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CHAPTER II

THE COW
(Al-Baqara\textsuperscript{\textregistered})

REVEALED AT MEDINA
(40 sections and 286 verses)

Abstract:

Sec. 1. Fundamental principles of Islam.
Sec. 2. Lip-profession.
Sec. 3. Divine Unity.
Sec. 4. Man's vast capabilities.
Sec. 5. Fulfilment of Israelite prophecies in the Holy Prophet.
Sec. 6, 7. Divine favours on Israel and their stubbornness.
Sec. 8. Israelites' degeneration.
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PART I

CHAPTER I

THE OPENING

(Al-Fátihah)

REVEALED AT MECCA

(7 verses)

Abstract:
1. ALLAH, the Lord of the whole creation, brings the creation to its goal of completion.
2. His loving beneficence and mercy are exercised both before and after man makes himself deserving of them. 3. His dealing with man is as that of a master with his servants, and therefore His law of requital is characterized by forgiveness. 4. Man's dependence on Him and His assistance of man. 5-7. Prayer for being kept always on the right or the middle path and not to be diverted to either side.

General Remarks.
The Fátihah or the Opening is known under various other names. It is spoken of as Sab'ān minal Masnūd or the Seven Oft-repeated Verses in the Qur'ān itself (15:87) because its seven verses are constantly repeated by every Muslim in his prayers at least thirty-two times a day. It is spoken of as the Fátihah-ul-Kitāb or the Opening of the Book in a saying of the Holy Prophet in which it is said that "No prayer is complete without the recitation of Fátihah-ul-Kitāb" (AD, Tr.). Hence it is also called Sūrat-ul-Ṣalāt, i.e. the chapter of Prayer, being essential to every prayer whether performed in congregation or in private. It is also called Sūrat-ul-Duʿā, i.e. the chapter of Supplication, because the entire chapter is a supplication or a prayer to the Great Master, and because as a prayer it not only occupies the highest place among the prayers of other sacred books, but also among those taught by the Holy Qur'ān itself. It is also called Ummul-Kitāb, i.e. the Basis of the Book, because it contains the whole of the Qur'ān as it were in a nutshell. Some of the other names given to this chapter are the Praise, the Thanksgiving, the Foundation, the Treasure, the Whole, the Sufficient, the Healer, and the Healing.

Al-Fátihah or Fátihah-ul-Kitāb contains seven verses in a single section, and was revealed at Mecca, being without doubt one of the earliest revelations. Muir, who divides the whole of the Meccan revelation into five periods, places the Fátihah in the first period—though he is mistaken in placing it before even the 96th chapter, for which there is overwhelming evidence as being the first revelation. It is, of course, impossible to give the exact date or even the exact order in which the various chapters were revealed, but there is not the least doubt that the Fátihah must be placed among the earliest revelations. It is referred to in 15:87 as the Seven Oft-repeated Verses, a name by which this chapter is generally known, and the 15th chapter, which is undoubtedly Meccan, can by no means be placed among the latest Meccan revelations. Again, it is a fact that the Fátihah formed an essential part of the Muslim prayers from the earliest days when prayer was
made obligatory for the Muslims, and there is a vast mass of evidence showing that this happened very early after the Prophet's call. For not only is the fact referred to in the earliest revelations, such as the 73rd chapter, but there are also other historical incidents showing that prayer was observed by the earliest Muslim converts. The Holy Prophet's removal to the house of Arqam is a historical fact of undoubted truth, and it occurred at the latest in the fourth year of his preaching, and this removal was necessitated by the troubles caused to the Muslims on account of their saying prayers in places which were not safe from the interference of the unbelievers. Thus the story of Sa'd, who "retired for prayer with a group of believers to a valley near Mecca," and the occurrence of an affray with some of his neighbours, as narrated by Muir, may be taken as a preliminary to the choice of Arqam's house so as to avoid interruption.

The chapter is headed by the words Bismillāh-ir-Rahmān-ir-Rahīm, which also head every one of the other 114 chapters of the Holy Qur-ān with the exception of one only, the ninth, while the same sentence occurs once in the middle of a chapter, viz. in 27:30, thus occurring 114 times in the Holy Qur-ān. The phrase has besides acquired such a wide usage among the Muslims that it is the first thing which a Muslim child learns, and in his everyday affairs the Bismillāh is the first word which a Muslim utters.

The Bismillāh is the quintessence of the chapter Fatiḥah, in the same manner as the latter is the quintessence of the Qur-ān itself. By commencing every important affair with the Bismillāh the Muslim in fact shows in the midst of his everyday life affairs that the right attitude of the human mind towards the Great Mind of the universe is that it should always seek a support in the Mighty One who is the source of all strength, and thus Divine Unity finds expression in the practical life of man in a manner unapproached anywhere else in the history of religion.

The revelation of the Bismillāh seems to have soon followed the first revelation of the opening verses of Chapter 96, for it forms a part of even the shortest chapter revealed to the Holy Prophet. Moreover, the words of the Bismillāh show a deep connection with the account of the first revelation as given by the Holy Prophet himself. He was in the well-known cave of Hira when the first message came to him. This message was brought by an angel, who asked the Holy Prophet to read. "I am not one who can read," was the reply. The request and the answer were repeated thrice, when the angel said: "Read in the name of your Lord who created, He created man from a clot; read and your Lord is most Honourable" (Bkh). And as the Prophet, who on the most trustworthy testimony did not know either reading or writing, was able to read with the help of the Lord, even so is every Muslim taught to seek the help of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful, in everything that he seeks to do. The Bismillāh must thus have immediately followed the very first revelation.

Besides the word Allāh, which in the Arabic language is the proper name of the Divine Being, there occur in the Bismillāh the two chief attributive names Ar-Rahmān and Ar-Rahīm, which signify respectively the Beneficent One Who exercises His love towards all His creatures in providing for them before they come into existence, and the Merciful One Who deals mercifully with His servants in making their humble deeds bear fruit. Thus, in addition to the dependence of man on his Divine Maker, the Bismillāh teaches the absolute and transcendent Unity of the Divine Being in the use of the word Allāh, which was never applied to any other object of worship by the Arabs, and His great and unbounded love and mercy for His creatures in the use of the two words Ar-Rahmān and Ar-Rahīm. So great is His love that He requires no compensation for its exercise, as the Christian doctrine of atonement teaches, and so great is His mercy that He can make the deeds of man bear an unbounded fruit, and the gift of His salvation is therefore permanent and not temporary, as taught by the Vedic religion.

Rodwell's suggestion that the Bismillāh in the form in which it appears in the Holy Qur-ān was first taught to the Qurais by the post Umayya of Tāif seems to have been due to some misconception, for there is unimpeachable testimony to show that the Qurais not only did not know the name Ar-Rahmān of the Divine Being, to which they asserted themselves to be utter strangers (25:60), but that they were averse to the use of
the Bismillah itself in the form in which it was taught by the Holy Prophet. For so late as the sixth year of Hejira, when a truce was drawn up between the Muslims and the Quraish, Suhail ibn-i-‘Amru, on behalf of the Quraish, refused to prefix Bismillah-ir-Rahmân-ir-Rahîm to the agreement, saying “I do not know this,” and the agreement was therefore headed by Bismika Allâhumma, the form in common use among the Quraish (Tb). That some nations had some such form which they prefixed to their writings cannot be denied, but the mere existence among any other people, as the Jews or the Sabaeans or the Zoroastrians, of any expression which they prefixed to their writings does not show that the Holy Prophet had borrowed the idea from here or there. It is in the choice of the words that the real beauty lies, for the real message of Islam was the perfection of religion, and this perfection is made clear in its Bismillah, in the very first words with which it opens. Islam has never claimed that what it preached was never preached to the world before; on the other hand, it lays claim to purifying and making perfect the old doctrines (5:8). Even the words Bakhshshâghar and Dâdâr, meaning respectively the Pardoner and the Just, make no approach to the beauty of the two fundamental attributes of love and mercy made manifest in the words Ar-Rahmân and Ar-Rahîm. The choice of these two attributes of love and mercy as the prime attributes of the Divine Being is sufficient comment on the misstatements of the carpers at Islam, who misrepresent the God of Islam as a Cruel and Wrathful Being.

The Fitaqah has a special importance as a prayer, being an essential part of every prayer, whether offered in congregation or in private. Its Oft-repeated Seven Verses constitute the prayer for guidance of every Muslim at least thirty-two times a day, and therefore it has a much greater importance for him than the Lord’s prayer for a Christian. And there is another difference too. The latter is instructed to pray for the coming of the kingdom of God, whereas the Muslim is instructed to seek for his right place in that kingdom, which had already come, the hint no doubt being that the coming of the Holy Prophet was really the advent of the kingdom of God about whose approach Jesus preached to his followers (Mark 1:15). Thus the prayer is a model prayer taught to the Muslims, and the objection as to the inconsistency of the form of address adopted here with the Divine authorship of the Book vanishes in the light of these facts. The numerous prayers contained in the Holy Qurân follow the same rule and are never preceded by the word “say” or any other word to that effect. For instance, compare the prayer contained in the concluding verse of the 2nd chapter, and also the prayer contained in 3; 7, 8 and 3; 190-193 and elsewhere. That a form of prayer or supplication is meant for the supplicant is so clear that any introductory word commanding men to pray in that form would have been superfluous.

Some hostile critics have suggested that such a prayer is suited only for blind and sinful men groping in the dark to find out the way. Surely it is a very distorted view of the sublime words, which express the natural yearning of the sincere soul to be kept on the right way and to be saved from stumbling. The prayer contained in this chapter is the sublimest of all the prayers that exist in any religion, and occupies the first place among all the prayers contained in the Qurân itself. A chorus of praise has gone forth for it from the greatest detractors of the Holy Qurân, and they have been compelled to “admire its spirit.” The entire chapter is composed of seven verses, the first three of which speak of the four chief Divine attributes, viz. providence, beneficence, mercy, and requital, thus giving expression to the grandeur and praise of the Divine Being, and the last three lay open before the Great Maker the earnest desire of man’s soul to walk in righteousness without stumbling on either side, while the middle one is expressive of man’s entire dependence on Allah. The attributes referred to are those which dissole Allah’s all-encompassing beneficence and care, and His unbounded love for all of His creatures, and the ideal to which the soul is made to aspire is the highest to which man can rise, the path of righteousness, the path of grace, and the path in which there is no stumbling. If, on the one hand, the narrow views which addressed the Divine Being as the Lord of a particular nation are swept off before the mention of His equal providence and equal love for all mankind, nay for all the creatures that exist in all the worlds, and the idea of
paternal care and affection contained in the word Father dwindles into insignificance before the all-embracing beneficence and love of the Rabb of all existence. Who provides and regulates the means of existence, nourishment, and perfection of the creatures long before they come into existence, there is, on the other, the high aspiration of the soul for an unbounded spiritual rise unhindered by all considerations of cares of the body which craves for the "daily bread," and even of solicitude for forgiveness of wrongs done and injuries inflicted, for the soul seeks to rise to a place where wrongs and injuries are not known. It makes the soul aspire to the great spiritual-eminence to which are those to whom Allah was gracious, the prophets, the truthful, the faithful, and the righteous (4: 71). It sets before the eye that high goal, the goal of Divine grace wherein is no displeasure and which is beyond the reach of error. With all its beauty, even the Lord's prayer sinks into insignificance before the all-comprehensiveness and majestic glory of the Fatiha, and one would in vain turn over the pages of sacred books to find anything approaching the grand and sublime ideas contained in this chapter of the Holy Qur'an.

The four attributes of the Divine Being mentioned here are, moreover, a refutation of the wrong conceptions of the fundamental principles of faith met with in some of the prominent religions of the world. The name Rabb, for instance, which signifies Divine Providence, indicates that all things in creation are so made as to attain gradually to a state of perfection within their spheres of capacity, and thus points out the erroneousness of the doctrine of the "Fall of man," which upholds that an original state of perfection has given place to degeneration. The designation of the Divine Being as Lord of the worlds gives a death-blow to all narrow views of the spiritual blessings and their limitation to certain territorial bounds, racial distinctions, or particular times, and thus makes clear that the highest of these blessings, the gift of Divine revelation, could neither be limited to a particular country nor to a particular nation, nor yet to a particular age. The attribute of loving beneficence in Ar-Rahman is a refutation of the doctrines of atonement and sonship, as it directs attention to the fact that benefits are conferred on man by the Divine Being without exacting any compensation from him, Ar-Rahman being the Beneficent Lord whose manifold blessings are conferred on man without his ever having done anything to deserve them. The attribute of mercy in Ar-Rahim points out the error of the Vedic doctrine which teaches that the Divine Being is unable to give manifold and unlimited reward for limited acts of man and that therefore his salvation, even when it has been earned after going through innumerable states of life, must be short-lived, for Ar-Rahim signifies the Merciful Being Who multiplies rewards to an unlimited extent. And the last attribute, mastership of the day of requital, is directed against those doctrines which deny the quality of forgiveness in the Divine Being, the most prominent of these being the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, for Malik is not the king or the judge whose duty is to hold the balance equally between two parties, but He is the Master, and those that are guilty are only His creatures, whom He can wholly forgive without any idea of injustice or favouritism being attributed to Him.

I have also said that the seven verses of the Fatiha contain the whole of the Qur'an in them. It is for this reason that in 15: 87, already quoted, it is spoken of as the Great Qur'an (Bkh). And so in fact it is, as the name Umm-ul-Qur'an, a name given to it by the Holy Prophet himself, shows (Bkh). For the Qur'an is a Book which declares the glory of Allah and teaches the right way to man, and both these themes find expression in the Fatiha. The fundamental principles of faith, the prime attributes of the Divine Being, which are the basis of all other attributes, the relations which ought to hold between man and his Creator, are all contained in their essence in the seven short sentences of which this wonderful chapter is made up. And to crown all, this chapter opens with the broadest possible conception of the Lordship (this word is intentionally adopted in the place of Fatherhood) of the Divine Being and the brotherhood of man, nay of the oneness of all creation, for the unity of the creation necessarily follows the unity of the Creator.
1 I retain the ordinary translation of the particle ba', but I must warn the reader that the sense of this particle is not the same in Arabic as the sense of the word in in the equivalent phrase in the name of God, in in the latter case signifying on account of, whereas the ba' in Arabic signifies by, or through, or, to be more exact, with the assistance of. The phrase is in fact equivalent to: I seek the assistance of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful (AH).

