

“ And We have not sent you (O Muhammad)  
but as a mercy to (all) the nations”

—The Holy Qur'an XXI: 107

# GLIMPSSES

FROM

# THE LIFE

OF THE

# PROPHET MUHAMMAD

By

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# Glimpses from the Life of The Holy Prophet Muhammad

*“ We (God) have not sent thee (Muhammad) otherwise than mercy unto all creatures.”*—THE QUR-AN, 2 : 107.

*“ Blessed be He who sent down ‘Al-furqan’ (illumination) on His servant, that to all creatures he may be a warner.”*—THE QUR-AN 25 : 1.

If the world ever needed a prophet it was at the time when Muhammad made his appearance, when the laws of God were being violated and the limits and bounds put by Him were being transgressed simultaneously on the whole surface of the earth. Every gross degradation of humanity has always seen the appearance of a prophet, so when the whole horizon of the world had become darkened under the dense clouds of infidelity, dishonesty and unchastity, the Great Prophet came in Arabia. It was a time when every country and each nation had seen complete

depravity ; so much so that sin was not regarded as sin in many cases, but as an act of virtue. The statement may startle many, but it is truth, and a reference to the Church history of the mediæval days in Europe and of the Puranic age in India, as well as the Muzdic history of Persia, will verify our remarks. Human society at that period of human history had sunk to its lowest ebb, spiritually as well as morally. And "as in Nature light always follows darkness and rain comes after drought," so this wretched state of things then obtaining in the four corners of the world in the fifth century of the Christian era called either for the appearance of several prophets in several countries or the advent of one masterly mind who should come to restore universally the religion of God in its perfect form. Different nations before Muhammad had been given different books, but the books could not remain free from human alloy ; the will of God revealed to man had become obscure, and diversity

of opinion cropped up everywhere, even in most essential principles of religion. The Qur-án refers to this state of things in the following verse, where it refers to the necessity of the Quranic revelation :—

*(All) people are a single nation, so Allah raised prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed with them the Book with truth, that it might judge between people in that in which they differed, and none but the very people who were given it differed about it after clear arguments had come to them revolting among themselves, so Allah has guided by His will those who believe the truth about which they differed, and Allah guides whom He pleases to the right path”* (The Cow, 213). In commenting upon this verse Maulvi Muhammad Ali writes in his English translation of the Qur-án :

“The first part of the verse states the universal law according to which Allah raised prophets among all nations, because all the nations are a single people, and therefore it could not be that prophets should be raised in one nation and not in another. With every

one of these prophets, we are then told, a book was revealed, so that it might point out the right way to the various contending parties that existed before the advent of that Prophet. But as time passed, the very people to whom the book was given so that they might follow it, went against it. Thus, though a prophet had been raised in every nation, yet every nation had forsaken the right way and acted against the very direction which had been given to it, so difference again arose which necessitated the advent of another prophet. Hence it was necessary to raise a prophet who should show the right way to all nations. If a prophet was needed by every nation to settle its own differences one was surely now needed to settle the differences of the various nations, for the truth which had been shown to different prophets had again become obscured. Thus among the different national religions of the world Islam occupies the position of an international religion."

The logic in the above is obvious. It seems to me quite clear and convincing. The Divine dispensation has always deemed it necessary to enlighten man of the high will of God, and of the index of His heart. And it was done before Islam came by such books as the Old and New Testaments, but all those

books which were revealed before Muhammad, became obscured and unauthenticated, so there was a genuine need of another revelation. Besides, the world was on the move to bring the distantly located units of humanity into one cosmopolitan body, and therefore a book was needed to accumulate all the past truths purified from human alloy—a prophet was needed to mirror the life of all other prophets. Hence the Qur'an came, and the Prophet Muhammad came, one as the Final Testament or Gospel, the other as the seal and the last of the Prophets.

## THE ULTIMATE PROPHET

But why the last? A full reply to it demands an extent which the present space at my disposal hardly allows. But I may take here one aspect of the question. Let us consider the primary object for which the mantle of prophethood falls on the shoulders of a chosen one. He does not come for any personal aggrandizement nor to become an

object of worship and to take the place of the Deity. He brings a message from God to man for the guidance of the latter, and elucidates it through his actions. He receives precepts from Heaven and translates them into action through his own example. He is the first to obey the laws revealed to him from Above and leads others to follow him in doing the same. Thus the words of God and the actions of a prophet in the way of illustration help others to pursue the path of guidance, and if they are preserved in their original integrity and transmitted to us in their genuine colours, there lies no necessity of having a new revelation or a new prophet. But the fact was that whatever had come from God before the advent of Muhammad saw corruption and human interpolation. The records of the lives of the pre-Islamic religious teachers themselves are enveloped in mystery. They are more of the character of a myth than of history. In fact, we know very little of their life. Hence the need of

the Qur-án and the Holy Prophet. And if the Qur-án is just the same as it was in the days of the Prophet and the record of the acts and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad himself is unexceptionally complete, faithful, and correct, are we still in need of any other prophet or any new revelation from God? Hence the Qur-án, the last Book of God and Muhammad, the last of the prophets. It is more on account of the finality of the Law and guidance given in the last message of God than the personality of the holy messenger which makes him the Ultimate Prophet. When the Holy Qur-án faithfully represents the will of the Most High and contains everything necessary to meet our moral and spiritual requirements, a new revelation would be a useless repetition and a redundancy.



## THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PROPHET.

That Muhammad was the only prophet who could see his mission fulfilled in his own life-time is a simple historical truth. The chief characteristic of the *Holy Book revealed to him which no other book can claim is the wonderful transformation which it brought about.* and it is to this characteristic also that it lays claim in the very commencement when it says: "This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide against evil." That the transformation wrought by it is unparalleled in the history of the world is admitted on all hands, for if the Holy Prophet was the most successful of all prophets and religious personalities, this success was due to no other cause than the Qur-an. Its injunctions swept off the most deep-rooted evils like idolatry and drunkenness, and left no trace of them in the Arabian peninsula, welded the warring elements of the Arabian society into one nation, and made an ignorant

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1 See *Encyclopædia Britannica*, eleventh edition; art. "Koran."

people the foremost torch-bearers of knowledge and of science. Besides, every word of the Qur-án gives expression to Divine majesty and glory in a manner which is not approached by any other sacred book; and hence the challenge of the Holy Qur-án remains unanswered to this day.

The whole human race, leave apart the Arabs, was at its lowest moral ebb when the Qur-an was revealed. Clouds of darkness and ignorance overhung the horizon of the earth. Libertinism was the order of the day; so much so that wickedness of the blackest dye was taken in some countries as an act of merit in the eye of God. In four corners of the world all laws of God had been violated and Divine limits transgressed. And the Arabs were the most wicked people that the earth of God had ever seen. They not only committed wrongs of the worst type, but they exulted in doing so and were great boasters of it. That was an age of the best poetry in Arabia. They used to meet in their fairs

and festivals and vie with each other in their power of making poetry ; they produced and read the finest specimen of their composition, and it often contained narrations of their villainous deeds. A people of this sort ! and within less than a quarter of a century transformed into a nation of God-fearing men of piety and righteousness, keeping all the commandments of God and respecting all the laws of society. The most ignorant of the world became torch-bearers of knowledge and learning to the then benighted world. Those who kept the weaker sex at the lowest stage of degradation became the first champions of female rights, and infused into the world such a chivalrous spirit as was unknown before. And this all within the shortest space of time ! History fails to refer to another regeneration like what was effected by Muhammad : May the choicest blessings of God be on him !

### SPIRITUALITY SECRET OF SUCCESS

This success, so unique in its kind and

so unparalleled in history, only speaks of that highest stage of spirituality which the Sacred Prophet had attained. No reform in any community can possibly be worked out unless its members entertain some regard for the reformer and are willing to obey him. But no worldly riches or power, nor even any amount of one's working miracle, can inspire others with that love, respect, and obedience which always follows an advanced spirituality. The words of Muhammad were not the dictates of a potentate. Nay, he disavowed always possession of things which might influence others in his favour. In the words of the Qur-án, he would say often and often : "I say not to you, 'In my possession are the treasures of God'; neither do I say to you, 'Verily I am an angel'; only what is revealed to me do I follow." But still he commanded submission and homage unimaginable. In fact his words were the words of the beloved, to be respected and cared for by the lover. And if such is the mental attitude of the people towards their teacher, no wonder he is "the

most successful among all other religious personalities" in working out reforms. But one should first reach the height of the ladder of spirituality before he aspires to that success. Jesus might convert water into wine, but he could not convert the nature of his disciples into what he desired them to be: He wished they could possess a grain of faith. And his apprehensions proved true when the trial came: One mostly trusted betrayed him. If others deserted him, the one given the keys of heaven cursed and disowned him. Call them what you will, "infirm in faith" or "weak in spirituality," but the fact remains the same. It does reflect on the weakness of the teacher's spiritual influence. He seems to lack that "alchemy" which converts a base metal into shining gold. The followers of Moses also would not care much for their liberator. They would not listen to him on his way to the Promised Land. But the holy companion of the Sacred Prophet would always say: "Like the companions of Moses, we will not say: (O Moses) 'Go thou and thy Lord and fight,'

but we will fight on your right and left, in your front and on your back.” And these were not mere lip expressions. Invariably they were put to hardest trials, and their words proved always to be true. The following unparalleled piece of bravery and fidelity of the Prophet’s companions, so ably portrayed by Maulvi Sadr-ud-Din we also read in Bukhari, Zurqani, Ibn Hisham, and Sir William Muir.

### A HUMAN FORTRESS

“It was in the battle-field of Uhud, in one of his defensive wars, when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, being hard pressed by the forces of the enemy, fell down in a pit and fainted.

“He had received over eighty wounds : two of the rings of his helmet had run into his cheek, his face weltered in blood, and a blow at his teeth made one of them fly away. The enemy was marching on and sending volleys of arrows, and the life of the Prophet was in danger. He being senseless and no

breastwork to defend him against the enemy, disappointment and despair were staring him in the face, but the self-devotion and fidelity to their master, the unprecedented characteristic of the followers of the Holy Prophet, warded off the dire consequence of the situation. Abu-Bakr, the first successor after the Prophet, was the first to see the danger, and was foremost in offering ready help, which example was at once followed by Ali, Talha, Zubair, Abu Ubaidah, Abu Dujáná, and many others. The Prophet was in the pit, and a sure mark for the enemy. The fight being hand to hand, and the place being even and plain, the only fortification which could save the leader at the moment was a living wall of the human beings, which, however, was not wanting. They fortified the pit and exposed themselves to the coming volleys. The human fortress gave a brave defiance. Talha strained two or three bows, and received thirty-five wounds in the endeavour to shoot back the pressing enemy, and proclaimed that no blow will reach the

sacred body of the Prophet but through his own chest, and besought his esteemed leader to refrain from raising his head, and thus obviate the danger of any shot striking at him. Abu Dujáná was afraid, lest the weak flesh in him should overcome his faithful love for his master ; he therefore turned his back to the enemy and inclined over the Prophet. The other constituents of the living fortification made an impenetrable wall against the shots of the enemy. They fell dead one after the other, but their vacant places were filled up by others equally devoted. Ibn Comina, from the ranks of the enemy, came forward with the sword, but it was barely warded off his head by the naked hand of Talha, whose fingers were disabled for life thereby.

“ There were no hospital assistants or the sisters of charity to nurse the holy wounded, but love and devotion made up the deficiency. Abu Ubaidah applied his own teeth to extract the rings of helmet firmly embedded in the cheek of Muhammad, and



had to lose his own two teeth before he succeeded in his endeavour. Water could not be found at that moment to wash the body and face of the Prophet besmeared with blood, but many a human tongue came forward to lick it off. Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet, with Saffiah and other renowned ladies, were busily engaged staunching the blood and nursing his wounds. But it was Umm Nasibah, daughter of Ka'b, whose desperate spirit greatly contributed to win the day. She wielded her sword and drew her bow with the object of defending the Holy Person that lay in the pit. Other ladies like Umm Sulaim, Umm Saleet, 'Ayisha, and others caught her enthusiasm, and accordingly made an onslaught on the enemy, while nursing the wounded.

“One of the young children was commanded by his mother to arm himself with a sword and dash upon the enemy to defend the Prophet.”

The above very highly speaks of the

teacher and the taught—an instance the like of which can be boasted by chronicles. The followers of Muhammad proved true to their professions which they used to sing proudly as their war-cry :—

*“ We are that very people that have pledged themselves to Muhammad to fight in defence of their faith throughout lives.”*

The spirit infused by the Prophet did not only find its exhibition in the exchange of arms, but it enabled “the sons of the desert” also to face courageously the most formidable of the foes that a man has to grapple with—his own corrupt nature and evil habits. History fails to refer to a single instance where a reformer met such an implicit allegiance to his precepts from the people he wished to reform, especially in the matter of eradicating their most deeply rooted evils. “Drink” was one of their evils. No Bacchanalian orgies elsewhere could surpass the Arab indulgence of alcohol in those days. Their daily meals were three, but they

worshipped Bacchus five times a day. But when the time came for the Prophet to introduce into them total abstinence, the streets of Madina were overflowing with the detestable contents of the wine-barrels, which were emptied at the one magic word of the Prophet.

No appeal from the brain power of the nation to the Cabinet to stop liquor traffic—and that only for a short period—was needed. One word from the master-mind, and the five times fixed for the worship of Bacchus were converted into the five times of Allah's worship in Islam. Such radical revolutions in the morals of people cannot be worked out without one's being at the climax of spirituality—and so was Muhammad. After all, the whole prime of manhood spent in retirement in the Cave of Hira could not remain without bringing its fruits. Though they were the early days of his marriage, Muhammad would often retire to that cave and spend month after month there in divine contemplation.

There the angel of God appeared to him and brought him the first message.

His duties increased with his ministry, but nothing could keep him back from his communion with God, his days in action, but his nights in long prayers. Even in the busy life of Madina one could see his feet swelling as for nights he was on them in the presence of God, and thus continued till he left the world.

# An Ideal Representative

AND

## Guide of Humanity

“*A noble pattern have ye in God’s Apostle.*”—THE  
QUR-AN 33 : 21.

“*For thou (Muhammad) art of a noble nature.*”—  
Ibid. 68 : 5.

“*Say : If ye love God, then follow me (Muhammad)*”  
—Ibid. 3 : 29.

“*Religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this Man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity.*”—RENAN.

So Renan remarked when speaking of Jesus. Renan, with all his rationalistic attainments, was no proof against his early predilection. A calm and unprejudiced consideration of what we read in the Bible as to the life of Jesus, in the light of what is necessary to constitute human society, will convince our readers that the remark of Renan was not free from short-sightedness. He

should have known that there were various walks of life most necessary for the superstructure of human society where Christ, as reported in the evangelical record, could not be a guide. A king on the throne, a judge on the bench, a statesman in his cabinet, and general in the field, are as necessary units of human society as a teacher of morality; and God was also not unwise in raising patriarchs like David, Solomon, Joseph, and Joshua, who acted respectively as a king, a judge, a minister of state, and a general. They were human beings, and possibly committed errors in the performance of such duties. But if God had to come as the "ideal representative and guide of humanity," as it is said He did in the person of Jesus, we could have been more benefited if God had appeared as a king or a statesman. He could have left better rules for the guidance of Christian kings and statesmen in Europe, and the world have been saved this terrible conflagration into which it has been thrown under ambition and

selfassertiveness. Christendom wanted a God in the person of a general and an emperor rather than in a "Prince of peace," to guide Christian nations in their recent slaughter of humanity. He could have taught them morals of war. Perhaps His precepts and action in this respect might have proved a better check in this war to all that has created in Europe "a long and sombre procession of cruelty and suffering and a most deplorable and tragic spectacle of bloodshed and distress."

Perhaps Jesus did not come for the kingdom of this world. But if the civic and economic policy of the world necessitated the existence of some kind of kingdom and the enforcement of mutual rights and obligations between man and man, the only basis of a commonwealth, renders some sort of government indispensable; and if no sooner man emerges out of the primitive state of nature than at once knowledge of individual property rushes to his mind, and its security, together

with the safety of his own life, brings home to him the necessity of some sovereign political authority, though in a rudimentary form, should we look to the Mount of Olives for an "ideal representative and guide of humanity," as Renan says, or to the Mount of Faran to find a king, a statesman, a lawgiver, and a general in the person of the Prophet Muhammad?

Does not the conduct of the latter's followers in the present war justify the remarks? Especially in view of the strong contrast between the exhibition of the worst type of brutality by some Christians and the doings of the Turks—the followers of the Warrior Prophet—who have been spoken of by the English press as "clean fighters and gentlemen."

Christ apparently was no example in the higher walks of life, but I wish he could be of help to us in our ordinary life. Is not our domestic life an essential and important item in the programme of our life? Are not



many houses in these days scenes of unhappiness, misery, and discord ; and does not this deplorable state result from want of those sweet relations between husband and wife which make the matrimonial bond a heavenly tie ? Is not the very word “ home ” a treasure of dearest associations, and are not these things growing extinct day by day in most of the houses of to-day ? Was not woman created to be a helpmate to man, and are they not intended to live as husband and wife, on the happy or unpleasant mutual relations between whom a home becomes a heaven or a hell ? If these are realities of life and are to a great extent responsible for our happiness or misery, are we not in urgent need of a guide to regulate our domestic daily life ? It is a matter of regret that the son of Mary, on account of his ministry being cut short so soon, could not avail himself of an opportunity to have an earthly connection with some woman as husband and wife, and we are again constrained to turn our eyes to some other quarters for “ a guide of

humanity." Jesus, of course, had a mother, but perhaps the mystic side of his nature comes in the way, and a son in a Christian home has nothing to learn from Jesus in home morals. The holy Virgin could with complacency of mind hear her son call her "woman." Perhaps she saw in him something different from herself; but an average Englishwoman would not like to be addressed thus.

