

"There will be no Prophet after me."—Muhammad.

# *The* **Islamic Review**

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# MUHAMMAD

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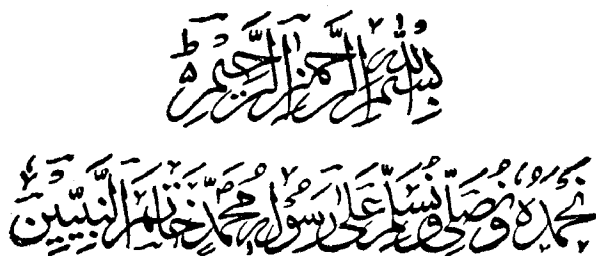
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**Mellom Abdul Shuhairu Carlos**



# THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

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[NO. 10

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## A DECLARATION

I, Clifford Johnson, do hereby faithfully and solemnly declare of my own free will 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, and others, and that I will live a Muslim life by the help of Allah.

*La ilaha il-Allah Muhammad-un-Rasul Allah.*

[There is but one God (Allah) and Muhammad is God's Messenger.]

SHEIKH JALALUDDIN JOHNSON.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

### ISLAM—A MESSAGE OF PEACE

By C. A. SOORMA.

(Continued from Vol. XXVI, page 347.)

#### CHAPTER X.

##### THE CHARACTER OF THE PROPHET

In my study of the Life of the Prophet and the history of Islam, I have not come across a better description of the character of the Prophet than that portrayed by Ameer Ali. It is one of the grandest and most eloquent tributes ever paid to the memory of Muhammad, the man and the Prophet, in English, and I beg to reproduce it now for your edification:

“So ended a life, consecrated, from first to last, to the service of God and humanity. Is there another to be compared to his, with all its trials and temptations? Is there another which has stood the fire of the world, and come out unscathed? The humble preacher had risen to be the ruler of Arabia, the equal of Chosroes and of Cæsar, the arbiter of the destinies of a nation. But the same humility of spirit, the same nobility of soul and purity of heart, austerity of conduct, refinement and delicacy of feeling, and stern devotion to duty which had won him the title of *Al-Amin*, combined with a severe sense of self-examination, are ever the distinguishing traits of his character. Once in his life whilst in a religious conversation with an influential citizen of Mecca, he had turned away from a humble blind seeker of the truth. He is always recurring to this incident with remorse and proclaiming God’s disapprobation.

“A nature so pure, so tender, and yet so heroic, inspires not only reverence, but love. Naturally,

## ISLAM—A MESSAGE OF PEACE

the Arabian writers dwell with the proudest satisfaction on the graces and intellectual gifts of the son of Abdullah. His courteousness to the great, affability to the humble, and his dignified bearing to the presumptuous, procured him universal respect and admiration. His countenance reflected the benevolence of his heart, profoundly read in the volume of Nature, though ignorant of letters, with an expansive mind, elevated by deep communion with the Soul of the Universe, he was gifted with the power of influencing equally the learned and the unlearned. Withal, there was a majesty in his face, an air of genius, which inspired all who came in contact with him with a feeling of veneration and love.

“His singular elevation of mind, his extreme delicacy and refinement of feeling, his purity and truth form the constant theme of the traditions. He was most indulgent to his inferiors, and would never allow his awkward little page to be scolded whatever he did. ‘Ten years,’ said Anas, his servant, ‘was I about the Prophet, and he never said so much as *Uff* to me.’ He was very affectionate towards his family. One of his boys died on his breast in the smoky house of the nurse, a blacksmith’s wife. He was very fond of children. He would stop them in streets, and pat their little cheeks; he never struck anyone in his life. The worst expression he ever made use of in conversation was: ‘What has come to him? May his forehead be darkened with mud!’ When asked to curse someone, he replied:

‘I have not been sent to curse, but to be a mercy to mankind!’

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“He visited the sick, followed every bier he met, accepted the invitation of a slave to dinner, mended his own clothes, milked his goats and waited upon himself, summarily related another tradition. He never withdrew his hand from another’s palm first, and turned not before the other had turned. His hand was the most generous, his breast the most courageous, his tongue the most truthful; he was the most faithful protector of those he protected; the sweetest and most agreeable in conversation; those who saw him were suddenly filled with reverence; those who came near him loved him; they who described him would say: ‘I have never seen his like either before or after.’ He was of great taciturnity; and when he spoke, he spoke with emphasis and deliberation, and no one could even forget what he said. Modesty and kindness, patience, self-denial and generosity pervaded his conduct and riveted the affection of all around him. With the bereaved and afflicted he sympathised tenderly. . . . He shared his food with others even in times of scarcity and was sedulously solicitous for the personal comfort of every one about him. He would stop in the streets, listening to the sorrows of the humblest. He would go to the houses of the lowliest to console the afflicted and to comfort the heart-broken. The meanest slaves would take hold of his hands and drag him to their masters to obtain redress for ill-treatment or release from bondage. He never sat down to a meal without first invoking a blessing, and never rose without uttering a thanksgiving; his time was regularly apportioned. During the day when not engaged in prayers, he received visitors and transacted public affairs.

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At night he slept little, spending most of the hours in devotion. He loved the poor and respected them, and many who had no home or shelter of their own slept at night in the mosque contiguous to his house. Each evening it was his custom to invite some of them to partake of his humble fare. The others became the guests of his principal disciples. His conduct towards the bitterest of his enemies was marked by a noble clemency and forbearance. Stern, almost to severity, to the enemies of the State, mockings, affronts, outrage and persecutions towards himself were, in the hours of his triumph—synonymous with the hour of trial to the human heart—all buried in oblivion, and forgiveness was extended to the worst criminal.

“Muhammad was extremely simple in his habits. His mode of life, his dress and his belongings, retained to the very last a character of patriarchal simplicity. Many a time, Abu Huraira reports, had the Prophet to go without a meal. Dates and water frequently formed his only nourishment. Often, for months together, no fire could be lighted in his house from scantiness of means. God, say the Muslim historians, had indeed put before him the key to the treasures of this world, but he refused it!

“The mind of this remarkable Teacher was, in its intellectualism and progressive ideals, essentially modern. Eternal striving was, in his teaching, a necessity of human existence: ‘Man cannot exist without constant effort!’ ‘The effort is from me, its fulfilment comes from God.’ The world, he taught, was a well-ordered Creation, regulated and guided by a Supreme Intelligence overshadowing the Universe. ‘Everything is pledged



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to its own time,' he declared. And yet human will was free to work for its own salvation. His sympathy was universal; it was he who invoked the mercy of the Creator on all living beings. It was he who pronounced the saving of one human life tantamount to the saving of humanity.

"His social conception was constructive, not disintegrating. In his most exalted mood, he never overlooked the sanctity of human life. To him the service of humanity was the highest act of devotion. His call to his faithful was not to forsake those to whom they owed a duty; but in the performance of that duty to earn 'merit', and reward. Children were a trust from God to be brought up in tenderness and affection; parents were to be respected and loved. The circle of duty embraced in its fold kindred, neighbour and the humble being 'whose mouth was in the dust.'

"Fourteen centuries have passed since he delivered his message but time has made no difference in the devotion he inspired, and to-day, as then, the Faithful have in their hearts and on their lips those memorable words:

'May my life be thy sacrifice, O Prophet of God'.—

AMEER ALI; *The Spirit of Islam*, pp. 117—121.

Such, then, is the character of the Man whose greatness and nobility of character is daily receiving added lustre from the four corners of the earth, as the sun does as it approaches the meridian of noonday!

## **IBN KHALDUN—PHILOSOPHER**

### **IBN KHALDUN—THE PHILOSOPHER OF HISTORY**

BY HAMID RAZA, B.A. (ALIG.)

