

"Muhammad is . . . the Apostle of Allah and the Last of the Prophets . . ."

—HOLY QUR-AN, 33 : 4

"There will be no prophet after me."

—PROPHET MUHAMMAD

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نَحْمَدُكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
وَيَا نَبِيَّ الْبَرِّ

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

Vol.
XXXV

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BY THE LIGHT OF THE HOLY QUR-AN

Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth declares the glory of Allah ; to Him belongs the kingdom, and to Him is due (all) praise, and He has power over all things.

He it is who created you, but one of you is an unbeliever and another of you is a believer ; and Allah sees what you do.

He created the heavens and the earth with truth, and He formed you, then made goodly your forms, and to Him is the ultimate resort.

He knows what is in the heavens and the earth, and He knows what you hide and what you manifest ; and Allah is Cognizant of what is in the hearts.

Has there not come to you the story of those who disbelieved before, then tasted the evil result of their affair, and they had a painful chastisement ?

That is because there came to them their apostles with clear arguments, but they said : Shall mortals

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guide us ? So they disbelieved and turned back, and Allah does not stand in need (of anything), and Allah is Self-Sufficient, Praised.

—*The Holy Qur-án, Ch. LXVI, vv. 1-6.*

The Purport

The Creator being perfect, the creation is faultless at bottom. Man's vision and understanding of the creation, however, differs. Those who care to go deep enough see the hand of a Perfect Providence both in the creation of the universe and in the existence of man himself—others do not. But the spiritual laziness of these latter cannot go unnoticed. History bears testimony to the fact that such careless people, behaving indifferently in life, as if it were without any purpose, are visited with crushing calamities. The whole chain of cause and effect and the sequence of phenomena in the world were enough to make people realize that they should take their life seriously or else they would meet with disaster through a wrongful course of action. But God out of His mercy affords these people a further facility—He sends His Prophets as warners before the actual arrival of such calamities. And it is after ridiculing such warners that those callous people meet their doom. God, on His part, takes all necessary steps to save them from such disaster, but if they do not care to avail of His provisions, it does not harm Him in the least. His high purpose will, in any case, be fulfilled.

PRIESTLY FUNCTION AND PRIESTCRAFT

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

There must be leadership in matters religious just as there is leadership in all other activities of life. All people are not equally gifted to understand and explain questions of religion. Those who are better qualified must lead those who are less. Whether in ritualistic aspects or in their moral philosophy and spiritual implications, we are always happy to be enlightened by people who are better qualified than ourselves and we are also happy to acknowledge the leadership of such people. The

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man who at a particular place and on a particular occasion plays such a role may be regarded as discharging the functions of a priest, and may even be called a priest from this point of view. But this is not what is styled as priestcraft, and which presupposes a sort of a syndicate monopolising the whole authority of certifying the eligibility of a person for priestly function: a syndicate which is supposed to derive its sanction in a mysterious way from God. This is the very opposite of democracy in the sphere of religion. The congregation is not in a position under this latter system to judge the qualification of a priest, nor is a person who is not wholly and solely devoted to this work and who has not secured the stamp of the religious syndicate, qualified to officiate in any religious function, even if the function has to be postponed or even stopped for lack of a priest so authorised. In Hinduism this authority is acquired through birth primarily and in Christianity it is imparted through a training that would satisfy the authorities wielding power on rights Divine. Whatever the process of selection and appointment, they stand practically on the same level. It is an exclusive system and the people in general have nothing to do with it. To use a term of political science, it is kind of oligarchy, and it maintains its authority on two things. Some sort of ruling is traced to the founder or founders, which indicates a delegation of power to some person or persons. The Brahmin was declared by the founders of Hinduism, it is narrated, to have sprung from the head of Brahma, the Creator. They, therefore, became the sole repository of the knowledge of the Vedas and the only people who can attend to the religious needs of the people.

The Christian Church is founded on certain words ascribed to Prophet Jesus concerning the high role Peter was to play in the moulding and direction of the Christian faith.

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Islam alone stands on quite a different footing. The successorship devolves, by a clear injunction of the Qur'án, not on a person or a group of persons among the followers of the faith, but on the whole body of believers. Says the Book :

Thus have We made you an equitable people so that you may be the bearers of witness to humanity, and the Prophet a bearer of witness to you.

This is a very clear statement. It asserts, without any ambiguity, that the whole congregation represents the Holy Prophet as bearer of witness. The community may further appoint one man or a group of men to actively look after the religious needs of the community, but the sovereign power, to use another term of political science, lies with the community at large. This is the *Magna Carta* of spiritual democracy in Islam. The dispute about the personal successorship of the Holy Prophet with all its evil results, has this one redeeming feature in it, to wit, it indicates the absence of the Holy Prophet's imposition of any decision of his on this point on the congregation. Indeed, he could not have given any such decision as the Holy Qurán gave him no authority to do so. The Book evidently delegates the power of appointing the religious executive to the whole community.

But this is only one way of maintaining the spiritual democracy in Islam. Another and a more potent way is the emphasis on the necessity of reading and understanding the Scripture on the part of each and every believer. It need hardly be mentioned that in Christianity for about two millenniums the understanding of the Scriptures was the sole monopoly of the Church and in Hinduism that of the Brahmins all throughout. Horrible persecutions were inflicted on those non-Latin speaking Christians who first dared to have the Bible translated into their own language, to make it possible for the ordinary man to know what the Book contained. In Hinduism the Shudra

PRIESTLY FUNCTION AND PRIESTCRAFT

is not allowed even to listen to the holy words recited on pain of brutal physical suffering. The Holy Qurán on the other hand announces its own position in respect of this question in the adoption of its very name Qur'án, which means "a thing to be read" by every one—man and woman, the young and the old, the learned and the unlearned, the master and the slave. As a matter of fact, the reading and understanding of the Holy Qurán is made compulsory by precept and practice. There is a saying of the Holy Prophet : "Education is obligatory on every Muslim, man and woman," in which the narrowest interpretation of education covers the knowledge of the Holy Qurán. Indeed, the knowledge of the Qurán was so common among the believers that challenged on a point of law during his Friday sermon, the mighty Caliph Umar had to admit that the women of Madina had a greater understanding of the Qurán in some matters than even the Caliph himself. In various ways the Holy Qurán emphasises the need of the knowledge of the Qurán by the common man. Speaking of the midnight prayer God says :

"So you should read whatever you can afford of the Quran."

One is expected to memorise the Qurán as much as it is possible for him to do. An encouragement is afforded to the reading of the Book in another statement :

"We have made the Qur-án easy as a reminder."

In other words, as the Book contains admonition and warning for one and all, it has been made easy for reading and understanding.

Further, we are required to ponder over the Qurán. Mere parrot-like recitation is not all that is wanted :

"Do not they ponder over the Qur-án" ?

A society in which an average man and woman is required like this to understand and think over the Scripture, leaves scarcely any room for the growth of a priestly hierarchy.

And yet Islam is for systematised, well-regulated social order and religion plays a very prominent part in it. Its

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religious activities are naturally expected to be methodical as well and so they are. Strict discipline is enjoined in the observance of collective religious activities ; obedience to constituted authority is enjoined in no uncertain terms. But the principle of spiritual democracy is upheld in an equally clear language. Says the Holy Qur'an :

"Obey God and obey the Apostle and those in authority among you : but if you happen to differ on any question refer it to God (*i.e.*, Book of God), and the Apostle (*i.e.*, the Sunnah)."

