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“The Islamic Review,” The Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, Surrey, £1 10s. 0d. post free; single copies 3s.
Fiji:
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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION:  India Rs. 15/-  Foreign £1-10.0  U.S.A. 6 dollars

Back numbers from 1927 onwards available at same rate

THE MANAGER, THE ISLAMIC CULTURE, Post Box 171, Hyderabad-Deccan (India)

JANUARY—FEBRUARY—MARCH 1963
Between Ourselves

THE COVER

The picture on the cover portrays life in the Indonesian countryside. In Indonesia, as in other Muslim countries, men and women interrupt their daily work to devote a few moments to the remembrance of God — a feature of Muslim life which one sees so often in all Muslim countries.

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The Islamic Review

Jan.-Feb.-Mar. 1963 51st YEAR OF PUBLICATION

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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
MATERIALISM, SPIRITUALISM, ISLAM

"And seek the future abode by means of what God has given you and do not neglect your portion of this world, and do good (to others) as God has done good to you, and do not seek to make mischief in the world, for God does not love the mischief-makers."—The Holy Qur'an, 28 : 27.

In these few significant words the Qur'an disposes of the dispute arising out of the rival claims of materialism and materialism, so powerfully exercising the minds of many in the East and the West. The question has assumed a particular importance for those, who, religiously believing in the extreme other-worldliness, have become very much impressed of late by the power of material resources and the scientific knowledge of things to alleviate human suffering, as witnessed in the development of modern civilization. These people forget that even the Galian Teacher had not ignored the role of matter in human existence inasmuch as he is reported to have said: *Man does not live by bread alone.*

The word “alone” must be particularly noted. Jesus does not deny that bread is an essential factor in human existence. All he says is that something more is needed to make man worthy of his name. A reformer of a particular set of evils in a particular age and country, he, of course, at times uttered words likely to create some misunderstanding about his actual view on the subject, words such as the following: *Therefore, I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, neither for the body, what ye shall put on. . . and seek not yet what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, neither ye be of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after . . . but rather seek ye the kingdom of God: and all these things will be added unto you* (Luke 12 : 22-31).

But even in this passage, the master puts in words that redeem the apparent one-sidedness of his exhortations; for example, in verse 23 he says: *The life is more than meat and the body is more than raiment.*

This shows his awareness of the indispensability of meat and raiment in human life.

Again in verse 30 he says: *And your father knoweth ye have need of these things.*

The fact is that he was addressing an audience grossly materialistic in outlook, on the subject of the essential need of spiritual culture, and not laying down a balanced principle of action for all conditions of society. Seen in this light the stirring sermon, worthy of a prophet alone, will appear intelligible to all. And if any misunderstandings were likely to be created by this emphasis on one aspect of the question, rendered necessary by the peculiarities of the situation, it was removed by the Qur'an, which came to supplement and fulfill the message of Jesus at the appropriate moment. The verse of the Qur'an quoted above makes it perfectly clear how a reconciliation is not only possible but even necessary between the demands of the spirit and the matter. Material pursuits are commendable if their object is to promote the welfare of the soul. As a matter of fact, viewed rationally, in this world of matter, if our spiritual conscience begins with the thought of God and His attributes, it finds its consumption in some material benefits conferred by us on our fellow human beings. That is the meaning of the clause *Seek the future abode by means of what God has given you.* The Qur'an further clarifies this point when it says elsewhere: *You will not attain to any spiritual virtue unless you spend out of what you love* (3 : 91). And the Book states in
parenthesis in the passages quoted at the top: *And do not neglect your portion of this world.* Thus, we are not only permitted but even asked to look after our material requirements. The Qur'an does not expect us to be ascetics, because that would be both unnatural and unworkable. As the Prophet says, our body has a right over us and so have our physical senses, so long as they do not tend to disturb the peace of the society. So, starting from the satisfaction of our basic physical needs, we proceed to be helpful to others out of our gratitude to our Creator, and looking forward to a blissful eternal existence in our life beyond the grave. It is this last aspect of the question that constitutes spiritual outlook on life as distinguished from the materialistic one. A person does not become a materialist just because of his worldly pursuits and of his efforts to augment his material possessions, or to satisfy his physical needs. He becomes a materialist only when he seeks nothing but self-satisfaction or self-gratification or self-exaltation of his endeavour. Here comes the parting of the ways between the upholders of the two philosophies of life. It is the ultimate object of our social and economic efforts that constitutes the point of difference. Do we make them for the mere satisfaction or gratification of our personal selves? Or do we make them as a kind of dedicated service? The one leads to materialism and the other to Islam and to real spiritualism. As we see it — you spiritualize or assign a spiritual end to your material pursuits and control and guide them to that end, and you attain to real spiritualism, whereas if you do not assign any such purpose to these pursuits, you are a materialist.

People have also asked the question, “If acts of charity or of social service are done by a man without any reference to God, religion and spiritual life, will he be regarded as a materialist?” We say “Yes, he will be so regarded.”, and we are emphatic on this point. While we condemn the formalistic and ritualistic religion which is callous to human sufferings, we do not place much reliance on the “act of virtue” of an atheist, or agnostic either; for the simple reason that such acts of such people are at bottom nothing but the satisfaction of their ego or vanity, unless of course these are subconsciously influenced by some religious feeling coming to them through environment or heredity. The logical consequence of real atheism or materialism is callousness, or at least indifference, to human sufferings.

If no vigorous spiritual movement arrests this trend in the Western world, our world will very soon be full of animals in human shape, each one trying to tear the other to pieces. This is what the Qur'an means when it speaks of mischief-makers in the verse under discussion. Indeed, a combination of outright materialism with “good deeds” is a psychological impossibility. When I refuse to believe that there is any life beyond this physical existence, I must have as much of its pleasures as I can, even at the expense of others, if need be, and the need, indeed, is always there. Man’s desire for things is insatiable and the resources of the material world are so awfully limited. A materialistic view of life, having no principle higher than selfishness, naturally sets the stage for jealousy, suspicion and perpetual strife, and not for co-existence, co-operation, consideration for others and commiseration far less for love and charity. It definitely issues a licence for greed and selfishness and their inevitable results, exploitation and tyranny, veiled or open. That is why even in the interest of our social life, if not for any other purpose, we must requisition the services of spiritualism or idealism as it is otherwise called. We cannot foster any spirit of sacrifice and service in man on the basis of materialism, and these two virtues are so essentially needed in this world of unlimited desires and limited means of their satisfaction.

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**JESUS IN “HEAVEN ON EARTH”**

By al-HAJJ KHWAJA NAZIR AHMAD, Barrister-at-Law

AL-SAYYID RASHID RIDHA, a disciple of the Mufti Muhammad ‘Abduh of Egypt, wrote in his commentary of the Qur'an that Jesus' flight to India and his death in this town (i.e., Srinagar) is not against reason and inference.

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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN ISLAM

By The Late MAULANA MUHAMMED ‘ALI

Material, inner and spiritual experience of humanity

In all religious books, the existence of God is taken almost as an axiomatic truth. The Holy Qur’an, however, advances numerous arguments to prove the existence of a Supreme Being Who is the Creator and Controller of this universe. In a brief treatment like the present, I can only refer to the three main kinds of arguments with which the holy book briefly deals. These are, first, the arguments drawn from creation, which may be called the lower or material experience of humanity; secondly, the evidence of human nature, which may be called the inner experience of humanity; and thirdly, the arguments based on Divine revelation to man, which may be called the higher or spiritual experience of humanity. It will be seen, from what is said further on, that, as the scope of experience is narrowed down, so the arguments gain in effectiveness. The argument from creation simply shows that there must be a Creator of this universe, Who is also its Controller, but it does not go so far as to show that there is a God. The testimony of human nature proceeds a step further, since there is in it a consciousness of Divine existence, though that consciousness may differ in different natures according to whether the inner light is bright or dim. It is only revelation that discloses God in the full splendour of His light, and shows the sublime attributes which man must emulate if he is to attain perfection, together with the means whereby he can hold communion with the Divine Being.

The law of evolution as an evidence of purpose and wisdom

The first argument, that drawn from creation, centres round the word Rabb. In the very first revelation that came to the Prophet, he was told to “read in the name of the Rabb Who created” (96:1). Now the word Rabb, which is generally translated as “Lord”, conveys quite a different significance. According to the best authorities on Arabic lexicology, it combines two senses, that of fostering, bringing up or nourishing, and that of regulating, completing and accomplishing (L.L., TA). Thus its underlying idea is that of fostering things from the crudest state to that of highest perfection; in other words, the idea of evolution. Raghib is even more explicit on this point. According to him, Rabb signifies the fostering of a thing in such a manner as to make it attain one condition after another until it reaches its goal of perfection. There is thus, in the use of the word Rabb, an indication that everything created by God bears the impress of Divine creation, in the characteristic of moving on from lower to higher stages until it reaches completion. This argument is expanded and made clearer in another very early revelation which runs thus: “Glorify the name of thy Rabb, the most High, Who creates, then makes complete, and Who makes (things) according to a measure, then guides them to their goal of perfection” (87:1-3). The full idea of Rabb is here expounded. He creates things and brings them to perfection: He makes things according to a measure and shows them the ways whereby they may attain to perfection.

The idea of evolution is fully developed in the first two actions, the creation and the completion, so that everything created by God must attain to its destined completion. The last two actions show how the completion of evolution is brought about. Everything is made according to measure, that is to say, certain laws of development are inherent in it; and it is also shown a way, that is to say, it knows the line along which it must proceed, so that it may reach its goal of completion. It thus appears that the creative force is not a blind force but one possessing wisdom and acting with a purpose, and that purpose is the moving on of the whole creation from the lower to the higher. Even to the ordinary eye, wisdom and purpose are observable throughout the whole of the Divine creation, from the tiniest particle of dust or blade of grass to the mighty spheres moving in the universe on their appointed courses, because every one of them is travelling on along a certain line to its appointed goal of completion.

In this connection let me draw attention to another characteristic of God’s creation. Everything, we are told, is created in pairs:

“And the heaven, We raised it high with power, and We are the maker of things ample. And the earth, We have made it a wide extent; how well have We spread it out. And of everything We have created pairs that you may be mindful” (51:47-49).

“Glory be to Him Who created pairs of all things, of what the earth grows and of their own kind and of what they know not” (36:36).

“And He Who created pairs of all things” (43:12).

This shows that there are pairs not only in the animal creation but also in “what the earth grows”, that is, in the vegetable kingdom, and further in “what you know not”. In fact, the idea of pairing is carried to its furthest extent, so that even the heavens and the earth are described as if they were a pair, because of the quality of activity in the one and that of passivity in the other. This deep inter-relationship of things is also an evidence of Divine purpose in the whole of creation.

One law prevails in the whole universe

A further point upon which the Qur’an lays a special stress is the fact that, notwithstanding its immensity of variety, there is but one law for the whole universe:

“Who created the seven heavens alike; thou seest no incongruity in the creation of the Beneficent God; then look again, canst thou see any disorder? Then turn back the eye again and again; thy look will come back to thee confused while it is fatigued” (67:3, 4).
Here we are told that there is in creation neither incongruity, whereby things belonging to the same class are subject to different laws, nor disorder, whereby the law cannot work uniformly; so that the miraculous regularity and uniformity of law in the midst of the unimaginable variety of conflicting conditions existing in the universe is also evidence of a Divine purpose and wisdom in the creation of things.

The whole of creation is held under control

Another argument that there is an intelligent being guiding the universe is the fact that from the smallest particle to the largest heavenly body, everything is held under control and is subject to a law; no one thing interferes with the course of another or hampers it; while, on the other hand, all things are helping each other to attain perfection. The Qur’ān stresses this fact frequently:

“The sun and the moon follow a reckoning and the herbs and the trees do adore” (55:5, 6).

“And the sun runs on to a term appointed for it; that is the ordination of the Mighty, the Wise. And for the moon We have ordained stages till it becomes again as an old dry palm branch. Neither is it allowable to the sun that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day; and all bodies float on in sphere” (36:38-40).

“Again, He directed Himself to the heaven and it is a vapour, so He said to it and to the earth. Come both willingly or unwillingly. They both said, We come willingly” (41:11).

“Allah is He Who made subservient to you the sea that the ships may run therein by His command, and that you may seek of His grace, and that you may give thanks. And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all, from Himself; indeed there are signs in this for a people who reflect” (45:12, 13).

“And He created the sun and the moon and the stars, made subservient by His command; surely His is the creation and the command” (7:54).

All these verses show that inasmuch as everything is subject to command and control for the fulfilment of a certain purpose, there must be an all-Wise Controller of the whole.

Guidance afforded by human nature

The second class of argument for the existence of God relates to the human soul. In the first place, there is the consciousness of the existence of God. There is an inner light within each man telling him that there is a Higher Being, a God, a Creator. This inner evidence is often brought out in the form of a question. It is like an appeal to man’s inner self. The question is sometimes left unanswered, as if man were called upon to give it a deeper thought: “Or were they created for nothing, or are they the creators (of their own souls)? Or did they create the heavens and the earth?” (52:35, 36). Sometimes the answer is given: “And if thou ask them, Who created the heavens and the earth, they would certainly say, The Mighty, the Knowing One, has created them” (43:9). On one occasion, the question is put direct to the human soul by God Himself: “And when thy Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their backs, the descendants, and made them bear witness regarding their own souls: Am I not your Lord (Rabb)? They said: Yes, we bear witness” (7:172). This is clearly the evidence of human nature, which is elsewhere spoken of as being “the nature made by Allah in which He has made all men” (30:30). Sometimes this consciousness on the part of the human soul is mentioned in terms of its unimaginable nearness to the Divine Spirit: “We are nearer to him than his life-vein” (50:16). And again, “We are nearer to it (the soul) than you” (56:85). The idea that God is nearer to man than his own self, only shows that the consciousness of the existence of God in the human soul is even clearer than the consciousness of its own existence.

If, then, the human soul has such a clear consciousness of the existence of God, how is it, the question may be asked, that there are men who deny the existence of God? Here, two things must be borne in mind. In the first place the inner light within each man, which makes him conscious of the existence of God, is not equally clear in all cases. With some, as with the great divines of every age and country, that light shines forth in its full glory, and their consciousness of the Divine presence is very strong. In the case of ordinary men, consciousness is generally weaker and the inner light more dim; there may even be cases in which that consciousness is only in a state of inertia, and the inner light has almost gone out. Secondly, even the atheist or the agnostic recognizes a First Cause, or a Higher Power, even though he may deny the existence of a God with particular attributes; and occasionally that consciousness is awakened in him, and the inner light asserts itself, especially in times of distress or affliction. It looks very much as though ease and comfort, like evil, cast a veil over the inner light of man, and that veil was removed by distress—a fact to which the Holy Qur’ān has repeatedly called attention:

“And when We show favour to man, he turns aside and withdraws himself, and when evil touches him, he makes lengthy supplications” (41:51).

“And when harm afflicts men, they call upon their Lord, turning to him” (30:33).

“And when the waves come over them like coverings they call upon Allah, being sincere to Him in obedience, but when He brings them safe to the land, some of them follow the middle course” (31:32).

“And whatever favour is bestowed on you, it is from Allah, and when evil afflicts you, to Him do you cry for aid” (16:53).

There is in man’s soul something more than mere consciousness of the existence of God; there is in it a yearning after its Maker—the instinct to turn to God for help; there is implanted in it the love of God for Whose sake it is ready to make every sacrifice. Finally, it cannot find complete contentment without God. But it is difficult to deal with these and the numerous other subjects relating to the attributes of the human soul in the short space at our disposal; so, perforce, we must leave it there.

Guidance afforded by Divine revelation

The clearest and surest evidence relating to the existence of God is afforded by Divine revelation, which not only establishes the truth of the existence of God, but also casts a flood of light on the Divine attributes without which the
existence of the Divine Being would remain mere dogma. It is through this disclosure of the Divine attributes that belief in God becomes the most important factor in the evolution of man, since a knowledge of those attributes enables him to set before himself the high ideal of imitating Divine morals; and it is only thus that man can rise to the highest moral eminence. God is the Nourisher of all the worlds, so His worshipers will do their utmost to serve the cause of humanity, and exercise care even for the dumb creation. God is Loving and Affectionate to His creatures, so one who believes in Him will be moved by the impulse of love and affection towards His creation. God is Merciful and Forgiving, so His servant must be merciful and forgiving to his fellow-beings.

A belief in God possessing the perfect attributes made known by Divine revelation is the highest ideal which a man can place before himself; and without this ideal there is a void in man's life which drains it of all earnestness and every noble aspiration.

In another way, Divine revelation brings man closer to God and makes His existence felt as a reality in his life, and that is through the example of the perfect man who holds communion with the Divine Being. That God is a Reality, a Truth — in fact, the greatest reality in this world — that man can feel His presence and realize Him in every hour of his everyday life, and have the closest relations with Him; that such a realization of the Divine Being works a change in the life of man, making him an irresistible spiritual force in the world, is not the solitary experience of one individual or of one nation, but the universal experience of men in all nations, all countries and all ages. Abraham, Moses, Christ, Confucius, Zoroaster, Rama, Krishna, Buddha and Muhammad, each and every one of these luminaries has brought about a moral, and in some cases also a material, revolution in the world, which the combined resources of whole nations have been powerless to resist, and has lifted up humanity from the depths of degredation to the greatest heights of moral, and even material, prosperity; which only shows to what heights man’s soul may rise if only it works in true relationship with the Divine Being. To take but one example, that of the Prophet Muhammad. A solitary man arises in the midst of a whole nation which is sunk deep in all kinds of vice and degradation. He has no power at his back, not even a man to second him, and without any preliminaries at all, he sets his hand to the unimaginable and apparently impossible task of the reformation, not merely of that one nation, but, through it, of the whole of humanity, and he starts with that one Force, the Force Divine, which makes possible the impossible — “Read in the name of thy Lord! ’” “Arise and warn and thy Lord do magnify”. The cause was Divine, and it was on Divine help that its success depended. With every new dawn the task grows harder, and the opposition waxes stronger, until, to an onlooker, there is nothing but disappointment everywhere. Yet how does it affect the Prophet's mind? His determination grows stronger with the strength of the opposition and, while in the earlier revelation there are only general statements of the triumph of his cause and the failure of the enemy, those statements become clearer and more definite as the prospects, to all outward appearance, grow more hopeless. Here are a few verses in the order of their revelation:

  “By the grace of thy Lord thou art not mad. And thou wilt surely have a reward never to be cut off” (68 : 2, 3).

“Surely We have given thee abundance of good” (108 : 1).

“Surely with difficulty is ease” (94 : 5).

“And what comes after is certainly better for thee than that which has gone before, and soon will thy Lord give thee so that thou art well pleased” (93 : 4, 5).

“Truly it is the word of an honoured Messenger, the possessor of strength, having an honourable place with the Lord of the ‘Throne’” (81 : 19, 20).

“And during a part of the night, forsake sleep by it (i.e. the Qur’an) ... maybe thy Lord will raise thee to a position of great glory” (17 : 79).

“O man! We have not revealed the Qur’an to thee that thou mayest be unsuccessful” (20 : 1, 2).

“And on that day the believers will rejoice, with the help of Allah” (30 : 4, 5).

“Surely We help Our messengers, and those who believe, in this world’s life and on the day when the witnesses stand up” (40 : 51).

“Blessed is He Who, if He pleases, will give thee better gardens than these, in which rivers flow, and He will give thee palaces” (25 : 10).

“Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will make them rulers in the earth as He made rulers those before them, and that He will establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, and that He will, after their fear, give them security in exchange” (24 : 55).

“He it is Who sent His Messenger with the guidance and the true religion that He may make it prevail over all the religions” (48 : 28).

In like manner, the end of opposition is described more clearly in the later revelations than in the earlier, although that opposition grew more and more powerful as days went on. The following three verses belong to three different periods:

“Until when they see what they are threatened with, they shall know who is weaker in helpers and fewer in number” (72 : 24).

“Or do they say, We are a host allied together to help each other? Soon shall the hosts be routed and they shall turn their backs” (54 : 44, 45).

“Say to those who disbelieve, you shall soon be vanquished” (3 : 11).

And all this came about years after these things had been foretold, though at the time of their foretelling there was nothing to justify such prophecies: nay, the circumstances were all against them. No man could possibly have foreseen what was so clearly stated as certain to come about, and no human power could have brought to utter failure the whole nation with all its resources ranged against a solitary man whom it was determined to destroy. Divine revelation thus affords the clearest and surest testimony of the existence of God, before Whose knowledge, past, present and future are alike and Who controls alike the forces of nature and the destiny of man.

