

"Muhammad is . . . the Apostle of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets . . ." HOLY QUR-AN 33 :
"There will be no Prophet after me."—MUHAMMAD.

The
Islamic Review

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CONTENTS

Mrs. M. Aslam Hussain	<i>Frontispiece</i>
		PAGE
A Declaration	281
The Muslim Culture: by Syed Abdul Latif	..	282
Islam and Social Service: by M. A. C. M. Saleh	..	291
Islam—A Message of Peace: by C. A. Soorma	..	295
Jesus and Morality: by Professor Y. Chishtie, B.A. (Hons.)	306
Chief Objects of Relation: by Professor Syed Muzaffaruddin Nadvi, M.A.	313

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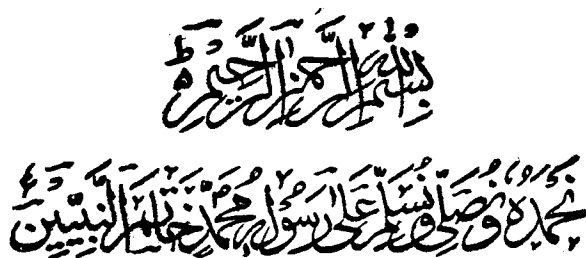
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A DECLARATION

I, Miss Davin Adrienne Marie Rose, of Boulebard de Raimbaldi, Nice, France, 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.]

(Sd.) DAVIN RAHIMA ADRIENNE.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

THE MUSLIM CULTURE

BY SYED ABDUL LATIF

The question has been raised and repeated more than once: What is the Muslim Culture and where is it to be found in India? There was a time when such a question could hardly have been even conceived. In Academic circles, we used freely to talk of our own peculiar group cultures—the Hindu, the Muslim, the English and so forth—and take delight in recalling to mind our several achievements in the past in the domain of arts, of sciences, of philosophy and life's other expressions. There was no thought on the part of any one group of denying the heritage of another, although a scale of values was always applied by each for the sake of self-satisfaction. That natural intellectual attitude is now being disturbed, and we are being asked, in the name of nationalism, to cease from caring for our individual cultures. Indeed, attempts are being made to treat the culture of the Musalmans in particular, as of no consequence in our present state of modern civilisation. Its very existence in any dynamic form at the present day is doubted and challenged, causing a sort of uneasiness among the Muslim intellectuals in every part of the country.

Muslim Cultural Problem, not Communalism.—On the face of it, the question is a simple one, and can be answered in a simple straightforward manner, on an intellectual plane. Unfortunately, however, as everybody knows, the question has been dictated by reasons not purely intellectual, dictated more to operate as a check upon the Muslim desire to safeguard the interests of his culture than to elicit information that may help us to understand and appraise its value to life. Not merely that: it has become part of the plan of those who have devised this question to cry down every answer to

THE MUSLIM CULTURE

it as communalism. That is the situation now. An amusing situation! You ask a question and you refuse to listen to a reply. Even when you give a hearing, you have learned to say, you are not satisfied: it is all Communalism. So, when I have to speak on this subject to-day, I feel a natural diffidence: for I do not wish to be misunderstood, much less to receive the self-same compliment for the trouble. I may tell you I am not a politician and cannot easily follow the jargon of politics; but I believe that to explain a point of view or an attitude towards life, or to speak out the truth one has in order to dispel ignorance, is not to inculcate communalism. I also believe that to describe the culture of a people, to show how their mind or genius has manifested itself in their language and literature, in their arts and sciences, in their modes of thought and living, in their personal laws and social and economic order, and in their outlook on life, and to explain how these together give them a distinctive character of their own, is not to uphold communalism. Every culture is a living organism. Very often it proceeds from the life of a people only to react on it and receive further volition, and it develops or decays with the life of the people who sustain it. In a few cases, it functions as a living idea, and satisfies some spiritual law of life. It then reacts on humanity at large and introduces a harmony in the clashing interests of class and colour and race. It has no particular habitation of its own, and gives its name to the place to which it travels and to the people who react to it. If the hands that hold it grow weak, it does not itself drop and disappear. It passes on to other hands and transfers its name to them. Thus it lives and moves on. We do not judge it by the hands that tremble to hold it, but by the hands that have held it firmly or by the hands that stretch themselves out to give it a welcome. Above all, we judge it by its own

ISLAMIC REVIEW

inherent strength. Wisdom lies not in quarrelling with such a culture for the sake of any passing political end, but in utilising it as a contributory force to the progress of humanity. It is of such a culture that I propose to speak to you this evening; and I believe that to do so is not to preach communalism.

If you agree with me so far, my task will be greatly lightened; for then I shall not stand in need of analysing the political background to the question before us. I should, however, like to clear one or two points before I proceed.

The subject of the Muslim Culture is too vast to be discussed in a single lecture, and I must explain to you how I should like to approach it so as to give you an idea as to what it is and where it is to be found in India.

The mind of the Muslim has, in the course of history, expressed itself in every culture-field—in the field of action, of thought, and of creation. These are the three great fields in which all human activity is distributed; and, in each field, the Muslim has made a mark for himself. In the field of action, he has evolved a particular type of social and economic order and polity, influenced by a jurisprudence of his own and worked out into a comprehensive law called the “Shariyah.” In the field of thought, his genius has laid the foundations of modern science and determined its subsequent course. In the field of creation, what has he not done to enrich and beautify life by his spiritual energy expressing itself in his literatures, his arts and his philosophy and religion. So, you see, it is a vast culture, every aspect of which is a great subject in itself. Like every other culture, especially in its social aspect, it has reacted, every now and then, to the influences of other cultures; and this reaction is mostly visible in minor details, and is brought about by climatic conditions, by exigencies of

THE MUSLIM CULTURE

expansion and mixed living, and by individual tales and lapses. Nevertheless, the structure stands with all its outlines permanently impressed on the life of the Musalmans. To question its existence, to ask what it is, and where it is to be found, is, to put it mildly, an intellectual self-deception. I should like to guard you against that. The Muslim Culture is here in India as in countries where the Musalmans predominate, and it is better frankly to recognise it, and see how it can be invited to help this country to rise to the fullest growth of its political stature than to close one's eyes to it. My object to-night is to emphasise that this Culture of the Musalmans is still alive, and has the vitality to promote that end.

I do not propose to make a survey of the different fields in which this culture has expressed itself in the course of history; for that will be a mere pedantic effort, and will be wearisome to you. On the other hand, I shall invite you to feel the soul that has worked in all the branches of the Muslim life and holds together the entire body of his culture. In other words, I should like you to consider the basis on which this culture rests. If that basis is properly appreciated, I dare say, the difficulty in understanding the cultural safeguards of the Indian Muslims may be greatly minimised.

Pandit Nehru's Views Examined.—So far as I can see, the difficulty in appreciating the value of the Muslim Culture as a means of political progress for India lies in the fact that those who question it seem to be obsessed by rather indifferent notions as to what it is that really constitutes culture. In the interests of my subject, I think I should warn you against such notions. Let me quote from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for the sake of illustration. I have selected him for a very special reason. Living in the detached atmosphere of the Osmania University, I have quietly watched for

ISLAMIC REVIEW

years the career of many a public man in our country, and I fancy that he is one of our few men who can make or mar a great cause. There is so much of honest strength in him that it will be a matter of genuine grief if—especially at a time such as this when he is holding a place of great trust and influence—his energy is victimised by any incorrect or inadequate approach to the Muslim problem in India.

