PROMISED MESSIAH SPEAKS
‘Islam, the True and Living Faith’
By Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad
Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement in Islam

In order to recognize a true religion it is necessary to look at three matters. In the first place, one must see what is the teaching of a religion concerning God. That is to say, what does a religion state with regard to the Unity, power, knowledge, perfection, greatness, punishment, mercy and other attributes of the Divine.....

Secondly, it is necessary that a seeker-after-truth should inquire what does a religion teach with regard to his own self and with regard to human conduct. Is there anything in its teaching which would disrupt human relationships, or would draw a person into courses which are inconsistent with modesty and honor, or would be contrary to the law of nature, or would be impossible to conform to or carry out, or make it dangerous to do so. It would also be necessary to see whether some important teaching needed to control disorderlines has been left out. It would also be necessary to discover whether a religion presents God as a Great Benefactor with Whom a relationship of personal love should be established and whether it lays down commandments which lead from darkness into light and from heedlessness to remembrance.

Thirdly, it is necessary for a seeker-after-truth to satisfy himself that the God presented by a religion should not be one Who is believed in on the basis of tales and stories and resembles a dead being. To believe in a God who resembles a dead being, belief in whom is not by virtue of His having manifested Himself but is due to one’s own good faith, would be to put Him under an obligation. It is useless to believe in a God whose powers are not felt and who does not Himself make manifest the signs of His own existence and life(Naseem-e-Dawat, pp. 12,13).
OUR BELIEFS
(1) That there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger.

(2) After the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), Allah has completely barred the appearance of a prophet, old or new.

(3) After the Holy Prophet, Gabriel can never descend and bring Prophetic Revelation (Wahy Nubuwwah) to any person.

(4) If Gabriel were to descend with one word of Prophetic Revelation (Wahy Nubuwwah) on any person, it would contradict the two complementary verses: “This day have I perfected your Religion for you” (5:5); “He is the Messenger of Allah and the Last of the prophets.”

(5) The Holy Prophet also said: “I am Muhammad and I am Ahmad and I am al-‘Aqib (the one who comes last) after whom there can be no prophet.” (Al-Bukhari : Kitab al-Manaqib)

(6) In the light of the above Islamic fundamentals, the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement never claimed to be a Nabi, but the Gōd-Ordained Mujaddid (“The Promised Messiah”) of the 14th Islamic Century, having been expressly raised to re-establish the predominance of Islam in the world.

(7) He named his followers ‘Ahmadi’ after the Holy Prophet’s Jamali (beatific) name ‘Ahmad’.

(8) He proclaimed that no verse of the Holy Qur'an has been abrogated nor shall ever be abrogated.

(9) All the Companions of the Holy Prophet and the Imams are venerable.

(10) It is spiritually conducive to our Faith to accept the revivalist Islamic missions of all Mujaddids (Renovators).

(11) Any one who declares his faith in the Kalimah (Muslim formula of faith- la ilaha ilallahu Muhammadur Rasulullah) is a Muslim.

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EDITORIAL
Let Mankind Set Its Priorities Right
By Ch. Masud Akhtar

Most men are ignorant and a few are extremely ignorant. It no doubt is a startling statement, yet it is a bare truism. Ignorance is not the same as illiteracy. Ignorance means a lack of knowledge while illiteracy is one of the means of obtaining knowledge. Ignorance, being a lack of knowledge, is a relative term. A person may be extremely knowledgeable in one field while he may be quite blank in another or all other fields. Thus, ignorance is something which every one of us partakes to some or the other extent. In this era of specialization, no doubt, the number of specialists swells as every day passes but so does the number of ignorants about other walks of life increase and this increasing ignorance of the common man enhances the chances of misleading today's man more easily than his predecessors. The specialists in various fields have acquired the power of controlling and directing our destinies in their respective field.

Likewise, some men are clever and mean and a few are extremly clever and mean, this being another uncontroversible truism. It is a tragedy that this minority calls the cards in today's world.

As a result of this commonly prevalent ignorance and exploitation by the clever and mean men, we observe that:

1. Clever and cunning priests have built Empires and Palaces for themselves in the very name of God and religion;
2. Clever politicians have enslaved the whole human race to their ambitions
3. Mothers allow their children to be rendered fodder of the Guns in the name of catching slogans like Nation, Ideology or Race;
4. Mankind allows great quantities of its material resources, human effort and energy to be wasted in the production of war materials;
5. The very things and acts which one hates to be done to one's ownself becomes fairseeming while inflicted by us upon others;
6. And finally, mankind, in the various parts of the world, is engaged in killing other men in the name of nation, race, economic well-being or religion; a mean act of self-destruction or the destruction of one's own species, which no other animte species indulges in.

The fact is that we allow all the above and many other such ugly acts to be committed against humanity because we are ignorant of the underlying evil. We dance slavishly at the tunes of the said clever minority and allow ourselves to be taken as white or black first; as being Jewish, Christians, Hindus or Muslims first or as being Americans, Russians, Germans, English, Israelites, Arabs, Chinese or Indians first rather than being identified as a Human Being first. The tragedy of our specie is that it is anything and everything rather than being a human being first. This disorder in our order of priorities of identification is due to our ignorance about the real dignified status the Creator has bestowed upon us in the scheme of the creation of this universe. This ignorance results in our allowing barriers to be erected between ourselves and our brethren. Nation, race, ideology are the idols which we have coined with our own hands and we worship these idols more than we worship God. God made us human beings first, all descendents of Adam and Eve, and anything else came latter. This self-imposed upsetting of priorities has blinded us so much that we even take pride in planning and working destruction and annihilation of our own specie and are directing our resources, efforts and energies towards that end without even realizing as to what an ugly pursuit we are engaged in. No other animate specie has done so much to destroy itself as mankind has done and is still doing. Let it be clear like a day to every one of us that peace cannot visit any society until that society is able to recognize the truth of setting right its order of priorities. We need to learn that we are human beings first, rather than being anything else. The Holy Qur'an emphasises not only the dignity of man in the scheme of the universe but also the fact that mankind is but one nation. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him, taught that a true believer is one who likes for his brother what he likes for himself. By holding fast and practicing these noble precepts, mankind can rediscover itself as human beings and can change this world into a heaven of peace. The question that begs itself is that how many of us are possessed of that clarity of vision and courage to undo and destroy the web of false idols which we ourselves have woven around ourselves on account of false notions? If you think that you are a human being and, in that capacity, owe some duty to your specie, then come join hands with us in our efforts to destroy all false Gods and false barriers.

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OUR EVOLUTIONARY JOURNEY
By The Late Khawaja Kamaluddin

The Origin of Man. We are on the journey of Evolution, and in our travels have passed through various worlds of progress. In each world there are several stages where we are furnished with new equipment for the next. We may, or may not, complete the progress that we should have made in any particular world, but no sooner does our equipment become worn out, and is not longer serviceable, than we have to leave it and enter into a new world. In other words, we are given a new body at every stage. On our departure from a world we leave that world's body behind us, and on entering into a new world we are given a new body. The termination of any one of these stages of existence through which we pass into the coming world.

The Holy Book traces our origin to the region of stars("Consider the heaven and the comet by night; "And what will make you know how great the comet by night is? "The star of piercing brightness"(86:1-3)), which in the hours of darkness shed light which pierces its way through the earth and makes it pregnant with its contents. Water also comes down from the clouds and penetrating the earth("And We send down water from the clouds according to a measure, then We cause it to settle in the earth, and most surely We are able to carry it away."(23:18)), helps to produce and nurture trees("Then We cause to grow thereby gardens of palm trees and grapes for you; you have in them many fruits and from them do you eat."(23:19)) and cattles, which in their turn supply us with food containing all the constituents of protoplasm. Thus sperma is created, which when located in the womb of a woman passes through various embryonic stages("Then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made in the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation, so blessed be Allah, the best of the creators."(23:14)), where it receives bones and flesh for further progress.

On their completion something new is born which the Holy Qur'an calls Nafs. This is no other than our spirit, an assemblage of passions of which the chief characteristic is consciousness. Thus we come into this world and our aim in this earthly sojourn is to reach the stage of soul. The spirit must pass through several stages of progress, but its course is interrupted when its equipment is no longer serviceable, and this means death. We naturally leave the body here, but the life is continuous. The spirit makes further progress. If at the time of death it has become ripened into the soul, then it enters into the world of further progress which, in religious terminology, is called Heaven("And enter into My garden."(89:30)). But it it has not completed its course, then it will have to begin the journey from the very stage in which it was at the time of its departure from this planet.

There is one great difference which distinguishes the two journeys- the past and the future. We possess a material body, with or without consciousness, in all our past stages. Consciousness originates in the womb. Subsequently matter and consciousness travel together. Then follows death, and the spirit is separated from the body. But there is always a marked pause at the termination of each world. The progressive agency seems to suspend all its activities for a time, and then sets forth on the new journey. So also in our own journey there occurs a great departure after death. Matter is finished with. There is no further progress for it. The further journey is the journey of the spirit, with consciousness, so there must be the longest possible pause wherein the spirit will remain absolutely inactive. This stage has been termed Barzakh-the period between death and resurrection("Haply I may do good in that which I have left. By no-means it is a (mere) word that he speaks; and before them is a barrier until the day they are raised."(23:100)). The spirit is placed in what the Holy Qur'an calls Ajdas("And the forms shall be breathed into, when lo, from their graves they shall hasten on to their Lord!"(36:51)), the plural of Jadas, which means a state of being cut off. The spirit has become cut off from the body, and so the latter cut off from further progress.

Divine economy has been pleased to give all spirits simultaneous start in the coming journey- that of the spirit unencumbered by flesh. It must await the time when every spirit has left the earth. A kind of swoon overtakes all those who leave the earth, and this continues until the spirits rise again at their resurrection. They will rise from their resting places, as if awakened out of sleep which will appear to them as if it had been for a portion of a day. But coming events cast their shadows before. We shall see Heaven and Hell, as in a dream. This, without doubt, will be the commencement of the further journey. But the spirits will have to start, each from the stage in which it was when death overtook it.

Psychologists differ as to the origin of the soul and its nature, some holding that it comes from another sphere and joins itself to the body, where it becomes a prisoner of the flesh. But the Holy Qur'an describes it as an evolved form of consciousness, which is itself only a child of the body. Human consciousness, when it is cleansed of its low nature and equipped with true spirituality, becomes, under Divine Inspiration, the Soul. The Lord breathed His Spirit into man when the materials of the body in its embryonic condition became properly arranged("So when I have made him complete and breathed into him of My Inspiration, fall down making obeisance to him."(15:29)). He did the same in the case of Jesus, when he was in Mary's womb. The Spirit of the Lord is not confined like a prisoner's within the walls of the body, but has been endowed with our physical nature as the wherewithal of its future growth. The Holy Qur'an often speaks of coming events as having already happened, more especially in the case of such potentialities as are, in the knowledge of God, certain of

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actualization on some future occasion. The Divine Spirit was breathed into us in order that we might receive homage from the angels, which will come to pass when the Divine Flame so kindled in us becomes fully ablaze. Yet the Holy Qur'-an mentions it as already accomplished. This, in fact, is our future goal. We need a religion that will enable us to claim this destined honor. It may or may not be ours in this life, but it will be within our reach when our time is come to leave the world. We cannot afford to kill the body as the sickly theologians in pre-Islamic days were wont to teach, since it would be a suicidal act on our part, involving an attempt to kill the Divine Spirit within us. What we need is something to train our physical "urges" to help, and not retard, the growth of the Spirit.

In the animal frame, matter reaches its final development, but its further progress is solely concerned with consciousness, which in its initial stage consists of various passions and emotions. In the animal kingdom there is hardly any right of ownership. Animals, in fact, possess nothing of that individual consciousness which in the human mind creates the idea of mine and thine. Animals claim everything they need, as if it were their own, while the human mind is capable of making a distinction between mine and thine. But since we have risen from the animal state we have in us the animal instinct of usurping others' rights. Most of verge on the border of animality and worship the same spirit, which is the initial stage of the human 'self.' Had this spirit been left unchecked, as in the case of a baby who claims everything he sees as his own, we should all of us, by this time, have been in a condition of sheer chaos. But the Great Designer does not leave us here. He has given us a goal that is very far off. Wh have been sent into the world to prepare ourselves for the journey that lies before us. It is for us to mould anew the newly arisen Spirit into Soul before we leave the earth. For this reason we have to pass through stages of which four are the main and they are thus styled by the Holy Book:

1. Belief in the truth. The Holy Qur'-an calls it Iman. Our every action arises from certain convictions which are the mainsprings of our deeds whether right or wrong. Hence the Holy Qur'-an lays down the necessity of making certain truths our belief. The believers, so the Book says, are the only persons who become 'successful' in life.

