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THE HOLY QUR-ĀN

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The photo shows a part of the audience that attended the function arranged in honour of the birthday of the Holy Prophet Muhammad by the Muslim Society of Great Britain on Friday, October 30, 1931, at the Hotel Metropole, London, W.C.2, at 8.30 p.m. His Highness the Aga Khan was in the chair.

On the dais in the right-hand corner are seen (from left to right) the Rt. Hon. Lord Headley, His Highness the Aga Khan, Sir Omar Hubert Rankin, Bt., and Sir Muhammad Shafi.
The lecture delivered by Sir Hubert on the occasion appears in this issue.

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
مُحَمَّدٌ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

THE
ISLAMIC REVIEW

RAJAB-SHA'BĀN, 1350 A.H.

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THE MUSLIM SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN
CELEBRATES THE BIRTHDAY OF THE
HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD

UNDER the auspices of the Muslim Society of Great Britain the Birthday Celebration of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) was commemorated at the Hotel Metropole, London, W.C. 2, on Friday, the 30th October. Sir Umar Hubert Rankin was the host. The reception began at about 8 p.m., when friends of all denominations began to pour in to pay their humble tribute to the memory of one of the greatest benefactors of mankind, and lasted till 9 p.m., when H.H. The Agha Khan took the chair. A photograph taken during the proceedings appears as a frontispiece to this number.

The meeting was opened with the recital of the "Fātiha" in Arabic by Sir Umar Hubert Rankin. Lord Headley read the translation of it and a few lines of prayer suited to the occasion. His Highness the Agha Khan then delivered his short but instructive opening speech, in the course of which he observed that he had always desired to see Islam in the West organized by the Westerners themselves and interpreted in the light of their own thoughts and needs, and that the meeting of the evening was an indication of the fulfilment of that desire of his. With these introductory remarks he called

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upon the host, Sir Umar Hubert Rankin, to introduce the subject of the Holy Prophet's life to the audience. Sir Umar's speech appears elsewhere. Sir Umar Hubert was followed by Sirdar Iqbal Ali Shah, Pandit H.P. Shastri, Moulana Shaukat 'Alī, Sir 'Umar Hayāt Khan, Sir 'Abbās 'Alī Baig, General Blakeney, and Mr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, each one of them addressing the meeting on the life and teachings of Muhammad in his own learned way. The meeting lasted till 10.30, after which the guests partook of light refreshments provided by the host of the evening. Happy talks and mutual introductions continued till late in the night.

The occasion, at which more than 250 friends were present, was a great success, it having awakened many non-Muslim friends to the realization of the debt of gratitude which they owe to the great Arabian Prophet.

But it would be ungrateful to dismiss the subject without congratulating the untiring Secretary of the Society, Mr. Habeebu 'l-Lah Lovegrove, and Sir Umar Hubert Rankin for his kindly consenting to defray all the expenses of the function.

Amongst those present were: Lady Headley, Lady Shafī', Lady 'Alī Imām, Sahibzada Abdussamad Khan of Rampore State, Sir Akbar and Lady Hydari, Sir Abbas and Lady 'Alī Baig, Nawab of Chittari, Dr. Shafa'at Ahmad Khan, Maulana Shafī' Dāoodī, Maulana Shaukat 'Alī, Mrs. Buchanan Hamilton, Lady Blomfield, Lady Boyle, Begum Shah Nawaz, Mr. and Mrs. Jauhari, Prince Aly Khan, The Hon. Shaikh Mushir Husain Kidwai, Sir Umar Hayāt Khan, Sir and Lady Abdul Qādir, Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Latifi, Prince Sadiq of Mangrol, and Mr. and Mrs. Mahmudullah.

SPEECH OF SIR OMAR HUBERT RANKIN ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE BIRTHDAY OF THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD

YOUR HIGHNESS, MY LORDS, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN,

We are celebrating the 1403rd anniversary of the Birthday of the Holy Prophet Muhammad according to lunar calcu-

SPEECH OF SIR OMAR HUBERT RANKIN

lations, and the 1360th according to solar calculations—he having been born in the year 571 of the Christian Era.

A kind of hero-worship (if I be permitted to employ the term used by Muslim theologians) is at the basis of everything that goes to make the history of a nation—nay, even that of humanity. It is the inspirations of heroes which keep the life of society warm. But beyond a certain limit this very hero-worship (to use the term once more) causes harm to human consciousness, in the place of good. Heroes adored excessively impede the progress of the human mind by lowering its ideals and limiting its aspirations.

To the great misfortune of the world, heroes, especially the founders of religions, have almost everywhere been confounded with the goal of life as upheld by them. Muhammad is the only founder of religion who has been able to keep the vision of the human soul unobstructed by his personality. He is pre-eminently a leader, a guide, and an example, but, proclaims he, "I am only a mortal like you; it is revealed to me that your God is One God, therefore whoever hopes to meet his Lord, he should do good deeds, and not join anyone in the Service of his Lord" (Qur-án, xviii. 110). His glory lies in being reinspired with the truth about the human life, which was as much meant for himself as for others. In fact, he is the foremost among the believers; that is his pride.

Ladies and gentlemen, to bring death upon oneself in the attempt to establish truth requires a great courage and self-abnegation. Martyrs rightly arouse a feeling of admiration and respect everywhere. But is it not a higher form of martyrdom to keep on living from moment to moment with tortures, fears, and worries worse than death itself, to stand undaunted amidst them till the last moment, in order to see the principle established, the vision comprehended, and the virtue practised by those whose abject condition rouses the indignation of the hero?

Ponder awhile the persecution of Muhammad in Mecca for thirteen long years: how inhuman tortures were inflicted on his followers, men and women; remember how he was himself going to be strangled, and how the persecutions proving too

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much, these followers, "one hundred men and women," in the words of Sir William Muir, "rather than abjure their precious faith, had abandoned home and sought refuge in Abyssinian exile"; and how still larger numbers fled to Medina; how temptations, threats, and boycotting all failing, the enemies of Muhammad and of truth, of virtue and of freedom, determined to put an end to his life in a fiendish way and compelled the zealous preacher to pass on to Medina to try a path of less resistance—consider this phase of his eventful life and decide if it does not require a harder mettle, a greater pluck on the part of a man to face these circumstances than that required in a simple martyrdom.

Ladies and gentlemen, if the principle of non-violence and persuasion required a demonstration, it was never, perhaps, within historical times demonstrated so successfully and for such a length of time. The utmost attempt was made to avoid giving offence to the diehard champions of vice and superstition.

But there are people who will not only themselves cling to all that is evil, but will resent the very idea of good. Such a class of people is to be found everywhere, and they were enormous in number in Arabia as it was at that time. They had followed the humble emigrants of Abyssinia and demanded their extradition from the king of that country. They would not, if they could, allow the believers to take refuge in Medina. But now when the believers, together with the Prophet, had actually gone to Medina, where they were hailed as brothers by a very strong party, it was natural that these implacable enemies of virtue and of the virtuous would carry their offensive raids into the new colony of truth. Three expeditions were sent, one after another, to rout these heretics, as they were called. One of them was fought at Badr, three days' journey from Medina and ten days' from Mecca; the next was at Uhud, at a distance of three miles from Medina; and the last one took the shape of a siege of that city where the humble believers had taken shelter. In all these battles the Prophet only followed the clear injunctions of the Qur-án: "Permission to fight is only given to those upon whom war has

SPEECH OF SIR OMAR HUBERT RANKIN

been made because they are the oppressed." "And fight with them until there is no persecution, and religion should be only for God; but if they desist, then there should be no hostility, except against the oppressors." The fact was that non-resistance had been tried to an extent beyond which it could not go. Now the time had come when there should be either defensive resistance or total extinction. The lives and examples of the first believers in a truth are, undoubtedly, immeasurably more important for humanity than their dramatic and passive martyrdom. This was understood by the Prophet and known to his God, Who alone had the knowledge of the realities of human life. So in spite of his reluctance, described in the Qur-án, and against great odds, he had to wage these wars in defence of his faith. Out of evil cometh good. As a result of the successful termination of these wars, not only was religious freedom and civil peace established throughout Arabia, but an opportunity was offered to show the example of actual mercy and forgiveness, which the world needed. It was the Holy Prophet Muhammad who first showed, on the occasion of his triumphal entry into Mecca, how to love one's enemies. A general amnesty was proclaimed to all those who, for close upon two decades, had inflicted inhuman tortures upon the believers. But not even a reproach proceeded from the Prophet on that day. If mercy and forgiveness require for their real manifestation the power to revenge, Muhammad was surely the only blessed person who fulfilled this condition.

