly saying that she could herself do all she needed. Being the head of the State, there would have been no difficulty in procuring a servant or servants for her, but he did not wish that she should make herself dependent upon others. Whenever presents were made to him, though he disliked intensely the practice of giving and accepting such things, he distributed them there and then amongst his friends. Once a woman gave him a piece of cloth, which he, being in need of it, accepted. One standing by began to admire it looking upon it with envious eyes, whereupon the Prophet gave that piece of cloth to him straightaway. Gardens, they say, are rarities in Arabia and the most coveted of landed properties. Once a person presented the Prophet with somewhere about seven gardens. These he accepted and devoted them to charitable uses, their produce being distributed among the poor and needy.

Firmness in his dealings, disregard of social distinctions, modesty, lenience, shyness, humility, hospitality and sublimity of disposition are among the chief traits in the character of the Prophet. Some one has remarked that "the humble soul is like the violet which grows low, hangs its head and hides itself within the folds of its own leaves. Were it not that the fragrance of its many graces discovered it to the world, it would choose to live and die in secrecy." In Muhammad, indeed, were all these characteristics of the violet, and, yet like musk, his fame spread all over the world. Humility and meekness dwelt in his bosom from the very beginning, and for

ISLAMIC REVIEW

ever. Meek to the highest degree, he enjoyed a perpetual Sabbath. His anger was like fire struck from steel, hard to be roused, and when roused, soon gone, for meekness not only imparts great peace of mind, but adds lustre to the countenance and the thoughts behind it.

Man is a social animal. He must live in society. He will, nine cases out of ten, never be happy without society. Beset as we are with numerous impulses and cravings, our inability to satisfy them by our own unaided efforts demands the formation of a very strong and well-organised force for the purpose. This force is called *Society*. Islam is the most democratic of all religions. Whereas every other religion without exception admits a number of grades and caste-systems, Islam ignores them all. Democracy, the most-worshipped goddess of modern times, was first conceived of by the Prophet of Islam. He it was who advocated Universal Brotherhood. Snobbishness in all its grades is to be found everywhere, in every department of human activity. Even the sacred institution of religion is not immune from its baneful influence. Hinduism, though one of the oldest in the world, yet limited in extent and scope, to a greater degree than Islam and Christianity, has welcomed the veritable monster of snobbishness in its most refined and polished shape. In fact, Manu, its Law-giver, has raised this social canker to the dignity of a virtue. Untouchability is the bane of human society. This dragon of Untouchability was from the beginning a curse, and has remained so ever since. But, as "the old order changeth yielding place to new," and as the Law of change is the law of God, Mr. Gandhi, the sole monopolist of Yervada Gaol, has been sent to uproot this mandrake of a plant—Untouchability, which leads to social and communal disruption and destruction. He has launched the crusade against the centuries-old conventions of Hinduism,

MUHAMMAD THE MAN

and I pray that he may succeed in his noble mission in raising the social status of the *Harijans*, the souls of God, but, unfortunately, the object in view is more political than social or religious, and for this reason alone, if not for others, Mr. Gandhi is bound to fail.

As for Islam, it does not permit any such thing. It is like a pure honey which requires no chemical purification. It is immune from all such diseases as aristocracy, snob-bishness, aloofness, and despotism. It is the only religion that not only teaches and preaches Universal Brotherhood and Equality, but puts them into actual practice. It binds all its adherents with the common cord of God, Love and Brotherhood. By it we are taught to look to one another's needs, to make sacrifices in favour of those who are around us, to cultivate a spirit of Universal Brotherhood and to discipline self-seeking tendencies which, if not properly controlled and regulated, will work havoc on humanity and create every sort of trouble. Islam is not only easy to follow, but is the most liberal religion in the world. Sceptre and Crown in it are as good as at scythe and spade. Bolshevism, the greatest post-war movement of the world, is Islamic in its spirit, the only difference being its negation of God. Muhammad can rightly claim to have discovered the specific remedy for controlling the self-seeking tendencies in man, for the remedy he suggested and acted upon is none other than that Universal Brotherhood whereby he purged Arabia of all its troubles.

It was Muhammad who took up the cause of Woman, Woman who had been treated as a chattel in the pre-Islamic Era. No religion or civilization had, till then, done anything to raise the status, up to which she was born. In dealing with women, Muhammad is poles apart from the rest of the Prophets and other spiritual luminaries throughout the ages. The Hebrew Law was unfavour-

ISLAMIC REVIEW

able to her. A Jew, invoking the blessings of God, prays : " I thank Thee, O Lord ! and Glory be to Thee that Thou didst not make me a woman." She was no better off in Judaic society. She had been called " the organ of evil," " likened to a scorpion ever ready to sting," " the poisonous asp," " the malice of the dragon," and described by many others with like outrageous epithets. Such was the esteem in which Woman was held by persons of exalted position in the Christian Church, like St. Paul, St. Bernard, St. Anthony and others. St. Paul seems to be the originator of this attitude. His personal grudge against the fair sex is, perhaps, the consequence of his suit having been rejected by a young Jewish woman, the daughter of the High Priest. Even Jesus could not bring himself to ameliorate her lot. At the time when the early Christian Fathers were raising the slogan *woman was made for man and not man for woman*, Muhammad told the world *that woman was the twin half of man*. The Holy Qur-án calls her " Muhsinah," the benefactor, which means that she merited none of the curses heaped upon her by the Christians and the Hebrews. Muhammad showed the world that she " was a rocky fortress against Satan, a light-house of virtues, a garment of man as he is her garment and a fountain of love and affection." Woman is a ministering angel for man, and it is thus that Islam thinks of her.

