

"Muhammad is . . . the Apostle of Allah and the Last of the Prophets . . ."—
HOLY QUR-AN, 33 : 40. "There will be no prophet after me."— MUHAMMAD.

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CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|------|
| By the Light of the Quran | 73 |
| Declarations | 74 |
| Islamic Conception of God. By Khan Bahadur Ahsanullah, M.A. | 75 |
| Muhammad in the Quran. By S. Maqbool Ahmad, B.A. | 81 |
| The Religion of Humanity. By Rabi'al Karim, M.Sc. | 92 |
| Influence of Islamic Culture on the Architecture of the West. By Professor Hector O. Corfiato, S.A.D.G. | 98 |
| Correspondence | 111 |

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مَجْلَدُ رَبِيعِ الْأَوَّلِ ١٣٦٣ هـ
مَرْحَلَةُ رَجَبِ ١٩٤٤ م

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

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RABI'UL-AWWAL, 1363 A.H.
MARCH, 1944 A.C.

[No. 3

BY THE LIGHT OF THE QURAN

“(As to) those whom We gave the Book before it, they are believers in it.

“And when it is recited to them they say: We believe in it; surely it is the truth from our Lord; surely we were submitters before this.

“These shall be granted their reward twice, because they are steadfast and they repel evil with good and spend out of what We have given them.

“And when they hear idle talk, they turn aside from it and say: We shall have our deeds and you shall have your deeds: peace be on you, we do not desire the ignorant.”—Chapter 28, vv. 52—55.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

DECLARATIONS

I, MR. WILLIAM WILKINSON BOYD, of Maclean Road, London, S.E. 23, 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.

Lá iláha ill-Alláh Muhammad-un Rasúl-Alláh.

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

25th March, 1942. (Sd.) W. WILKINSON BOYD.

I, MISS MABEL G. COMMINS, of St. Elmo, Belgrave Road, Dublin, 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.

Lá iláha ill-Alláh Muhammad-un Rasúl-Alláh.

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

July 20, 1942. (Sd.) MABEL COMMINS.

ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF GOD

BY KHAN BAHADUR AHSANULLAH, M.A.

Late Asstt. D. P. I. Bengal

There is a class of philosophers who seem to think that the universe is the outward manifestation of the inward spirit. They assert that spirit cannot exist without matter and that both exist from time immemorial. They mean that the universe is not the creation of God but is co-eternal with Him.

Sankhya Philosophers are of opinion that *Prakriti* and *Purush* are both eternal, one cannot be conceived without the other. As heat or electricity is inseparable from body, so is *Purush*, according to them, inseparable from *Prakriti*.

There is another class of philosophers who deny the existence of the world as a separate entity. They assert that objects in the world are nothing more than groups of our own sensations. The world, as it were, is the creation of our own senses. Objects are said to be soft or hard, black or white, sweet or bitter, sweet-smelling or foul-smelling, as we feel them. We know nothing of objects except what we feel by our own senses. There is nothing, they say, beyond our own sensations. They apparently overlook the fact that there is something outside us which causes our sensations. The same thing may appear different in size to the same man using glasses with different powers. Again the same man goes about with his five senses but does not feel the same sensations all over. The knowledge of a man born blind in respect of an object is not exactly the same as that of a man with perfect vision. It is really the object which produces sensations, which vary with persons having different sensitive capacities, the object remaining the same. With defects in senses, the same object would appear different to different

ISLAMIC REVIEW

defective persons. It is not the senses which determine the objects ; the object stands aloof independent of our senses. It is wrong to say that the object is the creation of our own senses. The object exists, whether we see it or not.

Islam teaches that the world was created by God and has an existence of its own. The world will remain all the same, whether we use our senses or not. God is the Creator and the world is the created. God exists apart from the world, and God would exist, even if the world would cease to exist.

God is the Absolute Being Who creates, fosters and brings up the world from the crudest state to the highest perfection. He gives the objects their proper shape, promotes their growth by degrees and builds up the world according to His premeditated design. God has a design of His own and regulates the world with a view to achieve His object by gradual evolution of things from the simplest form to the goal of completion. God is the Designer, Moulder and Fashioner of the world. The world cannot subsist for a moment by itself. It is God who gives it sustenance. He is the Energiser and Sustainer of the world. He can bring into existence any number of worlds at His sweet will without His energy being diminished thereby, and He can cause their extinction without adding to or losing any portion of His energy. He is Infinite and the world is finite ; the finite cannot add or cause diminution to the Infinite. No creation of things finite can bring about any change in the Infinite. Mathematics, too, teach us that infinite *minus* finite is infinite.

God exists necessarily by Himself, comprising infinite attributes of perfection. His attributes are partially manifested in the universe, His *Zat* (or Essence) standing aloof as beyond our comprehension. We

ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF GOD

can conceive, however imperfectly, His *Sifat* (or Attributes) but not His *Zat* (or Essence).

When persons get immersed in the Divinity, as sometimes the Sufis are, they lose their knowledge of their own selves for the time being. In this state of immersion they see all around them nothing but His signs, nothing but His glory. They lose even the very knowledge of their immersion. They then live in God and experience an inexplicable ecstasy. This state cannot, however, continue long unless one becomes united with Him, casting his body aside. It is folly to say that man, when spiritually advanced, can realize God as He is in Himself. Man can, at best, get a glimpse of the Divine attributes but cannot realize His *Zat*, or even His *Sifat* in entirety.

Prior to the creation of the universe God was Absolute, Thing-in-Himself, Unknown and Unknowable, transcending all phenomenal manifestations. After the creation of the universe God's attributes became partially manifested, His *Zat* or Noumenal Unity remaining absolute as ever. His *Zat* is ununderstandable, inconceivable, unrealizable. God's attributes are infinite in number, some of which are partially manifested in the universe. His *Zat* is absolute and is independent of the created universe.

God is Omnipresent. His seat extends over the earth and the heavens and all that is in the universe—says the Qur-án. There is no place where He is not. But this does not mean that His presence is confined to the limits of the universe. He is both outside and inside the universe. He is both in and out. He is both Transcendent and Immanent. His *Zat* is distinct from His attributes. His *Zat* is Transcendent. His attributes, though infinite, are partially manifested in His creation like the sun whose rays are partially reflected on a mirror or a reflector.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

The Islamic conception of God is unique and does not conform to any other system of theism. His holy essence is Eternal and Absolute, independent of all limitations and beyond human conception. He is as full after the creation as He was prior to it. Myriads of finite universes, if created, would not make the slightest difference in His Infinite *Zat*.

Islam believes in God as One above all tribal or national gods. The God of Islam is not the God of a particular tribe or nation nor is He One Who shares powers with deities or angels. Islamic God is the Lord on whom all depend. He begets not nor is He begotten. He is independent of every being created. God is the Lord of all the worlds. He has none to participate in His power which is infinite. He has none to assist Him in His work. He stands Unique and Absolute. Islam does not ascribe fatherhood to God nor does it set up equals with Him. It is above all doctrines of incarnation.

Unity is the keynote to the conception of God in Islam. The God of Islam is the Author of all that exists. Islam denies all plurality in Godhead. Islam places no limitation upon His power as other religions do. Islam claims absolute unity for the Divine Being. The Unity of Godhead is the cardinal doctrine of the Qur-án. The laws of nature—the law of gravity, the laws pervading the mineral, the vegetable and the animal world give clear indications of the unity of the Maker.

