

"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

*The*

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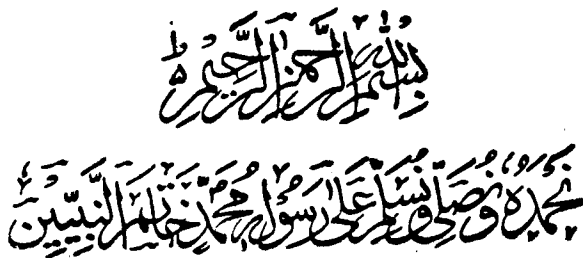
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No. 11

## BY THE LIGHT OF THE HOLY QUR-AN

“ O you who believe ! be upright for Allah, bearers of witness with justice, and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably ; act equitably, that is nearer to piety, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah. Surely Allah is Aware of what you do.”

—The Holy Qur'án V : 8.

### The Purport

International peace depends entirely on international justice. Slightest injustice anywhere in international relationships must disturb the poised condition of the whole political situation of the world. As wardens of world peace, the Muslims are to take utmost care to uphold the cause of this peace by insisting on even-handed justice to each individual nation, even to a nation, at whose hands they may have had occasion to suffer great inequities and treacheries, and against whom they may as a consequence be highly incensed. Believing in God, Who has knowledge of our innermost feelings and thoughts, we must not allow ourselves to be swayed by any spirit of revengefulness, when we sit in judgment over any affair of our enemies. That, indeed, will be a crucial test of our faith in God.

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### A DECLARATION

I, Reginald Douglas Easden, of Bellshill, Lanarkshire. Scotland, aged 27, formerly of Roman Catholic persuasion, 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 Illa 'L-láh Muhammadu 'nRasúlu 'L-láh*

(There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger).

*Dated 10th September, 1947.*

(*Sd.*) R. D. EASDEN.

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### 'ID-AL-ADZHA

#### Celebrations in Woking

The Muslim festival of 'Īd-al-Adzḥa, commemorating the supreme sacrifice of Prophet Abraham, was celebrated at the Shah Jahan Mosque, Woking, England on Sunday the 26th October 1947, with due solemnity and in an atmosphere of joyful brotherliness. Maulvi Abdul Majid M.A., who returned to England a few weeks back, led the congregational prayer, attended by over three hundred Muslims representing various nations and races of the world, in the lawn of the mosque, canopied suitably for the occasion. The management feels, however, that the attendance is fast outgrowing the accommodation provided for these celebrations as the years roll by. The countries represented were Turkey, Iran, Egypt, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Arabia, Great Britain and the other European countries. Among the notabilities who participated the following may be mentioned :

Habib Ibrahim Rahimtoola Esq., High Commissioner for Pakistan, Mr. Moizuddin Ahmad, I.C.S., 1st Secretary to High Commissioner for Pakistan, Mr. Naqvi,

## RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEW BROTHERS

I.C.S., Nawab Mir Nawaz Jung Bahadur Agent-General Hyderabad (Dn.) General Idroos, Commander-in-Chief, Hyderabad Forces, Seth Jafar Haroon of Karachi, Seth Yusuf Ali Jivanjee, Mr. S. M. Haffar of Manchester, Mr. Biswas, the Personal Representative of the High Commissioner for India, Personal Representative of the Iranian Minister, Personal Representative of the Saudi Arabian Minister, Personal Representative of the Syrian Minister.

An appeal for Funds for the Indian Muslim refugees was made by the Hony. Secretary of the Muslim League, Branch, London.

Weather was fine and a large number of Muslims and friends remained with the staff of the Mosque and the Mission till Tea and Dinner and joined the afternoon and evening congregational prayers.

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## RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEW BROTHERS IN THE FAITH

Although there is a fairly large number of conversions to Islam in England every year, there has long been the need for an effort to weld those converted into a Muslim community compatible with the Brotherhood of Islam. In a country such as England the Muslims do not naturally tend to form themselves into such a community owing to the many practical difficulties with which they are surrounded in a non-Muslim country. However, it is useless to even think of overcoming these difficulties unless those who have made the Declaration of Faith and are true Muslims in their hearts are given the opportunity of knowing what a practical Muslim life should be. It is felt that those converts learning the practical as well as the spiritual side of Islam will wish to meet their Muslim brethren at every opportunity so that the foundation of a community will be formed which will one day, with Allah's help, blossom into solid and permanent community. It is also hoped that those Muslims attending the school and absorbing the Teaching of God as revealed in the Holy Qur'án, and who in their

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own lives follow the glorious example set by the Prophet Muhammad (the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as revealed in the Hadith, will, by the example set by their own upright way of life, attract new converts to Islam.

In order to achieve these objects the Muslim Society in Great Britain is starting a school on the lines set out below. The following have volunteered to teach the subjects set against their names :

Al-Hajj Dr. S. M. Abdullah and Maulvi Abdul Majid :  
Qur'án and Hadith.

Mr. Abdul-Aal and Mr. Daud Cowan: Arabic language.

Dr. Abul-Fadzl: the practical side of Islam (prayers etc., including the study of the life-history of the Prophet (the peace and blessings of God be upon him)).

The classes will take place every Saturday at 18, Eccleston Square, S.W.1 (near Victoria Station) and will be divided up as follows :—

4-30—5-30, P.M., The practical side of Islam.

5-30—6-0, P.M., Arabic language.

6-0 —7-0, P.M., Qur'án and Hadith.

*Secretary,*

*The Muslim Society in Great Britain*

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## WHAT DO YOU THINK OF RELIGION ?

BY A BRITISH MUSLIM

If this question were put to " the man in the street " a variety of answers would be returned which could be sorted and reduced to two categories—one would include those who regard Religion as a vexatious and tedious thing and a bar to progress, the other would describe Religion as the mainspring of life.

The first would include those who, in all probability, have never regarded Religion as the source or mainspring

## WHAT DO YOU THINK OF RELIGION ?

of action. There would, of course, be a minority who had so regarded it, but the spring had broken through careless winding or inattention, dirt had got in, clogged its activity and, finally, broken it. When the mainspring of a clock or watch is broken, the timepiece is rendered useless until it is repaired ; it may be shaken or oiled, but the wheels won't go round and no motion will result ; there may be a faint momentary ticking, but it will be very feeble, inoperative and of short duration. As with the watch, so with human beings. The Five Pillars of Islam are the mainspring of the Muslim's life and must be maintained if that life is to be preserved from inertia or apathy.

The active exercise of religious principles is neither tedious nor vexatious ; instead of being a bar to, it is the prime mover of progress. It is a spur, not a brake. There are some people who pay more attention to prohibition than to precept ; who, though unintentionally, make the lives of their children miserable by the frequent negative commands. There is much more of "Thou shalt not" than "Thou shalt" in their injunctions. The story, by no means apocryphal, is told of a mother commanding a son to go upstairs and see what Tommy is doing and tell him not to. There are some Christians who observe the precept "Be glad in the Lord and rejoice" with long frozen faces and with an expression that would cast a damper on a funeral. I knew once a Christian "evangelist" who used to preach sermons against football.

The Jewish faith is supposed by many who know nothing of Jewish life to consist of a persistent scrupulosity in observing a large number of negative commands. There can be few happier gatherings on earth than a Sabbath evening in a Jewish household, when the peace of God—that peace which passes all *misunderstanding*—is predominant. One of the happiest afternoons in my life was spent in a *Succah* in the small back garden of a large house in Oxford during the Feast of Tabernacles, when the citron and other delicious fruits were items on an unwritten menu. Where can be experienced more delightful and peaceful, joyous because not hilarious, gatherings that are experienced at Woking, or, I suppose, at any Mosque, on the occasion of the Muslim festivals. Some of us can look back with pleasurable memories to

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those happy gatherings under the renowned superintendence of Maulvi Sadr-ud-din and Khwaja Kamal-ud-din. Peace and happy fraternity followed the worship of Allah, not a forced peace but unclouded serenity. Loved ones, now sorely missed, were present and there was "Peace, perfect peace", not in the ambiguous words of the hymn, "with loved ones far away."

What do we Muslims think of Religion? Do we find it the key to happiness or have we mislaid the key? If we do not, it is not because there is anything wrong with the mainspring, but because we have omitted to wind the watch. There is something lacking in us: *we* have got out of gear. Joy and peace come from obedience, cheerful and willing obedience that demands no strain, that springs from a loyal desire to serve Allah with our bodies and talents as well as with our souls, not with Puritanical or Pharisaic subservience but because every thought, word and action are consecrated to the Will of Allah. There must be a daily supply of force. The mill will never grind with the water that is past. Most watches want daily winding.

Lord, for to-morrow and its needs, I do not pray;  
Keep me, my God, from stain of sin, Just for to-day.  
Let me in season, Lord, be grave; in season, gay;  
Let me be faithful to Thy Grace, Just for to-day.