Ibn Khaldun is the greater historical thinker of the East. Born in 1332 A.D. at Tunis, he was descended from an ancient tribe of Hadarmaut, and was one of a family from Seville, whose ancestors had settled in North Africa. His early education was carefully planned, and, at the age of twenty, he had completed his study of Logic, Philosophy, Mathematics and Arabic Literature. He then began his political career by entering the services of various kings, details of which would be tedious in an article like this. In 1362, he entered the service of the Sultan of Granada. In 1374, he retired for a period of four years and wrote his celebrated "Prolegomena," prefixed to his University History. Later on, he sailed for Egypt, and accepted a professorship at the Al-Azhar University in Cairo. He was in Damascus, with the Sultan of Egypt, when it was besieged by Tamerlane in A.D. 1400. Now ambassador to Pedro of Castile, now a high official at Cairo, now an honoured guest of Tamerlane, Ibn Khaldun lived with statesmen and Kings and had a clear insight into contemporary politics. He died in 1406.

As a philosopher of history, Ibn Khaldun occupies both an outstanding and a distinctive place. It is the function of the philosophy of history to determine a right standpoint from which to view the whole history of man as a historical and social being. Judged by this standard, Ibn Khaldun has been aptly called by the European writers as "The Father of Modern History." It is his thought-provoking, comprehensive "Prolegomena," appended to his Universal History, that has earned for him the considered praise of European historians. In some of its conclusions it anticipates Spengler's "Decline of the West" and deals with all

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branches of Arab Science and Culture. It is, as a great English writer says: "remarkable in the sweep of its information, the sanity of its outlook, and profundity of its philosophy." It is a grand achievement of Arab historical genius and sets forth Ibn Khaldun's principles of historical criticism and research. He himself in the following words has stated his idea of the historian's function: "Know that the true purpose of history is to make us acquainted with human society, *i.e.*, with the civilization of the world and with its natural phenomena, such as savage life, the softening of manners, attachment to the family and the tribe, the various kinds of superiority which one people gains over another, the kingdoms and divers dynasties which arise in this way, the different trades and laborious occupations to which men devote themselves in order to earn their livelihood, the sciences and arts; in fine, all the manifold conditions which naturally occur in the development of civilization." History, according to Ibn Khaldun, is no dull, wearisome record of kings and wars; it gives in a nutshell the cultural achievements of man in the various channels of his social development. Thus Ibn Khaldun seems to trace the evolution of human society through man's political and social organisations. He is a serious student of human institutions and expounds his thesis on scientific lines. He arrived, for the first time in human literature, at a philosophical conception of history, and discovered, formulated and systematised laws of the formation and decline of human society. Ibn Khaldun's observations on the relations of society and Individual are pre-eminently modern. He was a believer in the principle of evolution and laid down "Continuity of progress" as the law governing society. All events of history thus appear to him to be inter-connected and inter-dependent. He wants us to look backward and forward, and this is

### **IBN KHALDUN:—PHILOSOPHER**

what every genuine student of history must do. Thus he saw in history "an endless cycle of progress and retrogression, analogous to the phenomena of human life."

Ibn Khaldun made a new approach to the problem of History. Long before the French writer, Montesquieu, he discovered and laid down the law of causality in its widest applications to human society. He saw that the course of history is balanced by two forces—nomadic and settled life. "The nomadic life naturally precedes and produces the other. Its characteristics are simplicity and purity of manners; warlike spirit, and, above all, a loyal devotion to the interests of the family and the tribe. As the nomads become more civilized, they settle down, form states, and make conquests. They have then reached their highest development. Corrupted by luxury, and losing the virtues which raised them to power, they are soon swept away by a ruder people." Such, in bare outline, is the course of history as Ibn Khaldun conceived it; and who can deny the truth of his thesis? Nevertheless, the real nation-building factors are, as Ibn Khaldun suggests, Patriotism and Religion. Patriotism springs up and flourishes among nomad peoples, where the instinct of self-preservation awakens a keen sense of mutual kinship and urges men to make common cause with one another. But patriotism is not enough, and Ibn Khaldun's sense of historical values culminates in a broad conception of history. He expands his consciousness and wants us to submerge our petty loyalties into a universal ethical purpose. These loyalties, he suggests, should be subdued and concentrated on a central point so that a super-national polity may be evolved in human organisation. The role of religion should not be underrated in moulding the destiny of tribes and nations. Ibn Khaldun recognises that religion is the only source of producing that unification

and solidarity without which no state can exist. So he lays down the proposition that "the Arabs are incapable of founding an empire unless they are imbued with religious enthusiasm by a prophet or a saint."

Ibn Khaldun's method is thus strictly scientific and is mainly responsible for the world-wide recognition of his genius. His historical method has nothing of the romantic fiction or glamour indulged in by many Oriental writers. As a historian he is at once impartial, sedate and rational, and is singularly free from political, religious or racial prejudices. His vision is not obscured by fanaticism, as he extends his historical researches into foreign fields with a marked sympathy. He stresses the study of the original genius of a race in studying their history. This saves the historian from falling into many a pitfall of rash generalisation. It is this method of study that has been followed with advantage by the sane European historians. Ibn Khaldun also stresses the influence of physical environment—climate, soil, food and other natural factors—on the national character of a people. He thus directly anticipates Bodin, Montesquieu, Hegel and Buckle—all the leading historians of our modern times. This new method of study has made Ibn Khaldun most popular among the modern European writers who are known as philosophers of History. His work thus gives us new aspects of historiography, and his influence on the neo-philosophy of history is conspicuous, as has been admitted by all the European critics. An interesting feature is the economic aspect of Ibn Khaldun's historiography. Several expressions in his "Prolegomena" remind us of Marx's aphorisms. He observes that differences in the conditions of groups and tribes are due to their economic maladjustment.

To sum up, Ibn Khaldun is a constructive force in the domain of modern historiography. His title to

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

enduring fame rests on his immortal "Prolegomena" that merits the earnest attention of the readers. It is "a grand and closely reasoned view of history as the record of man's social development." His plan of history implies a deep conscious purpose and suggests all those problems which "have come to constitute the principal pre-occupation of modern historians." No Muslim historian had taken a view at once so comprehensive and so philosophical. Ibn Khaldun stood far above his age, and his own countrymen admired rather than followed him. He was, in a word, the spiritual father of the modern historians.

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## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

BY ABDUL LATIF KHAN

Historical research clearly proves that Islam quickened the pulse of humanity, furthered culture and civilization and promoted the intellectual and moral development of the world. To a dying world it gave new life and activity. The wonderful moral and intellectual transformation it brought about is unprecedented in the annals of the world. Islam is the religion of peace and love. It preaches the brotherhood and equality of all mankind, destroys all invidious distinctions of caste, colour and creed and thus founds a world-wide fraternity and a universal brotherhood. It was not meant for one age but for all ages. Its sole mission is to purify, reform and elevate humanity. It is the only religion which has made the acquisition of learning a duty incumbent upon every man and woman. It told its followers to go even to China to acquire knowledge. No religion ever spoke more eloquently on the benefits of learning and recommended more strongly to its followers the acquisition of learning, heart and soul.

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It is remarkable that this ardent devotion to learning and culture distinguished it from all other religions of the world, ancient and modern. In the Middle Ages, when Europe was plunged in the Cimmerian darkness of ignorance, superstition and brutality, the Muslims were the most enlightened nation of the world and it was they who carried aloft the lamp of learning and culture for the enlightenment of humanity. It was none but the followers of Islam who kept alight the torch of learning and culture during the long period of intellectual and moral darkness which extended from the time of Virgil to that of Almonzor and continued in Europe till the days of Dante. It was Islam which gave birth to modern civilisation.