One point requires to be made clear in this connection—whether the conquest of Mecca was utilized for a forced conversion. Let Muir, who is in no way a sympathetic writer, reply to this question for us. Says he: "Although the city had cheerfully accepted his authority, all its inhabitants had not yet embraced the new religion, nor formally acknowledged his prophetic claims; perhaps he intended to follow the course he had pursued at Medina, and leave the conversion of the people to be gradually accomplished without compulsion." Such was, therefore, the nature of the wars he had to fight against his will.

The spirit and the teachings of his religion cannot be more

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authoritatively described than by quoting the representation made to the Christian king of Abyssinia by the Muslims who had taken refuge in his kingdom:

“ O king, we were an ignorant people, given to idolatry. We used to eat corpses even of animals that had died a natural death, and to do all sorts of disgraceful things. We did not make good our obligations to our relations, and ill-treated our neighbours. The strong amongst us would thrive at the expense of the weak, till at last God raised a Prophet for our reformation. His descent, his righteousness, his integrity, and his virtue are well known to us. He called us to the worship of God, and bade us give up idolatry and stone-worship. He enjoined on us to tell the truth, to make good our trusts, to have regard for our kith and kin, and to do good to our neighbours. He taught us to shun everything foul and to avoid bloodshed. He forbade all sorts of indecent things, telling lies, and misappropriating orphans' belongings. So we believed in him, followed him, and acted up to his teachings. Thereupon our people began to do us wrong, to subject us to tortures, thinking that we might abjure our faith and revert to idolatry. When, however, their cruelties exceeded all bounds, we came to seek asylum in your country.”

His religion, the religion of Islam, breathes an unparalleled spirit of toleration towards other religions by insisting not only on a respect for the founders of other religions but an actual faith in them. It is a strange fact that while a fanatical Hindu, Jew, or Christian can afford to show disrespect to the Prophet Muhammad, a Muslim can only, at the peril of his faith, reciprocate that feeling towards Buddha, Moses, or Jesus. To remain a Muslim one should take the names of these personages, and others like them, with the invocations of the blessings of Allah upon them. Such is a Muslim, the follower of Muhammad, who is so much maligned in the Western world. It was Muhammad who proclaimed for the first time that all the different nations—black, yellow, and white—are equally loved by God, and equally blessed with provisions temporal and spiritual; that prophets had appeared and revelations had been vouchsafed to each group of humanity in the past.

SPEECH OF SIR OMAR HUBERT RANKIN

Such an idea has been the basis of several schools of thought at the present moment, and a great effort is being made to form an eclectic faith; but may we not ask if this idea was ever so clearly conceived and emphatically preached before the advent of Muhammad?

Democracy in its real sense was for the first time preached and practised by Muhammad. He abolished all the privileges based upon birth and established virtuous conduct as the standard of greatness. His personal example was too eloquent in this matter.

He would not allow anyone to rise on his arrival. He would not even allow his hands to be kissed. He would accept the invitation of even a slave and dine with him. Indeed, he would walk on foot by the side of the son of his freed slave whilst the latter was riding on his horse. He declared and enforced the equality of man in all its bearing and with all the weight of his personality.

And I must say a few words about this personality. We cannot do better than quote Bosworth Smith in this connection: "In the shepherd of the scrub, in the Syrian trader, in the solitary of Mount Hera, in the reformer in the minority of one, in the exile of Medina, in the acknowledged conqueror, in the equal of the Persian Croesus and the Greek Heraclius, we can still trace a substantial unity. I doubt whether any other man, whose external conditions changed so much, ever himself changed less to meet them; the accidents are changed, the essence seems to be the same in all."

It is a huge task and a vast subject to do justice to the character of Muhammad; so historical and eventful and instructive is his life. It was but necessary to utter a few words in commemoration of his name, and this I have done.

Now, one word to my friends of the other religions. Justice is the least thing we owe to our fellow-beings. Every one of us owes justice to that great man whose name is known to every civilized man. Even a cursory glance at his life will tell us that Muhammad had some thought for humanity. A peep at his character will tell us at once that he represented something very useful to man. Is it anything but justice,

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therefore, to try to ascertain what his mission was and what was specifically human about the man? And then, when we have understood what these were, is it not right that we should recognize in him a true brother of ours, a friend and a helper in the otherwise dark pathway of this life of struggle and temptation? Yes, so he is. He is an asset to humanity, and the recognition of this fact has become imperative.

THE TABLE-TALK OF THE HOLY PROPHET OF DUMB ANIMALS

FEAR God in respect of animals: ride them when they are fit to be ridden, and get off when they are tired.

A man came before the Prophet with a carpet and said, "O Prophet, I passed through a wood and heard the voices of the young of birds; and I took and put them into my carpet; and their mother came fluttering round my head, and I uncovered the young, and the mother fell down upon them, then I wrapped them up in my carpet; and there are the young which I have." Then the Prophet said, "Put them down." And when he did so their mother joined them; and the Prophet said, "Do you wonder at the affection of the mother towards the young? I swear by Him Who hath sent me, verily God is more loving to His servants than the mother to these young birds. Return them to the place from which ye took them, and let their mother be with them."

Verily there are rewards for our doing good to dumb animals, and giving them water to drink. An adulteress was forgiven who passed by a dog at a well; for the dog was holding out his tongue from thirst, which was near killing him; and the woman took off her boot, and tied it to the end of her garment, and drew water for the dog, and gave him to drink; and she was forgiven for that act.

OF HOSPITALITY

When a man cometh into his house and remembereth God and repeateth His name at eating his meals, the Devil sayeth to his followers, "Here is no place for you to stay in to-night, nor is there any supper for you." And when a man cometh into his house without remembering God's name, the Devil sayeth to his followers, "You have got a place to spend the night in."

Whosoever believeth in God and the Day of Resurrection must respect his guest, and the time of being kind to him is one day and one night, and the period of entertaining him is three days, and after that, if he doth it longer, he benefiteth him more. It is not right for a guest to stay in the house of the host so long as to inconvenience him.

I heard this: that God is pure, and loveth purity; and God is liberal, and loveth liberality; God is munificent, and loveth munificence; then keep the courts of your house clear, and do not be like Jews who do not clean the courts of their houses.

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

CHAPTER V

MODEL OF ACTION

JESUS AND MUHAMMAD

It is painful for Christians, as Dean Swan remarks, to be told that the Muslim world speaks of Jesus as a Prophet, yet some Christian controversialists attempt comparison between him and our Holy Prophet, thereby inviting us to meet them on their own ground. I, personally, find invidious comparison a particularly odious task. Though some of the remarks in the Dean's address induced me to refer to the subject, yet I was by no means clear as to what my course should have been, until quite unexpectedly a letter reached me from the U.S.A. from a notorious religionist deeply interested in foreign missions, in which he offers the same challenge. We Muslims have been ordered by the Qur-án to make no difference between prophet and prophet (ii. 136); but the Church accepts her Lord as a God which, candidly speaking, is an insult to the monotheistic sense innate in a Muslim. Though Jesus evinced many human infirmities, yet dogmatic theology asks us to accept these infirmities as manifestations of certain Divine traits commingled with humanity. It asserts that when God appeared as man He was pleased to choose humble parentage with women like Rahab and Uriah's wife among His ancestors. It is also said He suffered indignity and disgrace for the same—a thing which transcends any possible human conception of the Supreme Being. Ancient India has also believed in Gods-incarnate, but most of them, like Ram Chander, Krishna, and Paras Ram, possessed power that betokened a shadow of the Lord. In my own humble opinion all this shame and disgrace that fell to the lot of Jesus was a warning that a person with such a faith, though a very great man and a martyr for the Truth, cannot be God—the Ruler of all that is in heaven and on earth.

Natural theology is now an established fact. The work

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of Nature discloses certain indications of the Hand behind the scene which may, be safely taken as the very best criterion whereby to judge the claims of the Lord of Christianity to Godhood. I am glad to note that the last book of God has helped us greatly in this matter. It speaks of 100 Attributes of God, as I have mentioned before. They enumerate the Divine ways of the Lord that are observable in Nature as appertaining to Him. They also may be taken as an exemplar for our own mode of life. We have been told in the Qur-án that we have come here as vicegerents of God. To us have potentially been delegated the powers signified by the Holy Names. We are also told that all our chances of success and happiness lie in equipping ourselves with these Divine Qualities, and I therefore take the Sacred Names as our guide in considering the position of the Lord Christ. In this case, though the Excellent Names represent the potential qualities of a perfect man, yet Jesus, according to the Gospels, seems to have lacked many of them. For example, I find the following Names in the Sacred List. Of some of them I have made mention in former pages, together with their meanings, but in order to refresh the memories of my readers (since it seems to me immensely important that we should decide this vexed question between Christianity and Islam) I take the liberty of repeating what I have already said.