2 Allah, according to the most correct of the opinions respecting it, is a proper name applied to the Being Who exists necessarily by Himself, comprising all the attributes of perfection (TA-LL), the al being inseparable from it, not derived (Msb-LL). Al-ilāh is a different word, and there is nothing to show that Allah is a contraction of Al-ilāh. The word Allah is not applied to any being except the only true God, and comprises all the excellent names (TA-LL), and the Arabs never gave the name Allah to any of their numerous idols. Hence, as being the proper name of the Divine Being, and not having any equivalent in any other language, I have adopted the original word in this translation.

3 Ar-Rahmān and Ar-Rahīm are both derived from rahmat, signifying tenderness requiring the exercise of beneficence (Rgh), and thus comprising the idea of love and mercy. Ar-Rahmān and Ar-Rahīm are both active participle nouns of different measures denoting intensiveness of significance, the former being of the measure of fa'ālān and indicating the greatest preponderance of the quality of mercy, and the latter being of the measure of fa'il and being expressive of a constant repetition and manifestation of the attribute (AH). The two words have been explained by the Holy Prophet himself, and though the words are different, the ultimate significance is the same as that which is the result of the grammatical consideration. He is reported to have said: "Ar-Rahmān is the Beneficent God Whose love and mercy are manifested in the creation of this world, and Ar-Rahīm is the Merciful God Whose love and mercy are manifested in the state that comes after." (AH), i.e. in the consequences of the deeds of men. Thus the attribute of mercy in Ar-Rahmān is manifested before man comes into existence in the creation of things that are necessary for his life here, and therefore without his having deserved them, while the same attribute in Ar-Rahīm is manifested when man has done something to deserve it. Thus the former is expressive of the utmost degree of love and generosity, the latter of unbounded and constant favour and mercy. Lexicologists agree in holding that the former includes both the believer and the unbeliever for its objects, while the latter particularizes more the believer (LL, Rgh, IA, TA). Hence I render Ar-Rahmān as meaning the Beneficent God, because the idea of doing good is predominant in it, though I must admit that the English language lacks an equivalent of Ar-Rahmān even making an approach to giving expression to the all-comprehensive love and goodness manifested in that word.

It may also be noted that Ar-Rahmān, though manifesting an attribute, is like a proper name and applicable only to the Divine Being. The word is, in fact, used as an alternative with Allah, very clearly so in 17:110. Hence it is not applied to denote the quality of mercy in man, though Ar-Rahīm is so applied. The only exception mentioned by the lexicologists is that Musulma the Liar was called the Rahmān of Yamāmah by his followers, but such a use of a proper name has always been considered allowable. As the word Rahmān as a name of the Divine Being was quite new to the Arabs (25:60), the followers of the Liar may have applied it to him as a retort to the Muslims.

4 The al in al-hamd-u is for istighārāt-ul-jīn, i.e. the universal inclusion of the genus (AH), showing that all kinds of praise are included.

5 The Arabic word Rabb conveys not only the idea of fostering, bringing-up, or nourish-

6, see next page.
Title and Subject-matter.

The name of this chapter is taken from the story narrated in vv. 67-71 regarding the slaughter of a cow. As this chapter deals chiefly with the Jews, and as cow-worship, as shown in foot-notes 84 and 106, was the particular form of idolatry which took a hold among the Jews, the importance of that incident seems to have been rightly estimated in giving this chapter the name that it bears.

This chapter deals mainly with the Jews and their contentions against Islam, and hence it is that much of the legislation, details of which necessarily differ from the Jewish law, and most of the Jewish objections to the prophethood of Muhammad—may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him—are dealt with in this chapter. A perusal of the analysis of the chapter will show how the various sections fit into each other, the allegation of confusedness in the arrangement being simply due to want of reflection. The chapter opens with a brief statement of the fundamental principles of Islam, and, after mentioning the consequences of their acceptance or rejection in the first section, and dealing with lip-professions in the second, draws an inference of the truth of those principles, and more particularly of Divine Unity, by referring to the work of God in nature in the third. The fourth section proceeds to show that man is endowed with vast capabilities, but suffers the consequences of wasting his opportunity, and this is illustrated in the story of Adam. Then in the fifth section the case of the Israelite nation is introduced, and they are told how the Qur'an fulfills the prophecies met with in their books, and the next two sections are devoted to Divine favours on them and their stubbornness, being followed by three others which speak of their degeneration, their hard-heartedness, and their violation of covenants. The eleventh section speaks of their objections to the Holy Prophet, and the twelfth refers to their great enmity and to their plans against him. The thirteenth states that former scriptures are abrogated and a better and more advanced code is given in the form of Islam, the religion of entire submission. The next section points out that partial good is met with in all religions, but it is only in Islam that religion attains perfections. The fifteenth reminds the Israelites of the covenant with Abraham, which required the raising of a prophet from among the Ishmaelites, being followed by another dealing with the religion of the great patriarch. The subject of Qiblah being transferred to the Ka'ba, the house rebuilt by Abraham, is thus introduced, and the next two sections, while declaring the Ka'ba to be the new centre of spiritual activity, also give reasons for the change. The nineteenth warns the Muslims that they must undergo hard trials before they obtain mastery of the Sacred House, which was henceforth to be the centre of the Muslims, though the idolatry prevailing there was certainly destined to disappear, while Unity must ultimately obtain the triumph, this being made clear in the twentieth section. Certain minor differences with the Jewish law are then introduced as against the common principle of the doctrine of Unity, and thus the laws relating to foods, retaliation, transfer of property on decease, fasting, fighting, pilgrimage, wine, gambling, orphans, marital obligations, divorce, and widowhood are discussed in the eleven sections that follow. The next two make a reversion to the subject of fighting, which was necessary if the Muslims would escape national death, and illustrations are given from the Israelite history. We are then told in the thirty-fourth section of the mighty power of Allah to give life to the dead, and the Muslims are told that they should not use compulsion in the matter of religion, as their opponents had done. Two instances are then quoted in the following section, one from the history of Abraham and the other from the Israelite history, showing how dead nations are raised to life. But national growth and prosperity, we are immediately told in the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh sections, depends on acts of sacrifice, and every penny spent in the cause of truth yields seven hundredfold and even much more fruit. The Muslims, being thus promised abundance of wealth as the result of their sacrifices, are warned in the following section against usurious dealings which breed an inordinate love for wealth, for the amassing of wealth was not the goal of a Muslim's life. They are at the same time told, in the thirty-ninth section, to guard their property rights by the employment of writing in their transactions and securing evidence. In conclusion they are taught a prayer for the ultimate triumph.
of the truth. Thus we find no break in the continuity of the subject, and the change, whenever necessary, is introduced quite naturally.

Connection with the preceding Chapter.

There is a clear connection between this chapter and the last one. There in the concluding words is a prayer for being guided on the right path (1:5), while here that guidance is afforded in the opening words: "This book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide" (v. 2). Again, that prayer seeks to establish us in the path of those who have received Divine favours (1:6), and here we are told in v. 5 who are they on the right direction and who shall be successful. Similarly, while that prayer creates in us the yearning to avoid the path of those upon whom wrath has been brought down and those who go astray (1:7), this one hastens to point out that those who do not care for the Prophet's warning, neither reflecting upon it nor lending ear to it (v. 6), have ultimately their very hearts and ears closed against the truth, this grievous punishment being the form in which wrath is brought down upon them (v. 7), and that those who consider faith to be only a lip-profession are really they who go astray, because they buy error at the price of right direction (v. 16). Any one who has read the Holy Qur'an will easily see that no other chapter could have so fittingly followed the Fātiḥah, and as in the beginning, so in the end, there is a clear connection with the opening chapter.

But though this chapter follows the Fātiḥah it is really the first chapter, because the Fātiḥah is placed at the head, being the essence of the whole of the Qur'an. This affords very clear evidence of the wisdom displayed in the arrangement of the chapters of the Holy Book. For this chapter fittingly opens with a prelude as to the object which is aimed at in the revelation of the Holy Qur'an, and contains in its very opening verses the fundamental principles of the Islamic religion, which are also in fact the fundamental principles which can form the basis of the natural religion of man. These principles are five in number, three of them containing theoretical ordinances or articles of belief and two containing practical ordinances or principles of action. The theoretical ordinances are a belief in the Unseen, i.e. Allah, in Divine revelation to the Holy Prophet as well as to the prophets before him, and in the life to come, while on the practical side is mentioned prayer, the outpouring of the human heart before the Great Divine Mind, which is the source from which springs true Divine love, and charity in its broadest sense. The result of the acceptance of these fundamental principles is mentioned in v. 5, being guidance in the right direction and success. Similarly, it is with a reiteration of the broad principles of the Islamic faith and with a prayer for the triumph of the truth that the chapter ends, and the whole of the chapter is really an illustration of the truth of the principles enunciated in its beginning. If this chapter were removed from its place, there is not a single other chapter in the whole of the Qur'an that could take its place and serve the purpose of a prelude to the Holy Book.

Date of Revelation.

There is little doubt that this chapter was revealed at Medina, and belongs to the earliest Medinan revelations. Doubt has been entertained as to vv. 21–39 and 164–172, but the reasons given are very poor. That all those verses in which the words "O men" occur belong to the Meccan revelation, and those in which the words "O you who believe" occur belong to Medinan revelation, is the unwarranted generalization of some exegetists; and European students of the Holy Qur'an have taken it from the Ḥadīths, without caring to see that even the Ḥadīths does not rely on this test, and without giving any consideration to facts. For the 4th chapter, the Women, undoubtedly belongs wholly to the Medinan revelation, and it opens with the words "O men." Similarly, the 22nd chapter, which is unanimously accepted as belonging to the Meccan period, begins with the words "O you who believe." Hence the criterion on which vv. 21–39 are regarded as belonging to Meccan revelation fails altogether. As regards the testimony of the subject matter in these verses, as well as in 164–172 and 256–258, doubt being also entertained as to the Medinan origin of the latter, it seems to me to be a mere fancy of the critics, for no hard-
SECTION 1

Fundamental Principles of Islam

1. Omniscience of Allah. 2. Qur-an a perfect guidance. 3-4. Fundamental principles. 5-7. Consequences of their acceptance and rejection.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

I am Allah, the best Knower.\(^{11}\)

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and fast line can be drawn as to the subjects which are treated in Meccan or Medinian revelations. The latest European criticism on this point inclines more to a right view than the hasty opinion of earlier critics. In his "New Researches" Hirschfeld observes: "If we had no other critical aid, it would frequently be quite impossible to distinguish between Medinian and later Meccan revelations... Medinian addresses, like the Meccan ones, abound in declamatory, narrative, and parabolical passages." But I must add that many of the unwarranted conclusions of European critics are based on the rash generalizations of Oriental exegetes.

The doubt regarding vv. 285, 286, the concluding verses of the chapter, is equally groundless. V. 285 only reiterates the cosmopolitan nature of the religion of Islam, which has already been established in the very beginning in v. 4, and then in the middle of the chapter in v. 126, a belief in the truth of all the prophets being mentioned as the very basis of the religion of Islam in all the three places. V. 286 teaches a prayer, about the Medinian origin of which it is rather strange that a doubt should have been entertained.

I do not find any reliable report as to the Meccan origin of any portion of this chapter. Even if there were any such report, I would warn the reader to receive it with caution. The whole of the 2nd chapter thus belongs to earlier Medinian revelation, and I very much doubt the reports which refer the injunctions regarding the prohibition of usury in the concluding sections to about the closing period of the Holy Prophet's life. That portion may have been revealed at a later period than the rest of the chapter, but in view of the same prohibition having been revealed in 8:129 it could not be so late. An analysis of the chapter leads one to the conclusion that almost the whole of it was revealed previously to the revelation of the next or the 3rd chapter.

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\(^{11}\) The original words are alif, lam, mim. Translations of the Holy Qur-an generally leave abbreviations, like the one occurring here, untranslated. The combinations of letters or single letters occurring at the commencement of several chapters of the Holy Qur-an, 29 in all, are called the letter of the alphabet, or simply muqatta‘at, and according to the best received opinions these letters are abbreviations standing for words. The Arabs used similar letters in their verses, as in قل لى لقنين قاتل قاتل where the letter stands for waqaft-u, i.e. I stop (AH). Another instance of the same is contained in the verse، بالله خيرات و ان شرفاً. لا أريد النذر إلا أن تأ where fā‘ stands for fasharrun, meaning then evil let there be, and tā‘ for tashá‘, meaning thou pleasest (AH). And in ordinary conversation you hear a man saying fā‘ in answer to one who says, Will thou come? The fā‘ in this case means then go thou with us (LL). Abbreviations are known to all languages, the only peculiarity of their use in Arabic literature being that the letters carry different meanings in different...
2 This book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who guard (against evil).

places, and the meaning is decided in each case by the context. Such is the opinion of Tāb (AH). Both he and IMsd agree in interpreting the combination (read: alif, lām, mīm) occurring here, as well as at the commencement of the 3rd, 29th, 30th, 31st, and 32nd chapters of the Holy Qurān, as standing for ʿālī, ʿālamān, ʿālī, ʿālamān, ʿālī, ʿālamān, i.e. I am Allah, the best Knower, alif standing for anā, lām for Allāh, and mīm for al-lāmi (AH, IJ), being respectively the first, the middle, and the last letter of the words for which they stand. Others regard them as contractions for some Divine attributes. That they may also serve as the names of chapters is no ground for supposing that they carry no significance. The strange suggestion of Gollis that alif, lām, mīm stands for amr-ī, Muḥammad, which is said to mean at the command of Muḥammad, is not only devoid of authority but is also grammatically incorrect, and the correct Arabic equivalent would be bi-amr-ī, Muḥammad, which, however, does not give us the actual letters. Rodwell’s statement, made in his comment on the significance of the letter mīm occurring in the beginning of chapter 68, that “the meaning of this and of the similar symbols, throughout the Qurān, was unknown to the Muḥammadians themselves even in the first century,” is equally devoid of truth, for the significance of these letters can in most cases be traced to the companions of the Holy Prophet, and hence the suggestion that these were “private marks or initial letters attached by their proprietor to the copies furnished to Zaid, when effecting his recension of the text under ‘Ugūmān” is not even worth consideration, and it is further opposed to the surest historical testimony, which proves beyond all doubt that these letters were recorded as parts of these chapters in the time of the Holy Prophet himself.