---

### THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL

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

Some years ago I went frequently to the services conducted by the late Rev. Charles Voysey at the Theistic Church, Swallow Street, Piccadilly, attracted thither, first of all, by the fact that his assistant minister, John Glen, was an old friend, who had fought his way from Trinitarianism to Monotheism. Glen used to conduct a week-evening service, which generally took the form of a free and easy discussion. One evening the parable of the Prodigal came up for discussion and a stalwart upholder of evangelical doctrine ventured the assertion that the parable might be described as an epitome of the teaching of God's full and free forgiveness of the repentant sinner.



## THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL

"Yes," said Mr. Glen "and we accept it as such, because there is no hint or mention in the narrative of the practice of or necessity for substitutionary atonement." This view, presumably, had never struck the disputant before, for in a minute or so, he sat down and said no more.

Islam, which is purely Theistic in its teaching, may also point to the story as a parabolic presentation of the ways of Allah with repentant sinner. "You Muslims quite overlook the Christian teaching of God's love," said an ordained minister of the Church of England to me a few days ago.

"Have you ever read the Qur-án?" I asked him.

"No," was his answer. "I have glanced at it, but found it such a farrago that I gave it up in despair."

"If you had read it instead of glancing at it," I replied, "you would have found it to be not a farrago but an exposition in the main of God's mercy and compassion, which are attributes far higher than love, which term has become degraded in its use and application in the modern world. Particularly in the modern novel it has been become a term used to refer to the indulgence by men and women of unrestricted baser passions.

But why is the parable generally denominated the parable of the Prodigal son? Would it not be more appropriate to call it 'The prodigal *Parent*,' for it was the father who was prodigal in the gifts he showered upon his erring but repentant son?

There are still some who hold that repentance cannot be effective unless it is accompanied by an atonement on behalf of the sinner by someone unconnected with him and by restitution. Here there was neither substitutionary atonement nor restitution: this latter was impossible because the prodigal had "wasted his substance." Yet restoration was possible as an act of grace. The sinner had become free by reattainment to Truth. The material world of sensual pleasures had lost its grip of him and no longer dominated his actions.

What says the Qur-án? Listen.

God wishes to explain to you and to guide you into the ordinances of those who were before you and to turn towards you, for God is knowing, wise. God wishes to turn towards you,

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but those who follow their lusts wish that ye should swerve with a mighty swerving. God wishes to make it light for you, for man was created weak. (IV, 31).

Yet whoso does evil and wrongs himself and then asks pardon of God, shall find God forgiving and merciful; and whoso commits a crime, he only commits it against himself, for God is knowing, wise.

And whoso commits a fault or a sin and throws it on the innocent, he hath to bear a calumny and a manifest sin.

Were it not for God's grace upon thee and His mercy, a party of them would have tried to lead thee astray; they only lead themselves astray; they shall not hurt you in aught; for God hath sent down upon thee the Book and the wisdom and taught thee what thou didst not know, for God's grace was mighty on thee. (IV, 110-112)

Whoso turns again after his injustice and acts aright, verily God will turn to him for, verily, God is Forgiving, Merciful.

(V. 43)

God hath prescribed for Himself mercy; verily, he of you who does evil in ignorance and then turns again and does right—verily, He is forgiving and merciful. (VI, 54).

Those who have done bad works and then turn again after them and believe—verily, thy Lord, after that, is Forgiving and Merciful. (VII, 151)

It is not for the Prophet and those who believe to ask forgiveness for the idolaters, even though they be their kindred, after it has been made manifest to them that they are the followers of hell. (IX, 115).

I am to you from God a warner and a herald of glad tidings; and that ye seek pardon from your Lord, then turn again to Him. He will cause you to enjoy a good provision to a named and appointed time and will give His grace to every one deserving grace; but if ye turn your backs, I fear for you the torment of a great day. (XI, 1.)

Verily, thy Lord to those who have done evil in ignorance and then repented after that and done aright—verily thy Lord afterwards is Forgiving and Merciful. (XVI, 120).

I am forgiving unto him who repents and believes and does right and then is guided. (XX, 84).

He who turns again and does aright, verily, he turns again to God repentant. (XXV, 71).

Many other quotations from the Qur'an might be quoted as well as from the Traditions. The two following from the latter source must be sufficient, at any rate for the present.

He who asks pardon continually Allah releases him from every constraint.

## THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL

Joy be to him who has asked much pardon in the day and night.

Parabolic teaching was the method employed by the Rabbis in pre-apostolic times and it is not unknown among the Jews at the present day. It was also used by Buddha. But by them, as with Jesus, the "spiritual" meanings of the tales were not given to the people generally but reserved for earnest disciples or students, to whom it was given "in the house", away from the multitude or "uninitiated." It is largely the Swedenborgian method of explanation of biblical narratives. There is naught in the term "uninitiated" to cause alarm. It does not mean, at least necessarily so, experiencing certain unknown hardships and an elaborate ceremony in joining a society, whose ritual is not known to the uninitiated. In this application it means the discovery of the hidden meaning of the narrative, here, *e.g.*, the spiritual meaning of a parable, reminding us of the definition sometimes given that a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. The Essenes and Therapeutae, in particular, paid but little heed to the literal rendering of the Scriptures, which, to them, meant the Old Testament writings, but sought to ascertain the spiritual meanings, not only of parables but of seemingly statements of facts. Bruno wrote :

The Therapeutae interpreted the Scriptures of the Old Testament allegorically and, being wont to seek the spiritual meaning of the Law, they more readily embraced the gospel than those that looked no further than the outward letter.

Augustine, in his work, *Letter and Spirit*, demonstrated that not only the histories, precepts, parables and figures of the Old Testament, but those also of the New Testament, were both to be interpreted and applied in a spiritual manner, otherwise the meaning would be lost, for "the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life."

This parable of the Prodigal has ever been popular in the sense of being retained in the memory because, unhappily, in its material interpretation and general application it has a too frequent demonstration in modern experience. There is, however, for students of the mysteries in all Scriptures a deeper meaning than the ordinary, which, like a gem which has been buried beneath the soil, will scintillate with more than ordinary grandeur when brought to the surface and exposed to the rays of the sun.

The "house" is the symbol of the place where the higher knowledge or spiritual interpretation of parable is revealed. From Matthew xiii, 36, we learn that it was not until Jesus had dismissed the crowds and had entered "the house" that the disciples sought from him an explanation of the parable he had uttered.

Although it is not definitely stated to have been the case, the inference is that both sons had been resident with the father "in the house." Only the younger is described as possessed of the desire to leave home. In common parlance he wanted "to set up on his own account." The history of many religious movements in every country is the story of such defections. The foundations of such purpose must be the knowledge acquired "in the house" away from the guidance of the "father" or "master." So the prodigal "gathered all together" and took his journey into a "far country" where he "wasted his substance with riotous living."

The meaning seems to be that he had a desire to go out into the world among the crowds and there to spread abroad the knowledge he had acquired, in disregard of the injunction to "cast not pearls before swine." Darby's translation is that the younger son "dissipated his property, living in debauchery," but it does not seem fitting to emphasize the literal meaning. The parable does not suggest that the motive was in any way impure. He may have been and probably was imbued with a desire that might be described as Utopian. He wanted to do good, but lacked discretion. It is unwise and nearly always inimical to scatter truths wholesale in a haphazard manner.

The non-observance of discretion in the dissemination of spiritual truth impoverishes both the tutor and the taught. The "famine in the land" has reference to a dearth of spiritual rather than material sustenance: teaching on a lower plane is unsatisfying to those who have climbed the heights. However great the attainments in the acquisition of spiritual knowledge, we are always dependent on "the father in the house." So soon as sustenance is sought from other sources there will arise "a mighty famine" and the student will "begin to be in want." Spiritual hunger always arises when the dis-

## THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL

ciple is alienated from the source of Eternal Truth, even though, for a time, he may "long to fill his belly with the husks which the swine were eating" The initiate, fed upon the spiritual content, can no longer satisfy his hunger with the outer shell. Nor will the food of yesterday satisfy the hunger of today. So we read that

"When he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land and he began (the word is emphasized in the original) to be in want."

The younger son is represented as departing from the source of supply and impoverishing himself by giving indiscriminately from the store of knowledge he had accumulated to those who were not sufficiently instructed to benefit from such teaching. He had occupation and, therefore, wages fitted to the work he performed, but the husk or shell—mere ceremonial or ritual—has no sustaining power for the earnest student of the hidden mysteries of nature or of science or of spiritual truth. The hired servants had bread enough and to spare, for they could not assimilate all the teaching given to them.