As no collective life is possible without obedience to constituted authority, who in a way take the position of the Prophet in a very limited sense, we are expected to acknowledge their leadership. But in the same breath we are reminded that the final responsibility of having religion established in the life of the people rests with the community itself, which must keep on exercising its power of understanding the religion and watch the authorities lest they should go wrong. And when they do go wrong, it is for the community to put them right in the light of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. A typical illustration of this spirit is furnished by the manner in which Muslim congregational prayer is conducted. An Imam should be there to conduct the prayer. He must be followed implicitly, so much so that if he makes any mistake and does not rectify it the whole congregation is to follow him even in his mistake. But at the same time it is expected of the members of congregation that they should point out the mistake even in the course of the prayer. This vigilance of and permission to the congregation to point out mistake is typical of the Muslim spiritual democracy. In the field of action it is illustrated by the first address of *Hazrat* Abu Bakr to the Muslim community on his assumption of the office of Khilafat. He said :

If you see me going straight obey me, but if you find me going wrong put me right.

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Needless to say *Hazrat* Abu Bakr combined in himself both the temporal as well as the spiritual leadership of the Muslim community, and these words of his typify the attitude of Islam towards all constituted authority.

In any society and in every department of life there must be a division of labour and specialisation. The one ensures easy working, the other progress, improvement and efficiency.

The religious side of our life must have these elements just as they exist in all other phases of life. But Islam never inculcates blind and servile following of the authorities in any matter. There is no infallible authority for a Muslim excepting the Book of God and the Sunnah. The Muslim community believes in leadership, pays obedience to the leadership but it does so in the full knowledge that leadership can go wrong at times and needs to be watched. Generally speaking, the leader knows better than any other person, but at times the followers may know better. This feeling cuts at the very root of any possible growth of priestcraft in Islam.

Some Christian critics of Islam have failed to grasp this position of Islam in respect of religious leadership.

They cite the Muslims' respect for the Ulama and saints and jump to the conclusion that these form the Muslim counterpart of the Church in Christianity. They forget that any '*Alim* or *Wali* (saint) secures his exalted position not through any certificate either from any high dignitary or of any authoritative body. No certificate from, say, the Deoband Ulama or the Ulama of Al-Azhar, the biggest and the oldest body of Ulama in the world, will entitle a man to religious leadership, unless people recognise him as such on his own merits. And what is more, as often as not a leader of this kind rises to power and influence, in the teeth of opposition from established bodies and institutions just by dint of his own knowledge

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of religion and spiritual attainments. So, in the last analysis, it is the popular mind as enlightened by the Qurán and the Prophet's Sunnah that determines the qualifications of a man for religious leadership. And this constitutes a negation of the very spirit of priestcraft.

The saying of the Prophet "The Ulama are the Successors of the Prophets" is to be read in the light of this attitude and tradition of Islam. The successorship is spiritual and spontaneous, and not imposed by any human agency claiming any superhuman right of spiritual nomination. The spiritual perception of the *Ummat* as enlightened by the Qurán is the only authority on earth, which has the power to decide if a particular man or body of men is entitled to the religious leadership of the nation.

THE WAY OF LIFE

Upon Tolerance

BY WILLIAM BASHYR-PICKARD, B.A. (CANTAB)

Tolerance, we imagine, is the opposite of bigotry. It is a calm broadmindedness in place of a narrow fanaticism. With tolerance one may yet have in one's being the white hot dynamic that moves mountains : but with tolerance one will not manifest a subversive violence that makes havoc without securing redress. Tolerance is blessed. Violence is the fiery seed of further violence.

How many quotations spring up instantly to mind when our thought is of tolerance, even indeed as multifarious flowers unfold in beauty to the golden caresses of the all-gleaming sun. Let us pluck a few in passing :

"Judge not that ye be not judged."

"To know all is to forgive all."

"If any man smite thee upon thy right cheek, turn 'thou the left also."

THE WAY OF LIFE

Remember, too, the incident :

"A bier passed by Muhammad. He rose to his feet. It was said to him, 'This is the funeral of a Jew!' But he answered, 'Was it not the holder of a soul?' "

Read and ponder the words of the Qur-ān in this respect. Thus :

"Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews and the Christians and the Sabians—whoever believes in God and the last day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, neither shall they grieve."¹

And again it is said :

"And We did send apostles before thee : there are some of them that We have mentioned to thee and there are others whom We have not mentioned to thee."²

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If we consider for a moment, we shall realize that over the whole of humanity is spread a wide diversity. Colours of countenance are different one from another. Habits and powers of body are different one from another. Taste, inclination and temperament are even more varied than the multiplex combination and contrast of the whole gamut of colour tones. The make-up of mind in the individual man or woman is of more than millionfold divergence. To God alone belongeth Unity. The phenomena are many and ever-changing.

Therefore I say it behoves us to meditate upon this central fact of existence ; and, having meditated, surely we shall each and every one realize that this rich and blessed variety of being and activity can proceed in joy, even as some supreme symphony of the life spirit by the ready and unstinted practice of a tolerance as wide as the heavens and the earth. If the composer be one, will not the notes of the harmonies of gladness be many ? Shall we improve the form and fibre of our existence, if we insist that the only right is a monotone of colour, a monotone of voiced expression, a monotone of mind ?

¹ The Holy Qur-ān : II, 62.

² *Ibid.*, XL, 78.

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Nay, far otherwise !

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Remember the verses of the Qur-ân and carry them in your hearts. Even thus :

"And one of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colours ; most surely there are signs in this for the learned."¹

And again, with what truth and brevity !

"(All) people are a single nation."

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Now, what is the aim of the idealists, what the aim of the practical men of affairs in their survey of the human scene ? When these idealistic ones and these practical ones consider humanity and the wide-spread panorama of human activity, what is it in their hearts that each alike seeks ?

I imagine that the object of their search is somewhat of the following nature.

Let me express their object in its seven phases—phases which indeed in some respects intersect and overlap. Thus they would say :

"We seek the felicity of humanity, that is (1) the happiness and well-being of races, (2) the happy and progressive life of nations, (3) a clean and healthy political functioning of the social order, (4) communal peace in diversity, (5) the contentment of classes and (6) individuals and (7) the freedom of religion, wherein shall be found no violence or oppression, no rancour or ill-will."

And what, in a word, will secure the victory alike for the idealists and for the practical men ?

That necessary pass-word to world felicity is indeed, *Toleration*. In every sphere, in every phase of activity, by day and by night, at work or at leisure, in written word or in spoken debate, a wide and ever-ready toleration. The world needs good-will. We must be men of good-will. We cannot be men of good-will without a calm and spacious toleration.

¹ The Holy Qur-ân : XXX, 22.

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In each and all of the seven phases outlined above is necessary a kindly and understanding tolerance, if the diversity existing in the world is to manifest itself rightly in the harmonious delight of a universal well-being.

* * *

Before dealing with each of the seven phases in turn let us recall that the Qur-ân carries an admonition that the prophets of other nations are to be respected and that indeed no distinction is to be made between prophets.

So :

"There is not a people but a warner has gone among them."¹

"And every nation had a guide."²

"To every nation We appointed acts of devotion which they observe, therefore they should not dispute with thee about the matter."³

"For every one of you We did appoint a law and a way."⁴

"And those who believe in God and His apostles and do not make a distinction between any of them—God will grant them their rewards."⁵

And again :

"Say : We believe in God and in that which has been revealed to us and in that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes and in that which was given to Moses and Jesus and in that which was given to the prophets from their Lord ; we do not make any distinction between any of them and to Him do we submit."⁶

If, then, a Muslim should believe in all the prophets who came from time to time to various nations, how can there be any room for racial antagonism ? How can the people of one prophet be placed above or below the people of another prophet ?

* * *

We come now to the seven phases of tolerance, the

¹ The Holy Qur-ân : XXXV, 24.

² *Ibid.*, XXII, 67.

³ *Ibid.*, IV, 152.

⁴ *Ibid.*, XIII, 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, V, 48.

⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 136.