12 Palmer translates the word gālika as that, and thinks that its rendering as this is an error, but as LL says: “Like as a person held in mean estimation is indicated by hāzā, which denotes a thing that is near, so, on account of its high degree of estimation, a thing that is approved is indicated by gālika, whereby one indicates a thing that is remote.” In other words, gālika does refer here to a remote thing, and should not be rendered as that, but it indicates the high estimation in which the Qurān is held.

13 The Qurān is here called al-kitāb, the Book. The root-word ḫitāb means he wrote and also he brought together (LL) and kitāb, or book, is a writing which is complete in itself. Thus a letter may also be called a kitāb, and in this sense the word occurs in 27: 28, 29. The application of the word kitāb to the Holy Qurān occurs in very early revelations, and the use of the word shows clearly that the Qurān was from the first to be a complete book, and one that existed not only in the memory of men but also in visible characters on writing material, for otherwise it could not be called al-kitāb. Thus there is conclusive internal evidence in the use of this word that its arrangement, without which it could not be called a book, was effected by the Holy Prophet for himself, and the copy prepared by Zaid in the time of Abū Bakr followed that arrangement. For the explanation of the word Qurān see foot-note 238.

14 I make a departure here from the rendering of the word muttāqī, which English-translators generally render into God-fearing or pious. The root is waqā, and conveys the sense of saving, guarding, or preserving (LL). According to Ṭaqī, wāqiyāh signifies the guarding of a thing from that which harms or injures it. The verb of which muttāqī is the nominative form is illtāqī, which means, he preserved or guarded himself exceedingly.

"In the conventional language of the law," according to LL, "he preserved or guarded himself exceedingly from sin or what would harm him in the world to come." Hence the word muttāqī may properly be translated only as one who guards himself (against evil), or one who is careful (of his duty).
3 Those who believe in the unseen and keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them; 17
4 And who believe in that which has been revealed to you and that which was revealed before you, and they are sure of the hereafter. 19

15 Al-ghāib is that which is unseen or unperceivable by the ordinary senses, such as the existence of Allah, the certainty of which is obtained through Divine revelation. To render it as mysteries of faith, as Sale has done, is to introduce the Christian formulas of mysteries into the clear principles of Islam. As regards the acceptance of the unseen, it must be borne in mind that every science is based on certain fundamental principles, the truth of which is actually witnessed only in the result.

16 Ṣalāt among the Arabs stood for supplication or prayer, as Āśāh says, speaking of wine: وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ الْرِّجْلَ فِي ذَلِكَ نَصْرُهُ وَصَلِّ عَلَى ذَلِكَ وَارْتِسَمْ i.e. and he exposed it to the wind in its jar, and he prayed over its jar and petitioned for it (II). Similarly in another verse the same poet says,

لَيْهَا حَارَسَ لا يُبِيرَ الدِّينَ بِنِيَّتِهَا وَأَنَّهُ ذَلِكَ عَلَى هَلَكَتِهِ i.e. he prayed for her (II). In Islam Ās-ṣalāt assumed a regularity and a form, and became an established institution of religion, for details of which see Preface. The verb used to indicate the observance of ṣalāt is throughout the Holy Qur-ān aqāma, from اَقَامَ الْعَمَّ اَمْرُ i.e. he kept a thing or an affair in a right state (LL), and hence it is not the mere observance of the form that the Qur-ān requires, but the keeping of it in a right state, i.e. being true to the spirit of the prayer. It should, however, be borne in mind that besides the regular service, which is performed five times a day and which is obligatory, there is ample room for the individual in the Muslim ṣalāt for the outpouring of the heart’s sentiments. It may also be added that prayer, according to the Holy Qur-ān, is the true means of the purification of the heart, for “prayer keeps one away from indecency and evil” (29:45).

17 Spending out of what one has been given stands here for charity in its broadest sense, or the doing of good to all creatures. Like its other institutions useful to humanity, Islam has given a regularity and a permanence to the institution of charity. No one can enter into the brotherhood of Islam unless and until he is willing to give annually a part of his wealth for the support of the poorer members of the brotherhood. The part thus required to be paid into the public funds is called Zakāt, which is a kind of tax, amounting generally to a fortieth portion of certain possessions—a tax which is levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor. The conditions subject to which it is made obligatory, and other details, will be found in the Appendix. Besides the obligatory payment, however, the expression used here includes voluntary charitable acts of every kind, from a complete devotion of oneself to the cause of humanity to a smile to one’s fellow-being; the last is included in the definition of charity according to an express saying of the Holy Prophet.

18 Of all the religions of the world Islam is the only one that laid down the broad basis of faith in all the prophets of the world, and the recognition of truth in all religions is its distinctive characteristic. The words that which was revealed before you include revelations to all the nations of the world; for we are elsewhere told that “there is not a people but a warner has gone among them” (35:21). The Qur-ān does not, however, 19, see next page.
5 These are on a right course from their Lord, and these it is that shall be successful.
6 Surely those who disbelieve it being alike to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, will not believe.
7 Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and there is a covering over their eyes, and there is a great chastisement for them.

mention all the prophets by their names, for “there are some of them that We have mentioned to you, and there are others whom We have not mentioned to you” (40:78). It should also be noted that the word anzala (inf. n. inzāl), which occurs here in connection with revelation, is frequently used in the Qur’ān in the simple sense of ṣāl or ṣalāh, i.e. the making a thing attain or arrive at or come to a certain place, and does not necessarily imply sending down. Hence, wherever the word is used in connection with Divine messages, I have translated it as revealed, because revelation is the form in which Divine messages are communicated to men. It should also be noted that the singular personal pronoun kuf has been translated as you, while the exact sense of the original is given in the margin invariably.

19 A belief in a life after death is the last of the five fundamental principles of Islam that are stated here. It is only this belief that can make the generality of men conscious of the responsibility of human actions. A life after death, according to Islam, implies a state of existence which begins with death, but a complete manifestation of which takes place later, when the fruits of the actions done in this life take their final shape. It should be borne in mind that a belief in Allah and a belief in the hereafter, being respectively the first and the last of the fundamental principles of Islam as mentioned here, often stand for a belief in all the fundamental principles of Islam, as in vv. 8, 62, etc. That the word akhirat does not signify the later revelation is made clear by a comparison with a similar use of the word elsewhere, as, for instance, in 13:37, where Joseph is made to say: “Surely I have forsaken the religion of a people who do not believe in Allah and they are deniers of the hereafter”; or in 27:3: “Who keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, and of the hereafter they are sure.” In fact, it is quite unwarranted to take al-akhirat as meaning some particular revelation to be granted after the Holy Prophet, for the door to revelation is open to all the followers of the Holy Prophet, and thousands have been made to drink deep at this source.

20 The passage is parenthetical (AH), and should be translated as such. The ordinary rendering of the passage, which makes the parenthetical passage an enunciative one, makes the verse meaningless, for it would then run thus: “Surely those who disbelieve, it is alike to them whether you warn them or do not warn them; they will not believe.” Now this amounts to saying that no one who has once disbelieved would ever believe, a statement which is absurd on the face of it. Treating the portion quoted above as parenthetical, the meaning is quite clear, viz. disbelievers of a particular type, i.e. those who pay no heed at all to the Prophet’s warning, cannot benefit by his preaching. This interpretation makes the passage agree with the spirit of the Holy Qur’ān. Otherwise the preaching of the Qur’ān would be meaningless, for as a matter of fact it was from among those who disbelieved first that the converts to Islam were continually gained.

21 It should be noted that only those disbelievers are spoken of here who so hardened their hearts as not to pay any heed to the Prophet’s preaching and warning, as clearly indicated in the previous verse. It is not on every heart that the seal is set, but only on
SECTION 2

Lip-profession

8-16. The hypocrites and their indulgence in mischief and mockery.
17-20. Two parables.

8 And there are some people who say: We believe in Allah and the last day; and they are not at all believers.
9 They desire to deceive Allah and those who believe, and they deceive only themselves and they do not perceive.
10 There is a disease in their hearts, so Allah added to their disease, and they shall have a painful chastisement because they lied.

that of the reprobate, the hardened sinners who pay no heed to the call of the reformer. They refuse to open their hearts to receive the truth, and do not lend their ears to listen to it nor use their eyes to distinguish the truth from the falsehood. This is stated clearly in 7:179: "They have hearts with which they do not understand, and they have eyes with which they do not see, and they have ears with which they do not hear: they are as cattle." And in 41:5 we have: "And they say, Our hearts are under coverings from that to which you call us, and there is a heaviness in our ears and a veil hangs between us and you." A comparison with these two verses is sufficient to show that what is indicated by "the setting of the seal on the hearts and hearing" in the first case is indicated in the second by "the possession of hearts with which they do not understand, and ears with which they do not hear," and in the third by "their hearts being under coverings and their ears having a heaviness in them." Thus the significance of "their hearts being sealed" is simply this, that they pay no heed to the Prophet's warning, and refuse to understand and hear what he says, and so their very refusal becomes the sealing of their hearts and ears. And as Allah made them taste the consequences of their heedlessness, He is spoken of as having sealed their hearts and ears.

22 Belief in Allah and the last day is here equivalent to the profession of the faith of Islam. See foot-note 19. The persons spoken of in this verse are the hypocrites, who were a source of constant trouble to the Holy Prophet at Medina. Before he came to that city, Abdulla bin Ubayy was a person of note there, and he expected to become the leader. But the Holy Prophet's advent, and his recognition by all the communities of that city as the head of the republic there, robbed Abdulla of those dearly cherished hopes, and he along with his followers adopted an attitude of hypocrisy towards the Holy Prophet and his companions. The case of the hypocrites is dealt with at length here, in 3:148-150, 4:60-152, 9:38-127, and in the 63rd chapter, and occasionally elsewhere.

23 Khadda'a-ha signifies he strove, endeavoured or desired to deceive him (LL). . . .

One says this of a man when he has not attained his desire, for many a verb of the measure of fa'al'a relates to one only as in the instance of عاقبت الله i.e. I pursued the thief (LA-LL). Khadda'a also indicates, when used concerning the Divine Being, He requited to him his deceit (TA-LL). See further foot-notes 27 and 637. But note that khadda'a also means taraka (Q), i.e. he forsook, as in خادع الجلد i.e. he forsook glory

24, see next page.
11 And when it is said to them, Do not make mischief in the land, they say: We are but peacemakers.
12 Now surely they themselves are the mischief-makers, but they do not perceive.\textsuperscript{26}
13 And when it is said to them, Believe as the people believe, they say: Shall we believe as the fools believe? Now surely they themselves are the fools, but they do not know.
14 And when they meet those who believe, they say, We believe; and when they are alone with their devils,\textsuperscript{28} they say: Surely we are with you, we were only mocking.
15 Allah shall pay them back their mockery,\textsuperscript{27} and He leaves them alone in their inordinacy, blindly wandering on.

(TA-LL), and similarly khada'a means he refrained, as in (S-LL).

24 The disease is the pain in their hearts due to the advent of the Holy Prophet, for it deprived them of leadership. Allah's adding to this disease signifies that their pain became greater as they witnessed the triumphant progress of Islam. As for attributing this addition to Allah, compare 71:5, where Noah is made to say: "But my call has only made them fly the more." The increase in the disease or the aversion was the result of their own act in each case, but as Allah's raising the Prophet and the triumph of his cause or the invitation of the Prophet became the respective occasions of that act, Allah or the invitation is spoken of as the effective cause. Similarly in 93:5 it is said: "Then we render him the lowest of the low"); whereas the degradation is the result of man's own action and the Divine Being only brings about the consequences of the evil that man does. Or the disease here stands for the weakness of their hearts (AH), for they had not the courage to deny Islam openly, and this weakness only became the greater as the cause of Islam became more and more triumphant.

25 Their idea of making peace was only this, that they mixed with both parties, but they were really taking advantage of this opportunity to sow the seeds of dissension and mischief among the various parties. In fact, they were a constant source of mischief, for whereas outwardly they were with the Muslims, they always plotted against them and gave help to their enemies.

26 By their shajāṭin or devils are meant their evil companions, as plainly stated in v. 76: "And when they meet those who believe they say, We believe; and when they are alone with another they say," etc.; where, instead of being alone with their devils, they are spoken of as being alone with others from among themselves. Imaad says that by their devils are meant their leaders in unbelief (II). This significance is given in the margin. Kf and Ba say by their shajāṭin or devils are meant those men who made themselves like the devils in insolence and rebellion. In fact, in the Arabic language the word shajāṭ (devil) signifies, as A'Ub puts it, "every insolent or rebellious one from among the jinn and the men and the beasts (Rgh). Hence the word is freely used to indicate insolent men, serpents," etc.

27 The word istiḥād occurring in this verse is thus explained by Kf: The meaning is,
TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY QUR-ÁN

world over, and of a book which is considered by such a great mass of humanity to be the Final Word of God as revealed to His Last Prophet—a book, of moral, social, and religious guidance, of undoubted authenticity, purity, and sublimity.

