(In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful)

EUROPE'S DEBT TO ISLAM

BY
Dr. GUSTAV DIERCKS.

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Books on Islamic Literature

BY

Al-Hajj Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din

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Sheikh Mushir Hussain Qidwai, Bar-at-Law.

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By Lord Headley

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Europe’s Debt to Islam
(The Arabs in the Middle Ages, and their influence on the Culture of Europe)

BY

DR. GUSTAV DIERCKS

(Translated from the German by 'Abdul-Majid, M.A.)

I

The decline of the Roman Empire. Christianity and the Germans. Fundamentals and intellectual seeds of the mediaeval and the modern culture. The mental decline in the Christian countries before the appearance of the Arabs.

When we wish to attempt to study the Middle Ages, it is necessary to call to mind the state into which the ancient age had sunk by reason of the decay of its vitality. This process of disintegration had paved the way for new organisms. Therefore, in our attempt to appraise the influence of Muslim culture, we must look well before we leap. In other words, we must consider the causes that led to the decline of the ancients and to downfall of the vast world-empire of the Romans. We should also examine all those factors which manifest the zeitgeist—the spirit of the times—of the early centuries of our era, and those which fostered it: for nowhere in the cultural history of mankind is there to be found a gap. Everywhere a continuity of evolution is noticeable springing from the simplest seeds, growing into most perfect organisms, and then dying away once more. Everywhere we see a close connection between cause and effect. Every phenomenon, every new factor, posits for its appearance certain preliminary

1 A translation of Die Araber im Mittelalter und ihr Einfluss auf die Kultur Europa's, by Gustav Diercks, Leipzig, 2nd Edn, 1882, pp. 1—10
requisites, which are its cause. Every plant postulates for its growth its soil, and it will only thrive in a place where the necessary conditions congenial to its flourishing are available. Just as Christianity did not originate in an unprepared soil, but was the product of the contemporary \textit{zeitgeist}, and could only support itself and develop itself because of the coincidence of its ideas with those prevalent at that time, so also in the case of Islam, the circumstances of its origin influenced its growth and left their mark, if not on the whole of mankind, at least on a considerable portion thereof.

Tillage and the rearing of the cattle formed the basis upon which the Roman State was founded. The sword had to protect and strengthen the State; and when it came to be wielded by strong men, as the Romans themselves were, the result was that province after province fell into their hands. About 240 B.C. Rome had acquired such a power and had become so conspicuous in the world that no other State was in a position to withstand or impede the political system practised by the Romans. All further expansion of the Roman Empire was only a logical result, a corollary to the power which they had attained.

Now, what were the causes which brought Rome to such a high pinnacle of glory and worldly prosperity? They were: the simplicity of their customs, sobriety, contentment, moderation, a strict education and military discipline, coupled with a sure instinct for what was beneficial and of practical use for their purposes.

The nucleus of the working capacity of the Romans was their physical strength, which the above-mentioned characteristics (often called “the Roman virtues”) sublimated and sustained. If these qualities became corrupted, or sapped, or if the Romans forsook them, their strength disappeared as well. If any untoward influence limited or adversely affected
their working capacity, the results of the Roman activities became uncertain as well. If, therefore, on the one hand, the Roman Empire expanded and became possessed of fertile provinces, then, on the other hand, the very nature of this change exposed the Romans all the more to the corrupting influences which riches bring in their train—influences which are especially powerful over people brought up in indigence and amid the hardships of toil. The officials of the State and the army contractors who had made themselves rich in the provinces had invested their capital in immovable property, by purchasing large pieces of land. The peasant class was thus demolished. Consequently the petty independent landlords were replaced by tenants, leaseholders, while the peasants were either converted into slaves or supplanted by such. Exactly in the same way free craftsmen were replaced by bondsmen. The result of this process was that the middle-class went completely out of existence. Industrial diligence and tillage, which were, in sooth, the bedrock of the Roman culture, disappeared; the people found satisfaction in wars or in idleness, leaving it to the prominent men and the State to take care of them. The provinces delivered and supplied them with all the necessities of life. Consequently the Italian fields could be turned into parks which announced in eloquent terms the fact that the capital depended in material things on the provinces, and how the whole of Italy consumed everything and produced nothing. Soon after, even the military service was felt to be a burden by the Roman citizens, and the size of the armies from now onwards was supplied by the provinces. Thus disappeared gradually one of the old Roman customs, although men like Cato strained every nerve to bolster it up.

It was in Sicily that the Romans first came in contact with Greek culture. This contact was rendered yet closer when in 146 B.C. Greece was converted into a Roman province, and Greek art, Greek literature and Greek culture generally
were converted into the handmaidens of Rome, though, indeed, it was more than two centuries ago that the flourishing period of Greek civilization had passed away. The Greeks themselves had succumbed to the corrupting and destructive influence of the Orient which they had conquered, and it was this influence above all others which corrupted the Romans and broke their power. They found enjoyment in the refined and exquisite pleasures of Alexandria and the Orient, and abandoned themselves to these pleasures the more completely in that they were formerly accustomed to simplicity.

Now, if we regard the contact of the Romans with the Greeks from the point of view of literature, we find ourselves face to face with a phenomenon of the very highest importance. The Romans, being devoid of idealism, being thoroughly barren, practical men, had up till now not felt any necessity for occupying themselves with belles-lettres. They could, therefore, not create a literature of their own. It was first through their acquaintance with Greek literature that the Romans were roused to an interest in letters, and, even when the foundations of a Roman literature were laid through the agency of freed or bond-Greeks, we find Roman literature in its later developments followed closely the Greek pattern. While the valour and the sword of the Romans lent a new form to the world of those days, the spirit and the artistic ideals of the Greeks, which to a certain extent combined themselves with the love of justice and equity and the practical nationalism of the Romans, supplied its inspiration.

But, in proportion to the degree in which they conquered the globe, the Romans sank lower and lower in the scale of morality. The well-meaning doctors, the true patriots, professed to find the salvation of society in the upkeep of the old Roman virtues, in the sustenance of the economic, social and State fundamentals, but, although they tried to work on these
lines, they were unable to combat the spirit of the times. They could not retard the development of the germs of disease which, becoming more active, brought the colossus of the Roman Empire to meet its disruption and decay. Conditions had completely changed since the time the Persians had waged wars against the Greeks. Since those times, the horizon of the Greeks had been extended, the national limitations had been thrown overboard, new viewpoints and new ideas had sprung to life from the close contact of many peoples with one another. Since the time Alexander the Great led his expedition against the East, and had helped, unknowingly of course, the rise of the concept of cosmopolitanism, since the time he had made Alexandria his capital, which city forthwith became a market, not only for the material products, but also for the mental culture, of the then known world—it was at this time the mind of the world had taken another flight. The idea of the unity of mankind, the concept of universalism, rose to supremacy in the mind of the world at that time. It put a fresh face upon the intercourse of the world. It pointed out new paths to the collective culture of the world, and set up new aims. It was from Alexander, from the Hellenists and in particular from Alexandria, that this movement emanated—a movement which gradually caught all people of culture and was destined to be of great importance in the development of nations. The Romans were not only affected by this movement towards the unity of mankind, but, during the time that their world-empire was building, they were more than ever its carriers and intermediaries. In all the domains of general culture the effects of the spirit of the times were to be noticed, the most important for the history of the world being the religious circumstances which took shape from the contact of all nations. If, on the one hand, we find that in Rome extraneous religions had struck their roots about the time of the Punic Wars, on the other hand we find that, with
new conquest, with the penetration of each fresh cult, the reverence and awe cherished by the Romans for their old gods gradually disappeared. Besides, in Rome every kind of religion of the world-empire was represented—the religions of the conquerors and the religions of the conquered; the masses, therefore, were at sea to know which gods to adore. The extraordinary tolerance of the Romans in matters of belief, so long as the interests of the State were not jeopardized, was, in no small measure, responsible for the spread of the foreign cults. In the place of faith and belief there appeared amongst the lower classes the grossest superstition resulting from an admixture of various religions, while amongst the higher classes, even if the tinsel of piety was still preserved, scepticism or absolute indifference was the rule. Moreover, the rites of the cults degenerated into hollow shams and empty forms which afforded no inward satisfaction, but served to stimulate senses only.

Socrates and his pupil Plato had deflected the philosophizing spirit into new channels. The idealism of Plato and the realism of Aristotle had marked out the ways which philosophy had to tread in future. Whereas the pre-Socratic philosophy had made matter the especial object of intellectual examination and study, Socrates diverted the mind into the domains of ethic, of the mental and the abstract, thus helping reason to its proper place. The post-Socratic philosophy had to follow the lines already chalked out for it, and in the end culminated, on the one hand, in complete scepticism and, on the other, in the most sublime idealism. Simultaneously every conceivable effort was made through the combination of the Greek and the Oriental philosophies in the hope of arriving at a satisfying goal. All adaptations, nevertheless, were of no avail. They all ended in smoke. One sole dominant idea was manifest in all the systems: the groping after a firmer and a surer hold, which would save one from the mental pain which arose from
a crying need of belief. In order to win a substitute for the bitterness of life, recourse was had to a flight into the realms of the metaphysical and transcendental. Not only did the mentally developed souls feel a great degree of instability and uncertainty, but the masses also were filled with disgust at the prevailing conditions. They were impregnated with an aspiration for the better. Nay, one perhaps could say that it was especially in these classes of society that such feelings found a foothold; because to the slave, to the poor, who did not expect anything from life, the hope for a better hereafter came as balm. He softened and alleviated his pains through the bright imaginations of his exalted mind, through practical philosophy which the itinerary preachers taught and instilled in him, and also through a simple human morality, which had for a basis the human teachings of the Cynic and Stoic philosophers and preachers.

Whilst, outwardly, the glory and grandeur of culture kept pace with the successes of the Roman weapons and shone more brilliantly than ever, whilst the love for pomp was indulged in an increasingly greater degree, the mental and the corporeal troubles of the organism of the Roman Empire spread faster than ever and hastened its approaching downfall. Thus collapsed that symmetrical edifice, and there was need of fresh elements to prevent its complete demolition. These young unvitiated, undepraved healing powers were provided by Christianity and by the world-conflict, century-long, provoked by the Teutons, who, while dealing destruction and ruin on all sides, at the same time created a new state of affairs. Here, indeed, begins the struggle of the Christian religion, which in its origin is very simple and easy to comprehend, with the philosophies and religious systems of the Roman world, which lay buried under the burden of scepticism and mysticism. Here begins the struggle between the Romans and the tribes of the Teutonic branch of people which hurled
themselves from the North. They were by nature wild and barbaric in comparison with the weakened Romans. But the very strength of their capacities and the pure, untainted nature of their customs, while bursting in upon the Roman Empire with destruction, at the same time brought a panacea. Thus, in conjunction with Christianity, the Barbarian invasion helped to lay the foundation of a new order in the world.

Repeatedly we notice in the history of mankind the phenomenon that the spirit of the times gives birth from out of its own self to that which the world needs. Similarly, Christianity was the child of those days in which the alleged birth of Jesus Christ is said to have taken place. The sources of this new religion cannot be ascertained historically; for neither the contemporary literature nor that of the later period down to the second century offers any certain and definite accounts or details of the founder and of the beginnings of Christianity. They are, as a matter of fact, wrapped up in the mythical darkness with which fiction has surrounded the one who, in accordance with the mental development of those days, prepared in Palestine the way for a reformation of the stiff and orthodox Judaism which had passed into formalism; for he, like Buddha, preached truly humanitarian moral teachings understandable even to the least developed mind; for he indeed preached anew the doctrine of love for one’s neighbour, a standard of conduct upheld by all humanists, and he made the Kingdom of God to be the end and reward of this earthly life. Jesus was a man, and wished the good of his fellow-beings.

The soil in which these splendid teachings, because of their very simplicity, could strike root was, as we have already seen, lying close at hand throughout the Roman Empire. The oppressed looked forward cherishingly to a Saviour in consequence of the Messiah conception which had gone forth from
the Zoroastrian Persians. They expected that he would free them from their mental and physical ailments. And the philosophical schools had exerted themselves to give substance to the idea of such an ideal figure. The teachings of the Jewish humanists could not, although they alone dovetailed into the then national circumstances, satisfy the spirit of the times which reigned supreme in the whole of the Roman Empire and breathed forth the ideas of internationalism, of cosmopolitanism and of universalism. To meet these demands the Jewish teaching had to undergo a corresponding change.

And here it is that we notice for the first time coming to light the great difference between the ancient age and the age which succeeded it. In the ancient age every people was one complete self-contained national entity, animated by a stiff inelastic particularism and an inordinate self-estimation, and behaving very proudly and coldly towards everyone else. From the very moment since Alexander had first broken through the national limits, the ideas concerning the unity of mankind gained importance in order to assume from now onwards the sovereignty for ever.

Whilst the real disciples of the Jewish reformer, in the national-Jewish sense, developed his teachings and within the Jewish societies worked for them, Paul educated on the Greek lines accommodated the self-same teachings to the philosophies of the stoics and the cynics and in part to the Alexandrian syncretism, which combined the mysticism of the Egyptians with the supernaturalism of the Persians, with the monotheism of the Hebrews and with the idealism of the Platonists, and made itself especially palpable in the Revelation of St. John the Divine.

The Christian-Pauline teaching spread rather rapidly; partly because of its relationship to the Stoic philosophy and
partly owing to the great tolerance of the Roman Empire. The great Jewish societies in the large towns facilitated its spread, although, as natural, the disciples, in the first place, belonged to the poorer and lower classes of the populace. The oppressed, the poor, the bondsmen, the unhappy and the discontented—these it was who, in their misery, seeking after consolation, lent their ear to the new teachings before anyone else.

To give a picture of the development of the Church would be too lengthy a matter, and indeed out of place here. We would therefore content ourselves with emphasizing a few important factors which are relevant to the subject-matter of these pages.

The teachings of Jesus Christ, coupled with the occultness of the mysteries, gained in importance all the more because they did not demand subscription to any cult. Their importance was likewise strengthened by the streams of asceticism which welled forth soon after from the East and especially from Egypt, and were combined with fanciful and visionary idea of the Kingdom of God in the life hereafter. These ideas paved the way for a contemptuous attitude towards the life in this world, and roused a longing for the future life. Thus was developed an inclination to abandon the world, and also a tendency to revolt against existing circumstances. This latter tendency often assumed a character dangerous to the state. Martyrdom was often courted by the fanatical, uncouth, uneducated Christians, by their breaking, or running counter to, the laws of the State. If any such movement ever assumed very great dimensions, it was small wonder if the whole of the new institution had to pay a toll and had to suffer all sorts of persecutions for the recklessness of an individual. The cult which was thus gradually built up was in itself largely responsible for the unfavourable opinion which the heterodox
entertained concerning the Christians. For the *agape*, the brotherly or sisterly kiss, the anthropophagical semblance attached to the conception of enjoyment of the blood and the flesh of Jesus Christ were blameworthy as far as the non-Christians were concerned. They were unable to comprehend the symbolical meaning lying behind the outward forms, and false ideas were thereby aroused.

In proportion as the Christian teachings won respect, power and acceptance, their representatives began to put on a presumptuous attitude. At the same time, the circumstance that Christ had not bequeathed any precise and formulated teachings, and had not left behind anything written, also had its effect. From the very beginning the society had split into two parts—the so-called Jewish Christians and the heathen Christians—engaged in mutual warfare. Naturally matters did not stop at this schism; every fundamental dogma gave rise to obnoxiously revolting quarrels. The efforts which Christianity made to reconcile and to connect itself with other religions and with the Greek philosophy had opened up, in consequence, a still broader gulf. The result, therefore, was that, in the third century, the original disunion had given birth to a considerable number of sects which in reality perverted the humane teaching of love for one’s neighbour into terrible and gory persecutions of each other. Every society, every sect, believed itself to be in possession of the true revelation, and around the most conceivably insignificant differences in the definition of terms, in the interpretation of the teachings of Jesus Christ, arose quarrels which set the whole of Christendom in commotion, and called forth fratricidal wars, not to mention all those hateful and obnoxious word and pen battles and curses which the bishops hurled against each other.

