

# The *Islamic Review*

Edited by KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN, B.A., LL.B.

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MAULVI MUSTAFA KHAN, B.A., M.R.A.S.



MAULVI DOST MUHAMMAD.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ  
مُحَمَّدٌ وَوَسَلَّى عَلَیْ رَسُوْلِہِ الْکَرِیْمِ

# THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

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DECEMBER 1921

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# ISLAMIC REVIEW

## NOTES

### Modern Religious Thinkers.

Elsewhere in these pages we publish the abstract of a paper read at the Second Conference of the Modern Religious Thinkers, on the converging tendencies of modern religious thought and the scientific spirit. The problem for discussion was put thus :

#### DEATH KNELL OF CHRISTIANITY.

The convergence is mutual. Science now deals not only with cosmic but with human subjects, such as the history of religion and the development of society. Religious thought becomes less and less opposed to science, and more and more affected by science. Are these tendencies permanent? What promise do they hold out for the future of religion and for religious unity?

#### ISLAM—RATIONAL.

We welcome the daily growing recognition of reason in religion. It is a happy sign harbingering the dawn of a new era in religious thought. It sounds, however, the death-knell of all systems of religion that are not in keeping with the scientific spirit of the age, Christianity coming the foremost of all. Nevertheless, it is a move in the right direction, and a critical student of Islam cannot fail to read in it a gradual advance towards Islam.

Islam is essentially a rational religion. Time and again it appeals to human reason to drive home religious truths. In fact, it makes no assertion but substantiates it with sound arguments based on human reason. Islam looks upon religious and physical truths as two aspects of one and the same truth. There can be no antagonism whatsoever between the two. To throw light upon religious truths, Islam invariably draws attention to natural phenomena—the sun, the moon, the stars, the fixed orbits in which various planets move, rainfall, vegetation and so forth. Religious truths and physical phenomena are manifestations of the same Power, the Great Unseen,

## NOTES

the one being His words as revealed to man, the other His deeds as met with in nature. Both spring from the same source; both reveal the same set of laws. Islam signifies submission to these laws. This is why according to the Holy Qur-án, Islam is not only the religion of man, but also of the whole universe, from the microscopic atom to the most gigantic creation, the sun. Religion and science are thus the two ways in which the same Being has manifested Himself. The progress of science therefore cannot but lead to a greater recognition of a Purposive Creative Power—God, from the Islamic point of view.

The paper read, which is otherwise as instructive as interesting, takes a narrow view of religion. When, for instance, it makes the following observation:

There is no need to disturb the faithful of existing religions; but a vast number of men have no religion at all, or if they have, their heart is not in it. If they had the courage to speak out, they would say, religious teachings go against their reason—it seems to have only the Christian religion in view, with regard to which no doubt the remark holds good to the very letter. Islam, on the other hand, takes its stand on human reason itself. A hundred and one times, man has been exhorted to make use of his reason in order to realize the truths of religion.

Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain! Glory be to Thee! save us then from the chastisement of the fire. (The Holy Qur-án iii: 190.)

Thus, reflection on what happens in the universe is described as one of the characteristics of those who remember God. And what else is science but such reflection on the phenomena of nature?

### FUNDAMENTALS AND SUPERSTRUCTURE.

Another point in regard to which we have to take exception to the paper is the scope of religion. The

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paper is content that the *fundamentals* of religion have not been encroached upon by science, by which it obviously means the existence of Divine Being. The superstructure of religion, it says, has been swept away by the advancing current of science as going against reason, but the basic principle, the existence of a Power known as God in religious parlance, is beyond the reach of science. In the case of Islam, as we have already pointed out, neither the principles nor the details of religion are irrational. On the other hand, they are just in accordance with the requirements of human reason. But so far as Christianity is concerned even the fundamentals have been called into question. Christianity reduces the Universe to three ultimate principles—Father, Son, the Holy Ghost. The scientific tendency, however, is towards unity, i.e. it finds explanation for the diversity of natural phenomena in some one ultimate cause. Even assuming the fundamentals of Christianity are safe, it is no matter for satisfaction. For a religion to be acceptable to man, the superstructure matters as much as the fundamentals. Religion must give us a code of practical life. It must regulate the work-a-day life of man. It must manifest the Divine Will to man as to how he should demean himself in his earthly life. Mere fundamentals can carry us no great way. They are just like a seed, which must sprout into offshoots, grow into trunk, branches and so forth, else it will get rotten and atrophied.

### THE SCIENTIFIC RELIGION.

To be scientific, religion must have unity of Godhead for its basic principle. And if a religion were to be built up on this foundation, we maintain it can be no other than Islam. The Modern Religious Thinkers would do well to try this method. Let them take unity for the foundation stone and then erect the necessary superstructure in such a way

## NOTES

that each part may be consistent to every other as well as the foundation. And we can assure them, they will build up the religion of Islam. This is the very plan the Holy Qur-án invites non-Muslims to adopt, in order to come at the right form of religion :

Say, O followers of the Book ! come to an equitable proposition between us and you that we shall not serve any but Allah and that we shall not associate aught with Him, and that some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah ; but if they turn back, then say : Bear witness that we are Muslims (iii. 63).

The verse asserts that so long as they stick to, and do not turn back from, the principle of Unity, of Godhead, they cannot, with due regard to consistency, have any other form of religion than Islam.

### A Recognition.

MAULVI MUSTAFA KHAN, B.A., and MAULVI DOST MUHAMMAD are on the eve of departure from the field of their labours, after a career of devoted service in the cause of Islam, in connection with the Muslim Mission, Woking.

About two years back, when choice fell upon MAULVI MUSTAFA KHAN to assume charge of the Mission, it was not without diffidence that he responded to the call. While in his home-land, he had no doubt won general admiration for his Muslim-like character as well as his literary talents. As an author he had made valuable contributions to Islamic literature. His works, no less than half a dozen, had already won much popularity. Nevertheless, a faint apprehension was there lest his modest ways and inexperience of English social life should in any way handicap him in his new sphere of activities. It was thus with somewhat of reluctance that he consented to shoulder the responsibility. But his subsequent career in this foreign land has furnished

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ample proof that a better choice could not, under the circumstances, be made.

With a strong moral backbone, it did not take him long to win the love and regard of all he came in contact with. His unassuming manners added lustre to his solid worth. His sermons at the Mosque, the London Muslim Prayer-house, coming as they did from a truly Muslim heart, went straight to the hearts of the audience. Nor were his lectures at the various non-Muslim churches less impressive.

During his term of "Imamat," the Mission had to pass through various sorts of ups and downs. Nevertheless, he proved a match for the trying situations, and with a tact and patience so characteristic of him, he steered the Mission clear of all sorts of rocks and cliffs besetting its course.

A considerable number of the children of this English soil received the light of Islam through him. Many and varied are the improvements he effected in the working of the Mission. There is hardly a branch of the Mission activities but bears an impress of his skilful and laborious hand. The *Islamic Review* is especially indebted to him. Under his able editorship, the sphere of its influence widened to almost double its previous extent.