THE EXCELLENCE OF THE HOLY AL-QUR-ÁN

THE TESTIMONY OF WESTERN WRITERS

"When once you get this Qur-án fairly off, the essential type of it begins to disclose itself, and in this there is a merit quite other than the literary one. If a book come from the heart, it will contrive to reach all other hearts; all art and authorcraft are of small amount to that. One would say the primary character of the Qur-án is that of its genuineness of its being a bona-fide book. Sincerity, in all senses, seems to me the merit of the Qur-án; it is, after all, the first and last merit in a book; gives rise to merits of all kinds—nay, at bottom, it alone can give rise to merit of any kind."—CARLYLE.

"The Mohammedan law is binding upon all, from the crowned head to the meanest subject; it is a law interwoven with a system of the wisest, the most learned, and the most enlightened jurisprudence that ever existed in the world."—EDMUND BURKE (Impeachment of Warren Hastings).

"The Qur-án contains pure, elevated, and benignant precepts."

"The creed of Mohammad is free from the suspicion of ambiguity, and the Qur-án is a glorious testimony to the unity of God."—GIBBON.

"The Qur-án abounds with arguments drawn from Nature and Providence: with a view to prove the existence of God, as the Supreme Ruler, and to enforce His sovereign claim on the obedience and gratitude of mankind. The retribution of good and evil in the life to come, the obligation to follow virtue and eschew vice, the duty and happiness of the creature in worshipping and serving the Creator, and such-like topics, are set forth in language of beauty and vigour, abounding often with real poetry. Thus, also, the reasonableness of the Resurrection is taught by many forcible considerations, and especially by the analogy, so striking in southern climes, of the earth, long dry and dead, quickened suddenly into exuberant life by the copious rain from heaven."—WILLIAM MUIR.

"Within a confined circle the code of the Qur-án makes doubtless a deeper impression than has been made on Christianity by the code of the Bible."—DEAN STANLEY.

"We may well say the Qur-án is one of the grandest books ever written. . . . Such a work is a problem of the highest interest to every thoughtful observer of the destinies of mankind."—DR. STEINGOSS.

"That part of Islam . . . which most distinctly reveals the mind of its author is also its most complete and its most shining part. We mean the Ethics of the Qur-án. They are not found,
THE HOLY QUR-ÁN

With English Translation and Commentary, printed on high-class India paper, and bound in green flexible leather, is now ready. Price 20s. Prospectus and sample pages sent free on application. Cloth-bound Edition, price 16s., postage extra. Prices in India: India paper, Rs. 20; cloth bound, Rs. 17. Apply in India to Ishaat-Islam Office, Nowlakha, Lahore. For Press comments see overleaf.

Qur-án Class.—Lessons from the Qur-án every Friday at the Muslim House (111, Campden Hill Road, W. 8) at 7 p.m., and every Wednesday at the Mosque, Woking, at 7 p.m. By Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, B.A., LL.B. No fees charged.

Arabic Class (to study Arabic language).—Conducted by Mr. SYED EHSAN EL-BAKRI, at Muslim House, every Friday, at 8 p.m. No fees charged. More lessons by arrangement.

Friday Prayer and Sermon.—At the London Muslim House, every Friday, 1.30 p.m. By Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din.

Service, Sermon and Lectures every alternate Saturday and Sunday at the Muslim House, 111, Campden Hill Road, W. 8, and every Sunday at the Mosque, Woking. For syllabus see the reverse.
NOTES

At the urgent request of a large number of friends interested to know more of Islam, and who regarded our fortnightly Sunday lectures at the London Muslim House as not sufficient to satisfy the need, we have arranged from the first week of April to give a series of discourses on the “Study of Islam” on every other Saturday—the day of our At Home—which function is followed by a short speech by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din in the Muslim House Lecture Room, on some prominent feature of Islam; then questions are invited from the audience, to which he makes reply. The discussions which thus follow have proved very interesting and lively. These discourses, as well as other lectures in the Muslim House, are delivered on the constructive lines, in order to give the audience a clear and systematic insight into the practical side of Islam. We give below our syllabus of lectures and services held during the month of April.

7th April, at 3.15. The Mosque, Woking. By Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din. Subject: “Prayer.”

6th April, Saturday, at 5 p.m. London Muslim House. Study of Islam. Short speech by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, followed by questions and answers. Subject: “Articles of Faith in Islam.”

14th April, Sunday, at 3.15 p.m. London Muslim House. Service and Sermon by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din. Subject: “Muslim Prayer—Meditation in Silence.”

14th April, at 3.15. The Mosque, Woking. By Mr. Abdul Qayum Malik, B.A. Subject: “Islamic Outlook on Life.”

20th April, Saturday, at 5 p.m. London Muslim House. Study of Islam. Short speech by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, followed by questions and answers. Subject: “Five Pillars of Islam.”

21st April, at 3.15. The Mosque, Woking. By Mr. Ch. Salman Schleich. Subject: “Hopes and Rewards through Actions.”

28th April, at 3.15. The Mosque, Woking. By Mr. Abdul Qayum Malik, B.A. Subject: “Muhammad the Best Model.”

28th April, Sunday, at 3.15 p.m. London Muslim House. Service and Sermon by Marmaduke Pickthall, Esq. Subject: “The Kingdom of God.”
OTHER LECTURES.
21st April. Lecture by KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN at Fulham Spiritualist Circle, 12, Lettice Street, Munster Road, W. 6. Subject: "What is Islam?—peace and way to peace."

25th April. Lecture by KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN at 17, Prince Henry's Room, Fleet Street, E.C., before the Cercle d'Études Ethnographique. Subject: "Arabic, the Language of Religion."

We have also started the Qur-án class, which, as its very name shows, is bound to have a very useful future before it. Muslims as well as others who are interested in the study of the Greatest Book are made welcome, and no fees are charged.

As an auxiliary to the above, an Arabic class is also held, instructions at which are also imparted gratis. The class is conducted by Syed Ehsan-el-Bakri, of Egypt.

THE LONDON MUSLIM SOCIETY.—On the 4th of April, Mr. Zahiruddin read a paper on the ever fascinating yet unsolved problem of the Unity of East and West. From a complete breadth of vision with which he handled his subject, and a large mass of telling arguments with which he developed his discourse, it was obvious he had done full justice to his task.

ADHESIONS TO ISLAM.—We are glad to announce that two members of a respectable Hebrew family—a gentleman and his daughter—have signified their acceptance of the Holy Faith of Islam.

As we are going to press for our June number a month in advance, we give below our

SYLLABUS OF LECTURES AND SERMONS FOR JUNE.
1st June, Saturday, at 5 p.m., at the London Muslim House. Study of Islam. "Almsgiving in Islam." By KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN, followed by questions and answers.

2nd June, Sunday, at 3.15 p.m., at The Mosque, Woking. Sermon and Service by KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.

9th June, Sunday, at 3.15 p.m., at the London Muslim House. Lecture on Islam. By Mr. MARMADUKE PICKTHALL.

9th June, Sunday, at 3.15 p.m., at The Mosque, Woking. "Human Fellowship in Islam." By Mr. ABDUL QAYUM MALIK.

15th June; Saturday; at 6 p.m., at the London Muslim House. Study of Islam. "Islam in Daily Life (in Family Relationship)." By KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN, followed by questions and answers.
16th June, Sunday, at 3.15 p.m., at The Mosque, Woking. Sermon and Service by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din.

23rd June, Sunday, at 3.15 p.m., at the London Muslim House. Service and Sermon by Rt. Hon. Lord Headley.

23rd June, Sunday, at 3.15 p.m., at the Mosque, Woking. "The Pilgrimage—a Movement for World-Federation of Nations." By Mr. Abdul Qayum Malik.

29th June, Saturday, at 5 p.m., at the London Muslim House. Study of Islam. "Prohibitions." By Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, followed by questions and answers.

30th June, Sunday, at 3.15 p.m., at The Mosque, Woking. Sermon and Service by Mr. C. S. Schleich.

OTHER LECTURES.


The readers would remember our note of the last month about the shortage of paper and our intention of publishing the June and July numbers together. As the Holy Month of Ramadan begins on the 10th of June, and we are anxious to publish the June number containing an article on "Fasting" in time, we had to publish it early, though in a reduced bulk. It is a trifle less than its usual size, but contains a full quantity of the matter. We would, however, publish the July and August numbers together later on.

"CHRISTIANITY'S FAILURE"

STRIKING SERMON AT THE CITY TEMPLE

"Christ is the most maligned character in history, maligned by none so much as by those who most readily call him Lord!"

"Conventional Christianity is a continuous crucifixion of Christ.

"These two utterances were embodied in a sensational sermon preached at the City Temple by the Rev. V. T. Pomeroy, of Bradford. For long, he said, thinking people had felt that something was lacking in the Christian Church, and with the crash of war it had become increasingly apparent that something was wrong, dangerously. Very evident had it become that conventional Christianity, as it was understood by laity and clergy alike, was not adequate for the wants of the world. It stood as a block instead of as an inspiration towards progress."
A soldier acquaintance of the preacher had written to him saying, 'I was beginning to think that God was dead, and then came the glorious news from Russia.' Yet what part had the Church played in this great Revolution, this great movement for the good of millions of long-suffering people? None!"

The above is from a London paper, and the words quoted are from an English clergyman. They speak for themselves. In the columns of the Islamic Review it has been pointed out many a time that the Christianity of the Church is more than a useless institution. It is positively harmful. From a religious point of view it is pernicious because it replaces the One God of Moses with three gods supposed to be in one, because it has re-introduced heathen beliefs and rites in the purified monotheism, because it teaches the worship of a man. It is morally harmful because it takes away the responsibility of persons from their shoulders and puts it upon that of one man—Jesus Christ; because it introduces the theory of original sin, teaches man that he can secure salvation, not by his own good acts, but simply by an absurd and degrading belief in a filial murder or crucifixion. Socially, Christianity has degraded woman sex, and politically it has supported Cæsarly autocracy. Christianity has been responsible for most tortuous persecutions, murders, and inquisitions. In its more influential days it has always been an obstacle to all scientific progress and to every social or political reform.

Even lately many a Christian protested against the prohibition of alcohol in European countries. The conscientious verdict of many in England has been against the present war, as they consider fighting to be unchristian, though the broad fact is that the largest quantity of human blood has been spilt by such peoples and nations who call themselves Christians. There is no doubt that it is the Christians themselves who have acted most contrarily to the noble teachings of Christ. In fact, through their belief the purpose of the creation of such a noble soul in this world has been set at naught. They have deified him, and thus made him inaccessible to humanity, to reform and elevate which he was sent as a Messenger or Prophet of the merciful God. No Christian who believes Christ to be the only son of God can ever think of following his example, even in such
virtues which can be rightly attributed to him. They believe that the object of creating Christ was simply to put him to a disgraceful death. In their belief he was never meant to be an example to the sons and daughters of Eve, who have inherited their sinful nature from her. Therefore they do not care to study the life of Christ, or even to make sure what that was. The writers of the New Testament did not think it worth while to see that they do not contradict each other. The New Testament does not contain any such guidance for man which would make him a useful citizen of any advanced State, which would teach him how to secure the best form of government or how to lay down such practical laws that would ensure the freedom, the sobriety, the purity, and the progress of nations. There are certainly some beautiful ethical dogmas in the New Testament, as there are in those other sacred books which are attributed to those saintly men who came centuries before Christ. But there is nothing in the Christianity as known to us upon which any democratic government can be based. Christianity as a religion never did anything to discourage even slavery. It never taught man to respect liberty. Woman, according to Christian saints, was nothing but a deadly evil—man and woman both miserable sinners. Christianity has no doubt proved an utter failure, and this through no fault of that grand and noble soul—Jesus Christ, Son of Mary.

AL-QIDWAL.

SIMPPLICITY OF FAITH

By Lord Headley.

When my dear brother Khwaja Kamaluddin asked me to give a short address on “Simplicity of Faith” I was very pleased, though I felt that I had not really sufficient time on hand to do justice to the subject. It is not a simple matter at all to deal with the simplicity of a particular religion without touching on the complications of other religions and running great risk of offending the susceptibilities of others on whom I should be very loath to inflict pain. Nevertheless in these terrible days, when we are all faced

This lecture was delivered by Rt. Hon. Lord Headley at London Muslim House on Sunday, the 17th March.
with deadly peril, plain speaking should be permitted and honest conviction treated with leniency: we may none of us have much longer in which to speak the truth, and it is better to speak out boldly whilst we can.

Many golden opportunities of doing good and advancing the welfare of the race have been lost through a fear of what others may think, say, or do. If we know that we wish to do good, that alone should be sufficient to give us courage to advance any sound proposition.

Not so long ago I made so bold as to mention one of the articles in the recent issue of the ISLAMIC REVIEW to a very narrow-minded lady who has so persistently refused to learn anything at all beyond the teaching of her earliest youth (in religious matters) that she still thinks that we Muslims are heathens with lots of wives and that we worship Muhammad. The result of my temerity was quite unexpected: she suddenly assumed a cataleptic attitude and begged me to say no more because it gave her such agony to hear of such things. In the face of such bigotry and want of perception one is puzzled: of course I said no more. Religion, or that compelling conviction which binds us to a particular line of conduct in all our dealings with ourselves and our fellow-creatures, may be simple and easily understood by the whole community or it may be rendered complicated to suit certain aims and objects altogether outside plain "Duty to God and neighbour."

Ever since those early days when human sacrifices were carried out with such revolting cruelty it has been the aim of certain persons professing special knowledge of the future state to secure for their own benefit certain temporal advantages.

In quite the earliest days of man's advent—long before the formation of any of the "religions" as we now know them—it was thought necessary to propitiate an angry god by a bloody sacrifice which was carried out in the following manner: A young man of special beauty and promise was selected and was fed up and given all the good things possible for a certain number of weeks: he was then conducted to the top of a hill and bound tightly to a stone slab; a priest then advanced and cut out his heart with a flint knife.
The bleeding heart was then held up towards the sky, and the people exclaimed, "Now is the angry god appeased." Of course it never occurred to the poor benighted creatures that a god who could only be propitiated by the horrible commission of a cruel murder was not one to be respected or loved: no, the priest, having gained his power by occult methods, persuaded the credulous people to believe in a loathsome god of his own imagination.