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| (1) " Ar-Rahmān." | He Whose blessings come to men unmerited and of His own accord, in every respect. |
| (2) " Ar-Rahīm." | He Who gives manifold rewards to our actions. |
| (3) " Al-Karīm." | Bounteous. |
| (4) " Al-Wahhāb." | He Who showers His blessings on others regardless of their merits. |
| (5) " Al-Razzāq." | Nourisher. |
| (6) " Al-Mu'tī." | The Giver of Gifts. |
| (7) " Al-Ghanī " and | He Who is rich Himself and enriches |
| (8) " Al-Mughnī." | others. |
| (9) " As-Samad." | He Who looks to the needs of others and on Whom all depend for their needs. |
| (10) " Al-Wālī." | The Guardian of others. |
| (11) " Al-Mujīb." | He Who answers prayers. |
| (12) " Ar-Ra'ūf." | He Who, out of kindness, wards off from others impending troubles and evils. |

MODEL OF ACTION

- (13) " Al-Muhaimin." He Who guards others in the time of danger.
- (14) " Al-Hāfiz." The Protector.
- (15) " Al-Hafiz." One immune from dangers.
- (16) "Māliki Yaumi 'd-Dīn" Master of the Day of Requital.
- (17) " Al-Tawwāb." The Acceptor of Repentance.
- (18) " As-Shakūr." He Who rewards others generously for small deeds.
- (19) " Al-Hamīd." He Who is praised in every way.
- (20) " Al-Hasīb." He Who is sufficient as a Reckoner or as a Giver of what suffices.
- (21) " Al-Muq̄sit." He Who acts equitably and justly.
- (22) " Al-Majid." He Who possesses glory and dignity. He Who is righteous in His actions as well as munificent.
- (23) " Al-Wāsi'." Ample in His means to keep others from straitened circumstances. Liberal in disposition.
- (24) " Al-Wakīl." He Who is relied upon in the management of affairs.
- (25) " Al-Shāhid." He Who is present and bears witness to things rightly.
- (26) " Al-Ahad." The One, The Unique in His ways.
- (27) " Al-Muta'ālī." Superior to others in all excellent qualities.
- (28) " Zu 'l-Jalāli wa 'l-Ikrām." He Who possesses greatness, majesty, and bounty.
- (29) " Al-Barr." The Compassionate, The Benign to His servants, The Boundless in goodness and beneficence.
- (30) " Al-Bāqī." He Who survives others and keeps things intact, or in the state in which they are.
- (31) " Al-Rāfi'." He Who raises another's status and condition.
- (32) " Al-Mu'izz." He Who increases honour for others; and
- (33) " Al-Muzill." He Who degrades others in rank.
- (34) " Al-Hayy." He Who is ever-living and makes others so.
- (35) " Al-Qayyūm." He Who is self-subsistent and makes others so.
- (36) " Al-Mumit." He Who puts another to death.
- (37) " Al-Muqaddim." He Who gives others preference or promotes.
- (38) " Al-Mu'akhkhir." He Who reduces others to the lowest grade.
- (39) " Al-Awwal." The First.
- (40) " Al-Ākhir." The Last.
- (41) " Al-Matīn." The Strong, The Firm, The Hard.
- (42) " Al-Wājid." He Who knows the whereabouts of all things.
- (43) " Al-Muntaqim." He Who, for the establishing of good, avenges Himself upon wrong-doers.
- (44) " Al-Walī." The Owner, The Protector.

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|----------------------|---|
| (45) "Al-'Azīz." | The Mighty, Potent, Powerful. |
| (46) "Al-Jabbār" and | He Who is powerful and influential in |
| (47) "Al-Qahhār." | bringing others under His control. |
| (48) "Al-Qawiyy." | One Who possesses both physical and |
| | spiritual strength in the highest degree. |
| (49) "Al-Qādir." | One Who has achieved the highest in |
| | wisdom and knowledge, which He uses |
| | with Powers enough to surmount all |
| | opposition that may come in His way. |
| (50) "Al-Jalīl." | The Doer of such things that may excite |
| | the wonder and surprise of others. |

I have only given here half of the Sacred List. I have left all the Names which speak of God's Knowledge, Wisdom, Design and Control of the Universe. Before I go further I would ask my readers to bear in mind that we have to consider the case of Jesus as narrated in the biblical record. Without questioning its veracity we are prepared to accept it as it stands, and yet that record does not disclose any action of the Master that may reasonably be included under these Names. I again request my Christian friends to beware of the vicious circle.

They regard him as God and are welcome to believe that he did possess potentially all that is signified by the above Names; but they must also bear in mind that negative virtues are no virtues. A person may be credited with a certain moral, but he cannot claim to possess it until he has put theory into practice under conditions which will supply a sufficient test. It is for us to consider the case of Jesus without any prepossession or prejudice; to see whether potentialities, in the case of Jesus, became actualized. I may say that, in my opinion, he did not possess even a tittle of the qualities disclosed by the above Names.

I have made every allowance in favour of Jesus. I have eliminated, intentionally, certain of the Divine Names which may with some stretch of imagination be held to be applicable to him, such as "Al-'Affuw"—The Pardonner; "Al-Ghafūr"—The Great Forgiver; "Al-Wadūd"—He Who loves intensely; "Al-Nāfi'"—The Profitable; "Al-Halīm"—Forbearer; "Al-Haqq"—He Who is right and truthful; "As-Sabūr"—The Patient, The Great Sufferer. Some few other Names may in

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like manner be applied to Jesus, but these words are so rich in their meanings that some of their applications cannot be found in him. For instance, "Al-Haqq" means Truthful and The Correct, but it also means that His words and actions must suit the occasion. Similarly, "As-Sabūr" not only conveys the idea of suffering but it signifies the "Patience" which is shown by people when they wait for the good result of their actions in unfavourable circumstances.

Jesus in some cases seems to manifest a high morality, but to fall short in some respects. For example, "Forgiveness" is a supreme moral virtue. It may be said that he forgave his enemies, especially when he was on the Cross. But the quality of forgiveness needs other essentials. There are four things necessary for its completion. First, the person must be persecuted by his enemies; secondly, he must overcome his enemies, and bring them crawling to his feet. Thirdly, he is justified in punishing them in requital for their former persecution. Fourthly, "forgiveness" comes from him of his own volition. In the case of Jesus only two out of these four essentials are found. No one came to him to ask for forgiveness, nor were his enemies ever at his mercy.

In vain we turn page after page of secular or sacred history to find an illustration of the case in the life of any great man. The only noble exception occurred in Mecca on the triumphal entry of the Holy Prophet Muhammad into that town, when he gave unconditional pardon to thousands of his implacable enemies who had ruthlessly been oppressing him and his companions for years. Ram Chandra, Krishna, and various prophets of Israel saw their enemies at their feet, but they preferred to punish them severely. The manifestation of true forgiveness would have been unheard of in the world had it not been for the example of the Arabian Prophet.

I may here refer to some others of the Divine Names which may be claimed by the Church for her Master. "Al-Awwal"—The First, and "Al-Ākhir"—The Last, are the two Names of God as mentioned above. It may be said that they apply to Jesus because of the words "I am Alpha and Omega" ("Beginning and the End," saith the Lord). But

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similar words are said to have been uttered by Bacchus centuries before. They were taken from Greek writings and were put into the mouth of Jesus by the Evangelists. Besides, words are no proof of realities. "Al-Ahad" is another Name of God, signifying The Unique, The One, which may be taken to refer to the miracles of Jesus as well as to the miracle of his birth. But the biblical record divests him of this claim also, since he did not perform a single miracle the parallel of which has not been reported as having been wrought by other prophets in the Bible.¹ The Qur-án says the same thing.² He may be taken as having no father, but Adam was without father and mother. We also read of another person referred to by St. Paul, named Melchisedek,³ who had neither mother nor father, nor beginning nor ending.

I have approached Jesus with all the reverence to which he is entitled as a prophet and a great personality in history, but I failed to read anything in his story as given in the Bible that leads me to accept him as our God. The Holy Names which I have mentioned above signify character which, the book of Nature tells us, is possessed by its Maker. They are also the qualities of the perfect man and were revealed to us that we might imitate them. The Dean would probably agree with me when I say that we do not find them indicated in the life of Jesus.