Muhammad (peace be on him) was also averse to slavery. He thought of its abolition thirteen and-a-half centuries ago. The modern world did away with it only comparatively recently, whereas the Prophet had practically abolished it in his own lifetime. He would purchase slaves only to set them free.

Let me conclude with the rich and wonderful words of the late Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din who, in one of his books, says : " In him we find a child, a young man, an

PERSONALITY IN A RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT

elderly man, a son, a brother, a husband, a father, a neighbour, a persecuted fugitive, a soldier, a general, a conqueror, a play-mate, a statesman, a king, a judge, a law-giver, a man in adversity and a man in prosperity. Varied as are these various positions, you will find him the same man from beginning to end, a thorough gentleman, to use the English phrase, always unchangeable and unchanged in his temperament, in his dealings, in his general mode of life."

Such was Muhammad, may Allah shower His choicest blessings upon him and his family !

PERSONALITY IN A RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

The importance of personality in a religious movement has always been something of a problem. Carlyle is certainly right when he says that there is in mankind generally an inherent tendency to worship heroes, and that it is this worship that sets in motion all that is potentially good in human nature. But he has overlooked another aspect of the same question, to wit, that, with all the adoration which they receive later on, in their lifetime such heroes experience nothing but torture and calumny at the hands of their own people. Take for instance the case of Jesus. He is worshipped, in the literal sense of the term, as no other hero has been worshipped before or after him. But what an unenviable fate he met with in his own time ! Not one man sincerely responded to his call, and he was put to an excruciatingly painful death. It seems that the human mind pays homage to a hero only when he is no longer a living and transforming force—when, as an ideal, he has been distorted and reduced to fit in with the low level of the common conception of idealism. It is, therefore, not to the real hero that

ISLAMIC REVIEW

they pay their homage, but to a hero of their own making whom they create out of certain fragments of the real one. This is invariably the case with all the world-heroes, an exception being found only in the case of Muhammad, who was able to make himself recognised as he really was, however limited the range of such recognition. Apart from this, however, his real position has at all times found champions ; but even he was all but killed in his long struggle for existence as a hero. And although at the time of his death he had the satisfaction of finding his real wishes carried out in practice, the number of those who had the fullest comprehension of his dreams was very small, and the forces of reaction were anything but crushed. The outburst of this reaction, just after the Prophet's death and its traces discovered in the Damascus Caliphate, are among the outstanding facts of history. This and hundreds of like tendencies within the house of Islam may be called the internal opposition to the personality of the hero ; and as for the outside world, after more than 1400 years, we find the largest religious community of the world, who are incidentally the closest to Islam and the most advanced in the material and intellectual fields, to be the fiercest in their denunciation of the Prophet, and to be most actively engaged, with all the forces at their command, in making people forswear their allegiance to Muhammad. Fortunately, we are living in an age of literary culture, and can consequently read the minds of our opponents in cold print. Thomas Carlyle may indeed have included the Prophet in his list of heroes, but he can be taken just as a freak of nature. Our days are surely far in advance of his, and the representative thinkers of England, if Carlyle's remarks had been a real index to the English mind, ought to have gone a step further in recognising the Prophet as a hero. But what do we find in fact ? One of its spokesmen, Mr. H. G. Wells, while admitting that the

PERSONALITY IN A RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT

principles of his religion are not only beneficial but even essentially necessary in the conduct of the affairs of humanity, considers, at the same time, the personality of the Prophet as unwholesome, and presenting a very bad example for humanity. Mr. G. B. Shaw, another of the modern intellectual leaders, who at one time appeared to be somewhat of an admirer of the Prophet, seeing that he would occasionally refer to his religion as commendable, was apt to be reticent on the subject of the personal character of the Prophet. But in his recent book "The Adventures of a Black Girl in her search for God," after admitting that Muhammad's religion was in many ways an improvement on other religions of the time, he proceeds to express serious doubts with regard to certain aspects of the Prophet's life. Although the language is very courteous and concludes in the form of an appeal to Muslims, it nevertheless betrays a lack of understanding of the character of the Prophet. Now Messrs. Wells and Shaw are notorious as ruthless critics of Jesus and of Christianity in general and yet their attitude towards the Prophet is just the same as the general attitude of Christendom. At first sight this may appear to be paradoxical, but a moment's reflection will discover a scientific reason hidden behind it, and this brings us to another aspect of the tendency of hero-worship in human nature. I make bold to assert here that however much the free-thinkers of Europe may denounce Jesus and the religion passing under his name, it is extremely difficult and almost impossible for them to cast away the impressions of Jesus' personality as preached for centuries to their communities by the various churches of Christianity. Their reasoning faculty may very well revolt against the teachings ascribed to Jesus, but the emotional part of their nature unconsciously pays homage to the personality of Jesus as depicted by the Church. The custom of monogamy in Christendom will appear to be only a legal com-

ISLAMIC REVIEW

promise with the celibacy of Jesus, when we consider that marriage was long looked upon by Christianity as a necessary evil—a concession merely to the weakness of the flesh.

Thus while Europe has been paying homage to this Jesus of its own conception—it is immaterial whether its people believe or not in his Sermon on the Mount—certain aspects of what is supposed to be his personality have sunk so deep into the minds of its people that even a man of Nietzsche's type cannot get away from its influence. Thus Nietzsche's abhorrence for womanhood was, to my mind, nothing but a reflection of the celibate life of Jesus, however much he might have outwardly detested his personality. Shaw and Wells are, certainly, less daring thinkers than the German philosopher, and so more liable to this sub-conscious feeling of Jesus-worship. So here is a strange phenomenon of human nature, that while Europe will have none of the teachings of Jesus, it consciously or unconsciously pays uniform homage to the personality of Jesus as it conceives of that personality, and, on the other hand, while it appreciates and even adopts the teachings of Muhammad it detests his personality. The explanation would seem to be this. As a matter of fact, the people accept the teachings of a hero more readily than they accept his personality, and when they actually pay homage to such a personality, it is not the actual personality as it was, but an adapted form of it which they are able to comprehend and assimilate.