The Pre-Islamite Arabs were sunk in the abyss of ignorance, barbarism and superstition. Islam impressed upon the Arabs the seriousness of life, laid the axe at the very root of social and moral corruptions, destroyed their insularity, and made them the heralds and pioneers of the most glorious civilization the world ever saw. Called by the life-giving voice of Islam from the most deplorable condition of life into which they had fallen with little hope for the present and with none for the future, the inhabitants of the Arabian desert went into the world with the lamp of learning in their hands to spread truth and to elevate and civilise mankind. It was Islam which transformed them as if by a magician's wand into the founders of Empires, builders of cities, collectors of libraries, teachers of arts, literature, science and philosophy to both the West and the East. It was the Holy Qur-án which underlay the vast energy and contained the principles which were its spring of action. There can be no denying that this Holy Book created a new phase of human thought and a fresh type of character. Under the inspiring influence of that Holy-Book, a congeries of warring tribes consolidated into a nation of heroes and

## ISLAM AND CIVILIZATION

woke into a new life of intellectual activity and moral purity. Their unexampled activity in all branches of human learning marked a unique epoch in the history of the world. It has been justly said that as long as the Muslims acted up to the teachings of Islam they led the vanguard of peace and progress and remained the warm protectors and promoters of science and civilization. The moment they became indifferent to the commandments of Islam, they lagged behind in the race for intellectual and moral progress. We can confidently say that the world is indebted to the Holy Qur-án for the growth of modern civilisation. Lest it be thought that we are biased in our opinion, we give below the words of some authorities in support of our statement :

G. Margoliouth, by no means a friend of Islam but a great Arabic scholar, says :

“The Qur-án enjoys the distinction of having been the starting-point of a new literary and philosophical movement which has powerfully affected the finest and most cultivated minds among both the Jews and the Christians in the Middle Ages. The general progress of the modern Muslim World has somehow been arrested, but research has shown that what European scholars knew of Greek Philosophy, of Mathematics, Astronomy and like sciences, for several centuries before the Renaissance was, roughly speaking, all derived from Latin treatises ultimately based on Arabic originals, and it was the Qur-án which though indirectly gave the first impetus to these studies among the Arabs and their allies. Linguistic investigations, poetry and other branches of literature also made their appearance soon after or simultaneously with the publication of the Qur-án, and the literary movement thus initiated



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has resulted in some of the finest products of genius and learning."

Emanuel Deutsch, a great Orientalist, says of the Qur-án:

"A book by the aid of which the Arabs conquered a world greater than that of Alexander the Great, greater than that of Rome and in as many tens of years as the latter had wanted hundreds to accomplish her conquests by the aid of which they alone of all the Shemites came to Europe as kings, whither the Phœnicians had come as tradesmen and the Jews as fugitives or captives, came to Europe to hold up together with these fugitives the light to humanity; they alone, while darkness lay around, to raise up the wisdom and knowledge of Hellas from the dead, to teach philosophy, medicine, astronomy and the golden art of song to the West as to the East, to stand at the cradle of modern science, and to cause us late epigoni for ever to weep over the day when Granada fell."

Johnson, another great writer, thus speaks of the Qur-án:

"If it is not poetry, and it is hard to say whether it be or not, it is more than poetry. It is not history, nor biography. It is not an anthology, like the sermon on the Mount, not metaphysical dialectics, like the Buddhist Sutras, nor sublime homilies, like Plato's Conferences of the wise and foolish teachers. It is a prophet's cry, Semitic to the core, yet of a meaning so universal and so timely that all the voices of the age take it up, willing or unwilling, and it echoes over palaces and deserts, over cities and empires, first kindling its chosen hearts to world-conquest, then gathering itself up into a reconstructive force that all the creative light of Greece and Asia might penetrate the

## **QUR-AN—PROPHET'S MIRACLE**

heavy gloom of Christian Europe, when Christianity was but the Queen of the Night."

Professor Browne, a very celebrated authority on Islam, says of Islam and the Arabs:

"It was undoubtedly due to Islam, that single yet majestic creed, of which no unprejudiced student can ignore the grandeur, that they owed the splendid part which they were destined to play in the history of Civilization."

*(To be continued.)*

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### **THE QUR-AN AS THE PROPHET'S ONLY MIRACLE**

BY HONOURABLE M. T. AKBAR, K.T.

What we require at the present moment is a deep and profound study of the Qur-án and the principles of Islam in the light of modern discoveries and knowledge, with the object of bringing to light the hidden flowers in the pages of the Holy Qur-án and the Hadith which are only awaiting the arrival of a pioneer to shed their perfume on the whole world. It was on the tongue of our honoured Prophet that the Holy Spirit descended and God the Most High revealed the Qur-án, and it is to this Book that we Muslims must turn in order to realise the greatness and the vitality of the principles of Islam.

It is impossible for any one to enumerate the blessings which have been showered by God upon us Muslims by the gift of this revelation.

It is the only code which sets forth in clear terms what Muslims must not do and what they must do to attain the Kingdom of God.

What has been forbidden are the very things which humanity has discovered and is discovering to be at the root of all evil, drink, gambling, fornication, adultery, the levying of interest and, above all, the association of

created things with God in the worship of God. Are not these the causes of all evil in history and do they not offer the same problems to the modern world? Intoxicants and the illicit use of drugs offer the most serious obstruction to progress in modern times, and one has heard of nations trying to enslave and exploit other nations by secret traffic in drugs, such as cocaine and opium. The wisdom of God is seen in the fact that intoxicants of all kinds are absolutely forbidden; so is gambling of any kind. It is not so in the affairs of man. In most States, some intoxicants are allowed whilst others are forbidden; and the States have to spend large slices of their revenue in the institution of excise departments to supervise what they have partially approved in principle by tolerating some kinds of intoxicants. Similarly with regard to lotteries and gambling. There is one law for the rich and another for the poor. Adultery is a civil wrong but not so fornication, and licensed houses in the Red Lamp Quarter bring in revenue to some States. The wealth of modern States is due to economic systems based on the levying of interest on capital, and we have only just witnessed the entire breakdown of modern economic systems and the return actually to the old system of barter and exchange.

Why is there this bitter hatred of capitalism in the creed of communism, and of Jews in Nazi Germany and now Austria?

The Bait-ul-Mal finds no place in the modern State, whereby State assistance can be given to needy men and women in distress.

It has been replaced by voluntary, charitable and social organisations flaunting in meretricious garb, where there is an unholy scramble for shoddy honours and petty baubles—bits of ribbon to stick in one's coat. Instead of the State doing its duty and fulfilling its obligations towards its own subjects, these institutions are

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actually encouraged by the State, for through these institutions it can evade its responsibilities. The pure monotheism of Islam, with its horror of idolatry, should be contrasted with the degradation to which idolatry can descend in the obscene rituals of *tantric* worship and the puerilities of passion plays (see Yeats Browne in "A Lancer at Large;" Forester's "A Voyage to India" and Matthew Arnold's "A Persian Passion Play"). In the Kaaba, at Mecca, there were 360 idols, one idol to be worshipped on each day of the lunar year, and the noblest act of the Prophet was when he broke every one of them and left the Kaaba—the House of God—empty of everything—symbolic of the human heart which should be unattached to any created thing so as to allow the light of God to see through the human heart. It is no wonder that Muslims are asked to adore God at least 5 times a day as a thanksgiving to Him for His mercy in sending His messenger—Muhammad—to reveal the Qur-án to us. When I think of the manifold blessings of the Qur-án I am struck dumb, till nothing is left, but God and I, which is the attitude of prayer in Islam.

