INTRODUCTION

These pages are a humble attempt on my part to meet enquiries which I receive from various quarters as to the reasons for my embracing Islam. I have not to make a case for the Faith. There is something unique about it. It is the religion of history and its teacher a personality in history. We know very little of other religions as to their original teachings; some scattered accounts consisting of a few moral precepts have been handed down to us, their genuineness being admittedly impeachable. The lives of almost all other teachers are enveloped with myth and mystery, and do not help us to read their own teachings in the light of their actions. On the other hand, in the case of Islam, no one had ever doubted the authenticity of its record. The Book of Islam, the Qur-án, is the same to-day as it was in the days of the Holy Prophet. His deeds and the sayings in which he translates the various precepts of the book, have come to us in their original purity, hence whatever I write in these pages is simply a paraphrase of some of the teachings I found in the Qur-án and the sayings of the Prophet. I found in them a consolation, which in vain I had searched for elsewhere. I wanted a simple, practical
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religion, free from dogma and tenets, which I could not accept without killing my reason. To do my duty to God, and my neighbour, undoubtedly is and ought to be the main object of every religious system, but Islam came to give the maxim a practical shape. We want precepts as well as example to meet all the contingencies and exigencies of life and directions to guide us in our difficult callings. This I found in Islam.

I am permitted to append the very striking paper on Islam, entitled "AL-ISLAM," contributed to the Wembley Religious Conference in 1924 by Al Haj Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, which will make clear any points which my inexperience may have confused or passed over.
WHAT IS ISLAM?

The nature made by Allah, in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah’s creation—that is the right religion.—Qur-Án, xxx. 30.

"Islam" is the name given by Allah to that religion which was preached by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (on whom be eternal peace), who appeared in Arabia some thirteen hundred years ago, and it is the last of the great religions of the world. The name "Islam" was not invented by those who professed it. This name is expressly given to this religion in the Holy Qur-án itself. It says: "Surely the (true) religion with Allah is Islam" (iii. 18); and in another place: "This day I have perfected for you your religion, and completed my favour on you, and chosen for you Islam as a religion" (v. 3).

The word "Islam" is very significant; it literally means "Peace," as "Peace" is the dominant idea in the whole system. It also means submission. The third meaning is the way to peace; and the teachings given under the name of Islam disclose all such ways as are sure to create peace in the world, if adhered to in daily life.

The follower of Islam is called a Muslim, which
means peaceful, and submissive. He who has not made peace with God and his fellow-beings cannot be a Muslim.

To make peace with God is to submit to His Will and obey His Commandments. To make peace with man is to do good to others.

"The best of God's obedient elect are those who, when seen, remind of God; and the worst of people are those who carry tales about, to do mischief and separate friends, and seek for the defects of the righteous" (Sayings of the Prophet).

"A Muslim is he," says the Prophet, "from whose hand no harm goes to another." The whole idea has been covered by the following verse in the Qur-án:

Yea! who ever submits himself entirely to Allah, and he is the doer of good to others, he has his reward from his Lord, and there is no fear for him, nor shall he grieve (xi. 112).

Objects of Religion.

Every child comes to this world without sin in its nature. He and his God, being at peace with each other, he does not stand in need of being reconciled to an angered Deity; and therefore needs no intercession or atonement. He has been given the highest capability and his progress is potentially unlimited—so we read in the Qur-án:

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 (xcv. 4, 5, 6).
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The object of religion is to help its followers to work out what is noble and good in their nature. Religion therefore is not only the sum total of belief, but doctrines and tenets which should be translated into action.

A faith without action is a dead letter in Islam and carries no merit in the eyes of Allah.

We have wonderful potentialities reposed in our nature by the hand of God, so the Qur-án teaches; and the best adoration or thanksgiving to God is to work them out to the benefit of our fellow-beings. We say prayers and glorify God, but if these actions of worship are not attended with any edifying of ourselves, they are of no value in Islam. Creed is of no consequence if unaccompanied by deed. Unless we actualize our asset in nature we are not glorifying Him, because we do not accomplish the grand object of our Creator.

Muhammad says:

1. The Lord does not regard a prayer in which the heart does not accompany the body.
2. He whom prayer preventeth not from wrongdoing and evil, increaseth in naught save in remoteness from the Lord.
3. Adore God as you would if you saw Him; for if you see Him not, He sees you.
4. Pray to God morning and evening and employ the day in your avocations. Prayer brings the Faithful into Communion with his Cherisher.

"A man's true wealth hereafter is the good he does in this world to his fellow-men. When he dies, people will say: What property has he left behind him?
But the angels who examine him will ask: What good deeds hast thou sent before thee?" (Muhammad).

**Islam the Religion of Humanity.**

"Surely the right religion with Allah is Islam" (Qur-án iii. 18). "Respect my commandments and show kindness to God's Creatures" was the definition of Islam given by the Prophet Muhammad.

This being so, the religion could not be confined to any time or place. This should be the corner-stone of every religion revealed to humanity. So we have been told by Muhammad and the Qur-án.

The religion of Islam therefore dawned upon humanity from the very beginning; it was the religion of Adam and of all the prophets following him. For this reason we Muslims do not look upon other religions as things of human growth.

We give them Divine origin and deem all religions in their original purity as binding on us as the religion taught by Muhammad. All the prophets command equal respect from us, and we make no distinction in our allegiance to them. The Qur-án itself enjoins this upon us, in the following verse:

*Say: We believe in Allah, and (in) that which has been revealed to us, and (in) that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac, Jacob and the tribes, and (in) that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and (in) that which was given to the prophets from their Lord, we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit (xi. 136).*
I wonder if there is anything equal to it in the teachings of any other religion of the world. The logic is obvious. We are not worshippers of prophets. We respect them as messengers of the Lord, and mouthpieces of God, and in this capacity not one of the blessed race can legitimately be given a preference to another; especially when we are taught by the Qur-án to believe that all of them brought the same religion to us. Could there be any cause of discord and dissension between a Muslim and a follower of any other religion? The moment you attach your faith to some personality to the discount of the teachers of other persuasions, you create seeds of divergence and diversity. For this very reason, the Qur-án gives us the name Muslim. He (God) names you Muslims before and in this (xxii. 78) and not Muhammadan, as sometimes we are wrongly styled.

Undoubtedly we received the last revelation of the old religion, Islam, through the teachings of Muham-mad, and we love him and respect him from the core of our heart for the same; but he himself, like all of us, was a follower of the same religion and therefore a "Muslim." "I am the first of those who submit (Muslim)" (vi. 164).

If Muslim means one who submits to Divine Law and subordinates his will to the will of the Most High, I wonder if there is any gentleman who would not care to call himself a Muslim. There could be no other religion but Islam. Those who label themselves under the name of this or that personality do thereby dis-
regard the claims of other prophets on their allegiance, and thus cause a split in the different units of humanity.

We receive all our inspirations and guidance from the Qur-án and the Sayings from the Prophet. With the advent of the Holy Prophet Muham-mad (peace and the blessings of God be upon him) we cannot accept other teachings unless they are in agreement with the spirit of the Qur-án, and no other sacred book has remained free from human alloy and has reached us in its original purity—a fact admitted by all—while the Qur-án comes to us admittedly uncorrupted and incorruptible. Are we not justified?

We accept Moses and Jesus as our own teachers, but can we rely on the Torah and the Bible as the true records of their teachings? If not, and modern research has established the unauthenticity of the Bible, we have been left no choice, but to accept the Qur-án as the sole book of religious truth. The Book in fact recapitulates all the old truths revealed to all other inspired teachers of humanity, "Pure pages, wherein are all the right books" (xcviii. 2 and 3), with additional truths to meet all human requirements. "We have not neglected anything in the book" (vi. 38).

Thus in accepting the Qur-án we accept the Bible and all other sacred books of the world in their original form. The Qur-án says (xvi. 63, 64, 65): "By Allah, most certainly we sent (Apostles) to nations before you, but the devil made their deeds fair-seeming to
them, so he is their guardian to-day, and they shall have a painful chastisement. And we have not revealed to you the Book except that you may make clear to them that about which they differ, and (as) a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe. And Allah has sent down water from the cloud and therewith given life to the earth after its death: most surely there is a sign in this for a people who would listen."