But Christianity had to undergo many other changes during the first three centuries of its existence, and eventually
out of monotheism there emerged Trinitarianism. If, however, an attempt was made to save the former by the teaching that three equalled one, the ununderstanding masses, who by nature were absolutely incapable of comprehending the abstract and the symbolical, had to give everything a concreteness, and in reality they worshipped God in three forms. Nor did they stop there: they built up a polytheism and a mythology the like of which cannot be found, or even imagined, elsewhere. The Virgin Mary and all the historical and mythical martyrs and ascetics were venerated in pictures and were made either into patron saints or advowees. Both paradise and hell were peopled with armies of imaginary figures, whose materialness, intercession and intrusion into human affairs were believed to be something self-understood by the lower class of people, just as well as the people of the ancient age believed in their own respective ones as being the result of their fantasy, which was stirred into action by the god-consciousness. All the efforts which Christianity makes to free itself from the blame of polytheism, all the sophistries of the theologians in this respect, are useless; for the true monotheism has never reigned supreme in the belief of the great masses. The reason for this lies in the nature of the human mind, which can only reach a right understanding of abstract concepts through the most scrupulous schooling.

But now, as regards the real teachings of Jesus Christ, there was scarcely one which ever came to fulfilment in accordance with the words of the evangels (Gospels); excepting indeed, the one which at all times has been held to be applicable. We refer, of course, to Mattheew x. 34, which reads: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." For quarrel, hatred and rage for persecution have so marked out Christianity in all ages, and have so ridiculed the teaching of love for one's neighbour, that one hardly knows what to think of the
historical understanding of those people who, even to-day, represent the teaching of love for one's neighbour firstly as a new teaching of Jesus, and secondly as a characteristic of Christianity.

Although Christ had spoken against the formalism of the temple services and against the showiness of piety, against the parrot-like and senseless repetition of prayers, which practices openly betrayed all those who adopted them, although Christ had discarded priestcraft, nevertheless the very first exact details about the organizations of the Christian societies afford an ample proof of the fact that within a few centuries after the alleged death of Jesus Christ the Presidents of the societies had already usurped the rule. Priestcraft comes into existence very easily. Belief and prayer very soon degenerate and become the mere outward marks of a pious Christian, while the lust for power and rule on the part of the clergy very soon disregards all limits. In this manner a cult was built up by exploiting the Egyptian and the Oriental ceremonies whose sole aim is the exciting of the senses, a cult which is its own parallel in matters of outward pomp. This made the commandment against possessing anything which was promulgated by the Saviour null and void. The expenditure which a cult dictates, the exaggerated, prodigious pomp of the priestly robes, necessitate immensely great sums; and the lust for power on the part of the clergy can most fittingly be paired with the greed which respects no commandments, which saps morality and recognizes no scruples when selecting a means to an end. Immediately Christianity was made into a State religion by Constantine the Great, because, being a shrewd politician, he had recognized its convenience and considered it beneficial to take account of it, the world of free-will and of mental despotism by the clergy was sacrificed. The Roman Bishops in their position, with the help of their high prelates, cardinals, clerical
and juridical counsellors, usurped as popes the lead of the Catholic Church which from now on followed in the wake of Roman imperialism and distinguished itself from it only through the priestly robes. Here it is that begins one of the saddest and, in every respect, most deplorable periods of world-history, because the clergy has been at all times and in all places an enemy to the education of the people. It systematically throttled the mind of the Christian people. One was allowed to think only that which the Church wanted or prescribed. To the despotism of the Church, its impatience, its hatred for everything which called up the memory of the pre-Christian period or of the Greek and Roman ancient age, were sacrificed the treasures of the literature and art of the ancient age. It destroyed whatever it could not force into its service or whatever would not fall in with its wishes. History can produce innumerable instances of the barbarism and anarchic ways of the Christian Bishops and of their congregations. I will content myself with quoting one only: the destruction of the invaluable library of Serapis at Alexandria in the year 389 by Archbishop Theophilus of Alexandria.  

Many of the wonderful buildings and the most beautiful sculptures of the ancient Greeks shared the same fate at the hands of the fanatical Christians, who wilfully opposed everything which was related to Greek ideals.

It is true that there were some Fathers of the church who made themselves prominent by their considerable knowledge; but these were, unfortunately, a few exceptions only, and their knowledge was subordinated to the control of faith and made use of in combating heathenism. Sometimes it merely

1 Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. xxviii, p. 208 (London, 1897), says: "The valuable library of Alexandria was pulled down and destroyed, and nearly twenty years afterwards the appearance of the empty shelves excited the regret and indignations of every spectator whose mind was not totally darkened by religious prejudice."
served as a means of glory, or of enhancing their position over the superstitious people. Many intelligent bishops recognized that the very loftiness of the Christian teaching rendered it impossible to work on the masses. They realized, also, that the ancient age and the traditional, hallowed through the century-long national life, could not be uprooted and cast aside without much ado, and they saw that the most efficacious method for the spread of Christianity lay in combining the old with the new, in putting the new picture into the old frames. They knew very well that the Christian religion had not made any addition of much importance to the art or to the culture of the world as a whole; for even the Christian art-symbols had for their pattern the forms given by Mithraism, by the cult of Isis, and by the Egyptian cults generally. They realized only too well that Greek literature and art, Roman culture and architecture, Roman law, the accomplishments, in short, of the earlier periods preceding Christianity, alone could supply the material with which one could afford to build, and they understood very well that Christianity, as it was, had not created any new culture, was not, in fact, creative or productive at all.

It was in this way that, from the times of Constantine, sprang up those adaptations of which the history of art and of literature could supply innumerable instances. The old picture of the gods were restamped as patron saints; the pagan festivals were made to pass as church ones; the heathen poems were remoulded into Christian ones; while in the stead of the old gods and the heroes they put Christ and the Virgin Mary, the saints and the martyrs. Of this amalgam, an illustration, very pregnant and full of meaning, is offered by that statue of Constantine which he caused to be set up in Byzantium after he had conquered that city and made it the capital of his East-Roman empire. On one socle, under which the supposed Trojan palladium lay buried, and which,
like other important tokens of fate, was brought from Rome, rose to the height of a hundred feet a column of porphyry which, too, is of Roman origin. On it was erected a statue of Apollo bearing, however, the head of Constantine which was surrounded with a radiant crown made of the nail from the cross of Jesus Christ. Superstition, vanity and sham belief—all were here, on a grand scale, combined with the products of Roman and Greek ideals and those of Christianity.

The mental poverty of the Christian writers, with an exception of the few Fathers of the Church, who were educated in Greek and Alexandrian high schools, was amazingly great. The literature of that period will serve as an example to show what a killing and atrophying effect the orthodox belief had upon the most splendid gift of men's mental powers. The occupation of many of the writers was confined to dressing and adapting the writings of the earlier pagan writers for the benefit of Christianity; in other words, to fabricating and writing a corresponding contemporary history. There were others who worked up the verses of the Greek poets afresh, and this is why, for instance, that the poems describing the ailing Christ ascribed to Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389) are composed very largely of verses from Euripides. Further, we find, that the Homerkenron which were begun by Pelagius (360-420) and continued by Eudokia, the wife of Teodosius II, and which give a description of the life of Christ, were made up from the verses of Homer, the names only having been altered. Even in those places where one decidedly presumes originality, namely, in the legendary poems, which embody in a literary form the mind of those days, we search in vain for originality, because the Greek romances and Oriental fairy tales are really the bedrock and the foundations upon which are built

1 The title of an important work of the Alexandrian literature.
the foolish stories which have been woven round the persons of
saints and martyrs. Nay, the clerical hymns, even at their
noblest, have, with very few exceptions, a leaning towards
eyearly developed and well-defined forms. The most remarkable
accomplishments—and they are simply characteristic of the
period—are those affectations of verses in which complicated
rhyming, the making of artificial monograms and symbolical
figures, the smallness of the script, and other similar playthings,
are the outstanding feature. One cannot expect more cogent
proofs of the mental impotence, resulting from the pressure of
orthodoxy, than the ones which are everywhere in evidence
during this period of world literature. A sharp, active and
healthy mind which has the power of creating, of producing
something original, works up even the foreign matter which it
takes, in such a way that the foreign loses its extraneous
character, beneath the stamp of originality imprinted by the
creative mind. It may be said that the Church accomplished
this too, in so far as it forced its teachings on countless
multitudes of people with fire and sword, with destruction and
desolation, never shrinking from the use of all available means
to achieve its end and in so far as, wheresoever it went, it
throttled their mind and checked its normal progress. The
difference, however, is that whatsoever things the Church
combined did not fuse into one, did not become a new whole,
but only appeared as such externally.

In addition, came the secularization of the Church, and
schisms in the Church, each trying to destroy the other. All
this naturally resulted in an internal crumbling of the Church
in proportion with its outward expansion. The pictures given
us by the enlightened and well-informed clergy in respect to
the moral decline of their profession, and of the sacrilegious
actions done in the name of Christ, are truly obnoxious.

In a few centuries, therefore, the whole of the structure of
the Church was nearing collapse and the high standard of culture which had adorned past years was also overwhelmed shortly afterwards and razed to the ground by the corrupting influence of the Church. Its blind religious fanaticism was the sole cause of its destruction. It is a very sad picture which is presented to the student of culture of that period. The mind of the thinker frittered away its energies in dogmatical quibbles and the splitting of straws. The researches of ancient times were trampled upon; they were ridiculed and they were destroyed; for they were pagan. The libraries becoming, for the most part, involved in the age-long dispute over images and dogmas, were wrecked by fanatical hordes of uneducated monks of the mutually impugning parties. Nay, many of them destroyed with their own hands many of the literary treasures which they had collected, because often the possession of a book could be fatal to the whole of a family.¹ For it was under Theodosius that heathendom succumbed completely. In the years 381 and 391 were introduced law after law through which gradually non-Christian sacrifice and temple worship, and confession of any other religious belief other than that of Christianity was forbidden and persecuted as a crime deserving of capital punishment. The last vestige of tolerance disappeared, and however hard a few individuals worked to protect the remains of the sacred antiquities, they could not do anything against the bloodthirsty hordes who took pleasure in destruction against the will of the emperors and the empresses—the females helped bravely to accelerate the destructive work in the name of Christianity—they could not achieve anything against the all-powerfulness of the priests, the worthy promulgators of love for one’s neighbours.

¹ "Every kind of manuscript which could be seized," says Draper. "was forthwith burnt. Everywhere men in terror destroyed their libraries, for fear that some unfortunate sentence in any of the books should involve them and their families in destruction." (Intellectual Development of Europe, p. 318).
It is true that in the libraries of Constantinople were collected a goodly store of the treasures of the literature of the ancients, but the greater part of it was sacrificed to appease religious fanaticism, so that we, living in these days, cannot ascertain definitely what heights the scientific attainments of those days had already reached. The Byzantines and the Christians in general not only did not continue the researches of their predecessors,¹ but destroyed them, so that their successors in many cases had to begin afresh, had to lay anew the foundations of science which the ancients had already developed with great thoroughness. The modern sciences are lifting the curtain day by day which is lying over the ancient age, and offer proof to the effect that the Egyptian and the Alexandrian physical researches must have reached a very amazingly high point.

The whole of learning from now on concentrated itself in the hands of the Fathers of the Church; and let us see how it was cultivated. True Philosophy had to go to the wall because she became the handmaid of Faith and consequently unable to develop herself farther; reason dared not put its surgical knife to the Christian dogmas. The Schools of Philosophy were closed down—the last of them disappearing in A.D. 529. The renowned commentator on Plato, Hypatia, was cruelly done to death by St. Cyril in 414, in Alexandria. Eusebius remarks on philosophy as follows: “It is not through ignorance of the things admired by philosophers, but rather through the contempt for such useless labours, that we think so little of these matters and turn our souls to the exercise of better things instead.” In the same spirit Lactantius holds all

¹ Draper says in his book *A History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*: “Nearly 2000 years had to intervene between Archimedes and Newton, nearly 1700 years between Hipparch and Kepler, nearly 2000 years between Hero—the first inventor of the machine worked by steam which worked in Serapim—and James Watt.”
philosophy to be "empty and false." Speaking with reference to the heretical doctrine of the globular form of the world, he says: "Is it possible that men can be so absurd as to believe that the tops of the trees on the other side of the earth hang downwards, and that men have their feet higher than their heads? If you ask them, How do you defend these monstrosities?—how is it that things do not fall away from the earth on the other side?—they reply that the nature of things is such that heavy bodies tend towards the centre, like the spokes of a wheel, while light bodies, such as clouds, smoke and fire, tend away from the centre towards the heavens on all sides. Now I am really at a loss what to say of those who, when they have once gone wrong, steadily persevere in their folly, and defend one absurd opinion by another." On the question of the antipodes, St. Augustine asserts that it is impossible there should be inhabitants on the opposite side of the earth, since no such race is recorded by Scripture among the descendants of Adam."

The Greek astronomers had already made careful and important observations. Timocharis had determined the movements of Venus. Eratosthenes had calculated the circumference of the earth. Posidonius, who died in 51 B.C., had come to the same calculations. The methods of both of them are described in Cleomedes. The result which the investigations and researches of Eratosthenes yield deviate but slightly from the calculations of the French learned professors. Astrology had developed itself along with it, but the relation between both of them became very soon just the reverse. For the results of astronomy were subordinated completely to astrology. Geography, mathematics, mechanics—nay, even many of the branches of industrial activity or industrialism, in which the ancients had already achieved important result, the

1 See Draper, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 315 (London).
whole, in short, of the sciences of antiquity—were sacrificed to the words of Holy Writ. "Euclid and Apollonius were looked upon as useless; the geography of Ptolemy was regarded as a blunder. The mechanical inventions of Archimedes" and those of Alexandrians "disappeared in face of the miracles, worked through the saints and the relics and the shrines."

Exactly in the same way medicine disappeared. Quacks usurped the places of the qualified doctors—quacks who cured through miraculous relics; the strength of belief was considered a substitute for the application of medicinal means of healing. Wherein lay the purpose of building highly equipped hospitals and scientific medical establishments for such sick people?

Gregory I., who has won the attribute of the Great, distinguished himself as much by his rage for destruction as for his enmity towards all higher education. This "Slave of the Slaves of God" had one principle in view: "Ignorance is the mother of piety," acting upon which he not only committed to the flames all the mathematical stories of Rome, but also burned the precious Palatine Library which was founded by the Emperor Augustus. He destroyed the greater part of the writings of Livy; he forbade the study of the classics; he maimed and mutilated the architectural remains of the ancient days.2

Now the question arises: What was the substitute which the Church offered to the world for all that which it had forbidden it, of which it had robbed and, through spoliation, deprived it? It gave the world the word of the Bible, the view of life of the Jews, which view had become stagnant on a far lower stage of Evolution than that of the Greeks. And this, again, had not even by its side the pure, moral, noble

1 Draper, op. cit.
2 Ibid p. 367.
fundamental principles with the help of which Christianity appeared victorious on the stage of the world. The word of Holy Writ was regarded as infallible right down to the time of Galileo (1564—1642), and everything which was spoken against the Holy Word was tantamount to heresy; and it was punished more and more at times when the Church felt the ground underneath its feet shaky, when it saw the gradual disappearance of the authority of dogmas, and the veil of mysticism rent by the spirit of research and scepticism and emancipation from its inwardly decaying edifice. Instead of goading the mind of the people towards intellectual development of thought, the Church penned it, on the contrary, within very narrow boundaries, every transgression beyond which was nothing less than a sacrilegious crime against the sanctity of the Christian teachings; but even these had in a few centuries lost the spur of their original simplicity. It was hardly possible to recognize them under the confused heap of religious and dogmatical sophistries, which had been crammed into them. They had been secularized from the moment that they had been transformed into an institution of the State, called the State Church. And this fact is admitted even by the Fathers of the Church.

Now what must be the consequence, if a people in the blindness of their obedience, amid strife within the Church, and the battering of the adversary without, gave up each and every higher interest and allowed itself to degenerate insensibly into a kind of worship of idols—an idolatry which not only displayed many traces of the exalted cult of the Greeks, but also opened hundreds of doors for deceptions and cheating? In this connection, says Draper: "There is a solemnity in the truthful accusation which Faustus makes to Augustine: You have substituted your agape for the sacrifice of the pagans; for

1 *Intellectual Development of Europe*, vol. i. p. 310:
their idols your martyrs, whom you serve with the very same honours. You appease the shades of the dead with wine and feasts; you celebrate the solemn festivals of the Gentiles; their calends and their solstices; and as to their manners, those you have retained without any alternation. Nothing distinguishes you from the pagans except that you hold your assemblies apart from them."

