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MUHAMMAD, THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PROPHET
MUHAMMAD, THE HISTORICAL PROPHET
SERMONS AND ESSAYS ON ISLAM: "STUDY OF ISLAM" SERIES

THE IDEAL PROPHET

INCORPORATING A PORTION OF
"GLIMPSES FROM THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET"

BY

THE KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

Imam of The Mosque, Woking

THE WOKING MUSLIM MISSION
AND
LITERARY TRUST,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.

TO

AL-HAJ NAWAB HAMIDULLAH

KHAN SAHIB BAHADUR

OF

BHOPAL, CENTRAL INDIA

First Published in 1925

FOREWORD

THE Author of this valuable addition to Islamic history needs no introduction from me, since he is almost as well known in the West as he is in the East, and the fairness and moderation with which he invariably handles his subjects have been favourably commented upon by readers all over the world.

In this book, like the other ten or twelve books he has written, it will be found that one of the characteristics is accuracy—all the statements are verified and supported by references to admittedly reliable authorities. As an example of this one has only to read his last book, *The Sources of Christianity*, and it is noteworthy that none of the critics—not even the Church papers—have even attempted to question the accuracy of any of the statements.

Since the appearance of the more recent works, attempts have been made to show that we Muslims are endeavouring to paint the Prophet quite a different colour and set up a New Islam with the view of furthering our Faith by these means. Now the present volume is written mainly to refute this effort to throw discredit on our methods, and I feel sure those who take the trouble to read the book through will admit that the Khwaja has very handsomely succeeded in the effort.

Our critics forget one thing: the historical facts connected with Muhammad stand out too prominently and are too well established to allow of any innovations. We have got voluminous books of traditions critically sifted and well established for their truth. They supply us with any amount

of material to write about Muhammad, and the Author has based all his statements on such authorities, and the Muslims are so jealous in this matter that anything written about the Prophet and not appearing in the "traditions" is discarded, no matter how much it may seemingly add to his glory. In this respect the Author makes particular mention of a biographer named Wakidi who has been taken to task for some of his statements which have been altogether discredited by men of admitted veracity and high reputation—one of them being Imam Shafii, who flourished in the early days of Islam. Unfortunately Wakidi has been quoted as an authority by certain European writers, and those very same discredited statements have been made much of by these writers. In this connection I may mention Professor Margoliouth; and it is particularly noticeable in his case, because he is supposed to be a very learned man and well versed in the intricacies of the Arabic language and history. He must surely have read what Imam Shafii and Ibn Khallican say about Wakidi when impeaching his veracity. Ibn Khallican says: "The traditions received from Wakidi are considered of feeble authority, and doubts have been expressed on the subject of his veracity." Imam Shafii says: "All the books of Wakidi are a heap of lies." It was surely the duty of Professor Margoliouth, when quoting Wakidi as an authority, to also make mention of the opinions of these learned and distinguished men. Of course if it is shown that the Professor was unaware that such persons as Imam Shafii and Ibn Khallican ever gave an opinion on such an important point, then it only seems to show that he is not quite so erudite as we thought on Arab history.

It is much to be deplored that one finds over and over again instances of missionaries and other Christian teachers wilfully misrepresenting our Faith to the world. How is it that I have so often had it said to me in the course of conversation: "You worship Muhammad and have to have four

wives," or "You believe that women have no souls and are not allowed in the Mosques"? These remarks are made in good faith and innocent of any attempt to deceive, but they point eloquently to the misleading teaching and wilful misrepresentations which are so common. There is something so inexpressibly mean and sordid in trying to advance one's religious beliefs by telling deliberate falsehoods about another religion. As the Khwaja says: "The Christian missionary is the worst sinner of all in this respect. He does not even spare his own prophets, and I, for one, fail to understand his mentality. On the one side, he believes in the prophethood of many of the Hebrew patriarchs, and on the other he recounts their wicked deeds, and incidentally he maligns those who, as the Bible says, walked humbly with the Lord, and were His begotten sons. What should we think of the God of these misnamed missionaries, Who chose such unrighteous people as His mouthpiece and sent them to act as models for us?" [1]

I am very glad to find that the Khwaja has followed, in this present volume, the healthy Muslim spirit of toleration and spirit of charity which characterized his former works, and which is, alas, so sadly wanting in very many Christian writings on religious matters. This tolerant spirit is appreciated, and I would gladly see it emulated for the credit of our sister religion. In referring to Jesus I find the following on page 6 of the book: "Jesus has begun to stand again as a man—neither as God nor as His son—in the estimate of the thinking minds in the West, and the Modernist is merely formulating progressive opinion in general. He is a true messenger of God, and one of the Muslim Prophets. He may or may not be an Ideal Prophet, but he is decidedly a sublime character: all gentleness, selflessness and humility; distressed with human troubles, but facing all temptations in manly wise; humble in station but courageous enough to expose

[1] See p. 131.

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hypocrisy in the higher ranks of society; insulted and persecuted, yet bearing it with meekness and patience; serving his friends and praying for his enemies; working wonders, yet never taking pride over them; ascribing them always to 'the finger of God,'[1] and even admitting other's ability to do the same; ever frank to admit his shortcomings; a true Prophet of his time who realized the social canker eating the heart and poisoning the life-blood of his people, and came with a remedy. Like Socrates and other martyrs to truth, he lived and died in the service of religion. Though somewhat exclusive in his sympathies, seeing that they were primarily for Jerusalem and her children. 'The tears he shed over his people may be estimated as the purest indication of his humanity.' What a noble and uplifting character in many ways! But if we take him as God his very achievements soil the Divine glory and, if anything, detract from the Divine dignity; all the grandeur, beauty and sublimity dwarf into nothing."

By way of contrast I may perhaps be permitted to take a few passages from the leaves of a book written by Miss Laura Helen Sawbridge and entitled *The Vision and the Mission of Womanhood.* This work contains the following passages with references to the Islamic Faith, and since it is issued under the ægis of the Bishop of London, who in the "Foreword" describes it as "a beautiful little book" which he commends "to the Church and Nation," I take it that these passages have the full approval of, at any rate, an important section of the Church of England.

Excerpts from Miss Sawbridge's book:—

"See now this vision of awful menace and solemn warning! The Crescent of the false prophet is lifted over 222 millions of the human race, contending for the rule of the nations against the Cross of Christ. That scimitar-like Crescent fitly

[1] Luke xi. 20.

symbolizes the world-spirit, which gained adherents to its faith at the point of the sword; the faith that appeals to the worldly and sensual, through its impure mixture of religiousness and immorality. The lust of the world contends with the Love of God. It is the religion that, while it vehemently proclaims its faith in one God, believes in Him as neither morally holy, nor as the Lord of Love and pity; and pours contempt upon the very thought of the Atoning Sacrifice of the Divine Sufferer. It is animated by the Spirit of Antichrist. It sets up the kingdom of the beast, strong and powerful; for the old, old promise of the tempter is, 'All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.' All shall be thine, all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, if thou wilt sell thy soul to false principle—to the lust of the flesh, to the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."

"See Mohammed, the false prophet, arise—of all religious founders, the only one who is later in time than the Christ of God—the only one who deliberately defied Him—utterly denying his claims."

"The love of Christian for Christian had been replaced by a burning hatred of sect for sect, so that when the Moslem appeared, the one would openly exult when the other was smitten. The Bride of Christ had been untrue to her Lord. She was herself animated by the spirit of the world instead of by the Holy Ghost—the only bond of Love and life-bearing Union with God. Having a name that she lived, she was dead. She had nothing but carnal weapons to oppose the awful force that bore down upon her. Therefore, throughout vast regions, the Church was swept from the face of the earth unto this very day. . . . Watch the Moslem bowing down where once the Christian knelt, and there denying vehemently the claims of Jesus Christ.

"Hear the Koran, the book of the false prophet—the only

one of all the sacred books of the world's religions that claims to supersede and deny the Everlasting Gospel. Hear that book repudiate the good tidings of great joy which were to be to all people."

Then follow some even more remarkable statements, and I feel considerable regret to think that the Bishop of London should have identified himself with such wild talk.

"Up to the time of Mohammed, *the Arabian woman enjoyed a great deal of social freedom, and her relationship with the other sex was healthier and franker than it has ever been since.*"

I do not propose to quote any further from this work, which from cover to cover contains the most undeserved and, so it seems to me, unchristian allusions to our Prophet and untruths respecting Islam, and I am most pleased to observe that the Khwaja has dealt with every point without referring to Miss Sawbridge or her book, which I myself should not have given much prominence to but for the fact that the Bishop of London has recommended it to the country as a beautiful work.

As regards the last quotation, a portion of which I have italicized, I wish to call particular attention to what the Khwaja says on page 27 in the following words:—

"But Arabia was the darkest spot in that darkest age of the world's history. Drink, adultery and gambling were common. Murder, infanticide and robbery were the pride of the Arabs. 'There were no moral, religious or social restrictions, no limits to marriage, no restraints on divorce.' Besides general promiscuity in sexual relations, they indulged habitually in incestuous connections. Sons treated the widows of their fathers as their wives. Wives in wedlock were not ashamed to receive attentions from others; nay, a married woman could even boast of the number of lovers she had had in the lifetime of her husband."

FOREWORD

In conclusion, I would draw the attention of His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury to the fact that we Muslims constitute a very large proportion of the British Empire, and indeed I have heard that His Majesty rules over more Muslims than Christians. It is possible perhaps that the benign influence of His Grace might be brought to bear on these fiery people with the view of curbing the flow of vituperative eloquence which is not conducive to harmony and good understanding.

HEADLEY.

IVY LODGE,
ST. MARGARET'S-ON-THAMES, TWICKENHAM,
December 2, 1925.

INTRODUCTION

"A NEW Mohammed drawn from a Christian paint-box." So says Rev. Mr. Cash in his recently published book, *The Moslem World in Revolution*, over the pen-pictures of the Holy Prophet given from time to time in the pages of the *Islamic Review*.

Islam and the Prophet, in their true colours, were practically unknown to the West until quite recently, and what was known of them was, most of it, an elaborate and conscienceless fiction. No sooner did they stand revealed in their original beauty, than the eyes of our adverse critics became dazzled. Our picture of the Prophet exposed the falsity of their writings and destroyed their past labour; but it was so fascinating and so irresistibly arresting, that they were unable to raise any objection to it at all save one, and that was that we had presented the Prophet in borrowed plumes, and not as he really was. The plumage was admittedly of enviable beauty, therefore it could not be of Islam, so our enemies argued, and in this argument they found a sort of cold consolation. They saw that they were losing ground, so they adopted a new subterfuge. "Neo-Islam"[1] and a

[1] Another person, Dr. W. Stanton by name, whose sojourn in India, as he wrongly thinks, authorizes him to call himself an authority on Islam, evinced only his ignorance of it, the other day when he wrote in some Christian paper that the Islam at Woking was something which he never heard of before. He wrote the truth. He never knew before what was real Islam. He read it through his coloured glasses to help him in his crusade against Islam; but his eyes became opened to realities through Woking. He could not say anything against the picture we sketched of Islam in its true colours; and in helplessness he joined his brethren in the Christian Mission propaganda in the new chorus, "Neo-Islam in Woking."

"Neo-Muhammad" is their cry to-day, and in fact they could not have paid a better compliment to our work than this, and I accepted it as such.[1]

Muhammad, in a way, is a new Muhammad to the Western world. He will remain so here for some time to come, like the fairest things in nature, which, eternally developing new and unexpected beauties, remain eternally fresh, new, and wonderful. Things which ignorance rejects as ugly and repelling become, when seen through the eyes of knowledge and understanding, both beautiful and fascinating. Their beauty continuously increases as our knowledge of them makes further progress. So will it be with Muhammad. Hitherto, in his case, not only ignorance but mis-statement or perversion of facts and suppression of the truth have unfortunately borne their part. "Neo-Muhammad" or "Neo-Islam" is not a new cry. It is only a re-echo of the old yell which has echoed on every occasion whenever there has arisen in Europe a new admirer of Muhammad who has not feared to voice his admiration for the Prophet. Gibbon, for his praise of Muhammad, was considered almost a heathen writer, as well as for his honest but unpalatable remarks on Christianity, as it was at the advent of the Prophet.

But when Carlyle unveiled, as it were, the beauty of the Holy Prophet to the Western eye, the old cry was so furiously raised against him, that the Dean of Edinburgh University, though determined enough in other matters, succumbed to it and was forced to tone down his eulogies of the Prophet in his subsequent writings. But Carlyle opened many eyes. His *Heroes and Hero-Worship* was followed by the appreciative works of Higgins, Devonport and Bosworth-Smith in English; of Krehl and Gremence in German, and the monumental work of Cætani in Italian, which, in the eyes of educated Europe, completely demolished the stock arguments employed

[1] "An Urgent Call," by the author.

by Christianity against Islam. "Muhammad is now no longer an impostor, but a great reformer. He is no longer a neurotic patient suffering from epilepsy, but a man of tremendous character and unbending will. He is no longer a self-seeking despot ministering to his own selfish ends, but a beneficent ruler, shedding light and love around him. He is no longer an opportunist, but a prophet with a fixed purpose, undeviating in his constancy. All this, Europe has now acknowledged, and acknowledged freely."[1] All this, however, did not affect the mental equipoise of the enemies of Islam so long as such acknowledgment remained buried in big libraries and was known only to the educated few. It is the recent awakening of the West to our faith that has disturbed the complacency of the enemies' camp.

The picture which the *Islamic Review* has given of Muhammad would, indeed, seem to be flawless in the eyes of our opponents, and in no way to be taken exception to; it must have gone to their hearts irresistibly, since they declare that "there is an attempt to make Muhammad the ethical ideal for mankind, and that this has involved the painting of a new Muhammad in colours drawn from a Christian paint-box."[2] Leaving aside for the moment all reference to the Holy Prophet, I am inclined, in all seriousness, to wonder whether it be possible to picture any sort of ethical ideal for mankind with the materials that can be obtained from a Christian paint-box. I cannot understand even the meaning of the word "Christian" when it is used by these men. It has become elastic enough to mean everything and anything, which results, very often, in its meaning nothing at all. Whatever appeals to a Christian missionary at the moment, he graces with the epithet "Christian," though he may not find the like of it in his own scripture. For example,

[1] S. Khuda Bakhsh, *Journal of the Muslim Institute*, Calcutta.
[2] *The Muslim World in Revolution*, p. 87.

I may refer to the status of woman under Christianity. Her position was not an enviable one when Jesus appeared. The Hebrew law and the practice of that race, who were extremely self-indulgent in his days, had made her a chattel in the house, a thing to be bartered and passed from hand to hand. She does not seem to have concerned Jesus much; she fails to draw upon herself the commiseration of the master, and he has not a single word to say as to ameliorating her condition. Then comes St. Paul. His unchivalrous and harsh references to woman in his writings are well known. The early Fathers go a step farther and spare no aspersion to malign womanhood; and this condition of things has continued with modifications up to the present day, when woman has at last begun to assert herself. The cultured contact of the West with Islam, especially in the days of the Crusades, brought to the Western world its ideals of chivalry. Honestly speaking, I fail to see anything in Christian teaching which has any bearing at all on the betterment of woman. By Christian teachings, I do not mean what comes from the Christian pulpit to-day. The leading Christian thought of the twentieth century is radically different from the Christian thought of early centuries. They are not on the same intellectual level. "What the religious person calls Christianity to-day—a religion of the individual, a personal healing principle—would have seemed folly to the early Christian."[1] No. By Christian teaching I mean the teachings of Jesus himself or what may be inferred reasonably from his words and actions. But if he himself remains absolutely silent on a subject, anything said on it in our days by Christian writers cannot be styled Christian teaching. Woman, as the history of Christendom shows, has ever been the most maltreated person, and yet I read in Dean Farrar's famous *Life* that Christianity "ennobled man, elevated woman, and lent a halo of innocence

[1] *Rise of Christianity*, by Kalhoff.

to the life of the child." When and where Christianity did accomplish these things before the modern times? Modern ideas and ideals have come from sources other than Christianity. A religion that teaches that every child is born in sin rather robs him of innocence than lends him a halo. These writers should know better and respect history more. They should think twice on the implications of their own religion's doctrines before making such assertions. The Christian tenet of original sin involves an assumption which ennobles neither man nor child, neither can the principle of the Immaculate Conception elevate motherhood.

But there is another undesirable thing in some of the writers. Unfortunately Christianity has some advocates who advance her cause at the expense of others. They illuminate her by blackening other religions, they safeguard her by robbing others of their due; they deify her Lord by reviling all other Prophets of God. They have a novel system of recording actualities, for they know that they cannot appeal to facts in history. The force of repetition stands with them as the equivalent of proof. To repeat certain statements, while ignoring rebutting facts, is a sure method of carrying conviction to the minds of thousands. These writers have adopted this plan. They play upon the mob psychology and produce the desired effect. In writing against other religions the popular course is this: First of all, one writer says something by way of suggestion or insinuation; the next after him declares the suggestion a possibility; the possibility then is converted into a theory by a third writer, while the fourth tries to make a fact out of the theory. Thus a wish, in four or five metamorphoses becomes a well-established fact, especially when other religions or civilizations come under their criticism.[1]

[1] Professor Margoliouth has especial merit in this respect. His writings always surprise me. In his case I really fail to differentiate between ignorance and mischief. For example, to make out his case he

A Christian missionary should not, however, forget that morality and ethics are not summed up in a few expressions of soft, unvirile morality. Ethics and human morals have aspects which will hardly be found touched on in the Gospel records. But I need not say more on this point. It can serve no useful purpose, and, moreover, personal reflection, however just and however justified, tends to promote ill-feeling, and comparisons are always odious.'

I propose, therefore, to join issue in the following manner. I propose, in these pages to sketch briefly the manners and

would read "Quenazite" for "Qurashite" sometimes; it may be a slip of the pen or an oversight, but, inasmuch as it gives a different colour to the whole story of the event concerned, it is difficult to distinguish between an error or distortion on his part. It is now worth while for a Muslim to show Professor Margoliouth to the world in his true colours, but the present is not the proper occasion for it. Here I do but refer to what he has done in his role of average propagandist against Islam, on the lines I have described here. Only a few months ago Dr. Mingana comes with his story of discovering some Syrian translation of the Qur-àn, which does not contain the translation of certain passages of the Qur-àn, and thereby he tries to insinuate that the Qur-an might have suffered in its purity. Conscious of the failure of his first abortive effort to question the genuineness of the Qur-àn, Dr. Mingana is too cautious this time to hazard any opinion. Yet "putting the cart before the horse" is a novel way of proving things. I am not, however, concerned with that at present. I merely desire to illustrate the habits of these propagandists, and their ingenious method of making mountains out of molehills, and I instance these gentlemen because they are the stars of this particular horizon. One comes with a suggestion, and in order to inspire confidence among the wary of the readers, expresses himself in very cautious language, knowing full well that his pen-comrade (if the phrase be permitted) will do what is necessary to perfect a contrivance, whereby his nebulous suggestions will presently assume (to all appearance) the solidity of hard fact. By way of illustration, I may mention that Dr. Mingana himself is very doubtful as to the antiquity of that Syrian translation of the Qur-àn. I quote his actual words:—

"No one is more conscious than we are of the gravity of the above suggestion as to the antiquity of the Syriac translation, and we hope that the care with which we have expressed ourselves will prove—as a Syriac saying has it—a healthy deterrent to an Arabic and Syriac

character of the Holy Prophet. I shall substantiate my statements by references to such of his own actions as have been set down in properly authenticated records. On the other hand, though the authenticity of the Bible has admittedly been impeached, I accept nevertheless everything said therein of Jesus as correct. It will then be possible for critics to decide whether the picture which I shall paint of Muhammad owes anything whatever to the record of Christ in the Bible. I assure them that they will not find in the Bible even the

scholar, whether Christian or Muslim, who might accuse us of lack of caution or of hasty conclusions. We are face to face with a Syriac text, the character and the nature of which *are not well defined.* We have brought forward strong reasons for believing that it does not emanate from Barsalibi, but we are not able *to ascertain with confidence the exact time of its appearance.*"

Now I quote Professor Margoliouth from his article entitled "Textual Variations of the Koran":—

"Until January of this year no ancient version of the Koran had been introduced into the criticism of that book; Dr. Mingana, who has discovered a Syriac version of *high antiquity,* and described in the Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, is the pioneer in this matter. The same scholar, in his *Leaves from Three Ancient Korans* (Cambridge, 1924), called attention to noteworthy variants in old manuscripts" (*Muslim World,* Vol. XV, No. 4, p. 334).

One fails to understand the standard of decency which the writer keeps before him when he writes on Islam. A thing of doubtful antiquity in the judgment of its discoverer, as the italics in the quotation show, becomes a matter of high antiquity within a space of less than a year with Professor Margoliouth. The last sentence of the quotation from Professor Margoliouth gives a clue to the real situation. The propaganda of the said *Leaves* was left as a hopeless task. But now mention has been made in unequivocal terms, I fancy that the third writer of the series will merely quote the words "noteworthy variants in old manuscripts" under the name of Margoliouth and it will pass as an authority to prove that the Qur-án, like the Bible, is not genuine. This is the way in which these clever people seek to play upon the ignorance of the many. Let the Professor ponder over it before he is put to further task. Is he not guilty of giving a false prop in the hand of the cunning adverse critic of the Qur-àn. The writings of Dr. Mingana may disappear, but his name will be used as an authority for such an unauthorized remark. Is he authorized to use the words *high antiquity* when Dr. Mingana himself thinks otherwise?

shadow of a one-tenth part of what they will read in these pages concerning the Holy Prophet.

I am not the first writer to discuss this subject. The Arabian, the Persian, and the Indian scholars and divines have all, through the ages, dwelt with the proudest satisfaction on the graces and gifts of the Holy Prophet.[1] I have

[1] The same may be said of many Europeans. I will cite, by way of example, Dr. Gustave Weil (Germany) and Mr. Poole. Will Mr. Cash examine for himself and see if they also have painted Muhammad in Christian colours? It is well to think this before making any assertion. Mr. Poole says:—

"There is something so tender and womanly, and withal so heroic, about the man, that one is in peril of finding the judgment unconsciously blinded by the feeling of reverence and well-nigh love that such a nature inspires. He who, standing alone braved for years the hatred of his people, is the same who was never the first to withdraw his hand from another's clasp; the beloved of children, who never passed a group of little ones without a smile from his wonderful eyes and a kind word for them, sounding all the kinder in that sweet-toned voice. The frank friendship, the noble generosity, the dauntless courage and hope of the man, all tend to melt criticism into admiration.

"He was an enthusiast in that noblest sense when enthusiasm becomes the salt of the earth, the one thing that keeps men from rotting whilst they live. Enthusiasm is often used despitefully, because it is joined to an unworthy cause, or falls upon barren ground and bears no fruit. So was it not with Mohammed. He was an enthusiast when enthusiasm was the one thing needed to set the world aflame, and his enthusiasm was noble for a noble cause. He was one of those happy few who have attained the supreme joy of making one great truth their very life-spring. He was the messenger of the one God; and never to his life's end did he forget who he was, or the message which was the marrow of his being. He brought his tidings to his people with a grand dignity sprung from the consciousness of his high office, together with a most sweet humility, whose roots lay in the knowledge of his own weakness."

Dr. Weil says:—

"Muhammad set a shining example to his people. His character was pure and stainless. His dress, his food, they were characterized by a rare simplicity. So unpretentious was he that he would receive from his companions no special mark of reverence, nor would he accept any service from his slave which he could do himself. Often and often was he seen in the market purchasing provisions; often and often was he seen mending his clothes in his room, or milking a goat in his court-

only translated something from their work. One of them is Imam Ghazalee, whose genius, learning and piety have drawn tribute from European writers. But his works on the character of Muhammad are in themselves culled from the writings of Bukhari, Muslim and other books of *Sihah-Sittah*—books the authenticity of which has never been called in question.

There are numberless books on the life of the Holy Prophet, some of them written in the early days of Islam, and among these Books of *Sirat*[1] and *Maghazi*[2] are conspicuous. Nevertheless they should be put to the test of the Books of Hadith —the traditions of the Prophet—before they can be accepted as reliable on the subject. Hafiz Zainuddin, a well-known "traditionist," very rightly remarks in his book, *Al-fiya-fis-syar*: "The seeker should remember that books on the *Sirat* (biography) of Muhammad gather all kinds of traditions and sayings, both those that are true and those which should be rejected." The *Sirat* and *Maghazi* books were not over-carefully compiled, and many unreliable accounts, in the nature of fiction, crept into them. On the other hand, in the books of *Hadith*, we have the statements of about 13,000 persons—who had spoken with the Prophet and seen him—that have been written down and passed on to us. "In order, then, to ascertain whether a certain narrator of a certain tradition is trustworthy, we consult a special branch of Arabic literature known as Asma-ur-Rijal—that is to say, the names of those who have either spoken to or seen the Prophet. In these books are preserved the accounts of the lives of the persons

yard. He was accessible to all and at all times. He visited the sick and was full of sympathy for all. Unlimited was his benevolence and generosity, and so was his anxious care for the welfare of the community. Despite innumerable presents which from all quarters unceasingly poured in for him, he left very little behind, and even that he regarded as state property."

[1] Biography. [2] Campaigns.

who are narrators of traditions, and it is from these books that we learn whether such should be accepted or rejected. Thousands of 'traditionists' spent their whole lives in preparing this branch of knowledge. They took long journeys to meet and interview the persons who could relate any events of the life of Muhammad. They met them and inquired about them; whether the narrator was a pious man; what were his occupations; whether he had a good memory; whether he was of a superficial or deep character; and if he proved to be in any way deficient, his evidence was rejected." It was under this system of sifting the truth that the books of *Sihah Sittah*—six reliable books of traditions—were prepared and became the basis of all other books on the life of the Prophet.

The books of *Maghazi*, on the other hand, have not appealed to the Muslim Divines and "traditionists," and their writers have not been accepted as reliable. Among these writers, Wakidi and his Kátib have been regarded,[1] in the Muhammadan world, as the *least trustworthy* and most *careless biographers* of Muhammad. Of the former Ibn Khallican speaks thus: "The traditions received from him (Wakidi) are considered of feeble authority, and doubts have been expressed on the subject of his veracity" (vol. iii, p. 62). Imam Sháfi'i —one of the four great Imams of the Muslim world—says that all the books of Wakidi are a load of lies, and other "traditionists" say the same. But unfortunately Wakidi is the chief authority with some of those European writers, who approach the subject with sinister motives and for obvious reasons. They can get such material in this fiction-writer's account of the Campaigns of Muhammad as, with little distortion, will help them to malign the Holy Prophet. Last August some defamatory matter concerning the Holy Prophet appeared in the daily Press. Professor Margoliouth was

[1] *Life of Muhammad*, by Syed Ameer Ali.

quoted by the writer as his authority, and the learned professor cited Wakidi as his authority. I asked him about it, and his reply was as I had anticipated. I, however, informed him that his choice had fallen upon a well-known liar. I hope that the learned professor will make amends in future. "The days are gone," as a writer in the *Islamic Review* (vol. xiii, No. 2) says, "when one could say a thing in some corner of the world and nobody would raise a voice of protest. To-day the world is one 'ear.'"

Before I conclude I must acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. Abdul Majid, M.A., of the Muslim Mission, Woking, and Mr. Abdul Khálique Khan, B.A., M.R.A.S., (Lond.), Bohra Muslim Missionary, for the service they have rendered in translating some of the *Hadiths* from the original text and in reading proofs of the book. May God bless them for their valuable assistance.

I am also grateful to those Muslim brethren who responded to my call and came forward with pecuniary help and enabled me to bring this book within the easy reach of those interested in our literature. Among them I would make particular mention of Her Highness the Begum Sahibah of Bhopal, to whom I am indebted in very many ways in the conduct of the Muslim Mission in my hands, and of Dr. Sir Mian Muhammad Shafi, the late Home Member of the Viceregal Council, India, and Barrister-at-Law at Lahore. He has enabled me to send several hundred copies of this book as a gift to various libraries in the West.

KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

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PEN PORTRAIT OF THE HOLY PROPHET

(HULYAH MUBARAK)

In place of a photographic likeness of the Prophet, I give herewith a pen portrait of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, as I find it outlined in Bukhari,[1] the well-authenticated book of the Traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

The Prophet's height was neither too tall nor too short. When he walked by himself, people said he was short-statured; whereas, when he walked with another, the Prophet seemed the taller of the two. The Prophet would say that the medium height was the best.

The Prophet's complexion was white, without being wheat-coloured or too white—the colour that is pure white is free from every mixture of yellow, red or any other colour.

Some have described the Prophet's complexion as being ruddy, and, in order to be consistent, have said that the parts exposed to the air and sun, such as the face, neck and ears, were reddish, while the parts covered by his clothes were pure white.

The Prophet's hair was curly and did not hang straight down; yet it was not too bushy. When the Prophet combed his locks, there was in them a wavy appearance. They say his hair flowed down to his shoulder. It is frequently stated to have reached the lobes of his ears. The Prophet sometimes parted his hair into two locks, one on each side of the ear. Sometimes he would comb his hair

[1] Also in Tirmizi's *Shamail*, Ibn-i-Hanbal's *Musnad*, *Muslim*.

above his ears, so that his neck could be seen there. In his beard and head there were only seventeen grey hairs, and never more than that.

His face was more beautiful than that of others; he who described the Prophet's face always compared it with the full moon. And because his skin was fair, the Prophet's anger and cheer could be discerned from his countenance. And the people said of him that he was, even as he is described by his friend Siddiq-i-Akbar in the couplet below :—

As there is no darkness in moonlit night,
So is Mustafa, the well-wisher, bright.

The forehead of the Prophet was wide, and the eyebrows were thin and full. Between the eyebrows there was a silvery lustre. The eyes of the Prophet were large and open, deep and dark with a tint of redness. His eyelashes were long, and so thick, that they looked as if they were about to meet. His nose sloped downward in just proportion; his teeth were a little interspaced, and, when he laughed, their brilliancy rivalled that of the lightning. His lips were beautiful and fascinating. His cheeks were not soft, but firm. His face was neither long, nor circular, but slightly rounded. His beard was thick, and he would not have it trimmed, but allowed it to grow. His moustache he wore clipped. The neck of the Prophet was more beautiful than that of other men; it was neither long nor short. The part of it, which was exposed to the sun and air looked like an urn of silver chased with gold. His breast, free from all malice, was broad, and no part of it seemed more prominent than the rest. . . Its surface was even and transparent and smooth. From the thorax to the navel there was a thin line of hair. There were no hairs besides. Both the shoulders of the Prophet were broad and thickly overgrown with hair. His shoulders, ankles and armpits were well-covered with

flesh. His back was broad, and near his right shoulder-blade was a mark like a seal, and in it there was a black mole, somewhat yellowish, round which there was some thick hair. Both his hands and arms were fleshy, his wrists long and his palms broad. His hands and feet were broad and wide set. His fingers were as if they were phalanges of silver. His palm was soft, even as velvet, and filled with scent like the palm of a perfumer. His thighs and calves were fleshy. His body was moderately stout, but in his old age it remained muscular and sinewy, as if it were re-born. His gait was firm; his step steadfast. In walking he leaned forward, and kept his paces close together.

The Prophet would say that he was more like Adam than other men, while in morals and disposition he resembled his father Abraham.

CHAPTER I

GODS-INCARNATE AS HUMAN IDEALS

THE war has left the world the wiser in many ways; for Armageddon brought in close contact with each other men of different races and widely divergent creeds. Those who had erstwhile divided the world into the two great opposing camps—the Christian and the Heathen—had their eyes opened so that they were able to perceive and appreciate excellences and beauties in faiths other than their own. The religious horizon in the West was widened; and thoughts which for many years past had been mute occupants of the minds of the more thinking section of educated humanity, began at last to find expression. A new religious consciousness has dawned upon the Western mind and the religious views have undergone a tremendous revolution, and that in a manner which may best be described as almost precipitate; the work of centuries has been accomplished in a few years. "Church repels" [1] and "the empty pews and vacant benches" are the salient features respectively, to-day, of ecclesiastical economy and of public worship. It indicates the tendencies of the modern mind. The laity would have "the teachings of Christ stripped of dogmas that others have put on them" [2] and Christianity shorn "of doctrines that were to serve a special purpose but now serve none." [3] It was to popularize

[1] Archbishop of York. [2] Hugh Walpole. [3] Rebecca West.

the faith with the Pagan world that the dogma of "God Incarnate, with the other Mystery tenets in its train," was incorporated into the simple faith of Jesus. The borrowed colours, though, remained deep and thick enough for centuries to conceal the real faith, have, however, become threadbare and no longer in demand. The beautiful of yesterday has become the odious of to-day. The Church's house, as it were, needed setting in order, and the Modernists of the Anglican Communion have set themselves boldly to the task. But they do not seem greatly to have perturbed the mind of the general public. Within nine years the superstructure of eighteen centuries has been demolished, and yet the "average Christian" continues to go about his daily tasks, serene and undismayed. The Suffering God is no longer an ideal in the estimate of the thinking laity. The Crucified Deity is to them an old myth; well enough for a child's imagination or for those who seek to shift such of the irksome burdens of the world as have fallen to their lot on to the shoulders of others. But for the rest, the Pauline story of the Angered God and His appeasement through vicarious sacrifice is only "an infiltration of the mystery cult."

The ancient world was not without her gods incarnate. The suffering deity appeared as "Redeemer and Mediator between man and God" in various parts of the world, at different times and in diverse shapes. He was Mithra of the Persian and the Baal of the Babylonians. If in Phrygia he was Attis, he was Adonis in Syria. He was Bacchus in Greece and Horus in Egypt. Apollo was the same to Constantine, who had only to place Christ on the pedestal of divinity recently vacated by Apollo, to ensure the successful furtherance of his far-reaching political schemes.

All these "beloved Sons" of God were born, so the myth goes, from the virgin womb on or about the 25th of December. They all brought the grace of the blood to mankind; they

all died to save man from eternal perdition, and their death, in each case, occurred on Friday before Easter Sunday; they were buried, but rose from the dead after two days; they founded Communions of Saints into which disciples were received by Baptism; they were commemorated by Eucharistic feasts. But to-day the world knows that these were mere mythical conceptions of the sun-worship cult which crept into the faith of Jesus afterwards.[1]

It is a misnomer to call such doctrines "theology." They were the devil's work, in the opinion of Tertullian[2] and Justin Martyr.[3] It is, however, immaterial whether the Arch-fiend anticipated the Church in mimicking its rites, as Justin says, or whether the Church incorporated such doctrines from Paganism; they are the work of Antichrist—whether Antichrist be the devil or man, seeing that they are contrary to the very spirit of Jesus, who demands of every person that he should bear his own cross. "No heathen tribe had ever conceived so grotesque an idea," Sir Arthur Conan Doyle remarks in a recent article called "My Religion," "involving, as it

[1] See *The Sources of Christianity*, by the author.

[2] "The Devil, whose business is to prevent the truth, mimicks the exact circumstances of the Divine Sacraments in the Mysteries of Idols. He himself *baptizes some*, that is to say, his believers and followers; he promises *forgiveness of sins from the sacred fount*, and *thereby initiates them* into the religion of Mithra. Thus he marks the foreheads of his own soldiers, thus he celebrates the *oblation of bread*; he brings in the symbol of *resurrection*, and wins the crown with the sword. He limits his chief priest to a single marriage, he even has his virgins and ascetics" (*Our Sun-God*, p. 179). Italics are mine.

[3] "The apostles, in the commentaries written by themselves which we call Gospels, have delivered down to us how that Jesus thus commanded them: 'He having taken bread, after that He had given thanks, said: Do this in commemoration of Me; this is My body; also having taken the cup and returned thanks, He said: This is My blood, and delivered it unto them alone'; which things the evil spirit have taught to be done out of memory in the mysteries and ministrations of Mithra. . . . For that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, you either know or can learn" (Justin Martyr, *Apol. II*).

does, the assumption that man was born with a hereditary stain upon him, that this stain for which he was not personally responsible had to be atoned for, and that the Creator of all things was compelled to make a blood sacrifice of His own innocent son in order to neutralize this mysterious curse."[1]

Jesus has begun to stand again as a man—neither as God nor as His son—in the estimate of the thinking minds in the West, and the Modernist is merely formulating progressive opinion in general. He is a true messenger of God, and one of the Muslim Prophets. He may or may not be an Ideal Prophet, but he is decidedly a sublime character; all gentleness, selflessness and humility; distressed with human troubles, but facing all temptations in manly wise; humble in station, but courageous enough to expose hypocrisy in the higher ranks of society; insulted and persecuted, yet bearing it with meekness and patience; serving his friends and praying for his enemies; working wonders, yet never taking pride over them; ascribing them always to "the finger of God,"[2] and even admitting other's ability to do the same; ever frank to admit his shortcomings; a true Prophet of his time who realized the social canker eating the heart and poisoning the life-blood of his people, and came with a remedy. Like Socrates and other martyrs to truth, he lived and died in the service of religion. Though somewhat exclusive in his sympathies, seeing that they were primarily for Jerusalem and her children. "The tears he shed over his people may be estimated as the purest indication of his humanity."

What a noble and uplifting character in many ways! But if we take him as God his very achievements soil the Divine glory and, if anything, detract from the Divine dignity; all the grandeur, beauty and sublimity dwarf into nothing.

[1] *Daily Express*, September 12th, 1925.

[2] Luke xi. 20.

What a poor show and a pitiable exhibition of Divine attributes. God, and yet led by the devil, and persecuted by the wicked, and insulted and tortured by the most despicable amongst his own creatures. A helpless being before his enemies; though able to overcome death and thus to thwart the schemes of his persecutors through his resurrection, yet even then concealing and disguising himself that he may not be put to death again; working the greatest miracle in the world—if he rose from the dead—yet concealing it from those most in need of it; afraid to taste the cup of affliction, but forced to drink it to the very dregs; planning a novel and a curious scheme to save humanity from the evil consequences of His own previous work,[1] yet failing in courage to face the hardships incident to its fulfilment; showing ordinary human weakness in turning to a tree when pressed with hunger, though it was not the time of fruit-bearing—thus indicating not only lack of omniscience but lack of ordinary human common sense, and then becoming enraged with an inanimate object (the tree) when baffled in his attempt —we also do much the same sort of thing when we kick a door which is not opened to us quickly enough—and, last of all, ignoring all those stern faculties with which he himself had invested humanity and preaching from the Mount a Sermon of an, humanly speaking, impracticable morality. There is nothing in the actions or words of the man Jesus to indicate that the God of nature and God of conscience had appeared in human flesh in the fulness of time, as the

[1] The doctrine of the Atonement is, to me, as irrelevant. That a father should invent the laws of a game knowing that they must be broken, force people to play it, sentence the players to punishment for breaking them, and accept the agony of his son as a substitute for the punishment, was credible enough to people who believed that hate might be the ultimate law of life.* * Rebecca West.

Bishop of London says.[1] Even His miracles on the earth, if He be God, dwindle into nothing when compared with His own work as Creator of the Universe. His miracles, as those of a Prophet, however, cannot astonish any student of the Bible. The other Hebrew prophets "cured diseases, raised the dead, divided the sea, commanded the Sun and the Moon to stand still, and ascended to Heaven accompanied by a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and the metaphorical style of the Hebrews might well ascribe to a saint and martyr the figurative title of Son of God."[2]

Jesus, as portrayed in the Bible, if God, is not a good conception of Godhood. Ramchandra and Krishna, the gods of the Hindus, show more glory and grandeur befitting their claims.

These two last-named claimants of Godhood, as their votaries would make them appear, have, however, never invited our serious consideration. They may or may not be gods, but, even if they be gods, they are of no help to us as such. They can neither be our ideals nor our models; for our ideals and aspirations are of necessity those of men. We can only follow one who is a man of like fashion with ourselves, whose powers, whether of mind or body, are no greater and no less than can be found in ourselves. Nothing can be a stronger incentive to us for following a teacher than our belief that his nature and ours are, in effect, one and the same. A lion or an elephant may, as circumstances dictate, excite in us wonder, admiration and terror; but we do not take lions or elephants as our ideals, because, however greatly we might desire to become lions or elephants, we know full well that such consummation is out of our power. Similarly, we are incapable of becoming God; we cannot go beyond the limits of our humanity. Where then arises the necessity of having a God-in-man placed before us as our ideal? The

[1] *Daily Express*, September 15, 1925. [2] Gibbon.

whole scheme, if any, would seem to be irrelevant. The Qur-án expounds this truth in these words:

> And nothing prevented people from believing when the guidance came to them except that they said: What! has Allah raised up a mortal to be an apostle?
>
> Say: Had there been in the earth: Angels walking alone as settlers; We would certainly have sent down to them from the heaven an angel as an apostle.[1]

An angel-apostle from God could only come to angels. Equipped, as he needs must be, with faculties essentially different from ours, he could not be an ideal for us, much less a God incarnate. We have been made after the image of God; we have somewhat of the Divine flame in us, but our soul is but only a tiny fragment of the Divine Soul, and that hampered and often hidden by the low passions out of which it must be evolved. We need a teacher and a master who has the same advantages and disadvantages as we; he must be an evolved soul, but from the very same stuff which now impedes our course of progress. He must have the same inclinations as ours, but with the power to control them. Though I read nothing of Jesus in the whole Evangelical record which could not be said of certain of his fellow-men, yet he is essentially human. He is worthy of being received as a model for our conduct—else why, in Islam, do we rank him next to the Holy Prophet? But I say it again that if Jesus is God, his utility to us as a pattern of humanity is nil; seeing that nothing can make us God. We are men, with the ideals and aspirations of men; we can follow one who, like the Prophet of Arabia, says to us: "I am only a man like unto you."[2] That is a great gospel for humanity. It brings the true ideal before us and opens up a splendid vista of shining hopes and glorious possibilities. Here is the greatest and the best of men,[3] the man who brought

[1] Holy Qur-án, xvii. 94, 95. [2] *Ibid.*, xviii. 110. [3] See ch. ii.

to perfect expression the best of that of which human nature is capable, and he says to us, "I am only a man like unto you." We may not reach the top of the ladder whereon he stands, but his thundering words dispel all doubts as to the capacity inherent in us and open a gateway to hope and success. He assures one that he and I are, as regards power and capabilities, alike, and this it is that compels me to follow him. No God incarnate can ask, or expect, any person to follow in His footsteps. If we are capable of following Him, then He is in His power and capabilities our equal, and every unit of erring humanity is as much the Son of God as He; but, of course, only in the figurative sense. If, however, He possesses within Him Godhood, and which is not and cannot be in us, He cannot say to us, as Muhammad says in the words of the Qur-án, "Follow me, God will love you and suppress your evil propensities."[1] A God Incarnate is as a pattern for humanity hopeless. How can He be an ideal to us when there is no affinity of powers and capabilities between Him and other men? "The ideal is to be attained by selecting and assembling in one whole the beauties and perfections which are usually seen in different individuals, excluding everything defective or unseemly, so as to form a type or model of the species."[2] A God incarnate does not belong to our species, there being something in Him to differentiate Him from us, and cannot consequently stand before us as a type of perfection, of beauty or of excellence.