In the last verse the Book uses a very beautiful and apposite simile. It compares Divine revelation to rain. Water germinates life and acts as a vivifying factor. If the rain could remain uncontaminated from earthly mixture there would be no need for fresh rain. There is a large mass of water all over the earth in the form of oceans, but it does not possess enough vitality, and hence our need of fresh rain. The words of God are like drops of rain that came from time to time and rained on the hearts of the prophets, whenever the water of the last spiritual rain (i.e. revelation) had become contaminated.

No other sacred Book had remained in its original entirety, and at the advent of the Prophet the world needed a new revelation. But why is the Qur-án the last of the Books and Muhammad the last of the prophets?

What I have said before furnishes the reply. The revelation from God came for the enlightenment of humanity on its road to perfection. It gave certain precepts which were acted upon by the prophets
themselves, who were the first recipients of the Divine Message.

The Divine precepts were translated through their actions. If these precepts and examples could have been handed on intact to the coming generations there would have been no need of any subsequent revelation or prophet. The first prophet would have been the last. Unfortunately the record of every other prophet became enveloped in myth and mystery: his teaching, and his life, are now only an unreliable story. Even the historical reality of some of them is doubtful. But in the case of Muhammad (may peace be upon him and all the prophets) history strikes quite a different note. His precepts and example come to us uncorrupted and unalloyed. They are before us in their original colours, and if the institution of prophethood came into requisition for supplying humanity with Divine precepts and Divinely example, we have what is needful in Muhammad: hence he is the last of the prophets.

This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed my favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion (Qur-án v. 3).

This finality of the prophethood revelation should not be confused with the continuity of Divine communication with mankind. Islam opens the door of revelation to every evolved soul, and gives guidance to qualify us to receive Divine revelation. This was one of the many teachings of Islam that attracted me to it. "Those who strive in our way," says the
Qur-án, "we will show them the way." It is the privilege of a Muslim to receive a direct message from God.

Again the Qur-án says: "He (God) sends down the angels with the inspiration by His commandment on whom He pleases of His servants" (xvi. 2). "As for those who say, Our Lord is Allah, then continue in the right way, the angels descend upon them, saying: Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of the garden which you were promised. We are your guardians in this world's life and in the hereafter, and you shall have therein what your souls desire and you shall have therein what you ask for" (xli. 30 and 31).

To continue in "the right way" is needed to qualify a person to receive the Divine message. The Qur-án came to mark out that "right way," and prescribes codes wherewith to achieve it. In short, the whole teaching of the Book leads to it, and in this it claims to be the finality of revelation. There may be one hundred and one ways to our destination, but "the right way" is, and must be, the only way. And if the revelation in the Qur-án has succeeded in marking out the way, then there is no need for anything more to be done; and in this lies the finality of the message,

**ARTICLES OF FAITH.**

There are seven articles of faith in Islam. Belief in:

(1) God (Allah).

(2) Angels.
(3) Sacred Books.
(4) Divine messengers.
(5) The hereafter (life after death).
(6) Measurement of good and evil by God.
(7) Rising again after death.

Conception of God in Islam.

Unity is the keynote to the conception of the Divine Being in Islam. There is absolute unity in the Divine nature. It admits of no participation of manifoldness. Muslims deny all plurality of persons in the Godhead and any participation of any being on the face of the earth. The God of Islam is not the God of any particular nation. He is the "Lord of the Worlds."

The Qur-án describes Him in the opening verse. His are the sublimest and most perfect attributes, but the attribute of Mercy reigns over all.

Ar-Rahman (the Beneficent), Ar-Rahim (the Merciful) are the two names with which every chapter in the Qur-án opens. "My Mercy comprehends all conceivable things" (vii. 156).

Here I quote some of the Qur-ánic verses which will enable the reader to appreciate the Muslim conception of Allah:

Allah is He besides whom there is no god, the Everliving, the Self-subsisting, by whom all subsist; slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what He pleases:
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His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them both tires Him not and He is the Most High, the Great (ii. 255).

He is Allah besides whom there is no god (who should be served), the Knower of the unseen and seen; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful. He is Allah besides whom there is no god, the King, the Holy, the Author of Peace, the Granter of Security, Guardian over all, the Mighty, the Restorer of every loss, the Possessor of every greatness. Glory be to Allah from what they set up (with Him). High is Allah the Maker of all things, the Creator of all existence, the Fashioner (of all images). His are the most excellent names (and beautiful attributes that man could imagine); everything that exists in the heavens or in the earth declares His glory (and His perfection), and He is the mighty, the wise (lix. 22–24).

He is God the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing, the Deliverer from every affliction, the Generous, the Gracious, the Forgiving, the Near-at-Hand, who loves good and hates evil, who will take account of all human actions.

The word Allah, which has been used as a proper noun for God in the Qur-án, is the best conceivable word in all languages of the world to convey the conception. While all the words in different languages corresponding to the English word God have been applied by men to other subjects of adoration, besides God, the Arabic word Allah has never been so used in the whole course of Arabic literature.

Even before the advent of Muhammad, though the Arabs were idolators and worshipped hundreds of deities in pre-Islamic days, they never applied this word to any of those deities.

Angels.

Muslims, like the followers of many other religions, believe in the existence of angels, but they do not
accept angels as objects of adoration, nor address them in their prayers. They are functionaries in the working of the world on the physical plane. They act as spirits in things which, though inanimate, exhibit their attributes with as great an exactness as if they possessed a mind.

They never fail to work out their inherent properties, when coming under favourable circumstances. Everything organic or inorganic seems to pursue a prescribed course, laid down for its development by God. In pursuing that course, dumb and inanimate Nature seems to be more faithful than we intelligent beings. This law-abidingness in the dead matter is the work of an angel which works as mind or spirit in the different manifestations in Nature.

On the spiritual plane also angels perform their functions. They act as inviters to good. They bring messages from God to man and act as guardians to those evolved souls who continue on the right path. The angels guide them to good and guard them against evil. When a soul reaches the height of spirituality and become devoid of all selfish grossness they act as ministers to his needs and become his servants.

Sacred Books and Prophets.

Like the followers of other religions, Muslims believe in Divine revelation which came for human guidance through the few chosen ones: the only difference being in their universal acceptation of all the prophets
of the world, with Muhammad as the last. I have already disclosed the Muslim point of faith in this respect.

Life after Death.

Though all religions speak of life after death, no attempt, at all, has however been made to unveil the secrets of the hereafter. The Holy Qur-án makes it clear that the state after death is a complete exhibition of our spiritual state in this life. Here the good or bad conditions of the deeds or beliefs of a man are latent within him, but in the life to come they shall become manifest and clear as daylight. Here we are a hidden and concealed entity to others, but there our inner beauties or blemishes of mind will become an unveiled beauty or ugliness which will bring pain or pleasure to us. In this way we shall account for our good or bad deeds in this life.

The Paradise and Hell, as mentioned in the Holy Qur-án, shall be the places of abode of the righteous and the wicked respectively. Though the Qur-án gives physical names to the blessings of the other world, in order to give some idea of things, yet another verse comes to explain it: "No soul knows the blessings and joys which have been kept secret for it" (xxvii. 17). The Prophet explains this verse in the following words: "The eye has not seen, nor has the ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive of them." Those who say that Muslim Paradise smacks of sensuality and physical nature
have something in these quotations to ponder over. They give the lie to all that has been said by certain missionaries of the Muslim heaven and hell: "On that day you shall see the faithful men, and faithful women, their light running before and their light on their right hands" (lvii. 12). This verse shows that the light of faith by which the righteous men and women were guided in this life, and which could here be seen only with the spiritual eye, shall be clearly seen going before the believers on the day when they will rise in the hereafter. In this life also we feel happy when we do good deeds, and feel pain when we do wrong, but all this we experience mentally. In the life hereafter all this mental experience will become materialized—realities apparent to all others. In our present frame of mind we are unable to conceive the form in which our pains and pleasures will receive shape, but our belief and actions in this life will be the bedrock of our future growth.