The result was that Christian people were enveloped in a complete moral degeneracy, that the Christain religion, wherever it went, checked mental progress and development and suppressed the already existing culture. The whole of its learning consisted in nothing else, but belief in the words of Holy Writ, which perhaps but one man out of three hundred could decipher; in belief in the healing and miraculous power of the decayed bones of the martyrs; in belief in the miracle-performing splinters of the cross of Christ, whose wood, they said, "possessed the property of growth and hence furnished an abundant supply for the demands of the pilgrims and an unfailing source of pecuniary profit to its possessors. In the course of subsequent years there was accumulated in the various Churches of Europe, from this particular relic, a sufficiency to have constructed many hundred crosses."

Exaggerated miracles and superstition, a belief in the healing and miraculous powers of the decayed skeletons of martyrs, the splinters of the cross of Christ, and innumerable other fetishes represented the sum-total of what was offered to the people as a substitute for the learning and scholarship of the ancients. And one full, solid thousand years had to pass before Europe once more tried to scale the same height, which mankind had already reached, but from which it had been pushed back down into the deepest abyss of mental depravity.

1 Draper, vol. i. p. 309; London, 1875.
Thanks to the diligence of the Catholic writers of the Middle Ages, it has long been the custom to impute all the depravity of those days to the encroachment and invasions of the barbarians, i.e., to the tribes set in motion by the widespread migration of the peoples!

Tacitus had already recognized an element of great importance in the Germanic races. This is shown by him in his writings on Germany. In these writings he tried hard to arrest the decline of the Roman State which found itself on the downhill road of an inward corruption by bringing the untainted, natural strength and the simple and unaffected customs of the Germans into marked comparison with those of the highly-refined and polished Romans. He thus strove hard to rouse his countrymen to combat the peril of the poison which was decomposing the very vitals of the State, and exhorted them to return to that natural way of living to which they owed their greatness and which they could still see in the Germans of those days. But it is quite understandable that a single individual could never stay the progress of a corruption that had got its grip on millions. His endeavours were as useless as those of his predecessors. It was not the so-called barbarians, but the poisonous elements which the imperial Roman State organism had nourished in its body-politic, that brought about the collapse of the Empire. The decay of the Church hastened this process, and nothing was left for the barbarians to destroy. Tacitus had discerned that regeneration would result from an admixture of the German tribes, and history shows that he was not wrong.

If we were to consider the working of these ethnical elements, we could not afford to rely implicitly on the statements and evidences of writers contemporaneous with those battles of the Germans against the Romans and against the Greeks sent from Byzantium; for the writers referred to
belonged to the party of the opponents and of the Church. But we can draw conclusions from all that they have stated, which they could not suppress, as to the nature of influences which these barbarians must have exerted on the people of Southern Europe.

Now we can see from what has been said that at the time of the beginning of the migration of the people the Roman power was as good as buried; that it existed only in name and could no longer put up resistance to the inrushing floods of the foreign barbarians. The Greeks who were sent from Byzantium, the mercenary soldiers and, later, the barbarians themselves who had settled down in Italy—these it was who constituted the defenders and pilots of Imperialism. We have already noticed that the Church had become completely secularized in those days and had begun to decay inwardly as well. As regards the culture of those days, we know how barbarous was the behaviour of the Christian Church; how in its fury for destruction it demolished all the treasures of the ancient age, save those which were not liable to the party strifes and quarrels which arose from dogmatic discussion and from the deplorable internal condition of things in Rome under the rule of the last West Roman Emperor and under the sovereignty of the Eastern Romans. That during the battles of West Rome against the wild barbarians many architectural monuments and treasures of art were subjected to spoliation and that these battles owing to the bitterness on both sides—for it was among the quarrelling, warring parties always a question of life and death—were gory and that they cost both sides many lives should not at all astonish us, for history gives ample proof that the Christians were in no way less barbarous than their opponents. The Greek commanders, Belisar and Narses, did not fight; they only slaughtered. Even the rapid and varied succession of conquests of Rome by the barbarians did less harm than was caused by the
extortions of the Emperors and later of the clergy or by the internecine battles of the capital.

In conclusion it must not, in the first place, be ignored that the barbarians when they invaded the Roman Empire found very little to destroy. On the contrary, it is established that, according to the nature of the Germanic races, they adapted themselves everywhere very quickly to the social conditions which had been in existence there from the days of yore. The high culture which they encountered was rapidly adopted by them. Further, it is common knowledge that the Germanic tribes when they settled down on the soil of the Roman Empire, or even before they did so, were in an extraordinary manner accessible to the Christian teaching. It is well known that even if most of them (the Franks making a particular exception) still adhered to the more intelligent Arian formula of faith, they all of them became the most zealous protectors of Christianity, and were the props and spreaders of its teachings. The Westgoths and the Franks were the more trustworthy protagonists and servants of the Church than the peoples of the Empire, e.g., the Italians.

Now let us see what they did.

By their invasion they roused the people of Italy from the stagnation in which they had been submerged. The barbarians, having mingled with the Italians, laid the foundations of new nationalities. Such an amalgam of peoples was brought about in all the European provinces of the Empire. Further, languages also combined themselves one with another. Classical Latin had practically died away; for the Latin of the Middle Ages had grammatically nothing more in common with the Latin of Cicero, of Virgil and of Caesar, than the same family of words. For this reason Mediæval Latin resembled the Christian churches which had been shaped out of the pagan temples. Here also the antique was disfigured and desecrat-
ed. Along with the languages, many different concepts, many institutions, many customs had mingled, and the many cultures, which now developed everywhere, showed very clearly the variegated nature of elements. As bearers of culture next to the Franks it is principally the Goths and the Longobords (Lombards) and the Vandals that come into the purview of consideration. And as such they can compare very favourably with the Italian peoples.

Notwithstanding their aversion to the foreign elements, Muraton and Traboschi are compelled to admit that the intellectual level attained by the above-mentioned people was higher than that prevailing anywhere in Italy at that time. Theodorich, the king of the Eastgoths, was a ruler whose like Italy had not seen for a long time. He loved learning and art; he did all that he could to ameliorate their condition; he tried to attract the learned people to his Court; he built schools; in short, he took steps for the advancement of the arts of peace and for the uplift of his people; his successors, too, won distinction in the same way, so that a new culture seemed ready to shoot forth from the Court of Ravenna. Even if we could not or were not allowed to presume that the degree of civilization evinced by the different peoples in Italy after the advent of the German races was higher than that which had previously existed, and that the Goths too did not bring with them a very high scholarly nature, at least we are safe in asserting that under the rule of Theodorich, both the ruler and people were receptive of art and learning; that they cherished an interest for them and had great respect for the classical ancient age; that they tried to preserve all they could of it; that in their efforts also they showed religious tolerance and that they tried to save and respect the Catholic belief and its institutions. Under the rule of Theodorich, mankind began to come to life again and progress till the Greeks, sent from Byzantium, put an end to the Gothic Kingdom and nipped
the noble endeavour in the bud and thrust the people back once more into the dark night of illiteracy from which, perhaps, they otherwise could have managed to liberate themselves.

The Longobords (Lombards) seemed to occupy an even higher pedestal of culture than that attained by the Goths. They brought with them much that was truly German which, after it had struck deep root, exerted a great influence on the future progress of Italy. They tried their best, according to their capacity, to work for knowledge. All the great men, with very few exceptions, who occupied prominent positions in the mental life and work of those days came from their rich people. And this fact proves to us that these people were more civilized than the whole of the rest of Europe. We find, further, that it was they who, at a later period, worked as the intermediaries of the mind of Emancipation. As torch-bearers of civilization, working hard to free themselves from every yoke and oppression, they were compelled to infuse fear and awe into the Church, which was hungering for power and was doing its utmost to suppress and to destroy them. The Church used the Franks and the faithful king Charlemagne, the so-called Great, as tools to achieve its end and in reward for his services gave him the imperial crown. The Franks had also a leaven of German origin; and Charlemagne himself played his part, too, towards improving the culture of Europe in accordance naturally with the views of Christianity and by destroying much of the Germanic heathen remains and sacred relics.

The Vandals at last founded an empire in south Spain which by the writers of that period is described as flourishing. Just as prosperous and thriving was the empire which they created in Africa, and its culture was very significant. The Northerners succumbed too soon to the enervating climate of
these territories and could not protect themselves against the influences which riches, collected by them in heaps, exerted on their morals.

With the above is connected the next important question, that is to say, who were the preservers of the few literary treasures of the ancient ages which have been handed down to us? The answer to this question till very recently was generally as follows: It was principally the monks who saved these precious, invaluable treasures and offered an asylum to them in their cloisters. But there is very little truth in it. For, firstly, the greater part of the treasures, as stated above, were destroyed before the migration of the different races had set in; and in those days monachism had not developed to such an extent, and had quite other tendencies, so that we cannot accept the statement that it was the monks who conceived the idea of giving shelter to the works of the ancient ages in their cells. Secondly, the monks appear in the early part of the Mediæval period, with the characteristics of fanatical annihilators, not as the preservers of the treasures of the pagan age. Thirdly, we find everywhere regulations which forbade priests and monks to read heretical—that is to say, the classical—books; and perhaps only later was an exception made, in the tenth century. At all times, the illiteracy of the monks remained as their characteristic, and even in the famous cloister of St. Gallen it once so happened that the whole of the chapter was ignorant of the art of reading. Fourthly, there are to be found in many of the catalogues of the books in various libraries, and in many other decisive and definite dates in the history of culture, proofs to the fact that in the cloisters only very few literary products had been preserved.

In fine, we have now gained insight enough into the monachism of those days and into its history to be enabled to recognize the fact that, having regard to the excessive
number of the cloisters and to their being found in all places, practically nothing was done by them for the preservation of classical works. At all events it is true that the number of orders that devoted themselves to the service of learning was minute in proportion to the total; and, further, that these few belong to the later part of the Middle Ages, and that learned monks, those genuinely and actually engaged in the service of learning, formed an amazingly small percentage of the millions of monks that were scattered all over Europe. To these few individuals might go the credit of having been the preservers and custodians of the classical works, in so far as they did not extend their activities to washing or removing the old parchment writings before writing over them interesting fabulous legends or similar products of the sickly Christian mind. Before them on the side of the Christians it was only the Byzantines in whose libraries the small remains of those immensely great treasures lay heaped up—treasures which were the products of the mind of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Further, credit may be given to the Germanic tribes who had settled down permanently in Southern Europe; but more than any other nation the Arabs were the preservers of the sciences. To the Arabs, therefore, we turn now. Their appearance in history synchronizes with a period when the Church was entering upon a condition of complete and inevitable decay. Like a powerful current, this new element made its way through the world and compelled the Church to collect itself in order to oppose its strength against the new, defiant, threatening enemy that had, with an impetuous ferocity, hurled itself onwards and imperilled the world-governance of the Church.
II

The Early History of the Arabs; the Semitic Race—the Arabs especially; their Character, their Physical and Psychic Type; their Literature, State Institutions and Social Circumstances before Muhammad.

FROM time immemorial Arabia had attracted the attention of civilized peoples; for, firstly, it was known to the world as being the source of various articles of luxury, e.g., scent, amber, and other spices, which were eagerly sought for even in antiquity by all nations who had overcome the uncouth rough stage of nature and had trodden the way of civilization; secondly, Arabia had attracted towards itself the interest of the outside world because of its peculiar inhospitality which made it inaccessible to all but the Arabian Bedouins. Moreover, Arabia appeared to the world, in a manner different from Egypt to be a land of wonders, to explore which greater efforts were made than ever. Moreover, owing to their singularity, the inhabitants of this region must have caught the eye of foreigners, and the fact that the Arabian tribes occasionally participated in the wars of the outer world is shown to us by Homer, who in his Odyssey makes mention of the Erembr which the Alexandrine grammarians explain as Arabs.

The reports which the olden writers give us on Arabia and its inhabitants in sum total are very numerous. But it should not be forgotten that they are at the same time very weak. They are interwoven with fables, and therefore-
scarcely afford us a clear picture of the circumstances which in the earliest times must have obtained in that great peculiar peninsula. The most reliable informations—principally those of Strabo—pertain only to those parts which had become famous owing to the busy merchandise traffic of the Egyptian Phoenicians, Greeks, and Romans with the inhabitants thereof, and in which there was very little noteworthy concerning institutions, the nature and the character of the Arabs of the desert proper. Hence it is that not only can we understand the position ourselves, but also feel no surprise when Strabo tells us that the Arabs are not a martial and warlike people, but comb-sellers and traders. He had in his mind’s eye only that small portion of the Arabian peninsula and its population which made its living through merchandise and trade and, having enriched itself thereby, had thus forfeited its rough Arabian Bedouin character, and had become tender by adopting the cultural conditions which had little or nothing in common with the Arabs of the desert. It is rather an extravagant exaggeration when Strabo, in speaking of the expedition of Alexus Gallen during the reign of Caesar Augustus, tells us that on one single open battlefield ten thousand Arabs and two Romans fell, and that throughout the whole of the expedition only seven Romans were killed by the hand of the enemy. If we were to bring together the entire mass of material which offers itself to us for passing a judgment on the appearance of the Arabs, we should find that to characterize the Arabs, as unwarlike people would be fully untenable. It was the Arabs on whom the Empire of Zenobia in Palmyra rested; it was the Arabian soldiers who were highly valued and prized by the Persians as well as by the Byzantines, and all the notices on the appearance of the Arabs agree in the fact that the Arabs, right from the beginning, from time immemorial, had been a people invariably mobile, warlike, freebooting, and hostility-loving, just as even to-day the Bedouins of the desert
of Arabia are, and just as they were in the times of Muhammad. The confirmation of this fact we find in the oldest Arabian poems and in the few traces of the old Arabian culture generally. At all times the nomadic Bedouins have hated those living in the towns of the coastal region, and they have constantly maintained warfare with them. The former, in especial, have always preserved the character of the aboriginal Arabs, and to all intents and purposes have done so even to-day, to a miraculous degree. The Bedouins, indeed, were the real carriers of the national character, the props of all the great undertakings which shot forth from the Arabian peninsula.

The position of Arabia fitted in with this conservative element of the Arabian nature, just as much as, on the other hand, it made the country and its coastal people so important for the history of the trade of the world.

Enclosed on three sides by the sea, and on the fourth side by an element much more dangerous and much more difficult of access to a foreigner, namely, the desert of Africa and of the Asiatic continent, protected also through its very nature against all kinds of invaders into the interior, the interior itself cut up by high mountainous ranges and climatically divided into dissimilar zones, Arabia, whose area is more than twelve hundered thousand miles, or, in other words, is about one-third of the size of Europe, made, so to say, an island, and is so described by the Arabs themselves as Jaziratu 'l-'Arab. This mass of land was divided by the ancients in general into three divisions, which are: (1) Arabia Felix: the south and western coast with their immediate hinterlands, called Felix, because a flourishing agriculture was carried on there by which Nature had helped to make the place a fruitful paradise. In this district there had arisen a series of civilized kingdoms. (2) Arabia Deserta— the middle plateau which by mistake has
been regarded by the ancients as a complete desert, but, like Arabia Felix, it possessed in its valleys an exceedingly fertile soil and in the eighteenth century gave rise to the great cultural kingdom of the Wahabites. (3) Arabia Petræa—the north-western part of the peninsula and the part enclosing Sinai called Petræa, after the old town of Petræ, which was important for its old commercial history. Nowadays the island is divided into (1) Hedjaz, by which they understand the northern part of the coastal country situated on the Red Sea; (2) Yaman—the southern part on the corner of Bābu 'l-Mandab; (3) Mahra—the south coast whose hinterlands are known as Hazramaut; (4) Oman—the south-eastern corner of Arabia. The inner part is generally called Al-Jauf, and falls into several landscapes, amongst which Nejd, Shammar, Nufud, are especially worthy of note.