“I have tried hard,” says he, “to understand what this ‘Muslim Culture’ is, but I confess that I have not succeeded. I find a tiny handful of middle-class Muslims as well as Hindus in Northern India influenced by the Persian language and traditions. And looking to the masses, the most obvious symbols of ‘Muslim Culture’ seem to be: a particular type of pyjamas, not too long and not too short, a particular way of shaving or clipping the moustache but allowing the beard to grow, and a *lota* with a special kind of snout, just as the corresponding Hindu customs are the wearing of *dhoti*, the possession of a topknot, and a *lota* of a different kind. As a matter of fact, even these distinctions are largely urban and they tend to disappear. The Muslim peasantry and industrial workers are hardly distinguishable from the Hindu. The Muslim intelligentsia seldom sports a beard, though Aligarh still fancies a red Turkish cap with a fez (Turkish it is called, although Turkey will have none of it). Muslim women have taken to the *sari* and are emerging rather slowly from the *Purdah*. My own tastes do not harmonise with some of those habits, and I do not fancy beards or moustaches or topknots, but I have no desire to impose my canons of taste on others, though I must confess, in regard to beards, that I rejoice-

THE MUSLIM CULTURE

ed when Amanullah began to deal with them in summary fashion in Kabul."

Here, in this passage, you find Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru trying to seek the manifestation of the Muslim mind and soul, which alone is culture, in his fez, and pyjamas, and beard. Is that the line of enquiry for a serious student? Again, one may have one's own prejudices. We all have a few. They are usually hindrances to right understanding. However, when they are of a defiant, challenging variety, they vitiate the sense of perspective.

In the same chapter of his autobiography from which I have just quoted, Mr. Nehru notices that Turkey has discarded religion, that Iran is looking back to pre-Islamic days for her cultural inspirations, and that even Egypt is going the same way and keeping her politics quite apart from religion. So, on the strength of what he thinks to be a change in these countries, a change which, even like the Muslim Culture in India, he has not been able to understand, as I shall show later on, he proceeds to ask:

"What of the Muslim nation and Muslim culture? Are they to be found in the future in Northern India rejoicing under the benign rule of the British?"

And he himself answers:

"This idea of a Muslim nation is the figment of a few imaginations only, and but for the publicity given to it by the Press, few people would have heard of it and, even if many people believed in it, it would still vanish at the touch of reality."

I am afraid this is rather an unkind and again an unscientific treatment of the subject. Suspicion is a dangerous instrument of argument. Very often it betrays an absence of a grasp of realities and increases misunderstanding. The desire for preserving one's own

ISLAMIC REVIEW

peculiarities of thought and living is a natural desire. Is it not possible to respect one's own culture and yet, through the strength of character that that culture gives, contribute to the progress and prosperity of a common body-politic?

Let me proceed to yet another quotation from Mr. Nehru before I enter upon an analysis of the basis of Muslim Culture. The passage is from one of his recent writings. It will afford you a very good example of mistaking the non-essentials for the essentials, and of the habit of refusing to see the wood for the trees:

"Nations may retain," says Mr. Nehru, "and will retain for a long time much that is peculiar to them—language, habits, ways of thought, etc.—but the machine age and science, with swift travel, constant supply of world news, radio, cinema, etc., will make them more and more uniform. No one can fight against this inevitable tendency, and only a world catastrophe which shatters modern civilisation can really check it. There are certainly many differences between the traditional Hindu and Muslim philosophies of life, but these differences are hardly noticeable when both of them are compared to the modern scientific and industrial outlook on life; for, between this latter and the former two, there is a vast gulf. The real struggle to-day in India is not between Hindu culture and Muslim culture, but between these two and the conquering scientific culture of modern civilisation. Those who are desirous of preserving 'Muslim Culture,' whatever that may be, need not worry about Hindu culture, but should withstand the giant from the West. I have no doubt, personally, that all efforts, Hindu or Muslim, to oppose modern scientific and industrial civilisation are

THE MUSLIM CULTURE

doomed to failure and I shall watch this failure without regret."

Here, Mr. Nehru makes distinction between two sets of things. One there is, he says, which is peculiar to individual nations, such as language, habits, ways of thought and philosophies of life; and the other is that which may commonly affect one and all such as the machine age may provide—swift travel, constant supply of world news, radio and cinema. In the opinion of Mr. Nehru, it is the latter group of things that mould the culture of a people, and it is here that he has made a fundamental lapse of judgment. He has merely confused one with the other. What he calls things peculiar to individual nations, such as language, habits and ways of thought—and there are many others—which principally mark and determine the culture of one nation as distinguished from that of another; it is the "things peculiar" to his own community that a Muslim is anxious to safeguard just in the same way as even great men like Mahatma Gandhi are endeavouring to preserve things peculiar to the Hindu Culture. As for the things born of the machine age, let everyone seriously put the question to himself whether he is prepared to give them the same position in life, *viz.*, the cinema, the radio and the like. Obviously these are not the things which should form the inspiring forces in any national activity. They come in when they have to, and are replaced by other amenities of life. To us they are mere impersonal forces, just like electricity. Nobody can use it unless he knows how to regulate it. A knowledge of this in itself is not, however, the end. That itself is not a sign of civilisation. On the other hand, it is the purpose for which it is used or regulated, or the spirit behind the handling of it that is a determining factor in life. You can use electricity to work

ISLAMIC REVIEW

for happiness and comfort, or you can put it to destructive ends, as is being done in Europe at this moment. The aim is the thing; and it is this aim, the nature of it or the outlook on life that makes the difference between the culture of one people and that of another. You can never evolve a uniform world culture merely through the things of science. Any uniformity that the machine can give you will be only in the externals of life, in mere superficialities. That will not take hold of your soul, and will not denote a universal mind which alone can produce a world culture. Moreover, the universal mind is possible only when man has learned to react from the very depths of his being to a universal spiritual or moral law of life.

"One of the profound political troubles of our age," says Norman Bentwich Weizmann, Professor of the International Law of Peace at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, "is that, while modern science has multiplied human contacts and almost destroyed the old isolation of time and space between several nations, little progress has been made in bringing international relations under the control of the moral law. The world is politically as well as economically interdependent; what happens to-day between, *e.g.*, China and Japan profoundly affects the peoples and the States of Europe and America. And so long as the relations between countries are not controlled by moral principles, and the nations do not hold faithfully to their solemn compacts, they threaten to ruin the peace of the world. The religions of the peoples which alike uphold certain moral principles and share the common ideal of justice and peace, offer the best foundation for that universal moral law which must be established if civilisation is to stand."

ISLAM AND SOCIAL SERVICE

Basic Qualities of Muslim Culture.—This is the truth which needs to be respected. You cannot build a stable nationalism in this country merely on the common things on the surface. The true seat of culture is the mind of man which manifests itself in every field of life's activity. We have to determine what it is in its different cultural manifestations, and evolve a workable plan of co-ordination between them, based on the universal moral law of tolerance. Such being the pressing need of the hour, let us be clear in our minds as to what we mean by the Muslim Culture.