Life after death, though new in its nature, is the continuity of the present life. Death in Islam is not annihilation ("And do not speak of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead, nay (they are) alive."—ii. 154) or extinction, but the same cessation, of the ever-progressive element, for the time being, which we observe, in everything in the course of evolution that when it finishes a course of one order it enters into another. The interval, between the orders, is always attended with some sort of cessation or stagnation. The working essence remains in abeyance.
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This interval is in Islamic theology, called *Burzakh*, which begins and ends with what are respectively termed death and resurrection, in popular language. Whatever I have said of the Muslim heaven will, as well, apply to the nature of the Muslim hell. It is more or less of a purgatorial nature. It is not a permanent abode; but a temporary sojourn to help further mental and spiritual progress. Islam believes in a continuous life, the progress of which knows no bounds. Life passes through various stages of growth, our sojourn on this plane being one of them. In order to make perfect progress, one stage of evolution prepares us for our growth in the next. But if we have failed to achieve the required qualifications for proper upliftment, we have to undergo certain painful processes to cleanse us from those disqualifying factors in us which impede progress. That life of ordeal has been named Hell in the Qur-án. The seven heavens of Islam are seven stages of progress, and that again is not the limit; our progress will be continuous till we merge in the Divine Essence.

*Good and Evil.*

The problem of evil does not admit of easy solution. But for Islam it would have remained an unsolved mystery. We do not believe evil to be an independent entity. Anything and everything that emanates from the Foundation of Good must be, and is, good—so says the Qur-án. But the good of it comes out when we work under given conditions.
Opium or any other poison acts as a panacea if used in certain quantities under certain conditions and on certain occasions. Everything has been created for a good purpose, and has its use. If you exceed the limit it becomes evil. In short, everything has its use and abuse; it becomes good if it is given its proper use and evil when abused. Revelation and Science help us to find the real use of everything. When we go against the knowledge thus received we commit evil. Thus everything in its certain measure good is in another measure evil. These measures are unalterable and unchangeable, seeing that they have been prescribed by the Creator of all Things. Belief in this unchangeable measurement is an article of faith in Islam. In other words our belief in the theory of causality springs out of it and is helpful in maintaining moral order. If we strongly believe in the good and evil consequences of our actions which are sure to befall us, we cannot go the way of evil. We never take poison, but within prescribed limits as a medicine, because we believe in its mortal effect. Similarly if the world strongly believed in the baneful result of the abuse of things, evil would have long since ceased to exist. What is true on the physical plane is true also on the emotional and moral plane. Every emotion in us has its proper use. It becomes high morality and virtue when exhibited on proper occasions, but it is wickedness and sin when it gets the better of us in an uncontrolled manner. In fact, under the teaching of Islam, the misplacement of things
is evil. Adam may fall, when he gives way to his craving in the forbidden limits, but the craving in itself had its righteous use. For this reason we Muslims do not believe in sin in nature—the abuse of Nature is sin.

Resurrection.

I need not repeat here what I have already said under the heading "Life after Death." I have already spoken of Burzakh—a period of the cessation of activity of the progressive element in us. It has to end one day and to begin its further progress in the higher regions. If the soul on its separation from the body was competent enough to make further progress, it would be admitted into those regions called Paradise in the Qur-án: but if it is incompetent on account of certain impurities and has not become purified of all earthly dross, it will have to go into Hell for purification. The time when this is to occur has been styled, in Muslim theology, the day of rising after death.

The word resurrection in Islam does not necessarily convey the idea of a materialized resurrection of a physical body. If the life to come is inconceivable, as the Prophet says, it cannot be a physical resurrection in the true sense of the word. The Muslim conception of Hell is not hideous, nor does it suggest Divine Vengeance. It speaks rather of Divine mercy than of anger. If Hell has to cleanse the Sinner and prepare him for the heavenly life, it may act like an affectionate mother who subjects her child to a surgical
operation to secure his future health. For this very reason the Qur-án styles Hell Mother: “As for him whose measure of good deeds is light, his Mother is Hell” (ci. 8, 9).

**Five Pillars of Islam.**

Islam, as has been explained, means submission to the Divine Will and to the Judgment of Allah. By resigning ourselves to His Divine Will we are not fatalists, as is erroneously assumed by some writers. Islam allows freedom of action and liberty of judgment. There are always two courses open to us, one of evil, another of good. God guides us to good: our yielding to such guidance is Islam. If we are free to accept or reject the guidance, we cannot be fatalists.

The following verses in the Qur-án go directly against fatalism, and allow freedom of action: “Have We not given him two eyes, and a tongue and two lips, and pointed out to him the two conspicuous ways?” (xc. 8, 9, 10).

This revelation from God comes for our guidance, and if we submit to it willingly, it is Islam. In order to create in us this spirit of resignation, Islam has given us five institutions called **Five Pillars of Faith.**

1. Declaration of Faith.
2. Prayers.
3. Fasting.
4. Almsgiving.
5. Pilgrimage to Mecca.
Declaration.

The formula of the Muslim Faith is very simple; it consists of two sentences. There is no other Deity but Allah, and Muhammad is His messenger. If submission to the Divine Will, which amounts to our declaring, There is no Deity but Allah, completes the Faith, we need a revelation of His Will to us. We believe that the needed revelation came by the message given to us through Muhammad. In the second part of the declaration, "Muhammad is His Messenger," we do not express adoration or worship of Muhammad, but simply say that we resign ourselves to the Will of the Lord, as disclosed to us through His Messenger, Muhammad.

Prayers.

Duty to God and duty to our fellow-beings are the two salient features of every religion in the world. Prayers in Islam stand as an index of the former. It is neither Ritualism nor a formal recitation of words. The Qur-án deprecated such kind of prayers: "Woe to the praying ones, who are unmindful of their prayers" (cvii. 5 and 6).

"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is this, that you should believe in Allah, and the last day and the angels" (ii. 177). "This is one of the noblest verses in the Qur-án," says Dr. Wherry in his commentary. It clearly distinguishes between a formal and practical piety. Faith in God and benevo-
lence toward man are clearly set forth as the essence of religion. Muhammad says: "He who in prayer prevents not from wrong and evil increases in naught save remoteness from the Lord." These quotations explain the Muslim conception of prayer. It brings man face to face with his Creator, and in the words of the Prophet, "Brings the Faithful into communion with his Cherisher." The worshipper, in the Muslim prayer, recites certain attributes of God which work in and control the whole universe. As all morality and righteousness in Islam consists in moulding our conduct after the Divine attributes, prayer comes to remind us of them. We recite certain of the attributes of God when we begin our prayer. "Imbue yourself with Divine attributes" is our watchword. God is our Prototype, and all righteousness and piety in Islam consists in fashioning our character and conduct after the Divine attributes, of which we are repeatedly reminded in our prayer.

We also seek His help to keep the right path in all our activities. If we need Divine enlightenment in every step and every moment of life, it is not too much to pray to Him several times a day. When we arise, and when we retire to rest, we say our prayers. When we have finished a portion of our daily life, we again go to prayer, before we minister to our inner man. Then comes the afternoon prayer which closes our daily activities. The words of Jesus, "That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of the Lord," became a
reality in Islam. A Muslim looks to the nourishment of his soul, before that of his body. If meals are necessary to sustain the physical nature, prayers are as necessary for the sustenance of the soul.

Ablution.

Cleanliness is next to Godliness—a precept with others, but a practice in Islam. A Muslim has to make his ablution before he goes to prayer. He has to wash his hands up to his elbows, his face, and feet; he has to clean his teeth, rinse his mouth, pour water into his nostrils to clear away anything obstructing free breathing. Every mosque in Muslim countries has a convenience for ablution free of charge, open for the use of every worshipper. Every Muslim has to take a bath at least once a week, on Friday before he goes to join the congregation. He is expected to change his clothes as well and use some kind of perfume to freshen the atmosphere of the mosque.