Moreover, Jesus, as a man, cannot be taken as a universal model of action for humanity. To begin with, more than half of our life is usually occupied in domestic affairs. We have various responsibilities towards each other. We are fathers, sons, and husbands. The most difficult problem in domestic experience is that of husband and wife. Our conduct in the family makes of our life a heaven or a hell. But, unfortunately, we cannot look to Jesus in this respect for a model since he never married. His unmarried life unfortunately encouraged the institution of celibacy, and some of his words seem to have enjoined it, thus bringing into existence that

¹ 1 Kings xvii. 15, 23; 2 Kings v. 3; xi. 8; Josh. iii. 10, 16; Exod. xiv. 21.

² Holy Qur-án, v. 75.

³ Heb. vi. 20; and vii. 1-3

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monastic life which has proved so terrible a moral flaw in the social fabric. We read the following in the Qur-án: "And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him and goodness to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them (so much as) 'Ugh' nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word" (xvii. 23). But we are horrified when we find Jesus reported in the Gospels as saying to his Holy Mother: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" The Qur-án acquits him of this and declares him to have been most respectful and kind to his mother.¹ It is quite possible that Mary did not follow the views of her Son, but Islam teaches us to remain always reverential to our parents, whatsoever may be their beliefs. We also find no illustration in him of the conduct that we should observe in our dealings with other relatives or friends. Even as citizens we can find no guidance in the Nazarene. Our natural sense of politeness hardly permits us to speak of our fellow-countrymen as a "generation of vipers," especially when we know that "serpent" in Jewish phraseology meant Satan. He may be taken as a good example of a recluse; but we have various mundane affairs to which our existence compels us to attend, and which are indispensable to our happiness and comfort. Jesus laid down certain rudimentary principles of socialism, but even the firmest advocates of the system would hardly care to follow the Master in his socialistic tenets. The right of ownership is the only incentive to activity in life, but the Gentle Philosopher seems to ignore it absolutely, nor does he care greatly for knowledge or any other of the recognized means for worldly success.

If we separate his sermons, prayers, curses, and miracles from his life record, his whole history can be written in three or four pages. It cannot, even when most favourably considered, be accepted as a complete model for our actions; and I may mention here some of the most important functions of human society without which it cannot go on. We must have some sort of sovereign political authority to control affairs, whether this be king, parliament, or president. We

¹ Holy Qur-án, xix. 32.

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also need a statesman, a law-giver, a warrior, a judge, and a maintainer of peace, and a code of ethics which will make for success in business. The tradesman is a very necessary element in society. But we find no recognition of this fact in the life of Jesus. How, then, can we look to him as our model? Rather should we look to Muhammad, as I will explain later on.

Jesus, no doubt, gave us admirable sermons and parables, but we find a large portion of them in the Talmud, Mishna, and the sayings of Lord Buddha, who appeared some five thousand years before Jesus; while the Jewish Scriptures were also in existence before he was born. But even the sermons would seem to be of little practical value, seeing that the precepts still remain as unrealizable. Besides, teachings are no index of their teacher's character. The world has seen many persons who, while not scrupling to commit sin, have nevertheless left us the most beautiful and edifying books on ethics and morality.

The Sermon on the Mount seems to have been delivered by the Gentle Nazarene after he had emerged from some kind of monastic seclusion. His mind is full of certain principles which he probably learnt from the Essenes. He had had, till then, no experience of practical life and could not translate those principles into practice. No sooner did he appear in public than he poured out all the innermost thoughts of his breast; but further experience in life changed his views. The teacher of "turn the other cheek" doctrine could not see any good in the principle of submission to evil and ordered his disciples to "sell their garments in order to purchase swords." The Prince of Peace had to say, "I come not to bring peace, but a sword," and this teaching still appeals to his followers. They have sent sword and fire into every corner of the world, and there has never been any cult so inconsistent in precept and example. The Missionary Societies all over the world preach the soothing morality of Jesus as expressed in the Sermons; but after them come other followers of the Master, who fill the earth with human blood. The three M's—Merchants, Military, and Missionary—are sent

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to foreign lands, one after another, rather to secure political supremacy for the Western peoples than any moral victory for Jesus, because they unfortunately have carried with them the sins of drinking, gambling, and prostitution into regions where these evils had never hitherto been known.

The life of Muhammad cuts quite a different figure in the history of the world. He leaves us a complete record of his life. Though of noble extraction, he was born an orphan. He left the world when the whole country was at his feet. From a humble condition of life up to perfect prosperity he passed through and experienced every shade and form of honest living. His avocations were numerous and important, involving a profound knowledge of, and sympathy with, his fellow-men. He had, in fact, every opportunity for displaying the highest moral conduct in every walk of life. It would require volumes to deal adequately with a subject so vast. I would say here just a word to enable my readers to gain a true insight into his character. His morals were the morals of the Qur-án, so his companions were wont to say when describing his character. If they were asked to explain any Qur-ánic precept, they would refer to the conduct of the Holy Prophet, and if one should inquire as to his actions in connection with any particular phase of life, they would quote the Qur-án. The Holy Book was, as it were, a true portrait of Muhammad, while his life is the best commentary on the Qur-án. His history also authentically confirms the fact that he was the first person among all the Muslims around him who translated every good precept into practice. The Holy Book also bears testimony to this (vi. 163). Outspoken and frank in their utterances as were the Arabs of the Prophet's day, we do not find in the Traditions that they had ever any occasion to detect in the conduct of the Prophet anything contrary to Islamic teaching. I have already, in the course of the present work, enumerated the elements of the Islamic faith given by him; I have also set forth in these pages some eighty Holy Names of God; and if Muhammad acted up to the high morality demanded by the Holy Names and the various aspects of the faith, I do not see in history any man

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—or even God-incarnate—other than Muhammad, who could be a better model for our actions.

All that has been written by hostile critics as to the life of the Prophet throws an interesting light on the question. I find many stories afloat in the enemies' camp which are pure fabrications—a circumstance also pointed out by Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. One of these stories is of an alleged massacre in Mecca by the Holy Prophet. His private character as a whole, as admitted even by his foes, was above reproach. It was pure, chaste, and lovable. But his critics, when writing of his public life, labour under a certain confusion of ideas. They do not care to distinguish between principle and principle, and the action actuated thereby. Everything that has appeared questionable to others in Muhammad is a matter of principle. We should first see the advisability and the utility or otherwise of the principle in its abstract form, and then to criticize its translation into action. For instance, it is said that the Holy Prophet should not have married more wives than one at a time. Jesus, as I have already remarked, cannot give us guidance in this matter. Although he came to reform a tribe which was polygamous, and he himself was born in a similar family, he did not say a single word against the institution. Monogamy is not a Christian virtue. It was introduced, as a law, by Justinian—a Roman Emperor and law-giver. Christianity, indeed, had favoured polygamy for centuries. Many bishops, before modern days, used to have several unofficial wives. All other of the greater characters in sacred or secular history in every country had more than one wife under their roofs; and this was under the sanction of their various religions. The question is really between polygamy and monogamy. The former was in practice even in the best and most moral circles everywhere before the advent of Islam. The Prophet came to enforce a most desirable restriction as to number. Polygamy in Islam was a remedial law that came into operation under certain conditions of life. It would be too long a digression from my subject if I dwell further here upon this point; but I give instance. If conjugal companionship is our birthright,

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polygamy is a necessity when circumstances cause a decrease in the male population. The Great War has furnished the same problem, since it left five or six times more women than men in some European countries. England had about two million more women than men before the war, but that Armageddon doubled the number. The number of women in Nottingham was four times that of men, as was pointed out by one of the London daily newspapers in 1925. If conjugal connection is a life instinct, as I said before, polygamy or else illicit connection is the only remedy. English legislation was forced to recognize that necessity by granting the so-called War-Baby Pensions. Al-Qur-án sanctioned, for the first time, polygamy under similar circumstances. The battles of Badr and Uhud had shattered the Muslim ranks. They had reduced the male population of the Muslim community, which was already very limited in number. These wars left a large number of widows and orphans without any protector. Now the Islamic polity does not permit a woman to live under the roof of a man who does not stand either in marital relation or in a prohibited degree of marriage to her. Such a wise principle is alone able to maintain the health and purity of morals in any society. Polygamy, after the above-mentioned battles, which were to be followed by similar events, was the only alternative, and it was resorted to under Qur-ánic injunctions. After the death of the Lady Khadija, the first wife of the Prophet, he married only one virgin. Neither beauty nor wealth was his motive in his other marriages. All his subsequent wives were widows and mostly wives of those of his friends who had given their lives in support of his faith. These noble ladies had no one to befriend them; in some cases no other person would sue them in marriage. Some had passed the middle age; none possessed the charms of youth; and they stood in urgent need of some sort of protection and maintenance; so the Holy Prophet had compassion on them.