A little reflection will dispose of this anomaly also. The teachings of a religious leader have always two aspects—the intellectual and the spiritual. Now the recognition which is readily offered to them by people in general is concerned with the intellectual aspect only. But the hero cares very little for this. A philosopher or a man of letters may rest satisfied with this much of

PERSONALITY IN A RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT

recognition, but not a prophet or a religious reformer. His eye is always on the spiritual aspect of his teachings, which are themselves the products of his spiritual realisations and which he wants the people to assimilate. The soul of these teachings is pregnant with a thorough transformation. Considerations of time and place cannot stand in its way. It rages ever and anon with a suppressed force of revolution—a revolution in the mind and what emanates therefrom. The hero, with all his efforts, cannot contain within himself this tremendous force. Every now and again it bursts beyond his control and sets the outside world quaking. The act of Abraham's idol-breaking, which may appear rather fanatical to us in these days, had its source in this fact. Even Jesus the "Prince of Peace" went into the temple of God and cast out the money-changers and all of them that sold doves, and said unto them, "It is written, My House shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves," (Matth. 22 : 12, 13).

Thus the generality of people, while professing intellectual sympathy with the teachings of a hero, feel at the same time the existence of a convulsive force underlying them. The personality of the hero is the living embodiment of this convulsive force, hence the people's inability to accept it so readily. But one thing is very important in this connection. When the hero's personality is accepted by a people, it is not an intellectual appreciation but always a spiritual assimilation. It is true, as I have already shown, that when such an assimilation takes place it is generally too late in the day and is not the assimilation of the real hero but of an adapted form of him. Nevertheless, once the hero is recognised the conception of his personality enters the very soul of the nation and manifests itself, for whatever it may be worth, in all the avenues of its life—social, political, and economic as well as moral.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

Subsequently there may be thousands of movements to change the outlook thus formed and these may even create some sort of outward change here and there, but the main outlook cannot change, unless and until some other hero is installed in the popular mind in place of the one recognised. I have already tried to show how the European mind is, at bottom, still swayed by the personality of Jesus. It is significant to note in this connection that Dr. Oscar Levy, the great German scholar and champion of Neitzschian philosophy, holds the view that even the Godless Socialist movement of Russia is inspired by the ideals of Christianity. In fact, to an observant mind, the influences of Christian ideals will be clearly visible in all the affairs of European life. Among numerous instances, let us take just one. Why, for example, is not illicit sexual connection, as such, regarded as crime in the European criminal codes of law? Do we not find in this but a reflection of the conduct of Jesus towards "a woman taken in adultery," (John : 8) and towards "a woman in the city which was a sinner," (Luke : 7) ? Similar influences of a hero's personality on the national life of a people can be found in the case of other religious communities. The imprints of the lives of Rama and Krishna, for example, as portrayed in their sacred Scriptures, can be found in the national life of the Hindus. Miss Mayo's observation that the filthy practices prevalent in the Hindu community alone are backed by the sanction of their religion, whereas those prevalent in Christendom are not so sanctified, is not, therefore, correct, as we see it. We shall further be guilty of partiality if we do not mention here that there are many evil practices to be found in the Muslim community, as it is in these days, and these also are the reflections, in the same way, of the Prophet's personality as understood by the later generations of Muslims. It is true that these reflections are not real but perverted, but it is by these perversions that the low

PERSONALITY IN A RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT

level of the general run of intellect adapts the hero's personality for its own assimilation. There is one difference, however, between the personality of Muhammad as a religious hero and those of other heroes of his category. Muhammad's personality is a living and a historical one, and can be studied in its pristine purity for the purpose of a correct interpretation, whereas the same privilege cannot be claimed for the other personalities, whom the shadows of the pre-historic age have kept in hopeless obscurity. I have already referred to the replacement of one hero by another. But this is the most difficult process of all the processes of mental transformation. It is difficult because, as I have said, it demands a revolutionary change in the central outlook on life.

This difficulty presents itself everywhere, when you try to preach Islam to non-Muslims. It is experienced at home among the Hindus, and abroad among the Christians. In view of this difficulty, some of our more light-hearted enthusiasts ask us every now and then if we cannot do away with the personality of Muhammad while preaching Islam. In making this suggestion they seek further justification in the fact that the personality of the Prophet, as distinguished from the Qur-án, has suffered many misrepresentations at the hands of its own followers, and that whereas it is comparatively easy to contend with the misrepresentations of opponents, it is extremely difficult to set right wrongs done at home. We acknowledge the force of this latter argument and admit that, along with other heroes, our hero has also passed through many internal perversions before reaching the present generation. But we assert that it will do no real good either to ourselves or to unbelieving communities like the Christians, to have from them an admission of the beauties of Islam, as proceeding from their intellectual understanding of the religion. You cannot have the desired spiritual transformation, unless you have

ISLAMIC REVIEW

Muhammad enthroned in their minds as a religious hero. True, you have to cope with difficulties innumerable—internal and external; but this is the just price for an achievement so great. We should have Muhammad's personality installed as a hero, not because we happen to be Muslims and our national interest is staked on this, but because it is the only way of bringing about the moral, social and political transformation which the time demands. And in their efforts towards this installation, the Muslims themselves will get the right view of the Prophet's personality and receive its reviving spirit in their own national life. There remains one more point to be discussed. So far, the installation of one hero in the place of another has meant, in religious history, the overthrow of the latter. And here there is an advantage on our side as well as a disadvantage. The acceptance of Muhammad's personality does not threaten any previous personality with any overthrow. It does not dispute the place already occupied by a hero, to make room for itself. It requires, instead, an extension of the receiving mind to make additional room for the new occupation. Thus it demands a process of religious understanding, of which the people of the world have no experience, but it is again, the process needed to make humanity live a life of internationalism.