This is very necessary in hot as well as in cold countries; and I wonder if European experts in hygiene can give us a better course of cleanliness than that prescribed by the Prophet.

Fasting.

An abstentious life gives tone to our physical, moral, and spiritual health; and the institution of fasting, which has been observed by every religion, is a most essential course. Fasting does not mean abstention from food only, but from every kind of evil. Moral
upliftment is the object of fasting—"Fasting has been enjoined upon you... that you may learn to be righteous" (Qur-án, ii. 183). While fasting, we abstain from things otherwise lawful in order to please our Lord. If we keep ourselves away from lawful things, all the more should we shun things that are unlawful. If a person learns to part with what he lawfully owns, he is not likely to appropriate things which do not rightfully belong to him. "If a person does not restrain his hand, his eyes and his lips from harming others," so says the noble Prophet, "his fasting is only starvation, which has no merit in the eye of the Lord." The Prophet was proverbially generous in his charity, but his generosity increased in the month of fasting. Abstinence from food really means to part with it for the benefit of the needy, and the Prophet worked out this principle when fasting, by being more generous. It is a pity that the Pauline superstructure of the Church, which wrongly passes under the name of Jesus, abolished all the sacred institutions which could help spiritual advancement, one of them being fasting.

If the Master is the best specimen for our imitation, and he used to keep the fast, why should not his followers, if they are good Christians, do the same. If he fulfilled all righteousness for the whole world, and thus absolved the people from their religious duties, of which fasting was one, it would be only reasonable to conclude that we are absolved from all other duties. In these days, people have become
interested in psychic research and in the working out of the occult power within them. They would make much better progress by following this institution of fasting. Jesus had to keep the fast for forty days before he received his illumination. The Prophet of Islam went on fasting for months, and then came that wonderful revelation to him which completed the Qur-án—a Book of real enlightenment and guidance, on every plane of humanity.

*Almsgiving.*

Every religion and every system of ethics preaches Charity, but Islam systematized it in a workable form. It made it obligatory on every Muslim to spend one-fortieth part of his income for the benefit of the needy. Various other charities have also been enjoined in Islam, but this acts as a poor tax to be levied by the State on every Muslim who is in receipt of a certain amount of income. “Almsgiving,” the Prophet remarked when asked about it, “is an institution to enrich the poor at the expense of the rich.” A Muslim can exercise his other charitable instincts in any way he likes, but he must hand over one-fortieth of his income to the State for the benefit of the poor.

The conception of charity in Islam is very broad, and to enable the reader to appreciate its extent, I give here some of the sayings of the Prophet bearing on the matter.
Charity.

"Charity wards off impending calamities.

The charity-tax should be collected from the rich and given away to the poor.

To meet friends cheerfully and to invite them to a feast are charitable acts.

To treat a wife tenderly and put a morsel in her mouth is charitable.

To treat children affectionately and kiss them are charitable acts.

To feed the wayfarer is charitable.

To remove troublesome things from the path is charitable.

To extend consideration towards neighbours and send them presents are charitable acts.

The person that looks after an orphan will be at one with Me on the day of requital.

The needy should be helped."

Sympathy.

"Do you love your Creator? Love your fellow-beings first.

God is not merciful to him who is not so to mankind. They will enter the Blissful abode who have true, pure, and merciful hearts. He who is not kind to God's creatures, and to his own children, God will not be so to him.

One who takes charge of an orphan will be one with Me on the day of requital.

Look after the widowed women."
Help the needy.
One of the acts of charity is to feed the wayfarer.
He is not of us (Muslims) who is not affectionate to his little ones, and does not revere the old.
To gladden the heart of the weary, to remove the suffering of the afflicted, have their own rewards.
He who helps his fellow-creatures in the hour of need, and he who helps the oppressed, him will God help in the time of difficulty.
Who is the most favoured of God? He from whom the greatest good cometh to His creatures, he who will do good to the needy, God will do good to him in this and in the next world.
Seek for My goodwill in that of the poor and indigent.
Avert the wrath of Allah with charity, be it but half a date. They will enter the abode of Bliss who have a true, pure and merciful heart.
O! A’iysha (Prophet’s spouse) do not turn away the poor without giving them something, be it but half a date.”

Pilgrimage to Mecca.
This is obligatory only on those who can afford to perform it. Real spiritual advancement depends upon absolute divorcement from earthly concerns, and the institution of Pilgrimage in Islam came as a practical demonstration of how this can be done. The pilgrim not only leaves his home and those who are dear and near to him, but he divests himself when nearing the
house of God, keeping only two sheets with him to cover his body.

When reaching the shrine, he walks round the House of God as a true lover would round the house of his beloved one. The shrine of Mecca is the oldest House known to humanity for the worship of one God. It existed before the time of Abraham. The Prophet Muhammad was born at Mecca, at a time when this House of God was the worshipping place of idolaters, who had placed some three hundred and sixty-five idols in it, which were worshipped by them, each in its turn, on every day of the year. Idolatry continued until Mecca was conquered by the Prophet, who then purged the House of God of all the idols. Muhammad was buried in Medina, a town one hundred and fifty miles from Mecca. Jerusalem comes next to Mecca as a Holy Place. A Muslim visits the tomb of the Prophet out of his respect and love for him; but not as a worshipper.

**Equality of Man.**

“Love thy neighbour as thyself” is a beautiful expression of Jesus, but like many of his other dicta lacking in means wherewith to make it a practical reality. The period of his ministry was very short and he could not accomplish his work. Consequently he had to leave it to the coming Master. The Spirit of Truth—the paraclete—as spoken of in the fourth Gospel, was Muhammad, and he showed the world the
way to bring the various teachings of Jesus into practice.

No one can afford to love his neighbour as himself unless he has a feeling of equality between himself and his neighbour. "I am only a man like unto you," so says the noble Prophet; and thus bringing himself on an equal footing with other men, he establishes the principle of equality between man and man.

"The believers are brothers" is another verse in the Qur-án. The Arabic word for "brothers" used in the text is Ikhwán, which I am told means brothers from the same parents. Thus "love thy neighbour as thyself" becomes a practical truth. When a Muslim regards another Muslim as born of his own parents he will feel for him as he would for himself. The Universal Brotherhood of Islam is here translated into action.

Only the other day some of the British Muslims lunched with His Highness the Ameer Abdullah at the Mosque, Woking. There were about one hundred persons of different ranks of society, but no distinction of class or caste was made. The full spirit of equality and brotherhood breathed in every corner of the house; all could shake hands and talk freely with the King. When the hour of lunch came, it was something marvellous in the eye of the visitor to find that no special seats or tickets for particular guests had been provided. It was left to the company, including the King and his Staff, to find their own seats. A
gentleman declared his faith in Islam and accepted the Faith. His Highness was the first man not only to shake hands with the new Brother, but to kiss him and to be kissed by him. This illustrates the strong spirit of fraternal equality which exists between the Faithful. Muslims feel more at home even in another's house than members of an average English family would in their own home. Freedom of talk and action, open-heartedness, no reserve, or formality characterize the whole atmosphere. Islam has succeeded in welding black and white into one family. It would not be out of place to quote some of the teachings of the Prophet on the subject. The last war has established that Christianity lacks that bond of union which exists in Islam. European nations, though most of them belong to the same Faith, are at daggers drawn against each other. Nationality and not religion is the binding force in Christendom, but in Islam religion and not nationality is the first consideration. Says our Prophet: "Muslims are brothers in religion and they must not oppress one another, nor cease from assisting each other, nor hold one another in contempt. The seat of righteousness is the heart; therefore, that heart which is righteous does not hold a Muslim in contempt, and all the things of one Muslim are unlawful to another—his blood, property and reputation.

"No man has believed perfectly until he wish for his brother that which he wishes for himself. All the Muslims are as one body. If a man complains of a
pain in his head, his whole body complains, and if his eye complains, his whole body complains.

“All Muslims are like one wall, some parts strengthening others, in such way must they support each other.

“Help your brother in adversity and redeem him if he go astray.”

