

"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

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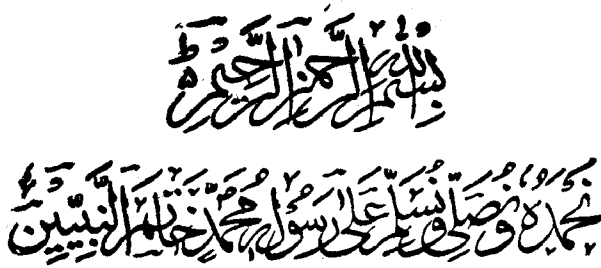
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THE
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[No. 11

A DECLARATION

I, Mrs. Louisa Kate Penny, of Lupill Park, London, N. 7, 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.]

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ISLAMIC REVIEW

AN APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF THE HOLY QUR-AN

BY SIR NIZAMAT JUNG

CHAPTER II

ISLAM MISREPRESENTED

Religion and Bigotry.—It makes one sad to think that some of our religious people professing to be exponents of the teachings of the Qur-án show, not only narrow-mindedness and intolerance at times, but also carelessness of truth and sincerity. A sense of false superiority arising from supposed orthodoxy, a punctilious observance of the ritual of religion and some of its negligible details relating chiefly to costume and ablution, and an arrogant assumption that they alone will be saved—all these seem to turn their thoughts away from the essentials of religion, which are truth, sincerity, purity of heart, in one word, righteousness.

Some of these sanctimonious gentlemen consider it their foremost religious duty to consign the followers of all other religions straightway to perdition. Their conception of the Deity seems to be not mercy, benevolence and grace, but wrath and vengeance personified! They think more about the anger of God than about His kindness and mercy and never-ceasing grace. I cannot think of God as being angry because anger is a human, and purely animal passion, and God must be above it. His attributes must be those which are considered purest, highest and best in man, and that at the very highest and best. Anger and vengeance imply resentment, which in its nature is a personal feeling. Nothing that God does is personal to Him, however personal it may be to us. His will, His judgment, and His deed are all one, and they are Universal Law. And in that Law are Justice and Mercy and Grace to crown Retribution.

This is the impression I get from reading the Qur-án. It gives the essence of the divine to us in a

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human guise; and the language used is that of a kind father admonishing and warning his truant children in order to guide them back to the right path. There are passages in it here and there, the pathetic benevolence and divine humanity of which brings tears to our eyes. And the wonder of it all is, that it is the plain and simple language of reason, though occasionally metaphorical, and the object of it is guidance of mankind by indicating the essential everlasting distinction between good and evil, between right and wrong. It does not inspire terror, but hope with its expectancy of bliss; and it purifies and confirms faith.

It is an erroneous belief—mostly inculcated by narrow-minded bigotry—that the Qur-án condemns the followers of all other religions to eternal perdition as “Kafirs.” It does not; it shows a kindly feeling towards Christians, and even as regards Jews it readily makes benevolent exceptions in favour of good ones. It ever stresses the fact that all men will be judged in accordance with what they have earned by their deeds. “Kafirs” in the Quranic sense are only those who are persistent polytheists and refuse to believe in the unity of God. For from such denial it necessarily follows that their conception of the universe and of the inter-relation of all the powers and the existences in it is utterly perverse. It destroys the oneness of being and the universality of divine law. Before a God who represents these and is the Paramount Power, the small Deities of Polytheism must appear as traitors and usurpers, and their votaries as seditious and rebels! Is there any injustice in this? And yet the Qur-án enjoins forbearance towards other religions and persuasions, however false they may be. “Do not abuse others’ religion for they may retort by saying things against Allah.”

Sectarian Prejudice against the Qur-án.—Experience teaches us that learning does not necessarily release

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the mind from prejudice; and it is a well-known fact that the human mind can always find arguments for proving what it wishes to believe. It is an adept in chasing and capturing mendacious arguments for its own purposes, and once it begins to follow the scent, it is so intent, on the trail, that it fails to see the true arguments lying under its very nose. This may be a reflection upon the attitude of learned writers of commentaries on the Qur-án who only succeed in making obscure what was transparently clear, and it may be a reflection on the lucubrations of some of the foreign scholars (or scholiasts) who have felt a call to write about the Qur-án and the Founder of Islam. From beneath the deliberately superimposed calm of apparently dispassionate and austere impartial critical judgment, some of them seem to emit occasional sparks of ill-suppressed anger and ill-concealed malice. Open any introduction to any translation of the Qur-án at any page at hazard, and you will observe some little sign of this. In some cases you come across a very carefully designed piece of literary workmanship heavy with unexpressed thoughts, the reservations of which are of portentous significance. It is sometimes difficult to understand what they mean to convey.

It has been alleged by some that Muhammad cannot be regarded as a prophet of truth in the absolute meaning of the term! One wonders what is "truth in its absolute meaning."

The creed of Islam is so simple and so natural that it has no need to be propped up by any quasi-metaphysical doctrine of Neo-Platonic mysticism. There is only one God, Almighty, Just and Merciful, the Creator of all that is in the universe, and Muhammad is his Apostle, because he was His creature and instrument for conveying the message of the oneness and might and majesty, of the justice and mercy and benevolence of God. He

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delivered it to a world in which human beings were worshipping stocks and stones fashioned by their own hands into a semblance of divine idols. The message was delivered, it was willingly or unwillingly accepted, and within a few short years it transformed Arabia and laid the foundation of a new world of thought and action, and shaped the mould of a new Civilisation. A great and glaring untruth was being accepted by the human mind under the name of religion in the guise of those uncouth, ill-fashioned images. One man saw the untruth of it all in its naked deformity and had the courage to proclaim it as such, and to fight against it till he destroyed it and replaced it with a simple and majestic truth: namely, that the unseen God is One and Eternal and Almighty. That man also had the courage to say to his countrymen: "This is the truth and you shall believe it. I have been ordained by the Lord of Creation to convey it to the world, and I am therefore His chosen Messenger." Is there any imposture in this, any false doctrine, any claim that was not justified by the whole life of the man?

The Qur-án is nothing if it does not convey this great moral and spiritual lesson to man: "Thou must earn thy salvation by thy faith and thy good deeds alone; if thou doest good it is for thy own soul, if thou doest evil it is also for thy own soul, and thou shalt answer for it."

The Prophet of Islam was not trying to discover truths. Simple truths of a universal nature were being poured into his heart by the Great Power that rules the Universe. His part was to have them believed and put into practice. No Prophet had ever done more than this.

The Prophet of Islam never professed to be introducing a new religion; neither did Jesus. They professed only to have been missioned to restore the old

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religion to its purity. The Qur-án is merely a confirmation of the divine message sent through Moses and Jesus; and Islam does not claim to be a new religion: it is a re-assertion of the old faith in a less ambiguous form.

OUR DEBT TO THE MOSLEM ARAB*

BY JOHN CLARK ARCHER

Since problems of cultural inheritance and the preservation of peculiarities in a people's heritage seem nowadays in some quarters in process of closer scrutiny—not to say arbitrary solution—than for many decades, or centuries, previously, we have occasion and incentive therein for a re-examination of some of the cultural results of relations between Islam and Christendom, especially our own indebtedness, if any, to Islam. But, apart from any passing mood or practice of our own day, which would preserve the “native” and reject the “foreign” in a national situation, we have a recurring obligation in the direction of historical perspective and for the building of a reasonably international society well guided by lessons of the past and using any worthy elements of human progress.