One can easily imagine the primitive man worshipping the sun, the moon, or the stars, or even a beautiful flower or tree, for there is something very attractive in the pantheistic idea of seeing the infinite power and beauty of God in all His wonderful works: no doubt the priest had very little difficulty in deflecting this natural human tendency to worship that which is above human comprehension to a belief in an occult deity whose ear he, the priest, alone had access to.

History teems with examples of successful manipulation of the "bogey" or angry god ever ready to pounce upon the erring and the fallen. Priestcraft very soon developed into a fine art, and, as human nature is ever apt to err, the opportunities for the exercise of sacerdotal authority have never for a moment failed from the days when the heart was cut out of the living man down to the present day, when the Christian Religion deliberately consigns to everlasting damnation—a far worse punishment than the cutting out of the heart—all those who cannot believe certain dogmatic assertions respecting sacraments, the divinity of Christ, the Trinity, etc. Thus it will be seen that a very complicated fabric was soon erected by the exercise of a little priestly cunning. Professing absolute power and the ability to pardon the erring, the priest adopted this line of argument with his flock: "Now, my poor friends, you are all born in sin; you are soon to appear before an angry god who will burn you in hell-fire, as you so richly deserve for daring to come into this world. You are even as worms, and there is no health in you, so you must infallibly be damned everlastingly: yet no—I can save you if you do what I tell you and believe all I teach you, but there are a great many conditions. You must unhesitatingly swallow all the dogmas and especially that one respecting the divinity of Christ, without a firm
belief in which even I cannot possibly save you. You are then to believe that Christ was or is GOD, but that GOD caused him to be put to a cruel death in order to propitiate Himself in respect to some failure on the part of mankind to come up to the specification ordained by the Great Creator who is also GOD. You need not say that you understand this, but you must believe it just as you would have to believe me if I told you that the earth was flat and the moon was a paralleloiped. I am an ordained priest of God, and you have no right to question anything I tell you. But I may as well mention that although I am chiefly concerned with your souls my interest in your temporal affairs is also considerable, and should not be neglected by any means. You must believe in the sacraments as being necessary to salvation, and the holy Fathers of the Church have also piled up a very considerable amount of controversial matter which will tend to make you doubt everything you ever did or saw or thought."

All this does not spell SIMPLICITY; it has always seemed to me that this complicating and confusing the points that really matter with those of minor importance has been effected in order to give priests work to do in order to justify their continuance in their so-called sacred office. Do not misunderstand my meaning. There have been good and saintly men in priestly offices and there is good in all the great religions of the world, but, take it all round, sacerdotal influence has tended to complicate beliefs and too often has led to bids for temporal power.

The idolatrous practices which prevailed in Arabia before the Holy Prophet Muhammad came into power were horrible in the extreme, but he immediately effected a change:—

1. He forgave all his enemies who fell into his power, and thus secured their love and support.
2. He broke up all the hideous idols with which Mecca was surrounded.
3. He abolished infanticide. (It had been the practice of the benighted people to bury their female infants alive at the feet of these idols.)
4. He regulated polygamy.
5. He laid down rules of life, gave the people sunk in darkness a religion of grand simplicity.
In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the great reformer Martin Luther followed up in north Europe what Muhammad had started over nine hundred years before in Arabia, viz., the clearing away of that which was founded on superstition and bigotry and putting in its place a faith of simple trust and belief in God.

It will hardly be denied that the elder branch of the Christian Church is complicated because of the numerous channels through which the Almighty has to be approached. The invocation of saints, the intervention of priests, the intercession of the Virgin Mary, are all so many stepping-stones without using which the Almighty should not be approached; and the advanced High Church party in the Church of England follows closely on the steps of the Church of Rome.

Allowing that the Christian Churches have spread light in dark places and advanced civilization in a wonderful manner, it by no means follows that they would not have done even better had they not been hampered by the dogmas imposed by zealots at various times during which the fabric was being, so to speak, built up. Now all the great religions inculcate the importance of our Duty to our God and our Duty to our Neighbour, and I think I may say that any one carrying out this great precept in life may hope for salvation after his departure from this life—to whichever religious denomination he may belong. For example, suppose we educate a child from the very earliest age to obey the commandments and believe in God and be good and true to all around him, but at the same time made him believe that his future salvation also depended upon a firm belief that the moon was made of green cheese—what would be the result?

We should have inculcated perfectly good principles and made a good citizen of the child; but we should have also insulted his intelligence and stretched his capacity for belief to breaking-point. By leading him to suppose that salvation is impossible without the adoption of the green-cheese theory we should infallibly lead him to ask questions which would very probably lead to his rejection of the whole of the religion which could impose such a belief as a necessity to salvation. Therefore I say it is incumbent on all of us to seek a religion which is free from very gross improbabilities and which holds out hope of Divine pity and aid to all who earnestly look to the One Great God and seek to do His Will and obey His laws.

When I am told that I am a miserable sinner I recognize much truth in the remark and accept it, but when I am told that the GOD I praise and worship will not receive me into His fold because I cannot believe certain dogmatic teachings of a particular Church I resent it as being altogether antagonistic to the very idea of a God of Mercy. Certainly we shall all be punished for our sins—the very commission of evil deeds brings its own punishment in the shape of remorse; but to tell people that they will be damned eternally because
they cannot swallow hideously improbable stories invented by those who were engaged in building up this or that particular form of worship is certainly insulting to the intelligence.

Almost the first letter I received after becoming a Muslim was one in which the writer put it quite plainly: "If you do not believe in the Divinity of Christ you cannot be saved." Only think of it: the unfairness; the downright cruelty! Here am I, a poor little mortal, created and placed in this world by a BEING so great, so wise, so merciful, and so mighty that I am unable to form even an estimate of my own idea of His Majesty, suddenly informed that it was very wicked of me to be born in sin and to be a child of wrath, and that so awfully wicked am I that nothing but the slaughter of an entirely innocent person can possibly save me. I am then told that my sins are of such an awful nature that my Maker (who presumably knows most about my construction and sin-capacity) has decided that He ought to be propitiated, and that in order that the sacrifice may be sufficiently important to satisfy Him and appease His anger, He has decided to put him to a somewhat cruel death by crucifixion. It should be remembered that this punishment is nothing to the other punishments inflicted from time to time by such pious institutions as the Holy Inquisition, e.g. the rack, tearing out the eyes with red-hot pincers, etc.; and it must be remembered also that the individual chosen was none other than the only son of this angry God and that this only son then became God, who could, of course, feel no pain.

So that it really comes to this: I have to believe that in order to bribe himself to be kind to me God has to consent to a very cruel sacrifice. Of course the question arises: Was God always thus cruel and unfair? Was He so before the creation of man?

The objects of "religions" seem to have been to raise doubts and ambiguities and controversies. Many of them are good, but why not choose the best? Why not adopt that simple Faith which, looking steadfastly to Allah the Lord of all creatures and begging His aid, surrenders all to Him and obeys His injunctions respecting good citizenship?

When the rich young man, addressing Christ as "Good Master," asked what good thing he should do in order to secure eternal life, the reply was: "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

The religion which runs entirely with Christ's teaching is not far from us; it appeals to all, it is free from dogmas, it is free from sacerdotalism, which is nearly always self-interested, and it does not condemn those who think differently to everlasting flames.

This religion is one of pure Faith in God alone and in good works. Islam is that religion, and we should all pray that it may soon become the universal and rational religion of the whole world.
THE EVOLUTION OF A MAN

By N. Stephen, A.S.P., F.P.C. (Lond.)

"Man is his own star, and that soul that can
Be honest, is the only Perfect Man."

FLETCHER.

In the course of my fairly long life I have often been impressed by the way in which many students look for the cause of certain things, as though there were but one cause. A longer study, on broader lines, would soon show them that it is very rarely that any great or widespread effect is brought about by any single cause; if it were so, many problems would be easy of solution.

No, the things that matter are not so simple as that; they are the result of many causes, some great, some small, some even most contradictory, but all having their little say in the final result.

I lately listened to a long discussion as to the cause of religious decay, and the growing carelessness of the masses on that subject. There were some able speakers, and one said one cause and one another, nearly all of which were contributory; and at last a speaker rose and said, "It seems to me all these are trifles; there must be one primary cause, if we could find it, and I think it is a growth of indifference"; and so we have travelled in a circle and lost sight of the cause, to find ourselves back at the effect, for is not carelessness and indifference the same thing, or idea, in another form of words?

Why is this? It is because there is no one primary cause; but there are many causes, trifles perhaps, the cumulative effect of which is seen in a growing carelessness as to religious services or instruction.

So in the evolution of a man, there are many influences at work, some good, some bad, but all leaving their impress more or less strongly on the final product. There is a certain river some thirty miles from here (Liverpool) which I know well from its source to the sea; but let me use it as an allegory of man's life.

It rises among some limestone rocks in a lonely nook far from human dwelling, a pure, limpid stream, clear as crystal, flowing over a stony bed for some miles without visible change; then it receives the waters of a tributary stream which has come over the peat moss, and our river takes on a measure of its colour: it is no longer so clear, but is tinged with the brown of the peat. It is still a clean and pleasant river, but never quite the same as in those first miles: a new influence has entered into it which can never be quite got rid of. A little farther, another stream flows in, and this has come through farmlands and low-lying, muddy places, and when it joins our river that river loses its clarity, becomes less beautiful and more opaque, and its banks are no longer clean, for our river as it flows leaves along them the marks of its impurities in deposits of mud and refuse. And now it nears a large town, and more streams run into it, and some of these bear the refuse of factories and some
THE EVOLUTION OF A MAN

the outflow of dye-works, and our river reaches the town black as ink and foul of smell (you may see it so to-day). So the river which was once a pleasure to the eye and a source of health to the body has become an offence and a danger—all the resources of science have been called in to purify it, but only with partial success; and so on again it flows through fields to sandy flats, receiving many little streams of pure water which dilute its impurities, and at last it reaches the sea, God's mighty purifier. At first it discourts even that, but soon it is absorbed therein, and in ways known only to God made pure again.

So mote it be with all of us. Amen.

And this fairly pictures the evolution of man,² by which I mean not merely his bodily, physical growth, but the growth of all those higher faculties of thought and reason which place him at the head of creation as man and not mere animal, and which make him a responsible and in a large measure self-governing creature.

Alike and yet unlike, in what endless variety we see him: the noble and the debased, the sleek and the surly, the gentle and the vulgar, the sympathetic and the selfish, the clever and the commonplace, the good and the bad, but all men, growing together under similar conditions, yet so widely different. Why?

That is the problem; and the question is not What is the cause? because there is no one cause, but What are the causes? for they are many, and, like the tributaries of our river, they fall in at various stages and with varied effects on the progress of life's journey.

Consider, the earliest of these—hereditary transmission—which many claim to be the most powerful of all. What a puzzling, interesting, and withal evasive thing it is, governed by no known laws, yet as easy to recognize as it is impossible to explain.

In olden times, when other influences were fewer in number and less general in application, when life was a simpler and less complicated thing than it is to-day, I can believe this was the great factor in the making of a man, and so thought our forefathers, for they said, "What is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh," and in another and older form, "Like father, like son";

but twentieth-century views do not accept this, but rather the view that what we inherit is only a tendency to certain things, ways, or habits which may be overcome by the power of will of the person, or by the force of other influences. Then this law is so uncertain in its action, and, to use a florist's term, it is not always true to type. The son of a musician is not always (in fact not often) musically gifted, and the son of an athlete may be a decadent, and the reason of this is just the elusive thing we have so far failed to grasp.

I know that many seek to explain it by going back some generations to find a parallel, and talk about reverting or shooting back.

I use the word all through as sexually inclusive.
to the original stock; and there is much in favour of that view, for such revertting seems to be almost a law of nature; but in spite of this, the real power of these pre-natal influences, the things which govern them, are among our unsolved problems: we see the effects of them but cannot explain, much less control, them by education, by example, and other things. We can modify or regulate them, but this can only be done after birth; all that is pre-natal is beyond our reach: its work for good or evil is finished before human agency can act in any way. But note, its influence is universal: all men, savage or civilized, are subject to it. The savage knows no other leader; he follows his inherited likes and dislikes unchecked, and is much more like his father (mostly) than the man of more civilized and artificial surroundings; to use again that florist’s term, he “breeds more true to type,” but even here the student will find many curious and puzzling exceptions.

All our knowledge can carry us little beyond this, so why trouble? Let us leave pre-natal matters and come to the stage immediately after birth, where we really begin life’s battle and pilgrimage.

I think it was Confucius who first said, “Our death begins with our birth,” but Young has the same thought:

“While man is growing, life is in decrease,
Our cradles rock us nearer to the tomb;
Our birth is nothing but our death begun.”

Night-thoughts.

But that is a side-light. The condition of babyhood is common to all. As Mark Twain said: “We have not all the good fortune to be ladies, we cannot all be generals, or poets, or statesmen, but when we work down to babies we are on common ground.”

Yes, we have all been babies, “mere bundles of undeveloped possibilities,” and on the development or moulding of these possibilities depends the character of the man.

Note here that the civilized man is quite an artificial product; he is never born “ready made.” The embryonic intellect, the inherited passions in the child, are like clay on the potter’s wheel, to be moulded by skill into any form desired; but all his skill is not infallible, and may be brought to naught by some flaw in the clay or some failure in the firing. Still—

“’Tis granted, and no plainer fact appears,
Our most important are our earliest years.
The mind, imprecise and soft, with ease
Imbibes and copies what it hears and sees;
And through life’s labyrinth holds fast the clue.
That education gives it, false or true.”

Cowper.