THE UNITY OF GOD

All the basic principles of Islam are fully dealt with in the Holy Qur’an, and so is the doctrine of faith in God,
The gravity of shirk*

The opposite of Unity or Tawhid is shirk. The word shirk implies partnership and shurik (pl. shuraka) means a partner. In the Holy Qur’an, shirk is used to signify the associating of gods with God, whether such association be with respect to the person of God or His attributes or His works, or with respect to the obedience which is due to Him alone. Shirk is said to be the gravest of all sins: “Shirk is a grievous iniquity” (31 : 13): “Allah does not forgive the association of other gods with Him and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases” (4 : 48). But the great gravity of this human weakness is not due to the jealousy of God — in fact jealousy is, according to the Holy Qur’an, quite unthinkable as an attribute of the Divine Being; it is due to the fact that it demoralizes man, while Divine Unity brings about his moral elevation. According to the Holy Qur’an, man is God’s vicegerent (khilafah) on earth (2 : 30), and this shows that he is gifted with the power of controlling the rest of the earthly creation. We are told expressly that he has been made to rule the world: “Allah is He Who made subservient to you the sea that the ships may run therein by His command that you may seek of His grace, and that you may give thanks. And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all from Himself; surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect” (45 : 12, 13). Man is thus placed above the whole of creation; some even above the very angels who make obeisance to him (2 : 34). If, then, man has been created to rule the universe and is gifted with the power to subdue everything, and to turn it to his use, does he not degrade himself by taking other things for gods, by bowing before the very things which he has been created to conquer and rule? This is an argument which the Holy Qur’an has itself advanced against shirk. Thus the words, “Shall I seek a lord other than Allah, and He is the Lord of all things” (6 : 105), are followed in the next verse by, “And He has made you rulers of the earth”. And again:

1 Some have explained Oneness in attributes as meaning that He does not possess two powers, two knowledges, etc., and Oneness in works as meaning that no other being has influence over Him.

2 The Arabic word for worship is ‘ibadah, which carries originally a wide significance, the showing of submission to the utmost extent, or obedience which is combined with the utmost humility, but in ordinary usage it means the adopting of a reverential attitude of the body towards a thing, while the mind is engrossed with ideas of its greatness and mightiness, and the making of supplications to it. It is in this sense that the word ‘ibadah is used here.

* The letter i in shirk should be pronounced as i in spirit.—Ed.

Various forms of shirk

The various forms of shirk mentioned in the Holy Qur’an are an indication of the ennobling message underlying the teaching of Divine Unity. These are summed up in 3 : 63, “That we shall not worship2 any but Allah and that we shall not associate aught with Him and that some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah”. These are really three forms of shirk — a fourth kind is mentioned separately. The most palpable form of shirk is that in which anything besides God is worshipped, such as stones, idols, trees, animals, tombs, heavenly bodies, forces of nature, or human beings who are supposed to be demi-gods or gods or incarnations of God or sons or daughters of God. The second kind of shirk, which is less palpable, is the associating of other things with God, that is to say, to suppose that other things and beings possess the same attributes as the Divine Being. The belief that there are three persons in the Godhead, and that the Son and the Holy Ghost are eternal, Omnipotent and Omniscient like God Himself, as in the Christian creed, or that there is a Creator of Evil along with a Creator of Good, as in Zoroastrianism, or that matter and soul are co-eternal with God and self-existing like Himself, as in Hinduism — all fall under this head. The last kind of shirk is that in which some men take others for their lords. The meaning of this was explained by the Prophet himself in answer to a question put to him. When 9 : 31 was revealed — “They have taken their doctors of law and their monks for lords besides Allah” — ‘Adiy ibn Hatim, a convert from Christianity, said to the Prophet that the Jews and the Christians did not worship the doctors of law and the monks. The Prophet asked him if it was not true that they blindly obeyed them in what they enjoined and what they forbade, and ‘Adiy answered in the affirmative, which shows that to follow the behests of great men blindly was also considered shirk. And the fourth kind of shirk is that which is referred to in 25 : 43: “Hast thou seen him who takes his low desires for his god?” Here blindly following one’s own desires is also called shirk, the reason being that the Unity of God is not merely a dogma to be believed in but has a deep underlying significance, as will be shown later on. A belief in the Unity of God means that true obedience is due to God alone, and whosoever obeys either anyone else, or his own low desires, in preference to the Divine commandments, is really guilty of shirk.

Idolatry

Of the different forms of shirk, idolatry is denounced in the most scathing terms and, indeed, is cited more frequently than all the other forms of shirk. This is due to the fact that idolatry is the most heinous form of shirk and also was the most rampant throughout the world at the advent of Islam. Not only is idolatry condemned in its gross form, which takes it for granted that an idol can cause benefit or
do harm, but the idea is also controverted that there is any meaning underlying this gross form of worship: “And those who take guardians besides Him (saying), We do not serve them save that they may bring us nearer to Allah, Allah will judge between them in that in which they differ” (39:33). A similar excuse is put forward today by some of the advanced idolaters. It is said that an idol is used simply to concentrate the worshipper’s attention, which means that with an idol before a worshipper, wherever he may concentrate his attention, he will become more deeply engrossed in Divine contemplation, and that is the very idea which is controverted in the verse quoted above — “that they may bring us nearer to Allah”.

But even in this case the worshipper must believe that the idol on which he centres his attention is a symbol of the Divine Being, which is a grossly false notion; and, moreover, it is the idol on which the worshipper’s attention is centred, not the Divine Being. It is also wrong to suppose that a material symbol is necessary for concentration, for attention can be every whit as easily concentrated on a spiritual object, and it is only when the object of attention is spiritual that concentration helps the development of will-power. Along with idol-worship, the Holy Qur’ān also prohibits dedication to idols (6:137).

Nature worship

Another form of prevailing shirk denounced in the Holy Qur’ān is the worship of the sun, the moon, the stars, in fact of everything which might appear to control the destinies of man. The worship of these great luminaries is expressly forbidden: “And among His signs are the night and the day and the sun and the moon; do not make obeisance to the sun nor to the moon, and make obeisance to Allah Who created them” (41:37). The argument is also clearly put forth in Abraham’s controversy with his people that “these things are themselves under the control of a Higher Power.” The argument thus advanced against the worship of the sun and the moon not only applies to all heavenly bodies but also, and equally well, to all the forces of nature, which are in fact again and again mentioned as being made subservient to man. The worship of Sirius is alluded to in 53:49, where God is called the Lord of Sirius.

Deism and the Trinity

Deism is mentioned in particular: “And Allah has said, “Take not two gods. He is only One God” (16:51). The jinn are also referred to as being set up on a level with God: “And they make the jinn associates with Allah, while He created them” (6:101). Trinity is also denounced as a form of shirk: “Believe therefore in Allah and His messengers, and say not, Three; desist, it is better for you: Allah is only One God” (4:171). It is sometimes alleged that the Qur’ānic conception of the Trinity is a mistaken one, because it speaks of Jesus and Mary as having been taken for two gods: “O Jesus, son of Mary! Didst thou say to men, Take me and my mother for two gods, besides Allah?” (5:116). The reference here is to Mariolatry. That

Mary was worshipped as a fact, and the Qur’ān’s reference to it is significant, but it should be noted that neither the Holy Qur’ān, nor the Prophet Muhammad, has anywhere said that Mary was the third person of the Trinity. Where the Holy Qur’ān denounces the Trinity, it speaks of the doctrine of worship but does not speak of the worship of Mary at all; and where it speaks of the worship of Mary, it does not refer to the Trinity.

Doctrine of sonship

Another form of shirk, refuted in the Holy Qur’ān, is the doctrine that God has sons or daughters. The pagan Arabs ascribed daughters to God while the Christians hold that God has a son. Though the doctrine of ascribing daughters to God is mentioned in the Holy Qur’ān several times, as in 16:57, 17:40, 37:149, yet it is against the Christian doctrine that the holy book speaks with gravest emphasis: “And they say: The Beneficent God has taken (to Himself) a son. Certainly you have made an abominable assertion: the heavens may almost be rent thereat, and the earth cleave asunder, and the mountains fall down in pieces, that they ascribe a son to the Beneficent God” (19:88-91). The doctrine is denounced repeatedly; for instance in 2:116; 6:102-104; 10:68; 17:111; 18:4; 5:19; 35:91; 92:23; 37:151, 152; 112:3. Of these, ch. 112 is undoubtedly one of the earliest revelations, while the 17th, 18th and 19th chapters also belong to the early Makkah period. This shows that even the very first the Holy Qur’ān set before itself the correction of this error. It will be observed that a mention of the doctrine of sonship is often followed by the word subhana-hu, which word is used to indicate the purity of God from all defects. The reason for this is that the doctrine of sonship is due to the supposition that God cannot forgive sins unless He receives some satisfaction therefore, and this satisfaction is supposed to be have afforded by the crucifixion of the Son of God, who alone is said to be sinless. The doctrine of sonship is thus practically a denial of the quality of forgiveness in God, and this amounts to attributing a defect to Him. It is for this reason also that we are told in 19:92, which is preceded by a most forcible denunciation of the doctrine of sonship, that “it is not worthy of the Beneficent God (Rahman) that He should take to Himself a son.” The word Rahman signifies originally the Lord of immeasurable mercy Who requires no satisfaction or compensation for a display of the quality of mercy which is inherent in Him, and the attribute of being Rahman negatives the doctrine of sonship.

4 The doctrine and practice of Mariolatry, as it is called by the Protestant controversialists, is too well-known. In the catechism of the Roman Church the following doctrines are to be found:

4 “And thus did We show Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and that he might be of those who are sure. So when night overshadowed him, he saw a star. Said he, Is this my Lord? And when it set, he said, I do not love the setting ones. Then when he saw the moon rising, he said, Is this my Lord? When it set, he said, If my Lord had not guided me, I should be of the erring people. Then when he saw the sun rising, he said, Is this my Lord? Is this the greatest? And when it set, he said, O my people! I am clear of what you set up with Allah. I have turned myself, being upright, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth and I am not of the polytheists” (6:76-80).
Significance underlying the doctrine of Unity

The various kinds of shirk mentioned in the Holy Qur'an show that in the doctrine of Unity it gives to the world an ennobling message of advancement all round, physical as well as moral and spiritual. Man is freed not only from slavery to animate and inanimate objects, but also from subservience to the great and wondrous forces of nature which, he is told, he can subdue to himself. It goes further and delivers man from that greatest of slaveries, slavery to man. It does not allow to any mortal the dignity of Godhead, or being more than a mortal; for the greatest of mortals is commanded to say: "I am only a mortal like you; it is revealed to me that your God is One God." (18: 110). Thus all the bonds which fettered the mind of man were broken, and he was set on the road to progress. A slave mind, as the Holy Qur'an plainly says, is incapable of doing anything good and great, and hence the first condition for the advancement of man was that his mind should be set free from the trammels of all kinds of slavery, which was accomplished in the message of Divine Unity.

Unity of human race underlies Unity of God

The doctrine of the Unity of God, besides casting off the bonds of slavery which had enthralled the human mind, and thus opening the way for his advancement, carries another significance equally great, if not greater, to wit, the idea of the unity of the human race. He is the Rabb of all the nations, Rabb al-'alamin. Rabb in Arabic signifies the Fosterer of a thing in such a manner as to make it attain one condition after another until it reaches its goal of completion (R). The words Rabb al-'alamin thus signify that all the nations of the world are, as it were, the children of one Father, and that He takes equal care of all, bringing all to their goal of completion by degrees. Hence God is spoken of in the Holy Qur'an as granting not only His physical but also His spiritual sustenance. His revelation, to all the nations of the world: "Every nation had a messenger" (10: 47); "There is not a people but a warner has gone among them" (35: 24). We further find that the Holy Qur'an upholds the idea that God, being the God of all nations, deals with all of them alike. He hearkens to the prayers of all, whatever their religion or nationality. He is equally merciful to all and forgives the sins of all. He rewards the good deeds of the Muslim and the non-Muslim alike; and not only does He deal with all nations alike but we are further told that He created them all alike, in the Divine nature: "The nature made by Allah in which He has made all men" (30: 30). And this unity of the human race, which is thus a natural corollary of the doctrine of the Unity of God, is further stressed in the plain words that "all men are a single nation" (2: 213), and that "people are naught but a single nation." (10: 19).

(To be concluded)
THE DIVINE DIVAN

One whisper'd ALLAH, one whisper'd GOD,
One to himself said DIEU, le BON DIEU, le DIEU
UNIQUE.
Others there were, and divers Names I heard,
So, as I ponder'd, swift as from some heavenly bird,
A flash of inspiration in my heart did speak:
"These are My lovers. Myriads they are,
But in their hearts, from near or far,
From here or there,
From everywhere,
These notes of music from their hearts do stream:
'My beloved, beloved, beloved, Thou art the ONE SUPREME.'"

* * *

He is the Lord of Heaven and Earth,
He is the Lord of Eternity,
He is the Lord of death and birth,
Lord of the night, Lord of the day,
Lord of profound serenity.
Nothing escapes His gaze, Nothing escapes His pow'r,
The Great Assessor of right and wrong,
Lord of each passing hour.
Who is this Mighty One, Boundless in pow'r,
Lord of the mountains, the trees and the flow'r's?
Search in thine heart; the answer is there.
He is the ONE, the BELOVED. His care
Girdles existence with Mercy, with fair
And faded Forgiveness, Who knowest thy need,
Who heareth thy cries, Who doth thee feed.
Ahh! speak to the One, the Beloved, the Lord,
The Helper, Sustainer, the Truly Adored.

* * *

'Tis now the season of much delight,
Welcome as sunrise after a night
Of suffering and dread darkness and shadowy fears.
'Tis now the season, when appears
The smiling face of girlish Spring with laughter and tears.
Gone is the Winter with its wan

Spectre of snows and numbing, freezing cold!
Gone is the Winter with its long nights creeping on
And dreary, cloudy days of darkness, as if no sun had shone!
Gone!
And now,
Spring makes her bow.
The green grass shines to our feet
And flowers our joyful eyes with myriad colours greet.
So, in our heart there flourishes that fadeless Spring,
Thinking of the Beloved, as notes of rapture ring
Around, above, about us, viewing everything
Thou, Lord Beloved, hast with wondrous beauty made.
Who else but Thou, the One Supreme, should be obey'd?

* * *

O Lord of Loveliness, Lord of the Spring,
Lord of the waking Earth, to Thee we sing.
The sun, Thy ministrant, his beams doth fling
With golden glory upon everything.
Or high or low, on mountain top or glade with woods encircling.
And blossoms bright to brilliant birth doth bring,
Making our hearts, renew'd, with rapture's music ring.

So, ere the sun rise, so, when the sun hath set,
So, at the noonday, so, in dark midnight's jet.
Thee we do not in our hearts forget.
To Thee do we turn for Guidance, and from Thee we get
Guidance and Help and Joy without regret.
Forgiveness, Mercy, Wisdom, Purity, and yet
That heart is best with Thy Remembrance firm inset.

Beloved Lord, around I see
Thy loved Handiwork encircling me,
Beauty and Bounty and Forgiveness, free
To all who to Thee turn with sincerity.
Accept, then, from this heart th' entirety
Of love to Thee that to Thy creatures it may be
Flowing from me, O Thou Lord of Eternity.

William Bashyr Pickard.
ISLAM AND THE THREE QUESTIONS

By Mr. K. A. CHANDOO

There are three basic questions with which every man is faced: (1) Who is his Creator; what is the nature of that Being? (2) Who is Man? (3) What is Righteousness?

What is Islam?

Before I answer the three questions according to Islam, let me first define what Islam is. The word “Islam” means Surrender; that is, man’s unconditional surrender of his will and purpose to God. The word “Muslim” means Surrenderer; that is, one who has unconditionally surrendered to God’s Will and Guidance. But surrender of what? Of my will and purpose? My will and purpose consist of ignorant ideas! Hence, when Islam says surrender, what it really means in practice is surrender of ignorant ideas: selfish ideas, ideas of ill-will toward others, fearful ideas, ideas of limitations, painful ideas, grievous ideas, hateful ideas, impatient ideas, revengeful ideas, destructive ideas, lustful ideas, ideas of the fear of diseases, of illness, of sickness, ideas of the fear of failure, poverty. To be sure, the surrendering of these ignorant ideas is not done in one day or one year; it is a continuous process as long as a man lives here on earth. But, as a Muslim advances in his spiritual growth, these ignorant ideas have less and less effect upon his mind, since his mind gets occupied more and more with good ideas which necessarily displace ignorant ideas.

What are these good ideas? They are selfless ideas, ideas of goodwill towards others, loving ideas, beneficent ideas, merciful ideas, grateful ideas, benevolent ideas, forgiving ideas and constructive ideas. God, the One Mind, is the source of all good ideas. A Muslim gets good ideas from the Qur’an, which deals with all the fundamental articles of faith in Islam.

The fundamental articles of Islam are:

“I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, the Alone, no partner whatsoever has He,”

“And I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and messenger.”

Notice that the first and fundamental article of faith of a Muslim begins negatively; it says, “there is no God but Allah.” It begins with a rejection of other false gods. It begins with a denial of the existence of any other god. It says “No... Yes.” As we all know, a Muslim recites this article not only during formal prayers, but he also recites it secretly in his heart all the time and wherever he is. Now, the question is this: What is it that a Muslim denies all the time and at all places? What is it that he rejects? Against what does he point the “No”? It is ignorant ideas, of which a Muslim denies recognition! It is ignorant ideas, unreal ideas, which a Muslim rejects! It is ignorant ideas against which a Muslim directs his big and emphatic “NO”! As soon as a Muslim says “there is no god”, he then immediately says “but Allah”. And no sooner does he mention “Allah” than good ideas begin to flow in, and ignorant ideas to disappear and vanish into nothingness. How true is the Qur’an when it says: those “who have believed and whose hearts have rest in the remembrance of Allah. Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest!” (13:28). What is it that gives rest to hearts? What is it that gives peace to hearts? It is good ideas, grateful ideas! One cannot have these good ideas unless one believes in God first. How can one have good ideas when one denies the Source? Thus the Qur’an, the Cream of Good Ideas, is meaningless to the disbelievers because they deny the Source of the Cream of Good Ideas! That is why the warnings of the Qur’an, the warnings of the Day of Judgment, of the Doom of Fire of Hell, have no effect on the disbelievers! “So withdraw from them (O Muhammad), for thou art in no wise blameworthy, and warn, for warning profit eth believers” (51:54, 55).

“Lo! Those who say: Our Lord is God, and afterwards are upright, the angels descend upon them, saying: Fear not nor grieve, but hear good tidings of the paradise which ye are promised. We are your protecting friends in the life of the world and in the Hereafter. There ye will have all that your souls desire, and there ye will have all for which ye pray. A gift of welcome from the Forgiving, the Merciful.” (41:30-32). Who are these angels? Where are they? Are they not in ideas, thoughts?

A Muslim thus guards himself against ignorant ideas by the weapon “there is no God” and makes his mind receptive to good ideas by immediately saying “...but Allah”. There is also another weapon, equally effective, which a Muslim uses against ignorant and Satanic ideas. This weapon is “I seek refuge in Allah from Satan, the Outcast”. Or, “My Lord! I seek refuge in Thee from suggestions of the evil ones” (24:18). Or, “I seek refuge in the Beneficent One” (19:18). As soon as ignorant, lustful and fearful ideas begin to touch the Muslim’s heart, he immediately seeks refuge in God. And no sooner does he seek refuge in God than the lustful and fearful ideas disappear! How can he seek refuge in God? By merely directing his thoughts to Him; God is nearer to him than his thoughts. How true is the Qur’an: “And if a whisper from the devil reach thee (O Muhammad), then seek refuge in God. Lo! He is the Hearer, the Knower” (41:36).

These ignorant ideas disappear immediately, because (a) God is indeed the Hearer; He is indeed nearer to man than his jugular vein. The Qur’an says: “We verily created man and We know that his soul whispereth to him, and We are nearer to him than his jugular vein” (50:16). (b) Again, these ignorant ideas disappear so very quickly because they are mere illusions. They are unreal. They do not exist in reality — in the realm of the ONE REAL, God. In the realm of God, Satan does not exist. The realm of God includes both the heavens and the earth and everything that is in between them. Thus under God, Satan can have no power over man.

Since a Muslim is he who has unconditionally surrendered, he must necessarily follow God’s Guidance. In all his decisions, in all his steps, in all his actions, however
small they may be, he must ask the guidance of God. “Lo! Those who believe and do good works, their Lord guideth them by their faith” (10:9). The greater the faith in God, the closer one is to Allah, the closer one is to God, the greater the ability to receive good ideas. Thus when a Muslim says, “Show us the straight path” he is really asking God for the best ideas, the right ideas at the right time and at the right place. God guides man by thoughts and ideas.

It is his thoughts and his ideas that make a man what he is. Our surroundings, our institutions, are products of our ideas. It is ideas and thoughts that make things (and not vice versa, as Karl Marx and his followers maintain). Our speech and actions are our later stages of our ideas. Our bodily, as well as mental, health is influenced by our thoughts. Our relationship with other people, with our surroundings, with our institutions, depends entirely upon the kind of ideas we have. The course of history is governed by ideas. It is an idea which has got hold of the Marxists, and which has made them its servants. As the wind moves a cloud from one region to another, so it is ideas which move civilization from one region to another. Some ideas are mirage-based; they are temporary. They will fail their holders in the end. The ideas based on God, and originating from Him, are real and permanent. They will prevail in the end. “Let not the vicissitude (of the success) of those in the land who disbelieve deceive thee (O Muhammad). It is but a brief comfort. And afterwards their habitation will be hell, an ill abode” (3:196, 197).