The Muslim Culture is neither Arabian nor Iranian, as Pandit Jawaharlal fancies it is. It is neither racial nor national. It is, if I may so call it, Qur-ánic. You may call it a religious culture if you like ; but, in the case of the Qur-ánic culture, there is no need for any one to fight shy of religion. The religion of the Qur-án is not a religion in the popular sense of the term. It does not thrive on mere contemplation. It is not monasticism, or asceticism : nor is it a bundle of symbolic ceremonies conducted by a hereditary priesthood. It is not merely faith or belief.

ISLAM AND SOCIAL SERVICE

BY M. A. C. M. SALEH

It is natural to ask oneself what Islam taught concerning social service. The fundamental principle of social service should be spontaneous love and affection towards one's fellow-beings and there should be no selfish motive whatsoever. The Holy Qur-án is full of passages which have a direct bearing upon this theme, and the life of the Holy Prophet is a model of social service; he sacrificed the things he loved most dearly in the service of mankind. His example of social service in every department of life met with great respect and admira-

ISLAMIC REVIEW

tion from all quarters. Service to humanity was his chief concern, even in the hour of his greatest trial. His immediate successors in emulating his noble deeds held a position of honour and rectitude which was an inspiration to the vast concourse of Muslims under their benevolent administration.

Since the advent of Adam, Prophets had appeared and ministered to the spiritual needs of the people. All of them received a message from God, but each one confined his activities to certain territories, beyond which their message could not reach as their teachings were not universally applicable. The Prophet of Islam brought a message similar to that given to his predecessors, but its application was world-wide. He suffered more and endured longer than the other Prophets of God. His mission was not limited, and in all that he preached and practised his one object was to set the wheel of progress in motion till the day of judgment. With such a far-reaching doctrine he exhorted the people of his age and country first; later, his teachings spread far and wide, and proved capable of developing the highest consummation of man. Any passage of the Holy Qur-án or of the Sayings of the Prophet has its use to-day as it had centuries ago, the only difference being its interpretation to suit the age, condition, climate and the circumstances surrounding it.

The spirit and letter of the Prophet's teachings should be understood with a background of science, history and geography, and the elasticity and catholicity which his teachings show regarding our daily routine of work, should be absorbed into our system, so that the full implications of his great work may be realised. Various social problems confront reformers nowadays, but the key to solve them is to be found in the Holy Qur-án, which beautifully solved and simplified social problems centuries before the birth of these modern

ISLAM AND SOCIAL SERVICE

reformers. It is the appeal to the heart which effects the change in the conduct of life, and the Holy Qur-án provides this appeal abundantly.

The oft-repeated calumny that Islam was spread at the point of the sword has to be refuted in the light of authentic history. There is a reliable report that while the Holy Prophet was reclining under the shade of a tree on a hot day with his sword by his side, a Jew, seeing the weapon, took possession of it and, holding it forth, called out "Muhammad, who is there to save you from being put to death?" "Allah," replied the Prophet, calm and collected as he usually was. Thereupon the Jew dropped the sword and Muhammad, picking it up, asked him the same question. He had no defence but to implore Muhammad's mercy. In this the Prophet taught the Jew how to be kind, merciful and forbearing. The Jew at once fell on his knees and embraced Islam. He returned to his tribe, and related the wonderful effect upon him of Muhammad's character and career. Soon after, the whole tribe became Muslims. This is one of the many thousands of instances where the Prophet earned the esteem and love of his enemies. History records that the secret of his success lay in his supreme virtue and innocence.

In Taif, whither he went to preach Islam, he was pelted with stones, and then driven out of the country. His disciples begged of him to invoke the curse of God upon the people of Taif for their brutal acts. But the Prophet never stooped so low; he replied that God has sent him as a Mercy and a Blessing to the world, and quoted some verses of the Holy Qur-án in confirmation of his statement.

The Holy Prophet abolished all distinctions of tribal and class superiority by freely mixing with all; his own practice was to attend any funeral and render help until the whole ceremony was over. An organised form

ISLAMIC REVIEW

of social relief among Muslims is traced to the institution of Zakát, and the malpractices now rampant are to be deplored and condemned. Muslims of means are compelled to pay out of their gross capital $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. annually; this sum should be collected into a common fund and distributed by officials as stipulated in the Holy Qur-án. It is desirable that a *Bait-al-mál* should be established and the collection of Zakát should conform to the requirements of the holy injunction. Zakát should help to prevent paupers and to promote a healthy society and to propagate Islam. Zakát is a form of practical purification.

The Prophet, who first inaugurated the institution of Zakát under Divine dispensation, never utilised the collection for his personal benefit. He set a high standard for his followers to emulate. At the present time it seems their enthusiasm is so great that they exceed the bounds of the holy order and begin to distribute the Zakát themselves. Individual distribution will not fulfil the obligations of Zakát, and it is not true Zakát, but a violation of the sacred law of Islam; and that is sinful. During the periods of the Abbasides and the Ommeyyades, this collection of poor-rate was continued by the establishment of a separate department and by employing official collectors as prescribed in the Holy Qur-án.

An earnest appeal should be made to wealthy and learned Muslims to restore to Islam this one-time glorious institution, and to act according to the spirit and letter of Islam, so that social service may be a living reality among the Muslims conformable with their traditional heritage.

ISLAM—A MESSAGE OF PEACE

By C. A. SOORMA

(Continued from Vol. XXVII, Page 98.)

CHAPTER XIII

WOMEN IN ISLAM

Before I describe to you the position of women in Islam, I think it will be desirable if I, first of all, point out to you the status of women in pre-Islamic Arabia. I have taken the liberty of reproducing the following from my work, *"Islam's Attitude Towards Women and Orphans"*:

"Among Mohammed's own people, the Arabs, unlimited polygamy prevailed prior to the promulgation of Islam. A man might marry as many wives as he could maintain, and repudiate them at will. A widow was considered as a sort of integral part of the heritage of her husband. Hence the frequent unions between step-sons and mothers-in-law which, when subsequently forbidden by Islam, were branded by the name of *Nikah-ul-Makht* (shameful or odious marriage). Even polyandry was practised by the half-Jewish, half-Sabean tribes of Yemen."—*Ameer Ali, "Life and Teachings of Mohammad,"* p. 225; and also *Ameer Ali, "Mahomedan Law,"* Vol. II, p. 20. "Before Islam, a woman was not a free agent in contracting marriage. It was the right of the father, brother, cousin or any other male guardian to give her in marriage, whether she was old or young, widow or virgin, to whomsoever, he chose. Her consent was of no moment. There was even a practice prevalent of marrying women by force. This often happened on the death of a man leaving widows. His son or other heir would immediately cast a sheet of cloth on each of the widows (excepting his natural mother),

and this was a symbol that he had annexed them to himself. If a widow escaped to her relations before the sheet was thrown over her, the heirs of the deceased would refuse to pay the dower. This custom is described as the inheriting of a deceased man's widows by his heirs, who in such cases would divide them among themselves like goods There was no restriction as to the number of wives an Arab could take. The only limit was that imposed by his means, opportunity and inclinations. Unrestricted polygamy which was sanctioned by usage was universally prevalent. This was exclusive of the number of slave girls which a man might possess. . . . The limits of relationship within which marriage was prohibited were narrow and defined only by close degrees of consanguinity. . . . There can be no doubt that an Arab could not marry his mother, grandmother, sister, daughter or granddaughter, and perhaps he was not allowed to marry his aunt or niece. But those among them that followed the Magian religion could marry their own daughters and sisters. An Arab was permitted to take as his wife his step-mother, cousin, wife's sisters, and could combine in marriage two sisters or a woman and her niece. It is doubtful whether he could marry his mother-in-law or step-daughter. . . . Unrestrained as an Arab was in the number of his wives, he was likewise absolutely free to release himself from the marital tie. His power in this connection was absolute and he was not required or expected to assign any reason for its exercise, nor was he under the necessity of observing any particular procedure. The word commonly used for this purpose was *talaq*. It depended upon his