### WRONG CONCEPTION OF SPIRITUALITY

But Jesus was not for the world; he came only for something spiritual—some of our readers will think so when reading the above. I wish one could disillusion such friends of their wrong conception of spirituality. With them, perhaps, spirituality means effacement of all our social concerns and disregard of mundane duties. But Jesus was not a recluse, after all. He was a man of action as well. To fast and to see visions, to pray away the midnight hours and to talk

with God through the night watches, as Cardinal Newman wrongly thinks, is not the whole spirituality. "The weekday side of our life," in the words of J. R. Miller, D.D., "has a great deal more to do with the spiritual life, with the building of our character, with our growth in grace, than many of us think. On the other hand, no day can be made beautiful whose secular side is not so full and complete as its religious side." But what else is religious side? where lies the dividing line between the religious and the secular, when you lead a life of purity and chastity, of charity and benevolence in all its walks? Are not our physical conditions closely connected with our moral and spiritual? Even our drinking and eating play a great part in the world of our moral and spiritual conditions. Jesus himself made no difference between what is called a secular and a religious life. It was, however, for Muhammad to bring so clearly home to the world that every act of a person "has a

religious bearing, a religious significance; his whole life from the cradle to the grave is one series of religious performances. There is no sharp dividing line between religion and politics. There is no such thing as 'Give unto Cæsar what is Cæsar's, and unto God what is God's.' Cæsar is but a representative of God, and obedience to him is obedience to God. Not only had he to regulate the ritual, frame religious ordinances, direct the worship of his followers, but he had also to guide their political destiny." <sup>1</sup> And was Jesus a recluse, or a man of action? His life was one both of prayer and action. His nights he passed in communing with God; his mornings found him doing all sorts of good offices to those in need and distress. He was none the less spiritual when he was in the company of the publicans and tax-collectors. Did not his spiritual powers find their exhibition when he was participating in

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<sup>1</sup> S. Khuda Buksh, *Journal of the Moslem Institute, Calcutta.*

a marriage ceremony? And if the weekday side of his life was quite consistent with his spirituality, Jesus could not have become less spiritual if he had been raised as a king or a potentate.

### SPIRITUALITY IN DAILY LIFE.

And if spirituality consists chiefly in doing something to advance real human happiness by precept and example, a king is also advanced in spirituality, can do more to further human happiness than a discarded recluse. Humility of mind and meekness in deportment, the two among several other essentials of spirituality, when exhibited by those who can afford to do otherwise, add charms to their owner. They are taken as a good moral object-lesson and act as a magic wand converting every haughty, stiff-necked into a gentle and humble creature. But when these high morals find their manifestation in one humble in position, they only invite effrontery and rebuke and excite jeer and jest. They are not taken as good morals

of their owner, but as a necessary outcome of his low social status.

And in this respect Muhammad is the only glorious illustration of true spirituality.

Once an orphan, again a persecuted citizen, again one flying for his life, and then a spiritual and temporal chief. But could this taste of power "change his method of living? Did he surround himself with the pomp of power? Did he keep a retinue or bodyguard, or did he indulge in any one of those outward manifestations of earthly glory in which the monarchs of the earth, ancient and modern, have loved to clothe themselves? Did he amass wealth or leave a large fortune behind? In fact, in no one single respect did he change. Power, notwithstanding, and stupendous power too, for he exercised a power which the greatest of monarchs might have envied, he remained to the last simple, unostentatious, free from pride, living for his flock and living with them with a self-sacrifice rarely to be seen in life."<sup>1</sup> Here is the *great*

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1 S. Khuda Bukhsh, *ibid.*

*potentate*, but “*poor in spirit.*” Here is the great builder of temporal and religious power, but meek, merciful, and pure in heart, who inherited “the earth but did hunger and thirst after righteousness.” In his case, lipwords became reality and actions. This is real spirituality, which remains, unflinching and unscathed, even in affluence and prosperity. One who is meek and humble in poverty and adversity has nothing to lose if he chooses to be so ; but he has still to put his spirituality to test if he dips deep into the well of riches and power and remains unaffected. I will refer here to the tribute paid by Dr. Gustave Weil to Muhammad :—

“ Muhammad set a shining example to his people. His character was pure and stainless. His dress, his food, they were characterized by a rare simplicity. So unpretentious was he that he would receive from his companions no special mark of reverence, nor would he accept any service from his slave which he could do himself. Often and often

was he seen in the market purchasing provisions ; often and often was he seen mending his clothes in his room, or milking a goat in his courtyard. He was accessible to all and at all times. He visited the sick and was full of sympathy for all. Unlimited was his benevolence and generosity, and so was his anxious care for the welfare of the community. Despite innumerable presents which from all quarters unceasingly poured in for him, he left very little behind, and even that he regarded as state property. ”

### MAGNANIMITY OF THE PROPHET

Take, again, his triumphal entry into Makka. What a glorious instance of forbearance ! Arabia lay prostrate at his feet and Makka, the stronghold of opposition, was entirely at his mercy. Did he then show a spirit of revenge ? And could he not, if he had so willed, have cut off the head of every one there, those implacable enemies of his who gave him no quarter, who forced him to leave his native land to seek shelter, who



held him up to scorn and ridicule, who persecuted him with a rancour and bitterness which was at once cruel and unreasonable.

But the personal element never entered into his actions at all. He rejected every token of personal homage and declined all regal authority, and when the haughty chiefs of the Quraish appeared before him he asked—

“What can you expect at my hands?”

“Mercy, O generous brother.”

“Be it so, you are free.”

His simplicity, his humanity, his frugality, his forbearance, his earnestness, his steadfastness, his firmness in adversity, his meekness in power, his humility in greatness, his anxious care for animals, his passionate love for children, his unbending sense of fairness and justice!—Is there another instance in the history of the world where we have the assemblage of all these virtues woven into one character?

After centuries of perversion of facts and

suppression of truth, the figure of Muhammad stands aloft to-day compelling the admiration and commanding the reverence of the non-Muslim world. He is no longer an impostor, but a great reformer. He is no longer a neurotic patient suffering from epilepsy, but a man of tremendous character and unbending will. He is no longer a self-seeking despot, ministering to his own selfish ends, but a beneficent ruler shedding light and love around him. He is no longer an opportunist, but a Prophet with a fixed purpose, undeviating in his constancy. All this Europe has now acknowledged, and acknowledged freely. We have the appreciative works of Higgins, Davenport, Bosworth, Smith, and Carlyle in English ; of Krehl and Grimme in German ; the monumental work of Caetani in Italian. There are others besides, scholarly works, but they are not altogether free from those prejudices which at one time constituted the stock-in-trade of Christendom.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the Muslim Institute, Calcutta.*

## “SERMON ON THE MOUNT” NO GUIDE TO HUMANITY

The deeper I go into the question, the more doubtful I become as to the correctness of Renan's remark given above. The morality taught by Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount never found favour even with his immediate followers. The precepts in the sermon may be taken as an idealism, but the world for the last two thousand years could not see its way to bring them into practice. Even the devout workers of his mission find themselves often unfit to work out these idealistic principles of ethics, and are only waiting for the second advent of Christ when the Kingdom of heaven shall come to restore peace, amity, and love, and man, becoming circumcised of all stern but otherwise manly passions, will be in a more suitable disposition to act upon them. We may accept this apologetic exposition: but what about the stern side of our character, which, dangerous as it seemingly appears to peace, is also an

essential factor in maintaining the same? Jesus may guide us in the exercise of our tender, passive moral qualities, but happiness to human society greatly depends also upon the exercise of the stern ones when properly balanced—anger, hatred, and we may add to them vengeance also: their exercise is necessary to keep life and property secure. One may brand them as lower passions; but is it not just an act of godliness if we hate falsehood, if we are angry with anything cruel or wrong, and if a culprit is brought to book and society is avenged in the interest of public safety? These passions have their right use, and it is only in their degenerate use that they become bestial. On the other hand, they become higher morality when they are put to their proper use. To say these stern passions are undesirable is simply to find fault with the Supreme Wisdom. Are not hatred and anger relatives? Do they not affect the trend of human affairs? And if man is born after the image of God, all the moral qualities, tender or stern, observable

in him must be divine moral attributes in man, and they cannot be dispensed with. Do we not observe them in the working of dumb nature, the best index of divine character; do we not read of them in the Bible as attributes of God?—and if we exercise them we simply go after God. These passions no doubt require regulation and training, and it is in the life of a perfect man in whom God is claimed to have been revealed that we look for the right use of such passions. Is not the get-your-both-cheeks-struck morality sufficient, if adopted, to destroy those stern morals which are divine, and to render our life and property insecure? Is not the resist-not-evil principle of life a premium to cruelty and rowdyism? This kind of morality seems to be too high-flown to be practised, and will remain so till the day of judgment. But can the Teacher of the Sermon on the Mount under these conditions claim to be a perfect model of humanity and an ideal representative of mankind, as Renan makes him to be?

But leaving apart anger, hatred, and vengeance, there are other moral attributes besides those claimed as Christian morals observable in us. Modesty, meekness, and patience do not exhaust the long list of human morals. Bravery, justice, chivalry, generosity, self-confidence, and many other noble qualities—they did hardly find their exhibition in actions in the record of Jesus. To take the most favourable view of the case, Jesus, a raised Divine Messenger, possessed them potentially; but they remained in abeyance, and did not see their revelation in him, as he did not get the occasion necessary for the manifestation of these morals.

## MUHAMMAD—A PERFECT SPECIMEN IN PRACTICE

A possible potentiality is no proof of actuality, and negative virtues are no virtues, especially in teachers of morality. They cost nothing, and are no help to one who needs a specimen in practice. You may read homilies

of forgiveness and sermons of meekness, but lip-teachings are no proof of their possession by you. Words converted into actions only can justify our claims to possession. How can you teach lessons of patience and meekness if you never happened to face the hardest trials of life as Jesus did? What a marvellous thing to find the Holy Teacher of Islam as just up to our demand! From orphanage to kingship Muhammad passed through different stages of life. Events of diverse nature arose in his life which demanded manifestation of various characters. At every step he was weighed, but was never found wanting. We need a perfect model up to our needs in several walks of life, and the life of the Sacred Prophet eloquently promises it in itself. A king, a statesman, a warrior, a general, a lawgiver, a judge, a tradesman, a friend, a father, a son, a husband, a neighbour—all these characters are mirrored in most beautiful colours in the life of the Prophet; and it is not through his sermons and teachings

that we have to make an estimate of him and to learn morals from him, but through actions and deeds.

## MUHAMMAD—A TEACHER THROUGH ACTION.

And in this lies the superiority of the Great Prophet over the other prophets of the world. They leave us legacies of words, though of wisdom and guidance; but for their translation into actions we look in vain in the account of these teachers' lives. Teachings put into practice by the teacher himself is our need. It will help us to appreciate them and guide us to act upon them. But, unfortunately, what we know of these teachers is too meagre to guarantee it. They are not even historic.

## THE HISTORIC PROPHET.

They are enshrouded in obscurity. Their life smacks something strange and antique. They speak like oracles, and even the few words reported to have escaped from their



lips hardly enable us to have an insight into their character. The Prophet Muhammad on the other hand, is more historic than Cæsar and Alexander the Great. His life is just like a mirror before us where different characters of high-mindedness, generosity, bravery, patience, meekness, forgiveness, and other necessary constituents of humanity reflect in most brilliant colours. The life of the Prophet is an eloquent commentary of the sacred Book. Every virtue recommended or any vice enjoined against in the Qur-án, and the same you will find illustrated in the actions of the Prophet. The importance of it can hardly be exaggerated. Without it we are unable to appreciate one's teaching and we give it up as hopeless, but for our regard for the teacher we sometimes call it as something ideal, which really means an impracticability. " 'Love you enemy' did not pass beyond the domain of dream in Christianity, but Muhammad—(peace be upon him!)—has shown us how love for the enemy may be shown in practice. Only a

practical benefactor of humanity like Muhammad could say: "For the love of Allah give away your wealth in freeing those enemies whom you have captured in war." So was enjoined in the Qur-án, and so in every case Muhammad acted upon the injunction, and the Muslim conquerors in the footsteps of their Master always spent their wealth in freeing their captives."<sup>1</sup> Similarly everything in the Qur-án found its practical illustration in the life of the Teacher. His life was eventful, and furnished him occasions to manifest what was noble and good in him. It is due to the extreme opulence of the life of the Prophet in practical demonstration of all the many virtues that we recognize in him the most perfect figure in the history of man.

## MUHAMMAD IN ADVERSITY

In fact, one who could not experience change in the circumstances of his life cannot afford to be a perfect model for others'

<sup>1</sup> Muhammad Ali, M.A.: *The Translation of the Qur-an.*

imitation. Every moral quality requires given conditions, and unless they are present one cannot be rightly accredited with it. Adversity and prosperity are necessary to give revelation to different moralities. Trial gives man a character, but success brings forth his nobility of mind if he possesses it. In fact, humanity is not only softness of heart. It consists of various morals, tender and stern, and they need variety of conditions for their development. If some find manifestation in penury, others demand affluence for perfection. Very few guides of humanity were given an occasion to taste both. But Muhammad, to act as a perfect model for humanity, had to pass through every phase of life. If prosperity brings forth his generosity, his forgiveness and his high-mindedness, his adversity gives him an occasion to exhibit his patience, fortitude, and his trust in God.

## MUHAMMAD'S TRUST IN GOD

The hardships which Muhammad (peace be on him !) had to bear in his early mission were as severe as severe could be. History has recorded several instances of such men, who have been pioneers in any walk of life, having been ill-treated by their compatriots ; but the persecution of Muhammad, when he called his idolatrous people, who were steeped in almost all the known vices and immoralities, to one God and to ethical and moral grandeur and purity, was unsurpassingly terrible.

He and his faithful wife Khadijah and but few other followers bore the brunt of the persecution for years. Muhammad, before the proclamation of his mission, was called *Al-Amin*, the Trusty ; but simply because he invited his people to the worship of One God his countrymen began to despise him, and tortured his few followers, whom he had to send away from Arabia. He himself went away to Taif in the hope of meeting better

treatment at the hands of the people there, but they welcomed him with stones, and with bruises all over his body he returned. While on his way back he lay down under the shade of a tree and fell asleep, when one of his persecutors came up, and taking up his sword in his hand, woke him up. "Who will save thee now, O Muhammad, from my hands?" Without an instant's hesitation Muhammad's reply was, "My God." The enemy was at once awed by this daring answer, and feeling nervous dropped the sword, which Muhammad instantaneously took up and cried, "Who will save thee now?" Poor man—he thought he had no God to save him, so he sought mercy at the hands of Muhammad. But Muhammad was not the man to allow any self-idolization. He raised up the fallen man, and said, "The same God who saved me from thy hands will save thee." The man became a Muslim—resigned to the will of God—and Muhammad's trust in God was rewarded.

However, in Makka the persecution of Muhammad was ruthless. For three long years he, with his few followers, was completely ostracized in his own land, and at last his life was seriously imperilled. Fortunately, through his spiritual power he came to know the designs of his enemies just early enough to leave his house before they reached it with the intention of killing him. He had one solitary companion with him when he was flying to Madina pursued by his bloodthirsty enemies. He and his companion hid themselves in a cave. While there his companion heard the footsteps of the enemies who were in search of them. His companion was not like the apostles of another prophet who never cared for their master when he was in danger, in spite of his solicitations. Abu-Bakr knew that it was only the life of Muhammad that was in danger—not his. But he loved Muhammad more than he loved himself; so he became anxious when he heard the footsteps of the enemies. “We are only two, and the enemies are a large

number," said he in the cave. What did Muhammad say at that time of danger, when his life was at stake? Did the cry of *Eli, eli, lama sabachthani*? ("O God, O God, why hast Thou forsaken me?") escape from his lips? Did the idea for a moment cross his mind that God, his God, the Cherisher of all the worlds, for Whose sake and Whose sake alone he was persecuted, for Whose sake and Whose sake alone he was leaving his hearth and home and was flying to a strange place to proclaim His Majesty and His Unity, had forsaken him? It must not be forgotten that by his proclamation of the Oneness of God Muhammad had lost his position, his popularity. Muhammad was by birth an aristocrat. Blue blood ran in his veins. He was personally, too, very popular. But since he had heard the call of his Creator, and invited his brethren to that call, he had lost all—his very life was threatened, so perilously threatened. His solitary companion in the cave, the venerable Abu-Bakr, was anxious. The anxious words "We are only two" came

to his lips. "No," said Muhammad emphatically, "*Lá tahzan, inalláha ma'aná*" ("Do not get disheartened, God is with us"). God was always with Muhammad. In the flash of lightning, in the peal of thunder, in his travels, in his bed, in his anxious moments, in his hours of happiness and delight always and everywhere Muhammad saw the glory of God. His God, omnipresent and omniscient, helpful and loving God, was always with him. There has never breathed a soul on the face of this earth who had so much confidence in God as had Muhammad (may peace be on his soul, and may those who follow him have the help of God always and everywhere with them) !<sup>1</sup>

## MUHAMMAD AND JESUS BOTH PRAYING FOR THEIR ENEMIES

Taif was a place at some distance from Makka. Muhammad preached there against idolatry. The idolaters drove him out of the city. The rabble and the slaves followed,

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<sup>1</sup> Mushir Hussain Qidwai.



hooting and pelting him with stones until the evening. Wounded and bleeding, footsore and weary, he betook himself to prayer. And the following words found utterance in a moment of deep distress and affliction: “*O Lord, I make my complaint to Thee. Out of my feebleness and the vanity of my wishes I am insignificant in the sight of men; O Thou Most Merciful! Lord of the weak, Thou art my Lord. Forsake me not. Leave me not a prey to strangers nor to my enemies. If Thou art not offended, I am safe. I seek refuge in the light of Thy countenance, by which all darkness is dispelled and peace cometh in the near and hereafter. Solve Thou my difficulties as it pleaseth Thee. Guide them in the right path, for they do not know what they do.*”

Noble words and worthy of the noble speaker. Conscious of the insignificance he has been reduced to, and yet such splendid reliance on God. “If Thou art not offended I am safe.” How hopeful in his trials—not the slightest tinge of despondency, no complaint, *no doubt as to his being forsaken* by God.