The question, as I said before, is one of principle, and with it goes the consequent action. Marriage in Islam is a civil institution sanctified by religion. It is also a matter of economy to be resorted to when needful. But if the circum-

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stances of society do not admit of polygamy it can be dispensed with without interfering with the teachings of the Qur-án; and modern Turkey in disallowing it has done nothing against Islam.

The Holy Prophet has been also blamed for his warfare. This criticism does not come well from Christians, whose scriptures have commanded the unsheathing of swords and the extermination of enemies. Jesus also, as he admits, came to "send not peace, but a sword" into the world, and would have done so had it been possible. To ensure peace it is necessary at all times to be prepared for war. The Great War was waged between Christian nations. Every nation engaged in it had the sanction and prayers of its clergy to support it. The Bishop of London led a pious army on a day of intercession. He spoke in Hyde Park of the necessity of fighting. He went so far as to say that war was a necessity and in accordance with religion. We cannot exist unless we are prepared to resist those who disturb our peace and are not amenable to law. The world had need of a warrior prophet to give us, by precept and practice, a code of military ethics. This was Muhammad's task, since the problem had, before his time, never been properly defined. He gave us the last and most desirable laws in the matter,¹ one of them appertaining to war captivity.

Slavery was another curse of humanity. Unfortunately, it had received the sanction of every religion before Islam. The Roman, Judaic, and other laws of the world, including those of Christendom, encouraged slavery. After the Romans, Christian Europe permitted slavery in its worst form. Slaves were the subject of the Treaty between fighting nations in Europe. London was a notorious market until comparatively recent times for slave traffic. No prophet of the world, including Jesus, concerned himself with this accursed institution which afflicted nearly the half of humanity. Muhammad, for the first time in the world's history, abolished practically all forms of slavery, the only exception permitted by the Qur-án being in the case of prisoners-of-war (viii. 67). This will last

¹ See *Islam and Civilization*, by the same author.

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as long as war lasts. It will automatically cease when the sword is actually and permanently sheathed; and I am happy to note that the period has been foretold by the Holy Prophet when war shall disappear from the world.

The taking of prisoners-of-war has been allowed by all International Laws. The Hague Conference made provision for political prisoners. But these were set at naught by the belligerent nations in the Great War. But it is noteworthy that the laws framed by Islam are more humane than those since promulgated by others. It is the beauty of those laws that brought many so-called slaves under Islam to positions of authority in the country. A Slave Dynasty has been a famous ruling family in India. Mr. Lane Poole has very rightly remarked that the slave of to-day becomes the son-in-law of to-morrow in Muslim families.

In short, I fail to see any public action of the Prophet which if criticized involves a matter of principle.

In this connection I would briefly refer to the event which the Dean has been pleased to call the " Massacre of the Jews in Medina " by the Holy Prophet. The killing of a culprit is no offence if the culprit deserves it. Nothing is, in itself, evil, it is only wrong or untimely use which makes it so. The Holy Prophet, after his flight to Medina, found the town occupied by a heterogeneous population differing widely from each other in their beliefs and manners. He created a régime of democracy with himself as president, to which everyone in the town and the regions thereto adjacent submitted. All the tribes there entered into a defensive alliance. They were to help each other when attacked by an enemy from without, and were not to conspire with such an enemy against the people of Medina. A treaty was entered into to this effect and all agreed to refrain from any act of sedition. But a certain Jewish tribe, the " Bani-Quraiza " by name, were false from the very beginning. They were continually conspiring with the enemy. Islam was making headway, and this they could not stand. They therefore sent secretly to the Meccans and invited them to attack Medina. The enemy came in hordes, numbering upwards of ten thousand. They besieged

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the town, which had been strongly entrenched by the Prophet, for several days, while the aforesaid Jewish tribe not only did not help the besieged, but became an open enemy, informing the Meccans of everything going on in Medina. But the siege was raised; the Meccans fled and left the Prophet victorious. Thereupon he asked the Jews to explain their conduct, and they, in turn, demanded trial by an independent tribunal. To this the Prophet agreed, and left them the choice of their judge. They selected Sa'd-bin-Waqqās to decide the case. He found them guilty and passed sentence of death on the traitors in accordance with their revealed law as given in the Bible; and the sentence was duly carried out. Can the Dean cite any code of law or equity that would justify him in calling this action of the Prophet a massacre? I may remind him of a similar occurrence in his own country of England during the Great War. Sir Roger Casement, an Irish ex-Civil Servant, conspired with the Germans and invited them to Ireland in order to attack England. The mischief was discovered and Casement was tried for high treason. He was convicted and sentenced to death. The King was petitioned for mercy, but the law had to take its course. I do not see much difference between the two cases.

CHAPTER VI

A DECISIVE WORD

THERE is no ground for reconciliation between Islam and Christianity. It is not so much that they differ from each other in detail as that they are diametrically opposed in their basic principles. Religion has come to set our nature on the right path and to carry it to perfection. All other things in the universe have the same religion for their advancement. They have before them a prescribed course given to them by their Creator, by pursuing which they will reach their respective goals. Human nature, moreover, is a repository of various capabilities, and stands in need of similar assistance if it is to bring its faculties to fruition. But the two faiths differ from each other in their view of our nature. They are like signposts pointing in opposite directions, suggesting opposite ways which are incapable of meeting.

We need not, therefore, enter into any detailed and elaborate arguments in the matter. We have only to consider the basic principles aforesaid to come to a right conclusion. I will state quite simply the fundamentals of the two religions and will leave the decision to the judgment of my readers. Our nature, according to Church theology, is corrupt and sinful by its very birth. Sin is innate in us. It comes to us as a heritage from our first parents who committed the first sin in the Garden of Eden. Their sins are upon us, and for them we have been doomed to eternal damnation.

Sin means the breaking of the law. We therefore were incapable, from the very beginning, of observing it; but yet God was pleased to send us His Laws, through His several Messengers, for four thousand years. The long experience proved ineffectual and we were found to be criminal by nature. We deserved punishment, but the Love of God sought to save us. On the other hand, His justice demanded a punishment for the inherited sin, so He contrived a new scheme of salvation and came Himself to pay the penalty. He sent His

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only begotten Son two thousand years ago to bear our sins, who became accursed by reason of the curse on us. His Blood appeased the Divine Anger, and the Children of Wrath became the Children of Grace, since he had atoned for our sins.

The epiphany of the Church, inspired by the Holy Ghost, proposed, thereupon, participation in the Holy Communion in order to transform our sinful nature into a righteous one. No sooner does a believer in the Blood partake of the Sacred Elements—the consecrated Bread and Wine—than they become the blood and flesh of Jesus in the sinner's body—it is metaphorically, or literally as the Romish Church holds. It washes off all the impurities of our nature, as it communes with the nature of Jesus Christ and becomes *at-one* with Him. For this reason the Eucharistic meal has been given the name of the Holy Communion. Our sinful nature is purified thereby. It becomes clean and white like snow. It makes us acceptable to the Divine Presence and permits us to enter into His Garden. But those who neither believe in the Blood of Christ nor participate in the Eucharist are condemned to eternal perdition. It becomes necessary, therefore, that every child should be baptized at birth if he is not to be claimed by the fires of Hell, seeing that he is born in sin. For this reason all such children as are not baptized immediately after their birth go to Hell if they die. Consequently every stillborn child, and every child who dies before he can receive baptism, is not buried in the consecrated ground which is reserved for the baptized. The Russians a few centuries back used to burn such babies—by way of aid, perhaps, to the wrathful God in the matter of punishment. Thus we are born for Hell if not redeemed by the sprinkling of holy water on our heads.

But birthplace or parentage is a matter of accident; we may or may not be born under a Christian roof. It is believed, therefore, that God has already chosen some of us for the heavenly life and that these are born in a house where they can receive baptism. This belief in predestination is one of the doctrines of the Church—we find it in the Athanasian Creed, and as a logical sequence thereto those who never heard of Jesus nor of the Gospel of the Blood come also under the

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category of the condemned, because no one will be received by God without some intermediary or intercessor, who is the Lord Jesus Christ. The whole universe, according to Christian cosmography, is a three-storied house with the earth as the middle floor. The upper story is meant for the saved souls, while those who did not believe in the Blood will go to the lower.

I have given here a faithful picture of Christian doctrines; I need not subject them to any criticism. The reader may see for himself what they are worth, in the light of his own observation and his knowledge of nature in general. Now I give the Islamic point of view.