It is essential that a Muslim fill his mind with permanent and real ideas. In order to do this, he must (a) read the Qur’an every day, especially at dawn. “Establish worship at the going down of the sun until the dark of night, and (the recital of) the Qur’an at dawn. Lo! (the recital of) the Qur’an at dawn is ever witnessed” (17:78). “And We reveal of the Qur’an that which is a healing and a mercy for believers, though it increase the evil-doers in naught save ruin” (17:82). “Lo! those who read the Scripture of Allah, and establish worship, and spend of that which We have bestowed on them secretly and openly, they look forward to imperishable gain” (35:29). The Qur’an is the greatest gift of the Muslim. Let him make use of it. Surely the Qur’an is meant to be read. (b) Pray ceaselessly. By prayer I do not mean just the formal prayers, but I include also constant remembrance of God in between the formal prayers. That secret remembrance of God is one’s heart — that is the greatest force! “Recite that which hath been inspired in thee of the Scripture, and establish worship. Lo! worship preserveth from lewdness and iniquity, but verily remembrance of Allah is more important. And Allah knoweth what ye do” (29:45).

(2) The second point in regard to the articles of faith: “Muhammad is His slave and messenger”, Muhammad had completely surrendered to God, as had all the previous messengers. To be the slave of God is the proudest boast of the Muslim, bondage to God liberating from all other servitudes, from all ignorant ideas. For, under God, man is completely self-governed, absolutely independent.

(3) The Qur’an explicitly claims that Muhammad is that “Holy Comforter”, who Jesus Christ, the slave and messenger of God, had promised would come and bring all the truth; the Qur’an being that which contains all the truth.

The Qur’an also emphasizes that Jesus was the slave and messenger of God. He was not God-in-flesh or the son of God in any sense of the word. Surely he was miraculously born of the Virgin Mary; surely he was the promised Messiah, the promised Christ. But, also, he was the slave of God, and he was proud to be so. He himself had completely surrendered to God. He said to his disciples: “Lo! God is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is a straight path” (3:35).

Now, I shall answer the three basic questions.

(1) Who is God? What is the nature of God?

In the words of the Qur’an:

“Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds,”
“The Beneficent, the Merciful,”
“Owner of the Day of Judgment,”
“Thee (alone) we worship; Thee (alone) we ask for help,”
“Show us the straight path,”
“The path of those whom Thou hast favoured,”
“Not (the path) of those who earn Thine anger nor of those who go astray” (1:1-7).

Again:

“Say: He is God, the One!”
“God, the eternally Besought of all!”
“He begetteth not nor was begotten,”
“And there is none comparable unto Him” (112:1-4).

(These two chapters make these essential part of a Muslim’s prayer.)

Let the reader give special attention to the last three verses: “God, the eternally Besought of all! He begetteth not, nor was begotten. And there is none comparable unto Him”. These three verses emphasize the immateriality of the One Eternal God, the infiniteness of God, the allness of God. “And He it is Who in the heaven is God, and in the earth God. He is the Wise, the Knower” (43:84). “He is the First and the Last, and the Inward and the Outward; and He is Knower of all things” (57:3). Thus, God is unimaginable. He is the One, the Unseen. He is ALL in ALL. He is nearer to man “than his jugular vein” (50:16). This is the conception of God, which the Qur’an throughout emphasizes. Indeed, the two above-quoted chapters not only answer the question Who is and what is the nature of God?, but they also make the very précis of the Qur’an. For the Qur’an throughout emphasizes one thing only, and that is the right conception of God. Indeed, Muhammad, the slave and messenger of God (the blessings of God be upon him), was not brought into this world to preach a belief in God; he was brought to preach the right conception of God. He was brought to preach “there is no god but God”. He was brought to preach “God! There is no god save Him, the Alme, the Eternal. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakest Him. Unto Him beleth whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Who is he that intercedeth with Him save by His leave? He knoweth that which is in front of them and that which is behind them, while they encompass nothing of His knowledge save what He will. His throne includeth the heavens and the earth, and He is never weary of preserving them. He is the Sublime, the Tremendous” (2:255). In short, Islam teaches the immaterial and spiritual conception of the One God.
The Qur’án condemns the material conception of the One God. Or, to use the language of the Qur’án, it uncom promisingly condemns associating partnership with the One God. Thus, calling Jesus “our mediator”, or calling him “the son of God”, or calling him “God-in-flesh”, is what I call a material conception of God; or, to put it in other words, it is associating partnership with God. Jesus (a) is not “our mediator” because God does not need a mediator. God is the One Eternal Lord; He is the eternally Besought of all; He Knows all, He Hears all, He Sees all. And He is Able to do all things. Thus Islam rejects the idea of mediation. Jesus (b) is not the son of God, because God “begetteth not”. God does not need a son. He created everything that is in the heavens and the earth, and everything that is in between them. All, without exception, obey Him. He is Aware of all things. He creates what He wills, and destroys what He wills. None shares in His Kingdom. All, including Jesus, are obedient to Him. Thus Jesus was the slave of God; a most righteous slave indeed. Jesus (c) is not God-in-flesh because: “And there is none comparable unto Him”. God is incomparable, unimaginable. Anything that is comparable is God’s creation. Thus Jesus is God’s creation. Anything that is materially bound, anything that has a form, anything that is limited, anything that is touch able, anything that is imaginable, anything that is comparable, anything that can be seen, anything that can be reproduced, is a creation of God and is obedient to Him. God is the One Unseen, the Absolutely Independent of His creatures. To quote again the words of Jesus to his disciples “Lo! God is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is a straight path” (3 : 51).

In order to keep the immaterial conception of God intact, the Qur’án, therefore, emphasizes that Jesus, Muhammad, and all other previous messengers of God, were His servants. Indeed, all men and women are servants of God. God has no children. He needs no children. All men and women obey Him willingly or unwillingly. Those slaves of God who obey Him willingly earn His favour. As for the rebellious slaves, the evildoers, they earn His anger. “And unto God falleth prostrate whosoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, as do their shadows in the morning and the evening hours.”

I might add, in passing, another important point in the Muslim conception of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, the Lord of the Worlds, the Loving, the Most Forgiving, the Most High. The Muslims never address God as “Our Father” as the Christians do. This is because the concept not only includes the Divine fatherly love, but it also includes the motherly aspect of Divine Love, as the two principal epithets of God indicate: al-Rahman (The Beneficent), al-Rahim (the Merciful). The Prophet Muhammad said that God is seventy times more merciful to man than is a mother to her child. The Qur’án says God is the most Merciful of all those who show mercy, the Most Forgiving (for those who turn repentant to Him). This father-mother love of God (and greater than that) is one of the many reasons why Muslims never address God as “Our Father” or “My Father”. Rather, they address Him as “Our Lord” or “My Lord”.

(2) Who is Man?

Man, says the Qur’án, is an agent of God, a viceroy of God on earth. He has only one legitimate purpose in the world — to serve God, his Lord, by doing good to others for the sake of God only. The Qur’án says God created man for one purpose only — to worship and glorify Him. That is to say, to bear witness, in action, that there is no god but God. Man’s reward is in the Hereafter. While he is here on earth, he should do good to others for the sake of God only; he should expect no reward from mankind nor any thanks. His reward is from God only — which will be preservation of him from the Doom of the Day of Judgment, and eternal peace and happiness in the Next World. And whatsoever good a man does, it is God who gives him strength to do it. Of himself, man can do nothing. The power to do good to others comes from God only. I have already explained how a man gets this power. In short, it is good ideas which he gets as a result of his faith and closeness to God, the One Mind, the Source of all good ideas, which necessarily lead to good actions. Hence the necessity of the agent of God for prayers and remembrance of God. Worship in Islam is the Supreme Ethic; Virtue is the Supreme Worship.

To put it in other words, man’s only legitimate function in this world is to individualize the infinite power of God; to individualize the infinite Benevolence of God, to individualize the infinite Mercy and the infinite Forgiveness and Benevolence of God. This is clearly seen from the following prayer of the Muslim: Creator of the heavens and the earth! Thou art my Protecting Friend in the world and the Hereafter. Make me to die submissive (unto Thee), and join me to the righteous (The Qur’án, 12 : 101). Another prayer of the Muslim goes like this: My Lord, arouse me to be thankful for Thy favour wherewith Thou hast favoured me and my parents, and to do good that shall be pleasing unto Thee, and incline me in (the number of) Thy righteous slaves (The Qur’án, 27 : 19). God is sufficient as a Friend, and God is sufficient as a Helper (4 : 45). And trust thou in the Living One Who dieth not, and hymn His praise. He succeth as the Knower of His bondmen’s sins (25 : 58). The (faithful) slaves of the Beneficent are they who walk upon the earth modestly, and when the foolish ones address them answer: Peace (25 : 63).

Not only does the Qur’án inform man that he is on a mission here on earth, but it also warns man that it is a temporary mission. The Institution of Agency, or of Viceroy ship, is a temporary institution set up by God. The Day of Judgment will mark the end of this institution. This is the day when God, the Accountant, will show mankind with a most clear showing how they behaved in their capacity as His viceroy. The Doom of Fire is for those who were careless of their missions on earth. As for those who strove in the service of their Lord, they will be rewarded with forgiveness, exemption from the Doom of Hell, and Eternal Peace in Paradise.

Hence, as to the question where does man come from? the answer is: From God, his Lord, who created him, guides him, gives him food to eat, gives him water to drink, heals him when he is sick. The object of man’s existence is to glorify God, that is to say, to bear witness in thought, speech and action that “there is no god but God”, that is to say, to serve God by doing good to others. Where is man going? Unto God is the journeying. Unto God is the return. Lo! We are God’s, and lo! unto Him we are returning (The Qur’án, 2 : 156). Grant us Thy forgiveness, our Lord. Unto Thee is the journeying (The Qur’án, 2 : 285).

If man is the agent of God on earth, then how is it that we also see much evil around us? How is it we see many
men and women doing evil? The answer given by the Qur'an is very simple: Not because man is basically evil, not because man is born inherently evil, but because man is free. God has given man some freedom of choice of action. Indeed, it is this particular freedom that has made man different from all other animals. Man has the freedom to do good actions or to do bad actions. But he has no freedom of choice over consequences of his actions. If he does good actions, it is for the good of his own soul, which will earn Eternal Peace. If he does evil actions, he is hurting his own soul. The Qur'an says the following about man being a free agent:

"And a soul and Him who perfected it,
"And inspired it (with conscience of) what is wrong for it and (what is) right for it.
"He is indeed successful who causeth it to grow,
"And he is indeed a failure who stumteth it" (91 : 7-10).

How to cause this soul to grow? Say: Lo! My worship and my sacrifice and my living and my dying are for God, Lord of the Worlds. He hath no partner. This am I commanded, and I am first of those who surrender (unto Him) (7 : 163, 164). That is to say, complete surrender unto God is the way to cause this soul to grow. In other words, salvation is obtained by belief in God and good actions. How to stunt this soul? The answer is very simple: disbelief in God. If a person disbelieves in God, he will necessarily believe in mirages, which will give him ignorant ideas leading him to selfish, evil actions which will finally drag him to the Fire. Thus the Qur'an says: God is the Protecting Friend of those who believe. He bringeth them out of darkness into light. As for those who disbelieve, their patrons are false deities. They bring them out of light into darkness. Such are rightful owners of the Fire. They will abide therein (2 : 257).

Hence, Islam does not believe in the Christian doctrine of the Original Sin of Man, since Islam believes that man is free to do good or evil. Hence, Islam does not believe that man is born inherently evil, basically sinful. As a matter of fact, the Prophet Muhammad (the blessings and peace of God be upon him!) said that every child is born a Muslim (i.e., a surrenderer to God); it is his parents who make him a Christian or a Jew or a Sabean. Under God, his rightful Lord, man is basically good. Outside God, man is doomed.

The only sin that Islam knows is the sin of associating partnership with God, the sin of having a material conception of God. The only sin that Islam knows is the sin of a failure to recognize that there is no god but God. And to avoid this sin and to obtain salvation from this sin, it is entirely the individual's responsibility. Nobody can save him, but himself. And the individual's responsibility is very light, very simple. To save himself, he is merely required to recognize that there is no god but God, the One, no partner has He. There is no baptism or any other kind of ceremony whatsoever in Islam when one becomes a Muslim. It is only a matter of recognition of himself — that he is an agent of God.

(3) What is righteousness?

The Qur'an says: It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces to the East and the West; but righteous is he who believeth in God and the Last Day and the angels and the Scripture and the Prophets; and giveth his wealth, for love of Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free; and observeth proper worship and payeth the poor-due. And those who keep their treaty when they make one, and the patient in tribulation and adversity and time of stress. Such are they who are sincere. Such are the God-fearing (2 : 177).

Commenting upon this verse, Mr. S. Muhammad Tufail, Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Woking, said the following during his 'Id al-Adha sermon, 1961:

"The Qur'an says that true righteousness or goodness of a high order does not lie in the outward form. Some form is, of course, needed to give expression to our righteous deeds. We face towards Mecca while praying, but this act in itself is not an act of righteousness. Even our ritual prayer cannot make us righteous, unless it is accompanied by certain deeds of kindness (107 : 1-7). The mainspring of such deeds should be the thought of God, that is why faith in God is the first condition of true piety. With belief in God is mentioned our belief in the Last Day, the angels, the Divine revelation and all the prophets of God. But the Qur'an does not stop here. Mere outward profession and expression in certain spiritual and theological doctrines cannot lead us anywhere.

'You cannot attain to righteousness unless you spend out of what you love' (3 : 91).

'Man is mostly absorbed in collecting the goods of this world, and in amassing wealth for himself and his family. Therefore the first test laid down by the Qur'an for righteousness is to spend one's wealth in the way of God for the near of kins, the orphans, the needy, etc. But this spending should be done out of love of God and with no other motive.

'And they give food, out of love for Him, to the poor and the orphan and the captive. We feed you for God's pleasure only — We desire from you neither reward nor thanks' (76 : 8-9).

'Again, the spending of one's wealth should not be confined to the near of kin but it should also include the wayfarer, i.e., Ibn al-Sabil (Son of the Road). A traveller, or a person far away on a journey from home or one stranded on the way, all are Sons of the Road.

'The ransoming of the captives or the slaves has also been mentioned as a righteous deed.

'The other part of the verse deals with prayer and Zakat. The definition of Faith and righteousness has not yet been completed. Believers in God should also keep up their prayers and pay the Zakat. The word Zakat has generally been translated as alms-giving or poor rate, but this has another significance. Purification of the self also falls under this category. At one place the Qur'an says:

'Woe to the polytheists who pay not the Zakat (or purify themselves of the disease of shirk and kufr, i.e., polytheism and disbelief)" (41 : 7).

'Finally, we are reminded of the fulfilment of our promises and pledges and the display of patience in

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distress, poverty, hardship, misfortune, calamity, periods of panic and war. If we can show such fortitude and courage with a pure heart and faith in God, we have rightly understood the message of Islam. It is not mere formalism, or mere belief, it is something with which one has to live all the days of one's life. The approach is individual, but it is also connected with social organization. The believers must realize these truths in their private lives, as well as public, before the words of the Qur'án can be truly applied to them."

**QUEST OF THE SPIRIT**

By MALIKA FRANCES CITRINE

"I was indeed amazed to discover in Islam a monotheistic faith of pure and fervent devotion to God, prescribing a complete and practical discipline for all to follow, and by means of which the religious spirit is constantly deepened and developed. Here in Islam the simple essentials of true faith had been surprisingly well preserved from the complicated additions and elaborations which have been superimposed upon other religions, making them difficult to accept or to follow sincerely. Above all, this was a faith which commanded belief in all of God's prophets, not claiming to be a rival and exclusive depository of Truth, but a reminder and confirmation of the original core of true guidance which had been given by all of God's previous Messengers to the different nations of mankind."

Many Europeans have been drawn to Islam as a result of visiting Islamic countries and being impressed by the devotion and fervour of Muslim peoples, which forms such a sharp contrast to the religious indifference of the Western world. Yet this was not so in my case, for I have never yet visited an Islamic country, nor did I even meet any Muslims until after I had accepted Islam in my heart. It was simply through personal study that I was able to travel through many realms of the spirit until I finally came to the end of the journey in the House of Islam.

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Mrs. Malika Frances Citrine, a Roman Catholic in the fold of Islam

I was born and brought up in a Roman Catholic family, and educated in a convent school. Yet some time before I left this school I had begun to doubt the truth of many of the Church's doctrines, since they seemed to me to be not only irrational and sometimes harmful in their effects, but were not even truly substantiated by the Gospels themselves. Above all, I felt very strongly that if God existed and was good and just, He would not have given the whole of His Truth to one community only, leaving all the rest of humanity in total error and darkness. It therefore seemed to me that there were two possibilities: either that all the great religions were true in their fundamentals, or that they were all equally false and meaningless.

Since it is apparent that all religious belief must hinge upon the conviction that the spirit of man survives the death of the body, and since spiritualists claim to be able to prove this survival, I began by studying their claims. Among several others, the work in particular of Sir Oliver Lodge, the notable scientist who had turned his attention to this subject, convinced me that the soul of man does indeed survive the grave. Of course there is much fraud and deception in this field, but there is certainly also a core of truth which cannot be ignored.

**Hindu faith**

Having satisfied myself on this point I began to study the religions of the Eastern world, and since the teachings of the Hindu Vedanta and Yoga have received considerable publicity in the West, I started with these. I became familiar with the Upanishads, the Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali, and above all the Bhagavad-Gita, from which I gained much inspiration and delight. For a number of years I lived by the light of this philosophy and the regular practice of meditation. Although I realized that the Hindu faith as popularly practised is marred by caste, by superstition, and even crude idolatry, I felt without doubt that the higher reaches of Hindu thought could be seen to bear the imprint of Divine inspiration.

Yet philosophy, however, noble, is not religious practice, and tends to remain an intellectual rather than a living force in one's life. And after I was married and had small children..."
to look after, I also found it became impossible to obtain the peace and privacy which is necessary for meditation. I was therefore reluctantly forced to abandon it, and to try to seek absorption in my daily duties and the domestic round.

**Buddhism**

This did not find satisfying for very long, and soon I felt myself drawn to the study of Buddhism, this being a universal faith which has also received some sympathetic attention in the Western world. I therefore studied the Dhammapada and the various schools of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, and although the variety of schools was sometimes confusing (ranging from the lofty heights of Mahayana philosophy to the mechanical prayer-wheel and Buddha-worship of the masses), I felt that simple Buddhist life, enriched whenever possible by contemplation and study, would be a noble and worthwhile spiritual goal.

Yet in Buddhism, as in Christianity, the peak and summit of the spiritual life is regarded as being attainable only through a permanently monastic and celibate existence, which no life in the world, however noble and devout, can equal in spiritual status. This seemed to be strangely unrealistic. Certainly, a religious life might be rendered easier by monastic seclusion, but I could not see how this attainment could be considered to be superior to the spiritual achievement involved in facing and surmounting the many trials and difficulties of ordinary life in the everyday world. It is also obvious that monastic celibacy deprives family life and future generations of some of their best influences. Above all, I found it most disturbing to have constantly held before me an ideal of life which I was not in a position to try to put into practice.

**Great mysteries of the world**

From time to time, when making general studies in Comparative Religion, I had been much attracted by the works of the great mystics of the various faiths, particularly Ruysbroeck, Eckhart, San Juan de la Cruz, Jalal-ud-Din Rumi, and author of the profound subtleties of the "Tao-Teh-Ching". My own experience in meditation had enabled me to understand a little of the significance of their works, which though expressed in the language of their various faiths, spoke so clearly of an experience which was common to them all.

These studies tended to confirm my view that all the great faiths sprang originally from the same source. This also prompted me to study more fully the religion of the author of *The Masnavi*, for I had sometimes thought that the quality of faith could perhaps be gauged by the stature of its great mystical saints, which would suggest that Islam might have a greater status than is usually conceded in the West. I was puzzled by the fact that *The Masnavi* of Rumi seemed to me to represent one of the highest peaks in this domain, while the religion of Islam was popularly represented as the rather elementary faith of fierce and primitive Arab tribes and their despotic and licentious rulers. I was therefore determined to discover the reason for this apparent discrepancy.

**Towards Islam**

I was indeed amazed to discover in Islam a monotheistic faith of pure and fervent devotion to God, prescribing a complete and practical discipline for all to follow, and by means of which the religious spirit is constantly deepened and developed. Here in Islam the simple essentials of true faith had been surprisingly well preserved from the complicated additions and elaborations which have been superimposed upon other religions, making them difficult to accept or to follow sincerely. Above all, this was a faith which commanded belief in all of God's prophets, not claiming to be a rival and exclusive depository of Truth, but a reminder and confirmation of the original core of true guidance which had been given by all of God's previous Messengers to the different nations of mankind.