Great, indeed, must have been the surprise and joy of the younger son to find himself not only restored but raised—robed in the first robe, given the signet ring, his feet shod, denoting that he was in no sense or meaning a slave or a bond servant, for shoes were not worn by slaves. Never more would the material world of sensual pleasures appeal to him or dominate his acts.

"His thoughts and words composed, his mind unaffected by any bewilderment of life, he, indeed, would mount above the stream."

One point must be noted. The misfortunes or evils which befell the erring son were not sent as a punishment for his misdeeds. Nor were they referred to by the father when receiving the son back into the home circle. He would not even permit the son to refer to the terrible mistake he had made. The brief confession was sufficient demonstration of the sincerity of his penitence and his confession was reduced by compulsion to the greatest brevity. One writer has written a work of fiction based on the belief that forgiveness of sins is impossible from the scientific point of view. The late Dr. N. Bishop Harman, preaching in Manchester College,

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Oxford, in 1923 expounded the opposite view both forcibly and eloquently, which he was qualified to do from both the religious and scientific standpoint. He expressed his conviction, based on certain experiences which he quoted, that such statements were inaccurate, despite appearances which on a first and limited view, might appear to support.

And the elder son? He, too, was outside the house, but not far away. He was "in the field" not in the far country. He could hear the music and dancing but did not know what it all meant. He was within the line of communication but not of participation. He was a man of divided desires. He wanted to make merry with his friends, but, at the same time he was envious of the joy within the house, which was his real home. There are many such to-day with divided desires, who want to make the best of both worlds and who remain undecided which to choose. The return of the wanderer was certainly a time for music and dancing and says Ecclesiastes :

I commend mirth because a man hath no better thing under the sun than to eat and to drink and be merry.

The father kissed him—that was a token of love. It would be a profitable study to recount all the kisses mentioned in the Bible. We read in Deuteronomy xxxiv, 5, that Moses died in the land of Moab "according to the word of the Lord" but the more precise rendering is "by the mouth of the Lord" and Moses Maimonides, commenting on this, says that Moses was "kissed into eternity by the Eternal."

The father gave instructions to the servants to bring about the rehabiliement of the son, the wanderer. Save for the falling on the neck, the embracing and the kissing—no deputy could do that—all was done by the servants acting on instructions. The divine purposes are always brought about by intermediaries—angels or men. But the father went out in person to entreat the elder son to come in and join in the merriment. It is a sad thought that jealousy may sometimes force its way into the happiness that should spring from a notable and praise-worthy accomplishment.

## THE WAY OF LIFE

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

### The Guidance—3

"Say : Whether you hide what is in your hearts or manifest it, God knows it ; and He knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth ; and God hath power over all things."<sup>1</sup>

Verily so ! Nothing can lie hidden from God, the Omnipresent. Surely instantaneous knowledge of everything, whether concealed within the heart or manifest outside it, belongeth unto God, Whom nothing can deceive, with Whom no subterfuge can prevail, Him serve with the pure heart, casting out fear.

"As to those who believe and do good deeds, He will pay them fully their rewards : and God does not love the unjust."<sup>2</sup>

"And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden, the extensiveness of which is the heavens and the earth. It is prepared for those who guard (against evil).

"For those who spend (benevolently) in ease as well as in straitness, and for those who restrain (their) anger and pardon men. And God loves the doers of good to (others)."<sup>3</sup>

Here we have a clear indication that God is Forgiving. Though punishment for wrongdoing is in the hands of God, He hath endued mercy and forgiveness upon Himself. God may forgive. Hasten, then, seek and obtain this forgiveness from God. When the balm of forgiveness hath healed the wounds and the pains of evil-doing, then the lightened spirit is cleansed and ready to enter the Garden. And what is the Garden ? Lo ! it comprises in its extent the very heavens and the earth. By grace can one enter, and by knowledge and nearness to God can one dwell therein amidst a succession of blessings, while upon every hand is rapture in a thousand forms, springing untiring from the well-spring of the recognition of reality.

Upon earth, in practical life, the servants of the Merciful spend with benevolence. They keep a fast guard upon their anger and they are forgivers of men. Surely such God loveth !

"And a soul shall not die but with the permission of God. The term is fixed ; and whoever desires the reward of this world,

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur'an, III : 28.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, III : 56.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, III : 132, 133.

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We will give him of it, and whoever desires the reward of the hereafter, We will give him of it ; and We will reward the grateful."<sup>1</sup>

"God gives life and God causes death : and God sees what you do."<sup>2</sup>

Let men take heart and persevere in well-doing, and let them boldly accomplish their duty : for

"If God assists you, then there is none that can overcome you, and if He forsakes you, who is there that can assist you apart from Him ? And upon God should the believers rely."<sup>3</sup>

Verily truly so ! for indeed

"God is sufficient for us and most excellent is the Protector."<sup>4</sup>

"O you who believe ! be patient and excel in endurance and remain steadfast and be careful of (your duty to) God that you may be successful."<sup>5</sup>

Peruse the Book, then lay it by, then peruse it again and mark carefully in your mind those versets which have an instant message to your mind or which thrill fast to your heart-strings.

So we read :

"If you shun the great things which are forbidden you, We will do away with your evil (inclinations) and will cause you to enter an honourable place."<sup>6</sup>

Let us pause at this point and rejoice to recognise the merciful dealing of God towards humanity. Lo, at first, nothing beyond our power is asked of us. Desiring the way of God, we have but resolutely to shun the greater evils ; then gradually, guidance and strength will descend upon us to master the lesser evils also, so that, in time's process, we shall draw nearer and nearer to God, as it were step by step, shaking off encumbrances and overcoming obstacles and making definite progress as the days go by.

"Surely God does not do injustice to the weight of an atom. If it is a good deed, He multiplies it and gives from Himself a great reward."<sup>7</sup>

Such minute justice is only possible unto God.

Omniscience and Omnipresence can alone secure unerring justice. By the side of the divine justice is

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur'an, III 144.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, III : 159.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, III : 199.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, IV : 40.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, III : 155.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, III : 172.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, IV : 31.



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seated the divine mercy—mercy, which, beholding a good deed, tends it as some precious plants and makes it fruitful, multiplying it tenfold. And it may be you will notice at times, attendant upon a good deed, there comes some blessing which appears extraneous, even fortuitous, which indeed can only be attributed to the bounty of God, well-pleased.

Again and similarly :

"Say : The provision of this world is brief and the hereafter is better for him who guards (against evil), and you shall not be wronged one whit.

"Wherever you are, death will overtake you, though you are in towers raised aloft. If a benefit befalls them, they say : This is from God : but if a misfortune befalls them, they say : This is from you. Say : All is from God. What is the matter with these people that they are so far from understanding what is said ?"<sup>1</sup>

Further on in the same chapter of the Qur-án we meet an everyday injunction, which, if carried out, would greatly help the amiability of human intercourse.

Thus :

"And when you are greeted with a greeting, return the greeting with interest or at least equally. Surely God takes account of all things."<sup>2</sup>

If kindly speech is offered you, give kindly speech in return. Yea, or add thereto, showing thyself yet more amiable. Greetings and salutations may seem small things, but indeed they have great power of good ; and God takes account of this and of all things.

In the same sura later we read :

"And when you journey in the earth there is no blame on you if you shorten the prayer; if you fear that those who disbelieve will cause you distress ; surely the unbelievers are your open enemies."<sup>3</sup>

And,

"When you have finished the prayer, remember God standing and sitting and reclining. When you are secure from danger, keep up prayer. Surely prayer is a timed ordinance for the believers."<sup>4</sup>

From these two verses we may clearly understand the implications of the ordinance of prayer. Lengthy, inconvenient prayers are not required. The exigencies of

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur'an IV : 77-78.  
<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, IV : 101.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, IV : 86.  
<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, IV : 103.

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travelling are met by a judicious shortening of prayer, not, mark you, by the total abandonment of prayer ; for especially in the trouble, uncertainty, hazard and perplexity inseparable from travel, the remembrance of God is a source of right direction and of comfort. Nevertheless, even in times of travel, of danger, of trouble, of warfare even, remember that prayer is a timed ordinance for the believers. At the breaking of the day, in the noon time and at the going down of the sun, the memory of God should fill the heart with an unassailable refreshment. The eternal light should ever at such times break through the clouds of the temporal and shine with the unquenchable sunshine of joy.

Consider, too, the implication of these versets, not far removed from one another :

"They hide themselves from men, but they do not hide themselves from God. He is with them when they meditate by night words which please Him not : and God encompasses what they do."<sup>1</sup>

"Whoever does evil or acts unjustly towards his soul, then asks forgiveness of God, he shall find God Forgiving, Merciful.