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seven phases often overlapping and interlacing, in which an effective tolerance should manifest itself.

(1) *Racial Tolerance.* Race grew into diversity by separation. Living segregated by geographical conditions, wherein differences of climate were widely divergent, humanity developed through the ages into various races of different tastes, ideals, customs and mentality. Race recognised not race as brother, but broadly as barbarian, foreigner, or even foreign devil. Now, by a reversal of process, the old barriers of non-intercourse and geographical separation having been thrown down, race meets race and mixes with race. To-day race learns widely of race. Varying customs, ideals, likes and dislikes of races, are made familiar one with the other.

To-day, therefore, most urgently is there necessity of racial tolerance and a realization of fundamental humanity, that race is brother to race.

(2) *National Tolerance.* For the immediate purpose of the betterment of mankind perhaps nothing is more important than the sublimation, the humanization, shall it be said, of the old fetish, the old idol, the old altar of sacrifice, which lived and drank in the mixed blood of brothers under the name of patriotism. Although 'My country right or wrong' was perhaps the crudest expression of this luxuriant, unpruned cult, there were many and wide-spread narrow and ugly manifestations of its misguided power. Let no nation glorify itself over others. Let no nation for its wider place in the sun trample down any other nation whatsoever. Let the muffled, strutting pride that masquerades and poisons the air of humanity with foul breath, crying, 'Backward nation', cast off its garment of pride and recognize itself as one brother amongst many.

Love one's own nation by all means, love one's own native land by all means, but remember other people, born elsewhere, have other native lands. Arrogate not to any nation the claim of excellence supreme over others,

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(3) *Political Tolerance.* As customs and conditions vary vastly in different quarters of the globe, as, too, mentalities and ideals differ amongst different peoples, why should we, with a narrow-minded uniformity, desire identical ideologies in political administration? Can we not (and how much better it would be!) abandon propagandist politics? Let each brother nation live in what politically shaped house he finds most convenient and let us devote the energy thus saved to the setting of our own delapidated house in better order. Truly, manifold are the blessings in this!

And at home, in domestic politics, if there are parties, communities of divergent views, let us practise a brotherly tolerance. Let us at least be able to imagine that the other parties, the other communal groups, have also the welfare of our country in view, even as we have.

(4) *Communal Tolerance.* Within the broad lines of what may be, to the discerning eye, recognized as a national unity we sometimes find sections of humanity grouped together by custom, traditions, sentiment and outlook as different communities. Let us each and all respect these communities, recognize them each and all as part of the nation-wide unity and, if we should find it too difficult to see eye to eye with them in every respect, yet at least let us maintain our true brotherhood by manifesting an ever ready tolerance that refrains from violence or from any aggravation towards violence.

When with a calm detachment, which we should certainly have it in us to achieve from time to time, we view these different communities, we shall find very much that is common ground, common humanity, so that the fountainhead of our universal benevolence should not be dried up, but should yield waters of peace for the blessing of the nation.

(5) *Class Tolerance.* Similarly, within communities and within nations, we find more or less sharply dis-

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tinguished classes, high or low, rich or poor, educated or unlettered. Into what maelstrom of turbulent bitterness shall we not fall, unless beneath all outward distinctions we recognize an inner resemblance, unless we practise, not a cold condescension, not a snobbery of hauteur, but a warm and understanding tolerance, which indeed is but part of our universal benevolence. Let us remember that each one of us alike, whether he be king, sultan, prince, president, doctor, lawyer, politician, religious mendicant, refuse remover, artist, writer, baker, banker, soldier, copper-smith, miner, builder, factory worker, film star, saint or convict, each one of us alike weareth the common garment of our humanity which death alone will take from us.

(6) *Individual Tolerance.* Now here again is a test of our sincerity, for it may be that we feel naturally disinclined towards one of the same race, of the same nation, of the same political persuasion, of the same community, of the same class. Yes and truly, we have in such a case great need of individual tolerance. We must respect the rights of and act with a brotherly kindness to the individual. Even we may find to our dismay that actual blood brotherhood (than which what is closer?) does not always rule out the arising of contentious feuds and hatreds.

If we find a suspicion of this bitterness in ourselves, we must stamp it out, manfully making purification of this unnatural evil : and indeed in the words of the Old English poem, 'The grace of God is great enough'. (*Pearl*)

(7) *Religious Tolerance.* Lastly, we come to that phase of tolerance which embraceth all, which overstepeth all the preceding boundary marks of races, nations, politics, communities or classes : for religion knoweth no such distinction or barrier. Within the bond of one religion we may find diverse races, nations, communities, classes. Yet have we the crying need of a benign and benevolent religious tolerance. Violence often hath

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marred religious history. In zeal towards God we should not forget the urgency of practising a natural, spontaneous, world-wide love towards man, towards our brother, whether he find God this way or that way, or whether at present he seem not to find God at all or to care for the thought of God. Verily, he cannot escape God ; for God is nearer than the neck-vein.

* * *

Remember the Qur-ān, wherein it says :

“And certainly We created man, and We know what his mind suggests to him, and We are nearer to him than his life-vein.”¹

ISLAM AND CLIMATOLOGY

BY MUHAMMAD SADIQ DUDLEY WRIGHT, D. PHIL., F.S.P.

There is one event in the history of Religions which Christian apologists find it very difficult to explain and so the general practice is to ignore it and leave it unexplained. The subject is the rise of Islam. It is now generally acknowledged by students of Comparative Religion that the world is not so constituted that courage and strength, endurance and organization, with success long sustained, are obtainable in the service of falsehood, so that the days have passed into history when it was customary to describe the Prophet Muhammad as an impostor and the religion he taught as imposture. When great thinkers, some Christian, some Agnostic, began to emphasize the disinterested part played by the Prophet and beneficial outcome of the Faith he inculcated, particularly its effect upon a pagan people, who had been unmoved by the appeals made to them by representatives of the Christian religion in its varied forms, the apologists began to look about them for some other explanation of what seemed to them the marvellous, almost miraculous, growth of

¹ The Holy Qur-ān : L, 16.

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Islam though many even then, as to-day, regarded it merely as an incident or an accident, for which no adequate explanation could be offered.

Quite recently a pamphlet advertised in a second-hand bookseller's catalogue, which I receive periodically, caught my eye and it being the only copy available, I lost no time in sending for it and, fortunately, was able to secure it. Immediately, I read it with interest and not without amusement. The title of the pamphlet is: *The Rise of Mahomet accounted for on Natural and Civil Principles*. It was published in 1796—150 years ago. The author, according to the title-page, was Nathan Alcock, M.D., Oxford and Leyden, F.R.S., F.R.C.P., for many years Prælector [Lecturer or Reader] in Chemistry and Anatomy in the University of Oxford.

The pamphlet was commended to the notice of the Lord Bishop of Chester by the author's brother, the Rev. Thomas Alcock, Vicar of Runcorn in Cheshire, who quoted the following extract from a letter received by him from the author :

I have lately added to the chapter *On the Effects of Warm Air*, a full sheet to account for the sudden rise and prodigious progress of the Mahometan empire and religion from the nature of the climate, the character of the Arabians and the neighbouring nations resulting from the climate, the particular circumstances of the times and politic institutions of the founder adapted to the climate and times.

To this extract, the Rev. Thomas Alcock has added, as a commendation to the bishop :

I wish you could see this before it be printed. I like it myself.

Hæckel and other writers of repute have discoursed on the geography of religions and many have told us that religion is a matter of latitude ; many hard things have also been said, particularly by Englishmen about the vagaries of climate, but, personally, I have never before heard climate accused of being the cause for the adoption of a religious system. Muslims, of course, do not

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claim Islam to be a *new* religion, founded by Muhammad. We revere him as the Prophet of Allah, preaching the same religion and delivering the same message to the people that was preached and delivered by Moses, Jesus and the other prophets who preceded him and which, like Muhammad, they received through the media of angelic messengers.