In all that Maulvi Mustafa Khan accomplished, not a little credit is due to MAULVI DOST MUHAMMAD, who constantly rendered him ungrudging assistance. He had the sole charge of the Mission Office, and spent many a laborious hour pouring over numerous registers. Seldom would he let go a Thursday, the Indian mail day, without posting a lengthy epistle, entitled the "Náma-i-Woking," to some vernacular papers in India. The Náma (epistle) would bear the happy tidings of new conversions, keep Indian Muslims in touch with the religious currents of thought in the West and inspire them to fresh enthusiasm for the propagation of Islam. Never

## CHRIST IN MUHAMMAD

for a day since he set foot on this land of form and fashion, did he part with his turban; such was his pride in the dress of his home-land. Amiable of disposition, sociable and attentive, he was very popular among our English Muslim brethren and sisters. Children would fondly cling to his knees to receive a warm pat from him. The brotherhood will surely lose in him a pleasant member and the Mission a valuable asset.

After a long self-imposed exile in the path of Allah, a sweet family life awaits them each in India. Their numerous friends, too, must be eager to extend them a warm welcome back to the land of their birth. We wish them God-speed and a happy time among their kith and kin.

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## CHRIST IN MUHAMMAD

By MAULVI YAKUB KHAN, B.A., B.T.

THE *Walthamstow Guardian*, issue October 21st, publishes, under the title, "CHRIST OR MUHAMMAD," the speech of the Bishop of Barking, in connection with the Walthamstow Missionary Young Life Campaign. With a view to giving the reader an idea of the Cimmerian darkness of ignorance that prevails in the West concerning the true teachings of Islam, we give below an extract from the same :

There was a question as to whether the world was to be dominated in the future by power, or regarded as an unlimited field for service. There were two religions in the world—one, Christianity, and the other, Islam. Mohammedanism was as ever making a bold bid for domination as a world religion. It had, of course, its good features, or it would not have gained the sway it exercised. They, however, never looked with any personal respect on the character of its founder, nor how it placed womanhood, and, above all, it left out the name of Jesus Christ. Moslem was the idea of power, but Christianity substituted the idea of service. If Moslem or Islam should gain supremacy over the world, or the greater part, then the sad features which

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have darkened human lives over vast portions of the world for centuries would still continue, and, perhaps, be aggravated. But if the light of the Gospel shone in all nations then they might be sanguine, and the future of the world would be bright indeed. If the world was to be saved they must spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Bishop reads in Islam a spirit of brute force, of domineering over the world with blind power, in Christianity of service to and love with humanity at large. As regards his misconception of Islamic cult, we are in no way surprised. Almost the whole of the Christian world labours under the same misunderstanding. And the Bishop is a chip of the same block. In our last issue we attempted to enlighten the vast ill-informed Christian masses that Islam condemns the use of force in the matter of faith, which is solely an affair of one's own free conviction. "There is no compulsion in matters religious," says the Holy Qur-án. Interference of any form with the free exercise of one's discretion is contradictory, as we pointed out in our last, to the very essence of Islam, which means *willing* submission. Even God, according to the Holy Qur-án, refrains from thrusting His own will upon man in the matter of choice between right and wrong: "Say, the Truth is from your Lord, whosoever may wish, he may believe and whosoever may wish, he may disbelieve. . . ." "Verily we have shown to him (man) the right path; he may be grateful or ungrateful." This is the teaching of Islam on the point, in positive, unequivocal terms. It is therefore unfair to allege that Islam offers the alternatives of death or Islam to the non-believers.

The general misconception that Islam is a religion of the sword is due, among other reasons, to a confusion between the teachings of Islam and the history of Islam. We believe the fallacy is obvious enough. The history of the Church of Christ is replete with hideous barbarities perpetrated in the name of religion during the period known as the

## CHRIST IN MUHAMMAD

Middle Ages. The horrible stories of mutilations, burning alive, strangling, and all sorts of tortures repellent to the modern mind—and all this with all pious intentions to further the cause of Christianity—are surely not few and far between in the Church annals. Would it be anything but absurd to impute these brutalities to the teachings of the gentle Nazarene, who would not allow even the retaliation of evil with evil, but would rather have us turn up the other cheek and thus vanquish an insolent foe with a moral weapon? Now, may we expect Christendom to draw even the same line of discrimination, in the case of Islam too, between the teachings as such and as carried out by some. For the golden rule of life is to do unto others as one would be done by. Islam as a religion is, no doubt, accountable in so far as its teachings, moral social, and spiritual, are calculated to further human good and felicity, but is in no way responsible for what A or B, who professes to be a Muslim, has done, is doing, or may ever do. Let Christianity be under no misunderstanding as to the real ground on which it ought to, and has to, meet Islam in a struggle for world-domination. So far as the practical demonstration of religion is concerned, the Muslims can set up as their ideal no other than the Holy Prophet himself. To pick out an undesirable character in the history of Islam, which, too, we make bold to assert, sinks into insignificance if viewed side by side with similar aspects of Christian history, and to stigmatize Islam on that account, is *prima facie* unwarranted. As regards the life of the Holy Prophet himself, even hostile critics have to admit that it was one uniform clean sheet, devoted to the service of humanity. His wars, it is an historical fact, were purely defensive, into which he was dragged, only as a last alternative to strike a blow for the very existence of the small Muslim brotherhood. We would mention, out of a whole lifetime

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record, just one incident of the Holy Prophet's life to show that whatever else the motive of his wars, it was surely not the propagation of religion. An average reader of human history knows that for full thirteen years the Holy Prophet, as well as the small though devoted band of his followers, was subjected to inhuman tortures, till at last he had to flee for his very life to Medina, through drawn swords ready to fall upon him the moment he should come out of his house. There, too, he was allowed no rest. Incursions were made upon Medina, one after another, to extirpate the tender plant of Islam root and branch. At last came the day when the same abused, detested, persecuted and exiled Muhammad (may peace be on him) made his triumphant entry into Mecca, the scene of his tortures as well as of those of his many companions, at the head of ten thousand strong. The whole of Mecca lay literally at his feet. What treatment would the most humane twentieth-century Government have meted out to the bloodthirsty enemies, as the Meccans were, can be imagined with no great difficulty. Why go far back? Arson, pillage, murder, gallows, shooting, destruction of life and property, that followed in the wake of a victorious army during the Great War, is a matter of but yesterday. How the Holy Prophet treated such a fallen foe may better be put in the words of Muir, by no means an unreliable authority with the Christians :

The long and obstinate struggle against his (Muhammad's) pretensions maintained by the inhabitants of his native city (Mecca) might have induced a haughty tyrant to mark his indignation in indelible traces of fire and blood. But Muhammad, excepting a few criminals, granted a universal pardon; and nobly casting into oblivion the memory of the past, with all its mockery, affronts and persecutions, he treated even the foremost of his opponents with a gracious and even friendly consideration.

Again says the same authority :

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Although the city (Mecca) had cheerfully accepted his authority, all its inhabitants had not yet embraced the new religion, nor formally acknowledged his prophetic claim. Perhaps he intended to follow the course he had pursued at Medina and leave the conversion of the people to be gradually accomplished *without compulsion*.

As a matter of fact, how could the Holy Prophet force convictions of faith on others, in direct contravention of Islamic dictates? It is thus established that the Holy Prophet carried out to the very letter the Qur-*anic* injunction that *there is no compulsion in religion*; for could there be a better opportunity for fulfilling his greed, as alleged, for proselytism at the point of the sword than the fall of Mecca? The objection levelled at Islam in season and out of season, that it offers the Qur-*an* with the one hand, while dangles the sword with the other, is not borne out by the teachings of the Holy Qur-*an* nor the practical life of the Holy Prophet.