Sermon and Sacrament.

The series of articles on "My Religion" in the *Daily Express* has done an immense amount of good. It has cleared the ground, and beliefs of the layman have at last found

[1] Holy Qur-án, liii. 30.
[2] Fleming. Webster's *New International Dictionary.*

expression. In fact the period of Gods-incarnate is over, and that Christianity has proved the last chapter in the history of the Mystery cults. It gave, as it were, the summary of all pagan beliefs and rites, but it is now coming to its conclusion. The world before Jesus, as I wrote in the *Sources of Christianity*, was not without her Christs. He was the last of the series under the Church dogma. If the Religion of Sermon—God raising Prophets to reveal His mind to the people through sermons, and the people acting upon them—has, from the very beginning, been the religion of a large portion of humanity, it is equally true the Religion of Sacrament and Baptism has not been less attractive to others. Nay, the latter in olden days has claimed a wider allegiance from humanity than the former, and this for obvious reasons. It is more mystic than the other, and consequently more appealing to the child in man. The magic in it, that it will secure us all that is necessary without much trouble and that it will save us from facing the brunt of life—"Has not Christ washed off my sin through his blood?"—a happy slogan to induce us to throw our irksome burden on to the shoulders of others—must be more inviting. But the world has become wiser, and the days of charm and magic are over. The best and most eloquent testimony to this fact comes from the empty pews and vacant benches of the churches. Had the laity, in general, any belief in the efficacy of the Sacrament, the Archbishop of Canterbury would have had no occasion to bewail the shortcomings of the clergy. There would have been no necessity for them to keep pace with the time and prepare suitable sermons, if Sacrament were believed to be sufficiently efficacious, as the old belief went. But the Sacrament has lost its charm, and hundreds of thousands of Christians spend their Sabbaths in motoring, golf, lawn tennis, going to concerts, kinema shows, even dancing. Even those who seriously wish to devote the Sabbath to heart-searching

and worship do not want to hear the message from the professional spiritual leaders. They go to places of worship where the administration of the Holy Communion has been utterly dispensed with and the sermon takes precedence of the Sacrament. The responsible authorities in the Church, too, have become alive to the situation. Dr. Barnes indirectly but cautiously, and therefore partially, traces the Sacramental institution as an infiltration of a heathen cult. His remark acts as a feeler. It no doubt arouses some opposition from the English Church Union, and the Archbishop of Canterbury's attention has also been drawn to it, but the generality of the Christian conscience remains unperturbed; so much so, that the Primate would not take notice of Dr. Barnes's remark in his address to the Church Congress held last month; he would only exhort the clergy to burn the midnight oil and come to the pulpit with better sermons. But what the Primate forgets is this, that if the Sacrament is still the pivot on which the Church religion hinges, the sermon must retire to the background. The truth, however, has dawned upon the Church authorities, and the days of the Religion of Sacraments are numbered, and with it the days of Gods-incarnate in the West. There is a silver lining edging the clouds that have been enshrouding the simple faith of Jesus, since the Pauline innovations. The Sacrament was a Pagan rite, and the Church sanctified it. Many of the ceremonies and tenets long accepted by the Church have been found wrong, and rejected. Besides, the Sacrament did not come from Jesus; it does not disclose his mind. It is the sermon that does so, and must take precedence of the other. The matter is being sifted, and it will not be long before a conclusion is arrived at. The Lord's Supper is only a memorial of a certain event in the life of the Master, and should be revered as such. But it should be divested of the magical effect it possesses in the popular belief. People should understand that they can be at one with the

Master only by following him in thought and deed. Their participation in the Eucharistic meals or the baptismal rites can have nothing to do with their salvation. It has also been argued in this connection that St. Paul, the first witness of Christianity, had not much faith in the Sacramental meals and rites. It seems to be so. He does not make mention of it in his writings; nay, he seems to be averse to it. "I thank God that I baptized none of you" are his words. They enable us to understand his mind on the subject. His own relation with Jesus was not through baptism but through a call.

I need not here go into the detail of the discussion that has arisen as to the necessity or otherwise of the Sacrament in the Christian world. It is, after all, a piece of superstition, and can no longer receive countenance from reason and culture when these are once aroused to consider the matter. Sermon is getting now the better of Sacrament. Precept is driving Magic from the field. Words of Wisdom are superseding rituals of charm. In every other department of human activities are found the same. It is the formula, and not the charm, which one should seek after if he cares for worldly success, and why should it be otherwise in religion? Islam, among religions, was the first to enunciate this principle, and Muhammad was the first Prophet to lay special stress on it. The world had its Sacraments everywhere, alike both in the nature of the ceremony and of the event commemorated—the oblation of the bread, the holy-water, baptism, etc., were all the same.[1] As a Redeemer through blood, Jesus may now seem a solitary entity. But he was not so at the time when he was deified. Besides those I alluded to before, there were "parcels of Sons," to quote Justin Martyr, born of a virgin womb, with the same story as that of Christ. In the Mystery cult Jesus has no superiority. As a deity he is one of the sons of gods

[1] See *The Sources of Christianity*, by the Author.

in mythology. Justin Martyr saw this and felt it. Justin had to resort to a curious explanation when he was put to task by the then Emperor of Rome on this point. His *Apologia* was written by way of explaining the riddle.

These have now, however, become things of the past in Eastern countries. The East regards Redeemers as mythical conceptions, and the West is bound to treat this portion of Christianity as an incorporation from Paganism. It will not take much time to do it; but the sooner it becomes an accomplished fact the better for the prospects of cordial relation between the various races of mankind. The East was earlier in realizing the truth and consigning the Mystery cult to oblivion as a piece of superstition. The West must now follow the East. It has done before. The light has always come from the East. With this we dismiss the idea of God-Incarnate as irrelevant and unnecessary for our advancement on any human plane.

CHAPTER II

THE PROPHETS OF GOD AS IDEALS

It is a good sign that the Sermon is getting the better of the Sacrament. It will lead to universalism. No religion in the world is without its sermons. Morality, after all, is a common property. Most of the Sermon on the Mount is a re-echo of the past. Buddha and others before Jesus gave similar precepts to the world; many of the parables of Jesus were only renderings of the parables in Buddhistic literature. Jesus, as I believe, did not owe his enlightenment to Buddhistic lore; all his knowledge came directly from God. This new development of religious thought in the West will create harmony among religions, for a closer study will enable people to appreciate the Qur-ánic truth that no nation was left without a Divine message and that all the great religions of the world came from God and brought the same message, and that Jesus was one of the Prophets of God. The pedlars in religion—and there are so many in the West—will have to take themselves and their absurdities from God's earth. A new race of evangelists will appear with minds too elevated to pick holes in others. They will go more after the tenets than after the Teacher. They will respect the Master through his precepts; and in whichever religion they find the same or a parallel to their tenets, they will not suspect plagiarism, but will accept it as a proof of Divine revelation in that religion. That will be the the day for the Glory of God and of Islam. Islam has already created that psychology

among its adherents.[1] A Muslim must believe in the Divine origin of every great religion. He must believe that Prophets were given to every nation and that all the Prophets of God were entitled to equal respect, and he must not make any distinctions between them. The position is logically tenable as well. We are composed of body and soul. Both should be equally nourished by our Creator. If in His physical dispensation to minister to our physical needs He has made no difference between man and man, shall He then be partial in His spiritual Providence? If His message through Jesus could not reach the four corners of the world—even now there are millions whom it has not reached—would the Sustainer of all the human race suffer those waiting multitudes to starve for lack of spiritual food? No. He sends His message to them through other Divine messengers; and this it is that explains the existence of so many religions in the world. These Messengers from Above brought Divine lore and illuminated the world. They were the teachers, and the models for the practice of the tenets they inculcated in their people, under Divine guidance. But their contemporaries did not keep full records of the words and deeds of these masters. Whatever has come down has been merely hearsay, giving such ample occasion for adulteration that within the space of a century each religion had suffered in its purity. Coming generations were given a religion which was never taught by the Master, and in the case of Christianity, I may say, not even imagined by the Founder. This paucity of contemporary records of the various Teachers has led to a further difficulty. None of the old religions possess enough material to meet the needs of the day, and the world in general has been left to its own judgment on many vital matters of life. Christianity is a case in point; if we leave aside the mystical side of the creed, the sermons and other utterances of Jesus do not come up to our

[1] See Qur-án, ii. 136.

demands. His teachings, as recorded, give a general outline of a religion of Love and Kindliness, and that again in an idealistic way, that hardly suits the practical side of life; and this is not all, as Arnold Bennett rightly says. The ideals of Jesus tend, rather more than less, to influence the individual towards the life of a recluse. They do not fit in with social or national life. They have no bearing on international relations. There is, moreover, a sort of discrepancy between the various utterances of Jesus and his recorded actions which does not help us in understanding his precepts. They in a way are contrary to his own teachings. The root of all is that his disciples or other contemporaries did not leave us an adequate record of his life. Such has been the case with the other Prophets of God. "Unlike[1] all other Prophets, whose proper likeness is concealed from us in a mist of reverence, Muhammad is a clear historic character, the numberless details of whose conduct and demeanour are recorded for us by his own contemporaries." Muhammad is the only Prophet who may be called historic in the true sense of the word. From his childhood to his death, most of his life—and especially the period of his ministry as a Prophet—is on record. I know more of him than I know of my own parents in many respects; and is it not a wonderful thing that, with all our knowledge of him, he commands our respect and admiration? *I cannot say what would be our estimate of others had we known more of them.* The lives of other Prophets are enshrouded in mystery and myth; we know very little of their daily life, they speak like oracles; and are tolerable only when considered as subjects of fiction; but Muhammad is more definitely historic than any personality in history. It is indeed wonderful how little his detractors find to use against him in all this mass of evidence.

[1] Marmaduke Pickthall.

Herein lies the superiority of the Holy Prophet, and for this, among many other things, we accept him as the Ideal Prophet. The record of his words and deeds is complete, and his precepts and examples stand in complementary relation to each other, as if every need of the human soul has been anticipated and every contingency of human existence provided for in the mirror of his life. As a Muslim I cannot say that other Prophets of God did not perfect their mission. I only say that we find very little in their record to help us. They must have done that for which they were sent; but their historians have not been faithful. In the matter of this dearth of record of the world's Prophets, I am constrained to remark that had it not been for Muhammad we should not be able to appreciate the Divine institution of Prophethood. If a Prophet comes only to read homilies on morality, while he himself in his life does nothing to raise humanity, but simply reiterates in a different accent the lesson taught by others before him, I fail to understand the necessity of his Divine Mission. We can learn the same from those who did not claim to have been raised up by God.

There is an ancient Indian book in Sanskrit literature called *Panchatantra*—"Words of Wisdom from Birds." The book gives hints for good government and good citizenship. It used to be an essential part of the course prescribed for the training of princes and the children of rulers in the East. All questions of morality, ethics, and polity have been lucidly discussed in the book; but everything purports to come from the mouths of birds and other dumb creatures. A pigeon gives us a lesson how "a friend in need is a friend indeed," and illustrates the dictum by his personal experience of his friend, a mouse. An owl teaches us stratagems of war; a crow drives home to us a piece of wisdom, namely, that we should not be deceived by our enemy's apparent insignificance, telling how a lion, for example, was lured to a snare by a fox.

Another lesson—that a stupid friend is more dangerous than a wise enemy—is taught by reference to the story of a monkey who used to be on the watch when his master was asleep. One day some flies were disturbing the sleep of the master; the monkey killed him when trying to remove the flies with a sword. An interesting book of wisdom, no doubt; but the modern mind scarcely believes in its utility, seeing that it lacks reality and life like colours. We cannot be guided by precepts which were never put into action by their own teachers. That is a sound principle, and one that should guide us when selecting our teacher and guide. His actions, rather than his words, should entitle him to our allegiance. In fact, an ethical aphorism written on a wall is as good as in the mouth of a teacher, if he has never been able to put it into practice.

But few act upon this principle, especially in matters of religion. We find any amount of stories of homilies and moral lessons in sacred books. But they are not sufficiently effective, if they are not translated into actions by the teachers. They may even mislead us, since we do not know how to act upon them, if the actions of the teacher are wanting to enlighten us on the subject. Our own ingenuity, then, comes to work, and we do what was perhaps never intended by the teacher. For example, every student of the Gospels knows that there are hopeless contradictions in the teaching of Jesus as to the use of the sword. Had there been some actions of Jesus to explain his precepts, the history of Christendom would have been different. The pulpit, on the other side, has always been subservient to statecraft. The clergy further the ends of the State rather than guard the conscience of the people. They read homilies of war when the State wants war, as did the Bishop of London in 1918 at the Marble Arch, but they lay special stress on the Sermon on the Mount when the time has come for the sword to return

to its scabbard. Humility, meekness, forgiveness, and non-resistance to evil are some of the claimed ethics of Christianity, but her history discloses quite a different chapter. There we find heartless, sanguinary persecution of others, want of charity and lack of kindliness. Had there been actions of the Master translating his precepts, the love of his followers for him would at least have actuated them to follow his actions.

It should not be forgotten that a potentiality is no proof of actuality. Even negative virtues, especially in teachers of morality, are no virtues at all. They cost them nothing; neither are they of any assistance to those who need practical illustrations of moral lessons. We may read to others homilies of forgiveness and sermons of meekness, but lip-teaching in itself furnishes no proof that we possess the morals we teach to others. Words converted into actions alone can show that we possess moral virtues. Moreover, how can we teach others what we have not experienced ourselves? A man must face the hardest trials of life, like Jesus and Muhammad, before he attempts to teach others a lesson of patience and forbearance. Jesus, however, could not find the proper occasions necessary to mould various other moralities into practical shape like Muhammad.

Again, we may become struck with the idealistic beauty of some of the teachings of a Prophet; we may admire them, but our sentimentality should not influence us in accepting them as verities of life, we may only respect them as sacred relics of the past. In this respect we make another mistake when judging the character of a person. We accept words for actions. Virtues preached are often believed to be actually owned by their teachers. But it is a mistake. Practically every race has its own ethical literature in which we sometimes find rules of high morality worthy of a Prophet; but if the contents of books could be accepted as an index of the moral character

of their writers, our judgment on the moral side of Lord Verulam should be other than it is. A character, however highly divine its claims may be, should not be accredited with all the moral attributes which it inculcates in others, unless it acts upon them itself. In the case of a Prophet the Muslim attitude is, however, different. If he accepts some person as a Prophet, he must as well believe that anything actually taught by the Prophet to others was either done or would have been done by him had occasion arisen. We are taught that all Prophets charged with the same mission and of the same calibre came to do the duty imposed upon them as such. "All people are a single nation, so Allah raised Prophets as bearers of God's news and as warners, and He revealed with them the book with truth" (Qur-án, ii. 213). The English word "truth" in the verse has "haqq" as its Arabic equivalent in the original text. It means that the message that comes from Above for human guidance is a practicable verity and not a dreamer's ideal; anything of the latter sort, even if found in the record of a Prophet, is not from God and is a subsequent accretion.

But almost all these Prophets have laboured under two disadvantages. First, they did not pass through various vicissitudes of life, like Muhammad and had not, therefore, the necessary occasions to give expression to the various phases of true humanity Had they had such occasions, they would have done the same as a Prophet of God would do. For instance, much of our happiness depends upon the observance of true domestic morals. Jesus could have made an ideal husband if he had married, but he had no opportunity of doing so, and we cannot look to him as a guide in the matter. On the other hand, those who perhaps had such chances, and probably acquitted themselves well in the circumstances, have left us a very meagre record of their lives, and that record, again, is not the narration of the actual happenings of their

lives, but an account of the impression of those around them who wrote their history. They wrote what appealed to them. These two factors chiefly disappoint a seeker of light when he tries to find something helpful in the life of the various Prophets of the world. Muhammad is the only personality among the race of the Prophets whose records and experiences satisfy all that could be demanded of a Prophet.

A few prayers and a few curses, or a few sermons and a few miracles, do not make up the whole furniture of a Prophet; much more than this is needed to make a Prophet of a man. A Prophet comes to resuscitate humanity when death—mental, moral and spiritual death—has overtaken it; he comes with high principles; he acts upon them himself, and leads others to do likewise; he thus brings reanimation to his environment. In a word, he comes to evolve humanity, a problem of a very complex nature. Humanity has very many sides—physical, emotional, sentimental, social, moral, mental and spiritual. They all are mixed with each other; they are complementary to each other for their existence and growth; they serve each other reciprocally in performing their respective functions. We cannot neglect one for the benefit of another. For instance, we hear much said against our low passions. We are advised to crush them. But that would be unnatural. These passions are in their evolutionary state; they are the bedrock of high morality, and germinate spirituality. A Prophet must have regard to them all. He must evolve a system that may bring every human instinct into proper play, and control every faculty in a way that may raise humanity and enable man to reflect Divine morality, as I said in these pages elsewhere.

Elsewhere I have summed up some of the special and exclusive achievements of the Prophet Muhammad, and the unique service he rendered to humanity in such a capacity. His achievements are the achievements of a Prophet. I do

not find them in the life of other Prophets, probably on account of the two causes mentioned above. But if we Muslims accept Muhammad as the Ideal Prophet, it is in his representative character as well. Every Prophet of God was an Ideal, and came as a model, to be imitated by the people he was raised up among, and he would be the same ideal to all coming generations, if we were in possession of his full record and if he had had the necessary opportunities for the display of various virtues which he was undoubtedly possessed but was unable to put into practice for want of an opportunity. But as things stand, we look only to Muhammad as such a Prophet. In him we find every requisite of a Prophet. He assembles in him all that was individually possessed by the other Prophets. He collects in him all that we want to see in a Prophet. Salawātu 'l-Lāhi 'alaihi wa 'alā ālihī—the blessings of God be upon him and his followers.

Under these circumstances the task of idealization is not so heavy. We avoid invidious comparison, if possible, but no occasion arises for it between the two, when we know everything of one and very little of the other. We Muslims believe that all of the Prophets came with the best of missions to humanity. They did their utmost to fulfil it; they bore an ideal character—they were sinless, for how could they be otherwise, if they were the begotten sons of the Lord and walked humbly with Him? as the Bible says. Were they not chosen by the Almighty to act as His mouthpiece? It will involve a reflection on His Omniscience, if these "Sons of God" shall have proved unworthy of the choice, as Creed theology thinks; but the scantiness of their record compels us to look to Arabia to find how far her noble son fulfilled the condition of the Ideal Prophet. We do not have to provide him with an individuality for the purpose, because he possesses a towering personality as a man, and *ipso facto* invites attention —yes, as a man. This I say advisedly, and I admit that he

does not offer any competition whatsoever with God-Incarnate. He does not claim Godhood. But Jesus does not appear to be unique in his claim for divinity. He is not the only Son of God who came to give his blood to wash off human unrighteousness.

In fact, he was tried as a seditious person, and many innocent people have been put to death for the same offence. Let Dr. Zwemer trumpet forth that Christianity is unique in supplying humanity with the proof of this peculiar phase of Divine Love—he simply shows his ignorance—but most probably he conceals facts, a proceeding of which he can hardly claim to be entirely innocent; but he must know that paganism has produced several Sons of God, who were sent by the Father to give their lives to serve humanity. Bacchus was one of them, who said, for the first time, that he was the Alpha and Omega of the world, and the Redeemer of the human race. He was born of a virgin on December 25 and gave his life on the Friday before Easter Sunday, and rose on that memorable day. St. Paul and his progeny copied the whole drama of the Passion from them, and it is curious that the Qur-án disclosed the secret almost at the time when the imitation had become complete.

To resume the subject, the idealization of a Prophet demands several things. First of all, we have to consider the nature of the task laid on his shoulders, and then his personality—for this goes a long way towards idealizing a person; then his character, which must possess an assemblage of all human virtues, so that he may act as a perfect pattern for others' imitation. He must disclose unique perseverance and pertinacity and presence of mind in face of the hardest ordeals and trials of life. The Ideal Prophet must be an ideal teacher of principles necessary for human advancement, an Ideal Expounder, on lines comprehensible by every shade of culture, and then he must be an ideal exemplar, who lives after his own teaching; for example is better than precept, and actions

speak louder than sermons. These considerations lead me to believe in his claim as being the Last of the Prophets.

Let us consider the primary object for which the mantle of prophethood falls on the shoulders of a chosen one. He does not come for any personal aggrandizement, nor to become an object of worship, and to take the place of the Deity. He brings a message from God to man for man's guidance, and makes it clear thrqugh his actions. He receives precepts from Heaven and translates them into action through his own example. He is the first to obey the laws revealed to him from Above, and leads others to follow him in doing the same. Thus the words of God, and the actions of a Prophet by way of illustration, help others to pursue the path of guidance, and if they are preserved in their original integrity and transmitted to us in their genuine colours, there is no necessity for a new revelation or a new Prophet. But the fact was that whatever had come from God before Muhammad had seen corruption and human interpolation. The records of the lives of the pre-Islamic religious teachers themselves are enveloped in mystery; as I have said before, we know very little of their lives. Hence the need of the Qur-án and the Holy Prophet; and if the Qur-án is just the same as it was in the days of the Prophet, and the record of the acts and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad himself is without exception complete, faithful and correct, do we need any other prophet, or any new revelation from God? Hence the Qur-án is the last Book of God, and Muhammad is the last of the Prophets. The finality of the Law and guidance given in the last message of God, rather than the personality of the holy messenger, is what makes him the Ultimate Prophet. The Holy Qur-án faithfully represents the will of the Most High, and contains everything necessary for our moral and spiritual requirements, a new revelation would be a useless repetition.

THE IDEAL PROPHET

Religion, after all, comes to pave the way from humanity to divinity, to raise man from the borders of animality to the precincts of divinity; and finality of the Divine Revelation on this score is understandable. There may be many ways, some long, some crooked, between the two orders, but there must also be the shortest way. A straight line between any two given points is the shortest line. The Qur-án gives the name of *Sirát Mustaqím* to the religion it preaches, which literally means "the straight way"; and if it is understandable that the way shown through a Divine Revelation for human guidance should be the shortest, and the straight way cannot be improved upon, then the proposition that such and such a Prophet was revealed *Sirát Mustaqím* is tenable; and hence the finality of the Revelation. The whole question turns on one consideration, whether the way preached by that Prophet was a straight one; and this involves an assumption that his was the last word on the question. In this respect, I may safely say that Muhammad is the last Prophet. He stands ahead, centuries before. He is the Prophet of all time, and of people of all shades of culture and enlightenment. To-day the world is coming to adopt the truths he preached in his own time. Let Dr. Besant give us the tidings that the fulness of time has arrived for the appearance of the Star of the East. Leave apart the consideration that prophets from the East have never been the protégés of others in religious matters, nor have they been under the tutelage of others for religious instruction. Dr. Besant should point out any new truths which she thinks have not been preached before and which will be preached by her protégé. Further, let me draw the attention of my readers to a chapter in this book entitled "The Ideal Teacher." Let them ponder over the points I discuss there, and see for themselves whether they are sufficient to further civilization and culture or need improvement. Possibilities are useless when we deal with hard facts.

CHAPTER III

BEFORE MUHAMMAD

Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what the hands of men have wrought.—THE HOLY QUR-AN, XXX. 41.

Know that Allah gives life to the earth after its death.—lvi. 17.

IN these verses the Qur-án speaks of the corruption that prevailed in all countries of the world before the advent of the Holy Prophet. Death—mental, moral and spiritual death—had overtaken the human race, and darkness prevailed everywhere, clouding the beliefs and perverting the actions of the people. Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and other religions of the world, had lost all healthy influence on the lives of their followers. "The Christianity of the seventh century was itself decrepit and corrupt." [1] It was rent with schism and heresies. The religion of Jesus had reverted to Heathenism, and the religious conception of the masses was only an infiltration of the Pagan cult. Besides, the souls of the dead were worshipped and their relics and images were the objects of chief adoration.[2]

The social and moral condition of the world was equally deplorable. The followers of these religions had not only ceased to practise virtue, but vice itself had come to be looked upon as virtue, and men committed deadly sin to

[1] Muir.

[2] "The Christians of the Seventh Century had insensibly relapsed into a semblance of Paganism; their public and private vows were addressed to the relics and images that disgraced the temples of the East: the throne of the Almighty was darkened by a crowd of martyrs, saints and angels, the objects of popular veneration; and the Collyridian heretics, who flourished in the fruitful soil of Arabia, invested the Virgin Mary with the name and honours of a goddess. The mysteries of the trinity and incarnation appear to contradict the principle of

earn merit in the eye of the Lord. Every nation had sunk to a state of complete moral depravity. The corruption had appeared in the continents and on the islands. The statement may startle many, but it is the truth. The reader has but to remember that that time was the darkest period of the Middle Ages in Europe, and of the Mazdaic and Puranic Ages in Persia and India respectively. Illicit sexual intercourse—a crime next only to murder in its consequences—was committed in the performance of various sacred rites. It was practised as a virtue with the sanction of religion. In the confessional in Christendom, more sin was committed than was washed away. "The condition of Constantinople under Justinian, the Christian and the glorified legislator, is the best index to the demoralized and degraded state of society all over Christendom. Public or private virtue had no recognition in the social conceptions; a harlot sat on throne of the Cæsars, and shared with the emperor the honours of the State. Theodora had publicly plied her trade in the city of Constantine, and her name was a byword among its dissolute inhabitants. And now she was adored as a queen in the same city by 'grave magistrates, orthodox bishops, victorious generals, and captive monarchs.' The empire was disgraced by her cruelties, which recognized no religious or moral restraint. Seditions, outbreaks and sanguinary tumults, in which the priesthood always took the most prominent part, were the order of the day. On these occasions every law, human or divine, was trampled under foot; churches and altars were polluted by atrocious murders; no place was safe or sacred from depredations."[1] In Persia, the Phallic cult, introduced

the Divine Unity. In their obvious sense, they introduce three equal deities, and transform the man Jesus into the substance of the son of God: an orthodox commentary will satisfy only a believing mind. . . . The creed of Mahomet is free from the suspicion of ambiguity, and the Koran is a glorious testimony to the Unity of God."—GIBBON.

[1] Syed Ameer Ali, *Spirit of Islam.*

centuries before by Artaxerxes Mnemon, the brother of Cyprus, was brought to its climax at that time by Mazdak, who, among his other abominable tenets, taught partnership in women. He sanctified scenes of obscenity accompanied by every kind of bacchanalian orgy. This frightful communism in women was also practised in India, under the teachings of *Shaktakmat*, then in its prime in India. A *shaktak* priest could, of right, command the company of others' wives for his pleasure. Such demands were willingly obeyed, and the brides usually passed the first week of their honeymoon in the company of the high-priests. It was an act of virtue, and earned in their sight divine grace enough to bless their wedded life. The night of Shivratri, a Hindu festival, occasioned, in its celebration, an exhibition of the worst type of brutality when, under the influence of women and wine, even incestuous connections failed to excite any horror, since, indeed, the *Shaktak mantras* (sacred hymns) chanted on the occasion ennobled everything foul and mean. If a conception of the Deity in any class of people rightly mirrors their conception of virtue (and it does, for the Deity everywhere and always focuses in Himself all that appears noble and good to His votaries), the Hindu gods of the time indicate the very worst type of morality then obtaining in India; for we find the lives and exploits of those Indian deities teeming with immorality.

But Arabia was the darkest spot in that darkest age of the world's history. Drink, adultery and gambling were common. Murder, infanticide and robbery were the pride of the Arabs. "There were no moral, religious or social restrictions, no limits to marriage, no restraints on divorce." Besides general promiscuity in sexual relations, they indulged habitually in incestuous connections. Sons treated the widows of their fathers as their wives. Wives in wedlock were not ashamed to receive attentions from others; nay, a married

woman could even boast of the number of lovers she had had in the lifetime of her husband. Human sacrifice was prevalent, and the daughters were buried alive at birth. Bloody quarrels and suicides were frequent, and a single rash word often paid its penalty in death. The spirit of rapine, murder and revenge had reached such a pitch that women did not feel content until they had dyed their garments with the blood of their enemy, and eaten his very heart. I cannot imagine any evil which was not practised in Arabia in its worst form in those days. "In this primitive and abject state, which ill deserves the name of society, the human brute, without arts and laws, almost without sense and language, is poorly distinguished from the rest of the animal creation." Such is Gibbon's comment on the Arabs of those days. It is true that no period in history has ever been free from evil and wickedness; but the worst feature of the time was that human consciousness had reached its lowest stage of degradation; that is to say, it accepted evil for virtue. If the world ever needed a Prophet, it was at that time; "as in nature, light follows darkness, and rain comes after drought," the appearance of a Prophet has always occurred to terminate any cycle of degraded humanity. But that was a period when the whole horizon of the world had become darkened under the clouds of infidelity, ignorance and wantonness. Virtue had vanished, and evil stood for righteousness.

The world had seen Divine Messengers and Prophets before, but the time of their appearance was not so dark as the time when Muhammad appeared; nor had the former prophets such a difficult task before them as had the Prophet of Arabia. Moses came for the emancipation of the Israelites, and to lead them to the Promised Land; but the Egyptians of his time were not without culture and civilization. They studied science and art; they had their own system of ethics; and a class among them, called magicians, were interested in

reading the secrets of nature, and practised mesmerism. Jesus also appeared in the midst of Roman civilization and culture. He saw around him a culture which compares not unfavourably with that of to-day. The Romans were idolaters, but his own tribe practised monotheism. Ceremonialism, worship of the letter, hypocrisy and self-indulgence were the chief evils of his day, but the religion of God and His commandments was not unknown to his people. Jesus came only to fulfil the Law and the Prophets in their true spirit. And if these conditions were such as to demand the appearance of Divine Messengers like Moses and Jesus, the sixth century of the Christian era did most decidedly call for the appearance of several prophets in several countries, or, failing that, the coming of one master mind who should restore the religion of God to its perfect form everywhere; for the laws of God were everywhere transgressed and His limits trampled upon universally; and the earth had never seen a darker age. But the Arabs were the most wicked people of all. They committed sins of the vilest type and openly exulted in them. They were the most ignorant of the human race, and that in spite of the fact that they possessed the rare gift of poetry in a rare degree, but it was merely to recount their own vile deeds.

If the moral horizon of the world was so gloomy at the time, its spiritual and religious side was not less dark; and here I speak only of Christianity. Jesus himself did not found a church, nor did he bring a new religion; he came to reform the church of Moses.[1]

But only a century or two after him, he himself became a new centre of ancient tradition, a new sanctuary, as it were, which enshrined the religion of the old. "All that was believed and taught about various deities in the pagan world—thousands of years before Jesus—in India, Greece, Persia and Rome,

[1] Dean Inge, in the Conference of Modern Churchmen held at Cambridge on August 9, 1917.

became incorporated in the pure and simple faith of Jesus, and his blessed name soiled with things he never knew or taught. A Divine Messenger and a true Prophet of God was given the office of a pagan deity and was degraded into a substitute for the Sun-god—a popular deity in the ancient world; all that was observed in the ceremonials of the heathen cult was introduced into his faith, which was originally none other than Islam."[1]

Christianity came to demolish paganism, but became a helpless prey to it. "It was not in Christendom alone that, what is popularly misnamed, philosophy had done its worst; the evil culminating in idolatry. This so-called philosophy, which had developed itself afresh as Spinozism, had already overpowered the earlier revelation in the East. The results in the Semitic races of Central and Eastern Asia were most corrupt systems of idolatry, so that between these and Christendom, to which may be added the northern tribes of Europe, the known world, in the days of Muhammad, represented one vast scene of idolatrous abominations, and, as we have since discovered, the then unknown world was in the same condition. . . . Even some of the Jewish tribes failed to escape the general contagion, joining in the idolatrous observances and sundry offerings to the heathen worship in the Kà-aba at Mecca."[2]

All the books from God, that came from time to time to every nation and to every country for human guidance, had lost their purity, and man-made creeds obscured the Word of the Lord. The scriptures of the Israelites, the Persians, the Hindus, the Chinese, the Buddhists, all suffered in their purity, and the Bible shared the same fate. To-day there are few who honestly believe in the genuineness of the Bible. It has admittedly become adulterated with folklore. Many of the clergy of the Anglican Church confess themselves unable

[1] *The Sources of Christianity.* [2] Professor J. J. Lane.

unfeignedly to believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments and to take oath as to their genuineness,[1] as they did not believe in the truth of many of the legends and beliefs narrated in the Scriptures.

If such was the condition of sacred literature in the sixth century of the Christian era, and if the Will of the Lord had become so obscured as to be unknown to the human mind, it is difficult to believe that God could remain indifferent to the state of affairs then obtaining throughout the entire world. Surely He would reveal His Mind yet again to humanity, and restore His Word to its pristine beauty and purity. The Qur-án refers to the point in the following verse, when speaking of the necessity of its revelation :—

People are a single nation, so Allah raised Prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed with them the Book with truth, that it might judge between people in that which they differed, and none but the very people who were given it differed about it after clear arguments had come to them, revolting among themselves, so Allah has guided by His Will those who believe the truth about which they differed, and Allah guides them whom He pleases to the right path.[2]

The logic in the above is obvious. It speaks of the Divine Dispensation that has always enlightened man concerning God's Will. Books were given to various peoples, but they went against the word contained in those books. Prophets were raised up before Muhammad, in every nation, yet every

[1] In the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury, in the sitting of July 5, 1917, some of the clergy demanded that the wording of the third question put to them at their ordination should be changed; as they were unable conscientiously to answer it in the prescribed terms because they did not possess the belief demanded. The question and the answer were as follows :—

Q. "Do you unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments?"

A. "I do so believe them."

The question was consequently changed.

[2] Holy Qur-àn, ii. 213.

nation left the right path. Differences arose as to the true tenets and religious variations of each faith. No religion presented a worse spectacle than Christianity. Either a prophet was needed by every nation to settle its own differences, or one was needed to settle the differences of the various nations, for the Truth, though given to several prophets, had become obscured in those days. The last Book of God which came to meet the need of the day sums up the whole situation in the following lines:—

> By Allah, most certainly We sent (apostles) to nations before you, but the devil made their deeds fair-seeming to them, so he is their guardian to-day, and they shall have a painful chastisement.
>
> And We have not revealed to you the Book except that you may make clear to them that about which they differ, and (as) a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe.[1]

These are words too eloquent to need any comment in the light of the events narrated above. They speak of two things: first, the devil made the deeds of the people fair-seeming to them, and secondly, the religion of every apostle from God had become split into an infinity of divisions and sections. It must be the devil who made their deeds fair-seeming to the people if deeds of the blackest dye were taken as righteousness in those days, and "let us do evil that good may come" became a moral precept in Christendom. Even to-day, in every religion except Islam, we find sects and sub-sects that have cropped up from time to time to suit the whims of the spiritually conceited.

Christianity can modestly boast of more than four hundred such sects, and the worst of it is, that the sectarian differences in all these religions are basic and doctrinal, unlike Islam, where, notwithstanding the existence of various schools of thought, the so-called three or four sects in Islam do not admit of any crucial or doctrinal divergences.[2] But the internal differences among other religions are not of modern growth.

[1] Holy Qur-án, xvi. 63, 64.

[2] *Sources of Christianity.*

They existed in a more tangible form immediately before the revelation of the Qur-án. Other religions had maintained their purity for a long period after their foundation, but Christianity was a hopeless mass of chaotic beliefs even within a century and a half of its Lord's death. Truth is one-sided and never double-faced, but, under Christianity, there seemed no limit to its aspects. Would God remain silent, and give countenance to this chaos? Every moment, in the physical world, He works cosmos out of chaos; why should He not do the same in the world of religion? Dean Inge, of St. Paul's, said, in addressing the Oxford branch of the Churchmen's Union:—

> Many Churchmen would say that the place of liberal movement was outside the door. Yet just think what would be the result if all expression of free-thought had been stifled within the Church of England. The Church would now be committed to believe that the sun went round the earth, that Heaven was a place which we might reach in an aeroplane when we knew the way, that Hell was a place under our feet, and that, as the mediæval theologian suggested, volcanic eruptions were caused by over-population in the infernal regions—things which no educated person could or did believe. If these things were so, there would be no room in the Church of England to-day except for the fools and liars. Modern Churchmen believed that the Church was called upon to face difficulties and solve them by unfettered inquiry. They did not believe that authority or tradition had settled everything, that we had only to accept formulæ drawn up in the early centuries, but that we must take into account recent developments in philosophy, history and criticism, and, above all, natural science. Recent researches of older religions have brought to light things that are penetrating modern minds and leaving them no other course but to reject the time-honoured beliefs and received opinions on matters religious.

But the "time-honoured beliefs and received opinions on matters religious" did exist in the sixth century, and these crude views on Heaven and Hell were obtaining then in Christendom. If Jesus came with a message from God, would the Almighty allow the Church called after the name of Christ to have no room except for "the fools and liars" for some eighteen centuries and wait for the learned Dean and his

co-workers to set the error right by means of their Modernist movement? It reminds me that it would be in place here to add a word about the Modernist deliberations of the present day. Since A.D. 1915 the dignitaries of the Church have met almost every year to reform their beliefs. They establish the following:—

(1) Jesus was only a man, and not God in any sense of the word.[1]

(2) His sonship of God only meant his nearness to God—a stage of spiritual elevation open to every son of Adam; and the theory of the Immaculate Conception or of the Virgin Birth was introduced only to strengthen belief in his Godhood.

(3) The belief in the fall of Adam was erroneous.[2] Man enters the world without any sin in nature.[3] Sin is an acquisition, and salvation from it can be attained through one's own exertions. No one can atone for the sin of others.[4]

(4) Most of the Christian rites have been incorporated from Paganism,[5] among them the Sacrament as an infiltration from the Mysteries of the cult of the sun-worshippers.

(5) Jesus shared the errors of his contemporaries.[6]

(6) The Church passing under his name was not founded by him.[7]

(7) The Bible is not the pure Word of God,[8] but mixed with folklore, and many of the events mentioned in it are unbelievable; and if Jesus referred to them as a truth—as in

[1] Holy Qur-àn, xxix. 90—93; v. 75; iii. 58; ix. 30.

[2] The Vicar of Partington, in the Conference of Modern Churchmen, August 26, 1925, at Oxford.

[3] "Every one who is born is in the nature of Islam (submission to God) at his birth" (Muhammad).

[4] Holy Qur-àn, vi. 165.

[5] Qur-àn, ix. 30. Dr. Barnes, in his sermon in August 1925.

[6] Dean of Carlisle, Oxford, 1921.

[7] Qur-àn, v. 116, 117. Dean Inge, in the Churchmen's Conference at Cambridge on August 9, 1917.

[8] Qur-àn, iv. 46. The Lower House of Convocation of Canterbury, in the sitting of July 5, 1917.

the case of Jonah's fish, he shared with others wrong beliefs current in his day.

(8) Jesus did not die on the cross, but was under a swoon, and his resurrection was spiritual, not physical.[1]

We may leave aside the crude theology of the Middle Ages; we may take some of the doctrines of the Romish Church as a remnant of Paganism; but the Reformation does not seem to improve the matter if so much was left for the Modernist to do. The Reformation, after all, proved to be a political move to free the State from the domination of the Church. Perhaps its aim was to undo the work of the Nicene Council which made the State subordinate to the Church. Of course Protestant bodies, and especially the Church of England, profess to believe in much the same doctrines as those of the Romish Church, minus infallibility of the Pope and one or two other things; but the Modernist movement destroys the whole superstructure on which the current Christianity has been built, and tries to restore the Church of Christ to its original purity. Yet this work of the Modernist has been anticipated by the Holy Prophet of Islam. I do not find a single thing of any consequence in their deliberations which has not been lucidly dealt with in the pages of the Qur-án, and with more logic, precision, and true teaching thereon.

In this respect I fail to understand Christian psychology. If religion is a divine institution, receiving its inspiration directly from God, all these modernizing efforts are an insult to the Divine dispensation; and yet the churchman would seem to experience no difficulty in giving a cordial welcome to a new revision or recasting of his beliefs. Perhaps he is used to it. Modernization has been the exclusive boast of the Western Church from the beginning. If Paul could so

[1] Qur-án, iii. 54.

modernize it to suit it to the pagan requirements of his time —and yet he is accepted as the sole authority in the Church —it will not perhaps greatly disturb the present-day religious instinct if some new interpretation is found out to bring the Christian faith more or less into line with the demands of rationalism as has been hinted in the recent deliberations of the Modernists at Oxford. But if God spoke to man from time to time to express His will to man for his guidance, and always chose one man to be His mouthpiece —and they can scarcely disbelieve in this Divine Economy, otherwise the whole fabric of Christianity falls to the ground— one fails to understand this delegation of Divine work to human councils and conferences. God is unchangeable in His ways. His laws are immutable. The study of every ancient religion in the world, including that revealed to the Israelite, speaks of the same Divine Economy. The message from God came always through one man at a time, and that when the old message became corrupt through human handling a new messenger came to restore the religion of God to its original purity. Jesus came for the same ministry. He also prophesied that another[1] would appear after him to bring the whole truth. But no one heeded his words. The Grace of the Blood, under the inspiration of the Pagan cult[2] mysteries, came to substitute the old divine system of human salvation that could be achieved through observing "the Religion of Commandments and Obedience"; the mode of divine revelation underwent a change as well, perhaps under the same inspiration. Instead of choosing one man as His messenger, God began to express His mind through Councils and Synods of the parsons and prelates. But man-made things cannot satisfy the human mind if it is a progressive mind. The present intellectual unrest concerning current creeds in the West is not a new development of its kind; every third or

[1] St. John xiii. and xvi. [2] Dr. Barnes.

fourth century since the birth of the Church the world has seen its re-occurrence. Do not all these attempts at the modernization of the Christian faith prove its creed to be only a human fabrication? If from God, it should have remained the same in all the evolutionary stages of man's mind, and at the same time capable of satisfying each new demand as it arose. Does not the whole of Nature itself bear testimony to this truth? Everything in the universe is as old as the world itself, and yet ever new and fresh, with ever the same capacity for satisfying the human mind, though it is always in a process of development that never ceases. Every new need can be and is satisfied by what is discovered in the original authority. For this reason the Qur-án gives the attribute of *Rahman* to Allah—the Beneficent Lord who created things to satisfy human needs long before those needs came into existence. The Providence of the all-knowing God must precede the appearance of need. Similarly religion, if from God, should be comprehensive enough to be grasped by the progressive mind. Christianity certainly could not stand this test; and from a Muslim point of view a religion is hardly worth the name if it is not proof against the vicissitudes of time. We claim that the religion revealed in the Qur-án possesses this adamantine, unshakable character, leaving aside all question of its merits or demerits. No desire for change in its doctrinal beliefs has ever been felt by its adherents, no matter how developed their culture or how advanced their thought. Islam can boast of achievements in culture and science far greater than those of Christianity. It has always encouraged liberal education, yet the most cultured people within its pale have been foremost in support of its teaching. It was with much astonishment that one of the English dailies in India was forced to admit that while Western liberal education caused bankruptcy of religious belief and encouraged scepticism and materialism,

it only served to strengthen the belief of the Muslim in Islam.