Now, the whole discussion brings us to this conclusion. That seldom, if ever, is the personality of a hero comprehended in its pristine purity either in his own age or in the ages that follow, yet whatever of good or evil is found in the national life of a people has its sanction from that personality, howsoever perverted its comprehension in the popular mind may be. That as a consequence, no religious transformation can be brought about without effecting a recognition of the hero of the reforming religion; and, lastly, that if the personality of our hero has certain disadvantages to contend with, in the way of its recognition it has corresponding advantages as well.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

TWENTY YEARS AGO

Baptism with water is a legacy from Judaism to Christianity. It could outlive the fatal influence of Pauline teachings, which relieved the adherents of the Church of Christianity from the burden of Commandments. But if the law was the curse, as we infer from the writings of St. Paul, and if its observance were unnecessary, is not the adoption and continuance of the Jewish rite of initiation to righteousness in the Church of Christ an anomaly? And if the sacred custom is observed to symbolise the new dispensation, the said ceremony, in fulfilment of the words quoted above, if they applied to Jesus Christ should be performed with fire and not with water. We need not at present enter here into the question of the Holy Ghost—a being imperceptible in himself and often not recognisable when translated into actions and deeds of those baptised in the Church: a question which demands a strange kind of orthodoxy of the faith to believe in him.

* * * * *

The whole problem resolves itself into one question: Does baptism in the name of Christ and our belief in the cross miraculously transform us into at-one-ment with God: does it paralyse all our bestial passions and desires and make us but as automatons in the hand of God? If so, we are really baptised with fire. But if to reach that high state of Resignation to God we require a course of discipline, a training under which we have to learn how to win the victory for God in the daily struggle in our life between our will and that of the Most High, and between our discretion and desire and those of the Almighty, we do need the law and external guidance; and the whole reasoning of St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans seems to be absolutely fallacious, and Jesus appears to be the true Messenger of God in saying:—

“Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least Commandments and shall teach them so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.

ISLAM THE NATURAL RELIGION OF MAN

BY M. ABDUS SAMAD, B.A.

Islam is not a new Faith. It is the natural religion of man and has existed in the world ever since the dawn of human life. The religion of Adam (peace be on him), whom many of us regard to be the first man, was Islam ; and Abraham, Moses, David, Solômon, Jesus (peace be on them)—all these great prophets of God preached the same eternal religion, Islam.

More than one hundred thousand of prophets-such is the popular belief—were raised in the different parts of the world and at different times. “ There is not a people but a Warner has gone among them.”¹ None of these prophets ever preached any other religion than Islam. A verse of the Holy Qur-ân, the Sacred Book of Islam, says :—“ And certainly We (God) raised in every nation an apostle saying : Serve God and shun the devil.”² From this it appears that the command of avoiding Satan and submitting to the Will of God was given to all alike.

Going deeper into the matter, we find that in fact the religion of all human beings, like that of the prophets of old, was originally nothing but Islam. Muhammad (peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him), the last prophet of God, says that every human child is born in the natural religion of submission to Allah, which means Islam, and it is its parents that teach it and bring it up in another religion. The birth of a human child in the religion of nature, *i.e.*, Islam, is comparable to the birth of a beast with limbs of its own species. As a cat is not born with the limbs of a dog so a human child is not

¹ Qur-ân, 35 : 24.

² Qur-ân, 16 : 36.

ISLAM THE NATURAL RELIGION OF MAN

born with any attributes which are not in accordance with Islam. In order to explain this truth, the Holy Prophet recited the following verse of the Qur-án :—" The nature made by Allah in which He has made men—there is no altering of Allah's creation—that is the right religion."¹ It is to this natural religion of man, the religion of surrender to the Divine Will, that the name *Islam* has been given.

In order to understand the true significance of Islam as a natural religion, we should first see what is exactly meant by Islam. Now, the whole meaning of the religion of Islam may be said to have been compressed into the *Kalima*, which may be regarded to be the only Formula of Faith in Islam. It is *La ilaha illallah, Muhammadur Rasulullah*—None deserves to be worshipped besides One God, and Muhammad is the Apostle of God. Or, in other words, Islam connotes belief in the unity of the Maker of the entire creation, and that Muhammad was raised by God as a guide for humanity.

The first part of the *Kalima* clearly signifies that the Lord of the entire world is One ; while the second part implies that human beings are all equal and are all brothers and sisters to one another. It is for emphasizing this latter fact that the Holy Prophet repeatedly says that he is nothing but a man like us all, and that he is neither God, son of God, nor anything of the kind. It is only with a view to laying stress on this fact that he does not stop with teaching *La ilaha illallah* but makes it obligatory for us to declare in the same breath *Muhammadur Rasulullah*—Muhammad is not a God, but is only a Messenger of God, a plain human being chosen by God for conveying the Divine Message of peace and happiness to other men. Says the Qur-án : " I am nothing but a Warner and Giver of good news to a people who believe."²

¹ Qur-án, 30 : 30.