ISLAM—A MESSAGE OF PEACE

discretion whether he would dissolve the marriage absolutely and thus set the woman free to marry again or not. He might, if he so chose, revoke the divorce and resume marital connection. Sometimes an Arab would pronounce *talaq* ten times and take his wife back, and again divorce her and then take her back and so on. The wife in such a predicament was entirely at the mercy of the husband, and would not know when she was free. Sometimes the husband would renounce his wife by means of what was called a suspensory divorce. This procedure did not dissolve the marriage, but it only enabled the husband to refuse to live with his wife, while the latter was not at liberty to marry again. . . . The wife among the Arabs had no corresponding right to release herself from the marriage bond. But her parents by a friendly arrangement with the husband could obtain a separation by returning the dower if it had been paid, or by agreeing to forego it if not paid. Such an arrangement was called *Khula*, and by it the marriage tie would be absolutely dissolved.”—*Abdur Rahim*, “*Muhammadan Jurisprudence*,” pp. 9-11.

So much for marriage and divorce among the Arabs before Islam. But they even practised female infanticide, as is clear from the following:

“In proportion to his eagerness to have a son an Arab father regarded the birth of a daughter as a calamity partly because of the degraded status of women. Even in the time of the Prophet female infanticide was prevalent, and many fathers used to bury their daughters alive as soon as born.”—*Abdur Rahim*, *op. cit.*, p. 12; and *Ameer Ali*, “*Mahomedan Law*,” Vol. II, pp. 19—21.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

As regards the right of the Arab woman to hold property, we find—

“that though a woman was debarred from inheriting, she was under no disability in the matter of owning property. Anything that she might receive from her husband as dower or by gift from him or her parents and relatives was absolutely hers. Sometimes women acquired riches by trade and commerce, and some of them were owners of lands and houses. But neither the person nor possessions of a woman were safe unless she was under the protection of her parents or some male relatives or her husband. If her protector proved rapacious or dishonest, she hardly had any remedy.”—*Abdur Rahim, op. cit.*, p. 12.

Regarding Succession and Inheritance, the customary laws of the heathen Arabs were as follows:

“On the death of an Arab his possessions, such as had not been disposed of, devolved on his male heirs capable of bearing arms, all females and minors being excluded. The heirship was determined by consanguinity, adoption or compact. . . . The shares of the different heirs in the heritable estate were not fixed. . . . If there were grown-up sons they probably excluded daughters; wives, sisters and mother did not inherit at all, but the estate was considered liable for the payment of the widow’s dower, and among some tribes at least for her maintenance.”—*Abdur Rahim, op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.

The above brief account, as we have seen, bears a strong resemblance to pagan and Hindu Laws. Woman was not treated as a useful and respectable member of society, but rather as mere chattel and goods. This was so in all primitive societies.

ISLAM—A MESSAGE OF PEACE

The Holy Qur-án deals with the subject of women in Chapter IV, entitled *Al-Nisa* or *The Women*.

On the question of treatment of women, I quote the following verses of the Holy Qur-án:

“O you who believe! it is not lawful for you that you should take women as heritage against (their) will; and do not straiten them in order that you may take part of what you have given them, unless they are guilty of manifest indecency; and treat them kindly; then if you hate them, it may be that you dislike a thing while Allah has placed abundant good in it.” (IV: 19.)

“And marry not women whom your fathers married, except what has already passed; this surely is indecent and hateful, and it is an evil way.” (IV: 22.)

If we analyse the above two verses, we get the following rules:

- (1) They deny the right of the heir to inherit the deceased man's widows, which, as we have noticed, existed among the pre-Islamic Arabs.
- (2) They deny the right of the heir to deprive the widows of their dowry unless they were guilty of hatred and desertion of the husband, or of doing harm to the husband and his family. In such cases, the fault being on the part of the woman, she may be required to return her dowry wholly or in part—*Muhammad Ali, op. cit.*, pp. 205-6.
- (3) The heirs of the deceased are commanded to treat the widows with kindness, and not to despise them.

“And if you wish to have (one) wife in the place of another and you have given one of them a heap of gold, then take not from it anything; would you take it by slandering (her) and

ISLAMIC REVIEW

(doing her) manifest wrong?" (IV:20.)

"And how can you take it when one of you has already gone in to the other and they have made with you a firm covenant?" (IV:21.)

Both the above verses remedy another evil which was common in the days of ignorance. It was notorious that if a married man desired to marry another woman, he would accuse his first wife of gross immorality, thus compelling her to obtain a divorce by paying a large sum of money. This would be a breach of the marriage covenant, and the Qur-án rightly forbade it.

It is also noteworthy that the Qur-án lays great stress on the fair name and reputation of women. For instance, it says:

"And those who accuse free women, then do not bring four witnesses, flog them (giving) eighty stripes, and do not admit any evidence from them ever; and these it is that are the transgressors."
(XXIV:4.)

Here the accusation is against unmarried women, and the punishment for it is prescribed, which is severe. The following two verses deal with the accusation of the wife by the husband and *vice versa*:

(a) "And (as for) those who accuse their wives and have no witnesses except themselves, the evidence of one of these (should be taken) four times, bearing Allah to witness that he is most surely of the truthful ones."
(XXIV:6.)

(b) "And the fifth (time) that the curse of Allah be on him if he is one of the liars."
(XXIV:7.)

(c) "And it shall avert the chastisement from her if she testify four times, bearing Allah to witness that he is most surely one of the liars." (XXIV:8.)

ISLAM—A MESSAGE OF PEACE

(d) "And the fifth (time) that the wrath of Allah be on her if he is one of the truthful."
(XXIV: 9.)

Verses (a) to (d) relate to cases when either the husband or the wife accuses the other of infidelity but cannot produce witnesses in proof of his or her allegation. In such cases, a divorce is effected, as neither party is punishable for the accusation, which is based simply on oath against oath. In this connection, it must be noted that if the husband accuses his wife of infidelity the wife may claim divorce by a suit, but *laan*, or the mere imprecation, or accusation does not *ipso facto* operate as a divorce.—Mulla, "*Mahomedan Law*" (8th edition), p. 194.