Our present task might seem at first glance almost highly theoretical—that is, our exposition of “our own indebtedness.” Nor would we merely point to American collections of books, manuscripts and the arts which exhibit the gifts of the Islamic movement. We have in mind the West and the fact that we are heirs of the West and of its inheritance. We have in mind also our future and whatever may be built in it. And the fact is of moment that America and the West are “Christian” in contrast with the “Moslem world.” The Christian and the Moslem have yet to reach a constructive understanding by means of mutually sympathetic and objective study. Their two worlds have stood consistently in

*Courtesy *The Moslem World*, New York.

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opposition, religiously opposed, at least, whatever they have exchanged in general culture. Certain Christian writers of our own time have commonly begrudged Islam its values. One of them who has peculiar competence went at least thus far in the issue of *The Moslem World* of October 1916, page 347: "Both Arabs and Turks borrowed everything that had to do with culture, except their languages, from others." And Christian apologists have continually emphasised "the dead weight of Islam." There is, of course, a corresponding Islamic apologetic, as in the *Islamic Review*, which rejects Christianity (except for Christian elements which authentic Moslem tradition holds). And some Moslem writers of the day, especially in India and Egypt, are giving Islam added credit as an agency of culture.* Certain Moslem apologists of liberal attitude are interpreting Christian ideas in the light of what they take to be the very essence of Islam—a striking method of interpretation such as Christianity has often used, *e.g.*, in its theory of Christian doctrine as the fulfilment of non-Christian faiths.

Among less apologetic students, also, there are differences of opinion on the origin and character of Moslem and Christian ideas and institutions, for example, the "Roman," the "Byzantine" and the newer "pre-Byzantine" schools of interpreters. As one of these students looks off dispassionately toward Mecca—or, toward Baghdad or Cordova, instead—what values can he detect along the intervening, westward routes of Islamic expansion? Are there convincing evidences in the various records of the intervals that western culture is definitely indebted to the Moslems? And, if so, is it a debt to their originality, or only to their agency? There are many records worth examining, although all the facts, one feels, are not available; and there are many

* See "The Influence of Islam on Indian Culture," by Tarachand, 1936.

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items worthy of enumeration and commentary in a review of the essential situation. Whatever the present writer may lack of technical competence at certain points in this survey, he disclaims, in general, an apologetic interest, and is not aware of any "feeling" in dealing with the Islamic-Christian field, which, religiously, at least, is so highly controversial.

In further restriction of our field of inquiry and survey, let us ask about *Arab* influence—rather than Moslem, in general—on certain *parts* of the West during chosen *eras*. This would take us to the East at first, for the question is involved of Arab (Moslem Arab) originality. It would take us from Islam's original location in Arabia out to Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo (Fostat) and, eventually, to Cordova within the period of the first century and a quarter of the Moslem movement, introducing us to such close associates of the Arabs as Persians, Hellenistic Greeks, Armenians, Copts, Berbers and Iberians—a scene quite complicated in itself and yet fully illustrative of the *Arab's* rôle. Damascus, a very ancient, pre-Islamic foundation, represents a midway point of mediation, where significant influence was soon exerted upon Islam; whatever effects the Moslems themselves may have accomplished. Baghdad was virtually a Moslem foundation (762 A.D.) intended to be new and unhampered by alien elements. And, although Baghdad is a sign of Islam's *eastward* course, it represents Greek influence on Islam and through Islam an influence on the West. It might properly exhibit, none-the-less, whatever there was of Arab originality. Cordova was a Moslem city of the West (with certain prior Iberian constituents). If Baghdad might exhibit what the Arabs had to give, Cordova might symbolise their actual gifts.

But we have moved inevitably by our reference to these two cities into a further era of Islam, into our own

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ninth century, for in that century, Baghdad was *the* seat of the Moslem Golden Age, with Cordova as a worthy rival in most particulars. In this same century, likewise, Sicily was flourishing under the Moslem Aghlabids as a medium of great influence. And a third era must be distinguished, even though all three stand together in close sequence, a third era culminating in Baghdad, with the finished work of al-Ghazáli (d. 1111 A.D.) and, in Cordova, with the death of Ibn Rushd (Averroes, d. 1198 A.D.). Taken as a whole, the dominance of Arab factors in the Islamic Empire extended through five hundred years until A.D. 1200. But the fortunes of Baghdad and Cordova waned perceptibly during the tenth century, and even during the days of Ibn Rushd. Toledo was the chief seat of Moslem learning in Spain. By 1200 A.D. the "spiritual" rather than any imperial splendour was the measure of Moslem influence. And again how complicated had the racial scene become! In Spain alone were not only Arab, but these Spanish, Moorish and other elements—lingering remnants of Slavic, Saxon, Roman and Phœnician.

I.—What had the Arab to contribute to the West—or anywhere? Arabia was the cradle and Arabs the original people of Islam. When Islam was born the land was comparatively barren and the people destitute of higher culture. Could any good thing come out of such a Nazareth? Yes, they had their language, as was said, a most extraordinary medium of expression, which during the lifetime of Mohammed had acquired the character of "the tongue of the angels," had become the sole language of God's final revelations—but more of this later. And, some would say they had their music and a modicum of poetry, either pre-Islamic or early Moslem. We all would say that they had their religion, whatever our opinion of its origins, and that they had their Prophet. Although much has been written, often indisputably, to show Islam's original indebtedness to

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Judaism, on the one hand, or to Christianity, on the other, not to mention such pagan ingredients as the *Ka'ba* and the *Hajj*, Islam must be counted an *original* religion.

Precisely what do we mean by "originality"? Originality is possible, surely, apart from origins. Intensity of devotion to an ideal and effectiveness in the promulgation of it may guarantee the devotee's priority and independence. Of course, time-sequences and human associations may not wholly be ignored, and least of all, recorded acknowledgments of debt, but there is convincing evidence of originality in the very exercise of sensitive, acquisitive, selective and creative powers, such as Islam had and exercised, both in Arabia and beyond. Wise choices and definite rejections were made repeatedly in the course of Islam's broadening experience. Take the case of *fiqh*, or canon law—or, call it simply Law, since in early Islam the state and church were one. It gave full play, in matters not precluded by Koranic statements, to the exercise of judgment (*ra'y*, opinion), to the use of common-sense on a *qadi's* or judge's part, especially in the years before the Law was systematised under the Abbasides (ninth century A.D.). When Islam fell heir to, *e.g.*, Roman Law, in Syria and elsewhere, Roman elements were then made to fit Islamic usage. And what was true of Law (Islam's problems were at first political) was in a commensurate degree true later of Theology. Islam was able both in Law and in Theology to develop and establish a *variegated orthodoxy*.

Mohammed himself has this peculiar claim, among others, to originality—he was selective. Reared a pagan, learning much about Judaism and Christianity, he declared himself, however, the "restorer" of the "religion of Abraham" which had been corrupted.* This, to him,

* Cf. Koran, 2 : 129; 3 : 89.

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was the original sound (*cf. hanif*) religion, in contrast with the "guidance" (*huda*) of the Jews and Christians. After all, who taught Mohammed to be a monotheist? Neither Jews nor Christians did, apart from his own common-sense. His "Unity" was for the times an innovation which even before the founding of Baghdad had probably had this effect, at least, on Christendom: it fed the Christian image-controversy, inspiring the iconoclasm of the eastern Emperor Leo (717—740 A.D.), in spite of the strenuous opposition of the western Church. And, in spite of Leo's own successful opposition to Islam, his elevation of the serfs to civil liberty may have been partially inspired by the comparatively classless society of the Moslems. Abstemiousness, also, was another of the Prophet's own ingredients of the pure, Abrahamic religion, which has had its novel influence.