This aspect of the question leaves me to say something of the hospitality awarded to strangers.

In Muslim lands there are no hotels or boarding-houses. Every Muslim house opens its door to the stranger according to its means. A Muslim will break bread with his guest and do everything to make his stay comfortable. To respect or entertain a guest is an act of great merit in Islam. Even in wild towns of the Indian borders, when a tribal feud is at its height, a host will not ask the name of a person who comes to partake of his hospitality. The guest may possibly belong to the enemy camp, and the disclosure of his name might deprive him of willing hospitality. The Prophet says on this subject:

“He who believes in one God and in a future life let him honour his guest.

“Whosoever believes in God and the hereafter must respect his guests, and whosoever believes in God and the hereafter must not incommode his neighbours, and a believer must speak only good words, otherwise remain silent.

“It is not right for a guest to stay so long as to incommode his host.”
"O Apostle of God, inform me, if I stop with a man and he does not entertain me, and he afterwards stops at my house, am I to entertain him as he did me?" Lord Muhammad answered: "Entertain him. It is of my ways that the host should come out with his guest to the door of his house."

Democracy, the chief boast of the West, had its birth in Islam. Equality between man and man is its basic principle, and it is observed to its full extent in every form of life in Muslim countries.

In their mosques they meet five times a day; there are no pews or seats reserved or sold to some of the congregation. The first who enters takes the first position. Perfect democracy in religion, in politics and society, is the marked feature of Islam. The levelling forces of Islam have demolished all barriers of caste, colour, and descent.

**Women in Islam.**

The subject of equality between man and man will remain incomplete if I remain silent on the position of women in Islam. Before the advent of Islam woman had no position in the world. Islam raised her from the lowest status to equality with man when the Qur-án brought the following gospel: "O people, be careful of (your duty to) your Lord, who created you from a single being, and created its mate of the same (kind)" (iv. r).

The Prophet's words explain the verse very elo-
quently when he says: "Women are the twin halves of men." Could there be any justification in view of these passages of the misstatement of some writers who say that Muslims do not believe that a woman has a soul? The Qur-án in various places admits the equality of man and woman on almost every plane, moral, spiritual, and intellectual.

The present position of woman in Christendom is not the result of Christianity. Jesus more or less remains silent on the subject, but the real founder of Church religion, St. Paul, had not a good word to say for woman.

The very basic principle of Christianity reduces her to the utmost degradation when it makes her the cause of human perdition. She tempted Adam to commit sin, and brought eternal condemnation on the head of man; she opened the door of sin and brought death into the world. No wonder the early fathers in the Church used harsh words respecting her.

With one word Muhammad raised her to the highest pedestal when he said: "Heaven lies at the feet of thy Mother." Under the teaching of Christianity if the first Mother brought us eternal Hell, in Islam she has opened the door of Paradise. There has been during the last twenty years a regular fight between the two sexes as to their respective rights and obligations; but could the advocates of the Suffragette movement claim a better position for woman than has already been awarded her in the Qur-án? "To them (women) is due what is due from them." Man
under this teaching cannot bring the other sex under any obligation or duty until and unless he himself is prepared to do the same in her favour. In Islam woman is an independent personality; she can enter into any business, make any contract or testament in her own name; she is entitled to inherit, as mother, wife, sister and daughter, a thing unknown in any other religion, civilization, or legislation. A Western home is not a commendable home for woman. Marriage is a lottery. Heart-burning transference of love and affection, neglected wives, and daughters, sons in affluence and parents in indigence, are the common features of our home life. But a Muslim home opens the door of quite a different life. Religion is nowhere more strictly observed, and the Teacher’s words nowhere more strictly obeyed, than in Muslim lands, and the reader may picture for himself the felicitous state of a Muslim home if the following words of the Prophet are put into practice:

*Women.*

The best of you is he who behaves best in his household. Women are the twin halves of men. The world and all things in it are valuable, but the most valuable thing in the world is a virtuous wife.

When a woman observes the five times of prayer, and fasts the month of Ramazan, and is chaste, and is not disobedient to her husband, then tell her to enter Paradise by whichever door she likes.

*Wife.*

A virtuous wife is a man’s best treasure. Admonish your wives with kindness. A Muslim must not hate his wife, and
if he be displeased with one bad quality in her, then let him be pleased with another which is good. Do you beat your wives as you would a slave? That you must not.

The best of you before God and His creation are those who are best in their own families, and I am the best to my family.

One of the disciples inquired of the Apostle as to what treatment should be meted out to a wife. He 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, nor separate yourself from her in displeasure. Give your wife good counsel, and do not beat your noble wife like a slave. If a woman undertakes more than one day's journey some of her male relations should accompany her."

Polygamy.

Polygamy, it must not be forgotten, existed in the world before Islam. Many of the Israelite Patriarchs were polygamous, and the number of wives in some cases amounted to five hundred.

Founders of other religions in the world were no exception to it. Christianity did not make any change in this direction, and until the sixteenth century the whole of Christendom was polygamous. The worst of the polygamous types were the clergy and the bishops. The present law of monogamy was framed after the Institutes of Justinian, a Roman law-giver, and an atheist. Islam came to reform the system. It reduced the number of wives, and allowed a second marriage only under certain restricted conditions, where it was the only possible solution of the situation. Again the Qur-án laid down certain conditions as to the treatment to be awarded to the different wives. This made polygamy next to an impossibility. Islam
unlike other religions made laws for everything, including polygamy, and was largely instrumental in checking it. We hear a lot of Muslim polygamy, and yet the number of polygamous marriages is not one in ten thousand.

Polygamy is not an obligation in Islam; it was provided to meet certain contingencies of life which could only be remedied in this way. If marriage in the bald sense of the word means the companionship of man and woman for connubial purposes, then the West is more polygamous than the East.

There are often hard cases in a man’s life—when he cannot separate from his first wife, and yet is in need of a second marriage. Take the case of a barren woman, or a confirmed invalid incapable of bringing forth children, or of looking after domestic duties. The second wife would be more desirable than all the substitutes which human ingenuity could devise. Until to-day human society has failed to create any adequate check on illicit sexual intercourse and illegitimate birth. These things are to a great extent unknown in the East, and polygamy is one of the chief means of removing the stigma of illegitimacy from those poor souls who were never consulted as to their being brought into this world, and who, according to Western ideas, have become disinherited, though inheriting all the physical infirmities of the father, whatever they may be. Besides, woman in Islam is entitled to receive every protection, regard and maintenance from the male sex. She is not
supposed to work hard and earn her livelihood. The physical difference between the two sexes apportions the hardness of life to man. "Men are the maintainers of women," says the Qur-án. They must look after them. Accidents or events in the world have often depleted the male ranks, and the number of women has always exceeded that of man for the same reason. The last war decreased the population by about a million men. The question of unemployment is growing serious, and the members of the fair sex are compelled to vacate their position for men. This is one of the contingencies when polygamy plays its part. Those verses of the Qur-án which deal with the subject received their revelation in the time of war; just after the battle of Uhud, when seventy out of seven hundred choice soldiers of Islam fell on the battlefield, leaving widows and children, who could not otherwise honourably live, without showing signs of immorality and moral degradation, unless sheltered by a cosy and affectionate roof.

Men were killed, and left behind them widows and orphans. Their protection and maintenance, especially in the countries of the East where it is a disgrace for society to see woman subjected to the hardships of life by earning her livelihood, could not be secured except through polygamous marriage. The several marriages of the Prophet have the same explanation. A man who was married in the prime of his youth, when twenty-five years of age, to a widow of forty, especially in hot countries, where women grow pre-
maturely old, and who could remain faithful to her up to the age of fifty-two, could not be a prey to his passions.