### UNIVERSALITY OF MISSION.

Now, as regards *universality* of mission which the Bishop claims for Christianity, let us apply the same test and refer the point to the rival religions themselves. Surely it is no use fishing for arguments to substantiate what is not supported, nay denied in plain language, by the religion itself. This is what Jesus himself says: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. . . . It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs" (Math. xv. 24, 26). Here is Jesus' own saying on the question. Is it not rather presumptuous on the part of the Church dignitary to invest his master with feathers which he himself disowns? He is modest enough to limit the scope of his message to the "lost sheep of Israel," and is even unwilling to allow others to share it with his children, the Israelites; but the clergy, his self-constituted champions, are never tired of crying themselves hoarse

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on the world-wide mission of Christianity. Turning to Islam, we find the cosmopolitan idea running all through, both in the Holy Qur-án and the sayings of the Holy Prophet. The Holy Qur-án positively asserts the universality of Islam as thus: "O you mankind! I am Allah's messenger to you all. We have not sent thee but a mercy for the whole of mankind." Again: "We have not sent thee but towards the whole of mankind." The Holy Prophet says: "I have been raised for both the black and the white races." Thus, on their own respective confessions, Christianity is a denominational, while Islam a cosmopolitan religion.

### CHRISTIANITY DOOMED.

As a matter of fact, Christianity as a religion has little chance of survival in the modern religious struggle under the searching light of reason, far less of world-domination. There are a hundred and one reasons to show that it is lacking in the very essentials of a rational religion. It has failed, and miserably too, to appeal to common sense, so far as its basic principles are concerned, and is, on that score, already losing its hold in enlightened quarters within its own fold. The conception of Godhead, which is, in fact, the corner-stone of religion, is jarring to the arithmetical sense of the commonest unsophisticated mind—three equal to one and one to three. Then, as regards its teachings having a bearing on practical life, it falls equally short of the demands of an average human mind. To put the whole in a nutshell its teaching amounts to the well-known saying, "To rob Peter to pay Paul." The son of man is guilty of an offence, but instead of punishing him, the son of God is made to bear his cross. This is the death-knell of all moral life. When the knave knows he will escape scot-free, whatever evil he might commit, no wonder that his low passions should run riot.

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Islam, on the other hand, is the one religion that comes up to the rational demands of the daily progressing humanity. With every fresh step along the path of reason, man finds himself in a position to realize the worth of Islamic teachings all the better. Its doctrine of unalloyed unity of Godhead has already won universal homage, so much so that even Christianity has seen fit to present its Trinity under the vane of Unity. As regards the practical side of life, Islamic teachings do not divest man of all responsibility for his deeds. According to Islam one shall reap just as he may sow, which keeps a check upon man's low propensities, and gives an impetus to self-exertion. Thus Islamic rule of human conduct, unlike that of Christianity, is conducive to the progress of civilization. Which, then, has the greater chance of world-domination—Christianity or Islam?

### CHRIST IN MUHAMMAD.

Reliable Christian scholars have come to the conclusion that the Christianity of the day wrongly goes after the name of Jesus. He could not be the author of a religion so out of keeping with the requirements of human nature. As a matter of fact all the prophets got their light from the same Divine source. Their teachings could not possibly differ from each other. The discrepancies that are met with among the various religions of the world have crept in through human interpolations. The only religious book that has preserved to this hour its original purity intact is the Holy Qur-án. The only religious personality the smallest details of whose eventful life may to this day be seen in the broad daylight of authenticated history is Muhammad (may peace be on him). Islam thus is the only religion which, emanating from the common source of all religions, has to this day baffled the corrupting influences of the lapse of time. But inasmuch as all religions sprang from the same source, with one

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and the same message, we would not be wrong in drawing the inference that each one of the defunct or disfigured members of this vast sisterhood of religions must have been similar, for all practical purposes, to the one which has survived them all, viz. Islam. This is exactly what the Holy Qur-án says. Islam, it says, was the religion of Abraham, of Moses, of Noah, of Jesus, and of all other prophets (peace on all) raised from time to time. It is not the exclusive faith of the followers of Muhammad (peace be on him). Islam thus was the religion of Jesus as much as of Muhammad (peace be on both). The so-called Christianity of the day is the much adulterated form of the pure religion of Jesus (peace be on him), which was no other than Islam. So with just a slight variation in the query of the Barking Bishop, Christ *or* Muhammad, we would hail Christendom to Christ *in* Muhammad; for, in accepting Islam, they will surely be reverting to the true religion of Jesus. Every Muslim is faith-bound to believe in all Prophets, including Jesus, ever raised, as much as in Muhammad. Thus, in coming over to the fold of Islam, a Christian does not lose Jesus Christ; nay, he finds him in his truest colour. To our Christian brethren, therefore, we would say: Back, back to the true religion of Jesus, and find Christ in Muhammad!

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### THE FUNDAMENTALS OF RELIGION AND THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF SCIENCE

*Abstract of a Paper read at the Second Conference  
of Modern Religious Thinkers, Nov. 4th, 1921.*

By BERNARD HOLLANDER, M.D.

It is a sign of the times that a discussion has been arranged to show the converging tendencies of modern religious thought and the scientific spirit.

## THE FUNDAMENTALS OF RELIGION

It will remind many of similar discussions, but with an opposite tendency, which took place a generation ago by men like Prof. Huxley and Mr. Gladstone, that is by pronounced agnostics and pronounced believers, the one seeking to discover chiefly what is false in theology, and the other defending the traditions and dogmas of the Church with no less ardour and sometimes with considerable bitterness. To-day neither the agnostics nor the faithful are vehement in their professions. Orthodox men have grown more tolerant, and sceptics more modest. Literal and unreasoning acceptance of the Bible is no longer expected; on the other hand, its critics are mindful of the fact that the Bible has been the handbook of Life to countless millions of men and women and must be treated with respect.

Theologians themselves are now busy seeking new meanings for old phrases, and Canons, Deans and Bishops are discussing Church History and the fundamental dogmas of Christianity in newspapers and popular magazines with a freedom which would have astonished former generations. They admit that not all the Biblical records can be considered as inspired, and those that may be taken to contain revealed truths had to be interpreted by the saint or prophet receiving them in accordance with the knowledge in existence at that age. We are reminded also that not all the contents of the Bible is religion in the strict sense. A large part of the Old Testament consists of the history of the Jewish race and the laws for the governance of the Jewish people; and much of the theology of the New Testament is not derived from Christ's teaching, but from the speculations of Greek philosophers, the later Platonists. Altogether, religious belief has been allowed to become largely a matter of personal opinion both among the laity and the clergy. Preachers in their sermons tread lightly on subjects of controversy and confine themselves more and

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more to such themes as will enable them to make a compromise with scientific developments. No doubt, it has been found that when clergymen preach, not what they themselves believe but what they have been briefed to maintain, they fail to carry conviction to others. This is one of the reasons why so many people have grown indifferent to religion and worship has diminished. Wealth and the strong man are the idols of the populace. Genius and a saintly character count for nothing. Champion prize-fighters and film-heroes are more to the taste of the present generation. There is still some religion left, but it does not form part of the daily life with many. Our generation is too busy looking after its material welfare and the realization of the possibilities of this world. The promise of a Life hereafter is no longer regarded seriously, at least not from the orthodox point of view of the soul, the refined spirit of man, ascending to Heaven. The only interest that is taken in the problem is from the professional Spiritists' standpoint, who claim that the whole of our present life and surroundings are transplanted to a region very near to us and that we can get in communication with our departed friends through the intervention of a medium, one on this and one on the other side, very much the same as the businessman rings up his client by telephone.