2. Lowliness in our prayers.

3. Abstention from vanity, levity and absurdity.

4. Aiming at purification and sharing our properties with others. The word used in the text is zakat which gives both the ideas. They are in fact correlated to each other.

5. Continence, that is to say, purity in sexual relations.

6. Keeping of trusts and covenants.

7. Putting into practice the requirements of Muslim prayer.

Nafs Lawwama. All of us may not have an opportunity to acquaint ourselves with the Qur'-anic injunctions, but public opinion and the other requirements of society demand from us the observance of these things. Something within accuses us if we go against them. It censures us whenever we think of violating another's right. This inner voice is termed conscience in common phraseology, but in the Holy Qur'-an it is described as the Chiding Spirit(Nafs Lawwama) and it is the third evolutionary stage of our spirit's growth. The moment we possess the knowledge of right and wrong a sort of struggle starts between the Commanding Spirit and the Chiding Spirit. The former commands usurpation and misappropriation, while the latter speaks of justice and equity, in the light of the above knowledge. Unfortunately, most of us stand on the verge of animality and worship the Commanding Spirit. Nay, such are more dangerous to human society than the animals. We have to deal with the spirit in such a way that it yields to the voice of the Accusing or Chiding Spirit('Islamic prayer has been introduced mainly for our elevation. The Holy Qur'-an makes the Lord God as our prototype. We have to call Him with His Characteristics (7:180). The first thing we recite in the prayer is that our Lord is free from all defects and impurities. Then we speak of His possessing all that is good and it is for us to seek to emulate Him in this. In Ch. 29, v. 45, we find the same thing said of prayer).

The question of the growth and development of this Chiding Spirit in man has been fraught with many a misunderstanding in modern intellectual circles, the most important of these being the one concerning the sex. Extreme views have always been held here on this subject. At one time it was regarded as the root of all sinfulness in human mind, and as such fit only to be shunned as a deadly poison. Then the pendulum swung to
the other direction, and it is believed now that it has no bearing on our moral nature and can be indulged in an absolute freedom, without in any way jeopardizing our intellectual and moral growth. A proper understanding of the subject will, however, require a complete grasp of the fundamental laws of life and organism, the most important of which is the law of combination.

The law of Combination and the sexual instincts in man. If combination is the chief process at work in everything in nature, from Emanation to Perfection, it follows that the ingredients of all things in every stage of their growth must differ from each other in their qualities, inasmuch as no one thing will mix with another to produce a new thing under the law of chemical combination, unless all these exhibit variety in properties. The Holy Book refers to this more explicitly when it says that everything in nature has its mate for the work of procreation. All are male or female."And of everything We created pairs that you may be mindful."(51:49) "And He it is Who spread the earth and made it in it firm mountains and rivers, and of all fruits He has made in it two kinds; He makes the night cover the day; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect."(13:3). This establishes to some degree the difference in their natures. The Book speaks of another wonderful phenomenon when it tells us that heaven and earth stand towards each other in the relation of male and female. The heavens, with everything in them, have been evolved with activity."Consider the cloud pouring rain."(86:11) "And the earth splitting(with plants.)"(86:12)), while the earth, on the other hand, had been made receptive of their effects. How could matter, in the shape of the heavens, differ in its nature from the other form, that is to say, the Earth, unless it works in obedience to some will?

This difference and combination pervade the whole of the universe and in the human world it takes the form of sex.

The control of our sexual instincts is as essential as that of the stomach. When beyond control, sexual passions know no bounds. Men, women and animals— all are victimized indiscriminately. Even inanimate things are used to satisfy them; and this is more dangerous to health than any other unnatural practice; since it not only injures the sexual faculties but harms the powers of sight and of the brain.

We read of Sodom in ancient history and the curse under which it lay, but its sins are unfortunately repeated even now in our days in some centres of modern civilization. Some men of culture would not regard the practice as unnatural, for they maintain that there is a third species in our race, where man's love goes after man, and legislation should not, therefore, obstruct such love. The Qur'an refutes this fallacious logic in one word when it says:"Women are your tillth." Besides condemning the practice the Book explains the object for which the instinct in dispute was given. It is not pleasure but some higher purpose, which brought our various instincts into existence, though pleasure indeed be the prime mover in the generality of cases. And such an alleviation of the incidence of our various duties speaks eloquently of the Designer's wisdom. The procreation of species was the primary object of sexual instincts. If no ploughman would dream of sowing his seed in a land not meant for cultivation, none should stoop to a practice that does not help towards bringing forth children; and here woman is man's only partner. But the interests of the coming generation and their proper upbringing demand that the sexes should stand in matrimonial relations with each other, before they come together, and the fact of their marriage should be known: hence all concealed marriages are disallowed. But any and every female should not be brought into connubial relation. There are various things to be considered before a man marries a woman. For instance, it is incestuous to bring mothers, daughters and sisters into matrimonial connection, and the Holy Book puts ten other classes of women on the prohibition list."Forbidden to you are your mothers and your daughters and your sisters and your paternal aunts and your maternal aunts and brothers' daughters and sister' daughters and your mothers that have suckled you and your foster-sisters and mothers of your wives and your stepdaughters who are in your guardianship, (born) of your wives to whom you have gone in; but if you have not gone in them, there is no blame on you(in marrying them), and the wives of your sons who are of your own loins, and that you should have two sisters together, except what has already passed; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."(4:23)

"And whoever among you has not within his power amleness of means to marry free believing women, then (he may marry) of those whom your right hands possess from among your believing maidens; and Allah knows best your faith; you are (sprung) the one from the other; so marry them with the permission of their masters, and give them their dowries justly, they being chaste, not fornicating, nor receiving paramours; and when they are taken in marriage, then if they are guilty of indecency, they shall suffer half the punishment which is (inflicted) upon free women. This is for him among you who fears falling into evil; and that you abstain is better for you, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."(4:25). All women married to others are forbidden for connubial purposes. Prostitution, temporary marriage, concubinage and paramours have been condemned. Though war-captivity terminates all former matrimonial relations existing between persons of hostile nations, yet a new master cannot share his bed with a female captive unless she be first made free, and then married according to the usage of the conquering race. Not only is fornication declared to be an indecency and evil, but even going nigh to it is forbidden. For the same reason women are asked to conceal their ornaments and their hair from the eye of strangers. In short, anything that might possibly excite the passions should be concealed. The use of the veil, as practiced in the East, is not a religious ordinance. Local causes have commended the practice and sanctified it into a custom. The Book looks with disfavor on the promiscuous mingling of the two sexes which is often to be observed in the West. Staring at one of another sex is forbidden, and we have been clearly ordered to "guard all our holes." It is the beauty of the Book that though it deals on occasions with delicate subjects, yet it never violates the sense of decency in its choice of words. The last injunction though very
euphemistic and concise is wide enough to bring the evil use of eyes, ears and mouth (tongue) also within its scope.

Nafs Mutmainnah: The Spirit at Rest. This careful guarding and control of our instincts and the judicious satisfaction of our appetites apply to all the different aspects of our consciousness, while we strive for the fullest assertion of the Chiding Spirit in us. The struggle is hard and long drawn, but an earnest soul keeps steadily on its evolutionary journey, and ultimately reaches a point where the Commanding Spirit has completely surrendered to the Chiding Spirit. The voice of the uncontrollable spirit would be hushed up forever and the Chiding Spirit would achieve full victory. We shall shun evil and virtue shall rule every nook and corner of our hearts. The spirit ("O soul that art at rest!" (89:27)) will then be at rest, and thus we will reach the fourth stage of our evolutionary travel. A fire from above descends upon the heart; it burns out the whole of our physical nature and consumes every vestige of evil inclination that is therein, and we become reconciled to our Lord ("Return to your Lord, well pleased (with Him), well-pleasing (Him)." (89:28)). He also is pleased with us. Here we pass on to the fifth and sixth stage of our growth. His will becomes the rule of our life, and we are like lifeless machines in His hands. Then the soul is refined and the final stage is reached. All temptations disappear utterly. We feel as though we are living for others, their happiness becomes the object of our life. We are active only to supply others' needs. We take infinite pains and face all the hardships of existence, but for the service of others. In fact, we do all that we used to do before, but, whereas formerly we were self-centered in our motives, now it is the benefit of others which induces us to face the trials of life. We walk humbly with the Lord, and most willingly adopt all His ways to maintain and nourish His other creatures. When we reflect His color as Rabbut Alamin-"The Nourisher and Maintainer of All," we enter into His Heaven like a faithful servant, and become at one with Him. This is the true Holy Communion when the Divine Blood, to use the metaphor, runs into our veins. We lose our entity and merge in Him, and the soul becomes mature. This is the final stage of our growth. Here our journey comes to an end. A Light ("On that day you will see the faithful men and the faithful women their light running before them and on their right hand good news for you today; gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide therein, that is the grand achievement." (57:12)) from within shines forth and guides us to the realms of our Lord that we may walk therein.

There is another salient feature observable in people who are nearing the conditions when the soul is born. Under the first three aforesaid conditions of the Spirit we act for ourselves. Our own happiness and comfort inspire all our activities. But when the Spirit has attained its rest, we act as trustees for others taking the remainder of the world as our beneficiary. Man, of the whole creation, possesses two distinguishing features in his capacity for earning. Unlike other animals, he thinks for the morrow and can store up something against a rainy day. Secondly, he can earn more than he needs. Though all of us possess these two qualities, yet they bear a different significance to a people of advanced spirituality. Such consider that these instincts were given to them for the benefit of others. They will accept only a pittance from their labor while the surplus must go to others. They become oblivious of their own needs and go against their own desires. Their life is, as it were, a tyranny over their own 'self.'

We know very little of the soul, only that something becomes created in us at a certain stage of spiritual development, as an agent of God to rule on His behalf. Formerly, we used to obey the spirit in us, but now we obey the soul directly.

We do nothing unless we are ordered to do so, and for all our activities we look to Him. It is the same Divine Spirit which was breathed into us, when in the womb, but is now full grown and worthy of receiving homage from God's angels. I am not speaking of fiction, but of reality. Though men of such souls are very rare, but they have not yet entirely disappeared from the earth.

Our knowledge is very superficial. There are many things of which we know very little. For example, consciousness, life and electricity are each a mystery to us. Matter engenders them, but they are absolutely different from matter, and the soul may be classed under the same category. The Holy Qur'an rightly says that we are given very little knowledge.

The Return of the Soul: If continuity of life is a scientific truth, the soul thus evolved cannot remain on earth after its separation from the body, for Soul is after all another name for human consciousness, purged absolutely of all physical elements. It is a spirit, without earthly link or tendency. It must rise upwards to other regions according to its capacity. The soul of the Holy Prophet remained only forty days on the earth, according to the traditions. Jesus ("When Allah said: O Jesus! I will cause you to die and exalt you in My presence and clear you of those who disbelieve and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve to the day of resurrection: then to Me shall be your return, so I will decide between you concerning that in which you differed." (3:54)) Elijah, called Idris ("And We raised him to an elevated state." (19:57)) in the Holy Qur'an, and other prophets also rose after death from the terrestrial to the higher spheres.

The soul emanates from the Divine Light. This is precisely what science tells us today. It traces our beginnings back to light, which passes through various phases till it assumes that of human consciousness. Our body consists of all the concomitants of the progressive agency, electrons being among them. The human soul may embody itself in any of these substances, according to its capacity and fitness for the return journey to Light. We read of the Holy Prophet that on the night of his Ascension he rode to heaven on Buraq, a body composed of electrons, according to the literal meaning of the word. We are also told that our movements in heaven will be so swift that we shall reach the place, however distant it be, the moment we think of it; and this is readily imaginable if our soul has assumed the attributes of these substances.

But such an electric movement pertains to the Soul only, and not to the physical body whose very nature
keeps the Soul anchored to the earth. Carnal passions are only a rarefied form of the earthly nature, and a spirit cannot therefore ascend unless it be free of them. Such freedom alone gives it a start for the upward journey, especially when it seeks to retrace its steps along the same route by which it travelled hither in the first instance. But there is one distinction. On our outward journey to the present state we had passed through various regions without knowing it.

We reached the earth with no consciousness in us. It appeared in our frame to partake in a measure of our physical nature. But when consciousness becomes purified of material things it rises heavenward in the form of a soul. It passes again through the same regions, but it carries with it this time two new capacities,- one articulation and the other consciousness-in its purified form, that is to say, the Soul. We have to return to the Divine Light from where we came.