According to Islam every person enters into this world with a sinless nature. He may be of any parentage—Muslim or non-Muslim—he is pure. If he dies at his birth, or before he reaches an age to distinguish between right and wrong, he enters into the garden of Heaven. Human nature, according to the Qur-ánic teachings, is originally free from any taint or imperfection. It has been created to obey the Law (v. 56). In fact, it is a God-given nature in which we are born (xxx. 30), full of wonderful capacities (xcv. 4); and we receive revelation from on high for its development (ii. 5). This, according to Islam, is the main and sole object of religion sent from God. A like religion has been given to every other thing in Nature. They follow it by instinct and bring forth what is latent in them. We are the best handiwork of God. We have to officiate for Him on the earth (ii. 30); and need a similar religion to claim the Divine Heritage. We are given the knowledge of the right path. If we take it, we reach the goal (xci. 8-9), but if we do not, our innate faculties become stunted—sometimes perverted—and our progress is checked. We are in the course of evolution. We have already passed various stages of growth before we are born into this conscious world on the earth. We are progressive and not retrogressive. We never go back, but move onward and upward, though our journey is sometimes retarded because we fail to acquire the necessary qualifications for the further stages. Seeing that the blemishes of the past stage, in every progressive entity, if accompanying it in the new stage, create a hindrance, so that

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it cannot go further unless and until the said blemishes are removed, every stage in its progress is a stage of preparation for that to come. We enter into this conscious order to qualify ourselves for a further journey after our death in the world of morals and spirituality. If we enter into the life beyond the grave properly prepared, we are accorded admission into what is called Heaven. But if our faculties, by reason of our disregard of the Law given us in this world for preparation, cannot develop, but have become corrupt, our progress is thereby checked and we must remove the stigma if we are to qualify ourselves for further progress. Since we have entered into the new world with a diseased soul, we need treatment of a purgatorial nature which must naturally be painful. This is Hell. This cleanses us of all impurities and fits us for advancement. Hell has, for this reason, been described in the Qur-án as our mother (xci. 9) or friend (li. 15), because maternal affection would subject a child to the pain of a surgical operation to free its body from a poisonous ulcer from which it was suffering. The Heaven and Hell of the Qur-án are not confined to any locality. They are only our mental and spiritual conditions, and the whole universe will act for us according to the preparation we have made for the future. Here, our movements are confined to terrestrial regions, but in future the whole face of Nature will be the scene of activities with unlimited progress before them (lvii. 21).

Every religion speaks generally of man as an image of God, but the Qur-án is more explicit. It says that we have been sent here to act as His vicegerents on earth (ii. 30). We have therefore been given the best and highest faculties (xcv. 4) to enable us to act as such. In short, we are capable of imbuing ourselves with Divine Morals, and for this purpose some hundred Attributes of God have been revealed to us in the Book. They do not exhaust the list of His Holy Names, but they are such attributes as we can conceive of and imitate. We have also been shown the way to equip ourselves with them, and this has been called " Law " in the Qur-án. We have been told to follow it so that we may perform here the duties of the Divine Viceroy. The religion of the Qur-án is

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not Legalism, as it is ironically termed by Christian critics, but a supreme code of life.

It should not be forgotten, however, that we have risen from animality, and bring with us its carnal passions by way of legacy. These hankerings, in their refined form, act as a life instinct in us and urge us to efforts for our own happiness and comfort. But if these passions remain in their inceptive form unbridled, uncontrolled, and we act as the animals do, our actions take the form of sin. In fact, almost every form of sin is an action allowable in the animal kingdom; but we belong to humanity, and we should act in a manner befitting the condition of life which is ours. Therefore, we have need of rules to regulate our actions. Of course, the breakers of the Law must be punished, but those who have not received the Law should be exempted from its penalty, as the Qur-án says (xvii. 15). But since everyone is endowed by Nature with common sense, and the rudimentary laws of morality are, as it were, imprinted on his heart, though he may not have received the revealed "Law," he will be dealt with according to the measure of the knowledge he has received, by Him Who knows the recesses of the heart.

Let everyone judge for himself whether Islam or Christianity fulfils the demands of justice and propriety.

Again, those who do good actions—which means fulfilment of the "Law"—have been told that they will receive ample rewards from their Lord (vi. 161). But for sinners no provision like that of atonement has been made. The door of repentance remains ever open to them, as I said before, and they will come under the mercy of the Lord if they make amends. But no one will bear their burden for them and no one will act as intercessor or intermediary with the Lord. Favouritism or intercession, whether in the guise of atonement or in any other form, weakens the sense of responsibility in man; and so it has not been favourably spoken of in our Book. Intercession with the Lord is doubtless allowed in very rare cases, but the intermediary, it is said, will not go against the will of the Most High (xliii. 86-87), and will intercede only with previous sanction from Him (*ibid*).

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To strengthen the sense of responsibility in us we have been clearly told that we shall reap what we have sown. If we do good, it is for ourselves. If we do wrong, it is upon our soul (xvii. 15). Even a tittle of good or evil shall have its requital (xcix. 7-8).

We are told that God, of His own beneficence, has given us enough material for our comfort; and it is said that nothing in heaven and on earth is vain (iii. 190). Everything has some use for our benefit (ii. 22), but we have been commanded to acquire the knowledge necessary for bringing the whole of Nature under our governance; for it has been declared that on the attainment of the necessary knowledge we shall become the Lords of Nature, and all her powers will be made obedient to us (ii. 34). In short, everything in the universe, including the sun and the other luminaries, has been created as our servants (xvi. 12); but further enlightenment and help come only to those who properly utilize the God-given gifts, and besides the necessities of life God has created every kind of comfort in this world for our use, making it lawful for us so long as we do not abuse it (vii. 32).

For every good action this reward is multiplied, but evil is recompensed only according to its own measure (vi. 161). God in no case changes our conditions (xiii. 11). His actions follow our actions like a shadow. We begin to "move," and the Divine Reward or His forgiveness or punishment follows.

I have given here the basic doctrines of the Qur-án which may act as an ethical system for the conduct of our life on earth. We know nothing of the future; all that we do is in the light of what has been revealed to us in our respective scriptures; but in the affairs of the world we can easily see that the principles laid down by the Qur-án will certainly secure us happiness, comfort, and prosperity. And we are told that the life to come is the shadow of this life, as we find everywhere in evolution. This life is a life compounded of physical, moral, and spiritual natures. We have been shown the way to subordinate our physical nature and make it subservient to the moral and spiritual order. But the life to

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come will be purely moral and spiritual in character, with our best morality in this life to act as a foundation.

So far as I understand the case, sin plays a most important part in both theologies. It is a heritage under Christianity, while only an acquisition in Islam, earned by breaking the Law. Sin cannot be got rid of by any good action, the Church teaches, while Islam promises us a sinless life free from diabolic control (xv. 42) if we follow its injunctions. Sin is an invincible thing, says the Church, and man is compelled to throw down his arms and seek refuge in the Grace of the Blood. Islam, on the other hand, fortifies us so that we fight manfully against the devil, and subdue him. A word more ere I conclude this chapter. Heaven in this life or in the hereafter is our birth-right under Islam which we lose by our own misdeeds; but according to Church doctrine we are born for Hell, unless we become regenerated through Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER VII

MODERNISM

A NEW CREED DESIRED

THE Bishop of Birmingham, Dr. Barnes, at the Birmingham Diocesan Conference, 1931, expressed a desire for a new creed, "For creeds [according to him] were not vitally infallible in both religion and science."

The tender conscience of the person wishing to be ordained is required to reconcile itself to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Church at the expense both of common sense and acquired knowledge.¹ The Modernists of to-day seek to relieve such ordinants of the burden and agitate for the repudiation of everything of pagan origin now existing in Christianity.

But Modernization is not a feature peculiar to the Church of England. It has been resorted to in other religions too, and appeared over and over again in the Western Church. Islam, however, is an exception. In Islam there has never been any Modernist movement, and this for obvious reasons. The Qur-ánic tenets are not based on human traditions which so often are but the foundation of speculative theology. Such traditions often fail totally before the onset of new ideas. They are therefore modified from time to time, so as to bring them into harmony with modern thought. Old wine is put into new bottles to pander to new tastes. We pull old theology to pieces to make a new one, only to pull that to pieces in its turn after a little time. Religion from God remains unchangeable. His created things suffice to meet every newly arisen need, as they come from an Omniscient Mind. The Holy Qur-án compares speculative theology with the spider's house, which it declares to be the weakest of all houses. All animals, including man, usually make use of materials produced by Nature when building their houses. But the material used by the spider comes from her own stomach. Every gust of wind breaks the house to pieces, but the spider remains too

¹ *Islamic Review*, Vol. XIX, No. 9.