The religious feeling is an innate complex feeling arising from wonder and awe, with which are mingled either hope or fear, and veneration. It may remain latent from lack of cultivation, or get deadened by excessive devotion to material affairs; but it is inherent in human nature. The religious feeling is independent of the intellect; yet the intellect may be used to interpret phenomena which inspire religious feeling. Science, on the other hand, is based entirely on intellectual processes and the emotions its pursuit gives rise to are of negligible quantity. The growth and diffusion of physical truths

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has dissipated many of the dogmas of the old theology, but science has not touched the fundamentals of religion. Indeed, the more scientific facts are accumulated, the more it is evident that religion is something apart from science, something distinct. Science and religion, taken in the broad sense, are not antagonistic; on the contrary, they complement one another; for, after all, science is concerned with the various energies existing in the Universe and the discovery of the laws of their manifestation; but it does not tell us what they are or whence they came. These energies are only the phenomenal manifestations of realities of which we know nothing. For example, we have now a vast science of electricity which we apply to important practical purposes; but we are still ignorant of what electricity really is. Similarly, when we speak of the law of heredity, we have explained nothing. We have only given a name to the marvellous fact that some potency lies in each seed or egg, which causes it to produce a plant or an animal from which the seed or egg came. Even if we could explain the nature of electricity and the process of heredity, these phenomena would lose none of their marvellousness. Indeed, the greater the progress of science, the more we must marvel at the magnificence of the Universe and wonder what is the object of it all.

The materialists of old could find no purpose. They held that things happen, not because there is a purpose in their happening, but because they cannot help happening. Modern research has caused matter, in the old sense, to vanish. We have discovered that matter, too, has its activities. Matter, as now known, consists of innumerable electrons and ions in constant motion. The X-rays show certain forms of matter to be almost ethereal; on the other hand, so-called spirit cannot be contemplated with our senses except as having form—except as “materialized.” It is now held that neither

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matter nor energy had a beginning, that matter had to be shaped or evolved into the different objects and beings. What is it that has shaped and is still shaping the world? Cosmic mechanism and aimlessness cannot go together. It is not surprising therefore that many learned men hold the opinion that there is room for another than a physical interpretation of the world. Scientific truths are based on demonstrable facts; but, in their view, that does not exclude the possibility that they are divine.

What we have said of inorganic matter is still more true of organic matter. Organic matter is live matter, every bit of it. The whole body—all the organs, including the different parts of the eye and of the brain, the bones, muscles, and the skin—consists of a vast and harmoniously co-operating aggregation of living cells with individual energies; and yet, what is so marvellous, each body preserves its own individuality. The living body has been represented as a machine; but it is a machine only in a certain sense. It is a living, automatic, self-reproducing, self-regulating machine, unlike any other. Behind every other machine there is a living being who has made and started it, without whom it would not exist or go. The human body repairs itself; man can only guide the repair and hasten it. The human body profits by experience; no machine does so.

The living body has also been represented as one great laboratory, in which most varied processes—assimilation, respiration, secretion, excretion, generation, sensation—go on harmoniously to maintain a unity of being, though each is liable to incalculable disorders. Man's life undoubtedly consists of vast chemical and physical processes; but not entirely so. For example, we can buy pepsin at the chemist's and digest beef with it in an egg-cup; but the human mind can retard or accelerate the same bodily process, and this is an element which eludes chemical and

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physical investigation. We can measure the shortening of a muscle, the pull it produces, the oxygen it absorbs, the electrical changes which accompany its excitation; yet, having done so, we are no nearer to understanding a mental act, or a variety of mental acts totally opposed to one another, which can set the same muscle into activity. A thought, an emotion, may prostrate a man as effectually as a blow on his head from a hammer. And the same mental cause will produce totally different effects in different individuals, and in the same individual at different times. The biologist, in his laboratory, may declare life and mind to be the result of mechanico-chemical forces and make human beings appear as if they were marionettes that move as a part of the universal clock-work. But does he regard himself as an automaton compelled to make the investigation? If he were merely a piece of mechanism, he would not be at the same time a spectator.

But if the mechanistic theory does not explain life, neither does the vitalistic. As Huxley said, to explain that water is wet by virtue of its "aquosity," or that a body manifests the signs of life by virtue of its "vitality"—or "entelechy," as we say now—is to tell just nothing about it. The same is true as regards mind. We have a number of theories of the relation between mind and brain, but nothing definite; since we do not know what mind itself is. Neither scalpel, microscope, nor test tube have ever laid bare the process by which nerve stimuli are transformed into sensations or ideas. We speak of mental activities sometimes as functions of the brain; but it is solely through them, through our conscious sensations, that we have any acquaintance with the brain at all.

No doubt, cerebral texture and calibre have much to do with the quality of our thought and disposition; but it is also true that our thoughts and our dispositions may change the character of

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our brain; wicked thoughts and spiritual impulses subjecting our cerebral matter to different displacements and weaving it into fresh association tracts. It is true we cannot help our thoughts; but we can help dwelling on them. We are able to exercise a selection. By the power of our spirit we can, to some extent at least, elevate, control, and direct the mental, physical, and chemical elements of our being, even modify heredity, influence our environment, and shape our course towards a definite goal of existence. It is the mind that uses the instrument; and not the instrument that creates the mind. We know that the greater the mental development, the richer and more complex is the cell-structure of the brain; but nothing is known why one man's genius should take the direction of a Newton, while that of another develops into a Shakespeare or into a Michel Angelo; nothing is known why one man should become saintly in character, while another develops a genius in crime. Even if the functions of each structurally differentiated part of the brain had been explored and found to be related to some element of the mind, it would carry us not much further; for the brain has the same relation to the mind as the eye has to sight. The eye is an essential organ for seeing; but there is no limit to what we may see with our eyes; just as there is no limit to what we may conceive with our brains.

My own researches into the higher phenomena of hypnotism and suggestion, which I have fully described in my recent work, entitled *In Search of the Soul*, show that mental states can be induced post-hypnotically in which greater intellectual, moral, and "psychic" abilities are displayed than the same person is capable of in the normal state. There are evidently mental powers, hitherto unexplored, in the unconscious sphere, more exalted in their nature than those which belong to conscious life. It is useless for those who have never cultivated

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what I might call the "psychic" powers to argue against the reality of things which those so gifted experience.

The new psychology, which has sprung up within recent years, and which does not confine itself to the study of the intellect as the old psychology has largely done, but studies primarily the character and behaviour of man, the motives which guide his conduct and the manner of his reactions to the environment, recognizes that man is descended from the animal with whom he shares a number of instinctive tendencies, and that his intellectual and moral gifts are only a super-structure. Like the animal, he has definite impulses to gratify his hunger, lust, greed, etc., that is his propensities for self-preservation and the preservation of the species; and his intellect is principally employed to that end. Some men are content to rest there; but the great majority have developed higher intellectual, ethical, æsthetical, and so-called spiritual capacities. These mental powers are latent in all of us, though not all of us possess them in the same degree. They require cultivation and experience to be properly manifested. Even the atheist is not without religious sentiments. His arguments are directed against theological dogmas, not against religion proper. The two are not synonymous; just as man's vision does not depend on his theory of light. True, religious sentiments are not essential for human existence. Man can survive without the higher faculties, without ideals, without everything which ennobles and beautifies life. He can act from purely selfish motives, and if, by chance, such a man is altruistic, it is because he finds altruism pays better than egoism.