"And whoever commits a sin, he only commits it against his own soul. And God is Knowing, Wise."<sup>2</sup>

"Whoever does evil, he shall be requited with it, and besides God he shall find for himself neither a guardian nor a helper."

"And whoever does good deeds, whether male or female, and is a believer...these shall enter the Garden ; and they shall not be dealt with a jot unjustly.

"And who has a better religion than he who submits himself entirely unto God ? and is the doer of good (to others) and follows the faith of Abraham, the upright one ; and God took Abraham as a friend."

"And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth belongeth unto God ; and God encompasses all things."

Now the foregoing<sup>3</sup> Quranic versets make some highly important statements ; and the realization of the truth embedded in them would go far to ameliorate civilization. For, when we have grasped their meaning, what indeed is it but on this wise ? Wrong-doing may escape the eyes of mankind, but in no whit can wrong-doing escape the knowledge of God. Of what avail is it to escape the censure and the punishment of humanity,

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur'an IV : 108.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, IV : 110-111.

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when the final, the complete punishing justice of God cannot be eluded? As all secret actions are known to God, so punishing vengeance rests completely in the hands of God. Yet, by the mercy of God, a way of escape lies open. To those who repent from the heart and are sincere in supplicating the Lord of all, the Eternal, for forgiveness, upon such the mercy of the Great Forgiver may shine, banishing the darkness of their previous wrong-doing.

Think not that sins committed against other people actually and fundamentally have power to harm other people. Nay, upon a man's own self is laid the burden and torment and the punishment of the sin he commits. Verily the sinning one, not the sinned against, must expiate the sin committed. And certainly your own good deeds and your own wrong deeds, blended together, make up the pattern of your own life and destiny. The wisdom of God is over His creation.

And now to the conclusion : what is the prevailing picture patterned on the mind by the last four versets quoted? Is it not as follows : God encompasses all. God is completely Just ; in no whit shall they be dealt with unjustly. For evil deeds, there is the requital of evil and no power for the protection of evil may raise itself against the power of God, in Whose hands is the judgment and the apportioning of punishment. Likewise belief and good deeds will engender the good reward, and no power for the obliteration of good may raise itself to prevail against the One, the Supreme, the Beneficent.

Verily, with God, there is but one religion (however many forms), and that religion is complete submission unto the will of God, even as did submit Abraham and Jesus and Muhammad.

And how glorious the closing verset :

"Whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth belongeth unto God : and God encompasses all things."

Nothing distant, nothing near, nothing large and nothing small but it belongeth outright unto God and abideth unshakably in His power. Beyond the most distant star and nearer than the fragment of an atom, substance, energy, light, power, completely are His.

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Neither by day nor by night, neither in time past nor in time yet to come, nay, nor even in the flicker of the fleeting present, canst thou elude Him. At all times, in all ways and in every place and circumstance, fear not, He will uphold thee. Be, then, of good cheer ! and let the joy of the universe invade thee !

And now there have come to my mind verses of long ago upon this subject and for a present conclusion I will quote them thus :

"Allah alone hath set the stars  
With trembling brightness in the void.  
The mighty mountains, cold, serene and chaste,  
Snow-shouldered, wear their majesty from Him.  
He.....Allah.....One.....Alone,  
Curtain'd the dim-lit forest depth,  
And domed the spacious heaven o'er the wide grey steppe.  
The circumambient, all-encasing air  
Is Allah's only...zephyr and hurricane are His.  
The rippling river and the laughing fountain,  
The surge tremendous of the eddying ocean,  
Alike are Allah's...beauty and might are His.  
The painted peacock proudly dight,  
Emblazon'd o'er with eyes of light,  
The lofty eagle, emperor  
Of aery thrones impregnable ;  
And that sweet warbler from the wood at eve,  
That melts with harmony the listening air,  
Each unto Allah several glory gives.  
The works of man ; his ardent beauty ;  
The deathless traceries of golden language,  
Fashion'd in fadeless glory by a master mind ;  
These do but dimly shadow forth  
The sacred writings, surely writ  
In cadences celestial  
By the Invisible, Omnipotent,  
Eternal and Omniscient,  
The Bountiful, the Merciful,  
Ever for ever through the universe."

*Author's*

*"The Invisible Hath Written"*  
*Published I. R. April, 1922.*

# POLITICAL SCIENCE AND GOVERNMENT IN ISLAM

BY S. MAHMUD-UR-RAHMAN.

*(Continued from Vol. XXXV, p. 375)*

## The Legislative Organ

Government have three separate categories of power—power of legislation, power of execution and power of interpretation and application of the law. The will of the state is formulated and expressed in the law by which the affairs of the state are managed. The will thus expressed in the law needs to be interpreted and applied to concrete cases, and then it has to be executed. From this we have three functions to be performed by government—Legislative, Executive and Judicial. Here we shall deal with the legislative organ of the state.

In modern democracies, government derive their powers from the citizens who directly or indirectly elect them; they exercise these powers as their representatives. But in the Islamic Republic the powers of government are derived from two sources: Divine authority and body-politic. The will of the people expressed through the agency of the representative legislature is not paramount, but only subordinate to the highest law-making authority of God. We find the operation of these two wills in the governance of a country under Islam without leading to any conflicts and deadlocks.

In a state the legislature is a paramount body because all other organs through which the will of the state finds expression only hinges upon it. In some states like England, the legislature makes and unmakes all laws, amends and alters constitutions and decides all questions of government. Though in the Islamic republic, the legislature is not the repository of such absolute powers, yet it is undoubtedly the supreme body, for the executive functionaries are legally bound to obey its dictates and commands which we call law in other words.

In the Islamic republican system the constituent organ which is concerned with the fundamental law is absolutely independent of the ordinary law-making bodies. Then as regards ordinary legislation, the state may have one or more law-making bodies. But according to the theory of

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two wills the law-making authority is vested in a legislature consisting of two chambers. The lower chamber which consists of the elected representatives of the people at large is the real legislative body from which emanate all laws and statutes needed to keep the governmental machinery running. The upper chamber consisting of eminent jurists of honesty and character, examines the laws passed by the lower chamber in the light of Divine laws and thereby checks hasty, rash and ill-considered measures and prevents passion, caprice, prejudice, irreligion and party-intrigue.

The Upper Chamber of the Legislature should be indirectly elected. The method of indirect election may vary ; but one of the most convenient methods is that the people will choose from the general mass a body of men distinguished by their ability, independent of popular passions and party-affiliations and sound in judgment in order to form an electoral college, which in their turn will elect jurists with requisite merits and qualities to the upper chamber. This council of jurists, by virtue of their higher ability, character, keener sense of responsibility and deeper knowledge of the shari'ah will not only provide ample safeguards against the overriding of the Divine will, but also eliminate to a large extent the possible dangers of democratic passions of the lower house by revising and criticising the measures adopted by them.

On the other hand, the constitution of the lower chamber is quite simple. The system of election for this chamber should be direct so that universal suffrage may get the fullest recognition and democratic passion may be brought into the fullest play. The lower chamber of the legislature acts as a great educative force by training and mobilising public opinion on all topics concerning social life. It is the yard-stick by which the progress of political consciousness is measured. Since all classes of people are free to be represented on this chamber, it is likely that strong party-passions, excitement and immature judgment will make it difficult to secure sound legislative projects, but the upper chamber—the great jurists of the state, who are independent of it—is there to restrain such tendencies.

In Islam the power of the legislature and the power of the executive are separate. In the days of the Caliphs, it

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was the jurists who used to make laws by way of deductions from the Qur'ān and the Traditions. Until very recently this practice was in vogue and even the most absolute monarch did not venture to arrogate to himself the authority of making laws. They made only those laws and policies which were administrative in character, but all the laws and statutes comprised in the term of shari'ah—laws and statutes for the regulation of ethical conduct and social relations in the affairs of everyday life and for the dispensation of justice—were left entirely to the school of jurists who were independent of the executive chiefs of the state. If we want to keep the present religious structure of our society, which we should, we must retain this salutary convention.

The executive chief of the state is not a member of the legislature ; nor is he responsible to it. He exercises the powers conferred upon him by the constitution ; but the legislature may criticise his acts and policies in order to set him right, may refuse to pass the bills introduced by him or to ratify the measures adopted by him. So in the latter case ; it is always necessary for him to consult the legislature before he adopts any measure so that the question of ratification may not create complexities.

The idea of representation is modern, we know that it is in England that the first really representative legislature came into being, but until modern times, the British Parliament could not exercise legislative power in the manner in which it does now. In spite of its elective character it could not do more than recommend measures to the king who had the sole authority to accept or reject them. But in Islam, the Caliphs or even the monarchs who held sway over vast territories never regarded themselves as the only legal repository of law-making power.