“Solve Thou my difficulties as it pleaseth Thee”—another noble expression, eloquent enough to enlighten a narrow-minded Church missionary who ignorantly harps on the uniqueness of “Thy will and not mine.” The concluding portion of the above-quoted prayer is similar to that of Jesus, and yet they differ from each other in the main point.

“*Forgive them, for they know not what they do*”—Jesus.

“*Guide them in the right path, for they know not what they do*”—Muhammad.

Words suiting the circumstances of the speakers respectively, and coming events proved their truth. Jesus had no chance of gaining that power over his enemies in his lifetime which could enable him to show his magnanimity of soul in the form of forgiveness. He implores God to “forgive them.” Muhammad had to reach that climax; he had to forgive them himself. It was so within the knowledge of God. Besides, the words inspired on the lips of the latter are more

comprehensive. They go further and include *forgiveness* in them. Forgiveness is only for the things past ; guidance to righteousness is for the past as well as for the future, as no one can tread the path of righteousness with his past sins unforgiven. So the Holy Prophet not only implores for the forgiveness of past deeds but for their future righteousness as well. The words were prophetic, and proved to be so. Muhammad came to his full power, and his oppressors whenever they came to him received treatment of unparalleled kindness.

## MUHAMMAD IN POWER

### THREE REQUISITES OF FORGIVENESS

Few persons remember their days of adversity when they come to power. But a serene and noble mind is an adamant proof against all the vicissitudes of time. In his case change means newness of circumstance to bring forth such other noble qualities as could not be exhibited in his former state. No virtue is without its own phase and

character. It demands circumstances peculiar to it for its revelation, without which no one can claim to possess it. Forgiveness, for instance, can be shown only by one who undergoes three stages of life. Firstly, he has been in affliction and helplessly persecuted by his enemies. Secondly, he has come to full power, and his enemies are at his mercy; and lastly, they come to receive judgment for their tyranny at his hand, but they are forgiven and not punished. *How can one be accredited with mercy who never had any one at his mercy?* and forgiveness, like mercy, can only be shown by those who by change of circumstances find their persecutors helpless and at their mercy. With splendid meekness Jesus bore all the derisions of the Israelites, and showed marvellous patience in the hardest trials of life which he suffered as a martyr to the truth, and how noble of him to say while on the cross, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*" Jesus could not do more than that. But Muhammad had to forgive his enemies himself. For full thirteen

years he remained subject to a long series of persecutions of variegated nature. He was tortured physically and mentally, but he was always prayerful for the welfare of his foes.

### MUHAMMAD AND NOT JESUS COULD SHOW FORGIVENESS.

It has just been remarked that the moral quality of forgiveness demands three conditions precedent for its manifestation. These conditions must be fulfilled before one can lay claim to possess this noble attribute. Jesus was persecuted, but the other two conditions remained lacking in his life. It was at the hand of the Prophet of Islam where *forgiveness* found its right use and occasion, when the "Lord on high with ten thousand saints" reached the gates of the "Ancient House" in the person of Muhammad. The old writings were fulfilled, and the one who had fled from Makka persecuted and tortured came back victorious. The enemies of the Prophet in Makka had

subjected him and his followers for thirteen years to a long course of trials and hardships which surpassed in intensity and quantity the hardest trials in others' lives. His enemies fell and found themselves at the absolute mercy of their persecuted victim. They deserved every imaginable punishment to be devised by human ingenuity, and to bring them to it was simply to meet the ends of justice and equity. Muhammad would have been quite justified if he had punished them as severely as Joshua, Ramchandra, and Krishna did when victorious over their enemies ; but the great Divine moral attribute would have remained in abeyance for ever. God raised various prophets from time to time, and His various characters were revealed in them. Muhammad was the last of the race, and all those Divine moral attributes which were still undeveloped in man found their proper epiphany in him. Forgiveness, being one of them, had its own occasion as well as its use. It found no occasion in the lifetime of Jesus, and if others

had it, they did not utilize it. But Muhammad had the rare occasion and did not fail to use it. His enemies, when utterly fallen, entreated him to treat them as a noble-minded person would do. The appeal was most opportune, and made to the right man, and was readily accepted. Thus Makka fell without a single drop of human blood being shed—an event unparalleled in history.

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## A CAPTIVE CHRISTIAN LADY AND MUHAMMAD

Muhammad was compelled to wage wars, but never a sword was drawn but as a last resort to defend human life and secure safety to it. These battles proved useful in one way: they furnished occasions for the revelation of that nobility of character in Muhammad which cannot be exhibited without them. That noble treatment which the defeated received at the hand of the Prophet worked wonders. Never a suppliant came but he

got more than he deserved or desired. After the defeat of the clan Tayy of Yemen (Arabia), a band of Christian women was brought before the Prophet among the prisoners, led by Safana, the daughter of a widely famed Christian philanthropist known as Hatim. When the Prophet came to know of her lineage, he showed her every respect. He informed her that the generosity of her father called for the tender treatment of his daughter. "God loves those that are kind to His creatures"—so said the Prophet to the lady—"and Islam aims at inculcating the higher virtues, and consequently it must recognize them wherever they exist." So saying, the Prophet released Safana. But the daughter of Hatim was worthy of her father. Emboldened by the saintly appearance and kind treatment of her liberator, her self-sacrificing spirit came to the rescue of her fellow-prisoners; she refused to accept the favour if the other prisoners of her sex were to remain state prisoners. But her selfabnegation could not go unrewarded,



especially at the hands of Muhammad, who always proved more than a match for the nobleness shown by others; and so the Christian lady had to invoke a long prayer upon the head of her noble deliverer, when she found all her companions liberated at her intercession. The whole company were given leave very soon, and they were dispatched to their town under a trustworthy escort.



## ISLAM NEVER ENFORCED THROUGH THE SWORD

The life of the Prophet is full of such events. If the sword were drawn to force others to conversion, why were the prisoners released at the end of each war and allowed to go to their home without being converted to Islam? Can any person refer to a single conversion which was secured through compulsion?

## MUHAMMAD A REAL WARRIOR

To wage war in defence of life and property was a duty, and cannot be treated

as a crusade. His amazing, untiring zeal to stamp out idolatry from his country and to enforce there other reforms roused terrible opposition against the Founder of Islam. No Arab tribe was without its idols, and to vindicate and protect the honour of their image-god every clan rose in war. This occurred when the Prophet was at Madina. Invaded on all sides by his enemies, he had every now and then to take the field or to send men to meet aggression. Sometimes victorious, sometimes defeated, every incident created an appropriate occasion for the noble Prophet to manifest different phases of his grand character. *One has simply to digest and codify them, and the world will find in them laws and rules of war more humane and appropriate than could ever be imagined by the promoters of the Hague Conference (or U. N. O.—Editors).* Besides, laws coming from one believed to be a Messenger of God can command respect and obedience which can never be claimed by man-made laws. That we do stand in need of some laws with

religious authority about them that should regulate war in case it should occur, cannot be denied in the face of what we bitterly experience every day in the present war. Could the convention at Geneva and the conference of The Hague secure any respect for their ordinances even from their very promulgators in their belligerent capacity? The laws were humane in their treatment of war prisoners. They protected the civil population of the enemy. But when the mad dogs of the war were unchained, all such ordinances were shelved into oblivion. The German could not have done what Cardinal Mercier styles as slave-raids had Germany taken her ethics from the founder of her religion, who could have waged wars like Muhammad and dealt with the war captives as well as civil population of the enemy. The German General Staff must have before them directions like the following, which Caliph Abu-Bakr, the successor of Muhammad, gave to the Muslims when they left Madina for the conquest of Syria.

## MUSLIM ETHICS OF WAR

“ When you meet your enemies in the fight, comport yourselves as befits good Muslims, and remember to prove yourselves the true descendants of Ishmael. In the order and disposition of the host, and in all battles, be careful to follow your banners boldly, and be ever obedient to your leaders. Never yield to, or turn your backs on, your enemies ; it is for the cause of good that you fight. You are incited by no less noble a desire than His glory ; therefore, fear not to enter into the fight nor let the numbers of your foes alarm you even though excessive. If God should give you the victory, *don't abuse your advantages, and beware how you stain your swords in the blood of him who yields ; neither touch ye the children, the women, nor the infirm, old men whom ye may find among your enemies. In your progress through the enemy's land cut down no palms, or other fruit trees ; destroy not the products of the earth ; ravage no fields ; burn no dwellings ; from the stores of your enemies take only what you need for your wants.* Let no destruction be made without necessity, but occupy the city of the enemy ; and if there be any that may serve as an asylum to your adversaries, them do you destroy. Treat the prisoners and him who renders himself to your mercy with pity, as God shall do to you in your need ; but trample down the proud and rebellious, nor

fail to crush all who have broken the conditions imposed on them. Let there be no perfidy nor falsehood in your treaties with your enemies; be faithful in all things, proving yourself ever upright and noble, and maintaining your word and promise truly. *Do not disturb the quiet of the monk or hermit and destroy not their abodes, but inflict the rigour of death upon all who shall refuse the conditions you may impose upon them.*"

The italics are ours. That the injunctions have always been carried to the letter is an admitted fact. Read the above and think what a world of devastation and vandalism we find in Europe to the contrary! Is not Islam the proverbial enemy of idolatry and the notorious killer of all sorts of polytheistic tendencies? Yet thousands of temples, pagodas, and shrines consecrated to gods, goddesses, and demi-gods, teeming with valuable golden and marble images and idols, have survived the most successful Muslim invasion and rule in India. Could you show a single instance in the whole Muslim history where the house of God, no matter belonging to whatever denomination or creed, met the

fate which the Rhiems Cathedral and a house of God in Louvain has seen in these days? The reason is not difficult to find out. Man-made laws cannot command everlasting respect; treaties are made to serve the time, and they are more honoured in the breach than in their observance, if they are not convenient. But when an ordinance receives religious authority about it, or comes from a founder of a religion, its violation excites public censure. It is not a breach of a word of honour, but a sin, a sacrilege, and a blasphemy, and a student of psychology can easily comprehend the difference between the binding force of the two. "Tariq, the first invader of Spain, commanded that no offence should be offered to the peaceable and unarmed inhabitants; that only those who bore arms should be attacked; and that plunder should be confined to the field of battle and to towns carried by assault." Even in these degenerate days of modern civilization, the followers of Muhammad could follow their Master.

A SPLENDID ILLUSTRATION OF MUSLIM  
WAR-ETHICS IN ADRIANOPE

It was in the siege of Adrianople by the Bulgars in the Balkan War, when the besieged fell short of provisions. Under the Muslim martial laws every resident of the citadel was compelled to part with the extra provisions he had in store for the benefit of the rest. Muslim and non-Muslim had to do the same. But when the news reached the ears of the Shaikhul-Islam (the Muslim High Priest) he admonished Shukri Pasha, the famous defender of Adrianople, to annul the order in case of the non-Muslim portion of the population, as it was against the war-ethics pronounced by the Warrior Prophet. The mandate, though entailing great privation to the Muslims in Adrianople, was implicitly obeyed, as it had a most sanctified authority of religion at its back.

JESUS PREACHED AND ANTICIPATED  
WAR

That war was the permanent curse or necessary asset to humanity, take it as you may, was not unknown even to Jesus. "Think not that I came to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword." How prophetic Jesus was when he said: "I am come to send fire on the earth." His followers did what he himself could not do, and fire in its different forms in the hands of the Christians became a scourge to humanity. No doubt Jesus in some other mood also said: "Love your enemies and do good to them that hate you," and all the Church ingenuity and eloquence has been a simple waste in her efforts to reconcile the above two expressions of his mind. Had Jesus been given a chance to appear as warrior, though he anticipated so, as appears from his record, we could have read his mind through his actions, as in the case of Muhammad. If war is a legacy of man, and



he has to make resort to it now and then, a teacher coming from God to act as a model for our guidance cannot claim perfection unless he himself has waged war, and through his example shown us the occasion, the use, and the ethics of war. We do not only read the following in the Qur-án and his sayings, better than which one cannot imagine as laws of war, but we find an eloquent commentary on them in the actions of the Holy Prophet :

*“ A <sup>1</sup> sanction is given forth to those who, because they have suffered outrages, have taken up arms ; and verily God is well able to succour them. Those who have been driven forth from their homes wrongfully, only because they say ‘ Our Lord is God.’ And if God had not repelled some men by others, cloisters and churches and oratories and mosques, wherein the name of God is ever commemorated, would surely have been destroyed (22 : 39). And fight in the way of Allah with those who fight with you, and do not exceed the*

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1 This verse is the earliest revelation regarding the permission to fight and wage war.—ED.

*limits. Surely Allah does not love those who exceed the limits. And kill them<sup>1</sup> wherever you find them and drive them out from whence they drove you, and persecution is severer than slaughter; and do not fight with them at the Sacred Mosque until they fight with you in it, then slay them; such is the recompense of the unbelievers. But if they desist, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. And fight with them until there is no persecution, and religion should be only for Allah. But if they desist, then there should be no hostility except against the oppressor” (2:190—193).*

“From the above it may be concluded that fighting was permitted as a measure of self-defence and to put a stop to religious

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1 “To kill the enemy wherever one finds him is nothing strange when a state of war exists, and yet the critics of Islam draw the most grotesque conclusions from these simple words. The verse, read together with the first, runs thus: ‘*And fight with those who are fighting with you and kill them wherever you find them.*’ Do the civilized nations fight with each other to spare their enemies?”—MUHAMMAD ALI, *The Translation of the Qur-an.*

persecution. The enemy had first taken up arms with the object of extirpating Islam, and to repel them resort to arms was made. Hence the first restriction to which the fighting is made subject is that the Muslims should fight only against those "who are fighting with you." This restriction further shows that women, children, and old men who could not take up arms were not to be molested. A similar exception was also made in favour of monks and hermits and the civil population."<sup>1</sup> Whenever an expedition was sent against an enemy the Prophet used to say: "*March in the name of God and by His aid, and by the religion of the Prophet. Do not kill an old man, who is not able to fight nor young children nor women.*" Again, the Prophet said to his General Khalid: "*Do not kill any woman, do not kill any labourer.*" The second restriction is that the Muslims should not exceed the limits of the necessity of war. Fighting for the propagation of the faith is

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<sup>1</sup> Maulvi Muhammad Ali: *The Translation of the Qur-an.*

not once mentioned in the whole of the Qur-án, and it should be noted that it is this *defensive fighting* which is called *fighting in the way of Allah*. To establish religious freedom, no matter in respect of what creed or persuasion, "cloisters and churches, oratories and mosques," all have equal claim on Muslim arms for defence. The excuses for which wars are undertaken in civilized countries had long existed in the days of the Prophet, but the Muslims were not allowed to fight until the very existence of Islam was in danger.

If war is as old as man, and sacred and lay history are full of belligerent events, we need some ethics of war to regulate our doings when hostilities are resumed. A warrior-prophet is needed, who by his presence on the battlefields, by his actions and sayings in military exploits, by his precepts and examples under contingencies of war, has left us lessons and directions to follow; and that was Muhammad.

## MUHAMMAD AS A SOLDIER

Those were the days of bravery and dauntless martial spirit, especially in Arabia, when the Holy Prophet made his appearance. Even the female section of the Arabs were so dauntless as to accompany their husbands when they went to war. To speak of bravery and courage in these belligerent days of ours is to relate stories of bygone ages. The undaunted spirit of gallantry and intrepidity is not much in requisition when the two combatants have to stand against each other at a distance of many miles apart and cannons have to decide the events of war. It is not your courageous spirit, but your purse, which brings you victory. But the days of the Prophet were different. Prowess and valour were all in all for that nation of wild and warlike people. It was to humanize them, and through them the whole world, and not to circumscribe their bravery and martial spirit, that the Prophet was raised in Arabia. His mission was to regulate, and

not to thwart, nature and its gifts.

The Prophet of Islam was quite up to the high ideals of his time ; he evinced a manly spirit, braving all dangers for himself and always occupying the most conspicuous position in the first and foremost ranks of his forces. On one occasion, in the battle of Hunain, when the Muslim army could not stand their ground and began to retreat, the undaunted courage and self-confidence of Muhammad changed the whole scene. Single-handed the Prophet spurred his mule right towards the host of the enemy with the following words on his lips : " I am the Prophet, and there is no untruth in it ; I am the grandson of Muttalib. " This gave fresh courage to the Muslims, who recovered themselves ; and this changed the events of the war.