That education gives it. What a mighty power, then, are home influences, varying in different countries, perhaps, but strong in all; here, long before the mind can grasp the meaning
of book or school, we begin to learn, while we possess only that
cracy of imitation which is part of our nature, and none of
the judgment which comes with more mature years, enabling
us to distinguish right from wrong, to choose the good and shun
the evil; while we are, in fact, as irresponsible as kittens or
lambs. What a responsibility, then, lies with parents, that
they should realize the vast importance of this period, when
men are all little hero-worshippers, striving to copy those they
love or admire.

It follows, then, that as our homes are, so shall we be our-
selves; you cannot expect a child reared in the midst of care-
lessness to be anything better than a careless man, and those
whose early years are spent amid pious and thoughtful
surroundings never entirely break away from the influences
of those early days. “As the twig is bent the tree is inclined,”
and all our later education is influenced by the habits and
tastes of those first impressions.

Allied to these are the influences of habits and companions,
and these two are so closely interwoven we may treat of them
together, for our habits are often formed on those of our com-
panions. How important, then, becomes the company we keep,
for as the proverb says, “He who lies down with dogs will get
up with fleas,” or again, “He who sits by the fire will smell
of the smoke,” so the influence of habit can hardly be exag-
gerated, for “man is a creature of habit.” The actions and
even the thoughts of many men are controlled by little else,
while all men feel, consciously or unconsciously, the “force of
habit,” and naturally fall into companionship with those of
similar tastes, and these habits and tastes are generally formed
early in life, and are very persistent. Some, of course, are
good, such as cleanliness, which is next to godliness, tidiness or
neatness both in work or person, punctuality; others are bad,
such as drunkenness, gambling, drug habits generally; but,
sad to say, the evil habits seem much stronger than the good,
and, once formed, much more difficult to overcome. And here
comes in the value of the wider education, when we learn
intellectually, more than by imitation, so we develop on larger
lines, learn that we must do, and decide, things for ourselves—in
other words, shoulder our responsibilities, and no longer expect
to have things arranged for us. But we are not yet quite inde-
pendent; there are rules and laws which must be kept to: we
are under discipline, and we shall be fortunate if that discipline
is wisely enforced, so as to teach us self-control, perhaps the
most important thing of all that goes to the evolution of a man,
for man’s greatest victory is to be master of himself, his habits,
his passions, his temper, all held subservient to his intellectual
powers, to his knowledge of right and wrong.

Here comes in the influence of religion, which in all its
forms—at least all its comparatively modern forms—teaches
us to distinguish right from wrong. I do not use the word
as to matters of faith or dogma, which may be very doubtful,
but in relation to its general teaching, and I say there is better
hope for the man of wrong religion than one of no religion
at all, for this is one of the great restraining influences of life, teaching us that if we do right we shall have reward, if wrong punishment. That "the sins of the fathers are visited upon their children" may be open to argument, but this is certain, "The deeds we do return to us again, to bring us our reward, or shame."

So you see many causes go to the evolution of man, some merely impulsive, some restraining, and the final man is largely, if not entirely, himself responsible for what he is. He cannot excuse himself on the ground of heredity, because that can be conquered or modified; it is no excuse to say, "I am the creature of habit," for habit is largely a matter of choice, and should always be under the control of our higher powers.

It must not be thought this exhausts the influences at work, but the limits of this paper only permit me to name such things as opportunity, the force of circumstances, which often keep a man tied to a position he is not suited to, even which he utterly dislikes, but the necessity of earning a living, especially in our large cities, has made a slave of many men, who have never had a chance to take the position they were intellectually fit for. Still, these are mostly the exceptions; man in most cases is "the arbiter of his own destiny." Circumstances are plastic, and the strong man can mould them to his desire in most cases.

Thus we see there are many things go to the evolution of a man, but when we ask, Why is this man what he is, and that man so different? we face a new problem which in most cases we cannot solve. You may say Kismet, but that is the answer of the weak, who make no effort, sit down satisfied with any excuse, and ask no questions; he is the man who has stopped short in his evolution. But "the man who dare be honest with himself," choosing the right, shunning the wrong, ever ready to seek the point he has missed, it may be unawares, and to pick it up, the man who stands to fight life's battle, not dream it, has carried evolution much farther, has reached a higher plane in the scale of growth, and may go on to perfection and grow to be a Man in all the honour and grandeur of true manhood, and, as Shakespeare said, "What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason, how infinite in faculty!" Noble in reason: there is the point. Nobility not in rank, but in thought and act; these go far to make the perfect man, and these are the things a man must choose for himself in all honesty of purpose and striving of fight; he can win through if he will, but, as Fletcher says:—

"Man is his own star, and that soul that can
Be honest, is the only Perfect Man."
THE STUDY OF ISLAM

V.

RAMADAN, OR THE MONTH OF FASTING

The Holy Month of Ramadan would begin on the tenth day of this month. The month is held in veneration by the Muslims the world over, and they observe fasting on all of its days. But the observance of keeping fasts is not peculiar to Muslims alone. Nearly all the great religions of the world have laid down this ordinance in one form or another, and in our own days there is a growing body of men who, although definitely uninterested in any religion, do recognize the wisdom and advantage of this practice. The peculiarity of Islam lies in this, that where it always presents all such of its features as are common to it and other religions in a highly purified and correct form, it has also laid down rules and regulations for the observance of fasting which clearly distinguish it from a mere ordeal of starving. These rules and regulations make it one of the most wonderful and ethical institutions that are yet known to men. The commencement of the Holy Month introduces in the Muslim world a visible change in their daily life. So far as the rules about the hours of partaking food go, a Muslim—after the new moon has risen—would take a breakfast before the dawn 1 of the next morning, and would abstain from taking anything till the sunset time of the day, and this course would be followed so long as the lunar month lasts. This feature of Islamic fasting is seemingly common to this institution in other religions, although there are some according to which the abstention from, or the partaking of, certain foods constitutes alone the observance. The same do help themselves to fruits, their juice, and some other similar refreshments. Islamic fasting, however, is an absolute and total abstention from taking anything to eat or drink. Islam besides prescribes injunctions which distinguish it from mere starvation. The Holy Preceptor of Islam has frequently said that mere abstention from food and drinks does not unveil the real significance of Islamic fasting. The verses of Al Qur-án which convey the injunction are explicit and to the point in their statement, which make it an institution for the improvement of the moral and spiritual condition of man. We

1 The time of sunrise in this country in the month of Ramadan will vary from 3.45 a.m. to 3.56 a.m. The time of dawn, therefore, for the purpose of keeping fast, according to light-saving hours, will be sometimes between 2.30 and 2.45 a.m.—Ed.
have given these verses and the commentary thereupon on pages 254–258.

In order to lay down the best course of escaping evil, Islam expects its follower to even abstain from those things during the month of Ramadan the use of which would be permissible to him at other times; and all this in the name of God of Mercy and Greatness. This indirectly enables him to practise in a very effective way the resistance to evil inclinations when he is capable of abstaining from all lawful indulgence during this month. During the time of fasting one has to give up all those connections which arise out of one's matrimonial state, as well as to resist every expression of this carnal instinct in man or woman. So that Islamic fasting does not merely mean the fasting of one's organs of receiving food, but also the fasting of eyes, ears, lips, etc. It constitutes the strict non-indulgence in any physical gratifications. According to the ways of the Holy Prophet, an observer of it should not merely keep his organs of doing and feeling from unlawful indulgence, but should on the other hand employ them in doing meritorious acts. One whofasts and cannot keep his eyes from casting lustful looks is not at all observing the rule. Likewise one who hears foul language or speaks it, or one whose limbs and organs move in unholliness, commits wrong and violates the sanctity of fasting. Islam puts a ban on evil thoughts and reflections. Islam expects its followers to develop to their fullest limit all those faculties in them which are noble and good; that is why the Holy Prophet, besides his habitual benevolence of disposition, was even more generous during the days of the Ramadan. He was foremost of all in giving with a free hand out of what he had. The Qur'án prescribes the same mode for the suppression of a passion like anger in man:—

"Wal kázimín alghaiz, wal 'áfín anannás, walláho yuhbbul muhsinín."

"The true believer is he who controls his anger and forgives peoples. Verily Allah loves those who are benefactors of their fellow-men."

As a matter of fact all our passions arise from our different natural appetites, and can never be killed; but directed in the right channels they will become assets of incalculable value to humanity. This is the reason why the Holy Book has enjoined upon every man not only to control his anger but also to exercise a little extra generosity towards the one who had been the cause of it; and to do so, particularly when a Muslim is fasting, constitutes part of his observance of the ordinance. He should, moreover, be bountiful in freely ministering out of his possessions to the wants of others. The exercise of all other noble qualities in the fasting month is especially recommended. A month thus spent in charity and abstinence would never fail to yield the best of results for the rest of the year. This fact holds good in regard to every other quality in man. Besides, if the eagerness to do the opposite of bad to the highest degree can create high order of morality, observance to a course of discipline like the Muslim fasting could never fail to build an enduring character in him for a whole lifetime.
Unfortunately injunctions like fasting have always been regarded in the Christian world as systems of mortification and penance—a necessary part, as they think, of the Old Covenant. To them such institutions therefore seem to be just ordinances descending upon ordinary mortals in the garb of religion from an all-powerful autocrat who takes delight in making his creatures suffer. And since according to Church theology man was incapable of bearing the burden of this heavy task—"the law," the latter became a source of malediction to him—Jesus came to relieve humanity from its baneful effect. A supreme penalty was paid to the Tasking Master—to relieve us from all kinds of penances and mortifications. A new covenant was entered into and "the Blood" placed a seal of confirmation on it.

What a misnomer of theology and a puerile and trite conception of religion! The real function of religion is the reform of our morals, and if the observance of fasting, such as is laid down by Islam, can and does promote this reform, can any atonement or intercession absolve us from the necessity of observing it? Islamic fasting happily is neither a mortification nor a course of wicked starvation. It is far from being that over which an impious tyrant gloats. It does not atone for any sin, nor has it anything to do with a painful incident. It is only a means, and a potent means, for the reform of our morals and the best ethical ideal for one to strive for. Does it not, as we all know, furnish the best weapon to fight out any lack of patience or perseverance? If we regard resolution of purpose as the highest moral quality in man, then it is the chief function of every correct system of religion, not only to hold up this quality in our esteem, but also to lay down the mode of its acquisition. Islam did not content itself to say that humility and gentleness are the best of virtues, but has laid down rules how these could be possessed and exercised. It has placed fasting among such modes. One of the sayings of the Holy Prophet reads:

Assaumo nifus sabr."
(Fasting is half-patience.)

How can one deny the value of fasting, even though its definition was reduced to mere abstention from food and drinks between certain hours? We are very well acquainted with the physical helplessness and total dependence on medical aid of those to whom the sumnum bonum of life is eating and leading an easy life. To them a course of fasting would be what an elixir of life is to the dying. Besides, rich foods and drinks in a glutton give rise to all those base passions to which a man of abstemious habits would be a stranger. Evil deeds hardly fit well with a hungered body. If the above is undoubtedly true, is it not more than the truth that during the month of fasting all doors are closed upon Satan, as the Noble Prophet remarked?
It has been pointed out that we have not only to shun evil during Ramadan, but also to exercise our faculties of generosity and benevolence to our utmost capacity. That is why in Islamic countries ordinary business is a little less attended to during these days than in others. It is therefore a universal wish to save out of a years' earnings for use during this Holy Month. An unusual social and moral atmosphere is the visible feature of this month. Hearts move towards piety and goodness as if by instinct. After usual night prayer there is another prayer known as the "Taráveeh" prayer. This prayer is in fact the substitute of midnight prayer. "Tahájjad," or midnight prayer, is the sixth prayer, which is not obligatory, and is said between 1 a.m. and early dawn by the pious. But during Ramadan its observance becomes essential for all. After breaking their fasts, and having taken their suppers, the Muslims leave their houses and come to the mosques to pass most of the night in prayer, but as the place of worship becomes crowded with the votaries one of them assumes the duties of Imam, while others follow him in prayers. He recites the Qur'án in an audible tone and arranges to finish the whole of it within the month. This prayer of Taráveeh consists of twenty Rakāat, which ordinarily take some three hours to finish. Then they go to their homes and retire to rest, but leave their beds again some two or three hours before the dawn. Some of the Muslims prefer to say their Tahájjad—midnight prayer—in place of Taráveeh at this time. Then some breakfast is taken. This over, the morning prayer is said. A brief nap is taken by some after they have said their morning prayer, to make up for the want of rest which long hours of waking during the night might have caused. The normal business is resumed. All those for whom the suspension of their business in the month is possible—and Muslims mostly take care to save something in eleven months to enable them to dispense with their work in this month—generally resort during the day and the night to devotional places; there they do reading from the Qur'án, if by themselves, or busy themselves with religious and prayer exercises and study works on morals, ethics, etc. The mosques are generally very crowded during these days, which remain open day and night with the exception of a few hours at night-time; but what is most conspicuous is the fact that the spectre of the want of the daily necessities of life is banished from the land. This is due entirely to the fact that rich and poor are all eager to be helpful and sympathetic to those who need this kind of assistance and charity. Good-fellowship, conscientiousness, and devotion become the order of the day. Even the most indigent in the society find plentiful help from the charity of their more blessed neighbours. Those in the West, who are beginning to recognize now that silence and contemplation too play no small part in the achievement of human enfoldment, would do well to note the truth of the above in Islamic countries, especially during the month of Ramadan.

One who leads the prayer.
LAILA-TUL-QADR—THE MOST SACRED NIGHT OF THE YEAR.

It is one of the popular traditional beliefs amongst Muslims that one of the last ten nights of the month Ramadán is one for the fulfilment of human prayers and supplications. This particular night has not been very definitely distinguished from the other nine, but the experience of those who have been blessed with those most propitious moments generally goes to fix it as one of the odd nights in the last ten nights of the month. Some regard the 27th or the 29th as the Night, although the greater consensus of opinion is in favour of the 27th. Let it not be regarded that this night is all a myth, but is a reality which is fully borne out by the experience of those who had the supreme bliss of witnessing it. The writer of these pages too is not unfamiliar with the inspiring effect of this experience. The Holy Qur-án designates the night as the "Lailá-tul-

1 THE BLESSED NIGHT

Arabic metre Mufáeelun, Mufáeelun, Mufáeelun, Mufáeelun.