² Qur-án, 7 : 188.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

This *Rasul* of God clearly teaches us that if there is any distinction between man and man, it is submission to God (*taqwa*) that gives one man superiority over another. The Holy Qur-án says :—" O you men ! We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other ; surely the most honourable of you with Allah is the one among you (who is) most careful of his duty ; surely Allah is Knowing, Aware."¹

Wealth, birth or complexion of the body will add nothing to or subtract anything from one's respectability. If you wish to be greater than others, you must excel them in the service of God and the condition of your soul must be better than theirs.

Now, that God is One, that He is the Master of all and that human beings are all created of the same stuff² and are all equal like brothers and sisters born of the same parents—these truths must be accepted by every sane man for the simple reason that these are truths which have their foundations in nature. It may be that for selfish considerations people may not always admit them. They may declare like the Bolsheviks that they do not believe in any God, or they may give out like the Hindus that they believe in the plurality of gods. The powerful may oppress the weak ; and the rich may hesitate to accept the poor as brothers. But the inner belief, the belief in the heart of hearts of all, is the same : men are all brethren and God is their over-Lord and Master.

This simple and natural belief in the Unity and Sovereignty of Allah and the brotherhood of man may be dimmed for the moment by a cloud of superstition which may have been set up by an interested priesthood ; but once the cloud is dissipated, man realises the enchanting beauty of the innate belief and the truth of the natural religion. Casuistry and sophistry of logic-choppers and machinations of priestcraft may turn people away from

¹ Qur-án, 49 : 13.

² Qur-án, 4 : 1

ISLAM THE NATURAL RELIGION OF MAN

this natural belief in Islam, and may for a time induce them to worship men, idols or even heaps of sand, as did the pre-Islamic Arabs, but considered carefully, this change in the nature of man is only superficial. In the innermost recesses of his heart will be found the same eternal belief in the Oneness of God and brotherhood of man.

In this land of the Khasis¹, too, as a result of long contact with others, we find an example of corruption of the simple belief of the Khasi people. We know the Khasis were believers in the Unity of Godhead from very early times. But their long contact with the people who believed in the plurality of gods was responsible for their faith being tinged with ideas of idolatry. Through contact with the Christians, again, the mysterious doctrine of the "three Gods in One" began to capture the imagination of the Khasis. But these changes are only superficial, and when we see any one of them turning back to the worship of One God, we thank God very sincerely and know that it is nothing but self-expression of Nature: the simple human soul is now purged of all foreign dross.

Habit is but second nature. Tradition, custom and social prejudices, all go to warp the simple, natural faith. Like that European girl, who was brought up amongst the wolves of the African forest and partook of the nature of the wolves, our believes also undergo a temporary change through the subtle influence of the surroundings. Blessed is the man who feels the change and comes back into his own natural belief, Islam. For, the Qur-án very reasonably says:—"And whoever desires a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted from him, and in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers."² Islam being but another name for the nature in which God has created man,³ it is not conceivable how any religion other than Islam can be acceptable to God.

¹ A hill tribe in Assam (India).

² Qur-án, 7 : 84.

³ Qur-án, 30 : 30.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

For bringing mankind back to the natural religion of Islam and for keeping them therein, the Merciful Lord of the Universe has raised many a prophet and many a warner among them from time to time in different countries. But after the death of these prophets and warners, people forgot their teachings and the merits of the natural religion. Some of them were so far misled as to worship the very prophets and great men who had taught them how to worship the One True God ; while others stooped so low as to bow down before objects of Nature which God created as their servants.¹

This process went on until we come to the 6th century A.C. when a fierce struggle was going on throughout the length and breadth of the world. There was everywhere spiritual starvation, and people began to doubt if there was any God controlling the affairs of men. It was in this time of spiritual sterility that God, out of His mercy, sent down His last Prophet, Hazrat Muhammad (may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him). He summoned the world to this natural religion of Islam, which, he said, was as simple as it was perfect.² His voice of thunder influenced the hearts of all that heard him. In the 23 years of his ministration, Islam spread far and wide and influenced the life and thought of the people so deeply that their very nature, as it were, was changed. So far as the Arabs among whom the Prophet was raised, were concerned, all the barbarous traits of their character disappeared as if by the movement of the magic wand. Other uncultured races, too, rose to the highest peak of civilization when they ceased to fight against their own nature. The barbarous Abyssinian, the ferocious Bedouin and the proud Quraish—all abandoned their former perverted nature, and in a very short time became welded into a progressive nation, "the cynosure of neighbouring eyes."

¹ Qurán, 14 : 33.

² Qurán, 5 : 3.

ISLAM THE NATURAL RELIGION OF MAN

Under the benign influence of this simple religion, kings lived in the simple ways of mendicants ; while on the other hand, nobody wondered if the mendicant of to-day turned to be the king of to-morrow.

Muhammad (may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him), though the Prophet of God and King of Arabia, himself led the life of a poor Arab, thus teaching the world, as much by practice as by precept, the Islamic ideal of simplicity and equality. Coming in contact with the touchstone of his personal influence, all the dross of Arabia turned into pure gold. Whoever learnt from him the lesson of *Tawheed*—the Unity of Godhead—learnt automatically the principle of brotherhood also. It was this teaching of plain living and high thinking coupled with a wonderful feeling of brotherhood that animated Umar, the second rightly-guided Caliph and admittedly one of the greatest rulers of his time, to allow his camel-driver, while entering Jerusalem, to ride the animal in his own place—himself walking on foot and leading the camel by the nose-string. The ennobling spirit of this natural and vigorous religion enabled some slaves like Qutbuddin, Ghyasuddin and Altamsh to become empire-builders. Perfect freedom of all in self-elevation—be it spiritual or temporal—which is implied in the brotherhood of Islam, can perform wonders everywhere.