Can a man of selfish motives ever dare perform such tasks ? Such a wonderful demonstration of indomitable and intrepid courage on the part of the Divine claimant

to which the veterans of the Arab clans stood eye-witness, and which was attended with brilliant success, not only broke the martial power of the Arabs, but conquered their hearts.

Europe is in arms. Is she to be guided at this juncture by the Holy Prophet or by the Blessed Son of Mary?

A brave soldier, a dauntless veteran, and yet so meek, so loving and so kind in his dealing, not only in his family circle but with every one coming in contact with him. Study any phase of his life, domestic, private or public, and you are sure to be impressed with the highest type of tenderness.

## THE TENDERNESS OF THE PROPHET

By S. H. LEEDER, Author of "The Desert Gateway," "Veiled Mysteries of Egypt," etc.

I like to dwell on the traits of tenderness in the character of Muhammad, the great Prophet of Islam, chiefly because that phase

of him has been lost sight of, if indeed it was ever known, in the West. Much is heard of the Sword of Islam; the heroic side of this great life has received something like justice from one great historian, Gibbon, and has inspired the rhapsodies of Carlyle. These writers did great service to the cause of Truth by giving pause to the flood of abuse, till then unchecked, by which Christian writers thought to serve their cause against a power they had been taught to hate.

During recent years there have arisen serious misgivings in the minds of intelligent Western writers as to how far and how grossly the world has been misled on the subject of the fanaticism of Islam, the formalism of its worship, and the alleged sensualism of its teaching; though little impression has, I fear, been made on the mass of ignorance and the prejudice still prevailing.

But who of Christian writers has paused to contemplate the abundant evidence there is of the fact that the Prophet was a man of



tenderness of heart, gentle with the weak and suffering, compassionate and very pitiful to the poor, a man recognized by all children as a playmate over whom they ruled with no sign of fear. It is said of his grandchildren, the world-respected martyrs Hasan and Husain, that they climbed all over him and pulled his beard to tease him, with never a reproof. He told them amusing stories ; he was often seen lying on the floor with the infants on and about him, while he played in their games with their toys. He stopped children in the streets with affectionate word and gesture. The taciturnity which marked his intercourse with grown-up people ever gave way to his gentle affection for the young. There is a beautiful description of him going to the smoky hut of a woman, a blacksmith's wife, who had charge of a dying child. He nursed the little invalid for many hours, and in the end it died upon his breast.

It is strange to reflect that this tenderness of Muhammad led him to that arrangement

of his household which has brought upon his memory the cruellest libel of which Western judgment is guilty. During all the early years of his married life he lived alone with Khadijah, as true and devoted a helpmate as man has ever known—a more perfect union is not recorded of any man of genius. When he was depressed about his spiritual state Khadijah constantly said to him, “Thou art of a good life.” When he was getting on in years, and was widowed, it was tender compassion that led him to throw “the cloak of marriage” over certain poor women, saving them—one from a return to idolatry, others from poverty and neglect. In the case of Zainab (who was hopelessly ill at the time and died soon after) the marriage was to set right a point of law. I know of cases in the East to-day where his followers have given a like protection to poor women, with no thought of any gratification of self. It would be as just to vilify the character of our own Samuel Johnson because of the poor female

souls he harboured out of the kindness of his rugged but tender old heart, as to speak of sensualism in such a connection.

All the people of the Islamic East are kind to the blind ; question them, and at once they tell you that one of the first lessons from the Prophet's life was his consideration for those who had lost their sight. Muhammad suffered remorse for many years because he once frowned at the importunity of a blind man.

To his inferiors the Prophet was ever indulgent. He once had an awkward little page, but he would not allow him to be scolded. A servant, Anas, declared : " Ten years was I about the Prophet, and he never said as much as 'uff' to me." He regularly visited the sick, and he taught his followers by his own example that beautiful Eastern custom of turning to follow any bier he might meet, and even to help carry it, if only for a few yards, as a sign of sympathy. I once saw a pitiful little procession going to the burial

of a babe, which the father carried in his arms. Several men at different points stopped the man and, with tears in their eyes, silently held out their arms to relieve him of his sad burden for a short distance. All they could say to me in explanation was, "The Prophet, on whom be blessings and peace, he would have done it!" He never first withdrew his hand out of another's palm, and turned not before the other had turned. If a slave invited him to a meal, he would accept with a gentle grace.

In numbers of villages scattered all over the Eastern world you will find a bench, often protected from rain and sun, by the side of the mosque door. Here poor wayfarers gather as a sign that they are in need, and as men visit the mosque they invite "the sitters on the bench," as they are called, to eat with them that day, or, failing that, they give them alms to pay for food. This good custom, like most others, is founded on the tradition that tells of the Prophet's tenderness for the poor.

When he went in to his meals he nearly always called some such folk to join him.

What I have written does but indicate—and that only partially—one side of this great character. It may well serve to show why all men who had intimate dealings with the Prophet venerated and loved him. Some day, perhaps, when a love of truth shines clear enough to dispel the prejudice of the ages, Western writers will carry the study of the life of Muhammad past the point where they now allow his name to stand as a great figure in history, and will give him his just place in the golden book of humanity.

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## MUHAMMAD AS A HUSBAND

In the religious history of the world there is no person who has done so much to elevate the position of the fair sex as Muhammad. He gave them rights when they had none. He taught man to respect woman, which never was man taught before. He made the

woman sex almost sacred. Woman was always a weaker sex. In uncivilized countries, and even in civilized countries then—*i e.* over thirteen hundred years ago—she was by herself absolutely helpless. She could not live without a protector—a man—a father, a brother, or a husband. She was ill-treated by all. Muhammad protected her from all. He saved her from being buried alive as a daughter—little innocent child. He gave her rights of inheritance even as a sister. He protected her rights when she was a wife from being usurped by her husband. Muhammad never preached what he himself did not practise. He was a model father; he was a model husband. His first wife was his senior by fifteen years; she was forty while Muhammad himself was only twenty-five. A woman of forty in the East is considered very old, but Muhammad remained fondly devoted to his wife until her very death, which took place twenty-seven years after their marriage; and that devotion is truly represented in the words of Prof. T. W. Arnold, “one of the

most beautiful pictures of a perfect wedded life that history gives us." When the call came to Muhammad from above, he came as a faithful husband direct to Khadijah and sought her advice. Khadijah—his close companion who knew him as nobody else knew him—from whom Muhammad could not conceal anything even if he had desired to do so, gave him a certificate in these words: "Joyful tidings do you bring. By Him in Whose hand is the soul of Khadijah, I will henceforth regard you as the Prophet. Allah will not suffer you to be dejected. Have you not been loving to your kinsfolk, kind to your neighbours, charitable to the poor, hospitable to the stranger, faithful to your word, and ever a defender of truth?"

Well did Muhammad deserve this certificate from the hands of his wife. He was true to his wife all his life, and even when she was dead he never forgot her. Her memory was ever green to him. He cherished even those people who were liked or who

associated with Khadijah. Once after the death of Khadijah a woman came to his wife Ayesha. Muhammad saw her and showed her uncommonly great respect. When she was gone Ayesha asked Muhammad the reason for showing that particular respect to that woman. Muhammad said, "I showed her so much respect because she used to come to Khadijah."

When Khadijah died, Muhammad's most faithful friend Abu-Bakr asked him to marry his little daughter Ayesha; and Muhammad, out of regard to his friend and companion who had borne with him many a hardship, could not refuse: so young and beautiful Ayesha was first betrothed and then married to the Prophet. Yet he never forgot his late wife Khadijah, and always used to remember her with affectionate memory. One day, as he was thus cherishing the memory, like a devoted husband, of his deceased wife, the new wife, young and pretty as she was, felt a little jealous and said to



Muhammad, "Was she not old, and has not Allah given you a better one in her place?" "No," replied Muhammad, "there never can be a better! She believed in me when others ridiculed me, she helped me when I was persecuted by the world." (Abulfeda).

Khadijah has been placed in the ranks of the four perfect women—(1) The sister of Moses, (2) The mother of Jesus, (3) Khadijah, and (4) Fatimah, the beloved daughter of the Prophet.

As a husband Muhammad was fond of Ayesha as well. Al-Ghazzali writes: "The Prophet himself, when he found the weight of his revelations press too heavily upon him, touched his wife Ayesha and said, 'Speak to me, O Ayesha, speak to me!' This he did, so that from that familiar human touch he might receive comfort and strength." Muhammad used to take part in his wife's recreations and amusements, and did not check them. On one occasion he ran races with Ayesha to humour her, and on another

he held her up in his arms that she might look at some performing negroes.

Muhammad taught others, by preaching as well as by example, to be good husbands. When his freed bondman Zaid, whom he treated very affectionately like a son to raise the status of slaves in society and to whom he got one of his own distant relatives married, wanted to divorce his wife, the Prophet made several efforts to reconcile the two; and ultimately, when his attempts failed and he found that he could not leave Zainab alone to be looked down on in society after having got her married to a person who was once a slave, he married her himself and treated her with husbandly devotion, thus re-establishing her social position and impressing upon Zaid how wrong it was of him not to put up with his wife—a lady who was fit to become the wife of the Prophet. Muhammad's sayings giving us some idea of what sort of husband he was are as follows :

“To give one's wife the money she

requires is more important than to give alms."

"He who deserts his wife and children is like a runaway slave ; till he returns to them none of his fasts or prayers will be accepted by Allah."

"He who bears the ill-humour of his wife patiently will earn as much merit as Job did by the patient endurance of his trials."

"When husband and wife eat together Allah sends His blessings upon them, and the angels pray for them."

On his death-bed also the Prophet was heard to say, "Continue in prayer and treat your wives well, for they are dependent upon you."

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## THE PROPHET'S GRATITUDE

BY MARMADUKE PICKTHALL

A VERY learned English Orientalist has confessed that, from his lifelong study of the

early history of Islam, he has derived so great a personal admiration and affection for the character of the Prophet that he is not quite certain whether his view of the religion can be called unbiased, seeing that he has this strong affection for its founder. Others besides the learned man in question have the same experience, and it is a pity that so few have made the same confession, which is needed to dispel those calumnies, born of the ignorant fanaticism of a darker age, which still pass current with some people for religious truth. This love and admiration which results in candid minds from a close study of the Prophet's life and sayings, is the more remarkable, because during the later years of his mission the character and conduct of the man Muhammad were subjected to the fiercest light of public criticism—the light that beats upon a throne. Unlike all other prophets, whose proper likeness is concealed from us in mists of reverence, Muhammad is a clear historical character, the minutest

details of whose conduct and demeanour are recorded for us by his own contemporaries. It is indeed wonderful how little his detractors find to use against him in this mass of evidence. That he once, for a moment, wavered in his sacred purpose, making a concession to the idolaters, which he revoked almost immediately; that he said an angel spoke to him continually (which, seeing he was not a Christian, proves him an impostor!); that he was ignorant of certain facts of modern science, and spoke the language of his people and his age: that is really all that it amounts to in the way of adverse criticism.

If, for argument's sake, any charge against him were ever established, what would that prove? Merely that the Prophet (whom God bless) was human like the rest of us. He never claimed to be otherwise. It is a common and an ancient error of the Christians to imagine that Muslims worship Muhammad or ascribe to him a mystical divinity like that which the Churches have

ascribed to Jesus Christ. And on that ground they dismiss the most honest of men as an impostor. He would have been one had he pretended he was God. But he did not. It was, indeed, the error against which he most vehemently inveighed, regarding it as an affront to the eternal Majesty, an anthropomorphic invention of the minds of men. Muhammad is "the messenger *and servant* of God:" "the first of believers," the leader in the way of salvation, setting the example in obedience to the law which was revealed through him, one of the humblest worshippers of all those millions who obeyed and still obey that law.

When Ibrahim, the son of his old age, died at the age of eighteen months, on the same day there was an eclipse of the sun, and the people said :

"It is eclipsed because of the death of Ibrahim."

The Prophet said : "The sun and the moon are two signs of the signs of God.

They are not eclipsed on account of the death or life of any one."

Are these the words of an impostor? The symptoms of imposture are well known, and they are altogether absent from the records of the Prophet's life.

Some hostile writers have declared that visions of the kind he saw denote a sickness of the brain. Well, those who see visions owing to a sickness of the brain, and continue in that state, become ecstatic or insane. Muhammad, on the contrary, was as sane and practical in the last days of his life as he had been when he first received his mission; the burden of his teaching, the burden of his message was the same; his simplicity of life, his piety, remained unaltered. And this becomes the more noteworthy when we consider that in the last years of his life he was a mighty potentate, whose will was law, well able, if he wished, to gratify his every whim. To the last he was a pious Muslim, simple in his habits, regular in prayer, vigorous and far-seeing in affairs of state,

gentle and forgiving in his private intercourse with men, a loyal friend, a noble enemy, faithful in all things that he undertook. His followers were bound to him by the ties of love, not fear.

“Ten years,” said Anas, his servant, “was I about the Prophet, and he never said so much as ‘Uff’ to me.”

He forgave the woman who prepared for him a poisoned meal, giving him thereby a painful illness which eventually caused his death. He forgave the ghoulish and ferocious Hind, the wife of Abu Sufian, who devoured the liver of his uncle Hamzah on the field of Uhud ; he forgave men and women who had maligned or betrayed him. Only for the welfare of the Muslim commonwealth was he severe in punishment—never on his personal account. Muhammad was full of virtues. But what has charmed me most among the virtues of Muhammad is his gratitude—a very rare ingredient in the constitution of great men.



In his youth, as everybody knows, he was not financially well off until he married Khadijah, a wealthy widow some fifteen years older than himself. For twenty-seven years, until she died, this lady was his only wife and his elect companion.

“The messenger of God (God bless him) loved her (Khadijah) with a strong devotion. Before their marriage he used to travel to Bosrah on her business with her slave Maysarah. Afterwards he spent her month in the cause of God. And he continued to remember her with deep affection after her decease, till Ayesah”—a young girl, the daughter of his best friend, Abu-Bakr, whom the Prophet married on the death of Khadijah—“grew jealous. And she said: ‘O messenger of God, what was she but an old woman? God has given thee a better in her stead.’ He answered: ‘No, by Allah! He has not given me a better in her stead. She believed in me when men denied my mission; she gave me all her wealth to spend

when men restrained me; so kind and generous was she to me.' Ayesah said: 'I will never speak of her again save with respect.' "

And again :--

"Abu Hurayrah relates: Gabriel came to the Prophet (may God bless him), saying: O messenger of God, this Khadijah presented to thee as it were a vessel full of food and drink; for what she gave to thee announce to her Peace from her Lord and inform her that a house of silver is prepared for her in that garden where toil and trouble are not."

Do not these traditions breathe true warmth of love and gratitude? I commend them to all those who still imagine that the Prophet of Islam degraded women and despised them, or regarded them as soulless. Why, he described his daughter Fatimah upon her wedding morn as "accompanied by troops of angels on the right hand and the left"—a lovely image of triumphant girlhood, but hardly that which would apply to an

inferior creature, one without a soul. But I digress.

There is another fine expression of the Prophet's gratitude, which I can never read without a thrill.

The Ansar, the Muslims of Madinah, had received the Prophet gladly on his flight from Makka, giving him not only a refuge but also a kingdom, and welcoming the Muhajerin (the other fugitive believers) in their homes as brethren. There remained in Makka only the idolaters, who waged relentless war upon the Muslims for some years. Then Makka fell, and some of these relentless enemies embraced Islam through fear, and hypocritically. Soon after the conquest of Makka, on one occasion the *Ansar* thought that more favour had been shown to Makkans, and grumbled. When the Prophet heard of their complaints he ordered them to assemble before him, and said :

“O Ansar, I have learnt what you say

one to another. When I came among you, you were wandering in darkness, and the Lord guided you aright ; you were suffering, and He made you happy ; there was enmity among yourselves, and He has filled your hearts with brotherly love and peace. Was it not so ? Tell me !”

The men, with hanging heads, ashamed, replied : “ In truth it is as thou sayest ; to the Lord and His Apostle belong mercy and benevolence.”

As quick as lightning came the Prophet’s cry—

“ No, by the Lord ! You might have answered, and answered truly, for I myself would have borne witness to its truth, thus : Thou, camest to us rejected, and we believed in thee ; thou camest as a helpless fugitive, and we assisted thee ; poor and an outcast, and we gave thee an asylum ; comfortless, and we consoled thee !’ O Ansar, why disturb your hearts about the things of this life ? Are you not content that others should

obtain the flocks and camels while you go back to your homes with me in your midst? By Him who holds my life in His hands, I will never forsake you. If all mankind went one way, and the Ansar went another, I would join the Ansar. The Lord be favourable unto them and bless them, and their children, and their children's children."

That is the royal charter of Madina, endearing it above all other cities to the Muslim's heart. How could they fail to love a man who spoke like that?