But most of us bid farewell to this world when we are still at the stage of the animal spirit; to which we bow down and whose dictates we obey, and it is only the force of public opinion which keeps us within reasonable bounds. Thus public opinion creates conscience in us in its most primitive form. Its voice is very weak, and we do not attempt to listen to it unless we are afraid of being detected. The great virtue of the present day civilized society lies in the people’s efforts to conceal their wrongs from others. For example, sexual purity has been respected from the earliest days, but though public opinion has become notoriously weak on this point, yet it would nevertheless censure any conduct that would affect the rights of those who stand in matrimonial relations to each other. Various means have been devised to hush up and conceal what has been done amiss. Birth control is one which is playing havoc on our social relations. The centers of civilization are simply repeating the practice of Pompeii’s days. Wickedness has become rampant though in a most refined form. Learning and culture have been prostituted to give a polish even to our vilest deeds. In short, wellnigh all of us leave this world when the animal spirit in us is still at its height and we indulge in all kinds of evil. In other words, we have not been able to release ourselves from the clutches of the Commanding Spirit. We may, and doubtless do, understand the difference between right and wrong, and to this extent our Spirit has reached its second stage of evolution. But, alas! we remain only standing at the threshold of the third stage when death removes us from the scene. We, no doubt, have entered the province of the Chiding Spirit, but we take no heed to its warnings. We gag it, and turn our backs on its protests. We may die in this state of carelessness, but the Chiding Spirit must one day arise, and then it will appear with a vengeance indeed. This will occur at our resurrection ("Nay! I call to witness the day of Resurrection."). (75:1-2)) because we must leave our body behind and with it its appendage-the Spirit in its first form.

Day of Resurrection. We shall therefore have to rise again, since we have not passed the stage of the Commanding Spirit, though we did possess a rudimentary knowledge of right and wrong. Our resurrection will bring us face to face at once with the advance of the mind in the form of the Chiding Spirit. And then another trouble awaits us. Here we can avoid the detection of wrong-doing, because wrong-doing is mostly under cover of the body, but there all our efforts to conceal evil will be of no avail, and our inner self will stand forth naked in the sight of all ("On that day you shall be exposed to view-no secret of yours shall remain hidden."). (69:18) "On that day hidden things shall be made manifest." (86:9)). All that has been done clandestinely will stand forth as an open secret. Thus the pangs caused by the Chiding Spirit will increase exceedingly. It will be a terrible day, subjecting us to unimaginable pains and torments. Our perceptions will grow more intense, our physical nature weak, and our remorse and sense of shame will reach a fearful pitch. We shall suffer torments in their most acute form on the day when we will be stripped of all our physical parts. This awful day has been called by the Holy Qur’-an the day of Resurrection. The sacred books have not entered on any campaign of terror, as the Church says, if they appeal to us by their message concerning the Last Day. Its pains cannot be exaggerated, and I deliberately aver that the very words of the Scriptures themselves have failed to convey a hundredth part of the agonies that we shall have to experience on that Day. It is not an inconceivable thing. We can understand it if we only visualize the Chiding Spirit at its zenith and every moral and spiritual wrong in us revealed. Just as the body of a patient suffering from a venerable disease bears sometimes palpable marks of the scourge, it will be no surprising thing to find our various organs bearing witness to the wrongs we have done in this life ("On that day We will set a seal upon their mouths, and their hands shall speak to Us, and their feet shall bear witness of what they earned."). (36:65)). The agonies of the time will be simply unbearable, and we shall naturally look either for return ("And could you see when they are made to stand before the Fire, then they shall say: Would that we were sent back, and we would not reject the communications of our Lord and we would be of the believers!"). (6:272)) to our past life in order to do better, or to have some purgatorial treatment that may relieve us of the torment. But the Beneficent Lord has anticipated our needs ("Except those on whom your Lord has mercy; and for this did He create them; and the word of your Lord is fulfilled: Certainly I will find hell with the jinn and the men, all together."). (11:119)) and His Providence has created for us a hospital ("So today ransom shall not be accepted from you nor from those who disbelieved; your abode is the fire; it is your friend, and evil is the resort."). (57:15)) in the form of Hell; because we, being on the course of evolution, cannot go back. Hell, in fact, though an evil resort, is the best suited for our progress in the spiritual world. Had we left the world with the Chiding perfected and the voice of conscience heard in every way there could have been neither Resurrection nor Hell. We would have been like angels: our souls freed from all earthly passions and none to be reclaimed by the Hell. But since we could not avail ourselves of our opportunities in this life for the required evolution, and abused all the blessings ("Then on that day you shall most certainly be questioned about the
And as for the two who are guilty of indecency from among you, give them both a slight punishment; then if they repent and amend, turn aside from them; surely Allah is Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful.

Repentance with Allah is only for those who do evil in ignorance, then turn (to Allah) soon, so these is it to whom Allah turns (mercifully), and Allah is Ever-knowing, Wise.

And repentance is not for those who go on doing evil deeds, until when death comes to one of them, he says: surely now I repent; nor (for) those who die while they are unbelievers. These are they for whom We have prepared a painful chastisement.

(4:14-18)

"They shall have chastisement in this world's life, and the chastisement of the hereafter is certainly more grievous, and they shall have no protector against Allah." (13:34)

"(Into) hell! they shall enter into it, and an evil place it is to settle in." (14:29)

"And thus do We recompense him who is extravagant and does not believe in the communications of his Lord; and certainly the chastisement of the hereafter is severer and more lasting." (20:127)

We shall not be able to return to earth ("And whomever Allah makes err, he has no guardian after Him; and you shall see the unjust, when they see the chastisement, saying: Is there any way to return." (42:44)) for our purification, though we may long and even pray for it, because we shall leave behind the material body, as it is necessary only for an earthly sojourn. Heaven, on the other hand, will not receive us in the condition in which we now find ourselves, since it is a place exclusively for purified souls.

(*) And it is said to those who guard (against evil): What is it that your Lord has revealed? They say, Good. For those who do good in this world is good, and certainly the abode of the hereafter is better; and certainly most excellent is the abode of those who guard (against evil)." (16:30)

"On that day you will see the faithful men and the faithful women—their light running before them and on their right hand—good news for you today: gardens beneath which rivers flow, to

And we therein, that is the grand achievement." (57:12)

"And We will remove whatever of ill-feeling is in their breasts; the rivers shall flow beneath them and they shall say: All praise is due to Allah Who guided us to this; and we would not have found the way had it not been that Allah had guided us; certainly the apostles of our Lord brought the truth; and it shall be cried out to them that this is the garden of which you are made heirs for what you did." (7:43)

Besides, if we be not purged of our earthly appetites then how can we live in regions which provide only spiritual food! Again, if Heaven is the place of light ("On the day when the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women will say to those who believe: Wait for us, that we may have light from your light; it shall be said: Turn back and seek a light. Then separation would be brought about between them, with a wall having a door in it; (as for) the inside of it, there shall be mercy in it, and (as for) the outside of it, before it there shall be chastisement." (57:13) "(Many) faces on that day shall be bright." (80:38)) how can we face it if we are of dark substance! ("And (as for) those who have earned evil, the punishment of an evil is the like of it, and abasement shall come upon them—they shall have none to protect them from Allah, as if their faces had been covered with slices of the dense darkness of night; these are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide." (10:27) "Darkness shall cover them." (80:41)) Heaven is also the place for the spirit at rest ("O soul that art at rest! Return to your Lord, well-pleased (with Him), well-pleasing (Him). So enter among My servants, and enter into My Garden." (89:27-30), whereas our minds will surely be full of restlessness. The voice of conscience, which, after the Resurrection, will become too strong to be ignored by us, will goad us on to purification. In these circumstances we shall be left with no other alternative than to enter into Hell(*).

(*) "And when it is said to him, Guard against (the punishment of) Allah, pride carries him off to sin; therefore hell is sufficient for him; and certainly it is an evil resting-place." (2:206)

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The Holy Qur'an requires a belief not only in its own truth but also in the truth of previous scriptures delivered to prophets of the different nations of the world. At its commencement, it lays down clearly: "And those who believe in that which has been revealed to thee and that which was revealed before thee" (2:4). The universality of what was revealed before is clearly accepted: "And there is not a people but a warner has gone among them" (35:24); "And every nation had an apostle" (10:47). Lest any one should be misled by the names of a few of the prophets mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, it is stated: "And certainly We sent apostles before thee: there are some of them that We have mentioned to thee and there are others whom We have not mentioned to thee" (40:78; 4:164). Thus the Holy Qur'an accepts the truth of the sacred books of the world, and hence it is, again and again, spoken of as a Book verifying what was before it. The basis of the relation in which the Holy Qur'an stands to other scriptures is, therefore, that they are all members of one family; they have all a Divine origin.

The Verifier of the sacred books of the world, however, occupies a unique position among them. The relation in which the Holy Qur'an stands to earlier scriptures is thus lucidly set forth by the Holy book itself: “And We have revealed to thee the Book with the truth verifying what is before it of the book and a guardian over it” (5:48). The Qur'an is thus not only a verifier of the sacred books of all nations as stated above; it is also a guardian over them. In other words, it guards the original teachings of the prophets of God, for, as elsewhere stated, those teachings had undergone alterations, and only a revelation from God could separate the pure Divine teaching from the mass of error which had grown around it. This was the work done by the Holy Qur'an, and hence it is called a guardian over the earlier scriptures. Of all the scriptures, it has particularly chosen the Gospels to show in what ways erroneous doctrines had almost entirely suppressed the truth preached by a prophet of God. The erroneous doctrines of Christianity were especially pointed out and stressed because the Omniscient God knew that the world would be misled more by them than by any other erroneous teaching. They seem, moreover, to have been chosen as an example, for how could earlier scriptures escape alterations if the teachings of so recent a prophet as Jesus Christ could not be handed over intact to posterity?

The Holy Qur'an further claims that it came as a judge to decide the differences between the various religions: “Certainly We sent apostles to nations before thee....And We have not revealed to thee the Book except that thou mayest make clear to them that about which they differ” (16:63,64). As already stated, the Qur'an proclaimed that prophets had been raised in every nation, and, therefore, that every nation differed from other nations even in the essentials of faith. The position of the Holy Qur'an was, therefore, essentially that of a judge deciding between these various claimants.

The most important point to be borne in mind in connection with the relation of the Holy Qur'an to the earlier scriptures is that it makes clear what is obscure in them and explains full what is there stated briefly. Revelation, according to the Holy Qur'an, is not only universal but also progressive, and it attains perfection in that final revelation. A revelation was granted to each nation according to its requirements, and in each age, in accordance with the capacity of the people of that age. As the human brain became more and more developed, more and more light was cast by revelation on matters relating to the unseen, on the existence and attributes of the Divine Being, on the nature of revelation from Him, on the requital of good and evil, on the life after death, and on Paradise and hell. It is for this reason that the Holy Qur'an is again and again called a book "that makes manifest". It shed complete light on the essentials of the faith and made manifest what had hitherto of necessity remained obscure.

Further, as a result of what has been said above, the Holy Qur'an claims that it came as a perfect revelation of Divine will: “This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favor on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion” (5:3). The finality of the Qur'anic revelation is, therefore, based on its perfection. New scriptures were revealed as long as they were needed, but when perfect light was cast on all essentials of religion in the Holy Qur'an, no prophet was needed after him. Six hundred years before him, Jesus Christ, who was the last among the national prophets- the Holy Prophet Muhammad being the prophet not of one nation but of the whole world- had declared in plain words that he could not guide the world to perfect truth, because the world at that stage was not in a fit condition to receive that truth: “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you unto all truth” (John 16:12,13).