But the remarkable feature of the pamphlet is that after this fanfare, the pamphlet explains nothing which it promised to explain. The text of the promised discourse is found in the title and in the letter written by the author's brother to his bishop. But there is no discourse on that text in the pamphlet. It reminded me forcibly of a quip of the famous Baptist preacher, C. H. Spurgeon, who once remarked of some sermons he had read that "if the texts had been afflicted with the smallpox, the sermons would never have caught the complaint"—the distance between them was so great as to remove all fear of infection.

It has, of course, to be admitted that the author's qualifications as a lecturer in chemistry and anatomy, admirable though they must undoubtedly have been, were not of the nature to enable him to discourse with authority on the subject of the rise and progress of any religious system. He seems, however, to have read sufficient of the Islamic Faith and its Prophet to yield tribute to it, even though (according to the title of the pamphlet) the climate was responsible for both. He admits that the Christianity of the time was "contaminated with superstition and fanaticism and split into various sects and parties," "that two metropolitan bishops of Constantinople and Rome were violently contending for supremacy and who should be esteemed the sovereign Pontiff" [was this state of things due to the climate?] But he makes many blunders in his "facts." He says that the aim of Muhammad was "to establish a new

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government and a new religion among the Arabians, that Fergius, a Nestorian monk, "assisted Mahomet in forming a motley religion that should embrace all parties : Pagans, Jews and Christians ; and should adopt the excellencies and reject the errors of all three," although in the next line he says that "Mahomet was probably very sincere in his attempt to establish this principle [the Unity of God] and to throw down idolatry, which then so much prevailed."

Then we are told suddenly :

We cannot but admire the great sagacity and comprehension of Mahomet in laying the foundation of that mighty empire and extensive religion which he established. This extraordinary man perfectly understood the nature of the Arabian climate, the genius of the people and the circumstances of the times and, conformably to these principles, planned with great penetration and judgment both his civil and religious institutions.

The Arabians are a lively, active, spirited people, of good parts, warm passions, quick sensibility of constitution, much addicted to sensual pleasure and a voluptuous course of life. So, indeed, are the inhabitants of all dry, elevated countries in warm climates. The neighbouring nations, Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Persia, over which the Saracen empire and religion were extended with incredible celerity, partake much of the Arabian character, but breathing a more humid atmosphere, are more soft, luxurious and effeminate.

These are the only references that can be found to supply a justification of the text and when read in conjunction with the Qur-án and Arabian history, readers will accord them what value they merit.

The author then follows with an epitome of the Faith of Islam and gives a meed of praise to some of the tenets and practices, particularly to the prohibition of wine and other intoxicating liquors. He even admits that—

Mahomet made a wise use of these great instruments of conquest and sanctions of government, rewards and punishments.

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A judicious display and management of such operative principles could not fail of having an extraordinary influence on a people naturally susceptible of very strong impressions from the passions of hope and fear.

From Dr. Alcock, I turned to the Rectorial address delivered by J. A. Froude at the University of St. Andrew's on March 17, 1871, from which the following extracts are taken :

The light which there was in the Muslim creed was real. It taught the omnipotence and omnipresence of one eternal Spirit, the Maker and Ruler of all things, by whose everlasting purpose all things are and whose will all things must obey ; and this central truth, to which later experience and broader knowledge can add nothing, has taught so clearly and so simply that in Islam there has been no room for heresy and scarcely for schism.

The Qur-ān has been accused of countenancing sensual vice. Rather it bridled and brought within limits a sensuality which before was unbounded. It forbade and has absolutely extinguished, wherever Islam is professed, the bestial drunkenness which is the disgrace of our Christian English and Scottish towns. Even now, after centuries of decay, the Mussulman probably governs his life by the Qur-ān, more accurately than most Christians obey the Sermon on the Mount or the Ten Commandments. In our own India, where the Muslim creed retains its relative superiority to the superstitions of the native races, the Mussulman is a higher order of being.

Speaking of the frauds perpetrated by the Roman Catholics, he said :

When a start has once been made on the road of deception, the after-progress is a rapid one. The desired effect was not produced. Incredulity increased. Imposture ran a race with unbelief in the vain hope of silencing inquiry and with imposture all genuine love for spiritual or moral truth disappeared.

JESUS THE SON OF MARY HIS BIRTH AND DEATH

BY KHWAJA NAZIR AHMAD

(Continued from Vol. XXXV. p. 40)

THE PASSION

By combining the different statements in the four Gospels, the Acts and the Epistles of Paul and Peter, the Christians construct an account of certain events, which form the basis of their religion. They believe that Jesus died on the cross ; that devout hands took his body down from the cross and laid it in a tomb on the Friday evening ; that Jesus rose from the tomb on the following Sunday ; that after an earthly sojourn, during which his disciples saw him on several occasions, he ascended to heaven to sit on the right hand of God.

But even a superficial examination of the texts reveals this legend to be artificially composed from contradictory fragments which have not only been compiled in utter disregard of their discrepancies, but, instead of exhibiting a sequence, are really alternative narratives.

The resurrection of Jesus has to be considered with the Burial which preceded it and the Ascension which followed it. But to appreciate the significance, sequence and unreality of these three inseparable events, some observations, by way of introduction, on the crucifixion itself, are necessary.

For the purpose of this article I am not concerned with the nature of the Jewish accusations against Jesus which resulted in his trial before the Sanhedrin or the legality of the procedure adopted by this tribunal, or his subsequent trial before Pilate, or the episode of Pilate's

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sending Jesus back to Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, who happened to be in Jerusalem, an episode peculiar to Luke¹ only, and whose futility does him scant credit. I may, however, mention that the Gospel account of the arrest, trial and condemnation of Jesus swarms with impossibilities, improbabilities and inconsistencies and is quite unintelligible from the juridical point of view.

But, before dealing with the scenes at Calvary, there are one or two matters which require our special attention. First is a comparison by Jesus of his fate with that of Jonah, the Prophet. In response to a demand of the Scribes and Pharisees for a sign, Jesus is reported to have said :

An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign ; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas : for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.²

In Luke also this prophecy is referred to in the following terms :—

This is an evil generation : they seek a sign ; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of Jonas, the Prophet. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.³

The Biblical version of Jonah can, by no stretch of imagination, be made to support the theory of the death of Jesus on the cross, or his burial as a *dead* man, or his ultimate resurrection from the *dead* ; for Jonah was cast *alive* into the sea by his fellow passenger on board the ship, was swallowed *alive* by a whale, remained *alive* in its belly for three days and three nights and was vomited out *alive*.⁴

¹ Luke, XXIII : 7.

² Matt., XII : 39-40 ; see also Matt., XIV :

³ Luke, XI : 29-30.

⁴ Jonah, I : 9-17 ; II : 1-10.

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Jesus, on the contrary, according to the Christian belief, was not alive, but dead. Further, Jesus remained in the tomb for twenty six hours only.

Secondly, only one aspect of the course of events before the Sanhedrin deserves our consideration. The proceedings adopted by this college of elders in this case were quite in conformity with the established law. The procedure against a "Corrupter" who sought to attain the purity of religion, is explained in the Talmud. A judicial ambush is therein provided for as an essential part of the examination of criminals. When a man was accused of being a "Corrupter" two witnesses were suborned and concealed behind a partition. The accused was brought into a contiguous room, where he could be heard by these two witnesses without his perceiving them. Two candles were lighted near him in order that it might be satisfactorily proved that the witnesses "saw him."¹ He was then made to repeat his blasphemy and urged to retract it. If he persisted he was produced with the two witnesses before the tribunal and on being found guilty was sentenced to death. The narrative of the trial of Jesus corresponded with the procedure described in the Talmud, and we are also told that he was charged with "Corruption," i.e. "perverting the nation,"² and that the chief priest and elders and all the council sought false witnesses against Jesus to put him to death.³ Their failure to get two reliable witnesses, who would support the accusation, infuriated them and they tried to get the blind man whom Jesus had cured to testify against him.⁴ Speaking of the atrocities of the Sanhedrin on this occasion Dean Milman says that they maltreated all

¹ Renan, *History of the Origin of Christianity*, 227.