I saw, moreover, that the teachings of Islam were of a realistic and positive nature, which did not seek to set up an unhealthy conflict between body and soul, or an unfavourable attitude towards ordinary human life, with its manifold opportunities of spiritual endeavour and discipline. Life in all its aspects was seen to be this opportunity to serve, and to seek communion with God, and this privilege was open to all alike, and without the mediation of a superior priestly caste. I realized then that I had always been a Muslim in the fundamental sense, at least since the day when I arrived at the conviction that all the great Prophets of God had brought the same Divine Message to mankind, but in different terminology, and that Islam had so well preserved the Last Message in its true, original form.

The book which had most impressed me in my Islamic studies was *The Spirit of Islam*, by Syed Ameer Ali, although this book is not without some criticism of the Muslim world in regard to many customs and attitudes which the author wished to see reformed. It does, however, put before Muslims and the world as a whole the true, inspiring grandeur of the faith of Islam, which it should surely be the duty and desire of every Muslim to attempt to bring down to the realm of practical life. This is undoubtedly a book which all Muslim students should endeavour to read and study.

In the modern world, in which all communities have been brought so close to each other by the marvels of speedy transport, both the Islamic and Western civilizations now meet and intermingle at many points and exert their respective influences upon each other. This could surely be of benefit if approached in the right spirit. Yet it is sometimes said that young Muslims are so dazzled by Western material progress that they tend to admire and imitate everything Western, even to the extent of forswaking Islam in favour of agnostic materialism.

**Western civilization and the Muslim world**

I am not one of those who would dismiss Western civilization as a thing wholly evil, to be utterly condemned. I believe, on the contrary, that it has achieved much that is good and of lasting value — for the work of the Prophet Jesus (on whom be Peace!) has not been entirely in vain. I would say that the good things achieved include the advance of scientific and technical knowledge, progress in medicine and welfare services, universal education, the practice of equity between the sexes, and the general recognition of the ideal of monogamy. It can of course be truly said that all these advances were suggested long ago in the Qur'an, and if the West has now overtaken the East in these matters it is not the fault of Islam, but rather a failure to carry its true teachings into practice.

Having thus appreciated the achievements of the West, it is nevertheless important to recognize the darker and...
ignoble aspects of Western life, which all Muslims would surely wish to reject. In this category I would place the general indifference to religious values, which have now been replaced by the worship of money, ease and pleasure, together with the lowering of cultural standards, the open flouting of modesty and chastity, general disregard for family ties and duties, and widespread indulgence in alcohol and gambling.

It would therefore seem to me that there is at the present time a unique opportunity for the House of Islam to arise and take over the moral and cultural leadership of the world, and once more to pass on the torch of progress to future generations. This, however, will not be done by slavishly imitating the West, but by incorporating only its nobler achievements into a truly Islamic pattern of progress, which can be born only of a deep understanding and sincere practice of the true spirit and ideals of Islam.

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE METHODS OF DESCARTES AND GHAZALI

By PROFESSOR A. H. I. VORA, M.A.

“Ghazali, like Descartes, employed the method of doubt for finding out something that could not be doubted. If we compare the results of this method, there also Ghazali fares better. Because of his emphasis on intuitive experiences, he was able to attain the certitude of self, God and the world; while Descartes, on the other hand, does not succeed in this attempt because he does not accept any higher authority than reason, and hence the self arrived at by his ‘Cogito’ remains the human bundle of sensations and does not attain that level of the ego of a Sufi, which is nothing but the manifestation of the Absolute itself.”

The principle of “doubt” as the beginning of knowledge in the philosophy of Descartes and Ghazali

All those who are well versed in Western philosophy, when they study Muslim philosophers, find in the Muslim mystic Ghazali (1058-1111 C.E.) a forerunner of the French philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650 C.E.), especially so far as his method is concerned. W. M. Watt, in the introduction to his book The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazali, writes: “Al-Ghazali introduces his discussions in manner reminiscent of Descartes. . . . In his description how he successfully emerged from this (scepticism) he partly anticipates the philosophical method of systematic doubt employed by Descartes.” Dr. Muhammad Iqbal traces the method of doubt even further when he says: “It was, I think, Nazzam who first formulated the principles of ‘doubt’ as the beginning of all knowledge. Ghazali further amplified it in his Revivification of the Sciences of Religion and prepared the way for the ‘Descartes’ method.”

It is a pity that, in spite of this, no mention is made of Ghazali by various Western authors writing on Descartes, with the result that the students of Western philosophy do not know anything about the pioneers of the method of doubt, and out of ignorance consider Descartes as the pioneer. For instance, Leon Roth considers the publication of Discourse as “the dividing line in the history of thought. Everything that came before it is old, everything that came after it is new.” But in fact the dividing line should be put much earlier. The zeal for the free and fearless pursuit after truth, the spirit of scientific inquiry, the democratic mode of approach in the fields of thought, did not start with the Renaissance. Far earlier lie the roots of modern philosophy. The Renaissance only brought this spirit to the notice of the Europeans through scholars like Roger Bacon (1214-1294), who took their education in the Arab Universities of Spain. It was the Crusades, during which Ghazali lived, that gave an opportunity to the thinkers of Europe to learn from the Arabs the importance of free inquiry.

The very first sentence of the Discourse, “Le bon Sens est la Chose du monde la mieux partagee,” wherein many critics have found a key to the understanding of Descartes’ philosophy, was not spoken for the first time by a man. Ghazali also believed in it, and his zeal to find out what this “Le bon sens” is, is expressed thus:

“I have heard, too, the Tradition related of the Prophet of God, according to which he said, ‘Everyone who is born, is born with a sound nature’. My innermost being was moved to discover what this original nature really was, and what the belief derived from the authority of parents and teachers really was.”

In his endeavour to discover this original nature, Ghazali found that whatever he had learned from the teachers and parents and all his other inherited beliefs lost their grip upon him and he began to doubt everything. When after studying all the sciences and “reading all the books that had fallen into his hands”. Descartes, the so-called father of modern philosophy, declared that “there was no science in existence that was of such a nature as I had previously been given to believe,” he reveals the similar attitude to that of Ghazali: the only difference is that the

1 Muhammad Iqbal, Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p. 122.
2 Descartes, Discourse on Method, p. 3.
3 “Good sense is, of all things among men, the most equally distributed.”

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
The spirit of free inquiry

The uncertainty regarding the truth about the contents of their knowledge led both these philosophers to start a search within themselves to find out whether there was anything about the truth of which they could be certain. In this search, the first step of the path Descartes chose to follow was "never to accept anything for true which I did not clearly know to be such; that is to say, carefully to avoid precipitancy and prejudice, and to comprise nothing more in my judgment that was presented to my mind so clearly and distinctly as to exclude all ground of doubt".6 Ghazali puts this criterion of clearness and distinctness more emphatically and in a less ambiguous manner. The ambiguity of Descartes' words is brought out by Leibnitz saying that the clear cognition may be confused and distinct cognition may be inadequate. Following are the words of Ghazali, which state an idea similar to that of Descartes but in a better form:

"It was plain to me that sure and certain knowledge is that knowledge in which the object is disclosed in such a fashion that no doubt remains along with it, that no possibility of error or illusion accompanies it and that the mind cannot even entertain such a superstition. Certain knowledge must also be infallible, and this infallibility or security from error is such that no attempt to show the falsity of knowledge can occasion doubt or denial, even though the attempt is made by someone who turns stones into gold or a rod into a serpent."7

These sentences depict the spirit of free inquiry in its complete force. What Falconberg wrote about the spirit of modern philosophy could be more precisely said regarding the soul that wrote the above words. He said: "Not that which has been considered true for centuries, not that which another says, though he be Aristotle or Thomas Aquinas, not that which flatters the desires of the heart, is true, but that only which is demonstrated to my own understanding with convincing force."

Starting with this preliminary doubt, both these philosophers tried to examine all that they had hitherto known to be true, and to see whether there was anything which could pass the test of this criterion. Both of them brought sense perception and necessary truths under this rigorous test. Descartes dismissed sense perception, saying, "I observed, however, that these sometimes misled us, and it is the part of prudence not to place absolute confidence in that by which we have even once been deceived."8 How far the logic of this generalization could be accepted is doubtful. But this cannot be said about Ghazali's way of discarding sense perception as a source of true knowledge. Referring once again to his own words, we read:

"The outcome of this protracted effort to induce doubt was that I could no longer trust sense perception either. Doubt began to spread here and say, 'From where does this reliance on sense perception come?'"

The most powerful sense is that of sight, yet when it looks at the shadow of a stick, it sees it standing still. Then by experiment and observation after an hour it knows that the shadow is moving. . . Again it looks at the sun and sees it small. . . Yet geometrical computations show that it is greater than the earth in size. In this and similar cases of sense perception the sense as a judge forms his judgments, but another judge, the intellect, shows him repeatedly to be wrong: and the charge of falsity cannot be rebutted."9

Surely the argument of Ghazali is much more convincing than that of Descartes. To put it in the terminology of Indian philosophy, Descartes doubts Vyavaharika Satta on the basis of experiences of Pratibhasa Satta, namely illusions and dream experiences, but this is looking at things upside down. On the other hand, Ghazali finds out two contradictory experiences in the Vyavaharika Satta itself, and therefore judges it doubtful on the basis of reason, a higher faculty than sense perception. His words in the last sentence regarding the rebuttal of the charge given it an excellent criterion to determine the superiority of intellect over the senses, comparable to those given by Plato, Mill and other Western philosophers.

Arguments by Descartes and Ghazali for doubting necessary truths compared

Now we shall see arguments forwarded by these thinkers for doubting necessary truths, e.g., "Two and three make five, and a square has but four sides" (Descartes), and "Ten are more than three, the same thing cannot be both affirmed and denied at one time and one thing is not generated in time and eternal, nor both existent and non-existent, nor both necessary and impossible" (Ghazali). It should be noted here that the examples of necessary truths given by Ghazali are rich in variety and cover many fields of intellectual activity.

For doubting necessary truths Descartes has to take recourse first to God and then to the Devil. First of all, he believes that God might be persuading the human mind in such a fashion that it may consider false to be true. But such an attribution to God was not palatable to Descartes, and hence he depicted a deceiving devil "who employs all his artifice to deceive him". This intrusion of God and the devil is considered as unwarranted by many critics. When Descartes has not yet arrived at any certain knowledge, how can he believe that a good God and a malignant demon existed?

The procedure which Ghazali follows is more consistent with his argument against the validity of sense perception. "Perhaps behind intellectual apprehension there is another judge, who, if he manifests himself, will show the falsity of intellect in its judging."10 Here Ghazali refers to dream experiences, and says that in dreams we believe certain things to be true, but when we are awake we find that they are false. Similarly, in comparison with the super-intellectual state, which he calls mystic union, the necessary truths of our waking consciousness would be like dreaming, and what we consider as true may prove false. Ghazali further describes that some Sufis claim that in their mystic state they experience certain circumstances which do not tally with the principles of intellect. Comparing the arguments of

5 Ghazali died in 1111 C.E., and Descartes was born in 1596 C.E.
Ghazali and Descartes, we can say that the former is more systematic in his method of doubt.

But what about the results of this method? Was it that Ghazali was a sceptic, and that is why his method of doubt was more systematic? The answer must be in the negative. Ghazali, like Descartes, employed this method for finding out something that could not be doubted. If we compare the results of this method, there also Ghazali fares better. Because of his emphasis on intuitive experiences, he was able to attain the certitude of self, God and the world; while Descartes, on the other hand, does not succeed in this attempt because he does not accept any higher authority than reason, and hence the self arrived at by his "Cogito" remains the human bundle of sensations and does not attain that level of the ego of a Sufi, which is nothing but the manifestation of the Absolute itself.

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LIFE OF THE PROPHET

BY ‘ALLAMAH SHIBLI NU’MANI

Translated by Muhammad Tayyab Bakhsh

(The birth of the Prophet Muhammad was an epoch-making event of the greatest magnitude in human history. The ‘Allamah Shibli Nu’mani of India (d. Nov. 1914) has described it in poetic prose that seems to flow from the very depths of a devoted soul. To do justice to the author I venture to render it into English that follows the original as closely and as faithfully as possible—Translator.)

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More than once has this world of ours been visited by blooms of spring pregnant with new life; many a time has this abode of man been illuminated with a radiance that has dazzled the eyes. But now dawns the day old hoary Time had long been awaiting; the day to which the anxious glimmer of the stars had long since looked forward.

For thousands of years, days and nights had followed each other in unending succession; angels had sped far and wide to enforce Divine decrees, the elements had intermingled into new forms, dead and living; the sun and the moon had cours ed along their paths of light; the wind and the rain had drenched the earth with their blessings; in short, Nature had been unrolling its varied panorama only to set the stage for the advent of this auspicious day.

Godly souls with their serene breath, Abraham with his belief in the One God, Joseph with his angelic beauty, Moses with his staggering miracles, Jesus with his power to raise the dead, had all lived and toiled to lay at the feet of the Last Messenger the fruits of their labours as a token of homage.

Now dawns the day, the blessed day that heralds in an age of bliss and happy hopes. The biographers of the Prophet (peace be on his soul!) relate in their own limited way the miraculous omens witnessed during the preceding night: fourteen minarets on the royal palace of the Chosroes of Iran are said to have fallen to the ground, the river Sawa ran dry and the sacred fire went out. Whatever the truth, who can doubt that the splendour of Iran, the brilliance of Byzantium, the glory of China, were soon to be laid down in dust?

The sacred fire may not have gone out; it is, nevertheless, an historical truth that the fire of untruth and unbelief, the flames of paganism and the infernal furnace of misguided living, were shortly to find a cold grave. Magism was sent asunder, and the Christian doctrines dropped down lifeless like autumn leaves, and the great temples where idols reigned were deserted and turned into dreary ruins.

The air rang with the call of the One God; virtue beamed fresh and lovely like a rose garden: Divine guidance clothed the earth in a raiment of light, and morality put on a heavenly brilliance like polished glass, when the orphaned son of ‘Abdullah, the darling child of Amina, the lord of the Ka’bah, the uncrowned king of Arabia, the supreme master of the world and the hereafter, in full glory and state descended from the heavenly abode of the holies to walk this earth of Time and Space:

The holy messenger, the Divine messenger, the last of the long line of prophets,
He shone like a pinnacle of sunny radiance over the dome of the starry firmament;
The soul of wisdom that bore God’s words had knowledge and wisdom;
Humanity’s precious store lying at his feet.
With sweet eloquence, though himself unlettered,
He revealed truths taught by the great seers from Adam to Jesus.
Like the well-known lemon, the first fruit of the Spring, he heralded in a season of beauty and bloom.

May God perpetuate His blessings on his soul!

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW
Date of his birth

The famous Egyptian astronomer, Mahmud Pasha Falaki, has written a treatise on the date of birth of the Prophet. Therein he has proved after much calculation that the Prophet graced this world on 9th Rabi’ al-Awwal (Monday), i.e. 20th April 571 C.E. This orphan was named Muhammad by his grandfather, ‘Abdul Mutallib.

PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR

Reasons for compiling the present work

The greatest and the foremost duty we owe to humanity at large is the sacred service of raising society to the highest level of moral excellence. To achieve this end we have first to fix the right criteria for moral virtues, e.g., piety, fear of God, chastity, benevolence, forgiveness, perseverance, self-sacrifice and self-respect; and then to see that they are taught and practised in our daily life.

The usual and ordinary way to teach morality is by oral precept or preaching from the pulpit. Civilized communities, however, resort to wide circulation of high-class literature as a more refined method of moral education. Vice may also be checked and morality forced upon people under penalties. The last is perhaps the cruelest method of forcing people to become virtuous by compulsion.

These are the methods that have been usually employed; even this highly civilized age of ours can do no better. But the most excellent and at the same time the most fruitful method is neither the pen nor the pulpit; nor does compulsion prove worthwhile. Virtue is best taught only when there comes on the stage of the world some perfect embodiment of ethical excellence. A few syllables from his lips are far more effective than volumes of printed words; and just a little sign or gesture from him is more forceful than the commands of a sovereign. Whatever ethical values we have today have emanated from such pious and moral luminaries. The rest of our achievements are but decorative streaks and shreds on the edifice of civilization.

Such Divine souls as have made their début on the stage of the world have been many. But, so far as known to history, each of them has been a paragon of some particular virtue. Jesus Christ taught only obedience and forbearance, hospitality and contentment, peace and forgiveness. Unfortunately, there is nothing in the Scriptures of the Christians to hint at the moral gifts requisite for Government and Statecraft. On the other hand, prophets like Moses and Noah taught their followers nothing of general forgiveness or tolerance. Therefore, for its perfection the world of man stood in need of an embodiment of excellence who in his self might have the qualities of a king and a saint, who might be the lord of the world as well as a staunch devotee of the Lord of all existence. The world needed one who might wield the sceptre and yet remain a hermit, who might play the conqueror and yet live in indigence, who could give laws to the world, while telling his beads, and who could willingly resign himself to a life of poverty, while giving away enormous treasures with a free hand. Such an all-embracing personality, such a Divine creation, might rightly be deemed as the crown and glory of creation itself, and so could God declare in the Qur’an: This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favours on you and chosen for you Islam as your religion (5 : 4).

The world is mortal and time’s fell hands spare nothing. Consequently, a perfect man, too, must be subject to the mortal ravages of time. Thus, there arises the necessity of preserving for all time to come every syllable that drops from his lips, of recording every gesture and movement of his body, and of perpetuating each mark and line of his features, so that his personality may guide us, whenever such guidance is needed in the perilous voyage of life.

It is a strange coincidence that, just as none of the founders of other religions was means to act as a perfect embodiment of all virtues, so has none of them left behind a comprehensive record of his life. Take the instance of Jesus Christ, who lived for thirty-three years. Out of these thirty-three years, it is only three years we know about. The reformers of Iran, too, are known to the world only through the Sháh-Náma of Firdausi. The Indian Avataras (Incarnations) are also lost in a haze of myth. Of Moses likewise, our knowledge is based primarily on the Torah, a book that came into existence almost 300 years after the death of Moses.

1 A note by the late Sayyid Sulayman Nadvi, the compiler of Shibli’s Sirat al-Nabi, and Editor of the Ma’arif, Aligarh, India. These lines refer to the “People of the Book”. Their prophets, as portrayed in their sacred books, bear the characters here attributed to them. Shibli takes them for granted, and emphasizes the need for a perfect one who might be regarded as a complete embodiment of virtue. But Islam teaches us to have equal faith in the veracity of the missions of all the prophets; and to regard them as possessing all the virtues that a prophet ought to have. The Qur’an says: We make no difference between any of His messengers (2 : 136). This verse enjoins upon us to consider all the prophets to be equally gifted with prophetic excellence. But side by side with this, the Qur’an says: We have made some of these messengers to excel others. Among them are they to whom God spoke; and some of them He exalted by (many) degrees of rank. And We gave clear arguments (signs) to Jesus, son of Mary, and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit (2 : 253). This verse shows that, in degrees of perfection, prophets slightly differ; and, to reconcile the two divine statements, a little detailed discussion is necessary.

The prophets were all equally endowed with all the perfections and moral excellence that a prophet ought to possess. But, to meet the particular requirements of their time and surroundings, they did not reveal, in obedience to the divine will, all their prophetic qualities. Some of them displayed a particular set of virtues, while others exhibited other perfections. In other words, the excellence or virtue that was needed in the particular circumstances was exhibited to the utmost, whereas the rest of the qualities, not in demand at the time, were not revealed to a remarkable degree under the Divine purpose.

In short, the demonstration of every quality required particular environment and special circumstances. But lack of exemplification, due to want of particular occasion, does not imply non-existence of intrinsic virtue. So, if under certain aspects, some of the virtues were not exhibited, simply because they were not wanted, it does not then mean that those virtues were absent.

The prisoners of war taken in the battle of Badr by the Prophet Muhammad are a case in point. Abu Bakr pleaded for their release on ransom, whereas ‘Umar suggested their outright execution. At this the Prophet pointed towards Abu Bakr and remarked that, so far as hardness and softness were concerned, God made hearts different, and further about Abu Bakr that he was like Abraham and Jesus, whereas ‘Umar was like Noah and Moses. Here one displayed tenderness, while the other was stern (the Mustadrik of Haikim).

The above saying of the Prophet is an indication of the difference between the holy characters of the prophets. The Prophet Muhammad was the last messenger of God sent to all humanity, and so all the virtues possessed by him found a practical manifestation in his career. Each ray of light beaming forth from him among the prophets served as the guiding star for humanity, and every nook and corner of this dark world received light from the manifold perfections he displayed. With all that, our view of the manifestation of perfections should not be allowed to be disparaging of other prophets; for such an act would amount to spiritual condemnation. (For details see the Essay on Khalil Ki Bashirvat in the Ma’arif for Muhammard and Safar, 1356 A.H. (April-May 1937 C.E.).

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himself. This was a clear sign from God that, just as the teachings and achievements of these prophets were not meant to last for ever, so we hardly needed more than the sketchy portrayals that history has preserved. Providence itself is the best judge, and provides whatever is needed and whenever we need it.