There is yet another aspect of the case worth consideration by modern thought and Church theology. The present intellectual struggle proves at least this, that the religion taught by Jesus has not reached us in its entirety, that the Divine Dispensation has failed. That the teaching of the Master saw corruption in the very beginning is an admitted fact. Every subsequent effort to restore it to its pristine purity, though seemingly successful for the time, has, nevertheless, always failed to receive support from the coming generation.

You cannot rebuild a ruined house with the materials of decay. You cannot, from the crumbling bricks and rotting timber that may remain to you, reconstruct that house in any form approximating to its original. You can, at best, produce a pathetically ineffectual imitation, or a grotesque parody, good neither to look at nor to live in.

And if it be so with man's efforts to restore the work of his own hands when it has become ruinous, how shall it be with those things that are the work of God's hand?

The fruits of the earth that ripen, summer by summer, and fall into decay and are gone, leaving only rottenness behind them—can man, from that rottenness, bring back the fruit again in its beauty and its sweetness? The elements, the constituent atoms that go to the making of the fruit, are from God—everlasting, undiminishing, indestructible. They exist —have existed from the birth of Time—in all-surrounding space, a vast, confused, heterogeneous mass, the secret of whose compounding is known to God alone. And as the earthly fruit decays with the decaying year into rottenness and nothing, the constituent atoms that composed it pass back into the mass from which they came, to be absorbed into it again, thence to be again sent forth by God at the

appointed time to be blended anew in the buds of spring and the ripe fruits of summer. It is God's work to renew and restore them when need arises. It is not for man to interfere.

And if it be so with the works of God, will it be otherwise with the Word of God, the Message that He has been sending through all the ages by the mouth of His chosen Prophets?

The Last Word of God, while explaining the necessity of the Revelation of the Holy Qur-án, because the previous revelations had become tempered with human handlings, thus refers to this very natural phenomenon to elucidate the truth I am speaking of:—

By Allah, most certainly We sent (apostles) to nations before *you*, but the devil made their deeds fair-seeming to them, so he is their guardian to-day, and they shall have a painful chastisement.

And We have not revealed to *you* the Book except that *you may* make clear to them that about which they differ, and (as) a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe.

And of the fruits of the palm and the grapes—you obtain from *them* intoxication and goodly provision; most surely there is a sign in this for a people who ponder.[1]

If the house be decayed, man cannot, out of that decay, build it anew.

If the fruit be decayed and rotten, man cannot out of that rottenness bring forth fresh.

If the Word of God become decayed and corrupted by the taint of human error, loss, denial, interpolation, suppression, misconstruction, its vitality sapped, its usefulness destroyed, man cannot out of that corruption, out of the wreck of the remnant of the revealed Word, build for himself that Word anew.

As with the material decay of flowers and fruit, so with the spiritual decay of religion and faith. It is God's work, and His alone, to restore and renew.

[1] Holy Qur-án, xvi. 63, 64 and 67.

So it is with the teaching of Jesus. Shall we look to human effort to aid us in discovering it, in restoring, in building it up again, when the result of such effort is sure to be baffled by a new development of thought within a century; or should we look to God to renew the revelation of His will as man everywhere was wont to do before the advent of Jesus? If the latter is the safest course, then the need for it appeared only a few centuries after Jesus, and the Qur-án and the Prophet Muhammad came to meet that need in the sixth century of the Christian era. It is immaterial if the said need has been felt in the West to-day, as every tenet found wrong now did exist so at the appearance of Muhammad. That was the right time for its rectification; and if we find that all that has been deliberated upon by the Modernist of the day has already been dealt with in the Qur-án, and the Book has given the true view on every subject—a view that has been to a greater extent confirmed by the Modernist—will it not justify our belief in the divine origin of Islam and in its claim to receive universal adherence, as the corruption of the religion of God had reached its climax in the four corners of the world at the Revelation of the Qur-án?

I cannot conclude this chapter without saying a word as to the universal debt owed by humanity to the Prophet of Arabia, for his re-establishing man's belief in the Unity of God; and that at a time when the whole world had forgotten it. Polytheism in its lowest and worst form practically monopolized human worship, at that time. From an eggshell to God, incarnate in human form, every manifestation of Nature—stones, trees, winds, waters, rivers, clouds, skies, stars, the moon and the sun—received from humanity the adoration that should go only to Allah. Nay, men even worshipped their own passions and desires under different names. If in India countless images were worshipped and their aid invoked to fulfil various human desires, Christendom had its

countless saints to be adored on similar occasions. The Phallic cult was at its prime, especially in India, where some of its temples are still in existence. Some of these I have myself seen, and the nauseating and indecent scenes carved on their walls have revolted me. Here sheer obscenity reaches its climax, and shameless wantonness could not be more unbridled. It requires no great stretch of imagination to picture the ghastly deeds that must have been practised within the four walls of these houses of gods of lust; and all in the name of Religion. Can the reader conceive of a blacker type of theology than that which existed when Muhammad came to save belief in the Unity of God, as Swedenborg admits?

Arabia was the seat of every creed before the days of the Prophet. Judaism, Zoroastrianism, various sections of Christianity, star-worship, belief in the reincarnation of the soul, and varying shades of various "isms" and cults, had their followers there. But Arabia in the main remained above the outside influences and followed her local creed teeming with superstitions. The Arabs did not confine their worship to the sun, moon and stars; every fetish was their god. Ka'aba, the most ancient and the first house of Allah—Abraham also went there to worship God—had become the place for the worship of three hundred and sixty gods, every day being consecrated to the worship of one deity. This Arab pantheon was presided over by Hubal, Lat and Uzza. The gods were shaped like human beings, eagles, lions, etc. Besides various sacrifices, parents dragged their own sons to be killed at the altar of these deities. Could God leave Arabia, as well as the rest of the world, in that horrible condition when Judaism and Christianity and the other creeds had lost their faith in the Unity of God and were no longer operative in bringing humanity to light?

Here I wish to say something as to Christian beliefs prevalent at the time of the coming of the Holy Prophet. In

the early days in Rome, Christians were in a minority. There were various cults of Paganism arrayed against Christianity, among which Mithraism was to prove her most formidable foe.[1] A struggle ensued, but the struggle of Christianity against Mithraism was not like that of Islam against Pagan beliefs in Arabia. Christianity borrowed the rites of the Pagan cult wholesale. She did not destroy them, as Islam did in Arabia. A renegade from Paganism could enter the fold of Christianity and take all his old rites and customs with him. The process of development was a natural one; and in due course, all Pagan rites became part of the ritual of the new cult, chief among these being "the Sacrament," a circumstance which twentieth-century Christianity has only just begun to detect. That this was so even before the days of Justin Martyr appears from his *Apologia*. Somewhere about the middle of the third century, when the Fourth Gospel, though written at the beginning of the second century, began to dominate Christian thought, the Pagans advanced the challenge: "If Jesus were a man, why worship him? if a God, why weep for His suffering?" and this led to various ideas as to the nature of the Triune God. Some held that the three—the Father, the Son and Holy Ghost—were not distinct Persons but functions of the One God. Others said that they were three aspects of the Deity—power, wisdom and goodness. The ancient Hindus and the Greeks believed in a similar trinity. Some thought that Jesus was merely a superior man born supernaturally. The insoluble enigma, which will remain so for eternity, proved a Upas-tree for deadliness, and Christendom became a seething cauldron of warring sects. Fighting, massacres and persecution of the most brutal nature took place in the very Churches. This internecine strife could have killed Christianity had not the State come to her aid. The triumph of Constantine was the

[1] Professor J. Parkinson.

victory of Christianity. Theodosia placed her on a secure footing. But this did not stop the wrangling over dogma; the strife became ever more intense, and the feeling more bitter. Arius held that "the Son is totally and essentially distinct from the Father.", Bishop Alexander had Arius ejected from the Church at two Councils at Alexandria. Sect after sect arose; each coming with a new but equally unintelligible solution. Another dispute arose as to the manner of the combination of the Divine and human natures in Jesus; another over the position and personality of the Holy Ghost, until Manichæism arose and identified Jesus with Mithra the Sun-god. It claimed that Jesus had only a seeming body, and could not suffer. I sum up the results of the various Councils held to explain the riddle.

The Council of Nicæa (321) determined against Arius; that Christ was truly God, co-equal and co-eternal with His Father—separate, yet one.

Council of Constantinople (381) determined against Apollinaris that He was also truly man.

Council of Ephesus (431) established that the two natures were indivisibly one.

Council of Chalcedon (451), that the two natures were nevertheless perfectly distinct.

Nestorianism split the Eastern Empire into two camps. Heraclius sought to create harmony between the two by his decree of 630 A.C., affirming that while in Christ there were two natures, there was only one will; but the attempt was useless. The Catholic Church decided that there were two wills, although they always coincided. Constantine II (681) finally accepted the doctrine that in Christ the two wills were harmonized; but this did not improve the matter. It merely added another unintelligible dogma to the already existing jumble of meaningless doctrines that Orthodox Christianity had evolved. The contact between Christianity and its Pagan

surroundings brought still further modifications. Pagan rites and ceremonies were freely appropriated, and, by the end of the sixth century A.C., Christianity was as polytheistic as any of the earlier religions. Mary was raised to the rank of a Divinity. The primary trinity consisted of two Gods and a Goddess—Father, Mother and the Son. Images were set up in the churches and prayers to Saints were addressed to their images. The use of holy water, admittedly a Pagan fetish, gradually became universal in the rites of the Church. Christianity had, in fact, to all intents and purposes, returned to Paganism and Idolatry when Muhammad appeared. Could there be a better occasion and a direr need for the appearance of a Prophet, especially when we find that the present Christian thought is to a great extent due to contact with Muslim ideas?

Muhammad established the Unity of God in its purest form and placed it on an unshakable foundation. If religion is sent to tell something of God, and to acquaint humanity with its Creator and His attributes, can history point to any person other than Muhammad who has served the cause of religion better than he?

To-day Polytheism is on the wane, and Monotheism in the ascendant. Even the Trinitarians, and the worshippers of stones in India, come with apologies and excuses for their ideas on religion and for their modes of worship. They take pains to explain that their beliefs do not contravene the belief in the Oneness of God. And the credit of this all should go to Muhammad. Will my Unitarian friends consider for a moment this aspect of the question? Could their faith have been saved, or could it have reached them at all, without the ministry of Muhammad? They do not believe in the Divinity of any person. They worship one God. Jesus came with the same message, but could not fulfil his work on account of the shortness of his ministry. But if his claim to their allegiance

is for the same reason, and not a part of what they inherited from their parents, should they not come to Muhammad with the same respect, seeing that the latter did more than the former in the matter? Jesus was, after all, a Prophet. There were other prophets before him who had been accepted as such by them; but if Muhammad came with the same mission and accomplished it in a way transcending any previous attempt, can any person in the name of truth and consistency deny his Prophethood? I would go further, and say to the whole world of religion: "If you believe in the Divine revelation, in a Book—the Book you claim as yours from God—and if you believe in a Prophet who, you claim, was raised up by God to bring His message to you, then you must needs believe in the Prophethood of Muhammad, and in the Divine origin of the Qur-ánic revelation."

God spoke, to reveal His mind to various people, through their Prophets, and if in the course of time the will of the Lord becomes obscured through human interpolation, God will speak again. He will choose someone from among the human race as His mouthpiece, as He did before. The Revealed Books of all the nations had become corrupt at the advent of Muhammad, and they exist in the same condition now; no person other than Muhammad has appeared, till now, to restore them to their original form. If this statement be true, the non-Muslim world is on the horns of a dilemma. Either it must accept Muhammad as the Prophet of God, Who raised him up to purify religion from human corruption, or the pre-Islamic Books of God were not of Divine origin. Had they been in truth the Word of God, He must have taken some steps to keep them in their integrity when the human hand spoiled them. The Qur-án, in this respect, appeals to Nature, and drives the truth home to its readers in these words:—

Whatever sign we cause to lose its worth and use, or be forgotten, We bring one better than it or like it. (ii. 106).

THE IDEAL PROPHET

No sooner does a thing created by God disappear or become vitiated for its use, than a fresh supply comes to take its place. This law of demand and supply obtains universally in the physical world. It must do the same in the spiritual world. The Word of God comes to sustain the spirit and nourish the soul; if it disappears or becomes vitiated, it must come again in its Divine purity: and it has done so in the form of the Qur-án.

CHAPTER IV

THE IDEAL CALL

It was in the cave of Hira that the mantle of Prophethood fell on the Holy Prophet Muhammad. The first message of his call was couched in the following words: "Read in the name of your Lord Who created. He created man from a clot. Read and your Lord is most Honourable. Who taught (to write) with the pen. Taught man what he knew not. Nay: man is most surely inordinate."[1]

A message free from personal or tribal predilection, and at the same time so grand and so majestic—the Gospel for human upliftment. God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, when he was deputed to liberate the Children of Israel from the thraldom of Pharaoh. This was the main object which called forth the ministry of Moses. He had also to raise his brethren in Israel to a nation of conquerors and rulers. But he could not accomplish the latter object. Anyhow, his mission was more or less of a tribal nature. Then comes the son of Mary, and the spirit of the Lord descended upon him from Heaven, in the shape of a dove. His message was that *the son of man was the son of God*, with whom his Father was "well pleased." I do not propose to dwell at length on these two messages that Moses and Jesus respectively received from the Most High, at the beginning of their Call to Divine Ministry. Suffice it to say that the mission of the one concerned the affairs of a tribe singled out from thousands of tribes of the world, while that of the other spoke of the personal aggrandize-

[1] Holy Qur-án, xcvi. 1—6.

ment of some particular personality, and his sole concern, as he frequently expressed, were the lost tribes.

But Muhammad is given a message of quite a different character, soaring above individual or racial interest. It speaks of man as a class. It tells of the highest aim that a son of man is capable of reaching, and of the ways wherewith to accomplish that grand object. The message, in so many words, speaks of *reading and writing—who taught with the pen*—and of learning sciences unknown to the world in the time of the Prophet—*taught man what he knew not.* The message is of a universal character, and brings the whole human race within its area.

The condition of the world at the Prophet's coming demanded a universal message, which was not the case at the advent of Moses, Jesus or any other of the prophets. One hardly understands the Bishop of London when he says that the God of Conscience appeared in the fulness of time in the person of Christ. Had the Bishop been fully aware of the state of affairs existing in the world some two thousand years ago, his own words would have carried no meaning in his own judgment. If Jesus appeared to redeem man from sin and its penalty, why was that particular time chosen for his appearance? And why should the world have had to wait some five centuries more to see the time when sin reached its climax. It was in the time of Muhammad that wickedness was everywhere supreme. Would not that have been the proper time for the appearance of the world-Saviour, if he had to take upon himself the burden of others, and ransom them through his blood. But history (I should say myth) only repeated its events in the person of Jesus, if his mission was such as is popularly believed.

At the time of his appearance, Persia, China and India were respectively under the salubrious influence of three great Masters—Zoroaster, Confucius and Buddha—who appeared

almost simultaneously some five hundred years before Jesus. Judea needed a reformer, other countries apparently did not.

Ponder over the words of these three messages given to the three Prophets, and one becomes impressed at once with the largeness of the soul of the last Prophet. Man is the best product of Nature so far as the physical world is concerned. Physical growth reaches its consummation in his frame, and yet this all comes out of a blood-clot, as the above quotation from the Qur-án shows. The Creator of man, as the sacred words tell us, Who raised a wonderful creature like man out of a clot, now intends to raise him to the height of mental, moral and spiritual culture. He informs man of this His grand object through Muhammad; and in the very first revelation He discloses the ways and the means whereby to reach that goal.

The message, to begin with, comes from *Rabb*, the Arabic equivalent in the original text of the English word "Lord" as in the English rendering of the verse. The message would read thus: "Read in the name of your Rabb. . . . Read and your Rabb is most Honourable." The word "Rabb" is very significant. In commenting on the meaning of the word "Rabb," His Holiness Muhammad Ali, the author of the English translation of the Qur-án, gives the following:—

The Arabic word *Rabb* conveys not only the idea of *fostering, bringing-up,* or *nourishing,* but also that of regulating, completing, and accomplishing (TA-LL), *i.e.* of the evolution of things from the crudest state to that of the highest perfection. According to Rgh,[1] *Rabb* signifies the *fostering of a thing in such a manner as to make it attain one condition after another until it reaches its goal of completion.* Hence *Rabb* is the Author of all existence, Who has not only given to the whole creation its means of nourishment but has also beforehand ordained for each a sphere of capacity and within that sphere provided the means by which it continues to attain gradually to its goal of perfection. It will thus be seen that the word *Rabb,* which, for want of a better word, I render as *Lord,* conveys a far nobler and grander idea than the word *ab* or *father,* which has comparatively a very limited significance.

[1] Rághib.

The italicized words in the above quotation—Rabb signifies the fostering of a thing in such a manner as to make it attain one condition after another until it reaches its goal of completion—fully sum up the intended significance of the word "evolution." I am not modernizing the Qur-án. I hate juggling with words in matters of religion. The above definition of the word "Rabb" was given by Imam Rághib centuries ago, in his dictionary of the roots of the Qur-ánic words, and he quotes pre-Islamic poets to support this finding. He wrote at a time when the theory of evolution had not been dreamt of. Moreover, the general meaning of the word as given from Lane's lexicon in the above quotation conveys the complete idea of evolution.

The message coming from Rabb that Allah now intends to open to man all those evolutionary stages which stand between him and his goal and will enable him to pass through them.

The opening verse of the Qur-án styles Allah "Rabb-ul 'Alamín." It means the Creator, Nourisher and Evolver of the worlds—and of the different orders of things in the universe. It eloquently suggests that every thing in the universe is in the course of evolution, and the Qur-án comes from the same Creative and Evolutionary Agency to help man to the same end. The theory may come as a new truth to a dogma-ridden world, but not to a Muslim. "The vital truth of which the term 'Evolution' is perhaps an inconvenient symbol"[1] was established some thirteen hundred years ago, when Rabb was given in the Qur-án as one of the four foremost attributes of Allah; "the Gospel, wholly permeated by it in its history, its philosophy and its ethics," came in the form of the Qur-án.

To-day the Fundamentalists are at loggerheads with the Evolutionists. But, leaving apart Darwinism, the principle

[1] Professor Bethune-Baker, "The Modern Churchman" (*The Universe*, Nov. 30, 1925).

of evolution—that things inherently possess capabilities and, under favourable circumstances, bring them to development—pervades the whole universe. The word "evolution" is, however, not expressive enough to convey the real idea. The Qur-án uses *falah*—an Arabic word—as its substitute, that literally means "uncovering" or "furrowing out of hidden things"—unfolding of latent faculties. According to the Qur-án, as we read in its beginning, Divine Revelation came for the *falah* of man, namely, to guide him to the Divinely prescribed course that may bring his faculties to their fullest growth.

I do not write in any modernist spirit. On the contrary, I read this in the Last Book of God in clear terms and in various places, which I may quote by way of illustration:—

"And certainly We made above you seven ways; and never are We heedless of creation. And We send down water from the cloud according to a measure, We cause it to settle in the earth, and most surely We are able to carry it away. Then We cause to grow thereby gardens of palm-trees and grapes for you; you have in them many fruits and from them do you eat. And a tree that grows out of Mount Sinai which produces oil and a condiment for those who eat. . . . And certainly We created man of an extract of clay. Then We made him a small life-germ in a firm resting-place. Then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made in the lump of flesh bones, then We clothe the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation, so blessed be Allah, the best of the creators. Then after that you will most surely die. Then surely on the day of resurrection you shall be raised. . . . Successful indeed are the believers who are humble in their prayers, And who keep aloof from what is vain, And who act aiming at purification. And who are continent, except before their mates or those whom their right hands possess, for they surely are not blameable. But whoever seeks to go beyond that, these are

they that exceed the limits; And those who are keepers of their trusts and their covenant, And those who keep a guard on their prayers; These are they who are the heirs, Who shall inherit the Paradise; they shall abide therein."

These verses, which form the first section of the 23rd chapter, deal with the creation of man, from his nebular condition up to his birth on earth, and his further journey to realms beyond the grave. Thrice the Book speaks of seven stages in its growth. Something comes from above; becomes settled in the earth. It takes the form of different vegetations, called in the text "an extract of clay," which through various stages of evolution assumes the shape of life-germs—the genital seed. In this respect the above verses make special mention of things that constitute plasmic congeries. There are, further, seven stages in the womb, which give rise to "another creation"—that is to say, human consciousness. This consciousness has again to attain the seven mental or moral qualities mentioned in the above verses; and when we have thus perfected our course on the earth, we inherit Paradise.

Now to resume the subject, man has achieved all that he now possesses through knowledge and science—science that was not known in ancient times, and therefore rightly called modern science. The Qur-án says the same thing. It speaks of knowledge unknown to man before, and the fact that modern science received its inception at the hands of the Muslims, and flourished afterwards, speaks volumes for the portentous prophecy conveyed in the first message to Muhammad (may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him).

No doubt the world was no stranger to reading and writing before Islam, but these arts were confined to a few sanctuaries and convents. The rest of the world had no knowledge of them. How could they come into vogue when the very use of paper was unknown before Islam? Skins of animals, stone

tablets, animal-bones and tree-leaves supplied the scanty material for ancient lore to be written upon. Such things could not help the furtherance of reading and writing. Muslims introduced paper and gave a large impetus to learning. In fact, reading, the use of the pen, and the learning of "knowledges" not known before, *i.e.* modern science, were the three chief factors that worked out the greatness of man and brought him to the honourable position he holds now in the whole universe. Here again I would quote the first message to the Prophet, and leave it for my readers to find out for themselves whether the very three factors of human magnificence have not been mentioned in these words: "Read in the name of your Lord who created. He created man from a clot. Read and your Lord is most Honourable. Who taught (to write) with the pen. Taught man what he knew not. Nay: man is most surely inordinate."[1]

A man may write volumes to extol the "master," or the prophet whom he follows, but facts are, after all, facts. The grandeur and universal scope of the message to Muhammad eclipse those to Moses and Jesus; and the coming events proved the truth of each. Moses did liberate the children of Jacob from the Egyptian bondage, and Jesus did speak and preach of "Our Father in Heaven." But "Our" were the Israelites. They were his sole concern. He would weep for Jerusalem; he would go after it like a hen after her chickens. The coming Evangelists, no doubt, widened the scope of his mission to limits never imagined by him. But in his own lifetime he would not throw pearls before swine. He would not give the bread of the children to the dogs. In short, both Moses and Jesus came with missions of a limited scope and of a limited object. But Muhammad comes with a universal mission.[2] He looks to mankind for his ministry. He makes the whole human race his concern. He makes the whole world his

[1] Holy Qur-án, xcvi. 1-6.

[2] *Ibid.*, xxxiv. 28.

diocese. Again, he comes with an object peculiar only to mankind. If Moses stands for liberty, and Jesus interests himself in sermonizing upon love and meekness, Muhammad thinks of something else; without which liberty, love, meekness or any other human moral cannot work properly. There is something else in humanity which, if it remains undeveloped, will make of man a brute of the worst type. I mean, wisdom, the power of reasoning and logic. Animals have the sense of liberty. They do care for it. They go after freedom. Love and meekness are also not unknown to them, but man has been given that which has been denied to the animal kingdom. He possesses a peculiar mentality and a consciousness not possessed by animals. I mean, his intelligence. Muhammad stands for the development of this differentiating and characteristic human faculty. In it lay the greatness and grandeur of the human race; and it could not be worked out except through reading, through writing and through learning things unknown before. Do we not find the same in the very first revelation to Muhammad as quoted above?

But how could Humanity work out her greatness and reach her goal if man did not know of his capabilities as well as of his shortcomings? He must know the extent of his progress and the ways to reach it. He must also know his deficiencies and how to avoid them. Could there be any better object for the mission of a prophet than to enlighten humanity on these things? But in this respect all different philosophies, creeds and persuasions of the ancient world could not avail. Evil in man was their chief theme. They all emphasized the evil side of human nature. The Church in the West made sin an inseparable component of humanity; the teacher of Zoroastrianism made man a plaything in the hands of the Spirit of Evil. Buddha could not see anything but trouble and tribulation surrounding man—and that as a consequence of something evil in the nature of man—and his whole salva-

tion was forfeit. The old Sages of Brahmanism could not see anything beautiful and sublime in the God-made world. They saw their happiness only in detachment from it. In short, man did not appear to the ancient world as an entity possessing something good and noble in him. But Muhammad strikes a new note. He gives us the true anatomy, if the word be permitted, of the human mind. Verily, the Qur-án says: "We created man, of goodliest fibre, and made him the lowest of the low, but those who believe and do good deeds, for them is the reward uncut." Man was a microcosm, possessing in himself all that the other units in the universe possessed separately. He was of the best make, but with evil inclinations of the worst type. His capabilities were unlimited, and his destined progress knew no bounds. But if he could soar to the highest of the high, he could also descend to the lowest of the low. This was all unknown to him. Nor did he know the way to develop his powers and avoid the snares that beset him. A prophet from God was needed to bring such a message, and I say that one cannot imagine a better mission for such a prophet than that of bringing the required enlightenment to humanity. It was the mission of the Prophet Muhammad. If Moses, Jesus and many other prophets of the world can rightly be accepted as messengers from God by their respective followers, Muhammad (may peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him) undoubtedly has got a prior and better claim to universal allegiance as a true messenger from Allah.

CHAPTER V

THE IDEAL PERSONALITY

THE greatness of a man does not consist in the working of miracles or the doing of wonders; neither does it lie in the preaching of sermons or the formulating of theories. These are but passing phenomena. The greatness of a man lies in the possession of a mighty personality. "Personality is one of the indescribable wonders of the world, and . . . personalities can and do the marvels of the world." It is of everlasting value for those who are immediately around it, and for those, also, who come after. It conciliates opposition and inspires respect and imitation, which result, in the long run, in implicit obedience. It inspires others with its own spirit and dyes them in its own colour. It changes ideas and revolutionizes the thoughts, the habits and the customs of its contemporaries. It creates a new basis for the beliefs and actions of generation after generation of the races of mankind. In a word, it creates a new heaven and a new earth. Muhammad was such a personality, and, as such, was unique. There have been other personalities in the world. We may clothe them with attributes they never possessed; we may attribute to them virtues and ethics that they never owned or taught. "We may crucify Saviours or transfer them from the human to the divine on Mounts of Transfiguration." But all this is an afterthought that seeks to deify or magnify a unit of humanity. On the other hand, the light of personality shines like the sun; instantly opposition shrivels into nothing before its fiery ardour and unconquerable

soul. Our judgment as to a person believed to possess personality must, therefore, be based on the opinion and action of his own contemporaries. "If the test of a great man's inspiration is the reverence which his words inspire in those who acknowledge their divine origin," as is remarked in the editorial columns of the *Daily Express* of November 10th, "then Muhammad must be numbered among the greatest." But if this test is right—and it is right—Muhammad is a unique character, seeing that no other reformer, prophet, nor even any God-incarnate, could have and claim that love, devotion and obedience that came to Muhammad from his followers, who were not of low station or of inferior mental calibre, but men of position, rank, wealth and culture; and from his own kith and kin, those who knew the ins and outs of his life. "For twelve years the early Muslims suffered frightful persecution at the hands of idolaters, and yet their number steadily increased. The community was scattered, many were driven into exile, yet it went on growing. Though its numbers were subjected to most cruel tortures, there were few apostates, and many converts to the faith of Allah. Did the personality of Muhammad—the most charming that the world has ever known—count for nothing in that steadfast and enduring growth?"[1]

In Muhammad we have the ideal personality, who in his

[1] Marmaduke Pickthall, from whom I have just quoted, says further: "Listen to the answer which a follower of his, when put to the extreme of torture, gave his persecutors. They asked him: 'Don't you wish now that Muhammad was in your place?' Amid his pain the sufferer cried out: 'I would not wish to be with my family, my wealth and my children, on the condition that Muhammad was only to be pricked by a thorn.' That is the accent of a personal love, not merely of the reverence that men feel for prophets, or the loyalty they pay to kings. One who had been his body servant said: 'I served our Lord Muhammad for ten years, and in that time he never said so much as "Uf" to me. The same note of personal affection is evident in all the hundreds of reports concerning him which those whose privilege it was to know him in this life have left behind."

own lifetime moulds the character of his fellow-men, reforms them, changes their thoughts, puts new ideals before them, elevates them to a higher plane, and, in spite of themselves, drives them onward and upwards on the path of progress, to the fulness of a better and holier life.

Muhammad was surrounded by infidelity, drunkenness, immorality, oppression, irreligion and infanticide; true religion had vanished, and an admixture of idolatry, fetishism, nature, element and man-worship was prevailing everywhere, even among Christians and Jews. Above all, he had to face people who were immensely conservative; who would not stoop to any interference with their own ways; who were tenaciously attached to their old customs and habits, and would not tolerate any admonition from another. It was a hopeless task to reform them. But Muhammad came with a mission to do so, a mission that surpasses the mission of other prophets in its arduous nature. But did Muhammad hesitate or shirk it?[1] Did he begin his work with words and deeds of compromise, as others did? Did he adopt half-measures, or try the gradual infusion of new thoughts? Were his actions ever influenced by expediency? No. He goes directly to the root of the evil. Sensitive, retiring and reticent as he was, he neither temporized nor kept silent. He felt the force of his convictions and had the courage to act up to them. He was never influenced by expediency, neither did he ever care for diplomacy. He was always direct, whether in reply, advice, or reproof. To the non-Muslim world, he would say, in the words of the Qur-án: "Whoever desires a religion other than Islam—submission to God—it shall not be accepted from him, and in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers."[2] To the Christian he would say: "Jesus, son of Mary, is only an apostle of God . . . believe therefore in Allah and His Apostle and say not, Three. Desist, it is better for you . . .

[1] Professor J. Parkinson.

[2] Holy Qur-án, ii.

and they say the beneficent God has taken to Himself a son. Certainly you have made an abominable assertion. The heavens may almost be rent thereat, and the earth cleave asunder, and the mountains fall down in that they ascribe a son to God . . . say, God is One. He is independent, He is neither begotten nor begets."[1] The Christians say: "The Messiah is the son of Allah; these are the words of their mouths; *they imitate the saying of those who were pagans before:*[2] Allah destroyed them; now they are turned away." To the Romish Church he would say: "They have taken their Doctors of Law and their monks for Lords besides Allah."[3] The Jews believed that they were the sons of God, and the Christians also thought themselves to be so; but Muhammad would admonish them and say: "The Jews and Christians say we are sons of Allah and His beloved ones; say, why then does He chastise you?"[4] In addressing the Jews he said: "Most of you are transgressors. . . . Allah has cursed and brought His wrath upon (them) of whom He made apes and swine."[5] To the hypocrites he would say: "There is a disease in their hearts, so Allah added to their disease and they shall have a painful chastisement, because they lied."[6] To those who would not listen to admonition nor care for warning he would declare: "Allah has put a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and there is a covering over their eyes and there is a great chastisement for them."[7] "Deaf, dumb, blind, so they will not turn back."[8] Those were the days when salvation through vicarious atonements, sacrificial rites, intermediaries and intercessions was a popular belief; and no one was prepared to bear or give countenance to any attempt that would expose the hollowness of that belief. And yet Muhammad falsified all these doctrines when

[1] Holy Qur-án, ch. cxii.
[2] See *Sources of Christianity*.
[3] Holy Qur-án, ix. 31.
[4] *Ibid.*, v. 18.
[5] *Ibid.*, v. 57-60.
[6] *Ibid.*, ii. 10.
[7] *Ibid.*, ii. 7.
[8] *Ibid.*, ii. 18.

he said: "What! shall I seek a Lord better than Allah? And He is the Lord of all things; and *no soul earns (evil) but against itself, and no bearer of a burden shall bear the burden of another*" (vi. 165). "There does not reach Allah their flesh (of animals sacrificed) nor their blood, but to Him is acceptable righteousness on your part" (xxii. 37). "So the intercessions of intercessors shall not avail others."[1]

Arabia was a seat of different religions, each decrying the other; while no religion, though it suffered in purity, was without some partial truth. The same state of things we find to-day. But Muhammad denounced sectarianism and decried the hostile attitude of the various religions towards each other, in the following words of the Qur-án: "And the Jews say, The Christians do not follow anything (good), and the Christians say, The Jews do not follow anything (good), while they recite the (same) Book. Even thus say those who have no knowledge, like to what they say; so Allah shall judge between them on the day of resurrection in what they differ."[2] "Say: We believe in Allah and (in) that which has been revealed to us, and (in) that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and (in) that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and (in) that which was given to the prophets from their Lord; we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit."[3]

Those were the days when ritualism was the sum total of almost every religion. But Muhammad distinguished between a formal and ceremonial piety. He made faith in God, and benevolence towards man, the essence of religion. "It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is *this, that one* should believe in Allah and the last day and the angels, and the book and the prophets, and give away wealth out of love for Him to the

[1] Holy Qur-án, lxxiv. 48. [2] *Ibid.*, ii. 113. [3] *Ibid.*, ii. 136.

near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the waytarer and the beggars and for (the emancipation of) the captives, and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate; and the performance of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in time of conflict—these are they who are true (to themselves), and these are they who guard (against evil)." [1]

The Arabs were extremely addicted to "drink" and gambling, but he would not allow even moderation; he would go directly to the root of it and would preach total prohibition thus: "O you who believe! intoxicants and games of chance and (sacrificing to) stones set up and (dividing by) arrows are only an uncleanness, the devil's work; shun it, therefore, that you may be successful." [2] His countrymen used to kill their female babies or bury them alive. It was a custom honoured by usage, but Muhammad uprooted it, saying when one is buried alive—"for what sin was she killed?" [3] In short, no false belief or wrong doctrine remained of which the error or hollowness was not exposed. No evil custom or bad habit was left unrebuked. And yet Muhammad would neither inspire any false hope nor would he claim any identity with the Deity. "No extraordinary pretensions, no indulgence in hyperbolical language, no endeavour to cast a glamour round his character and personality: 'I am only a preacher of God's words, the bringer of God's message to mankind,'" [4] repeats he always.

Miracles he performed, but not to propagate his faith. [5] He would plainly say he was but a man like others; he had no treasures, nor did he claim to know the secrets of the future: "Say: I am only a man like unto you." [6] "Say: I do not control any benefit or harm for my own soul except as Allah pleases, and had I known the unseen I would have had much

[1] Holy Qur-ân, ii. 177. [2] *Ibid.*, v. 90. [3] *Ibid.*, lxxxi. 8-9.
[4] Syed Ameer Ali. [5] Bukhari, Book of Manâqib.
[6] Holy Qur-ân, xviii. 110.

of good, and no evil would have touched me. I am nothing but a warner and giver of good news to people who believe."[1] "Say: I do not say to you I have with me the treasures of Allah, nor do I know the unseen, nor do I say to you that I am an angel." The Arabs were a superstitious people. Had the Prophet so wished, he could have claimed any supernatural powers for himself. Many incidents occurred in his lifetime when people would have ascribed divine powers to him, but he destroyed all such vain suggestions by a plain denial. It is stated that on the day of the death of his son, the sun became totally eclipsed. Some of the pagans thought that the sun was in mourning for the sad event. They went to him with repentance, ready to accept his mission. But he would not take advantage of such subterfuges. He said: "Surely the Sun and the Moon are two signs of Allah; they do not suffer eclipse in consequence of the death of anybody nor on account of any one's life."

Here is a man, a reformer, a Prophet, a Messenger from God, who stripped himself of all the paraphernalia reported to have been possessed by those who came before him with a similar mission. He disowned all that might invite following, help, co-operation or sympathy. Thus he made no friends, but enemies of them all. He would not yield to solicitations nor accept a position of wealth,[2] to prejudice the mission—a mission in no way contributing to his personal aggrandizement—but the mission of God, the mission of humanity and the mission of everything that is noblest and best, the mission to establish the Unity of God and, through it, the unity of the human race, the mission of raising degraded humanity to its destined elevation. In short, he deprived himself of all that could have smoothed his way to success; had he done otherwise, he would have been untrue to himself and insincere to his mission for which he had the call. He did not work miracles to achieve

[1] Holy Qur-án, vii. 188.

[2] See p. 71.

his object, but he worked what was more than a miracle: he worked against odds and achieved a success—such a success as has never come to any person before or since in religious or secular history, and that in the adverse circumstances to which he had been subjected. But to achieve this unique success he did not resort to things beyond human reach, in which case he could not have acted as an exemplar. He used all the honest and honourable means that are open to others, and so his life is an object-lesson to those who have to work for success against heavy odds and under adverse circumstances.

A prophet comes to act as a guide and a model; Muhammad has a special claim to those qualifications. He is the Prophet in human colours, and consequently a true specimen for our imitation. He faces difficulties, and surmounts them with means within the reach of humanity. Other Prophets, as the report goes, had recourse to miracles to meet the difficulties in their way. One could understand the need of a miracle in order to strengthen the conviction of, or drive home, certain truths to a man in the street—it is a necessity, and there is a genuine report of any number of miracles performed by the Holy Prophet for that purpose—but we, in our day, have to face similar difficulties in our life, and we cannot do miracles in order to surmount them. Moses saved his people from the Egyptian tyranny through a miracle, but Muhammad defended the city of Medina with his little band against ten thousand odds through his heroic and soldier-like measures which a commander of an army will be proud to follow with advantage. But Moses with all his miracles could not infuse that spirit of manliness into his followers which we observe in the ranks of Muhammad. Jesus had to complain always of the lack of faith in his disciples, though they saw many a miracle from the master, but Muhammad had a band of the faithful unique in their devotion to the master.

Few persons remember their days of adversity when they come to power. High-mindedness and great strength of character alone can stand against the vicissitudes of life. To him who possesses these qualities change means newness of occasions that call forth such other noble qualities as could not be exhibited in his former state. In fact, every quality has its own occasion and demands special circumstances for its revelation. If trial gives man a character, success brings out his nobility of mind, if he possesses it. Humanity is not only softness of heart; it consists of various morals, tender and stern, and needs a variety of conditions for their development. If some find manifestation in penury, others demand affluence if they are to appear in perfection. Very few of the Guides of Humanity were granted occasion to taste both. But Muhammad, to act as a perfect model for humanity, had to pass every phase of life. If prosperity brought out his generosity, his forgiveness, and his high-mindedness, his adversity gave him occasion to exhibit his patience, his fortitude, and his trust in God.

There is one thing in him that shows that he had achieved that zenith of character and morality that must be the final goal of human endeavour, where man reflects Divine morals. Like all the ways and laws of God, Muhammad is unchangeable. In victory or in defeat, in power or in adversity, in affluence or in indigence, he is the same. He discloses the same character. Humility was, for example, his special characteristic throughout his career. "His military triumphs," says Washington-Irving, "awakened no pride or vainglory, as they would have done had they been effected for selfish purposes. In the time of his greatest power he maintained the same simplicity of manners and appearance as in the day of his adversity. So far from affecting regal state, he was displeased if, on entering a room, any unusual testimonial of respect were shown him. If he aimed at

universal dominion, it was the dominion of the faith; as to the temporal rule which grew up in his hands, as he used it without ostentation so he took no step to perpetuate it in his family."

"After he became the sovereign of Arabia he still remained on terms of brotherhood with all believers. He had not to surround himself with guards and janitors; he moved in simple ways among the brethren, the guide, the peacemaker, the trusted friend."[1] "Even at the zenith of his worldly power the good sense of Muhammad," says Gibbon, "despised the pomp of royalty; the apostle of God submitted to the menial offices of the family; he kindled the fire, swept the floor, milked the ewes and mended with his own hand his shoes and his woollen garments. Disdaining the penance and merit of an hermit, he observed, without effort and vanity, the abstemious diet of an Arab and a soldier. On solemn occasions he feasted his companions with hospitable plenty; but, in his domestic life, many weeks would elapse without a fire being kindled in the hearth of the Prophet." I would add a statement on record left by the Lady Ayesha to these quotations which I have purposely made in pursuance of an Arabic proverb that says that the best of testimony is that that comes from the other camp: "For a whole month together we did not light a fire to dress victuals; our food was nothing but dates and water unless anyone sent us meat. The people of the Prophet's household never got wheat bread on two successive days."[2]

[1] Marmaduke Pickthall.

[2] In the collection of Tirmizi known as the "Jàmi'" it is stated that the Prophet and his family went hungry for many nights successively, because they could not get anything to eat in the evening.

Once, no fire was made for two months in the house of the Prophet. Ayesha related this to 'Urwa-bin-Zubair, who asked her what they

This was the life he led and such were his humble ways when the whole of Arabia was at his feet. The entire town of Medina grew wealthy in the latter days of his life. Everywhere there was gold and silver, and yet the house of his own daughter showed no sign of riches, no trace of wealth or comfort. On the very day of his death his only assets were a few shillings, a part of which went to satisfy a debt and the rest was given to a needy person who came to his house for charity. The clothes in which he breathed his last had patches. The whole property being thus spent, the Prophet has been reported to have remarked: "We of the class of Prophets neither inherit from others nor do we leave anything for others to inherit from us."

had been eating. Ayesha answered: "Water and dates. Sometimes the neighbours would send in goat's milk, and we would drink of it." *

In Bukhari, Book of Riqàq, it is stated that the Prophet never ate a loaf of bread.

Sahl-bin-S'ad relates that the Prophet had never had any chance of enjoying the fine flour which in Arabia is known as Hawar-in-Naqi. He was asked whether there were no sieves in the days of the Prophet. He said: "No, there were none." People asked him how they removed the bran. He said: "We used to blow it away with our breath. Whatever was left was kneaded." †

Ayesha relates that the Prophet never knew what it was to satisfy his hunger all through the period beginning with the Flight and ending with his death. ‡

Anas relates that once he went to the Prophet, and on appearing before him found that the Prophet had tied a piece of cloth, very tightly round his waist. When he inquired what the reason was, one of the Companions replied to him: "On account of hunger." §

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* Bukhari. † Tirmizi's *Shamail.* ‡ *Ibid.* § Muslim.