Islam teaches Universal Brotherhood of man. God is the Lord of all nations. The entire human creation is but one family. Islam does not give preference to any nation, class or sect. There is but one community with One God to Whom we are all responsible. Islam does not make any difference between man and man. We are to love men as children of the same

ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF GOD

Father. The more one loves man, the nearer he is to God. The more he inclines himself to worldly attractions, the farther he is away from God. "God is not kind to him who is not kind to his fellow beings," says the Holy Prophet.

God, out of His infinite love, created the world with a definite object in view which every created thing tends to fulfil, man not excepted. Man is free to act as he chooses. He is responsible to God for his actions and will be punished or rewarded as the case may be in the hereafter. At the same time, he lives to fulfil the Will of God and to work out the end for which he was created. His freedom is limited. He is free to act subject to the Will of God. Not that one's destiny is fixed in the sense that he must do what it is ordained for him but that he can exercise his own discretion subject to the limits imposed by God. God alone knows what our destiny tends to, but, within the limitation of His Will, we are free to act as we choose.

God breathed into Adam and commanded the angels to bow before him. All bowed except Satan and God banished Satan from Heaven. Satan swore that he would tempt men to evil ways. God allowed it. This is by way of a parable. Not that God had no power over Satan but that He desired that every man should fight his desires and resist temptations. This fight, or *jihad* as it is called, continues till death. God has endowed every person with a soul to overcome passions and temptations. Happiness lies in the victory of the soul over the *Nafs* or passions. No passions, no victory. It was out of sheer kindness that man was endowed with a soul to rule over passions and thereby to earn the blessings of God. It is this *jihad* which gives superiority to men over angels. The latter have no trial to overcome, no struggle to make,

ISLAMIC REVIEW

no reward to win. They only sing the praise of God and carry out His errands.

God gave Adam knowledge of all names, which really means that God gave man vast capability of grasping the mysteries of Nature, which the angels lacked. Man's superiority over the angels is thus preordained. Man lives to discover the infinite wisdom that underlies the creation.

It will be foolish to shut one's eyes against the signs of infinite wisdom embedded in the Book of Nature. God's desire will not be fulfilled unless we go deep and study the intricacies of Nature. Culture of the mind is the highest achievement that man can aspire to.

Science discovers the laws of Nature, the truths that pervade the universe. Every thinker will bear witness to the fact that God created the universe with one object—that every atom in it should be of service to man, the highest and best of His creation. The earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the mineral world, the vegetable world, the animal world—all are working to an end, that end being the service of man. How Great, how Mighty, how Kind, how Loving is He to man! Our aim should be to trace His design in all that is created, to realize how Good He is. Every leaf of a tree bespeaks the glory of God. Fie to man if he does not culture his spirit, if he does not bring himself into communion with God, if he does not immerse himself in the ocean of Divine Love. Surely love is the true link which connects man with the Beloved God. Love is Divine, it proceeds from God and lifts man to Divinity. How happy is he who is blest with love divine!

MUHAMMAD IN THE QURAN

BY S. MAQBOOL AHMAD, B.A.

A prophet was expected when John the Baptist was preaching in the valley of Jordan. "And when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, who art thou? And he confessed and denied not; but confessed I am not the Christ. And they asked him, what then? Art thou Elias? And he said I am not. Art thou that Prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, who art thou that we may give an answer to them that sent us? What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of the one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the Prophet Isaiah. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ nor Elias, neither *that Prophet?*" (St. John, I: 19—25.)

That Prophet was, of course, the Prophet foretold by Moses. (Deuteronomy, XVII: 18; XXXIII: 2.) It is clear that neither Jesus nor John the Baptist was meant by "that Prophet." Whoever that be, they were not. That personality was yet to appear and at last "it shineth forth from Mount Paran" nearly six hundred years after this episode. The Jews were so certain about the appearance of this Prophet "like unto Moses out of their brethren" that some tribes actually migrated to Arabia to wait for him and it is mentioned in the Qur-án that whenever they battled with pagan Arabs they prayed for his appearance to confound their enemies. Muhammad is born at last. Hallelujah! He also bore a pre-natal name which though only an inflexion of the name given to him by his parents and meaning the same, nobody knew it in Arabia till then; in the Greek version of the New Testament a very obscure "Paraclete" appeared

ISLAMIC REVIEW

whose literal translation was "Ahmad," but this word was never translated for the benefit of the Arabs by anybody. One has to admit that either Muhammad came to know of it miraculously or it was revealed to him by God which comes to the same thing. Anyway the learned are agreed that it was not a figment of Muhammad's imagination. There it was in spite of all attempts to blot and conceal it. Very soon "Ahmad" came to mean in the world of Islam the same thing as the other name of the Prophet, viz. "Muhammad" and generation after generation of Muslim families have used this word more in christening their children than the name which his parents originally bestowed on him. I myself bear it with pride as a part of my own name—the other two parts of my name, "Saiyid" (Felix) and "Maqbool" (Chosen) are mere adjectives which Indian parents usually add with that blessed name to distinguish one child from the other and millions and millions of children are born every day in the Muslim world with fanciful suffixes and prefixes of local colour but the name given by Prophet Jesus is so common a factor that it has almost become the hall-mark of a Muslim. The first convert to Islam among the Mongol Emperors, the grandson of Pagan Halagu, was given this name and the dreaded Sultans of Turkey once a terror of Europe have had six Muhammads, four Ahmads and five Mustafas (latter only meaning "blessed one" used often by Muslims to avoid taking his name in vain talk). The two African fanatics, the Mahdi of Sudan and Mad Mulla of Somaliland both had the double name of the Prophet Muhammad Ahmad. In fact there is hardly any Muslim dynasty whose haughty rulers did not bear this name with other adjectives.

Perhaps I may be pardoned a little digression while on the subject of prophetic name. According to St.

MUHAMMAD IN THE QURAN

Matthew, Jesus too was given a name by Prophet Isaiah and he quotes the following verse from Isaiah Behold a virgin shall be with a child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." (Matthew, I, 23).

Now turn to Isaiah Chapter VII, v. 14, but read it with context from verse 10, and if I have remarked in my previous article that Matthew was a man of mediocre learning and understanding, I had in my mind the basis of that remark in this verse. Not only Thomas Paine in his "*Age of Reason*" has ridiculed this ingenuity of St. Matthew, but any common reader will agree that the zeal of St. Matthew might be diverted to some better purpose, for if this verse applies by any stretch of imagination to Jesus, then one can only say that Isaiah must be a very absurd man to tell Ahaz of this, as Ahaz wanted an immediate sign and not a post dated one, and perhaps that may be the reason why it is not a common name among the Christians. In our own time, two monarchs bore this name, one Muslim and the other Christian. King Amanullah (the Arabic form of Emmanuel) of Afghanistan and King Victor Emmanuel of Italy. Amanullah drew himself to Emmanuel after his abdication and some Isaiah of our time might find a good omen in this conjunction to deliver a prophecy for his namesake whose fate is hanging in balance at this moment. Arabs are generally a comely people of Caucasian stock with tanned brown complexion, high forehead, curly hairs and bushy beards and Muhammad was no exception. He was strong and healthy son of the desert and his early childhood was immured in hardihood, being nursed by a Bedouin woman Halima of the tribe of Saad living in the vicinity of Makka in pure desert atmosphere. He lost both his parents when very young and was

ISLAMIC REVIEW

adopted by his grandfather Abdul Muttalib, the ruler and dictator of Makka. Forty years he lived with the Makkans as a private citizen gaining the appreciation of his countrymen for his honesty and truthfulness, above all wordly temptations, with a hobby to do odd jobs for the helpless and the poor. This brought him in contact with an aged lady Khadija whom he married at the age of 25; the lady was 15 years senior to him. Both husband and wife lived a calm and peaceful life, though I could very well picture to myself this Makkan fighting a slave-baiter with his brawny hand in the manner of Moses to whom his career much resembled, both having at this time powerful connections, one with Pharaoh and the other with the ruling family of Makka, the Quraish. He was, however, not happy at the sight of the terrible degradation of his countrymen who were little better than savages. Illiterate and ignorant of the politics, history and religion of any people or country, his contemplative mind could neither discover a model or exemplar to shape the destiny of his fellow-countrymen, nor could he solve the mysteries and tribulations of life by independent thinking. He groped in the dark and was suffering the same mental agony as Buddha of India, the ready remedy of which is to cut oneself off from society, but Muhammad had no inclination for that. He retired to the cave of Paran—called Hira by the Arabs, and devoted one month in contemplation and fasting. One day he felt as if some voice was calling him.