Followers of various religious equally love the faith of their choice. If you ask a general question which among the prophets is to be regarded as a perfect embodiment of virtues, the answer will reveal a long variety. But if you make a little variation in the wording and ask whether they have an authentic record of any prophet's life which has been compiled with a greater care for reliability than could ever be observed for Divine books, and which, at the same time, is comprehensive enough to embrace the minutest details of his words and deeds, a record that depicts his manner of dress, his gait and deportment, his natural bent of mind and his modes of living, how he ate and drank, woke and slept, laughed and talked — if you ask such a question, then the only one answer possible will be "Muhammad" (may my parents be a sacrifice to him!) (May God perpetuate His blessings upon his soul!).

Biography and its literary aspect

Whatever has been said in the preceding pages was but the religious aspect of the motive for undertaking this venture. Let us now see it from the literary point of view.

In literature, biography occupies a special place. The life-story of the meanest of us may be a lesson and a source of knowledge. What novel hopes our nobodies entertain, what strange plans they make, how they go on and on in their limited sphere of activities, how they get up and move on, step by step, where they stumble, what opposition they encounter and then sit down dejected and tired, only to take rest, and again move onward — in short, all the varied panorama of effort and struggle, courage and daring that we meet with in the career of an Alexander may be likewise witnessed in the life-sketch of a poor labourer or peasant. Thus, all biography has lessons for us and leads us to the knowledge of truth. The "Man" dealt with is of little importance; the important thing is the details and their authenticity . . . details that expose to view the manifold turns and corners in a career. If, fortunately, the "Man" is a superman and the details, too, are exhaustive and absolutely authentic, biography should expect no better subject.

In view of these facts, none can deny that the life-history of the Prophet Muhammad is an imperative need not only for Muslims but for humanity at large. This is a necessity, not only religious or Islamic, but also literary and artistic, moral and cultural. In short, it is a necessity that meets our interests in this world and the Hereafter.

Being a Muslim, I was not oblivious to the duty of writing a biography of the Prophet Muhammad before undertaking any other literary venture. But this tremendous and delicate task required much preparation, and I dared not do so without proper planning. With all that, I felt the growing need of such a book more than ever.

Biography and 'Ilm al-Kalám (Scholastic Theology or the Science of the Articles of Belief)

Formerly, biography was valued merely as a chronicle or history. It had nothing to do with 'Ilm al-Kalám. Modern critics, however, argue that if religion simply means a belief in God, the matter ends there. But, if faith in the prophet-hood is also a part of religion, then there arises the question about the character and life of the person who was God's Messenger and a recipient of revelation.

European biographers have painted the moral life of the Prophet Muhammad in the darkest colours. Modern Muslims, pressed by present-day needs, have grown absolutely ignorant of Arabic literature. Those who wish to know something of the life of the Prophet have, consequently, to resort to the biographies written by Europeans. By slow degrees, and yet continuously, they get poisoned. As a result, there is quite a large number of people who regard Muhammad as a mere reformer, and that if he was able to correct society in any way, he had acquired himself of his mission; and the fact that spots could also be detected in his moral character did not affect his position.

These were the considerations that compelled me to undertake the arduous task of compiling a comprehensive book on the life of the Prophet Muhammad. Apparently, this seemed to be an easy affair, as there were many books on the Prophet's life in Arabic; and to produce a large and interesting book based on them would not mean more than the labour of a few months. In fact, however, no other work is more arduous and beset with difficulties than this.

Further on, I shall try to show in detail that so far no biography of the Prophet has been based on authentic sayings. 2 Hafiz Ibn Hajir's teacher, Hafiz Zain al-Din 'Irāqi, in

2 Here let another important and delicate problem be settled which has been created by our lack of knowledge of the science of Sirah or biography. Many people regard Sirah as a part of the Hadith (Traditions or Sayings of the Prophet). They think that, if we sort out from the books of the Hadith facts that belong to the life of the Prophet, then we get Sirah, or the life-history of the Prophet. Of reliable books of the Hadith that contain not a single doubtful report we have many, for instance, the Bukhari, the Muslim, and others; which negative the assertion that an authentic work on Sirah does not exist. To further understand this fact the following points should be borne in mind:

(1) First of all, we should decide what Sirah is. The old traditionists and the 'Arba'ī-Rijal (compilers of the life-histories of the Companions of the Prophet) hold that the Maghazi and Sirah are the special campaigns (Ghazawat) of the Prophet. Hence the work by Ibn Ishaq is called a book of Maghazi as well as of Sirah. Hafiz Ibn Hajir, in his book Fath al-Bari, has also used both these terms as synonyms. In the books of Jurisprudence (Fiqh) this term has been used in the same sense. In such books, the word Sirah found in the chapters entitled Jihad and Sirah refers to Ghazawat and Jihad injunctions.

It continued to be so for many years. Up to the third century, works designated as Sirah books, e.g., Sirat Ibn Hisham, Sirat Ibn 'Abd, Sirat As'ad, etc., generally give the description of Ghazawat alone. Later on, however, books on Sirah dealt with other subjects also, even to the exclusion of the Ghazawat. In Mawalah Ladmuniyah, we find almost anything except the Ghazawat.

On the other hand, the traditionists began to regard Sirah and Maghazi as quite different and distinct from collections of the Hadith. Later on, this distinction grew so pronounced that, in some cases, the authors of Sirah and Maghazi were regarded as a group opposed to the traditionists. In controversies on certain incidents, one may see the entire class of Sirah writers arrayed against Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim; and there are people who reject Bukhari's statement on the ground that it is belied by the writers of books on Sirah. But critics declare that an authentically reported tradition deserves to be accepted, even though discredited by all the Sirah writers unanimously. Let us cite a few instances:

(i) Among the various Ghazawat, there is a Ghazawāt known
his book on Sirah, says: "The student must know that books of Sirah (biography) contain facts faithfully reported, as well as those whose authenticity is disputable."

It is on account of this that even in the most reliable books on Sirah there are incorporated many sayings that are weak. Consequently, it was necessary to collect a very large number of books dealing with traditions and the lives of the Prophet and then to compile a standard work based on thorough research and critical study. But to make a thorough study of hundreds of books and then to unearth the data was not a job for a single hand. In addition to this, a knowledge of whatever the European writers have written about the Prophet was indispensable. I do not know any of the Western languages. Hence the need of a whole department of translators, having command over Arabic and Western languages. Now that God has provided all these facilities, I have no excuse to make. Failure to discharge my duty would mean the greatest ill-luck for me.

No personage in the annals of history had or is ever likely to have the facts of his life recorded with such comprehensiveness and scrupulous care as the Prophet of Islam. This is the unique pride of the Muslims, and for this performance they shall stand unrivalled for all time to come. Thirty thousand persons who had associated with or seen the Prophet have had their names and lives preserved. Can a more astounding performance be imagined: and it was all done at a time when reading and writing had newly come into vogue.


In the following pages we propose to discuss the nature and history of the material collected by the early writers relating to the biography of the Prophet, in order to show how it is to be explored, sifted and utilized.

Early biographies and the written material

Generally, it is held that reading and writing was not common among the Arabs, and that books first came to be written in the days of the ‘Abbaside Caliph, Abu Mansur, approximately in the year 143 A.H. (760 C.E.). Hence, the sayings of the Prophet and the accounts of his life, such as existed, were believed to have been preserved in the archives of memory, and not on paper. But such a superficial view is not warranted. Reading and writing, though limited to a few, had long been known to the Arabs. In ancient days, the scripts familiar to the Arabs were known as Hameeri and Nābiti; and a large number of inscriptions in both have now been made available through European labour. Shortly before the advent of Islam, another script was developed, having which gone through many changes is known as modern Arabic.

The history and origin of the present Arabic script is clouded in legends. For example, Ibn al-Nadeem has quoted Kalbi as saying that the men who originated the Arabic script were ‘Abu Jād, Hawāz, Hūti, Kālimun, Sa‘fas and Qurashīt (names which we now pronounce as Abjad, Hawwaz, Hūti, Kālamun, Sa‘fas and Qurashat). A similar statement is also there from Kāb, who says that Adam was

"As for the Shaykh Dumyati, he has discounted this Hadith as unreliable, because all the writers on Sirah had rejected it" (Vol. 7, p. 322). Having referred to Dumyati's view on this point, the 'Allama Ibn Hajar refuted this as well.

The substance of the discussion is that Sirah is a separate branch of learning not identical with the Hadith. Hence, the writers of Sirah were not scrupulous about the authenticity of a report to the same degree as the collectors of traditions found in the Hadith. To cite an analogy, Islamic jurisprudence is all derived from the Qur’ān and the Hadith, yet it cannot be said that it is one and the same thing with them or that it equals them in merit.

(2) Maghāzī and Sirah require minute details, which, if judged by the strict criteria of the Hadith, are not available. The writers on Sirah are thus compelled to relax their standards. Hence this branch of learning does not rank with the Hadith.

(3) Bukhari and Muslim made it a point not to report a single saying of doubtful nature — the Sirah writers never worked under such restrictions. There are scores of books by writers from the earliest to the present times, for instance Sirat Ibn Islaq, Sirat Ibn Hisham, Sirat Ibn Suyūd al-Nas, Sirat Dumyati, Sirat Halal, Mawādth Latmiyyah, etc. None of these writers has observed these restrictions.

It may now be seen what we meant when we said that no authentic book had so far been written on Sirah; and how far it is correct.

3 All these books have been mentioned in the Preface to the book Isti‘āb.

It must be borne in mind that, in books of Hadith, one can find numerous notices of the Prophet's life, activities, habits, morals, etc. They are of immense help to a compiler of his biography. No doubt. But a full-fledged biography could not be compiled on the basis of these notices alone. Moreover, they lack chronological order. Collections of the Prophet's sayings form a separate literature in addition to the books mentioned above.
the originator of all alphabets. Ibn al-Nadeem has again quoted from Hadrat ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbas to the effect that the first to introduce the Arabic script were three persons belonging to the tribe of Banu-Mukhallad Ibn Nadr Ibn Kanana. This probably took place at a time when the Quraish had gained ascendency and were engaged in trade with the outside world. Ibn al-Nadeem says that in the library of Khalifah Mamun al-Rasheed he had found a document written by ‘Abdul Muttalib Ibn Hāshim (grandfather of the Prophet), and it ran thus: A certain Hameeri, resident of Sana’a, owes to me, ‘Abdal Muttalib Ibn Hāshim, resident of Mecca, one thousand dirhams of silver, weighed against iron. He will have to pay the same when called upon to do so. God and two angels stand witness to it.\(^5\)

This document shows that ‘Abdul Muttalib had loaned one thousand dirhams to a certain person belonging to the tribe of Hameer, and that these people believed in angels (and probably in the Kirām al-Kāthībīn, i.e., two recording angels). Ibn al-Nadeem has further remarked that the hand in which this document was written looked like that of a female.

‘Allamah Baladhar says that, at the time when the Prophet attained prophethood, seventeen persons among the Quraish knew reading and writing; and they were ‘Umar, ‘Ali, ‘Uthmān, Abu ‘Ubaidah, Talha, Zaid, Abu Hudaiyah, Abu Sufyan, Shifa’ Ibn ‘Abdullah, etc.\(^6\)

Among the prisoners from the Quraish taken in the battle of Badr, which took place in the second year of Hijra (i.e. 623 C.E.), there were many who could not pay for their liberty; and the literate among them were ordered by the Prophet to teach at least ten illiterate Muslim children in place of cash payment. Zaid Ibn Thābit, who later on became famous as the scribe of the Prophet, learned reading and writing in this way.\(^7\)

These facts show that literacy had made some headway among the Arabs in general and the Meccans in particular, even in the days of the Prophet. Now it remains to be seen whether the followers of the Prophet noted down his sayings and whether we have inherited any written material for a biography. There are sayings, some of which are to be found in the al-Sahih of Muslim, which speak of the Prophet having ordered his Companions not to write down anything he said. The words of Muslim are: Write not from me anything; and whosoever has written anything from me other than the Qur’an should rub it out.

But this seems to have been an order of the early days, for there are several authentic sayings to prove that the Companions of the Prophet had his permission to write down whatever he said. Bukhari, in the chapter entitled “Knowledge”, reports Abu Hurairah as saying that, of all the Companions of the Prophet, none except ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar remembered as many sayings as he did, the reason being that ‘Abdullah used to write down whatever the Prophet said, which he did not do. There is another report that ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar was in the habit of writing down every word uttered by the Prophet. The Quraish, the report adds, asked ‘Abdullah not to do that, for sometimes the Prophet was in anger and sometimes in a happy mood. At this, ‘Abdullah stopped writing, and later on reported the matter to the Prophet himself. The Prophet pointed towards his lips and said, “Do write, for nothing but truth could escape from them.”\(^8\)

Khatib Baghdadi, in his book Taqeeed al-’Ilm, says that the book in which ‘Abdullah had written down these sayings was named Sādiqah.\(^9\)

Once the Prophet Muhammad ordered that the names of all those people who had embraced Islam by that time should be noted down; and the names of about 1,500 of his followers were recorded.\(^10\)

Khatib Baghdadi, in his book Taqeeed al-’Ilm, again says that when the people gathered in a large number to hear Anas repeat the sayings of the Prophet, Anas used to bring out a scroll of paper and say, “Here are the sayings which I had written down after I had heard them from the Prophet Muhammad.”

The Prophet sent many written orders concerning charity, poor-rate (Zakat), etc., to the various tribes of Arabia; and many of them are still preserved in books of Ḥadith. In the same way the messages addressed by the Prophet to the various kings and chieftains of Arabia and of other countries were also in writing.

In al-Sahih of Bukhari (chapter Kitab al-’Ilm, i.e., Book of Knowledge), it is mentioned that in the year when Mecca fell into the hands of the Muslims it so happened that a certain person belonging to the tribe of Khuzza’a killed some other man. At this, the Prophet delivered a sermon while seated on a camel. A man, belonging to the Yemen, came and requested the Prophet to let him have a copy of it in writing. The Prophet ordered a copy of the same to be given to the man.

In short, by the time of the death of the Prophet there was the following written material:

1. Those Ḥadith that ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Amr Ibn ‘Abbas, ‘Ali, Anas or other Companions of the Prophet had preserved in writing.\(^11\)

2. Written orders, treaties (such as the Treaty of Hudaibiyya) or the messages sent by the Prophet to the various tribes.\(^12\)

3. Letters which the Prophet had sent to various kings, rulers and other dignitaries of the surrounding areas.\(^13\)

4. Names of 1,500 followers of the Prophet.

After the death of the Prophet this written material increased enormously. On the advent of the ‘ Abbasides just after the murder of Walied Ibn Yazeed, when books on Ḥadith were transferred from the library of Walied, those written by Imam Zohri alone numbered so many that they were carried on the backs of mules.\(^14\)

(To be continued)

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\(^5\) Ibn al-Nadeem, Cairo edn., p. 17.
\(^7\) Futah al-Buldan.
\(^8\) Abu Daud, Vol. II, p. 77.
\(^9\) Jami’ Bayan al-’Ilm, by Qazi Ibn ‘Abd al-Birr, p. 77.
\(^14\) Tadhkirah al-Hujaz, by ‘Allama Dhibah; Tadhkirah, by Imam Zohri.
ISLAM AND CHALLENGES OF THE MODERN TIMES

By A. K. M. FAZLUL QUADER CHOWDHURY

"We must remember that Muslims can flourish only if Islam is strong and vital, is pure and creative, and that the spiritual welfare of Muslims lies in a spiritually strong and vital Islam."

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am thankful to the Mo'tamar al-'Aalam al-Islami for their kind invitation to inaugurate their Seminar on "Islam and the Challenges of the Modern Times". I am deeply conscious of the honour, and feel privileged to be here amongst eminent men of the Muslim world.

I understand that this Seminar has been organized to avail of the presence of the distinguished members of the Executive Council of the Mo'tamar which is currently holding its meeting in Karachi. I extend a warm welcome to them, and trust that their stay in Pakistan will be pleasant and fruitful.

Islam gives the Muslim community a cohesion which has withstood the test of centuries. Therefore, every step taken to surmount the physical distances and in bringing the Muslims of the world together is a step in the right direction. I congratulate the Mo'tamar al-'Aalam al-Islami for its efforts towards Muslim solidarity, and pray that God may crown with success the efforts of all those who are associated in this most desirable and important work.

Islamic principles are a perennial challenge to man to come up to them

Though today the Muslim world is divided by political problems which are unique in each country, I feel that the common cultural and spiritual bonds which have given solidarity to Muslim communities for centuries will again become a great integrating force.

Ladies and Gentlemen: Islam is the name of those principles which the Qur'an put before mankind for its eternal guidance and which the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be on him!) embodied in his life-work to serve as a model for humanity. Since these principles are eternal and timeless, there can be no question of their being challenged by the passage of time. On the contrary, they are a perennial challenge to man to come up to them. What is adaptable to times and climes is the application of these principles. That is why the Ijihad or fresh thinking in embodying these principles into an actually operative system is of fundamental importance in Islam.

The Qur'an lays down the objectives and the overall plan of life for a Muslim. The Qur'an is the revelation of what is righteous in the eyes of God. It is a guide book to mankind on how they should live. It lays down the moral law and clearly states what is right and what is wrong and what a man ought to do. The revealed book indicates to man what justice is and what injustice is. It aims at a society based upon the principles of justice, progress and morality. A truly Islamic society is the expression of the code of life revealed to the Prophet in the Qur'an. The Muslims have been charged to play an historic role in the reconstruction of human life on earth.

The concept of the Tauheed and its influence on practical life

The most important concept in Islam is the concept of the Tauheed. The idea of the Tauheed is stated in the Qur'an in the following words: "Say: 'I am only a man like yourselves; it is revealed to me that your Lord is only One God'. So let him who hopes to meet his Lord act righteously, let him make none sharer of the worship due unto his Lord" (18:110).

This concept of the unity of God and unity and indivisibility of life places man in direct contact with the Creator. There is no medium between man and God except righteousness. Those who are moral and just are dear to him. The individual is made personally responsible for his faith, actions and conduct as a member of the community.

History is replete with examples of the solidarity of Muslim society. This solidarity has been exhibited on numerous occasions by Muslims all over the world. To illustrate from contemporary history, the valiant struggle for independence waged by our brethren in Algeria touched the hearts of Muslims all over the world.

The concept of the Tauheed is the most important concept, and from this flows directly the principles of equality and brotherhood. It provides integration to the members of the Muslim community. Islam integrated the lives of the Muslims and brought about a social cohesion hitherto unknown to mankind. The Qur'anic law, being uniform and precise from laying down prayer rites to property rights, introduced a new pattern of life. This pattern of life gave unity to the community. As a result, the Muslims were fired by the faith and conviction to build on earth a new social order based upon the principles laid down in the Qur'an.

Twice in the history of mankind, once from the 6th century C.E. to the fall of Baghdad in 1258 C.E., and
secondly, in the 16th century, culminating in a new zenith under the great Mughals and the Ottomans, the Muslims burst forth in triumph from the Pyrénées to the Himalayas. In these two periods the Muslims attained greatness in all fields of human creativity, in arts and sciences, architecture, mathematics, technology, philosophy, history, jurisprudence, etc. Through their administrative and commercial skills and attainment of political and economic mastery, the Muslims brought into being a new civilization.

The second wave of Islamic upsurge was more short-lived than the first. However, in some respects the 16th century could be regarded as the Muslims' greatest century to date. Thereafter, Muslim society ceased to advance, and by the 18th century it was in serious decline.

It was indeed a very serious decline, because with the loss of military and political power intellectual effort stagnated.

This decline coincided with the rise of Western civilization. I need not go into the struggle that has been waged over the last 100 years by Muslims in Asia and in Africa to gain independence. Though by the grace of God we have come out successfully from this struggle, as we look around we find much to build, and that means hard and dedicated work by each one of us. Our objective should be to regenerate Muslim society on the eternal and timeless principles laid down by the Qur’ân.

A little while ago I talked about the concept of the Tauheed, from which flow the principles of equality and brotherhood. Also from this concept flows the principle that life is a unitary whole and cannot be compartmentalized into religious and secular sectors. Therefore, while we have to live in a world of science and technology we have to spread the principles of justice and morality. On these alone a new social order can be built. We have to propagate for a society which must seek justice in the midst of machines. When we are able to do this, our science and technology become truly Islamic and are invested with fresh meaning and import. The Qur’ân, indeed, strongly encourages scientific inquiry; it declares the universe to be a sum-total of the “Signs” (‘Aayat) of God and calls upon the Muslim to study and investigate these “Signs”. Science, however, confers upon man a terrific power which he is morally bound to wield properly if he is a Muslim. Thus, science will put at his disposal the vast power unleashed by the atom. But whether he will make devastating bombs out of it or isotopes for healing cancer will depend on his moral make-up. Islam encourages both — science and a positive moral outlook.