² Luke, XXIII : 2.

³ Matt., XXVI : 59 ; Luke XXII : 55.

⁴ John, IX : 21-23.

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partisans of Jesus with the terrible threats of excommunication, and the timid believers and his relatives, including Mary, the mother of Jesus, were put before this awful tribunal, and, when questioned, refrained from saying anything lest their testimony may be used against Jesus, but they, one and all, did refer the tribunal to Jesus himself for information.¹ The judges were thus compelled to question Jesus, and he then delivered a speech, "which was both a memorable speech and a masterpiece of advocacy."² The reference, no doubt, is to certain passages in John.³ I will later on have occasion to refer to this speech in some detail.

Jesus, no doubt, was condemned to death. There is no reason to suppose that the Romans did not try to execute the sentence and there is not the least ground to imagine that someone else, who in appearance was like Jesus, was substituted for him on the cross. It does not seem legitimate to doubt the historicity of the fact that Jesus was put on the cross, but exception can be taken to the details in the Gospel account and it can be established that he did not die on the cross.

In itself it is not unlikely that Jesus was scourged, that is to say, subjected to *flagella*, or the *flagra* as the evangelists call it, or was mocked at and insulted by the soldiers and the onlooking crowd. I will omit the details of cruelty heaped on Jesus. The evangelists give them in great detail in order to move the listeners and the readers in the deepest possible way. For my purpose it is equally unimportant whether these things happened in Pilate's pretorium or in the house of the high priest—of course, the Gospels differ.

¹ Milman, *History of Christianity*, 272.

² Lawrence, *Ecclesiastical History*, 201.

³ John, XVIII : 20-21.

The Crucifixion

On the way to the Golgatha, Jesus was offered a beverage which is described as of vinegar mingled with gall¹ and according to Mark, mixed with Myrrh,² a kind of anæsthetic or narcotic, a stupefying draught which, according to the Rabbinical tradition,³ Jewish women considered a pious deed to prepare and offer to those about to be executed ; the real object being to blunt their susceptibility to pain.⁴ But Matthew gives a different object. It was the fulfilment of a prophecy. The Gospel of Matthew, curiously enough, does not contain a single line which is not a reproduction of some prophecy of the Old Testament. The soldiers cast lots for division of his garments amongst themselves⁵ so that it might be fulfilled.

They parted my garments among them, and upon my vestures did they cast lots.⁶

The nailing of Jesus on the cross was, again, the fulfilment of another prophecy.⁷

The beverage was first given before crucifixion ; ⁸ the second time, after he was put on the cross, when the soldiers gave him *posca*,⁹ and for the third time, on the cry of Jesus : " I Thirst."¹⁰ Matthew then refers to the wagging of the heads and the scorn of the passers by¹¹ and makes the chief priest say :

He trusted in God ; let Him deliver him now ; if He will have him, for he said I am the Son of God.¹²

This reference again is nothing else than a Greek reproduction of what stands in the Psalms.¹³

¹ Matt., XXVII : 34.

² Mark, XV : 23.

³ Brandt, *Die Evangelische Gesch und der ursprung des Christentums*, 177.

⁴ Dummelow, *Commentary on Holy Bible*, 717.

⁵ Matt., XXVII : 35.

⁶ Ps., XXII : 18.

⁷ Ps. XXII : 16-18 ; LXIX : 21.

⁸ Matt., XXVII : 34 ; Mark. XV : 23.

⁹ Luke XXIII, 36.

¹⁰ Matt., XXVII : 48, Mark, XV : 36 ; John XIX : 28-29.

¹¹ Matt., XXVII : 39 cp. Ps. XXII : 7.

¹² Matt., XXVII : 43,

¹³ Ps. XXII : 8.

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The first two evangelists do not tell us that any of the twelve disciples was present at the crucifixion. It appears that they had all forsaken Jesus and fled at the time of his arrest,¹ and had not followed him, and were too afraid for their own lives to be present at Calvary.

This is one of those very rare incidents in which Matthew could not see the fulfilment of any prophecy of, the Old Testament ; for the simple reason, perhaps, that unlike Jesus, the prophets of yore must have had a few faithful disciples.

To resume the narrative, John does say that Peter and John followed Jesus, but only to the Hall of Judgment and there too in disguise only. Even John does not allege that these two disciples were present anywhere near the cross. The evangelists do mention, however, the presence of several Galilean women, including Mary, the mother of Jesus.²

We are then told that Jesus uttered a cry. The evangelists differ as to what his last words were. Both Matthew and Mark say that he cried with a loud voice *Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani*—My God, my God : why hast Thou forsaken me ?³ The ancient text of Mark current in the West makes Jesus also add :

Why hast Thou put me to shame ?⁴

I pause to observe that the utterance was not an appeal from a beloved son to the Father. It was a cry of despair, the most poignant expression of the innermost feeling of a man in agony who could not but dread that even God had forsaken him and thus put him to shame. And why should Jesus have made this accusatory utterance, which must have come from his very heart ? He

¹ Matt., XXVII : 56 Cp. Matt., XIV : 51.

² John, XIX : 25.

³ Matt., XXVII : 46 : Mark, XV : 34.

⁴ Tucker, *History of Christianity in the Light of Modern Knowledge*, 258.

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did not wish to die, as his work was yet incomplete. The kingdom he had foretold had yet to come. He could not understand why God, Who also knew that his work was yet incomplete, had forsaken him and had not come to his help to enable him to complete his mission, and had allowed him to be stigmatized ; for

He that is hanged is accursed of God.¹

Jesus had told his disciples that :

My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death.²

And he had prayed

Abba, father, all things are possible unto Thee ; take away this cup from me ; nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt.³

And according to Luke :

And being in great agony he prayed more earnestly : and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.⁴

Now, if Jesus knew that he was to die for the sins of others and that he would be raised again to sit on the right hand of God, why was he "sorrowful unto death," and why did he pray in "great agony" to God to "take away this cup" from him ? The answers are too obvious. He did not know anything except that the Jews were bent on condemning him to death and that according to Jewish belief, and his own belief as a Jew, if he died on the cross he would be dying the death of an "accursed of God." That is why he was in great agony and prayed to God to take away this death from him. Did not God hear and accept this prayer of Jesus, one of His Prophets, or as Christians would have it His only begotten son ? No, say the Christians for they make Jesus die on the cross. But, Luke says that an angel of God visited him at that very time.⁵ Paul, however, clinches the matter

¹ Deut., XXI : 33.

² Mark, XIV : 34, Matt., XXIV : 38.

³ Mark, XIV : 36, Matt., XXVI : 39, Luke, XXII : 42.

⁴ Luke, XXII : 44.

⁵ Luke, XXII : 43.

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when he says :

Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and fears unto Him that was able to save him from death, *and was heard in that he feared.*¹

If the prayer of Jesus was heard and granted, as it must have been, he could not have died on the cross. But if it was not heard and he was in fact crucified, this cry of Jesus, at a moment of extreme weakness of his mind, and the extreme limit of his physical torture, is an everlasting answer to the blasphemous dogma of the Christians, that Jesus, the son of God, knew that, in fulfilment of His Divine will, he was dying for the sins of others. Luke,² it is true, could not find this utterance compatible with the son-God theory, and therefore replaced it with a quotation from the Psalms,³ but the Gospel of Peter as translated by Lake attributes the same utterance to Jesus.⁴ According to John, however, all that Jesus said was : "It is finished."