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busy to fashion it anew. And so it is with all religions which place man on the altar of God. They give to their theology a shape spun, as it were, from their own minds, which cannot stand the tests of days to come; modernization is then resorted to, and the faith is recast in a new mould. The Divinity of Jesus, the basis of the Church religion, has always been in the melting-pot. It received a new construction every time that each successive generation of Early Fathers tried to explain the nature of Jesus as God; and the relation existing between his flesh and the Holy Ghost. Their explanation was never a final one, but was always rejected by their successors, who in turn formulated their views in new beliefs, which in their turn had to give place to other beliefs. In short, the spirit of modernity was constantly in evidence and beliefs were constantly changing or assuming a new form. The Apostle's Creed, the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, and the Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Church, came one after another in the attempt to satisfy the same spirit which has manifested itself so vigorously in our own time and has brought into existence the present Modernist Movement.

Though Modernism has been at work in other religions, as I have said before, yet the Church has always given it Divine sanction. In the fulfilment of a prophecy made by Jesus as to the appearance of the Spirit of Truth, it has been thought that the Holy Ghost fills the minds of the Elders in the Church whenever they meet to devise a new form for the current faith to confront a newly arisen emergency. Such might well be the case, if the revised creed was an addition to or explanation of the former creed, conforming to it in its main features. But the new creed has at times directly contradicted the old one. How, then, can both deliberations be inspired by the Holy Ghost? The thing passes human comprehension. Jesus, they say, came to crush Paganism, but his whole kingdom became heatherized by those early Christian Councils and Synods which were believed to have been filled with the Holy Ghost. The creeds so arrived at, however, remained intact for several centuries until new factors arose to impair their stability. Islam gave an impetus to knowledge and a great

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revival of learning took place in Europe after the conquest of Constantinople. Then the fight between Science and the Church religion began. Though the latter at first tried to throttle Science by the use of every weapon of tyranny and oppression, nevertheless Science survived all her persecutions and eventually assumed the form of a foe to be reckoned with. The Church then sought a compromise with the aid of modernization, but this proved to be an impossibility. The formal religion was irreconcilable with Science. Next the clergy were asked by the laity to place reason and religion in two watertight compartments, as it were, within their breasts, and this was tried for some time, but the rapid onslaught of Science speedily rendered the position of neutrality untenable.

The Bishop of Ripon some six years ago asked Science to take a ten years' holiday in order to enable people to digest her new truths. In fact, he himself wanted breathing space to modernize the faith of the Church on new lines. But Science was more attractive, and Science prevailed. Modernists of to-day have no time for such half-measures. They began their work of reform in earnest in the days of the Great War, when the attention of the people was drawn elsewhere. Their first public conference took place in Cambridge in 1915. The subject of discussion was whether or not Jesus was the founder of the Church. The debate was opened by the Dean of St. Paul's, who in a very learned discourse negatived the proposition. Dean Inge maintained that Jesus was only the Lord of the Church which passes under his name, but not its Founder, being himself a follower of the Mosaic Dispensation. He without doubt advocated reforms which excited opposition, but he never contemplated schism of any kind. The Church received its superstructure from St. Paul, who made a Greek god of a Hebrew prophet, like Jesus. The idea was attractive to the Romans and the Greeks, and the Early Fathers in the coming few centuries incorporated the residue of paganism into a faith of Jesus. They made him the last of the Christs who had appeared from time to time in the pagan world. To cleanse Christianity from such foreign accretions the Modernists decided to meet every year, and they gradually made "a

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clean sweep of all those factors whereby Christianity had become heathenized." In the course of some fifteen years every pagan element was purged of the faith of Jesus, and the Formal Church is left shorn of almost all its essentials. Now they desire to do away with the existing creed and make a new one in its place. It is, no doubt, a courageous attempt, yet at the same time an effort, as it were, to snatch the work of guidance from the Divine hand. In all former Councils honest attempts were made to satisfy perturbed minds in forming the new creed, but those deliberating could not see into the future and always came to a wrong solution of the problem that, for the time being, faced them. But the ways of the Lord are different from those of men—and are unalterable. He has always been pleased to choose some individual rather than a body of men to act as His mouthpiece. Whenever such an emergency arises, He puts His words into the mouth of an individual and inspires that individual with His religion for the guidance of others. It would therefore be contrary to His methods that the Spirit of Truth should appear in the form of the Elders of the Church to be filled with the Holy Ghost. Similarly, in Nature God's laws do not correspond with this practice of the Church. Whenever there has been a demand for a thing, a new supply has straightway come from Him. The Law holds good in every nook and corner of Nature, and in like manner it obtains in human society in the matter of religion. Whenever any religion taught by an early Messenger has lost its purity, God has forthwith raised up a new prophet to restore it to its original beauty.

Moses was followed by generations of prophets, to meet similar emergencies. Jesus, as admitted by Dean Inge at Cambridge in 1915, came for the same purpose. His prophetic eye saw the corruption that was to creep into his teaching, and he foretold the advent of a new prophet whom he called the Spirit of Truth. The corruption was not long in coming, and it was due to the action of his own followers, who tried to win over the Gentiles to their religion.

The heresy became complete somewhere about the begin-

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ning of the sixth century, and the conditions thus developed did demand at that time Divine reform. God could not go against His own methods. He could not sleep over it for several centuries; He had always renewed His Message when the old one had become corrupted or forgotten. The Bible bears witness to this, and we see the same thing in the working of Nature. So He must send a Messenger to rebuke and root out the Heathenism thus incorporated in the Church of Jesus. The Messenger was Muhammad. It was no mere coincidence that the corruption in the Christian Church should have synchronized with the advent of the Arabian Prophet. He came and gave the lie to everything of pagan origin in the faith ascribed to Jesus.

I sum up here, in my own words, some of the conclusions arrived at by the Modernists in this connection within the last twenty years:

- (a) The Church teachings do not come from Jesus. The founders of his Church were other people.
- (b) Jesus did not teach that he and his mother were God.
- (c) Jesus was not God, in any sense of the word.
- (d) Jesus was a Messenger from God and did what other Messengers had done in their day.
- (e) God does not assume human shape, but man may achieve Divine attributes.
- (f) We are born with a perfect and pure nature.
- (g) The Bible has lost its genuineness.
- (h) The story of Jesus has been written in imitation of the pagan cult.
- (i) Heaven is not the top story of a three-storied house, as the dogmatic theology implies, but comprehends the whole universe.

I have left out some of the minor points dealt with by the Modernists, but now I will quote a few verses from the Qur-án, while the Book teems with similar teachings. It will show that the Qur-ánic Revelation has anticipated the Modernist deliberations, which have, in fact, followed it, word for word. In their zeal they have introduced Islam into Christendom.

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If the above teachings came in time to save humanity from the Paganism which reappeared in the Church religion, and thus to set a reasonable portion of the human race on the right path under the name of Islam (which has since extended its frontiers to the four corners of the earth), then Muhammad was decidedly a Messenger from the Most High. I would ask the Modernists to consider from this angle the claims of the Holy Prophet as a Divine guide. If Jesus, Moses, and other Hebrew patriarchs have been accepted by the Western world as Teachers from God, why should not the Teacher from Arabia receive similar recognition from them? Here I give the quotations from the Qur-án, to which I have referred:

The Story of Jesus an Imitation of Paganism. The Work of the Early Fathers.

“ And the Jews say: Ezra is the son of Allah; and the Christians say: The Messiah is the son of Allah; these are the words of their mouths; they imitate the saying of those who disbelieved before; Allah destroyed them; now they are turned away!

“ They have taken their doctors of law and their monks for Lords besides Allah, and (also) the Messiah son of Mary; and they were enjoined that they should serve one God only, there is no god but He; far from His glory be what they set up (with Him).” (ix. 30, 31.)

Teachings of Jesus, that he and his mother were not God.

“ Certainly they disbelieve who say: Surely Allah, He is the Messiah, son of Mary; and the Messiah said: O children of Israel! serve Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Surely whoever associates (others) with Allah, then Allah has forbidden to him the garden, and his abode is the fire; and there shall be no helpers for the unjust.

“ Certainly they disbelieve who say: Surely Allah is the third (person) of the three; and there is no god but the one God, and if they desist not from what they say, a painful chastisement shall befall those among them who disbelieve.” (v. 72, 73).

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“ The Messiah, son of Mary, is but an apostle; apostles before him have indeed passed away; and his mother was a truthful woman; they both used to eat food. See how We make the communications clear to them, then behold, how they are turned away.” (v. 75.)

Jesus a word, like other words, i.e. a creation of God.

“ About which they differ? ” (lxxviii. 3.)