“O thou enwrapped in contemplation, arise and warn, etc.”* (Al-Muddassir). This was in the third week of Ramadhan, in the 40th year of his life and about 610 of Christian era. Puzzled and perplexed he returned shivering to his wife and woman-like she

* The first words that came to the Prophet were—“Read in the name of thy Lord, Who created,.....”—Ed I. R.

MUHAMMAD IN THE QURAN

consoled him. So far the introduction outside the Qur-án culled from tradition. Now, let us see Muhammad through the prism of the Qur-án.

The Qur-án, as every reader knows, is not a biography of the Prophet, nor his reminiscences, neither is it arranged chronologically nor subjectwise, except for a few chapters like *Yusuf*, *Kahf*, *Táhhá*. It is an iridescent cadence of oratory and poetry addressed to Muhammad and if my readers are expecting from this essay a study of the mind of Muhammad from the Qur-án, they will be disappointed. Qur-án has not come from the mind or pen of Muhammad, he could not even wield the pen. It has come out of his mouth but this was only as a medium of the Holy Ghost which was shadowed in its turn by God Almighty. Our Christian readers will rather be surprised to know that Muhammad himself had doubted his new experience. And what is more, this misgiving of his is not kept secret but exposed in the very Qur-án for which he is charged of fabrication.

“And if thou art in doubt of that which We have sent down unto thee, ask those who read the Book before thee. Verily the truth is come to thee from thy Lord, be not of those who are in doubt. And be not of those who say the signs of God are lies, or wilt thou be of those who lose.” (X : 94)

The Prophet never thought for himself this position suddenly thrust on him, but when it came he had to be told that he was inspired and so he is addressed.

“Thou could not hope that the Book would be thrown to thee ; save as a mercy from thy Lord ! Be not thou a backer-up of those who misbelieve ; and let them not turn thee from the signs of God, after they have been sent down to thee ; but call unto thy Lord and be not of the idolaters ; and call not with God

ISLAMIC REVIEW

upon any other god ; there is no god but He. Everything is perishable except His face. His is the Judgment, and unto Him shall ye return." (XXVIII : 86-88.)

"O thou apostle—preach what has been revealed to thee from thy Lord, if thou do it not, thou hast not preached His message, and God will not protect thee from men, for God guides not people whom misbelieve" (V : 67).

Then more persistently.

"Verily We have inspired thee as We inspired Noah and the Prophets after him, and as We inspired Abraham and Ishmael, and Jacob and Jonah and Aaron, and Solomon, and to David We gave Psalm. Of the apostles We have already told thee of some before and of the apostles some We have not told thee of." (IV : 163-164).

"And verily it is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds, the faithful spirit came down with it upon thy heart, that thou shouldst be of those who warn, in plain Arabic language, verily it is in the scriptures of yore." (XXVI : 192-195).

"It is not for any mortal that God should speak to him, except by inspiration or from behind a veil, or by sending an apostle and inspiring him by His permission what He pleases, verily He is High and Wise." (XLII : 50).

"God, there is no god but He, the Living, the Self-subsistent. He has sent down to thee the Book in truth, confirming what was before it, and has revealed the Law and the Gospel before, for the guidance of men, and has revealed thee the Discrimination." (III : 1).

"He has revealed this to you in the Book, that when ye hear the signs of God disbelieved in and mocked at ; then sit ye not down with them until they plunge into another discourse, for verily, then ye would be like them." (IV : 140).

MUHAMMAD IN THE QURAN

“We have revealed to thee the Book in truth, verifying what was before it and preserving it; judge then between them by what God has revealed and follow not their lusts, turning away from what is given to thee of the truth.” (V:48).

“This is the Book which We have revealed, a blessing and a confirmation to those which were before it and that the mother of the cities (Makka) may be warned, with those who are round about her. Those who believed in the Last Day believed them, and they unto their prayers will keep. Who is more unjust than he who devises a lie, or says I am inspired, when he was not inspired at all?” (VI:93, 94).

“The Qur-án could not have been devised by any beside God, but it verifies that which was before it, and details the book—there is no doubt therein—from the Lord of the worlds. Do they say, he hath devised it? Say then, bring a Surah (Chapter) like it and call if ye can, on others than God, if ye do tell the truth.” (X:37, 38).

“And We have not sent before thee any but man whom We inspire—ask ye those who have the reminder, if ye know not yourselves—with manifest signs and with scriptures, and We have sent down the reminder to thee too, that thou mayest explain to men what has been sent down to them, and haply they may reflect.” (XVI:43, 44).

“By God—We sent messengers to nations before thee, but Satan made their works seemly to them, for he is their portion to-day, and for them is grievous woe; We have only sent down to thee the Book, that thou mayest explain to them which they did dispute about and as a guidance and mercy to a people who believe.” (XVI:63).

“Thus did We sent down to thee the Book; and those to whom We have given the book believe

ISLAMIC REVIEW

therein ; though none gainsay Our signs except the misbelievers. Thou couldst not recite before this any book, nor write it with thy right hand, for in that case those who deem it vain would have doubted. Nay, but it is evident sign in the breasts of those who are endowed with knowledge and none but the unjust would gainsay Our signs.” (XX : 47-49.)

“The revelation of the book, there is no doubt therein, from the Lord of the worlds. Do they say, He has forged it ? Nay, it is the truth from thy Lord that thou mayest warn a people, to whom no warner has come before thee, haply they may be guided.” (XXXII : 2, 3.)

“A blessed Book which We have sent down to thee that they consider its verses, and those endowed with mind may be mindful.” (XXXVIII : 29.)

“Or do they say, he has forged a lie ? Say, if I have forged ye cannot obtain for me aught from God ; He knows best what you utter concerning it ; He is a witness enough between them and you, and He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.” (XLVI : 8.)

“Be not in doubt about it ; verily it is the truth from thy Lord, though most men do not believe. Who is more unjust than he who forges against God a lie ? They shall be set before their Lord, and the witnesses shall say, those it is who lie against God.” (XI : 17, 18.)

Inspiration from God is the main insignia of Prophethood. If Muhammad was a prophet he was inspired, for religion preached by a worldly reformer and laity could not possibly tell men what is to happen to them when they are dead, and it is the Angel of death that leads man to religion. There could be no ethics and social reformation and for that matter the peace of mind except the solution of this mystery which can only be unravelled by God’s inspired men. Now Muhammad faces his countrymen, pagans, to the very

MUHAMMAD IN THE QURAN

core. They had no idea of God, Angel, inspiration, prophethood, retribution, future life and social justice. His family, the Quraish, the rulers of Makka, were the custodians of an ancient shrine which was visited once a year by all the Arabs and brought them their main income. As he struck at the very root of this invulnerable centre, his own family circle brought on him the full force of their hatred and rancour. I will now pick out the portion of the Qur-án relevant to his physical and mental struggle with the Makkans and with the people of Madina where lived also two Jewish tribes since the days of Titus—Banu Quraiza and Banu Nadzir. There was also a Jewish colony in Khaibar, two days' journey from Madina in the west and a colony of Christians in Najran in the south in the province of Yemen, the remnant of those Abyssinians who once dominated Yemen. Muhammad had a minor and side struggle with the Hypocrites at Madina the leader of whom was Abdullah bin Ubayy. I will describe or rather quote the relevant portion of the Qur-án under two headings—'Muhammad's struggle in Makka' and 'Muhammad's struggle in Madina.'