Since the lower chamber is the index of public opinion, its members should be elected in such a manner as may ensure fair and equitable representation of all sections of people as also of all professional and occupational interests. In accordance with the Islamic principles of equity and justice no interests should go unrepresented. If there are religious minorities in the state, provision should be made for their proportional representation and

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their voice should be heard and carry weight in all cases of law-making which may affect their interests in any way. Smooth and harmonious living in a state inhabited by different religious communities requires considerable sacrifices on their part, and a spirit of mutual compromise and agreement should be allowed to grow in order to make the passage of such laws possible, even if it may retard progress for a time. The minorities should feel that they are not slighted and aggrieved. In a legislature where the majority does not run the government, there is enough room for dispassionate consideration of all measures introduced and their enactment. Bills and proposals coming from the executive chief of the state, who is independent of the legislature, do not generally give rise to party-passions and intrigues as in the cabinet system, but these are rather viewed critically from a distance by all the members sitting together in judgment.

The best principle of representation is to distribute seats on the basis of population. Constituencies of equal population are created and each of them has the right to elect a representative. If there are minority communities in the state, they should have proportional representation with seats reserved so that they may not be engulfed by the major community. In order to enable them to secure fair representation, Islam goes even so far as to give them the right of separate election if they think that joint election will go against their interests.

The method of election should be direct and secret and the executive authorities should give all facilities to the voters for the free and unhampered exercise of their electoral functions. The term of the office of representatives should be short so that they may not lose touch with the electorate. It is variously fixed in various states. A term of five years may be fixed with convenience for the tenure of their mandates.

### **The Executive Organ**

When the will of the state is expressed and formulated in terms of law, it is required to be carried into execution. The organ or the department which carries out this function of government is known as the executive.



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The executive organ not only embraces the supreme head of the State, but also the ministers, the subordinate executive and administrative officers.

The principle of unity in the organisation of the executive office is an essential feature of Islamic government. In the First Islamic Republic established by the Prophet the chief executive office was entrusted to a single person called caliph. It is not necessary that we should call him caliph, we may call him by any other name, say, Imam or president. What we are concerned is that in republican states as in any other state, efficiency of government depends upon promptness of decision and action, singleness of purpose and energy in the executive. Lack of these qualities in the executive organ of the state will inevitably lead to weakness and inefficiency. So keeping these important facts in view Islam is in favour of a single executive head.

Islam requires that trusts should be made over to a person or persons worthy of them, and this great principle should guide the choice of the chief executive. The history of the early caliphate shows how the best results can be secured by an indirect election. The Caliphs of the early Islamic republic were elected by the elders of society. It is a very responsible task to choose the highest executive of the state and consequently necessitates power of discrimination and judgment on the part of the electorate. Popular passion and excitement, party-intrigues and caprices should not be allowed to enter into the selection of the head of state who should rise above all such considerations in the discharge of the sacred functions entrusted to him under the decree of God. So a body of intermediate electors capable of discharging their electoral trusts faithfully and according to the principle of justice and fairness should be elected by the people, and these intermediate electors will choose the best man to hold the most responsible office of the state.

The early Caliphs had a council to assist them in matters of administration. This good example may be followed and a council of state may be elected by the body of intermediate electors or appointed by the supreme head of the state from among experienced and

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capable civil service men according to arrangements in the constitutional document. The terms of their office and responsibility and the conditions of their removal should be clearly stated. They have a character of an advisory board, and the chief executive may override their decision. The members of the council who are in charge of the executive departments of government attend the sessions of the legislative assemblies and answer questions and keep them aware of the activities of the government. They introduce bills and budget proposals in the legislature and take part in debates, but do not vote.

It is evident from the constitutional history of the early caliphate that the duration of the office of the Caliph was not fixed. The principle should be applied now. The executive head of the Islamic Republic should continue in office as long as he acts justly and righteously. Of course there is no bar to the fixing of the term for which he will hold office. He is directly responsible to the people who elect him and can remove him from the exalted position in case of misgovernment and miscarriage of his functions. The competent body which can judge whether he is guilty of such gross misconduct for which he may forfeit his right to continue in office should be the council of jurists—the upper chamber of the legislature. They may try to set him right by passing votes of censure. If there is an impeachment against him by both the chambers sitting together on the verdict of the council of jurists, the issue of his dismissal should be decided by holding a plebescite.

As head of the government, the president or the caliph as we should call him in the Islamic republic, exercises functions which may be classified as follows :

Firstly, the chief executive is authorised to conduct diplomatic relations by concluding treaties and agreements with foreign states, appoint ambassadors in foreign countries and receive those appointed by foreign states and to make international trade and commercial pacts and relations.

Secondly, on the administrative side, he is entrusted with power to direct and supervise the execution of law and for this purpose, he appoints, directs and removes

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his subordinates. In exercise of his power of direction, he issues instructions and orders to the subordinate staff.

Thirdly, the constitution gives him authority to make decrees and regulations and issue orders, which take the shape of ordinances. This authority is exercised by him in times of emergency. When the legislature is not in session, or when there is no time to have them passed through the usual legislative procedure, he makes these temporary laws subject to the conditions that they must be placed before the legislature for ratification.

Fourthly, his judicial power consists in granting pardons to persons convicted of crimes.

Fifthly, the caliph is at the head of the army and the navy and the air force of the state. In declaring wars he must consult the legislature, but he can conclude peace subject to the ratification of its conditions. Once the war is declared he is supreme in his power to conduct the military operations. In the case of foreign attacks he is responsible for defence. In times of war he assumes great powers like a dictator because a singleness of purpose and promptness of decision and action are essential to the successful direction of war. In view of the gravity of the situation, he can impose martial law, suspend ordinary civil guarantees, suppress newspapers, and in many other ways curtail the constitutional rights of the people. He can mobilise the entire resources of the state to meet the grave crisis. It belongs to him to organise the forces, plan and direct the campaigns and appoint generals and commanders and to do all that is necessary to bring the war to a successful conclusion. Although he behaves like a dictator, he cannot go on for any unusual length of time without public opinion behind him. If he goes beyond the limit the legislature which reflects the will of the state brings him back to the right path. God enjoins that counsel should be taken even in the midst of war :

“ So it is due to mercy from God that thou dealest with them gently, and hadst thou been rough and hard-hearted, they could have departed from around thee ; pardon them and therefore ask protection for them and take counsel with them in the affair, when thou hast determined, place thy trust in God ; for God loves those who trust in Him.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur'an, III : 158.

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Sixthly, the supreme head of the Islamic Republican State, though in theory independent of the legislature, is, in some respects, subject to its control. The legislature controls him in as much as it appropriates money for the maintenance of executive officers, makes laws and prescribes duties and obligations which it is incumbent upon him and his department to obey. The rôle which he plays in the passing of laws is indirect. His duty is to furnish the legislature with information about the legislative needs of the country thereby helping it to frame laws, to recommend measures for its consideration and to give assent or refuse to assent to the acts passed by it. By the very constitution of his office, the caliph is in the best position to control extensive sources of information regarding domestic and foreign affairs, and hence it is his function to keep the legislature informed of the facts on the strength of which necessary laws can be passed and evils can be remedied.

All acts and legislations passed by the legislature require the assent of the chief executive before they become fit for application. The constitution gives him the power of veto. By the exercise of his veto, he can disapprove any act passed by it and compel its reconsideration or modification according to his suggestions. As the supreme head of the government it is his duty to prevent hasty and unwise legislation, check encroachment upon Divine authority and protect the rights of the minorities; by virtue of his veto-power he can guard the interests of the state against the evil effects of factions and improvidence of the law-makers. Besides, he is exposed to the danger of being subject to their commands and dictates and his constitutional powers may be rendered ineffective. In such cases, his veto-power comes to defend him against the attempt of the legislature to deprive him of his right and authority, and enables him to hold the balance even.

### The Judiciary

We know that the primary aim of the state is to protect individual rights and maintain peace and order. The laws that are passed by the legislature relate to the determination of rights and privileges between one citizen

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and another and between the citizens and the government. These laws are to be interpreted and applied to particular cases with justice and fairness and hence it follows that the state should have an organisation for the administration of law. This organisation is known as the judiciary.

In early times the states had no judicial organs for the purpose of deciding rights and punishing private crimes. It was the feudal lords, the headmen of the tribe and the church which used to administer justice according to customs and usages. Only in the case of an offence against the state, the government brought the offender to book. The administration of justice as a function of the state is of comparatively recent origin. Even in the nineteenth century, the feudal lords in Germany and the Church courts in England used to exercise civil jurisdiction in certain cases. But the case is different when we look into the history of Islamic politics. The Qur'an not only gives elaborate laws, but also makes it incumbent upon the Caliph as the head of the state to see that these laws are administered through a competent judicial agency. So we find that in the First Islamic Republic judges were appointed to dispense justice and that the executive branch of Government enforced their verdict and decisions.