In the words of de La Mare:

“Though I should sit  
By some tarn in thy hills,  
Using its ink  
As the spirit wills  
To write of Earth's wonders,  
Its live, willed things,  
Flit would the ages  
On soundless wings  
Ere unto Z  
My pen drew nigh;  
Leviathan told  
And the honey-fly:  
And still would remain  
My wit to try—  
My worn reeds broken  
The dark tarn dry,  
All words forgotten—  
Thou, Lord, and I.”

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The same idea is expressed at the end of the chapter, The Cave in the Holy Qur-án:

“I bless God for the gift of the Qur-án, because that book calls me to what gives life to me and leads me from darkness to light. It does not stop short at giving negative moral precepts, but it furnishes man with a powerful weapon with which evil can be fought and repelled. It shows one how faith and trust in God must be fostered, by translating them into actions (91:9-10). It does not ask man to desert the world and to take refuge in the jungle. This is the way of cowardice; on the other hand, the Qur-án expects every man and woman to stand at his or her post in this world. Allah says: “Do not neglect your portion of this world, and do good to others as Allah has done good to you” (28:77; 73:7 and 20). It shows man that he is destined for a great end, that his progress will always be onwards (84: 17—20; 95:6), that God has implanted conscience in him to guide him (91:8) and that he is a free agent to choose whatever course he likes (76:3 and 5:48). I was reading Wildon Carr’s account of Leibnitz and his Monadology and I was struck by the close resemblance of some of Leibnitz’s conclusions with the doctrines of the Qur-án, particularly the idea that the life of this world with its conception of space and time was an illusion and that life was meant to be evolved in the natural world to the moral world till finally men and women will be fit denizens of the City of God.

The Qur-án in several places insists on the idea that the whole of humanity was made from one substance or *nafs* and that, if any one slays a man unjustly, it is as if he slew all men, and, conversely, if he keeps one man alive, it is as if he kept alive all men (5:32).

A passage in the Qur-án attracted my attention when I first read it. Allah says that if He did not set up one community against another it would end in

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mischievous and disaster in this world. Is not the truth of this passage being demonstrated every day in life? After the Great War the Christian Allied Powers were, like Selkirk, monarchs of all they surveyed and they began, like Omar Khayyam of old, to remould the world more to their heart's desire. But the plan of God raised up Soviet Russia and Communism in opposition. Only the pendulum swung too far the other way and the reaction was followed immediately by the birth of Fascism. The pendulum of life is always swinging to and fro for certain ends and purposes.

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BY KHAN BAHADUR AL-HAJJ B. (M.) K. LODI.

*(Continued from Vol. XXVI, page 186.)*

### **PART II.**

#### **THE PHENOMENA OF SIMILARITIES.**

As I have pointed out in the preceding part of this article, the theory of "borrowing" stands on slippery ground. The critics have judged Islam from a misleading standpoint. Their criterion is that there is much in Islam which may be found in other religions, but a critical examination of the so-called phenomenon of identity will show that it is not real, but deceptive. Pick any one Islamic teaching; compare it, as closely as you could, with the seemingly parallel teaching in other religions; judge the Teachers concerned as well as the distance of time and space that separate them, and you will surely distinguish the Islamic as quite distinct from, and independent of others, but all emanating from a common and Higher source. The following are some of the typical instances:

(1) It was that ancient sage of China of the sixth century B.C., viz., *Confucius*, who first taught his followers to "worship as though the Deity is present." He stopped there, and his teaching did not appeal to the people at large, nor did it have the desired effect. His creed was that he "neither affirmed nor denied the existence of God,<sup>1</sup> whereas the Prophet Muhammad, realising God as he did, went further and exhorted his people in a more practical and in a more effective manner, and said: "Thou shouldst pray to God as if thou seest Him, and if thou canst not see Him, He sees thee." Note the perfect nature of the saying. Could it ever have emanated from an unlettered mind of Arabia of the 6/7 centuries A.D., unless that mind had realised God, and was inspired by God? Or does it admit of a supposition that Muhammad merely imitated Confucius and amplified his teaching? When and where did they live? Muhammad lived about 1,200 years after Confucius. Where is China, and where is Arabia? In order to stress the value of learning, the Prophet exhorted his people to acquire learning, *even if it were in China*, hinting thereby at the then formidable transport difficulty between the two countries.

Assuming for argument's sake that there were no transport barriers, did Muhammad ever go to China, or did any Chinaman visit Arabia and teach the Prophet of Arabia or his people his own language or scriptures? History decidedly answers these questions in the negative.

(2) It was *Sandilya*,<sup>2</sup> of the Vedic-period, who first expounded the theory that the *Self* within the heart is "Brahma," while, ages and ages after, the Prophet of Arabia, who knew nothing of the Aryan literature, or

1 Vide Vol. III, Part I; Vol. XV, Part I: Dr. Legge's "Translation of Confucius' Teachings," S.B.E. Series, edited by Max-Muller.

2 Page 223, History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature edited by Max-Muller.

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even of its very existence, said: "Man's mind is God's abode." Is this not an echo of the same voice—*Divine?*

(3) That great Greek philosopher, *Socrates* (between the 5th and 4th centuries B.C.) said: "Know thyself," a saying which is again traced to the Delphic Oracle.<sup>1</sup> To "Know one's self" was evidently considered by *Socrates* an end in itself, whereas, far remote in time and space, the Prophet of Arabia realized that it was only a *means* to know God, and laid down that "He who knows his 'Self' knows his Lord." Readers will note the perfect nature of Muhammad's saying. The reason is obvious. *Socrates* was a "profound sceptic."<sup>2</sup> With the above sayings, compare the Upanishads:

(a) "He who knows the 'self' overcomes grief."<sup>3</sup>

(b) "He who knows 'Brahma' attains the Highest."<sup>4</sup>

(c) "He who knows the Highest *Brahma* becomes even *Brahma*."<sup>5</sup>

The mystic theory of absorption of the enlightened and austere lower "self," in the Universal Self, is thus openly stated in the Upanishads, while it is veiled from the unenlightened by the cautious, enigmatical and pregnant language of the Prophet, so that only he who realizes his self, will realize the end and the nature of the end. Then again, the question whether a knowledge of the "self" is subordinate to work and sacrifices, or whether it is an independent means to reach the Highest, is in dispute amongst the Vedantists themselves,<sup>6</sup> while the Prophet's saying has left no

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1 A famous Oracle which was in Delphi, a town in ancient Greece.

2 Page 215, Vol. I, "The Outline of History," by H. G. Wells.

3 Kh: Ups. III: 4—7.

4 Tait: Ups. II—1.

5 Mund: Ups. III: 2—9.

6 Page 285, Vol. 38, Part II, "The Vedanta," with a Commentary by Shankaracharya, translated by George Thibaut, S. B. E., Series, edited by Max-Muller.



room for speculation. Is it then a "copy"? Did the unlettered Prophet of Arabia copy from the ancient Sanskrit Scriptures of India? The very idea is absurd, if not revolting.

(4) The author of the *Ammitha Bindu Upanishad* merely said: "Brahma is without doubt beyond reason and *analogy*," while the Qur-ání stretched the theory further and declared: "Nothing is *like a likeness* of Him." A more lofty, a more decisive expression could neither be traced to the literature of any of the remaining religions of the world, nor be at least conceived. It is indeed a transcendently pure and unrivalled conception of God—That He is even *beyond a metaphorical comparison*. Be it noted that the idea of "likeness" is repeated *twice* in the Qur-ánic verse, and is expressed in two different Arabic words—*Ka* and *Mithl*, both meaning—"like." The addition of the word "*Ka*" would be unnecessary if it were to express the idea merely as "nothing is like Him," but the object underlying the addition of "*Ka*" and in the repetition of the idea of "likeness" is unequivocally to negative the idea of "likeness" itself, and to impress the fact that, even were it possible to speculate with the aid of the highest pitch of human imagination and conception, if God is, or may be, like anything, even then a comparison is out of the question, because there is *nothing even like His likeness*. What a-supreme, perfect, and clear conception of the Incomparable, Matchless, Unchallengeable, Unrivalled qualities of God! With due deference to the sanctity and high philosophy of the famous "Forest Books" (Upanishads), it has to be pointed out that their conception of the *incomparable nature* of God appears not exhaustive; it does not even approach that majestic and sublime conception which is

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reflected in *one* Qur-ánic word *Kamithlihi*. The explanation is not far to seek. The language of the Upanishads is admittedly the language of the Rishis, addressed to their disciples and interlocutors, and it is *human*; it is not claimed to be a direct revelation from the Super-human as is the case with the Qur-án. It is the artist who can delineate his picture better. "The odour of musk must come of its own accord from the musk itself, and not from its praise by the dealer in musk." Is Islam's a borrowed musk?