Man wanted his animal propensities in his fight with nature and with wild beasts. He still wants them in competition with other men. He would hardly have survived without them; but he has got a moral sense, which gives him the power of adapta-

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tion to the common good. Spiritual reconstruction is imperatively needed to deliver humanity from the animal plane. There is no need to disturb the faithful of existing religions; but a vast number of men have either no religion at all, or if they have their heart is not in it. If they had the courage to speak out they would say, religious teachings go against their reason. They are ignorant of the fact, which I have endeavoured to prove in this paper, that the fundamentals of religion have never been touched by science and are as true to-day as they were at the time of the great Patriarchs. There is no greater revelation of the Almighty's magnificence and beneficence than can be found in the treasures and beauty of the Universe and the wonderful achievements of science; and by obeying God's laws we are obeying the laws of the physical and moral world and avoid sickness and sin.

Let us get back to the fundamentals of religion! Let us get back to God, the ideal of all men! Not to the God in the primitive conception of simple-minded people who appreciated Him only in the measure in which He interferes with the natural laws and to their personal advantage; but to the God who is always with us, whose presence animates our being, places us beyond temptation, and gives us a goal towards which we can strive.

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### ISLAMIC AND CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION

By R. LISSAN

#### II

To deal with the influence Islam has had in transforming the crude state of early Arabia, we will consider the condition in pre-Islamic times.

Morality was at a low ebb, adultery and sex irregularities were practised, unblushingly and shame-

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lessly published broadcast in immoral poetry. Drunkenness was very prevalent, and whilst in that state, profligacy was freely resorted to. Games of chance were the favourite amusement, and usury was practised. Female slaves were instructed in singing and dancing, and allowed to sell their favours for money which was retained by their owners. Robbery, murder and pillage were of frequent occurrence. Females captured during wars were made slaves by the victors. Superstition was rife; a belief in charms, omens, fetiches and various means of divination were general. The old law, blood for blood, was the procedure for murder or homicide. Idolatry was the religion of the tribes. Within the Ka'ba was the image of Abraham with the divining arrows in his hand, and a lamb standing beside him, as also that of Ishmael. There was a class of the people called Sabeans, who were star-worshippers. The state of woman was that of utter wretchedness and degradation; divorce was practised, and infanticide also was prevalent.

But with the coming of the Prophet, all this was replaced by a pure monotheism: idolatry was not *absorbed* by the new Faith but utterly demolished and the idols destroyed. Sexual promiscuity was prohibited, drunkenness forbidden, infanticide suppressed; harmony reigned instead of the petty tribal wars; restrictions and limitations were placed on marriage, slavery and concubinage.

It is customary to reprove the Prophet for plural marriages. This is due mainly to the garbled accounts disseminated broadcast by interested propagandists. The Prophet led a bachelor life with unimpeachable chastity to the age of twenty-five, the full bloom of youthful vigour in a warm Asiatic climate. Whom then did he marry? A widow of forty, with whom alone he kept matrimonial relation for full twenty-eight years. At her death the Prophet was fifty-three years of age. Is it fair

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to impute sinister motives to one who has led a spotless life to a good old age in the company of a single wife? The fact is that in consequence of the decimation of the male element of the then small Muslim brotherhood, through successive battles, the female element preponderated. Surely Europe is in a position, after the havoc wrought by the Great War, to realize the gravity of such a state of society. The surplus female population had to be provided for, and the best way possible was to admit them into the household on terms of perfect equality with others. Thus polygamy was *allowed* as a special measure to meet an extraordinary situation; it was *never enjoined*.

An abnormal state of society called for an abnormal remedy, but for which the result would have been that many would have been doomed to a joyless life, without a source of subsistence and perhaps taken to an aberrant course of life. If polygamy was an evil, it was the lesser one, as compared to the destitute homeless state of many a widow, as well as the moral corruption that must have followed in the other case. It was therefore the very best thing to do, under the circumstances. In Europe we find the same female preponderance, but owing to the western adherence to monogamy plus a defective social system, introduced by the Dark Ages, the result is the corruption of morals disgracing our centres of civilization, and also double establishments which are so prevalent in Europe and America. Moreover in the early part of the Middle Ages as well as later, the Church itself was not so strict in that of respect; historical works on that subject (Lea's *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy*) will afford plenty of evidence. The lives of Clovis the first Christian King, and Charlemagne the founder of the Holy Roman Empire, were anything but enviable. Charlemagne had more concubines and mistresses than any historical personage, except-

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ing perhaps Nero or Caligula, and both were eulogized by the Church. In addition, one should consult the *Lives of the Popes* in that regard.

This aspect of Christianity leads us to the question of the early religions which were polytheistic. The lapses of Jupiter and the old Greek gods and goddesses are well known, although these are now generally understood to be cosmic myths; but they had a tendency to produce a laxity of morals in man, who usually followed the gods. This did not tend to uplift the moral character, and a reaction set in, in the direction of celibacy. The philosophers of Stoicism, the Neo-platonists and Roman authors denounced the laxity of morals quite as strongly as the Christian fathers. Such corruption as there was, did not diminish by the example of the ascetics, and Milman states that their example had no compensating effect on "the mass of the worshippers." On the other hand the ascetics degenerated into eccentricities that repel the modern mind. The literature describing their deeds is characterized by Mr. Lecky as "glaring mendacity." Mr. McCabe writes, "Monks intrigued with Roman mothers for the sons that the fathers destined for the service of the stricken empire." "A hideous, sordid, emaciated maniac, without knowledge, without patriotism, without natural affection, passing his life in a long routine of useless and atrocious self-torture, and quailing before the ghostly phantoms of his diseased brain, had become the ideal of the nations that had known the writings of Plato and Cicero and the lives of Socrates and Cato," writes Mr. Lecky. All this was under the Christian regime. St. Augustine, in *De Opere Monachorum*, and the letters of Jerome describe their licentiousness. Between the hypocrisy of the lower clergy and the ascetic excesses of the higher, humanity went its way along the broad road. The agapae or love feasts were orgies of drunkenness and immorality.

“Consecrated virgins and monks cohabited under thin pretences,” says St. Jerome. Palestine, says another saint, became a hot-bed of debauchery. Troops of monks wandered everywhere, selling spurious relics and indulging their worst passions of cruelty and ferocity in a zeal for orthodoxy.

Jerome also says in his letters (Migne edition), that priests and laity, men and women, were sordid, greedy, unchaste and utterly irreligious. He actually forbids his virtuous young ladies to even remain in a room with a Roman priest.

In later times Pope Gelasius in his letters laments “the number of marriages and incestuous connections among the consecrated virgins.” In brief, from the sixth to the twelfth century, ecclesiastical annals are one mass of decrees for the suppression of fornication and incest among the clergy, monks and nuns (Lea, *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy*, and for later times the historical works of Lecky, Hallam, Gibbon, and Milman).