The religion of Islam must, therefore, itself be counted a definite contribution of the Arabs—an element frequently omitted in discussions of the Moslem "legacy." As Gustav Diercks said fifty years ago in his "Die Arabische Kultur:"

"This tremendous movement came out of Arabia borne by Arabs. The Caliphate and its sole dominion was established by the Arabs, ruled by them and regulated on Arabic principles. The Arabic book of religion, the Koran, and its tongue provided articulation (*Bindeglieder*) for all Moslem lands. The very spirit which infused the Moslem world was Arabic and it was the basis, the driving force (Motor) of culture."

He called it amazing that a mere handful of Arabs could win their way abroad so easily, whatever help Syrians, Berbers and others gave them (but his interesting solution of the quick conquest of Spain was the receptive presence there of a previous Semitic, Phœnician,

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culture)! He, however, used the term "Arab," or, at any rate, "Arab culture," sometimes very loosely (*im allgemeinen!*) not reckoning exactly on the many racial factors, as we must do in any fair analysis to-day.

By implication, at least, Diercks makes his own distinction between cultures, which others have made in terms of "East" and "West," thereby accounting for "implacable" differences. There is indeed an East and there is also a West, with cogent connotations of mutual dissimilarity. On the whole, accordingly, Islam is Oriental and Christianity Occidental (Christianity *was* a religion of essentially eastern origin, but it has developed forms conspicuously in contrast therewith, as anyone knows who examines the modern history of Christianity in the Orient). But lest we emphasise unduly such a contrast in our present study, let us further analyse the setting of our problem: A map indicative of political, ethical, artistic and religious ideas and institutions would not only show "East" and "West," but would draw a line somewhere between Syro-Armenian and other regions eastward, *i.e.*, between Byzantine and Eastern regions, and would distinguish—for certain periods—the eastern from the western Mediterranean, thus differentiating between the "Classical" and the Oriental spirit and content of Western literature. It would show Arabia in comparative isolation and exhibit in many colours, now blending, now blurred, the extensive belt of Islam from Gibraltar and the Pyrenees on the west to indefinite borders in the east—the colouring due to *many* racial and other elements pre-Moslem and, perhaps, pre-Christian. Baghdad, for example, on this map would be composite: a city planned by an Arab, a Persian and a Jew, erected on Sásánid soil with at least some Sánánian materials, and welcoming, especially during its Golden Age, the physical and cultural merchandise of the world, including things "Indo-European."

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Although the Arabs had no structural taste or skill, and found native craftsmen in their eastern provinces who built in their own peculiar style,* the mosques, palaces and schools, retained an unmistakable *individuality* of their own, in spite of such adoptions, for example, as the dome, the minaret and the horseshoe arch. Was it Arabic religion dominating culture? Did not the minaret answer the need, whether of Bilal or later *mu'ezzins*, of elevation for the summons to public prayer? Religion was served by the dome and the arch, also. And unquestionably, religion provided through its sacred script the principal ornamentation of mosques and other public buildings, even as religion prohibited their use of "representations" (images, etc.). The Kufic script attained a high degree of excellence and was widely used, being freely adopted by the Christian West for use in art and architecture. To a great extent, therefore, the Arabic language in itself was a contribution to a general culture. But we may not ignore yet another aspect of this language, quite apart from its religious content, and that is the language as a competent medium for all sorts and aspects of ideas. Its structural complexity as a general medium stands in amazing contrast with the original simplicity of Islam. It has played, on this account, its own conspicuous part in the development of Moslem thought and in the transmission of ideas, especially to the West. It is of no small moment that culture should have a language through which it may express itself.

There was also in Baghdad a certain original Arab stock of *poetry* and *music*, and the Arabs were both inventors and improvers of musical instruments, such as the guitar, certain harps and flutes and the tambourine.† Perhaps there had been Persian influences through the

* Cf. M. S. Briggs in "The Legacy of Islam," page 156.

† *Ibid.*, page 361.

state of Hira, and Byzantine influence through Ghassán on Arab music prior to Islam, yet there was earlier still an indigenous Arab (Semitic?) theory and practice. One writer* seeks to prove the Greek origin of Moslem music, even while he lists, along with what he calls "West Arabian" (*Hedjazi*), "two modes, Arabic, not Greek." Evidence of Greek influence is, of course, abundant. There is, likewise, abundant evidence that the Arabs themselves improved upon this musical heritage, both in theory and in practice. In poetry, a definite contribution of the Arab to *form* was perfect rhyme (even the Koran, which eschews poetry, is composed in rhymed prose) and a contribution of his to *content* was a type of platonic love, the pure devotion of the lover to a conventionally idealized and physically unattainable mistress. There was in early Baghdad love aplenty for "water, wine, gardens bright and faces fair" (Abu Nuwas), yet there was also a poetic cult of singers of the truly martyr spirit of enraptured lovers living and dying chaste. This type of poetry was destined later to affect the West as a peculiar expression of Knightly virtue, as mystic compensation, at the lowest, for fleshly self-denial, and at the highest, as the realization of the divine Beloved. Baghdad under the "religious" Abbasids, furnished a congenial soil for this, in contrast with the earlier pagan, sensuous mood of the Damascene Umayyads.

With reference now to early Arab *ideas*, apart from original Islam-as-such, perhaps little need be said immediately in further evidence of their originality. Ideas, after all, are less tangible than mosques, guitars and poetry, and yet it were unfair to imply that the early Arabs had no ideas of their own. They did draw freely upon other sources—such was their disposition, as we have said. And their chief source was Greece. But in

*Gairdner in "The Moslem World," October 1916, page 355.

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Islamic mysticism as it developed in the East there was something appropriately original. On the contrary, in the realm of *reason* (the Islamic *'aql*) the source was Greek.* In Damascus first of all under Christian theologians, such as the famous John of that city, Moslems indulged in dialectic, examining in this way the articles of their faith, a faith supremely based on revelation. In Iraq, Greek science and philosophy were made accessible to Moslems by certain Syrians, and rationalistic speculation (cf. the "free-thinking" Mu'tazilites) gained headway. This was a notable development which in time, though reluctantly, became a part of orthodoxy—by no means, however, to the extent to which Thomist scholasticism transformed the theology of Rome. Islamic mysticism, however, enjoyed a wider, more enduring triumph, whether positively or even as a reaction against suboriginal, especially scholastic, orthodoxy. There may have been, to some extent, for mysticism, Greek inspiration (neo-Platonic), but mystical elements were actually native to Islam.† There is indeed a long line leading not too deviously from the place of Mohammed's first auditions, Mt. Hirá, to the *Confessions* of the great scholastic mystic al-Ghazáli; and Sufism, with all its varied elements, is pre-eminently Moslem. The mystic way, likewise, was a notable development which represents through al-Ghazáli a new kind of orthodoxy through the "destruction" of philosophy. Previously Ibn Sina (Avicenna) had merely *separated* theology and philosophy, realizing that Greek thought and Islamic could not be reconciled. Moslem mysticism has been influential mainly in the East. In the West, Greek reason was predominant.

The conclusion of our scanty treatment so far of Arab originality is this: the original stock of the Moslem

* See any standard treatise on the subject, *e.g.*, O'Leary's "Arabic Thought" of Macdonald's "Muslim Theology."

† See Archer's "Mystical Elements in Mohammed" and Nazmi Anabtaww, "Sufism in Islam."

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Arab was chiefly his essential religion, together with an adequate linguistic medium through which to express his peculiar devotion; *and* he had the flexibility of language and the dispositional tolerance necessary to accommodate himself to strange surroundings over which he exercised control. All this made him the driving force in his own reconstruction of a new civilization, to which, nevertheless, he as well as others were indebted.