## Muhammad As Social Reformer

By J. PARKINSON

THE average European, when he reads the heading of this article, will probably shrug his shoulders and smile with self-satisfaction, thinking that between the man Muhammad and the term Socialist there is no connecting link. Yet the social, let me say Socialist, reforms taught by the Prophet and introduced by him in his legislation permeate the entire

body politic of Islam. While the universal spirit of expansion inherited by the race may have carried the Muslim to the Pyrenese in the West and the Indus and Oxus in the East in martial splendour and conquering zeal, it was the Socialist essence and energy of Islamic legislation that built up and maintained the mighty fabric of Saracenic civilization, and made it supreme over all existing and pre-existing empires, making Granada the Queen City of the West, Bagdad the Pride of the East, Damascus the Pearl of the Desert, and Cordova the greatest Glory of the World. To elevate a people, to raise them socially and mentally and in economics and politics, to make them true students of science and art and literature, you must first elevate them morally, giving them an appreciation of morals before the other modes of thought are set in motion. So the earliest social reforms of the Prophet were moral reforms. In fact, his whole teaching is particularly moral, strong, ethically and spiritually—the foundation on which all legislation

ought to be built.

The State is a mass of individuals, and to raise the State to the highest point of development sought for, you must raise the individual. Spiritual progress lies at the root of all material progress. They both react the one on the other ; sometimes one may be ahead, sometimes the other. But progress spiritually is the mainspring of the total machinery of the State, and is the real measuring-rod of progress and civilization.

So the Prophet introduced the grand ideal of Islamic Brotherhood, binding Muslim to Muslim and State to State. It may be said that Jesus also, and others as well, taught disciples an ideal of brotherhood. Yes, *disciples*. Muhammad was wider and nobler than disciples, and in his sweep embraced not only Muslims but all humanity. One God, one people ; the Creator—His creation.

“ Whether a Believer, a Jew, a Christian, or a Sabeen, he who believes in God, the Last Day, and *acts aright*, his reward is with

his God, he should neither fear nor be grieved.”

His ideal was a brotherhood of the whole of humanity, binding man to man and nation to nation. The doctrine that each man will be judged by *his works* was a decided advance on the early doctrines that the gods could be propitiated by sacrifice or by mere belief in the efficacy of a sacrifice, either animal, human, or divine. His salvation depended on his labours, on his acts and thoughts.

### THE EXPANSIVENESS OF ISLAM

and its attitude towards other creeds was a note in the history of religion, save, perhaps, in the case of the Buddha, who went a good length towards such a goal. It heralded liberty of conscience for all. “Let there be no violence in religion.”

“IT IS YOURS ONLY TO PREACH.”

Brought in toleration of the opinions of others, and complete freedom of worship according to the person's inclinations or



beliefs. So far as the Muslim was concerned it put an end for ever to the doctrine that there was one standard of morals for the individual and another standard for the nation or the State. The State would henceforth be judged by the same measuring-rod that judged the acts of the individual. A State could not make progress—would, indeed, be subject to disintegration—unless internally, as between each person, justice was impartially administered. It is to the credit of the Prophet of Islam that he provided a system by which injustice might be detected and judged, whether perpetrated by rich or poor, high or low.

#### WOMAN.

Woman was elevated to a status she had never enjoyed previously, either in the East or the West. Her rights were safeguarded by the law, and her husband had no claim on the fruits of her labour or on her property, while as wife she held certain legal claims on her husband he could not repudiate and none

might take from her. Slavery was not abolished ; but the social position of the slave was so entirely changed that he became practically one of the family. The laws governing his condition were so framed that had the Muslims themselves acted up to them slavery would have been a thing of the past in the lands of Islam centuries ago. I may say here that a man can only be made a slave by a Muslim when he is taken prisoner in war, and not even then if he can pay a ransom, or if the nation to which he belongs can pay an indemnity. Another valuable social reformation was the abolishing of all forms of gambling, one of the curses of present-day Christendom, another the total prohibition of strong drink, the most degrading and destructive habit of the West ; evils that for generations have been enervating and debauching the manhood and womanhood of Europe. No religion save Islam has ever attempted their abolition. Two aspects of the Prophet's teaching ought to appeal to every

modern Socialist. The first his forbidding

### USURY.

The hoarding up of money so as to lay it out at interest and live on it without labour was interdicted. Every Muslim must work for his own sustenance. Such a law made for the more equal distribution of wealth. It saved the many from becoming paupers and the few millionaires. The Khalifa Umar so far recognized this teaching of his master that he refused to keep a surplus in the State Treasury, and distributed what was over every Friday to the people according to their needs. The second aspect: The Prophet forbade "cornering," the creation of a monopoly in any of the food-stuffs of the people by which prices might be raised and the poorer portion suffer. The introduction of some of the laws of Islam in the British Isles at the present time would relieve the cares of many a housewife.

### THE POLITICAL ASPECT OF ISLAM

Never seems to have been clearly grasped

by the great mass of Europeans. Politically Islam is a Brotherhood, and therefore a Democracy. The meanest subject of a Muslim State has the same right to be heard on a question affecting the State or the religion as the ruler of the State himself.

### UNDER ISLAM ALL ARE EQUAL

The Prophet left no hard-and-fast rule as to the title of the supreme head of a Muslim State, or as to whether that head was to be one man or a body of men. That point was in the hands of the people themselves : the *ijma* or agreement of the Muslims. They could appoint a King, a Sultan, a President, or a Council. But no matter which was appointed, the governor or governing body was only there to see that the laws formulated by the Prophet were carried out, and that any fresh laws of detail in State management introduced were in conformity with the general principles enunciated by the great lawgiver. It was the duty of the head to

safeguard the interests of the State internally and externally according to the law of Islam. The head of a Muslim State is merely administrative and executive. No Khalifa or Governor was at liberty to act contrary to the decision of a court of justice. Tribunals of justice were independent; and rich and poor alike, Sultan and servant were tried equally by the Qadzi (chief judge), a pauper on application to the judge having the power to call the King to account. Even in England until lately the landowning (county) families looked on labour as demeaning; the idea still remains, but has become less noticeable, disappearing gradually before the sheer economic, political, and social pressure of capitalism. On the other hand,

#### MUHAMMAD ENNOBLED LABOUR

and raised it to the highest standing. He was a worker himself; so were his earliest and most enthusiastic converts. Land in Muslim countries has always been the most important asset from which revenue was obtainable. All

land was the property of the State, and was only leased out to individuals at an unsettled tax. The tax varied according to the conditions, the ideal being never to overtax so as to pauperize, or make life a burden. If the law was carried out no great landowning or capitalist class could arise. The division of a person's estate after death was fixed by law; all relations within a certain degree were provided for, so there could be no vast accumulation of land or capital in one person or the elder branch of a family. The old and the infirm were the care of the State, and the State was bound to provide for them. "Old age pensions" are centuries old in Islam.

In the face of these facts, on the question of what attitude the Prophet is likely to have taken up in regard to the social problems of the present, we need not speculate. If the doctrines he taught had been obeyed by all, there would not have arisen a war of classes, no pauperization would have been possible, no deadweight of capitalism would have

arisen to crush the whole social fabric, no monopoly could have been created. Such was the far-seeing, far-reaching legislation of that one man who set Arabia on fire with the light of his genius and the energy of his divine inspiration.

## MUHAMMAD AND LEARNING

BY PROFESSOR N. STEPHEN

“Seek Knowledge, from the cradle to the grave.”  
—MUHAMMAD.

I AM not much of a hero-worshipper, for I have always thought more of a man's work and teaching than his personality: which is always the least permanent part of him, and must quickly pass away and be forgotten, or, after a time, be idealized by his admirers and traduced by his enemies, till the picture left is at best a doubtful copy of the original.

But a man's work, his words and teaching, live after him, and, if he be a man of mark, stand as his mark on history and posterity, to influence for good or evil many

thousands of his fellow-men. Such a man undoubtedly was Muhammad—a great man, and intellectually a strong man, whose example and influence brought about reforms which, in the circumstance surrounding him, were little less than miraculous.

He was not perhaps a learned man, but I think a man with more knowledge and greater refinement than is usually ascribed to him. I am led to this conclusion by the fact that—

“The tribe of Banú Quraish, and especially that branch of it called the Banú Sa‘d, among whom the Prophet spent his childhood, were renowned throughout Arabia for the purity and eloquence of their language.”<sup>1</sup>

And Sir William Muir (not a very friendly biographer) says: “His speech was formed upon one of the purest models of the beautiful language of the peninsula.”

<sup>1</sup> “The Birth and Childhood of Muhammad,” by Syed Ahmad Khan Bahadur. Trubners, London, 1870.



Such environment could not fail to make him a man of some refinement and good taste; and no doubt it was this which enabled him to attract to himself men much more learned than he.

Another evidence of his love of "Light and Learning" (or shall I say of knowledge?—for with all respect to those more learned on this point, I think knowledge would often convey a truer conception of his meaning than learning does) is to be found in his desire at all times to get to the cause of things for himself, and his habit of retiring to think over things and questions in solitude, remaining there until satisfied that by reason, or, as he sometimes said, by inspiration, he had arrived at a solution of his problem.

I am not going to dwell on his life history, being well aware that at this late date, and with so many biographies all more or less contradictory, it is difficult to arrive at anything like exact knowledge. So leaving that point to better informed and more able

writers, I shall content myself with some of his most authentic sayings on which to hang a few conclusions, believing that a man's sayings are in the main a fair index to his mind. He says—

“The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr.”<sup>1</sup>

Here is evidence of his fearless and open speech : for this certainly was a bold thing to say, considering that at the time, and for some centuries after, most religious bodies, heathen and Christian, kept all learning jealously under guard ; making it the prerogative of the priestly or ruling class, and even making penal laws to prevent the teaching of the common (!) people, and committing to prison all who made blasphemous (so-called) remarks as to martyrs ; and beyond this, in their dread of learning, consigned to the flames the priceless libraries collected by past generations, inflicting on the world a

<sup>1</sup> All quotations, unless otherwise stated, are from Muhammad. — N. S.

loss so great as to be inconceivable, an injury which can never be compensated, an act of vandalism which will for ever be a black page in history, a disgrace and dishonour to the people and still more to the Church which approved such an act.

Compare this attempt to keep the masses in ignorance with the teaching of Muhammad, who says :

“The acquisition of knowledge is **A DUTY** incumbent on every Muslim, *male and female.*”<sup>1</sup>

Surely a great saying and an honour to himself and his faith, and equally great as a contrast to the methods of his opponents.

Incidentally note in passing this sidelight on his attitude to women : it is the duty of male and female alike. What an answer to those who say he taught that woman has neither soul nor intellect ! Mark also the broadmindedness of this view. He would

<sup>1</sup> The italics are mine.—N. S.

open the book of knowledge *to all*—male or female, rich or poor, common or select ; it was not only their right, it was *a duty* incumbent on all to learn all they could, to make the best of themselves, which they could never do while in ignorance.

I once heard it argued that Muhammad did not know how dangerous and far-reaching the results might be, and that it might just as often be a power for evil as for good. I entirely disagree with both statements. Regarding the latter, I do not believe that learning is AS OFTEN powerful for evil ; on the contrary, I am sure its tendency is always towards good, though it may be, and often is, diverted to evil.

That Muhammad fully realized how far-reaching knowledge is, is clear, for, he says:

“He dieth not, who takes to learning.,,

A man’s life on earth might, nay must, be short, but his learning lives after him, and the end of its influence none can see. That he

had not lost sight of its possible danger is equally clear from this :

“The worst of men is a bad learned man, and a good learned man is the best.”

Here he indicates the increased power of the learned man both for good and evil ; but so sure is he that the balance will always tend to good that he says:

“To listen to the words of the learned and to instil into others the lessons of science is better than religious exercises.”

Make no mistake though ; he does not say it is to take the place of religious exercises—in fact I think this saying points more at those who shut themselves up (*i.e.* monks, hermits etc.) and refuse to take their share in the battle of life.

How may we visualize the value of learning? Can you realize this? The ignorant man may **EXIST**, he never really **LIVES** ; his limitations are so great he is like

one shut up in a cell, the four walls of which form the boundary of his world ; but even a little learning may make the cell a palace, while much will make it almost a paradise.

I know it is not easy to climb the ladder, for, as Ruskin says, "It takes a great deal of time to get a little deal of time to get a little deal of learning," But let none be discouraged; there are many kinds of learning besides that in books—in fact there are many *book scholars* who know very little, and many learned men who *know little of books*. The greatest botanist I ever knew could not read, but he could give you the name and life of every herb and flower and tree within miles of his cottage, and men with many letters after their names came from long distances to consult Old John on some doubtful point. Similarly, one of the best ornithologists I ever knew had a library consisting of two volumes, seldom opened, but he knew all there was to be known of every bird in the British Isles. So if you cannot get scholarship, get knowledge—

they are not quite the same, you see ; learn nature, and more than all learn your fellow-man. No knowledge is ever wasted, if you will but use it ; therefore—

“Acquire knowledge ; it enables the possessor to distinguish right from wrong ; it lights the way to heaven ; it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when friendless ; it guides us to happiness ; it sustains us in misery ; it is an ornament among friends, and an armour against enemies.”

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[On the background of this learned discourse of the Professor, the following sayings of the Prophet will be of interest to the readers.]

Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave.

Go in the search of knowledge even into China (a very distant place).

The desire of knowledge is a divine commandment for every Muslim ; and to

instruct in knowledge those who are unworthy of it is like putting pearls, jewels, and gold on the necks of swine.

With knowledge man rises to the heights of goodness and to a noble position, associates with monarchs in this world, and attains to the perfection of happiness in the next.

Excessive knowledge is better than excessive praying . . . . It is better to teach knowledge one hour in the night than to pray the whole night.

That person who shall die while he is studying knowledge in order to revive the knowledge of religion, will be only one degree inferior to the prophet.

Whoso honoureth the learned honours me.

One learned man is harder on the devil than a thousand ignorant worshippers.

That person who shall pursue the path of knowledge, God will direct him to the path of paradise; and verily the superiority of a



learned man over an ignorant worshipper is like that of the full moon over all the stars.

Who are the learned? Those who practise what they know.

The knowledge from which no benefit is derived is like a treasure from which no charity is bestowed in the way of the Lord.

## PROPHET'S LETTERS TO HIS CONTEMPORANEOUS POTENTATES

BY MAULVI MUHAMMAD ALI, M.A., LL.B.

THAT the divine message of the Holy Prophet Muhammad was universal and not confined to any particular country or tribe, as in the case of the other Prophets of the world, including Jesus, appears from those letters which he wrote to all the rulers of the neighbouring countries. After the truce of Hudaibiah, which took place at the end of 6 A.H., messengers were sent to the royal courts of Syria, Persia, Egypt, and Abyssinia. These monarchs were invited to

give adhesion to Islam. The kings of various provinces of Arabia also received similar envoys from the Prophet. Munzar, king of Yaman, was one of them. These letters have been mentioned in the authentic books of the traditions of the Prophet. They also speak of the treatment which the messages and the messengers received in the different royal courts. Bukhari relates of the latter which Dahyah Kalbi, a companion of the Prophet, was commissioned to carry to the governor of Basrah, who sent it to Heraclius in Syria. The letter was read by the said monarch in the presence of his courtiers and the bishops of the empire when he was at Jerusalem. Heraclius at first proposed to them that they should embrace the religion of the Prophet, but when he found that the chiefs and the bishops were strongly against his proposal, he retracted his words and said that he only intended to test their belief in their ancestors' faith. Chosroes Pervez, the king of Persia, tore the letter of the Prophet in the presence of the messenger with a knife which the king

happened to have in his hand when the letter was read to him. On learning this, the Prophet prayed to God that the empire of Chosroes might be shattered. The words were prophetic, and the prayer of Muhammad could not remain without having its effect witnessed by the world. In connection with this event, the historians also relate the murder of Chosroes by his own son Sheroyah, who used the very same knife in his patricidal act. Chosroes in return sent his reply in the form of an ultimatum to the Prophet, asking him for an immediate surrender to the religion and court of Persia. The messengers reached Madinah at sunset and were presented to the Prophet, who received the message calmly, asking them to wait for reply till the break of day. Next morning, to their great surprise and discomfiture, they were told that God, on the reference of their message to Him by Muhammad, had revealed to him that Chosroes had been stabbed to death by his own son on that very night, and so it was the case, as we find in authentic accounts. But

most of the letters of the Prophet were received with great honour, and one of them, to Maqauqis, the king of Egypt, is expressly mentioned in the books of traditions as having been preserved in the royal treasury. The king placed it in an ivory casket, which he sealed and made over to his treasurer. Zurquani, the well-known commentator of the *Mawahib-i-Ludunniyyah*, gives full particulars about it. The bearer of the letter was Hatib, son of Ali Bala'at. He explained to Maqauqis the mission of the Prophet, who he said, had come to fulfil the prophecy<sup>1</sup> of Jesus as to the appearance of another Prophet, and as it was necessary for the Jews to accept Jesus when he made his appearance, though they had holy writs in their hands, so it was necessary for both the Jews and the Christians to accept the prophesied Prophet, who appeared in the person of Muhammad. Maqauqis, after reading the letter, said to Hatib, the messenger, that he did not find

<sup>1</sup> St. John xvi. 7-9.—Ed.

Muhammad enjoining aught which he should abstain from, or prohibiting aught that was desirable; that he did not consider him a magician or as one in error, nor did he find him a soothsayer or a liar but that he found in him the signs of prophethood.

It is remarkable that the letter to Maqauqis has clearly been mentioned in all the books of the traditions as having been safely preserved. It is this letter<sup>1</sup> that was discovered in the year 1858 by some French travellers at a convent in Upper Egypt, from which it was then removed to Constantinople to the Ottoman custody. It has been declared to be genuine by Dr. P. Badger. At the top of page 51 is given in the right-hand column the text of the sacred document as deciphered by D. Badger and in the left-hand column the text of the letter to Maqauqis as given in a tradition in the *Mawahib-ul-*

<sup>1</sup> The facsimile of the original was published in the January (1917) number of the *Islamic Review*.