Mr. McCabe, *The Popes and their Church*, page 71: “The thirteenth century was just as sordid, as murderous, as immoral, as filthy and vicious to live in, as the modern mind can possibly conceive. Its intellectual life was confined to a few thousand clerics, sterile in its subjects, cramped by the ecclesiastical authorities, and indebted to the Muhammadans for its existence. Its Francis and Dominic are just a proof that the older monastic orders were, as Cardinal de Vitry says, ‘unfit for a decent man or woman to live in,’ and the new monastic bodies were corrupted within twenty years. Its jollity of life was accompanied by as free a use of the knife as you will find in the Malay Archipelago to-day, as free a use of alcohol as you will find among ‘civilized’ savages, and as free an indulgence of sex impulses as you will find among monkeys; and it was overcast by such plagues, famines, diseases, wars, robberies, persecutions and oppressions

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as you will find nowhere." Such was Christian Europe.

When the Crusaders captured Constantinople, in their march to Palestine to rescue it from the Muslim, there is an appalling picture drawn by Milman: "Christian virgins and matrons were violated in the open streets, the churches were plundered of their relics, and prostitutes filled the cathedral with immoral songs and sat in the Primate's chair."

In England, all the monasteries except Glastonbury and Abingdon were irregular, and were notorious as places of the most scandalous corruption and dissipation (Lea). At Rome, Milman says "Chastity had become so rare as to be considered an angelic virtue, and visitors found that there was not one in the Roman Church who was not illiterate, simoniacal or living in concubinage." These quotations may be easily extended, but sufficient to say that from the time of the state control of Christianity at the time of Constantine, about A.D. 300 down to the thirteenth or fourteenth century, Christianity as carried out and practised was nothing but a hot-bed of vice, corruption, persecution and bloodshed. Delicate virgins of the Arian heretical sect were tortured in a revolting way. Remsburg estimates 9,000,000 victims of persecution for witchcraft and other offences, during the Middle Ages, but we will deal elsewhere with that.

These statements and remarks are from the works of the Christian Fathers and Popes, and not from any hostile critic or cleric—Jerome, Augustine, Gelasius, Pope Gregory and Benedict—supplemented by historians like Dean Milman, Lecky, Bryce, Hallam, Lea, and Gibbon, and show the true facts of the case without any attempt to conceal or gloss over the truth. Europe is to this day suffering for the degradation into which it was led by the Christian Church.

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As showing the aberrant nature of sexual ideas, acting, as every medical and psychical student knows, on the mind and the nerves, producing brain disorders, there are no suicides in Islam, and there is a lower rate of mental affections compared with the records in European countries.

Islam as a missionary religion has cultivated a broad and tolerant view as a faith, and is free from the stigma of persecution of alien or unorthodox elements. Sir Richard Burton, as well as other travellers, speaks of its humanizing influence on the African races. At the centres of learning under Muslim Spain, Christian students were welcomed and facilities were offered and accepted for study. During the Wars of the Crusades, when Richard Coeur de Lion and Philip were ill at Acre, Saladin sent his own physicians to their aid. The leniency and toleration in the capture of Jerusalem is well-known, as also other instances.

One of the Papal diplomats declared, "it is of the essence of the Church to be intolerant." Christianity illustrates this saying by the treatment accorded to scientists and unorthodox elements, as the following partial list will show: Arnold of Brescia, disciple of Peter Abelard (who was mutilated), scientist and humanitarian reformer, was burnt at Rome 1155, John Huss, 1415; Roger Bacon, imprisoned for fourteen years for science; Tyndall, translator of the Bible, strangled and burnt at Antwerp; Servetus, the Parisian doctor, burnt at Geneva by Calvin, October 27, 1553, because their ideas did not agree; Molinois, sixteen years in the dungeons of the Inquisition, and died in 1696; Simon Morin, burned with his works at Paris, March 14, 1663; Savonarola, Cecco d'Ascoli, Bruno, the persecution of Galileo, the burning of the Knight Templars and their Grand Master at Paris by the French King and the Pope, the persecution of the Albigenses, the Waldenses, and

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the proceedings of the Inquisition in nearly all the countries of Europe, the expulsion of the Moors from Spain. All this was done at clerical instigation. Protestants and Catholics alike were violently intolerant. Other instances might be quoted, in Ireland, Scotland, etc., prompting one to exclaim with Madame Roland, "Religion, religion, how many crimes are committed in thy name!"

Slavery was rampant in the East before Muhammad, but he regulated and checked its debasing side, giving the slave privileges and a fair and just treatment and repressing the cruelty practised. "Muslims shall exercise kindness towards their slaves" (Sura iv. 40). "He who beats his slave without fault or slaps him on the face, his atonement is—freeing him." "A man who behaves ill to his slave will not enter Paradise." Lane (*Arabian Nights*, vol. i, page 55): "A master is bound to afford his slave proper food and clothing, or to let him work for his own support, or to sell, give away or liberate him, and it is seldom that a master emancipates a female slave without marrying her to some man able to support her, or otherwise providing for her." The tendency has always been in Islam to ameliorate the condition of the slave and secure just and humane treatment.

The African slave trade, says Mr. Brace, "was the most dreadful curse that has perhaps ever afflicted humanity," and he admits that the guilt of this great crime rests on the Christian Church as an organized body (page 365). The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Lands, which sent missionaries to Guinea to convert the natives, had slaves on their plantations in Barbadoes and did not even give them religious instruction. The horrors they were subjected to are well known. There were 80,000 black slaves in London in 1760. They were regularly advertised in papers and bequeathed in wills (*Independent Review*, October

1905). The ministers of religion declared slavery to be sanctioned by scripture.

In the American Episcopal Church, many of its southern bishops had slaves; it is computed that the Methodists held 250,000 and the Baptists 225,000 (McCabe, *Bible in Europe*, page 137).

Spain made treaties in the "Name of the Most Holy Trinity," giving monopolies to traders. Captain Hawkins sailed from England in quest of natives to kidnap, in a ship called the *Jesus*. He was knighted and supported by the nobility. In 1708, our parliament declared that the trade was important and ought to be free and open to all the Queen's subjects. The English colonies alone imported 2,130,000 slaves between 1680-1780. The treatment by the southern planters was responsible for the slave rising, and was the inciting cause of the Civil War.

A political historian like Guizot, a strong advocate of the civilizing force of Christianity, passes this verdict on the Church: "The Church has often, no doubt, set up and defended the rights of the people against the bad government of their rulers, but when the question of political securities arose between power and liberty, when any step was taken to establish a system of permanent instruments that might effectively protect liberty from invasions of power in general, the Church has always ranged itself on the side of despotism (*History of Civilization in Europe*, page 171). Slavery was particularly rife in Rome, where it is said there were 900,000 slaves in a population of 1,610,000, and the slave market was filled by the unscrupulous trader. The first effort of a religion such as that taught by Jesus, should have been the alleviation of human suffering and its denunciation, but there is not one word in the Bible against slavery. Even St. Paul had a slave. The philosophy of the Stoics went to mitigate slavery, but not the Christian:

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this is singular, as Christianity spread largely among slaves and poor freemen. The Emperors Caracalla and Diocletian forbade the sale of children into slavery, and a creditor making a slave of his debtor; but Constantine, the first Christian emperor, allowed parents to sell their children into slavery. Under Islam, the slave was placed on a level with his master. Pope Leo the Great forbade the reception of slaves into the Christian ministry, not from a lofty abhorrence of bondage, but "lest the sacred ministry be polluted by the vileness of their association." By degrees the slave passed into a condition of serfdom, the condition of the serf being worse than that of the slave, being chained, so to speak, to the soil. The churches and monasteries that owned slaves rarely freed them (being corporate, not personal property).