Muhammad's Struggle in Makka

Unlike the Christians of our time, the pagan Makkans did not suspect Muhammad as a clever schemer, and it was natural. They knew Muhammad's own grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, who was the ruler of Makka and when he died, his uncle, Abu Talib, Muhammad's guardian, took his place. The temporal and spiritual see naturally would ultimately one day be filled by himself, if he had remained quiet. They only thought him to be a deluded fool, spoiling his own worldly prospects, and interfering in the life of his countrymen. They called him one possessed or suffering from hallucination or delusion, a magician, a soothsayer, a poet. They did not accuse him of any immoral act or of any

ISLAMIC REVIEW

cheating or deception he might have committed during the forty years of his life he lived with them, for, though utterly unscrupulous about inventing any malicious charge if they had so wished, they knew it would hold no water at all and they would only be discredited by their own party, and make them a laughing stock. It was they who called him Amin or trustworthy. They only persecuted him physically and mentally and the following verses from the Qur-án will give a picture of how he was treated by the Makkans. His own aunt and uncle have been immortalised in these verses of the Qur-án, which brought from Hafiz, the lyrical poet of Persia, the following couplet :

Hasan zi Basra, Bilal az Habash, Suhaib az Rum.

Zi Khaki Makka Abu Lahab, in chi bul'ajabist.

Hasan from Basra, Bilal from Abyssinia, Suhaib from Greece (sit in the kingdom of God) but Abu Lahab from Makka 'how strange !'

"Abu Lahab's two hands shall perish, and he shall perish. His wealth shall not avail him, nor what he has earned. He shall broil in a fire that flames, and his wife carrying faggots—on her neck a cord of palm fibres." (CXI.)

It is recorded that Abu Lahab's wife got herself strangled accidentally with a cord of palm fibre which she was using to bind faggots, afterwards, and her husband too died by falling in a ditch and breaking his hands.

Another uncle of the Prophet, Abu Jahl, is condemned in the following verses. He it was who threw rubbish on the head of the Prophet when he was adoring his Lord.

"Hast thou considered him who forbids a servant when he prays? Hast thou considered if he were in guidance or bade piety? Hast thou considered if he said it was a lie and turned his back? Nay, surely if

MUHAMMAD IN THE QURAN

he do not desist We will drag him by the forelock—the lying sinful forelock. So let him call his counsel : We will call the guards of hell : Nay, obey him not but adore and draw nigh.” (XCVI : 9—19.)

Abu Jahl was killed in the battle of Badr afterwards, his head was cut off by a Muslim warrior who dragged it on ground by the forelock.

Then comes the condemnation of the Ruling Tribe of Makka.

“ Woe to every slanderer, backbiter, who collects wealth and counts it. He thinks that his wealth can immortalize him. Not so, he shall be hurled into Al Hutama, and what shall make thee understand what Al Hutama is ? the fire of God kindled ; which rises above the hearts. Verily, it is an archway over them on long drawn columns.” (CIV.)

His family, the Quraish, the rulers of Makka, going against him, his two uncles stubbornly resisting and fiercely persecuting him, his other uncles mildly contemptuous or lukewarm, he looks around in despair. He is heartened.

“ By the forenoon and the night when it darkens. Thy Lord has not forsaken thee, nor disappointed thee and surely the hereafter is better for thee than the former ; and in the end thy Lord will give thee, and thou shalt be well pleased. Did he not find thee an orphan, and give thee shelter ? and find thee erring, and guide thee ? and find thee poor with a family, and nourish thee ?” (XCIII : 1—10.)

(To be continued.)

ISLAMIC REVIEW

THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY

RAMADZAN

BY RABI'AL KARIM, M.Sc.

(Continued from p. 46 of the last issue.)

That is why the Ramadhan comes year after year to sanctify and purify the human mind and to lift it from a fallen degraded condition to a sublime and noble state and to fill it with serene and sacred pleasure. This glorious Qur-án is the inspiration of Divine power—it is an eternal clarion call to religion and consciousness ; year after year this absolute and true message is ringing deeply and solemnly in silence in the human mind. As if it is calling “ Arise, ye bewildered forgetful men ! Awaken from your sleep of materialistic ties. Ye sleeping ! Hark, ye are not the pleasure-loving body—the hunger of the flesh is not your real hunger. Those hundreds of duplicity, meanness, avarice, contempt are not yours. Yours is a soul—living, vital and conscientious. Your place is high up in the spiritual regions, your food is the deep meditation and devotion in the service and love of the Lord. O ye forgetful ! Awaken from your slumber. Conquer your body. Tear down all your bonds of passion and bloom in all the radiance of beauty and purity to drink deep from the divine elixir of sanctity, peace, virtue and salvation.”

Verily Ramadhan comes with this great message—this glorious call. This inspiration flows through the Muslim mind like an electric current and the charmed and dead soul answers this call. The Muslim is absorbed in deep meditation in his inner consciousness.

Mark the pale but calm serene face of the fasting eight-year-old child, look at the restrained figure of the fasting addict, just think of the wayward young man's attachment to his prayers in Ramadhan and say whether Ramadhan is or is not really a call to virtue and sanctity—whether or not it is a divine inspiration. There

THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY

is no vicious person whose heart will not tremble to sin in Ramadhan, there is no such lying cheat whose facial nerves will not shrink for a moment to lie in this holy month, there is no such base thief whose hand will not tremble for once to steal in this glorious month. Whenever we see that those who have never thought of praying to God even in their dreams, those who have never hesitated to act readily as fiends to seek their mean self-interest, turn pale to admit that they have not fasted,—we are at once reminded what a unique call of the Lord is this sacred, ecstatic and thought-provoking month of Ramadhan. That quaking of the soul, that shrinking of the mind, that trembling of the hand are touches of sanity—are inspirations of divinity. But he who does not wake up to this feeling, does not engage himself to conquer the material body by restraint has no hope. That body has totally swallowed him, Satan has imprisoned him for ever. His be-all and end-all is to satisfy the body and its cravings. He cannot look beyond this and his future is dark and dismal. And when his body will crumble down, he will find no place even to stand on.

That is why this rigid devoted fasting for thirty days in a pure, serene and enlightened state of mind in the conquest of the material body by a deep solemn meditation. This is not for nothing nor this is superfluous. It is not the vain imagination of enthusiastic preachers—this fasting, this restraint, this separation from the world of physical senses for thirty days year after year is greatly necessary to destroy the materialistic grip of the age—to cut asunder the enticing attachment of Satan—and to merge in the infinite mercy of the Supreme Being. Beautiful is this concentrated effort for gaining humanity out of animal existence. This lustful body does not shrink without fasting and rigidity. Fasting for a day or two cannot

ISLAMIC REVIEW

wipe off the materialistic attractions of life. Devoted effort is essential to remove this charm—long and penanceful restraint is necessary to kill the brute in man—his fiendish envy—his rousing passions. With long fasting as the body becomes leaner and weaker, the tide of the animal ego and passion ebbs down. There is no surging of passion or lust in a fasting mind. All the restlessness in man's mind is subdued. Like the rosette-rosal dawn after a stormy and wild night, the silvery beams of peace, love and purity pacify the unruffled mind. The lotus-heart slowly opens its petals to the radiant piety—the materialistic darkness stealthily recedes and the sublime rays of divinity brighten up the mind.