II.—We turn now to what the Arab took with him to the West. We thus journey from Baghdad to Cordova, and on the way, or at least upon arrival, we become aware of a somewhat abrupt transition. Cordovan Islam is somewhat different from Baghdadi, although Islamic unity prevails throughout, and the Arab is therein the dominating personality. But Spanish Islam is more in the Umayyad tradition of Damascus, by reason of the blood succession in its Cordovan Caliphate. And Spain and Iraq were at extremities. Had we not looked at the essential Arab in his native setting, we might think his brother of the western migration to have been merely a *purveyor* of culture. True, the West profited more from the Arab's transmission of culture than from his originality. The West spurned the Arab's Islam as a religion, bitterly rejecting its monotheism and its iconoclasm, and practising, even with its own Christian monasticism, far less human brotherhood and abstemiousness than were characteristic of Islam. In the name of religion the West launched against the Arabs and their compatriots (too late, however, for our present purposes) a series of wars whose motives mainly were relief for European over-population and success in the commercial enterprise of Genoese and Venetians. But during earlier centuries the Arabs of Spain—and of Sicily—had brought, on their part, gifts to the Latin West. Islam was more than a military invasion; it was a cultural penetration. Even as Islamic art came into

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being in the East amidst mutually hostile Sásánid and Hellenistic cultures, so also in the West amidst hostilities, through the instrumentality of "enemies" of Christendom came new cultural forms of art, architecture, science, literature and philosophy. Even as any Thábit may court his lady in the enemies' preserve, so culture laughs at handicaps and barriers.

"By the tenth century the whole basis of life throughout Spain was profoundly influenced by Islam," and with the capture of Toledo in 1085 by the Christian forces the way was effectively opened for the spread of that influence to the rest of Europe.* In this century, of course, the great Islamic Empire still bounded Christian Europe on many sides, and not until about 1500 did Europe break away and get *beyond* Islam. Until Toledo's fall the prevailing influence in the Moslem West was Arabic (in the East, Turkish elements had only just then begun to get political control). But in studies of our day the term "Arab" is being used with greater caution and more exactitude—the giver himself is examined with the gift. There were Berbers (a majority) among the early Moslem conquerors—Táriq was a Berber. We have mentioned other racial strains as well. Historians have lent confusion to the scene by uncritical use of such terms as Arab, Moor, Saracen and Turk, even as some rulers and anthropologists to-day abuse the good name "Aryan." Fifty years ago Lane-Poole (in his "Moors in Spain," page 13) set a bad example by using the word "Moor" to signify Arabs and other Moham-medans of Spain, remarking, nevertheless, and again mistakenly, that "properly it should only be applied to Berbers." Ribera, a specialist in the history of Cordova, has proved that the Moors of Spain were overwhelmingly Spanish in blood, although they thoroughly absorbed Arabic culture. Trend has penetratingly observed,†

* Cf. "Legacy," page 28.

† "Legacy," page 6.

relative to much intermarriage between Moslems and Christians in Spain, that "the more Arab names a man bore the less Arab blood he had in his veins!" Although it may sometime be possible to trace the Arab strain more exactly by a closer scrutiny of genealogical and related sources, such as al-Baládhuri's and Ibn Hazm's *Ansábs*, we must be content here with what may rightly be called merely Arabic in the situation symbolized by Cordova.

We said *symbolized* by Cordova, whose era of competitive brilliance was the tenth century, during which it was the most civilized centre in Europe, especially under the great ruler Abd-ar-Rahman III (916—941). But it was even then the flower of previous planting, and it was later on that some aspects of its influence were yet more prominent, *i.e.*, in a subsequent time of political confusion when Greek philosophy was known in Spain through re-discovery by means of Syriac and Arabic translations, a time when also there were obvious acknowledgments by many Christians of their obligation to Islam. The debt was manifold, chiefly *linguistic*, *artistic* and *ideological*—a debt partly definite enough for a just evaluation, partly intangible. But when has the clear proof of influence waited entirely upon exact measurement!

Perhaps the most readily measured items are *linguistic*. Arabic was a richer and more flexible tongue than Latin or any other of Europe, including Greek. No western tongue can equal it in the variety of its verb forms and of its verbal nouns. It was the reasonable and altogether adequate channel of Greek learning to Islamised lands (had it not been for the Arabs, Greek culture would only have come back into Europe too late, if at all). It not only served to transmit ancient learning, but contributed a liberal vocabulary through which new ideas might be expressed. The abundance and

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variety of Arab terminology in the Iberian peninsula are in themselves overwhelming evidence of the West's indebtedness. Many western tongues hold borrowings from Arabic, whether names of places, commodities or ideas. There are many in the vocabulary of trade and navigation, alone; but we would not emphasise mere *words*, which in themselves are not indubitable signs of cultural effects. There is no necessary psychological connection between a certain Hadramauti *qal'a* and its sole inscription, "Allah," or between an American dollar and its legend, "In God we trust." Words are somewhat like coins. Moslem coins have been found in a wide belt across Russia and over the Baltic into southern Scandinavia—beyond the pale of Islam. And yet mere words, as Arabic script, do represent a contribution.

The adaptation (adoption?) of *Arabic letters* for decorative purposes has been mentioned. This is one of the first examples of direct, persistent Arab influence on Christian art. Fra Lippo Lippi's Coronation of the Virgin shows Arabic lettering—almost undecipherable—on the scarf held by the angels (*cf.* Arabic as "the tongue of the angels"). Oriental fabrics with Arabic lettering were often made up into priestly vestments. There is a gold coin* of 774 A.D., struck by "Offa Rex" of Mercia, which is "actually a copy of an Arabic coin." On one face this Christian coin bears the legend—unconsciously (?) inconsistent—in Kufic Arabic, "There is no god but Allah," followed immediately by what appears to be (the writer has seen only a reproduction) the rest of the Moslem "witness," "Mohammed is the messenger of Allah." But, for that matter, many Europeans who had accepted Islam knew no Arabic! While Moslem scribes themselves strove with religious zeal as well as worldly skill to perfect their sacred characters, Christians used

* See "The Moslem World," October 1916, pages 431-32.

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them in defiance of Islam on textiles, ivory, metal and other articles (whose craftsmanship in itself was generally superior to anything of the sort done by the Arabs). For Moslems themselves, their script was the chief means of ornamentation. Diercks remarked,* but not convincingly, that "the only peculiarity of Arabic architectural style is the predominance of ornamentation over construction, and perhaps herein lay the excellence of their many buildings in the Golden Age." Yet many buildings were abominably constructed. The various styles of script, especially the Kufic and the Maghribe monumental, were early and universally used for decorative purposes.

Architecture is as tangible as language, and in this field, also, it can be said that Arabs made a definite contribution. And in their giving they fully equalled the achievement of the West, i.e., Rome. Take the great Mosque of Cordova, for instance, begun in 786, enlarged from time to time, and standing in magnificent proportions in the tenth century. It exhibits a system of vaulting based on intersecting arches. In fact, for the sake of elevation of roof in the enormous sanctuary there was built a second range of arches beyond the height of the Roman columns appropriated in the building of the lower storey. Whatever the Spanish Arab's architectural inheritance, Roman or Byzantine, or pre-Byzantine, he developed in Spain a tradition of design which had persistent influence. He developed the horseshoe arch, for example, realising more than others both its structural and its decorative possibilities. The "Moorish" Puerta del Sol, Toledo, was a combination of an outer, higher, pointed horseshoe arch and an inner, lower, round arch in one gateway. The Arabs seem often to have employed more curvature in their arches than was customary with Romans and Byzantines. That is, they pulled in

**Op. cit.*, page 29.

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the ends of the semi-circles and of the pointed horseshoes. Such developments are perfected in later "Gothic" architecture.