The Judicial Courts in Islam are no respecter of persons. As soon as the common brotherhood was established, the Holy Prophet declared justice as the function of the state. No individual is allowed to play the rôle of a judge unless he is appointed and trained to perform duties which demand power of critical judgment and a strict sense of impartiality.

Judges are appointed by the chief executive and therefore under his administrative control, but for the matter of that, they are in no way bound to obey his directives in respect of the discharge of their duties. In the English constitution the King can do no wrong and hence no court is competent to try him. In almost all modern constitutions, the chief executive is not subject to the jurisdiction of any court. But in Islam, the great Caliphs were summoned and tried by the ordinary courts. The law is applicable equally to all irrespective of rank and

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wealth. The advantage of this system is that as the chief of the state is liable to answer for his wrong deeds in the court of justice, he will always try to secure every step he takes by judicious care and sound judgment. It may be argued that if he is sued so easily it will be impossible for him to do his duty fearlessly. This argument does not hold good because those who bring frivolous and baseless complaints will be dealt with so severely as to prevent recurrence of such cases in future.

Muhammad Hamidullah says in *Muslim Conduct of State* :

"Whatever the Muslim ruler does in his capacity of ruler, such as in the administration of justice, no suit may be instituted against him. On the other hand if the ruler does a thing in his private capacity, he is as liable to be tried before an ordinary Muslim court as any other Muslim subject ; for the rulers are as much subject to law as the citizens of the state. Thus it was that the Prophet heard cases against his proper person. In the time of the Caliphs, complaints were made in the court of the Qadzi of the metropolis, and Abu Bakr, 'Umar, Ali and many an Umayyad and Abbasid Caliph attended the court at the summons of the judges. On the same basis, if the rulers had any private claim, they instituted a suit in the court and did not assume the position of judge as well as party to the case."

The judicial power can be exercised by a hierarchy of judges and magistrates organised one above another. The jurisdiction should be distributed among the various courts in the state with the Supreme Court at the top, which has the right to hear appeals from the lower courts, give rulings in all new cases and decide all matters of dispute between the executive and the legislative organs and interpret the constitutional laws when referred to it.

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### JESUS SON OF MARY

#### HIS BIRTH AND DEATH

BY KHWAJA NAZIR AHMAD BAR-AT-LAW

(Continued from Vol. XXXVI, p. 382)

The Sanhedrin under the Roman Law had the power to try all Jews, but it could not impose the capital sentence<sup>3</sup> and it had to be confirmed by Pilate. The offence they had charged Jesus with was :

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We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is an anointed king.<sup>1</sup>

In John the charge against Jesus is explained thus :

Whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.<sup>2</sup>

No doubt, the charge was so framed, on false allegation, as to give Pilate his jurisdiction to impose the capital sentence. I have already explained that the procedure laid down in the Talmud for establishing the guilt of an accused person required that he should be questioned first. If he did not plead to the charge or admit his guilt, two witnesses had to depose to his guilt. Jesus was accordingly questioned :

The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spoke openly to the world, I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing. Why asketh thou me ? ask them which heard me. What I had said unto them : behold they knew what I said.<sup>3</sup>

It is obvious that his disciples were not present and the elders had to question Jesus about them and "his doctrine," but Jesus "held his peace"<sup>4</sup> and refused to plead to the charge. Then as was required by Law :

The chief priests and all the council sought for witnesses against Jesus to put him to death, and found none.<sup>5</sup>

The high priest and the elders then tried to persuade the blind man, whom Jesus had cured, to testify against him. They asked him :

What savest thou of him ; that he hath opened thine eyes ? He said : *he is a prophet*.<sup>6</sup>

The blind man was thus of no help to them, and they next questioned his parents,<sup>7</sup> but they also could not or would not give the desired testimony. In the absence of the other disciples of Jesus, who had all fled away,<sup>8</sup> they questioned Peter, through three different persons. Peter not only denied on oath his connections with Jesus but even cursed him.<sup>9</sup> All this took place as required by

<sup>1</sup> Luke, XXIII : R. V., p. 1163 discloses another Christian forgery. The word *Christ* was inserted later on.

<sup>2</sup> John, XIX : 12.

<sup>3</sup> John, XVIII : 19-21.

<sup>4</sup> Matt., XXVI : 63 ; Mark, XIV : 16.

<sup>5</sup> Mark, XIV : 55 ; Cf., Matt., XXVI : 59.

<sup>6</sup> John, IX : 17.

<sup>7</sup> John, IX : 18-22.

<sup>8</sup> Matt., XXVI : 56 ; Mark, XIV : 40.

<sup>9</sup> Matt., XXIXXVI : 70-74 Luke, 6-60,

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Law, in the presence of Jesus :

And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter—and Peter went out and wept bitterly.<sup>1</sup>

The only person left was Mary. Speaking of the atrocities of the Sanhedrin on this occasion, Dean Milman says that they maltreated all partisans of Jesus with the terrible threats of excommunication, and the timid believers and his relatives, including Mary, were put before this awful tribunal, and when questioned refrained from saying anything, lest their testimony should be used against Jesus, but they one and all referred them to Jesus himself for information.<sup>2</sup>

It is to this incident that the Holy Qur-ân next refers :

They said O Mary ! surely thou hast brought a great evil. O sister of Aaron, your father was not a bad man, nor was your mother an unchaste woman.<sup>3</sup>

The mention of Mary as sister of Aaron had a far deeper significance. It was meant as an appeal to her high lineage, to her better sense of justice ; for Aaron, whose descendant she was, had been the first in the line, the fountain head, of the Israel priesthood : a saintly man bound by the Law. It was an appeal to Mary to do her duty, to uphold the Law, and to support and side with the Pharisees who ‘sat in Moses’ seat,’ even though her so doing would set her up against her own son. She was also reminded that she belonged to a noble family, the pride of Israel, and that her parents had also been virtuous and noble ; and that, therefore, she was expected and ought to give the required testimony against “the great evil” which she had unwittingly brought into the world. They did not refer to Joseph intentionally. Firstly, because he was dead at that time,<sup>4</sup> and, secondly, even a mention of him would have by itself suggested a defence which would have disproved the charge of Jesus being a “King of the Jews,” as Joseph was a “son of David,”<sup>5</sup> and the Messiah, whom the Jews expected to be their king, redeemer and deliverer, had to be “born of the seed of the loins of David.”

<sup>1</sup> Luke, XXII : 61-63.

<sup>2</sup> Dean Milman, *History of Christianity*, 272.

<sup>3</sup> The Holy Qur-ân, XIX : 27-28.

<sup>4</sup> For the lamentations of Jesus at the death of his father, Joseph, see I. R., Vol. XXXIV : 366.

<sup>5</sup> Matt., I : 20.



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The background of this form of address is purely Oriental. Jesus was spoken of as an "evil" because his deeds appeared to the Pharisees to be against the Law; and not because it had anything to do with the birth of Jesus.

Mary, however, quite naturally refused to answer and "pointed to him" for a reply. But the elders wanted her evidence. They had, only a short while before the trial, when Jesus was talking of Abraham, taunted him: "Thou art not yet fifty years old."<sup>1</sup>

The elders, therefore, goaded her to speak and pointed out to her in the same Oriental strain that they could not speak in her presence to one who "was a child in the cradle." There was nothing extraordinary for the elders to speak of Jesus in these terms. It is noteworthy that they referred to him as one who *was* and not *is* a "child in the cradle."

Jesus realized the awkward position in which his mother had been placed. He already knew that her refusal might expose her to maltreatment by the Sanhedrin. To spare her the ordeal and suffering, and to be true to the character of being "good to his mother," he decided to and did address the elders himself. This address "was both a memorable speech and a masterpiece of advocacy".<sup>2</sup> It is this address of Jesus which is reproduced in the Holy Qur-án in the verses under discussion.<sup>3</sup> Had the question in issue been his legitimacy, or the conduct of Mary herself, Mary, and Mary alone, could have thrown light on it. In any case, Jesus ought to have referred to this matter in his reply. But he said nothing of the kind. The reply of Jesus becomes intelligible only if we consider it in the light of the charge which the Pharisees and elders had framed against him. They wanted to know of his "doctrine" and the charge was that he was a rebel against Cæsar as he claimed to be a "king of the Jews." Jesus, in his address, explained his "doctrine" and then concluded his address by refuting the specific charge. He said:

Surely I am the servant of God, He has given me the Book and made me a Prophet—He has not made me *rebellious*.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John, VIII : 27.

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence, *The Ecclesiastical History*, 201.

<sup>3</sup> The Holy Qur-án, XIX : 30-33

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, XIX : 30 : 33. Translation by Hafiz Ghulam Sarwar. The word 'rebellious' is more appropriate : See Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Vol. II : 375.