In our times, too, the world is witnessing dissension and disorder rampant everywhere. The only remedy for the woes and sufferings of to-day is the acceptance of the Islamic faith which is alone the world-religion inculcating principles of peace and goodwill as its very name signifies. For obtaining concord and peace, the nations of the world must cease warring among themselves and with the laws of Nature which are really the laws of God. If man wants to be regarded as a human being by his fellow-men, if the poor do not want to be oppressed by the

rich, if the Sudra does not wish to continue to be the humblest part of Hinduism in the eyes of the Brahmin, if the black Indian wants to have his rights recognised by the white European or American, and if women refuse to lead a life of degradation and shame as playthings of the sterner sex—then the only way open before them all is to break down the artificial barriers which vested interests have set up from times immemorial, and come over boldly to the fold of Islam, the natural religion of man. Here the weary shall get shelter and rest; the spiritually starved shall find their food; and the oppressed and the down-trodden shall see their rights vindicated.

ESSENTIALS OF SUFISM

BY PROFESSOR S. MUZZAFFAR-UD-DIN, B.A., B.E.S.

Sufism, as a technical term, is defined and explained by saints in different ways. Some of the definitions¹ are given below :—

1. Sufism consists in the renunciation of every thing else than God.—Dhun-Nun Misri.
2. Sufism means thorough dependence on God for life, death, and every thing else.—Junaid Baghdadi.
3. Sufism is a combination of all virtues and negation of all vices.—Abu Mohammad Jariri.
4. A Sufi is one who neither likes nor is liked by any one.—Hasan ibne Mansoor Hallâj.
5. A Sufi is he who resigns himself entirely to God.—Maulana Roomi.
6. Sufism consists in the abandonment of all the carnal desires. Sufis are those whose souls are purified and who occupy first rank in the presence of God. Sufis are those who neither own nor are owned by any one.—Abul Hassan Nuri.

¹ *Tasawwuf in Islam*, Abdul Majid.

ESSENTIALS OF SUFISM

7. A Sufi is one who does not see any thing in the two worlds other than God.—Abu Baker Shibli.
8. He is a Sufi who blinds himself to every thing and gets absorbed in God both externally and internally.—Ali bin Bindar, Nishapuri.

These variations in the explanation of the nature of Sufism only indicate various stages of mystical evolution. In the beginning Sufism merely amounted to piety and chastity, and subsequently other spiritual virtues, such as submission, resignation, love, affection, etc., crept into its conception. Finally self-annihilation and complete absorption in God, followed the suit. In this way Sufism became a combination of all noble virtues. It is not, therefore, strange that different saints explained Sufism in different ways in accordance with their taste and inclination. Some have identified it with puritanism, some with self-effacement, some with absorption in the Deity, and so forth. The variations in the definition are rather verbal than real.

Ibn-i-Khaldun, discussing the nature and origin of Sufism, says that mystical tendency had been in existence during the time of the early Caliphs and some other companions. The elementary form of mysticism consisted in—

- (a) purification of soul,
- (b) devotion to God,
- (c) renunciation of the luxury of the world,
- (d) treatment of worldly life as a transitory stage,
- (e) retirement from public life, and
- (f) undisturbed recollection of God.

The learned author further says that in the early period of Islam most of the believers had mystical spirit, but with the accumulation of wealth in later times only a few of them could progress ; and these Muslims unmolested by worldly attractions were called “ Sufis.”¹

¹ *Muqaddama-i-Ibn-i-Khaldun.*

ISLAMIC REVIEW

From the first Sufi Imam Hasan Basri (d. 162 A. H. ; 777-8 A. C.) down to the saints of the tenth century of the Hijra, almost all genuine Sufis contributed something towards the development of the esoteric aspect of the Faith. An immensely large number of books have been written from time to time on Islamic mysticism, and any one desirous to know the fundamentals and essentials of Sufism in detail may refer to these works, particularly *Kitab-ul-Lam'a*, by Sheikh Abu Siraj (d. 378 A.H.). *Kashful-Mahjub*, by Sheikh Ali Hujwairi (d. 465 A.H.) and *Risala-i-Qushairiya*, by Abul Qasim Qushairy (d. 465 A. H.).

By a perusal of these books we are led to conclude that Sufism is only the internal aspect of the religion of Islam. The basic difference between *Shari'at* (external path) and *Haqiqat* (internal path) of Islam may be summarised as follows :—

(a) In *Shari'at* knowledge precedes action while in *Haqiqat* action precedes knowledge.

(b) The former is based on studies and experiments, whereas the latter on inspiration and revelation, as God says :

So He intimated to it (the Soul) by inspiration its deviating from truth and its guarding (against evil)."¹

(c) The basis of the former is affirmation and that of the latter is negation. In the exoteric side we keep on affirming a cause for every phenomenon we come across until we reach a self-existing cause, and this is God. But in the esoteric side we go on eliminating each and every faulty or dependent phenomenon, until we arrive at an independent existence free from all defects, and this is God.

(d) *Shari'at* chiefly relates to body while *Haqiqat* to soul. Islam refers to the former as *Khalq* (creation),

¹ The Holy Qur-ān, 91 : 8.

ESSENTIALS OF SUFISM

as the Qur-án says, "Behold, to Him belong creation and command;" and to the latter as *Amr* (Divine Command), as the Qur-án says, "Say; 'Soul is the command of my Lord.'"

(e) A secular scholar makes distinction between means and end, while a Sufi makes no such distinction. In his case means and end are concentrated on one point only, *i.e.*, the Divinity.

(f) A secular scholar aims at achieving rewards and avoiding punishment at the hands of God in this world or the next. But a Sufi aims at God Himself. He loses himself in God, only to live in Him.