A further portion of the West's debt to things Arabic is represented by *ideas*—and herein the Arabic language is involved again, and Arabic literature. We enter this field, however, with great caution, for it holds often only disappointing confusion. Many comparative studies must yet be made for the sake of better comprehension of Islam's bequest. Further inquiry must be made, for example, for western quotations from Arabic authors, for explicit acknowledgments of dependence. Dr. Asiny Palacios, of the University of Madrid, has said that Dante's "Divine Comedy" is indebted to Ibn Arabi (Ibnu-l-'Arabi), the arch-Sufi of the thirteenth century, and the other Moslem mystics. There was a European (Paris) school of "Averoists" until well into the sixteenth century (yet Averroes was largely rejected by his fellow Moslems, and rejected, too, at last, by Christian Schoolmen). But we have set a limit to the field of inquiry, 1200 A.D., or thereabouts. This enables us to make a distinction which the case deserves.

It seems clear now that only after the capture of Constantinople in 1204 by the Crusaders did the West get the *real Aristotle*. Probably *this* was the Aristotle used ultimately by Thomas Aquinas, although among doctrines of Islamic origin actually to be found in the *Summa* are references to Ibn Rushd and to his materials as quoted by Maimonides.* Before 1204 only a garbled, incomplete Aristotle was available. In Arabic translations which were again done into Latin the West had his "Logic"—no, there was of this a Latin edition of the Greek before Islam—and parts of his "Organon." In the twelfth century all of "Aristotle" was available to the Latin West by way of Spain. Cordova had been the

* Cf. "Legacy," page 280

seat of study of "Aristotelian" treatises since about 800, especially the physics, metaphysics and psychology,* but it was Aristotle sometimes as interpreted by neo-Platonists, and always as defined in Arabic. However, our immediate reason for saying all this is to point out that thus intellectual inquiry began—or was unusually stimulated—in Europe within the realm of religion.

Think, if you will, of the effect at that time on practical, legalistic Roman Catholicism of rationalistic inquiry, intellectual speculation, Greek dialectic! Apart from any adoption of specific Arab formulæ, and any examples of literary dependence, there are undeniably evident in Europe certain effects of Spanish Arab *toleration*. Someone has spoken of this as "the only favourable legacy which Islam had bequeathed." The toleration was Islamic, the "marvellous flower of Hispanic thought" was Greek—and the Arab was the carrier of both. His influence in the West, therefore, was, on the whole, more rational than mystical, even to the exposition of "wisdom mixed with unbelief." In contrast, Spanish Christianity was more legalistic than speculative. (Islamic "fundamentalism" is a comparatively late reaction within Islam.) Yet Western Christendom responded to the general shock of a liberalising Islam.

There is no room here for more than this general appraisal of the *philosophical* impact—the field is too vast, and many of its chief contents too well known, although many problems linger with it. We have indulged already perhaps too much in what Ibn Khallikan called "beaten thoughts."† But Ibn Hazm might be cited in illustration of one important phase of Moslem influence which will bear with profit further inquiry. He is especially valuable *to-day* for his contributions in the eleventh century to *comparative religion*. He was

* Cf. Ency. Brit. XIVth ed., 2 : 354.

† Biog. Dict. ed. de Slane, I : 99.

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an "Arab" (really Muzarab) scholar of Cordova during troubled times of civil war,* whom Nicholson has called "the most original genius of Moslem Spain,"† and Gibb, "the founder of the science of comparative religion,"‡ and Guillaume—following Ibn Khallikan—has called him the composer of "the first systematic higher critical study of the Old and New Testaments."§ Ibn Khallikan said of him, "his knowledge was of the most varied kind,|| and al-Maqqari reported that the "Unitarian" ruler al-Mansur remarked at his tomb, "All scholars have to apply to Ibn Hazm when in difficulty."¶ Ibn Hazm was severely critical, not only of non-Moslem faiths, but also of sects in Islam, especially the scholastics,** and as Ibn Khallikan observed, frequently attacked the *imáms*. But he was intent upon fairness and intellectual honesty in his attacks, desiring, as he said, to be "scientific." He, of course, suffered much for his critical activities; and not until a century after his demise were his works made—through the mystic Ibn Arabi—a part of the heritage of Europe.

It might be interesting to note in passing that al-Shahrastáni of Khurásán, author of another *Kitab al-Milal wa'l-Nihal*, or "book of sects" (chiefly within the ranks of Moslems themselves), was born twenty years after the death of Ibn Hazm, to whom he apparently, however, was in no way indebted. "Comparative Religion," as applied to the study of the great religions, as distinct from an historical or an apologetic account, or even as distinct from a comparative description of the sects of one religion, is a modern, Western undertaking, but after the manner of the Spanish Moslem Ibn Hazm;

* Cf. Dozy-Stokes, "Moslems in Spain," pages 575 ff.

† "Literary History of the Arabs," page 426.

‡ "Legacy," page 187; an apparent reference to Ibn Hazm's *Kitab al-Fisal*, or "A Treatise on Differences in Religions, Philosophies and Sects."

§ *Ibid.*, page 282.

|| Biog. Dict. II, page 267.

¶ Ency. of Islam, 2 : 386.

** Cf. Goldziher, *Die Zāhiriten*.

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and co-operation among the great religions as prerequisite to mutual understanding and to the ultimate triumph of what is best in man's spiritual adventure is even yet, after many modern centuries, a novel view.

We may then, as Westerners and Christians, continue, with profit to many of us and justice to some others, our review and reappraisal of the Moslem's, especially the Arab's rôle in western history, thus serving ever anew and more effectively the great cause of Religion, in world culture.

A NOTE ON COMMUTING THE YEARS OF THE MUSLIM ERA INTO THOSE OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA

BY FAZAL KARIM SAUNDERS

Most students of Islam are conversant with the simple formulas by means of which, given the number of a certain year in the Christian Era, one can calculate the corresponding date in the Muslim Era, and *vice versa*.

In order to understand the working of that formula, it must be remembered, firstly, that the Hegira (or flight of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca) took place 622 years after the birth of Jesus Christ, and, secondly, that the Muslim year is a lunar one.

The flight of the Prophet took place on the 19th June 622 A.D., but the Caliph Omar fixed the beginning of the Muslim Era at the first month of the Arab year, during which the flight took place. This date corresponds to the 19th April 622 A.D., which fell on Friday.

This starting point, then, thus approximately fixed, we must remember that the number of days in the Lunar year being less than the number of days in the Solar (or Gregorian) year, every year the Muslim festivals and seasons fall a little earlier—eleven days—in the Christian calendar. (Thus, if in one year the month of Ramadan commences on the 19th November, the next year it will commence on the 8th, and so on.)

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And it has been calculated that at the end of every 33 years the dates of the various Muslim seasons have come round to the same places in the Gregorian calendar. (Thus, if in 1904 Ramadan commenced on the first December, then in 1937 (33 years later) it will commence on the same date) and if we divide 33 into the number of the Muslim (or Hegeran) year, we shall have the number of periods at the end of which the dates of the Muslim festivals are the same (in the Gregorian calendar).

And if we subtract this quotient from the number of the Hegeran year, we shall get the number of Gregorian years corresponding to the actual (Gregorian) time which has elapsed during the number of Hegeran years expressed by the Hegeran date in question.

It remains to add to the result the 622 years which have elapsed from the beginning of the Christian era up to the Hegeran, and we then have the Gregorian year we are looking for.