Among the Scriptures of the world, the Holy Qur'an, therefore, occupies a unique

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HADHRAT UMAR FAROOQ—PART 2
By The Late Maulana Muhammad Ali
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Sa’d Appointed Generalissimo A.H. 14 (A.D. 635)

The fire of revenge once more blazed up in Persia. There was at the time a woman on the throne. She was de-throned and Yazdejird, a young prince of 16, was made king. Domestic feuds were all forgotten. Secret machinations were as usual employed to spread anarchy in Muslim possessions. Once more Muthanna had to retreat, this time far back to the old frontier of Arabia. Arabia was also astir as never before. Proclamation of jihad was made all over the land. The Caliph was anxious in person to take the command, but the council of advisers did not approve. Sa’d ibn Abi-Waqas was chosen for the chief command and given a detailed plan of battle. At the head of a large army he marched to the frontier. At a distance of three days’ journey from Kufah, he encamped, surveyed the situation and wrote a detailed account to the Caliph. Muthanna had already succumbed to the wounds he had received at the battle of Jaar before the arrival of Sa’d. Before his death, however, he had left detailed instructions for Sa’d, which his brother now communicated to the general. The total strength of the Muslim army stood at 30,000. The Caliph sent instructions to encamp at Qadisiyah, and there, with the mountain in the rear, to draw up the army in regular martial array. The Caliph also desired that, before opening hostilities, envoys should be sent over to the Court of Persia with the message of Islam. So confident was he of the intrinsic beauties of the teachings of Islam and of its peaceful principles that he did not consider it impossible to vanquish the foe with the sword of truth rather than that of steel even when passions were running high. Mada’in, the capital of Persia, was forty miles from the Muslim encampment. Forthwith envoys galloped on horse-back, obtained audience of the king and conveyed to him the message of Islam. They were laughed at, ridiculed and scorned. “You are a contemptible people,” retorted Yazdejird. “Undoubtedly we were so,” replied the Muslim spokesman, “we were a people of no consequence. But God raised a Prophet in our midst who purged us of all those low and base things and put us on the path of virtue. Should you also accept this message, we are all brothers; otherwise it is not possible for us at this stage to give up hostilities without your agreeing to pay us tribute.” Hearing this Yazdejird could not control himself and very harshly turned the envoys out. One of them was even made to bear a basket full of earth, to impress upon them that they were a mean people and would be made thus to work as slaves for the Persians. The Muslim deputies, however, were not so easily depressed. They took it as a happy augury and brought away the basket with the earth to their own camp, saying that with their own hands the Persians had made over their land to them. What unshakable faith!

Battle of Qadisiyah 14 A.H. (635 A.D.)

Persia mustered all its strength this time for a decisive blow. An army of one hundred and twenty thousand was raised, and put under the command of their greatest war hero, Rustam. Though this was four times the Muslim numbers, yet there was hesitation in the Persian ranks to take the field against a foe of whom they had by this time had sufficient experience. But an army so stupendous could not long be kept unoccupied without much damage to the countryside where it was encamped. At length, Rustam had to come out. Once more the Muslims tried for peace, the envoy offering Rustam the same terms as were offered to the youthful king. Rustam was much infuriated and boasted that he would smash the whole of Arabia to pieces. The following day, they filled up the canal that separated the two armies, thus preparing a way to cross the enemy’s side. The Persian army advanced. Sa’d was feeling unwell and was unable to move about. He directed operations from his sick bed. This was a most bloody battle, lasting for three whole days. The first day’s battle is known as Yaum al-Armath or the day of confusion; the second day’s as Yaum al-Aghwaath or the day of succour; and the third day’s as Yaum al-Imas or the day of distress. On the very first day arrived the Syrian division, originally stationed in Mesopotamia, to reinforce the Muslim army. On the first two days fortune fluctuated, but both sides kept their respective grounds. Losses on the Persian side were heavier. The third day also presented the same appearance. The wall of Persian elephants would not let the Muslim horsemen advance. At length Qa’qa’ managed to pull down two of the beasts and as a result all the rest fled in terror. The fury of the battle was, however, unabated and it continued throughout the night. When day broke, Qa’qa’ took a handful of the most daring soldiers and rushed upon Rustam. This was a signal for the whole army to turn that way. Rustam, seeing this jumped down from his high seat, was wounded and, while running away, was recognized and killed by a Muslim soldier. With the death of the commander-in-chief, the Persian troops took to flight. Thus this most terrible battle of Qadisiyah...
came to a close. A large quantity of spoil fell into the hands of the Muslims. Casualties on the Muslim side during all three days numbered 8,500, but the Persians suffered a much heavier loss. This took place in the month of Ramadan, 14 A.H., corresponding to October, 635 A.D.

Sa’d’s Advance On Mada’in. The Western Part Evacuated By Persians, 15 A.H. (636 A.D.)

The battle of Qadisiyah was a decisive one in the campaign of Mesopotamia. It completely broke the strength of Persia. The defeated army took refuge in Babel. After a short stay at Qadisiyah, Sa’d advanced on Babel and, driving the enemy out, took possession of the whole of that strip of territory. The Persians took shelter within the walls of Bahrasheh, the part of the capital on the western bank of the Tigris, the real capital being on the eastern bank. With the sanction of the Caliph, after a few months, in the year 15 A.H., Sa’d marched against the capital. Several skirmishes took place on the way. At some distance from Mada’in, the queen-mother in person came out at the head of the army to stem the Muslim advance but was defeated. The victorious army pushed forward to the capital and, on beholding the palaces of the Chosroes, Sa’d burst out into an exclamation of joy, “Allah-u-Akbar,” he shouted, “this day the Prophet’s prophecy has been fulfilled,” referring to the incident when the Prophet, while engaged in digging a ditch around Madinah before the battle of Ahzab, observed that he had just then been shown in a spiritual phenomenon known as kashf—the palaces of the Chosroes and that the angel Gabriel had informed him that his followers would possess them. At length, Sa’d laid siege to the western part of the capital. The siege lasted for months and at last the Persians could no longer hold out. They evacuated this part of the town, taking refuge in the eastern part.

Thus the whole of the territory between the Euphrates and the Tigris, which is Mesopotamia proper, came into the possession of the Muslims.

Fall of Mada’in, 16 A.H. (637 A.D.)

Now the situation was that on the western bank of the Tigris were encamped the Muslim troops, whereas the eastern was occupied by the Persians. This state continued for some time when, at last, Sa’d explained to his soldiers the danger of their position. All boats, he said, were in the possession of the enemy who might swoop down on them any time they chose, whereas the Persians were immune from attack. Their own situation was, therefore, unsafe until the enemy were ejected from their stronghold on the eastern bank. There was only one way open to them; somehow they must screw up courage and cross the river. Now the Tigris is a stream of great depth and velocity. The Muslims had no boats. But they possessed one thing—indomitable pluck before which could stand neither mountains nor rivers. Six hundred of the bravest men were picked out and divided into ten detachments of sixty each. The first sixty threw their horses into the river and in the teeth of the swift current gained the opposite bank. Their example was followed by the other detachments. This feat of rare valor was displayed under the very eyes of the Persians, who beholding this wonderful performance, were seized with unspeakable terror and fled in utter consternation, crying “Geni! geni have come!” Yazdejird had already removed his treasures and the ladies of his household to Hulwan. Now that he heard the terrible news, he also took to flight. In the month of Safar, 16 A.H., corresponding to March, 637 A.D., Sa’d entered Mada’in and, while thus marching through the town in triumph, he had on his lips that prophetic verse of the Qur’an:

“How many the gardens they left, and springs and crops and magnificent mansions and luxuries in which they lived! Even so; and We gave them as a heritage to another people” (44:25-28).

It was without doubt a clear sign of Divine might that a small nation, looked upon with contempt and whose envoy was sent back with a basket of dust on his head—that such an insignificant nation overthrew a most mighty empire with no more than 30,000 men. Silver, gold and diamonds, the spoils of war, when collected, made a considerable heap. One-fifth, including the Chosroes’ robes and ornaments and a highly precious carpet inlaid with diamonds, was sent to Madinah. Fifteen years before, when the Prophet was running away for his life from Makkah to Madinah and a price was set on his head, dead or alive, a certain man named Suraqah had gone out in search of the precious fugitive. It so happened, however, that every time Suraqah came within reach of the Prophet his horse stumbled and fell. Seeing that some hidden Power protected the Prophet, the pursuer repented of his conduct and on bended knees asked for pardon. But he had more than a pardon. “Suraqah,” said the Prophet, “I see the gold bracelets of the Chosroes on thy wrists.” And lo! the spoils that came to Madinah actually included a pair of the Persian king’s gold bracelets. Suraqah was immediately sent for and made to wear them, and the joy of the faithful knew no bounds when they saw the prophecy of their beloved Master come out so literally true. When ‘Umar beheld the enormous riches brought as spoils, tears came to his eyes. On being asked what made him weep at that moment of joy, the Caliph said: “I fear lest this wealth and comfort should ultimately cause the ruin of my people!” And when Ziyad, who had escorted the spoils to the capital, asked the Caliph’s permission for the army to extend
its conquist towards Khurasan, he positively forbade him: "I would much rather see an insurmountable mountain between Mesopotamia and those lands, so that neither they should be able to approach us nor we should be able to approach them."

Persians' Advance On and Defeat At Jalula 16 A.H. (637 A.D.)

The eastern part of Mada'in fell in the year 16 A.H.. Sa'd encamped here for the summer months which passed off peacefully. Yazdejird took refuge in Hulwan, about a hundred miles to the north of Mada'in. Once more he ordered the Persian forces to advance and a part of his army occupied Jalula, a very strongly fortified place with a rampart and a deep trench around it. Sa'd sent for the Caliph's permission to adopt counter-measures, on receipt of which he despatched a division 12,000 strong under Qa'qa' to meet the Persians. Siege was laid to Jalula but the besieged were in unbroken communication with Hulwan, from where they regularly received all help. The siege dragged on for eighty days, before the Persians were again defeated. Yazdejird shifted his headquarters along with the residue of his forces to Ray. Qa'qa' proceeded to Hulwan, took possession of it and left a garrison there.

Battle Of Takrit 16 A.H. 637 A.D. Christian Tribes Embrace Islam. Mosul Occupied

For the moment all was quiet so far as Persia was concerned. There was no apprehension of another attack. But in the meanwhile war clouds were gathering in the north. At Takrit, about a hundred miles from Mada'in, Roman forces were mustering strong. They had also won over some Christian Beduin tribes. To meet this new danger, the Muslim army marched northward. The two armies met at Takrit. As usual, the Muslims sent envoys to the Christian tribes with the message of Islam with the result that these tribes embraced the faith and joined hands with the Muslim forces. These were the three tribes of Ayad, Taghib and Namar. The Roman army sustained a crushing defeat. The Muslims advanced further and took possession of Mosul. Takrit and Mosul were both parts of Jazirah, a province of Mesopotamia. It was the concourse of the Roman forces that compelled Muslims to attack these places. They never invaded Jazirah until the people of that part had, with the help of Roman forces, first attacked them. But more of this later on in the course of discussion on the Syrian wars.

Basrah and Kufah Founded, 17 A.H.

While Sa'd was busy fighting in upper Mesopotamia, 'Umar was not unmindful of the southern part, to strengthen which he directed 'Utbah to take possession of Ubullah, a seaport on the Persian Gulf. This 'Utbah did in the year 14 A.H. with the help of a battalion which he took with him from Bahrain. In the vicinity of the place three years later, in the year 17 A.H., was founded the town of Basrah. Towards the north sprang up the town of Kufah. Thus both these towns, which ultimately developed into big centers, were founded during the reign of 'Umar.

Damascus Conquered, 14 A.H. (635 A.D.)

To turn to the Syrian theater of war. It will be recollected that in a pitched battle at Ahnadin the Muslims had defeated the Roman force, about 250,000 strong, and that news of this brilliant victory arrived at Madinah just at the time when Abu Bakr was on his deathbed. After this disaster, Heraclius took refuge in Antioch, whereas the Muslim general, Khalid, marched on Damascus in the year 14 A.H.. Damascus, capital of Syria from ancient days, is situated in a most fertile valley known for the charm of its natural scenery as the paradise of the world. It is also a flourishing center of commerce. Khalid, keeping in view the importance of the town, laid siege to it after great preparations. The siege lasted for six full months. Heraclius sent reinforcements to the besieged from Hims but Khalid despatched a detachment to block their way. The cold of Damascus was very trying for the dwellers of the desert but rather than give up the siege, they put up with hardship. One night on the occasion of a festival, intelligence was brought to Khalid that the whole town had given itself up to drinking and merry-making. Taking advantage of the situation, he took a handful of his bravest men scaled the rampart, jumped down and, killing the guard, flung the gate open. The Muslims rushed in. The besieged saw that resistance was of no avail and they themselves opened the gate at the other end of the town to the division under Abu 'Ubaidah. For this reason the whole town was granted immunity. Neither prisoners nor spoils were taken. The conquest of Damascus took place in the year 14 A.H., corresponding to 635 A.D.