In darkest night, in rainy day,
My eyes upon Thy shining face;
With horrid looks when comes dismay
My rock of hope, Thy blessing grace.

Can I forget that "blessed night"
When I was bled with darts of love?
How beatic, how charming sight,
When heart which, flying like a dove,
Began to melt into a cloud
To rise to Thee, in regions high,
Soul wished to leave its earthly shroud
To see the Beauty, eye to eye.
I wish, my Love! if that had been
The final moment of this life,
With joyful heart, with mind serene,
I would have left this earthly strife.

Thy Words I read in sacred Book;—
Thou listeneest to the one aggrieved.
My Love! come, shine, in gloomy nook
Of heart, that bleeds and feels bereaved.

KHWAJA.

The Qur-án.
Qadr,"—"the Grand Night," and the hours between the midnight and the early dawn are those of Divine Grace in it. It is generally supposed that it is invariably a clear night, and the sacred moments are attended by a cool breeze and a fine drizzling which exhilarates the soul. The pious, deep in his contemplation, finds a strange and indescribable emotion arising out of him: The universe all round him appears to have donned a robe of purity. All of his low desires and carnal passions are dead in him. He finds himself most eager to lay out his heart, his bosom, before the Great Lord; and when he stands before Him in this attitude he finds himself entirely lost in Him—he feels crushed by a nameless weight which enthralls him, and he is ecstatic. He is oblivious to the posture or the position in which he is, thus wrapped up in his contemplation. Whether he is standing up, bowing, sitting down, or in prostration, he is incapable of changing any of these postures. A stream of prayer bursts out of him, like that of a spring, and he feels a melting down all over. When he is in this state a kind of liquid is emitted by his tongue which is refreshing and sweet. His bosom is unlocked, and there is a feeling of freshness all about him. Although there is no one near him, yet he finds himself overpowered by the assurance that he is in the presence of his God, who is encouraging him to approach Him with his prayer which would be fulfilled. These few remarks describe but partially the most wonderful sensation that a true and devoted seeker experiences during the brief hours of bliss that occur during this night. One would willingly give his whole life for these few moments of true Divine Beatitude which a Muslim, only Muslim, can achieve in the said night.

I'TIKAF.

To obtain this transcendental good fortune there is a religious usage amongst Muslims of contemplation alone and in silence. This is called "I'tikaf." All larger mosques in Muslim lands have attached to them small cubicles as silence-chambers for the purpose of "I'tikaf." Those who desire to go through this form of devotion during Ramadan leave their homes on the 21st night and take up their habitat in these cubicles, which they only leave for necessity. Their food, which never exceeds bare subsistence, is brought to them by their people. This meal is taken by them between sunset and dawn. This routine is kept up for ten days between the 20th of Ramadan and the rising of the next crescent. "I'tikaf" consists of contemplating the attributes of God and a searching inquiry into the votaries' own shortcomings. Their readings of the Qur-án are always done with a serious eye to find the points of agreement and disagreement between their ways and the teaching of the Holy Book. They then earnestly approach the Lord for the right and straight guidance. The life of the Holy Prophet and the teachings of Al Qur-án are set up

See p. 261.
by them as ideals, and they pray for being given the courage to reach up to them. The nightly hours are mostly spent in prayers, meditation, and contemplation. To find the propitious moments of the said sacred night is not the chief aim of the worshipper in I'tikaf. He looks more to have his life in tune with the Universal Spirit, and in the dark hours of the chamber he tries to kindle divine flame in him and receive true illumination. The people of the worshippers receive a special request to minister alms to the poor on their behalf. The above might excite a sceptical smile in this materialistic world, but experience knows the enormous spiritual and moral value of these exercises. It is not a traditional belief, but it is a reality and an experience.

The 27th Night of the Ramadan.

It has been indicated that a special grace attaches to the "Laila-tul-Qadr" night in Muslim countries, which is generally taken to be the 27th of the month. Those who are not in I'tikaf celebrate it with special celebration: mosques are decorated with taste for the occasion. When the time of breaking fast draws near, worshippers in their hundreds flock to mosques. Well-to-do people bring light refreshments to the mosques. This is a matter of course on all other evenings of the Ramadan, but the 27th night is observed in a special manner. All in the mosque share the light refreshments taken on the occasion of breaking the fast, and then offer their prayers together. It has been mentioned before that the special prayer which is said after the night prayers is called the "Taráveeh," and a portion of Al Qur-án is recited in it. At some places, however, it is arranged that the whole of the Qur-án is recited by different Imams, and thus this night of 27th is spent. This briefly is a description of the month, which ends by the rising of the crescent of Eid, which literally means happiness, and is celebrated as a thanksgiving to God for the privilege of having enjoyed the blessings of the Ramadan and not as an occasion which brought an end to starvation, as the calumniators of Islam in the person of Christian propagandists would suggest. Every Muslim looks forward, for the month and the last Friday of Ramadan is observed with a sense of mourning, as the very name Jumna-tul-Vida shows—the Friday of Farewell to Ramadan. The special feature of this Friday is that almost all the Muslims of cities prefer to say their Friday prayer together in one big mosque, and observe the day as a holiday. We do not know of any occasion in the Christian world corresponding to this month. The Christmas was the happiest occasion to celebrate the advent of one of the most truthful men, who ushered the spirit of righteousness in the world. But the way in which it is celebrated indicates it much more that of a Bacchus worship than the commemoration of the Righteous as he was. It must be confessed that all Muslims do not observe fasting, but then it would be difficult to meet any such who would assume any attitude of irreverence towards it. One would never dare
to publicly dishonour its tenets, but would always try to act in as upright a manner as possible. To tell a Muslim of his being with fast, or the month being that of fasts, is the most potent reminder to him of virtue. To say that one is fasting is a sure guarantee of the truth of his speech. From all these statements it is apparent what a powerful institution fasting is for the balance of passions and the development of character.

**WHEN FASTING IS NOT OBLIGATORY**

Fasting need not be observed in illness and in travel. This remission, however, might be redeemed at other times. It would be rather difficult to definitely lay down rules to meet all kinds of individual cases. Every man is the best judge of his own conditions, and can know when one is really ill. The easiest way to determine this inability is to follow medical advice, which should clearly say that fasting would do harm. Women with child at the breast, in pregnancy, or during those few days of the month peculiar to their sex, need not also observe it.

In the end we give below those verses of Al Qur-án which lay down the injunctions with explanations of verses taken from the translation of Al Qur-án by Molvi Mohammed Ali. The foot-notes are very useful. They supplement further information which the writer has not given for the same reason.

**SECTION 23**

**Fasting**

183, 184. Fasting enjoined. 185. The month of Ramadán to be observed as a month of fasting. 186. Acceptance of prayers. 187. The limits of fasts. 188. Rights of property to be respected.

183 O you who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard (against evil). 225

225 Fasting is a religious institution almost as universal as prayer, and in Islam it is one of the four fundamental practical ordinances, the other three being prayer, poor-rate, and pilgrimage. The words of the Qur-án show that fasting was enjoined on all nations by the prophets who passed before the Holy Prophet Muhammad. "Fasting has in all ages and among some nations been an exercise much in use in times of mourning, sorrow, and afflictions" (Cr. Bib. Con.). Fasting has also been in vogue among the Hindus. Even Christians, who think that they have no need of any religious exercise on account of Jesus' atonement, were commanded by that prophet to keep the fasts: "Moreover, when ye fast, do not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance... But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face" (Matt. 6:16, 17). Again, when the Pharisees objected to Jesus' disciples not keeping the fast as often as John's, his only answer was that when he will be taken away "then shall they fast in those days" (Huls 5:33-35).

But Islam has introduced quite a new meaning into the institution of fasting. Before Islam, fasting meant the suffering of some privation in times of mourning and sorrow; in Islam, it becomes an institution for the improvement of the moral and spiritual condition of man. This is plainly stated in the concluding words: *So that you may guard against evil. The object is that man may learn how he can shun evil, and hence fasting in Islam does*
For a certain number of days; but whoever among you is sick or on a journey, then (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days; and those who are able to do it may effect a redemption by feeding a poor man; so whoever does good spontaneously it is better for him; and that you fast is better for you if you know.

The month of Ramadán is that in which the Qur-án

not mean simply abstaining from food, but from every kind of evil. In fact, abstinence from food is only a step to make a man realize that if he can, in obedience to Divine injunctions, abstain from that which is otherwise lawful, how much more necessary it is that he should abstain from the evil ways which are forbidden by God. All the institutions of Islam are, in fact, practical steps leading to perfect purification of the soul. But along with moral elevation, which is aimed at in fasting, another object seems to be hinted at. In fact, the twofold object is that Muslims may be able to guard themselves, (a) morally and spiritually, against evil, for one who is able to renounce the lawful satisfaction of his desires in obedience to Divine commandments certainly acquires the power to renounce their unlawful gratification; and (b) physically against their opponents by habituating themselves to suffer tribulations which they must suffer in defence of Islam and Muslims.

The number of days is definitely stated in the next verse as being the twenty-nine or thirty days of the month of Ramadán. For details of fasting see Preface.

The word fidyah used in this verse is thus explained by Rgh: That by means of which a man saves himself, being the wealth which he spends on account of some devotion in which he has fallen short. The word also indicates the giving away of property by which freedom of any kind is purchased. By those who are able to do it are meant those who are able to feel a poor man. As regards those who cannot keep the fast on account of constant or long illness, or who are too old or too weak (including in this class the woman who is with child or who gives suck), the practice has been to give away the measure of one man's food to a poor man every day during the whole month (Bkh, AD). Doing good to others is enjoined in addition to fasting in the month of Ramadán. We are told that the Holy Prophet, who was universally recognized for his abundant charity, was most charitable in the month of Ramadán (Bkh). In its mildest form the injunction is generally observed by giving away the measure of a poor man's feeding at the close of the month, which is called the sadaqat-ul-fitr, and which is obligatory on every male, female, and child, master and servant (Bkh).

The revelation of the Holy Qur-án commenced in the month of Ramadán, which is the ninth month of the Arabian year (Hs), hence, the month of Ramadán is particularly spoken of as being the month in which the Holy Qur-án was revealed. The root meaning of Ramadán is excessiveness of heat; the month was so called because "when they changed the names of the months from the ancient language, they named them according to the seasons in which they fell, and this month agreed with the days of excessive heat" (LL, B7). Some say that it is one of the names of Allah, for which, however, there is no reliable authority.

Al-Qur-án is the name by which the Holy Book revealed to the Prophet Muhammad—peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him!—is known, and by this name the Holy Book is frequently mentioned in the Divine revelation. The word is an infinitive noun from the root gara-a, which signifies primarily he collected together the things (LA, TA-LL). The secondary significance of the root-word is reading or reciting a
was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the distinction, therefore whoever of you is present in the month, he shall fast therein, and whoever is sick or upon a journey, then (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days; Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire for you difficulty, and (He desires) that you should complete the number and that you should exalt the greatness of Allah for His having guided you and that you may give thanks.

186 And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near; I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should answer My call and believe in Me that they may find in the right way.²²⁹

book, the word being applied to reading or recitation because in reading letters and words are joined to each other in a certain order (Rgh). The name Qur-án really refers to both the root-meanings, for on the one hand it signifies a book in which are gathered together all the Divine Books, a distinction to which the Qur-án itself lays claim in 98:4 and elsewhere (Rgh); on the other it means a book that is or should be read, the Holy Qur-án being the book “that has been truly described as the most widely read book in existence” (Rw. Br.). The commentators have pointed out thirty-one different names under which the Holy Qur-án is spoken of in the revelation itself, the most important of these being Al-Kitâb, or the Book, and Az-Zikr, or the Reminder.

²²⁹ There are three statements made here regarding the Holy Qur-án; firstly, that it is a guidance for all men, and that therefore it contains teachings which are suitable for the various classes and grades of men in different countries and ages; secondly, that it contains comprehensive arguments of the guidance, thus demonstrating the truth of what it asserts; and thirdly, that in addition to the arguments it affords a clear distinction, separating the truth from the falsehood by making the faithful taste the fruits of faith and the rejecters the evil consequences of their rejection of truth. The battle of Badr, which is called yâm-ul-jurgán, or the day of distinction, in 8:41, also took place in the month of Ramadan.

²³⁰ The connection of this verse with the previous and the following verses consists in the fact that fasting, which includes shunning every sort of evil, brings a man nearer to the fountain-head of purity, and the more a man is brought near to the Holy One, the more do his supplications find acceptance with his Master. Hence, it is related that in the month of Ramadan the Holy Prophet exerted himself the greater in his prayers (Bkh), and induced his followers to do likewise (Muslim).