Representing the Hegeran year by H and the Gregorian year by G, we can establish the following formula

$$G = \left(H - \frac{H}{33} \right) + 922$$

and by a simple algebraical operation one can pass from the Gregorian year to the Hegeran year.

$$H = \frac{33}{32} \left(G + 62 \right)$$

We can verify this as follows :

Present Muslim A.H.

$$\text{Year} \quad 1358 \div 33 = 41 \quad 1939 - 622 = 1317$$

$$1358 - 41 = 1317 \text{ and } \frac{33}{32} \text{ of } 1317 = 1358 \text{ A.H.}$$

$$1317 + 622 = 1939 \text{ A.D.}$$

**THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY QUR-AN UPON
ARABIC LITERATURE**

BY HAFIZ BASHEER AHMAD MISRI, B.A. (HONS.)

This essay is confined to Arabic literature in so far as it was directly affected by the Holy Qur-án and its teachings. It is not intended to deal exhaustively with the entire subsequent development of Arabic literature which accompanied the spread of Islam.

The pre-Islamic literature which has come down to us is only in the form of poetry. The art of writing was not introduced into Arabic till later. Therefore, Arabic poetry, with its characteristics of economy of words, music and rhythm, was most adapted for preservation by oral transmission from generation to generation.

The advent of Islam proved rather discouraging to the art of poetry. The pagan Arabs, wanderers of the deserts, did not know anything but their tribal feuds and stratagems. Their ambitions did not soar beyond roast-meat, women, wine and a camel ride over hill and dale. These were the people who, after embracing Islam, were occupied in the wars with the Persian and Roman Empires and forgot to think of poetry. Then again the verses of the Holy Qur-án, the very words of Allah to them, such as the following:

“And as to the poets, those who go astray follow them. Do you not see that they wander about bewildered in every valley? And that they say that which they do not do?”

(The Holy Qur-án, 26: 224—226)

proved very fatal to Arabic poetry. The Muslims began to abhor the very idea of composing poetry, and regarded it as a violation of the orders of Allah to do so. So much so, that the well-known poet, Labid, one of the authors of the seven “Muallaqats,” stopped writing poetry after embracing Islam, saying, “God has given me the Qur-án in exchange for it.” He did not offer a

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single verse afterwards, though he lived for 30 years after the Hijrah. This is why, for a considerable time after the appearance of Islam, no poet of distinction was born in that nation of poets.

But a thorough study of the so-called hostile attitude of the Holy Prophet towards poetry clearly shows that what he meant to destroy was *pagan* poetry, pregnant with pagan ideals and pagan characteristics. In a word, it was the *paganism* of poetry which the Holy Prophet had come to destroy. The Holy Prophet, accordingly, annihilated this evil of *paganism* to the very roots, and made the Arabs the torch-bearers of a divine light which illuminated the dark regions of the world. He never meant to destroy the very art of poetry itself, nor to extinguish the fire of life in people, the flames of which sought their way out in the form of music. Rather he wanted to change those flames into a divine light, no matter if they came out in metrical form or in prose. Otherwise he could not possibly have said,

"Inna minal bayani la sihrá

Wa inna minash-shi'ri la hikmá"

i.e., there is enchantment in speech and wisdom in poetry. Neither can we ignore, in this connection, the presence of Hassan-bin-Thabit in his court.

The impulse given by the Holy Prophet to the literary pursuits of the Muslims is not negligible either. There are many sayings of the Holy Prophet, which show his burning desire for learning. It was in response to the famous Prophetic tradition, "Seek ye learning though it be in China," that Muslim scholars undertook long and distant journeys to far off countries. The Holy Prophet tried to convince every believer that—

"Wisdom is the lost property of a believer, he should claim it wherever he finds it."

At the time when the Holy Qur-án was compiled, it was written in a very imperfect and poor script. Those

who had learnt it by heart—"Huffáz"—were dying fast on account of the successive wars. So the need was very urgently felt for the establishment of a more adequate script to preserve the Holy Qur-án. On the recommendation of Umar, Abu-Bakr appointed Zaid-bin-Thabit of al-Madina to collect the scattered portions of the Qur-án, which had been hitherto inscribed on the ribs of palm-leaves or on pieces of white stone, apart from their being in the minds of the memorisers.

Owing to the defective nature of Kufic script and to the lack of vowel marks, various readings arose in current copies. The foundation of Arabic is its system of inflectional roots. A vowel mark sometimes changes the very meaning of a word. It was necessary to preserve the text from corruption and alteration by fixing rigid rules for Arabic grammar. This need was felt more by the non-Arabs—mostly Persians—who were very anxious to learn Arabic. Accordingly, Uthman appointed the same Zaid-bin-Thabit as the Chairman of the Committee of Revision. Abu-Bakr's copy, then in the possession of his daughter, Hafsa, was used as a basis, and standard copies of the text were issued, which were to set the standard of literary Arabic for the future. This standard almost every Arabic writer of to-day tries to imitate. On the borderland of Persia the scientific study of the Arabic language and grammar was begun, encouraged by the desire to learn the Holy Qur-án. Thus the Holy Qur-án became the basis for the modern philology and lexicography of the Arabic language.

The literary standard set by the Holy Qur-án and its permanent influence upon the language cannot be fully appreciated, unless we are aware that it is due to this Qur-ánic standard alone that the various dialects of the Arabic-speaking people have not so far diverged as to become different languages. An Iraqi may find it a little difficult to understand the speech of a Moroccan, but he can easily understand his written language.

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When Islam spread throughout East and West, the position of the Holy Qur-án was that of the first prayer-book and law-book for every Muslim of whatever sect and country, and soon Arabic became a world language, the language of the ruling nation. People devoted themselves to the study of the Qur-án, so much so, that even its letters were counted to be 323,621, its verses 6,239, and its words 77,934. It was and is necessary for every Muslim to teach the Holy Qur-án to his child before he learns anything else, and it is esteemed a great spiritual achievement if one memorises it. These memorisers are called "Huffáz." Even to-day countless "Huffáz" are found, the writer being himself a "Háfiz," having learnt the Holy Qur-án by heart at the age of fourteen.

It is to the interest shown by the Muslims in Qur-ánic studies that almost all the branches of Arabic literature and Muslim sciences owe their origin. The explanation of the various teachings of the Holy Qur-án, the conduct of every-day life and business were sought in the practice of the Holy Prophet, called "Hadith." The entire Muslim theology and jurisprudence are based upon the teachings of the Holy Qur-án and the practice of the Holy Prophet. Great pains were taken to collect the traditions of the Holy Prophet, and thereby a new science, the science of tradition, came into being in Arabic literature. Also it was in the form of tradition that Arabic Historiography began.

Within a century the Arabs had filled the globe with their cries of "Allah-u-Akbar!" = "God is Great." Islamic standards, banners and pennons were flying from the Pyrenees to the Pamirs. Wherever the Arabs went, they won the laurels of success. They brought about a gradual absorption of the conquered nations into Islamic culture and thought, and this was followed by the linguistic conquest of the subjugated people. The combination of the advanced civilisation and rich

thoughts of the conquered nations with the rich and musical expression of the Arabs, produced an immortal literature, a literature of which the Qur-án formed the origin.

THE MUSLIM CULTURE

BY SYED ABDUL LATIF

(Continued from Vol. XXVII, page 291.)