Battle Of Fihl

It has been noticed above that Heraclius sent reinforcements for the relief of the Roman garrison at Damascus which however, could not find their way to their destination. These forces together with others were therefore directed towards Ardan as the next rallying point. Khalid advanced that way and encamped at Fihl. Impressed by the determination and perseverance of the Muslims, the Christians made advances for peace. Khalid deputed Mu'adh to discuss peace terms. During the discussion, the Christians, trying
to overawe the Muslim envoy, referred to their large army and abundance of supplies. Mu'adh in reply quoted the Quranic verse: "How often has a small party vanquished a numerous host by Allah’s permission" (2:249). No agreement could be arrived at with regard to the peace terms. The Muslims’ demand was the same as in the case of Persia, whereas the Christians were only trying to buy them off. The following day, a Christian envoy came to the Muslim camp with the offer of two dinars per head to the whole army, provided it departed. The matter was at length referred to arbitration by the sword. A bloody battle was fought in which the Romans, 50,000 strong, were defeated. (Muir places this battle before the capture of Damascus). The victory brought the whole of the territory of Ardan into the possession of Muslims. Wherever the people surrendered, the Muslims guaranteed them, as some of the terms of peace, perfect protection of their lives and property and of their churches. The only condition on the Muslim side was that some pieces of land should be utilized for the erection of mosques.

Battle of Hims

After the capture of Ardan, the Muslim army advanced towards Hims, and after some feeble resistance this town also surrendered. From here Khalid proceeded further but instructions from the Caliph stopped him from pushing on. This also shows that all that the Muslims wanted was to take possession of places which originally formed part of Arabia, and with that retraced its

Arabia, and with that to bring warfare to a close. Consequently, the whole army retraced its steps. Abu ‘Ubaidah encamped at Hims and ‘Amr ibn ‘As at Ardan, while Khalid returned to Damascus.

Battle of Yarmuk, 15 A.H. (636 A.D.)

The Caesar felt greatly crest-fallen at the fall of three important centers like Damascus, Ardan and Hims and with full enthusiasm began to raise a large army. Couriers rushed to all parts of the empire with orders that all available men must at once be sent. A huge army gathered at Antioch. When news of this came to the Muslim camp, Abu ‘Ubaidah forthwith held council with his officers. It was unanimously agreed that the situation was extremely critical and that a small army like theirs could not withstand the daily swelling tide of the enemy’s ranks. Nor was there any near prospect of reinforcements arriving from Madinah. The territory occupied, it was decided, must be evacuated. This was accordingly done. Abu ‘Ubaidah gave up his position at Hims and returned towards Damascus. On leaving Hims, however, he ordered that the whole amount of jizyah realized from the people of Hims should be returned to them. Jizyah, he said, was a tax in return for protection. When they could no longer give that protection, they had no right to keep the money. The whole amount was consequently withdrawn from the treasury and made over to the people who were thus being left to the mercy of the enemy and who were all either Christians or Jews. In vain will the critic ransack the dusty pages of history for another such brilliant spot, such scrupulous regard for the rights of citizenship in time of war. The treatment by Muslims of the inhabitants was such that at their departure, Christians as well as Jews actually shed tears and prayed God to bring them back. Muir, after admiring the leniency of the Arab conquerors towards the conquered and their justice and integrity, quotes a Nestorian Bishop of the time: "These Arabs to whom God has accorded in our days the dominion are become our masters; but they do not combat the Christian religion; much rather they protect our faith; they respect our priests and our holy men, and make gifts to our churches and our convents" (p. 128).

The retreat from Hims had its repercussion in other parts. Some parts of Ardan had also to be evacuated. The armies of Abu ‘Ubaidah and ‘Amr ibn ‘As rallied at Yarmuk, where reinforcement previously despatched from Madinah also arrived. The total strength of the Muslim army was between thirty and forty thousand. The Romans marched down on them with a large force of two hundred thousand. Before the commencement of hostilities, there were negotiations for peace. The Romans again tried to buy off the Muslims who demanded payment of tribute as recognition of defeat. What unwavering fortitude! Two hundred thousand were ready to fall upon them but their faith was unshaken. Truth, they said, must triumph. At length a bloody battle ensued in which even Muslim women participated. The Muslims were repulsed several times, and once they were thrust back to their encampment from were the women-folk reproached them and urged them on once more against the foe. They fought desperately, none caring for his life, each trying to excel in valor and rushing into the very thick of the

rushing into the very thick of the enemy. The Romans lost their footing and took to their heels. Three thousand Muslim martyrs fell on the field and the number of Christian casualties was very large. When Heraclius heard of the defeat, he left for Constantinople.

The battle of Yarmuk occupies the same position in the Syrian campaign as that of Qadisiyah in the Persian. Like Qadisiyah it was a decisive battle. Thereafter, all the Syrian towns surrendered one by one—Qinnasrin, Halb, Antioch and so forth, some of the people joined the faith of Islam but the bulk of the population stuck to Christianity and paid jizyah. The people of one place Jarjoma, neither embraced Islam
nor paid jizyah. Peace was concluded with them on the condition that, if needed, they would fight on the Muslim side. This treaty shows that the Muslims wanted nothing but peace and tranquillity; and it was only to establish permanent peace that they were fighting.

Jerusalem Capitulates, 15 A.H. (637 A.D.)

When Abu Bakr first sent an expedition to Syria, he divided the army into three or four divisions, each to advance to a particular part of the country. The division under the command of 'Amr ibn 'As was detailed for the province of Palestine, but he was repeatedly required to leave his own front and go over to Damascus to reinforce the small force engaged there. Jerusalem, therefore, had not so far been captured. After the fall of Yarmuk, the Muslim forces were not much in requisition in that area and siege was therefore, laid to Jerusalem. In addition to these forces, Abu 'Ubaidah also, relieved his campaign in the north, turned to the help of the besiegers. When Artabun (Aretion) heard of this, he slunk off to Egypt with his army. This incident, by the way, is worth noting in connection with the later conquest of Egypt. The inhabitants of Jerusalem offered to capitulate on condition that the Caliph in person came over and signed the treaty. The holy temple at Jerusalem being the sanctuary of the Israelite prophets, the Muslims respected it as they respected those prophets. 'Umar, therefore, held a consultation and it was decided that the condition should be accepted. Consequently, 'Umar left Madinah for Jerusalem. This journey of one who was the King not only of Arabia but also of Mesopotamia and Syria is unique for its simplicity. In the same simple coarse dress as he usually wore, with no large retinue, 'Umar set out with just a few men, entrusting affairs of state to the care of 'Ali Khalid and other officers received him at Jabiayah.

He was, however, much displeased at the rich costumes they were wearing, and when one was brought for him, he refused to put it on, retaining his usual simple dress. The treaty was drawn up and signed, and it is produced below to show the treatment of Muslims towards people of other persuasions:

Treaty of Jerusalem

"This is the covenant of peace which 'Umar, the servant of God and the commander of the faithful, had made with the people of Jerusalem. This peace which is vouchsafed to them guarantees them protection of life, of property, of churches, of crosses, and of those set up, display and honor these crosses. Their churches shall not be used as dwelling houses, nor shall they be dismantled, nor shall they or their compounds, their crosses or their belongings be in any way damaged. They shall be subjected to no compulsion in matters of faith, nor shall they be in any way molested. No Jews shall reside with them in Jerusalem. It is incumbent on the people of Jerusalem that they should pay the jizyah as people of other towns do. They must also turn out Greeks and robbers. Whoever of the Greeks leaves the town, his life and property shall be protected till he should reach a place of safety, and whoever should stay in Jerusalem, he shall be protected and he must pay jizyah like the rest of the inhabitants. And whoever should wish to go away with the Greeks and leaves behind their churches and crucifixes, there is protection for them as well. Their lives, properties, churches and crosses shall be protected till they reach a place of safety. Whatever is contained in this i'ad is under the covenant of God and His Messenger and under the guarantee of his successors and the faithful, as long as the inhabitants pay the jizyah."

This treaty was drawn up in the year 15 A.H., and was signed by Khalid ibn Walid, 'Amr ibn 'As, 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Auf and Mu'awiyah as witnesses. The signature of Khalid on this document may, by the way, be helpful in removing a doubtful point of chronology as to when this renowned general was recalled by 'Umar. The evidence establishes for certain that till the year 15 A.H., at least, he was still holding his exalted position; otherwise, in his stead there should have been the signature of Abu 'Ubaydah. Christian historians have recorded that when the Christian Patriarch was showing the Caliph round the antiquities of the town, the hour of Muslim prayers arrived. At that time they were within a most ancient church, the church of the Resurrection. The Patriarch suggested that the Caliph should say his prayers there. He refused the kindly offer with thanks, saying his prayers neither there nor in the famous church of Constantine, where prayer-carpets had already been spread out. "Should we say our prayers here?" he observed, "Muslims might some day claim the right to erect a mosque in this place." With such scrupulousness he protected the sanctity of Christian places of worship from violence even at some future time. This is the example of toleration, it must be remembered, set by the immediate disciples of the Prophet. If during the long history of Islam, any Muslim conqueror may have transgressed the limit, Islam cannot justly be held responsible.

Greek Efforts to Expel Muslims from Syria, 17 A.H. (638 A.D.)

In the year 17 A.H., the Caesar, at the instigation of the people of Jazirah made another attempt to regain possession of Syria. Jazirah is the territory situated to the north of Mesopotamia. The Muslim armies, after the subjugation of Mesopotamia, never advanced beyond, either to the north or to the east. The Caliph did not want to take one
Conquest Of Jazirah

It was necessary to punish this transgression on the part of the people of Jazirah. 'Umar consequently ordered Sa'd to invade that territory. The Muslim army was small but the people of Jazirah having suffered a reverse with Caesar's army, did not consider it worthwhile to offer serious resistance. A few skirmishes here and there were all that took place and thus in the year 17 A.H. Jazirah was added to the territory of Islam.

Removal Of Khalid, 17 A.H.

It is not out of place, while narrating the events of the year 17 A.H., to touch upon two other important incidents of the same year. One of these is the removal of Khalid from command. There is no doubt about the fact that 'Umar did not like the war policy of Khalid. As early as the Arab rising after the Prophet's death, Khalid's treatment of Malik ibn Nuwaishah had given cause for offence, and though Khalid's explanation was accepted by Abu Bakr, 'Umar was not satisfied. Oftentimes Khalid was unduly severe on the field of battle, which 'Umar positively disliked. Nevertheless, on assuming the reins of government, he adopted as mild an attitude towards that general as possible and did not in any way interfere with him. His signature as witness to the treaty of Jerusalem shows that up to the conquest of that town, Khalid was in chief command of the Syrian army. It was after this that, in consequence of his refusal to render account for an item of expenditure, he was removed from command and put under Abu 'Ubaidah. In the year 17 A.H., Khalid gave an award of a thousand dinars to a certain poet. 'Umar disliked this extravagance and called for an explanation. At first, Khalid refused to give it, on which the Caliph ordered Bilal to handcuff him with his own turban - a mark that he was adjudged guilty. Then Khalid explained that he had given the money out of his private purse and, as a mark of acquittal, his hands were untied. Such strong handling of a renowned general whose exploits were the wonder of the world shows what spirit Islam had breathed into its votaries. The man at the top was as liable to answer for his conduct as the man at the bottom. This spectacle of human equality as displayed by Islam stands unrivalled in the annals of man. Later, Khalid returned to Madinah and personally pleaded his innocence before 'Umar. The Caliph assured him that he still loved and respected him, at the same time writing to the officers concerned that Khalid had been removed not in consequence of any displeasure incurred by him or of any misappropriation of funds. The only reason of his removal, 'Umar explained, was that he was afraid lest people should attribute the conquests of Islam to Khalid's skill and prowess; these are all from God.

Plague Of 'Amwas, 17-18 A.H.

The other incident worth mentioning is the epidemic of plague which broke out at 'Amwas in Syria in 17 A.H., and infected even Mesopotamia, continuing till 18 A.H. To devise preventive measures, 'Umar again set out for Syria. Abu 'Ubaidah and others came out some distance to receive the Caliph. On hearing details of the epidemic from the commander-in-chief, 'Umar called a council of the companions to consider the situation. A saying of the Prophet was also brought to his notice, forbidding a new-comer to visit a place stricken with plague as well as one already there to leave that place for another. Acting on this the Caliph gave up the idea of proceeding any further. "Art thou running away from the decree of God?" objected Abu 'Ubaidah. "Yes," replied the Caliph, "from one decree I am running away to another decree," meaning that if
one place is plague-stricken according to the decree of God, another is safe by the same decree. Abu 'Ubaidah was instructed to shift his troops from the low land where they were encamped and scatter them on the hilltops. He gave immediate effect to the orders, but for himself it was too late. He had already caught the infection to which he succumbed while yet on the way. His death was followed by that of another illustrious companion, Mu'adh ibn Jabal. At length, 'amr Mu'adh ibn Jabal. At length, 'Amr ibn 'As had the troops scattered over the mountains and thus the epidemic was checked, but only after it had taken a toll of 25,000 lives from among the Muslims. 'Umar's order to remove the troops from the infected area throws light on the true significance of the Prophet's words. All that the Prophet meant was that people in infected area must not carry the infection to other inhabited places. The idea was to check its spread. It was by no means intended that those infected with plague must perish where they were. To remedy the ravages of plague, 'Umar undertook a journey to Syria for the third time. On the way he stopped at Ayyla at the head of the Gulf of 'Aqabah as the guest of the bishop of the place. The Caliph's shirt, torn on the journey, was stitched by the bishop with his own hands. This shows what friendly relations existed at that time between Muslims and Christians. In this very year, i.e. A.H. 18, Arabia was visited with the calamity of a terrible famine, in which the Caliph in person did relief work like a common laborer.