In this part of the narrative the most important question is the time when Jesus is supposed to have "yielded up his ghost," as it will determine the period for which he was on the cross. According to Matthew and Mark it was about the ninth hour (3 P.M.) that Jesus complained of having been forsaken by God⁵ and that it was shortly after this that he "yielded up the ghost." Mark gives us the time when Jesus was put on the cross as the third hour (9 A.M.)⁷ Therefore, according to these two, Jesus was on the cross for six hours. Luke fixes the sixth hour as the time when Jesus "gave up the ghost." He also mentions that the darkness lasted from the sixth to the ninth hour.⁸ On the other hand John says that it was about the sixth hour (12 noon) that Pilate sat in judgment over Jesus.⁹ Even if we assume

¹ Heb., V : 7.

² Lake, XXIII : 46.

³ Ps., XXXI : 5.

⁴ Lake, *The Resurrection of Jesus* : 156.

⁵ John, XIX : 30.

⁶ Matt. XXVII : 46 ; Mark, XV : 34.

⁷ Mark, XV : 23.

⁸ Luke, XXII : 44-46.

⁹ John XIX : 14.

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that Jesus was put on the cross instantly after the sentence, Jesus could not have remained on the cross for more than three hours. Luke gives the same period: from the third hour (9 A.M.) to the sixth hour (12 noon.)

The peculiar atrocity of the crucifixion was that one could live for days in this horrible state upon this instrument of torture.¹ The body was fixed to the cross with ropes or nails through the hands. The victim's body was supported not only by the nail through the hands but by a small piece of wood projecting at right angles, a *sedile*, on which he sat as on a saddle. Sometimes there was also a support for the feet, to which the feet were nailed.

The bleeding from the hands and feet soon stopped and was never fatal. The real cause of death was the unnatural position of the body which brought on a frightful disturbance of the circulation, terrible pains in the head and heart and frequently rigidity of the limbs. Victims, with normal constitution, died, after a few days, of exhaustion and hunger. The original idea of this cruel punishment was not directly to kill the culprit by positive injuries but to expose the victim, nailed by the hands, of which he had neglected to make good use, and to let him rot on the cross.

If the culprit was a Jew his body had to be removed before nightfall because :

His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him *that day* ; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God ;) that thy land be not defiled.....²

We also know that in view of the approach of the Sabbath, "executions lasting until late in the afternoon were impossible,"³ and, therefore, "the body could not have been removed as late as the ninth hour."⁴

¹ Dummelow, *Commentary on Holy Bible*, 717.

² Deut., XXI : 23.

³ *Sifre*, II : 221.

⁴ *Sanh.* 35b. *The Jewish Encyclopædia*, Vol. IV, 374.

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Whether it was for this reason or that the next day, after the crucifixion, was the Sabbath, and a Sabbath of peculiar solemnity, the Jews expressed to the Procurator their desire that this holy day should not be profaned by such a spectacle. Their request was granted and orders were given to remove the three condemned ones and to hasten their death. The soldiers executed these orders by applying to the two thieves the *crurifragium* and broke their legs, but to Jesus they did not think it necessary as "they thought him to be dead."¹ They could not, however, be certain as Jesus had remained on the cross only for about three hours. That death had not overridden Jesus is evident from the facts that the two malefactors were still alive when taken off the cross and Jesus had strength enough to utter a loud cry immediately before the moment which is regarded as his last. At that moment there must have prevailed a good deal of confusion particularly because of the peculiar events which followed : the veil of the temple was rent in twain, the earth did quake, the rocks rent, the graves were opened and many bodies of dead saints arose and came out of the graves and went into the city and appeared unto many.² Further, there was a darkness from the sixth hour (12 noon) to the ninth hour (3 P.M.)³ like of which had not been seen before. It was so intense that even the sun was darkened⁴ or in other words the sun ceased to be visible to the naked eye and thus there was

¹ Renan, *History of the Origin of Christianity*, Book I, 246.

² Matt., XXVII : 51. It is noteworthy that almost all the Prophets who had preceded Jesus were buried in Jerusalem. They must have also arisen from their graves and borne testimony that the son of God had been crucified. Yet the Roman soldiers, the hard-hearted Jews and the wretched disciples of Jesus, the Gospels tell us, were not convinced.

³ Matt., XXVII : 45 ; Mark. XV : 33 ; Luke XXIII : 44.

⁴ Luke, XXIII : 45.

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hardly any visibility left.¹ In these circumstances, when confusion prevailed all around, the body of Jesus was removed from the cross during *the day*, i.e., during the day-time, in compliance with the commands of the Bible to which I have already made a reference.

At this stage John mentions a remarkable incident. Jesus' bones, he says, were not broken,

but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side and forthwith came there out blood and water.²

In the very next verse John represents that

he that saw it bare record, and *his record is true and he knoweth that he saith true*, that ye might believe.

It is curious that realising the difficulty which such an event would present to the Christian belief, the early Church Fathers, whose dishonesty and unscrupulousness has no parallel in human history and who never hesitated to tell lies or commit forgeries for the glory of their son-god, expunged an identical passage from Matthew. This passage now appears in the margin of verse 49 of Chapter XXVII of the Revised Version.³ The compilers of this Version note that to this verse many ancient authorities add :

And another took a spear and pierced his side *and there came out water and blood*.

The "blood and water" incident is also mentioned in one of the Epistles.⁴

Before I take up the narrative, I think it would not be out of place to refer to a book which first appeared in America in 1873 : *The Crucifixion by an Eye-witness*. This book is an English translation of an ancient Latin copy of a "Letter written seven years after the Crucifixion by a personal friend of Jesus in Jerusalem to an Eseer

¹ Such an occurrence, undoubtedly, as an eclipse of the Sun for three hours, is neither known to history nor can it admit of any scientific explanation. The duration of time for which it is supposed to have occurred is not only incredible but impossible. Further, an eclipse of the Sun can never occur on the 14th or 15th of a lunar month.

² John, XIX : 34.

³ Revised Version, p. 1096.

⁴ I John, V : 6.

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Brother in Alexandria." In this book the events leading to the crucifixion, the scenes at Calvary and what took place subsequently were narrated in great detail. This book was withdrawn from circulation the moment it was published. All the copies were collected and burnt. "All the plates were destroyed, and it was supposed that all the published copies of the book were likewise disposed of—the official copies which were deposited with the librarian of the Congress, in compliance with the Laws of Copyright, also disappeared. Fortunately, one copy escaped this fate." It was republished in 1907, after it had been compared with the Latin manuscript which still exists in Germany. "This old parchment was found in a house in Alexandria,—the house, it has been proved by archæological discoveries, belonged to the Order of the Essenes. It was written by a Terapeut, the highest esteemed member of the Order." In this book we are told that

One of the soldiers struck his spear into the body in such a manner that it passed over the hip and into the side. The body showed no convulsions, and this was taken by the centurian as a sure sign that he (Jesus) was actually dead, and he hurriedly went away to make his report (to Pilate).

But from the insignificant wound *flowed blood and water*, at which John (the evangelist who was a member of the Order, as a novitiate) wondered for even John knew, from the knowledge of our Brotherhood, that from a wound in a dead body flows nothing but a few drops of thickened blood.