This is one picture—the solemn and majestic silent picture of the universe. Now I shall depict another picture—the tender and charming picture, and will blend the cool shade with the silvery beams.

This is of the Ramadhan that brings welfare, peace and love. It is like the *salsabil* fount to a parched throat—it is like the elixir ointment to the burnt organs of the body and the mind. It is the friend of the poor and solace to the afflicted. The orphan, the sick, the destitute have lifted their weak hands and prayed for its arrival for the whole year. Hundreds of lowly householders have asked for its advent. The All-Merciful pours down His infinite mercy on mankind in this month of Ramadhan and that is why the Muslim mind the world over is filled to the brim with piety and affection. The wretched person who used to beg from door to door is now face to face with the never-to-be-emptied food store, his pangs of hunger have been appeased, that afflicted man whose tears have run down his bosom begging mercy from all throughout the year is now bathed in the showers of mercy and love, the unfortunate

THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY

being who could never cover her body decently with a tattered piece of cloth has now been blessed with new clothes, the poor people who could not meet the wants of their family in spite of their best attempts have filled their empty stores out of the flow of mercy. Loads of food and dress, gems and jewels are being sent in all directions from the Divine store, and the sweet elixir from the Divine Bounty is quenching the thirst of the world. There is no sorrow today, no affliction, no want—all troubles are at an end. This is why there is a smile on every Muslim face, there is gaiety in all Muslim courtyards. The blessings of the mercy of the Supreme Lord have touched equally the hearts of the rich and the poor, the healthy and the suffering and made them resplendent with virtue and well-being, so much so that even the darkness of the night is not able to spoil that cheering music. The donor is freely bestowing food, dress and money, the strong have held the hands of the weak and are leading them on to the land of safety, the healthy are shedding tears by the bedside of the sick—fraternal affection has filled every heart. The voice is tender, the heart is pure, the mind is sympathetic and the eyes are kind. The hand that has struck hard like thunder has today become tender and soft ; the tongue that has hurt so many hearts has become sweet.

This is the smiling glorious picture of the Ramadan—the calm and peaceful rays of the morn—the dewy and affectionate touch of the Zephyr. When the Ramadan peeps with the shade of mercy of the Infinite, playing the soft music of love and peace, then the tears of sorrow turn into pearls of sympathy and the heart is filled with the resonance of joy and festivity. Words fail to describe what tenderness is there in this rigidity, what sweetness in this solemnity, what a balm in this mortification! The glow of calm and cheer that

ISLAMIC REVIEW

manifests itself on the face of the fasting saint as the shades of the evening veil the face of the earth, the divine peace and strength that generate in his mind can never be understood by the unfortunate disbeliever. He may laugh at the alleged stupidity of the man for fasting, but as he remains deprived of fasting he fails to realise what sweetness and happiness are there in the diversity created by the Ramadhan. Habit makes sweet things bitter, and turns cool, refreshing drinks into hot ones, it deadens the sense of taste and smell. A charming figure is not so charming if seen for all times, the sweet fragrance of the rose loses its perfume if smelt frequently. He who indulges ever and anon in sumptuous dinners and suppers can never feel how merciful is the Creator and with what infinite mercy and affection He has enveloped us, what nectar He has reposed in our food and drink. That man is really hungry though he fills his stomach; he is really thirsty though he drinks, because his food is not palatable to him, his drink does not refresh him. His mind is for ever unsatisfied, he always feels oppressed by the pressure of his temptations. But when a fasting Muslim, the devotee of Allah, lifts his glass of water after his day's fast, a strange refreshing sweetness fills his parched throat and a savoury odour comes to him from his ordinary food. His mind is filled with the blessings and mercy of Allah and a deep sense of gratitude to the All-merciful fills his heart and this feeling transcends all the din [and bustle of the *iftar* (breaking of the fast in the evening).

This Ramadhan is all aglow with glory and peace, with tenderness and sweetness. Meditation has made it solemn, devotion has made it calm and joy has made it lively. That is why it is so loving, so caressing. The devoted thinker is saying within himself, "Oh my friend! Thou Ramadhan! Come every year with a

THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY

flow of cool and refreshing water over the desert of life to make sweet-smelling flowers to bloom in the thorny dale and to kindle divine lights in the otherwise dark gloom of existence—come as the blessings and mercy of the Creator. At your advent we gain our real selves, and the brute in us merges in humanity. We can understand through you that we are not self-concentred brutes, we are not mean but we are men—men with hearts and feelings—members of affectionate and cheerful families. At your beckoning we look towards our wretched brethren with sorrowful eyes—we wipe the tears off our afflicted mothers. Oh friend! Come filling all our hearts. Thy golden touch turns us back from the lures of materialism and through restraint in fast, do you let us know that we are not mere lustful bodies, but are sacred, pious and self-realising souls. You teach us that in the service of the Lord lies our greatest delight, that therein lies our salvation and that the pleasure of the Almighty is the summum bonum of our life.”

We are raised to life so to speak year after year, we arise out of the death-bed of this vicious world. That is why, Oh Ramadan! thou art a thing of joy and mirth and so we welcome thee with outstretched arms. “Oh! Eternal message from the Lord—come year after year—come as a messenger of peace—goodwill—come in the company of devotion, meditation and delight.”

ISLAMIC REVIEW

INFLUENCE OF ISLAMIC CULTURE ON THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE WEST*

BY PROFESSOR HECTOR O. CORFIATO, S. A. D. G.

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The wonderful rendering of an art which flourished under the patronage and protection of Islam, quite unrivalled in the early Middle Ages, is such an important chapter in the life of mankind that I regret, in the time at my disposal, it is impossible to give it full justice. Islamic art developed with a lightning rapidity in Asia and Egypt and in parts of Europe due to the dynamic fervour of a new religion which provided the means of unification of different races and brought about a new philosophy and outlook of life, hitherto despised by other religious teachings. To quote Finlay, "Who does not know how in those gloomy and lamentable ages, in which Europe was enveloped in the darkest shadow of ignorance, the Arabs alone, with the greatest industry, applied themselves to the promotion of the sciences."

It was the Arab doctors of medicine and the Arab philosophers who gave new life to the study of all sciences and arts. It was the Arabs who kept burning the Greek flame of learning and this passion for higher ideals can be best judged by the conditions for granting peace to the Emperor Michael III, by the renowned Caliph Al-Mamun when he asked that there should be given to him all the writings of the learned Greeks which were preserved in the Imperial Library at Constantinople (814). European culture expressed its debt to Islamic learning when Avicenna and Averrhoes were represented in the apotheosis of St. Thomas Aquinas, in the great fresco by Taddeo Gaddi in the

*Being the text of a lecture delivered at a meeting of the Muslim Society in Great Britain, held at 18, Eccleston Square, London, S. W. 1, on Saturday, April, 19, 1943.

ISLAM AND WESTERN ARCHITECTURE

Church of St. Maria Novella in Florence. Muslim architecture is only one facet of the rare jewel of Islamic culture, and it can be best appreciated in its proper setting. Architecture is inseparable from all the causes which influence the evolution of art. In examining these causes, it will be found that Islam followed the usual processes; it borrowed, adopted, adapted, developed and lent. If we are to understand this intercourse between Islam and the West, we must find the points of contact.