Egypt Invaded, 19 A.H. (640 A.D.)

The third time when 'Umar visited Syria in connection with the plague, 'Amr ibn 'As, who was in command of the army at the time, asked permission to invade Egypt. History does not record the circumstances that called for such an expedition, but the silence of history must by no means be misconstrued to imply that there were no weighty reasons for such a measure, that it was just a passion for territorial extension, or (as some Christian historians have put it) the army's idleness called for some occupation. It has been noticed that a most virulent epidemic had wrought havoc in the Muslim army, having thinned its ranks by no less than 25,000. The danger of an invasion by the Caesar had not as yet disappeared. Under these circumstances, the Muslims could ill-afford to quit Syria. It was, as Sir William Muir puts it, after much hesitation that the Caliph gave his consent. And what was the army with which 'Amr ibn 'As set out to invade Egypt? Just 5,000 strong! No sane general would, with such a force and under such circumstances venture out on an expedition of such magnitude without urgent reasons. The apprehension, it seems, was that the Caesar was about to march on Syria through Egypt and it was to check this advance that 'Umar permitted his Syrian commander to proceed to Egypt. The last invasion of the Caesar at the invitation of the people of Jazirah, in which the Muslims lost Antioch, had also been made from Alexandria, the famous seaport of Egypt. And it is likely that this time invasion was again contemplated by that route. It must be recollected in this connection that while 'Amr was advancing on Jerusalem in the year A.H. 15, Artabun had withdrawn his troops to Egypt. These troops were still there, for the name of this same Artabun is mentioned in connection with the siege of Fustat. It is recorded that when Muquqis concluded a truce for five days, Artabun was against it. Thus the permission for invasion was neither asked for, nor given light-heartedly. Dark clouds of danger were gathering in Egypt. Artabun with his troops was there. The Caesar had previously invaded Syria through Egypt. He might have been planning another invasion from that quarter.

Fall Of Fustat, 19 A.H. (640 A.D.)

In fine, 'Amr marched out against Egypt towards the close of the year 18 A.H. with only 5,000 men under his command. The army being so small, the Caliph contemplated recalling 'Amr, but he had already reached Egypt. Consequently, reinforcements were dispatched to his help under the command of Zubair. 'Amr reached the Egyptian frontier by the rout of Wadi al-'Arish on Dhi-l-Hijjah 10, 18 A.H., corresponding to December 12, 639. After encounters at a few towns on the way, such as Farama and Bilbeis, siege was at last laid to Fustat. This was a most strongly fortified fort on the bank of the Nile with the royal army for its garrison. The siege lasted for seven months. At last Zubair with a handful of men scaled the wall of the fort by means of a ladder and fell on the besieged with shouts of Allahu Akbar. The Christians were seized with terror and laid down their arms. The entire garrison was granted amnesty. Thus in the year 19 A.H., the lower part of Egypt was dismembered from the Roman Empire and came into Muslim possession.

Fall Of Alexandria, 20 A.H. (641 A.D.)

Hearing of the fall of Fustat, the Caesar landed another division of troops at Alexandria. 'Amr obtained the Caliph's permission to advance on that port. On the way, the combined Roman and Egyptian forces opposed the Muslim advance but were repulsed. Siege was at length laid to Alexandria. Communication by sea was, however, maintained unbroken by the enemy, and the besieged received regular supplies. The siege consequently dragged on for a considerable
length of time. But at last the town was captured in 20 A.H.,
corresponding to 641 A.D., and
the whole of Egypt thus came into
the possession of Muslims. On
instructions from the Caliph,
Fustat was made the capital.
Alexandria, however, had been
left without a strong garrison
and, finding it thus exposed, the
Caesar, during the reign of
‘Uthman, once more captured it
with his fleet. In the year 25 A.H.,
‘Amr ibn ‘As wrested it from the
Romans once more.

Library Of Alexandria

In connection with the conquest
of Alexandria, one is naturally
reminded of its famous library
and the common allegation that it
was burnt to ashes at the instance
of ‘Umar. Gibbon’s conclusions
are positive on the point. This
famous historian has proved that
the library was burnt long before
the Muslim conquest of the town.
Muir also exonerates the Muslim
conquerors from this charge.
“The story of the burning of the
library of Alexandria by the
Arabs,” says he, “is a late
invention.”

The Suez Canal

Besides his most brilliant
exploits in the field of arms, one of
the achievements of ‘Amr ibn ‘As
was in the field of engineering. At
the instance of ‘Umar, he had a
canal dug, connecting the waters
of the Nile with the Red Sea. This
canal was very useful in
transporting the corn of Egypt to
Yanbu’, the Arabian seaport of
the Red Sea. It remained
Navigable for eighty years, after
which, getting filled up with sand,
it became unserviceable.

Campaign in Khuzistan, 16-19 A.H. (637-641 A.D.)

“Turning once more to the
eastern provinces of the
Caliphate we find the cautious
policy of ‘Umar still tending to
restrain the Muslim arms within
the limits of the Arabian ‘Iraq, or
the country bounded by the
Western slopes of the Persian
range, but they were soon, by the
force of events, to burst the
barrier.” In these words does Muir
admit that the Muslims were
averse to carrying their arms
beyond the limits of Arab
settlements but were actually
dragged out by sheer force of
circumstances. This is how a new
development took place. The
Governor of Bahrain, who
occupied the Western coast of the
Persian Gulf, was alarmed at the
enemy’s movements on the
opposite coast. In the face of
danger brewing in such
proximity, he could not sit still.
To nip the hostile movement in
the bud, he crossed the Gulf and
landed his forces on the opposite
coast in the year 16 A.H. He,
however, found himself caught in
the enemy’s snare and was not
able even to beat a retreat. The
Caliph sent a division of army
under ‘Uthbah to his rescue. The
rescue was effected but the moral
effect of the retreat on the
neighboring provinces was
disastrous. Hurmuzan, the
Governor of Ahwaz, a province
near Basrah, who had fought
against the Muslims in the battle
of Qadisiyah and fled back to his
own place, now began to give
fresh trouble. “He began now to
make raids upon the Arab
outposts, and ‘Uthbah resolved to
attack him,” says Muir. This was
in the year 17 A.H. With the help
of a Beduin tribe, ‘Uthbah
succeeded in ejecting the enemy
from Ahwaz. Accoring to the
treaty that was concluded, the
province was ceded to the
Muslims and entrusted by ‘Uthbah
to the same Beduin tribe. Soon
after, however, ‘Uthbah died, and
Mughirah was appointed
Governor of Basrah in his place.
Hurmuzan again picked a
quarrel with the Beduin tribe on
some frontier dispute and,
violating the treaty, waged war
against the Muslims. He was
again defeated and Ahwaz once
more fell into Muslim hands. The
victorious Muslim army wanted
to push their victory forward
beyond Ahwaz, but the Caliph
again witheld permission.
Hurmuzan had fled eastward
but was again granted immunity
by the Muslims. This happened
in the year 18 A.H. Shortly after
this the defeated Persian
monarch, Yazdejird, who had
taken refuge in Merv, sent his
emissaries into Persia, rousing
the populace to insurrection. The
attitude of Hurmuzan again
became dubious and consequently,
in the year 19 A.H., the Caliph
sent orders to the forces of Kufah
and Basrah to march against him
under the command of Nu’man.
With a large Persian army,
Hurmuzan gave battle at Ram
Hurmuz but was once again
defeated, taking refuge in the
castle of Shustar, some fifty miles
to the north of Ahwaz. The castle
remained besieged for several
months. At last, discovering a
secret entrance, Muslim soldiers
entered the castle and captured it.
Hurmuzan gave himself up on
condition that he would be
guaranteed a safe conduct to the
presence of the Caliph, who might
deal with him as he pleased.

Hurmuzan Becomes A Muslim

When brought before ‘Umar,
Hurmuzan was dressed in the
most gorgeous regal robes,
followed by a long train of
courtiers and attendants. The
triumphant king, on the other
hand, was at the time lying
stretched on the ground wearing a
coarse shirt. Fairly long contact
with Muslims had already
acquainted Hurmuzan with the
virtues of Islam. Now, beholding
with his own eyes the sublime
simplicity of the Caliph, the truth
of Islam instantaneously sank
into his heart. How wonderful
must be the force, he said to
himself, which thus makes man
indifferent to worldly attractions,
which had thus transformed the
master of many kingdoms and
countless treasures into a hermit
to whom gold and diamonds were
no more than dust. The wealthiest
king, yet leading the life of an
indigent recluse! Thus musing
within himself his heart had
already fallen prey to the fascinating force of Islam but he would not as yet declare his faith, fearing lest this might be suspected as a subterfuge to save his skin. The king seated on the throne of dust was revolving in his mind the repeated treachery of the vanquished foe of the gorgeous costume and he did so in a mood of deep anguish. At last he spoke: "To pardon a man who has been the cause of shedding so much Muslim blood! Impossible! Hurmuzan thereupon begged for a cup of water, which was given him. He hesitated. "How can I drink this water," he said, "unless I am assured that I will not be slain even before I drink it." "You are safe," replied the Caliph, "till you have drunk the cup." Forthwith he let the cup drop to the ground, saying that according to the pledged word of the Caliph, he could not be killed. 'Umar was surprised at the trick. Now that he was safe and his position secure against the suspicion of subterfuge, he recited aloud the Kalima, saying that he was already a Muslim.

Ban Against Advance On Persia Withdrawn, (641 A.D.)

'Umar had issued strict orders to stop all advance towards Persia. A deputation of Muslims waited upon him to implore him to withdraw the prohibition. Thus Muir writes: "The deputation which, along with the spoil of Tostar, carried al-Hurmuzan a prisoner to Madinah, throws light upon reasons that weighed with the Caliph to withdraw his long-standing embargo on a forward movement...."

"What is the cause," inquired 'Umar of the deputation, "that these Persian persistently break faith and rebel against us? May be, ye treat them harshly." "Not so," they answered; "but thou hast forbidden us to enlarge our boundary, and the king is in their midst to stir them up. Two kings can in no wise exist together until the one expels the other. It is not our harshness, but their king, that has incited them to rise against us after having made submission. And so it will go on until thou shalt remove the barrier and leave us to go forward and expel their king. Not till then will their hopes and machinations cease." The demand, continues the historian, was supported even by Hurmuzan and at last the Caliph was convinced that the restriction ought to be removed. To quote Muir again: "The truth began to dawn on 'Umar that necessity was laid upon him to withdraw the ban against advance. In self-defense, nothing was left but to crush the Chosroes and to take entire possession of his realm."

And yet again: "He was compelled at last by the warlike attitude of the Persian court to bid his armies take the field with the avowed object of dealing the empire a final blow."

These last words from the pen of a Christian historian are clear and yet, in the face of this positive admission, 'Umar is accused, for his subjugation and annexation of Persia, of lust of loot and territorial extension. He was by no means inclined to resort to such a measure but, if allowed any longer lease, Persia would certainly have gathered strength and crushed Arabia. Circumstances thus forced the Caliph's reluctant hand.

Battle of Nihawand and Conquest of Persia, 22 A.H. (643 A.D.)