Islam as Social Creed.—On the other hand, Islam is the name given to a certain outlook on life, and the "Ummat" or Community of Islam is the name given to a certain type of social order that that outlook brings into being or evolves. You may talk of this outlook on life, of this order of society, with absolutely no reference to God, if you are so minded. Nevertheless, Islam will remain Islam in its social bearing which will even then mean the path of peace, a way of life, just as does Communism, Socialism, Nazism or Fascism. These several ways of living are but attempts to regulate human energy towards certain ideals or definite aims. I can conceive of persons who have a genuine dislike for religions of every description which postulate a life after death. In their case, the absence of any definite creed is itself a creed for them. For lack of a better term, people designate their attitude as materialism. One or other of these several ways everyone follows. Sometimes the path is prescribed for him through birth; sometimes he himself makes a selection. A student of comparative ways of living may strike the balance between one and another and adjudicate superiority; but for a sincere follower an active pursuit is what primarily matters. So I fancy is the case with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru when he says he believes in Socialism. So must it be with a Muslim when he says he believes in Islam. As a Muslim he believes in a path of life, in an order of society called "Quranic" or "Islamic." You

cannot force him to forget himself or give up his creed in matters of social relationships or politics. If, by chance, the creeds of the two cover some common ground or do not create a direct conflict, co-operation along certain lines is possible; but, where the outlooks differ from each other in fundamentals, no amount of facile argument or sophistry, even in the name of patriotism, will be of much avail, for patriotism will be invoked by both, and interpreted in terms of their particular creeds. That is the situation that has arisen between the Musalmans and the majority section of the people of this country; and it is surely a part of statesmanship to welcome a dispassionate analysis of the differences in outlook between the two great communities, and see on what basis true co-operation should be possible. To talk of differences honestly, is, I think, the first step towards unity. It may be a paradox, but it has to be faced.

Culture of Movement and Unity.—As I have pointed out already, Islam is a creed which aims at evolving and maintaining a social order laying its supreme emphasis on two fundamental truths of life—one, which I may call *movement in life*; the other *unity in life*—both pointing to a programme of action which goes by the name of “Shariyah.” You may as well call this “Shariyah” an “Act” of Islam. Within the framework of this Act, this programme—its boundaries—a Muslim has to live and work. These boundaries are really not narrow, as in our present state of ignorance and decadence they appear. The march of events in the history of Islam has demonstrated time and again that, to the extent that the two fundamental truths of life, of movement and unity, have been kept in view, to that extent has the “Shariyah” of Islam responded and supplied the vital energy to its followers. The two truths are in a sense but one, and argue but one moral

or social or spiritual law of life which—if I may so express it—has served as a preamble to this Act or this “Shariyah” of Islam. That Act stands, because the moral law which has inspired it is a natural law of life, as I have discussed at length in a recent contribution, “The Concept of Society in Islam,” and to which I may again refer during the course of this lecture.

Dynamic Culture.—What is this movement in life that is at the basis of Muslim Culture? I may say at once that it is not my intention to-night to give a philosophical exposition of this idea; nor is it necessary for my immediate purpose. It may be enough if I point out to you that, according to the Qur-án, life is one continuous progression. It is a linear line, and not a cycle. It is dynamic and every moment it unfolds itself in fresh glory. The idea of evolution is only a thing of yesterday in European thought and science; but, among the Musalmans, it is a thing as old as the Qur-án. The influence of Greek thought, as it came to the Musalmans through the Byzantine Christian channels, at first made the early thinkers among them to incline to the view that life was something static, but very soon the Qur-ánic interpretation of life asserted itself and gave such powerful volition to the intellectual life of the followers of the Faith that they were destined to lay the foundations of scientific enquiry and the spirit of research.

This is not the time to enumerate in detail the achievements of their minds in the realms of Arts and Sciences. I may just quote a paragraph or two from “The Making of Humanity” by Briffault, which will give you in general terms an idea of how important were the contributions made by the Musalmans under the impulse of this Islamic thought of movement:

“For although there is not a single aspect of European growth in which the decisive influence of Islamic Culture is not traceable, nowhere

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is it so clear and momentous as in the genesis of that power which constitutes the permanent distinctive force of the modern world, and the supreme source of its victory—natural science and the scientific spirit.

“The debt of our science to that of the Arabs does not consist in startling discoveries of revolutionary theories; science owes a great deal more to Arab culture; it owes its existence. The Astronomy and Mathematics of the Greeks were a foreign importation never thoroughly acclimatised in Greek culture. The Greeks systematised, generalised and theorised, but the patient ways of investigation, the accumulation of positive knowledge, the minute methods of science, detailed and prolonged observation and experimental inquiry were altogether alien to the Greek temperament. Only in Hellenistic Alexandria was any approach to scientific work conducted in the ancient classical world. What we call “Science” arose in Europe as a result of a new spirit of inquiry, of new methods of investigation, of the method of experiment, observation, measurement, of the development of Mathematics in a form unknown to the Greeks. That spirit and those methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs.”

The picture of the achievements of the Muslim mind in the different fields of intellectual interest may be enlarged; and details filled in from their history, but it will all point to one fundamental attitude of the mind as developed by the influences of the teachings of the Qur-án; which was that life was one continuous urge for progress and that, therefore, it was part of its need

to accommodate itself to the interaction of the natural forces that worked around him and, through a knowledge of this interaction, to harness the forces of nature to subserve to the primary aim of life which was to promote unity and solidarity among mankind.

No Clash with Modern Civilization.—This being so, all this talk of the Muslim Culture or the Muslim mind standing to lose its Islamic character by the onslaughts of the present scientific age, or to be side-tracked in the struggle is, I am afraid, beside the point. I may assure Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru that the Muslim mind has nothing to fear from the achievements of Science. In fact, the very things that seem to him to constitute the present scientific culture truly only mark an extension of the Muslim Culture and even a fruition of it. There is no doubt a gap, a very great gap between the point at which the Musalman left it and the point at which he is now called upon to meet it again after centuries of forgetfulness. In their present state of undeniable depression, promoted by historical forces into which we need not go at this moment, the Musalmans have become an object of light valuation. Their mind has fallen a prey to the influences of un-Islamic cultures and may seem incapable of recognising in the progress of the West only the result of his own initial efforts. Education, however, will set matters right. There is already an awakening all over the Muslim world, and an earnest endeavour to break through the un-Islamic cobweb that has for generations held them back from claiming their own. Turkey has taken a step forward. To casual observers, not conversant with the spirit of Islam the step it has taken may seem un-Islamic; but we know what that spirit is, and are not nervous over what has happened. Iran is coming back into its own. One may fancy it is reviving the pre-Islamic Culture, but it is not so. The Qur-*ā*nic spirit is working on both the

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countries for freedom of thought and freedom of movement in life, and the same, in more or less similar fashion, as warranted by local needs, is working for the liberation of the Muslim mind in other countries—in Egypt, Tripoli, Morocco, Syria, Arabia, Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan, where the Musalmans enjoy a homogeneous existence. We, in India, in spite of the fact that we are dispersed over a vast area and have to live in the midst of a numerically stronger non-Muslim community, we too are growing conscious of what we have to do. Not far off seems to be the day when this great belt of Islam stretching from the Atlantic right across two great continents with its offshoots on every side, will fall into line with the spirit of what people call the Age of Science. The Muslim Culture is not, therefore, of a type that will clash with any culture that science may evolve. It will certainly not fight shy of it. It has the vitality to adapt itself to the changing phase of existence. If properly utilised, it will prove an asset of incalculable value to the emancipation of life, even in this country.

That is one part of the basis of the Muslim Culture.

(To be continued.)