"Men are the maintainers (*Qawwamun*) of women, because Allah has made some of them to excel others and because they spend out of their property; the good women are therefore obedient, guarding the unseen as Allah has guarded; and (as to) those on whose part you fear desertion, admonish them, and leave them alone in the sleeping-places and beat them; then if they obey you, do not seek a way against them; surely Allah is High, Great." (IV: 34.)

This verse is often quoted to prove that the Prophet treated women unfairly by giving men superior powers and rights. Let me give you its commentary by Muhammad Ali:

"The significance of *qawwam* means he maintained her and managed her affair, having charge of her affair; hence he is said to be her *qawwam*, i.e., maintainer. Similarly, it means he maintained the orphan or the child. Hence by the men being *qawwamun* is only meant that they are the maintainers of women, and the reason given is that Allah has made some to excel others, i.e.,

ISLAMIC REVIEW

the man excels the woman in constitution and physique, while the woman excels the man in beauty and delicacy of structure. . . . Obedience here signifies obedience to Allah. This significance of the verse is made clear by a comparison with Chapter XXXII: 31 and 35; and Chapter LXVI: 5. The guarding of the unseen is an euphemism for guarding the husband's rights. The two justifications of a good wife, as given here, are her piety or obedience to Allah and chastity, *i.e.*, she must be careful of her duty to Allah and to her husband. . . . The remedy pointed out when the wife's desertion is feared is threefold: At first she is only to be admonished. If she desists, the evil is mended, but if she persists in the wrong course, her bed is to be separated. If she still persists, chastisement is permitted as a last resort. Regarding this last remedy two things must, however, be borne in mind: Firstly, it is a mere permission, and sayings of the Holy Prophet make it clear that, though allowed, it was discouraged in practice. Thus the Prophet is reported (by Imam Fakhruddin Rázi) to have said on the complaint of certain women as to ill-treatment by their husbands: 'You will find these men as the best among you.' According to Shafai, it is preferable not to resort to the chastisement of the wife. In fact, as the injunctions of the Qur-án are wide in their scope, the example of the Holy Prophet and his constant exhortations for kind treatment towards women, so much so that he made man's good treatment of his wife the gauge of his goodness in general—'the best of you is he who is best to his wife'—show clearly that this permission is meant only for that type of men and women who

ISLAM—A MESSAGE OF PEACE

belong to a low grade of society. Secondly, even this permission cannot be adopted indiscriminately, for sayings of the Holy Prophet make it quite evident that chastisement, when resorted to in extreme cases, must be very slight. I'Ab says that it may be with a tooth-brush (called *khilal*) or something like it."—*Muhammad Ali, op. cit.*, pp. 211-12.

In this connection, I may point out the view of English Common Law on the right of the husband to chastise his wife. Blackstone, writing in the eighteenth century, says:

"The husband also (by the old law) might give his wife moderate correction. For, as he is to answer for her misbehaviour, the law thought it reasonable to instruct him with this power of restraining her, by domestic chastisement, in the same moderation that a man is allowed to correct his apprentices or children; for whom the master or parent is also liable in some cases to answer. But this power of correction was confined within reasonable bounds, and the husband was prohibited from using any violence to his wife. . . . The Civil Law gave the husband the same, or a larger, authority over his wife; allowing him for some misdemeanours *flagellis et fustibus acriter verberare uxorem* (i.e., a husband may beat his wife with whips or cudgels sharply). But with us, in the politer reign of Charles the Second, this power of correction began to be doubted, and a wife may now have security of the peace against her husband; or in return, a husband against his wife. Yet the lower rank of people, who were always fond of the old Common Law, still claim, and exert, their ancient privilege; and the courts of law will still permit a husband

ISLAMIC REVIEW

to restrain a wife of her liberty, in case of any gross misbehaviour."—*Blackstone, "Commentaries on the Laws of England,"* Vol. I, p. 444.

Clearly, then, this permissive use of chastisement in the time of Muhammad among a savage and barbarous people was considered necessary. To-day, just as in England this right has become a "mere legal curiosity," so in almost all Islamic countries the power of chastisement has fallen into decay and never exercised as of right.

Islam recognises full equality of the sexes in so far as their civil rights are concerned. No disability of any kind attaches to women.

May I remind you once more of the exhortation of the Prophet about treating one's wives as contained in his last sermon on the mount:

"Ye people, ye have rights over your wives, *and your wives have rights over you.* Treat your wives with kindness and love. Verily ye have taken them on the security of God, and have made their persons lawful unto you by the words of God Keep always faithful to the trust reposed in you, and avoid"

"Under the Islamic Law, as will be shown in detail hereafter, a woman occupies a superior legal position to that of her English sister. As long as she is unmarried, she remains under the parental roof, and until she attains her majority, she is, to some extent, under the control of the father or his representative. As soon, however, as she is of age, the law vests in her all the rights which belong to her as an independent human being."—*Ameer Ali, "Mahomedan Law,"* Vol. II, p. 20.

It further recognises the main distinctions of minority and majority and this will have to be borne in mind when dealing with matrimony in Islam. All

ISLAM—A MESSAGE OF PEACE

persons under the age of majority in Islam are under the *patria potestas* of their natural or legal guardians. The age of majority in Islam is on the completion of the fifteenth year as will be clear hereafter.

Islam recognises no special rights of the male over the female in so far as contractual capacity is concerned, with the exception of contracting a polygamous marriage. But this exception is one which is recognised by all nations which sanction polygamy. Polygamy and polyandry are two entirely different things. Many nations of to-day and of antiquity have sanctioned polygamy. But very few races allow and sanction polyandry, and the latter is naturally looked upon with much disfavour by all civilised nations. I am not here to discuss the merits or demerits of polygamy or polyandry, but I must admit that the two stand on entirely different planes and must be treated accordingly.

Coming back to the question of contractual capacity, Islam recognises the right of a female, if *sui juris*, to enter into any contract, including the contract of marriage. The age of discretion, according to the majority of Muslim jurists, is reckoned to be on the completion of the seventh year. It is interesting, in this connection, to note that the Indian Penal Code assumes that a person, whether male or female, having completed the seventh year, will have attained sufficient discretion to distinguish between right and wrong. Therefore, under the Indian Penal Code, a child having completed the seventh year will be presumed, until the contrary be proved, to have attained sufficient maturity of understanding and will be held to be criminally liable for his or her act and the mere fact of minority would be no excuse, except, perhaps, on the ground of extenuation of punishment.

Then, again, according to Muslim jurists, majority is presumed on the completion of the fifteenth year, or in the alternative, on the attainment of puberty, if

ISLAMIC REVIEW

puberty had been attained earlier than the fifteenth year. As a general rule, therefore, a person who completes the fifteenth year is considered, *without distinction of sex*, to be adult and *sui juris* possessed of the capacity to enter into legal transactions.

JESUS AND MORALITY

BY PROFESSOR Y. CHISHTIE, B.A. (HONS.)