As already stated, Yazdejird was fanning, from his refuge at Merv through his agents, the fire of another war against the Muslims over the length and breadth of Persia. He succeeded in enlisting the co-operation even of some independent kingdoms. A huge army, 150,000 strong, was rallied at Hamdan, with Firozan in chief command. Sa'd kept the Caliph informed of this general mobilization. The advance of this army would have been most dangerous to the Muslims. A counter-army was immediately raised and marched to Hulwan under the command of Nu'man. A little ahead at a place called Nihawand, the two armies met in the year 22 A.H. Nu'man was killed in the action but the laurels of victory fell to the Muslims. Most of the enemy's army perished. From Nihawand, the Muslim army advanced on Ray. In the meanwhile, Yazdejird fled to Isphahan and thence on to Kirman, finally taking refuge in Balkh. At Ray, the Persian army gave another battle under Isfandiyar but was as usual defeated. Yazdejird was still active. With the help of Tartars and Chinese he kept up some show of fighting, but all to no purpose. In the meantime, Muslim forces had spread over the whole of Persia. Fars, Makran, Sajistan, Khurasan, Azarbajian, all these provinces were one by one occupied. Thus the whole of Persia came completely under the rule of Islam. It is worthy of note that on this occasion while the tax known as jizyah was imposed in some parts, there were other adjacent parts where the people neither embraced Islam nor paid jizyah. They only agreed to render military assistance in time of need. The peace with Jurjan, for instance, was concluded on this very condition, viz., that the people who agreed to assist the Muslims in withstanding a foreign invasion would be exempt from jizyah. Likewise Shahr Baraz, an Armenian chief, concluded peace on the condition of military assistance and exemption from jizyah. Kirman and Sistan were conquered in the year 23 A.H.

Death of 'Umar, 23 A.H. (644 A.D.)

'Umar met his death at the hands of a Persian slave, Abu Lu'l'lu' (Firoz) by name, who had, under the influence of his Roman masters, turned Christian. He fell into the hands of Mughirah in
Weakening of the Roman and Persian Empires

That the empires of Persia and Rome were at the time undergoing a process of decay, though true to a certain extent, does in no way explain the conquests of Islam. They had undoubtedly lost much of their original power and glory. Their civilizations were things of the past and by mutual warfare they had greatly undermined each other's power. But when all this has been said, the question still remains: Were they too weak for Arabia? Certainly not. The Arabs were utterly insignificant compared to them even in this fallen state. Parts of Arabia were actually under their sway—the northern part under the Caesar and the eastern under the Chosroes. The Arabs had such terror of them that even in parts other than their possessions, they did just as they pleased. Furthermore, the war was caused by the transgression of these two powers on the frontier. They were obviously conscious of their strength. If they had really been weak, as is alleged, their weakness should have manifested itself in some outward sign. They should have been unable to put enough forces into the field or the soldiers should have been ill-equipped. But history tells a different tale. They brought twice, thrice, nay even five times as large armies as the Muslims did. Of equipment too, their soldiers had abundance, offensive as well as defensive. Their common soldiers were from head to foot clad in iron. Thus, notwithstanding their comparative downfall from their original glory, either of these two empires was still far too formidable for Arabia, and before their combined forces Arabia was absolutely insignificant. The hostilities were, in a way, against their combined forces, inasmuch as they were carried on simultaneously against both.

False Charge of Love of Loot

In their second explanation of these conquests of Islam, European historians seem to reflect the modern mentality of their own lands but they have overlooked one most important factor in all expeditions for purposes of loot. Such expeditions are invariably undertaken by the strong against the weak, and not vice versa. It is a law of physical nature and as such insusceptible of charge. Does it not work just the same in this twentieth century? Do not the strong nations of Europe dominate the weaker nations of the world under our own eyes, exploiting all the resources of their soil for their own aggrandizement? What is this but a more refined and, hence, less palpable form of loot? Such is this immutable law of physical nature. But, on the contrary, the history of mankind presents not one instance where a weak nation has assailed a strong one with a view of robbing it. All robbers take good care to see that their victim is not their superior in strength. No robbers would run the risk of waylaying a well-equipped army, knowing it to be so. There is yet another consideration which makes this explanation untenable. Love of money invariably begets love of life. People out for loot are incapable of feats of valor such as were displayed by the Muslims. Their foremost consideration is their own safety. The reckless courage with which Muslims fought the foe in these wars, regardless of life and death, should convince any fair-minded man that sordid love of loot could not inspire such invincible bravery. These men must have been inspired by a far nobler passion which made them oblivious of all personal considerations. To take up arms against Persia and Rome was, humanly speaking, to run into the very jaws of death, and no band of mere robbers could possibly think of doing so. It must have been something far higher that banished all fear of death from the hearts of Muslims. It was their high sense of duty.

Glorious Deeds of Muslim Soldiers

A brief summary such as this is hardly the place to sketch in any great detail the most remarkable feats of valor, determination and self-sacrifice that Muslim soldiers displayed in these battles. The chapter they added to the history of warfare is resplendent with the most glorious deeds. To point to just a few, let us take the reader to the field of Jaris, where the Muslims suffered a defeat. Crossing the bridge, they find the enemy in battle array in a narrow space. In the forefront is the wall of elephants wearing loudly ringing bells. The Arab steeds take fright at so strange a scene and wheel around. Forthwith Abu 'Ubaidah, the commander, leaps to the ground sabre in hand. His example is followed by others. But for poor mortals to push back this moving wall is not an easy task. Nevertheless, the reckless daring with which they charged these giants is a sight for the gods to behold and admire. Sword in hand, Abu 'Ubaidah dashes against this wall and grapples with one of the beasts. The elephant pulls him down and with his stupendous weight crushes his body to pulp. A sight that would have unmanned even the strongest nerve only inspires greater courage in his followers. The dead commander's brother rushes to the scene, takes hold of the standard and dashes against the same animal. He meets with the same fate. Another follows and likewise falls. Another and yet another till seven most valiant men were crushed underneath that one beast.

At the battle of Qadisiyah, Tulaihah rushed single-handed into the ranks of the enemy, 60,000 strong, in the dark of the night and, dealing death right and left, came back with a prisoner of war. At this very field, Abu Mihran, the famous poet and a brave man, was one day found drunk and consequently put in the camp prison. As the battle raged hot, he saw from his dungeon that the Persians by numerical superiority were pushing the Muslims back. He could not bear the sight. His blood
Mesopotamia who, on his return home, took him along. Here he one day came with a complaint to the Caliph that his master realized from him two dirhams a day. He was told that this was not too much for a carpenter, which greatly incensed him. The following day at early dawn when the Caliph was conducting prayers, Abu Lu’lu’ slipped forward and stabbed him. With unruffled composure ‘Umar made ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn ‘Auf the Imam in his own place and went on with his prayers. The assassin, after stabbing some other persons, committed suicide. When after prayers the Caliph was informed that the assailant was a Christian, he thanked God that he had not met his death at the hands of a Muslim. The wound was deep and the bowels had been cut. There was no hope of recovery. The first thing he did was to ask ‘A’ishah’s permission to be buried by the Prophet’s side. Then for the election of his successor, he selected six most prominent men—‘Uthman, ‘Ali, Zubair, Talhah, Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqas, and ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn ‘Auf, and left the decision in their hands. Whoever from among themselves, he said, these six men, elected by a majority of votes should be made Caliph. Then he had the account of his debts brought to him. This, he said, should be paid out of his legacy. Wounded on Dhl-Hijjah 26, 23 A.H., he passed away four days later on Muharram 1, 24 A.H.

Reasons Underlying the Great Conquests of ‘Umar’s Reign

Of the glorious achievements of ‘Umar, what strikes one as the most conspicuous, is the great conquests of Islam. That such vast territory should have been subjugated within the brief space of ten years is by itself a wonderful phenomenon, the more so when it is borne in mind that hostilities were started at one and the same time against two most mighty empires, each apparently possessed of power enough to trample Arabia under foot in days. But one’s wonder knows no bounds when one beholds that on no field did the Muslim army exceed 40,000 whereas the enemy at times put into the field as large an army as 250,000. Of equipment, the Arabs had not a hundredth part of that possessed by those empires. The enemy, long used to warfare, had a good military organization, whereas the Arabs had never before seen rallies so vast nor had they ever experienced warfare abroad. In military training, the Arabs were as deficient as their opponents were skilled. Then the battles were fought not in Arabia but on the enemy’s ground, where they had, besides abundant supplies, well-fortified strongholds. Notwithstanding all the odds favoring the enemy, what a wonder that, except at Jasr, not once were the Muslims defeated! European historians have assigned only two reasons for this: firstly, that the Persian and Roman Empires had considerably degenerated; and, secondly, that the prospect of spoil, rather than loot as they put it, had roused the martial spirit of the Muslims. Mada’in was the scene of similar feats of fearless valor. The first man to throw his horse into the deep and rapid stream of the Tigris was the commander, Sa’d himself. Others followed, one by one, as if it were no more than a gallop on a level race-course, and this under the very eyes of the enemy watching from the opposite bank. At Fihl, in one of the Syrian battles, the center of the enemy’s army was repeatedly attacked by the Muslims but would not budge an inch from its position. Hisham Ibn ‘Utba, commander of a detachment, jumped from his horse and darted into the center, swearing that he would either fix the standard of Islam there or perish in the attempt. At Hims, Shurahbil advanced alone towards the town. He was attacked by a troop of cavalry but he fought stubbornly, killed eleven men and put the whole troop to flight. At Yarmuk, when ‘Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahl saw the Muslims hard-pressed, his spirits were aroused. In his former days, he said, he had been fighting even against the Prophet. How could that day his steps recede from the infidels? Four hundred men fired with his enthusiasm also pledged their lives to repulse the foe. They dashed against the enemy and it was the fiercest dash ever made. They fought a desperate fight and fell to the last man, but the enemy was repulsed. On another occasion shurahbil, while surrounded by the enemy and fighting single-handed, was heard, while thus fighting, reciting the Qur’anic verse: “Allah has purchased of the faithful their lives and their property in return for this that they shall have paradise.” And while thus reciting the verse he was calling aloud: “Let those who will have this Divine bargain come forward!” The Muslims had been pressed as far back as the female camp, but this supernatural call rallied them once more to the onslaught and the advancing enemy was hurled back. Too numerous to mention are the deeds of daring and devotion to duty shown by Muslim soldiers in these wars; the few examples quoted above will
suffice to show that the Prophet had breathed an invincible spirit into them.

**Muslim's Sense of Duty**

The rank and file of Muslims, as these few events illustrate, were imbued with a feeling which made them accomplish such prodigies of valor and which removed from their hearts all fear of the overwhelming odds against them the feeling of confidence that in the eye of God it was their foremost duty to fight. They were swayed by one passion to do what God wanted them to do. Called upon in the name of God, they cared not for their lives nor could love for wives and children swerve them from the path of duty. Worldly riches were insignificant in their eyes. At that moment they were under the spell of one all-consuming passion—the love of God. Every other consideration sank into insignificance. The Nation brought into being by the master-hand of the Prophet was characterized by two outstanding qualities. He had firmly implanted into their hearts faith in the existence of God and he had infused into them a high sense of duty, which to them, meant no more nor less than obedience to the will of the Lord. Their faith in God, deep-rooted as it was, served as a never-failing battery of power which electrified the whole of their beings. They were certainly not a nation who would cause so much as a pin-prick to another for nothing. Far from it. They even put up with much at the hands of others with forgiving generosity. When, however, things were carried to an extreme and attempts were made to wipe truth out of existence, they behaved as lions. This exactly was the life drama of the Prophet himself. Personal persecution, ridicule, molestation, hardship, he submitted to all with patience and fortitude without ever thinking of striking back. But when the enemy, not content with that, actually unsheathed the sword to extirpate Islam, he was not the man to stand aside. With might and main—limited though it was— he came out to defend the Truth. Three hundred against 1,000, 700 against 3,000, 1,500 against 15,000—in spite of such disparity in numerical strength, it was not for him to shirk or shrink. These two words had no place in Islam. A tower of moral strength, though physically weak, he triumphed in spite of the odds against him.

In the early Caliphate wars the same drama was being re-enacted. Muslims never offered molestation to their powerful neighbors. When, however, these neighbors puffed up with the pride of their vast physical resources, rose to destroy the independence of Arabia, the Muslims, undaunted by either their numbers or their resources, made short work of them, and in the course of a few years the whole face of the map was changed. Their lives were a practical commentary on the Qur'anic verse: “How often has a small party vanquished a numerous host by Allah’s permission” (2:249). They demonstrated that success depends neither on numbers nor on armaments, but on the strength of heart born of a firm faith in God. As a matter of fact, they were a living proof of His existence. Humanity refuses to believe what a tremendous force is true faith in God. It is generally dismissed as superstition. These early sons of Islam, however, demonstrated for all the world to see that, though God is invisible, the great miracles that were wrought through connection with Him revealed Him too obviously for denial. Thus the true secret of the success of Muslims during the reigns of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar lay in their force of conviction. It is true they had, in this respect, a great advantage over later generations of Islam. They had with their own eyes seen the whole drama of the Prophet’s life. They had seen how one lone man arose to proclaim the name of the Lord, how not only his immediate relations but the whole of the country went out to the rescue. They found their own hearts kindled in the same by the same faith kindled in the hearts of the Arabs. Moreover, through the same prophetic lips, they had also heard that, just as the oppression of the Arabs had, rather than injure Islam, served to help forward its growth and development, in like manner, the aggressions of the Caesar and the Chosroes would only bring about the downfall of their own empires.