CHAPTER VI

THE IDEAL CHARACTER

In the furnace of trial and persecution the ore of character becomes burnished gold. Adversity and hardship bring out what lies in man; they either make of him an everlasting character the light of which shall shine always and everywhere, or reduce him to nothingness and oblivion. Therefore, those who aspire after success must be prepared to tread the road of hardship and trials.

The call that came to Muhammad in the cave caused a great trembling to come upon him; he hastened home to his wife bidding her cover him in something. She asked him what had happened to him. When he was a little recovered, he said: "O Khadija!" (his wife) "He of whom one would not have believed it, has become either a soothsayer or one 'possessed.'" She replied: "God is my protector, O Abu'l Kasim!" (another name of Muhammad) "He will surely not let such a thing happen unto thee; for thou speakest the truth; returnest not evil for evil, keepest faith, art of a good life, and kind to thy relations and friends; neither art thou a babbler in the market-places. What has befallen thee? Hast thou seen aught terrible?" Muhammad replied: "Yes." And he told her what he had seen. Whereupon she answered and said: "Rejoice, O dear husband, and be of good cheer, He in whose hands stands Khadija's life is my witness, and thou shalt be the Prophet of this people." Had Muhammad been an impostor, would he have gone to his own home

in this condition and in this terrified frame of mind; and to a person who, as his wife, knew everything of good and bad in him; and would she have accosted him thus, if his past character had not been worthy of a Prophet? Jesus could not inspire any faith among his nearest relatives. His brothers had no belief in him;[1] they endeavoured to take possession of his person "believing him to be out of his mind."[2] But Muhammad opened his soul to those who knew him best, those who were his closest relations and dearest friends—his wife, his beloved cousin, and his intimate friends—and those who lived with him and noted all his movements. Had they observed the slightest sign of worldliness, or want of faith, they could hardly have been convinced of his inspiration. Their acceptance of his mission speaks volumes for his stalwart character and his truthful nature. Let the old Patriarch Abú Tálib, his uncle, when invited to Islam, say: "I cannot abjure the religion of my fathers"; but when he was informed by his own son Ali of his belief in Muhammad, Abú Tálib would say: "Well, my son, he (Muhammad) will not call thee to anything save that which is good; therefore thou art free to cleave unto him."

When the Prophet gave out his claim to prophethood, it is said that the Meccans, who had an intimate knowledge of him, were of opinion that to believe that Muhammad was a liar or an impostor was out of the question, because it was against his nature to tell lies or impute lies. They said that they were rather of opinion that he had lost his senses. Others believed that he had fallen a victim to poetical exaggerations. That is why the Qur-án makes mention of the false notions of the Meccans, and contains references to such words as "Muhammad is a poet," "Muhammad is insane," "Muhammad is possessed." In spite of all this, they never called him a liar. Once, when the élite of the Quraish were sitting

[1] John vii. 5. [2] Mark iii. 21.

together and talking, the topic turned on Muhammad. Nazr-bin-Hárith, who was the most experienced in worldly matters of all the Quraish, intervened and said: "O Quraish, you have not been able to devise any plan to get out of the difficulty which has descended on you. Muhammad grew up from his childhood to be a young man before your eyes. You know full well that he was the most honest, the most veracious, the most charming of all of you. And when his hair is growing grey, and when he has placed his ideas and claims before you, it is you who have the audacity to say: 'He is a magician, he is a soothsayer, he is a poet, he is mad.' By God, I have listened to what Muhammad says and preaches. Muhammad is neither a magician, nor a poet, nor a madman, nor a soothsayer. I believe some new calamity is going to befall you."[1] Abu Jihl, the uncle of the Prophet and the implacable enemy of the Prophet, used to say: "Muhammad, I do not say you are a liar, but whatever you preach is untrue and I hold it to be false."[2]

For three long years after the Call he laboured quietly to wean his people from the worship of idols, but the ancient cult was deeply rooted among them; and his own tribe had a vested interest in the old worship. It involved their prestige and maintenance, and hence the great opposition that came from this quarter. It was a sort of life-and-death struggle for the first three years, during which period he secured but very few converts; yet his heart never failed him. He preached quietly and calmly. Though the people at Mecca thought him crazed and "possessed," still they did not obstruct him, at the first. But the call came again: "O you who are clothed! Arise and warn, And magnify your Lord, And purify your garments, And shun uncleanness." The warning was to convey the message to others, and to wean them from their gross practices, and warn them to shun their unclean

[1] Ibn-i-Hishám. [2] Tirmizi.

ways, and thus to purify the spiritual garments in which they had been clothed by reason of their wrong beliefs and evil actions. Muhammad, after this Divine message, determined to appeal to the Quraish to abandon their idolatry. He convened an assembly at the Safa Mountain; he ascended the small hill and called out: "O people of the Quraish!" When all of them were assembled, he thus addressed them: "If I were to tell you that behind this mountain there was lying hidden a large army, would you believe in me?" All of them said: "Certainly, only because, within our knowledge, you have never told a lie."[1] Then he spoke to his people of their wickedness in the sight of the Lord, their folly in adoring idols that they themselves had made. He warned them of the fate that had befallen those who heeded not the words of their Prophets in past days. But he was mocked and derided; taunted and scoffed at. Thus failing in his attempt to convert the Quraish, he went to the strangers who visited Mecca for trade or pilgrimage. He preached to them the words of God; but the Quraish interfered. They posted themselves in the different streets of the town, and warned the strangers against holding any communication with Muhammad, whom they declared to be a dangerous magician. Calumnies, libel and vilification came from them continuously, but could not silence the warner. His perseverance aroused open and violent opposition. He was forbidden to say his prayers in the Ka'aba, and was pursued wherever he went. But nothing could make him waver. Often he was in imminent danger of his life, but his calm and self-control were a match for their murderous intentions, which utterly failed to put a stop to conversion, and had no effect whatever on the zeal and ardour of the preacher: the more his enemies increased in their persecution, the more he put his heart and soul into his preaching. His enemies col-

[1] Bukhari.

lected all their forces, but he told them that the punishment which had alighted on the tribes of old, that had not heeded the warning of the Divine messenger, was awaiting them, and that they were "deaf, dumb and blind, therefore they shall not retrace their steps." Muhammad, and with him a few of his new followers, were not at once molested, but the rest were victimized under an organized system of persecution. Each family tortured its own members or dependents. "They were thrown into prison, starved and then beaten with sticks. They were exposed to the burning heat of the desert on the scorching sand, where, when reduced to the last extremity by thirst, they were offered the alternative of worshipping the idol or death."[1] But the perseverance of Muhammad inspired his followers to stand firm in his faith, though many were killed. Muhammad saw all the sufferings of his disciples, but nothing could affect his determination. When the Quraish perceived that "the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church," they bethought them of other means to stop the Prophet. Worldly-wise as they were, they thought that the things of the world might persuade him to give up his denunciation of their faith and prestige. They, therefore, approached him one day when he was sitting in the Ka'aba, and 'Otba, representing the Quraish, said: "O son of my brother, thou art distinguished by thy qualities and thy descent. Now thou hast sown division among our people, and cast dissension in our families; thou denouncest our gods and goddesses; thou dost tax our ancestors with impiety. We have a proposition to make to thee; think well if it will not suit thee to accept it." 'Speak, O father of Walíd'—name of a son of 'Otba—said the Prophet: 'I listen, O son of my brother,' commenced 'Otba: 'If thou wishest to acquire riches by this affair, we will collect a fortune larger than is possessed by any of us; if thou desirest honours and dignity,

[1] Syed Ameer Ali.

we shall make thee our chief, and shall not do a thing without thee; if thou desirest dominion, we shall make thee our king; and if the spirit (demon) which possesses thee cannot be overpowered, we will bring thee doctors and give them riches till they cure thee.' And when he had done, 'Hast thou finished, O father of Walíd?' asked the Prophet. 'Yes,' replied he. 'Then listen to me.' 'I listen,' he said. 'In the name of the most Merciful God,' commenced the Warner, 'this is a revelation from the most Merciful: a book, the verses whereof are distinctly explained, an Arabic Qur-án for the instruction of people who understand; bearing good tidings, and announcing threats: but the greater part of them turn aside, and hearken not thereto. And they say, 'Our hearts are veiled from the doctrine to which thou invitest us; and there is a deafness in our ears, and a curtain between us and thee: wherefore act thou as thou shalt think fit; for we shall act according to our own sentiments.' 'Say, Verily, I am only a man like you. It is revealed unto me that your God is one God: wherefore direct your way straight unto Him; and ask pardon of Him for what is past. And woe be to the idolaters, who give not the appointed alms, and believe not in the life to come! But as to those who believe and work righteousness, they shall receive an everlasting reward.'[1] When the Prophet finished this recitation, he said to 'Otba: 'Thou hast heard, now take the course which seemeth best to thee.'"[2]

The temptation and the tempter in the form of man, and not a vision or a dream as we read in the Bible.

When the cruelties of the Meccans became more and more unbearable, Muhammad advised some of his followers to seek refuge in Abyssinia. Acting upon the advice, fifteen of the new converts emigrated to Abyssinia. They were followed

[1] Holy Qur-án, Sura xii.

[2] Ibn-i-Hishám, pp. 185, 186: *Spirit of Islam.*

by others, but the hostility of the Quraish pursued them even there. The Abyssinian king, however, did not listen to the Meccans. The foiling of their attempt and the discovery that successful emigration to Abyssinia was followed by similar emigration, added fuel to the fire of their hatred. They fell, with all the fury of demons, upon Muhammad, but he was a man of super-calibre. He stood bravely at his post and pursued his Mission amidst every insult and outrage. Again they came to him with offers of honour and riches, if he would but desert from his mission; but they received the same reply in the following words: "I am neither desirous of riches nor ambitious of dignity nor of dominion; I am sent by God, Who has ordained me to announce glad tidings unto you. I give you the words of my Lord; I admonish you. If you accept the message I bring you, God will be favourable to you both in this world and in the next; if you reject my admonitions, I shall be patient, and leave God to judge between you and me." The Meccans took it as an insult. Then they lost patience with Muhammad. They sent deputations to Abú Tálib, his uncle, asking him to stop his nephew from preaching against their religion. But Muhammad persisted in his denunciation of their ungodliness and impiety. Next they closed the doors of the Ka'aba, where he used to go and preach his religion to others, against the Prophet. They went to Abú Tálib in a body with an ultimatum, and said: "We respect thine age and thy rank, but our respect for thee has bounds, and verily we can have no further patience with thy nephew's abuse of our gods, and his ill words against our ancestors; wherefore do thou either prevent him from so doing, or thyself take part with him, so that we may settle the matter by fight until one of the two parties is exterminated." These portentous words weighed heavily on Abú Tálib. He sent for Muhammad and, informing him of what the Quraish had said, begged him to give up his mission. It

appeared as though Abú Tálib wished to withdraw his protection from Muhammad; but nothing would bend the master will, and Muhammad replied firmly: "O my uncle, if they placed the Sun on my right hand and the Moon on my left to force me to renounce my work, verily I would not desist therefrom until God had made manifest His work, or I had perished in the attempt." This he said and was about to depart, when the old Patriarch called aloud: "Son of my brother, come back; say whatsoever thou pleasest, for by thy Lord, I will not abandon thee, nay, never." This declaration of Abú Tálib increased the Meccan fury, and they determined to exterminate the Háshimites and Muttalibites, the clan of Abú Tálib. They made a league against the family and excommunicated it—forbidding all and sundry to enter into any contract of marriage with them, or to buy or sell to or from them. It meant open war, and the Háshimites were few in number; they had to take refuge somewhere. They went to a long, narrow mountain gorge which had only a small, narrow entry. There they lived in a state of privation for three full years, suffering often the pangs of hunger and thirst, but the undauntable will became more strengthened. The Prophet could not preach for the whole of the year, seeing that to leave the place of refuge was a suicidal act; it would have been courting immediate death, but when the sacred months came every year, when violence was deemed sacrilege, the Teacher would come out of his prison and preach his religion to those who came on pilgrimage from abroad. The Meccans could not hurt him, on account of the sacred months, but they mocked and scoffed at him and gave him every harsh name. These conditions continued for three years up to the tenth year of his mission, when, through the intercession of other tribes, the ban of excommunication was removed and the Háshimites came out of the dungeon. But the coming year dealt the Prophet a heavier blow. His uncle and his wife

died one after the other. In the former he lost the protector of his youth, and one who stood between him and his enemies, and in the latter a life-long sympathiser and a true counsellor. Despairing of the Meccans, but never despairing of his Mission, the Prophet now tried to change the scene of his Ministry. He went to Taif—a town some forty miles from Mecca—with his servant Zaid. He spoke to the people of Taif about his Mission, warning them against idolatry and calling them to the worship of God. The preaching aroused strong indignation, and he was driven from the city. The rebels and the roughs of the town followed him, abusing and pelting him with stones. Wounded and bleeding, thirsty and famished, he went to a hillock, and raising his hands towards heaven, he cried: "O Lord, I make my complaint to Thee. Out of my feebleness and the vanity of my wishes I am insignificant in the sight of men; O Thou Most Merciful! Lord of the weak, Thou art my Lord. Forsake me not. Leave me not a prey to strangers nor to mine enemies. If Thou art not offended, I am safe. I seek refuge in the light of Thy countenance by which all darkness is dispelled and peace cometh here and hereafter. Solve Thou my difficulties as it pleaseth Thee. Guide these people in the right path, for they do not know what they do."

Noble words, worthy of noble lips; conscious of the insignificance he has been reduced to, and yet with such a splendid reliance on God. "If Thou art not offended, I am safe," are words that show no despondency, no complaint and no doubt as to his being unforsaken by God. "Solve Thou my difficulties as it pleaseth Thee"—another noble expression eloquent enough to enlighten the narrow-minded Church missionary who ignorantly harps on the uniqueness of "Thy will and not mine." The concluding portion of the prayer reminds me of that of Jesus when he says: "Forgive them, for they know not what they do." But the Prophet says: "Guide them in the right path, for they know not what they

do"—words suiting the circumstances of the speakers respectively, and proving their truth. Jesus had no chance of gaining over his enemies in his lifetime a power which could enable him to show his magnanimity of soul in the form of forgiveness. He implores God to "forgive them." Muhammad had to reach that climax; he had to forgive them himself. It was so, within the knowledge of God. Besides, the words inspired on the lips of the latter are more comprehensive. They go further, and include *forgiveness*. Forgiveness is only for the things past; guidance to righteousness is for the past as well as for the future, for no one can tread the path of righteousness with his past sins unforgiven. So the Holy Prophet not only prays for the forgiveness of his enemies' past deeds but for their future righteousness as well. The words were prophetic, and have proved so, for Muhammad became supreme and his oppressors, whenever they came to him, received treatment of unparalleled kindness.

Muhammad returned to Mecca with a wounded heart, but he did not relax his efforts. His preaching continued, but now was chiefly addressed to the strangers who came to Mecca in the days of pilgrimage. One day he met six men from Medina. They listened to his words and accepted his Mission. The next year the same Medinites brought six more of their fellow-citizens, but the latter came as deputies to represent the principal tribes of Medina. They also became his converts, and the pledge they took was this:—

> "We will not associate anything with God, we will not steal, nor commit adultery, nor fornication; we will not kill our children; we will abstain from calumny and slander; we will obey the Prophet in everything that is right; and we will be faithful to him in weal and in sorrow."[1]

[1] Ibn-i-Hishám.

The Prophet used almost always to take the pledge from his proselytes in these words. They not only show the evil conditions of the people of Arabia at the time of the Prophet's coming, but also the nature of the reform which he intended; and history shows that when he left the world all these evils had become extinct among his followers. There is one thing also in the pledge which is very remarkable and shows the real worth of the personality he possessed, and that is selflessness, which is, in fact, the groundwork of every high moral system—love, generosity, courage, honesty, fair dealing, etc. Every high morality is founded on selflessness. In the above pledge Muhammad seeks obedience, not for his own self-aggrandizement, but in everything that is right: no personal element works in him. After the pledge, the Medinites returned to their town, accompanied by a Muslim from Mecca, who was charged with the duty of teaching them the fundamental doctrines of the new religion. Though the new faith began to spread rapidly in Medina, Muhammad had to face the most perilous period of his life in those days. But the occasion brought out his real worth. The grandeur of his character and his sublime trust in God were a marvel to men. His resolution of purpose, his steadfastness to his cause against overwhelming odds, and his sincere belief in his own Mission and its final victory, have extracted the following words even from an enemy, like Sir William Muir:—

"Mahomet, thus holding his people at bay, waiting, in the still expectation of victory, to outward appearance defenceless, and with his little band, as it were, in the lion's mouth, yet trusting in His Almighty power whose messenger he believed himself to be, resolute and unmoved—presents a spectacle of sublimity paralleled only in the sacred records by such scenes as that of the prophet of Israel, when he complained to his Master, 'I, even I only, am left.'"[1]

[1] *Life of Muhmamad*, vol. ii, p. 228.

The next year when the Medinites came to see the Master, they were seventy-five in number, and had come to invite him to their town. Muhammad spoke to them of the risks they incurred by embracing Islam and inviting him to their city, but they replied that they were fully conscious of the danger, and added: "Speak, O Prophet of God, and exact any pledge for thyself and thy God." The usual pledge was taken, and then they said: "If we die in the cause of God, what shall be our return?" "Happiness hereafter," was the reply. No promise of kingdom or placing their children on the right side of his throne when he should be in glory.

This conference of the Medinites with Muhammad, though it took place secretly at night, was, however, observed, and it made the Meccans redouble their persecution of the Prophet and his disciples. Their position became more and more critical; until at last a general massacre seemed imminent. Muhammad advised his followers to emigrate secretly to Medina. Family after family of the new converts began to disappear from Mecca, but Muhammad would not leave the place. The moment of trial came. He was urged to fly to Medina, and every facility was arranged to enable him to reach the place of safety and protection, but he would not leave any of his friends behind him; he would wait for the time when all of them left the place of danger. The storm was at its height, but it did not intimidate the Prophet. All his disciples left for Medina excepting Ali and Abu Bakr.

The Quraish saw the situation, and realized what it would mean to them if Muhammad reached Medina. They met at the Town Hall and decided to assassinate him. A number of brave men were chosen from different families for this murderous deed. They watched all night long round the house of the Prophet, but Muhammad escaped with Abu Bakr and lay hid for three days in a cave of Mount Thaur, a few miles from Mecca.

The fury of the Quraish now knew no limit. The whole country was searched and a price was set on the Prophet's head. Muhammad was hotly pursued by his bloodthirsty enemies, who traced the route of his flight by his footprints. They reached the mouth of the cave. Abu Bakr became anxious when he heard the footsteps of the enemy. "We are only two, and the enemy are in great force," he said to Muhammad. Their lives were at stake, but the reply discloses that presence of mind, and that trust in God, which history fails to reveal in other great personalities of the world. "No," said Muhammad emphatically, "do not get disheartened, God is with us." On the evening of the third day Muhammad left the cave and reached Medina by unfrequented paths.

Before I proceed further, I would summarize the Meccan life of the Prophet rather in the words of Syed Ameer Ali, in his book *The Spirit of Islam*, than in my own words. He depicts it so beautifully in the following passage:—

"We have seen this wonderful man as an orphan child who had never known a father's love, bereft in infancy of a mother's care, his early life so full of pathos, growing up from a thoughtful childhood to a still more thoughtful youth. His youth as pure and true as his boyhood; his manhood as austere and devout as his youth. His ear ever open to the sorrows and sufferings of the weak and the poor; his heart ever full of sympathy and tenderness towards all God's creatures. He walks so humbly and so purely, that men turn round and point: 'There goes al-Amin, the true, the upright, the trusty. A faithful friend, a devoted husband; a thinker intent on the mysteries of life and death, on the responsibilities of human actions, the end and aim of human existence—he sets himself to the task of reclaiming and reforming a nation, nay, a world, with only one loving heart to comfort and solace him. Baffled, he never falters; beaten, he never despairs. He struggles on

with indomitable spirit to achieve the work assigned to him. His purity and nobleness of character, his intense and earnest belief in God's mercy, bring round him ultimately many a devoted heart; and when the moment of the severest trial comes, like the faithful mariner, he remains steadfast at his post until all his followers are safe, and then betakes himself to the hospitable shore: such we have seen him. We shall see him now the king of men, the ruler of human hearts, chief, lawyer, and supreme magistrate, and yet without any self-exaltation, lowly and humble. His history henceforth is merged in the history of the commonwealth of which he was the centre. Henceforth the Preacher who with his own hands, mended his clothes, and often went without bread, was mightier than the mightiest sovereigns of the earth."

Muhammad's career at Medina was an essential link in the chain of human character. In Medina he had the opportunity of practising what he preached in Mecca. He ennobled and enlarged the laws of Moses, and brought down upon earth the Kingdom of Heaven prayed for by Jesus. By raising the morals of his people to a saintly and angelic height, he realized the democratic dreams of Aristotle and Plato, and for the first time in history founded and administered a socialistic State. He produced a State populated and worked by men without any vice—men who needed no police force to keep them in order, who had no prejudice of class, race or colour left in them against one another—men amongst whom was no distinction between rulers and the ruled. All barriers of class, creed, colour and descent were demolished; white and black, red and yellow, were all declared equal in the sight of the Lord, for they came from the same essence and from the same first parents. To demolish the distinction of race, blood and riches, it was said that the noblest in the sight of God was he who was most virtuous among men. For the

first time it was formulated by Omar, the second successor of Muhammad, that the government of a country could not be called a true government if every unit from among the ruled had not the right to have his voice heard and respected. The meanest subject of a State was for the first time given the same right to be heard on a question affecting the State, or religion, as the ruler of the State himself. For the first time in the history of the world, hereditary right to rule gave place to a right by election, and no matter who was appointed, the governor or governing body was only there to see that the laws formulated by Islam were carried out, and that any fresh laws of detail introduced in State management were in conformity with the general principles enunciated by the Great Lawgiver. A plebeian was encouraged to point out the fault of a ruler in his administration.

The State they possessed belonged equally to one and all, male and female—and all, in turn, belonged to one universal God, all obeyed one law, not man-made, but sent down from the All-merciful and Impartial God, which was the same for rich and poor alike.

Jesus dreamed of socialistic ideas, but Muhammad materialized them in their best form. He sanctified labour by doing everything by his own hand.

The Prophet never liked others to do anything for him. His own work he would do with his own hands.[1] He busied himself with the household work. He would mend his torn clothes, sweep out his house with a broom, fetch things from the market, and when his shoes were worn out, he would mend them himself. The bucket of water he would fetch himself; he would tie the camel and feed it with his own hands; he would help the servant in kneading the flour.[2] Anas relates that he went to the Prophet and found him

[1] Qazi 'Iyaz *Sharh Shifa.*
[2] Bukhari; Qazi 'Iyaz.

rubbing oil on the body of a camel. In another tradition he says he saw him branding the camels of charity.[1] While still a child, the Prophet helped in the erection of the Ka'aba. He brought bricks and stones to the masons. Whilst the building of the "Prophet's Mosque" in Medina, the Ka'aba Mosque, and the digging of the trench in the battle of Ahzáb was going on, no one could differentiate between the Prophet and the ordinary labourer.[2]

The whole peninsula of Arabia was subjugated and Medina became as if the treasure-house of gold and silver, but her Lord would say: "Man has got no claim to other things than the following—a house to live in, a cloth to cover himself, bread to satisfy himself, and water."[3] The life of the Prophet at Medina showed that earthly kingdom had never been the aim of his life; it came to him and enabled him to show to the Lords of the Earth that public money was a sacred trust for the benefit of the people in the Commonwealth, and not for their pleasures.

His life was very simple. He would put on whatever kind or quality of cloth he could get. He would eat whatever was placed before him. He would sit wherever he could find room, whether on a mat, a carpet or the ground.[4] The bran was never removed from the flour which he used.[5] His shirt was usually worn unbuttoned. By nature he had a dislike for things of embellishment. Show in dress he did not approve of.

Islam disapproves of asceticism; and it was for this very reason that the Prophet held the use of the delicacies and enjoyments of the world lawful. He himself enjoyed them. Nevertheless, he discouraged an easy life, full of enjoyment, conventional, luxurious such as rich people led, and advised others to shun such a life, for it tends to weaken our manly

[1] Muslim. [2] Bukhari. [3] Tirmizi.
[4] Tirmizi's *Shamail.* [5] Bukhari.

qualities. A certain friend of Caliph Ali sent him cooked food. His wife, Fatima, said: "How much better would it be if the Prophet, too, partakes of our food." Ali went and requested the Prophet to join them, but on reaching the door the Prophet noticed that curtains were hung on the walls inside. He returned. Ali inquired the reason of his going back. The Prophet said: "It does not behove a Prophet to enter a house which is so much decorated." [1]

The Prophet used to say: "Three beds in a house are quite sufficient—one for one's own personal use, the other for the wife, and the third for the guest." [2]

Imbued with modesty and humility of mind, and always underrating himself, the Prophet would wear simple, rough, coarse kinds of cloth. Caliph Omar was of opinion that the Prophet should put on gorgeous garments when receiving deputations and seeing ambassadors and other distinguished personages. It chanced that a robe was on sale in the market, and Omar, seizing the opportunity, made bold to propose that it should be purchased for use on special occasions, such as Friday Prayers and the formal reception of deputations and ambassadors. The Prophet said: "It should be worn by one who has got no share in the hereafter." Usually he would wear clothes made of wool, and he breathed his last in such clothes as these. [3]

In Mashraba it was that Caliph Omar paid a visit to the Prophet and found, to his surprise, that the Prophet had one sheet of cloth on his body, and one sofa without bedding on it and a pillow stuffed with the bark of the date-palm. In one corner of the room there was a small quantity of barley, in another was spread the skin of an animal, while just above his head were hanging a few water-skins. Omar relates that on seeing this utter absence of material comforts, tears came into his eyes. The Prophet inquired of him the reason of

[1] Abu-Daud. [2] *Ibid.* [3] Bukhari.

his weeping, and Omar replied: "O Prophet of God, I have every reason to weep. The strings with which the sofa is interwoven have made deep impressions on your naked body. The room itself is as comfortless. Is it not unbearable to find that the Chosroes of Persia and the Emperors of Rome be flooded with material enjoyments, while you, who are the Apostle of God, be leading such a simple life—is it not intolerable?" The Prophet said: "O son of Khattáb, do you not prefer that they should get the world and I the hereafter?"[1]

The Prophet used to say: "Each one of us does not require to have more, in this world, than the provision which a traveller takes with him on his journey."[2]

Once, on being asked whether he would not like to have a cushion for his bedstead, the Prophet said: "What have I to do with this world? I am not connected with the world more than the traveller who sits for a short while under the shade of a tree, and leaves it and goes on."[3]

I have dealt with the various aspects of his character which is, in a sense, an assemblage of virtues and goodness. These qualities constitute all that is necessary to human morality, but most of them appertain rather to the exalted positions of life. It is all very well for a person to show some sort of good morality in straitened conditions of life. Humility and meekness may be shown by anyone in poverty and adversity, but in such a case it would be difficult to distinguish between meekness and timidity. It would be difficult to say whether the person in question was truly humble-minded or a coward. But if a man of high position shows humility of mind at a time when he could be overbearing, and no one would dare to take notice of him, simply on account of his position, then he may be credited with the possession of a high morality. In short, most of what goes to make up the

[1] Muslim, Book of Talaq. [2] Ibn-i-Maja, Book of Zuhd.
[3] Tirmizi, Book of Zuhd.

noblest human character is displayed in the Prophet's life at Medina. Had it not been for his life in Medina, where his enemies came pursuing him, to strangle Islam and exterminate the little band—I may say the only band on the whole surface of the earth who at that time worshipped one and only one God, as the Prophet said on the eve of the fight at Badr which led to all the wars that Muhammad fought—the world would not have been taught the right use of the sword and the true solution of the problems of Woman and Slavery. Till then they had been cruelly maltreated. War gave Muhammad his opportunity, and he promulgated laws to ameliorate and raise their condition.

He entered into treaties with his enemies, but he proved through his conduct that the treaties were not scraps of paper, but sacred documents. I wish Europe had Muhammad as her model, and the world would have been saved all the trouble it has suffered, as there is nothing in the life of Jesus to guide humanity in the higher walks of life. Then the treaties would not have been respected more in their breaches than in their fulfilment. One of the stipulations agreed upon in the truce of Hudaibiyyah in 6 A.H. was, that if any Meccan, after having accepted Islam, escaped to Medina, to seek refuge with the Prophet, then the Prophet should be legally bound to return him to Mecca. No sooner was the treaty signed, than Abu Jandal managed to escape from imprisonment and fled to Medina to take shelter with the Prophet. Abu Jandal told his tale of sufferings. The Muslims were moved to compassion and indignation. But the Prophet addressed him composedly: "Abu Jandal! have patience; we cannot break our promise. God will create some way for you out of the difficulty."[1] Abu Jandal is not the solitary instance in this respect. Many Meccans came and became Muslims, but the Prophet would not award them his protection against the

[1] Bukhari.

tyranny of the Quraish in which they were sure to meet with on their return to Mecca. They had to go back under the treaty of Hudaibiyyah. Wahshi, who had assassinated the uncle of the Prophet, afraid of being caught when Islam triumphed, kept on moving from one place to another. The inhabitants of Táif formed a deputation to be sent to Medina to wait on the Prophet. Wahshi was one of the deputation. He expressed his fear of being captured and beheaded for the murder of the Prophet's uncle. But the people assured him that Muhammad was not such a man as to punish ambassadors and that he need entertain no such apprehension. Accordingly he, placing reliance on the assurance of the people, came and met the Prophet and embraced Islam. [1]

Abu Rafi', a slave, while still a non-Muslim, came to Medina as a messenger on behalf of the Quraish. His eyes fell on the illustrious face, shining with the light of truth, and he at once was convinced of the truth of the mission of the Prophet. Abu Rafi' said to him: "O Prophet of God, I will not return to the unbelievers." The Prophet said: "I cannot break my promise, nor can I hold the envoys back from going. You must go now. And if you find that, on reaching Mecca, the state of your mind remains the same, then come back." [2] Accordingly he left the Prophet for Mecca.

Respect of promise was one of the features in his character that won him the title of *Al-Ameen*—"The Trustworthy"—

[1] Bukhari.

[2] Before his call to the Prophethood, one named Abdulla-bin-abli-Amsa, entered into some business transaction with the Prophet. He had to keep an engagement somewhere else, and requested the Prophet to wait for him, telling him that he would be back very soon, and would then settle the matter. It so happened that the promise escaped his memory. He returned after three days and to his surprise found that the Prophet was there. On seeing him, the Prophet said: "I have been sitting here waiting for you for the last three days." *

* Abu-Daud.

even in his early life at Mecca. Among the many questions pertaining to the person of Muhammad, put to the Quraishite chief, Abu Sufyán, the Emperor of Rome asked him whether Muhammad had ever broken a promise. Abu Sufyán had to admit that the Prophet always kept his promise.[1]

In the battle of Badr, the numerical strength of the Muslims was less than one-third of that of their opponents. At such a critical and fateful juncture, each one man was indispensable to the Prophet. Every one would have justified his action, had he even gone so far as to employ means to win over people to his side. But the Prophet was all faithfulness. There were two men, Abu Huzaifa and Abu Hisl, who were on their way from Mecca to Medina. They were intercepted by the enemy, and prevented from joining Muhammad. They insisted on going to Medina, and they were released on condition that they would not side with the Prophet, and would not help him against the Meccans. When these two companions came to the Prophet, they related the state of things and the conditions of their release. The Prophet said: "You must go back; we must keep our words under all circumstances. We require nothing else than the help of God."[2]

The life in Mecca had been a life of adversity, of trial, of worries; in Medina it was a life of success and of prosperity. And herein lies a lesson for the Muslims of to-day. Their condition is more like the Prophet's experience in Mecca; it is a time of trial. But if they persevere, if they show high morality, if they come out faithful, if they become united and active, if they be but true to themselves, to their brethren, to their faith, to their Prophet and to their God, they will meet with the same success that came to Muhammad.

[1] Bukhari. [2] Muslim.

THE IDEAL PROPHET

The life at Medina, and his success there brought to Muhammad occasions that called forth that magnanimity of soul the equal of which age-long history of the world cannot produce. The surrender of Mecca offered him ample opportunities of revenge, but he did not avail himself of them.[1]

[1] In Khaibar, a Jewess tried to kill the Prophet by poisoning the food prepared for him. On having eaten it, he noticed that the food was poisonous. He sent for the Jews. They confessed their crime, but the Prophet took no action whatsoever, and the Jewess was only punished with death under the law of retaliation, when a Companion of the Prophet, who had partaken with the Prophet of the same food, had died. It is related that the Prophet felt the after-effects of the poison all his life.

It is related that, once again, a man attempted the life of the Prophet. He was captured and brought before him, but on seeing him became afraid. The Prophet addressed him thus: "Do not be afraid of me; even if you had intended to kill me, you could never have done so."*

Umair-bin-Wahab was a bitter enemy of the Prophet. He was sent to Medina by Safwan-bin-Umayya on promise of a great reward if he should succeed in killing the Prophet, and thus taking revenge for those Quraish who had fallen in the battle of Badr. Umair, having given his sword a temper of poison, went to Medina; but, the people guessing his intention, Omar wanted to punish him. The Prophet stopped him from doing so, but made Umair sit near him, and, in the course of conversation, disclosed to him the purpose of his shameful mission; on hearing which Umair was thunderstruck that the Prophet did not even chide him. He straightway embraced Islam, and on his return to Mecca became a missionary for Islam—an utterly transformed man. This happened in 3 A.H.

While they were returning from a battlefield, the Companions of the Prophet, owing to the scorching rays of the sun, halted under the shade of some trees. The Prophet had ungirdled his sword and hung it on the branch of a tree. But the unbelievers—his inveterate enemies—were always on the lookout to make short work of Muhammad, and a Bedouin, finding that the Companions of the Prophet were not on the alert, approached the place where the sword was hanging, and removed it. The Prophet awoke and found a man standing over his head with a sword in his hand. The Bedouin, on seeing the Prophet awake, addressed him thus: "Muhammad, tell me, who can save you now?" The Prophet replied: "Allah." The voice of the Prophet, unruffled and not betraying the slightest trace of consternation, had a marvellous effect on the Bedouin, who put up his sword. In the meantime, the Companions came to the Prophet, who related the incident to them. The Prophet did not even draw the attention of the Bedouin to his vile purpose.†

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* Musnad.

† Bukhari, Book of Jihad.

CHAPTER VII

THE IDEAL SUCCESS

This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed my favour on you.—HOLY QUR-AN, v. 3.

MOSES was brought up in the house of wealth and culture, Jesus arose under a nation that could boast of the highest form of civilization; but Muhammad was raised "to recite communications of Allah" to those who had not emerged even from the twilight of an early civilization, and were wrapt up in the shrouds of ignorance. He came to "purify" a nation steeped in barbarism, superstitions, cruelty and vice; he was inspired "to teach the Book and the Wisdom" to a people shrouded in absolute spiritual darkness,[1] and sunk in complete mental and moral torpor.

The career of a Prophet is never an easy one. He is raised up among his own kith and kin, and has to seek an audience from among those who have known him from his childhood; who are aware of the intimate details of his life and well acquainted with his merits and demerits. The spirit of rivalry and jealousy is also at work against him, and is a subtle impediment to success. Jesus could not win for himself even the faith of his own relatives; he formulated only his own experience when he said: "A Prophet is not without honour,

[1] He it is who raised among the illiterates an Apostle from among themselves, who recites to them His communications, and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom, although they were before certainly in clear error (Holy Qur-án, lxii. 2).

save in his own country, and in his own house."[1] Yet Muhammad, an illiterate Arab and a camel-driver, an orphan and a protége of Abú-Tálib, comes forward against these same odds, with the mission of a Prophet, and has achieved a success that could not be claimed by any of his predecessors in the line of Prophets. "It is easy to make good and far-reaching plans, but more difficult to carry them out." Moses, Jesus, and many of the Prophets before Muhammad, did not live to see the success of their respective missions. One, indeed, was so despondent that he thought that God had forsaken him; and if some of them did win a following, they were not able to inspire them with a spirit of confidence themselves. The emancipated children of the Egyptian bondage repeatedly disobeyed Moses; Peter and other disciples denied their Master. They left him in the moment of his dire need. But the humble preacher to the haughty Meccan, who had only the other day been jeered at and ridiculed, molested and persecuted, stoned and hunted out of the city of his birth, had "within the short space of nine years," after his flight from Mecca, "lifted up his people from the abysmal depth of moral and spiritual degradation to a conception of purity and justice." The ministry of Muhammad lasted for twenty-three years, but even in the short space of the first five years after the proclamation of his mission, the miraculous change which he was able to effect among his followers appears from the words of Ja'far-al-Tayyar, one of the ninety Muslim refugees in Abyssinia from the persecution of the Meccans, to the Christian king of that country: "We were an ignorant and misled people; we worshipped images, ate dead bodies, were lewd, ill-treated our neighbours, and the strong despoiled the weak of their property. We had long been in this condition when God sent a Prophet to us from amongst our own people, whose noble birth, truthfulness, honesty and righteousness were well

[1] Matt. xiii. 57.

known to us. He called us to God, to worship Him, and Him only, and to leave off adoring the idols and stones before which our fathers and forefathers had knelt. He ordered us to obey God alone, and not to make anyone His equal. He made it incumbent upon us to offer up prayer, to give alms, to fast, when not sick or travelling. He commanded us to speak the truth, to give back safe and whole what is entrusted to us by others, to be affectionate to our relations and kind to our neighbours, to shun wicked acts, licentiousness and bloody quarrels. He told us not to bear false witness, not to deprive orphans of their property, not to impute bad motives to, nor be suspicious of women. We have taken his advice and admonitions to heart; have believed in his truthfulness; have followed all the orders which God has made known to us; and have believed in the Unity of God. We abstain from what is forbidden, and confine ourselves to what is permitted. Our people are infuriated at this change in our belief, thoughts and actions. They have persecuted us, and done their best to force us back to the idols, images and wicked acts which we have left. When it became impossible to live among them, and when persecution and torture became unbearable, we left our country, and, believing you to be a tolerant king, have taken refuge in your dominions."

The above may sound to some ears like the words of a zealous admirer of the Prophet, and from one who had to make the best of his case in order to win favour with the Abyssinian king, and obtain from him shelter and protection. But let an avowed enemy of Islam bear testimony to the above statement. Sir William Muir says :—

"Few and simple were the precepts of Muhammad. His teaching had wrought a marvellous and a mighty work. Never since the days when primitive Christianity startled the world from its sleep and waged mortal combat with Heathenism, had men seen the like arousing of spiritual life,

the like faith that suffered sacrifices and took joyfully the spoiling of goods for conscience' sake.

"From time beyond memory Mecca and the whole Peninsula had been steeped in spiritual torpor. The slight and transient influences of Judaism, Christianity or philosophical inquiry upon the Arab mind had been but as the ruffling here and there of the surface of a quiet lake; all remained still and motionless below. The people were sunk in superstition, cruelty and vice. It was a common practice for the eldest son to take to wife his father's widows, inherited as property with the rest of the estate. Pride and poverty had introduced among them (as they have among the Hindus) the crime of female infanticide. Their religion was a gross idolatry, and their faith rather the dark superstitious dread of unseen beings, whose good will they sought to propitiate and whose displeasure to avert, than the belief in an overruling Providence. The life to come and retribution for good and evil were, as motives of actions, practically unknown. Thirteen years before the Hijra (July 2, A.D. 622), Mecca lay lifeless in this debased state. What a change had those thirteen years now produced! A band of several hundred persons had rejected idolatry, adopted the worship of One God and surrendered themselves implicitly to the guidance of what they believed to be a revelation from Him, praying to the Almighty with frequency and fervour, looking for pardon to His mercy and striving to follow after good works, almsgiving, chastity and justice. They now lived under a constant sense of the Omnipotent power of God and of His Providential care over the minutest of their concerns. In all the gifts of Nature, in every relation of life, at each turn of their affairs, individual or public, they saw His hand. And above all, the new existence in which they exulted was regarded as the mark of special grace, while the unbelief of their blinded fellow-citizens was the hardening stamp of reprobation. Muhammad

was the minister of life to them, the source under God of their newborn hopes, and to him they yielded an implicit submission.

"In so short a period Mecca had, from his wonderful movement, been rent into two factions which, unmindful of their old landmarks of tribe and family, had arrayed themselves in deadly opposition one against the other. The Believers bore persecution with a patient and tolerant spirit, and though it was their wisdom so to do, the credit of magnanimous forbearance may be freely accorded. One hundred men and women, rather than abjure their precious faith, had abandoned home and sought refuge, till the storm should be overpast, in Abyssinian exile, and again a still larger number, with the Prophet himself, were emigrating from their fondly loved city with its sacred temple, to them the holiest spot on earth, and fleeing to Medina. There the same marvellous charm had within two or three years been preparing for them a brotherhood ready to defend the Prophet and his followers with their blood. Jewish truth had long sounded in the ears of the men of Medina, but it was not until they heard the spirit-stirring strains of the Arabian Prophet that they, too, awoke from their slumber and sprang suddenly into a new and earnest life."