I must emphasize that we cannot entertain the idea of a civilization which is not unitary. The secular-religious fashion of Western civilization is unacceptable to Islam. It is foreign to the spirit of Islam to render what are Caesar’s things to Caesar as well as God’s to God in this world. We cannot compartmentalize and segregate moral and political aspects of life. For us the principles of justice and morality spring from faith in the eternal principles given to mankind by the Qur’ân.

The extinction of race-consciousness and liberation from alcohol

Islam is the message of peace, integrity and emancipation of the world from all superstitions, and the last hope for the solution of world problems. I firmly believe that in a world of inequalities, social and economic injustice, suspicions and imperialist designs leading to arms race, the message of Islam based upon the principles of equality and brotherhood among mankind can produce important salutary effects. In particular, there are two conspicuous sources of danger that threaten the world today, namely, race conscious-ness and alcohol, and the moral decay arising from these. In the history of the world the Islamic spirit has rendered services in these two fields and can once again rescue humanity. If we succeed in this direction, we would have achieved work of high moral and social value. As Professor Toynbee puts it: “The extinction of race consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding moral achievements of Islam, and in the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of its Islamic virtue. . . .”

Referring to the second major contribution that Islam can make, Professor Arnold Toynbee says: “. . . and one of these manifestations might be a liberation from alcohol which was inspired by religious conviction . . .”

Economic justice

Besides these two important contributions that Muslims can make to the advancement of the 20th century civilization, Islam's emphasis on equitable distribution of incomes can be brought to bear with great advantage, resulting in emancipation and happiness in the lives of the people all over the world. As the Qur’ân tells us, there can be no prayer unless there is economic justice. In short, Islam is against exploitation in every form.

The present-day inequalities as between individuals and nations and the distinction between the rich and the poor, which is the creation of class consciousness, will disappear if man's actions are governed by active love and brotherly concern for the welfare of others as laid down by Islam.

There are numerous ills facing the present-day society. I firmly believe that Islamic principles can apply to modern conditions. As I said earlier, they are eternal and timeless. What is adaptable to times is not these principles but the application of these principles. That is why the Ijtihad or fresh thinking in embodying these principles into an actually operative system is of fundamental importance in Islam. And here I might refer to the principle of the Ijma. The Ijma is the “consensus of the community.” The Ijma has overriding authority in every branch of Islamic doctrine, law and statecraft. As the “consensus of the community” has binding force, the concept of the Ijtihad, that is, re-thinking the application of the principles of Islam, is of fundamental importance at this stage of Muslim history. What is required is vision and intellect to produce an adequate application of Islamic principles to the modern society.

The reinterpretation of Islam is a mighty enterprise. It amounts to constructing a new life in the mid-20th century. By development in the past Islam has conclusively shown that it is a live and dynamic religion.

I feel sure that the researches that are being carried out by almost all the Muslim countries will help to clarify thinking on the application of these principles. As you are aware, the Government of Pakistan has set up a Central Institute of Islamic Research with these very objectives. I trust that
the Muslim countries conducting research in Islamic history, philosophy, jurisprudence, etc., in which the Institute in Pakistan has drawn up an ambitious programme, will cooperate with each other and exchange information and research workers. By pooling resources, material and intellectual, it should be possible to redefine and interpret the methods of application of the principles in the context of the modern world.

I would like to end by stating my firm belief that the resurgence of Islam, Inshaa' Allah (God willing), will be attained within our lifetime. But we must remember that Muslims can flourish only if Islam is strong and vital, is pure and creative, and that the spiritual welfare of Muslims lies in a spiritually strong and vital Islam.

Mr. Chairman: I thank you once again and through you the Mo'tamar al-'Aalam al-Islami, for the honour done to me by asking me to inaugurate this Seminar. I feel great pleasure in doing so now. I wish you fruitful deliberations.

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REFLECTIONS

By FUARD UDUMAN

What devil is this that tempts me now
With a sizzling smile, I know not how?
Where its beauty lies there dangers lurk
And smothers my senses with its murk.

Beauty, beauty, beauty comes
Laughing merrily and then becomes
A lifelong agony in sorrow found,
Why taste this friend, and whither bound?

The more you talk the less you live,
The more you want the less He gives,
The more you shout the less He hears,
And when you hate your hate he fears.

So live in peace with thyself and learn
The ways of men and what they yearn.
With blind pride and this in its turn
Destroys its makers and their senses burn.

Not what he is but what you are
Should thou think, and then beware
Of cheating self which leads thee bare
To the dark wilderness with none to care.

So see thyself before it's late,
Thy heart the mirror, thy eyes the gate,
All actions spring, thy thoughts offering
To hell or heaven each way they ring.

What you do is what you think,
What you see is what you link,
What you hope is what you pray,
What you are is what you seek.

So mould thy heart in Love sublime,
And let this action thy faults outshine,
For life is short and withering time
Gathers harvest and sings thy rhyme.

The Self within the self is what I seek,
To parry the prongs of the vulture’s beak,
Which plays with the senses, cheek to cheek,
Feeding the ego with its poisonous beak.

The pencil writes, but where's the fist.
That breaks the doubt, scatters the mist?
Who gives the answer with a twist
He shows to me his golden wrist.

My darling Love, where have you been?
I lay waiting and you were not seen,
Playing a little here and there
You've left your footprints everywhere.

Sweet scented Flower, where will You bloom,
To show Thy beauty and, ever so soon,
Open bright petals to dispel the gloom
That breathes within and without the tomb.

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JANUARY—FEBRUARY—MARCH 1963
By the Light of
The Qur'an and the Hadith

TO FRIEND OR FOE ALWAYS BE JUST

By MAULAVI EMAMBACCOS

The Holy Qur'an says:
"O you who believe! be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness for Allah's (God's) sake, though it may be against your own selves or parents or near relatives, if he be rich or poor, Allah is most competent (to deal) with them both; therefore do not follow low desires, lest you deviate; and if you swerve or turn aside, then surely Allah is aware of what you do" (4:135).

The meaning of the above verse is that you should not be partial to the rich man on account of some favour that you may expect from him, or some harm that you fear from him, nor should you fear from him, nor should you-state other than the truth when the person against whom you bear witness is a poor man, on account of compassion for him.

Thus, neither ties of kinship and love nor considerations of fear, favour or compassion should make one swerve from the truth.

For example, I quote a case that occurred in the lifetime of the holy Prophet Muhammad. A man who was supposed to be a master had stolen a coat of mail, and having hidden it at a Jew's, afterwards accused the Jew of the theft, while his tribe supported him. The holy Prophet, notwithstanding the open enmity of the Jews, cleared the Jew of the charge.

Classic example

Thus, the Holy Qur'an lays down the broad principle that dishonesty must be punished, notwithstanding that one guilty of it may profess the religion of Islam and the party injured may be a non-Muslim, or even an enemy of the Muslims.

Every case must be decided on its merits, and the balance of justice must be held equal between Muslim and non-Muslim and between friend and foe.

A slightly less scrupulous person would have been led away from the strict requirements of justice by the exigencies of the case, for it was a time when every Muslim's hand was sorely needed for the defence of Islam, and a verdict against a man supported by his whole tribe meant the loss of that entire tribe.

In another case a woman of high rank was taken to the Prophet with a charge of theft, and the people of high rank pleaded with the Prophet on behalf of the woman, saying that the woman was of high rank and the law should not be applied. The Prophet thereupon said that even if "my daughter Fatima were to commit theft the law should be applied".
MUHAMMAD RAFFEEQ—A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Muhammad Rafeeq (born 17th November 1904) died peacefully at his residence on Sunday 22nd April 1962. In his early years he was Secretary of the Curepe Islamic Association, and he enjoyed being of service to the community. When the late Maulavi Fazal Karim Khan Durrani, a Muslim missionary from Lahore, visited Trinidad at the invitation of prominent Muslims, young Rafeeq became a student of his “Evening Religious Classes”. Rafeeq’s ideas of religion assumed wider proportions, and he was caught between the old and new world of Islamic concepts and jurisprudence.

In the late 1920’s, with the formation of the Tackvesyatul Islam Association by Muslim leaders of Trinidad, all religious district associations gave way to the parent body, and all Muslims were represented by this single Islamic organization. For several years Rafeeq occupied the office of Hon. Secretary of this Association, and rendered very useful service in the cause of Islam and Muslims generally. He assisted in the original Bill relating to Muslim Marriage and Divorce, which at the time was considered a big advance in the march of Islam in this territory. He was appointed a Marriage Officer, which position he held to the end. He also acted as a Divorce Officer.

The Trinidad Muslim League came into being in 1947 for reasons well known to the Muslim community of Trinidad. Rafeeq was a founder-member. This organization represents the Ghair-Mukallid (Non-Conformist) Muslims of the territory. The basic difference between this organization and other Muslim bodies is that the T.M.L. encourages freedom of thought and enquiry into all religious subjects based upon the Qur’an and authentic Hadith. Rafeeq was devoted to the fundamentals of Islam, but held very strong views on non-fundamental issues, and even differed emphatically with his colleagues. His perspicacity and devotion to duty was simply amazing. At one and the same time he occupied the following positions in the League: (1) President General; (2) Trustee; (3) Member of the Education Board; (4) Manager of the T.M.L. School, St. Joseph; (5) Imam of the Jinnah Memorial Mosque; (6) Marriage and Divorce Officer; and (7) Member of the Council of the League. Such was the driving force of the man. He will long be remembered for the originality of his plans and ideas in augmenting the funds of the League. His zeal and enthusiasm in this direction stands unmatched. His greatest contribution in this respect was his “Liquidation Drive”, which he organized and personally supervised in collecting money to liquidate the heavy financial commitments on the Jinnah Memorial Mosque, and which was climaxd by the “Burning of the Bills” ceremony, indicating that the Mosque was free from financial encumbrances. He supervised almost every department in the construction of the Mosque.

The Jinnah Memorial Mosque, St. Joseph, Trinidad

As an author, Rafeeq had written several valuable articles on Islamic subjects, and he had composed a number of inspiring poems on Islam as well as other subjects which won for him great admiration among his fellow men. On several occasions he had taken up his pen to write in defence of Islam in the local Press. He would be remembered for the lively controversy carried out in the P.O.S. Gazette (now defunct) with a non-Muslim, coinciding with the arrival of Maulavi Ameer ‘Ali in Trinidad. He had also written several replies to his Muslim brothers exhorting them to follow the right path. His Vindication was a masterpiece, and was so considered by his friends. His latest works include A Muslim Catechism, in two parts, and Teach Yourself Islam (now in print), a very valuable reference work for students. He had also written several poems.

In recent years Mr. Rafeeq’s health began to fail him. On the advice of his physicians he visited the United Kingdom for medical treatment. Ever since his return over a year ago from the U.K. he was apparently on the “sick list”, but he refused to recognize this situation.

While in London he met Mr. S. M. Tufail, who was acting Imam of the Shah Jehan Mosque, Surrey, England, and through whom Mr. Rafeeq was given the momentous opportunity of addressing a very large gathering on ‘Id al-Adha in May 1961, pictures of which were reproduced in The Islamic Review of June 1962 and some local newspapers. Mr. Rafeeq confirmed that it was a very happy moment of his life. He also acknowledged that he owned a great deal to Mr. Tufail for the successses he had in the publication of his works. Mr. Tufail has undertaken to print the works left by Mr. Rafeeq.

NAZEER MUHAMMAD.

JANUARY—FEBRUARY—MARCH 1963
HOW WE CAN ACHIEVE AN ISLAMIC SOCIETY

By MARYAM JAMEELAH

If we claim to be Muslims who value the integrity of our faith, we must recognize modernism for the evil that it is and reject it completely. The evil of Western civilization is not incidental or merely caused by human weakness which fails to live up to noble principles. The noble principles themselves are lacking. In other words, modern Western civilization is evil in theory as well as in practice. This evil is a basic and integral part of its guiding philosophy and corrupts the whole structure. One may well object and insist that Western civilization has achieved greatness in so many fields. However, it must be remembered that falsehood always parades itself under the guise of truth. This is why it seldom, if ever, appears totally black. Nevertheless upon closer inspection, the motives and driving principles behind the façade of modern “progress” are all evil. Let us now examine three of the most treasured achievements of modern Western civilization for what they are: (1) science and technology, (2) political democracy, and (3) economic prosperity.

What is the true motive behind the spectacular progress in science and technology? It amounts to simply this. Men want to be God. They are convinced that once science has enabled the human race to attain independence from the natural environment and complete control over the elements, they need no longer feel accountable to any power higher than themselves.

What is the true meaning of modern political democracy? As political democracy is understood today, it is inseparable from secularism. In theory as well as in practice, any law can be made or unmade regardless of its intrinsic value to society provided only that the majority of voters wish it. A glaring example of modern political democracy at work is the case of prohibition. Shortly after World War I, alcohol was recognized as an absolute evil to society and the prohibition of its sale and use was added as an amendment to the American Constitution. The people were furious at this new law and revolted against it so violently that within several years the amendment was repealed. In all the Western democracies, law is regarded as purely man-made. Therefore the will of the majority is legally absolute. Without recognition of any Divine Law, politics is motivated by expediency, opportunism and selfishness. In the Western democracies, religious freedom is largely the product of religious indifference.

What is the basis of the economic prosperity of the West? It is nothing more than the exploitation of weaker countries by means of interest. This is clearly revealed in the fact that although my own country has only about 7 per cent of the world’s population, it consumes more than half of the production of its natural resources! Interest is such an integral part of the modern economic system that no loan, no trade agreement or commercial transaction is conducted without it. Our Prophet is reported to have said that “a time will come over people when not a single one will remain who does not swallow down interest, and if he does not swallow it, its vapour will overcome him.” This prophecy has been fulfilled. Although within the economically “advanced” countries of the West wealth is fairly evenly distributed, the gap between them and the so-called “under-developed” nations of Asia and Africa is steadily widening. Although Western political leaders shed copious crocodile tears over the poverty-stricken people of Asia and Africa, at the same time they use interest to perpetuate and increase this misery. Economic imperialism continues unabated. Only the methods have changed. Today economic imperialism is promoted under the guise of “foreign aid” and “technical assistance.” Because nearly all the new nations are deeply indebted and utterly economically dependent on America or Russia, or both, even their political freedom is largely nominal. Some are on the verge of bankruptcy. Since all “foreign aid” involves high rates of interest, in order to pay, the Government of the poor country is obliged to burden the people with more and more taxation and inflation. For the price of a few dams and factories, the country is worse off economically than ever. Thus, as a result of the modern economic system based on interest, the rich countries grow richer while the poor countries become poorer and poorer.

Therefore we Muslims have no alternative but to reject Westernization and vigorously reassert our religious and cultural identity. There will be many who will ridicule this as mere wishful thinking. They will point out that because of modern technological progress, all parts of the world have become so dependent upon each other that no people in the world can remain aloof from modern civilization and hope to survive. They will tell us that it is impossible for any government to flourish in the modern world based on a law revealed more than a thousand years ago. Our enemies will do their best to convince us that the Shari’a is a fossil and the Caliphate nothing more than a museum piece.

We must not listen to these people because they do not have the least understanding of our faith and what it means. We can rest assured that the day our faith in God is restored, the day we recover from our defeatist mentality and our inferiority complexes, the day we regain our pride and self-respect, and as soon as we are willing to put forth the effort and make the necessary sacrifices — the future is ours.

The most important and immediate goal of the Muslim world is political independence. Without political independence, we are powerless to do anything. Islam cannot flourish under foreign rule. Our political freedom must be genuine and complete. That can never be so long as we are too weak.
to defend ourselves. Under no circumstances should we become entangled in foreign military alliances and allow foreign troops to entrench themselves on our soil. Above all, we must pursue our policies completely independent of the United States and the Soviet Union. We must not be deceived by propaganda from either side. One is as godless and materialistic as the other. Both are united in their hostility to Islam.

Political independence cannot be achieved without economic independence. We must strive towards as much economic self-sufficiency as possible. We need fear no harm in trading with any country so long as we are free and equal partners. However, we must be extremely wary of “technical assistance” programmes and avoid accepting foreign aid like the plague. No matter what they say, there are always plenty of strings attached. Our political freedom will be only a hollow mockery if we are swamped by indebtedness to foreign powers. I wonder if those who insist on the necessity of seeking these loans for economic development and raising the standard of living have asked themselves if a few factories, dams or hydro-electric plants are worth any price of the loss of our freedom and self-respect. The only way we can achieve economic independence is by limiting our spending within our ability to pay. Deficit spending inevitably results in uncontrolled inflation and the further impoverishment of the people. It leads not to prosperity but straight down the road to economic ruin.

Many will now ask, “Why the necessity for an Islamic State? If Islam is spiritually valid, then why should it be dependent upon worldly power? If faith is inspired by inner conviction, if it cannot be compelled by any external force, then what is the purpose of religious law and religious government?”

It is imperative to answer these questions before we proceed any further. Islam differs from all other religions in that it is much more than mere creed, dogma and ritual. It is unique in that it is social as well as private. If God is the supreme sovereign then we are utterly dependent upon Him and obliged to obey His revealed laws in our collective as well as our individual lives.

A Muslim who lives in a materialistic society finds every aspect of his environment united in a conspiracy against him. Woe be unto him who dares devote a few minutes each day on the job to say his prayers! He may well be thrown out of work and unable to earn a livelihood. Indeed, he would find it almost impossible to pray anywhere except in the privacy of his home. He could not perform his prayers in public without creating a spectacle and risk being seized by the police and sent to a mental hospital. The law would compel him to send his children to a school where their education is saturated with materialistic values and stand by helplessly as they grew up to regard religion with contempt.

Do not misunderstand me. Islam can survive even under the worst circumstances, but the difference between Islam in a materialistic environment and Islam in a truly Muslim society is like a tree whose seed fell on rocky barren land and grew stunted and sickly, and a tree that grows in fertile soil, tall and straight, thriving luxuriantly.

The purpose of Islamic government is not to force anyone to believe against his will. It is not meant to spy on people and punish those who do not fast or pray. But those who do want to fast and pray will find all obstacles removed from their path. Their children will receive an education which inspires them with love for their faith and their heritage. The whole atmosphere will be friendly and encourage the individual in his spiritual growth.

We cannot attain an Islamic society until we recognize the supremacy of the Shari' a. Since ruler and ruled alike are all equally subject to the same Divine law, tyranny and despotism will find no place in an Islamic State. In order to derive full benefit from the Shari' a, it must always be interpreted in a strict literal sense.

This immediately brings up the question of Ijtihad (use of independent judgment in interpreting the Shari' a) versus Taqlid (or the reliance on the authority of previous jurists). It has become the fashion nowadays to blame the decadence, stagnation and decline of the Muslim world on Taqlid. This is extremely misleading, for Taqlid was the result of these unfortunate circumstances and not the cause. During the Crusades and the Mongol invasions which destroyed so many centres of learning, the leading jurists and theologians realized that society would disintegrate into utter chaos if unqualified ignorant people were free to tamper with the Shari' a just as they pleased. The impact of modern Western civilization has created a similar situation even more dangerous. Today Western educated leaders with little or no appreciation of Islamic values are claiming the right of Ijtihad to mutilate the Shari' a beyond recognition. This they do by rejecting the Fiqh of the great classical jurists as no longer applicable to the present day and by casting doubt on the authenticity of the Hadith in order to allow them the maximum freedom to introduce Western innovations. This is what the modernizers today understand as Ijtihad.

What are the actual principles which govern Ijtihad? Ijtihad is valid only when:

1. It is applied where there are no specific injunctions of the Qur' an or Sunnah (practice of the Prophet).
2. It does not conflict with the Qur' an or the Sunnah.
3. No elaborate sophistry is used to obscure the true principles of the Qur' an and Sunnah.

It is glaringly obvious that the modernists have violated all these rules — particularly the last. This is why Taqlid is preferable to the abuse of Ijtihad.

Despite their human fallibility or any errors they might have made, the great classical jurists and traditionalists were always inspired by the noblest motives. Their character and piety were superior beyond question. Because they lived at a time when the power of Islamic civilization was supreme, they were slaves to no foreign ideology. In so far as accepting the fact that al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Hanifa, Shafi'i, Malik, Hanbal, Ibn Taimiya and al-Ghazzali understood and interpreted the principles of Islam better than any modernizer of today ever could, I believe that Taqlid is justified.

Ijtihad, of course, must not be neglected, but only those qualified by their learning and piety should be allowed to practice it.

Education is the most important function of the Islamic State. A renaissance of Islam is impossible without popular support. It can never hope to succeed unless the rising
generation understand and fully appreciate the value of their faith. How can this be accomplished?

First of all we must recognize, for instance, the priceless value of al-Azhar University and give to it all the moral and material support we possibly can. We must do all in our power to protect the legacy of al-Azhar University and establish many new institutions of learning along similar lines.

In all our schools, the Qur’án, instead of being just another incidental subject, must be made the focal point around which everything else revolves. All other subjects should be taught in relation to the Qur’án to avoid any sharp distinction between religious and secular learning. In this way the entire curriculum can be integrated harmoniously. Every Muslim child should learn to read and recite the Qur’án in Arabic. For young children who speak no Arabic, the teacher can explain the meaning of the verses to them in their native language as they go along. However, beyond the early elementary stages, Arabic should be the principal medium of instruction.