“ When the angels said: O Mary! surely Allah gives you good news with a word from Him (of one) whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, worthy of regard in this world and the hereafter, and of those who are made near (to Allah).” (iii. 44.)

“ Say: If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would surely be consumed before the words of my Lord are exhausted, though We were to bring the like of that (sea) to add thereto.” (xviii. 109.)

No one Son of God.

“ Say: He, Allah, is One.

“ Allah is He on whom all depend.

“ He begets not, nor is He begotten:

“ And none is like Him.” (cxii.)

“ Such is Jesus son of Mary; (this is) the saying of truth about which they dispute.

“ It beseems not Allah that He should take to Himself a son, glory be to Him; when He has decreed a matter He only says to it ‘ Be,’ and it is.” (xix. 34, 35.)

Jesus like other men a Spirit of God.

“ When your Lord said to the angels: Surely I am going to create a mortal from dust: and when I have made him complete and breathed into him My spirit, then fall down making obeisance to him.” (xxxviii. 71, 72, see also xv. 28, 29.)

“ And Mary, the daughter of Amran, who guarded her chastity, so we breathed into him (Jesus) of our spirit and she accepted the truth and the words of her Lord.” (lxvi. 12.)

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Humanity rises to Divinity.

“Receive the colour of God and who is better than God in baptizing and Him do we serve.” (ii. 138.)

Human nature is from God, therefore not sinful.

“Then set your face upright for religion in the right state—the nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah’s creation: that is the right religion, but most people do not know.” (xxx. 30.)

Interpolation in the Bible.

“Of those who are Jews, (they) alter words from their places and they neglected a portion of what they were reminded of; and you shall always discover treachery in them excepting a few of them; so pardon them and turn away; surely Allah loves those who do good (to others).” (v. 13.)

“The Jews . . . they alter the words from their places, saying: If you are given this, take it, and if you are not given this, be cautious; and as for him whose temptation Allah desires, you cannot control any thing for him with Allah. Those are they for whom Allah does not desire that He should purify their hearts; they shall have disgrace in this world, and they shall have a grievous chastisement in the hereafter.” (v. 41.)

Extensiveness of Heaven

“A garden (Paradise), the extensiveness of which is heaven and the earth.” (iii. 132.)

“A garden, the extensiveness is as the extensiveness of the heaven and the earth.” (xxi. 57.)

The Qur-án decidedly obviates the necessity for the Modernist movement; but the ways of God are different from ours. Perhaps He will bring the benighted world to the true light by their means.

The work of the Modernists has till now been on destructive lines. The removal of the old debris is necessary before a new edifice can be raised. There are, however, one or two points in the above conclusions that have about them con-

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structive features. In 1926 the Modernists held that human nature is perfect at its birth and not defective or sinful, as the Church believed. They also initiated another beautiful tenet that man can rise from humanity to Divinity. The second principle is, in a way, a sequel to the first. If our nature is from God, it must be capable of clothing itself in Divine attributes. It is, as I said, a sublime and grand Doctrine; but it comes from Islam and Muhammad. If Dr. Barnes renounces the old Church creed and desires a new one, he could not find a better one than that contained in the Declaration of Faith in Islam—"Lā Ilāha ila 'l-Lāh" ("There is no object of adoration other than Allah"). In adoring Allah the Muslims do not worship any effigy of God. The Qur-án has revealed to them His beautiful Attributes and they try to follow them in their lives. This is the main idea of worship. "Imbue yourself with Divine Attributes" is a Muslim motto, given us by the Holy Prophet. It has recently dawned on some theologians in the West, as I remarked elsewhere, that the best of our morals are shadows of the Divine Attributes. But Divine "Morals" do not mean the tender things of which we read in the Sermon on the Mount; rather do they include in their significance all ethics and morals which declare themselves, in the working of Nature, as those of her Maker.

Here I will mention certain of the principles from the Qur-án which will keep us on the right path in moulding our characters on Divine lines. They are as follows:

(a) The world is full of resources.¹ Everything in it has been created for our use and benefit.²

(b) All things in Nature follow prescribed laws.³ If we know them and observe them too we shall bring Nature into subjection to us, since every thing in it is created for our service.⁴

(c) The whole world is in a measured order.⁵ We must know those measures to claim our mastery over Nature.

(d) Everything we need or desire is already provided. The gifts of Nature are beyond our comprehension.⁶

¹ xiv. 37.

² ii, 22; xv. 20.

³ iii. 82.

⁴ xiv. 33.

⁵ xv. 21.

⁶ xiv. 34.

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- (e) Everything is, by its nature, unchangeable.¹
 (f) All the Laws of Nature are unalterable.²
 (g) Things combine with each other in a fixed proportion to create new things; we must know these proportions.³
 (h) Everything is for our good, but if mishandled it becomes evil.
 (i) Labour receives its reward.⁴
 (j) Idleness brings no gain.⁵
 (k) Good actions are not wasted.⁶
 (l) Actions on right lines bring ample reward.⁷
 (m) God's blessings are open to all.⁸
 (n) Good and evil, however trifling in extent, bring their own reward.⁹
 (o) We are responsible for our actions.¹⁰
 (p) No action remains unnoticed.¹¹
 (q) God brings to light that which we conceal.¹²
 (r) Our gain and loss are the result of our actions.¹³
 (s) Our misfortunes come from ourselves.¹⁴
 (t) No one will bear our burden.¹⁵
 (u) No one stands as intermediary or intercessor between God and ourselves.¹⁶
 (v) God is quick in taking account of His creatures.¹⁷
 (w) No Divine law is unbearable.¹⁸
 (x) Wrong actions are punished, but repentance with amendment is acceptable.
 (y) Forgiveness comes to him who commits wrong through ignorance, forgetfulness or circumstances beyond his control.¹⁹
 (z) Human nature is possessed of the highest abilities, but we need Divine guidance, for want of which we sink to the lowest depths.

These are some of the general features of Qur-ánic ethics. The Book is full of such principles, and supplies us with the

¹ xxx. 30.

³ lxxxvii. 2, 3.

⁵ i. 2.

⁷ vi. 161.

¹⁰ xiii. 17; iii. 179.

¹³ ii. 286.

¹⁶ ii. 225.

¹⁸ ii. 286.

² lxxvii. 17; xliii. 35.

⁴ iii. 135; lviii. 29.

⁶ xxx. 18; vii. 170; lvi. 12.

⁸ i. 1.

⁹ viii. 89.

¹¹ iii. 115.

¹² ii. 72.

¹⁴ iii. 164.

¹⁵ xv. 17.

¹⁷ ii. 202.

¹⁹ ii. 286.

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best code of life for the building up of character. I wonder if the few principles of negative morality, most of them impracticable, of which we read in the Sermon on the Mount, could give us such a code. Before I conclude, I will add a brief résumé of Islamic principles, such as may help our friends the Modernists in the constructive work now before them.

WHAT IS ISLAM?

ISLAM, THE RELIGION OF PEACE.—The word Islam literally means: (1) Peace; (2) the way to achieve peace; (3) submission; as submission to another's will is the safest course to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

THE PROPHETS OF ISLAM.—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last Prophet of the Faith. Muslims, i.e. the followers of Islam, accept all such of the world's prophets, including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

THE QUR-ÁN.—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-án. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book, but, inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur-án, the last Book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.—These are seven in number: belief in (1) Allah; (2) angels; (3) books from God; (4) messengers from God; (5) the hereafter; (6) the measurement of good and evil; (7) resurrection after death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by

WHAT IS ISLAM ?

their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in heaven. State after death is an image of the spiritual state in this life.

The sixth article of faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination; he believes in Premeasurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

PILLARS OF ISLAM.—These are five in number: (1) declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad; (2) prayer; (3) fasting; (4) almsgiving; (5) pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine of Mecca.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.—The Muslims worship one God—the Almighty, the All-knowing, the All-just, the Cherisher of all the Worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is Indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the heaven and the earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

FAITH AND ACTION.—Faith without action is a dead letter. Faith is of itself insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden, and none can expiate for another's sin.

ETHICS IN ISLAM.—“Imbue yourself with Divine attributes,” says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels and leading him to the border of Divinity.

THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN ISLAM.—Men and women come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have

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been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual, and moral attainment. Islam places man and woman under like obligations, the one to the other.

EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches, and family honours are accidental things; virtue and the service of humanity are the matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race, and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

PERSONAL JUDGMENT.—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion, which, according to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

KNOWLEDGE.—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to angels.

SANCTITY OF LABOUR.—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

CHARITY.—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God, for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others, and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.

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