Imam Ghazzali, who developed the mystical ideas into a separate branch of learning, explaining the differences between *Shari'at* and *Haqiqat* says that knowledge is generally obtained by senses or by means of argument and inferences, but sometimes it is possible that one may be inspired with some knowledge without the help of physical senses or any previous effort in the form of instruction or experience. This sort of inspiration can be obtained by self-exertion and self-purification. The usual method of achieving success in this line is that a man must cut himself off from all worldly things and devote himself whole-heartedly to the Deity. He must withdraw his attention from without and fix it within God. When a man succeeds in getting absorbed in God, he now and then gets a Divine Flash revealing to him everything under and above the sun.¹

The materialist will naturally find it difficult to believe that things can be known by inspiration or revelation. But it must be borne in mind that in almost every age and every country there have been some people believing in spiritualism. Plato himself believed in the existence of spiritualism. Even now in Europe there is a class of

¹ See *Ehyâ-ul-'Ulum*, and also *Al-Ghazzali*, by Shibli.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

thinkers known as Spiritualists who maintain that knowledge sometimes may be acquired from the esoteric method.

Ghazzali further says that belief in God in some form or other is almost a universal creed. But a very large number of men believe in God by following either the dictates of reason or practices of their ancestors. Naturally, therefore, this sort of belief does not create any great influence on the minds of people. On the contrary a Sufi believes in God as a result of self-denial and self-renunciation, and in course of time he reaches a stage of mental progress when he sees the Deity all around and finds nothing but the Supreme Being. This vision of an all-absorbing Deity creates in his mind some virtues which draw him closer and closer to God. Similarly every body knows that God is the sustainer of the world and its inmates, and that God has taken over the responsibility of providing food to every living being.¹ Nevertheless, human beings frequently get impatient if their subsistence is delayed any day for some reason or other. This mentality clearly shows that their belief in God, as the sustainer of the Universe, does not produce any effect on their minds. Reverse is the case with real Sufis who are always satisfied and never feel anxious for their meals knowing as they do that the Creator knows His business better than anybody else.²

Some of the opponents of Sufism maintain that Qur-án and Hadith (Tradition) have got nothing to do with Sufism. Of course, the present day corrupted Sufism (known as Pirism) cannot be taken as an Islamic institution. But real Sufism as an instrument of self-purification has been frequently referred to in the Qur-án and sayings of the Prophet. Sheikh Abul Hasan Seraj writes in his book *Kitab-ul-Lama'*:

¹ The Holy Qur-án, 11 : 6. ² See Ehyâ-ul-'Ulum and Al-Gazzali, by Shibli.

ESSENTIALS OF SUFISM

“ The right of inferring spiritual ideas and thoughts is earned only by those persons who have followed the Book of God and sayings and doings of the Prophet both externally and internally. When these people have successfully moulded themselves in accordance with the commandment of God and Prophet, God bestows on them a flash of learning which purifies their minds and which purges them of passion, lust, selfishness and avarice.”¹

The chief aim or final destination of Sufis is the “Unity of Existence” or Pantheism. They do not identify God with the universe or the universe with God, but they deny existence to all things other than the Deity, and believe that the only Existence is God and the rest is only His manifestation. The Muslim Pantheism should not be confounded with the Hindu or Buddhist Pantheism, which involves incarnation of things or transmigration of souls. When a Sufi says, “ I am God and God is I,” he never means thereby that Godhead is incarnated in him or he is embodied in Godhead. Incarnation of one phenomenon in another presupposes the existence of two separate or different entities invested with form and flesh—a supposition which is absurd in the case of the Divinity. Mahmud Astrabadi, author of *Gulshan-i-Raz*, a well-known book on Sufism, says :—

“ Incarnation and Co-existence are impossible here because duality in unity is the essence of misguidance.”

What a Sufi means is this : There is only one substance in existence and that is God. Nothing beyond God exists. The world we live in and the different phenomena we witness here are the only manifestations of that Divine Existence. What we suppose to be existing is nothing but a reflection of the All-absorbing and All-pervading Deity. Pantheism is, therefore, that form of

¹ *Tasawwaf in Islam*, Abdul Majid.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

monism which declares the entire universe or nature as a manifestation of the Supreme and Absolute Being. In other words, neither does God stand apart from the universe or nature, nor the universe or nature stands aloof from God. The same author says:—

“ The universe is entirely relative term like the point which runs in the circumference of a circle.”

This theory may further be illustrated thus :—

Keep a mirror before you and look into it. You will find your reflection thereon. The question is ‘ whether this reflection is exactly yourself or something else than yourself.’ Obviously, you cannot say either ; then what is this ? The only answer to the question is that the image you see inside the mirror is only the reflection of something outside, while the reflection itself does not exist separately. The same is the position of God. The phenomena of the world are the manifestations or reflections of the Deity, but we cannot say that these manifestations are exactly God Himself, nor can we say that they are altogether separate from Him.

The same poet says in *Gulshan-i-Raz* :—

“ Keep the mirror before you and look at another figure inside. Observe carefully so as to see what that reflection is. Neither is (the reflection) this nor that. What, then, is that reflection ? ”

Sufis substantiate their belief in the Pantheistic theory by a reference to the text of the Qur-án. We find in the Holy Book that God in the earliest eternity addressing Himself to the human souls asked the question.

“ Am I not your Lord ? ” “ Yes,” was the answer that came forth instantly. Referring to this conversation between the Creator and the created the author of *Gulshan-i-Raz* says—

“ Why did God say ‘ Am I not your Lord ? ’ Who was after all there to say “ Yes ” at that moment ? ”

THE HOLY QURAN AND ITS COMMENTARY

The answer to the question is furnished by the poet himself who says :—

“ The knower and the known are none but He, find out ; but the earth gets rediance from the sun.”