The Holy Prophet was "the most successful of all the Prophets and religious personalities."[1] He worked out such a political, social, mental and theological transformation in his own time as has never been effected in any country or in any nation even by successive generations of reformers. His was the voice of thunder. The most deep-rooted evils were swept away before his mighty word like straws before a hurricane. He aroused men from their death-like sleep and carried them to the highest pinnacle of development. Those who, two decades before, had worshipped every fetish and carried pieces of stone with them on their journeys to serve

[1] *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th edition; art, "Koran."

as objects of adoration, became Monotheists in the pure and true sense of the word—so much so that the great Caliph Omar, who in the days of paganism would fall down prostrate before any good-looking piece of stone that he came across, or worship a sandhill after milking his she-camel, if he failed to find a piece of stone, became so exalted in his conception of the Oneness of God that he was heard to utter the following words while kissing the sacred black stone of the shrine of Ka'aba with the end of his sword resting on it: "Thou art but a piece of stone, and I would have shattered thee to pieces, had it not been that the Prophet of God had kissed thee." Not only was a vast area—the twelve hundred thousand square miles of Arabia—weaned from the curse of idolatry within a fifth of a century, but such a fire of enthusiasm for proclaiming the Unity of God was kindled in the hearts of the Arabs that it carried them throughout the length and breadth of the then known world to exalt the name of the One God. Those who but yesterday, as it were, had dwelt in a state of permanent warfare among themselves, and had revelled in scenes of bloodshed and murder on the most trifling pretexts of revenge, became welded into a unique brotherhood that inspired every member of it to do anything and everything for others, and not for his own benefit. The most ignorant race of the world became the torch-bearers of knowledge and learning to the then benighted world. "A poor shepherd people, roaming unnoticed in its deserts since the creation of the world: a Hero Prophet was sent down to them with a word they could believe: see, the unnoticed becomes world-noticeable, the small has grown world-great; within one century afterwards, Arabia is at Granada, on this and, at Delhi on that; glancing with valour and splendour and the light of genius, Arabia shines through long ages over a great section of the world."[1] Those who cherished no respect

[1] Carlyle.

for women became the first champions of female rights and carried into the world a chivalrous spirit hitherto unknown.

In short, the most debased of sinners became men of righteousness and piety, keeping all the laws of God and respecting the ordinances of society. Those whose actions arose habitually from only sordid motives began to look to "something beyond the grave," "the something higher, purer and diviner" that actuated them to deeds of charity, goodness, justice and everlasting love. "What a change had these few years witnessed! The angel of heaven had veritably passed through the land, breathing harmony and love into the hearts of those who had hitherto been sunk in the most revolting semi-barbarism. What had once been a moral desert, where all laws, human and divine, were contemned and infringed without remorse, was now transformed into a garden."[1] Idolatry, devil-worship, fetishism, were rooted out; gambling, drunkenness and adultery disappeared. Polygamy was regulated and slavery nearly abolished. Female chastity became a virtue; industry replaced idleness; the Kingdom of Heaven, prayed for by Jesus and others, had been established in Arabia!

It is not easy to picture for oneself a system of government without a police force of some sort, for the purpose of keeping the peace and maintaining order, yet just such a system did the world see in the last days of the Prophet at Medina, when crime became extinct and whosoever committed sin, even though unobserved, would make full confession thereof, straightway, before the Holy Prophet. The presence of God became a living reality among those who surrounded the Prophet of God, and there was no need for any detective service. The culprit was his own captor; falsehood became unknown; no case needed long and tedious sifting and an army of lawyers trained in the sophists' art of making the

[1] *Spirit of Islam*, by Syed Ameer Ali.

worse appear the better cause. No assistance was needed, even by the humblest, in making good his case. There were no allegations of facts or joinders of issue, no statement of claim or skilfully concocted defence. The Omniscient and Omnipresent God was before the eye everywhere. "Thy kingdom come"—the prayer of Jesus—became reality at the bidding of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

This success, unique in its kind and unparalleled in history, bears testimony to the extraordinarily high stage of spirituality to which the Sacred Prophet had attained. No reform in any community can possibly be worked out unless its members entertain some regard for the reformer, and are willing to obey him. But no worldly riches or power, nor even any amount of miracle-working, can inspire others with that love, respect, and obedience which always follow an advanced spirituality. The words of Muhammad were not the dictates of a potentate. Nay, he disavowed always the possession of things which might influence others in his favour. In the words of the Qur-án, he would say often and often: "I say not to you, 'In my possession are the treasures of God'; neither do I say to you, 'Verily I am an angel'; only what is revealed to me do I follow." But still he commanded submission and homage unimaginable. His words were the words of the beloved, to be respected and cared for by the lover. And if such is the mental attitude of the people towards their teacher, it is not surprising that he was "the most successful among all other religious personalities" in working out reforms. But one should first reach the height of the ladder of spirituality before he aspires to that success. Jesus might convert water into wine, but he could not convert the nature of his disciples into what he desired them to be. He wished that they could possess even a grain of faith. And so it proved when the trial came. The one most trusted betrayed him. If others deserted him, the one given the keys of heaven cursed and

disowned him. Call them what you will, "infirm in faith" or "weak in spirituality," but the fact remains the same. The Teacher seems to lack that "alchemy" which converts a baser metal into shining gold. The followers of Moses also had no great regard for their liberator. They would not listen to him on his way to the Promised Land. But the holy companion of the Sacred Prophet would always say: "Like the companions of Moses, we will not say: (O Moses) 'Go thou and thy Lord and fight,' but we will fight on your right and left, in your front and at your back." And these were not mere lip expressions. Invariably they were put to the hardest trials, and their words proved always to be true.

On the battlefield of Ohud, the Holy Prophet, being hard pressed by the force of the enemy, fell into a pit. He had received eighty wounds, his face weltered in blood and his life was in danger, but the unprecedented devotion of his followers came to his rescue. The Prophet was in the pit and a sure prey for the enemy, should they find him; the only thing in the nature of a fortification which could save him at the moment was a lining-wall of human beings which his companions made. They stood round the pit and exposed themselves to the arrows of the enemy, that pierced the bodies of this human fortress but did not reach the body of the Prophet. The members of this living fortification fell dead one after the other, but their place was filled by others. Women were not behindhand in showing their devotion to the Prophet on this occasion; for Umm-i-Nasiba drew her sword and her example was followed by Umm-i-Salma, Ayesha and others, who made onslaught on the enemy and can rightly claim to have saved the situation in the nick of time. The companions of the Prophet used to sing the following as their war-cry: "We are that very people that have pledged themselves to Muhammad to fight in defence of our faith throughout our

lives." The occasion came and they proved true to their words. It is glory both for the teacher and the taught.

The spirit infused by the Prophet not only manifested itself on the field of battle, but it also enabled "the sons of the desert" to face courageously the most formidable foes that a man has to grapple with—his own corrupt nature and evil habits. History fails to give a single instance where a reformer met with such implicit obedience to his precepts, from the people he wished to reform, especially in the matter of eradicating their most deeply rooted evils. "Drink" was one of their evils. No Bacchanalian orgies could surpass the Arab indulgence in alcohol in those days. Their daily meals were three, but they worshipped Bacchus five times a day. When, however, the time came for the Prophet to turn them to total abstinence, the streets of Medina were overflowing with the detestable contents of the wine-barrels, which were emptied at the one magic word of the Prophet.

No appeal from the brain-power of the nation to the Cabinet to stop liquor-traffic—and that only for a short period —was needed. One word from the master-mind, and the five times fixed for the worship of Bacchus were converted into the five times of Allah's worship, in Islam. Such radical revolutions in the morals of people cannot be accomplished save by one at the highest stage of spirituality—as was Muhammad. After all, the whole prime of his manhood, spent in retirement in the Cave of Hira, could not but bring forth fruit. Though they were the early days of his marriage, Muhammad would often retire to that cave, and spend month after month there in divine contemplation. There the angel of God appeared to him and brought him the first message.

His duties increased with his ministry, but nothing could keep him back from his communion with God; his days were spent in action, and his nights in long prayers. Even in the busy life of Medina one could see his feet swelling, for at nights

he stood humbly in the presence of God; and thus he continued till he left the world.

In the tenth year of the Hijra the hosts of Arabia came flocking to join the faith of the Prophet. Numerous embassies poured into Mecca and Medina from all the tribes of Arabia "to testify their adhesion and that of their chiefs and tribes" to Islam. The Prophet then received the last revelation from the Most High. It ran thus:—

"When there comes the help of Allah and the victory,
And you see men entering the religion of Allah in companies,
Then celebrate the praise of your Lord, and ask His forgiveness;
surely He is oft-returning (to mercy)."[1]

These verses, that speak of the great help and divine victory, indicated the accomplishment of the mission of the Prophet. This was the last revelation, and the Prophet received it at Mecca when visiting that sacred town with over a hundred thousand followers. It showed how the wonderful prophecies that announced the final victory of Islam, in the days when the Prophet was in utter loneliness and helplessness, became fulfilled. Ibn-i-Abbás saw in the above revelation an indication of the approaching death of the Holy Prophet.[2] Ibn-i-Abbás was right. The Prophet lived only eighty days after it. On the 10th of Zil-Hijja (8th of March, A.D. 632) the Prophet was in Miná—the place of sacrifices—after performing his last pilgrimage. And what an impressive spectacle! There was a concourse[3] of Muslims around him that numbered upwards of 140,000 men, women and children. A great multitude without a single polytheist among them—and at the very place where the Prophet, some twenty years previously, was discarded and rejected.[4] "This day," the Word from Allah brought him the happy news, "I have perfected your religion for you, and completed My favour on you." The

[1] Holy Qur-án, cx.
[2] Bukhari.
[3] Ibn-Hisham; Ibn-Athir.
[4] Bukhari.

sermon of the Prophet on this occasion was remarkable. He was on a camel, and the people around him represented every Arabian tribe and clan. He spoke slowly, and his words were repeated aloud by others, and thus reached the farthest end of the assembly. The sermon ran thus:—

"Ye people, listen to my words, for I know not whether another year will be vouchsafed to me after this year to find myself amongst you.

"Do you know what day is it to-day? This is the *Yaum-un-Nahr* or the sacred Day of Sacrifice. Do you know which month is this? This is the sacred month. Do you know what place is this? This is the sacred town. So I apprise you that your lives, your properties, and your honour must be as sacred to one another as this sacred day, as this sacred month, and as this sacred town. Let those present take this message to those absent. You are about to meet your Lord who will call you to account for your deeds.

"This day all sums of interest are remitted, including that of 'Abbás-bin-'Abd-ul-Muttalib. This day, the retaliation for all murders committed in the days of ignorance is cancelled, and foremost of all, the murder of Rabi'-bin-Haris is forgiven.

"O people! This day Satan has despaired of re-establishing his worship in this land of yours. But should you obey him even in what may seem to you trifling, it will be a matter of pleasure for him. So you must beware of him in the matter of your faith.

"Then, O my people! You have certain rights over your wives, and so have your wives over you. . . . They are the trust of God in your hands. So you must treat them with all kindness. . . . And as regards your slaves, see that you give them to eat of what you yourself eat, and clothe them with what you clothe yourselves.

"O people! Listen to what I say and take it to heart.

You must know that every Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. You are all equal, *i.e.* enjoy equal rights and have similar obligations. You are all members of one common brotherhood. So it is forbidden for any of you to take from his brother save what the latter should willingly give. So do not tyrannize over your people, *i.e.* do not usurp their rights."

Then the Prophet exclaimed: "O Lord, have I conveyed Thy message?" And the valley resounded with the reply from the assembled host: "By our Lord! verily thou hast." Then the Prophet said: "O Lord, I beseech Thee, bear Thou witness unto it." What a glorious mission, and what a glorious accomplishment!

Ruhi fidaka yá Rasulallah.

("May my life be thy sacrifice, O Prophet of God!")

CHAPTER VIII

THE IDEAL TEACHER OF RELIGION

OBJECT OF RELIGION

FOR the first time Muhammad explained the true conception of religion. The world was not without its religion before him, but religion was believed to be an institution for the purpose of pleasing God and receiving His favour or of appeasing His anger through various forms of ritual and sacrifice, offerings and prayers. The pagan world before Christianity had her Christs everywhere: the son of Mary was the last of the series. Sin and its atonement through the blood of an Incarnate God was the ancient religion everywhere, thousands of years before Christianity. Muhammad came and gave a new objective of religion. It is not salvation from the fall, but the upliftment, the development of that potentiality which is latent in man; in other words, the evolution of humanity. Like everything in Nature, man possesses certain aptitudes and capabilities, or hidden faculties. It is to work them out, to bring them to development to the best advantage that religion has been vouchsafed to him. Religion, as Muhammad taught, is a theory of life, a thing to live upon, in order to bring to prominence that which is novel and good in us.

And the good which is in us is the Divine flame breathed into us by the Breath of the Lord. But this Divine element is hidden in the welter of human passions which in their primitive form approximated rather to the beast than to man, as we visualize him. Just as everything in Nature brings

Beauty and Sublimity out of ugliness, so also is our carnal nature the seed-ground of nobility. The Prophet of Arabia was the first Divine Messenger to disclose the secret in plain terms to the world. The evolution of which I speak is the evolution of our consciousness—the sublimation of the animal consciousness into the Divine. This, in fact, is the subjective side of Religion, according to the teaching of Muhammad, and in this is his superiority manifest. The aim of the other Messengers from Allah was the same, but the methods ascribed to them by tradition for accomplishing their purpose were neither easy nor systematic, and at times unnatural. They would give us noble words of advice, but that in incoherent form; they would read us Sermons on morality; they would supply us with a code of ritual and ceremonials; they would suggest prayer and sacrifice, and that is all.

On the other hand, Muhammad, like a professor of anatomy, explores the whole human mind, goes into its every seam, from heel to head. He does not propose to kill our instincts or crush our passions if they be, and because they are, carnal; instead, he propounds a system to control them so that they may function to our best advantage and pass from the bestial to the noble, from the mother instinct that germinates passions and instincts to the tendency for self-preservation or, in other words, the instinct of existence. This instinct gives rise to two passions—the passion of Anger and the passion of Desire. Then Anger and Desire, whether in their refined or corrupt form, branch forth in various directions, some towards good, others towards evil. For example, if Anger in its evil form creates Enmity, Malice, Prejudice, Hot Temper, Tyranny, Backbiting, Abusive Language, Cowardice, Hypocrisy, the same Anger in its noble form appears as Bravery, Courage, Highmindedness, Patience, Perseverance, Toleration, Courtesy, Meekness, Humility and Forgiveness.

Again, in the case of Lust or Desire, it in its evolved form

becomes Love, Devotion, Mercy, Generosity, Contentment, Selflessness, Trustworthiness, Trust in God and so forth; but in its degraded form it remains Meanness, Niggardliness, Avarice, Pride, Extravagance, Jealousy, Envy, Dishonesty, Boasting, Laziness and the like. Then these two passions in their united form give rise to various other things. Our consciousness has a third side also, and that, when properly cultivated, rules the emotional, sentimental and passionate side of it. This is the mental aspect, which, again, has its good or evil developments. If a creed or faith does not comprehend the whole range of human psychology, it cannot serve the purpose for which Religion comes from God. Matter achieves its highest development in the human form, where it gives birth to a consciousness which differs from animal consciousness in the vastness of its comprehension and growth. Everything in Nature is on its way to an ultimate perfection, and this by observing a certain prescribed course. Similarly, our further evolution in this world lies in the evolution of our consciousness, just as physically we have reached the desired end; and for this soul-development Religion is the prescribed course. For the world, I believe, has become too wise to accept the dogma of the Angry God and mankind's reconciliation with Him through sacrifice as the basis of and reason for Religion. The world had had enough of such scapegoats. The sublimation of human consciousness into Divine consciousness can be the only laudable object of Religion, the only watchword for which martyrs may be worthily made. This transmutation of the baser into noble cannot be affected by magic. It can only be accomplished by incessant striving and hard work under the guidance of a Master Mind who understands the true anatomy of the human soul. This is the work of a true Prophet from God. I cannot understand any other object for which God sends His Religion to humanity. The Qur-án, in its opening verses, discloses the same object of

Divine Revelation. Is not Muhammad, then, the Ideal Teacher of humanity if he lays down rules and regulations to raise humanity from the animal to the Divine, and for this purpose gives us guidance so that we may sublimate the root passions in us—Anger, Lust and cognate passions—into Divine Morality? Muhammad deals with every phase of the question; he deals with every good or bad form of passion; gives advice and suggests guidance so that we may aim at the best and avoid the corrupt. I do not find the same elsewhere.

Some think that Religion comes to secure an entry into Heaven, which they believe lies somewhere beyond the sky[1];

[1] In *Religion, Science and Reality* Dean Inge says:

The discovery that the earth, instead of being the centre of a finite universe, like a dish with a dish-cover over it, is a planet revolving round the sun, which itself is only one of millions of stars, tore into shreds the Christian map of the universe.

Until that time the ordinary man, whether educated or uneducated, had pictured the sum of things as a three-storeyed building, consisting of heaven, the abode of God, the angels and beatified spirits; our earth; and the infernal regions, where the devil, his angels, and lost souls are imprisoned and tormented. . . . Most certainly heaven and hell were geographical expressions.

The articles in the Creeds on the descent of Christ into Hades, and His ascent into heaven, affirm no less; and it is obvious that the bodily resurrection of Christ is intimately connected with the bodily ascension. The new cosmography thus touched the faith of the Creeds very closely.

That the Church interpreted these doctrines literally is shown by the Anglican Articles of Religion, which declare that Christ ascended into heaven with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature; and there sitteth. Transubstantiation was denied on the ground that the body of Christ is in heaven, and that it is contrary to the properties of a natural body to be in more than one place at the same time.

The Copernican astronomy, and all the knowledge about the heavens which has been built on this foundation, leave no room for a geographical heaven.

Space seems to be infinite, and among all the stars, planets, satellites, and nebulæ which are sparsely scattered over its vast empty distances, we can hardly imagine that one has been chosen as the abode of the Creator and the site of the heavenly Jerusalem. The belief in a subterranean place of punishment, which has not been disproved by

but the Qur-án exposes the error of all such crude notions when it says that Heaven is the evolved condition of our soul, the casting or not casting of human passions into the mould of Divine attributes—that makes our Heaven both here and in the hereafter—for the Qur-án promises two heavens—and also its reverse, Hell.

THE MUSLIM CONCEPTION OF HEAVEN

The new cosmography compels Dean Inge to disbelieve in the Christian map of the universe and discard geographical

astronomy, seems to have faded away without making any commotion. . . .

The older problem, however, is still shirked. A short time ago I reviewed a book by a writer whom a popular vote would probably choose as our foremost theologian. I found there a statement that Christians are no longer expected to believe in a local heaven above our heads. I welcomed this rejection of a geographical heaven as significant, coming as it did from a pillar of orthodoxy. . . .

Another distinguished theologian, in discussing the ascension of Christ, said that the words "into heaven" might be taken symbolically, but that we must believe that the physical body of Christ was raised to a considerable distance above the ground.

I do ask, with all possible earnestness: Is this kind of shuffling any longer tolerable? Is it not essential that the Church should face this problem, which for four hundred years it has kept at arm's length? Do Christians accept those verdicts of astronomical science which seem to be surely established, with those modifications of traditional theology which they imply, or do they not? To juggle with words, "letting I dare not wait upon I would," can satisfy nobody.

Dr. Temple, Bishop of Manchester, agrees with Dean Inge. He says:

"The ascension is clearly an acted parable. . . ."

The Creed which says that Christ ascended into heaven also says that He sat down on the right hand of God. This is a frankly pictorial expression, representing Christ's union with God in power and universal accessibility.

Although we know next to nothing of the resurrection of the body of Our Lord, we do say that He was able to appear at will.

Of course, heaven is not a place, but a spiritual condition. It is fellowship with God, and no one hesitates to speak of an ascent from earthly interests, although the expression comes from a map of the universe which we no longer accept.

heaven and hell; but he will find something in the Qur-án that will satisfy him. In those days when the earth was taken to be the centre of the universe, Muhammad declared to the world that heaven and hell were not the names of two places, but they were two conditions of life after death. In this respect the Qur-án says: "Hasten to protection against sin from your Lord and to a garden (heaven) the extensiveness of which is as the extensiveness of the heaven and the earth." A similar statement of heaven occurs in chap. iii. 132. These statements give us the key to a right conception of the Muslim paradise. It is not limited to a particular place, but is as wide as the heavens and the earth. The following incident is related in various Qur-ánic commentaries under chap. iii. 132: "A messenger of Heraclius asked the Holy Prophet, 'If paradise were as extensive as the heavens and the earth, where should be hell?' The Prophet answered, 'Glory be to Allah, where is the night when the day comes?'"

Thus heaven and hell are the conditions of a future life, that follows the condition of each human heart. The heart creates heaven and hell, as the Qur-án says.[1]

Heaven and hell, according to Muhammad's teaching, are different stages of the evolutionary journey to the realms beyond the grave. Our physical nature binds us to earth, but when our consciousness shall have evolved into further progress, it will become clothed, impelled by constructive ability, by some element—*Noor* is the Arabic word for it, which may be translated by light—that will carry it through the various avenues of the universe. This is the Muslim conception of heaven, and the Muslim hell is just the reverse of it. The one refers to our faculties in full fruition, the other in their stunted stage. "He will indeed be evolved who purifies his soul, and he will indeed fail who stunts it."[2]

[1] Chap. xxvi. 89; cvi. 5-7; xiii. 23, 24.
[2] Holy Qur-án, xc. 9, 10.

The subject needs further elucidation, but before I do that it will be well to refer to certain aspects of things in their evolutionary course. There is no locomotion in the vegetable kingdom, but it appears in the animal kingdom on account of consciousness. This it is that quickens mental and spiritual flight in the human frame. For this reason, if animal consciousness was given a furniture lighter than that allotted to the vegetable order, human consciousness must needs be clothed in a yet more refined form of matter. Similarly, in its further stage of development, our consciousness must need something of a more attenuated nature as its wherewithal for movement and self-expression in the celestial realms—realms that will become opened to it gradually.

The seven heavens of the Qur-án are the seven evolutionary stages. If a person with a sensible head on his shoulders cannot deny scientific truths and accepts the Principles of Evolution as a verity—whether it be called religious or scientific, for me they are one and the same—how can he disbelieve in the further growth of human consciousness after death? If nebular complexes are, every moment, on their journey up to human consciousness, in order to develop everything inherently embedded in them, they must proceed beyond the grave, in their evolutionary course, if they happen to possess potentialities that have not come to fruition in the present human form. A seed must bring forth everything inherent in it, in the form of a fruit; and that is not the end. It becomes, eventually, as food, a constituent of human consciousness. The human mind possesses various capabilities, and these capabilities remain dormant in most of us; there ought to be some space and time for every one of us to bring them to their full growth. Moreover, the mind has admittedly an occult side to it, which has never till now come to its full and permanent manifestation in any individual. It discloses itself occasionally in advanced souls.

Visions, true dreams, knowledge received in trances, second-sight, telepathy, clairvoyance, clairaudience, journeys of the soul (with its astral body, as they call it in popular language), are some of its aspects that have now come within the ken of the Western world through recent researches, though they have been known to Muslims since the birth of Islam. History shows that no individual, till to-day, has been able to exhibit these latent possessions of the human mind to its best advantage, though Jesus may be accepted by his followers as one who reached the zenith of evolution. But his words and deeds contradict such an assertion. In the incident of the fig-tree he evinced more than average infirmity of human knowledge. He himself denied knowledge of many other things. "There is," to quote the late lamented Dean of Carlisle, "no more reason for supposing that Jesus of Nazareth knew more than his contemporaries about the true scientific explanation of the mental diseases which current belief attributed to diabolic possession, than that he knew more about the authorship of the Pentateuch or the Psalms. It is difficult to deny that he entertained some anticipations about the future which history has not verified." The quotation speaks only of a knowledge within possible human reach, but I am speaking of that knowledge that comes through some latent senses which work occasionally only in certain cases. We must reach a stage when they will work permanently. The Qur-án tells us that our earthly nature suppresses these latent senses. They remain behind the screen, but sometimes the screen is, under the urge of certain spiritual impulses, removed, and we see realities in an abnormal way. We have to make these abnormals, normal. No human logic can, in the light of present scientific knowledge, deny such a future progress. But it will have its bright as well as dark side, and Religion calls the former heaven and the latter hell, and heaven and hell are the onward or backward progresses of the human

soul. Herein lies the explanation of the popular terminology, which led the crude mediæval mind to draw the maps of heaven and hell. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle need not have troubled to refer to his personal experience, to prove the existence of heaven and hell, and to say: "I know that now there are thousands of spirits hovering above us." Belief in heaven and hell, in the Qur-ánic sense of the words, is a logical sequence of our belief in the Principle of Evolution, and hence they must be accepted as scientific verities.

Now I wish to say a few words as to the way suggested by the Qur-án to create our heaven. From the nebular condition up to the development of the human mind there are numberless stages of evolution—lesser and greater—each greater stage consisting of seven lesser stages. The end of each greater stage is characterized by a sudden cessation of progress—popularly called death—the decomposition of the ingredients which the progressive entity then absorbed in order to pursue its course of progress, in every stage. This cessation of progress continues for periods of different duration in different cases. This period we Muslims call *burzakh.* When the period ends, the entity enters into the new order next in progress to the one left behind. We observe this *burzakh* when snow melts into water or water assumes the shape of vapour and the heat becomes latent. *Burzakh* literally means inactivity.

In every stage, the progressive entity owns two things; first, a portion of the equipment in a more refined form that belonged to the stage it left behind; and secondly, something entirely new that differentiates it from the stage it left behind. Its progress in the new stage lies chiefly in the cultivation and development of this differentiating principle. When it passes the newly entered stage and enters into other higher stages it becomes purged of all that belonged to the stage preceding. This differentiating element now becomes the only

groundwork for progress in the new order, where again appears something new which progresses and acts as a new differentiator. A tree will furnish a good illustration. Its seed passes through several stages of progress before it assumes the shape of fruit, i.e. trunk, twigs, flower and then fruit. Leaves possess something of the twig, but there is something new that creates the flower, and flower contains something of a leaf but nothing of twig or trunk. Fruit has the aroma of the flower, but it possesses nourishing qualities that were not fully possessed by the flower, and the fruit contains nothing which is proper to twigs or leaves. In short, the progressive entity in every evolutionary stage cultivates that element that differentiates it from the lower order, and rejects all that it gained from that order when it entered into one higher. Nay, the matter rejected becomes dangerous for its further growth in the new stage. The gold of an earlier stage becomes the lead in an evolved stage. This principle appertains to every order of Evolution, including human life. Thus physical nature gives rise to animal passions, but in the human frame the progressive entity must partake only of so much of it as may be necessary for its very existence; its further progress consists chiefly in the cultivation of consciousness. But when the progressive entity leaves the human frame it must not retain within itself anything of a physical nature. The said nature, though essential for our growth on this side of the grave, will be detrimental to our growth on the other, especially if it remained uncontrolled, in which state it arouses all the evil propensities which lead to sin. It is by the suppression of these propensities that we shall facilitate our progress in the journey beyond the grave. But this we cannot do without the help of God; hence Islam teaches us to be constant in our supplication to God for His protection against sin. This will explain the Qur-ánic verse under discussion: "Hasten to protection against sin from your Lord and to a

garden the extensiveness of which is as the extensiveness of the heaven and the earth."

GOD OUR PROTOTYPE

Muhammad does not leave us here; he places before us the mould into which we have to cast our passions. The dictum that man was made after the image of God used to be something of a riddle. But Muhammad made it clear when he said to his followers, "Imbue yourself with Divine attributes." Muhammad thus summed up the whole object of human life on this side of the grave. In spirit we have been fashioned after the image of the Lord, and we have to partake of His colour, and this necessitates the knowledge of God in so far as a Finite mind can comprehend the Infinite. It is false theology to say that God is knowable. We know little of Him, and that little is the theme and the cause of the various Religions, which all differ in their conceptions of Godhood. Some streak of God, vaguely seen as it were, will not, however, serve the purpose. If we have to assume the colours of God, we must know something of Him. Muhammad, again, is unique in that he deals with this subject in the manner required. The Qur-án teaches that God is incomprehensible, but it speaks of certain of His attributes that may come within human comprehension and may act as prototype for us in fashioning our morals after Divine attributes. The Qur-án therefore speaks of only ninety-nine attributes of God. These do not exhaust Godhood, but they are the only phases of Divinity in which it is possible for man to seek to imitate his Creator. We must create God-consciousness within ourselves, and these are its various features at which we must aim. Muhammad therefore gave to the world a clear defined conception of God as far as it was comprehensible. The conception relied for its testimony on the whole universe

around. It was a conception of lovable attributes that could be reflected by humanity. The Hebrew God was an unforgiving God, inexorable in having the demands of His laws satisfied, harsh and cruel to the enemies of His people. The deities of other nations were not less cruel. The smoke of the burnt sacrifice and the blood of the brutes on the altar only could please their nostrils and gratify their eyes. All deities, whether of the East or West, were more or less of the same type. Jesus, no doubt, came to mitigate the severity of these conceptions of Godhood. He would call his God his Father, and tried to show that the relation between God and man was that of father and son. But that beautiful idea was soon brought to naught by the builders of his Church. The loving Father became an angry Father who would not forgive any wrong against Him—the same inexorable Hebrew Deity. The Father in Heaven was clothed in the garb of other Pagan deities who, like Zeus, would send his sons to be killed for the sins of others. This notion of Godhood not only marred the beauty of Jesus's message of God, but gave also a most outrageous conception of fatherhood—a father who would not forgive any wrong against him but would kill the best of his sons to save his other wicked sons. Muhammad gave a conception of God that surpassed all other previous conceptions in its grandeur and beauty. The God of Muhammad is Allah, who is Rabb,[1] Rahman, Rahim, and Malik-e-Yaumed-deen. These are the first four attributes of Allah given in the opening verses of the Qur-án. They sum up in themselves all the other Divine attributes mentioned in the Book. The God of Muhammad is Rabb—who creates things and endows them with various capabilities. He sustains and nourishes them in such a way that all those capabilities come to perfection by passing through various stages of development, which stages He Himself arranges for the evolution of everything in His

[1] For the full meaning of Rabb, see p. 49.

creation. He is Rahman Who, out of His compassion for His creatures, has already created things that meet their need, at each stage of their growth, and all these blessings come to them without any claim on their part on the bounty of the Lord. Thus His blessings come to them without any compensation for this Grace being demanded. He is Rahim Who, out of His compassion and love, gives a thousandfold reward to any good action done by His creatures, and that reward mostly comes in the unfolding of our latent faculties. But if His creatures take the wrong course in their growth He need not punish them, as He is not bound by laws like a judge or the God of the Church. He is the Master of His laws, and therefore the Owner of the day of judgment (Malik-e-Yaumed-deen). He often forgives; but where punishment is the only course to bring reclamation to the offender—because reclamation to the right path to growth is the main object—He awards punishment.

Ponder over these four Divine attributes, and you will find every atom in Nature bearing witness to it through its creation, nourishment and development. Would we might follow the Lord in His these four ways. The millennium would come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. His ways are impartial; He is equal in His bounties to all. If earthly rulers could rule their subjects after the pattern of Rabb, Rahman, Rahim and Malik-e-Yaumed-deen, the kingdom of God prayed for by Jesus would be at hand and come on the earth speedily, as it did in the days of Muhammad.

MORALITY A REFLECTION OF DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

Under these premises the world realized for the first time that faith in God meant faith in the virtues connected with His name—a truth that has very recently dawned on the Western

mind.[1] The Muslim worship of God consists chiefly in casting our characters in the mould of the Divine attributes. The Book of Islam makes Allah the chief and exclusive theme of it; the rest does but subserve this chief object. From this point of view we can divide the Qur-án into the following six headings with Allah as the central figure:—

"First: It makes mention of His attributes, or the various forms in which He has manifested Himself.

"Secondly: It refers to the various aspects of the universe, in illustrating the working of these attributes.

"Thirdly: Our conformity with those attributes which have been called virtues, righteousness, and purity. Anything done or felt which is not in unison with these attributes or manifestations of God, is evil.

"Fourthly: The law, or the commandment, obedience to which enables us to conform as aforesaid, and safeguards us from the danger of going astray.

"Fifthly: The mention of certain personalities who conform their lives to the said manifestations, and of those who do not do so. To the first category belong the Prophets, the righteous, the truthful, and the Martyrs or witnesses to His ways. Those who oppose belong to the other class.

"Sixthly: The book tells of the life after death, which, again, illustrates the same principle.

"Those who have been able to imbue themselves with Divine attributes will have an abode of felicity called Heaven; while the other class of those who fall short of the standard of qualification for the heavenly life will have to pass some time in a condition wherein they will be enabled to make up the deficiency—I mean the Hell of the Holy Qur-án. Islam does not admit of eternal hell. Thus it will appear that the Holy Qur-án has been revealed only to tell of God and His ways, and to give guidance whereby we may walk in His ways. If

[1] Dean Inge in *Modern Churchman Review.*

to walk humbly with the Lord is the best of life, even an atheist cannot do otherwise, seeing that he must abide by the laws of Nature, which are only the manifestation of the ways of the Lord; and the sole object of a revelation must be to enlighten us as to His ways. Apart from all considerations of the unauthentic character of the other sacred Scriptures, let us believe in their genuineness—but even then they are not of much help to us now; they do not speak of all the attributes of God disclosed in the book of Nature. Therefore if the Qur-án takes God and His manifestations as its main theme, and shows how to conform to those manifestations, can it not claim to be the only book which fulfils the object of a revelation from God?" [1]

MUSLIM PRAYER

Every person who seeks to observe good morals must tread God's earth reflecting Divine attributes, as they are directly connected with true morality. We should examine and search our hearts, and review our conduct several times a day, and see if our thoughts and deeds are consistent with the Divine ways. For this purpose we were ordered by Muhammad to say our prayers five times a day; for to do so is like a perennial stream, he says, running past our door, that will purify our hearts so many times a day.

Muhammad also keeps this object in view when he prescribes the words that we repeat in our prayer. This conception of prayer and the words of the Muslim prayer made it a prosperous institution in Islam. The Mosque in this respect may be compared with advantage with all other houses of worship. Empty pews and vacant benches are not the complaint in Christendom only, but it is more or less universal. The Mosques, however, in Muslim lands, are never

[1] *Threshold of Truth*, by the same author.

left vacant. The comparison becomes especially interesting when we remember that the Muslims have to worship Allah five times a day, while in almost every other religion, God's day comes once a week. The reason why the churches have been neglected has been partially discovered by the Archbishop of Canterbury. In his address to the last Church Congress he laid special stress on the necessity of improving the quality of the sermons from the pulpit. He wants to make them the means of attracting congregations; perhaps a kinema would, on the whole, be more efficacious, and I should not be surprised if it were to replace the sermon in the near future. But the secret of the attraction of the Muslim prayer lies in the fact that a Muslim reads the needed sermon to himself in every prayer. He is supposed to examine all his doings in the light of the words he recites; for he recites certain names of God, and must find out for himself if he has been reflecting those Divine attributes in his own words and deeds since he said his last prayer.

His own business and avocation also form a part of the study he makes in his prayer. In every prayer he repeats so many times the first four names of God—Rabb, Rahman, Rahim, Malik-e-Yaumed-deen. The names have a direct connection with his morality and with his business. Each name gives him an occasion for heart-searching, and of seeing whether or not he is making himself a fit denizen of the Kingdom of God. But here I would take the business side of human affairs, because it is apt to make people specially neglectful of their prayers. Every avocation in life demands some material, some capacity, some encouragement to ensure success. In his prayer a Muslim is assured that God as Rabbul-álamín has created everything to help him, and has reposed wonderful capabilities to be evolved in everything connected with his business. He has also given him capacity to achieve success in the work on which he is engaged. If

his work needs any particular material, Allah as Rahman has created what is needful, for this is the meaning of the word; he has simply to search and find it. But he must remember that all these beneficences of God are helpful only to those who help themselves. These are the demands of Rahim, which means that His blessings in rewarding our actions, though manifold, only follow our own action. If He, as Rahman, has created everything needful, He rewards only those who apply themselves to His bounties. He is also Malik-e-Yaumed-deen—the Master of Requital. He may chastise us, too, for mishandling His things. Could there be a better lesson, a greater energizing factor for goading us on and deepening our interest in our work? Could there be a better assurance than that which comes from the Governor of the Universe, to infuse us with a new spirit that will quicken our faculties for work, and our insight into things around us, and will increase our energy and application? I have dealt here only with the first sentence of the Muslim prayer, but the rest of it is of the same character. Each and every word implies the same. Apart from the moral side of our life, we remain more or less engrossed in the business side. We meet difficulties and anxiety every day on that score. We need help and encouragement. The world will not come to our help, but God will; and the Muslim prayer opens the door of Divine aid, but at the same time it makes men infinitely more self-reliant. Jesus was not wrong when he said: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." But Muhammad made it a reality.

MUSLIM FORMULA OF LIFE

Muhammad gives us a formula of life that surpasses, in its beauty and efficiency, every like direction that has been given for others for our guidance. He asks us to repeat the formula, *Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim,* before beginning

anything. It means: ".I begin in the name of Allah, Who is Rahman and Rahim," Who, of His own accord, provides us with all we need, not as a reward for our actions, or because we deserve it, but out of His beneficence; and if we do some good action, His rewards (Rahim) are manifold. I have just remarked that these two Excellent Names assure us of the abundance of the requisite means supplied to us for the work we begin, and of our success with it; but the same formula, when observed in our daily life, will cast it in the Divine mould; seeing that true morality, in Islam, consists in reflecting the Divine attributes. A Muslim must act like Rahman and Rahim in his relation to others, at each step of his life. He must look to the needs of others, whether they deserve it or not. His help must go to others automatically without their request or desert; and if they serve him in any way, his reward to them should be manifold. In these two words Muhammad sums up his whole religion: "Be Rahman and Rahim (beneficent and merciful) to others in each step of your life, and bring the kingdom of heaven on earth." "Love God and love your neighbour" is a good formula, but Muhammad improves on it when he says: "Do you wish to love God? Then love His creatures"; and then he teaches us how to love God. He asks us to repeat the formula in our actions, as we repeat its words in the beginning of everything we do, whether in our family circle or in any other sphere of life.

Formula for Greeting.

Again, he proposes words of greeting on the same lines. *Assalamo-alaikum* are the words we repeat when we meet each other. It means "Peace be upon you." But the word *Assalam* is one of the Names of God, in the Qur-án. It means "The Peace." The Muslim greeting thus means: "The Lord of the Peace watches you," and you should maintain peace on the earth. Let us reflect upon these brief hints on life,

without making any fuss about the tenets and ethics of our respective creeds. The love of neighbour ought to be the main object and formula of religion. Let us see who among the whole noble race of Teachers of religion has given the formula the most practical shape. "Do you wish to love your God?" says Muhammad, "Then love His creatures." By saying this, Muhammad makes the formula more understandable, seeing that, before that, we should not know how to love God; and besides, He needs no love. Again, Muhammad asks us to be beneficent and merciful—Rahman and Rahim—towards others, in every step of our life. He wants us to be at peace with everyone we meet; and then search our hearts and examine our conduct five times a day when at prayers, and see how far we have acted upon these hints of life, how far we have observed benevolence and compassion, and how far we have helped to maintain peace in the world.

NO INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN MAN AND GOD

For the first time it was established that there was no intermediary between man and God; that the Divine precincts were accessible to everyone, and it is this truth that was impressed upon our minds by the Qur-án. It draws our attention to the numberless bounties of Allah that have been created in Nature for our sustenance. These we can approach without any intermediary. Our own efforts will bring them to us so that they may minister to our needs. But we need someone to teach us their use, and as soon as we become able to understand the ways of utilizing them we stand no more in need of further help. Nature, after all, suggests the mind of its Creator. But we need a person to enlighten us as to His ways, someone to teach us how to approach Him, which being done, our personal striving will carry us to the Divine precincts. The door of the Lord is ever open to every striver

after Him. The Qur-án says: "Those who strive after Us, We show them our way." "And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am near; I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should answer My call and believe in Me, that they may find the right way." A prophet is a teacher, a guide and an exemplar, but he is not an intermediary. Belief in an intermediary weakens our sense of responsibility and destroys self-reliance. The chief object of our belief in the Unity of God is to create in us steadfastness of character and independence of judgment, thereby encouraging freedom of action. Could belief in an intermediary be helpful in cultivating these high morals? Belief in the intermediary, in fact, is a remnant of Paganism. Every cult and every country of the ancient world had its intermediary. The belief crept into almost all the branches of Theism from the beginning. No Religion of Divine origin in its subsequent stages remained free from it. It was not only the founder of a Religion that was accepted as an intermediary between his people and God, but every man of known piety and righteousness after the founder was adopted as an intermediary also. Christ is not the only intermediary in Christendom, but after him Mary, Peter, Popes, Cardinals, even the ordinary parson, play the same rôle. I need not refer to the baneful influences of sacerdotalism on the progress of Europe. England only a few centuries ago was all barbarity and ignorance; she began to progress when the country arose against the high-handedness of the clergy, and was relieved from the canon rule through the interference of the Parliament. Is not the Holy Prophet of Arabia a real blessing to humanity, seeing that it was he who relieved the world from this pernicious institution when he declared that there was no intermediary between God and His creature? Islam has no priestly class. Everyone is his own priest.

Muhammad is also the first Prophet who "strikes at the

root of the idea of a favourite nation whose members alone may be entitled to salvation." The Qur-án brought a Gospel of Peace to the whole world when it proclaimed: "Surely those who believe and those who are Jews and the Christians and the Sabæans, whoever believeth in Allah and the last day and doeth good, they shall have their reward from the Lord, and there is no fear for them, neither shall they grieve." This verse of the Qur-án, which I regard as a real Gospel of Peace for the world, removing as it does all prejudices that arose from denominational creeds, may be compared with advantage with the reported words of Jesus in St. Mark xvi: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; *but he that believeth not shall be damned.*" The words in italics most probably inspired the damning portion of the Athanasian Creed, which was responsible to a great extent for the tyranny of the days of the Inquisition. The public conscience has awakened to the cruel nature of that creed, and the removal of the "damnatory" clauses from it has been suggested; but should not the world feel indebted to Muhammad, who saw the pernicious effect of such narrow-minded doctrines? He preached that salvation was not confined to our belief in this or that man, but that it depended upon right beliefs. But he also said that it was not right belief alone, but belief translated into actions, that earned merit in the eye of the Lord irrespective of the creed or class to which the doer of the actions might happen to belong. Belief in a prophet is belief in him in his capacity of Messenger from Allah, which means belief in the Divine message which he brings.

MONOTHEISM IN ITS PUREST FORM

It is a well-known and an undeniable fact that Muhammad, and Muhammad only and no one else, estab-

lished monotheism in its purest form. The worship of One God, Who was neither begetter nor begotten, nor had any associates with Him in His Godhood, was taught in the most unequivocal terms. Before Muhammad, the world worshipped everything in the universe. The Sun, the Moon, the Stars, clouds, water, winds, fire, trees, rivers and stones, egg-shells and many a God-incarnate man, were his deities. The Holy Prophet brought down all these man-made gods from the pedestal of divinity.