This extensive region was, even in ancient times, pierced with the caravan roads, which to this day remain unchanged, and along which at all times the goods of Arabia were exported to foreign countries and the goods of the Far East and those of the West were exchanged. For intermediary trade no other people were better suited than the Arabs, who in this respect were favoured in the highest degree. To the west lay the old kingdom of Egypt, in the north-west Phœnicia, in the north Syria, in the north-east the old civilized kingdoms of the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Parthians, and the Persians, and in the east India, with which relations were maintained by the enterprising Arabian tribes who lived on the Persian Gulf and were known to be bold, rash sailors, both valued and feared. Their desert town of Gyrrha had become the emporium for the goods which they brought from India or which the Indian ships took over to the Persian Gulf unless they exchanged them with the Egyptian and Phœnician goods in the island of Socotora, which is situated towards the south of Arabia and east of Africa. The whole
of the intermediate trade between all these countries lay so exclusively in the hands of the Arab tradesmen that foreigners described many products which were brought first to Arabia from the Far East as Arabian, and it was to the interest of the Arabs not to dispel these ideas, lest by intimating to the Eastern and Western trade friends the respective sources and places of production of the articles they should bring about direct trade relations between them. Very zealously and very enviously they watched over the Egyptian, Greek, and Phoenician ships, which were not allowed a chance of going on to India, and the Arabs exercised simultaneously a very strict sea-police service and carried on a hazardous sea piracy. Even in the later periods we hear of isolated places at which foreign ships no sooner touched than they disappeared. Perhaps they were captured in order that they might not reach the far Indian cities. Although the Arabs were mere coasters, they must in the ancient age have ventured in their boats made of leather tubes far into the sea like those bold pirates who, in still smaller conveyances, tried to intercept the way of the Portuguese to West India and often fought European seamen with success.

Now the question arises, to what race this people living in the peninsula belongs; this people which by the anthropologists, ethnographists, and travellers has been described, in general, as one of the noblest and the most gifted of peoples (refering primarily to the representatives of the stock type—the Bedouins).

Here, as well, there are many obstacles, because the ethnographical material for our researches on the people of the Arabian peninsula available to us in the Bible, the writings of the Greeks, the Romans, and the Arabs of the Middle Ages is very unreliable. Only for modern times, aided by the careful comparative study of the languages, has it been reserved to solve the ethnographical questions.
What was the nature of the original people, what was the race to which they belonged, is not to be ascertained with any certainty. The very first recognizable traces reveal the Hamitic branch of the race living in the interior part of the country. The Hamites were the nearest relatives of the Semites and the destinies of these two people were everywhere more or less bound up within each other. Living together originally in the vicinity of the Sea of Aral, to the north of Erau, both the stocks migrated at a time when they had a common language, which had not as yet outgrown the simplest radical forms. The Hamites were the first to emigrate towards the south-west, crossing over to settle down in the provinces of the Euphrates and the Tigris. Thence again driven onwards by the Semites, who were pushing them from behind, they migrated still farther to the south-west, and came to people principally the north of Africa, where indeed they were able to create the great civilized kingdom of Egypt in the valley of the Nile. During the emigration some isolated members had broken loose from the stock. These, presumably going along the Persian Gulf, reached the Arabian peninsula and conquered it. But they could not withstand the Semites who had followed them here as well, just as they had followed in the wake of the Hamites. They were subjugated by the Semites and only isolated, unknown, unimportant tribes of Southern Arabia survived as the remnants of the early Hamitic population. The tribes of 'Ad and Samud, too, about which the Qur-án repeatedly talks, are looked upon as Hamitic or Kushitic by the ethnographer Muller. Moreover, the statement that the Semitic immigration did not take place all at once, but gradually, is supported by the fictitious history of the Arabs and the division of the latter into Joktanids and Ishmaelites, between both of which there had always existed quite a sharp contrast. The former derive their origin from Joktan, a scion of Sem, while the latter trace their origin from Abraham's son, Ishmael. The Joktanids, who in historical
times had conquered Yeman, seem to have had an inclination for colonization. The Ishmaelites, on the other hand, took pride in being Bedouins and nomads. Moreover, the Semitic immigration must have proceeded not only from the side of Chaldea, but also along the Red Sea as well, and the fabulous history, which arose under the influence of Jewish history and derives very little direct from Chaldea, tries hard to sketch the connections of the different factors of population under the guise of genealogical stories, which we can easily afford to pass over. This much is certain, that the population of the Arabian peninsula in historical times, and as far as the majority, if not all, of the antique statements go, was Semitic. Therefore it will be necessary to discuss the nature of their relationship in a few words, to comprehend the relation of the Arabs to their neighbours.

The Semitic people are divided into those of the north and of the south, into those of the east and of the west. To the eastern belong the Assyrians, Babylonians, Chaldeans, Phœnicians, and the Israelites. All these together make the northern family. The southern consists of the different tribes of the Arabs: Ishmaelites in the north and the interior, Yoktanids or the Himyarites or Sabians in the south, whence also proceeded the colonization of Abyssina, whose language, Geez, is still most closely connected with the Himyarite. The language of the Ishmaelites, the Musta’riba, has, nevertheless, through the Qur-án attained prominence and authority, and their dialects are the ones which to-day are spoken by most of the Arabs, with the sole exception of the souther Arabian tribes, which still cling, with a real characteristic tenaciousness, to the sister languages of the old Himyaric language.

Further, the isolation of the Arabian peninsula contributed an explanation why the tribes of the interior, the nomadic Bedouins, preserved the pure racial character more
than any of the Semitic people. The tribes of the Arabs can, therefore, with every right, even to-day, pass muster as the carriers of the Semitic original type, and it is indeed truly astonishing to find with what purity have been preserved the customs, habits, view-points, and traditions of the half-savage, uncivilized Bedouin tribes. The Bedouins themselves also, with great ambition and envy, kept a jealous eye over these customs and traditions, so that the pure Arabian blood which courses in their veins has not forfeited its purity through being mixed with that of the foreigner.

The typical features of the pure Arabs are as follows: The skull, as well as the face, is completely oval, and possesses a great regularity, a beautiful, harmonious proportion, and an extraordinary fineness and elegance in details. The hair of the head is not curly, but even and jet-black, and its growth is sharply defined. The forehead is generally not very high, but pretty strongly convex; the cheek-bones do not protrude very much; the chin manifests a beautiful curve; the nose is aristocratic; the mouth is small; the teeth are dazzlingly white, toothache being unknown amongst the pure Arabs; the black fiery eyes in their almond-shaped cavities are protected by the long eyelashes, and furnished with an arch by the round eyebrows. All these together go to lend the Arabs, whose mien, as a rule, is serious, that powerful irresistible charm which they exercise over every foreigner. The whole of the head of an Arab is a standing, patent testimony to the intelligence, to the capacity for evolution and development, due to the great natural inherent qualities which the Arabs have always exhibited.

The rest of the body is, in general, of a medium size, symmetrical and finely proportionate; as a rule, it is lean and sinewy; it has an extraordinarily great power of resistance, because the Arab, right from his birth, is exposed to all kinds
of climatic influences and changes, and for this reason, as well as through being constantly on the move, becomes thoroughly inured to hardship.

The psychic fundamental characteristics of the Semites manifest themselves likewise in the Arabs in the greatest purity and in a refined form. The soil, the climate, and the struggle for existence, which under the local outdoor circumstances was extremely hard, one and all led to a great development of subjectivism in the Arab. The interest for "I"—egotism—and for its extensions, namely, the family and the tribe, modifies the controlling disposition of the Arabian mind. The inward individual life of emotion and feeling was so great, so exuberant, that it allowed the mind to soar to very exceptional heights of abstract, theoretical speculations; it indeed constantly compelled it to turn everything to the account of "I," and to comprehend everything in the light of, and in connection with, "I." The crass egotism which can so readily grow out of such a soil found its corrective in the quality of charity towards animals and mankind (this charitable nature was forced upon the Arabs by their outdoor circumstances), in the unbounded hospitality which in the whole of the world is without a parallel elsewhere, in the unflinching faithfulness to their promises, and in the mighty sense of justice and honour which enthuses the Bedouins. Further, the sense of justice demands in itself an individual equality of all the Arabs, and out of this equality has arisen the impulse for freedom which makes it impossible for a real pure-bred Bedouin of the desert to place himself body and soul under anyone set over him in authority. He hates the courtiers and disdains him who makes a slave of himself; on this score he despises also those who reside in a town, those who lead a settled life, and he hates the luxurious life and the attractions and charms of civilization; for this reason also, he
looks down upon trade and arts and crafts, upon everything, in short, which can in one way or another injure his unrestricted freedom, everything, indeed, through which the self-consciousness of a Bedouin can come to harm. Accordingly he regards robbery as his birthright, which can be limited only by contracts. To whomsoever a Bedouin assures his protection, to that man, to his tribe, and to his family, it is assured unswervingly with the Bedouin’s own property and person; that man can rely upon the Bedouin, he can trust him in just the same way as he would trust himself. But, on the contrary, the man who has an enemy in the person of the Bedouin possesses no means of protection against the Bedouin, no law shelters him or his property; he has only the magnanimity of the Bedouin upon which to rely. Infidelity and treachery are looked down upon as the meanest sort of crimes of which a Bedouin can ever be guilty. Murder has its punishment, and finds its limitations in the blood-revenge. For this reason it was always avoided as much as possible. Even for the deadly enemy, hospitality demands protection, even if only for a period of three and a quarter days. Moreover, one should not believe that robbery and thievery went unpunished. If the perpetrators were caught, they had to expect a severe punishment. The Arabs were distinguished by great moderation, sobriety, and simplicity, and the natural sharpness of their senses, aided by this as much as by their mode of life, was consequently heightened to an astonishingly great extent. Oratory, the talent for improvisation, the art of versification, are as much the natural gifts of a Bedouin as is the inclination for fanaticism. What he once acknowledges as true, what is proved to him to be true, for that he will always come forward with all the zeal and energy of which a man can be capable. As soon as an idea catches hold of him, he does not know any fear of death. The life of the desert ought to provoke in him his mental powers, especially the
fantasy, the power of imagination in the highest degree, and this accounts for the fact that the Arab, who hated every kind of higher culture, became the carrier of sciences and certain branches of art. As to the relation of the Bedouin to woman, it can be said that in the earliest times it was very good and praiseworthy, and far nobler than it is to-day. Certainly it was the wife who had to look after all the household business. But on the whole she was equal in rank with, and had the same rights as, the husband. The pre-Islamic love-poems present us with a body of testimony to the fact that it was not unusual for high idealistic love-relation to exist. Further, the old writers tell us that monogamy reigned in Arabia. But even so, the chivalry of the Arabs ought not in the least degree to be attributed to the high social status of the Arabian women.

The first appearance of the Arabs in the history of nations dates far back. One has good reason to believe that the Hyksos (a nomadic people who, according to Lauth, invaded Egypt in 2185 B.C. and lived there for a few centuries—nay, in certain parts thereof acquired the rule of the kingdom), were no other than the Arabs, and this view is still further justified when one finds Manetho mention the same fact, although there is another notice which alludes to Phoenicians. These foreigner-nomads appear as a rough people who destroyed culture. So stormy was their progress and on-march that the powers of the old, well-organized cultural kingdoms could not stand against them. But the conquerors speedily caught the infection of culture and were won over thereto. The outward

1 The learned author does not quote his authority for these statements. The social status of woman in the pre-Islamic Arabia was undoubtedly inferior to what it is to-day. See Ameer Ali, *Spirit of Islam* (London, 1922); Muhammad Ali, *Muhammad the Prophet* (Lahore, 1924). (Transl.). The same remarks apply to the author’s observations on monogamy. (Transl.).
character of the Hyksos has also a great similarity with that of the Arabs after Muhammad. A second incident is told us by Diodor. According to this, a Himyarite king, Ariaus (as an ally of Ninus), had fought the Babylonians successfully and had returned laden with many treasures to his southern home. Further, we are told by Herodotus that Cambyses in his expedition against Egypt had entered into a treaty with an Arab king, who was most probably a chieftain of the Syrian Bedouin tribes. According to this treaty, Cambyses' army was to be supplied with water by the Arabs on its way through the Syrian deserts. This mention is still more interesting owing to the information as to the ceremonies which were connected with the treaty, and Herodotus gives the Arabs a certificate to the fact that they held the treaties as sacred as any other people on the earth. Even outside the territory of the Arabian peninsula, barring all the state societies on the African soil, the Arabs founded independent kingdoms, namely, the one of Hira in Chaldea, famous for its patronage of art and of poetry, and secondly, that of the Ghassanids in Syria.

It is after that time that the settled Arabs begin to take part as traders in the trade of the world. Through this means they exercised a great influence no less on the conditions of the means of communication than on the culture of the then known world, for it was the Arabs who brought in their merchandise many of the most prized articles of luxury, which they exchanged in great quantities for iron, silver and Phœnician goods. According to the reports of the ancients, especially according to the geography of Ptolemy, Sprenger is inclined to believe that the well-known Ophir of the Bible (which book, as a matter of fact, gives much information on the Arabs) lies on the west coast of Arabia on the Red Sea.

In the centuries immediately before and after the birth of Christ there appeared Arabs, as already remarked, as
soliders of the parties fighting on the western part of Asia, and Zenobia could create through their help the brilliant Tadmor or Palmyra, and was able to found a kingdom which for a short time rose to such power as to rival the all-powerful Rome. Since A.D. 267, when Palmyra was razed to the ground, down to the times of Muhammad, the Arabs disappear from the historical platform of the world, and their own interior history is so much interwoven with fables and fictions that we cannot form a clear picture of the historical events in Arabia. The fact that the tribes of the peninsula were always on the move, and at feuds with one another, helped to bring the psychical and physical powers and the capabilities of the Bedouins to a still further development. To go into the details of these small wars would be outside the scope of this essay; we would therefore confine ourselves only to the indications of some of the few historical facts which are of importance for the history of Islam.

Mecca has been regarded at all times as a national sacred place, and its foundation, as well as that of its temple, the Ka'ba, was attributed to Abraham and Ishmael. Around the history of the foundation of this town, which repeatedly has been ascribed to the Amalekites, there had arisen many traditions connected with it, because Mecca (the Macoraba of Ptolemy), being an independent, rich, commercial town, and also a religious centre, enjoyed on the whole a great respect, and it appears that many wars took place for the capture of this town. Even in the days of Ishmael, the south Arabian or Yoktanid tribes (amongst which the Jurhamids were the most prominent) are said to have taken possession of the town, which was exposed to the influences of the northern Kindites or Minairs who had built cultural states. About 150 B.C. the flourishing countries of the settled Yoktanid tribes in the south of the peninsula were destroyed through the deluges which drove the people to emigrate. A party of
the latter, the Khuzaites, led by one ‘Amr bin Lohai, turned themselves northwards towards Mecca and, aided by the Ishmaelites, succeeded in expelling the ruling Jurhamites. But the Ishmaelites endeavoured in their own place to drive out the Khuzaites and to make themselves the owners once more of their original property. But in this they did not succeed. They did, however, acquire the temple service which was accordingly entrusted to them, especially to the tribe of the Quraish, so that they were empowered to arrange the ritual and the cults and to fix the festival. They could also for the most part fix at their discretion one of the four sacred months, in which every kind of feud must cease throughout the whole of the peninsula. Through this office they acquired not only a prominent prestige, but also an influence over the whole of the Arabian population. It was about the middle of the fifth century after Christ, in the year 464, that the Quraishites succeeded in driving out the Khuzaites and in wresting from them the possession of Mecca for themselves. In the meantime Mosaism and Christianity had gained many followers in the south and west of Arabia, and the wars which resulted, especially the Christian persecutions which broke out in Yeman about the end of the fifth century in consequence of the predominance of Mosaism, served as an incentive for the Christian Ethiopian emperor to conquer Southern Arabia, to capture Mecca itself in a.d. 571 and to rule those territories till about a.d. 576, in which year, in order to avoid measuring his power with that of the Persian Chosroes I, he retreated back to Ethiopia.

To the Bedouin, who starts with the principle of individual equality, the monarchist form of organization was out of the question. Each family constituted in itself a small and absolutely independent state, whose leader was, either the oldest of the family or that one who was most distinguished both for mental capacity and for valour. When families grew...
into tribes, there arose, as against other tribes, the necessity for tribal leadership, whether in war or on the occasion of the great festivals. Here, again, it was the oldest member of the tribe, or that one who was generally recognized as most capable, whom the leaders of the families elected as Shaikh from amongst themselves. So far was the chieftain thus elected from becoming a prince, that it was not even within his power to make any rule or regulation whatsoever, unless the same duly emanated from a common resolution unanimously adopted by the heads of families. To the chieftain was accorded no higher personal power than that enjoyed by every other member of the tribe. The most that was done was that his advice was followed; there was no question of his behests being obeyed. There are many examples to show that this patriarchal constitution was preserved—which is exactly what happened in the case of the settled Arabs—even when greater state organisms were created, with kings at the helm. In the first place, an inheritance of the rank of a king was a virtual impossibility, more especially so when we remember that there was no talk of what we now term a "nobility" amongst the Arabs. Moreover, the power of the princes was not only extremely limited, but depended upon the goodwill of the shaikhs or the electors, and was only tolerated so long as it was in consonance with the old time-honoured and traditional customs. Independent of the shaikhs and the chieftains were the Kázís; that is to say the judges, to whose decisions even the shaikhs and the chieftains had unconditionally to submit. In war, too, the leaders of the tribes were equally independent, unless they chanced at the same time to be their leader in peace-time.