These are mainly the relationship of Islam with the Greek Empire of Constantinople; the great trade routes which took the products of the east all over Europe and as far north as Scandinavia; the Islamic domination of Sicily; the Islamic domination of Spain and to a lesser degree, the Crusades. The exile of the Nestorians to Persia and the Exodus of Greek scholars after Justinian's persecution were amongst the first inspirations to Islamic scholarship. Greek Philosophy is the root of Islamic schools of thought,* as acknowledged by Al Jahiz of Basra--“Did we not possess the books of the ancients, in which their wonderful wisdom is immortalised and in which the manifold lessons of history are so dealt with, that the past lives before your eyes? Did we not have access to the riches of their experience which otherwise would have been barred to us, our share of wisdom would be immeasurably smaller, and our means of obtaining a true perspective meagre?”

It is not, therefore, surprising, that the best exponents of Aristotelian theories are Muslim scholars most famous of all, Al-Kindi. Thinkers of Cordova translated Greek philosophers from Syria, and although the study of philosophy started at Baghdad, Islamic

*We are afraid the picture is rather overdrawn here. The root was provided to these schools of thought by the Scriptures of Islam. The Greek or any other philosophy may be said to have supplied imagination and colour.—ED. I. R.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

Spain became the centre of classical studies and English scholars such as Robert, the Englishman (the first to translate the Qur-án), Michael Scott, Daniel Morley and Adelard of Bath, flocked to Toledo in search of learning.

The Western world was greatly influenced by translations from Arabic into Latin, one of the best of Aristotle's commentators being the Spanish Muslim philosopher Ibn Rushd (Averrhoes, 1198). Ibn Massara's Empedocleian theories greatly influenced religious thought in Europe. At a much earlier period another school of translations, that of Hunayn Ibn Ishaq Al-Ibadi and his nephew who travelled on purpose to Alexandria were to no small degree responsible for the revival of philosophy in Europe. To the school of learning of that period we owe the names of Thabit Ibn Qurra and Qusta Ibn Luqua, physicians, and Al-Razi, known as Rhazes, whose work *Al-Hawi* (comprehensive book) was translated into Latin under the auspices of Charles I of Anjou.

It is difficult to sort out exactly what Islam owes to Constantinople and what Constantinople owes to Islam, as both were in close contact, friendly or otherwise. What the effect was on arts, of the first siege of Constantinople during Mu'awia's reign is little known, the Arab historian Tabari being silent on the point. Sicily played no small rôle in the spreading of Islamic knowledge and arts in Europe; it is in Sicily that Abdul Malik exiled many of his subjects who had revolted at Kairwan.

It is to Al-Idrisi that King Roger II of Sicily entrusted the writing of a book on Geography, and the world map by Marino Sanuto (1321), dedicated to the Pope was a copy of an Arabic Map.

Frederic II not only surrounded himself with Arabic scholars but even used a Saracen army against

ISLAM AND WESTERN ARCHITECTURE

the Pope. As a matter of fact, during the Norman rule in Sicily, in the short space of two hundred years, a magnificent series of achievements in arts, sciences and literature was accomplished, where Islamic inspiration was the dominant keynote. When the Normans conquered Sicily they found, in addition to the native population, Greeks and Arabs, remains of Byzantine or Arab domination.

Greeks and Arabs were infinitely superior to the native population in culture. The Normans adopted Greek and Arabic traditions and most of the high officials belonged to one of the two races already mentioned, in this, Normans following the Achemenid Persians' examples.

The Crusades were a pretext to economic and social necessities at the time, the sacking of Constantinople in 1204 being a proof of that. Only to a small degree did they contribute in spreading Islamic culture. To the crusaders we owe the foundation of trading quarters by the Venetians and Genoese. To these traders we owe the importation into Europe of such things as sesame, maize, rice, lemons, apricots, shallots, etc., and carmine, lilac, alum, cloves, incense, aloes. Many names as "Muslin" (from Mosul), "Baldashins" or "Baldacco" (Baghdad), "Damasks" and "Damascenes" (Damascus), "Atlas" (Silk Satin), "Taffeta" (from Perra Tafich), Grenadine (Granada) and even "Atabi" or "Taby" are Arabic. Pepys mentions in his diary that "he wore his Taby silk waistcoat", and the name of "Taby" coat is derived from that epithet.

The diffusion of Arabic numerals is due to these traders, especially that blessing of mathematicians, the nought or *sifr*. And no smaller blessing was the foundation of the first hospital in Europe by Louis IX, Les Quinzevingts, after his return from the crusade

ISLAMIC REVIEW

(1254—60). In this he modelled it on the first hospital ever founded, that of Harún-Al-Raschid. It can be mentioned at this stage that all medical curricula up to the end of the sixteenth century were based on Avicenna's canon and on the writings by Rhazes, especially in Vienna and Frankfurt. The influence of Islam through trade, can be assessed by the fact that coins with Arab inscriptions are to be found in Russia, Scandinavia and most remote parts of Europe or Asia. Italian banks of Genoa, Pisa, Sienne, etc., used with the Byzantine gold coinage bearing Arabic inscriptions, the Saracenati, until Innocent IV protested in 1249. In France, up to the end of the 13th Century, Arabic gold coins with Hijra dating were used. The British Museum possessed a coin of King Ofa of Mercia with an Arabic inscription and, better still, an Irish cross with a central enamelled medallion bearing the inscription *Bi-ism-Allah*.

Many words such as "algebra," "cheque," "magazine," "admiral," "tariff," "arsenal," "alcove," "sofa," "mattress," "talisman" and even "baroque" are Islamic in origin. The Cordwainers Company owes its origin to Cordovan Leather.

Art always follows in the wake of trade. Music and popular songs spread through Arabic channels; a proof of it may be found in "Lute," from Alud; Guitar from Guitara; Ribble from Rabab; Fanfare from Anfari; and Troubadour from Tarraba; Alfarabi, under the name of "Al-pharabius" was widely known for his works on music. With songs, the Chansons-De-Gest found their way into the south of France and Europe. The song of Roland, the Cid and many fables and tales of mediæval Europe, are direct copies of Arabic prototypes. The result of the infiltration of Arabic literary themes was a vast intellectual movement which outgrew the narrow ecclesiastical limits of that

ISLAM AND WESTERN ARCHITECTURE

period. Boccaccio, for his *Decameron*, found his inspiration in oriental tales, Dante, in his "Divine Comedy", borrows his legend of Saint Patrick, and his description of purgatory from Arabic ideas. Germany and England with their scholars Olarius or William Bedwell, and Edmond Castell—one of the first Cambridge professors of Arabic. In the 18th Century, the translation into English by Chaplow of that masterpiece, "The Maqamat" by Hariri brought fresh ideas to European literature. In France many books were written in imitation of Arabic themes, such as Montesquieu's "Lettres Persanes" and Victor Hugo's "Les Orientales." Even Voltaire, whose prolific mind is beyond question, succumbed to the influence of Islamic literature. The rôle that Islamic universities and centres of learning have played is not yet fully known. Long before Bologna, Montpellier or Oxford, Islamic universities flourished in Damascus, Jerusalem, Alexandria and Salerno. The University of Baghdad, founded by Nizam-al-Mulk, friend of Omar Khayyam, was famous. European universities were modelled on Islamic institutions, especially the university of Mustan Serijah in Baghdad (1234). At that university students paid no fees and received an allowance of one gold dinar per month each. According to Ibn Turat free meals were provided, baths and even free paper and pens. A hospital with daily medical inspections was attached to the university for the benefit of the students, and all that happened in 13th century, long before the name of Beveridge had been heard! In the field of arts the debt of Europe to Islam can hardly be assessed. The Sicilian and Spanish weavers were responsible for the spread of rich fabrics with Arabic inscriptions, all over Europe. This patterning influenced not only architecture but also painting and all the ancillary arts.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