They had this happy prophecy from the Prophet’s own lips and, filled with the conviction of its truth, what did they care for the vast numbers of the Persians and the Romans or their abundance of material strength?

**Continued in Next Issue**

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**Our Evolutionary Journey**

**Continued From Page 10**

“For those who respond to their Lord is good; and (as for) those who do not respond to Him, had they all that is in the earth and the like thereof with it they would certainly offer it for a ransom. (As for) those, an evil reckoning shall be theirs and their abode is hell, and evil is the resting-place."(13:18)

We shall also realize the agonies which its denizens will have to experience, and their imagination alone will terrify us, but as there will be no other course open to us, we shall be driven towards it ("The day on which they shall be driven away to the fire of hell with violence.") (52:13)), as if we were dumb and blind ("And whomsoever Allah guides, he is the follower of the right way, and whomsoever He causes to err, you shall not find for him guardians besides Him; and We will gather them together on the day of Resurrection on their faces, blind and dumb and deaf;"

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There is a saying of which we Muslims are very fond—it has been handed down through countless generations—‘Paradise lies at the feet of thy mother’; and if this saying means anything, it means that a Muslim’s veneration for the women who have borne him and have suffered so much in bringing him safely into the world is very deep and real. That the Holy Prophet Muhammad placed the greatest weight and importance on the fair and kind treatment of women is shown not only by his acts during his life, but in the numerous sayings he left behind when he passed from this earth. I here reproduce a few noteworthy selections in the hope that they will enlighten those who are at present in ignorance as to the Prophet’s true character—he was just and lenient to all in his family and kind to animals also:

1. Women are the twin-halves of men.
2. The best of you is he who behaves best to his household.
3. The world and all things in it are valuable; but the most valuable thing in the world is a virtuous wife.
4. When a woman observes the prescribed prayers and fasts the month of Ramzan, and is chaste, and is not disobedient to her husband, then tell her to enter Paradise by whichever gate she chooses.
5. The great Prophet abhorred the idea of beating women; ‘Those men who beat their wives do not behave well. He is not of my way who teaches a woman to stray.’
6. He is of the most perfect Muslims whose disposition is most liked by his own family.
7. The best of you are they who behave best to their wives.
8. The thing which is lawful, but disliked by God, is divorce.
9. God enjoins upon you to treat women well, for they are your mothers, daughters, and aunts.
10. The rights of women are sacred. See that women are maintained in the rights granted to them.
11. A virtuous wife is a man’s best treasure.
12. Do not prevent your women from coming to the Mosque.
13. Admonish your wives with kindness.
14. Asked what treatment should be meted out to a wife, the Prophet answered: ‘Give her to eat when you eat yourself and clothe her when you clothe yourself; and do not slap her in the face nor abuse her, not separate yourself from her in displeasure.’
15. Give your wife good counsel, and do not beat your noble wife like a slave.
16. If a woman undertakes more than one day’s journey some of her male relations should accompany her.
The Message of Islam

By AL-HAJJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

The world has not been without her reformers and prophets before and after Islam. But history fails to lay its finger upon a single personality, other than Muhammad, who could perform the real function of a Messenger from the Lord in doing good to the whole world. Nay, I would go further; I would say, no other prophet's claim could be considered as such if Muhammad could not be accepted as a Prophet from the Above. Ours are days of utility and not of sentimentality. We hardly need a Prophet to read us homilies or sermons on visionary ideals—or give us lessons on ceremonials. We need no "slain deity" to wash off our sin through the magic of his blood. A Messenger from the Lord should come like the spring which resuscitates the dead nature; he should raise again the lifeless mass and arouse humanity from her torpor. His teaching should illumine benighted hearts and put forth before them ideals that help human progress on material, mental and spiritual planes. He should raise the human mind above ignorance, and expose the falsity of wrong beliefs. In a word, he should stir the stagnant pool of humanity, and bring forth out of it a living stream. All this Muhammad accomplished. Look at the condition of the whole world before and after him. Culture and progress followed him immediately in Muslim lands—movements which influenced the whole world afterwards and continue to do the same till today. Things unknown in the realm of knowledge came to light through his teaching and led to modern civilization. Even in the field of religion, Muhammad caused a wonderful revolution in its every corner. Study Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity and other faiths of the world as they stood at the advent of Islam; compare their respective modern beliefs with what they believed at first. Everywhere reformation followed Islam. Every religion is now molded, or is on its way to become so, in Islamic cast. Polytheistic tendencies are on the wane, and mankind embraces the Muslim Monotheism. Superstitions are disappearing. Observe the present movements in the Christian Church. What disgust with the old order that is here! Nay, the whole Modernist movement is based on Islamic laws.

Islam literally means, implicit submission to Divine Laws, or the complete subjugation of our human will to the Will of the Lord. This obedience to God does not mean the bondage of man, in any sense, or the rule of an Arbitrary Will over him, but it means Divine Guidance in this working out of the real object of religion.

The religious passion in us, like our other instincts, must be satisfied in a way that may help the growth of our nature. Religion, therefore, must have the same object. The Quran defines religion thus: "Then set your face upright, for religion is the right state, the nature made by Allah in which He has made man; there is no altering of Allah's creation; that is the right religion, but most people do not know" (30:30).

The sacred words give both the objective and subjective aspects of religion. They point out the goal as well as the means to reach it—the aim and the procedure. The aim is to work out our nature to its best advantage, and the procedure lies in "setting our face upright in the right state."

This leads me to say something of human nature and its capabilities. Christian theology sees no good in it. Human nature, it says, is sinful and tainted from birth, and the blot on it could not be removed except through our belief in The Blood. Islam, however, takes quite a contrary view of the case. It tells us that we enter into the world with a nature pure and untainted and capable of soaring to Divine precincts. Sin, we are told, is not among the furniture of our nature; it is a subsequent acquisition that results when we abuse our capabilities.

The whole question turns on our nature and its capacities. We, no doubt, are capable of sin, but we are also capable of resisting it. The error in Christian theology lies in mistaking capacity for nature. Nature is not tainted. It possesses no inclination towards wrong. It is abuse of our inclination that germinates evil. But this is true of everything in Nature. A simple thing like water, which is a blessing, will play havoc, if uncontrolled. The fire that does so much good to humanity is capable of reducing whole towns to ashes. Everything that comes from God is for our good. It possesses certain properties which may be misapplied. Opium, which drugs our senses and numbs our faculties, has invaluable medicinal properties. Everything has its use and an occasion for it. It becomes a blessing—and that was the purpose for which it was created—if only we try and find out its use, its occasion and the right measure in which it is to be used. The Quran revealed this truth, when it said, "And He made the measure that you may not be inordinate in respect of the measure" (45:7-8).

In fact, God is the measurer of good and evil. Every measure of everything is for good. But what is good for A is evil for B. The food of a thorny shrub is the destroyer of a fruitful tree. It is in finding out the property of measure that brings forth all prosperity. It was to emphasize the importance of the knowledge of measure that the principle of good and evil measure was included in the Muslim articles of faith: "Wa-l-Qadri Khareht wa sharrihi min 'L-ladht t'ald—I believe in measurement of good and evil from God—in short, it is the mishandling or misapplication of things that is responsible for the world of evil. We need knowledge of these things. Science has come to check various diseases and disasters: the same is true of human nature; man is Nature's masterpiece; he is capable of sinking to the lowest of the low. His soaring or sinking are the two same phases of the power of moving. Fire
has been given a capability of exuding heat: it may cook a dish or burn a whole house. We have to find out how to control these elements, and thus we can convert a seeming curse into a blessing. Similarly, we need knowledge of the nature of our passions. The world before Islam lacked the revelation of these truths, and the message came from the Lord in the following words: "Certainly We created man in the best make, then We render him the lowest of the low, except those who believe and do good, so they shall have a reward, never to be cut off. Then who can give you the lie after (this) about the judgment?" (Quran 95: 4–7).

Other messengers before Islam told us that man was after the image of the Lord, but the Message went further and gave us the greatest of all tidings. It declared that we were the vicegerents of God on the earth and were capable of assuming His colors. It showed us the way to achieve this grandest object.

Islam thus came with quite a new conception of religion. It did not speak either of "an angered Deity" whose wrath could be propitiated only through offerings of flesh and blood, or whose pleasure could be secured through ceremonialism or the singing of hymns and repetition of words in His praise. The Book of Islam—the Quran—says:

"There does not reach Allah (God) their flesh nor their blood, but to Him is acceptable righteousness" (22:37).

"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces toward the East and the West, but righteousness in this, that one should believe in Allah and the Last Day and the Angels and the Book and the Prophets and give away wealth out of love for Him, to the near of kin, and the orphan and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) the captives, and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate; and the performers of their promise when they make a promise and the patient in distress and affliction in time of conflict—these are they who are true (to themselves), and these are they who are righteous" (2: 177).

"Be grateful to Allah (God). And whoever is grateful, he is only grateful for his own soul; and whoever is ungrateful, then surely Allah is self-sufficient, praised" (31:2).

These verses dispense with the religion of the "Grace of Blood" as well as with ceremonialism. The Quran attaches no value to ritualism and sacraments. It speaks of the religion of Beliefs and Action with a view to attaining some purpose. The last verse, it is true, speaks of Divine glorification and the duty of thanksgiving. But it is for the benefit of our own souls, seeing that God is "Self-sufficient and Praised." Even amongst us one who seeks praise and "fishes for compliments" fails to command our respect; we call him conceited. What, then, would be our estimation of a God whose pleasure consisted in hearing praises and thanksgivings from His own creatures, and that, too, for the maintenance and continuance of His own scheme of creation? Islam, no doubt, enjoins prayers and thanksgiving. But it gives them quite a new meaning. The Quran calls prayer a reminder. The Muslim Prayer has been couched in words that eloquently show the relations existing between man and God, and the course pursued by Divine economy, in showering His blessings on His creatures. Again, the words of the prayer prompt us to seek to mold our actions in the Divine cast. We are also taught clearly that lip-gratitude carries no weight with the Lord. Thanksgiving in Islam consists in making proper use of Divine blessings, to our own edification. Prayer and thanksgiving in Islam are, in fact, disciplinary measures for working out our spiritual development.

Everything around us appears to possess inherent qualities. The atomic world and its various combinations are repositories of numberless capacities. They only await favorable circumstances to bring their latent faculties to full fruition. A seed is a potential tree and a sand-shovel a royal palace; the light of a glowworm evolves into an electric arc, and the noise of a cricket into a grand oratorio. Everything, in short, is on its way to advancement. Should we not expect the same of human nature? Our frame is the best product of Nature. It comprises particles of everything in the universe. All the faculties of the animal kingdom have become collocated in human consciousness. It is imaginable that this world of wonderful probabilities and possibilities is meant to remain dormant? Islam says "No." It says that the main object of religion is to make these probabilities and possibilities a reality, and therein lies the true satisfaction of our religious instinct.
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MUHAMMAD THE GREATEST MAN OF HISTORY

"If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad? . . . Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask: Is there any man greater than he?"

—Alphonse de Lamartine in Histoire de la Turquie

QUR’AN, THE GREATEST SPIRITUAL FORCE

"It is the one miracle claimed by Muhammad—his standing miracle, he called it—and a miracle it is."

—Bosworth Smith

"Never has a people been led more rapidly to civilization, such as it was, than were the Arabs through Islam. . . . And to it was also indirectly due the marvelous development of all branches of science in the Moslem world."

—New Researches by H. Hirschfeld

"Here, therefore, its merits as a literary production should, perhaps, not be measured by some preconceived maxims of subjective and aesthetic taste, but by the effects which it produced in Muhammad’s contemporaries and fellow-countrymen. If it spoke so powerfully and convincingly to the hearts of his hearers as to weld hitherto centrifugal and antagonistic elements into one compact and well organized body, animated by ideas far beyond those which had until now ruled the Arabian mind, then its eloquence was perfect, simply because it created a civilized nation out of savage tribes, and shot a fresh woof into the old warp of history."

—Dr. Steingass, Hughes’ Dictionary of Islam

THE BEAUTIFUL CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAM

"I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phases of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him—the wonderful man—and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Saviour of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the Dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness. I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today."

—George Bernard Shaw