If the business of a moral teacher ends with the mere recitation and inculcation of a few moral precepts, without translating them into action in his daily life, every nation can safely claim to have produced thousands of moral teachers who can easily be placed on a level with the hero of the evangelic records. It is within everybody's range of experience that sometimes in a fortuitous moment, a man may utter beautiful moral precepts and sublime aphorisms. Sometimes it so happens that a person has to discourse with those who are intellectually his inferiors and, in order to maintain a dignified position among them, he indulges in moral sayings of a very lofty nature, from an easy-chair, as it were, with no intention of living up to them. It is also possible that those precepts may not, at all, be an index to his heart, and the words falling from his lips penetrate his soul just as little as a swift-flowing stream does an adamantive rock in its bed. Sometimes a person is so influenced by his surroundings and environment that he cannot but be didactic in his speech, or he may become the recipient of some inspiration from above enabling him, in that transient moment, to utter words of great ethical value; but, as we know, these instances do not exalt a person to stand forth before his fellowmen as a guide in the manifold walks of life. We are well aware that it is very easy to pronounce moral precepts verbally but very difficult to live up to them.

JESUS AND MORALITY

A moral teacher—one worthy of being accepted as a guide in life—is one who practises himself what he preaches to others and sets an example before us, by his daily life, which may be followed by us with profit. Moreover, he should teach such morals as may be conducive to the highest good of society. I do not confine the meaning of the term “good” to mere earthly pleasure, as some philosophers are prone to do; I rather include both earthly pleasures and spiritual bliss, as it is only in the happy conjunction of our physical and spiritual advancement that our life may be said to have been spent in the proper manner on this planet.

With these ends in view, I will, in all candour and frankness, study some of the morals taught by Jesus of Nazareth as presented to us by Christian records and interpreted by official Christianity. Let me begin with St. John’s Gospel. 8: 3—11.

Here I will not pause and reflect, in common with all unbiassed critics, whether the passage in question is genuine or spurious—John’s own words or a mere fabrication of some pious Christian of a later age. I take it as it is recorded in the Gospel.

The ever memorable words attributed to Jesus are as follows:

“Nor do I condemn thee; go and sin no more.”

And it is with these words, that we are chiefly concerned for the present. In this verdict, given by Jesus, Christians see a wonderful demonstration of mercy and forgiveness. Licentiousness, they argue, was the common practice amongst both the Jews and the Gentiles at the time of the advent of Jesus, as the immoral and debased lines of these people bear a standing testimony to this fact. That woman was certainly not guilty of any unusual crime; all those who had gathered round her, *viz.*, her accusers, had been guilty of that crime themselves. Jesus took this opportunity of exposing the

ISLAMIC REVIEW

hollowness of the morals of his fellow countrymen and said :

“He amongst you, who is without sin, should come forward and cast the first stone at her.”

As none dared to do so, Jesus adopted the attitude of mercy towards her and consequently let her go unmolested by her enemies.

This is the substance of the argument in defence of the high ethical standard set before us by Jesus. But the question is whether a critic is going to be swayed by a mere dash of sentimentalism. This is nothing but simply beating about the bush. The main objection to this teaching, *viz.*, What would be the effect on the moral life of society if our acting in accordance with this teaching remains intact. If we make the attitude and the procedure of Jesus our guide in dealing with culprits of this type, surely immorality and lewdness will rapidly become rampant in society as nobody can be punished for his or her guilt according to this law. Very soon the whole fabric of society would be rent asunder, for everybody knows that only after the protracted labour of ages and ages can such a being be found who would be in a position to condemn and stone the culprit.

The famous verdict of Jesus “Nor do I condemn thee,” may disclose a demonstration of great mercy to his infatuated admirers but the administration of justice would certainly come to an end if an offender was to be left unpunished simply because his accusers were not guiltless.

Moreover, I ask, Has any Christian community or government ever set this “surpassing act of mercy” before it as a model to be copied in everyday life? If not, what moral can be drawn from this act of Jesus? Rather, in this alleged act of Jesus, a sceptic may be excused for finding an encouragement of crime. It is no justifica-

JESUS AND MORALITY

tion to say that those were the days rife with adulterous practices, and that a woman was very rightly left free of any charge, when others were never brought to book. The Mosaic law did provide capital punishment for this crime, and Jesus, who "came to fulfil the law" and claimed to be a strict observant of it, could not himself have disregarded it with such impunity.

To call it an act of mercy is merely to evince ignorance. Mercy shown to culprits is to cause tyranny on society and to obliterate the distinction between mercy and justice. We should be merciful only when we are sure that mercy will bring good results to the culprit and that he will lead a better life in future; otherwise all mercy shown to such a person is mercy thrown away.

I think St. Augustine felt the weight of these objections and rightly concluded that the passage in question was not genuine "as its moral teaching is certainly not wholesome." And yet we are surprised to find pious Christians glorifying this alleged act as the supreme moral example ever set for humanity.

Again, take St. John, 2:6—10. Here we see Jesus changing water into wine. Christian commentators make much of this "miracle" and see in it "a symbol of what Jesus did for the world in glorifying all the things." This alleged miracle may have some fascination for shallow minds, but on pondering over it seriously one fails to find any moral significance in it.

Pious Christians, again, represent Jesus as having sanctioned the use of fermented liquors in conformity with his own example. "There was," says Dr. C. Geikie, D.D., in his "Hours With the Bible" (London, 1896), Vol. 2, p. 121, "No such neglect of the person, as many of his contemporaries thought identical with holiness, for he (Jesus) did not decline the anointing of his head or beard, or the washing of his feet; nor did he require ascetic restrictions at

ISLAMIC REVIEW

bread and honey and of fish, flesh and fowl. He readily accepted invitations with all the customary refinement. The Pharisee atoned for his occasional entertainment by fasting on Monday or Thursday, but Jesus exposed himself to the charge of indulgence because he never practised even such intermittent austerities."

That he was in the habit of using fermented liquors is also alleged by Dr. L. Abbot, D.D., in his well-known commentary on the New Testament. On the occasion in question he made, according to the findings of the learned Doctor, no less than 150 gallons of wine; and if on the one hand it is a wasteful miracle, as so much wine was not needed there, it is, at the same time, an authority for gross indulgence afterwards. "We all know," says Dr. Abbot, "that drunkenness is the prolific cause of fully half the dreadful moral evil that surrounds us in America in this age." Jesus, as the Gospel account of the feast of Passover goes to prove, did not condemn the use of wine and he further perpetuated its use by the Church as an abiding memorial to his "atoning love;" and St. Paul still further permitted its use by allowing "his son," Timothy, "to use water no more, but to drink wine for his often infirmities."

I ask my Christian friends, What was the effect of this allegation of changing of water into wine by Jesus upon the morals of the Christian world? It is, I believe, no exaggeration to affirm that if ever in the world an evil got so firmly rooted in the system of society as to undermine its morals altogether and to eat into its very bowels, as it were, it was this story of changing, of this free use, this permission and this symbolising of wine by Jesus *as given in the Gospels*.

If anybody differs here, let me ask why the pious Christians all the world over are exerting themselves to their utmost to eradicate this "symbol of atoning love" from the civilised world of to-day? Why,

JESUS AND MORALITY

only a few years ago, did America pass a Law forbidding the manufacture of this emblem of "fellowship and joy in the world to come" which is moreover an indispensable factor in the Holy Communion as practised in all the Christian Churches to-day?