The German emperors were robed with Arabic inscription, many Christian cathedrals had their altars carved with Islamic fabrics and churches possessed priceless Eastern carpets. It is curious to note that a painting by Giotto represents Christ, draped in clothes with borders of Arabic inscriptions. The art of pottery in Europe owes almost everything to Islam. Italian drug-jars of 15th century were the product of Muslim artists. Hispano-moresque pottery was made for Cardinals and Popes, and rich families of Spain, Italy and France. As Cardinal Ximenez once remarked 'They lack our faith, but we lack their works.' The present-day ceramics of south-western Europe are a legacy of the coloured Agulejos. The wonderful Spanish timber or coffered ceilings, inspired by Arabic patterning are by far the best examples of such work, much better than the Palestine Chapel at Palermo or the ceilings at Fontainebleau or Dijon. These works usually were carried out in Spain by Muslim craftsmen called *mudejars* who were constantly employed in Spain in the construction of churches. This spirit of tolerance proving that art is a unifying factor in this world was reciprocated by the Muslims who employed Christian craftsmen in the construction of mosques. It is interesting to note that the Alcazar at Seville was built for Pedro the Cruel by *mudejar* work-men.

If Muslims did not invent the pointed arch they certainly made an intelligent use of it and taught its construction to Christian builders. The intersecting arches and rib-vaulting construction, preceded the similar Gothic system by two centuries. The countries which first saw Islamic architecture flourish, offered worthy examples, like Machatta, Sarvistan, Fizuzabad, Cesiphon and in the great entrance openings of mosques there is no servile copyism of the prototype.

ISLAM AND WESTERN ARCHITECTURE

Egypt and Syria were rich in Hellenistic traditions. In the former country the Copts transmitted many building traditions. Armenian and Greek masons were employed in Egypt and even as far west as Spain and sometimes in France, as may be seen in the 9th century church of Germigny des pres. Yet the Muslim architecture imparted a character and individuality of its own. The pointed arch as well as the waved or keel-shaped arch, passed into Gothic, while the lobed or cusped arch (very likely borrowed from India) was eagerly adopted by the mediæval western architect. It is known that Indian craftsmen worked in Egypt as early as the 3rd century B. C. India herself borrowed from Mesopotamia, Persia, and Greece, since the times of Asoka, and later became a lender. I do not propose to enter into a lengthy explanation of Indian symbolism in architecture, whether the horse-shoe arch suggests the lotus leaf, or the pointed arch the lotus petal and the trefoil arch a compound aureole is immaterial. The Islamic artist made use of this motif, and passed it on to the builders of Gothic cathedrals. The dome itself whether depressed as in the Byzantine cupola, or ovoid as in the Syro-Persian, raised or bulbous or even cone-shaped became an integral part of the five-principal styles in Islamic architecture. In Sicily, French and Arab artists mingled freely under the patronage of Frederick II and Islamic influence spread to Rome, Lombardy and is apparent in Apulian art as may be observed in the cathedrals of Trani, Bari, and Betonto. Genoa naturally was subjected to Islamic influences and so were buildings of the Carolingian period—Santo Tosca at Tosello and San Donato at Zara. Venice itself, rich with spoils from the sack of Constantinople in 1204, and artistic objects brought by merchants from the east, gave rise to a special art of its own, which I call by the French word

ISLAMIC REVIEW

‘Arabisant.’ This art influenced mediaeval and renaissance Germany and also southern and central France. The Cistercian monks spread Gothic traditions the root of which came from the East. Arab at may be seen not only in the decoration and ornament of the niches of the four minor doors at St. Marks but also in its construction. The arches of the upper part of the elevation (Gothic tabernacles added later) show in the inflected crowning arch the results of Islamic inspiration. To a similar influence must be attributed the stilted arches at the corners of the facade, and also the bulb-shaped cupolas, which were still more accentuated in their bulb form as may be seen in a picture painted in 1496 by Gentile Bellini. At Sienna the brick and stone treatment, at Como in the Church of St. Abonndio, and at Cremona may be seen, examples of Islamic character. Many palaces of Venice like the Loredan or the Dell’Oro recall Moorish prototypes. Even in Padua, in the Church of St. Sophia the external arch gallery recalls the architecture of Toledo. In Sicily, as we have seen, we have pure Islamic art in buildings, fortifications and palaces surrounded with gardens, according to Islamic tradition. Gardens scattered with pavillions, kiosks, fountains and running water. Yet the majority of these buildings were erected after the Arab domination, like the monastery of St. Giovanni-degli-eremite, erected by King Roger. The Church of St. Cataldo the Ziza, the Piccola Cuba and the great Cuba in the Palermo, with its stalactite ornaments, are purely Arab in style. Then we have those buildings which denote mixed influences, such as Byzantine and Arab or Arab and Norman. To mention a few, the Church of Santa Matia-del-Ammariglio, the Palatine Chapel, the Cathedral of Cefalu, and the Cathedral of Montreale. In Spain Islamic influence seems natural, but original ideas, like the blind or blank

ISLAM AND WESTERN ARCHITECTURE

arcading, the prototype of which is to be found in the Cristo-de-la-Luz at Toledo (10th century) spread far beyond its original country and may be seen in the cathedrals of Durham or Norwich. It is the decorative use of architectural elements of this type which may be traced directly to Islam. The same applies to the treatment of paired windows, the Al-Shamas or Ajimez of the Spaniards. The mosque of Cordova with its low columns and circular shaft above necessitated by the use of existing columns, gave rise to the Gothic theme of circular pier and superimposed shaft supporting the ribbed vaulting. Cordova with its 70 libraries became such a famous centre of learning and art, that the rulers of Navarre and Leon, whenever in need of a surgeon or an artist, applied always to Cordova. Queen Tot of Navarre brought, for instance, her son Sancho the Fat, to Cordova to be cured of his obesity. The Islamic Mozarabis also spread during their persecution under the Berber Almoravides and the Almohades. The Cluniac monks were also accessories in the diffusion and adoption of these Islamic methods of construction. It was during these periods of persecution that the geographers Al Bakri, Idrisi and Ibn-Zuhr (the Avenzoir) lived and taught under the Almoravides. In France the Cistercian and Cluniac monks rivalled in new building and the immediate result may be seen at Vezelay. St. Denis and other buildings of the period, such as Poitiers, Vaison, or some churches of Poitou. Islamic fabrics inspired the decoration of the windows at the church of Aulnay and the doorways at Avallon. The history of King Odo and Sully, and the monastic orders in France are rich in examples of Islamic infiltration through Spain such as the importation of the Lancet Gothic. The ornamental battlements of the mosque of Ibn Tulun (876) are to be seen in many a Gothic or Tudor building.

ISLAMIC REVIEW

The Kufic ornamental inscriptions served as example for Gothic friezes. The decoration of the Retable at Westminster Abbey according to Professor Lettaby may be attributed to Islamic origins. Machicolations derived from the Bab-an-Nasr in Cairo (1087) will inspire the castle-builders of Europe and they will be seen first at Norwich and then at Chatillon or Villeneuveles-Avignons. It would be interesting to note that machicolations were originally latrines formed with a pierced slab supported by brackets and overhanging the top of building. It is not known who originated the idea of dropping through the hole molten lead or equally disagreeable matter and missiles.