OBJECT OF MONOTHEISM

It was not because his God was a jealous God, as the writer of Exodus would make Him. He is above the passion of envy, and His glory would not suffer if the whole world became idolatrous, nor would it be added to a jot if everyone worshipped Him in the right way.[1] It was for his own edification that man was taught by Muhammad to observe a strict faith in the Unity of God.[2] Man is the chief actor and vicegerent[3] of God on earth to work out the great scheme of creation, and inasmuch as the said scheme has to work in certain ways—ways that have been indicated by the very names and attributes of God—his actions and his ways must reflect and be in imitation of Divine ways in order to bring the scheme to its desired end. In this sense we have to live the Religion of Unity. This is what is meant by the baptism of God, in the Qur-án. Our mind has to work in, and conduct, our little world—the human body—just as the Great Mind works in the universe. We are co-workers with the Great Designer in our humble ways, and have consequently to walk humbly with Him. The Holy Prophet thus creates in us a new zest for Religion. Religion is no longer a scheme exclusively for the betterment of life after death, or

[1] Holy Qur-án, xxxi. 12. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*, ii. 30.

for gaining entrance into the kingdom of God in heaven, but a scheme to do something in every moment of life for the furtherance of the Divine Purpose which is, in fact, our own purpose. This new perspective of Religion changed entirely the meaning of Divine worship and glorification. It showed that God was not to be glorified only by the singing of hymns and the saying of prayers—they were means to an end—but by our actualizing such potentialities as have been reposed in us and in things created to minister to us. The very first ordinance in the Qur-án puts this perspective of Religion before us in the following words:—

"O men! serve your Lord Who created you and those before you so that you may guard (against evil).

"Who made the earth a resting-place for you and the heaven a structure, and (Who) sends down rain from the cloud, then brings forth with it subsistence for you of the fruits; therefore do not set up rivals to Allah while you know."[1]

Any other conception of worship—as, for example, to please the Deity, to win His favours—would encourage polytheism, as it has done already in the world. This Divine favouritism, if the expression may be permitted, is at the root of Pluralism in Religion.

GOD NOT IMPERSONAL

Similarly, it was taught in the clearest terms, for the first time, that God was not an impersonal one, as one clothed with human passions, that the pleasure or anger of God were not His passions;[2] they involved an assumption under which His pleasure became expressed when human faculties became fully fledged, but if they became stunted through our wrong doings and lost their purpose, it indicated His wrath.

[1] Holy Qur-án, ii. 21, 22.

[2] "There is nothing like him" (Qur-án, xlii. 9). "Vision comprehends Him not, and He comprehends all visions" (vi. 104).

THE IDEAL TEACHER OF RELIGION

HUMAN CAPABILITIES AND SINLESSNESS OF NATURE

The world had very erroneous conceptions of human capabilities. Evil had been taken as its backbone; nothing sublime or beautiful was in humanity. If some religions, like Christianity, declared evil and sin to be the sole furniture of the human mind, others taught that human life was full of trouble and tribulation, and that salvation lay in annihilation, seeing that this world was thought to be full of nothing but misery and evil, as I said before. Muhammad, for the first time, declared that human nature was potentially perfect—a truth established to-day by biology; he taught that it was free from any taint of evil. Sin, he declared, was an acquisition, an after-acquirement and not a heritage. Human nature, as the Qur-án says, was capable of unlimited progress, but with inclination to degradation as well; man could soar to the highest of the high, but can go to the lowest of the low, and the Religion Muhammad brought was to work out the former and check the latter.

THE PROBLEM OF GOOD AND EVIL

The problem of good and evil was a great puzzle. Its misapprehension not only gave rise to wrong notions that created divergent ethics, but it also produced a disastrous effect on human character. The wrong solution of the problem weakened the sense of responsibility. The theory of sin by inheritance, for instance, and many others like, reduced man to the rôle of automaton, as a helpless, passive and unconsenting instrument of evil. The Holy Prophet simplified the problem. God is the Source of all good. As the Qur-án says: "Everything that comes from Him is good; human nature is pure and perfect. The mishandling or abuse of things creates

evil. Opium and arsenic used for the purpose for which they have been created are blessings of God, but their abuse makes of each a curse." [1] "Even the best of God's blessings in the limited horizon of the human eye becomes harmful when it is used to excess." [2] Fire, the source of comfort and happiness, plays havoc with property and life if ignorance or inadvertence permit it to function in undesirable ways. Excess in drinking even such a harmless thing as water brings on dropsy, and extravagance in diet causes indigestion, with its train of numberless diseases. Everything has got its ordained measure and its prescribed occasion. If we transgress the given limits or put things to a use for which they are not intended, the good changes into evil. Laxative and costive medicines stand in contrast. Which of the two is good and which is evil? Both of them do immense good, if properly used. Both will prove harmful, if used to excess or on wrong occasion. In short, everything, used in its defined measure, is good. It becomes evil when mishandled or misapplied. The Holy Qur-án draws our attention to this basic principle of measure, that regulates the whole universe :—

"The Beneficent God—Rahman— . . . created man. . . . The sun and the moon followed a reckoning. . . . He made *the Measure* that you may not be inordinate in respect of measures and keep up the balance with equity, and do not make the measure deficient." [3]

UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD

Man must live in society. He cannot be happy without it. Beset as we are with numerous behests and cravings, our inability to satisfy them by individual effort demands the

[1] *Towards Islam*, by the same author.

[2] *Islam and Zoroastrianism*, by the same author.

[3] Holy Qur-àn lv. 1—9.

formation of society. We must look to each other's need. We must serve others and be served by them. But the self-seeking nature in us, if not properly controlled, makes havoc among us, and creates all the trouble around us. Oppression, persecution, crimes, offences, disputes, war—all these are the outcome of this peculiar medley of self-seeking tendencies and the sociable nature in man. We need some sort of sacrifice in favour of those around us. We need to cultivate a spirit of brotherhood to improve the said tendency. In this respect, Muhammad can rightly claim to have discovered the specific remedy. He laid down principles of universal brotherhood, and succeeded in establishing it, in his own lifetime. Through this institution he purged Arabia of all its troubles.

For the first time the world received those broad principles from Muhammad which will establish the universal brotherhood of man in the world. Jesus had had such a desire; but it remained only a dream, and the history of Christendom has never shown a spirit of universal brotherhood. Islam saw that brotherhood which welded high and low, rich and poor, white and black, into one fraternity. The world of to-day goes after universalism, but if that universalism ever becomes a reality, it will be on the principles of Islam. And in this connection I may refer to the conception of Muslim Godhood. The Pre-Islamic God was a tribal God everywhere, whether in the East or the West. He was the God of Abraham and Jacob, He was the Mazda of the renowned ancestors in Persia, but the Qur-án speaks of a *Rabbul Alameen*—God, The Creator, The Nourisher and The Sustainer of all the worlds, of all the nations and races, and Who made no distinction between man and man.

The world cries aloud for peace, and peace is still far off. The Great War ended only to lay the foundations of a still greater war. It may break out at any time and reduce humanity to nothing. But if you wish to observe true fellow-

feeling, and experience the genuine spirit of brotherhood among the heterogeneous units of humanity, that alone can bring peace into the world. Go to Mecca and see the drama of fraternity being acted on the day of Pilgrimage. All man-made barriers of distinction removed, all colour and race-prejudices brushed aside. Men of all rank, plebeian and patrician, clad in the same sort of cloth. Father or son, brother or sister, mother or daughter, the only word for addressing each other according to their age, among those who are strangers to each other in language, colour and race. Everyone trying to serve another, and abstaining from receiving anything in lieu thereof, everyone willing to offer his all for the benefit of the other, everyone rejoicing when deprived of his own goods, if they do but go to meet the others' need. Self-seeking tendencies could not work to the injury of others in such circumstances. This scene of true fraternity goes on for at least five months of every year in Mecca. Mecca has rightly been styled a City of Peace. But to-day Mecca has lost this, its enviable beauty. Those who have lived for centuries in peace within the four walls of this Town of Peace, are on "pins and needles." Those who, tired of the world-sordidness and selfishness, used to resort to that centre of true self-abnegation and selflessness, which alone can bring happiness to man, to-day find insurmountable difficulties in their journey thither. But who is responsible for it all? Who has marred the happiness of the Muslim world? The question is not a difficult one to answer. Not Ibn-i-Saud or Ali; they are the instruments and creatures of circumstances. The catastrophe has been brought forth by those who for their imperialistic desires brought Mecca and Hedjaz within the scope of their world politics, making Pilgrimage to Mecca a subject of their political consideration; by those who think that their land-grabbing tendencies cannot work well unless Mecca comes indirectly under their jurisdiction; by those who

have been wrongly regarding Pilgrimage to Mecca as a subterfuge to cover political gatherings. Ask Lord Headley, and from his personal experience he will give the lie to these hallucinations of Western politicians. The Khilafat and the Pilgrimage have long been thorns in the flesh to astute diplomats. One, they think, they have shattered to pieces, and concerning the other they are devising schemes.

These are, at least, Muslim impressions in general. Some call the British Government a Muslim Government, because Muslims constitute the great majority of British subjects. If the Government is wise, it will respect our susceptibilities. We are entitled to look to it for the redress of all these wrongs. We do not wish it to interfere in the affairs of Mecca; but we know that Mecca can be restored to its *status quo* without such interference being so apparent as to cause offence even to the most sensitive.

UNIVERSALISM

Muhammad laid the foundation of universalism. For the first time it was proclaimed that every religion in the beginning came from God, every great Prophet was raised by God, every nation was given a divine warner, and Muhammad made it the duty of the Muslims to accept the Prophets of others as their own Prophet, they cannot make any distinction between Muhammad and other prophets. It was taught that all these prophets came with the same religion from God, and taught the same truth, but their teachings suffered in purity and had become adulterated by successive generations, and this led to all the differences between Religion and Religion.

But in the beginning they all came with truth. Their teachers all drank from the same Fountain-head. How, indeed, could it be otherwise, if the whole human race was created by the same God? How could He bless one nation and leave others to starve spiritually, if His physical dispen-

sation blessed all equally. His universal Providence must surely give teachers of His religion to every group of humanity, especially in days when there were few, if any, means of communication between race and race whereby one might impart to another the Truth that had been revealed; nay, they were entirely separated from each other by natural or artificial barriers; and for this reason it was that religion was revealed to every nation separately.[1]

The present order of things has, however, brought the races of mankind together; religions and cultures have come in contact with each other. But each sticks tenaciously to its own creed; for the whole world will not follow one road. Is it not, then, desirable for the world to subscribe to a doctrine that demands recognition of the Divine origin of each great religion? Such a doctrine would create mutual understanding and break down narrow-mindedness. It would mitigate the religious bias that so readily stirs up enmity between nation and nation. Such belief is needed in the interest of peace, and Muhammad taught this healthy principle of universal harmony. To-day it is regarded more or less as a truism, but the world at the outset needed some Divine pronouncement through a Messenger if the doctrine was to claim general recognition. Religion is a great factor of unification, and its chief object is to create harmony among the discordant, diverging units of humanity, and never has the need of such harmony been more evident than to-day. Has not Muhammad, then, brought a true message, and is he not a true Messenger of God?

ALL PROPHETS SINLESS

Muhammad goes further still. He extols other teachers of the world; he defends them against their detractors, and gives the lie to all that has been said against their characters.

[1] Holy Qur-àn, xxxv. 24; iii. 83.

THE IDEAL TEACHER OF RELIGION

Unfortunately people often seek to establish the greatness of their own teachers, by vilifying those of others, and the Christian missionary is the worst sinner of all in this respect. He does not even spare his own Prophets, and I, for one, fail to understand his mentality. On the one side, he believes in the prophethood of many of the Hebrew patriarchs, and on the other he recounts their wicked deeds, and incidentally he maligns those who, as the Bible says, walked humbly with the Lord, and were His begotten sons. What should we think of the God of these misnamed missionaries, Who chose such unrighteous people as His mouthpiece and sent them to act as models for us? But the motives of these defamers of the "goodly fellowship of the Prophets" are obvious. The deification of the Son of Mary demanded denunciation of the others, in their foolish judgment. To preach the Epiphany of that strange phase of Divine Love—He loved man so much that He gave the blood of His only Son to save humanity—these defamers of the righteous of God spare no one from their thorny tongues. They declare their adversaries to be "robbers and thieves" and use other harsh names; but the last of the Prophets came to rescue the noble race. He dignified them all; he made a general declaration that all Prophets, wherever they were, were righteous and sinless. He then took them, one by one, and praised them in terms that reversed the calumny. The veracity of Abraham and Joseph was impugned in the Bible, but Muhammad declared that they were truthful. Lot was given a bad character, but Muhammad spoke of his pure character, and in this respect no one can exaggerate the indebtedness of Jesus to Muhammad. With one word the Qur-án removed all the slur that attached to the birth of Jesus in the opinion of the Jews, who in order to give the lie to the claims of Jesus, referred to Deut. xxii. 2. But Al-Qur-án[1] calls Jesus the "Spirit of God" and free from the

[1] Holy Qur-àn, iv. 171.

touch of Satan, and this lifted above reproach the character of Mary and the birth of Jesus.

COMPLETE RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

For the first time, the principle of "no compulsion in religion" was enunciated and acted upon by Muhammad. Differences of opinion in religious matters were respected and individual opinion encouraged. Freedom of conscience was allowed. For everyone to be held responsible to his God alone for his religion was a thing hitherto unknown to the world. History is full of religious persecutions and crusades, and Christendom has exhibited the worst type of religious intolerance in her religious zeal. The world needed reform in this respect, and Muhammad came. We do not read of persecutions of Galileos, Latimers and others in the annals of Islam. Heresy has been condemned, but not punished. "If Dean Inge had lived a few hundred years ago, he would probably have been a candidate for the stake on a charge of heresy." But Muhammad teaches that every person is responsible only to God for his beliefs, and no man is entitled to question or persecute another for conscience' sake. The Prophet condemns all religious persecution when he says that people will not be punished for their disbelief or erroneous beliefs in this life, but in the life after death. In this life they have to account only for their actions. Thus, he preached a religious toleration that had never been known to the world before, and which is even to-day repugnant to the Christian spirit, if the Church may be accepted as its exponent in such matters—for example, as the Athanasian Creed.[1] Muhammad puts the religion of universal toleration into practice; he awards protection of life and property to

[1] "Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, *without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.*"

the followers of other religions in the same way as he does in the case of a Muslim. He allows them to follow their own religion and observe their own rites. He grants concessions to Christians. "No conquering race of faith has given to its subjects a nobler guarantee than is to be found in the following words of the Prophet[1]: 'To the Christians of Najran and the surrounding territories the security of God and the pledge of His Prophet are extended for their lives, their religion and their property—to the present as well as the absent, and others besides; there shall be no interference with (the practice of) their faith or their observances; nor any change in their rights or privileges; no bishop shall be removed from his bishopric, nor any monk from his monastery, nor any priest from his priesthood, and they shall continue to enjoy everything, great and small, as heretofore; *no image or cross shall be destroyed: they shall not oppress nor be oppressed: they shall not practise the rights of blood-vengeance as in the Days of Ignorance: no tithes shall be levied from them, nor shall they be required to furnish provisions for the troops.*'"

Similar concession was granted to the Zoroastrians in Arabia. I give a few extracts from the Prophet's letter to Farrukh b. Shakhsan, the head of a fire-temple:—

This is the letter from the Apostle of God (may God bless him and assoil him) to the freedman Farrukh b. Shakhsan, brother of Salman Farsi (may God be pleased with him!), and to his family and posterity that he may have, as long as they exist, regardless of which of them will turn Moslem or will remain faithful to his (original) creed.

. . . . .

This is my letter: verily upon him (i.e. Farrukh b. Shakhsan) is the protection of God, also upon his sons, with regard to their lives, property, in the lands in which they live, plains or hills; as well as freedom of use of the wells and pastures which they possess. They must not be treated unjustly or oppressed. And those to whom this

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[1] Syed Ameer Ali, *Spirit of Islam.*

my letter will be read must protect them (i.e. the Zoroastrians), leave them free, and prevent the offences from others, and not show hostility to them by insult or by using force.[1]

. . . . . .

They are entirely free in their possessions of fire-temples as well as the landed and other property attached to the latter. No one also should restrict them in the use of rich dress, the use of stirrups, construction of buildings or stables, performing burials, or observing anything which is accepted in their religion or sects. They must be treated better than all other (non-Muhammadan) peoples under protection.

In Islam, the Muslims and the Zimmis[2] are absolutely equal in the eyes of the Law. "Their blood," said Ali, the fourth Caliph, "was like our blood." This spirit of toleration was observed everywhere, under Muslim rule when it was at its prime. In the days of the first Caliph, his commander, Khalid-bin-Walid, issued a proclamation by which he guaranteed the lives, liberties and property of the Christians, and declared "that they *shall not be prevented from beating their* nakus (*bells*), *and that they put their crosses on occasions of festival.*" The declaration was approved and sanctioned by the Caliph. "After the conquest of Egypt, the Caliph Omar scrupulously preserved intact the property dedicated to the Christian Churches, and continued the allowance made by the former government for the support of the priests." In the reign of the third Caliph the Christian Patriarch of Merv bore the memorable testimony to the tolerant spirit of the Muslims in his letter to the Bishop of Fars.[3] The fourth Caliph granted another charter after the Holy Prophet to the

[1] See *Ahad Nameh*, published by the Iran League, Bombay.

[2] The non-Muslim subjects of Muslim States are called Zimmis. The word itself is very instructive, and shows the immunity which a non-Muslim enjoys under the Muslim rule. The word means "people living under guarantees," *i.e.* every Muslim is responsible for the safety of the life, liberty and property of the non-Muslim.

[3] See p. 136, where Dr. Mingana refers to it.

third Caliph, head of a Zoroastrian temple in Persia, that runs thus :—.

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate!

This is the rescript of the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib to Bahram Shad b. Khiradars, the Zoroastrian, who was in charge of the religious affairs of his community, as well as to his family in general, the descendants of Adarbad, son of Adarbad Marispand the Persian.

Verily I made you safe with regard to your lives, property, wives and posterity. I granted you the promise of God and His protection, as well as the protection of His Prophet (may God bless and assoil him!), and ordered those amongst the Muhammadans, faithful to their creed, who obey God and His Prophet; also the rulers of provinces, the commanders of the troops, fighting in our cause of God, and the commanders of the garrisons in the frontier regions, to the effect that they must protect and defend you, and show you kindness and goodwill, and remove oppression on you. I have abolished capitation tax payable by yourselves, your children and their descendants; also the royalties from your cattle and cows. I made you absolute masters of the houses (*i e.* fire-temples) which are built for yourselves, all endowments of properties, lands and estates belonging to them as well as of other grants, and offerings to them and their necessary repairs.

I also sanction the custom, current amongst your community, according to which every man adhering to the Zoroastrian religion pays yearly, as a tax (*Jaziya*), one *dirham* to the headman from amongst yourselves who is charged with the (religious) authority over his community as well as adjudicates the causes which arise between them.

I made the (inheritable) property of those belonging to the Zoroastrian creed, but themselves of mixed birth, to pass to the religious head of your community when I heard the Apostle of God saying: "The people descending from the parents of two religions do not inherit."

All this I said to you when I satisfied myself as to your position in your community and chieftainship over it; also that your remaining in this dignity conduces to their benefit. And I decided this when I realized concerning your sincerity in counsel, your devotion and affection for the people of your religion.

And it behoves the faithful men and women professing Islam, that they should defend Bahram Shad Khiradars, the Zoroastrian, concerning whatever is perpetuated of their (Zoroastrians') customs; and that they should not impose claims of their own invention, or restriction whatever; that they must be generous to the generous amongst the Zoroastrians and condone their faults; that they should never, as long as the Zoroastrians exist, demand the capitation taxes from

them; that they (the Moslems) should not compel them (the Zoroastrians) to change their religion in accordance with the word of God, the Blessed, the Most High (the Koran, II, 257): "There is no compulsion in matters religious, but only explanation (of the difference between) the right way and error."

. . . . .

Some of the Christian Fathers, in the day of the Prophet, came to discuss with him the merits of the true religion. Muslim hospitality lodged them in houses surrounding the Mosque of the Prophet, where they remained for several days, and then came Sunday, the day of the Lord with the Christians. For a Muslim, the whole of the earth is his Mosque; but the Christian guests had to find a church in which to pray to their God; and there was no church to be found. But the Prophet came to their rescue. He offered them his own Mosque. The very House of Allah, where God, Who is neither Begotten nor Begetter, was worshipped, became a place of worship for those who believed in the begotten Son of God. Such a benevolent spirit could not fail to stem religious persecution in Islam, as has been observed elsewhere, especially in Christendom. Dr. Mingana has recently discovered a charter granted by Muktafi II, Caliph of Baghdad, to the Nestorian Church, which appoints the Nestorian Patriarch the Catholicas of the Nestorian Christians. Among other things it says:—

Thy life and property and those of thy people will be protected; great care will be taken in the promotion of your welfare; your ways of interring your dead will be respected, and your churches and monasteries will be protected. In all this we are in conformity with the method adopted by the Orthodox Caliphs with your predecessors.

The Commander of the Faithful was also gracious to be willing to mediate between the different Christian communities in their law suits in order to exact justice from the strong in favour of the weak, and to direct to the right path anyone who was straying from it; to look after them according to the requirements of their religion, and to follow it in its clear path and straight course.

In this respect Dr. Mingana says: "The need has always been felt for an authoritative statement throwing light on the

relations between official Islam and official Christianity at the time when Islam had power of life and death over millions of Christian subjects. Individual Christians may have suffered persecution at the hand of individual Muslims, but such incidents . . . are to be considered as infractions of the laws. . . . The statutory attitude of Islam on this subject is laid down in clear terms in the present document, which proves beyond the possibility of doubt that . . . statutory intolerance was not among its defects. . . ." "The charter emanates from the chancery of an Abbasid Caliph, but could an English King, a Dutch Queen or a French President write in the twentieth century a more tolerant charter in favour of their numerous Muslim subjects?" So interrogates Dr. Mingana, but I wonder the tolerant spirit of the present-day rulers would even emulate with advantage the spirit disclosed in the various charters given above. Again Dr. Mingana says: "The charter was written in the twelfth century, but the Caliph who granted it states that he is following in the steps of the first four Caliphs after the Prophet, and copying the model of all the Abbasid Caliphs, his predecessors. The praiseworthy key-note of tolerance that runs through it is therefore that of all the Muslim Caliphs, and not of one of them only. This is best illustrated by the memorable sentence of the Nestorian Patriarch Isho' Yahb III (A.D. 650-660): 'The Arabs to whom God has given at this time the government of the world . . . do not persecute the Christian religion; on the contrary, they favour it, honour our priests and the saints of the Lord, and confer benefits on churches and monasteries.'"

The Muslim rulers in India granted subsidies and estates for the upkeep of the Hindu temples. Even to-day, Hyderabad, an Indian Muslim State, allows ample subsidies to the Hindus, Christians, Zoroastrians and the followers of other religions. The same is the case in Bhopal. "Many modern

governments, not excepting some of the most civilized, may take the Muslim administration, in this respect, for their model."[1]

Let our critics say what they will, they cannot deny facts and figures in history. The very existence of the Balkan States gives the lie direct to any such accusation as that which says that the sword in one hand and the Qur-án in the other has been the policy of Muslim rule. These communities furnish a living testimony that under Muslim rule the existence of non-Muslims is safe and secure. Take another case—that of India. After about a thousand years of strong Muslim rule, what do we find? The total population is 300,000,000; more than two-thirds are non-Muslim to this day. And even the 80,000,000 of the Muslim element consists mainly of the descendants of the Muslim immigrants, the Arabs, the Pathans, the Moguls, the Syeds and the Bloaches. These are hard facts of history, and surely no other testimony is needed to establish the conclusion that whithersoever the Crescent has penetrated, its policy has been to live and let live. To-day we appreciate the spirit of toleration in an age of general broad-mindedness and culture, but Muhammad taught and observed it at a time when persecution of others for conscience' sake was treated everywhere as a religious verity, and that chiefly on account of the example of the Hebrew prophets and the silence of others on the subject. But if religious tolerance must be a necessary article of faith in the Religion of Humanity, it is surely yet another cogent justification for Muhammad's claim to the name of Ideal Prophet.

RIGHT USE OF SWORD

For the first time the world was taught by the Prophet the right use of the sword. Secular and sacred history alike show that the sword has never been dispensed with. It was

[1] Syed Ameer Ali, *Spirit of Islam.*

unsheathed by the Hindu Prophets and the Hebrew Patriarchs; for neither the Hebrew Law nor that of the Hindus is in any way favourable to "pacifism." The Prince of Peace also declared that he came to send on the earth "not peace but a sword"; he came to fulfil the Law and the Prophets; the laws of his religion permitted it, and his prophets waged war. In fact, he would have had recourse to the sword had a favourable occasion arisen, but it did not; and if he prevented Peter from drawing the sword, it was because the time was not propitious. Violence would but have entailed further trouble for him and for his followers. Besides, what Jesus himself could not do has been done with considerable thoroughness by his followers. His words have proved dangerously prophetic. A large portion of the wealth and the brain of Christendom is expended in discovering various ways in which they may send sword and fire more efficaciously into the world; and that, not for the furtherance of any humane cause, but to pander to the spirit of aggression and "grab."

"I, however, maintain that at times it becomes one of our highest humanitarian duties to unsheathe the sword. We cannot conscientiously stand aside as indifferent spectators when the liberties of an oppressed people are being trampled upon, when religious freedom is at stake. There do arise situations when the use of arms becomes an unavoidable necessity. But the arms have often been abused, and it was the duty of a Prophet from God to tell us the right occasion when the sword can be wielded."[1]

Jesus was prepared to send sword and fire into the world, but Muhammad was compelled to do so. He allowed the use of arms on the following three occasions:—

(i) To save a house for the worship of God from destruction, be it Christian, Jew, Hindu, Buddhist or Muslim (Holy Qur-án, xxii. 40).

[1] *The House Divided*, by the same author.

(ii) To establish freedom of conscience. Every one, according to Qur-ánic teaching, has the right to choose his own faith, and no one should force his religious beliefs on others by persecution or otherwise. And if a person does so, it is the duty of a Muslim to fight against such religious persecution, irrespective of whether the aggrieved be a Jew or a Christian and the persecutor a Muslim (ii. 190-193).

(iii) In self-defence (xxii. 39).

But in each case a Muslim should suspend hostilities whenever the oppressor shows an inclination towards peace (ii. 194).

Other Prophets of the world, especially the Hebrew, drew the sword for a cause of doubtful righteousness, as the Old Testament shows; but Muhammad did what righteousness demanded. Nevertheless the Western mind has become so much poisoned by prejudiced statements carped at Islam, that it will not care to hear what is true.

EQUALITY OF MAN AND ELEVATION OF WOMANHOOD

Belief in the Unity of God in its purest form established two truths—the equality between man and man and the subservience of the rest of Nature to the human race; the former giving rise to all the good and healthy principles of democracy, and the latter affording stimulus to scientific researches. The democratic spirit of Islam is a well-known verity, but here I will speak only of the blessings which were conferred on Womanhood through the Holy Prophet.

Before Islam, Woman was treated as a chattel. No religion or civilization had as yet raised her to the status that should have been her birthright. She was regarded as an evil but necessary appendage, and she received the worst treatment of all from Christianity. The story of the Temptation in the

Book of Genesis, and the basic principle of the Church creed taken therefrom, damaged her position tremendously.

In dealing with the status of Woman, Islam and Christianity stand poles apart. The one has raised her from the lowest possible depths to a level equal to that of man, at a time when her degradation knew no limit; the other thrust her back to thraldom at a time when she was beginning to emerge from it under Roman civilization. This civilization was struggling to raise her status when Christianity came like an icy blast and nipped the efforts in the very bud. The statement, though historically accurate, will surprise many amongst those who are accustomed to listen to the very different story told by Christian writers. But if even Jesus does not seem to concern himself about the female sex, and if those who immediately followed him—and have since been looked upon as the builders of the Church, and filled with the Holy Ghost—did nothing to improve her condition, while their words and actions brought every odium on her; and if Christian States have continued this treatment for centuries, and, indeed until recent days, when Woman began to assert herself, how can they declare that Christianity brought an honourable position to Woman?

The Hebrew Law was unfavourable to her. The Divine command, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee," had the effect of reducing her to the position of a chattel in the house, and so she was, in Judaic society. On the other hand, it must be remembered that Jesus did not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it. Whenever something appeared to him as an abuse of the Law, he expressed his disapproval of it, and tried to reform it. But in the case of Woman his silence shows that the idea of ameliorating her lot never occurred to him, though the self-indulgence of his tribe was peculiarly damaging to womankind.

If Paganism supplied the idea of a suffering Deity and of a crucified Saviour, and the sad event in the life of Jesus

favoured their incorporation with Christianity, the legends of the Temptation in Genesis served as a beautiful connecting link between the two. It inspired the story of the Fall of Adam, and through him, the fall of the human race—a theory absolutely, and now admittedly, unknown to the Jews, but initiated by the writers of the Pauline literature to strengthen and explain the Pagan theory of redemption through blood. To that extent it acted well, but it was of no service to Woman. The whole blame of human perdition, by reason of this first sin, was laid at her door: "Adam was not deceived, but the Woman being deceived, was in the transgression." Woman consequently could not be in the good books of those who took these expressions as the Word of God and believed in the theory of the Fall of Adam. This explains the cruel attitude which the Early Fathers and the real builders of the Church adopted towards Woman, following, as they did, in the footsteps of St. Paul. In fact, her disgrace at the hands of these Fathers was the true and logical sequel to the Christian beliefs, of which the following is an illustration: "Do you know," says Tertullian, when addressing Women, "that you are each Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age; the guilt, of necessity, must live too. You are the devil's gateway; you are the unsealer of that tree; you are the first deserter of the Divine Law; you destroyed as easily God's image."

The Christian apologist of modern culture, while he sees in it mediæval savagery and wantonness, cannot rationally deny that "the pious aspersions" of the Father, were not without justification. The logic was simple and true. If it was believed that sin was a heritage and eternal condemnation its price—and so it is believed till to-day—then eternal condemnation has come through Woman; she opened the door of all human sufferings. She is "the organ of the devil," "a scorpion ever ready to sting," "the poisonous asp," "the

malice of the dragon." These are some of the blessings that Woman received from persons of exalted position in the Church, such as St. Bernard, St. Anthony, St. Jerome, St. Cyprian, and St. Paul, who seem to me to be at the bottom of it. His personal[1] grudge against the sex, in consequence of his suit being rejected by a Jewish young woman, the high priest's daughter, perhaps was responsible for it. Say what you will, if "sin in nature" is the foundation-stone of the sacramental religion, which Christianity has become—the principle of atonement and of the Divinity of Christ are mere corollaries of it, then Woman deserves all that has been said by these Fathers. Present-day culture may not tolerate it, but her real redemption lies only in exposing the falsity of these beliefs. And was not the Holy Prophet, even on this very point, the real benefactor of Woman, seeing that he gave the lie to this crude theology, and took exception to the theory of sin in nature? He declared that every child was born sinless, and that in the case of the Temptation, man and woman were not respectively the tempted and the tempter, but both of them equally suffered and were equally deceived by the evil agency.

Just at the time when the Christian Church was so outrageously trampling on womanhood, and the rest of the world was treating her no less cruelly, Muhammad came to save the situation. He raised Woman to such a height as she had never dreamed of before—a height which leaves her nothing higher for which to strive.

While the Christian Fathers were harping on the slogan that woman was made for man and not man for woman, Muhammad told the world that woman was the twin-half of man, in commenting upon the Qur-ánic verse, that revealed in the following words the great truth that man and woman had come from the same essence and were one and the same

[1] Epiph. *Hæ.*, xxx. 16, p. 14. *Islamic Review*, vol. xii, p. 232.

in that respect: "O people! be careful of (your duty to) your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same (kind) and spread from these two, many men and women; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, by whom you demand one of another (your rights), and (to) the ties of relationship; surely Allah ever watches over you." The Qur-án gave the name of *mohsina* to Woman, which meant that she was neither the "organ of the devil" nor his gateway, but a *rocky fortress against Satan*, a lighthouse of virtue and continence that alone can save man from shipwreck while tossing among the stormy waves of passion. The Bible says: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee," but Muhammad says: "Woman is the sovereign of your house." St. Paul may say: "Let the Woman learn in silence, without subjection, for I suffer not a Woman to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence"; but the Qur-án contradicts him when it says: "Woman has like rights with those of man,—the same is due to her as is due from her." She is not "a scorpion ever ready to sting," but "a garment of man as he is her garment" [1]; she is not the "instrument of iniquity," as these Christian Fathers call her, but, in the words of the Qur-án,[2] a fountain of love and affection. Let Jesus say to his mother: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"—put whatever construction you like on these words and come with any explanation you please, people in Christendom even to-day reflect this utterance of their Master in their actions—the affluence of sons go hand in hand with the indigence of mothers in the West—mothers are discarded and disregarded—but a Muslim leaves no effort undone to pay all respect and reverence to his mother, because his Prophet Muhammad tells him: "Paradise lies at the feet of a mother." Happy marriage may be a lottery in the West, as some assert, but it makes a wife, in a Muslim house, the

[1] Qur-án, ii. 187. [2] *Ibid.*, xxx. 21.

dearest, of friends, a counterpart of man susceptible to all healthy and salutary influences. It could not well be otherwise, seeing that we are bound to obey the Master who says: "The best of you are they who behave best to their wives." Again he says: "The best of you before God and His creation are those who are best in their own families, and I am the best to my family."

"One of the disciples inquired of the Apostle as to what treatment should be meted out to a wife. He answered: 'Give her to eat when you eat yourself, and clothe her when you clothe yourself; and do not slap her on the face nor abuse her, nor separate yourself from her in displeasure.'"

"Give your wife good counsel, and do not beat your noble wife like a slave."

"Admonish your wives with kindness."

"A Muslim must not hate his wife; and if he be displeased with one bad quality in her, then let him be pleased with another which is good."

Just a quarter of a century after the time when the council of Christian Fathers at Meccan were discussing whether any female could enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, and with great difficulty they had come to the conclusion that she might enter into Paradise, but that she would have to be sexless, the Qur-án brought the gospel to her in the following words:—

"Enter into Paradise, ye and your wives delighted."

"But whoso doth the things that are right, whether the male or female, and is a believer, whether male or female, they shall enter into Paradise."

"Whoso doth that which is right, whether male or female, him or her will we quicken to happy life."

When the world was doubtful whether any spiritual advancement was open to Woman at all, the Qur-án taught the following: "Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women,

and the obeying men and the obeying women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the patient men and the patient women, and the humble men and the humble women, and the almsgiving men and the almsgiving women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their private parts and the women who guard, and the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember—Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward."[1] It is only utter ignorance of Islam and blind prejudice against it that comes to the surface when our adverse critics assert that Woman, under Islam, does not possess a soul. It hardly needs any elaborate discussion to refute this piece of foolhardiness. If a Man possesses a soul, Woman must possess one also, seeing that both are, according to the teaching of the Qur-àn, of the same essence.

MARRIAGE ENNOBLED

Muhammad gave a new and noble meaning to the institution of marriage. He sanctified it by making it a channel for the working out of high morality and for developing that germ[2] of love and compassion which is embedded in the human breast. The spirit of sacrifice is the backbone of all noble passions; and marriage gives a natural impetus to it, and brings it to the surface. After marriage, man and woman live for each other and for their children. They make every sort of sacrifice for their comfort. Thus family life widens the heart and broadens the consciousness. We learn to feel and do for others as we do for ourselves, and the greater the number of the family, the more occasion there is for this sort of moral discipline. I am inclined to think that polygamy, if carried on in strict observance of the Muslim Law, would be a great help towards that end, though it must needs entail many troubles and hardships. For a man to be equal in his

[1] Qur-án, xxxiii. 35. [2] *Ibid.*, xxx. 21.

love and in his treatment towards his several wives is a tremendous task of an arduous nature, and if a person succeeds, he is certainly not an average person. But if he is unable to do so, he commits sin,[1] under the Qur-án, if he takes more than one wife. And in this respect, Muhammad again proves an ideal personality. None of his wives had any complaint of his being partial to another. He was, on the other hand, surprisingly impartial in his treatment of all of them. And there is nothing carnal in the fact of his having so many wives. His was a most abstemious life of starvation and want—a life which could hardly have aroused passions. He was in the prime of his life when he married first, a widow of forty years. He did not take another wife until the Lady Khadija, his first wife, died. He was then fifty-two years of age. Then he married a virgin, the Lady Ayesha. At this time he was compelled to wage war against his enemies, which thinned the ranks of his friends, who gave their lives for him, leaving behind widows, who surely needed shelter and protection. Then it was that the law of polygamy was promulgated, to meet this necessity; neither should it be forgotten that most of the widows who came under the protection of the Prophet as his wives had passed the age of connubial relations. There was no question of desire or of the flesh in these marriages. Rather, it created an occasion for the Prophet to show that a woman, who possesses no personal charms, has an equal claim on, and should receive an equal share of, all the regard and consideration of the husband—even if he be the husband of some handsome woman.

POLYGAMY

Monogamy should not be taken as a Christian verity. Polygamy was in vogue in Christendom only a few centuries ago,

[1] Qur-án, iv.

not only among the laity, but the clergy also. Every other religion and civilization has allowed it. Jesus undoubtedly was not himself a lawgiver, and did not say anything on the subject. But he followed the Mosaic law and was insistent on its observance. The law and practice of the house of Jacob encouraged polygamy, and that to an extent which must sound fantastic to a modern mind, seeing that a patriarch among the Israelites could afford to bring five hundred wives under his roof. Jesus tried, among other things, to reform the self-indulgence of his tribe, but polygamy did not occur to him as a matter for reformation, though freely practised by his own people. Monogamy was first made a matter of legislation in the West by the Emperor Justinian, a Roman and a pagan Jurist, but, like many other Roman virtues, it became something of a back number for many centuries under the onslaughts of Christianity.

Islam came to reform the abuses of the world at large, and took notice of polygamy as well. It brought it under drastic restrictions and made it next to an impossibility in ordinary cases. The institution, as such, was not without its use under special circumstances. A house with no children is a graveyard. The first marriage may prove barren for years, and if the wife is responsible for the misfortune, a second marriage would be the only thing in requisition in the case of those whose happiness remains incomplete without children. In India, such marriages take place often at the instance of the first wife herself. It was to meet such contingencies of an exceptional character that polygamy received countenance in Islam. If the females sometimes outnumber the males—and this occurs in and after a period of war—it furnishes another argument for bringing more than one wife under one roof, to ward off evil in its most heinous form. It was in the days of wars, when the number of women had increased in Medina, that the Qur-ánic verses allowing poly-

gamy under certain restrictions were revealed. The sexual instinct is, after all, a life tendency, and cannot become extinct. The curbing of the passions is unhealthy, and the institution of celibacy has always and everywhere created a spirit of moral leprosy. Men and women are entitled, under the demands of Nature, to claim companionship of each other in lawful wedlock, but promiscuous intermixture is pernicious to society. Is not polygamy—carried on, of course, with Muslim restriction—the only remedy under such circumstances? We do not advocate it—we resort to it only by way of remedy; and Islam can dispense with it without affecting its tenets.

Europe has, since the war, been facing the same problem. The war has left women outnumbering men in the West to an appalling extent. Unmarried life is unnatural and unhealthy. It is a sin, if sin means anything and everything that is damaging to human progress.

But has Christendom been purged of polygamy? Marriage, in its bald form, is after all a connection of man and woman. Our interest in the coming generation and the consciousness of paternity gives sanctity to the institution of marriage. Take it in its initial form, and the Christian in the West would appear to be more of a polygamist than the Muslim anywhere. The latter, in very rare cases (and, moreover, in a legalized form), does that which the former does unscrupulously and in an illegal form. But what an irony of fate! The former action, so healthy in its consequences, is branded as an offence which the law calls bigamy, while the latter, so flagrant and shameless in its methods, is practised with impunity, and the law takes no cognizance of it. Legislation should not succumb to sentimentality; its mission should be the betterment of human society and to contribute to the happiness of that society. There are two evils which the world, from the beginning, has never been able to remedy—the uncontrolled brutality of man when under the excitement of his passions,

and the weakness of a woman when she has become a victim thereto; and what is the result? Bastardy for the child, misery and shame for the mother. Has religion or civilization, in this matter, schemed out anything to remedy this double evil? Muslim lands are free from it. Why should the innocent children, who were not consulted by their parents as to their being brought into this world to a life of infamy, be debarred from inheriting the name and property of their fathers? England had, in a manner, to recognize "war babies," and thus give indirect countenance to polygamy. But that was a temporary measure. Humanitarian principles have come forward to provide "Houses of Rescue" and "Foundling Hospitals" to save these innocent victims of human depravity from misery and indigence, but what about the ignominy that stigmatizes their whole life and leaves their mothers in the lurch? Could they not have been saved from all this, if the mothers had been allowed by the law to hold the honourable position of a second wife, where the first marriage, for various reasons, could not accomplish the matrimonial purpose?

Polygamy was observed indiscriminately before Islam, as I said before, and there was no restriction as to the number of a man's wives. He could have as many as he wished. Islam regulated the number if special circumstances did unavoidably necessitate plurality of wives. There are certain contingencies in life where polygamy alone can check incontinence. The Muslim conception of evil is very vast. Islam regards it from various angles, and one of them is the hygienic angle. In connubial life, there arise occasions when man and woman should separate from each other for hygienic reasons. For instance, woman labours under certain disabilities, for a week, in every month. The days of pregnancy, and the time of suckling a child are further disabilities that would last at least for eighteen months. In the interest of

the health of the child and of the mother, Islam strongly recommends that husband and wife should not share beds under these conditions. In this respect Muhammad advised us to exercise control over our passions and suggested various ways which might help us, of which fasting was one. But in no case would he leave any loophole for misconduct. He would rather allow the husband to have the company of another wife than violate hygienic laws or pursue the course of incontinence; and if we observe these injunctions strictly, the number of wives will come to four.

An advocate of equality between man and woman would demand polyandry—plurality of husbands. Apart from the fact that woman, and not man, labours under the disability aforesaid, there are other reasons for prohibiting polyandry, hygienic as well as such as will help to proper bringing up of children. For example, the ascertaining of parentage is essential on each birth, to ensure the performance of natural obligations as the rearing of children. In polygamy we can ascertain maternity and paternity both, but in the case of polyandry we cannot ascertain the latter.

Moreover, all kinds of venereal disease follow polyandric connection. Some of the hilly districts in the Himalayan mountains, where polyandry is observed, are notorious homes for such diseases. It is now an established fact that these maladies come from woman. She, and not man, becomes the first victim of it. Connection with more than one man brings disease to the female sex.