(5) God has no name in the sense in which the word "name" is meant. His Reality (Zát) remained *anonymous*, but became *panonymous* ("attributive" Sifát) after the creation of man. And yet certain ancient sages and seers have preferred to express their consciousness of God in general and vague terms, *e.g.*, "It is. It is" (Katha Upanishad). "That, That one, and He" (Bhagavad Gita). God spoke to Moses and said: "I am that I am." There is an old German expression: "Istegke—it." The idea underlying all these vague expressions is to denote a "concealed invisible third person" (Zamír-i-Gháib), an idea that is identical with that which is implied in the Arabic word *Hu*. "*Hu*" is, in Arabic grammar, "a singular personal pronoun"—meaning "He," and secondarily "He who exists," "the Eternal God," indicating thereby that the rest, *viz.*, His creation, is "non-existent," "temporal," "perishable," so that the word *Hu* has come to denote God, and is used as such in several verses of the Qur-án, a sense in which Sri Krishna uses the word *He* in verse No. 42, II Discourse, of the Bhágavad Gita. Is it a "borrowed" word? Can anybody dare assert that the idea was borrowed by Muhammad from India, Egypt and Germany? Is it not a distinctive conception of God, quite independent of others enumerated above? We leave the answer to the readers themselves.

(6) That *water* was the primitive element and the first work of the creative Power is now the uniform opinion of the philosophy of the world, though with the Parsis<sup>1</sup> it is the *Sky* that was the first creation, and water the second. It is said that it was the Ionic Philosopher, *Thales*, who first considered "water" "as the first cause of all things." That *water* was the root-cause, and the world, the offshoot, is also the view of the seers of the Upanishads (*Aitareya*). The Puranic idea is that *Narayana* was originally on the waters before He gave birth to Brahma from his navel with power to create. The "waters" are said to mean: "the liquid space whence our solid earth arose."<sup>2</sup> That God said: "Let the Water bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly," is the Biblical version.<sup>3</sup> With these older theories, let us compare the later one, *viz.*, Islamic: "We made every living thing of water" (*Qur-án*, XXI: 30).

That there is life even in inorganic creation, and that each such creation is in a silent state of prayer and praise of its Creator, is often enunciated in the *Qur-án*. That, ere creation, God's throne had stood upon water, is also the *Qur-ánic* dictum (XI: 7). In reply to the question of an Arab as to where was God before He created the world, the Prophet Muhammad said: "He was in *Amá*. "Ama" means "a dark, fine subtle cloud," to which scientists after ages of labour gave the name of *Ether*.

These truths lay hidden in the physical world, which science discovered long, long after the Prophet of Arabia. It is therefore evident that they could never have reached the ignorant Arab minds of the 6/7th

<sup>1</sup> Pages 9 and 10, Vol. V, Part I, "Pahlavi Texts," translated by E. W. West, S. B. E. Series, edited by Max-Müller.

<sup>2</sup> 169-170; "The Puranas in the Light of Modern Science," by K. Narayanaswamy Iyer, Madras.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis, I 20.

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centuries A.D. The revelations of the Qur-án and the Tradition of the Prophet quoted in the preceding paragraph are identical, more with the theories in *Aryan* literature than with the Biblical statement which is very meagre, too meagre to enlighten an unlettered Arab. Did Muhammad have access to the ancient Scriptures of the Hindus? Decidedly not.

(7) Very, very ancient is the principle of periodical "divine" intervention in order to guide and redeem the erring humanity—as ancient as humanity itself. Sri Krishna said: "Oh Bharata! Whenever there is decay of righteousness and an exaltation of unrighteousness, then *I myself come forth.*"<sup>1</sup> The *Dasátir*,<sup>2</sup> the sacred writings of the ancient Persian Prophets, which may be called the "Old Testament of the Parsis," while the *Zend-Avesta* is their New Testament, makes mention of 15 ancient Prophets in Persia alone, including Zardusht or Zoroaster, as the 18th, and 5th Sason as the last who is said to have been contemporary with Emperor Heracles. It is also the Buddhistic belief that a blessed *Thattaghata* or *Buddha* is born from time to time as a guide to erring mortals.<sup>3</sup> The Buddha, too, has said that there were several Buddhas prior to his time, though their names are not given, and that there are Buddhas yet to come.<sup>4</sup> The next religious literature in which some of the ancient Prophets are mentioned is the Old Testament of the Bible. And the last is the Qur-án which gives prominence to the phenomena of Prophethood. The Prophet of Islam said that there were 1,24,000 Prophets and Teachers in the world

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1 Bhagavad Gita, IV: 7. N. B.—Islam would substitute for the "italicised" words: "I send a messenger or Reformer," because neither the Hindu doctrine of "incarnation" nor the Christian anthropomorphism is recognised in Islam.

2 Translated into English by Mullah Firoz Bin Kaus, and edited and republished by D. J. Medhoré (1888.)

3 Pages 186-187, Vol. XI, "Buddhistic Suttas," translated by Rys David, S.B.E. Series, edited by Max-Muller.

4 Page 275, Vol. XIX, "The Life of Buddha," translated by Samuel Beal, S.B.E. Series, edited by Max-Muller.

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from Adam onwards. Their mission emanated from one and the same source—"Divine,"—and tended to one and the same purpose, *viz.*, to reform mankind whenever mankind went astray; and it is this very purpose that was in the heart and on the lips of the Preacher of Islam. Did he ever study the literature of the afore-said people? If not, how did the truth suddenly reveal itself to and shine upon the heart of an unlettered Arab of the 7th Century A.D., who never knew what nations existed before him, what Scriptures they possessed, and through whom they were revealed, and so on? He was living in a country that was then practically cut off from the outside world; he was speaking a language not known outside his country; and he himself did not know any of the languages foreign to that country. Muhammad was undoubtedly a prophet of God.

(8) The Upanishads (Katha) that were composed by certain sages and seers who lived between 1,000 B.C. and 300 B.C., laid down that "the road to Him (Brahma) is as difficult to go as the sharp edge of a razor." There is more or less a similar symbol of struggle of the souls before reaching Heaven in the *Hades* of the Greeks, *Wogho* of the Chinese, the *Gisell* and *Hifrost* of the Scandinavians, the *Bridge of Hell* of the Jews, the *Chinavat* of the Parsis, and in the *Sirdt* of the Muslims, that have to be safely crossed over before they can enter Paradise. From where did Muhammad imbibe the idea? Did he imitate Zoroaster from Iran as some critics think? If so, how? Nobody has ever answered this authoritatively.