After the death of his first wife, the Prophet took Ayesha, the daughter of his friend Abu Bekr, as his wife. Then came the period of fighting, in which many of his devoted friends were killed, leaving unprotected widows, almost all of whom were old. He took some of them in marriage in order to give them a home and protection. It should not, however, be forgotten that the law of polygamy does not give a man a blank cheque, as it were, to be filled in by him as his fancy may suggest. Where there is no necessity for them such alliances are not allowed; they become sin. The restriction of equal treatment of the wives in lodging, comfort, etc., make it next to impossible to have a second wife in ordinary cases. Monogamy is recommended in the Qur-án. Monogamy is a food and polygamy a medicine, with all its bitterness, which can only be used when illness renders it necessary. No marriage can take place without free consent of the parties concerned, and no woman can be forced to marry a man who has already a wife living with him. In the case of a bachelor, the possibility of the husband contracting a second marriage can be provided against. Marriage with all its sacredness is a civil contract in Islam, and can be subjected to any reasonable and lawful stipulation. For instance, it can be stipulated that in the event of a man marrying another wife his first wife will become absolved from
all her duties as wife. She may treat it as nullifying the marital relation. She can also claim a penalty and maintenance for life, if these are provided in the marriage contract. She can marry another man, and that act will not disqualify her from claiming the maintenance from her first husband. In short, polygamy in Islam came into practice to serve the interest of the weaker sex, and will come automatically to an end when human society becomes purified of its moral ill-health. This is the spirit of the Muslim law of polygamy.

I need not say much about divorce here. The Western world has realized the hardship of the dogma under which it is believed that human agency cannot separate what has been joined together by God. Cases like that of Rutherford are something unimaginable in Islam, where even incompatibility of dispositions is a valid cause for separation and divorce. Scandals of divorce cases in the West are unknown in the East. The method of divorcement is a private concern, and mutual arrangement between the parties saves them from becoming victims of public scandal and leaves them a fair chance of entering into new marital relations. With all this freedom of action in the matter of divorce, it is nevertheless very rare in Muslim countries. This speaks well for the happy relations existing between a Muslim and his wife. After all "she is the sovereign of the house," in the words of the Prophet, who also says, "the thing that is lawful, but disliked by God, is divorce."
Respect for Parents and Old Age.

Respect for parents and old age has been chiefly emphasized in Islam. Parents come next to God in receiving homage from their children: "And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him, and goodness to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them (so much as) "Ugh," nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word. And make yourselves submissively gentle to them with compassion and say: O my Lord, have compassion on them, as they brought me up (when I was) little. Your Lord knows best what is in your minds; if you are good, then those who turn (to Him) frequently and give to the near of kin his due, and (to) the needy and the wayfarer, and do not squander wastefully. Surely the squanderers are the fellows of the devils, and the devil is ungrateful to his Lord.

"And if you turn away from them to seek mercy from your Lord which you hope for, speak to them a gentle word" (Qur-án, xvi. 23–28).

Kith and Kin.

1. Allah's pleasure is in father's pleasure, and Allah's displeasure is in father's displeasure.

2. The blessings of Allah do not descend upon the family in which is one, who deserts his relations.
(3) He who wishes to enter Paradise must please his father and mother.

(4) "O! Apostle of God," cried a follower, "I have done a crime. Is there any act by which I may repent?" "Have you an aunt?" "Yes," said he. "Go do good to her, and your crime will be pardoned."

(5) Lord Muhammad used to rise to his feet and spread a cloth for the woman that performed the rôle of a nurse to him when young.

(6) Lord Muhammad would go out in advance to receive his daughter Fatima, when she would come from her husband's house.

(7) A man must do good to his parents, although they may have injured him.

(8) The duty of a junior to a senior brother is that of a child to its father.

(9) Giving alms to the poor has the reward of one alms, but that given to kindred has two rewards.

(10) Kindness is a mark of faith, and whoever has not kindness has not faith.

(11) Whoever is kind to the creation God is kind to him.

**Reverence for Authority.**

Islam means submission to Allah, and consequently lays special stress on submission to authority. Home is the real moral nursery, and our reverence for our parents and old age, which is so emphatically taught and practised in Islam, inspires us to treat every person in authority in the same manner. According to a
tradition of the Holy Prophet "even if a negro slave be in authority, he must be obeyed." Sedition and revolt, without just cause, are absolutely discouraged, in order to maintain peace in the government. At Friday prayers, ever since the days of the Prophet, the following verse has been read from the Qur-án: "God orders you to be equitable, beneficent and to do to others as you do to the members of your own family and prohibits you from evils (affecting your individuality) and sins (affecting others than yourself) and sedition (wrong affecting the whole society)."

If on the one hand submission to authority has been obligatory, to a Muslim it has also been declared that he who respectfully points out the errors of the government to the persons in authority wages the Holy War. Holy War does not necessarily mean the use of the sword. Every effort to prevent wrong is a Holy War in Islam. Foreign rule is no hardship to a Muslim if it be consistent with justice and equality, and does not interfere with his Faith. The Muslims under British rule have been the most loyal subjects among all subject races, and the recent trouble merely arose from the indiscreet policy pursued by certain of our statesmen, which appeared to Muslims as an interference with their Faith. Faith with them is the first concern; religion has taught a Muslim to be loyal to his government, and religion again alienates him from it, when it does not respect the pledges made concerning the preservation of some of the Muslim institutes.
USE OF THE SWORD IN ISLAM.

The world has never been free from the sword. Even the Prince of Peace could see the necessity for the sword when he said: "I come not to bring peace but a sword." I wish the Master could have left us some guidance as to the proper use of sword and fire so that Christendom might have been freed from the bloodshed which it has caused in the name of religion. Christianity was all meekness and modesty as long as it was the religion of slaves and the very poor; but no sooner had it secured a royal conversion in the person of Constantine, than streams of blood began to flow. The adherents of no other religion have shown more intolerance, cruelty and persecution than the followers of the one who preached "Love thine enemy." Enemies apart, the followers of the same Master cut each other's throats, simply because some units of his following did not worship and adore him in the same way as the others. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre caused so much bloodshed in the days of the Crusades, that if its custody had not been given into the hands of Muslims, it would have been reduced to dust. Muslims under Qur-ánic teachings are bound to preserve and protect every house where God is worshipped no matter what religion is practised, while the hatred which the Greek Church bears towards the Catholic Church is well known.

The keys of the Holy Sepulchre had to remain in the hands of the Muslims until to-day, not to protect
the place, but to prevent the warring factions of Christianity from tearing at each other’s throats. War is not yet done with. The civilized West spent all her ingenuity and culture only in producing weapons of war. The world needed some ethics of war to enlighten man as to its when, where, and how, and Muhammad came to meet the need. Here I take the liberty of quoting our Imam Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, of the Mosque, Woking, from whose pen the subject has received a very lucid exposition in his recent publication, *The House Divided*, in the following words:

"The apparent contradictions in the recorded teaching of Jesus as to the use of the sword, perplexing as they may be to the student of the Gospels, are consistent in Muslim eyes—nay, they are to him the teachings of very truth itself.

"Occasions, as they arise, must be dealt with by appropriate methods, and what may be objectionable in one case becomes indispensible in another. Hence the apparently conflicting nature of the Master’s words, which are in fact intended to meet different situations, the nature of which he would, no doubt, have explained, had it not been for the very brief duration of his Ministry. He had not time enough at his disposal, and so he promised the coming of another Teacher (St. John xvi.); and we Muslims find that other Teacher in the Prophet Muhammad. It was Muhammad who enlightened mankind. He showed—in precept as well as in practice—under what circumstance a son of God shall send fire and sword
into the world, and under what condition his love goes out even to his enemies. Read the sacred words of the Master in the light of the Qur-án, and they embody this very truth; otherwise they seem impracticable and even inconsistent. Christian preachers are often themselves at a loss to make out the precise purport of these teachings. They elect to regard them as abstract idealism. But they are not so to a Muslim. To him, they are quite intelligible—in fact, the only true and practical teaching.

"It will not be out of place here to make a passing reference to the Muslim ethics of war. Mr. Bonar Law, late Prime Minister, held out a policy of peace for the world, and for that all must be profoundly thankful. But none can foretell when the havoc of a new war may burst upon humanity. Perhaps some prospective Lloyd George—if not that gentleman in person—may find a shadow of suggestion in these lines. If a Christian Government unsheathes the sword in defence of Christians, then a Muslim, on the principles which we indicate below on the authority of the Qur-án, will stand shoulder to shoulder with it, even though, in so doing, he be acting in opposition to a Muslim Power.