SLAVERY ABOLISHED

Religion after religion appeared, and civilization after civilization came, but no one cared to take notice of the slave class like women. Muhammad was the first to take commiseration on that abused class; he abolished all the different forms

of slavery, excepting war captivity, and he laid down laws to ameliorate the condition of those in war bondage, and laid down principles of treatment to be meted out to them on such equal terms that it nearly banished slavery in his own time. He raised the status of the slave to such an extent that the slave of to-day became the king of to-morrow.[1]

DRINK AND GAMBLING

Among his various reforms one may make mention of "drink and gambling" which are still the pest of humanity. To-day the Western world has entered on the campaign against drink, but Muhammad saw the evil, both of drink and games of chance, at a time when no one saw anything wrong in either of them, and it was Muhammad who purged one-fourth of humanity of their evil consequences.

RESPECT FOR LEARNING AND LOGIC

Muhammad was the first teacher of a religion that made religion and science helpmates one to another. He abolished dogma and made reason and logic the only test of religious truth.[2] There is nothing in his teachings that can insult intelligence or cannot meet the demand of rationality.

Muhammad placed the acquirement and cultivation of knowledge even before the worship of God. In his judgment, exploring in the realms of Nature with a view to bringing the various manifestations of Nature to subserve humanity was the real glorification of God. He gave such an impetus to learning, that it brought forth, within a century after him, a tremendous upheaval of various material sciences in Muslim lands. In pre-Islamic days, man worshipped every manifestation of Nature from an egg-shell to stars, clouds, etc.

[1] See App. II.

[2] See chapter, The Ideal Expounder.

Muhammad preached subservience of Nature to man, and with one stroke the gods of yesterday became the servants and handmaids of to-day. In this respect the Prophet says the following:—

RESPECT FOR REASON AND LEARNING

To listen to the words of the learned and to instil into others the lessons of Science is better than religious exercises.

The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr.

He who leaves home in search of knowledge walks in the path of Allah.

The acquisition of knowledge is a duty incumbent on every Muslim, male and female.

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

UNIVERSALITY OF TEACHINGS

There are so many religions in the world, and yet every man is convinced that his is the one religion from God, and consequently the world-religion, and claims universality for its teaching. The Christian missionary is especially vociferous upon this point.

Universal religion is a possibility, especially when all parts of the world are, as to-day, in close communication with each other. But there is an enormous amount of doctrinal disparity among the existing religions of the world, and the world-religion should bring these doctrinal differences within its range. It must give judgment on each point of difference.

It must give reason for the tenets that it propounds for acceptance, and expose the falsity of such as it rejects. In this connection I may speak of certain of the great differentiating doctrines that have created the various existing schools of religious thought.

To begin with, some religions speak of God, and make Him the central figure of a creed; there are others that make no mention of the Deity in the whole code of their teachings. Buddha and Confucius preached religions of ethics, and dispensed with God. Again, among the believers in God there are those who worship and obey Him on lines said to be revealed by Him to humanity, and there are others who believe that it is for themselves to find out the ways of God. In other words, they do not believe in the necessity of revelation from God, but hold that their own conscience, in its most advanced development, mirrors the Divine Will. Such are the Theists, in London; and the Brahmos, in India. Again, those who believe in the Divine Revelation—the "Peoples of the Book," in the words of the Qur-án—may be divided into two categories: those who believe that the human soul, on severing its association with the body, never comes again into an earthly frame, and those who maintain that the soul transmigrates and remains earth-bound. It leaves one body and enters into another. This is the doctrine of the Reincarnation of the Soul. Moreover, there is a very great difference of conception of the religious verities, in every class of thought. The World-Religion must contain something in it to meet every demand. It must satisfy every question that arises from whatever school of thought it springs, and all this should come from the Teacher of the religion himself. I have read the whole Bible, and I find nothing in it capable of refuting such tenets of other religions as go against its teachings. For instance, I find nothing in the Bible that could satisfy these Reincarnationists. Jesus, too,

is silent on the subject. How, then, can he claim universal allegiance? Again, every man has his own prophet, whom he respects. There may be something wrong in the teaching ascribed to him, yet he has got a sort of personal hold on his followers that keeps them attached to the religion of the Master, though it may not be free from error.

This is just the condition of the Western mind. The lovable character of Jesus—and it is admittedly so—is a binding force, and yet millions of Christians do not believe in traditional Christianity. The world-religion must say something to remove the anomaly. Muhammad solves the problem when he declares that all the teachers, with Jesus among them, came from God. They brought the Truth but it has become mingled with folk-lore. Muhammad is the Master Teacher in this respect. His religion is sufficient and exhaustive. Whatever has been taught elsewhere, if right, meets with his approval and intelligent advocacy and support, and if wrong, is rejected on a rational basis. Similarly he deals with every phase of human mind and character, and brings them all within the scope of his teachings.[1] All other Revealed Books are wanting in this respect, and most of all are the teachings of Jesus. It is this thoroughness in the range of his teaching that makes him the Ideal Teacher of Religion.

A LIVEABLE RELIGION

In this connection I would speak of one thing, which, in my humble opinion, is the core of religion, the only object for the accomplishment of which religion came. It is the development of the human mind, the conversion of our consciousness into a true conscience. We have the animal in us, and we have to

[1] I will deal with this subject *in extenso* in my book, the *Ethics of the Qur-an.*

sublimate it into a divine being, reflecting divine morals. No religion extant is without something to achieve that object. But Muhammad teaches us the shortest and surest way. Where other religions demand from us the observance of rigid ascetic penances, and the putting aside of our mundane duties if we are interested in the cultivation of our mystical faculties, Muhammad wants us to remain in the world, but live the worldly life in a way that may carry us to our goal. We need not divide our week into God's day and man's day. Every minute of our life belongs to God, and should be spent accordingly. For this purpose, Muhammad wants us to say our prayers at least five times a day, to commune with the Deity after every important interval of our daily life, in words the bearing of which may spiritualize our doings within the periods intervening between those prayers. Muhammad wants us to lead the family life, and teaches us the way to make it a nursery of good morals and spirituality. The chief problem in our life is that of our bestial passions and carnal desires. Muhammad does not suggest their killing, as has been done in many religions. He teaches their control; we have to train them in such a way that the low passions imbue high morality and generate spirituality. "Hand in action and heart with God" is the Persian proverb which becomes reality in Islam. In this respect, again I remark that Muhammad was the first to evolve such a system.

CHAPTER IX

THE IDEAL EXPOUNDER

THERE are certain things in every religion which are articles of faith; for example, belief in God, in angels, in revelation, in prophethood, in the day of resurrection and in the accountability for our present actions in the life after death; these are essential parts of almost every creed, but they have been forced upon the world in the form of dogma. No attempt was ever made, before Islam, to explain them on a rational basis. Miracles were the only method of substantiating their belief—miracles accompanied by the argument that inasmuch as these doctrines were taught by miracle-working personalities, they consequently were above doubt. But when the miracles themselves went by the board, the result was a veritable bankruptcy[1] of faith. I do not propose to go at any length into the subject in this place; I simply remark that miracles have always acted as a cogent factor in aiding faith in the times of their worker, but they soon become ancient history—take on a legendary aspect and lose their hold on posterity.

[1] Dean Inge says: "If the whole of Nature is purposive, it is not likely that we can discern special purposes operating in particular cases. The laws of Nature are, on this hypothesis, purposive laws, like all other laws; and if they are the laws of an omnipotent and omniscient Being, we should expect them to act regularly and uniformly. A machine that needs tinkering is a faulty machine, but a machine that has no intelligence behind it can hardly be called a machine at all.

"All that science has done to establish the uniformity and regularity of Nature's operations tells heavily in favour of the existence of a single creative intelligence. . . ."

Moreover, we possess the faculty of reason. It is a gift of God, and must, as such, be utilized to the full. It must be permitted to assert itself; we cannot be supposed to accept everything at the expense of our intelligence. Religion should not be a burden to us, as the Qur-án says,[1] that we cannot intelligently bear. The Qur-án is teeming with words like the following, that make the concluding part of such verses as refer the reader to the various manifestations of Nature in proof of the various Qur-ánic truths: "There are signs in this for a people who understand (xxx. 24), who reflect (xxi. 24), who believe (xvi. 64), who listen (xvi. 65), who ponder (xvi. 67), who mind (vi. 127), who know (vii. 32), who are righteous (x. 6), who are patient and grateful" (xiv. 5).

The Qur-án appeals to reason, understanding, patient reflecting and pondering, knowledge and mindfulness, and righteousness. It neither makes dogmatic assertions nor plays upon miracles. The demands of Reason, in face of these beliefs, began to be felt, even in the days of Jesus. A certain Sadducee would not believe in the life after death, and demanded some rational proof of the resurrection. It may be that the average level of intelligence at that time was incapable of comprehending a rational explanation of higher things, and Jesus consequently had to reply thus: "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living."[2] These words, however, would carry no conviction to a modern sceptic, who would discover in it a logical fallacy; for the argument involves an assumption which itself needs proof.

Heaven and hell are part and parcel of every religion. A religion without belief in the life after death is of no value,

[1] Holy Qur-án, ii. 286.

[2] Matt. xxii. 31-32.

but belief in heaven and hell is also a stumbling-block to many. It has created atheism. The child in man was quite satisfied with the geography of heaven and hell, but when reason and science began to assert themselves it aroused scepticism. The Copernican system tore into shreds the Christian map of heaven and hell. It affected that creed in other ways, and for this reason persecution of science and culture was rife for a time. This state of things went on for several centuries until such persecution was resented and a new attitude was adopted. It was argued that religion and science were two different things and could be placed in the human breast, as it were, within two separate water-tight compartments. This was well enough for a while, but it could not stand against the onward march of culture, and the Church in the West was compelled to find some way of compromise between religion and science. But false theology cannot go with true science. On the other hand, the modern spirit of tolerance allowed people to open their minds and say fearlessly the thoughts that were lurking at the back of their minds, concerning the falsity of the so-called religious verities, and the frank statement that resulted disturbed the conscience and the faith of thousands in religion of every kind. The only exception was, and is, in the world of Islam. From the very beginning, Islam has marched shoulder to shoulder with culture. After the coming of Islam the world witnessed a tremendous upheaval in science and learning. The Muslims are the pioneers of modern culture, but Islam has never seen unbelief in its truths in the ranks of its followers. That is because Muhammad gave his religion on rational lines. If prophets come to strengthen their followers' belief in things they teach to others under Divine Inspiration, is not Muhammad the only personality who has saved the faith of millions?

The Qur-án's method is different and more in line with

the requirements of the day, for it adopts the same rational course in explaining its teachings as has to-day enabled modern scientists to believe in the existence of some First Intelligent Cause. This has kept atheism at bay in Islam. For instance, in speaking of the resurrection, the Book of God appeals to Nature for testimony. It refers to the continuity of life and order observable everywhere, without any gap; it also asserts that the cessation of growth, commonly called death, that suddenly occurs in all sentient things, is only a transition from one order to another in the evolutionary stages of its course, when the vivifying principle becomes latent for a period called *Burzakh* in Arabic, which literally means inactivity. Things die in this way and rise again; the autumn and the spring illustrate the same in the vegetable kingdom. In this strain, the Qur-án says, after referring to those who disbelieve in the resurrection: "They say, What, when we are dead and have become dust? That is a far (from probable) return; We (God) know indeed what the earth diminishes of them, and with Us is a writing that *preserves. . . .*" "Do they then not look up to heaven above them, how We have made it and adorned it and it *has no gaps*, . . . And the earth, We have made it plain and cast in it mountains and We have made to grow therein of all beautiful kinds, and We send down *from the cloud water abounding* in good, then We cause *to grow thereby gardens and the grain that is reaped. . . .* And the tall *palm trees having spadices closely set one above another*, A sustenance for the servants and We give life thereby to a dead land; *thus is the rising*" (l. 6-11).

The Book again refers to the phenomena of the fire coming out of wood in order to prove the continuity and preservation of things when they pass from one order to another, or when they resume their former shape. It says in chap. xxxvi.: "Says he: Who will give life to the bones when they are

rotten (79), Say, He will give life to them Who brought them into existence at first, and He is Cognizant of all creation (80), He Who has made for you the fire (to burn) from the green tree, so that with it you may kindle (fire) (81), Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth, able to create the like of them? Yea and He is the Creator (of them all) the Knower."

A green tree is the combination of sunshine and certain gases. It has rightly been called "bottled sunshine," while the process of burning fire is a process under which sunshine separates itself from those other gases which combined with it to make a tree. Science also tells us that when a piece of wood burns it gives back all that it took in its making from the sun and from other things. No ingredient of wood suffers in quality and quantity when it resumes its former shape at its burning. The same amount of sunshine will come back as the tree took in at its making. This is an apt illustration of how substances remain intact in their essence, though the shapes into which they become transferred suffer destruction.

If the resurrection of things consisted in the reunion of elements after their decomposition, it could not excite any doubt. But it is the idea of the continuity of individual consciousness after death that needed explanation, and the Qur-án meets the need in the words above quoted. In short, every doctrine taught by the Qur-án is confirmed in it by reference to the phenomena of the universe. If Science to-day believes in the working of One Single Mind behind the scene, and accepts no plurality of gods—whether they be the forces of Nature (which only the atheist will accept), or the man-made deities of a polytheist, it is because the forces of Nature work complementarily to further the same end, and the Qur-án has foreshadowed these truths and expounded these mysteries in a way comprehensible alike by culture and illiteracy. For example, the Book says the following against Pluralism:

"Nay, He Who created the heavens and the earth, and sent down for you water from the cloud; then We cause to grow thereby beautiful gardens; it is not possible for you that you should make the trees thereof to grow. Is there a god with Allah? Nay! they are a people who deviate.

"Or, Who made the earth a resting-place, and made in it rivers, and raised on it mountains, and placed between the two seas a barrier. Is there a god with Allah? Nay! most of them do not know.

"Or, Who answers the distressed one when he calls upon Him and removes the evil, and He will make you successors in the earth. Is there a god with Allah? Little is it that you mind.

"Or, Who guides you in utter darkness of the land and the sea, and Who sends the winds as good news before His mercy. Is there a god with Allah? Exalted be Allah above what they associate (with Him).

"Or, Who originates the creation, then reproduces it, and Who gives you sustenance from the heaven and the earth. Is there a god with Allah? Say: Bring your proof if you are truthful.

"Say: No one in the heavens and the earth knows the Unseen but Allah; and they do not know when they shall be raised.

"Nay, their knowledge respecting the hereafter is slight and hasty, Nay, they are in doubt about it, Nay, they are quite blind to it."

Before concluding this aspect of the subject, I say one thing: if the order of religion is to inform man of his God and guide him to conduct himself in accordance with the scheme of the Creative Agency (seeing that he himself forms an important part of that scheme), it seems to me the highest duty of a Divine Messenger to explain to us the truths of religion in a way that may appeal to human minds of every

shade of culture. Materialism has sapped the very life of religion in the West for want of true logic on one side, and because of the domination of dogma on the other. Science appeared in the nick of time to stem the ever-increasing wave of atheism that had overwhelmed Christianity. Science, in fact, did that which seems to have been left undone by Jesus and others, if we believe their record. Yet Muhammad did it. The Qur-án revealed the same identical proof of Godhood that Science has since discovered in the book of Nature.

It would be a wide departure from the subject if I essayed to quote the Qur-án on the religious verities that I have mentioned. I would, however, say a word or two as to how the Qur-án proves the existence of God. Modern theology advances as its chief argument the design theory, the purposefulness of things; the complementary relations existing between the various entities that go together to work out the same end, and the Reign of the Law that brings everything in Nature under its rule. Science has also come forward, as I said before, to support Theology in this respect; but the Qur-án has anticipated both in advancing all these arguments. For instance, the Qur-án sums up the Design theory, the purposefulness of things and Monism in one section: "And your God is one God, *there is no God but He*, He is Rahman and Raheem"—*i.e.* He Who *anticipates your need and looks to it beforehand*—" and Who out of His kindness rewards all your works so many fold. Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships that run in the sea with that which profits men, and the water that Allah sends from the clouds, *these give life with it to the earth* after its death and *spread in it* (all kinds) *of animals*, and the changing of the winds and the clouds made subservient between the heaven and the earth, these are signs for a people who understand."[1] Ponder over

[1] Holy Qur-án, ii. 163—164.

the lines italicized. They refer to design and purpose. The alternation of the day and the night, which causes changes in the weather, affects the atmosphere and changes the course of the winds, and thus brings rainy seasons and dry weather in a desired order; then the withering of Nature and its resuscitation; and all with the life of man himself depending on the peculiar bending of the earth-sphere towards its orbit. Is all this mere haphazard? Are they not all links of the same chain? Everything working in its own sphere and yet co-operating with others towards the same end—"These give life to the earth after its death." These are scientific truths of recent discovery. Surely the Qur-án must be the Book from God, if it discloses these secrets of Nature at a time when ignorance and superstition were at their height in their rule over the human mind. Is it all meaningless? Let us cast our eyes over all that is outspread before us in the realm of Nature, and we shall not find therein a single thing which is unconnected with our own existence; but all disclosing one design, one purpose and one hand behind the whole universe. Again the Book says: "Those who remember Allah . . . and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth (say); Our Lord—Who looks to our sustenance and maintenance—Thou hast *not created all this in vain.* Glory be to Thee."[1]

Those things which did not admit of any intelligible explanation until yesterday have to-day been found to be the source of a great real purpose. It is true that milliards upon milliards of things exist which yet baffle human reason as to the object for which they have been created; but all that has been discovered so far has been established to be with purpose. Now if I have come to know, even in the words of the Holy Qur-án, that the present arrangement of the Solar System, so far as our planet goes, is definitely with purpose in its existence and movements, and that every atom in the material world is

[1] Holy Qur-án, iii. 190.

essential to the well-being of this arrangement, then, by a process of inductive reasoning, I have every right to suppose that every object in Nature admits of my using it for my benefit—it is a different matter altogether to know in what way I can best avail myself of these advantages—and is subservient to me, under the ordinance of some Mind which I call Allah. Again, the Book says: "Allah is He Who created the heavens and the earth and sent down water from the clouds, then brought with it fruit as a sustenance for you, and he has made the ships subservient to you, that they might run their course in the sea by His command. And *He has made the rivers subservient to you*, the sun and the moon, pursuing their courses. And He *has made subservient to you the night and the day.* And He gives *you of all that you ask.*"[1] Mark the italicized words of the quotation. Imagine all the advance we have made in supplying things to serve our needs and comfort. But did you ever think of a contrivance, or scheme out a design, in working out which you did not find the necessary aids already existing in Nature? How, then, can you call it purposeless? Concerning the Reign of the Law in the Universe—that means the subordination of Matter to Mind and consequently its pre-existence—the Book says: "And to Him doth obey what is in the heavens and the earth." "And a sign to them is the night; we draw forth from it the day, then lo, they are in the dark; and the sun runs on to a term appointed for it; and that is the ordinance of the Mighty and the Knowing. And as for the moon, we have ordained for it stages, till it becomes again as an old dry palm-branch. Neither is it allowable to the sun that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day. All float on in a sphere."[2]

[1] Holy Qur-án, xiv. 32-34.

[2] *Ibid.*, xxxvi. 37-40. The word "float" is very expressive; it refers to the liquid nature of the substance in which the various planets, etc., move.

These words bring the whole Solar System under a Divine Ordinance, referring, in proof of such ordination, to that regularity observed by all the luminaries with such mathematical precision as to obviate the least chance of collision; though many of them have, till now, been found irregular in their course. I will take the earth for illustration. Our planet is the outcome of the solar heat, which, passing through the various processes of evolution, has assumed its present shape. Then, by the law of gravity, it began to follow an elliptical path round the sun, with its axis inclined to its orbit. Could it not follow a circular course? Why did its axis make an angle of 23½ degrees instead of, say, 67½ at its tangent? The axis could have as well stood parallel to its orbit. If the present situation was not without purpose, the earth could have assumed any form or course. If the law of gravity confined it to its revolution around the sun, what was that law, "evolved from accidence," which made the earth stand on its orbit with its axis inclined? What a contradiction in terms—law and accident; and still we willingly subject our reasoning to this ridiculous anomaly, merely to avoid belief in Divine Ordination.[1]

And in this respect I wish to join issues with any who shall make the claim of universality for the religion to which he belongs. If he wishes to convert me to his faith, he must first disprove the doctrines and principles of my creed, and next, present, in a form consistent with human reason, the tenets which he wishes to inculcate in me; and all this from his Revealed Book. I need not go to a God Who has been dumb Himself and Who needs my help to advocate His cause. Let Christian missionaries produce arguments to prove the existence of God, first from the words of Jesus, and then to give some rational proof of his divinity, atonement and sacraments—and that in his own words. Let the Lord of traditional

[1] *The Threshold of Truth*, by the same author.

Christianity make out his own case, without the help of St. Paul and others who paganized his simple faith. Moreover, every non-Christian has his own beliefs that are contrary to Christian beliefs. These, too, must be refuted by Jesus himself before he can claim others' allegiance. For the sake of argument, a person believes in the reincarnation of souls; but does not believe in the necessity of Divine Revelation, and in Prophethood, nor in angels, nor in the resurrection, nor in a future existence. He, on the other hand, believes in the eternity of matter and in its co-existence with God. I have summed up here some of the differentiating tenets between various religions of the Empire. Is there any material in the whole Bible for destroying these disbeliefs so as to prepare the way for Christianity, seeing that the destruction of the old order must precede the construction of the new?

There is nothing in the words of Jesus or his disciples, including that half-logician St. Paul, to meet the demand. Why should so much money be wasted on Foreign Missions? If others advance rationality and intelligence to substantiate their doctrines, then meet them on their own ground.

The failure of foreign missions even among the uncultured classes, and the spread of Islam even among people of learning and science, as here in England, for instance, is at first sight a puzzling phenomenon; but here is one of the answers to the riddle. Come to the Qur-án and Muhammad, and you will find logic and reasoning and constant reference to Nature all round, in explanation and illustration of the principles it teaches, and of the errors it rejects. Muhammad knew nothing of any non-Semitic religion, and yet the Qur-án deals thoroughly with the subject of the Reincarnation of the Soul,[1] and advances reasons to meet every phase of the doctrine in chap. xxxvi and elsewhere. Again, take the question of Divine Revelation. The Qur-án deals with this subject beautifully

[1] See the *Reincarnation of the Soul*, by the same author.

and treats exhaustively, on a rational basis, of all the phases of the doctrine, in the chapter called The Bee, *e.g.* Is revelation a necessity? why Divine Revelation has been given over and over again to various nations and countries; why the necessity for the revelation of the Qur-án, in spite of the pre-existence of other Revealed Books; the why, the where, the when and the how of Divine Revelation and its finality, and why we must keep to certain books of God, when there is so much material before us from which we might make our choice. Again, it is asked that even if, as the Qur-án declares, the previous revelations had become adulterated, could we not still separate the truth from the adulterated mass? Such are the various thoughts that arise in the minds of thoughtful people, and some of them are of quite modern growth. Yet the Qur-án deals with them in the clearest terms. I have dealt with the subject thoroughly in my book, *The Necessity of Revelation*, but the limit of the space in these pages bar me from reproducing some of its contents here.

CHAPTER X

THE IDEAL EXEMPLAR

MUHAMMAD is the best exemplar and, I may say, the only Prophet who himself worked out all the principles he taught to others. There is not a single ordinance or injunction in the Qur-án that he did not act upon. We read homilies and sermons elsewhere, we find idealistic and unpractical theories of morality and ethics, but we fail to find them practised by their own teachers. Muhammad is the only noble exception to this rule. Whatever he taught to others, he practised himself.

It should not be forgotten that a potentiality is no proof of actuality. Even negative virtues, especially in teachers of morality, are no virtues at all. They cost them nothing, neither are they of any assistance to those who need practical illustrations of moral lessons. We may read to others homilies of forgiveness and sermons of meekness, but lip-teaching in itself furnishes no proof that we possess the morals we teach to others. Words converted into actions alone can show that we possess moral virtues. Moreover, how can we teach others what we have not experienced ourselves? A man must face the hardest trials of life like Jesus and Muhammad before he attempts to teach others a lesson of patience and forbearance. Jesus, however, could not find the proper occasions necessary to mould various other moralities into practical shape like Muhammad.

In fact, one who has not experienced changes in life cannot

be, in every respect, a perfect model for others' imitation. Every moral quality requires certain given conditions for its display; and unless they present themselves in a person as enabling him thus to practise a certain morality, he cannot be credited with them. Adversity and prosperity in life are both necessary to the revelation of different moralities.

From orphan to king, Muhammad passed through many different stages of life. Events of diverse nature arose in the course of his career which demanded the manifestation of various characters. At every step he was weighed, but was never found wanting. We need a perfect model suitable to our needs in our several walks of life, and the life of the sacred Prophet in itself eloquently promises such a model. A king, a statesman, a warrior, a general, a lawgiver, a judge, a conqueror, a persecuted fugitive, a tradesman, a friend, a son, a father, a husband, a neighbour—all these characters are mirrored in most beautiful colours in his life. It is not through his sermons and teachings that we have to make our estimate of his character or teaching, but through his actions and deeds. In this respect Muhammad is the only solitary noble example in history. How can any other personality be taken as an ideal and a universal model for the human race if his own life has not been of a universal character? Jesus is no example to others in various walks of life, leave apart his being ideal, and he is not decidedly so in its higher avenues.

For example, forgiveness requires given conditions for its exhibition, in the absence of which no one can fairly claim to have fulfilled it. In the first place let us suppose that a person is persecuted ruthlessly by his enemies; and in the second, that his enemies fall and the change of circumstances places them at his mercy; and in third that he possesses the power to give them the punishment they rightly deserve. Mercy, like forgiveness, can be shown only by him who finds others at his mercy. The mere preaching of mercy is

no proof, or even any indication, that the person so preaching really possesses that quality, unless he is in a position to show mercy. Moreover, a persecutor and a tormentor would regard forgiveness as an insult to himself if it came from his helpless victim. Jesus on the cross prayed for forgiveness for his tormentors. It shows the beauty of his heart. He, however, was situated in circumstances which were very far from constituting the necessary condition for the display of the quality of mercy. He could neither vanquish his enemy nor were they at his feet craving mercy. In sacred history there is only one noble example which has the three conditions precedent for the manifestation of forgiveness, and that example was Muhammad. Consider his triumphal entry into Mecca. Arabia lay prostrate at his feet, and Mecca, the stronghold of opposition, was at his mercy. He could have cut off the heads of everyone there, those implacable enemies of his who gave him no quarter, who forced him to leave his native land and seek shelter among strangers; who held him up to senseless ridicule and cruel scorn. Muhammad would have been quite justified if he had punished them. Many of the Hebrew prophets did punish their enemies, and severely. Ramchandra and Krishna, the prophets and gods of the Hindoos, were relentless to their conquered foes. But the moral attribute of Forgiveness, which had never, till then, received its full revelation in the history of religion, would have remained in abeyance, perhaps for ever, but for Muhammad.

"The personal element never entered into his actions at all. He rejected every token of personal homage, and declined all regal authority; and when, at last, his haughty enemies appeared, humbled, before him, he asked what treatment they could expect at his hand." The Quraish, though cruel and callous themselves, knew full well the compassionate nature of the Prophet. They cried out: "Thou art a noble brother and a noble cousin." Whereto the Prophet responded:

"There shall be no reproach against you this day; go: ye are free."[1] Among them was Hinda, the daughter of the Arab Chief Utba, the principal instrument of the cruel persecution to which the Prophet and his friends had been subjected for full thirteen years. Her enmity for the Prophet was not less than that of her father. She went so far as to chew the very liver of Hamza, the Uncle of the Prophet, when the former fell in battle with the Meccans. Now, being afraid to face the Prophet, she came before him with a veil on her face to avoid identification. The Prophet recognized her at once, but did not even hint at the painful incident.[2] What could be a better proof of a forgiving and forgetting nature cultivated in the companion of the Prophet by his precept and example than the fact that this same lady afterwards became the mother of the first ruling Muslim Dynasty? I refer to the Ommayad. Another arch-enemy of the Prophet was Abu-Sufyán, who took a leading part in all the expeditions against him. He it was who spoke evil of Muhammad in the court of Heraclius. Wherefore he did not dare to come before Muhammad without someone to intercede for him. Abbás came with him, but the Prophet needed no intercession. Abu-Sufyan was not only granted an unconditional pardon, but it was also proclaimed that whosoever would take refuge in the house of Abu-Sufyán should consider himself safe.[3] Habbar-bin-Al-Aswad, another enemy of the Prophet, who, in a way, was responsible for the death of Zainab, Muhammad's daughter, thought of fleeing to Persia for his life at the conquest of Mecca; but instead, he came to the Prophet and addressed him thus:—

"O Prophet of God, I wanted to flee away to Persia, but thy mercy and thy gentle and compassionate nature have kept me back; whatsoever thou has heard of me is true. I

[1] Bukhari, Book Fath-i-Mecca. [2] Bukhari.
[3] Bukhari, Fath-i-Mecca.

know what I have done. I come to thee now to confess my wrongs."

He received his pardon.[1]

Ikrama, the son of Abu-Jihl, the most implacable and inveterate enemy of the Prophet, who, like his father, was one of the chief persecutors of the Muslims, fled to Yamen at the Conquest of Mecca. His wife went after him and brought him back to the Prophet, and before Ikrama had come near the Prophet or had uttered a word in supplication for pardon, the Prophet, at first glimpse of him, rose and went forward to receive him, and said: "How welcome is your coming, O emigrant!" Search the pages of history and the archives of every civilization, old and new, and you would find no other example of one who through his own actions could give such practical illustration of the morality he taught to others.

And here I may refer to Muhammad's abolition of blood-vengeance, which was practised, and indeed encouraged, by the pre-Islamic customs of the Arabs. If a murder was committed, it was to be avenged by blood, even after two or three generations. Ibn-Rabi was a cousin of the Prophet. He was confided, in his infancy, to the care of a family of the Bani-Laith. The child was cruelly killed by some of the tribe of Huzail, but the blood was not yet avenged, and the right of doing so went to the Prophet. In his last "sermon on the mount" he said, among other things:

"*Henceforth the vengeance of blood practised in the days of Jahiliyat* (ignorance) *is prohibited; and all blood-feud abolished, commencing with the murder of Ibn-Rabi', son of Harith, son of Abd-ul-Muttalib.*"

If the Qur-án gives us, on one side, an exhaustive anatomy of ethics, and deals with the stern and soft sides of morality, the life of the Prophet, on the other, mirrors them all in actual colours. From an orphan to a king he passed

[1] Isaba.

through every shade and vicissitude of life; he performed every duty of life, and thus became the best exemplar. In him you find a child, a young man, an elderly man, a son, a brother, a husband, a neighbour, a playmate, a soldier, an army commander, a conqueror, a persecuted fugitive, a tradesman, a king, a judge, a man in adversity and in prosperity. Varied as these positions are, you will find in him the same man from beginning to end, a thorough gentleman, to use the English phrase; always unchangeable and unchanged in his temperament, in his dealings, in his general mode of life. What then can be said of the calibre of those other teachers who could not set themselves above the dead-level of ordinary life? We may follow any walk in life; we may come to face any contingency or any circumstance, but we shall always find something in the words and deeds of Muhammad for our guidance; we shall find there a light to show us the right way when we are groping in the darkness. And we find something else in Muhammad. He does not leave us rigidly defined, cut-and-dried ways which we must follow slavishly. He encourages our personal judgment. He gives us hints relating to various contingencies of life based upon broad moral principles, and we may act according to circumstances, in their light.

His life is an eloquent commentary on the Qur-án. We need not go to the commentators for their exposition of the various ordinances and injunctions given therein; because we read them in the very actions of the Prophet. Every virtue recommended, every evil forbidden in the Book, finds illustration in his actions, to which, indeed, Ayesha, his wife, would refer when asked to explain any Qur-ánic verses dealing with our daily life; she would, in like manner, read some Qur-ánic verses when asked about the ways of the Prophet on some particular occasion; and most commentators on the Qur-án follow the same course. They refer to the words and

deeds of the Prophet in illustration of the precepts of the Book, which contains upwards of five hundred ordinances and injunctions, every one of them with its illustration in the life of the Holy Prophet.

The cases I have just cited when speaking of forgiveness beautifully illustrate as well the verse in the action of the Prophet. Again, for the emancipation of the slaves, the Qur-án ordered: "For the love of Allah, give away your wealth in freeing those enemies whom you have captured in war."[1] In this verse, the Qur-án taught a practical way to "love your enemy," and Muhammad was the foremost of his followers in acting upon this injunction. I can multiply illustration after illustration on this score. But I will quote here the rendering of only such Qur-ánic verses into the action of the Holy Prophet as demand exceptional strength of character for their observance.

KEEPING OF PROMISE

"*The Believers are . . . those who are keepers . . . of their Covenants.*"[1] "*And fulfil the promise.*"[2] The world would have been different if the injunction would have been given the full effect. But in the Prophet we find a practical verity of it to its perfection. I have cited some instances on pp. 85-87, which should be taken as a lesson by the Christian Governments in respecting the treaties they make every day, and which they honour through breaches. Muhammad as a ruler also enters into treaties with his enemies; they ask him to consent to such terms that are most unfavourable even to his Mission; he accepts them and observes them under circumstances when the Western political conscience does not feel perturbed in breaking covenants. In the battle of Badr, the numerical strength of the Muslims was exceedingly small. Two of his companions remained behind, and the

[1] Holy Qur-án, xxiii. 8. [2] *Ibid.*, v. 1.

enemy intercepted them on their way, but released them on the promise that they would not joint the Prophet. They reached his camp, but were returned when they related of their promise, though every man was indispensable.[1]

DOING OF JUSTICE

Not less difficult than keeping promise is the doing of justice in case where one of the parties concerned happens to belong to the adverse camp. But the Qur-án says: "Surely Allah enjoins doing of justice."[2] "Let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably; act equitably, that is nearer to piety."[3] And Muhammad observes it.

A woman belonging to the tribe of Makhzum was found guilty of theft; and her relations requested Usama-bin Zaid, for whom the Prophet had much regard, to intervene and entreat the Prophet to release her. The Prophet said: "O Usama, do you mean to come to me and intercede against the Laws of God?" Then the Prophet convened a meeting and thus addressed them: "Nations which have preceded you have been wiped off the face of the earth, for the one reason only, that they imposed punishment on the poor and relaxed the laws in favour of the rich. I swear by God that if Fatima, my daughter, were to be found guilty of theft, then I would have her hands cut."[4]

On the eve of his death the Prophet proclaimed that if he owed any money to anyone, that person should demand it from him: if he ever had hurt the property and life of any man, then his own life and property were at that man's disposal; that he should take revenge therefor on him in this world. The whole congregation was silent. There was only one who rose and claimed the payment of a few *dirhems*, which were paid off there and then.[5]

[1] See p. 87. [2] Holy Qur-án, xvi. 90. [3] *Ibid.*, v. 8.
[4] Bukhari; Muslim. [5] Ibn-i-Ishaq.

THE IDEAL EXEMPLAR

Once the Prophet was distributing booty; and the people had gathered round him, when a certain man leant the whole weight of his body on the Prophet. The Prophet had a small thin stick in his hand with which he pushed the man away; but in so doing, the end of the stick scratched the offender's face. The Prophet said: "Take revenge on me." The man said: "O Prophet of God, I forgo my right and I forgive thee."[1]

The Prophet looked upon all alike. Rich or poor, high or low, master or servant, all he treated in the same way without any regard to dignity or rank. Salman, Sahib and Bilal, who were freedmen, were accorded the same treatment as any member of the noble tribe of the Quraish could ever expect at the hands of the Prophet. It so happened that Salman and Bilal were together in a certain place, and that Abu Sufyan, the Quraishite chief, chanced to be there as well. Salman and Bilal, on seeing him, said: "The sword has not laid its full hand on the neck of this enemy of God." Abu Bakr, another Quraishite, said to them: "How dare you use such words as these to the chief of the Quraish?" Then he came to the Prophet and related the whole incident. The Prophet said: "I wish to know whether you have not hurt the feelings of these two gentlemen. And if you have wounded their feelings, then you have incurred the displeasure of God." At once Abu Bakr went to them and asked: "Brethren, may I know if my remarks have made you angry with me?" They said: "No, may God forgive you."[2]

Before proceeding to the Pilgrimage, the Quraish used to stay in a place called Muzdalafa, which they had reserved for their own use. They did not like to mix with the common people owing to the nobility of their lineage, and the special prerogatives which they enjoyed. The Prophet never liked and never encouraged this distinction. Before and after the

[1] Abu-Daud. [2] Muslim.

Call, he stayed where others stayed. Moreover, the Prophet never tolerated the idea of having a specially selected and shady place reserved for him. He used to say: "Whosoever reaches the place first, has the prior claim to it." [1]

SACRIFICIAL SPIRIT

"And they give food out of love for Him to the poor and the orphan and the captive." [2] *"Love those who have fled to them and do not find in their hearts a need of what they are given and prefer them before themselves, though poverty may affect them."* [3]

Sacrifice is one of the most prominent characteristics of the life of the Prophet. The Prophet was devoted to his children. His daughter, Fatima, came frequently to visit him; and the Prophet, on seeing her, would rise from his seat to mark his love for her, and used to make her sit in his own place. Yet there was no servant in the household of his daughter. She had to grind corn with her own hands, and to fetch water; and, in time, the manual labour caused pain in her hands. She wanted to speak, many a time, to the Prophet about her condition, but could never pluck up sufficient courage to do so. Her husband, Ali, however, seized an opportunity and related to the Prophet her troubles, suggesting that one of the captive slave-girls of such and such a battle could be allotted to her for the household purpose. The reply of the Prophet was: "The Companions of Suffa have not yet been properly provided for, and so long as their condition does not become satisfactory and improve, I cannot devote my attention to anything else." [4]

Once a woman presented the Prophet with a sheet of cloth, which he, standing in need of such a thing, accepted. A certain man standing by, observed: "What a beautiful

[1] Ibn-i-Hanbal's *Musnad.*
[2] Holy Qur-án, lxxvi. 8.
[3] *Ibid.*, lix. 9.
[4] Abu-Daud.

sheet of cloth!" Whereupon the Prophet took it off and gave it to him. But when the Prophet had left them, the people censured him, and said: "Do you know that the Prophet stood in need of the sheet? And at the same time you know as well that the Prophet never refuses the request of anyone?" He said: "Yes, I know all that. I have taken this sheet for the sake of seeking blessings in it. I desire to be enshrouded, at my death, in this sheet."[1]

In Arabia, gardens are the most coveted form of landed property. A man named Makhairiq presented to the Prophet seven of his gardens. The names of these gardens were Mashib, Saniqa, Dallal, Husaini, Birqa, A'awáf, and Mashraba-umm-i-Ibrahim. The Prophet devoted them to charitable uses, *i.e.* they were made *Waqf*, and their produce was distributed among the poor and the needy.[2]

A Companion of the Prophet got married, but he had nothing in his house wherewith to entertain his friends. The Prophet told him to go to Ayesha and request her to give him a sack of flour. He went, and brought it back with him. And yet the Prophet's house had nothing else than that which Ayesha had given away, even for the evening meal.[3]

Once a certain man belonging to the clan of Ghaffar stayed with the Prophet. The Prophet had nothing for the evening meal but a little quantity of goat's milk, which he offered to his guest; himself passing the night in hunger.[4]

FAIRNESS IN DEALING

"*And give full measure when you measure.*"[5] "*Surely Alláh commands you to make over trust to their owners.*"[6] "*Believers . . . are those who keep others' trust.*"[7]

Although the Prophet, owing to his liberal nature, was

[1] Bukhari.
[2] Fath-ul-Bari; Isaba.
[3] Ibn-i-Hanbal's *Musnad.*
[4] Ibn-i-Hanbal's *Musnad.*
[5] Holy Qur-án, xvii. 35.
[6] *Ibid.*, iv. 58.
[7] *Ibid.*, xxiii. 8.

always in debt, so much so that on the eve of his death his armour was lying with a pawnbroker for eighty pounds of corn, yet he was very strict and fair in his dealings. The Jews constituted the rich class of Medina, and whenever he stood in need of money he had to borrow it from them. The period preceding his Call to the Prophethood bears testimony to his scrupulous honesty and fair dealing. The Quraish had bestowed on him unanimously the epithet of *Al-Amin* ("The Trustworthy")—a title which they had never given to anyone before. Sáib was a certain merchant who came to accept Islam. People introduced him to the Prophet in high terms. The Prophet said: "I know him better than you." Sáib said: "May my life be the Prophet's sacrifice. The Prophet was my partner; and his transactions, his dealings were most straightforward and above reproach."[1]

Once the Prophet borrowed a camel from somebody. When he returned it, he returned a better one for it and said: "The best men are they who pay their debts with fairness of dealing."[2]

Once a Bedouin, from whom the Prophet had borrowed money, came to demand his debt. The Bedouin, by nature very rough and uncouth, began to talk rudely to the Prophet. The Companions, resentful of such insulting behaviour, admonished him, and said: "Do you know whom you are speaking to?" The Bedouin said very calmly: "Yes, but I am doing nothing more than demanding my due." The Prophet turned to his Companions and said: "You ought to have sided with him because he is in the right."[3]

Once a Bedouin was selling camel-flesh. The Prophet, thinking that some quantity of dates was lying in the house, effected a bargain for the piece of flesh on barter. On reaching home, he found that he was wrong. He came out and said to the butcher: "I had bought meat thinking that there

[1] Abu-Daud. [2] Tirmizi. [3] Ibn-i-Maja.

were some dates in the house, but now I find that they are not there." The butcher cried aloud and said: "O, you dishonest man.". People said to him: "Are you in your right senses? The Prophet—and dishonesty?" The Prophet said: "No, leave him; he has a right to say this." The Prophet repeated his excuse, but the reply from the butcher each time was: "O, you dishonest man." The Companions wanted to stop him, but the Prophet intervened and said: "No, leave him; let him say whatever he likes: he has a right to it." After this the Prophet sent him to a lady with the request that she should give the promised quantity of dates to him. On his return the Prophet was sitting among his friends. The generous and fair dealing of the Prophet had left a deep impression on the Bedouin's mind, and no sooner did his eyes fall on the Prophet, than he cried out: "Muhammad, may God reward you with a goodly reward. You have paid up the full price and a better price."[1]

Once, outside Medina, a small caravan broke its journey and pitched its tents. Among the camels was one of a red colour. The Prophet happened to pass by the place, and inquired the price of the camel. The people told him a certain price which the Prophet accepted without haggling, and led the camel away by the nose-string. When the Prophet had gone, the whole of the caravan felt that they had made a mistake in handing over the camel without having found out who the customer was. But there was a lady in the caravan who said: "Do not worry; we have never seen such an illustrious face"—meaning thereby that a man with a face such as that of the Prophet would never cheat. At nightfall the Prophet sent them food and dates in payment of the price.[2]

The Prophet wanted to buy a few weapons in the battle of Hunain, and Safawan, who was still an unbeliever at that time, had a large stock of armour. The Prophet desired to

[1] Ibn-i-Hanbal's *Musnad*. [2] Dar-Qutni.

make a small purchase, whereupon Safawan said: "Muhammad, do you wish to rob me of my armour?" The Prophet said: "No, I wish to borrow them; and if any one of them is damaged, I will pay the cost. Accordingly, Safawan lent him thirty or forty suits of armour. After the battle of Hunain, when stock was taken of all the weapons and armour and other things, it was found that a few suits of armour were missing. The Prophet said to Safawan: "A few of your suits of armour are missing. Kindly accept their price." He said: "O Prophet of God, the condition of my mind has undergone a change, and I am now a Muslim."[1]

When a dead body was brought for prayers, the Prophet asked always whether the deceased had any liabilities which he could not meet. If it was found out that he owed something, then he would ask his Companions to say the prayers, but he himself did not join with them.[2]

DISREGARD OF DISTINCTION

"I am only a man like unto you."[3]

The Prophet worked with Others.