Against their low standard of material culture—if, in respect of the Bedouins, we may use the word at all in its modern European sense—the poetical power of the Arab stands out all the more clearly. Lyrical, first and last, as is
all Semitic poetry, that of the Bedouins affords us a most certain and exact insight into the thought and life which prevailed among them in the ages past. It is true that their circle of poetical similes and pictures is very limited; but how could it have been otherwise in a country not only isolated from the whole of the world, but in itself predominantly a desert? There is nothing of the traditional poetical phrase, nor of the conventional, stereotyped, rhetorical flourishes which abound in the later poems of the Orient and, to a certain extent, in the artistic or self-conscious poems of all nations in the most distressing manner. It is this unaffectedness that differentiates the poetry of the ancient Arabs, to its immeasurable advantage, from the ruck of post-Islamic poetry, and it is chiefly on this field of general culture that the Arabs may be regarded as having left their mark. They were, more than anything else, a race of born poets. Even in later periods, the poets of the civilized and cultured countries of the Orient were wont for years to resort to the inhabitants of the Arabian deserts in order to learn from them the poetics, the pure language of Arabia. The same course was followed by those towns which sought above all to implant and foster a sense of nationality in their citizens. They sent their children, even from their birth, to the desert and they left them there during the first few year of infancy—the impressionable years—so that they might be bred and born, as it were, in the pure customs of their forefathers.

The first to collect the poems of the pre-Islamic period was Abu Tammam (805-846), in an anthology known as Hamasa—which, literally translated, means “bravery.” These poems have evidently remained in their original condition just as they had preserved themselves in the mouths of the people, so that through them we get a very faithful reflection
of the mental and intellectual life, the ideals, and the general way of thinking of the ancient Arabs.

Of the vast importance of the art of poetry among the Arabs, and of the part that it played not only in their everyday life but also in their politics, we have many illuminative examples. There used to take place at all the great annual fairs or markets which were held in Mina, as well as at all those which were held on ‘Okaz, poetical contests, lyrical prize-fights. On such occasion the voice of the people or that of the generally acknowledged prize-poets, gave the decisions, and the poems which were awarded prizes were inscribed in golden letters on Persian silk and hung\(^1\) in the national temple of the Ka‘aba in Mecca; from which circumstance these prize poems, of which seven are known to us,

\(^1\) Professor Theodor Noldeke, in his book *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Poesie der Araber*, Hanover, 1864, pp. xvii-xxi, asserts that the story that the prize poems were hung in the Ka‘aba is a fiction, and gives the following reasons:

1. An event of such a national importance is neither mentioned in Al-azraqi nor in Ibn Hisham.
2. It does not seem to have been known to Al-Kalbi nor to his son.
3. Nor does any book, nor any history dealing with Mecca, which otherwise take notice of even the minutest detail, have a single word to say on this point.
4. Both the Qur-an and the Hadith are silent on it. The Prophet must have alluded to it if anything at all of this nature used to take place in Arabia.
5. Kitabu ‘l-Aghani has very little on the subject.

The first person to mention this fiction is the grammarian Ahmad an-Nahas. Later, we find it noticed by Ibn Khaldun, iii. 337-338, and As-Suyuti.

It is true, he observes, that it is not an easy matter to explain the real significance of the epithet *Mu‘allaqat*, but even so, we should not accept this fable as true in the face of the silence of such reliable authorities as those given above.

The learned Professor is inclined to believe that the word *Mu‘allaqat* is a synonym of *As-Sumut* (lit. necklaces), another epithet used to designate the prize poems, although it is not possible to find a parallel to this usage in the Arabic language. He thinks that the most the word could be understood to mean would be “raised to an elevated place owing to preciousness.”
derive their name of *Mu'allaqat*. No battle was ever begun but it was preceded by a poetical challenge and a reply thereto. Nay, such was the respect in which they were held, that the poets appeared in everyday life as arbitrators in quarrels, and hindered or ended, by their judgments, the wars that would from time to time break out among the tribes. "Thus after forty years' war when a well in the desert had nearly caused a new quarrel between the tribes of Bakr and Taghlib, 'Amru bin Hind became a judge, both the poets, 'Amru bin Kulthum and Harith bin Hilliza, the former selected by the Taghlibites, the latter by the Bakrites, counsels of their tribes," who decided the quarrel (cf. Weil, *Die Poetische Literatur der Araber*). That the poets enjoyed such great respect was due to the fact that they themselves, like all their brethren of the tribes, were brave men. They strove to distinguish themselves in battle with sword and lance with much the same zest as they contended in the battle of words for the poetical prize. Hammer Purgstall rightly observes:—

> Threefold virtue is quite especial to the Arab.
> Combined in his soul are
> Eloquence, generosity and valour.
> To him from whose mouth like gold the pure speech flows,
> To him from whose hands gold so lightly as water runs,
> Whosoever with the lance wide about the sheepfold protects,
> A typical example of the Arabian chivalry is he
> And of his honours are the songs of the desert full.
III

THE RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT ARABS

It was religion that principally determined the cultural life of the Oriental peoples of old, and even if we be disinclined to admit any such profound influence on the ancient Arabs as we find among the cultured peoples of the Hamitic and Semitic races, it is nonetheless of importance that it shows up with greater clarity the ancient ideas of the Semitic tribes and in a greater degree because it formed the foundations of Islam.

Here again we meet with the same obstacles; not so much from any lack of detail as to the religion of the ancient Arabs as because they are so blurred—the religion of Islam, it must be remembered, was very hard at work trying to destroy the remnants of the old Arab faith—that it is with great difficulty, and only in an indirect way, that we can form an idea of its general features.

Just as the Arabs preserved, longest of all, the Semitic characteristics in their purest pristine forms, so did they with religion. Both Hamites and Semites throughout exhibit a strong inclination for star-worship; which the nomadic tribes especially, aided by conditions of climate and soil, developed to a high degree; and, in the case of the settled tribes also, it paved the way for a high and esoteric teaching and the beginnings of astronomy on the one hand and for crude fetishism on the other.

The worship of stars, as is natural, must everywhere be preceded by something else, namely, the consciousness of a higher, superhuman power, which in the first place could only be dimly imagined as One, Unique. With most of the peoples,
especially with the Hamites and the Semites, we find, in fact, traces of such an undeveloped, uncouth and instinctive monothelism, or at the least we can assign to it an important part of their religious life. But the rough primitive people were not in a position, with their undeveloped mental faculties, to grasp the conception of an invisible power. They could comprehend the Divine only in concrete forms palpable to the senses, and hence they worshipped, as the revealed forms of the godhead, all that appeared to them most miraculous or which influenced most their existence in an untoward or toward manner; all that was most incomprehensible to them or exhibited, in the clearest possible manner, the stamp of immortality. Hence it is that the cult of the masculine Sun and his feminine complement—the Moon—was one to commend itself readily to the peoples of the South. But it did not satisfy them for long, and soon they turned to the worship of the stars, whose rising and setting corresponded with certain natural phenomena, climatic changes, rain, drought and the like. And thus we find among the various Arabian tribes, side by side with the Sun, which—according to Krehl—is the equivalent of Orotal, a name of a god mentioned by Herodotus and probably alluded to under many other names as well and with the Moon, they worshipped Jupiter, Mercury, Sirius, the Pleiades, as being the revelations of the Godhead which one characterized as _Ilah, Allah_. Saturn, be it noted, seems to have been the object of peculiar veneration among the Arabs.

Nevertheless all these stars were regarded by them as nothing more than manifestation forms of the one divine First Principal which, as done by the other Semitic peoples in the case of _el, Ilu_, etc., was identified now with this star, now with that or other objects of the cult. Now they conceived it as one enthroned on an inaccessible superiority, now they reduced it to the simple God-concept. This one-God, already invoked as Allah in earlier times, had neither
a temple nor a cult; for amongst the Arabs there was no talk of a priestcraft, i.e., a caste which enslaves the religious and in general the mental life, nor were there any religious books. Even if later the petty gods had their temples, cults, votaries, and Kāhins, the latter did not exercise any moral power on the masses of the people. What they had to do was, in fact, to look after the divine service in temples. It was in very exceptional cases that they played the role of mediators between the devotees and their gods or that they acquired the respect, fame, and importance enjoyed by teachers and prophets.

The holy places, in the earliest times, were the tops of mountains, and probably, for preference, such as possessed some special kind of configuration. For on them, it was believed, man was nearest to the goddesses and the stars; and from this conception was developed that cult of height which is constantly encountered amongst peoples akin to the Arabs, especially the Israelites. Religion having once reached the surface of the earth, it was but a step for the Arabs to the cult of unusually formed or rare stones, generally meteorites, not only because their origin remains a mystery, but also because the fact of their falling from vast heights must needs suggest their connection with the stars.

To add to this, there was yet another aspect of religion which must be noted.

Love for kindred, for the tribe and for the motherland was extraordinarily intense amongst the Semites, and especially the Arabs. So it came about that to such individuals as had in life accomplished some great thing their kindred were wont to dedicate a fitting memorial which, enhanced by the glamorous background afforded it of time and space, developed gradually into an object of divine worship. Of the soul of one who was murdered they believed it found no rest unless the
murder was avenged; of another they imagined that it changed itself into a bird—all being initial stages in the belief of the transmigration of souls. These simple fundamental views now linked themselves, on the one hand, with historical events so as to become a hero-cult with which again is connected the constantly recurring cult of the supposed first man (in this case Adam and Eve); on the other hand, they afforded a foundation for a belief in the spirit-world. The beliefs in heroes, spirits, stones and stars combined together and gave rise to a fetishism which manifested itself in amulets, stones, and especially in pictures of human figures and in graven images, all of which came to be regarded as mediators between man and the gods he feared. As far as the lower strata of people were concerned, it was but natural that this fetishism had to sink still lower. The worship of stones, like that of the famous black stone of the Ka'ba, is by the later Muslim scholars traced primarily to the fact that such a worship was first instituted as a sign of remembrance, of which the spiritual value was gradually but constantly being raised. Others explained that the stones, which were set up for the purposes of the cult, were but the representatives, as it were, of the Ka'ba or black stone itself, which was traditionally held to have been given to Ishmael by the archangel Gabriel. Legend further went on to state that it was then a white hyacinth but, in consequence of continual contact with sinful men, had become black and hard. The number of these fictitious stories which have crystallized themselves around the Ka'ba in all its aspects, in its building and its history, is, as may be readily understood, very great; very numerous, too, are the efforts which have been made to explain the various cults of Arabia. To go into details would naturally be impossible in the space at our disposal, but it may be mentioned in passing that Dozy also, in his exceptionally thorough researches, in respect of the stone cult, alludes to a conception which often
appears amongst the Semites, according to which man is believed to have risen from the stones, i.e. from earthly matter.

The original worship of idols is traced back to a Yoktanid, ‘Amru bin Lohayy by name, the Emir of Khuza’a in Yaman, who had migrated from the south of the peninsula to Makka; but this is, of course, an obvious fiction, for even in the earlier times the Israelite and Syrian idolatry was rampant in Arabia, where the people were hard at work endeavouring to symbolize in stone the figures of the deities they worshipped.

THE RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT ARABS AND THE NEED OF A RELIGIOUS REFORMATION

Ultimately we find among the Arabs, just as much as among the Israelites and other Semites, a fairly developed tree-cult. Long-lived trees, such as the oak, the turpentine and the tamarind, could readily be taken as typifying certain aspects of revelation of the deity; and later, especially at the time when a lower sort of fetishism was abroad, they were worshipped as in themselves divine. The Arabs also believed that the powers of the stars to which such trees were dedicated were vouchsafed to the trees also.

It has been supposed that trees were planted on historical sites to commemorate events which had thus taken place, and that gradually they had become elevated to the status of a fetish. The palm affords us an illuminating reason for the origin of the tree-cult in general, and, in particular, of the special cult centred on itself. Although the palm is essentially a tree of the desert, yet it can only thrive in a place where there is water—in other words, where there is arable soil. The considerations which led man to worship it were twofold: first, because the palm alone it is which cannot only survive but
thrive in the full blaze of the sun in those regions, and consequently might well be held to be in some way connected with the sun; and secondly, because its very presence is a sure indication that fertile soil is to be found in its immediate neighbourhood. Now the original Semitic term for the palm is el; and the selfsame word is used to name the heavenly Original Power, which has been often enough identified with the sun. It is but natural, then, the palm should have had many other names in Arabic. For example, Tamr, which is the same as the Hebrew Tamar, gave to the town of Tadmaor the name which the Romans quite rightly translated as Palmyra. But the Greeks called the date-palm and its fruit “phœnix.” The same word nevertheless denoted—except among the Phœnicians—the colour purple, and a bird—to wit, the Egyptian miraculous bird, which was the symbol of the sun-deity. Exactly in the same way has the sun been conceived under the similitude of an eagle and the like avian figures. We can therefore safely draw the conclusion that, to the Arabs, the palm stood for the tree of divinity; and the very fact that it directed man to the place where he could make his habitation was enough to show its divine nature.

The principal centre of the cult was Zú-Riyám—the hub of the Sabean god-worship—where there was a temple and an established place of pilgrimage; others being Mina, ‘Okáz and Makka. All the religious ceremonies related to the various cults of the Arabs show there existed strong signs of affinity between themselves and those of the other Semitic peoples; and the cult of the festival of Makka, which specially inspired Dozy to institute comparisons between that feast and those of the ancient Hebrews, and the result of his labours he has set down in his book The Israelites in Mecca. According to him, it is most probable that the holy place of Makka was founded by the Israelites, or, to be more exact, by the tribe of Simeon, in the days of King David. These Simeonites, whom
he looks upon as being identical with the Jurhumites of the Arabian tradition, were condemned, seeing that they had not led a thorough expedition against the Amalekites, to leave their homelands. They must have spread themselves across the adjacent provinces, and especially over the peninsula of Arabia, thus introducing the Old-Hebraic cults into Makka. After the Babylonian Captivity there is said to have come to Makka one more great influx of Israelites—the second Jurhumites of the Arabs; and down to the minutest detail Dozy shows how the ceremonies of the earlier period—nay, even those which are observed by the Makkans pilgrims—agree with the corresponding Israelitish ceremonies, and that those of the Arabs have completely lost their original significance. As far as the monotheistic belief of certain of the sects (especially that of the Hanifs) before Muhammad, which has been described as the Din of Abraham, is concerned, we must not understand by this the "Faith of Abraham," but rather the Faith of the Hebrews. How far Dozy is right must be left for further research to decide finally on the strength of the invaluable indications given by him. But when all is said, the influence exercised by the Israelitish religion at all times on the belief of the Arabs in all their phases of evolution must needs have been very great; indeed, the number of those Israelites who lived on the peninsula must have been itself very great, seeing that entire tribes had been completely won over to the religion of Moses. Much less marked were the effects of the Zoroastrian teachings on the belief of the Arabs in the pre-Islamic period. Even if we were to allow that the north-eastern tribes of Arabia were in constant and direct intercourse with the Chaldeans, with the North Mesopotamian and Iranian peoples, the influence which the religions of the latter exerted did not go very much farther than the north-east of the peninsula. Most of the traces of Zoroastrianism which we encounter in the codes of the Hanifs and in Islam had been
introduced through the channels of Jewish belief, according to
the form it took after the Babylonian Exile and of Christianity,
which, in a similar way, owing to its Mosaic bases (and in
part even directly), had assimilated to itself much of the
teachings and ideas associated with Zoroaster.