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It is, therefore, abundantly clear that Jesus was forty, at least thirty years old, and his Mission had already been entrusted to him when the incident mentioned in the Holy Qur-án took place, and that the only charge against him was that he had *rebelled* against Cæsar, and that the chastity of Mary or the birth of Jesus was not being challenged by the Jews. These verses of the Holy Qur-án do not, therefore, discuss or deal with the chastity of Mary.

V. The Christian critics of Islam refer to another verse of the Holy Qur-án wherein it is stated that the Jews had been guilty of a great slander against Mary, and urge that the Jews could not have accused Mary of anything if Jesus had been born in the usual normal manner. They, therefore, say that it was because Jesus had no father that the Jews felt compelled to question the chastity of Mary.

The verse runs :

And for their disbelief and their saying against Mary a great slander (*Buhtanan azeema*).<sup>1</sup>

This verse occurs in Ch. IV which deals with the iniquities of the Jews generally, both before and after the ministry of Jesus in Palestine. It refers to their transgressions and recapitulates various salient incidents of Jewish refractoriness, their breach of the Covenant of Mount Sinai, their arrogance when they were commanded humility and their transgression of the Sabbath.<sup>2</sup> The crescendo, if that word be permitted, in the Qur-ánic argument is remarkable. In the very next verse, we are told, that the Jews incurred Divine displeasure for their breach of the Covenant, their rejection of Allah's guidance as conveyed to them in His signs, their killing of His Messengers and their arrogantly imagining themselves to be above the law.<sup>3</sup> Then begins another series of their iniquities from a different point of view : that they rejected the faith, they made false charges against Mary<sup>4</sup>, who was a chosen of God, and they boasted of having killed Jesus when they were in fact victims of their

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-án IV : 156. Translation by Hafiz Ghulam Sarwar.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, IV : 154.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, IV : 155.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, IV : 156.

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own halucinations for they had neither killed nor crucified him.<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-án then speaks of their punishment and the termination of His favours on them.

The coupling of the three events and the nature of their punishment speak for themselves : for they show that the Holy Qur-án is mentioning the Jewish allegations prevalent at the time it was revealed, or in any case to events, after the termination of the ministry of Jesus in Palestine. The Jews could only be punished for their disbelief in Jesus after the termination of his ministry in Palestine. The scene at Calvary took place also at the close of that ministry. That they did not accuse Mary of adultery before or during the ministry of Jesus in Palestine is a fact of history and that is why the Holy Qur-án speaks of it with those events which took place after his ministry in Palestine.

No doubt, it will be a repetition, but it would be worth while if I recapitulate here once again, what I have already said in connection with the attitude of the Jews of his time regarding the birth of Jesus. To them Jesus was a Jew, born under the Law. They knew of his parents, his brothers and sisters, and there are numerous references in the Gospels to both of his parents. The Jews of his time did not accept his Divine Mission, they could not even dream of his immaculate birth. To them either he was a legitimate son of Joseph and Mary or he was illegitimate. They knew the Law of Moses :

A bastard shall not enter the congregation of the Lord, even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord.<sup>2</sup>

But Jesus not only entered the synagogues but constantly preached in them. Could the Jews of his time have suffered him to do so, if they did not believe him to be a legitimate son born in wedlock under the Law ? The Samaritan chronicles disclose that the Jews of his time took Jesus to be the son of Joseph and Mary.<sup>3</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur'an IV : 157.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. XXIII : 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal Asiatique*, (869), II : 439.

Talmudic expression :

Jesus was a carpenter, a son of a carpenter<sup>1</sup>

finds support in the Rabbinical saying :

Jesus was as legitimate as any other Jewish child of Galilee.

All the Apostles were ignorant of the virgin birth. James the brother of Jesus, who was the head of the Church at Jerusalem and belonged to the Ebionites, believed with them :

Jesus is the Messiah, yet a mere man, born by natural generation to Joseph and Mary.<sup>3</sup>

In the Gospel according to the Hebrews it is narrated that Mary had been married to Joseph and had given birth to Jesus in a natural manner.<sup>4</sup> Jerome has preserved a verse from this Gospel which says :

The mother and father of Joseph were present at his baptism.<sup>5</sup>

The Old Syriac Gospel, recovered from Mount Sinai by Mrs Lewis and Mrs. Gibson, contains the following explicit statement :

Jesus' father was Joseph and his mother Mary.<sup>6</sup>

St. Thomas "which is called *Didymus* unto his fellow disciples"<sup>7</sup> and whose real name was Judas<sup>8</sup> was the twin brother of Jesus. *Thomas* in Aramaic and *Didymus* in Greek mean a twin. This surname was given to Judas because of his peculiar relationship with Jesus. The most ancient tradition, beginning with the Gospel and *Acta Thomae*, make him to be the twin brother of Jesus. I will deal with this fact in some detail in a later chapter. It is interesting, however, to note that his followers in the East and the West did not believe in the virgin birth of Jesus. His followers in the West are known as Thomists and their creed is called Thomism. In the first instance it became the accepted doctrine of the Dominicans Order, but later on it was adopted by Aquinas who introduced the creed to the West. In the East the Assyrian Church and the Christians of St. Thomas of Southern India believed and had a Gospel which asserted that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary and St. Thomas was his twin brother. With the advent of the

<sup>1</sup> *J. Yabon*, III : 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ab zar*, 3 b.

<sup>3</sup> Hastings, *History of the Apostolic Church*, 318-332, see also Mosheim, *Ecc. History*, Vol I : 214.

<sup>4</sup> Gospel of Hebrews, II : 3.

<sup>5</sup> Lewis, *The Old Syriac Gospel*, 2.

<sup>6</sup> *Esu. H. E.*, I : XIII : 10.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, III : 2.

<sup>8</sup> John, XI : 16.

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Portuguese in India they for the first time learnt of the Holy Inquisitions and the Council of Diampore compelled them to abjure their faith.

Whiston in his Dissertation I to the works of Josephus says :

All the believing Jews and all the rest of the Nazarene Jews esteemed Jesus with one consent, as a mere man, the son of Joseph and Mary.<sup>1</sup>

Hasting also says :

It is quite clear that Jesus was popularly looked upon by his contemporaries as Joseph's son by natural generation.<sup>2</sup>

After taking into consideration the contemporary writing and other Rabbinical literature the compilers of the Jewish Encyclopaedia say :

The Jews, who are represented as inimical to Jesus in the canonical Gospels, took him to be legitimate and born in the ordinary natural way.<sup>3</sup>

The editors of the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* in discussing the birth of Jesus say that "It is true that this (Luke IV : 22) was early understood to mean the son of Joseph", and cite Origen, who wrote his Commentary on Matthew in about 246 C.E., as saying that the citizens of Nazareth believed that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary.<sup>4</sup>

It is obvious that the Jews among whom Jesus lived and preached did not question his legitimacy at all. They could not have, therefore, accused Mary of unchastity during Jesus' Ministry in Palestine. So long as the Christians did not assert the virgin birth of Jesus, the Jews did not challenge his legitimacy. It was in the second century of the Christian Era that the virgin birth theory was first put forward in support of the claim that Jesus was the son of God. The Pagans and the Jews then retorted with their charge of illegitimacy.

The Holy Qur-án is, therefore, only referring to this later charge, for such a charge was never made during the lifetime of Jesus.

This verse cannot, therefore, be cited in support of the virgin-birth theory.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. III : 276.

<sup>2</sup> Hasting's *Dictionary of the Church and the Gospels*, 808.

<sup>3</sup> *Jewish Ency.* Vol. VII : 170.

<sup>4</sup> *Ency. Bib.* Col. 3598.

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VI. The last objection of the Christians is that the Holy Qur-an cites the case of Adam as a parallel to that of Jesus, and, therefore, Jesus like Adam was without a father. They urge that Jesus was created, like Adam by a Divine command : *kun fa yakoon.*

In this connection the Christian critics of Islam refer to the following Qur-ānic verse :

Surely the likeness of Jesus is with Allah as the likeness of Adam ; He created him from dust, then said to him, Be and he was. (This is) the truth from your Lord, so be not of the disputers.<sup>1</sup>

All the commentators of the Holy Qur-ān, ancient and modern, agree that these verses, along with some others, were revealed when the Holy Prophet was having a discussion with the Christians of Najran in the tenth year of the *Hijra*.<sup>2</sup> This deputation consisted of sixty men and was headed by Abdul Masih, the chief of the Christians of Najran. The discussion took place in the Mosque of the Holy Prophet where the visitors had been lodged and permitted to hold their own prayers. In *Sirat-ul-Halabi*<sup>3</sup> the visit of this deputation is described in all its details. The point in issue was the Divinity of Jesus. Abdul Masih, the leader of the Christians, opened the discussion and enquired from the Holy Prophet :

They<sup>4</sup> said : What do you think of our Lord (*Sahib*) ?