There is hardly any difference worth the name in the two. The word *Dá'iyah* in the document now discovered stands for the word *Dud'iyah* in the tradition, while the rest of the two is the same. But both the words give the same meaning. Most probably the error lies in deciphering the document. The translation of the two is absolutely identical, which I give below:—

“In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. From Muhammad the servant of God and His Apostle to Maqauqis, the Chief of the Copts. Peace be upon him who follows true guidance. After this I invite thee to accept Islam. Become a Muslim and thou wilt be saved. God will grant thee a double reward. But if thou turn back, then on thee will be the sin of the Copts. O people of the Book ! Come to a word laid down plainly between us and you, that we will not worship aught but God, and then we will join no other god with Him, nor take each other for lords other than God. But if they turn

back, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims.”

The seal to be read from below upwards.

The discovery of this document is an unimpeachable testimony to the truth of all those traditions which tell us that the Holy Prophet wrote letters to the potentates.

The letter written to Heraclius as reported in Bukhari, seems to have been written nearly in the same wording. Its translation is as follows:—

“ In the Name of God, the most Merciful, the Compassionate. From Muhammad, the servant of God and His Apostle, to *Herqal*, the Chief of *Rúm*. Peace be upon him who follows true guidance. After this I invite thee to accept Islam. Become a Muslim and thou wilt be saved. God will grant thee a double reward. But if thou turn back, then on thee will be the sin of *Yarses* (*i.e.* thy subject). O people of the Book! Come to a word laid down plainly between us and you, that we will not worship aught but God, and that we



will join no other god with Him, nor take each other for lords other than God. But if they turn back, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims.”

The only difference between the above and the one discovered is that in the former the letter is “To Heraclius, the Chief of the Roman Empire,” while in the latter it is “To Maqauqis, the King of Egypt.” And further, while Heraclius is warned of the sins of the “*Yarses*,” *i.e.* his subjects, Maqauqis is warned that in the case of his rejection of the message, the sin of the “Copts” will be on his head. The difference arose from the necessity of addressing the letters to the rulers of two different countries. The letter addressed to Munzar, ruler of Yaman, as I am told by the Editor of *THE ISLAMIC REVIEW*, has also been preserved. The original was shown to Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din by the present head of the Ayyubi family<sup>1</sup> at Damascus, where the former

<sup>1</sup> The descendants of Salahuddin Ayyubi, the great Saladin of the Crusade fame.

went in September 1914 in search of the ancient MSS. of the Qur-án belonging to the early centuries of the Muslim era, in order to refute the baseless charge of Dr. Mingana. The Khwaja had in his possession a facsimile copy of the letter to Maqauqis, and on examination he not only found that the substance of both the letters was the same, with the only difference arising from the necessity of addressing the two letters to two different rulers, but that both the letters seemed to come from the same handwriting and in the same character. The letter to Munzar has also been mentioned in the books of our Prophet's traditions. This wonderful preservation of the exact words of the letters, which the discovery of their original in Egypt and Syria proves, shows clearly that the reporters of the said traditions generally reported, not only the subject-matter in their own words, but the very words they heard.

## ADDRESS

BY

MR. MARMADUKE PICKTHALL

ON

## THE PROPHET'S BIRTHDAY

BRETHREN,—The Prophet Muhammad is a historical character. There is no doubt but that he really existed; and the things that I am going to relate are facts of history.

Muhammad, son of Abdullah, son of Abdu'l-Muttalib, of the tribe of the Quraish, was an Arab, a native of Makka, and his parents were idolaters. His father died a few days before his birth. Though of good family he was left poor, and when he came to man's estate he found employment in the service of a wealthy widow named Khadijah. On her business he travelled into Syria, and even further, in charge of trains of camels bearing merchandise. In these journeys he no doubt fell in with Jews and Christians more enlightened than the Jews and Christians he had known at home in Makka. No doubt he

pondered much upon the subject of religion, and inquired especially about the faith of Abraham, because the Makkans claimed Abraham for their father and the founder of their temple, which was still called Baitullah (the house of Allah or the One God), although the object chiefly worshipped there were a multitude of idols, which they called the daughters of God and intercessors. No doubt the young Muhammad thought upon this subject, and early came to the perception that the Eternal is One and undefinable in human terms; that the Prophets—Abraham Moses, Jesus—had proclaimed this truth to men; and that wherever God had been defined in human terms or represented as a number of deities, that was the result of human error and misguidance. These subsidiary mysteries in the interests of priests and Rabbis, a means of mystification and extortion whereby they made themselves the jealous guardians of the Source of Spiritual Life, which should be free to all. To the evil influence of these inventions Muhammad

attributed all the senseless bloodshed, cruel rites and superstitions, all the disgusting orgies, which disgraced his people.

One can only conjecture that Muhammad thought in this way, for we have no access to his thoughts in those days, and the record of his early life is meagre and obscured by legends. We know that the rich widow, his employer, married him, her servant; that their married life was radiantly happy, despite the fact that she was fourteen years his senior; that this marriage raised him to a good position in the city; that it was his custom to withdraw into the desert for a month of every year for meditation, and that his conduct earned for him the surname *Al-Amin* (the trustworthy). And really we know very little more until he reached the age of forty.

Then he had a vision. He was in the desert place of his retirement; it was night; he was entranced. He saw a strange light in the sky, and heard a voice commanding him to cry aloud in warning to mankind.

What were his feelings on the occasion? Not those of a man who wished to be a Prophet; not those of an impostor, certainly! When he awoke out of his trance, with the words which had been spoken to him graven, as it were, upon his heart, still trembling, he went home to Khadijah and cried: "Cover me with cloth! Cover me with cloth!" And they covered him as he desired. And when the fear left him he spoke to Khadijah and told her what had happen. And he said: "I am afraid for my life."

Khadijah replied:—

"God is my protection, O Abu'l-Qásim. He will surely not let such a thing befall thee; for thou speakest the truth, thou dost not return evil for evil, thou keepest faith, art of a good life and kind to the relations and friends. And thou art not a babbler in the market-place. What has happened to thee? Hast thou seen anything terrible?"

She urged him to be glad instead of sorrowful, for she believed with all her heart

that he was called to be the Prophet of his people.

Then she took him to her cousin Waraqa, an old, blind man, who "know the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians," and he said :—

"I swear by Him in Whose hand is the life of Waraqa that God has chosen thee to be the Prophet of this people. The Namúsu'l-akbar—the message from on high—has come to thee. They will call thee liar, they will banish thee, they will fight against thee. Ah, that I could live till those days! I would fight for thee."

Waraqa died soon after, and there was a long period during which the Prophet, working for the cause of God and conscious of his mission, longed for the heavenly voice to speak again.

At length it came ; the blessed vision was again vouchsafed to him, and for the remainder of his days it counselled him, with the result which the world knows as the Qur-án,

the miracle to which Muhammad himself so often appealed as proof of his divine mission. And a miracle, indeed, it seems, for the Prophet, though cultured, was unlettered, and there is no reasonable room for doubt that a large part, at any rate, of that strange flood of eloquence, so purely sane, came to him in states of trance. The book is like no other book on earth. Explanations of the mystery of its existence have been suggested by the sceptical, but none explains it. It remains a wonder of the world.

From the moment he realized his mission Muhammad lost all thought of his own private interests. Thenceforth he was the messenger and slave of God. No other man in the whole history of the world, however mighty his enthusiasm for a cause, has ever served that cause more single-heartedly than did the Arab Prophet. In the hour of triumph as in that of adversity, he was the faithful slave of the Most High, doing his Master's work without a taint of private motives.



The first thirteen years of his mission were years of persecution and distress. The progress of the Faith was slow, the Prophet suffered. Then came the *Hijrah* or emigration the date from which the Muslims start their calendar. Muhammad, escaping from the daggers of the men of Makka who had planned to murder him, left Makka, the last but one of all the Muslims, for Madinah, where the people hailed him as their ruler. He had now a little kingdom and an army. He was fifty-two. In the remaining ten years of his life he succeeded in reforming all Arabia; he destroyed idolatry, raised women from the utmost degradation to an honoured and assured position, abolished senseless bloodshed, made strict rules for war, and for the first time in the history of the world made universal brotherhood a principle and fact of common law.

Some people would persuade us that all this was accomplished by the sword alone—by violence. That is impossible. The works

of violence are never permanent. The Prophet's work—God's work, he would correct me—endures until this present hour. The personal love with which his followers, in their ever-growing multitude, revered the Prophet suggests no thought of violence. The Muslims only fought in self-defence or for the punishment of treachery and wrong; and Muhammad's rules of war were far more merciful than any known to men before his time.

The Prophet was not pitiless nor overbearing. He was no mad fanatic, cruel through excess of zeal. Indeed there never stepped upon this earth a kinder man, nor one more sensible. Innumerable are the instances of his forgiveness.. He forgave the Jewess who prepared for him a poisoned meal, from which one of his companions died and he himself derived a painful illness which eventually caused his death. He forgave the man who, by an act of brutal rudeness, killed his daughter. He forgave Hinda, the wife of

Abu Sufián, who devoured the flesh of true believers on the field of Uhud like a ghou, when she declared repentance. He forgave the men of Makka, his most cruel persecutors. He forgave, so far as I know, every one who ever wronged him personally. He never struck a human being in his life.

No, it was not by the sword alone that Islam prevailed. The Prophet's cry to men was: God is One, the Merciful, the Friend of all who trust in Him and do good works. Use your minds which have been given you for judgment. Forsake your superstitions and abominations and do the right. All who believe are brothers, whether slave or free. Cast down your idols, leave your lying priests. God the Most High is One and altogether indescribable to all who truly turn to Him. This is the faith of Abraham and Jesus and all the Prophets since the world began. Trust in God and He will lead you out of darkness into light.

It was the light of human progress and

emancipation—the light of free intelligence uplifted towards communion with the universal, all-creative Mind—divine light, truly—which led men in their thousands to embrace Islam. The priests and soothsayers, the vulgar-minded and ambitious rulers, were alarmed. They tried to crush the movement by the force of arms. The Muslims fought against them, were victorious, and each fresh victory brought crowds of willing converts, won over by the unexpected mercy of the conquerors.

Now, I could speak to you at any length about the Prophet's charm of character, his gratitude to those who loved and helped him, his forgiving spirit, his sweet manners, patience, wisdom. My mind is full of all these things, for, from my reading, I have come to love him as one loves a friend. But supposing he were present in this room to-day, I know that he would be ashamed and grieved to hear such praises. His only pride was in the service of his Lord. He had no personal ambition and no self-conceit. He would say,

“I was a man much like another. Praise God Who guided me and raised me in His service.” So in the spirit of his life and teaching, I leave the charm and virtues of his private character and dwell on his fidelity, his self-surrender. Though he rose to be, in fact, the Emperor of all Arabia, he never made himself a potentate. His position was that of the Imam before congregation, foremost in obedience to the law which he himself announced. In the plenitude of his power he scorned those personal advantages which for most men are the charm and use of power. It was possible for him to gratify his every wish, to surround himself with pomp and luxury, to heap up riches. The people were prepared to worship him. Think of the temptations to a man of common mould. He never even saw them. He remained the faithful messenger and servant, bent only on obedience to his Lord’s commands. He claimed the honour of a deputy, and nothing more.

Much has been made by his traducers of the fact that he did exact some measure of reverence from his people, that he did claim certain privileges. You have only to read in the Qur-án the injunction to the Muslims not to raise their voices loud in conversation with the Prophet, and not to throng his house unless invited, to realize how unassuming was the state he kept. That he allowed himself to have any number of wives while his followers might have but four at most, has been produced as evidence of self-indulgence. That is most unfair. If he had announced his special privilege to have more wives than four and then proceeded to avail himself of that privilege, the charge might lie. As a matter of fact, the Prophet had already burdened himself with the charge of a number of women, mostly widows, left in need, when he was inspired to bid the Muslims marry only four at most. A relief was thus accorded to his followers which he himself, as head of the community, having the care of all

its widows and the conduct of its policy, could not enjoy. He was not the sensualist portrayed by Christian writers of a bygone day. He was a man with all the passions of a man, a man of wonderful virility ; yet for twenty-five years of his life—throughout his prime of manhood—he had one wife only, Khadíjah, to whom he was devoted, although she was a great deal older than he was, and he remained devoted to her memory.

When Ayesah, a young girl, the daughter of his closest friend, whom the Prophet married after the death of Khadíjah, said to him coaxingly:—

“What was she but an old woman ? God has given thee a better in her stead!” Muhammad answered:—

“No, by Allah ! God has not given me a better in her stead. She believed in me when men derided. She gave me all her wealth to spend when men opposed me. So kind and generous was she to me.”

Ayeshah, frightened at his vehemence murmured : "I will never speak of her again but with respect."

The story comes from Ayeshah herself.

When Khadíjah died the Prophet was fifty-one. His numerous later marriages, with perhaps two exceptions, were acts of charity or policy.

The privileges which he claimed, as head of the Muslim State, if you look into them, are really either cares of state or common courtesy. He was accessible to small and great, was hospitable, charitable, generous—within the limit of his means, for he was never rich. The public income he expended for the public good. Authority he held not as a weapon of ambition, but a sacred trust to benefit mankind. He restrained the people from regarding him with too great reverence, and frequently rebuked their superstition. On the day when little Ibrahím, the son of his old age, died, an occasion of great grief



to all the Muslims, there happened to be an eclipse of the sun. What an opportunity for an impostor or for one puffed up with spiritual pride! The people were all saying, "It is for the death of Ibrahím." Muhammad chid them for their foolishness. He said: "The sun and the moon are two signs of the signs of God. They are not eclipsed on account of the life or death of any one." Again and again he told them he was nothing but a man, deserving honour only as God's messenger. It was owing to this perfect self-surrender—which is the meaning of Islam—that when he spoke to the assembled tribes from Mount Arafát on the occasion of his "farewell pilgrimage" to Makka, and saw the wonderful devotion and enthusiasm of those thousands who, but a few months or years before, had all been conscienceless idolaters, the Prophet was able to exclaim:

"O Lord, I have delivered my message, and my errand is accomplished."

The multitude below made answer with

one voice:

“Aye, that thou hast !”

The Prophet said : “O Lord ! I beseech Thee, bear Thou witness to it.”

The faithful servant had performed his task.

No man ever served humanity as this man did, whose sole aim was to serve God. And his example shows us that to serve God truly is to serve humanity. Personal ambition, national ambition, tribal jealousy—all the passions which compose what we call patriotism—he abjured as criminal. Instead he preached the brotherhood of all believers.

## MUHAMMAD A TOWERING PERSONALITY

Presidential speech made by Mr. A. Yusuf Ali, (retired) I.C.S. at the celebration of the Birthday of the Prophet at Hotel Cecil, 6th January 1917.—Ed.

If we were celebrating the birthday of a personal friend we might have before our

minds three different aspects. We might contemplate another milestone passed on the dreary way of "slow-footed Time"; we might dwell with loving care on the charm and worth of our friend's personality; and we might recall with affection and gratitude all that that personality meant to us in our lives. Muhammad was a towering personality in the world's history; and yet, as the sublimest is often the most accessible to the humblest, we feel as if we had in him a close associate and friend. On the anniversary of his birthday, therefore, we could with profit address ourselves to all the three aspects of the celebration of a friend's anniversary.

Thirteen hundred—aye, many more than thirteen hundred—years had passed in the procession of history since that noble life came into being on earth. What changes, what developments—of triumph and disaster, of glory and shame—had come to pass since then! Divided Arabia, despised Arabia, was united into a Power that commanded respect

for its manly vigour, intellectual catholicity, and moral steadfastness. Corrupt Byzantium was swept away ; the pride of Persia and the mystery of Egypt gave place to a simple, open, straightforward way of life that added a fresh chapter to the evolution of humanity. Fragments of Greek and Roman civilization and of the civilization of the Mediterranean, the Nile, the Euphrates, the Ganges, and the Oxus, and even of the distant Yangtse, were welded together into a compact and living system of thought which triumphed because it worked on realities and was true to itself. The foundations of modern science, art, and industry were laid, because respect for tradition was qualified by the spirit of research. When these living forces ceased to work, the dead mass showed signs of toppling over. Jerusalem was not only in Palestine ; God can raise up "seed unto Abraham" even among the Gentiles. But it was something to have planted the spirit of brotherhood among the nations, and that spirit was exemplified even to-day on the five continents.

Mr. Pickthall has given a vivid picture of the Prophet's personality. Through all the phases of his life he showed an example of living faith, unflinching courage, and uniform gentleness and kindness. Whether we see him as the orphan boy who was respected by his relatives, or as the honest merchant who dealt with scrupulous faith both in his relation to his employer and in his relation to those with whom he did business ; or as the mystic who communed with nature and the spirit of man or as the devoted and unselfish householder, the husband of the Lady Khadíjah ; or as the persecuted Reformer cast out by his city of Makka and welcomed by another city which cherishes his tomb to this day ; or as the fearless Preacher and Warner, who spoke out of the gifts of his inspiration, and spared neither himself nor his friend ; or as the Prince who lived as the lowliest of those whom he led, the leader who based his claim to a hearing on the test of service ; or as the organizer of victory, the founder of a State, the new Jerusalem of men's dreams ; or as the

old Sage, who to the last days of his ministry refused to be elevated above the dust of the crowd whom he taught as a brother among brothers—in all these aspects we find his life full of meaning and profitable instruction.