(9) It appears from the Buddhistic literature that the Buddha advised his people to give *one fortieth* of their income to the poor, while Islam has made it obligatory on the net income of every Muslim of means. This is what is called Zakát (poor-rate, poor-due) in Islam, a kind of tax levied on the rich for the benefit of the

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poor, thereby to encourage and strengthen the brotherhood of man. "Zakát" has rendered the brotherhood real; it is not a *sentimental* Christian brotherhood. There is no religion in the world which does not preach charity. Human disposition generally is by itself charitable, but in Islam, "Zakát" has become, like prayer, a permanent and obligatory institution. How did the Buddha and Muhammad happen to agree upon the *rate* of distribution ( $\frac{1}{40}$ )? When and where did they live? Can there be any further doubt that the common link between the two Teachers was but "divine inspiration?"

(10) A belief in the existence of unembodied spiritual beings like *Angels* serving God as His messengers and serving men as their ministrants is found in common with the *Parsis*, *Jews*, *Christians* and *Muslims*. Similar was the belief in *Taoism* of the Chinese.<sup>1</sup> How do you account for this uniformly similar belief? Even the Buddha who protested from Hinduism and who overlooked, if not denied, the existence of a Supreme Spiritual Being (God), believed in the existence of some powerful "celestial spirits." It is said that he had even had their vision a few moments before his death.<sup>2</sup> Is this not a realisation on the part of the Buddha of the mysteries of creation? If so, why do the critics deny Muhammad a similar achievement?

(11) Let us next examine the law on what they call *retributive justice*, as laid down by different religions. The Great *Abad*, one of the ancient Persian Prophets,<sup>3</sup> said that "whatever an offender doth to another, do even so unto him," more or less a *Mosaic law* which is to the following effect: "Eye for eye, nose for nose, tooth for

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1 Page 235, Vol. XI, Part II, "The Texts of Taoism," by James Legge, S.B.E. Series, edited by Max-Muller.

2 Pages 58, 215, Vol. XI, "Translation of the Buddhist Suttas," by Rys David, S.B.E. Series, edited by Max-Muller.

3 "Desatir," No. 93, "The Book of the Prophet the Great Abad," translated by Mulla Firoz Bin Kaus, edited by D. J. Medhore, (1888).

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tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.”<sup>1</sup> It was the ancient “Taoism” of the Chinese that prescribed the golden rule of conduct: “Requite injury with kindness”<sup>2</sup> while Confucius, another ancient sage of China, recommended that “injury should be repaid with justice and kindness.” The Buddha said: “Return good for evil,” while Christ’s teaching was: “Resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also,”<sup>3</sup> both of which remain in practice a dead-letter. Compare with the above precepts the Qur-ánic: 4 “Repel evil with that which is best,” and note the language used. It is seemingly identical with the other sayings, but quite distinct in its import. Though the doing of good in return to evil is almost the common teaching of several Teachers, they have remained as mere Utopian ideals. Nowhere else is the principle found in such a sublime and yet a practical form as in the Qur-án. The Qur-ánic principle is that, while it is necessary to repel evil in the interest of society, it is also necessary to see if it cannot be *repelled by what is best*? That is, if the circumstances require the doing of good, do it; or if punishment is found necessary, punish. The aim is to repel evil, but the method of repelling it is to be the best that is possible or desirable in the circumstances. This is the maxim of the Qur-án, and this is the maxim that guided the life and conduct of Muhammad throughout his prophetic mission. But that was a maxim that Muhammad did not know. He never knew what the precepts of the other Teachers were, or who were the Teachers, and where were their scriptures. Is it not then a proof positive that the Qur-án is a revealed Word of God, and that it contains *the best* of the previous

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1 Ex. XXI: 24-25.

2 “Giles’ Sayings of Laojze,” page 57, Legge.

3 Math., V. 39.

4 XXIII: 96; XLI: 34.

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revelations, which were unknown to Muhammad until they were revealed to him?

(12) There are, again, *two* religious institutions, of *Ablution* and *Prayer*, and they are common in almost all theistic systems, but there is a world of difference between the Islamic and others, and I have dealt with them *in extenso* in my previous article under the heading: "Exoteric and Esoteric Significance of Prayer in Islam," in three parts (vide Vol. XXV, Nos. 8—12 of the *Islamic Review*). There I have proved the unique nature of the Muslim—"Salát" as well as of the general prayer that is contained in the "opening" chapter of the Qur-án, in respect of both of which no traces of correspondence can be found in other religions, so that it is quite clear that they could never have been borrowed from any foreign source. Readers will do well to re-peruse the article.

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## SOME GEOGRAPHICAL POINTS IN THE QUR-AN

BY PROF. SYED MUZAFFAR-UD-DIN NADVI, M.A.

(Continued from Vol. XXVI, page 353.)

### CHAPTER IV

#### SABA (or SHEBA)

The Sabáeans were a well-known clan of the Qahtánid race. They established their rule in both south and north Arabia, and attained a high degree of culture and prosperity. With the decline of the Mináeans, the Sabáeans rose to power and built their forts in Yemen in the neighbourhood of the then existing forts of the Mináeans.

According to the Old Testament Sabá or Shebà was the name of the head of a tribe but, according to the Arabs, Umar or 'Abd-i-Shams was his name and *Sabá* was his title. Modern scholars also favour the latter



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view. Arab philologists are of the opinion that the word "Sabá" is derived from "Sabi" which means "to enslave." As 'Abd-i-Shams was a great conqueror and enslaved many persons, he received the title of Sabá (one who enslaves). The modern theory is that the words "Sabá" and "Sabi" have been derived from a word meaning commerce. In inscriptions, the word "Sabá" has been used in the sense of commercial journey.<sup>1</sup> In Arabic, the word is still used in the sense of trade in wine and a journey in connection therewith. As the Sabáeans were commercial people, they came to be called by this name.

*The Period of the Sabáeans.* Some Arab historians and genealogists have described 'Abd-i-Shams as the grandson of Qahtán and estimated the duration of his reign (or that of his family) as 484 years.<sup>2</sup> It means that the house of 'Abd-i-Shams (*i.e.*, the Sabáeans) ruled from approximately 2,500 B.C., (sometime after Qahtá) to 2000 B.C. This view is, however, untenable as Prophet Solomon (950 B.C.) and the Sabáeans have been described in the Qur-án and the Bible as contemporaries.

The first mention of the Sabáeans as rulers is found in Prophet David's Psalm, which shows that their period of prosperity had already begun before 1,000 B.C. An Assyrian inscription, dated 715 B.C., mentions the Sabáean king, Ith'amara, who paid tribute to Sargon, the Assyrian emperor.<sup>3</sup> This points to the middle period of their rule. Finally, they are mentioned in Greek books, written about the time of the birth of the Prophet Jesus, and this refers to the last stage of their life.

Most of the inscriptions of Sabá, discovered so far, are undated, but archæological experts have tried to fix

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1 "Encyclopædia Britannica," Vol. XXIII, page 955 (13th edn.)

2 Vide "Maruj-udh-Dhahab," Vol. I, page 193.

3 Vide "Psalm," LXXII, 10.

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their approximate dates. All scholars are agreed that, about 115 B.C., power passed from the Sabáeans to the Himyarites. They are also agreed that some inscriptions date as far back as the 19th Century B.C. (some say the 16th.)<sup>1</sup> Between these two dates their period of prosperity must be fixed; the Sabáean kings have been explicitly mentioned in Zabúr (Psalm) which was revealed in the middle of the 10th Century B.C., so their rise cannot be supported to have been later than 1100 B.C.

*The extent of the Sabáean Kingdom.*—The capital of the Sabáean kingdom was Ma'rib, a town in the eastern part of Yemen, in South Arabia, but in course of time, the Sabáeans extended their sway to the west as far as Hadramaut. As they were commercial people, they had to occupy a number of commercial and sea routes. In this way they had extended their kingdom in North Arabia also. "Some parts of the African coasts were under the suzerainty of the Sabáean kings as late as the Sabáeo-Himyarite period; the district of Azania was held for the Sabáean monarch by the governor of Maphorites (Ma'afir) and was exploited by a Sabáean company." (Vide *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Vol. XXIII, page 956.)