Are not, I ask, these two instances alone a sort of abiding testimony to the failure of Jesus Christ as portrayed in the Gospels as a moral teacher of humanity? If anybody has the temerity to come forward with the plea that Jesus did not sanction this excessive indulgence in wine as is witnessed to-day, I would at once retort that there is no single verse in the whole range of Biblical literature prescribing the quantity of liquor to be used by Christians in their daily lives. Moreover, Jesus was himself, as we are told by Christians, exposed to the charge of indulgence. Was he not nicknamed a "wine-bibber," a "glutton" and a "friend of sinners"? If this is a fact, why not imitate him to the fullest extent possible? Why are Christians so eager to shun the stigma of indulgence or intemperance, when their "Lord" did not care a fig for these things?

Thomas à Kempis, in his world-renowned "Imitation of Christ," has taken great pains to describe the beauties and the advantages of walking in the footsteps of the "Lord;" yet it is no small wonder to find his co-religionists trying to abolish the use of that which according to them was freely used by their "Saviour" all through his earthly sojourn!

As a true heaven-guided teacher of humanity, Jesus must have foreseen the evil consequences of this "symbol of atoning love," for it is this foresight and foresight alone, which serves as a differentia between the ordinary run of mankind and divinely appointed reformers and moralists. Who does not know that wine is the "mother of all evils?" Surely this sad omission

ISLAMIC REVIEW

ascribed to Jesus to have prohibited the use of all sorts of intoxicants reflects upon his high position and debars him from taking his stand in the galaxy of the great moral teachers of the world.

What a big contrast, now let me state, do we find in this respect between such a picture of a "Saviour" and the Holy Prophet of Islam (Peace and blessings of God be upon his soul). The latter not only prohibited the use of all intoxicants but also made indulgence in them a heinous crime ; while the alleged example of the former introduced it—as we have seen—into the most sacred rite of the Church for all ages to come! We are reminded, here, of an Indian proverb—"A foolish friend is worse than a wise enemy." In their false love of Jesus, our Christian friends make him seem to sanction a thing which, in an enlightened age, they come to regard as a vice. What has been the effect of the Qur-ánic injunction regarding intoxicants upon the moral life of the Muslim world is no secret at all. Even the most inveterate enemies of Islam and its holy Founder have to admit that Islam is the only religion in the world which enjoins upon its followers to shun all sorts of intoxicating liquors. "Certain injunctions of the Qur-án," writes Dr. T. W. Arnold, "have had a lasting influence upon the general character of Muhammadan (Muslim) Society; such has been the prohibition of the drinking of wine, which is described as an abomination of Satan's work." (5:90). Though there have been flagrant breaches of this commandment in most periods of Muhammadan (Muslim) history, yet its widespread observance has given to Muslim society a general stamp of sobriety and austerity, and there have been times when Muhammadan (Muslim) governments have taken stern measures in insisting that the prohibition was observed." (*The Islamic Faith*, p. 14.)

CHIEF OBJECTS OF RELATION

The efforts of the American Government during the recent years to put a stop to the evil of drinking, and the formation of temperance societies in several European countries which preach against the use of liquors and the strict measures adopted by several provincial legislative bodies in our own country against the manufacture and the sale of liquors, are unmistakable signs of that change which Islam has been slowly working in the moral life of human beings, and we are quite justified in asserting that the whole world is gradually coming to the ethical standard laid down by the holy Prophet of Islam, and that the day is not very far distant when all the civilised nations of the world will have to accept the ethics of the Qur-án as their sole guide in life. How beautifully and truly has the Qur-án foretold this happy revolution in the following words:

هو الذى ارسل رسوله بالهدى ودين الحق
ليظهره على الدين كله وكفى بالله شهيدا-

“Allah is He who sent His Apostle with (true) guidance and the true religion, so that he might establish its superiority over all the religions of the world, and Allah is a sufficient witness to the truth of this prophecy.”

May the Muslims all the world over cast off their lethargy and be up like one man to hold the banner of the Qur-án high and exert themselves to the utmost to disseminate its teachings to the benighted nations of the world. *Amen!*

CHIEF OBJECTS OF RELATION*

Relationship of Man with Nature, Man and God

ISLAM—AN IDEAL RELIGION

By PROFESSOR SYED MUZAFFARUDDIN NADVI, M.A.

An ideal religion has, among other things, to solve

* This article is more or less based on the Islamic works by the late Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din of the Woking Mosque, England.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

the following problems which have agitated human minds in all ages and in all countries:

- (1) What are human capabilities and what is the right way to work them out?
- (2) What is the relationship between Man and Nature?
- (3) What is the relationship between Man and Man?
- (4) What is the relationship between Man and God?

I need hardly say that the emancipation of mankind depends, to a very large extent, on the correct solution of the aforesaid problems. Unless we know where we stand and what our powers and limitations are, we cannot, with confidence, march on our way to progress or glory. Similarly, if we do not possess a clear idea of the relationship between man and the elements of Nature, between man and man, and man and God, we cannot have a rational code of life or a right criterion of morality.

In the present article, I propose to discuss the above-mentioned problems and to prove, by facts and arguments, that Islam is an Ideal Religion which has solved these problems more rationally, and thereby contributed towards human civilisation more substantially than any other religion has done so far.

I.—Human Capabilities and the Way to Work them out.—Prior to Islam religion or philosophy did not do full justice to mankind. Man was more or less treated as an embodiment of low passions. Some people held that sin is innate in human nature, while others maintained that man is condemned to eternal perdition. Buddhism declares man unworthy of his existence, and teaches that the only escape of man from his miseries lies in self-annihilation. Vedic philosophy also does not do man justice in that it condemns the human body as an ever-existing stumbling-block to spiritual progress.

CHIEF OBJECTS OF RELATION

Zoroastrianism places man in a dilemma by enforcing obedience to two diametrically opposed gods—the god of good and the god of evil.

Islam has taken an altogether different view of man and his capabilities. It declares in unmistakable terms that man is born free from sin and is capable of observing all divine laws and making all kinds of progress. Man is endowed with all necessary qualities—physical, moral, spiritual and mental—and it is always open to him to utilise them to the full. Virtue or sin, merit or demerit, is of man's own seeking and making. We are architects of our own fortune. We are to mould our own destiny. We are to shape our policy with a view to attaining our goal. According to Islam, every kind of progress in this world or the next is our birth-right, and we must devise ways and means to acquire it; but, if we neglect our duty and do not follow the universal laws of God (which are also the laws of Nature), we shall be doomed to failure here as well as hereafter.

The Qur-án, the most authentic book on the earth, referring to the capabilities and shortcomings of man, says:

“Certainly We created man in the best make.
Then We render him the lowest of the low,
except those who believe and do good, so
they shall have reward never to be cut off.”
(XCV, 4—6.)