"The Qur-án sanctions the use of the sword under certain circumstances. First and foremost, in the cause of religion—religion as such, it must be borne in mind, and not Islam exclusively. For this, two distinct occasions have been mentioned. First, when a house of worship is in danger—be it Christian,
Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, or any other—a Muslim is enjoined to shed his very blood to save it from demolition. Says the Qur-án:

Permission (to fight) is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed, and most surely Allah is well able to assist them; Those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say: Our Lord is Allah, and had there not been Allah’s repelling some people by others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches, and synagogues and mosques in which Allah’s name is much remembered; and surely Allah will help him who helps His Cause; most surely Allah is strong, mighty (xxii. 39, 40).

"It is significant that the mosque is mentioned last of all. This simple verse has since been responsible for the safety of all buildings dedicated to any form of worship. Notwithstanding two thousand years of Muslim rule, India is still the home of thousands of the temples of idolatry. Can our history produce a parallel to such magnanimity? Where are the great and gorgeous mosques, one may ask, that were once the glory of Spain, Sicily, Southern France, Malta and elsewhere? To pick out a solitary instance here and there of the conversion of a non-Muslim house of worship into a mosque is to make a mountain out of a molehill. Such cases—which are too rare to deserve any serious mention at all—are exceptions, due to indiscreetness on the part of individuals, and do, actually, only tend to establish the rule.

"Again the use of the sword is also permissible when freedom of conscience is at stake. Of all religions, Islam stands conspicuous in establishing a perfection
of religious freedom. ‘There is no compulsion in matters religious,’ proclaimed the Qur-án,¹ which has since been the Magna Charta of religion for peoples of all creeds under the rule of Islam. Not only is all interference with another’s religious views forbidden, but, should such interference be enforced at the point of the sword, it is the duty of a Muslim to repel it with the sword. In the matter of religion, none may stand between man and God. It is the birthright of man to hold whatever convictions he deems right. Persecution of others must be resisted at all cost by a Muslim, irrespective of whether the aggrieved be a Jew or a Christian, or of any other faith. For this purpose a Muslim is not only allowed, but enjoined, to fight until perfect religious liberty has been established.

“As regards temporal affairs, authority to wield the sword has been limited to one, and only one, case—self-defence. This permission has been further restricted by the condition that, as soon as the enemy suspends hostilities, and shows an inclination towards peace, then Muslims must do the same. This is the principle upon which Britain acted during the Great War, and the Church supported her. Whatever the interpretation put upon the Sermon on the Mount, the fact remains that in the Great War Britain followed the teaching and example of the Prophet of Arabia.

¹ See Muhammed Ali’s translation Holy Qur-án, ii. 192, 193.
"Muhammed had to fight seven battles in all, of which the first three—the principal ones, the rest being more of the nature of skirmishes when a general state of war prevails—best illustrate the principle in question. For thirteen long years the Prophet and his comrades were the victims of inhuman persecution at the hands of the Meccans—an historical fact admitted by friend and foe. He suffered all this without retaliation. When, however, things reached a pitch when his life itself was in danger, some safeguard became necessary. The very night when the conspirators were to make away with him, he managed to escape with his life to Medina, in the company of his devoted friend Abu Bakr. But his enemies did not let him alone, even in this far-off refuge, one hundred and fifty miles from Mecca. Jealous of his success in his new place of sojourn, they made repeated efforts to nip the tender plant of Islam in the bud. In all these three battles, the locality of the battlefield is, I think, a decisive factor, showing that the Muslims were constrained to resort to the sword in sheer self-defence.

"The first of these was fought at Badr, one hundred and twenty miles distant from Mecca, the enemy headquarters, and thirty miles from Medina. And what was the comparative strength of the contending parties? 313 Muslims against 1,000 Meccans.

"Uhud was the scene of the second battle. It was still nearer the Muslim's home of adoption—only twelve miles from Medina. The relative strength
this time was about 1,000 Muslims to 3,000 Meccans.

"The third was an attack on the town itself. Siege was laid to Medina by an army 10,000 strong. Do not these facts and figures—the locality of the actions and the relative strength of the two contending forces—furnish conclusive testimony to the fact that self-defence was the only motive which prompted the Muslims to strike a blow?"

"This is exactly the occasion when Jesus would have us sell our clothes to purchase swords. But it was left to Muhammad to illustrate also the rational application of the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, and this he did in a manner unique in the history of the world. With 10,000 men he marched against Mecca—the same Mecca which was the scene for long years of Muslim persecution. The town surrendered, and was occupied without the spilling of a drop of blood. The vanquished, who had spared no ingenuity in inflicting tortures on Muslims—the ring-leaders of the deadly opposition, tormentors, oppressors, and assassins—lay wholly at the mercy of the victors. No punishment would have been too hard for them, according to modern military laws.

"But was it not now that the 'Spirit' of Truth was to perfect the teachings of the Preacher of the Sermon on the Mount—to lead people into 'all truth'? Was it not for him to illustrate in practice the precepts of Jesus, 'Love thine enemy'?

" Summoning their leading men, he announced his
decision—a decision beyond their wildest expectations of leniency—'This day there shall be no reproach in you.' Such a magnanimous amnesty secured to the Muslims what could never have been gained in any other way—the victory was won, and their enemies' hearts by love. The gulf of decades of bloodthirsty malice was bridged by a simple stroke. Love was applied to anoint and heal the raw wound of hate. The great and famous dynasty of Muslim rules—the Umayyads—to whom the world is indebted for vast treasures of art, of science and of philosophy, sprang from the descendants of the ring-leaders of enemies thus won over.

"So long as man is what he is, and his nature is not a true Muslim or a true Christian nature—which are at the bottom one and the same—war will remain an indispensable factor in human life.

"Nevertheless, until the arrival of the Millennium, much can be done to alleviate the terror and the suffering which are the outcome of wanton brutality. Consequently Islam, recognizing war as an unavoidable evil, has at the same time laid down, as far as possible, rules and regulations for reducing its evils to a minimum.

"The Hague Conferences, too, some years ago framed a code of warfare for obviating unnecessary bloodshed and undue suffering, but how far it has succeeded in practice it is not for me to say. If, however, such restrictions had been imposed by the hand of God, the adherents of the various religions of the world
would have been more careful to abide by them. The Qur-án lays down:

"‘Permission (to fight) is given to them upon whom war is made, because they are oppressed, and most surely Allah is well able to assist them’ (xxii. 39).

"‘And fight in the way of Allah with those who fight with you, and do not exceed the limits, surely Allah does not love those who exceed the limits.

"‘And kill them wherever you find them and drive them out from where they drove you out, and persecution is severer than slaughter; and do not fight with them at the sacred mosque until they fight you in it, but if they do fight you, then slay them; such is the recompense of the unbelievers.

"‘But if they desist surely Allah is forgiving, merciful.

"‘And fight with them until there is no persecution, and religion should be only for Allah; but if they desist there should be no hostility except against the oppressors’ (ii. 190–193).

"The Prophet Muhammad also communicated a system of war, which I give below, in the words of his immediate successor, Abu Bakr: ‘When you meet your enemies in the fight, compose yourself as befits good Muslims, and remember to prove yourselves at the time true descendants of Ishmail.

"‘In the order and disposition of the host, and in all battles, be careful to follow your bannersboldly, and be ever obedient to your leaders. Never yield to or turn your backs on your enemies; it is for the cause
of good that you fight. You are incited by no less noble a desire than His glory; therefore, fear not to enter in the fight nor let the numbers of your foes alarm you, even though excessive. If God should give you the victory, do not abuse your advantages, and beware how you stain your sword; neither touch ye the children, the women, nor the infirm old men whom ye may find among your enemies. In your progress through the enemies' land cut down no palms, or other fruit trees; destroy not the products of the earth; ravage no fields; burn no dwellings; from the stores of your enemies take only what you need for your wants. Let no destruction be made without necessity, but occupy the city of the enemy; and if there be any that may serve as an asylum to your adversaries, them do you destroy. Treat the prisoners and him who renders himself to your mercy with pity, as God shall do to you in your need; but trample down the proud and rebellious, nor fail to crush all who have broken the conditions imposed on them. Let there be no perfidy nor falsehood in your treaties with your enemies: be faithful in all things, proving yourself ever upright and noble, and maintaining your word and promise truly.