But how do we translate all these precious gifts into our everyday lives? Unless we do so, they are without meaning as far as we are concerned. We should be unworthy of them if we do not use them to make other people's lives brighter and happier. Do we act on the principles of brotherhood which we profess? Are we gentle to an erring brother? Or helpful to one in distress? Or brave in affliction? Or steadfast under temptation? Or trustworthy in the hour of danger? Or united in the unselfish pursuit of noble ends? We have to put these questions to ourselves, and let our heart overflow with gratitude, because in spite of our unworthiness we have a Guide and Apostle who can show us the way and give us the message of Truth. In sober earnestness we

must rejoice in the gifts of his personality, and be glad that we are heirs to his teaching.

MUHAMMAD :

## A RATIONAL TEACHER AND PROPHET

BY MUHAMMAD ASHRAF (*an English Muslim*)

BEING a student for the last thirty years of Christianity as expounded in its numerous creeds, I sought to harmonize my reasoning faculties with its doctrines, but I found to my despair that the most valuable gift of God to man—his developed and evolved power of reasoning and intellect—was considered to be the greatest enemy of Christian doctrines. My priests, pastors, and ministers gave me plainly to understand that unless I reduced my thinking and reasoning capabilities to that of an infant I should be “damned” in attempting to discriminate in religious matters. Reason had no place in the so-called Christian theology. What was wanted was faith—blind, ignorant, almost stupid faith. My mind revolted against such blasphemy. For God to

condemn Reason—to punish us for our ancestors' love of knowledge and of their partaking the fruits of the "tree of knowledge"—was to my mind an insult to Himself and to the reason evolved in us. It was just as if man was forbidden to use his eyesight in his everyday life.

My mind hankered after a religion which would encourage rational scrutiny, would have reasonable and practical ethics—a religion that would have withstood the ravages of time and could be as pure and unalloyed to-day as it was when it came down to guide humanity—a religion that had no mystery to act as a drug upon my intellect, no priest to place himself between me and my loving Maker—a religion that would not rest salvation on mere belief, but on good acts—a religion which would be in harmony with Nature—my own nature as well as that of the whole world. Where was such a religion to be found? I was taught that the only religion worth the name, the only religion



which could be adopted by civilized people, was Christianity. The followers of other religions were heathens. Islam I found to be the most reviled religion; and now I know the reason why our priests and parsons do not like their "sheep" to come across to Islam—the religion preached by Muhammad. They are afraid of Islam because it satisfies the cravings and promptings of a sane, sober, and sound heart and brain both. The life of Muhammad as well as his teachings are free from every mystery. Fullest possible glare of reasoning has been thrown upon them. Muhammad is a historic figure. He lived the life which man lives. He never allowed any mystery to be attached to himself. He proclaimed at the top of his voice that he was a man—a plain warner. The same miracles have been attributed to him of curing the deaf and blind, etc., which have been attributed to Jesus Christ—but he never himself encouraged them. On the other hand, the Qur-án has boldly announced that wonder-working can be no criterion of the truth of

any teachings. When Muhammad's only male child died there was a solar eclipse. His followers were ready to believe that even the sun was mourning the loss of the Prophet's son. But Muhammad instantly rebuked the idea. He never encouraged superstition. There is no miraculous transmutation, no vicarious atonement, in Islam. There is no puzzle like that of "Three in one and one in three." Nor was Muhammad ever dogmatic in his teachings. The Qur-án is the only religious book which has appealed to our understanding and reasoning to convince us of its principles. The noblest and greatest theme of the Qur-án is the Unity of God—it has convincingly brought arguments to uphold that theme and to impress it upon our minds. Evidences have been produced of the Oneness of God, of His supreme rule and power, love, mercy, etc., not from miracles but from natural phenomena. How different it is from other religions—specially Christianity. John Davenport has accurately gauged the difference between

## Christianity and Islam.

“It must be borne in mind,” he writes, “that whereas the hold the former has over its professors is naturally referred by them to its dogmas, thus causing religion and morals to be regarded as distinct from each other ; in the latter it is, on the contrary, not the dogmatic, but the practical portion which has influenced the moral, social, legal, and political ideas and circumstances of its believers. So that, to the Muhammadan mind, patriotism, legality, tradition, right are all included in that one word—Islam..... The religion thus established by the Qur-án is a stern and severe Monotheism : it has nothing abstract and indistinct in its primary notion of the Godhead. Allah, so far from being a mere philosophic first cause regulating the universe by established laws, while itself stands aloof in unapproachable majesty, is an ever-present, ever-working energy. It is a religion, moreover, stripped of all controversy, and which, proposing no mystery to offer violence to reason, restricts the imagination of men to the being satisfied with a plain, invariable worship, notwithstanding the fiery passions and blind zeal that so often transported them beyond themselves. Lastly, it is a religion from which all worship of saints and martyrs, relics and images, all mystery and metaphysical subtlety, all

monastic seclusion and enthusiastic penance is banished; and which bears internal proofs of having been the result of long and deep meditation upon the nature of things, upon the state and condition of the nations of the world at that time, and upon the reconciliation of the object of religion with those of reason.”

## THE SPIRITUAL ASPECT OF THE LIFE OF MUHAMMAD

BY AL-VARISI

IT is not far from truth to say that when Muhammad came there was no real spirituality left in the world. Even the first stage of spiritual evolution—ethical and moral evolution—was at its lowest. The teachings of the great spiritualists of India had become absolutely distorted. Even Buddhistic spiritualism had been degraded into a sort of atheistic humanism. Judaic spirituality had also been misunderstood, and the spirituality of Jesus had degenerated into grossest Trinitarianism, including a deified man. The Arab life itself was very much near the animal life. It is undeniable that here and there in the

world there must have been individuals living in caves or monasteries who had cut themselves off altogether from their fellow-beings and from all their affairs, engrossed in self-edification ; but spirituality as a universal means of elevating humanity—a human consciousness of its original soul, whence it came and where it went—was unknown when Muhammad came. Some true souls in Arabia itself had got sick of the gross idolatry, and their souls tried to soar aloft to the One and Only Real Existence. But the way to reach that goal was lost. Muhammad was born among idolatrous Arabs, where even God, the Spirit of all spirits, was represented by 360 idols. But Muhammad himself had a pure soul. Even when his people were steeped in vices and immoralities of the worst type he was straight. He was the Al-Amin, the Trusty. His soul could not be satisfied with its environments. What am I? What is this mysterious and unfathomable thing called the universe? What is life? What is death? Who is the author, sustainer, and

cherisher of all that exists? What is man? What relation has he with his Creator? The sun, the moon, the elements, what are they? Are they really gods? Such were the questions put by Muhammad's inner self to himself. Who was to answer them? Carlyle says that the grim rocks of Hira, of Mount Sinai, the stern, sandy solitude answered not. The great heaven, rolling silently overhead, with its bright glancing stars, answered not. There was no answer, says Carlyle. Yes, there was no answer I also repeat. Even the oracles of India, of China, of Palestine, of Nazareth answered not. The spirit of Krishna, of Buddha, of Moses, of Jesus have sent a telepathic answer to the spirit of Muhammad, but to all outward appearance there was no medium, no answer. Even the spirits of the great departed had become voiceless, speechless. They seemed to have become indifferent to the world. The only answer to these and thousands of other questions like these came from Muhammad himself. Carlyle beautifully puts it, "The man's own soul,

and what of God's inspiration dwelt there, had to answer." Yes, it was only the spiritual self of Muhammad that solved all the problems which his thinking and inquisitive soul put to him. Muhammad had prepared his soul by years of exercise, introspection, and communion to give the answer. For years after his marriage he used to go to a cave on Mount Hira, sometimes with his faithful wife, sometimes all by himself. There he engaged himself in meditation and in communion. Solitude, at that time of his life, had become a passion to him. He was engaged in the study of self—in the conquest over his physical body, his human sentiments. He used to spend night after night in that solitary cave far away from all the world. He was a recluse. He began to see visions. He began even to hear voices from mouths his eyes could not see. The great unseen was revealed to him. He could read the Book of Nature. That unlettered man became the most learned of the Book of Nature; as if the very stones spoke to him, as if the very trees invited him

to take up the great task of restoring spirituality. The whole nature, as if it were, called him forth to crush materialism, to break the idols and images, to abolish man-worship and to teach man to know himself, and thus to know God. Muhammad in that case was one with his Maker—the all-pervading, omnipresent, omnipotent God.

Ghazzali says, “The aim of moral discipline is to purify the heart from the lust of passion and resentment, till, like a clear mirror, it reflects the Light of God.” The Light of God was fully and completely reflected in the soul of Muhammad. He had reached the stage of self-elevation when duality becomes non-existent and only One remains. The Qur-án says, “Allah is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth.” That Light, and that Light alone, reflected in the soul of Muhammad. In all the gifts of Nature, in every relation of life, in the rising moon, in the setting sun, he saw the hand of God—the One and only God—the One and



only spirit that rules over and pervades the whole universe. And in the words of the Qur-án his prayers and supplications, his life and death, were all for none but the One Cherisher of the Worlds.

Muhammad, by meditation and prayer, by cutting himself away from the affairs of the world, had realized the craving of his soul. "We have stripped the evil from off thee and thy sight to-day is keen," says Al-Qurán. The veil had fallen from the eyes of Muhammad. He had become conscious that the human soul is from God, for God, and returning to God. *Inná lilláh wa inná ilaihi ráji'ún* (Al-Qur-án).

No formal prayers had been instituted then, no month of fasting was fixed then. The *Law* of Islam itself had not been promulgated. The SHARIAT was unknown. But Muhammad had reached that stage of spiritual evolution in which his soul had acquired a full knowledge of God.

Al-Ghazzali says that any one who will

look into the matter will see that happiness is necessarily linked with the knowledge of God. Each faculty of ours delights in that for which it was created. Lust delights in accomplishing desire, anger in taking vengeance, the eye in seeing beautiful objects, and the ear in hearing beautiful sounds. The highest function of the soul of man is the perception of truth ; in this accordingly it finds its special delight.

Muhammad had acquired happiness. His soul had realized the Truth for itself. But that alone did not satisfy him. He was not selfish ; he was not egoistic. Self-elevation alone could not satisfy him. He was destined for a higher position. His heart bled for his people—nay, for the whole human race, for all his fellow-beings all over the world. When the evolution of his spirituality had reached a high stage by self-abnegation and self-surrender he was chosen by God—the All-Wise, the All-Merciful—to be His messenger to His people of the Message of Islam—resignation to the will of God. He was the

first Muslim in the strictest sense of the word, and by the complete surrender of himself to his Maker he became His beloved, His chosen man to take His final message to humanity, to be a torch-bearer of Eternal Light. Moses and Jesus and others had been chosen before when they had evolved their spirituality. But their spiritual power was perhaps not so highly developed as to be chosen for the task of world-regeneration. Moses and Jesus both came only to the Israelites. Non-Israelites were nothing but "dogs" in the eyes of Jesus. Muhammad was chosen to be world-teacher. He was designated to be the Mercy of the Worlds—

*Wa má arsalnáka illá rahmatan li'l'álatin.*

And so one night—the night which has been called *Lailatul Qadr*—the night of power and excellence, when the whole creation is in a worshipful mood—in the middle of that night the call came. Muhammad heard a voice mightier and clearer than he had ever

heard before, "surging like the waves of the ocean," asking him to "Read"—read the Book of Nature. Twice the voice called, and twice Muhammad said that he was untaught. "Read!" called out the voice for the third time, and Muhammad then realized that he could no more evade. "What shall I read?" he inquired. "Read in the name of thy Lord Who hath created"—and Muhammad answered the call. He repeated what he was told to read. When he woke from his trance the medium had disappeared, but he felt as if the words that were spoken to his soul had been written in his heart. However, at first this highest reward, this culminating result of his spiritual evolution and elevation weighed so much upon him that he came trembling to his bosom friend—his own wife—Khadijah-tul-Kubra, and related to her what had happened. Khadijah, who knew Muhammad as closely as nobody else could know, who knew his spiritual exercises, who had seen him in communion with God in the same cave where the call had at last come,

said, "Rejoice, and be of good cheer. He in Whose hands is Khadijah's life is my witness that thou wilt be the Prophet of the people." And so it was. Thenceforward Muhammad was the mouthpiece of God, not only to one people for one time, but to all people for all time.

With his call to the Prophethood, Muhammad could no more take to the life of a recluse. He was commissioned by God to set the best example to humanity—an example which every human being could follow—an example which would be in harmony with the purpose of the creation of the universe, where everything obeys the Law—where every "effect" has a "cause"—where even the very soul has to live in a body, where even the "prince of peace" had to proclaim, "I came not to send peace, but a sword. I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother" (Matt. x. 35, 36.)

Muhammad as a Prophet had to establish

morality, elevate social conditions, and improve human life in all respects, in every phase. He was a Universal Prophet; even the political and constitutional dreams of Socrates and Plato had to be realized through him. He had to defend the cause of Truth even at the risk of his life. He had to legislate. He had even to be a soldier, a monarch, the general of an army, the president of a commonwealth. But never for one minute did he allow his soul to be left alone. No day and no night passed without his holding his communion with his God.

His followers presented themselves five times a day before their Maker, but his own soul did not feel satisfied even with that. His feet would get swollen by his standing in his nocturnal prayers when the rest of the world—his own faithful followers—enjoyed calm sleep. Prayer he found to be the best spiritual medium, and he used it to its fullest extent for the achievement of even his prophetic mission. And how could an

ordinary man represent the Almighty and Omniscient, the Merciful and the Majestic, the Loving and yet the Requiting God, to Whom belongs the kingdom of heaven and earth, to Whom submits the whole universe; if he had not divine spiritual power within? Muhammad's spiritual power was unapproached by any other man, by any other prophet—neither by Moses, nor by Jesus, nor even by those ancient master spiritualists like Buddha and Krishna. Muhammad did not only enact legislation revealed to him, but by his spiritual power subjected the whole people to own will, and thus secured their implicit obedience to these laws. Up to this day at least one-fourth of the population of the whole globe abstains from alcohol simply because Muhammad during his lifetime willed it.

Hafiz, that mighty spiritualist whose *Diwán* to-day is a storehouse of noble inspirations has beautifully said.

*Mara ba khiyale tu chi perwahé sharab ast*

*Khum go sarey khud geer ki khum khana  
kharab ast.*

Since the time that Muhammad undertook his prophetic mission he had to suppress those spiritual powers in which he indulged for his own personal edification, so that he might not be misunderstood as were the prophets of yore. He was very jealous to lay any such example which would go against his mission work—which would encourage any superstition, any indolence, any neglect or indifference to duty—which would sin in any respect against the sublime Unity of God—which would raise anybody equal to Him—in power, in knowledge, or in any respect. But those who assert that Muhammad could not prophesy and had no spiritual power to cure the sick, etc, are ignorant, shamefully ignorant, of his life-history, or of that everliving book the Qur-án, which was revealed to him, and which in itself is the most remarkable proof of Muhammad's spirituality and inspiration.

If all the literature that was written before Muhammad on spiritualism was



collected on one side, and that written after Muhammad by his followers on the other, the latter will be not only much larger in quantity but also better in quality.

Muhammad combined in his ideal of spirituality DUTY with LOVE.

### LESSONS OF DUTY.

The Qur-án says, "No soul shall labour but for itself, and no burdened one shall bear another's burden."

"Be good to parents, and to the kindred, and to orphans, and to the poor, and to the neighbour, whether kinsman or new-comer, and to a fellow-traveller, and to the wayfarer, and to those whom your right hands possess."

"Give just measure, and be not defrauders; and weigh with an equal balance; and diminish not unto men aught of their matters, neither commit violence in the earth, acting corruptly," etc.

The moral code of Islam is complete,

in which the duty of man is clearly laid down before him.

### LOVE OF GOD.

But the part that love plays in the religion of Islam is also highly appreciable. The Holy Prophet Muhammad said, "I would not value having the whole wealth of the world in the place of this revelation. Say: (O Muhammad!) O My servants who have oppressed your own souls, despair not of the mercy of God." A man said, "What is the condition of him who hath associated others with God? The Holy Prophet remained silent; after that he said, 'Know that him also God forgiveth; but on repentance.'"

"My mercy encompasseth all," says the Qur-án.

"And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, then will I be nigh unto them. I will answer the cry of him that crieth when he crieth unto Me: but let them hearken unto Me, and believe in Me, that they may proceed aright."

“Is not He who answereth the oppressed when they cry to Him and taketh off their ills, and maketh you to succeed your sires on the earth? What! a god with Allah? How few bear these things in mind!

“Pray to Me, and I will hearken.”

“And when they who believe in Our signs come to thee (Muhammad), say: ‘Peace be upon you! Your Lord hath laid down for Himself a law of mercy; so that if any one of you commit a fault through ignorance, and afterwards turn and amend, He surely will be generous, merciful.’”

The effect of the spiritual life and teachings of Muhammad on his companions made models of human perfection. The Qur-án has preserved contemporary records of their virtues thus:

“And the servants of God of Mercy are they who walk upon the earth softly; and when the ignorant address them, they reply, ‘Peace!’ They that pass the night in the

worship of their Lord prostrate and standing, and that say, 'O our Lord! turn away from us the torment of Hell for its torment is endless: it is indeed an ill-abode and resting-place'! Those who when they spend are neither lavish nor niggard, but keep the mean. Those who call no other gods with God, nor slay whom God hath forbidden to be slain, except for a just cause, and who commit not fornication (for he who doth this shall receive punishment)."