Both these religions, the Jewish and the Christian, in the
last centuries before and in the first after Christ, contributed
their share towards the culmination of chaos in Arabian
religious ideas. In particular should be mentioned the sects,
such as the Essenes, which, differing from the orthodox codes
of belief, sought shelter in Arabia and then endeavoured to
spread their ideas. In the latter respect their efforts remained
unfruitful; for their teachings did not sufficiently grapple with
the circumstances under which the Arabs lived. But they,
like the monotheistic Din of Abraham, which over and over
again tried to make its way, did actually go far towards serving
as a foundation on which the Arabian sectaries could build.
They had realized the importance of a reformation of the
intolerable antediluvian, uncouth cults of the Arabs. It was
for this reason that they had been scouted as Hanifs, heretics,
by the orthodox idol-worshippers of the period from the fourth
to the sixth century after Christ. Far from accepting the
Mosaic teachings or those of Christianity, they paved the way,
by means of their strong fundamental teachings of monotheism,
for the Islam of Muhammad. It was they who propounded
the cult of the invisible One-God in such a way that Muham-
mad could retain it in its principal features. With all their
might they worked for the abolition of such individual
survivals of barbarism as still remained of the old regime,
especially the murder of girls. If it be true to say that
infanticide amongst a few of the tribes had been virtually
recognized as a religious sacrifice, acceptable to the idols—a
custom whereof the roots are to be traced to the same ideas
which had given rise amongst other Semitic peoples to human
sacrifice, self-mutilation and other kindred manifestations—then it should not be forgotten that the murdering of girls in general, notwithstanding the fact that some higher motives may have gone a long way to determine it, is to be imputed also to causes other than purely religious ones. The fact that it was, as a rule, the poor and destitute among the Bedouins who sometimes buried the new-born daughters alive, shows that poverty may be held, in part at least, accountable for a proceeding which, according to our ideas, suggests a state of the lowest mental depravity. Not so much the fear that the family might become too large as the consideration that if the family were to grow too large its girls would, in times of war, be easy victims to the ravisher, was most probably the cause for a custom, which, according to our standard, is inhuman. Several Hanifs like Zaid bin ‘Amr and Waraqah bin Naufal worked zealously against it; but to abolish it completely has been the merit of Muhammad alone.

The endeavours of the Hanifs to reform such a state of affairs gained in energy, especially after the penetration of the Christian belief from Abyssinia. When its kings conquered Yaman in 530 and extended their rule up to Makka, the influence exerted by the Hanifs on the masses that were not at all willing to serve the foreign African rulers grew mightily. With the help of the powerful Persian King Chosroes I, the Ethiopians were once more driven from Arabian soil in 576.

Now, if the condition of the peninsula during the sixth century be considered from the religious standpoint, we find it to be one of utter hopelessness and uncertainty, due, no doubt, in great measure to sheer moral instability. No one knew to which God to turn, and idol-worship and crude fetishism grew with sinister rapidity. Considered from the political point of view, the population of the peninsula, which had never been a national entity, was more than ever divided
and embittered by the demon of blood-revenge in a most frightful manner. This state of affairs must needs create a thorough reform movement from within, and just as, six hundred years earlier, similar circumstances had given rise to Christianity, in the same way appeared in Arabia the religion of Islam, borne by the powerful personality of Muhammad.

The Semites had already created two religions of the highest importance: the Mosaic and the Christian. It was from them also that the religion of Islam, the youngest of the world-religions, had its birth. Once again it was monotheistic—nay, a religion which laid a much greater stress on the oneness of the God-concept than had the others. It is here that we find the great contrast which lies between the peoples of the Indo-Germanic and the Semitic races, and which has made itself manifest in all the branches of their cultures, their views of life, their outlook on the world, and in their languages.

Muhammad—the name means "the Blessed"—or Abu 'l-Qāsim, called after his eldest son, Qāsim, was born on the 20th April, 571 C.E. His father, 'Abdu 'l-Láh, as well as his mother Amina, came of the prominent and ruling family of the Quraish in Makka, but of a branch that had become impoverished. 'Abdu 'l-Láh died shortly before or soon after the birth of Muhammad, and left his wife and child in so distressing circumstances that Amina had the greatest difficulty in finding a wet-nurse for the delicate child, who, early in his third year, had to be brought back from the desert. On the death of Amina very shortly afterwards, the child’s grandfather, 'Abdu 'l-Muttalib, took charge of him, and after his death, his uncle Abú Tálib. During his stay with his uncle, Muhammad worked as a shepherd, a camel-driver, and a water-carrier, and in these capacities made many journeys in Arabia and as far as the Syrian boundaries, and thus assimi-
lated in his early years a great variety of extraneous impressions. These were destined to exercise a powerful influence upon him as he grew up; for Muhammad possessed an exceptionally vigorous, brisk, and facile power of perception.

For the rest, very little is known about the days of his youth. It is first at the age of twenty-five that he reappears, in the service of a rich widow, Khadija. It was his duty to travel for her extensively in the course of her business, and, inasmuch as all his journeys ended very prosperously, the forty-year-old lady Khadija gradually took more active interest in him than before, an interest which presently found expression in her marriage with her employee. From now on Muhammad does not appear to be greatly interested in things commercial, rather preferring to indulge his passion for contemplation which had caused him often, and for a long period of time, to withdraw from the town and, sometimes with Khadija, sometimes alone, to seek the aloofness of the desert.

The chaotic and unstable condition of religious and political affairs in the Arabian peninsula, combined with the rapid and widespread penetration of Byzantine and Persian rule into Arabia, urged upon him the idea of the thorough reform of all the Arabian tribes and of their unification into one single nation; a high purpose which was to make of him that which he ultimately became. In his fortieth year he believed himself to have beheld the Angel Gabriel, who brought him the revelation of the Most High and commanded him to promulgate it to men. Because from the first he had made it known that he would utterly destroy and root out idolatry, and because through this policy of his he threatened to jeopardize and actually to injure the material interests of the Quraish who controlled the service of the Ka'ba and many other lucrative privileges connected with it, he met with
relentless opposition, accompanied by derision and mockery, which seemed as if it would completely blight all his efforts at their very outset. Semitic pertinacity in pursuit of a set purpose, backed in this case by fanatical enthusiasm for an ideal in the fulfilment of which there seemed to him to lie the sole hope for the welfare and safety of the people to which he belonged, manifests itself in Muhammad more markedly than the opposition of the ruling classes of the Makkan population had bargained for. Undaunted, with the most complete confidence in his sacred cause, and in his call as the promulgator of the heavenly revelation, he courageously continued his efforts although his followers during the first years were limited to a few individuals of his household and his relatives. But when two prominent Makkans, Abu Bakr and 'Osman, accepted the teachings of Muhammad; when the young, active, and enthusiastic idealist 'Ali came over to the side of the Prophet, the attitude of the governing parties of Makka towards the brave reformer and the forty followers whom he had won over during the first year of his call became so alert and threatening that Muhammad himself, it seemed for the moment, had a qualm of indecision as to whether or not it would be prudent for him to measure his strength with opponents so vastly more powerful. As soon, however, as it became known that the latter were hard at work plotting against the life of Muhammad (as a result of which a number of his relatives espoused his cause), he once more took his old courage in his hands and began to preach against idolatry with an ever-increasing boldness. The fundamental teachings of Moses and of Christianity, which formed the basis of his teaching, and which, it may be remarked in passing, he had learnt through oral traditions, not from the respective Scriptures, because he could neither read nor write, were moulded by him in such a way as to appear both national and individual-
istic.¹ He laid stress, in the first place, on the Unity of God and His Immateriality, whence resulted, in contrast to the worship of pictures as practised by the Byzantine Christians which had sunk into gross fetishism, the strict interdiction of pictorial representations not only of the divine but of all living objects. The conscientiously guiding principles of Muhammad were throughout his life only of the purest and the noblest, simply because they aimed at nothing else but the welfare of the Arabian people. The very fact that Muhammad, later on, was called upon to play the role of a prophet does not entitle anyone to brand him as liar or impostor. What Islam had achieved and is achieving even now in Asia, in Africa, and elsewhere, the good and wholesome effect it has produced and is producing, should certainly protect every thinker, everyone who has so much as dabbled even in the history of other religions, from smirching the memory of one who in energy, idealism, and enthusiasm has no recorded parallel. If he used practical means, if he availed himself cleverly of the peculiar conditions of soil and climate, as well as of the nature of the inhabitants of Arabia, he did nothing other than what, for example, every capable politician, every priest of all time, has done; what missionaries are compelled to do to-day, if they want to achieve any practical result. Human ideals have always—more or less—been the children of human selfishness and egoism. Everything of note,

¹ The writer is a non-Muslim, and cannot, it seems, in common with European Orientalists, understand that Muhammad did not at all stand in need of basing his teachings on Judaism and Christianity. The very fact that his teachings resemble those of Moses and Jesus so much does not necessarily go to prove that he must have borrowed them from his predecessors. The truth is that the source of Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad is one and the same. They all had their inspiration from the Most High. It is a mistake due to the lack of understanding of the phenomenon of revelation that invariably one comes across the observation that Muhammad borrowed from his predecessors. This idea was strengthened by a book—Geiger, Was hat Muhammad aus dem Judenthum aufgenommen?—Publishers.
and worth mentioning, which mankind has done has always been the result of an appeal to human weaknesses, passions, and interests; never has it arisen from motiveless and metaphysical ideals. For the ideals of Muhammad were, first and last, practical. The means by which he sought to realize them were strictly practical means, and the means most suitable to the prevailing conditions. And herein lies the secret of the miraculous success of his teachings. The followers of other religions can never forgive him this success, because they are envious of it. And what is more, they forget the history alike of their own and other religions, and scrupulously avoid a scrutiny of their foundations. They are always, with horror and reprobation, accusing Islam of those same practical methods which they themselves have made too good use of. The fear of punishment and the hope of happiness hereafter have been the powerful moulding factors of all the religions of the world.

But to return to Muhammad. His bold front exasperated his opponents more than ever, and the steps they took became in the end so drastic, especially after they had, so to say, placed a ban on the Prophet and his followers as heterodox and traitors to religion, that some of the believers, on the advice of Muhammad, had to fly from Makka and he himself thought it prudent to betake himself to Ta'if, in the hope of finding support there. Disillusioned, he had to return to Makka, where, in the meantime, Khadija and Abu Talib, who were dearest and closest to his heart, had died. But soon—namely, in his fifty-first year—the events of his life took a turn for the better. The Prophet had succeeded in winning over a few of the inhabitants of Yathrib,—later called Madina,—and because the Madinites, who had, from time immemorial, been jealous of the Makkans, felt themselves to some extent in duty bound, as being the relatives of Amina, to assist her son, and especially
because they hoped through the help of the latter and his teachings to achieve considerable advantages for themselves at the cost of the Makkans, they asked Muhammad to take refuge in their town. Now when the Prophet found out that he could no longer successfully withstand the opposition of his opponents, he, after having sent on all his followers in advance and received tidings of their safety, decided on the 13th September, 622 C.E., on flight, which date has rightly been considered by Muslims to be epoch-making and the beginning or starting-point for their own chronology.

After his flight to Madina, Muhammad had to devote his special attention to the building-up, the consolidating, and the diffusion of the teachings of Islam. For this, before all, it was necessary that, on the one hand, all those who had already been won over to the cause of Islam should remain loyal—for this purpose pecuniary resources were essential—and that, on the other hand, the masses of the Arab population must be converted—and for this, in the first place, the subjugation of his opponents, the Makkans, was most necessary; for "eloquence, charitableness, and valour" were the qualities which the Arabs appreciated most.

In 624 C.E. there was an open battle between 300 Muslims and 900 Makkans, near Badr, a place rich in wells, and lying nearer Madina than Makka. The victory of the Muslims in this battle was apart from the rich booty which fell into their hands, of very great importance to the cause of Islam; for it went a long way towards raising Muslim prestige in the eyes of all Arabia, as well as bringing with it a host of new followers. The Makkans could not leave this defeat unavenged, and there ensued another battle near Uhud, where the Muslims were defeated and suffered heavy losses. Therefore, when in 627 C.E. 10,000 Makkans marched against him, Muhammad did not come out into the open to fight them. The resulting siege
proved fruitless and the Makkans had to retire empty-handed. Then, in the year 628 C.E., Muhammad decided on a bold step. He himself undertook a journey to Makka, to perform the pilgrimage during the holy months, together with a company of 700 to 1,400 Muslims. He was not permitted to enter the city, although the Makkans did not dare to use force in excluding him. A treaty not unfavourable for Muhammad was then arranged, according to which permission was given to him to perform the pilgrimage in the following year, and a ten years' truce was concluded between him and the Makkans. Even if Muhammad did not achieve that which he set out for, the moral influence of this treaty, which recognized the Muslims as an equal power, was of inestimable importance to the cause of the Prophet, and enhanced his prestige among all the Arabian tribes. From now on Muhammad was determined to spread Islam beyond the frontiers of Arabia; he therefore sent letters to the Byzantine Emperor Heraklius, to Chosroes II of Persia, to the King of Abyssinia, and to the Governors of Egypt and other petty princes, inviting them to embrace Islam. While most of them paid no attention to the letter, ‘Amru, the Chrsitain Arab chieftain of the Ghassanid Kingdom, who was under the suzerainty and protection of the Byzantine Emperor, killed the envoy of Muhammad and challenged the Prophet, though this act of his led to a battle which was the first occasion on which the Muslims came in conflict with Byzantium. The indecisiveness of this expedition, which was more like a defeat than a victory, set the Arabian opponents of the Prophet in motion once more. Muhammad, on his part, utilized the breach of contract of which the Makkans had been guilty, by setting out to conquer Makka. In the year 629 C.E. he marched against Makka at the head of 10,000 Muslims. The city had to open its gates to him, and surrendered without striking a blow. Immediately, and with disdain, he abolished the bloody custom of revenge, of which he
according to all Arabian war ethics, was then entitled to take the fullest advantage; and in the Temple he destroyed the statues of the principal idol, Hubul, as well as all other idols which were standing there. In short, he introduced Islam into Ka‘ba, and the citizens straightway accepted the new faith. After Muhammad had gained yet another victory over Ta‘if, in the valley of Hunain, in 631 c.e., practically all the Arabian tribes had voluntarily surrendered themselves to him.

On his return to Madina his first desire was to lead an expedition against Byzantium; but while preparations were still in progress, death overtook him on the 8th July, 632 c.e.

Now, we have to ask ourselves, what was it which made Muhammad exert such an extraordinarily preponderant influence and achieve in his dealings with the Arabs such an unusual measure of success that in a proportionately small period of time the whole of Arabia bent itself to his will? He himself was an Arab from top to toe. Certainly he was no poet, and never sought to pass as one. But, in place of poetical genius, he was endowed with eloquence powerful, captivating, at times overwhelming, which, backed by zealous enthusiasm and fervour, made an impression on the Bedouins even deeper than that which the words of a poet might have created. He was, furthermore, essentially a brave man, and this went far towards acquiring for him the respect of the Arabs; for fearlessness, intrepidity, and manly courage were among the qualities which the Arabs honoured most. He was inspired by the democratic feeling for equality which was also congenial to the Arabs and never failed to attract them. Personal marks of respect he always rejected; his one desire was to be treated just like his fellow-beings, and to pass as one of them, and he disdained to surround himself with the halo of supernatural powers or to exploit occasions that might have given him the prestige of a miracle-worker. When the
Arabs demanded of him miracles as proof of his heavenly mission, he simply replied that the revelation of God, Whom he served but as an instrument, was in itself miracle enough. He was always accessible to everyone. He visited the sick, he accompanied the dead to their last resting-place, while the hospitality and charity of his nature knew no bounds—and these have ever been counted two of the highest virtues in an Arab—while his engaging personality exercised a supreme fascination over all with whom he came in contact. His stately and honourable presence, together with the magical power of his eyes, enchanted all who approached him, denoting as they did at once, individuality and a unique distinction.

The same qualities are also very evident in his teachings. These were simple, intelligible to every man, and addressed to every man as such. Muhammad allowed many of the traditional institutions which had been handed down from the earlier times to continue in so far as they did not collide or clash with the fundamentals of his own message. He knew well that by a complete destruction of the ancient customs he would miss the achievement of his object, especially with the conservative Arabs.¹ This is why he retained the ceremonials of the early cults generally, and recognized in Islam various divine forms as good or evil spirits and angels, just as the Jews and the Christians had done with the Parsi conceptions and deities.

It is equally true that he destroyed much, but by way of compensation he issued many sensible prohibitions which affected the very essence of Arabian life. Blood-feuds and infanticide were removed for ever. Gambling, usury, and drinking were strictly forbidden; all traces of the early idolworship were everywhere searched out and destroyed.

¹ To say this is to miss the whole sense of the Prophets, teachings. He knew from impriation what belonged in the Arab beliefs to the true religion of Abraham and what was not so.—Publishers.
Many laws were made against slavery, and even if it could not be completely removed, at least the path for its removal was paved and its rigour ameliorated.