The above verses clearly lay down:

- (a) That man, far from being born a sinner, is capable of soaring to the highest of the high.
- (b) That man has a dark side also, *i.e.*, man is capable of sinking to the lowest of the low also.
- (c) That those who believe in the Divine Laws of God and act upon them will get a never-ending reward.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

"God helps those who help themselves," is the keynote of the teachings of Islam. If we direct our energy to the right line of action and exert ourselves to the best of our capabilities, we are sure to earn the confidence and favour of God. But if we remain idle or disobey the laws of God, we are sure to incur His wrath. A few verses of the Qur-án bearing on this question are given below:

- (a) Man shall have nothing but what he strives for. (LIII, 39.)
- (b) Every soul is pledged to what it does. (LII, 21, also LXXIV, 38.)
- (c) Verily, I will not waste the work of any male or female worker among you. (III, 194.)
- (d) Indeed God does not waste the reward of the doers of good. (IX, 120.)
- (e) Verily God does not alter the condition of a people until they themselves alter their condition. (XIII, 11.)

II.—Relationship between Man and Nature.—

Before the advent of Islam, different elements of Nature were treated as objects of human worship. The sun, the moon, the river, the air, the mountain and almost all other great phenomena were worshipped in one form or another by a large section of humanity. Even at present we find some people indulging in this sort of worship. The consequence of this practice is obvious. If a man is believed to be subordinate to Nature, and if he is required to bow down and worship its elements, human progress, particularly in the material sciences, becomes well-nigh impossible. Probably it was due to this mistaken belief and practice that the material sciences did not flourish to an appreciable extent before Islam.

Islam takes a far more rational and scientific view of the matter. It places man above all created things. It

CHIEF OBJECTS OF RELATION

gives man an inherent prerogative to rule over Nature and to utilise it to the best advantage. The Qur-án says:

“He (God) has made the rivers subservient to you. And He has made subservient to you the sun or the moon pursuing their course, and He has made subservient to you the night and day.” (XIV, 32-33.)

It is hardly necessary to say that belief in the unity of God, which is the corner-stone of the religion of Islam, makes it simply impossible for us to adore or worship any one else besides God. Belief in the unity of God places the sun, the moon and all other manifestations of Nature at our feet. We are to obtain service from them, we are to turn them to our good and we are to rule over them.

*III.—Relationship between Man and Man.—*Before Islam, humanity was hopelessly divided. In some countries the caste system was in vogue, in some places colour considerations were dominant, and in some lands labour and capital developed into watertight compartments. Islam sought to remove all these unnatural divisions of mankind. The Muslims succeeded in their attempt at universal brotherhood as long as they followed their religion in letter as well as spirit.

Islam declares that all men are equal, and that there is no distinction between man and man on the basis of race, colour, class, etc. The Prophet (may peace be on him!) says that all men are born of Adam, and Adam was made of clay. Almost all prophets and apostles are erroneously regarded by their followers as supermen. Jesus Christ is taken as a part and parcel of the Godhead; Buddha is worshipped as a Divine Lord; Sri Krishna is adored as an incarnation of the Supreme Being, and so on. But the case of Muhammad is altogether different. We are Muslims, and not Muham-

ISLAMIC REVIEW

madans in the sense in which followers of Jesus Christ are Christians. Really this is a very unhappy epithet given to Muslims by Europeans.

The Qur-án says: "Say (O Prophet) 'Indeed I am a man like you, and it is revealed to me that your Lord is one Lord.'" (XVIII, 110.) "Indeed, God has conferred a benefit on the Believers by sending an apostle from among themselves who recites His verses to them and purifies them and teaches them the Book and wisdom." (III, 163.) The significance of this Islamic belief is quite clear. The chief mission of a Divine messenger is to preach and guide, while that of mankind in general is to follow ; and it is quite obvious that we can well follow in the footsteps of a leader who is of the same make as we are. How can we follow one who is beyond our reach? We can adore such a guide (if any), but follow we cannot. If prophets and ordinary men are equal constitutionally and essentially, we are tempted to try to make our lives as sublime as those of prophets. So God says: "Indeed in the Prophet of Allah there is an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the latter day and remembers Allah much." (XXXIII, 21.)

In short, the relationship between man and man is that of equals. The only distinction which Islam recognises between man and man is the one which is based on one's merits as the Qur-án says:

"Verily the most honoured among you with God is the one among you most careful of his duty." (XLIX, 13.)

IV.—Relationship between Man and God.—The conception of God in Islam is different from that in other religions. Hinduism, like Hellenism, believes in a number of gods and goddesses and thereby encroaches on the indisputable supremacy of God. Christianity believes in a trinity, which is hardly compatible with

CHIEF OBJECTS OF RELATION

the *absolute* and *undivided* power of the Lord. Zoroastrianism divides the power of God between two gods—a god of good and a god of evil.

Islam has taken the most logical view of the question. It renounces all deities, gods and goddesses worshipped by a large section of humanity, and declares in the most emphatic terms possible that there is no god but the *one* God and that He is All-Powerful, Omnipotent and Omniscient. Further, God, according to the religion of Islam, is Compassionate and Merciful, ever ready to come to the rescue of His creatures. Of course, He punishes the guilty, but His mercy is comprehensive enough to take within its shelter even the most persistent of sinners. The principle underlying the Divine punishment is the rectification and reformation of the people. This is why we find that God punishes the sinner only to the extent of his sin, but rewards the virtuous tenfold or more, as the Qur-án says:

“Whosoever does one good act will receive a tenfold reward, and whosoever does one bad act will not be punished but to that extent.” (VI, 161.)

The following attributes of God, which are mentioned in the opening chapter of the Qur-án (Sura Fatiha), define the relationship of God with mankind:

(1) *Rabbul 'Alamin*, i.e., *the Evolver of universes*.—“Rab” in Arabic has four meanings: (a) One who creates, (b) One who nourishes, (c) One who maintains, and (d) One who supplies us with all necessary things. Considering all these meanings, the most suitable equivalent in English for “Ráb” is “Evolver.”

(2) *Ar-Rahman*, i.e., *Compassionate*.—God is called “Rahman,” as He bestowed on us unlimited bounties, though we did not earn them, and provided all things necessary for our comfort before we or our needs came into being.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

- (3) *Ar-Rahim*, i.e., *Merciful*.—God is Rahim as He gives us a tenfold or hundredfold reward for one good action on our part. The difference between the attributes “Rahman” and “Rahim” is that the former signifies that God heaps favours on us *out of His Grace* and not in consideration of any of our deeds, *e.g.*, He created the sun and the moon, etc., for our benefit; whereas the latter means that He rewards us for our good deeds far more generously than we deserve.
- (4) *Malik-i-Yaumiddin*, i.e., *The Owner of the Day of Judgment*.—On that day God will be not only Judge but also Supreme Lord, as it is open to Him to forgive even the worst sinners out of His Grace and Mercy.

So much concerning the dealings of God with men. Now let us consider the part to be played by man in relation to God. The aim of human creation, according to the Qur-án, is: “Verily, I am going to make a Vicegerent (‘Caliph’) on the earth.” (II, 30). The chief duty of man is, therefore, to represent honestly and faithfully God and His attributes on the earth, and to behave in such a way as to show that he is the noblest creature and special favourite of God. Further, we find in the Qur-án that all important created things such as the earth, the heaven, the mountains, etc., refused to bear the burden of Divine representation and it was man, and man alone, who accepted the responsibility of representing the Divinity. (*Vide* closing verses of Sura “Ahzab.”) (XXXIII, 72.)

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