"Who fulfil their pledge to God, and break not their compact. And who join together what God hath bidden to be joined, and who fear their Lord, and dread an ill-reckoning; And who, from desire to see the face of their Lord, are constant amid trials, and observe prayer and give alms, in secret and openly, out of what We have bestowed upon them, and turn aside evil by good: for them is the recompense of that abode, gardens of Eden—into which they shall enter together with the just of their fathers and their wives

and their descendants : and the angels shall go in unto them at every portal saying : 'Peace be with you because ye have endured all things' ! Charming the recompense of their abode."

To the modern spiritualists the following verse of the Qur-án may be of interest :

"And say not of those who are slain on God's path that they are dead ; nay, they are living, only you do not know."

#### SOME SPIRITUALISTIC INCIDENTS.

When Muhammad's uncle, Ja'far, was killed, he was seen in a vision flying in the paradise, and since that time the appellation of Tayyár, the flier, was added to his name.

In battle, which has been called the battle of the Ditch, when digging a trench, the spade fell on a stone and a spark came out. Muhammad said to his companions that in that spark he saw the empires of Kaiser and Kisra that were soon to come under the banner of Islam.

This prophetic vision of Muhammad was fully realized after his death, when his followers conquered the domains of Kaiser and Kisra both.

There was a rough child of Arabia named *Suráqah*. Muhammad once said, "I am seeing the gold bangles of Kisra on your wrists."

When Persia was conquered during the time of the second successor of Muhammad, 'Umar, he deliberately asked *Suráqah* to put on the Persian monarch's bangles, and thus was fulfilled again the prophecy of Muhammad.

One day Muhammad's camel was lost. People searched for it but could not find it. An unbeliever came and said: "You, Muhammad, pretend to be a prophet. When you cannot know where is your camel, how can you tell people about the after life or the next world?"

Muhammad smiled and said: "I have

been commissioned to guide people on the path of rectitude and piety and reason. I have come to lay down the law, not to break it; therefore I have to keep my spiritual powers suppressed. But now that you challenge me, I tell you to go to such and such a place, in such and such a tree the nose string of my camel has got entangled." The man went and fetched it from that very place, and became a believer.

#### A FEW PROPHEPIC VERSES OF THE QUR-AN.

The Qur-án itself is full of predictions which were fully realized in due time.

(1) "The Greeks have been overcome in the nearest part of the land; but after their defeat, they shall overcome *the others in their turn* within a *few years*. Unto God *belongeth* the disposal of *this matter*, both for what is past, and for what is to come; and on that day shall the believers rejoice in the success granted by God; for He granteth success unto whom He pleaseth and He *is* the Mighty, and

the Merciful. *This is the promise of God. God will not act contrary to His promise ; but the greater part of men know not.*” [N.B.—The word “few” in the expression “within a few years,” is a translation of Arabic “Bidz‘” which means “from three to nine.”]

The Persians as is well known were the worshippers of fire and the Greeks were Christians. When, therefore, the news of the victory of the Persians over the Greeks was first heard in Makka, the idolaters of Makka became elated ; and they began to speak to the followers of Muhammad that as the Persians defeated Christians with their own scriptures, *so* would they overcome them though they had the Qur-án—their guide of faith. It was on this occasion that the above verse was revealed, whereupon Abu Bakr spoke to the idolaters that they were doomed to be disappointed. “In the name of God I tell you, Greeks will again conquer the Persians.” Then Ubaya, son of Khalaf, the leader of the opponents, said that he was a liar and



challenged him to fix a limit and lay a wager. The limit was to be three years, and a wager of ten camels was laid and security was given. Abu Bakr then came to Prophet Muhammad, and told him all that had happened. Then Muhammad explained to him that the world *Bidz'* meant from three to nine, and therefore advised him to ask for an extension of limit even at a higher wager than ten camels. The limit was then prolonged to nine years and the wager was raised to a hundred camels. Before the time elapsed Ubaya, son of Khalaf, died of a wound he had received at Uhud. The Greeks triumphed over the Persians in the seventh year of their first defeat. Abu Bakr got the camels from the heirs of Ubaya and brought them to Prophet Muhammad, who asked him to give them away in alms.

(2) "Verily He who hath given thee the Qur-án for a rule of faith and practice, will certainly bring thee back home unto Makka," and it so happened.

(3) "We have surely sent down the Qur-án; and We will certainly preserve the same *from corruption*," is a prophecy which has been literally fulfilled.

### SOME SPIRITUAL SAYINGS OF MUHAMMAD.

Some of the sayings of the Prophet have the highest spiritual value; as for example:

"God saith, 'I am near the hope of whoso putteth it in Me; and I am with him, and near him, when he remembereth Me.'"

"God saith, 'Whoso doth one good act, for him are ten rewards; and I also give more to whomever I will; and whoso doth an ill, its retaliation is equal to it, or I forgive him; and whoso seeketh to approach Me one span, I seek to approach one cubit; and whoso seeketh to approach Me one cubit, I seek to approach him two fathoms; and whoso walketh towards Me, I run towards him; and who cometh before Me with the earth full of sins, and believeth solely in Me, him I come before with a front of forgiveness like that.'"

“God saith, ‘The person I hold as a beloved, I am his hearing by which he heareth, and I am his sight by which he seeth, and I am his hands by which he holdeth, and I am his feet by which he walketh.’”

“God saith, ‘O man! only follow thou My laws, and thou shalt become like unto Me, and then say, “Be” and behold, It is.’”

#### SOME VERSES OF THE QUR-AN WHICH HAVE A MYSTIC INTERPRETATION.

The following verses of the Qur-án also require deeper study.

(1) And seek strength from Prayer and Patience. These are difficult but to those who are humble and believe that they will meet their Lord and are returning to Him.

(2) And to him (man) We (Allah) are nearer than jugular vein.

(3) And He (Allah) is with you wherever you be.

(4) O thou soul, that art at rest, return to thy Lord, thou being pleased with Him and

He with thee.

(5) And We (Allah) are nearer to him than you ; but you do not see Us.

(6) And to Allah belongs the East and the West ; therefore, to whichever direction you turn yourself there is the face of Allah.

(7) He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden.

(8) Every one knoweth His prayer and His praise.

(9) Verily they who swear fealty to you (Muhammad) swear fealty to Allah. The Hand of Allah is over their hands.

(10) When I (Allah) have formed the body (of man) and breathed into it My soul, prostrate yourselves (angels) before it.

Hafiz has beautifully interpreted this last verse of the Qur-án thus :

*Ta nafukhto feehe min ruhee shuneedam shud  
yaqeen*

*Ma zi áne wayam wo oo zi áne maast.*

(“When I heard that God had breathed  
His soul into me I came to know :  
I am His and He is mine.”)

And in praise of Muhammad’s spiritual  
beauty Hafiz sweetly sings thus :

“The angels when they prostrated before  
Adam meant to do homage to thee  
(O Muhammad),

Because they saw in thy beauty some-  
thing above human beauty.”

#### GHAZZALI’S DESCRIPTION OF SPIRITUAL POWER.

Al-Ghazzali says:

Nor is it only by reason of knowledge  
acquired and intuitive that the soul of man  
holds the first rank among created things, but  
also by reason of power. Just as angels  
preside over the elements, so does the soul  
rule the members of body. Those souls  
which attain a special degree of power not  
only rule their own body but those of others  
also. If they wish a sick man to recover he

recovers, or a person in health to fall ill he becomes ill, or if they will the presence of a person he comes to them. According as the effects produced by these powerful souls are good or bad they are termed miracles or sorceries. These souls differ from common folk in three ways. (1) What others only see in dreams they see in their waking moments. (2) While others' wills only affect their own bodies, these, by will-power, can move bodies extraneous to themselves. (3) The knowledge which others acquire by laborious learning comes to them by intuition."

### SPIRITUAL HEALING.

Muhammad's companions have related :

"When any one of us was sick the Messenger of God used to rub his hands upon the sick person's body saying, 'O Lord of mankind! take away this pain, and give health; for Thou art the giver of health : there is no health but thine, that health which leaveth no sickness.'"

"When any person complained of being out of order, or having a wound, or sore, the Rasúl

used to moisten his finger, and put it upon the earth, after which he would apply it to the painful part and rub it, saying, 'In the name of God ; we have done this in order to restore the sick to health, by the permission of our Lord.' "

It has been said that once there was a great drought in the country. People came to Muhammad and asked him to make it rain. He prayed and the rain began to fall. But it fell too much and the people's houses began to fall. They came again and asked Muhammad to stop it. He again prayed, and it stopped. People were wonderstruck. But Muhammad warned them that he was only a man. It was God who was All-powerful.

### MI'RAJ (ASCENSION).

An incident is related of the early Prophetic life of Muhammad. It is called *Mi'raj* (Ascension). Some Muslims believe that on a certain night the Prophet ascended to heaven

in his physical body. There are others who say that the ascension was in vision—*i.e.* spiritual.

### THE WAHY (REVELATION).

After the first revelation or *Wahy* to the Holy Prophet, the angel Gabriel became the medium for successive revelations which continued till a little before the death of the Prophet. Sometimes the *Wahy* used to come while Muhammad was in a sort of trance. He heard first a jingling sound, and then the revelation clearly and distinctly which was impressed upon his mind. When it was completed he used to call his amanuensis Zaid to write down the whole of the revelation word for word as it was revealed to him. The Holy Qur-án is thus, the whole of it, a revelation from Above. It is really and truly the Word of God as heard by Muhammad through his prophetic spirituality. It is the greatest and most permanent miracle the world ever saw. It is the greatest spiritual triumph of all times. An unlettered man like Muhammad was the human



medium of the Great Spirit to promulgate His Law in this world. It has been miraculously preserved for over thirteen hundred years absolutely intact—word for word—letter for letter, and is today the spiritual, moral, military, civil, criminal and yet religious code of life of one-fourth of the whole human race. It still continues the challenge.

*Fa'tú bi súratiṁ mim mithlihi.*

(Bring one chapter like that if you can.) Illiterate Muhammad became the medium of a Book, on reading which the best Arabic LITTERATEURS shouted out—"This is nothing but an open magic!"

How great must have been the spiritualism of Muhammad to have been selected to be the medium for such a mighty and comprehensive revelation—for such a glorious religion which, and which alone, can satisfy the advancing reason and the developed conscience of humanity!

May peace of God be upon Muhammad,

and may His help be vouchsafed to Islam and Muslims !

## THE LAW OF RETRIBUTION

MOSES, JESUS, AND MUHAMMAD

FROM the very beginning of his race man has evinced disposition to criminal liability, and no branch of mankind has been without its Cain. Our mutual dependence interweaves human society, but our struggle for existence, exercised at the expense of others, shatters its very fabric. Had Nature been so generous to us as it has been in lavishing its bounties on dumb creatures in some respects, much of the criminality had disappeared. To save them from heat and cold lower animals are given comfortable skins; while, to protect us against the inclemency of weather, we have to look to others' labour. So it fares with our other hungers and thirsts. We cannot kill the behest of our cravings. We must satisfy them, but we cannot do so without others' help. Mutual co-operation is the backbone of human

society, and the principle of "give and take", guided with prudence and good conscience, can only guarantee us perfect order and happiness. But selfishness takes the better of us. We try to exact from others as much as possible, and give in return as little as acceptable. This often creates unpleasantness, and even excites resentment, which when exercised beyond legitimate limits, leads to aggressiveness and criminality and endangers peace and tranquillity. But we wish to avoid it while we do not give up our selfish desire ; we want to rob others without being detected, and we stoop to clandestine ways. Our culpable propensities find new activities for their plans, and give shape to theft, pilfering, cheating, and swindling.

"Respect your neighbour" and "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you" could suppress all our criminal predilection, but, thick-skinned as many of us are, we need drastic measures to invite our observance of these golden rules. This necessitates criminal

legislation, and brings forth penal laws into existence. In fact, no human institution can claim perfection for it without providing some penal measures for securing safety to property and life, as without it there will be no order, but a sort of chaos will become engendered which will sap the very life of society and bring forth misery. Some sort of criminal law is therefore a necessity ; and religion, if it came from God to secure to us peace and happiness, would be an utter failure if it made no such provision. Rules of morality and virtue, taught and enjoined upon for observance, but with no stringent measures to check their infringement, are only dead letters ; and fear of punishment after death, even up to eternity, has not often proved to be an effective check against criminality. The God of Moses, after giving His Commandments for the guidance of the house of Israel, had to provide " Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot."

THE LAW OF MOSES AND ITS ANNULMENT BY  
JESUS.

The importance of this Law of Retribution to human society cannot be too much exaggerated. It supplied a good basis to coming legislation of various nations and civilizations. But it was not without its defect. It was too drastic to allow leniency in cases of possible reformation of the first offenders. The law of mercy was also needed, which they say was given by Jesus. But the law of the Mount of Olives seems to nullify the law of the Mount of Sinai. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also," is not an amendment, but annulment. It repeats the whole law of retribution. Nothing could be more desirable than this, had the advent of Jesus put an end to criminality. But if it survived the crucifixion, we should better go to the law of

Moses than that of Jesus.

The whole difficulty lies in realizing the ministry of Jesus and his real mission as a promulgator of such laws. If Jesus be given his true position, and it will be that which he himself professes and claims, he stands redeemed of his paradoxical situation and the unpractical nature of his teachings explained. He did not come, as it is believed, to take the burden of others on his shoulders, therefore giving license to violence by preaching "Resist not evil." He was not a prophet to other nations, as he himself stated, but he was raised to reform the House of Jacob. He came to improve the morals of the Israelites and expose the hollowness of others who posed as the only expounders of Mosaic law. It has been abused, and Jesus came to explain it.

#### ANNULMENT EXPLAINED.

To understand the whole situation which called forth these two contradictory laws from

two persons claiming to have been inspired by the same Divine source, one must refer to those circumstances which were responsible for bringing the law of Moses into existence. The "children of bondage" required emancipation physically as well as morally. Through the bondage of many generations under the rule of various Pharaohs, the Israelites had lost all manly morals, and had become dejected and cowardly. Crossing the Red Sea could liberate them from the yoke of Egyptian kings, but it could not liberate them from the slavery of servile habits. To make a martial race of these sons of bondage, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," was the only code of life suited to redeem their enervated spirits. The said law therefore worked well, and succeeded in turning children of bondage into a race of rulers and conquerors. Then came abuse. They forgot the spirit and began to worship the letter. They left the kernel and went after the husk. They insisted scrupulously on the literal observance of the law of vengeance, and in course of time

they became a personification of vengeance. Their hatred, when aroused, knew no bounds. Thus they fell morally, and with it came their worldly downfall. They were again humbled under a foreign yoke, and needed a redeemer. The promised Messiah came, and brought them a code of regeneration. Their previous history was a good lesson to them. If their previous emancipation consisted really in the observance of the law, the subsequent situation should also follow the law. If the law of vengeance came to regenerate them when they were slaves to unmanly habits and was a necessary preliminary to making them rulers and conquerors, the law of mercy was indispensable as well to redeem them from being victims of anger and hatred before they could be restored to their lost supremacy. The law preached by Jesus may appear to us impracticable and not consonant with the polity and commonweal of the world in general, but it was a gospel to and could save those who had been slaves to hatred and anger. The law of Jesus thus had its



particular use, and so had the law of Moses. They were given under peculiar circumstances, and were meant to serve special purposes. Conditions similar to those in the lives of these divine personages, if again in existence, will justify a resort to them, but to claim for them universal application in all times and places is a mistake of no small magnitude. The conditions of the day are so changed, that we can follow them if necessary only in spirit and not in letter.

It is, however, worthy of note that the law of Moses has remained always in requisition. No legislation could dispense with it. The law of retribution, in fact, brought magistracy into existence, but the law of mercy remained always ignored. No penal code of any country made any provision based on the spirit of Jesus. But it is indispensable also in the proper administration of civil justice. There are certain criminal propensities which evince their existence in us even before we reach an age of discretion. Stealing is one

of them. Besides, punishment very seldom effects reform. Penal servitude sends back more gaol-birds than reclaimed delinquents. Would it not be more desirable to devise some good scheme for reclaiming first committers of ordinary offences than to make them callous through punishment? Such legislation will create wholesome effect and produce good citizens. Mosaic law welded with the law of Jesus, with some modification, will produce a very happy result. No offence, no doubt in the interest of peace and good order, should remain unpunished; but in certain offences, if a first offender of tender age and of good antecedents is given the chance of reform instead of being punished, the society will be the gainer and the ends of justice will be better served. And it is a matter of great rejoicing to note that the world, after all, has seen the necessity of such legislation. Almost all civilized nations have made some sort of amendments. Reformatory schools have been opened to substitute gaols, and in certain countries such culprits are released, on security

for good behaviour, for a period enough to kill their evil propensities. The law of Moses was too severe, and the law of Jesus, though suiting the conditions of his own age, had become an impracticability. We could only observe it in spirit, and that only under the condition of reclamation. If there was no prospect of reform, the law of Jesus was no good. It was the Holy Prophet Muhammad to whom the secret of this happy legislation was revealed centuries before the world jurists could think of it, as we read in the Qur-án the following : —“Let the recompense of evil be only a like evil ; but he who forgiveth and reforms shall be rewarded by God Himself ; for He loveth not those who act unjustly” (42 : 38). The verse upholds Mosaic law and supports the law of Jesus, but under condition, and lays down clearly a salubrious foundation of useful legislation of penal laws.