The commercial route extending from Yemen to Syria *via* Hijáz was also under their control, and they had established some colonies in its vicinity. Probably, they conquered these places in the 9th or 8th Century B.C., after the decline of the Mináeans. "An Assyrian inscription mentions Itha'mara, the Sabáean, who paid tribute to king Sargon in 715 B.C. At that time, the Sabáeans must have been in North Arabia, unless the inscription refers to a northern colony of the southern Sabáeans. The former opinion is held by E. Glaser, who thinks that in the 9th and 8th Centuries B.C. they moved down along the west coast of the south; where they conquered the Mináeans" (*Encyclopædia Britannica* Vol. II, page 264.)

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<sup>1</sup> "Encyclopædia Britannica," Vol. II, page 264 (13th edn.).

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The Old Testament, referring to the Sabáeans, says: "And the Sabáeans fell upon them, and took them away; yes, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword," (Job, I, 15). "The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them." (Job, VI, 19.) Tema is a town near Syria. The Sabáeans are frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, thus showing that they had their colonies in the neighbourhood of Syria, Palestine and Midian.

*Sabà and Himyar.*—Many Arab historians have described Himyar as the son and immediate successor of Saba, and have referred to all the Sabáean kings of Yemen as Himyarites. They hold that the Sabáean kingdom never existed separately from the Himyarite kingdom. This view is decidedly contrary to the verses of the Qur-án, wherein the Sabáean kingdom is mentioned without any reference to the Himyarites; and all Hebrew, Greek and archæological evidences corroborate the view of the Qur-án. All the revealed Hebrew books mention the kingdom of Yemen under the name of the Sabáean kingdom. Greek historians did not mention the Himyarites before 20 B.C. Archæological evidences also place the Himyarites not earlier than 115 B.C.

Another serious mistake of Arab historians is that they take all the heads of the family, from the first Himyarite founder of the kingdom back to Himyar bin Saba, as kings and have consequently taken the Himyarite period to have begun from Himyar bin Sabá. It is not necessary that the kingdom established by a member of a tribe must systematically be traced to the founder of that tribe. For example, Abul 'Abbás as-Saffáh is the founder of the Abbasid dynasty, but the founder of his family, 'Abbás, preceded him by five or six generations. Now, Abbàs is decidedly the founder of the "Abbasid family" but certainly not of the "Abbasid dynasty." As-Saffáh, who actually established his rule, was the founder of the

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Abbasid dynasty. Similarly, the Himyarite family may have originated from Himyar bin Sabá, but the Himyarite kingdom began several centuries later, and it was only to mark the family connection that it was described as the Himyarite kingdom. It never implied that Himyar bin Sabá himself founded it also. Mu'awiyah and his successors are called Umayyads, but does that mean that Umayya himself was the founder of the Umayyad dynasty?

The Sabáean kingdom began to decline in 115 B.C. It split up into a number of states, which continued down to about 600 A.D., *i.e.*, until the advent of Islam. E. Glaser has, however, fixed 115 B.C. as the period of the rise of the Himyarites and the fall of the Sabáeans. The idea, therefore, is that the Sabáean kingdom in its integrity lasted until about 115 B.C., when the Himyarites rose to power, though some of the descendants of Sabá continued to rule in some places for centuries thereafter.

*The Kingdom of Sabá.*—The kingdom of Sabá is first mentioned during the time of Prophet David, in 1000 B.C. In those far-off days, the wealth and splendour of the Sabáeans caused envy and jealousy to the neighbouring kings. The following occurs in Prophet David's Psalm (a Psalm for Solomon): "Give the king thy judgment, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son . . . . The kings of Sheba and Sabá shall offer gifts . . . . And to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba." (LXX II: 1, 10, 15.) The wishes of king David materialised as we find that the king of Sabá offered gold and other gifts to Solomon, son of David. In 950 B.C. (approximately the period of Solomon's rule) a certain woman who is known as Bilqís among the Arabs was ruling in Sabá, as we find in the Qur-án, and in the Old Testament.

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During the time of the Assyrian monarch, Sargon, (721—706 B.C.), the country of Sabá was ruled over by a king, named Ith'amara. Sargon left us an inscription in which he says: "Thamud . . . Samsi, queen of Arabia, and Ith'amara, the Sabáean, paid tribute to me."<sup>1</sup>

It is admitted, as noticed before, that Sargon never went to Yemen, and so the Sabáeans themselves must have extended up to the borders of Assyria. This view is confirmed by a reference to the Old Testament (Job, I:15, 17) which says that the Sabáeans and Chaldeans (Assyrians), on the northern skirts of Arabia, made a common cause in plundering and carrying away the cattle of Job.

Ith'amara was the name of several kings of Sabá including the one who built the well-known Dam of Ma'rib. As Arab historians have confused the Sabáeans with Himyarites, they have not mentioned any Sabáean king separately from the Himyarite kings. They have classified the latter under two heads: (a) "Mulúk-i-Himyar" (*i.e.*, Himyarite kings who ruled in Yemen only), and (b) "Tabábi'a-i-Himyar" (Tubba' kings) who ruled both in Yemen and Hadramaut. The Arab historians say that the first Tubba' king was Hárith-ur-Rá'ish and that the number of the Himyarite kings was very small. Some Arab writers have altogether omitted this period. After describing the life of Himyar bin Sabá, they proceed to Hárith either immediately or after supplying some links, but the fact is that Himyar preceded Hárith by at least 1,000 years. Some historians have tried to fill the gap but their views are so conflicting that it is difficult to reach any definite conclusion. Moreover, the names they suggest are not Sabáean in sound.

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1 W. Rogers' "History of Babylon," Vol. II, page 164.

## HEROIC DEEDS OF MUSLIM WOMEN

### HEROIC DEEDS OF MUSLIM WOMEN

BY MAULANA SYED SULAIMAN NADVI.

(Continued from Vol. XXVI, page 350.)

Chivalry to a Moghal Prince was a breath to his nostrils, but shall we disinherit the Timurite Princesses of this heritage? If we examine details in *Babar Namah*, *Humayun Namah*, *Tuzk-e-Jehangiri*, we shall find the Timurite women wearing arms, riding horses, going on hunting excursions, killing lions, playing polo and practising with bows and arrows. They learnt all technicalities of soldiering and we learn from the *Tuzk-e-Baburi* that Babur's conquests of Kabul, Samarqund and Fergahana owed much to women.

Nur Jehan did not genealogically come of Timur and Babur. She was nevertheless their daughter-in-law. She would mount an elephant, go a-hunting to the forest and shoot lions with steady hands. Jehangir gives an elegant description in his *Tuzk* of Nur Jehan's hunting exploits. He writes:

"Once I went a-hunting. I was seated on an elephant along with Rustam Khan; Nur Jehan occupied another, when a lion came out of a bush. The elephant scented the lion and shivered. With a frightened elephant it is difficult to shoot steadily from the howdah. After me, Rustam Khan was unrivalled in shooting, but he missed a number of shots from the howdah of his elephant. Nur Jehan, however, shot the lion dead pointblank."<sup>1</sup>

On another occasion Nur Jehan accompanied him on a hunting excursion. She mounted an elephant when four lions made a sudden appearance. Nur Jehan was not in the least perturbed, and she fired her gun rapidly but peacefully. She shot dead two lions with one bullet

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<sup>1</sup> *Tuzk-e-Jehangiri*, page 279.

each and the other two by two each. Jehangir was highly pleased with her and gave her valuable ornaments as reward. A poet wittily said,

نور جهان گرچه بصورت زن است  
در صف مردان زن شیر افکن است

Nur Jehan was formerly the wife of Ali Quli Khan Sher Afgan. زن شیر افکن has beautified the line.