The Prophet used to join with the Companions in their manual labour. After his flight to Medina, his first anxiety was to erect a Mosque there, afterwards known as the "Prophet's Mosque." In the construction of this Mosque the Prophet contributed his quota of help in the capacity of a labourer. He brought the bricks. The Companions could not dissuade him from performing his duty. They would come around and say with love and affection: "Our lives be sacrificed for you! Why do you take the trouble of working? What are we for?" In the battle of Ahzab, when trenches were being dug, the Prophet worked like an ordinary

[1] Abu-Daud. [2] Bukhari. [3] Holy Qur-án, xviii. 110.

labourer, so much so that a layer of dust could be seen on his body and forehead.[1]

Once the Prophet was accompanied by his Companions on a journey. There was no food. Nevertheless, the Companions made the necessary arrangements for cooking. The work was divided among them, and the Prophet took upon himself the task of gathering the firewood. The Companions said to him, respectfully: "O Prophet of God, we would do this work as well."[2] But the Prophet replied: "That is quite true, but I do not like to place myself above you. God does not love one who places himself above his Companions."[3]

The Prophet had very few camels in the battle of Badr. For every three men they had but one camel. People rode by turns. The Prophet also, in common with two other friends, had but one camel. The devoted Companions would endeavour to forgo their turns over and over again, and would come to him with the request that he should remain on the camel and that they might be allowed to walk; but the Prophet would always reply: "I do not think that you can walk more than I, and moreover, I have a greater desire to earn reward than you."[3]

The Prophet discouraged undue Reverence.

Polytheism finds its origin in exaggerated and undue veneration, and praises sung in honour of holy men. The Prophet realized this, and used to say: "Do not utter such exaggerated words of praise for me, as the Christians do in honour of Ibn-i-Maryam" (*i.e.* Son of Mary). "I am nothing more than a servant of God and His Apostle."[4]

Qais-bin-Sa'd relates that he went to Hira, where he found that the people prostrated before their chief to show their respect for him. On his return he came to the Prophet and

[1] Bukhari.
[2] Zurqani.
[3] Ibn-i-Hanbal's *Musnad.*
[4] Bukhari.

related what he had experienced. He suggested to the Prophet that he deserved that the people should prostrate themselves before him in a far greater degree than did the chief of Hira. The Prophet said: "I would like to know whether you would prostrate yourself before my grave after my death." Qais said: "No." The Prophet said: "Then why should you prostrate yourself while I am alive?" [1]

The Prophet went to the house of Mu'awwaz-bin-'Afra to take part in the celebrations of the marriage of his daughter. The Prophet took his seat in the place which was specially prepared for the bride. The girls of the house gathered round him and began to sing elegiac poems, in which mention was made of the martyrs of the battle of Badr. One of them sang the following: "Fíná nabíyyun ya'lamo má fí ghadí,"—that is, "Amongst us there is a Prophet who knows the things of the morrow." The Prophet said: "Leave this; sing the same verses which you were singing." [2]

MODESTY, LENITY, SHYNESS AND HUMILITY

"Thus it is due to mercy from Alláh that you deal with them gently." [3] *"And do not go about in the land exultingly."* [4] *"Say to the believing men that they cast down their looks."* [5] *"Say: My Lord has prohibited indecency."* [6] *"And the servants of the Beneficent are they who walk on the earth in humbleness."* [7]

In the authenticated Books of Traditions it is related that the Prophet was more bashful and modest than virgin girls. Every movement and every action of his betrayed the shyness of his nature. The Prophet never exchanged harsh words with anyone. He walked through the streets unnoticed. He

[1] Abu-Daud.
[2] Muslim.
[3] Holy Qur-án, iii. 158.
[4] *Ibid.* xvii. 37.
[5] *Ibid.* xxiv. 30.
[6] *Ibid.* vii. 33.
[7] *Ibid.* xxv. 63.

never laughed, but would smile instead. He would never show his displeasure at or dislike for a thing, out of regard for others' thoughts or words. The expression of his face was a sure indication as to whether he liked a thing or not.

The Arabs attached no great importance to modesty or shyness. Bathing naked was quite the fashion. The circum-ambulation of the Ka'aba was performed in a state of nudity. The Prophet, on the other hand, had a strong dislike for absence of modesty or shyness, for bathing naked and the naked circum-ambulation. The Prophet once said: "Do you go to the public baths?" And the people answered: "Bathing in a public bath is very useful for diseases, and causes the dirt on the bodies to be removed." The Prophet said: "When you bathe, do not bathe naked." In Arabia there were no public baths. But in the towns lying on the boundary adjoining Arabia there were many. It was for this very reason that the Prophet said: "When you go to conquer Persia and other foreign countries, you will come across many baths. Go to them with sheets on your bodies."

Some ladies who belonged to the town of Homs, in Syria, came to Umm-i-Salma. She inquired of them which town they had come from. They said: "Homs." Umm-i-Salma said: "Are you, then, of those women who bathe in public baths?" They said: "Is public bathing something to be condemned?" To which she made answer: "I have heard from the Holy Prophet that a woman who takes off her clothes in a place other than her home is disgraced by God." It is related in the traditions collected by Abu-Daud that the Prophet had prohibited his followers from bathing in public baths; but he relaxed this injunction in favour of men, provided that they did not bathe naked. He made no such concession for women.[1]

[1] Bukhari.

Mu'az-bin-Jabal used to lead the prayers in a certain quarter of the town and, in his prayers, used to recite lengthy chapters of the Qur-án. A certain man complained to the Prophet that Mu'az read such long chapters that it had proved to be a hinderance for him to say his prayers in leadership of Mu'az. Abu Masúd Ansari relates that he had never seen the Prophet more angry than at that time. He answered thus: "There are certain people who inspire aversion in the minds of others; everyone from amongst you, who happens to lead the prayers, should read short chapters; for in the congregation of those that pray there are the weak, the decrepit and the old."[1]

In punishment and retaliation he was very cautious and considerate. He would prefer, as far as possible, forgiveness to punishment. Once a certain man who was guilty of a sin came to the Prophet and confessed it, begging the Prophet to inflict punishment for it. The Prophet kept silent and turned a deaf ear to his requests until the time of afternoon prayer came. He related the same story once again. The Prophet said: "Have you said your prayers?" He said: "Yes." The Prophet said: "Then God has forgiven you."[2]

The Prophet would not impose unnecessary restrictions on his followers. Relaxation and leniency were the red threads that ran through all the punishments he inflicted. It is related that a certain man, guilty of transgressing the religious law in a certain respect, confessed his fault to the Prophet, who said: "Set a captive free." The man replied: "I cannot do that." "Then keep fast for two months." "No," said he, "I am not strong enough." "Then go and feed sixty poor men," said the Prophet; and the man refused, saying: "I have not got the means." The Prophet kept silent for a little while, and all of a sudden a basket full of dates was

[1] Bukhari. [2] *Ibid.*

presented to the Prophet. Then the Prophet inquired after the man who had been questioning him, and the man said: "Here I am." "Then," said the Prophet, "take this basket and distribute it among the poor." The man said: "O Prophet of God, there is none so poor in Mecca as myself." The Prophet laughed and said: "So be it; go and distribute it amongst your family."[1]

PRAISE DISCOURAGED

"*Do not think those who rejoice for what they have done and love that they should be praised for what they have not done.*"[2]

Praise, however heartfelt, was foreign to the nature of the Prophet. He could never tolerate praise even for his own person. On one occasion when some people were indulging in the usual personalities they chanced, in the course of their conversation, to speak very highly of a certain man. The Prophet said: "You have cut the neck of your friend." These words he repeated many times, and then added: "If you ever wish to talk about a person, then you should say: 'I think so.'"[3] Once Aswad-bin-Sari' came to the Prophet and told him that he had composed a few verses to the glory of God and in praise of the Prophet. "Yes," was the reply, "God loves being glorified." Aswad began to recite his verses. In the meanwhile there came another man. The Prophet stopped Aswad; after the man had left the Prophet, Aswad resumed again. The man came in again. The Prophet stopped him again. It happened twice or thrice. Aswad asked who that man was for whose sake the Prophet had stopped him so many times. The Prophet replied: "He is one who does not like unnecessary idle talk."[4]

[1] Bukhari.
[2] Holy Qur-àn, iii. 187.
[3] Ibn-i-Hanbal's *Musnad.*
[4] Bukhari's *Adab-ul-Mufrad.*

THE IDEAL PROPHET

SUBLIMITY OF MANNER

"And most surely you conform (yourself) to sublime morality." [1]

Abbas-bin-Shurahbil, a Medinite, stole into a garden, to pluck some fruit. He was very hungry, and famine had struck the land. He ate some of it and put the rest into his pocket. The owner of the garden having caught him red-handed, seized him, stripped him, and gave him a good thrashing. Abbas brought his case to the Prophet for justice. The gardener was sent for, and the Prophet addressed him thus: "This boy was ignorant, you might have taught him; he was hungry, you ought to have fed him." He asked the gardener to return him his clothes. In addition to that, the Prophet gave him 60 lb. of corn.[2]

Once a certain man wanted to see the Prophet, and asked the requisite permission. The Prophet said: "Show him in, although he is not a good man." But when the man came in, the Prophet talked to him with gentleness. Ayesha was astonished at this, and asked him how it was that, although he disliked the man, he was so good to him. The Prophet replied: The worst man in the eyes of God is the one whose harsh language goes so far as to estrange people from associating with him." [3]

It is related that once, while the Prophet was sitting among his friends, there came to visit him, the husband of his wet-nurse. The Prophet spread a corner of his sheet for him to sit upon. Then came the mother of his wet-nurse. He spread the other corner of his sheet for her to sit upon. Then came the brother of his wet-nurse. The Prophet got up and seated him in front of himself.[4]

[1] Holy Qur-án, lxviii. 4.
[2] Bukhari; Abu-Daud.
[3] Abu-Daud.
[4] Abu-Daud.

THE IDEAL EXEMPLAR

Once, while the Prophet was distributing meat, there came a woman who desired to see him. The Prophet met her and showed her every respect. He spread his own sheet for her. The narrator says that when he asked the people who that woman was, they said it was the wet-nurse of the Prophet.[1]

[1] Abu-Daud.

CHAPTER XI

THE ASSEMBLAGE OF VIRTUES

The space here debars me from describing the various sides of the character of the Holy Prophet. History fails to point out any other personality than him where we find the assemblage of all the virtues that constituted an evolved humanity. His simplicity, his humanity, his generosity, his frugality, his broadmindedness, his forbearance, his earnestness of purpose, his steadfastness, his firmness in adversity, his meekness in power, his humility in greatness, his anxious care for animals, his passionate love for children, his bravery and courage, his magnanimity, his unbending sense of justice. Volumes are needed to do justice to this Superman.

The following description of the manners of the Prophet comes from Imam Ghazali, the well-known Muslim Divine of European fame, with few additions from me. The reader will find in it a little repetition of what I have said elsewhere, but my excuse for it is this: that there was enough material within the reach of the so-called authorities on Islam in this country if they cared to do justice to Muhammad. But they approached the subject with a different motive. They would rather go for their authority to Waqidi, a fiction writer, than to some reliable Muslim authorities.

Of all men, the Prophet was the meekest, the bravest, the gentlest, the chastest and the most charitable. He never kept any money or coin overnight, but if, when darkness fell, there remained anything at all, he would not return home

until he had bestowed it upon some poor man. Whatever God gave him, he took only what was necessary for his expenses, and that also of the cheapest and most easily obtainable, *viz.*, dates and barley; and the rest he gave away in God's way. Whosoever asked anything from him, he would give it to him. He would give out of his yearly provisions as well, giving preference to the wants of the beggars over his own; and if before the year ended he happened to have nothing left, he would mend his own shoes, and serve his own household and help his wives in preparing food. He was the most modest of all men, and would not stare at anyone, keeping his eyes downcast. "His courteousness to the great, his affability to the humble, and his dignified bearing to the presumptuous, procured him universal respect and admiration. Once in his life, whilst engaged in a religious conversation with an influential citizen of Mecca, he had turned away from a humble blind seeker of the truth." For this he received Divine disapprobation.[1] After this, whenever the Prophet saw the poor blind man, he used to go out of his way to do him honour, saying: "The man is thrice welcome on whose account my Lord hath reprimanded me." And he made him twice governor of Medina.[2]

He accepted alike the invitations of free men and slaves. He would accept presents, however humble—a sip of milk or the leg of a hare—and would give like presents in exchange. He would partake of what was given him, but would never eat of an offering (*sadqa*—anything given in charity). Never would he reject the invitation of a bondswoman or of a poor man, but would go with his host. He would be zealously wrathful for his God's sake, but never to satisfy his own self. The truth he would announce and support, even though it entailed the sacrifice of his own interests or those of his adherents. The infidels once offered to side with him to avenge themselves upon other infidels, but he would not accept their

[1] Holy Qur-án, lxxx. [2] Muir.

offer, saying he would not be helped by an infidel, although his followers were so few that even the addition of a single man was of importance. He would bind to his stomach a stone to appease his hunger. He would eat whatever was put before him; he never rejected whatever came to him and was lawful; if he found dates without any bread, or roasted flesh, or bread of wheat or barley, or anything sweet such as honey or milk without bread or green dates or melon, he would welcome it. He never had his fill of wheat bread for any three consecutive days in his whole life; not because he had lack of it or was niggardly, but simply to keep his carnal appetites under control. Many times he had to go without a meal. Often for months together no fire could be lighted in his house from scantiness of means—and that in the days of Medina, when he was a ruler and a king. He mended his own clothes and milked his goats.

He would accept invitations to wedding feasts, he would visit the sick or accompany a funeral procession; "He would go to the house of the lowliest to console the afflicted and to comfort the heart-broken." He would go single among his enemies unguarded, and, without the least show of pride, excelled the rest in hospitality. "Each evening it was his custom to invite some of them to partake of his humble fare." He shared his food, even in times of scarcity, with others. He was eloquent without circumlocution, his aspect was always cheerful. He was of great taciturnity; and when he spoke he spoke with emphasis and deliberation, and no one could ever forget what he said. "Modesty, kindness, patience, self-denial and generosity pervaded his conduct and directed the attention of all around him."[1] He was never embarrassed by mundane affairs. He would wear any garment that came readiest to hand—now a small woollen turban, now a Yaman sheet, now a jute head dress. His ring was of silver, put on

[1] *Spirit of Islam*, by Syed Ameer Ali.

the small finger of right or left hand. He would mount whatever was available, whether horse, camel, mule or zebra; and sometimes he would walk barefoot without a cap, turban or sheet, and would go to the farther end of Medina to visit the sick. He liked perfume and disliked offensive smells. He would associate with hermits and would dine with indigents. He honoured the well-behaved and won the hearts of the people by befriending them. He recompensed the compassionate without giving preference to his near relations. He never oppressed anyone, but pardoned those who apologized. "His conduct towards the bitterest of his enemies was marked by a noble clemency and forbearance. Stern almost to severity to the enemies of the State, mockings, affronts, outrages and persecutions towards himself were, in the hour of triumph, all buried in oblivion; and forgiveness was extended to the worst criminal." He never uttered anything save truth, even when annoyed. He would smile, but never utter a coarse laugh. Lawful games he would witness, and would never discourage them. He would have a race with his familiar friends to see who outran the others. Even when voices were raised high in his presence, he would suffer it in patience. He had many she-camels and she-goats, whose milk he and his family would consume. He had male and female servants, whom he never outdid in food or dress. Never a moment passed without his doing something important for God or for the benefit of his own soul. He went to the gardens of his adherents; he never despised any poor or helpless person for his poverty, or feared any potentate for his riches, but would attribute both to Divine Providence. God Almighty had concentrated in him the noblest morals and the most exalted principles. He was illiterate, unable to read or write, born in a benighted country among wild and ignorant people. But God the Great adorned him with the best of noble qualities, the highest morals and the most exalted habits. He

was the most faithful protector of those he protected, the sweetest and most agreeable in conversation.

Whomsoever of the faithful the Prophet admonished, for him he prayed that mercy might be shown him. Never did he curse a woman or a servant; when a war was in progress he was asked to curse his opponents, but he said he was sent to bless rather than curse. And whenever he was asked to curse the Muslims or infidels without distinction, he pronounced benediction instead of execration. He never raised his hand against anyone but in a crusade in the name of God; and when maltreated he never took revenge save when God was reviled. And when he had to choose between two alternatives, he preferred the more feasible one, provided there was no vestige of sin in it, and that no relationship was infringed by such a procedure, for from both of these he always kept himselr aloof. And whenever any free person or slave, male or female, came to him with any petition, he promptly offered to serve him. "The meanest slaves would take hold of his hand and drag him to their masters to obtain redress for ill-treatment of release from bondage." Anas records: "By the Being Who sent the Prophet with truth, in whatever way I displeased or annoyed him he never told me why I had done such a thing." The Prophet never cared for a bed: if there was a bed ready, he slept on it; and if there was no bedding, he slept on the earth. His habit was to be the first to greet whomsoever he met. And when anybody made him his proxy, he would deliberate till the other party had departed of his own accord. Whenever he met an associate he shook hands with him first, and then put his own fingers in those of the other in a firm grip, whether sitting or standing. He never first withdrew his hand from another's palm, and turned not before the other had turned.

The name of God was ever on his tongue; when praying, if any person came to him, he would shorten his prayers, and

ask his visitor if he had any business with him, and would resume his prayers after he had done with him. He usually sat with his calves erect, encircled by his hands. This sitting posture did not differ from that of his companions. He sat wherever there was a place to sit. When with his associates, none ever saw him sit with stretched legs so as to lessen the space, but when there was ample room he would do so. He visited the sick and followed every bier he met. He welcomed and entertained all who came to him, although they might not be of his blood; "he was sedulously solicitous for the personal comfort of every one about him. He would stop in the streets listening to the sorrows of the humblest"; he would spread his blanket for them to sit upon. The pillow he reclined upon he would take from under himself and would give it to the visitor; if he declined to take it, he would insist upon his resting on it. Whoever loved him, thought he was the most favoured of all the others, though he attended to his visitors according to their social position. His fellowship, conversation, audience, and company was a society of modesty, civility and confidence, as says God Almighty: "Of the mercy of God thou hast spoken to them in gentle terms; hadst thou been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from thee." To please them he would call his associates by their tribal appellations, and give a title of distinction to him who had none already; and the people would then call this man by the title so conferred upon him. To the women who had issue he would also give such a designation, and those who were issueless he called by their tribal titles. He was very affectionate towards his family. One of his boys died on his breast in the smoky house of the nurse. He was very fond of children. He would stop them in the streets and pat their cheek. He would give pet titles to them, whose hearts were won in this manner. He was the last to be angry and the first to be appeased.

The worst expression he ever made use of in conversation was: "What has come to him? May his forehead be darkened." He was kind to all, and generous and beneficent. In his society there was never any noise, and when he left it he said: "Holiness to Thee, O God, and praise be to Thee. I testify that there is no God but Thee."

BENEVOLENCE

The Prophet was charitable and benevolent above all other men, and in the month of Ramazan he was so generous that there was nothing which he would not give away.[1] Ali, when describing the qualities of the Prophet, was wont to say that he was open-handed above all others; that he was broad-chested above the rest; that he was more truthful in his talk than all the others; that he fulfilled his promises more than others; that he was superior to others in soft manners; and that in family prestige he was the most exalted. He who saw him for the first time only was terrified, but if he became intimate, the Prophet became the sole object of his love. His biographer says that he never saw his like before, nor his match afterwards. When one embraced Islam he never denied him what he asked for. A certain person once begged of him; he gave him goats and sheep so plentifully that they could fill the space between two hills. This man went back to his clansmen and asked them to become Muslims, as Muhammad gave alms like a man who was not afraid of starvation.[2] Never was he asked for a thing which he did not give. There were brought to him ninety thousand *dirhems*, which he put on a mattress and began to distribute, and did not send away any beggar disappointed; so much so, that the entire amount was exhausted. A man came up to him and asked for something. He told him he had nothing with him, but he

[1] Ibn-i-Hisham. [2] Bukhari.

could take from someone else on his credit, and that he would pay it back when he should get something. Omar Faruq, upon this, said: "O Messenger of Allah, God does not demand of thee anything over which thou hast no power." This offended him. The man then told him that he might continue spending, and the Master of the heavens would not see him poor. This made the Prophet smile, and there was cheerfulness upon his countenance.[1] Once when the Prophet was retreating from the battle of Hunain, the Arabs presented themselves and began to annoy him for charity to such an extent that he had to repair towards a tree of acacia, in which tree his sheet got entangled. He therefore waited, and then he asked them for his sheet, and said that if he had camels in number equal to those thorny trees he would divide them among the Arabs, and they would not then find him a miser or a coward.[2]

His benevolence had gained such a wide reputation that once a certain Bedouin ventured to catch him by his shirt and said: "There is only a trifling desire of mine which has remained unfulfilled, and I am afraid I may forget it. Come and help me in accomplishing it." The Prophet left the congregation, which was ready to offer its prayers, and accompanied him. The Prophet returned, and said his prayers after having helped the Bedouin.[3] Once while he was conversing with Abu-Zarr, the Prophet said: "Abu-Zarr, if the Mount of Uhud be transmuted for me into gold, I would never have it that three nights should pass and the money still be lying with me."[4] On another occasion a large sum of money was received as tribute from the province of Bahrein. The Prophet gave instructions that it should be placed in the courtyard of the mosque, and when he came did not so much as glance at it. After the prayers were offered, he began to distribute it. Whoever came to him got

[1] Muslim.
[2] Bukhari, Book Asshuja'at fil Harb.
[3] Bukhari's Adab-ul-Mufrad.
[4] Bukhari, Book Al-Istiqra.

his share. Abbas, who had been reduced to poverty in the battle of Badr in 2 A.H., got so much that he could not move by reason of the weight. The Prophet did not leave the place till everything was given away.[1] Umm-i-Salma, the wife of the Prophet, relates that one evening he came in unusually early, and the expression his face showed perturbation. She asked him the reason. The Prophet said: "I received seven *dinars* yesterday, and they have been lying since then on the bed."[2] It is related that once the Prophet came to the house after the afternoon prayers. After a short while he returned. The people could not understand the reason of his abruptly leaving them. On being asked, he told them that while offering his prayers he remembered that there were a few *dinars*[3] in the house yet unexpended, and that he had gone to give instructions as to their disposal in charity.[4]

But the Prophet disliked to accept alms and charity for his person and his family. He used to say: "When I come home, I find sometimes a date lying on the bed. I like to eat it, but then, thinking that the date might be a date given in alms or charity, I put it again on the bed."[5]

Once Hasan, the grandson of the Prophet, put one date (given in charity) into his mouth. The Prophet scolded him, and said: "Knowest thou not that our family, the sons of Hashim, does not eat the things of charity?" And he made him vomit it.[6]

BRAVERY

Ali says: "We sought the shelter of the Prophet who was nearer to the enemy than we were, and was that day the hardest fighter of all."[7] He also says that "in the

[1] Bukhari, Book Alqisma
[2] Ibn-i-Hanbal's *Musnad*, vol. vi, p. 293.
[3] A gold coin. [4] Bukhari. [5] Bukhari, Book of Luqta.
[6] Bukhari. [7] *Musnad* of Ibn-i-Hanbal, vol. i. p. 126.

heat of the battle, when both the armies came to a hand-to-hand fight, we came behind the Prophet, and thus none was nearer or closer to the hostile force than he." And he says that the Prophet was short and brief in his talk, and when he ordered a general assault he was in person ready and was above others warlike. He, above all, was considered a warrior who in the thick of the battle was closest to the Prophet, for the Prophet was always nearest the foe. When the infidels encircled him, he dismounted from his mule and said: "I am the apostle of God, I am a prophet, and I am the son of Abd-ul-Muttalib."

In the battle of Hunain, 8 A.H., when the showers of arrows from the enemy camp of Bani Hawazin began to pour on the devoted heads of the Muslims whose numerical strength was far inferior to that of the enemy, the Muslims were repulsed. But the Prophet himself maintained his place on the battlefield. He urged on his mule continually, but it was hindered from going forward by his ardent followers. It was the Prophet who was all the while the aim, the target of the arrows of the enemy, and it was he alone who showed no sign of weakness. Barra, who had taken part in this battle, replied, on being asked whether he had run for his life: "I do bear witness to the fact that we did, but it was the Prophet of God alone who did not budge from his post. By God, it was his side which served as a shelter to us even when the battle was at its height. The one from amongst us who could stand by the side of the Prophet was counted the bravest of all." [2]

Anas, the household servant of the Prophet for seven years, relates that the Prophet was the bravest of them all. Once a rumour was afloat that the enemy was at the gates of Medina. The Medinites began to make preparations to meet the enemy. But the first, the foremost of all who went out

[1] Bukhari, Book Hunain.
[2] Muslim, Book of the Battle of Hunain.

alone to meet the enemy, was the Prophet himself. He was so active, alert and agile that he did not even lose time in saddling his horse. The Prophet had reconnoitred all the points of danger, riding bareback, and returned to his people in Medina to inform them, to their great comfort, that there was no cause for fear.[1]

Ibn-i-Hanbal relates in his authenticated and well-known book, *Musnad*, that in the battle of Badr, when the fully armoured enemy arrayed before the eyes of the Muslims (who numbered little more than three hundred men) were stalking with pride and causing consternation in the minds of the Muslim handful, it was the Prophet alone who was a source of strength to them all. The poorly armed Muslims, overawed by the might of their enemy (who outnumbered them by seven hundred), came one and all to the Prophet to seek mental refuge, and it was the Prophet only who remained steadfast.

FORGIVENESS

The Prophet pardoned those who hurt him, notwithstanding the latter being in his power. The Prophet was meek above all, and though he had power, he was most bent on forgiving the faults of others. Once some silver and gold chains were presented to him, but he distributed them among his attendants. Thereupon an Arab got up and said: "O Muhammad, certainly God ordained thee to dispense justice, but I do not see thee do so." Upon which the Prophet said: "O wretch, who then will act justly with thee, if not I?" When he turned his back to be off, the Prophet ordered that he should be mildly brought back to him. Once Muhammad was in a battle, when the infidels perceived some negligence in the forces of Islam. An infidel came upon Muhammad with a naked sword and said

[1] Bukhari.

to him: "Who can now deliver thee from my hand?" The Prophet said: "God Almighty." The narrator says that the sword dropped from the infidel's hands, and the Prophet picked it up and said to him: "Who can now rescue thee from me?" The infidel said: "You have made a captive; prove yourself superior to the other captors." The Prophet told him to say: "I testify that there is no Deity but God." The Prophet let him go free, and when he came to his own comrades, he told them that he had come to them from a set of the best of men.[1] Anas says that a Jewess brought to him a goat surcharged with poison, in the hope that he would eat some of it. The woman was brought to the presence of the Prophet, who asked her of the poison. She said she sought to kill him. He said God was not pleased to let her have her wish. The attendants asked to be allowed to kill her; he said to them: "No."[2] Once when the Prophet distributed some money, one of the Nazarenes said that such a distribution had never been intended by God. Someone brought this to the notice of the Prophet; whereupon his face reddened, and he said: "May God show mercy to my brother Moses, for he was oppressed more than this, but he bore it patiently."[3] The Prophet used to say that none of them should speak anything to him concerning his companions, for he would like to go to them with a clear bosom.

The Prophet was sensitive, and showed it; his anger and cheerfulness could be judged from the expression of his face. He never said a thing which he thought would annoy anyone. A certain person who had used yellow scent came to him. He disliked the scent, but to the man he would say nothing. When he went away he told the people that it would be good if they asked him not to use that scent.

[1] Bukhari, Book of Jihad.
[2] Bukhari, Book of Wafat-un-Nabi.
[3] Bukhari, Book of Battle of Hunain.

THE IDEAL PROPHET

HUMILITY OF MIND

Notwithstanding his exalted position, the Prophet was, above all others, meek and humble. He visited the sick and went with a funeral, and accepted a slave's invitation, and mended his own shoes, and patched his own clothes, and when in his own house he would join his wives to work for their needs.[1] His companions did no work for him, for they knew he disliked such a thing. When he passed by some boys he salaamed them. A person was brought to him who got terrified and awed. On seeing him, he said: "Be not afraid."; for that he was not a king, but a son of a woman of the Quraish tribe who ate dried flesh.[2] With his associates he was as familiar as if he were one of them, and a stranger could not identify him till he had inquired about him[3]; wherefore his companions besought him that he should sit in a place where he could be recognized by strangers and so had a raised platform of earth made for him to sit upon. And if any of his companions or anyone else called him, he would, in answer, say: "Here am I." And when in a gathering of the people they talked of the Judgment Day, he would dilate upon that topic; or if eating and drinking, he would speak of the same to them; and if of worldly matters, he would do the same, for he would be meek and mild with them. And when his companions recited a poetical couplet before him and made mention of their childhood and laughed he smiled also, and never bade them refrain from anything but what was prohibited.

Once the Prophet came from his home, and the people who were waiting for him rose in token of respect. Thereupon the Prophet said: "Do not get up like the non-Arabs to show your respect."[4] This humility of mind reaches its zenith when we learn that he did not like others to address him with the

[1] Tirmizi's Shamàil.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Bukhari, Book Kitab-ul-Imán.
[4] Abu-Daud and Ibn-Maja.

respectful epithets which he undoubtedly deserved. Once a certain friend of his addressed him in the following words: "O our master, O the son of our master, the son of the best of us!" The Prophet said: "Guard yourself against sin, lest Satan should pull you down from the high pedestal of virtue on which you are standing. I am Muhammad, the son of Abdullah, the Servant of God, and His Apostle. I do not desire that you should exceed that which God has conferred on me." Once again a certain man came and addressed him with the words: "O best of the world." The Prophet's reply was: "It was Abraham."[1] Abdullah bin Sukhair relates that when the deputation of Bani Amir waited upon him they pointed to the Prophet and said: "Here is our Lord." The Prophet said: "Your Lord is God." They continued saying: "He is the best of us, the noblest of us." The Prophet said: "When you speak, think and weigh whether or not it be Satan who is driving you."[2] Humility of mind is put to a very severe test when a man is surrounded by admirers and faithful followers who are ready to shed their blood for his sake. But the Prophet's humility of mind becomes all the more conspicuous on such occasions. It is related that when he entered Mecca as a conqueror, with zealous admirers all around him, numbering more than ten thousand ready to sacrifice their lives for him, the Prophet bent his head so low as to touch the saddle.[3] Makhzama, one of the companions of the Prophet, asked his son Maswar to accompany him to the Prophet and request him to give them their share of the sheets of cloth which the Prophet had received. The distribution was already over when they arrived, and the Prophet was no longer in the Mosque. Makhzama asked his son to call out the Prophet. The son said: "But how can I dare do such a thing as to call out the Prophet!" Makhzama said: "Son, Muhammad is

[1] Ibn-i-Hanbal's *Musnad*. [2] Abu-Daud, Book Kitab-ul-Adab.
[3] Sirat Ibn-i-Hisham.

not harsh by nature." Maswar was emboldened by his father's words, and did as requested." The Prophet came out immediately and gave them their due share.[1]

On a certain journey, the companions slaughtered a goat, and made preparations for cooking it. A division of labour was agreed upon, and the Prophet said: "I will bring firewood from the woods." Finding that the companions hesitated to accept his services, the Prophet said: "I do not like making distinctions."[2] In another journey, the strap of the shoe of the Prophet broke, and he set to work to mend it. A certain companion came forward with the request that his services might be utilized, but the Prophet said: "This is what we call 'personality worship,' and I do not like it."[3] Once two companions of the Prophet came to him, and found him repairing his house. They joined him, and when the work was finished, he prayed for them.[4]

The Prophet would do the Work of Others.

Once the Prophet had to send Khabbab-bin-Aratt on a certain expedition. In his absence there was none to attend to such household duties as required strength. The Prophet therefore went daily to the house of his companion, Khabbab, to milk the camels for him.[5]

Certain men came from Abyssinia. They were lodged with the Prophet as his personal guests. The companions wanted to relieve him of the extra burden of this hospitality, but the Prophet said: "No, these people have treated my friends hospitably, therefore I, myself, will perform all that I owe to them in the way of hospitality."[6]

A companion named Abdullah-bin-abi-Aufa says that the Prophet had no feeling of humiliation when walking with widows and orphans. He would accompany them and help

[1] Bukhari. [2] Zurqani. [3] *Ibid.*, vol. iii.
[4] Ibn-i-Hanbal's *Musnad.* [5] Ibn-i-S'ad. [6] Qazi'Iyaz's *Shifa.*

them in their work.[1] The girls of Medina would come to him for help and say: "O Prophet of God, we need your help in this and that work." The Prophet would get up and help them.

EXCHANGE OF PRESENTS

The Prophet used to say: "Give presents to each and this will increase mutual love." He used to accept and give presents. He used to say that presents are the best means of strengthening love and affection. The Companions of the Prophet used to send presents to the Prophet.[2] The Prophet would send presents to the neighbouring kings and sultans. A Syrian chieftain presented the Prophet with a white mule. The Aziz of Egypt sent a mule to him as well. A certain Emir sent him socks. The Emperor of Rome sent him a fur coat. It was lined with silk. The Prophet put it on for a little while. After having taken it off, he sent it to Ali's brother, J'afar.[3]

The Prophet used to send presents in return to those from whom he had accepted them. Zi Yazan, the famous King of Yemen, sent to the Prophet a precious coat which he had bought for sixty-six camels. The Prophet accepted it, and sent a coat to Zi Yazan which had cost the Prophet twenty camels.[4]

A man of the Banu Fazaza presented the Prophet with a camel. The Prophet wanted to repay this present according to his means, and to this the man objected. The Prophet ascended the pulpit and delivered a public address in this wise: "You give me presents, and when I want to repay them according to my means, you are displeased. In future, I will not accept presents from any tribe but from the Quraish, the Thaqif, the Ansars and the Daus,"[5] meaning thereby

[1] Nasai. [2] Bukhari. [3] Abu-Daud.
[4] *Ibid.* [5] Bukhari's Adab-ul-Mufrad.

that they understood him and knew well what his habits were.

The Prophet used to send to Abu Ayyub Ansari the food which was left over; and used constantly to send presents to his neighbours.[1]

The Prophet always evaded the debt of being obliged to another. Even Abu Bakr, his staunch, devoted and self-sacrificing friend, could not induce him to waver from this rule. At the Time of Flight, the Prophet paid him the price of the camel which this friend had offered to him for the journey which both of them were going to make together.[2] The Mosque in Medina is built on a piece of land which the proprietors desired to present to the Prophet, but the Prophet declined to accept their offer, and paid the price.

Once upon a time Omar, afterwards Caliph, his son Abdullah-bin-Omar, and the Prophet were travelling together. The camel of Abdullah was refractory, and would go ahead of the camel of the Prophet. Abdullah tried to pull the reins, but he could not control it. Omar, being annoyed at the behaviour of the camel, scolded Abdullah; whereupon the Prophet requested Omar to sell him the camel. Omar said: "Accept it as a present from me." The Prophet said: "No, take the price." Omar repeated his request. Again the Prophet refused to accept the offer. At last, Omar had to accept the price; so the Prophet bought it and gave it to Omar's son, Abdullah-bin-Omar, and said: "Now, this camel is yours."[3]

HIS AVERSION FOR BEGGARY

Although the Prophet was so compassionate and kind-hearted, yet he used to express an indignant hatred for

[1] Muslim. [2] Bukhari. [3] *Ibid.*

beggary, especially when the beggar was not really in want. He used to say: "To go and collect pieces of wood and to sell them in the market, and thereby to save and uphold one's honour, is far better and more commendable than begging of another for help."[1]

Once a friend of the Prophet came to him and asked for some help. The Prophet asked him whether he had any possessions at all. To which the friend replied: "I have only a cup to drink from, and a bed, part of which I use for covering myself and part of which I utilize for spreading on the bedstead." The Prophet sent for both the things and asked if there was anyone who would care to buy those two articles. One of the Companions offered one *dirhem* for them. The Prophet asked if there was any other who would pay more for them. There was one who doubled the amount. The Prophet gave him the things and addressed the friend thus: "Here are the two *dirhems;* with the one buy something to eat, and with the other buy a piece of rope and go into the woods and collect pieces of wood and sell them in the market." A fortnight passed, and the friend came to visit the Prophet again and informed him that he had saved fifteen *dirhems* and that with some of them he had bought cloth and with some of them corn. The Prophet said: "Which is more commendable and praiseworthy—this, or going to the Day of Judgment branded with the mark of begging?"[2]

Once a few of the *Ansars* (helpers) came to the Prophet and begged for alms. The Prophet gave them what he had. He never rejected a request so long as he had anything to give. Once it so happened that he had nothing, and on being requested by the same *Ansars* for help, he said: "So long as I possess even a nut, I will not withhold it from

[1] Bukhari, Book of Sadaqat.
[2] Abu-Daud; Tarmazi.

you; it is at your disposal; but the man who prays to God that He may save him the dishonour and disgrace of beggary, is saved from it; and the man who asks of God for riches, is given the riches; and the man who prays to Him for patience, is granted patience, and I tell you that there is nothing more precious and no riches better than patience."[1]

It was after the fall of Mecca that Hakim-bin-Hizam embraced Islam. He requested the Prophet for monetary help. The Prophet gave it to him. A few days after, he came and entreated for more. The Prophet gave this time as well. He came for the third time and requested more, when the Prophet said: "O Hakim, wealth is a very sweet thing: one who accepts it without caring for it, is always blessed with more; and the one who gets it with greed and hankers after it, is deprived of it; and that one can be likened unto a man who goes on eating, but never gets satisfied. And mind you, the upper hand is better than the one which is beneath it." This advice of the Prophet told on Hakim to such an extent that so long as he lived he never spread out his hand to anyone even for a small insignificant need.[2]

On the occasion of his last pilgrimage to Mecca, known as Hajjat-ul-Wida, while the Prophet was distributing charity, there came two men, who joined the crowd. The Prophet raised his eyes and looked at them. He found that they were strong and healthy. He said to them: "See here, if you like, I can give you something out of this; but I may point out that this money has no share in it for those who can work and earn their living honestly."[3]

A certain man of the name of Qabisa ran into debt. He approached the Prophet and explained to him the situation.

[1] Bukhari, Book of Sadaqat. [2] *Ibid.*
[3] Abu-Daud, Book of Za'kat.

The Prophet, after having promised to help him out of the difficulty, said: "O Qabisa, begging and stretching out the hand before the people is only allowed for three kinds of men: first, the man who has run into debt, but when he is relieved of the debt, he should refrain from asking for more; secondly, the man whose whole property has been ruined by an unexpected misfortune—it is allowable for him to beg for help so long as he is in straitened circumstances; thirdly, the man who is starving, but there must be three legal witnesses of his own quarter that he is really starving. Except these three, whoever goes out begging, eats that which is *haram*, *i.e.* prohibited by God."

HOSPITALITY

The Prophet's hospitality made no distinction between a Muslim or a non-Muslim. He put the Abyssinian envoys and the Christian deputation from the Negus in his own house, and looked after their needs himself.[1] Once a non-believer was his guest. The Prophet gave him the milk of one goat to drink. He drank the whole of it. The Prophet sent for the second goat; but even that did not satisfy the man, for whom seven goats were ultimately milked; for the Prophet kept on giving him milk so long as he seemed to need it.[2]

The poorest and the most indigent group of the Companions of the Prophet were those who were known as *As-hab-us-Suffa*, *i.e.* the Companions of Suffa. They were the common guests of all the Muslims; but it was the Prophet himself who used to entertain them most. Once he said: "Those of you who have to-day food enough for two should take three of the Companions of Suffa, and those who have enough for four,

[1] Qazi Iyaz's *Shifa*.

[2] Muslim.

five. Accordingly Abu Bakr brought three, but the Prophet brought ten.[1]

Abu Huraira was one of those Companions who are, in the History of Islam, known as the Companions of Suffa. He relates that once, owing to extreme hunger, he could not walk and had to sit down by the roadside. Abu Bakr passed by him. He inquired of Abu Bakr about a verse in the Qur-án, thinking that his talk would convey to Abu Bakr that he was hungry. But he went his way and did not notice that he was hungry. Then came Omar, to whom Abu Huraira talked in the same way; but the result was the same. Then the Prophet came by, who, looking at him, laughed and said: "Come with me." On reaching home, the Prophet found a flagon of milk. On inquiring where it had come from, he found out that the milk had been sent as a present. The Prophet asked Abu Huraira to call the Companions of Suffa. Abu Huraira went and brought all of them. The Prophet gave Abu Huraira the flagon and asked him to distribute it among themselves.[2]

Miqdad relates that he and his friends were in such straitened circumstances that they had actually lost their eyesight through starvation. They begged of many people to take upon themselves the responsibility of supplying them at least with their daily meals, but their request was of no avail. At last they went to the Prophet, who took them to his house and showed them three goats whose milk, he said, was at their disposal.[3]

This chapter of the book needs insertion of more material before its conclusion. Besides I intended to add to it another chapter to meet some of the Western criticism. But an urgent call from South Africa compels me to reserve the remaining material for the second volume of the

[1] Muslim. [2] Tirmizi. [3] Muslim.

book. I would say one word more here as to the said criticism. Some of the writers here have purposely preferred Wakdi (admittedly a most unreliable writer in the Muslim world) to their other original writers on the Holy Prophet, for obvious reasons.

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