By his rigid simplicity in dress and food he confessed his Arabian character. In general he was tolerant and mild; he only avenged himself—if that it can be called—on those who sought to destroy the cause of Islam. That he himself, even in the most righteous wrath, was capable of moderation and self-control, is most clearly shown by his behaviour in Makka after his conquest of that city.

The chief importance of the teachings of Islam lies in its emphasis on monotheism, in its simplicity and the intelligibility of its fundamental principles, and in its practical view-points, which fit in exactly with life and human nature. In these teachings lies the reason for the immense spread of the religion of Islam, and these teachings were the message of Muhammad. Those who accepted them were, and are, granted a sure, moral support. They cannot, under any circumstances, estrange any man from his human duties; they can never constitute a social hindrance. For Muhammad not only recognized the value of active work, but also recommended it strongly. That is why he was a zealous opponent of monasticism which during his days, in the Buddhistic Orient as well as in the Christian Occident, was very much in evidence. And if monasticism did, later, rear its head in the Muslim countries, it was an apparition foreign to the nature of Islam and the result of mystical, ascetical influences deriving as well from other religions as from the Islamic sectarianism which had sprung therefrom. Every Muslim is supposed to be his own priest, and if, notwithstanding this the Imams, Ulema, and the like, later on wielded a great power, it was due to the fact that they were not only theologians but also jurists.
To attempt to deny that Islam has been of great service to mankind is tantamount to misjudging the whole history of the world, both in its human and cultural aspects. But apart from this fact, Islam, by its appearance, roused Christendom sharply from the lethargy and secularism under whose influence it was rapidly nearing complete collapse. Islam won over vast numbers of people, pining away, doped, as it were, by an uncouth fetishism, to a life of wholesome activity; it raised them to a sublime belief in one God, and trained them to become moral beings. If the orthodox schools professed to discern and recognize the doctrine of predestination in Islam's belief in God and raised it to the pedestal of dogma, they took a view precisely opposite to the Semitic, more especially the Arabian weltanschauung, which, as a matter of fact, lays more stress than any other school on individualism. There are many passages in the Qur-án which prove most conclusively that Muhammad himself never had it in mind for a moment to stifle and destroy the individuality which is the working capacity of man, by any such dogma. Muhammad liberated his people from that fearful demon which was compassing their ruin. That is to say, he liberated them from the curse of the blood-feud, thus successfully effecting that which had never before been contemplated as even possible. He united countless tribes into one nation; and inspired in them that undaunted courage and enthusiasm which enabled them not only to shake off the foreign yoke, which had been growing more and more oppressive, but also by a brilliant, well-nigh miraculous exploitation, as it were, of the genius that lay dormant within them to make history, and to leave an indelible impress on the cultural development of the world in an epoch-making manner.
THE CALIPHATE AND THE SPREAD OF ISLAM

The death of Muhammad seemed, at first, to destroy all that he had accomplished; for no sooner had the news spread amongst the Bedouins than they shook off the uncomfortable yoke which had curtailed their hitherto unbridled freedom, and the infant kingdom which had only just come into existence was resolved once again into the component parts of which it had been welded with such pains and pertinacity. Various parties sprang up in Arabia, and amongst the Muslims themselves there were dissensions and discords, every faction pursuing its own interests exclusively, so that a reunification of the scattered elements was possible by no means other than those of violence—and who should adopt such a course as this? Muhammad had not thought of designating a successor, who after his death should assume the reins of government. His followers had not reckoned with the possibility of the Prophet himself being mortal even as they. His death took them completely by surprise, and even the energetic 'Umar could not, at first, bring himself to believe that it had actually happened.

Perhaps Muhammad had of set purpose refrained from giving any regulations as to what should or should not take place after his death, or who should assume the leadership of the Muslims, because he did not want to touch a question which obviously might be the cause of differences amongst the more ambitious of his disciples and friends, who might thus too readily jeopardize the cause of Islam and destroy the work long before it was completed. Therefore he left it to them to agree among themselves after his death on the question and form of his successorship, relying on the tried zeal and fidelity of those who had stood by him with their advice and had supported him in his resolutions. Amongst these, Abu Bakr's name is of special note. He is the father of the Prophet's
beloved wife 'A'isha, to whose (Abu Bakr's) advice and judgment the Prophet attached great weight. Abu Bakr represented and officiated for the Prophet in the last hours of his life at the prayers in the Mosque when, at the house of 'A'isha and in her arms, Muhammad breathed his last. Owing to all these circumstances, and especially in view of the fact that Abu Bakr was the oldest of all those who had migrated to Madian, the eyes of Muslims were turned to him when it came to the election of a caliph, a successor and representative of the Prophet, a leader of the prayers in the Mosque, and head of the State or society. But the beloved of Muhammad was 'Ali, his son-in-law, the husband of Fatima, and he also had a numerous following. In addition to these two parties, into which the immediate disciples of the deceased had divided themselves, there were many others amongst the former emigrants who claimed for themselves the honour of providing a caliph. There were the men of Madina who were striving hard after the reins of government; there were the Ansârs (the helpers), to whom to a great extent was due the recognition that Islam had acquired. Amongst the Madinities there were again two parties sharply opposed to each other—the tribes of Aus and Khazraj, each one of whom put forward its own candidate. The struggle as to who should succeed the Prophet was assuming portentous and fateful proportions when it was suddenly ended by 'Umar's abrupt decision in favour of Abu Bakr as caliph. The resultant accession to power of the Makkan and political parties proved a singularly favourable turning-point in the progress of Islam; for although Abu Bakr and 'Umar were as much orthodox as 'Ali was, yet they supplied all that was lacking in the case of the mystical idealist 'Ali, and which was primarily most essential if the kingdom which was heading straight for disruption was to be saved and properly organized; for theirs was a policy aiming at practical ends and borne onward by uncompromising will
power. Abu Bakr proved himself fully equal to the difficult circumstances in which he entered upon the caliphate. With true Arabian tenacity and energy he pursued his aims, which he once and for all had recognized as right and truthful, and demonstrated in the austerity of his career that he possessed the ruler's instinct in a supreme degree, in which true leniency and forbearance were most happily mated with an inexorable strictness. Only through the application of this last-named quality could he, for example, hope to regain the Bedouin tribes which had fallen away, and compel them to acknowledge his sovereignty. He fought them courageously and relentlessly, refusing—against the counsels of his advisers—to make any concessions at all, for thus alone, he believed, could they be subjugated. And, as a matter of fact, it was by these methods that he did succeed in uniting them, within a short period and for ever, into one nation as far as the outer world was concerned.

Moreover, Abu Bakr followed in the strictest manner the words of the Prophet and strove earnestly to become his real follower and true successor. It was he who gave effect to all such plans of Muhammad as had been frustrated or suspended by his death. Muhammad, for instance, wanted to undertake an expedition against the Byzantines, and also against the Syrians. Therefore the first thing which Abu Bakr did—in spite of the fact that his hands were already overfull with the subjugations of the Arabs, and that he had at his disposal a very inadequate army, with consequently a very faint prospect of success—was to march against them. The victorious result of this war in no small measure enhanced the prestige of Islam not only throughout the whole of Arabia but also in all countries round about.

The political institutions of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and indeed of the first four caliphs in general, which had been
introduced under these circumstances, were taken to have become decisive for all time, and under the first two caliphs there developed a peculiar socialistic State constitution which has no parallel in the history of the world.

The founding of Islam had nothing whatever to do with material gains and worldly success; and as soon as the Arabs recognized that they henceforward could expect from Islam, not only its protection, but also diverse palpable advantages; as soon as they understood that the principle laid down by Muhammad, which propounded equality of rights among all the Arabian Muslims and a share of each of one of them in all that accrued from the expeditions—was recognized and observed, the Bedouins flocked in large numbers to the armies of the caliphs. From the beginning, therefore, it was not only the fanaticism with which the Arabs, according to their nature, espoused the cause of the national belief, but principally also the judicious apportionment of the moneys of the State, the prospects of material advantages, and, later on, the preference of the Arabs to all the Muslims of other nationalities, which enabled the proportionately small armies of Arabia to achieve successes which stand out so conspicuously in the history of the world. For this reason it was an extraordinary political step of Abu Bakr and 'Umar to permit the regulations of Muhammad to stand in respect of the division of the moneys of the State, and to found on them the system of taxation and finance which we find in operation in the history of the caliphs.

Muhammad had ordained that four-fifths of the war booty was to be divided amongst the warriors, the remaining one-fifth going to the State treasury. This law was preserved, and later on extended, so that the Muslim—apart from insignificant disbursements, such as taxes on money and merchandise—had to pay to the State 2½ per cent. poor-rate and property-
Annual endowments were given originally to the surviving wives and the nearest relations of the Prophet, and after that to the Muslims of both the Holy Cities of Makka and Madina. Later they were extended to all the real Arabian Muslims. A most careful register of all the Arabian tribes was maintained, and special offices were erected for this purpose, so that the income of the State might be divided in a just manner, in accordance with the prescribed regulations.

THE SPREAD OF ISLAM AND THE SWORD

It is understandable that this socialistic, communistic constitution must have worked very attractively on all the followers of Islam, so that every one of them espoused the cause with joy and a contempt for death which to them, in case they lived, brought considerable benefit and fixed incomes, while, should they die, the happiness of paradise was secured to them.

This circumstance, and allied to it the allegation that Islam was spread at the point of the sword, and, last but not least, the imposition of a capitation-tax on non-Muslims, are some of those accusations to which the teachings of Muhammad are held to be open. Such allegations, however, suffer consistently from a lack of appreciation and a scrupulous and convenient forgetting of the means which other religions have employed for proselytizing purpose. Herder has very rightly observed, on this point, the following: "It is a pity that the Arabs even in this respect had the precedent of Christianity before them, which of all religions always forced on foreign peoples its own belief as being a necessary condition for happiness and salvation. The Arab did not convert through women, monks, and underhand methods, but as would become a man of the desert, sword in hand and with a demanding voice of challenge: 'Tribute or Faith.'" But if we take exception to Herder's view as being opposed to the well-known tolerance
of the Muslims, it must be understood that much that is exaggerated has been advanced both for and against that tolerance. First of all, the concepts of humanity and tolerance had quite another value in ancient times, and during the Middle Ages to that which is accorded to them nowadays among those peoples that determine the world’s civilization. Uncivilized peoples swing often to and fro between unintelligible mildness and unimaginable cruelty, because they mostly yield and give expression to the impulse, generally unreasoned, of the moment. The Semites, generally speaking, exhibit as a rule, especially in the early periods of their existence, a great impatience in all matters religious, which was the result of their natural self-consciousness and subjectivism. And fanatics, whatsoever cause they may represent, are seldom tolerant. Moreover, Muhammad himself was compelled to draw the sword through the opposition of the Makkans. He was forced—as everyone will be forced—to protect with the sword his faith and spread it. He believed his faith to be the only means of salvation to his people and the only true faith. From this step of Muhammad the militant aspect of Islam was ordained from the beginning. Just as Muhammad, so far as political interests permitted, yielded to his natural inclination towards mildness, as in the case of his vanquished enemies, so also did the Arabs in general, provided their fanaticism was not excited to a blind rage through too obstinate opposition, faithlessness, infidelity, or mischievousness. That this army, composed as it was of uncivilized fanatics—and the Arabian Muslims in the first century after Muhammad were little else than such—confined itself to imposing a tax on non-Muslims, instead of forcing them to accept Islam with all the violence at their disposal, is in reality a most eloquent tribute to their tolerance. Such tolerance we should have looked for still less from the fierce and warlike Bedouins, especially when we remember that the inability of the Byzantine and Persian troops to offer
them any effective opposition should have tended to make them boastful and exultant above the ordinary. But, on the other hand, this much is certain: that wherever fanaticism and dogmatic orthodoxy ruled and predominated, patience with liberal movements and the spread of knowledge was practically non-existent; that the latter could only prosper where the power of orthodoxy was broken; and that as soon as ever liberal beliefs once again triumphed over free and liberal ideas the Arabian-Moorish culture fell to ruins. When we consider all these things we ought most decidedly to protest against the view that conversion by forcible means had ever in Islam passed into a general system. Further, the history of Islamic peoples gives proofs of the fact that most of the numerous wars—a portion of which was undoubtedly stained with blood—which led to the decline of the caliphate—the great independent parts of it, that is—are all of them to be traced back to ethnical reasons. The contrast between the races and peoples, which came in touch with each other within the caliphate and through Islam, political reasons, and last of all the greed, ambition, and selfishness of the governors and officials, office-hunters, and deposed princes, were the main causes of the decline of the caliphate. That in many cases the political aims were bound up with religious aims is very natural so also, now and then, certain of the more militant sects caused great commotion and disturbance of a disruptive tendency. That wars against non-Muslims were religious and for the sake of religion, and were undertaken by Muslims for the oppression of other religions, is not only, generally speaking, out of the question, but also even in special cases it would be very difficult to prove that material and political reasons were not the real causes of those wars.
AL-KHULAFAT’U ‘R-RASHIDUN

ABU BAKR

The problem of the Prophet's successorship was, and remained, a difficult one. The enthronement of a Caliph, who in his person represented a spiritual as well as political head, led necessarily to an outwardly monarchical form of government. And against such a state of affairs the Arabian nature rebelled with all its might, just as it did against every step towards the centralization of the paramount power, a centralization which in reality had never existed in any kingdom where Arabs were in a majority. Thus it was that later, under the Abbaside Dynasty, at the time of its highest cultural prosperity and military and political power, the Caliphate allowed that every and even the smallest place did not suffer any outside interference in its internal affairs. This sense of independence, this individualism of the Arabs found itself from the first in sharp conflict with every constitution which was struggling for a monarchical form. This, however, was not the most difficult problem, for the first Caliphs were as Arab in their convictions as was Muhammad, when they thought the Arabs sense of equality of rights would be injured in one way or another through the enforcement of a monarchical system. The State concept, as well as the religious concept, were to an Arab, one and the same thing. The State, according to his idea, was society, and he looked upon the Caliph, therefore, as only the leader, the Imam, as it were, and did not confer upon him any sovereign titles such as Shaikh or Malik—which means King. And if the word Khalif came later to acquire a political significance, it was but the result of the natural development of political life, which evolving itself from the theocratic, and democratic forms, gradually passed to those of bureaucracy and despotism. It was the right of self-determination that the Arabs wanted, the
right to safeguard themselves under all circumstances even against a Caliph; and this happened principally through the fact that they, just as they did with the Shaikhs, or at times with the Kadis, selected him and did not admit of any hereditary right in the matter. The second Caliph, ‘Umar, went so far as expressly to make his son ineligible to the honour of Caliph. It was reverence for the Prophet only that led them to deviate so far from the principle of equality of rights, and to waive the claim, which must have seemed to them reasonable enough, that every Arab could become a Caliph. They confined this honour, however, to the tribe which the Prophet belonged—to the Quraish. There were, of course, parties and sects which held the view that every Arab was eligible for the position of Caliph; but these never gained power. All the Caliphs, from Abü Bakr down to the last, Mustansir, were Quraishites.

The Caliph, therefore, was an elective prince, his kingdom an elective kingdom. Such a state of affairs manifested itself from the first a source of the greatest danger to the existence of the kingdom—for the tribe of the Quraish, once extraordinarily large, was now scattered far and wide; and because primarily, as is the case with elective empires, the prince is at the mercy of the ruling parties, of the Viziers, and bodyguard, etc., his power became shadowy—almost nominal—and his kingdom a battlefield, a hotbed of festering ambitions.

The history of the Caliphate can be divided, according to successive development, into three periods, the first embracing the rule of the first four Caliphs, Abü Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Usman, and ‘Ali (632-661 C.E.). Because of its character, this is described as the patriarchal period. The capital and residence of the Caliph during this period was at Madīna. The second is that of the Ommayyid Dynasty (661-750 C.E.), the residence of the Caliph then being at Damascus. The third
is the period of the Abbaside Dynasty, which was brought to an end by the Mongols in 1258 C.E. Baghdad was the capital of the Caliphs of this dynasty.

Because the first period was the norm for the formation of the State as regards constitution and organization, and because during this period the Arabian kingdom had received an immense extension which foretold clearly the world-significance and power of Islam, it is perhaps essential that something should be said as to the means whereby those magnificent successes had been achieved.