France, however, had been subjected to Islamic influences at a much earlier date than the period of Sully. Charlemagne had understood that Law and Force were useless in his endeavours to reform and organize barbarians. He understood that the arts and letters were the only means of overthrowing barbarism. (It seems that this lesson has not yet been understood in modern times.) Charlemagne knew Harun-al-Rashid who had sent him a clock as a present. In 777 he concluded treaties of alliance with the Moors of Saragossa and Huesca. Through these treaties he brought to France Moors from Spain and Arabs from Syria,—grammarians, musicians and mathematicians. At a later period the Venetian traders arrived in France.

The manuscript of antiquities of Limoges dates the arrival of Venetians between 988 and 989. It goes on as follows: 'The old registers of the country tell us that the Venetian traders of merchandise from the East being unable to pass their ships on their way from the Mediterranean, to the Atlantic through the Straits of Gibraltar (on account of the difficulties of passage), came to settle at Limoges and established the Venetian Exchange, bringing spices and other stuffs

ISLAM AND WESTERN ARCHITECTURE

from the East, through Aigues-Mortes by mule or camel to Limoges and thence to La Rochelle, Brittany, England, Scotland etc.' This happened at a time when architects were trying to find to replace the wooden ceilings of churches, an easy prey to fire, by something more solid. In this way the cupola was introduced. But this cupola was the Eastern cupola of Byzantine or Mesopotamia and it came through Venice together with spices, silk and fabrics from Syria, Baghdad, Egypt, Sicily and Spain. All these fabrics are to be found in all mediæval tombs of the 12th century or paintings of that period. In the path of trade art followed, and the architecture of Saintonge, Poitou, Anjou, Maine and especially Normandy adapted for their own use drawings and especially decorative designs of Eastern patterning. All along the Rhone and Saone we see Venetian influence and through Venice the Islamic East is present.

All the decorative motifs as far as Toulouse and the mouth of the Gironde are eastern. In 984 St. Front was built reproducing St. Mark of Venice. It was designed either from the plans of a Venetian architect or from the drawings of a Frenchman who studied St. Mark. In this I quote the great authority Viollet-le-duc. The cupolas, however, of St. Front belong to the ovoidal Islamic type and this tradition still persists in modern French church buildings such as those by Vandremere, Magne and others. I venture to suggest that the Renaissance, rich in eastern designs such as the arabesque, the bee-hive pattern and other geometrical designs adopted the principle of contrast of dome and spire from the Islamic cupola and minaret. The ellipsoidal form of the Renaissance dome forming an independent external shell from the internal vault has not yet been satisfactorily explained. The artistic mind always works on some precedent, however slender

ISLAMIC REVIEW

it may be. Did not the stalactite motif develop from the corbelled tiles (first to be seen at the mosque of Al-Zayashi in Mesopotamia) and did not the Irish interlaced decorative carving, as well as the northern German and Scandinavian find their primary form in Koptic and Arabic designs? To the same origin may be attributed the geometrical cornices to be found in early Renaissance buildings.

From this short expose of the influence of Islam on Western architecture it may be seen that many new ideas were due to the impact of the East and the West, one of the least expected being the origin of modern taxation. With income-tax at 10s. in £1, it is comforting to know that Louis VII in 1146 levied a tax on personal property and his example was soon followed by Henry II who raised two-pence on £1 and also the Saladin tithe to finance the crusades. This flow of ideas may be explained also by the fact that craftsmen of all creeds and races travelled in far distant countries in search of work. In time of war, these craftsmen formed the 'smalla' that followed the camps. Tolerance was a virtue greatly practised by Muslim rulers. In Spain, Christians and Muslims lived side by side, creating a friendly atmosphere seldom seen in Europe in the Middle Ages. So much so, that the French who had helped Alphonso VIII to win the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212) deserted the Spanish king in disgust when they saw how kindly he treated the conquered Muslims. 'L'Islam est une religion d'hommes' says Renan. It would be fitting, therefore, to recall the verses of the Qur-án—'Men are the enemies of each other. Were they left to their instincts of violence and greed, they would utterly lay waste the earth.'

CORRESPONDENCE

CAMBRIDGE,
August 4, 1943.

DEAR SIR,

I have spent some time in the East during the last few years and have become interested in your religion. I wonder if you could tell me more about it? Perhaps I could come over to Woking some time and have a talk with some one there.

Yours truly,
P. M.

MANCHESTER,
August 12, 1943.

DEAR SIR,

I have taken a deep interest in the Islamic Religion for a considerable time and have greatly admired the Muslim faith and possess a copy of the Qur-ân in English language.

I am taking the liberty of writing to you to inquire whether you could recommend any books in English dealing with the faith, particularly in its modern phase and would therefore highly appreciate any information you could give me.

Trusting to be favoured with your reply, for which I should feel greatly indebted to you,

I am, Yours respectfully,
C. G. R.

LEICESTER,
August 16, 1943.

MY DEAR IMAM,

Many thanks for your welcome letter which reached me on Saturday, and I thank you for having accepted me as a brother in Islam.

I feel sure that having broken away from the dogma of Christian Church, I shall be much happier and find peace in the teachings of Muhammad, on whom be peace.

I wish I could come and learn from you more of the true faith, its forms of prayer, ceremonies etc., but, as I am situated at the moment, that is of course out of the question. However, I expect to be leaving the army soon for health's reason and in that case it might be possible to come to Woking and see you. . . . The beginning of your letter with "Assalamu-Alaikum" reminds me of when I was up on the N. W. Frontier of India among the Pathan tribesmen. I learnt to speak Urdu reasonably well. Of course even that language has become very rusty as far as I am concerned, for I have not used it since 1929. However, I am thinking of

ISLAMIC REVIEW

taking up Arabic so that I can read the Qur-an in the original. I wonder if you would be good enough to let me have a copy of some of the principal Muslim Prayers in English for I am very ignorant as regards them.

In conclusion, may I hope that you will write to me as frequently as your time will permit.

Yours very sincerely,
C. N. (Lieut.).

August 19, 1943.

MY DEAR SIR,

I was ever so pleased to receive your most kind letter and the pamphlets on Islam, and I very highly appreciate your kindness. I am forming a very strong attachment to Islam and I shall carefully study the reading matter you have so very kindly provided me with. I have conformed for a number of years to the Jewish Religion but I find it a very restrictive and conservative religion, suited to a particular race of people whereas the faith of Islam appears to me to be universal and free in presenting God resplendently in all His wonder to every one who wishes to respect Him.

It appears to me that Muhammad has acted as a magnificent and brave representative of God to destroy evil and corruption and establish goodness, beauty and wholesome teaching amongst mankind and I have great respect and admiration for him. I desire to conclude my letter in tendering you my very high respects and best wishes in the advancement of the will of Allah.

Yours,
C. G. R.

LEICESTER

THE IMAM, WORKING MOSQUE.

DEAR SIR,

Will you please send me the pamphlets and any leaflets you have on Islam by the Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din.

Thanking you,

W. S.

CLAPHAM, S.W. 8
September 2, 1943.

DEAR SIR,

I should take it as a great favour, if you would send me several copies of the Islamic literature different series as I should like to know a little more of the true meaning of Islam, and what its relative meanings are. If these are unobtainable please tell me of any book which might explain more to me.

Yours faithfully,
(Miss) J. T.

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Manager, **THE MUSLIM BOOK SOCIETY, Azeez Manzil, Brandreth Road, LAHORE, Punjab (India)**