The Messenger of God enquired, " Who is your Lord ? "

They replied : " Isa. Do you take him to be a servant of God ? "

The Messenger of God said : " Yes. "

They then asked : " Have you seen any one like him, or have you been informed of a man like him ? He is God because he had no father, he raised the dead, he gave information of the unseen, he cured lepers and made birds from clay. Consider this superiority. Do you still call him a servant of God ? "

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-ān, III : 58-59.

<sup>2</sup> Most of the commentators say that verses 1 to 62 of chapter III were revealed at that time ; some say that verses 1 to 83, were revealed on that occasion.

<sup>3</sup> Allama Burhan-ud-Din Halabi, *Sirat-ul-Halabi*, Vol. III : 4. See also *Asar-ul-Muhammadi* of Ahmad Zeeni, Vol. II : 211.

<sup>4</sup> The plural pronoun is throughout used in the origin to indicate that Abdul Masih was speaking on behalf of his companions.

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The Holy Prophet did not answer at once for at that very moment came the Divine revelation : one of the verses revealed was :

Surely the likeness of Jesus is with Allah as the likeness of Adam ; He created him from dust, then said, Be, and he was.<sup>1</sup>

It may be noticed that the verse does not say that the creation of Jesus was like that of Adam. I now quote the discussion from *Tafsir Ibn Jarir at Tabari* where it is recorded in full details under this very verse.<sup>2</sup>

They questioned " Who was his father ? "<sup>3</sup>

The Messenger of God replied, "*Don't you know that no child is born but has a likeness to its father in form and appearance ?*"

They said : " Yes, we know."

The Messenger of God said : " Don't you know that our God is alive and will never die and Jesus had to die ? "

They said : " Yes, we know."

The Messenger of God said : " Don't you know that our God is One to Whom everything submits. He is the Custodian and Guardian of all and He gives sustenance to everyone ? "

They replied : " Yes, we know."

The Messenger of God questioned : " Was Jesus possessed of any of these powers ? "

They replied : " No."

The Messenger of God then asked : " Did Jesus know of any of these things except those of which God gave him knowledge ? "

They answered " No."

The Messenger of God said : " Don't you know that our God neither eats, nor drinks nor does He answer the calls of nature ? "

They said : " Yes, we know."

Then said the Messenger of God : " *Don't you know that Jesus was conceived by a woman just as any other woman conceives a child, then she gave birth to him like every other woman gives birth to a child, he was then reared up like other children, then he used to eat and drink and answer the calls of nature like other human beings ?*"

They said : " Yes, we know."

The Messenger of God then enquired : " How can Messiah be the one ; whom you take him to be (i. e., God) ? "

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-án, III : 58.

<sup>2</sup> *Tafsir Ibn-i-Jarir at Tabari*, Vol. III : 100-101.

<sup>3</sup> The Christians, and the like of them, even to-day put 'the same question to Muslims.

Rabi narrates that the Christians could not reply to this question, but would not agree either and insisted on their false belief. As a last resort the Holy Prophet invited them in the terms of the revelation :

But whoever disputes with you in this matter after what has come to you of knowledge, then say, Come ! let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women, and our people and your people then let us be earnest in prayer and pray for curse of Allah on the liars.<sup>1</sup>

The Christians wanted time to consider the challenge and on the next day Abdul Masih and two of his companions informed the Holy Prophet that they had decided not to accept it, and that they would not pray against him nor invite him to pray against them. Thereupon an agreement was entered into whereby they were made free to practise their religion.

I have quoted this discussion *verbatim* to show how the Holy Prophet understood and explained "the likeness of Jesus is with Allah as the likeness of Adam," and how he illustrated his interpretation of the verse by referring to two very singular facts in the life of any man : likeness of a child with his father in appearance and form and the conception and birth of every human child. These illustrations and the likeness with "Adam" or "*other human beings*" would be inapplicable if "Adam" is taken to mean the Adam of the Bible who had neither a father nor a mother. According to the Bible he was not conceived by a mother.

Besides, the verse in question is universally relied upon by Muslims to refute the Divinity of Jesus. But it cannot serve this purpose if Jesus was in fact compared with the Biblical Adam, *i.e.*, if both of them had no father. No, the word 'Adam' in this verse means nothing more than a *man*. Hazrat Ibn Abbas interpreted the word *Adam* in this verse as *man* for he said : Man and not Adam (as a distinct entity) was created from dust. This verse, he said, could only be an argument against the Christians if by *Adam* is meant *man*.<sup>2</sup>

It may be stated that the Holy Qur-án does not mention or accept the Biblical theory of the creation of Adam. Indeed the Book does not state at all when and

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-án, III : 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Tafsir Ibn Hussain*, Vol. III : 203.



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how Adam was born. Imam Baqir, the great Muslim divine, is reported to have said : " Millions of Adams had passed away before our father Adam." Ibn Arabi, the great Sufi, writes in his wonderful work *The Futuhat* that forty thousand years before our Adam, there was another Adam.

Again, the creation of *Adam* is nowhere stated in the Holy Qur-án. The Book does not say how he was made. Nowhere in the Holy Qur-án is it stated that God created *Adam* from *turāb* (dust) except in the verse under discussion. In fact, the word *turāb* (dust) is used exclusively in connection with the creation of *man*.<sup>1</sup> Again, the creation of man, alone, and not that of *Adam*, from clay (*teen*) is mentioned in the Holy Qur-án,<sup>2</sup> further, the term *salsāl kalfakhār* (sounding clay, brittle like pottery) is also exclusively mentioned in connection with the creation of man and not that of *Adam*.<sup>3</sup>

It is obvious, therefore, that these stages of matter through which man has to pass in its evolution of creation refer to *man* alone.

(To be continued.)

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## CORRESPONDENCE

Bellshill,  
Lanarkshire  
Scotland  
10th September, 1947.

Sir,

Thank you for your letter dated 1st September, 1947.

I must apologise for not replying before, but I was waiting for a duplicate form to complete for you. Apparently, however, you intended that I should make one myself, so I have enclosed one with this letter, hoping that I have remembered the information required on the original.

The subscription form for the *Islamic Review* will be completed and posted together with an annual subscription as soon as possible.

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Qur-án, XII : 5, XIII : 5, XXII : 5, XXIII : 35, 82, XXVII : 67, XXX : 22 : XXXV : 11-12 : XXXVII : 10 ; XL : 67, L : 3, LVI : 47 ; LXXXVII : 40.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, VI : 2 : VII : 11-12 ; XVII : 61 ; XXIII : 7-8, 12-15 : XXXII : 7-8 ; XXXVII : 11 ; XXXVIII : 71-76.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, XV : 26-53 : XXXV : 13-14.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

You may expect a regular monthly donation for the various funds to reach you on or about the first week of each month.

As my financial situation is rather precarious at the moment, I have not been able to make any contributions as yet. This situation will be speedily rectified.

Thank you for your good wishes and I am honoured to be accepted as a member of the Islamic Brotherhood. I have studied the books that you so kindly sent me and must acknowledge the truth and wisdom of their contents. I am a great reader of all types of books and I would like to tell you that the most beautiful book I have ever read is the Translation of the Holy Qur'an (by Maulvi Muhammad Ali). I envy those who can understand the Arabic language, for I feel that the Holy Qur'an has perhaps lost a little of its beauty through translation into English.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,  
Reginald D. Easden.

Bharathi Bavanam  
Wallajahpet  
North Arcot,  
9th October, 1947.

Sir,

I entirely agree with your sane and sober editorial view (in 1947 July "Islamic Review", which you have so kindly sent to me) that there must be an all-round and harmonious development of all the faculties of man, viz. of action, contemplation and devotion or Karma, Giana, and Bhakti respecting both for the ideal man and the normal man. And what is "specialisation" but the fruit of this root of all-round development without which there can be no fruit whatever?

You know the famous and favourite quotation from the Holy Qur'an so frequently cited :

1. "There is no compulsion in religion."

That is—no compulsion either way—either to continue in one's own religion or to be converted into another faith if convinced.

2. "There were God-sent Apostles before Muhammad but some were mentioned by Him and others not." (The Holy Qur'an, 40 : 78).

3. "Every one is responsible for his actions" (The Holy Qur'an, 52 : 21).

4. "The least good or evil done by each counts" (The Holy Qur'an, 7 : 8).

5. "Be they Jews, Christians or Sabeans—whoever believes in God and do good are rewarded by the Lord" (The Holy Qur'an, 2 : 62).

I am yours sincerely,  
W. Doraiswami Ayyar,

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