That the prayer of a devout suppliant is accepted is plainly stated here, but two points must be noted in connection with this subject. In the first place, there is an impression that the efficacy of prayer in some way interferes with resorting to practical means to attain an object, so that if this impression has produced a class of men who totally deny the efficacy of prayer, it has also led others to think that by resorting to prayer...
187. It is made lawful to you to go in to your wives on the night of the fast; they are an apparel for you and you are an apparel for them. Allah knows that you acted unfaithfully to yourselves, so He has turned to you (mercifully) and removed from you (this burden); so now be in contact with them and seek what Allah has ordained for you, and eat and drink until the whiteness of the day becomes distinct from the blackness of the night at a man may dispense with all external means for the attainment of his object. Both these views are wrong, and opposed to the true doctrine of the efficacy of prayer as taught in Islam. The fact is that there is an indissoluble connection between practical means and prayer. Any one who sets before himself the attainment of an object first looks for the practical means to achieve it, and endeavours to his utmost to find out the agencies by which he can possibly attain that end. In this search for means he has to apply all his faculties to the object before him, and to give his whole attention to the finding of those means which will secure his object. This deep reflection or will-power may be called a prayer in a certain sense. For when we strive hard in search of what is hidden from us and unknown to us, we really seek for guidance from a Higher Power from whom nothing is hidden in a language which is expressed by our very condition. It cannot be doubted that when, in search of a thing, the soul stretches itself out in true zeal and ardour to the Giver of all gifts, and finding itself weak and unable to attain the end by itself, seeks for light from the Higher Source, it is plunged in a prayerful meditation, and its condition then is truly that of one who prays to God. The difference is only this, that the truly wise, the holy men of God, pray with due respect to Him whom they recognize to be the Source of all blessings, and their supplications are based upon a clear knowledge; while the prayer of those upon whose eyes a veil is cast is like wandering in darkness, and it takes the form of meditation and reflection. Thus those who neglect prayer in search of means and do not reflect well upon their course in a prayerful mood are as wrong as those who do not resort to practical means on account of their prayers. Secondly, it should be borne in mind that the efficacy of prayer does not mean that every object for which a man prays to the Divine Being should be immediately attained. This is made clear by the Holy Qur’an itself: “Him you will call upon, so He clears a way that for which you pray if He pleases” (6:41); so that every object prayed for may not be attained. And again: “And We will most certainly try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits” (v. 155); so that trials and hardships must be undergone even by the faithful, and they must be prepared to suffer every kind of loss. But just as the efficacy of a medicine cannot be denied because it does not prove efficacious in all cases, so the efficacy of prayer cannot be denied on this ground.

231. This description of the mutual relations of husband and wife, and the mutual comfort they find in and the protection they afford to each other, is unsurpassed in beauty.

232. All that the reports narrated in connection with this verse show is that the Muslims at first thought that it was illegal to go in to their wives, even at night-time, on the days during which they kept fasts, but this practice, which, according to Abû Mâlik, was adopted from the Christians (Rāz), was, at any rate, according to the unanimous opinion of all commentators, not based on any Quranic revelation, the only revelation on this point being the one given in this verse, which pointed out the error of the view and removed the rigour under which the Muslims had placed themselves.
dawn, then complete the fast till night, and have not contact with them while you keep to the mosques; these are the limits of Allah, so do not go near them. Thus does Allah make clear His communications for men that they may guard (against evil).

188 And do not swallow up your property among yourselves by false means, neither seek to gain access thereby to the judges, so that you may swallow up a part of the property of men wrongfully while you know.

233 Khait originally means thread, but is not limited to that use. The Khait alraqubah (lit., the thread of the neck) means the spinal cord of the neck (S, Q-LI). And Khait Minassubah is also said to signify a tint of the dawn (TA-LI). Hence you say, Tabayyanat Khait minal Khait. The night became distinct from the day (TA-LII). Hence Alkhait alabyas signifies the whiteness of the dawn and Alkhait alaswad the blackness of the night (LL); so here the break of the dawn is meant, after which no food or drink should be taken till sunset.

234 By this is meant those who cut themselves off from all worldly connections during the last ten days of the month of Ramadân, passing day and night in mosques. This practice is known as Fâhaf. But it is voluntary and not obligatory.

235 The injunction to abstain from illegally taking other men’s property is a fitting sequel to the injunction relating to fasting, for by fasting a man abstains from using what he has a legal right to, simply in obedience to Divine commandments. Fasting, in fact, enables a man to control his passions, and once the passions are mastered, the greed for illegally acquiring what belongs to others will also vanish.

**Selection from Bukhârî.**

The following on the subject of fasting has been culled from Bukhârî, the most reliable book of the Prophet’s traditions:

1. When the month is that of Ramadan, the gates of Heaven are made wide open, and the Satan is bound in chains.

2. Commence fasting after seeing the new moon of Ramadan, and cease fasting after seeing the new moon of Shawwal. If it is cloudy, fast for thirty days.

3. Says Abdullah bin Abbas: “Holy Prophet was foremost of all in doing good to others, but during the month his generosity was even greater.”

4. One who abandons not deception and telling lies, then Allah does not need his keeping himself from eating and drinking. Allah says: “Every one does good deeds for
himself, but he fasts for My (God's) sake, and I alone can reward him.”

5. Fasting shields from sin. When fasting, let no one speak foul, nor let him be boisterous. If he hears any one speaking foul to him, or using force against him, let him content with saying: “I am fasting.”

6. If there be one unmarried, and being in fear of his yielding to evil passion, let him fast.

7. Let none fast on the day or two days preceding the month of fasting. But let one fast who is in the habit of fasting on a certain day, which happens to come before the month of Ramadan.

8. In Qur-an Khait-alahyas means the light of dawn, and Khait-alaswad means the darkness of the night.

9. Let no one cease eating his early morning meal when he hears Bilal calling to prayer.

Hazrat Bilal, a companion of the Holy Prophet, used to call to prayer. Sometimes he gave the call for morning prayer before time, which induced some to begin their fast; hence the saying.

10. To partake the early morning meal (before fasting) is mustahab (desirable), not wajib (obligatory).

11. If one with fast pours water in his nose which passes down the throat, and he cannot emit it, his fast is not broken.

12. Feeling like sea-sickness does not break the fast, as something is discharged, not taken in.

13. The fast is broken by that which is swallowed, not by that which is given out.

14. When the night turns its back on this side, i.e. the east, and when day turns its back on that side, i.e. the west, and the Sun sets, it is the time of breaking the fast.

Fasts other than those of the Ramadan.

1. Says Lady Aishâ: “Holy Prophet did not fast in any month more than in that of Shabán (besides Ramadan), and used to fast during the whole of this month. He used to say: ‘Do good to the extent of your ability only.”

2. Says Abdullah bin Aud bin As: “Holy Prophet addressed him, saying: ‘Abdullah, I have heard you fast in the day, and spend the night standing in prayers. Do
not do to such an extent. Do keep fasts, and give yourself relief from it as well. Say prayers, but do sleep as well; for your body and your eyes have a right (to be properly taken care of) on you, your wife and your guests have claims on you. Fast not more than three days in one month, for every good deed is rewarded tenfold.' The Prophet added: 'Fast like Prophet David, and do not excel him in this.' 'How did he fast?' I asked. 'He fasted on alternate days,' was his reply.'

3. Let none of you fast on Fridays, excepting when you are fasting on the two days, viz. the one preceding and the other following it.

4. Holy Prophet forbade fasting on Id-ul-Fitar and Id uddahá days.

LAILA-TUL-QADR.

1. Seek for it in the odd nights of the last ten nights of the Ramadan.

2. Holy Prophet went into I'takáf—during the last ten days of Ramadan.

3. One may go into I'takáf even for a night.

4. A wife may see her husband in I'takáf (and no more).

GRACE AND SIN

My sins, Thy grace, my faults, Thy love,
My wrongful deeds, Thy forgiveness,
O Counter of the Days! do tell
Which greater is and which is less,
I know my life is evil full,
But who can count Thy grace as well?
I bask in shining rays of hope,
Undaunted of all fear of hell.

Thou dost not need some price for sin
In compensation of mercy.
In things from Thee "no give and take
Thy gifts, Thy blessings, ever free.

But if Thy wrath is unappeased,
And wants "the blood" in penalty,
Adieu, O Lord! to Thee adieu;
What difference is in me and Thee?

KHWAJA.

* See p. 252.
CHAPTER XCIVII
THE MAJESTY
(Al-Qadr)
REVEALED AT MECCA
(5 verses)

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Surely We revealed it on the grand night.  
2 And what will make you comprehend what the grand night is?

General remarks.
The very first revelation of the Holy Qur'ān contained in the last chapter is suitably followed in arrangement by one that relates when the revelation of the Qur'ān began. It was the night of Majesty (one of the last ten nights of the month of Ramadān) which first witnessed the shining of that light which was destined to illumine the whole world. And the coming of the first revelation on the night of Majesty, which gives its name to this chapter, contained a clear indication that the most majestic of all revelations was now being granted to the world, and that the majesty of this revelation, as well as of its recipient, should be established in the world. The chapter is unquestionably one of the very earliest revelations.

3777 Lailat-ul-qadr, which I have rendered as the grand night, and which literally means the night of majesty or grandeur or greatness, is a well-known night in the month of Ramadān, being the 21st or 23rd or 25th or 27th or 29th night of the month, or more probably one of the latter three. In 44: 3 it is called the blessed night. From 2: 185 it appears that the Holy Qur'ān was revealed in the month of Ramadān, and from the above it appears to have been revealed on the grand night; by revelation of course being meant its first revelation, because the whole was revealed in portions during twenty-three years, and the word Qur'ān is applicable as well to a portion as to the whole. It is for this reason that the i'tikāf, or adhering to the mosques, is fixed for the last ten days of the month of Ramadān, and in fact lailat-ul-qadr owes its importance to the fact that it was on this night that the most blessed and perfect of all revelations was vouchsafed to the world. Moses' fasting for forty days previous to the receipt of revelation (Exod. 24: 19), and Jesus' keeping fast for the same number of days before he was called upon to undertake the office of prophethood (Matt. 4: 2), show that the gift of revelation comes with fasting; hence the Muslims are required to fast every year for thirty days, and special Divine blessings are promised to them in the concluding days of the fasts.
3 The grand night is better than a thousand months.\textsuperscript{2778}
4 The angels and the inspiration descend in it by the permission of their Lord for every affair.\textsuperscript{2779}
5 Peace! it is till the break of the morning.\textsuperscript{2780}

But the \textit{lailat-ul-qadr} carries another and deeper significance. The time during which a prophet appears is usually a time of darkness, and, as such, is often compared to a night in the Holy Qur-\text{"an}; but as in this darkness comes a blessing from on high in the person of a Divine messenger, this night is a blessed and majestic night. Hence the period of the advent of a Divine messenger may also be metaphorically called \textit{lailat-ul-qadr}. Its designation as the \\
\textit{blessed night} in 44:3, followed as it is by the statement that in it “every wise affair is made distinct,” shows clearly that the other significance of the word is based on the Holy Qur-\text{"an} itself, because it is during the time of a prophet’s advent that true wisdom is distinctly established.

\textsuperscript{2778} A thousand months are equal to about 83 years, leaving 17 years to complete a century. There is a saying of the Holy Prophet according to which a mujaddid, or a reformer, will appear among the Muslims at the commencement of every century. The deeper significance of \textit{lailat-ul-qadr} given in the previous note finds additional support in the circumstance that such a reformer would, under ordinary circumstances, work for some twenty years, and this period is therefore better and richer than the remaining eighty years marked by the absence of a reformer.

\textsuperscript{2779} The descent of the angels and the “inspiration” also show that \textit{lailat-ul-qadr} has a deeper significance, for though a particular night in the month of Ramadan may be characterized by great Divine blessings, it is more especially in connection with the mission of one appointed by Allah for the regeneration of the world that “the angels and inspiration” come down from heaven, such being the Divine support of his cause. For the meaning of \textit{ru\j{ih}} see 653, 2183.

\textsuperscript{2780} “Peace” is the chief distinction of \textit{lailat-ul-qadr}. This peace comes to the hearts of the true devotees in the form of a tranquillity of mind which makes them fit to receive Divine blessings. Its continuance “till the break of the morning” is quite clear when the night is taken literally; the break of morning would signify the approaching end of the reformer, when truth, like the light of the day, has made itself fully manifest.
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any more than the other laws, brought together in one, or two, or three Surats, but "like golden threads" they are woven into the huge fabric of the religious constitution of Muhammad. Injustice, falsehood, pride, revengefulness, calumny, mockery, avarice, prodigality, debauchery, mistrust, and suspicion are inveighed against as ungodly and wicked: while benevolence, liberality, modesty, forbearance, patience, and endurance, frugality, sincerity, straightforwardness, decency, love of peace and truth, and above all trusting in one God and submitting to His will, are considered as the pillars of true piety and the principal signs of a true believer."—CHAMBERS'S **Encyclopaedia.**

At a later period of his (the Prophet's) career, no one would venture to doubt the Divine origin of his whole Book."—RODWELL.

"By a fortune absolutely unique in history, Mohammed is the threefold founder of a nation, of an empire, and of a religion. Illiterate himself, scarcely able to read or write, he was yet the author of a book which is a poem, a code of laws, a book of common prayer, and a bible in one, and is revered to this day by a sixth of the whole human race as a miracle of purity of style, of wisdom, and of truth. It is the one miracle claimed by Mohammed—"his standing miracle," he called it—and a miracle, indeed, it is."—BOSWORTH SMITH'S **Life of Mohammad.**

"The morals of the Qur-án have not been less unjustly attacked than its dogmas. It condemns debauchery and excesses of every kind, usury, avarice, and pride, slander and calumny, covetousness, hypocrisy, the thirsting after worldly goods; it ordains, on the contrary, almsgiving, filial piety, gratitude towards God, fidelity to engagements, justice, specially towards orphans and without respect of persons, chastity and decency, even in words, the ransoming of captives, patience, submission, benevolence, forgiveness of injuries, the returning of good for evil, and the walking in the path of virtue, not with the view of obtaining the approbation of the world, but for being acceptable to God."—J. DAVENTH.

"Among the many excellencies of the Qur-án are two eminently conspicuous—one being the tone of awe and reverence which it always observes when speaking or referring to the Deity, to whom it never attributes either human frailties or passions; the other, the total absence throughout it of all impure, immoral, and indecent ideas, expressions, narratives, etc., blemishes which, it is much to be regretted, are of frequent occurrence in what Christians style the 'Old Testament.' So exempt, indeed, is the Qur-án from these undeniable defects that it needs not the slightest castration, and may be read, from beginning to end, without causing a blush to suffuse the cheek of modesty itself."

"The Qur-án is the general code of the Moslem world: a social, civil, commercial, military, judicial, criminal, penal, and yet religious code. By it everything is regulated—from the ceremonies of religion to those of daily life, from the salvation of the soul to the health of the body, from the rights of the general community to those of each individual, from the