*(To be continued.)*

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## THE CHARACTER OF MUHAMMAD

By MASUD ALI VARESI

### XII

#### JUSTICE AND EQUITY

A DEEP and careful study of this subject is sure to convince one that justice means universal love and absence of personal motives. No cause for complaint can ever arise against a judge having no personal interest and looking upon the parties in a case with equitable eye. Such a judge is not likely to deal harshly, or be dominated by undue influence, or render injustice to the parties concerned. He will decide on the merits of the case, and will exercise his fullest discretion as far as justice, equity and good conscience are concerned. There can be no reason whatever for a man to be unjust whose principle of life is altruism, compassion without distinction and irrespective of creed or nationality, and who is inspired with a selfless devotion to the

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amelioration of humanity at large. Tyranny or injustice may only emanate from a man having personal interest in an affair, and inclined to favour a party, whether entitled to such favour or not. A man, naturally bent upon administering justice under any circumstances whatever, can never be unjust.

The Prophet's disinterested and selfless love and his sincere affection for mankind have been already dealt with in the foregoing pages. Taking all these authenticated facts into consideration, we have no other alternative than to arrive at the conclusion that a man of his spotless character is bound to be just and a staunch advocate of truth; and nothing contrary to real justice, equity and good conscience should have ever marked his character or emanated from him. No person, sensible, clear-headed, and with a well-balanced and unbiased state of mind, can ever entertain the slightest doubt against the blameless character of Muhammad (peace be on him). And those who have imputed accusations against him are blind to facts, to truth, and to historical events. They are injudicious, authors of deliberate falsehood, prejudiced, and have given vent to their inhuman feelings by the sheer concoction of cock-and-bull stories. Such a set of authors have practically disgraced *truth, honesty, and conscience* themselves. They are guilty of an atrocious crime by misleading the world with their deceptive fabrications. They have ignored the fact that Muhammad, unlike others, was the greatest historical personality and not a myth. He was a blessing to the world. The Holy Qur-án, left by him for the guidance of the world, is bound to keep Islam alive and Muhammad's memory green and fresh in the world till the day of resurrection.

Now to come to the point. No exhaustive details about the Prophet's life before he was entrusted with the divine mission are known. But this much

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is an admitted and unquestionable fact, that from the very beginning of his life, he had remarkably distinguished himself for justice. He was poor, had no worldly honours, but in spite of this fact he was almost always elected as an arbitrator when the Quraish were split up with controversies about a certain question of the day. The result was that they called him *Ameen*, the reliable, the trustworthy.

After he received Divine call, his life teemed with an endless series of facts shedding dazzling light on the noble traits of his character. From a religious standpoint, the Jews had no faith in him, but on occasions of their communal and mutual differences, they with one accord elected the Prophet as a judge for the final settlement of their disputes. His decision was unanimously approved of. None of them ever found the slightest fault with his verdict. This was the case with the enemies of Islam. Can the world produce a single parallel of the Prophet's justice, rich in its copiousness and perfect in detail? Not only this. Whenever there was a friction or controversy between Muslims and non-believers, it was the Prophet who was resorted to by all alike to decide the dispute. Hazrat Abbas (blessings of God be on him) says: "There arose a dispute between a Jew and a man, Bashar, who had embraced Islam but had not changed his old habits. 'Let us go to Muhammad,' suggested the Jew to Bashar. 'No, let us go to the chief of the Jews, Ka'b bin Al-Ashraf,' replied the Muslim. The Jew declined to do so because the acceptance of illegal gratification was a common practice among the Jews. At last both the Jew and Bashar went to the Prophet. The Jew was justified in his claim, and the Prophet settled it in his favour."

After the victory of Mecca, a woman, Fatema bint-ul-Aswad, of the Bani-Makhzum tribe, was arrested on an offence of theft. When the guilt was proved, the Prophet ordered her hand to be

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cut off. The nobility of the Quraish were displeased with this indignity, and they wanted to have the woman exempted from the penalty by a strong recommendation to the Prophet. But no one dared represent her case to him. At last they succeeded in persuading Asama bin Zaid to beg the Prophet for her acquittal. The Prophet said, "O Asama, you meddle with the punishment imposed by God." Then the Prophet got up and delivered a speech, wherein he said, "O people, the nations preceding you ultimately met their ruin only because they set at liberty such of the thieves as belonged to a noble family, while they sentenced those to punishment who were weak (i.e. poor and without influence). I call God as a witness that if Fatema, daughter of Muhammad, had been guilty of theft, I should have amputated her hand." (Bokhari, p. 616.)

The Prophet's justice went so far that people dealt with him harshly, made persistent demands on minor matters of little importance, and the Prophet, who was an embodiment of humility and justice, always decided in their favour against his own person. Abu Huraira says: "The Prophet had borrowed a camel from some one. One day the owner came to him, made persistent demands, and uttered harsh words. The Prophet's companions were enraged at the absurd and harsh words, and wanted the man to shut up. But the Prophet asked them to let him alone, for a creditor had the right to demand. Then the Prophet ordered a similar camel to be given to the man. Accidentally, no such camel was available. The attendants submitted to the Prophet that there were better camels than the one required. He ordered a better one to be made over to the man, and said, 'The better of you is the person who pays better.'" (Bokhari, p. 309.)

In connection with the justice of the Prophet, there are events worth mentioning pertaining to the

## THE CHARACTER OF MUHAMMAD

peace of Hadibiyah. In the sixth year of the Hejira, the Prophet started for Mecca to perform the Haj pilgrimage. The Meccans feared lest his visit to Mecca might add to the number and prowess of the Mussalmans, and the very inhabitants of Mecca might embrace Islam in great numbers. The leading men of the Quraish community accordingly made preparations to obstruct him in the way. Both the parties met at Hadibiyah. The Prophet had no intention to fight; he had travelled with a different motive. He sent word to the Meccans, intimating his peaceful intentions. The Quraish sent Suhail bin Amru as an envoy to enter into an agreement. The Prophet accepted all the conditions of the treaty, and sent for the scribe to write it out. He ordered the scribe to write out, "In the name of God, the most Merciful and the most Compassionate." Suhail said, "We do not know who the Merciful is. You write what you used to write before, i.e. 'Ya samakal-Lahum.'" The Mussalmans were enraged at this, and exclaimed that they would begin "Bismilláh-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim" only. But the Prophet acceded to the request of the non-believers, and directed the scribe to write thus, "I, Muhammad, the Messenger of God and . . . ." Suhail again objected to this and said, "By God, if we did put faith in you as the Messenger of God, how could we have stood in your way, and why would there have been a battle between you and us? You must, therefore, instead of 'Muhammad, the Messenger of God,' put down, 'Muhammad, son of Abdullah.'" The Prophet answered, "God is my witness that I am undoubtedly the Messenger of God. But if you treat my claim as false, do write 'Muhammad, son of Abdullah' only." (Bokhari, p. 379.)