In Abú Bakr we had recognized a true and faithful disciple of Muhammad. The words of the Prophet were to him infallible, and he followed them implicitly. One of the first duties which he set himself was to collect the revelations—till then scattered—of the Prophet in the form of the Qur-án. His wholehearted reverence for the Prophet was also the reason why at the time of this first edition, just as it was in the case of the second made by ‘Usman, the existing materials were not examined and classified. They adopted no critical method in their collection. If ‘Ali was dissatisfied with the collection of the Qur-án, it was due to the fact that he saw that, as actually happened, the written word might tend to become a limitation of belief. The idealistic ‘Ali demanded that every believer should take into himself the spirit of Islam and should give it expression through his actions.

1 The learned writer, in common with other orientalists of Europe, is under the impression that the Qur-án was not in the form of a book during the days of the Prophe. Muhammad ‘Ali in the Introduction to his *Translation of the Qur-an* (Woking, 1920), has dealt with this question at length and proved to the hilt that the Qur-án was existing in the same arrangement and order in which we have to-day. European scholars, simply because they cannot understand some verses of the Qur-án, instead of believing that their knowledge and power of comprehension is defective, at once come to the conclusion that the arrangement is uncritical.—Publishers.

2 This also is contrary to facts:—Publishers.
We found in Abū Bakr a real and a pure Arab full of the old national outlook on life, enthused with the Bedouin spirit and clinging tenaciously to the old-Arabian customs in so far they were reconcilable with the laws of Islam, and it is in this stress of the national life that, to us, appears to lie the great value of this Caliph as well as that of the second. Besides, Abū Bakr had an extraordinarily able commander of his forces in the person of Khalid bin Walid, who led the small army which was at his disposal from one victory to another, heartened them, heightened their self-confidence, and made them, fortified as they were by religious fanaticisms, invincible. It was through him that Syria was wrested from the Christians (Byzantines), and Damascus conquered; through him, too, that the Christian-Arabian kingdom of Hira, which had been under Persian sovereignty, was conquered, the Persians defeated, and their territories as far as the lower Euphrates annexed to the Caliphate Empire.

In his private life Abū Bakr was a simple Bedouin, who would reject with scorn the shelter of the tent while on pilgrimage. He had a business of his own; and in clothing and food alike his tastes were extremely simple, differing in no way from those of the other Arabs. When, after a period of two years as Caliph (632-634), he felt that his end was drawing near he tried his best to save the kingdom from the danger of a disputed succession by nominating to succeed him ‘Umar, who during his last illness had officiated for him as Imam; and before his death he had made the succession of ‘Umar secure.
'Umar, too, had the same Bedouin simplicity. He possessed, moreover, an energetic, straightforward character—being ever most just and impartial, but a strict Muslim withal. He did more even than Abū Bakr had done when he tried to deepen the national consciousness by promulgating a series of laws which aimed simply at this one object. First of all he built up the system of annual endowments and of the taxes as outlined above, and thereby not only succeeded in raising the courage and enthusiasm of his soldiers, but also gave the principle of general military service once again a new lease of practical existence. He wanted the Arabs to become the standard-bearers of Islam, and as such the first people of the world. To this end he believed it essential above all things that the military power of his countrymen should remain unimpaired, and the means to achieve this seemed to him to lie in the maintenance of simple customs, together with protection against all effeminate and enervating influences as well as against mixing with other nationalities. It was for this reason that he issued the prohibition that no Arab should acquire possession of land outside Arabia, carry on agriculture, or learn foreign languages; that he so stationed the garrison posts that the soldiers were never in danger of becoming estranged from their desert nature; that he required every Arab capable of bearing arms and fit for military service to apply his strength exclusively to the furthering of the cause of Islam. On his part he assured them, wherever they went, of special prerogatives of all kinds; for he knew that thus he could exalt the national pride; and the natural result was that the principle of equality of rights for all Muslims was given a rude shaking, and the way to the evolution and development of class differences among the peoples of all Islamic countries with the exception of Arabia, was opened up. Now because Arabia could alone be the
birthplace of the true faith of Islam, 'Umar further decreed that all non-Muslims should leave the peninsula; and that they should make themselves recognizable as non-Muslims by a distinctive dress. But on the whole he was most mild and charitable in his dealings with the vanquished, and forbade, as did Abu Bakr, murder and plunder simply for the sake of greed after the agreed treaties had been concluded. He, too, had at his disposal brilliant field-marshal such as Abu 'Ubaida, and 'Amru, and Sa'd. The first was employed especially in Syria, the second in Egypt and Africa, and the third in Persia, where the last Sassanide Yazdegerd and his field-marshal Rustum expended all their powers in vain efforts to repulse the small but victorious armies of the Arabs. Under 'Omar the Great (634-644) there were said to have been conquered 36,000 towns, and if we try to bring before the mind's eye the expansion of the Empire under his rule, this total does seem imporable. Jerusalem fell in 637 C.E.; at about the same time Syria was being gradually subdued. In 639 Egypt was added to the Empire, and in 639 Alexandria was conquered; while in 642 the last opposition of the Persians was broken down at a battle near Nehawand. In spite of all these immense successes, and of the vast sums of money which in the form of tributes and taxes flowed into the treasury of the State, 'Omar remained ever the simple Bedouin, and when the Christian Governor of Jerusalem

1 The banishment of the Jews and Christians was due to political considerations which impelled 'Omar to take such a drastic step. Both these communities in Arabia were always conspiring against the Muslim Empire, and their machinations had become unbearable during the days of 'Omar. When the Jews of Khaibar were banished—and the Christians of Najrân, who were ordered to migrate to Iraq and Syria—edicts were issued by 'Omar to the effect that the banished Christians should be fully compensated, and that every precaution should be taken to afford them comfort when they settled down in Syria or Iraq.—Publishers.

2 That was not a special dress imposed on non-Muslims, but the dress to which they were already accustomed and which they had been wearing long before the Muslims.—Publishers.
desired to surrender the city to him, 'Omar himself repaired to Jerusalem. The proceedings from beginning to end were as simple as the ways of the Bedouin. On the camel which he was riding he had dates, corn, waterskin, wooden bowl; in short, everything he required for his simple meals. The spirit which animated him when concluding peace-treaties manifests itself very clearly from the terms which he agreed upon with Jerusalem and which served as a pattern for most of the later treaties. I give below a few extracts therefrom according to the wording of Daumer in his book *Mahomed und sein Werk*:

"In the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful. This treaty comprehends all Christian subjects, priests, monks, and nuns. This treaty grants them security and protection wherever they may be.

"We as pontiffs are in duty bound to assure protection for ourselves and our adherents, and all Christian subjects who, as such, fulfil their obligations.

"A similar external protection shall be granted to their (Christian) churches, houses, and to their places of pilgrimage, as well as to those who visit these places; the Georgians, Abyssinians, Jacobites, Nestorians, and all those who acknowledge the Prophet Jesus. All these deserve consideration because they had heretofore been honoured with a document of the Prophet Muhammad, at the end whereof he affixed his seal, and in which he has emphatically ordered us to be beneficent and to grant them security. Accordingly we, the head of all the true believers, are greatly desirous of showing ourselves benevolent, as a mark of respect for him who had already given you his graciousness and favours.

"They are accordingly, as pilgrims in all the Muslim countries by sea or land, exempted from the payment of all impost duties and taxes and of capitation-tax. On their entry into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and on their
entire pilgrimage no kind of tax shall be exacted from them.

"Whosoever, having read this treaty, shall between to-day and the Last Day of Judgment behave towards them or deal with them in contravention of this treaty, breaks the covenant of God and that of His beloved Prophet. . . ." 

THE CALIPHS

The preference of the Arabs to the vanquished peoples—which from the standpoint of the Caliph was natural enough—evoked great indignation under the last Caliph. Especially was this to be noticed in the case of Persia. The last Sassanides had already in every conceivable way tried to strengthen and consolidate the national self-consciousness. They had, while working against Buddhism and Christianity, vivified the Zoroastrian belief anew. They had struggled hard to save Persia, both politically and culturally, from the corruption into which it had fallen, with a view to a national regeneration. In everything else they had succeeded; the Persian armies had successfully fought the Byzantine forces, and a new era already seemed to have dawned for Persia. Then into the newly rejuvenated Kingdom of Persia broke the Arab armies and destroyed it. The powerful land-owning nobility—the Dihkans—were forced to humble themselves before the uncouth sons of the desert, to acknowledge them as masters, to make over to them the yield of all their fertile possessions, and generally to lose their independence.

The resentment which filled them soon spread to the whole of the nation, all of which, coming from the Indo-Germanic stock, differed fundamentally in nature from the Semitic Arabs. Through the next development which the state of affairs in Persia had to undergo—when the population was divided into three classes, of which the first consisted of the true Arabs,
the second of those who had accepted Islam, and the third of the non-Muslims—the contrasts soon came to a crisis and gave rise to many risings and even rebellions among the Persians. Their Indo-Germanic way of thought revolted, struggling manfully against Islam, its teachings, and many of its interdictions—such as music, dancing, and the drinking of wine. The Persians have always been inclined to heterodoxy, freedom of thought, and secularization, so they became the champions of the Shiite or free conception of Islam; and because ‘Ali and his family had been driven into the background by the orthodox, they espoused his cause in opposition to the strict orthodox Sunni schools of thought, looked upon ‘Ali as the first rightful Caliph, and raised him to a saint, in whose honour they established cults and were loyal to his descendants as the true Imams. Omar himself, however, fell by the dagger of a fanatical Persian who wanted to revenge on him the unhappiness and misfortune which had overtaken his people and his country.

With the accession of the third caliph, ‘Osman (644-656), ... in the place of this independence, which was an essential characteristic of the first caliphs, came unbridled self-seeking and greed; and even if we admit that the old Caliph ‘Osman was himself not noticeably affected by selfish aims, it is still very certain that his relatives, the governors, field-marshals, and other officials tried their utmost to exploit those under them with a view to personal gain. Many of the regulations issued by ‘Osman were set at naught, and it was the constant effort of the fortunately placed officials to get possession of large tracts of land so that they might make themselves as independent as possible. The provincials, on their part, even if they had accepted Islam, were driven more and more into a state of independence of their Arabian rulers and found themselves soon in a position corresponding somewhat to that of the
Roman client towards his patron or the European and early Persian feudal system. The Persian nobility, after their acceptance of Islam, tried as much as possible to compensate themselves for the loss of the property which they had forfeited by capturing influential administrative posts. But, nevertheless, it was not until the time of the Abbasides that they succeeded in attaining anything like equality of social status with the Arabs.

Now the armies of the Caliph penetrated still farther under the rule of 'Osman and conquered vast territories, so that the boundaries of the kingdom stretched from Carthage to the Indus; but in the interior it was already fermenting, seething dangerously, and 'Osman himself was the victim of a conspiracy against his life. . . .

His death was at once the signal for a succession of wars, which were henceforward to be waged between the followers of 'Osman and those of 'Ali, and developed into terrible civil struggles, fought with the deadliest peril to the life of the Empire. Mu'awiya, a great-grandson of Omayya, was a confirmed enemy of 'Ali, and under the pretext of avenging 'Osman's fate he preached a holy war against the new caliph, who had bitter foes in 'Ayesha, the widow of Muhammad, and in Talha and Zubair, the flight-companions of the Prophet. 'Ali was, at the outset, victorious, and after he had subdued 'Ayesha in 657, he turned his attention to Mu'awiya, defeating him (Mu'awiya) in several battles. In order to save himself from utter collapse, this Syrian Governor (Mu'awiya), who had been posing as the rival caliph, made use of a ruse which brought the battle to an end and resulted in the appointment of an arbiter, who declared both the opponents ineligible for the office of Caliph. Mu'awiya was adjudged lawful, legitimate caliph. The new battles evoked by this step so shook the State that three fanatics agreed to kill the three causes of the trouble, 'Ali, Mu'awiya and 'Amru, the Gover-
nor of Egypt, simultaneously. But it was the first alone who fell to the assassin's dagger in 661; Mu‘awiya was formally elected the caliph; and Hasan, the son of Ali, to whom the followers of the latter paid homage, was compelled to abdicate.

The transference of the seat of the caliphate to Syria (Damascus) opened up straightway a channel for Byzantine influence, traces of which we find not only in the further progress of Arabian political life, but also in the development of Arabian culture during this period. The boundaries of the kingdom were continually being extended. Under Mu‘awiya I the Arabs penetrated as far as the territories of Oxus and Jaxartes, laid siege for many years, one after another, to the city of Constantinople; under ‘Abdu ’l-Malik they conquered Armenia, destroyed Carthage, overran the whole of Northern Africa, and in 711 occupied Spain.

The patriarchal simplicity of the early times now disappeared. The huge State incomes were wasted in a most extravagant fashion. The love of pomp, effeminacy, and greed sapped the strength of the Arabs, which till then had been unimpaired, and led inevitably to the downfall of the Omayyid dynasty. Only one member of this great family, ‘Abdu ’r-Rahman, continued to save himself, and founded in 759 in Granada a caliphate which was independent of the Orient and soon eclipsed it.

With the Abbasides the Empire's centre of gravity was transferred to the Persian cultural sphere, when Baghdad, founded by Mansur, was made the capital. The great extension of territory which the Empire attained in this third period (750-1258) necessitated an ever-expanding system of administrative machinery. For this purpose, once again, the Persian institutions were taken as the pattern, just as we notice everywhere Persian influences in all branches of culture,
which culture, in its blossoming period under Harunu’r-Rashid (786-809) and Mamun (813-833), sprang entirely from Persian soil. Persian, too, was the wazarat, which as soon as it had become hereditary and undermined the power of the caliph resulted in the wazirs (viziers) growing gradually all-powerful, and becoming masters even of the caliphs themselves. Certainly there were amongst the viziers, especially the Barmakites, many very great statesmen, who were devoted to the cause of culture. When, in order to counterbalance the powers of the viziers, the caliphs created a Turkish bodyguard they laid the foundations of an evil no less far-reaching; it was not long before these troops usurped to themselves great powers, and the selfsame signs which we detect in the Roman Empire during its last phase of development when the Pretorians were all-powerful, were to be seen here also. The Turkish bodyguard made and unmade caliphs, and left them only so much of power as caprice suggested. The Caliph Radi (934-940) tried to remedy this corroding and progressing evil when he allowed the Turks to take a personal part in the affairs of the Government. He separated the spiritual role of the caliph from the worldly on entrusting the latter to an Amiru ’l-Umara (Prince of the Princes), for which position he selected a Turk, Ibn Rayek, and reserving for himself the spiritual power. With this step he really surrendered the government of the Empire and made the caliph a mere high-priest whose duty consisted in performing the public-prescribed prayers. When, after a few years, the Buids made the Imamate hereditary in their house its significance corresponded almost exactly to that of the Frankish institution of *maiores domus*. More than ever before, the Governors of the provinces strove and plotted for a complete independence, and thus piece after piece broke away from the mighty Caliphate Empire which existed but in name and was only loosely kept together through the nominal bond of Islam. The Turks and the Seljuks helped each other zealously in the work of disruption, till finally the Mongol Khan, Halaku, conquered Baghdad in 1258 and the
outward existence of the caliphate was brought to an end.

The most significant dynasties which gradually detached themselves from the rule of the caliphates were those of the Idrisis in Fez; the Aghlabites in Kairouan and Tunis, who had also conquered Sicily and Corsica, and even threatened Rome; the Tulinides and Ikshidido in Egypt and Syria; the Fatmids who ruled over Egypt from 969 to 1171; the Almoravids and Almohads in West Africa and Spain; the Saffarids and Tahirds in Khorasan and Sijistan; the Samanids in Buchara and Ghaznavids in India whose kingdom stretched from the Ganges to the Caspian Sea and who in India created an outstanding culture, upon which the old Indian culture has exerted considerable influence.

The ancient commercial relations of the Arabs with Central Africa, and later those of the Indian Muslims with East African and the insular peoples, prepared the ground for Islam even in those far-off lands, and to-day it is spreading in the Pacific ever farther and farther, because it is readily intelligible even to the lower comprehension of uncivilized peoples; because it is perfectly in accord with climatic conditions, more so, indeed, than any other religion, and at the same time does not make excessive demands on those who profess it. Chaillé-Long, in his book l'Afrique Centrale, where he describes his expedition to Victoria Nyanza, has observed that the Arabs have even penetrated to that place, and judging from his remarks on the type of negro to be found there, one must presume that actually a mixture between the Arabs and the negroes must have taken place in much earlier times. Thus we meet the Arabs, and with them Islam also, in the most distant countries, in which the teachings of the Prophet became an invaluable cultural factor in that it turned the nations from uncouthness and barbarism, raised them to a worthy stage of human development, and gave them the plain principles of a simple moral teaching.
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