There is another reference to the Pantheistic view in the Qur-án. We find that when Moses was given the first Divine Flash, God manifested Himself to him through a tree in “ Wadi-i-Aiman ” (*i.e.*, the sacred valley). Referring to it the same poet says :—

“ Come along in the sacred valley, when all of a sudden a tree tells you, ‘ Indeed I am God.’ When it is admissible for a tree to announce ‘ I am God,’ why should not the same be permissible for a blessed man ? ”

After giving various illustrations of the pantheistic view, the poet concludes the subject by saying—

“ Nothing else than God is God. It is all the same whether you say : ‘ He is God ’ or ‘ I am God. ’ ”

THE HOLY QUR-AN AND ITS COMMENTARY

BY THE LATE KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

(*Continued from Vol. XXI, p. 390.*)

Verse 74.—The inevitable result of the Jews infringing the Divine Laws is that their hearts become hardened. Elsewhere in the Qur-án God speaks of this very phenomenon as the setting of a seal on their hearts. The significance of God’s not giving them the power of doing anything good is, that their own hearts, of their own accord, become gradually indifferent to any sort of

ISLAMIC REVIEW

virtuous action. Thus, just as here in these four sections, after describing the excesses and transgressions of the Jews, He says that their hearts are hardened, so in the chapter headed "The Woman"—v. 153-155—after reference to the national crimes of the Jews, it is said "Nay, Allah set a seal upon them owing to their unbelief," that is, God sealed up their hearts on account of their unbelief. Thus the concluding portion of the verse has, quite unambiguously, cleared up this apparently insoluble question. To put the matter in plain words—God, by Himself, never sets any seal on any one's heart. It is man who first perpetrates acts of unbelief in consequence of which his capacity for doing good gradually vanishes away until he reaches a state wherein the committing of sin becomes second nature with him. But since all these things happen in accordance with His laws, God has said that He sets a seal on the heart of such a person, and it is this process which is described in the beginning of the verse. But along with the statement of this fact a hint is thrown out with regard to some who are destined to be reformed. It is said that, without doubt, their hearts will be hard as stones or even harder, but that there are stones, again, from which great streams gush forth, many that split into pieces, and yet others that roll down for fear of God, that is to say, that, although these people have become hard as stones, there are still some among them who will repent, and prostrate themselves before God through fear of Him. The concluding portion of the verse—"Allah is not at all heedless of what you do"—puts this hint in a still clearer light, for it means just this that if such persons will but make a little effort toward good, attempt a good deed, however small, it will not be ignored by God. The simple fact is that while we are involved in active sin, the guidance of God ceases to have any effect on us at all, but as soon as ever we detach ourselves, even a little, from the evil path and incline

THE HOLY QUR-AN AND ITS COMMENTARY

towards virtue, the grace and favours of God begin to flow in upon us again.

Verse 75.—Now, when the condition of the Jews has reached such a state, how can the Muslims expect from them that they should have any faith left in the Truth that has been vouchsafed to them, particularly when some of these former deliberately manipulate, as it were, and tamper with the word of God? We know that, in these days, it has been proved by men of authority that the Jews and their progeny, the Christians, have, in many places, altered and adapted the words of God; but this allegation of such a practice was advanced by the Qur-án against the Jews 1350 years ago. Some 25 years back Bishop Gore was disputing this charge of the Holy Qur-án, but to-day he himself has been constrained to admit that what the Qur-án asserted centuries ago is but the plain truth. Some shallow-thinking persons put forward a strange logic. They hold that when the Qur-án says that it “verifies what is in your hands,” it is admitting that there has been no interpolation in the Old and New Testaments. These people fail to understand that this statement relates, as is evident from the verses before and after, to one particular event, which is also described there. This event is that foretold by both Testaments, to wit, the coming of a Prophet and, according to the Qur-án, that prophecy has been fulfilled in the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. In other words, his coming confirmed what was written in the Torah and in the Gospels, the sacred books, respectively, of the Jews and the Christians. Thus it is mere ignorance of the rules of interpretation that seeks to read into a detached verse a meaning in harmony with its own desires, and that without any reference to other verses bearing on the same subject. The rule is that the whole of the book should be taken into consideration when dealing with the

ISLAMIC REVIEW

interpretation of any particular part of it. Moreover, the Qur-án does not once assert that the two Testaments have been changed wholesale. On the contrary, it simply says that they have been altered in places. It also affirms that the Testaments, in their original revealed state, were fountains of light and guidance to mankind but that later followers of these books have made certain alterations in certain places.

Verse 76.—Having pointed out in the previous verse that Muslims should not, in any way, place reliance on the Jews, the Qur-án puts forward, in confirmation of its statement, yet another fact concerning that people, to wit, that although some of them may profess their faith in Islam while in the presence of the believers, yet when they meet in their own assemblies, these same persons reprimand the less clever among them for admitting in the presence of Muslims what is contained in the Torah, one of such admissions being the prophecy about the coming of a prophet which had not yet seen fulfilment. They enter a protest against these brothers of theirs, pointing out that by telling the Muslims all about the contents of the Torah, they put them in an advantageous position for debating with them in matters religious.

(To be continued.)

WHAT IS ISLAM ?

WHAT IS ISLAM ?

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

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 PROPHET 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-AN.—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-án. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book, 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 Premeasurement 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 at Mecca.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.—The Muslims worship One God—the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Just, the Cherisher of All the

ISLAMIC REVIEW

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 Heavens 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 by itself is 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 OF 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.—Man and woman come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainments. Islam places man and woman under the 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.

SANCITY 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.

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