Thus it is evident that the Prophet's attitude in this special respect proves his justice and freedom from all prejudice. He thought that Suhail, though

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an enemy, was quite justified in objecting to the words "Messenger of God." The Prophet, however, did his duty as the Messenger of God to convince the other party of the truth of his mission, and it lay absolutely with the Prophet's enemies to believe or disbelieve in such truth.

*(To be continued.)*

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### A PERFECT CODE OF LAW

EVERY fresh enactment of the British Parliament opens with some such words, "Be it enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty . . . and by the authority of the same as follows." This is the form in which every new legal measure that a sovereign gives to his people invariably begins. The reason is not far to seek. The very conception of law implies a certain central authority, from which it must emanate. No law can exist independent of such authority, for who will otherwise enforce it? The fountain-head of all law is the King, the sovereign power. The same idea permeates all our institutions, which have to deal with law, justice and order. The judge from his bench passes sentences of life and death on behalf of the King, and the police officer handcuffs the criminal, addressing him, "I arrest you in the name of the King." The object is always to impress the common mind with the proper sense of awe and respect, and to remind it of its duty which it owes to the sovereign lord. No less it is meant to bring home that disobedience to the law is sure to be followed by punishment and retribution, and that compliance with it will be conducive to the public good enabling all to enjoy their rights peaceably and peacefully under the protection of the lawgiver, the sovereign.

The opening verse of the Holy Qur-án runs :

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim.*

It begins with the particle *bá*, which, in English,

## A PERFECT CODE OF LAW

means "on account of." It is generally known to be of *isti'anat* (assistance), and its English equivalents, so to say, are "by, through, or with the assistance of." But to my mind the English substitutes by themselves are not quite capable of conveying the full import of the particle *bá*. It has been explained by most of the commentators to mean "I seek the assistance of," but I think the *bá* admits of another explanation as well without encroaching upon its primary significance of assistance. To me it appears to convey the grander and sublimer idea of authority, which is the true and great attribute of Godhead, from Whom, in fact, all authority and power draws its life-blood. This significance rather adds to the majesty of the verse. How sublime the verse sounds, when it is understood to open like an Imperial Act: "(Be it enacted) by or in the name (authority) of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful." The two attributes of beneficence and mercy which are mentioned in this verse make this significance more clear. The idea of power and authority place a distance between the master and his servant which widens proportionately to the dignity and position of the master; and the greater a good master is, the more has he to stoop to inspire confidence in the minds of his servants. Qualities of beneficence and mercy have come to shorten the great distance which the first part of the verse expresses and serve as a connecting link between Allah's sublime majesty and the humility and nothingness of His creatures, because, after all, man is but much less than an atom as compared with Godhead, the Creator and Ordainer of the universe. The qualities of beneficence and mercy would be meaningless and redundant without the primary conception of authority.

Secondly the Qur-án is essentially a complete code of law and the enactment of God for the guidance of His people and servants for all times. It is full of commandments, ordinances and injunctions. It

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is, therefore, quite natural that Allah should have chosen to open His code just in the same way and manner as our Acts of the sovereigns of this earth open, so that we may understand. It is indeed a miracle of the Holy Qur-án that coming from the mouth of an illiterate Arab (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) at a time when the most civilized nations of to-day had not yet begun to learn their first lessons in law-building, it opens exactly as if it were enacted by the most enlightened legislature of the present time. What did Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who sprang of a people totally ignorant of every notion of legislation, who was bred amidst the discordant elements of Arabian clans, and who could not make out one letter of the alphabet from another all his life, know of the exact and true phraseology of a legal Act? It is evident, therefore, that the framer and enactor of the Qur-anic code was no ordinary mortal of the Middle Ages who, deprived of all advantages which book education can bring, saw nothing around him but dense darkness, idolatry and vice in their worst form. And this, the only possibility, being excluded, one is forced to admit that the legislator of the Qur-anic code was no other than Allah, Who is fully aware of the most advanced forms in which a legal enactment should open and that Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was only the mouth-piece of Him Who is "the Knowing, the Wise."

I have heard the opponents of Islam advance an objection that if the Qur-án is the word of God, why does it open with "In the name of Allah," which sounds as if these words were uttered by a person other than the Divine Being. The objection is in the first place due to lack of knowledge of the chronological order in which the Holy Qur-án was revealed, but chiefly to the fact that the translators confine themselves only to one sense of the particle

## A PERFECT CODE OF LAW

*bá* and altogether forget to point out that the very essence of the true and correct phraseology of a legal enactment is instilled in the compound word "Bismillah," and the Qur-án opens rightly and faithfully in the manner in which a legal Act does and should begin.

In the last 1,400 years the world has taken long strides towards civilization. They have evolved their numerous codes on various subjects, criminal and civil, etc., to supplement and supplant their religious books, where there were any, and human ingenuity has spared no pains in making them perfection itself. But the Muslim still holds up and will ever hold up his fourteen centuries old Qur-án, and with it defy the whole mass of codified and uncodified law of the world. Well may he do so. Where man-made codes of the earth start with the names and authority of ephemeral sovereigns, his code opens in the name and with the sanction of a Sovereign Who never dies, and knows the art and science of legislation better than all the legislatures and parliaments put together, and Who is well aware as to what will be commensurate with the requirements and needs of all times. MUHAMMAD DIN JAN.

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## CORRESPONDENCE

### HOW ISLAM CAN BE UNITED AND THE BROTHERHOOD CONSOLIDATED

*To the Editor of the ISLAMIC REVIEW.*

DEAR SIR,—I shall be glad if you will kindly give publicity to the following in your valuable paper :

The first and foremost step to be taken in order to bring about a union of the Moslems of the world is to start an organization to be known as the League of Islamic Nations. It should have its branches in

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almost all the Moslem and non-Moslem countries. In many non-Moslem countries there are Moslems who are in the minority, and non-Moslems predominate. In such a case they cannot be overlooked. In Ceylon the Tamils and Singalese are predominantly in the majority, and we stand at a ratio of three Moslems to twenty Sinhalese and three Moslems to twelve Tamils, and, taken as a whole, three Moslems to thirty-two or more non-Moslems. A non-Moslem country having even one Moslem should be entitled to a branch organization. It should have for its object: 1st, to propagat Islam in countries hitherto not approached; 2nd, to start propaganda work both in Moslem and non-Moslem countries where anti-Islamic propaganda is hard at work; 3rd, to start newspapers in Moslem and non-Moslem countries which should deal with matters social, political, religious, and economic, concerning the Moslems. Such a paper would keep the Moslems of various parts in touch with each other. Greatest stress must be laid on supplying the paper with first-hand and reliable information of their brethren in the remotest parts of the world. Fourth, to promote commerce between the Islamic nations of one country with the other, thus making them interdependent, which will inevitably lead to the cementing of the Islamic brotherhood; 5th, to hold representative meetings year after year in various places where delegates from various parts of the world should gather, and discuss matters involving the prestige and honour of Islam.

Will our Moslem brethren of India take the lead to organize such a move?

Yours faithfully,

MUHAMMED N. MARIKAR.

[We commend the suggestion to the notice of the Moslem Press, in India as well as abroad. We have no doubt the idea, if realized, will be prolific of immense good to the world-wide Moslem brotherhood.—ED.]

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