In order to give our youth a clear understanding of the past in relation to the present, we must revolutionize our attitude in regard to Islamic history. Far too many educated Muslims regard the transmission of Greek philosophy by the Mu’tazalites to medieval Europe as the most important contribution of Islamic civilization to humanity. The significance of such philosophers as Ibn Farabi, Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd have been highly over-rated. A true perspective of Islamic history will enable us to understand why the achievements of Abu Bakr, ’Umar Ibn Khattab, ’Ali, Husain, ’Umar ‘Abd al-Aziz, Saladin and Aurangzeb were so much greater. The Tafsirs of the Qur’án — not the commentaries on Aristotle — is our gift to the world.

The study of Western languages, literature, philosophy and law should be confined to the universities, preferably on the graduate level. Under no circumstances should we expose our children or adolescents to Western education, for this is deadly poison to impressionable immature minds. On the other hand, it is essential that our leaders have a thorough familiarity and understanding of the characteristics of Western civilization in order that they may effectively combat its influence.

Another vital function of the Islamic State is the protection of the family. Strong family ties of mutual affection and responsibility are indispensable for a healthy society. Filial loyalty and respect and consideration for old people must be emphasized and encouraged in every possible way. When women are made to feel dignified and important in bearing the major responsibility for preserving a wholesome home life, they will have no desire to play the role of a man. Neither will they resent being required by law to dress modestly and conceal their bodies in public. An Islamic society must insist on segregation of boys and girls after puberty, ban the importation of immoral books, forbid the sale of alcoholic beverages and enforce the full penalties of the Shari’a against illicit sex.

We must make every effort to strengthen the bonds of the Ummah from one end of the Muslim world to the other. If the different Muslim countries are unable to unite politically at once, they can pave the way by eliminating visa requirements, passports, tariffs and customs duties in order to promote unrestricted freedom of commerce and travel.

Minority groups living under Muslim rule must be allowed religious and cultural autonomy and their rights scrupulously protected according to the principles laid down in the Shari’a.

A simple but effective way of combating the evil of modern nationalism is to ban the display of statues and pictures of prominent personalities in public places. Neither should portraits of political leaders be allowed to appear on our stamps and coins. Nationalism is nothing more than paganism, and like all idol worship, cannot exist without the use of images.

We will never regain our self-respect until we recognize the crucial importance of avoiding the adoption of Western dress and living habits. Let anyone who doubts the truth of this listen to the prophetic wisdom in Ibn Khaldun’s Muqaddimah:

“The vanquished never fail to seek to imitate their victors in their dress, insignia, beliefs and other customs and usages. This is because men are always inclined to attribute perfection to those who have defeated and subjugated them. Should this false belief persist long, it will become a profound conviction which inevitably leads to the adoption of all the tenets of the victors and the imitation of all their characteristics. This imitation may come about either unconsciously or because of a mistaken belief that the victory of the conquerors was not due to their superior physical strength and solidarity but because of the inferiority of the customs and beliefs of the conquered. Hence arises the delusion that such an imitation will remove the causes of defeat.”

Here in this one paragraph Ibn Khaldun has described with the superb insight of a genius exactly what is wrong with us. The remedy is obvious. If our pride in our faith and its heritage is genuine, it must be expressed by our physical appearance. If we do not want to be like our enemies, we should not want to look like them either. Certainly we have no right to call ourselves Muslims if we are ashamed to be identified as such.

What will the world be like under Islamic rule?

When men recognize the sovereignty of God and the supremacy of His law, all false values will be swept away. It will be a world where all men are slaves of God and not to each other. Implementation of the Takbir means freedom from all forms of human tyranny. It will be a world where a man is judged by his character and not his worldly success. There will be no place for racial discrimination or class hatred. Congregational prayer, pilgrimage, fasting and Zakat will create strong bonds of affection, trust, understanding and responsibility between man and his fellow man. The prosperous will enjoy their wealth as a bounty from God in which the poor have a rightful share. It will be a world without artificiality or deception. Women will not try to be like men nor will the old feel ashamed of their age. Since this world will be recognized as only a temporary abode, people will be preoccupied with eternal salvation and shun as evil all that diverts them from the remembrance of God and the hereafter. Night clubs, dance halls, theatres, bars, saloons, gambling casinos and brothels would soon go bankrupt and be forced to close down for lack of business.

The Islamic State will not be a Utopia, for perfection does not belong to this world. Because we are human, we are forever destined to fall short of the ideal. But at least we will never lack ideals to live up to. Some of us will be
tempted to break the law, but crime will be confined to isolated individuals instead of being a raging epidemic. There will be no confusion in any mind as to what is right and what is wrong.

Yes, even in an Islamic society human beings will suffer, for sorrow is as an inseparable part of life as are its joys. There will be hunger, pain, sickness and death. But despair, depression and boredom will be absent. Nobody will doubt the meaning or purpose of life. Suicides will be almost unknown.

Although Paradise can never be achieved on earth, Islam certainly can and shall transform it into a vastly better place than the kind of world in which we are living today.


The Kurds have always been considered as a brave and fighting race. Salah al-Din Ayubi, a Muslim whose name is significantly connected with the Crusades, was of Kurdish stock. During the seventh century the Kurds were converted to Islam by the Arabs. The Seljuk Turks subjugated them in the 11th century and the Mongols fought them into submission between the 13th and 15th centuries. Till 1639 there at least was a territorial identification of Kurdistan, but in that year the Ottoman and Iranian governments decided on a division of Kurdish territory. Since then they have nursed a strong desire for freedom. To achieve this they have carried out a number of revolts from 1882 onwards, but as yet have not succeeded. Autonomy has been promised them once before by the Treaty of Sevres in 1920, but it was never carried out. If the present government of Iraq does carry out its promise then it will partially fulfil the long-desired wishes of these ardent freedom-loving people.

It is difficult to define a Kurd, but in a territory consisting roughly of 60,000 square miles and surrounded by Turkey, the U.S.S.R., Iran, Iraq and Syria, a population of 2,500,000 prides itself in being Kurd. They have had a succession of failures in wresting their freedom from the Turks, the Iranians and the Iraqis. In the book under review an effort has been made to collect all the possible facts of one, such revolt which was carried out soon after World War II, in 1946, against Iran. In this particular revolt, from the contents of the book it seems that Kurdistan nationalism became a plaything in the Cold War between the U.S.S.R. and Britain. With Soviet help the Kurds were able to establish a republic and control it from Mahabad. One of the chief figures of that struggle was Mulla Mustafa Barzani, with whom the previous government of Iraq was in friendly consultation. When Britain and the United States got an upper hand in this camouflaged struggle, the Kurdish Republic had to be dissolved. As the Iranian army, with the continued help and advice of the Western powers, gained more and more territory from the Kurds, Mulla Mustafa gathered some 1,500 Barzans and a smaller group of other tribesmen and withdrew north on the Miyandoab road as far as the town of Bukan. At Bukan, Mulla Mustafa decided to turn west into the mountains on the short-cut to Mahabad. It was at Bukan that one of the Ilkhaniyadeh chiefs heard him remark that "The Kurds have not been defeated by the Iranian army; rather it was the Soviet Union that was defeated by the United States and Great Britain" (p. 114).

Although the Soviet Union did not help the Kurds to maintain their newly-won independence, they at least did give refuge to the Kurds who sought their protection from the advancing Iranian army. The following passage gives a dramatic account of the final stages of the retreat: "During the next five days Iranian army units moved up from Khooi and out from Maku to converge on the Barzani positions. When they reached the Aras on 18th June, however, they found that all their foes had crossed into the Soviet Union during the previous two days, leaving behind a few rifles and grenades, some ammunition, and the bodies of two men who had drowned in the river. This was at a point opposite the Soviet frontier post at Sarachlu. Mulla Mustafa and his men did not find their way home again until eleven years and four months later" (p. 129).

There are a number of such incidents relating to Russian tactics and assistance mentioned by the author, and as one reads the story of the formation and dissolution of the Kurdish Republic of 1946, one also gains an insight into the grim and deadly manoeuvres of a cold war. The following accounts provide an illustration: "History was being written in Iranian Azerbaijan where Soviet occupation forces had been reinforced in October 1945 to assure by their intimidating presence the success of a 'popular movement'. By mid-November armed partisans, including 'Muhajirin' from Soviet Azerbaijan, set out in earnest to take over civil and military control of the province. They compelled Iranian army units to retire to Tabriz. Gendarme and police posts were attacked and disarmed, public buildings in Tabriz were occupied, and the city was cut off from Teheran. While Soviet officials were dealing politely with Iranian officials in Azerbaijan, they were at the same time encouraging and protecting a revolutionary movement which could hardly have prevailed had Iranian military forces had access to the province" (p. 59).

Again: "During the four years after the Soviet occupation of Azerbaijan both tribesmen and city Kurds had acquired arms. As if a shortage still existed in Mahabad,
where almost every household already had at least one rifle, Qazi Muhammad arranged through the Soviet trade agent in Mahabad, Babayov, for the supply of additional rifles. . . . One night in December, a few days after Azerbaijani forces had captured the Iranian gendarmie post in Rezaieh, several Russian trucks drew up near the Perd-i-sur bridge crossing the Chom-i-Sauj Bulaqeh south-west of Mahabad on the old road to Rezaieh. Their lights were off. Out of the narrow lanes of Mahabad filed members of the party to take charge of 1,200 rifles that had belonged to the gendarmie. Ample supplies of ammunition were also unloaded under the supervision of a Russian officer. This first Soviet-sponsored shipment to Kurdistan was a covert operation; but those Kurds who had met Baghiroev in Baku told their friends that more military equipment, including tanks and artillery, would soon be on the way" (p. 55).

The Kurdish Republic of 1946 lasted only 14 months, "but the fact remains that the spirit that broke into a flame of Kurdish nationalism in Iran between 1943 and 1944 still exists in Mahabad and elsewhere in Kurdistan" (p. 126). The spirit did burst into flames again in 1961, when the biggest Kurdish revolt took place in 1961. Like the Iraqis, all concerned nations will probably come to realize that it is an almost impossible task to suppress the Kurdish love for freedom, because they live in the tradition Shar chaktira la bekariya ("Fighting is better than idleness").

The book contains an episode of a brave people, and on reading it, as one comes to admire the determination and will of the Kurds, one also feels impressed by the efforts of the author in collecting the material for his book, which is mostly based on unpublished sources.

I. A.

* * *


The author of this book, Sir Roger Stevens, K.C.M.G., has had a long and distinguished career in the British Foreign Service, and has held posts in various parts of the world. He served as British Ambassador in Teheran from 1954 to 1958, where his experiences aroused the interests reflected in this book.

As described in the blurb, "Most of the books written about Persia have been either personal accounts of travel, or learned disquisitions for the expert. Sir Roger Stevens has a more practical aim; to provide a summary of Persian topography, history, religion and art, together with a detailed tour of the country's ancient cities and monuments."

It would be very difficult to explain fluently the actual contents of this book without writing a review of great length — and this is hardly practical. It covers a large aspect of Persian life and its internal and external influences. The author has taken meticulous care in assembling his material and rendering it into the disciplined order achieved.

The book is divided into two parts, section one subdivided under the headings "The Setting", "Religion", "Art," etc., and section two under geographical groupings, e.g., "South of the Elburz", "To Khorasan", "The Caspian Rainbelt," and so on, covering most, if not all, Iran to "Khuzistan and the Gulf".

There are twenty-eight photographic illustrations, all but seven of them taken by the author himself, and all excellently produced. To these are added a series of maps.

To aid the reader's understanding of the changes wrought in old Persia and the consequent formation of present-day Iran, a table of Royal Houses is set out, tracing history from the Achaemenians of 640-323 B.C. to the ruling dynasty of this era, the Pahlis. It acts as a convenient guide as the reader delves into the stories of what they achieved, or destroyed, and what evidence there is left for one to behold today.

The purpose behind the author's labours in writing The Land of the Great Sophy was to attempt to explain as fully as possible in one book the great and varied past of Iran, believing as he does that such knowledge is necessary as a key to understanding the Iran of this present day. As he explains in his "Introduction": "... This is in no sense a book about modern Persia — its institutions, its politics, its economic development ... Persian literature is passed by, my ignorance of the language precludes any appreciation of that ... but there are many things in the past which are not irrelevant to an understanding of modern Persia. Persia grows out of her past to as great an extent as any evolving nation, her geography, her history, her religion and her art tell more perhaps about the Persian character and the nature of the country than any account of her modern economy or form of government."

The first basic analysis presented is that of defining what is "Persia" and what is "Iran". Persia is the cradle of the Persian Empire, from which, by the conquest of neighbouring territory, spread in size to become the Iran of today. It might be said as a comparison that their relationship to each other can be likened to that of England to the United Kingdom. This is not an accurate parallel to draw, but provides a rough idea.

To have an understanding of the people of Iran, it is necessary to realize that though today they are unified and form a racial group peculiarly their own, this has not always been the case. Their historical origins can be traced back to the days when Persia was the land described above, when she was extending her territories, and when tribes of varying ethnic strains invaded the area, settled and intermingled with each other and the indigenous population, becoming in time the unified group of today.

Geographical features of the country must also be taken into account, for the environmental results these produce in their turn influence the way of life and temperament of the people pocketed in the different regions.

As a whole, Iran can be described as a high plateau of an average height of 4,5,000 ft., intersected by mountain ranges. It is one of the highest situated countries in the world. It is accessible by land, but relatively inaccessible by water — a factor of prime importance where invasion from other territories was (and still is) concerned. The scenery contrasts vividly between jagged mountains and lush well-watered green valleys.

The author has a genuine love of Iran, and this shines through his descriptions of the places he visits and sees, partly with an eye to the past and partly with an eye to the present. His appreciation of Persian architecture is transmitted to the reader, its beauty, its amazing practicability and its immensity. This is his description of the stairway at Persepolis:
“The Shiraz road leads straight through the heart of the small village, past the gateway of the modern hotel, and then reaches the foot of the great entrance staircase. Here expectation and excitement begin to mount. The great stone blocks of which the terrace is composed strike a note of massive solidity: the height of the wall (59 ft. sheer at its greatest extent on the east side) cannot fail to impress. The size of the columns far above it is minuscule when seen from a distance, can now be grasped.

“Our sense of scale is sharpened as we climb the stairs. These are a double flight, constructed of huge stones and so beautifully proportioned that a horseman can ride up or down them with ease. Since staircase building is an art of which we have learnt nothing and, it often seems to me, forgotten something since 400 B.C., I append the measurements and other details for the benefit of future practitioners (length of each step 22½ ft., width 15 in., height 4 in.).

“There are sixty-nine steps in each first flight, and forty-two in each second flight. The stone landings at the turn of each staircase occupy an area of 192 square yards. One climbs without any sense of climbing. Massive, rugged, devoid of ornament, designed perhaps to terrify but not to tire, the entrance staircase was the only means of access to the platform: no doubt prisoners and petitioners, tribemen to render homage, and soldiers to guard the palaces, used it far more frequently than the king.”

The natural scenery shares in Sir Roger’s verbal mastery, and one can visualise in one’s mind’s eye the barren beauty of the mountain range, and the lush greenness and exotic blossoms of the more fertile areas.

These magnificent descriptions occur throughout the book, as the reader journeys with the author through this exciting, intriguing land of contrasts, and with him one experiences the thrill and wonder of the magnificence of past Iran.

Material from the writings of earlier explorers and travellers are drawn upon, lending to the author’s impressions an aura of authenticity. From Marco Polo (1254-1324 C.E.) to Dr. Roman Ghirshman, who still works as Head of the French Archaeological Mission to Iran, each contributes to help in this analysis of the great civilizations of ancient Persia. To these can be added other such authorities as Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo (d. 1412 C.E.), envoy of Henry III of Castile to the court of Timur in 1403 C.E., Pietro della Valle (1586-1652 C.E.), Roman traveller in the Orient, and Sir Henry Rawlinson (1810-1895 C.E.), who re-organised the Persian army from 1933-1839.

This book, it is suggested, will act as a guide to the traveller, and true to his proved thoroughness, the author includes in this book a special appendix on travel facilities (as per 1962), giving details of air and rail facilities, as well as data on the accommodation available at such places as Teheran and Isfahan, and a general account of food and general costs. This is therefore a must for the intending tourist. It is, however, also recommended for others less fortunate. If they cannot view this fascinating land in person, this book will bring it to their firesides.

J. W.
attempted invasion of Suez by the British in 1956 into its proper perspective, which is against the backcloth of the happenings which culminated in the events of 1882. It is the circumstances leading up to both events which to a great extent colours the attitude of Egypt to Britain and other countries of the Western hemisphere today. As Miss Rowlett states, “Many British who have forgotten the story of those early years in Egypt express their opinions freely about the Egypt of today, and feel totally at a loss to understand why goodwill and gratitude are not in the ascendant, and from whence the hatred has come.”

The author is the daughter of the late Sir Frederick Rowlett, Governor of the National Bank of Egypt. She was born in Egypt in 1908 and has spent much of her life there. Her book illustrates well her love of the country and her desire to bring a closer understanding between it and Britain. For her material she draws much on the official documents of the day, from the writings of other interested authors, and in particular on her own family correspondence, that of her maternal grandfather J. E. Cornish, who as a water engineer travelled about the country on various irrigation schemes and witnessed in person the treatment and enforced labour of the Egyptian peasant, rendering all he saw down in writing. His presence, and that of various others at the time of the 1882 events, also resulted in further letters, recording things as they happened. The use by Miss Rowlett of this material thus brings to her book a life and authenticity which lends strength to her purpose.

There seems hardly any need to recommend this book to Egyptian readers. The events portrayed will be only too well known to them already. I would, however, ask British readers to get a copy — it is not necessarily shaming to read of one’s own failings and mistakes, or to acknowledge that one’s country could have acted better than she did. Even if these readers still nurture the opinion that Britain was not in the wrong after all, at least they will have been afforded an opportunity to view events in the light of the Egyptian viewpoint, and thus understand why she feels and acts as she does towards the West, and Britain in particular.

To quote Miss Rowlett: “It could be said of England abroad that in conscientious anxiety to push through new schemes, she has sometimes pushed aside the very people whom the schemes were meant to benefit. She has been grieved with the results. The fault lies not in the material good achieved but in the human cost by which it was achieved. England so often played a double role.”

It must of course also be realized that a country can be praised or cursed for what it does in another country, not only for the effects this may have on the nation as a whole, but also for the effects the individual visitors have on individual native inhabitants. Thus it is that each single person is an ambassador for the way of life he represents abroad. It is on this level that mutual understanding has a chance of being created, to culminate eventually in international understanding and respect. I hope that this book will prove to help matters on this level.

J. W.

* * *


Dr. Williams is an American orientalist who has specialized in Islamic studies, and at the moment is a Professor at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal. He has enriched his knowledge of Islam, not only by study, but also by staying in Muslim countries.

The author devotes the first page to the first chapter of the Qur'an, because he says it is “the Lord’s prayer of Islam” and “is recited for each new beginning”. For some reason, which we have failed to understand, he has transliterated the name of the first chapter of the Qur'an as “Fatiha” (pp. 13 and 103). There is no clue for this transliteration in the part of the book called “Pronunciation Guide” or anywhere else. The author has translated the fourth verse of the Fatiha as “Master of the Day of Doom”. The term Doom is used in Christian religious writings to signify a certain meaning and concept which is quite different from the Muslim belief of the “Day of Requital”, and the Divine law of requital of deeds is working every moment of our lives.

On page 31 the author states: “Jesus holds a place unique among the prophets of Islam. He is born of a virgin, purified above all women. He is the promised Messiah, ‘The Word of God and a Spirit from Him’, an almost superhuman figure who spoke from the cradle and worked great wonders by the power of God.” This is not a correct exposition of Muslim beliefs. In the first place no prophet can hold “a place unique among the prophets in Islam”, because an express commandment of the Qur’an reads as follows: “Say: We believe in Allah and (in) that which was revealed to us, and (in) that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and (in) that which was given to Moses and Jesus and (in) that which was given to the prophets from their Lord, we do not make any distinction between any of them and to Him do we submit” (2 : 136).

Secondly, the author quotes verses 22-36 from chapter 19 of the Qur’an in support of his view that in Islam Jesus is believed to be “an almost superhuman figure who spoke from the cradle”. “Old and learned Jews would no doubt speak of a young man who was born and brought up before their eyes as a child in the cradle, as if disdaining to address one so young. See what follows, vv. 30, 31, wherein it is made quite clear that the incident mentioned here relates to a time when Jesus was a grown-up man” (Muhammad ‘Ali’s Translation of the Holy Qur’an, Lahore, p. 599).

The book, however, covers a wide field of Islamic subjects, such as the Qur’an, the Hadith, the Law (fiqh, Shari‘ah), Sufism, Kalim, and the Dissidents of the Community (i.e., the Kharijis, the Zaydis, the Twelvers, and so on). The English translation of the Qur’anic verses have been taken from Arberry’s translation.