THE PROPHET'S FLIGHT AND HIS FIRST FRIDAY SERMON

BY M. AHSANULLAH

The anxious days of our Prophet (peace be on him!) at Mecca after he began preaching openly are ever memorable. The attitude of the Quraish was intolerable. The privations, persecution and assaults the Prophet had to face, added to the grim determination of the Quraish to do away with him, reached their highest point. Despite all these troubles, the Prophet went on delivering his message. At last it became absolutely necessary for him to leave his birth-place. The difficulties on the way and the calmness with which he endured

them are beyond description. The Quraish declared a reward of one hundred camels to any one who would bring the head of our Prophet. A gang of 70 robbers, under their leader Barida, seized this opportunity of obtaining the reward offered. The Prophet and his companion Abu Bakr had just then arrived at the outskirts of Medina when they were confronted by these marauders. The Prophet and his companion were completely unarmed. The Prophet was then deeply absorbed in reciting the Holy Qur-án; the deep and sweet melody of his voice resounded through the hills, awaking a wonderful thrill. The leader and his band advanced proudly and eagerly, when the sweet enchanting words and the waves of melody became clearly audible to them. The words recited came from the core of the Prophet's heart, and, as such, found a place in their hearts. The leader felt his legs weighed down and his arms became powerless when our Prophet, in the natural serenity and sweetness of his voice, asked him, "Stranger, who are you and what do you want?"

"I am Barida, chieftain of the Aslam Tribe," was the reply.

"Aslam? Peace and good tidings!"

"Who are you?" asked the leader.

"I am a Meccan, Muhammad by name, son of Abdullah—the servant of truth—the messenger of Allah."

Our Prophet looked at Barida. Barida forgot himself completely, as he looked upon the face of our Prophet shedding heavenly lustre, magnetic with love and affection. Barida sat down at once; the spear fell from his hand. His associates, also, were in the same bewildered mood. The heavenly message of the Qur-án, the fascinating waves of the Prophet's melodious voice and, above all, his firm and undisturbed bearing, the strength of his mind, the warmth of the fullness

THE PROPHET'S FLIGHT

of his belief, the holy delight of truth that brightened up his face with a heavenly light awed Barida and his band, and they fell down at the Prophet's feet.

Our Prophet was about to proceed, after giving some words of advice, when Barida came to himself, and in a voice subdued by reverence said, "My Lord, when out of kindness once you have given me shelter at your feet, I hope I shall not be deprived of it." Thereupon Barida and his band, with seventy naked swords and spears, began marching ahead of the Prophet with a white flag fluttering in the air.

It was a memorable day at Medina when the auspicious arrival of the Prophet became known to the citizens. It was Friday, and the Prophet performed the Jum'a prayer for the first time with the followers. The Sermon that he delivered ran as follows:

"All praise and glory are due to Allah alone. We sing His praise and implore Him for help to be able to perform our duties, and we beg forgiveness of Him for failure to do our duties; and we ask Him for strength to enable us to know the right path. We believe in Him, and we shall not disobey His commands. We will not consider him to be one of us who is refractory to Him. I bear witness to the fact that there is none worthy of our worship besides Allah."

"We also bear witness to the fact that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. When for long the world was deprived of the preachings of the Prophet, when knowledge was about to disappear, when mankind was going astray and was steeped in superstition, and when death and severe retribution for actions committed were fast nearing them, it was then that Allah sent His Prophet to them with the light of truth and knowledge.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

Perfection of life is attainable by strictly following the commands of Allah and His Prophet, while disobedience to Allah and His prophets will lead them astray.

“Reform yourselves, every one of you, in such a way that vice and inclination for bad deeds may be permanently eradicated from your minds. This is the best of my advice to you. Think of the after-life and cultivate your conscience to a degree that evil thoughts and bad ideas become automatically alien to you like poison. One Muslim cannot give better advice to another. These bad deeds, which Allah has warned you to refrain from, take care not to approach them. This is the best of advice and the best of knowledge.

“Forget not your duty to Allah and your relation with Him. Rectify your mistakes therein, if any, both openly and secretly. Make that relation firm and perfect. This is the supreme knowledge in your life here, and the best of means for your life hereafter.

“Bear in mind that, if you do otherwise, however much you may be afraid to face the consequences of your deeds, there is no escape from them. Allah is love and mercy. So He has warned you of the unavoidable consequences of your deeds. Of the man who will translate his words into action and will fulfil his promise in practice, Allah has said, ‘there is no change in my order and I am not an oppressor of mankind.’ For this you should cultivate your conscience directly and indirectly, openly and secretly. Fullness in the centre of conscience is the best of your wealth and the highest success for humanity.

THE PROPHET'S FLIGHT

"Enjoy all worldly comforts legally and reasonably.

Let no fascination of comforts lead you to immoderation. Allah has given you His books, has shown you His path. Now is the time to distinguish who is the real follower of truth, and who is the liar with his lip-loyalty.

"Therefore, as Allah has blessed you, do you also engage yourselves to do good to the world as Allah has done good to you. Know the enemies of Allah to be your enemies, and in the name of Allah declare crusade against them. Allah has chosen you for this and has called you "Muslims." As the result of your action he whose destruction is inevitable by the very immutable laws of nature, let him meet with destruction rightly, justly and reasonably, and let him who will get life, have it with the co-operation of truth, justice and reason. Know it for certain there is no power and strength save and except in Allah.

"Therefore, do you always remember Allah, and earn your means for the next world. If you can, realise your relation with Allah, and if, after realisation, you make that relation firm and perfect and can fully rely on His love, then Allah will take charge of man's dealings with you. Allah's order prevails over man, but man's order does not prevail over Allah. Man is not His master, but He is the Master of all. Allah is great, Allah is glorious and there is no power save in Allah."

CORRESPONDENCE

TRINITY SQUARE,
S.E. I.

DEAR SIR,

Will you kindly supply me with some literature about the Moslem faith? I noticed that one was invited to write when passing in a train the other day.

Thanking you,

Yours truly,
H. G.

BROMPTON ROAD,
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DEAR SIR,

Kindly send me information "What is Islam." I saw your announcement when passing Woking yesterday.

Yours truly,
BERTHA SMITH.

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THE IMAM,

WOKING MUSLIM MISSION,
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SIR,

I have a correspondent friend in Bhagulpur, India, who has asked me to write you for what I would term authoritative and unbiased knowledge of the history and tenets of Islam. Please oblige,

Respectfully yours,
J. R. HIGGS.

FALMOUTH,
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DEAR SIR,

Would you kindly inform me what one has to do to become a Muslim? I am 16 years of age, and have always been interested in the Muslim Faith, namely Muhammadanism.

Longing to hear from you, sir,

Yours faithfully,
DENYS GRAY.

MANCHESTER.

THE BASHIR MUSLIM LIBRARY,

THE MOSQUE,
WOKING, SURREY.

DEAR SIR,

I have on two occasions seen the *Islamic Review* in the Didsbury Free Library, and it has very much interested me. In fact, so much that I feel I should like to meet someone who is connected with it.

Could you kindly put me in touch with someone in the Manchester District who is connected with it? If you can I shall esteem it a great favour.

I am, sir,
Yours very truly,
JOHN J. TINKER.

SAMPLES OF THE HOLY QURAN

1 اللَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبَدُّ مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ

1. Size 11 inches × 7 inches. 2. Bound. 3. Price 14 annas or 1s. 2d.

2 أَوْ تَخْفَوْهُ يُحَاسِبُكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ

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3 وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ

3. Size 10 inches × 6½ inches. 2. Bound. 3. Price Rs. 2-8-0. or 3s. 4d.

4 شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۖ أَمِنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ

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5 إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۖ كُلٌّ

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6 أَمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَيْكَتِهِ وَكِتَابِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ

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7 لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا

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