'Ve do not disturb the quiet of the monk or hermit and destroy not their abodes, but inflict the rigour of death upon all who shall refuse the conditions you may impose upon them' (The Law Quarterly Review, 1908).

"I leave it for the judgment of the reader to decide
how far these regulations, if universally adopted, would have contributed to the welfare of humanity. Generally speaking they have been observed by Muslims ever since.

"The most recent example has been seen in the peaceful occupation by Mustapha Kemal's victorious army of a territory where their brethren in blood and in faith had been subjected to the utmost devastation of fire and sword."

**Some of the Ethics of Islam.**

No religion is without its moral precepts and ethical teachings, but Islam gave them in a more systematized form, and left no branch of ethics untouched. Other religions for the most part confine their mission to some tribe or race, but Islam goes beyond these limits and deals with all international relations. In this respect Christianity is silent. Christianity, like Islam, is of great help in individual upliftment, but Islam governs relations between nation and nation; it is more universal than a tribal creed. The two things in Islam which chiefly excite my admiration are these:

The Prophet laid special stress on the acquirement of knowledge. "Go to China," he would say to his disciples, "in search of knowledge." He also said that the contemplation of man for a while, of doing good to his fellow-beings, was more meritorious than prayer for a whole night. Labour was the second
thing which he sanctified. He made it Divine and declared idleness to be a sin.

He would not allow his followers, as others did, to go on a journey or religious mission without a penny in their pockets. A Muslim cannot go even on a pilgrimage to Mecca unless he has means to satisfy his needs. Muhammad did not shut the doors of Heaven on a rich man.

Riches, on the other hand, if used to further the cause of humanity, were under his teaching the surest means to secure entrance into Heaven. Each man's assets, including his abilities and powers, are a trust to be used for the benefit of God's creatures.

The pages of this small book do not leave me room to deal with the aspects of Muslim ethics *in extenso*. I think I cannot do better than conclude by giving some of the moral and ethical precepts in the following lines extracted from the Qur-án and Sayings of the Prophet:

Surely those who accuse chaste believing women unaware (of the evil), are cursed in this world and the hereafter, and they shall have a grievous chastisement (Al-Qur-án, xxiv. 23).

This refers to those who continue to spread false reports concerning chaste women, the gossip-mongers in every society. Islam strictly forbids such scandals.

O you who believe! do not enter houses other than your own houses until you have asked permission and saluted their inmates; this is better for you, that you may be mindful (Al-Qur-án, xxiv. 27).

The Arabs (before Muhammad) entered houses
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without permission or knocking at the door. This savage custom was abolished, and the law revealed in this verse laid down the basis of domestic peace and security needed for an advanced society. The law is a clear testimony of the great trust which Muslims have in their womenfolk. It is also a preventive measure against slander.

Respect for Each Other’s Privacy.

O you who believe! let those whom your right hand possess and those of you who have not attained to puberty ask permission of you three times; before the morning prayer, and when you put off your clothes at midday in summer, and after the prayer of the nightfall; these are three times of privacy for you; neither is it a sin for you nor for them besides thee; some of you must go round about (waiting) upon others; thus does Allah make clear to you the communications, and Allah is Knowing, Wise (Al-Qur-án, xxiv. 58).

Matters of state should take precedence over private affairs:

Only those are believers who believe in Allah and His Apostle, and when they are with him on a momentous affair, they go not away until they have asked His permission; surely they who ask your permission are they who believe in Allah and His Apostle; so when they ask your permission for some affair of theirs, give permission to whom you please of them, and ask forgiveness for them from Allah; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful (Al-Qur-án, xxiv. 62).

And if two parties of the believers quarrel, make peace between them; but if one of them acts wrongfully towards the other, fight that which acts wrongfully until it returns to Allah’s command; then if it returns, make peace between them with justice and act equitably; surely Allah loves those who act equitably (Al-Qur-án, xlix. 9).

The believers are but brethren, therefore make peace between your brethren and be careful of (your duty to) Allah that mercy be had on you (Al-Qur-án, xlix. 10).
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RESPECT FOR EACH OTHER'S DIGNITY.

O you who believe! let not (one) people laugh at (another) people, perchance they may be better than they, nor let woman (laugh) at (other) women, perchance they may be better than they; and do not find fault with your people nor call one another by nicknames; evil is a bad name after faith, and whoever does not turn, these it is that are the unjust.

O you who believe! avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin, and do not spy nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? But you abhor it; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, surely Allah is Oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful.

O men surely we have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honourable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty); surely Allah is Knowing, Aware (Al-Qur-án, xlix. 11, 12, 13).

These verses deal with some of the evils rampant in the so-called civilized society, and which corrupts a society to its core. These evils arise mostly with wealth, for, living in luxury and comfort, people are pleased with the hobby of fault-finding to overrun each other in business or other private affairs, thus creating mutual hatred which causes brotherly affection and friendly concord to fade into oblivion. The principle of the vast brotherhood of mankind is laid down for moral reformation, through a better mutual understanding between different races and colours.

The Book reminds people that they are members of one family, and that their divisions into tribes, communities, nations, or races should not lead to estrangement from, but to a better understanding
of, each other. True superiority of one individual or nation over the other is not in colour, rank or wealth, but in moral greatness. Whosoever puts his energy into the effort for self-preservation and good to humanity is great and dignified, and has attained to Paradise, the goal of life. Such a one has served his Lord and His creatures, and proved himself worthy of the bounties of Father-in-heaven. The above are some of the moral rules from the last Book revealed to mankind. It shows the moral height to which Muhammad (Peace be ever with him) wanted his followers to aspire. The atmosphere he wanted to create was one of mutual love and sacrifice; the society he wanted to foster was one in which man, in spite of the animal instinct so engrafted in his nature, might act reasonably, conduct himself nobly, and discharge his duties in a manly and dignified spirit.

Verily there is a piece of flesh in the body of man which, when good, the whole body is good; and when bad, the whole body is bad—and beware! that is the Heart (Muhammad).

No man is true in the truest sense of the word but he who is true in word, in deed, and in thought (Muhammad).

My Cherisher has enjoined upon me nine things: (1) To reverence Him, externally and internally; (2) to speak truth, and with propriety, in prosperity and adversity; (3) moderation in affluence and poverty; (4) to benefit my relations and kindred, though they do not benefit me; (5) to give alms to him who refuseth me; (6) to forgive him who injureth me; (7) that my silence should be attaining a knowledge of God; (8) that when I speak I should mention Him; (9) that when I look on God's creatures it should be as an example for them, and God hath ordered me to direct in that which is lawful (Muhammad).

All God's creatures are His family; and he is the most
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beloved of God who trieth to do most good to God’s creatures (Muhammad).

The Faithful (i.e. Muslims) are those who perform their trust, fail not in their word, and keep their pledge. The things of one Muslim are unlawful to another—his blood, property, and honour (Muhammad).

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

It is better to sit alone than in company with the bad; and it is better to sit with the good than alone. And it is better to speak words to a seeker of knowledge than to remain silent; and silence is better than bad words (Muhammad).

Torment not yourself, lest God should punish you. Monasticism is not countenanced by Islam (Muhammad).

The mortal crimes are to associate another with God, to vex your father and mother, to murder your own species, to commit suicide, and to swear to a lie (Muhammad).

If you derive pleasure from the good deed you perform, and feel grieved for the evil which you commit, you are a true believer (Muhammad).

The greatest struggle is that for the conquest of self. No misfortune or trial befalleth a person but on account of his own faults; and most of these God forgives (Muhammad).

The Lord does not regard a prayer in which the heart does not accompany the body (Muhammad).