During Jehangir's last days, Asaf Khan was partly responsible for the rancour which Jehangir and Nur Jehan bore against Mahabat Khan. Asaf Khan endeavoured to bring disgrace and discredit to Mahabat Khan. Jehangir was encamped near the river Bhatt. Asaf Khan had sent all soldiers, domestics, and arms across the river. Jehangir, his family and a few servants and eunuchs remained behind to cross next morning. Mahabat Khan designed a *coup* and seized the Emperor's person. But the audacious general was chagrined to miss Nur Jehan, who escaped across the river. She upbraided her nobles and generals. All this, she reproached them, had happened through their neglect and stupid mismanagement. It was then unanimously resolved that next morning the whole army should be drawn up in battle array, cross the river and deliver an attack on Mahabat Khan.

The next morning all the forces were ready. Mahabat had already set fire to the bridge but the dashing soldiers plunged their horses and elephants into the river. Nur Jehan also mounted an elephant and had, beside her, Prince Shahryar's sister and Shah Nawaz Khan's daughter. The Imperialists had not crossed the river when Mahabat Khan let loose his forces. Nur Jehan's army was separated into numerous, isolated, confused groups, and all order and discipline was washed away in the river. Nur Jehan asked Khawja Abdul Hassan and Moatamad Khan not to delay but to strike

## HEROIC DEEDS OF MUSLIM WOMEN

boldly forward. Nur Jehan herself was not immune from attack. The soldiers of Mahabat Khan surrounded her elephant and showers of arrows began to fall on her right and left, when one struck her arm. Her clothes were steeped in blood. She extracted the arrow from her own hand and threw it aside. The eunuchs of Nur Jehan were also killed and her elephant received sword cuts on the trunk and was wounded on the hind part of its body with spears. The elephant took to flight and swam across to the bank with great difficulty. But it was on account of her maimed and fugitive elephant that Nur Jehan failed to put up a brisk fight on the occasion.<sup>1</sup>

Mirza Hadi has related a wonderful deed of a woman at the end of the *Tuzk-e-Jehangiri*, although he has made same scandalous references to her morality.

In Jehangir's reign, the fortress of Daulatabad was under Nizam-ul-Mulk. Hamid Khan, a negro, was the Court Counsel of Nizam-ul-Mulk, and inside the palace Hamid Khan's wife had assumed supreme authority. She was an ordinary woman, but she gradually gained power even in Nizam-ul-Mulk's Court. And when she rode out, the nobles and the military officers walked behind her horse on foot. Nizam-ul-Mulk was a tool in the hands of the husband and the wife. During this time Adil Khan sent a huge army against Nizam-ul-Mulk. Nizam-ul-Mulk was not getting any worthy man to send in opposition to Adil Shah's forces. Hamid Begum offered her services saying that if she did win, it would be a glory for her, and if vanquished, it would be a matter of little or no consideration for a woman. Nizam-ul-Mulk consented to this, and Hamid Begum marched with the forces. She pleased her soldiers with bountiful munificence, and when the fighting armies

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<sup>1</sup> *Tuzk-e-Jehangiri*, pages 404, 405.



## ISLAMIC REVIEW

clashed, she stood like an adamantine rock in the battlefield. Thus inspired by her presence, her soldiers fought gallantly and not long after Adil Shah's troops fled in confusion and disorder, leaving behind their artillery. Mirza writes:

"She put on the veil over her pretty stature, and fastened the ornamented sword and dagger round her waist. And when the two forces arrayed in opposition, she gave a bold, gallant and courageous fight to Adil Shah's forces and encouraged her soldiers to kill, fight and strike boldly and promised bounties for them. She herself stood manfully like an impenetrable mountain during the fight and completely discomfited the assailants. She took possession of their elephants and guns and retreated gloriously."

---

## CORRESPONDENCE

SOUTH CLIFF AVENUE,  
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DEAR IMAM AHMAD,

How very kind indeed of you to send me this most interesting book, "The Ideal Prophet." Thank you so much. I do appreciate your kind thought very much, and I am looking forward to reading the book. I have just been able to glance through it as I got home from Scotland only last night.

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Yours very sincerely,  
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Please accept my sincere thanks for sending me "The Ideal Prophet." I shall read it with deep interest. Some of the wonderful sayings of the Prophet which were quoted at the Anniversary Meeting at the Quadrant Restaurant impressed me very deeply, and I am anxious to read more of his utterances, and learn more of his work.

With renewed thanks,  
Believe me,

Yours sincerely,  
(SIR) E. N. BENNET (M.P.)

## CORRESPONDENCE

To

THE EDITOR,  
"THE LONDONER'S DIARY,"  
*Evening Standard*,  
47 SHOE LANE,  
LONDON, E. C. 4.

DEAR SIR,

Allow me at the outset to express my appreciation on behalf of my community of your very sympathetic attitude towards our religion and history.

Obviously the title "The Mountain and Muhammad" given to a paragraph published in the 4th July issue of the *Evening Standard* is an unconscious slip. Nevertheless, a person of your fairmindedness and rigid accuracy would be only too glad to be informed about the real facts in this connection. There is no foundation in fact whatsoever for the widely circulated story that has been current in England to the effect that on his failure to work the miracle of moving a mountain from its place, Prophet Muhammad tried to cover his humiliation by himself going to the mountain. A person of your liberal education and wide learning is most probably aware that there is not a shred of myth about the Prophet. It can truly be said of him that the minutest details of his life have been recorded, so that he is the most historical person the world has ever known.

Let me assure you that there is nothing in the whole history of his life that will lend any support to this particular fiction about him that has been so current in Western lands. As a matter of fact we are inclined to believe that the idea of moving a mountain as a kind of miracle has been suggested by an utterance of the Holy Prophet Jesus as recorded in the Christian Gospels. It seems that it has been enlarged upon and perpetrated upon the Prophet Muhammad as a matter of joke in the same way as the story of an angel coming to the Holy Prophet Muhammad in the shape of a pigeon was suggested by the dove story (in which the Holy Ghost is represented as descending on Jesus in the form of a dove) of the Gospels.

Hoping to be excused for this intrusion on your valuable time, and always at your service with regard to correct knowledge about our history and religion,

I remain,  
Yours faithfully,  
AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD,  
*Imam.*

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## OUR DOUBLE NUMBER

As usual, owing to the month of Ramadan, we issue a Double Number for the months of November-December 1938.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

### A NEW WORKER IN THE FIELD

While regretfully bidding farewell to our worthy Secretary of the Mosque, Woking, Khwaja Salah-ud-Din Mahmud—the second son of the founder, the late Khwaja Kamaluddin,—who has been an indefatigable worker in the cause of the Movement here, for over two years, and who has to leave us on grounds of ill-health, we welcome in our midst with great joy and thanksgiving the new Assistant Imam, Mirza Wali Ahmad Baig, an equally tireless and patient worker in the sacred cause.

Ripe with experience in an Eastern field, where he has contended with Christian missionaries, he is, we are sure, going to be more than a match for all those English missionaries returned from the East who raise by false propaganda enormous funds from simple-minded British people for their so-called evangelising Missions in the East. Unlike missionaries of current Christianity, however, our brother's implements will not be merely worldly experiences, but, also—what is far more important and what really matters—genuine religiosity and piety. As a matter of fact, in any combat of religious theories, it is this last-named quality that finally acts as the deciding factor, and we are happy to note that our new colleague possesses them in abundance.

We wish Mr. K. S. Mahmud a happy return home to a well-earned rest, and at the same time we extend a cordial welcome to the new Assistant Imam. We wish a speedy recovery to the former, and a long and a successful career to the latter.

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