But concerning the wound itself, it may have been on the right or left side of the body and in any spot from the shoulder to the hip. Some have suggested that it was pericardium which had been pierced ; but for this to have happened the pierced spot would have to be in front of the chest and not on the side. Leaving these uncertainties aside, the fact remains that blood and water came out, and that this can be taken as a sure sign that death had not yet taken place. It has been suggested that the blood as soon as it ceases to take part in the

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vital process begins to divide itself into plasma and serum, and that the separation of the blood from the water was a proof of Jesus' real death. To this I will give an answer presently. Again, it has been suggested that in case of nervous fever and suffocation the blood retains its fluidity in the corpse. But there is no justification for alleging that Jesus died of any fever and the question of suffocation is ruled out by the fact that Jesus was able to utter a *loud cry* to the last. It has also been urged that within one hour of death the blood does not coagulate in the vessels. But surely it must have taken more than an hour for the Jews to have gone to Pilate and to return with his orders. Further, if the spear had struck one of the larger vessels, blood alone would have come out, and if he had already been dead over an hour and his corpse being in the ordinary state, nothing at all would have come out, because plasma and serum are not separated in the vessels of the corpse, like they do in a basin in which blood letting is done. After taking all these facts into consideration and on good medical authority the compilers of the *Encyclopædia Biblica* have to admit that Jesus was in fact *alive* when this wound was inflicted, for they say :

From the critical point of view we can hardly say that the fact that Jesus received the wound after he had breathed his last is well established.¹

In the face of these facts even Dean Farrar had to concede that when the Roman soldier thrust the broad head of the hasta in the side of Jesus, "he might be only in a syncope,"² and Jesus, who only appeared to be dead, had in fact fallen into a comatose state.

It may be repeated that the short time Jesus was on the cross, three hours at the most, and the uncertain nature and effect of the wound from the spear, and the

¹ *Ency. Biblica*, Art, *Cross*, Col. 960.

² Farrar, *Life of Christ*, 421.

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coming out of the blood and water from his body, leave no room for any doubt that Jesus did not die on the cross. If the soldiers and others present, in the circumstances already mentioned, thought him to be dead, it was because they could not distinguish between a deep swoon and the rigidity of syncope from real death. There is no ground for the suggestion that amongst them was any one who was acquainted with the medical science, which itself was in a low state in that age.

That there was doubt about Jesus' death at that very time is clear from Paul when he says :

Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?¹

Dean Farrar also refers to the assertion of the *Docetic* sect of Gnostics that Jesus had only seemed to die². Origen had his own doubts, so had Tertulian : and Origen had to invoke a miracle to explain so sudden an end. But the fact that people at that very time doubted his death can be gathered from the surprise of Pilate.³ Besides, the questions put by him to the centurion show that he wished to silence the doubts of his contemporaries. But the narrative of Matthew itself mentions an event which puts the matter beyond all doubt. After Jesus' body had been placed in the sepulchre the Pharisees came together to Pilate and asked him :

Command, therefore, that the Sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead. *So the last error shall be worse than the first.*⁴

The same version is given in the Gospel of Peter.⁵ Now what was *this first error* ? Not that they had accused Jesus and found him guilty of "corruption," not that at their instance he had been sentenced to death by

¹ I Cor. XV : 12-15.

² Farrar, *Life of Christ*, 424.

³ Mark, XIV : 44.

⁴ Matt, XXVII : 64.

⁵ Gospel of Peter, II : 8.

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Pilate ; not that he had been put on the cross. No, they believed, Jesus to be a pretender and a false prophet ; and, therefore, they could not have had any compassion for him. The *first error* could not, therefore, be any other than that Jesus had been taken off the cross, much earlier than was necessary, that his bones had not been broken and as a result of these Jesus had not been, according to them, in fact "crucified" at all. This and this alone was the *first error* which would become insignificant if the apprehensions of the Jews should materialize. They, therefore, prayed that the sepulchre should be made secure and sealed so that even if buried alive Jesus should remain there and die of suffocation. They, in fact, in the narrative, express their apprehensions in quite unambiguous terms :

Lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, he has risen from the dead.¹

The Pharisees did not believe in his miracles ; they did not admit his Divine origin or mission, they did not even acknowledge him as the Messiah. They, therefore, could not attribute a belief to the people that if the body was stolen and the sepulchre found empty that any one would believe that Jesus had arisen from the dead. To them, with the traditions of the Old Testament, regarding raising of the dead, securing and sealing of the tomb would have been no safeguard. It is evident, therefore, that the Pharisees and the elders knew that through unforeseen circumstances, Jesus had not died on the cross and they wanted to ensure his death by sealing and securing of the tomb to prevent all possibility of his body being stolen or otherwise removed. The events regarding the burial and the subsequent visits of the women to the sepulchre, to which I will refer in detail shortly, also point to the same conclusion.

¹ Matt, XXVIII : 64.

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Pilate ; not that he had been put on the cross. No, they believed, Jesus to be a pretender and a false prophet ; and, therefore, they could not have had any compassion for him. The *first error* could not, therefore, be any other than that Jesus had been taken off the cross, much earlier than was necessary, that his bones had not been, broken and as a result of these Jesus had not been, according to them, in fact "crucified" at all. This and this alone was the *first error* which would become insignificant if the apprehensions of the Jews should materialize. They, therefore, prayed that the sepulchre should be made secure and sealed so that even if buried alive Jesus should remain there and die of suffocation. They, in fact, in the narrative, express their apprehensions in quite unambiguous terms :

Lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, he has risen from the dead.¹

The Pharisees did not believe in his miracles ; they did not admit his Divine origin or mission, they did not even acknowledge him as the Messiah. They, therefore, could not attribute a belief to the people that if the body was stolen and the sepulchre found empty that any one would believe that Jesus had arisen from the dead. To them, with the traditions of the Old Testament, regarding raising of the dead, securing and sealing of the tomb would have been no safeguard. It is evident, therefore, that the Pharisees and the elders knew that through unforeseen circumstances, Jesus had not died on the cross and they wanted to ensure his death by sealing and securing of the tomb to prevent all possibility of his body being stolen or otherwise removed. The events regarding the burial and the subsequent visits of the women to the sepulchre, to which I will refer in detail shortly, also point to the same conclusion.

¹ Matt, XXVIII : 64.

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receive, the last instructions which fell from Jesus,¹ but it represents the same anxiety to establish a testimony. As a matter of fact, early tradition with or without the guarantee of women, was not in a position to do anything more than assert the essential facts: Jesus was arrested, tried, condemned and put on the cross; of that alone they were certain. They could not and did not in clear and unambiguous terms assert his death on the cross because "the matter was made dubious to them."²

(To be Continued.)

GEMS FROM THE PROPHET'S LIPS

Abu Sa'id-al-Khudriy reported that the Messenger of Allah said: A believer is never tired of good things he hears until he enters paradise.—*Tirmizi*.

Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah said: The Believer is simple, beneficent, and the sinful man is cunning, cowardly.—*Ahmad, Abu Dawūd, Tirmizi*.

Ibn Mas'ud reported that the Messenger of Allah said: The believer is not a backbiter, nor a curser, nor a doer of filthy actions, nor an impudent fellow.—*Tirmizi*.

Abu Sa'id reported that the Messenger of Allah said: There are two traits which do not occur together in a believer—misery and bad conduct.—*Tirmizi*.

Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah said: The parable of the believer is as the parable of a standing corn which the wind ceases not to blow down. Even so trials cease not to fall upon the believer. The likeness of a hypocrite is as a cypress tree which bends not unless it is felled.—*Agreed*.

'Amir-ar-Rām reported the Holy Prophet spoke about disease and said: Verily (as for) a believer, when sickness befalls him and then the Almighty and Glorious Allah relieves him therefrom, it becomes to him a penance for his sins which are past and an admonition for him for what will occur in future. When the hypocrite falls ill and is afterwards relieved he becomes like the camel whose master tied it up and then untied it, and he understands not why he tied and untied it.—*Abu Dawūd*.