According to the author, “Arabic when expertly used is a remarkably terse, rich and forceful language, and the Arabic of the Qur’an is by turns striking, soaring, vivid, terrible, tender and breathtaking” (p. 16). In some Muslim circles a discussion is raging as to whether the Hadith should be given any importance or not. Dr. Williams provides a very good guide in that controversy: “... the Hadith conveys precious information: almost all the early history of Islam and many of the moral precepts of the Prophet. It is indeed precisely the preciousness of the material which led to its being counterfeited.

“Moreover, traditions which are themselves false may have a certain historical and moral value for later generations, if they are accepted in the early collections. ... Thus they relay values which earlier generations of experts pronounced ‘Islamic’ whether or not they relate an historical
event. . . . It remains to be seen whether a new orthodox school of Hadith criticism can rise in modern times” (p. 58). Discussing the legal system of Islam, the author raises a very important question, which is even occupying the thoughts of some Muslims on Islamic law like Professor A. A. A. Fyze, and that is the functional value of these systems in Muslim societies today. The author states: “All of them (the legal texts) are the works of medieval ‘ulama’ who were revered because their work was held to indeed explicate the Divine Law in some way. But while authoritative, they are not held to have been infallible, and they frequently differed among themselves. Exactly what bearing their endeavours should have on the life of Muslims today is one of the pressing and hotly debated issues of modern Islam. How much of their work is to be incorporated in the legislation of modern Muslims States is a matter of earnest questioning among responsible classes of Muslims, while it still forms an important part of the studies of the ‘ulama’” (pp. 94 and 95). The author pays a great tribute to the spiritual powers of Islam by saying: “Despite the claims of law, another aspect of Islam has been almost equally important for the rank and file of the faithful — this is Sufism; mysticism, as it is usually translated. . . . The discredit brought upon Sufism by its more extravagant adherents has led in most areas of the world to the disrepute and neglect of mysticism, and at times, even to its persecution. It is quite possible that this aspect of Islam is doomed today. But one may doubt it . . . as long as there are lovers of God among the Muslims, there will be those who will respond to the moving testimony of the Sufi saints. The Sufis have been the great missionaries of Islam. Their interpretation of what Muhammad brought has proved the most winning to members of alien religious traditions, in India, Anatolia, Africa and Indonesia: and even those parts of the world longest Muslim. . . . One eminent scholar even maintains, ‘It is thanks to its mysticism that Islam is an international and universal religion’” (pp. 136-137).

The book is strongly recommended to students of Islam, because in a small volume it succeeds in giving a comprehensive picture of Islam, its growth as a world civilization, and its trends of thought. The author has made a sincere attempt to present a fair and accurate picture of Islam.

Transliterations of Arabic words are not uniform (charismah for kariisma, p. 77), and there are also mistakes in proof reading (p. 113).

I. A.

UNITED MUSLIM COUNCIL OF NIGERIA
7 Ojo Giga Street,
Lagos, Nigeria.

Dear Sir,

The United Muslims Council of Nigeria is out to regain the lost unity among Muslims and to cater for the unification of all Muslims: its aims and objects are the preservation of Islamic laws, the promotion of cultural institutions, educational advancement, the welfare of all pilgrims to Mecca and Medina, and propagating Islam among the people. The United Muslim Council of Nigeria is, however, not a political organization.

To achieve these objects:
(a) We must first adopt a common medium of understanding; and
(b) We must not allow political differences to injure our unity.

The task before the Muslim of the modern age is very great. We have to re-think the whole system of Islam without completely breaking with our past.

I am very proud to record that in the short time of our existence we have been able to do our best for the unity of Islam with the co-operation of the Federal Government under the leadership of the Hon. Hadij Tafawa Balewa and the Western Nigeria Governments under the leadership of the first Premier of the Western Region, the Hon. Chief Obafemi Awolowo, and the present Premier, the Hon. Chief S. L. Akintola, the Premier of Western Nigeria.

It has been said that the quality of every organization must depend on three factors: its leadership, its machinery and its policy. If this proposition is accepted to be true, there can be no question or doubt that the United Muslim Council of Nigeria is the most fruitful Islamic Cultural Organization in Nigeria.

Yours sincerely,

AL-HAJI Y. K. APEBA YAKUS,
Secretary-General.

UN-ISLAMIC TITLES!
2 Wellington Street,
Port Louis.
27th March 1963.

Dear Sir,

As a regular reader of The Islamic Review I feel it will interest your readers to note that the title His Eminence is making its way easily among our theologians. Personally I deplore the use of this term, as it especially refers to a Cardinal of the Catholic Church.

In the August 1962 issue of The Islamic Review the Eminent Rector of the Azhar University is referred to as His Eminence. From Pakistan we had the visit of one theologian and his disciples referred to him as His Exalted Eminence so and so.

Do these “Ulama” need foreign titles of priesthood to impose their quality and capacity of theologian on the public, or is it only fashionable . . . ?

Yours faithfully,

R. B. NAHABOO.
THE FINALITY OF PROPHETHOOD
P.O. Box 269,
Port Louis,
Mauritius.
10th March 1963.

Dear Sir,

I read with pleasure the series of instalments concerning "The Finality of Prophethood". I congratulate Mr. S. Muhammad Tufail for his wise decision to translate this work of the Maulana Muhammad ‘Ali. The English version does not show any sign of translation of the work of one man by another. I think the late Maulana has left no avenue unexplored to show how and why prophets — nay, a single prophet — cannot appear after the great World-Prophet, Muhammad (the peace and blessings of God be upon him!). I wonder how those who hold the view of the continuity of prophethood after Muhammad will answer the challenge that not a single hadith can be reported, however weak it may be, in support of the continuity of prophethood when more than forty sayings can be reported to prove the finality?

I suggest that after completion of the instalments the whole work be published in booklet form and put on the market.

Yours faithfully,

K. R. AHMADI.

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW IN CHINESE NEEDS HELP
The Islamic Review Association,
P.O. Box 7244, Taichung,
Taiwan, Republic of China.
16th February 1963.

Dear Sir,

In order to preach Islam by distributing Islamic literature and our magazine Islamic Review (Chinese) FREE to Muslims and non-Muslims in the Republic of China (Taiwan), we shall gratefully acknowledge contributions to this noble cause.

We, the members of the Islamic Association, have been working for Islam for the last ten years (the magazine has been published over seven years). We have distributed 30,000 copies of our magazine and a good deal of Islamic literature free of charge. Our present financial position does not permit us to continue this noble work; thus we are obliged to ask our Muslim brothers and sisters to help us. Chinese Muslims may contact us for literature on Islam.

Yours fraternally,

HAJI YUSUF MA PIN SHO,
President.

"MAHOMET — THE FOUNDER OF ISLAM"
Campola,
Ceylon.
20th February 1963.

Dear Sir,

I am a subscriber of your esteemed weekly Knowledge. In issue No. 97, Vol. 9, dated 12th November 1962, in the article entitled "Mahomet: The Founder of Islam" (p. 1552), glaring inaccuracies tending to give a very distorted picture of Islam and the Prophet Muhammad are found. I wish to point out a few of them:

1. The statement that "Mahomet had a number of visions" is, to say the least, misleading. He received "revelations" from God through the angel Gabriel. The word "revelation" in relation to prophets of God is too well known to need any explanation.

2. The phrase "the Koran (which he wrote)" is factually untrue. The Holy Qur'an was revealed piecemeal during a period of 23 years and was written down by his companions (not by him). Only after his death was it compiled in book form.

3. The most objectionable feature of the article is the picture alleged to be that of the holy Prophet "based on pictures in the ancient copies of the Koran". It is common knowledge that no copy of the Qur'an at any stage contained any pictures of the holy Prophet or any other person. The alleged picture reproduced by you could either be only imaginary or fictitious.

4. The proper spelling of the Prophet of Islam is "Muhammad", and not "Mahomet".

I am deeply grieved that an article in your esteemed weekly on such a great personality should contain such inaccuracies and distortions, especially in view of the fact that Knowledge is meant for edification of the young and is expected to be preserved as an encyclopaedia.

In fairness to truth and scholarship and the standard expected of your magazine, I kindly request you to rectify the harm done in an appropriate way, and also publish an article founded on correct and authoritative facts.

Yours faithfully,

M. MUHAMMAD SALIH.

THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF ISLAM
West Street,
Howdia Nagar,
Uthampaiayam,
Madurai District,
South India.
17th January 1963.

Dear Sir,

Some time back I had an opportunity to go through parts of the Encyclopaedia of Islam, compiled and edited by H. A. R. Gibb, the author of Muhammadanism.

At first glance the articles appear to be objective, but in fact at places they misrepresent Islam to a large extent. They are written in such a way as to create doubt in the minds of the readers about the origin of Islam and its founder. Contrary to the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, Dr. Gibb asserts that Islam was not intended for the whole world. According to him the Prophet never thought to make Islam a universal religion.

With regard to the Prophet's letters, Dr. Gibb says that his letters were not genuine. But there is evidence to show that official documents, agreements and letters patent on the part of the Prophet began even earlier than Hijra. There are 300 letters emanating from the holy Prophet (Dr. Hamidullah's translation, Sahifah Hammam Ibn Munabbih).

The Prophet sent letters inviting Byzantine emperors, the Persian Chosroes, the Egyptian Muqauqia, the Abyssinian Negroes and other rulers to embrace Islam. Of these the original letter addressed to Hirachlius was preserved until very recently. Letters to Muqauqia, Negus and al-Mundhir Ibn Sawa of Bahrain exist even today (Dr. Hamidullah, le Prophet de l'Islam, pp. 205-207, 212-261, 253-257. Partly also in Islamic Culture, October 1959).

These are just two instances of the prejudiced approach of the well-known orientalist about Islam. Muslims who know the religious literature, cannot, of course, be misled by such statements. But what about those who know very little about Islam or have just started to learn about it? How I wish we could produce our own Encyclopaedia of Islam for the world!

Yours faithfully,

M. KATHER SULTAN.

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A LONG-STANDING NEED
8b Bahawalpur House,
Lahore,
Pakistan.
25th January 1963.

Dear Sir,

The Communist and other countries use their broadcasting houses as the chief organs of propaganda for bringing about an ever-increasing number of people within the orbit of their influence. How unfortunate it is that while those who have much less to give have gone forward at an amazing speed in publicizing and popularizing their respective ideologies by mass media of radio, press, movies, etc. We have practically slept over this vital issue concerning our very existence. Why not a separate broadcasting house, under the name of "Voice of Islam", be set up in Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaya, Nigeria, Iraq, and other countries, to disseminate the teachings and principles of Islam in Spanish, German, French, English, Japanese, Chinese, Dutch, Italian, Swedish, etc.? A board of scholars should also be set up for this purpose. Such a campaign of enlightenment is also badly needed for eradicating ignorance and prejudice about Islam, which is rampant in the non-Muslim world and which of late is developing new dimensions.

Yours sincerely,
SÁMAY NAVEED.

HELPING THE COLONIES
46 Chiswick Village,
9th March 1963.

Dear Sir,

In the Editorial of the October, November, December issue of The Islamic Review (1961) you state: "... The only decent course for France is to declare a deadline for withdrawal and to hand over Algeria to the Algerians, to whom it belongs. That is what Britain, with far greater stakes, did in the case of her colonies. Why cannot France take a leaf out of Britain's book?"

Algeria has its independence now, and, thank God, the rule of the country is in the hands of Muslims, who have now an unquestionable majority as only about 200,000 out of the million Europeans still remain in the country. Yet this control by the majority with rights granted to the minority is exactly what is denied in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, two cases, incidentally, out of "Britain's book". Undoubtedly in the first of the two countries, namely South Africa, Britain left "the settlers' problem as a domestic problem of that country". In Southern Rhodesia events seem to be leading to the same path as that of South Africa.

Whereas I wholeheartedly agree that Algeria should have been free long ago, your statement that France take a page out of Britain's book proves nothing more than the fact that the British are better trained in diplomacy than the French. The French, too, have granted independence to African countries with reasonable tolerance comparable to the British record in cases where there were no "settlers' problems". As regards your statement about Britain's "greater stakes", I wonder how many people are aware of the fact that the French community, with less than 10 per cent of the population of the British Commonwealth, receives far greater aid from France than the latter does from Britain.

Yours sincerely,
M. S. KHAIH.

ISLAMIC LITERATURE IN TURKISH
Uskudar-Istanbul,
Turkey.
10th February 1963.

Dear Sir,

I have written a book entitled Türk Gençinin din Dersleri (Religious Lessons of the Turkish Youth) in two volumes. My purpose in writing this book is to enable the young Muslims to learn the contents of Islam with ease and without difficulty.

The text, I venture to say, could be understood even by those who have not had the advantage of receiving higher education. Both books are supplementary to each other, and nothing is omitted from the Islamic point of view.

I have much pleasure in presenting it for your personal study. If you approve of the texts, you could translate it into English and have it on the market both in the U.S.A. and England, and thus serve the Islamic world.

I could send Turkish copies to my fellow Turkish citizens and to those who speak Turkish.

Yours faithfully,
IBRAHIM BEGEU.

ENVER PASHA
Budapest V. Petofi ter 3.
17th January 1963.

Dear Sir,

I read with great interest Dr. Muffic's article on Enver Pasha, March 1962 issue, and intended to reflect upon some mistakes and errors in the exposition of Enver's character, but pressure of work and other circumstances prevented me from doing so. It is, therefore, to my great satisfaction that Mr. C. Howard Ellis (October, November and December 1962 issue), has done the task in a most scholarly way. I should still add some personal items to complete the picture.

While a student at the Faculty of Law of the University of Constantinople in 1904 I came into contact with some leading Young Turks, and struck up an intimate friendship with Mahmoud Fáyiz, who in his turn took me to Saloniki, where I met Captain Enver, and in the railway Talaat Efendi, postal official in the train. As a young man full of ardour and enthusiasm for liberty I threw myself with all the vigour and recklessness of youth into the Young Turks movement, and using the privileged Austrian post office at Constantinople, corresponded with Ahmed Riza, Paris, the editor of Shelb-i-Unmet, and Ahmed Sayid B. Cairo, author of the brilliantly written books, Rehnuma-i-Inklah, Waka-i-Abdul Aziz and Tariih-i-Sultan Murad-i-Khamis. I boldly distributed the Young Turks' weeklies, Meshveret and Hurriyet, among my fellow students, with the result that having been detected, was put into jail, out of which our Consul rescued me in support of the treaties of "capitulations".

Nevertheless, I continued my subversive activities against the tyrannical rule of Abdul Hamid II in Anatolia. My connections had not been interrupted even after my return home and hailed the Young Turks revolution of 1908 with exultation, but felt a deep sorrow at the rape of Tripoli by the Italian imperialists, and paid tribute to the heroism of Enver, who hurried to Africa, now under the banner of Islam, to retrieve the colony for the new Sultan Mohammed Reshad.

I hope that these last sentences will betray something of the hesitancy of Enver. A young man, whose father was a doorkeeper in Adrianope, and later, when Enver had married the daughter of the Sultan, had been elevated to the noble name of Musa Pasha, Enver had remarkable good looks; long eyelashes screened his dark eyes, from which a
fretting intellect radiated out. As a Young Turk, like his associates of the donne class (Jews turned Muslim), he entered the precincts of freemasonry, without disowning their Islamic creed. His adventure in Tripoli was heroic, Islamic and loyal. In the Balkan war he rescued Adrianople from the Bulgarians, who themselves have become victims of their allies, the Serbians, Greeks, and finally of the Rumanians.

The Balkan wars were a prelude to World War I, and the parts to be played had been prefixed: Turkey could not keep herself out of it and the Germans did their best to draw Turkey into the squabble. The two warships “Goeben” and “Breslau” fled to Turkey, and by a trick they were turned into Turkish boats, still manned by beturbrushed German sailors.

The new Turkish Government, headed by the exiles and clandestine home auxiliaries, projected a liberal, cosmopolitan reign, uniting Albanian, Kurd and Persian Muslims together with the Christian subjects. A parliament and a senate was convoked, which already contained the germ of dissolution in itself. The imitation of a liberal constitution like that of France could not work in a realm in which layers of vastly divergent forces had been at work for centuries. These forces could only be repressed by the atrocious measures of Abdul Hamid’s submissive government. But the spirit of the age was decided against such measures. They were doomed to perdure in the first decades of the 20th century in Turkey, and in Austria as well.

The population of Turkey consisted of different Muslim and Christian nationalities, among them the nomadic Bedouin, the cave dwellers of Syria and Anatolia, the feudal landowners, the growing town inhabitants, the Frenchified intelligentsia and the penurious officialdom, all displayed in their topsy-turvey aspect a most incoherent social-political picture. This hodge-podge of interest ought to be reared into liberal, constitutional empire under the banner of the Sultan and Ottomans.

The infeasibility of this arduous task soon presented itself. The Albanians rose up, the Arabs awoke to their ancient historic splendour, the Christians, first elated with the new prospects, soon found themselves disillusioned. To all these inherent diseases came a theoretical infection, which supported by some Tartar refugees, soon took root in the inexperienced souls of the Turkish youth. One nationality—spirit engenders the neighbour’s nationality, and in a moment a struggle of nationalism flared up in a hot blaze all over the empire. The Turks regarded themselves as the ruling caste and vindicated their race above all others. This superb race was the Turkian, the catchword which combined all nations, peoples and folk who spoke an akin tongue. Siberian Tartars sighing under the Czarist yoke, Turksmen, and all Osmanli Turks, ought to form one huge community, excluding from this hierarchy all meaner elements. Turkanism has struck the death-knell of the man-coloured Ottoman empire.1

In 1915, as the High Commissioner of the Hungarian Red Crescent Society, I met my old friend Enver again. This time he was seated as Pasha, Minister of War, and aide de camp of His Majesty the Sultan, in the sumptuous palace of the Harbie (now university). He still had the amiable smile and the slightly sunburn complexion as before, but his shoulders were burdened by grave cares: the vicissitudes of the war on the Caucasus front and the Arab opposition rising to revolt, which could only be stifled by the brutal execution of Syrian patriots. The Armenians, at the instigation of Czarist agents, tried to avenge the atrocities perpetrated against them by Abdul Hamid. Flames of discontent surged up in every corner of the realm.

Talaat, my old friend, now sat in the Ministry of the Interior. During a dinner our conversation turned to the Armenian massacres. Most of them had been deported to unknown districts of the country and left a prey to marauding bandits, or sunk into the depths of the Black Sea into eternal oblivion.

“We do not hate the Armenians only on account of their being our enemy. Their annihilation is an economic necessity. Turks are husbandmen, officials and soldiers. We are not business men. The Armenians, with their alacrity, earn easily the money, which we hardly gather at the cost of our work. We must create, by the elimination of the Armenian class, a horror vacui into which our Turkish sons will dash in and take up, instead of office work, the more profitable business occupations.”

I looked at him astonished. He forecast a theory of eliminating one class, by exterminating it in cold blood, in order to make room for another. A theory which later on was put into practice by other dreamers. Alas, this theoretician of extermination-economics, was shot down in Berlin after the war by one descendant of those Armenians whom he exterminated.

I met Mustafa Kemal Pasha at the Dardanelles in August 1915, where I was slightly wounded, but through the care of Dr. Suleyman Nu’man Pasha soon recovered and returned home.

The spring of 1918 saw me again in Turkey. I met Enver Pasha again, and he graciously returned my visit in the Pera Palace, inadvertently leaving the whole box of his newly-printed visiting cards in my room. I still preserve them as a souvenir of bygone times.

He remonstrated with me that I visited Abdul Mejid in his palace on the Bosphorus, together with the Hungarian military orchestra, which played some pieces in his honour. In 1924 Mustafa Kemal also expelled Abdul Mejid, who as “Caliph” for a time indulged in this fictional office. In 1931 I met his daughter in Hyderabad, when she was married to the son and heir of the Nizam al-Mulk.

I saw Enver Pasha for the last time on the platform of the railway station at Sirkeji, in Istanbul, in April 1919, where he had come to take leave of the two brave sons of Abdul Mejid, Faruk and Omar, who were travelling to Austria and then to Africa to fight the “infidels”. Enver embraced me, saying the brotherly farewell of “Gule gule”.

His character? He was a Turk, a Muslim, an enlightened believer who ordered the exchange of the fez on the heads of soldiers for a more convenient headgear called after him, enverie: he was an intrepid fighter, a convinced Turanist, pro-German at times, pro-Lenin’s socialism at others, at heart a restless ambitious man always keen for success. May we call him an adventurer? Were not many, all too many, personages of the last two wars adventurers? All human history has been moved to and fro by adventurers. Islamic history, to the detriment of its people, is a saddening stage of ambition and of divided interests of parties and factions, whether Turks or Arabs, Persian or Indian Muslims. Is it the tragic fate ordained by God? Why must humans acquiesce to His will. Yours faithfully.

JULIUS GERMANUS.

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