Suhaib-bin-Sinān reported that the Holy Prophet said: Excellent is the affair of the believer. His affair, all of it, is good for him; and that is not the case with any one except with the believer. If prosperity attends him, he is thankful (to Allah), and that is good for him, and if adversity befalls him, he is patient and it is good for him.—*Muslim*.

¹ John, XIX: 25.

² The Holy Qur-an, IV: 157.

GEMS FROM THE PROPHET'S LIPS

Abdullah-bin-'Amr reported that the Holy Prophet said: A Muslim is he from whose tongue and hands the Muslims are safe: and a believer is he in whom mankind have an asylum for their blood and their properties.—*Agreed.*

Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah said. Disasters continue to fall upon a believing man or woman in his life, property and issue, till he meets Allah with no sin upon him (after death).—*Tirmizi.*

Abdullah bin-Mas'ud reported that the Messenger of Allah said: There is no believing servant from whose eyes tears roll down, even it be like the head of a fly, out of fear of Allah and then it takes away something bright from his face, but Allah will make the fire unlawful for him.—*Ibn Mājah.*

Safwān-bin Sulaim reported that the Messenger of Allah was questioned: Can the believer become coward? 'Yes' replied he. It was said to him: Can the believer become liar? 'No' said he.—*Mālik.*

Abu Hurairah reported that the people of the Book used to read the Torah in Hebrew, and explain it in Arabic to the Muslims. The Messenger of Allah remarked: Don't believe the people of the Book as true, nor disbelieve them but say: We believe in Allah and in what has been revealed to us, and that which was revealed to Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac and Jacob and their descendants from their Lord, we don't make any distinction between any of them, and to Him (alone) do we submit (The Holy Qur-ān 3: 83).—*Bukhari.*

Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah said: Verily those who will hold me dearest among my followers will be a people after me of whom everybody would like that he could see me at the cost of his family and property.—*Muslim.*

Mu'awiyah reported: I heard the Holy Prophet say: There will never cease a section of my followers who will keep up the command of Allah. Whoever will put them to disgrace, shall not be able to injure them, nor shall he who will oppose them, till the order of Allah comes, while they will remain upon that.—*Agreed.*

Ibn Abbas reported that the Messenger of Allah said: Verily Allah pardons mistakes and loss of memory of my followers and what they are made to do by force.—*Ibn Mājah, Baihaqi.*

Abu Hurairah reported: Of what I know from the Holy Prophet, (it is that) he said: Verily the Almighty and Glorious Allah will send for this people at the head of every century one who will revive its religion for them.—*Atū Dawūd.*

Abu Ubaidah reported that he asked: O Messenger of Allah! is there anybody better than us who accepted Islam and fought hard with you? 'Yes' said he, 'a people who will come after me and believe (truly) in me without seeing me.—*Ahmad.*

Anas reported that the Messenger of Allah said: By One in whose hand there stands my life, nobody (truly) believes till he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.—*Agreed.*

Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah said: He does not (truly) believe by Allah, he does not believe by Allah,

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he does not believe by Allah. He questioned : Who, O Prophet of Allah ? He replied : He whose neighbour is not safe from his injuries.—*Agr. ed.*

Abu Sa'īd al-Khudriy reported that the Messenger of Allah said : Everybody who hath an atom weight belief in his heart will be taken out of the Fire.—*Tirmizi.*

Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah said : Certainly what reaches the believer out of his works and good actions after his death is the learning he has acquired and spread abroad, and a pious issue he has left, or a mosque he has built up, or a canal he has caused to be excavated : or an act of charity he has done out of his wealth while in his health and life—(these) will reach him (even) after his death.—*Ibn Mājah, Baihaqi.*

Abu Umāmah reported that a man asked the Holy Prophet : What is faith ? He replied : When your good work gives you pleasure and your evil work grieves you, you are then a man of faith. He enquired : What is sin ? He said : When anything smites you within yourself, avoid it.—*Ahmad.*

Mu'az-bin-Jabal reported that he asked the Holy Prophet about the most excellent faith. He said : It is that you love for Allah and hate for Allah, and engage your tongue in the remembrance of Allah. He enquired : What is that O Prophet of Allah ? He replied : It is that you love for men what you love for yourself and hate for them what you hate for yourselves.—*Ahmad*

'Amr-bin-Abasah reported : I came to the Apostle of Allah and enquired : O Prophet of Allah ! Who is with you about this affair ? "A free man" replied he "or a slave." I enquired : What is Islam ? He replied : Patience and generosity. I enquired : Which Islam is best ? He replied : That one's from whose tongue and hand Muslims are safe. I asked : Which prayer is best ? He said : Prolonged prostration. I asked : Which emigration is best ? He replied : It is that you emigrate from what your Lord dislike. I asked : Which fight is best ? He replied : That in which his best horse is killed and his blood shed. I enquired : Which of the hours is best for prayer ? He said : The middle of the latter half of night.—*Ahmad.*

Abdullah-bin-'Amr reported that the Messenger of Allah said : None of you (truly) believes till he makes his passions follow what I have been commissioned with.—*Sharh i-Sunnat.*

'Amr-bin-Shu'aib reported from his father, and he from his grandfather that the Holy Prophet asked : Who in creation is most pleasing to you in faith ? 'Angels' replied they. He said : What is (the matter) with them that they will not believe while they are near their Lord ? They said : Then (they must be) the Prophets. He said : What is (the matter) with them that they will not believe while revelation comes to them ? They replied : Then we. He said : What is (the matter) with you that you will not believe while I live in your midst ? The Messenger of Allah said : Surely the dearest of the creatures to me in faith will be the people who will come after me. They will see the scripts wherein there is a book. They will believe in what is therein.—*Baihaqi.*

WHAT IS ISLAM ?

[The following is a very brief account of Islam, and some of its teachings. For further details, please write to the IMAM of the Mosque, Working, Surey, England, or to the Editor, *The Islamic Review*, Aziz Manzil, Brandreth Road, Lahore, India.]

ISLAM : THE RELIGION OF PEACE.—The word "Islam" literally means : (1) Peace ; (2) the way to achieve peace ; (3) submission, as submission to the Master's will is the only way to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code, whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

THE PROPHET OF ISLAM.—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last Prophet of the Faith. Muslims, *i. e.*, the followers of Islam, accept all such of the world's Prophets, including Abraham, Moses and Jesus, as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

THE QUR-AN.—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-an. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book. Inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur-an, the last Book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.—These are seven in number ; Belief in (1) Allah ; (2) Angels ; (3) Books from God ; (4) Messengers from God ; (5) the Hereafter ; (6) the Pre-measurement of Good and Evil ; (7) Resurrection after Death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress ; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the Hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in Heaven. State after death is a counter-part of the spiritual state in this life.

The sixth article of Faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination ; he believes in Premeasurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

PILLARS OF ISLAM.—These are five in number ; (1) Declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad ; (2) Prayer ; (3) Fasting ; (4) Almsgiving ; (5) Pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine at Makka.

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ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.—The Muslims worship One God—the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Just, the Cherisher of all the worlds, the Friend, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is invisible in person. He is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

FAITH AND ACTION—Faith without action is a dead letter. Faith by itself is insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden and none can expiate for another's sin.

ETHICS OF ISLAM.—"Imbue yourself with Divine Attributes," says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His Attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine Attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature, which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels, and leading him to the border of Divinity.

THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM.—Man and woman come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainments. Islam places man and woman under the like obligations, the one to the other.

EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches and family honours are accidental things: virtue and the service of humanity are the matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

PERSONAL JUDGMENT.—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion, which, according to the saying of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

KNOWLEDGE.—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to angels.

SANCTITY OF LABOUR.—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

CHARITY.—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others; and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.

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